

Opinion – Transport Convener on Spaces for People

Creating spaces for people

Keeping people safe and supporting business recovery

by Lesley Macinnes, Convener for Transport and Environment, The City of Edinburgh Council

Edinburgh's residents are noticing more pedestrianised areas, wider pavements and cycle lanes popping up across Edinburgh recently. With these temporary measures, and more planned, our Spaces for People programme is making good progress.

We were awarded £5m of Scottish Government funding to make these temporary changes as lockdown is gradually lifted.

We are creating more space for everyone to keep a safe distance, whether they are walking or cycling, using a wheelchair or other mobility aids, using a pram or queuing to get into a shop.

Temporary measures so far include segregated cycle lanes on several streets and closing pinch points like Waverley Bridge. Others will help people to physically distance while enjoying shopping areas like Victoria Street, Portobello and Gorgie. Work is also well underway to create more than 30km temporary cycle lanes and widen pavements across the city.

We're basing our changes on previous consultations and on the phenomenal feedback we received through the interactive Commonplace online tool. Residents made more than 4000 suggestions on how to make the city function better during this difficult time. Comments about reducing the amount and speed of traffic, widening pavements and creating cycle lanes came through loud and clear. Those suggestions and our actions

are all about making the city's streets and communities more accessible and welcoming to everyone.

As we go through the next few months we will be using these ideas to improve the reallocation of space in our city. It's very important that we give everyone the space to move around safely, secure in the knowledge that the best possible measures have been put in place to let them go shopping, get some exercise or go to work in this beautiful city.

Find out more about the Spaces for People plans at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/spacesforpeople