

Final decision on East Craigs Low Traffic Neighbourhood to be made by Transport Committee

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) are a bit of a hot potato in Edinburgh at the moment and there are naturally views on both sides.

The Transport Convener has announced today that the final decision on a revised proposal for East Craigs will be discussed by all the members of the Transport and Environment Committee at their next meeting on 1 October 2020.

The council [announced](#) that the residential area in West Edinburgh is where the first LTN will be introduced.

You will be able to watch the Transport and Environment Committee meeting on the council's website. The papers [will be published here](#) in the week leading up to it.

Only a few weeks ago a public meeting was organised by Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP in West Edinburgh and [hundreds of people](#) turned up, most of them against the proposed measures turned up. Some people at the meeting said others who supported the traffic reducing plans were a bit apprehensive of going along. The numbers were to be restricted to 200 to keep within the Covid-19 guidelines, but a police van was present during the meeting, and no action was taken to disperse those in attendance.

Today just as we were putting the finishing touches to this article, the political debate rages on. Mr Cole-Hamilton has now accused Transport Convener, Lesley Macinnes, of hypocrisy – and has been taken to task by the Council Leader, Adam McVey.

Let's get this clear- This MSP invited the Transport Convenor [@lmacinnessnp](#) to a public meeting. It appears he failed to properly liaise with police or public safety & he's now trying to shift blame.

Pathetic. Edinburgh West deserves much better than this.
<https://t.co/ZuEhPSJ2k8>

– Cllr Adam McVey (@adamrmcvey) [September 16, 2020](#)

Mr Cole Hamilton announced the meeting on his Facebook page.

We have published as much footage of the meeting and those we interviewed to find out their views.

(With apologies in advance for the length of the video, it is embedded here.)

A petition was also set up and is supported by 2600 signatories. [The petition](#) rejects the traffic proposals on the basis that they will 'increase congestion, emissions and journey times, endanger access to Emergency Services and increase risks to all road users. Drum Brae junction and roundabout, identified by SusTrans as the most dangerous accident black spot in Edinburgh, will become even busier."

THE PUBLIC MEETING 28 AUGUST 2020

At the meeting local Mr Cole-Hamilton, urged the audience to welcome the Transport Convener and urged them to treat her with respect. He said that while the Liberal Democrats have supported many of the emergency Covid-19 measures, the council has got this scheme 'so far wrong' and it should not have taken an opposition MSP from another political party to get the people in front of the city leaders who are making the decisions.

Since then, Mr Cole-Hamilton has used [First Minister's Questions](#) to ask Nicola Sturgeon whether the council has acted lawfully in establishing such measures in East Craigs. He asked: "The City of Edinburgh Council is about to use Government spaces for people money to impose sweeping changes on the communities of East Craigs and Craigmount in my constituency, affecting 3,500 homes. The council has avoided any meaningful consultation, through the use of temporary traffic regulation orders, despite stating openly that the changes are likely to become permanent.

"So keen were they to be heard that 1,000 residents recently attended a public meeting that I organised with the council's transport convener. They are not car enthusiasts; they are normal people. Had the city council asked them, they would have made it clear that the plans will actually lengthen essential car journeys, putting huge additional pressure on arterial routes.

"Given that a court in Berlin struck down similar proposals, stating that they were a misuse of the emergency, is the First Minister content that the council administration is acting lawfully and in the spirit of the Government's funds for community social distancing?"

The First Minister replied: "I am happy to look into the specifics in more detail. I absolutely believe that local

people should be properly consulted and listened to about local schemes. Alex Cole-Hamilton regularly comes to the chamber and talks to me about the need for greater localism and decentralisation and the need to do more to tackle climate change, so he should perhaps also reflect on that. He is right, however, to voice the interests of his constituents, and I am sure and I hope that the City of Edinburgh Council will listen and take them seriously.”

At the public meeting

Cllr Robert Aldridge, the local Liberal Democrat councillor, said that such a scheme should be designed with the community and for the community and demanded local consultation.

Conservative councillor, Mark Brown, admitted he was not necessarily opposed to some of the measures themselves. He said: “The amount of public opposition to these plans is absolutely clear. The council has brought forward substantial changes to the East Craigs area despite all other local politicians views. I am not necessarily opposed to the principle but simply the strategy for implementing the plans.”

Local councillor, Clare Bridgman, an Independent, was unable to attend the meeting in person, but told us afterwards: “My main concern is the effect on emergency vehicles. North Gyle and Craigmount is not a High Street area, but people here generally work out of town and need to use their cars to pick up children or get to work. It is great to ban cars, but sometimes that is the only way to pick up children. My feeling is that locals do not have the confidence that this will be temporary. There are a number of submissions against it but it looks as if it will go through. During rush hour it is a real challenge to turn right, and with all these engines running there will be an increase in emissions. The backlog will be worse, and as for using it as a rat run – you have to know the area to use it as that! But there is some merit in possibly

closing off North Gyle Terrace at Maybury Road. They should stop that road up. ”



Cllr Lesley Macinnes at the public meeting in Gyle Park 28 August 2020 ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

Cllr Lesley Macinnes talked to the crowd, and was met after a while with some booing and jeering. She said she was pleased to have the opportunity to speak to everyone attending the meeting, but she also tried to explain the process by which the plans are being introduced.

She said: “A lot of the work we are doing on the streets is around safe passage to school or spaces for people to exercise, as well as the two segregated cycle lanes to hospitals. We live in fear of a return to Covid-19 and that is why we are continuing with our Spaces for People measures so that people have enough room to move around. And we want to see the benefits being enjoyed early in the lockdown when far more people were out exercising. As people return to work, we want safe passage for them too.”

Community Council

The chair of the Drumbrae Community Council, Kenny Wright, explained to the Transport Convener at the public meeting that the Community Council had not been consulted as she claimed.

He told The Edinburgh Reporter that they had definitely not received notification of the proposals before the Policy and Sustainability Committee meeting in May when these plans were discussed, and that he only knew of the five day consultation when some of the local politicians alerted him to it.

Now, of course, he explains that there are already ‘polarised and entrenched views’ on the matter, and the feeling is that the council is doing this to the community rather than with the community.

At the time when the limited consultation was taking place the Drumbrae Community Council responded with these queries:

- Why is this process being done under the umbrella of Covid-19 emergency measures?
- Why is this being pushed through without appropriate time for community consultation and engagement?
- Where are the supportive statistics for these proposals?
- What were the timescales for residents being made aware of these statistics and proposals?
- Do these proposals take into account the existing proposals for the new and extensive works on the Cammo side of Maybury Road from Maybury to Barnton junctions?
- Are these proposals consistent with the change proposals there, for the future?
- Why is the already failed work of widening pavements at junction Craigs Road and Drum Brae South being repeated?
- We tried that 4 or 5 years ago and this work was subsequently removed.
- Why is Craigmount Avenue North at Craigmount Way being closed, what is the purpose of this?
- How many cyclists currently use Drum Brae South/North?
- How is increasing traffic by forcing more vehicles to use the alternative routes of Glasgow Road, North Gyle Grove, North Gyle Road, North Gyle Avenue, Drum Brae South/North and Craigs Road a better option than the current situation?
- Do we agree that these proposals have a high risk of far more 3 points turning and drop offs at blocked off streets nearest Craigmount High School?

Mr Wright, on behalf of the Community Council, says he really wants to find a consensus, as he realises that the council intends to proceed with the scheme, but the community council cannot accept that local democracy has just been ignored in

this way. They do not see what would be wrong with pausing the initiative and properly consulting with the affected communities to at least 'try and gain a consensus on areas of agreement'.

The community council now asks who initiated this idea and for what specific purpose? What was the background work that allowed it to proceed from a low key discussion at the Policy and Sustainability Committee meeting in May to a full set of drawings only a couple of weeks later?

The East Craigs plan was presented to the council on 14 May as a live project which was 'community driven'. The proposed action was to 'close selected roads to enable local trips to be made safely, especially to parks etc and schools'.

After the meeting the council sent a letter to residents of the area stating: "The East Craigs LTN is a temporary scheme which will be monitored and adapted if necessary. We hope to use this to build future plans, for example as part of the West Edinburgh Link programme if appropriate. There are many factors that have led to the introduction of this temporary LTN including:

"Consistent feedback from the community over the last two years which has requested more and safer options for walking, cycling and wheeling.

"To reduce traffic avoiding busier routes; and To bring the benefits of quieter, safer streets to children and communities in the whole area. I hope that this information provides some reassurance that the concerns of residents are being taken extremely seriously and that the Council is keen to work closely with the community on this to provide a safer local area for residents.

"The Council remains committed to introducing the LTN but with some changes being considered following public concerns, as set out in the *attached note**. We will also ensure there is

ongoing engagement with residents, ward Councillors and Community Councils.”

**We have as yet been unable to obtain a copy of the attachment but will add it here when we do.*

Support for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

In Edinburgh there are businesses and communities which support the proposals to reduce traffic in certain areas such as Corstorphine and Marchmont, and they are active in that support.

Recently, 136 organisations from all over the UK, but including several in Edinburgh, signed a joint statement calling on council leaders to introduce more of these measures all over the country.

In Edinburgh the groups signing the statement included Bikes for Refugees, Blackford Safe Routes, Corstorphine Climate Action, Spokes Party, SPOKES, the Lothian Cycle Campaign, SPOKES South Edinburgh, Hart’s Cyclery, Pedal on Parliament, Davidson’s Mains Primary School Bike Bus team, Roseburn Cycle Route Support Group and James Gillespie’s Primary School.

Click here to to read the Joint Statement in full below

The statement says that research has analysed areas where LTNs were introduced, in particular in Outer London. Although the sample size of the LTNs is, they admit, small, it finds that the ‘effect direction is consistent’, and that they reduce car use and ownership as well as increasing active travel, and concludes that LTNs are an important tool.

The first LTN promised for Edinburgh will be created in East Craigs where there will be a mix of segregated cycleways, road

closures and what is called 'filtered permeability'. This means using planters and other objects in the roadways to allow some traffic such as mobility scooters and bikes through, but to divert cars and lorries by main roads.

According to the Cycling Assembly of Great Britain: "**Filtered permeability can be achieved on existing streets either by a straightforward physical point closure, called a [modal filter](#) (e.g. a bollard), or by the use of opposed one-way streets (with exemptions for cycling), or simply by signs.**"

One of the comments from an East Craigs local:

John, resident of Craigs Road said: "I broadly support the Council's LTN proposal for East Craigs because of the long-term benefit for my young family and the community as a whole. It's a great idea! More time outside in nature, more time engaging with the community and more time exercising. A win win win!

"On one hand, we are so very fortunate to be located near so much amenity within walking distance, but on the other, the area is subject to so much commuting and developmental pressure. Current patterns suggest that these pressures will grow, which will put our neighbourhood square in the firing line, resulting in potentially tragic consequences. As residents, we have a huge opportunity to correct that through accepting the proactive measures that the council is taking.

"The proposals also address our moral obligations to others; those who cannot afford a car, those that suffer from breathing difficulties because of local pollution, those who suffer loneliness or anxiety because of lack of interaction with others. The LTN will help these individuals, while globally we help the planet by ensuring that our cars are left in the drive as often as possible, bringing our emissions down. Change can be hard to take, and I do sympathise with some residents who object to the proposal as there is a lot of

misinformation out there, but the mounting evidence of how other communities have benefited from an LTN are not to be ignored. Once we've adjusted, I have no doubt that East Craigs will be a cleaner, safer and more vibrant environment for us all to live in."

Marchmont scheme

A further LTN scheme in Marchmont has been designed by the team behind Blackford Safe Routes. They organise the bike bus to James Gillespie's Primary School, and this proposal is designed to reduce rat-running, promote local businesses and make it safer to walk and cycle in the area. They are of course most interested in the routes to school. Currently they cycle through the grounds of the Astley Ainslie and make their way as a group to the primary school. The council assist them by having a member of staff who controls the traffic lights on the route so that the bike bus has priority.



The Wee Unicorns from James Gillespie's Primary School cycling

to school in March 2019 PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

Joint Statement in Support of Low Traffic Neighbourhood Trials

We, the undersigned, wish to express our support of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods tackling congestion on residential and main roads and give our thanks to the local councils who are working to ensure our streets are safe for everyone.

Lockdown opened the country's eyes to a different way that streets could be – places that welcomed walking, cycling, and socially distanced cups of tea with neighbours. Roads were transformed from dangerous thoroughfares to playgrounds for local children. As lockdown eases and communities all over the country re-open, it would be devastating for our communities if everyone abandoned public transport and started driving private vehicles instead. Now more than ever we need safe and spacious routes for walking and cycling to stop the air and noise pollution, and danger that traffic inflicts on our neighbourhoods. That's why we welcome the leadership of councils who are working tirelessly to make sure changes to streetspace aren't lost as life returns to normal.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, when designed well, massively reduce motor traffic, allowing kids to play outside and local residents to walk and cycle more, with less dependency on their cars. In the few weeks since Salford introduced their Low Traffic Neighbourhood trial, reports are already circulating of families taking to the streets on their bikes, delighting in the new space. And in more established Low Traffic Neighbourhoods like Waltham Forest in London, residents have seen transformative changes to the school run. Once traffic is removed from side streets, vulnerable road users can travel safely on foot, benefiting the whole community, not only those that live there. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are one of several vital approaches needed to

reduce car dependency, and combat climate change, air pollution, obesity, road danger and more. Where they've gone in, shops and cafes within the scheme have seen huge footfall increases, while shops on the edges have done well too.

We hope this is just the beginning of an ambitious plan to transform our streets for the better – with speed reduction, safer crossings, anti-social parking enforcement, protected cycle lanes, controlled parking zones, an increase in cycle parking, parklets, and other incentives to reduce car ownership. We support Low Traffic Neighbourhoods that reduce congestion and air pollution on residential and main roads and we call for more local councils to work with residents to implement them.

Signed,

- 1. 20's Plenty For Us*
- 2. Action Vision Zero*
- 3. Active Things*
- 4. Adam Tranter, Bicycle Mayor for Coventry*
- 5. Barnsbury & St Mary's Neighbourhood Group, Islington*
- 6. Better Streets for Enfield*
- 7. Better Streets for Grove Park*
- 8. Better Streets for Havering*
- 9. Better Streets for Kensington and Chelsea*
- 10. Better Streets for Newham*
- 11. Better Streets for Tower Hamlets*
- 12. Bikes for Refugees (Scotland)*
- 13. Blackford Safe Routes, Edinburgh*
- 14. Bloomsbury Air*
- 15. Breathe in Brighton*
- 16. Bricycles, Brighton & Hove Cycling Campaign*
- 17. Brighton and Hove Green Party*
- 18. Bromley Living Streets*
- 19. Burgess & Hall Wines*
- 20. CAA – Edinburgh*
- 21. Camcycle – Cambridge Cycling Campaign*

22. *Car-Free Norwich*
23. *Citizens UK Just Transition Campaign*
24. *Clean Air for Dulwich*
25. *Clean Air for Streatham Hill*
26. *Clean School Air*
27. *Greener & Cleaner Bromley & Beyond*
28. *Climate Action Newcastle*
29. *Corstorphine Climate Action*
30. *Croydon Living Streets*
31. *Crystal Palace LTN (CPLTN)*
32. *Cycle Ipswich*
33. *Cycle Islington*
34. *Cycle Sisters*
35. *Dalovelo*
36. *Davidson's Mains Primary School Bike Bus team, Edinburgh*
37. *DeptfordFolk*
38. *Dulwich and Herne Hill Safe Routes to School*
39. *Ealing Green Party*
40. *East Hillside LTN Group*
41. *Enjoy London Fields*
42. *Extinction Rebellion Hammersmith & Fulham*
43. *Forest Hill Society's Clean Air For SE23 campaign*
44. *Fossil Free Islington*
45. *Fossil Free Newham*
46. *Fox Lane LTN*
47. *Green Liberal Democrats*
48. *Green School Runs*
49. *GrowN22 C.I.C.*
50. *H&F Circles*
51. *Hammersmith and Fulham Cycling*
52. *Hanover Action*
53. *Hanover Liveable Neighbourhood*
54. *Hart's Cyclery*
55. *Havering Cyclists*
56. *Healthy Streets Bounds Green*
57. *Histon and Impington Healthy Streets*
58. *Hilltop E17 Community*

59. *Hot Milk Cafe*
60. *Hounslow Cycling Campaign*
61. *I Like Clean Air*
62. *#inspiringsustainableislington*
63. *James Gillespie's Primary School*
64. *Joji Skin Care Ltd*
65. *JoyRiders London C.I.C.*
66. *Lambeth Living Streets*
67. *Lambeth Cyclists*
68. *Lewisham Cyclists*
69. *Liveable Streatham Wells*
70. *Living Streets North Tyneside*
71. *London Cycling Campaign*
72. *London Living Streets*
73. *LowTrafficLDNFields*
74. *Low Traffic Corstorphine*
75. *Make Lee Green*
76. *Markhouse Residents' Mini Holland Group*
77. *Merton Residents' Transport Group, Merton, London*
78. *Mobilities Justice CIC*
79. *Mums for Lungs*
80. *Neu Architects Ltd*
81. *Newcastle Cycling Campaign*
82. *Newham Cyclists*
83. *Niveous Limited*
84. *OMA Bikes*
85. *Pedals: Nottingham Cycle Campaign*
86. *Pedal on Parliament*
87. *Pedal People*
88. *Pedestrianise Staplehurst Road*
89. *Plastic Free Pantry Ltd*
90. *PlayMeetStreet North Tyneside*
91. *Possible*
92. *Quiet & Still LTD*
93. *RailtonLTN*
94. *Roasting House*
95. *Roseburn Cycle Route Support Group*

96. *Runsome*
97. *Safe Roads for Tulse Hill*
98. *Safer Stoneyhurst*
99. *Save Oval Streets*
100. *School Streets Initiative*
101. *SPACE for Fenham and Arthur's Hill*
102. *SPACE for Gosforth*
103. *SPACE for Heaton*
104. *SPACE for Jesmond*
105. *Spokes Party*
106. *Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign*
107. *Spokes South Edinburgh*
108. *Southwark Cyclists*
109. *St George's Hospital Bicycle Users Group*
110. *St Mary's Walthamstow, London*
111. *Streetlife Nottingham*
112. *Sustainable Transport Shropshire*
113. *Sustrans*
114. *Tonbridge Bicycle Users Group (TBUG)*
115. *Tooting Healthy Streets*
116. *Tower Hamlets Wheelers*
117. *Transition Town Tooting Environmental Group*
118. *Transport Initiatives*
119. *Tumbridge Wells Bicycle Users Group (TWBUG)*
120. *Queens Boundary Community*
121. *Urmston Bee Network*
122. *Urban Good CIC*
123. *Walk And Cycle London CIC*
124. *Walk Ride Bath*
125. *Walk Ride Bolton Borough*
126. *Walk Ride Greater Manchester*
127. *Walk Ride Heatons*
128. *Walk Ride Salford*
129. *Walworth Healthy Streets*
130. *Waltham Forest Cycling Campaign*
131. *Wandsworth Cycling Campaign*
132. *Wandsworth Living Streets*

133. *We Love Salters*

134. *We Support Waltham Forest Mini Holland*

135. *Westminster Healthy Streets*

136. *York Cycle Campaign*