

Council to progress with Spaces for People measures

The administration proposals to introduce new measures and make changes to existing ones under the Spaces for People programme, were finally agreed today.

Using the procedure under the council's Standing Order 23.1 the debate by all 63 councillors on the Spaces for People Update was 'truncated' today. (This is the same term that Cllr Ian Perry used at the Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) [meeting last week](#).)



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That standing order allows for a member to propose that 'the matter may now be decided'. That was accepted by the Lord Provost, allowing him perhaps to realise the ambition to end the council meeting at 5pm today. Previous meetings have extended well beyond that time – including the Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) on 12 November.

The report on the temporary measures being used by the council to create space for people on our streets and roads was debated 'extensively' at TEC last week – and a decision was made. Last Thursday, the Conservative Group used Standing Order 30 to refer the decision taken at TEC to the full council for further discussion and approval or otherwise. This meant that any changes agreed by TEC – for example at some schools – were delayed by one week.

The Rt Hon Lord Provost, Frank Ross, who runs the full council meeting, accepted a proposal by Cllr Cathy Fullerton that the debate on this matter at full council was brought to a conclusion after seven councillors had spoken in the debate. (This was the same number of councillors who had contributed to a previous item on the agenda.) It still took a good fifteen minutes of voting on the coalition motion and the various amendments to get this item approved by the council, but it did mean that the political discussion was reduced. The substantive decision made at TEC last week was informed by the council officers who attended and contributed to that meeting, and this was one of the objections which the Transport Convener made last week. She pointed out then that although the decision was to be referred to all 63 councillors, they would not be able to ask council officers for any further details as officers are not present at meetings of full council.

Political debate

The Conservative Group asked for each major measure in the Spaces for People programme to be considered separately. The group leader Iain Whyte said they had asked for the major proposals to be brought to committee so that the local members could imbue any decisions with their local knowledge. Advocating more consultation on these temporary measures he said: "If we don't listen to people we won't take them with us."

Cllr Jason Rust asking for delay in taking these decisions said that 'the council must have the humility to say we've got this wrong'. He also said that the priorities were wrong in spending £32,000 on bollards but only £20,000 on measures around schools.

In relation to Braid Road which will remain closed meantime, the council did agree that a briefing note will be circulated to Committee members and relevant ward councillors in mid-December 2020 providing more detailed monitoring info on traffic volumes, public transport journey times and air pollution levels.

The Transport Convener Lesley Macinnes said that Spaces for People has been introduced under the most difficult of circumstances. She continued: "It is a complex series of actions that have to be taken in order to secure that safe physical distancing for people to move around the city in a sustainable manner. Officers are working as hard and as fast as they can to put in place measures that are required by the city."

She explained that measures on Lanark Road have already been altered to accommodate local concerns. She said: "This council administration is attempting to undertake a complex process with as much flexibility as we can build in. To hear it characterised again and again by those who have political skin in the game in order to undermine what we are trying to do is, I think, absolutely appalling."

She also explained that the continual demands for consultation from opposition parties is contrary to what was voted for by the council who approved the processes put in place (with a limited 5 day consultation).

Cllr Macinnes said that more details behind schemes will be published on the council website. She said: "People will be able to access some of that reasoning and get more detail

attached to it. That is a practical step which I am happy to take. It is about opening up, and letting people see why we're making these decisions, how we're going to implement them and what are the likely benefits. Nobody's talking about the benefits of these schemes. I hope that it will be understood that the motivation of the coalition in undertaking this work is not to cause concern in communities or upset but to deliver positive benefits at a time of immense constraints and concern about infection rates."

When introducing the initial £10 million funding for Spaces for People in the Scottish Parliament on 28 April 2020, the Transport Convener, Michael Matheson, said: "The package consists of 100 per cent funding for local authorities to put in place temporary measures, such as pop-up cycle lanes and wider walkways, through a new spaces for people fund of £10 million that will be administered by Sustrans; guidance to support local authorities on the use of existing legislation that gives them powers to quickly implement temporary road reallocation measures; and access to a range of advice and support from Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government on topics including construction, public health, equalities and communications.

"I very much hope that local authorities will come forward with bold, ambitious plans to implement temporary active travel measures, following the example of cities, towns and places around the world."

The council will be proceeding with these measures

In practical terms, this means that the council can now proceed to introduce the specific measures as set out in item 4.5 of last week's report:

4.5.1 On **Warriston Road** it is proposed to remove the measures

in place as it appears that there is decreased pressure on the North Edinburgh Path Network now and use of the road by people walking and cycling is modest. These measures have therefore been assessed as no longer being required.

4.5.2 On **Victoria Street** changes are proposed to create a revised pedestrian priority zone which allows limited servicing access during the day. This recommendation has been made following review of the existing measures and feedback from a Local Elected Member and traders that improvements to delivery and servicing access are required. The proposed measures include time restricted access from a gateway feature at the George IV Bridge junction. The 'no parking' restriction is proposed to continue, but limited loading will be permitted.

4.5.3 Following feedback from the Cramond and Barnton Community Council it is proposed to re-open the **Cammo Estate** lower car park, by relocating the road closure to the south of the access. In addition, during the period of the temporary closure local residents have reported inconsiderate parking in the area. To address this, additional temporary waiting restrictions have been laid at the Cammo Road junction to improve visibility.

4.5.4 During the review detailed consideration was given to local access and the principles of the closure of **Silverknowes Road** (North section). The original project principles are still valid (to provide safe access to areas of exercise) however, the reinstatement of the public transport route is seen as important to provide access to sustainable transport. While it is acknowledged that public transport use is restricted at this time, the reinstatement of the local bus service should give people safe travel options, in line with appropriate travel advice. The proposal is to reopen the road to public transport vehicles. Keeping the road closed to other traffic will allow the introduction of a wide segregated cycleway suitable for family groups and children.

4.5.5 Following a review of the scheme and feedback from Lothian Buses, it is proposed to remove the measures in place on **Great Junction Street**.

4.5.6 Following review of the scheme and representation from local Councillors, it is proposed to reinstate 10 parking spaces on **Morningside Road**.



Morningside Road. Photo: © 2020, Martin P. McAdam
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New schemes

There are new schemes planned for South Bridge, Lanark Road, Longstone Road and Inglis Green Road, the A1 and A90 and Greenbank to Meadows.

South Bridge – a bus gate will be introduced at Chambers Street where there will be a revised road layout. Temporary traffic lights will be introduced at the George IV Bridge end of Chambers Street.

Lanark Road, Longstone Road and Inglis Green Road – cycle segregation and revised parking arrangements are proposed. This will provide a safe protected cycling route as an alternative to the Water of Leith path and the canal towpath. With regard to the proposals for Lanark Road, there is a petition set up by Derryck Reid rejecting the council's proposals for the introduction of a temporary segregated cycle lane. While they agree on the reduction of the speed limit on the road to 30mph, many of the objections centre around the removal of parking spaces for residents or delivery vans outside their own homes. The objectors also say that this will create congestion by reducing the carriageway to a single lane. Cllr Gavin Corbett reminded councillors that it was in 2012 that Andrew McNicoll was killed while cycling on Lanark Road. He explained that while traffic has grown by 8% in the last

decade and it is necessary to reallocate space, change can be uncomfortable. He also pointed out that on the canal towpath which is a shared space there is already tension between everyone who uses the space.

The A1 and A90 – temporary cycle infrastructure on the A1

Greenbank and the Meadows – safer cycling route on this route will be provided. Braid Road will remain closed while the measures at St Peter's and James Gillespie's schools are set up. This will provide a 'coherent quiet connection' from Greenbank to the Meadows without any further interventions in Cluny or Midmar.

The council is largely basing the work it will carry out in Blackford on a plan proposed by Blackford Safe Routes. They are the group who have organised the Bike Bus for pupils at James Gillespie's allowing pupils to cycle to school in a group one Friday per month.

The group's Ewen Maclean said after the decision: "We believe very strongly that the Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Route will benefit everyone in the community.

"This particular route provides safer active travel for thousands of school children in the area, but also allows opportunities for everyone to travel more safely and more sustainably, at a time when many people are worried about using public transport, and we vitally need safe travel alternatives to the car.

"We hope that this route is just the start of many such measures that could be employed across the city which will promote more vibrant and active communities, encouraging benefits for local businesses and safer, more connected communities. By giving people safe travel alternatives traffic volume will lessen; this phenomenon is known as "traffic evaporation" and means that such schemes do benefit those that need to drive – such as those with mobility issues – as

parking becomes less difficult and congestion is eased.

“It has been noted in Low Traffic Neighbourhoods elsewhere that approval rating goes up significantly after installation, and there is almost no objection from Emergency Services, who cite traffic volume and congestion as main contributing factor to extended response times.

“We believe that in the current emergency situation, where we are encouraging children to make their way to schools on their own from a young age to reduce transmission among adults, implementing the measures will serve as a consultation for the community; they can easily be modified if specific problems arise thanks to the adaptable nature of modal filters.”

Other measures

There is also now approval for measures to be introduced or revised on a long list of other roads and streets with specific actions. (see these in full below)

Some movement will now be made on the introduction of a segregated cycleway on **Broughton Street**. Better Broughton which includes former councillor and MP, Mark Lazarowicz, in its numbers said in their deputation: “We have produced a set of proposals to tackle these issues and work for the transformation of our community. We identified the need for wider footpath space, and protected cycle lanes, particularly uphill, as a major early priority. We are therefore pleased to see that the recommendations for further “Spaces for People” measures, include, as a top priority, the provision of wider pavements and an uphill cycle lane in Broughton Street, along with pedestrian improvements to the Broughton Street roundabout.”

The council is to make repairs to the rising bollards on High Street – which were working in March but now seem to require further work. This will allow access to Cockburn Street for

residents there. Cllr Joanna Mowat has been vocal in representing their concerns at not being able to have goods delivered to their homes.

Finally, the council is moving in on street clutter including guardrails. They plan to remove these wherever possible to provide more space for pedestrians and others on the pavements.

There will be further amendments to these temporary measures introduced. The next meeting of the Transport and Environment Committee will take place in January 2021.



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