

Spaces for People continued

The City of Edinburgh Council has taken a variety of steps to make streets safer for residents walking, cycling and wheeling since the first lockdown began in March.

Some of this has included road and street closures, and of course, as is the way of things, not everyone has been happy with those.

The council introduced the changes under the emergency Covid-19 measures, and funded them with some of the £5 million of Scottish Government money awarded to Edinburgh.

The council has now reviewed these and will decide next week whether to continue with some or make any changes, as recommended by council officers. The stopping up of streets, widening pavements and introducing segregated cycle lanes is all aimed at making enough space to allow for physical distancing needed in the wake of the pandemic.

Some schemes may be changed, such as Warriston Road where road closures will be removed, on Great Junction Street where measures will be removed (there is just not enough room there according to what we were told), on Victoria Street where limited servicing for businesses will be allowed during the day, Cammo Estate lower car park will be reopened, and buses will be allowed to use the northern part of Silverknowes Road. New schemes will include measures on South Bridge, Lanark Road, Longstone Road and Inglis Green Road, A1 and A90 and Greenbank to The Meadows (where Braid Road will remain closed as it forms part of the bigger picture).

New schemes at Featherhall and Leith will be framed for approval by councillors in January 2021.

Council officers say that there are 130 schools in the city and that measures to make areas around schools have already been introduced at around 75 of those.

Transport and Environment Committee Convener Councillor Lesley Macinnes said: "Since May we've made real progress to create safer, more welcoming spaces for walking, cycling and wheeling while we continue to deal with the ongoing pandemic. There's no sign of the current conditions changing anytime soon and it's paramount that we continue to provide protected routes for the many people who don't own cars and while public transport is at a lower capacity.

"The advantage of introducing these measures on a temporary basis is that we're able to tweak and improve on schemes based on feedback and monitoring and this update demonstrates that we are doing that. Thanks to the thousands of comments received through our Commonplace tool we're also going to be able to introduce changes that further meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists across the city."

Transport and Environment Committee Vice Convener Councillor Karen Doran said: "We know how much these changes mean to residents, local businesses and community groups. We've had lots of fantastic feedback from those benefiting from improvements but we're also aware of some of the concerns people have had, which is why we're carrying out these regular reviews, and holding a full discussion on some of the more complex schemes coming forward."

[In August](#) Policy and Sustainability Committee agreed to receive updates on the Spaces for People programme every two months, including reviews of delivered schemes. Following the latest reviews, it is recommended that 18 of the interventions continue as usual, or with minor revisions.

Amongst four measures highlighted for more significant amendments are the closure of Warriston Road, which is no longer considered necessary due to decreased pressure on the North Edinburgh Path Network. On Victoria Street, it is proposed to allow limited servicing access to allow delivery and servicing access were required. And Silverknowes Road (north section), which is currently closed, would be reopened to public transport, along with a segregated cycle lane, if approved.

Four broader schemes will be considered by councillors on Thursday, rather than agreed under delegated authority, due to their complexity. On South Bridge, it is proposed to introduce a bus gate, footpath widening and segregated cycleways, while cycle segregation and revised parking arrangements on Lanark Road, Longstone Road and Inglis Green Road will go before councillors. Committee will also be asked to approve one of two options for the route between Greenbank and the Meadows, building upon the strategic context of the existing three interventions in the area (Braid Road, Braidburn Terrace and Comiston Road).

Analysis of Commonplace feedback identified clusters of comments, areas where particular issues affect pedestrians and cyclists and 'agreements' with comments. This has led to recommendations for nine additional schemes, as well as contributing to a project with Living Streets to define and schedule the removal of non-essential street furniture to improve walking conditions.

The report also outlines other activities to create better spaces for walking and cycling, amongst which are measures to improve access to schools, a review of winter maintenance plans and the potential introduction of planters, benches or parklets on Victoria Street and Cockburn Street.

Read the full report, Spaces for People Update – November 2020, online and [watch the Transport and Environment Committee](#)

[live](#) via webcast.



Silverknowes Road. Photo: Martin P. McAdam
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