

New cycle path to be created from Portobello to Musselburgh

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

A temporary cycle path heading east out of Portobello will stretch all the way to Musselburgh in a cross-border project.

The path, which is being created by The City of Edinburgh Council, was originally expected to stop at the edge of the city's boundary.

However, a report to councillors reveals that East Lothian Council has agreed to let Edinburgh continue the path all the way into the town after successfully applying for an additional £40,000 in funding.

The report, which updates councillors on the local authority's progress introducing its Safer Spaces programme of work across the county, said the additional project had been added on after Edinburgh Council approached East Lothian Council officers.

It said: "The City of Edinburgh Council approached us with a proposal to extend a temporary cycleway along the A199 from Portobello into Musselburgh.

"This had been highlighted as a priority for local people

through their consultation process and this support had also been captured by our online portal.

“As all of our available funding had already been committed, we approached Sustrans for additional funds on the grounds that a cycleway that stops at the county boundary does not make sense to users.”

Sustrans awarded £1.4m to East Lothian Council in June to introduce a swathe of measures to allow social distancing and create safe spaces in the county’s towns and communities.

The report says that up to December, £427,000 had been spent on projects including town centre measures, 20mph speed limits, a Cockenzie to Prestonpans cycleway, and the Edinburgh Just Eat Cycle Hire Scheme.

It added: “A further £591,000 is committed in terms of staff time and consultancy support for design, risk and equalities assessments, road safety audits and public engagement, and the eBike Hire scheme which is currently out for tender.

“It is estimated that a further £366k will be required to implement the committed schemes – costs to be confirmed once designs are finalised and contracts awarded.”

While some of the proposals were widely welcomed by local communities, others had to be revised after meeting opposition.

Attempts to suspend parking in town centres met opposition in Haddington and Prestonpans and were dropped, while early objections from traders to suspending parking bays in North Berwick, Tranent and Musselburgh saw proposals tweaked to meet concerns.

Vandalism has also been an issue on two projects. One of the Edinburgh Cycle Hire trial stations in Musselburgh at the town’s Brunton Hall was targeted and police were called in.

In North Berwick, bollards installed as traffic calming measures have been vandalised or struck by vehicles so often they are being scrapped and replaced by planters.

One project which had been called for by the public for some time was the opening of the Electric Bridge in Musselburgh for cyclists.

The report revealed: "While this project had been an aspiration of ELC for some time, Covid-19 brought this to the fore again with considerable public pressure to move this forward during lockdown.

"East Lothian Council has now taken ownership of the bridge and added signage to make it clear it is for the use of cyclists. The adjacent footbridge will now serve pedestrians only."

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