

Council pave the way for spending on footpaths and dropped kerbs

Increased spending will allow The City of Edinburgh Council to keep to its promise of ensuring safer, more accessible footpaths in the city.

In September, as a result of the matter being raised by Green councillor, Cllr Claire Miller, the council agreed to take Transport for All's Pavements Pledge. Now the council is seeking to increase spending on creating dropped kerbs and raised crossings, as well as protecting disabled parking bays. It plans an allocation of £1.82 million until 2025/26, spending more than £350,000 each year.

There are already several projects (for example Meadows to George Street and West Edinburgh Link) which should improve conditions for pedestrians or wheelchair users, but a further £50,000 will be spent on removing chicane gates on paths which make them inaccessible to wheelchair users and others, and money will also be used to widen off-road routes. These matters will be decided at Thursday's Transport and Environment Committee. The papers are [here](#).

Councillor Lesley Macinnes, Transport and Environment Convener, said: "We want Edinburgh's streets to be for everyone, and taking the Equal Pavements Pledge refocuses our commitment to providing safer, more accessible footways, particularly for those with disabilities. There is clearly

work to be done to improve our historic streets so that everyone can easily get from A to B and the pledge's seven points demonstrate the kind of actions needed.

“As part of our Active Travel Investment Programme we're placing a real focus on measures to improve accessibility, in particular through investment of more than £1.8m over the next five years in dropped kerbs and raised crossings, in addition to several projects, big and small, across the city.

“This will add to steps already taken to improve the conditions of our streets for those with mobility issues. Our citywide A-board ban has been welcomed by equalities groups for reducing street clutter and now we've recently been working with Living Streets to identify non-essential street furniture for removal. We've undertaken a comprehensive review of crossing points across the city to identify locations where dropped kerbs are needed too.”

Councillor Karen Doran, Transport and Environment Vice Convener, said: “We have several strategies, projects and policies in development that put people at the heart of the city and the Equal Pavements Pledge will be central to our thinking as we progress these schemes over the coming years, not in the least the plans for investment.”



A board on Edinburgh pavement photographed in 2018 before the ban came into effect

In 2018 the council introduced a [citywide A-board ban](#) to create safer, accessible streets, which has been welcomed by equalities groups for reducing street clutter. Over recent months the council has been working with Living Streets to identify non-essential street furniture for removal.

The seven commitments in the pledge are as follows:

1. Listen, and act:

Engage with and listen to the perspectives of disabled people, across the impairment groups, who have been significantly erased from the conversation. By doing this, we can move forward with accessible, inclusive, pan-impairment solutions which benefit everyone, and the environment.

2. Keep it clear:

Maintain a minimum of 1.5m clearance on all pavements, by enforcing the terms of your licenses with businesses. Issue written warnings and follow up with on-site visits to premises to enforce the terms. Use roaming 'inspectors' to ensure pavements aren't blocked.

3. Cut the clutter:

Operate a zero-tolerance approach to street clutter. Issue warnings to businesses that obstruct pavements with A-boards, and follow up with fines. Consider temporarily removing permanent fixtures, for example bollards and lamp posts, while outdoor furniture is on pavements to maintain a clear path. Electric Vehicle charging points should only be situated on a pavement as a last resort if there are no other options, and must be placed in a way that will not cause obstruction or trip hazard from trailing cables.

4. Mind the trash:

Schedule waste removal at times that will be the least disruptive, reducing the issue of bags of rubbish being left on pavements during periods of high footfall.

5. Drop the kerbs:

Undertake a professional accessibility audit of your streetspace and install immediate short-term measures (e.g: asphalt ramps) at problem areas to ensure step-free access. This is a short term and immediate solution while more

long-term solutions, including proper dropped kerbs and correct tactile paving where appropriate, are devised and installed.

6. Protect Blue Badge Bays

Do not remove parking spaces for Blue Badge holders except where supported by robust data and in consultation with disabled residents. In rare occasions where this is unavoidable, the bays must be relocated close to the original location and any plans should be consulted on with disabled residents to avoid impeding access.

7. Work with disabled experts

We want to see local authorities and transport providers commit to a co-production model built on the views and expertise of a wide range of disabled voices. Work with representatives from a pan-impairment organisation who can train your team and work with you to embed the Social Model of Disability to ensure all future streetspace schemes are delivered with accessibility at their core.