

Slower Speeds, Safer Streets summit

An online summit organised recently by Living Streets Edinburgh and chaired by former councillor and MP, Mark Lazarowicz, discussed the need for slower speeds to ensure safer streets.

The event was attended by transport professionals and Cllr Lesley Macinnes who is Transport Convener. With more than 60 people attending online the discussion was described as “lively”.

Mark Lazarowicz said: “This event highlighted the progress that has been made in tackling speeding in Edinburgh, but also what more needs to be done. Safer streets benefits all those who use them – whether they are walking, cycling, in public transport, or driving. I hope that, following on from this event, that the city council, and councillors from all parties, will now commit themselves to reaching the Vision Zero target by 2030 at the latest. That means that we should aim to have zero killed or seriously injured on our city’s roads. Other cities in Europe do this – we should do the same.”

With thanks to Living Streets, these were the four main themes under discussion:

Street Design: It is not enough to set speed limits, the engineering of the road (for example, to introduce narrow

traffic lanes and 'tight' corners at side roads) needs to be changed to ensure driver compliance.

Enforcement: there is a widespread perception that 20 mph limits, while welcome, are widely broken; the traffic camera regime especially faced criticism for the number of 'bagged' cameras and inability of fixed cameras to be used in 20mph zones. There was a lot of scepticism that the national Scottish approach to deciding when and where to locate cameras (based on average speeds) was appropriate as this can mean tolerating significant levels of speeding traffic.

Budgets: The meeting was told that across Scotland, the Safety Camera Partnership had an annual budget across Scotland of £5 million; a proportion which was widely felt to be out of kilter with Transport Scotland's overall £2.5 billion budget. Locally, residents report being told that road changes can't be made because of council budget constraints.

Community Speedwatch: there was significant interest in – and support for – communities being involved in measuring and enforcing speed limits; in promoting awareness (eg through stickers on wheely bins) and in being involved in decisions on where to deploy speed cameras.

Cycle infrastructure: there was significant support for providing segregated cycle infrastructure as part of safer street environments.

Technology: there were a number of interesting ideas about the use of new technology to achieve safer streets, for example, the potential for more use of Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) to control and limit the speed of council vehicles, buses and taxis; or to deter 'rat running' behaviour (eg to avoid speed camera or through satnavs).

Presentations from the event may be viewed [here](#).