

Council will not proceed with pilot scheme for zebra crossings

The introduction of low-cost zebra crossings on Edinburgh's streets could take "several years", it has emerged, after a bid to conduct a trial in the capital failed.

The crossings, which would be used on side streets, would still use zebra markings but not Belisha beacons on either side and they would be significantly cheaper for local authorities to create and maintain as they do not use any electricity.

These crossings are said to encourage more walking by making people feel safer when crossing the road.

It is estimated they would cost the council £1,000 each – around £39,000 less than the price of main road crossings which require flashing yellow lights.

Pilot schemes in other cities have found that roughly 30 per cent more motorists stopped for pedestrians waiting to cross when the low-cost option was in use, compared to there being no crossing in place.

Liberal Democrat councillor [Neil Ross](#) tabled a motion at the November transport committee calling for powers to be given to The City of Edinburgh Council by the UK Government to introduce zebra markings on side streets.

And he requested that officers “investigate the potential to set up a trial of zebra markings on side streets in Edinburgh,” like those carried out in Manchester and Aarhus in Denmark.

Since the motion was passed, council officers have spoken with Scottish Government Ministers, Transport Scotland and officials from Glasgow City Council, who have also been looking into trialling the scheme.

However, the council’s executive Director of Place, Paul Lawrence, said in a report to councillors he has now been advised the low-cost crossings are “not permitted on a public road under current legislation”.

He added Scottish Ministers “have no powers to authorise their use, even on a trial basis”.

He said: “To permit this would require a change to be made to secondary legislation, namely the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.

“While Transport Scotland appreciated that the use of low cost zebra crossings on public roads might be a useful tool to encourage and prioritise active travel, they do not consider that a compelling case for changes to legislation to permit this has yet been made.”

He added that even if the case for legislative amendment was made successfully, the likely time scale for change to the law “would be several years.”

Councillors agreed to instead undertake a study of the effectiveness of low-cost zebra crossings already in place away from the city’s public road network in locations such as supermarket car parks, retail parks and within the grounds of hospitals and schools.

Andrew Easson, road safety and active travel manager for the

council said: “What we’re proposing is effectively to try and gather evidence to support making that case for a change to the legislation. But we will continue to engage on it.”

Councillor Neil Ross said: “I am pleased with the way the council has responded and investigated the matter, I’m pleased with the way they have been in touch with The Scottish Government and investigated the possibilities but I am a little bit disappointed it’s not got any further and that a trial isn’t on the cards at the moment.”



The photo above shows the newly installed full blown zebra crossing with Belisha beacons on Grange Loan at St Catherine’s Church – one of three which have been under discussion by the council since 2014. The final plan from 2018 shows that this crossing was to have a new raised carriageway with ramps, a new improved footway space with street trees and benches on the side where the photo was taken from and also that the barrier onto Lover’s Loan (just visible at the far side of the crossing) was to be improved to allow wheelchair access. Whether or not all of these are in place is not clear but

there is however a dropped kerb on either side of the road.

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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