

Corstorphine LTN – hundreds attend public meeting

More than four hundred people congregated in St Margaret's Park on Tuesday evening to hear views from several speakers all opposed in some way to the trial Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) which The City of Edinburgh Council has introduced.

The council says that the moves will create a safer more comfortable environment for residents moving about or spending time in the streets and outdoor spaces in Corstorphine.

The trial involves practical measures and six months of open public consultation, although it is unclear how many of the people in St Margaret's Park on Tuesday evening were aware of that.

There were demands from most in the audience that the LTN should either be changed or scrapped. Allison Thomas said she was there to protest that the council was proceeding despite the outcome of the consultation. She said: "We said no. I think you can see that the population of Corstorphine feels quite strongly."

A Wester Broom resident said that he now has to drive up Drum Brae to Clermiston to come back down to Rowlands the chemist on Featherhall Avenue where it is blocked off. He said he had

had to walk to the park on Tuesday night which took about an hour.

A St John's Road resident said she needs to get about for her mobile business and is finding it very difficult to do so with the changes on the streets.

A resident of the sheltered housing complex on Claycot Park said she now has to shut her windows due to the increased pollution outside in Corstorphine High Street.

One member of the audience asked which councillors had implemented these changes and asked what changes they had made in their own constituencies. Another whose wife is a wheelchair user said that the one way streets being imposed would increase the cost of taxi journeys.

A member of the audience told The Edinburgh Reporter that the 20 minute neighbourhood is a "UN sustainable development goal, a global plan which has been communicated and it is in the public domain. 20 minute neighbourhoods, smart cities there are lots of terms they are using interchangeably, to mean the same thing where they are trying to create zones where people will be housed and settled in, and then further restrictions will be brought in, in terms of people being able to move outside of that zone. That is the incremental changes which could come with these plans".

A Meadowhouse Road resident said that cars are now driven along the pavement during rush hour, something which has only happened since the measures were implemented.

Local MSP Alex Cole Hamilton said that it was shameful that Cllr Scott Arthur was not at the meeting. He said: "He should be here to hear what you think."

The Edinburgh Reporter has already been advised that the Transport Convener and the Council Leader have invited some of the group to a meeting at the City Chambers.

Mr Cole Hamilton said he is not opposed to the idea of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and said he really liked what they have done in Waltham Forest and commended that council for the “five iterations of consultation”. He said: “That consultation didn’t happen at all in East Craigs, we got to this space where people were getting letters through the door saying this is happening to you, effectively kettling 7,500 homes.

“There was a consultation for this, but as we’ve heard, there was a secondary consultation which overrode the first, and people rightly are concerned that they’ve not properly had their voice heard. So my function is your parliamentary representative – as your neighbour – is to make sure that your voices heard in the corridors of power.

“And I fear that because of what they did in East Craigs because of what is happening here, what I’m getting from people in Corstorphine is this is actually setting back the active travel agenda.”

Mr Cole Hamilton convened a meeting in Gyle Park in August 2020 about a possible LTN in East Craigs. He claims now that there was a special dispensation from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to breach Covid rules for the “function of duty and democracy” and around 800 people were present at the meeting. But the measures being considered then were under special Covid rules, and while the effect might be similar, the process was completely different. The UK Government which funded the scheme and The Scottish Government which allocated half the national funding to Edinburgh, did not lay down any requirements for consultation at that time. The idea was to put in measures for public health reasons just as quickly as possible.

The Scottish Liberal Democrat leader concluded: “My goodness, tonight is the start of something where they can’t ignore the democratic views of the people who have to live in Corstorphine, who love to live in Corstorphine. It’s a beautiful community to live in, but they have made this issue a divisive one, and yet still turn their back on being willing to hear from you.”

[St Margaret’s Park – the speeches](#) from [The Edinburgh Reporter](#) [On Vimeo](#) on [Vimeo](#).



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Grant Douglas, MBE. © 2023 Martin McAdam

Grant Douglas, MBE, is a local resident awarded an MBE for services to disabled people after inventing the S'up spoon – a

spoon for people who have shaky hands. Grant is experiencing negative impacts of the LTN restrictions and has asked the Council to consider providing an exemption for blue badge holders, but says his request has been refused.



Allison Thomas © 2023 Martin McAdam



Jackie Connor. © 2023 Martin McAdam

Jackie Connor who is one of the people behind Accessible Corstorphine for Everyone (ACE) explained how the group came about. She said: "This all started only five weeks ago with a Facebook page created to give a platform to express people's views on the Corstorphine LTN. Within a remarkably short time span, the page has rapidly grown. And we now have over 1700 supporters In addition we have successfully formed a community group known as ACE or Accessible Corstorphine for Everyone. I acknowledge there are strong feelings in the community, both in favour of and against LTN."

Ms Connor set out her demands to Edinburgh Council to reverse Experimental Traffic Regulation Order 2121 and restore the affected areas. She also asked for a "fair and non-biased consultation clearly describing proposed measures" with implementation of changes based on the majority view. She conceded that promoting alternative modes of transport is essential but "that should not come at the expense of hindering the movement and accessibility of others. We must

find a balanced approach that respects the needs of all community members.” She referred to carers who have less time to offer care due to the effect of the LTN.



Peter Roberts. © 2023 Martin McAdam

Peter Roberts has lived in Corstorphine for 23 years. He admitted that at first he was not in favour of the LTN proposals claiming that journeys would be longer with traffic jams more frequent which was “the exact opposite of the council’s stated aims”.

He also attacked the consultation itself.

He claimed that three out of seven organisations consulted were “pressure groups supporting low traffic neighbourhoods”. He queried why the council did not consult Get Edinburgh Moving which had “great experience of fighting the East Craigs LTN”, and said the result was a “loaded group which was only ever going to give one answer”.

He said that a council officer, Martin Lings, had told him

that the face to face street survey was not used to make any decisions about proceeding with the changes and continued: "One justification that Mr. Lings and Councillor Arthur the transport convener have made for ignoring the majority is that a minority don't feel that the streets are safe enough." Mr Roberts agreed that streets need to be safe for everybody not just most people but "you do not achieve that by bulldozing through a programme of changes, which the overwhelming majority have explicitly rejected. You do it by finding a programme of changes which can gain broad support".

Mr Roberts contended that the experimental measures restrict a huge number of streets which were never mentioned in the original consultation and that there are others – parking bans, one way roads and even complete road closures which could be "implemented tomorrow with no further notice".

He said that by the time the six month consultation is over the "damage will have been done, businesses will have been ruined and lives turned upside down". He urged everyone to keep contacting their councillors making it clear "that we are not going away and that we won't forget".

Grant Douglas spoke to the audience to point out that his journeys were now much longer and more difficult, and that he is wholly dependent on his car due to disability.



David Lowe. © 2023 Martin McAdam

David Lowe read out a statement by the manager of The Gift Tree which is a local shop. The statement asserted that the limited amount of consultation was an “absolute joke”. The “fonts used are tiny making them difficult to read, not easily accessible and you have to know where to find them or read the tiny print strapped to a lamppost”. It was also pointed out that Station Road is suddenly becoming a cul de sac, that areas were added without consultation and that car users are just not welcome.



David Madine. © 2023 Martin McAdam

David Madine had also helped to set up the LTN Facebook page and claimed it has more than 1,800 members. He is a cyclist, commuting daily and, despite serious injury following a hit and run in September, he said this is not a motorist v cyclist debate. He also said that most people would love to have less traffic on the roads, but that this LTN is not the solution to that, that traffic has just moved to previously quieter roads including the road where he lives. He said: "A primary aim of the LTN is to reduce traffic. more traffic than ever now goes past the front of Corstorphine Primary School and more traffic than ever now travels on Meadowplace Road and Station Road. And residents have photographic proof of this. It is fact it's not hearsay."

He concluded: "What has been imposed on us has produced the polar opposite of community improvement."



Cllr Fiona Bennett Corstorphine/Murrayfield © 2023 Martin McAdam

Cllr Fiona Bennett said: "I think that they need to listen to the community. I think the turnout tonight has been fantastic and certainly indicative of very strong feelings in the community. The decision makers need to listen to the people that they are representing."



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Peter Roberts, David Madine, Jackie Connor and Alex Cole Hamilton. © 2023 Martin McAdam