

# **Leith Walk cycle path is “an accident waiting to happen”**

**Work is to begin to fix an Edinburgh cycle path described as “an accident waiting to happen” as snagging for Trams to Newhaven gets underway.**

Some of the turns on Leith Walk’s ‘zig-zag’ bike lane have been found to be too sharp – and fail to comply with the council’s street design guidance.

The scheme is part of the public realm connected to the latest tram line extension, and has been ridiculed by many people online since cyclists started to use it a year ago.

Edinburgh Council’s chief officer for the £207 million project, which opened to the public last week, confirmed to the Transport Committee this week that safety improvements would be made to the path in the coming weeks.

Hannah Ross, senior responsible officer for Trams to Newhaven, said that the “worst” – but not all – of the corners will be rectified.

She said: “Some of the commentary around the cycle lane is people would like to see it made completely straight. “That’s not part of the contractual position because they’ve had to design around loading and parking and bus stops.

“Some of the turns on the cycle path are too acute and they fall outside the Edinburgh Street Design Guidance so those are a defect and will be rectified.”

Online, the bike lane has been dubbed “an accident waiting to happen” which “makes Edinburgh look moronic”.

Ms Ross said work to address defects discovered during construction, including the new cycling infrastructure on Leith Walk, will be completed over the next five weeks.

She said more cycle parking, planters and benches would also be installed as finishing touches to public realm along the route are made.

Ms Ross said patronage on Trams to Newhaven had been “really strong” during the first week with a “significant increase across the line since trams opened”.

She added: “We’re trying not to count our chickens before they’re hatched because some of them will be people trying it out, or visiting Newhaven for a day out rather than normal traffic, so we’ll see how it smooths out over the next month – but it’s been a really strong start.

“In terms of the teething issues, there have been a couple of instances where the tram has got stuck behind a parked car or van – those are relatively infrequent. I think that what we are doing is working very closely with Edinburgh Trams in terms of their operational delivery.

“I want to reassure people that the project team remains in place until the contract has been fully delivered.

“I know that some elements of the public realm are hugely important to local businesses and local communities we have worked with and within from the beginning of the project and I can understand that people will be worried that the big glamorous bit has been delivered and we all lose interest and disappear off – but we remain a funded project and our job is to make sure it’s delivered in the way we said it would be.”

*by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter.*

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Critical Mass took to Leith Walk recently Photo © 2023 Martin P. McAdam [www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)



On the eve of the launch of the Trams to Newhaven press were invited aboard to see for themselves what the new part of the line is like PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter