

# Anti LTN group considering legal action

Edinburgh residents who want to get rid of new traffic restrictions in Corstorphine say they are looking at the possibility of a “legal route” to achieve their aims, as they claimed benefits of the controversial scheme have been “few and far between”.

Corstorphine’s Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) is intended to stop drivers taking short cuts through residential streets and create a “safer and more comfortable environment” for those living in the area.

The key changes have seen motorists banned from turning onto St John’s Road – the second most-polluted street in the country, according to research – from Featherhall Avenue; vehicle access blocked both ways at Featherhall Crescent’s junction with Meadow Place Road, and access from Manse Road on to the High Street restricted to buses, cycles and taxis only at peak times.

But they have sparked a backlash since being rolled-out last month as some in the community argue the measures haven’t been of benefit to anyone locally – forcing people to make longer journeys and creating more congestion on other nearby roads.

And now critics are set to see if there is a “legal fight to

be had” in a bid to see the LTN changed or scrapped altogether.



Cllr Scott Arthur talked to The Edinburgh Reporter about the Low Traffic Neighbourhood measures being trialled in Corstorphine PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter Council transport convener Scott Arthur said he would “absolutely welcome that scrutiny” but had “no concerns” about its legal basis.

Cllr Arthur also hit out at “personal attacks” aimed at him and other council staff by a “tiny minority” online in response to the new traffic restrictions.

David Madine, who runs the ‘Stop the Corstorphine LTN’ group on Facebook whilst not opposing every single measure introduced, said he felt the local authority had to act immediately to reverse much of the scheme rather than waiting until the end of the initial trial period.

“I think things need to be changed now, I really do,” he said. “Why should it continue when we can see the problems that it’s

causing?"

He said where he lives Station Road, on the edge of the LTN, he has noticed a greater build-up of traffic since the start of the scheme.

"That's not safer for me, that's not cleaner air for me and my children, it's not safer for me to take my girls out on their bikes," he said.

"They've been few and far between – the positive impacts and the positive things that have happened.

"I think it's increased the amount of traffic and pollution in the surrounding streets. There used to be four ways out on to St John's Road and they've halved that. The traffic isn't going to disappear, it's just been dispersed.

"There's also a lot of impact for disabled residents who need their cars and for people with mobility issues as well."

In 2021 East Craigs residents successfully had their LTN scrapped after raising thousands for research and legal advice which concluded use of certain traffic orders would be unlawful.

Inspired by this, Mr Madine said similar action is already being considered by the group in Corstorphine.

"It's not something we would like to do, it's people's own money," he said, "but it's a situation we're looking into as well – going down a legal route to see if the council has done this illegally and if there's a legal fight to be had."

The trial LTN was approved by city councillors in 2021 in response to "concerns about intrusive traffic levels and speeding vehicles in certain streets in this area of Corstorphine" and to "reduce car dependency, promote active travel, and increase the quality of public space".



One of the most contentious features of the scheme has been the arrival of a 'bus gate' on Manse Road (photographed above) which restricts traffic other than buses, cycles and taxis from entering St John's Road at peak times. The group says that nearly two-thirds opposed the measure in a public consultation, but the council has been accused of ignoring local views and pressing ahead regardless.

Corstorphine resident Karen Smith said the council has "created a situation where the short journeys have now become long journeys".

She said the streets now closed to through traffic would be "safer by default" as a result of fewer motorists using them, but disputed there were any safety issues in the first place.

Vicky Parker, who also lives in the area, said: "When we use our car to go shopping, instead of coming down St John's Road which is hugely congested we would just nip through Manse Road.

"What it's doing is not stopping the cars, it's pushing all



the cars on to St John's Road which is already congested."

She also criticised the decision to block access in and out of Featherhall Crescent with benches and planters which she described as "a stupid waste of money".

She added: "It went from working really well and simply – to now it's like a crazy place, it's dangerous, it's impacted on people."

However Chris Young from Low Traffic Corstorphine, a group formed to "promote the facts and evidence" about LTNs, said he has already noticed a positive effect.

"I walk the area regularly and I'm seeing the quieting of these streets on Featherhall and Manse Road, a quite dramatic quietening," he said. "A number of residents have contacted me to say they're seeing the same thing and their kids are much safer on the streets in front of their houses now."

He added: "LTNs are purely and simply about reducing rat-running traffic, reducing speed on our roads and making spaces safer for people to move about.

"We know that this area did suffer from rat-running in the past and these measures are designed to combat that.

"There is support for it. What you're seeing at the moment is loud objecting voices which is typical of an LTN introduction, and it will settle down.

"Drivers and driver error are responsible for 95 per cent of road deaths and serious road injury, if you remove a number of cars from driving through an estate then straight away it's safer for everybody."

Mr Young, who was recently a Green Party candidate in the Corstorphine/Murrayfield by election, added that increased congestion on main roads is worth putting up with if it results in fewer cars driving through residential areas.

“They are spaces for people to live and get about safely,” he said, “and main roads are designed for traffic.”



Cllr Scott Arthur talked to The Edinburgh Reporter about the Low Traffic Neighbourhood measures being trialled in Corstorphine PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

Cllr Arthur said: "I've been out [to Corstorphine] a few times and so far I have not spotted any issues – I do get that there are issues from time to time because people send me pictures of cars queued up, but we are still in that transition.

"We're collecting traffic data, noise data, air pollution data as well as comments from residents and businesses and all that will be put in the public data.

"A survey done independently for the council showed that two-thirds of people in the area felt there was an issue with too many vehicles, so that's what we have to address. That doesn't necessarily mean that we've got the right set of measures just now and that's what the trial is about.

"Right now I have no concerns about the legal basis of it, but I absolutely welcome that scrutiny."

The Transport Convener said he had seen posts made on the Facebook group which included "personal attacks" aimed at him and other council staff and "conspiracy theories" about the intentions of the LTN. (The councillor also mentioned this in a recent episode of The Edinburgh Reporter podcast [which you can listen to here.](#))

He said: "It's a tiny minority of people using the page that are posting this unacceptable content."

Cllr Arthur attended an online meeting of Corstorphine Community Council and you can read the minutes of that meeting below.

Mr Madine responded: "Myself and other admins of the group are aware of these things that are on and it's not the reason the group was set up in the first place. The group was set up as a community initiative and that's the way we want it to stay.

“This isn’t the motorists versus cyclists debate, this is a community issue and it needs to stay like that.”

*by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter.*

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