

New bus gate operational in Leith from Wednesday

A new Edinburgh bus gate camera is being set up by Leith Links as part of more Low Traffic Neighbourhood measures being rolled out in the area this week.

Restricting traffic to buses, taxis and bicycles will aim to stop drivers taking short cuts through a road near to a primary school to “create a safer, more relaxed environment,” the city’s transport chief said.

‘Cars will be prohibited from entering Links Place from Links Gardens’ or drivers will be fined £60, reduced to £30 if paid within two weeks. Westbound traffic has to continue north on Salamander Place, while those travelling from that direction will not be able to turn right into Links Place.

Alongside the closure of Tolbooth Wynd to through traffic, where vehicles will have to enter and exit from Henderson Street, the measures are the final changes to traffic operations as part of Leith’s Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) taking effect from Wednesday.

Initially fines will not be handed out to drivers who pass through the bus gate, which will be in operation 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with warning notices being issued for the first two weeks and full enforcement beginning after that.

The council said that while there are no current bus services using Links Place the filter “allows for taxis to use this

route and allows for any future changes to bus services”.

Transport and Environment Convener Cllr Scott Arthur said: “The trial bus and taxi gate at Links Place will reduce traffic shortcutting through the area near St Mary’s RC Primary School to create a safer, more relaxed environment for everyone.

“We’ve been keeping residents and businesses up to date with the changes through newsletters and other communications, and are listening to their feedback. The team has drawn up a robust monitoring and evaluation plan so that once the full scheme is in place, they can understand the benefits and impacts of Leith Connections.”

A bus gate set up in Corstorphine, where an LTN is also being trialled, has proved controversial. Around £100,000 in fines was generated by the camera in a couple of months, and vandals firstly cut down the pole it was attached to and targeted it again after it was reinstated by cutting its wires. Due to go live again from Friday, the council has covered the pole with anti-climb paint and installed a CCTV camera to monitor the spot at Manse Road’s junction with St John’s Road.

Greens councillor for Leith, Chas Booth, said the Low Traffic Neighbourhood has been less contentious in his ward, telling the Transport and Environment Committee last week the reaction from locals to the removal non-residential through traffic from streets had been “overwhelmingly positive”.

He said: “I’ve obviously had some complaints as well, but a number of residents have said how much they didn’t anticipate that it was going to have a big beneficial impact on them in terms of, for example, road noise or air pollution or their kids being able to play outside without worrying so much about the traffic.

“This is something we should be looking to roll out more broadly, not necessarily the full LTN but just a simple modal

filter can really make a big difference.”

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

