

Future use of E-scooters needs addressed says new MP

The future use of electric scooters will have to be addressed as part of wider changes to the way people travel in the future, one of West Lothian's new Labour MPs has said.

The use of traditional scooters gets plenty of mention in the West Lothian Active Travel Plan drawn up for the next five years.

But the growing popularity of E-scooters, which can reach speeds of 40mph, and the way they are currently used is at odds with the promotion of safer, more active travel

Councillors regularly hear complaints about the use of E-scooters on public footpaths and roads as their popularity grows.

Chairing a meeting of the Environment and Sustainability PDSP this week Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan, elected as MP for Bathgate and Lintlithgow constituency in July, said something would have to change.

Referring to the use of E-scooters Councillor Sullivan said: "There's something not quite right about them at the moment.

"I'm a wee bit concerned. We get lots of reports about them and regularly get complaints about them associated with anti-social behaviour. Zipping along pavements and in and out of traffic. We know that they are only meant to be used on private land."

She was responding to a presentation of the council's 2024-2029 Active Travel Plan from Victoria Mungall, Development and Transport Manager.

Ms Mungall agreed, saying: "It's an important point. Motorised scooters are not supported. The difficulty comes in how to police their use. Going forward we would need to identify their volume as a transport mode."

Councillor Sullivan said: "I know on the continent they are recognised as a valuable mode of transport and are used responsibly. Should we be looking at them as part of active travel? It seems a bit of an anomaly."

The Active Travel plans look at ways to promote safer routes to walk, cycle and wheel – by scooter, disability buggy or wheelchair. The local plan is part of a nationwide promotion of behavioural change, encouraging people out of private cars toward more active lives and towards using public transport.

It is expected to be ratified by the council's Executive at its next meeting.

Comments about the use of E-scooters are regularly brought up with police at local area committees as their use grows. Despite becoming more and more common on streets it is illegal to use them on public footpaths and roads.

Current law states that to be used on a road they are required to have insurance, be registered with DVLA, be taxed and have a valid MoT certificate – the rider must also have an appropriate driving licence.

However, their use is difficult to police in the same way that the use of off-road bikes in housing areas is.

Speaking at a recent meeting of the Livingston South Local Area Committee, Community Sgt Liam Arbuthnot told councillors: "The biggest problem is being there at the time. There is work

on going to deal with ongoing issues of unregistered vehicles.”

He is working with colleagues in traffic policing and also consulting police in Edinburgh and schemes that community teams in the city are working on to tackle the problem.

Councillor Moira McKeen Shemilt told the meeting that there was a particular problem around Crofthead farm community centre.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter