

East Lothian Council pauses plans to reduce speed on former A1

Controversial plans to reduce the speed limit on a major East Lothian road so a cycle path could be built have been put on hold.

East Lothian Council had planned to reduce the speed on the A199 from the national limit to 40mph as part of an active freeway project linking communities along its route.

More than 850 people signed a petition opposing the speed change after it was announced in March and there was criticism of the public consultation held ahead of the decision with many complaining they were unaware of the plans.

Now as the local authority announced the start of the first phase of its freeway it has been revealed the plans for the road, which is the former A1, have been set aside.

A council spokesperson said Scottish Government which had been expected to support the freeway and required the change to the speed limit was no longer guaranteed.

They said: "While a 40mph limit was previously a requirement of funding for the active travel scheme being proposed for the A199, the Scottish Government is now reviewing the way it funds Active Travel.

"We are looking out for other opportunities for funding for our proposed wider scheme and will subsequently establish

whether a 40mph limit is required on the A199, taking into account funding criteria and feedback received from partners and the community.”

The freeway is part of a larger proposal to create what the council describes as a “high-quality commuter cycling and walking link connecting Dunbar-East Linton-Haddington-Gladsmuir-MacmerryTranent-Musselburgh along the route of A199”.

The council’s Labour administration cabinet unanimously backed the plans to cut the speed on the A199 to 40mph in March this year.

At the time elected members were told funds from the Scottish Government to support the project but were subject to the reduced speed limit being part of the project.

Its spokesperson said the £350,000 used for the East Linton work which will see a new segregated path created would support its “longer-term ambitions for the A199”.

The A199 has been used as a diversion for vehicles in bad weather after a number of lorries were blown over on a bridge on the A1 between Haddington and Dunbar, during high winds to avoid further incidents.

Despite the decision to shelve the speed reduction plans work on the first phase of the freeway began this week in East Linton.

The council said the first stage of the “re-purposing of the A199” to create a shared use path was underway with work to take an on-road section of National Cycle Network Route 76, which currently runs along Mill Wynd, in the village, and create a segregated active travel path.

Crossing points will also be improved, including across the A199 between Lauder Place and Brae Heads Loan.

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By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter