

# Low traffic zone in Leith made permanent

**Edinburgh councillors have voted to make a controversial low traffic area in a city neighbourhood permanent.**

For over a year, roads and junctions in Leith have been temporarily closed or modified as part of a pilot scheme to reduce traffic and make the area more walkable.

Now, councillors have voted in a committee to make the modifications permanent, with a few minor changes to address concerns raised from the scheme.

Green co-leader Chas Booth, who represents Leith, said: "I'm absolutely delighted the Leith Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) has been made permanent today.

"This is the right decision for Leith, and will help to lock in the traffic reductions, safer streets and cleaner air that this scheme has already delivered.

"Thousands of my constituents will be breathing a sigh of relief at this decision, and hundreds of kids will be able to walk, wheel and cycle to school more safely as a result."

A public opinion exercise carried out by the council late last year found that 74% of those surveyed supported the changes.

But, a survey by the local community council during the same timespan found a more even split.

In the council's exercise, 74 people surveyed said they had a

perception that pollution, traffic and speed on city streets had increased, and 55 more said that the scheme had made driving journeys longer.

According to the council's own data, though, driving speeds and traffic levels had reduced substantially on most roads in and bordering the scheme area which were measured.

Along Salamander Place, some respondents to the council's exercise said that traffic levels had increased, but the council's data shows no change in vehicle numbers.

The only road measured by the council to have shown an increase in traffic was Duncan Place.

Councillors have endorsed slight modifications to the scheme. Among these is the movement of a bus gate in the neighbourhood to be adjacent to Links Gardens, in order to cut down traffic on several nearby streets.

Further, there will be consideration of adding dropped kerbs in different parts of Leith in order to enable accessibility, and maintenance of planters and benches in the area will be stepped up.

Liveable Leith, a campaign group supporting the measures being made permanent, celebrated the news, saying on Twitter: "This account was set up almost 4 years ago to fight for the low traffic neighbourhood in Leith, an area where less than half of residents own a car.

"Today, the council voted to make the entire scheme permanent. Now, we can build on and improve, rather than rip out. Thank you!"

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter