



## **Travelling Safely: Lanark Road and Longstone**

COVID-19 and the global climate crisis continue to impact significantly on local neighbourhoods.

A sustainable and integrated transport system which supports active travel has been highlighted by public health leaders and politicians as a priority investment area. National and local policy in relation to climate change, transport, air quality, placemaking and health increasingly promotes active travel and the need to make the shift to more sustainable transport.

Cities and communities around the world are rebalancing streets to support wellbeing, emissions-reduction and healthy communities. Berlin, Birmingham, Glasgow, Paris are all facing the same challenges with the same intent: seeking to promote innovative, place-based solutions and investing in their neighbourhoods - to reduce emissions and improve citizen's health.

### **Policy context:**

Every level of government across political parties is committed to deliver Net Zero: [local](#), [Scottish](#) and [UK](#) governments are in agreement change needs to happen.

The [Scottish Government's planning position statement](#) highlights the importance of creating resilient sustainable communities, pointing to 20 minute neighbourhoods as a key tool in the battle against climate change and health inequalities. Edinburgh's [2030 City Plan](#) requires us to be bold and reimagine our streetscapes.

COVID-19 [thrives on our most vulnerable and widens existing inequalities](#). The impact of climate change affects [the most vulnerable](#).

By supporting our communities to be healthier and our local businesses more resilient we can help prepare them for climate change. But the longer we wait, the less equitable change will be. However, there are good examples in Scotland where positive changes to streets have been made. They align with this vision:

- Accessible, inclusive and safe communities where all citizens, irrespective of age or ability, have access to services, shops, greenspace and community spaces; and
- Creating long-term environmentally and economically sustainable communities where residents can thrive.



## Example: Glasgow

Glasgow, like Edinburgh, has [challenging targets to reduce carbon emissions](#) as part of a bigger global effort. It has recognised that a sustainable and integrated transport system which supports active travel is a priority for the city, it's businesses and residents.

[SW20 visited Glasgow](#) to see the inclusive and accessible designs that help its residents move around safely, regardless of age and mobility. Miles driven in Scotland in the decade prior to COVID-19 [increased by 10%](#). Glasgow's [liveable neighbourhoods](#) reduce car dependency making walking, cycling and public transport the best choices. They were built as part of conversations with the local community, but with wellbeing and the climate emergency in mind.

Cycling is [up 400% and the public is supportive](#). Glasgow is now proposing [160 miles of active travel routes](#) and [new sustainable transport avenues](#). Images from these schemes are below. This is possible in SW Edinburgh:





## Lanark Road and Longstone:

As you consider the schemes in SW Edinburgh and others across Edinburgh, be comforted that other cities have implemented these within the same policy context. An 'improve not remove' approach is essential to creating better options for our community. Local improvements might include:

### Ensuring Accessibility:

- Permanent, well-designed schemes to be developed, in line with the successes of Glasgow schemes.
- More [dropped kerbs or tactile paving](#), particularly at routes to bus stops, in line with the [Council's Equal Pavement's Pledge](#)
- Inclusion of blue badge spaces around schools and parks (e.g. Dovecot Grove)
- [144 medics across the Lothians's wrote an open letter to improve and extend current active measures to reduce health inequalities](#)
- Pedestrian prioritisation: it is positive to see crossings planned for Lanark Road, where there are currently none between Gillespie Crossroads and Longstone (despite being 8 between the Bypass and Balerno).
- Acceleration of the West Edinburgh Link crossing at Hailes Gardens.

### Local residents fieldwork & our survey responses (c300) suggest:

- Low levels of parking on Lanark Road: e.g. only 33 cars total on 3.2 miles of kerb (Sunday evening when residents were in). This aligns with Council officer findings.
- Using timed parking may support nursery and other businesses, where short parking windows (c15mins) would allow drop offs /pick-ups.
- Council Officers report the speed of cars along Lanark Road creates a risk of harm, with many cars still travelling in excess of the current limits. Our surveys suggest potential support for 20mph - a key enabler for active travel.

### South West Edinburgh - Planning for the future:

- Public transport hesitancy persists and more [people are choosing their cars](#). This is likely to continue whilst Covid-19 guidance encourages working from home where possible and social distancing measures. Commuting has not yet returned.
- The schemes on Lanark Road and in Longstone can be connected as part of Edinburgh active travel plans - to Juniper Green, Wester Hailes & Slateford. [A coherent network drives demand](#) and increases inclusivity, [encouraging more women, ethnic minorities and inexperienced cyclists](#). This also benefits public transport users and drivers.
- 2022 - 2025 will see a significant [increase local housing](#) particularly in Balerno, Longstone, Craiglockhart & Colinton.

### Consider the alternative: removing schemes Lanark Road and in Longstone could mean:

- Traffic will have more space and speeds will increase
- Cars will be [parked across traffic islands](#) and [sightlines at junctions will be poor](#), as was the case prior to this scheme
- The Water of Leith and Union Canal are often congested, muddy and mostly unlit – they are not viable alternative routes that make people feel safe.

### Results from our surveys:

- 85% are concerned or very concerned about crossing wide side-street junction



- 77.5% agree that if lanes cycle lanes are made permanent, pedestrians should have priority crossing junctions.
- 75% of respondents support retaining double yellow lines to improve sightlines near junctions
- Common barriers to walking, wheeling or cycling: infrastructure not joined up, speed of cars, safety.
- 75% want the 30mph limit retained or lowered to 20mph.

#### Quotes:

*"I've lived in the area all my life and volume of cars in our community has increased to a point where something has to change. There are just too many cars. Crossing the roads and junctions along Lanark Road often feels very unsafe with drivers proving unwilling to observe the speed limits locally. It's time that people were put first in our community again and if drivers have to be that little bit more patient, then so be it. It's long overdue"*

*"Before these changes it was impossible to use most of the little island crossing points as cars were usually parked on either both sides or at least one side. It made it impossible for me to push my fathers wheelchair between the parked cars to use the island... the crossing points useless anyway we mostly had to try to cross all four lanes in one go. That's quite frightening when cars are whizzing towards you at 40mph +. At least now we can use the islands but they do not offer much protection so we'd love to see better crossings and priority at junctions would be welcome too. The lack of dropped kerbs is disgraceful but raising the pavement up would be even more welcome"*

*"Put Lanark road back to normal. It is a disaster now. Why are we changing the roads for a small number of idiots that don't know how to cross roads. Or for the totally stupid cyclistS that don't know how to use the road or know the rules of the road."*

#### Did you know:

- [SW20](#) was formed in June 2021 by local residents, groups and businesses to amplify a positive vision in [an open letter](#) to Council Leaders about Lanark Road?
- [70% of kids walked or cycled to school](#) in the 1970; safe ways to journey to schools are a barrier to choosing active travel?
- There was an [increase in women cycling in 2020 by 56%](#) (compared to a 12% increase of men?). This increase was directly attributed to the introduction of Covid-19 active travel measures and significant reduction of car traffic.
- Active travel interventions in London 2020 [reduced traffic casualties by half?](#)
- Creating segregated infrastructure [improves safety for all road users?](#) Using [advisory lanes \(paint\), make it worse](#) - creates more harm.
- SW20 surveys indicates there may be broad support for pedestrian crossings, keeping (and potential furthering) speed limit reduction and for well-designed infrastructure?



We leave you with three images of what might be possible in South West Edinburgh:



Image 1: pedestrian crossing at Dovecot Park



Image 2: continuous pavement, giving priority to pedestrians at junctions



Image 3: floating parking with sustainable drainage, accessible kerbs and clearer parking spaces

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