

Deputations

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am Thursday, 12th September, 2024

Dean of Guild Court Room - City Chambers

Deputations

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CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Item No 3

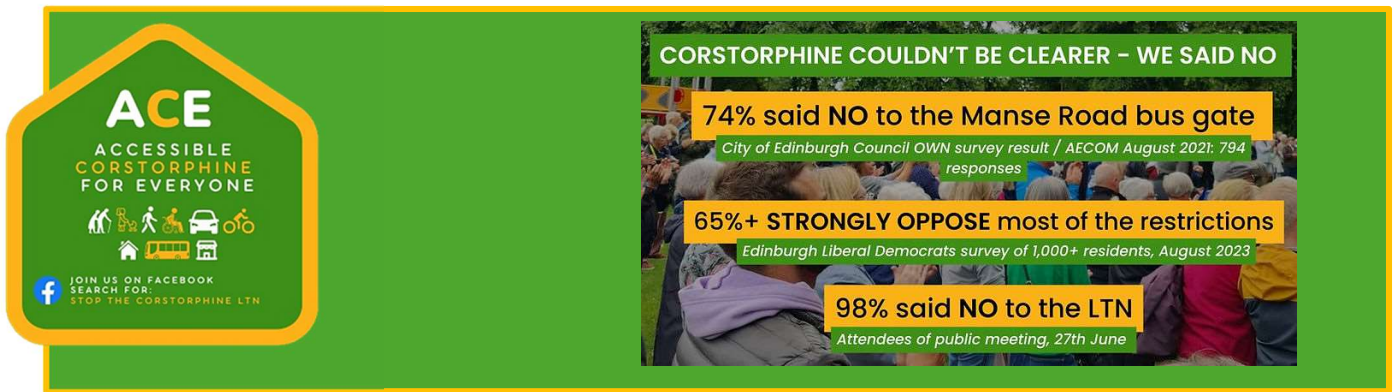
Transport and Environment Committee

12 September 2024

DEPUTATION REQUESTS

Subject	Deputation
<p>3.1 In relation to item 6.1 – Business Bulletin (Corstorphine Connections)</p>	<p>Accessible Corstorphine for Everyone (Written and verbal submission)</p> <p>Low Traffic Corstorphine (written submission)</p> <p>Neilsons Solicitors & Estate Agents (written and verbal submission)</p> <p>Oswald Terrace Community Group (Verbal submission)</p>
<p>3.2 In relation to item 7.1 - Draft Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy</p>	<p>Spokes Planning Group (written submission)</p>
<p>3.3 In relation to item 7.2 - George Street and FNT - Operational Plan Update</p>	<p>George Street Association (written and verbal submission)</p> <p>GMB (written and verbal submission)</p>

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Deputation to Transport and Environment Committee meeting on 12/09/2024

Accessible Corstorphine for Everyone (ACE) is **a community group of over 2.2k people** who are concerned about the trial LTN scheme imposed against the wishes of the vast majority of those who responded to the consultation and the unwanted traffic restrictions being forced upon residents and visitors.

Many believed that there would be no reduction in traffic, which would simply be shifted to nearby streets, causing congestion. This is exactly what has happened.

Despite the clear rejection of the scheme, Edinburgh Council ignored the community and went ahead. Why spend public money on a consultation if you are simply going to ignore the results?

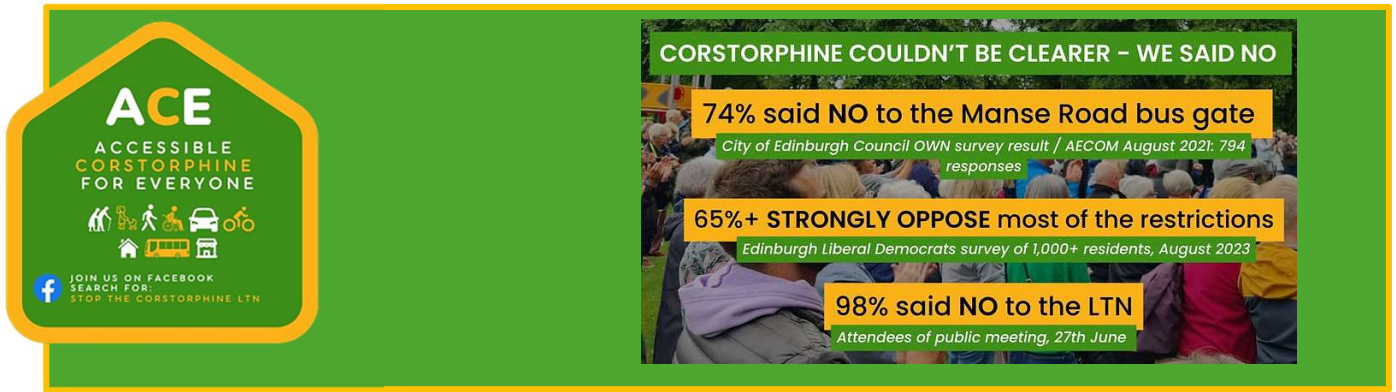
The community could not have been clearer in rejecting the LTN: **74% of people responding to the council's own survey said they did not want the bus gate on Manse Road** - for every 1 person in favour of the bus gate, more than 4 opposed.

The TRO sub-committee is obliged to decide the future of the scheme based upon merit rather than political consideration, so let's look at the data:

- **Traffic up by 6.5%** since LTN started (the average for western Edinburgh is 6.0%).
- **Children at higher risk overall** as many streets see an increase in traffic but very few see a decrease.
- Cycling has increased by a tiny 3.6% and walking by 2.2%. Note that the baseline was taken in November whilst the increase was measured in May. Data taken last November (the same month as the baseline) showed that **cycling had decreased by 29% and walking by 4%** (and by even more when the Manse Road bus gate is operational).
- Streets filled with clutter - **people being seriously injured or discouraged from going out***
- **More than £800k of our taxes spent** to achieve these dubious "benefits".
- Council claiming support from results of a survey of **pedestrians only** (no motorists, housebound residents, businesses etc allowed to respond). Even so, the results still can't show clear majority support.
- **All other surveys showed overwhelming rejection** (60% - 80% opposed to every measure).
- **Multiple procedural failings** throughout the implementation render it unfit for purpose.

An experiment which increases traffic fails to meet the first requirement of an LTN (the clue is in the name). There is only one possible decision - **REMOVE IT!**

***We implore the committee to read the many impact statements at the end of this deputation very carefully and consider: Is this what you really intended?**



This deputation will expand upon the failure to reduce traffic, improve child safety, increase active travel and demonstrate that these failings can only be attributed to the LTN. The failure of the council to obtain an survey of the full spectrum of public opinion and the misleading claims of public support will also be demonstrated. A list of procedural errors is provided which demonstrate that the process was fatally flawed and unfit for purpose. Finally, ten impact statements are included, followed by constructive suggestions for alternative approaches.



Failure to increase active travel:

Although summary results for May 2024 have been shared (3.6% and walking by 2.2%), the full results by street had not been released by the council at the time of writing. However, the figures below were taken in November 2023. This is the same month as the baseline data and so probably provides a fairer comparison than the data from May. Thus, neither seasonal fluctuations, nor the lingering impacts of lockdown, have caused these substantial reductions. The blame lies unequivocally with the LTN.

Average number of cyclists (weekday)

	2021	2023	increase	%increase
Site I – Saughton Road North;	61	38	-23	-37.70%
Site K – Ladywell Road;	40	28	-12	-30.00%
Site L – Featherhall Avenue;	56	34	-22	-39.29%
Site M – Manse Street;	16	9	-7	-43.75%
Site N – Manse Road;	40	26	-14	-35.00%
Site O – Corstorphine High Street;	48	42	-6	-12.50%
Site P – Kirk Loan;	22	16	-6	-27.27%
Site Q – Lampacre Road;	39	36	-3	-7.69%
Total	322	229	-93	-28.88%

During Bus Gate Hours - Weekday Average Cycle Flows

	2021	2023	increase	%increase
Site I – Saughton Road North;	37	22	-15	-40.54%
Site K – Ladywell Road;	28	18	-10	-35.71%
Site L – Featherhall Avenue;	34	16	-18	-52.94%
Site M – Manse Street;	10	8	-2	-20.00%
Site N – Manse Road;	27	15	-12	-44.44%
Site O – Corstorphine High Street;	31	28	-3	-9.68%
Site P – Kirk Loan;	13	8	-5	-38.46%
Site Q – Lampacre Road;	28	28	0	0.00%
Total	208	143	-65	-31.25%

Overall, cycling had plummeted by a staggering 29%, plunging even further to a 31% decline when the bus gate is in full operation.



Average number of pedestrians (weekday)

	2021	2023	increase	%increase
Site I – Saughton Road North;	1430	1500	70	4.90%
Site K – Ladywell Road;	791	876	85	10.75%
Site L – Featherhall Avenue;	940	729	-211	-22.45%
Site M – Manse Street;	716	652	-64	-8.94%
Site N – Manse Road;	916	794	-122	-13.32%
Site O – Corstorphine High Street;	995	1134	139	13.97%
Site P – Kirk Loan;	500	633	133	26.60%
Site Q – Lampacre Road;	968	655	-313	-32.33%
Total	7256	6973	-283	-3.90%

During Bus Gate Hours - Weekday Average Pedestrian Flows

	2021	2023	increase	%increase
Site I – Saughton Road North;	742	754	12	1.62%
Site K – Ladywell Road;	411	514	103	25.06%
Site L – Featherhall Avenue;	617	438	-179	-29.01%
Site M – Manse Street;	601	535	-66	-10.98%
Site N – Manse Road;	601	492	-109	-18.14%
Site O – Corstorphine High Street;	729	720	-9	-1.23%
Site P – Kirk Loan;	242	329	87	35.95%
Site Q – Lampacre Road;	811	531	-280	-34.53%
Total	4754	4313	-441	-9.28%

Overall, pedestrian activity has dwindled by 4%, with a decline of 9% observed specifically when the bus gate is active.

Failure to reduce traffic:

Rather than alleviating traffic issues, the LTN has simply shifted vehicles to neighbouring streets, leading to a significant 6.5% increase in traffic within the LTN boundaries by May 2024. This increase exceeds the overall traffic escalation observed in western Edinburgh over the same timeframe. Again, full data from May breakdown of this data shows the extent of traffic displacement. Speculation about “traffic evaporation” has proven illusory.



Overall Figures

Table 1 - Total weekday traffic flows across a full 24-hour period

	Baseline	6-Month Post	Increase	%increase
Total	90171	96698	6527	7.24%
Total LTN	35721	35257	-464	-1.30%
Total Boundary Streets	54450	61441	6991	12.84%

Table 2 -Total weekday traffic flows across the hours of operation of the bus gate

	Baseline	6-Month Post	Increase	%increase
Total	36201	39123	2922	8.07%
Total LTN	14987	15365	378	2.52%
Total Boundary Streets	21214	23758	2544	11.99%

Table 3 -Total weekday traffic flows outwith the hours of operation of the bus gate

	Baseline	6-Month Post	Increase	%increase
Total	53970	57575	3605	6.68%
Total LTN	20734	19892	-842	-4.06%
Total Boundary Streets	33236	37683	4447	13.38%

In Nov 23 there had been a notable increase in traffic by 7.24%, surpassing the typical background levels for Edinburgh. Remarkably, traffic continues to rise even when the bus gate is operational.

Failure to Consider those Most Adversely Affected or Make Reasonable Adjustments

The LTN has worsened accessibility challenges for those most dependent on our streets. Despite the LTN restricting the travel of some residents with disabilities and making it more difficult for them to access local amenities, the council has refused to make reasonable adjustments to the restrictions. A resident of Featherhall who relies on a Motability vehicle has been denied an exemption from the Bus Gate restrictions,



which results in a detour of over 1 km to his journey to local shops. Furthermore, many residents who rely on carers have complained that the restrictions make visits more difficult.

Average number of vehicles (weekday)

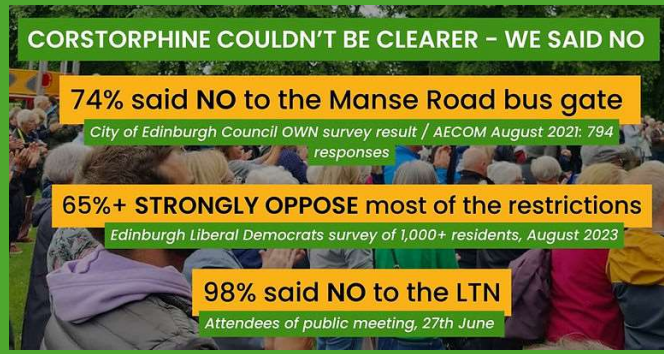
Road	Baseline	6-Month Post	Increase	%increase
Meadow Place Road	20114	21048	934	4.64%
St John's Road	21032	21489	457	2.17%
Station Road	2227	2804	577	25.91%
Pinkhill	1757	1642	-115	-6.55%
Balgreen Road	6364	7553	1189	18.68%
Ladywell Avenue	1807	1407	-400	-22.14%
Dovecot Road	469	628	159	33.90%
Broomhall Crescent	193	181	-12	-6.22%
Saughton Road North	8889	8644	-245	-2.76%
Broomhouse Drive	6940	11351	4411	63.56%
Ladywell Road	7096	7662	566	7.98%
Featherhall Avenue	1043	1700	657	62.99%
Manse Street	165	151	-14	-8.48%
Manse Road	3028	1539	-1489	-49.17%
Corstorphine High Street	6406	6454	48	0.75%
Kirk Loan	2641	2445	-196	-7.42%
Total	90171	96698	6527	7.24%

A greater number of streets have experienced an *increase* in traffic rather than a decrease – *children at higher risk overall!*

While we could selectively choose data from specific streets to align with our perspectives, the broader perspective reveals that the LTN has indeed **led to heightened traffic** and diminished active travel with the bus gate emerging as the most counterproductive aspect of the initiative.

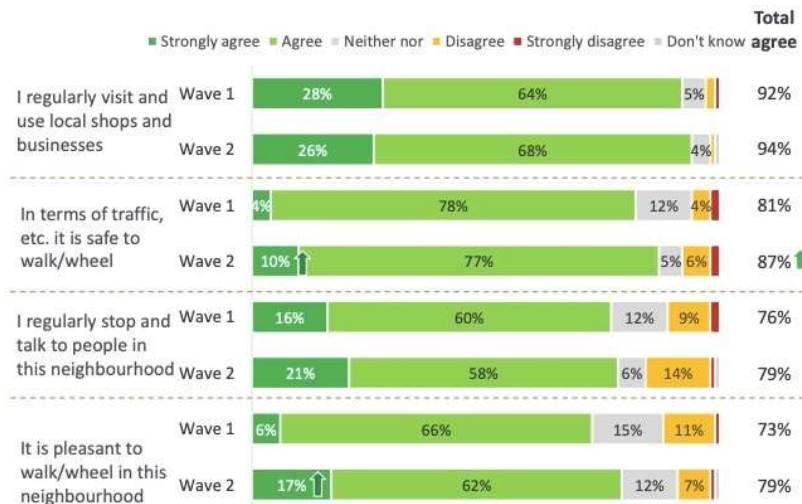
Inaccurate Reporting of Survey Results

The council repeatedly relies on a market research **survey of 305 pedestrians only** as evidence of support. This survey **excluded the views of motorists, the housebound, and business owners**, meaning that the **results cannot be trusted**. Even though many of those most adversely affected were excluded from taking part, the results show barely 50% support. It is certain that were those excluded to give their views, the



results would look very different. **The council has repeatedly refused to carry out a random survey of household in order to obtain a wider spectrum of views.** The reason for this reluctance is seen clearly from the findings of 35 other questions from four distinct surveys, which garnered responses from a total of 1,604 individuals. These responses consistently demonstrated a majority ranging from 60% to 85% against the LTN.

Attitudes towards walking/wheeling in the area



Every open question unveiled public satisfaction with road conditions.

Numerous open survey questions indicating satisfaction with the existing conditions

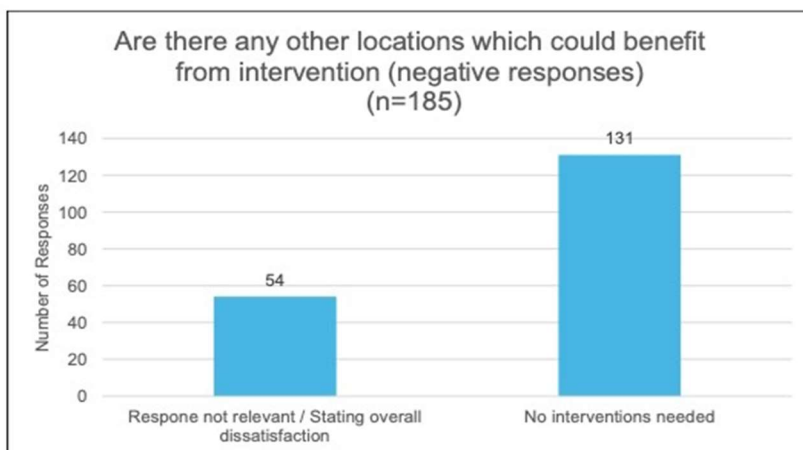


Figure 5:36 – Opinion from respondents whether there are any other locations which require intervention



CORSTORPHINE COULDN'T BE CLEARER - WE SAID NO

74% said NO to the Manse Road bus gate
City of Edinburgh Council OWN survey result / AECOM August 2021: 794 responses

65%+ STRONGLY OPPOSE most of the restrictions
Edinburgh Liberal Democrats survey of 1,000+ residents, August 2023

98% said NO to the LTN
Attendees of public meeting, 27th June

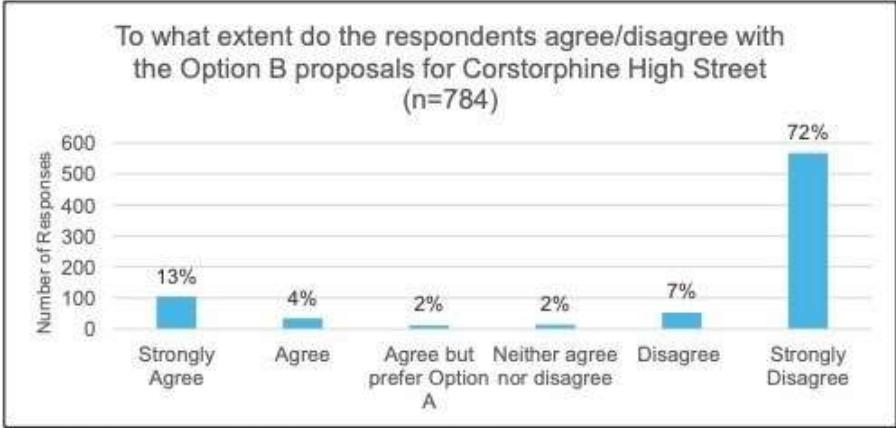


Figure 5:6 – Opinion on option B for Corstorphine High Street

The community has NEVER supported the LTN

Furthermore, minor traffic concerns were only elicited through leading questions, such as "What would you say is the biggest problem with, for example, cycling, walking, traffic etc," with the absence of a "None" response option.

Image of public space in low traffic neighbourhood (Q12)



All Residents survey respondents were read a description of the low traffic neighbourhood - "A low traffic neighbourhood is going to be established in Corstorphine in July 2022. This will remove rat running traffic from some of the streets in the area (particularly around the schools), provide widened pavements, improve pedestrian crossings and create new public spaces."

They were also shown this image to illustrate a potential public space in the low traffic neighbourhood.



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Among the numerous leading questions, one glaring example stands out: alleged benefits were mentioned four times, yet there was no reference to any restrictions.



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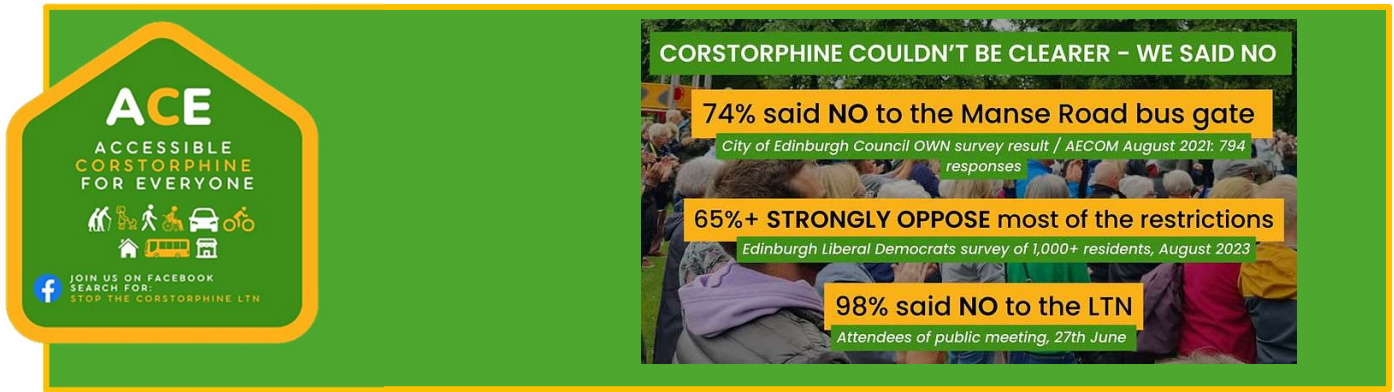
65%+ STRONGLY OPPOSE most of the restrictions
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This recent open survey of random passers-by at the Corstorphine Fair shows true public opinion with little selection bias (anyone can take part):



Procedural Failings



ACE has identified at least 11 procedural failings in the implementation of the LTN. Of these are more serious than others. However, taken together, our catalogue of failings demonstrates that the process was fatally flawed and unfit for purpose.

Some of these failings are detailed below:

1. Sustrans has had a disproportionately influential role throughout the process. Funding for some council transport projects is obtained from Sustrans, many ex-Sustrans employees were involved in the LTN management, whilst other Sustrans employees conducted the integrated impact assessment which dismissed potential harms without proper consideration. The conflicts of interest are clear. How can a quasi-judicial committee rely on information produced in this way?
2. A raft of additional restrictions were authorised in ETRO21/21 (May 2023), but never implemented. Ever since then, people have been living with the threat that they might one day wake up to new restrictions with no additional notice and no opportunity to challenge the justification. This is intolerable and certainly seems to be outside the spirit (and possibly the letter) of the Scottish Government Regulations for implementing the Road Traffic Act 1984. In particular, regulation 16 requires the council to specify the “operative dates” for commencing each provision in the order itself.

Most people would interpret "operative date" to mean the date of actual implementation, rather than the date of authorisation - i.e. when the change becomes physically operational. Since we do not know whether / when the bulk of the authorised restrictions will be implemented, it would seem that the order has not met the requirements of the regulation."

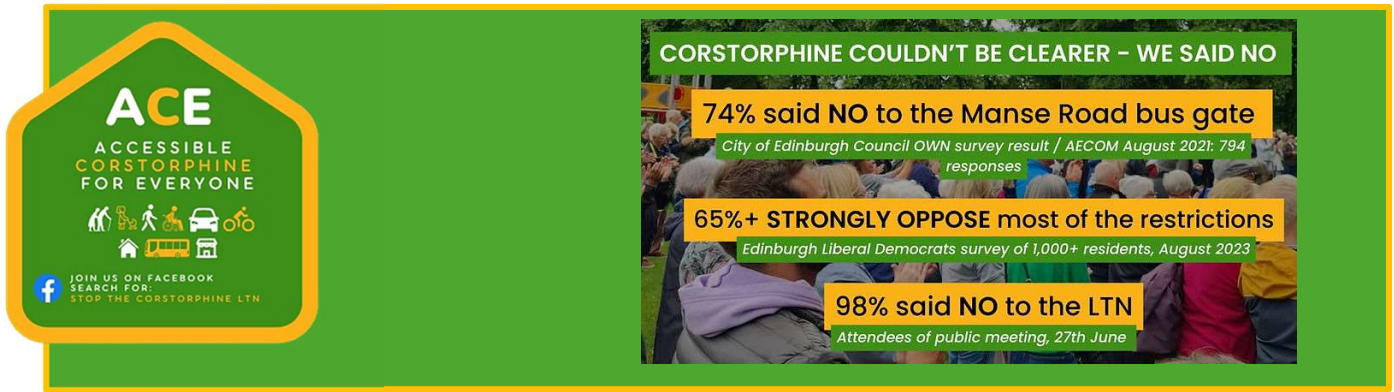
3. Part III Schedule 9 of The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 requires consultation with the Chief Constable of Police Scotland prior to implementation or amendment of a road traffic order.

The “consultation” before implementation for ETRO/21/21 comprised a single email informing Police Scotland of the changes. No reply was recorded and there appears to have been no follow-up. This lacks any semblance of consultation, formal or informal.

Furthermore, an email notifying Police Scotland was sent just one day before the subsequent amendments to ETRO/21/21 were due to take effect. Informing Police Scotland about amendments to the order at 4:57 pm the day before they are set to be enforced is wholly unacceptable and indicates a lack of genuine intent to engage in consultation.

Both of these occurrences demonstrate a failure to adhere to Part III Schedule 9 of The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

4. The Scottish Ambulance Service has stated, in response to an FOI request, that it holds no records of consultation by the City of Edinburgh Council regarding the implementation or amendment of ETRO 21/21. This is despite the following statement appearing in the Integrated Impact Assessment: “The following engagement events were carried out for Stage 2....Meeting with the Corstorphine Business



Community and emergency services”. This statement in the IIA is contradicted by the response from the Scottish Ambulance service.

5. Lothian Buses indicated that they provided feedback on the project through the Spaces for People Design Review Group, rather than the LTN consultation and a major Edinburgh taxi firm has stated that they were not consulted on the matter.
6. The Integrated Impact Assessment had not been published prior to the consultation process and it is notable that the date of sign-off of this interim report is the 15th of June 2023, which post-dates the implementation of the measures.

The casual dismissal of potential harms or discriminatory outcomes is particularly concerning. The assessment included statements unsupported by the evidence, sweeping or generalised statements and statements which directly contradicted the references cited in support. The integrated impact assessment referred to drawings which did not match the drawings listed on ETRO 21/21. Substantive differences were identified between the drawings, suggesting that some elements of the ETRO were not assessed.

7. In accordance with GG 119 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, a Stage 3 Safety Audit should be carried out before the scheme has opened to avoid the need for the RSA team to traverse the site when fully open to traffic.

The first visit to carry out the Stage 3 Safety Audit occurred on the 1st August 2023 (2 months after commencement) and the second visit occurred on the 1st September 2023 (3 months after commencement).

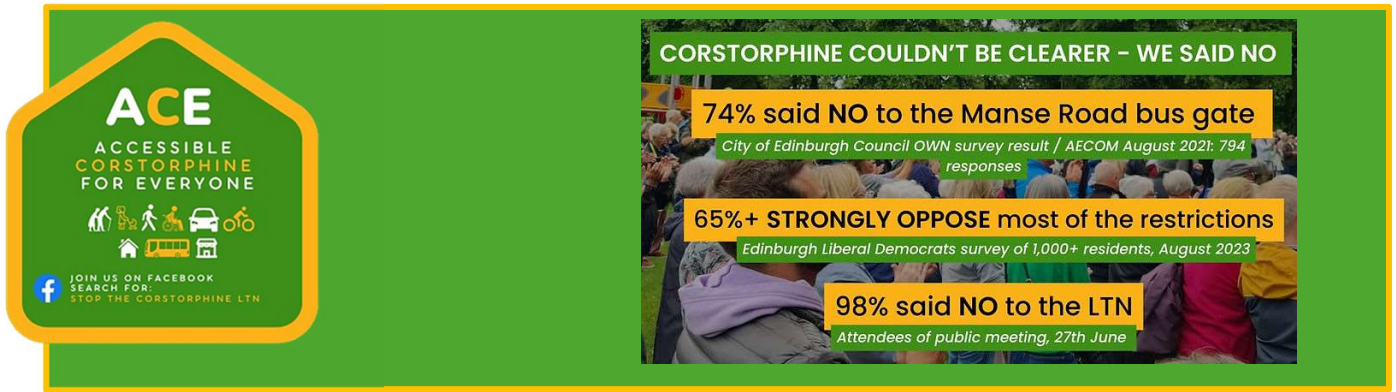
Revision 1 of the Safety Audit Report was issued on the 8th September 2023 and Revision 2 on the 13th October 2023 (over 5 months after commencement of the scheme)

8. Fines which were issued between the commencement of the scheme and the identification of shortcomings in the signage by the road safety auditors were obviously unfair. We have since heard from some people that upon appeal to the Transport Tribunal, the adjudicator did not find in the favour of the Council. Despite this, the council are still fighting back in a desperate attempt to not only disregard the findings in the Stage 3 Safety Audit but to take money from upset residents in the midst of a cost of living crisis.

Impact Statements

Impact statement from Ms. Reid who has lived in Corstorphine for 38 years

The impact of the trial LTN restrictions has impacted myself, family and friends, particularly in relation to accessibility for those who need to get around the area.



The restrictions have caused stress as I regularly take a family member for specialised hospital treatment and the Manse Road/Featherhall Road changes and closures now mean that this journey takes longer (getting caught up in traffic/having to leave the house so much earlier/not sure if we will get to the appointment on time) which is stressful not only for myself but more importantly for the person who is receiving the treatment at a very specific time.

Bus journeys into town now take at least 20 minutes longer, due to the bus lanes on St John's Road/foot of Drumbrae to Station Road now no longer in operation due to cycle lanes now installed. It means the buses have to sit in heavy rerouted traffic due to Manse Road restrictions. Of course, with the cycle lanes now at Roseburn to Haymarket also adding to the longer bus journey.

The volume of traffic on Broomhall Road/Meadow Place Road has increased dramatically at peak times due to the LTN Measures. It can take at times c.15 minutes to enter/exit Wester Broom and I have to rely on goodwill from drivers to let us join the queue, this at times can be dangerous and stressful. It is worse at school times with Gylemuir Primary School pupils and parents. Also residents/carers/visitors to the South Gyle Respite Care for Adults With Learning Disabilities should also be taken into consideration, as it's not safe.

Corstorphine residents were told that the LTN measures are to improve wheeling; cycling and walking however the pavements and roads are in a shocking state of disrepair. I have tripped a few times (fortunately nothing too serious so far) which has made me nervous about walking - a hobby I have always done regularly and used to enjoy but I am now conscious that all I do is look at the pavements and roads to avoid tripping. It has also affected my walking companions who live in Corstorphine who no longer go out for walks, and this has left them feeling isolated so I tend to walk alone now. Not great for mental health!

The Transport Convener's social media post tells citizens to 'cycle more and reduce the burden on the NHS'. I found this very offensive and upsetting not just for myself but also for family members and neighbours who through no fault of their own are unable to cycle and now feel they are a 'burden on the NHS'. This is an appalling statement from a Councillor. I asked him why he felt this message was appropriate, however I have never received a reply.

The once beautiful conservation village of Corstorphine has been destroyed with street and pavement clutter. The unattractive 'pocket park' is never used and is dangerous when wet, the surface of the road is slippery (image 2 attached); the supposedly 'temporary' Give Way sign on the High Street is an eyesore and again dangerous and serves no obvious benefit/purpose (image 3 attached). I have contacted Councillors regarding these particular issues but have not received a helpful reply.

I am also aware of long residing residents moving out of the area due to the LTN measures which is sad and Corstorphine is losing it's community spirit.



Myself and others I have spoken to are of course in agreement with making our roads safer particularly near primary schools, however I have not yet spoken to anyone within Corstorphine who feels the LTN measures have achieved this. If anything, the traffic now travels faster past Corstorphine Primary School and the Manse Road bus gate times do not reflect school times, there is no logic at all.

I also find it odd and frustrating that we are never shown the 'surveys and research' that supposedly have been conducted; why is this? I have yet to meet a local resident that has been surveyed.

In summary, I personally feel that the residents of Corstorphine are being ignored. The LTN was implemented against the majority, who resoundingly rejected it. Changes should improve the lives of residents, not make them worse. They seem to try and solve problems that were never there in the first place!



Impact statement from Mr. Lucas who has lived in Corstorphine for 35 years:

I write this as a resident of Featherhall Crescent North to object in the strongest terms to the following road closures introduced as part of the Corstorphine LTN ETRO:

1. The closure of Featherhall Crescent at its junction with Meadow Place Road.
2. The closure of Featherhall Avenue to northbound traffic at its junction with St John's Road.
3. The bus gate at the north end of Manse Road.

The stated objectives of the scheme include reducing the volume of traffic in residential streets and improving local air quality. These road closures are having the opposite effect!

Cars used to have four exit routes from the Featherhall streets: the west end of Featherhall Crescent, both ends of Featherhall Avenue, and the north end of Manse Road. Now there's at most two exit routes (outside bus gate times), and often just one: the south end of Featherhall Avenue. This means all the residents and visitors of the approximately 250 houses affected by the road closures must use the south end of Featherhall Avenue. Everyone who uses these streets regularly knows how unsuitable this stretch of road is for extra traffic, due to being narrow, parked cars, blind corners, and the partially-sighted junction with Ladywell Road.

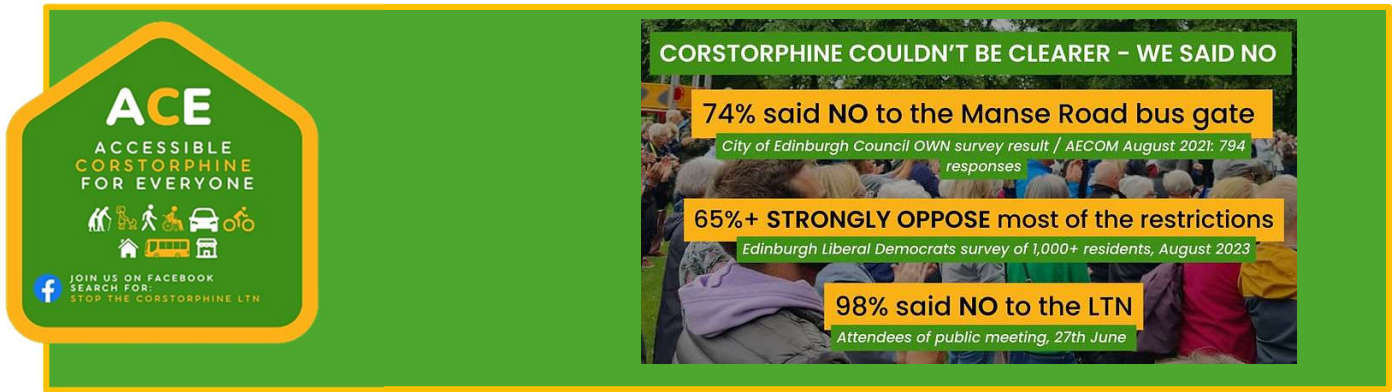
Let me use myself as an example. On leaving my house in Featherhall Crescent North, I used to often exit by a short route via either the west end of Featherhall Crescent or the north end of Featherhall Avenue. Now these are closed, I am forced to take the much longer route via the south end of Featherhall Avenue, Ladywell Road and Meadow Place Road. I've already mentioned the unsuitability of the former. Ladywell Road and Meadow Place Road are also very bad places to add extra traffic, due to high volumes already and congestion at the Tesco traffic lights. Extra traffic here has an exponential effect on pollution due to forcing all the traffic to spend longer waiting at the lights.

Then, when I return to my house, I'm now forced to take this longer route in reverse, so twice I am unnecessarily driving along more residential streets and creating more pollution.

I already mentioned there are about 250 houses in the immediate area affected by these closures, but Featherhall Avenue also has two busy nurseries and the Health Centre. All of these have a lot of users who need to use their cars, and they too now must drive in and out via the dangerous end of Featherhall Avenue. Then there are parents who drive their kids to the Primary School. Surprise, surprise! some of them still park in the Featherhalls and drive back and forth along Featherhall Avenue.

Furthermore, vehicles now often do 3-point turns in our street before returning to Featherhall Avenue. One such car recently damaged our garden wall when turning. This has been reported to the police and we await the outcome of the police enquiry.

Assuming I'm not alone in complaining, I implore the City Council to start listening to local residents and reverse these road closures ASAP!



Impact statement from Mr Robertson who has lived in Corstorphine for 38 years:

I retired before the LTN was introduced and was enjoying walking and cycling around Corstorphine. It's a quiet area with one busy road through it. No one said we really need roads blocked and pavements widened.

A survey asked us about clean air and walking. Of course, we were in favour but did not support restrictions. Then suddenly the LTN appeared. We were horrified. Hundreds met in the park to express outrage.

I felt ignored and powerless. And disdain for Edinburgh councillors.

I rarely use the car, but now can't just drive to where I want to. Journeys through the area are now funnelled on to busy main roads.

Sitting in traffic jams, I can see the very quiet Manse Road that I used to use. This was quiet before and is even quieter now. But the main roads are hell. I hate some parts of where I live now.

When I don't get through the traffic lights and someone toots another driver in frustration, I think I'm being forced to live in some Green nightmare.

Neighbours and friends discuss the LTN all the time. It has brought us together. Our abhorrence and lack of respect for our rulers is massive.

The few LTN advocates want to go further and permanently block roads. We know that will happen next. Our fury will be unbounded.

A shopkeeper I know well at Manse Road looks at it and asks what problem were the councillors trying to solve. It was never that busy, and now it's a deserted junction.

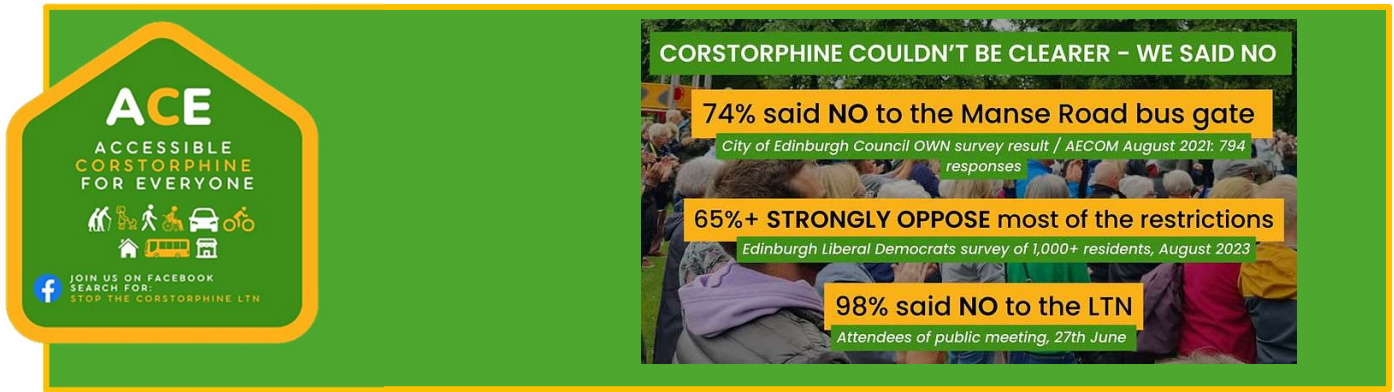
I am upset and very, very, very sad.



Impact statement from Mrs. Virtue who has lived in Corstorphine for over 50 years.

At 90 years old, I often find myself leaning on my close family for assistance, but since the introduction of the LTN, I've begun to feel like a burden on them. My son and granddaughter, both living nearby, have their own struggles. They leave for work early in the morning and return late and I can't bear to ask them to endure even more traffic just to visit me in The Paddockholm. The 10-mile journey from their office to my home can often turn into an hour-long journey and I often end up telling them not to bother, fearing I'm imposing on them. My other granddaughter, a mother of two young boys, faces her own challenges commuting from West Lothian and the stress of traffic jams she faces in Corstorphine keeps her from visiting often, and I worry my great-grandsons will forget me.

Living alone since my husband passed, I rely on family visits for social interaction. My limited mobility, means I depend on taxis for transportation, but even these short journeys are lengthened by traffic, turning simple trips to my doctors surgery on Ladywell Road into a lengthy journey. After half a century in Corstorphine, once a cherished historic village, I'm heartbroken by the changes. The imposition of unsightly bollards and painted roads in our conservation village feels deeply unfair and upsetting. The once-charming village now echoes with discontent over the LTN's impact. I feel abandoned by our councillors and have come to despise living here. If I weren't 90 years old, I'd consider leaving, but I feel trapped in a place that no longer feels like home.



Impact statement from Ms. K Burnett who has lived in Corstorphine for over 10 years.

I've contacted before regarding the Corstorphine ETRO and have been compelled to make this impact statement, to object to the plans that have been installed, without resident consent, that are far too restrictive and dangerous to the residents these changes directly affect.

I live at Featherhall Grove. I previously had four exits available, depending on which direction I was heading. I now have one. And it's to drive away from St John's Road, up Featherhall Avenue towards Ladywell Road.

This happens directly outside the Corstorphine Nursery (where my daughter attends) as well as Ladywell medical centre. I am disappointed to read these road plans are to 'deter motor traffic around Corstorphine and Carrick Knowe, particularly around primary schools'.

Do you know where Corstorphine Primary School is? Ladywell Road.

All you're doing, by closing off Featherhall Crescent North & South and installing a bus lane on Manse Road, is pushing anyone who lives in Featherhall to drive closer to the nursery and primary school.

Anyone dropping off or parking on Featherhall Avenue towards St John's Road, needs to do a U-turn to head back towards the only exit.

How is that safe for nursery and school children? Or those trying to access Ladywell Medical Centre?

If I need to get to work, in Leith, I have to drive in the opposite direction on to Ladywell Road, past the primary school, round on to Sycamore Terrace, onto Corstorphine Park Gardens, to Station Road, to then queue behind every other driver who has been pushed through this same residential route, to turn left on to St John's Road, then right at the lights on to Clermiston Road.

Why do I drive to work instead of using public transport? Because my daughter needs to be dropped to nursery after 8am, and I start work, in Leith, at 9am. It would be impossible to do nursery drop off, get a bus into town, then the tram or bus down to Leith in under one hour.

If I need to drive anywhere else in the other direction, I have to turn right onto Ladywell avenue (another blind spot) and wait at the lights at Tesco, before joining all of the traffic trying to use DrumBrae roundabout because cars have been all shifted towards what is already a congested road.

When I walk with my daughter, I notice how much heavier the traffic is. It's extremely dangerous for pedestrians as well as drivers.

Recent data has also shown that traffic volumes are up, and cycling is down, proving these changes aren't having the desired effect.

My parents live on Templeland Road. Previously if I was needing to drive (with shopping for them for example) I could turn left onto St John's Road then the next right on to Templeland. Now I have to do the previous route and endure Drumbrae roundabout.



The extra travel I am having to do just to get out from where I live, goes against any sustainable initiative and with rising fuel costs, is incredibly disheartening.

The cons to these LTN plans - from a resident, who lives and engages with the community are as follows:

The cost of all of these implementations do not outweigh the money being spent elsewhere (I.e. childcare, food banks, the potholes, elderly care etc)

We are in a time of crisis. Stop penalising local residents with these costly restrictions and start focussing on real issues.



Impact statement from Mrs. M Burnett who has lived in Corstorphine for over 50 years.

Firstly, my frustration at the blatant ignoring and manipulation of the questions and results of the Council consultations. This is not democracy. I've communicated my objections on many occasions and either received combative replies or none at all. The photos and statements they give to the press are untruths. How's this listening to the residents?

I've always been proud to be a Corstorphine resident but am now embarrassed at the mess made by the LTN - the bus gate, the pocket park, state of the roads and pavements, shoddy workmanship, bollards everywhere, displaced traffic on surrounding roads not designed for this, road markings, road sign after road sign, more ideas put in as afterthoughts (e.g. confusing 2-way at top of Manse Road)

How is it safer for children when Featherhall residents (where my daughter lives) have only one narrow, dangerous exit and many have to turn left and go past the front of Corstorphine Primary to eventually get access to St Johns Road? I'm fortunate to be active and strongly sympathise with the disabled and wheelchair users navigating round. Not to mention mums with prams. I've experienced this pushing my grandchildren to nursery.

Journeys by Public transport now take me longer due to bus lanes being taken over by underused cycle lanes and build up of traffic. Other cities have amended their plans by accepting LTNs are not the answer. CEC seem to heap on more and more restrictions regardless of the evidence shown by their own figures.



Impact statement from Mrs. Chamberlain who has lived in Corstorphine for 40 years.

From the outset, the decision to implement the LTN in Corstorphine was not a democratic decision but an ideological decision made by unelected groups.

The plan is ill-conceived and the decision to put a bus gate at the top of Manse Road has caused mayhem around Corstorphine.

Manse Road with its traffic lights provided a safe and accessible crossing from south to north of the area but now traffic is displaced to other streets in the area especially Station Road, making access and egress from The Paddockholm and houses and other side streets really difficult.

All that has happened is that life has been made more difficult for not only car users, but for pedestrians, who now have more difficulty crossing roads due to increased traffic.

Not everyone can carry heavy bags of shopping so in fact you are discriminating against the weak, elderly and disabled in favour of cyclists and an ideology.

Corstorphine is being ruined by this ill-conceived plan and the hazard of uneven and poorly maintained pavements are ignored.



Impact statement from Mr. Sohail

Since the bus gate, it has meant we are having to try and find an alternative parking place out with our driveway. As our work co-insides with the timings and it is not feasible for us to try and add on 15 to 20mins to our journey by taking a detour.

A journey which is normally 10mins to work has meant it would be at least 20/30mins. Also, as we now park our car across the road, in St Ninians it has meant my car has had a hit and run. Also finding a parking space is a challenge itself. Trying to cross over with 2 young children (to take them to their activities and also having elderly parents who have to now negotiate across the busy St Johns Road), all has had a real detrimental and stressful impact on our lives. Once upon a time we were all able to park in our drive without any worries for our children and elderly parents' safety and the safety of our cars.



Impact statement from Mr. & Mrs Kent

Mr & Mrs Kent have lived in Corstorphine for 46 years.

Since retirement 3 years ago we have noticed how difficult it is to manoeuvre around the surrounding areas. It's becoming a no go as one person commented. I've cycled and used public transport all my working life and now would like to have the pleasure of using our car complete with the disability badge we received to help us with getting shopping and attending NHS appointments without these LTN actions being forced our way.

Things like fixing dangerous potholes and removing bollards for emergency services would be a good starting point.

Impact statement from Mrs Aitken

I have lived in Corstorphine for 29 years and prior to the LTN, I found it a pleasant place to walk and I had good vehicle access to my home. I enjoy walking and I am happy to do so wherever possible. I always walked my children to school and there was excellent provision of lollipop attendants, safe crossing places and traffic light crossings when my children were old enough to walk to school without me.

I live in Featherhall Crescent South and the changes imposed have caused a huge detriment to walking and driving in the streets around my home. The traffic on Featherhall Avenue has increased dramatically and so many of the streets in this area now have far too much traffic all forced onto one road that cannot cope. There are numerous cars forced into doing U-turns on Featherhall Avenue and Featherhall Crescent South due to the many road closures. I find the area generally unpleasant to walk in now due to the increased volume of cars and the unsightly mess of signage and ugly unkept planters. The pocket parklet at the end of Featherhall Crescent South/North is a complete mess and is not used. The pencil bollards are completely inappropriate along with the ridiculous paw print markings on the planters. Who would want to sit in a parklet positioned right beside a busy road?

Vehicle access to my home has been impacted massively. Prior to the changes imposed, I had 4 choices of roads to access my home. Due to the road closures, I am now forced to access my home via Featherhall Crescent South which would have always been my least preferred choice due to the double bend and poor visibility. The changes imposed are without doubt compromising my safety as this road is not safe for the number of vehicles now using it and it is only a matter of time before there is a collision. I am now forced to drive further and through more residential streets than I did before LTN caused road closures.

I have a job, a family, a social life and I am a carer for a blue badge holder. There will always be occasions when I need to drive and walking or public transport is not practical in certain circumstances. The LTN has simply made my life more difficult and created a far less pleasant environment for both walking and driving. I am impacted by the bus gate imposed at Manse Road and I feel strongly the bus gate needs to be removed



and the road restored to its previous state. The road layout is confusing and visibility is terrible when turning left onto Manse Road from Featherhall Terrace.

I feel strongly that all aspects of the LTN need to be debated (and removed) as although some of the changes impact less people and will therefore generate less feedback, for those of us who are impacted the disruption to our lives is dreadful. In particular, I am referring to the closure of Featherhall Avenue at St Johns Road and the closure of Featherhall Crescent at the junction of Meadowplace Road.

Summary / Conclusions

ACE is acutely aware of the impact that the poorly designed street clutter is having on our community, particularly the hazardous give-way "island" structure on Corstorphine High Street. Installed as part of the LTN restrictions, this structure has proven to be a significant danger to pedestrians. There have been multiple incidents where individuals have stumbled or tripped, some resulting in serious injuries. In one recent case, a gentleman required hospital treatment, including stitches to his face, with further treatment needed. Alarming, some pedestrians have even fallen into the path of oncoming traffic. The claim that the LTN would make walking in the area safer is clearly unfounded. Our community is deeply committed to ensuring a safe and accessible environment for all residents and visitors. These kerbs and bollards represent a serious safety risk and must be removed before another tragedy occurs.

Furthermore, these give-way installations have failed to slow down traffic. Instead, they have contributed to increasing chaos for buses and cars, leading to frequent near-misses and worsening the already heavy congestion during Manse Road bus gate times. These are not "traffic calming" measures but rather contributors to a more dangerous and congested road environment.

The council's refusal to heed the concerns of locals has resulted in a costly and avoidable failure. Local insights offer valuable solutions to traffic issues, far superior to generic, top-down approaches imposed by national pressure groups.

How can this committee justify squandering over **£800k** of public funds on a scheme that merely displaces traffic? The council could have spent the money on improving the public realm, like the bowling green in St Margaret's park which won't get any funding despite the local community being told it would benefit from investment and creating extensive possible designs for it.

How can you disregard the voices of longtime residents whose daily routines have been disrupted by these changes?

Given that the LTN has failed to meet any of its objectives, it's imperative to revert to previous traffic systems, beginning with the removal of the Manse Road bus gate. This action is crucial for restoring the quality of life for residents like those who have provided impact statements.

Alternative Proposals

We constructively suggest the following alternatives to the LTN:



1. To address the stress and discontent among residents, the most straightforward resolution would be to roll back the changes implemented under the LTN scheme. Reinstating previous traffic configurations could restore community harmony. The best option is to revert all changes since it has caused stress within the community.

2. Removing the bus gate on Manse Road and reopening Featherhall Avenue to all.

3. In addition to these immediate changes, we propose launching a phased community feedback program. This program would include:

- **Short-term:** Engage with residents through surveys and town hall meetings within the next three months to gather comprehensive feedback on the LTN's impact.
- **Medium-term:** Based on this feedback, develop and trial alternative traffic management solutions that address the community's primary concerns, such as safer pedestrian crossings and effective traffic calming measures that do not restrict access.
- **Long-term:** Establish a continuous feedback mechanism that allows for ongoing assessment and adjustment of the traffic measures to ensure they remain aligned with community needs and preferences."

The community have been repeatedly assured that the scheme is a trial, but the ongoing disruptions, such as road excavations, installation of bollards and road painting convey a sense of permanence.

Back in November 2023, led by a motion from Councillor Euan Davidson, the community urged the TEC committee to listen to us by removing the Manse Road Bus Gate, however, despite a wealth of clear facts and evidence, the committee chose to keep the bus gate.

The way the community of Corstorphine has been treated over this LTN is not only shameful but also deeply offensive.

Dismissing us as "those who shout the loudest" and calling us a "lobby group" whilst some on this committee are members of a group who "lobby the Scottish Government extensively" reflects poorly on the council and undermines democracy.

Corstorphine LTN

Not Wanted; Not Working; Not Democratic

- **Traffic up by 6.5%** since LTN started (the average for western Edinburgh is 6.0%).
- **Children at higher risk overall** as many streets see an increase in traffic but very few see a decrease.
- Cycling has increased by a tiny 3.6% and walking by 2.2%. Note that the baseline was taken in November whilst the increase was measured in May.
- Data taken last November (the same month as the baseline) showed that **cycling had decreased by 29% and walking by 4%** (and by even more when Manse Road bus gate is operational).
- Streets filled with clutter - **people being seriously injured or discouraged from going out***
- **More than £800k of our taxes spent** to achieve these dubious "benefits".

The real impact of the LTN

Lethal trip hazard to the partially sighted, in the dark, or when covered in leaves



Pavement widened & then obstructed with bollards



Rubbish & trip hazard left for over 1 year



Corstorphine LTN
Not Wanted; Not Working; Not Democratic

- Council claiming support from results of a biased survey of **pedestrians only**.
- No motorists, housebound residents, businesses etc allowed to respond.
- Even so, the results still can't show consistent majority support.
- Market research was repeated, whereas the Phase 2 Engagement report which was open to anyone was **never** repeated.
- **All other surveys showed overwhelming rejection** (60% - 80% opposed to every measure).
- **Multiple procedural failings** throughout the implementation render it unfit for purpose.

The real impact of the LTN



Average number of cyclists (weekday)

	2021	2023	increase	%increase
Site I – Saughton Road North;	61	38	-23	-37.70%
Site K – Ladywell Road;	40	28	-12	-30.00%
Site L – Featherhall Avenue;	56	34	-22	-39.29%
Site M – Manse Street;	16	9	-7	-43.75%
Site N – Manse Road;	40	26	-14	-35.00%
Site O – Corstorphine High Street;	48	42	-6	-12.50%
Site P – Kirk Loan;	22	16	-6	-27.27%
Site Q – Lampacre Road;	39	36	-3	-7.69%
Total	322	229	-93	-28.88%

During Bus Gate Hours - Weekday Average Cycle Flows

	2021	2023	increase	%increase
Site I – Saughton Road North;	37	22	-15	-40.54%
Site K – Ladywell Road;	28	18	-10	-35.71%
Site L – Featherhall Avenue;	34	16	-18	-52.94%
Site M – Manse Street;	10	8	-2	-20.00%
Site N – Manse Road;	27	15	-12	-44.44%
Site O – Corstorphine High Street;	31	28	-3	-9.68%
Site P – Kirk Loan;	13	8	-5	-38.46%
Site Q – Lampacre Road;	28	28	0	0.00%
Total	208	143	-65	-31.25%

**November
baseline versus
November data:
Cycling down by
about 30%**

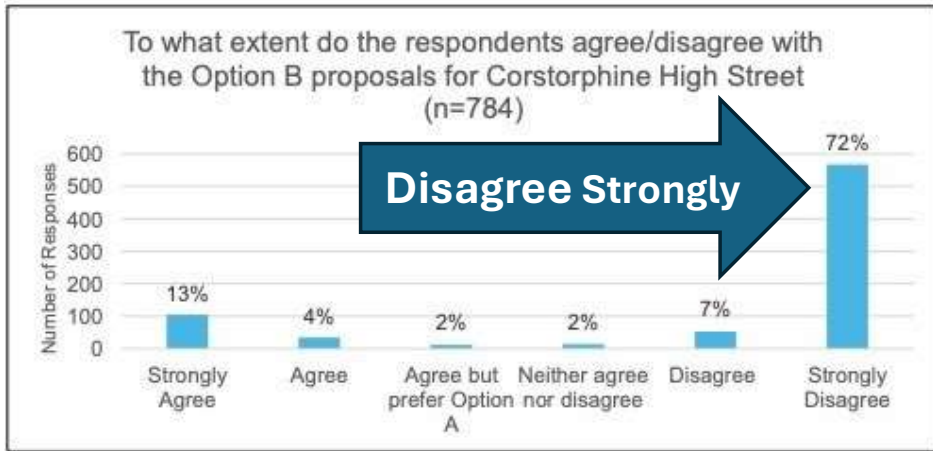


Figure 5:6 – Opinion on option B for Corstorphine High Street

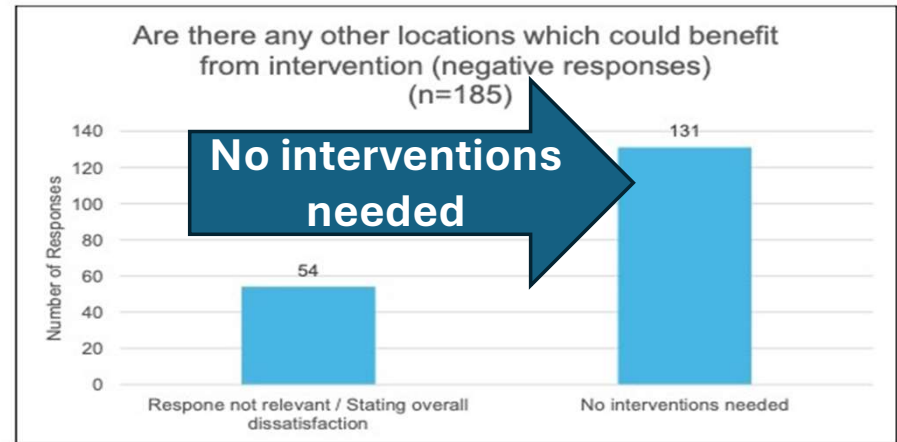
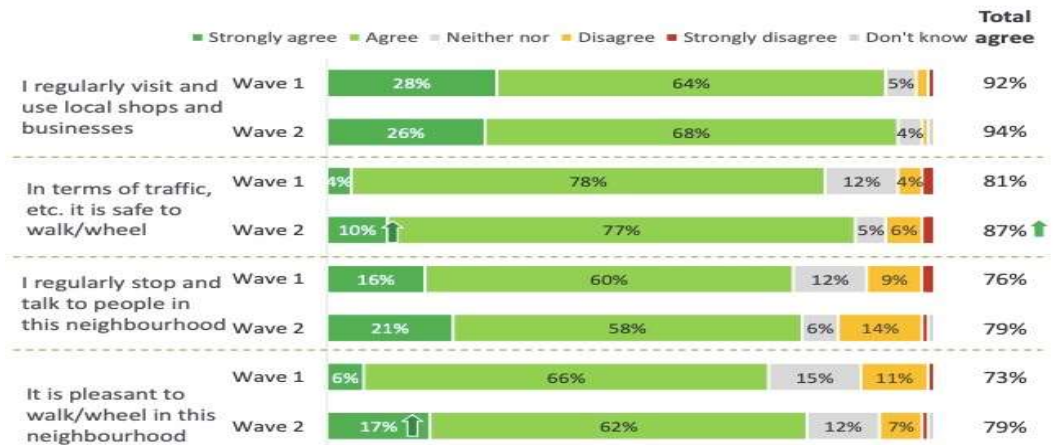


Figure 5:36 – Opinion from respondents whether there are any other locations which require intervention

The community has NEVER supported the LTN!

It is already pleasant to walk: 79%

Attitudes towards walking/wheeling in the area



What do you think of the LTN? (Corstorphine Fair, June 24)



Good / Don't know

Bad

The community has
NEVER supported the LTN!

Random, open, unbiased poll



LTC Deputation to Transport & Environment Committee September 12th 2024

In reference to recent news in Business Bulletin

CORSTORPHINE CONNECTIONS LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOOD

- **9.2% decrease in peak-time traffic around Corstorphine Primary School, enhancing child safety**
- **3.6% increase in cycling and 2.2% in walking, supporting Scotland's active travel goals**
- **50% of residents support the project, with 91% agreeing it's now safe to walk/wheel in the area**
- **Project aligns with Edinburgh's 2030 carbon neutrality goal and Scotland's climate targets**
- **Crucial step in managing traffic impact of 11,000 planned new homes in West Edinburgh**

Low Traffic Corstorphine is a group of local Corstorphine residents and business people passionate about bringing safer streets, better air quality and improved accessibility to residents of all ages, genders and abilities whether they are walkers, wheelers, cyclers, drivers or passengers.

We write with respect to 'Corstorphine Connections' as detailed in the Business Bulletin of the 12th September Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) meeting papers. We would like to reiterate our strong support for this project and urge you to continue with the trial ETRO measures.

We are delighted to see the positive impact of the Corstorphine Connections project detailed in June 2024's research findings. These results demonstrate that the scheme is successfully achieving its objectives of creating a safer and more comfortable environment for active travel and community engagement in a residential area. We are particularly encouraged by the following outcomes:

1. **Improved safety around schools:** The 9.2% decrease in peak-time traffic around Corstorphine Primary School enhances child safety, supporting Scotland's aim for safer routes to schools.
2. **Increased active travel:** The rise in cycling (3.6%), walking (2.2%) and active travel to schools (3%) aligns with the UK's target for 50% of short journeys to be made by active travel by 2030.
3. **Environmental benefits:** Reduced traffic speeds and improved air quality contribute to Edinburgh's 2030 net zero goal and Scotland's climate targets.
4. **Strong community support:** 50% resident support and high approval for specific improvements demonstrate community buy-in for sustainable urban development.
5. **Effective traffic management:** Reduction in non-local through-traffic preserves neighbourhood character, supporting Edinburgh's broader traffic management strategies.

These outcomes directly support Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2 and Edinburgh's City Mobility Plan, showing how local initiatives can contribute to national and city-wide objectives.

We continue to be concerned about the vandalism to Manse Road's bus gate camera and thank the council and police for their swift responses. We propose either making the bus gate run 24 hours a day/7 days a week to avoid confusion for drivers or adding a modal filter at the top of Manse Road to eliminate the need for a bus gate. We also suggest adding a bus gate to Corstorphine High Street or introducing a one-way system to address traffic concerns near Corstorphine Primary School.



Low Traffic Corstorphine

lowtrafficcorstorphine.org.uk | @TrafficLow

With approximately 11,000 new homes planned for West Edinburgh, we urge the Council to consider how Corstorphine Connections can be a model for mitigating impact on our saturated road network.

It's important to note that these improvements address long-standing community concerns, much of which can be viewed by visiting corstorphinecc.uk/traffic - feedback since 2016 has consistently highlighted issues with pollution, traffic volume and pedestrian safety:

- The 2016 Placemaking exercise revealed serious concern over St. John's Road's pollution levels. Responses included pedestrianisation, closing residential streets to through traffic, reducing the types of traffic using main roads, introducing walking or cycling areas for school children and increasing timings for pedestrian crossings.
- At a 2017 public meeting, speeding, rat running, vehicles mounting pavements, commuter and airport parking were highlighted as issues deterring people from choosing active travel, with the perception being that "pedestrians aren't considered important".

The Corstorphine Connections project is directly addressing these concerns, demonstrating real, positive change.

We thank Council officers and Committee members for their commitment to community engagement. We urge you to continue and expand this successful scheme, which is improving safety, health and quality of life in our neighbourhood while contributing to Edinburgh's and Scotland's broader sustainable transport goals.

Thank you for allowing us to submit this deputation.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Young & Janis Ross-Williamson

Chris Young

Co-Chair Low Traffic Corstorphine

Janis Ross-Williamson

Co-Chair Low Traffic Corstorphine

**DEPUTATION TO TEC 12 SEPTEMBER 2024
BY NEILSONS SOLICITORS & ESTATE AGENTS**

Neilsons Solicitors & Estate Agents was established in 1977, primarily to provide the citizens of Edinburgh & the Lothians with services relating to residential property in the area. We sold 1189 properties in 2023 (about 10% of the market share) and bought a further 1476. We have 88 Partners and staff. The majority of these work at our Head Offices in Corstorphine.

At no time have Neilsons been proactively consulted by those running the LTN. We would have thought that as a major local employer we would have been specifically invited to engage with the consultation process. We have had to actively seek out those in charge of the project and local Councillors to express our concerns. During this time we have worked closely with ACE and we commend them for the quality of their work, their diligence and their determination to have their voice heard.

Our deputation today covers how the measures affect our staff, our business and our clients. In short, all have been negatively affected without any demonstrable benefit elsewhere in the community.

We conducted an anonymous survey among our staff earlier this year. 92% of those who responded were against the LTN. One of the few voices who was for it in principle still said that it does not achieve its aim of reducing traffic and congestion.

A large portion of our business comprises Estate Agency services. By its nature, that requires our 8 valuers to travel in person to clients' homes to assess them. It is not possible to provide this service without a car. The appointments that we cover in a day could be anywhere from Fife to East Lothian and our valuers need to be professionally dressed and have equipment and paperwork with them. Public transport would not be reliable or flexible enough for us to manage our diaries effectively and transport by bike or similar would be out of the question given our unreliable climate. Since the introduction of the LTN many of our valuers have been stuck in the increased congestion on Meadow Place Road, St John's Road and the surrounding areas, have had to leave additional transport time getting to and from appointments and have been much delayed when having to pop by the office for keys or other information and exchange with colleagues. Sitting in the traffic caused by the LTN is a frustrating waste of time. A journey that would previously have taken just 10 minutes is increasingly likely to be twice that time when trying to avoid the LTN or the bus gate during its operating hours.

Those selling property in the Corstorphine area immediately outside the LTN have regularly expressed their own frustrations and concerns with the LTN to us since its implementation, we are in frequent and regular communication with those in the community around our Head Office and have yet to hear anyone locally celebrate it, including occupants of Manse Road where the bus gate has been a huge cause of local confusion.

In addition to Estate Agency and residential property services, our firm also provides Private Client services. Part of that involves attending clients' homes, hospitals and hospices to have wills drafted and signed. Some of these are referred to as "death bed wills". As you will appreciate, these can be stressful appointments and sometimes time can be of the essence – we need to get to the client during what is sometimes a short window when they are lucid and have

legal capacity to give instructions and sign documents. Increased traffic and reduced parking makes a difficult job even harder for our solicitors attending these appointments.

Our firm's position is that the LTN is damaging to our business, our staff and clients. We agree with ACE's position that it is a failure and we suggest that wholesale reform is required.

[Draft Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy](#) - Written deputation from Spokes

Spokes believe that there should be protected cycleways on Princes Street, and are therefore disappointed that there is no mention of this possibility in the report. Whilst we recognise that there are space constraints, Princes Street has always been a more popular cycle route than the parallel streets, and is clearly an important destination in its own right.

Importantly, Princes Street is the direct route for many journeys which would otherwise require crossing and re-crossing the tramlines. This manoeuvre, as the Council knows, has resulted in many bike crashes, injuries and council compensation payments following the precedent created by [Lady Wolff's judgement in 2019](#).

We also note that:

- Public consultations in previous years and Spokes's own member surveys have shown strong support for a Princes Street cycle route.
- Cycle lanes (albeit unprotected) were installed in Princes Street when then councillor David Begg was Transport Convener, and operated well, only to be removed by a subsequent council
- The Council-commissioned 2010 report by Jan Gehl, a leading expert on sustainable city design, clearly seeks provision for cycle use in Princes Street.
- Permeable city centre cycle use is vital if Edinburgh is to achieve its targets for growing cycle use - including its targets for all trips, i.e. everyday trips to shops etc, not just commuting. People of all ages and abilities need to get to destinations such as shops, the Gardens and Waverley by cycle.
- We believe that there is adequate space for cycleways once a properly considered design is developed alongside junction safety improvements.
- When the City Centre Transformation plans for Lothian Rd and the Bridges Corridor are implemented, alongside the existing CCWEL and George St - Meadows links then Princes St will be an even more popular cycle route than at the moment. Cycle space provision for all the cyclists headed to and through it will therefore be required. Spokes traffic counts show that cycles form 15%-20% of all vehicles coming down Lothian Road & Forrest Rd, and it is likely that this will increase once safe space is provided.

We therefore ask that, at the very least, further consideration is given to whether carriageway space on Princes Street can be re-allocated to provide protected cycleways. This could possibly involve a reduction in the number of buses on routes served by trams.

Additionally, we do not feel that sufficient emphasis is being given to making the West End junction safe for cyclists. The junction was listed as the top priority junction in the Major Junctions Review in 2023 and is where [Zhi Min Soh](#) was killed in 2017. With current resources, it may easily be another seven years before the Lothian Road project is finished, and to leave the West End junction in its present state of danger for so many more years is surely unacceptable

Spokes planning group
10/9/24

George Street Association

Submission to Transport and Environment Committee – 12 September 2024

George Street and First New Town – Operational Plan and Project Update.

1. **The George Street Association (GSA)** much appreciates the opportunity to provide this written submission, ahead of our deputation appearing before the Committee when it meets on Thursday 12 September.
2. **GSA is open to all organisations operating in George Street and neighbouring streets.** This is a very diverse group covering: retail, hospitality, commerce, charities, churches and statutory bodies. That diversity is a part of the strength and resilience of George Street, but it also adds to the complexity of planning a project such as this to achieve optimal outcomes that will meet very diverse needs.
3. George Street is a dynamic street, both as existing occupiers and owners adapt to a changing business environment and as different uses are found for existing premises. Factoring in future changes adds a further layer of complexity to this project.
4. George Street should look and operate very much better than it currently does. Planning its transformation has been under discussion for many years as the plans have slowly evolved into the present design, which commands widespread support
5. In our previous submission to the Committee, we expressed concern that overall costs had then risen to £36m and that due to inflation there would be further cost increases leading to an ever-widening funding gap which could lead to delays or force adverse changes to the plans
6. **Most regrettably these concerns are now clear and there are now serious doubts about how the extensive works involved in this transformation will be funded, given the extent of external funding required and the challenging financial situation facing the Scottish Government.**
7. This is most disappointing because GSA has taken a positive constructive approach to this project but given this present uncertainty, we feel **there needs to be far greater clarity over funding before proceeding any further**
8. We feel **it would be premature to proceed further at this stage with development and promotion of TRO's for an operational plan that was predicated on a major transformation of the physical layout and appearance of the street, when there is now uncertainty whether these works can be carried out.** The Operational Plan was not devised to apply to the present state of the street would and would not command support.
9. GSA has a mutual interest with the City Council and others involved in this ambitious project to deliver the high-quality changes needed for the future success of this iconic street, while addressing the challenges of creating a net zero city centre

Dr William Duncan

September 2024

Chair, George Street Association

Appendix 2

Speaking notes for oral Deputation from George Street Association

Transport and Environment Committee – 15 June 2023

1. The George Street Association (GSA) much appreciates the opportunity to present our views to the Committee on the report on the George Street and First New Town redevelopment.
2. I am William Duncan and have chaired GSA since retiring as Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2017.
3. I am grateful to the Clerk for circulating our written submission.
4. Appreciating the need for brevity, should like to emphasise only 3 points:
 - i). Planning the transformation of George Street is a complex project that has been under discussion for many years. **The considerable costs and disruption involved will only be worthwhile if they result in a street that is:**
 - a. ***more accessible*** to a wider range of users, including to those with specific mobility and access needs.
 - b. ***more user-friendly and safer on a 24/7 basis***
 - c. ***more attractive and enhances its World Heritage status***

The proposals before the Committee should be judged against how well they will deliver all of these objectives.
 - ii). **The Operational Plan is still work in progress, with several tricky issues still to resolve. It would be premature for the Committee to**

sign it off as being sufficiently advanced to generate the TRO's. There has been good engagement with stakeholders and the latest version of the Operational Plan recognises the diversity of needs more realistically than did earlier versions, but there are contentious issues to be resolved before the TRO's can be produced.

Take for example the impact on one of the GSA members - St Andrew and St George's Church which occupies an iconic building that was created as a church as part of the original plan for the Street.

The Operational Plan as it stands will severely disadvantage it in its specifically Christian activities, and in its wider use as a venue, and in fund raising for others.

The Sunday window (page 153) needs to be till 12.30 and the arrangements for 3rd party visitors at anytime who need to get to the front door need to be specified.

A particular concern is deliveries of donated books and other goods for its Annual Christian Aid sale when people who are not known to the Church arrive by car and have to unload at the front door.

The "particular consideration" given to the Church as mentioned in para 4.4.10 " exemption for access for coaches, mini buses and other vehicles deemed necessary to support the operation of such premises" is tantalisingly vague. We need to know what will it mean in practice?

We are concerned if the TRO's appear before a mutually acceptable solution is found to outstanding issues such as these, it will result in many objections to the TRO' s and dealing with these will only end up protracting the time before construction can finally begin.

iii) There will be considerable disruption during the construction phase and this will undoubtedly have an adverse financial impact on GSA members. Many are only beginning to recover from the

business disruption caused by the coronavirus restrictions. For this reason, **we implore the Council to begin discussions now with GSA and Essential Edinburgh about creating an adequate and realistic financial support package for affected organisations during the construction phase.** There is an urgency to begin doing this, both to give reassurance to those affected by these plans and so the cost of this support is factored into the overall budget for delivery of this project.

5. GSA has a mutual interest with the City Council and others involved in this ambitious project to deliver the high-quality changes needed for the future success of this iconic street, while addressing the challenges of creating a net zero city centre.

6. In Summary

- **This is a complex project, increasingly so.**
- **There is still a lot of essential and sensitive work to do on the Operational Plan before it can be signed off and produce TRO's**
- **We must move at pace but not cut corners**
- **We need financial support to those impacted financially during the construction phase.**
- **GSA want to continue to work constructively with all those involved to make it succeed.**
- **This project *must* succeed - it is too important for Edinburgh.**

Thank you for your attention

WD

15 June 2023

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Written & Verbal Deputation for 7.2 George Street and First New Town - Operational Plan and Project , Update – report by the Interim Executive Director of Place

Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) play a vital role in Edinburgh’s transport infrastructure, especially in catering to individuals with diverse accessibility needs. With a population nearing 500,000 and over 4 million visitors annually, PHVs offer flexible and personalized transport options that serve both residents and visitors, including those with various disabilities. The wide range of vehicle types within Edinburgh’s PHV fleet is designed to accommodate different physical conditions, providing a crucial service for those whose needs may not be fully addressed by public transport or traditional taxis. Given that one in four Edinburgh residents has some form of disability, and according to the 2023 Scotland Visitor Survey on Accessible Tourism, one in ten visitors to Scotland has a long-term health condition or mobility impairment, PHVs are essential in bridging the gap for people who require more specific transport solutions.

With years of experience providing Private Hire services to persons with disabilities, I have concerns that restricting 24/7 access to George Street solely to Blue Badge or Taxi Card holders fails to consider a significant number of visitors and residents with temporary or unregistered disabilities. Many international visitors, as well as those from other parts of the UK, may have mobility impairments or temporary disabilities but do not hold Blue Badges. These individuals may still require special access to key areas like George Street. As Edinburgh is a global tourist hub, policies must accommodate the needs of this diverse group. Limiting access to only Blue Badge holders creates barriers for many, including those who rely on PHVs to navigate the city. Allowing broader access to George Street for individuals with various disabilities, whether permanent or temporary, is essential in making Edinburgh’s infrastructure inclusive and accessible for all.

The 2023 Scotland Visitor Survey on Accessible Tourism stated that only 14% found getting around “very easy.” This highlights a gap in Edinburgh’s accessibility, reinforcing the importance of PHVs in providing tailored transport options to those with mobility impairments.

Can the committee please consider 24/7 accessible access for disabled international visitors and those members of the public who have temporary disabilities?

Thank you.

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