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Corstorphine Connections Community Engagement

Whether you walk, cycle, wheel or drive in our neighbourhood, Low Traffic Corstorphine (LTC) is a community group that aims to provide a focus for residents, school children and carers, business owners, people who work in the area and regular visitors who want safer, healthier, less congested streets. To this end, we would like to respond to the Council's Corstorphine Connections consultation.

We strongly support interventions in our local area to improve provision for people walking, wheeling and cycling, and as a natural extension of this are supportive of low traffic neighbourhoods.

Members of LTC live both inside and on the periphery of the proposed LTN area, and their personal experiences alongside policy and evidence should help to highlight problems, as well as areas of improvement for walking, wheeling and cycling.

The proposed area covers the south part of Corstorphine, but we note that the north part of Corstorphine would also benefit greatly from consultation and implementation of an LTN or similar. The two halves of the area are intrinsically linked, and many people from north Corstorphine make local trips into the south (and vice versa); these residents would love to be able to walk and cycle more on quieter, safer streets.

While there are no LTN plans to currently comment on, we would like to submit some feedback regarding the key areas of consultation during this exploratory phase.

Travel behaviours

We can only provide anecdotal evidence on current travel behaviours in south Corstorphine. We hope that the individual responses submitted from the Corstorphine Connections consultation will give CEC a good evidence base to work with for making improvements.

Issues with transport and travelling in the area

We've identified the following issues that make active travel in the area difficult:

► Traffic volume and speed on main roads

Traffic in Corstorphine has been a problem for a long time – both volume and speed are detrimental on main roads. [The air quality management area](#) that cuts through the community confirms the problem of traffic, and [a long history of road traffic collisions](#) (some fatal), helps to confirm that road safety needs improved on arterial routes.

We note too that the recently published [City Mobility Plan](#) places some of the busiest roads and congestion hotspots directly in Corstorphine. Failing this evidence, feel free to take a walk or cycle around the community to experience the main roads for yourself. Problem main roads include St Johns Road, Saughton Road North, High Street, Ladywell Road and Meadow Place Road.

► Rat running and speeding traffic on residential streets

Residential streets in the proposed LTN area have been struggling with rat running traffic for years, some of which is at excessive speed.

Much of this driver behaviour is focused at the north end of the LTN, where drivers use residential streets to avoid main road junctions at Meadow Place Road and the Drum Brae roundabout. Rat running residential streets include Featherhall Avenue, Manse Road, Kirk Loan, Corstorphine Park Gardens, Station Road, Meadowhouse Road, Castle Avenue, Ladywell Avenue and Pinkhill.



► **Narrow pavements and poor walking/wheeling environment for pedestrians**

It's unpleasant to walk around much of the proposed LTN area. Pavements are almost always too narrow, and are often cracked and uneven. There are not enough dropped kerbs. There is often a lot of pavement clutter and inconsiderately positioned wheelie bins. Pavement parking is common. At roads, crossing times are often far too long and priority is not given to pedestrians.

This makes getting about difficult or impossible for anyone in a wheelchair, with a visual impairment or with limited mobility. It makes walking much harder for parents and carers with small kids and prams, and is an unpleasant experience for everyone else.

Narrow pavements are a particular issue on Manse Road, Kirk Loan, the High Street, Meadowhouse Road and Featherhall Avenue. However, regardless of the residential street in the LTN area, it's unlikely the pavements meet **Council street design guidance** of 2m as an absolute minimum.

Main roads also suffer this problem. Much of St Johns Road pavement is too narrow (as evidenced by the recent Spaces for People intervention), and the High Street, Ladywell Road and Sycamore Terrace have woefully inadequate pavement widths. All the other pavement issues we've noted above apply on these routes too.

► **Inconsiderate commuter and non-resident parking**

Parking problems are another long standing issue in the area that needs addressed. We understand the Council is in the process of a parking consultation, and we welcome this. Based on the outcome of the parking survey conducted in 2017, **many streets in the LTN area** were noted to have problem parking. Several LTC members attended a Corstorphine Community Council parking meeting in 2017, **which raised issues and possible solutions**.

One bad parking hotspot is the Saughton tram stop, where lots of people dump their cars before hopping onto the tram. Similar behaviours are seen along the full stretch of feeder residential streets onto St Johns Road, as drivers leave their cars for the working day, full days or weeks (when they jet off on holiday via the airport).

As you can imagine, inconsiderate and illegal parking causes a range of issues for people looking to get around on foot, wheel and cycle. Sightlines are reduced, dropped kerbs are obscured, junctions are hard to negotiate and dangerous parking maneuvers put people at risk. Pavement parking also makes routes inaccessible for vulnerable pedestrians such as wheelchair users or people with visual impairments.

► **Main roads create barriers to cycling**

As already noted, main roads surrounding and through south Corstorphine are difficult to cycle on. For any cyclist who is not very confident in traffic, the main roads of St Johns Road, the High Street, Ladywell Road, Saughton Road North and Meadow Place Road act as large barriers to people looking to cycle safely from a to b.

These roads' lack of quality infrastructure essentially stop people from travelling actively to local destinations that would otherwise be quick and easy journeys.

► **Bad junctions for negotiating on foot and cycle**

Junction treatments throughout and surrounding the proposed LTN area are often difficult for people to cross on foot, wheel and cycle. Junctions, **like this one at Kirk Loan and Saughton Road**



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North, can have wide bellmouths, which encourage drivers to take them at faster speeds and make crossing much harder for pedestrians.

Other junctions, like this one at [Castle Avenue and Tyler Acre Road](#), feel frightening to many people trying to cross a busy road on foot or cycle. This junction at [Dovecot Road and Meadowhouse Road](#) is on a “quiet” route but is scary to negotiate due to fast traffic coming both north and south along Saughton Road North. This junction at [Manse Road](#) is tricky to cross because of narrow pavements and volume of traffic turning into the street. This junction at [Featherhall Avenue and Ladywell Avenue](#) is an exercise in misery for anyone looking to cross it because it combines bellmouths with fast traffic, narrow pavements and poor road surface.

Junction treatments for anyone trying to travel into the proposed LTN area from north Corstorphine are also unpleasant. The most obvious of this is probably the [Clermiston Road junction with St Johns Road](#), which takes multiple slow crossing points to get over the road for anyone on foot. The [Kaimes Road](#) crossing to access the quiet route is also poor and desperately needs a traffic-light controlled crossing point and upgrade of Traquair Alley so it is accessible and step-free.

► **Indirect cycling quiet routes and no north south options**

The designated Quiet Route 9 has several issues that make it unattractive for many people who might otherwise choose to cycle. It suffers from rat-running along Meadowhouse Road and Pinkhill, has awkward physical barriers throughout and has problems with poor visibility and sightlines in several locations (for example Ladiebridge, Traquair Alley and Dovecot Road/Saughton Road North junction). It's also indirect, taking around 20% longer than a direct route along the A8.

There is also no quality north south route for people on bikes. This is a big issue and makes getting about locally much harder when you're cycling.

► **The school run is difficult for many families walking, wheeling and cycling**

Please apply all of the above issues to the school run. For many families, walking, wheeling or cycling to school is incredibly difficult. In addition, the long catchment area for Craigmount High School and Corstorphine Primary School means some pupils are not close and have to travel a bit further, but with no safe cycling routes they can't get to school under their own steam and instead have to be driven, which exacerbates already busy streets.

Perceptions on walking, cycling and wheeling

We do know from surveys in the past around Corstorphine that there is interest in improving walking, wheeling and cycling and that many residents in the area think existing provision is poor. This can be seen in reports like the Corstorphine Community Council [placemaking exercise in 2016](#), and the [Public Life Street Assessment](#) from 2017.

We also know there are lots of activities and projects locally to help more people get walking, wheeling and cycling. Ageing Well walks, Breeze cycling rides, a busy local bike shop, a primary school bike bus and the nearby Edinburgh [All-Ability Bike Centre](#) all show there is appetite for inclusive active travel.

Despite some local noisy voices, it's pretty clear from multiple [quality surveys](#), consultations and reports that the majority of people in Edinburgh support walking, wheeling and cycling investment. We do feel concerned that anti-LTN and anti-cycling voices are drowning out people that want to



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support safer streets for active travel, and note that there is a significant amount of misinformation being bandied about locally in an attempt to stoke opposition.

We also note with concern the sudden “interest” from anti-LTN groups regarding disabled people’s long-standing transport struggles as soon as filtering is mentioned. Disabled people’s opinions and needs are just as varied as anyone else’s when it comes to making our streets safer, and hope that CEC will constructively engage with local disabled people and listen to their views. What we do know is that the status quo is **not working for people with disabilities**, and our urban environments need to change to reduce traffic domination and enable disabled people to get about safely.

Access to and use of greenspace space in the area

Union Park and St Margaret’s Park are the two main greenspaces inside the LTN area. It would be brilliant to see more people cycling to these parks, instead of driving there. This could be encouraged with protected cycleways along High Street and Saughton Road North.

We think that walking and wheeling provision to these parks could also be improved, particularly around St Margaret’s Park. Wider pavements on the surrounding streets would be welcomed. Some reserved disabled car parking spaces would also be helpful for disabled people to access both parks.

Where people want to travel to and from

An LTN in south Corstorphine could potentially make short, local journeys much more appealing by foot, wheel and cycle. We’ve identified the following local destinations that residents in Corstorphine like to visit:

Retail

- ▶ St Johns Road shops
- ▶ Hermiston Gait
- ▶ Gyle Shopping Centre
- ▶ Tesco
- ▶ Corstorphine retail park (PC World etc)
- ▶ Local shops like Scotmid and corner shops

Employers

- ▶ RBS Gogarburn
- ▶ Gyle Industrial Estate

Leisure

- ▶ Drumbrae Leisure Centre
- ▶ David Lloyd

Greenspace

- ▶ St Margarets Park
- ▶ Union Park
- ▶ Gyle Park
- ▶ Corstorphine Hill
- ▶ Cammo Estate

Schools

- ▶ Corstorphine Primary
- ▶ Carrick Knowe Primary
- ▶ Gylemuir Primary
- ▶ St Andrews Fox Covert Primary
- ▶ Forrester High
- ▶ St Augustines High
- ▶ Craigmount High

Amenities

- ▶ Corstorphine library
- ▶ Local parks
- ▶ Local churches
- ▶ Ladywell doctors’ surgery
- ▶ Local nurseries and community centres

Transport

- ▶ Local bus stops
- ▶ Saughton/Balgreen tram stops
- ▶ South Gyle train station
- ▶ Edinburgh Park train station
- ▶ Edinburgh Gateway train station

Many of these local destinations could be **cycled within 10–15 minutes** if good on-road infrastructure and safer conditions were provided.



Opportunities for improvement

We have some suggestions to help improve active travel conditions in the proposed LTN area:

► **Improve pavements**

Widen lots of pavements, introduce continuous footway across minor road junctions (most of Saughton Road North's residential feeder streets would be great candidates for this), remove street clutter and provide more dropped kerbs. Streets urgently in need of wider pavements include Manse Road, Kirk Loan, Meadowhouse Road, High Street and Featherhall Avenue.

► **Filter residential streets/remove through traffic**

This would make a huge difference to volume and speeds of traffic. Filtering, one way streets with contraflows, and other traffic calming measures could really improve the area. Streets include Kirk Loan, Manse Road, Featherhall Avenue, Meadowhouse Road, Ladywell Avenue, Station Road, Castle Avenue, and Pinkhill.

► **Provide streetscape improvements so walking feels more enjoyable**

We'd really like to see some placemaking in our local community. Pocket parks, benches and places to linger, children's play areas, public artworks and more trees and greenery would be welcomed.

► **Build protected cycleways on main roads**

Without main road protected cycle provision, it's always going to be tough to get people cycling for everyday trips. Folk like to get places directly and quickly regardless of transport mode. Candidate roads are the High Street, Ladywell Road, Meadow Place Road, St Johns Road (and the wider A8) and Saughton Road North.

► **Enforce parking restrictions and deter pavement parking**

We hope that the forthcoming CEC consultation on parking and corresponding actions help to address parking problems locally.

► **Enforce speed restrictions and reduce traffic speed**

We appreciate that the police have limited resources for speeding enforcement, but changing street environments to make drivers slow down is a workable alternative solution to police standing with radar guns. This could include changing traffic light priorities, tightening junctions, providing build outs, speed cameras and speed signage.

► **Make Quiet Routes 8 and 9 better**

Opportunities for improvement include removal of barriers, improving sightlines and tight turns, improving junctions and crossing points, combatting problem parking and removing through traffic from residential streets. If these routes are not accessible to anyone using an adapted cycle or a small child cycling, they are not inclusive and this needs to be addressed.

► **Provide better signage for active travel routes**

Making routes more visible and easier to follow via improved signage would be a quick win and low cost. Glasgow active travel route signs have estimated time by foot and cycle and we think this is a great help to show people just how convenient walking and cycling is for short, local journeys when the routes are safe and accessible.

► **Implement recommendations from the Corstorphine Public Life Street Assessment**

Lots of research and development was put into the [Public Life Street Assessment](#) for



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Corstorphine. This is a quality, robust and evidence-based report with a long list of good recommendations. We'd like to see these recommendations implemented, as they would provide a better active travel environment and support local shops and businesses to thrive.

► **Make the school run safer**

If you do all of the above, then children's journeys to school would be markedly improved on foot, wheel and cycle. We'd love to see many more kids getting to school under their own steam, but the urban environment needs to feel safe and welcoming for this to happen.

In summary, we hope that these insights and suggestions will be useful to council officers as they start to piece together the walking, wheeling and cycling stories from residents and visitors to the area. We are pleased to also be a part of the Community Reference Group, and feel positive about the consultation process and ongoing dialogue with the City of Edinburgh Council. No doubt there is a lot of work to do, but once the balance starts to shift towards more equitable and socially just forms of transport, it will make all the difference for our community and the environment.

Thank you for addressing the long-standing issues we have faced in the area with traffic, road safety and pollution. We cannot wait to experience our community with more priority and space given to walking, wheeling and cycling.

Yours sincerely
(on behalf of Low Traffic Corstorphine)

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