



10th February 2021

Low Traffic Corstorphine

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Dear Spaces for People team,

RE Proposed footway widening and pedestrian improvements, Corstorphine High St, Featherhall Avenue, Kirk Loan and Dovecot Road

Whether you walk, cycle, wheel or drive in our neighbourhood, Low Traffic Corstorphine 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 Spaces for People proposal as noted above.

We strongly support interventions in our local area to improve provision for people walking, wheeling and cycling. We feel this proposal provides some positive temporary improvements for those on foot in particular with respect to social distancing. As a bonus, there are some good gains for general safety for those walking and wheeling, and would advocate for this scheme to be made permanent and iteratively improved, should it be implemented via SfP. We do not feel this proposal makes cycling significantly safer, but appreciate that there are still improvements.

Points regarding specific elements as follows:

Introduction of footway widening along Corstorphine High Street

We support this improvement. It will ensure better social distancing for school children and families around Corstorphine Primary School, as well as provide more space for people visiting the park, local nurseries and businesses along this stretch. The pavements along the High Street are chronically narrow – any space gained will help people feel safer walking/wheeling and provide a small buffer from traffic (which is unfortunately often over the speed limit).

Traffic calming build outs are also included along the High Street.

We support this improvement. The buildouts will give more pedestrian space, as well as help to slow traffic. Slower traffic speeds will enable more people to walk, wheel and cycle locally as the environment should feel safer and more accessible.

On Featherhall Avenue, parking restrictions have been introduced.

We support this improvement. The pavements along this stretch are extremely narrow (especially the west pavement) and it is very difficult to socially distance due to parked cars and obstructed views. Currently, people sometimes have to walk in the middle of the road to appropriately distance due to parked cars and those with wheelchairs and scooters also fare terribly due to the pavement narrowness. These temporary restrictions will provide better sightlines as a bonus, making collisions and conflict between vehicles and pedestrians less likely.

We'd love to see some wider pavement on the west side – not just the parking restrictions.

At all side roads along the High Street, including Kirk Loan, corner radii have been tightened.

We support this improvement. More space for pedestrians is welcomed to enable better social distancing, and it will make crossing these junctions easier for anyone on foot or wheeling. This will be especially good news for vulnerable pedestrians on foot such as elderly and disabled people as well as young families, who need more time to cross.



We would ask if there is any way to pull more space for pedestrians at the access point to Manse Road. This is another chronic pinch point and conflict zone for vehicles and people – huge volumes of traffic use this road as a rat run and the pavements are incredibly narrow. Any more space gained for people here would be welcomed, particularly as this is a desire line for families travelling to and from Corstorphine Primary School.

Cycleways have been introduced at the west end of the High Street and Ladywell Road to provide safe space for cycling.

We are not enthused by the temporary cycle lanes, as they disappear once you approach the primary school and are not protected. We would have much preferred to see a continuous protected cycleway along the whole stretch of the High Street.

However, we appreciate the limitations with space and budget, and understand that these lanes will dovetail into temporary protected infrastructure further westwards towards Meadow Place Road. Certainly, people heading to and from Tesco by bike and peeling off at Featherhall Avenue or Ladywell Avenue will find these temporary improvements helpful to a degree. On-road painted cycles will also be a reminder for drivers to be aware of cyclists.

We note the very poor quality of road surface at the junctions for Ladywell and Featherhall Avenues. The proposed cycleways go straight through some very poor road surface and huge potholes. We would expect these defects in the road to be addressed before allocating it to a cycle lane.

We would hope that the road diet and build outs would slow traffic down along the High Street, so that people cycling would feel safer along it (but we're not convinced). We don't think improvements are great for cycling with respect to this SfP intervention generally, but we still support the scheme and would love to see iterative improvements to help make the space safer for cycling going forward.

On Dovecot Road, at the junction with Ladywell Avenue and at the entrance to St Margaret's Park, footways have been widened.

We support this improvement. The junction at Dovecot Road is badly in need of tightening and the extra pavement will make a big difference for social distancing (especially on the south side). Parking restrictions and pedestrian space around the south access to the park is also welcomed, meaning people are not squeezed onto narrow pavement and having to dodge parked cars in order to socially distance.

Bus stops have been retained.

We support this retention and believe there is likely to be no detrimental impact for people using public transport.

Other

We note the introduction of parking restrictions along the High Street and are in support of this improvement. We think this will be especially helpful for the primary school, which suffers from a lot of inconsiderate parking during drop-off and pick-up times. The restrictions will make the space safer for school children and ensure that families have the space they need without being boxed in by vehicles.



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We would like to note how transformative this Spaces for People scheme could be for our local area. The High Street and surrounds have been in dire need of rebalancing towards the needs of active travel for a long time, and there have been long-standing issues and complaints in the area with respect to inconsiderate parking, speeding, traffic volumes and a general lack of safety for people who would like to walk and cycle to access local businesses and amenities.

We appreciate these are temporary improvements due to the Covid-19 crisis, but hope that this scheme is successful and, in the future and with good-quality community consultation, could be made permanent and iteratively improved on as budget and resources become available. A permanent scheme of this nature could work very well coupled with improvements along the A8. With wider pavements and protected cycleway on two key routes through Corstorphine, walking, wheeling and cycling could see big positive shifts.

Thank you very much for this scheme – LTC is delighted to see CEC working hard to enable more people to walk, wheel and cycle safely during this horrendous pandemic.

Yours sincerely
(on behalf of Low Traffic Corstorphine)

Janis Ross-Williamson

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