

Leith Connections Community Reference Group – Key themes meeting note

Meeting name	Time	Attendees	Circulation	Apologies
CRG Meeting 1	7pm-9pm	Jennifer Marlborough – Leith Harbour & Newhaven CC Jim Scanlon – Leith Links CC Sally Millar – Edinburgh Bus Users Group Stuart Hay – Living Streets Andrew McPake – Spokes Nikki Dunne – Leith Primary School (parent council) Clara Johnston – Edinburgh Access Panel Leah Gallacher – Scottish Government (Victoria Quay) Martyn Lings – City of Edinburgh Council Miles Wilkinson – City of Edinburgh Council Paul Matthews – AECOM Anna McRobbie – AECOM	All	-
Meeting date	Project name			
4 th March 2021	Leith Connections			
Location	Prepared by			
Microsoft Teams	Anna McRobbie			

1. Foot of the Walk to Ocean Terminal cycle route

Introduction

- Purpose of the CRG is to help develop consistent dialogue with local people throughout the development of the project, especially during these times when public meetings are restricted.
- The group will be a touchstone for local feedback and views; however, it will not supersede the views of residents expressed during the consultation surveys. It is simply an additionally way for the project team to create dialogue with the local community.

Accessibility

- Query over whether the Henderson Street cycle lane will remain cobbled or whether it will have a smooth surface.
Project team confirmed that the intention is to have a new surface, currently looking at options.
- Important to consider blue badge provision on Great Junction Street.
Project team highlighted that this kind of information is helpful. A survey was commissioned recently to understand the parking in the area so at the next stage we will have some data to help identify where blue badge provision should be provided. Feedback from CRG and online surveys will also be important.
- Concern raised over the floating bus stops proposed on Great Junction Street. Concerns raised by members including feeling dangerous, particularly by the elderly/vulnerable. Suggested that there may be a moratorium placed on this kind of design by the Transport and Environment Committee pending further consultation.
Project team suggested that the moratorium is for temporary floating bus stops not permanent ones but will look into this.
- Concern raised around how far bus stops will be from each other and need to ensure these are accessible.

- Moving bus stops on Henderson Street and relocating them won't make a big difference but will be inconvenient to people accessing church halls and local amenities. *Project team should consider the location of bus stops in accessing local places of interest/demand.*
-
- Query over how this project is promoting access to the waterfront. Suggestion of a route via Victoria Quay (Ocean Drive) to Ocean Terminal. How will cyclists manage here without a cycle route? This area is important but not included in the current plan.
Project team highlighted that a connection from Commercial Street to Ocean Terminal is part of the proposed cycling route however, due to issues relating to land ownership, there has been a delay at this stage but is in the scope for development and more details will be shared when we have received them.
- Noted that a number of cyclists may wish to turn right at the Foot of the Walk towards Leith Links and not left. The new cycle route is diverting people away from the Links. Important to consider the connections to the Links as part of the project.
- Where are people to park their cars after these proposals are implemented? Suggestion of a new car park which would also accommodate people from East Lothian which may come to use the tram into the city.
Project team noted that park and ride concepts are being considered on the periphery of the city, although that is happening separately to any proposals being discussed here.
- Noted that parking spaces are being sacrificed to accommodate the proposed cycle route.
Project team note that unrestricted parking on Henderson Street will be lost. Parking surveys have been carried out to understand what capacity needs to be accommodated for in the area so that we can consider the provision for some spaces lost elsewhere. Also noted that a Controlled Parking Zone project is progressing in Leith, separate to the proposal's beings discussed here.
- Noted that the proposed partial closure of Coburg Street to through traffic and the changes on Sandport Bridge could encourage cyclists to use other routes other than the narrow path of the Water of Leith which is often overcrowded and is a positive measure.

Traffic

- Henderson Street and Cables Wynd will effectively become dead ends. A concern was raised over the closure of Parliament Street – with suggestion to keep it open to local traffic, residents, and business traffic but not to through traffic.
- Query around progression of cyclists from Leith Walk onto Great Junction Street and safety concerns.
Noted that the project team are liaising closely with the Trams to Newhaven Team as the junction itself is being delivered as part of the Trams scheme and out with the Leith Connections project scope.
- Query over whether this is a plan to create cycling provision on Kirkgate/Newkirkgate.
Noted by the project team that this area was looked at during the inception stage of the cycle route but early engagement with community groups revealed that the proposed Foot of the Walk to Ocean Terminal cycle route was the preferred route favoured. Hence, this project does not propose any changes to Kirkgate/Newkirkgate.

Placemaking

- Be mindful of heritage/conservation of the area.

Other points

- Query over what type of design guidance is being implemented.
Project team confirm that Edinburgh Design Guidance is being used.

2. Low Traffic Neighbourhood

Accessibility

- Query over how the project will promote public transport.
Project team responded by saying that by closing the route to through traffic and introducing a bus gate on the Shore, we believe this will make an improvement to bus services. Engagement with public transport teams and providers is also ongoing.
- Noted that the proposed LTN should not make bus operation or bus services more difficult to access or a more unattractive option. There could be potential issues with the eastern section of the proposed LTN. The people living in this area have already lost access to bus services – service 12 has been removed which only leaves the option of the service 1 which is a further walk to access. Due to the tram work, the service 16 has been removed from Constitution Street. This eastern area has a number of proposed developments and will bring in thousands of people and concern that these people won't have adequate access to bus services.
- Concerns raised with future provisions for public transport when there is no information available about the post tram servicing and coverage.
- Footway widths on the southside of Great Junction Street are narrow and could do with widening.
- A lack of dropped kerbs and tactile paving in the area, many are missing.
- Street clutter is an issue.
- Quiet Routes in the area are not well advertised and could be better signposted.
- Signage for the Britannia and other local trip attractions could also be improved.
- Would be good to make a safe route from Leith Links to the Water of Leith, especially for bikes.
- Brown field sites in Leith are now being developed and so a bus service through the centre of the proposed LTN area would be supported.
- Area south of East Hermitage Place is residential. Children come from here to attend the schools north of the Links and have to cross East Hermitage Place however there are no safe crossings and this road is becoming much busier due to the tram works.
- Parking restrictions or one-way system implemented on Duncan Place and John's Place would be beneficial for children crossing the road to school.
- With the CPZ to be implemented in the area, it is important that there is allowance made for those that require blue badge parking.
- Query over whether Phase 1 of the CPZ has been shelved due to the tram works and this Leith Connections project.
Project team confirms that this is not our understanding. The proposals for the CPZ are not being consulted on at the moment but will be in the coming months.
- Issues with dropped kerbs and tactile paving on Cables Wynd.
- Prioritise entry and exit points of the LTN for peds/cyclists. Highlighted that crossing the Lindsay Road/Commercial Street, Portland Terrace junction is a safety concern. Suggestion to encourage cyclists to filter up the middle of this junction. Key to also ensure this junction provides safe crossing for cyclists also.
- Noted that with an ageing population, a growing number of people need easy access to public transport at relatively short distances from where they live. Be mindful of this and the need for good public transport support.
- Long spacings between bus stops on Commercial Street is an issue currently. Narrow pavements here also noted.
- There was a suggestion to remove parking from Commercial Street and widen pavements.
- Links Place onto Queen Charlotte Street is a critical cycling route and needs some kind of treatment. Could it be two-way to cycle traffic?

- Suggestion for crossings around Leith Links to be raised or made into zebras to give priority to pedestrians.
- Provide a better link to Ocean Drive via the Shore.

Traffic

- Aspiration of the LTN is promising, but there may be a possibility that it increases congestion on the perimeter roads. That kind of congestion can lead to delays to buses as well as everyone else and could be a potential barrier for bus users.
- Junctions in the area generally need looked at in terms of their capacity and operations.
- Junction of Queen Charlotte Street and Constitution Street is an accident hotspot. Junction of Portland Terrace/Lindsay Road/Commercial Street and Ocean Drive also a dangerous one. Concerns over safety here.
- Salamander Street and Commercial Street are feeder roads from East Lothian. Any proposals made will affect them. There is a lot of residential building happening in East Lothian and so there may be higher numbers of people entering the city via Leith. If there are any diversions, then Ocean Drive may pick up this traffic.
- Great Junction Street is a concern, suggested that it could be made one-way but noted that there is a still a need to access business. The number of movements at the Foot of the Walk junction would therefore be reduced and improve safety.
- Proposed idea for a one-way loop via Duncan Place/ John's Place/ Links Place/ Links Gardens to reduce traffic but allow for a smooth access and exit to the LTN scheme.
- Ocean Drive and Ocean Way have high volumes of traffic and have problems with speeding. They have been used as rat runs in the past.
- Coburg Street is also used as a rat run.
- Mill Lane also used as a rat run, as a way of getting around Henderson Street/ Shore.
- Salamander Street/ Place used by heavy traffic. Surfaces are poor and dangerous for cyclists.
- Duncan Place/ Links Place junction – crossing is dangerous here as it is a wide junction and people drive round it at speed. Safety issue here for pedestrians crossing.

Placemaking

- Support to maintain Kirkgate as a primary pedestrian space.
- Suggestion to improve the public realm where Coalhill and Sandport Bridge meet.
- Potential to look at improving Commercial Wharf as a throughway for pedestrians although there are problems here with uneven ground and obstructions.
- The Shore, Tolbooth Wynd and Bernard Street should be community focussed and pavements widened.
- The Shore area could do with some maintenance to freshen it up along with more seating.

Other points

- *Highlighted by project team that there are no set proposals for this proposed LTN as of yet. This consultation phase and communication with Community Reference Groups is part of an evidence gathering stage to inform any design decision making.*
- Noted that Leith Docks is putting forward an application to become a Freeport. If it wins this right, then it could become a lot busier and this would affect traffic levels in the area.