



The Community Council represents the views of local residents to Edinburgh City Council

From : Ian Mowat – Chair, NTBCC

19th March 2017

Stuart Maclean,
Committee Services
Transport and Environment Committee
City of Edinburgh Council

Dear Stuarts

Dear Stuart

I am writing on behalf of the New Town and Broughton Community Council regarding the report that the Transport and Environment Committee approves the recommendations by the Traffic Management Review Panel (TMRP) that Leith Street is closed between Calton Road and Waterloo Place for a period of 44 working weeks between 4 September 2017 and 26 July 2018 *“to facilitate essential deep drainage works and carriageway and footway reconstruction, realignment and renewal.”*

Please could you forward this email to all Councillors on the Committee and confirm to me that you have done so (copying in my work email also).

Our representations are as follows:

1. The claim at para 9.2 that extensive stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to date, by the Developer, is not true, at least as regards community councils and local residents. Whilst we had enjoyed mostly positive engagement with the developers of the St James Centre in the period when the various planning applications were being determined, we have heard nothing about traffic management for six months until the press reports on 28 February (“Broughton Spurtle” article and Edinburgh Evening News) that Leith St was to be closed for up to 44 weeks.
2. That said, we commend the developer for making his representatives available to attend our Community Council at short notice on Monday 13 March, and their honesty in admitting that their “stakeholder engagement” was more communication- that we were being told what diversions would happen - rather than consulting us with a reasonable time to respond.
3. Given that it emerged at the meeting that it had been known for some months that closure of Leith St was unavoidable, we are very disappointed that local residents were left in the



dark about this until under 3 weeks before the Committee requires to take a decision. This is an unacceptable way of treating local residents, some of whose lives will be affected on a daily basis by these diversions, and we would urge that the Committee deplore the Council Administration's failure to consult timeously and make a recommendation that any future closures in connection with the development be the subject of at least 28 days consultation with stakeholders before coming to committee.

4. Turning to the recommendation itself, we accept that it will be necessary to close Leith Street for several months enable the work to be carried out. We also take no issue with the diversion routes proposed for bus and general traffic. What we do take issue with is;
 - a) that the closure need be as long as 44 weeks, and
 - b) the absence of mention of specific measures to ensure that the spill over of diverted traffic into residential streets is minimised.
5. Taking spill over first, we observe that the eastern diversion route is one of the lengthiest diversions ever put in place in Edinburgh. At busy times, it will almost certainly be quicker for bus passengers traveling to Leith to alight at Waterloo Place and walk down to Elm Row to pick up their next bus than wait while the buses crawl round the proposed Abbeyhill gyratory. However, drivers have no such choice, so will inevitably use any alternate route that might be quicker. Unfortunately for the residents of Carlton and Royal Terrace, there is a rather obvious short cut back to Leith Walk up Carlton Terrace Brae. The local residents association, the Regent, Royal, Carlton Terrace and Mews Association, have confirmed to us that they are extremely concerned about this and consider that probably the only way to stop their streets from becoming as snarled up as the official diversion route is likely to be is to close Carlton Terrace Brae at Regent Road.
6. However, this will have considerable disadvantages for residents and businesses alike on Regent, Royal and Carlton Terrace, whose only ingress will be by Blenheim Place, and will add to traffic using the diversion route. Given this, whilst we would urge the Committee to require Council Officers to explore this option with the resident and businesses of Regent, Royal and Carlton Terraces, we also urge that other deterrents be considered, such as a speed camera (needed anyway as locals report that the 20mph limit is being regularly ignored on Royal Terrace) and signage marking this route "unsuitable for HGVs" and "local traffic only", as well as the other measures listed below.
7. The eastern diversion route from Waterloo Place to Leith Walk is even lengthier, but at least for private vehicles there is a real alternative, to drive under Waterloo Place via Calton Road. Currently this seems to be proposed as only 2-way as far as the Long Term Waverley car park entrance. Several Community councillors recall that it used to be possible to turn right out of Calton Road into Leith Street until the 1990s, and wonder why the option of permitting this movement has been rejected. The representatives from the Laing O'Rourke



and SWECO were unable to provide specific reasons for this. If this were available, it would for some traffic coming from the Old Town provide a useful alternative ensuring that the “official” diversion route is less snarled, and thus make the Carlton Terrace Brae shortcut less tempting.

8. It would also draw some traffic away from the western route via Hanover Street and York Place, which is currently operating at near full capacity and which we also fear will snarl up, leading to spill over into streets such as Abercromby Place, Albany Street, Northumberland Street, Drummond Place and London Street in the second New Town.
9. We understand from the developers that Council traffic modelling suggests permitting the right turn out of Calton Road would be problematic - we think this requires a second look and request that the Committee require Council officers to look at this again, and even if it is decided not to open this route at the start of the diversions period, to retain it as an option should traffic spill over in residential streets be excessive. Moreover, we request the Council officer be directed to share their detailed reasons for rejecting this, including demonstration of traffic modelling with the NTBCC by the end of April so we can take an informed view about this option.
10. One way of minimising delay on the diversion route is to make them as far as possible no-stopping, no-waiting, no-loading, no-parking. We urge the Committee to ensure this is done on the official diversion routes. Another is to ensure that as little private traffic comes into the city centre as possible. We suggest the following steps:
 - (a) Large signs on all main routes advising that Leith Street is closed, severe delays are expected and providing directions to the nearest park and ride.
 - (b) Incentives such as 2 for 1 or reduced price bus ticket for users of park and rides.
 - (c) Restrictions on HGV loading in the city centre to outside rush hour periods.
11. However, even if all these measures are put in place, disruption to the lives of both local residents and the wider community will be considerable. In this context, we note with concern the absence of any estimate of the cost to Edinburgh’s economy of this closure, and request that the Council release (and if necessary undertake an analysis of) this. That said, it can be expected also to be significant. Given this, we urge the Committee to ensure that Leith Street is reopened as soon as possible. The developers indicated to us that they would be planning to work 6 days a week on Leith Street for no more than ordinary working hours. Community Councillors and residents attending our meeting were understandably surprised (or more correctly, were appalled) that no consideration was apparently being given to either 7 day a week working or extended working hours (or both) compatible with noise guidelines (e.g. 16 hours per day). We would urge the Committee to make this a requirement of agreeing the diversion – and limit it to a shorter maximum duration in consequence.



12. We have already urged that even if residents' suggestions regarding Calton Road and Carlton Terrace Brae are not adopted initially, they are kept under close review. To this end we welcome the commitment that throughout the duration of the closure period, the TMRP will review and monitor the status of the works, the programme and the diversion route on a regular basis and, as a minimum, monthly.
13. To strengthen this requirement , we suggest that the Committee require the Council to measure traffic levels at morning and afternoon traffic peaks on the diversion routes and neighbouring streets likely to be affected- including Royal Terrace, Abercromby Place, Albany Street, Northumberland Street, Drummond Place and London Street, prior to the diversions, and then repeat the measurements in the first 3 weeks of the diversion, and publish these in a report to the Transport Committee within one month of the commencement of the diversions. This would provide the necessary factual basis for review, which should be undertaken in conjunction with local stakeholders including the NTBCC and residents associations.
14. Last, we seek an undertaking that there would be no measures (e.g. suspension of residents' parking) in any of the neighbouring residential streets which would improve their attractiveness in terms of traffic flows and therefore encourage motorists to divert through them.

Yours sincerely

Ian Mowat
Chair NTBCC



New Town and Broughton Community Council
