

## **2024 NTBCC Transport Committee Annual Report**

The last eight months since our 2023 AGM has again been a demanding and at times frustrating period for the Transport Committee. We have attended a number of Council events, responded to several Council consultations and submitted deputations to the Transport and Environment Committee. The following are some of the highlights of our work.

### **Trams Project**

We have made two deputations, jointly with CCTT, to the Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) highlighting our concerns. The most recent deputation in April resulted in a decision to have the project team report back on progress at least six monthly to the TEC. It remains unclear how the remaining work will be completed as the contractors undertaking the project have released all of their staff. We also still await the publication of the latest update of the Road Safety Audit.

One area where there has been some progress is the redesign of Elm Row. We had highlighted serious concerns with this area of public realm during 2021 mainly due to the configuration of parking and split cycle path. It was agreed that after the Tram Project was completed, the Council would revisit the design. This has been done; it is expected that a recommendation to implement some positive changes to the layout of this space will be made shortly.

### **Picardy Place**

After many months of trying to obtain a copy of the design drawings and an appeal against the limited information issued in response to our FOI last year, we eventually received most of the requested drawings. These raise questions about whether the design meets current design standards and whether the contractor has followed that design. Given the long-standing commitment made to engagement with the local community, it is disappointing that it has proved so difficult to obtain clear information about what was planned.

### **Active Travel**

New Experimental Traffic Orders (ETRO) were expected to be published last year for the temporary changes introduced under the Spaces for People programme. They have still not been issued for the Broughton Street to Canonmills corridor. The ones for Waverley Bridge and London Road have been issued and we will be submitting comments to reiterate concerns about these schemes. We also have continuing concerns that the use of ETRO further delays any permanent works.

We have continued to work with Living Streets, Spokes, Edinburgh Bus Users Group and other Active Travel groups to highlight common concerns regarding the design and maintenance of pavements, cycle paths and other areas of public realm. There is significant shared frustration about the lack of response and slow progress regarding many of the issues we have identified.

### **City Mobility Plan**

As reported previously, we provided a detailed response to the Council's consultation on the individual action plans resulting from the overall City Mobility Plan (CMP). We emphasised the need to seek further input on the implementation of the plans in specific areas and the need to effectively prioritise the implementation of the many elements of the plans to ensure that efforts and funds was focussed on those areas which will result in the greatest benefit. This response was included in a report to the TEC in October 2023. The TEC reviewed progress against the CMP in February 2024 and it is apparent that the lack of sufficient funding will impact the delivery of the plans and achievement of the Council's mobility goals.

One of the CMP workstreams is the development of an overall plan to allocate street space between different modes of travel. The “**Our Future Streets**” initiative will have a major impact on people living in NTBCC area. One of the recommendations is to limit traffic using Bridges Corridor which will significantly limit the options for most traffic wishing to travel between the north and south of the city centre. We have requested a meeting with Council staff to review the modelling that has been used to develop the recommendations and understand their impact on our community. We await a response to this request.

### **Low Emission Zone**

Enforcement of the Edinburgh LEZ commences on 1 June but based on responses to questions we issued to Transport staff, it appears that the Council is not fully ready for enforcement to start. Also, there remain significant gaps regarding the promised monitoring of traffic flows and atmospheric emissions on the mostly residential streets on the periphery of the LEZ.

### **Meadows to George Street Consultation**

We provided detailed comments in response to the publication of draft traffic orders to implement the Meadows to George Street project. Our concerns focussed on loss of pedestrian space and amenity due to the introduction of segregated cycle lanes along the whole route, the closure of The Mound to most traffic for much of the day severing an essential route for city centre traffic and the adverse impact on disabled people of floating bus stops and loss of disabled parking. We also raised concerns about how this project is being integrated with other Council transport initiatives.

### **George Street and First New Town Project**

We have provided input to a number of issues resulting from the plans for the redevelopment of this area of the city centre. From a transport perspective we have highlighted the adverse impact on disabled people of the proposed restrictions to traffic and the loss of bus services.

### **Traffic Noise and Vibration Issues**

We have continued to support East London Street residents regarding noise and vibration issues caused by increased traffic including buses using this street. Following the petition from local residents to reduce traffic related nuisance, a report was considered at the October TEC meeting. We made a deputation at that meeting highlighting concerns about the report and supporting an amendment from Councillor McFarlane. This amendment was adopted; resulting in a further report to the TEC in January 2024 that recommended that no further action be taken to improve the road surface or otherwise reduce the nuisance caused by high traffic levels. However, following the intervention of Councillor McFarlane, it was decided that road department officials should commence consultation on the replacement of the setts with asphalt.

After a period of nearly two years without any direct communications with Lothian Buses, we had a couple of constructive meetings with senior management in an effort to improve communications on issues affecting our community including East London Street.

Further information about our work is shown in the monthly Transport Committee reports which are appended to the meeting minutes and can be found on the NTBCC website. I would like to thank the members of the Transport Committee for their contributions over the last year.

Prepared by Mike Birch  
NTBCC Transport Convenor  
1 June 2024