

Verbal Deputation to Transport and Environment Committee meeting to be held on 12 October 2023 regarding item 7.4: East London Street

Thank you for allowing me to make a verbal deputation at today's meeting.

Hopefully you will have had a chance to read the written deputation that was submitted earlier this week and in particular the attached document which highlights a number of concerns about the conclusions in the report regarding the results of the noise survey.

The New Town and Broughton Community Council has been actively involved in the East London Street traffic issues for at least three years. As you will be aware from the August meeting there is significant frustration among residents that the underlying issues with traffic on East London Street have not been addressed over several years despite their best efforts to raise awareness of these issues. We share their frustration and are disappointed that despite trying to take a reasonable and balanced position that with a few exceptions our attempts to engage with the Council and Lothian Buses have been largely fruitless.

Clearly, it is important that any decisions are based on complete and accurate information. Unfortunately, we believe that the report does not contain the information required to allow meaningful decisions to be taken at this time. Some of the key issues are:

- The section dealing with the results of the noise survey appears to have misinterpreted the data and therefore its conclusions are faulty. This is **the fundamental issue for residents** and the lack of any recommended actions is very surprising. I have sat in the second-floor kitchen of one of the properties and heard the noise that the traffic, not just buses, creates. As noted in the attachment to our deputation, **the night-time noise levels are well above the WHO recommended maximum and thus likely to be causing significant health impacts for residents.** Remember that an increase of 20dB equates to a 100-fold increase in the sound intensity. The Council surely has a responsibility to protect the health and well-being of its residents. **We respectfully urge the Council to review its conclusions and thus recommendations.**

- The report greatly **underestimates the extent to which East London Street has been used as a diversion route**. For periods in 2022, nearly 500 buses a day were being routed along East London Street and that does not include the out of service buses.
- No information is included in the report on the **current condition of the road surface** nor any details of when it was last inspected. Due to the need to keep the road open as a diversion, there has been hardly any maintenance work undertaken for over three years.
- We do not recognise the **data provided by Lothian Buses**. The numbers for this year appear to be incomplete - missing significant periods of the day and only reporting “scheduled” buses. The historical data does not match information provided previously by Lothian Buses or our own observations. **We believe that further data should be sought from Lothian Buses to substantiate the information presented in the report.**
- Due to delays in conducting the **traffic and speed survey**, we do not have the data on which to make informed decisions about the future traffic management for this street. **We urge the Committee to progress this survey as soon as possible to allow the results to be part of the decision-making process and not just reported in a bulletin.**
- Given the concerns about the use of this street by **out-of-service buses**, we believe that it is important to ensure that the survey is able to distinguish between HGV’s and PSV’s. **We therefore suggest that a video survey should be conducted to complement the standard tube survey. This will remove any uncertainty about this important and emotive aspect of the data.**

In conclusion while we want the issues being experienced by East London Street residents to be addressed, we would support a limited delay to allow a more thorough evaluation of the options to be undertaken. It is critical that any solution will result in long term sustainable improvement and recognise there is a primary school on the street. We also hope to be actively involved in the decision-making process to ensure that the views of residents are fully considered.

Thank you for your time.