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 /AlmondCouncillors



Queensferry & District Community Council – June 2018 Report

Queensferry High Street

As no doubt covered in other reports, Edinburgh Council officials have now published revised proposals for the new Queensferry High Street. These differ from earlier plans by retaining the two-way flow on the street. The draft plan from last year proposed moving to a one-way system.

The initial consultation last year showed mixed views amongst residents on moving to a one-way system. However, the major factor driving the new decision has been based on funding and the requirement to commit the £2 million available by the end of March.

The necessary legal changes required for a one-way system would almost certainly *not* be delivered in that timescale. To avoid the risk of losing the funding, the Steering Group agreed to progress with an amended scheme.

The new proposals

- retain two-way traffic but leave open the option of moving to a one-way system in the future.
- install a three-way signalised junction at the foot of the Loan to improve road safety and deliver the proposed pedestrian crossing.
- restrict large vehicles from passing through the High Street, but allowing limited HGV business servicing times (timings to be agreed in consultation with local businesses).
- retain car parking in the same positions and quantities as are currently on street.

A new public information event will be organised over the summer. Actual construction work will start early in 2020 and should be completed that year.

Local policing

Earlier this year, the SNP/Labour administration cut the Council's budget for community policing by 20%. The detailed impact of this cut was unveiled last week. Whilst funded officers for the Almond ward continue, Police Scotland has now admitted the reduction in officers in Edinburgh city centre will mean other officers who normally focus on issues in Queensferry will need to be diverted at certain times. Along with our Lib Dem councillor colleagues, we opposed this cut to policing and have raised our concerns about the potential impact locally.

Shore Road

Following further concerns, we have organised an on-site meeting between local transport officials and some residents to discuss the traffic and access problems at Shore Road. With the marina's success, the volume of traffic on the road is continuing to increase, causing congestion issues. We will report back on any actions.

Low emission zone

Edinburgh Council has launched its consultation on plans to introduce a city wide 'low emission zone' (LEZ) in a bid to reduce air pollution.

The plans would firstly see a city centre LEZ, which would restrict access to all vehicles which do not need certain national emissions standards.

There would also be an outer city-wide LEZ (covering all areas inside the city bypass). The consultation specifically asks whether this zone should apply to all vehicles or just apply to buses/coaches and commercial vehicles.

This would be a significant new policy in Edinburgh so it is very important that people respond to this consultation by the 21 July deadline. [The survey can be accessed here.](#)

Garden tax update

At last week's Transport Committee, the three opposition parties on the Council came together to force a rethink on the unpopular garden tax. The annual charge for garden waste collection was introduced last year, despite significant opposition. Latest figures show the volume of garden waste being recycled has fallen significantly since the new charge came into force.

The cross-party motion demanded that Council officials bring forward specific options that would allow the garden tax to be scrapped from next year. Meantime, residents will need to re-register for collections for 2019/20.

A90 bus lanes

Back in March, Council transport officers were instructed to look at the feasibility of introducing dedicated bus lanes along the length of the A90/Queensferry Road. This aimed to speed up bus times and make local services like the 43/x43 more reliable.

The published report to the Transport Committee concluded such lanes are "not feasible". The modelling showed new lanes would increase journey times for other vehicles by over 70%. The increase in congestion would be so bad that it would also increase the time taken for buses to actually get to the bus lanes.

The Transport Committee agreed that doing nothing is not an option. The matter has been referred to an all-party group. It is worth saying that some, albeit more limited changes, are still planned. These include reintroducing the bus lane at the Dolphington on-slip.

Craigiehall housing plan withdrawn

We were pleased to see the planning application to build 1,200 new homes on the Craigiehall fields (to the west of Barnton) being withdrawn by the developer.

The plans were twice the size of the recent controversial Cammo development. Unlike Cammo, this application had been recommended for refusal by Council planning officers.

As councillors, we had been limited in what we could say on the plan because the proposal would have come to the full Council for a final decision. However, with the plans now withdrawn, we can be open and say we would have strongly opposed the application. It would have been wholly inappropriate to build such a massive new development on greenbelt land. It would have added even further to the traffic chaos we see on the A90 and Barnton junction.