

Annual Transport Report - May 2017

The prominence of transport issues in Queensferry community life has continued over the past year.

Now that CEC's Local Development Plan has been adopted, detailed proposals for large-scale housing estates are coming forward for sites where appropriate development has a reasonable chance of being permitted. This is in addition to smaller scale changes scattered around the town. The community council needs to form a view on the impact of development and there are often concerns regarding pedestrian access, traffic flow or parking facilities associated with proposed changes in land use. Each proposal is accompanied by a transport assessment, which is verified against policy and guidance, but also reviewed for credibility at a local level.

Although Edinburgh Council still hold a budget of around £1m to rebuild the High Street road surface, the council's protracted transformation programme means that project management resource remain scarce and sub-contracting difficult. This is a little disappointing because the project has potential to deliver spinoff improvements for the non-motorist experience and also traffic management which locals often demand as a priority. The Burnshot Flyover is now closed to all road users due to instability. While a notional budget for replacement is secure, diversion arrangements are likely to remain in place for at least another year. QDCC receives updates on these projects and shares information with the community. While this is not always well-received, understanding the full situation can present opportunities for temporary mitigation.

After construction delays announced in 2016, and again in April 2017, the Queensferry Crossing and approach roads are on the verge of opening, with public interest being raised further. We continue to attend quarterly meetings with Transport Scotland and FCBC where community concerns can be brought up. Although there are a number of changes and renewals on the road network, it is quite difficult to find practical transport benefits accrued by the town arising from the project. The community isn't too vocal about this at present, perhaps because the prestige aspect dominates.

On the public transport front, figures released for passenger use at Dalmeny Station to April 2016 reflected continued growth at a rate of around 10% per year, and industrial action affecting services for much of 2016 was resolved. Meanwhile the Stagecoach bus service to Edinburgh city centre was reduced in August 2016 due to low passenger numbers and will be withdrawn from June 2017. Fortunately, Lothian Buses have formed a new company which will provide similar coverage commercially on the route. In common with elected members and contrary to widely-held opinion, QDCC has no statutory role here, therefore any input or influence remained 'behind the scenes'. However the value of regular dialogue with service providers has become apparent.

Queensferry was one of the first areas in Edinburgh to receive default 20mph speed limits in built-up areas, without extra calming measures being built. We were kept up-to-date with the rollout plans. Public reaction has been mostly supportive, although we've gathered some negative views that the new limits are not widely observed, too restrictive, produce more pollution, damage vehicles and lead to faster traffic speed. Parking around schools continues to adversely affect the community, but it is good to hear of the pragmatic approach being taken by the parent council at QPS which is being reported back through our Education sub-committee.