

Deputation TEC 7th March 2024

Blackford Safe Routes are clear that modal filters are the only sensible option on residential streets. We welcome the officer recommendation for Whitehouse Loan of the revised option 2 – that is retaining the full filter at Strathearn Road and adding a new filter on Clinton Road.

Modal filters reduce the risk of death and serious injury by 50%, including for drivers. The safety of people has always been at the heart of Blackford Safe Routes, and we were reminded of how dangerous Edinburgh's roads are last week. Our committee member and her son were involved in a car crash with a speeding driver. She has suffered a broken neck and damage to her knee. Car crashes like this are a direct consequence of street designs that prioritise cars and speed, creating places where people feel unsafe. High traffic volumes and speeds can be designed out. Campaigners against modal filters ignore that there is a human cost.

On the Braid estate, complaints of speeding on Hermitage Dr after it was reopened to through-traffic are not a surprise. The same will happen at Braid Avenue if it is reopened to cars, with a resurgence of the videos on social media of the traffic jams and fumes.

Conversely, the council's own report states: "The respondents who live on streets which have modal filters are experiencing benefits from the low traffic environment and do not want to lose those benefits". These benefits have included traffic evaporation of 40% and no additional traffic on Morningside Road. This is evidence of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood working exactly as designed. This meets council traffic reduction targets and that is safer, cleaner, greener, and healthier.

We question why the council are looking to remove a successful LTN in favour of high cost segregated cycle lanes. Although the consultation returned a mix of views, consultations are not referendums and should not be treated as such. Moreover, the consultation did not provide people with the costs of the different designs. The council's report now shows that segregated cycle lanes will cost £400,000. That is £400,000 to replace a successful set of modal filters. £400,000 being taken out of the active travel budget to allow affluent car drivers to drive through a residential area. £400,000 that could be spent improving active travel in other areas of the city.

Removal of the modal filters will also result in the loss of a safe east-west route for pupils walking and cycling to South Morningside Primary School. Children's safety is being put at risk. This is supported by the council's own report that young people, including children, will be negatively impacted by the removal of the filters. 90% of children walk or cycle to James Gillespie's Primary School and there are 6 primary schools on the Quiet Route, so it affects thousands of children. We would like to remind the committee of its responsibilities to protect the rights of the child under the UN Convention. Voting to remove modal filters which are the safest option, is knowingly putting the interests of motorists ahead of children's right to life. And let's

be absolutely clear here, modal filters don't stop access for cars, so you are trading a child's right to be safe with a minor inconvenience to drivers. The modal filters are supporting a safe route to South Morningside Primary School and that should be the priority.

Cllr Scott Arthur says the Quiet Route is taking up a lot of council officers' time. The lack of cross-party support for children's safety, political game playing and the use of consultations to weaken road safety has wasted council time. A decision to remove the modal filters and replace them with expensive cycle lanes will only waste more officer resource. We cannot see how this is justified when the result will cost £400,000 and provide no safety benefit to pedestrians of any age. We will also continue to campaign for genuine road safety.

In summary, Blackford Safe Routes supports the revised option 1 in the Braid Estate and the revised option 2 for Whitehouse Loan. We support these because they are the safest design for people, because they are the most cost-effective solutions, and because they deliver multiple additional health and wellbeing benefits. We strongly oppose any weakening of road safety for any users, and any options that are unnecessarily expensive or labour intensive. We also sincerely hope that no more children will die on Edinburgh's roads while councillors play political games.

We are parents not politicians, our only interest is the safety of our kids.

You can read what you like into it, we are just asking the council to prioritise children's safety

50% of car journeys are for leisure purposes

Bikes are fastest in the city