

March 2013

Walkable Communities: local people taking action

Tranent and Ormiston Tenants & Residents
Associations
supported by Living Streets Scotland

An Audit of High Street, Tranent



Contents	Page
Summary	3
Introduction	5
Audit route and process	5
Demographic context	5
Findings and recommendations	6
Short-term recommendations for action	6
Medium-term recommendations for action	11
Longer-term recommendations for action	12
Relationship to Council plans and priorities	15
Contact details	15

Summary

On 1 March 2013 an audit of Tranent High Street, and the connections with Bridge Street, Church Street, Winton Place, Plough Lane and Ormiston Road, was undertaken by the Tranent and Ormiston Tenants & Residents Associations.

Street audits are a structured and systematic method of evaluating the quality of streets and spaces for walking from the point of view of those who use them. From the High Street audit the group agreed the following priority short, medium and longer term actions that would improve conditions for walking.

Priority recommendations for action

Short term:

East Lothian Council

1. Prevent schoolchildren spilling onto the carriageway from Plough Lane.
2. Repair trip hazards at various locations on the audit route and plant trees in tree grilles.
3. Install a comfortable seat mid-way between Winton Place and Ormiston Road.

Recharge Youth Community facility:

4. Undertake a youth-led project to work with the shops concerned to develop an effective queuing system that will decrease congestion on the footways and improved road safety.

Medium term:

East Lothian Council

1. Provide a dropped kerb directly opposite the existing one outside the entrance to the Tranent Day Care Centre on Church Street.
2. Install bollards, or other preventative measure, on the corner of Ormiston Road/High Street to stop vehicles mounting the footway.

Longer term:

East Lothian Council

1. Redesign the street layout, bus shelter positioning and traffic management infrastructure to reduce traffic congestion and improve pedestrian provision.

Police Scotland East (Lothian and Borders Police)

2. Increase the level of Traffic Warden service in Tranent.

Short-term actions are considered by the group to have the potential to improve the walking environment within approximately 12, and medium term within approximately 18 months.

It is appreciated that longer-term actions may be of higher cost and therefore may take longer to deliver. However, the Tranent and Ormiston Tenants & Residents Associations would appreciate a response on the feasibility and timescales for delivery of these actions.

Other short-term recommendations for action

East Lothian Council

- Widen the gap between the bollards at the dropped kerb on Winton Place (outside the Turks Head) to allow easier access for wheelchair users.
- Review, upgrade and improve consistency of signage.
- Implement an effective litter prevention and management regime including strategies to tackle dog fouling.
- Reduce street clutter.
- Improve the aesthetic quality of the High Street.
- Re-paint the road markings on Winton Place.
- Allocate motorbike parking bays in the Winton Place car park.
- Improve road signs to instruct drivers on how to negotiate the roundabout at Church Street.

Other longer-term recommendations for action

East Lothian Council

- Resurface or properly repair footways and carriageways to provide smooth and even surfaces suitable for pedestrians of all abilities.
- Treat blister paving and slabbed footways to ensure they are not slippery in wet weather.

Tranent and Ormiston Tenants & Residents Associations commends this report to all relevant agencies and would appreciate a commitment to co-operative working to achieve the best possible short, medium and longer term outcomes for the citizens of Tranent.

Introduction

Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians. With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk. We work with professionals and politicians to make sure every community can enjoy vibrant streets and public spaces.

In March 2013 the Tranent and Ormiston Tenants & Residents Associations conducted a street audit of Tranent High Street and immediate connecting streets.

The event was facilitated by Living Streets Scotland as part of its Walkable Communities project. Living Streets has received funding from Scottish Government to work with community groups across Scotland in 2012/13 to help them improve the walking environment in their neighbourhoods. Further information on this work can be found at www.livingstreets.org.uk/scotland

Audit route and process

The audit of the High Street and the connections with Bridge Street, Church Street, Winton Place, Plough Lane and Ormiston Road, were identified as presenting barriers to walking, allowed the group to critically review this street for walking, decide on priority and other issues and solutions and to take action to influence on-the-ground changes.

The group walked the entire audit route identifying, discussing and recording issues that encouraged and discouraged everyday walking. Issues identified were then discussed in detail before agreement was reached on key short, medium and longer term priorities for actions that would improve the walking environment.

Demographic context

The High Street is the main shopping and amenity thoroughfare for the 9,000 residents of the ex-mining town of Tranent. Key trip generators to the High Street include – the Post Office, library, council offices, health centre, dental surgery, day care centre, community centre, Recharge Youth Community facility, police station, primary school, secondary school, banks, pharmacies, hotels, cafes, pubs and a range of other retail and commercial businesses.

Tranent is part of the Fa'side Ward of East Lothian Council. Many of Tranent's population commute to Edinburgh, Haddington and Macmerry where the council is the major employer. Approximately 20% of people in Tranent are of pensionable age.¹

Tranent High Street forms part of the A199 which serves as the main distributor road to the surrounding settlements of Haddington, Wallyford, Macmerry and Ormiston. It is estimated that, on average, 15,000 vehicles, including buses and HGV's, pass through the High Street in every 24 hour period.² While this level is regarded as average for the town and road type, this is set within the context of an overall increase in traffic on Scotland's roads since 2001 (5% increase in cars, 31% increase in light goods vehicles, 4% increase in heavy goods vehicles).³

¹ Tranent Community Profile, East Lothian Council, 2011.

² From correspondence with East Lothian Council Transportation Department.

³ Scottish Transport Statistics, No.31, 2012 Edition.

Findings and recommendations

Short-term recommendations for action

Priority issues

1. Schoolchildren running onto the carriageway from Plough Lane

At lunch times and after school significant numbers of children from Ross High pour onto the High Street carriageway from Plough Lane. Many do not wait to cross safely, instead they weave amongst the traffic.

At lunch times schoolchildren also gather on the footways as they queue outside shops on the High Street; specifically Greggs, Baguette Express, Spar, the Bakers and Snak Shak. This causes congestion on the footway, making it difficult for other pedestrians to pass.



Recommendations

East Lothian Council:

Prevent schoolchildren spilling onto the carriageway from Plough Lane. This can be done either by installing a staggered barrier at the bottom of Plough Lane; or by moving the footway build-out from outside the New Plough public house to opposite Plough Lane, as this would help people see if vehicles are coming before crossing the road at the end of Plough Lane.

Recharge Youth Community facility:

Undertake a youth-led project to work with the shops concerned to develop an effective queuing system that will decrease congestion on the footways and improve road safety.

2. Trip hazards at various locations along the audit route

Trip hazards were noted at various locations, namely:

- Uneven footway on Church Street on the approach to the roundabout, including a metal stump remaining from removal of a pole and an area of bad tarmac patching outside the day centre;
- A toppled bollard and a raised slab outside the camera shop on Winton Place;
- Tree grilles in Civic Square (trees have been removed but the grilles remain);
- A raised platform in Civic Square;
- Broken steps at the entrance to the Labour Party offices (number 65);
- Damaged water utility port cover outside Kashmir Valley restaurant;
- Junction gradient at High Street and Ormiston Road, in combination with the footway materials, creates a very slippery surface when wet;

- A raised steel plate covering a deep drain outside Visual Eyes – this supposedly temporary measure has been in place for some time;



Recommendation

East Lothian Council:

Remove and/or repair trip hazards as noted above and plant new trees in the tree grilles.

3. Lack of places to rest between Winton Place and Ormiston Road

Seats have been provided at the Winton Place memorial and the Ormiston Road junction, but there is nowhere to rest in-between. The provision of comfortable seats at short, accessible distances would make it easier for people of all abilities to utilise the services on the High Street. Such provision would also encourage social interaction and community cohesion for all visitors to the High Street.

Recommendation

Install a comfortable seat approximately mid-way on the sunny (north) side of the High Street.

Other short-term recommendations for action

4. Dropped kerb blocked by a bollard

The dropped kerb outside the Turk's Head on Winton Place is blocked by a bollard, creating unnecessary difficulty for wheelchair and buggy users. However, the group are aware that prior to installation of the bollards a trader at this location habitually drove a vehicle onto the footway at this point. It is anticipated that if the bollard was removed, this kind of inconsiderate behaviour would resume. The recommendation below is therefore intended to improve accessibility for wheelchair users without creating further problems for pedestrians.



Recommendation

East Lothian Council:

Widen the gap between the bollards to allow easier access for wheelchair and buggy users.

5. Poor standard of signage and interpretation

Signage along the audit route was repeatedly found to be of a poor standard, of inconsistent style or in the wrong location, namely:

- The location of the interpretation board for the Jackie Crookston memorial sculpture in Civic Square is not obvious, being sited on a wall behind the sculpture. The memorial would be enhanced if upgraded, more informative interpretation was located immediately next to the sculpture.
- The directional sign for the George Johnston Centre, currently located in a recess in Civic Square, is overlooked.
- The tourist information signpost in Civic Square is dirty and easily overlooked.
- Garish shop signage, e.g. Gourmet Place Chinese takeaway (number 40); Crolla's Takeaway (number 97), reduces the aesthetic quality of the street.
- The signage outside The Hub is outdated and inconsistent with other street signs.
- The sign for the bus stop on High Street south, outside Crolla's, is not on the actual bus stop. If moved to the actual bus stop this would encourage bus drivers to fully pull in to the bus bay, allowing traffic to pass.
- The sign for the taxi rank is damaged and uses an out of date style inconsistent with other signage on the street.
- The pointers on the tourist information signpost outside Reilly's garage point in the wrong direction. The gold lettering on a black background is also difficult to see for people with visual impairment.



Recommendations

East Lothian Council:

Review, upgrade and improve the standard, consistency and location of signage within the Council's control.

On publication of the Council's signage guidance (in process), proactively implement this and encourage traders to comply.

6. Dog fouling, litter and persistent littering behaviour

Dog fouling on the Backside path is known to be a frequent and recurring problem.

This presents the following problems for pedestrians:

- It is not always seen in time to avoid stepping in it
- It is inconvenient and at times difficult for people with reduced mobility to step around it
- It makes walking in the area an unpleasant experience
- There are potential health risks for children who may touch it.

Intense periods of littering also occur during school lunch times. The group commend the Council for putting in place a litter picking sweep every afternoon to address this issue. However, the group felt that schoolchildren should be encouraged not to drop litter in the first place.

Recommendations

East Lothian Council:

Implement an effective litter prevention and management regime including strategies to tackle dog fouling.

East Lothian Council Community Wardens & Ross High School:

Community Wardens, in association with Ross High School, to implement an anti-littering campaign, using awareness raising and positive reward techniques.

7. Street clutter

A range of obstacles were found to clutter the footway at various points along the audit route. This reduces the available space for pedestrians, making it difficult for less able users in particular to enjoy safe and unobstructed passage. Street clutter issues were:

- A number of commercial waste bins had been left on the footway after emptying;
- A telecommunications box and a lamppost are situated in the middle of the footway outside Needles Tattoos (number 101);
- Two A-boards advertising the same shop (Ferguson Pet Supplies) in the middle of the footway;

In addition, the cycle stands on the footway outside Sun Blinds (vacant) are thought to be rarely used and instead serve merely to clutter the footway.



Recommendations

East Lothian Council:

Require all traders to remove waste bins from the footway immediately after emptying.

Relocate the telecommunications box and the lamppost to the outer edge of the footway (it is appreciated that this may be regarded as a longer term recommendation for action).

Regulate the use of A-boards to ensure unobstructed pedestrian movement. Consider a planning/design policy with a presumption in favour of wall-mounted advertising boards.

Determine the frequency of use of the cycle stands outside Sun Blinds, and remove these if they are found to be infrequently used.



8. Poor aesthetic quality of the High Street

Degraded building frontages and poor maintenance detract from the character of the place, are unwelcoming and create an impression of neglect for the area. Specific issues include:

- The farming/mining memorial wall mural, above Fairway Estate Agents on Winton Place, is in disrepair;
- Telecommunications boxes adjacent to the war memorial on Winton Place are shabby and unattractive;
- Advertising banners attached to the guardrail at the Church Street roundabout are scruffy, create a tawdry impression and will encourage the posting of further banners;
- The tourist information post in Civic Square is dirty;
- The push-button casings for the traffic lights outside the Premier Store (number 43) are in a poor condition;
- The down-pipe outside the Premier Store requires repair;
- The doorway of number 53 is scruffy and needs re-painted;
- The external paintwork of Kopa's Takeaway is in poor condition;
- The litter bin outside Ladbroke's is broken;
- The litter bin at the bus stop next to Whispers is in poor condition and its style is inconsistent with other bins on the street;
- The frontage of the premises at number 91 is extremely degraded;
- The windows of the vacant shop on High Street south (previously Sun Blinds, now under the control of Co-op Pharmacy) are covered with blank, uninteresting boards and scruffy posters that create a run-down impression.



Recommendations

East Lothian Council: Repair and improve the aesthetic quality of the High Street as indicated above.

Work with the Recharge Youth Community facility to engage a youth-led art project to repair the farming/mining mural and brighten the frontage of vacant shops.



9. Faded road markings on Winton Place

All road markings at the junction of Winton Place with the High Street are so faded that they are illegible. This can create confusion for all users and encourages inappropriate driver behaviour.



Recommendation
East Lothian Council:
Re-paint the road markings.

10. Lack of allocated motorbike parking

There is no provision for motorbike parking in the car park on Winton Place. Designated motorbike parking would help to keep the High Street and connecting streets clear of parked motorbikes, thus decreasing inappropriate parking.



Recommendation
East Lothian Council:
Allocate marked motorbike parking bays in the Winton Place car park, possibly the unused tarmac rectangle at the back of the car park.

11. Driver confusion with the Church Street roundabout

At times drivers seem confused about how to negotiate the Church Street roundabout, resulting in erratic behaviour which in turn increases the risk for pedestrians. Existing advisory signs are not prominent.



Recommendation
East Lothian Council:
Improve road signs to instruct drivers on how to negotiate the roundabout at Church Street.

Medium-term recommendations for action

Priority issues

1. Lack of dropped kerb on Church Street

A dropped kerb has been provided directly outside the entrance to Tranent Day Care Centre, but there is no dropped kerb on the opposite side of the road. The nearest opposing dropped kerb is on the bend of the footway at Bridge Street/Church Street. This is an unsafe location for wheelchair and buggy users to cross the road.



Recommendation

East Lothian Council:

Provide a dropped kerb directly opposite the existing one outside the entrance to Tranent Day Care Centre on Church Street.

2. Vehicles mount the footway at the corner of Ormiston Road/High Street

Vehicles persistently mount the footway when making the turn from Ormiston Road into the High Street. This is unsafe and inconvenient for pedestrian of all abilities but particularly so for those with visual or mobility impairment.

Recommendation

East Lothian Council:

Install bollards, or other preventative measure, at the footway edge on the corner of Ormiston Road and High Street to prevent vehicles mounting the footway.

Longer-term recommendations for action

Priority issues

1. Traffic congestion throughout the audit route, poor traffic management, problematic bus stop/shelter positioning and lack of pedestrian provision

Overall, the level of traffic congestion, poor traffic management and lack of pedestrian provision makes walking in the High Street area an unpleasant experience. Specifically, the group noted the following concerns:

- There are no safe or convenient crossing points in the vicinity of the Bridge Street roundabout;
- Vehicles frequently park on double yellow lines, resulting in poor sightlines for pedestrians trying to cross the road;
- Vehicles frequently park on footways in Church Street. This reduces the available space for pedestrians, at times resulting in pedestrians being required to walk on the carriageway. This is particularly unsafe and inconvenient for wheelchair and buggy users and people with visual impairment.
- Drivers frequently execute “u turns” in the High Street bringing traffic flow to a stand-still and compounding congestion, thus making it more difficult for pedestrians to cross the carriageway safely;
- Buses often fail to pull in properly into the bus bays outside Whispers and Co-op Funeral Care, resulting in traffic build-up and congestion. This is compounded by the sequencing of the traffic lights at High Street East.



Recommendations

East Lothian Council:

The group are very concerned about the poor traffic management, degraded pedestrian environment and lack of pedestrian provision on the High Street; and strongly recommend that a comprehensive review of traffic management, street design and layout, and pedestrian friendly alternatives be undertaken as soon as possible.

The feasibility of re-connecting Bridge Street to Well Wynd, possibly as a one-way system, should be considered as part of the review.

The review process should start with an inclusive community engagement initiative.

The group would like remedies considered for all issues noted above, including:

- Re-design of the Bridge Street/Church Street/High Street junction – including signalised traffic control and safe, signalised crossing points;
- More extensive use of zig-zag and yellow-box road markings to improve sightlines for pedestrians and drivers;
- Move the bus stop/shelter at the south and east end of the High Street to outside Ladbrokes, making it easier for buses to fully pull into the bus bay; and to alleviate congestion caused by the current bus stops being positioned almost directly opposite each other. Removal of the bus shelter from outside Whispers would also allow the CCTV operator a clear view of these particular licensed premises, which has been the location of several incidents in recent months.
- Review the spacing and sequencing of the traffic lights at High Street East to mitigate traffic congestion as much as possible;
- Implement a “No U Turn” traffic regulation on the High Street.

Police Scotland East (Lothian and Borders Police):

Increase the level of Traffic Warden service in Tranent to tackle frequent infringement of existing traffic regulations.

Other longer-term recommendations for action

2. Broken and uneven surfaces

The footway surfaces on Bridge Street are in very poor condition with a variety of cracked slabs and tarmac; holes; sub-standard patching; raised utility ports and undulations resulting from vehicles being driven onto the footways.

There is also a significant depression in the carriageway in Winton Place, at a frequently used pedestrian crossing point.

Uneven surfaces present trip hazards for all pedestrians, but particularly for people who have reduced mobility and visual impairment.



Recommendation

Resurface or properly repair footways and carriageways to provide smooth and even surfaces suitable for people of all abilities.

3. Footway surfaces are slippery in wet weather

Blister paving and slabbed footways on the audit route are very slippery in wet and icy weather. This increases the risk of falls for all but is a particular concern for people with visual and/or mobility difficulties.



Recommendation

Treat blister paving and slabbed footways to ensure they are not slippery in wet and icy weather.

Relationship to plans and priorities

The East Lothian Community Planning Partnership's (ELCPP) stated intention is to *“work in partnership to build an East Lothian where everyone has the opportunity to lead a fulfilling life and which contributes to a fair and sustainable future for Scotland and the wider world.”*

In the publication “Our Plan for the Future of East Lothian: Single Outcome Agreement 2011” the ELCPP set out the priority actions and specific ELCPP commitments through which the statement of intent would be achieved. Although the period of the Plan has expired it is nonetheless the most up-to-date expression of intended outcomes for local people. A new Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) is expected to be in place by summer 2013.

SOA sort-term outcomes that directly relate to the findings of the Tranent High Street audit include:

- People live healthier, more active and independent lives in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.
- Reduced number of road casualties and collisions.
- Towns and villages are thriving and well-maintained places, where new development reflects their distinct identity. [The indicator of improving pedestrian flow counts for Tranent town centre is particularly relevant to the audit.]
- Increased use of more sustainable forms of transport, moving away from single-car occupancy. [Walking being the most sustainable form of all transport.]
- Communities are well informed and influence decisions that matter in their local areas.
- Young people and children are involved in community life and their achievements are recognised.

Delivering the recommendations from the Tranent High Street audit will directly contribute to meeting the above East Lothian Community Plan priorities and local outcomes within the Single Outcome Agreement.

The audit findings and recommendations are also in accordance with the consultation findings from the Tranent Planning for Real event (October/November 2011). Following this event East Lothian Council stated its intention to develop a town centre strategy for Tranent. The findings of the High Street audit, together with the Planning for Real findings, will help to inform the forthcoming Tranent Town Centre Strategy process.

Contact details

This report is submitted by the Tranent and Ormiston Tenants & Residents Associations. Please direct your response to the group's named independent Outreach Officer:

Mr Paul Laidlaw
Phone: 0131 665 9304
E-mail: plaidlaw@eastlothian.gov.uk

This report was written by Living Streets Scotland on behalf of the Tranent and Ormiston Tenants & Residents Associations.

Janice Gray
Communities Co-ordinator
Living Streets Scotland

Thorn House, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh. EH2 2PR.

tel: 0131 243 2649

email: janice.gray@livingstreets.org.uk

web: www.livingstreetsscotland.org.uk

Living Streets is the national charity working to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets around the UK

Living Streets (The Pedestrians Association) is a Registered Charity No. 1108448 (England and Wales) and SC039808 (Scotland), Company Limited by Guarantee (England & Wales), Company Registration No. 5368409. Registered office 4th Floor, Universal House, 88-94 Wentworth Street. E1 7SA