



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
PETITIONS AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY 2 MARCH 2023
ONLINE DIGITAL MEETING FACILITY**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor N Hampshire
Councillor L Jardine
Councillor G McGuire
Councillor A Forrest

Council Officials Present:

Mr I Forrest, Senior Solicitor
Ms A Stubbs, Service Manager – Roads
Mr I Lennox, Team Manager – Assets and Regulatory

Clerk:

Ms B Crichton, Committees Officer

Apologies:

Councillor J McMillan (sub. G McGuire)
Councillor L Bruce (sub. J McMillan)

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. PET0123: CALLING ON EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL TO MAKE DUNBAR ROAD, ARTILLERY PARK JUNCTION, AND HARDGATE SAFER FOR ALL RESIDENTS, WALKERS, CYCLISTS, AND DRIVERS, AND TO DEAL WITH PUBLIC PARKING

A report had been submitted by the Executive Director for Council Resources to advise of a petition that had been submitted by Shirley Bisset, principal petitioner, calling on East Lothian Council to make Dunbar Road, Artillery Park Junction, and Hardgate, Haddington, safer for all residents, walkers, cyclists, and drivers, and to deal with public parking. The petition had 356 signatures, and was accompanied by additional submissions of photographs, newspaper articles, letters, and emails.

The Provost would ordinarily be the Convener of the Petitions and Community Empowerment Review Committee, but as he had made a declaration of interest and nominated a substitute, the clerk invited Members to make nominations. Councillor McGuire nominated Councillor Hampshire, and all Members confirmed they were content for Councillor Hampshire to act as Convener.

The Convener asked all Members to confirm they had familiarised themselves with the submissions and follow-up emails provided by the principal petitioner, and all Members stated that they had seen these submissions.

Alan Stubbs, Service Manager – Roads, advised of the actions taken by Roads Services in relation to the subject of the petition. There had been regular contact from the principal petitioner since 2017, and officers from Roads Services had provided responses to any direct contact. The principal petitioner had also made contact with other departments within the council, as well as other individuals, groups, businesses, and agencies. Mr Stubbs referred also to a letter containing 26 specific questions, from April 2020; he had copied in Councillors, MPs, MSPs, Police Scotland, and the council's Feedback Team to his response.

He then addressed the various issues raised by the petitioner. In relation to speeding, he advised that a traffic survey had been carried out in August-September 2019, at a time when the speed limit on Dunbar Road was still 30mph; the data showed that the seven-day combined average was 17.2mph, and he reported that Police Scotland did not have concerns over speeding in this area. He thought that the further parking restrictions requested in the petition would likely serve to increase speeding on the road, as parked cars had an effect of slowing down traffic.

Regarding volume of traffic, Mr Stubbs gave an account of the four categories of road in East Lothian, and explained that Dunbar Road was an A road, i.e. a major road intended to provide large transport links between our towns and villages which was deemed suitable for all types of vehicles. The 2019 survey showed an expected volume of traffic for a road of this nature, with 90% of the daily 8219 vehicles being cars, vans, and buses.

Regarding parking on Dunbar Road, he referred to work carried out in 2019 to identify sites to increase parking supply within Haddington. He noted that the demand on parking in Haddington has outstripped the available supply, with congestion caused by visitors searching for parking spaces. After an appraisal, a site was identified at Whittingehame Drive for a potential long stay car park, which would have allowed for some parking restrictions on Dunbar Road. As this was not taken forward, there had been no proposals to restrict parking on Dunbar Road given the challenges around parking within the town.

Mr Stubbs reported on responses from Environmental Health Officers on the petitioner's points on environmental issues, who advised that East Lothian Council must regularly assess air quality to verify that standards were met for various pollutants; annual assessments showed that the health-based standards were met and pollutant levels were not exceeded. The levels recorded in the Hardgate area were well below the thresholds allowed, and amongst the lowest of all measurements taken within the country.

Mr Stubbs had reviewed the recorded accidents and near misses database for 2010-2021, and reported that there were only four incidents recorded, all classified as 'slight'. There may well be more near misses and our property damage but we only have records that result in injury. He advised that some of the line markings on Dunbar Road had recently been refreshed, including at the junctions at Tenterfield Drive and Artillery Park. Line markings were refreshed on a cyclic basis. He advised that the white line across the principal petitioner's driveway had been refreshed in September 2018, and an attempt was made to extend the white line in August 2020, also at the petitioner's request. This was done on one side, but would encroach on her neighbour's drive on the other side, and her neighbour had objected; this had been explained to the petitioner.

Mr Stubbs said that concerns regarding the location of the bus shelter had been taken into account, and the existing bus shelter would be relocated to just before the National Tyre Centre. Mr Stubbs advised that in accordance with the council's policy for road inspections the A6093 Dunbar Road, Haddington was subject to a driven safety inspection every month and a walking safety inspection every two years. Recent records showed that no safety inspections had been missed. Mr Stubbs indicated that he could provide inspection records and defects identified over the last few years to cover the safety inspection cycle if required. East Lothian Council would likely undertake some footway resurfacing in the next 2-5 years, subject to budget allocation and other priorities. He summed up by saying that the issues raised were important for East Lothian Council and communities. He noted the balance to be struck between the needs of the community, other residents, businesses, and motorists, etc. He disagreed that officers had done nothing; they had provided responses to contact made, and he reiterated the actions taken to date, including reduction of the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph, and the proposal to move the location of a bus shelter. He felt it was inappropriate for the principal petitioner to refer to officers in a derogatory way, and although the principal petitioner may not agree with the responses, this did not mean that officers had not listened and did not care.

Mr Stubbs responded to questions from Members. He confirmed that the advisory white line was as long as it could be without encroaching on the neighbouring driveway. He advised that further traffic surveys had been carried out since 2019; the 2019 survey had been referred to because the speed limit had still been at 30mph at the time. More recent traffic surveys showed vehicles travelling at lower speeds again, and a comparable volume of traffic to the 2019 survey. Although another survey could be carried out, he felt there was enough data to show that the use of the road had not changed dramatically over the years, and several snapshots of the road's use had been taken around when the 20mph speed limit had been introduced.

Answering further questions, Mr Stubbs said that the new location of the bus shelter would lead to a restriction on parking around the bus stop. He highlighted that any new crossing considered would have led to a further restriction on parking, which likely would not be looked upon positively by other residents who parked on Dunbar Rd. Mr Stubbs said that officers could consider implementing parking restrictions if Members requested this, but highlighted the impact this would have on parking displacement.

He reiterated that data did not suggest there was a speeding issue, but there would always be some drivers who chose to speed. He highlighted the speed reducing measure provided by the parked cars.

Mr Stubbs confirmed that the white line was advisory, but said that obstruction of a driveway was a police matter; the petitioner could contact Police Scotland if their driveway had been obstructed. Mr Stubbs said that although no prescribed signage would be available, advisory signage could be considered to try to assist with the difficulties with access to and egress from driveways. Mr Stubbs said that the roads under discussion had had their line markings refreshed, whereas other areas had not yet had this work undertaken; he was not aware of any lines that were causing issues.

Councillor Jardine noted the significant number of residents who had also wished to join the principal petitioner in raising concerns with East Lothian Council. The Convener commented that perception of speed could be quite different from reality, and thought that the presence of parked cars could feel as though vehicles were moving faster than was actually the case.

Councillor Forrest had considered the significant amount of evidence submitted, but having heard from Mr Stubbs, he felt that East Lothian Council was already doing everything it could to address the concerns raised. He thought that adding parking restrictions would cause further issues with parking displacement.

The Convener acknowledged the significant amount of evidence gathering carried out by the principal petitioner. He used the road regularly, and noted that the narrowing of the road by parked cars acted as a traffic calming measure. Individual driver behaviour could not be controlled by the council, and the road had to be designed for the majority of traffic. He thought that the parking situation was acceptable, and said the council had no power to deter anyone from stopping at the side of the road or parking overnight. He said that the road had always been busy, and thought that the majority of construction traffic came in from the west side of Haddington. He thought that moving the bus stop would help to provide a safer place to cross the road. He noted that obstruction of a driveway was a police matter and not something that should involve East Lothian Council. He thought that officers had undertaken all reasonable actions, and would not look for officers to make any changes to their current plans for the road.

Councillor McGuire commented that officers had gone to great lengths to address concerns. As some of the concerns related to individual driver behaviour, he suggested that a driver awareness promotion via the press could be considered. The Convener advised that the Road Safety Group ran such campaigns in conjunction with partners.

The Members confirmed their decisions in turn. The Convener was satisfied that officers had taken appropriate action and would not ask for any changes to be made, and Councillors McGuire and Forrest supported these comments. Councillor Jardine acknowledged that concerns would remain with individual residents, but agreed that nothing further could be done by East Lothian Council.

Decision

The Committee unanimously agreed that no further action should be taken as a result of the submitted petition, and accordingly the petition was dismissed.

Signed

Councillor N Hampshire
Convener of the Petitions and Community Empowerment Review Committee