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Date: 8 February 2022



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East Renfrewshire
G46 8NG

Dear [Action Against East Renfrewshire Bollards]

Petition to Remove Black and White Cycle Segregation Bollards on Ayr Road, Newton Mearns

Thank you for your letter dated 16 December 2021 and supporting petition seeking the urgent removal of the bollards on Ayr Road.

Since December 2020 East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) has been trialling a temporary 'pop-up bike & roll corridor' on Ayr Road. The measures seek to safeguard the existing cycle lane through the introduction of 'light segregation'; physical objects placed intermittently alongside a cycle lane marking to provide separation between cycle users and motorised traffic. These measures also support a temporary speed limit reduction from 40mph to 30mph¹.

A community consultation exercise concluded end of November 2021² and a decision on whether to retain, modify, or remove the measures will be taken in June 2022.

Although measures have been introduced rapidly in response to the COVID pandemic (to support social distancing and sustain increases in active travel), the urgent need to protect public health and support sustainable modes of transport will continue to be a key element of East Renfrewshire's recovery from COVID³.

We note concerns raised within the petition and a response to key points is included as an addendum to this letter.

Nevertheless, objections must be balanced against multiple and far-reaching national and local policy objectives. These include cross-cutting areas such as transport & access, health & wellbeing, sustainability & carbon reduction, as well an established and recognised community demand for safe, inclusive space for cycling in the area.

¹ <https://erspacesforpeople.commonplace.is/proposals/a-77-ayr-road-pop-up-bike-roll-corridor>

² <https://erspacesforpeople.commonplace.is/proposals/a-77-ayr-road-phase-2>

³ https://covid.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/2296/Transport-response-to-Covid-19/pdf/ERC_-_Transport_response_to_Covid_19_-_FINAL.pdf?m=637350829594170000



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Research shows that for everyday cycling on busy roads to be fully accessible, inclusive and appeal to the greatest number of users (regardless of age, ability, or experience), users must be protected from motorised traffic through physical separation⁴.

The trial currently underway represents an opportunity to fully assess impacts on road users and residents, which in turn provides valuable evidence to inform the design of any potential permanent measures.

Therefore, ERC will not be removing the bollards at this time. We will instead continue monitoring and progress with key recommendations of the Spring 2021 Design Review⁵, namely, the development of an outline 'masterplan' for Ayr Road. This plan will conceptualise a future streetscape to improve provision for walking, cycling, and wheeling along Ayr Road, while also balancing the needs of residents with the function of Ayr Road as a key local movement corridor. This will include consultation with the community and opportunities to feed into the design development process.

Thank you again for submitting your petition. I hope this clarifies the council's position and would encourage your group to continue to engage with ERC on any issues that arise as a result of the trial.

Yours sincerely

Gillian McCarney
Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer)

CC

Lorraine McMillian – Chief Executive

Cllr Tony Buchanan – Leader of the Council

Andrew Cahill – Director of Environment

Ward 3 Councillors – Jim Fletcher, Colm Merrick, Gordon Wallace

Ward 5 Councillors – Caroline Bamforth, Barbara Grant, Jim McLean, Jim Swift

Kirsten Oswald MP

Jackson Carlaw MSP

⁴ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/50323/cycling-by-design-update-2019-final-document-15-september-2021-1.pdf>

⁵ <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/commonplace-customer-assets/erspacesforpeople/A77%20Ayr%20Road%20Design%20Review.pdf>

Addendum: ERC response to issues raised by the petition

Key issues raised in petition	ERC petition response
<p><i>Delivery drivers, essential visitors (such as care workers) and emergency vehicles are unable to stop safely on the road. This leads to additional parking/traffic on side streets or parking between the bollards and Ayr Road which is unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians.</i></p>	<p>Reduction of parking on Ayr Road is a desirable outcome of the project. We would advise residents and visitors to use off-street and nearby on-street parking where this does not cause an obstruction.</p> <p>Nevertheless, we note continuing demand for on-street parking and loading provision on Ayr Road, especially for services such as deliveries. Unfortunately, our ability to accommodate both on-street parking and a segregated cycle lane is constrained by the current road layout – in particular, the central reservation – which cannot be modified as part of a temporary infrastructure programme.</p> <p>Resolution of this issue is likely to be considered by the upcoming masterplan.</p>
<p><i>Blocked access to driveways by delivery drivers and other vehicles and instances of cars parking completely on the pavement, causing obstruction to pedestrians and wheelchair users.</i></p>	<p>Inconsiderate and obstructive parking on Ayr Road (whether partially or fully on footway and cycle lane) is a historical problem. We would encourage all road users to act responsibly and adhere to the Highway Code. This includes not blocking driveway access, obstructing cycle lanes or parking on the footway.</p> <p>Police Scotland have the power to carry out enforcement when vehicles cause an obstruction with ERC continuing to monitor the impact of temporary measures on obstructive parking behaviour.</p>
<p><i>Ongoing disruption to the flow of traffic leading to increased congestion, emissions and air pollution.</i></p>	<p>ERC's monitoring and evaluation framework will consider the effects of the scheme on congestion and air quality. It should be borne in mind that the primary source of congestion, transport emissions, and reduced air quality across the region is high levels of private car use. As such, measures to enable a shift to more sustainable modes of transport represent part of the solution.</p> <p>The vast majority of the corridor has seen no change in capacity for motor traffic, which remains at one lane in each direction. We have responded to community feedback about localised congestion at Mearns Cross by reinstating two lanes on the southbound approach, which we will continue to monitor.</p>
<p><i>Road safety concerns over parking on the central reservation by delivery vans and other large vehicles which is unsafe and obstructs the view of the road by other</i></p>	<p>Independent consultants recently conducted a Stage 3 Road Safety Audit, which is standard practice upon completion of any significant road scheme. The council asked the auditors to consider whether parking on the central reservation was detrimental to road safety. The final report does not highlight this as a significant risk.</p>

<p>drivers.</p>	<p>We do however advise motorists to park only in locations that do not present hazards to other road users.</p>
<p><i>The existing cycle lane has been narrowed by hard segregation and cyclists are unable to ride side by side or overtake each other without going between bollards into the flow of traffic. This has discouraged families and children from using the cycle lane and is an immediate concern to cyclists using the road on a regular basis.</i></p>	<p>The cycle lanes on Ayr Road do meet the minimum design requirements as defined in the relevant guidance. However, we accept that they fall below the desirable width and this prevents people comfortably cycling side-by-side within the lane.</p> <p>This drawback is balanced against the positive effects of separation, such as the increased sense of safety and strong evidence that this is more attractive to a wider range of people than conventional unsegregated infrastructure.</p> <p>Please note, ERC has widened the cycle lane in several locations since the trial commenced. Further widening of the cycle lane would necessitate resurfacing around the central reservation. At present, if required to bear the weight of large numbers of vehicles, this part of the road would quickly deteriorate.</p>
<p><i>Cyclists have safety concerns about fallen bollards or other debris obstructing the cycle lane.</i></p>	<p>The route is inspected daily by council staff who remove any items that are hazardous to road users. ERC will continue to monitor the efficacy of the light segregation units, including the number and frequency of repairs, as well as the cause of damage.</p>
<p><i>Cyclists are concerned about fallen leaves, blocked drains, snow, slush and other debris in cycle lane and whether the council will be able to provide adequate maintenance by clearing or gritting.</i></p>	<p>ERC are trialling a compact sweeper in order to maintain the cycle lane and to better understand future maintenance implications as part of ongoing monitoring efforts.</p> <p>Please note, the bollards have a limited impact on spread of grit from the adjacent carriageway</p>
<p><i>Large tailbacks and additional congestion caused on bin collection day by the bin lorry which obstructs Ayr Road during peak time traffic and safety concerns with cars passing on the wrong side of the road.</i></p>	<p>The initial design for Ayr Road left regular gaps in the segregation to allow bin lorries to stop and queuing traffic pass. Following a review, approximately 70 bollards were removed to create additional stopping areas for bin lorries and operatives to access the kerbside. We are continuing to engage with colleagues to monitor impacts resulting from weekly bin collections along Ayr Road.</p>
<p><i>Drivers are unable to see cyclists when turning right to travel up Ayr Road and the height of the bollards blocks cycle lights therefore endangering cyclists.</i></p>	<p>The Road Safety Audit did not find that the bollards restricted sightlines generally, but did identify some specific areas where increased spacing would benefit visibility. ERC will be responding to the findings of this audit and consider changes as part of ongoing operations.</p>
<p><i>Drivers have reported an</i></p>	<p>As noted above, the available capacity for motor traffic</p>

<p><i>increase in congestion at junctions and obstructed views and added congestion from side streets.</i></p>	<p>on Ayr Road is largely unchanged as a result of the measures. Congestion will however be assessed as part of the monitoring and evaluation process. This will consider impacts of design against before-and-after traffic data to identify any effects the scheme may have had on traffic flows.</p>
<p><i>Road safety concerns about ambulances and other emergency vehicles being able to pass through traffic in an emergency.</i></p>	<p>From the outset, ERC has sought feedback from the emergency services to understand potential impacts on emergency response times. To date no objections have been received. Nevertheless, we continue to consider any changes that may be necessary to assist the emergency services and maintain an open dialogue with Police Scotland via regular liaison meetings.</p>
<p><i>Road safety concerns from both cyclists and drivers about wet/icy conditions and limited space to avoid collisions.</i></p>	<p>The Road Safety Audit did not identify any risk in this regard. The A77 is identified as a priority route as part of ERC's winter maintenance programme. This aspect will however continue to be monitored to better understand future maintenance implications.</p>
<p><i>Limited stopping spaces for buses and no stopping places for parents doing drop off for school buses.</i></p>	<p>The line of bollards is discontinued in the area around bus stops, and the gaps are designed to allow buses to stop by the kerbside. We have consulted with bus operators who have not reported any impacts on bus stop access.</p> <p>Deterring obstructive parking on the cycle lane is a key objective of the scheme and we encourage parents dropping off children at school bus pick-up points to do so only where this does not cause an obstruction to other road users.</p>
<p><i>No safe stopping places for car users in emergency situations such as flat tyres, sick children, choking, heart attack, blurred vision etc. Continuous driving may also encourage use of mobile phones for texting and unsafe use of satnav.</i></p>	<p>We would encourage road users to pull in only when it is safe and practicable to do so, with frequent gaps in the segregation to allow road users to stop in an emergency.</p> <p>The laws prohibiting certain uses of mobile communication devices while driving have not been affected by the introduction of the scheme.</p>
<p><i>Safety concerns about strobing effects/reflection of light on bollards affecting vision especially at night for both cyclists and road users.</i></p>	<p>Although we cannot discount people's personal experiences (and note feedback received to this effect) the Road Safety Audit process, which included a site visit to Ayr Road in the hours of darkness, did not identify a strobing effect as being problematic for the safety of road users.</p>
<p><i>Residents and visitors are experiencing difficulty accessing driveways and there are concerns about road safety as well as added road</i></p>	<p>We have previously agreed to remove bollards from the vicinity of properties along Ayr Road where these impede driveway access and egress. Please note, ERC will continue to make reasonable adjustments where a need has been determined.</p>

<p>congestion.</p>	
<p><i>Residents are concerned about the unsightly appearance of bollards and local estate agents have confirmed this is detrimental to house prices on Ayr Road and surrounding areas.</i></p>	<p>ERC expects that the masterplan process will generate a series of options and include a more aesthetically pleasing long-term design approach for Ayr Road.</p>
<p><i>Ongoing costs to the council to maintain the scheme including daily picking up of knocked over bollards. This is currently done by a vehicle travelling up and down the road with multiple workers.</i></p>	<p>Maintenance costs associated with the measures are currently being met by Sustrans' Spaces for People funding.</p> <p>We accept however the ease by which bollards can become dislodged is disappointing, with works recently completed to enhance the resilience of these. We will continue to monitor the scheme to understand future maintenance costs associated with any permanent changes to the road layout.</p>
<p><i>There is growing unrest within the community between cyclists and other road users who are unable to share spaces due to hard segregation. There have been a number of 'road rage' incidents between cyclists and drivers and reported incidents of drivers shouting abuse at council bin lorry staff.</i></p>	<p>Reports of "growing unrest" and abuse are of course regrettable. Based on observations this conflict arises as a result of drivers obstructing the cycle lane (therefore creating hazards for cyclists wishing to manoeuvre into live traffic) and cyclists legitimately avoiding the cycle lanes in favour of the general carriageway, resulting in driver delay and frustration. Reasons for the latter may be due to cycle lane width and a desire for social 'side by side' cycling, as well as avoiding ironwork, debris, parked vehicles or individual decisions regarding road positioning and personal safety in line with Rule 61 of the Highway Code.</p> <p>It is clear therefore that "sharing" road space is not a sustainable long-term option and any expectation that vulnerable road users must share space with fast moving motorised vehicles is untenable if cycling is to be a legitimate form of everyday transport.</p> <p>How best to meet demand for safe and inclusive active travel infrastructure (by ensuring appropriate separation for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles) is therefore a key aim of measures.</p> <p>As noted previously, we have created additional stopping areas for bin lorries in an attempt to mitigate driver aggression towards refuse vehicle staff.</p>
<p><i>While we appreciate that East Renfrewshire Council is trying to support and encourage cycling, there seems to be limited or no benefit from the</i></p>	<p>The principal benefit of light segregation is to provide separation between vulnerable road users and motorised traffic. This has been shown elsewhere to encourage more people to cycle by broadening its appeal to a larger segment of the population.</p>

<p><i>installation of the bollards which are in place.</i></p>	<p>Evidence from public attitude surveys consistently demonstrates that it is the perception of road danger that is one of the key barriers to increasing levels of cycling. Although ERC recognise that temporary measures are unlikely to produce a fully inclusive design, we will assess whether measures have increased the propensity to cycle and utilise key learnings to inform longer term design solutions.</p>
<p><i>There have been a number of public complaints and issues reported directly to East Renfrewshire Council which have not been recognised or rectified.</i></p> <p><i>Consultation appears to have been limited to the Commonplace website and residents of Ayr Road have reported no prior notice of the erection of bollards. The online document also has dozens of negative views/comments which appear to have been ignored.</i></p>	<p>Please note that all complaints and reported issues have been considered, with the majority of these actioned accordingly. Feedback received as part of the ongoing community and stakeholder consultation has, and continues to, directly influence ongoing design development.</p> <p>Please note that the consultation process is not focused on whether the scheme should proceed, but how measures impact residents and road users, what changes may be necessary and what measures may look like moving forward.</p> <p>Given the extraordinary circumstances presented by COVID, the introduction of temporary measures did require a change to usual engagement approaches. This included an initial trial period associated with the introduction of temporary traffic management (traffic cones) for a period of 6-7 months supported by ongoing communication and engagement across multiple channels to promote transparency of the council's actions. The later included disseminating information via community networks, direct resident notification, press releases / social media, on-street posters and the use of a dedicated design feedback platforms.</p>