

Lenzie Community Council

Discussion of 'Healthy Habits' Plan for Lenzie / Kirkintilloch

Introduction

East Dunbartonshire Council has won funding under the Scottish Government's 'Smarter Choices, Smarter Places' initiative to apply a series of transport interventions within the Kirkintilloch/Lenzie area, intended to promote active travel and improve the health of the local community. Dr Graeme McLay, the Council's Senior Transportation Officer, attended the AGM of Lenzie Community Council on 30th October 2008 to explain the main features of the plan, marketed under the title of 'Healthy Habits'. The Plan included several maps and a copy of the funding submission dated July 2008. There was extensive discussion, contributed by members of the public as well as Community Council members and the purpose of this document is to capture as much of that discussion as possible, together with previous Community Council discussions and subsequent consideration of the documents by Community Council members. No claim is made that this document is a comprehensive representation of the views of Lenzie community, as geographical and other representation on the Council is too narrow at this stage. Rather, the intention is to contribute constructively to development of the Plan and to provide a starting point for wider discussion within the community.

A central aim of the Plan is to reduce car use and increase 'active travel' in Lenzie/Kirkintilloch by improving walking and cycling infrastructure provision, together with increased use of public transport. This is an issue where input of local knowledge and views will be crucial for success and the aim of this discussion is to initiate a dialogue with transport planners. This document will focus on maps included in the strategy document – in particular map 5, which identifies off-road and on-road routes, together with new routes under construction, including the Kirkintilloch Link Road (KLR). A key aim of the strategy is to try to ensure that as much vehicular traffic as possible is directed along the KLR, which should reduce traffic through the central residential part of Lenzie and open up opportunities for improved cycling and walking provision.

The strategy document does not deal specifically with the vexed issue of parking relative to Lenzie Station, which was discussed extensively at the AGM. Parking was also discussed at a meeting between Community Council members and representatives of First Scotrail and EDC Transport Planning at Lenzie Station on 10th October. Some points concerning this matter will be included in this document. It is known that control of parking is being addressed by ED Council and is also being considered through the Local Transport Strategy for 2008-2013. The EDC Core Paths Plan is also relevant to the Healthy Habits Strategy and Lenzie Community Council has already commented on the Draft Core Paths Plan at the public consultation stage during the summer of 2008.

Travel to Lenzie Station and Parking Issues

Use of Lenzie Station has increased greatly over recent years, mainly due to traffic congestion and increased parking charges in Glasgow City. There is a proposal to extend the platform at Bishopbriggs Station, which would permit six-coach trains and probably give rise to further increased usage of Lenzie Station. More railway Halts have been proposed for Woodilee and Westerhill, but it will not be possible to even consider these until the new electrified route from Glasgow to Edinburgh has been implemented. Lenzie Station therefore constitutes both a threat and an opportunity to the Healthy Habits strategy. The **opportunity** would arise through more Lenzie residents switching from car to train travel. The distinctly serious **threat** is that there will be more traffic problems on the local roads that connect to the Station from outwith Lenzie, and that parking on residential streets will increase. The view of the Community Council is that the Healthy Habits strategy, as currently stated, does not offer many solutions to counter this threat. It is not possible to quantify these issues at present as there is an absence of information on the origins and destinations of rail users and off/on street parkers, or an estimate of the extent to which improved car parking at Croy Station might influence the situation.

One strategy which has the potential to alleviate the problem is the use of satellite car parks together with Park and Ride provision. The Community Council would like to see active consideration of this idea for potential inclusion in the Strategy. Another difficulty is the absence of an integrated transport system, as exists in many European suburban areas. This is due in part to transport policies based on creating competition. For example it was noted that two buses per hour of the new X/85/87 Express Bus system operated by First Bus compete directly in timing with First Scotrail trains to Glasgow and do not serve as

'feeders' for the rail system. Similar inconsistencies regarding policies for parking charges were mentioned at the Lenzie Station site meeting.

The AGM was told that KI planned to bring forward a decked car park within the North car park at Lenzie Station and, more recently the Community Council was informed that EDC, SPT and Network Rail have agreed jointly to progress this plan. There may be opposition to this from nearby residents on appearance grounds and early consideration should be given to architectural quality and 'greening' or other measures which would make this more acceptable. However, the impact on total parking that such a development is likely to make is probably small, given the numbers of parked vehicles in the area at present. A suggestion was made at the AGM to consider use for parking of the 'waste' ground between Millersneuk Road and the railway. This would not be an objection-free option either, as it currently constitutes 'greenspace' (albeit it could be better managed from the point of view of tree-surgery and flooding), it provides a measure of rail noise screening for residents in the flats opposite and there could be road traffic problems at the junction.

During the Lenzie Station site visit, it was noted that no distinction is made between the 'island' car parking at the Station and the North car park. It was suggested that a time limit should be put on the island park, for the benefit of Queen's Buildings shoppers and Station pickup/drop off. Attention was also drawn to the resulting situation where temporary and longer term parking on the double yellow lines on the North side of the island takes place and this causes severe manoeuvring difficulties for buses. Taxi double parking in the 'buses only' bay is also a problem. First Scotrail and EDC representatives at the meeting agreed to look into ownership and responsibility for altering use of this part of the parking provision. 'Policing' of the car parks is currently carried out by one or other of the rail authorities and the sticky notices applied to wrongly parked vehicles appear to have little effect on persistent offenders.

Infrastructure Proposals – map 5

Key Off-Road Routes

Measures identified for action in the Strategy comprise filling of missing gaps in the Strathkelvin Walkway in Kirkintilloch and links through Southbank Business Park. The latter should benefit users of Christine's Way in the High Gallowhill area.

It would be helpful to include other current off-road routes in Map 5 – in particular, Lenzie Moss circular route, Waterside to Garngaber and Auchinloch-Lenzie via the Golf Course. Note that these routes link to Lenzie Station. However, several, if not most of the off road routes are recreational in character – that is, they are mostly ash-surfaced and useable in daylight only. Improving them to the level required for daily use would be seen by many residents as a negative step.

Several other 'completions' and improvements have been suggested by the Community Council, namely:

- A link from the north end of the Lenzie Moss boardwalk, across beside the Rugby pitch to Boghead Road and then via Boghead Wood path to Christine's Way. This route has now been recognised as feasible by Access Officers and is on the list for attention in the future.
- Links from Lenzie Moss School (and potentially Lenzie Academy) and Oak Drive to the Lenzie Moss path leading to the Station.
- As previously suggested by LCC – a new link for the benefit of the new Woodilee Estate and Larkfield from the corner of Easter Garngaber and Garngaber Avenue through to Lenzie Station.

Primary Road Network

A Primary road is presumably a road intended to carry normal vehicular traffic (and not cycles) and Garngaber Avenue is the only road identified thus to serve Lenzie (in addition to the Link Road under construction). It is not clear why several other roads have *not* been so designated, in particular, Lindsaybeg Road, Crosshill Road and Boghead Road, which will be needed to give access to the wider local road network. (This may be a matter of definition.) Increased traffic on Garngaber Avenue may be problematic to residents (although removal of parked cars would probably be welcomed) and it has been noted previously that this will be the obvious route for walkers and cyclists coming from the Woodilee Estate to use facilities in Lenzie, including the Station. (Garngaber Avenue is currently clear of parked cars on a temporary order and moves to make this permanent should be considered.)

Fears have been expressed that the only road leading off Garngaber Avenue (Lomond Road) may become the starting point for several 'rat runs' through the complex of housing in Moncrieff, Douglas, Laurel Avenues and Middlemuir Road (as happens to some extent at present). Consideration could be

given to a barrier in Lomond Road or at the other ends of the likely bypass routes. However, it would not be sensible to 'force' vehicles all the way up to Kirkintilloch Road, so that they would have to return all the way down Moncrieff Avenue or Middlemuir Road to reach their destinations.

The rail tunnel route on Eastern Garngaber Road will become largely redundant (post-KLR) for vehicles, except for those aiming to avoid the traffic lights at the KLR-Woodilee intersection and could be closed off to the great benefit of walkers and cyclists, who currently run the risk of being drenched in wet weather. The adjacent exit from Craigenbay Road onto Eastern Garngaber Road was closed off several years ago, following representations by the residents of the Craigenbay estate concerned about the safety of children, but other alterations to traffic flow on completion of the Link Road may prompt reconsideration of that arrangement. At present, there is no 'dropped kerb' arrangement at the cul-de-sac end of Craigenbay Road and this is inconvenient for pram users and cyclists at a point which is vulnerable to fast traffic.

On-Road Routes

The most radical of the suggestions in the Strategy is that use of the present Auchinloch Road-Kirkintilloch Road-Lenzie Road through-route be restricted in some way, so that alterations which would make it more suitable for cycling, more-pleasant walking and bus transport could be implemented. Map 5 shows the 'on-road' route starting at the Crosshill Road-Auchinloch Road mini-roundabout, although it was suggested that the point of vehicle restriction might be at the Hornshill roundabout. It is not clear at this stage that the road is at all points wide enough to allow cycle lanes, but it could be assumed as a possibility for the sake of further consideration.

The implications for car drivers living in various parts of Lenzie and Auchinloch need to be considered carefully. Residents North of Garngaber Avenue or Lindsaybeg Road would have the option of using either Garngaber Avenue or Lindsaybeg Road to access KLR and the M80, or would alternatively access at Townhead. Any of these options would be at least as favourable to drivers as using the present twisting, congested and dangerous route to Hornshill via Auchinloch Road and Stepps Road (note that the speed limit on Stepps Road is 60 mph, which is something of an anomaly given that the M80 has a 50 mph limit and 40 mph is proposed for KLR). South Lenzie residents would have the option of using Lindsaybeg Road or taking Crosshill Road and Robroyston Road to access M80 at junction 2 (Saughs roundabout). Auchinloch and Gadloch residents would perhaps be the most inconvenienced by a restriction at Hornshill, as proposed, which suggests that a better location for any restriction might be between Auchinloch and the Crosshill Road junction. Much depends on the nature of the restriction – a complete barrier to cars would cause difficulties, but some kind of single-tracking, combined with a protected bus lane might make the alternative routes via the KLR more attractive.

This strategy of encouraging KLR use and discouraging use of the present route has many attractions for Lenzie residents. These would include removal of fast-moving and heavy vehicles from the route (except presumably when access to specific premises is required), the general reduction of traffic volume which has reached very troublesome and unsafe levels for a residential area and the possibility that a safe cycling route could be established, connecting nearly all parts of Lenzie to Kirkintilloch Centre and Lenzie Station. The legitimate concern is that if no measures are taken, then vehicle traffic on this residential route will gradually return to the present level, which would be very undesirable.

Minor and miscellaneous points

- Map 4 does not include the Woodilee bus route.
- The extension of the Railway Walkway southward beyond Bothlyn Cottage is towards Chryston and not following the line of the Link Road as shown on the map (unless the intention is to provide a cycle track alongside the Link Road at this point?) It has come to our attention more recently that the continuation of the Railway Walkway to Chryston will intersect the Muirhead/Chryston bypass and the nature of this crossing is not known. A tunnel path crossing would be undesirable.
- At the top of page 30, it would be advisable to designate this on road route as Lenzie-Kirkintilloch-Auchinloch Road to make clear the extent of the route to be treated for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Map 5 shows the Strathkelvin Walkway route bypassing Parkview Court as it reaches the Leisure Centre, which may not be what is intended.

