

## Pedestrian Safety in Residential Streets

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### Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership

27 September 2010

#### Purpose of report

- 1 To refer a report on pedestrian safety in residential streets.

#### Main report

- 2 On 4 May 2010 the Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee considered a report by the Director of City Development, in response to a motion by Councillor Hawkins on addressing pedestrian safety in residential streets including the possibility of redesigning existing streets in accordance with the principles adopted for Home Zones.
- 3 The Committee agreed:-
  - 1) To note the report and discharge the motion by Councillor Hawkins
  - 2) To call for a further report addressing problems with parking on pavements and how pedestrian safety on residential streets could be improved without reverting to Homezone principles.
  - 3) **To refer the report to Neighbourhood Partnerships.**

#### Recommendation

- 4 **To note the report.**

*Alastair Maclean*

**Alastair Maclean**  
Head of Legal and Administrative Services

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**Appendix** report by the Director City Development

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**Wards affected** All

**Background Papers** Scottish Executive (2007) Home Zones in Scotland – Evaluation Report. Scottish Government (2010). Designing Streets. The Home Zones (Scotland) (No. 2) Regulations 2002. Home Zones Pilot, Caledonian Area, Dalry (2003).

## **Pedestrian Safety in Residential Streets**

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### **Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee**

**4 May 2010**

#### **1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To respond to the notice of motion by Councillor Hawkins presented to the Committee on 24 November 2009, to report on:
- a) How pedestrian safety could be increased in residential streets whilst accommodating other pressures of use.
  - b) The possibility of redesigning existing streets in accordance with the principles adopted for Home Zones.
  - c) How the designs might be incorporated into areas of architectural sensitivity and Conservation Areas.
  - d) The adoption of good design principles from the initial consideration of such schemes.
  - e) The costs of such alterations in comparison to traditional street design on a whole life costing basis.

#### **2 Summary**

- 2.1 The Committee requested at their meeting on 24 November 2009, that the Director of City Development develop a report addressing pedestrian safety in residential streets. The Committee noted that in some areas of the city, residential streets are very narrow and are effectively reduced to one way streets by parked cars that line one or both sides of the street, often with parked cars on the pavement. Pavement parking prevents free access by pedestrians, especially those with prams or those with mobility issues, forcing them to use the carriageway to the detriment of their safety. For example, in Portobello, Bath Street, Marlborough Street and Regent Street and the Rosefields.

### **3 Main report**

- 3.1 The philosophy of a “Home Zone” is a design principle where people are thought more important than cars, with the carriageway alignment designed to reduce vehicle speeds and increase pedestrian safety. Home Zones aim to create residential areas where street space is shared between pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Resulting vehicle speeds are lower, and drivers are made to feel they are guests in an environment designed for people to walk and play. Home Zones focus on changing driver behaviour, with emphasis on the quality of life for residents as well as road safety.
- 3.2 Since Home Zones are designed to create a shared space for vehicles and pedestrians, they aim to lose the distinction between carriageways and footways, creating in their place a single shared space. In a Home Zone, people share the road surface, and, if well designed, vehicles can only travel at a maximum speed that is little faster than walking pace (less than 10mph). Shared space also helps promote social interaction, and makes it easier for most people to move around.
- 3.3 It is a common perception that Home Zones reduce levels of parking occurring in residential areas. That is not their purpose. Their purpose is to reduce the impact of cars in residential areas and, thus, promote more diverse street environments. Home Zones can be introduced where levels of car ownerships are quite high, although greater benefits will be experienced where levels of car use are quite low. Increasing pressure to park within Home Zone areas however can undermine the concept. Separate parking restraint and enforcement measures may be required to maintain the level of parking in which a scheme can successfully operate.
- 3.4 In 1999 the Scottish Executive invited councils to nominate Home Zone projects for monitoring and evaluation purposes. The Council nominated the Caledonian area of Dalry, made up of 4 streets and 250 - 300 multi occupancy tenement dwellings, for the purpose of developing a Home Zone. Similar to the Portobello examples cited previously, the Caledonian area has high levels of associated on-street car parking.
- 3.5 The Council's proposed Caledonian scheme involved redesigning existing streets (retrofitting) in accordance with the Home Zones concept. Retrofitted Home Zones are best used where residents perceive traffic to be dangerous and are discouraged from going out. Retrofitting is very challenging and potentially more costly approach than incorporating Home Zone principles in new housing schemes. Retrofitted schemes, however, offer potential for wider community benefits, especially where the community has actively participated in progressing the project. Key retrofitting issues include:
- a) Resolving different community views and expectations.
  - b) Reconciling such expectations with what can be achieved in financial and engineering terms.

- c) Implementing extensive streetscape works in a populated residential area.
- d) Addressing issues associated with the volume and location of parking.
- e) Selecting materials that strike a balance between capital costs and ongoing maintenance costs.
- f) Focusing on investment at key locations within a Home Zone, or spreading it more widely.
- g) The need to accommodate service vehicles, parking and potentially buses.

3.6 The Caledonian project was however abandoned due to the significant level of objection, and an overall lack of consensus on the part of the local community. The community was particularly concerned about the threat of reducing levels of car parking provision to accommodate the Home Zone, although the scheme would have resulted in only a minor reduction in on street parking. Parking is an emotive issue for residents, particularly in densely populated areas with narrow streets. Maintaining community support was made difficult as the Caledonian area contained a relatively young and mobile population.

3.7 The Scottish Executive's evaluation of other piloted Scottish Home Zone schemes did however reveal the following conclusions:

- a) Principal benefits relate to community involvement and empowerment, with comparatively minor changes in vehicle speeds or volumes.
- b) Funding is inevitably a key issue, largely due to the significant sums involved in implementing Home Zone projects and the difficulty in synchronising development with council and external funding sources.
- c) The long timescales involved (typically five years), and the need to bridge the gap between technical design issues and community expectations and involvement created significant challenges.
- d) Councils faced difficulties in reconciling the extended design and consultation timescales with budgeting and funding applications.
- e) There was only limited evidence that the schemes have resulted in increased community use of outdoor space.
- f) New build schemes offer the potential to include the physical elements of Home Zones, but can present significant social challenges, particularly where awareness of area's status is low among incoming residents.
- g) There can also be technical issues associated with the creation of shared spaces and the provision of services.

- h) Home Zones have the potential to raise issues for partially sighted and blind people where shared spaces are provided and there is an absence of kerbs.
  - i) The study found that neither of the implemented schemes (of the original four pilots) had been formally designated as Home Zones, partly due to the fact that the projects started before the point where the regulations came into force (2002), as well as there being a mismatch between the onerous Regulations and the 'community' dimension of Home Zones.
- 3.8 Under the Home Zones (Scotland) Regulations 2002, Home Zones are designated as shared surfaces. Shared surfaces can cause significant problems for some disabled people. People with cognitive difficulties may find the environment difficult to interpret. In addition, the absence of a conventional kerb poses problems for blind or partially sighted people, who rely on these to delineate different parts of the street and provide a navigational feature. Blind and partially sighted people therefore strongly object to the proliferation of shared surfaces. Research published by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association demonstrates that there is no current method which can be used as an effective alternative to the kerb.
- 3.9 Wauchope Square in Craigmillar has recently undergone a wider regeneration initiative lead by the Council. A Home Zone was seen as integral to providing a high quality residential environment and public realm, by treating the road as part of a shared space between buildings, and providing superior paving, landscaping, gardens, squares and courtyards. The costs of which were however significant – see *Financial Implications*.
- 3.10 In addition to an objection to this scheme by RNIB Scotland, Lothian and Borders Police were not supportive of the establishment of a Home Zone in Wauchope Square, stating '*that the safety of residents, pedestrians and particularly the vulnerable could be compromised*'. Following such concerns, and alongside recent consultation with the Scottish Government, the Council aim to withdraw from the formal Home Zone designation process for Wauchope Square, with the streets in this particular scheme operating instead as a shared surface type arrangement.
- 3.11 Matters are complicated further by the publication in March 2010 of the Scottish Government's *Designing Streets* Policy Statement that encourages the creation of Home Zones. Through the use of Quality Audit stages, disability groups are invited to provide input to the design of shared space schemes. Quality Audit is a new concept, and one that needs to be investigated further by the Council.
- 3.12 The Council is currently undertaking a trial of tactile surfacing for the 21st Century Housing scheme in Gracemount. This trial involves the Edinburgh Access Panel and will establish what, if any, measures can be introduced into shared spaces to make them acceptable to blind or partially sighted people. Until a suitable resolve is agreed the Council will not be formalising new schemes, or indeed retrofitting schemes as a Home Zone.

- 3.13 Subject to enabling suitable provision for disabled people or the visually impaired, shared surface streets are likely to work well in short lengths, in cul-de-sacs, where the volume of motor traffic is below 100 vehicles per hour (peak), and where parking is controlled or it takes place in designated areas.

#### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Funding is a critical factor in the design and implementation of retrofitted Home Zones, since it contributes to the time taken to implement a scheme and has a bearing on the choice of materials and the scale of a scheme. Funding directly and indirectly influenced the decision not to progress with the Caledonian scheme.
- 4.2 The outline proposals for the Caledonian Home Zone were estimated at £800,000 or more (approximately £2700 per household). This was to be sourced from the £4.2million grant funding made available under the 20mph speed limits around schools, Safer Routes to school and the development of Home Zones from the Scottish Executive from 2003-2008. As a result, the Council decided to use the allocation for the implementation of 20mph zones around schools and safe routes to schools schemes instead.
- 4.3 Assuming inflation was fixed at 2% growth since the pricing of the four street Caledonian scheme in 2003, then a rough forecast can be applied to the suggested Portobello streets (similar number of streets to Caledonian) to establish a cost of £920,000. Each scheme however requires different styles of materials and will involve variable amounts of planning, design, utility and other ground works, so this is merely a rough indication.
- 4.4 The recently constructed Wauchope Square scheme cost £5,000,000 to develop, and has a capacity for some 400 houses (approximately £12,500 per household). The high costs associated with Home Zone projects relative to the size of community in question raises concerns where it means that investment elsewhere is restricted as a result. This will have relevance in the context of all locations which are interested in establishing a Home Zone concept.
- 4.5 Conservation areas and areas of architectural sensitivity will need to have particular attention paid to the materials used. The quality of the design and its appropriateness to an area can have a significant effect on the extent to which a place is liked and well-used. Design quality also makes a difference in creating places that will stand the test of time; being well-designed to last longer and be easy to maintain. Quality, sensitive design and suitable materials will therefore add to the capital, and maintenance costs of a scheme. Consultation with the Streetscape steering group would be essential to ensure design proposals are appropriate in the context of Edinburgh's built heritage.

- 4.6 The difficulty in securing funding can influence the design of the Home Zone (eg comprehensive or selective in its approach) and the timescale over which it is designed and implemented. The choice of location for development of a Home Zone may also affect the potential funding sources available. Time and resources are required to submit additional funding applications.
- 4.7 With Council budgets continually becoming restricted priorities tend to favour more traditional safety projects which aim primarily to reduce levels of road traffic incidents. Promoting alternative means to improve road safety and conditions for pedestrians are being pursued by the Council, through developing a Road Safety Plan and an Active Travel Plan.

## **5 Environmental Impact**

- 5.1 There are no adverse environmental impacts arising from this report.

## **6 Equalities Impact**

- 6.1 There are no adverse equalities or human rights implications arising from this report.

## **7 Conclusions**

- 7.1 Until a suitable resolve is agreed between the Council and the Edinburgh Access Panel regarding shared space, the Council will not be formalising new schemes, or indeed retrofitting schemes as a Home Zone. The Council will, however, pursue the recently introduced Quality Audit concept, with a view to establishing general design principles to accommodate a mixture of uses and a variety of users in residential streets. Such principles will be influenced through consultation with Streetscape and the Edinburgh Access Panel.

## **8 Recommendations**

- 8.1 To note the findings of this report.
- 8.2 To discharge the motion.



**Dave Anderson**  
Director of City Development

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Appendices	None
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Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	<p>This Report can help contribute to the current National Outcomes:</p> <p><b>(6)</b> - We live longer, healthier lives.</p> <p><b>(9)</b> - We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.</p> <p><b>(10)</b> - We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.</p> <p><b>(12)</b> - We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.</p> <p>Supports Local Outcome LO9: The number of casualties resulting from road traffic collisions is reduced.</p>
Background Papers	<p>Scottish Executive (2007). Home Zones in Scotland – Evaluation Report. Scottish Government (2010). Designing Streets. The Home Zones (Scotland) (No.2) Regulations 2002. Home Zones Pilot, Caledonian Area, Dalry (2003).</p>