

Briefing Note: Prestonpans to Levenhall Active Travel Route

Introduction

East Lothian Council, in partnership with Sustrans, has commissioned AECOM to develop a safe, accessible and lit active travel route between Prestonpans and Levenhall, to improve the connectivity for those walking, wheeling, or cycling in the area.

By promoting active travel, the route will support the achievement of East Lothian's Climate Change Strategy¹ which aims to reduce carbon emissions and improve climate resilience. The route will also form a key connection, as part of the wider East Lothian Active Travel Improvement Plan², to several routes including:

- Musselburgh Active Toun (MAT)³
- The John Muir Way⁴
- National Cycle Route 76 (NCN 76)⁵

The figure below shows an overview of how the route will connect with the wider planned active travel network in East Lothian:

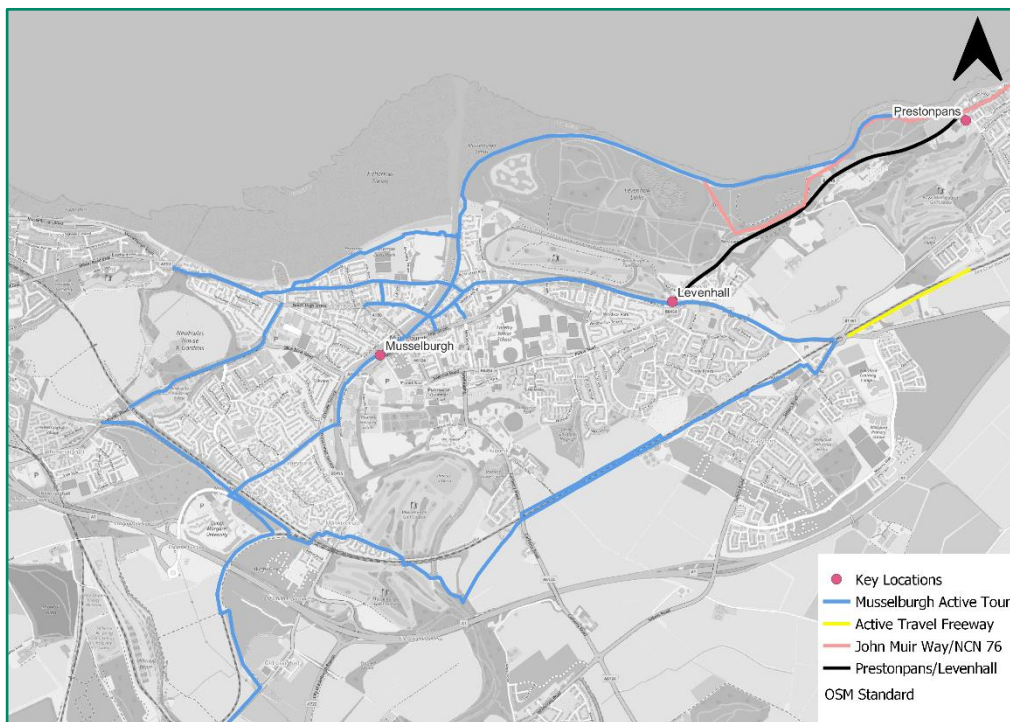


Figure 1: Local Active Travel Network

The goal of the project is to create a direct commuter route for people walking and cycling between Prestonpans and Levenhall that will complement the existing leisure routes in the area, connect to the Musselburgh Active Toun network, and provide capacity for future extension through Prestonpans and beyond.

¹ [ELC Climate Change Strategy \(2020-2025\)](#) (Accessed Nov 2024)

² [ELC Active Travel Improvement Plan \(2018-2024\)](#) (Accessed Nov 2024)

³ [Musselburgh Active Toun \(MAT\)](#) (Accessed Nov 2024)

⁴ [The John Muir Way](#) (Accessed Nov 2024)

⁵ [National Cycle Route 76 \(NCN76\)](#) (Accessed Nov 2024)

The objectives of the project are to:

- Create a safe, direct and accessible active travel link between Levenhall and Prestonpans
- Contribute towards improved road safety in, and between Levenhall and Prestonpans
- Enable improved active travel connections to local businesses, schools and community assets along the route
- Provide a connection to the local active travel network

Work Undertaken to Date

Following the appraisal of options along the corridor, a RIBA Stage 2 concept design was developed in 2024, and consultation and engagement was undertaken in early 2025. This included engagement with Elected Members, local community groups, bus operators and businesses; an online survey and drop-in sessions were also held to provide an opportunity for the public to provide feedback.

Feedback received from this round of engagement was broadly positive, with responses highlighting key features of the route and possible design aspects to be considered in future design stages, particularly around parking and accessibility.

Feedback included concerns raised by some residents on the impact of the proposal for private parking on-street, as well as business parking and servicing. Concerns were also raised in relation to the potential for conflicts on the busier sections of segregated / shared use paths at residential frontages. Feedback highlighted some areas of poor pedestrian provision at Levenhall (footways and crossings) and issues with speed of traffic.

To reflect feedback received, designs were updated and two options identified. The options have been updated to present shared use infrastructure for the majority of the route for each of the two options. The primary difference between the two options is at the Levenhall end of route as summarised below:

- Option 1 proposes pedestrian improvements and traffic calming at Levenhall. This includes a mixed traffic street for cyclists / traffic (see Figure 2 below) which includes a protected strip down the middle of the carriageway to narrow lanes, reduce speeds and encourage cyclists to ride with the traffic. Wider pavements and an improved pedestrian crossing are also included.
- Option 2 proposes a shared use path on the north side of the carriageway, with raised table side road crossings at Hope Place and Levenhall Links Road junctions.



Figure 2: Example mixed traffic street treatment with narrowed lanes

The project is currently at RIBA Stage 2. This stage serves to refine the concept designs to the point that they can be taken forward to detailed design and Traffic Orders. During this stage detailed cost estimates are

produced, and relevant impact assessments are conducted to support any required planning applications that may be required.

Key design changes based on feedback

- 1) Removal of segregated cycle way option at Levenhall
- 2) Additional pedestrian improvements at Levenhall, including road crossings
- 3) Alternative options at Levenhall to accommodate people cycling
- 4) In response to operator feedback, carriageway widths adjusted on the Westpans to Prestonpans section, to better accommodate buses

It is noted that adjusting the carriageway widths is likely to impact local landscape, including the potential for some trees to be removed. This is to allow a shared use path to be accommodated.

Proposed Consultation and Engagement

As this stage of the study, a further round of targeted engagement is being undertaken with specific stakeholders and members of the public residing on the corridor. The aim of this engagement is to gain feedback on the updated designs from different groups and individuals.

Design options have been developed to support further discussion with stakeholders and within the community and feedback will be used to help determine the most appropriate solution for the study area.

An online survey will be available in October for targeted stakeholders and members of the public residing directly on the corridor to provide feedback. The latest designs will also be published online at the same time, alongside an overview of updates.

If you have any queries or require any further information, please contact:

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