



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET

**TUESDAY 11 MARCH 2025
VIA DIGITAL MEETING FACILITY**

Cabinet Members Present:

Councillor S Akhtar
Councillor N Hampshire (Convener)
Councillor J McMillan
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor C McGinn

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor L Jardine
Councillor S McIntosh
Councillor G McGuire
Councillor C Yorkston

Council Officials Present:

Ms L Brown, Interim Chief Executive/Executive Director for Education and Children's Services
Ms S Fortune, Executive Director for Council Resources
Ms N McDowell, Head of Education
Ms H Barnett, Head of Corporate Support
Mr T Reid, Head of Infrastructure
Ms C Rodgers, Head of Communities & Partnerships
Mr S Cooper, Service Manager - Communications
Mr C Grilli, Service Manager – Governance
Mr A Stubbs, Service Manager for Roads
Mr P Forsyth, Project Manager – Growth & Sustainability
Mr I King, Roads Asset & Regulatory Manager
Ms M Haddow, Senior Roads Officer
Ms L Hunter, Senior Roads Officer

Clerk:

Ms F Currie
Ms E Barclay (Meeting Administrator)

Apologies:

Councillor F Dugdale

Declarations of Interest:

None

The clerk advised that the meeting was being webcast live via the Council's website in order to allow the public access to the democratic process in East Lothian. East Lothian Council was the data controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected as part of the recording would be retained in accordance with the Council's policy on record retention, and a recording of this meeting would be publicly available for up to six months.

The clerk confirmed attendance by taking a roll call of Cabinet Members present.

Before moving into the business of the meeting, the Convener announced the death of former councillor, David Costello. Mr Costello had been a councillor between 1995 and 2002, had held the role of planning convener, where he had helped to deliver many different developments across East Lothian, and had also been Depute Provost for a time. He said that Mr Costello would be greatly missed by many in the community of Prestonpans.

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL: CABINET, 21 JANUARY 2025

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet on 21 January 2025 were approved.

2. EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL TRAVEL PLAN 2025-2030

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Place seeking Cabinet approval for a new Travel Plan for East Lothian Council.

The Service Manager for Roads, Alan Stubbs, presented the report outlining the background and purpose of the Travel Plan. He said that the plan had been influenced by factors including an increasing population, increased pressure on transport infrastructure and providing viable alternatives to motorised transport, particularly single occupancy car journeys. He advised that the Council had a statutory duty to report annually on carbon emissions, including emissions from workforce commutes, and that it was committed to reducing emissions by increasing the number of staff travelling to work sustainably. An annual travel survey was undertaken to calculate and monitor progress, and the plan provided the basis to support and encourage active and sustainable travel choices. He explained the development of the new Travel Plan for 2025-2030, in partnership with TravelKnowhow Scotland, and the use of digital tools to generate a more data driven approach to workforce travel planning and implementation.

Mr Stubbs and the Head of Infrastructure, Tom Reid, responded to questions from Councillor McIntosh on how to encourage behavioural change, issues around public transport and the use of data. Mr Stubbs provided some examples of improvements to facilities and the promotion of initiatives to support sustainable travel. Mr Reid advised that, if approved, the Travel Plan would be widely promoted to managers and staff. Data would be used to inform and promote to car sharing, and the Council would collaborate with transport partners to look at discount schemes for public transport. He explained that the software would allow them to see which parts of the plan were being adopted by staff and where changes or strengthening was required.

Mr Stubbs responded to a question on the salary sacrifice scheme for discounted bus travel. He explained that this had to be based on a set amount as the Payroll Team needed to know in advance the sum to deduct from monthly salary. There was no date yet for rollout and they were continuing to explore other options with providers. He confirmed that the Council did work closely with its bus and rail partners, and the Scottish Government, on these initiatives.

Addressing the recent announcement in changes to bus services, Mr Reid acknowledged the challenges that such changes brought. However, he said that the Council's travel partners had been hugely supportive during the pandemic, and they had continued to work with them to

support tenders and maintain the frequency of rural services. He pointed to the forthcoming initiatives for staff and said that the Council remained committed to doing what it could to support improvements to bus and rail networks in the future. He advised that the data provided by Cal Commuter would allow the Council to work more collegiately with partners and to feed information back to colleagues to effect further changes.

Officers responded to a further question from Councillor McIntosh regarding targets for a reduction in car mileage and commuting. Mr Stubbs outlined some of the initiatives in place to try to reduce the burden in making these behavioural changes. Peter Forsyth, Project Manager – Growth & Sustainability, explained that due to the level of growth and development in East Lothian the target of a 5% reduction in car mileage and commuting seemed more realistic within the context of what they were trying to achieve. He also noted that the 20% target was currently being reviewed by CoSLA and the Scottish Government, and they were awaiting further detail on what that would mean for targets going forward. Mr Reid added that radical change and investment was required at national level to change the way that people thought and to provide affordable, sustainable travel networks.

In response to a question from Councillor Akhtar, Mr Stubbs provided examples of initiatives to reduce single car occupancy, such as car clubs, utilising pool cars, introducing new policies like the car leasing scheme and a mechanism for supporting car sharing. He said that while that there had been some improvements, the Council was trying to do more to provide more staff with incentives to make behavioural changes.

Mr Reid replied to a question from the Convener. He advised that currently the level of funding within the capital plan was not sufficient to allow the Council to make the change to decarbonise the fleet. He said that another approach would be required, such as grant funding from government or a change to market conditions resulting in a significant drop in the price of alternative fuel vehicles.

Councillor McMillan thanked officers for the report the theme which was to achieve radical change by encouraging people to make changes to their behaviour. He said it was important to engage with all partners in looking for different ways to achieve decarbonisation and net zero targets, including providing information and services. He reflected on the improvements to bus and rail services since 2012 but acknowledged more needed to be done. He highlighted the work of the regional transport partnership and that there were likely to be changes coming forward through the work of Transport Scotland over the next year. He concluded that making the necessary changes was an individual ask and he exhorted everyone to think about their actions.

Councillor McGinn thanked officers for the report while reflecting on the positives and negatives. He commented on the irony of the timing in talking about collaboration with partners and communication flow when councillors had not had the opportunity to talk to their communities about the recent changes announced to bus routes. This was reflected in recent feedback he had received at community council meetings in the number of e-mails he had received about transport issues. Nevertheless, he commended the work outlined in the report which was supported by the diligent efforts of staff, and he praised the Council's determination to reduce its carbon footprint.

Councillor Forrest also thanked officers for their work and an excellent report. He welcomed the ongoing efforts and said he looked forward to working with partners to make further improvements.

The Convener commended efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of staff coming to work and of the plant machinery used to deliver services. He said that the challenging financial situation made it especially difficult to make changes to the fleet and reduce the impact on the environment. He said that public transport in the county was provided mainly by private sector

providers, and they delivered what he believed was a really good service. He pointed out that while the Council provided £1M to subsidise some bus routes, it could not cover every route across the county. He hoped that staff would consider how they travelled to work and, where possible, would change to more sustainable models. He said that going forward we must do all we could to reduce our carbon footprint.

The Convener moved to a roll call on the recommendations, which were approved unanimously.

Decision

The Cabinet agreed unanimously, by roll call vote:

- i. To approve the targets and corresponding action plan contained within the new travel plan.
- ii. To commit to a data-led approach to workforce travel planning and Scope 3 emissions reporting for the duration of the plan (6 years). This would require annual subscription to the CalCommuter tool (or similar).
- iii. To Approve the Draft East Lothian Council Travel Plan 2025-2030 in Appendix A.

3. BELHAVEN MASTERPLAN REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Place allowing Members to review the Belhaven Masterplan 2024 report.

Senior Roads Officer, Morag Haddow, presented the report. She referred to the results of the consultation undertaken in 2019 which identified a number of deficiencies in walking and cycling infrastructure and the general amenity of the Belhaven area. Potential solutions were explored during a further period of consultation which took place over 6 weeks at the end of 2024 to prioritise these projects. The engagement work included an online survey, and drop-in sessions and workshops. A total of 360 responses were received providing valuable feedback and identifying the projects people most wanted to see move forward. Ms Haddow provided details of the projects, as set out in the report. She indicated that officers planned to take these forwards in order of priority, although projects 1, 2 and 3 could potentially be combined as a single project which would require planning permission. She also advised that the intention was to seek funding from Transport Scotland and all of the work would be dependent on that external funding coming forward.

Ms Haddow responded to questions from Councillor Jardine. She confirmed that the proposals that had been consulted on last year had come from the original 2019 report which itself had identified concerns without going any further. This most recent report was providing solutions to those issues. She stated that the main concerns raised by respondents to the consultation were around crossing the road at the junction with Shore Road and at Brewery Lane, as well as a desire to improve walking and cycling connections between Belhaven and Dunbar. She said that while officers had not explicitly consulted with people out with the local area, the survey had been available online. She explained that experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) could be set up to trial different options over a period of 6 to 18 months. In relation to the closure of Back Row, that there had been no monitoring of the previous closure, so a trial was required. She was concerned that too many different trials could be confusing and there was a cost involved. She did not rule out trialling other options, but these would have to be structured very carefully.

In reply to a question from the Convener, Ms Haddow confirmed that they would take on board responses to the consultation and the impact on surrounding streets before proceeding to the stage of seeking planning permission, and that people would also have the opportunity to comment on the planning application.

Mr Reid advised that the community council had submitted a late response to the consultation with some suggestions on the proposals. He confirmed that these would be taken into account should Cabinet support the recommendations in the report.

The Convener was pleased that matters had now reached the stage of trialling options to try to improve the movement of traffic and the safety of pedestrians in the Belhaven area. He said that during summer the area could become dangerous as a result of narrow roads and pavements and fast-moving traffic on the network. He did have concerns about how best to resolve the issues on Back Row and he was not convinced that a complete closure was the answer. He said that the Council would need to consider how to deliver this going forward but he welcomed the report as a move towards improving safety for residents and visitors.

Councillor McMillan echoed the Convener's remarks, particularly around the reasons for these proposals. He was delighted to hear about the consultation and Mr Reid's commitment to continuing to listen to local views. He said that engagement was important, and the recommendations were well worth supporting.

The Convener moved to a roll call on the recommendations, which were approved unanimously.

Decision

The Cabinet agreed unanimously, by roll call vote, to take forward the tasks identified below in priority order and as opportunities arose, namely:

- i. Seek funding to signalise the junction of Beveridge Row/Edinburgh Road/ Shore Road
- ii. Conduct a trial restricting Back Road between Winterfield Place and Winterfield Golf Club to non-motorised vehicles only
- iii. Finalise designs for Shore Road path to incorporate feedback received, and apply for Planning Permission on this basis
- iv. Apply for Planning Permission for agreed improvements at Shore Road Car Park entrance, and seek funding to implement this
- v. Consult further on restricting beachfront parking at Belhaven to Blue Badge holders only
- vi. Undertake further design work to change alignment of crossing at Duke Street / Brewery Lane and seek funding for further consultation and subsequent implementation.

4. VARIOUS ROADS, MUSSELBURGH, INTRODUCTION AND AMENDMENTS TO TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS, MARCH 2025

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Place seeking Cabinet approval of the statutory procedures necessary to make and amend Traffic Regulation Orders to prohibit

waiting, loading and unloading, reduce an existing speed limit, and permit contra-flow cycles on an existing one-way street.

Mr Forsyth presented the report giving a brief summary of the background. He advised that the report sought approval to begin the statutory procedures and that the proposed interventions would improve routes for active travel through Musselburgh by providing a safer segregated space for users, reducing speed limits and prohibiting parking on specified streets.

There were no questions from Members.

Councillor Forrest welcomed the report and said that, when walking around the streets affected, it was clear to see why the proposals were being brought forward, especially those around parking. He praised the work already done and said he looked forward to the consultation stage.

Councillor McMillan also welcomed the proposals. He believed that they would encourage people to use the high streets, promote tourism and help people move around more easily and safely.

The Convener moved to a roll call on the recommendations, which were approved unanimously.

Decision

The Cabinet agreed unanimously, by roll call vote, to approve the statutory procedure necessary to initiate, consider any objections and make or amend Traffic Regulation Orders in accordance with the relevant legislation in respect of locations and proposals listed in Appendices A, B, & C of the report.

Signed

Councillor Norman Hampshire
Council Leader and Convener of Cabinet