

Smokey Brae Improvements Consultation Report

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Smokey Brae Improvements Consultation Report

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1. Introduction

In early 2021 the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) appointed Jacobs to develop options for improving the safety, security and provision for people walking, wheeling and cycling on the Smokey Brae corridor and junction area with Marionville Avenue and Restalrig Avenue. Following an initial screening process, feasible options were assessed by CEC's design team and subsequently with feedback from key external stakeholders. A preferred option was identified, which has been developed into the proposals presented during the public consultation process.

This report summarises the consultation exercise that was undertaken during Stage 3 Developed Design of the Smokey Brae Improvements project.

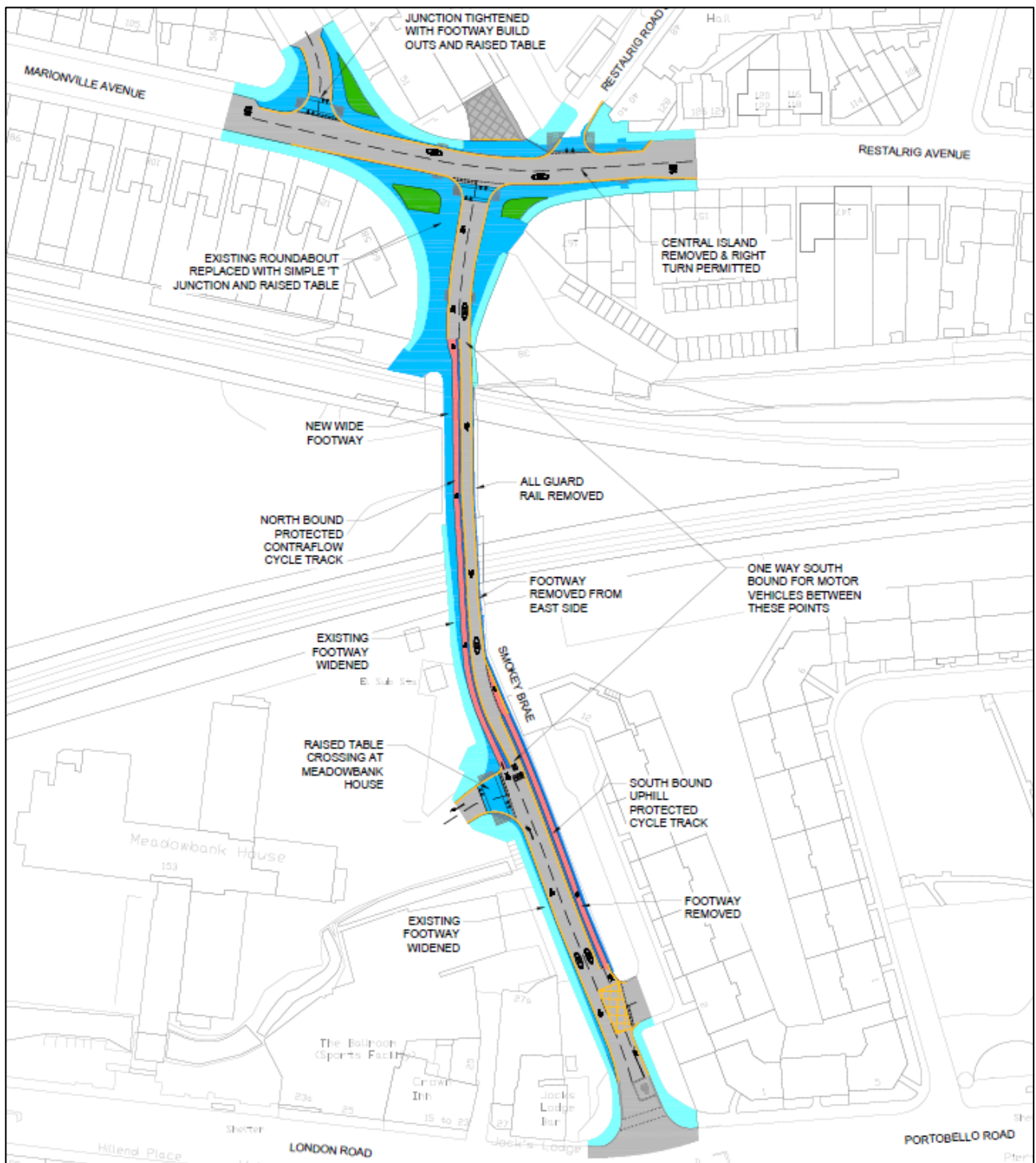
2. Proposals

The proposals to deliver people focussed improvements on Smokey Brae take cognisance and follow the overarching government strategies and CEC policies, such as (but not limited to): Transport Scotland's [National Transport Strategy 2](#) and [Edinburgh's City Mobility Plan](#). As such, the proposals have been developed to align with the principles of the transport hierarchy by prioritising the most sustainable and equitable modes of transport; with a primary aim of delivering a safer and more desirable corridor for people of all abilities to use.

In summary the key elements of the proposals to improve the Smokey Brae corridor and northern area are as follows:

- Widened and renewed footways;
- New sections of physically separated cycle lanes;
- New and improved pedestrian crossings;
- Street lighting improvements;
- Public realm improvements;
- New areas of public green/blue space;
- Reallocation and renewal of the carriageway;
- Traffic calming measures; and,
- Closing Smokey Brae to northbound (downhill) traffic under the railway bridges.

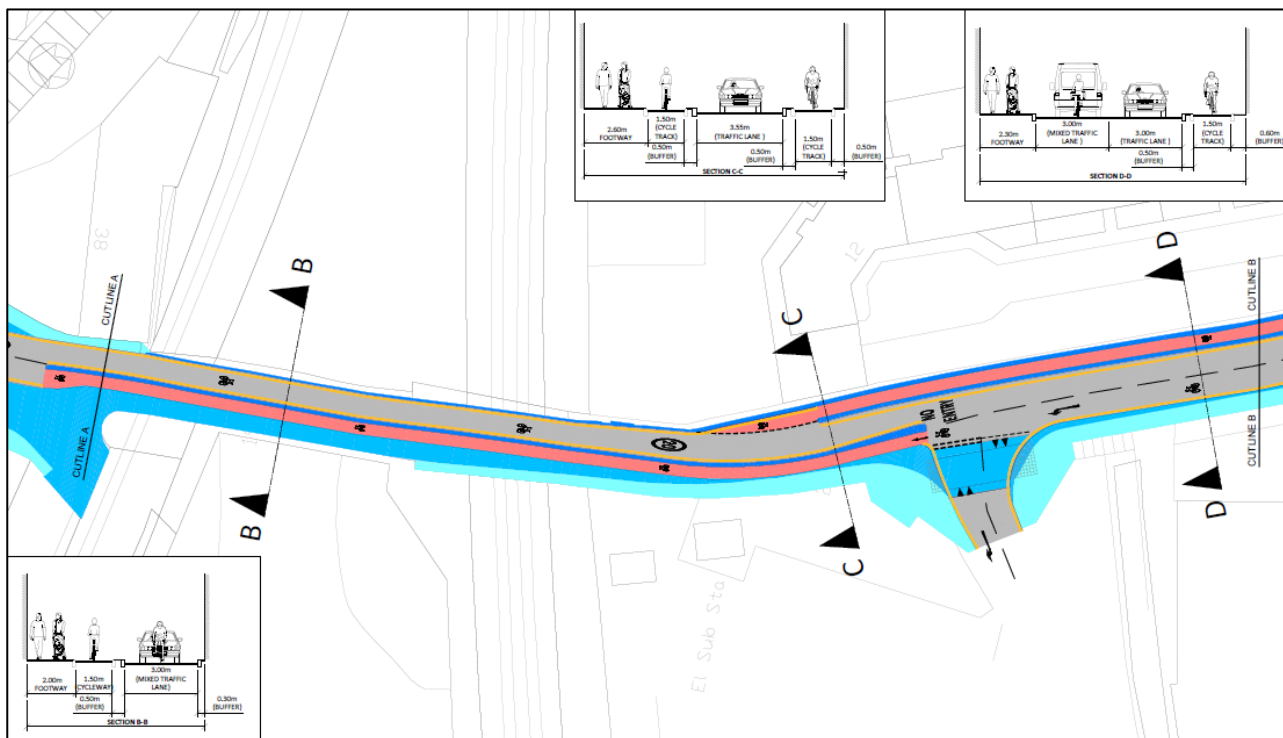
Figure 1 shows the proposals for the Smokey Brae corridor.



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Figure 1 Plan of the Smokey Brae proposal

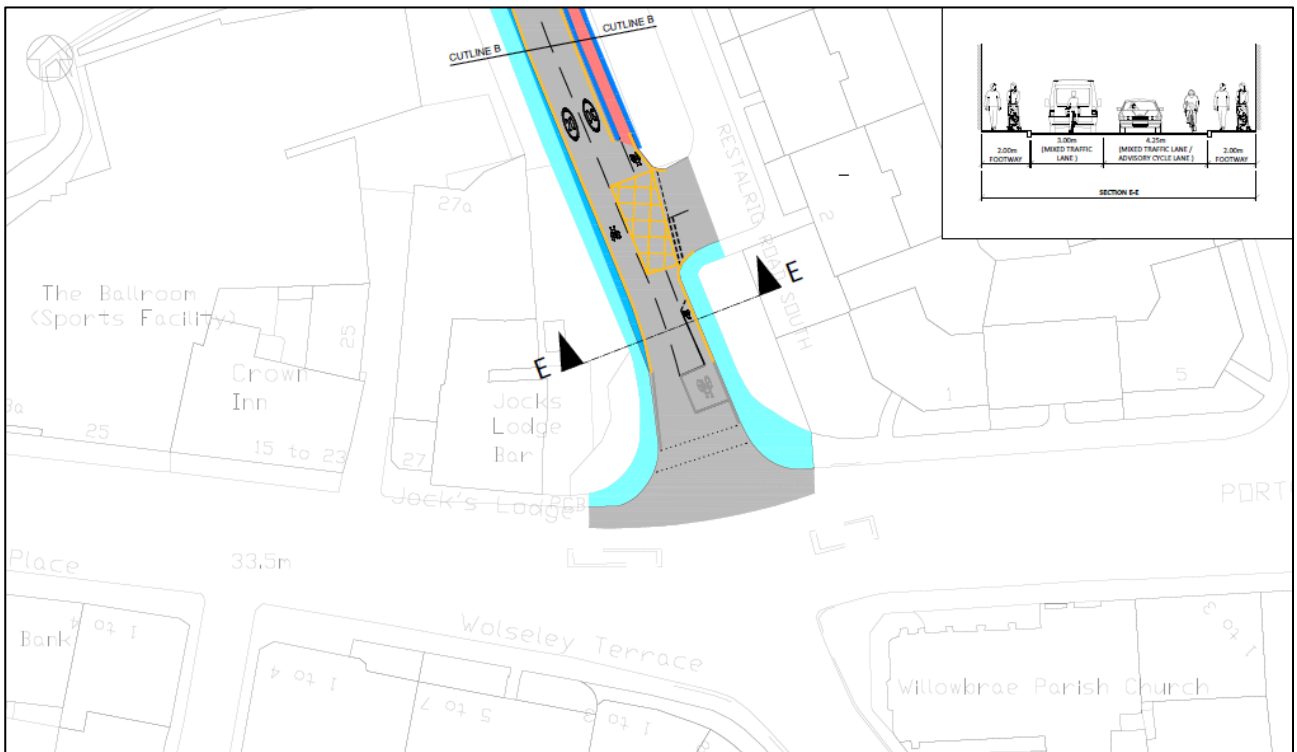
Figure 2 shows the proposed junction design for the northern area of Smokey Brae where it meets Marionville Avenue and Restalrig Avenue. The proposed design will remove the existing roundabout and introduce a priority junction that permits the reallocation of underutilised areas to the benefit of the local residents and people walking, wheeling and cycling.



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Figure 3 Proposal for the central section of Smokey Brae

Figure 4 shows the southern section of Smokey Brae on approach and at the Jock's Lodge junction. The proposed design will narrow the junction radii where it meets Jock's Lodge and widen the footway on the western side. The southbound (uphill) section of physically protected cycle lane will end at the spur street for residents' access.



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Figure 4 Proposal for the southern section of Smokey Brae

3. Forms of Consultation

Consultation Type	Description
Meeting/workshop with internal and external stakeholders	The Meadowbank development sounding board forum was used to develop proposals. The proposals were discussed at meetings on 17 December 2020, 03 November 2021 and 30 March 2022.
Public Exhibition	Consultation boards were on display at the Piershill Library from Monday 25 April 2022 to Monday 09 May 2022.
Consultation Hub	The City of Edinburgh Council Consultation Hub hosted project information and the online survey .
Leaflets	11,000 leaflets detailing the proposals and a survey were distributed throughout the surrounding communities.
Social Media	The project was promoted through the City of Edinburgh Council's social media channels including Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.
Online Survey	The online survey was hosted on the City of Edinburgh Council's consultation hub from 22 April 2022 until 16 May 2022.

Table 1 Consultation methods

4. Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the Meadowbank regeneration project an Active Travel Cycling and Streets workshop was held on Monday 19 November 2019 which was attended by residents, local representatives, and council officers. One of the overwhelming points that came out of the workshop was the perceived issue regarding the safety and accessibility for people walking and wheeling on Smokey Brae. It was agreed by the Council that as part of the active travel strategy for the Meadowbank regeneration project, improvements to Smokey Brae would be carried out. Two members of the community sat on the Council's Smokey Brae Improvements project team as well as on the Meadowbank Sounding Board. A collaborate development approach has been adopted with design updates and decisions proposed by the project team for initial feedback from the sounding board. Since 2021, the primary means of community engagement for the project has been through the Meadowbank Sounding Board. The sounding board brings together developers, community groups and representatives, community councils, ward councillors and relevant Council officers. Engagement with mobility/access groups was carried out during early April 2022. Statutory engagement will begin once the detailed designs for the proposed schemes are finalised.

In addition to the collaborative development approach outlined above, proposals to deliver a temporary Covid-19 response project via the Council's Spaces for People programme was developed during early 2021. As part of the development process feedback from external stakeholders was sought which helped to shape the temporary Covid-19 proposals. Ultimately, the temporary Spaces for People proposals for Smokey Brae were not implemented, however the feedback received during the development process has been taken into consideration and helped to inform the permanent proposals consulted upon.

5. Organisational Responses

This section presents the organisational responses received from stakeholder groups to the proposals for improving the Smokey Brae corridor and northern area.

5.1 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

We are pleased that Edinburgh City Council have consulted with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service during the Smokey Brae planning process. We are committed to improving the safety of all road users, especially those most vulnerable. We do not have any objections to the proposal presented and look forward to continued engagement with planners.

5.2 Edinburgh Living Streets Group

Smokey Brae is at odds with the transport hierarchy. It feels like a hostile environment for anyone not moving in a car. The current layout puts pedestrians in as an afterthought and is particularly unsuitable for anyone pushing a pram or using a wheelchair. The pavement is too narrow, and traffic moves incredibly quickly and close to those using it. The pavement creates a pinch point that when two adults walk through in opposite directions on foot, they struggle to pass. If a pram or wheelchair is involved, one party must give way. Currently, walkers and wheelers who choose to avoid this junction must make a 15-minute detour. Living Streets Edinburgh Group greatly welcomes the proposals to redesign Smokey Brae and create a space that respects the transport hierarchy more.

- Living Streets support the introduction of continuous pavement with raised table junctions. These should be implemented using pavement materials rather than road material as this will emphasise pedestrian priority.
- The designs appear to reduce the overall footway space available for pedestrians by removing the pavement on the eastern side of the road. However, this seems to be a reasonable compromise as there is currently no safe crossing near the railway underpass, and the existing footway is too narrow.
- If it's possible to make the proposed new pavement even wider, Living Streets Edinburgh Group will welcome this. However, we appreciate this may not be easy to do given the overall width available and the welcome introduction of safe infrastructure for cyclists. Perhaps you could achieve this by closing the road from the T-junction to the Meadowbank House entrance to both northbound and southbound traffic, except for emergency vehicles only. This change would allow the fire service quick access to the south and create ample room for walkers, wheelers and cyclists alike.
- Living Streets Edinburgh Group members have noted that the Jock's Lodge crossroads poor crossing times. Those who need to cross the road must wait for 2-minutes between signals and only have 7 seconds to cross. People who want to go down Smokey Brae will need to use these crossings. Pedestrians coming from Portobello Road will now have to as the pavement has switched sides. Therefore, we think it should be a requirement to adjust the timings of these crossings to give more priority to pedestrians!

- Lastly, we've mentioned in our other answers to the survey that we would like the introduction of seating and wildflowers. Due care should be given to the seating positioning so as not to obstruct the natural movement of people through the area.

5.3 Spokes

Smokey Brae is loathed by most who use it, particularly people walking, wheeling or cycling. Many people on foot or bike avoid it because it feels unsafe and oppressive. In addition, detours significantly increase journey times and may deter people from choosing healthier and sustainable transport modes. Spokes believe the proposals presented will help equalise the transport landscape in this area and therefore we support them.

- Spokes strongly support the removal of the roundabout in favour of the T-junction and raised table crossings. However, this may allow for higher speeds moving through the area and ask that the council consider additional speed reduction measures for traffic moving between Marionville Avenue and Restalrig Avenue.
- Spokes request that all the raised table junctions be implemented as continuous pavements and built with pavement material. This further implies pedestrian priority, making it more likely that drivers will give way to those higher up the transport hierarchy.
- The introduction of a protected cycle lane heading north is also welcome. However, Spokes request appropriate signage and road markings are in place to indicate the presence of cyclists, and the need to give way. Specifically for traffic leaving Meadowbank House and the garages at the bottom of Restalrig Road South.
- Spokes have raised concerns for cyclists heading south, as it may not be immediately apparent that there's a cycle lane just after the railway bridge and have proposed road marking such as a cycle-and-arrow may help with this.
- It's unclear why the general traffic lane becomes slightly wider heading south after the railway bridge (from 3m to 3.55m) rather than making either of the cycle lanes wider. There is a risk that this additional .55m could encourage drivers to overtake southbound cyclists before they are safely in the protected lane. Both cycle lanes are only 1.5m wide in the current proposal, which is the minimum recommended width. We suggest widening one of the lanes to 2m at this point (it's probably easiest to widen the northbound lane).
- Spokes have requested that proposals go further urging the complete closure of the Restalrig Rd South section to car traffic. However, to provide the emergency services from Marionville Fire Station to have quick access heading south this could be facilitated by using a 'bendy bollard' or modal filter that the fire service can temporarily remove.
- Consider Smokey Brae as a component in a network of safe cycling infrastructure and not in isolation. Currently, southbound cyclists have little priority or protection after the segregated cycle lane. Spokes recommend introducing advanced cycle green lights that allow riders to get into a safe position as they enter the Jock's Lodge crossroads.
- To achieve greater network connectivity the southbound cycle track should have a continuous link to the existing Portobello Road infrastructure. Unfortunately, there is a short stretch of road

before the Portobello Road cycle lane begins, which drivers frequently block by parking there. If a continuous lane isn't possible, it is recommended controlling the parking on the road with double red lines.

- Further to treating Smokey Brae as part of a network rather than an isolated piece of infrastructure, Spokes request that creating a fully segregated cycle lane on the approach to the Jock's Lodge junction on London Road is considered.

6. Survey Consultation Outputs

There were 1,031 responses received to the online and paper survey with the output as presented in this section.

6.1 Q1. Do you support the proposals to improve Smokey Brae?

Figure 5 shows the levels of support and opposition for the proposals put forward in the consultation to improve Smokey Brae. The results show that 50% are in support of the proposals and 49% were in opposition.

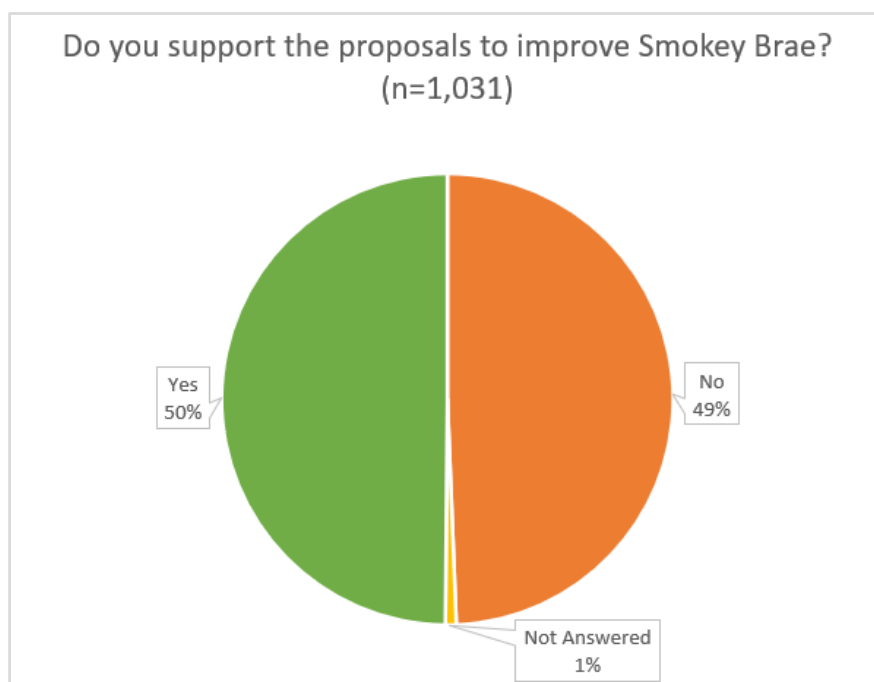


Figure 5 Output to Q1. Do you support the proposals to improve Smokey Brae?

6.2 Q2. Would these proposals impact on your journey time?

Responses were not conclusive and provided little data for meaningful analysis. Therefore, it is considered that this question does not provide relevant information to establish a reasonable outcome, either positive or negative.

6.3 Q3. Would these proposals encourage you to walk, cycle or wheel e.g. use wheelchair or pram?

Figure 6 shows the output of those who felt that the proposals would encourage them to walk, cycle or wheel. The results show that 44% of respondents felt the proposals would encourage them whereas 55% did not think the proposals would encourage them to walk, cycle or wheel.

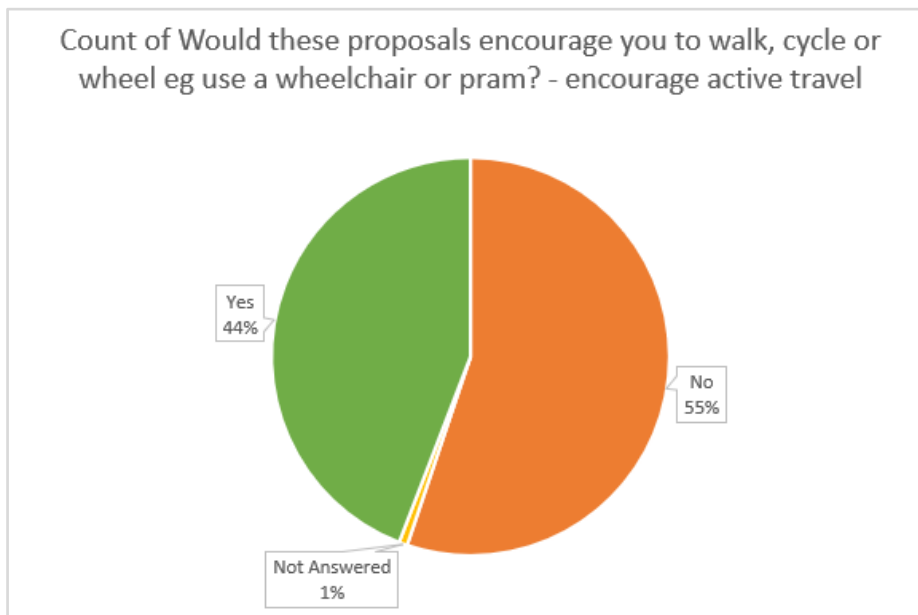


Figure 6 Output to Q3. Would the proposals encourage you to walk, wheel or cycle?

6.4 Q4. The proposals allow more space for public amenity. How would you like to use this space?

When asked what respondents would like the new public amenity space that the proposals would reclaim from the carriageway to be used for, the most popular selection of the options given was the introduction of Wildflower Planting. This was followed by the Community Garden, Planters and Seating options which all had a similar level of support.

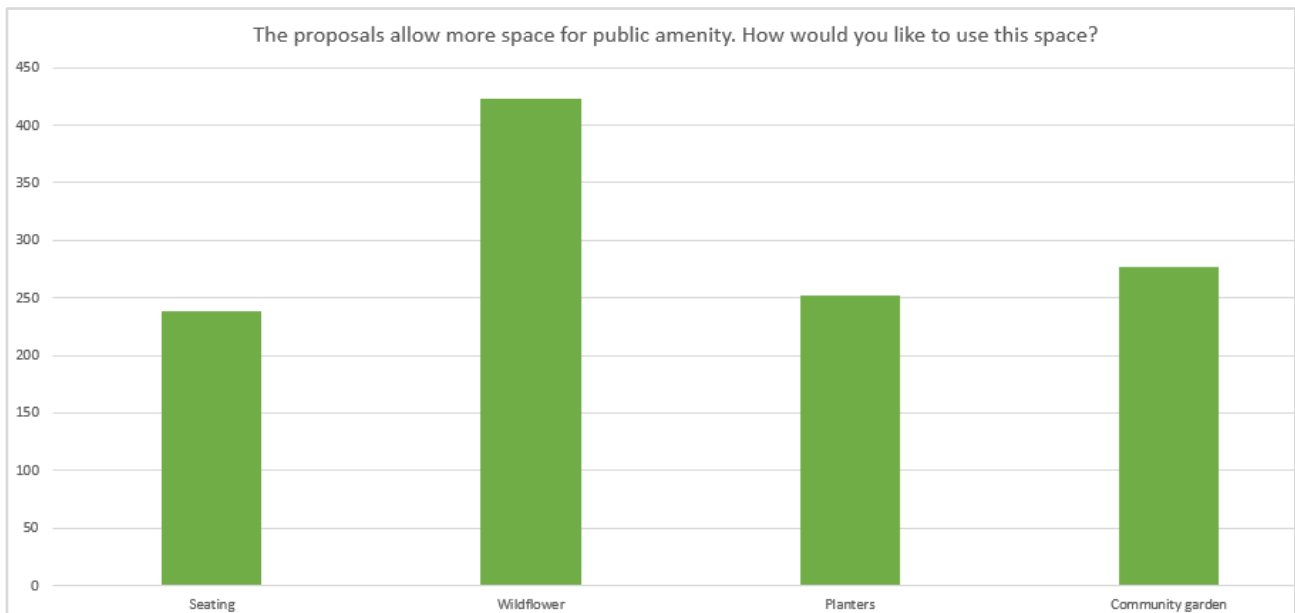


Figure 7 Output to Q4. The proposals allow more space for public amenity. How would you like to use this space?

7. Addressing the Key Issues Identified from the Online Survey

With reference to the people who opposed the proposals in Question 1 (Do you support the proposals to improve Smokey Brae?), key themes were drawn out of the details that were provided in the additional comments box. Figure 8 presents a breakdown of the key themes drawn out which are discussed in more detail within this section.

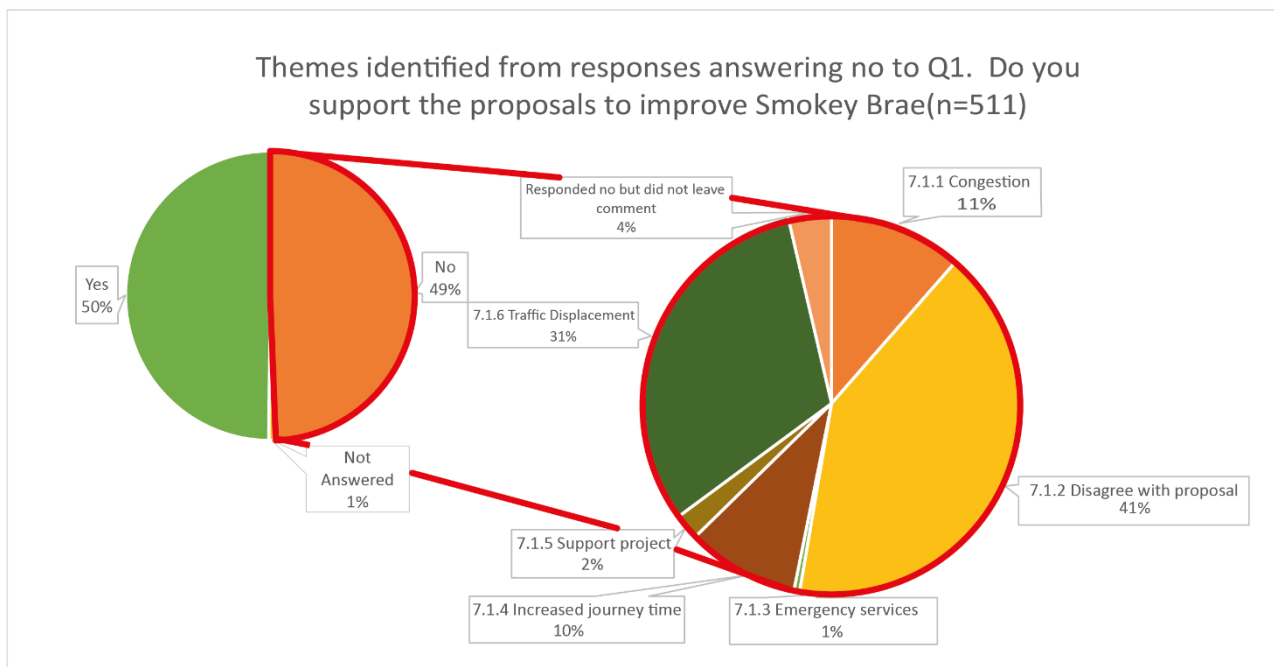


Figure 8 Categories of opposition to the proposals

7.1 Emergency Services

Less than 1% of the opposing respondents raised concerns over the potential impacts of increased emergency service response times. The Marionville Fire Station in the northern area of the proposals was specifically commented on.

7.1.1 City of Edinburgh Council Response

Our emergency services are key project stakeholders, with special consideration having been afforded to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service due to the proximity of the Marionville Fire Station and the project area. Representatives from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have been directly consulted on the proposals to date and their feedback has helped to inform the development of the proposals being brought forward. The ability for fire and rescue appliances to maintain swift response times has been a critical factor in the development of the proposals and has been accommodated by maintaining the southbound motor vehicle lane on the Smokey Brae corridor. Continued consultation with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will take place throughout all subsequent stages of design and implementation, in addition to consultation with all other emergency services at key points in the development process.

It should also be noted that key consideration will be given, and arrangements made prior to construction to mitigate and reduce potential impacts to fire and rescue appliance response times during the construction works.

7.2 Disagree with Proposal

41% of opposing respondents commented with general statements to the project ranging from the opposition to the introduction of cycling facilities, to the introduction of a one-way system for southbound road users.

7.2.1 City of Edinburgh Council Response

Smokey Brae is currently a hostile corridor and environment for people walking, wheeling and cycling. Improvements to the current corridor and northern area are essential to improve safety and meet desirable standards, and in doing so will support and enable people to choose more sustainable modes of transport for everyday journeys. In addition, forthcoming developments in the local area will increase the pressure on the current sub-standard walking, wheeling and cycling provision on the Smokey Brae corridor, which provide a further justification for improvements to be made to this area.

7.3 Traffic Displacement

31% of opposing respondents raised concerns over traffic displacement caused by the introduction of a one-way system for southbound road users. Specifically, there were concerns that traffic displacement would increase pressure on nearby junctions and increase vehicular traffic on Marionville Avenue, Restalrig Avenue and Craightinny Avenue.

7.3.1 City of Edinburgh Council Response

Due to the nature of the proposals and changing of priorities on the Smokey Brae corridor people may choose to use the local road network differently. As such, traffic modelling will be undertaken during the next stage of development, with the outcomes of which being considered and where necessary this may lead to further assessments and mitigation measures being developed and delivered in conjunction with the works. Mitigation measures in the local road network will be incorporated and delivered in conjunction with the proposal to ease congestion at key locations and discourage the rerouting of non-residential traffic on neighbourhood streets.

Following an establishment period post construction, if necessary additional mitigation measures will be considered and implemented where appropriate to further control and discourage the rerouting of non-residential traffic on neighbourhood streets.

7.4 Congestion

11% of the opposing respondents identified environmental issues such as, increases in pollution in adjacent areas caused by displaced motor vehicles and congestion as their main concern resulting from the proposed introduction of a one-way system for southbound road users.

7.4.1 City of Edinburgh Council Response

Due to the nature of the proposals and changing of priorities on the Smokey Brae corridor people may choose to use the local road network differently. As such, traffic modelling will be undertaken during the next stage of development, with the outcomes of which being considered and where necessary may lead to further assessments and mitigation measures being developed and delivered in conjunction with the works. Where necessary, mitigation measures will be developed to ease congestion at key locations and discourage the rerouting of non-residential traffic on neighbourhood streets.

The Jock's Lodge junction and A1 corridor heading into the city centre is part of Edinburgh's Central Air Quality Management Area which will also be taken into account during the traffic modelling exercise and any subsequent assessments that may also be required.

Adjustments to the Jock's Lodge junction operations will also be investigated to better suit the changing of priorities for the proposed Smokey Brae new road layout.

7.5 Increased Journey Times

Increases in journey times caused by the removal of two-way traffic under the railway bridges was identified as a key concern for 10% of the opposing respondents. The potential increased journey times were specified as being caused by convoluted routes as a result of the introduction of the proposed one-way system for southbound road users.

7.5.1 City of Edinburgh Council Response

Due to the nature of the proposals and changing of priorities on the Smokey Brae corridor people may choose to use other and more sustainable modes of transport that the new proposals afforded better provision for. Motor vehicle access will be maintained for all residents to and from their neighbourhood streets and properties. Mitigation measures in the local road network will be incorporated and delivered in conjunction with the proposal to ease congestion at key locations and discourage the rerouting of non-residential traffic on neighbourhood streets.

7.6 Support Project in Principle

2% of opposing respondents comments were supportive of the project aims in principle, however, they requested the proposals should be more ambitious and consider a full closure to motor vehicles on the Smokey Brae corridor.

7.6.1 City of Edinburgh Council Response

There are numerous competing constraints on the Smokey Brae corridor and local road network. The proposals follow the transport hierarchy of prioritising sustainable modes of transport by reallocating and rebalancing the available space on Smokey Brae, while taking account of the numerous competing constraints. A motor vehicle modal filter (with the exception of southbound fire and rescue appliances) was considered during development, however it was discounted in favour of the proposals being brought forward primarily due to the wider network implications and requirement to balance the competing constraints on the corridor.

8. Consultation Summary

It was found that of the people who responded to the public consultation there was close to an even split between those who supported and opposed the proposals.

The proposals gained 50% support, with the key supporter themes raised in the comments being as follows:

- The improvements for pedestrians were raised as a key benefit of the proposals.
- Respondents welcomed the improvements to personal safety that the proposals will provide.
- The benefits that the proposals would have for people cycling was raised.
- Requests that the project go further to better connect to the infrastructure at Jock's Lodge and consider the project as part of the wider network

Of the 49% of respondents who opposed the proposals and provided comments, they were primarily against the introduction of the proposed one-way system for southbound motor vehicles on Smokey Brae and the impacts that this change may cause. As presented and discussed in more detail above the main themes drawn out from the consultation feedback were as follows:

- The concern regarding emergency service response times;
- General disagreement with the proposals;
- Traffic displacement;
- Increased congestion;
- Increased journey times; and,
- Supportive of the projects aims in principle but requested that the proposals should be more ambitious.

8.1 Next Steps

The project team will take onboard the feedback received during the consultation period and review it against the current proposals. Once the plans have been developed further, it is the intention of the Council to deliver improvements to Smokey Brae and the northern area at the earliest opportunity. In order to do so, the statutory Traffic Regulation and Redetermination Order processes will need to be undertaken. The statutory order process is anticipated to be commenced during FY2023/2024 and will provide local residents, stakeholders and the wider public with an opportunity to review and comment on the further developed proposals prior to final approval and delivery.

Appendix A. Mailout



Improvements to Smokey Brae

As part of the Meadowbank redevelopment plans, people in the community identified the need to make Smokey Brae safer and more accessible for people who walk, cycle or use wheels of different kinds, like wheelchairs or prams.

Sustrans is a charity that provide funding and support to help develop active travel routes and promote walking, wheeling and cycling.

The Council is working with Sustrans and Jacobs Transport Consultants to come up with a proposed design for the Smokey Brae.

Issues with current layout

- More cars use the route than people walking, wheeling or cycling
- Concerns about personal safety due to poor lighting and surveillance
- Narrow pavements

Benefits of improvements

- Wider pavements (minimum of 2m)
- Separate cycle lanes
- Safe and secure pedestrian crossings
- Street lighting improvements
- More public green space
- Closing Smokey Brae to downhill to traffic



For more information scan the QR code or go to www.edinburgh.gov.uk/smokeybrae



If you would like the leaflet in another format such as Braille, large print or translation, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service email its@edinburgh.gov.uk quoting reference 19-5034.



Appendix B. Questionnaire

Questionnaire Smokey Brae Active travel improvements

Have your say on the proposed design

We would like to get your views on the proposed design for Smokey Brae and find out what you would like to see the new public spaces used for. Please answer these questions:

1. Do you support the proposals to improve Smokey Brae?

a. Yes

b. No

2. Would these proposals impact on your journey times?

a. Yes

b. No

3. Would these proposals encourage you to walk, cycle or wheel eg use wheelchair or pram?

a. Yes

b. No

4. The proposals allow more space for public amenity. How would you like to use this space?

(Tick all that apply)

a. Seating

b. Planting – wildflower

c. Planters

d. Community garden

Comments (please use the next page if you need more space)

Please complete the questionnaire and return it to Piershill Library, 30 Piersfield Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 7BQ by 9 May 2022. You can also fill in the questionnaire online at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/smokeybrae or scan the barcode.

