



From Richard M Henderson,
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25 April 2020

Dear Sirs,

**City Mobility Plan
Consultation response by Balerno Community Council**

Introduction

This letter sets out the comments of Balerno Community Council (the Council) in relation to City of Edinburgh Council's City Mobility Plan consultation. It should be read along with the comments submitted by the Council on-line; ref - ANON-XSEF-ZXRM-7.

The consultation opened on 31 January and will now close on 30 April having been extended by one month in view of the Covid-19 outbreak.

The Consultation has not been amended other than in terms of the period for response. In particular it has not been amended with reference to any change in circumstances envisaged as arising from the Covid-19 outbreak.

For the reasons set out below the Council considers that the consultation should be suspended pending the UK and Scottish Governments setting a date by which they would expect that current emergency restrictions will be removed.

Impact of Covid-19

This Council has no more idea than anyone else as to the precise impacts which will follow from the current Covid-19 outbreak. It is unrealistic to suppose that the Covid-19 outbreak will have no long term impacts on Edinburgh.

The Fraser of Allander Institute¹ has estimated that so far as Scotland is concerned the construction sector could contract by 40-50%, production by 25-30%, services by 15-20% and that Scottish GDP could contract by about 20-25% overall. Services, by far the largest part of the Scottish economy, will take a hit in retail and wholesale, transport and storage, and accommodation and food services, with the majority of the latter sector currently mothballed. But there could be a "modest expansion" in the public sector and a "fairly modest" contraction in real estate. The agricultural sector is predicted to grow by 2-5%, though even a 5% growth in this sector would add less than +0.1 to overall Scottish GDP.

Commentators suggest that social habits and practices will be fundamentally altered as a result of the outbreak. It could take a considerable period of time before people might wish to re-adopt the old patterns of living and commuting. Home working may well become a preferred option leading to less pressure on transport to city centres and correspondingly less pressure

¹ BBC report 8 April 2020



on housing development in South East Scotland focussing on Edinburgh. To align transport and development policies for the next ten years to pre Covid-19 assumptions would be unwise. At the least we should be arguing for a modification of the ten year planning perspective and looking at shorter periods for Local Plans as we emerge from Covid-19

Planning for future development and transport provision for the next ten years in the current state of uncertainty will more resemble crystal ball gazing than anything else. In the circumstances the Council believes that the City Mobility Plan process should be suspended pending the conclusion of the current Covid 19 outbreak.

If for any reason the City consider that suspension of the City Mobility Plan process is impossible then the Council believes that a further period of consultation will be necessary to allow consideration of any provisional conclusions in advance of the City formulating proposals.

The Council's observations on the specific issues raised in the on-line City Mobility Plan consultation as published have been submitted on-line but are set out below along with more general observations on the issues raised.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard M Henderson', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Richard M Henderson

Chair, Balerno Community Council

Cc Cllrs Graeme Bruce, Neil Gardiner, Ricky Henderson and Susan Webber; Ian Hynd (BCC)
Tony Allen (BCC), Hugh Watt (BCC)



ANNEX A

City Mobility Plan - Consultation response by Balerno Community Council General Comments

The City Mobility Plan (the Plan) is one of two linked documents, the other being CityPlan2030 (CityPlan), which together will set the context for the development planning strategy in the city to succeed the 2016 Local Development Plan (the 2016 Plan).

Both the Plan and CityPlan are set at a high level. They do not, at this stage, set out detail down to the level of our community. This narrative response addresses some detail issues to illustrate the issues of concern for the Council.

NOTE – The comments in this Annex do not take account of any probable impacts of the current Covid-19 outbreak.

These comments consider matters under the following headings;

1. An overview of Balerno;
2. Travel and Mobility Issues;
3. Comments on the three stage vision in the Plan – 2022, 2025, and 2030.

2 An overview of Balerno

Location – Balerno is a historic village with conservation area. It is at the same time a growing community with significant house building currently being carried on at Newmills (Kingfisher Park) (@206 units) and Ravelrig (Ravelrig Heights) (@120units). The village is situated at the south western extremity of the City at @540ft to 600ft altitude, on the northern slopes of the Pentland Hills.

While residents tend to think of Balerno as a village, others may see it principally as a commuter suburb. Little if any public infrastructural development has taken place over the past twenty years.

Balerno's western boundary abuts on to Kirknewton, 5 miles away. Its southern boundary is with Penicuik and Midlothian on the northern flanks of the Pentland Hills while to the north is Ratho, again 5 miles distant. Balerno's eastern boundary is with Currie and its focus, for employment, commerce and leisure tends to be to the east, to Edinburgh city centre 8 miles away along the continuously built up A70 Lanark Road West. East is the only direction in which travel by public transport is possible, which means that there is a public transport barrier to accessing the public, and particularly hospital, facilities provided by Livingston only 7miles away. Balerno residents work across the whole of Edinburgh and its hinterland, including, its centre, its northern and southern sectors, as well as to the east and west.

Population – Balerno's population was noted at 6031 in 2001. The Balerno boundary was moved in 2017 on the introduction of multi member City Council constituencies, leading in our estimate to the transfer of some 1200 residents to the Currie CC area. On that basis the figure for 2007 might have been @4900.

Estimates vary and are difficult given changes in boundaries and the vagaries of census districts. However the ONS 2014 Mid-Year Estimate suggested a population of 5915, while the 2011 census figure is 5927. We estimate that since 2014 the population may have increased by <@1000 given housing developments at Ravelrig and Newmills.

Within the population the *over 65's* cohort, at 16.9%, is higher than the Edinburgh average of 12.%. There are no community facilities for elderly to meet together in Balerno other than the St Joseph's Centre, part of Balerno Parish Church.

Surgery – While Balerno does host a dental practice, the local medical surgery is in Currie, close to the bus route, but @3miles from the Balerno bus terminus; much of Balerno is situated more than 0.5 miles from the nearest bus stop.



Infrastructure – Balerno hosts two inns , two carry out food outlets, one bistro/café and one community café.

There are some commercial/industrial enterprises including two small supermarkets and one small hardware store. There are three hairdressers and one nail bar. While there are a number of locally based building and service trades we do not have any detailed information on numbers. There are two garages. The Post Office is located with the bistro as a Post Office Local model. Main Street, Balerno is designated as a Local Centre in the 2016 Local Development Plan. The Library is located in Main Street. The public counter at the Police Station was closed in 2016.

Education, youth provision & social clubs – Balerno hosts Balerno High School and Dean Park Primary School both of which currently require serious investment. The High School feeder primaries apart from DPPS are Ratho PS and Kirknewton PS. There are three of four nurseries/playgroups and at least two after school and breakfast clubs.

Having in the past had a thriving and extensive programme, there is now little or no formal adult education provision in Balerno.

Balerno Bowling Club and Balerno Tennis Club are located in the middle of the village as is Currie Rugby Football Club (Currie Chieftains). All of which provide social facilities. Currie RFC has a youth operation catering for over 280 young players.

The Scout Group occupies the Scout Hall and provides activities for over 250 young people.

2 *Travel and mobility issues* –

Road traffic – Balerno lies on the A70 which is an arterial route into the City, especially for traffic seeking to avoid the congested A71 and M8. Anecdotal evidence suggests a rising graph in commuter traffic from West Lothian. The Community Council will consider further research with Heriot Watt University.

Limited bus services – Balerno covers a relatively large geographical area including a large area of farmland and heathland. There is no public transport access to or around Balerno except the 44 bus route which runs a 6 bus per hour service in each direction to and from the city centre. Traffic congestion regularly sees buses arriving in two and threes.

Distance to public transport within Balerno – The geography of Balerno and the absence of routes other than the 44 means that residents in parts of Balerno and certainly those outside of the village envelope may have well over a mile to travel to the nearest bus stop. Because of the relative absence of public transport, car ownership and use is also high and there is growing pressure on parking facilities, which are confined at present to two small car parks in the village centre catering for some 68 cars in total. These are now used to an extent as Park & Ride. There is additional parking at Malleny Park, adjacent to the village centre. This is already heavily used by evening and weekend sports users and for day-time public use by users accessing the village and local facilities and amenities. However, it is in very poor condition due to a lack of maintenance by CEC.

Neither Kirknewton nor Ratho have the benefit of direct public transport connections with Balerno despite being communities within the Balerno High School catchment area. That situation is likely to affect student after-school engagement and general community cohesion.

There are no structural links connecting Balerno with Ratho or Kirknewton. Balerno CC have called for a bus link.

Railway but no rail halt – Curriehill station was reopened in 1987. The line runs past Balerno and hosted two stations at one point, at Ravelrig Junction and at Balerno, the latter being on the branch line.

Electric vehicles – The Community Council has in the past asked for installation of electric vehicle charging points but as yet to no avail.



ANNEX B – City Mobility Plan - Consultation response by Balerno Community Council
Comments on the three stage vision in the Plan – 2022, 2025, and 2030

This section addresses the issues raised in the Three Stage vision set out from p17 of the Plan, and the comments reflect those lodged on-line by the Council.

NOTE - The comments in this Annex do not take account of any probable impacts of the current Covid-19 outbreak.

Stage 1 - 2022 - Delivering today, planning for the future.

- **Measure** - Tram route to Newhaven will be largely complete
 - **Comment** - We do not envisage any direct unique impact on Balerno related to completion of the tram route to Newhaven.
- **Measure** - A comprehensive review of bus routes in the city will have taken place
 - **Comment** - We think that a comprehensive review of bus routes in the city should be undertaken. In particular we believe that such a review;
 - must take into account and make provision for cross boundary bus services including to and from Kirknewton and Livingston from the A70 corridor;
 - must take into account and make provision for rural bus services between outlying settlements including Ratho and Balerno;
 - must take into account and make provision for bus or minibus services to provide connection to cross city bus routes as for example a mini bus service connecting Balerno to the Pentland Hills at Harlaw and/or Threipmuir;
- **Measure** - The current generation of major active travel schemes will be delivered
 - **Comment** - While the current Active Travel programme does not directly impact on Balerno, we believe that
 - proposals must be developed urgently for improvement of the Water of Leith path National 75 route so that it can be shared safely between cyclists and pedestrians, and for extension of national 75 to allow for safe route to the A71;
 - proposals must be developed urgently for a safe pathway to the Pentlands from Balerno, including for the replacement of the Green Bridge over the Bavelaw Burn at Malleny House;
- **Measure** - The Low Emissions Zone will be in place
 - **Comment** - We do not envisage the planning stage for the introduction of a Low Emission Zone having any particular impact on Balerno.
- **Measure** - A plan for the investment of the resources generated in public transport improvements by a workplace parking levy will be complete.
 - **Comment** - While we do not envisage that the planning stage for the development of a plan for the investment of the resources generated in public transport improvements by a workplace parking levy will have a direct unique impact on Balerno, we nevertheless believe that urgent consideration requires to be given to ;
 - the improvement of public transport both along the Water of Leith corridor and for access to the Pentland Hills and to remoter communities for which there is currently no such provision eg Glenbrook and also cross routes as eg to Ratho;
 - improvement of public transport for cross boundary services to eg Kirknewton, Livingston and especially St John's Hospital. This will



- require development of cross boundary co-operation and more mature cross boundary policy making, which may have been absent in the past;
 - the development of rail services on the Edinburgh to Glasgow Central line;
 - development of electric vehicle charging facilities in village car parks and at Regional Park access points;
- **Measure** - The City Centre Transformation Programme will have identified the transformational redesign of city centre places and space
 - While we do not envisage that any *transformational redesign of city centre places and space* The identified by the City Centre Transformation Programme will have a direct unique impact on Balerno, nevertheless we would expect the views of outlying areas to be sought and had regard to.
- **Measure** - Working with Transport Scotland and Network Rail, the Waverley station masterplan will have a full implementation plan.
 - **Comment** - While we do not envisage that implementation of the Waverley station masterplan will have a direct unique impact on Balerno, nevertheless we would expect the views of outlying areas to be sought and had regard to.

Stage 2 – 2025 – bolder actions.

- **Measure** - A comprehensive mass rapid transit plan for the city and region will be completed. This will include new bus and tram systems, as well as park and ride and edge of city logistics hubs
 - **Comment** - We would expect that the Upper Water of Leith Valley would be directly impacted in the preparation of any *comprehensive mass rapid transit plan for the city and region*. The Council agrees that ‘a comprehensive new bus strategy,..... including stops, routes, and public transport interchanges’ is urgently required. Implementation of any such plan should be the subject of extensive and meaningful consultation. We would in particular consider that the problems of the A70 at present are immediate. In particular,
 - Urgent consideration is necessary in advance of 2022 for development of park and ride facilities west of Balerno.
 - The Council has noted both that all existing P&R facilities P&R facilities are at the edge of the city footprint, and also that there is no current P&R facility serving the A70 arterial route. We have also noted that the City Mobility Plan appears to have ignored the A70 in its planning to date;
 - New bus, tram and P&R systems are urgently required for SW Edinburgh.
- **Measure** - The business case for a north south tram line will be agreed, linking Granton to the Bio Quarter and beyond.
 - **Comment** - The Council does not envisage that a north south tram line linking Granton to the Bio Quarter and beyond will directly impact on Balerno;
- **Measure** - A comprehensive new bus strategy will be agreed, including stops, routes, and public transport interchanges. Bus congestion will be reduced and bus penetration of key streets like Princes Street will be addressed. The to not through philosophy for th city centre will be being delivered. George Street will be transformed.??????
 - **Comment** - The Council agrees that ‘a comprehensive new bus strategy,..... including stops, routes, and public transport interchanges’ is urgently required. The Council has asked in the past – Community Plan March 2019 – for a transport review for Balerno;
- **Measure** - Income from the workplace parking levy will be delivering public transport improvements, focused on quality, innovation and affordability for those in greatest need.



- **Comment** - The Council would be surprised if 'Income from the workplace parking levy' were not to be 'delivering public transport improvements, focused on quality, innovation and affordability for those in greatest need', and in that context need should be taken to include transport poverty by reference to SIMD criteria;
- **Measure** - Air pollution levels will have been significantly reduced following the introduction of a low emission cordon around the city centre and the city boundary.
 - **Comment** - The Council would require significantly more information on the City's proposals for. Low Emission Zones before assessing the impact of such on Balerno;
- **Measure** - A data driven approach to mobility needs will be in place, working with the taxi trade, public transport providers and the commercial sector.
 - **Comment** - The Council would welcome 'A data driven approach to mobility needs' and believes that community councils should be involved closely alongside 'with the taxi trade, public transport providers and the commercial sector'
- **Measure** - Conditions for pedestrians will be much improved, thanks to the delivery of the Edinburgh street design guidance policy and a rigorous approach to enforcement.
 - **Comment** - The Council notes that by 2025 '*Conditions for pedestrians [should be] much improved, thanks to the delivery of the Edinburgh street design guidance policy and a rigorous approach to enforcement*'. It believes however that that conditions for pedestrians in Balerno have to be urgently considered long in advance of 2022 in particular by provision of pavements on both sides of the road along the full length of the A70 within Balerno village.

Stage 3 - 2030 – a city transformed.

- **Measure** - The mass transit network, including tram, will have been extended west to Newbridge and will have been developed to connect the Waterfront in the north to the Royal Infirmary in the south and beyond.
 - **Comment** - The Council believes that extension of the mass transit network to Newbridge could have a positive impact on Balerno so far as access to public transport is concerned, but only if there are proper public transport connections to intermediate hubs, in place. The effective closure of Hermiston Gait as a car/tram interchange represents a lost opportunity. Hence the comments above in relation to earlier stages of the Plan.
- **Measure** - The city region's seven park and ride facilities will be upgraded to support fast and frequent public transport along strategic bus lanes and mass rapid transit routes travel from these interchanges into the city.
 - **Comment** - The Council believes that development of some form of P&R facility for the A70 is becoming urgent and cannot wait 'til 2025+. The A70 itself would require to be re-engineered to avoid the Hannahfield bends area, to cater for the emerging increased demand from West Lothian in particular. We believe that either a P&R site must be identified west of Hannahfield or within Balerno probably linked to a rail interchange at a new Ravelrig Station. Either way the problem of the Hannahfield bends at the entrance to Balerno must be addressed. They are both a constraint on traffic flow, problematic for large buses coming from a P&R or an obstruction for traffic to a P&R at Ravelrig.

Either way Hannahfield bends are a problem. It may be that one solution might be to develop a new bypass between the Haggs Road and the railway to a P&R at Ravelrig. We think the optimum solution would involve the development of a



rail interchange at Ravelrig with P&R characteristics and associated with local Balerno focussed bus routes probably using Optima-scale electric buses.

In any event the Lanark Road West is not apt to allow for development of a rapid tranmsit route on its current line.

- **Measure** - Arterial routes will be being used for mass commuting by bike.
 - **Comment** - The Council notes the aspiration for Phase 3 that '*Arterial routes will be being used for mass commuting by bike*'. The Council does not believe that mass commuting by bicycle along the A70 road is deliverable without complete re-engineering of the road involving compulsory acquisition of garden ground and demolition of some properties. Mass commuting along the A70 corridor might be possible if a separate cycle path were constructed possibly along the line of the disused Balerno branch rail line. So far as the A70 corridor is concerned the Council does not believe that mass commuting by bicycle is likely except by electric cycles.
- **Measure** - The city centre will be largely car free, with the workplace parking levy reducing in revenue as car use to commute declines.
 - **Comment** - The Council notes the aspiration for Phase 3 that '*The city centre will be largely car free, with the workplace parking levy reducing in revenue as car use to commute declines.*' The Council believes that car use to commute may well decrease significantly by 2030 but also believes that eg the family caring obligations of commuters along with flexible working patterns are likely to lead to continuing demand for flexible individual transport options which in the short to medium term will equate to private cars. This aspiration smacks of lack of critical imagination.
- **Measure** - Iconic streets will be progressively pedestrianised. Elsewhere pavements widths will have been significantly widened with obstacles removed.
 - **Comment** - The Council notes the aspiration for Phase 3 that '*Iconic streets will be progressively pedestrianised. Elsewhere pavements widths will have been significantly widened with obstacles removed*' and regards this aspiration as bland and unadventurous. Increased pedestrianisation is no more than a continuation of current policy, and similarly pavements will be widened. Not rocket science.
- **Measure** - Seamless pricing, ticketing and accessibility will allow passengers to move between different forms of transport, from their cars to trams and local buses at these interchanges, without having to pay at different access points.
 - **Comment** - The Council notes the aspiration for Phase 3 that '*Seamless pricing, ticketing and accessibility will allow passengers to move between different forms of transport, from their cars to trams* It similarly considers this to be a singularly unexciting aspiration. Seamless pricing etc ought to be deliverable now; we already have *tap-on tap-off* facilities like those provided through Littlepay at eg Metrobus in SE England are believed to show the model in action. It ought not to take 10 years to get to that stage in Edinburgh.

