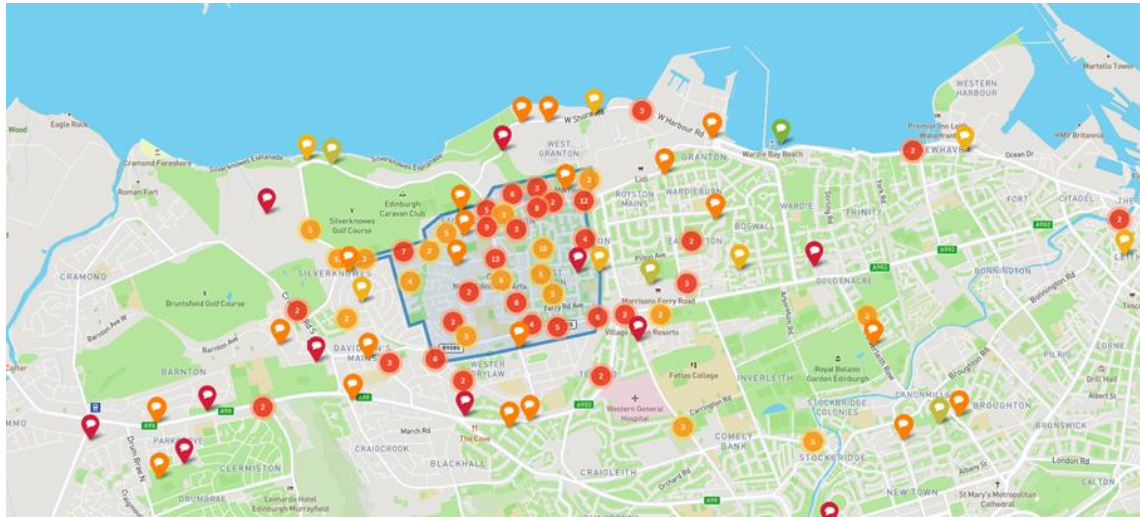


# NEAT Connections

## Commonplace report part 2: Qualitative results



06 July 2021

To find out more, please contact: Rebecca Harbinson  
Rebecca.harbinson@sustrans.org.uk

**Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.**

We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

Join us on our journey.

[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland).



Document details	
<b>Reference ID:</b>	SUSR1938
<b>Version:</b>	1.0
<b>Client:</b>	CEC; Sustrans internal
<b>Circulation Status:</b>	External
<b>Issue Date:</b>	06/07/2021
<b>Author(s):</b>	Rebecca Harbinson
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Lauren Durrell
<b>Signed off by:</b>	Lauren Durrell
<b>Accepted by:</b>	
<b>Contact:</b>	Rebecca.harbinson@sustrans.org.uk

The results presented here form the second part of the NEAT Commonplace data analysis, covering the qualitative analysis. You can find the quantitative analysis in the first part of the report: “NEAT Connections Commonplace report: part 1 quantitative results” <sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> NEAT Connections Commonplace report: part 1 quantitative results

# Contents

Introduction	3
Commonplace qualitative data	4
1.1 Qualitative results summary	4
1.2 Cycle Infrastructure: A segregated and joined up network.	4
1.3 Pedestrian facilities	6
1.4 Safety	7
1.5 Quality of space	8
1.6 Traffic volume	9
1.7 Driver attitudes & behaviour	9
1.8 Spaces for People	10
1.9 Parking	11
2. Community group survey	12

# Introduction

Sustrans and The City of Edinburgh Council have been working in partnership on the North Edinburgh Active Travel (NEAT) Connections project. The project proposes substantial active travel and green infrastructure changes to Pennywell Road and the surrounding area. This includes increasing the space available for walking, cycling and wheeling; making it easier to access local amenities without use of a car; and working with members of the community to improve public and green spaces.

A survey of members of the general public was conducted using the Commonplace online platform to identify barriers to active travel in North Edinburgh and field potential improvements. Commonplace is an online platform that allows respondents to pin anonymous survey responses to a location on a project area map which is publicly visible. The platform displays the survey responses as a heat map, to show hotspots where there are barrier or improvements that are needed. The survey was distributed amongst local community groups, published as a press release on the City of Edinburgh Council website and social media sites to promote the survey and expand its reach.

The Commonplace 'comments' (or responses) consisted of a set of multiple choice and open text questions. Participants could leave comments of their own and agree with existing comments posted by others. The multiple choice questions focused on identifying barriers to active travel in the project area and understanding improvements that would be suitable to address these barriers. Respondents had the opportunity to answer each multiple choice question in their own words using an optional free text box. There were a further two free text questions; the first asked respondents what else would encourage them to move around the area and beyond by foot, bike, wheelchair or scooter. People were also given space to add any further comments or suggestions about the project area.

This report is broken into two parts. The first presents the quantitative findings of the multiple choice responses, broken down by postcode area<sup>2</sup>. Demographics of respondents are also presented. The present report is the second part and provides an overview of the free text responses. Additionally, during between 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021, community groups in North Edinburgh shared their views in a survey relating to active travel in North Edinburgh. The results of the survey are reviewed in chapter two of this report and compared with the results of the quantitative Commonplace survey results<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of the community group survey was also to identify the barriers to active travel and necessary improvements that would help groups within the community to actively travel in and around Pennywell road.

---





<sup>2</sup> NEAT Connections Commonplace report: [part](#) 1 quantitative results

# Commonplace qualitative data

---

## 1.1 Qualitative results summary

The qualitative data analysis identified the following themes:

-  Cycle infrastructure: A segregated and joined up network
-  Pedestrian facilities
-  Safety
-  Improved facilities
-  Traffic volume
-  Driver attitudes and behaviour
-  Spaces for People project feedback
-  Parking

---

## 1.2 Cycle Infrastructure: A segregated and joined up network.

Cycle infrastructure and having a segregated and joined up network emerged as a strong theme in the data. Around one quarter of all free text responses fell into this overarching category.

Several sub-themes within this category were evident:

- connected routes and links in the network
- cycle paths and lanes
- segregation
- design and layout e.g. dropped curbs
- school routes and cycle parking.

All of the comments under this theme relayed the need for a connected and joined up network throughout North Edinburgh. Most comments included suggestions as to how this could be achieved.

*“...As both a walker and a cyclist I would like to see accessible and joined up spaces throughout Edinburgh but it must be properly thought out and implemented. Perhaps a one way system around Silverknowes Road and Marine Drive, with the other lane open only pedestrians/cyclists would help?...”*

*“...Why not close off an entire lane, have a useful cycle lane with proper markings and junctions to leave/enter the cycle lane to turn into other roads etc, and improve facilities for pavement users?”*

Other responses commented on the need for a segregated active travel network and the potential benefits for the road network as well as cyclists and pavement users.

*“Creating problems for drivers and longer routes is not helpful. Invest in path networks away from roads so pedestrians and cyclists are kept safe and there will be less pressure on roads.”*

The comments relating to specific routes, infrastructure, and existing paths were mixed in sentiment and tended to relate to specific locations that are currently problematic.

*“Needed better shared path to connect Waterfront Gait and Granton Mill Road, both [are] quiet streets but with no safe link between them, just a busy road.”*

*“I'd love to be able to safely cycle directly to Morrisons from Muirhouse Parkway. There is segregation up to the roundabout, then you're pretty much taking your life in your hands if you want to go the direct route.”*

*“No dropped kerb provided to access this handy little cycle link - particularly annoying if coming to and from the west, as you have to bump up the kerb or cycle along the pavement, meaning cyclists feel unwelcome and are put in an antisocial situation”*

Respondents, as well as remarking on issues with specific infrastructure, provided suggestions to help resolve problems in specific areas and address the needs of cyclists in North Edinburgh

*“The roundabout [at Muirhouse Parkway] should also have Dutch style bike lanes around it.”*

*“Dedicated cycle paths connecting east west and north south routes. Segregated cycling for children on school routes”*

*“...a gap in the central reservation [at Pennywell Gardens/Pennywell Road] would help here, just for bikes not cars.”*

---

## 1.3 Pedestrian facilities

The quality and locations of pedestrian facilities was another core theme present in the data and included items that contribute to journeys made by pedestrians in North Edinburgh. Comments ranged from design and maintenance, to specific paths and barriers.

*“Lots of the “dropped curbs” have fallen out of code through lack of maintenance and I struggle to make the crossing even with an off road powerchair. Dropped curbs can be up to 1.5 inches! There has recently been a cycle barrier installed right across the dropped curb...Really makes you feel not seen as a wheelchair user.”*

*“At this [West Granton Access] crossing you can’t see if it’s safe to cross from the traffic heading northbound due to hedges and bushes on the right hand side”*

*“Traffic lights with green man crossing and wider island in centre [Suggested at West Granton Rd]”*

*“Lights crossing do not match up so difficult to cross. Traffic is way too fast, dangerous.”*

*“... [Pennywell Rd/ Muirhouse Parkway] roundabout needs traffic lights. It is very busy there, car go flying around it and it’s not safe for people, especially with dogs and families to cross.”*

As with the comments on cycling facilities and network, some comments placed emphasis on path networks away from the road, for use shared by both pedestrians and cyclists.

*“...There are existing path networks that are safer and not on the roads which I think should be invested in and made better...”*

*“It feels like there should be more or better known or advertised routes between the built up area and the coastal path. What routes exist than run North South? It is a mystery and no good sources of information, for both walking and cycling.”*

---

## 1.4 Safety

Safety appeared to be a common concern. The speed and volume of traffic in the area has particularly impacted perception of safety for walking, wheeling, and cycling in the area, affecting how residents are choosing to travel. Some respondents detailed lengthy detours to avoid specific of road.

*“Traffic [on West Granton Road] is way too fast, dangerous.”*

*“I'd love to be able to safely cycle directly to Morrisons from Muirhouse Parkway. There is segregation up to the roundabout, then you're pretty much taking your life in your hands if you want to go the direct route. At the moment I go all the way down to the waterfront & back up as this is the only way to avoid all traffic, it's not ideal though, especially in the dark.”*

*“Roundabout [at Waterfront Park] needs to be made smaller and designed to slow down traffic. It clearly prioritises car flow and not pedestrians. Cycling across I've had a few close calls as motorists don't slow down. The Waterfront Gait side should have continuous pavements to slow the traffic...”*

Some of the comments that mentioned safety relate to the layout of the Spaces for People temporary infrastructure in place throughout North Edinburgh.

*“The road is full of potholes and dips, including in the cycle lanes, making it unsafe to cycle on but again the bollards make it impossible to move out to avoid them. The speed bumps encroach on the cycle lanes making them unsafe.”*

*“Accident waiting to happen at this roundabout [Pennywell Rd/Muirhouse Parkway]...buses cannot safely exit roundabout without coming onto other side of road since the cycle lane has been installed causing buses to wait on the roundabout while waiting cars move out the way.”*



Concerns around security were also commented upon by respondents, with some residents wanting to see changes “to discourage anti-social behaviour”.

---

## 1.5 Quality of space

Respondents commented on the quality of space and facilities throughout the NEAT project area. Respondents talked about issues such as the maintenance of the local area, the sense of place in North Edinburgh and the potential of certain areas to be transformed as to spaces for play or areas for sport.

Some mentioned areas for improvements that appeared neglected due to litter or a lack of maintenance.

*“The Council chopped down mature bushes and just left it bare, now nettles are growing instead. Replace bushes with new plant life, flowers and trees etc.”*

*“It’s neglected, areas are not maintained and looks unsightly”*

Other comments mentioned how biodiversity could be improved in certain areas and remarked on the specific locations that could be developed into quality green spaces.

*“West Pilton Park has so much potential. The area down by the pitches is a vast but largely unused grass area (for several reasons but one is it’s so boggy for half the year). Lots of birds there though. Why not do a big pond with drainage channels, or start a community croft area like in Leith? There would still be plenty of space to have as normal parkland. I’d be willing to set to a “friends of..” group to support development of these.”*

*“Plant a few trees in the northern part of this big lawn [at West Pilton Garden]”*

Some comments raised the potential for social and recreational space in North Edinburgh including sports facilities and spaces for play.

*“My children would like this park [West Pilton] to be clean and equipped to play”*

*“[West Pilton Park is] good for playing. Social space just needs some fixed goalposts and would be a good space”*

---

## 1.6 Traffic volume

As well as appearing as a key part of the 'Safety' theme, traffic volume was highlighted as impacting on liveability due to rat-running. A number of respondents remarked on the use of certain areas as rat runs and how this impinged on local residents and active travel.

*"There are too many rat runs for speeding cars in the area. This part of North Edinburgh should be a LTN with bus/cycle only routes so more people will actively travel."*

*"This is a residential street [Marine Drive] and should not be the main access point for Silverknowes promenade"*

*"Far too much traffic uses Muirhosue Parkway as a dragstrip. Adding a roundabout designed to interrupt the flow and slow down traffic is a must."*

Some respondents commented on the impact of road closures on surrounding streets close to Silverknowes Parkway.

*"Too many vehicles diverted from Silverknowes...[It's] increased Traffic"*

*"Whilst efforts to increase safety and access for walkers, cyclists and other non-vehicular traffic are admirable, the closure of Silverknowes Road has caused a dangerous increase in traffic on Marine Drive, a residential street. It has not had the desired effect of reducing road use, merely moved it to a road that cannot cope"*

*"Ridiculous road closure [at Silverknowes Parkway]... negative effect on surrounding streets"*

---

## 1.7 Driver attitudes & behaviour

Some comments remarked on driver attitudes and behaviour in the area and how they interacted with the road layout and impact on peoples experiences as residents and when traveling.

*"A large majority of motorists ignore the fact that this is a roundabout and drive straight through without stopping to give way. Also, due to the size of it, many use it as a car park. This is quite unacceptable given the residential natures of the immediate area."*

*“Before the cycle lane Motorists had difficult time merging from 2 to 1 lanes. They would announce that with their horns, especially in the morning.”*

*“There are often cars parked in the cycle lane, forcing cyclists to move into the road through the posts”*

---

## 1.8 Spaces for People

Spaces for People temporary infrastructure was implemented throughout Edinburgh during the summer of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of the commonplace survey, infrastructure had been in place throughout North Edinburgh for approximately 6 months. Some of the respondents on the Commonplace platform shared their views on the design and layout of the temporary infrastructure.

Within this theme, comments remarked on the design of the infrastructure and the maintenance or improvements needed for cycle lanes in particular to be functional.

*“As with all the temporary Spaces for People pop up cycle lanes they have highlighted that as soon as they are physically segregated from the road with barriers it becomes impossible to clean and clear them of debris and grit them in winter. This results in cyclists then needing to move into what is now a narrower road and cycle with cars in what is an even smaller space than would have been available if the segregated lane was not in place. This design flaw needs to be we noted as the council rolls out permanent solutions.”*

Respondents provided feedback on the materials used to segregate cycle lanes, often commenting that they found them to be a safety issue and create lanes that are too narrow.

*“...The concrete bases for the bollards sit inside the cycle lanes [on Pennywell Road], making them narrower. The bollards get in the way of cyclists wishing to move out into the road to turn right or overtake slower cyclists... The road itself has been turned into a one-and-a-half-lane road which only encourages poor driving and confuses drivers”.*

*“...The posts on the cycle lane have been placed inside the cycle lane line, making the cycle lane very narrow and obstacles hard to avoid...” “Separate cycle lanes (not the ‘pop-up’ ones that have been put up around the city as these are not actually safe for cyclists for a number of reasons). I would recommend looking to cities which have fully integrated cycling routes and established cycling cultures to see how cycle lanes can be implemented effectively.”*

Respondents also provided more generalised feedback on the Spaces for people interventions and their thoughts on the programme.

*“Some of the [spaces for people] decisions are nonsensical and the designs do not always protect the people for which they are intended.”*

*“Area has improved, but further improvements are necessary.”*

---

## 1.9 Parking

A number of respondents raised the issue of parking around North Edinburgh. Comments relating to parking were largely negative in sentiment and the comments often pointed towards too many cars parking in either residential or inconvenient areas.

*“Cars parking right up to the double yellow means there is barely enough room for a car to get past it and the traffic island. I have seen vans needing to go on the wrong side of the road, entering the roundabout the wrong way just so they can get past. The double yellow lines need to be made slightly longer to allow more space for vehicles to safely pass.” “The parked cars belong to residents and should not be removed. If anything, Marine Drive should be closed to non-residents, access for walkers and cyclists improved, and Silverknowes Road should be re-opened.”*

*“Good idea to replace green central reservation with parking spaces - so needed for Pennywell All Care Centre staff as sadly not every member of PACC staff was allocated a parking space (bad NHS Lothian/CEC planning again!) Thank you!”*

## 2. Community group survey

The following chapter discusses the results from the communities survey open between 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and 17<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021. The survey captured the barriers to active travel for community groups in the North Edinburgh project area.

The survey was distributed to local community groups in North Edinburgh. Group leaders or designated members were asked to respond to the survey on behalf of all members. We received three responses from groups including a social justice organisation, an environmental group that works to encourage better practice with recycling and waste and a group that helps with supported accommodation for the homeless. Most or some of the group members across the three groups lived in the area local to Pennywell Road.

Respondents to the survey largely agreed that it was important for themselves and their community group members to be able to walk, wheel and cycle in the area local to Pennywell Road. The groups agreed that this was not always easy, with at least one group disagreeing that it was easy to either walk, wheel or cycle in and around the area local to Pennywell Road. In contrast, most groups agreed that it was easy to move around the area by car.

The survey asked community groups about existing barriers to walking, cycling and wheeling in the area local to Pennywell road. Results from the survey highlighted that a lack of cycle infrastructure such as paths and traffic free cycle lanes were a barrier to cycling in particular. This result was concurrent with Commonplace results which showed “Not Cycle Friendly” as the top most selected barrier to cycling in North Edinburgh.

The barriers to walking and wheeling local to Pennywell Road experienced by community group members align with those highlighted in the Commonplace survey data. Respondents to the communities’ survey agreed that physical barriers such as chicanes and bollards and a lack of pavements were issues for people walking or wheeling in the local area. Some barriers were reported to affect all three active travel modes. These included accessibility issues, shared use path width, and condition of road surfaces. The Commonplace survey, identified “Hard to get around” and “not walking friendly” as one of the top five barriers to active travel in North Edinburgh.

Safety and the lack of street lighting was also reported as a barrier for community group members to walk, wheel or cycle. Again, this is consistent with the Commonplace survey results, which found “unsafe” and “dangerous” to be in the top five reported barriers to active travel in North Edinburgh. The Commonplace survey also included “safer crossings” and “safer junctions” as a top improvements in North Edinburgh. Respondents to the community survey were in agreement that improvements at junctions were necessary and reported the issue of street fences that prevent crossing at safe or desirable locations.

All of the community groups agreed or strongly agreed that improving existing active travel infrastructure and creating more footways and segregated cycle paths would help their community groups to travel actively in the local area. This was consistent with the improvements that were presented in the Commonplace survey data which included “connect pavements” and “safe cycle lanes” in the top five most selected improvements.

The Community group survey also asked respondents about more interactive initiatives that could help improve the uptake of active travel within their community groups. Respondents were strongly in favour of initiatives or events such as bicycle repair and maintenance classes, group walks or cycles, adult cycle training, family cycle training, and women only cycle training or groups. Respondents were also strongly in favour of improvements to the area that would directly facilitate cycling. These improvements included increased cycle parking near destinations such as schools and shops, affordable cycle hire, secure cycle storage and community cycle repair points. This was in agreement with the barriers expressed by respondents who all agreed that there is insufficient cycle storage in the area local to Pennywell road and poor access to cycles. The community group survey asked if religious or cultural factors may be a barrier to active travel. It was reported as such for two community groups and/ or their representatives, who confirmed that it may be a barrier to either walking or cycling in the local area.