

East Renfrewshire Council Transport Response to COVID-19

1. Recommendations:

1.1 The Director of Environment at East Renfrewshire Council is asked to:

- 1.1.1 Recognise the changes which COVID-19 has made to people's everyday lives and that many of the changes will remain in place for the foreseeable future
- 1.1.2 Recognise the importance of transport to the development of plans to help East Renfrewshire residents adapt and renew in response to COVID 19 and note that schemes which enable people to be safe and physically distant when walking and cycling will be central to this response
- 1.1.3 Note that the Scottish Government has announced £10m '[Spaces for People](#)' funding for local authorities to deliver temporary improvements for walking and cycling, and agrees to submit an application from East Renfrewshire Council for funding to support the delivery of local schemes
- 1.1.4 Following notification to local ward Councillors on specific schemes, delegate decision making responsibility to Head of Environment Service / Chief Planner to implement temporary schemes. These decisions will be reported to the Environment Departmental Management Team regularly
- 1.1.5 Approve principles outlined within East Renfrewshire Council's Transport Response to COVID-19 and Stage 1 response measures outlined in Appendix A.

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2. Background

- 2.1 The emergency resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented in our lifetimes and has resulted in profound changes to travel patterns and how people use streets and spaces in East Renfrewshire and beyond. This includes:
- 2.1.1 The need to impose physical distancing measures in order to reduce virus transmission has brought into sharp focus some of the inadequacies inherent in the way space is allocated on the local road network and in public spaces generally.
 - 2.1.2 The need for the public to access local services and facilities, and for key workers to get to work safely, when public transport capacity significantly reduced has highlighted the current lack of high quality routes for cycling.
 - 2.1.3 Vulnerable people are unable to leave their homes and many are now relying on the council to provide them with essential supplies.
 - 2.1.4 A daily walk or bike ride for exercise has also become a key part of people's routine, helping maintain mental and physical health. The restriction on travel to essential trips has led to a major reduction in overall transport use but a noticeable increase in walking and cycling.
 - 2.1.5 Although massively reduced levels of motor traffic has encouraged many people to turn to active travel, issues remain with road danger and an increase in speeding.
 - 2.1.6 Local businesses are struggling to survive and will need to find new ways to reach their customers.
- 2.2 This situation is likely to continue even after the current emergency period has passed. There is an immediate need to enable physical distancing in order to limit contagion and prevent a second surge. This need cannot always be safely accommodated within existing transport networks and infrastructure, particularly around walking/cycling routes, outside shops and other services such as pharmacies. The need to act quickly and at scale has become more pressing.
- 2.3 While there may be a natural desire to seek a return to the pre COVID-19 transport 'status quo', East Renfrewshire's long term strategic vision is that "communities are shaped around people, with walking or cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys" (Local Development Plan 2).

- 2.4 The predicted decrease in public transport capacity and usage, along with possible increase in motor traffic post-lockdown, will place additional pressure on the road network. This in turn will impact the feasibility of active travel and safe social distancing into the future.
- 2.5 Therefore, while planning our response to the current situation to allow residents to walk and cycle safely in order to access key services and while accommodating necessary distancing protocols, a key consideration should be avoiding a return to pre-existing motor traffic levels. This will require traffic restraint, together with measures to further promote and enable sustainable forms of travel.

3. Do Nothing

- 3.1 'Do nothing' has been considered, but is not considered appropriate as this is likely to result in:
 - 3.1.1 Inability of residents to comply with Government guidance on 'social distancing'
 - 3.1.2 Increased road danger as a result of higher motor traffic levels, speeds, collisions and harmful emissions
 - 3.1.3 Modal shift away from sustainable transport modes to private cars
 - 3.1.4 Increased inequalities as those that can work from home do so, or drive. National research shows these tend to be higher income earners
 - 3.1.5 Weaker and less diverse economy as small businesses struggle to adapt to new conditions.

4. Key Principles

- 4.1 A number of key principles have been developed while preparing East Renfrewshire Council's Transport Response to COVID-19.
- 4.2 **Enable compliance with government guidance**
 - 4.2.1 'Lockdown' and social / physical distancing are the main tools currently available to reduce virus transmission.
 - 4.2.2 Walking and cycling are considered the preferred ways to move around for essential journeys and help meet minimum daily requirements for physical exercise.
 - 4.2.3 The need for distancing is likely continue well into the recovery period or until such time as other tools become available.

4.3 Enable essential journeys to be made safely

- 4.3.1 Key workers, including those providing health and social care, still need to travel during the lockdown period.
- 4.3.2 As restrictions ease, wider groups are likely to be added to the current list and trip making will increase.
- 4.3.3 Of particular note is school travel, which accounts for a significant amount of journeys at peak times.
- 4.3.4 Journeys on both public transport and by road need to be managed to ensure safety and to maintain low levels of private motor vehicle traffic.
- 4.3.5 This recognises that those people able to work from home continue to do so.

4.4 Support vulnerable people

- 4.4.1 Large numbers of people identified as particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 require support. This is already happening as part of the council's "shielding" arrangements, with coordinated deliveries of essential supplies across the authority.
- 4.4.2 The requirement for this is likely to continue for some time and planning should prepare for a longer term, less resource intensive delivery model, including deliveries by bicycle.
- 4.4.3 Any changes to the kerbside - for example parking suspensions - will need to consider the need for motor vehicle access for vulnerable households.

4.5 Support the local economy

- 4.5.1 As restrictions ease and businesses re-open those that rely on footfall and face-to-face customer contact may find conditions particularly difficult.
- 4.5.2 For people to return to Town and Neighbourhood Centres, they must feel safe in doing so. This means providing adequate space for customers to queue outside businesses and for others to be able to pass them safely on footways.
- 4.5.3 New options linking businesses and their customers may be required, as well as a consolidation of sustainable delivery services, while reducing the number of vehicle trips overall.
- 4.5.4 Behaviour change and physical streetscape measures that encourage sustainable transport habits while supporting local businesses should be encouraged.

4.6 Plan for now, near and longer term

4.6.1 There are urgent actions that need to be taken, principally to satisfy a) protection public health by enabling physical distancing and b) reduce road danger.

4.6.2 Beyond this we need to consider how to manage the transport network sustainably as restrictions are eased and through the recovery period. This must take into account longer term objectives for public health, economic recovery and carbon reduction.

4.6.3 We therefore need a phased approach to our response in conjunction with neighbouring authorities and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.

4.7 Consistency and transparency

4.7.1 Any measures, particularly changes to the adopted road network, must be carefully considered and sit within the existing policy frameworks, including our approach to sustainable transport, road danger reduction and the relation of this to the COVID-19 public health context.

4.7.2 Although it is recognised temporary measures such as changes to the road layout or parking arrangements may impact residents and businesses, ensuring wider public safety must be the Council's primary responsibility.

4.7.3 The Council's actions must be clear and transparent to stakeholders.

5. Phased Approach

5.1 A number of response phases have been identified as part of a 'dynamic' approach to the COVID-19 emergency. This includes:

5.2 Phase 1 – lockdown (days/weeks)

5.2.1 Discourage mobility in line with government guidelines

5.2.2 Promote measures to enable safe physical distancing, particularly within Town & Neighbourhood Centres where key services and facilities are located.

5.3 Phase 2 – near term; easing of lockdown restrictions (weeks)

5.3.1 Temporary footway widening and waiting areas where constraints have been identified

5.3.2 Creation of temporary active travel links to key Town/Neighbourhood centres, as well as other local services, facilities and destinations

5.3.3 Investigate measures to develop and promote 'Low Traffic Neighbourhoods', including 'School Streets' and 'Safer Routes to School'

5.3.4 Investigate options for future delivery and supply service model with community and partners to help support vulnerable people and businesses

5.4 **Phase 3 – medium term; lifting of restrictions (weeks/months)**

5.4.1 Ongoing footway widening

5.4.2 Continued development and refinement of safe active travel links

5.4.3 Promotion of safe public transport use (as people potentially switch to more car trips)

5.4.4 Streetscape interventions to support business trading and safe physical distancing

5.4.5 Promote sustainable local delivery and supply services

5.5 **Phase 4 – recovery**

5.5.1 Assess permanent reallocation of road space

5.5.2 Support local business recovery and servicing requirements

5.5.3 Establish new Local Transport Strategy and supporting plans and policies

6. **Action Plan**

6.1 A number of key actions have been identified to support the Transport Response to COVID-19.

6.2 Mobilising teams across different council services and consultation with partners, including emergency services.

6.3 Review existing data and plans to identify priority measures utilising a GIS (mapping software) based approach.

6.4 Identify appropriate internal governance structures.

6.5 Identify funding sources and programme.

6.6 Prepare Communications Strategy.

6.7 Implement priority response measures.

6.8 Ongoing communication, engagement, review and development of proposed response measures.

7. Response Measures

- 7.1 As previously outlined, an increasing number of people are walking and cycling. Large parts of local footway and path network are busy to the extent that it is difficult for people to practise physical distancing as well as creating potential knock-on road safety issues. As a result, a series of temporary response measures have been considered to assist physical distancing while undertaking essential trips and exercise.
- 7.2 Restrictions on parking where necessary to enable safe social distancing and, where appropriate, enable servicing to local businesses.
- 7.3 Increased pedestrian space (i.e. footway widening) through road space reallocation.
- 7.4 Increased safe cycling space - including “pop up cycle lanes” - through road space reallocation along Strategic Cycle Corridors and other key active travel links.
- 7.5 Delineating ‘waiting areas’ outside shops & services where necessary.
- 7.6 Development of ‘Neighbourhood Zones’. This will consider the merits of strategic road closures to discourage vehicular through traffic while enabling safe walking, cycling and wheeling in residential areas.
- 7.7 Junction and crossing retrofit to improve safety and reduce road danger.
- 7.8 Utilisation of temporary signage to assist all road users.
- 7.9 Additional enforcement measures to tackle illegal parking and speeding.
- 7.10 The Transport Response to COVID-19 will be progressed using mapping software to create a spatial plan. This will also enable council officers to plan, record and share response measures across the council, with partners and the wider public.

8. Legal Considerations

- 8.1 Clarification should be sought regarding traffic orders for urgent measures such as narrowing / reducing traffic lanes to increase footway space and whether this can be implemented without the need for a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (Section 14(1) Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984) or Temporary Traffic Regulation Notice (Section 14(2) Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984).
- 8.2 Should a traffic order be required, it is recommended that an authority or area wide traffic order is made in order to cover a range of interventions and remove the need to make traffic orders for each one. Such an order must be made on the basis of protecting the public from danger.

- 8.3 There is considered to be an increased risk of challenge when bringing forward changes to the adopted road network with reduced levels of public engagement, but minimum requirements will be met (as outlined below).
- 8.4 All Traffic Orders required as part of the Response will be subject to Equality Impact Assessment, although it is accepted that COVID-19 restrictions and urgency of response will make engagement with protected groups more challenging.

9. Stakeholder & Community Engagement

- 9.1 Bringing forward any changes will require a change to usual engagement approaches. East Renfrewshire Council will continue to meet legal requirements relating to statutory consultation and will engage key local stakeholders, but it will be necessary to accelerate this process since it is an emergency response to COVID-19.
- 9.2 'In depth' engagement will not be possible without prolonging timescales. As such, street trials and experimental measures may be used as part of an ongoing engagement process.
- 9.3 Emergency services will be key stakeholder who will be closely involved in the development of schemes and consulted with as part of the statutory process.
- 9.4 Rapid and ongoing community engagement may be facilitated through council communication mechanisms (i.e. social media) and supported through the 'Commonplace' online engagement platform. This will provide a mechanism for members of the public to obtain further information, suggest measures necessary in their area and provide ongoing feedback as trials progress. This feedback can be also be utilised by East Renfrewshire Council to refine and amend any changes as necessary.

10. Governance

- 10.1 The Head of Environment / Chief Planner will oversee and agree the Transport Response to COVID-19 in consultation with the Director of Environment, Roads Controller and Departmental Management Team.
- 10.2 Elected members to be notified of proposed priority measures in their areas and views sought for subsequent phases.
- 10.3 The Head of Environment / Chief Planner will be responsible for delegated decisions relating to programme scope and development.
- 10.4 The Roads Controller will be responsible for delegated decisions relating to project implementation.
- 10.5 Day to day decisions to be taken by identified COVID-19 Transport Response project team.

11. Funding

- 11.1 Sustrans and Transport Scotland have recently launched a £10 million initiative 'Spaces for People' which provides 100% funding to authorities to put in place temporary measures, including widening walkways and new 'pop up' cycle lanes.
- 11.2 The Sustrans / Transport Scotland 'Places for Everyone' programme is still open to permanent active travel and placemaking initiatives. This includes opportunities for strategy development.
- 11.3 Additional funding sources are also available for measures to promote active travel and behaviour change including 'Walking, Cycling, Safer Roads' and 'Smarter Choices, Smarter Places' grant funding.

Appendix A: Stage 1 Response Measures

Note 1:

This Appendix shows the measures considered appropriate for first stage funding of East Renfrewshire’s COVID-19 Transport Response. This list is not exhaustive as it represents the start of a ‘dynamic’ approach to the COVID-19 emergency within East Renfrewshire, which may result in an alternative approach or modified measures as plans proceed. All proposals are subject to a design and risk assessment process being followed and will consider all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and particularly people with mobility or visual impairments, whilst maintaining appropriate access for residents and businesses.

Note 2: Expected timescales

This table includes indicative timescales for delivering proposed measures. However, the timescales for medium and longer term schemes may be extended as the design and implementation timescales are dependent on funding and/or availability of materials and contractors.

Stage 1 funding:

Location	Response measure	Issue	Action	Justification
Phase 1 (priority) measures: timescales - end of May 2020				
Main Street, Thornliebank	Parking Restriction	Narrow footway, potential for queuing and congestion outside chemist and Farmfoods	Cordon off parking bays – potential allowance for deliveries, loading, blue badge holders	Social distancing Road safety Modal shift
Main Street, Barrhead	Parking Restriction	Narrow footway, observed queues outside pharmacy SW of Arthurlie St	Cordon off parking bays – potential allowance for deliveries, loading, blue badge holders	Social distancing Road safety Modal shift
Main Street, Neilston	Pedestrian Waiting Areas	Narrow footway and guardrail at pharmacy	Cordon off waiting area at side of building	Social distancing Road safety Modal shift

Eastwood Mains Road; Williamwood Shops, Clarkston	Parking Restriction	Narrow footway outside shops	Cordon off service road to vehicular traffic – potential allowance for deliveries, loading, blue badge holders	Social distancing Road safety Modal shift
Fenwick Road (Between Barrland Dr & Dalmeny Ave), Giffnock	Parking Restriction	Narrow footway. Parking issues reported preventing deliveries to shops and pharmacy	Cordon off parking bays – potential allowance for deliveries, loading, blue badge holders	Social distancing Road safety Modal shift
Fenwick Road / Park Road (outside Sainsburys), Giffnock	Light segregation carriageway - ped	Opportunity for congestion on footway outside Sainsburys. Prevent illegal parking on double yellow lines.	Cordon off section of carriageway between parking bay and Park Road Junction	Social distancing
Fenwick Road (Berryhill Road to Orchard Drive), Giffnock	light segregation carriageway - cycle	Increased level of active travel along busy corridor. Cycle lanes provided further north and south	Provide temporary protected cycle lanes. This can provide also buffer between footway and carriageway	Social distancing Road safety Modal shift
Authority wide	Junctions & crossings	Delay to pedestrians at controlled crossings and resultant footway congestion	Shorten waiting time	Modal shift Social distancing
Phase 2 (near term) measures: timescales - end June 2020				
Strategic Cycle Corridor 2 (A77; Newton Mearns - Giffnock)	Light segregation carriageway - cycle	Demand for safe inclusive cycle space. Road safety concerns due to vehicle speeds and road layout, such as the danger of 'left hooks' at junctions . Presence of Parked cars & stationary buses forcing cycles into carriageway.	Roadspace reallocation through vertical segregation of widened cycle lane. Parking suspension. Realignment of parking bays. Realignment of bus stops. Reduction in Newton Mearns 40mph speed limit to 30mph.	Social distancing Appropriate separation of walking & cycling Road safety Protecting public health Modal shift
Strategic Cycle Corridor 4 (A727; Eastwood Toll - Spiersbridge Roundabout), Giffnock – Thornliebank	Light segregation carriageway - cycle	Increase capacity for walking and cycling around Rouken Glen Park. Demand for safe inclusive cycle space. Road safety concerns due to vehicle speeds and dual carriageway road layout	Roadspace reallocation through vertical segregation of carriageway lanes.	Social distancing Appropriate separation of walking & cycling Road safety Protecting public health Modal shift

Strategic Cycle Corridor 3 (B767 Clarkston Toll - Netherlee), Clarkston – Stamperland - Netherlee	Light segregation carriageway - cycle	Demand for safe inclusive cycle space. Road safety concerns due to vehicle speeds and road layout, presence of parked cars & bus stops resulting in conflict and danger between cars & cyclists.	Roadspace reallocation through vertical segregation of carriageway lanes.	Social distancing Appropriate separation of walking & cycling Road safety Protecting public health Modal shift
Strategic Cycle Corridor 1 (Dovecothall Roundabout to Allans Corner), Barrhead	Light segregation carriageway - cycle	Demand for safe inclusive cycle space. Road safety concerns due to vehicle speeds and road layout, presence of parked cars & bus stops resulting in conflict and danger between cars & cyclists.	Roadspace reallocation through vertical segregation of carriageway lane and repurposing and realignment of parking bays	Social distancing Appropriate separation of walking & cycling Road safety Protecting public health Modal shift
Springfield Road - between 'five ways junction' at Springhill Road and Kirktonfield Crescent, Barrhead – Neilston	Road closure	Lack of suitable active travel routes between Neilston, Barrhead and Dams to Darnley Country Park	Road closure to through vehicle traffic but open to people	Road safety Protecting public health Modal shift
Carlibar Road at Glen Street, Barrhead	Road closure	Footway along Carlibar Road narrow (2m) in each direction. Opportunity to reduce vehicle through traffic on Carlibar Road to allow pedestrian and cycle movement.	Road closure to through vehicle traffic but open to people	Social distancing Road safety Protecting public health Modal shift
Davieland Road, Giffnock	Road closure (one-way)	Vehicle speeds, unsafe parking arrangements, busy footway (c3.5m width) associated with park foot traffic	One-way system for vehicles (south to north uphill to mitigate speeds). Realignment of parking to extend walking & cycling space on west side. Parking restrictions on east cycle lane supported with light segregation	Social distancing Appropriate separation of walking & cycling Road safety Protecting public health Modal shift
Spiersbridge Road - Thornliebank to Rouken Glen Road	Light segregation carriageway - ped & cycle	Popular walking / cycling route from Thornliebank to Rouken Glen. Footway along Spiersbridge Road unsuitable for safe social distancing (3m).	Seek to reduce carriageway to minimum extent (i.e. c6m). Introduce southbound ped/cycle space	Social distancing Road safety Protecting public health Modal shift

Rouken Glen Road, Thornliebank	Road Closure	Predominantly functions as a cut-through for vehicles avoiding Spiersbridge Toll. Opportunity to address footway constraints on Spiersbridge Road and provide attractive active travel connection to A727 / Rouken Glen Park	Road closure to through-traffic but open to people	Social distancing Road safety Protecting public health Modal shift
Merrylee Park Shops, Giffnock	Light segregation carriageway - ped	Constrained footway (c.3m) outside business and essential services (pharmacy)	cordon off parking layby - allow business loading/unloading only on service road	Social distancing
Sheddens Shops, Clarkston	Light segregation carriageway - ped	Constrained footway (c.2m) outside business and doctors surgery	cordon off parking bays and realign parking horizontally onto carriageway.	Social distancing
Authority wide	Other	Neighbourhood Zones – Strategic Definition	Identify contained residential ‘local traffic cells’ bound by primary and distributor roads or other physical feature	Assist with Stage 3 measures and longer term planning

Phase 3 (medium term) measures:

- Phase 3 measures will be determined following review of community and stakeholder engagement, as well as assessment of existing response measures in July 2020 or later. This will take into account government guidance at this time.
- Phase 3 will consider elements such as ‘Low Traffic Neighbourhoods’ and ‘School Streets/Safer Routes to School’ in order to deliver a more strategic approach to response measures.
- The Roads and Transportation Service will work in partnership with East Renfrewshire Council Communities Service to assess community transport and delivery requirements and scope for improvement in line with the ‘Support Vulnerable People’ principle.
- The Roads and Transportation Service will work in partnership with East Renfrewshire Council Town Centre and Economic Regeneration Services to align Transport Response with the local Economic Recovery Plan in line with the ‘Support the Local Economy’ principle.

Phase 4 (long term) measures:

- Appraisal of response measures and assessment of permanent reallocation of road space
- East Renfrewshire Council will apply for funding to progress development of a refreshed Local Transport Strategy. This will include a public consultation on strategic transport objectives and supporting plans and policies for the area.
- East Renfrewshire Council will continue to pursue development of 'Better Points' behaviour change initiative to support sustainable travel and local economic recovery.