



Scotland Walking Summit, session 2

12 August

Transcript

Dani: Hi everyone, and welcome to the second session of the Living Streets Scotland Walking Summit.

My name's Dani, I'm the Communications Coordinator at Living Streets. I'm going to hand over to the presenters and the speakers in a minute, but I'm just going to do a quick bit of housekeeping before we get started.

Today's session is going to last for an hour, we're scheduled in until 3 o'clock, and We're going to have a presentation and then time for a bit more of a discussion and for questions.

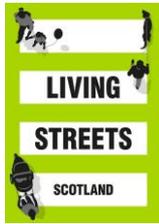
If you have questions that you'd like the panel to address, there's a box for you to do that at the bottom of your screen, if you use the Q&A button at the bottom of your screen

for any direct questions to the panellists. We really do encourage you to submit them if you have them, and I'll keep an eye on those during the session, and I'll reappear later on so I can ask some of those to the panel. If you have any other sort of more general comments or reflections, or any problems with any aspects of the setup of the webinar, with the technology, and please use the chat function for that, so I can keep an eye on that separately, I'll try my best to resolve any problems that we have.

And just finally we're recording today's session, and you'll be able to watch it afterwards, if you have to duck out at any point, we'll also be asking for feedback on how you think it's gone, so we can use that to improve future webinars that we do.

So I'm going to hand over to Stuart now, and he can introduce the rest of the discussion and the panellists.

Stuart: Good afternoon everybody. For those of you who don't know me I'm Stuart Hay, Director at Living Streets Scotland, I look after the charity's work in Scotland, and a small team that does various projects with schools, but increasingly we're working with communities and trying to work on issues around the accessibility of the street environment. At the last session where we kicked off this series, you kind of heard our views on this, and how we're developing our thinking. That was very much our views and what we were really keen to do was to get people with more first-hand experience of the street environment, how it affects them, living with a disability on a day to day basis. To help us out on that I'm delighted that we've got Keith Robertson who is an advisor to the Scottish Government through the Mobility and Access Committee Scotland. He is also the manager of a charity called Disability Beyond Borders which does work in Eastern Europe on these things, so a whole breadth of experience there on the mobility side of things. We were due to be joined by Monica McGill, who had kindly agreed to step in and talk about issues around visual impairment, she's a campaigner for Guide Dogs and has done a lot of work in this area, unfortunately, she's unwell so we're hoping she's on the mend, but we're delighted that Catriona Burness from RNIB has been able to step in and give us that perspective and she's done a lot of work in this area on how the public realm especially affects people who have a visual impairment.



And I'm going to hand first up to Keith who's going to set the scene a little bit. He's going to give us a presentation of his experiences of some things he's seen in the built environment, I should warn, everybody this is going to contain a lot of street clutter and all sorts of things that really upset Living Streets, so, hopefully a good collection of how not to do it. And then after that we'll have a discussion on things that we can and should be doing to sort out the situation. So I'm going to hand straight over to Keith, and his presentation seems to be working! We didn't do presentations the last time, so, over to you Keith. That should be working now there. Okay, excellent. Yeah, we're good to go. And I think you're at the end of your presentation rather than the start. This is the trailer, a sneak preview. There you go. Good to go.

Keith: Yeah, I was going backwards there! I'd like to talk for about 10 to 12 minutes today, really initially about disability and people's abilities, about access, what it means, and then some examples of barriers for disabled people, both at home and some ridiculous ones are in Ukraine, where we do a lot of work. And look at, you know, what are the possible solutions.

And initially, I'd like to bring a quote from Vikas Khanna, who said "disability is the inability to see ability". It sounds a bit of a mouthful, but actually it's very accurate, and it's one of the best quotes about disability that I've ever come across. So, what I always want people to see is not people's disability. I think disability is one of the most emotive words in any language.

We should be seeing people for their abilities and not their disabilities. I want you to think about what people can do and not what they can't do, because that's what's really important. I also want you to think about access, the concept of accessible design really ensures both direct access, unassisted, and then indirect access, where people can use assistive technology for access, or they may have a carer or somebody with them to assist them to gain access. It's about making things accessible to everyone, not just people with a disability. Our streetscapes, you know, our roadscape should be available and accessible to everyone immaterial.

The best quote I've ever seen on access was posted by a guy called Alistair Duggin in May 2016, a civil servant, who said "accessibility means that people can do what they need to do in a similar amount of time and effort as someone that does not have a disability, means that people are empowered, can be independent, and will not be frustrated by something that was poorly designed or implemented, and that's crucial. I mean, if we look back in the last few years about shared space, you know, there was actually nothing wrong with the principles of shared space, but the implementation was absolutely disastrous.

And what Alistair said there is based on the one sentence which for me for me, all equality should be based on in Europe, and it's that everybody has the right to live a life with dignity and respect, and with choice and independence. And that's, to me that's a really important statement.

We need to break down the barriers to get fair access, maybe some of you are like me and actually have nightmares about places like this. These are places in Scotland, I won't name and shame, but they are places in Scotland. They are horrendous. They're horrendous for someone who's ambulant disabled, for someone with a sight impairment, or someone with a wheelchair. These are nearly insurmountable.



We can get down streets like this. A-boards, in my opinion, should be banned everywhere. And I give credit to the cities and the towns that have banned them. I want to flag this up because some barriers can be a bit extreme. These are in the UK. The one on your left, there's actually a wheelchair sign on this supposed ramp. Now I've been a wheelchair user for nearly 40 years, and I wouldn't be coming down that, I'll tell you that for nothing. I don't think Eddie the Eagle would be coming down that, I think it's too steep for him!

The centre one, believe it or not, that is the entry for Kent and Midway wheelchairs services. That's their reception. So you can go in the wheelchair service as long as you don't use one. The parking bay in the right hand side, believe it or not that's in Glasgow. I reckon I'm a reasonable driver but I couldn't put a car between these two posts, and what do they put there? A disabled bay.

Absolutely ridiculous, but that's what we see. And that's what we were up against. These other ones are even more extreme, and they are in Ukraine. The one on the left. these are underpasses in the capital in Kiev. Where instead of putting a ramp, they just fill some bits in with concrete, and just for extra measure, to make it even more dangerous, they coat them in marble, to make them nice and slippery. And they're really really steep.

The centre one is the ramp that I use to get into the supermarket, and that's one of the very few ramps in the city of three and a half million people. And the one on the right, that's just an entry into the shop. But you'll see on the right hand side is blocked off the left hand side, to pretty it up, a little pink bike, no disabled person can get in or out. No upstand to stop everybody falling off the side. And they think this is wonderful. The fact that it's got a step before you can ever get onto the ramp has never actually even been thought about. Nevertheless, this is what we're up against. I think one of the barriers that a lot of people don't consider is sign clutter. and I do stress sign clutter and not signage. Signage, and signs, and wayfinding, and you'll see in the next slide, is to me something totally different. This is in Weymouth, and how anybody can ever get anywhere with these signs, whether they're able bodied or disabled, is beyond me. Because it looks like the hospital is actually the superstore, and vice versa. And I don't think that's correct. But nevertheless. Sign clutter can be extremely misleading, and there's no way that anybody can wayfind from them. We need to get rid of signs that don't do anything.

Then we may start to break down the barriers, of where is something, and how do we get there. Also, we know it's easy to mark out in wayfinding, as with the picture on the right, where the most accessible route is. It's not rocket science, but they don't seem to get it right. Signs and wayfinding are extremely important. I'm sure a lot of you have noticed this especially in shopping centres and such like sorry, where you often get these interactive maps. Interactive maps are find if you can see them, somebody with a sight impairment, they're not [going to be able to], you know, they need to be audio as well. So people really have got to think about these things.

But before we can get anywhere, first and foremost, the infrastructures has got to be in a condition that we can use. These are all relatively close to me within 60 miles of my home, and they're still waiting to be maintained.

There's also an issue around maintenance, if route authorities, whether that be the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, or local roads, where it should be local authorities and councils, if



they need to make dips in pavements and make better access. why are they doing during planned maintenance, when it doesn't cost nearly as much money, because they're always shouting about how they don't have the money. Well, there's ways to do things that are much more cost effective. But first and foremost, we need surfaces we can actually travel on and not trip up and actually end up having to sue the council and it'll cost them even more money. And a lot of people do. So maintenance of existing infrastructure is absolutely essential. Either that or we can't walk, wheel, cycle, anywhere.

One of the things that I haven't got here, but, Robert Weetman of Living Streets and I have discussed at great length, and something that I will be putting into the consultation on a some changes to the highway code that's happening just now, is that there is no defined colour for cycle lanes. We see red cycle lanes, we see orange, yellow, green, we see every every colour except tartan for cycle lanes.

Why on earth is there not one defined colour for cycle lanes? Same as they are for signs? I really don't get it. It doesn't make any sense. So things need to be brought into the 21st century. And quite often we do face insurmountable barriers. The picture on the left, that is a that is roadblocks that were suspended because of COVID-19, but nobody has maintained them. Nobody has kept things as they should be. So the barrier that was there has gotten even worse. You'll notice there's no way on and off pavements. The middle one, you simply can't get along the pavement, because some smart alec but has never received any disability awareness training, or any access training, decided to put the signs on the pavement. It's pretty stupid. I believe that everyone, working on road works, whether that be road authority or utility companies, right from the labourer to the site manager should receive disability awareness training and access training. The one on the right, just now it's, it's probably about the best that we've got, that yellow ramp is what roadworks use as a temporary sort of dropped kerb, however the slight problem is somebody with Asperger's, some people with certain mental health disabilities, some people with autism, dementia, Alzheimer's, won't go near fluorescent colours, they automatically steer away from them, so they wouldn't be able to use that. I did approach the road authority and utility committee in Scotland about it. They said it was the health and safety issue. I approached the HSE about it, because there's no reason for them to be this fluorescent colour, especially when the safety signs are only plain yellow and not fluorescent, and basically they said they didn't want to know. They think they've heard the last of me, I promise you they haven't

They gave the wrong answer. Instead of working with us, they decided to try and brush us off. Let it sit for a little while but once the present crisis is over then we'll try again.

We can transform our streets. This is from my local city, is Perth, the picture on the left is what Perth was in 1977,78,79. And I was heavily involved when they pedestrianised the high street which is now on the right-hand side. Within the last 10 years or so we did away with the likes of grilles where trees were planted because you now get a concrete that's porous, so the water gets through to keep the tree alive. Feeds the roots, and you don't have this grille that people trip on, get wheelchair wheels caught on, break white canes on, and if you notice, the picture on the right, all the signs, the seats, the bins and everything, are all in one row. and if anybody puts an A-board out that isn't in that row, they get fined. In Perth it's the same with pavement cafes, you have to apply to get a



pavement cafe, and if it's sanctioned there's a little stud, that's flush with the pavement, and if you didn't know what you were looking for, you wouldn't see it, and that's the distance they're allowed to bring the pavement cafe out to, and if they breach that they get fined and the council do fine them. And it works. It really works. It gets away with the clutter. Clutter is barriers, and we don't want to see it. We don't want to see barriers, we need to get rid of them not create them.

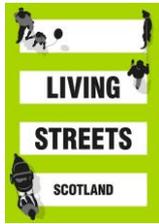
The consequences. They're really serious. The top picture on the left isn't in this country. But that could easily be anywhere. You know, it does happen to be in Odessa in Southern Ukraine, but I have seen similar in this country. If disabled people can't get out and about, if you're stuck in four walls, without question: isolation. especially in the long term leads to the deterioration of a person's mental health. And the other three pictures are representative of that, you know, it is difficult enough living with a disability, year in, year out. Not only, you know, that the social impact, but there's also financial impact. If a pound is worth a pound in a non disabled person's pocket, to a disabled person that's only worth sixty-eight pence. That is, the financial discrepancy. The financial gap between living as a disabled person, and a non-disabled person because it costs so much extra to live as a disabled person. No government has addressed that yet, and it needs to be addressed. Because that is one of the barriers that leads to isolation, as much as a physical barrier.

This is really important, it really is. Barriers we need to get rid of. So what's the answer? For me, the answer, and I think it's been proven. is to ask disabled people, engage with disabled people and disability organisations, engage with the public, consult with them. And I mean consult with them, not, you know, have a tick box exercise, really take into consideration what's being said. Equality impact assessments, I really believe in. They highlight across all protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010, what the effect of any changes, any projects will have on any of these characteristics. There's also another one I haven't got up there, and because it's only used in the built environment, and it's called an access statement. An access statement tells architects, consultants, designers, they have to put down what has been put in place, but also what has not been put in place, and why it hasn't been put in place. Because there may be a valid reason, but at the same time, they may be trying to get away with something, and that is not acceptable. So, we need not just to listen. But we actually need to hear people. There's a big difference between listening and hearing. And then hearing we've got to understand, and we understand by engaging, by asking, by consulting properly. Yeah, it is difficult for somebody who's not, who isn't disabled themselves or doesn't have a family member or friend that isn't disabled, but doesn't mean that they can have some sort of understanding. And if they don't engage that isn't going to happen. They need to ask themselves though. What if it was you or your family? How would you cope? What would you do?

And we need to nail this down. I've been banging on about this for 30-odd years, things are changing, but not at the rate I would like them to change, that's for sure.

I hope that's... it's been a bit of a rocket ship through presentation, but I hope I've given you something to think about. And thanks for listening. Any questions I'd be happy to, I'd be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

Stuart: Thanks Keith and, you know, obviously, sort of been at this for a long time, and your frustration was obviously there, and in terms of how little progress has been made. I've gotta have a



quick question. Have we made more progress indoors than outdoors in terms of how these things are addressed?

Keith: I think, they're about 50-50 just now. I do think that one of the biggest contributors or contributing factors to getting rid of barriers is integrating standards into existing standards, like Scottish building standards, it used to be part of the regulations over building standards in Scotland. It was part E in England hence we get Doc M toilet packages, they were integrated in '96 and that's made a difference. We need more integration in the civil engineering stuff as well. But we are slowly getting there.

I advise the Scottish Government when they're pulling contracts together that especially for the bigger jobs to put a consultant comply clause in the contract. We can't have anything to do with the tendering and obviously we have to pull back at that time, but we have input into the wording of the contract. It means that, because everything's usually designed in build, the contractor can't go in and do their own thing. They have to come and ask if they can do something unless there's a valid reason, that's fine. But more often than not, they're just trying to save money and make some more money for themselves and, not acceptable.

I'm going to bring in Catriona there and just to get her perspective on what she's seen, and also other issues that she's aware of at the moment, particularly, I suppose, as the street environments really changed because of COVID, there's extra, extra challenges as we all get back out and about, all the problems that were there before, but I think there's a few new problems but I'll let Catriona, maybe give us some insights and to what she's seen.

Catriona: Well, thanks very much for inviting me to speak, if I can just say I'm not the intended speaker for the panel today, but I'm very pleased to be able to come in and say something and be here from the Royal National Institute of Blind people in Scotland, and RNIB's goal is to help blind and partially sighted people of all ages to live as independently as possible. And the capacity to get around is critical within that. In terms of numbers of people with sight loss in Scotland, we have approximately 35,000 to 36,000 registered as either blind or partially sighted in Scotland, with around 170,000 living with a significant amount of sight loss but not sufficient to be registered as blind or partially sighted. And the figure of those with an element of significant sight loss is likely to double over the next decade, due to ageing population, and also due to the prevalence of diseases such as diabetes. And now we're in a situation where coronavirus is giving us a startling new context for all of our lives. And for blind or partially sighted people there have been significant challenges. RNIB did a survey, to see how people were experiencing lockdown. Some of the headline findings from the survey were that three quarters round about three quarters were quite or very concerned about access to food during lockdown, with around 21% of them, being careful about how they used food before they were able to reach a next delivery. A quarter didn't have anyone in their household, who could guide them, and two thirds described themselves as less independent than before lockdown. And we're in a situation at the moment where the world is changing around us quite a lot, and many people with sight loss won't necessarily be taking in the extent to which the world is changing outside their doors, in that they may be slower to come out and about, to carry out inessential travel activities, so the focus that we've had as a charity is with our staff have been working from home, or advice line workers have been working from home. We've been focusing on



looking for supermarket slots guidance on social distancing, social distancing plays a critical role in reducing infection rates of the pandemic, but social distancing is so hard for people with sight loss to deal with, and guide dogs don't deal with it either. Guide dogs aren't trained to find two metre markings in supermarket queues. And you can't detect them with a long cane either. In any case, not all forms of sight loss are visible, or if somebody is moving in a way that might be a bit different, or getting in somebody else's way, it might not be immediately obvious that person has got sight loss, especially if you're coming up from behind them, you know from the back who's got what condition? And they wouldn't necessarily be aware of somebody moving up fast behind them, so there's a need for public awareness of his hidden disability in particular at this time.

We are delighted, as an organisation, that the Scottish Government has now produced guidance on guiding people with sight loss, and I'd be very happy to send that to Living Streets, because I think it's helpful to be aware of it. But essentially it, whilst it's advising that if you are being guided by somebody outwith your household, it can happen. You can be guided by somebody outwith your household on the basis that you minimise the time spent in the necessary proximity to guide somebody, that that you observe hygiene measures such as wearing masks, ideally gloves, using hand sanitizers afterwards, but that that is a potential lifeline to people with sight loss emerging from the stricter phases of lockdown that we've experienced. And

As an organisation. We produced the coronavirus courtesy code to help to, to provide some tips to local authorities, there's nothing very new, in the coronavirus courtesy code. It's very similar to their guidance that MACS devised, which was circulated to local authorities by the Scottish Government. The coronavirus courtesy code starts off from the basis of keep safe and two metres apart. Be aware that not all disabilities, including sight loss, are visible and work together to ensure everyone can use our roads and paths. If I was able to share the screen with you I could show you the coronavirus courtesy code. Can I get a little bit of onscreen advice on whether or not I could do that?

Dani: Yes, you can Catriona, if you can find the button, the green button that says share screen.

Catriona: Yes, okay, share screen. So, sorry, I'm fluffing about trying, trying to do this. I think I got it, I think I've got it. Okay.

The part I want to focus on really is the sort of virus courtesy code, it's on one page, it was never intended to be anything other than broad guidelines. But it also reflects a lot of the concerns that RNIB Scotland has had as a sight loss charity and the kind of comments that we've been making over time, on street design. So that in terms of the, the, the spaces for people initiatives that are are undergoing in Scotland, you know we very much want to see. it's been recognised that to have social distance you need extra space we very much want to see that extra space is allocated from the roadway, rather than from the pavements. And that would give cyclists, a segregated area in which to move around, given that, there's extra pressure, new, increased pressure to enable people to cycle as an alternative to using public transport which is more challenging to use at the minute, perhaps becoming less challenging.

That we would like to see, you've got these wonderful images of signs, Keith, we didn't want to see signs as part of the new arrangements, popping up on pavements and blocking the pavement access, and looking to avoid shared space between cyclists and pedestrians on, on the basis that's



explained here, that blind and partially sighted pedestrians find it extremely difficult to detect cycles, and others may not realise that a pedestrian has sight loss. I noted that in the last session that you had, Stuart, you were reminded of the participants of the conference of the highway code, that cycling is not permitted on pavements. Making the point that we need to retain dropped kerbs for crossings, wheelchair users. But at the same time maintaining kerbs as clues to allow visually impaired people to move around and to find able to find the pavement edges. We're also keen to see controlled crossings contained for again people with sight loss this gives a safe crossing guarantee.

And, the point on bus stops is perhaps one that we can discuss in the remainder of the session. But that we were certainly keen to see that bus stops are accessible, and that they don't involve standing, or crossing cycle lanes. I'm perhaps best to leave it there just now, because I'm sure that people will have questions and comments. And I also know that there's representatives from other sight loss organisations here, including people from Guide Dogs Scotland, there maybe things that they would like to add.

Stuart: Thank you very much. I mean, that was good to get straight up to date on where we are. And I'm going to come in on the back of that, and it's a question to both yourself Catriona and to Keith, what we've seen is things have moved really rapidly which in some ways is quite good, I see some positive things happening, such as realising how wide two metres is, and if we can get people more space on pavements that's good for everyone. It was a real battle on the footway parking just to get one and a half metres recognised as kind of of the minimum that you need. But I think there's some real downsides to what's happening, partly because it's quite rapid and I get the impression that a lot of people have adapted to the environment. Now the kind of rug has been pulled from under them in terms of how our streets are laid out. Have you got any tips on how councils can actually engage quickly and effectively with people with a range of disabilities so they actually learn, so they can adapt schemes quite quickly, and fix them? I mean they've not went out to make life difficult for people but I think that's happened in some some instances, so how do they sort that, in conjunction with people who actually know what's going on?

Stuart: I think the first port of call should be the Third Sector Interface, every area has got a Third Sector Interface. The majority anyway, you know, and there'll be some disability groups that are members of that, ranging from pan-disability to wheelchair users to people who sight impairment etc etc etc. You know, and also to engage with people. I know there's not many of us in the country who are actual professionals in this field, qualified in the field, and we look at all disabilities, not just our own. You know, quite often. The last disability I tend to consider is wheelchairs, because I happen to use one, that's just through habit. Catriona might have some other tips.

Catriona: I'm just checking I'm not muted! What we have been emphasising as an organisation is asking people with sight loss to contact their councillors if they discover something that's been altered that makes their life more difficult, that we've on our website, we've got a link to the coronavirus courtesy code, but it enables people to put in their own postcode, and they can write to their local councillors about what they found on their doorsteps, because the, the coronavirus street alterations have been done at speed. And so, because they're literally being unrolled before our eyes, and because they're happening across Scotland. We have not been responding to the



individual council consultations, we have sent every council in Scotland a copy of the coronavirus courtesy code, and we're asking local people to contact their councillors to say what their specific issue is, whether it's that they have found that they can't cross a road at least to be able to cross with ease, and that might not be because the traffic lights have been altered onto the coronavirus team, it might just mean the traffic lights are not working, and can be repaired. I am aware of that having happened in a couple of towns, in Perth, where there are traffic lights that have required repair, rather than they're being intentionally switched off under the coronavirus street alterations.

Stuart: Just going to come in on the back of that, this is an interesting area. Is it easy to find for people to know who to talk to in councils? Do councils make it easy in terms of if you've got a problem, is it obvious to know where to go? And can you provide any sort of tips or comment on that issue?

Keith: No! Finding out who to go to in a council, if people don't know the workings of local authorities. It's extremely difficult. And I would suggest first port of call is probably the equalities officer, if they've got an equalities officer, of course, some councils don't. Failing that, the roads engineers in the roads department. They should each have a road engineer for a certain part of that local authority area, who's responsible for the roads in that. So that would be the first two ports of call.

Stuart: I'll just give a plug for a guide, we did it was mainly aimed at older people but it works for everyone. did try and find the phone number to contact for people, and which is on our website, we can provide the link to that, so we've got a guide to streets. And that was quite interesting in terms of making sure, that the phone is actually quite important for people. And that's another another consideration in terms of making things things accessible. I'm gonna have one last question from me and then I'm going to throw open, if you've got some questions, that that Dani's been collecting for us, but the last point is when you're responding to issues, I think there's an issue with just a lack of street management, I just don't think that councils have the resources out there to do this stuff or do it well. It's not criticism they do the best with the resources they have, but things like roadworks and getting those fixed, is that a particular problem for people with disabilities? that there's just not people out on the ground that they can turn to to get things fixed quickly. I'll start with Catriona on that one.

Catriona: It depends where you live, it's easier to identify where to go in some council areas than others, the websites, the council websites, and it would be normally through a website, could have 'pavement', a portal which has 'pavement complaints', Edinburgh City Council has a specific email to contact if you've come across a rogue A board in the city, in the city centre, in the city boundaries giving there's an A board ban across Edinburgh now.

Stuart: You mentioned the A boards, and I think that's a good one, in terms of, that's a council that has been really proactive and they've put some staff and time behind it and it's actually worked. Pretty much. I think there's been a little bit of a problem of course, coronavirus, these businesses have kind of rushed out to say we're back in business and dug out some old A boards, but I think the council are on that and what I would like to see is actually councils actually being as proactive about roadwork sites, because it's kind of wild west territory I'm afraid, in terms of how those sites are



maintained, which is really concerning because this is actually a health and safety issue it's not just an accessibility issue as Keith pointed out.

So I'm going to see if Dani has any other questions for us, that have come in, so I don't have to keep talking.

Keith: Can I just say something about the roadworks?

Stuart: Yeah

Keith: A lot of people won't realise but Scotland's one of only three countries in the world actually has a roadworks commissioner. And I contacted the roadworks commissioner about suspended roadworks because they will collapse, and create even bigger barriers, and about three, four weeks ago, they do a monthly newsletter to all road authorities and all utility companies, and they put a reminder in there that they have a duty to tidy up suspended roadworks. So we've tried to be proactive on that.

Stuart: Okay. Thanks for that. Dani, did we have anything?

Dani There's only been one question I'm afraid, so I'll read that out. So this question says: "I am hearing impaired and walk with difficulty. Both DPTAC which advises the English government, and IMTAC the mobility committee advising on mobility issues for disabled people in Northern Ireland, have changed their position on whether shared space slows down motorists and cyclists and whether or not it's safe for disabled people. What is MACS position on this and is it likely to change?"

Keith: MACS' position hasn't changed because we've always been against it, as opposed to DPTAC and IMTAC who had it under consideration. We've gone even further and persuaded the Scottish Government to do some research, and do actually a considerable amount of research on inclusive street design, and what could be the principles that could come from that. DFT and DPTAC had got wind of it, and they contacted us and said, could we come on board, and we said what you bringing to the table? They said we'll double the budget, we said welcome. So DFT are now involved in that, unfortunately, it has been held back a little bit because of COVID-19, but hopefully within the next couple of months, we will be getting moving again. The consultants carrying out the initial consultation on it, the first document that came back - it's a tripartite thing between Transport Scotland, Sustrans, and the other one, Society for Chief Officers for Transportation in Scotland, and the first document was not up to standard, or wasn't acceptable, so that's a small steering group. When they ok it, that'll come through to the working group, which is actually roads for all, and then we will look at it and decide what principles there are, to take out, to remove shared space. Shared space, as I said in my presentation, the implementation didn't work. Hence the court cases that Guide Dogs took in Mayfair, Islington, Taunton, etc.

I will once and for all, the design principles, need to be quantifiable, we've got to get away from whoever shouts loudest gets their way. They need to be qualitative, not just quantitative. And that's what we'll be working on, the target date is the 31 March next year, it may go a wee bit over that because of COVID-19, but we're working hard. We're actually way ahead of DPTAC or IMTAC. A long answer to a short question but that's where we are.



Stuart: Catriona, I know, I think the position of RNIB on shared spaces is very clear but I wonder if you could just maybe take us through, one of the issues that we we criticism from certain cycling interests is in and around concerns about floating bus stops and how they operate. And there is a view that is expressed that they work in the Netherlands so we should just get on with it. I think that's very very simplistic in terms of actual experience but I wonder what your, your views are?

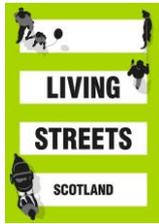
Catriona: We're seeing more floating bus stops being introduced under the road reallocation schemes, or rather proposed, and on that basis we're if anything, hardening our position. To make it clear it's not really very accessible to cross a cycle lane to get to a bus stop. It's definitely inaccessible to have to stand on a cycle lane to get on or off a bus, and it presents safety issues for both cyclists, for pedestrians, potentially for bus drivers.

I mean this is, people ask Can this be designed around? And I would very much like to see a design that would enable a bus passenger to leave from the pavement, to get onto the bus, without having the clash between the positioning of the cycle lane and the bus stop. It's clearly one of the most difficult of design issues, and we're very aware of that. We've been involved in discussions with Cycling UK, with Pedal on Parliament...Scotland, we're discussing what the options are, but I have to say at the moment we are concerned about the sudden increase of temporary bus stops which are replacing existing bus stops with arrangements that actually involve people standing in cycle paths to get on and off the bus. And I can't see that as positive.

Stuart: Yeah, thank you for that, I mean I think there's another issue and Keth maybe has a view on this, but I think there's the headline issues about safety here, and, which in some some cases if the design is right, we can we can avoid that. If the bikes are slow enough and they have enough warning etc etc there is stuff you can do, but I think there's a wider issue that if we don't get the design right, is that people will be excluded because there's places they won't go, there won't be safety incidents because people choose not to use certain bus stops, and that's you know discriminatory and, you know, it's a risk that could happen Keith?

Keith: Yeah, I think it's a it's a two-edged sword, because usually for a lot of authorities, the first thing they look at is has there been any accidents, you know, what is the safety and figures on that? And if people aren't coming out because they don't feel safe in their environment, and mean, safety, and feeling safe, not just safety, but actually feeling safe, which is different, is up there in parallel with accessibility, if people don't feel safe they won't go out. You're right, if they don't feel safe to go out then the health and safety figures are likely to be false. Accidents may not be happening because people aren't there for them to happen. And we end up with nothing done. We've got to get the design right. People are starting to get fed up of me banging on about design but it is so crucial, because if we get the design right and the implementation of the design right, and the education of the public out about what has just been built, then we get the usage correct, and we've got to concentrate on that.

Stuart: I think Dani's come in and said there's a few more questions.



Dani: Yeah, this one maybe fits quite nicely with what you were just talking about tjere Keith, somebody asked, Where can designers go for advice on who to contact when they are designing public spaces? So this person is an architect and, and is looking for sort of ways to find resources to make use of the information, the experiences that we've been talking about.

Keith: It partly depends what the project is, if it's a really large project, I would say the local third sector interface, section four, comes under safety in Scottish building standards, both domestic and non-domestic, if it's an architect, it's all in there, but we must remember that the standards are the very minimum requirements. And if we want to future proof the environment, whether that be the built environment, open environment or streetscapes, then, we need to put in better than the minimum requirements. That's important be kept in mind. I'm quite willing to help people if I can, MACS would be a more strategic organisation, we'd have to be kind of, the largest project, but if somebody wants to wants to contact me for some few quick questions, feel free to give my contact details Dani.

Dani: And there's another question here about where can people go to find more information on other disabilities like autism, and what good design would look like for people with autism.

Keith: I would say Scottish Autism. You know, go there. You've got the Alzheimer's Association. I know that's something slightly different, but, you know, nevertheless, you know, Dementia Scotland, these organisations are readily available and now, Spinal Injury Scotland etc etc etc, organisations like Glasgow Disability Alliance, that is in effect a third sector interface. Find out the third sector interface in the local area and they'll put them in touch with disability groups in that area. If it's local. And if it's National, go to the national organisations.

Stuart: Thanks, thanks Keith, and I would recommend we've worked with Glasgow Disability Alliance in the past we've worked with several similar organisations in Perth and Kinross, and it's well worth it. It does provide that access to people that wouldn't necessarily come in via a normal consultation and I think, also it's different, talking to people who might actually use the infrastructure from people who have an interest in design which is very valid but it's amazing what people who who use the street, because they have that lived experience, they know where they're trying to get to and how that street's going to work. And that's one of the themes I think we've tried to bring in and through those sessions, is the amount of hard work that needs to be done at the start of this this process, and to engage everybody.

Just a quick thought I've seen EQIAs on a number of schemes. Quite, quite major schemes. I've never been particularly thrilled at them in terms of the level of depth, it does seem to have a footnote in committee reports that go to councillors, am I being unfair there or have I just picked a bad bunch to see?

Catriona: I haven't seen a very inspiring bunch, either, Stuart.

Stuart: Ok, Keith?

Keith: I have seen some good EQIAs, I've seen some very bad ones. The problem is within the Equalities Act, there is only a need to do an equality impact assessment, and not the quality of it. So we get a lot of tick box exercises. And the message we've got to get across is not acceptable. We've



approached EHRC Equality and Human Rights Commission, saying can we do something about it, can we get the quality sorted, and they've said that's outwith their gift, they can't do that. So we're trying to look at other means by where we can get the quality of it, and also revert back to although its not legally binding, other than in the built environment, access statements as far as disabled people are concerned, is a really good tool. Very focused tool, by where not only can they put in and start bragging about what they've put in for disabled people, the flipside of that is they have to put in what they haven't put in and why, and more often than not, the reason why not, doesn't stack up, and then you can do something about it.

Stuart: Okay, I'm going to start wrapping things up unless there's any last minute questions that we're going to miss out on. What we did the last time is we will try and capture everything from the chat. We do have a paper that we launched at our last meeting, it's still out there so if people want to comment on that, we've had comments from MACS which is very helpful but if others can help us out with that that will inform our, our position but will also hopefully help us to target our efforts in working in this field and and partnering up with people. We also have one more session to go in this series which would conclude our engagement on this topic, and the plan is to get some people with some design expertise just to see how they're responding to this issue, and maybe we can have a look at people that do consultations as well, just thinking on my feet in terms of how this discussion has gone today. That's the next stage, I've got a few things quickly to do I need to first of all thank Keith for his presentation, and answering all the questions I threw his way, and a special thank you to Catriona who stepped in very much at the last moment and did a great job of representing an interest for people with sight loss because we were really keen that that was, was was covered. And I think it was interesting that we also started to discuss about some of the other disabilities that are not sort of so mainstream, but maybe we need to think a little bit more, more about, Keith brought that in, the impact on people with autism

So let's see how we can move on on these issues and I think I would urge everybody to follow up on some of the resources that we identified during the session, we'll try and pull those together out to participants. So look out for the final session, that will be on the 26th of August, and we may continue going on with, with this format of things if there is demand for it but that will be the final one in this series, but the work won't stop, we'll still be looking to work with partners and trying to fix up streets on the ground so that they're inclusive for everyone.

So thanks very much for everybody, that got involved today, a special thank you to Dani for keeping everything ticking along, that was appreciated, the technical title was pretty flawless, so, that's great because I think we're going to be doing these types of events for a while, until things with COVID change, so on that note just everybody stay safe, and we'll look forward to seeing you again at the end of the month.