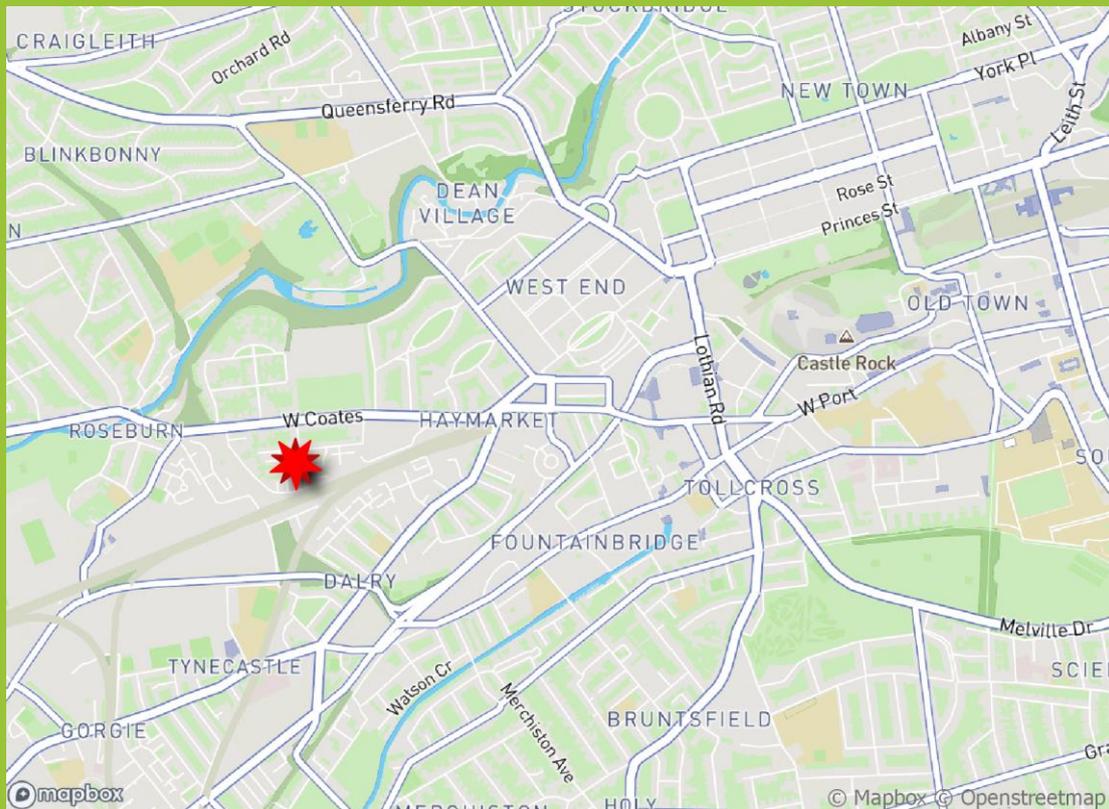


Pedestrian conditions assessment

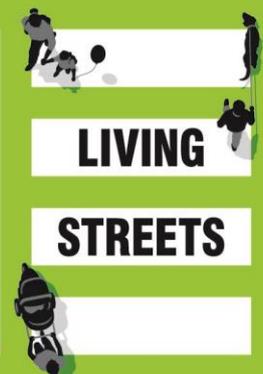
Sutherland St, Edinburgh (Manor Housing)

Social Housing Partnership Fund for

Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities 2020-21



We are Living Streets Scotland, part of the UK charity for everyday walking. We want to create a nation where walking is the natural choice for everyday, local journeys.



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Summary

Key points for registered social landlord

Our assessment of the area around Sutherland Street, Edinburgh, which should be checked with residents and other stakeholders, leads us to conclude that pedestrians are disadvantaged by these key issues:

- Footway (i.e. pavement) provision around the local area is not of sufficient quality to adequately support passage by those with many physical disabilities, with the setted (“cobbled”) carriageway surfaces adding further issues.
- Locations for both signalised crossings (with traffic lights), and bus stops, on West Coates are relatively rare. Consequently shorter journeys by bus are inconvenient enough to make use of this service pointless for access to the local shops – despite this being a major bus route.

As the Registered Social Landlord, it may only be possible for Manor Estates Housing Association to lead action in connection with a small number of the issues and ideas described in this report. The most significant of these might be around:

- supporting residents to make their accessibility needs around footway (pavement) provision heard, and in working toward ensuring improvements take place.

We report on wider issues because we consider that the better these are understood the greater the likelihood of change – whether locally and more generally.

Background note:

Our urban environments are defined by interrelated features under the influence of many different bodies, and this report is about current conditions whatever their cause. Registered social landlords do not generally have control over the main factors which affect pedestrians in the wider areas around the properties they manage. Likewise local authorities - with limited resources and budgets, and facing numerous other constraints - do not have immediate control over many of the factors which affect pedestrians.

However, in the longer term it is helpful if problems are understood, and potential solutions are explored. Registered social landlords may be able to have a positive influence, making more immediate changes where they have the power to do so, supporting others to understand the issues their residents face, and playing their part in working toward change.

This report is based on an assessment which used mapping and information available from sources such as Google Streetview. As a check of the accuracy of this assessment we discussed our initial findings to a small group of local residents. The intention is that the information in the report is used to support a longer informed discussion with local residents, as they are the real experts on the quality of the experience for pedestrians in the areas where they live.

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Introduction

Living Streets has received funding from the Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities, administered by Cycling Scotland. As part of this work we are assessing conditions for pedestrians around properties managed by registered social landlords.

This report presents observations and suggestions for improving conditions, following an assessment of the area around the Manor Estates Housing Association property at Sutherland Street, Haymarket, Edinburgh.

Key factors we assess

Our assessment looked at issues such as the following:

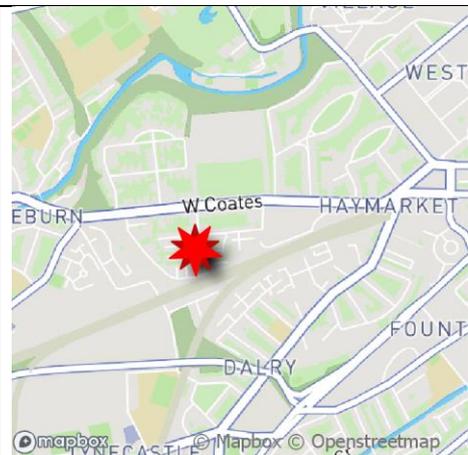
- **Footway (i.e. pavement)¹ and path provision:** the presence, surface quality, continuity, width, obstruction, and design of footways and paths.
- **Accessibility:** how far footways and paths, and their interaction with the carriageways of streets, have been designed to accommodate disabled people and others less able to deal with complicated or dangerous conditions.
- **General area design and character:** whether this is an area full of human activity and street life or one dominated by the movement of or parking of vehicles and the provision of roads designed primarily to facilitate these things.
- **Local area traffic-related safety:** looking at possibility of risk of injury from vehicles, and the likely effects of this risk on behaviour, not least in terms of how easily pedestrians cross streets, but also on how pleasant or otherwise a journey might be.
- **Whether streets and paths are welcoming to pedestrians:** both in and around an area, including focusing on how they will feel after dark or later at night – considering in particular what ‘passive surveillance’² exists, and to what level streets and paths are overlooked from buildings nearby.
- **Area permeability:** looking at whether paths and footways connect to provide convenient shorter routes for pedestrians, and longer routes for those driving – or whether routes for pedestrians are defined by following streets which have been designed around vehicle use, or by the necessity to negotiate these safely.
- **Entry and exit points and routes from an area:** looking at what boundaries around the area define these points/routes, and conditions for pedestrians here.
- **Likely destinations outside the local area and routes to/from these:** considering pedestrian journeys primarily for utility journeys – including for shopping, education, and work – and conditions for pedestrians along these, distances, and potential use of public transport.

¹ For clarity this report often uses the word term ‘footway’ rather than the phrase ‘the pavement’ to describe the space for walking on beside a road. We do this because the word ‘pavement’ is also used in technical discussion to describe the actual material a road or path is constructed from.

² We use the term ‘passive surveillance’ to describe the way in which it feels safer to be on a street where there are other people nearby who may be able to see activity, including those who might look out from the windows of a building – even if nobody is currently actively doing so.

Location

Sutherland Street is around 400-500m west of Haymarket Station in Edinburgh, in an area which might be seen to be on the edge (to the west) of the city centre.



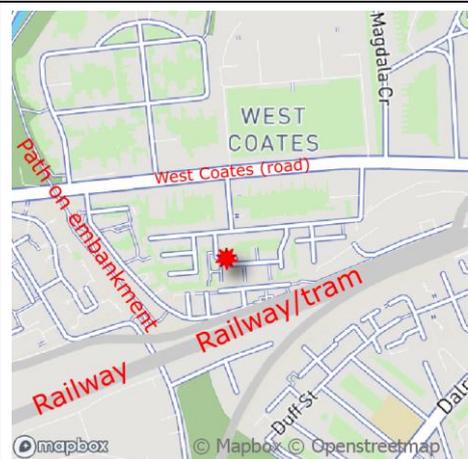
Location

Sutherland Street is part of a small surrounding neighbourhood of primarily residential property, defined by the following very clear boundaries:

- West Coates (road) to the north.
- A railway line to the south.
- A path high on an embankment to the west.
- A distinct area of office buildings (stretching from the railway to West Coates) to the east.

Within this there are smaller areas of housing which probably feel very separate from one another, being:

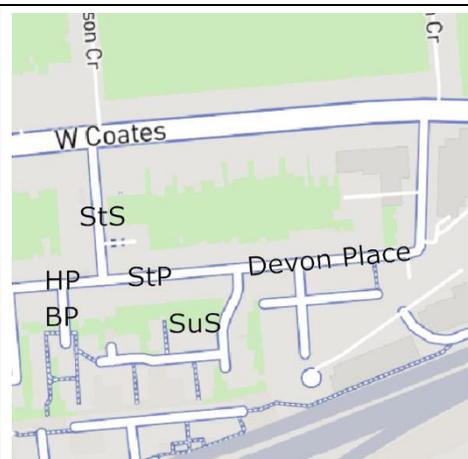
- physically disconnected, lacking any direct routes from one to the other,
- built around cul-de-sac like areas, which only immediate residents are likely to access,
- in groups of very different building style, focused away from one another.



Area boundaries

Street names change frequently in this area, as shown. This map (right) is provided to support observations in the remainder of this report.

- StS = Stanhope Street
- StP = Stanhope Place
- HP = Hampton Place
- BP = Borthwick Place
- SuS = Sutherland Street



Street names (see text to left)

Observations

Key observations

We think that these issues (and any positive points) most strongly influence the experience of pedestrians in the area. These issues may arise from many different factors. The registered social landlord, and even the local authority, may have little or no direct control over some of them.

In practical terms this small residential neighbourhood is made up of several smaller neighbourhoods.

It is notable that the area around Sutherland Street (streets/paths in blue in map on right) is effectively a mini-neighbourhood.

All access to the area is via two points on West Coates (marked as red dots on map to right).

The residential property built around Balbirnie Street, (streets/paths marked in purple in map to right) cannot be reached from the other parts of the residential area, except via West Coates – even although many of the buildings are only separated by around 15 metres.

This is unfortunate. Connections here could have facilitated access to/from the southwest from the mini-neighbourhoods around Sutherland Street - and for residents around Balbirnie Street to West Coates.



Differing colours highlight disconnected sections of street/path. Access points from West Coates indicated with red dots.



Indication of a sense of separation of areas
red=residential yellow=industrial/office

The Sutherland Street mini-neighbourhood has only two possible access points – whether for pedestrians or vehicles.

The first (access 1 in map to right) is on “Borthwick Place” which effectively is a very short (approx 25m) access lane to a small car park (capacity of around 8 vehicles).

The second (access 2) is at the end of Sutherland Street itself where this meets Devon Place/Stanhope Place.



Sutherland Street mini-neighbourhood area and access points

For pedestrians in the Sutherland Street mini-neighbourhood all journeys (other than visiting immediate neighbours, or similar) must therefore begin using one of two possible routes to West Coates.

(Strictly there are 4 potential routes if swapping from one of the main routes to the other using Stanhope Place.)

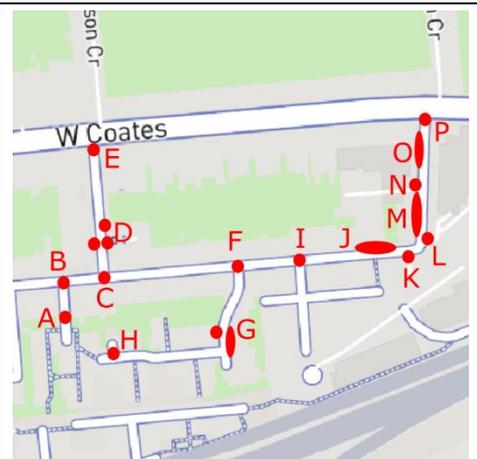


All possible access/exit routes from Sutherland Street area

There are many issues around accessibility on the local streets connecting Sutherland Street to West Coates. These may make access to and from Sutherland Street challenging or impossible for some people. This will affect those using a mobility aid like a wheelchair or mobility scooter, or people who are less physically confident when walking.

The letters below correspond to points on the map (right) and the Google Streetview links below this map (overleaf).

- A) Lack of meaningful footway (pavement) and rough setted carriageway surface.
- B) Lack of dropped kerbs, setted carriageway, north-south crossing blocked by parking
- C) footway build out does not align, failing to narrow north-south crossing of setted carriageway



Local accessibility issues (see text left).

- D) footway has significant crossfall (slope) provided to facilitate smooth vehicle movement into very minor private parking area (rather than providing a sharp ramp for vehicles to a level footway)
- E) Pedestrians must cross road end on rough setted surface
- F) Lack of dropped kerbs, footway build out does not align thus failing to narrow north-south crossing of setted carriageway
- G) Significant crossfall created on wide proportion of footway to facilitate smooth vehicle movement into parking spaces, rather than providing a steep ramp to a level footway.
- H) Dropped kerbs provided at an angle to direction of travel due to prioritising a wide turning space for vehicles, while at the same time allowing parking to obstruct this turning space.
- I) Dropped kerbs at 45 degrees to direction of travel, north-south crossing blocked by parking
- J) Lack of dropped kerbs and significant crossfall on lowered footway to allow smooth vehicle access across large stretch of this footway, rather than providing a steep ramp to a level footway.
- K) Significant crossfall on footway to allow smooth access to small private parking area, rather than provision of a steep ramp to a level footway.
- L) Gap in footway allowing convenient vehicle access to minor office parking area, with rough setted carriageway surface (rather than providing steep ramp to vehicle crossing of level footway) – with speed slowed instead by an additional hump
- M) Long stretch of very narrow footway.
- N) Lack of dropped kerbs, break in footway to facilitate vehicle access to minor office parking area.
- O) Very narrow footway broken by two minor vehicle access areas, both lacking proper provision for pedestrians.
- P) Pedestrians must cross road end on rough setted surface, with vehicle access at higher speed facilitated by gentle swept kerb line from east. A ramp is provided to slow vehicles, but this is probably too gentle to be effective.

Links to representative images on Google Streetview:

- A) [Borthwick Place surface and footway](#)
- B) [Issues at junction](#)
- C) [Issues at junction \(& newer image\)](#)
- D) [Footway at vehicle access \(also other side of street\)](#)
- E) [Surface at crossing point](#)
- F) [Issues at junction](#)
- G) [Footway at vehicle access \(also other side of street\)](#)
- H) [Turning space prioritised over pedestrian use](#)
- I) [Issues at junction](#)
- J) [Footway at vehicle access](#)
- K) [Footway at vehicle access](#)
- L) [Footway at vehicle access](#)
- M) [Narrow footway](#)
- N) [Footway at vehicle access](#)
- O) [Footway at vehicle access](#)
- P) [Surface at crossing point, swept entry facilitating vehicle speed](#)

<p>In addition to the above specific issues, narrow sections of footway are common in this local area, as are obstructions on the footway.</p> <p>Together issues of narrowness and obstruction combine to make it likely that some uses of some sections of footway become impossible.</p> <p>In many residential areas those using mobility aids - such as wheelchairs or mobility scooters - will use short sections of quiet carriageway to bypass issues on the footway. Here the rough setted carriageway surfaces make this option unattractive or unavailable.</p>	<p>Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</p> <p><u>Borthwick Place car park</u></p> <p><u>Borthwick Place</u></p> <p><u>Stanhope St obstructions</u></p> <p><u>Stanhope St obstructions</u></p> <p><u>Sutherland St obstructions</u></p>
<p>The area around the junction of Devon Place and West Coates is dominated by larger office buildings, feeling to be outside the residential area. This area may feel to be much less welcoming after dark or later at night. Not only is there a lack of ‘passive surveillance’ of the street, but also a number of darker or hidden spaces.</p> <p>Access for pedestrians here is complicated by narrow or missing footways – with vehicle access to the offices prioritised over provision for pedestrians. The setted (“cobbled”) surface of the carriageway will be likely to further limit options for people using wheelchairs or other mobility aids.</p>	<p>Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</p> <p><u>Devon Place (east end)</u></p> <p><u>Devon Place (east end)</u></p> <p><u>Building access ramp</u></p> <p><u>Building access ramps</u></p>

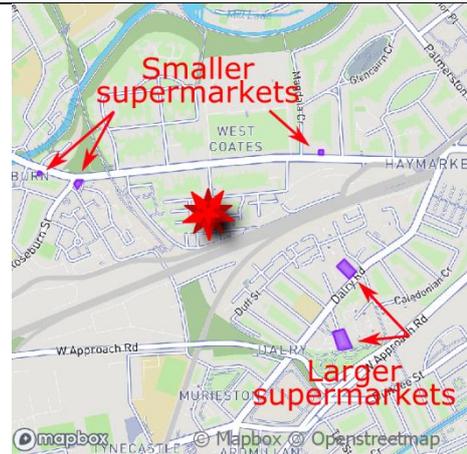
Secondary observations

<p>Positively, most parts of most pedestrian routes in the immediate area are closely overlooked from nearby residential buildings, and sections of street which aren’t overlooked are relatively short. This is likely to make mean that most routes locally remain relatively welcoming after dark or later at night.</p>	<p>Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</p> <p><u>Typical overlooked residential street</u></p>
<p>The path marking the west of this residential area – raised on an embankment – connects through the city to the north, providing passage on a good surface, crossing both busy roads and other obstructions like the Water of Leith. During the day this is busy, and despite a degree of isolation many people will be likely to feel it to be safe to use.</p> <p>It is unlikely to feel welcoming to very many people after dark or later at night.</p>	<p>Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</p> <p><u>Access to path 1 (Balbirnie Place)</u></p> <p><u>Access to path 2 (Balbirnie Place)</u></p>

There are two small supermarkets nearby on West Coates – around 400-600m away. Access to these is facilitated by signalised crossings (i.e. with traffic lights) which are encountered on West Coates on route.

There are regular buses along West Coates, meaning that access to the areas near these supermarkets might be simplified for anyone less able to walk this distance. Unfortunately the available signalised crossings are positioned in such a way as to undermine this option – with bus stops relatively rare. Those who might find the bus helpful in travelling this distance will also need to use a signalised crossing of West Coates. A journey using a bus and the available signalised crossings may be of a similar length to walking the whole route.

Future development is planned on West Coates, supporting the addition of segregated tracks for cycling. We have not assessed whether this will improve or worsen pedestrian journeys to these local destinations, or the utility of bus services for these kinds of short trip.



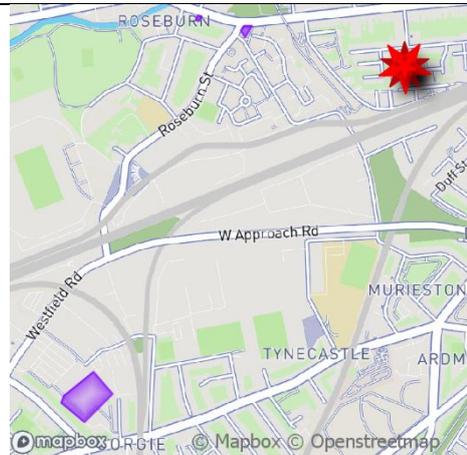
Main supermarket options

Larger supermarkets are available in Dalry – around 300-400m away ‘as the crow flies’ (image above). Access to these is made indirect by the railway. Route lengths are

- via Russell Road around 1.6 km to Lidl / 1.8 km to the Cooperative.
- via Haymarket around 1.4 km to Lidl / 1.2 km to the Cooperative.

We understand that some residents in Sutherland Street walk to these destinations via Haymarket, and that others travel to them by bus, changing at Haymarket (walking between stops on Haymarket Terrace and Dalry Road).

A much larger Sainsbury supermarket is available on Westfield Road. Access involves around a 1.6km walk, but on streets defined by non-residential non-retail uses, passage under the railway, and by carriageway design focused on efficiently transferring vehicles to and from the major ‘Western Approach Road’. The journey is relatively unpleasant even in the daytime. It would appear that the supermarket has been built primarily to serve people accessing it by car. There is no convenient bus service supporting access.



Westfield Road supermarket (1.6km walk)

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)

[Access route to closest large Sainsbury](#)

[Closest large Sainsbury](#)

There is also a large supermarket and retail park, focused on large areas of car park, around 2.5km north. Although this has clearly also been built to focus on car-based customers this might also be accessed conveniently by bicycle, using the path which passes to the west of the residential area.

We understand from residents that some also travel by bus much further (7km) to The Gyle shopping centre because the bus access is good, the centre provides level access, and the journey is simple.

In theory Russell Road offers a convenient access to destinations south of the railway. Access to this is facilitated by a path from Balbirnie Place, although access to this is inconvenient (via West Coates).

A plan has been put forward for better linking the current path (on the embankment west of the residential area) so that there is an extension provided to the south of the railway bridges, connecting to Duff Street and Dalry Road. Such an improvement would provide a much more attractive link for residents toward the facilities to the south of the railway – although the unattractive link under the main railway bridges would remain. These facilities (as noted above) include two larger supermarkets.



Route to Russell Road

Russell Road has no bordering residential property, in the section to the south of the railway. Railway bridges and light-industrial building uses combine to make this a less attractive environment, which some people will feel to be unwelcoming after dark or later at night.

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)

[Russell Road at northerly railway bridge](#)

[General Russell Road character](#)

The nature of the streets in the focus area means that there is no through traffic (except on West Coates), and that there should be minimal movement of vehicles altogether. This should mean that it is possible to design the streets to prioritise pedestrian movement. There are many places where simultaneous two way vehicle movement will be rare, so key locations for crossing could be significantly narrowed.

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)

[Stanhope Street \(showing width\)](#)

[Balbirnie Place narrowing](#)

Given this situation, the width of the carriageway provided at Stanhope Street is far greater than required. The carriageway on this street could be very significantly narrowed, perhaps including a restriction allowing only one-way movement, with little loss of convenience for those driving, and a great deal of additional space for pedestrian use.

More creative solutions to change the feel of the carriageway are not unknown locally. Balbirnie Place has a section which is designed to narrow the feel of the carriageway, while also allowing for the occasional movement of larger vehicles.

The catchment non-denominational primary school – around 1.5km on foot - is relatively easy to access, although this involves sections alongside West Coates (a major road). Russell Road can only be crossed using a signalised crossing, at West Coates.

The catchment non-denominational secondary school is 5km away ('as the crow flies'). In theory such a distance might very easily be cycled by most young people. A 'quiet route' is signed in this direction, passing near the school, but in avoiding busier roads this distance is extended to around 7.5km. Despite this additional distance it seems likely that some of the sections of road which are included in this 'quiet route' would seem too threatening for cycling for many people.

Potential improvements

This section lists some ideas for change. These are intended to prompt discussion, and are not necessarily recommendations. We've separated the ideas into two rough categories. The first ideas are about changes which might more easily be led by the registered social landlord. The registered social landlord may be able to have a strong influence in connection with the second group of ideas.

Led by the registered social landlord:

The registered social landlord might consider trying to take a lead on the following issues, although the cooperation of other bodies might be required:

Improvements to accessibility of local footways (pavements)

While as a registered social landlord improvements to the local footways cannot be implemented directly there may be steps that can be taken to support such improvements. We would suggest seeking funding for a feasibility study, assessing key options and costs.

Clearly the focus of such a study could be on the most local issues, including the setted surface (and inadequate footways) of Borthwick Place. However because there are so few possible routes for accessing/leaving Sutherland Street Manor Housing has a clear interest in studying the whole of these routes.

Considering whether connections could be created to Balbirnie Place

There may be advantages to some residents arising from the isolation of the housing around Sutherland Street – but pedestrian connections to Balbirnie Place could be created fairly simply (in engineering terms). Only a wall separates some of the paths on Sutherland Street from the car parking areas accessed from Balbirnie Place. It might be possible to create a doorway-style link through this wall which would become known to local people, but which would feel less obvious to outsiders.

Influenced by the registered social landlord

These more complex changes might require a much deeper involvement from other bodies, but we guess that the registered social landlord ought to be able to provide strong encouragement or strong influence:

Support for new bridges and pedestrian improvements toward Dalry

If current plans to add a path toward Dalry are implemented, and a connection could be created between Sutherland Street and Balbirnie Place, pedestrian routes from Sutherland Street to the large supermarkets in Dalry could be cut from 1.5km to around 900m. Such a route would be on quiet streets with higher quality footway, avoiding both the setted surfaces locally and some of the industrial section of Russell Road.

Manor Estates might consider providing support for this development and/or communicating with residents about this potential development. It may also be worth supporting calls for further improvements to the area under the railway bridges.

Support for re-location of bus stops or crossings

It seems likely that current bus stop locations on West Coates, Haymarket Terrace and Roseburn Terrace, have all been chosen to try to avoid disruption to the larger road junctions nearby. Dedicated signalised crossings (i.e. crossings with traffic lights not also at a junction) will also have been located with this in mind.

For any residents of Sutherland Street who are less able to walk long distances the placement of both bus stops and crossings may make a profound difference to how easy it is to access these local shops on foot (or using a wheelchair or other mobility aid) and by bus.

As current work progresses on the re-design of West Coates, Haymarket Terrace and Roseburn Terrace, Manor Housing might wish to support residents to assess the effects of this on such local journeys, and to push for improvements to the plans where necessary.

Further information

Potential funding

Funding for improvements to the urban environment might be available from a number of sources, including:

- Places for Everyone:
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2019/scotland/places-for-everyone/>
- Awards for All:
<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/under10k>
- The Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities:
<https://www.cycling.scot/what-we-do/cycling-friendly/social-housing-fund>