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Sue Bell
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18/6/2010

Dear Ms Bell,

Re - Water of Leith Management Plan Consultation

Please accept our apologies for the slightly late consultation response. I have not completed the pro-forma, as we are broadly supportive of all the aims, objectives and specific actions that are laid out in the plan.

However, we would wish to make a couple of additional points, and we are happy for the organisations coordinating this work to consider where they should fit in the plan.

Active Travel

Whilst the access section recognises that the Water of Leith Walkway is an important route for walkers and cyclists, we believe that the plan should make a more explicit commitment to supporting the growth of active travel in the city, and improving the walkway with a view to minimising the scope for conflict between user groups.

We note that the city of Edinburgh council is currently developing an Active Travel strategy for the city, and wonder whether there is more scope for coordination between the management plan and the active travel strategy.

From our own consultation, we know that the Water of Leith corridor is much valued, and well used, by local commuters on foot and on bicycle - and indeed that improving the management of the corridor will only serve to encourage more people to use the river for this purpose.

However, there are clearly sections of the walkway that are narrow, poorly surfaced, and in some cases there are steps along the path. For people using 'wheeled' transport the walkway is also more fragmented - there are often no specific facilities linking up the sections of the walkway for cyclists, for example.

Whilst we can appreciate that the rural or semi-natural character of the river is something many would wish to preserve, the poor quality of the path in some areas does nothing to minimise conflict between different transport modes, and excludes people with buggies, wheelchairs and so on from using some sections of the walkway altogether.

Whilst we are strongly supportive of the specific action to conduct an 'accessibility' survey of the whole walkway, we believe the plan should go further. It should explicitly seek to increase the numbers of people walking and cycling along the walkway - ensuring that signage and links between sections are designed to consider all transport modes - not just those on foot.

Siltation of the Water of Leith Basin

Greener Leith is aware of concerns amongst local residents of the amount of silt that is building up in the Water of Leith basin - in the area around The Shore. Not only does this contribute to the problem of unsightly litter and debris build up in the area. There are also concerns that if left unchecked, the build up of silt in the basin will lead to increased risk of local flooding.

Whilst we appreciate that removing the silt will be costly, and preventing it's deposition is almost impossible, we would wish to see the Management plan recognise local residents concerns and incorporate some form of action to address them.

Litter and Debris in the Water of Leith Basin

Greener Leith is also acutely aware of the local concern over the amount of litter and debris that accumulates in the Water of Leith Basin. There is a common local perception that the current 'gentlemens' agreement between the various parties involved is not satisfactory. The management plan should explicitly seek to minimise complaints about litter in this area. Complaints information, monitoring data, and information about the frequency and quantity of litter removed should be made public on a regular basis by the various parties involved.

Where Greener Leith can support the management plan

Greener Leith is a small charity, that seeks to promote community involvement, sustainable development and better public spaces. Therefore, our aims and objectives support many of the aims of the management plan. Whilst we are not limited to working in the Leith Neighbourhood Partnership area, naturally most of our work, and most of our members, are based in the two wards of Leith and Leith Walk.

Greener Leith has an interest in developing a community owned micro-hydro plant on Rebraes Weir, although this is at an early stage.

Where our capacity permits, we would be able to:

- Participate in a stakeholder group focussed on the river and/or delivery of the masterplan.
- Work in partnership to support the delivery of some actions - e.g. the proposal to deliver an audio wildlife tour of the waterway.
- Promote community involvement and greater public awareness of the river, and specific management initiatives.

I hope that this response is not too late to be considered by Water of Leith Management group, and look forward reading the finalised plan.

Yours Sincerely,

Alastair Tibbitt
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