

# Crieff Engagement Event Report

## Executive Summary

Perth & Kinross Council (PKC) published the Crieff Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in August 2019 following approval by the Environment and Infrastructure Committee. In order to gather feedback on which AQAP improvement measures should be prioritised and how they should be implemented, a community engagement event was carried out in Crieff during February 2020. This report aims to set out the responses gathered through this engagement in an organised and concise manner.

Respondents provided a wide range of feedback throughout the engagement, with three main areas of primary concern being identified: two junctions in need of improvement, reducing on street parking and changing the location of bus layover stops within Crieff high street. West High Street was frequently raised as a choke point within Crieff due to parking spaces narrowing road width, while concerns about road safety led to much discussion about the Dollerie Terrace junction.

PKC will consider the feedback received during the engagement event in conjunction with all other evidence gathered in past surveys and consultations. PKC will use this evidence to inform decisions on the implementation and prioritisation of AQAP measures, working in collaboration with Transport Scotland and BEAR Scotland to improve air quality within Crieff.

## Introduction

On Saturday 29 February 2020, the Environmental Health Team at PKC embarked on a community engagement event in Crieff centred around the air quality issues on the Crieff High Street corridor.

The A85 running through Crieff is a trunk road, meaning any changes suggested at the event to road layout, junctions and/or parking for the improvement of air quality must be approved by Transport Scotland (the road owner) and carried out by their contractors BEAR Scotland. In addition to working with PKC to improve air quality within Crieff, Transport Scotland has a responsibility for maintaining traffic flow and road safety on trunk roads, both of which were expected to be key issues at the event. Representatives from both Transport Scotland and BEAR were therefore in attendance on the day of the event to answer any questions relating to their remit.

Previous consultation experience led to the choice of a drop-in-session as the best method of engagement for this event. The Environmental Health Team delivered 4 workshops focused on the key issues of parking, junction issues, general traffic issues and our Air Quality Action Plan measures through a combination of large detailed A0 maps of Crieff, posters and sticky notes (**Figure 1**). This was complemented by clear and concise information boards and a virtual “drive through” of Crieff played on repeat on the Smartboard, highlighting problem areas in the High Street such as poor signage and illegal parking. The use of maps proved to be a great success for gathering information as the public were able to use them as reference points for discussions with representatives. Those unable to attend the event could participate through a questionnaire on PKC’s Consultation Hub.



**Figure 1: Layout of event workshops – A0 maps for each topic spread across the room**

The event gained much traction in the lead up to February 29th due to excellent work from the PKC Communications & Design Team who managed to reach the public via social media, newspaper outlets and posters. We were also assisted by local activists who encouraged the general public to take an interest in the event and to utilise the resources and representatives who would be available. In total some 50+ attendees made it to the Strathearn Community Campus and were greeted with refreshments and a range of workshops along with 4 members of the Environmental Health Team, PKC's Air Quality Consultants Sweco, BEAR Scotland and Transport Scotland. Also present at the event throughout the day were Councillors Roz McCall, Rhona Brock and Stewart Donaldson who were happy to assist. In addition, we were delighted to welcome MSP and Crieff resident Roseanna Cunningham, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform to the event.

## **Workshop and Consultation Hub Feedback**

### **AQAP Measures**

Participants were asked to prioritise their preferred air quality improvement measures from the Air Quality Action Plan.

Attendees at the event listed incentivising parking out with the AQAM (measure B2) as their main priority. Anti-idling enforcement (measure C3), public transport improvements (measure D4) and linking cycling/walking routes with the Campus for sport (measure E6) were of next highest priority.

There was a significant focus on road safety within Crieff during the engagement period, which led to a review into the current location of pedestrian crossings (measure C4) also receiving a large number of votes from attendees.

A breakdown of the received responses can be seen in **Table 1** below, arranged by number of responses prioritising each measure.

**Table 1: Results from AQAP Measures Workshop**

AQAP Measure	Event Responses	Online Responses	Total
B.2 Incentivise parking out with the AQMA (e.g. reduce /remove A85 parking, increased car park signage etc.)	4	19	23
C.3 Anti-Idling Enforcement	4	14	18
D.4 Public transport improvements	4	14	18
E.6 Cycling/walking routes to be routed to link in with the campus for sport	4	14	18
C.4 Undertake a review of current locations of pedestrian crossings	10	7	17
D.1 Encourage private and public operators to pursue cleaner vehicles	7	10	17
E.4 Promotion of active travel	4	13	17
B.1 Redirect local road traffic movements away from the A85	1	10	11
D.6 Implement ECO Stars scheme for HGV and bus operators	1	10	11
D.5 Restrict access for polluting vehicles within the AQMA	2	8	10
D.2 Maintenance of the Local/Voluntary Bus Quality Partnership	2	6	8
C.5 Limit or prioritise turning right on to High St	-	8	8
D.3 School Travel Plans	1	7	8
F.1 Review developments which may cause pollution	2	5	7
C.2 Urban Traffic Control Systems congestion management	1	6	7
E.5 Awareness raising and education, presentations at local schools/community meetings	1	6	7
E.1 Promotion of lift sharing and development of car clubs	1	5	6
E.2 Travel Plans for large institutions and businesses	-	5	5
E.3 Create and implement PKC Corporate Travel Plan	-	3	3
E.7 Provision of Perth & Kinross Council "Champions" for transportation methods	-	3	3
C.1 Possible provision of smart parking in Crieff	-	3	3

## Parking

At the parking workshop a number of question prompts were provided to direct conversation towards key issues identified by PKC in previous studies and consultations. In addition to answering these questions, respondents provided their own comments related to parking within Crieff, indicating on a map the location related to their concerns.

Respondents were asked if they considered parking within the Crieff High Street corridor to be an issue:

- 92% of respondents thought it was an issue
- 8% disagreed

The following question asked if there should be more or less on-street parking within the High Street corridor:

- 87% said there should be less parking
- 5% said there should be more parking
- 8% said no change is needed

Respondents were then asked: “Do you currently use on street parking spaces in the Crieff High Street corridor, and if so why?”. A number of responses came from those who use these parking spaces, their reason for using them ranging from brief trips to the shops, needing to use a blue badge for disabled access, and an unwillingness to walk from off street car parks. These respondents agreed however that there is ample off-street parking and on street parking should either be reduced or only be used for short periods (15/30 mins).

### **Illegal Parking**

Illegal parking has been raised at previous consultations as an issue within Crieff due to both HGVs and cars often parking on double yellow lines throughout the High Street corridor, restricting the already narrow road width and causing congestion. Areas respondents listed as locations of frequent idling were: outside the town hall, within bus stops, outside Tower Bakery, Strathearn Terrace and at West High Street.

Two solutions were proposed by respondents during this consultation: enhanced parking enforcement within Crieff and bollards/extended pavements to prevent illegal parking. These bollards could be permanent or temporary and would be deployed in areas where frequent illegal parking has been identified as a problem. Proposed changes for enhanced enforcement included cameras to capture offences, publicised penalties (name and shame) and a full-time parking warden within Crieff.

### **Removal/Reduction of Parking**

The topic which received the greatest number of responses during the consultation was the reduction or removal of on-street parking in the Crieff High Street corridor.

The majority of parking responses specified the 6 parking spaces at West High Street should be removed at a minimum, with many calling for on-street parking within Crieff High Street to be removed entirely, withholding a small number of spaces for blue badge holders and loading bays. The West High Street spaces are too small for average cars which causes vehicles to jut out into the road, restricting the road width such that two-way traffic cannot be maintained. This issue is especially prevalent when large vehicles such as HGVs and buses pass through the area, resulting in substantial queuing and congestion.

The vast majority of respondents believe there is sufficient parking available in the off-street car parks to satisfy demand, while the need to walk through the High Street more rather than parking outside the intended shop may promote business. Parking on the High Street corridor has also been accused of reducing visibility at junctions with the A85 from streets such as Strathearn Terrace, Mitchell Street and Hill Street, leading to respondents calling for the removal of said parking.

Softer measures suggested included:

- Restricting parking with yellow lines to outside peak hours
- Introducing double red lines at West High Street to restrict all stopping
- Allowing on street parking for short periods only (15 to 20 mins).

### **More parking**

A small number of responses called for greater provision of parking in Crieff, for off street parking in particular. In conjunction with this increased parking, better signage for the off-street car parks was requested to encourage usage. Those who already use off street car parks ask for free parking to be available for longer periods: currently King Street car park allows free parking for two hours only.

### **Speed Limits**

Throughout the event, local campaigners and residents were vocal in the fact that 20mph zones should be introduced in Crieff for road safety reasons with the caveat that there are studies that also show subsequent emissions reductions. The public were particularly advocating for a reduction in speed at the eastern edge of the town towards the golf course, where most speeding tends to take place according to residents. A few comments made by the public indicated that a reduction in the speed limit would be preferred to the removal of on-street parking as the public feel this is a valuable commodity.

It must be stated that not all members of the public are in favour of a speed reduction. Certain residents stated that they wished to get through the High Street as quick as possible and an increase from the average speed of 18mph is what is need in Crieff.

### **Loading/Unloading**

Loading/unloading HGVs have been identified as one of the main sources of congestion within Crieff through previous consultations and was once again a key discussion point in this consultation. Responses came from a mix of business owners, community activists and general members of the public all of whom had differing opinions on the subject of loading and unloading.

A high proportion of responses were in favour of restricting loading/unloading times to outside of peak hours (pre 9am, post 5pm) and/or replacing existing parking spaces with designated loading bays at either end of the High Street. Many attendees stated that there is a pinch point outside RS

McColls/Tower Bakery where unloading vehicles combined with the bus stop regularly causes traffic to back up, suggesting the width of the pavements outside RS McColls could be reduced to move both buses and loading vehicles off the main road. This would allow traffic on the A85 to move unrestricted, reducing the pollution caused by congestion. Other locations proposed for designated loading bays were James Square and on street parking spaces at West High Street.

## **Public Transport**

A large number of responses relating to public transport were recorded in the consultation, with the most important issue being the layover location of buses within the high street. Currently, the 15 service between Stirling and Perth will stop outside RS McColls for long periods of time, often leaving their engines running while waiting.

A number of alternative locations for layovers were suggested, including:

- Leadenflower Car Park
- Lodge Street
- Old bus station/depot on Church Street
- Strathearn Community Campus.

In addition to moving the location of bus layovers, many suggested the removal of all bus stops along the high street save for one for disabled/elderly passengers, in order to lessen the congestion within Crieff.

Another strongly held opinion was there should be an increase in bus frequency through Crieff. Although Crieff is well served by a number of services, residents raised concerns about the Perth service recently changing to an hourly rather than a half hourly service, and the number 45 bus running only until 4pm. Those wishing to make better use of community facilities in Crieff such as the library and sports facilities at the Community Campus wish for a better bus service to the school/Aldi (Broich Road). A number of respondents believe public transport must receive increased promotion, particularly to younger people both to encourage their confidence and reduce the need for parents to drive their children to locations.

## **Active Travel**

There were a number of responses attributed to making Crieff more suitable and desirable for residents and visitors to travel actively. The majority of these recommendations stated that a full removal of vehicles from the high street (pedestrianisation) would bring greater benefits in relation to economic, social and environmental sustainability. Other recommendations included giving pedestrians priority (akin to similar layouts on Perth High Street and Perth Mill Street). Regarding road safety, the public recommended that pavements be widened at the expense of car parking spaces and that traffic lights be monitored for those running red lights.

Overall, those who voiced their opinion at the community engagement event recommended that a shift in priority to pedestrians on Crieff high street be made with financial commitments to active travel being suggested. An example of this was the introduction of a bike library of electric, manual and/or cargo bikes (bikes with inbuilt storage for freight/shopping) to encourage locals who use the high street to do so by bicycle.

## Traffic Routing Changes

Re-routing traffic or changing the traffic system was a solution regularly brought up throughout the consultation. The majority of suggestions were focussed on contraflow systems which were discussed as both favourable and unfavourable by members of the community. Some attendees believed a contraflow system in conjunction with speed limits would improve road safety, while others argued there was a need to increase the flow of traffic on the high street corridor to improve air quality. They argued that a removal of on-street parking would allow for a better traffic flow on Crieff High Street.

One-way systems were also mentioned throughout the event as a solution for congestion issues on Crieff High Street. The majority of these suggestions centred around creating a one-way loop system on the West High Street/Comrie Street junction (**Figure 2**). It is thought that a system such as this would reduce congestion to enter West High Street from Comrie Street and Galvelmore Street. An example of this suggestion was making Comrie Street one way (entrance onto West High Street only) and creating a northbound loop at Burrell Street. Similar suggestions were made with a southbound loop towards Broich Road to alleviate congestion. To avoid congestion at the James Square area of the A85, it was suggested that entrance to King Street on be achieved via a left turn, creating a one-way access system. Attendees at the event also mentioned that attempting to move traffic off of the A85 and onto the side streets of Crieff may be beneficial for both traffic flow and in turn air quality.

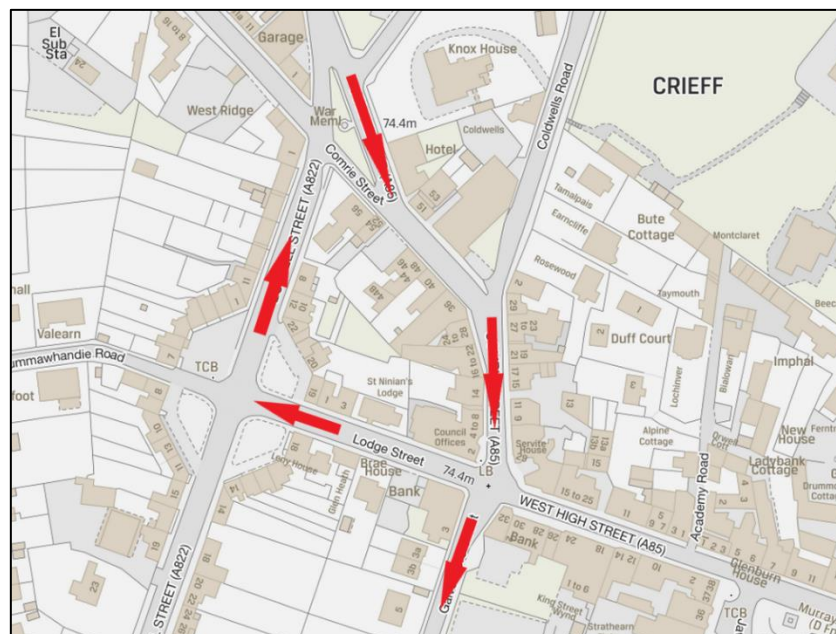


Figure 2: Example of possible one-way system at West High St

## **Improving Junctions – Comrie St**

There were a large number of consultation responses regarding the Comrie Street/West High Street 4-way junction, the majority of which called for turning restrictions or one-way systems to be implemented. As with the section above, many suggested making Comrie Street one way eastbound, thereby removing the congestion caused by right turning traffic. Westbound traffic would then be diverted down Lodge street and right along Burrell Street, possibly with traffic lights at the junction between these two roads. Galvelmore street was also suggested to be one way southbound, to restrict those turning right on to West High Street or going straight across to Comrie St.

The suggested alternative to a one-way system was the use of a traffic signalling at this junction, to control the high volume of turning traffic. These signals were also suggested in order to provide a pedestrian crossing, as this area was found by many to be a difficult place to cross the road. As was suggested for the one-way system above, traffic lights could be linked with a second set at the Lodge Street/Burrell Street junction.

Both alternatives were proposed in conjunction with the removal of on-street parking spaces at West High Street outside Clydesdale Bank. Residents complained these spaces are not large enough for the average car, causing vehicles to jut out into the road and restrict the road width such that only one lane of traffic can pass at a time. The removal of these six parking spaces would remove the majority of congestion at this junction according to respondents. There was also a request to remove the disabled parking on Comrie Street as this restricts throughflow.

There was disagreement between the members of the public as to which areas of the junction deserve priority were there to be any potential changes to the junction's layout. For example, it was suggested that priority should not be given to those driving up Lodge Street. This was contested by residents who stated that the incline of this road would mean any vehicles stopping and starting at the junction could enhance emissions.

## **Improving Junctions – Church St**

The area around Church Street has a number of takeaways and shops, which caused frequent illegal parking both by cars and delivery vehicles. Residents requested the removal of all parking in this area and all along the High Street corridor, in addition to an increase in parking enforcement to discourage illegal parking and improve traffic flow as a result.

There were a small number of responses suggesting a change in the priorities at Church Street may improve the junction, but with no clear consensus. For example, one such response proposed Church Street be made one way south bound, while another disagreed saying it should be one way northbound. There were a few comments on the safety of this junction due to the width and steepness of the road at Church street, and it was requested that the pavement be widened on the eastern side to make crossing easier.

Mitchell Street (which is in the vicinity of Church street) was also raised as a dangerous junction on account of poor visibility when turning on to High Street. This problem is often exacerbated by illegal parking east of this junction, which makes turning right on to East High Street particularly dangerous.



While reducing illegal parking was a solution raised, another was to restrict all right turns out of Mitchell Street.

### **Improving Junctions – Dollerie Terrace**

Throughout the consultation, Dollerie Terrace appeared to be a key point of contention amongst residents due to its wide junction with East High Street which can be difficult for pedestrians to cross. This point is exacerbated by the issue of speed limits being exceeded at this end of the High Street corridor.

Residents voiced their concerns on the road safety aspect of this junction, in particular with the adjacent bus stop of which can be difficult to reach due to this issue. It was suggested on multiple occasions that a pedestrian crossing be installed at this location to improve road safety. An alternative suggestion was that of building out the pavements at this location and thus reducing the road width. Some attendees argued that introducing a crossing point at this location is not needed, instead calling for a traffic island to be introduced at the top of Dollerie Terrace to assist pedestrians but keep traffic moving as normal.

Points were raised in relation to the changing of the junction itself to restrict turning, improve the crossing facilities and make the junction more visible for drivers emerging (with similar issues being raised for the adjacent Strathearn Terrace). Strathearn Terrace can also be a difficult junction to emerge from due to illegal parking at the entrance/exit which has led to the public calling for a removal of illegal parking or making this street a one-way system. It was counter-argued by attendees that the junction is required to be this as wide as it is to increase visibility. Some online responses suggested making this area a mini-roundabout to reduce traffic speeds and make turning onto Dollerie Terrace safer.

Attendees also stated that the junction is used as a turning circle for so called 'boy racers' which in turn can make the area more dangerous regarding crossing the road. According to the respondents and attendees, vehicle speeds can sometimes exceed 40mph at this point and the introduction of a 30mph sign prior to the junction appears to have done little to stop this. Attendees called for a reduction in speed limit to 20mph in this area to alleviate this problem which was also suggested to help improve the air quality (although studies in this field vary).

### **Other**

Further comments by respondents included:

- Concern over little progress being made by PKC since the 2019 Crieff Consultation, questioning why additional public engagement was needed
- The suggestion of an A85 bypass being constructed to solve air quality and traffic issues

- Mention of congestion caused by bin lorries within Crieff, with the request that these vehicles be restricted during the hours of 8:30-9:30 and 15:30-17:30.

In addition to the focus of air quality, this forum was used to gather opinions on how Crieff may be improved as a whole. Many respondents utilised this to discuss parking issues such as increasing parking enforcement, introducing a park and ride scheme and removing on-street parking. A few respondents put forward ideas to make shopping and visiting Crieff more attractive such as pedestrianisation, lowering speed limits for vehicles, widening pavements, utilising James square for board games/events, tree planting and removing clutter from store fronts.

## **Conclusions**

A wide range of detailed feedback was received in this engagement event, ranging from topics frequently raised in past consultations to issues previously unknown to PKC. The use of maps to direct conversation proved very effective and allowed a greater understanding of the public's thoughts and concerns to be obtained.

From the responses received it is clear that three main areas within Crieff require further consideration, according to the majority of respondents:

1. **Improving Junctions** - The majority of responses asking for changes to road layouts/priorities and a removal of parking spaces related to the West High Street junction with Comrie Street. There was a general consensus that the 6 parking spaces on West High Street are responsible for much of the congestion and air pollution within the area, due to their narrowing of the road width. This has led to the request that all of these parking spaces be removed to enable smooth flow of traffic.

In conjunction with this, various suggestions for changing this junction's layout to improve traffic flow were received, in general discouraging traffic from turning off the High Street by implementing one-way systems or traffic signalling. Comrie Street in particular was recommended to be one way eastbound, redirecting westbound traffic down Lodge Street to eliminate right turning traffic.

Road safety within Crieff was the primary concern of many whom attended the engagement event, in particular the safety of Dollerie Terrace. This junction was accused of being too wide and difficult to cross, while also being exploited by vehicles speeding and/or using the junction as a turning circle. In addition, members of the public attempting to cross the road at this point to reach the bus stop often have to wait long periods of time to cross safely, due to the speed of vehicles at this point and limited visibility. Changes recommended by the public included a new pedestrian crossing, reducing the speed limit throughout Crieff to 20mph and reducing the width of the Dollerie Terrace junction.

2. **Parking** – The majority response by respondents was that there is sufficient off-street parking within Crieff to justify the removal of some or all on street parking within the High Street Corridor (not including the provision of disabled spaces). The removal of this parking would be expected to improve general traffic flow through Crieff, however would need to come alongside better enforcement from traffic wardens to discourage illegal parking both by cars and HGVs. Suggested alternatives to increased enforcement were cameras or physical barriers, and dedicated loading bays to discourage HGVs from blocking traffic during loading/unloading.
3. **Buses** – The most important issue regarding buses for respondents was changing the current location of bus layovers. Currently buses layover outside RS McColls and are frequently accused of idling unnecessarily and restricting traffic flow. Locations suggested for the relocation of layovers were Lodge Street, Leadenflower Car Park, Strathearn Community Campus and the old bus station at Church Street

Alongside the main points summarised above many useful comments and suggestions were received during this engagement event, all of which will be considered by PKC as potential options to improve the air quality within Crieff.

### **Moving Forward**

The information gathered and compiled from the 2020 Crieff Community Engagement Event and online questionnaire will provide insight into how the AQAP measures should be undertaken. These responses alongside other evidence gathered by PKC will be considered in collaboration with Transport Scotland and BEAR Scotland to enable the implementation of the AQAP measures while taking into account public opinion to ultimately improve the air quality. Moving forward into the year 2020/2021, PKC will be aiming to begin implementing projects and measures from the Crieff AQAP utilising the information gathered from the 2020 engagement event.