



## **Leith Street reopens following major infrastructure works**

**18 July 2018**

Leith Street will reopen to traffic in both directions by 6am on Saturday 28 July ahead of this year's Fringe, following a programme of infrastructure improvement works which began in September 2017.

Comprehensively reconfigured from the intersection with Waterloo Place to the junction with Little King Street, both southbound lanes and one northbound lane will be reopened to road traffic for the first time in 11 months. Bus services will also return to Leith Street on the 28<sup>th</sup>, with more details available at <https://www.lothianbuses.com/>.

The northbound inside lane from Waterloo Place to Greenside Row will remain closed as part of the safety initiatives in place during the construction of the adjoining Edinburgh St James site. As enabling works continue on Picardy Place, some traffic management will also remain in place at the northern end of Leith Street.

Overseen by Laing O'Rourke, the main contractor at Edinburgh St James, the works programme has created a high quality and much-improved environment along Leith Street, which better serves pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and road traffic alike. Below ground, infrastructure and utilities have also been renewed, greatly reducing the need for any future works or repairs.

### **Pedestrians**

Pavements along the full length of the road have been reconstructed using high quality materials and widened, largely by removing the central reservation that existed on the old road layout, creating a much safer and more accessible route for all pedestrians.

The new layout has also been designed to better meet the needs of those with physical disabilities and those that are sensory impaired, with a total of four primary crossing points on Leith Street, a new signalised junction at Calton Road and tactile paving at each crossing point.

The pedestrian crossing at Waterloo Place has also been significantly improved with a larger footway provision and wider crossing.

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## **Cyclists**

A dedicated two-way cycle way has been created between Calton Road and Picardy Place, which will continue to be extended as part of upcoming improvement works at Picardy Place, eventually joining up with the existing infrastructure already in place on Leith Walk. Cyclists can also make a left turn at the top of Leith Street on to Waterloo Place.

## **Vehicles**

The existing carriageway along Leith Street has been resurfaced and in many instances has been fully reconstructed, creating a safer and smoother environment for road traffic. Traffic will not be able to turn right from Calton Road northbound on to Leith Street, right from Leith Street on to Calton Road or left from Leith Street on to Waterloo Place. Calton Road will reopen and the diversion route on George Street will return to its original operation on the 28<sup>th</sup> July, whilst the diversion route at Easter Road/Montrose Terrace/London Road will be removed after the August festival period, in early September.

Commenting on the works programme, **Martin Perry, Director of Development, Edinburgh St James**, said:

*“We would like to thank the public for their patience during the main phase of construction work along Leith Street and we are delighted to now be reopening the street to traffic on the 28<sup>th</sup> July as planned. The closure period has enabled us to deliver a high quality and much-improved environment, which will better serve Edinburgh’s pedestrians, cyclists and public transport for years to come.”*

Approved by the City of Edinburgh Council’s Transport and Environment Committee in March 2017, the Leith Street works programme has also been supported by the Council’s City Wide Traffic Management Group, which includes representatives from the Council, local transport providers and emergency services.

**Councillor Lesley Macinnes, Transport Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council**, said:

*“The reopening of Leith Street marks the culmination of the first phase of public realm improvements being delivered in conjunction with the Edinburgh St James project. With wider pavements and better cycling provision, the works have created a much more accessible and people-friendly thoroughfare.*

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*“Temporary traffic management will remain in place to allow construction of the new Picardy Place road layout to continue. I would like to thank the public for their continued patience and cooperation while these works are carried out.”*

**ENDS**

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