

Tweeddale Access Panel: Overview of Peebles Street Access Audits

Three access audits (for central, south and north Peebles) were carried out by five representatives of Tweeddale Access Panel and David Hunter (Not for Profit Planning) in September and October 2020.

Key findings were:

The town centre has generally good and broad pavements but is dominated by traffic with very limited options to cross the main road. The major road junction at the roundabout at Peebles Old Parish Church in particular is a major problem for pedestrians. There is only one signalised crossing of the A72 on the High Street which people who have a visual impairment, or are slow to walk or wheel, are likely to feel safe to use.

Many residential parts of town (including streets with high footfall, including by schoolchildren) suffer from a legacy of outdated road design such as:

- narrow pavements;
- lack of dropped kerbs;
- wide junction splays.

In the residential parts of town, there are a number of more minor junctions which present difficulties crossing the road, including Northgate/Dean Park, Rosetta Road/March Street and at the foot of Tweed Brae.

There is evidence (from observation and the experience of TAP members) that many wheelchair users use the carriageway in preference to the footway, because the pavements are more difficult to use than the roadway.

In places, there are potholes and other trip hazards in both pavements and roads where pedestrians need to cross. There are some pavement obstructions such as overhanging bushes and residential wheelie bins.

Conclusions

The three reports contain many detailed suggestions for improvement at specific locations including some 'quick wins' which should be reviewed. The opportunity should be taken to address these through routine maintenance, in partnership with the Tweeddale Access Panel, as the quickest and most cost-effective way to improve them. In some places it is recommended that more significant (and expensive) redesign should be considered, which may need additional capital investment.

The presence of a major road (A72) through the town centre poses a particular challenge. Traffic management measures - in particular control of parking and vehicle speeds - may be the most effective short to medium term interventions.

David Hunter
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