

Spokesworker is an occasional ("roughly monthly") news sheet, with stop-press news of forthcoming events, and of road, traffic and planning matters. It is not automatically sent to all members. A copy is enclosed if we are writing to you anyway, and copies are handed out at working group meetings. You can make sure to get a copy by sending us 10 or so stamped addressed envelopes. Spokesworker also appears on our Internet web site - to be notified of such updates by email, contact spokesATspokes.org.uk.

BUDGET 2010-11

There is no sign of the Scottish Government listening to the all-party Parliamentary Transport, Infrastructure & Climate Change Committee, who recommended urgent attention to higher cycle/walk investment, through a transfer within the budget's transport section [see overleaf for extracts from the report].

After Spokes highlighted that recommendation many members and other cyclists throughout Scotland contacted MSPs, asking for it to be acted on. So far the government appears to have ignored the recommendation – just as they did to a similar, though less strong, TICC recommendation last year.

WHAT MSPs SAY – AND WHAT WE SAY

Several members have now forwarded us replies from MSPs, and these confirm the levels of concern. **Mike Pringle MSP** [Edinburgh South, Lib Dem] said *"a considerable number of constituents are contacting me"* and has written to Stewart Stevenson, Transport Minister. **Dr Ian McKee MSP** [SNP, Lothians List] started his letter thus *"So many people have contacted me about this issue that I have drafted this response."*

The fullest response was Dr McKee's – and naturally he attempts [unsuccessfully in our view] to defend his government. **We have therefore posted on our website Dr McKee's letter and our response to it** [see December 23 news item on website].

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Over the holiday and in early January the parties engage in last-minute behind-the-scenes bartering, then the SNP government publishes a final Budget Bill which it hopes includes sufficient concessions to other parties to get through the Parliament.

We believe that **Green MSP Patrick Harvie** and **Labour MSP Cathy Peattie** have already together held a private meeting with Finance Secretary John Swinney, on behalf of TICC Committee, to press the case for adequate investment in cycling and walking.

However, we have no idea whether any party will hold out for concessions on cycling investment in the behind-the-scenes budget negotiations. What concessions the parties demand in this argy-bargy often depend on what they think constituents want. It is interesting that Dr McKee in his above letter says, *"I wish to highlight that opposition parties have so far been more concerned with GARL, the Glasgow Airport Rail Link, than active transport"*

Although probably true, that is absolutely no excuse for the SNP government knowingly to allow cycling investment to fall every year so far through their period in office [Spokes Bulletin 104, page 1]. However, it highlights that government decisions can be as much about political advantage as about principles.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

It's still very much worth writing to MSPs – find them at writetothem.com. Please send us useful replies.

When writing to SNP MSPs point out that falling cycling investment* is incompatible with their target for 10% of journeys to be by bike in 2020 and with the aims of the Climate Change Scotland Act. There are useful quotes from official government advisers the Sustainable Development Commission in their 3rd annual report on Government progress – see website article.

*confirmed in the independent Parliamentary SPICe Information Bulletin *Cycling in Scotland*.

When writing to non-SNP MSPs use any of the above points, but you might also ask if SNP MSP Dr Ian McKee is being fair to suggest (as above) that other parties are largely forgetting cycling and walking – or is your MSP's party going to take a stand on adequate cycling investment in the final budget negotiations?

CEC COUNCIL Q&As

Cllr Cameron Rose and Cllr Steve Burgess have been asking questions of considerable interest [slightly abbreviated below]

City of Edinburgh Council – Thursday 15 Oct 2009

COLOURED SURFACING

Q1 By Councillor Rose answered by the Convener of the Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee

q What is the combined surface area of on-road cycle lanes and advanced stop line boxes in place in Edinburgh?

a There is not a full record of on road cycle lanes or advanced stop line boxes. Based on available information, the estimated combined area is in the region of 36,000 to 51,000 square metres. Though not all is coloured, the percentage uncoloured is estimated to be fairly low in relation to the range of combined area.

q How much would it cost to ensure that all on-road lanes and stop line boxes are surfaced with the standard red colour?

a The estimated total cost of refreshing or surfacing the entire combined area of cycle lanes and advanced stop line boxes, and providing the associated lines and cycle symbols, would be between £470,000 and £660,000 at current rates. Assuming replacement every 10 years, this would require annual maintenance spend of approximately £47,000 to £66,000.

q Does the Administration have a plan to achieve this?

a I have already made arrangements for a separate record of cycle lane and advanced stop lane installation and upkeep to be made for monitoring purposes. This can allow a prioritised programme of upkeep and renewal to be drawn up. I will be looking for this to be published as part of the forthcoming Cycle Action Plan.

Finally I have asked that we use enforcement powers, in the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (as amended), to ensure that utility companies reinstate cycle lanes to a satisfactory standard after their work, including the replacement of red surfacing.

CONSULTATION ON PRINCES STREET FUTURE

Q20 By Councillor Burgess answered by the Convener of the Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee

q Will the Administration ensure that the options for improving the pedestrian environment in the city centre includes full pedestrianisation of Princes Street (with trams and cycles)?

a The Director of City Development is modelling six different options, offering varying degrees and combinations of enhanced pedestrian facilities in Princes St/ George St area. The outcome of traffic modelling should be known in January 2010. I can confirm that full pedestrianisation, with inclusion of trams and cycles, will be one of several options considered for Princes Street.

q When will these options be presented?

a Initial presentations around the options have commenced in preparation for a consultation process over the next few months. No date for a report to Committee/full Council has been set at this stage. However, there will be an interim report detailing the outcome of the traffic modelling and feedback from this phase of consultation in the first half of 2010.

q I thank the Convener of Transport for the confirmation that full pedestrianisation of Princes Street, excepting trams and cycles, has not been abandoned. I understand that a large part of the concern about removal of motorised traffic is coming from Lothian Buses and I ask whether you would be proactive in identifying and addressing concerns of Lothian Buses.

a Yes. We have met with Lothian Buses already and we will continue to talk to them about their views on the subject.

EMPLOYER CYCLING

80:40:20 project to encourage greener commuting

The Bike Station has won one of the largest Climate Challenge Fund grants ever – for the **80:40:20 project** to encourage green commuting amongst small and medium employers in Edinburgh.

The Bike Station is now looking for employers to join the pilot phase of the project, and for employees interested in pushing this with their employers.

They hope to change commuting habits from driving towards taking the bus, cycling, walking or car sharing. If interested, ask your employer to **register in the Bike Station 80:40:20 project**.

The project can provide journey plans, walk/cycle maps, loan bikes, cycle training/maintenance, trial bus passes, trial car-club membership and advice on car sharing and eco-driving. It also encourages leisure cycling, inter-company bike challenges, charity and social walk/cycle events, and career/personal development opportunities including certificated training and volunteering.

Best of all its FREE! Your boss won't need to pay a thing!

Contact: Kat Parfoot kat@thebikestation.org.uk 0131 668 1996.

Project partners include: Lothian Buses, Spokes, Edinburgh City Car Club, Energy Saving Scotland, Edinburgh Napier University, Sustrans, Cycling Scotland, Challenge for Change, Edinburgh Bicycle Co-operative, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce.

EMPLOYMENT AND CHILD COMMUTING

Combining commuting with child school travel is a particular problem, with car often seen as the best or only option. A Spokes member is hoping to work with the 80:40:20 project on this aspect. **If you have relevant experience – or ideas which the project could try out – please contact spokesATspokes.org.uk.**

SNIPPETS

SPOKES PUBLIC MEETING: Princes Street Future. A report of our Nov 19 public meeting should soon be on our website.

SESTRAN SPONSORED RIDES 2010 - entry fee; bookable transport back to start. lisa.black@sestran.gov.uk, 524 5159.

Mega Cycle May 2, Penicuik to Prestongrange (with May Gala festivities), 20 miles following old miners sites across Mid and East Lothian. Mainly paths, half way stop at Dalkeith Park. Suitable for age 8+ (under 16's must be accompanied by an adult).

Two Capitals Ride Jun 13, Dunfermline-Edinburgh (25 miles). www.twocapitals.org. Money goes to schools cycling equipment.

UNION CANAL TOWPATH

Several people have complained to councillors about the growing muddiness between Leamington Bridge and Viewforth. This was to be surfaced as part of adjacent property development which is on hold. The council will now do this themselves at the same time as the surfacing between Wester Hailes and Gogar Station Rd (due to be complete by March 2010).

BRITISH WATERWAYS PROPERTY SELL-OFF

Message from Sustrans...

British Waterways are facing funding cuts which threaten the towpaths, including those parts of the National Cycle Network that run along them. Annually, over 11 million people walk or cycle on canal towpaths. Around half of the recent investment was money British Waterways generates from its property estate. Twice this year BW property has been threatened by the Treasury to be sold off. If this happened the towpath network could rapidly fall back into disrepair. **Please sign the petition...**

<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/protectourcanals/>.

VELO-CITY GLOBAL 2010, COPENHAGEN June 22-25 International conference for cycle campaigners, experts, planners, decision makers and researchers from all over the world to discuss the potential and challenges of cycling. www.velo-city2010.com.

DAZZLING BIKE LIGHTS ON SHARED PATHS

It's dangerous to be dazzled by undipped car headlights – so don't do the same when you are a cyclist! *On shared paths we suggest...*

1. Align your lights slightly to your left
2. Tilt lights to shine about 5m in front of you

TICC BUDGET REPORT

The all-party Parliamentary Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee, in their detailed report on the SNP 2010-11 draft budget has called for increased cycling/walking investment. Extracts of their report are printed here [our emphases in **bold**] [*see Spokes website, Dec 7 news item, for link to full report*].

Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee - Report on the Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2010-11

137. The treatment of active travel in the draft budget once again gives the Committee cause for concern.

138. In its report to the Finance Committee on the 2008-09 draft budget, the Committee recommended that a gradual transfer of resources be made from the relevant components of the health budget to the active travel line, in order to realise the public health benefits from investment in walking and cycling projects. In its report on the 2009-10 draft budget, noting that its previous recommendation had not been acted upon, the Committee again recommended that the Scottish Government should give consideration to increasing the active travel line in the budget.

139. The Committee notes that, despite these recommendations, the sustainable transport and active travel line decreased from £11.5m in the 2009-10 budget to £11.2m in 2010-11 draft budget.

140. The Committee also notes that in the foreword to the recent consultation on the Scottish Government's Cycling Action Plan for Scotland, the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change states that his vision is that *'by 2020, 10% of all journeys taken in Scotland will be taken by bike.'*

141. **However, in written evidence, cycling campaign group Spokes suggests that, in recent years, total investment from all main sources has remained no higher than the equivalent of 1% of the transport budget**, with the result that cycle use in Scotland has remained at around 1% of all journeys. This compares to 5%-30% of journeys in other European countries.

143. **In their written evidence Spokes propose the draft budget be amended to allow a £20m Cycle Projects Fund**, administered by the Scottish Government's own sustainable transport team. The Cabinet Secretary responded to this proposal by saying that:

'An extra £20 million is quite a sum of money to be wrestled with, given the financial constraints within which we are operating.'

144. The fact that proposed spend in this area is declining when one of the stated objectives of the Scottish Government is to achieve a ten-fold increase in cycling journeys, appears to the Committee to be contradictory. It considers that a reduction in the sustainable transport and active travel line suggests the priorities of the transport agenda are, in budgetary terms, moving in the opposite direction to those in the draft Cycling Action Plan.

145. The greenhouse gas emissions reductions required by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 represent a hugely significant challenge for the Scottish Government. The Committee is of the view that, that if the Scottish Government is to be perceived as taking seriously the need to encourage modal shift to reduce emissions from transport, it must make more practical moves. **It considers that if significant progress is to be made, new methods of funding need developed, perhaps in the direction argued by Spokes in its well argued submission.**

146. Whilst the Committee acknowledges the pressures on the draft budget, it is concerned at the continued gradual reduction in the sustainable transport and active travel line. It is of the view that **the decline in the funding of sustainable transport and active travel needs to be not only reversed, but significantly increased.** However, the high-level nature of the information contained in the draft budget makes it difficult to identify where specific capacity exists for a reallocation of resources.

147. **The Committee therefore recommends that the Scottish Government conduct an exercise to establish what scope exists across the transport budget for reallocating resources in order to reverse the incremental decline in the active travel line. It further recommends that this exercise is conducted prior to the debate on the Finance Committee's report on the draft budget and that the results are submitted to both committees.**