

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.

MAY 5 MANIFESTOS

Party manifestos for the May 5th Scottish Parliament elections are all better on cycling than at the 2007 election [Spokesworker 22.4.07] though most still leave a great deal to be desired. **Spokes, individual members, and other organisations, have done much lobbying during the last 4 years, including in the run-up to party manifesto preparations. It has made a real difference – thank you if you have contacted MSPs, whether this year or earlier!**

You will of course vote on a range of issues, not just cycling, and Spokes is not advising you how to vote. However, there is a clear gradation in how seriously the manifestos take cycling investment and objectives, as can be seen from the extracts below. **Depending on which combination of parties is in power we are likely to see significant differences in cycling investment levels.**

**From best to worst on cycling, the manifestos rank like this...
BEST Green : Labour : LibDem : SNP : Conservative WORST**

Spokes had 2 main manifesto 'asks' [3.1.11 letter to parties]. **First: a substantial rise in the proportion of the transport budget going to cycling investment.** This is the top issue, with cycling investment currently only some 1% of total transport spending. Specific promises like a Boris Bikes hire scheme sound good but are financially small; whereas raising cycling investment from 1% of the transport budget to 10%, 5%, or even doubling it to 2%, would bring huge possibilities (including Boris bikes!) **Our second ask: to retain the government CAPS target for 10% of all trips to be by bike in 2020.** At present investment levels this is a pipe-dream, almost a hoax [see Spokes 109, p1] but retaining the target keeps up the pressure for realistic funding.

We are delighted that four of the five main parties promise a higher proportion of transport investment going to cycling.

Sadly only one party [Greens] promise a specific percentage, but these promises nonetheless give valuable scope for lobbying the new government, whatever its make-up. Most disappointing is that the 4 'big' parties remain wedded to continued expansion of trunk-road capacity: with huge financial implications, let alone the considerations of environment, energy security, public health and sustainable local communities. Such spending also makes it harder to raise cycling investment by the significant levels needed.

**Manifesto wordings now follow, with Spokes comments.
We show the entire wording on cycling from each manifesto.**

CONSERVATIVE www.scottishconservatives.com

Cycling is not mentioned in the transport section [p6,7]!! Astonishingly, the only mention of cycling is under Sport [p27], *"We will promote sponsored bike schemes for our towns and cities to encourage greater participation in cycling."*

GREEN www.scottishgreens.org.uk

[p12] *"With better use of the planning system the distance people need to travel to work and to access services can be reduced. A 'Living Streets' approach will build neighbourhoods that are safer, healthier and happier. The capital investment needed for walking and cycling is minimal, but the economic benefit is huge, especially given the improvement to public health. We'll ensure that by the end of the next Parliament active travel will receive at least 10% of the transport budget; walking and cycling must be a particular priority for school transport.*

Workplaces have a role to play in supporting these changes, with showers and space for bike parking, and workplace parking charges to help pay for cut-price public transport deals and bike-to-work schemes. In cities, public bike-hire schemes as well as car clubs have a big role to play in cutting cars on the roads."

The investment promise is excellent and the clearest of any party.

LABOUR www.scottishlabour.org.uk

[p21 and p75] *"Scottish Labour is determined to see walking and cycling become a more convenient, attractive and realistic choice for many short journeys and will retain the target of ensuring that 10 per cent of trips be made by bike by 2020. To achieve this, we will ensure that active travel receives a higher proportion of the overall transport budget and promote the Cycle Friendly Employer Award Scheme, which recognises workplaces that put in place measures to create a culture of cycling. Where possible, Scottish Labour will work with partners to encourage bicycle banks – like those developed in London – and tube-style bike maps, to promote the growth of cycling in our towns and cities."* This is the strongest commitment of the 4 big parties, and it incorporates the 2 main Spokes 'asks' – although a commitment to a % of the transport budget would have been even better.

LIBDEM www.scotlibdems.org.uk

[p45] *"Increase the proportion of the transport budget spent on sustainable and active travel measures, to help double the number of short journeys by foot and cycle. We will deliver the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland [CAPS] and ensure that active travel infrastructure is at the heart of all housing and commercial developments."* Almost commits to the 2 Spokes 'asks' but doesn't explicitly accept the 2020 target for 10% of trips by bike. The manifesto target to double foot/bike trips in this Parliament – i.e. by year 2016 – makes the 2020 target look tricky to achieve.

SNP www2.snp.org

No mention of cycling in the transport section [p13]. However... [p6] *"Scottish Futures Fund" ... includes £50 million over 5 years, to be "invested in new projects across the country designed to deliver improved connectivity and innovation in transport. This ... will focus on modal shift to help more Scots move to low-carbon and active travel options."*

[p35] We *"will continue to increase the proportion of transport spending that goes on low-carbon, active and sustainable travel."* [Spokes note – this is misleading. The proportion of transport spending going to low-carbon motor vehicles has indeed risen, but the proportion going to cycling has not risen - see Spokes 109, 'Government Reply'].

The SNP manifesto promises are hard to assess but look disappointing. It is not clear if the £50m over 5 years (£10m a year) is the whole proposed increase, but since cycling is not mentioned in the transport section it may be. Note too that the £50m covers low-carbon motor vehicles as well as cycling (and walking) so we are probably looking at a £2m-£3m rise in annual cycling investment, compared to a current total approaching £20m, so any rise in cycling's % of total transport would be small.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW ...

- **Use the information above to question your local candidates.** For example, remind them of their manifesto promises above and ask to what level they will raise cycling investment - especially when the 4 biggest parties are also promising new and expanded trunk roads which will require very large sums.
- **Take part in the Stop Climate Chaos election e-action** which includes an 'ask' for 10% of the transport budget for active travel. Go to www.stopclimatechaos.org/scottish-election-action. **The SCCS website automatically lists all the candidates for your postcode area, so is very easy to use.** You can edit the draft email there if you wish to send a more cycling-specific message.

... AND AFTER THE ELECTIONS

Continued lobbying is vital after the election: immediately and later. Remind victorious parties of their promises - pester them! **Right after the election** there may be inter-party negotiations to form a government - a short immediate email/letter to MSPs of likely governing parties could be really useful at that stage.

PRINCES ST FUTURE

As reported in Spokesworker 7.3.11, councillors approved some general recommendations by officials on the 'Gehl' report into the future of Princes St and surroundings. Thanks to **Cllr Steve Burgess** we got a change in the officials' proposals, to refer to cycling in relation to Princes St, not only in George St.

At the time of this officials' report to councillors, remarkably, the Gehl report was not yet online for the public to see. That has now been done and, as expected, it is considerably more forthcoming on cycling than the officials' recommendations to councillors. See it at ... www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/207/planning-policies/1096/public_realm/2 [6 pdf files, totalling over 10MB].

Public consultation is promised later this year – it will be fascinating to see how far what is proposed by officials in the consultation reflects Gehl on the role of cycling, and particularly what is proposed for the long-term future of Princes Street!

CYCLING ENGLAND

Cycling England was killed on 1st April under the UK *Bonfire of the Quangos* – a tragic, ill-considered loss, casting doubt on the government 'green agenda' and supposed wish to grow cycle use.

Cycling England's research, and the great success of its Cycling Demonstration Towns (at a time when cycle use stayed static in most parts of England), have been a real inspiration and source of evidence and ideas for cycling developments in Scotland too.

Incidentally, Cycling England is not really comparable to Cycling Scotland – it had a much wider remit, notably allocating the former UK government's growing funding for Cycling Demonstration Towns. In contrast, the two main cycling-relevant Scottish funding streams are dispensed by the Scottish Government itself (CWSS is allocated by the government to councils; and the Sustainable & Active Transport budget to a variety of organisations including Sustrans and Cycling Scotland).

Much of Cycling England's website, including research reports and advice notes, are fortunately being maintained – by the independent professional body CILT (Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport) at www.ciltuk.org.uk/pages/cycling.

Below, we print much of the **final message from Cycling England's Director, Philip Darnton** [see Spokes website March 30 news item for the full message] who also spoke inspirationally at the recent Spokes/ Cyclenation conference in Edinburgh [www.spokes.org.uk – downloads – odds&ends -Cyclenation].

“Cycling England is just about to celebrate its sixth anniversary. Set up by the Transport Secretary, Alistair Darling, in March 2005 with an initial budget of £5m. pa, and a team of two we have come a long way and achieved much in those six years.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and professionalism of everyone involved, from the 18 Cycling Towns to the Bikeability training and Bike It schemes, as well as the more recent “Finding New Solutions” projects, we have already had a dramatic impact on the culture of cycling in England. Remember the key statistics from just three years in the Cycling Demonstration Towns:

Cycling trips up by 27%

Cycling to school doubled in Bike It schools

Real health impact on physical activity

Results not seen in the rest of the country

On track to double cycling trips in a decade

The Government's decision to abolish Cycling England as being a “quango” is regrettable, and cost ineffective, but it is not the demise of this little group of managers which is to be lamented it is the loss of the nationally extended network of enthusiasts, with their acquired knowledge, skills and engagement which is the real waste. You have achieved an amazing amount in a very short time, and already it is beginning to show right across England.

Our core hypothesis, back in 2005, was that with a consistent strategy and continuity of funding equivalent to “cycling towns in Europe”, we could expect to achieve similar rates of growth in everyday cycling. These first six years have already proved us right, and we will all treasure our small part in that success.

Unfortunately, Government has yet to appreciate these key lessons of consistency, continuity and the need for a long term strategy for an integrated transport policy for Britain. Sadly

cycling still seems to be a “party political football” to be played with according to fashionable ideology or dogma.

But the challenge facing us – of a real change to behaviour, and of much more cycling especially for short urban trips – is not a “quick fix”. We never thought it was.

So my final message is one of determination. Every one of us knows that the challenge is worth all our effort; we all know how relevant and how important it is. In our various ways we will not give up. We know that investment in cycling works; it brings results; it makes a difference to everyone's life. It's worth it.

Phillip Darnton, 28 March 2011

SNIPPETS

SPOKES BIKE BREAKFAST remember for your diary June 12 City Chambers. *More info:* mknottenbelt1@googlemail.com

WORKPLACE BUGS The Bike Station has set up a new website www.scotbug.com to encourage and support workplace Bicycle User Groups. Spokes has a 'workplace cycling' web page listing resources such as this, also with links to the websites of several local BUGs. See www.spokes.org.uk – links – workplace. *Please tell us of any local BUG websites not listed there.*

EDINBURGH COUNCIL INTERACTIVE TRAVEL MAP

This new online map includes public bike parking and offroad routes, and other useful info such as roadworks updates and car club locations. www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/1525/journey_planning_and_timetables/1313/interactive_travel_map

CYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES FUND Grants up to £5k for projects enabling more local cycling opportunities... www.cyclingscotland.org/our-projects/award-schemes/cycle-friendly-community-project. *More info:* Christopher.Johnson@cyclingscotland.org

A member has suggested Spokes might apply for a project *“How to be a Cycling Commuter”* – involving a new factsheet and outreach work, for example at Spokes stalls. However this would need a volunteer with significant time to coordinate such a project.

REPORT DEAD (OR LIVE) HEDGEHOGS!! Hedgehogs are thought to be declining in the UK overall, but not much is known about Scotland. The Wildlife Information Centre wants people who see hedgehogs to send them sightings of both live and dead hedgehogs – the latter often being seen when cycling. www.wildlifeinformation.co.uk/hedgehogs.php.

CHARITY RIDE MARSHALLS WANTED The Stroke Assn needs help for its 12 June charity ride www.stroke.org.uk/cycleforth.

2nd FORTH RD BRIDGE

Thank you to all who joined the FOE 'Cyberaction' asking MSPs to stop contracts being signed till after the Holyrood elections, and till the outcome of tests on the existing bridge is known later this year. 405 people took part, resulting in 3285 emails to MSPs. Various MSPs put forward a motion [below] and a Scotsman poll found the Forth Bridge to be 24th out of 25 possible political priorities – but the Government still looks set to sign the contract before the election, to tie the hands of the next government.

Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): Forth Crossing Contract

That the Parliament expresses its concern at plans for the contract for the Forth Replacement Crossing project to be awarded during dissolution; considers this announcement breaks with tradition; recognises reported concerns that this decision means that it will be signed in haste; considers that lessons should be learned from the contractual difficulties of Edinburgh tram project, and urges that the contract is neither awarded nor signed until members have been elected and sworn in.

Supported by: Hugh O'Donnell, Robin Harper, Mary Mulligan, Patrick Harvie, Mike Pringle, Hugh Henry.

www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/business/motions/Default.aspx?motionid=21021

SNP MSP Chris Harvie rebelled against his own party, saying, *“The new Forth crossing is a high-petrol project and the \$200 barrel of oil is on its way. Do we want to die slowly by garrotte, or do we want to be guillotined? Those could be the alternatives that are in front of us. We are facing a totally unprecedented environmental and fuel situation. If we do not bear that in mind when making investment decisions we are in for very big trouble.”* www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/Business/ORSearch/ReportView.aspx?r=6191