

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.

FOR YOUR DIARY

SEE ALSO EVENTS LIST ON SPOKES WEBSITE

Apr 2 Edinburgh Transport Policy? [title unknown] Speaker **Cllr Lesley Hinds**, Council Transport Convener. 7.15 for 7.30. Quaker Mtg House, 7 Victoria Ter. Capital Rail Action Group mtg so probably mainly on rail & tram: chance to ask re tram bike carriage trial; and why no bike hub [maintenance, hire, secure storage] in Haymarket Stn planning permission. www.capitalrail.org.uk/events

Apr 8 Spokes Public Meeting – Future of Local Transport Main speaker **Prof Iain Docherty**, with special input on cycling from **Jim Eadie MSP** [Cross-Party cycling group] and **Cllr Jim Orr** [Edinburgh cycling supremo]. Spokes.org.uk Feb 21 news.

Apr 18 Council Petitions Cttee re. Princes Street

Apr 28 Innertube Postcode Challenge Fun family day on North Edinburgh path network. Details will be at www.elgt.org.uk.

May 7 Rail Business Plan for Scotland 2014-19 Nigel Wunsch, Network Rail's Head of Strategy and Planning for Scotland. CRAG mtg – details as for April 2 above.

May 13 6th Scottish Active Travel Conference Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh <http://walkcycleconnect.org>.

May 19 Pedal on Parliament Vital pressure on Scottish Govt! **Note date change from Sat 18 to Sun 19.** pedalonparliament.org.

June 15-23 National Bike Week www.bikeweek.org.uk and

June 15-23 Edinburgh Festival of Cycling www.edfoc.org.uk Edfoc seeks ideas/offers for cycling events of all types.

The NBW/EdFoC Week includes..

June 15 St Andrews ride www.leprahealthinaction.org/edinburgh-to-st-andrews-cycle-ride

June 19 Spokes Bike Breakfast City Chambers, 7.45-9.45

PRINCES ST BIKE BAN

Note: The Council Committee papers for this and the Leith Walk proposals can be found at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpol : see Transport & Environment Committee 19 March [items 7.20 and 7.6]

With tram works and tram funding now under control after years of chaos, the new Council is responding to longstanding lobbying by Spokes and others with radical city centre proposals, banning traffic from the north sides of Princes St and George St. Widened pavements would allow cafes and a more people-friendly feeling.

But, astonishingly, the proposals ban eastbound Princes Street cycling – and westbound the only option will be the bus/taxi carriageway. Eastbound cyclists would be diverted away from Princes Street to a (hopefully) high-quality but round-about route along George St, then back again at the far end of Princes Street.

The Council's overall vision, and its intent to act quickly, are a welcome breath of fresh air, but the Princes St ban would be a real blow for cycling. It is wholly at odds with the Council's own Jan Gehl report – supposedly the basis of the new plans – and totally inconsistent with the council's intention to raise cycle use to 10% of all journeys (15% of commuter journeys) by 2020.

A 2-way cycleroute is proposed on the traffic-free north side of George Street. The same should happen in Princes Street. Careful design, perhaps 2-3cm below pavement level, and with similar high quality paving, should provide a solution acceptable to 'streetscape' visual demands. Paving and appearance would keep speeds to an appropriate level if this is a concern.

- Princes Street worked well even with totally unrestricted cycling in 2011** when the street was completely traffic-free during a one-month break in tram works [pictures in Spokes 115].

- The proposed George St 2-way cycleroute** will certainly help many people. However, for many other west-east trips it is not a sensible alternative, being a detour with 2 or more left and right turns at each end as well as road crossings along George St. Returning to Princes St will involve the same tramline crossing as now. It is difficult to see how a cycle-friendly connection back to Princes Street and the Bridges would be designed, and this is not shown even in outline in the council proposal.

- George Street is increasingly closed to traffic during festivals** – this is likely for the whole of August this year. What happens then if cycling is also banned on Princes Street?

- Several officers and councillors have said the proposals will reduce tramline crashes and injuries.** We believe that this may be part of the reason for the ban, though it is not mentioned in the report. We believe it to be a seriously misplaced view.

MORE INFORMATION

For more on the implications for tramline crashes, and on the Gehl report, see our March 15 article at www.spokes.org.uk.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Public consultation is expected in the coming weeks, but if the bike ban concerns you, *please contact your councillors now* [www.writetothem.com]. We cannot expect precise details yet, but **ask for an assurance that the Princes Street redesign will include safe eastbound and westbound cycling provision.**

- Our **traffic-free Princes St petition** also remains. *Please sign if you've not yet done so - see Jan 28 website news item.* We will use it to highlight the above case at the council Petitions Cttee on April 18 when Peter Hawkins will speak for Spokes.

LEITH WALK

Council proposals for Leith Walk also go to the March 19 Transport Cttee, and include serious disappointments as well as exciting possibilities. However, despite lengthy consultation much remains unclear, and **it appears that final decisions will be taken by a small council committee without further public input.**

FOOT OF WALK TO PILRIG ST [2.23-2.26]

This is disappointing for cycling, just resurfacing the existing lanes, rather than the segregated uphill lane sought in the Greener Leith/ Spokes joint submission [News item 14 Jan, spokes.org.uk].

Better parking regulation is needed, to prevent double-parking and to increase turnover for local shops, but this is not covered.

PILRIG ST TO PICARDY PLACE & BEYOND [2.27-2.33]

More encouraging, but vaguer! - depends entirely on the council getting extra government funding [via Sustrans]. They are of course competing for scarce money: this would be solved overnight if the government invested in cycling at a level commensurate with their cycle use target [see *Bidding Fund* overleaf].

Sustrans wisely insists [p4] that funding depends in part on the council committing to a wider future scheme linking to Princes St, Calton Rd (for Waverley) & George St. Connecting to the Bridges needs also mentioned: many Leith Walk users come from there.

If Sustrans money is secured, London Road roundabout would probably be converted into a signalised junction – a big plus!

OTHER ISSUES

Disappointingly, a **20mph zone** is ruled out pending Council decisions on the Local Transport Strategy [Spokes 115, page 3].

The report says [2.37] that Sustrans and the Police are working on **secure overnight bike storage** for Leith tenement dwellers.

Picardy Place roundabout could be converted to a signalised junction in a future scheme [2.34] – presumably too costly now.

If you use this area and are unhappy with any of the above, please email your councillors www.writetothem.com.

COUNCIL PETITIONS

Note: Find council petitions at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/petitions

PRINCES STREET [Spokes petition]

If you've not signed our Princes Street petition, please consider doing so. We're already well over the 500 needed, but every extra will strengthen our case at the Petitions Committee on 18 April.

HOLYROOD PARK [this is not a Spokes petition]

Another petition seeks closure of the Holyrood Park roads to motor traffic (but allowing access to the various car parking areas). Sign up if you agree. Any decision would need to be taken by Historic Scotland, who run the Park and its roads, but support from an Edinburgh Council petition might help.

LONDON LEADING

Mayor Boris Johnson has announced a major new cycling policy and a step change in funding. The new policy includes...

- ◆ A 15-mile "substantially segregated" route across London.
- ◆ In central London, a network of "high volume, high-quality routes, combining segregation and quiet shared streets."
- ◆ More 'superhighways' but at a higher standard.
- ◆ Between one and 3 outer London Boroughs will get intensive investment to create 'Mini-Hollands.'
- ◆ Cycling promotion as "normal, a part of everyday life. I want it to be something you feel comfortable doing in your ordinary clothes, something you hardly think about," says Johnson.

The investment programme is not entirely clear, but specifically promises £913m over 10 years, with maximum annual spending of £145m in 2015 - presumably declining thereafter but remaining far higher than in the whole of Scotland, let alone Edinburgh!

In making comparisons, remember that Edinburgh's transport budget is £20m-£30m, the Scottish transport budget £2000m, and London's £5000m! So although London will invest far more than Edinburgh in cycling, it represents under 2% of London's transport budget, compared to Edinburgh's 5% in 12/13 and 6% in 13/14.

The real comparison is not Edinburgh but Scotland. London and Scotland have transport budgets in the £1000m's, populations of 8 and 5 million, and both work with subsidiary elected councils, the London Boroughs and the Scottish Councils. Scotland comes out very poorly in this comparison, alloting just 1% of its transport budget to cycling, around £20m a year, compared with London's 3% in 2015 [£145m] and average 2% [£91m] over 10 years.

Boris's plan also enables Boroughs to bid to a central fund for a major infrastructure project - somewhat like the Spokes bidding fund proposal for the Scottish Government [below].

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you use London's document to lobby councillors [e.g about Princes St] mention its vision, but remember, as above, Edinburgh has only a tiny proportion of London's money. Only when the Scottish Government takes cycle funding - and its own 2020 cycle use target - seriously will there be money for Scottish Councils to emulate London's proposals widely. Thus **lobbying MSPs about funding** [www.writetothem.com] and **attending pressure points like Pedal on Parliament** is as vital as lobbying the council.

MORE INFO

The above issues, including the financial comparisons are discussed further in our spokes.org.uk March 8 news story.

For two highly positive reviews, see...

www.bikebiz.com/news/read/capital-s-cycling-czar-unveils-ambitious-plan-to-get-london-cycling/014484

www.guardian.co.uk/politics/bike-blog/2013/mar/07/boris-johnson-future-london-cycling

For some considered, though still positive, reports, see...

www.aviewfromthecyclepath.com/2013/03/londons-new-plans-serious-campaigning.html

www.voleospeed.co.uk/2013/03/a-vision-of-change.html

BIDDING FUND

If the Scottish govt ever does fund cycling on a level to meet its own cycle-use targets, Spokes has suggested a fund to which Councils or other bodies could bid for projects too large to be easily funded from other sources. This would solve the **Leith Walk** problem [overleaf] and be a bit like **Boris's bidding fund** [above]. See, for example c.1211 at spokes.org.uk : documents : submissions : national. Tell your MSPs at www.writetothem.com.

SCOTTISH BIKE SHOW

Spokes is sharing a corner of the Sustrans stall at the SBS in Glasgow on 27-28 April. We need a Sun 28 volunteer at the stall [you'll have a chance to look round too]. **But** - you must be a **Spokes member and a Sustrans member**. We will refund travel to Glasgow. If able to help, contact Judy.CantleyATbtinternet.com.

FUNDING YOUR IDEA

If you've an idea for a local project to reduce carbon emissions by getting more people cycling, you might get money from the **Climate Challenge Fund**. Over £10m is available each year, with opportunities to apply 3 times a year - the next application deadline is 5 April. <http://ccf.keepsScotlandBeautiful.org>. The Spokes project/factsheets on tenement living with a bike were funded this way.

A90 PATH DIVERSION

The next phase of the long-awaited and long-campaigned-for path upgrade starts Mon 15 April, lasting 6 weeks. The path will be raised to carriageway level, widened and resurfaced adjacent to Burnshot Wood. Most of the new path will be ~2.5m wide, but with one pinch point around 2m. **Unfortunately the path will be closed during the work**, between Barnbogle and Burnshot junctions. The diversion is huge - we are asking for an alternative. Further information: Callum Smith C.Smith@edinburgh.gov.uk.

POLICE & BUSES

A Spokes member sent us the article below, based on his experiences following a scary incident with a bus last year.

"While the dangers of cycling can be overplayed and while most drivers are considerate around cyclists it is important that cyclists can have confidence in commercial companies, the police and prosecutors when bullied, intimidated or injured by motor traffic.

I spent much of 2012 in close contact with Lothian and Borders Police. I made a complaint against a Lothian Bus driver who in my view acted recklessly, driving a double-decker bus in a manner clearly designed to intimidate me on a bicycle. He claimed I had 'run a red light' somehow giving justification for this behaviour. He was completely unaware of a green light cyclist filter in this part of the city. What made me more determined was that this particular bus company are by and large excellent, having done lots of additional training for drivers on cycle safety.*

**Spokes Note:* see spokes.org.uk : documents : publictransport : bus.

My case was taken up by a junior police officer, was a very low priority and took over six months before I was told that nothing could be done. Crucial to success in my case - and I suspect many cases - would have been CCTV records from the bus. However, apparently, CCTV records are only retained for 28 days, then destroyed under data protection requirements. The junior officer was unaware of this and so the CCTV records had been deleted.

When I complained about this, however, I was impressed by the way Lothian and Borders Police handled the complaint. They acknowledged shortcomings and agreed that procedures with the main bus companies would be sharpened and senior officers reminded. This resulted in the refreshing of a police briefing note: *Chief Constables Memorandum 56-2006 Dated 31/8/2006* sets out procedures between Police and bus companies.

These police procedures relate to First Group and Lothian Buses and will hopefully help other cyclists who make a representation. The early stages are crucial, particularly to ensure that relevant CCTV coverage is not deleted. Ironically my own experience is that while serious incidents are thankfully infrequent they are generally more likely with cars and other commercial vehicles than with buses. I hope other commercial companies will be encouraged to adopt similar practices and procedures with the Police.

Have you needed to involve commercial companies or the Police in a cycling incident? Was the experience positive or negative? Any particular lessons or suggestions? I would be interested to hear from you. Please email me at mitchellriachATbtinternet.com. Please also email if you'd like to see the above memorandum."