

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.

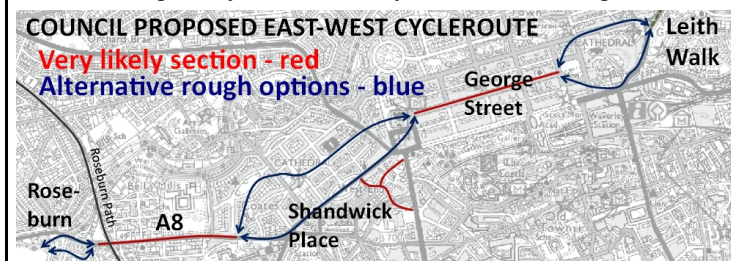
BUDGET 15/16 : Scotland email your MSPs a.s.a.p.

There's good news about Edinburgh Council's budget – see col 2. Sadly the story is different at Scottish Government level.

The government's draft budget, announced on 9 October is both disappointing and confusing - but confusion seems to hide a fall in total cash compared to this year, 14/15. Cycling investment did rise significantly in 14/15, from around 1% of transport spending to just under 2%, and we hoped this was the start of a ramping up towards the government aim of a big rise in cycle use by 2020. Instead, it looks like 14/15 was a high point, and we could be down to 1.7% or so in 15/16. In contrast, the *Association of Directors of Public Health* says **10%** of transport budgets should be invested in cycling and walking – see www.adph.org.uk/category/atpa.

Moreover, there looks to be an even bigger fall in infrastructure, i.e. construction of cycle facilities, with more cash instead going to 'behaviour change' measures such as advice and publicity.

Infrastructure money is what Sustrans uses for its 'Community Links' 50/50 grants to Scottish councils. In Edinburgh, examples are Leith Walk and Innocent-Meadows-Canal; funding for these is approved. However, the planned major east-west city centre route to connect the North Edinburgh network at Roseburn through to Leith Walk [see map] is at an earlier stage, and will need Sustrans match-funding next year and/or the year after if it is to go ahead.



PLEASE ACT !! - HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

The draft budget is now being discussed by Parliamentary Committees. Please email your MSPs to say why cycling investment matters to you. Find them at www.writetothem.com.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Note: It's quite possible to email your MSPs without reading further if you are busy, but for more on the budget see the Oct 22 and Oct 30 news items at www.spokes.org.uk.

Incidentally, we have found what looks like a mistake in Finance Secretary John Swinney's budget speech to Parliament, when he promised £10m "additional" for walking/cycling "infrastructure." Our investigations uncovered that £5m of this is **not in fact for infrastructure** but for 'behaviour change' (publicity, advice, etc). There are also problems restricting how the other £5m can be used. Secondly, the £10m is also only 'additional' in a very limited sense. In 14/15 there was some £14m extra one-off cycling cash from other sources [such as Forth Bridge underspending] and thus in 15/16 the overall total falls despite the 'additional' £10m.

We have written to the government pointing out that the draft budget does not tie up with the budget speech made to Parliament. They should now come up with a genuine new £10m investment in infrastructure. More details on our website as above.

BUDGET 15/16 : Edinburgh comment by 19 Dec

Edinburgh Council looks set to continue its policy of raising cycle investment by 1% of the transport budget each year, up to the next election - reaching 8% in 15/16. It's a great example to other councils and enables Edinburgh to attract big Sustrans government cycling money under the 50/50 match-funding rules.

WHAT YOU CAN DO – 1 [at any time]

Not all councillors support this policy and each year sees internal arguments. **It helps a lot when councillors hear, from people like you, that their efforts are appreciated.** This does *not* mean avoiding criticism of the council. It means being 'constructively critical.' In other words, when you contact a councillor with a complaint or suggestion, do also compliment them on what you find good and on improvements that help you. Your comments can then be seen as building on what they have already done.

WHAT YOU CAN DO – 2 [by 19 December]

The council is consulting on its 15/16 budget. There is info and a 'budget challenge' game at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/budget. [In the game, cycling is not mentioned, as the questions are at quite a high level, and only give a few examples within each area of spending].

There is also a 'budget overview' with 5 different spending areas. Cycling and road maintenance come under the heading of "An Attractive City to Live and Work in."

To comment specifically on cycling or other transport matters, you can email [councilbudget \[AT\] edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:councilbudget[AT]edinburgh.gov.uk) or, write to: Freepost RSJC-SLXC-YTJY, Budget, Council Leader, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1YJ.

Explain why *you* appreciate the Council's decision to allocate a % of the transport budget to cycling, and why this matters to you.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Nov 20 SPOKES PUBLIC MEETING - Cycling Development in the Lothians. With top transport councillors from Edinburgh and the 3 Lothians Councils, and a 1-hour discussion/QA chaired by Spokes member **Alison Johnstone MSP**.

- ♦ Augustine United Church, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh
- ♦ Meeting proper at 7.30; doors open 6.45 for coffee, stall, chat
- ♦ **Please come along, to impress & challenge the councillors!**
- ♦ More details: see Spokes Bulletin 120 or www.spokes.org.uk.

Dec 13 Farmers' Market, Spokes stall Castle Ter, morning. If you can help, please contact [martyn.edelsten \[AT\] ed.ac.uk](mailto:martyn.edelsten[AT]ed.ac.uk)

But do call by anyway to say hello!

2015 April 25 Pedal on Parliament, #PoP4 for your diary!

2015 June 11-21 Edinburgh Festival of Cycling, EdFoC. Ideas and offers to run new events are welcomed. edfoc.org.uk.

SPOKESWORKER

Spokesworker is now less regular - we instead email an 'Action Update' to the 95% of members for whom we have addresses. When a new Spokesworker is produced it is also notified by email - as well as being on our website and in paper form at events and for anyone who has sent us a supply of SAEs.

- ♦ Make sure to let us know if you change your email address
- ♦ If we don't have your email address, we'd like it if you're happy
- ♦ Remember also to check our website news items every so often
- ♦ We have an active twitter presence @SpokesLothian. Please keep an eye on it and RT any tweets you support. Our latest tweets also appear on our website in the right-hand column.

LOTHIANS PLANS

EAST LOTHIAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, MAIN ISSUES REPORT – *please comment*

The Local Development Plan will be vital for future transport planning, including cycling. The Council is now consulting on a 'Main Issues' report which will lead to the final plan.

Please do submit your views. The consultation begins on Nov 17 and you can find it at <http://eastlothianconsultations.co.uk>.

Also, it would be great if any East Lothian member(s) could volunteer to draw up a Spokes response. We would assist by circulating your draft for comment to all East Lothian members and to Spokes Planning Group.

We recently responded to West Lothian's similar consultation. We were last-minute and could have said more, but it might give you ideas... www.spokes.org.uk : documents : local : West Lothian

MIDLOTHIAN CYCLING STRATEGY - *by 19 Dec*

The Council is to prepare a Cycling Strategy, partly thanks to local people (you?) who have lobbied on cycling issues.

To find out what people think about current cycling conditions and what improvements are needed there is an online survey at www.midlothian.gov.uk/cycling-survey.

For more info, or to discuss ideas, contact Council cycling officer Dave Kenny [AT] midlothian.gov.uk, phone 0131 271 3398. Please also pass on details to friends/ colleagues who get about by bike in Midlothian – or would like to!

SUPER(?)MARKETS

Despite Council policies for cycle parking at new developments, Edinburgh has a hotch-potch of provision - and it may be worse elsewhere. Even when a supermarket does have good provision, it can be changed by an unconcerned property manager – even removed entirely – at a whim, with no intervention by the Council. We have had some successes, and partial successes, but the whole situation is a lottery causing frustration and wasting volunteer time. Spokes cannot follow up all cases intensely enough, and it often depends on members with an interest in a particular store.

Lidl, Dalry Road – excellent covered Sheffield racks near the store entrance were recently removed overnight with no warning, to extend the trolley racks. Emails, tweets and many retweets aimed at UK Lidl HQ and the German Lidl parent company embarrassed the local management into promising new racks, and a picture of the proposed replacement looks quite hopeful.

Tesco, Linlithgow – originally built for Wm Low, West Lothian's planning permission led to excellent covered Sheffield racks near the main entrance. Then, some years after Tesco took over, the racks disappeared to extend the trolley area. Emailed complaints to the then Tesco boss Terry Leahy eventually brought a replacement – but not Sheffield racks, not undercover and too tight for 2 bikes per slot. Spokes complained to the Council, but they were unwilling to take action and the substandard provision remains.

Tesco Express, Stenhouse – the planning application had no cycle parking. Spokes objected, and the store now has nicely-spaced, well overlooked, Sheffield racks - albeit not under cover.

FUTURE

Our Planning Group is contacting the council with a list of stores with no parking, including... Tesco at Haymarket, Roseburn Street and Fountainbridge; Co-op at Haymarket Terrace; Sainsbury at Fountainbridge; Scotmid at Saughtonhall Drive. Tell us any others!

Our Resources Group would ideally like to do a wider project – perhaps surveying all supermarkets, preparing a report for wide distribution to relevant agencies, and making contact with regional managers to try and get one or more chains to undertake consistent high-quality provision throughout their area (which could be much wider than just Edinburgh). However this project needs a volunteer coordinator with enthusiasm and sufficient spare time.

YOUR LOCAL STORE

If parking is bad or non-existent and you are getting nowhere with local managers, try embarrassing them with wider publicity as we did above with Lidl Dalry Road. You can often find relevant email/twitter addresses via google, or we may be able to help.

FORTRESS WAVERLEY

Following Network Rail's decision to ban cycling on both of the two ramps from Waverley Bridge into the station, cyclists have to push down the narrow pavements, often congested with walkers, and totally unsuitable for prams, buggies and bikes (even if not loaded with panniers) to pass each other.

This was a knee-jerk reaction to the sad death of a pedestrian hit by a reversing car on the south ramp. No cyclists were involved and we know of no cycling problems reported on either ramp.

Network Rail says the north ramp must be kept for delivery vehicles, and fenced off at the bottom so they don't crash into pedestrians. Spokes believes this is a severe over-reaction and that it is possible to provide safe cycling on one or other of the ramps.

The message to visitors is appalling: what other major European station would corral 2-way walking and cycling into a narrow passage, leaving a wide adjacent roadway virtually empty!



Pedestrian squeeze even without bikes or prams! broughtonspurtle.org.uk

Many people have already written to MSPs/MPs, and as a result Spokes member **Mark Lazarowicz MP** raised this in the UK Parliament [see spokes.org.uk, July 4 news, 16.10.14 update].

If it concerns you email your MSPs and MPs, asking them to take this up with Network Rail. [Use www.writetothem.com]

If you have already written and are unhappy with the reply, complain to Passenger Focus [www.passengerfocus.org.uk]. Their Scotland contact is richard.sansom [AT] passengerfocus.org.uk

DECORATORS NEEDED

For many years Spokes has rented a room at St Martins Church [now St Martins Community Resource Centre] as our office. We have no staff, but it is used for storage, dealing with post, and occasional Resources Group and other working meetings.

We have been asked if we could redecorate the room. It is not large, but has a very high ceiling. There is also preparatory work, such as removing old wall fixings and tidying up the plaster.

Are any Spokes members willing to help? Ideally we need an organiser/expert with suitable knowledge, plus a small band of volunteer workers. We guess it might take a couple of weekends, though some volunteers would only be for part of the time. In any case the room is not big enough for a crowd! If you can volunteer, as an expert or a worker, email [judy.cantley \[AT\] btinternet.com](mailto:judy.cantley@btinternet.com)

SNIPPETS

Highland Cycle Campaign – excellent November newsletter at www.highlandcyclecampaign.com. If you know the area, please object **by Nov 28** to the proposed 70mph Inverness-Nairn A96 which cyclists are expected to use without any cycloveroute [page 5].

Queen St Station rebuild - comment by 23 Dec. An area has been identified for possible "enhanced bike provision" - this needs to include maintenance, hire, supervised storage, etc. www.egip.info

Tollcross-Canal A new link is open via Lochrin Place, though unfortunately the towpath cobbles here are particularly bad.

Doctor Bike Times & places at www.thebikestation.org.uk/dr-bike.

Edinburgh Council Atlas Find masses of geographical info about the council - wards, cycloveroutes, libraries, bike parking, greenbelt, 'urban forest,' etc, here.. <http://217.174.251.127/atlas/cecAtlas.html>.