

## **Spokes Public Meeting 20 November 2014**

### **Cycling Development in the Lothians ( + in/out of Edinburgh)**

#### **Notes from Meeting**

#### **Introductions**

DdF introduced Cllrs Dave Berry (E Lothian), Derek Rosie (Midlothian), Tony Boyle (W Lothian) and Adam McVey (Edinburgh).

**Aim of meeting:** Spokes has always been “The Lothian Cycle Campaign” from the days of the now-abolished Lothian Regional Council, which handled transport for the whole area now covered by the 4 councils. 10% of Spokes members live in the Lothians and over 1000 cyclists commute for work across the city boundary every day (over 700 in, over 300 out). There are high rates of school cycling in Lothians, eg Dunbar. So Lothians cycling is far from being only recreational, the Edinburgh-centric view!

Meeting aims to bring councillors together from all 4 areas to learn from and be challenged by each other and by the audience.

Council Officers present in the audience were introduced: Iain Reid (ELC), Dave Kenny (MLC), Deborah Paton (WLC), and Sarah Ryan from SEStran, the Regional Transport Partnership.

#### **Notices:**

**Scottish Budget:** time to email our MSPs, given the projected fall in cycling infrastructure investment in the draft 15/16 government budget as compared to 14/15 investment.

#### **Cllr Dave Berry (E Lothian) [standing in for Cllr Michael Veitch, who was ill]**

Important to attract leisure users, esp. from Edinburgh; trails eg John Muir Way (JMW), Pencaitland etc. Catering for 3 kinds of cyclist: road clubs; families on quiet lanes and trails; schools and utility. Bikes on trains is an issue, need better service. Cycling is 6% of transport budget\*. New type of cycling is “fat” bikes suitable for riding on beaches.

*\*Spokes note:* Presumably this is for 2014/15 as our 2013/14 survey [in Spokes Bulletin 120] showed 2.3%.

Booklet “Active Choices” is available; EL Spokes map hugely praised; A council cycling leaflet mentions Athelstaneford and Tynningham (cafe) as attractions. There's also a glossy booklet\* for sale.

*\*Spokes note:* We think this is the map-booklet of core paths, not a set of rides as such.

#### **Cllr Derek Rosie (Midlothian)**

County has 12 miles of traffic-free paths; Council trying to encourage commuting to city, trying to make main roads safer and include off-road alternatives where possible. Routes being developed from Penicuik (Roslin Glen) and Roslin to Edinburgh via Lasswade Rd. Cycling to school is making progress, and cycle tracks in schools. New High Sch at Newbattle will have safe routes to school.

Council measures to increase cycle awareness among own staff; bin lorry adapted to pick up cyclists (laughter – in fact he was referring to [a new electronic system](#) alerting drivers to cyclists and alerting cyclists if the lorry turns left).

Newtongrange Mining and Roslin Chapel have Cycle Welcome Awards. Leaflet in preparation: North Esk Cycle Loop. Cycle Strategy 2015-2020 now out for consultation.

## Cllr Tony Boyle (W Lothian)

Journeys to work and to secondary school only 1% by bike, but to primary school 6%, and 53% travel actively to school.

WLC [has won £1.8m from Sustrans' Community Links](#), for missing links to schools, town centres, rail stations and the NCN. Projects Polbeth - W Calder; Bathgate - Livingston (slide shows current muddy 'desire line' beside main road); segregated beside A7066; Armadale - Whitburn; Linlithgow short links; Blackridge link to station; Broxburn short links for better air quality; Almondvale Park in Livingston; Bathgate Hills Quiet Roads Study revisited.

## Cllr Adam McVey (Edinburgh) - with special ref to connections beyond city

To Midlothian: Lasswade Rd, Gilmerton Dykes Rd; to Fife, the A90 path and improvements right through to Roseburn; A8 footway upgrade planned 15/16.

More generally, making all roads more cycle-friendly via 20mph limits; training for bus drivers and Council lorry drivers. Leith-Porty already done, and Porty to E Lothian boundary is "aspiration".

Cycle budget (7% of transport spending in 14/15, 8% in 15/16) is £1.3m, and can be doubled up with successful Sustrans bids, but this is still nothing like enough to do what's needed – tens of £m's needed. Wants to work more closely with developers to maximise resources for Active Travel infrastructure. Due to population density, cyclist route projects near the city centre get much more usage per £ invested and this is an important consideration in deciding projects.

## Question and Answer Session (Chair: Alison Johnstone)

### E Lothian

**Bikes on trains?** Working towards a better, possibly hourly service to Dunbar with new rail company Abellio, using 380-Class electrics which allow much better bike space flexibility than inter-city trains. Also fighting for extended service to Berwick with new stations at Reston and East Linton.

**John Muir Way improvements?** Parts of route are currently split, with on-road alternatives for cyclists; it's basically a walking route, not intended for cycling all the way. Publication available; Cycle Forth (N Berwick Cycle Group) has done a review of part of the route; may need improvement of road signing too.

**Safe Routes to School** Of the 800 kids in Dunbar, 300 cycle to school; police give talks in schools; bike tracks.

## Midlothian

**% of budget for cycling?** Nothing from MLC own capital budget; cycling money mainly from CWSS;

**Info/data on current cycling levels?** Counters on off-road paths via Sustrans, but nothing counted on-road

**Cycling to Penicuik via A701?; cycling to Bush Estate?** A701 scheme at Milton Bridge - islands being removed, cycle lanes widened; shared-use on wide footway to be introduced in some rural parts; a longer-term offroad alternative also being looked into. Council still seeking realignment of A701 road at Bilston [aka Bilston bypass, rejected 20 years ago!] which could bring improve conditions for cycling.

**Comment by East Lothian** - We have painted wide cycle lanes through island gaps, showing that motorists cannot pass cyclists. This caused problems when introduced, but people got used to them, and signs also erected - now is working well. This is mainly on quieter roads, not like the A701.

## W Lothian

**Does council have further ambitions for next round of Sustrans bidding? How do you get feedback from cyclists/public about what they want? Successful Sustrans bidding - offer advice to other LAs?**

(Deb Paton, cycle officer) Feedback coming from wide sources, not just cyclists, by involvement in community work, visiting/working with schools (on travel plans, for example), thinking about green energy strategies and others – lots of other criteria in these too. Data from many sources, e.g. Household Survey. Other initiatives - Community Street Orders being trialled; behaviour change sessions in sec. Schools;

**Linlithgow High St poor cycling conditions** - Parking allowed on pavement, with officially marked spaces.\* Speaker does not see much hope to improve conditions, especially with police no longer enforcing parking restrictions.

*\*Spokes note:* a Bill currently in parliament would criminalise pavement parking, but would officially marked spaces still be allowed?

**Charges for parking at traffic-generators [examples Linlithgow station and Linlithgow High St]?** Council unlikely to do this – the Linlithgow Vennel car park is the only one anywhere in W Lothian with charging.

## Edinburgh

**Qns re schools & traffic speeds** - AMcV welcomes 'school streets' notion, which they've 'borrowed' from ELC [closing streets to motor traffic at school start/end times]; welcomes idea of streets as “place” rather than for vehicle movement; wants 20mph to be default in urban areas, also avoids need for too much signage, but this may require legal changes; need for more devolution of powers here, including road signage; wants folding bikes allowed on Lothian Buses\*; bikes to be trialled on trams. Direct vision buses & HGVs.

*\*Spokes note:* folding bikes are allowed on [Lothian and First buses](#) if in a bag.

**Following up crashes (section 39) in detail to identify causes/solutions?** - conversation got diverted so no response from councillors on this

**Speed limits on rural roads?** (reduce to 40 mph?) Hard to get permission to introduce speed limits on quiet roads\*

*\*Spokes note* – but [Clackmannanshire does it](#).

**West Lothian comment:** two roads have been reduced from 60->40 and council has advisory 20 speed limit in all residential areas.

**Edinburgh:** Police have agreed to start enforcing 20 speed limits in town.

**Future Edinburgh routes to the Lothians?** Problem that Edinburgh has to prioritise and therefore most focus on centre as benefits larger number of people. Longer out of town routes are also very expensive.

## Other Q/A points

**Transport Minister Keith Brown has published “vision” for AT for 2030** - “jam tomorrow” cry from audience.

**Bikes on buses and in taxis?** D Holladay gave examples of what can be done, and increasing patronage at same time.

## Summing up / lessons learned (Alison Johnstone)

- LAs should invest money of their own, thus enabling them to bid for 50/50 Sustrans funding and other match funding from outside
- Cycle infrastructure can be built in to all new road schemes - much cheaper than retro-fitting
- Directors of Public Health consortium of 100+ organisations say 10% of transport budgets\* (national and local) should go for cycling/AT. It's a no-brainer, considering obesity, climate change etc, and social justice. Aim for everybody to do <5 mile journeys without car.
- Really important to collect data/do research. Only way to make the case without personalising/politicising. Enables well-designed bids to Sustrans and others, and allows follow-up on the success or otherwise of particular projects.
- Way forward: regular forum between the Lothians councils.
- Advice to members of the audience - Lobby your councillors, not only by writing but phone them and go to surgeries so they have to take note and give sensible responses.

*\*Spokes note:* Currently **1%-2% of Scottish government transport spending** is invested in cycling (1.9% in 14/15, with a decline to perhaps 1.7% expected for 15/16 on the basis of the government's draft budget. Roughly **2.8% of council transport budgets** go to cycling, with **Edinburgh** the only council to allocate a specific % in advance (started at 5%, rising 1% a year to 7% in 14/15 and expected 8% in 15/16) – an example to other councils in Scotland and indeed the UK. For more details on government and council cycling investment see pages 6-7 of [Spokes Bulletin 120](#).