



# City of Edinburgh Council Local Transport Strategy 'Issues for Review', January 2013

## Transform Scotland consultation response

Friday 15 March 2013

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Transform Scotland would like to make some comments on various aspects of the consultation on *Developing a New Local Transport Strategy: Issues for Review*. We also submitted a response using the online form — but given that this was essentially anonymous, we have decided to also submit a separate written response.
- 1.2 We are very supportive of much of the content and are pleased to support much of what is proposed in the document. We make specific comments on several issues below. We will be responding separately to the consultation on the *Public and Accessible Transport Action Plan* and on the *Building a Vision for the City Centre* consultation.

### 2 Integrated Transport

- 2.1 We strongly support integrated ticketing and have long lobbied for a national smartcard. We appreciate that current legislation makes the introduction of a Scotland wide smartcard difficult to achieve and would suggest that the CEC, along with other local authorities, lobby the Scottish Government to allow better integration of transport services.
- 2.2 We suggest that particular consideration be given to the integration of cycling and public transport because the potential for significant growth of this sustainable form of transport is huge if the integrated infrastructure is developed. A low-cost improvement to cycle-walk integration could be achieved through a substantial enhancement to the availability of cycle parking across the city; this would also represent a high-profile, visible commitment to increasing cycle rates.

### 3 Supported Bus Services

- 3.1 We support Option 1 and would like to see increased funding to maintain and enhance service levels. The aim should be to attract more car commuters to use public transport and reduce congestion and the provision of a good range of services is essential to achieve this end. Stronger enforcement of bus lanes is required because it is common to see drivers abusing the system and we support using parking charges and bus lane camera fines towards helping fund services.

### 4 20mph Speed Limits

- 4.1 We support Option 1, with 20mph limits in residential streets, shopping areas, including the city centre, and to main roads with high pedestrian activity.
- 4.2 However, we also believe that the Home Zones approach should be applied for all new-build residential areas, with an aspiration that this be extended to existing streets in due course, as and when funds allow. In the Home Zones model, space is created for trees and other types of planting and where people can use seating, socialise or where children can play safely. In this way, there is an obvious transition from main highway into residential area, which has an impact on driver behaviour.

## **5 30mph Speed Limits**

- 5.1 We support Option 1: a 30mph limit on all streets with any 'urban' frontage. Safety should be the prime consideration and the need for drivers to travel at greater speed within the urban realm is hard to support. Both this proposal, and the 20mph in residential areas, needs to be enforced and speed cameras at selected locations should be the norm. The Council should consider a "name and shame" policy to identify anti-social drivers who break the limit more than twice in a year.

## **6 School Streets**

- 6.1 We support Option 1: Implement 'school streets' part time closure schemes. It is a common observation that many schools experience chaotic conditions in the streets at times with parents driving to the school gates and dropping children off. Dangerous conditions are created unnecessarily with children having to negotiate parked and moving cars to gain access to the school. Drop-off areas should be designated, with the children then able to walk along the school's street in a traffic free environment.

## **7 City Centre Car Parking**

- 7.1 We consider that there is ample provision for car parking in the city centre (as evidenced by the "lightly used" Greenside car park) and that, in fact, there should be a reduction in parking in some of the more iconic streets. An example is George Street, which would benefit enormously from having parking removed from along the centre and the conversion of the central section into a walking and seating area.
- 7.2 We also feel that Princes Street should be fully or partially pedestrianised to provide more space for walkers and cyclists because experience of other city centres shows that tourists and shoppers flock to attractive traffic-free areas. The success of the redeveloped St Andrew's Square gives a taste of what is achievable.

## **8 Sunday Parking**

- 8.1 We would be content with any one of Options 2, 3 or 4: extend parking and loading restrictions that currently apply Monday to Saturday to include Sundays on main bus corridors. We also support the proposal that additional revenue be ring-fenced for the provision of enhanced bus services or for the support of uneconomic routes.
- 8.2 However, we also think that the Council should also consider the potential application of the "car-free Sundays" approach (see e.g. the proposal currently being proposed for Bristol, but also trialled worldwide for many years) to certain streets in the city centre. We have a long-standing precedent in Edinburgh for this approach in terms of the closure of certain sections of Holyrood Park to vehicular traffic for part of every Sunday.

## **9 Controlled Parking Zones:**

- 9.1 We support Option 1: conclude the current roll-out of Priority Parking at the edge of the CPZ. We also agree with the suggestion to take forward further Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) or Priority Parking areas on a planned and strategic basis, actively promoting schemes where future pressures are anticipated, for example, around major employment, retail or university sites in the suburbs.

## **10 Air Quality:**

- 10.1 We support Option 2: Introduce a 'Low Emissions Zone' to Edinburgh with entry requirements for buses and goods vehicles based on their emissions. Little improvement of air quality is evident within Edinburgh and other cities in the past decade or more so clearly voluntary measures have been, and are unlikely to be, effective. The introduction of a Low Emission Zone may have the added benefit of reducing unnecessary journeys into the city centre.

## 11 Travel Planning:

- 11.1 Transform Scotland has long supported travel planning as a way of persuading and helping people to travel to work by public transport or walking/cycling. Hence we support Option 1, with the CEC employing a specific officer to undertake this remit, as an excellent way to move the initiative forward.
- 11.2 We would note that travel planning is not only a very cost-effective way of bringing about behaviour change, but that it also has excellent performance in terms of emissions reduction (see e.g. Scottish Government (2009) *Mitigating Transport's Climate Change Impact in Scotland*, where it was found to be one of the lowest-cost ways of driving cuts in emissions).

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Transform Scotland is the national sustainable transport alliance, campaigning for a more sustainable and socially-just transport system. Our membership includes bus, rail and shipping operators; local authorities; national environment and conservation groups; consultancies; and local transport campaigns. Transform Scotland Limited is a registered Scottish charity (SC041516).

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