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to: "Fisher, Ronnie" <Ronnie.Fisher@westlothian.gov.uk>
spokes <spokes@spokes.org.uk>,
cc: "tom. conn" <Tom.Conn@westlothian.gov.uk>,
"lcag@transitionlinlithgow.org.uk" <lcag@transitionlinlithgow.org.uk>
date: 12 February 2014 19:29
subject: Re: Community Links Bid 1 of - [INTERNAL ONLY]

Dear Ronnie

I am emailing on behalf of Spokes West Lothian to support the Council's applications for match funding for the schemes listed at the end of this email for 14/15 and 15/16.

Presumably Sustrans will not have sufficient funds to approve all applications, and we regret that at this short notice we have not been able to come up with a priority listing. However, we make the following comments about priorities...

Bid 3: Bathgate Hills cycling/walking-friendly roads

We don't have details of what you are proposing, but in principle we suspect that this could be a very important project because it is different to the usual cyclistroute projects funded by Sustrans. *Provided that the scheme is bold and developed in conjunction with Sustrans*, this could form an exemplar scheme for similar areas and it therefore deserves special consideration.

Railway station access routes

In general we see these as having a high priority, given that they contribute to 'everyday' cycle trips, although obviously they have a leisure value too. The Transport Minister, Keith Brown MSP, has stated several times that he sees everyday cycle trips, and particularly commuting, as being key to the government's aim to substantially raise cycle use by 2020.

Incidentally, whilst strongly supporting these bids, Spokes is very disappointed that the links to the Bathgate line rail stations were not *built and funded* as part of the Bathgate/Airdrie re-opening project, instead of being left to the local authority and Sustrans to fund from their very limited cycling budgets, and long after the stations opened. It is a sad reflection on the lack of 'integrated transport' thinking within Transport Scotland - no way would they leave it for years to provide access for car commuters, for all their protestations about wanting to see transfer from car to active travel.

Linlithgow area bids

Given that Sustrans is unlikely to fund everything, we strongly urge that the costly zig-zag ramp from the canal to the golf courses road is put at the lowest priority. Its use is likely to be relatively low as compared to much more important connections from Sellars Road, the Academy and the Leisure Centre, and the very cheap but useful connection at Braehead. [Thus, if money is tight, bid 7 should be approved only with respect of Braehead].

In particular we strongly support the Sellars Road proposal [bid 6] which will link the towpath (and therefore other areas of the town) to the north west Linlithgow housing, the supermarket and shopping centre, and (potentially) Linlithgow Bridge Primary. The route will also provide many useful intermediate connections - for example from the Academy area to the shopping centre - and should thus contribute strongly to everyday trips. Finally, it is also a very important link in the 'round Linlithgow' leisure route for which Spokes has long argued.

Other bids

We do not have enough feedback to comment on the other bids. However we make the general point that priority should be given to those which encourage everyday walking and cycling trips - shopping, commuting, school, etc - over those which are purely recreational.

I hope these comments are useful.

Dave du Feu
for Spokes

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL BIDS TO SUSTRANS

1. B7010 Fauldhouse to Longridge - Provision of Missing Cyclepath Link
2. B8084 Whitburn to Armadale - Cyclepath Provision and Link to Railway Station
3. Bathgate Hills - Cycling/Walking Friendly Roads
4. Blackridge NCR75 Realignment and Access to Railway Station
5. Broxburn Links to Union Canal Towpath
6. Cellars Path to Union Canal - Upgrade Core Path
7. Golf Coarse Road & Braehead Park Links to Union Canal Towpath Linlithgow
8. Linlithgow Academy & Sports Centre Links to Union Canal Towpath
9. Livingston Network - Wheeling Ramps to Steps
10. Meadowhead Grove, Addiewell – Link and Access to Railway Station
11. Chapelton Drive, Polbeth to Harburn Drive, West Calder - Upgrade Cyclepath
12. Riddochhill, Blackburn to Wester Inch, Bathgate - Cyclepath Provision
13. Starlaw West Roundabout to Boghall Roundabout - Cyclepath Provision

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** Spokes: spokes.org.uk; twitter.com/SpokesLothian

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** Great sites: badscience.net, 38degrees.org.uk, copenhagenize.com, thebikestation.org.uk, ghgonline.org