

The Action-Update of Spokes the Lothian Cycle Campaign

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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 spokes@spokes.org.uk.

FOR YOUR DIARY

See Spokes 103 p2 and Spokesworker 16.3.09 for more events

Apr 15/16 – ScotRail Meet the Managers Go with your ideas and suggestions. Managers will be available 1630-1830 at these stations.. Apr 15 Glasgow QS; Apr 16 Glasgow Central & Musselburgh.

Apr 22 Climate Change Rally Scottish Parliament, 12am-2pm - not from 11 as wrongly stated in our Bulletin. The climax, with speeches, will be 1-1.30; entertainment at other times. The rally is to call for the Climate Change Bill to be toughened, especially...

- ◆ annual reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 3% a year **starting now** (as promised in the SNP manifesto)
- ◆ inclusion of emissions from international aviation and shipping **from the beginning.** www.stopclimatechaosscotland.org

Jun 13-21 National Bike Week www.bikeweek.org.uk, includes...

Jun 17 Spokes Bike Breakfast jackieATwaitrose.com

Jun 21 Dunbar Bikefest MrMAJames@gmail.com 01368 864717

Sep 13 Pedal for Scotland pedalforscotland.org

EDIN COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP (NP) PUBLIC MEETINGS Usually start 6.30/7.00. Discuss goings-on in your area; ask cycling questions; collar councillors – they usually come early. More details at edinburghnp.org.uk or 200.2323. *Forthcoming meetings...* [* = venue to be decided]

Apr 15 Pentlands NP at Oxbgangs Nbd Centre

Apr 22 Almond NP*

Apr 23 Portobello & Craigmillar NP, at Hays Comm Business Centre

May 12 Inverleith NP* June 3 Forth NP*

June 10 Leith NP* June 11 West Ed NP*

PRINCES STREET

Our proposed campaign [Spokesworker 16.3.09] for Princes Street to be tram/pedestrian/cyclist-only has generated great enthusiasm, and we will be following this through as far as possible.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- ◆ If you support the idea, please contact your councillors. Send us any useful replies.
- ◆ It would be useful to have a few pictures of a successful high-profile European city street similar to Princes Street, and in which only trams, bikes and walkers are allowed. And/or possibly a professional drawing of how Princes Street could be.
- ◆ Also useful would be a picture of Princes Street as it was until the tram works diversions - showing congestion, lots of buses and pedestrians and at least one bike!
- ◆ If there is anyone with enthusiasm and ability to help organise a bigger campaign, please get in touch. We'd like to liaise with sympathetic organisations, prepare briefings, target lobbying, etc.

FEEDBACK ALREADY RECEIVED...

Conservative councillor Cameron Rose replied to a member that although he certainly couldn't commit to anything at present, "There are several reasons why I find this quite attractive..."

1. The closure of Princes St has not led to a marked downturn in footfall.
2. As the population and the number of tourists increases it is necessary to take measures to .. prevent incremental strangulation.
3. I have heard quite a few positive comments about the bus rerouting.
4. I have increasingly been seeing pedestrianisation of further parts of the city centre as viable. Of course I'd like to include bikes too. I also appreciate the benefits of streets with low vehicle noise."

A senior council official told us that this idea is starting to be discussed internally, that there are strong views on both sides, and that the coming days, weeks and months are crucial for anyone with views on this to contact their councillors. *ctd overleaf*

CONSULTATIONS

To see these consultations: go to www.edinburgh.gov.uk – quick links – council consultations – planning consultations. Or see printed copies at Council HQ, Waverley Court, 4 Market Street. **Do read these if possible, but if you don't have time to read them please send in any comments you have on these areas anyway.**

ST MARGARET'S HOUSE DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

Comments by 24 April to gina.bellhouse@edinburgh.gov.uk. More info from her by email or phone 469.3723.

This is a large triangular development area, starting at Jocks Lodge, bounded by the main line railway and London Rd. The draft talks extensively about cycling policy. However, in the actual plans there is a 'pedestrian thoroughfare' (section 8.2) and a map of pedestrian routes (page 24) but nothing at all on cycling.

PICARDY PLACE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Comments by 10 April to andrew.sikes@edinburgh.gov.uk. More info from him by email or phone 469.3412.

Draft ideas/principles for the huge triangle from John Lewis and the Cathedral steps down past the existing roundabout, in the light of the tram, the replacement of the roundabout by a gyratory, and the replacement of the St James Centre. **Obviously this is a truly critical area for cyclists on many through journeys and for accessing the many local opportunities/facilities.** If the Council is serious about its target to grow bike use and make the city more accessible by bike, then this area is a blackspot where thought absolutely must be given to cycling access and through routes. Moreover it's a large area, with lots of space to play with. **Yet this 24-page document mentions cycling just once (p19 sec 5) – and merely in passing, with no recommendations for action.**

It would therefore seem that these 'development principles' must be relying entirely on the (separate) road plans to cater for cycling – yet the council and TIE have admitted that the roads here are (and will be) difficult for cyclists – in several directions, but especially from Leith Walk to York Place/ St Andrews Square.

It is very difficult to make specific suggestions, since the whole thing is so complex and there are several different 'players' – TIE and the council Transport section design the road system; the Planning section is devising these 'development principles,' and there are private developers for the St James redevelopment.

However, here are some ideas for comments...

- **Cycling must be considered and the area made cycle friendly. This must be addressed in the Development Principles, and not dropped into a convenient gap between Planning, Transport and TIE.** Advice could be taken from TPI, the expert cycle/tram consultants appointed by TIE.
- **A pedestrian connection is planned from Picardy Place via Little King St, through the new St James redevelopment, to St Andrews Square (4.5 and fig 9).** It will give access to and through the heart of the new shopping/business centre, and provide a link between Leith Walk and St Andrews Square. It may be steep in parts, but the alternative via York Place is extremely steep at North St Andrews St, that junction will be very tricky when the tram tracks are in place, and it doesn't give access to the new St James shop/business developments.
- **Cyclists need to be able to get safely from Leith Walk to the above route and the new St James Centre.** Either the (separate) road proposals must be greatly improved for cyclists or a bike route provided: this could partly be combined with the pedestrian route from the tram stop to Little King Street.

Please copy your comments to Spokes.

ctd from p1 coll - Princes Street

Several Spokes members have sent us positive comments, and others have added their voice on our website forum. One said, "*No other capital city in Europe would let this once in a lifetime opportunity pass. Glasgow has long realised the benefits of large scale pedestrianisation - surely Edinburgh is not going to allow traffic back on Princes Street? This would create one of the world's greatest public spaces - an area for all types of activity - cafes, music, etc. Removing buses and taxis would allow more tram stops, and great conditions for bikes to be provided.*"

The only negative reactions have been from just 2 people who are concerned for bus stops to be retained on Princes St, or that this is a more convenient route for buses than George St, or that parts of Princes St could be underutilised for much of the year.

PETER HAWKINS'S SUBMISSION

Here is Peter's original submission to the council Princes St Development Briefs consultation, on behalf of CTC, endorsed by Spokes, which inspired the idea for this campaign..

From: Peter Hawkins <PeterhawkATcare4free.net>

Dear Mr McAfee,

We welcome the opportunity to comment on this consultation. I have seen the plans on display at Waverley Court and these are the basis of this response.

We welcome the comments that "*improving the public realm is fundamental to reinforcing the city centre's unique sense of place...*" and "*...improvements to pedestrian connectivity, legibility, safety and permeability*".

The notion of a sense of 'place' has been much spoken of recently. First, a talk to the city's Cycle Forum by a member of the Council's Planning Team (Riccardo Marini); second, the recent draft guidance *Designing Streets* from the Scottish Government, where 'place' is mentioned as one of the prime objectives of street design; then, third, an inspirational address from Jan Gael, urban designer from Copenhagen, at the 'Dreams on Wheels' conference, where he showed us how Copenhagen planners have gradually reclaimed the city from cars. Such improvements to connectivity, legibility, safety and permeability should of course apply explicitly and equally to cyclists, in line with council policies - see later in this submission for further comment.

By 'place' we understand the idea not just of somewhere distinctive, somewhere with 'character', but also somewhere where people want to go (as opposed to 'have to' go), a place where people go to enjoy the experience, where people can meet on a casual basis. This is obviously working well in Copenhagen, and it's vital, in our opinion, that it be made to work here too. (Gael's comment was that Edinburgh is making progress but has some way to go). A number of other cities world-wide were mentioned as having achieved these goals, and it's important for Edinburgh to do the same, not just to remain competitive in the tourism market, but as something of value for its own sake and for us, its residents.

For Princes St, the aim must surely be to re-connect the shops on the one side, with the Gardens on the other. The great failing of the street, as it is (or rather was, until recently) is that pedestrians cannot get from one to the other without running the gamut of buses and taxis. And although there is supposed to be an agreement on 20mph, this is rarely observed, making the crossing a hazardous and unpleasant experience. Once the trams are up and running, there must surely be a strong case for removing all other motorised traffic from the street, which will then allow pavement cafes to flourish, allow people to move along and across the street, and above all restore to the street a sense of calm and quiet, a place where people want to come just to enjoy the experience.

Designing Streets mentions a number of objectives for street design but the two most important are 'place' and 'movement', and a whole section is devoted to the importance of getting the balance right between these two. It is strange, therefore, that these Princes Street Briefs have virtually nothing to say about 'movement' (we hope this is not a reflection of how the Council works, Planning in one corner, Transport in the other). **In particular we are disappointed there is no mention of cycling.** *Designing Streets* includes a travel provision hierarchy: "*consider first pedestrians and cyclists. Consider last, private vehicles*". Edinburgh's own Local Transport Strategy subscribes to a similar hierarchy. The "*improvements to pedestrian connectivity, permeability*" etc in the draft Briefs, apply equally well to cyclists. "Pedestrian" should be

amended, as appropriate, to "pedestrian and cyclist".

Since cyclists will not be banned from the Princes Street of the future - and indeed we hope they will be welcomed, for the healthy, quiet, sustainable alternative travel mode they represent - we wish to see mention, in the Briefs, of the kind of provision that might be made. This should include access, and parking - parking for shoppers, visitors, and even for those who work there. If cyclists are made welcome in Princes St, this will encourage people to come there by bike, thereby benefiting the whole city by reducing traffic congestion and pollution.

Our vision for Princes Street then is for a 'place' whose character is defined as somewhere to come for the sheer pleasure of the experience, as well as to take part in the 'market' function which is already established. We envisage a street with no movement other than pedestrians, cyclists and trams. A street in other words quiet enough to hear yourself, and others, talking; where you can enjoy the unprecedented views which tourists come to see, without the hazard of being struck by a motor vehicle and a constant awareness of danger; a place to feel relaxed.

This mix of pedestrians, cyclists and trams has been established in the centre of Copenhagen and other world-class cities, and shown to work well. We feel confident that our Planning Department shares the vision, and that the business and public transport community can be taken on board to share it too. We hope the final version of the Briefs will do the same, have more to say on cycling, and make cyclists feel welcome."

SNIPPETS

- ♦ Many thanks to members who attended the **Southside Corridor Consultation** [Spokesworker 3.3.09 and email to local members]. We understand cycle issues were the points most raised - particularly full reinstatement of red surfacing on the N-S routes, and E-W connection for the Sustrans route between the Meadows and Innocent Tunnel via Gifford Pk. We await the consultants' report with interest! **If you hear of similar consultations in other areas** please send us details so we can circulate local members.
- ♦ **Spokes member Mike Lewis** [who organises the 20-miler easy rides - see Diary in Bulletin] has put up an Edinburgh cycling **quiz** on his excellent events website. The questions will be changed from time to time. www.cycling-edinburgh.org.uk/quiz.php.
- ♦ Talks and reports from the **Edinburgh Car Clubs Conference** 19.3.09 are online at www.ratransport.co.uk/postcarclubconf.html.
- ♦ A remarkable experimental **online bike-route planner** is now available. See cyclingedinburgh.info "Cycle Streets Goes Live" for a news item and edinburgh.cyclestreets.net for the website. **Many thanks to Cambridge Cycle Campaign and Edinburgh's Chris Hill for this huge achievement.**
- ♦ A report on the excellent **Spokes Bikes and Public Transport** meeting will be in next Spokesworker. Meanwhile our website will soon have the lovely posters developed by Lothian Buses in conjunction with Spokes, to encourage driver awareness of bikes.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Latest climate change reports are increasingly worrying...

- ♦ Scientists are calling for far tougher UK and international climate change targets following the latest scientific evidence. See www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/Mar/17/uk-climate-budget-advice-weak and www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/Mar/13/stern-attacks-politicians-climate-change
- ♦ A **European Environment Agency (EEA) analysis** suggests that even if all countries achieve existing targets (such as 80% by 2050 for Scotland/UK) global temperatures will rise 4% this century, making much of Asia, Africa and America uninhabitable. If sufficiently tough decisions are not taken in this autumn's Copenhagen climate summit there will be "*untold decades of civil strife and hunger across the globe*" [Sunday Herald 29.3.09].
- APRIL 22 CLIMATE RALLY - ADVANCE HELP NEEDED**
See rally details in the diary section. Help is needed in advance to put up posters about the rally. And on the day to leaflet people going to work - at Waverley, possibly top of the Meadows, etc.
To help contact Gail.Wilson@rspsb.org.uk 311 6512.