

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.

FOR YOUR DIARY

See also Spokes Bulletin 109 & Spokesworker 22.2.11
Mar 19 Future of Leith Waterfront Workshop – see article
Mar 23 SPOKES Election Hustings – see Bulletin or website

PRINCES ST: longterm future + bike parking

The report to the Council on the long-term future of Princes St and surrounding areas, by Danish consultants Gehl architects, is thought to suggest big potential for high cycle use - certainly that was the impression given by the Gehl speaker, David Sim, at a council seminar to which Spokes was invited late last year.

The Gehl report itself is not yet online, and we've not seen it, though we are told it will be on the council website soon. However Planning officials prepared a report for councillors on the Gehl recommendations, and Spokes was disappointed to see a relatively low profile in it to cycling issues and potential. **We quickly emailed all councillors on the relevant committee, with a briefing document, and achieved some useful results...**

◆ The officials' long-term 'Action Plan' included consideration of a George St cycle lane, but no mention of cycling in relation to Princes St. **Cllr Steve Burgess** [the Green councillor who helped us some time ago to get parking banned on the Mound] raised our points at the Committee, and got through an amendment that the Action Plan would include a specific reference to Princes Street.

◆ Transport convener **Cllr Gordon Mackenzie** emailed to tell us it has just been agreed that requests by the Cycle Team to install more **city centre bike parking** will now get more favourable consideration than in the past – there will now be a presumption in favour (in the past some proposals were stymied by Streetscape visual considerations). More City Centre bike parking is now in the Cycle Team plans for 2011/12 financial year [Spokes 109 p4] and a study is underway to identify locations. **To suggest locations:** email cycling@edinburgh.gov.uk as soon as possible.

◆ Cllr Mackenzie promises also to ask officials to incorporate other points from our submission into the developing action plans for Princes St and George St.

There is to be a consultation on the recommendations – we don't yet know when or what this will contain, but we will of course notify members when it happens.

Background: the Committee Report and our submission are at... www.spokes.org.uk – downloads – local issues – Edinburgh

BIKE STORAGE

If you are considering new bike storage in your flat or tenement, or are lobbying councillors for overnight street parking please let us know! Fill in our survey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/XX5982Y

Even if you aren't acting on bike storage now, if you have comments on the

Spokes **bike storage factsheet** [which was circulated to members in the recent mailout] please also complete the survey.

More information: see Feb 28 news item at www.spokes.org.uk.



SOUTH EDINBURGH

The results of last autumn's Quality Bike Corridor and area-wide 20mph zone consultations have been reported to councillors, with **high public support for both schemes.** [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/811/agendas_minutes_and_reports, see Feb 8 Transport Cttee].

For the QBC, the report says all comments received suggesting changes are currently being considered – Spokes hopes to meet the council to discuss the outcome of our comments.

For the 20mph zone, a good number of people suggested widening the 20mph area to include some of the main roads. The officials are recommending this be trialled in the QBC, on Ratcliffe Terrace and Causewayside, between the junctions with Fountainhall Road and West Preston Street.

Separate Traffic Regulation Orders will be used for the main 20mph zone and for the QBC section. A councillor tells us he expects big opposition to the QBC 20mph Order from some of the public - so public support is vital too. We will try to advise members when the Order is out for consultation - **but meantime if you use this area it would be very useful to tell your councillors you are delighted to hear they are planning 20mph for the Quality Bike Corridor between Fountainhall Rd and West Preston St [part of which is quite narrow] and you look forward to seeing 20mph in place there as soon as possible.** Find your councillors [you have 3 or 4] at www.writetothem.com.

LEITH WATERFRONT

Edinburgh council has issued for consultation the **Waterfront and Leith ADF** [Area Development Framework]. **If the future of this area concerns you, send in your comments by March 28.**

See the document and related info at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/consultations/Waterfront_and_Leith_Area_Development_Framework
Queries and further info: Andrew.Sikes@edinburgh.gov.uk.

Community Planning Workshop, March 19

This workshop is being held by local group JUMP [Joined Up Master Planning] to prepare a community response to the ADF. 11am-3pm at The Lighthouse, 20-22 West Harbour Road, open to all. Please email info@artinarchitecture.co.uk [phone 555 2280] if you wish to go. If you can't attend but have ideas, email them to that address as well as to the formal consultation.

Most important: whether or not you attend the workshop, do submit your own comments to the formal council consultation.

Spokes comments

A Spokes response will be prepared by Planning Group, but here are some initial thoughts from one member...

- ◆ Flowery language is used - not always clear what it means in reality.
- ◆ Cycling issues mentioned in places, but plenty places where only walking is mentioned though cycling should also be.
- ◆ A big part of the plan is the "Great Street" concept for the A901 through the area. It's not too clear what this means, though they want it to be a great street to walk along - no mention of cycling, though obviously it's really important for that, as the main relatively direct artery through the area. It's also (from memory) quite wide in parts, so may be scope for something imaginative.
- ◆ It's not made clear that the coastal path ('Almond to Esk') is for cycling as well as walking.
- ◆ Cycling conditions on streets are mentioned a little, but there seems a danger that offroad paths such as Water of Leith are seen as sufficient to cater for all or most cycling needs, whereas inevitably the bulk of cycling trips is on the roads.
- ◆ As always - the vital question of how far the aspirations in the ADF can be made real in planning applications and in consistency between adjacent developments etc. Is that point even mentioned?

CANAL LIGHTING

As promised by Edinburgh Council, LED solar lighting is to be installed experimentally on a section of the canal towpath – could this be a first for the UK?? The invitation to tender has just been announced, “*The City of Edinburgh Council wishes to appoint a suitably experienced contractor to supply and install Solar LED lighting along the Union Canal Towpath, within Edinburgh.*”

http://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/search/show/Search_View.aspx?id=MAR089020

Application Deadline: 10/03/2011 Notice Deadline: 16/03/2011.

FUEL COSTS

The current Middle East instability, despite only 2% of world oil coming from Libya, has already brought big rises in petrol prices, a sign of how close the world is to the point where demand exceeds available supply. Whilst supply exceeded demand, costs remained relatively low: if one supplier charged too much another could come in at a lower price. But as soon as there is not enough to go around, the price rises sharply, as buyers still want to buy the same amount, and the suppliers have them 'over a barrel.'

The main political parties argue about petrol tax, discounts, etc; but this is burying heads in the sand. A few pence off tax is pretty irrelevant if prices rise by tens of pence due to demand exceeding supply. It is surely vital for oil-importing countries like Britain to institute measures to start reducing oil use. *For example...*

◆ **Halt trunk road expansion:** this encourages more and longer journeys, more people living further from their work, etc, etc.

◆ **Postpone decisions on the £2.3bn (£2,300,000,000) new Forth Road Bridge until the future of the existing bridge is clear** – a clear picture on the state of the bridge is expected within a year, and it is looking hopeful. It is shocking and crazy that the present Scottish government is planning to sign the contract in the weeks running up to the election, so as to bind in the next government to big penalty clauses if they decide on postponement or cancellation. This is the same tactic used many years ago by the then Conservative-led Lothian Regional Council, to tie in the next council to building the “Western Relief Road” into the city centre: after the election the new Labour council had to pay substantial penalties to cancel the road, and almost bottled out on their manifesto promise to cancel it.

◆ **Use the vast sums released by the above two bullet points** to repair existing roads and to greatly raise the percentage of the transport budget going to cycling, walking and public transport.

◆ **Institute charges for large retail and leisure premises, based on the number of car-parking spaces over a certain minimum.** This would discourage out-of-town and car-based developments, in favour of town-centre and easily accessible locations. The Scottish government's recent proposed levy on the biggest stores would have been a small step on the out-of-town issue, but would also have hit big in-town stores, even where they provide no car parking and rely on users of public transport, and active travel.

Please consider contacting politicians and writing to the press about such points now and as the May elections approach. Some MSPs are sympathetic to such ideas – they need encouraged!!

OXFORD/EDINBURGH

Bulletin 109 mentions the remarkable similarity between Oxford and Edinburgh in terms of road, traffic and cycling patterns – though of course, there are also differences in the situations and in the campaign emphases. **The following article is from Oxford Cycle Campaign** www.cyclox.org/what-we-say/dual-network.

Note - SPK: means a comment from Spokes. We have also used **bold** to show similarities with Edinburgh.

Oxford has a dual cycle network...

◆ The **main cycle routes** follow normal traffic corridors. There are quite a lot of cycle lanes, traffic is not too bad, the junctions are OK, but we need to take care around buses. [SPK: the Oxford main cycle routes are equivalent to those in the *Cycle Friendly City* section of Edinburgh's Active Travel Action Plan, ATAP].

◆ The **quiet cycle routes** avoid the traffic (mostly) - see map linked from the cyclox website article for more detail. [SPK: the Oxford quiet cycle routes are equivalent to the *Family Friendly Network* section of Edinburgh's Active Travel Action Plan, ATAP].

Oxford also, critically, has **excellent bus services** (a bus every few minutes on all the main corridors), which has allowed traffic to be reduced substantially over the years - see bus map and central bus stop guide on Cyclox website.

Understanding Oxford's Dual Network

Oxford has a very constrained road network, with major rivers running north-south, and **all main roads fanning out from the centre**. In the sixties, bridges were built across the rivers about two kilometres north and south of the centre, and a ring road built round the edge of the built-up area. But the inner relief road across Christchurch Meadow was not built. [SPK: in Edinburgh, the outer-city bypass was built, but inner ring-road plans were scrapped].

Starting in the seventies, **cycle lanes/ bus lanes have been marked on most of Oxford's main roads**. Oxford was one of the first cities to put in cycle lanes, and found that it could be done safely, as long as (1) cycle lanes were continuous across side roads, and (2) a reasonable amount of room was left around parking. Most of Oxford's cycle lanes are quite narrow, but this doesn't seem to cause a safety problem. We prefer wider cycle lanes, for comfort, but we recognise this sometimes has to be balanced against competing demands for roadspace.

Parking on main roads has mostly been removed (in some places it has been put into bays). There are still some gaps in the

cycle lanes, where the road is narrow or where there is still parking: our proposal for LTP3 is to address many of these.

The bus lanes (and bus priority lights) mean that **buses get significant priority over cars**. In most cities, buses spend the rush hour stuck in traffic; in Oxford they get to their destination then come back to pick up some more passengers. This makes it a lot cheaper for bus companies to provide the service (fewer buses and drivers), so we have modern low-floor clean-burn buses, and several competing bus companies. [SPK: Edinburgh doesn't have that type of competition but has an excellent publicly-owned bus company].

There are two consequences of the excellent buses: (1) fewer cyclists, because some potential cyclists use the bus, and (2) political acceptance that car-access can be actively discouraged, to the point that there are considerably fewer cars on the main roads than you might expect.

So Oxford is one of the few places where cyclists really can use all the roads. There isn't too horrendous a volume of traffic, it doesn't go very fast, and the junctions are mostly OK. We have to look out for buses, but at least they're fairly easy to spot, and they know we know who they are.

In Denmark and the Netherlands, cycle routes tend to run on a mix of quieter roads and tracks alongside busy main roads. In Oxford we've ended up with a different approach: **the main cycle routes are on the traditional main roads**, and are used by most adult cyclists. Since the eighties, however, we've also copied Dutch/Danish practice, by making **quiet routes away from main roads**, initially as Safe Routes to School, but latterly to provide a coherent alternative for those who prefer it. But generally, the quiet routes are used by many fewer cyclists than the main routes.

As a result, the focus of the cycle campaign is dealing with the gaps in the cycle lanes on the main roads. This is where most cyclists want to be. We also want the quiet routes to be properly signposted, and minor problems dealt with, so that there's a reasonable alternative to the main roads when you first start cycling or when cycling with children.

We are also trying to learn to love the buses. This is difficult for hardened cyclists, but it is clear that buses have made a huge positive difference to Oxford, and the more of them the better. [SPK: Spokes would like Edinburgh's bus routes re-organised, with a traffic-free Princes Street, as appears to be suggested in the Council's Gehl report. But we certainly agree with Cyclox's general point about the immense value to the city of having an excellent bus service – and we have built up a very good relationship with Lothian Buses – e.g. see Jan 7 news item at www.spokes.org.uk].