

Spokes Election Hustings 23 March 2011

Cllr Steve Burgess (Greens), candidate for Lothians Regional List

Introduction:

Reasons for promoting cycling the usual, plus reducing oil dependency. Transport is second biggest source of CO₂, and still increasing (by 10% since 1990). Transport policy going wrong direction – pub trans investment down since 2005, Gov't still promoting AWPR and FRB2 (Forth Road Bridge 2). Costs comparison: £100K per mile of cycleway vs £27m ditto of motorway.

In calculating cost/benefit ratio for schemes, speed is over-valued and impacts on health and the environment under-valued – need total review of STAG procedure for assessing transport proposals.

Wants 10% of transport budget for AT (active travel), and at least 50% of that for cycling.

Greens record: they stopped loss of ring-fencing for CWSS in Year 1; argued for cancellation of road schemes, the only ones to vote against FRB2; P Harvie got chair of TIE cttee and launched active travel Inquiry; climate challenge fund was gained, which has led to good schemes like The Bike Station, EDCo-op etc.

Question/Answer group sessions:

Was asked about promoting strict liability but not aware of it (as with some of the other politicians) (and ditto some special lenses for HGVs to make cyclists more visible). In discussion - was strict liability a reserved matter? Audience thought not – can come under Scottish law, and is a local transport matter. (SB – too late to go in manifesto).

Q Hackney has free cycle training for adults, with trainers paid. A. Supports this – lot of adults not confident.

Q Could NHS also pay for cycling? A. SCCS also wants inter-departmental co-operation – Greens support this.

Q Why do none of 4 main parties support significant investment in cycling (it's hovered at 1% for years)? A. Not much political capital in it. FRB2 by contrast is populist. Answer is to elect more Greens, who can punch above their weight.

Q Role of Tpt Scotland – no interest in cycling. A. Greens can audit spending.

Q Can planning laws be improved to increase gain? A. Section 75 agreements could be useful.

Q. Parliament TICC Inquiry – Active Travel report was bland. A. Cttees are cross-party, reports have to be agreed by all. P Harvie was frustrated because it didn't go far enough – and we didn't get the money to implement the recommendations.

Q. Alternative to FRB2? A. Repair the existing. Lessen the impacts on it – re-instate tolls, charge more for single-occupant vehicles, put in peak- hours bus lanes, more P+R.

Q. Congestion from Q'ferry to city – how reduce? A. CEC is critical of FRB2 because will increase traffic levels. See answer above.

Q. Would you promote freight by bike – local deliveries? And pedi-cabs for taxis? A. increase in traffic is largely white vans (10% up – most of this is vans), so yes, good. Amazing what bikes can carry.

Q. What are your priorities? A. investment from Gov't. LAs have limited budgets. LAs would then decide best methods – cycle lanes; cycle tracks; potholes; maps; QBCs; etc

Q. Integration with pub trans? A. Greens argued for trams to take bikes. Buses could have racks.

Q. Progress possible with funding tight? A. Don't believe Cameron R. - there IS money, it's just not being spent wisely, eg FRB2, fuel duty reductions.

Q. Why did Greens 'ask' for home insulation not for more on cycling? A. They didn't have list of priorities, they had only one 'ask' and chose insulation.

Summing up:

Welcomes the good ideas he's heard – strict liability; lenses on HGVs; training for adults as well as children; audits on TS.

Manifesto (to be launched in April) will support demand management on cars.