

SPOKES

The Lothian Cycle Campaign

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NOTES FROM RICHARD ARMITAGE EDINBURGH VISIT 17/18 SEPT 2009

These notes summarise the **concrete suggestions for action by Edinburgh City** which emerged from RA's visit. They are primarily based on the lunchtime meeting hosted by Cllr Mackenzie, but with relevant additions from the subsequent discussion with Cllrs Rose and Burgess, and from the previous evening's public meeting.

It is notable that these suggestions are all based around current levels of capital expenditure on cycling policy of around £1m p.a. - although clearly increases would be beneficial. Many of the suggestions here do however require additional *staff input* – but proposals are also made for how that could be helped.

Spokes requests that Cllr Mackenzie and the Director together actively consider the points in this document, with a view to taking early action where that seems beneficial in working towards the Council's Charter of Brussels target and the Lib Dem manifesto commitment. Where early action is not possible, those ideas could be considered for the Council's forthcoming Cycle Action Plan.

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1. MAKE MAXIMUM USE OF WHAT THE CITY HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED AND PLANNED

1.1 Edinburgh has a significant amount of cycling infrastructure, both onroad and offroad. A priority is giving this a much stronger public identity, and ensuring it is well maintained and properly linked up. Aylesbury, with its gemstone-identity routes, is an example where this was done, leading to significant rises in bike use. [Phil Noble mentioned that Exeter is another English city, with similarities to Edinburgh, where bike use has been increased significantly in a quite short period].

1.2 RA suggests **creating one corridor per year**, largely by linking up existing facilities, giving it a name, an identity, and raising its public profile. This to include not just onroad and other infrastructure work, but visiting frontagers along the route (e.g. offering to install customer bike parking, 50% contribution to staff/residential bike parking), publicity through local groups and schools, etc.

1.3 **Year 2010/11 – Kings Buildings to George Square (or better - continue through to Princes St).** The Council has already allocated £150k for onroad improvements to this route in 2010/11. The project should be widened as above, to give the route a high public profile; also to experiment with ideas for use in future routes. Consider...

- A name and possibly colour/brand for the route
- A publicly visible counter as in some European towns (possibly at top of MMW)
- An experimental physically segregated section where width allows, even if fairly short (possibly city-bound from West Saville Terrace to Fountainhall Road)
- Work with local frontagers, local community groups, university etc, as above.
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1.4 In view of the council's new 15% target, cycling needs a priority in the **maintenance budget**. At present there are no clear guidelines or any real consistency in how cycling is treated within that budget.

In terms of *coloured surfacing*, an extremely rough guesstimate suggested that to replace all faded-out coloured surfacing in the city might cost around £0.5m. This could be a priority earmarked item for the maintenance budget over the next 2 years, rather than waiting in each stretch of road until as and when that section of road is to be completely resurfaced.

As regards *other maintenance priorities*, the point was made that the consequences for a cyclist going into a pothole or a badly maintained gutter or drain cover are far more serious than for a motorised vehicle, and that therefore this work should be prioritised in kerbside areas, especially where there are cycle lanes.

2. LEAD BY EXAMPLE

2.1 RA pointed out that to convince the public the council has to lead by example. He proposes a **Cycle Impact Assessment (CIA)** of all sections/departments of the council, covering all its 19000(?) staff.

2.2 The CIA would consider **all areas of activity of each section**. For example, housing would consider cycle parking for residents, tourism would work with other tourist agencies to ensure that B&Bs, hotels, etc, offer bike hire as standard.

2.3 In terms of **staff travel**, each section or department should be given an annual budget for staff travel on CEC business. Through the CIA, a proportion of this will be expected to be used to foster increased cycle use. This would also be linked to the council's targets on climate change emissions reductions, because it would of course be a capped budget (i.e. no overspend allowed), and therefore the spend on cycling facilities or training would necessitate fewer miles by car.

2.4 **All councillors and all senior staff** (say earning over £50k) would be offered cycle training and encouraged to cycle to work, leading by example not just to the public but to other staff in all parts of the council.

3. PRACTICAL PARTNERSHIPS – build resources and actions by working with other agencies

3.1 **Links at high level and at working level with Lothian Health** – they should be contributing resources to active travel work with the council.

We note that **Dr Charles Winstanley**, Chair of Lothian Health Board, came along (unknown to Spokes in advance) as an ordinary member of the audience at the Spokes public meeting, and contributed positively to the discussion (without revealing his identity), suggesting a particular interest in this. The makeup of the Board, with a link to Dr Winstanley, is here...

<http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/aboutus/ourorganisation/nhsboard/members.asp>

Possibly Lothian Health could provide a shared staff member who could work on some of the staff-intensive aspects of projects such as the public and stakeholder engagement in 1.3 above (working with frontagers, groups, etc) and/or 2.2 (working with different departments of the council - and of course doing the same within Lothian Health).

Related to the above, we note the very encouraging comments on '*transport, health and sustainability*' in NHS Lothian's Director of Public Health annual report 2007/8

http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/news/annual_reports/publichealth/2007-08/02/2-5.html

Lothian's Public Health Director is **Dr Alison McCallum** - also at the above Health Board web link.

Spokes notes that Glasgow is already taking a lead in this area. The Council's *Glasgow Health Commission* brought together council and health interests, and its recent report (www.glasgow.gov.uk/healthcommission) proposed (recommendation 7)...

*“A greater emphasis on **safe, active and sustainable modes of transport as the main feature** (our emphasis) of the city's future transport growth. The Health Commission believes Glasgow should aim to:*

- *Increase its spend on walking and cycling as a proportion of overall transport investment towards average EU levels. This will help to shift our focus away from the car and towards modes of transport which are good for health and good for the environment.*
- *Hold a summit to agree on more progress towards this aim and to encourage cycling among our communities – we need especially to change our culture so that cycling in Glasgow is seen as an activity for all.”*

3.2 Links with tourism/festival – a big part of Edinburgh's economy.

Hotels/B&Bs could be offering bike hire (with local bike hire businesses) as part of their deals to customers – could be set up by existing tourist/festival organisations.

A privately-financed bike hire service aimed primarily at tourists could be set up – possibly at Waverley, incorporating bike parking, servicing, etc. RA has seen this in other tourist areas in mainland Europe, where the council handles the cycling infrastructure, and leaves the private sector to deliver bike hire.

Note - Spokes has just discovered that a European-style bike store/hire/service centre 'Cycle Point' (the Dutch name is 'Fiets Point') is to be opened at Leeds station. This is aimed primarily at bike storage for locals, to encourage greater rail use, but clearly in Edinburgh's case could be aimed equally at the tourist market. For details, and link to a video, see...

<http://www.bikebiz.com/news/30521/UK-to-get-Dutch-style-CyclePoint-shops>

RA feels that a Paris-style Vélib scheme could well work in Edinburgh in due course, but he is sceptical about a council-run multi-location hire scheme at present – doesn't feel that central Edinburgh yet feels sufficiently bike-friendly [that could change if Princes Street becomes a bike-welcoming motor-free 'demonstration' area]. RA feels that a Vélib scheme would lead to claims on revenue budgets that seem hard to justify when we have yet to establish a highways maintenance budget line for cycle lanes.

3.3 Links with business – Chamber of Commerce etc.

Projects for co-funding of bike infrastructure [parking etc] and promotion, etc – possibly a high-profile competition amongst local businesses. [Note that Edinburgh Bike Station has applied to Climate Challenge for a large scale project to tackle this with small and medium-size businesses, in association with Chamber of Commerce, Spokes and others].

4. WORK ON ALL FRONTS AT ONCE

RA pointed out, first, that the council's 15% target is very ambitious and, second, that not all initiatives will necessarily succeed. **It is therefore essential to proceed on all fronts at once** - whilst ensuring the flexibility to increase the emphasis on any areas/initiatives which are looking particularly promising.

END

[For other ideas, see also Spokes briefing document prepared for 30.7.09 meeting with Cllr Mackenzie and others]