

# SPOKES

## *The Lothian Cycle Campaign*

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### **CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL TEC COMMITTEE 4 JUNE 2013**

### **Briefing from Spokes re. Item 7.3 CITY CENTRE VISION**

#### **Background**

Spokes strongly welcomes the Council's overall concept to trial an improved environment in Princes Street and George Street, with one-way motor traffic in Princes Street and George Street; albeit that our first preference is for an entirely traffic-free Princes Street. With tram development now under control after years of chaos, the Council is to be congratulated on pressing forward with a bold, imaginative scheme to create a more people-friendly place.

The recent Spokes petition to the council, with nearly 600 signatures, and remitted by the Petitions Committee as part of this consultation, called for Princes Street to be *a place where people can move about, relax, shop, and enjoy this marvellous street in peace and safety; and where pedestrians, cyclists and trams co-exist well.*

However, whilst the Council proposal will be a big step in this direction, we are shocked that it does not allow for cycle use on the north side of Princes Street, instead forcing anyone travelling by bike to divert up to and back from George Street. ***We urge councillors to amend the proposed trial, as suggested in the box below.***

We are also concerned about the level of parking to be retained in George Street, but await more detail on this.

#### **Reasons for enabling cycle use in Princes Street**

- ◆ The public consultation showed strong support for a Princes Street cycleroute.
- ◆ Permeable city centre cycle use is vital if Edinburgh is to achieve its targets for growing cycle use – including its targets for *all* trips, i.e. everyday trips to shops etc, not just commuting. People need to get to shops, the Gardens, Waverley etc by bike and with their children. Cyclists are *not* just hi-viz east-west commuters.
- ◆ Encouraging cycle use is the norm in European cities. Edinburgh is risking its hard-won reputation as the leading cycling city in Scotland and as one of the UK's leading cycling cities.
- ◆ Glasgow is introducing a public bike hire scheme in 2014, like those in London, Paris and most European capitals. With cycle use banned in Princes Street, an Edinburgh scheme targeting visitors would be doomed.
- ◆ Edinburgh attracts many visitors from Europe who expect cycling to be welcomed. They do not expect to arrive on the airport tram, or at Waverley, only to be confronted by an immediate ban on using their bike.
- ◆ Princes Street worked well during the total closure in 2011 even with totally unrestricted cycling. It would work even better with a well-designed cycleroute.
- ◆ The Council's Gehl Report clearly seeks provision for cycle use in Princes Street [e.g. chap 3 p112].
- ◆ There is more than adequate space for a cycleroute once the bus shelters and existing roadway are removed.
- ◆ With cycling permitted only in George Street, safe connections from the Bridges and Lothian Road to the city centre will be very difficult to provide, with many extra left and right turns. Spokes traffic counts show bikes form 15%-20% of all vehicles coming down Lothian Road, and the Bridges may be similar.

**Given the strong support for a Princes Street cycleroute in the consultation, and the fact that the council is undertaking a 12-month trial of the entire concept, *Spokes asks the Transport and Environment Committee to amend the proposals as follows...***

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Include a 2-way cycleroute on the north side of Princes Street as part of the 12-month trial.</li><li>◆ If after the first 3 months there are found to be insuperable negatives, revert to the original proposal.</li></ul> |
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