

Liberal Democrats Manifesto for Cycling

Below are some of the main elements relating to cycling within the full Liberal Democrat manifesto. The elements in bold appear in the manifesto, the 'comments' are provided for explanatory purposes but are not in the manifesto. I've also appended details on how some of the 5% of Transport funding which will go to Cycling is to be spent next year as well as an outline of projects which are proposed for following years.

As a scene setter, I would highlight that elsewhere in the Liberal Democrat manifesto we make specific commitments to improve roads across Edinburgh; both resurfacing and making permanent pothole repairs. While this is not a benefit solely to cyclists, the condition of road surfaces is a concern to many cyclists and an improvement will benefit the quality and safety of cycling.

Happy to respond to queries on the manifesto as time permits!

Cllr Gordon Mackenzie
Edinburgh Liberal Democrats

Building a Better Edinburgh: Transport (Cycling)

Building on our investment in cycling, the highest in Scotland, and our road safety measures such as mobile speed signs and 20mph zones, increase the percentage of transport spend allocated to cycling to a minimum of 5% in 2012/13 and increase by 1% annually.

Comment - This commitment backs up the funding we provided in this year's Council budget. In summary a significant proportion of the funding will be used to accelerate the completion of the Active Travel Action Plan cycling components, increase the funding for promoting cycling, properly maintaining the cycle network, bringing in a cycle leasing scheme and providing cycle training for P6 children.

More details on some of the infrastructure projects covered by this funding are contained in the appendix.

Use Edinburgh's Streets Ahead Partnership as a starting point for a Streets Ahead Plus scheme that will use trained local volunteers to identify potential road safety problems (speeding, hazardous parking at schools, misuse of cycling and pedestrian areas) to be addressed by targeting those responsible and raising awareness.

Comment - 'Streets Ahead Plus' is based on the award winning Community Speedwatch schemes already operating across many parts of the UK. Feedback on the introduction of the 20mph pilot in south Edinburgh and the awareness campaign on Advanced Stop Boxes has been generally positive. However many people have commented that they would like to see more action to reinforce these measures including enforcement. Streets Ahead Plus will support the implementation of these and other road safety measures. Local volunteers would be trained and equipped to identify and record specific road safety problems; speeding, stopping in Advanced Stop Boxes, jumping red lights etc.

Details of the offence; registration number, location, time, etc, would be passed on to the Streets Ahead Partnership to follow up as appropriate e.g. via a warning letter or home visit. The purpose and benefit of the scheme would include, mobilising community support for road safety and providing a more visible presence on the street, thereby deterring the offending behaviour. Additionally, identifying the offenders will assist the Streets Ahead Partnership to target those individuals for awareness raising and /or enforcement action. The Fife pilot has shown that speeds dropped as a result of this approach, it has been hailed as a success by the Police and is now being extended to other areas of Fife.

Accelerate the Active Travel Action Plan, improve the maintenance of the existing cycle network, target safety issues and reaffirm our commitment to the goals set out in the Charter of Brussels.

Comment - Details of the sort of projects which are being planned are provided in the appendix. It's not the complete list but will hopefully give readers some indication of projects which are proposed for their area or routes they use.

'Roll out cycle training to all P6 children in Edinburgh's schools'

Comment - The additional funding being provided as part of the Cycling budget will enable us to fund paid trainers where necessary. If the Scottish Government contributes to the initiative Council funds will be freed up for use in other cycling projects

'Work with NHS, education, voluntary and private sectors to promote cycling to work or study'

Comment - Funding of c£100,000 a year, from the Council budget, has been earmarked for this initiative along with whatever contributions are available from external funders and sponsors. A proposal has already been agreed by Council and we expect the project to go out to tender towards the end of the summer.

Introduce more 20mph limits where there is support from local residents'

Comment - We believe that there is considerable potential to replicate the current pilot in other parts of the city and will also explore the inclusion of busier roads and local shopping areas as has already happened on part of Causewayside.

'To trial bikes on Tram within 6 months of operational service'

Comment - We believe there is little risk in bring the trial period forward by 6 months

Strengthen the “Edinburgh Road Works Ahead” agreement to reduce the disruption caused by roadworks. We will invest in better traffic modelling, better signage and better warning to road and footway users; press the Roads Commissioner to improve the way utilities works are managed and inspected; and lobby the Scottish Government to introduce “lane charges” to compensate for disruption and to encourage speedier completions.

As well as causing disruption to journeys, roadworks can often present a particular hazard for cyclists with narrow lanes and drivers confused by unfamiliar diversions. Getting roadworks completed more quickly, with better planning and signage will reduce the disruption and the likelihood of accidents.

Deliver on the Jan Gehl recommendations for the city centre, creating new welcoming spaces for residents and visitors; and report on potential temporary traffic schemes by the end of 2012 with a report on permanent schemes by the middle of 2015.’

Comment - This will provide the opportunity to investigate the feasibility and desirability of an east west cycle route through the city centre on a trial basis before implementing the preferred schemes in the second half of the Council.

Recognising the importance of building on our progress in maintaining good condition roads and pavements for all users, commit to reducing the percentage of roads and pavements in need of repair over the next five years.

Comment - Better road surfaces are a benefit to all road users but perhaps more to cyclists who are at greater risk if a pothole causes a fall or or sudden change of direction.

Aware of the inherited backlog of repairs from the previous administration and of the damage wrought by two extreme winters, use the extra £3m in the 2012-13 budget to fix over a third of the city’s potholes with our award-winning “Right First Time” scheme, using materials and processes to make more permanent repairs. Over the next four years, we will invest additional funds to ensure that all potholes are fixed permanently wherever possible.

Comments as per road surfaces above

Unless there is compelling evidence that voluntary actions will deliver the traffic air pollution reductions required to improve air quality in the next three years, to promote Low Emission Zone(s) and target the highest polluting older buses and lorries.

Comment - pollution affects everyone living in or using the busier streets in Edinburgh and cyclists are no exception. Improving air quality will make cycling an even healthier way to travel around Edinburgh.