

31 March 2014

SG Town Centres Action Plan [TCAP] ***Notes for SP CPCG re. 27.3.14 meeting of SG and Spokes***

Following a letter¹ from Spokes to Planning Minister Derek Mackay MSP, about the TCAP, Spokes was invited² to a meeting with relevant Scottish Government officials. [This invite was also mentioned in the Minister's letter³ to Alison Johnstone MSP, in response to her letter from the CPCG re the TCAP].

The meeting was held on 27 March, convened by Susan Brown, TCAP Manager from the SG Housing and Regeneration Unit; also attended by officials from the Sustainable Transport Team [including Karen Furey] and from Planning. Spokes was represented by Dave du Feu, Peter Hawkins and Marion Preez. Ian Findlay from Paths for All had also been invited by the TCAP team.

Important points to emerge from the meeting, from our perspective, were...

- ◆ A main concern in the Spokes letter to the Minister had been that the TCAP classed active travel initiatives as 'long term' [the only action thus classified]. SB said that the TCAP demonstration projects could now include appropriate active travel initiatives at an early stage.
- ◆ SB said that the TCAP initiative had very little funding of its own, and for elements such as active travel would rely mainly on working jointly with other departments/agencies which had relevant funding. For example, Community Links (SG Sustainable Transport/ Sustrans), Rail station improvement funds, Bus improvement plan funding, etc.
- ◆ **SB is keen to receive ideas (e.g. from CPCG) as to how active travel could be incorporated effectively into the town centre demonstration projects, but bearing in mind the above.**
- ◆ Spokes is concerned, more generally, that there is a disconnect between planning and transport, at both national and local authority level, of which the TCAP's initial 'long-term' active travel perspective was just one symptom. This general issue is discussed in a feature in Spokes Bulletin 118⁴, with many examples both national and local.

Continued overleaf

1 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1311-letter-to-Derek-Mackay-v3.pdf>

2 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1401-Reply-from-D-Mackay-Mr-Dave-du-Feu-SPOKES.doc>

3 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1401-Minister-to-AJ-20140000619.pdf>

4 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/pall6.pdf> [Spokes Bulletin 118, pages 6-7]

- ◆ The Planning Minister has promised⁵ official guidance to local authorities on how planning and transport could be better connected to foster modal shift to active travel. Also a Masterplanning Toolkit to advise local authorities and others on town centre regeneration is to be issued (this summer?) SB promised that the points in the Spokes Bulletin feature above would be considered in the preparation of these documents.
- ◆ Spokes [PH and MP] had given a 20-minute presentation to Edinburgh City Council planning officers on the problems resulting from inadequate consideration of planning and transport links at local authority level. PH and MP offered also to present this to SG officials involved in the preparation of the above documents.
- ◆ Spokes pointed out that restrictions on car use [e.g. car parking rules and enforcement, and roadspace reallocation] were essential in creating local environments conducive to walking and cycling. This had been emphasised at a recent Spokes public meeting by Prof Colin Pooley, head of the *Understanding Walking and Cycling* study⁶.
- ◆ There is evidence from Europe and the USA that a car-reduced environment can boost local trade and assist town centre regeneration. However SB would like to hear of examples *in Scotland* where this has happened successfully. DdF referred to a press report of Milngavie traders seeking restrictions on car parking, to encourage turnover and local shopping. *Later* – the press cutting⁷ is from 2012, and we do not know the outcome/ current status.

Dave du Feu
31.3.2014

Email comment [1.4.14] from Susan Brown, TCAP manager, on the above notes...

Happy with the note you've provided to the cross-party group [i.e. the above document]: one point I'd like to clarify is that overall, the town centre action plan delivery is reliant on working cross-department, with local authorities, the third and community sectors and the private sector too.

On the masterplanning toolkit; happy to pass on good practise examples, case studies that you all are aware of to the authors of the toolkit – whether around functional/commuting or leisure related cycling measures bringing benefits to town/business and activity within towns. This is currently being drafted and so suggestions to us over next couple of weeks are welcomed from the group.

Susan Brown / Regeneration Strategy Unit / Direct Telephone : 0131 244 0472 / Mobile : 07769239161
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/town-centres/review>

5 <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/74381.aspx> [paras 89 & 91]

6 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/2014/03/cycling-past-present-and-possible-futures/>

7 <http://www.milngavieherald.co.uk/news/local-headlines/parking-charges-in-bearsden-and-milngavie-get-the-thumbs-up-from-traders-1-2435647>