

Spokes Holyrood Hustings 2016 (21<sup>st</sup> March 2016)

Notes from the breakout group number 1 – Chair Richard

Candidates in the order we saw them

**Sandy Batho? (Conservative)** – was asked what he understood by Presumed Liability (PL) and whether or not he supported it. He confessed to not knowing what PL was – it was briefly explained to him and he said his wife had mentioned it to him. There was a comment from the floor about the state of the roads and Sandy took the opportunity to talk around this for a while. The floor pointed out that at times the problem was caused by Utilities and what would Sandy do about that – he agreed that Utility Companies should be made to repair roads they damaged – a discussion followed about London and the powers the Mayor has in this area. Asked as he did not favour a % spend of the transport budget on cycling how monies would be allocated to cycling Sandy said on the basis of need – but when pressed on what ‘need’ meant was very vague. Mentioned infrastructure, attitudes and perceptions.

**Sarah Boyack (Labour)** asked that we give our names when asking questions. Ian then asked about induced demand and traffic evaporation (showing off or what!!) and was asked to explain the terms. Sarah agreed that car use needs to be reduced and that and that bus lanes being shared with cyclists is a good thing which needs standardisation. She agreed with pinch points to slow traffic and other ‘traffic evaporation’ measures. She would reduce A9 spending, use a % of the trunk road budget on cycling and that there needs to be strategic and national thinking about all transport.

Osman then asked a lengthy question about the proposed Roseburn – Leith Street Link (I think he was against it – but it was hard to tell) – Sarah came back strongly in favour and stressed the importance of these key routes if cycling is to be seen as less dangerous and become more popular. Ricard emphasised that cycle savvy council staff need to be in place and Sarah picked up on the need to fund councils properly so that they can do their job.

The 20 mph limit was mentioned and Sarah said this needs to be a bottoms up thing and locals and local issues need to be engaged.

**Emma Farthing-Sykes (Lib Dem)** was asked if LDs would make cycle provision compulsory in all new plans? Emma said they would need to be the correct provisions but was vague, when pressed, on what ‘correct’ meant. Asked about PL she said she was aware of PL but needed to have more evidence. When it was pointed out that there is lots of evidence available in Europe she said that PL had only recently been introduced in Europe! There was then a general chat round the idea that car drivers should be specifically trained to be aware of cyclists in the manner that Lothian Bus drivers were. Emma responded by getting back to her themes about behaviour and attitude and acknowledged that infrastructure was also important. Also mentioned Bikeability schemes but seemed a bit vague on these!

**Alison Johnstone (Green)** asked about progress on Leith Walk suggested that a councillor would be better placed to answer. Asked – what is holding up PL? responded that there is a good deal of hostility towards PL but that Alison (and others at Holyrood) were fully supportive of PL. Alison emphasised that the Green Party has always been in favour of cycling and cyclists – when asked what more would they do if they had power – Alison responded with: the target is 10% of travel to be by bike so 10% of the transport budget should be spent on cycle projects. Emphasised the need to encourage cycling at school level, that a consistent approach was needed and that we (cycle lobby) need to keep pushing for recognition and change.

**Jim Eadie (SNP)** – was asked (by someone different) about PL who said he knew of a case of a lady cycling who had been killed by a motorist and the sentence was 5 years – too lenient in the view of the questioner. It transpired that the lady was his wife who was killed in 2011 (I think) – this took up a fair bit of the session and Jim was at a loss as to what to say. He mentioned, when asked about the cause of cycling accidents, that thorough investigation of cycle accidents is undertaken by a Police Authority in England (he did not say which one) and Jim has asked Police Scotland that they emulate this good practice (outcome is uncertain).

There was time for one final question – Given that cycling hits so many policy goals, tourism, health, pollution, carbon reduction and that Spokes are continually pointing out areas where policy outcomes are not helped when cycling is ignored (e.g. the new train configurations, Forth Bridge closure etc) Nods from Jim – so the question ‘is there a conspiracy against cycling or are these a series of cockups?’ Resigned chuckle from Jim (it had been a long session) who then said probably a bit of both – session over.

Note Taker: Benedict Bate