

# Notes from Group 2

## Jim Eadie (SNP)

*Question: 7 out of 10 vehicles driving past are single occupancy. With scarce funding, what do the SNP think about road pricing? It seems very inefficient to ask populus to fund active travel vs. charging individuals who create congestion.*

Gov't is investing in car sharing and other alternatives. Doesn't always work but we are making progress. I don't drive; walk 15 minutes.

At some stage we will need congestion charging; Edinburgh would be well suited to it but the public here voted it down a number of years ago.

*Can the guarantees be stronger as to what congestion charging money would be used for?*

Need political leadership, which party will commit to it? Probably no party will in the next Scottish election.

Need to keep investing in other alternatives as well. Keen on South Sub – believe it's now possible and will work with Andrew Burns at CEC to do feasibility study.

*Question: Segregated cycleways. Could be possible, perhaps just using cheaper dividers. Is this a possibility?*

Edinburgh has shown leadership – e.g. Leith Walk, though I recognise it's slow. It is what we need though. Need to avoid people thinking it's only "crazy" people that cycle.

Bikeability training important. Still need to tap into the infrastructure benefits – cycling counts and does improve economy.

*Question: Not a cyclist, here from Roseburn businesses. 95% of people are against the cyclepath. In favour of upgrading the existing NCR instead. Is it possible to stop this?*

[ Chair intervened as this is not a national issue ]

*Norway investing in cycle tracks above the roads. Could we do this? I'm a car driver and scared of hitting a cyclist.*

It's good to recognise that people need to share space. For issues like this you need to follow the local planning process. Though if everyone says not in my backyard then nothing gets done. Planning can result in proposals being altered – engage with process.

*Question: Bikes on trains and the new Edinburgh/Glasgow class 385s. Big demand to get bikes on. Conductors are good about it but only two dedicated spaces on new trains. In Germany trains are same length but use vertical hooks – could we do that? Why is there no dialog about this?*

Abellio Scotrail head came along twice to committee. Smooth talker but he is engaging and listening. More passengers means more money. They need to meet their obligations as a public service body. I will follow this up.

*Question: Is there bike parking at parliament?*

Yes, bike parking in underground car park. But also next to loading bays.

## Sandy Ratho (Conservative)

*Question: Very concerned about the West Highland Line and lack of bike spaces. Last summer I went with 4 friends, cycled from Oban to Fort William and we stayed in the local hotels. Only did it because of the train. It's hopeless if we lose the bike spaces – need bookable spaces.*

In terms of government we need to stipulate these things via contracts. For example we say that things need “minimum apprenticeships”, this is another example. Train companies have not had any strong direction from government that this is important. e.g. new East Coast trains only have 2 or 3 bike spaces! Used to be easier in the past.

*TS no longer have relationship with cycle lobby – that's not ok!*

Clearly, helps to have politicians that get it.

*Question. Role of Transport Scotland itself. It's a misnomer – really Trunk Roads Scotland. Staffed with roads engineers. So what would you do? How would you shift it to include active travel?*

It's an agent of government. I'd look for the political process to set the priorities for TS. Minister often conferring with them. Also need to reflect integrated transport.

*Question: You said you aren't in favour of reserved percentage of budget for cycling. What do you propose for ensuring that all councils are spending on active travel?*

Tend to think of it in terms of the needs rather than formula. Biggest risk in Edinburgh for example is pot holes. Need to avoid reserved money for cycling detracting from investments that help everyone.

## Sarah Boyack (Labour)

*Question. Taxation and funding. Very frustrating seeing single occupancy vehicles – doesn't follow polluter pays. Would road pricing not be more efficient?*

I proposed it a while back. A lot of people disagreed – national paper ran “on your Boyack series”! Prefer now a dedicated percentage – 1% of trunk roads. Every year for 20 years that would make a big difference. I think pollution is very important – need LEZs, that would start to change things. Avoid 44T trucks coming into Edinburgh, encourage smaller vans for the last mile. Low emission buses are helpful, Edinburgh leading the way.

What about congestion charge?

Not for me – got the scars from last time. LEZ is what I think is next.

*But buses can't move for traffic!*

Bus lanes are important. Make for a more disruptive journey for drivers as well. Building a strategic network is crucial for on road bike lanes. Funding wise believe that tourism levy and changes to local taxation are important.

*Question: Is Labour's extra 1p on tax proposal only for NHS and education?*

If you earn £150k+ we'd make you pay 50p in £. And we wouldn't abolish APD. The 1p mostly education, but this gives local authority capacity to do more with other money. So many requests about social care at the moment – it's heart wrenching. Cycling is down the pecking order, so need longer term approach.

*Question: What about road pricing? (again)*

Labour party had referendum and the public voted against it; we didn't want to push it. Maybe it was a policy before it's time or we could have been clearer exactly how it would be spent. Ken took the hit and shows it can be done in London, though there was a lot of smear from the media. It's still on the statute book in Edinburgh.

## Emma Farthing-Sykes (Lib Dem)

*Question: In some parts of North America all of the buses have bike racks in front. Is that an option?*

I wonder how that would work? How does it work?

*Self-regulating. System called rack and roll.*

Yeah it's definitely important as if there's no train you're in trouble.

*Question: Safety. Mentioned parked cars but not behaviour of motorists and pedestrians and cyclists and dog walkers. How do we get the police and judiciary engaged?*

With theft the police don't treat it as crime – even though I can't get home if my bike is stolen, so it's just as serious as car crime. Attitudes... I'd hopefully open talks with DVLA as it makes me a better driver. When I do drive I have better awareness of what's going on. Also a better pedestrian – pedestrians can be weaving through cars. So would work with DVLA to do additional cycle awareness part of test. Bus drivers get training – it helps.

*Question: Safety, cycle lanes, and potholes. I behave erratically when there's a pothole. Dangerous for everyone. Address it all as an integrated issue.*

Yup, definitely. I see it at Craiglockhart. You do have to be bullish. I do have to pull out to prevent overtaking sometimes. Need to make motorists more aware of this. Longer term want to provide Bikeability for everyone, it's a long term thing. Can't remove all cars overnight much as I'd like to.

*Question: Are we trying to sell the product (cycling) before we've actually built the infrastructure?*

It needs to be joined up. But 10% already cycle in Edinburgh. Harder in Glasgow. Infrastructure does matter, everywhere needs to be better. But want it joined up. More cyclists on the road has improved car behaviour.

## Alison Johnstone (Green)

*Question: What are your thoughts on APD?*

Do not think it should be cut. Doesn't make sense – it's the most polluting industry. *What about tourists?*

We will see more people go overseas on holiday if APD is cut! There is a tourist deficit – look at the economics – tourists from here spend more abroad than tourists visiting here.

I don't think flying should be for only the wealthy, but polluter pays is important. We've been subsidising aviation for a while

*Question: Transport and planning. Exponential growth in Edinburgh and green belt erosion. Smaller cities work better.*

Need to tackle this at council level. Some councillors don't get it. They talk of green fingers extending out from Edinburgh but it's more like brown fingers. The green belt owned by speculative landowners waiting to make some money. I want to see Edinburgh food belt, spoke with people at Damhead about this. Also have to task what the optimal size for a city is? Studies show that cities can lose cohesion. I've been in Edinburgh 50 years and we have seen it change.

*Government undermining council efforts – developer appeals to SG when council reject*

Yes. There was one particular site earmarked for affordable housing, now has a Costa, M&S, Aldi because councils own planning department overturned. People asking me for petition of no confidence in planning department! Greens support local community having right of appeal. I got involved in trying to save a playing field in my 30s. Got to government reporter but we lost there.

*Question: Do we need all these big hotels? Not getting the numbers to fill them.*

I was campaigning against the hotel in the RHS. What is a 6-star hotel anyway? Have to ask ourselves who is Edinburgh for? Want to be welcoming and international of course, but local services are important. How easy it is to get around. What makes it civilised outwith the festival. I do wonder if we need the tourist tax. A lot the chains are just trying to make money and not benefiting the community – tourist tax would help reverse this.

*Question. Will be there many greens in next parliament? Where do you differ?*

Sarah and Jim are advocates, but aren't part of a party that get it. 99% of the rest of their party will vote stuff down.