

April 6, SPOKES Public Meeting, notes by Mies

## **Adam McVey, SNP**

### **Intro speech:**

Thanks to SPOKES for organising this meeting, inviting me.

Securing the 10% funding: SNP is committed to this, this will be in our manifesto (which was leaked) and public on Monday. We are keeping this for 5 years.: You will want that message (that active travel needs funding properly) to spread to a national level, which you can achieve if SNP is locally represented and committing itself to the 10%.

Also: this is not just about a percentage, but total amount comes to a share lots bigger in the huge transport budget that SNP has committed (£100million for roads and footways over 5 years). We can also leverage in money from others - Sustrans has 5 Community Link projects, all lying ready for implementation.

Meantime, our city is growing and we need different modes of transport to work in the centre: Princes Street is a problem: we need more light rail as there is not enough space for more buses needed to carry the growing population.

Edinburgh once did not have current cycling levels either: that took investment, something we can do too with 1. Political will, and 2. Money. SNP will do both and carry this beyond Edinburgh.

### **In groups:**

*On 10% funding:* Will you increase this percentage when cycling goes up in future?: There might be a case for it later (we say to keep it for five years), but not at the moment because we are at capacity: big cycle projects need lots of political oversight and design expertise (see for example the input the East-West route needs), and we have a limited amount of that. Increasing the team is also hard because we don't have the networks yet.

*Parking in cycle lanes:* Yes, bad on Leith walk: we spend a lot of money on lanes, then they are no use. There is a parking bill in parliament just now: talks about enforcement, the need for double red (but that needs traffic regulation and would not want to do that for the whole network) and double parking and parking on pavements. This is about tolerance and the need for a change of culture (to protect cyclists/peds) (example of a taxi blocking the tram for a good while, driver going about his business, not caring).

*Congestion charge: Is it time for it now?* In manifesto we tackle air quality and congestion and is outcome focused: we use the tools we have (rather than saying we need congestion charging). Tools we have are: raising rail and tram capacity, decreasing vehicles in town (Borders Rail has done much in this line, parking restrictions). Politically a hard one because our constituents pay for others' benefit (the people who come into town by car)

*Photo of 'pretend cycle lanes' (in Bristo Place/PotterRow: just some paint in the middle of the road, making cyclists turning right vulnerable):* yes, bad design. I hope we would not be doing that but cannot promise we won't be repainting existing paint lines... (i.e. realistic response)

*Princes Street/Centre:* In any other place Pr Street would be café culture. Here, it is like a bus station. Was discussed three years ago and led to minimising traffic on George Street. So far we have not solved the problem of how you get buses from east to west.

*Is the SNP behind cycling?* There are some dissenting voices in the SNP group but most of these are standing down. We have delivered a lot of things in last 5 years and we have been becoming more supportive despite that contingent (and will be set to be doing more without that contingent).

*CycleHire Scheme?* We talked to JC Decaux who said they would do it, then said for free, then pulled out after two years. Frustrating. Now Transport for Edinburgh is putting one forward and are much better positioned to deliver something good, they are now talking about how (beyond negotiation). *But will this succeed if there are no good routes in the centre?* Depends on the positioning of the scheme: should attract students etc. and tempt them where they are.

*Potholes: what is in the budget for it?* 100 million for next five years WILL cover resurfacing and potholes. We have a system of red (total deep resurfacing)/amber (part repaving)/green (fix potholes only) and decided it is more efficient and better outcome if we prioritise amber more, as pothole only is not effective and red is too costly and takes long to do. Utility companies being taken to account and better monitoring and oversight before jobs are signed off and now 18 months guarantees so have to re-do if they fail within that. Prioritising bus and cycle routes.

*Roadworks need to take into account where peds and cyclists go.* There are national standards around that but we have designed local standards in cross-party agreements (e.g. about things like how long the works should be before you install a ped light), but only some utility companies signed up for that.

*Greenfield building: poor plans that encourage car use without public transport, etc. then ignore needs of cyclists on busier roads that result.* Our commitment is to build on waste land within city boundaries first, to take pressure off the green belt. Decreased the density assumption (that would mean buses could run commercially as more people coming out of that area), e.g. by building colony housing instead of semi-detached, but maybe not successfully persuaded my colleagues.

### **Summary Remarks:**

Groups discussion was very informative, and glad to see that the questions were in line with what we have in our manifesto already. General agreement about city expansion and the consequences, and how utility companies should operate (maybe not total agreement about parking in lanes). Good questions. More points or questions: just email me. Thanks.