

If replying by email, please use... davedufeu@gmail.com

To: playyourpart@edinburgh.gov.uk

15 December 2017

City of Edinburgh Council Budget Consultation 2018-19

consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/ce/2018-19-council-budget-engagement/

A. Introductory and wider comments

The Council has very ambitious [Local Transport Strategy](#) targets to increase cycle use: from 7% of work trips in 2010 to 15% in 2020, and from 2% of all trips to 10%. The Strategy has equally tough targets to cut car use: from 43% of all trips in 2010 to just 31% in 2020, and car commuting from 42% to 29%. This implies a significant shift from car to bike, given that the LTS also seeks slight increases in travel by foot and bus. Given the need for significant change in travel habits to meet these targets, it is essential that budgets are fully aligned with the targets.

We therefore welcome the Council's [continuing policy](#) to allocate 10% of transport capital and revenue budgets to cycling. We of course appreciate that if the transport budget as a whole has to be cut in the context of reduced national funding then the absolute allocation to cycling has to fall in line with the %.

Statistics from a [variety of sources](#), including Spokes traffic counts, the [Census](#) and the Scottish Household Survey, show that the policy and investment are working – trends in both cycle and car use are moving in the desired direction, albeit at a rate slower than is needed. To meet the targets by the expected dates, or as soon as possible thereafter, bold and innovative ideas are needed, including on funding.

One idea with great potential is a [premises parking levy](#) – an extension of Nottingham's successful workplace levy – and **we urge the Council to seek powers for this from the Scottish Government**. It would be charged on all premises (including workplaces, superstores, leisure centres, etc) with over a minimum number of car spaces and would be levied on the business, not individual users. It would thus have the dual function of raising significant investment for public and active transport, and also of incentivising businesses to encourage staff and customers to use sustainable means of travel and transport.

B. Comments on proposed budget changes

The remainder of this response comments on relevant sections of the Council's [document of potential budget changes](#). Some of our comments are not strictly on the financial aspects, but on related points that can contribute more widely to a range of Council objectives.

2 Fleet financing

We are delighted that the December 7 Transport Committee, in debating the [report on EV policy](#), accepted an amendment which, inter alia, includes “*developing a council cargo bike pilot for appropriate council deliveries.*” We suggest that is incorporated into this year's budget.

If successful, a cargo-bike local deliveries scheme would bring about not just reduced operational and capital costs, but significantly reduced carbon and toxic emissions and a worthwhile contribution to wider council transport objectives.

Incidentally, advice on cargo-bike local delivery systems is available from the [EU Cycle Logistics Federation](#). Their main UK contact is [Richard Armitage](#), who is familiar with Edinburgh. There are also a small number of early adopters in Edinburgh – we can pass on details of several of these.

5 Roundabouts and verge advertising

Whilst we fully appreciate the Council's need to raise additional funding in a climate of cutbacks, we urge that very full consideration is given to road safety issues, notably the danger of driver distraction. We have seen planning applications from private developers for advertising hoardings which appeared to us to be a clear danger and to which we have objected successfully in some cases.

9 Improving occupational health and wellbeing support for staff

There is evidence that staff who cycle to work rather than driving take less sickness absence – one study suggested on average one day less sickness absence per year. Furthermore there is evidence that company promotion of cycling can lead to lower job turnover and can help attract employees, particularly 'creative talent.' References for all these claims can be found in section 4.4 of the report [The Value of Cycling](#), commissioned by the Department of Transport.

This suggests that the Council's existing policy of encouraging staff travel by bike has valuable side-effects in terms of occupational health and should be maintained and expanded. Travel by bike for work purposes during the day, for example between sites and premises, might be expected to have similar benefits and should also be encouraged; note that this is also relevant to transportation of goods (2 above).

16 Home to School Transport

The trend to greater exercise of parental choice in recent years has exacerbated the many problems caused by the school run. Often pupils are transported by car, causing considerable traffic congestion, making life more dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists during their journey and particularly around the school gate. Moreover the healthy development of children is damaged – not only do they miss out on many hours of walking and cycling, but some will become habituated to car as a preferred means of getting about. Few parents in choosing a school give thought to such impacts on their children, instead scouring the often misleading exam records of different schools.

Child obesity in Scotland is already [at record levels](#), and school travel, which is a daily essential 'activity,' can be used either to perpetuate, worsen and entrench this state of affairs – or to help remedy it

Clearly, parental choice is a 'given' in current society, but the Council should substantially increase its efforts to highlight the many benefits of choosing ones local school, including the above health benefits, and should continue its Safe Routes to School programme to improve cycling and walking routes to schools from their catchment areas. Moreover, in addition to these 'carrots' to choose ones local school, the Council should also continue to pursue the 'stick' by measures such as its School Streets policies.

24 Transport Policy Enforcement

Spokes strongly supports the proposals in this section. Not only will these measures generate income but they will contribute significantly to Council transport policies and to achieving the ambitious modal shift targets in the Council's Local Transport Strategy.

Bus lane enforcement, in particular, benefits cyclists as well as buses since the bus lane, if enforced, provides a degree of separation from most traffic. Even within the bus lane, Lothian Bus drivers have received cycle-awareness training, though there are complaints about some other operators. Clearly a segregated cycle lane is the preferred option but, in the interim, onroad bus (or cycle) lanes are valuable.

Spokes (along with Living Streets Edinburgh) is particularly disappointed that the previous Council inexplicably took the decision to scrap Saturday bus lanes and off-peak weekday lanes, despite this running counter to Council policies and despite [over 150 formal objections](#) from individuals and organisations. The video in [this report](#) illustrates the dangers of allowing cars in bus lanes. We urge the new Council to revisit this decision and look instead to introducing 7-7-7 bus lanes, i.e. 7am-7pm, 7 days a week, as we believe Glasgow Council is implementing following their public consultation – and noting that Edinburgh failed to consult the public about bus lane cuts, merely raising it at the Transport Forum.

Finally, we urge the Council to seek powers from the Scottish Government to extend its armoury of measures to implement and enforce its transport objectives and targets. In particular, we suggest a **Premises Parking Levy** (see section A above) and the use of CCTV cameras other than those specifically installed for enforcement purposes (as discussed at the December 7 Transport Committee).

29 Parking Permits and Pay & Display

We support this proposal, for reasons similar to 24 above.

36 Reducing external legal spend

We are aware of a legal case against the Council which we believe covers at least 100 individuals who have suffered tramline bike crashes. If successful this could land the Council with a significant bill – and we understand from Prof Chris Oliver, a consultant surgeon who has collated tramline-related injuries at the RIE, that there have also been a significant number of pedestrian tramline injuries.

As the Council is aware, Spokes is of the opinion that a proportion of these injuries could have been avoided had the Council adopted the recommendations of a Dutch transport consultant brought over jointly by Spokes and TIE.

To minimise the danger of further injuries and claims against the Council, it is vital that every consideration is given to cyclist and pedestrian issues in the proposed **tram extension**, including segregated cycle lanes the entire length of Leith Walk and beyond.

In relation to the existing tramlines, we welcome the [safety measures now being implemented](#), though they cannot fully compensate for the intrinsic problems resulting from the basic layout. However, the [City Centre Transformation project](#) provides a great opportunity for more significant improvement and we urge that it looks (at the very least) to replace one Princes Street eastbound traffic lane by a 3m-wide 2-way cyclistroute (or, if feasible, unidirectional cyclistroutes on both sides) thus keeping cyclists away from the tramlines and generally allowing a better angle when needing to cross them.