

Spokes Action Update 04.01.18

... This is a circular to emailable Spokes members. If you recently sent us a change of email address it may not yet be in our database, so this message may go to your old address or possibly to both.

... **Please check below carefully for everything that concerns you, then follow it up.**

1. Happy New Year to all Spokes members!!

In Edinburgh, 2018 is likely to see a continuing series of relatively small cycling infrastructure improvements but nothing really major. The Council's 'Big 3' cycle projects for onroad segregated provision - the [West-East route; Meadows to George Street; West Edinburgh](#) – will be in planning, consultation and legal phases, with physical work unlikely to start before 2019. The same is probably true of **Meadows-Canal**, though with [initial consultation complete](#) long ago this surely could be expedited. Extension of the relatively short new segregated provision in **Leith Walk** is unlikely to be contemplated until the big decision in autumn 2018 on tram extension.

One place we may see new segregated provision in 2018 is at [Picardy Place](#), if the Council's January 25th 'Picardy decision day' decides to go ahead with its current plan (with modifications). We would however prefer, and have argued for, a postponement and a less traffic-dominated complete rethink, including Leith Street, which would also give the opportunity for significantly better cycling and pedestrian conditions.

Phase 2 of [tramline safety measures](#) is expected in the Spring and phase 3 (subject to legal orders being approved) in the Autumn. Whilst very welcome, the need for these measures would have been much less had the original layout of the tramlines taken better consideration for other road users, especially bikes.

On the non-infrastructure side, we are expecting a big **bike-share scheme** to be launched, and after all the hints this year [e.g. see page 3 [here](#)] it will be a huge disappointment if it doesn't happen.

Also long overdue is a roll-out of the Council's [onstreet secure bike storage project](#). Again an absence of substantial moves here would be extremely unfortunate given the massive demand which the Council itself identified long ago during its seemingly never-ending pilot scheme.

Potentially most important of all is the [City Centre Transformation Project](#), which could herald a massive rethink on the city centre during the lifetime of this council – or could end up as another great idea which flounders and disappears under a host of pressures, councillor weakness and token gestures as happened with Edinburgh's Gehl report back in the early 2010s [see para 1102 [here](#)].

Although **Edinburgh** is still way ahead of **Glasgow** for cycle usage levels, Glasgow now has a lengthy onroad segregated cyclistroute, another under construction in 2018, an expanding bike-share scheme, a City Deal supporting big city centre walk/cycle improvements, work about to start in Sauchiehall Street, and an ambitious City Centre [Connectivity Commission](#) (under former Edinburgh Transport Convener Prof David Begg) matching Edinburgh's above Transformation Project. ***In summary – Edinburgh needs to look seriously at its cycling laurels!***

Do you make New Year resolutions? If so, try one of these!!

- ◆ *In 2018 I will email my councillors and/or MSPs at least 3 times during the year, starting in January, about some issue that concerns me.* [Find them at www.writetothem.com 1nd/or, for Edinburgh Councillors, [here](#)]
- ◆ *In 2018 I will visit the surgery of at least one of my councillors or MSPs to discuss an issue that concerns me.* [Email them to ask about time, place, appointments etc]
- ◆ *In 2018 I will make sure my councillors act on bike-share / act on onstreet bike storage / take bold decisions for the City Centre Transformation project* [delete as applicable].
- ◆ *In 2018 I will make sure that my MSPs act on my concerns over bike/rail provision for Edinburgh/Glasgow to Inverness/Aberdeen / the Highland lines / Borders Railway / other* [delete as applicable].

2. Top tweets 2017

We can get some indication of the issues of greatest concern in 2017 by looking at which Spokes tweets were retweeted (RT'd) the most. A RT means that the person wants this tweet to be seen more widely, and so this is a good way to identify which issues were considered most important – at least by twitter users who follow Spokes!

Check out our article on 2017's top tweets [here](#). Naturally we tweeted the article, and you can RT it [here](#)!

Briefly, the top issues raised were...

- ◆ **Bike/rail spaces** on the forthcoming new trains for Edinburgh/Glasgow to Aberdeen/Inverness
- ◆ The **Scottish Government 2017/18 budget**, in which the *increase* in trunk road funding was almost four times higher than the *total* for walking and cycling.
- ◆ The **police #OpClosePass project** coming to Edinburgh then more widely to Scotland
- ◆ **Infrastructure issues good and bad**: West-East cycleroute; Sheriffhall roundabout; Picardy Place.

3. #Spokes40 exhibition venues + venue help needed

The poster exhibition about Spokes's 40 years is arranged at the times/venues below. A link to a file of exhibition dates is on our [Spokes History webpage](#) - it will be updated when new dates/ venues are known.

Dec13-Jan 15 (or later)	Portobello library
Feb (dates to be confirmed)	Edinburgh Central Library , George IV Bridge
Jan 4 – Jan 26	Out of the Blue , 36 Dalmeny St, Edinburgh, EH6 8RG
Jan 22 – Feb 9	Edinburgh University, Chaplaincy Centre Bristo Square

Can you offer us a venue for a 2-week (or more) display, where the exhibition can be seen by members of the public? Or, can you **ask at your local library, community centre, etc.** Please make sure the venue is interested before contacting us, as we don't have a lot of time to approach lots of venues on spec ourselves. If you can help, please email mnknotenbelt1@gmail.com.

Also - there's a comprehensive #Spokes40 article on our website [here](#), including links to videos, speeches, presentations, posters, etc.

4. Shawfair path open until **Sunday 7 January**

Sustrans is [building a 3km path](#) on the disused rail line from Shawfair to Lasswade Road. From there you can continue along the existing path all the way to Roslin.

The new path is now tarmaced, but works stopped over the holiday period, and the path is temporarily open for people to try out until Sunday 7th (inclusive). Connections to the path are currently available only at Lasswade Road, Shawfair and at the A7 (a fast and busy road). The continuing works will include connections to Gilmerton (Drum St) and to Danderhall (users have already started creating an informal connection there!) The path should be fully open in early February.

There are some great photos and videos of the path on the City Cycling Forum [here](#).

5. Edinburgh Council budget **please act asap**

We are of course delighted that the Council maintains its committent to allocate 10% of the transport budget to cycling. However there are other relevant issues, good and bad, in the budget plans. See our [submission](#).

If you agree strongly with any of our points, contact your councillor(s) to emphasise the issue and ask them to argue for relevant changes/tweaks to the draft budget. *Please do this soon* – with no overall majority in the Council there will be a lot of haggling within the Council in January, prior to the final budget vote in February.

6. George Street consultation **Jan 15 & 16**

The Council has appointed consultants to undertake yet another look at the future of George Street. This time they have been told to come up with an actual scheme rather than solely a set of 'design principles' (although they are starting afresh with working out new 'objectives').

Spokes attended a 'stakeholder' consultation to discuss objectives, and that is now being followed by the above public drop-in exhibition/consultation, which we suspect will still be at the stage of 'objectives' rather than actual scheme options. General issues we consider need includes in the 'objectives' are...

- ◆ **Proper segregated cycle provision** not shared-space areas. A few councillors favour the latter, with cyclists dismounting when pedestrian numbers are heavy, so it is important that the point is made by as many people as possible. It is important also to note that George Street is part of the Council's flagship west-east cycleroute, not just a standalone 'place' project. [Interestingly, Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow City Centre is about to be revamped with a segregated cycleroute instead of shared space].
- ◆ The **central car parking** should be removed
- ◆ **Temporary events in George Street** should be designed such that the cycleroute and a pedestrian route remain in place.

The exhibition/consultation will be Jan 15-16 at the City Arts Centre, 2 Market St [floor 5]. Opening hours not yet known, but presumably during the Centre's opening hours. More details: fiona.robertson@streets-uk.com.

Incidentally details of the previous massive George St consultation can be found on [this page](#) of our website – see relevant paras between 1403 and 1606.

7. Causey consultation **Jan 20 & 23**

Spokes (and many individuals) objected to previous plans for the Causey (the triangle adjacent to West Crosscauseway in the Southside) as they removed the Chapel Street cycle lanes. New plans have now been prepared which look a considerable improvement.

The new plans will soon be published as a Traffic Regulation Order for formal objections, but they are first being exhibited for comments and any final tweaks, to try and avoid objections at the formal stage.

[Sat 20 Jan, 2.30 – 4.30pm and Tues 23 Jan, 5.30–7.30pm](#), both at Buccleuch & Greyfriars Church hall.

Spokes comments on the current and earlier plans are on our website on [this page](#).

8. Developer consultation exhibitions in West Edinburgh

Jan 29/30

Mixed use development Ref 17/06066/PAN

This is the site where Waitrose had previously applied, 181-195 St Johns Rd.

Exhibition at Astoria Centre, Kirk Loan, 29 Jan. 12-7pm and 30 Jan. 10.30-12.30pm.

We have not yet checked for cycling implications.

Feb 8/9

Gyle Centre extension. Ref 17/05894/PAN.

Exhibition at Unit 33, Gyle Centre, 8 Feb 3-8pm and 9 Feb 10-2pm.

Cycleroute improvements and signage badly needed.

For more info on the above consultations paste in the above reference numbers at...

<https://citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk/idxpa-web/>

[but plans are unlikely to be published before the exhibitions]

9. Official consultations – *Check out council and government consultations here...*

- ◆ Edinburgh consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk includes...
 - **Parking permits diesel surcharge** [ends Jan 28]
- ◆ Edinburgh [Edinburgh traffic orders](http://Edinburgh.traffic.orders)
- ◆ East Lothian www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk
- ◆ Midlothian www.midlothian.gov.uk/consultation/open
- ◆ West Lothian www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations
- ◆ Scottish Govt consult.gov.scot includes...
 - **Healthier Future** – actions on diet, activity and healthy weight [ends Jan 31]

10. Midlothian / West Lothian cycling issues & plans

We belatedly received [Cllr Russell Imrie's notes](#) from our autumn public meeting about cycling policies in the Lothians, but better late than never! They provide a very valuable picture of current cycling issues and proposals as seen by **Midlothian Council**. A useful, though less detailed, **West Lothian** perspective is in [Jim Stewart's powerpoint](#) presentation.

A full description of the meeting, with links to more resources, is [here](#). We were disappointed that the East Lothian speaker pulled out at the last minute.

11. Public Life Street Assessments

Edinburgh Council has published extensive new reports on “*the public life of Edinburgh's town centres revealing how each currently functions in terms of pedestrian/cyclist movement and as a place.*” The reports cover the following areas and are to be used in developing council policies and plans...

Bruntsfield/M'side	Corstorphine	Leith Walk	Gorgie/Dalry
Nicolson St/Clerk St	Portobello	Stockbridge	Tollcross

All the reports are on Edinburgh Council website [here](#), followed by a brief article on how they will be used and how they link into council policy documents.

We've not checked them all but some (though not all) are very positive about the opportunities for improved cycle provision. The reports could provide useful material to raise with your councillors – ask them to get some of the local cycling recommendations implemented!

We'd also be interested in feedback from members about any of the reports.

12. Finally

- ◆ Remember to check out our **website** every so often www.spokes.org.uk.
- ◆ We are active on **Twitter** [@SpokesLothian](#). Follow us and RT tweets you support. Check our 'favourites' for important or interesting tweets. Recent tweets also appear on our website.
- ◆ If you use **Facebook**, please like, share, etc the [Spokes Facebook page](#). We hope soon to restart the automatic twitter feed to Facebook.
- ◆ The **Spokes Bulletin** is one of our main means of spreading knowledge of Spokes, of what is happening in cycling development, and how people can help. Can you use a supply (large or small) to leaflet bikes at your workplace or on bikes parked around any areas of the city [not Haymarket or Waverley which we already cover] – or would your local cafe, barber, etc like 5 or 10 copies? If you'd like a supply of the current bulletin, and/or if you'd like a regular supply of future copies, email updates AT [spokes.org.uk](mailto:updates@spokes.org.uk).