

SPOKES KES *The Lothian Cycle Campaign*

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22 November 2018

To: Cllr Adam McVey, Leader of City of Edinburgh Council	adam.mcvey@edinburgh.gov.uk
Cllr Derek Milligan, Leader of Midlothian Council	derek.milligan@midlothian.gov.uk
Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure	scottish.ministers@gov.scot
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Important note: this letter is addressed to **Council leaders**, rather than to Transport portfolio holders, since the letter proposes action within the **City-Region Deal**, and so decisions would need to be taken at that level.

Sheriffhall Roundabout Reconstruction ... An Oasis of Cycling Excellence in a Desert of Underprovision? An integrated project, incorporating cyclistroute links, is essential

Dear Councillors McVey and Milligan

We have not yet received a reply to our letter¹ of 25.10.18 about the above, other than Cllr McVey's acknowledgement on 26.10.18, but in view of some further developments we are writing again.

Firstly, we request a meeting with yourselves (and possibly a representative of Transport Scotland) to discuss our proposal that the City/Region Deal Sheriffhall junction project also includes high quality cyclistroutes connecting from the roundabout to important destinations in your two local authority areas. Whilst adequate connections already exist for cars, this is patently not the case travelling by bike, as detailed in our original letter.

Secondly, the level of public concern has become even more apparent since we wrote.

You may be aware that a petition² has been set up in support of our proposal by a concerned local Midlothian resident, and has already attracted well over 500 signatures.

Additionally, numbers of people who already use the route have copied us emails which they have sent to either Edinburgh or Midlothian councillors, stressing the inadequacies and dangers of current provision. Doubtless you will have seen some of these, but typical comments are...

1 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Sheriffhall-and-The-City-Deal-final.pdf>

2 <https://www.change.org/p/michael-matheson-scottish-government-improve-cycle-routes-via-sheriffhall-between-edinburgh-and-midlothian>

I commute into Edinburgh by bike once or twice a week, and I always feel that for much of this I'm taking my life in my hands, as I rely on a painted white line to protect me from vehicles. If there were a segregated route via Sheriffhall, I would very much prefer to use it.

I live in Bonnyrigg and work in Leith, and occasionally try to go via Sheriffhall, but feel like I'm taking my life into my own hands! It would be amazing if there was safe passage this way.

I work at the Royal Infirmary and I am both a recreational cyclist and a commuter cyclist, frequently "negotiating" the Sheriffhall roundabout, a crucial access point for the Edinburgh Bioquarter and its many employees like me. ... I ask you to advocate for the Sheriffhall project to be expanded to include cycle route connections. A single integrated project which funds and builds the connecting cycle routes as part of the one project will help to promote and protect cyclists.

Cycling means a lot to me. It helps me feel better mentally, and it keeps me fit. I work in Edinburgh and I cycle two or three times a week. I'd like for my husband not to panic if I don't send the 'all ok' text. I'd like my daughter to be able to cycle further as she grows up. I'd like many other people to enjoy the benefits of cycling.

These are existing cyclists who are brave enough to cycle to, through and from Sheriffhall but, clearly, they all do so with trepidation – and, clearly too, many others must be deterred by the conditions. The existing City/Region Deal Sheriffhall project will solve the problem *at* the roundabout but not *to* or *from* it, and without the integrated project which we suggest it is therefore unlikely that significant numbers of new users can be attracted.

Finally, we have checked through various City-Region Deal documents, and without the project being enhanced to incorporate high quality connecting routes it is difficult to see how the Deal's ambitions can be realised.

*The City Region Deal will deliver major investments to ensure that Scotland's capital and its region is served by world-class transport infrastructure.*³ [para 2.50]

Active Travel provision at the roundabout itself does look set to merit the description “world-class” but were you to invite politicians or celebrities to view or open it you would be ashamed to take them there by bike!

Transport Projects in the Deal are to be based on the SESplan Cross-Boundary Appraisal⁴ which clearly recognises that gaps in provision must be filled, not just improvements at junctions themselves.

*The A720 ... forms a barrier to active travel trips. This can cause severance between the communities and facilities on either side of the route. Opportunities exist to enhance the provision for cross boundary trips to be made by active travel modes **through filling gaps in the cycle route network** and improving provision at junctions.*

In conclusion, we hope that a meeting with yourselves will be possible to discuss our City/Region Deal proposal. We additionally repeat our previous offer to take relevant politicians and officers on a guided tour of the current infrastructure to illustrate the absolute necessity that the Sheriffhall project becomes a true and popular active travel exemplar rather than a masterpiece of cycle infrastructure isolated in the middle of C20th carmageddon.

Yours sincerely
Michaela Jackson

supported by
David French
Alec Mann
Dave du Feu

3 http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/57706/item_86_-_edinburgh_and_south-east_scotland_city_region_deal

4 <https://www.sesplan.gov.uk/assets/SESplan%20Cross%20Boundary%20Report.pdf>