

# Edinburgh Mobility Plan<sup>1</sup>

## Response by Spokes – Lothian Cycle Campaign

### Overall

- Spokes very much welcomes the overall objectives of the plan, particularly the target of net zero carbon emissions from transport by 2030 and the aim to increase trips made by healthy and sustainable travel modes. Taken together with the City Centre Transformation and City Plan 2030, this represents a major step forward in planning for a more sustainable and people-friendly City and we congratulate the Council on its publication.
- Clearly, determined implementation, fitting for the climate emergency, will be critical. Thus, while we wholeheartedly welcome the objectives of the Plan, we believe that there is insufficient recognition of some of the hurdles that will have to be overcome in order to achieve what will be, for many people and businesses, a radical change of lifestyles and operations, in order to achieve these objectives. We highlight below two implications of this:
  - First, whilst the radical proposed infrastructure changes are very welcome and are essential, they must be paralleled by strong attention to awareness and behaviour change by individuals and by businesses. There is reference to a behaviour change campaign in the document, but this needs to be sufficiently powerful that infrastructure and behaviour change work together to achieve rapid and substantial modal shift.
  - Second, more emphasis should be given to the measures to manage demand. We appreciate that these can be difficult to introduce but are amongst the most effective. We recognise that there has been resistance in the past, but with the climate emergency, times have changed. The Council should take heart from recent measures such as the success of the reduction in speed limits and be bold in pursuing further demand management measures.
- In this context we note that there is no reference to the planned major road schemes that will take place during the plan period at Sheriffhall and Gogarburn. We believe that resources should be shifted from costly and traffic-generating schemes like these to active travel and public transport, including staffing resources to design the relevant infrastructure. We appreciate that Sheriffhall is a trunk road and not within the Council's direct control, but nonetheless the Council has substantial influence through its powerful position in the City/Region Deal which is funding Sheriffhall, albeit via Transport Scotland. Such major road schemes distort the expenditure patterns for transport within the City region and encourage modal shift in the wrong direction. We draw your attention to the Spokes response to the draft road orders for Sheriffhall.<sup>2</sup>

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1 <https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/city-mobility-plan/>

2 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2001-Sheriffhall-road-orders-Spokes-response-near-final.pdf>

- Spokes is also concerned that there are inconsistencies between the Mobility Plan and City Plan 2030. In particular the mobility plan talks of cycle provision on all arterial routes, such that by 2030 there will be mass use of them for cycling, but it does not mention any specific arterial routes. In contrast the city plan does not say anything at all about arterial routes, but it does show one specific one on its cycleroutes map, namely the A71. The two plans should be consistent and show cycleroutes on all arterial routes.
- The Plan makes reference to involving interest groups in delivery plan governance. Spokes asks to be involved in any group established.

### **Specifics: Infrastructure**

- Spokes welcomes the completion by 2022 of currently planned segregated routes: CCWEL, Meadows-Canal, West Edinburgh Link, Bioquarter to Dalkeith Rd, Leith Walk, Meadows-George St (May 2023).
- We strongly support the proposals to build cycling facilities on all arterial routes. The norm for such routes, and any other main roads, should be segregated provision. However the plans for arterial road cycleroutes should be completed by 2022 rather than the 2025 suggested in the draft Plan, so that implementation can follow on immediately from the current cycleroute projects which are due for completion by 2022. Delaying the start of implementation until 2025 would be very disappointing.
- Constructing proper facilities for cyclists at the West End junction is recognised in the Plan to be a priority. We emphasise this point, in view of the tramline-related cyclist's death there, and the continuing tramline cyclist crashes. This junction also remains a significant barrier for cyclists travelling between south and north (in either direction).
- We support the 'to not through' city centre proposals, provided that cyclists can continue to be able travel through the city centre.
- We support the creation of goods micro-distribution hubs, particularly for the city centre where distribution by bike is an ideal option. Spokes compliments the Council strongly for its cargo bike scheme for local deliveries on Leith Walk during the tram works, and we look forward to this being used as a pilot and example for other areas of the City, particularly its centre and its local town centres.
- Maintenance. The other major infrastructure issue affecting uptake of cycling is the condition of the roads - potholes! The Mobility Plan does not make any reference to this issue. However, maintaining good road surfaces is vital for active travel and should be covered in the Plan.

## **Specifics: Demand Management**

- Spokes strongly supports the introduction of workplace parking levies and urges the Council to press ahead with them urgently, particularly given that several parties in the Scottish Parliament (which is to be re-elected in 2021) have expressed the wish to remove these powers. We also regret that the Parliament was unwilling to grant Councils powers for wider premises levies, to cover customer spaces as well as workplace ones, and we urge the Council to argue the case further with national politicians in view of the more recent climate emergency policy declarations.
- Spokes supports further speed limit reductions. The changes to date have helped make cycling a safer, more enjoyable activity in Edinburgh and further reductions should be encouraged.
- Spokes supports the introduction of congestion charging. It would have the effect of redressing the balance in favour of public transport and active travel. The charge should be designed flexibly such that it imposes higher charges on the most undesirable vehicles (including for example engine size and emission levels) and the most inappropriate locations.

## **Other**

- Co-operation with neighbouring councils - most of the arterial roads into the city centre originate in West Lothian, Midlothian or East Lothian. We believe that the City Council needs to cooperate with those councils at an early 'ideas' stage to try and ensure that cycle facilities continue beyond the city boundary where this would be useful. The City Council should also start thinking at an early stage how those other councils could find funding for their sections, so they get included if any new funding opportunities arise, such as another phase of City-Region deals.
- Setting an example – the City Council is a big employer. It should continue to set an example to others by reducing car use further among its own employees, through carrot-and-stick incentives, e.g. a generous cycle mileage allowance and managing demand through allocated parking spaces etc.

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