

Spokes Action-Update 10 January 2021

spokes.org.uk St Martins Centre, 232 Dalry Road EH11 2JG 0131.313.2114 twitter [@SpokesLothian](https://twitter.com/SpokesLothian)

0. Finding your councillors

Find your councillors by typing your postcode on [this page](#). If you already know your ward, [go here](#). Note that everyone has either 3 or 4 councillors, usually from assorted parties.

1. Happy New Year to you and all Spokes members

Last year's pandemic, which, sadly, continues, brought a huge shake-up for transport and travel in Edinburgh, Scotland, the UK and round the world. Whilst the pandemic continues to devastate many lives, the impact on transport has ranged in different respects from pretty disastrous to some remarkably positive developments which no way would otherwise have happened.

Spokes activities have also been drastically affected, again with both positive and negative impacts. However overall we have achieved a great deal, both covid-related as in our [support for key workers](#) and commenting on [Spaces for People schemes](#), and in non-covid respects such as [Spokes maps](#) and assisting the growth of [cargo bikes](#) in Edinburgh. As always, many individual members have helped Spokes in a wide range of ways, for which many thanks. [Local area groups](#) too have been very active.

There is a wide-ranging review of 2020 on our website...
<http://www.spokes.org.uk/2020/12/2020-what-on-earth-happened/>

If you use twitter, please retweet the tweet which links to the article...
<https://twitter.com/SpokesLothian/status/1343541014695452676>

2. EdFoC Bicycle Film Festival [Jan 15-24]

Edinburgh Festival of Cycling [EdFoC] like so many events, fell to the covid pandemic in 2020. However, to start 2021, EdFoC has teamed up (virtually) with the international [Bicycle Film Festival](#) – now coming to Edinburgh January 15-24.

The Film Festival moves from city to city, and at any time during your city's Festival you can stream a great 90-minute film collection curated by the International Festival.

For more info, and how to buy tickets, see our [website article](#).

Spokes Ticket-Refund Competition [closes 12 Jan]

In order to support and help publicise the Festival, Spokes is offering to refund £10 to each of 3 lucky (or clever?) winners. This roughly covers the basic ticket price. You just have to come up with a winning slogan (not more than 15 extra words) which begins...

♦ *Bikes are best because...*



Please do enter - ok, we already know bikes are best, but we'd love to hear *your* top reason(s)

How to enter – full details in the [website article](#)

Please also help publicise the comp - [retweet our tweet](#) and [like on facebook](#).

3. Spaces for People (SfP) schemes – the future

Whilst there have been some problems with Spaces for People schemes, overall they have brought remarkable and quite unanticipated changes in the space of less than a year. With schemes still being installed, there are expected to be...

- ◆ around 70 school road safety schemes, a number of which include road closures near the school, effectively creating local low traffic neighbourhoods
- ◆ over 30km of semi-segregated arterial road cyclist routes
- ◆ wider footways in many town centres

See the Spokes [SfP page](#) for comprehensive details, including Spokes responses to the schemes.



photo: John Robson

It is natural, with these schemes on the ground, to see them as permanent changes to the road system. However, they are temporary, with many only legally valid due to Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) which in turn only retain validity whilst the pandemic remains (and up to a max of 18 months).

Once legal validity ends, councils will have to remove such SfP schemes unless they are made permanent through a full traffic regulation order (TRO). **Unfortunately this is not straightforward.** Certain types of objections to a TRO can trigger a Scottish Government public hearing, meaning the TTRO would expire long before the TRO process was complete. Councils can in theory get round this by using an 18-month Experimental TRO (ETRO) followed by a full TRO, but the whole mess would result in serious staff-time implications, and very likely delays to other parts of the active travel programme.

Furthermore, replacing temporary schemes by permanent ones is likely to require significant staff time on redesign, based on the temporary scheme experience and consultation, and is likely also to require considerable funding for long-lasting materials and installations.

Thus, even with the best will in the world, councils (not just Edinburgh) may find it difficult or even impossible to make all the schemes which have proved successful permanent.

The Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Cycling, Walking and Buses is raising these issues with the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Michael Matheson MSP. The whole thing is complex, but there are a whole range of measures which the Scottish Government could take to prevent this potential disaster, whilst still ensuring full public consultation on all schemes that are to be made permanent.

We don't pretend to have all the answers, but people will find it incomprehensible if successful schemes are scrapped purely for 'paper' reasons. At the start of the pandemic the government acted rapidly to modify the rules so that covid-related reasons could justify use of a TTRO. They must now act to ensure that all successful schemes can be made permanent. *Examples* of possible measures are below. We are not saying these are necessarily the best or only answers: but the government can and must find solutions.

- ◆ allowing covid-related TTRO schemes to remain in place until an underway TRO process is complete
- ◆ once a TRO is passed, allowing the temporary infrastructure to remain until the necessary staff and capital funding are in place for the permanent scheme (with safeguards over inordinate timescales)
- ◆ follow the English example, where ETROs can be made permanent more easily (whilst still ensuring full consultation)
- ◆ significantly increasing active travel cash in the forthcoming government budget, to enable permanent schemes to come on stream faster

What you can do

- ◆ If this concerns you, contact [your MSPs](#). Tell them why it matters that successful SfP schemes are made permanent and ask them to ensure the Cabinet Secretary for Transport acts to ensure this
- ◆ Respond to the Climate Change Plan Update consultation (section 4, question 3, below), since one of its questions provides a good opportunity to raise this issue.

4. Climate Change Plan update (CCPu) consultation – **ends 12 January**

Under the Climate Change Act, the Scottish Government must bring out periodic reports on how it is going to meet its climate targets. The latest report is now out for consultation. It has chapters regarding emissions over the whole range of government policies, and is asking people and organisations to comment on whichever sections they wish.

Spokes is responding to the 5 questions on transport, and we hope you will do the same. Of course, feel free also to respond to any other sections that concern you.

The Spokes response is fairly long and detailed, but it is fine to send in a brief response, mentioning only the points that concern you most, and using your own language.

Consultation page (for transport questions only) ... yourviews.parliament.scot/recc/e7d9fb7c/

Consultation page (for all questions) ... yourviews.parliament.scot/ecclr/ccp-update/

Spokes draft response (transport qns only) ... www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2101-CCPu-spokes-response-v1-1.pdf

Here are the 5 questions and a short summary of our main points...

1. What is your assessment of the progress to date in cutting emissions within the sector/sectors of interest and the implementation of the proposals and policies set out in previous Climate Change Plans (RPP1-3)?

- transport has performed very poorly in reducing emissions up to now
- there is a need for a major rise in active travel investment – government transport spending has disproportionately benefited motor traffic compared to active travel

2. Do you think the scale of reductions proposed within the sector(s) are appropriate and are the proposals and policies within the CCPu effective for meeting the annual emissions targets and contributing towards the 75% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 and net-zero by 2045 targets?

- the plan includes a **remarkable and unexpected commitment to reduce car km 20% by 2030** – it's possibly a first in the entire world for a whole country to commit to this
- however we are very concerned that the policies will not be enough to achieve it – just like the government failed miserably to achieve its target of 10% of all trips by bike by 2020
- it is not enough just to spend more on active and public transport – car restraint measures are also vital
- the continued plans for trunk road expansion are quite incompatible with the above target
- the rules for workplace parking levies are long overdue, and should be expanded to cover large areas of customer parking, not just staff parking
- whilst we support EVs, government policy and incentives must put much more emphasis on giving people the options and incentives to move to ebikes, car clubs, public transport etc rather than making it feel like your only option is to change from a fossil vehicle to an EV

3. Do you think the timescales over which the proposals and policies are expected to take effect are appropriate?

- there is often a time lag before a new transport policy has its full emissions effect, as people and businesses gradually change their transport habits
- **BUT there is an immediate opportunity to speed things up by helping councils to make successful SfP schemes permanent. The government should take immediate steps on this [as in section 3 above].**

4. To what extent do you think the proposals and policies reflect considerations about behaviour change and opportunities to secure wider benefits (e.g. environmental, financial and health) from specific interventions in particular sectors?

- there is much evidence that active travel brings all these benefits, especially as compared to motor travel

5. To what extent do you think the CCPu delivers a green recovery?

- much will depend on how effectively the CCPu is delivered, and in particular whether effective measures are taken to implement the commitment to a 20% reduction in car miles by 2030.

Please also help by retweeting our tweet about the consultation...

twitter.com/SpokesLothian/status/1346765732521123841

5. Local consultations

Edinburgh Living Landscape – *ends 29 January*

Consultation page... consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/living-landscapes-comments-and-suggestions

Creating and connecting green areas of the city – your suggestions wanted by the Council

Seafield Road development – *28 January online*

The council plans for the whole brownfield site between the cat and dog home and the main portobello prom to be mainly residential. An application is now in for residential development on part of the site. There will be a staffed online consultation/QA opportunity 3-7pm on Thurs 28 Jan.

Details here... <https://seafieldroad.scot>



Also this article... www.scottishconstructionnow.com/article/residential-led-development-plan-unveiled-at-seafield

We would like to see less car parking, with the space used for more housing or green space; plus improvements to the adjacent prom section and a cycle/ped connection to it from the new housing.

The proposal is at the PAN stage, which is where developers of major schemes are required to seek public comment prior to making a planning application. At this PAN stage the public comments to the developer, not to the council, although in addition to replying to the developer you can of course also tell your councillors what you would like to see, and ask them to support you in their own comments.

The developer is expected in its subsequent planning application to give the results of the PAN consultation and how it responds to the points made.

Filmhouse planning application [ref: 20/05527/FUL] – *ends 21 January*

The controversial detailed planning application for a new Filmhouse on Festival Square has been lodged and is open for comment or objection to the Council.

Planning application / comment page... <https://citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk/idxpa-web/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=dates&keyVal=QL46DJEWHBB00>

Spokes has no view on the principle of the development, but from a quick initial inspection we are very disappointed that the plans do not appear to show the west-east cycle route from the Exchange/ Business district continuing through Festival Square, to Lothian Road, where the Council has long been promising a major pedestrian/cycle crossing of Lothian Road linking Festival Square to the Usher Hall area [e.g. City Centre Transformation strategy document, [chapter 4](#), page 64 diagram].

If this concerns you please respond to the planning application.

The Filmhouse plan has already been through the PAN stage, where the developer seeks public comment. Our response at that earlier stage is here... www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/New-Filmhouse-Proposal-spokes-response-submitted.pdf

6. Ice, gritting & slipping

There have been many comments on social media about gritting of paths, footways and roads - mainly negative, though some praising the council in difficult circumstances.

You can find the Council's gritting information and priorities map here... <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/gritting-grit-bins>

We have also seen reports of many people in A&E with broken bones, including a couple of quite serious cyclist injuries. Going out by bike to the shops or for mental or physical exercise is great but if the cold returns please do avoid ice, and walk if necessary. The NHS really does not need A&E filling up at this time!

Be careful walking too ... we recall a few years ago a spokes member who wisely got off her bike approaching ice, only to slip on the pavement a few minutes later, resulting in a concussion injury!

7. Scottish Government consultations

Please respond to any of these consultations which concern you....

Climate Change Plan update consultation – **ends 12 January**

- ◆ See (4) above

National Planning Framework NPF4 – **ends 19 Feb**

- ◆ This is to assess what major issues the government should concentrate on in its national planning policies. They propose: zero emissions; resilient communities; wellbeing economy; Greener places.
- ◆ Our response to the previous NPF4 consultation is [here](#).

Cleaner Air for Scotland 2 ... **ends 22 Jan**

- ◆ We have not yet prepared a draft response to this consultation, and we welcome comments from members
- ◆ The consultation recommendations are meant to be based on the report of an expert review body, which made tough recommendations – see page 5 of [Spokes Bulletin 136](#). However, the consultation seriously waters them down. For example, the expert group recommended that *“additions to the trunk road and motorway network should be significantly de-prioritised **and ideally end** within the next 5 or so years.”* However the Scottish Government's consultation instead proposes that *“**capacity expansion of the trunk road and motorway networks will be de-prioritised over the next 20 years.**”*
- ◆ Note that this consultation was published well before the Climate Change Plan update consultation ((4) above). Thus it does not include the commitment to cut car miles by 20% by 2030. However, now that commitment is public, we should ask for it to be added to the Cleaner Air proposals.

8. Did you know??

Nearly 70% of Spokes member households have access to a car. And 3% don't have a bike!

9. Consultations – **Check council, government & other consultations here**

- ◆ Edinburgh consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk
- ◆ Edinburgh [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
- ◆ Transport Scotland www.transport.gov.scot/consultations
- ◆ **Just in case...** Transform Scotland keeps an updated page of current transport-related consultations... transformscotland.org.uk/whats-new/action-alerts Check it out in case there's anything important that doesn't appear in the website addresses above (there often is!)

10. Keeping in touch

- ★ Remember to check out our **website** every so often www.spokes.org.uk
- ★ We are active on **Twitter** [@SpokesLothian](#). Follow us and ReTweet tweets that you support. Recent tweets also appear on our website in the right-hand column.
- ★ If you use **Facebook**, please like, share, etc the [Spokes Facebook page](#).
- ★ To campaign effectively Spokes needs as many supporters as possible. If you are not already a member and you like what we do, go to www.spokes.org.uk/membership.