

2030 Draft Climate Strategy

Response from Spokes 12.09.2021

[Link to 2030 Draft Climate Strategy](#)

[Link to consultation page](#)

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation. Our response focuses on the areas of the strategy relevant to Spokes' work and is organised under the relevant headings provided on the consultation webpages.

Draft 2030 climate strategy vision, principles and actions

Spokes welcomes the vision of the strategy. In terms of transport, the development of a network of safe and attractive active travel routes and an integrated world-class sustainable public transport system, combined with 20 minute neighbourhoods will make walking, cycling and wheeling a safer more accessible and attractive option for residents. We also welcome the proposed re-imagining of the city centre as a place for walking, cycling and wheeling with excellent public transport accessibility.

While we agree with the principles of the strategy, these could be strengthened by mentioning transport specifically. As recognised within the strategy, transport is the second largest contributor to emissions in Edinburgh and transport emissions will need to decrease by 12 times the rate of the last two decades for the net zero target to be met. Given this, and the fact that transport emissions have been historically hard to reduce, it is important to give the changes required to transport sufficient weight throughout the strategy.

We welcome the prioritisation of investment in expanding Edinburgh's walking and cycling routes to connect local services and amenities in the actions of the strategy to connect local services and amenities. We encourage the council to ensure the strategy actions combine infrastructure provision for active travel with behaviour change incentives, including both 'push' and 'pull' factors to encourage people to make the shift from private vehicles towards active travel and public transport.

Engaging and empowering citizens to tackle climate change

Spokes welcome the strategic approach and outcomes regarding engaging and empowering citizens to tackle climate change.

We recognise the importance of delivering awareness campaigns to help with behaviour change, including behaviour change towards sustainable modes of transport, and encourage the council to ensure these sufficiently well resourced to make an impact. This is particularly important given the noted historical difficulty in reducing emissions from transport.

A key barrier to cycling is not feeling safe on the roads.¹ This needs to be addressed in order for citizens to feel empowered to cycle as a means of taking climate action. We recognise the strategy includes improving active travel infrastructure to ensure cycling provision is safe and accessible to all, and we urge the council to prioritise this action.

¹ Cycling Scotland (2019) <https://www.cycling.scot/mediaLibrary/other/english/7268.pdf>

Another barrier to cycling has been identified as people feeling “I’m not the kind of person who rides a bike”.² This is something the council and their partners could help to address through targeted awareness raising, making clear that cycling is about everyday travel rather than lycra etc, and through cycle ability courses which promote cycling to a range of ages, backgrounds and abilities.

Spokes urge the council to consider including more ‘push’ factors as incentives for behaviour change relating to travel. Research has shown ‘pull’ factors which encourage people use alternative modes of transport to private cars are unlikely to be effective on their own. Combining ‘pull’ factors with ‘push’ factors, which directly discourage use of unsustainable modes of transport by making it less convenient is likely to be more successful.³ Parking restrictions, road space reallocation, and introduction of a Workplace Parking Levy are positive examples of ‘push’ factors readily available for the council to use. The example of Spaces for People shows how much can be achieved in a short time when the political will is there. In terms of the Workplace Parking Levy, we urge the Council to continue to press the Scottish Government to extend this to large-scale customer parking provision, such as at out-of-town retail centres.

Net zero, climate resilient development and growth

Spokes welcome the 20 minute neighbourhood approach outlined in this part of the strategy and urges the council to recognise in the strategy that attractive and accessible active travel infrastructure is integral to successful development of 20 minute neighbourhoods.

Net zero emissions. Transport

Spokes welcomes the strategic approach and general outcomes of the approach to transport within the strategy.

We agree that the next steps of the strategy look positive and urge the council to ensure these steps and the strategic approach go far enough to achieve the outcomes set out in the strategy. This is particularly important given that, as the report mentions, transport emissions have historically been difficult to reduce, and the significant reduction required in order to achieve net zero by 2030.

We strongly support the prioritisation of investment in expanding the active travel network, connecting communities to services and amenities in their neighbourhoods. We urge the council to invest in active travel between neighbourhoods as well.

We encourage the council to monitor the impact of infrastructure changes closely as part of the ‘measuring success’ measures outlined in the strategy (e.g. user satisfaction, effects on local economy, including local businesses). By doing this, the council and its partners will be equipped to promote benefits of schemes and assist in building support for the continued expansion of active travel infrastructure in the city. This approach was found to be integral to the success of rapid roll-out of active travel infrastructure in New York City.⁴

We support the improvement and integration of the public transport system in the city and regional context and encourage the council to consider how active travel can be integrated with public transport to encourage sustainable ‘first and last mile’ journeys. This could be particularly advantageous in the context of disadvantaged communities, which, as the strategy mentions, tend to be less well served by public transport. Access to bikes in disadvantaged communities could be improved through expansion of the existing cycle sharing scheme in Edinburgh and

² Ibid.

³ SPICe (2020) <https://spice-spotlight.scot/2020/12/16/back-to-the-future-reducing-car-travel-in-scotland/>

⁴ Sadik-Khan and Solomonow (2017) *Streetfight: handbook for an urban revolution*

development of an initiative similar to Bikes for All, which has run successfully in Glasgow to promote cycling among under represented groups and minority communities.⁵

As two thirds of the 95,000 people travelling to work in Edinburgh from other council areas travel by car, changes in this area represent a significant opportunity to reduce transport emissions. Spokes urges the council to work with SEStran and neighbouring councils on improving sustainable transport connections between council areas, including joined up active travel infrastructure and greater integration of public transport and active travel options. As highlighted above, integration of public transport and active travel options can encourage people to make sustainable 'first and last mile' journeys.

We strongly support the introduction of Low Emissions Zone schemes to reduce harmful emissions.

We support the creation of a city-centre operations plan to reduce emissions by improving the way goods and service vehicles move around the city and the wider roll-out to other areas. In particular, we encourage the council to ensure that cargo bikes are used wherever possible as part of this plan. We note that some local businesses are already using cargo bikes for local deliveries to customers and this could also be encouraged by the council and their partners.

While we recognise the importance of investment in EV infrastructure, we urge the council to ensure alternatives to motor vehicles are given due consideration. Given the wider benefits of active travel, use of cargo bikes and public transport, it is imperative that people and businesses are aware of a range of options and their benefits when making choices and do not simply replace diesel or petrol vehicles with electric ones. Promotion of car club membership over private vehicle ownership can also assist with this.

Spokes urges the council to consider including more 'push' factors as incentives for behaviour change relating to travel. Research has shown 'pull' factors which encourage people use alternative modes of transport to private cars are unlikely to be effective on their own. Combining 'pull' factors with 'push' factors, which directly discourage use of unsustainable modes of transport by making it less convenient is likely to be more successful.⁶ Introduction of a Workplace Parking Levy is a positive example of a 'push' factor readily available for the council to use and we fully support its use.

We support the plan for the council to work with citizens and city partners to support staff and residents to make more sustainable travel choices in their professional and personal lives. In doing this, we encourage the council to identify and address key barriers to making sustainable travel choices and adopt a targeted approach to this.

⁵ CoMoUK (2020) <https://como.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Bikes-For-All-Report-2020.pdf>

⁶ SPICe (2020) <https://spice-spotlight.scot/2020/12/16/back-to-the-future-reducing-car-travel-in-scotland/>