

# Spokes Action-Update 29 May 2022

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## 0. Finding your councillors

Find your ward & councillors by typing your postcode on [this page](#) [or [edinburgh.gov.uk](https://edinburgh.gov.uk) : Council & Committees : Find your Councillor]. Note that everyone has either 3 or 4 councillors, usually from assorted parties.

## 1. Zhi Min Soh memorial event 6pm Tuesday 31 May, West End

Tuesday 31 May marks exactly 5 years since student Zhi Min Soh was killed at the West End tramlines, being hit by the driver of a private bus after she had fallen.

The anniversary will be marked by a short event at the West End, organised by [Infrasisters](#). There will be some music, two short speeches, and a minute's silence. Bikes and bells are welcome, and there will be an opportunity to lay flowers. **Please do come along.**

We expect some councillors will be there – speak to them with your thoughts.

### Background

Disappointingly, there has still been no Fatal Accident Inquiry, but one expert has suggested that there were [two parts to the tragedy](#). First, evidence suggests that Zhi Min was already on the ground, almost certainly due to the tramlines. But then, tragically, the driver of the Rabbie's bus behind her did not stop in time - for whatever reason.

Spokes receives many reports from people who have come off on the tramlines, most with cuts and bruises, but some with serious injury. Any of these, however, could be fatal if a driver was too close. Although Zhi Min was killed at the West End blackspot, it can happen anywhere on the tramlines.

When the tram was being planned, Spokes argued for a safer layout, such as tramlines on one side of the road and a segregated cycleroute on the other, but our arguments failed, resulting in many more crashes and injuries than need have happened.

### What the Council is doing

Now the Council is slowly introducing mitigations – first, simple ones like advance bike traffic lights and the “give cyclists space” signs which remarkably were unique in the UK and needed Scottish and UK government permissions to erect.

Immediately after the Festival, however, in early September, work is at last due to start on significant road layout changes at several blackspots – South St Andrews St, South Charlotte St and Haymarket junction.

The West End junction, recognised by the Council as another tramline blackspot, is to have a major redesign as part of plans for a bike friendly and pedestrian friendly 'Lothian Road Boulevard', but this is probably several years away and is something the new Transport Committee should prioritise.

The Leith tramline extension did learn one big lesson, by providing cycle facilities separate from the tramlines though, as we know, the detailed Leith Walk cycleroute design has been pretty shocking.

**In conclusion, our councillors have a great deal to learn and to act on. Please keep reminding them, so that Zhi Min Soh is not just the first person to be killed this way in Edinburgh, but also the last.**



InfraSisters  
@InfraSisters

At 6pm on the Tuesday 31st May, we will be meeting to pay tribute to the life of Zhi Min Soh on the fifth anniversary of her tragic death. Please come and join us; bring your bikes, your flowers, your bells and your voices.



10:26 PM · May 12, 2022 · Twitter for iPad

51 Retweets 8 Quote Tweets 88 Likes



Tweet your reply

Reply



InfraSisters @InfraSisters · May 12  
Replying to @InfraSisters

We will gather at her ghost bike, outside The Huxley at the West End of Princes Street to leave a flower, speak in her memory, hold a minute's silence and remind our council that safe streets are not a luxury.

## 2. Council election outcome

The [Council elections on 5 May](#) resulted in a doubling of **Lib Dem** seats from 6 to 12 (including 2 new Spokes member councillors) and, after a very negative campaign as far as active travel was concerned, a halving of **Conservative** numbers from 18 to 9, reducing them from the second biggest group on the Council to the smallest. **Greens** and **Labour** made modest gains, with no change for the **SNP**.

Party	Seats won	Gain/Loss
SNP	19	–
Labour	13	+1
LibDem	12	+6
Green	10	+2
Conservative	9	-9

Biggest surprise, however, is that after 3 weeks of negotiations, the Council now has a (very) minority Labour administration in place of the previous SNP/Labour coalition. Our take on the full story is [here](#).

Labour will now attempt to implement its manifesto, but in order to get sufficient votes will need to negotiate with other parties and get agreement issue by issue. Given that Labour is in a very clear minority it is possible the arrangement will prove unstable when problems arise, as they always do; but on the other hand we may see a new model of cross-party working based on voting issue by issue. Only time will tell!

### Active Travel policies

The Labour manifesto is [here](#), and our comparison of party manifestos [here](#) (pdf table [here](#)). Overall we found the Green manifesto best for AT. However, both Labour and SNP were very good although they differed in that Labour came out particularly well on AT funding, whilst SNP had the strongest policies on car-use reduction.

Labour manifesto promises on AT included..

- Increase AT spending to 15% of the transport budget – and new Transport Convener, Cllr Scott Arthur, reaffirmed this in [his speech](#) to Council.
- Increase the footway maintenance budget by 20%
- Increase the pedestrian crossing budget (which includes toucans) by 20%
- Improve and extend the network of protected cycleroutes, filling current significant gaps
- Developing LTNs, with local community involvement

### Traffic reduction

Traffic reduction did not feature strongly in Labour's manifesto, other than more controls on parking, and so will be a major challenge and a fascinating test for Labour on climate and creating a more liveable city.

To take a particularly controversial example, although *Scottish* Labour opposed a **Workplace Parking Levy** (WPL), *Edinburgh* Labour did not mention it in their manifesto, thus leaving themselves the option of going either way – and we know that several Labour councillors strongly support it. Existing Council policy has already instructed officers to report on a possible WPL for the city, and with the Lib Dem commitment to investigate it there is a possible SNP/Green/LibDem majority for WPL. If they came up with a well thought-out scheme, Labour would be hard put to join the Conservatives in opposing it – and would be outvoted if they did!

### Transport Convenor

New Transport Convener is [Scott Arthur](#), Labour councillor for Colinton/Fairmilehead, and a Spokes member. He may not be in post for long as there may be Committee reorganisation in the autumn once new councillors have gained experience.

Cllr Arthur is a regular utility cyclist; also a strong advocate of bus, walk and, for those who need a car, the [car club](#). He has been widely criticised on social media for lukewarm views on Spaces for People [\[example\]](#) but more recently urged faster progress on the [ETRO process](#) [experimental traffic order] which make schemes permanent after public engagement.

It is noteworthy that in 2018, when the SNP/Labour coalition voted \*against\* continuing the [Leith Street uphill cycleroute](#) (and a wider footway) up to Princes Street, Cllr Arthur broke the Labour whip and supported a Green amendment on this by Cllr Chas Booth (which sadly was defeated 8-3).

We are particularly pleased that Cllr Arthur has already raised the issue of [staffing for AT work](#), which has been a big cause of delays. There have been significant improvements recently, but it certainly needs continual attention.



*click pic for full tweet and video*

## 3. Spokes news

### 3.1 May traffic count

Our May 17th city-centre 2022 traffic count found bike numbers continuing their upward trend during our covid counts. Totalled over our 4 city-centre count points (northbound and southbound, Forrest Road triangle and Lothian Road) during the 8-9am peak period, total bike numbers jumped dramatically from 217 last May to 310 this year. The increase was entirely northbound (perhaps commuters returning to city centre jobs) with southbound bike numbers almost unchanged.

Private motor traffic fell somewhat (though see the 'cautionary note' in our [full report](#)) whilst commercial traffic (taxis, buses, vans etc) stayed fairly static.

As a result, bikes as a percentage of all vehicles rose from 8.9% a year ago to 12.7% now, totalled over the 4 locations, ranging from a high of 21.5% northbound 8-9am at Forrest Road, to the lowest count of 5.5% southbound lunchtime at Lothian Road.

Totals from the 4 counts we have undertaken during the pandemic are in the table below. The weather was reasonably good for all counts, so had little impact on the changes.

City centre, 8-9am	Nov 2020	May 2021	Nov 2021	May 2022
Bikes	229	217	270	310
Commercial (bus, taxi, van, etc)	679	706	727	728
Private car	1321	1507	1454	1403*
Bikes as % of total traffic	10.3%	8.9%	11.0%	12.7%
% of cars which are single-occupant	79.0%	76.4%	75.4%	77.7%

*Spokes covid traffic counts 8-9am, totals Lothian Rd & Forrest Rd, northbound & southbound*

Counts were also held at **lunchtime** and (by Spokes Party) in **Portobello area**. For a comprehensive article, and links to the full data, see [www.spokes.org.uk/2022/05/city-centre-traffic-count-bikes-up-cars-down](http://www.spokes.org.uk/2022/05/city-centre-traffic-count-bikes-up-cars-down).

**Thank you to everyone who helps with the counts, and especially Barbara the main organiser.**

### 3.2 Website updates

Find more via our [consultations page](#). **Spokes Planning Group welcomes new volunteers to help with submissions for both local and national developments.**

- Smokey Brae (Restalrig) roads changes, with protected cycle lane [\[para 2204 here\]](#)
- Inglis Green 'Booker Site' Planning App 22/02233/FUL [\[para 2205 here\]](#)
- West Lothian Council, Spaces for People stakeholder consultation [\[para 2205 here\]](#)
- Minutes of Spokes [Planning Group](#), [Resources Group](#)
- Council Elections – [Spokes briefing](#) to newly elected councillors
- Tramline dangers – [opinion piece](#) by independent transport specialist Dave Holladay

### 3.3 Old edition Edinburgh Spokes maps, free to good homes

We still have a supply of the previous (2016, with 2019 updates) edition. These are free to any community or educational organisation that can make use of them. Obviously they are not for resale, and we hope they will go to people who cannot easily afford one or would not otherwise buy one, or for educational purposes.

Already we have donated to Bikes for Refugees, to a community library and an educational establishment. We have a [factsheet showing potential uses in schools](#).

If you are involved in or know of a relevant organisation, please email [office@spokes.org.uk](mailto:office@spokes.org.uk) saying how many copies you could use, and how. As we are all volunteers, please contact relevant organisations yourself in the first place, to be sure that they would potentially use the maps, and how many, before emailing us.

## 4. For your diary

- ◆ May 31, 6pm, West End – **Memorial event for Zhi Min Soh** – see (1) above
- ◆ June 19, 11-3, **Bellfield BikeFest** (Portobello), probably with Spokes stall
- ◆ June 25 **Critical Mass** – Families of course welcome. Last Saturday of every month, and now attracting 100-200 people. As **recommended by** Edinburgh's new Transport Convener
- ◆ July 16-17 **EdFoC Mini Festival of Cycling** (provisional)

## 5. Sustrans Cycling Index

Formerly known as 'Bike Life' Sustrans has published the latest in its series of reports on cycling and walking in cities around the UK. As always, the Edinburgh document contains a great deal of useful information about existing active travel patterns, and the results of an independently conducted representative Edinburgh opinion survey.

For example, in Edinburgh..

- 26% of residents cycle at least once a week (35% of men but only 17% of women)
- 57% support protected onroad cyclist routes (29% opposed)
- 61% support creation of more Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (21% oppose)

[Cycling Index website](#) [Edinburgh Report](#)



*click pic for full poster tweet*

## 6. There is nothing to say here!

## 7. Consultations [see also [spokes.org.uk/consultns](https://spokes.org.uk/consultns)]

**Please respond to any of the consultations below which cover areas where you live, work, visit or are otherwise involved.** If you respond by email, please send us a copy; otherwise please let us know of any main concerns or thoughts which you'd like considered for possible inclusion in official Spokes responses. You could also send your points to your local councillors (section 0 above) and ask them to support you in their own comments.

### 7.1 Edinburgh/Lothians Traffic Regulation Orders

**You can find TROs which are being consulted on [here](#).** There are two consultation stages..

a. **First stage consultation**, also known as **stakeholder consultation**. This is fairly informal - you can comment but if you say 'object' it has no legal force. The consultation is notified to stakeholder groups such as Spokes, as well as bus, fire, etc. The public are also welcome to comment, but it is up to the council whether to advertise widely or not. At this stage the Council sometimes just publishes the plans, without the accompanying documentation which comes in stage (b) below.

b. **Advertisement stage** also known as **objections stage**. Following the stakeholder consultation the council may choose to modify the plans, or not. The plans must then be widely advertised to the public for comments and objections. Objections are reported to the Transport Committee and certain types of objection, if not withdrawn, have to be referred to the Scottish Government for a final decision.

**There are currently a few TROs undergoing these processes, as below. Please comment on all that concern you. Send your comments to [TRO.Consultations@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:TRO.Consultations@edinburgh.gov.uk) quoting the TRO reference number below..**

**Note:** It is a good idea to comment **in support** if you like a proposal, since this helps to balance objections

- [TRO/22/06 Dalmahoy Junction](#) – **closing date 17.6.22** [This is at stage (a) above]. The TRO would reduce the speed limit to 30mph on a section of A71 and Dalmahoy Road.



## 7.2 Edinburgh/Lothians Planning Proposals

Major developments are now legally required to go through a **Proposal of Application Notice (PAN)** stage before a normal planning application is submitted. At the PAN stage, the public must be consulted via an exhibition, online or in person. The subsequent **planning application (PA)** is then supposed to take account of the PAN consultation, hopefully to reduce the number of objections at PA stage.

**Your comments at the PAN stage are to the developer; comments/objections at the PA stage are to the Council.**

*It is important to comment at the PAN stage* as Council officers may be less supportive of comments which are only raised when a final PA is submitted. Conversely, if the developer's final PA does not pay attention to significant comments made at the PAN stage (either adopting the point or explaining why not) then planning officers may think there is more of a case to investigate.

Details of PAN exhibitions are meant to be publicised by the developer, but they are not always obvious. Some consultations are just online exhibitions open for a few weeks, whilst others also include one or more days with the developer available to answer questions interactively and possibly to give a presentation.

We try to list major current PANs on the website – go to [spokes.org.uk – consultns – planning proposal consultns](https://spokes.org.uk/consultns/planning-proposal-consultns)

### Finding details of PAN or PA proposals

Go to the Council's [Planning Portal](#) and type in the PAN or PA reference number for the proposal. With a PA, full details should be shown. With a PAN there may be few details other than the developer's contact – details will appear when their PAN exhibition is launched. Note that approval of a PAN on the Planning Portal merely means that the developer has permission to go ahead with a public consultation, *not* with the development! For more details or other queries, email the developer contact.

Below are some current PAs or PANs which we think are particularly relevant, with email addresses included where possible in case you want more info. ***If you submit comments, please send us a copy.***

- PAN - 'West Town Edinburgh' - **closing date June 3** 22/01625/PAN and 22/01626/PAN (for Phase 1) massive site bounded by A8 to south, Gogar Burn and ECML to north and east, Eastfield Rd to west; 205 acres; 7000 homes; £2bn project. Website & consultation details: [west-town-edinburgh.com](https://west-town-edinburgh.com) Contact: [info@west-town-edinburgh.com](mailto:info@west-town-edinburgh.com)
- PA - Inglis Green Road 'Booker' site [[PA 22/02233/FUL](#)] – **closing date June 3** Really important opportunity to get a new ped/cycle bridge across the Water of Leith in Longstone area. More info: see [Article in Edinburgh Reporter](#) / [Tweet by Longstone Community Council](#) / [Spokes response](#)

## 7.3 Other Edinburgh/Lothians local consultations

- [New Liberton High School and Community Campus](#) – **closing date 3.6.22** Check out bike access from surrounding residential areas, and bike parking – we've not yet done so. Info & comments: [newliberton@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:newliberton@edinburgh.gov.uk)
- [Reimagining Murrayburn, Hailesland, Dumbryden](#) – **closing date 16 July** Aiming to improve streets and places, based on 20-minute neighbourhood principles
- [Dalkeith Town Centre regeneration](#) – **closing dates various until 30 June** Online workshop May 31; 'Walkabout' Guide to make notes outside (until June 14); special meetings for businesses and for support groups; and an email address you can contact any time until June 30, [elena.sabatini@nesta.org.uk](mailto:elena.sabatini@nesta.org.uk)

## 7.4. Government consultations - PTO

## 7.4. Government consultations

- [Future of National Parks in Scotland](#) – *closes 6 June*
- [Review of Permitted Development Rights, Phase 2](#) – *closes 3 August*
  - Permitted Development Rights (PDR) allow developments to go ahead without needing planning permission. You may remember last year the Scottish Government implemented changes which amongst other things gave PDR to install modest sized sheds in front gardens - i.e. there is now no requirement to apply for planning permission. The new proposed changes include...
    1. Changes to town centre rules - it looks quite complex with many proposed changes, largely aimed to make town centres more vibrant, but with possible downsides too if businesses get too many freedoms! One simple example is to grant pdr for tables and chairs on footways (under certain conditions). It really needs some careful scrutiny to see what might affect cycling negatively and which proposals we would like to support.
    2. EV charging infrastructure - again the proposals would make it much easier to install this without seeking permissions. Again there is a great deal of detail, including a lot about making it easier to install EV infrastructure on the roads; which could be problematic for us in some cases
  - Although the closing date is over 2 months away, there is a lot of detail. If we can get a draft well before the closing date we can use it to encourage others also to respond. One or more volunteers to look carefully through the material and draft a possible response would be appreciated.

## 8. More & future consultations – *Check council, government, other consultations*

- ◆ Edinburgh [consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk](https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk)
- ◆ Edinburgh [Edinburgh traffic orders](#)
- ◆ East Lothian [www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk](http://www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk)
- ◆ Midlothian <https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/directory/33/consultations>
- ◆ West Lothian [www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations)
- ◆ Scottish Government [consult.gov.scot](https://consult.gov.scot)
- ◆ Transport Scotland [www.transport.gov.scot/consultations](https://www.transport.gov.scot/consultations)
- ◆ Scottish Parliament consultations [yourviews.parliament.scot/consultation\\_finder](https://yourviews.parliament.scot/consultation_finder)
- ◆ Scottish Parliament petitions [parliament.scot/get-involved/petitions](https://parliament.scot/get-involved/petitions)
- ◆ Just in case... Transform Scotland keeps an updated page of current transport-related consultations... [transformscotland.org.uk/whats-new/action-alerts](https://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!)

## 9. Keeping in touch

- ★ Remember to check out our **website** every so often [www.spokes.org.uk](http://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](http://www.spokes.org.uk/membership).