Spokes Action-Update 1.12.23

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0. Finding your councillors

In Edinburgh, find your ward & councillors by typing your postcode on this page [or edinburgh.gov.uk : Council & Committees : Find your Councillor]. Everyone has either 3 or 4 councillors, usually from assorted parties. For any Council, and to find MSPs, you can use writetothem.com.

1. November Traffic Count – small (but positive!) change

The biannual Spokes traffic count, on November 7, found a continuing (but small) rise in bike traffic, and a continuing (but small) fall in private motor traffic, compared to November 2022. As a result, bikes between 8-9am rose to 14.8% of all vehicles, from 14.5% in 2022; and to 8.4% from 7.9% at our lunchtime (1230-1330) count.

Totals at Lothian Rd & Forrest Rd	Nov 2022	Nov 2023	Nov 2022	Nov 2023
northbound & southbound	8-9am	8-9am	1230-1330	1230-1330
Bikes	358	365	142	156
Commercial (bus, taxi, van, etc)	688	703	710	761
Private car	1415	1390	956	946
Bikes as % of total traffic	14.5%	14.8%	7.9%	8.4%
% of cars which are single-occupant	74.0%	75.5%	67.6%	70.5%

The counts were at our usual 4 city centre count locations, Lothian Road and Forrest Road, northbound and southbound, with fairly similar weather both years. Of course, the counts are just snapshots on one day. However, to maximise comparability, we always use the same day of the week, a Tuesday, and the same time of year.

There was a noticeable rise in 'commercial' traffic (in which we include van, bus and taxi), particularly at lunchtime. Indeed, this was one reason why the growth in the bike traffic % was not greater. Interestingly, whilst bike and car both fell noticeably northbound 8-9am on Lothian Road, bus/taxi/van rose.

The slight rise in overall **bike numbers** masked the fact that *northbound* was down at 8-9 and 1230-1330 (with a significant 8-9am drop at Lothian Road, from 140 bikes in Nov 2022 to 116). However total *southbound* was well up at both time slots (with significant rises at Forrest Road), more than compensating for the northbound fall.

Unsurprisingly, top scoring bike spot was Forrest Road northbound at 8-9am, bikes forming 22% of all vehicles.

Car numbers at 8-9am were little changed from 2022 (though, like bikes, with a drop at Lothian Road). More puzzling, particularly with North Bridge reopening northbound, lunchtime car numbers were up very substantially northbound (from 405 in 2022 to 491 in 2023) and down equally substantially southbound (from 551 to 455).

<u>Spokes Porty</u> now does a traffic count in Brighton Place at the same times as our City Centre counts. Results were almost identical to Nov 2022, with marginal declines in bike and car numbers, and a slight rise in van/bus/taxi.

More info

Website article; Full count data; Tweet (RTs welcome); Our count data page has trends and earlier surveys.

Policy Implications

- The Scottish Government in December 2020 made a remarkable "commitment" (not just "target") to
 reduce car-km 20% by year 2030; and Edinburgh City followed this up with an even tougher 30% "target."
 See background and links in this article. Our count suggests that the Council is well off track so far, and if
 that is so in a big city then the Scottish Government commitment may well be in an even worse position.
- To add to the concern, the government's final 'route map' to achieve the 20% reduction is still not published, <u>2 years after</u> a consultation draft which was itself delayed by a year to allow post-covid traffic patterns to stabilise. Waiting to see what happens is no longer a credible policy, if it ever was.
- Although the difference in trends between city centre and Portobello are not great between the 2022 and
 2023 Novembers, the city centre has a slightly firmer trend away from car use. It would be useful to know,
 and would be concerning, if car use is more resistant to change in all non-central areas, or if it is specific to
 Portobello, perhaps because it is the nearest seaside opportunity for city dwellers. In any case, Edinburgh
 Council's plans for Portobello to become a 20-minute neighbourhood should be treated urgently.

2. Events for your diary

Events marked * will have a Spokes stall – please volunteer to help! Or come and say hello anyway!

Closing dates for consultations

There are many current consultations, each with their own closing date – see sections 5,6,7 below.

*Dec 7 Thu 20's Plenty for Scotland conference, Edinburgh

86% of **Edinburgh** streets <u>are now 20mph</u>, with proposals recently consulted on which would raise this to 90%. At **Scottish** level, the <u>Bute House agreement</u> between the SNP and the Greens means that 20mph should be the norm in all urban areas by 2025. **Wales** <u>has already introduced</u> default 20mph in urban areas, country-wide. Meanwhile, in **England**, Rishi Sunak is attempting to move things in the opposite direction, saying that 20mph <u>does not suit British values</u>!



Reduced speed limits are often <u>highly controversial at first</u>, more so since social media became so ubiquitous, but the results eventually are reduced casualties and public acceptance. Edinburgh has seen <u>30% casualty reduction</u> on affected roads.

The <u>all-day conference on 7 December</u> will highlight and debate all the above contemporary and controversial issues, with top speakers, including...

- ◆ Lee Waters MS, Wales Deputy Minister for Climate Change
- ♦ Will Norman, Walking and Cycling Commissioner for London
- ◆ Cllr Scott Arthur, Edinburgh Transport Convener
- Public health specialists
- ◆ Fiona Hyslop, Scottish Transport Minister has also been invited

The standard fee for members of relevant organisations (such as Spokes) is £95 – there was an earlier reduced offer, but it is now closed and not many spaces are now left even at £95. Spokes may be able to sponsor or subsidise one or two members with a specific involvement or purpose.

Dec 9, Sat *COP28 Global Day of Action*

Includes a gathering outside the Scottish Parliament at 12.30

- **♦** Speakers
- Music
- ♦ Kids activities
- ♦ Food & hot drinks on sale

The Edinburgh/Scotland event is part of a global day of action. Find other UK locations here.

The <u>COP28 international conference</u> runs from 30 Nov to 12 Dec, and the day of action is timed to coincide with the start of the final few days when negotiations come to a head.

The past year has seen intensification of climate-related disasters around the world.

In advance of COP28 UN Secretary General António Guterres , <u>said</u> "the world remains massively off track to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and avoiding the worst of climate catastrophe ... global ambition stagnated over the past year and national climate plans are strikingly misaligned with the science."

Meanwhile, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS), a coalition of over 60 Scottish civil society organisations concerned about climate change, has published a Climate Manifesto "highlighting over 100 positive actions that governments should take to accelerate action to reduce Scotland's contribution to the climate emergency, whilst securing sustainable jobs, improving health and wellbeing, and reducing inequality." Spokes has been involved in developing the report's transport recommendations.

3. Planning group info

3.1 Bellmouth junctions

Bellmouth junctions encourage motor traffic to enter and exit at excessive speeds, drivers thereby inevitably paying less attention to cyclists and pedestrians. Bellmouths also give pedestrians a much longer road crossing than a more right-angled design. Ferniehill Road provides a good (i.e. bad!) example - see picture.

Spokes Planning Group is collecting examples to submit to the Council, who have asked us to report any of concern. Please let us know of any you consider particularly bad in your part of the city.



3.2 Path entry chicanes → bollards

The Council's Active Travel team have been removing chicanes from paths around the city, and replacing with bollards where appropriate. Chicanes are no longer considered normal good practice, as they often make life difficult for anything wider than a normal bike – for example trailers, handcycles, cargobikes, wheelchairs.

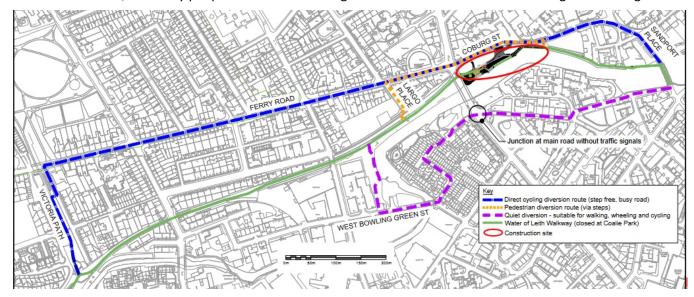
An example is shown in this <u>tweet</u> from Spokes South Edinburgh group.

The original aim was often to keep motorcycles out, but this is now much less of a problem than the above disadvantages. However bollards have proved necessary at some locations to prevent car entry!

If you know of any remaining chicanes which could be removed and if necessary replaced by bollards or other solutions, please let us know, and we will pass on the details.

3.3 Water of Leith path, 6-month closure for Coalie Park upgrade

This much-used path is closed for an extended period for a major (and welcome) redesign of Coalie Park, through which the path passes. Spokes has worked with the promoters to design <u>an alternative</u> (purple on map) as quiet and low-traffic as possible, though it does involve crossing Great Junction Street. For the confident cyclist, Ferry Road is more direct, but many people find it too daunting. The alternative is or soon will be signed on the ground.



4. Group member volunteers needed

Most Spokes activity happens through working groups which meet roughly monthly online. The two most central groups, <u>Planning</u> and <u>Resources</u>, have both lost a couple of regular members during the last year or so. This has a clear detrimental effect on Spokes activity: most importantly we can't respond to all relevant council and other consultations; but also, for example, fewer volunteers to help at stalls and more strain on other group members.

Please do get in touch if you'd like to try joining Planning or Resources. Both have well-used email lists to keep in touch with ongoing issues between meetings. At meetings, don't be shy to butt in with your thoughts or asking anything that is unclear; groups are friendly and everyone starts by not really knowing what is going on!

Don't feel you don't know enough – it is by doing that you learn - and you would normally share with other members of the group. For example, on responding to a consultation in Planning Group, someone might draw up initial ideas, others could then comment and perhaps add useful references, leading to a final complete response.

5. Edinburgh Consultations (including by developers)

Please respond as an individual to all that concern you. Also copy to Spokes for possible use in our responses.

Note on *PANs*: Developers of large schemes must now submit a PAN prior to a planning application. A PAN ('proposal of application notice') requires a public consultation, the results of which must then be submitted with the eventual planning application. The PAN consultations normally comprise drop-ins and an email address for enquiries, but, annoyingly, not all developers put the proposals online.

One of our Planning Group members scrutinises the Council's weekly list for relevant PANs (and planning applications) and circulates Planning Group. There are frequent PANs relevant to Spokes (maybe 2 or 3 a month) but unfortunately we don't have capacity normally to notify local members and often not even to respond ourselves, though we try to do this for anything really major or where there are very clear bike implications. A new member with the time and interest to coordinate such responses would be hugely valuable!

5.1 Spaces For People bike lanes, ETROs – consultn postponed; new date still unknown

The 6-month <u>formal consultation [#6]</u> for the *Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders* for the *Spaces-for-People/Travelling-Safely* main road semi-segregated bike lanes was due to end on May 20th. However, errors have been found in the technicalities of the Orders, so they will have to be re-issued - which means another 6-month consultation period. Spokes has been assured that comments already submitted will still be taken into account.

5.2 Edinburgh Arena planning proposal 23/06913/PAN - ends 12.2.24

The international entertainment group AEG, which runs the O2 Arena in London, is proposing an 8500-seater arena at Edinburgh Park. It would be by some distance the largest indoor venue in the city.

Drop-ins: Mon 4 Dec & Tue 9 Jan, both 3-7pm at 1 New Park Square, EH12 9GR

Enquiries and address for email comments: consultation@edinburghparkarena.com

Website: www.edinburghparkarena.com (plans online 'soon')

Edinburgh Reporter article: theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2023/11/edinburgh-arena-will-be-great-for-the-city

Remarkably, the website says this on car parking: A car free arena development fully aligned with national and local planning policy requirements. The site is located adjacent public transport infrastructure/services (rail, tram and buses), that together provide fast and frequent connections to Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife, Glasgow, the Central Belt and beyond. Blue Badge parking will be provided, while drop off / pick up will be possible.

There is of course a large nearby existing car park, but an 8500 seater without further parking is very welcome. We urge members to submit comments in support of this access/parking policy – though clearly it must also build in cycle access and parking if it is to be "fully aligned with national and local planning policy requirements."

5.3 West Craigs planning proposal 23/04779/PAN - ends 13 December

Major residential site, part of the overall West Craigs development, with shops and an active travel route. The site includes part of Maybury Rd, including junction of Craigs Rd with Maybury Rd, and the Bughtlin rbt.

Website: westcraigsnorth.co.uk

Enquiries and address for email comments: westcraigsnorth@iceniprojects.com

Drop-ins: these are now past

Note that their website says that comments close on 20 November, but the Council approval to go ahead with the PAN says <u>comments should close on 13 December</u>, so please point that out if emailing them.



5.4 Bus Lane ETRO/23/13 - ends 11 December

Bus lanes and/or restrictions on waiting/loading, at Captain's Road, Drum St, Newtoft St, Duddingston Park South, Howden Hall Road, Gogar Underpass, Newbridge Edinburgh Rd (A89). This is an ETRO, so we presume the measures are all now in place, but on an experimental basis. Whether the schemes are kept, modified or scrapped will depend on the feedback to this consultation, as well as monitoring of the schemes. *If you would like to influence what happens, please respond.*

The Order ETRO/23/13, including plans Where to send your comments Background info

5.5 Holyrood Park draft Strategic Plan – ends 19 Dec

After years of campaigning by many groups including Spokes and, more recently, <u>Car-Free Holyrood</u>, there is now a consultation with options to remove all or most motor traffic from the Park. <u>The consultation</u> is by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) who are responsible for Park management.

Our <u>tweet</u> about the consultation proved very popular – please retweet further!

5.6 Workplace Parking Levy, should Edinburgh have one? - ends 6 Feb 2024

Council consultation here. There is some background info on our website here (para 2311).

5.7 George Street project, design of cross-streets - ends 8 Feb 2024

Council consultation here. There is more on this and earlier George Street consultations on our website here.

6. Lothians Councils Consultations

6.1 East Lothian – Musselburgh Active Toun (MAT project) – ends 31 December (???)

The project is consulting on 3 potential cycleroutes in and around the town. They have developed an online 'storymap' which details previous feedback and allows you to comment by entering comments directly onto a map, or by email to musselburghcycle.uki@aecom.com. There are also 3 drop-in sessions...

- Fisherrow Centre: Tuesday 12th December 3:30pm to 6:30pm
- Musselburgh East Community Learning Centre: Wednesday 13th December 9:30am to 12:30pm
- Queen Margaret University: Thursday 14th December 3:30pm to 6:30pm

Spokes Planning Group is hoping to make a submission, so please, as well as commenting directly, also send your comments to them via spokes@ spokes.org.uk.

6.2 West Lothian Council - enquiries re new road & path developments - no closing date

The Council has a <u>webpage</u> for enquiries and comments about new roads, footpaths, and cycle routes; and also <u>a page</u> of current projects and completed consultations.

7. National Consultations

7.1 Ecocide (Prevention) (Scotland) Bill – ends 9 Feb 2024

<u>Monica Lennon MSP</u> is proposing a Bill to protect the environment in Scotland and deter environmental damage by introducing the crime of ecocide into Scots law.

Read about the proposed Bill in this Consultation Document (791KB, pdf)

There is also a feedback survey here: Consultation Survey

8. Alistair Darling

We are very sorry to hear of the Alistair Darling's death. Prior to his main fame as UK Chancellor he was an Edinburgh Councillor, becoming Convener of the Transport Committee. Although more of a walker than a cyclist himself, he fully understood the importance of minimising car traffic in favour of active and sustainable transport as whole, and did a huge amount for cycling infrastructure. Whilst that is widely understood nowadays, it was advanced and somewhat brave thinking back in the 1980s - Edinburgh, for example, had a 'Highways' Department, with a transition to 'Transport' still resisted by some, though it would come soon.

Most importantly, he created the Council's first (3-person) cycle team and gave them a substantial budget (£400k in the first year, a very substantial amount in the late 1980s). In subsequent years, the team led to the expansion and tarmacing of North Edinburgh Network, the first light-controlled crossing (a toucan) across Melville Drive, the North Meadows cycleroute, and the start of onroad facilities, albeit only painted in those days.

More pictures in our tweet.



LOTHIAN REGIONAL COUNCIL APPOINTS CYCLE PROJECT T

Lothian Regional Council is now appointing a Cycle Project Team in the Highways Department. This is the culmination of SPOKES' major campaign of recent years.

Labour Party gave a manifesto promise to set up a "minimum 4-person cycle project unit" during their 4-year term of office. Given the current financial situation SPOKES gives the Council full credit for setting up a 3-person team after one year in office.

The Cycle Team form part of a significant shift of emphasis within the department, with 10 new staff being appointed to concentrate on low-cost road safety measures, including cycling schemes. Thus we can also expect to see much faster progress on

Before the 1986 Regional elections, Lothian Technician) plus one person to prioritise other safety schemes. The remaining 6 will be placed 2 in each of the 3 Area Divisions (City Centre, outer Edinburgh, and the Lothians), and will boost their existing safety work.

> Cllr Alastair Darling Transport Chairman Lothian Regional Council

LOTHIAN REGIONAL COUNCIL

In support of the Council's sims to improve road safety and promote cycling in Lothian Region applications are invited for the tollowing pests

The person appointed to this post of Project Engineer will be employed initially to head a cycle project team with the Department Candidates should therefore possess an interest and some experience in measures to assist the movement of cyclists

pedestrianisation schemes, pavement "blips" at junctions to slow down traffic and make it safer to cross the road, road closures to stop through motor traffic in residential areas, and so on. We will try to ensure that cyclists are always considered: by allowing cycle exemptions where motor traffic is restricted, and by maximum use of lights rather than roundabouts.

Of the 10 new staff, 4 will go to the highways HQ unit: the Cycle Team (consisting of a project Supervising Technician and Engineer, a

Councillor Alastair Darling, Chairman of the Transportation Committee, says in a recent letter to SPOKES that the Council now has "a coherent cycling strategy". Given the new staffing, a master plan in the Grimshaw Report, and a continuing reasonable budget, we are hopeful that substantial progress can at last be made.

MONEY FOR CYCLE SCHEMES

As regards finance, the draft plans (TPP) for 1987/88 show budget allocation for cycle schemes increased from £300,000 Ctd. on p.3

Perhaps even more importantly he scrapped the Western Relief Road (which would effectively have extended the M8 into Lothian Road) although the Conservatives had deliberately signed the contract for it, with heavy cancellation penalties, the day before the 1986 election in which they lost power to Labour. He later said,

"If we hadn't stopped it, the middle of Edinburgh would have been a completely different place. It would have been destroyed by these maniacs who wanted to build a stilted-up motorway as the way of the future."

9. Snippets

9.1 School Bike Buses & LTNs - in Manchester

Like Edinburgh, Manchester is experimenting with Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and, like Edinburgh, school bike buses are appearing. It was great to hear that George Banfill, son of a long-standing Spokes member, was involved in setting up the Manchester Withington primary school bike bus. We've been sent this video about the bike bus and LTN. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxBl_MRRj9Y

The active travel revolution is

We've also tweeted it **here** – retweets welcome!

If you'd like to help an existing Edinburgh bike bus (e.g. stewarding) see the list in this <u>Transport Committee</u> <u>Bulletin</u> (page 6) – unfortunately contact details are not given. There's also a list, with more info and some contacts <u>here</u>. If you can't find a good contact, email jarlathflynn @hotmail.com, who can probably help.

If you (with others) would like to set up a bike bus at your local school, there's a council email address for help (transport.roadsafety@edinburgh.gov.uk) in the above Council Bulletin article. There is a great guide prepared by Cycling Scotland, working with Edinburgh's Sciennes Primary and Blackford Safe Routes. There is also advice here, and Jarlath (above) can also advise. Most bike buses are set up and operated by interested local parents rather than the school.

9.2 Roseburn to Canal

<u>Major works continue</u>, and on 21 November the bridge base over Dalry Road was craned into place. Ken Murray came up with a great <u>before-and-after tweet</u>.





9.3 ScotRail bike-booking app

ScotRail <u>has modified its app</u> allowing you to book bike spaces via mobile phone, instead of being limited to their website only. The app is <u>here</u>. It has received positive feedback on social media as being user-friendly.

9.4 ScotRail – Sustainable Access to Stations report

John Lauder, former Sustrans Scotland Director, was commissioned by ScotRail to produce recommendations on improving access to stations by active and sustainable travel. Several reports are now available...

- Sustainable Travel to Stations Strategy <u>here</u>
- Easy read version is available here
- Practitioner's guide here for people working in local government, regional planning and transport, as well as community groups and the rail industry

9.5 Locally-sourced Xmas trees, delivered to you by bike

If you buy a live Xmas tree and don't have your own cargo-bike, you can get it delivered by <u>Edinburgh Cycling Gardeners</u>. You can also help advertise their service by retweeting <u>here</u>. The trees are sourced locally by <u>Tollcross Treeworks</u>.



9.6 edi.bike newsletter

There's a great new weekly newsletter on bike-related Edinburgh news. <u>edibike.substack.com</u> Have a look, and sign up!

9.7 Cycling Scotland awards

There were two well-deserved local awards in Cycling Scotland's annual Cycling Awards ceremony.

Outline Hair in Candlemaker Row won Business Cycling Champion for owner Kay Corbett's remarkable initiative of, amongst other things, providing staff and customer bike parking within the salon! In recognition, Spokes gave them an Edinburgh Bike Map for use of staff and customers.



Matthew Ball of Linlithgow won a <u>Community Champion award</u> for his tireless work over several years bringing to fruition the <u>West Lothian Cycle Circuit</u>. "a transformational space to develop skills & build confidence." In recognition, <u>Spokes donated</u> Matthew an Edinburgh Bike Map (he of course already has our West Lothian one!) and offered to help fund an outdoor map poster like <u>West Lothian Bike Library</u> has done.



10. More & future consultations - Check council, government, and other sites

- Edinburgh consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk
- ◆ Edinburgh Edinburgh traffic orders
- ◆ East Lothian www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk
- ◆ **Midlothian** https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/directory/33/consultations
- ♦ West Lothian <u>www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations</u>
- ◆ Scottish Government consult.gov.scot
- ◆ Transport Scotland www.transport.gov.scot/consultations
- ◆ Scottish Parliament consultations yourviews.parliament.scot/consultation finder
- Scottish Parliament petitions
 petitions.parliament.scot
- ◆ Just in case... Transform Scotland keeps an updated page of current transport-related consultations... <u>transformscotland.org.uk/whats-new/action-alerts</u> Check it out in case there's anything important that doesn't appear in the website addresses above (there often is!)
- ◆ Spokes website We have a page of particularly relevant consultations <u>www.spokes.org.uk/consultns</u>

11. 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.