

Spokes Action-Update 08.01.26

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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. Welcome to 2026!

There's a [major article on our website](#) on what we may expect for cycling-related development in Edinburgh in 2026. Some is pretty definite, some is 'expected' and some will depend on bids from the Council for Scottish Government active travel funding. The article includes...

- ◆ A start to implementing the council's 'Primary Cycle Network' of segregated routes on main roads. As the Council's [active travel delivery plan](#) 2021-2030 rightly says, these "*are usually the most direct, flattest and socially safe routes.*"
- ◆ Upgrading the Travelling Safely bollarded routes on **Duddingston Road, Duddingston Road West, Seafield Street, A1** (including London Road)
- ◆ A start on [Dundee/Fountainbridge scheme](#) (see 2 below) if consultation and traffic orders go relatively smoothly. **Please respond by 12 January!!**
- ◆ Fully segregated onroad route [Cameron Toll - Bioquarter](#)
- ◆ [Meadows to Canal - Kings Theatre section work starts on Jan 12](#); main route construction due December 2026
- ◆ [Foot of Walk to Dock Street](#) – completion & opening
- ◆ [Lothian Road boulevard](#) – initial outline plans
- ◆ A8, CCWEL cycling & bus facilities extension from Roseburn to Gogar – initial outline plans
- ◆ 7-7-7 Bus-lane experiment, Balerno to Musselburgh
- ◆ [Voi bike hire](#) – further expansion
- ◆ One-way street cycle exemptions – several batches to be implemented in 26/27
- ◆ [Secure On-street Cycle Parking](#) – further phases
- ◆ Silverknowes Road (construction now underway)
- ◆ [West Edinburgh Link](#) (some construction now underway)
- ◆ [Smokey Brae & Marionville](#)
- ◆ **Decision** – tram future
- ◆ **Decision** - Princes St future
- ◆ **Decision** – Braids Estate quiet route
- ◆ **Unlikely** – Significant progress on the Mobility Plan policy to remove through motor traffic from the City Centre by use of multiple traffic filters and bus-gates
- ◆ **Unlikely** - Significant progress on congestion charging or other strong forms of demand management
- ◆ **Finally** – Our article also covers the *massive* waste of precious officer time in handling the concerns of councillors worried by objections which in the end often prove either irrelevant or largely unfounded. Time which delays these and other projects, and could be spent far more productively. Our article gives examples, which really are shocking when one considers how this time and money could be better used.



Dundee St/ Fountainbridge proposals



Foot of Walk to Dock Street, under construction.
Photo: John Robson



Braids Estate - will the filters remain and be made permanent?

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Contact your councillors on *any of the issues in the article and ask them to follow up for you*
- *Repost our Bluesky post of the article.*

2. Dundee Street / Fountainbridge AT Project – **closes 12 January**

We urge Spokes members who use this part of the city - or the canal towpath – to respond to the council. There will be objections, so comments in support are important.

There is an online QA at the above link, or you can email briefly (or at length) to dundeestreetfountainbridge@edinburgh.gov.uk

The project proposes a continuous main-road segregated cycle route in a busy part of the city, also reducing pressure on the congested Union Canal towpath. Towpath cycling will remain legal, but people wishing to cycle faster will now have a safe and protected onroad alternative.

The project also provides a safe road crossing to the canal from Telfer Subway and the North Edinburgh Network.

With thousands of new homes, student beds and new office, leisure, and commercial development all under construction or recently completed, it is imperative that people are able to safely walk and cycle in the area. Otherwise we will see more congested, less safe streets and worse towpath congestion.

The project will also be a welcome early demonstration of the Council's new Mobility Plan policy that the '*Primary Cycle Network*' should largely comprise main road segregated bike lanes, which, it says, "*are usually the most direct, flattest and socially safe routes.*"



Visualisation at Angle Park Terrace. In future the scheme would be extended west along Slateford Road as part of the Council's Circulation Plan

We are aware that there have been suggestions by Living Streets that cycle facilities should be provided along a back street route instead, in order to provide much wider footways. However, the scheme as it stands provides improved pedestrian facilities (see consultation page) whereas a convoluted back street cycle route would attract relatively few cyclists, and therefore one of the main objectives of the scheme - to reduce pressure on the towpath - would be lost. The roadway width in the final scheme should of course be the minimum acceptable for safety, to ensure that footways are as wide as possible alongside the segregated bike lanes.

The Spokes submission is not yet finalised, but there's a great one [here](#) from Blackford Safe Routes.

3. Dates for your diary

- **Jan 20** [Air Pollution free webinar](#)
- **Jan 31** [Edinburgh Critical Mass ride](#)
- **March 16** Spokes public meeting, *Hustings for the May Holyrood election*, joint with Cycling UK
 - Speaker definite: [Daniel Johnson](#), Labour, MSP for Edinburgh Southern
 - Speaker promised: **Lib Dems; Greens** – provisionally [Kate Nevens](#), Lothians List Green candidate #2
 - No reply yet or uncertain: **SNP; Conservative; Reform** [we will keep chasing these!]
 - Spokes has worked with Cycling Scotland and other groups developing a [shared manifesto](#) for the elections now signed by around 60 Scottish groups involved in active travel.

COUNCIL CYCLE FORUMS [generally open to anyone interested, living in the council area]

- **East Lothian** [usually in-person] Next date unknown - email cmilne@eastlothian.gov.uk
- **Midlothian** [online] provisionally Weds 11 Feb, 1400-1600 - email Thomas.Quayle@midlothian.gov.uk
- **West Lothian** [online] Tues 27 Jan, 1400-1600 - email jocelyn@wlcan.scot

REGULAR EVENTS [please check before attending, in case of any changes]

Tuesdays 5-6.15pm UK cycle campaigners '[Active Travel Cafe](#)' via zoom. News, speakers & discussion

Tuesdays & Thursdays [Edinburgh Dawn Patrol](#) Markus Stitz, founder of [BikePacking Scotland](#), runs regular early-morning rides, leaving at 5.40am from the western gate of St Andrew Square, and ending at Wellington Coffee. Rides likely to be around 20 miles, e.g. a circular route encompassing Musselburgh at the far end.

Wednesdays 3pm-9pm [Bike Kitchen](#) Fix your bike with help from qualified volunteers at [Edinburgh Tool Library](#)

Thursdays 5-8pm [Bike DIY repair](#) at the Wee Spoke Hub [tools and advice provided; book in advance]

Fridays 1-3pm *First Fri of month* (but Jan 9) Easy rides from Bridgend Farmhouse. admin@bridgendfarmhouse.org.uk

Saturday 2pm – last Sat every month except December – [Critical Mass community fun ride](#), also making a point.

4. Climate Emergency

With world politics in turmoil, the growing climate emergency is often way down in public debate. Severe weather episodes hit the headlines briefly, but don't bring long-term climate action.

Yet, in Britain, 2025 was the hottest year on record [[Met Office](#)]. Heat and drought in 2025 cost UK arable farmers [over £800m in lost crops](#), following 2024's lost harvests caused by extreme, persistent rain leading to flooded and waterlogged fields.

Internationally, the current tensions over Greenland are heightened by the melting of Arctic Ice, itself due to global heating, leading to new shipping routes and conflict over new sources of minerals and oil.

UN Secretary General [António Guterres](#) has warned that "*devastating consequences*" are now inevitable.

Nonetheless, efforts to pressurise politicians and energise the public by NGOs, scientists, those most affected and others, continue, and must continue...

4.1 Draft Scottish Climate Change Plan – [consultation ends 29.1.26](#) + SCCS response

The Scottish Government is consulting on its [2026-2040 Climate Change Plan](#). You may recall that the previous Plan (2018-2032) included the 'commitment' to [cut car-km 20% by 2030](#). A commitment which later became a 'target' and which then in 2025 was [scrapped altogether](#), despite government-commissioned research showing [how it could be achieved](#).

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) has submitted [this response](#) to the new consultation, and with a [key-issues summary](#). On transport, whilst praising the Scottish Government's intentions on EVs, they say it is "*weak on both modal shift and increasing and improving public and active travel options. And there is no action to cut emissions from aviation or shipping.*"

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Please make your own response to the draft – it can be brief! SCCS has produced [this excellent page](#) of helpful advice on how to respond, and with other useful links.
- Spokes hopes to respond to the consultation and, if you decide to send in your own detailed personal response, or have points you'd like us to consider for the Spokes one, please send us a copy asap.
- Also help by reposting this [SCCS bluesky post](#).

4.2 Flight Free 2026

The biggest single action that many people in the richer world could take is to limit or cease their flying, especially long distance.

To find out more, and to pledge to be flight-free in 2026 (or holiday-flight-free) see their video [here](#), then go to [flightfree.co.uk](#).

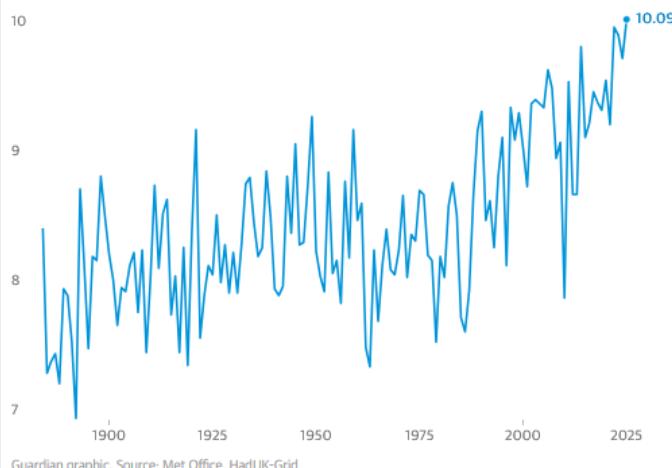
4.3 National Emergency Briefing

In late 2025 ten UK experts gave [briefings](#) on aspects of the climate crisis, and called for a national emergency briefing by the media and government. A video documentary is to follow.

Read the briefings, then [Take Action](#) via their website action page (and repost [our post!](#))

2025 was the UK's hottest year on record

Average annual air temperature, 1884-2025, °C



The Met Office's head of climate attribution, Dr Mark McCarthy, said: "2025 was the warmest year on record for the UK, surpassing the previous record set in 2022, in a series dating back to 1884. We're increasingly seeing UK temperatures break new ground in our changing climate, as demonstrated by a new highest UK mean temperature record just three years after the last record."

I will take the flight free challenge!

Name

Email

Type your pledge here (leave blank for default flight free in 2026)

100

Example pledges

- Flight free in 2026 (default)
- No holiday flights in 2026
- No more flights within Europe
- Flight free for life!

Sign the pledge

Signing the pledge will add your name and email address to the pledge database and our mailing list. You will receive one email a month giving you information and inspiration for your flight free year.

5. Spokes news & help needed

5.1 Rail (& bike/rail) – knowledgeable & proactive volunteer needed

Over the years Spokes has done much lobbying on bike/rail issues, some with considerable success, such as the flexible bike storage space on the Central Scotland mainline train fleet, improved bike access to Waverley, bike maps at some stations, and the abolition of ScotRail bike-carriage fees.

Our long-time campaigner Ewan Jeffrey is now looking for a replacement, and is happy to offer his experience to any new volunteer.

A big current issue is the procurement plans for two new train fleets (see 6 below) where we need to have an input to ensure good bike carriage provision. A separate issue is the need to persuade Transport Scotland to reinstate regular formal consultation arrangements – the previous Cycle Forum, which met two or three times a year, was scrapped when the Scottish Government took over responsibility for rail in Scotland.

5.2 Edinburgh Accessibility Commission – volunteer needed

Spokes has a place on [the Commission](#), which “provides independent advice to the Council on the challenges, opportunities and actions required to ensure the city’s public streets and spaces are as accessible as possible to disabled people.” We now need a new person to represent Spokes – preferably someone with personal experience or knowledge of the issues concerned. Please contact us [spokes@spokes.org.uk] if interested.

5.3 Spokes SCIO - trustees sought

Spokes is considering becoming a [SCIO](#). If anyone has suggestions for possible trustees, please get in touch.

We envisage the day-to-day operation of Spokes, with working groups, continuing to operate much as at present, but the SCIO umbrella would help with long-term issues such as succession, give increased credibility, and have some financial advantages. We anticipate the trustees would probably normally only need to meet 2 or 3 times a year, either online or in person.

5.4 Spokes Working Groups – please volunteer

Most Spokes activity happens through working groups which meet roughly monthly online.

Please do get in touch if you'd like to try joining Planning or Resources, our two most central groups. Both meet online roughly monthly and 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. 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. Or if you are helping at a Resources Group stall at a community event, you'd not be alone.

6. New Train Fleets

Transport Scotland is in the process of procuring two new train fleets...

- long distance [Inter-City trains](#) to replace the existing HST fleet linking Edinburgh and Glasgow to Inverness and Aberdeen
- local [electric/battery hybrid trains](#) for lines to Dundee via Fife Circle and for the Borders railway. Electrification work to Fife is about to start.

Clearly the design of this new rolling stock will have a profound effect on bike/rail opportunities for years to come on routes affecting many journeys to/from our local area. It has been publicly stated that bike carriage will be included but, as far as we are aware, there has been no consultation on designs, or what types of bikes and accessories will be catered for.

If you have views on what should be covered, please email your MSPs asking them to take up your concerns and get back to you. *Send us any useful replies.*

Do consider mentioning the economic benefits of bike tourism, as this has been a winning argument in the past – for example in getting the West Highland bike coaches and retro-fitting the HST fleet to Inverness and Aberdeen.

Note also that Spokes is looking for a new bike/rail campaigner – see 5.1 above.

Please respond as an individual to all consultations that concern you. And copy to Spokes, to aid our central response. We'd also appreciate volunteers to do an initial draft Spokes response to consultations. Whilst someone in Planning Group usually takes this on for location-specific consultations, it is harder to get contributors for the more general consultations such as the City Plan (7.3 below) or the draft Scotland Climate Change Plan (8.1).

7. Edinburgh Consultations [no relevant *Lothians* consultations of which we are aware]

7.1 Dundee Street Fountainbridge Active Travel Project – **ends 12 January** [Consultation site](#)

See (2) above. **Please reply to the consultation; and send Spokes anything you'd like included in our response.**

7.2 Edinburgh Coastal Change Adaptation Plan – **ends 19 January** [Consultation site](#)

“Billions of pounds of assets are currently protected by artificial and natural coastal defences. Climate change is predicted to lead to sea level rise and more intense storms which would threaten the coast through flooding and erosion. We are already seeing some of these effects today and must prepare for them now. ... The council is currently looking to understand what coastal management approaches are most appropriate for different lengths of Edinburgh coastline, based on local knowledge and insight.”

7.3 City Plan 2040 – **ends 23 January** [Consultation site](#)

This is the first stage in a very long process leading to the 2040 City Plan – it is seeking ideas and evidence rather than having a draft document yet. For more info, or to send an email rather than the online form, use cityplan2040@edinburgh.gov.uk. There have been a series of drop-ins, the final one being at Cameron Toll Shopping Centre on **17 Jan**, 11:30-14:30.

7.3 Barnton Connections (Maybury & Whitehouse Roads) – **ends 9 February** [Consultation site](#)

Segregated bike lanes along parts of Maybury Rd and Whitehouse Rd, including crossing Barnton junction

7.4 Silverknowes Road ETRO/21/30C [Consultation site](#) – **ends 10 February**

This experimental order provides the legal basis for parking/waiting restrictions which enable the cycle route to exist along Silverknowes Road (thus the map shows only the restrictions, not the cycle lane). Note that although the scheme is in place now, it is experimental, and could be removed if there is strong opposition and/or the council deems it unsuccessful. **So supportive comments are very important from people who use it.** To comment, use the contact details on [this page](#) and remember to quote the ETRO number above. A map and 'statement of reasons' for the scheme can be found [here](#) (see the drop-down menu of consultation documents).

7.5 Cameron Toll Centre redesign (25/06138/PAN) – **comments by 13 February**

This is a formal consultation by developers, the results of which must be taken into account when they prepare their detailed planning application. At this stage, comments are to the developer, not to the Council (although your own councillors may be interested in your comments to the developer).

The proposal is to *“provide mixed use development comprising retail, commercial and public realm, with other uses potentially including residential, student accommodation, later living accommodation, hotel and office space along with associated landscaping and infrastructure.”*

There will be a **staffed drop-in** at the shopping centre central mall (6 Lady Road EH16 5PB) on Thur 5 Feb, 2-7pm

We have not yet seen any plans, but the developers have been [talking to the press](#) and say they aim to make the development 'tram ready' and also able to form a transport hub if the south suburban rail line reopens.

Encouragingly, they also say the Centre *“needs to move away from just being a building dropped into the middle of a sea of parking to become a genuine commercial centre fit for purpose for the city’s south and east areas.”*

The Braid Burn, which currently runs in a culvert, may be reopened as part of the scheme.

Obviously this is an area where quality bike connections are vital, both to connect the centre to surrounding housing and being next to the bike route to the Infirmary. The development could make a big positive contribution to local cycling, with safe and welcoming routes – or it could make conditions even worse than now, especially since tramline dangers also have to be avoided should the tram go ahead here. **We'd appreciate local members contacting the developers with points of concern and asking what are the intentions.**

Comments and queries to: colin.j.smith@cbre.com.

8. National Consultations

8.1 Climate Change Plan 2026-2040 [Consultation site – closes 29 January](#) See 4.1 above

8.2 Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) Levels for Decriminalised Parking Enforcement [Consultation site – closes 30 January](#)

Many Councils in Scotland (including Edinburgh) have introduced “decriminalised parking enforcement” (DPE), which enables them to administer their own parking penalty charge schemes to encourage compliance with on-street parking controls [previously this was handled by the police, who often had little time for enforcement].

The consultation states that “*parking has become a contentious issue across our towns and cities as we seek to improve the country’s health and encourage active travel whilst making our streets more accessible for all. For enforcement to be effective, penalty charges for parking infringements need to be set at an appropriate level.*”

This consultation is about what guidance the government should give to councils about what level of penalties to apply – the maximum was raised to £100 (reduced to £50 if paid in 14 days in 2023).

The consultation asks: should the level be kept at £100, or raised to £120, or should Councils be left to set their own levels without government guidance?

8.3 Draft Transport Noise Action Plan (TNAP) 2024-2028 [Consultation site – closes 30 January](#)

“*This consultation relates to the draft Transport Noise Action Plan which aims to directly manage and, where practicable, reduce the effects of transport noise from Scotland’s trunk roads, major roads, and rail corridors, and to work with all transport providers to shape, focus, and deliver transport policy to manage noise.*”

“*Transport noise is the biggest source of environmental noise in Scotland, with around 1.4 million people exposed to potentially unhealthy noise levels. A variety of health problems can be associated with noise. For example, heart disease derived from exposure to daytime traffic noise costs approximately £1.2 Billion per annum ([DEFRA, 2008](#)), and sleep disturbance is one of the most common consequences of noise pollution. Noise is also an equity issue, with evidence showing low-income communities worldwide are most likely to be exposed to unacceptable levels of noise ([World Health Organisation, October 2023](#)). In addition, people affected by poverty live in disproportionately large numbers on busy main roads and often do not have the choice of moving away.*”

Note that the consultation does not cover local transport noise issues in the city, which it says are being consulted on separately, but no details given.

More info: drew.hill@transport.gov.scot

8.4 GB Road Safety Strategy [Consultation site – closes 31 March](#)

The UK government’s [Road Safety Strategy](#) (much of which affects Scotland) was launched today, 8.1.26. Whilst we’d always like to see more, this seems potentially quite significant towards reducing deaths and injuries. It includes 5 separate consultations, covering major areas in the new strategy. There are already calls from some to water these down, so please do consider putting in your own views...

- [motoring offences](#)
- [introducing a minimum learning period for learner drivers \(category B driving licence\)](#)
- [introducing mandatory eyesight testing for older drivers](#)
- [improving moped and motorcycle training, testing and licensing \(AM, A1, A2 and A driving licence\)](#)
- [mandating vehicle safety technologies in GB type approval](#)

9. E-Bikes (and not!)

“*E-bikes have become increasingly common. They’re a real game changer in getting more people cycling, helping unlock longer commutes, reducing barriers such as hills, making cycling more accessible for many. Whether helping people carry heavy shopping, businesses to make deliveries or parents take kids to nursery, e-bikes are supporting more people to switch travel habits and get around in a convenient, healthy and sustainable way.*

Despite this positive impact, there’s a lot of confusion out there about what e-bikes are. Too often, criticism of entirely legal e-bikes is bundled in with that of **illegally modified e-bikes and unlicensed electric motorcycles**, which do present serious risks to safety and have no place on our roads.”

Extract from an excellent Cycling Scotland [report on these issues](#), which is well worth a read.

10. Local councils - Active Travel websites + Cycle/AT Forums

- Edinburgh – [main page: Cycling & Walking page](#) / there is no Cycle Forum
- East Lothian - [main page: East Lothian on the move](#) / [AT infrastructure](#) / To attend the occasional council AT/Cycle Forum [usually held in-person] email cmilne@eastlothian.gov.uk
- Midlothian – [main page: Walking, cycling, horse riding](#) / [active travel map](#) / To attend the (new in 2026) online council AT/Cycle Forum, email Thomas.Quayle@midlothian.gov.uk
- West Lothian - [Enquiries and comments about new roads, footpaths, cycle routes](#) / [current projects and completed consultations](#). To attend the online AT/Cycle Forum (which is run by WL Climate Action, but includes a council officer), email jocelyn@wlcan.scot
- SEStran (South East Scotland regional transport partnership) – [People & Place, projects & grants](#)

11. 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 www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations
- ◆ 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... 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!)
- ◆ Spokes website We have a page of particularly relevant consultations www.spokes.org.uk/consultns

12. Keeping in touch

- ★ Remember to check out our **website** every so often www.spokes.org.uk
- ★ We are active on **Bluesky** [@spokes.org.uk](https://bluesky.social/@spokes.org.uk) Follow us, and repost posts that you support.
- ★ 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.