

BIKE LANES WORKING

Edinburgh's protected bike lanes on Leith Walk and on Roseburn CCWEL route now account for almost 10% of vehicle and pedestrian journeys on both, based on Cycling Scotland survey data in late 2025.

What's more, despite its tramlines, Leith Walk has had zero bike tramline crashes, whilst serious injuries continue in the badly designed initial tram route.

LESSONS LEARNED – AND TO BE LEARNED

◆ The protected bike lane success affirms the Council's decision [p8] that its *Primary Cycle Network* should largely comprise segregated lanes on main roads.

But - gaps need filled! What would bike usage be on the above routes if the missing George St link between them existed? – we suggest [p9] how to do this quickly if the planned complete revamp is currently too costly.

◆ The absence of tramline injuries affirms the Council's wisdom in providing segregated lanes on Leith Walk.

But - potentially dangerous sections of the Granton/Bioquarter future tramline proposals [p9] concern us.

FOOT OF WALK to DOCK STREET

The traffic-free Foot of Walk - Dock Street route, largely comprising bidirectional segregated onroad bike lanes, extends CCWEL and Leith Walk lanes north, with a planned continuation to Ocean Terminal. Importantly, for many trips this is an alternative to tramlined roads.



A cut that we support!! Transport Convener Cllr Stephen Jenkinson opens the section at Sandport Bridge over the Water of Leith. Also pictured, Cllrs Kayleigh Kinross-O'Neill (in wheelchair) and Chas Booth (behind Kayleigh). *Photo: DdF*



photo by kind permission

CYCLING THROUGH THE AGES

Cyclist **Edith** has a quick word before she heads off:

"Hi – I love cycling, it's really fun! What would be really good would be to have more space to explore the roads, see where they go, have fun, and not have cars hovering around! Bye!"

89-year-old **Michael Owen** says:

"I use my bike for shopping most days. Convenience, practical reasons... it's so much easier to get around for everyday things. For appointments e.g. medical checks in the city centre, I'll go by bike. On a nice day I might add a mile or two. I've always used my bike to keep fit, and now it's my main way of looking after myself. The physical fitness is a big thing for me, keeping me mobile."

Not surprisingly, Michael is very keen to see improved bike facilities



Cycling Scotland photo

SPOKES BULLETIN

Spokes now publishes a meaty 'roughly-monthly' email member circular. Our previous 3-a-year printed Bulletin [spokes.org.uk/bulletin], sadly, is now history - but we still plan a printed Bulletin like this once or twice a year: useful for bike leafleting, bike shops, libraries, etc. **Let us know if you could use a supply e.g. for bike leafleting.**

Inside

- ◆ Princes Street & George Street – p9
- ◆ New Favourite Bike Rides booklet – p5
- ◆ Traffic **growth** target! – p10
- ◆ Tramline Crashes - reporting & avoiding – p3
- ◆ Friendly organisations - p12
- ◆ Climate crisis, relentless progression – p10

Help us, other cyclists, and yourself by joining Spokes! – see centre page

FOR YOUR DIARY [spokes.org.uk for more info]

*with Spokes stall inc. Spokes maps at special price

May 30 Pedal on Parliament pedalonparliament.org

June 6 *? Meadows Festival meadowsfestival.co.uk

June 9-15 Bike Week 2026 cyclinguk.org/bikeweek

June 27 *Climate Festival edinburghclimatefestival.com

Sep 16 *Cycling Scotland conference cycling.scot/about/conference

CRITICAL MASS RIDES edinburghcriticalmass.wordpress.com

Last Saturday of each month, 2pm, Meadows

LEISURE BIKE RIDES - www.cycling-edinburgh.org.uk

includes 'very easy' rides, regular rides, weekend rides.

ONLINE MEMBER MEETUPS – more?

Our trial was friendly, enjoyable and useful, with ideas shared from bike storage to school air quality monitoring.

People are randomly split into groups to chat for 10 mins.

SPOKES MAPS & BUFFS

Spokes produces highly praised cycling maps, also used by walkers, with editions for Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian. Since the first map, in 1987, over 160,000 have been bought, described by users as “awesome” “invaluable” “fantastic” “gorgeous.” There were new West Lothian and Edinburgh editions in 2025.

For more on our amazing maps, see p4 and spokes.org.uk/spokes-maps

We also produce buffs/snoods, printed with selected map areas, which can be used in many ways, e.g. as a headscarf, trouser clip, or under a helmet.



Currently we only have Edinburgh buffs; Midlothian sold out. Buffs cost £5 each or £3 if ordered with a map. To order, email office@spokes.org.uk then pay by BACS.

SPOKES 2026 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Members due to renew will be notified, so no need to ask unless you aren't getting our 'monthly' Action-Update email

😊 THANK YOU 😊

Spokes is funded by donations from our 1000+ members and sales of our unmissable maps. Thus we can speak out without fear or favour, not worried about losing funds.

[Join Spokes!](#) See centre pages for application form.

SPOKES BULLETIN INFORMATION

Editor Dave du Feu Bulletin text may be used freely, if you credit us and give our website. **Created with** libreoffice.org

SPOKES COMPETITIONS

Last year's comp, [My Favourite Bike Ride](#), had such great entries that we've produced a new 'Favourite Rides' booklet from them – see a sample on p5 of this Bulletin.

COMP 2026 ... SPOKES@50

Our 2026 comp will be on our website over the summer, with another fantastic set of prizes. Members will of course also be notified in an email circular.

With our 50th anniversary next year, let us know any way – however indirect – that Spokes has benefitted you e.g.

- ◆ Using Spokes bike maps, or a Favourite Rides booklet
- ◆ Using local bike facilities - remember there wasn't even a Meadows cycleway until our 1980s campaign!
- ◆ Enjoying a competition prize
- ◆ Meeting like-minded people
- ◆ Advice/help e.g. getting front-garden bike boxes allowed

The entries may help our 2027 anniversary preparation!

THE SPOKES FUTURE

Much has been achieved by Spokes since 1977, but Edinburgh and the Lothians are still far from truly cycle friendly. As our 50th anniversary approaches we are seeking ways to boost this effort and ensure continuity.

Members will be asked at the AGM whether Spokes should become a charity and elect a board of trustees. The existing working groups (resources, planning, maps etc) would continue as before, whilst the trustees would have a strategic oversight and help ensure continuity.

Working groups would all be represented on the board, and **we also seek other people with relevant skills and experience who would like to help Spokes by becoming trustees.** To find out what this involves contact Ian Maxwell at imaxwell@gn.apc.org.

CARGOBIKE GRANTS

Thanks to kind donations from Spokes members, we continue to offer grants to **community organisations** and **microbusinesses** who need a cargobike. For example, [Cycling Gardeners of Edinburgh](#), a delivery business and a small new bike shop. Also, occasional grants to **Spokes member households** using surplus from map sales.

Details at: spokes.org.uk : documents : advice : cargo-bikes



TRAMLINE CRASHES: PLEASE REPORT

CRASHED ON TRAM LINES?



Report it at www.tramcrash.co.uk & help us improve cycle safety

Spokes gets many reports of tramlines crashes, some with serious injury. Based on this and other sources, we have prepared an info sheet on causes and how, hopefully, to reduce your risk of becoming a victim.

For the full info sheet and our own reporting page, see *Vital Links* at spokes.org.uk.

Crash causes vary between cities, e.g. due to poor/good layout design and track installation/maintenance quality.

TRAMLINE CRASH INSIGHTS

- ◆ Many crashes are at tramline-crossing blackspots; but many are also to people cycling *in the same direction as the rails* (sometimes caused by traffic pressures)
- ◆ Many crashes are to *experienced cyclists*, due to an unexpected or unseen hazard: see 'Reducing the Risks'
- ◆ Many crashes result from *skidding* rather than wheel-trapping. Skidding is more likely when wet and/or when tramlines protrude slightly above road surfaces
- ◆ An underlying problem is *poor layout design*; e.g. not providing separated bike lanes. Thus while the Council has tackled some issues, many cannot be fully solved.

Cycle Law
SCOTLAND

Because we cycle too.

Scotland's specialist, personal injury service for cyclists by cyclists.

0333 555 7783
cyclelawscotland.co.uk

REDUCING YOUR RISKS

These suggestions are made in good faith, but Spokes can take no responsibility for any consequences of using them. For a fuller version see website address above.

- ◆ approach tramlines as close to 90 degrees as possible, though the tramline layout often makes it impossible
- ◆ an angle of 60°+ is said to be pretty safe from wheel-trapping; but skids are still a big risk, especially if wet
- ◆ cross tramlines in a straight line. When cornering, the bike leans slightly, making skidding more likely
- ◆ don't slow down, and do keep a sensitive but firm grip on your handlebars. This should reduce the risk of your wheel being deflected into the tramline groove
- ◆ don't brake – this can make skidding more likely
- ◆ if possible (it's often not!) keep a distance from motor vehicles, especially behind you. Traffic pressures make crashes more likely, e.g. affecting your crossing angle

- ◆ cycling between tramlines is often traffic-free, but we *don't advise it* as it means two tramline crossings at dodgy angles – and we know of crashes that resulted
- ◆ be very aware that many crashes are to *experienced cyclists* who regularly use tramlined roads - but there was an unexpected hazard, e.g. a tramline marginally too high, wetness causing slippage, or traffic pressures
- ◆ we hate to say this but if the location feels particularly dangerous (e.g. wet, lots of traffic) it may be wise to get off and walk - if that is possible.

LESSONS LEARNED BY COUNCIL!

We'd be the first to agree that the Leith Walk cycle lanes are not perfect – BUT they are segregated from the tramlines, unlike the dangerous tramline 1 layout.

We have not received a single Leith Walk tramline crash report, after 2 years operation – whilst serious injuries continue at Haymarket, Haymarket Yards and Princes St.

Allan McDougall

SOLICITORS

Expert legal advice for cyclists

0808 560 0872

allanmcdougall.co.uk

*With you every
pedal of the way*

! FANTASTIC SPOKES MAPS !

"What fantastic maps: one of the best things since I moved to Scotland" – typical of our feedback!

Spokes has published an Edinburgh cycle map ever since 1987, evolving gradually into today's superb product. Our Lothians maps were started in 1998 and are now all on their 5th edition.

The maps are designed to help walkers too, showing footpaths as well as cycle routes, and with hills clearly indicated using colour, shading and contours

Map use

The value of the maps is demonstrated by sales, over 160,000 to date, and by the incredible feedback we get. It's also worth noting that they even have uses beyond cycling and walking – see for example our factsheet on uses in schools [spokes.org.uk/spokes-maps/#More].

"I recently acquired your Midlothian Walking & Cycling Map, and used it to go on a lovely walk along the North Esk. It's a great map!"

"When I first moved to the Lothians I bought all the maps, and it's one thing I do miss having moved to Fife. I hoped, and expected, I might be able to find something similar, but The importance of those maps can't be overestimated."

"They sell well here because the detailed map of Penicuik is the best available"

"As part of our brief to encourage more people to cycle, providing a complimentary copy of the Spokes Map is very useful ...and popular"

"I couldn't do this challenge (to ride every path in the city) without the Spokes map which is SO helpful."

**On sale in most bike shops and some bookshops
£6.95 & £7.50. Bulk discounts available**

Full details at spokes.org.uk/spokes-maps.

The Edinburgh map

The map was redrawn from scratch in 2020, and enlarged to include South Queensferry, Ratho and Kirkliston, with a major revision in 2025 showing new housing and cycle infrastructure.

The back of the map has an enlarged plan of the City Centre, details of local bike shops and a map of the regional routes in the Lothians and into Fife.



The Lothians maps

We now have fully revised and redesigned maps for West, East and Mid-Lothian, covering Cockburnspath to Falkirk, and south of Carlops to North Queensferry.

The backs of the maps include detailed town plans of main settlements, info about places to see, things to do and, of course, local bike shop contacts.

Map production

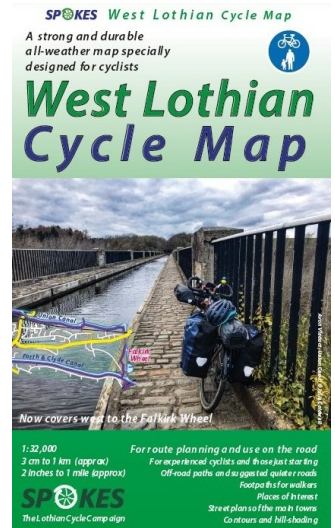
The maps are based on a mix of Ordnance Survey and OpenStreetMap data, and are produced entirely by Spokes volunteers: from the surveyors who check cycle facilities and changes on the ground before each new edition to the photography, graphics and cartography.

Paper v electronic

"I really like your maps. Currently I've got 3 on the wall – Edinburgh, West Lothian, East Lothian"

"Recommend pinning on the wall for easy route planning! After years with online maps, was surprised how much I preferred a real one."

Although our map sales suffered initially when apps became widely used, there remains a strong market, as both have their own strengths and weaknesses. Apps are great to check where you are, or to plot a circuit then forget the context and just follow your waypoints. But if you want to plan a route in comfort; or if you're out and the battery fails, or the weather changes and you want a short-cut home, nothing beats a (rainproof) Spokes map you can spread out to see the big picture.



FAVOURITE BIKE RIDES, edition 3

.. a sample page from our lovely booklet

Post-free from Spokes: 3rd edition £3; 2nd edition £2; both £4; or free when you buy Spokes maps. spokes.org.uk/spokes-maps

6 Aberlady to Bruntsfield

29 km, 18 miles ⌚ 2–3 hours   

This scenic coastal route takes you past some of East Lothian's finest beaches and many places of interest, including Gosford House, Prestonpans (noted for its murals) and the open-air industrial museum at Prestongrange. Care will be needed for the first few miles where the route follows a main road that is often busy with traffic.

▶ Start: Aberlady End: Bruntsfield

- ▶ From Aberlady, head SW on the coast road for 16 km to Musselburgh. This is initially the A198 and later the B1348; the whole of this section of the route is signposted as the John Muir Way (JMW). It passes Gosford House and Longniddry Bents, and through Port Seton, Cockenzie and Prestonpans.
- ▶ On reaching the River Esk in Musselburgh, turn left on Eskside East (do not cross the river at this point) and follow the riverside roads and paths for approximately 1 km into Station Road. Turn half-right on the signposted River Esk Walkway.
- ▶ Shortly after passing under a railway bridge, cross the river by a footbridge. You are now on NCN 1, which takes you past Queen Margaret University, Newcraighall, Brunstane station and on to the Innocent Path.
- ▶ On emerging from the Innocent Tunnel, continue on NCN 1 to the Meadows and then to Bruntsfield.

Variation: ■■■■■■■■

The route can be done in shorter stages by taking the train to or from Longniddry, Prestonpans or Wallyford (North Berwick line).



Jane Waters

Jane teaches the bassoon at various schools in Edinburgh, and she uses her Tern cargo bike for her twice-weekly commute from her home in Aberlady, with the instrument perched on the parcel shelf. In 2011, she took her bike and her two children — then aged 17 and 20 — on a charity ride from London to Paris.



♥ Why this is my favourite ride:

The highlight for me is spotting seals basking on the rocks opposite Gosford House. I also enjoy seeing the ducks and swans on the Esk, and the patterns made by the sun among the leaves on the Innocent Path. I always feel a sense of achievement when I arrive at work on two wheels, energised for the day ahead.

JOIN SPOKES !!

The printed version of this Bulletin is a 12-page A5 booklet, whose centre-page spread (i.e. pages 6/7, in the centre of the booklet) is a Spokes membership form.

A reduced A5 image of the form is pasted in below, but to find out more about Spokes membership, and to download and complete the full membership form, please go to spokes.org.uk/membership.

Spokes welcomes as members all individuals and organisations who support our objectives. Having as many members as possible helps us campaign more effectively – for example, we try to notify members when important cycling-related things are happening (or not happening) which you could help influence, whether in your local area or at council or national level.

There is no membership fee, so you genuinely are welcome to join even when hard up, but obviously we rely on the many kind donations from members to support our work.

Office use only: Postcode Area Year

SPOKES MEMBERSHIP FORM

Mailings will be addressed to the first person below. If you need separate mailings, please use a second form. Email circulars will go to all addresses below.

NB: Membership is processed by volunteers so it may be 2-3 weeks before you hear from us, although it's usually much quicker.

Spokes
 St Martin's Community Resource Centre,
 232 Dalry Rd, Edinburgh EH11 2JG
 Answerphone: (0131) 313 2114
 Internet: www.spokes.org.uk
 e-mail: spokes@spokes.org.uk
 Buesky: @spokes.org.uk

(It's OK not to tick any boxes if you are too busy to help)

6. Can you help Spokes regularly (say every 3-4 weeks) by joining a working group? Please tick:

Maps (Design and promote Spokes maps)
 Planning (Comment on road/traffic/planning proposals; attend consultation and official meetings)
 Resources (Membership, stalls, publications, meetings, publicity)
 Rides (Organise recreational or demonstration rides)

7. Can you help Spokes occasionally as follows?
 Please tick: We will only contact you for help in area(s) ticked.

A Deliver by bike to 30 or so addresses near where you live or work
 B Phone round a list of 10-15 members to pass on Information
 C Transport for a stall by Car Van bike Trailer
 D Take extra leaflets, e.g. for bikes at work or shops, or for friends. How many leaflets?
 E Leaflet passing cyclists for 1-2 hours
 F Speak at a public meeting about Spokes/cycling issues
 G Put up posters in shops, college, work, etc. How many?
 H Attend meetings to address envelopes/fold leaflets etc.
 I Give written views on road/traffic proposals in your area
 J Provide home baking for a Spokes social event
 K Help on a stall at a festival, rally or exhibition
 L Help in a bike census (usually morning rush-hour)
 M Attend direct action, demonstrations, etc.
 N Accompany an inexperienced/new cyclist for a few journeys
 O Help with cycle path construction and/or maintenance e.g. litter-picking, cutting back vegetation, etc.
 P Any other one-off job that comes up!

8. Can you offer any of these skills?

1 Website and database 4 Photography
 2 Cycle maintenance help 5 Graphics or cartoons
 3 Data analysis and entry 6 Mapping

9. State any other ways you can help.

Please tick if you would like a free Spokes mudguard sticker

GDPR and membership data: Your details will be stored in accordance with the Act. All your data will be sent to you annually for checking, on your renewal form. The Spokes privacy statement can be found towards the bottom of the web page spokes.org.uk/membership.

SMF 2/25

EDINBURGH PRIMARY CYCLE NETWORK

See spokes.org.uk, 3.1.26 blog, for links/info on these & other issues

In 2024 Edinburgh City Council adopted a new policy that the city's 'Primary Cycle Network' would largely comprise segregated routes on main roads. As it rightly said, these "are usually the most direct, flattest and socially safe routes." They are (generally) the routes most suitable for commuting and utility, where time is a top consideration, but needs combined with safety.

The main offroad paths are largely termed 'secondary' - not to downplay their value, but because generally they are less direct and used for leisure as much as for utility. This policy then informed the Implementation Plan, 'Delivering Actions for Active Travel, 2021-2030' [see box below]

What action will the Primary Network see in 2026 ?

TRAVELLING SAFELY ROUTES

During the covid pandemic, bike lanes separated from traffic by bollards ('Rosehill Defenders') were installed on many main roads, initially under temporary Orders, then experimental. At last, in 2025, after much angst and delay, the notorious 'TRO Subcommittee' made the routes legally permanent [spokes.org.uk, 4.9.25 blog].

A provisional programme to upgrade the routes, with kerbs, junction improvements, etc has been adopted. **This may well be the biggest contribution to the Primary Network.** The following are to be upgraded in 26/27 financial year: **Duddingston Rd, Duddingston Rd West, Seafield Street, A1 (including London Rd).**

MAJOR MAIN ROAD PLANS

Along with Travelling Safely routes, individual main road schemes will be a vital component of primary network development. Those now being planned include...

◆ **A7 corridor, Cameron Toll – Bioquarter** This major scheme was delayed for redesign, to add tram. If traffic orders go smoothly, work should start in early 2027.

◆ **A8 corridor, Roseburn-Maybury** Government funds have been obtained for initial design of this important bus/bike corridor, which should extend CCWEL's success west to Corstorphine and beyond. Tough choices may be needed on car space allocation, moving and static.

LEITH WALK

Leith Walk is a travel artery which is also a tramlined shopping street, with traffic lanes reduced to encourage tram, bus & active travel use. The cycle lanes do have problems but are well used and, importantly, have **prevented tramline bike crashes**, which continue to cause injuries, some very serious, in Princes Street and Haymarket on the tragically badly-planned first line.

The [Active Travel Implementation Plan \(ATIP\)](https://edinburgh.gov.uk/citymobilityplan), forms part of the Council Mobility Plan at edinburgh.gov.uk/citymobilityplan

INTEGRATION WITH RESURFACING

Kerb-separated bike lanes have been installed in several stretches of main road, under the Council policy to include active travel measures in road maintenance schemes where possible. Examples include stretches of **London Road, Portobello Road** and **Lasswade Road**. Although isolated stretches, it is good to use the opportunity - and it points the way to future extension.

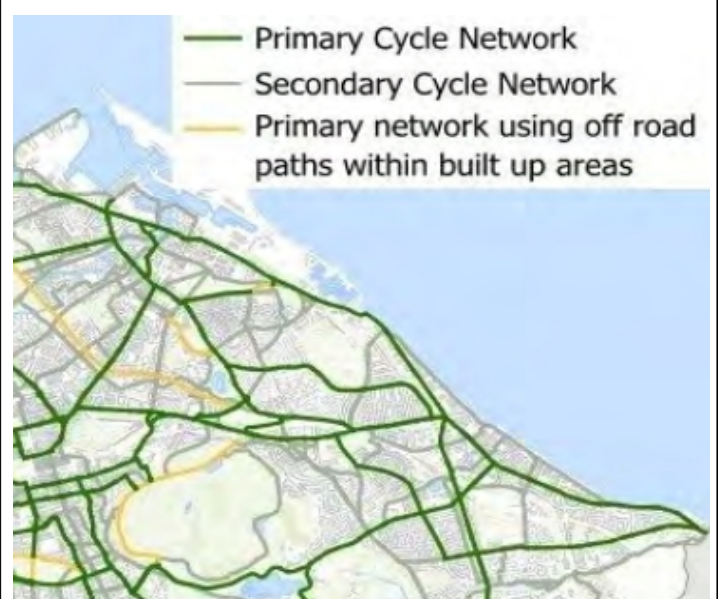


London Road bike lane installed during resurfacing

THE FULL NETWORK

The city's full cycle network will comprise...

- **Primary network** – above
 - **Secondary network** - offroad paths and quiet streets connecting the primary network to more destinations
 - **Local network** – local streets and legal local paths
- The aim is for all households to be within 400m (250m in more central, dense areas) of high quality, well-connected cyclist routes which are continuous, so that journeys *are safe* throughout, and *feel safe at all times*.



Extract from the proposed network [see ATIP, p19 & on] Although in overall support, Spokes disagrees with some aspects, for example the downplaying of Princes Street

2026: COUNCIL BIG-DECISIONS TIME

PRINCES ST & GEORGE ST

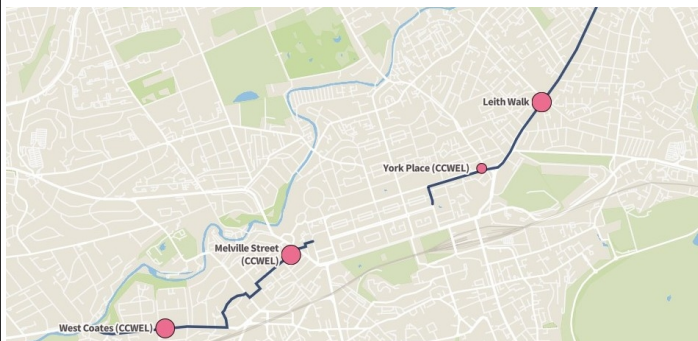
Two shock councillor decisions in late '25/ early '26 overturned expectations (good & bad!) for these top Edinburgh streets, returning them to the melting pot.

Draft **Princes Street** and Waverley Valley plans, widely dubbed unimaginative, were on 12.11.25 rejected by an unusually assertive Planning Committee! Councillors referenced ideas from **Richard Murphy architects**, highlighted in the Spokes submission, with wider footways and largely protected bike lanes, by cutting traffic lanes from four to two, with bus-stop bays. Only by reallocating roadspace can Princes Street reach its potential as Edinburgh's premier street.

In **George Street** 15 years of endless consultation led in 2025 to plans for a major, costly, redesign, including a central 'cycle street.' Our own preference was for wider footways with unidirectional protected bike lanes, but with this rejected we cautiously supported the cycle street as in some European cities. However our concern grew as proposed 'essential' vehicle access expanded.

It was widely expected that much of the considerable cost would come from the new 'Visitor Levy,' but on 12.2.26 councillors unexpectedly rejected this, and instructed officers to think again about respective funding and priorities between the two streets.

George Street, of course, also forms the central link of the Council's CCWEL east-west flagship bike route



George Street CCWEL missing link, from a Cycling Scotland [report](#), with counter data showing that cyclists already comprise nearly 10% of trips (including pedestrians) east on Leith Walk cycle lanes and west on the Roseburn section

Spokes view [more in [25.2.26 blog](#) at [spokes.org.uk](#)]

- ◆ **George Street** – wider footways, protected bike lanes and removal of all central parking c/sh/ould be adopted relatively quickly and cheaply, as an interim, or possibly long-term, solution if current plans prove unaffordable.
- ◆ **Princes Street** – roadspace reallocation, with wider footways and protected bike lanes is essential.

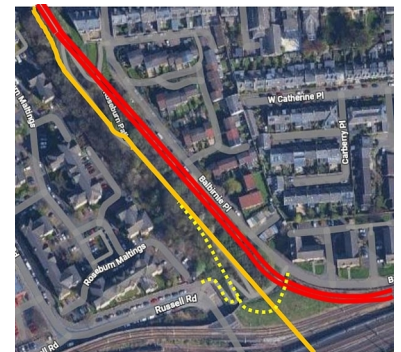
For Princes Street to achieve its "huge potential," cycle and pedestrian priority, and reduced vehicle presence, are "essential" ... renowned urban designer Jan Gehl, 15 years ago, commissioned by Edinburgh Council

TRAMLINE EXTENSION

A report on last year's massive early-stage consultation is due in summer 2026, when councillors will decide whether to go ahead with (costly) detailed planning. Spokes made a major submission to the consultation [[21.11.25 blog](#) at [spokes.org.uk](#)]. We support the tram in principle but see both problems and opportunities not adequately addressed in the 2025 consultation.

◆ **Concern:** Our top concern is fitting cycling and tram safely and effectively in the Bridges corridor: there are clear dangers in the consultation plans. We suggested several ameliorations and/or alternatives.

◆ **Opportunity:** Spokes has not opted between a Roseburn tram/path route or the Orchard Brae onroad tramline option. However, if the Council decides on Roseburn there is a massive opportunity to incorporate an active travel bridge over the mainline railway, extending Roseburn path to the canal without the big climbs down and up. The bridge is already in the *Mobility Plan* [[Active Travel Delivery document, p43](#) – see *ATIP* link opposite]



BIG IMPACT=> SCARY DECISIONS=> DELAY

◆ **Remove City Centre through-traffic:** Included in the Council's exciting 2024 'Future Streets' plan, and originally expected in 2025, things have gone really quiet! [see map+info at [spokes.org.uk](#), [1.3.24 blog](#)].

◆ **Congestion charging:** Government-commissioned research shows that only road user charging of some sort can achieve tough traffic reduction targets like Edinburgh's, and it is an option in the Council Mobility Plan. But Councils say they first need government rule changes [[6.5.25 Spokes blog](#) QA] - not expected till 2027!

LOTHIANS COUNCILS CONSULTATION

Edinburgh being a large council, officers often consult via user groups such as Spokes and Living Streets, with wider consultations mainly for major projects/policies.

However the 3 smaller councils have AT forums (online or in-person) open to all interested local people.

If you live in these areas, here are contacts...

- ◆ **East Lothian** email cmilne@eastlothian.gov.uk
- ◆ **Midlothian** Thomas.Quayle@midlothian.gov.uk
- ◆ **West Lothian** email jocelyn@wlcan.scot [this forum is run by [WL Climate Action](#), but council officers attend]

You can also find a lot about existing and planned bike facilities and policies by searching council websites.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT & BEYOND

Find your MSPs at www.parliament.scot/msps

TRAFFIC GROWTH TARGET !

Ever since the government [committed in 2020](#) to cut car-km 20% by 2030, Spokes expressed growing concern at the absence of effective measures to achieve it.

As late as Jan 2023 a [government-commissioned study](#) still showed 20% reduction “*is achievable*” and “*in an equitable way*” - through road user charging of various types [[9.1.25 blog](#) at spokes.org.uk]. But Ministers blocked publication till Dec 2024 and, even then, their feeble response failed to address its ‘key recommendations.’

In June 2025 they finally admitted the inevitable and scrapped the 20% ambition – in a document called ‘[Achieving Car Use Reduction](#)’ (!) This, and the subsequent draft Climate Change Plan, promise new targets – *but* implying that the new targets will be to reduce *predicted traffic growth*, not to reduce *actual car-km*!

Honesty is needed. This is *not* a traffic reduction target. It is approving traffic growth and just hoping to limit it.

Moreover, targets based on predictions of the future leave massive scope for ‘smoke and mirrors,’ unlike targets based on actual current traffic data.

Indeed, given the government’s Jan 2026 promise to complete A9 widening by 2035, plus rising trunk road cash in the 26/27 budget, not only will traffic likely be growing but so too will predicted traffic!

More background:

- spice-spotlight.scot/?s=driving 26.8.25 blog
- [Spokes Jan 2026 submission](#) on the draft Climate Change Plan

CLIMATE CRISIS PROGRESSION

Whilst local and international politics dominate the news, global heating continues its relentless progression. The Met Office confirms 2025 as Britain’s hottest year on record. UN chief António Guterres considers it now “*inevitable*” that the world will pass the 1.5° target, with “*devastating consequences*” [Guardian 28.10.25].

The UK is better placed than many countries, yet already the UK 2025 harvest was the second worst since records began in 1984, a £800m loss due to heat and floods.

Meanwhile it is business as usual for Scotland’s trunk roads, with a £90m rise in 26/27 despite being classed as “*High Negative*” in the budget’s climate impact report. Insurance companies, however, do feel the effects and increasingly call for action. Aviva says premiums will rise and some areas will become uninsurable, as already in parts of Florida and California. Along with other insurers and organisations they have set up the [Flood Action Coalition](#) to try and mitigate risks by nature-based solutions such as re-creating wetlands [Guardian 21.2.26].

FUNDS FOR ACTIVE TRAVEL (AT)

With Council budgets extremely hard-pressed, most Council AT infrastructure investment is from the annual Scottish Government budget, through grants & bids.

However, whilst active travel investment has one of the highest cost-benefit ratios of any transport mode, this is not reflected in government funding decisions. The commitment to invest 10% of transport money in AT by year 24/25 has been scrapped. Budgets rose to a high point of 5.6% in 24/25 (though later cut to 4% before it was used!) and by 26/27 are down to a probable 3.9%.

Budgets (£100k)	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27
Transport	3306	3485	3579	3925	3907	4145
AT	115.5	150.0	189.2	*219.9	166.1	163.4 (?)
AT as %	3.5%	4.3%	5.3%	*5.6%	4.3%	3.9% (?)

• Background, sources, etc in [28.1.26 blog](#) at spokes.org.uk

• Budgeted amounts are not always spent – in 24/25(*) the £220m was later cut drastically to £155m, i.e. just 4%.

There is also plenty ‘smoke and mirrors’ involved. AT is now bundled in with the Bus Infrastructure Fund (BIF) under a new ‘Active and Sustainable’ budget heading. The government shouts about the total rising: but this is entirely due to a BIF rise from £20m to £60m. And whilst they say the AT Investment Fund is rising (slightly) they don’t mention that other AT money will have to fall, to stay within the overall Active & Sustainable total.

Remember: This is the money needed to actually *deliver* planned AT projects such as Musselburgh-Portobello, Meadows-George Street, A8 corridor, and so on.



2024: One month's rain in 36 hours appears to solve the City Bypass congestion problem! But unfortunate drivers were stuck for up to six hours in other sections.

E-BIKE PLEASURES & WOES

E-bikes enable a whole new range of people to get about by bike. Indeed, a Spokes competition, “*What has transformed your cycling life,*” brought five entries from middle-aged or older people who had bought e-bikes. Some had not cycled for years, but now travel impressive distances for work and/or leisure. Four of the five had lost 1 or more stones, one “*a ton of weight.*” All their lives had been transformed!

Find these & other stories in our *Why E-bike?* factsheet at spokes.org.uk : documents : advice : e-bikes

EDINBURGH COUNCIL VOI BIKE HIRE

Edinburgh’s all-electric VOI bike hire scheme, despite some parking location problems, is a big success, with usage exceeding predictions and coverage widening. The Scotsman transport reporter, Alastair Dalton, a regular Edinburgh and Glasgow user, says: “*fun to ride, easy to use, and probably the fastest way across the city.*”



Alastair in a Glasgow bike lane.
Pic: John Devlin, The Scotsman

[AD produces a free emailed transport newsletter. To subscribe, scroll down to Transport at www.scotsman.com/newsletter]

BATTERY SAFETY

Safety-certified Battery Management Systems, used by all reputable manufacturers, prevent the thermal runaway which can cause fires when charging lithium batteries. However some unscrupulous suppliers cut costs, with sub-standard batteries and chargers.

Unfortunately public and media concerns often don’t distinguish the two. Spokes has had complaints about landlords, hotels and workplaces banning *all* e-bikes. Glasgow Central Station only allows e-bike parking with batteries removed. Some insurance companies have even banned e-bike storage in homes.

Government needs to tighten the weak product safety regulation and import controls on dangerous batteries and chargers. Meanwhile, the cycle trade has developed a register of reputable brands, which can be used by e-bike owners to reassure concerned landlords, employers, etc. A Spokes Battery Safety factsheet has further details – find it at the above link.

ILLEGAL USE OF MODIFIED E-BIKES

Genuine e-bikes have a 25kph top speed, with battery-powered assistance only kicking in when pedalling.

Modifications which exceed these requirements mean the machine is then classed as a moped or motorbike, not allowed on bike paths, and requiring helmet, etc on the road. Such modified ‘e-bikes’ are often used illegally for deliveries or joyriding. Police do confiscate them, but do not pursue due to the risks to the riders.

To tackle joyriding in Edinburgh, the Council has established a cross-agency partnership with Police Scotland and community groups, with a budget of £15,000, to identify solutions and also to increase patrols in problem areas.

Delivery bike illegal behaviour, however, is not driven primarily by individuals. Certainly, balaclava-clad riders who ignore traffic regulations are scary to pedestrians, a risk to themselves and others, and a gift to anti-cyclist politicians and media. But the real problem (and the real solution!) lies with the companies like Deliveroo, Just Eat and Uber Eats, whose exploitative delivery contracts lead to risk taking and corner cutting by people trying to make a basic living.

Pressure is mounting on these companies to train riders, inspect bikes and use GPS data to spot those exceeding speed limits. Local MP **Dr Scott Arthur** is pressing delivery companies and the UK Government on this, and Ministers have now promised a Work-Related Road Safety Charter (for all vehicle types).



Locally, unfair app-based working conditions for people such as delivery riders and care staff are being tackled by an impressive Edinburgh project, **The Workers Observatory** [workersobservatory.org], who equip gig workers to support each other and to challenge hidden and exploitative company algorithms.

Health

1,800 – 2,700
premature deaths each year
are due to **poor air quality**.
(source: Public Health Scotland)



Physical inactivity contributes
to **3,000** deaths in Scotland
each year.
(source: Public Health Scotland)



IF YOU ♥ SPOKES YOU MAY ALSO ♥ THESE

transform
scotland

transform.scot

Scotland's alliance for sustainable transport

- ◆ More people walking, wheeling, cycling
- ◆ More people using buses, trams, trains, ferries
- ◆ Less car use, less flying, less freight by road



infrasisters.org.uk

Mass rides on dark winter evenings, calling for night-time cycling infrastructure safe and comfortable for women and girls

- ◆ on-road infrastructure protected from traffic or offroad well-lit direct routes

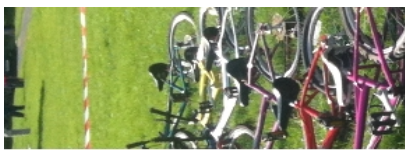
edinburghcriticalmass.wordpress.com



Cycle with others: reclaim the space, discover the city, meet other cyclists, generally have fun

- ◆ Last Sat every month, 2pm Middle Meadow Walk
- ◆ There are 300+ CM rides in the world each month

CityCyclingEdinburgh.info



// CityCyclingEdinburgh Forum

- ◆ Discuss any local cycling topic online
- ◆ Useful info and entertaining comments



sw20.info

Local group Currie/Oxgangs/Colinton, to encourage local living, name reflects 20mph & 20min neighbourhood

- ◆ Lobbying, cargobike hire, tool library, social media ...



stopclimatechaos.scot

"Climate change: the greatest challenge of our time"

- ◆ Diverse coalition of over 60 civil society organisations

- ◆ *Climate manifesto*: See 'policy' at above link

Bike Buses

[photo Andy Catlin]



- ◆ BlackfordSafeRoutes.co.uk is a top Safe Routes to School body, fighting for Greenbank/Meadows quiet route and supporting the Wee Unicorns Bike Bus

- ◆ Bikebus.org/Edinburgh All about local bike buses

- ◆ Spokes Bike Bus web page – loads of resources. Go to spokes.org.uk > documents > other > bike buses



edi.bike Weekly newsletter of infrastructure progress, road closures, events, etc

Also supporter's club, £1/month – well worth supporting!

LIVING STREETS EDINBURGH

livingstreetsedinburgh.org.uk Campaigning for...

- ◆ walking and wheeling as a safe, enjoyable, accessible, healthy way to get around Edinburgh
- ◆ reducing motorised traffic and its impact on people



thebikestation.org.uk

Charity bike business selling refurbished bikes and reinvesting in local community programmes

- ◆ *Donate a bike; buy a bike; volunteer*
- ◆ Cargo bike advice, try-outs, free kids 'Wee Bike Library'



ECCAN www.eccan.scot

- ◆ Join Edinburgh folk for community-led climate action
- ◆ Community initiatives on climate/nature emergency



Porty Community Energy

portycommunitybike.myturn.com

- ◆ Cargobike & ebike library
- ◆ Energy & climate, local advice & projects

HOW TO CONTACT POLITICIANS

1. Simplest - find them all at www.writetothem.com. Or...

2. MSPs – you have one constituency MSP and several Regional MSPs. Find them at www.parliament.scot/msps

3. Councillors web+phone below **Who runs the council?**

edinburgh.gov.uk	0131.529.3186	Lab (minority)
eastlothian.gov.uk	01620.827827	Lab (minority)
midlothian.gov.uk	0131.270.7500	SNP (minority)
westlothian.gov.uk	01506.280000	Lab (minority)

A PERSONAL VISIT??

Many people email their MSP/councillor, but why not visit their surgery for a chat on issues that concerns you: it could make an even bigger impact! Ask them for time/place.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Suggest bike parking sites: activetravel@edinburgh.gov.uk

Adult cycle training: 668.1996 info@thebikestation.org.uk

Bikes on rail, bus and ferry: www.travelinescotland.com:

Potholes, glass on paths, broken lights, in Edin/Lothian: [Use lamp-post numbers to report location]. 0800.232323 edinburgh.gov.uk/report. Or www.fillthathole.org.uk.

Bad glass/dumping [Ed only] Rapid Response 0808 100 3366

Taxi issues: licensing@edinburgh.gov.uk [try taxi firm first]

Lothian Buses: mail@lothianbuses.com 554 4494.

Dangerous drivers, mobile use, drink-driving, speeding, other road crime: see www.spokes.org.uk : links : reporting

Emotional/practical victim support: Brake 0808 800 0401