

# Spokes Action-Update 30.04.26

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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](http://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](http://writetothem.com).

## 1. The Holyrood 2026 Election is Thursday 7 April

The election is critical to active travel and wider transport policies and budgets for the next 5 years. Is there a local AT scheme you're looking forward to? – in Edinburgh, say Meadows to George St, or Portobello-Musselburgh? When and if such projects happen depends largely on the existence and size of the Government AT budget.

Sadly and disturbingly, in view of the climate crisis, the cost of living crisis, the need for healthier lifestyles to help the NHS crisis, and the shocking [decline in healthy life expectancy](#), most of this year's manifestos mark a massive deterioration in active travel policies as compared to the [2021 election](#) – or even [2016](#).

In 2021 all parties promised to increase AT investment from its then 3.5% of total transport. **But in 2026** the Greens do retain a 10% promise, but no other parties promise *even to maintain current levels* (3.9%) and the Conservatives explicitly promise a cut, calling active travel an *ideological project*. Meanwhile, apart from the Greens, there is unanimity on pouring more cash into increasing trunk road capacity.

Our [manifesto analysis](#) included most of the items directly relevant to cycling policy, as well as some wider environmental transport issues. However, we did not look at walk, bus and rail in our comparison. Our full detailed manifesto comparison table is [here](#), but a summary of the overall outcome is...

- **Greens** – excellent
- **LibDem** – positive, though in a fairly modest way
- **Labour & SNP** – poor
- **Reform** – bad
- **Conservatives** – terrible

### Stop press:

Free Voi bike travel to vote

.. 2 free rides on polling day!!

See our [bluesky post](#)

[ & please repost! ]



**Green** – if we had to quibble, more should be said on the public health and NHS benefits of people cycling for everyday travel; and, unlike all other parties, there is no specific mention of potholes.

**Lib Dem** – Several positive policies, but nothing really strong, and no mention of the importance of cycle networks. However, it is good to see AT referenced in several parts of the manifesto, not just transport, including several references to its public health importance.

**SNP** – The manifesto makes zero mention of the active travel budget (currently ~£163m), instead offering £2.5m for a bicycle repair fund and possible funding for outdoor recreation paths. No mention of cycle networks, traffic reduction, 20mph, LEZs or cycling's value for public health. They are against the Granton tram using the Roseburn route (which, of course, some people will see as positive and others as negative) but do not specify an alternative.

**Labour** – It is incomprehensible that there is no mention of cycling. The many top Labour politicians who understood and acted on its value for everyday travel, public health, climate, and enjoyable places to live would be gobsmacked – David Begg (who expanded North Ed Network), Alastair Darling (created Edinburgh Council's first cycle team), Sarah Boyack (initiated regular Scot Gov AT funding), and Council Transport conveners who took action on active travel, including Mark Lazarowicz, Andrew Burns, Scott Arthur and now Stephen Jenkinson.

**Reform** – The shortest of the manifestos, with an aim to “end the war on the car.” Cycling would however be supported as a means of recreation in rural Scotland.

**Conservative** – Although most parties don't mention the AT budget at all, the Conservatives are the only party explicitly promising to cut it (indeed their wording may even mean scrap it). They explicitly oppose any attempt to moderate car use growth, instead fast-tracking trunk road expansion and opposing LEZs, congestion or workplace charging, most speed reductions, air tax increases, etc. They also descend to semi-trumpian language such as ending “the obsession with cycle lanes” and describing active travel schemes as “ideological projects.”

### What you can do

- **Vote on 7 May** How to vote is of course your choice: you will need to take into account more than just AT. Indeed for some people independence (for or against!) or other issues may over-ride everything else.
- **Join 'Pedal On Parliament' on 30 May** to show the new Scottish Government that there is a real concern to take cycling more seriously as a form of local transport
- **Repost our bluesky election posts:** [Election article](#) / [Spokes hustings report](#) / [Free election-day Voi hires](#)

## 2. Dates for your diary

\* = with Spokes stall. *Come along and say hello – or email us to offer help!*

May 13, 3-5 & 6.30-8.30 [People's Emergency Briefing](#), **film & discussion**, already presented to MPs and decision-makers at Westminster. Leading experts from a range of fields explain why *"climate and nature breakdown will affect every constituency in the country, from health and food systems to infrastructure, security to economic stability. This crisis is more serious and immediate than many understand."*

\*May 16 **North Ed Festival** West Pilton Park, 12.00-17.30 Music, stalls, etc, all the Festival usual!

May 30 **Pedal on Parliament** is back!! 11.30 at The Meadows. Show newly elected MSPs what is needed.

May 30 **Critical Mass** will be on after PoP, at its usual 2pm time

\*? June 6 **Meadows Festival** – all the usual!

June 9-16 **Bike Week**

\*June 27 **Climate Festival** The Meadows, 12-7

\*Sept 16 **Cycling Scotland conference**, Perth

**REGULARS** [*check before attending, and tell us 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 early-morning rides, leaving St Andrew Square west gate at 5.40am, ending at Wellington Coffee

**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** 2-4pm until 30 October. Easy rides from Bridgend Farmhouse. [admin@bridgendfarmhouse.org.uk](mailto:admin@bridgendfarmhouse.org.uk)

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



Spokes stall at 2025 Meadows Festival

## 3. Bike-Rail [Send any comments/queries to [spokes@spokes.org.uk](mailto:spokes@spokes.org.uk) and we will pass to our bike/rail rep]

Scotrail have launched procurement for two new train types, for [suburban](#) and [long distance routes](#), both of which are important to cyclists.

The suburban trains will be battery electric and operate on the Fife and Borders lines which are to undergo partial electrification, and on some other routes. The initial specification is for 8 cycle spaces, a major improvement from the ageing class 158 and 170 diesel units they will replace. Cyclists on these routes tend to use the trains on a turn up and go basis so it is important that the cycle spaces are easy to access.

Meanwhile the "Inter7City" HST trains used on routes to Aberdeen and Inverness, which were belatedly fitted with 6 cycle spaces after campaigning by Spokes, are now coming to the end of life. These trains in the summer months often carry pre-booked tourers heading for the Highlands. The new replacements will be specified to the same bike capacity but unfortunately will not be ready before the venerable HSTs have to be withdrawn. In the interim mid-life diesel units from the Midlands are being drafted in as a stop gap, or so they say. These trains are similar to the Cross Country Voyagers and currently have only two bike spaces, of the awkward bike-handing type, but Scotrail say that they are to be refitted with 6 spaces. Let's hope they are better!

Procurement is at an early stage and the bike capacities quoted above may yet be changed in response to other demands for space. **Spokes has written to Transport Scotland asking to be engaged in the process to ensure adequate bike provision but this has been declined.** We will take up the matter after the elections.

### Tram Train for south sub?

There is [a proposal](#) to utilize the under-used south suburban railway, which currently only carries a few freight trains, to allow battery electric tram-trains, with connections at Murrayfield and Brunstane to form a loop. This would create new journey opportunities such as Cameron Toll to Haymarket, Morningside to the Airport and so on, which would be significantly quicker than car or bus equivalent. The main advantage of this plan is that the infrastructure is mostly already in place and would not require the disruptive construction work associated with on-street tram lines. A campaign group 'Tram Trains for Edinburgh' is holding a series of public meetings.

This is at an early stage, but it could make a major difference to cross city public transport on the south side. Thanks to determined Spokes lobbying when the tram first came to Edinburgh, bikes can be taken on the existing tram at off peak periods (as far as we know this is still the only UK tram to take bikes on regular scheduled services. If the tram-train project goes ahead, provision for cyclists could be built in, and we would certainly need to argue for continuing bike spaces on trams, cycle facilities at stops and integration with cycle routes.

## 4. Spokes news & help needed

### 4.1 Spokes annual paper-based mailout 2026

Most members should have received your paper-based mailout, with [Bulletin 140](#) and, as a thank-you for being a Spokes member, a free copy of our lovely new [Favourite Bike Rides](#) [Edition 3] booklet. A paper-based bulletin is essential once a year (perhaps twice), to have available in libraries, bike shops, etc and for bike leafleting.

- If you have not received your mailing by weekend May 9/10, let us know
- Get in touch if you could use a Bulletin supply for bike leafleting (Waverley, Haymarket and Princes St/ George St central areas have been done)
- Your mailout includes a printout of the info you gave us on your membership form. If there are changes to the info, or if you need to renew, please email [membership@spokes.org.uk](mailto:membership@spokes.org.uk).

### 4.2 Spokes maps

We've been asked about the **history of Spokes maps**. There are separate articles about the history of the Edinburgh maps and of the Lothians maps on our [website maps page](#).



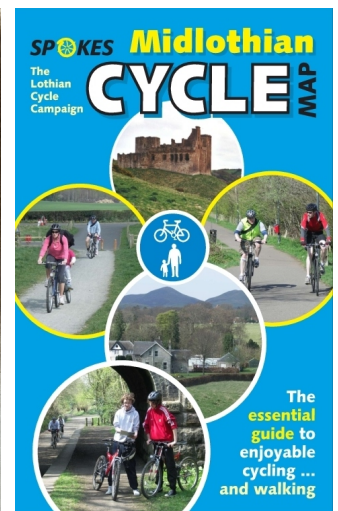
Bluesky post

Meanwhile, in addition to bike shops and selected book shops, you can now buy Spokes maps (Edinburgh and East Lothian only) at the [One World Shop](#) under St John's church at the West End.

And in **Linlithgow** we are experimenting with a maps article in a local door-to-door magazine, incorporating a £1 off voucher on any Spokes map at local bookshop, [Far From the Madding Crowd](#).



1st edition Edinburgh



First Lothians map: Midlothian

### 4.3 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.

### 4.4 Bike bus tabards

Spokes has sponsored 50 tabards for use by marshals in the growing number of school bike buses in Edinburgh. Thank-you to our members for your annual donations, which help us in initiatives like this! For more on the bike buses, see [bikebus.org/edinburgh](http://bikebus.org/edinburgh).

### 4.5 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 very-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.



bluesky post

## 5. Snippets

### 5.1 The changing skillset of active travel professionals

[Article](#) about the professional skills needed now that active travel is understood to be “a core mode of transport.” “Infrastructure once treated as an add-on to larger highway schemes is now understood as a core mode of transport - for the school run, the GP appointment, the short commute to the station.

Active travel schemes now intersect with public health, road safety, local economies and environmental outcomes. That breadth has real consequences for the professionals delivering them.”

### 5.2 Become a Cycling Scotland board member

“Cycling Scotland is recruiting for two new [voluntary trustees](#) to join our Board from summer 2026, to provide strategic leadership and work with the staff team to pursue our mission and charitable objectives.”

### 5.3 European State of the Climate – Copernicus report on 2025

[Comprehensive detailed data](#) on the dramatic climatic changes across Europe, the world’s fastest warming continent, whilst the Arctic is the fastest warming region, with temperatures reaching 30centigrade even at points within the Arctic Circle during the unprecedented 3-week July 2025 Scandinavia heatwave.



Ocean



Greenhouse gases driving climate change



Marine heatwaves impacting Mediterranean biodiversity



Peatland wildfires impacting biodiversity

Sections in the Copernicus report

## 6. Local developments (good, bad & uncertain..)

### 6.1 Greenbank-Meadows quiet route, including Cluny Drive & Whitehouse Loan traffic filters – and other Braid/Comiston schemes

On Tuesday 12 May, councillors on the TRO Subcommittee will decide whether to make legally permanent, in whole or in part, or to scrap, the Greenbank-Meadows Quiet Route, which currently is legal under Experimental Traffic Order ETRO/21/29D. The [Quiet Route](#) also serves several school journeys, keeping through traffic out of the area. The Cluny Drive filters also provide a much more pleasant and safer east-west connection along Cluny Drive. This TRO Subcommittee decision is the final step in a painful years-long saga of objections, indecision and councillor shenanigans which has plagued this scheme since it was introduced at the time of covid.

The TRO Subcommittee is a ‘quasi-judicial’ setup, not used by any other Council in Scotland as far as we know, and on which councillors are there only to assess the objections which have been received to the scheme. Councillors on the TROSub are meant to act purely as individuals, regardless of party. Indeed, the fact that the full Transport Committee (TEC) supports this scheme is in theory not relevant, even though the scheme was introduced, consulted on, and debated throughout by TEC, until this very final ‘quasi-judicial’ step.

#### Other schemes

At the same meeting, final decisions will be taken on making legally permanent (or not) the **Braid Road** ETRO/21/29B and **Comiston Road** ETRO/21/29C active travel experimental schemes. Once the schemes are legally permanent, they will then go on the list for improving the materials and possibly making further improvements, though there is already a long waiting list of schemes elsewhere in the city.

[For anyone interested in the technicalities, the above Orders are [here](#). Note that 29A is already approved].

#### So, what’s happening for TRO Sub?

- Because of quasi-judicial nature of the TRO Subcommittee, deputations are not allowed, so **Spokes** cannot make a submission [we have of course commented to TEC several times in the earlier processes]
- However, **individual members of the public (you!)** are welcome to email your own councillors as usual, for example to say how much you value the quiet route, the traffic filters and/or the other schemes. See [section 0 above to find your councillors](#). We don’t fully understand the legalities, but it may be best just to say how much you value these, rather than explicitly asking councillors to support the Orders. We’d suggest emailing after election day, 7 May, as councillors will be fully occupied till then (and of course before 12 May, the date of the subcommittee meeting). If any of your councillors are on the [TROsubcommittee](#), it may be particularly worth emailing them.
- **Edinburgh Critical Mass** is organising a supportive rally outside the City Chambers on the morning of TRO Sub, May 12<sup>th</sup>, to which anyone is welcome. We imagine details will be available on their [bluesky](#) account and probably in the May 4 and/or May 11 editions of [edi.bike](#), nearer the time.

## 6.2 Primary Cycle Network - standards

Edinburgh's policy on a Primary Cycle Network, largely comprising main road segregated bike routes, is discussed on page 8 of the new [Spokes Bulletin 140](#). However, there is no specification as to its detailed design.

Now, a pedestrian build-out has been constructed across the Gilmerton Road Primary Network route, replacing a central island, forcing cyclists to move out into the main traffic lane at the build-out (or hit the build-out kerb!)

Whilst removal of a pinch-point central island is valuable for those road-confident cyclists who prefer no cycle lane, a design such as this, interrupting the bike lane, could prevent families with children, or the more nervous, from using the route at all. It is a really bad precedent for the standards to be expected of the Primary Network.

Were the designers even aware of the Primary Network, and that this lay on it? And was the design (by another section of the department) discussed with the Council's active travel team? Is there joined-up thinking?

Obviously Spokes is very supportive of improved pedestrian facilities, especially here on a route to school, but there are alternative designs which could cater both for walking and cycling safety, some of which have been implemented by the Council at other locations (though no location is identical and modifications might be needed). However, a solution which enables cyclists to continue along a protected cycleroute, not being forced into the traffic stream, is surely essential for locations on the Council's Primary Cycle Network.



*The Gilmerton Road build-out under construction*



*Duddingston Rd build-out, with zebra cycle crossing*



*Build-out with continued cycleroute further along Gilmerton Rd*

## 6.3 Voi hire bikes – parking issues

Whilst the Council's new Voi hire bike scheme has been a great success overall, particularly in terms of usage and expansion to further areas of the city, there have been some problems around parking, with bikes occupying the city's Sheffield rack bike stands, or overlapping areas used by pedestrians. Members of Spokes Planning Group and others have been in touch with VOI over this and other initial issues, and it is great now to see parking areas starting to be clearly marked (even if they are not always big enough!)



**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 initial draft Spokes responses, ideally joining our Planning Group**

## 7. Edinburgh & Lothians Consultations [but no Lothians consultations at present]

### 7.1 North Edinburgh Connections – [website & online survey](#) – **closes 9 June**

Protected bike lanes and other improvements along:

- Pennywell Road [which will be de-dualed]
- Ferry Road
- West Granton Road

... linking to surrounding areas including North Ed path network (thence city centre), Granton and Cramond.

*“The goal of the project is to increase journeys by walking, wheeling, and cycling, and reduce dependence on private car journeys. The project looks for placemaking opportunities, reallocating road space, providing segregated cycle lanes, enhancing pedestrian and green space, improving junctions and creating a safe and vibrant place for all to enjoy.”*



#### Drop-ins

- Tue 5 May 12pm-6pm, Muirhouse Millennium Centre
- Sat 16 May 11am-5.30pm, North Edinburgh Community Festival
- Thu 28 May 1pm-7pm, North Edinburgh Arts

**Queries/More info:** [neatconnections@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:neatconnections@edinburgh.gov.uk)

### 7.2 Craigmillar/Niddrie Connections – [website & online survey](#) – **closes 8 July**

*“to revitalise the Craigmillar / Niddrie area by creating better spaces for high-quality, safe walking, wheeling, and cycling routes as well as improved bus priority, alongside more attractive places to spend time“*

...includes cyclistoutes on Peffermill Rd, Niddrie Mains Rd, Newcraighall Rd, Greendykes Rd + more, with connections to local schools. Fort Kinnaird and surrounding areas



#### Drop-ins

- May 11, 10am-7pm, Craigmillar Library, 101 Niddrie Mains Road EH16 4DS
- May 27, 11am-2pm, The White House, 70 Niddrie Mains Road EH16 4BG

**Queries/More info:** [CraigmillarNiddrie@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:CraigmillarNiddrie@edinburgh.gov.uk)

### 7.3 Lawnmarket – [Traffic Order ETRO/25/23](#) – **closes 22 August**

This is an Experimental Traffic Order banning motor traffic; plus banning large vehicles (coaches etc) on Johnston Terrace. With such Orders, the scheme is already in place, as an experiment. Depending on how the experiment goes, and the feedback received from the public, the experiment may be made permanent, modified, or scrapped. **So if you like it, or have comments, please do respond!** (and, as always, copy to Spokes so we can consider your points for our own response).

**Email your response to** [TRO.Consultations@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:TRO.Consultations@edinburgh.gov.uk), quoting 'ETRO/25/23, Lawnmarket area'

**If you have queries about the Order, email** [trafficorders@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:trafficorders@edinburgh.gov.uk).

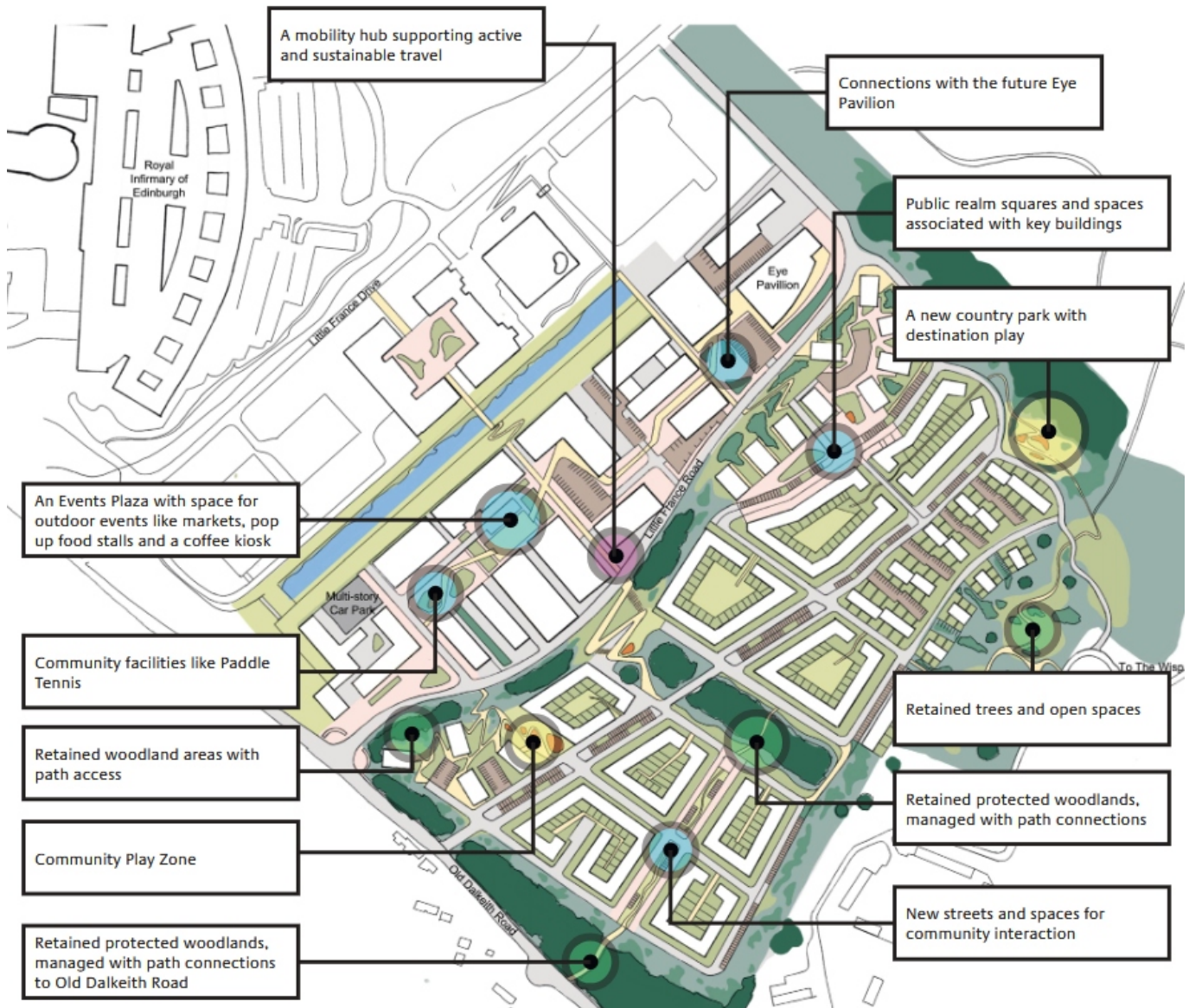
## 7.4 Bioquarter – [website](#)

A massive mixed-use masterplan between the existing Bioquarter and south towards the former Edmonstone Estate area, including 1500 homes, 1million sq ft of office & lab space, a hotel, mobility hub, public realm areas and active travel routes.

Click the 3 lines at top right of main website page to find FAQs and exhibition materials.

**All comments received in time will be considered for the next iteration of plans, which will go on display with resulting changes** on Tue 9 June, 2-7pm at Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre, 5 Moredunvale Place, EH17 7LB.

**Send your comments to:** [bioquarter@ryden.co.uk](mailto:bioquarter@ryden.co.uk) or use the form at the bottom of [this page](#).



## 8. National Consultations

### 8.1 [UK] Proposed changes to penalties for motoring offences [Consultn site](#) – *closes 11 May*

Seeks views on changes to existing motoring offences, and potential introduction of other offences, including on:

- drink and drug driving
- seat belt usage
- failure to stop and report
- driving unlicensed
- driving without a current MOT
- driving without motor insurance
- use of illegal number plates, including 'ghost' number plates

## 9. 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:jocelyn@wlcan.scot)
- **SEStran** (South East Scotland regional transport partnership) – [People & Place, projects & grants](#)

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

- **East Lothian** [usually in-person] For next date email [cmilne@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:cmilne@eastlothian.gov.uk)
- **Midlothian** [usually online] For next date email [Thomas.Quayle@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Thomas.Quayle@midlothian.gov.uk)
- **West Lothian** [usually online] For next date email [jocelyn@wlcan.scot](mailto:jocelyn@wlcan.scot)

## 10. More & future consultations – *Check council, government, and other sites*

- ◆ **Edinburgh** [consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk](http://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk)
- ◆ **Edinburgh** [Edinburgh traffic orders](#)
- ◆ **East Lothian** [www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk](http://www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk)
- ◆ **Midlothian** <https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/directory/33/consultations>
- ◆ **West Lothian** [www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations)
- ◆ **Scottish Government** [consult.gov.scot](http://consult.gov.scot)
- ◆ **Transport Scotland** [www.transport.gov.scot/consultations](http://www.transport.gov.scot/consultations)
- ◆ **Scottish Parliament consultations** [yourviews.parliament.scot/consultation\\_finder](http://yourviews.parliament.scot/consultation_finder)
- ◆ **Scottish Parliament petitions** [petitions.parliament.scot](http://petitions.parliament.scot)
- ◆ **UK government consultations** [https://www.gov.uk/search/policy-papers-and-consultations?content\\_store\\_document\\_type%5B%5D=open\\_consultations&order=most-viewed](https://www.gov.uk/search/policy-papers-and-consultations?content_store_document_type%5B%5D=open_consultations&order=most-viewed)
- ◆ **Just in case...** Transform Scotland keeps an updated page of current transport-related consultations... [transformscotland.org.uk/whats-new/action-alerts](http://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](http://www.spokes.org.uk/consultns)

## 11. Keeping in touch

- ★ Remember to check out our **website** every so often [www.spokes.org.uk](http://www.spokes.org.uk)
- ★ We are active on **Bluesky** [@spokes.org.uk](https://bsky.app/profile/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](http://www.spokes.org.uk/membership).