



Land Planning Policy Team
East Dunbartonshire Council
Southbank House, Strathkelvin Place
Kirkintilloch, G66 1XQ

PO Box 15175, Glasgow, G4 9LP

e-mail: consultations@gobike.org

web: www.gobike.org

By e-mail to: development.plan@eastdunbarton.gov.uk

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Dear Sir/Madam,

EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL, TRANSPORT OPTIONS REPORT

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposals for transport options in East Dunbartonshire. GoBike is pleased to put the following views forward.

GoBike is a group of people who enjoy cycling for commuting, shopping and other everyday journeys, as well as for leisure purposes. We have members in East Dunbartonshire who commute, by bike, to Glasgow and also cycle for utility and leisure purposes in East Dunbartonshire and the wider west of Scotland area. Likewise, we have members in Glasgow and other local authority areas who commute to East Dunbartonshire but also cycle there for other reasons. Most of us are confident when cycling on roads but we are very aware that many people would cycle if traffic was going slower, there was less roadside parking and if major routes between towns and within towns has segregated cycle lanes. We have looked at the Transport Options Report with interest and spoken to members of staff involved in its production and we offer the following comments:

Area Wide Options

Active Travel

This is where most of the emphasis should be, with segregated cycle lanes linking towns and linking suburbs with town centres. With a good network of cycling infrastructure many people would dust off their old bike or buy a new one and cycle that short journey to the station or the shops or to take their children to school. Schools should be organising walking groups or cycling groups to school; the Active Travel Coordinator that you propose should be leading on such actions. Actions such as this would make proposals such as the production of Active Travel Routes guides superfluous as people would already be using the active travel routes.

Public Transport

East Dunbartonshire Council should, in our view, be working with SPT for a publicly owned bus service, one that actively works to reduce pollution by providing cheap bus travel on the most heavily congested and polluted routes. As discussed at our meeting Lothian Transport provides a good, cheap bus service that has weaned many residents, and visitors, away from the perceived need for private motor transport. This should be the aim in East Dunbartonshire, where many residents have an inadequate bus service and feel pressured into buying a car.

Roads

Many of the options suggested would not be so significant if active travel and public transport were improved.

The major roads in East Dunbartonshire need to be provided with cycle lanes so that cycling may be a viable alternative for residents and visitors alike. Your report mentions an east-west route, which we support and below we expand on the need for the A81 Bears Way to be extended. However, there is a need for a cycle route on the A803 through Bishopbriggs, as well as a good quality route from Kirkintilloch to Lenzie. It is only through investment such as this that people will be able to make a real choice about their everyday mode of travel. Your Cycle Map East Dunbartonshire features many attractive places to cycle but, apart from the Bears Way, none are on road, and therefore do not assist with getting people on bikes from a to b along the majority desired direction of travel. Most people would take the car, rather than the bike, to get to the parks etc that are listed

Parking

Parking should not be free. It is an inefficient use of space. It is not the council's responsibility to store people's private property. However we do concede that provision must be made for people making essential journeys by car and would expect the amount of provision and numbers of disabled spaces to reflect that for essential journeys only. Parked cars, if off-street are using land that is valuable and could be put to better use. Vehicles parked on streets impede people cycling, make it hazardous for people crossing the road and delay buses.

Bearsden and Milngavie options

Active Travel

Good quality segregated cycle lanes are needed to link the two centres and to provide links on the major routes to the railway stations. The most important active travel concern, the extension of the Bears Way, is, curiously, in the next section "Public Transport".

Public Transport

To propose the enlargement of the car park at Milngavie Station rather than the extension of the Bears Way is a misuse of funds. It will encourage Milngavie residents who live near the station to use their cars for a very short journey that they could easily walk or cycle and it will leave commuters from the likes of Strathblane still struggling to find a place to leave their car. Yes, we understand that the aim is to increase rail commuting to Glasgow but it will significantly increase car use in Milngavie.

We also understand that there is no charge for parking here, which is unsustainable. A free car park such as this will simply encourage people to use their cars. In our view the station car park should be for rail passengers only and, in line with many other station car parks in Scotland, a parking fee should be levied. This would deter local residents from using the car park but will help people from outlying areas to get to the train.

This would mean that the extension of the Bears Way both north to the centre of Milngavie and south to the Glasgow border will be feasible. It will bring a major reduction in car use in the town as people cycle the short way to the station and will give a great boost to active travel both for East Dunbartonshire residents but also for anyone visiting.

In addition the Bears Way needs to be extended south to the Glasgow border, which hopefully, will encourage Glasgow City Council to install cycle lanes on Maryhill Road. Such a project by the two councils will attract people who wish to cycle the West Highland Way and many others who wish to tour East Dunbartonshire and surrounding areas. Once the route actually goes somewhere more people will use it and the ongoing nibbling away at its quality that we hear about will stop.

Roads

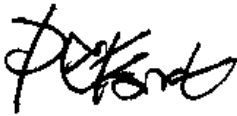
Roundabouts and major junctions such as Canniesburn Toll are hazardous for people cycling and any changes that are made at the junctions listed in the Report should be done in line with active travel guidance.

East-West cycle route. Such a route is needed if active travel is to be encouraged, and should be progressed

Bearsden and Bishopriggs Town Centres. The proposals listed will do little, if anything, to reduce motor vehicle use, and thus is there any useful purpose in continuing to monitor air quality? Does East Dunbartonshire Council give the results the respect they deserve? Major improvements in active travel and public transport are needed to effect a significant modal change.

We are thoroughly aware of the vocal opposition to active travel and the loss of privilege to the private car that there is in some sections of the East Dunbartonshire population, but this must be faced if active travel and climate change targets are to be met.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tricia Fort', written in a cursive style.

Tricia Fort
for Consultations, GoBike