

Council formalises its support bike buses

Cllr Jule Bandel, Edinburgh Greens transport spokesperson proposed a motion at today's council meeting calling for the council to support bike buses. These are organised cycle rides to school in the morning which are accompanied by adults – usually parents – and the ride moves as one vehicle.

This means that at junctions marshalls peel off from the ride to stop the traffic to allow all cyclists through at once, ensuring their safety. Often these rides have been accompanied by police officers on bicycles. In the case of the ride to James Gillespie's Primary School the traffic lights on Strathearn Road are manually switched to green to allow the bike bus to pass through more easily. That ride has the lovely gardens at Ashley Ainslie as part of its route along with other quiet roads – and of course the extra protection of stopped up streets introduced under Spaces for People.

The motion was agreed by the other political groups on the council. Cllr Bandel said: "I'm delighted the council has agreed to support bike buses at today's council meeting. Bike buses are an important way to provide young people with a fun and safe way to cycle to school and it's important they are supported by the council. Cycling and walking to school brings

considerable benefits, both for the health and well-being of the children themselves, but also for wider society with reduced congestion, air pollution and climate change emissions.

“Of course, while bike buses are an important way to support those cycling to school, they are not a substitute for investment in safe segregated cycling infrastructure. Green councillors will continue to press for increased investment in wider pavements and dedicated cycle paths to ensure that school kids do not need to share road space with one-ton metal boxes.”

The motion to council was as follows:

By Councillor Bandel – Bike Buses

“Council:

1. Notes that bike buses offer pupils a safe way to cycle to school as part of a group, promote cycling as an enjoyable activity, increase young people’s confidence to cycle on the road, and reduce emissions and congestion around schools.
2. Recognises that pupils should not need to rely on bike buses to safely cycle to school and reaffirms the Council’s commitment to create safer streets for cyclists of all ages and abilities.
3. Notes that Edinburgh currently has 6 active bike buses and thanks all volunteers involved in setting up and running bike buses across the city. Further thanks officers for their work to date on supporting bike buses since Councillor Miller’s ‘Bike Buses’ motion to Transport and Environment Committee in February 2020.
4. Commends volunteers at Sciennes Primary School and Blackford Safe Routes for creating a guide to running a bike bus which has been enabling more schools to offer a bike bus.

5. Recognises that more schools might be interested in setting up bike buses but may not be aware of the support and expertise that is available to them.
6. 6) Requests road safety officers to write to all primary schools in Edinburgh to encourage them to set up a bike bus and disseminate relevant guidance and support prepared by experienced bike bus organisers.”



George Watson's Bike Bus number 1