

QUESTION NO 23

By Councillor Munro for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 30 June 2022

The Walking and Cycling Index, carried out by City of Edinburgh Council and Sustrans was published on 17 May 22, 12 days after the election.

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/13474/walking-wheeling-and-cycling-boost-to-environment-and-economy>

Previously known as Bike Life, this is the fourth edition of this research, which has been carried out every two years since 2015.

- Question** (1) a) How much did City of Edinburgh Council spend on the 2022 research and any associated launch?
- b) Were any costs covered by other organisations?

Answer (1)

- Question** (2) On p4 of the report it says: "*Participation in walking, cycling and wheeling on a regular basis has stayed about the same since 2019.*"

This data shows that the Spaces for People cycle lanes installed during the pandemic did not lead to more people cycling than before the pandemic.

- a) Can the convener explain why this multi-million-pound investment failed to increase the participation in cycling in Edinburgh?
- b) Given this, and the well documented negative impacts on businesses and individuals including disabled people, what changes to the strategy of the previous administration will the convener seek to make?

Answer (2)

- Question** (3) On p16 of the report it says that Edinburgh has two miles of cycle tracks physical separated from traffic and pedestrians, up from 1 mile in 2019.

- a) In a footnote, it says this does not include the 22 miles of 'pop-up' cycle lane installed in 2020/21 in response to the pandemic.
- b) Why were these 'pop-up' Spaces for People lanes not included?

Answer

(3)

- (4)** On page 4 of the report, two statistics are highlighted next to each other: “66% of residents walk at least five days a week” and “26% of residents cycle at least once a week.”

It is not best practice to layout non-comparable data in a way that might lead the reader to directly compare them, especially when directly comparable data is available?

(4)

- (5)** Why did it not say “97% of residents walk at least once a week (up from 92% in 2019)” beside “26% of residents cycle at least once a week (up from 24% in 2019)”

and/or

- a) “66% of residents walk at least five days a week (up from 65% in 2019)” beside “8% of residents cycle at least five days a week (down from 9% in 2019)”?
- b) This misleading comparison “66% of residents make trips by walking at least five days a week and 26% of residents cycle at least once a week” has already been included on the Consultation Hub, in the introduction for the consultation for “Walk Wheel Cycle Burdiehouse”.
- c) If these statistics continue to be presented this way in official documents, could this lead to the public not spotting the disproportionate spend on cycling infrastructure over walking, even though walking is more accessible to all groups and top of the transport hierarchy?
- d) Will this now be corrected in the Walking and Cycling Index 2022 to prevent a cascade of misrepresentation in official documents, using the Index as a source?

Answer (5)

Question (6) City of Edinburgh Council needs to understand more about the barriers to people cycling and feeling safe.

In the 2019 Bike Life report it covered reasons why some residents do not cycle or why they cycle less often

1. Reason	2. %age of those who do not cycle or cycle less often (they could choose multiple reasons)
3. Concerned about safety	4. 51%
5. Poor weather	6. 31%
7. Not confident cycling	8. 26%
9. Lack of storage facilities at home or work	10. 25%
11. Too hilly here	12. 19%
13. Living too far from my destination	14. 15%
15. Children, passengers or too much to carry	16. 14%
17. Cost of a suitable cycle	18. 13%
19. Not for people like me	20. 9%

- a) In another question, 95% of the residents who believed cycling safety needed to be improved, said that the way to improve cycle safety in Edinburgh was better road quality and fewer potholes.
- b) This data contributes to understanding about the lack of increase in cycling. Why was data on all this included in the 2019 report but not in 2021?

Answer (6)

Question (7) The Walking and Cycling Index 2022 shows some dramatic declines when compared with the 2019 Bike Life report.

Responses to questions	2019	2021	Drop in percentage points
%age of residents that would be helped to cycle more by better facilities - more cycle tracks along roads that are physically	82%	64%	-18

separated from traffic.			
% of residents support building more cycle lanes physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic	74%	57%	-17
%age who want more traffic-free cycle routes away from roads, eg through parks, or along waterways	84%	73%	-11
%age of residents wanting more signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets	75%	67%	-8
% of people who agree increasing spaces for people socialising or walking and cycling on their local high street would improve the area	75%	58%	-17
% of people agreeing closing streets outside local schools to cars during school drop-off and pick up times would improve their local area	57%	47%	-10
% of people want to see more spent on cycling	62%	52%	-10

- a) Is there any commentary in the Index acknowledging the declines?
- b) Is there any commentary in the Index explaining the declines?
- c) This Index is used to inform and justify transport and active travel policy. Are there any policy changes informed by these declines?
- d) While there are some declines in the aggregated report across the UK, the declines in Edinburgh appear to be bigger. Is there any explanation for this?

Answer (7)