

**Report to Partnership Meeting June 2014**  
**RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**  
**National Walking Strategy Consultation**

**Purpose of the Report:**

To provide an update on the draft National Walking Strategy Consultation.

**Background:**

The Scottish Government announced a very short consultation on the draft National Walking Strategy between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May. Due to the restricted timescales HITRANS were unable to circulate the draft strategy for comment at either our Partnership Advisers or Board meetings.

HITRANS full submission is provided below, but the bullet points highlight our main comments on the draft strategy:

- HITRANS recognises the need for the National Walking strategy to have set targets or aspirations. These should be linked to the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland and the Active Travel Strategy which is currently being developed.
- The focus of the National Walking Strategy should be on everyday journeys where walking could be incorporated or encouraged. Walking for tourism and recreation is important, but often use of other transport is required to gain access to the desired location, and this is targeted towards the population who enjoy walking.
- With the support of its partner Local Authorities and increased ring-fenced funding, there is an opportunity for HITRANS to play a lead role in increasing levels of walking and cycling by implementing its Active Travel Audit Action Plans and working with Transport Scotland, Sustrans, Cycling Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, member Local Authorities and other Community Planning Partners.
- HITRANS can demonstrate a recent track record of progressive policy implementation and investment in active travel by working with its member Local Authorities and other partners to secure significant external funding.
- Links between cross government teams, especially NHS Health Scotland, Climate Change, Transport and Planning are essential in ensuring walking friendly environments are realised, along with the necessary behaviour change resources and materials to encourage people to get out and walk.

**HITRANS response to National Walking Strategy:**

The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) welcome the opportunity to contribute to the National Walking Strategy.

The promotion and development of walking and cycling, with a focus on active travel forms a core element of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy in which the following themes are identified as key objectives:

- Promote the long-term development of active travel across the region.
- Enable progress in active travel to be monitored across HITRANS.
- Promote partnership working in promotion of active travel.
- Achieve consistency of standards in infrastructure to support active travel.

## **National Walking Strategy Consultation Questions**

### **Vision**

The draft Strategy sets the following vision: 'A Scotland where places are well designed for walking, an increased number of people enjoy the outdoors and more people walk as part of their everyday journeys.'

#### **1. Is this the right vision for Scotland?**

Yes, it is good to see that the vision is prioritising the need for infrastructure and design to encourage walking environments.

It important that everyday journeys are recognised as being one of the priorities within this vision. This needs to link directly into cycling opportunities and key links with transport hubs to encourage a modal shift in peoples' travel behaviour from car use to using active travel.

The phrase 'enjoying the outdoors' is often promoted for recreational walking. It would be more powerful to link the vision into the key health messages for physical activity, which could reach a larger proportion of the population. Walking and active travel are key methods for adults to reach the minimum requirements of 30 minutes exercise 5 times per week, and 60 minutes for children. Tying the importance of health and active travel into the vision will strengthen the case for funding towards delivery in the future.

#### **2. Does the draft strategy provide the right framework to achieve this vision?**

The strategy does not have any significant targets linked to the document. HITRANS would like to see at least an aspiration that ties into the CAPS vision of 10% cycling by 2020 everyday, so that a baseline could be recorded and the improvements in walking levels could be analysed in the future.

The aims of 'we aspire to achieving levels of walking on a par with the best performing countries such as the Netherland, Norway and Sweden' need to be presented in a more factual manner. This, alongside baseline data on current walking levels is important in acknowledging the challenges of increasing walking within Scotland at present.

Additionally, the National Walking Strategy should tie into the developing Active Travel Strategy. Both documents, along with CAPS should set key targets for walking and cycling, which fit into each other and encourage behaviour change where walking and cycling are commonplace.

The focus on policy documents and cross sector delivery is vital within the strategy, but it would be good to see a framework of delivery methods established along with a specific budget for

implementation and a timescale for evaluation and analysis of any improvements in walking levels. The key actions established in the 'making change happen' should have at least aspirational % increase targets, to represent the importance in ensuring walking levels increase across Scotland in the short term future.

### **3. How does/could you/your organisation contribute towards achieving the vision?**

#### **HITRANS Active Travel Audits**

A key initiative HITRANS has undertaken in order to achieve these objectives is to fund a series of Active Travel Audits for all of its key regional settlements. A link to each of the Active Travel Audits can be found on the HITRANS website from the following link.

[http://www.hitrans.org.uk/Corporate/Research/Active\\_Travel](http://www.hitrans.org.uk/Corporate/Research/Active_Travel)

In the development of these Active Travel Audits, HITRANS has placed an emphasis on increasing utility walking and cycling for work and education. Without achieving modal shift in this area the CAPS target of 10% of all journeys by bike cannot be achieved, and walking rates will not increase.

Each Audit provides an Active Travel Prioritised Action Plan and an Active Travel Masterplan for each settlement. This identifies areas and potential interventions where there is the greatest potential to achieve modal shift or where there is the greatest need for infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. The Masterplan identifies a core network for pedestrians and cyclists that provide direct, convenient, and safe links between journey origins and journey attractors.

The Audits have already been successfully used to support investment programmes and provide an invaluable evidence base when applying for external sources of funding. Perhaps most critical of all, member Local Authorities have embedded the Audits within the planning process by adopting them in their Local Transport Strategies and Local Development Plans. This will help ensure that new development caters for walking and cycling and investment is secured for the improving the existing cycling network.

We are currently developing a series of Active Travel maps, linked into the audit areas, which will highlight all of the suggested active travel routes, mixed use paths and other recreational paths within settlements to encourage people to travel by foot or bike in their local area. This resource will be crucial in helping local people to identify the paths on their doorstep.

We are currently evaluating our 17 audits to take into account the key changes in local policies, the 2011 census data and to establish a picture of infrastructure improvements which have been delivered, or that are still vitally required to meet the demands of the communities in establishing active travel opportunities.

#### **Strategic Aims**

### **4. Do the strategic aims support the delivery of the vision?**

The three strategic aims identified in the National Walking Strategy are:

- Create a culture for walking
- Better walking environments throughout Scotland, and
- Ensure easy, convenient independent mobility for all.

A fourth aim should be that:

- Walking is seen as the best form of transport in local areas, following the hierarchy of walking, cycling, public transport use and car use.

The key aims need to be linked into a clear framework for delivery and should highlight guidance documents, such as designing streets and other examples of best practice to encourage the delivery of walking friendly environments.

Last week, the Welsh assembly have released their draft [Active Travel Action Plan](#) for consultation. This set out clear aims of:

- Making it safer to walk and cycle
- Making it easier to walk and cycle
- Creating an active travel culture
- Walking and cycling for all
- Monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes?

These clear and concise aims, with strong links to safety, ease of use, attractive environments, inclusivity and monitoring and evaluation for walking and cycling is perhaps a good model to adopt here in Scotland.

## Great places

### **5. How can we build on the current facilities in and around communities and ensure they are welcoming walking environments for everyone?**

When looking at the current facilities in place within communities, a focus has to be given to maintenance, the perception of safety on paths/routes and the knowledge of the existing network. Good signage is key to encouraging people to move between areas, with timings or distances identified. It has been proven that the 'build and people will use' model does not work for path infrastructure, and through the current development of HITRANS' Active Travel Maps it is very clear that many people are simply not aware of the walking and cycling infrastructure close to where they live.

A focus should be given to areas where rural deprivation, within the SIMD interactive mapping tool for deprivation. The 'geographic access' domain identifies that the majority of the communities within the HITRANS area are within the top 15% for deprivation. This is partly due to the poor infrastructure in place within rural communities for walking and cycling, and this needs to be addressed through capital funding for infrastructure, alongside revenue budgets for developing behavioural change materials aimed specifically at rural locations.

Within Argyll and Bute, the development of the NCN 78 has resulted in several communities working with the Local Authority to gain successful bids for Community Links funding to their local area, including crucial transport interchanges such as ferry terminals and train stations. This approach should result in a modal shift in travel behaviours.

Within more urban areas the focus should be on places for people to live, work and enjoy, with urban realm design, street furniture to promote active travel and walking including seating, localised art work and open friendly spaces where the car and other forms of transport are seen as secondary to walking and cycling.

To provide further comments on the National Walking Strategy it would be useful to see a copy of the Action Plan which was not included within the email.

### **Launch of the National Walking Strategy:**

The final version of the National Walking Strategy is due to be launched on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

### **Recommendation**

1. Members are asked to note the report.

**Report by:** Fiona McInally  
**Designation:** Active Travel Officer  
**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> May 2014

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>RTS delivery</b>	√	<b>This work supports RTS objectives and the monitoring of their implementation.</b>
<b>Policy</b>	√	<b>This work supports the development of our Active Travel Policies H27a to H27d</b>
<b>Financial</b>	-	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Equality</b>	-	<b>HITRANS support for Active Travel helps eliminate the barriers to travel for all and removes a number of physical accessibility barriers</b>