

## **Report to Partnership Meeting 5 October 2012**

### **RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

#### **Active Travel Work Package Update**

##### **Purpose of Report**

To update Board Members on a range of Active Travel projects supported by HITRANS through our collaborative work with our partner local authorities.

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

HITRANS commissioned work to Audit the barriers to Active Travel within all the Regional Centres in the Highlands and Islands. The aim of this process was to assess where best to apply available funding in order to increase the potential for active travel and ideally to see an increase in the number of people choosing to walk or cycle.

The Audit process has allowed HITRANS to develop a methodology to assess existing and proposed active travel infrastructure. This methodology is based on the following key parameters:

- A desktop study including demographics, travel to work patterns, public transport information and traffic accident data
- Analysis of main trip generators/attractors
- Consultation with the Local Authority and other interested parties
- On site audits
- Application of a 'prioritisation filter'

The prioritisation filter is an analysis tool to identify those corridors where there is the greatest potential for modal shift. The filter encompasses information from the desktop study such as demographic data, trip generators and attractors, planning proposals and the results of stakeholder consultation. The filter also assesses the 'implementability' of a route compared to its potential usage.

The outputs from the application of the methodology are:

- An Active Travel Prioritised Action Plan
- An Active Travel Master Plan

The prioritised action plan 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 master plan is a core network for pedestrians and cyclists that provides direct, convenient, safe, attractive and coherent links between journey origins and journey attractors. It should be noted that all the proposals contained within the prioritised action plan and master plan will require further investigation and feasibility work.

The detailed findings from each Audit is available on the HITRANS website where the Active Travel Audit reports are available to download from - [http://www.hitrans.org.uk/Corporate/Research/Active\\_Travel](http://www.hitrans.org.uk/Corporate/Research/Active_Travel)

The Rothesay Audit was used by Argyll and Bute Council to support the efforts of the Bute community in a successful application for Climate Challenge Funding. This continues to be used as a reference document as their project is implemented. It is intended that the "Towards Zero Carbon Bute" project will achieve measures identified in the HITRANS audit, including mapping and signage and reviewed prioritisation of routes in the town centre. This is the latest Active Travel Audit to have helped secure external funding for Active Travel infrastructure improvements after successful bids were made for ERDF funding with information supplied through the Inverness, Elgin and Invergordon / Alness Audits while the Kirkwall Audit supported a bid for Scottish Government funding from the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places initiative.

### **Active Travel Audit Related Project Delivery**

The Active Travel Audits have produced the Active Travel Prioritised Action Plan for regional centres and this has been a very effective tool in attracting external funding. To further support this work and help our partner local authorities attract funding HITRANS have channelled budget from our research and strategy delivery programme to our Council partners for the delivery of Active Travel work.

In 2011/12 the main beneficiaries of HITRANS Active Travel support from our Development budget were Argyll and Bute Council and Moray Council.

Argyll and Bute Council received £25,000 from HITRANS to support the delivery of Active Travel Infrastructure and Information in the Council area. This included the development of a series of walking and cycling maps for the towns where the audits have been conducted. Argyll and Bute Council used the funding to install dropped kerbs in Campbeltown and Lochgilphead as recommended in the Active Travel Audits and to provide cycle parking at a number of locations in Campbeltown and Lochgilphead. The Council will shortly be submitting a bid to SPT to match fund HITRANS contribution to the cycle parking so that facilities in Helensburgh and Lomond can be improved in line with the work that has been delivered in the HITRANS area. The HITRANS funding has been used by the Council to secure external funding from Sustrans through their Soft Measures funding stream.

### **Green and Active Travel Improvements – Highland Council ERDF Project**

The Green and Active Travel Improvements ERDF project is a 3 year project which commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 and will run until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2014. The £560,000 project for which The Highland Council are lead partner is supported by match funding from HITRANS as well as SUSTRANS and the Inverness Common Good Fund.

HITRANS contribution to the project is £90,000 and this was claimed in year 1 of the project.

The aim of the project is to develop, upgrade and promote key walking and cycling routes in Highland which were identified as priorities in the HITRANS funded Active Travel Audits that were undertaken in 9 settlements across Highland. It is hoped that the new routes together with promotion of existing facilities will not only encourage greater use of sustainable modes but also provide new health, social and economic opportunities in these areas.

In the initial year of the project the two main projects to receive funding were the completion of a shared use path connecting the towns of Alness and Invergordon in Easter Ross. The two town centres are less than 4km apart but until the path was constructed there was no safe means for

pedestrians or cyclists to make the journey between the settlements. The new link which was formally opened in May 2012 has been very well used this summer by walkers, cyclists and pram pushers alike! The other main project to be completed was the realignment of the National Cycle Network route No. 1 in East Inverness. This project has involved the widening of existing footways to create a safer and more direct cycle route which connects the commuter towns of Culloden and Balloch with Inverness.

Forthcoming projects to be completed during the remainder of the project include;

- Direct Pedestrian / Cycling route linking Inverness city centre with the new UHI Campus east of the A9 Trunk Rd.
- Expansion of cycle parking facilities at Inverness Rail Station to encourage more rail – cycle or cycle-rail journeys in the Highlands busiest rail station which now handles in excess of 1 million passengers per year.
- Improvement of NCN 78 route in Fort William and NCN route No 1 in Tain which were identified as priorities in the HITRANS Active Travel settlement Audits
- Develop 9 Active Travel Maps for each town in Highland where an Active Travel Audit was undertaken (Thurso, Wick, Tain, Alness/Invergordon, Dingwall, Inverness, Nairn, Aviemore and Fort William)

### Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note the report.

Risk	Impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	This work supports RTS objectives.
Policy	√	This work supports the development of our active travel policy.
Financial	√	This work has seen HITRANS budget used to attract partner funding and external support from Europe and development gain.
Equality	√	HITRANS support for Active Travel helps eliminate the barriers to travel for all and removes a number of physical accessibility barriers.

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**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012