

Report to Partnership Meeting 6th February 2015

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Community Links Update

Purpose of the Report:

To provide an overview of current Community Links Projects and upcoming deadline for 15/16 Community Links funding.

Sustrans Community Links Funding Update

Round 1: Awards for 2014/15:

As reported to previous Partnership Board meetings, the HITRANS region was very successful in gaining community links funding for 2014-16 through last years large Community Links funding round. In total 29 projects in the area were successful, bringing in £5.2M of funding which is matched against local funds to improve active travel infrastructure. Within this £1.075M is allocated to 2015/16 spend.

HITRANS award updates:

NCN 78, Corran Ferry to Ballachulish Bridge - £450K

This project is moving forward. Transport Scotland and their operators BEAR Scotland are managing the works due to the alignment beside the A82 Trunk road, and HITRANS are liaising with Transport Scotland, BEAR and Sustrans on this project.

The design has been split into two sections due to a variety of reasons including cost, community involvement and timescales.

Phase 1: Corran Ferry to Onich.

This section will use all of the £450K allocation provided through Community Links, plus an additional £150K which Sustrans have agreed to provide. This section follows the existing footway alongside the A82, but designs have enabled much of the section to reach 2.5m width and there is provision for a new ped/cycle bridge over the Righ burn. The increase in cost is due to more excavation and widening of the footpath to ensure sufficient width for cycling than TS/BEAR originally estimated within preliminary designs.

Following a meeting on 27th Jan where HITRANS and Sustrans saw the final detail for this section, there is to be a site visit to discuss a few key points. This will take place ASAP, and THC will be sent through drawings for comment.

Following this, the Invitation to Tender will then be issued, and it is anticipated that the works will conclude before Sustrans/TS financial year end in June.

Phase 2: Onich to Ballachulish Bridge.

Transport Scotland (TS) received communications from the Nether Lochaber Community Council that they did not want this element of the cycle route to go alongside the A82. Instead the community proposed a coastal option. This had the potential to take cyclists away from the trunk road, and was not identified as an option during an earlier TS feasibility during 2009.

HITRANS saw it as appropriate to consider if this was a suitable option, taking on board the significant engineering works on other aspects of the NCN78. The suggestion to take forward the feasibility was taken to the NCN 78 Steering group, and HITRANS commissioned AECOM to carry out this work. AECOM attended a site visit with their cycling and coastal engineers during October, along with members of the community council and local councillors. HITRANS received the finalised feasibility study in January 2015. This highlighted that:



- The route did not provide an alternative to the narrow section through the main aspect of the community
- It involved 3 additional crossings over the A82 trunk road
- The route would be 1.3km longer than the 'on road' alignment, and was classed as 'not direct' for utility trips
- There would be discussions with landowners and a SSI to consider
- Aspects of the route would require flood defences and ongoing maintenance.
- Section A and C only, not including any land purchase, design or traffic management (which is expected to be large cost) is expected to cost around £937,174.

Following the meeting between TS, BEAR, Sustrans and HITRANS on the 27th Jan, detailed design and cost estimates for the Onich to Ballachulish section were outlined, which provides a comparison from the feasibility. HITRANS would like to highlight the following:

- The 'on road' alignment from Onich to Ballachulish is expected to cost around £400k including traffic management. This cost may rise slightly if a separation strip is placed along the whole route.
- The route would have sections through the community where the path would be 1.5m wide due to constraints between private properties and the A82 trunk road.
- The route would have more continuity for the cyclist, and would have good sightlines for cyclists and pedestrians to make way for each other on narrow sections.

Following the comparison between the feasibility and the TS/BEAR design HITRANS feels that the 'on route' alignment would be safer for cyclists in terms of continuity of route type, with less crossings, and offer a more direct route for utility and every day journeys in the local community.

Future actions for this project:

- HITRANS may have to apply for a 2015/16 Community Link grant for the next section of the cycle route.
- The Active Travel Officer will attend the site meeting to look over detail with TS/BEAR/Sustrans.
- The Active Travel Officer will contact elected members in the area to discuss the feasibility and TS/BEAR designs and attend other local forums as required including the next NCN 78 steering group meeting.

HITRANS/HIE, Inverness Campus, North Bridge - £610K

HIE and HITRANS have agreed with Sustrans that this project will be split over 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years. Initially HIE were to develop preliminary design during 2014/15 and look to negotiate any necessary land agreements with the landlord. The predominant spend in the project is anticipated for 2015/16. HITRANS have been liaising with HIE over the last year on the development of this project. Sustrans have recently requested a breakdown of anticipated spend for 2014/15.

HITRANS/HIE Inverness Campus/South Bridge - £195K

This project has been granted an additional £55k towards the final design for the bridge improvements and links into the adjacent land. At present the tender documents are prepared, but there is a last minute negotiation between HIE and the landowner which is preventing the works from progressing. HIE hope to resolve this matter soon and have been liaising with THC and Sustrans regarding this. At present we are anticipating the project to be complete within Sustrans financial year end, June 2015.

Community Links 2015/16

In addition to the £10M which was allocated in the last funding round for works during 2015/16, there is an additional £10M available for Community Links during 2015/16.

The fund is for one year only, and works must be complete within the 2015/16 financial year. **The deadline is 13.00 on Friday 13th February 2015.**

The [guidance documents](#) and link to the [application portal](#) can be accessed online. The list of potential projects from the guidance is provided below:

1.4 What is eligible for funding?

We expect Smarter Choices to be an element of all your proposals. For those projects looking for significant investment we will look for a dedicated percentage of the project to have behaviour change elements included.

Eligible Community Link projects can fit into one of three stages.

- *Pre-construction*
- *Construction*
- *Post construction*

1.4.1 Pre-construction

We will consider applications that progress a scheme to the point of construction for following years, such as:

- Feasibility studies
- Cycling and Active Travel Strategies
- Cycling Network Strategies
- Community engagement to develop new projects
- Land negotiation and acquisition, planning process
- Design of the project including signage
- Baseline monitoring

1.4.2 Construction Funding for new or improved infrastructure: • Projects which result in routes of reasonable cycling or walking distances

- Formalising desire lines
- Upgrading and repair of existing surfaces • Route destination signage
- Replacement of steps with ramps
- Reduction of gradients which do not comply with the Equality Act 2010
- Addition of wheeling ramps to steps
- On road cycle provision
- Installation of flush kerbs
- Provision of TOUCAN and Zebra crossings as part of the network and junction improvements
- Provision of raised table crossings
- Provision of appropriate bridges
- Removal of access controls or improving access controls to comply with the Equality Act 2010
- Provision of lighting on active travel routes
- Cycle parking as part of a wider scheme
- Enhancements to existing cycling and walking networks, including the National Cycle Network (NCN)
- Placemaking schemes that evidence future modal shift to cycling and other active travel modes

Note: For construction projects, all land negotiations and planning permissions should be complete or very well advanced at the time of application.

5 1.4.3 Post construction

The funding could also cover promotional aspects of current and previous Sustrans funded infrastructure projects, such as:

- Promotion and awareness raising such as mapping and the use of digital channels.
- Route destination signage. The signing (or upgrading of signing) of an existing route can also qualify as a Community Links project. The existing route does not have to be one previously funded by Sustrans.
- Installation and / or upgrade to monitoring equipment (data also to be supplied to Sustrans' Research & Monitoring Unit) Additionally, your match funding, but not Community Links funding, can be used for the following types of post construction activities:
- Measures that help to ensure a legacy for your project
 - Ongoing monitoring such as Intercept Surveys, residents' and beneficiary surveys, or qualitative methods to capture perceptions and experience
- Events and community engagement workshops.

The above lists are to provide guidance only and do not necessarily exclude other proposals.

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note the report. Further progress reports will be brought to future Partnership Meetings.

Risk	Impact	Comment
RTS Delivery	√	This work supports RTS objectives and the monitoring of their implementation.
Policy	√	This work supports the development of our Active Travel Policies H27a to H27d
Financial	-	The Community Links awards provided to HITRANS.
Equality	√	HITRANS support for Active Travel helps eliminate the barriers to travel for all and removes a number of physical accessibility barriers.

Report by: Fiona McNally
Designation: Active Travel Officer
Date: 28th Jan 2015.