

Item:  
**7**



## **Report to Partnership Meeting 8 November 2013**

### **RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

#### **Active Travel / Community Links Funding**

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

To update Members on the HITRANS partnership with Sustrans Scotland and opportunities presented by Sustrans recent announcement of £14million additional funding in 2014/15 for their Community Links Programme.

##### **HITRANS / Sustrans Partnership – Active Travel Officer**

At the Partnership Meeting in April 2013, Members agreed that HITRANS work in partnership with Sustrans to recruit an Active Travel Officer on an initial two year contract with responsibilities for promoting and developing cycling across the HITRANS area.

The position was advertised in the summer and following a recruitment process carried out in conjunction with Sustrans, Fiona McNally, formerly of Paths for All, was appointed.

The Active Travel Officer will help progress plans for more cohesive active travel networks across the HITRANS area, through the management of strategic planning, day-to-day operation and co-ordination of active travel projects or initiatives.

It is expected that the post-holder will be able to where applicable support member Local Authorities in areas such as the developing and prioritising infrastructure projects identified in the Active Travel Audits; behavioural change campaigns or initiatives across the HITRANS area, the submission of applications for external funding, and monitoring of active travel indicators. They will also serve as a key link with Sustrans and benefit from the shared learning and experience that this partnership provides. This will include working closely with the Sustrans team based in Edinburgh involved in the delivery of the National Cycle Network route No. 78 between Inverness and Campbeltown which has recently received further capital funding from the Scottish Government.

The Active Travel Officer will benefit from an initial budget of £100k of funding from Sustrans this financial year and will be identifying a series of projects and initiatives over the coming weeks that maximises any opportunities for match funding. A number of potential projects have already been identified including projects in Bute, Corran and Inverness but once the post-holder has had the opportunity to meet each Local Authority and other Community Planning partners a full programme will be developed in conjunction with Sustrans.

##### **Sustrans Cycle Counters**

In the next few weeks, two high profile cycle counters will be getting installed within the HITRANS area with one on the NCN 78 at Benderloch near Oban and the other on Millburn

Road in Inverness. The counters are being provided by Sustrans through funding it has received from the Scottish Government.

These high visibility cycle counters will provide a digital display of the daily and yearly traffic totals for cyclists and pedestrians which the public can see as they pass the counter. The counters will provide data on route usage to the Local Authorities/Statutory bodies where the counter is located as well as Sustrans and the Scottish Government with the data from the 10 sites where the counters are being installed across Scotland also being relayed to a display housed at the Scottish Parliament.

### **Sustrans Community Links Programme**

At the Scottish Cycling Summit in October, the Transport Minister announced that an additional £20million of funding was being made available for cycling projects with around £14million allocated to the 2014/15 Community Links Programme as per the letter from John Lauder, Sustrans Scotland Director, appended to this report.

Discussions with Sustrans since this announcement indicate that there is a real opportunity to progress either a series of co-ordinated interventions in a particular town/s or develop one or more significant showcase projects which have previously been discounted because of levels of funding required. For those projects where the timescale available is challenging there may also be an opportunity to progress feasibility or detailed designs to advance projects to a 'shovel ready' status.

Initial discussions have already taken place with Partnership Advisors and Sustrans have indicated a willingness to come up and meet local authorities to help identify potential projects / initiatives. It is hoped that the Active Travel Officer can play a role in helping to co-ordinate this engagement and potentially assist with match funding required to progress schemes.

### **Recommendation**

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

<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>A budget of £50K in 2013/14 and £50K in 2014/15 has been allocated</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>

**Report by:** Neil MacRae  
**Designation:** Partnership Manager  
**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> October 2013

## Appendix: Item 7



14 October 2013

Dear Partner:

### **Community Links Programme – 2014/15 & 2015/16**

You will no doubt have heard the good news that the Scottish Government has made an additional £20 million available for cycling and walking projects for the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16. We wanted to update you on what opportunities this brings to your organisation and the areas in which the funding will be utilised.

The Community Links Programme continues to grow and the success has been recognised by the Government and the programme's stakeholders. It is our aim to continue the programme through the next two years and direct the majority of funding towards innovative and imaginative large scale projects.

We anticipate a budget of around £14 million for the 2014/15 Community Links Programme, which will be the largest Community Links funding pot ever available. As in previous years we will retain the established principle of matched funding by Sustrans and grant recipients of 50-50 evenly split funding. The £14 Million will be split into two main areas, namely:

- A continuation of the established Community Links Programme allowing you to develop and improve cycling networks in your area providing critical links within communities. As in previous years this funding will allow for pre, current and post construction interventions up to a total project cost of £1M.
- A larger investment fund made available for significant projects. We would encourage bids for projects of a total value of £1M and above for this element of the programme

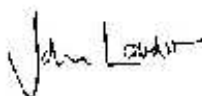


thus allowing more extensive projects to take place over the next two years. Our initial plan for this element of the programme will be to undertake large scale capital works in parallel with a comprehensive behaviour change process.

The application process for the funding will include a formal submission and a site visit from our Community Links team. For those projects seeking larger investment the formal submission will coincide with a presentation to a selection committee, made up of Sustrans and other key stakeholders as well as site visits where appropriate. It is envisaged that this will take place during the months of February and March 2014 with a view to announcing those successful applications in April 2014.

We will send out the application guidelines, criteria and a formal invitation for applications by early November 2013. In the mean time if you have any queries please get in touch with me at any time.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Lauder', with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

John Lauder,  
National Director