

Report to Partnership Meeting 17 September 2021

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

20 Minute Neighbourhoods

Purpose of Report

To update the Board on developments in the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept and what this could mean for communities within the HITRANS region.

Background

Within the 2020 Programme for Government is a commitment to work with local government and other partners to take forward ambitions for 20 minute neighbourhoods. The Scottish Government defines this as a place “*where people can meet their needs within a 20-minute walk from their house – enabling people to live better, healthier lives and supporting our net zero ambitions.*” More broadly, 20 minute neighbourhoods are those which are designed so that residents have the ability to meet most of their day to day needs within a 20 minute walk (800m) of home, through access to safe walking and cycling routes, or by public transport.

Any plans to create or promote a 20-minute neighbourhood should be based on what a local community wants, as each community will have its own particular context and aspirations for the future. However, the following characteristics are key:



From tcpa “20-Minute Neighbourhoods” Guide

The research network ClimateXChange published a paper in March this year entitled “20 Minute Neighborhoods in a Scottish Context”, by Stefanie O’Gorman and Rebecca Dillon-Robinson of Ramboll. This paper:

- considers the ambition for 20 minute neighbourhoods in Scotland, taking account of the differing settlement patterns across the country, and highlights interventions that would support delivery of the concept, supported by findings from baseline analysis; and
- analyses international evidence of the success of interventions to achieve these ambitions, including identifying specific success factors, place-making impacts, barriers to success, regulatory frameworks, funding mechanisms and stakeholder engagement and buy-in.

Key findings of this research are:

- A baseline assessment shows that communities across Scotland have the required services and infrastructure that would allow them to be 20 minute neighbourhoods. This is the case across both urban and rural settlement areas.
- However, the assessment does not allow for the conclusion that the required quality of services or infrastructure is in place. Nor does it conclude that these places are performing as 20 minute neighbourhoods.
- From the examples reviewed it is evident that a clear plan with bespoke local considerations is needed to achieve the vision. It is also clear that this plan must be people-centred and developed with the stakeholders in the community.

The report sets out five initial ambitions for developing 20 minute neighbourhoods in Scotland:

1. Scotland has the opportunity to be a GLOBAL LEADER in delivering this concept across the country, showing that it is feasible in both urban and rural locations
2. EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD in Scotland should be FACILITATED to be a 20 minute neighbourhood
3. Communities should be EMPOWERED to make changes in their neighbourhoods to allow them to meet their daily needs in a fair and equitable way
4. This concept should ENABLE people to travel actively in support of their health and well-being, without access being limited by the cost of transport
5. The 20 minute neighbourhood concept should be the ambition that PULLS TOGETHER all other relevant policies in a given location

Application to the HITRANS Region

Many of the main settlements in the HITRANS area contain employment centres, schools and colleges, GP surgeries and other healthcare centres, shopping and leisure opportunities. Almost all of these settlements are compact, with residential areas within 15-20 minutes’ walk or cycle of their centres.

Most of the larger settlements within the region now have Active Travel Audits or Masterplans which could facilitate the development of these settlements as 20 minute neighbourhoods. Some of the older Audits will require updating.

While it will not be possible for residents in smaller communities in the HITRANS region to meet all their essential needs (including employment, education, health care, shopping and leisure) within a 20-minute walk from home, thinking of 20 minute journey times offers a solution which could allow many residents to gain access to a local hub which could be a 20-minute neighbourhood. Journeys could be made by bicycle, bus, or personal motorised transport (scooter, motorbike, car, ecar). There could be a role for expanded Demand Responsive Transport, to shorten journey times and provide easy and affordable access to local hubs.

The ClimateXChange report makes the following eight recommendations across policy, national and local delivery and research, in order to realise the ambition of 20 minute neighbourhoods in Scotland:

1. Use NPF4 to rationalize and coordinate the policy landscape to support delivery of the 20 minute neighbourhood concept.
2. Place greater emphasis on reducing private car journeys, by providing high quality active travel infrastructure as part of reallocating space away from private cars to other modes, and by reimagining public transport to be more flexible in rural and urban settings.
3. Defining concept, framework and funding at a national level.
4. Defining local ambition, delivery and community participation.
5. Further assessment on a number of demonstration areas, selected to ensure diversity of type of neighbourhood.
6. A national survey on walkable distances and visual perceptions should be undertaken to nuance the 20 minute neighbourhoods concept and help design guidance for implementation.
7. Mapping to establish a detailed baseline which can be used to both support development of national and local plans and monitor national and local outcomes.
8. Review whether the Place Principle is being operationalised by Local Authorities, to identify barriers and mechanisms to overcome these.

20 Minute Rural Communities

It is proposed that HITRANS builds on this work, in smaller rural settlements which do not already have active travel audits or Masterplans in place. In particular the following Recommendations should be considered:

- 2:** reduce private car journeys through roadspace reallocation, providing active travel infrastructure and reimagining public transport, and
- 5:** carry out further assessment on demonstration areas within the HITRANS region.

These could include connecting dispersed settlements on islands, and rural centres on the mainland which could act as local hubs.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note and approve this report.

Risk Register

RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports both relevant RTS objectives and those of the Active Travel Framework.

Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports the development of our Active Travel policies.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work is supported by the Sustrans Partnership Grant.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – HITRANS support for active travel and 20 minute neighbourhoods across the region helps eliminate the barriers to travel for all.

Report by: Vikki Trelfer

Designation: Active Travel Officer

Date: 7th September 2021