

Report to Partnership Board Meeting 21 April 2023

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

ACTIVE TRAVEL UPDATE

Purpose of Report

This Report provides Board Members with an update on Active Travel projects in which HITRANS are currently involved.

REGIONAL ACTIVE TRAVEL BUDGET (Transport Scotland)

For 2023/24 financial year HITRANS submitted a bid to Transport Scotland for £1.1M. At the time of writing this report funding has not yet been confirmed, but Transport Scotland has indicated that they are willing to fund the following programmes totalling £905,000:

2023-24 Programmes	Total
1. Mobility Hubs & Micro Mobility <i>Better integrate active travel with other modes by co-locating ebikes or folding bikes at transport stops and interchanges.</i>	£200,000
2. Transport Integration <i>Better integrate cycling with bus travel by enabling bikes to be carried within buses on routes in Moray and Highland.</i>	£100,000
3. AT Masterplans & 20 Min Communities <i>Support the development of 20 Minute Communities in Moray, Highland and Wester Isles, by funding active travel masterplans and placemaking interventions in key settlements.</i>	£200,000
4. Quiet Routes & NCN <i>Develop Quiet Routes as an integral part of connected active travel networks, by supporting delivery of 5 pilot routes and mapping Quiet Route networks in each of our partner Local Authorities.</i>	£100,000
5. Path Improvement <i>Improve accessibility of existing active travel routes, by funding small scale interventions and mapping.</i>	£125,000
6. Resource Support <i>Increase capacity within HITRANS to deliver projects with increased active travel budgets and support partner Local Authorities, by increasing staff resource. This will support the eHUBS Project Officer and an additional Business Support Assistant.</i>	£80,000
7. Monitoring <i>Replacing the Sustrans Partnership Fund, this will support installation of multi-modal counters at strategic locations to establish baseline data across Highland region and the Western Isles.</i>	£100,000
2023-24 Total	£905,000
2022-23 Total (for reference - inc Sustrans Partnership Fund)	£1,211,500

The Active Travel Network & Strategy Development programme which was included in the original bid will not be taken forward; some projects have received Sustrans Places for Everyone Funding, and some will be absorbed into the Active Travel Masterplans and 20 Minute Communities programme to support the development of connected active travel networks in the HITRANS region.

2022-23 Learning & Highlights

The 2022-23 financial year presented several challenges relating to staff capacity and issues with the eBike share scheme provider in Inverness and Fort William, which are reflected in an underspend of £50k.

A new eHUBS project officer started in May 2022 to administer the budget allocated to Mobility Hubs, but left in October. A new Project Officer was appointed in November, but it meant that several months of staff project time were lost, impacting spend.

Several projects overran from 2021/22 with additional funding from Transport Scotland in early 2022, which had a knock-on effect in delaying the start of 2023/24 projects. In addition, the expected spend on expansion of HI-BIKE Inverness has been delayed beyond the financial year end due to supply issues with the operator, Bewegen.

With the delayed start of the Quiet Routes Pilot, only the initial preparatory work on the 5 proposed routes will be completed this financial year, with an interim report produced at the end of March and a final report due in October, to include monitoring and evaluation of the pilot routes. Limited staff capacity within Local Authority partners to deliver interventions may reduce the number of routes which can be piloted, and will need to be taken into account when considering Quiet Routes as part of a wider active travel network in each Local Authority area.

Highlights

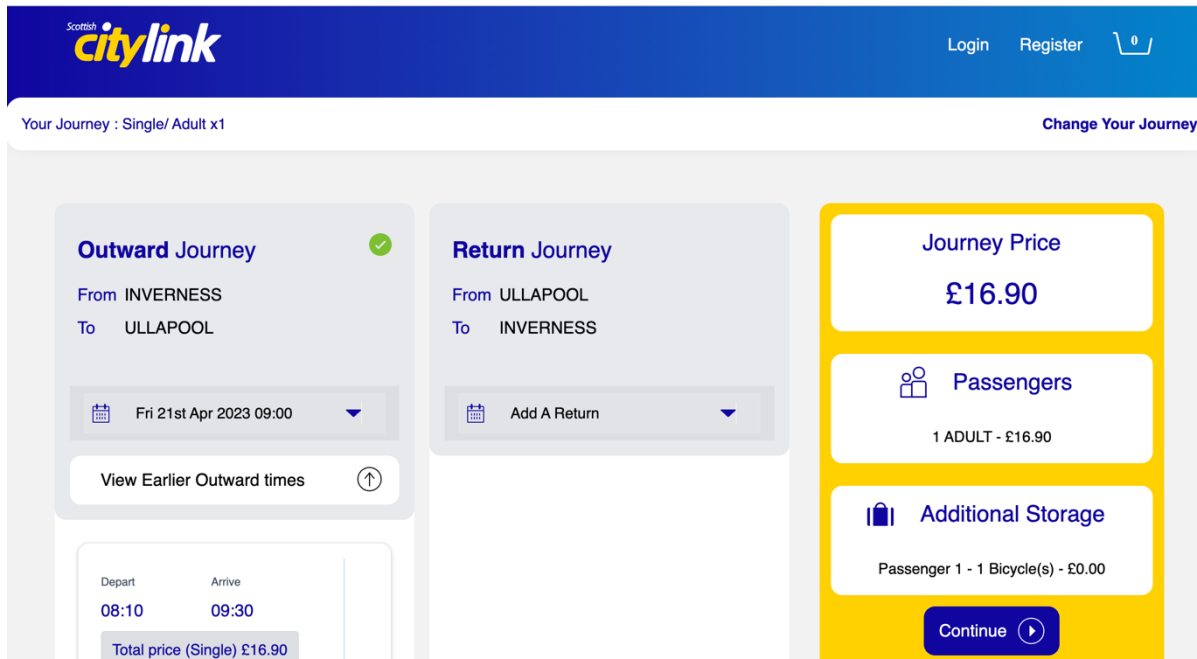
Quiet Routes

Consultants Sweco are working with HITRANS and Highland Council to pilot 3 – 4 Quiet Routes from a total of 5 potential routes. The 5 routes chosen had been previously identified by the local community as key connecting routes which would benefit from safety improvements for non-motorised users. Learning and recommendations from all routes, including those not taken forward, will be useful to inform Partners' roll out of Quiet Routes as key active travel connectors between existing infrastructure, communities and trip generators. A key learning point is that although Quiet Routes are a relatively low-cost way to facilitate active travel, particularly in rural areas, delivery may be impacted by capacity within local roads teams, who should be engaged at an early stage to absorb the additional work into their workplans.



Citylink Website Bike Bookings

HITRANS funded an add-on to the Citylink website to accommodate bike space reservations when making a seat booking. This went live in November 2022 and 198 bike reservations were made in the first 4 months of operation. This suggests the facility will be very popular and will facilitate car-free travel in the region. Citylink have indicated that they will expand the bike sock service to other routes.



The screenshot displays the Citylink website's booking interface. At the top, the Citylink logo is on the left, and 'Login', 'Register', and a shopping cart icon are on the right. Below the header, the text 'Your Journey : Single/ Adult x1' is on the left and 'Change Your Journey' is on the right. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column shows the 'Outward Journey' with a green checkmark, 'From INVERNESS', 'To ULLAPOOL', and a departure time of 'Fri 21st Apr 2023 09:00'. Below this is a 'View Earlier Outward times' button. The middle column shows the 'Return Journey' with 'From ULLAPOOL', 'To INVERNESS', and an 'Add A Return' button. The right column is a yellow summary box containing 'Journey Price £16.90', 'Passengers 1 ADULT - £16.90', and 'Additional Storage Passenger 1 - 1 Bicycle(s) - £0.00'. A blue 'Continue' button is at the bottom of the summary box. A small table at the bottom left of the main area shows 'Depart 08:10' and 'Arrive 09:30' with a 'Total price (Single) £16.90' below it.

Lochmaddy AT Link

HITRANS were able to quickly respond to AT Masterplan recommendations and work with CnES to take advantage of ongoing pier improvement works to add an AT link from the ferry terminal to connect with existing path infrastructure in the village. This work will be complete by May 2023.

At the time of writing, awards under the Active Travel Transformation Fund for delivery in 2023/24 have not yet been announced. Applications were made by Highland Council, Argyll and Bute Council and CnES for capital projects.

SUSTRANS PARTNERSHIP FUNDING

All projects delivered under this fund are now complete.

Completed projects are:

- 20 Minute Community baseline mapping tool – now available via HITRANS website
- Active Travel Masterplans for the Outer Hebrides
- Ullapool Sustainable Transport Plan
- Multi-modal counters in Nairn, Fort William, Stornoway, and Orkney.

The Sustrans Partnership will not continue in 2023/24 and the monitoring projects we would have funded through this have been incorporated into our bid to Transport Scotland as outlined above

Board Members are asked to note the report.

Report by:
Designation:
Date:

Vikki Trelfer
Active Travel Officer
5th April 2023