

Item:
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Report to Partnership Meeting 26 April 2024

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.

UPDATE ON REGIONAL ACTIVE TRAVEL BUDGET 2023-24 (Transport Scotland)

In **2023/24 financial year** HTRANS received £1,010,000 from Transport Scotland's Regional Active Travel Fund. A summary of spend and projects supported is provided below.

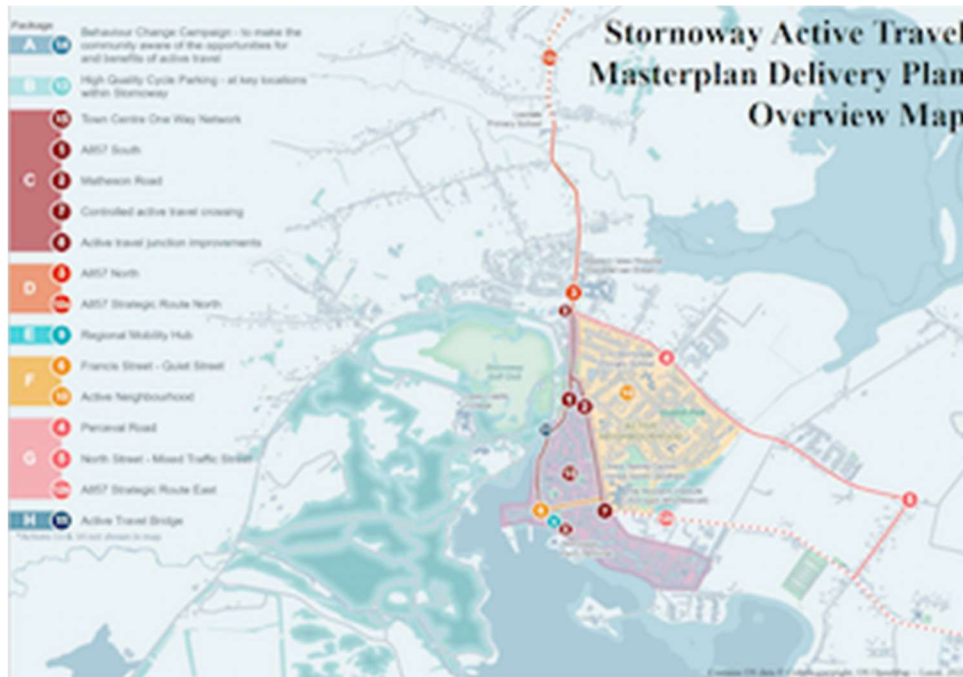
Programme	Spend
1. Monitoring Comprehensive programme of active travel data gathering across the HITRANS region to support infrastructure improvements and interventions, and to provide baseline data against which modal shift can be measured.	£85,891
2. Transport Integration Better integrate cycling with other modes through provision of cycle parking at transport halts and trip generators.	£77,001
3. AT Masterplans & 20 Minute Communities Support the development of 20 Minute Communities across the region, by funding active travel masterplan development and delivering interventions.	£181,762
4. Mobility Hubs & Micromobility Support HI-BIKE eBike share scheme and make shared mobility solutions for eBike, folding bike and eCargo bikes more widely available.	£303,109
5. Quiet Routes & NCN Develop Quiet Routes as an integral part of connected active travel networks across Local Authority regions, by supporting delivery of 5 pilot routes and mapping Quiet Route networks in each of our partner Local Authorities.	£149,187
6. Path Improvement Fund Improve the accessibility of existing active travel routes in 5 Local Authority areas by removing barriers and improving routes for a wide range of users; or identifying weak links in an active travel network for improvement in subsequent financial years.	£123,050
7. Resource Support	£90,000

Resource to cover staff costs associated with delivering projects under the Regional Active Travel Grant.	
TOTAL:	£1,010,000

HIGHLIGHTS

ACTIVE TRAVEL MASTERPLANS & 20 MINUTE COMMUNITIES

We worked with CnES and consultants Arup to develop a costed Delivery Plan for the Stornoway Masterplan. It was useful to have the flexibility in funding to go on and contract a feasibility study for the one-way system which will be pivotal to the other Masterplan recommendations, and CnES have submitted a bid to the Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF) to install trial measures this financial year.



HI-BIKE

HITRANS took over operation of the HI-BIKE electric bike share scheme in Inverness and Fort William following the withdrawal of Canadian operator, Bewegen. We were able to retain the customer service operative based in the Central Belt, and have now employed 1.5fte mechanics to keep the system running, and have a great partnership with IT provider WeGoShare, based in Portugal.

We have been able to take on the assets from the closed Bewegen schemes from Forth Bike and Sustran, and are using these for parts to keep the existing system going, and to expand our operations in Inverness and potentially into Elgin.

HI-BIKE has been very successful and popular, with close to 53,000 rides in total since it launched in October 2021. There are 1,668 regular users with current active memberships in Inverness and Fort William, and the bikes have travelled 240,000 km (that's almost 6 times round the world)!



ACTIVE TRAVEL FUNDING IN 2024-25

We will no longer have the Regional Active Travel Grant, which has been so useful for design, feasibility and pilot work. HITRANS have submitted three bids to the ATIF in the hope of being able to continue some of the work we began under the RATG.

ACTIVE TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

This fund is for construction only, with an emphasis on path construction and no allowance for design funding. We have submitted the following bids to Transport Scotland and await a decision:

- **Drumnadrochit Active Travel Link:** 225m of shared use path from the Loch Ness Hub towards the school, alongside the A82 trunk road. This project came out of our Mobility Hubs work in 2022-23 and will enable both local people and visitors to access the Hub and the local path network by bike without having to travel on the A82. The project requires co-ordination between the two landowners, Highland Council and Transport Scotland. Cost: £330,000.
- **Quiet Routes:** learning from the pilot in Highland, we have requested funding to expand Quiet Routes across the region in Orkney, Western Isles and Highland. Cost: £100,000.
- **Fort William Railway Footbridge:** Replacement of the current footbridge deck which is in poor condition. This is a partnership project with landowner Jahama Estates, who will provide project management. Cost: £270,000

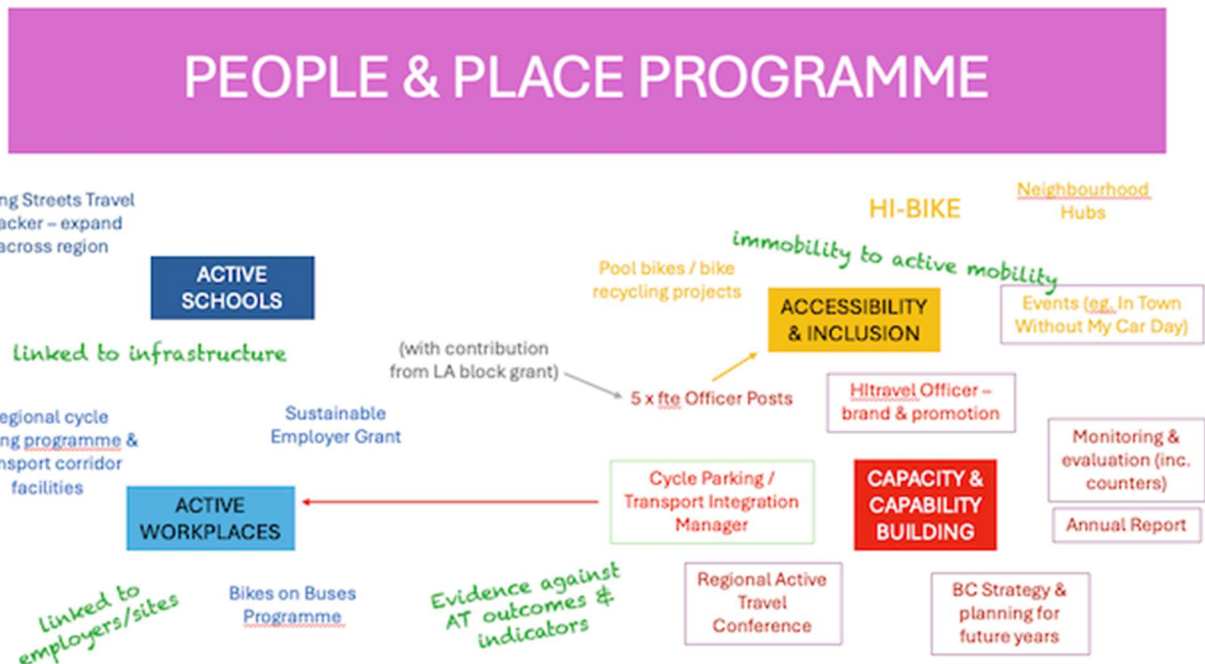
PEOPLE AND PLACE PROGRAMME

Following some last minute changes after the Scottish Budget in March, our People and Place behaviour change programme now has a budget of £1.6M (£584,000 Revenue & £1.04M Capital). The revenue/capital split presents some challenges for a programme that is largely revenue-based.

The programme has been agreed with Local Authority partners and follows the four themes set out by Transport Scotland of Active Schools, Active Workplaces, Accessibility & Inclusion, and Capacity & Capability Building. We have advertised for two new Project Officers, one to manage aspects of the programme relating to transport integration, and one to develop and promote a sustainable travel brand equivalent to the successful GetAbout brand in the Nestrans Region. We are working with Cycling UK to retain three behaviour change officers in Highland, Moray and Argyll and Bute, and will use the funding to retain our Business Support Officer in the Western Isles and to employ a behaviour change officer

in Orkney. We will also be able to continue to support the HI-BIKE scheme through this programme, providing access to bikes.

Board Members are asked to note the 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 Transport Scotland through the People & Place Programme (2024-25) and Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (2024-25).

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – HITRANS support for active travel helps eliminate the barriers to travel for all and makes walking, cycling and wheeling available to all, including by providing access to bikes.

Report by: Vikki Trefer
Designation: Active Travel Officer
Date: 3rd April 2024