

## Report to Partnership Board Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> September 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.

##### 1) PEOPLE AND PLACE PROGRAMME

Funding was confirmed in mid-April for the People and Place Programme of behaviour change and access to bikes. HITRANS was awarded a total of £1.6M, of which £584,370 is revenue and £1,041,816 is capital.

We have set up a steering group for the People and Place Programme, with Officers from each Local Authority and the Cairngorm National Park Authority, to provide programme oversight and to communicate updates on programme delivery. It will also help to co-ordinate HITRANS behaviour change activity with that being delivered directly by Local Authorities, and inform the development of our Behaviour Change Strategy and future programmes.

The first six months has been about mobilising the programme and recruiting staff, with grant agreements in place with the two National delivery partners Living Streets and Cycling UK. All posts were filled and new starts in place by July. Colleagues have now been recruited to three new programme delivery roles within HITRANS, and we have extended the contract of our Business Support Assistant in the Western Isles, refocusing the role on active travel behaviour change rather than sustainable transport. We have also recruited an additional eBike technician to work on the HI-BIKE project.

Our Mobility Hubs Officer, Chris Finlay, has relocated to a new home and new job in Norway; we were sad to see him go as he did an excellent job in managing the HI-BIKE scheme through the turbulence of last year's transfer of operations from Bewegen to HITRANS.

The active travel team at HITRANS now includes:

**Active Travel Officer** - Vikki Trelfer

*Oversight of programme delivery and budget management, line management of behaviour change officers.*

**HI-BIKE / Mobility Hubs Officer** - Vacant

*HI-BIKE operations and delivery of other aspects of mobility hubs such as eCargo bikes, non-standard cycles, and transport integration.*

**Transport Integration Manager** - Becca Purvis

*Managing delivery of the transport integration aspects of the programme including cycle parking, bikes on buses and working with Mobility Hubs Officer on mobility hubs.*

**Smart Travel Choices Officer(s)** – Sheena Corcoran & Sheila Wickens (1.2FTE)

*Branding, promotion and marketing of active travel, Sustainable Employer Grant.*

**Behaviour Change Officers** – Leah Mackay (Western Isles) & Murray Stewart (Orkney)

*Working with the Local Authority, NHS, schools, and other local partners to deliver on behaviour change outcomes within the People & Place Programme.*

**HI-BIKE Team** – Ian Mackenzie & Henry Batty (eBike Technicians), Jamie Brown (Customer Service & Ops support).

The People and Place Programme has four broad themes, and delivery of projects is now underway under each theme as described below.

### **Active Schools**

- Living Streets WOW Programme and Schools Travel Tracker
- Access to Bikes – pool bikes and affordable bikes

### **Active Workplaces**

- Bikes on Buses (Transport Integration)
- Cycle Parking Programme (Transport Integration)
- Sustainable Employer Grant (Smart Travel Choices)

### **Accessibility & Inclusion**

- HI-BIKE ebike share scheme (Inverness and Fort William)
- Neighbourhood Hubs (eCargo bikes, non-standard cycles, folding bike hire)
- Promotion, marketing & branding of active travel; supporting events and travel planning
- Access to bikes – pool bikes and recycled bikes
- Cycling UK programme in Caithness, Moray and Dunoon

### **Capacity and Capability Building**

- Monitoring & evaluation (funding for counters, M&E of programme)
- Regional active travel conference
- Local Authority Behaviour Change Officers (Orkney and Western Isles)
- Behaviour Change Strategy development & delivery plan
- Programme management

Some project highlights are provided below, and a more detailed report on activities and programmes delivered will be provided at the next Board meeting in November.

### **HI-BIKE Highlights (and lowlights)**

The eBike share scheme continues to be well used, although the Inverness scheme suffered a sudden bout of vandalism over the summer which led to the scheme being closed for a month while the damage to bikes and docks was repaired. This was particularly disheartening given that the scheme had operated for almost three years with no significant damage or issues. All incidents were reported to the police, with some good cctv and bystander footage provided. The docks have been modified so that it is no longer possible to break bikes out of the docks, and the vandalism seems to have subsided at the start of the school term. In more positive news, this year we changed the student membership from an annual to a monthly half-price subscription, and have seen an increased uptake.

<b>Memberships</b>	<b>Jan-Aug 2024</b>	<b>Jan-Aug 2023</b>		<b>Jan-Aug 2024</b>	<b>Jan-Aug 2023</b>
Pay per Ride	1459	991	Rides	20,569	20,730
Monthly Membership	438	480	Distance travelled (mi)	47,093	49,608
Annual Membership	44	31			
3 hour pass	1161	981	Average trip distance: 2.3 miles		

Student Membership	108	20	
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### Transport Integration Highlights

As part of the regional cycle parking programme, grants have been made to NHS Western Isles for cycle parking at sites in Stornoway and Uist, and to Highland Council for residential cycle parking within Raigmore Estate in Inverness. The eCargo bikes introduced as part of the eHUBS project last year will soon be available for hire at Rose Street Car Park in Inverness, through the HI-BIKE app.

### 2) ACTIVE TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

At the time of writing, there has still been no confirmation of funding for projects submitted to the Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF) for capital funding. Given the shortened delivery window – projects are to be complete by the end of March 2025 – and the recent finance announcements from Scottish Government, it seems unlikely that HITRANS' bids will be successful this financial year. Several of our partner Local Authorities have indicated that the projects they had submitted are no longer deliverable within the financial year.

### 3) OBAN TRANSPORT HUB

Consultants Arup have been appointed to design a walkway between Oban rail station and the Calmac terminal. The current arrangement is of poor quality with numerous changes in surface and no clear direct route. There is potential conflict between walkers, wheelers and cycle pushers with cars entering/exiting the car park, and also with commercial road vehicles on the pier.

A recent site meeting involving Transport Scotland, CMAL, Calmac, Network Rail, ScotRail, HITRANS and Argyll and Bute Council was convened to identify the optimum route.

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 and Place Programme (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:**  
**Designation:**  
**Date:**

**Vikki Trelfer**  
**Active Travel Officer**  
**9<sup>th</sup> September 2024**