

**Report to Partnership Board Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

**RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

**ACTIVE TRAVEL UPDATE**

**Purpose of Report**

To update Board Members on development of the People and Place Programme funded by Transport Scotland, and other Active Travel projects in which HITRANS and our Partner Local Authorities are involved.

**OVERVIEW**

For this financial year, 2024-25, the People and Place Programme funded by Transport Scotland is HITRANS' only source of active travel funding. It carries a budget of £1.6M, of which £584,370 is revenue and £1,041,816 is capital. The purpose of the Programme is to deliver behaviour change and access to bikes, with the aim of increasing the mode share of local, everyday journeys made by walking, wheeling or cycling rather than by private car.

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

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Active Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Living Streets WOW and Travel Tracker</li> <li>Access to regular &amp; non-standard cycles for bikeability</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Active Workplaces</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bikes on Buses</li> <li>Cycle parking programme</li> <li>Employers' Sustainable Travel Grant</li> <li>Workplace travel planning</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Accessibility &amp; Inclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HI-BIKE ebike share scheme</li> <li>Neighbourhood Hubs</li> <li>Promotion, marketing, branding &amp; events</li> <li>Access to affordable and non-standard cycles</li> <li>Cycling UK programme</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Capability &amp; Capacity Building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased team capacity within HITRANS Active Travel team</li> <li>Local Authority Behaviour Change Officers</li> <li>Monitoring &amp; evaluation</li> <li>Behaviour change strategy development &amp; delivery plan</li> <li>Conference / networking event</li> </ul>

**PEOPLE AND PLACE PROGRAMME UPDATE**

**Active Schools**

The Living Streets Programme Walk Once a Week and Travel Tracker, which records how pupils travel to school, is operating across the region. In **Highland** 13 primary schools are engaging with Travel Tracker. **Moray** has even better engagement, with 18 primary schools participating. Participation is less broad in other parts of the region, with only 2 primary schools on Islay engaging with Travel Tracker & WOW In **Argyll & Bute**, and our aim is to increase this next year and beyond. In **Orkney** and the **Western Isles** our behaviour change officers embedded with the Local Authorities have been working with Active Schools

and Road Safety Teams to assist Living Streets to engage with primary schools. Expressions of interest have been received from Stornoway and Tong primary schools in Western Isles, and all Orkney primary schools have been invited to participate.

Grants are being made to Outfit Moray and CnES for adapted or non-standard cycles to enable children of all abilities to participate in Bikeability training.

Our Behaviour Change Officer in the Western Isles is working with primary schools to implement **Park Smart and Park & Stride** initiatives, to make it safer and more pleasant for pupils to walk, wheel and cycle to school.

### **Active Workplaces**

Our Transport Integration Manager has done excellent work managing grants for **cycle parking** across the region; this budget is now fully committed and she is working to gather expressions of interest for next financial year and building a programme of cycle parking interventions to be delivered in future years, so we can plan our bids and spending. She has also had a breakthrough in enabling **bikes to be carried within buses**, through a partnership with NESTrans and Aberdeenshire Council that will see bikes carried on routes between Elgin and Aberdeen, and Aberdeen and Deeside.



TravelKnowHow is a workplace **travel planning** intervention supported across all 7 RTPs to work with targeted workplaces over the year to increase the number of employees travelling to work using sustainable modes. This year they are working with three large employers in Inverness; Lifescan, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, and Highland Council.

One of our Smart Travel Choices Officers is developing a **grant for employers** to help staff travel sustainably to work, initially following up expressions of interest to the Cycling Scotland Cycle Friendly Employer scheme which is not being supported in the HITRANS region this year, and then launching to a wider audience in the new year.

Our Behaviour Change Officer in Orkney is working with Orkney Islands Council to make the Council's **pool of electric bikes** more easily and widely available for staff to use.

### **Accessibility and Inclusion**

- *HI-BIKE ebike share scheme*

Rides and memberships are a little down compared to last year; initially we thought this was due to the vandalism in Inverness causing the system to close for 6 weeks over the peak summer period, but the data shows that it's actually rides in Fort William that have reduced.

Feedback from the Fort William Active Travel Group suggests that visitor numbers overall in the town were lower this year, and this along with the poor summer weather may account for the decrease in people using the scheme there. We still have a healthy base of regular users, with around 1,200 active users in total, of which 513 have monthly or annual memberships.

Memberships	Jan-Oct 2024	Jan-Oct 2023		Jan-Aug 2024	Jan-Aug 2023
Pay per Ride	1,154	1,871	Rides	22,704	23,804
Monthly Membership	513	689	Distance travelled (mi)	47,093	49,608
Annual Membership	48	44	Average trip distance: 4.5 miles		
3 hour pass	924	1,255	Average trip duration: 30 minutes		
Student Membership	128	29			

- *Neighbourhood Hubs*

Our Transport Integration Manager has been working with the HI-BIKE team to integrate an app-based locking system with the HI-BIKE app so that eCargo bikes can be made available for hire from Rose Street Car Park in Inverness. This project is due to go live later this month.

- *Promotion, marketing, branding & events*

Grants have been made to support School Streets in Highland & cycling confidence in Dunoon.

- *Access to affordable and non-standard cycles*

Grants have been made to bike recycling projects in Lochgilphead, Aviemore and Fort William. These make refurbished secondhand bikes available for free or at affordable prices to people who could not otherwise afford a bicycle.

- *Cycling UK programme*

In **Moray** there have been Successful BikeFest events over the summer and increased footfall to & delivery of adult cycle training from Cooper Park Hub in Elgin; the project officer is also engaging with local businesses and Moray College UHI

In **Dunoon** the project officer has been delivering health walks and led rides, maintenance sessions, and has had an increase in demand for bike loans.

In **Highland** the Noss School Bike Bus in Caithness has been a huge success with over 100 riders on a recent ride, equating to almost half of the school roll! Regular Dr Bike and bike maintenance sessions are offered, and led rides are well established and well attended.

### **Capacity and Capability Building**

We have been engaging with partner Local Authorities to offer funding for additional counters to both gather baseline data before new infrastructure is installed, and to measure use of key routes over time. Our Smart Travel Choices Officers are putting together a networking event to be held in the early spring, to bring together the various local and national delivery partners across the region to network and share knowledge. One of our Smart Travel Choices Officers is also drafting a behaviour change strategy, which will inform our plans for 2025/26 and beyond, and Sheena Corcoran will describe our work on this to date.

## **ACTIVE TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (TIER 2)**

An announcement was made by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport on 8<sup>th</sup> October that £10M has now been released for infrastructure projects. However, at the time of writing, there has still been no confirmation either way of funding for projects which HITRANS submitted to the Tier 2 Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF). £200k has been confirmed to Orkney Islands Council for construction of a shared use path known as the Weyland Bay project, connecting Kirkwall and Carness. Highland and Moray are in discussion with Transport Scotland over what projects may still be deliverable within the financial year, and Argyll & Bute has secured £260k for construction of a path in Rosneath, in the SPT region.

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**  
**24<sup>th</sup> October 2024**