

Item:  
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## Report to Partnership Meeting 6 February 2026

### RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

#### ACTIVE TRAVEL UPDATE

##### Purpose of Report

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

##### • CAPITAL PROJECTS: ACTIVE TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

HITRANS were awarded funding in November for two ATIF projects this financial year. One is the construction of an active travel route in lochdar, South Uist, which had been led by lochdar Community Council through the Places for Everyone Fund. The other is survey work to inform technical design for the Skye Cycle Way from Broadford to the Skye Bridge, a project which has been led by Broadford and Strath Community Company also through Places for Everyone. Construction work in lochdar is underway and due to complete by the end of March, and ecology and topographical survey work on Skye will be undertaken in the next few weeks.

We have submitted two bids to the 2026/27 Infrastructure Fund:

- Skye Cycle Way Technical Design
- Lochbroom Link feasibility and concept design – A former PfE project led by Lochbroom & Ullapool Community Trust to connect communities along the A835 trunk road

Following a meeting with key stakeholders in Oban, we are also seeking to review the proposed scheme for improving the passenger interchange facilities connecting the rail and ferry terminals and have submitted an application to Transport Scotland for a revised proposal.

With Local Authorities, RTPs and National Park Authorities now being the only beneficiaries of active travel infrastructure funding, we are beginning to receive a number of requests from community groups to submit bids to ATIF on their behalf. There is a need for some internal work within HITRANS to inform how we prioritise projects for future ATIF bids in, who is the most appropriate lead applicant (eg. HITRANS, the Local Authority, or Transport Scotland as the Trunk Road Authority), and how we manage requests for path development. It is our intention to include this within our Active Travel Strategy refresh, and to bring something to the Board later in the year.

##### • PEOPLE AND PLACE PROGRAMME

##### 2025/26

As we enter the final quarter of the financial year we are beginning to wrap up the 25/26 Programme and look ahead to evaluation and planning for next financial year.

We submitted a Q3 claim to Transport Scotland for £600,000, leaving £942,000 for our final claim at the end of March.

Highlights of the programme over the last quarter include:

- Inclusive Cycling Membership through HI-BIKE; we now have 7 people signed up or in the process of joining. This scheme enables people to have exclusive use of a non-standard or adapted cycle suited to their needs, which they can keep at home for the length of their membership – usually a year, with the option to extend.
- Positive Pedals – when Fyne Futures withdrew as our Local Delivery Partner in Rothesay, a small local bike refurbishment organisation called Positive Pedals stepped up to deliver activities designed to increase active travel participation and enhance wellbeing through the Rothesay Bike Cabin.
- Cycle Parking Fund – 6 cycle shelters have been installed across Highland in Invergordon, Dingwall, Golspie, Thurso, Alness and Ullapool as part of Highland Council's cycle parking programme.
- Dufftown Bike Share scheme funded through P&P and managed by the Community Trust has been popular with 11 three-week loans and 10 day loans in the third quarter of the year.

#### HI-BIKE

The HI-BIKE eBike share scheme continues to perform well and users have ridden a total distance equivalent to travelling almost three times round the world in 2025! A breakdown of use by quarter is provided below.

Q1 April to June:	Total Active Users	Total Number of Trips	Distance Travelled (miles)	Average Distance (miles)
	971	8,651	20,348	2.36
Q2 July to September:	Total Active Users	Total Number of Trips	Distance Travelled (miles)	Average Distance (miles)
	1,188	14,214	29,805	2.12
Q3 October to December:	<b>Memberships:</b>			
	Monthly:	Student Monthly:	Day Pass:	Pay Per Ride: Explorer (3 hrs):
	237	106	128	160 65
	Total Active Users:	Total Number of Trips	Distance Travelled (miles)	Average Distance (miles)
	705			
	October	3,862	6,967	1.81
	November	2,838	5,455	1.92
	December	1,888	3,676	1.96
Total for Q3		8,588	16,098	
Cumulative total for year:		31,453	66,251	

#### PLANNING FOR 2026-27

We've have submitted our proposals to Transport Scotland for the 2026-27 People and Place Programme, working on the assumption that funding will be at a similar level to this year.

As in previous years, the programme will be structured around the four Transport Scotland themes of Active Schools & Young People, Active Workplaces & Communities, Accessibility & Inclusion and Sustainable Transport, with the theme of Capability and Capacity running through these. Resources will be focused on projects and locations which meet the priorities outlined in the Behaviour Change Strategy for maximum impact.

The draft budget is broken down as follows, and will be confirmed once Transport Scotland are able to confirm our allocation:

Project / Programme	Budget	
	RDEL	CDEL
Local Delivery Partners	350,733	273,235
Smart Travel Choices	58,629	90,000
Transport Integration	22,000	600,500
HI-BIKE		
- Running Costs	30,900	200,734
- Expansion Costs		331,046
Total HI-BIKE:		629,780
Monitoring & Evaluation	1,000	26,726
Partner Local Behaviour Change Officers	186,000	18,000
HITRANS Programme Management Costs:		
Staff Costs	96,000	107,000
Resource Support	86,775	
Total Programme Management Costs:	182,775	107,000
	<b>RDEL</b>	<b>CDEL</b>
<b>Subtotals</b>	<b>832,037</b>	<b>1,647,241</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,479,278</b>	

We are assuming no change to the Revenue / Capital split & the CDEL-heavy allocation is reflected in the large budgets for Transport Integration and HI-BIKE.

We will continue to work with Local Delivery Partners under Service Level Agreements to deliver activities in line with our Behaviour Change Strategy and the People and Place Programme aims. This year we plan to work with two new organisations, one based in Alness in Highland and the other in Rothesay in Argyll and Bute. We have identified gaps in the provision of active travel behaviour change activity in Active Travel Masterplan settlements across the region, and if budgets increase in future we would like to develop partnerships with more local organisations where they exist in these locations.

- **OTHER PROJECTS**

Updating the Regional Active Travel Strategy has taken a backseat to the ATIF projects but will be picked up again later in the year. As part of the Strategy we will need to identify the best way to manage community requests for bids to ATIF; how we will prioritise these, and how to determine the most appropriate lead applicant between ourselves, partner local authorities, the National Park, or Transport Scotland where the trunk road presents a barrier to active travel.

We are supporting Moray Council to explore solutions for maintaining the NCN1 route and connections between Moray Coast communities following the collapse of the Spey Viaduct at Garmouth.

**Members are asked to note the report & direct any questions to the Active Travel Team Leader.**

**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 (2025-26) and Active Travel Infrastructure Fund.

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 Trelfer**

**Designation:** **Active Travel Team Leader**

**Date:** **15<sup>th</sup> January 2026**