

Item:
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Report to Partnership Meeting 24 April 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 (ATIF)**

lochdar Community Path

The Slighe an lochdar path completed at the end of the financial year, and went relatively smoothly. Pell Frischmann provided excellent project management and the contractor Macaulay Askernish Ltd were accommodating and flexible to work with. The community are delighted with their new route, which will have an official opening event in May.



Skye Cycle Way

Pre-design work for the Skye Cycle Way project was also complete by 31st March, with Preliminary Ecology Survey and additional Topographical Survey to inform the final design. Specification and tender documents have been prepared for Ground Investigation Works to begin as soon as the 2026-27 funding for full technical design is awarded. We've had good engagement with the landowners along the route and with Highland Council, who will be our project partner for the construction phase.

Oban Interchange

Transport Scotland provided £23,000 of funding to revise designs for the Oban Interchange improvements in the final quarter of 2025-26, through ATIF underspend. An application to ATIF has not been submitted for the project this year, but we are expecting it to be funded through the Islands Programme.

Lochbroom Links

HITRANS are supporting Lochbroom & Ullapool Community Trust with a bid to ATIF in 26-27. This will progress feasibility and concept designs for a cycle route connecting settlements along the A835 between Ardmail and Braemore Junction.

- **PEOPLE AND PLACE PROGRAMME**

The 2025/26 Programme is wrapping up, with final claims to Transport Scotland submitted on 20th and 31st March, and our final quarterly report was submitted on 17th April. Over the next few months the team will write up an end-of year report which will be presented to the Board in September.

In the final quarter of the financial year we received an additional £203,000 CDEL and £16,370 RDEL funding from Transport Scotland, in addition to the original £2,479,278 total award. This was allocated to:

- HI-BIKE Inverness (£75,000)
- HI-BIKE Aviemore expansion (£95,000)
- Inclusive Cycling & eCargo Bike Library (£33,000)
- Local Delivery Partners (£16,370)

Some highlights of the 2025-26 Programme are provided below.



Our annual Networking and Knowledge Sharing Event held in Orkney in October was well attended and resulted in great connections being made between different partners. It was inspirational to hear about all the excellent projects currently underway in Orkney.



£92,000 in grant awards distributed across 14 workplaces, supporting small and medium sized businesses, charities and public sector organisations to make active travel an easy choice for commuting and workplace travel.



£257,000 in grants for the provision of new cycle parking facilities, including:

- Five schools across the region
- Six leisure centres in Highland
- Children's residential facility on Orkney
- Cycle parking and repair stands across Moray
- eBike storage hub in Nairn



9 local delivery partners supported to deliver behaviour change activities tailored to their local area, including bike recycling, bike libraries, maintenance sessions and training, Dr Bike sessions, and led walks and rides to build confidence and improve social inclusion.

- Adventure Oban co-designed routes to school with pupils at 3 Primary Schools in and around Oban, mapping out a 5, 10 and 20 minute walk radius from the school and providing printed leaflets to each family at the school.
- The reCycle project based in Lochgilphead needed to recruit a new bike mechanic & couldn't find a suitable candidate locally, so are using Capacity & Capability funding to work with Developing the Young Workforce and train up a young apprentice into the role. This is a great example of genuine local capacity building enabled by the Programme.

- Lochaber Environmental Group have demonstrated good partnership working with Highland Council, providing Dr Bike ahead of Bikeability sessions. They have also been an excellent referral partner for the HI-BIKE Inclusive Cycling membership.

PEOPLE & PLACE PROGRAMME 2026-27

At the time of writing, we still don't have confirmation of our funding award for the 2026-27 People and Place Programme. We submitted proposals in January based on the assumption that funding will be at a similar level to last year's original award but have been told by Transport Scotland to expect a significant reduction in our revenue budget. This will obviously affect our ability to deliver an impactful Programme, and we are working with partners to identify alternative sources of funding. We will prioritise existing staff posts and Local Delivery Partners. Our People & Place Programme Manager will provide a verbal update at the meeting, when we should have more information.

This year we will start using the Good Grants platform to manage our grant making activity, which should simplify and improve our processes and free up some Officer time and capacity.



We are also moving away from delivery of the Living Streets WoW programme and travel tracker, as we have an ambition to be able to track and incentivise travel to every school across the region, and that was not going to be possible with the budget available and the delivery model put forward by Living Streets. We will be working with Local Authority partners and a software development company to create a bespoke programme modelled on Highland's Go For It scheme.

• OTHER PROJECTS

Active Travel Strategy

Stakeholder engagement for the Active Travel Strategy will be carried out over a 6 week period from mid-April to the end of May. We hope to be able to bring a draft strategy to the Board by September, but this will depend on staff capacity and ATIF awards.

Active Travel Advisory Groups

The Fort William Active Travel group met online on 22nd April. The HITRANS Active Travel Advisory Group will be held as a joint event with RTP1 on 30th April.

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 (2026-27) 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: 9th April 2026