

People and Place

Programme 2025-26



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Introduction

In the second year of our People and Place Programme funded by Transport Scotland we supported 21 projects across five strategic themes. Projects included those delivered in communities by local delivery partners, a cycle parking programme and access to bikes funding which we delivered with our Local Authorities and other partners, and the Workplace Active Travel Grant scheme which supported 12 workplaces to install or improve facilities for staff. These interventions were delivered across the HITRANS region in Highland, Moray, Orkney, Western Isles and Argyll and Bute, with a particular emphasis on inclusivity and local capacity building.

Programme Overview

Programme Themes

This year Transport Scotland added Sustainable Transport to the four original active travel themes:

1. Active Schools & Young People
2. Active Workplaces & Communities
3. Accessibility & Inclusion
4. Capacity & Capability building
5. Sustainable Transport

Delivery Partners

Delivery of the Programme across our large and diverse region was made possible by a variety of partners, working across all five themes.

Theme	Partner
Active Schools & Young People	Living Streets Moray Council, Orkney Islands Council
Active Workplaces & Communities	ACT Adventure Oban Clach Cycle CIC Cycling UK Dunoon Community Development Trust Fyne Futures Lochaber Environmental Group Outfit Moray Positive Pedals Spin Project Volunteering Hebrides TravelKnowHow
Accessibility & Inclusion	Cycling UK Inclusive Cycling Project; Lochaber Environmental Group; Spinal Injuries Scotland; Shopmobility Inverness
Capacity & Capability Building	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; Cairngorm National Park Authority; Highland Council; Orkney Islands Council
Sustainable Transport	Shiel Buses; HI-BIKE

Programme Summary

Overall Reach

- Over 26,000 participants from across age groups from pre-school to 65+ *(14,000 participants in 2024-25)*.
- 15.2 FTE posts were supported across 11 delivery partners.
- Delivered new or upgraded infrastructure (cycle parking, facilities, adapted bikes, traffic radar sensors) in 59 locations *(30 locations in 2024-25)*.

Key Outputs

- 7,713 no. primary school pupils engaged (Living Streets, Outfit Moray, Adventure Oban)
- 14 Workplaces funded through Workplace Active Travel Grant
- 451 personalised commuter plans for 3 workplaces
- Engagement with over 1,700 employees *(8,000 in 2024-25)*.
- 1,783 bikes checked and repaired, e.g. Dr Bikes in the community and in schools
- 353 bikes refurbished and rehomed either free or at low-cost to children and adults *(130 refurbished bikes in 2024-25)*.
- 12 projects funded through community cycle parking programme
- 7 Inclusive Cycling Members loan a non-standard cycle suited to their needs
- 4,446 hours of volunteer time donated to the programme, equating to £54,286* of time invested.

*Calculated at a rate of hours x national living wage rate for 21+ year olds in 25/26 (£12.21)

Summary by Theme

Active Schools & Young People

Outputs: school cycle parking grant; WOW Travel Tracker'; walking and cycling buses; bike maintenance and repair; learn to ride & Bikeability level 1 sessions; inclusive cycling sessions; led rides; girl-specific bike sessions; active travel mapping.

Outcomes: Increased numbers of pupils cycling to school; increased perceptions of safety for walking; wheeling or cycling to school; reduced barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling.

Active Workplaces & Communities

Outputs: community cycle parking grant; workplace active travel grant; workplace engagement with TravelKnowHow; Local Officers engaging with their communities and local employers; bike fleets, loans and libraries.

Outcomes: Increased numbers of people walking, wheeling and cycling to work and for everyday journeys; increased perceptions of safety.

Accessibility & Inclusion

Outputs: Loans of non-standard cycles and eCargo bikes; community bike share /loan schemes; adapted cycling sessions; bike refurbishment and distribution; low cost bike maintenance.

Outcomes: Increase in walking, wheeling and cycling for everyday journeys across all abilities; reduced barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling.

Capacity & Capability Building

Outputs: Local Officer posts; cycle mechanic training; maintenance sessions; volunteer opportunities; networking & learning event; funding for training and event attendance; local events and promotions; campaigns and communications.

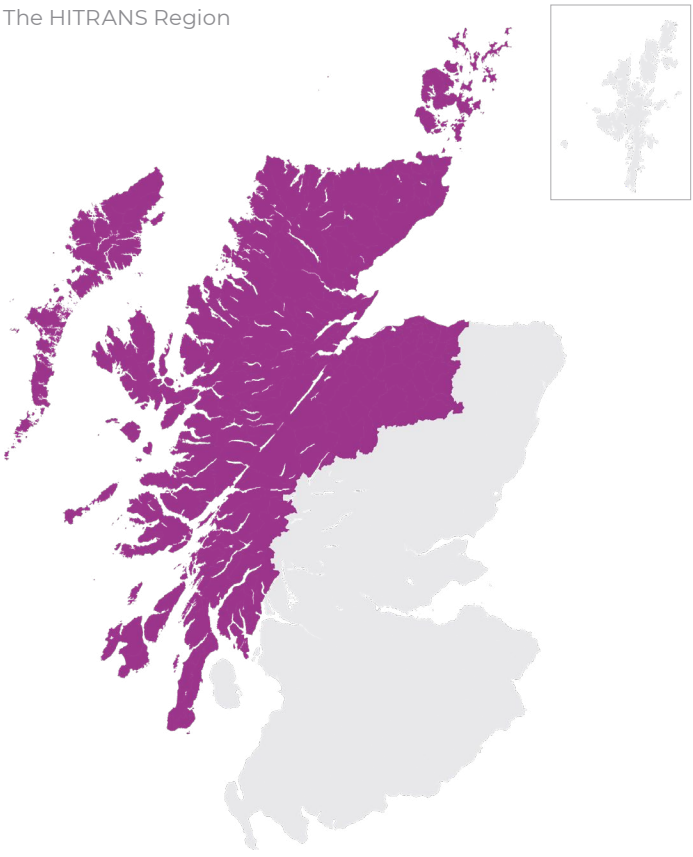
Outcomes: Walking, wheeling and cycling is supported by a range of partners; reduced perception of barriers to active travel.

Sustainable Transport

Outputs: HI-BIKE on-street ebike share scheme; Demand Responsive Transport; bus stop improvements and cycle parking; timetable information.

Outcomes: Increase in the number of people choosing sustainable transport for longer journeys.

The HITRANS Region



Best Practice & Learnings

Active Schools & Young People

Schools Approach by Outfit Moray: Outfit Moray provide a comprehensive programme of cycling activities for young people of all abilities in Moray, from nursery to high school. Outfit Moray's delivery of learn-to-ride sessions, Bikeability 1 and Dr Bikes means that almost every pupil within Moray Council can participate in Bikeability 2. The led rides following on from Bikeability 2 help to embed healthy travel behaviours for young people, demonstrating that behaviour change is a process rather than a one-off event.

- **Decision-maker engagement:** Engaging with school staff and parents is key to influencing children's travel choices and ensuring interventions such as School Streets can be implemented to make active travel the safe and obvious choice.
- **Inclusion: Outfit Moray** have demonstrated the importance of addressing accessibility and inclusion, by providing free bike loans and safety equipment to young people and delivering specific ASN sessions.
- **Infrastructure:** The provision of cycle parking at schools both raises the profile of cycling as a travel mode for school journeys, as well as making it the practical, easy option when there is a safe place to store cycles at school for staff and pupils.
- **Behaviour Change:** Outfit Moray and Living Streets' data indicates that providing a comprehensive package of cycling skills for children from the age of 3, can support lifelong healthy travel habits to become embedded from an early age.

Active Workplaces & Communities

HITRANS Active Travel Infrastructure Grants: A number of workplace and community infrastructure projects experienced delivery delays. Common factors included contractor availability, weather conditions, supply chain delays, competing estate priorities and staff capacity within delivery organisations.

These experiences highlighted that many participating organisations were delivering active travel infrastructure projects for the first time, alongside their core operational activities. As a result, we have developed enhanced guidance and support measures for future funding rounds to include clearer project milestones, strengthened our application requirements, and revised our evaluation process.

- **Infrastructure:** The provision of secure cycle parking increases access and reduces barriers to cycling across workplaces and communities. However, RTP support during the application process is important to ensure that organisations feel equipped to deliver the project. The timeline of the P&P funding cycle with funding awards received well into the first month of the financial year makes it challenging to instal infrastructure within the same financial year.
- **Grant Administration:** The administration process for workplace and community grants was very time consuming, and in 2026-27 we will switch from email-based applications and reporting to an online portal. We have been able to benefit from the experience of another RTP to choose an online platform that will make grant administration more straightforward and free up some staff capacity.
- **Dr Bike sessions** provide tangible benefits at relatively little cost.
- **Community organisations** are well-placed to engage across communities, providing bike loans to those who cannot afford their own bike and increasing confidence in cycling, route finding, and bike maintenance.

Accessibility & Inclusion

Access to Bikes: Demand for the Access to Bikes scheme remains strong, with some projects experiencing waiting lists of 4-5 weeks for more than half the year. Continued funding over the next 12-24 months would help meet sustained demand and enable more users to access bikes through loan schemes.

At-home storage remains a major challenge, particularly in remote rural and island communities where secure facilities and access to bike shops are limited. Secure and accessible storage was identified as a key factor influencing future eBike use and purchase.

Participants valued the opportunity to try different bike types before committing to buying their own. Inclusive cycling sessions supported users to build confidence, independence and cycling skills.

Sourcing particular types of non-standard cycles can be difficult as suppliers are limited, and lead times can be long as many of the bikes are built to order.

- **Access to refurbished and non-standard cycles:** To enable behaviour change at every level and ability and increase the number of people cycling and wheeling for everyday journeys, access to refurbished and non-standard cycles is essential. High demand for refurbished cycles demonstrates that many face financial barriers to cycling more.
- **Partnership working** across schools, health and social care is key to identifying and reaching those in need.

Capacity & Capability Building

Partnership Working and Networking: The partnership approach utilised by ACT, a local delivery partner, enables them to use the knowledge of key partners to identify where their service can have the greatest impact. It also allows them to work highly efficiently as partner networks allow them to cover the full local authority area from a central and fully resourced hub.

Regional Forums: The HITRANS Local Delivery Partner forum provides an opportunity for organisations to network with other funded projects. This quarterly Teams meeting is a space for partners to share updates, challenges and talk through solutions together. This joined-up approach means that behaviour change initiatives can link with and support each other. For example, Adventure Oban will refer young people to ACT,

who they identify through their schools work as in need of a bike but facing a financial barrier. ACT then supply the young person with a bike free of charge.

A 6-weekly online Behaviour Change Officer (BCO) forum was established in August 2025, to bring together the 9 local officers across the HITRANS region (all funded fully or partially through the People & Place Programme or Local Authority Direct Award). Participants share updates, knowledge and identify opportunities to collaborate. This has proven an effective way to share ideas and resulted in:

- Re-establishment of the Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) programme in the Western Isles, as a result of shared learning and training from the Highland Council BCOs.
- BCOs identified gaps in Bikeability 2 delivery in Badenoch & Strathspey schools and were able to support each other locally to ensure all planned delivery could be completed.
- Training opportunities were identified and shared, including Play on Pedals.

Peer Learning and Regional Collaboration: The Making Connections learning and networking event held in Orkney in October 2025 demonstrated the value of creating dedicated opportunities for peer learning between those involved in active travel across the region. Several collaborations emerged directly from the event, including:

- cross-authority sharing of learning from 20mph implementation,
- new connections between workplace active travel projects and funding opportunities,
- follow-on work to develop cycle training capacity in Orkney.

The event reinforced that regional networking can support delivery beyond the event itself, by helping practitioners build relationships; share practical delivery experience; and identify transferable approaches.

- **Revenue Funding:** To genuinely add capacity and capability to the Programme, staff roles and

training are critical. These are revenue activities, and with the current capital/revenue split of the Programme being so capital heavy, this presents a major challenge in continuing to deliver under this key theme.

- **Relationships:** Working in partnership with our Local Authorities and National Park Authority to jointly fund embedded Behaviour Change Officer posts has been key to building relationships and delivering the programme in the past two years.

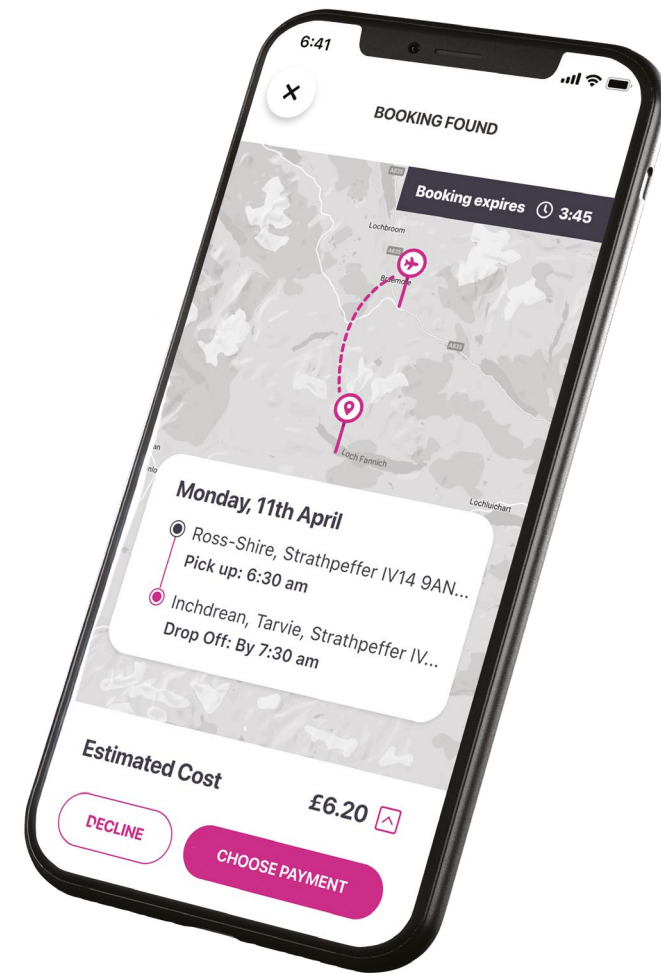
Sustainable Transport

HI-BIKE: E-bikes reduce barriers caused by hills, wind, longer cycling distances, and concerns related to fitness, age or physical ability. HI-BIKE overcomes financial barriers to sustainable travel, by providing affordable access to e-bikes without the ownership and maintenance costs. It also enables easy travel for non-drivers who might otherwise be disadvantaged or limited by bus timetables. It helps to connect people to their communities, jobs, services leisure and public transport for onward journeys.

Key learnings:

- The most popular docking stations are those with good integrated travel links, e.g. Inverness Railway Station, supporting onward travel and multimodal journeys.
- Reliable operations and service are critical to ensuring users remain confident in the system and that it meets their needs.
- Demand for e-bikes is often broader than expected, with users being locals running errands, commuters, and tourists.
- Dedicated cycle lanes and a feeling of safety are a significant factor in the popularity of cycle routes, for example the new multi-use path in Caol - Fort William has significant use.
- The greater the density and therefore the visibility and usefulness of docking locations, the greater the uptake. Eg. Fort William has better coverage overall than Inverness and as such is more useful to users.

Moove Flexi: Through a digital booking app, passengers can book and manage on-demand journeys more easily, while operators benefit from improved scheduling, vehicle tracking and service coordination. This helps to make rural and community transport services more accessible, efficient and user-friendly. Operators involved in the project often do not have the capacity to complete all the configuration, training, and ongoing tasks required to become fully set up, so HITRANS have created a document outlining the process of signing up for Moove Flexi. This can be shared with prospective operators so they understand the expectations and requirements from the outset.



Case Studies

Adventure Oban – Active Travel Maps in Schools

Adventure Oban is a community-led charity based in Oban, which aims to enable equal access to Oban's natural playground. Their Active Routes to Schools project aims to increase active travel in Oban, Lorne and the Isles through a focus on children and young people.



The project was born out of the Active Travel Plan for Oban, which Adventure Oban delivered in 2022 as part of the Sustaining Choices programme with Planning Aid Scotland, supported by the Argyll and Bute Council and Argyll and Bute Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT). Through conversations with hundreds of people in their community, and discussions with other organisations, they identified that 'safer routes to school' was a top priority for improving active travel in Oban. Their engagement showed that less than four children regularly cycle to high school and confidence was low amongst both young people and parents. In addition to this, Argyll and Bute had the lowest rate of active travel on the school commute of any mainland area.

In response to this, Adventure Oban started the 'Active Routes to Schools' project to map safe routes to schools and support behaviour change initiatives with schools. Through a range of sessions, Adventure Oban staff have worked with over 300 pupils at 5 primary schools in and around Oban, to create the maps, identify the safe routes, distances and build the messaging into the leaflets.

A range of age groups from P4 – P7 have taken part. depending on the school, and maps have been created for Rockfield, Park, Taynuilt, Lochnell and Dunbeg primary schools. Through these sessions, the pupils learnt about route planning, recognising barriers and enablers to active travel, and discussed the messaging around the benefits of active travel and how to

Secure Cycle Storage for Inverness Residents

Residents living in Highland Council flats on the Raigmore Estate in Inverness now have somewhere secure to store a bike thanks to HITRANS funding.

The initiative came about partly because of building management concerns with bikes regularly left in stairwells and lobbies, blocking access including fire escapes, or left on railings outside.

At the same time, the council is committed to support people to cycle more and has recently delivered a programme of dropped kerbs and junction improvements in the area.

Each of the 18 blocks of flats now has a six-bike lockable cycle storage pod after a successful application for funding towards cycling infrastructure in community settings.

The project has therefore delivered multiple positive outcomes including secure cycle storage for residents, with key allocation managed by housing staff.



Baiba Terehova, a resident of the Mackintosh Road flats, said: "Because there's now a good place to keep one, my son and daughter now both have a bike and use them all the time.

"Before, they would have either had to carry a bike up to the top floor or lock it to railings outside where it might have got damaged or stolen.

"The new unit is secure, dry and handy. It's a real help."

Housing maintenance staff at The Highland Council say they have noticed a reduction of bikes being tied to internal railings within the blocks as well as external railings.

This makes it easier for residents to get access, particularly if they have a pushchair, and it also keeps the fire exits clear.

HI-BIKE Inclusive Cycling Membership

Retired nurse Celia Talbot, 73, who lives in the Fort William area, has osteoarthritis and has also been diagnosed with MS.

She had to give up cycling due to difficulty balancing and moving on a conventional bike.



After trying out an e-trike on loan from the Lochaber Environmental Group (LEG), she joined the HITRANS scheme and now has one on permanent loan.

She uses the trike to shop, attend medical appointments and to visit friends up to 10 miles away.

“I love it. I am able to join the family and my little grandson on cycle outings along the canal bank.

“I use the bike just for the sheer pleasure of tootling along, with the wind in my face , seeing the surrounding countryside.

“The cycling has improved my general fitness and strengthened my leg muscles.

“Hilly roads pose no difficulty, so I’ve been cycling up Glen Loy, which is quiet and quite beautiful.

“These trips all restore me. It’s simply a joy to be out and about.”

Celia now cycles in all weathers and last winter clocked up an average of 20 miles a week.

In November, she completed a 100-mile challenge for pancreatic cancer and this summer hopes to join a biking group.

She has recommended the inclusive cycling scheme to friends who have never cycled or are having difficulty on a two-wheeler.

She added: “I cannot overstate the joyfulness cycling has brought me.”

Source: Inverness Walking & Cycling Index 2025, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

CnES Behaviour Change Officer – Tong Active Travel Breakfast

The Behaviour Change Officer for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar coordinated an Active Travel Breakfast at Tong Primary School (Lewis) on 12 September 2025 as part of efforts to encourage active travel among pupils and families. The initiative promoted walking, wheeling, and cycling to school through a “Park & Stride” activity, where participants met at Tong Church and walked together to the school before taking part in a healthy breakfast.

The event was delivered in partnership with school staff and organisations including Living Streets, HITRANS, Western Isles Council, and Active Schools. A total of 58 participants attended, including pupils, parents, staff, and partner organisations.



Volunteering Hebrides – Embark Project Children’s Cycle Library

Jacob’s* family have had two free bike loans from the Children’s Cycle Library, having returned the first bike when Jacob outgrew it and swapped it for a larger size. Before receiving his first loan, Jacob had only cycled on a tricycle. When he first borrowed a bike from the library, he started with stabilizers, but after a few months he had learned to ride without them. He is a good rider now and loves to go out for a ride. Having access to a bike from a young age has helped Jacob to develop a love of cycling and develop confidence on a bike.

Jacob’s dad commented: “It’s a great opportunity for my son. When the weather is nice, he can easily go out for a bike ride and enjoy himself, something he really loves to do.”



*Names of participants changed

Community Cycling Group

Joan has participated in our Embark Community Cycling Project during the last year. When she first got involved, she had not cycled for about 20 years and had never used an e-bike before. Since she joined our group, she has found her balance again and now she can go up and down the hills easily, benefitting from loaning an e-bike as the power assistance helps her to enjoy her ride.

“The cycling has been wonderful for me. Helped me get back on a bike after 20 years. It’s fabulous cycling in the Castle grounds.”

Walking and Wheeling Group

Dave joined the Embark Social Strolls group in December 2024, initially to help boost his fitness as he was in early preparation for a replacement hip operation. He soon found that as well as enjoying the walking, he really appreciated the company and met many new people. He found that the combination of a relatively gentle walk was made much more fulfilling when talking with like-minded people. The walks are now a regular part of his week.

“One feels very safe with the group and walking routes are adapted to suit all, so we are never over-stretched and always feel within our capabilities. I took a break from the group following my hip operation but as soon as I was able I was very happy to rejoin and appreciated the care and understanding... to build up back to a sensible distance.”

ACT reCycle Community Bicycle Scheme

The reCycle Community Bicycle Scheme, managed by the Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust, serves as a vital intervention in the Argyll and Bute rural transport landscape. By partnering with LiveArgyll, the scheme specifically targets the financial and logistical barriers that prevent school-aged children (and their families) from owning, using, or maintaining a bicycle.



Key Features of the Scheme

To ensure “ownership” is sustainable and has real long-term impact, the scheme includes:

- Maintenance Support: reCycle delivers STEMthemed sessions where students learn the mechanics of their own bikes using curriculum topics. Bicycles are brilliant for applying practical application of maths, technical literacy, chemistry, and health and wellbeing, for example.
- Bikeability Integration: By providing the hardware, the scheme allows LiveArgyll to achieve 100% participation in Bikeability training, regardless of the student’s socioeconomic background.
- In instances where pupils are without a helmet and/or other necessary items, ACT will ensure this accompanies the bicycle.

Example of the logistical challenges and opportunities.

Argyll and Bute is the second largest local authority in Scotland with this region also containing many island and remote and rural schools. Our ambition is to support from a small resourced Hub all schools in Argyll and Bute.

HI-BIKE

I use a Hi-Bike to go from the railway station to the campus every office day (unless the weather is terrible) which takes me along Millburn Road, then on the paths through the woods around the Raigmore estate. *It's a great start and end to my day in the office.*



I used to use the bike station on the campus now I use the new one at Raigmore Hospital. Hospital is really poor – there's no clear and direct route. Similarly, getting from Millburn Road cycleway to the bike hub at the railway station is challenging. You have to cross four lanes of traffic then the sleeping policemen at the roundabout behind the station. More long-distance cycleways like Millburn Road would improve cycling in Inverness.



Millburn Road is fine to cycle but access to and from the bike station at Raigmore Hospital is really poor – there's no clear and direct route. Similarly, getting from Millburn Road cycleway to the bike hub at the railway station is challenging. You have to cross four lanes of traffic then the sleeping policemen at the roundabout behind the station.

More long-distance cycleways like Millburn Road would improve cycling in Inverness.



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