Item: 12

HITRANS
THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Advisors 06 November 2026

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY

Purpose of Report

This report provides members with an update on the development of the Draft Active Travel Strategy updated from 2019.

Background

National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) positions active travel at the top of the transport hierarchy, and National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) integrates active travel considerations into national special and land-use planning. The requirement for an Active Travel Strategy (ATS) was initially introduced in the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (2013) and reinforced by the National Walking Strategy. The 2023 Cycling Framework for Active Travel includes an action for each local authority area to produce an active travel strategy in line with regional transport strategies. Revised Active Travel Strategy guidance was issued by Transport Scotland in 2023.

Regional Active Travel Strategy

A first draft of the revised Regional Active Travel Strategy is attached as an appendix; in the coming months there will be a period of open consultation and targeted stakeholder feedback.

A series of stakeholder workshops was held to develop the strategy themes, with HITRANS staff and Board Members, local authority and national park partners, and partners from health and transport. Two distinct strategic strands emerged from this work, and four themes. We were also able to identify HITRANS' "superpower" - the thing we do best - which emerged repeatedly in partner sessions as our ability to connect people, organisations and ideas that might otherwise remain fragmented; we are the glue that brings partners together to effect change.

Comments and feedback from Board members are invited ahead of the open consultation – particularly thoughts on the following:

- The two strategic strands:
  - ***Influencing the system*** to embed active travel within planning, policy, investment and service delivery, and
  - ***Cultural influence***, changing perceptions and behaviours to create a culture of walking and cycling across the region.
- The four strategic themes:
  - Rural and island focus
  - Improving health & wellbeing
  - Supporting the economy
  - Normalising walking, wheeling and cycling as everyday choices
- Short, medium and long-term delivery under each strand / theme
- The infrastructure pipeline and HITRANS' role in infrastructure development

Risk Register

RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment – The work to refresh the Regional Active Travel Strategy will involve the development of a new Delivery Plan to guide our work in the short, medium and long term.

Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports helps set new Active Travel policies and objectives.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work is supported by Transport Scotland through the People and Place Programme (2026-27).

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – Updating the Regional Active Travel Strategy offers an opportunity to comprehensively review the delivery of active travel projects across the region.

Recommendation

Members are invited to:

1. Note the report
2. Provide comments or feedback to the Active Travel Team Leader by 16th November, ahead of the open consultation.

Report by: **Vikki Trelfer**
Designation: **Active Travel Team Leader**
Date: **20th October 2026**