

2023/24 Active Travel Progress Report

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides an update to Members on the progress made in 2023/24 in relation to active travel projects in the Bute and Cowal (B&C) Area, informs Members of the significant changes in Scottish Government active travel funding and seeks continued support for the projects and wider active travel measures from Members.
- 1.2. Active travel encompasses accessible, everyday Walking, Mobility Assistance

and HITRANS Regional Active Travel Fund. Further funding has been secured for some projects via local community organisations and from willing businesses. It is recognised at a national level that the Active Travel Team in Argyll and Bute Council secure significantly more funding, and subsequently deliver more projects, than similar staffed teams in other Local Authorities and/or local authorities with similar populations.

- 1.7. Transport Scotland have informed Officers that, as of 24/25, the funding model for active travel will change. The primary change will be the reallocation of the significant funding currently disbursed via third-sector organisations (such as Sustrans or Paths for All) and, to a lesser extent Transport Scotland (e.g. CWSR), to individual Local Authority block grants and a single Transport Scotland controlled Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF). This will be undertaken incrementally over a 2 year transition period.
- 1.8. Transport Scotland informed Officers on 23 January 2024 that, as of 24/25, the funding model for active travel will change. Transitional arrangements for infrastructure design and construction are understood by Officers to be:
 - 24/25 a proportion of the Scottish Government's active travel funding will be allocated to Local Authority block grants with the remainder remaining as challenge funding, in particular in the PFE Programme (administered by Sustrans) and Transport Scotland's ATIF fund. Transport Scotland have stated that failure to expend the block grant allocation on appropriate active travel projects will negatively affect the Council's opportunity to secure additional funding from the ATIF. The Scottish Government's budget commits a total of £220M to active travel in 24/25.
 - 25/26, those Local Authorities which chose (in 24/25) to expend the full amount of active travel funding in their block grant on appropriate active travel projects will receive an increase in their block grant allowance for active travel, with a smaller percentage of the overall funding being available via challenge funds following the closure of the PFE programme (forecast for December 2025). The Scottish Government has set an objective of committing 10% of the 25/26 transport budget to active travel, estimated to be c.£320M.
 - 26/27 onwards the challenge funding available will be solely focused on assisting Local Authorities with the cost of delivering very highly ambitious active travel projects, as active travel infrastructure funding for smaller projects will be included within block grants of those Local Authorities which have chosen in 24/25 and 25/26 to dedicate it to active travel.
- 1.9. Transitional arrangement for behaviour change is understood by Officers to be

1.13.4. Instruct Officers to continue to identify and develop new active travel projects to benefit local residents, businesses and communities.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. This report provides an update to Members on the progress made in 2023/24 in relation to active travel projects in the Bute and Cowal (B&C) Area and seeks continued support for the projects from Members.
- 2.2. Active travel encompasses accessible, everyday Walking, Mobility Assistance and child prams (sometime collectively termed “Wheeling”) and Cycling. The

Team. All project costs, including internal staff costs, have to be funded via successfully securing highly competitive external challenge funds.

- 4.2. It is recognised at a national level that the Active Travel Team in Argyll and Bute Council secure significantly more funding, and subsequently deliver more projects, than similar staffed teams in other Local Authorities and/or local authorities with similar populations.
- 4.3. The Active Travel Team work with communities, internal and external stakeholders across Argyll and Bute to develop and deliver active travel projects which provide new/improved accessible infrastructure (e.g. paths, cycle lanes) and behaviour change (e.g. access to bikes, walking/cycle training, promotional activities).
- 4.4. In 2023/24 to date, the Active Travel Team secured £2.56M external funding for the development and delivery of a total of 23 projects across Argyll and Bute, including Argyll and Bute wide projects, valued at £155,000 in 23/24 and projects specific to the B&C area, valued at £1.41M. The total value of projects delivered to date is £2.56M. A list of all projects is presented in Appendix 1.

Future Funding Model

- 4.5. Transport Scotland informed Officers on 23 January 2024 that, as of 24/25, the funding model for active travel will change. At the time of writing, Transport Scotland have stated that they are unable to provide a detailed breakdown of the new funding model.

Council's block grant will require Members to decide to allocate the funding to develop and deliver active travel projects.

Improved active travel provision could reduce the requirement to provide school transport on safety grounds, thereby creating a revenue saving.

There is strong evidence that people who are more active, for example by walking or cycling, have better physical and mental health and are less likely to require social care services in later life which could result in a future saving to the Council or HSCP.

6.3. Legal

Continued input will be required from Legal Services to support any land acquisition required for the creation of active travel routes.

6.4. HR

None.

6.5. Fairer Scotland Duty:

6.5.1 Equalities

Provision of new and improved active travel infrastructure and behaviour change options will provide enhanced opportunities for residents and visitors to choose to travel more sustainably and actively by walking, wheeling and cycling. All new active travel routes are designed to be accessible and DDA compliant to provide a safe and accessible route for those with mobility aids including wheelchairs and parents/guardians with a child's pram or buggy.

6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty

New and improved active travel routes will improve access to essential services, retail, leisure and employment opportunities for local residents, with studies demonstrating those who travelled actively had

Appendix 1: 2024/25 Projects

Project	Outline Programme	Detail
Active Travel Promotional Campaign	<p>Spring 2024: launch and 1st campaign</p> <p>24/25: continue campaign</p> <p>Future:</p>	<p>Creation of a new sustainable travel (walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport) promotional brand “Better Journeys” and develop a promotional campaign to raise awareness of opportunities to travel actively and sustainably across Argyll and Bute. External funding has been retained within the Council by working with the Council’s Communications Team to develop the brand, campaign materials including posters and social media clips and prepare to launch the campaign in spring 2024.</p>
Beat the Street Game	14 Feb – 27 Mar 2024	<p>Beat the Street is a 6-week game run by Intelligent Health and funded by Paths for All Smarter Choices Smarter Places, supported by Transport Scotland. The Argyll and Bute Beat the Streets game is being run jointly with North Ayrshire Council between 14 Feb and 27 Mar 2024, and within Argyll and Bute includes the settlements of Helensburgh, Cardross, Rhu and Kilcreggan; Dunoon, Toward, Strone and Sandbank; Rothesay and Port Bannatyne; Campbeltown, Carradale, Drumlemble and Southend.</p> <p>Beat the Street is a free, fun, walking, cycling and wheeling game which gets communities, school pupils, and their families out and about in the local area, having fun and keeping healthy. It’s designed to get children and communities moving by helping people to make small changes, such as walking or cycling to school every day, to improve physical and mental health and help embed physical activity into everyday life. Free game packs have been delivered to primary schools within the areas above, including a contactless game card for each</p>

Dunoon to Hunters Quay

objectives of increasing inclusion/reducing social isolation, increasing access to services, improving health and reducing transport poverty.

2026/27 – 2027/28:
Construction

Rothesay Ferry Terminal and on to Albert Pier. This route is a key commuter and community link that will provide a safe active travel route to places of employment, essential services, residential areas, transport hubs, key recreational facilities and a range of retail services. The designs will include appropriate place making elements to enhance the route and offer wider public benefits along the route corridor.