



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. Transitional arrangements for infrastructure design and construction are understood by Officers to be:

24/25 a proportion will be allocated to Local Authority block grants with the remainder remaining as challenge funding, in particular in the PFE Programme (administered by ATIF fund. Transport Scotland have stated that failure to expend the block grant allocation on appropriate active

additional funding from the ATIF.

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

programmes which are deemed to be most effective when delivered at a national scale.

- 1.10. Separately, Officers are working to develop an Active Travel Strategy (ATS) for Argyll and Bute which will set out the policy and strategic context for the development and delivery of active travel across the whole of Argyll and Bute. Subsequent to this, an Active Travel Delivery Plan (ATDP) will be developed which will identify the specific projects to be developed in order to achieve the ambition set in the ATS.
- 1.11. Active Travel can offer significant benefits to the area:
  - Access to essential services and employment: In H&L 20% of households (2,115 households) do not have access to a motor vehicle and are reliant on public transport and active travel modes.
  - Health benefits: being more active reduces the risk of premature morbidity and death, particularly from diseases related to inactivity.
  - Economics: People who travel to shops by walking and/or cycling have a higher monthly spend than people who travel to shops by private car.
  - Improving safety: reduces injuries from car collisions.
- 1.12. A number of active travel projects link to schools, offering the opportunity to increase the numbers of pupils, parents and staff choosing to walk, cycle or wheel to school. While the main benefits are improved physical and mental health, where new active travel infrastructure creates a safe route to school where one did not previously exist it could reduce the requirement to provide school transport on safety grounds, thereby creating a revenue saving to the school transport budget.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.13. It is recommended that the Helensburgh and Lomond members:
  - 1.13.1. Welcome the progress made to date across a significant number of active travel projects by the small Active Travel Team.
  - 1.13.2. Support the continuation of the projects and the submission of future funding applications to external challenge funds (while these still exist) to continue to develop design and construction stages in order to deliver these projects.
  - 1.13.3. Support the allocation of the active travel funds to

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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**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**

**Helensburgh and Lomond**

**DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC  
GROWTH**

**12 March 2024**

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**2023/24 Active Travel Progress Report**

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

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 H&L area, with a 23/24 value of £628,000. Further details of these 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 confirm the value of specific funding streams for 24/25 as these are still subject to agreement with COSLA. It is understood 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 challenge fund, the Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF). This will be undertaken incrementally over a 2 year transition period.
- 4.6. Provisional transitional arrangements for infrastructure design and construction are understood by Officers to be:
  - 24/25 the allocation of a proportion funding to Local Authority block grants with the remainder remaining as challenge funding, in particular in the PFE Programme (administered by ATIF. The split of allocation the funding is understood to still be in negotiation between Transport Scotland and COSLA with Transport Scotland expecting to confirm values in early 24/25. Transport Scotland have also stated that failure to expend the block grant allocation on

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 including the closure of the PFE programme (forecast for December 2025).

From 26/27 onwards the challenge funding available (e.g. ATIF) will be solely focused on assisting Local Authorities with the cost of delivering very highly ambitious active travel projects, as the active travel infrastructure funding for smaller projects will be included within the block grants of those Local Authorities which chose to dedicate it to active travel in 24/25 and 25/26.

- 4.7. Behaviour change funding will be transferred from third sector organisations to the Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) in 24/25 onwards. This will enable the development and delivery of behaviour change programmes/activities which are tailored to the specific requirements of each RTP area. A small element of

campaigns/programmes which are deemed to be most effective when delivered at a national scale. Officers have started to engage with our RTPs (HITRANS and SPT) in order to understand and influence the future plans for the delivery of behaviour change projects.

#### **Current (2023/24) Funding Model**

- 4.8. The Active Travel Team work to source and secure highly competitive funding

Everyone (PFE) Programme (administered by Sustrans), the Scottish

Resource Fund, Paths for All Smarter Choices Smarter Places (SCSP)

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.

- 4.9. The primary external funding route for active travel infrastructure design is Places for Everyone (PFE) programme (which Sustrans are paid to administer). The PFE Programme is a competitive challenge fund structured around 8 project stages; with the 32 local authorities, 7 regional transport partnerships, two national parks and numerous community groups across Scotland competing against each other to secure the funding each project requires. In 23/24, the Active Travel Team secured £1.7M from the PFE Programme. It has been announced that the PFE Programme will be wound down with a final closure date of December 2025.

- 4.10. A minimum of three new competitive funding submissions are required to complete a project using PFE funding, with competitive applications required, as a minimum, prior to Stage 0 (Strategic Definition), Stage 3 (Developed Design) and Stage 5 (Construction)



population have low incomes (SIMD, 2020), the cost of travel is a significant barrier to a substantial number of the community. This is highlighted by the higher than Scottish average number of households have multiple cars but shorter than Scottish average journey distances to work/study (2011 census), indicating that a significant number of households own multiple cars to travel short distances. Walking, wheeling (mobility aids/child prams) and cycling are much cheaper than running a car or using public transport, and improving opportunities to choose to walk/cycle for essential journeys can improve access to essential services, reduce social exclusion and increase opportunities to access education and employment.

- 4.17. Health benefits of enabling individuals and communities to choose to travel more actively are well documented and a significant body of research has identified that having active, healthy lifestyles helps to reduce fragility and reduce falls as individuals age, and increase social inclusion and accessibility. In particular, being more active reduces the risk of premature morbidity and death, particularly from diseases related to inactivity including cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease, stroke, dementia, type 2 diabetes, hip fractures and cancer. Active travel also has significant mental health benefits including increasing social inclusion and reducing depression. This means those who choose to be more active are less likely to require social care services in later life which could result in a future saving to the Council or HSCP (DfT, 2014; CIHT, 2016; Centre for Mental Health, 2016; Scottish Government, 2018; Dunoon Shaping Places for Wellbeing, 2022; World Health Organisation, 2022; Public Health Scotland, 2022; Public Health Scotland, 2023).
- 4.18. Economics: People who travel to shops actively by walking and/or cycling, while they spend less per individual visit, make more visits a month and have a higher monthly spend than people who travel to shops by private car (Pedestrian

minimum distance from school to qualify for free school transport provision, but where there is no safe active travel route to school. Where new active travel infrastructure creates a safe route to school where one did not previously exist it could reduce the requirement to provide school transport on safety grounds, thereby creating a revenue saving.

### **Design guidance**

- 4.21. It is understood that adherence to the latest design criteria for active travel (e.g. Cycle by Design for cycle projects) will continue to be a requirement. However, the removal of national third-sector organisations from control of the main active travel funding streams should enable Officers to apply the guidance in a more flexible and specific manner to local circumstances. Utilising adopted design guidance provides a clear framework for development of designs which are appropriate, accessible, attractive and safe.

### **Active Travel Strategy (ATS)**

- 4.22. Separately, Officers are working to develop an Active Travel Strategy (ATS) for Argyll and Bute which will set out the policy and strategic context for the development and delivery of active travel across the whole of Argyll and Bute. Subsequent to this, an Active Travel Delivery Plan (ATDP) will be developed which will identify the specific projects to be developed in order to achieve the ambition set in the ATS.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1. Significant changes to the funding model in 2024/25 and 2025/26 will create opportunities for active travel projects to focus on local priorities, rather than projects which meet the aspirations and objectives of national organisations. However, continued delivery of new and improved active travel opportunities to the residents, businesses, communities and visitors in the H&L area will require Members to commit the additional active travel funding allocation in the 24/25 Council Block Grant to the development and delivery of active travel projects.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1. Policy**

SOA outcomes 2: We have infrastructure that supports sustainable growth and 5: People live active, healthier and independent lives. The project also supports

set out in the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS) and - The National Walking Strategy.

## 6.2. **Financial**

The change in approach to the provision of active travel funding by the Scottish Government from external challenge funding to including it within the

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

- 6.6. **Climate Change** Active Travel is the least carbon intensive mode of travel. Providing the opportunity for residents and visitors to consider an alternative to having to use a carbon footprint.
- 6.7. **Risk** There is a reputational risk to the Council if the projects are not completed within a reasonable timeframe.
- 6.8. **Customer Services** None.
- 6.9. **The Rights of the Child** Active travel is the most accessible mode of travel to young people as it does not have any minimum age limits, does not require any form of licence, is free to use and is not tied to any fixed timetable. All new active travel infrastructure is designed to be utilised by an unaccompanied 12 year old. Engagement with school pupils indicates that the vast majority of pupils strongly support the provision of new active travel infrastructure, even where it would adversely impact other modes of transport.

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**Appendix 1: 2023/24 Active Travel Projects**

## Appendix 1: 2023/24 Projects

Project	Outline Programme	Detail
Active Travel Promotional Campaign	<p>Spring 2024: launch and 1<sup>st</sup> campaign</p> <p>24/25: continue campaign</p> <p>Future: potential to continue campaign dependent on securing funding</p>	<p>Creation of a new sustainable travel (walking, wheeling, cycling)</p> <p>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 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, -3((an 4MCID 16(, )-3(-6lk3( )8(run)cli)4(r</p>

Smart phone app promotion	Summer 2023: 1 <sup>st</sup> campaign	pupil. Additional game cards can be collected by members of the public from public distribution locations such as libraries in the game areas. Players use contactless game cards to hover over the Beat Boxes which have been installed on lamp posts in the game areas and score points as they travel around. There is also a smartphone app which players over 13 years old can download. For further information please see: <a href="https://www.beatthestreet.me/activenation/">https://www.beatthestreet.me/activenation/</a>
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	<p>2025/26: Stage 2 Camsail Bay Developed and Technical Design subject to securing funding</p> <p>2027/28: Stage 2 Camsail Bay Construction subject to securing funding</p>	<p>final phase around Camsail Bay currently being designed in partnership with the community.</p>
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