

# Island Communities Impact Screening Assessment

# *Draft Regional Active Travel Strategy for the west of Scotland 2024-2038*

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

This Island Communities Impact Screening Assessment (ICIA) has been prepared to accompany the assessment of equalities impacts in relation to the draft Regional Active Travel Strategy for the west of Scotland 2024-2038, where they relate to island communities.

The west of Scotland, and the region covered by the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT), comprises the following local authorities: East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire, and the Helensburgh & Lomond ward in Argyll and Bute. The islands of Cumbrae and Arran, located in North Ayrshire, are identified as the only island communities in the study area.



## 1.2 The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 was passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2018. Section 7 of the Act states that a Relevant Authority must have regard to island communities in carrying out its functions.

Section 8 states that a Relevant Authority must prepare an ICIA in relation to a policy, strategy, or service, which, in the authority's opinion, is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities) in the area in which the authority exercises its functions.

Section 10 sets out how a Relevant Authority demonstrates compliance with the duty imposed by Section 7. It will do so:

- (a) by making such arrangements as it considers appropriate to review any policy, strategy or service (as the case may be) which it develops or delivers in carrying out its functions, and
- (b) either;

(i) in the case where the authority must prepare an island communities impact assessment under section 8(1), by preparing that assessment, or

(ii) in any other case, by making such an assessment or taking such other steps as the authority considers appropriate.

### 1.3 Methodology

This Screening Assessment considers steps one to four of the Scottish Government Island Communities Impact Assessment guidance<sup>1</sup>. Steps one to four are prescribed as follows:

- **Step One:** Developing a clear understanding of the objectives and intended outcomes of the policy, strategy or service including any island needs or impacts.
- **Step Two:** Gathering data, identifying evidence gaps and identifying stakeholders.
- **Step Three:** Consulting with appropriate stakeholders.
- **Step Four:** Assessing whether there are any issues resulting from the proposed policy that are significantly different from those that would be experienced on the mainland, or on other islands.

Following the assessment, it will be determined if the proposed strategy is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities). If any significantly different impacts are identified, an ICIA will be required.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government (2022) Island Communities Impact Assessments: Guidance and Toolkit, available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/island-communities-impact-assessments-guidance-toolkit-2/>

## 2 Strategy Priorities, Targets and Objectives

### 2.1 Overview

The draft Regional Active Travel Strategy (Regional ATS) for the west of Scotland 2024-2038 is being developed to set out a long-term vision for active travel in the west of Scotland. It aims to transform the way people travel around the Strathclyde region through the provision of a well-connected, continuous cross-boundary active travel network and supporting measures that inform and empower people to travel actively.

Active travel refers to journeys undertaken by people-powered modes, including walking, people using wheelchairs, and cycling (including e-bikes). Active travel is fundamental to the priorities of Scotland's National Transport Strategy<sup>2</sup> and increasing the active travel mode share will make a significant positive contribution to the national commitment to reduce car travel by 20% by 2030 and will support the transition to a net zero transport system.

### 2.2 Background

SPT has a statutory duty under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 to produce a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

In 2023 SPT published the RTS, entitled 'A Call to Action: The Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland (2023 – 2038)', which sets the long-term direction for transport in the region. It outlines the following vision to define the future transport system for the people, communities and businesses of the west of Scotland:

*"The west of Scotland will be an attractive, resilient and well-connected place with active, liveable communities and accessible, vibrant centres facilitated by high quality, sustainable and low carbon transport shaped by the needs of all."*

The Regional ATS is part of SPT's coordinated approach to achieve the RTS. It sets out a strategic approach to plan active travel infrastructure and behavioural interventions to deliver the step-change in active travel, specified by the RTS, to achieve a significant modal shift from the private car to more sustainable modes of transport.

### 2.3 Priorities

The vision of the Regional ATS accords with the vision of the RTS and is supported by three Priorities, which summarise the wider environmental, societal and economic goals for the region that the RTS and Regional ATS will help to deliver. The priorities are:

1. A healthier environment, supported by a transport system that helps our region become a low carbon place with healthier natural and built environments for the benefit of all.
2. Inclusive economic growth, underpinned by a transport system that supports regional economic development and growth, with better opportunities and fairer outcomes for all.
3. Improved quality of life, supported by a transport system that helps everyone to have better health and wellbeing and lead active, fulfilling lives.

The vision and accompanying priorities are intended to guide future actions and investment towards a low-carbon transport future. They also intend to provide guidance for partners and stakeholders for their own decision-making on transport strategies, projects, and programmes in the region.

<sup>2</sup> Transport Scotland (2020) National Transport Strategy 2, available at <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/national-transport-strategy-2/>

## 2.4 Targets

The targets give focus to the strategy and help capture the nature and scale of the change required to achieve the vision. The targets of the RTS and Regional ATS are:

- Target 1: By 2030, car kilometres in the region will be reduced by at least 20%
- Target 2: By 2030, transport emissions will be reduced by at least 53% from the 2019 baseline.
- Target 3: By 2030, at least 45% of all journeys will be made by means other than the private car as the main mode.

## 2.5 Objectives

The objectives are the specific changes to the transport system and travel behaviour that the RTS and Regional ATS aim to achieve.

The objectives are:

- Objective 1: To improve accessibility, affordability, availability, and safety of the transport system, ensuring everyone can get to town centres, jobs, education, healthcare and other everyday needs.
- Objective 2: To reduce carbon emissions and other harmful pollutants from transport in the region.
- Objective 3: To enable everyone to walk, cycle or wheel and for these to be the most popular choices for short, everyday journeys.
- Objective 4: To make public transport a desirable and convenient travel choice for everyone.
- Objective 5: To improve regional and inter-regional connections to key economic centres and strategic transport hubs for passengers and freight.

## 3 Evidence Base

### 3.1 Overview

An evidence base has been collated through the development of the Regional ATS which informs and supports the consideration of equalities issues, including those relevant to the ICIA, and the assessment of the equalities impacts of the proposed strategy.

The evidence base regards all consultation responses and research findings relative to transport and active travel, and equalities issues for the ICIA duty. Wider baseline data has been collated and reported upon in the following supporting documents for the Regional ATS: EqlA Scoping Document (Sweco, 2024) and Case for Change (Sweco, 2023).

### 3.2 Baseline Information

The SPT region is recognised to be diverse in many ways including, but not limited to, geography, density and across a range of socioeconomic factors. In this context, islands are identified alongside rural and remote communities on the Scottish mainland that are also more likely to experience daily transport challenges such as: a lack of transport services, long journey times, and greater distances to travel to reach essential services and transport interchanges. Specific to islands, however, is a dependence upon ferry services which creates additional access issues for island residents.

The Isle of Arran is the seventh largest Scottish island and is the largest island in the Firth of Clyde, with an area of 432 square kilometers. It is the most southerly populated of the Scottish islands and Brodick, Lamlash and Whiting Bay on the east coast are the island's main settlements. Arran is approximately a one-hour ferry crossing from mainland Scotland via the Ardrossan (North Ayrshire) – Brodick service. Other routes are available from Troon (South Ayrshire) to Brodick, Campbeltown (Argyll and Bute) to Brodick, Claonaig (Argyll and Bute) to Lochranza, and Tarbert (Argyll and Bute) to Lochranza, although the availability of these can vary depending on the time of year.<sup>3</sup>

The Isle of Cumbrae, also known as Great Cumbrae, lies off the Ayrshire coast and is approximately four miles long and two miles wide. It is Scotland's most accessible populated island and is just an eight-minute ferry trip from mainland Scotland. Millport is the only settlement on Cumbrae, where the ferry connects to Largs<sup>4</sup>.

#### Population Profiles

The approximate population on the island of Cumbrae is 1,376, while Arran has a population of 4,629<sup>5</sup>.

These populations are typically older than the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with over 30% of people aged 65 or over on the islands compared with 22% in North Ayrshire and 18% in Scotland<sup>6</sup>.

Data on population growth and decline is available for the Scottish Island Regions, in which 'Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes' is classified as a region. Across the period 2001-2021, 'Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes' has seen a 13% decline in population<sup>7</sup>. This contrasts with the trend seen across Scotland's Islands in which the overall population has grown, albeit in a slower rate to the growth seen on Mainland Scotland.

There have been substantial percentage increases in the population of those aged 65 to 74 and those aged 75 and over across all island groups in the period 2001-2021<sup>8</sup>. In 'Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes', the population of those aged 65 to 74 increased by 17.9% and the population of those aged 75 and over increased by 31.8%. The greatest decline in population is seen in the 5 to 15 age group, which

<sup>3</sup> Calmac, accessed November 2024, available at: <https://www.calmac.co.uk/destinations/arran>

<sup>4</sup> North Ayrshire Council (2022) Isle of Cumbrae Local Island Plan, available at: <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/cumbrae-local-island-plan.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Scotland's Census 2011

<sup>6</sup> National Records of Scotland (2021) Mid-2020 Small Area Population Estimates for 2011

<sup>7</sup> National Records of Scotland (2021) Small Area Population Estimates

<sup>8</sup> Rural & Environmental Science and Analytical Services [Island Dashboard by RESAS - Infogram](#)

has decreased by 41.5% for the same period. The National Plan for Scotland's Islands (2019)<sup>9</sup>, and aligned consultation efforts, tell us that current population trends – both population decline and an ageing demographic – are key challenges to ensuring the sustainability of island life<sup>9</sup>. Such demographic trends can have an adverse effect on factors including service sustainability, increasing the vulnerability of communities already experiencing higher costs of service provision and market access<sup>9</sup>.

Island rurality can also exacerbate inequality already experienced on account of the protected characteristics, as defined under the Equalities Act 2010. Issues which impact on all islanders such as access to transport may be acutely felt by some groups more than others, requiring targeted measures to redress the inequality experienced<sup>9</sup>. For example, older people and those with health and disability issues are likely to need to access health and social care facilities more often than other groups. The location of key facilities on the Scottish mainland and the lack of availability of transport services to these facilities intensifies the inequalities that people face as they age, including health and disability issues.

## Socio Economic Issues

Most Island Local Authorities in Scotland are found to have a higher employment rate than the national average, however data from 2023 shows North Ayrshire and Highland Council are exceptions to this trend<sup>10</sup>. North Ayrshire Council had the second lowest employment rate with 74% of those aged 16-64 in work<sup>11</sup>, just in line with the national average.

Tourism related activity is a key driver of economic activity and employment on Cumbrae and Arran. On Cumbrae, with 25% of all employment in 2019 was in the 'accommodation and food service activities' and 'arts, entertainment, and recreation' sectors<sup>12</sup>. On Arran, a quarter of all people in employment work in the accommodation and food services sector. Additionally, the transport sector supports around 9% of all employment in Arran and it is relatively more prevalent in Arran compared to Scotland as a whole. This may be due to ferries being the primary mode of transport to and from the island. Arran is reliant upon its ferry services to transport commuters and tourists to the local area, and also to deliver essential goods for islanders and tourists alike. A 2020 study by the Fraser of Allander Institute on Arran's economy estimated that, "on average, each day, the ferries contribute just under £170,000 to the island's economy"<sup>13</sup>.

Expenditure on transport (and the related effect on transport poverty) is generally above the Scottish average for large parts of Arran and for people in Cumbrae, likely reflecting the need for ferry travel to help access some services and facilities off the islands. The ICIA for NTS2 identified key factors giving rise to additional costs for households in islands communities compared to the rest of the UK include:

- Longer commuting distances compounded by higher fuel prices
- Issues around integrated timetabling
- The additional cost of the need to make occasional trips to the mainland
- Additional ferry/ air costs for inter-island travel

There is a strong relationship between transport and socio-economic activity, in which transport influences access to and people's ability to benefit from education, amenities, public services, employment and economic opportunities. The ICIA for NTS2 makes clear that transport "is particularly critical for the economic prosperity and wellbeing of island communities given the context of geographical separation" and that "the provision of lifeline ferry and air services and the relationship between transport, spatial planning and land use decision-making fundamentally affects access to

<sup>9</sup> The Scottish Government (2019) The National Plan for Scotland's Islands, available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/pages/1/>

<sup>10</sup> The Scottish Government (2023) Scottish Islands: Data Overview 2023

<sup>11</sup> National Records of Scotland (2023) Annual Population Survey

<sup>12</sup> North Ayrshire Council (2021) Isle of Cumbrae Economic Baseline Report

<sup>13</sup> University of Strathclyde Fraser of Allander Institute (2020) The Impact of Covid-19 on the Arran Economy

these opportunities for island communities, thereby contributing to positive or negative social and economic outcomes”.<sup>14</sup>

Access to sustainable travel choices is integral to helping achieve socioeconomic well-being and active travel, as low cost, low emission and healthy modes of travel, can positively contribute to this by improving transport options and connectivity for individuals, and more widely through reduced road congestion; support to local businesses and high streets and improved business efficiency (reduced absenteeism, presenteeism and costs of recruitment)<sup>15</sup>.

## Islands Typology

The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024)<sup>16</sup> classifies Scotland’s islands into ten categories based on combinations of population, access to local amenities, and access to mainland Scotland. The results and descriptions for each island type were created to provide an overview of islands in comparison to each other, rather than to non-island areas, and it should be noted that high scoring islands are not without challenges. The classification is intended to provide an indication of how an island is positioned relative to other islands in the typology.

The Islands Typology recognises ten island categories based on factors of capacity and reliance, ranging from ‘Connected Independent Islands’ to ‘Unserviced Islands’ and ‘Previously Inhabited Islands’. Both Arran and Great Cumbrae are classified as ‘Connected Independent Islands’ which are typified by the following:

- **Population:** Higher than average populations which are mainly growing.
- **On-island Amenities:** Highest levels of access to local amenities.
- **Ferry Connections:** High levels of access to mainland Scotland.

Variances within this classification are recognised, and explored further in this screening assessment, as follows:

- Across the period 2001-2021, the region ‘Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes’ has seen a 13% decline in population<sup>17</sup>.
- There is limited access to amenities on Great Cumbrae and the island’s amenities score is significantly lower than other island groupings. Its score is improved, however, due to the fast and frequent ferry crossing to Largs on the Scottish mainland, where a wide range of amenities and services are available.
- Of ferry services in the SPT region, the Ardrossan – Brodick and Wemyss Bay – Rothesay ferry services are most likely to experience service delays. Data analysed for the RTS identified that the Ardrossan – Brodick service is the least reliable in the SPT region (Stantec, 2021).

## Island Accessibility and Transport

Island communities face similar issues to those living in remote and rural areas on the Scottish mainland, but in many cases the challenges can be greater. Access to and dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys to ferry schedules. The context of geographical separation also compounds this.

Engagement undertaken as part of the development of National Transport Strategy 2 (Transport Scotland, 2020) identified the following concerns and unique challenges relevant to island communities:

- Centralisation of public transport and limited provision in peripheral areas
- poor journey connections, lack of seamlessness and lack of ticket integration

<sup>14</sup> Transport Scotland (2022), available at: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/island-communities-impact-assessment-ica-nts-delivery-plan/>

<sup>15</sup> Sustrans (2017) Active Travel and Economic Performance, available at <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/4472/4472.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> The Scottish Government (2024) Scottish Islands Typology Overview, available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-islands-typology-overview-2024/pages/1/>

<sup>17</sup> National Records of Scotland (2021) Small Area Population Estimates



- car dependencies due to poor public transport links
- insufficient active travel infrastructure on islands
- limited evening and weekend public transport services, resulting in difficulties accessing services and participating in social/ community activities
- incoherent, inconsistent and confusing public transport timetables across all modes
- the ability of public transport to meet the needs and expectations of tourists and visitors, especially to Scotland's islands
- higher costs of accessibility on islands and in rural areas
- imbalance of service provision and demand to meet concessionary transport needs, and
- call for more flexible and pro-active support needed for the berthing of cruise ships at ports<sup>18</sup>.

There are two key passenger ferry routes connecting Cumbrae and Arran to mainland North Ayrshire. These are essential to enable islanders to access mainland services and allow tourists to access the islands, thereby supporting their economies. Both routes are also substantially used for freight and commuting<sup>19</sup>.

Evidence presented as part of STPR2 (Transport Scotland, 2022) identified that ferry cancellations (primarily due to weather conditions, which accounted for cancellation of nearly 13% of sailings between Ardrossan and Brodick in 2019/2020) give rise to impacts on island economy and accessibility for island people to health and education services on the mainland.

These effects can be compounded in summer months when there is a greater demand for ferry and bus services from tourists and visitors and they can create difficulties for islanders needing to make journeys for essential reasons, particularly at short notice. Expenditure on transport (and the related effect on transport poverty) is generally above the Scottish average for large parts of Arran and for people in Cumbrae, likely reflecting the need for ferry travel to help access some services and facilities off the islands.

## **Active Travel**

Active travel infrastructure and activity across the islands is varied. The geography and topography of Arran presents a challenge for active travel between the main settlements, although the growing popularity of e-bikes is leading to an increase in demand for better routes despite the gradients. Active travel infrastructure is limited and while a section of the National Cycle Network (NCN73) runs between Brodick and Lochranza, it routes along the A841 and provides no segregation from motor vehicles.

Cumbrae is a popular island for leisure cycling, encouraged by flat topography. North Ayrshire's Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy, however, identifies significant potential for increased functional active travel trips on the island, particular for commuting between Millport and Largs. It is noted early feasibility work has begun to identify improvements for active travel between the Cumbrae ferry slip and the town of Millport<sup>20</sup>.

Local Island Plans have been developed with and for the island communities of Cumbrae and Arran and these aim to drive the development of community economic and environmental wellbeing. Public transport and infrastructure and transport reliability are key priorities for the 10-year Plans and the following transport related actions, within the scope of the Regional ATS, are identified to support their delivery:

### **For Arran**

- Improved roads and cycling infrastructure
- More environmentally friendly transport options (car share, bike hire, Electric Vehicle charging points, etc.)
- More joined up public transport

<sup>18</sup> Transport Scotland (2020) National Transport Strategy 2, available at <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/national-transport-strategy-2/>

<sup>19</sup> <sup>9</sup> North Ayrshire Council (2023) Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy



## For Cumbrae

- Upgrade / maintenance of road surfaces and pavements
- Safe cycle / active travel routes
- Investment in public realm

## 3.3 Public Engagement

Two phases of public engagement were organised during the development of the Regional ATS, as follows:

1. **Early Engagement** September – November 2023  
Aimed at better understanding public perceptions on existing barriers in relation to walking, wheeling and cycling and gathering views on initiatives to encourage members of the public to walk, wheel or cycle more often.
2. **Draft Regional ATS Engagement** July – September 2024  
Collected views on the draft Regional ATS document and accompanying Network & Infrastructure Delivery Plan (DP) to input to the final documents, before submission to the SPT Partnership for approval.

The engagement was carried out online and online surveys allowed the recording of public responses. Limited data about the home location of respondents was captured and it is, therefore, not possible to determine the level of feedback received from island communities in either phase of engagement.

Respondents were, however, asked in which local authority they live and North Ayrshire residents represented 2% of the survey sample in both the first phase (222 respondents) and second phase (73 respondents) of engagement.

The small sample size means no meaningful results and analysis have been recorded at the Local Authority level (North Ayrshire), and indeed at the local level (Arran and Cumbrae).

## 4 Assessment Outcomes

### 4.1 Overview

This section sets out the assessment and outcomes in relation to the potential impacts of the Regional ATS on the needs of island communities. This includes if the strategy, which forms the basis for future active travel interventions and investment in the SPT area, would have the potential for differential impacts on island communities.

The following questions are set out in the Island Communities Impact Assessment guidance to guide the assessment step:

- Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities?
- Does your assessment identify any potential barriers or wider impacts?
- How will you address these?

The strategy has been considered specifically with respect to the requirements of the ICIA legislation for consideration of the potential for significantly different impacts on island communities, with respect to demographic, economic and social issues and the extent to which the Strategy does, or needs to, improve or mitigate predicted outcomes from its implementation for the islands.

### 4.2 Summary of the Strategy and Policy Groups

The Strategy is for active travel modes, including walking, wheeling and cycling, and includes policies to improve access to and integration with public transport modes. It is intended to have the same impact across the region, to deliver the step-change in active travel and achieve a significant modal shift from the private car to more sustainable modes of transport.

The policies can be grouped under the following categories:

#### 1. **Creating an Attractive Environment for Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling**

These policy interventions are guided by National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) which aims to improve people's lives by making sustainable, liveable, and productive places. It is the aim of the Regional ATS to create a Regional Active Travel Network which is safe and attractive for all users, and that offers an inclusive way for people to travel actively regardless of age, gender, or disability.

#### 2. **Integrating Active Travel with Public Transport and Freight Movements**

These policy interventions are intended to make it easier for walkers, wheelers, and cyclists to access public transport, and to make low-carbon journeys convenient. Joining-up journeys in this way is key to providing an attractive alternative to car use and encouraging people to use more active and sustainable ways of getting around Strathclyde and beyond. The implementation of hubs will also add to the region's integrated and quality transport offering, considering the needs of all.

#### 3. **Increasing Access to Bikes**

These policy interventions are intended to tackle barriers to cycling, including the upfront costs of buying a bike, and make owning a bike an option for everyone to, ultimately, reduce transport poverty in the region. This incorporates standard, non-standard adapted and e-bikes.

#### 4. **Promotion, Travel Behaviour Change, and Information**

These policy interventions are focused on overcoming social barriers to active travel and aim to promote wider inclusion and increase the diversity of users. They comprise behavioural interventions and promotional, marketing and branding activities to encourage uptake of active travel.

## 5. Governance and Funding

These policy interventions are intended to ensure appropriate delivery and funding models are in place to enable local transport authorities to deliver high quality infrastructure and active travel measures.

The Strategy recognises that the SPT Region is diverse and includes the most densely populated city in Scotland as well as remote rural settlements and island communities. The uptake of active travel, and propensity to walk and cycle, is often lower outside of urban areas, where longer distances of travel are more common. A tailored approach for the delivery of active travel infrastructure is proposed in the Strategy for 'rural, remote and island communities', to provide direct connections to the closest town centres and public transport hubs, including ferry terminals, to enable improved access to services and centres.

## 4.3 Assessment

The assessment considers the anticipated impact of the Regional ATS policy groups on island communities, and then looks to the anticipated impact on demographic, economic and social issues for the islands.

The assessment is provided across **Table 4-1** and **Table 4-2**.

Table 4-1: Anticipated Impact of the Regional ATS Policies on Island Communities

Proposed Policy Groups	Impact	Reasoning
<b>1. Creating an Attractive Environment for Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling</b>	Positive	The policies, if implemented at scale and in hard-to-reach areas, would have beneficial impacts on island communities and provide potential for new accessibility and mobility opportunities for residents, businesses and visitors. Impacts are anticipated to be positive, however the level of impact will depend on extent of delivery of improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure, the design of place, and new networks.
<b>2. Integrating Active Travel with Public Transport and Freight Movements</b>	Positive	The policies support the aims of the National Plan for Scotland's Islands, which outlines the need for a low carbon transport system for island communities to ensure an equal footing with people on the Scottish mainland. Joining-up sustainable transport networks will allow island communities to be mobile within the island, and also provide improved connections to ports to improve access to the mainland and Scotland's urban centres which are important in enabling access for the islands to services and markets.
<b>3. Increasing Access to Bikes</b>	Positive	Increasing access to bikes also forms an integral part of Strategic Objective 3 of the National Plan for Scotland's Islands, recognising that the benefits of any investment in new or existing cycle route infrastructure can only be realised by people with access to a bike. The purchase of a bike can be a significant outlay for many people, particularly for families or those who need more specialist cycles, and the policies are anticipated to most positively benefit people living in deprived communities and low-income households.
<b>4. Promotion, Travel Behaviour Change, and Information</b>	Positive	The proposed programme of interventions to enable people to cycle, and to give them confidence and skills to do so, is intended to enhance the benefits of investments being made in active travel infrastructure and will be progressed in line with local community needs. These interventions will most positively benefit groups less likely

Proposed Policy Groups	Impact	Reasoning
		to participate in active travel, such as the older populations on island communities.
<b>5. Governance and Funding</b>	Positive	Appropriate delivery and funding models are required to enable local transport authorities to deliver high quality infrastructure and active travel measures. Delivery models will ensure that existing and future proposals and services under the Regional ATS are fully island proofed, to truly meet the needs of island communities.

Table 4-2: Anticipated Impact of the Regional ATS Policies on Demographic, Economic and Social Issues for the Islands

Assessment Criteria	Impact	Reasoning
<b>Demographic Issues</b> <i>Considering shrinking working-age populations and greater percentages of older people</i>	Positive	<p>The high cost and low provision of public transport services and facilities in island and rural areas presents a significant barrier in accessing education and employment opportunities for young and working-age populations. The Regional ATS has a strong focus on delivering inclusive and accessible infrastructure as part of a package of measures, including supporting behavioural interventions, that will improve connectivity for active modes between residential areas and local education facilities and employment centres, or ferry terminals for onward journeys. It is recognised that people in mid and later life are less likely to participate in active travel than younger age groups. Research on the motivators, including health benefits, and barriers, including personal safety, that are particularly relevant to the 50-70 age group<sup>21</sup>, will inform behavioural interventions and targeted support for groups with low active travel uptake including those with protected characteristics including age.</p>
<b>Economic Issues</b> <i>Considering key island industries, small businesses, transport links, transport costs, natural environment and biodiversity</i>	Positive	<p>Policies in the Regional ATS support new and enhanced networks for active travel, and improved access for walkers, wheelers and cyclists to access public transport, including ferry, services. Where the implementing measures are designed to take account of the specific needs of Arran and Cumbrae then it is predicted the Regional ATS would support: the movement of people and business (through reducing congestion), local businesses and high streets (through increased pedestrian and cyclist movements in these areas), and business efficiency (through reduced absenteeism as a result of a healthier and happier workforce). Increased active travel infrastructure may also support increased leisure and tourism opportunities in the cycle tourism sector<sup>22</sup>. Considering personal travel costs, walking is the cheapest form of transport and while the initial purchase of a cycle or suitable mobility aid can prohibitively expensive, cycling is typically cheaper than driving. Walking, wheeling and cycling may also replace public transport journeys in some shorter journeys on the islands and could represent transport cost savings for individuals.</p>

<sup>21</sup> Centre for Ageing Better, Sustrans (2021) Active Travel and Mid-life, available at <https://ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-09/Active-travel-and-mid-life-understanding-barriers.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Sustrans (2017) Active Travel and Economic Performance, available at <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/4472/4472.pdf>

Assessment Criteria	Impact	Reasoning
<b>Social</b> <i>Considering deprivation, cost of living and household budgeting, employment opportunities and childcare</i>	Positive	The Regional ATS is intended to improve access to sustainable travel choices, integral to helping achieve socioeconomic well-being. Active travel, as low cost, low emission and healthy modes of travel, can positively contribute to this by improving transport options and connectivity for individuals, with the potential to reduce or remove public transport and car-related costs for individuals and households. Policies in the Regional ATS support increased access to bikes for all, with the aim to make owning a bike an option for everyone and, ultimately, reducing transport poverty in the region.

## 4.4 Potential Barriers and Wider Impacts

Potential barriers to the effective implementation of the Strategy include difficulties in translating the aims to behavioural activation, a lack of understanding around the wider benefits of active travel and disconnected budgets. Such barriers are anticipated to be common throughout the SPT region, while they may be heightened amongst island communities due to challenges including connectivity, distance and demography.

As recognised in 'A route map to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres by 2030' (Transport Scotland, 2022) car use in rural and island community areas won't necessarily reduce at the same rate as in towns and cities. The anticipated impact of the Strategy, and modal shift towards active and sustainable modes, is predicted to be most positive when the full extent of proposed active travel infrastructure is delivered in line with targeted support for areas where active travel uptake is particularly low, enhancing the beneficial impacts of the Strategy for island communities and hard-to-reach areas.

The delivery of connected and safe cycle infrastructure may be constrained by factors including topography, availability of land and limitations in road space in rural and island communities. Successful active travel infrastructure must respond to local characteristics and local decision making and knowledge should be incorporated into the routing and design stages of network implementation.

## 5 Recommendations and Conclusions

It is considered that the Strategy establishes an appropriately positive framework which will allow future active travel interventions to be designed around targeting existing inequalities experienced by island communities on the transport network, and in society more widely.

This will ensure that those living in the island communities, and rural and remote areas, of the SPT region and are well connected and have improved access to local services and to ferry services for travel to the Scottish mainland.

Implementation of the Regional ATS is predicted to result in positive outcomes for the SPT region island communities, provided that implementing measures take full account of island challenges and circumstances. Measures should be developed sensitively to avoid adverse impacts on the high-quality marine and terrestrial environments of the islands which support community wellbeing and tourism based businesses.

Significantly different impacts are not expected for the island communities of the SPT region and it is not considered that island communities impact assessment is required.