



## Update on Active Travel and SPT Cycle to Work Scheme

**Committee** Operations

**Date of meeting** 6 November 2020

**Date of report** 12 October 2020

### Report by Chief Executive

#### 1. Object of report

To provide the Committee with an update on recent progress in relation to active travel including SPT's Cycle to Work (CTW) scheme for employees.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 SPT is committed to promoting healthier and more sustainable travel choices for people across the west of Scotland. Over the last 5 years, working alongside our partner councils, SPT has invested £7 million in support of walking and cycling projects.
- 2.2 In recent months, members have received various updates on the impact of the Covid-19 public health emergency on transport in the west of Scotland. Those impacts have been significant, particularly for public transport, but with regard to active travel, there have been encouraging signs of positivity.

#### 3. Update

- 3.1 Following national Covid-19 messages aimed at encouraging more active travel as an alternative to public transport during and following lockdown, one of the most noticeable impacts on travel during the Covid-19 pandemic has been the significant increases in the number of cycling trips made.
- 3.2 Across Scotland for example, 6-monthly figures (March to August 2020) highlighted a 43% increase in the number of recorded cycling journeys<sup>1</sup> compared with 2019 data. In some parts of the country, automatic cycle counters recorded increases of more than 100%. Further analysis of the data indicates that in many cases, recorded increases have been attributed mainly to leisure trips rather than commuting or any other trip purpose<sup>2</sup>. This could be considered to reflect the one hour per day of exercise encouraged during lockdown.
- 3.3 Members will be aware of the Scottish Government's £38 million "Spaces for People" initiative to help introduce temporary active travel measures in support of Transport Scotland's Transport Transition Plan, helping ensure that people could walk, cycle and wheel during the public health emergency whilst physically distancing and

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cycling.scot/news-article/six-month-stats-see-cycling-up-43-in-scotland>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.gcph.co.uk/latest/news/942\\_cycling\\_through\\_a\\_pandemic](https://www.gcph.co.uk/latest/news/942_cycling_through_a_pandemic)

keeping safe from traffic<sup>3</sup>. This initiative has played a part in supporting increases in cycling rates.

- 3.4 As regards SPT's capital programme, investment in previous years will have helped build momentum in encouraging active travel. This investment continues in 2020/21 with nearly £2million of SPT capital funding being committed to councils in support of delivering active travel measures.

Active travel projects being programmed for delivery this financial year include:

- South Ayrshire Council: Local Cycle Network Improvements (£450,000), including construction of an off-road cycle route between Alloway and Burton.
- East Dunbartonshire Council: Walking and Cycling Off-Road Network Improvements (£400,000), including improved links to the National Cycle Route network.
- Renfrewshire Council: Paisley to Renfrew Cycle Route (£280,000) which will deliver improvements to walking & cycling routes over the River Cart.
- North Ayrshire Council: Irvine Cycle Friendly Town (£250,000), including completion of Ayr Road path.
- South Lanarkshire Council: National Strategic Cycle Routes (£175,000), including enhancements to the East Kilbride cycle network.
- East Ayrshire Council: Kilmarnock to Crosshouse Cycle Route (£100,000).
- East Renfrewshire Council: Pedestrian and Cycle Improvements (£100,000), including shared cycle/footway along Stewarton Road, Newton Mearns.
- Glasgow City Council: Active Travel Network Enhancements (£50,000).
- Inverclyde Council: Cycle Route Improvements (£50,000).
- Argyll and Bute Council: Helensburgh and Lomond Cycleways (£25,000).

- 3.5 Members will also be aware of SPT's endeavours in relation to business continuity throughout the pandemic, in order that essential services such as the Subway and socially necessary bus services continue to operate. A key part of the business continuity work involves preparations for the future, including ensuring readiness for a return to the workplace for those SPT employees currently working from home.

- 3.6 From the early stages of lockdown, there was an increase in enquiries from staff in relation to SPT's Cycle to Work scheme, which had operated successfully in previous years. This could be considered to reflect a desire across staff to make new commuting choices on their return to the workplace.

- 3.7 In an effort to support and promote greater choice and a move towards more sustainable travel behaviours, the SPT Cycle to Work scheme for employees was relaunched<sup>4</sup>. The CTW scheme is a Government initiative, which aims to cut congestion on the roads, improve health, and have a positive impact on the environment. Nationally, the CTW initiative is a proven mechanism of incentivising behaviour change, with over two-thirds of users cycling more because of the scheme<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/p260620\\_Agenda10.pdf](http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/p260620_Agenda10.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The CTW scheme was last run in 2017

<sup>5</sup> Cycle to Work Alliance

- 3.8 SPT's CTW scheme ran from mid-June to end-September 2020 and offered employees the opportunity to save between 25% and 39% on the cost of a new bike and accessories up to the value of £2,000, whilst spreading the cost of repayments over one year via salary sacrifice. This year saw one of the most successful relaunches of the SPT CTW scheme with 22 employees (5% of all staff) taking advantage of the scheme, purchasing bikes and equipment totalling just over £22,000 and included 3 electric bikes.
- 3.9 Further, in recognition of SPT's continued efforts to encourage cycling amongst employees, including investment in staff cycle facilities, the launch of the CTW scheme, and our work with councils and partners to promote active travel through our capital programme, SPT successfully retained its Cycling Friendly Employer status in September 2020.
- 3.10 The Cycling Friendly Employer Award is Cycling Scotland's<sup>6</sup> nationally recognised Cycling Friendly award for organisations and community groups across Scotland, recognising efforts and commitment by employers to increase cycling rates. To achieve the award, employers are subject to an assessment carried out by Cycling Scotland, the requirement being to meet set criteria. In order to maintain Cycle Friendly Employer status, employers must undergo the assessment every 3 years.
- 3.11 The award also recognised the work achieved by SPT in raising awareness and understanding of mental health issues as well as our continued work in partnership with specialist organisations such as Validium, our Employee Assistance Provider, and Glasgow Association for Mental Health and Dementia.

#### **4. Conclusions**

- 4.1 While recent growth in active travel during the pandemic is encouraging, it remains to be seen whether this can be maintained in the long-term, particularly in regards to work-related trips. Continued investment in walking and cycling projects via SPT's capital programme will provide significant support in this, and officers continue to monitor current and predicted travel behaviours closely through work such as that being undertaken by the Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds, funded by partners including Transport Scotland and SPT. Further, strengthened support for active travel is emerging as a key factor in developmental work for the new Regional Transport Strategy.
- 4.2 According to the most recently published Public Attitudes Survey<sup>7</sup> carried out by Transport Scotland, responses indicate that concerns about using public transport remain high with 67% of people saying they are very or fairly concerned about contracting or spreading the virus while using public transport. It is therefore important as an employer that SPT understand the views, and indeed any concerns, from all employees around future travel choices. An updated SPT staff travel survey will be carried out prior to any planned return to work. The findings from the survey will be used to support and implement measures in order to help SPT employees travel healthily, sustainably and safely to their work.
- 4.3 As a Cycling Friendly Employer, SPT will continue to build upon the success of this year's CTW scheme and will continue to work alongside partner councils to ensure delivery of infrastructure projects that will support walking and cycling in our area.

#### **5. Committee action**

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cyclingfriendly.scot/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/covid-19-public-attitudes-survey-data-wave-8/>

The Committee is asked note the content of this report.

## 6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>In line with the current and developing Regional Transport Strategy.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>Findings from the future staff survey will be used to help support all employees in their return to work.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>Findings from the future survey will be used to help support all employees.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None at present.</i>

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