



Active Travel Update

Committee Strategy & Programmes

Date of meeting 25 November 2022

Date of report 15 November 2022

Report by Chief Executive

1. Object of report

To update the Committee on SPT initiatives to support active travel (walking, cycling and wheeling), including latest policy developments, progress on the Regional Active Travel Strategy, investment in active travel across the SPT area and the key principles of SPT's proposed response to the current Scottish Government consultation on a new Cycling Framework for Scotland.

2. Background

2.1. Active travel policy at national, regional and local level

The benefits of active travel have gained considerably better recognition over recent years, both in terms of health and wellbeing, and from wider societal impacts. These include better physical and mental health, reduced stress, safer and quieter streets, improved air quality, reduced transport emissions, and decreased reliance on unsustainable travel modes such as the private car.

Building on the National Transport Strategy 2, Transport Scotland's Active Travel Framework¹ sets out a vision for active travel by 2030 where Scotland's communities are shaped around people, with walking or cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys. As part of the Programme for Government, the Scottish Government has committed to increasing investment in active travel to at least £320 million or 10% of the national transport budget by 2024/25. To support this, the Scottish Government has established the Active Travel Transformation Project (ATTP), seeking to ensure that the appropriate skills, resources, and project development and delivery processes are in place in those organisations expected to deliver results from this step-change in funding. Officers are engaged in the process and an update will be provided to a future Committee as work progresses in that regard.

Scotland's Railway (ScotRail and Network Rail) has also begun a project entitled "Sustainable Access to Stations", which is seeking to improve opportunities to access rail stations by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. SPT is the representative of the Regional Transport Partnerships for Scotland on the steering group for the project and will keep members updated on any progress in that regard.

At regional level, the draft Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) recognises the need to facilitate a step-change in active travel and sets out five policies to help enable this

¹ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47158/sct09190900361.pdf>

change: development of a Regional Active Travel Network; accelerated delivery of walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure and facilities; access to bikes; integration of active travel and public transport; and integration of micro mobility and walking, wheeling and cycling.

The RTS also sets out a policy for reallocating road space to increase capacity for active and public transport modes, which will be essential to achieving a step change in facilitating modal shift away from private car usage.

In addition, the initial set of RTS actions reported to the Partnership Board in June² includes a commitment to developing and working with partners to implement a Regional Active Travel Strategy and Network Plan. This will build on the regional active travel concept network that has been developed jointly by SPT, Sustrans, ClydePlan & Green Network Partnership and Local Authorities and was included within the draft RTS. Further information on the Regional Active Travel Strategy and Network Plan is provided in the next section of this report.

Working with key partners including SPT, councils are at the forefront of planning, delivering and maintaining new or improved infrastructure for walking, wheeling and cycling. Councils are required to produce active travel strategies for their area, setting out plans to improve active travel networks and facilities to 2030. Local Strategies should be in line with Regional Transport Strategies and use an evidence-led approach and dialogue is ongoing between SPT and council colleagues in that regard.

To support national, regional and local policy on active travel, SPT has been taking forward a number of initiatives and activities as set out below.

3. Outline of proposals

3.1. Regional Active Travel Strategy and Network Plan

In 2023, SPT will work with partners to develop the Regional Active Travel Strategy and Network Plan. The Active Travel Strategy will be a key delivery mechanism of the future Regional Transport Strategy and will build on the work carried out to date with partners on the regional active travel concept network. This work will include development of a regional active travel infrastructure delivery plan to facilitate an accelerated step-change in infrastructure investment/delivery by improving co-ordination of local/regional projects and resources particularly on cross-boundary strategic routes. The work will also set out a co-ordinated programme of complementary activities and projects relating to behaviour change and active travel facilities.

The Active Travel Strategy and Network Plan will be developed in line with the emerging national guidance and will be co-ordinated with development of work on strategic bus corridors and wider Clyde Metro developments.

SPT has applied to Sustrans' Places for Everyone programme for funding to take forward the Regional Active Travel Strategy and Network Plan. Officers will advise of progress of this application and the outcomes of the Active Travel Transformation Project as matters progress.

² https://www.spt.co.uk/media/wjwhiuso/p240622_agenda10b.pdf

3.2. Active Travel Investment

Working with our council partners, SPT has invested £7.76m in active travel projects over the five year period 2017-2021. This represents 15% of SPT's total capital investment across all projects during that period. Worth highlighting is the fact that this level of investment exceeds the Scottish Government's commitment to spend 10% of its transport budget on active travel.

A range of active travel projects are being funded by SPT and delivered by our partner councils in 2022/2023. These range from investment in new and extended cycle paths including on the National Cycle Network; improved active travel links to rail stations; and a new pedestrian crossing. In total, planned investment by SPT amounts to £4.3m in 2022/2023 which is 28% of SPT's general capital allocation.

SPT has also been working with councils to help coordinate and monitor funding allocations from Transport Scotland as part of the Regional Active Travel Grant Fund (RATG). Through RATG, Transport Scotland provides funding to Regional Transport Partnerships and local authorities for active travel projects with a focus on projects which help support cross boundary travel. In 2022/2023, SPT's constituent councils received £580,000 of funding via RATG for projects ranging from design and infrastructure for cycle lanes, pedestrian crossings and travel behaviour initiatives. A new round of funding has opened for 2023/2024 and SPT is working closely with councils to coordinate submissions to Transport Scotland.

3.3. Other initiatives to promote active travel

To support delivery of SPT's policy commitments on active travel and our programme of active travel investments, we are currently in the process of recruiting a new Active Travel Officer post to join the Policy & Planning team at SPT. Among other duties, the postholder will have a key role in supporting development and implementation of the Regional Active Travel Strategy and Network Plan, working closely with our national, regional and local active travel partners.

SPT also promotes active travel by responding to national and local consultations on active travel, including the Scottish Government's current consultation on the Cycling Framework and Delivery Plan for Active Travel³. The draft Framework sets out the strategic priorities and shared actions to help meet the Scottish Government's long-term Vision for Active Travel. Through this framework, local authorities in Scotland will be required to produce active travel strategies for each local authority area, setting out plans to improve active travel networks and facilities to 2030. These strategies should include detailed mapping and use an evidence led approach to network planning.

SPT is preparing a response to the consultation reflecting the policies on active travel contained in the draft RTS, including our promotion of the regional active travel network; the need to accelerate delivery of walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure and facilities; the need to widen access to bikes including adapted bikes; and the need to integrate walking, wheeling and cycling with other sustainable transport modes. The response will be submitted as draft within the deadline subject to approval by the Committee at its next meeting.

In addition to investment in the active travel network, SPT promotes active travel in other ways, including through our Staff Cycle to Work Scheme and accreditation from Cycling Scotland as a Cycle Friendly Employer.

³ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/consultation/cycling-framework-for-active-travel-impact-assessments-consultation/>
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4. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

5. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>Delivering active travel investment in line with RTS policies will help to promote the draft RTS vision and its commitment to delivering sustainable and low carbon transport.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>Accessible walking, wheeling, cycling and good public transport links can reduce inequalities by giving equal access to employment, education and other services.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Climate Change, Adaptation & Carbon consequences	<i>Policies that reduce overall vehicle use and increase walking and cycling can assist in reducing emissions.</i>

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