
Oban, Lorn and the Isles Active Travel Update

1.0 ACTIVE TRAVEL OVERVIEW

- 1.1. Active Travel is an overarching term covering journeys made by a physically active means, for example walking, manual wheelchair, cycling or scooting.
- 1.2. The purpose of infrastructure development and delivery is to provide high-quality, accessible routes for people to walk/wheelchair and, in the case of cycleways cycle or scoot, thereby enabling and encouraging them to travel actively. Research has indicated that a lack of suitable and safe routes are one of the most frequently cited reasons for not travelling more actively. These physical route barriers can be relatively minor items, for example lack of dropped kerbs, or larger items, for example the lack of an off-carriageway route. This is particularly notable within Argyll and Bute where the majority of walking and/or cycling provision is extremely limited or non-existent out with the built up areas, forcing users to walk/cycle on national speed limit carriageways.
- 1.3. Behaviour Change projects are designed to overcome challenges to give people the confidence or incentive to travel more actively, for example by providing walking or cycle training, by providing individualized travel plans to demonstrate the viability of travelling more actively within their life or providing activities which encourage active travel.
- 1.4. Research has demonstrated that increased activity, including travelling actively, has significant physical and mental health benefits, reduces inequality, creates a healthier and more productive workforce and reduces congestion and transport related pollution (e.g. air, noise and visual). As such promotion of active travel delivers benefits and savings across both the public and private sectors while supporting economic development and healthier, happier lives.

2.0 ACTIVE TRAVEL IN OBAN, LORN & ISLES AREA

- 2.1. This briefing note provides an update to the Oban, Lorn & the Isles Community Planning Group on the active travel infrastructure development and behaviour change schemes which have been undertaken in the Oban, Lorn and the Isles (OLI) area in 2018/19 and a preview of work planned in 2019/20.
- 2.2. Within the OLI area the key long distance active travel routes are the:

- 2.2.1. National Cycle Network (NCN) 78 Caledonia Way route which links Campbeltown, Ardrishaig/Lochgilphead, Oban, Fort William and Inverness, using a combination of on and off road sections.
- 2.2.2. Trans-Scotland Pilgrims Way which links Iona and St Andrews, via Fionnphort, Craignure, Oban and Tyndrum. Within Argyll and Bute, the Pilgrims Way remains largely in the planning stages and little infrastructure or signage to support this route has been constructed to date.
- 2.3. In addition to the recognised long-distance routes there are numerous short, local routes which are used on a daily basis by residents and visitors across the OLI area. Some of these routes are pavements used by pedestrians, some off-road recognised paths, some are quiet roads and others are 'desire lines' which are not currently supported by any recognised infrastructure.

3.0 FUNDING SOURCES

- 3.1. The Scottish Government committed a total of £80M funding for Active Travel in 2018/19 and have committed the same funding in 2019/20. The majority of the Scottish Government's funding is distributed via Sustrans (2018/19: £56.8M), Paths for All (Smarter Choices Smarter Places, SCSP) (2018/19: £7.3M) and Cycling Scotland (£4.7M).

4.0 2018/19 PROJECTS

- 4.1. Design and Development Projects:

- 4.1.1. A&B Active Travel Routes Audit (A&BC & Sustrans)

Audit of the existing active travel network, on and off carriageway, to identify locations on the existing network which are sub-standard or pose a barrier to the use of a longer route, for example steps or lack of a dropped-kerb.

- 4.1.2. A&B Active Travel Route Development Plan (A&BC & Sustrans)

This work identified a future inter-urban active travel network in order to help direct future investment with the long-term aim of connecting key settlements and facilities within Argyll & Bute. In the OLI area, the key routes identified were Oban – Ganavan – Dunbeg – Connel, Connel – Taynuilt – Dalmally – Tyndrum, Oban – Lochgilphead, Fionnphort – Craignure and Craignure – Tobermory.

- 4.1.3. Oban Active Travel Study (A&BC & Sustrans)

The Oban Active Travel Study builds upon the actions identified in the 2010 Oban Active Travel Audit to identify deliverable actions which could improve active travel opportunities in Oban.

- 4.1.4. Dunbeg to European Marine Science Park Footway/Cycleway Design (A&BC, HIE & Sustrans)

The design of a walking and cycling route linking Dunbeg with the European Marine Science Park was undertaken by Argyll & Bute Council Roads Service as part of the programme of road improvements in the Dunbeg area associated with the new housing and improved access to the European Marine Science Park.

- 4.1.5. Oban – Tyndrum, part of Pilgrims Way (Sustrans & SNH)
A combined Sustrans/SNH post has been created to help develop a walking/cycling accessible route which will link Oban and Tyndrum as part of the long-distance Pilgrims Way. The officer was appointed last month and initial work to identify route options is ongoing.
- 4.1.6. Cruachan Cottages, Taynuilt (A&BC & Sustrans)
Consultation and design work has been undertaken to identify opportunities to improve the active travel network within Taynuilt.
- 4.1.7. Travel Survey & Diary of Oban residents (A&BC & SCSP)
A door-to-door survey of Oban residents was undertaken to identify travel behaviour and gain an understanding of the travel undertaken, including reasons for mode choice.
- 4.1.8. A&B Council Staff Travel Plan (A&BC & SCSP)
A staff travel plan was developed to support Council staff to travel more actively and sustainably both in commuting to work and also within work.
- 4.1.9. Oban Car Club Feasibility (COMOUK & A&BC)
A feasibility study developed to identify opportunities for the implementation of a car club within Oban serving businesses, residents and visitors. The study identified that a car club would be feasible but would require a significant business/public sector organisation to be an 'anchor user' in order to attract a commercial supplier to Oban.
- 4.1.10. Oban area bike share scheme including e-bikes feasibility (COMOUK & A&BC)
Developed as part of the Oban Car Club Feasibility study this work examined options for a bike share scheme in Oban. The work identified that, at least initially, a preferred approach would be to build up a base of business users via attracting businesses to create pool bikes for their staff to use for work journeys. This base use could help sustain a more reasonable visitor offering, the challenge being not to negatively impact on existing bike hire in Oban, and possibly the future roll-out of on-street automated stations, similar to the NextBike in Glasgow/'Boris bikes' in London.

4.2. Delivery projects:

- 4.2.1. Fionnphort to Creich Hall Path, Mull (MICT, A&BC & Sustrans)
A new walking & cycling path was constructed on Mull, linking Fionnphort to the Creich Hall, a total distance of approximately 1.5km. While the

project was led and driven by the community, the lead organisation for the construction was the Mull and Iona Community Trust with support from A&BC and SUSTANS.

- 4.2.2. NCN78, Caledonia Way (Sustrans & Transport Scotland)
Sustrans have constructed two new off-road sections of the NCN78, Caledonia Way north of Oban in 2018/19. These sections at North Ledaig (just north of Oban Airport) and Duror mean that the entire route of NCN78 from North Connel to Ballachulish is now off the carriageway of the main A828 trunk road.
- 4.2.3. Cycle & Scooter Storage, Taynuilt and Easdale Primary Schools (A&BC & Sustrans)
New cycle and scooter storage facilities were installed at Taynuilt and Easdale Primary schools to enable more pupils to cycle or scoot to school. These facilities were provided following requests from the schools.
- 4.2.4. Oban Airport e-bikes, for use of visiting pilots (Hitrans & A&BC)
Two e-bikes have been provided at Oban Airport for the use of visiting private pilots to explore the local area. This trial has been provided by Hitrans and is in addition to the 4 bicycles currently available at the airport for the use of visiting pilots. It is expected the new e-bikes will encourage visiting pilots to explore the local area, thereby benefiting the local economy.
- 4.2.5. Automated Pedestrian and Cycle Counters (A&BC & SCSP)
Argyll & Bute Council have a number of automated pedestrian and cycle counters within the Oban area, located in Soroba, North Oban, Ganavan, Connel, Benderloch, Barcaldine, Appin and Portnacraish. These counters provide information on the number of pedestrians and cyclists who pass these locations, thereby enabling an estimation of the changes in walking and cycling within the wider Oban area.

5.0 2019/20 PLANNED PROJECTS

5.1. Design and Development Projects:

- 5.1.1. Oban High School to Town Centre route design (A&BC & Sustrans)
In order to support pupils attending Oban High School it is planned to start initial feasibility and design work examining options to improve the pedestrian and cycle links between the new Oban High School and Oban Town Centre.
- 5.1.2. Automated Pedestrian and Cycle Counters Data Analysis (A&BC & SCSP)
It is planned to commission research into the data which has been accumulated from the Council's network of automated pedestrian and

cycle counters in order to help identify changes in active travel use and potential opportunities moving forward.

5.2. Delivery Projects

5.2.1. Oban Schools Travel Plans (A&BC & Sustrans)

School Travel Plans are key to changing the travel behaviour of pupils and parents in relation to getting to/from school. Research elsewhere has consistently shown around 20% of vehicles on the road in the AM peak are transporting school pupils. Encouraging change in the travel behaviour of pupils and parents who can change is key to helping improve the health and wellbeing of our young people and to reducing congestion, pollution and road safety concerns in the vicinity of schools. It is planned to update the School Travel Plans for a number of the schools in the OLI area linked to Oban High School.

5.2.2. Dunbeg to European Marine Science Park Construction (HIE, A&BC & Sustrans)

HIE and Argyll & Bute Council are working to construct the new walking/cycle route from Dunbeg to the European Marine Science Park designed in 2018/19.

5.2.3. Oban Active Travel Map: Update and Reprint (A&BC & SCSP)

It is planned to update and reprint the popular Oban Active Travel maps which were produced a few years ago. These maps help local residents and visitors to identify opportunities to travel actively within the Oban area by providing information on active travel routes, facilities and destinations with Oban and the surrounding area.

5.3. Through 2019/20 further projects will be developed and progressed, the above provides an overview of the work currently planned.

6.0 JOINT WORKING

6.1. As noted above, there have been significant steps forward with Active Travel in the area over recent years and there are significant benefits to other organisations from the promotion and increase in active travel.

6.2. Argyll & Bute Council, and our existing partners, continue to seek opportunities to work jointly with others to deliver improved active travel opportunities to residents, visitors and businesses within the OLI and wider Argyll & Bute Council area. We would welcome opportunities to work with members of the Community Planning Group on the development and delivery of future active travel initiatives and projects.

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