

DRAFT ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY FOR CONSULTATION

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report requests member approval for progressing to consultation on the draft of the Council's Active Travel Strategy. The draft Active Travel Strategy has been developed by Officers as instructed by this Committee on 01 June 2023. Consultation is a key step in the process set out by Transport Scotland for development of an Active Travel Strategy.
- 1.2. The Active Travel Strategy sets out the Council's vision and strategy to increase opportunities for residents and visitors to choose to make journeys by physically active means, for example walking or cycling. This will establish the context for the future development of plans for infrastructure to enable and encourage active travel, as well as behaviour change programmes to encourage uptake.
- 1.3. The subsidiary Active Travel Development Plan will set out a prioritised set of actions for both infrastructure and behaviour change projects. The prioritisation will apply the strategic context set in the Active Travel Strategy to a specific set of deliverable projects to ensure the principles established in the Active Travel Strategy are delivered on the ground. It is planned to present the Active Travel Development Plan to area committees for member input at the appropriate point in development.
- 1.4. The Scottish Government has committed to national funding for active travel to expedite delivery of new active travel infrastructure and behaviour change projects. However, opportunities to secure a share of this funding now require Local Authorities to demonstrate a relevant and up to date Active Travel Strategy and Delivery Plan as one of the key criteria, a requirement which we understand from Transport Scotland is planned to continue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:

- i. Consider and approve the draft Active Travel Strategy (**Appendix 1**) for a period of consultation.
- ii. Instruct Officers to provide a further report to EDI on completion of the consultation for members to consider and approve.

DRAFT ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY FOR CONSULTATION

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. The Active Travel Strategy sets out the Council's vision and strategy to increase opportunities for residents and visitors to choose to make journeys by physically active means, for example walking or cycling. This will establish the context for the future development of plans for infrastructure to enable and encourage active travel, as well as behaviour change programmes to encourage uptake.
- 2.2. A key stage in the process set out by Transport Scotland for development of an Active Travel Strategy is to undertake a consultation on the proposed strategy with key stakeholders including Regional Transport Partnerships, neighboring authorities, and statutory consultees; the wider communities and businesses in the area, and other interested parties.
- 2.3. Following approval of a final Active Travel Strategy a subsidiary Active Travel Development Plan will be developed to set out a prioritised set of actions for both infrastructure and behaviour change projects. The prioritisation will apply the strategic context set in the Active Travel Strategy to a specific set of deliverable projects to ensure the principles established in the Active Travel Strategy are delivered on the ground. It is planned to present the Active Travel Development Plan to area committees for member input at the appropriate point in development.
- 2.4. The Scottish Government has committed to national funding for active travel to expedite delivery of new active travel infrastructure and behaviour change projects. However, opportunities to secure a share of this funding now require Local Authorities to demonstrate a relevant and up to date Active Travel Strategy and Delivery Plan as one of the key criteria, a requirement which we understand from Transport Scotland is planned to continue.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. It is recommended that Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:
 - i. Consider and approve the draft Active Travel Strategy (**Appendix 1**) for a period of consultation.

- ii. Instruct Officers to provide a further report to EDI on completion of the consultation for members to consider and approve.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1. The Strategic Transportation Team has successfully secured £9.4M external funding over the past 5 years to develop active travel across Argyll and Bute. Additionally, the staff costs of the 1.7 FTE staff in the team working on active travel are funded via successfully securing highly competitive external challenge funds.
- 4.2. The Scottish Government has committed to national funding for active travel to expedite delivery of high quality active travel infrastructure. However, opportunities to secure a share of this funding require Local Authorities to demonstrate a relevant and up to date Active Travel Strategy (ATS) as one of the key criteria, a requirement which we understand from Transport Scotland is expected to continue.
- 4.3. An increasing number of other active travel funding sources are requiring evidence of a robust, relevant and up to date ATS as part of the application process to these highly competitive challenge funds. Transport Scotland, where most active travel funding conduits originally derive from, has stated they require all their funds criteria to require an up-to-date, adopted ATS and Delivery Plan prior to approving future funding applications. To continue to secure external active travel funding, Argyll and Bute Council is now required to develop and adopt an ATS and subsidiary Active Travel Delivery Plan (ATDP). External funding secured for active travel works cannot be used for any other purpose.
- 4.4. The ATS sets out the Council's vision and strategy to increase opportunities for residents and visitors to choose to make journeys by physically active means, for example walking or cycling, and set out clear objectives for success. This will establish the context for the subsequent development of an ATDP which will establish a prioritised programme of infrastructure and behaviour change programmes to enable and encourage uptake of active travel.
- 4.5. Community consultation and engagement is a key element of development of a robust ATS and ATDP. This will provide our communities, residents and businesses with the opportunity to input to the development of the Strategy and guide the forms of active travel interventions which their communities require in future.
- 4.6. The guidance on development of an ATS also stipulates that key stakeholders should also be consulted including Regional Transport Partnerships, neighboring authorities, statutory consultees and other interested groups.
- 4.7. Should members approve progression to consultation on the draft plan, Officers will work with the Communications Team, Communities Team and external partners to promote the consultation to as wide an audience as possible. On completion of the consultation, any necessary amendments will be made to the draft ATS prior to returning to members of final approval.

- 4.8. Funding to support staff time to develop an ATS and ATDP is planned to be secured from external sources. Most external active travel funding sources operate on an annual basis and it is expected separate funding will require to be identified for each financial year, albeit potentially from the same source.
- 4.9. Active travel supports delivery of a range of outcomes. The main of these are identified below:-
- Argyll and Bute Outcomes Improvement Plan (ABOIP) - Transport Infrastructure improvements priority
 - ABOIP - Community Wellbeing priority
 - Climate Emergency Declaration

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1. The development and adoption of a robust ATS and subsidiary ATDP will provide a basis for development of active travel projects to support our residents and visitors to choose actively, supporting improved health, access to services and economic development.
- 5.2. As an increasingly requested requirement for access to external funds for active travel, the adoption of an ATS and ATDP will enable continued successful securing of funding to improve our communities.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Policy - Development of an Active Travel Strategy will support the Council's ABOIP: Transport Infrastructure and Community Wellbeing priorities; The project also supports achievement of the Scottish Government's objectives set out in the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS) and Let's Get Scotland Walking - The National Walking Strategy.
- 6.2. Financial – The development of an Active Travel Strategy will not require any financial support from Argyll and Bute Council. Costs will be funded from external funding sources that can only be used for active travel investment.
- 6.3. Legal – None.
- 6.4. HR – None.
- 6.5. Fairer Scotland Duty
- 6.5.1. Equalities – The final Active Travel Strategy will be accompanied by a socio and economic impact assessment.
- 6.5.2. Socio-economic Duty – Creation of an Active Travel Strategy will support development of projects to enable our residents and visitors to travel more sustainably and actively which will help reduce transport and fuel poverty and improve access to essential services. Evidence indicates individuals who choose to travel actively have a higher annual spend in local businesses.

- 6.5.3. Islands – The Active Travel Strategy will include all islands within Argyll and Bute on an equal basis as the mainland.
- 6.6. Climate Change – Active Travel is the least carbon intensive mode of travel. The Active Travel Strategy will provide the context for development of new opportunities for residents and visitors to consider an alternative to having to use a private car to travel which will help lower Argyll and Bute’s carbon footprint.
- 6.7. Risk – There is a reputational risk to the Council if continued improvements to opportunities to choose to travel actively are not delivered.
- 6.8. Customer Service – None arising from this report.
- 6.9. The Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – 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 feedback demonstrates stronger support for the delivery walking and cycling infrastructure from younger members of the community than the average level of community support. Wider 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.

Executive Director with the responsibility for Development and Economic Growth: Kirsty Flanagan

Policy Lead for Roads, Transport and Amenity Services: Councillor John Armour

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: draft Active Travel Strategy for consultation