

Oban Town Centre North Active Travel Project

Frequently Asked Questions



What is this project?

The project is to explore opportunities for **new active travel improvements in Oban's northern town centre**.

The purpose of this stage of the project is to develop Concept Designs which set out the overall design principles for the area. We are in the very early stages and no elements are set in stone yet.

What is Active Travel?

Active travel refers to **walking, cycling, or wheeling** (wheeling refers to use of wheelchairs and mobility scooters).

What has been done so far?

We have done **evidence gathering** (traffic, cycle and parking surveys during August 2023), an **options appraisal** and prepared a **Concept Design**.

We started by undertaking a thorough evidence gathering exercise. We did 7 days of survey (7am-7pm per day) during August 2023 of parking, traffic, speed and cycle numbers. Parking surveys included counts every 30 minutes between 7am and 7pm on all streets and car parks in or immediately bordering the project area.

We hosted some initial public consultation events, before developing any design options, to fully understand the area's constraints, opportunities and needs.

We then developed four preliminary sketch options for appraisal. We considered what could be done within the town centre both in terms of available space, and considering the area's needs in terms of the A85 traffic, parking, and loading. These reflected a full range of interventions, from 'light touch' improvements to more extensive works.

We needed to develop this wide range of options to ensure that we are not excluding a potential approach without fully considering it.

You can view more information on the "Sketch Option Development" Board.

Who is funding this?

This project is funded by the **Scottish Government** through **Transport Scotland's 'Places for Everyone' programme** which is administered by **Sustrans**.

The funding we have received **can only be spent on projects that improve an area's walking, wheeling and cycling environment** (wheeling refers to use of wheelchairs and mobility scooters). This external funding is for active travel projects and cannot be redirected for other works.

Sustrans are a walking and cycling charity. The 'Places for Everyone' programme is for projects that make it easier to walk, cycle and wheel for everyday journeys.

Will you pedestrianise George Street?

We are **not proposing to pedestrianise George Street**.

During the Option Development stage, we developed four preliminary sketch options to consider the **full range** of interventions, from 'light touch' improvements to more extensive works.

We needed to develop this wide range of options to ensure that we are not excluding a potential approach without fully considering it.

One of these options considered pedestrianisation or controlled vehicle access to George Street. We presented this at public consultation, and this option was discounted following feedback.

Are you proposing a multi-storey car park at Corran Halls?

We are **not proposing a multi-storey car park**.

This scheme needs to work independently, regardless of whether a multi-storey car park comes forward in the future.

From our consultation so far, we have had some feedback from people in favour of a multi-storey to provide more off-street parking, whilst some are against the idea.

The option to provide a multi-storey car park is **not** part of this scheme. This is an active travel and not a parking project.

However, we acknowledge the benefits that additional off-street parking could bring to this Active Travel project, as it would reduce demand for on-street parking and allow extra space for seating, planting and pavement. We have therefore developed the Concept Design to be future-proofed, in case the Council wishes to progress a multi-storey option in the future.

Please view the "Potential Wider Measures" board to view the various wider measures that could complement this Active Travel Project in the future. They **do not form part of this project**, but are important to think about as a whole so that we can produce a resilient design.

I don't want to lose on-street parking or loading

The Concept Design **provides enough parking to meet the surveyed demand during the peak summer months**.

We have done **parking surveys between 7am and 7pm, for 7 days during August 2023**. We understand the pressures that the area faces during peak times, and we want to make the study area function more efficiently without simply removing parking capacity.

A key objective of this project is to safeguard Oban's strategic transport facilities (i.e. the A85 and ferry terminal, and business operations. Removal of all parking would be contrary to this objective and we want to deliver a scheme that works for Oban.

The Concept Designs **provide an overall parking level that meets surveyed demand**.

However, the project will seek to **prevent the ongoing issues of unlawful parking** along George Street's western side.

The project will also seek to prioritise street space for essential parking first and foremost (e.g. disabled bays, loading, short-stay, residential). Longer-stay visitor parking would be encouraged to take place in off-street car parks.

I didn't know about the consultation in February

The consultation event on the 29th February **was for pre-booked, one-to-one sessions with business owners**. Only business owners **within or directly bordering the project area** were invited.

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Public Consultation Event



What is being consulted on?

Argyll and Bute Council have appointed LUC as consultants to explore opportunities for new active travel improvements around Corran Esplanade and George Street in Oban's northern Town Centre.

Over the past few months we have explored several options for improving the area, considering a range of intervention levels from 'light touch' improvements to more extensive works.

These options were then subject to an appraisal, weighing up the benefits, disbenefits, public and stakeholder feedback, of each approach to arrive at a preferred approach. This preparatory work that has taken place has now allowed us to prepare a Concept Design.

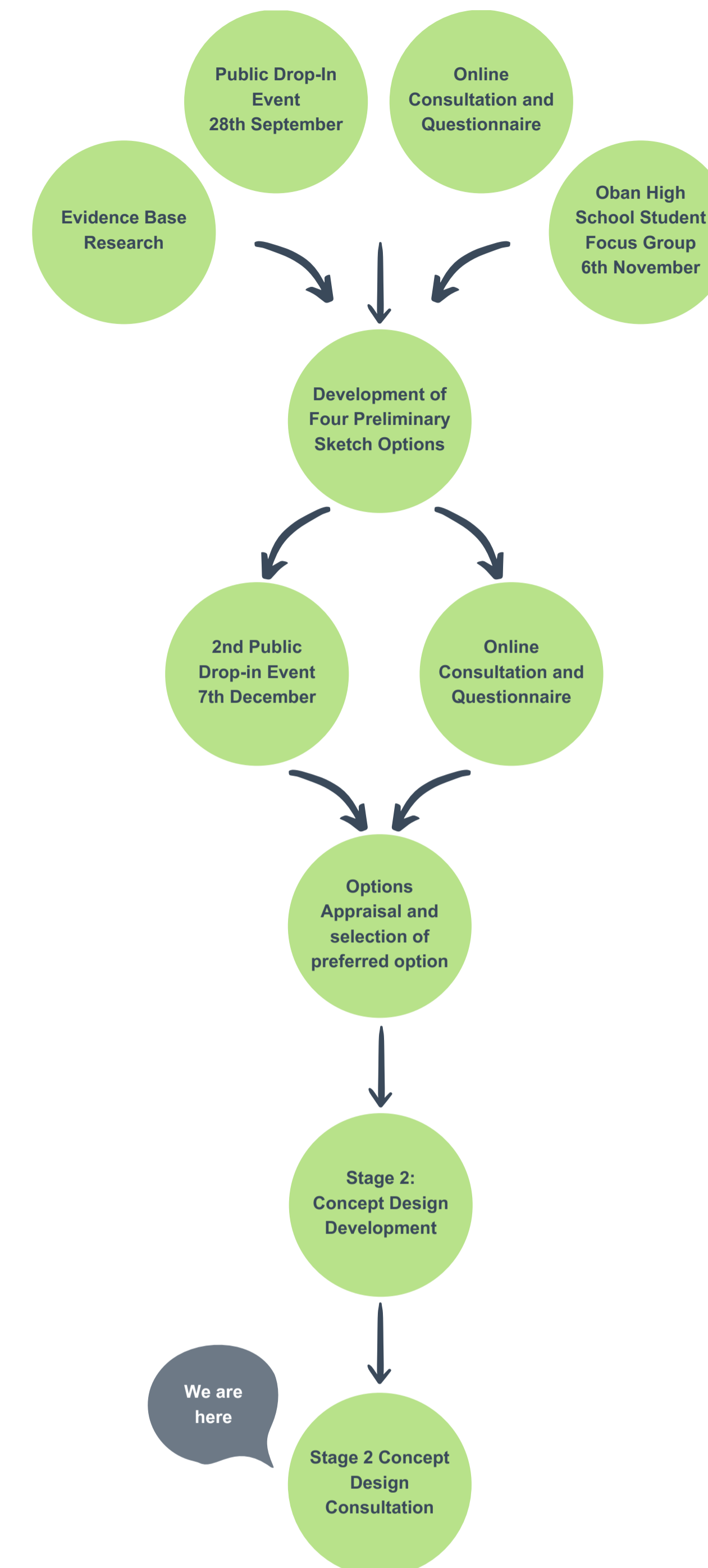
The designs remain at a very early stage, and we are seeking your views on this.

Project Aims and Objectives

Oban stands out as a unique town, boasting captivating landscapes, a rich cultural heritage, and plays a pivotal role as a transport hub to the Inner Hebrides. However, its popularity, compact layout, and terrain pose challenges for active travel, affecting both residents and visitors. This project aims to make walking, wheeling, and cycling the preferred choice in Oban Town Centre North.

The objectives of the Oban Town Centre North Active Travel Project can be categorised under 5 key headings:

- 1 | Make walking, wheeling and cycling the most enjoyable way to get around**
by delivering improved and inclusively accessible active travel infrastructure that has the support of stakeholders.
- 2 | Identify real and perceived barriers to active travel and deliver interventions that address these**
by undertaking thorough public and stakeholder consultation and engagement.
- 3 | Deliver strategies and interventions that reduce the impacts of A85 traffic on the study area**
by identifying opportunities, through traffic surveys and robust baseline analysis of travel patterns, to create proposals that optimise traffic flow and have the potential to reduce local car journeys and non-essential car travel through the study area.
- 4 | Safeguard Oban's strategic transport facilities and High Street business operations**
through engagement with local businesses and the identification of interventions to support increased footfall in the town centre whilst safeguarding access to Oban ferry terminal.
- 5 | Identify and future-proof connections to the wider town**
by conducting continual high-level strategic reviews of town-wide connections and producing a Supplementary Report recommending next steps following this scheme.



What happens next?

Your feedback on Concept Design will help us understand the public's reception to the designs and inform the future design stages.

We have funding to bring the project to Concept Design stage, following which further funding would be sought to develop designs further.

This project is funded by the Scottish Government through Transport Scotland and is administered by Sustrans. **There is no set date when further detailed design may progress, as this is subject to securing further funding and the findings of this consultation.**

Additional public consultations will be held if funding is secured and there is support for the project to progress onto the next design stage.