Active Travel Strategy Guidance

February 2023

Contents

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Introduction

The requirement for Active Travel Strategies (ATS), setting out a strategic approach to plan infrastructure and behavioural interventions, was introduced in the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland in 2013, reinforced by the National Walking Strategy. Active Travel Strategy Guidance was issued in 2014, to support local authorities and other statutory bodies to prepare an ATS for their area.

This update reflects key changes to national policy with implications for active travel strategies. There is a new definition of active travel, highlighting that strategies should deliver interventions for walking, wheeling and cycling and be informed by Equality Impact Assessments. New recommendations for top priority interventions, including segregated cycle networks in large towns/cities, rural routes that link to them, as well as neighbourhood-scale interventions. It also provides advice on the ATS development process, with greater emphasis on using data and evidence to inform the strategy and demonstrate the most impactful suite of interventions for the local context.

Active travel sits within the broader transport context: the National Transport Strategy (NTS) identified that poor integration is a barrier to people choosing sustainable modes (active, public, or shared transport). As set out in the second NTS Delivery Plan and Climate Change Plan update Monitoring Report, the Scottish Government are updating the guidance for discretionary local transport strategies (LTS) to align with national and regional strategies. Local transport strategies will allow authorities to detail how they intend to deliver on national objectives at a local level and provide an action plan for meeting local challenges and objectives. It is important that active travel interventions are planned as part of a package of measures that collectively incentivise modal shift to sustainable modes of transport.

In addition, while an ATS will set out how we better connect people and places by active travel, the justification for active travel interventions can be strengthened by delivering multiple benefits together, especially when resources are scarce. Taking a place-based approach to meeting community needs, considering places as a whole, can lead to greater benefits than through individual interventions, while also delivering on local health outcomes and narrowing health inequalities. There are also opportunities for environmental benefits beyond contribution of active travel to net zero emissions, through the inclusion of climate adaptation measures and biodiversity enhancements.

An ATS will make clear how its suite of projects delivers local policy priorities, integrating planning for walking, wheeling and cycling across disciplines and service areas, as well as delivering on national policy outcomes. In doing so they are effective tools to support decision-makers, helping to secure resources and provide the basis for funding applications.

Active Travel Strategies: Recommended content

» Definition of active travel (more details p. 5)

» National & local policy context - a brief summary (more details p. 9-13)

» Existing problems and opportunities for active travel - including a summary of the results of engagement

» Purpose of the strategy - Vision, objectives and outcomes

» Prioritised delivery plan - containing a description of proposed infrastructure improvements and supporting behavioural interventions, including a cycle network plan (more details p. 16-18)

» Analysis - Summary of the evidence and data analysis carried out, that informed proposed measures*

» Monitoring and evaluation plan

* In urban areas where bus priority measures are planned, a summary should also be provided of how bus priority measures and the cycle network plan has been spatially co-ordinated such that coherent networks exist for both.

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Active Travel is walking, wheeling and cycling

The term 'active travel' is not always commonly understood, so it is important to provide explanation within relevant documentation. Active Travel refers to journeys made by modes of transport that are fully or partially people-powered, irrespective of the purpose of the journey. It includes walking, people using wheelchairs, cycling (including e-bikes) to name a few. Active travel modes are at the top of the transport hierarchy and should be prioritised accordingly, with walking and wheeling considered first, followed by cycling, then the remainder of the modes, as per the Transport Hierarchy diagram.

'Walking and wheeling' represents the action of moving as a pedestrian, whether or not someone is walking or wheeling unaided or using any kind of wheeled mobility aid, including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, walking frames, prams or buggies. Wheeling is a term that many, but not all, disabled people identify with. It is important that individuals are allowed to self-identify with terms (e.g. wheeling, walking) and not assume that all people with a particular type of disability are alike and have the same needs.

'Active travel' can sometimes be incorrectly used synonymously with 'cycling', leading to the perception that active travel strategies and interventions solely relate to cycling. It is important that active travel strategies contain measures that support walking, wheeling and cycling. However, if an intervention relates to a specific mode, e.g. cycling, it is important to refer to this mode, rather than active travel.
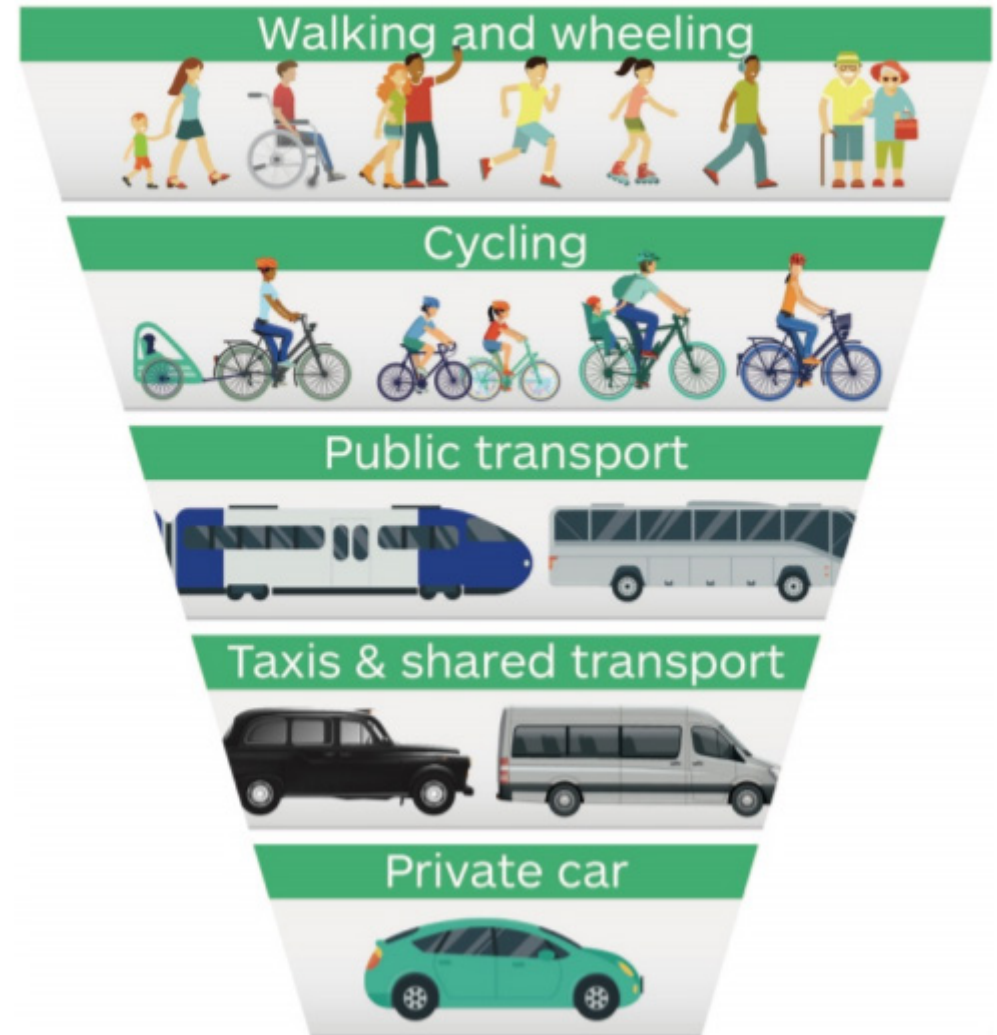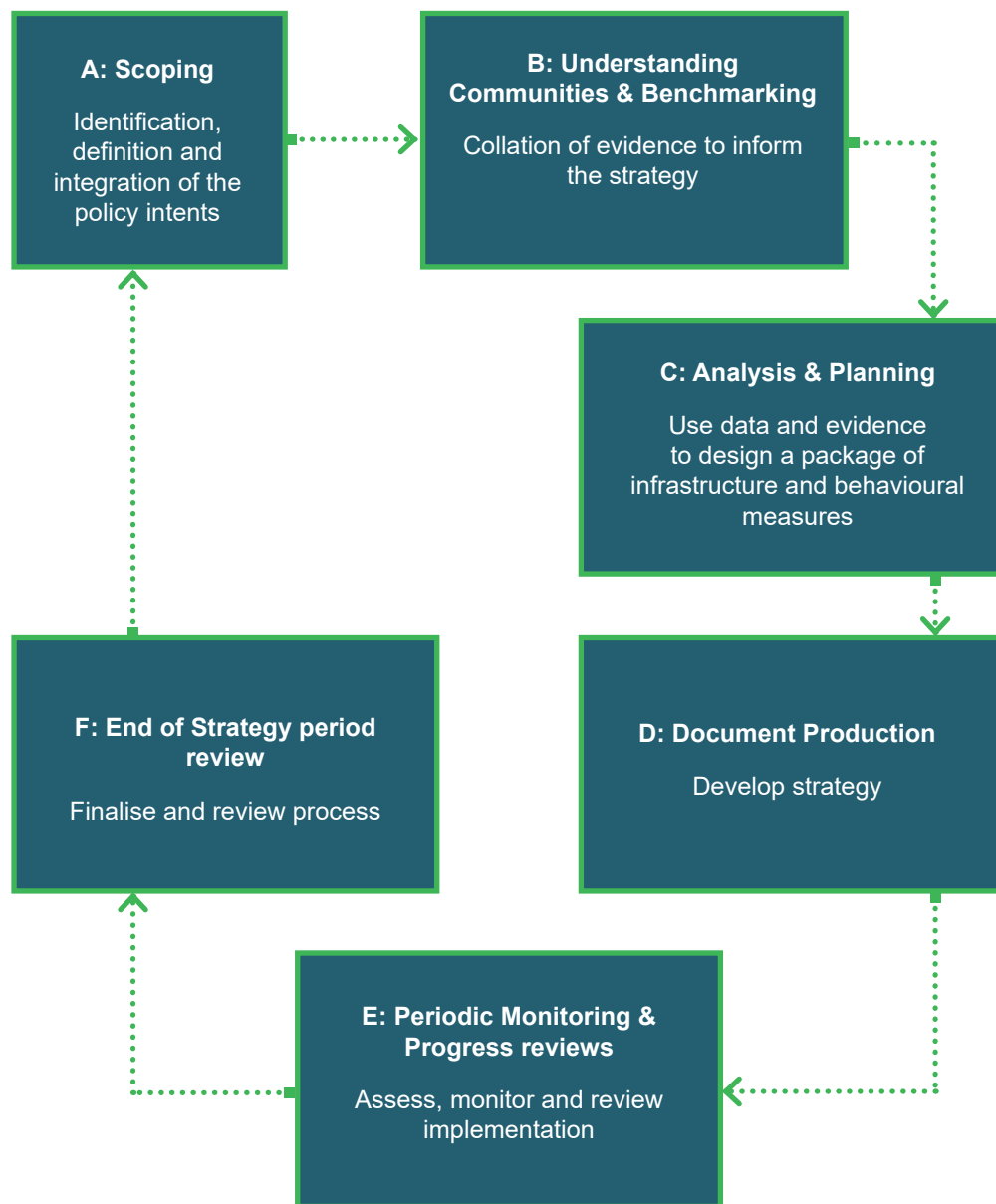

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Active Travel Strategies: Development Process

The following sets out suggested stages in the development of an active travel strategy. Questions are included as prompts

A: Scoping

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A: Scoping                    →    B: Understanding
                                   Communities & Benchmarking
Identification,
definition and                     Collation of evidence to inform
integration of the                 the strategy
policy intents

                                   C: Analysis & Planning

                                   Use data and evidence
                                   to design a package of
                                   infrastructure and behavioural
                                   measures

F: End of Strategy period          D: Document Production
review
                                   Develop strategy
Finalise and review process


            E: Periodic Monitoring &
            Progress reviews

            Assess, monitor and review
            implementation
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» Mandate – What is the internal mandate for developing the ATS?

» Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)* – an assessment should be performed to consider how the ATS may positively and negatively impact on each of the protected characteristics. Use the EqIA to shape the engagement process and proposed interventions. Update it during the ATS development process.

» Health Impact Assessment (HIA)* – A scoping HIA is recommended, with the potential for a full HIA, to look at the ATS through a health lens and the determinants of health for different populations. A HIA Scoping of this ATS guidance has been developed as a reference. Local authorities are encouraged to work with their local NHS Board public health or health improvement teams in developing their ATS and undertaking the HIA process.

» Stakeholder Mapping & Engagement

  • Internal – which service areas and teams have strategies and plans which overlap with active travel? Planning how and at which stages to engage with elected members and seek approval

  • External – organisations, communities and individuals who have relevant information to help shape the ATS, cross-referencing with EqIA

» Governance arrangements – may create a steering group to oversee development of the strategy and subsequent delivery

» Create outline ATS development programme & project brief

* Equality Impact Assessments and Health Impact Assessments can be combined along with assessments for other policy areas as part of an Integrated Impact Assessment

» Policy review :

- National context – how will relevant national policy priorities shape the strategy (see mini-review, p.9-13)

- Local context – how does active travel relate to and help deliver on the Council's high-level aims and strategies, those of the local Health & Social Care Partnership and those of the community (e.g., Locality & Community Plans)?

» Communications and Engagement Plans – how will you communicate about ATS development with different audiences?

B: Understanding Communities & Benchmarking

» Problems and opportunities – through engagement identify problems that active travel could help address and opportunities for improvements. They are likely to include both strategic and location-specific issues. Using the Place-based Framework is a good approach to identify what changes will make a difference. Refer to your EqIA, considering problems and opportunities for different groups of people.

» Review existing infrastructure quality and maintenance regime and activities currently undertaken related to active travel by the local authority, external organisations and the community.

» Data collection - data types could include:

- Movement / travel demand data

- Spatial data (e.g. existing infrastructure, public transport stops & interchanges, greenspace and networks)

- Population demographic data and SIMD

- Health data

- Other data sources referenced in the Active Travel Framework (Annex C)

» Benchmarking – how have similar areas strategically planned for active travel? What was successful / unsuccessful? what does current good practice look like? How successful was your previous ATS (if applicable)

C: Analysis & Planning:

» Set vision – what do you want the future to look like?

» Set ATS objectives – to respond to the problems and opportunities and achieve the vision, with reference to high-level local priorities.

» Outcomes – define changes that will result from your ATS.

» Indicators – to measure progress against outcomes, including identifying necessary data sources. You can consult Cycling Scotland, Sustrans or colleagues for cycle counter and other data sources.

» Develop a strategic approach to behaviour change to identify the types of infrastructure and behavioural interventions which are likely to be the most impactful in meeting your objectives. The Behaviour Change Wheel is useful framework to design a behaviour change strategy and identifying interventions. Details of this and other frameworks are contained in A guide to delivering effective SCSP projects. Propose package of infrastructure and behavioural measures to achieve the objectives, that will form the delivery plan of the ATS

- Note impact on outcomes & objectives

- Prioritised by importance (eg short / medium / long term)

- Identify responsibilities – department/organisation to lead and support each

- Note integration / dependencies with other areas (e.g. public transport, planning, parking controls)

» The package should include an evidence-led cycle network plan for your area, including infrastructure separated from traffic, integrated with public transport and rural links. A version of the Propensity to Cycle Tool is being developed for Scotland to support this, which will estimate relative demand for cycling journeys across road and path networks.

» Update the EqIA in relation to the proposed measures and modify the measures as necessary. Understand the types of behavioural support required to avoid inequalities in use.

» Monitoring Plan - to report against indicators and feed into progress reviews

D: Strategy production:

» Produce a draft strategy, including a delivery plan

» Community & Stakeholder Engagement on the draft

» Update strategy based on internal and external feedback

» Finalise strategy and delivery plan

E: Periodic Monitoring & progress reviews

» Governance Arrangements as agreed.

F: End of Strategy Period review

Image courtesy of Sustrans Scotland

National policy context

A review of the national policies with relevance to active travel is included to assist with policy reviews within active travel strategies and framing how enabling active travel can help meet multiple policy objectives. Implications for specific measures or processes that it would be valuable to include in Active Travel Strategies are highlighted.

Policy	Key extracts / relevance to active travel	Implications for active travel strategies
National Transport Strategy 2	Is underpinned by four priorities » Reduces inequalities » Takes climate action » Helps deliver inclusive economic growth » Improves our health and wellbeing Active travel can contribute to all four priorities, which are also the subject of other national policies reviewed below.	Emphasis in the policy review of the multiple benefits of active travel which can contribute to all 4 priorities of the National Transport Strategy.
	Includes the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and states that "*We will design our transport system so that walking, cycling and public and shared transport take precedence ahead of private car use*"	Active travel measures should be designed such that active travel is prioritised over planning for the private car.

Policy	Key extracts / relevance to active travel	Implications for active travel strategies
Cycling Framework and Delivery Plan for Active Travel in Scotland, 2022-2030 (draft)	The national cycling policy with an associated delivery plan which highlights: *The top priority for the achievement of our vision is for more dedicated, high quality, safe cycling infrastructure delivered by effective resourcing ensuring fair access and supported with training and education.*	Explicit reference that Active Travel Strategies will provide the basis for funding applications by local authorities. Many delivery plan actions are relevant to the content of Active Travel Strategies, key ones include: » Produce active travel strategies and maps for each local authority area setting out plans to improve active travel networks and facilities to 2030 using a robust evidence-led approach to network planning. » Build and maintain a dense, coherent network of connected cycling infrastructure in every town and city that is separate from traffic and integrated with public transport, and rural routes that link to these networks and interface with the trunk road network and NCN. » Use active travel strategies to prioritise investment in the creation of cycling infrastructure integrated with public transport in every town and city, and inter-urban / rural routes that link to these networks. This will build on the National Cycle Network and proposals for Active Freeways in STPR2.
Let's get Scotland Walking - The National Walking Strategy	The national walking policy with an associated action plan for 2016-2026	The action plan contains a range of actions relevant to Active Travel Strategy content, with a broad action to "*Ensure all existing or developing Active Travel Plans assist with the delivery of the National Walking Strategy*".
Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030	Has a vision that is working towards a road traffic system that becomes free from death and serious injury including emphasis on journeys made on foot and by cycle and a specific casualty reduction target for cyclists. One of the five outcomes is Safe Roads and Roadsides	Measures to segregate people cycling and walking from motor traffic are encouraged under the 'Safe Roads and Roadsides' outcome, along with speed limit reductions and promoting positive, safer behaviours in places where this is not possible.

Policy	Key extracts / relevance to active travel	Implications for active travel strategies
Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018 –2032 (December 2020)	Target to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030, associated route map	Modal shift to active travel will contribute to the 20% target. To maximise the contribution, infrastructure and behavioural measures need to be planned, using analysis to determine those that are likely to be the most impactful in your local area, with as much delivered prior to 2030 as possible. Evidence suggests implementing area-based town and city-wide interventions and networks are likely to have a greater impact than discrete projects. Implementing semi-permanent infrastructure to reallocate roadspace, as was trialled in Spaces for People is recommended for the rapid delivery of changes to streets and places. The new Experimental Traffic Order process is a way to achieve this, while also allowing engagement and modifications during the experimental period.
Climate Ready Scotland: climate change adaptation programme 2019-2024	An outcome-based approach which defines policies and proposals to respond to the effects of climate change, specifically projected increases in temperature (with greater warming in the summer than winter) and projected increases in rainfall in winter and reduced rainfall in summer. Key outcomes include: Outcome 1: Our communities are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe in response to the changing climate Sub-Outcome 1.2: Scotland's buildings and places are adaptable to Climate Change. This references Community Planning including developing active travel infrastructure using a place-based approach, Flood Risk Management Strategies and Greenspace.	The programme's cross-cutting approach promotes identifying co-benefits, and integration of adaptation into policy development and delivery. How infrastructure and services proposed by Active Travel Strategies are built and managed to adapt to the impacts of climate change are an important consideration.

Policy	Key extracts / relevance to active travel	Implications for active travel strategies
Fourth National Planning Framework	**National Planning Policy** Local Development Plans should support the principle and development of **20 minute neighbourhoods** (places where people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable walk, wheel or cycle of their home. The concept can be adjusted to varying geographical scales)	20 minute neighbourhoods are primarily a function of the distribution of housing and services. They also require creation of places where it is easy get about by active travel and have good access to public transport. Interventions which facilitate active travel in neighbourhoods (e.g. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, path creation, 20 mph speed limits) will contribute to the creation of a 20 minute neighbourhood.
	National Developments **Central Scotland Green Network.** Creation and connection of green infrastructure in Central Scotland including active travel path networks which will include but be denser than the National Cycle Network	The Green Action Trust are co-ordinating strategic planning of greened path networks and development proposals with local authorities across the CSGN area.
	National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network. Any new/and or upgraded routes for walking, cycling and wheeling that help create a national network	The principle of development in this category does not need to be agreed in planning consent processes, however it does not change the need for planning permission where this is required.

Policy	Key extracts / relevance to active travel	Implications for active travel strategies
Public Health Priorities for Scotland	There are 6 priorities, of which 5 are relevant to active travel: » 1: A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities	Planning changes to places where people live which support people to be healthy will contribute to achieving this priority. This includes measures to increase access to greenspace, reduce the dominance of motor traffic and co-designing changes with communities so they feel empowered to make decisions that directly affect them.
	» 2: A Scotland where we flourish in our early years	Measure that facilitate children's independent mobility will contribute to achieving this priority as will creating safe, accessible outdoor spaces for play in streets and parks
	» 3: A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing	Enabling active travel and improving access to greenspace will contribute to achieving this priority
	» 5: A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all	Measures to reduce transport poverty through enabling uptake of active travel options, particularly in areas of socio-economic disadvantage, will contribute to achieving this priority.
	» 6: A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active	Measures to enable people to work active travel into their daily routines will contribute to achieving this priority, in particular focusing on the least active in order to reduce health inequalities.
Cleaner Air for Scotland 2	Modal shift from private car to active travel will reduce transport-related emissions that are responsible for poor air quality.	The positive impact of modal shift from private car to active travel on air quality can be emphasised in the Policy Review section and when carrying out engagement for active travel interventions in relation to places with poor air quality.

National Outcomes

Enabling Active Travel contributes towards a range of national policy outcomes. National outcomes relevant to active travel are reproduced below. Reference to these may assist with framing active travel in the local an national context.

While increasing the numbers of people walking, wheeling and cycling is key, it is important to also consider wider benefits such as population health, contribution to net zero and climate adaptation and improving the quality of public spaces in line with the National Transport Strategy.

Image courtesy of Tactran

Active Travel Framework

Brings together the key policy approaches to improving the uptake of walking and cycling in Scotland

» Increase the number of people choosing walking, cycling and wheeling in Scotland

» High quality walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure is available to all

» Walking, cycling and wheeling is safer for all

» Walking, cycling and wheeling is available to all

» Delivery of walking, cycling and wheeling is promoted and supported by a range of partners

Active Scotland Outcomes Framework

National outcomes working towards more people being more active, more often, set as part of the Active Scotland Delivery Plan

» We encourage and enable the inactive to be more active

» We encourage and enable the active to stay active throughout life

» We develop physical confidence and competence from the earliest age

» We improve our active infrastructure people and place

» We support wellbeing and resilience in communities through physical activity and sport

» We improve opportunities to participate, progress and achieve in sport

Place and Wellbeing Outcomes

The Place and Wellbeing Outcomes provide a consistent and comprehensive focus for where place impacts on the wellbeing of people and planet. They are a set of interlinked outcomes for what every place needs for people to thrive and enable wellbeing. Outcomes sit under five overarching themes of movement, spaces, resources, civic and stewardship. They require all sectors to collaborate in order to deliver these outcomes in every place.

Stewardship
- Care and maintenance
- Influence and control

Movement
- Public transport
- Active travel
- Traffic and parking

Civic
- Identity and belonging
- Feeling safe

PEOPLE

Spaces
- Streets and spaces
- Natural spaces
- Play and recreation

Resources
- Services and support
- Work and economy
- Housing and community

Image courtesy of Cycling Scotland

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Interventions to address common barriers to active travel

Based on analysis of local data and problems and opportunities identified during the ATS development process, a package of interventions should be identified, to achieve the ATS objectives. They should address the identified problems and thereby help people to overcome barriers they face in order in order to walk, wheel and cycle.

Using a social marketing approach, behaviour can be changed using interventions that address people's areas of influence, namely support, design, inform & educate and control. This is known as the Intervention Mix into which different types of measures can be categorised:

Support - Giving people the means and solutions to travel actively

Design - Changing the environment, physical context and our services to support travelling actively. This is necessary but not sufficient to change travel behaviour.

Inform & educate - Providing targeted information to advise, build awareness, persuade and inspire.

Control - Steps to legislate, require, enforce and set standards

It is recommended that a mixture of intervention types are implemented together in the same area (e.g. neighbourhood, town). This has been shown to be an effective strategy for increasing sustainable transport use and reducing car use.

Some barriers to active travel will be specific to a local area. However, there are common barriers to active travel that many people experience and well understood interventions that are recommended to address them. This section sets these barriers out alongside recommended interventions, colour coded against the headings of the Intervention Mix.

Barriers	Interventions	
Social & physical barriers to walking;	Led walking groups	
Cost of owning and maintaining a cycle	Measures to increase access to cycles, which could include:	Develop public cycle hire schemes on a scale relevant to the area
		Free cycles for school children, a pilot project which will be rolled out as a national scheme
		Cycle loan / library schemes, including adapted cycles and cargo bikes
		Promotion of Cycle to Work scheme
		Cycle recycling and re-use
Cycle storage space / theft;	Increasing secure cycle parking and storage at key destinations and in residential areas	
Distance too far to cycle, hilliness and/ or fitness;	Measures to increase access to electric cycles will extend range and overcome these barriers for some people.	
Inability to cycle safely;	Cycle training	Bikeability Scotland training for all children
		Targeted offer of Essential Cycle Skills training for adults and families

Barriers	Interventions
Quality / inaccessibility of the pedestrian environment; fear of slips, trips and falls;	**Area-based accessibility audits with targeted improvements** The quality of the built environment disproportionately prevents people who identify with certain protected characteristics (including disabled people, children and elderly) from walking or wheeling. It can also prevent people from being able to access public transport. Often many small changes need to be made in an area to create good conditions for walking and wheeling. Audits are a good way to identify and prioritise necessary improvements. Common issues and potential solutions have been reviewed by Living Streets through a nationwide study. Both detailed design and wider issues such as dominance of parking in the streetscape and passive surveillance are important issues to address to enable walking and wheeling.
Traffic-related safety and personal security;	**On-road cycle networks, primarily composed of protected cycle lanes on main roads, in all large towns and cities** Cycle lanes physically separated from traffic improve safety and being in the street environment provides greater passive surveillance, compared to paths remote from the road, addressing personal security concerns These networks are likely to include Active Freeways, *high-quality direct active travel routes, segregated from traffic, along main roads in large urban areas (both radial and other high-demand corridors) that connect outlying neighbourhoods to city/town centres and other important destinations* Where cycleways are constructed, it is recommended to incorporate complementary improvements for walking and wheeling on the same streets

Barriers	Interventions
Traffic-related safety	**Plan strategic expansions to green path networks that are suitable for walking, wheeling and cycling, connecting communities in urban and rural areas.** Greened path networks can help achieve different outcomes to on-road cycle networks, so both types of interventions are needed Creating greened path networks provide active travel options which address traffic-related safety Where they are remote from the road network they can provide beneficial access to greenspace, help improve mental health and create leisure and tourism opportunities. However, they often lack passive surveillance and are perceived as poor for personal security, particularly in hours of darkness, by many people Path networks can provide vital connections between communities. Some paths may be designated as part of the National Cycle Network.
Neighbourhood traffic-related safety;	**Measures to reduce traffic volumes** Conversion of residential areas to Low Traffic Neighbourhoods to reduce through traffic volumes, making streets safer and more appealing to walk, wheel and cycle, using a package of one-way streets and modal filters. The space freed up can create opportunities for place-making, such as adding greenery, seating, art and play spaces. These changes to streets should be co-designed with communities following the Place Principle. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods will also make it safer for children to walk, wheel and cycle to school.

Barriers	Interventions	
Lack of awareness of support and infrastructure available to enable travelling actively;	Develop a behaviour change strategy tailored to individuals and your local area While some general information for the local population is needed, approaches need to be tailored and targeted to specific segments of the population in order to be most effective at changing behaviour. Blanket marketing campaigns on the benefits of active travel are less likely to lead to significant changes in behaviour.	
	Personal Travel Planning is a way to provide targeted information, incentives and motivation directly to individuals to help them make more sustainable travel choices.	
Parked motor vehicles preventing people using pavements;	Enforcement of forthcoming pavement parking regulations	
Traffic-related safety	Speed limit reductions including	Implementation of 20 mph speed limits in villages, towns and cities
		Reducing the speed limit of selected minor rural roads to enable more walking, wheeling and cycling, as part of a network approach
	Limiting street access to walking, wheeling and cycling	Implementation of School Streets, time-limited prohibitions to motor traffic on streets adjacent to schools
		Pedestrianisation of streets, retaining access by cycling

Image courtesy of Sustrans Scotland

This guidance was developed collaboratively through an Advisory Panel with membership from the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation, The City of Edinburgh Council (additional local authority representative), Tactran (representing regional transport partnerships), Public Health Scotland, Cycling Scotland, Paths for All, Sustrans Scotland and Transport Scotland.