

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	City Growth and Resources
DATE	03 February 2021
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026
REPORT NUMBER	COM/21/016
DIRECTOR	N/A
CHIEF OFFICER	Gale Beattie
REPORT AUTHOR	Tony Maric
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.1.1 & 2.1.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks the approval of the Committee for the Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026. If approved this will provide an agreed policy for Active Travel interventions and allow for future projects to be progressed as suitable funding becomes available.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

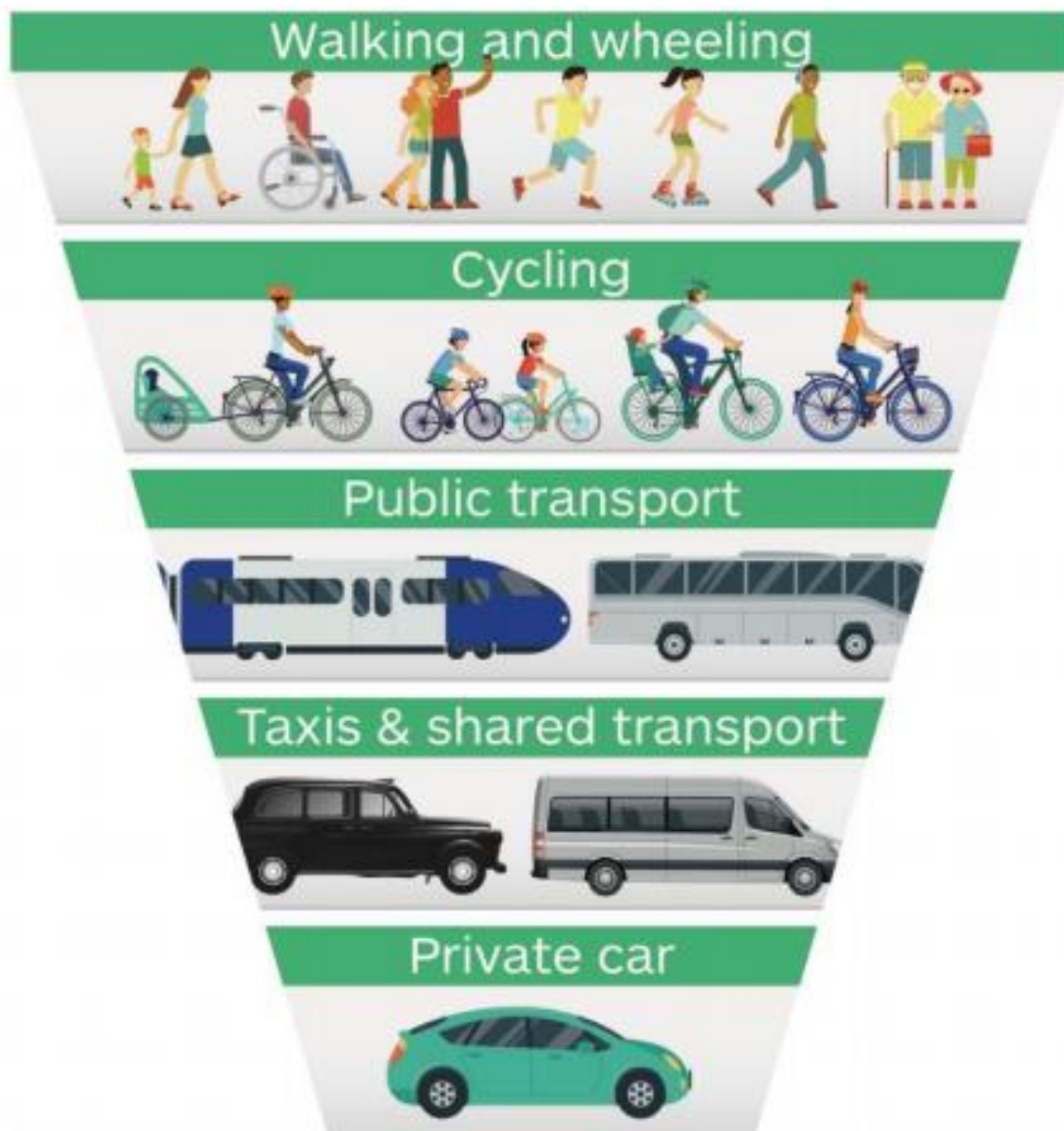
- 2.1 Approve the Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026, included at Appendix 5;
- 2.2 Instruct the Chief Officer- Strategic Place Planning, in collaboration with the Chief Officer - Capital and Chief Officer – Operations and Protective Services, to commence delivery of the Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026, maximising external funding opportunities, and to report back on progress against the Action Plan on an annual basis by way of a Service Update; and
- 2.3 Note that the Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026 helps to support the Council's ambitious Net Zero carbon plans for Aberdeen.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The current [Active Travel Action Plan 2017-2021](#) (ATAP), approved by the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee on 24 January 2017 is a five year plan which is due for renewal in 2021. It sits as a supplementary document to the [Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy](#) (LTS) to further develop the City's Active Travel aspirations. Many of the projects in the current plan have now been completed or are underway, as shown in the table in Appendix 1.

- 3.2 Therefore, the time is right for a review of the current plan and a refresh to ensure that the ATAP is kept up to date and relevant as we move to the next five-year cycle.
- 3.3 With the publication of the updated [National Transport Strategy](#) (NTS2) in February 2020, the Scottish Government has signalled that encouraging active travel is one of their priorities. The Regional Transport Partnership for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, Nestrans, is also currently updating its Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), which will help to shape regional transport policy through to 2040 and places a similar emphasis on active travel. The Council will therefore have a major role to play in driving forward this agenda, with a review of its LTS in 2021 and indeed, the [Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#) (LOIP) has as one of its 15 stretch outcomes the target of 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026.
- 3.4 Active travel is therefore a major priority for the Council as it looks to provide a City where all citizens can prosper. As well as providing a place where people can work, live, and play and supports good health and wellbeing, it is also important to have a vibrant, sustainable economy. As we embark on the road to recovery from the current Covid-19 health pandemic, the role that active travel can play in this, in terms of supporting a healthy population and the economic recovery, and especially in 'high street' locations, cannot be overestimated.
- 3.5 The NTS2 was published by Transport Scotland on 5 February 2020. It sets out the Scottish Government's vision for transport for the next 20 years and has four main priorities as follows:
- Reduces inequalities.
 - Takes climate action.
 - Helps deliver inclusive economic growth.
 - Improves our health and wellbeing.
- 3.6 NTS2 is supported by the Scottish Government's commitment to move towards a Net-Zero emissions target for greenhouse gases by 2045 as laid out in the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 which enshrines the commitment in law. This will necessitate a move away from the unrestrained use of fossil fuels and private cars for all journeys towards more sustainable forms of transport. It also re-affirms its commitment to the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy (see below), stating that all policy and investment decisions should be made in accordance with this hierarchy, which places active travel at the very top of the hierarchy and private car at the very bottom.

Prioritising Sustainable Transport

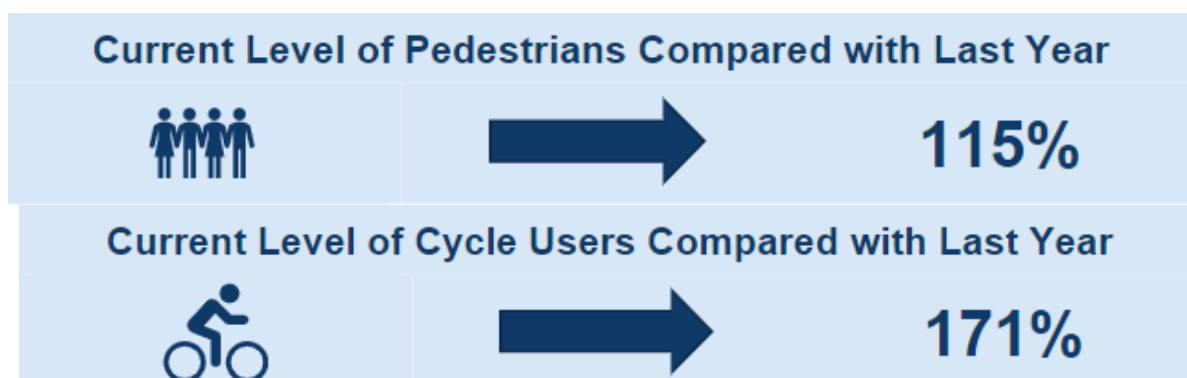


- 3.7 The Council also has an ambitious Net Zero Carbon reduction target to reduce Aberdeen's carbon emissions by 42.5% by 2026. The new ATAP will support this aspiration by providing the opportunity to move away from dependence on the private car for short journeys towards more sustainable and carbon neutral forms of transport, such as walking and cycling.
- 3.8 The new ATAP has been informed by two stages of public and stakeholder engagement.
- 3.9 To facilitate this, a consultation questionnaire was drawn up and this went live, supported by both a press release and social media posts from 10 January 2020 to 14 February 2020. The consultation asked stakeholders what their views and aspirations were for Active Travel in the City moving forward and what their priorities were for a refreshed ATAP. During this time, a total of 408

responses were received. A summary of the consultation response is included at Appendix 2.

- 3.10 The main perceptions emerging from this consultation were that Aberdeen is only moderately pedestrian friendly, whereas it was rated as not being cycle friendly, which is disappointing given the investment in active travel that has been made within the City as part of the current Active Travel Action Plan. However, this clearly demonstrates that a further step change in active travel provision is required as we move into the next iteration of the Action Plan.
- 3.11 It was suggested that the measures that have been implemented to date were a step in the right direction, but that there needed to be more pedestrianisation, segregated paths, more off-road cycling routes and better maintenance of the existing infrastructure to really encourage a greater take-up of active travel. It was also felt that the current network was too piecemeal and that there needed to be a more coordinated network of walking and cycling routes to encourage greater participation in active travel. It can also be inferred from the responses that the public are in favour of the ongoing delivery of the projects identified in the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), given that the City centre was seen as a priority area for improvement by most respondents.
- 3.12 The results were analysed and used to prepare a draft ATAP that went out to public consultation from 14 September 2020 to 25 October 2020. A total of 100 responses were received, with the majority of responses being from individuals rather than organisations. A summary of the consultation responses is included at Appendix 3. Overall, the consultation showed significant support for the vision, actions and priorities identified in the draft Plan.
- 3.13 In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic, respondents were also asked how important they felt it was to take the effects of the pandemic into account when finalising the Action Plan. 27% thought it was important or very important with a further 26% stating they felt neutral on this matter. There was an even split as to whether respondents felt that Covid-19 would change their travel behaviour with 36% stating it would and 43% stating it would have no effect.
- 3.14 Overall, there was a favourable response to the draft Action Plan with 50% of respondents stating they agreed with the objectives and 27% disagreeing. 41% agreed with the projects laid out in the Action Plan with 24% disagreeing and 65% agreed with the overall vision for the Action Plan, with only 22% disagreeing. Overall, 41% were content with the document overall, with 30% not being content.
- 3.15 The results of the consultation are therefore encouraging and demonstrate that there is public support for the aims and objectives of the proposed Active Travel Action Plan.
- 3.16 The first national lockdown took place from 23 March 2020 and lasted until the end of June 2020. The infographics below taken from the Council's weekly Covid-19 monitoring report figures show that nationally, significant increases in walking and cycling occurred when comparing a week in May this year (2020),

with the same week in 2019. It should also be noted that this trend has continued throughout 2020.



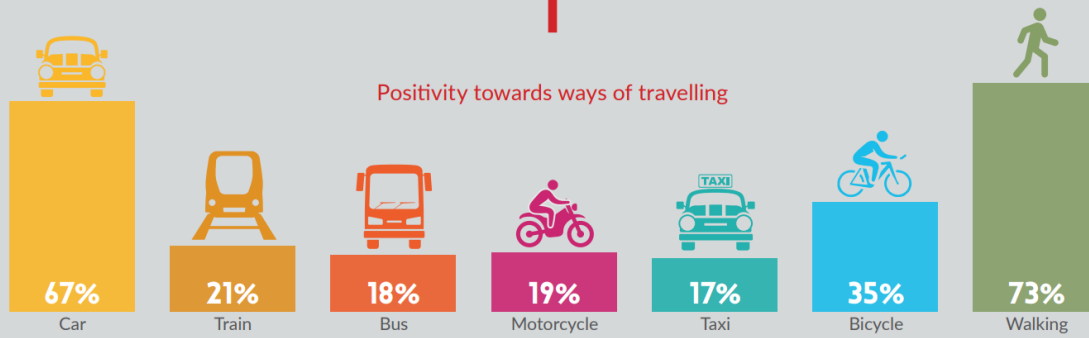
- 3.17 Nestrans has also been carrying out a series of monthly travel surveys since May 2020 to monitor changes in travel behaviour due to the current Covid-19 health pandemic. The latest survey was carried out between the 2nd and 9th of November. The full report can be found [here](#) with an infographic summarising the main points of the report found [here](#). The infographics below show the main travel behaviour trends. It can be seen that there is good positivity towards walking, cycling and use of the car, with attitudes towards public transport being very negative. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the message being given out by both the UK and Scottish Governments in the early stages of this pandemic was to avoid travel by public transport and the subsequent reduction in services. It can also be seen that walking and cycling has increased, both for leisure and exercise, and also as a substitute for other journeys. This may be as a consequence of less journeys by public transport being undertaken.

Those in **Aberdeen City** were more likely to go shopping in the last seven days than those in **Aberdeenshire**

NORTH EAST TRANSPORT BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDE SURVEYS

Wave 6 Report
(Survey Undertaken between 2nd November and 9th November)
Key Findings Infographic

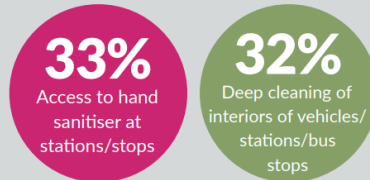
6/10 agree that use of **face coverings** on public transport makes them feel **safer**



Reasons for feeling negatively towards public transport



How to feel safer



Since the Covid-19 restrictions



48%

Walking:
for leisure/exercise

24%

Cycling:
for leisure/exercise

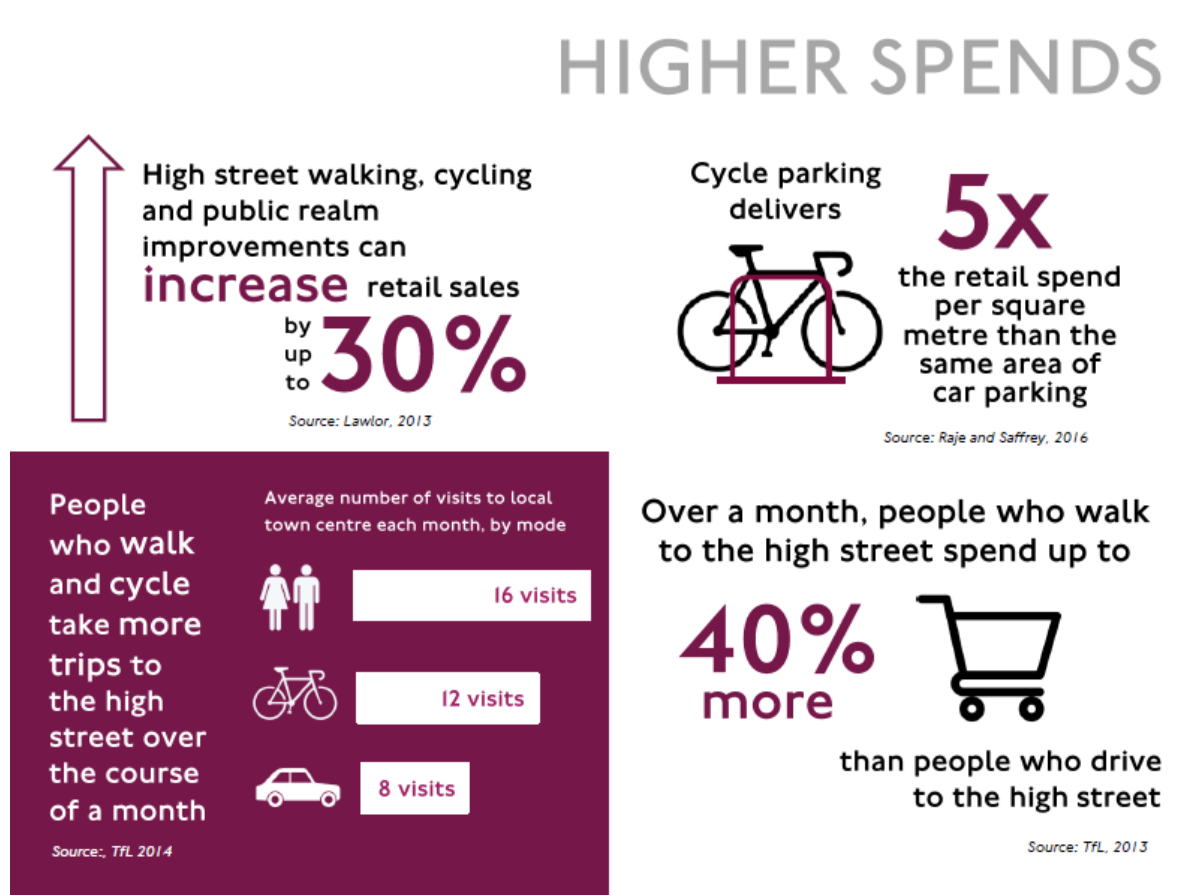
26%

Walking: to replace
a journey I would
normally make
another way

16%

Cycling: to replace
a journey I would
normally make
another way

- 3.18 The info graphic below shows the cost benefits that Active Travel can bring to the high street in terms of greater footfall, higher sales and higher spends.



- 3.19 In summary, it is clear there is demand for a step change in the improvement and delivery of active travel infrastructure across the City, which has significantly increased since the Covid-19 Health Pandemic began, with the subsequent and on-going restrictions imposed on the population from late March 2020. It is also clear that there are wider economic benefits of a more active population that is facilitated and encouraged to walk and cycle more. Aberdeen City Council cannot meet this challenge alone, and the approval of a new ATAP for the coming 5 years will help secure the necessary funding to enable its delivery.

- 3.20 An Executive Summary of the finalised Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021 to 2026 is included as Appendix 4. This includes a summary of the vision, aims, objectives and priorities for delivery over the next 5 years. The full document can be found at Appendix 5.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Funding will be required to ensure the delivery of the projects identified in the Action Plan. A large proportion of the proposed projects represent improvements to the strategic network. In the past, funding support for these kinds of projects has been available from external parties such as Nestrans, Sustrans, Transport Scotland, Scottish Government etc.

Officers will aim to maximise future external funding opportunities wherever available, with progress reported back to Committee on an annual basis.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	Should the Plan not be approved and delivered, the Council would not be able to fulfil some of the priorities or realise the benefits contained in the Council Delivery Plan, Net Zero Carbon Plan, Local Outcome Improvement Plan or key strategic policies such as the City Centre Masterplan and the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan.	Medium (M)	Approval and delivery of Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026 would alleviate this risk.
Compliance	Should the Plan not be approved and delivered, the Council would not be seen to be implementing the priorities contained in the National Transport Strategy 2 or the Local and Regional Transport Strategies with regards to Active Travel, or complying with Net Zero obligations	Medium (M)	Approval and delivery of Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026 would alleviate this risk.
Operational	Should the Plan not be approved, projects to improve Active	Medium (M)	Approval of Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan

	Travel Infrastructure and create a sense of 'place' would not be able to proceed and would be unlikely to attract external funding for delivery.		2021-2026 would alleviate this risk.
Reputational	The Council may be seen as not committed to Active Travel and the Net Zero agenda if the Action Plan is not approved and delivered.	Medium (M)	Approval and delivery of Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026 would alleviate this risk.
Environment / Climate	Should the Plan not be approved, the Council could be seen as not committed to sustainability and tackling climate change and seen as 'pro-car' by some sections of the community.	Medium (M)	Approval and delivery of Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026 would alleviate this risk.

7. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	<p>The Action Plan will help to support policy 4 of the Economy priorities of the Delivery Plan to increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP), including the redesigned Union Terrace Gardens. The Action Plan directly supports the CCMP as being a major aspect of the Action Plan and facilitates and encourages more sustainable and active travel.</p> <p>Policy 3 of the Place priorities of the Delivery Plan would also be supported. This is to refresh the local transport strategy, ensuring it includes the results of a city centre parking review, promotes cycle and pedestrian routes, and considers support for public transport. The Action Plan will be the main focus for Active Travel and will be a companion document to the local transport strategy, outlining the Council's</p>

	<p>policy on active travel and support for public transport.</p> <p>The Action Plan supports Policy 4 of the Place priorities of the Delivery Plan to implement a cycle hire scheme as the Action Plan includes this as one of the projects to be taken forward as part of the Plan and there are several complimentary infrastructure projects which would support a successful bike hire scheme.</p> <p>Policy 5 of the Place priorities of the Delivery Plan would also be supported too. This is to commit extra funding to resurface damaged roads and pavements throughout the city. The Action Plan includes a maintenance element to repair and enhance existing active travel infrastructure to ensure that a comprehensive network can be implemented and maintained.</p>
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p>The Action Plan will support Stretch Outcome 14 of the LOIP to address climate change by reducing Aberdeen’s carbon emissions by 42.5% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate. The Action Plan promotes active and sustainable transport and outlines the Council’s policy to encourage a shift away from dependence on the private car to cleaner, less carbon intensive forms of sustainable transport.</p> <p>Stretch Outcome 15 of the LOIP which aspires to 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026 will also be supported. The Action Plan sets out a list of infrastructure, behaviour change and complementary measures to promote walking and cycling and encourage greater uptake. It also outlines monitoring measures to help to achieve these targets.</p>
Regional and City Strategies	<p>The Action Plan supports the aims of the Local and Regional Transport Strategies which aim to support and promote sustainable and active travel, as well as the Local Development Plan which seeks to promote sustainable development that delivers a sense of place within the city.</p> <p>The Action Plan would also support the Council’s Air Quality Action Plan and the Net Zero Carbon</p>

	Reduction target of a 42.5% reduction in emissions by 2026. The Action Plan will provide the opportunity for a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable and carbon neutral forms of transport such as walking and cycling.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	<p>The Action Plan supports the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) which has as one of its four main priorities improving our health and wellbeing and reinforces its commitment to the sustainable transport hierarchy. The Action Plan provides the framework for the promotion of walking and cycling and a delivery plan to improve active travel infrastructure and lead to a modal shift away from the private car.</p> <p>The Action Plan also directly supports the Cycling Action Plan Scotland (CAPS) vision of 10% of everyday journeys by cycling by 2020 and the National Walking Strategy, as well as both adult and childhood obesity targets.</p> <p>Air quality and climate change is also supported too. Promoting active and sustainable travel will help to reduce harmful emissions and contribute towards the Net Zero Carbon Reduction target by 2042.</p>

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	EHRIA completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10. APPENDICES

- 1 Progress report on projects in 2017-2021 Active Travel Action Plan
- 2 Summary responses to first consultation
- 3 Summary responses to second consultation
- 4 ATAP Executive Summary report
- 5 ATAP Full Report

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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