

‘Midlothian on the Move: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone’

Report by Derek Oliver, Chief Officer - Place

Report for Decision

1 Recommendations

1.1 It is Recommended that Council:

- a. Approves ‘Midlothian on the Move: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034’.
- b. Notes and welcomes the responses to the 12-week public and stakeholder consultation on the final draft of ‘Midlothian on the Move: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034’.
- c. Agrees to seek funding to deliver safer walking, wheeling and cycling active travel infrastructure, route improvements and behaviour change programmes, as set out in the Active Travel Strategy Route Action Plan and 10-year Project Pipeline.
- d. Agrees to accept future reports on progress relating to the aims and objectives of the Active Travel Strategy and the delivery of active travel and sustainable transport projects and activities.
- e. Notes progress to date in 24/25 towards the securing of active travel funding, infrastructure delivery, delivery of behaviour change activities, development of proposals for 25/26, and other active travel promotional work.

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

- 2.1** This report seeks approval for the Council’s adoption of ‘On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034’ (The Strategy).
- 2.2** Midlothian’s previous Active Travel Strategy: 2018-2021 was agreed in 2017. A new up-to-date Active Travel Strategy is now a requirement for Councils wishing to secure funding from Transport Scotland for active travel projects.
- 2.3** Council agreed to a 12-week consultation on the final draft of ‘On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone’ in February 2024. The consultation ran from April-July 2024 and received a total of 178 public responses and 13 stakeholder responses. This report includes a consultation report and summary of the feedback, along with details of minor amendments and additions made to the draft strategy to address the consultation feedback (Detailed in

Appendix C). This most recent consultation exercise followed previous engagement activity that sought input from community and disability groups.

- 2.4 This report asks for Council approval to seek funding for the delivery of new active travel infrastructure projects for safer environments and paths for walking and wheeling (including wheelchair and mobility scooters), better routes to school, cycling and other active travel related activities as set out within the Strategy's Route Action Plan, and 10-year Project Delivery Programme, and to accept future reports on progress.
- 2.5 This report highlights progress to date in 2024/25 in securing external funding to be used for active travel works, and in development for delivery of new active travel infrastructure, existing route improvements, and behaviour change programmes.

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3. Background/Main Report

The importance of having a new and adopted active travel strategy

- 3.1. Midlothian Council's most recent active travel strategy spanned period 2018-2021. In February 2024, Council approved the extension of this document to the end of 2024, to allow for continued delivery of medium and long-term projects set out in the action plan, whilst a draft of a new strategy was being finalised and issued for public consultation. A new active travel strategy is required to replace the 2018-2024 document as Councils must demonstrate that they have a strategy in place that conforms to new [guidelines issued by Transport Scotland](#) in 2023, in order to apply for new funding streams.

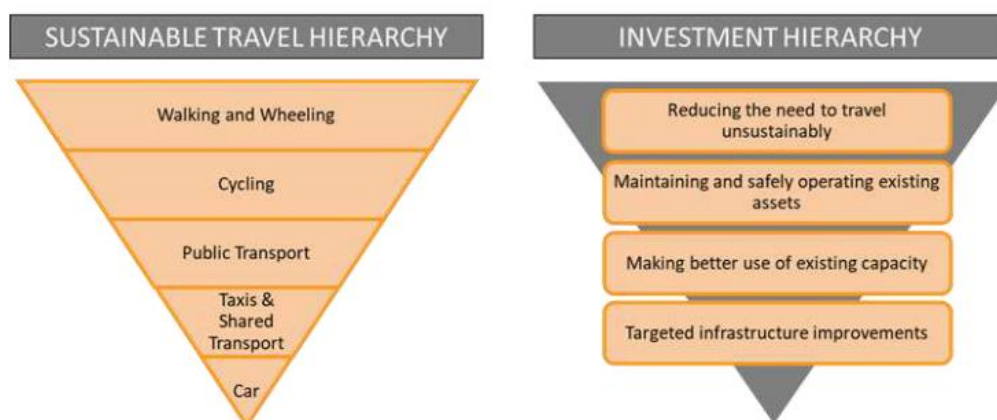
Production of the new active travel strategy

- 3.2. 'Midlothian On the Move: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone' has been drafted in-house, in accordance with new guidelines. It captures public and stakeholder input and feedback gathered from informal engagement events held since 2021, and most recently a consultation on the final draft that ran from April-July 2024. The title of the strategy: "On the Move Midlothian 2024-34: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone" follows local feedback that the terminology 'Active Travel' needs to be shown to be inclusive. The strategy includes a set of measurable aims and objectives relating to the delivery of safe and attractive active travel infrastructure and behaviour change activities, as well as a detailed route action plan and 10-year project delivery programme. The draft strategy is included in Appendix B.

Council should note that final type-setting and graphic design support for hard-copy and online versions of the ATS has been agreed, and will commence once the final draft version has been approved.

Importance of Active Travel funding to the Council

- 3.3.** Under [The Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#) the Scottish Government is committed to a 20% reduction in car kilometres in Scotland relative to the 2019 baseline level by 2030. Local Governments is also required as part of the Act to contribute to the reduction through long-term sustainable transport planning and better use of existing assets, with an emphasis on encouraging people to use active and public forms of transport.
- 3.4.** The Scottish Government’s vision is for ‘walking, wheeling and cycling to be the most popular choice for everyday journeys by 2030’, with over £500m invested in active travel over the last 4 years, to help make journeys safer and more appealing for those travelling without a car.
- 3.5.** From 2024/25 as part of a transformed funding landscape, Transport Scotland has made competitive ‘tiers’ of ‘Active Travel Infrastructure Fund’ (ATIF) to support the delivery of larger scale active travel projects. By attracting funds, Councils can deliver sustainable transport projects that provide better health outcomes for people as well as providing better access to local amenities.
- 3.6.** Three key national policies set out the need for well-planned sustainable transport in the context of land use and wider societal outcomes. These are the [National Transport Strategy \(NTS2\)](#), [Climate Change Plan \(2020 Update\)](#) and [National Planning Framework \(NPF4\)](#). All three reinforce the application of new hierarchies to planned investment in transport, as follows:



This is particularly important as the strategy aims to make day-to-day journeys for everyone safer by walking, wheeling and cycling – whether these are journeys to school, shops, community centres or to bus stops and train stations. “On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone”, focuses on enabling more safe and active day-to-day journeys so the Council can make a positive contribution to national Climate Change targets.

- 3.7.** Improvements to enable more people to travel safely by active means of transport such as 20mph speed zones, traffic calming, 'School Streets', and behaviour change campaigns will also aid Scotland in its ambition to have the best road safety performance in the world by 2030, as set out in Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030.
- 3.8.** The provision of safer and more attractive active travel infrastructure for walking and cycling is particularly important as Midlothian is the fastest growing local authority in Scotland - expected to see a 13.8% population rise by 2028. Securing additional external funding to make it easier for people to walk, wheel or cycle is important for all demographics, but in Midlothian this is particularly relevant for the older and school age populations. Maintaining independence and access to services such as libraries and leisure centres in older age is a key objective in Midlothian, where we have a growing population aged over 75. For this age group in particular, it is important that their homes are well connected to services and that footways and crossings are conducive to active and safe movement and mobility. Similarly, providing safe active travel routes to school is critical to meet commitments to reduce car kilometres - particularly in Midlothian, with 9.3% more births in 2021 than 2020.

'On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone' - Final draft Public Consultation results.

- 3.9.** A full public consultation exercise on the final draft of the strategy was undertaken to check priorities and ensure strong buy-in to proposals. The consultation exercise ran for a period of 12 weeks from April- July 2024, with the online survey being accessible from the Council's website and Consultation Hub, and promoted frequently and widely on the Council's social media channels. For those without digital access, hard copies of the survey and printed copies of the draft strategy were made available in all Council libraries.
- 3.10.** A total of 178 responses to the survey were received from individual members of the public, along with a further 13 responses from organisations/stakeholders. The survey consisted of a total of 11 questions, allowing respondents the opportunity to expand on their answers where applicable. The feedback received was supportive of the Strategy and its intentions, summarised in the detailed Consultation Report attached in Appendix C.

Midlothian Council Active Travel funding and delivery: Progress 2024/25

- 3.11.** As a result of having an Active Travel Strategy in place, Midlothian Council's Strategic Transport Planning Team and Active Travel Team have been successful in acquiring substantial additional, external funding to deliver a range of infrastructure and behaviour change projects in 2024/25.
- 3.12.** Midlothian Council was most recently awarded £753,062 from Transport Scotland's ATIF Tier 2 Fund (a £10 million fund) to deliver three projects improving active travel routes to school, ensuring the safety of vulnerable children and family groups making daily journeys. This funding will cover the installation of new crossings, junction tightening, shared-use path provision and traffic

calming measures in Penicuik, Easthouses and Bonnyrigg, and will be delivered this financial year. Midlothian Council also received a direct award of £655,000 from Transport Scotland's Tier 1 funding for 2024/25 which has allowed the design and delivery of a range of smaller scale neighbourhood level interventions, including the installation of traffic islands, zebra crossings, traffic calming, cycle path surface improvements and improved marking and signage around schools. £120,000 of this fund is being used to develop designs for active travel provision along the A703 connecting Easter Bush to the City of Edinburgh and improved active travel links between Lasswade and the A7.

- 3.13.** Partnership working with Sustrans has resulted in the Council being awarded £60,000 from Sustrans Network Funding to develop designs to extend the National Cycle Network around Roslin and Auchendinny. Additionally, Sustrans is providing some in-kind Infrastructure Design Team support for early stage design development to improve active travel connections from Eskbank College and Train Station to Dalkeith Town Centre.
- 3.14.** Other funding received into the Council this year has included £270,000 of Transport Scotland's 'People and Place' funding for Behaviour Change activities including the delivery of Bikeability training and other work in schools, staff lunchtime walks, walking step-count challenges and bike maintenance sessions. Midlothian Council has also worked to integrate active travel and public transport through the acceptance of £56,000 in partnership with SEStran to install a Brompton Bike Hire Locker at Sheriffhall Park and Ride.
- 3.15.** In addition to new funds, significant progress has been made in projects the Council previously received funding for. With a £226,000 award from the Sustrans 'Places for Everyone' Programme in 2023/24, the Council is making good progress in delivering Stages 0-2 proposals for the 'A7 Active Travel Corridor' (Stages 0-1 feasibility work is already complete) and this has a focus on journeys by walking and wheeling, as well as by bike, and links to public transport. Work commenced in September with the delivery of Stages 0-2 funded 'Shawfair Connections' Project.
- 3.16.** The Council's adoption of 'On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone' will allow Midlothian Council to seek further funding from these same funding bodies from 2025/26 onwards, with funding bids and proposals already being prepared for the delivery of more safe, and properly lit routes to schools and towns, town centre cycle parking, improved active travel connections between Lasswade and Loanhead, and between Roslin and Penicuik, as well as the creation of a rural off-road connection between Penicuik and the Scottish Borders.

Resourcing the delivery of the Active Travel Strategy and other Sustainable Transport projects

- 3.17.** As part of 'Midlothian on the Move: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone' a 10-year delivery programme has been developed, to ensure the phasing of projects is realistic and deliverable. The 10-year delivery programme will be reviewed annually. Construction-ready projects will be added to the Capital Programme once funding can be confirmed and appropriate governance is in place.

- 3.18.** Dedicated and consistent staffing is essential to progress 'On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone'; officers are required to develop funding bids, ensure solid governance and reporting arrangements are in place, manage consultants and contractors, and ensure compliance with industry and nationally agreed design standards. Between 2022 and 2025, the equivalent of two FTE officers have been available to progress Active Travel in the team. This has allowed the Council to develop relationships with funding bodies and submit successful bids to progress priority projects and develop the new Strategy which in turn helps deliver on health outcomes. The benefit to the Council to date includes funding receipt of £226,000 from the competitive 'Places for Everyone' fund in 2022/23, £753,062 from Transport Scotland's Active Travel Infrastructure Fund in 2024/25 (£10 Million fund for Scotland), up to £60,000 from Sustrans Network Development Fund, as well as the development of the new Active Travel Strategy, and wider contributions to sustainable transport, including supporting Planning, Roads, and other services as required.

4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1 Resource

The resourcing of the Strategy is entirely contained within Place Services.

4.2 Digital

None

4.3 Risk

The recommendations and proposals outlined within this report seek to mitigate or manage the risks to the Council set out below.

Not adopting 'On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone' will prevent the Council from making bid proposals to Active Travel funding streams, meaning less funding is identified for Midlothian communities, especially in relation to other Council areas, and less benefits to local people who want to walk, wheel (or ride) to local opportunities, activities and education.

Not developing sustainable travel may impact the Council meeting its obligations in relation to the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) Scotland Act 2019.

Not adequately resourcing the delivery of the new Active Travel Strategy will also risk the delivery of existing and future funded projects and targets, as well as contributing to a deterioration of existing assets that require investment and upgrading, and may risk increased costs through the need for consultancy support.

4.4 Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

An IIA has been completed and is available [online](#)

4.4 Additional Report Implications

See Appendix A

Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Report Implications

Appendix B – On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034’ – Final Draft

Appendix C- ‘On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034’ – Public Consultation Results

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Hub and Spoke
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement
- One size fits one
- None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious
- None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

Utilising a partnership approach to securing adequate staffing levels represents an example of Delivering Best Value.

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Input into the new ATS from all geographic communities and communities of interest was actively sought through the consultation period. 178 responses from the general public were received along with 13 from stakeholders/organisations. Other engagement prior to the writing of the ATS involved public and stakeholder consultation in 2021, School engagement in 2021, engagement with Forward Midlothian, as well as wider engagement as detailed in the attached IIA.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The report recommendations all contribute to the Single Midlothian Plan Vision “Midlothian will be a Great Green Place to Grow by achieving our net zero carbon ambitions”.

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not applicable

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Development of active and sustainable travel options for communities actively supports sustainable development.