

Intervention 7 – Reallocation of roadspace for active travel

1 Description of Package

Funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Sustrans Scotland, Spaces for People (SfP) is a temporary infrastructure programme which offers funding and support to make it safer for people who choose to walk, cycle or wheel for essential trips and exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, awards of over £38M have been made, primarily to local authorities.

This measure will support local authorities make temporary SfP schemes permanent, where appropriate and through due process, including engaging with local communities and in particular disabled people affected by the proposed changes. This may also include extending schemes to surrounding streets/areas. It will thereby provide long-term solutions which make it easier and safer for more people to move around, whether they are walking, cycling or wheeling.

It will utilise provision of the Places for Everyone grant (which is already available to deliver permanent active travel infrastructure). To be eligible for support through this measure, SfP projects must meet the criteria for Places for Everyone funding and local authorities should have gathered evidence and support for making these schemes permanent whilst they are temporary. Feedback on the temporary schemes from local people and local political support will be crucial in determining the schemes appropriate to be made permanent.

Note that this intervention has some similarities with intervention 4 (transport's contribution to placemaking principles in neighbourhoods), though intervention 7 is focussed on town/village locations, and this one on Scotland's cities. Whilst both interventions recognise and seek to contribute to positive outcomes for both active travel and improved placemaking, this intervention prioritises active travel in larger settlements, whereas intervention 4 prioritises the importance of placemaking in towns/villages, as these have been identified as the most important short-term delivery priorities. Work continues in STPR2 to develop recommendations for the most effective packages of interventions in all settings.



Cycle Lane in Glasgow

2 What we have heard?

Improving active travel infrastructure was clearly stated to be respondents’ highest priority aspirations in the online survey undertaken for STPR2 (which was widely promoted amongst active travel advocacy groups).

“Cycling - Availability of safe cycling infrastructure (e.g. cycleways)” was ranked by respondents as the highest priority intervention nationally, with over 50% more people stating this to be their top priority than the second choice. It was also stated to be the highest priority individual intervention in the Tay Cities, Glasgow City and Edinburgh & South East regions.

Respondents were also asked about their satisfaction with current transport modes. Across all Scotland-wide responses, between 53% and 62% were dissatisfied with the different aspects of walking and wheeling, and between 15% and 26% were satisfied. Dissatisfaction was highest for availability of attractive infrastructure.

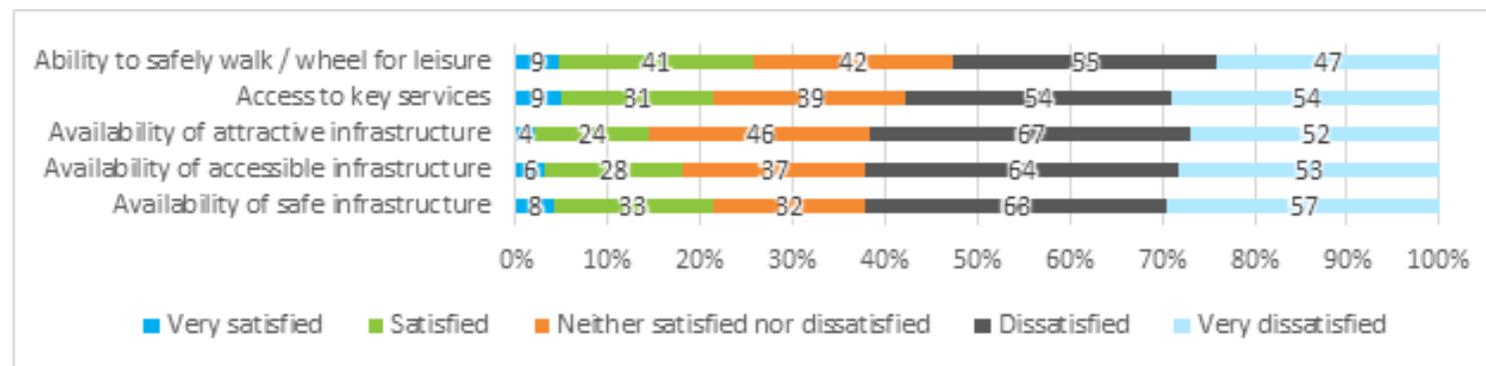


Figure 1: Scotland Wide - Satisfaction Walking and Wheeling

Meanwhile, between 64% and 79% were dissatisfied with the different aspects of cycling, and between 9% and 20% were satisfied. Dissatisfaction was highest for availability of safe infrastructure (Figure 2).

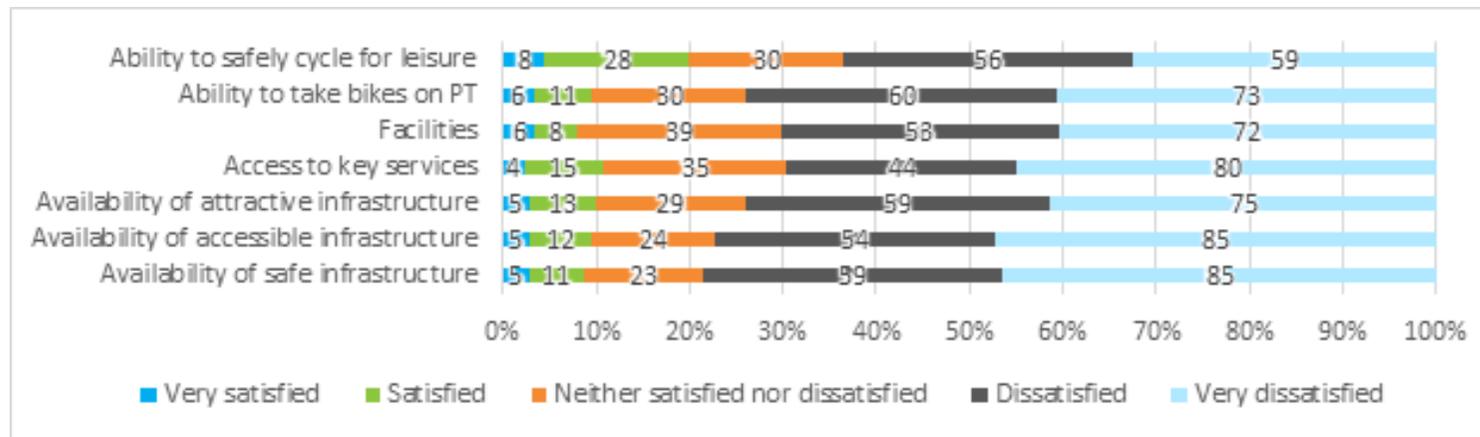


Figure 2: Scotland Wide - Satisfaction Cycling

Feedback from Spaces for People projects has varied by scheme type and location. As is befitting for the rapid installation of trial measures, of those that have been delivered to date, not all have been welcomed and some have been amended or removed as a result. But many are effective, and have been welcomed by users and other stakeholders. As an example, the closure of Union Street in Dundee was welcomed by traders, with one commenting *“It’s been noticeable, definitely, that there have been more people walking up and down the street [since the Spaces for People measures were introduced]. It’s been an enormous benefit for us. If it hadn’t happened, we’d have struggled with the current conditions.”*

3 The evidence base to support a case for change

In Scotland, the average mode share in 2018 was 1% for cycling and 20% for walking¹. Across Scotland, 49% of adults walk somewhere as a means of transport on at least three days per week², but cities show a higher propensity: Scotland’s four city authorities have proportions ranging from 51% (Dundee) to 72% (Edinburgh).

Despite many initiatives to support and encourage an increase in active travel in Scotland, the proportion of trips remains stubbornly low. The number of km cycled on Scotland’s roads in 2017 was nearly 7% less than in 2012³. The proportion of children walking

¹ Transport Scotland Scottish Transport Statistics, 2019

² Transport Scotland, Transport & Travel in Scotland, LA Tables, table 9, 2018

³ Transport Scotland, NTS2, 2020

to school in Scotland has been steadily declining in the last decade (from 46% in 2010 to 41% in 2019), but there are positive signs too, with the proportion of children cycling or scooting to school increasing from 3.5% to over 6.5% in the same period⁴.

Improved incentives and conditions for active travel during the COVID-19 pandemic helped facilitate a positive change in the number of people travelling by active modes. At the start of the first lockdown period, usage of all motorised modes fell sharply, but increases were seen in the numbers of people cycling and walking. Across Scotland, cycling was up by 50% in the 3rd week of April⁵ and by the following week levels of cycling were up by 120% compared with typical travel patterns for that time of year⁶. Further to this, Transport Scotland's COVID-19 public attitude surveys⁷ found that 8-9% of respondents in May 2020 stated that they walked or wheeled more and subsequent surveys have seen this figure rise to over 30% in September 2020.

Cycling Scotland's "New Lockdown Cycling Survey"⁸, conducted on 9th June 2020 reported that "of those who started cycling during lockdown, the top three reasons were: the weather was good (62 per cent), it improved my wellbeing (57 per cent) and less traffic on the roads (50 per cent)." Regarding measures to encourage participants to cycle more after lockdown, "More than one in four people living in Scotland (26 per cent) said having more dedicated cycle paths would be the most likely change to encourage them to cycle once lockdown is lifted. The figure rose to almost two thirds (63 per cent) for those who only started cycling during lockdown." These findings, supported by evidence of increased cycling levels during times of reduced traffic, show that more people will travel actively if they are less exposed to traffic; as traffic levels increase post-lockdown, the need to provide good infrastructure to minimise exposure becomes increasingly important.

Similarly, a survey conducted by YouGov in May 2020 found that in Glasgow⁹:

- 80% agreed that 'Cities must take effective measures to protect citizens from air pollution, even if this requires reallocating public space to walking, cycling and public transport'.
- 77% agreed that 'More public space should be reserved for pedestrians'.

⁴ Sustrans, Hands Up Survey Scotland, 2020, <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2019/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>

⁵ Monitoring data available from the 14th -19th of April 2020

⁶ Transport Scotland, COVID-19 Statistics, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publications/?publicationtype=1271&topic=63625&page=5>

⁷ Transport Scotland, COVID-19 Public Attitudes Survey Data: Wave 6, 2020, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/covid-19-public-attitudes-survey-data-wave-6/>

⁸ Cycling Scotland, New Lockdown Cycling Survey, 2020, <https://www.cycling.scot/news-article/new-lockdown-cycling-survey>

⁹ Transform Scotland, Yougov Poll, 2020, <https://transform.scot/blog/2020/06/11/new-report-active-recovery-locking-in-the-active-travel-benefits/>

- 65% agreed that ‘More public space in your nearest town/ city should be reserved for cycling’.

Building on successful Spaces for People schemes, through expansion and making them permanent, can make a difference, promoting health, sustainability, inclusion and economic wellbeing. The benefits realised will depend on location and scheme design, but comparisons with similar schemes elsewhere are relevant.

The reallocation of roadspace towards more active modes along with associated public realm improvements can have positive local economic benefits, with typical increases in footfall in the region of 20-30%. For example, Kelso town saw a 28% increase in footfall after introducing public realm improvements and street furniture rationalisation¹⁰.

4 The Strategic Rationale

Transport Scotland has set a strong policy framework for the promotion of active travel, including in its Active Travel Vision, Active Travel Outcomes Framework and NTS2. Through Places for Everyone funding, it is supporting the development of high-quality segregated cycling and walking routes at locations in Scotland’s towns and cities where local needs and opportunities are identified. The 2020 Programme for Government supported this outcome further, with a commitment of over £500M of funding for active travel infrastructure and supporting measures over the next five years.

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Michael Matheson: *“the task was now to ‘lock-in’ positive changes in travel behaviour. “This is why we have committed to invest over £500m in active travel over the next five years. By improving our match-funding offer for permanent infrastructure at the same time, it will help our local authorities make some of the temporary changes permanent where appropriate”¹¹.*

This package to expand and make permanent appropriate Spaces for People initiatives will help strengthen the commitment as many more local authorities from across Scotland have engaged with us to implement active travel infrastructure through the Spaces for People programme and are now keen to develop and implement permanent high quality active travel schemes as a result of this engagement and of realising the benefits of road reallocation which many of these schemes are demonstrating.

The aspirations are also supported by the views of many of Scotland’s people. Over a quarter of Scottish adults are ‘looking to

¹⁰ Scottish Borders Council, Footfall Report, 2016, cited at <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3890/pedestrian-pound-2018.pdf>

¹¹ BBC News, COVID-19: Scottish surge in cycling continues, 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-54253224>

change' towards increased rates of active travel¹², and 70% or more of residents in the cities surveyed would like to see more investment in active travel¹³.

Why now?

- There is a strong national and local policy context for active travel, to support healthy, inclusive and low carbon transport;
- Spaces for People has delivered some great schemes on a temporary basis; many of these schemes have demonstrated the benefits for all of reallocating roadspace;
- Places for Everyone has demonstrated that well-designed active travel infrastructure can be delivered in Scotland, and that there can be strong demand for its use, but further investment is required if the benefits are to be rolled out in a comprehensive manner across Scotland's cities and towns;
- Active travel is increasingly important for social inclusion and as an alternative to car use as we live with COVID-19, and high quality and well thought out active travel schemes provide a sustainable and inclusive option for short and medium-length urban journeys and as part of longer trips with public transport;
- High quality active travel routes can increase overall road network capacity in congested areas, benefitting economic vitality.

¹² Paths for All, National survey of attitudes and barriers to walking in Scotland, 2019, <https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/mediaLibrary/other/english/paths-for-all-national-survey---attitudes-and-barriers-to-walking-in-scotland.pdf>

¹³ Sustrans, Bike Life reports, <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life>

5 Meeting the STPR2 Transport Planning Objectives

TRANSPORT PLANNING OBJECTIVE	CONTRIBUTION	SCALE OF IMPACT (-3 to +3)
A sustainable strategic transport system that contributes significantly to the Scottish Government’s net zero emissions target.	High quality networks of strategic active travel routes can be particularly effective at encouraging walking and cycling for short and medium-length urban journeys. This measure will help add to and strengthen those networks and enable an attractive alternative to urban car journeys.	✓✓
An inclusive strategic transport system that improves the affordability and accessibility of public transport.	Although not everyone can walk or cycle, active travel offers the most inclusive transport choices. High quality active travel infrastructure can be particularly effective at enabling walking and cycling for people that are currently often excluded from transport because of reasons including cost, physical accessibility or fear of road danger. As such, this measure will improve transport inclusivity, especially amongst many members of commonly disadvantaged groups. Given that almost all public transport journeys include active travel links, the measures will also support accessibility of public transport	✓
A cohesive strategic transport system that enhances communities as places, supporting health and wellbeing.	Making permanent and expanding appropriate Spaces for People measures will lead to increased levels of physical activity, hence improved population health and wellbeing. If well designed, active travel infrastructure can also significantly improve placemaking, contributing the strengthened and vibrant communities.	✓✓
An integrated strategic transport system that contributes towards sustainable inclusive growth in Scotland.	Well-designed active travel infrastructure is correlated with improved economic performance of local retail centres, with typical increases in footfall of 20-30%. Active travel also offers the most inclusive means of connecting people to employment and services.	✓✓
A reliable and resilient strategic transport system that is safe and secure for users.	Fear of road danger is commonly reported as the single biggest barrier to active travel; this measure will help improve road safety and encourage active travel.	✓

6 Addressing the Post COVID-19 Priorities

POST-C19 PRIORITIES	CONTRIBUTION
Employment	Active travel enables inclusive, sustainable access for many people to city centre and other key employment sites. By increasing capacity on congested urban road networks, Spaces for People measures can also increase total transport capacity to employment hubs and other key destinations.
Environment	Increased active travel provision through the conversion of appropriate Spaces for People measures to permanent schemes provides capacity for modal shift from short and medium-distance car journeys within cities. Accompanying improvements to streetscapes can enhance placemaking and develop higher quality urban realms. This intervention is likely to have benefits for landscape, amenity, public health and air quality and also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions through modal shift.
Education	Making permanent Spaces for People measures will aid healthy and inclusive access to schools and further/higher education. This will help promote sustainable transport and young people’s health.
Equalities	Active travel provides the most inclusive transport choices, with accessibility benefits to many people that are commonly excluded from the transport system. The increased active travel provision will work to enhance access for some of Scotland’s most deprived communities, providing low-cost transport choices and accessible infrastructure for many people that are excluded by the current transport system.

7 SEA, EqIA and Other Impact Assessments¹⁴

ASSESSMENT	COMMENTARY
SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)	Making permanent appropriate Spaces for People projects will help deliver a modal shift from car to active travel, so reducing greenhouse gas emissions and (subject to careful design to minimise traffic congestion) improve air quality. It is also likely to have benefits for landscape, amenity and public health. The intervention will therefore complement the SEA and help progress the SEA objectives.
EqIA (Equality Impact Assessment)	The making permanent of Spaces for People measures will provide improved transport choices to people who are often excluded, including young and older people, people on low incomes that might struggle to afford a car or public transport fares, and people with physical or sensory impairments.
ICIA (Island Communities Impact Assessment)	This intervention is relevant to any location at which Spaces for People funded scheme has been implemented.
CRWIA (Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment)	Children and young people comprise one of the groups that is currently most excluded from a full range of transport choices, due to road safety concerns. Provision of high-quality active travel infrastructure is particularly beneficial to children and young people, enabling as it does many of them to travel cheaply and independently.
FSDIA (Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment)	Can provide significant benefit for inclusive accessibility and public health, including for members of target groups, and especially if successful interventions are built upon and are well designed to serve areas of highest needs.

¹⁴ All of these impact assessments are currently underway but no formal assessments have yet been undertaken. Please note SEA and EqIA scoping reports have been produced and consulted upon.

8 Implementability and Interdependencies

IMPLEMENTABILITY CRITERIA	COMMENTARY
Feasibility	All of the proposed measures have been trialled on a temporary basis, so should be operationally feasible, though all require testing through the TRO process.
Affordability	Costs of this measure are relatively modest in comparison with other investment options, but cannot be fully estimated until detail proposals are brought forward.
Public Acceptability	The public response to the Spaces for People Programme in Scotland has been mixed, largely dependent on the location and nature of the scheme. Local authorities must fully engage with local communities as part of any exercise to make schemes permanent. This is required by law and is necessary to ensure equalities duties are fully complied with and schemes are supported. Temporary schemes should help local communities understand the benefits that permanent schemes would bring by demonstrating positive changes such as less congestion and cleaner greener environments where people not traffic come first.

Key Interdependencies

Making permanent appropriate Spaces for People measures, is interdependent on the greater transport needs for urban corridors. Schemes will be competing for scarce urban roadspace with other needs, in particular for efficient bus movements, so careful joint design for all modes is required. There is also a strong interdependency with other local desires to improve urban environments, and for any permanent schemes to be properly integrated with networks providing local connections into communities and to other destinations.

Improved incentives and conditions for active travel during the COVID-19 pandemic helped facilitate a positive change in the number of people travelling by active modes. If we are to maintain this positive change to travel behaviours, one of the key aspects will be to build on the short term measures to provide a more sustainable active travel provision for the longer term.

