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People & Place: Year 1 Assessment Report

2024-25

Foreword



The creation of the People & Place programme exemplifies the Scottish Government's commitment to do more to move beyond strategic words on paper and on to concrete action on the ground: Taking bold decisions on new ways of working to give more direct funding and control to local government, deliver greater empowerment to communities, and get better outcomes for Scotland as a result.

This report demonstrates the early benefits that have been realised from a model that aligns with the principles of public service reform, and on behalf of the Government I would like to thank all of the Regional Transport Partnership and Local Authority teams, and all of the third sector and community delivery partners, for their support and hard work in Year 1 of the programme, for embracing change, and for their service to a healthier and more sustainable Scotland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fiona Hyslop".

Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport



The Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) welcome this Year 1 Assessment Report and the opportunity to reflect on the first year of delivery of the People & Place programme. We share the Cabinet Secretary's view that People & Place represents a positive step forward in moving from centrally commissioned programmes to a locally led, partnership-based approach. The RTPs were delighted to work in such a constructive way with Transport Scotland, and with our partner

Local Authorities and regional stakeholders, to deliver programmes shaped around the distinct needs of each region.

Despite the challenges of a compressed first year, the evaluation underlines the benefits of this regional partnership delivery model. It demonstrates how devolved decision-making has supported stronger collaboration, closer alignment with regional and local priorities, and more responsive, place-based interventions. We are already building on the learning from Year 1, with delivery of the second year of the programme progressing at pace. We remain committed to working in partnership with Government and delivery partners to strengthen this approach and maximise the benefits for communities across Scotland.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, reading "Ranald Robertson".

Ranald Robertson, Regional Transport Partnerships

Executive Summary

In its first year of operation, the 'People & Place' programme devolved and streamlined a total of £23.5 million in annual funding for active and sustainable travel promotion from Transport Scotland to Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) and Local Authorities (LAs). £19 million was grant funded directly to Scotland's seven RTPs, with an additional £4.5 million grant funded directly to Scotland's 32 LAs.

This assessment report shows that to date in Year 1 (financial year 2024-25) there is evidence that granting more regional and local control over the commissioning of these public services has increased cross-portfolio value and impact from the 'Support for Active and Sustainable Travel' budget line. This has enabled more joined-up working and greater alignment with local and regional strategies.

The devolved model has brought significant organisational change for the seven RTPs as the new direct funding recipients, and several national active travel charities as the former direct funding recipients. This change has not been entirely straightforward for the organisations involved, but all share a commitment to the aims of the programme and its future development.

This report highlights strong evidence of positive impacts from individual projects and initiatives, supporting the Scottish Government's decisions to increase national funding for this area of work in recent years. A key challenge facing the programme is the breadth and complexity of the interventions it supports and how to clearly articulate the aggregate benefits of these at a national level. Transport Scotland is working iteratively with stakeholders to develop a robust and proportionate system of ongoing monitoring and longer-term evaluation.

Based on this assessment of regional evaluation reports and other feedback gathered to date, Transport Scotland has trust and confidence in the RTPs and LAs as well-placed partners to strategically deploy active and sustainable travel resources in ways that are responsive to local and regional needs.

The headline recommendation of this Transport Scotland assessment report is that, subject to the ongoing agreement of Ministers, the People & Place delivery model should be continued over the next five-year parliamentary term, allowing it further time to establish and develop. There are a number of more granular assessments and recommendations relating to the programme's themes and the way it is planned, delivered, monitored and evaluated, and these are detailed in the report's **concluding section**.

Introduction

The Scottish Government's ambition for the shift to active and sustainable travel has never been greater, nor its recognition of the vital role it has to play in improving people's physical health and wellbeing; with cleaner air and safer streets for everyone, as well as helping tackle the climate emergency. Knowing the social, economic, and environmental dividends that these outcomes produce, investment in active travel infrastructure and behaviour change programmes has ramped up significantly in recent years, reaching record levels.

To ensure this additional funding is invested wisely, Transport Scotland initiated a major change programme for active travel delivery in 2021. This [Active Travel Transformation Programme](#) is affecting public sector reform across the entirety of the active travel system, driving improvement across both infrastructure delivery and behaviour change programmes. Transport Scotland has implemented a new model of programme delivery, nationally coordinated but regionally and locally led, designed to take this level of ambition and transform it into the change that people want and expect to see.

The new delivery model

Building upon a rich legacy of Scottish Government supported behaviour change and access to cycles interventions, the 'People & Place Programme' established a new funding model from 2024-25. Under this new model, funding that was previously allocated from the centre of government directly to national third sector delivery partners, has instead been allocated to Scotland's seven Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs).

This devolution of responsibility sees RTPs working in partnership with their respective Local Authorities (LAs) as well as other stakeholders and delivery partners to design their own tailored regional programmes of behaviour change initiatives under a refreshed national policy framework. Coupled with our new tiered delivery model for [active travel infrastructure](#), Transport Scotland's shared vision is for more autonomy at regional and local levels. This underpins a more agile approach to responding to locality and region-specific issues, placing greater emphasis on community planning and empowerment. It also strengthens the vital link between behaviour change and infrastructure in achieving modal shift, in line with the Verity House Agreement and the public sector reform agenda.

This Assessment Report

This in-house Transport Scotland report is both an assessment of the outputs (and to the extent possible the impacts) of the People & Place programme in Year 1, and also an assessment of the programme in terms of process (establishing, developing, and running the new delivery model).

It brings together a selection and analysis of the key results from each of the RTP's evaluation reports of their first year delivering the programme. It also draws on a range of additional supporting work, including feedback sought from third sector delivery partners involved in project delivery, and research conducted by Transport Scotland's Research team with RTP staff involved in programme administration (see [Annex B – Research Report: RTP Qualitative Interviews](#)).

Owing purely to practicality, this report will not be able to specifically mention each and every project and partner involved in delivering the programme. Readers should not conclude that any omission implies that a particular partner or project's contribution was insignificant, or that their evaluation work has not formed part of the programme's ongoing improvement process, only that difficult editorial decisions have been made to keep this report to a reasonable length.

Note: This report refers throughout to 'Paths for All', now known as '[Walking Scotland](#)', and Sustrans, now known as '[Walk Wheel Cycle Trust](#)'.

RTP Approaches to Programme Delivery

Each RTP across Scotland was encouraged to define its own approach within the guidelines of the programme to designing and delivering its regional People & Place Programme. All programmes were developed in the context of RTPs Regional Transport Strategies and a wealth of additional regional and local Transport and Active Travel Strategies. Regional Transport Strategies have statutory status under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, which places a duty on constituent Local Authorities, Health Boards, and other public bodies to perform functions related to transport consistently with them (see [Annex A – RTP Policy Context](#)).

RTPs also undertook the design and delivery of their programmes with reference to a wealth of local cross-cutting strategies and plans outwith transport. These covered areas including air quality, road safety, outdoor access, tourism, economic development, physical activity, health improvement, place planning, and community planning, highlighting the vast number of co-benefits that derive from promoting active travel. This process of joined-up local prioritisation, alongside the different organisational arrangements of the RTPs, and the different scales and geographies of the RTP regions, generated different delivery approaches across different regions. This has underlined at an early stage of the programme the strength of the model in enabling tailored solutions to unique geographic and demographic challenges. All population figures in this section are from the NRS Mid-2022 Population Estimates national statistics publication, the latest information available at the time the 2024/25 programme was planned and delivered.

ZetTrans is the regional transport partnership for Shetland, a single-authority RTP covering the Shetland Islands Council area. Shetland's location and geography mean that it forms a completely self-contained geographic entity, with just over 23,000 people, around 0.42% of Scotland's population, spread over 15 inhabited islands, 100 miles long within a 1,800-mile coastline. Providing and maintaining the necessary air, sea and road transport infrastructure is a complex task and results in high per capita costs.

In this context, ZetTrans adopted a straightforward approach - commissioning three well-established and resourced national third sector delivery partners to deliver four projects tailored to its strategies and using programme funding to start building delivery capacity within the local authority.

HITRANS is the regional transport partnership for a unique and varied area covering Moray, Argyll and Bute, Highland, Western Isles and the Orkney Islands. It is a large region, accounting for around 50% of Scotland's land mass, and contains a diverse mixture of islands, remote mainland, rural and urban areas, with over 466,000 people, nearly 9% of Scotland's population.

In this context, HITRANS took an approach centred on developing a comprehensive new behaviour change strategy and continuing to build on projects begun through previous funding such as HI-BIKE and cycle parking provision. Their delivery partners included local authorities, health boards, National Park Authorities, community organisations, and private sector organisations. In their own words:

“For HITRANS, it was quite a challenge to pivot from the previous model supported by Transport Scotland’s Regional Active Travel Fund (RATF), to

develop a behaviour change programme within a very short timescale, with limited staff capacity, and while still completing the 2023-24 RATF activity.

The previous model had focused on small scale infrastructure, feasibility and design, and piloting innovative projects like cycle socks on Citylink services, the HI-BIKE e-cycle share scheme, and Quiet Routes. The need to recruit additional team members to deliver the £1.6m People & Place Programme meant that delivery did not begin in earnest until the summer of 2024. As a result several projects were funded late on in the financial year, and reporting on these will be captured as part of the 2025-26 Programme evaluation.

Through the People & Place Programme we were able to continue and build on some of the projects begun through the Regional Active Travel Fund, such as HI-BIKE and cycle parking provision.” –
HITRANS Evaluation Report

Nestrans is the ‘city and shire’ regional transport partnership for Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council in the North East of Scotland. Nestrans accounts for just over 8% of the land mass of Scotland, with nearly 488,000 people, 9% of Scotland’s population, spread across this area. This has significantly contributed to a car dependent region, particularly in Aberdeenshire, which has the second largest car ownership percentage in Scotland.

In this context, Nestrans grounded its programme in its established regional transport strategy vision supported by four key pillars (Equality, Climate, Prosperity, and Wellbeing). They focused on the relationship that the strategy and associated policies and programmes have with local policy instruments, and how People & Place could work to support these policy aspirations, and programmes such as Aberdeenshire Council’s Integrated Travel Towns. In their own words:

“The People & Place programme is an important consequence of the Verity House Agreement (VHA) and the approach of local by default, national by agreement. In the first annual stocktake of the VHA it is noted that the Scottish Government needs to better understand the competing demands placed on local government by directorates and public bodies.

This has represented a considerable learning point for Nestrans, in balancing competing interests and priorities, while seeking to fulfil the regional potential of the People & Place programme.

In implementing this local model of delivery, Nestrans has also been aware of the requirement to balance local flexibility with national policies, while focusing on community empowerment.” – Nestrans Evaluation Report

Tactran is the regional transport partnership for Tayside and central Scotland. The RTP covers four Local Authority areas: Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross Council, and Stirling. The region has nearly 507,000 people, over 9% of Scotland’s population with a mix of all population types, including urban, city adjacent, rural, and deep rural communities.

In this context, Tactran identified the need for cross-cutting solutions across all population, geography and socio-economic groups, and developed their programme on the basis of focusing activities on core locations, referred to as ‘clusters’, where multiple needs and potential projects could be brought together. In their own words:

“The Tactran People & Place programme for 2024--25 set out to provide a wide range of activities focused on need and maximising outcomes. It sought to identify key locations where projects could be concentrated on specific clusters, as areas of multiple need within which interventions may have significant impacts.

A methodology was developed which identified four areas across the Tactran region where there was existing active travel infrastructure (such as: trails, cycleways etc) in existence or under construction. It being felt that behaviour change interventions focused on these clusters would be likely to have a greater impact on use [...]

The delivery of the People & Place programme in FY2024-25 has demonstrated significant impacts arising from targeted behaviour change initiatives. Such successes are indicative of the continuing benefit and further potential outcomes where best practices are

identified and followed, and where learnings are applied to future application” – Tactran Evaluation Report

SEStran is the regional transport partnership covering eight diverse local authorities in the South East of Scotland: City of Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders, and West Lothian. It covers just over 10% of Scotland’s landmass, and contains over 1.6 million people, nearly 30% of Scotland’s population. The majority of the population is concentrated in the centre of the SEStran area, with a large, sparsely populated rural area to the south, particularly the remote rural areas in the Scottish Borders and East Lothian. The greatest concentration of population is within the City of Edinburgh.

In this context SEStran developed a high-level programme plan, with early engagement with local authorities and delivery partners helping build trust, despite initial concerns about the shift in funding control. They took a collaborative approach with stakeholders, understanding operational realities and constraints. They delivered this through a diverse partnership of local authorities, third sector organisations, community groups, and educational institutions. In their own words:

“2024-25 has been a transition year in which responsibility for funding management moved to Regional Transport Partnerships for the first time, so there was a fundamental change in programme governance and delivery mechanisms. This inevitably influenced programme implementation and

outcomes and impacted data consistency as delivery organisations adapted to a new way of working [...]

Key findings show that the Programme aligns well with national and regional policy priorities. The funding model also reflects a broader policy shift away from national-level targets, for example, those to reduce car use, toward more flexible, locally tailored approaches. The People & Place Programme is well-positioned to support this evolving landscape.

The first year of delivery demonstrated meaningful progress in promoting active travel and enabling behaviour change.” - SEStran Evaluation Report

SPT is the regional transport partnership for the West of Scotland, covering East Dunbartonshire, East Ayrshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and the Helensburgh and Lomond wards of Argyll and Bute. The Strathclyde region has over 2.2 million people, over 40% of Scotland’s population,

and covers everything from Scotland's largest urban area (and the UK's biggest suburban rail network outside London), with some of the most deprived communities in the country, through to rural, island and coastal communities along the Firth of Clyde.

In this context, for the first year of the programme SPT chose to prioritise projects that provided good value-for-money, had been running continuously in the region for many years, and were aligned to the priorities of the SPT Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). They sought to secure capacity and capability and continuation of delivery through the disruptions of change, while allowing time to engage with stakeholders to gather a better understanding of the landscape during the transition year. As a result, SPT funded a wide variety of project types, across a wide range of partners. In their own words:

“SPT issued a request to Local Authorities and other third sector delivery partners for projects for the People & Place Programme (PPP) 2024-2025 and received upwards of 100 applications across 19 delivery partners. In practice, the application process proved very successful resulting in the programme being substantially oversubscribed, however, meaning it was not possible to fund all proposals. Through an evaluation process based on TS's key themes and priorities, the indicative available budget, the wider policy and operational landscape including the Regional Transport Strategy and emerging SPT Regional Active Travel Strategy, 45 'Priority' Projects were identified for delivery in 2024-2025.

Given the speed at which the PPP was developed, TS has acknowledged that 2024/2025 has been a transition year as the PPP approach is refined. As the funder, SPT has the responsibility for issuing and managing the grant in line with the requirements set out by TS in their Offer of Grant letter, and therefore, a key part of SPT's work this year has been to undertake a strong and resilient project monitoring, reporting and evaluation programme [...]

SPT has developed a Regional Transport Strategy and Regional Active Travel Strategy to support their ambitions for the area. The delivery of the People & Place Programme and associated projects will contribute to the delivery of both strategies, particularly the Active Travel Strategy.” – SPT Evaluation Report

SWestrans is the regional transport partnership for the South West of Scotland and has a boundary contiguous with Dumfries and Galloway Council. The SWestrans area covers 8.1% of Scotland's land mass, and over 145,000 people, 2.7% of Scotland population. The population density of the region is just 23 people per

square kilometre compared to the national average of 69 people per square kilometre, with Dumfries being the major centre of population.

In this context, in Year 1 SWestrans took a continuity approach, looking to retain the existing workforce within the region and assess the effectiveness of what was already in place before making major delivery model changes. Alongside working with national providers that had previously been funded by Transport Scotland directly, they also funded two additional national partner organisations to return to the region. In their own words:

“This the first year of P&P was seen in part by SWestrans as an assessment of what was already in place as much as a completely new way of working that has allowed us to make more informed decisions for the subsequent year. Given the short notice of the new funding model from Transport Scotland the majority of the bids were from national providers that had previously been funded by Transport Scotland, directly. We therefore looked to retain existing workforce within the region and assess the effectiveness of what was already in place before making any radical changes.

[...] At the inception of this fund SWestrans made the decision to recruit an additional member for staff to manage this programme and as an RTP with an oversight over a single local authority Dumfries and Galloway Council (DGC) the 24-25 SWestrans People & Place Active Travel Behaviour Change programme and Dumfries and Galloway Council’s Local Authority Direct Award (LADA) were pooled to provide a single fund.

[...] [This] fund allowed us to work across the council as a whole to identify opportunities to embed active travel in wider programmes such as the Active Lives Pathway.” – SWestrans Evaluation Report

Partner Approaches to Project Delivery

The new delivery model has brought significant change for third sector delivery partners, particularly the larger national charities who are no longer in receipt of direct funding from Transport Scotland. In some instances, these delivery partners encountered new and additional challenges in adapting to the different approaches taken by each of the RTPs. They reported having to realign their work to the programme’s themes and also to the RTP’s different priorities, in many cases having to reduce headcount or bring certain areas of work to an end.

Some delivery partners have seen definite positives in working with RTPs, describing aspects as more transparent, tailored, and strategic. However, others also describe the new landscape as fragmented, creating duplication, and adding a significant volume of bureaucracy. There is truth to both sentiments, and a distinct policy tension exists between localism that seeks to mitigate against 'one-size-fits-all' solutions, and universalism that seeks to mitigate against 'postcode lotteries'.

For the larger charities in particular, the loss of 'national' programmes was keenly felt, particularly where RTPs made different choices about which services matched best with the strategic transport or community needs of their region. One cause for optimism is that most delivery partners reported having very positive and supportive relationships with RTPs, even as completely new partnerships. The question of whether, over time, the benefits of more localism and new ways of working together will outweigh the disbenefits of differential services and additional bureaucracy, is one for a longer-term programme evaluation.

In terms of mitigating against the additional bureaucracy inherent in the new model, all stakeholders concurred in asking Transport Scotland to attempt to streamline and standardise processes where possible, which is actively being pursued.

Case study: Tactran's cluster model

Tactran engaged 'coordinating partners' to oversee delivery of specific projects along programme theme and allocated by specialism:

- Access to cycles and cycle parking projects were coordinated by Cycling Scotland
- Active Travel Promotion projects were overseen by Cyclehub and Living Streets
- Urban Trail development projects were overseen by ARUP

Local delivery partners, including the coordinating partners themselves, provided project delivery on the ground. Local delivery was overseen by the coordinating partners to maximise delivery outputs.

A spatial approach was proposed and adopted based on clusters. The consulting firm ARUP provided advice on the locations and justifications for clusters, with locations chosen to maximise the number of behaviour change interventions taking place in environments suited towards active travel.

The cluster approach was seen as an effective means of concentrating activities in the areas most tailored towards active travel: to provide the most meaningful impact in changing travel behaviour in the short term. As traffic-free infrastructure levels across the wider region caught up to the larger urban areas, interventions would then be distributed more widely in future years.

Impact Evaluation

This section primarily draws on information gathered under the People & Place Monitoring and Evaluation Framework showing evidence of outputs and impact under key 'themes' and with reference to the [Active Travel Framework \(ATF\)](#). Transport Scotland provided the framework to help baseline and standardise data collection through surveys across the programme.

The programme 'themes' were created to help provide narrative structure to reporting and focus attention on key behavioural inflection points (i.e. times in people's lives when they are most likely to form or change habits). There were three overarching behaviour change themes: 'Schools and Young People', 'Workplaces', and 'Accessibility and Inclusion', and an underpinning systemic theme: 'Capacity and Capability'. The purpose of survey data collection was to evaluate the impact of the active travel interventions being delivered and demonstrate how they directly contribute towards the following selected ATF 'Active Travel Outcomes' and 'Active Travel Outcome Indicators':

Outcome 1 - Increase the number of people choosing walking, cycling and wheeling in Scotland. Indicators:

- Proportion of short everyday journeys by walking/wheeling and cycling.
- Attitudes towards/p propensity to walking, cycling and wheeling.
- Proportion of journeys to school by walking, cycling and wheeling.
- Frequency of walking and cycling for pleasure / exercise.

Outcome 3: Walking, cycling and wheeling is safer for all. Indicator:

- Perceptions of safety of walking, wheeling and cycling.

Outcome 5: Walking, cycling and wheeling is available to all. Indicator:

- Proportion of people identifying barriers to walking, cycling and wheeling.

Depending on the project or activity, a range of other data collection methods were often appropriate (e.g. headcount data, focus groups, case studies, observation). M&E guidance focused on surveys to ensure there was a foundation of common principles and questions, and set out the minimum requirements for data gathering when using surveys. Within each of the three themes (Schools and Young People, Workplaces, Accessibility and Inclusion) Transport Scotland provided survey questions to ask to help RTPs demonstrate the impact of their intervention against the ATF outcomes and indicators.

P&P Theme: Schools and Young People

What is the ‘Schools and Young People’ theme?

This theme covers **interventions focused in and around schools** that deliver holistic solutions for creating an environment where active and sustainable travel choices are not only an option, but the most desirable way to travel for young people and families. It provides a relatively well-defined and targetable community for RTPs and LAs to focus on working with.

The theme is key both in terms of ‘place’, because schools collectively are one of the largest trip generators in Scotland (there were over [705,000 children attending school in Scotland in 2023](#) with about [50% of their journeys being made actively](#), which represents a considerable number of daily car trips), and also ‘people’, because there is strong evidence to show that social norms play a crucial role in behaviour change, and that helping children establish healthy travel behaviours should be a core activity of programmes seeking [sustainable travel behaviours](#).

This theme supports interventions such as Living Streets’s [Walk Once a Week](#) challenge, for example, where participating schools have markedly higher rates of walking to school journeys compared with schools not engaged with the programme.

*“**Findings support this pathway:** The Theory of Change for this theme posited that early interventions (e.g. cycle training, infrastructure, travel plans) would build confidence, increase active travel to school, and instil lifelong habits.*

The emphasis on early intervention and environmental change is validated; however, long-term tracking of behaviour into adolescence and adulthood remains a gap that is beyond the scope of this particular evaluation to address.” – SEStran evaluation report, assessment of their theme-specific theory of change.

Schools and Young People – Selected numbers

SWestrans

At least **46 of 97** primary schools engaged. **623** iBike activity participants. **198** Dr Bike session attendees. **125** children's participation opportunities for Rock Up and Ride. **165 cycles** distributed.

HITRANS

2,434 pupils participated in cycling training. **7,365 pupils** in **38 schools** registered for the Walk Once a Week (WOW) challenge.

Nestrans

Access to Bikes engagement across **45 schools**, supporting children and young people in **8 Aberdeenshire** Schools and **13 Aberdeen City** Schools.

Tactran

77% of children felt more able to travel actively to school through access to cycles work, **64%** following Active Travel Promotion and WOW, and **67%** after Cycle Training.

SPT

Engaged **385 schools** and **70,133 children**. Provided **1,332** new or refurbished cycles. Installed **44** cycle shelters / secure parking. Cycle training sessions to **1,927** people. Organised **803** led rides.

SEStran

54% of Kids Bike Life participants cycled more outside of school, with **86%** reporting increased confidence in cycling.

ZetTrans

Rock Up & Ride engaged with **12 young people** in Shetland.

Cross-RTP Results

'Schools and Young People' was a strong area of every RTP programme, reflecting both the range of very well-established projects and delivery partners already working in this space, and that the relatively structured nature of education settings present readily available opportunities around which to build interventions. Initiatives focused on increasing access to cycles, improving cycling confidence, installing light infrastructure (mainly cycle storage), and embedding behaviour change through education and engagement.

The evaluations collectively underscore the importance of early intervention, school-based engagement, and community partnerships in fostering long-term behaviour change. A common issue identified was practical difficulties associated with supporting projects across the academic year (mid-August to June) with a funding and delivery cycle tied to the financial year (April to March), which Transport Scotland sought to facilitate as far as possible within administrative constraints.

Tactran

Across their four clusters Tactran engaged delivery partners including Living Streets, CycleHub, Cycling Scotland, FEL, Recyke-a-Bike, and The Bike Station, and focused on three project areas:

- Promoting active travel within schools, including education and awareness campaigns on the benefits of active school travel which include incentivisation schemes and gamification projects;
- In school cycling training such as Bikeability, and;
- Providing cycle within schools, distributing new and refurbished cycles to children who may otherwise face barriers to cycling.

In general, they found it was not possible to carry out detailed comparative analysis of the schools data as there was a different sample group for the pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys, and a low response rate overall. Nevertheless, from the results that could be discerned, self-confidence in the ability to walk, wheel, and cycle increased by 77% where access to cycles was made available; with 64% increase related to active travel promotion activities. Rates of perceived safety also increased significantly, with 25% increase in parents' confidence to allow children to walk, and 46% in allowing children to cycle.

HITRANS

HITRANS engaged National Delivery Partner Living Streets to continue the Walk Once a Week (WOW) programme and School Travel Tracker in schools across Moray and Highland, with a new school joining the programme in the Western Isles. They also made grants to partner local authorities and third sector organisations to deliver projects. Projects included:

- Living Streets WOW and Travel Tracker
- Outfit Moray Bike Revolution & Inclusive Cycling
- Moray Council: West End Primary School Cycle Parking
- Orkney Islands Council: Papdale Nursery January Walking Challenge

Common Initiatives included Bikeability training (Learn to Ride and Bikeability Level 1), Learn to Cycle sessions, school infrastructure like shelters, and walking challenges. HITRANS found that all of the projects were able to positively evidence some or all of the outcome indicators around proportion of journeys to school by walking, wheeling and cycling, perceptions of safety of walking, wheeling & cycling, and proportion of people identifying barriers to walking, cycling and wheeling.

ZetTrans

ZetTrans ran a small project with Rock Up & Ride that engaged with 12 young people in Shetland. Through the project they researched, identified, and learned valuable lessons around the practicality of delivery in Shetland that will lay the groundwork for future years. The project team partnered with the Active Mobility Hub in Strathclyde University to support the evaluation of the national Rock Up & Ride programme, with the participant feedback below taken from the [final report](#) for the project delivered in Shetland:

- “Their Cycling skills and knowledge improved,”
- “They enjoyed the skills sessions and coaching course,”
- “Their confidence in cycling on their own has increased.”
- “They are excited to further develop skills through RUAR and support their community using their new skills and knowledge”

SEStran

SEStran categorised 27 of their 93 projects as falling under the ‘Schools and Young People’ theme, accounting for around 44% of their total spend. They reported positive results right across outcome indicators with its projects. For example, 54%

of participants said they were cycling more outside of school after the Kids Bike Life cycle training sessions.

FEL Scotland has since delivered an extensive programme of activities, events, and encouragement to try out different active modes, all linked to the school curriculum and Learning for Sustainability framework.

SPT

SPT's projects delivered interventions that primarily offered cycling training for children and young people, increased families' confidence in traveling actively to school, improved access to cycles, and encouraged children to walk to school.

A total of 16 projects were delivered by councils, Cycling Scotland, Living Streets, Paths for All, Sustrans, Scottish Cycling, and TravelKnowHow. Collectively these projects engaged 385 schools, reached 70,133 children, provided 1,332 new or refurbished cycles, installed 44 cycle shelters, or secure cycle parking facilities, delivered cycle training sessions to 1,927 people, and organised 803 led rides.

Two key areas of work facilitated or delivered through councils were "gamification" activities such as Beat the Street, and also "access to cycles". East Dunbartonshire Council were awarded £50,000 to purchase 156 cycles for primary and secondary schools, requested for Bikeability and Sustrans I Bike training. The schools can now integrate cycle maintenance, road safety, and environmental education into the curriculum.

SWestrans

SWestrans highlighted a positive of the programme was that it created opportunity for detailed discussion with Dumfries and Galloway Council's education team leading on Bikeability, allowing them to align programmes more closely and create a new streamlined single point of contact for all interventions working with schools. They emphasise how this helped overcome the problem of schools being "overloaded" by approaches from multiple external organisations, uncertain what to prioritise or what was aligned with existing Local Authority support – creating a single point of contact.

SWestrans projects included Sustrans IBike work and Scottish Cycling's Rock up and Ride work, delivering intervention across schools and communities, supporting social prescribing, community projects, infrastructure development, adaptive cycles and free cycles and accessories.

Nestrans

Nestrans work with delivery partners including Sustrans Cycling Scotland, Live Life Aberdeenshire, Adventure Aberdeen, and Huntly Development Trust. They supported the continued funding of Sustrans' I Bike Schools for both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. A total of 371 I Bike activities were logged in 33 schools. These activities had a total of 10,023 pupil attendances, 697 school staff attendances, and were supported by 133 volunteer attendances. Cycling Scotland through its Access to Bikes for Young People engaged with 45 schools, with Sustrans supporting children and young people in 21 Schools.

Case study: Nestrans - Stella's Voice, making cycles more accessible for everyone.

Stella's Voice aims to make cycles more accessible for everyone. This project looks to stop as many cycles as possible from going to landfill in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. Rather than go to waste, they hope to refurbish as many of them as possible so they can be given to those who would not be able to obtain a bicycle otherwise. They currently collect donated cycles from recycling centres across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire or can collect by arrangement.

Trained mechanics work on each cycle that is identified as being able to be fixed. They ensure it meets safety and quality standards resulting in cycles that are fit for use and able to be donated to those who have been identified as needing one. Each cycle is also supplied with a helmet, lock, and lights.

For cycles that are not repairable or beyond economic repair, all usable parts will be harvested allowing for more cycles to be repaired in the future, thereby increasing the repair rate and less cycles being unusable.

Alice's story

For Alice, it began with borrowing one of the cycles and her dad taking her around the junior pump track at a Stella's Voice event. Alice could not ride and needed her dad to hold the cycle as she went round the track.

Alice's brother, Henry, wanted to be part of the story too and got a cycle. Here is the feedback from their Mum:

"I'm delighted with the cycles from Stella's Voice. Alice's cycle has given her the confidence to learn to cycle and join in with her brother when he goes out on his.

Henry's BMX has allowed him to take part in events through his school at the pump track and gives him the freedom to go down there on evenings and weekends and have fun with his friends. He and his friends often cycle down the lido and other local cycling paths only coming home when they're hungry.

It's nice seeing kids out and about on their cycles keeping healthy and active."

P&P Theme: Workplaces

What is the 'Workplaces' theme?

This theme covers **interventions focused in and around places of work** (including further and higher education), that make active and sustainable travel choices a realistic solution for commuting.

The theme is key because places of work are significant trip generators, with the latest statistics showing 'Commuting' as the second most frequent reason for personal travel, at 21% just after 'Shopping' at 23% ([Transport and Travel in Scotland 2022](#)). There is a strong societal drive to get the private sector to do more to take climate action (businesses taking responsibility for their [Scope 3 emissions](#), for example) and protect the wellbeing of their employees.

This theme supports interventions such as [workplace travel planning](#) that enable businesses to do that. The UK Department for Transport's research found that even basic Travel Plans can reduce driver-only car journeys to work by 3% to 5%, and Travel Plans with large public transport fare discounts and [car parking measures](#) could achieve 15-30% reductions or more.

***“Findings partially support this:** This Theory of Change assumed that workplace-focused interventions (e.g. travel plans, infrastructure, campaigns) would shift commuting behaviours and embed active travel in organisational culture.*

However, limited quantitative data from workplace projects constrained the ability to fully test the Theory of Change. Many of these projects, such as workplace travel plans, were still in development and impact data was not yet in a usable form for meaningful analysis. Future evaluations should prioritise baseline and follow-up data collection in this theme.” – SEStran evaluation report, assessment of their theme-specific theory of change.

Workplaces – Selected numbers

ZetTrans

185 staff took part in a Step-Count Challenge with **37 competing teams** from Shetland Islands Council.

HITRANS

5 employers awarded sustainable travel grants. **3 organisations** supported with travel planning. Installed / upgraded shelters at **5 locations** across NHS Western Isles. Assessed / repaired **22 cycles** across NHS Highland.

Nestrans

2,223 Step Count Challenge participants, **63** lunchtime walk participants.

Tactran

Cycle parking and storage facilities installed in **12 locations**. **350 cycle packages** distributed to adults.

SPT

8 projects funded and **40 workplaces** involved and **10,331 people** benefiting. **13** cycle shelters and secure cycle parking facilities provided.

SEStran

10 projects across **13 workplaces**. Step counts **up an average of 139%** at Midlothian Council, with **83% of participants** consciously increasing activity.

SWestrans

423 staff actively engaged in walking projects across **4 workplaces**. Secure cycle storage and maintenance facilities supporting **40 staff and service users**.

Cross-RTP Results

Across regions, 'workplace' interventions included things such as cycle parking, pool bikes, Dr Bike sessions, travel planning, and 'walking challenges'. Although there were notable successes, in some regions workplaces proved a more challenging theme to engage with, particularly when reaching out to the private sector. While in some cases there was limited ability to assess impact, in other cases reported outcomes included increased cycling confidence, improved perceptions of safety, and modest modal shifts from car to active travel.

Reporting highlighting the importance of workplace culture in enabling change, and the effectiveness of initiatives such as workplace travel planning, peer-led walking groups and the value of pairing infrastructure with engagement. Overall, the theme showed that practical support, visible leadership, and tailored engagement are essential to embedding active travel in workplace settings and achieving long-term modal shift.

Tactran

With a strong focus on cycling (access to cycles and confidence building and cycle parking and storage), Tactran saw significant intersection between the 'workplace' and 'accessibility and inclusion' themes, with workplaces providing opportunities for delivery partners to engage with people facing barriers to cycling due to costs or wider life challenges, and those wanting to learn to ride or build confidence for on-road cycling.

HITRANS

Making use of their in-house team, HITRANS made grants for cycle parking provision at workplaces and Dr Bike sessions, offered a Sustainable Travel Grant to employers in Highland, and engaged Travelknowhow to carry out workplace engagement and travel planning at three large employers in Highland as part of the national programme.

HITRANS' experiences reiterated that while practical support (e.g. cycle shelters, repairs) helped increase access and reduce barriers, infrastructure alone is not sufficient, and pairing this with engagement and incentives was key to increasing levels of walking, wheeling and cycling. Dr Bike sessions in particular provided tangible benefits with minimal investment and were highly valued by staff, while travel planning highlighted barriers and supported targeted behaviour change efforts.

ZetTrans

ZetTrans' funded Paths for All to deliver a programme focused on supporting employees to walk more during the working day (e.g. through walking meetings, taking regular desk breaks, etc.), promoting the benefits of walking and being outdoors, and connecting with teammates either in person, or virtually. It included the Step Count Challenge open to people to register in teams to compete on steps taken. Positive feedback suggested improved health, wellbeing and social outcomes.

It was also interesting to note a piece of feedback received through ZetTrans's separate Connecting Communities project that provided e-cycle loans, which highlights the interconnectedness of the themes, in this case 'Accessibility and Inclusion':

"It made me more secure for my job knowing that I won't be late because I have a cycle to use." – e-cycle loan and cycling activities participant.

SEStran

SEStran categorised 10 of their 93 projects as falling under the 'Workplaces' theme, accounting for around 5% of their total spend. While stressing that these projects were mostly small in scale, provided limited data, and formed a relatively minor part of the overall programme, generally they highlighted positive outcomes in workplaces through the gamification of activity through the Step Count Challenge.

SEStran also noted observing positive sustained behaviour changes in workplaces, where initiatives like walking groups and step count challenges have become self-sustaining, with staff organising activities independently via platforms like Microsoft Teams.

SPT

SPT delivered seven projects under this theme, including interventions that provided access to fleets of cycles in workplaces, training and travel planning for employees to support a modal shift, incentivised active travel through workplace challenges and gamification, and implemented infrastructure such as active travel hubs.

From a broad range of projects, highlights included North Ayrshire Council's Travel Smart Programme reporting 50% increase in respondents who would walk for journeys under 5 miles, 40% increase in respondents who are quite likely to consider active travel as a means of transport, and a 16% decrease in respondents travelling to work by driving.

SWestrans

SWestrans found that given the nature of Dumfries and Galloway, there were few large-scale employers outwith the public sector, putting a limit on possible engagement.

Paths for All delivered the majority of SWestrans' work around this theme, but the initialisation of their workplace walking programmes were significantly delayed by the overall shift in funding model as new arrangements were established. Nevertheless, they ran impactful projects with the University of West Scotland (UWS), the NHS, D&G College, and Police Scotland (see cases study below), which resulted in 423 staff being actively engaged.

Cycling Scotland's Cycle Friendly Programme was also supported to provide the Oasis Youth Centre with a secure store for 10 cycles (including a maintenance stand and pump) for the 40 staff and service users who cycle regularly to the centre.

Nestrans

Similarly to SWestrans, Paths for All and Cycling Scotland were Nestrans' main chosen delivery partners for workplace engagement. The focus of Paths for All was delivering two bespoke Step Count Challenges for NHS Grampian (who they supported to achieve a '[Walk at Work Award](#)') and Aberdeen City Council, alongside organising and leading lunchtime walks with three workplaces, and undertaking walking route mapping.

12 lunchtime walks were carried out with a total of 63 participants, whilst the Step Count Challenge had 2,223 participants across workplaces. Cycling Scotland conducted 10 initiatives in workplaces, with a wide range of beneficiary groups, increase in cycle parking which in turn resulted in an increased confidence amongst people in being able to cycle to their workplace.

Case study: SPT - Paths for All, Walking Workplaces

Total Investment: £90,200.00. Timeline: September 2024 to March 2025. Project Aims:

- To get more people of working age to walk to and from their place of work
- To ensure better levels of physical activity among Scotland's workforce
- To reduce the number of car journeys made for work purposes
- To support specifically targeted groups and workplaces to be more active

Paths for All ran a “Workplaces Walking” program delivering walking support and provision in workplaces. The programme was based on learning from successful Smarter Choices Smarter Places project delivery and existing direct delivery Paths for All carries out around health. The programme supported and encouraged people within workplaces to walk more at, to, and from work, with delivery based on peer encouragement and support, and run using a network of regional officers.

Phase 1: Establishing the Programme

The project's Engagement Strategy focused on existing contacts and large public sector organisations. Paths for All contacted 15+ organisations, with three then recruited: NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Police Scotland, and West Dunbartonshire Council (later disengaged). A baseline survey was undertaken in October-December 2024. The response rate was limited, but supplementary data was sourced from TravelKnowHow. The baseline survey results informed the development of 'Walking Action Plans' tailored to each workplace.

Phase 2: Intervention and Impact

The project employed a variety of engagement methods, including in-person events and online-only methods. In-person methods were found to be more successful. West Dunbartonshire Council ceased participation at this point. In addition to the implementation of the Walking Action Plans, a Step Count Challenge was implemented at Police Scotland (173 participants) and a BetterPoints Challenge was implemented across NHS Ayrshire and Arran (47 participants). Therefore overall, 220 staff participated in active travel initiatives as part of this project.

P&P Theme: Accessibility and Inclusion

What is the 'Accessibility and Inclusion' theme?

This theme covers **interventions focused on supporting accessibility and inclusion** and creating opportunities for everyone to make the choice to travel actively and sustainably. Evidence shows that there are a large number of underrepresented groups in Scotland [who do not participate in active travel](#). Barriers often include cost, social perception, culture, health, ability, and geographical location.

The theme is key because the government has a moral and legal duty to ensure that people with different abilities, or people without the knowledge or skills, are not left out of the drive to promote walking, wheeling and cycling for everyday journeys.

This theme supports a range of interventions such as continuing to provide access to cycles (and adaptive cycles) for young people who cannot afford them, building on the legacy of Transport Scotland's [national pilots](#) and connecting strongly with the government's priority of eradicating child poverty, which a number of RTPs are continuing to mainstream into their programmes.

“Findings strongly validate this theory of change: This Theory of Change focused on reducing barriers to active travel for underrepresented groups through targeted infrastructure, equipment, and engagement.

This theme had the most comprehensive data and demonstrated the clearest causal links between interventions and outcomes, affirming the Theory of Change's structure and assumptions.” – SEStran evaluation report, assessment of their theme-specific theory of change.

Accessibility and Inclusion – Selected numbers

ZetTrans

123 people given access to a safe and appropriate cycle, and **69 repairs** completed.

HITRANS

137 free or low cost cycles supplied, **123 refurbished** cycles supplied or sold.

Nestrans

104 young people and **40 others** provided with access to a cycle. **26 cycle racks** two key bus routes, and **50 cycle covers** on other routes.

Tactran

41% of participants with a household income less than £10k pa, and **38%** with a condition affecting everyday activities. **8 Urban Trails** developed focused on accessibility improvements.

SPT

20 projects funded, supporting **126 organisations** and benefitting **23,341 people**, with **2,150** new and refurbished cycles provided, and **90 cycle training sessions** delivered.

SEStran

46 projects funded, **81%** across seven projects feeling safer cycling, **84%** of 'Greener Kirkcaldy' participants likely to walk or wheel more. **3 young people** able to accept new jobs.

SWestrans

198 people attend Dr Bike sessions. **54 cycles** (including locks helmets and lights) provided to young people.

Cross-RTP Results

Projects across regions provided interventions such as inclusive cycling initiatives, refurbished cycles, adaptive cycles, and confidence-building training to people with disabilities, low-income households, and ethnic minorities. Participants reported improved confidence and perceptions of safety, as well as positive health outcomes.

Across all regions, projects improved confidence, mobility, and social inclusion. Overall, the theme demonstrated that targeted, inclusive interventions can significantly increase active travel participation and support wider goals around equity, health, and environmental sustainability.

Tactran

As covered in the previous section, Tactran saw significant intersection between the 'workplace' and 'accessibility and inclusion' themes, with organisations including [FEL](#), the [Bike Station](#), and [Recyke-a-Bike](#) also working to provide access to new and refurbished cycles and cycling skills to people in communities facing barriers due to costs or wider life challenges, and those wanting to build confidence for on-road cycling.

Tactran also engaged Arup to develop eight 'Urban Trails', designed to be fun, 2 to 3km signed and themed routes that encourage walking, wheeling and cycling for local journeys, including 'trail zones' (for example play spaces, pocket parks or art installations) which repurpose unused space to create a collective theme on the route. The trail development focused on accessibility and inclusion improvements, for example surfacing improvements, upgrades to crossings or improved signage.

Tactran's analysis showed that their programme overall had significant uptake in deprived areas (SIMD deciles 1-2), reflected in the proportion of participants (41%) with an annual household income of less than £10,000, indicating success in reaching people from disadvantaged backgrounds. 38% of respondents also indicated they had a physical or mental health condition that affected their ability to carry out everyday activities to a degree ('a little' or 'a lot'), indicating good uptake among this group.

HITRANS

HITRANS funded several community-based initiatives to deliver a range of activities including access to cycles, Dr Bike sessions, trials, taster sessions and confidence building. They also funded Cycling UK to deliver Connecting Communities / Bothy projects in Moray, Dunoon and Caithness. They were able to continue operating the HI-BIKE on-street electric cycle share scheme, through which they have started to

pilot an Inclusive Cycling Membership which enables subscribers to access a non-standard or adapted cycle on loan for 2 to 12 months.

ZetTrans

Under this theme ZetTrans also engaged Cycling UK to run 'Connecting Communities' activity in Shetland, delivering a wide range of walking, wheeling and cycling activities in communities where other support is absent, focused on places active travel infrastructure is being developed, and including those that are underserved or underrepresented due to financial exclusion, culture, health conditions, and disability. They also supported the Cycle Access Fund, Cycling UK's grant fund that enables organisations to support access to cycles in their community.

SEStran

SEStran categorised 46 of their 93 projects as falling under the 'Accessibility and Inclusion' theme, accounting for around 44% of their total spend. These 46 projects covered a wide variety of work focused on targeted delivery of active travel equipment and infrastructure in deprived areas, accessibility audits, active travel promotional campaigns, and support packages (including financial) for individuals to access active travel.

Projects such as the City of Edinburgh Council's Partnership with Thistle Outdoors provide access to adapted cycles as well as training and support. Other kinds of support under this theme included adult cycle training, cycle maintenance workshops, led walks and cycles, and a variety of other walking, wheeling and cycling activities.

Interviews with project leads suggested that these projects often had a deep impact on the individuals and communities they target, increasing confidence to travel independently and providing an opportunity for socialising. The data analysed also suggested that such projects contribute to reducing transport poverty and reducing reliance on car usage.

SPT

SPT noted that a high volume of projects aligned with this theme, many of which were existing projects that were then built on through the People & Place programme. SPT categorised 20 projects specifically under this theme, including interventions such as:

- Providing access to cycles for groups facing barriers related to physical accessibility.

- Offering cycle training, cycle confidence sessions, and group cycling events focused on inclusion.
- Repairing and refurbishing cycles to improve affordability of active travel.
- Providing cycle loans and subsidised access to cycle subscriptions.
- Organised walking events.

Collectively SPT supported delivery which positively impacted 23,341 people. This included delivering cycling training to 3,286 individuals through 90 cycle training sessions, providing 2,150 new or refurbished cycles, delivering 553 walking activities, and 567 cycling activities.

SWestrans

Similarly to other RTPs, SWestrans found 'accessibility and inclusion' to be a theme running through several, if not most, projects, rather than necessarily capturing standalone activity.

Examples highlighted included the Rock Up & Ride cycling project working over three programme strands: Children, Communities, and Adaptive Bikes, focused on reducing barriers to cycling activity and improving access to cycles, predominantly for children and underrepresented groups. Eligible participants in the Children strand were gifted a free cycle and accessories after completing a block of sessions. Cycling Scotland's Cycle Friendly Programme in the region also provided 54 cycles (including locks helmets and lights) to young people who would otherwise not have access to a cycle. Many of the young people reached were identified by community workers as vulnerable or disadvantaged in terms of affordability to own a cycle.

Nestrans

Nestrans categorised 14 of 28 broadly grouped activities as falling under the 'accessibility and inclusion' theme, accounting for around £1.1m of the approximately £1.7m budget. Highlights from across this range of activities included Cycling Scotland providing 104 young people with access to a cycle, Cycling UK's Cycle Access Fund providing a further 40 people with access to a cycle, and Camphill School Aberdeen and Grampian Inclusive Cycling Bothies both expanding inclusive cycling work. Transport integration also featured strongly, with 26 new cycle racks installed on buses operated by Stagecoach serving two key routes, and 50 new covers to allow cycles to be carried on other routes where the buses do not have the cycle racks.

Case study: Outfit Moray – Inclusive Cycling & Bike Revolution

HiTrans' evaluation included [Outfit Moray](#)'s work right across programme themes and outcome indicators, highlighting both the interconnectedness and the breadth of work that many organisations carry out.

In addition to their work delivering Bikeability, key points from Outfit Moray's Inclusive Cycling and Bike Revolution programmes include:

- Demonstrated measurable increases in inclusion, safety, and long-term engagement with cycling through a range of schools and community cycle training.
- Delivered 113 sessions with 2,900+ attendances, from preschool age to 50+ (55% male, 45% female).
- Excelled in addressing inclusion (Additional support needs (ASN), access to appropriate cycles and equipment), delivering 53 ASN / Inclusive Cycling sessions with 566 participants.
- Addressed cost, physical access and equipment availability with adapted bikes and recycled bike access directly targeting known barriers.

Process Evaluation

This section of the assessment report reflects on the knowledge, expertise and workforce required to deliver the programme, RTPs' work under the 'Capacity and Capability' theme, and lessons learned on planning and delivery, communications and engagement, and monitoring and evaluation.

Rapidly standing up a new funding and delivery model involving the national Transport Agency, seven Regional Transport Partnerships, and 32 Local Authorities, working in concert with many national, regional, and community-level third sector organisations to continue established and develop new projects and programmes was an operationally complex task. Evaluating the process of change on the basis of evidence gathered during such an intensive period of change was also a challenging task. In addition to impact evaluation, the RTPs Year 1 Evaluation Reports, which Transport Scotland has followed up with ongoing in-depth discussion and supplementary qualitative research, also contain many valuable insights and recommendations concerning the structure and organisation of the programme itself, and these are reflected upon in this section.

P&P Theme: Capacity and Capability

What is the ‘Capacity and Capability’ theme?

This underpinning theme covers **work focused on building the knowledge base and delivery capacity and capability of the sector itself** (RTPs, LAs, the third sector and beyond). UK-level policy acknowledges that in the context of constrained finances and longer-term budget uncertainty, local authorities are finding it more [difficult to recruit and retain skilled staff](#), including in specialist roles such as transport planning.

This theme is key as the long-term effectiveness of the programme is directly dependent on the existence of sufficient delivery capacity and capability. Transport forms part of [Scotland’s Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan \(CESAP\)](#), which highlighted that the transition to net zero will require behaviour change by both employers and individuals. The CESAP stresses the need for skills investment planning in this area and to support stakeholders to take action to drive behaviour change and develop the leadership and management skills that will be required for a net zero future. In the transport sector specifically, the Transport Planning Society published a [think piece in May 2025](#) arguing for embedding behaviour change thinking into all transport planning education and qualifications, including the Transport Planning Professional (TPP) accreditation and master’s degrees, according strongly with the underpinning capabilities required for delivering the programme.

“This Theory of Change hypothesised that investing in staff, strategies, and systems would enable long-term, locally led behaviour change. Although quantitative indicators were lacking, qualitative evidence confirms that foundational capacity has been built, aligning with the Theory of Change intended outcomes.” – SEStran evaluation report, assessment of their theme-specific theory of change.

Capacity and Capability – Selected numbers

ZetTrans

12 high school pupils provided with British Cycling 'Introduction to Coaching' courses to qualify them to deliver fun and inclusive cycling sessions to further young people in the future.

HITRANS

A team of **9 FTE** staff dedicated to Programme delivery, with further roles supported across the programme. **3 counters** installed to evidence infrastructure improvements.

Nestrans

Draft Regional Active Travel Network (RATN) developed informed by public consultation to provide a **multi-decade** vision for prioritised pipeline of projects.

Tactran

217 adult confidence building / cycle training sessions delivered by Recyke-a-Bike, the Bike Station, and Angus Cycle Hub.

SPT

A total of **11 projects** were delivered under this theme that provided at least **9.3** roles. **2 instructors** trained to deliver training in communities. **44 travel plans** developed.

SEStran

10 projects receiving 7% of total funding, supporting staff time / dedicated active travel and behaviour change officers, and monitoring equipment (e.g. counting devices).

SWestrans

Internally **1 new FTE** role to manage the programme. Externally several roles including **4 FTE** 'Physical Activity Coaches' to March 2026 and secondment of **1 FTE** Co-ordinator.

Programme skills profile

What range of skills are required to deliver the People & Place programme? The following key areas of knowledge and expertise stand out from the evaluation and capacity and capability work:

- Transport planning
- Behavioural science
- Community engagement
- Knowledge sharing and evaluation
- Project design and delivery
- Programme management and monitoring

In policy terms, the programme sits at the intersection of transport planning and behavioural science, and requires a blend of expertise and experience from both professions to underpin its development.

Effective community engagement is the linchpin that puts people at the heart of the programme, with strong knowledge sharing and evaluation required to ‘close the loop’ and drive continuous improvement. Strong project design and delivery skills on the front line are essential for putting policy into practice.

As a multi-million pound programme working across regional and local levels through to hundreds of different projects in places right across the country, strong programme delivery, monitoring, governance, and financial management skills across the piece are also essential.

Programme workforce profile

Who delivered the People & Place programme in Year 1? The overall scale and makeup of the workforce directly involved in delivering the People & Place programme has been difficult to determine, being split across Transport Scotland, the RTPs, LAs, the private sector, the third sector, and the community and voluntary sector.

The number of FTE roles supported was not an explicitly ask in the M&E framework, and we should be conscious that any reported positions are only a fraction of the people involved, particularly when the number of dedicated volunteers who give their time to projects across the programme are also considered.

In future, a much fuller and more detailed picture of the programme workforce (paid and unpaid) is required. This will have benefits including supporting more comprehensive calculations of the programme’s impact, including through Social

Return on Investment (SRI) estimates and Commercial Value for Money (CVfM) Additional Benefits Reporting (ABR).

In addition, understanding how many people deliver the programme, who they are and where they are, will allow for a better understanding of how to support the capacity and capability that underpins programme delivery, ensuring the workforce is properly recognised and equipped with the right knowledge and skills to work effectively. It is this recognition that stands behind the programme's 'capacity and capability' theme.

2022 Capacity and Capability Assessment

In August 2022, a Capacity and Capability assessment was undertaken to inform the evaluation and evidence gathering phase of the Active Travel Transformation Project. A survey was issued across the sector and one-to-one sessions held with a cross-section of organisations.

Of the LAs (18) and RTPs (7) that responded, 12 stated that they had an Active Travel team. The average number of staff involved in active travel within the LAs that responded was 12.59 FTE. The largest team was based in Glasgow City Council at 109.9 FTE. Excluding Glasgow, the average resource across the other Councils that responded was 6.5 FTE. The average resource involved in active travel within Regional Transport Partnerships was 2.1 FTE. There was a total of 4.4 FTE staff working on active travel within the two National Park Authorities.

The average number of staff involved in active travel roles across the five national Delivery Partners at the time who responded to the survey (Sustrans, Cycling Scotland, Cycling UK, Energy Savings Trust, Living Streets) was 69.7 FTE. The largest team was based with Sustrans (256 FTE). The data returns showed that there were significantly more staff working in active travel based in the five national delivery partner organisations (363.65 FTE) than across the LAs, RTP's, and National Park Authorities that responded combined (226.6 FTE).

A new Capacity and Capability assessment will be carried out in 2026-27 that will allow us to see how these numbers have changed as a result of People & Place.

Cross-RTP Results

RTPs took several different approaches to the 'capacity and capability' theme. Although envisaged as an 'underpinning' theme (i.e. one about the delivery system itself rather than target populations), personal 'capacity and capability' is of course a key aspect of behaviour change, and the individual / systemic distinction is not clear-cut when it comes to interventions such as providing volunteer training in walk

leading or cycle repair, for example. In practice, several behaviour change interventions themselves were judged to fall most neatly into this category and so were sometimes reported under this theme.

Tactran

Tactran focused strongly on the impact in terms of personal capacity and capability (for example as highlighted, delivering 217 adult confidence building / cycle training sessions across the programme), but in addition to this, partnership capacity-building projects to highlight include Cycling Scotland working with the Safer Communities Team at Perth and Kinross Council to develop a multi-strand cycle training project, and the Bike Station working with Riverside Primary School on a range of activities.

HITRANS

Under this theme, HITRANS continued and expanded a cycle parking programme in collaboration with local authorities and other partner organisations, while shifting resources to enable them to expand capacity within the team to develop and offer an Access to Bikes fund. They created a second new post for [Smart Travel Choices](#) to enable co-ordinated messaging, communications, workplace travel planning and to manage a grant programme for employers to promote active travel to the workplace.

They worked with Orkney Islands Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar who part-funded HITRANS Behaviour Change Officer posts through their Local Authority Direct Award, in a set-up similar to Sustrans' Embedded Officer scheme. They also supported a Behaviour Change Officer post created at the Cairngorms National Park Authority through the [Cairngorms 2030 project](#). Some funding was used to support Highland Council to increase the network of counters to collect baseline and post-intervention data to monitor the impact of infrastructure projects and add to the database for active travel in the region.

ZetTrans

ZetTrans faced unique challenges around this theme, as a small single-authority RTP, and with limited geographical footprint from national active travel delivery partners in Shetland itself.

Responding to this in terms of delivery, for example, following an exploratory visit to Shetland by members of Scottish Cycling's Rock Up & Ride team, their project was adapted towards developing local capacity by upskilling high school children (S3+) to become British Cycling coaches, establishing a school and community cycling club, and supplementing in-person physical delivery with remote learning activities,

including providing schools with GoPro cameras to film activities and to encourage each other to keep cycling.

SEStran

SEStran categorised 10 of their 93 projects as falling under the 'Capacity and Capability Building' theme, accounting for around 6% of their total spend. Their evaluation report highlighted a number of positive changes in areas including support for strategic planning and behaviour change frameworks and improving staffing and organisational capacity.

Falkirk Council, for example, used People & Place funding to begin developing a dedicated behaviour change strategy, identifying key journeys, audiences, and a costed action plan for interventions. This strategy is expected to guide multi-year delivery of active travel initiatives, something that would have been unlikely without People & Place.

People & Place funding also supported the hiring of dedicated officers for active travel and behaviour change, as well as the purchase of monitoring equipment (e.g. counters). This has enabled councils and delivery partners to plan and deliver more structured, evidence based interventions.

On the way that delivery partner roles have adapted, SEStran noted changes around community empowerment and local delivery, with some organisations shifting from direct delivery to supporting local community groups to leading activities like cycle training. This decentralised approach increased reach and sustainability. One project lead noted:

"We can support those who know their communities. They can have a bigger impact than we would as an individual organisation."

SPT

SPT categorised a total of 11 projects under this theme, typically focused on increasing staff capacity by employing Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff members to manage and deliver active travel programmes. The funding provided for 9.3 FTE roles, including staff to run an active travel hub in North Ayrshire, Workplace Engagement Officers, Cycling Officer Internships, and staff to establish a 'National Park Mobility Partnership' for Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park (LLTNP).

These were projects made possible through People & Place funding for additional staff resource, and all reported positive contributions to Active Travel Framework Outcome 1 (Increase the number of people choosing walking, cycling and wheeling)

by increasing organisational capacity to deliver behaviour change activities, with individual project outcomes aligned with ATF Indicators 1 (Proportion of short everyday journeys by walking/wheeling and cycling) and 2 (Attitudes towards/propensity to walking, cycling and wheeling).

SWestrans

As a single-authority RTP covering Dumfries and Galloway Council (DGC), SWestrans highlighted that from the inception of the programme they made the decision to recruit an additional member of staff to bring together management of the People & Place programme and Dumfries and Galloway Council's Local Authority Direct Award (LADA), pooling these to provide a single fund. This entailed some changes to where funding was managed, allowing for SWestrans to work across the council as a whole to identify opportunities to embed active travel in wider programmes.

Nestrans

In addition to providing capacity and capability support across several projects, Nestrans' report was very positive in terms of the capacity and capability benefits of the People & Place programme across the sector, with Nestrans Director Paul Finch providing the following reflection on the impact it has had on Nestrans as an organisation:

“People & Place has strengthened our relationships with community planning partners, community groups, active travel delivery partners and NHS public health, because we now have something tangible to offer (either directly or through our delivery partners) over and above policy support and co-ordination - we have the ability to link things up better. Within the team there has been a considerable upskilling on grant funding processes and financial approvals. Behaviour change interventions at the community level are now a far greater part of our corporate thinking than prior to People & Place.” – Paul Finch, Director

Case study: SEStran 5 year delivery plan

During the evaluation process, SEStran published its [SEStran People & Place Delivery Plan](#) for future years.

This reflects a strategic shift towards longer-term, coordinated investment envisaged by these national policy changes to achieve meaningful behaviour change at scale, moving away from fragmented, short-term projects. This approach is designed to provide greater certainty and to focus on communities with the greatest need, supporting regional priorities.

The Delivery Plan sets out Key Performance Indicators and Outcome Monitoring for 2025-26 and beyond. This evaluation report considers those KPIs in light of the recommendations outlined in the Conclusions and Recommendations section; the data analysis itself uses data provided under the 2024-25 delivery plan and monitoring and evaluation guidance available to projects during the 2024-25 year.

Planning and Delivery

Compressed timeline for establishing the programme

Each RTP and many delivery partners expressed that significant challenges in Year 1 arose from, or were exacerbated by, the timing of Transport Scotland's decision-making around two fundamental milestones:

1. The point at which the 2024-25 delivery model was decided and RTPs were approached to take on and plan for the programme (three months before the start of the financial year);
2. The point at which the 2024-25 budget was confirmed and grant offer letters were issued to RTPs to fund the delivery of the programme (two weeks after the start of the financial year).

On the lead-in time for planning

Over the course of 2023, as part of the Active Travel Transformation Programme, Transport Scotland had been engaging with national delivery partners and other stakeholders on the future shape of national behaviour change and access to bikes programmes.

There was general consensus on the need for reform, and while ideas for a number of alternative approaches were discussed, it was the conclusion and announcement of the [Verity House Agreement](#) in June 2023, and the policy implications flowing from that agreement, that came to significantly influence thinking, broadening the horizon of possible delivery models under consideration.

While all parties could have benefitted from a longer lead-in time to prepare for the devolution of programme commissioning, there was both a need to keep step with the equivalent reforms to infrastructure funding, and a need not to lose the window of opportunity for what was judged to be a model with significant potential benefits.

Learning from this and looking ahead, notwithstanding any changes to overall policy goals, budgetary pressures, or the emergence of any critical failings, Transport Scotland shares the desire of RTPs and other stakeholders to allow time for the new model to 'bed in', and adopt an operational planning assumption that the People & Place programme will continue in this form over the next five-year parliamentary term. In this way, RTPs and delivery partners can be assured of no fundamental

changes in expectations, and can confidently invest the necessary time, effort, and resource in building and improving the programme.

On the timing of funding for delivery

The period between the Scottish Parliament passing a [Budget Bill](#) for the financial year ahead (aimed for by the end of February) and the start of that financial year itself (the beginning of April) is the brief one-month window of time in which all internal government spending approval processes and financial operational delivery planning must take place. In practice this means that spending approval is rarely, if ever, secured in time to allow for sufficient, confident, delivery planning until sometime into the financial year in which that delivery should have commenced. This poses a perennial risk to partners delivering annually grant funded programmes, who are forced to operate in an environment of extreme uncertainty around securing the employment of staff, and pressure around compressed programme timelines.

“We didn't get the grant offer letter until June and it took us two months to recruit and then we have to reapply for funding in December but we have nothing to show for our projects by December really” [as project could not commence until June. This is a particular issue for new projects, rather than long-standing projects]. – Partner feedback from the SPT evaluation report.

The new People & Place programme delivery model exacerbates this risk by adding an additional decision making stage between central government and frontline delivery partners, with RTPs required to undertake their own spending approval processes, financial operational delivery planning, and onward grant making, in parallel and subsequent to the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland's processes.

“in the 1-1 interviews, projects [...] highlighted the challenges following delays in receiving their grant award letters. Funded organisations described how delays, both from grant award or through the claims process, have the potential to delay project delivery, and create difficult situations, especially in cases where employment contracts were dependent on the grant funding.” - SEStran evaluation report.

Learning from this and looking ahead, there are two routes to addressing these risks: The first is to improve the efficiency of the internal Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, and subsequent RTP spending approval processes, and the second is to explore longer-term funding cycles.

In terms of securing internal government spending approval, notwithstanding the need to constantly assess and balance competing in-year spending pressures, as the

People & Place programme is no longer a 'new' funding approach, and as the evidence-base from its monitoring and evaluation continues to build, Transport Scotland would expect the process of funding confirmation to become smoother and delays to reduce.

In terms of subsequent RTP spending approval, similar considerations apply in relation to securing agreement from RTP Boards. RTPs have also now built up a degree of additional experience and staff capacity to handle the administration of onward funding, and so Transport Scotland would expect these delays to reduce as well, for example:

“From the RTP Active Travel Grant in 23/24 to the People & Place in 24/25 there was a 169.4% increase in funding which became the responsibility of Nestrans to administer. This increase in funding was accompanied by an increased administrative requirement. [...] Further work will be undertaken in 2025/26 to identify areas of improvement in how Nestrans administers the scheme from an administrative perspective and can support partners to understand and meet their requirements.” – Nestrans evaluation report.

In terms of longer-term (i.e. multi-year) funding cycles, the Scottish Government recognises that stakeholders need financial stability and surety, and is keen to provide as much certainty as possible while ensuring public finances remain on a sustainable footing.

That is why there has been activity to develop a multi-year Scottish Spending Review (SSR) which will be published alongside the 2026-27 Scottish Budget, to enable Scottish Ministers to consider the feasibility of multi-year funding to deliver on priorities in a fiscally sustainable way, while facing a challenging financial position over the medium-term. This involves the delivery of the actions set out in the [Fiscal Sustainability Delivery Plan](#) and the [Public Service Reform Strategy](#). The ways in which these financial planning activities may impact the ways in which it is possible to support the People & Place programme is a subject of ongoing discussion and policy development.

“We are concerned that year-to-year funding does not reflect the timescales which are necessary for behaviour change to occur.”

“Annual funding creates barriers to delivery.” – Partner feedback from the SPT evaluation report.

Beyond refining spending approval processes and exploring multi-year funding structures, there are also opportunities to explore new or improved ways day-to-day procurement and grant making is done, which is a subject of ongoing discussion between RTPs and delivery partners:

“If RTPs and local authorities could agree a delivery framework with delivery partners at the start of the year, much of the work could be awarded as a grant, rather than through multiple small procurement exercises. This would simplify commissioning, reduce administrative burden for all parties, and allow more time and resource to go into delivery.” – Third Sector Delivery Partner Questionnaire respondent.

Resource versus Capital Funding

RTPs and delivery partners are united in the message that the funding balance between available resource (RDEL ~35%) and Capital (CDEL ~65%) sits at odds with the purpose of the programme:

“[a] challenge has been the revenue versus capital split of the People & Place Programme, with two thirds of the available budget allocated as capital; this means that our ability to support revenue-based activities is constrained; for example, learn to ride sessions for children, adult cycle confidence, and workplace and community travel planning.” - Hitrans evaluation report.

“Funded project types were somewhat constrained by revenue and capital allocation.” - SPT evaluation report.

“Several organisations mentioned that one aspect of the funding that they found less favourable was the split between revenue and capital funding” - Delivery partner feedback, SEStran evaluation report.

“Funding was capital heavy so this meant we didn’t have revenue to employ people to deliver the projects. So for instance, we could buy a cycling hub but there is no funding to staff this.” “I also find the revenue capital split confusing as Behaviour change projects are mostly revenue projects. Some of the projects we wanted to deliver have been halted because of this split” - Delivery partner feedback, SPT evaluation report.

While Transport Scotland realise this is challenging, decisions are made in the context of particularly challenging budget and resource spending reviews, which have required, and will continue to require, difficult decisions to be taken across government.

On the definition of resource and capital expenditure

In policy terms the 2004 ‘*Smarter Choices - Changing The Way We Travel*’ report marked an important milestone in approaches by governments in the UK to influencing travel habits through coordinated packages of ‘soft measures’ of behaviour change interventions. This report was the policy origin of Scotland’s ‘Smarter Choices Smarter Places’ programme that preceded People & Place. That report made the following observation about funding mechanisms:

“Some local authorities have successfully made the case to their district auditors that soft measures, being part of a package of hard and soft measures, can be funded from capital budgets, and this has given them a great flexibility which they see as important. Others cannot do this, or think that they cannot. If soft measures are to be applied more intensively and extensively than at present, greater flexibility in funding them via capital programmes would be required, or alternative revenue sources would need to be found.” - Cairns S, Sloman L, Newson C, Anable J, Kirkbride A & Goodwin P, ‘[Smarter Choices – Changing the Way We Travel](#)’ (2004), Chapter 14, pg. 368

Exactly the same issue persists more than 20 years later, and several complications in the delivery of certain People & Place projects in Year 1 arose through RTPs and Local Authorities making different judgements about what could or could not be funded from capital budgets. This issue is particularly acute when, as outlined in the preceding section, the programme’s overall available budget is so heavily weighted towards capital.

It is not in Transport Scotland’s gift to instruct RTPs and local authorities in the detail of how they interpret financial rules. However, Transport Scotland has made clear that at national programme level it will not object to local decisions to take flexible approaches around funding packages of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ measures. This is particularly true given that better coordination of infrastructure and behaviour change work is a key programme aim (see [Joined-up Delivery](#) below).

Transport Scotland has urged RTPs and local authorities to collectively discuss where they can take common approaches, and aims to facilitate further coordination through ongoing programme knowledge exchange activity.

Joined-up delivery

Despite the fast pace at which the programme was established and the subsequent delay to it beginning in earnest, even from the first ‘year’ (10 months or so in practice) there are several good examples of how the new model has better enabled joined-up delivery, with funding being put to valuable cross-portfolio uses across infrastructure, health, education, and other areas such as air quality, including unlocking matched resource funding or compounding the impact previously committed resource funding. One project supported in part by People & Place was the winner of the Scottish Public Service Awards 2025 ‘Campbell Christie Public Service Reform Award’ for citizen-centred preventative working across boundaries, (see the Case Study below). Other examples include:

HITRANS worked with Orkney Islands Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar who part-funded HITRANS Behaviour Change Officer posts through their Local Authority Direct Award, in a set-up similar to Sustrans’ Embedded Officer scheme. They also supported the Behaviour Change Officer post created at the Cairngorms National Park Authority through the Cairngorms 2030 project. Some funding was used to support Highland Council to increase the network of counters to collect baseline and post-intervention data to monitor the impact of infrastructure projects and add to the database for active travel in the region.

SEStran highlighted that supporting staff time and dedicated active travel and behaviour change officers enabled the development of active travel behaviour change plans and strategies for councils. As a result, they have been able to plan programmes of behavioural change interventions over multiple years, especially important as many local authorities have not previously had access to funding to deliver these projects. An element highlighted under ‘capacity and capability’ was improved cross-departmental and community engagement, with projects like accessibility audits in East Lothian leading to new conversations across council departments and with communities, influencing broader infrastructure planning. A council officer shared:

“We’ve looked outside our traditional boundaries... It’s motivated good discussions inside and outside the council.”

In support of infrastructure spending **SPT** awarded North Lanarkshire Council £132,000 to match fund budget from other sources, including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to install five Active Travel Hubs across the local authority. In support of education spending they awarded East Dunbartonshire Council £50,000 to purchase 156 cycles for primary and secondary schools requested to enable Bikeability and Sustrans I Bike Training and to integrate cycle maintenance, road safety, and environmental education into the curriculum. In support of health

spending Cycling UK was awarded £137,368 to work with underserved individuals experiencing low levels of physical activities and poor health, supporting over 4,400 participants via 148 cycling activities and 300 Health Walks.

Nestrans reflected in general on how People & Place strengthened relationships with community planning partners, community groups, active travel delivery partners and NHS public health, because they now had something tangible to offer (either directly or through delivery partners) over and above policy support and co-ordination, namely the resource to link things up better.

ZetTrans highlighted how their Cycling UK Development Officer was able to signpost people to various health walks on offer (these being funded through Scottish Government's Active Scotland directorate) and also identify gaps in provision leading to new health walks being established in partnership with the NHS.

Despite these positive indications from across the programme, some delivery partners report that the funding landscape still feels fragmented, suggesting there is more that could be done, not just at the Transport Scotland / People & Place level, but across government:

“Better alignment with complementary national funding streams. There is significant potential to connect People & Place with funding for climate, energy, nature, adaptation and green skills. At present these opportunities can feel siloed, making it harder to create integrated programmes. Stronger national alignment would deliver better value for money and greater contribution to Programme for Government outcomes.” – Third Sector Delivery Partner Questionnaire respondent

Case study: “A game changing investment” - SWestrans support for the Dumfries and Galloway (D&G) Health and Social Care Partnership’s Active Lives Pathway (ALP)

Dumfries and Galloway Council (DGC), in collaboration with D&G Health and Social Care Partnership, launched the [award-winning](#) Active Lives Pathway (ALP) in November 2023 as a key prevention and early intervention programme, a system-wide partnership that supports people to live healthier, happier and more independent lives, while lowering demand for H&SC services. The ALP provides a single physical activity referral pathway for the entirety of the Health and Social Care (H&SC) system in D&G. Adults who are physically inactive and/or not meeting muscle strengthening guidelines can be referred by a H&SC professional to a behaviour change programme of physical activity, based on their motivation/confidence levels.

People & Place Programme funding supported an innovative partnership between DGC and SWestrans whereby funding of over £100,000 enabled the number of weekly classes and walks to increase from around 50-60 per week in January 2025 to over 100 by June 2025. This transport funding, described as a “game changing investment”, enabled the recruitment of a Co-ordinator and 6 Physical Activity Coaches (4 FTE posts) and enabled the delivery of weekly walks/classes in many of the region’s most rural and isolated communities, often impacted by poor transport and hidden deprivation.

ALP patients report statistically improved physical and mental wellbeing following programme completion, and the programme delivers a financial return to the NHS of £6.47 for every £1 invested.

Communication and Engagement

Key lessons that emerged from Year 1 were around the large number of stakeholders involved in coordination and delivery across the programmes' funded activities, and how critical early and ongoing collaborative engagement is to ensuring success. The tight timelines described in the **Planning and Delivery** section meant that over the establishing phase of the programme, not everyone felt sighted or engaged at the right time, but these experiences are feeding into future improvement.

The size of the RTP and the resource available to them was the biggest factor determining how much work could be done, as illustrated below through examples from larger (SEStran), mid-sized (Nestrans), and smaller (ZetTrans) RTPs' experiences:

SEStran rapidly developed a high-level programme plan in January and February 2024, and found early engagement with local authorities and delivery partners over this short development phase helped build trust, despite initial concerns about the shift in funding control. SEStrans' evaluation report found their collaborative approach and knowledge and understanding of operational realities and constraints were positively received, and their trust-based relationships and regular communication and consistent engagement was highlighted as a model of good practice.

SEStran have been exemplary in their communications work around the programme, creating dedicated pages on [their website](#), making project funding [data openly available](#), creating case study [video content](#), and setting up a newsletter, and running shared learning events.

Between preparation starting in January 2024 projects starting in April 2024, **Nestrans** met with local authorities and all six of the major national Delivery Partners to gauge what was already being delivered and what the aspirations were for future work. They drew up an assessment framework and developed investment criteria to assess and short-list proposals. This work involved a workshop with Nestrans Board members and working closely with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council in developing the proposed programme.

To consolidate this approach, Nestrans held a virtual People & Place event for delivery partners in October 2024 to showcase progress and offer a forum for them to meet. They also hosted a North East Showcase in March 2025, supported by Huntly Development Trust and attendees from across delivery partners, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councillors, and Transport Scotland. The event facilitated awareness of the programme and the wide range of projects being delivered across

the region, while creating the opportunity for delivery partners to meet in an informal setting. This integrated approach to partnership engagement established a solid foundation for the 2025-26 programme.

As covered in previous sections, **ZetTrans** had limited dedicated resources to deliver the programme, and as such, their communications and engagement work has come through their supported projects and delivery partners themselves. In follow-up discussion with Transport Scotland, they emphasise that with indications from Scottish Government that the People & Place programme is relatively secure for the longer term, then Shetland Island's Council is more likely to support the creation of permanent posts to further support this work.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We are healthy and active

Transport Scotland's active and sustainable travel work contributes right across Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF) Outcomes (currently [under reform](#)), but the key measurable indicator falls under 'We are healthy and active'.

Through this outcome, the Scottish Government takes a whole system approach to promoting good health and physical activity, and it includes a 'journeys by active travel' [National Indicator](#), which monitors the proportion of short journeys that are made by the two main active travel modes: walking and cycling.

We will have a sustainable, safe, and inclusive transport system, helping deliver a safer, healthier, fairer, and more prosperous Scotland

The [National Transport Strategy](#) sets out an ambitious vision for Scotland's transport system for the next 20 years. The vision is underpinned by four priorities: Reduces Inequalities, Takes Climate Action, Helps Deliver Inclusive Economic Growth and Improves our Health and Wellbeing, each with associated outcomes. Three of these outcomes are worth highlighting as particularly supported through the People and Place programme:

Will be easy to use for all: people have different needs and capabilities. Our transport system will recognise these and work to ensure that everyone can use the system with as few barriers as possible.

Will enable greener, cleaner choices: over the next 20 years, Scotland will see a continued transformation in transport where sustainable travel options are people's first choice if they need to travel. We will design our transport system so that walking, cycling and public and shared transport take precedence ahead of private car use.

Will enable us to make healthy travel choices: active modes will be a preferred method of travel and have a significant positive effect on individual health and wellbeing, both by making people more active and by improving air quality. This will reduce the social and economic impact of public health problems such as mental health, obesity, type-2 diabetes, and respiratory and cardio-vascular diseases.

Scotland's communities are shaped around people, with walking or cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys

Transport Scotland's active travel work delivers against a breadth of strategic objectives, and these are captured in the Active Travel Framework to 2030, the overarching vision of which is that 'Scotland's communities are shaped around people, with walking or cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys'.

Connecting directly to the NPF indicator and the NTS Outcomes, the primary (but not only) outcome of the Active Travel Framework is to 'Increase the number of people choosing walking, cycling and wheeling in Scotland', and the primary (but not only) indicator of that outcome is the same NPF measure: 'Proportion of short everyday journeys by walking and cycling'.

The agreed definition for this indicator is journeys under two miles for walking, and under five miles for cycling. This is measured at the national level by the [Scottish Household Survey](#), with the results released annually in the Official Statistics publication '[Transport and Travel in Scotland](#)' (TATIS). It is this primary indicator and this primary measure that underpins the People & Place programme's 'target behaviour' of 'The public choosing active travel over private car for short, everyday journeys' outlined in [Annex A - A 'Behaviour Change' approach](#).

A transport indicator ‘first among equals’

It is important to recognise the ‘journeys by active travel’ indicator as being the ‘first among equals’ of the People & Place programme’s outcomes, furnishing it with its coherent policy goal and actionable theory of change. As a national policy goal that Scotland’s transport agency has been made accountable for and entrusted to deliver against, the anchoring status of this transport-based indicator is appropriate in terms of transparency and governance.

A whole system approach

However, being merely one indicator ‘among equals’ is key, with the full range of Active Travel Framework indicators capturing a more complete set of transport factors. A failure to holistically plan and account for the programme’s full range of health, social, and environmental outcomes beyond transport would seriously curtail the breadth of cross-sectoral interventions and partnerships required to address the problem, and seriously underreport the return on investment that the programme delivers.

The feedback from RTPs and delivery partners on the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework established in Year 1 has strongly emphasised this, with all parties recognising the foundational role of transport, but wishing to build upon it, and warning of the pitfalls of narrow perspectives on the problem, its solutions, and their outcomes. Tactran, for example, are taking forward work to explore methods based on Social Return on Investment:

“further analyses were also suggested by the Tactran board. [...] An analysis based on the Social Return on Investment (SROI) is being developed to allow for a more detailed assessment at Tactran level. [...] Fundamentally the SROI assessment will focus on the most important sources of value to be defined by stakeholders. This allowing the further step of capturing social, economic, and environmental as well as financial value.” - Tactran evaluation report.

SEStran’s report also contains recommendations around collecting metrics on wider benefits and assessing value for money:

“The Delivery Plan acknowledges the benefits to climate and public health but does not explicitly include wider impact indicators for health or carbon emissions within its core Monitoring & Evaluation framework. [...] Recommendation: Consider piloting these indicators in a few projects before scaling region wide. Use a dashboard to track and visualise these metrics.”
“Recommendation: Align approach to VfM to the Magenta Book, to go beyond current guidance from Transport Scotland and its People & Place M&E

reporting requirements, to conduct a full VfM assessment.” – SEStran evaluation report.

The M&E Framework in Year 1 (2024-25)

The devolution of the commissioning of all specific interventions to the regional and local level provided an opportunity for Transport Scotland to take a step back and develop a new national-level monitoring and evaluation framework that aimed to provide:

1. A picture of **programme outcomes** nationally (impact evaluation) and;
2. Insights that could inform **continuous improvement** of the programme nationally (process evaluation).

Prior to the People & Place programme, each delivery partner reported outcomes to Transport Scotland on its own terms, or within its own framework, and while this has definite advantages, as the active and sustainable travel budget increased, and with it the scale and breadth of interventions, it became more challenging to set out the overall picture and rationale for what was being achieved where, and how, and why, across all of the supported projects.

To help address this, in the short development window available to stand up the People & Place programme, Transport Scotland laid the foundation for a new monitoring and evaluation framework, working with evaluation leads from key third sector delivery partners and analytical leads within the agency.

The outcome of this work was a standardised set of pre and post intervention survey questions that would apply to all interventions and relate directly to the outcomes in the Active Travel Framework.

The results of standardised data collection with these surveys, organised along the programme ‘themes’, were to provide the core components of RTPs evaluation reports and this ‘Year 1 Assessment Report’ baseline picture of the new programme, allowing for meaningful comparison of projects across the country. A copy of the Year 1 M&E Framework is available on request to info@transport.gov.scot.

Challenges with the Year 1 M&E Framework

Year 1 was about testing and learning from this new delivery model, including the M&E approach, and feedback highlighted that while promising in theory, in practice, there are several challenges with the pre and post intervention survey method. This includes a lack of capacity and capability in the system (from organisations on the

ground right up to Transport Scotland) implement it and analyse its outputs, and it has not provided the clear and comparable national picture initially hoped for.

Some of these challenges were connected to the system being new and established quickly, and so some improvements from Year 2 may be expected as capacity and capability has grown. Other challenges, however, are more fundamental, and point to the need to adopt an entirely different approach.

Capacity and Capability for M&E

Monitoring and evaluation activity under the new delivery model was widely seen as far too burdensome, with delivery partners working to two or more RTPs feeling particularly pressured:

“Far more reporting of individual datasets to different funders has meant less time for us to provide useful synthesis within and across locations or explore meaning in the data, and more time spent on project administration.” – Third Sector Delivery Partner Questionnaire respondent

As well as delivery partners responsible for smaller projects:

“A key issue for us is ensuring that monitoring expectations are proportionate to the size, capacity, and role of the organisation within the wider programme. Third sector organisations operate with limited administrative resource, and disproportionate M&E requirements risk pulling capacity away from delivery.” – Third Sector Delivery Partner Questionnaire respondent

The emphasis on implementing one overarching evaluation methodology on all programme participants and then feeding this upwards created information bottlenecks at each stage:

“we have noticed that different RTP are asking for different content and/or formats (data, information on projects, case studies etc) in their end of year reporting. TS may be receiving more streamlined reporting, but it appears this is due to significant effort across the RTP and delivery partners that could be made more efficient. Clarity on TS requirements and reporting intentions would potentially also help the RTP to focus more on outcomes.” – Third Sector Delivery Partner Questionnaire respondent

No ‘one size fits all’ evaluation methodology

More fundamentally, although Transport Scotland were aware that the pre and post intervention survey methodology would not be universally applicable, there was an

underestimation of the extent of its unsuitability and how placing an emphasis on it as a core method could prove counterproductive. SPT's experience described below exemplifies that of other RTPs in conducting their evaluations, and of Transport Scotland in trying to compile those evaluations into this Assessment Report:

“The SPT People & Place Programme has funded an extremely diverse portfolio of 45 projects across 19 delivery partners over 2024/25. The relevance of the Transport Scotland M&E Framework across these projects has varied significantly, with some projects being suitable for this approach, and others being partly or completely unsuitable. As a result, the M&E data collected by partners has been variable, making a full comparative analysis across the portfolio impossible.” – SPT evaluation report.

Feedback from delivery partners has also echoed this, for example:

“In the specifics, the framework survey is trying to combine very different datasets – a “good” outcome in a disability focused project will look very different compared to a workplace intervention e.g. what % of modal shift is reasonable to expect. It might make sense to group types of projects together by intended objective, and describe them as successful based on this.” – Third Sector Delivery Partner Questionnaire respondent.

SEStran's Evaluation Report contained a number of useful developments on Transport Scotland's core M&E Framework, notably providing a fully fleshed out overarching theory of change, as well as individual theories of change related to each programme theme. The report also helpfully detailed a proposed list of metrics against the underpinning 'Capacity and Capability' theme, which was not specifically covered in the M&E Framework.

SPT's Evaluation Report also contained a number of useful developments, notably a system of 'project typologies' to enable better comparison of 'like with like', grouping similar projects producing similar types and amounts of data, which allows for more meaningful comparisons:

1. Capital investment / material purchases,
2. Capacity and Capability / direct employment costs,
3. Ongoing Behaviour Change Interventions - Consistent target group,
4. Ongoing Behaviour Change Interventions - Changing audience,
5. Games or app-based behaviour change incentives,
6. Grant programmes,
7. Data and research.

These challenges of capacity, proportionality, and suitability, along with opportunities for improvement, are in the process of being addressed for future iterations of the programme.

The M&E Framework in Year 2 (2025-26)

The M&E Framework from Year 1 (2024-25) was adopted again in Year 2 (2025-26) with minimal changes, but it is worth noting that the scope of the programme was broadened even further to encompass 'sustainable travel' as a modal category and also grant funding for community-level projects as a mainstream function. This broadening of programme scope and function exacerbates all of the monitoring and evaluation challenges of capacity, proportionality, and suitability outlined in this assessment report, another factor pointing to a need to adopt an entirely different approach.

The M&E Framework from Year 3 (2026-27)

Having stood up a completely new funding model and devised an entirely new way of evaluating it over approximately three months, encountering difficulties like those outlined above is not surprising. However, Transport Scotland does have a vision for how to develop the M&E approach going forward, based on gathering a streamlined set of core metrics and supporting periodic longer-term evaluations. Based on the feedback from the RTPs and delivery partners summarised in this Assessment Report, Transport Scotland has begun drafting a simplified set of indicators for RTPs to report against for 2026-27 onwards. Looking ahead, the M&E methodology will be developed and rebalanced through:

- Placing more emphasis on inferring national programme outcomes rather than directly measuring individual project outcomes;
- Strengthening the monitoring of standard outputs, and correlating those with national level outcome indicators;
- Using less frequent but more tailored national evaluation to sample-test this;
- Achieving adaptability to evidence through strengthening peer-to-peer learning through knowledge exchange rather than top-down learning through national evaluation;
- Strengthen autonomy and flexibility by allowing RTP and delivery partners to choose when and how to evaluate their own projects and regional programmes.

Monitoring processes will be more carefully separated from evaluation processes, ensuring each is more proportionate and suited to its task.

Monitoring

Transport Scotland will implement a 'rolling' or 'dashboard' approach to the ongoing monitoring of the programme, capturing key metrics and outputs. Information will continue to be provided through monthly TS / RTP Governance Group meetings, and as part of the grant management process, standardised Quarterly Reports, evidence of expenditure against grant claims, and through an End of Grant report.

Triangulating (1) total project outputs collated from these sources, with (2) robust logic models and/or prior evidence, with (3) national-level data, will give Transport Scotland a practical ongoing picture of the programme underpinned by strong causal inference of effectiveness.

Evaluation

Transport Scotland will implement a longer-term evaluation approach - one better matched to the resource available for undertaking this kind of work, and better suited to measuring behaviour change over time. The agency will undertake or commission evaluation on a bi-annual basis (or longer if appropriate) employing mixed-methods sampling that will provide a deep-dive process and impact assessment.

Impact evaluation of a sample of selected projects will allow Transport Scotland to test the logic models and evidence base upon which the robustness of the monitoring approach depends. Ongoing monitoring will allow the agency to infer how effective the programme is, and periodic evaluation will allow the agency to verify this.

In parallel, RTPs, LAs, and delivery partners will be able (and indeed encouraged) to choose if and how to conduct or commission evaluation of individual projects for their own internal reporting and improvement purposes.

'Programme' to 'Portfolio'

People & Place marks the shift in the Scottish Government's approach to promoting active and sustainable travel behaviour change from centrally commissioning a series of programmes to managing a portfolio of investment. 'People & Place' is not strictly speaking a 'programme', which the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#) describes as:

"a unique, temporary, flexible organisation created to co-ordinate, direct and oversee the implementation of a set of projects and other related work to deliver outcomes and benefits related to a set of strategic objectives."

It now more fully bears the characteristics of a [‘portfolio’](#), specifically a portfolio of programmes and projects in turn delivered by local government, where these characteristics are:

- Has an ongoing existence for as long as the organisation has projects and programmes;
- Has constituent initiatives that will change over time;
- The primary focus is on the contribution of these products, outcomes and benefits to strategic objectives at a collective level;
- Is normally described as having a permanent lifespan.

2024-25 was the initial year of Transport Scotland maturing its delivery system, through a period of rapid growth, from ‘programme’ to ‘portfolio’, and it will take time to fully adopt the different mindset and techniques required for [portfolio management](#), including a more strategic approach to monitoring and evaluation.

Additional supporting work

Transport Scotland is currently undertaking a range of additional supporting work towards meeting [Audit Scotland’s January 2025 recommendation](#) that “By the end of 2025, [the Scottish Government should] review the first full year of the new system for active travel delivery, identify challenges and address them. It should evaluate the impact of the changes and whether they have resulted in more efficient delivery.”. This includes:

- Research conducted by Transport Scotland Research team with RTP’s members of staff involved in the administration of People & Place programme. This aims to explore experiences of administering the programme and staff views on impact on relationships and collaboration across the sector (see [Annex B – Research Report: RTP Qualitative Interviews](#)).
- Working with the ClimateXChange (CXC) through a [Post Doctoral Research Opportunity \(PDRO\)](#) to produce a report mapping the evidence-base that can be used to develop a pragmatic but robust evaluation methodology to assess modal shift to active travel as a result of the People & Place programme.
- Conducting a refresh of the Active Travel Framework Indicators, which are the specific metrics used to track progress toward the framework’s outcomes.
- Reviewing programme data collection across Transport Scotland funded active travel programmes to ensure value for money and help identify any gaps in coverage.
- Procuring consultancy support for sustainable transport projects to enable adequate access to expertise and resources to ensure continuity in project level monitoring and evaluation.

A note on learning lessons from across government

In assessing Year 1 of the People & Place Programme and in particular the challenges involved in evaluation and how to overcome these, it is instructive to have reference to the Scottish Government's September 2025 paper presenting learning from the [evaluation of the child poverty pathfinders](#) in Dundee and Glasgow about evaluating evolving and complex programmes. This paper is intended to support policy makers, programme delivery teams and evaluators to get the best out of future evaluations of similar initiatives and has a set of detailed suggestions for future evaluation of complex, place-based initiatives.

Conclusion

To reiterate the **Executive Summary**, the headline conclusion of this assessment report is that, subject to the ongoing agreement of Ministers, the People & Place delivery model is proving successful and should be continued over the next five-year parliamentary term, allowing it further time to establish and develop.

This report highlights strong evidence of continued positive impacts from individual sustainable and active travel behaviour change projects and initiatives, supporting the Scottish Government’s decision to increase national funding for this area of work. The report has also shown that there is good initial evidence that granting more regional and local control over the commissioning of these interventions has increased cross-portfolio value and impact from the ‘Support for Active and Sustainable Travel’ budget line.

This report demonstrates that while People & Place has enabled more joined-up working and greater alignment with local and regional strategies, there is still significant work to do for all of the organisations involved to adapt to new ways of working. Not least there is work for Transport Scotland to develop a proportionate portfolio management approach that supports more timely funding decisions, longer-term financial planning, minimises bureaucracy, promotes greater knowledge exchange, and enables more strategic evaluation.

Throughout the main sections of this report and its annex there are a number of more granular assessments that point to recommendations that will help drive this necessary improvement, whether that is building on existing strengths or addressing opportunities for development. For ease of reference a summary of 22 key assessments and recommendations has been provided in the following table:

This Report’s Key Assessments and Recommendations

Ref.	Assessment	Recommendation
01	There is a question of whether the benefits of more localism and new partnerships will outweigh the disbenefits of differential services and additional bureaucracy.	Transport Scotland should further interrogate this issue through longer-term programme evaluation.
02	All stakeholders concurred in asking Transport Scotland to do what it can to streamline and standardise processes where possible.	Transport Scotland should continue to do this.
03	Evaluation confirmed the importance and impact of early intervention, school-based engagement, and community partnerships in fostering long-term behaviour change.	The programme should retain its thematic emphasis on ‘Schools and Young People’.
04	Evaluation confirmed the effectiveness of workplace initiatives, but highlighted	The programme should retain its thematic emphasis on ‘Workplaces’ and explore

	their relatively small scale and difficulties around assessment.	ways to strengthen engagement with employers.
05	Evaluation confirmed that targeted, inclusive interventions are the broadest category of work and significantly increase active travel participation and support wider policy goals.	The programme should retain its thematic emphasis on 'Accessibility and Inclusion'.
06	The overall scale and makeup of the workforce directly involved in delivering the People & Place programme has been difficult to determine.	Transport Scotland should ensure programme monitoring and future capacity and capability assessment captures a more detailed picture of the programme workforce.
07	RTPs took several different approaches to the 'capacity and capability' theme.	The programme should retain its thematic emphasis on 'Capacity and Capability', but support it with further metrics and guidance.
08	All parties could have benefitted from a longer lead-in time to prepare for the new devolved model of programme commissioning.	Transport Scotland should adopt an operational planning assumption that the new model will continue in this form over the next five-year parliamentary term.
09	Late budget confirmation from Scottish Government / Transport Scotland allows insufficient time for confident delivery planning.	Transport Scotland should continue to expedite funding decisions as quickly as possible, and explore ways of supporting longer-term financial planning.
10	The balance between available RDEL (~35%) and CDEL (~65%) sits at odds with the purpose of the programme.	Transport Scotland should continue to consider this factor in making resource spending allocation decisions.
11	Delivery complications arise from differences in what different organisations believe can and cannot be funded from capital budgets.	RTPs and local authorities should collectively discuss where they can take common approaches.
12	The RTP's processes of joined-up local prioritisation, informed by local strategies and plans, has helped to better coordinate different sources of funding.	Transport Scotland should continue to place confidence in RTPs as well-placed partners to strategically deploy active and sustainable travel resources.
13	The funding landscape still feels fragmented from the perspective of delivery partners on the ground.	Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government should work to align and connect complimentary funding.
14	Communication and engagement is key to the programme across the large number of interested parties involved, but resource is a limiting factor.	Transport Scotland should look for ways to bolster communication and engagement support, particularly for smaller RTPs.
15	The 'journeys by active travel' indicator furnishes the programme with its coherent policy goal and actionable theory of change.	The programme should retain this transport-based 'anchoring' indicator for transparency and governance.
16	All parties recognise the foundational role of transport indicators, but want to build on them for whole systems approach.	Transport Scotland should continue to support the development of evaluation based on wider benefits, social return on investment, and value for money.
17	Monitoring and evaluation activity under the new delivery model was widely seen as far too burdensome	Transport Scotland should place more emphasis on inferring national programme outcomes through monitoring rather than directly measuring individual project outcomes.

18	The pre and post intervention survey approach was counterproductive as a core programme-wide methodology.	Transport Scotland should strengthen autonomy and flexibility by allowing RTP and delivery partners to choose when and how to evaluate their own projects and regional programmes.
19	People & Place marks a shift from centrally commissioning programmes to managing a portfolio of investment in local government programmes.	Transport Scotland should continue to develop a more strategic 'portfolio management' approach to People & Place.
20	People & Place is an evolving and complex programme / portfolio delivering complex, place-based initiatives	Transport Scotland should adopt lessons from comparable programmes on flexible approaches to the types of evaluation that are feasible and appropriate at different points in time.
21	The programme's policy goal is broadly defined, only one element of a dynamic system, and has many possible solutions with outcomes that emerge over different time horizons.	The programme should continue to be developed collaboratively and support pluralistic and agile sets of means of achieving its policy goal.
22	The programme has supported longer-term transport strategy and planning work.	The programme should continue to support this as a means of underpinning long-term continuous improvement.

Annex A – Background: Policy Context and Funding Structure

‘Behaviour Change’ Policy Context

Theoretical models of behaviour change

Following [best practice in policymaking](#) and transport planning, the People & Place programme follows a ‘behaviour change’ approach to promoting active and sustainable travel. This approach grounds the programme’s overarching ‘theory of change’ in the **‘Individual, Social, Material’ (ISM) model** of influencing behaviours, and in these terms, the specific **‘target behaviour’** of the P&P programme in Year 1 was:

‘The **public** choosing **active travel**
 over private car for **short, everyday** journeys’

To unpack this further:

- **‘Public’** means the programme is concerned primarily with *personal* travel choice (as opposed to commercial travel, for example).
- **‘Active travel’** refers generally to *walking, wheeling, and cycling*.
- **‘Short journeys’** means *under two miles for walking and wheeling, and under five miles for cycling* (measures linked to corresponding Scottish Household Survey questions).
- **‘Everyday journeys’** means *almost every trip purpose* that is not *exceptional* or very *occasional* (again linked to corresponding Scottish Household Survey questions).

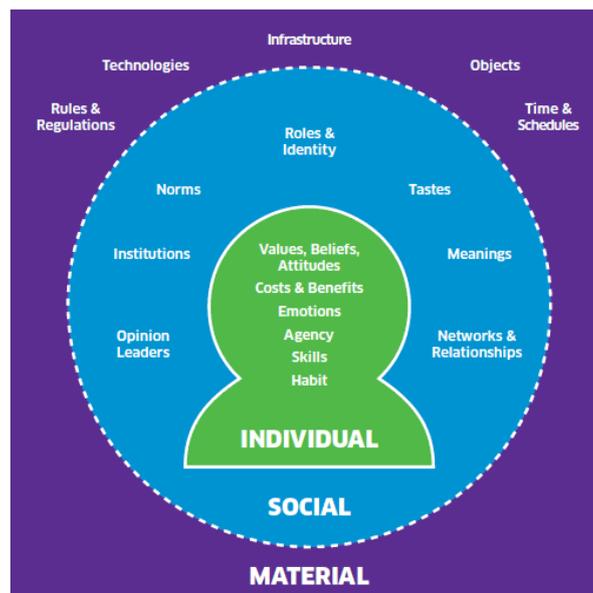


Figure 1 - The ISM Model

ISM is a theory and evidence-based way of thinking about three different contexts (individual, social, and material) that work together to influence people's behaviours.

Large-scale **material** factors are the domain of our active travel infrastructure programme, whereas **individual** and **social** factors (as well as some small-scale 'light' infrastructure) are the domain of this 'People & Place' programme. In coordination with each other, both programmes form a holistic approach to the policy aim of promoting more sustainable travel behaviours.

In addition to ISM, the '**Capability, Opportunity, Motivation**' (**COM-B**) model is used as a useful tool for breaking those individual and social factors down even further, and starting to identify the more specific interventions that need to be put in place to address them for different people in different places.

For any behaviour to be enacted people must have the **capability** to do it, the **opportunity** to do it, and they must be **motivated** to choose it over alternatives. In this sense, the aim of the programme is:

'Enabling and promoting modal shift through removing cultural and socioeconomic barriers to choosing active travel.'

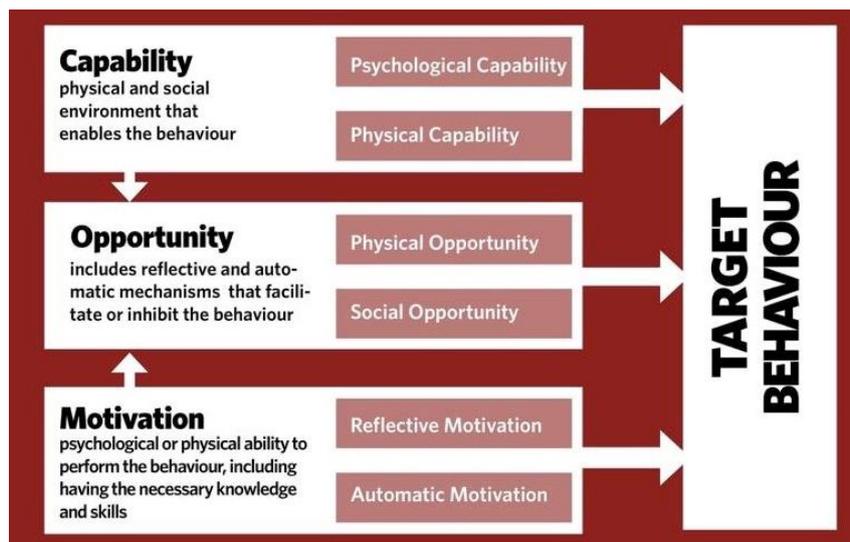


Figure 2 - The COM-B model

Mapping our policy aim against the elements of COM-B:

- **Enabling** = Capability.
- **Promoting** = Motivation.
- **Removing cultural / socioeconomic barriers** = Opportunity.
- **Active travel** = Behaviour.

Behaviour change theory in to practice

It is important to acknowledge that when viewed through the lens of behaviour change theory, the programme's goal of getting the public to choose active travel over private car for short, everyday journeys, has the key characteristics of a classic '[wicked problem](#)', including: "A broad definition, many possible solutions, being only one element of a dynamic system, and having outcomes that emerge over different time horizons." To have any possibility of success at addressing 'wicked problems', programmes must be developed collaboratively and support pluralistic and agile sets of means of achieving their goals.

Defining the problems

There is no full definition of all the individual or social factors or the cultural and socioeconomic barriers to choosing active travel, although there are [common themes](#) that many people experience. These factors differ greatly between different people, at different times, and in different contexts. Some barriers to choosing active travel will be specific to a local area. This is well illustrated by the different strategies referenced in the [RTP Policy Context](#) section.

Identifying the solutions

Just as there is no definitive formulation of the barriers and factors impacting active travel uptake, there is no exhaustive set of potential interventions: One [scoping review](#) of cycling promotion activities alone identified no fewer than "484 actions within 93 action types within 33 action categories under the nine intervention functions". This is exemplified by the various planning considerations outlined in the [RTP Approaches to Programme Delivery](#) section on what kinds of interventions ought to be the focus of attention where.

There are [well understood interventions](#) recommended to address common barriers to adopting active travel such as: education, training, promotion, and travel planning, with positive outcomes from these being seen and measured. However, there exist only a few objectively definitive 'tests' of the correctness of these interventions, in that they seek to shift participants' knowledge, skills, beliefs, feelings, and intentions through behavioural '[Stages of Change](#)', with long-term outcomes being new travel habits that are themselves heavily influenced by independent external factors. Rarely can interventions be definitively judged the 'right' or 'wrong' ones but rather good or bad, better or worse, depending on the context, and after having allowed sufficient time for results to emerge.

In the sense of being affected by external factors, the ‘problem’ the programme seeks to address can also be considered as a symptom of other systemic ‘problems’ outwith the immediate scope of programme. These include car-centric transport and urban planning, and socioeconomic and health inequalities, which the programme in turn helps to address through the [co-benefits](#) it delivers. This point comes to the fore in the **Joined-up Delivery** section describing the programme’s valuable cross-portfolio work.

Assessing the outcomes

There is no ‘stopping rule’ for having reached the conclusive solution to promoting active travel. The closest measure is captured in the Active Travel Framework’s vision for making walking, wheeling, and cycling ‘the most popular choices’ for short, everyday journeys (a national goal curbed by variable local geographies). This is informed by an understanding from behavioural science that policymakers should aim for:

“pushing behaviours past an adoption threshold beyond which further uptake is self-reinforcing” - Pizziol, V., Tavoni, A. [From niches to norms: the promise of social tipping interventions to scale climate action](#). npj Clim. Action 3, 46 (2024).

The importance of supporting long-term strategic approaches to delivering policies with broad goals is illustrated in the **Capacity and Capability** section.

Closing the loop

These are the kinds of considerations that the programme’s evolving monitoring and evaluation framework seeks to take into account: Is public funding of these specific interventions moving us towards fulfilling the programme’s goal, and if so, by how much? This is topic covered in the report’s section on the **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**.

Transport Scotland Policy Context

National Transport Strategy: Active travel is fundamental to all interconnected priorities of the Scottish Government's National Transport Strategy. This emphasises sustainable, inclusive, and accessible transport system that supports health and wellbeing, economic growth, and climate action.

Just Transition Plan for Transport: Scottish Government published a draft Just Transition Plan in February 2025, setting out a vision for decarbonising the transport sector by 2045 in a way that is fair, inclusive, and supports communities, aiming to ensure that no one is left behind as the country moves toward net-zero emissions. The draft Just Transition Plan recognises that government cannot deliver change alone, highlighting the essential role of regional partnerships and the importance of local engagement and delivery.

Physical Activity for Health Framework: It is important to note that the 'target behaviour' of the programme in fact encompasses *two* challenges, the first being 'choosing active travel' at all, and not just in preference to driving. This highlights the programme's connection to action to [improve levels of physical activity nationally](#), and particularly the virtuous circle between the governments walking for health and walking for transport policies: Traveling actively for everyday journeys supports people to be healthier, and in turn healthier people are able to travel actively for more of their everyday journeys.

Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009: Surface transport was the highest emitting sector in Scotland in 2022, accounting for 23% of Scotland's emissions. Carbon emissions from the sector are stubborn, having fallen by less than 1% since 1990. The 2009 Act sets ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including a net-zero target by 2045, which places significant emphasis on reducing transport emissions through modal shift to active and sustainable travel.

RTP Policy Context

Each RTP developed their programmes in the context of their Regional Transport Strategies (RTSs) and additional regional and local Transport and Active Travel Strategies (ATSS).

Links to a non-exhaustive selection of strategy documents:

RTP	RTS	ATS	Example LA strategies
Shetland Transport Partnership (ZetTrans)	Shetland Transport Strategy 2018-2028	Shetland Active Travel Strategy 2021-2026	Not applicable.
Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS)	HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy	Active Travel and Sustainable Transport Behaviour Change Strategy 2024-2030	Outer Hebrides Local Transport Strategy
North-East of Scotland Transport Partnership (Nestrans)	Nestrans 2040 Regional Transport Strategy	Active Travel Action Plan 2024	Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2021-2026 Aberdeenshire's Walking and Cycling Action Plan
Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership (Tactran)	Tayside and Central Scotland Regional Transport Strategy 2024-2034	Walking and Cycling Strategy and Action Plan	Angus Active & Sustainable Travel Strategy Dundee Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan 2024-2034
South-East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran)	SEStran 2035 Regional Transport Strategy	SEStran People & Place Delivery Plan	City of Edinburgh Active Travel Action Plan 2030 Active Travel Plan for West Lothian 2024-2029: Making Active Connections
Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)	The Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland 2023-2038	Regional Active Travel Strategy	Glasgow's Active Travel Strategy 2022-2031 South Ayrshire Active Travel Strategy 2022-2032
South-West of Scotland Transport Partnership (SWestrans)	SWestrans regional transport strategy 2023 to 2042	Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy 2022 to 2032	Not applicable.

Some of this important transport strategy and planning work has been supported through People & Place funding itself under the programme's '**Capacity and Capability**' theme, for example HITRANS' refreshed five-year Behaviour Change Strategy, and SEStran's forward-looking Delivery Plan. These are good examples of how the programme is helping to build the foundations of longer-term change, improving on previous funding that was spread widely and with less coordination, leading to a tendency towards relatively small single-year projects.

Funding Structure

People & Place funding

A total of £19,000,000 (£7,000,000 RDEL, £12,000,000 CDEL) in programme funding for RTPs was approved from the 2024-25 Active Travel Budget. RTPs negotiated an appropriate distribution of this funding between themselves, proposing a formula that reflected their population split, and also challenging geographic barriers faced by RTPs covering islands, highlands, and rural communities. The proposal was for a 7% baseline split of Revenue and Capital, with the remaining allocated on a per capita basis

RTP programme funding distribution

RTPs	RDEL	CDEL	TOTAL
HITRANS	£584,370	£1,041,816	£1,626,186
SEStran	£1,913,954	£3,412,200	£5,326,154
SPT	£2,615,032	£4,662,120	£7,277,152
SWestrans	£432,480	£432,480	£864,960
Tactran	£649,472	£1,157,880	£1,807,352
ZetTrans	£180,264	£180,264	£360,528
Nestrans	£624,427	£1,113,240	£1,737,667
Total	£7,000,000	£12,000,000	£19,000,000

Local Authority Direct Award (LADA) funding

In addition to People & Place funding, separate LADA funding of £4.5 million from Transport Scotland to Local Authorities (LAs) served the same core purpose as the RTP funding: Supporting the delivery of active and sustainable travel behaviour change interventions. Crucially, alongside enabling LAs to directly deliver and commission their own work (particularly essential for larger authorities), this funding was weighted towards resource and had a strong emphasis on maintaining the staff and expertise that hold the People & Place delivery model together (particularly essential for smaller authorities). The shift from the Smarter Choices Smarter Places (SCSP) LA Fund to a 'direct award' funding model, one with light-touch monitoring and evaluation requirements, was also established in 2024-25, both as part of Transport Scotland's active travel transformation work, and in response to the imperatives of the Verity House Agreement and the wider public service reform agenda to provide more autonomy for the LAs. Given their links, from 2025-26 LADA was explicitly brought under the banner of the programme as the 'People & Place Local Authority Direct Award'. LADA funding was also allocated on a per capita basis, with a 'baseline' of £64,000 for each Local Authority. The constituent councils within each RTP region were allocated the following funding in total:

LA programme funding distribution grouped by RTP area

RTPs	RDEL	CDEL	TOTAL
ZetTrans (One LA)	£42,667	£21,333	£64,000
HITRANS (Five LAs)	£307,311	£153,656	£460,967
Nestrans (Two LAs)	£259,175	£129,588	£388,763
Tactran (Four LAs)	£269,118	£134,559	£403,678
SEStran (Eight LAs)	£867,455	£433,727	£1,301,182
SPT (Twelve LAs) Including the Helensburgh and Lomond wards of Argyll and Bute.	£1,176,846	£588,423	£1,765,269
SWestrans (One LA)	£77,427	£38,714	£116,141
Total	£3,000,000	£1,500,000	£4,500,000

Taken across the two funds, this represented a significant level of annual investment of £23.5 million placed directly in the hands of local government for the purpose of promoting active and sustainable travel.

Active Travel Infrastructure Funding

In 2023-24, Scottish Government Active Travel infrastructure investment exceeded £165 million, delivering a range of infrastructure interventions and projects across several programmes. Details of this funding is available in the [Active Travel Infrastructure Investment Report 2023-24](#).

2024-25 also saw significant reform to this funding. The **Active Travel Infrastructure Fund Tier 1** was introduced, provided directly to LAs through their General Capital Grant, replacing the former Cycling, Walking, and Safer Routes fund (CWSR). The **Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF) Tier 2** was introduced as the primary vehicle for the Scottish Government to fund active travel infrastructure, shifting from the previous Places for Everyone programme. In supporting this funding our guidance has emphasised the importance of **associated ‘demand stimulation’ activities**, of the kind supported by the People & Place programme, and RTPs have been well placed to help align work across both areas. An Active Travel Infrastructure Investment Report 2024-25 will be published in due course.

Annex B – Research Report: RTP Qualitative Interviews

Summary

This report looks in detail at some of the main themes arising from the analysis of in-depth qualitative interviews with representatives from each of Scotland's seven RTPs. The aim of the research was to explore the impacts and experiences of those involved in rolling out People & Place.

The key findings from this research show that:

- The impact of a new approach on RTPs resulted in organisations having to adjust funding processes and pathways at pace, which had implications for resources and capacity internally.
- The impacts of People & Place itself were described in terms of requiring the management of shifting relationships with national and local partner organisations, whilst simultaneously delivering existing and ongoing active travel programmes.
- RTPs expressed that many aspects of this change have been seen as beneficial. For example, the ability to develop a potentially more agile approach to working with local active travel projects and organisations to better reflect the local and regional context.
- Challenges described by RTPs included:
 - Timing of funding - RTPs reflected on the difficulties of managing expectations and relationships with delivery partners due to delays to funding approval processes;
 - Differences in response to change across delivery partners – RTPs shared that community and local partners were in many cases most open to change;
 - The question of how and how best to capture the gains made by the different active travel activities often working at different scales both in terms of scope and delivery remains a difficult one and will require an open and iterative approach.

This research shows that for RTPs, as People & Place of work moves forward, consideration should be given to five key elements in order to improve experience and delivery of the programme:

- The wider impact of implementation of People & Place on RTPs and other organisations.
- A flexible and iterative approach to reporting and outcome measures should be adopted.
- RTPs to be supported in nurturing and maintaining relationships across the sector.
- Continued support for RTPs to increase clarity of and timeliness across the Active Travel funding landscape.
- Ensuring responsiveness to the local context is balanced with monitoring and evaluation considerations at all stages.

Background

Through 'People & Place' the Scottish Government supports local government to deliver sustainable and active travel behaviour change programs. These packages of regional and local community-led interventions are aimed at increasing the number of people walking, wheeling (including using wheelchairs and other mobility aids), cycling, and using public and low-carbon transport.

People & Place was established in 2024-25. Prior to this, sustainable and active travel behaviour change programmes were supported through grant funding directly to national third sector delivery partners, a number of charities including [Walking Scotland](#), [COMO UK](#), [Cycling Scotland](#), [Cycling UK](#), [Energy Saving Trust](#), [Forth Environment Link](#), [Living Streets Scotland](#) and [Walk Wheel Cycle Trust](#).

The majority of this funding is now allocated to Scotland's seven Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs), statutory independent bodies that bring together Local Authorities (LAs) and other key regional stakeholders to take a strategic approach to transport in each region of Scotland.

This devolution of responsibility sees RTPs working in partnership with their respective LAs as well as other stakeholders and delivery partners to design their own tailored regional programmes of behaviour change initiatives under a refreshed national policy framework. This reflects a key component of the Verity House Agreement to increase autonomy at regional and local levels.

This was the biggest change to the national delivery model in over a decade, bringing significant organisational change for the RTPs as new direct funding recipients, and active travel charities as former direct funding recipients. The capacity of RTPs to adapt to the changes and communicate the vision of People & Place are therefore key elements in the success of the programme.

The aim of this research was to collect evidence on the impacts and experiences of those involved in administering the roll out of People & Place. Via the anonymised context of a research interview space was provided for those responsible for implementing the programme to share their specific insights. These insights can now be fed in alongside other engagement work being carried out by Transport Scotland as a part of an iterative approach to ensure the programme continues to deliver on its vision.

Methodology

The research team at Transport Scotland developed an interview topic guide focusing on the following themes:

- Role – exploring the interviewee's position at the RTP, their background and wider team associated with People and Place.
- Programme – focusing on the understanding of the vision and aims of the programme.
- Process – exploring the implementation of the new approach and the impact on the RTP.
- Relationships – focusing on the wider impact of the implementation on the connections across the sector.

- Learning points – focusing on learning extracted from the first year of implementation and what could improve moving forward.

Transport Scotland's research team conducted seven interviews, one for each RTP, with individuals who had direct responsibility for collation of data collected by delivery partners as part of People & Place. The interviews lasted 45 minutes on average and data was collected between the end of October and start of November 2025.

Microsoft Teams was used to record and transcribe the interviews, with the recordings used only for the purpose of checking the accuracy of the transcripts. Data was analysed using MAXQDA, which is a software developed for qualitative data analysis. This software was used to support with the analysis of the interview transcripts. MAXQDA includes an AI function to assist with exploration of the data, which was used to support the main researcher led analysis of the interview data.

Findings

Impact of a new approach on RTPs

Overall, the participants referenced the new approach as a valuable change and that People & Place has been of overall benefit to the active travel sector.

In terms of the model and how it works, is good and people are responding positively to and I think we've set up good foundations for going forward. (RTP 1)

However, as a result of what was considered to be a swift introduction of People & Place, usually alongside the need to carry on supporting existing initiatives, RTPs reported feeling higher demands as there was a need to adapt existing systems, procedures, capacity and resources to incorporate the new approach.

(...) We've learned a lot over the last 18 months or so and it's been a really steep learning curve because it was quite a sudden change without any prior discussion. (...) (RTP 6)

Capacity

RTPs' existing active travel teams varied in size. These variations were reflected in the reported numbers of staff within their RTP handling Active Travel related work and the implementation of People & Place.

So there's three of us that look after the various strategic projects within [RTP 2]. (...) And then we have our active travel delivery officer (...) as well as our, well, he's called a graduate transport officer, but he's not really a graduate, you know, he's been in the role for a while, but our transport officer and he's got excellent data knowledge as well. (...) And we also get support from our marketing communications officer. (...) So we're a small team, but I would say nearly everybody's got some sort of involvement in the programme.

(RTP 2)

So my own area, I'm the only person really dedicated to policy and projects apart from my boss (...). (RTP 4)

Interviewees highlighted new demands placed on existing teams and relationships with partners arising from the roll out of People & Place. Internally, this had implications for how existing active travel teams are constituted. In some instances, participants reported that there is an overlap of functions, with the team having to be spread across other areas of work:

I would say four out of the seven in the whole transport team are pretty much full time on bus stuff because there's also the adult social care transport and the school transport which all gets wrapped up together with public transport in terms of contracting. (RTP 4)

As such, resourcing was one of the main factors highlighted when participants discussed the impact of the new approach. Participants described the implications for their job descriptions and day-to-day tasks. In particular, the emphasis for some was on the need to extend their existing role.

So People and Place is in one way it would, but it wouldn't really be part of my job day-to-day at all. But in reality it is. And actually it's been probably the main thing I've been doing all year because it has been quite resource intense I suppose. (RTP 4)

Several research participants referenced the need to increase resource and to add to existing RTP teams as a way to adjust and respond to the demands of People & Place.

[A new colleague] just started this financial year. One working on the community fund aspect of the programme and the other helping with the main programme aspects that I still kind of do all the kind of overarching strategic work around it and I kind of lead, I suppose, that team of the three of us, I've just sort of passed down some of the kind of admin and grant management duties to them still very much in that kind of like main active travel sphere and sort of looking forward will be taking forward a lot of the kind of actions. (RTP 3)

We have as of this year, funded one admin person who is very much, been an absolute amazing help to me in terms of dealing with the financial management side of things and pulling together invoices etc.. So that's been a massive benefit to us (...). (RTP 5)

However, simply increasing the number of staff was not always seen as immediately possible.

It would be resource implications, probably the thing that we speak about the most that it's not like we were overburdened with time

before and you know we're being asked to do more with the same amount of funding in terms of staff funding and the same number of staff, we haven't changed the number of staff. Part of that is because we haven't recruited for that post, but I think it's a, it's very much a human resource, I think issue for us. (RTP 2)

Another change for RTPs was the way these teams interact with local councils. This element varied between those within RTPs tasked with administering People & Place, in this context some RTPs deal only with one council whilst others work across as many as 12. In some of the smaller RTPs, the local council and the RTP share personnel, which it was noted can be helpful in terms of communication but also created challenges.

(...) and a colleague [name] is one of the other transport executives and she gives a lot of support working with [Council name] finance in managing the money for People and Place. So [name] is a really important cornerstone in our People and Place Programme. (RTP 2)

So it does make it harder and when you have this relationship with the local authority, where we're all wearing two hats all the time, it makes it challenging because the local authority and the regional transport partnership have different statutory duties and they are legally required to deliver on them. (RTP 4)

Where we may be different from the other RTPs that have multiple local authorities bidding into them and then a lot of that delivery is actually done by the councils as opposed [inaudible]. So the RTPs are much more so hands off and actually just coordinating funding bids rather than that actually on the ground delivering to the same extent. (RTP 5)

Adjusting processes

Another element discussed by the RTPs was the need to adjust processes and systems to accommodate People & Place. This was the case for RTPs and the delivery of projects.

[they] had to really pivot what [they] were doing in quite a short space of time and develop a behaviour change strategy and think about what [they] wanted to deliver and how [they] would do that with the budget that was available. (RTP 6)

Additionally, the impact on RTPs was also felt with regard to funding processing and allocation. One RTP respondent highlighted the need to adapt, for example, to the new channels for both distribution and accountability in terms of funding.

Just in terms of the amount of funding as well as that is now coming through us as an organisation. Um and just the level of oversight that you know is public funding, is public money you need to make

sure that this is all being spent appropriately and some of those sort of due diligence checks and that kind of admin side of it is probably the bit that takes up quite a good amount of time. (...). (RTP 2)

The new methods of funding distribution also meant a change in the ways of working with the various organisations. Another RTP respondent shared that “we took the decision to deliver some things ourselves. (...) And to work with local third sector organisations as our delivery partners rather than like the bigger charities based in the Central Belt.” (RTP 6)

Impact of People & Place implementation

When talking about implementation of the new process, respondents discussed what worked well in their view and what positive changes had resulted from the new approach to funding projects, despite the hurdles presented by the initial roll out.

So I think this the new model caught people unaware for a bit for the first year. I think the model we've got this year, where the RTPs get the bids from project partners as well as community projects place projects of larger regional projects and assess them and work with local authorities has definitely been a lot better as I think there's a feeling that a few teething problems aside, it's a better model this year and everybody's quite happy with it. Everybody would like a wee bit more money. But you know that's par for the course. But like, there is a feeling that the model has been a bit better. So and just how we are building on that for next year. (RTP 1)

Working with national and local delivery partners

People & Place Programme represents a change from national to regional and local delivery of active travel behaviour change interventions and the RTPs largely acknowledged the positive impact of this change on the community and wider sector. One respondent suggested that the relationship with Transport Scotland had been productive and collaborative during this transitional period and had fostered a locally responsive approach.

Yes, that is actually been quite a significant change and I think it's rather than them dictating a narrative to us, we're looking very much at what works for us locally. I think what we've seen historically and I think what we saw the beginning of the programme. And the bids coming in from those national partners were very good bids and you know very strong strong bids outlining what they were trying to achieve. But there is that localised understanding that they're missing. And I think that that was particularly through the communities fund that we saw coming back that you know everything that had come in that had been previously funded nationally on the community level were really good bids. (RTP 5)

Respondents noted that this shift in the funding model has created conditions in which money is being channelled to reach smaller partners working on specifically local projects.

And then you get all your new kind of local projects popping up through the Community funding through the local authorities that target different specific niches that are happening in local areas.
(RTP 3)

The new approach also enabled support for local organisations that “*would just not have capacity to do any of that [work] internally*” (RTP 7) despite potentially the need and additional value of these activities being recognised. One respondent suggested that there was increased understanding now of what sorts of initiatives were being funded. There was “*more clarity and certainty on the kinds of projects that people can apply for and things that they wanted to support and as a result of that, a lot more opportunities and projects and issues been brought to the table.*”(RTP 3)

Additionally, the change in process resulted in allocation of funding to organisations being seen as more meaningful and targeted, which had resulted in a better understanding of the impacts of the activities being undertaken by organisations.

I think that's been a positive and we've been able to channel money through a competitive process to organisations perhaps we'd previously supported, but now we're able to do so in a more meaningful way and we can see the impacts that that's having. (RTP 2)

One respondent highlighted a risk to be overly focussed on one area of active travel. However, another suggested that the current funding approach creates conditions in which this can be potentially addressed.

What's good about it is, particularly from the local delivery partners perspective, is that what we're doing now is starting to look at, OK, where we have things being delivered, but where do we not have things being delivered that we would like to see delivery. And so now we can start building relationships and partnerships in those areas. And I think without the People and Place Programme, that just wouldn't happen. (RTP 6)

Knowledge exchange

People & Place offered opportunities to gather understanding about what is happening across the sector locally. Respondents flagged the value of having more information about what is happening and how that can address previous knowledge gaps and contribute to future planning.

(...) we were aware of a number of local organisations that were potentially delivering active travel prior to [People and Place] through this business as usual approach. And I think that. I mean, I think that business as usual approach in the first year to find out what these

organisations were doing was a real strength and that again maybe highlights a weakness with the previous system in that as an RTP we should have known what these organisations were doing. (RTP 5)

Respondents also highlighted several instances where knowledge sharing events were organised and added value to the delivery of the programme by enabling peer to peer learning. One respondent also highlighted that these events aimed to support partners by providing a space where they could:

chat through what they're doing and kind of build like a support network within themselves so that if one of them has had a problem or is experiencing difficulties with something, maybe someone, one of the others has encountered that and they can give advice or even encouragement. (RTP 6).

Thus, it was felt that these events also facilitated links across the sector, developing networks as the next section will demonstrate.

So we were really trying to bring that together and now we're trying to go even further and sort of really bringing everyone. So local authorities, delivery partners and community groups just to really learn from each other, just to kind of understand who's doing what, how can we best work to better work together. And I think that is a big thing that without the program probably would have been hard to achieve. (RTP 7)

Linked with this, respondents also highlighted the value of having reporting systems in place that allows them to show the value of the work being done and sharing that with the wider sector as part of the process.

I think it's easier if you, because we've got the report and it's easier to justify it to turn around and saying yes, we've spent so in [RTP 1] and it's [sum] on People and Place, but you can turn around and say, well, here's the report. And here's the justification of what this money has been spent on. It's there's been good outcomes. (RTP 1)

Relationships/ links across the sector

A key positive impact reported by RTPs is the potential to strengthen established relationships and links as a result of People & Place. The new approach supported delivery partners leading to the realisation of “*this regional picture that's trying to be built and that they're not on their own and that they're part of a bigger (...) jigsaw.*” (RTP 2) From the perspective of some RTPs, the existing relationships with local authorities have been enhanced as a result of the programme.

With like you know specific elements for people to think about or to share or and it's we've had just quite a lot of like very positive feedback. I think just if you look at our local authorities, quite a lot of

them before People and Place just didn't have those relationships across you know like with the other local authorities. (RTP 7)

Improvements in relationship were also reported as a result of communication strategies that RTPs used when implementing People & Place.

I think that works quite well. It kind of again when you're trying to build a relationship with these people that you don't really know. You've never worked with before. That's quite a nice trusting relationship to build when you're just kind of upfront and honest with people about what you're doing. (RTP 3)

Respondents mentioned that during the initial phase of the programme, there was a need to “*make some quite hard decisions about what we could continue and what we couldn't*” (RTP 6) and that this impacted the relationship with some organisations.

(...) in a way soured the relationship from the start, but there wasn't anything else that we could do. (RTP 6)

In one case a respondent was keen to stress that whilst the landscape had shifted to permit a local approach the national delivery partners still had much to offer in terms of existing expertise, which could be utilised.

Also been really good in terms of that community support that I think as we move away from national providers to local community delivery, we're finding that you know once the enthusiasm happened locally, it's that specific knowledge that they might not have that [National Delivery Partner] have been really useful in bringing that together and building some more monitoring and evaluation framework around that as well. (RTP 5)

Challenges

Adaptability

With the introduction of the new funding model, partners were also required to adapt to a new way of delivering active travel activities. Whilst one respondent highlighted that the “*response has been really positive right across the board of all the delivery partners.*” (RTP 6) Participants also shared that delivery partners responded differently to the demands, with smaller organisations in some cases displaying more adaptability to the introduction of People & Place.

I think the local organisations have maybe responded more positively because they may be, they don't have a fixed way of doing things. So in the first year, we pretty much just said carry on doing what you're doing. But this year we've been a bit like, well, can you, you know, can you add this in? Can you change that slightly? And they've been really positive and responding to that, whereas I think

it's a little bit more challenging for the larger national delivery partners to do that because they maybe have a set model that they want to deliver the same thing in every place. (RTP 6)

Is building those relationships and delivery partners wise is a bit mixed and I think. That's partly the way they've adapted to the new programme. (...) there was quite a stark difference between how some delivery partners responded to it and how others did. Some just sort of, you know, they saw the change, it was happening and they just adapted to the way they work. And build those relationships with us in quite a positive way. (RTP 7)

Some delivery partners required support through the journey including a flexible approach to collecting information for monitoring and evaluation purposes, depending on the size and focus of the organisation.

That's kind of what we've been trying to do at the moment, just to, yeah, just to try and provide as much support as possible, just so that especially now with the community groups, they can just refer to that guidance document and they can exactly see what they should be looking at and how to sort of manage that and then obviously they're sort of free to sort of do what they can do. We're just not going to say all of that is like fully mandatory, but this is kind of where we're trying to go so that when the project starts, they know exactly what they should be looking at. (RTP 7)

M&E. Yeah, M&E and the other thing about monitoring and evaluation is because we deal with a number of different partners now, small community groups struggle to find the capacity to do you know large scale monitoring and evaluations. So I'm trying to make that as easy for them as possible. (RTP 1)

Communicating new ways of working

Another challenge raised was around the speed of changes and the need for RTPs to be familiar with them in order to communicate their implications to the various delivery partners.

Mainly through the third sector partners and Transport Scotland and the third sector partners had a relationship and I don't think we understood that that was the model. So we just assumed that everybody had an understanding of what was happening and maybe they never and everything was happening really, really quickly. (RTP 3)

RTPs shared their experiences of getting up to speed before communicating the changes related to funding, roles and responsibilities associated with the new Active Travel Framework.

You know [...] multiple organisations have been told that you know there isn't any funding this year and you know then having to explain well, there's no funding this year from that organisation, but we've now got that funding and.

Actually communicating that so that in itself was quite a task to actually communicate to everybody that [had] previously been funded by these organisations, that their funding's gone away, but the funding itself is still there. And I think that is a task that's now probably been completed. (RTP 5)

Views around how the programme has been communicated to the RTPs were on the whole positive.

The communication has improved a huge amount and I think the clarity of expectations, of what Transport Scotland expect, but also an understanding from them of what it's reasonable for us to deliver." (RTP 6)

The benefits of taking a collaborative approach in a dynamic environment, where new ways of working were still being absorbed, were highlighted.

You know, we were very much an evolving programme and I think that was coming from Transport Scotland as well, you know, but in some ways that was actually good and actually we just felt as though we were working much more collaboratively with Transport Scotland in that respect and that they were finding the way as much as we were. It wasn't. It felt less imposed on us by the fact it was evolving rapidly and I think we've now got to a point where we have a programme, that's won't stay static. I mean, it's got to continually evolve, but it's (...) stable. (RTP 5)

Procedural timings and funding allocation

Generally, in terms of funding, four of the seven RTPs interviewed explicitly mentioned issues caused by the need to wait for funding to be confirmed at the start of each year, including leaving some smaller organisations with a good deal of uncertainty and threats to continuity in delivering interventions.

We'd like the money at the start of April. It does feel and this will keep coming up, everybody will say this. It's and it is government spending getting things signed off but you do feel that you're maybe looking at one or two months at the start of the project where you're just treading water because we were sending out emails to partners saying, sorry, we've not had anything yet. So I'm that just people are keen to get moving, smaller community groups, wanting to keep the lights on and you've got this two months of limbo where the money hasn't appeared. (RTP 1)

One of the sort of biggest challenges or two, two of the biggest challenges. First of all, the main one is definitely timelines around financial years and there's the gap between the financial year finishing and the new financial year starting and is really challenging for a lot of these organisations. (RTP 3)

Respondents in some cases had begun to look for mitigations to the risks posed by the timings of funding confirmation at a local level.

I think it's across the whole programme, so last year I, because the funding is so uncertain and sometimes there's delays in having our funding confirmed by Transport Scotland, I had advised our local organisations. If they have or can find match funding that they should do that so that at least they would have something to carry them through April in the event that the funding was delayed. So actually most of our local partners have match funding, but none of the national partners do. (RTP 6)

Changes in funding also impacted how RTPs deliver activities and their programme of work. In some cases, this meant being flexible and finding ways to deliver activities using different resources available, maximising existing connections and knowledge.

If there was things that we couldn't fund directly through People and Place, our local authority partners said, well actually we could run this through LADA, the Local Authority Direct Award and they agreed between them that this could be a region wide project for example. (...) So that's been something that Transport Scotland has said that they were really happy with that we've tried to look at all of the money available and not just be really siloed in our thinking around this is the People and Place pot. (RTP 2)

Lessons learned for the future

Participants were asked about lessons learned and what improvements could be made to the existing approach in order to support delivery. The main elements raised by RTPs focused on: reporting of outcomes and funding allocation.

Reporting on outcomes: flexibility and clarity

Issues around the variation in partner size and resources were mentioned as creating challenges for reporting on outcomes and when using the Transport Scotland reporting template. This respondent shared that they would welcome:

assistance with that wider evaluation, (...) particularly when it's smaller community groups that don't do. You know, that don't have that knowledge when you're moving away from national partners (...). (RTP 5)

Related to support and guidance, RTPs also flagged the need to update and improve guidance around monitoring and evaluation. Participants shared suggestions for improvement and that it could be helpful for the future to focus on establishing an “*agreed minimum standard of data*” where after that each RTP could specify their requirements and needs according to:

what it is that you're trying to achieve regionally, what you know, the political influences are regionally, what the challenges that you're facing, whether that's looking at SIMD groups or whether it's looking at other marginalised groups. (RTP 2)

Another suggestion from participants related to the value of an iterative approach to updating reporting guidance, templates and requirements so that these could offer the best fit to measuring the projects RTPs are encountering in their regions.

We've basically been for a few projects we'd be like, OK, not sure what we're trying to measure here. So we're just going to go, what do we think is a good thing to measure here? So just a wee bit more guidance from Transport Scotland at, upfront would have been good. We're going to get there for next year. (RTP 1)

And Transport Scotland did provide the RTPs with a template for their end of year monitoring and evaluation report. It was largely based around comparing projects within the themes of the programme, but what we found was it was actually really difficult to compare projects under themes because what the projects were actually doing was very different. (...) (RTP 3)

Respondents also acknowledged that what constitutes best practice for reporting is evolving and this can be a challenge in itself.

It's you know, what do we need to record? I don't know yet. We haven't. Transport Scotland haven't agreed that. And I think that's, there's some discussion on that right now. (RTP 5)

I suppose in terms of, I mean the People and Place, there's a lot of work going into making it coherent and us all working together. (RTP 4)

RTPs also shared some reservations about the template for reporting. Respondents mentioned that it needed to be more outcomes driven and that the template should focus more on understanding the wider impact of the work. One respondent referenced that they have been discussing with Transport Scotland the potential to collect qualitative data as a valuable contribution to support the monitoring and evaluation process.

For the programme as a whole, we need to report on the outcomes, not just the output, so you know. 1000 people participated in doctor bike sessions. So what? What difference has it made? (RTP 6)

(...) I'm getting feedback from delivery partners as well that they know that the work they're doing actually has other benefits. It's not just what we're reporting on, which is obviously all the kind of active travel behaviour change elements, but all the other kind of social benefits that come with that and health benefits and that we're not recording but are definitely happening or at least the work is contributing to them in some way shape or form, so. (RTP 3)

Funding

A point repeated by several RTPs was the need to allow for multi-year funding. Respondents discussed multiple advantages of this approach and the added value it would bring to the entire programme:

For some of our delivery partners, it's so precarious and to be able to administer multi-year funding I think would allow some of these projects to really grow and it also avoids that uncertainty and scrabble at the start of the financial year when you're waiting for the process within Transport Scotland to burst into life and you know, grant offer letters to come forward. (...). (RTP 2)

I think it would be a lot easier and less stressful to manage the programme if we had multi-year funding, so if we knew if we were, if we had a three-year programme even, you know, we could, we could develop a great programme and our partners would be, you know, they would know what they were doing, they wouldn't be this anxiety every year between January and March. (RTP 6)

One RTP suggested funding streams could be made more coherent, allowing for better understanding of different funds and more joined up delivery of People & Place:

Maybe it's an aspiration, but having like more of a connection between that [People and Place] and some of the other active travel focused funds (...). (RTP 4)

Conclusions

Overall, there is evidence to suggest that RTPs experienced the introduction of People & Place as generally positive despite some clear challenges. According to the respondents, this programme allowed relationships to be fostered in a locally responsive way via investment in the community through local organisations whilst also enabling knowledge sharing across the sector. RTPs highlighted several instances where this programme of work was valuable in providing a funding avenue to deliver activities that would otherwise not be possible.

Some of the challenges and learning points shared by the RTPs during the interviews offer opportunities for future improvements and actions to support the following years of People & Place implementation.

Consider wider impact of implementation on RTPs as organisations.

Participants highlighted the impact that the implementation of the programme had on capacity across the organisation. This was mostly in the area of resourcing. Thus, consideration of how best to support RTPs in the delivery of this and similar programmes should be an ongoing priority.

A flexible approach to reporting and outcome metrics.

RTPs shared instances where reporting was challenging for delivery partners and where elements seem to not be capturing some of the impacts of the work being delivered. Moving forward, Transport Scotland could continue to develop feasible and useful monitoring and evaluation in collaboration with RTPs and delivery partners considering how evidence of the work can be collected to best capture impacts and outcomes.

Maintain relationships across the sector.

All RTPs referenced the value of the links across the sector encouraged within the programme. As such, support should be targeted to strengthening and maintaining existing relationships, as well as developing new ones as the programme evolves and progresses.

Funding landscape and processes.

RTPs highlighted challenges around timings for funding processes and how these impacted delivery partners. In addition, interviewees also referenced the need to clarify the landscape and what is on offer. As such, work to support RTPs around funding management and allocation should continue in order to deliver the programme as intended.

Responsiveness to local context to be balanced with monitoring and evaluation considerations.

RTPs expressed the benefit of having the ability to respond to the real time needs of the local partners and programmes. However, there will be a need to have in mind the Monitoring and Evaluation needs of People & Place and that this is given due consideration as new projects are initiated.



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