Active Travel Transformation: Assess Phase Summary Report







ACTIVE TRAVEL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

ACTIVE TRAVEL TRANSFORMATION: ASSESS PHASE SUMMARY REPORT

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1.1 Executive Summary

The Active Travel Transformation Project intends to devise and implement a system which delivers active travel infrastructure more quickly, to a high standard and in a planned, connected, cohesive way, meeting everyone's needs. It is imperative that best value for money is achieved for the Government's increasing investment in Active Travel.

In addition the delivery system should support and encourage people to use the infrastructure for everyday journeys and should provide additional support for those most in need – for example disabled people and people affected by transport poverty, to ensure a just transition.

Since its inception in 2022, there has been a large body of work undertaken through the Active Travel Transformation Project. This has included the following:

- Extensive stakeholder engagement, including a series of workshops and surveys involving all public and third sector delivery partners to inform the evidence base behind any future proposals for an alternative system for active travel delivery.
- The identification of challenges and opportunities that exist for Transport Scotland and partners to significantly accelerate active travel delivery. These challenges may be broadly categorised as follows:
 - Capacity and capability
 - Local delivery: Traffic Regulation Orders
 - Multi-year funding
 - Future delivery model (2024/25 onwards)
- Introduction of the Transformation Fund, which sees Transport Scotland assume responsibility for authorising funding and programme management in a more direct partnership model with Local Authorities.

This report sets out the evidence gathered and the key findings from the Assess Phase of the Project, and outlines the next steps for the Project leading up to 2023/24.

1.2 What is the active travel transformation project?

The Active Travel Framework was published in 2020 and produced by Transport Scotland in collaboration with key delivery partners, Regional Transport Partnerships and Local Authorities. It brings together the key policy approaches to improving the uptake of walking and cycling in Scotland. It reiterates the shared vision for active travel in Scotland, that by 2030:

"Scotland's communities are shaped around people and place, enabling walking and cycling to be the most popular mode of travel for short, everyday journeys."





The budget for active travel has steadily grown since its inception, doubling to £80m in 2018/19 and increasing to £150m in 2022/23. Currently, £190m is allocated for 2023/24, with a commitment to increase this to £320m in active travel investment in future budgets.

Through this budget, the Scottish Government and its partners have invested in active travel schemes across the country, as well as supporting behaviour change activity. This has included new and improved segregated walking and cycling paths, new junction arrangements and crossings, secure cycle parking, and behaviour change programmes.

The evidence is clear that in order to deliver modal shift, connected, good quality, safe active travel infrastructure is required, with people supported and encouraged to use it through various behaviour change and other enabling initiatives. While there have been examples of good practice throughout Scotland over the last decade, it is clear that the infrastructure required to enable large scale changes to travel behaviour has not been delivered quickly or efficiently enough.

The Active Travel Transformation Project was established by Transport Scotland in February 2022 to help deliver the vision for 2030, and ensure best value for the increasing investment by working with partners to devise and implement a delivery system which supports and enables local authorities and others to build active travel infrastructure more quickly, to a high standard and in a planned, connected, cohesive way, meeting everyone's needs. In addition the delivery system should support and encourage people to use the infrastructure for everyday journeys and should provide additional support for those most in need — for example disabled people and people affected by transport poverty, to ensure a just transition.

The Project defines the objective of Active Travel Transformation as:

"...an accessible system that delivers better outcomes with sufficient processes and resources to generate a pace and scale of delivery that matches our policy ambitions..."

In delivering on transformation, the project has focussed on five key pillars to date:

- Innovation and exemplar activity
- Capability and capacity
- Leadership and coordination
- Enablers and barriers
- Funding design and governance





1.3 The Case for Change

The rationale for delivering transformational change in the delivery of active travel is rooted in the need to move away from a "business as usual" approach. While local improvements have been made, evaluation of existing activity indicates that doing more of the same thing, in the same way, will not maximise outcomes, and to simply increase and expand the standard approach of grant funding programmes would not support achievement of Scotland's climate change targets and would not achieve value for money. Pre-pandemic, more than half of all journeys made in Scotland were under 5km (with a significantly higher proportion in cities), but only 1.2% of journeys were made by bike, and 22% on foot.

Furthermore, active travel has the potential to transform people's lives and their communities. By providing the opportunity for more people to travel by foot or cycle for school, work or leisure, improvements can be made to people's mental and physical health, their financial well-being, the engagement and cohesion of their community through increased social contact, and the quality of their public spaces and local areas.

Greater levels of active travel can reduce local emissions and improve local air quality, further improving community health. Each day in Scotland, walking and cycling in Scotland's cities takes up to 420,000 cars off the road. It can also substantially deliver for deprived and excluded communities and social groups, expanding accessibility and providing low cost transport options for these groups, as well as delivering decongestion benefits and road space reallocation in deprived areas that are often more highway dominated.

Increased active travel and enhanced infrastructure can also generate local economic benefits by increasing footfall for businesses, reduced risk of collisions and injuries on roads, reduced absenteeism, increased levels of productivity, and reduced pressure on physical and mental health services. Enhanced walking and cycling provision can also boost tourism: between 2013 and 2015, nearly 400,000 cycling trips and over 5m walking trips were made in Scotland, with an estimated associated spend of £1.9bn

Most recently, the case for increasing investment in active travel is further underpinned by the latest Programme for Government 2023-24, which commits to taking forward implementation of the Active Travel Transformation Project to help realise <u>our commitment</u> to £320 million in active travel investment in future budgets.

1.4 Activity undertaken through the Active Travel Transformation Project

1.4.1 Stakeholder engagement

The project has engaged extensively with a wide range of domestic and international stakeholders through a variety of engagement formats, including interviews, workshops and surveys. These engagement activities were consolidated by the establishment of a project board of senior representatives from across Transport Scotland. As the

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administrators of Transport Scotland's main active travel infrastructure fund, Places for Everyone, and the lead delivery partner for the National Cycle Network, Sustrans were also members of this board.

A series of workshops were held with active travel delivery partners to help inform the evidence base behind any future proposals for an alternative system for active travel delivery. Attendance included Local Authorities, regional transport partnerships, third sector organisations, national parks, public institutions, Transport Scotland officers and Elected Members. Three workshops took place, under the following themes:

- Innovation and exemplar activity
- Capacity and capability
- Leadership and engagement

1.4.2 Workshop 1 – Innovation and exemplar activity (May 2022)

Presentations at the workshop were delivered by Patrick Harvie MSP (Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights), Andreas Røhl (Associate Director of Urban Mobility at Gehl Architects and Director of the City of Copenhagen's Bicycle Programme from 2007 to 2015) and Richard Millar (Chief Operating Officer of Scottish Canals).

Patrick Harvie outlined the importance of active travel investment in delivery to realise Scotland's objectives for decarbonisation. The Minister also set out the need to think creatively and boldly about delivery in order to maximise output.

Andreas Røhl introduced Copenhagen as a case study in increasing cycle usage, setting out the five-fold increase in investment that was delivered and the challenges that this upscale created in terms of project management and delivering schemes simultaneously.

Although Andreas set out important differences between a cycling programme and other types of infrastructure, such as greater consultation and a more diverse range of resources required, his message was to treat cycling as 'nothing special' — that is, it still requires infrastructure investment just as roads do, and that normalising it as a form of transport is crucial. The importance of utilising existing public spaces and the development of new ones was also highlighted.

Ultimately, Copenhagen succeeded in taking full advantage of the political will to implement projects, a potential learning point at the stage Scotland is at in ramping up active travel delivery.

The first breakout discussion identified the following themes:

Political leadership in Copenhagen was critical in driving projects forward, with the city managing to avoid the pitfalls of bureaucracy and delays around roles and





responsibilities, highlighting the importance of strong governance, both locally and nationally.

The importance of walking and place-making in driving modal shift, economic regeneration, neighbourhood cohesion and from an equalities perspective.

The success of Copenhagen's outcome-focused and 'whole system' approach, with a tendency in Scotland for strategy to be continually revisited or local bureaucracy hampering delivery, instead of Copenhagen successfully focusing on delivering a specific outcome or solution.

Richard Millar introduced his role at Scottish Canals, which has worked with communities to upgrade canal towpaths and infrastructure around waterways to deliver active travel benefits, as well as creating the waterways as destinations and places for leisure.

The second breakout discussion identified the following themes:

The importance of making use of underutilised infrastructure assets, such as waterways and disused railways, for active travel.

Engagement builds participation and, subsequently, momentum. The work of Scottish Canals with communities is essential to deliver place-making and modal shift, advocating a bottom-up approach.

The importance of sustained committed funding over an extended period, helping both delivery and innovation.

The final breakout session asked participants to identify obstacles, quick wins and early steps for longer term wins under the categories of attitudes, funding and resources, strategy and planning, inclusivity, and other issues. Solutions from "quick wins" to longer term solutions were suggested to address the barriers that need to be removed to successfully transform Scotland into an active travel nation. Highlights from the proposals put forward, demonstrating the wide range of contributions, are set out below:

- Attitudes: a network of access points to e-bikes, stronger endorsement by role-models, workplace parking levies, adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to project planning and behaviour change, including a behaviour change syllabus in schools.
- Funding and resources: less bureaucratic process for funding, increasing resources in Local Authorities, dedicated partnership fund for walking, clearer funding structures.
- Strategy and Planning: Spaces for People approach to test out some routes, utilising existing assets such as disused railway lines, changed approach to the tests to be passed to support Compulsory Purchase Order, holistic town/city-wide network plans.
- Inclusivity: utilise Disability Equality Scotland's weekly polls, the need for meaningful Equality Impact Assessment, including accessible bikes in all cycling funding.

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Other issues: adopt path managers guide to grading manual for paths, an academy for training active travel providers, building on existing momentum between communities.

1.4.3 Workshop 2 – Capacity and capability (September 2022)

Presentations at the workshop were delivered by Patrick Harvie MSP, Mark Philpotts (Highway Engineer at SWECO, specialist in walking and cycling infrastructure, with 25 years' experience across the public private sector) and Neil MacRae (Regional Transport Partnership secondee to the Active Travel Transformation Project at Transport Scotland).

Patrick Harvie highlighted the need for delivery processes to match the level of ambition in the budget. The Minister emphasised that best practice in active travel delivery included:

- O Dedicated delivery teams working on long-term projects.
- Effective active travel strategies with high quality infrastructure at their heart.
- Long term funding to support effective delivery, resource commitment and a pipeline of schemes.

Mark Philpotts focused on how the built environment can be improved for active travel and the challenges to be overcome in achieving this. He noted successful ways to achieve positive outcomes, such as setting out an evidence-led vision, achieving buy-in to the vision through positive engagement and the importance of multi-disciplinary delivery teams.

Mark also highlighted that the financial commitment in Scotland represented a significant opportunity to achieve the goals set out in policy.

Neil MacRae presented his work leading on the capability and capacity survey and engagement with delivery partners. Neil also identified six sub-themes that sit under Capacity and Capability that have been surfaced by this work, namely:

- Staff capacity
- Skills
- Recruitment
- Strategy and pipeline
- Challenges to increasing delivery
- Addressing the challenges

A workshop session was also held, breaking out the group into the sub-themes above and asking each breakout group to design a challenge statement, and develop and vote on a set of ideas and solutions. The ideas that progressed through the long-listing and voting stages were:

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Giving active travel parity with road infrastructure through statutory changes.

Developing comprehensive multi-year funding for active travel, with all capital funding grants coming with a percentage of revenue funding.

Increasing in-house staff to reduce dependency on consultants and contractors, with secondments as a measure to share expertise.

Implementing a multi-disciplinary approach, with an emphasis on buy-in at all levels, community engagement and good communications plans.

Targeting areas according to deprivation indicators to identify skills and career pathways, which could also lead to the inclusivity of active travel outcomes.

1.4.4 Workshop 3 – Leadership and engagement (November 2022)

Presentations at the workshop were delivered by Patrick Harvie MSP, Jon Burke (Decarbonisation Lead for Gloucester City Council and former LB Hackney Councillor) and Lee Craigie (Active Nation Commissioner for Scotland).

The Minister highlighted the importance of working collectively, and how active travel spaces and infrastructure can be a boost for the quality and liveability of the public environment. He also encouraged participants to work to accelerate delivery in order to address the impacts of climate change.

Jon Burke identified the need to design public spaces that are flexible, incorporating other uses as well as active travel, and suitable for everyone. He also discussed being proactive in implementing road space reallocation and vehicle reduction measures, such as using technological enforcement, and ensuring the widest possible spectrum of benefits to communities are accounted for when assessing schemes.

Lee Craigie was appointed Active Nation Commissioner for Scotland in 2018, in a role to inspire and encourage people to be more active on a daily basis. She highlighted the importance of robust and meaningful community engagement, particularly involving young people in the process, and warned against the common disconnect between what we assume people think and what their real values are. This can cause people to disengage from the consultation process, and negatively impact the outcomes and, ultimately, the decision-making process.

In a further workshop discussion, participants were split out into themes and were asked to discuss their recent experiences and to focus on ways to overcome challenges in the future. Under each theme, the following priorities were identified:





Actions to make active travel more attractive – the construction of attractive infrastructure with delivery focus on needs as well as numbers of people.

Achieving meaningful and representative community consultation — more autonomous funding at Local Authority level, which would avoid repeating stages of consultation.

Working across spatial levels through coordination – coordinating efforts between neighbouring authorities and prioritising national standards across boundaries.

Navigating controversy – greater capacity to deliver and stick with projects during the delivery cycle.

Communicating the benefits for everyone – emphasising the multiple benefits of active travel schemes for people, and shifting to a needs-based funding model.

Better integration of active travel across authorities – greater funding equity to ensure projects other than 'quick wins' can be delivered, with planning support from central government to support local decision making.

Emphasis on electoral mandates – elected officials should recognise that elections offer the most comprehensive and representative insights into the preferences of their communities. Engagement and petitions may be impacted by small but vocal special interest groups and should not undermine mandates.

The workshop attendees also highlighted the pressures of funding in various contexts, such as for appropriate and early engagement, for land purchase needs, ensuring funding is reflective of local needs, and the pressures that match funding requirements places on some projects. The speakers identified the need to accelerate delivery, but without bypassing early and meaningful engagement.

1.5 Challenges and opportunities identified

The engagement activity set out above has provided valuable insight and understanding of the challenges that exist for both Transport Scotland and partners to significantly accelerating active travel delivery. These challenges can be broadly categorised into the following:

- Capacity and capability
- Local delivery: Traffic Regulation Orders
- Multi-year funding
- Future delivery model (2024/25 onwards)





1.5.1 Capacity and capability

A survey to understand capacity and capability in the existing delivery landscape was undertaken with delivery partners, alongside one-to-one discussions.. This highlighted issues such as:

- Limited resources: more than three quarters of survey returns identified staff capacity as a very significant challenge.
- Skills gaps: responses to the survey highlighted a lack of qualified staff in a number of areas in particular design, project management and construction Other skills gaps were also identified including legal and procurement, street design, place making, transport modelling and behaviour change.
- Recruitment and retention issues: Two thirds of organisations responding said that they currently had unfilled vacancies. Organisations highlighted challenges in recruiting and integrating high quality staff within their teams when the positions were on temporary contracts.

Despite the survey returns identifying a number of common and often shared challenges across the active travel sector the survey, and in particular the one-to-one discussions, highlighted a willingness and desire across Active Travel Delivery Partners to match the ambition presented by the generational shift in active travel spending.

Survey returns did not indicate any objection to the project objectives. Rather the responses highlighted a desire from organisations to work collaboratively to increase delivery provided the project can help provide them with suitable support to address the challenges.

A secondary process of interviews and surveys with consultants was also completed, which highlighted some similar issues with public sector delivery organisations.

1.5.2 Local delivery: Traffic Regulation Orders

A barrier that has been raised repeatedly by partners is the application of traffic regulation orders (TROs). This includes the use of experimental TROs, which were introduced in 2021 to positive feedback. However, there has been a mixed reception and application of these new regulations across Scottish Local Authorities, and in some areas implementation of TROs can still hinder the delivery of active travel infrastructure.

Given concerns regarding active travel and the TRO process remain, efforts are continuing to raise awareness of recent changes and the need to resolve the issues to maximise the opportunity for change presented by the Transformation Project.





1.5.3 Multi-year funding

The issue of single year funding has been identified as a high priority challenge faced by organisations attempting to scale up delivery, with a multi-year model and a move away from a competitive bidding process both suggested as solutions to the challenges faced. Partners note that these changes would enable a wider programme or network-based approach, as well as addressing issues regarding developing a pipeline of projects and securing long-term resource for delivery.

The 2023/24 Transformation Fund includes the provision for multi-year projects to be funded, with these schemes prioritised for funding in subsequent years if the initial application is successful. Whilst this goes some way to providing reassurance on the issues raised, it provides no guarantees for multi-year funding and considerations are ongoing regarding how a multi-year funding model can be developed adhering to the requirements set out in the Scottish Public Finance Manual.

Additionally, following the Verity House Agreement (June 2023), considerations are ongoing regarding the potential to help provide Local Authorities with the confidence they need to recruit on a longer term basis, thereby overcoming one of the key barriers to delivering infrastructure at greater pace and scale. More work is planned on this in order to better understand the implications of the new relationship between Scottish Government and Local Government and to understand and accommodate the intentions of the Verity House Agreement.

1.6 Project investment for 2023/24

It was agreed that funding would be allocated to a new Active Travel Transformation Fund for 2023/24, totalling £20-25m. This Fund launched in December 2022 and was introduced to trial a new approach to delivery, putting into practice what transformation may need to look like from 2024-25 in a pragmatic and enabling manner.

This funding allocation focused on projects that were construction-ready and can be delivered within the 2023-24 financial year targeting high quality projects that will deliver infrastructure on the ground at pace and scale. A secondary aim of the allocation was to provide support for projects to progress towards successful applications in future years and those that will be construction-ready from 2024/25.

As well as an assessment of the schemes, in order for Transport Scotland to prioritise support to partners where it is most needed, the process ensured that prospective partners had:

- An appropriately resourced active travel team.
- Evidence of strong local leadership and support.
- Detailed active travel strategies, including evidence of public engagement, and ambitions for cohesive networks and integration with other modes.
- Alignment with Transport Scotland's active travel strategic vision and outcomes, including with the National Transport Strategy.
- Assessed and quantified the potential local growth of active travel.
- A track record of active travel scheme delivery.

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A longlist of construction-ready projects was submitted by delivery partners totalling £103m, with a longer term pipeline of infrastructure projects totalling approximately £675m.

An initial sift to remove projects deemed not construction-ready was undertaken, generating a shortlist totalling £39.2m. A second sift was undertaken against the following criteria:

- Engagement
- Mode shift potential
- Deliverability
- O Risk

A third sift included a review by Sustrans against the Places for Everyone programme, with some further projects removed due to lack of deliverability in 2023/24 and interactions with the Places for Everyone programme.

These sifting stages resulted in a primary list valued at £19.865m and a secondary (reserve) list valued at £9.245m. The primary list included 14 delivery partners and 37 projects. The secondary list included five partners and seven projects. Revisions to this list were made following further assessment of the programme with partners. The latest position regarding funded projects, and their spread across Scotland is shown in 01.1

The award of further funding for design work during 2023-24, for schemes to be built in 2024-25, is close to being finalised.

One-to-one sessions have been offered to all partners who submitted a bid and are currently underway, the majority of which have been completed. The purpose of these sessions is to discuss the evaluation of the partner's submission as well as gather feedback and suggestions on the process for future years. Feedback has been generally very positive, and future year's delivery models will incorporate this.

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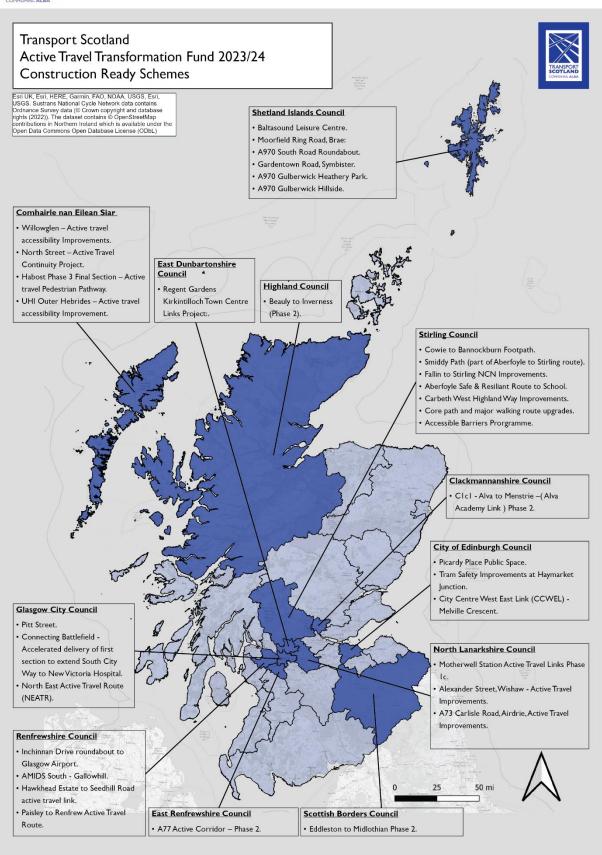
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¹ To note: The construction-ready schemes highlighted in the map are accurate at the time of writing.







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Figure 1 ATTF 2023/24 - Construction-ready projects funded

City of Edinburgh Council

- Picardy Place Public Space
- Tram Safety Improvements at Haymarket Junction
- City Centre West East Link (CCWEL) Melville Crescent

Glasgow City Council

- Pitt Street
- Connecting Battlefield Phase 1
- North East Active Travel Route (NEATR) Phase 1

Renfrewshire Council

- North Renfrewshire Active Travel Inchinnan Drive roundabout to Glasgow Airport
- Hawkhead Estate to Seedhill Road (Linside) active travel link
- Paisley to Renfrew Active Travel Route
- AMIDS South Gallowhill Link

North Lanarkshire Council

- Motherwell Station Active Travel Links
- A73 Carlisle Road, Airdrie Active Travel Improvements
- Alexander Street, Wishaw Active Travel Improvements

Stirling Council

- Cowie to Bannockburn Footpath
- Smiddy Path (part of Aberfoyle to Stirling route)
- Fallin to Stirling NCN Improvements
- Carbeth West Highland Way Improvements
- Core path and major walking route upgrades
- Accessible Barriers Programme

East Renfrewshire Council

• A77 Active Corridor – Phase 2

The Highland Council

Beauly to Inverness (Phase 2)

Scottish Borders Council

• Eddleston to Midlothian Phase 2

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

- Willowglen Active travel accessibility improvements
- North Street Active Travel Continuity Project
- Habost Phase 3 Final Section Active Travel Pedestrian Pathway
- UHI Outer Hebrides Active Travel accessibility improvements

Shetland Islands Council

- School/Leisure Centre path, Baltasound
- Moorfield Ring Road, Brae
- A970 South Road Roundabout, Lerwick
- Gardentown, Symbister
- A970 Gulberwick Heathery Park
- A970 Gulberwick Hillside

East Dunbartonshire Council

• Regent Gardens - Kirkintilloch Town Centre links Project

Clackmannanshire Council

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• C1c1 - Alva to Menstrie – (Alva Academy Link) Phase 2

1.7 Next steps

As set out in section 4, the engagement undertaken during the project has allowed for valuable insight on a number of issues to be gained from stakeholders, including on the existing delivery model, options for moving forward and their implications. The Roadmap for Active Travel Transformation is provided at Figure 2.

It is clear that any new delivery system needs to be more agile and enabling than the current model, rather than replicating existing barriers or creating new ones. Feedback from delivery partners on the model adopted for the Transformation Fund (see section 4.3) has been very positive in this regard.

Transport Scotland is considering a range of options for the future delivery of active travel in Scotland. This is being undertaken with a view to best achieving the objective of the Transformation Project.

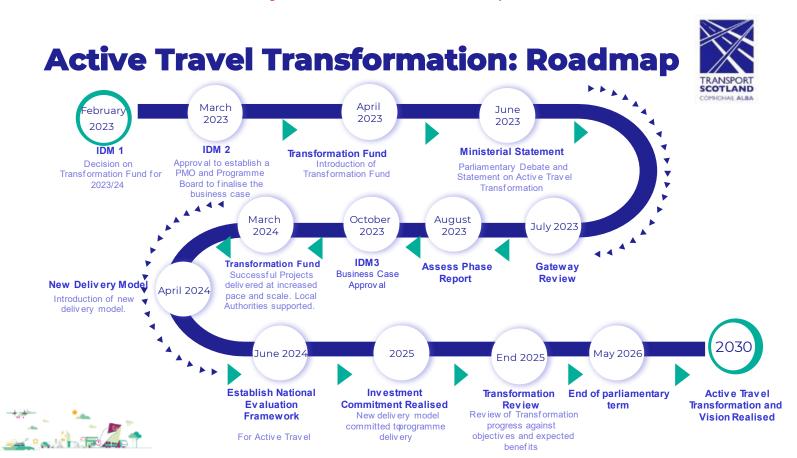
Any new model must account for the new Partnership Agreement between the Scottish Government and COSLA. The Verity House Agreement, signed in June 2023, sets out the vision for a more collaborative approach to delivering shared priorities for the people of Scotland.

The Project will also be subject to Gateway Review at relevant points during its progression, to provide an independent assurance review of the Project's position, and make recommendations on how it could be improved. This will include contributions and input from across Transport Scotland and Delivery Partners.





Figure 2 Active Travel Transformation: Roadmap



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- February 2023 -IDM 1- Decision on Transformation Fund for 2023/24
- March 2023 -IDM 2 Approval to establish a PMO and Programme Board to finalise the business case
- April 2023 Transformation Fund
- Introduction of Transformation Fund
- June 2023 Ministerial Statement -Parliamentary Debate and Statement on Active Travel Transformation
- July 2023 Gateway review
- August 2023 Assess Phase Report
- October 2023 IDM 3 -Business Case Approval
- March 2024 Transformation Fund Successful Projects delivered at increased pace and scale. Local Authorities supported.
- April 2024 New Delivery Model introduced
- June 2024 Establish National Evaluation Framework For Active Travel
- 2025 Investment Commitment Realised New delivery model committed to programme delivery
- End 2025 Transformation Review Review of Transformation progress against objectives and expected benefits
- May 2026 End of parliamentary term
- 2030 Active Travel Transformation and Vision Realised

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