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**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 15 NOVEMBER 2022**

**SUBJECT: ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND  
FINANCE)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to approve the Active Travel Strategy for Moray which sets out the Council's vision and action plan over the next 5 years for Active Travel in Moray.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (17) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to traffic management functions.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:**

- i. **note the consultation that has taken place with Stakeholders; and**
- ii. **agrees the Active Travel Strategy, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, as the policy position for Moray Council and as a forward programme of activity subject to appropriate funding being available.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 This is the Council's second Active Travel Strategy (ATS), with the previous strategy covering the period from 2016 to 2021. The ATS is a 5 year plan from 2022 to 2027 that aims to build on the increase in walking and cycling seen over the last 5 years in Moray, as well as meeting Scottish Government recommendations.
- 3.2 Active Travel has many benefits to both communities and individuals, and has a number of positive outcomes for public health, social inclusion, reducing the environmental impact of transport and for supporting local economic activity. By choosing to walk or cycle over private vehicle use, it can help deliver a low cost, high return for society as a whole and on individual health.
- 3.3 Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) sets out a vision for the next 20 years to create a transport system that is sustainable, safe, accessible and

inclusive for all. The NTS2 focuses on Active Travel as one of its key priorities as it aims to reduce inequalities, take climate action through promoting greener, cleaner travel choices, which will support the net zero target and improve our health and wellbeing. The Sustainable Transport Hierarchy identified in NTS2 prioritises walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport over single occupancy car use, and will be embedded in decision making to address any challenges and achieve key priorities.

3.4 The Council's Climate Change Strategy sets a target for Council operations to aim to be carbon neutral by 2030. There are four key actions within the Climate Change strategy that focus on Active Travel;

- Active travel for the journey to school;
- Targeted travel behaviour change programmes;
- Workplace Travel Plan for the Council as employer; and
- Embedding Active Travel infrastructure provision through Development Planning.

With the importance of our need locally, nationally and globally to combat climate change and reduce our carbon emissions, shifting from fossil fuel car use to walking and cycling for every day journeys will help reduce carbon emissions. It can also help to improve people's physical and mental health, which over the last 2 years has seen more pressure than ever before.

3.5 The Scottish Government have set out a legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2045, but with significant progress required to be made by 2030. The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out a strategic and policy approach to development and infrastructure provision, and the current draft NPF4 has set out a framework to help support the delivery of the Scottish Government 2045 target. Increasing our levels of active travel is an important contribution to achieving net zero, especially when noting that 37% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions arise from transport.

3.6 Moray has a good record in encouraging walking and cycling as travel choices, as evidenced in our past and current behaviour change initiatives. These include 'WOW Walk to School Travel Tracker', where Moray schools are regularly featured in the top 10 of Living Streets 'Walk of Fame' Scotland challenges, as well as our Bikeability programme, 'Love to Ride Moray' and the new 'Speyside Challenge'. Throughout September the Speyside Challenge saw over 40 participants competing to log the most active travel journeys. The total journeys logged at the end of the challenge was 2,354km and 306kg of Co2 was saved. This second ATS will build on that and will enable us to deliver outcomes of improving health, creating safer communities and reducing environmental impacts. Active Travel plays an important role in public health, the environment in which we live in and the open spaces we have access to. It also contributes to differences in the health and wellbeing of communities across Scotland by increasing opportunities for safe, attractive and enjoyable walking, wheeling and cycling.

3.7 On 7 December 2021, this committee approved a draft ATS and Action Plan for a 12 week public consultation period, from 10 January to 3 April 2022 (para 11 of the minute refers). The draft version of the ATS has now been revised following the public consultation and online engagement.

#### **4. STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The amended version of the ATS which incorporates the changes made as a result of the consideration of the consultation responses is attached as **Appendix 1**. Minor amendments have been made to the content and to the actions to reflect feedback from stakeholders. These included using all local photographs throughout the strategy, as well as the inclusion of additional tasks to support the actions.
- 4.2 The consultation on the draft strategy was publicised through local newspapers, the Moray Council website and social media, as well as posters erected across walking and cycling routes, transport interchanges and shared with community councils and committees. A printed version was also made available at various locations, including Elgin library.
- 4.3 Full details of the consultation and responses are attached as **Appendix 2**. The consultation consisted of two main strands:
- i. 2 online consultations sessions/ workshops were held with a range of stakeholders, and
  - ii. An online survey (attached as **Appendix 3**).
- 4.4 Moray Council's communications team supported these activities with social media promotion of the consultation and survey.
- 4.5 **Consultation Sessions/ Workshops:** the 2 online workshops consisted of representatives from:
- i. Moray Council (Roads Maintenance, Planning, Sport and Leisure, Economic Growth and Regeneration and Environmental Protection
  - ii. Outfit Moray
  - iii. Moray Ways Association
  - iv. Forres Green Spaces
  - v. Cairngorms National Park
  - vi. TSI Moray
  - vii. Finnerne Community Council
- 4.6 **Online Survey:** The online survey was hosted on Survey Monkey and shared on the Council's Sustainable Travel page. It included questions on the proposed vision, aims and objectives and action plan, as well as additional socio – demographic questions and equality impact. The key questions were:
- Do you agree with the proposed vision? If not, what alternative do you propose?
  - Where do you think there are current gaps in walking and cycling infrastructure provision?
  - What would encourage you to make more trips by foot or by cycle?
  - Do you agree with the overall aims and objectives of the ATS?
  - Do you consider that the proposed actions and tasks will deliver the objectives?

- 4.7 There were 84 respondents to the online survey. There was a spread of ages, with the 55-64 age group forming the largest response rate. There was an equal representation of both males and females at 45% each, 8.5% prefer not to say and 1.5% other. All responses came from within Moray, with a good mix of locations, although most who responded were from Elgin, Forres or Speyside. Nearly 97% had access to a car and could drive, and 16% considered their day to day activities to be impacted by a health problem or disability.
- 4.8 From the consultation, suggestions and improvements were made where sections of the active travel network provision could be improved, as well developing the objectives and actions in further detail. A number of minor changes have been made to the final Strategy such as additional tasks to clarify some of the actions in the Action Plan. The key amendments were;
- All photographs used throughout the Strategy were changed to local ones to showcase our infrastructure and scenery;
  - The inclusion of a new action to develop a maintenance plan for Active Travel infrastructure;
  - Inclusion of baseline data for some objectives such as, current walk to school figures and level 2 Bikeability delivery;
  - Expansion of the definition of Active Travel journeys to include shopping as a reason;
  - The measurement of objective 1, *'to increase the Active Travel network by 5% over the next 5 years'*, was highlighted a number of times throughout the feedback to be amended and increased from 5%. However, upon analysis of the current work being undertaken reviewing the Active Travel network and budget available, it was agreed that the 5% increase would be for public road network only.
- 4.9 The results from the consultation and stakeholder workshops showed a broad support for the aims and actions of the strategy, but highlighted the need for increased funding and resources in order to deliver the plan. This was evident through comments received in the surveys, as documented in **Appendix 2**. The comments did not indicate specific areas, projects or levels of funding support required, but mentioned that the Council was perhaps under resourced to deliver the aspirations of the consultees. Until interventions are identified we are unable to quantify the level of funding and resources needed.

## **5. STRATEGY**

- 5.1 The ATS sets out the ways by which Moray Council will encourage more non-motorised travel within Moray. The strategy sets out an active travel vision for Moray with supporting aims and objectives. An action plan is included in the strategy and work is on-going to identify active travel infrastructure projects in the action plan. The Vision for the strategy is:

*'to create a culture and environment where active travel is embedded within our communities as the automatic and obvious choice for everyday journeys to school, work and leisure, by providing a safe, integrated and accessible network for all.'*

5.2 There are 3 simple overarching aims for this strategy:

- to increase cycling and walking journeys to work;
- to increase cycling and walking journeys to education; and
- to increase the available infrastructure for active travel.

5.3 The aims of the strategy are based on six specific objectives which are focused around the provision of infrastructure and facilities, meaningful travel planning, skills training and education/ behaviour change.

5.4 There is on-going work to identify and prioritise infrastructure based on suggestions and improvements from the consultation (see para 4.8), which will include further consultation with the public as part of the review of the Local Development Plan, and will be the subject of a future report.

## **6. ACTION PLAN**

6.1 The strategy sets out a clear Action Plan with quantifiable outputs geared towards achieving the objectives. There are 8 key actions within the plan all relating to various aspects of improving Active Travel. Each action has associated tasks with planned outcomes, leads and timescales through to 2027.

6.2 The Action Plan sets out how the Council will continue to plan for the future, and the need for maintenance requirements to be considered with existing and new active travel infrastructure, as well as behaviour change and education programmes.

6.3 As part of the future planning for Active Travel infrastructure in Moray, a full review of both the existing network (breakdown of adopted/ not adopted, core paths etc.) and potential future route map plan, is currently being undertaken. There will be further consultation and public engagement on Active Travel infrastructure as part of the engagement for the review of the Local Development Plan. Consultation will begin towards the end of 2022 on a pilot project through Participatory Budgeting (PB), seeking feedback on the provision of cycle parking and bike repair stations across Moray.

6.4 Subject to approval, the next steps are to:

- Identify membership of a working group comprising of both internal Moray Council officers and external partners.
- Completion of the route map plan exercise which will form a baseline picture and identify any gaps in provision of the network.
- Develop a project plan to deliver the action plan, based on key priorities of each year.
- Develop a short and long term funding plan, which will include all available sources of funding from Scottish Government, national and local bodies, communities and the private sector. Almost all funding for infrastructure and soft measures / behaviour change programmes comes exclusively from external agencies.
- Develop a monitoring plan which will include a number of measures that will be undertaken and assessed at regular intervals. This will enable a progress report to be made on an annual basis.

- Ongoing delivery of some of the day tasks included in the action plan will be supported by the Sustrans embedded officer.

## **7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

The Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan support Moray's 2026 priorities for healthier citizens as well as for older people to sustain active lives in their community. As well as supporting economic development targets by providing greater choice for travel within and between communities.

The Active Travel Strategy also supports all four of the priority areas of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan;

- Developing a diverse, inclusive and sustainable economy
- Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray
- Empowering and connecting communities
- Improving wellbeing of our population

### **(b) Policy and Legal**

The Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan links to national and regional policy objectives, as set out in the strategy document, and Action 31 in the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 Delivery Programme and Action Plan – Encourage Active Travel.

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **(c) Financial implications**

The Scottish Government has committed to increasing investment to at least £320 million or 10% of the total transport budget on active travel by 2024-25. As set out in the ATS, it is intended to fund the Action Plan through existing funding streams, as well as applications for external grant funding when the opportunity arises.

With the increase of planned infrastructure, a bigger proportion of maintenance budget will be needed to be spent in the future on any new Active Travel routes, including winter maintenance and gritting. Roads Maintenance are currently responsible for 25 miles of cycle tracks.

Based on the consultation and engagement feedback, cycle parking and repair station infrastructure has emerged as a key priority. Due to this, we intend to run a pilot project using a Participatory Budgeting\* (PB) approach, and will allocate funds from our 'Cycling Walking Safer Routes' grant. As PB will be initially trialled as a pilot project, larger infrastructure projects are not within budget scope this year.

\*(Participatory budgeting (PB) is a democratic process in which members of the public decide directly how to spend part of a public budget. We support PB as a tool for community empowerment and as a

resource to build on the wider development of participatory democracy in Scotland).

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/participatory-budgeting/>

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report, however it should be noted that comprehensive delivery of the Action Plan will be contingent on successful sourcing of additional grant funding (subject to Council approvals).

**(d) Risk Implications**

Without an up to date Active Travel Strategy, there is a risk of a fragmented approach to the provision of Active Travel infrastructure and Behaviour Change programmes, which may not fully capitalise on existing and future funding opportunities.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications arising from this report as the delivery of the draft Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan will be part of existing staff duties. As part of Sustrans 'Strategic Partnerships programme', a Sustrans embedded project officer working within the Council and will be in post until May 2024. Their role is to support and help deliver the actions and tasks within the action plan with respect to infrastructure provision and community engagement on future active travel infrastructure projects.

The post is 100% funded through Transport Scotland for the first year of delivery. Following this Sustrans would continue to pay 50% of costs for a further two years, and the Council will match fund the other 50% through the 'Cycling Walking Safer Routes' (CWSR) grant funding.

**(f) Property**

There are no property implications arising from this report.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

This strategy is subject to consultation with service users, which will feed into an assessment of impacts in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty, The Fairer Scotland Duty, Human Rights and the Rights of the Child. The assessment will be carried out in consultation with the Council's internal equality forum.

Supporting active travel is beneficial for public health, and helps to tackle inequalities. Raising the profile of active travel choices will also help to improve accessibility for those with mobility disabilities. The provision of new shared use paths when developing the network in Moray, will create better accessibility for wheelchair users.

**(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

Promoting active travel is one of the key actions in the Council's Climate Change Strategy. The Active Travel Strategy can provide a positive impact on the climate through enabling and encouraging alternative modes of travel through Moray. Reduced emissions supports nature recovery and the overall improvement of environments.

**(i) Consultations**

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Legal Services Manager, Equal Opportunities Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Committee Services Officer (L Rowan), and Principal Climate Change Strategy Officer have all been consulted and their comments taken into account in this report.

**8. CONCLUSION**

**8.1 The Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan sets out how the Council will take forward its vision for active travel in Moray.**

**8.2 Having a strategy with a clear vision, and relevant objectives and actions that has been shaped through engagement with the public, has the potential to have a real positive effect and enhance the health and environment for all people across Moray.**

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Background Papers: [Previous Committee Report 7 December 2021](#) for draft [Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan](#)

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