

## The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee – 9<sup>th</sup> December 2013

Agenda Item	6
Report No	CIA/64/13

### Cycling in a Carbon Clever City

**Report by Director of Planning & Development, Director of Transport, Environment and Community Services, and Head of Policy and Performance**

This paper provides details of the Council's proposed approach for creating the right conditions for increasing cycling as a viable mode of transport in a Carbon CLEVER city. It sets out how the Council will consider the role of cycling, and the future priorities for further increasing cycle use, through the Inverness Land Use & Transport Strategy consultation and the Green Transport Strategy.

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 In October this year the City of Inverness Area Committee approved a process for consulting with partners, businesses and communities on a new [Land Use & Transport Strategy for Inverness](#) which aims to identify land use and transport priorities for improving the quality of the environment in Inverness City Centre and delivering a long term sustainable transport network. This will include the role of cycling in achieving this vision. Alongside, the Council has started work on a Green Transport Strategy which aims to maximise the role of active travel and public transport in the journeys we make across Highland. In addition, Highland Council's recent Carbon CLEVER conference highlighted the important role that cycling and active travel plays in achieving the Council's vision for a carbon neutral Inverness in a low-carbon Highlands by 2025.
- 1.2 Inverness is a compact City within which there is currently relatively high levels of cycling to work, with 7% of journeys to work being made by bike. Schools are also experiencing higher levels of cycling following Travel Plans through the Safer Routes to School project. However, only 2% of overall journeys are made by bicycle.
- 1.3 There is currently a national shift towards increasing cycling for everyday journeys through [National Cycling Action Plan for Scotland](#), the latest version of which was published in June 2013. The Action Plan sets out to reduce the large number of short journeys made by car replacing them with journeys by bikes or other active transport, but also improving health and reducing the carbon impact of transport. It sets out 19 actions for how local authorities can work in partnership to deliver the national target to increase cycling levels to 10% of all journeys by 2020.

- 1.4 The Highland Council and partner organisations are actively involved in delivering improvements to cycle infrastructure in the area that will help towards achieving this target. Hitrans in partnership with Sustrans has recently appointed Fiona McNally as an Active Travel Project Officer, whose role is to implement the [Active Travel Audits](#) in partnership with local authorities across the Highlands and Islands. Active Travel Audits identify priority areas where investment can achieve the greatest impact in terms of increasing levels of walking and cycling, and therefore provide the most effective proposals for increasing cycling and active travel.
- 1.5 This provides local momentum to the delivery of cycling improvements. The [Inverness Active Travel Audit](#) - prepared in 2011 - recommends various route enhancements and projects that would improve infrastructure in the City. These were showcased at the recent Carbon Clever Conference as the vision to aim for by 2025. A number of projects are in progress that aim to increase cycle use, and the Audit provides a guide for other future priorities for the City. The next sections provide an update on progress in delivering these projects and recommendations for future improvements to cycling infrastructure and facilities.

## 2. Current projects

- 2.1 In 2011 Highland Council was successful in obtaining funding from the European Regional Development Fund for the Green and Active Travel Project which helped to fund and deliver a number of the projects identified in the Active Travel Audits. In the Inverness area these are:
- **Improved cycle parking infrastructure** – This includes new storage shelters at Inverness Railway station which are currently being procured along with new cycle parking at Culloden shops.
  - **Cycle paths along Millburn Road** – This involves reconfiguration of the existing road space to provide 3m wide shared surface cycle/footpath to complete the active travel routes between the City Centre and Inverness Campus. This is currently being procured and is scheduled to be completed by mid/late 2014. A report to TECS committee in early 2014 will include consideration of additional funding for the completion of this project using currently unallocated capital resources for carbon clever initiatives from 2014.
  - **Active Travel Map for Inverness** – Highland Council and Hitrans have jointly commissioned new cycle maps for Inverness that are currently being designed and will be published by the end of this financial year. Maps are also being prepared for other towns across Highland (Dingwall, Thurso, Fort William, Tain, Alness and Invergordon).
- 2.2 Transport Scotland and Sustrans are currently developing proposals for completing the National Cycle Network 78 (NCN78) between Fort William and Inverness, including the section along Dores Road. Transport Scotland have committed the funding deliver improvements along the route, however, Highland Council and Transport Scotland will also need to work with developers of adjacent sites to ensure appropriate safeguarding of routes and

connections, particularly in accordance with development allocations in current and emerging Local Development Plans.

- 2.3 There are a number of finance sources that are being used to help deliver these projects both at the European, national, regional and local level. More recently, the Scottish Government has introduced an expanded Community Links Programme which aims to deliver the National Cycling Action Plan for Scotland, including a £14m fund for 2014/15, and £10m in 2015/16, for the creation of cycling network infrastructure and tackling barriers for new cyclists. All applications for funding must be led by local authorities and need to be matched by 50% funding from a combination of other sources, which may include local or regional funding opportunities and/or developer contributions.

### 3. Recommended future projects and next steps

- 3.1 Officers from TECS, Planning & Development and Hitrans have reviewed the recommendations from the Active Travel Audits as well as other innovative solutions currently under consideration by the Council and its partners. The following projects are considered to have the greatest potential for enabling an increase in cycling to contribute to the national target of 10% modal share for cycling. These are as follows:

**Arterial routes between City Centre and major destinations** – including Inverness Campus, Raigmore Hospital, retail centres, leisure venues and the existing and expanding communities in the City. This may include focussing on barriers or blockages to providing continuous routes to and from major destinations and the city centre, for example dropped kerbs, reconfigured road space and junctions and signage. It will be important to understand the needs of all users of roads and paths to avoid any conflicts and improve road safety.

**Interactive cycle maps website** – This formed part of the ERDF project described above, and aims to provide a valuable resource for cyclists and to use as a marketing tool for current and future cycling routes. There is scope to expand this to cover all the settlements covered by Active Travel Audits prepared by Hitrans across the Highland and Islands area.

**Electric bikes** – SSE have offered to install the infrastructure required for a pilot electric bicycle hire scheme in Inverness. The total cost would be in the region of £40,000, which SSE would procure. SSE would be the contracting authority, and also run the procurement process for the electric bicycles. Highland Council would have an on-going advisory role in this process.

**An opportunity to provide sponsorship for the Etape Loch Ness event on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2014** - This is a flagship cycling event for Scotland and the UK with huge potential for international appeal, promoting the Highlands as a cycling destination and as carbon clever. Sponsorship options are currently being explored.

- 3.2 A meeting is due to take place between SSE, Sustrans, Highland Council and Hitrans on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December (after the time of writing this report) which will scope the detail of how the electric bikes project could be taken forward.
- 3.3 A consultation is due to commence over the next few weeks which seeks to identify the land use and transport priorities for Inverness. The Council will be organising open consultation events where a range of stakeholders for their views in order to draw up a Land Use and Transport Strategy for the City. It is recommended that these projects are raised as possible priorities through the consultation so that stakeholders are able to comment on their potential benefits, the practicalities of delivering these projects, and other future priorities for delivering an efficient and effective active travel network. This will also include a discussion on travel behaviour and attitudes of all transport and road users. We will work with partner organisations with experience in behavioural change, such as Sustrans.
- 3.4 Feedback from the consultation on cycling issues will be incorporated into the wider feedback to this Committee on the Land Use and Transport Strategy, and where necessary to the TECS Committee on the Highland-wide Green Transport Strategy.

#### **4. Legal, Equality and Resource implications**

- 4.1 Legal implications arise from the duties on the Council regarding climate change and guidance relating to cycling targets. . Equalities issues generally relate to the need to enable more women to cycle and to make routes safer for younger and older people. For specific project proposals equalities screening will be carried out to encourage fairer access for all groups in the community to cycling opportunities.
- 4.2 For some of the projects identified in this report, internal and external sources of funding are being identified. Other projects will be reported back to this Committee alongside the feedback from the consultation proposed on the Land Use and Transport Strategy.
- 4.3 There are no risks identified at this stage.

#### **5. Climate Change and Carbon Clever**

- 5.1 The projects identified, and the imminent consultation on the Land Use & Transport Strategy, will encourage sustainable transport and thereby help to mitigate the impact of climate change by reducing traffic congestion, improving journey times and creating the right conditions for increasing cycling and walking and thereby reduce the carbon impact of transport.

## **Recommendation**

The Committee is invited to:

- i. recognise the existing projects for improving cycling in the City and the potential to use both internal and external funding sources to implement these projects;
- ii. agree the three recommended priorities for cycling infrastructure at paragraph 3.1 to be taken forward for feasibility, funding and implementation by officers and partner organisations, with progress reports to the City of Inverness Area Committee in the future;
- iii. in relation to recommendation ii above, to identify sources of area funding (e.g. ward discretionary fund and / or common good funding) for the remainder required for the electric bicycles scheme estimated to be £8,680 per annum for two years, with further information reported verbally at the meeting;
- iv. agree that future cycling issues should be fully considered through the consultation for the Inverness Land Use & Transport Strategy for bringing further improvements, for example, to link to the Millburn Road Scheme; and
- v. agree to explore the methods for tackling travel behaviour and attitudes to encourage more cycling through the Inverness Land Use and Transport Strategy.

Designation: Director of Planning & Development, Director of Transport, Environment and Community Services, Head of Policy and Performance

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> November 2013

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City of Inverness and Area Committee Report – 21/10/13 – Item 4 Inverness Land Use & Transport Strategy - <http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/60142BA2-61FF-49C2-AE1C-F75A1008BDD9/0/Item4CIA5213.pdf>

Active Travel Audits -

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport/transportplanning/ActiveTravelMasterplans.htm>

Inverness Active Travel Masterplan –

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3512DD39-BFF2-4A2D-BCBD-6A3A55BB2A53/0/InvernessActiveTravelAuditFinalReport.pdf>

Cycling Action Plan for Scotland -

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/06/25103912/0>

Community Links Programme - <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/what-we-do/communities/community-links>