

The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee – 2 June 2016

Agenda Item	8
Report No	CIA/24/16

Active Travel - Community Links PLUS Funding Bid Update

Report by Director of Development & Infrastructure

Summary

This report provides an update to Committee for the Community Links PLUS funding bid for the Inverness City Active Travel Network Project.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Inverness City Active Travel Network is one of five final projects being considered for Community Links PLUS funding.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Community Links PLUS competition was announced on 12th November 2015. The primary aim of the competition is for exemplar, high profile and 'game changing' cycling projects in Scotland. One or two projects will be awarded the final grant. The sum of money depends on the scheme or schemes, and the level of funding that is set for Active Travel by the Scottish Government.
- 2.2 Community Links PLUS attracted 25 applications from 24 Local Authorities across Scotland. The initial entries were narrowed down to 10 projects after Stage One and then down to 5 after Stage Two. The Inverness City Active Travel Network Project is one of the final 5 projects that are required to put forward their final Stage Three submission by the end of June 2016.
- 2.3 A copy of the Inverness City Active Travel Network Plan submitted for the Community Links PLUS funding is attached at **Appendix A**.

3. Details

- 3.1 The Inverness City Active Travel Network project aims to deliver a comprehensive active travel network across the City of Inverness that will aim to double the levels of cycling across the city.
- 3.2 The headline interventions include:
- to enhance the key 'East to West' active travel corridor linking with the City Centre;

- to complement the high quality active travel connection to the Inverness Campus via the 'Golden Bridge' with a new bridge, crossing the railway line, suitable for pedestrians and cyclists linking the Inverness Campus with the Inverness Retail and Business Park (partnership with HIE and others);
- to provide a new link (West Link Road) across the River Ness that enables walking and cycling journeys to and from the major sports facility area at Bught Park from the south side of Inverness which will also link up to the existing Southern Distributor Road which incorporates active travel infrastructure;
- to support the efforts to address air quality within the City Centre through the designation of road space, and new infrastructure for enhanced walking and cycle routes in the City Centre;
- to overcome the historic lack of connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists at the Harbour Road/Millburn Road and Longman Industrial area by providing a new active travel link (tunnel under the railway line);
- to address connectivity issues present at Inshes roundabout, providing a more direct link from the Southern Distributor Road to the Inverness Campus; and
- to complement proposed measures towards enhanced public transport infrastructure (rail and bus) by providing improved cycle routes and cycle parking to the transport hubs in the City Centre.

3.3 The project will also look to improve the wider City network through a wide variety of measures:

- new and enhanced dropped kerb arrangements and markings;
- reinforcement of the 20mph speed limit;
- covered cycle parking;
- crossing points;
- cycle contraflow provision;
- cycle bypasses (bus stops and other locations); and
- improved lighting.

3.4 A separate report is submitted to Committee covering proposed Road Traffic Regulation Orders to support specific active travel at key locations in Inverness.

3.5 In addition, it is proposed to incorporate a number of smarter measures throughout the duration of the project to encourage behaviour change, and engage with local communities as the network develops. These measures will include:

- improved wayfinding and legibility of routes;
- artwork and high quality street furniture;
- route mapping;
- travel planning;
- link with education – engagement with school pupils and further education students; and
- e-bike and 'bike and go' schemes.

- 3.6 An extract from the Stage Two submission for the Inverness City Active Travel Network is attached at **Appendix B**.
- 3.7 Since the announcement that the Inverness City Active Travel Network Project was through to Stage Three there have been a series of activities to assist with the preparation of the final submission:
- engagement workshop at the Cycling Inverness event;
 - commissioning of consultants to assist with the preparation of Dutch style cycle infrastructure designs and assistance with other submission requirements;
 - a series of workshops held in Inverness with Council designers and planners with other stakeholders; and
 - preparation of initial design proposals to form part of the funding bid package.
- 3.8 A short presentation and verbal update will be provided to bring Committee up-to-date with some of the major elements of the funding bid.
- 3.9 A summary of the consultation responses received at the Cycling Inverness event is attached at **Appendix C**.
- 3.10 A copy of the Cycling Advocacy document is attached at **Appendix D**. The Committee is requested to note the contents of this document, and to approve the use of this document for funding bids towards enhanced cycling and walking infrastructure across the City of Inverness Committee area, including the Community Links PLUS funding bid.
- 3.11 One of the key requirements is a clear demonstration of a buy-in from politicians, including the Leader of Council, relevant Committee Convenor and Committee Members. A letter of support from the Council Leader and other letters of support have clearly assisted with the successful outcome of the Stage Two submission. In order to provide evidence of support for the Stage Three submission the Committee is requested to formally note support for the funding bid.

4. Implications

4.1 Resource

- 4.1.1 Funding received from the successful outcome of Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the funding bid process is being used to undertake the preparation of the final Stage 3 submission.
- 4.1.2 Match funding of up to £7m has been identified, however the percentage of required has not yet been specified by Community Links PLUS. Further information is expected to be available in August 2016.
- 4.1.3 If the funding bid is successful a report will be brought to this committee later in the year.

- 4.2 **Legal**
No implications
- 4.3 **Equalities**
This opportunity for funding is a very positive situation for non-motorised users.
- 4.4 **Climate Change/Carbon Clever**
A successful outcome with the Community Links PLUS bid will mean a significant level of funding can enable the delivery of the Inverness City Active Travel Network and bring about the game changing doubling of cycling in Inverness.
- 4.5 **Risk**
Without this funding the speed of change for active travel in Inverness will not progress as quickly as it could.
- 4.6 **Gaelic and Rural implications**
No Implications

Recommendation

The committee is requested to:

- note the progress so far with the Inverness City Active Travel Network Project bid;
- note the consultation responses received at the Cycling Inverness event held at UHI Inverness College;
- approve the use of the Cycling Advocacy document to support funding bids towards enhanced cycling and walking infrastructure;
- confirm support for the overall aim to double the level of cycling across Inverness by 2020; and
- confirm support for the Community Links PLUS funding bid, to be submitted by the end of June 2016.

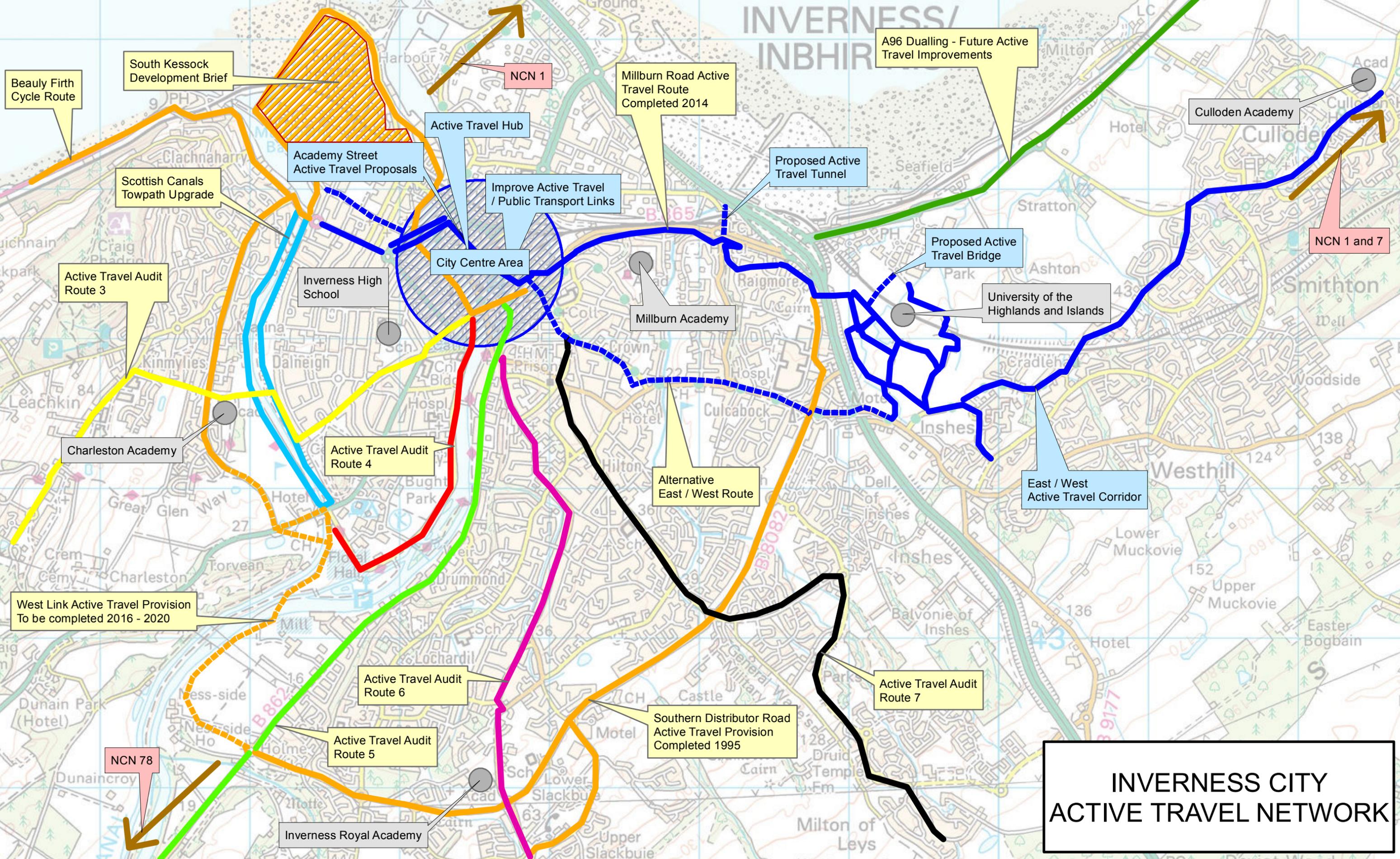
Designation: Transport Planning Manager

Date: 17 May 2016

Author: Richard Gerring

Background Papers: Community Links PLUS files held by the author

INVERNESS/ INBHIR



**INVERNESS CITY
ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK**

APPENDIX B EXTRACT FROM STAGE TWO SUBMISSION

Partnership Working and Deliverability

2. *Has there been any engagement with external organisations to date? (for example, targeted community beneficiaries, Regional Transport Partnerships, cycling and active travel stakeholders)*

The Highland Council already have an excellent track record in partnership and cross-portfolio working. In regards to active travel we have already successfully partnered with Hitrans, Velocity Cycle Café and Workshop, NHS Highland, HIE and Scottish Canals to deliver improvements. We have been actively engaging with these partners and others in the preparation of our Community Links PLUS submissions and have their support. We intend that if we are successful that these key partners and stakeholders will all have an important role in the delivery of different aspects of our project.

A series of additional Letters of Support have also been provided to confirm the broad endorsement for the Stage 2 submission for the Inverness City Active Travel Network, from the following organisations:

Black Isle Bicycles	Education (Highland Council)	Highland Cycle Campaign	Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)	HITRANS	NHS Highland
Scottish Canals	Transition Black Isle	Velocity Cycle Café and Workshop			VisitScotland

3. *Will the project be delivered within the time scales proposed? (For example, a summary of risks/ a risk assessment)*

The project will be delivered within the term of the funding period (2016 – 2020). It is proposed to set up governance and project management arrangements that will include a Project Board and Theme Working Groups. A full risk register will be prepared as part of the project that will be developed initially as part of the third stage submission.

Initial consideration of risks for some of the major elements of the project has identified the following key points:

- Inverness Campus – North Bridge: Planning permission in place; Initial infrastructure design under way; final funding commitment subject to CL+ outcome.
- Active Travel Hub: TS confirmed ERDF funding in place; funding allocation yet to be decided; potential difficulties if lack of project partners.
- East Inverness Active Travel Corridor: Historic signposted NCN route; constraints/opportunities for substantial enhancements to the quality of the route; detailed design to be prepared through the third stage submission.
- Harbour Road Active Travel Tunnel: Initial dialogue with Network Rail (NR) identifies engineering, land, and future maintenance issues to be resolved. NR indicate typical period

from investigation to delivery would be 3 years. Feasibility options to be investigated during 2016.

- City-wide Active Travel Enhancements: Inverness Active Travel Audit completed in 2011; Enhancements on Milburn Road, City Centre and Inverness Royal Academy already delivered through Community Links funding. Project Partners and Stakeholders support. Detailed design to be prepared through the third stage submission.
- Engagement (Education Link): Through Smarter Choices Smarter Places (SCSP) funding several cycling promotion projects have been delivered. Subject to future funding bids to SCSP / Carbon CLEVER an ambitious programme for engagement will be developed through the third stage submission.
- Safer Routes to School: We will continue to work with schools in Inverness to deliver walking and cycling enhancements. This is subject to future funding.

Project Partners

The Highland Council Care and Learning (Education) Service: This Service recognises the benefits of increased Active Travel. They will collaborate in connection with the development of an engagement plan which will be developed at the third stage submission.

The Highland Council Carbon CLEVER Team: A number of initiatives delivered across Inverness such as a partnership with the private sector to provide e-bike hire. Subject to future funding further initiatives will be taken forward.

The Highland Council Project Design Unit: This team has experience of delivering Community Links projects across the Highlands. Members of the team are undertaking Cycling Scotland's CPD training.

Regional Transport Partnership (HITRANS): The RTP has supported a number of Active Travel initiatives for Inverness such as the Inverness Active Travel Audit and the preparation of a cycle route map. Positive indications have been received for future collaboration and funding.

Scottish Canals: Infrastructure enhancements have been carried out along the Caledonian Canal. SC have a desire to take forward further enhancements subject to successful funding bids.

HIE: Planning permission in place for North Bridge to Inverness Campus; Initial infrastructure design under way; final funding commitment subject to CL+ outcome.

Funding

We have identified potential match funding in the region of £7M and will continue to investigate additional funding with partners in order to secure the maximum amount of match funding.

APPENDIX C

**Inverness City Active Travel Network
 Consultation Responses received at Cycling Inverness event at Inverness
 College 12th February 2015**

Taking forward the Inverness City Active Travel Network there is an opportunity to focus on the most advantageous measures. You are invited to identify your top 3 measures and if appropriate any locations.

Responses	Tally
Link with educational establishments (through physical and “smarter” measures) e.g. Bikeability, incentivise reaching mode share targets, link all establishments to network, build as bike workshops.	12
Provide new dedicated infrastructure e.g. Clearly marked routes, provides protection from traffic and is joined up, segregation along key active travel routes into the City, road space reallocation Specific locations mentioned – Harbour Road cycle route, links to and from Longman, Culduthel Road, Old Edinburgh Road	9
Comprehensive signage, advertising, branding and mapping	6
Link to health sector e.g. GP referrals to cycling classes/groups, educate families on health benefits	5
Provide more, secure cycle parking	5
Link with Employment Centres / Trip Generators E.g. with employee incentive schemes, bike maintenance sessions, providing infrastructure links to key centres, encourage use of pool bikes instead of hire cars	5
Improve existing infrastructure e.g. improve cycle lanes where width is constrained, remove barriers, dropped kerbs, surfacing improvements, review cycle “danger spots” and modify to increase safety, join up existing links	5
20mph limits across City/ key residential areas	5
City wide bike hire scheme	3
Driver training to include compulsory cycle training module	2
Develop e bike schemes e.g. introduce demos and easier booking system.	2
Better enforcement of cars exceeding speed limits	1
Inverness cycle auto-bahn	1
Loops out from the City	1
Provide fun facilities along the network – make it a destination by providing places to stop and enjoy	1
A coherent plan built into strategy and policy	1
Ease back on promotion re helmets and hi viz – acts as a deterrence for new cyclists	1
Hire cargo bikes	1
Bikes on buses	1



Photo courtesy of Velocity Cafe and Bike Workshop

Creating a city fit for the future



Putting active travel at the heart of the Highlands

- A shared vision
- Linking communities
- A happier, healthier place to live
- Increasing active tourism
- Better visitor experience
- Reducing reliance on cars
- A low carbon, sustainable future

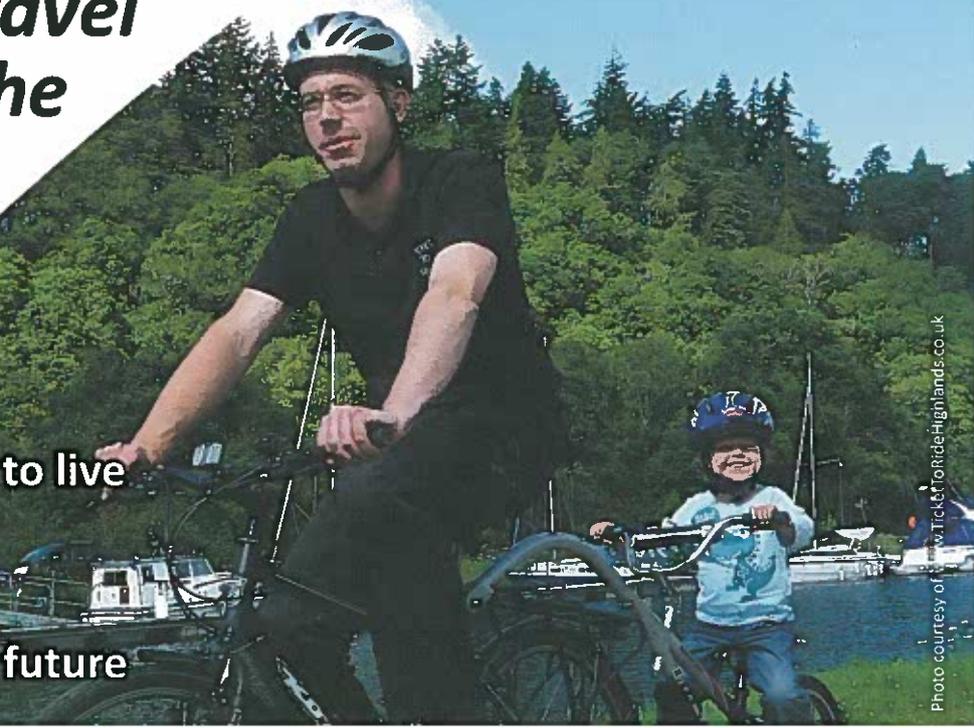


Photo courtesy of www.TrickbitoftheHighlands.co.uk



Our shared vision

2kg of carbon are saved for every short journey that is made using a bike instead of a car
Sustrans

Inverness already has some of the highest levels of cycling in Scotland – but with better infrastructure and sensitive development, the area could set new standards for active travel. Getting more people out on their bikes would not only improve their quality of life, it would improve their health and well-being too. And by attracting more cyclists to the area, the economy can benefit too.

The Etape Loch Ness cycle sportive, first held in May 2014, showed how Inverness and Loch Ness can be a draw for cyclists from far and wide – it sold out in minutes when entries were opened. If we can enhance the experience of visitors like these with high-quality cycle routes, they will come back again and again.

Our vision is for a region that puts active travel at the heart of everything it does. It is about getting about in our daily lives, enjoying a leisurely cycle ride at the weekend and offering something unique to visitors that will make them shout about the Highlands.

We believe Inverness and the surrounding communities can really benefit from an approach that balances the needs of all road users, providing a mix of cycle options that mean everybody from regular cycle commuters to first-time riders can enjoy the wonderful area at its best.

Imagine cycling along a traffic-free path overlooking Loch Ness – that's a vision we want to turn into a reality so that tens of thousands of people can benefit.

It's a vision shared by many groups and individuals and one that is being backed by Highland Council through its Carbon CLEVER scheme – which aims to have a low carbon Highlands and a carbon neutral Inverness city centre by 2025. That can only be achieved by a radical approach to how we get about – and creating more and better cycle routes is a major part of it.

There's already a new e-bike scheme offering locals and visitors access to electric bikes in the city centre.

A cycle route along Millburn Road linking the city centre to the new University of the Highlands and Islands campus at Beechwood via the eye-catching Golden Bridge will help to change people's habits and encourage more people to think about their travel options.

There is so much more going on, not just in Inverness but in the beautiful areas which surround this great city – from the communities around the Beaulieu Firth and Loch Ness to Nairn and the Black Isle.

Our shared vision is to make these places even more attractive by making them more easily accessible without needing to use the car. The spin-off benefits are there for all to see. Let's make change happen in the Highlands.

Leisure cycling is worth up to £239m to the Scottish economy – with an estimated £50m of that in the Highlands
The Value of Cycle Tourism report, June 2013 / VisitScotland

Beaulieu Firth

Develop a circular route around the firth to benefit locals and visitors

What's happening now

- Existing recommended on-road cycle route via minor road between Charlestown and Redcastle to Muir of Ord
- Beaulieu to Muir of Ord shared-use route being developed
- Beaulieu to Kirkhill shared-use path
- Minor roads through Cabrich link to existing cycle path into Inchmore



Aspirations for the future

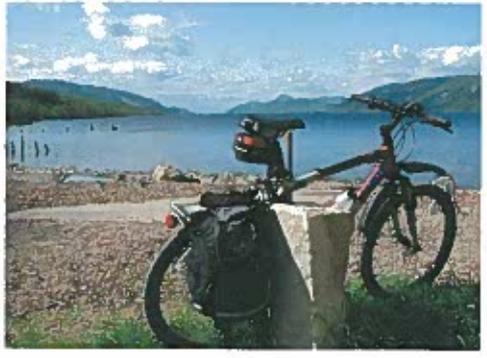
- Develop a traffic-free route between Bunchrew and Clachnaharry on the outskirts of Inverness
- Link minor roads on north of the firth with those on the south to create a quiet, safe cycling route around the firth – the 27-mile circuit is largely flat, with villages along the route offering places to stop. It has the potential to become a tourist attraction in its own right, with parts of the route close to the shore
- Connect communities along the route, including Muir of Ord, Beaulieu, Kiltarlity, Inchmore and Bunchrew to Inverness

Loch Ness

Complete a circular route around Loch Ness which has considerable potential benefit to both Inverness and Loch Ness communities

What's happening now

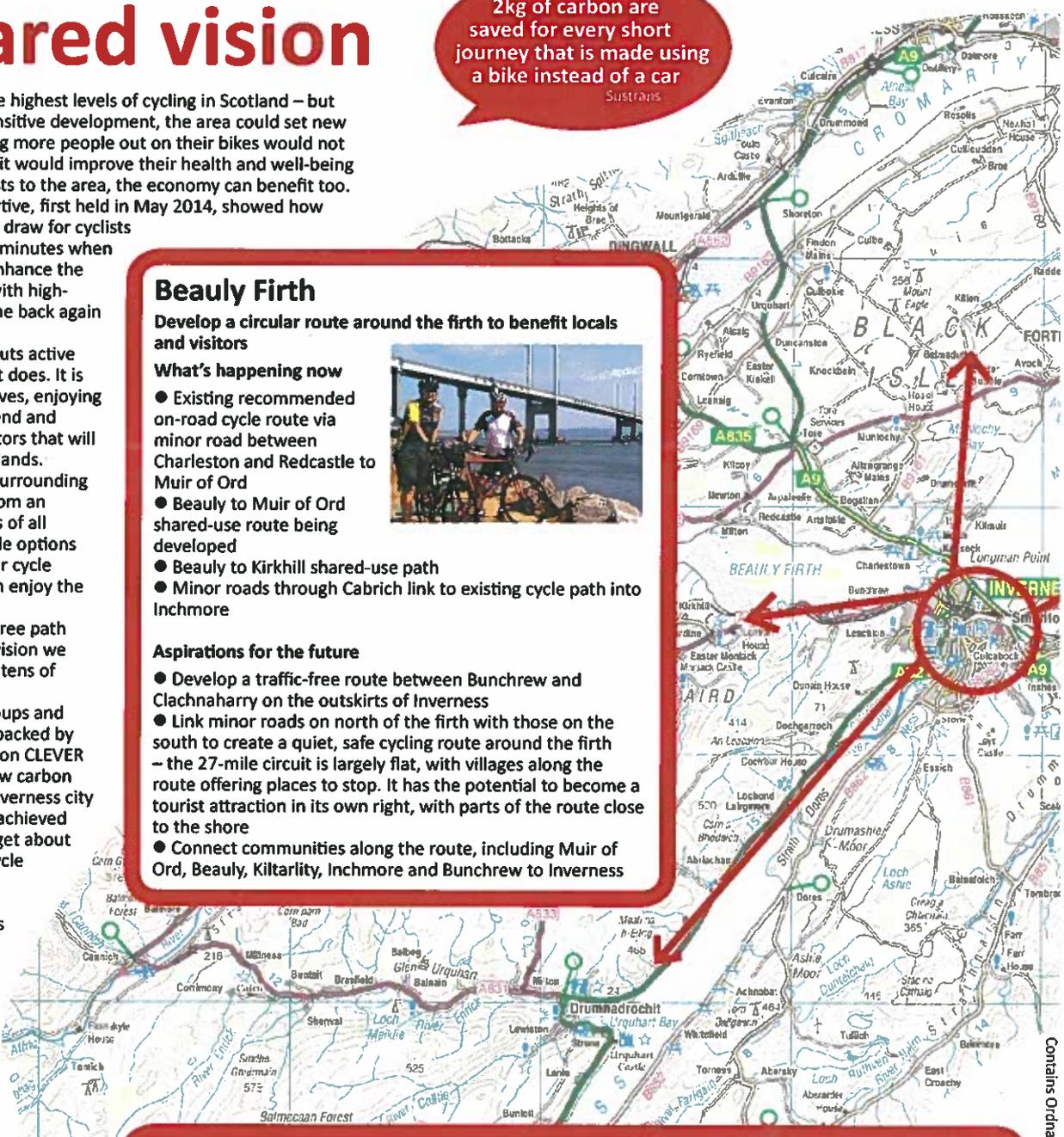
- National Cycle Network Route 78 is being developed between Fort William and Inverness, using minor roads on the south side of Loch Ness from Fort Augustus
- The recent Etape Loch Ness cycle sportive – which attracted more than 1000 entrants – is one of many events around the world-famous loch, which shows the high level of demand for cycling in the area

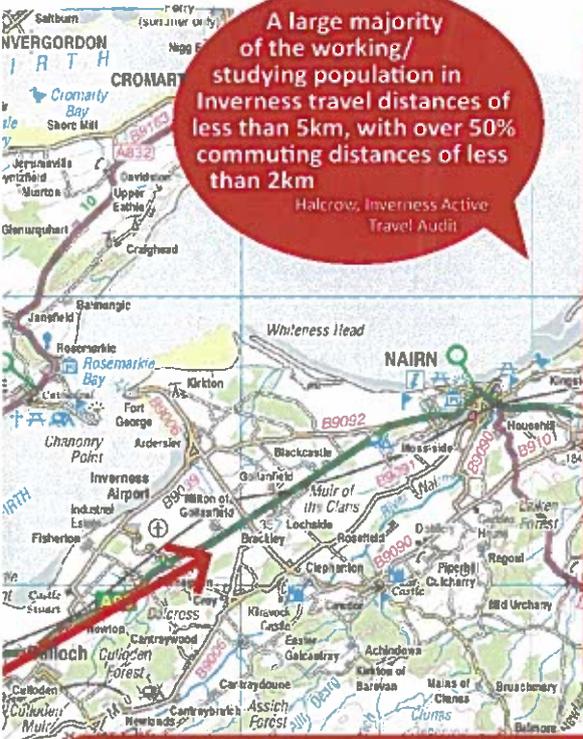


Aspirations for the future

- Increasing cycling levels in Inverness and other communities around Loch Ness
- Creating safer access to Drumadrochit, Urquhart Castle and Invermoriston

- A traffic-free route on the north side of Loch Ness would complete a circular route around the loch which would act as a draw for visitors from around the world
- Opportunities to develop green tourism and improve visitor experience by providing better access to the loch-side on the north





A large majority of the working/ studying population in Inverness travel distances of less than 5km, with over 50% commuting distances of less than 2km
Halcrow, Inverness Active Travel Audit

Inverness East

Produce an active travel network along the A96 corridor

What's happening now

- National Cycle Network Route 1 links Inverness to Nairn via minor roads past Culloden Battlefield and the Clava Cairns
- "A96 Corridor Green Network" mapped to guide development and protect and enhance green spaces in area

Aspirations for the future

- Routes to be created as east Inverness area is developed in line with the Local Development Plan
- Create a coastal trail between Inverness and Nairn
- Add a landward and tourist trail with north-south links between the three arterial routes
- Link communities along the route, including Ardersier, Tornagrain, Cawdor and Croy



Inverness City

Create a network of active travel routes between all settlements and major destinations

What's happening now

- Active travel map of the city being produced
- New e-bikes project with reduced rates for local users
- Millburn Road link from city centre to new UHI campus at Beechwood via the Golden Bridge
- Cycle counter on Millburn Road to record number of cyclists using route
- Linking campus to retail park by crossing the railway line
- Developments along riverside as part of flood alleviation works
- Feasibility study into cycle route options along Culduthel Road into city centre
- Bike cafe Velocity offers a staffed bike workshop as well as refreshments



Aspirations for the future

- Connecting where people live to where they want to be
- Focus on city centre, railway station, bus station, hospitals, major shopping areas, leisure/recreation centres
- Making Inverness Scotland's Cycling City
- Achieve all the recommendations set out in the Active Travel Audit
- Improvements to main arterial routes
- More cycle parking
- A carbon-neutral city centre
- A velodrome for Inverness

Black Isle

Provide safe cycling routes between rural communities

What's happening now

- Black Isle Bicycles project promoting cycle tourism in the area
- Black Isle Bicycles cycle hire scheme operating
- Million Miles project delivering cycle training in the community
- Stagecoach buses between Inverness and Cromarty can carry up to three bikes during the summer
- Learnie Red Rock Trails attracts mountain bikers to the Black Isle
- National Cycle Network Route 1 crosses the Black Isle to Cromarty - linking to Tain via the Cromarty Ferry in the summer

Aspirations for the future

- Develop safe cycling links between Black Isle communities and commuting routes to Dingwall and Inverness
- Promote safer rural cycling
- Promoting active travel by mapping existing routes and developing new ones
- More bikes on buses and bike racks at bus stops
- Developing and mapping themed routes looking at wildlife, local produce and heritage
- Development of a Black Isle cycle circuit



Regular cyclists are as fit as an average person 10 years younger
Sustrans



Backing our vision for a city fit for the future

Lee Craige

Commonwealth Games mountain biker and
Cycletherapy Co-ordinator, Velocity Cafe



"It's fantastic that this document is being compiled. The more people encouraging even more people to get on their bikes the better as far as I'm concerned. There are many types of cyclist using the roads and cycle routes around Inverness and the aims

contained in this shared vision will help make conditions better for many riders who live and work in the area or come to the Highlands to visit."

John Lauder

Director, Sustrans Scotland

"Inverness is a city with huge potential to give its citizens realistic choices to make every-day trips by bike a safe, sensible, healthy option. The city has some good infrastructure for cycling already and with a concerted effort could help transform itself and the lives of many of its citizens. In addition, it really could improve the offer made to visitors to stay, cycle around and help grow the economy. Sustrans already has a good relationship with the Highland Council and HITRANS and is willing to work closely with all concerned, including schools, health services and the community itself.

"If we work together to deliver long-term plans we can transform our lives and communities for the better. I hope this advocacy document brings people together and gets people travelling actively."

Drew Hendry

MP and former Leader of Highland Council

"Promoting and encouraging cycling, whilst improving facilities and infrastructure for cyclists in Inverness and the Highlands, is a priority for The Highland Council.

"From a personal perspective, cycling has vastly improved my physical health and well-being, and has even helped me improve my productivity and better serve my constituents.

"However, the benefits of cycling are not unique to individual cyclists. A key theme of the Council-led Carbon CLEVER initiative, which has the target of a carbon neutral Inverness in a low carbon Highlands by 2025, is to increase modal shift to cycling, thus helping reduce carbon emissions across the region. This will benefit the Highlands in a multitude of ways including less congestion, cleaner air, and healthier attitudes to how we use the planet's resources.

"Cycling as a method of getting around is growing faster in Inverness than just about anywhere in Scotland, and as a council, we understand the importance of supporting this growth through investment, infrastructure and provision of equipment. To this end, the Carbon CLEVER Cycles scheme provides a convenient, low-cost way to get around Inverness, helping you get fit and lower emissions whilst enjoying the beautiful scenery and fresh air of the Highlands.

"The council will continue to work with partners and the public to deliver a city and a region in which cycling is a norm, not an



Graeme Ambrose

Inverness and Loch Ness Tourism Business
Improvement Destination

"The Inverness and Loch Ness Tourism BID fully endorse the document. Anything that helps towards improving the cycling infrastructure of the area can only be good – good, as you say, for health, quality of life and tourism. Specifically re tourism, we know that more and more people are 'getting on their bike' to enjoy the pleasures of cycling on the south side of Loch Ness, but we need to link this to a route on the north side and create a 360 degree cycling trail and maximise the tourism potential. A 360 degree walking trail is likely to be completed in the next few years, we need the same for cycling. In Inverness you highlight the desire to create a very cycle friendly city. Again good from whatever perspective you look at it from."

Scott Armstrong

Regional Partnerships Director for the Highlands,
VisitScotland

"Cycle tourism has shown strong growth in recent years and in the coming years is anticipated to grow significantly creating new job opportunities. Stunningly beautiful cycle loops around such locations as Loch Ness and the Beaulieu Firth provides Inverness an opportunity to become a truly world class cycling destination. However further investment in cycling infrastructure will be required to achieve such an accolade."

Fiona McInally

Active Travel Officer, HITRANS

"Inverness and the surrounding communities are ideally situated for encouraging active travel, getting more people to cycle daily as part of their everyday activities.

"My role in HITRANS is to encourage active travel throughout the Highlands and Islands, working in partnership with others such as Sustrans to improve cycle infrastructure, and develop maps and other resources to help more people enjoy cycling.

"This document sets out the many projects already being undertaken by local organisations to encourage cycle infrastructure, and longer term ambitious aspirations for cycle tourism opportunities in the region.

"I hope this document highlights the appetite for Inverness to be a key cycling location, and will help encourage future investment in cycling

Ged Church

Highland Cycle Campaign

"Inverness and its surroundings have great potential to be developed as a cycle friendly area. The development of these routes as safe, attractive community links will encourage and enable many people to take up cycling as an everyday means of getting about as well as for recreation."

Wendy Price

Transition Black Isle

"The area around Inverness offers fantastic opportunities for cycling in a gorgeous setting – but there could be much better provision of safe routes and cycle paths which link communities and which create the obvious circular routes that would appeal to tourists and locals alike. More cycling infrastructure would easily pay for itself in terms of improvements to health and in increased visitor spending in the area. We support this vision to make the Inverness area a world class cycling location."

