

Agenda Item	15
Report No	CIA/19/17

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: City of Inverness Area Committee

Date: 19 June 2017

Report Title: Community Links Plus 2017

Report By: Director of Development & Infrastructure

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Community Links PLUS 2017 competition invited bids for exemplar, high profile and 'game changing' cycling projects in Scotland. This report provides an update on the preparation of the funding bid for the Inverness City Active Travel Network Project.
- 1.2 As part of the bid process an engagement programme was organised and undertaken between 10 April and 1 May 2017. An 'Engagement Report' (**Appendix 3**) sets out the activities undertaken, representations received and the proposed actions arising. It is acknowledged that further refinement and testing will be needed in the next more detailed stage when wider consultation will be undertaken. The report indicates changes to the design as a response to specific comments. Updated scheme drawings are being prepared for circulation to Committee Members prior to the Committee meeting. Positive discussions with businesses who have submitted representations are ongoing.
- 1.3 The opportunity to use the active travel infrastructure being built as part of the West Link Project as the major source of necessary match funding (50%) is considered only to be valid prior to the opening of the West Link route. The estimate of the funding that can be achieved through a successful bid is in the region of £2.5m.
- 1.4 Officers consider it essential for the Committee to formally endorse the Inverness City Active Travel Network Project funding bid to provide assurance of political support to the funding decision makers.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - note the previous support by the City of Inverness Area Committee for the overall aim to double the level of cycling across inverness by 2020;
 - agree the content of the Engagement Report and the design changes arising from the engagement process being made; and
 - agree and confirm support for the Inverness City Active Travel Network Project funding bid to the CL PLUS 2017 competition, to be submitted by 14 July 2017.

3. Background

- 3.1 There is considerable policy and strategy supporting active travel (cycling and walking). The following is a short summary of relevant policy documents.

Title	Key Criteria
Designing Streets	Street design must consider place before movement
Cycling Action Plan	Double the level of cycling by 2020 (10%)
Local Transport Strategy	The Council will seek to improve pedestrian and cycling facilities
Inverness Active Travel Audit	Intervention E1 East Inverness Active Travel Corridor
Scottish Planning Policy	Provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling for both active travel and recreation, and facilitate travel by public transport
Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), the Inner Moray Firth (IMFLD) and associated action programme	Fundamental aspect of the Development Plan's vision is to enable more efficient and sustainable forms of travel, this includes the enhancement of the active travel network.
Low Carbon Scotland Meeting The Emissions Reduction Targets 2013-2027	At least 10% of all journeys made by bicycle
Regional Active Travel Strategy (HITRANS)	Increase the number of cyclists using selected key routes
Inverness City Centre Development Brief (Draft)	Accessible, Easy and Safe to Move Around: A network of safe, attractive routes gives clear priority to walking, cycling and use of public transport while ensuring efficient access for vehicles, including parking.

- 3.2 The first Community Links PLUS (CL PLUS 2016) competition was announced back in November 2015. The competition invited bids for exemplar, high profile and 'game changing' cycling projects in Scotland.
- 3.3 The original Inverness City Active Travel Network bid was prepared and a report was presented to the 2 June 2016 City of Inverness Area Committee ([Item 8](#)). The Committee supported the overall aim to double the level of cycling across Inverness and supported the CL PLUS 2016 funding bid. Unfortunately the 2016 bid was not successful, however, as part of the feedback a commendation for the vision, ambition, and quality of the proposal was received.
- 3.4 After the announcement of the CL PLUS 2017 competition an expression of interest was submitted by officers. On 24 January 2017 a briefing note about the bid was issued to all Inverness Members. The potential funding will cover the three year period 2017 to 2020. A copy of the note is attached at **Appendix 1** which includes a copy of the overall network plan.
- 3.5 Officers were informed in late February 2017 that the Inverness City Active Travel Network project had been successful in reaching Stage Three of the competition. This is again one of 5 projects in Scotland that can put forward a significant funding submission by the deadline date of 14 July 2017. A copy of the press release relating to the announcement is attached at **Appendix 2**.

3.6 There are a number of other initiatives ongoing that have a relationship with this funding bid. The Development Plans Team are advancing work on the Inverness East Development Brief (3000 new homes as well as new office and business developments, new roads and active travel infrastructure and a range of community facilities including parks and schools). A workshop was held with around 70 people and was structured around the 'Place Standard' tool. A key principle is the provision of a high quality east-west cycle link to promote modal shift and ease the pressure on the transport network. The Inverness Rail Station Improvement Project led by the Scotrail Alliance aims to enhance the fabric of the railway station. In addition public realm improvements for Station Square/Academy Street and links to Falcon Square and the bus station are being developed.

4. Details of the Project

- 4.1 There is a requirement for match funding of 50% towards the overall submitted bid. Officers have identified the active travel elements within the West Link Project as the major match funding element for the Inverness City Active Travel Network Project. Other initiatives such as the investment in new cycle parking at Inverness Rail Station through the Scotrail franchise is also considered to be eligible match funding. The estimate of potential match funding is in the region of £2.5M. This would mean a successful funding bid would draw down the equivalent level of new resources.
- 4.2 The project aims to deliver a comprehensive active travel network across the City of Inverness that seeks to double the levels of cycling. The headline interventions include to:
- enhance the key 'East to West' active travel corridor linking with the City Centre;
 - provide a new link (West Link route) 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;
 - connect the West Link route to the City Centre (identified as ATN4 in the Active Travel Audit); and
 - 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.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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, disability groups (e.g. the Inverness Access Panel) and business interests 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.

5. Engagement 2017

- 5.1 Part of the requirements of the competition in 2017 involves the undertaking of engagement with the community and other stakeholders. An engagement programme was organised and undertaken between 10 April and 1 May 2017 (3 weeks).
- 5.2 In the run up to the engagement activities adverts were published in the local press. Twitter and Facebook were also used and specific stakeholders were invited to have a one-to-one meetings during the pop up shop event in the Victorian Market. Leaflets and flyers were also circulated across the City.
- 5.3 A web page titled ‘Inverness Active Travel 2017 - to restore Inverness’ streets in favour of people, walking and cycling’ was set up (see background papers section below). This enabled consultation responses through a series of questions and also allowed specific/more detailed responses. An Engagement Report has been prepared and is attached at **Appendix 3**. The table below summarises the engagement activities.

Pop up shop	150 attendees (2 days)
Twitter	13.3K tweet impressions
	238 profile visits
	329 actively engaged
	30 followers
Facebook	1,626 people reached
	189 actively engaged
	81 page views
	37 page links
Blog	489 views
	178 visitors
Survey	62 responses
Additional representations	A series of representations (received typically by email)
Press	3 articles

- 5.4 The responses to the question about dedicated and improved space for cyclists and pedestrians have been analysed and the overall results show that 87% of respondees would walk or cycle more.
- 5.5 The Engagement Report identifies responses received and groups the comments in a series of categories. The table below shows a sample from the submissions.

Cycle Parking	“Cycle parking needs to be well placed and thought out”
Greening	“Motorists want the green routes too” “Certainly like the greening up of Inverness”
Public Transport	“Buses not being in streets decimated the shops business”

Ideas	<p>“We want to capture ways to change behaviour especially for people who don't normally cycle”</p> <p>“Good initiative - keep going and extend the work further”</p> <p>“Make sure you design for bikes and feet when doing ALL road improvements”</p>
Comments	<p>“If there are dedicated cycle lanes will cyclists use them”</p> <p>“Dores road path is ignored / not used”</p> <p>“Good to see active travel genuinely being prioritised”</p>
Segregation	<p>“Academy Street doesn't necessarily need segregated lanes - bring the speed down, widen pavements & have shared car & cycle lanes”</p>

5.6 Following a meeting with a group of Inverness BID members on 4 May a series of detailed representations relating to Millburn Road and Academy Street have been received. The parties making the representations have requested that the submissions are provided to Committee members as part of any report to Committee. The representations are copied in full in the Engagement Report at **Appendix 3**.

5.7 The Engagement Report sets out a series of potential design adjustments in response to concerns raised whilst firstly retaining the principle of the redistribution of space to vulnerable road users and secondly remaining “game changing” in our approach. Updated scheme drawings are being prepared for circulation to Members prior to the meeting. It is acknowledged that testing will be needed in the next more detailed stage and will also undergo a comprehensive consultation process should the funding be awarded. This consultation will include key businesses and disability groups (including the Inverness Access Panel). The table below provides Officer responses to the key points raised in the representations received from businesses.

Comment	Officer Response
Accords with policies to support sustainable modes	Designing Streets/Inverness City Centre Dev Brief/LDP/LTS/RTS
Unaware of proposal	Advertised through various media/Liaison with BID
No technical assessment	This would be part of the next design stage after a successful funding decision. It should be noted however that the appointed consultant has a long track record of delivering schemes across Europe.
Significant impact on capacity of the Superstore junction for vehicles	No detailed testing has been carried out at this stage. The principle of road space being re-allocated remains fundamental to the Project.
Significantly reduce the existing capacity of the Millburn Road/Academy Street corridor	Changes to the design arising from the engagement are already in hand. Updated drawings to be circulated prior to the Committee meeting.
One of the main arterial routes to and from the A9	There are currently in the region of 11,500 vehicles using Academy Street (between 0700-

	1900). The majority of these journeys are through trips. With the opening of the West Link route through traffic will redistribute onto the surrounding road network.
Eastgate car park 635 spaces with a service yard – deliveries 41 per day	Concerns about access to the car parks are being taken on board through the updated design.
Falcon Gallery car park 700 spaces	
No evidence of swept path analysis	This would be part of the next design stage after a successful funding decision.
Disproportionately favour the 6% who cycle, pedestrians and those who use public transport	<p>The Inverness City Active Travel Network will support the objectives of a range of policies that require emphasis to be given to walking and cycling journeys.</p> <p>The redistribution of road space to sustainable modes of transport is fundamental to the Project.</p> <p>Inverness will join the growing number of cities and towns across Scotland investing in improving the environment for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Creating an improved sense of place will make “a city fit for the future” and ensure Inverness as the key destination.</p>
Proposal for a bus stop on the south side of Millburn Road	The design incorporates a new bus stop (inbound) that will provide access to businesses on this stretch of Millburn Road.

6 Implications

6.1 Resource

The development of the bid has been funded through awards from CL PLUS 2017 after Stage One (up to £10k available to claim) and Stage Two (up to £40k available to claim). Following the engagement activities updated scheme drawings are being prepared for circulation to Committee prior to the meeting. This will be funded through the Stage Two grant award. The Community Links PLUS 2017 funding competition offers the opportunity to use the active travel infrastructure being built as part of the West Link Project as match funding that will unlock the equivalent in new funds. The estimate of the funding that can be achieved through a successful bid is in the region of £2.5M.

6.2 Legal

If the funding bid is successful an agreement will be put in place with the funder.

6.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)

As part of the project new and enhanced dropped kerb arrangements and markings are planned. These will remove existing barriers for those road users with mobility impairment.

6.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever

The project will support reduced emission targets by increasing the level of cycling across the City of Inverness.

6.5 Risk

Through the engagement process both encouraging and disapproving representations have been received. The Engagement Report sets out the design changes to be taken forward in recognition of specific points raised largely from the businesses along Millburn Road. The opportunity to use the active travel infrastructure being built as part of the West Link Project as the major source of necessary match funding (50%) is considered only to be valid prior to the opening of the West Link route. The opportunity for another Community Links PLUS funding bid is considered to be highly unlikely after the West Link route is opened. Design changes are being worked on and ongoing dialogue with the businesses continues. The aim is to reach a position of understanding and if possible agreement to support the funding bid by the businesses. Officers consider it essential for the Committee to formally endorse the Inverness City Active Travel Network Project to provide assurance of political support to the funding decision makers.

6.6 Gaelic

The Wayfinding element of the Inverness City Active Travel Network makes a strong link with the Gaelic alphabet and the association with tree species.

Designation: Director of Development & Infrastructure
Date: 02 June 2017
Author: Richard Gerring - Transport Planning Manager
Background Papers: Community Links PLUS papers held by the author

City of Inverness Area Committee: 02 June 2016 – Item 8

http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/70312/item_8_active_travel_%E2%80%93_community_links_plus_funding_bid_update

Community Links PLUS Partner Brief

http://www.sustrans.org.uk/sites/default/files/file_content_type/16-11-18_community_links_plus_-_partner_brief_2016-17_final.pdf

Engagement Web Page

<https://invernessactivetravel.wordpress.com/author/invernessactivetravel/>



Please Ask for: Richard Gerring
Direct Dial: (01463) 252932
e-mail: Richard.gerring@highland.gov.uk
Your Ref:
Our Ref: CLPLUS2
Date: 24 January 2017

Dear All

BRIEFING: COMMUNITY LINKS PLUS 2 – FUNDING COMPETITION

Background

Now in its second year, Community Links PLUS 2 continues to seek big, bold and innovative projects which will restore the balance of Scotland's streets in favour of people walking and cycling. The process will again involve a three-stage design competition providing a framework to enable projects to be designed, delivered, monitored and evaluated.

Officers have already submitted an expression of interest to the Community Links PLUS 2 funding competition and the Inverness City Active Travel Network has succeeded in reaching Stage 2 of the process. We are now required to submit further documents including supporting evidence for Stage 2 which has bid deadline of 3rd February 2017.

Given the difficulties in finding match funding it has been necessary to review last year's bid and to modify it to make it a realistic and affordable bid.

Officers will be approaching individual organisations requesting letters of support for this next stage.

Update on 2015-16 Submission

The feedback we received on our Inverness City Active Travel Network submission, both verbal and written, was extremely positive and although the proposal was not successful the expert panel decided to award the Highland Council a **Commendation** for the vision, ambition, and quality of our proposal. The panel recognised that the project had the potential to significantly increase modal shift and make a real difference in the way people move to and through Inverness. The feedback included this statement:

"The Inverness Active Travel Network is an excellent proposal, with scope and ambition to create a truly city-wide network. The plans have been significantly strengthened from stage two. Strong political and stakeholder support has been secured, and work has begun on gaining grassroots and public support through engagement. The project has significant potential to benefit a range of public policy areas, notably health and wellbeing, education and social justice, and help secure and improve the economic position of Inverness by tackling the loss of younger residents."

The feedback also confirmed that some work has to be done to enhance certain aspects of the bid.

Community Links PLUS 2

The key dates for each of the remaining stages are:

Stage Two: 3rd February 2017 – Submission by the 10 shortlisted entrants

Stage Two invites each of the shortlisted applicants to submit proposals that include concept design options, feasibility studies and a business case. The entrants will also need to demonstrate community engagement and support for the project. The projects will be assessed by an independent expert panel.

Stage Two requires us to:

- Set out the concept and design options
- Have a viable business case and a delivery plan
- Have a plan for community engagement
- Demonstrate buy-in and support from the CEO or equivalent, Leaders of Councils, Committee Conveners (not just Transport)
- A demonstrable effort at cross-portfolio working is recommended and is seen as an exemplar model of partnership working

Stage Three: 14th July 2017 – Detailed submission by shortlisted entrants

Up to five of the highest quality proposals will be invited to proceed to Stage Three and will receive a grant of up to £40,000 to finalise a detailed proposal.

At Stage Three, each of the shortlisted entrants will be asked to develop their designs in more detail and to provide more information about costs and materials as well as evidence that their designs are technically robust. These final projects will be assessed by an independent expert panel, chaired by the Chief Executive of Transport Scotland, Roy Brannen.

Stage Three requires us to deliver:

- Fully worked up project proposals for assessment
- A presentation of the final project to the Expert Panel.

Competition Decision and Announcement – August / September 2017

Funding

For information the grants awarded for progression to stages two and three are not required to be match-funded. There will, however, be a need to clarify the proposed funding arrangements as part of the business case and delivery plan at Stage 3. The final award of funding for the winning project / projects will provide up to 50% of project costs.

We therefore must find the remaining costs from other sources. Officers have again investigated potential opportunities for match funding from schemes and initiatives already being undertaken or in the pipeline. Early indications are positive with an indicative figure of circa £2.5M being potential for match-funding.

Next Steps

Unfortunately we are obliged to adhere to the deadlines announced and therefore unable to make a formal presentation to the City of Inverness Committee.

We are optimistic that we can get through to Stage Three of the competition. At that point we will undertake further consultation and briefing.

We greatly appreciate the previous letters of support that we have received and we hope that we can again get the evidence of support needed for Stage Two.

If you have any questions about the project and the funding process then please contact my colleague Neil Young (01463 252906)

Yours sincerely,

Richard Gerring
Transport Planning Manager

Attachments

- Inverness City Active Travel – Project Description
- Inverness City Active Travel – Network Map

For your information the winner of the inaugural 2015-16 competition was Glasgow City Council's 'South City Way' project. This will run from Queen's Park, along Victoria Road, to the Merchant City district, improving facilities for those on foot, creating more vibrant streets, and creating a 3km segregated cycleway from the densely-populated Southside of Glasgow into the city centre. The project will improve the look and feel of the area and help give the city one of the most cohesive, high-quality urban cycle networks in the UK. Glasgow City Council was awarded £3,250,000, which they are match-funding to create a total project fund of £6,500,000.

Inverness City Active Travel Network – Project Description



The Inverness City Active Travel Network project aims to deliver a comprehensive active travel network across the City of Inverness that will bring about a **DOUBLING** of the levels of cycling across the City.

Our vision for Inverness is of a vibrant and economically successful city that stimulates more inward investment and attracts and retains people of all ages. It is a city that understands the importance of long and fulfilled lives lived in good health and the importance of tourism and inward investment, supported by a strong city centre and employment base. We seek to add to and improve what we have already achieved.

An active city fit for the future is at the heart of our vision. Walking and cycling on high quality, Dutch-inspired infrastructure will be seen as enjoyable, practical every day transport for more people that promotes health and enlivens our streets and public spaces. As a result, where there are roads we will begin to create streets, and where there are streets these will become more attractive as social spaces.

Interventions are proposed at the following locations:

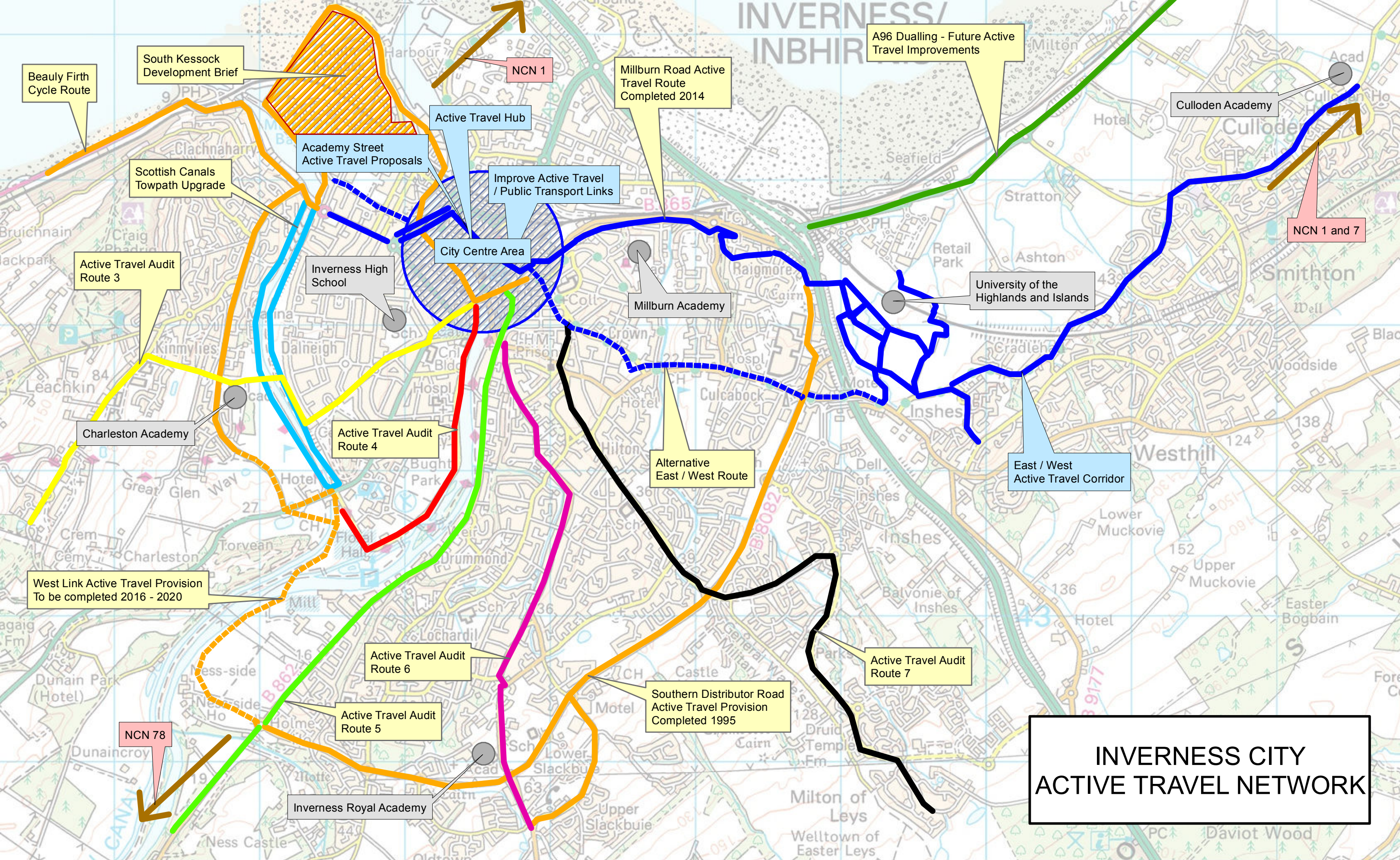
- Raigmore Interchange
- Thornbush Road
- Abban Street
- Academy Street
- Millburn Road
- Old Perth Road Roundabout
- West Link Route

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

- Covered Cycle Parking
- Crossing points
- Cycle contraflow provision
- Cycle bypasses (bus stops and other locations)
- Improved lighting
- New and enhanced dropped kerb arrangements and markings

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
- E bike and Bike and Go schemes



**INVERNESS CITY
ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK**

The Highland Council progresses to third and final stage of multi-million pound active travel competition, Community Links PLUS

The 'Inverness Active Travel Network' design submitted by the Council impressed Sustrans Scotland's Community Links PLUS competition panel with its dynamic and strategic infrastructure proposal that aims to double the current level of cycling in the city and become the active travel leader in Scotland.



Now the top quality bid will receive up to £40,000 of funding to develop the proposal with the aim of securing multi-million pound funding to enable the project.

Hosted by Sustrans Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government, the competition delivers pioneering and game-changing projects which inspire public bodies in Scotland to design better places and spaces for people to live, walk and cycle.

At the heart of The Highland Council's proposal is the aim to create an active city fit for the future which will promote active travel, improve community health and reduce congestion.

The ambitious proposal plans to strengthen the Inverness City Active Travel Network that connects all of the city's communities with the centre, as well as developing seamless and segregated cycle-friendly routes along Millburn Road, Academy Street and the Raigmore Interchange.

If successful, the plans propose a major overhaul of Millburn Road with the removal of one lane of general traffic in place for a fully segregated cycle path. A westbound bus lane and footpath would also be introduced,

transforming the area into a less congested and pedestrian friendly area. A signalised junction would also become a feature of Millburn Road with separate signals for pedestrians and cyclists.

Academy Street would also undergo a similar transformation with the implementation of a one-way cycle track with buffer zones off the main carriageway behind the parking and loading areas.

The city wide active travel network also plans to create a ramp from the Raigmore Interchange to the Golden Bridge that would see construction of a cycle and pedestrian friendly route to the Inverness Campus.

Provost of Inverness, councillor Helen Carmichael, said: "If the Inverness Active Travel Network project is successful in getting Community Links PLUS funding we'll be able to create the infrastructure needed to continue with our plans to encourage more cyclists whilst promoting health, reducing congestion and creating better public spaces."

The Highland Council's dynamic and strategic active travel proposal is competing against four other high quality bids from Glasgow City Council, The City of Edinburgh Council and Stirling Council.

Final proposals will be presented to a cross sector panel chaired by Transport Scotland chief executive, Roy Brannen, with the winning project announced in late Summer 2017.

Humza Yousaf, Minister for Transport and The Islands said: "I would like to congratulate the five projects that have made it through to the final round of the Community Links PLUS design competition.

"I am pleased to see that local authorities have again put forward very ambitious projects which will help to create a step change in conditions for walking, cycling and place making that communities can all benefit from.

“These kinds of place making projects are part of our long-term vision for active travel and also our recently published Cycling Action Plan for Scotland, which reiterates our commitment to maintain current levels of funding for the remainder of this Parliament.”

Last year’s winning entry was Glasgow City Council’s ‘South City Way’ project which on completion in 2018 will provide one of the most cohesive, high-quality urban cycle networks in the UK.

The exemplary project that integrates inspiring active travel with community placemaking was awarded £3.25 million of funding from The Scottish Government through Sustrans, with the investment match-funded by Glasgow City Council.

Daisy Narayanan, deputy director for built environment at Sustrans Scotland, added: “We are absolutely delighted with the extremely high quality of entries to our Community Links PLUS design competition. These proposals are exemplary in their understanding of the need to improve our streets for the well-being of everyone.

“They bode well for the future of Scotland. The Scottish Government, and in particular, Humza Yousaf MSP, the Minister for Transport and Islands, has demonstrated real vision in supporting this competition.

“Critically, local authorities across Scotland have shown they are keen to enable access for pedestrians and cyclists of all abilities. The country is embracing the health and economic benefits of a modal shift in how we design our streets and roads.”

Community Links PLUS is demonstrating that designing places around the needs of people delivers a wide range of benefits, including boosting local economies, smaller retailers, healthier communities and safer, more attractive streets.

1 Mar 2017