

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officer Roads and Neighbourhood****Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee -
6 November 2024**

Subject: Active Travel Strategy for West Dunbartonshire Council

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's commitment to promoting walking, wheeling, cycling and all other non-motorised forms of transport as detailed within the Active Travel Strategy. The Strategy aims to improve public health, reduce traffic congestion, support environmental sustainability, and enhance the overall quality of life in West Dunbartonshire.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the adoption of the Active Travel Strategy for West Dunbartonshire.

3. Background

- 3.1 Active travel refers to any form of human-powered transportation that involves physical activity. This is primarily walking, wheeling and cycling. However, it can include other modes such as skateboarding, rollerblading, and the use of non-motorised scooters.
- 3.2 The goal of active travel is to integrate physical activity into daily routines by encouraging people to use these modes of transport for commuting or recreation.
- 3.3 Active travel provides both mental and physical health benefits, promotes environmental sustainability, and has a positive effect on the reduction of traffic congestion, emissions, and pollution. Active travel can also be the most cost-efficient modes of transport.
- 3.4 Active travel is at the heart of both national and regional transportation and healthy policies. As a result, West Dunbartonshire Council aims to develop and implement this local strategy to facilitate and encourage active travel as part of our transportation network.

- 3.5 The strategy aligns with the Council's aims to reduce carbon emissions and reach the desired climate change targets set by the Scottish Government.
- 3.6 The Active Travel Strategy outlines the vision and plan to promote walking, wheeling, and cycling within the Authority's communities in alignment with Scotland's National ambitions.
- 3.7 It will help identify and provide sustainable, affordable, and accessible transport for all members of society across West Dunbartonshire.
- 3.8 The strategy explores the local challenges and gaps in active travel connectivity at a local level and aims to identify appropriate changes and upgrades to access, understanding and safety to ensure that active travel can become a mode of choice for everyone.
- 3.9 The potential future improvements are broken down into four categories: Routes, Associated Infrastructure, Policy, and Behaviour Change. Targeting all these categories together will provide an active travel network that is affordable and inclusive to all.
- (i) Routes are considered to be any active travel corridors that can help connect areas with the addition of improved infrastructure.
 - (ii) Associated infrastructure are an individual intervention or a range of improvements that will complement and enhance new and existing routes.
 - (iii) Policy measures are the changes to policy that positively impact and promote active travel across West Dunbartonshire.
 - (iv) Behaviour change involves engagement and promotion that will support key stakeholders (businesses, schools, communities, etc.) to travel actively by providing them with the opportunity, knowledge, and skills to do so.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1 West Dunbartonshire generates a large amount of commuter trips to Glasgow City Council, as well as other neighbouring authorities. It is vital to combat these by encouraging both the use of active travel methods and public transport.
- 4.2 Almost 25% of West Dunbartonshire's population say their day-to-day activities are limited by disability or long-term health problems. Active travel has extremely positive benefits for both physical and mental health, and it is vital any new infrastructure or initiatives must be accessible and inclusive to all.
- 4.3 A substantial proportion of the population in West Dunbartonshire are under the age of 16 or over the age of 60. It is crucial key locations for these demographics are accounted for and made accessible via active

transportation modes. The transport system should be futureproofed and encourage these key demographics to partake in active travel.

- 4.4 More than 50% of the population are women, yet very few use active travel methods as a means of transportation. This figure reflects national trends. All future enhancements should ensure all users feel safe to travel.
- 4.5 Fewer households in West Dunbartonshire own private vehicles than the national average. Active travel can help these households have a cheaper alternative and good connectivity and accessibility to the necessary facilities and services.
- 4.6 Dumbarton and Clydebank town centres experience the most commuter trips in the authority. Therefore, there are opportunities for modal shift to active travel to stop people being car dependent for small, local journeys.
- 4.7 West Dunbartonshire has good cycling access thanks to the National Cycle Network Route 7 (NCN7). This runs all the way from Clydebank up to Balloch. It is imperative that West Dunbartonshire builds from this to continue creating a well-connected cycle network in all areas across the local authority.
- 4.8 Through the public engagement events the community councils requested a focus on active travel in future planning policy, including local place plans. Additionally, members of the community highlighted areas they felt inaccessible via active travel methods:
 - (i) Old Military Road to Gartocharn.
 - (ii) A813 to Bonhill via Lomondgate Roundabout.
- 4.9 At the briefing workshops it was evident there is a need to link active travel in with the idea of '20 Minute Neighbourhoods'. It is also crucial to focus on the well-being aspect.
- 4.10 Loch Lomond offers a plethora of recreational activities, and it would be beneficial to tap into this and encourage active tourism. This would involve improved public transport and active travel integration and accessible to this area of West Dunbartonshire to further encourage visitors to travel more sustainably.
- 4.11 Through the public survey it was apparent that cycling was the least accessible mode of transport within West Dunbartonshire.

4.12 Survey respondents were also asked to identify the main barriers they felt when walking and wheeling in West Dunbartonshire:

- (i) Aggressive driver behaviour prohibits individuals travelling actively.
- (ii) Lack of continuous footway or path throughout the local authority.
- (iii) Poor condition of footways.
- (iv) Feeling unsafe while walking, with inadequate lighting a key factor in this.
- (v) Cars parked on pavements are a major obstacle.

4.13 Survey Respondents were also asked to identify the main barriers they encountered while cycling in West Dunbartonshire:

- (i) The majority who answered did not own or have access to a bicycle.
- (ii) A lack of continuous cycle routes often prevents them from travelling on bike.
- (iii) A lack of segregated cycle lanes.
- (iv) Traffic safety concerns and poor road conditions.

4.14 From this survey, respondents were asked what infrastructure and travel behaviour initiatives they would like to see developed and enhanced across West Dunbartonshire. The following list shows the results:

- (i) Path Maintenance.
- (ii) Public Art.
- (iii) Rest Spaces.
- (iv) Continuous Cycle Network.
- (v) Modal Segregation.
- (vi) Improved Connections.
- (vii) Route Information.
- (viii) Cycle Hire.
- (ix) Better Public Transport Services.
- (x) Organised Rides.
- (xi) Improved Lighting and Safety.
- (xii) Cycle Repair Access.
- (xiii) Increased Cycle Parking.
- (xiv) Social Walking and Cycling Groups.

4.15 From all the feedback received from a wide range of stakeholders across West Dunbartonshire, the following challenges and opportunities arose:

- (i) There is a real need to improve the inclusivity of active travel across the local authority, to ensure all members of society have equal and suitable access to all modes of transportation.
- (ii) Many individuals across West Dunbartonshire do not own or have

any access to a bicycle.

- (iii) Community involvement is at the heart of successful future active travel projects and initiatives. It is imperative that the community involvement is embedded in future work and coincides with the local plans and policies that are being implemented across West Dunbartonshire.
- (iv) Existing infrastructure (where it exists) is good. The focus must be on maintaining, improving, and expanding on this. Furthermore, there is a desire for improved connectivity between local and regional networks.
- (v) The use of active travel methods can be hindered because of safety concerns. This limits where, who and when people are willing to travel.
- (vi) As Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is a hotspot for tourism, there is a real opportunity to encourage and develop sustainable tourism in this area.
- (vii) All active travel modes need to be developed to coincide and collaborate with each other. These networks will only succeed if there is an inter-connectivity between modes – including public transport.

4.16 The key strategic objectives of the proposed Active Travel Strategy are:

Strategic Objective	Brief Description
Education	Raise awareness of the benefits of active travel and promote opportunities to get involved and reduce conflict between users.
Inclusivity	Ensure inclusive and equitable access to active travel for all. Including people with health conditions, those with different socio and economic needs, and the elderly.
Climate Impact	Encouraging active travel to be the preferred mode for short journeys.
Safety	Improve actual and perceived safety for those travelling actively, including children, women, and ethnic minority groups.
Health	Promote active travel for individual health gains, including mental wellbeing.
Connectivity	Connect key land uses and destinations via a coherent active travel network, taking advantage of public transport connections as well as blue-green infrastructure improvements.

These objectives were developed to address the ambitions for active travel in the region, ensuring that the strategy is responsive to the needs and aspirations of the local population.

- 4.17 Monitoring and evaluation is a key component of the Active Travel Strategy as it is vital to measure the uptake of active travel, assess the impact of interventions, and ensure continuous improvement.
- 4.18 The adoption of an Active Travel Strategy is essential for promoting healthier, more sustainable, and safer transportation in West Dunbartonshire. It aligns with the Council's broader goals of reducing emissions, improving public health, and creating vibrant, connected communities. The strategy provides a framework for the long-term development of active travel infrastructure and initiatives.

5. People Implications

- 5.1 There are no people implications associated with this proposal.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1 The financial or procurement implications will be assessed in advance of the delivery of individual projects.
- 6.2 The report will aid the application for future active travel funding grants as it illustrates a clear proposal for future development and enhancement. Grant funding opportunities from national and regional programs will be explored to help support the implementation of the strategy.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1 There are no risks involved within the Active Travel Strategy. Risk analysis will be undertaken in advance of the delivery of individual projects.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1 There will be positive impacts for various protected groups and across human rights and health and social/economic areas as detailed in the Equality Impact Assessment. The Strategy has taken an approach to decarbonise travel emissions and implement active travel alternatives through applying principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Just Transition. Furthermore, we want to take this forward in a way that, active and sustainable travel alternatives are fairer and more equal, considering alienated minorities and notably those in poverty - so it can empower women and those with disabilities, etc. to make Sustainable travel choices and improve the local economy.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 Extensive consultation has been undertaken, both online and in-person, with all key and relevant stakeholders. This included council staff, local residents, businesses, community groups, neighbouring local authorities, and any other relevant organisations.
- 9.2 Feedback illustrates a strong support for the strategy, with many keen to see the future development and enhancement of active travel across West Dunbartonshire.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1 The Strategy sets out proposals and actions to support the successful delivery of the strategic priorities and objectives of the Council:

Our residents' health and wellbeing remains a priority; and
Our neighbourhoods are sustainable and attractive.

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Date: 16 October 2024

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Appendices: Appendix 1: West Dunbartonshire Active Travel Strategy
Appendix 2 EIA (To follow)

Wards Affected: All