

FMQ - ACTIVE TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME

ISSUE: The Scottish Government confirmed record funding for AT in its 2023-24 budget with £189.2m allocated

ISSUE: Evidence suggests that safer segregated cycling infrastructure is required to allow and encourage people to cycle more.

ISSUE: COSLA, local authorities and RTPs have been critical that funding is channeled through Sustrans.

Top Lines

- The Scottish Government budget for 2023-24 has confirmed record funding for Active Travel of £189.2 million.
- This includes the Cycling Walking Safer Routes grant of £35 million that goes directly to local authorities on a pro rata basis.
- As of this month, almost £120m of grants have been approved, with over £100m of that already distributed from the Sustainable and Active Travel budget.
- We are working with officials from the delivery partners and colleagues in Scottish Government to progress the remaining programmes that are awaiting a decision.
- We are investing in ambitious on and off-road segregated walking and cycling routes, safer junctions and improved design of place. This is because public feedback and evidence shows speed and volume of traffic deters people from walking and cycling.
- Programme for Government of 2021 committed that at least £320 million, or 10% of the total transport budget, will go on active travel by 2024-25.
- An Active Travel Transformation Project has been considering how best to ensure the delivery model for active travel can evolve to match the policy ambition and the significant increase in budget from 2024-25.
- The record budget for 2023-24 includes a £20 million Transformation Programme, that is intended to enable transformative delivery at pace and scale; successful applicants have been advised in May 2023.
- The Fund sees Transport Scotland assume responsibility for authorising funding and programme management in a more direct partnership model, and puts into practice for 2023-24 our theory of what transformation needs to look like for 2024-25 in a pragmatic and enabling manner.
- In 2023-24, through our established programmes, including Cycling and Walking Safer Routes, Places for Everyone and the National Cycle Network, we will continue to support infrastructure projects that contribute to the transformation of our towns, cities and villages and

the delivery of our 2030 vision for place and people-focussed communities that enable active travel modes to be the default choice for daily journeys.

We are making major investments in on and off road segregated routes

- In 2022-23, over £52 million of the Active Travel capital budget was allocated in grant funding to Sustrans for the Places for Everyone infrastructure programme.
- Approximately 200 active travel infrastructure projects are in train nationally within Places for Everyone, with agreed funding of over £161 million between now and April 2026.
- Recently completed schemes include the Stockingfield and Sighthill Bridges in Glasgow that both provide vital walking and cycling routes, as well as important Community connections across canal and road barriers.
- Our two largest local authorities, Glasgow City Council and City of Edinburgh Council, have projects underway with funding totalling over £38 million and £49 million of TS funding respectively.
- Since 2010, the Community Links and Places for Everyone programme has delivered around 415 miles of walking and cycling paths, of which around 270 miles is completely new infrastructure.
- We have increased investment in extending and improving the National Cycle Network (NCN) to £13.8 million in 2023-24; this is an important network for both everyday journeys and tourism.
- The NCN in Scotland is approximately 1,700 miles with a further 43 km of new and improved routes constructed in 2022-23.
- The NCN carries 104 million trips per annum spread equally by people travelling by foot or bike, generating £239 million per year for the Scottish economy.

We do not underestimate the scale of the change that needs to take place

- We are working with local authorities to design and build active travel infrastructure to high standards and as quickly as possible.
- There are delivery challenges in this and for various reasons, including minimising disruption to bus services, supply chain issues and managing public objections, timescales are stretching as schemes become bigger and more ambitious.
- We are working closely with local authorities to overcome barriers and minimise the timescales for delivery whilst ensuring that the infrastructure delivered is safe and of high quality.

- This includes through our delivery partners, such as Sustrans, ensuring that local authorities also get other support they need in the form of technical advice and embedded infrastructure delivery specialists where required.

We are maximising both quality and funding by funding projects through Sustrans

- Channelling funding through Sustrans enables us to raise the ambition of local authorities and other partners and to maximise the benefit of the active travel budget by attracting match funding.
- And local authorities are provided with expertise and support to enable them to consult, design and build high quality infrastructure with consistent standards across Scotland.

We are investing in other infrastructure and in behaviour change to ensure routes are used

- We are continuing to fund the Ian Findlay Paths Fund with £1.8m in 2023-24. The fund is managed by Paths for All and named in memory of Ian Findlay, their former Chief Officer who sadly passed away suddenly in March 2021, and was a great advocate for active travel.
- This fund supports small, local projects to make improvements to existing path infrastructure and make connections where there are gaps in local path networks and opened in July 2022.
- To make walking and cycling a more realistic choice for all, we are investing in projects to provide clear signage, cycle parking and facilities at workplaces, schools, campuses and in communities.
- In 2019 we launched the Social Housing Fund for improved Walking and Cycling Facilities to encourage active travel within communities, particularly those in areas of multiple deprivation; this project is receiving funding of £900,000 in 2023-24.
- In addition Transport Scotland invests in walking and cycling infrastructure as part of its major capital projects such as trunk roads, rail, canals and ferries; a further £6.5 million is invested in active travel projects to support safety improvements on our Trunk Roads in 2023-24.
- Infrastructure projects have behaviour change programmes incorporated as and where needed. For example, cycle training in nearby schools, led rides and cycle training for the wider community to make them familiar with the new cycle routes.
- The transformation of active travel delivery can only be fully realised with support from our delivery partners across both infrastructure and

behaviour change projects, given the close relationship between the two.