

## Intervention 4 – Transport’s contribution to placemaking principles in neighbourhoods

### 1 Description of Package

Reallocation of road space away from the private car towards active travel and the creation of high-quality urban environments can be an effective way of creating better places by enhancing the attractiveness of towns and villages, to the benefit of those that live in, work in and visit them. This supports Place Based Investment, including town centre revitalisation and ambitions to develop 20-minute neighbourhoods, collaborating with local authorities and other partners deliver projects to achieve these outcomes. Options in towns and villages include:

- Reallocation of road space to better provide for those that walk, wheel<sup>1</sup> or cycle
- Improved surfacing
- Improved cycle parking
- Removal and/or rationalisation of on-street parking
- Planters and increased outdoor seating
- Increased green space and biodiversity
- The creation of accessible and family-friendly spaces
- Create an improved balance between modes making for a more welcoming environment for all



Pedestrian Zone

It is recommended that Transport Scotland continues to work across Scottish Government and with other partners to deliver this investment. There is potential to undertake demonstrator projects in towns and villages where there is severance due to a trunk road acting as a barrier to creating a high quality environment for walking, wheeling and cycling for shorter everyday journeys. Elsewhere, implementation would be taken forward in partnership with local authorities who have similar aspirations and are committed to reallocating road space and parking to allow for a more balanced street environment. Opportunities to contribute to projects identified through the Place Based Investment Programme could also be explored.

*Note that this intervention has some similarities with intervention 7 (reallocation of roadspace for active travel), though intervention 7 is focussed on city locations, and this one on Scotland’s towns and villages. Whilst both interventions recognise and seek to contribute to positive outcomes for both active travel and improved placemaking, this intervention prioritises the importance of*

<sup>1</sup> Wheeling: refers to travelling by wheelchair.

placemaking in towns/villages, whereas intervention 7 prioritises active travel in larger settlements, as these have been identified as the most important short-term delivery priorities. Work continues in STPR2 to develop recommendations for the most effective packages of interventions in all settings.

## 2 What we have heard?

Improving active travel infrastructure was clearly stated to be respondents’ highest priority in the online survey undertaken for STPR2 (which was widely promoted amongst active travel advocacy groups).

“Cycling - Availability of safe cycling infrastructure (e.g. cycleways)” was ranked by respondents as the highest priority intervention nationally, with over 50% more people stating this to be their top priority than the second choice. This aspect also recorded the lowest satisfaction levels in the more rural STPR2 regions of Argyll & Bute, Ayrshire & Arran, Highlands & Islands, and Shetland Islands.

Across all Scotland-wide responses, between 53% and 62% were dissatisfied with the different aspects of walking and wheeling, and between 15% and 26% were satisfied. Dissatisfaction was highest for responses in relation to the availability of attractive infrastructure.

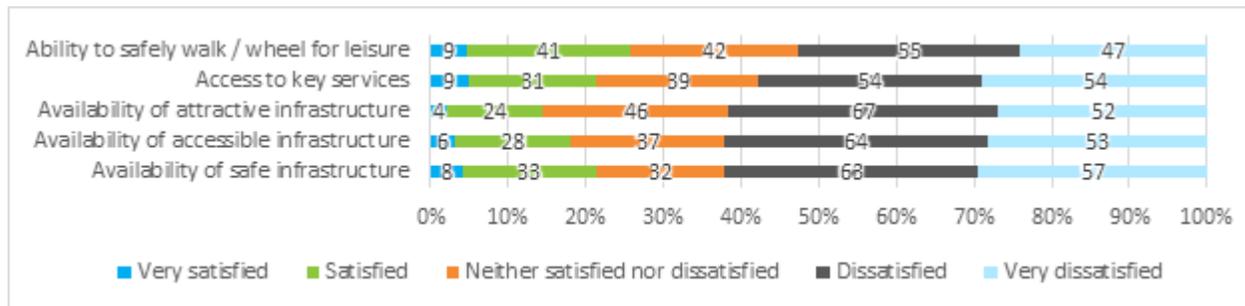


Figure 1: Scotland Wide - Satisfaction Walking and Wheeling (STPR2 on-line survey)

Meanwhile, between 64% and 79% were dissatisfied with the different aspects of cycling, and between 9% and 20% were satisfied. Dissatisfaction was highest for responses in relation to the availability of safe infrastructure for cycling.

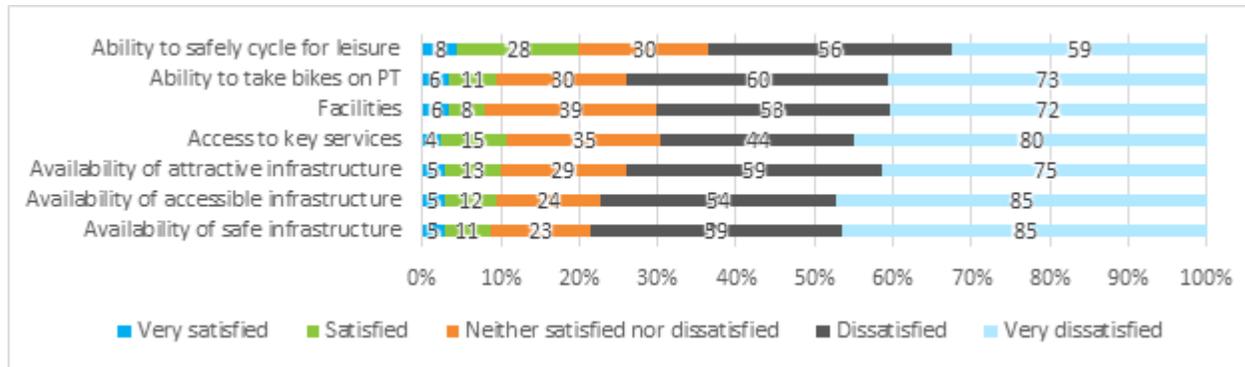


Figure 2: Scotland Wide - Satisfaction Cycling (STPR2 on-line survey)

Aspirations to improve active travel infrastructure were aired at each of the regional options development workshops held for STPR2 in 2019 and early 2020, reinforcing that stakeholders’ views complement those of the online survey.

Stakeholder feedback therefore supports the rationale that investing to improve active travel infrastructure is a relevant priority for STPR2.

### 3 The evidence base to support a case for change

Improved conditions for active travel, complemented by improved placemaking including public realm, can help bring economic, health, social, environmental and safety benefits to town and village centres throughout Scotland.

There is evidence to support the economic benefits associated with increasing active travel provision in town centres. Compact town centres optimised for walking and cycling can have a “retail density” (spend per square metre) 2.5 times higher than a typical urban centre<sup>2</sup>. It has also been found that cyclists visit local shops more regularly, spending more than users of most other modes of transport<sup>3</sup>.

Increasing cycle parking within town and village centres can have economic benefits. Cycle parking (per square metre) can deliver

<sup>2</sup> Raje & Daffrey, [The Value of Cycling - Local Economic Benefits](#), 2016

<sup>3</sup> Raje & Daffrey, [The Value of Cycling - Local Economic Benefits](#), 2016

five times higher retail spend than the same area of car parking<sup>4</sup>.

Public realm improvements can have positive economic impacts. For example, in Kelso, public realm and traffic management changes resulted in a 28% increase in footfall<sup>5</sup>. Good urban design and quality green spaces can increase property prices and rents; a 1% increase in green space can lead to a 0.3-0.5% increase in average house prices<sup>6</sup>.

The health benefits associated with increased levels of active travel are well known. Keeping physically active can reduce the risk of heart and circulatory disease by as much as 35% and risk of early death by as much as 30%<sup>7</sup>. Walking, wheeling and cycling also have positive effects on mental health and general wellbeing. The mental health and neurological benefits include reduced risk of dementia, improved sleep quality, and a greater sense of wellbeing<sup>8</sup>.

There are many social and community benefits associated with improving conditions for active travel. Walking, wheeling and cycling locally allows more people to feel connected with their local community. Improved public realm and increased green spaces allow for people to gather and socialise. Studies have linked the quality of public spaces to people’s perceptions of attractiveness of an area, contributing towards their quality of life<sup>9</sup>.

In the UK, only 40% of men and 28% of women currently meet the recommended minimum target of 2.5 hours of moderate activity per week<sup>10</sup>. Improved conditions for active travel will help to increase these proportions.

The national average for Scotland for households with access to a bike is 34%. The areas with the highest levels of access to bikes are more rural areas, with Highland (54%), Orkney Islands (47%), Aberdeenshire (47%), Moray (46%) and Perth & Kinross (46%) being the top five. This shows high potential for many people in rural areas to access their local town centres by bike.

Over the past decade, Scotland has seen a noticeable decline in many of its high streets. Scottish retailers have been closing at a rate of just over one a week for the past 10 years, with almost 620 businesses having called in administrators over the past

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<sup>4</sup> Raje & Daffrey, [The Value of Cycling - Local Economic Benefits](#), 2016

<sup>5</sup> Living Streets, [The Pedestrian Pound](#), 2018

<sup>6</sup> Living Streets, [The Pedestrian Pound](#), 2018

<sup>7</sup> Sustrans, [Health benefits of cycling and walking](#), 2019

<sup>8</sup> Public Health England, [Cycling and walking for individual and population health benefits](#), 2018, and Mobility, Mood and Place <https://sites.eca.ed.ac.uk/mmp/>

<sup>9</sup> Living Streets, [The Pedestrian Pound](#), 2018 and Architecture & Design Scotland, Town Centre Living: a Caring Place, 2019, <https://www.ads.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CaringPlacesReportV1.12019.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Sustrans, [Health benefits of cycling and walking](#), 2019

decade<sup>11</sup>. The Scottish Borders Council has been monitoring footfall in various towns across the borders, since 2007. The data shows an overall decline in footfall over the past 13 years, with a decline recorded in each of the last three years, even pre-COVID-19<sup>12</sup>. Activity which can encourage more people to come back to town centres could help reduce or reverse these trends.

#### 4 The Strategic Rationale

Transport has an important role to play in promoting the planning and development of healthier, inclusive, sustainable and well-designed places across Scotland. The public realm, including the design, layout and accessibility of our streets and spaces, has an essential role in creating better places. Good quality places will stand the test of time and provide much wider benefits for people’s health, wellbeing, the economy and environment. Being easy to move around is one of the six qualities of successful places, however transport cuts across others. This intervention will support the cross-cutting planning policy on design and place-making. It will also assist in delivering place-based policies to incorporate design considerations that reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of people.

The Scottish Government’s Place Principle<sup>13</sup> promotes the need to take more collaborative approaches to supporting local services and assets, and is focussed on the value and importance of working across sectors and with communities to achieve better outcomes. It is supported by the Place Standard tool which allows the quality of a place to be assessed in order to identify strengths and assets and areas for development and improvement. Meanwhile, the Scottish Government’s Town Centre Action Plan states that “*Town centres are a key element of the economic and social fabric of Scotland and can be a central component of successful local economies and offer a base for small businesses and jobs. Town centres are often at the core of community life, offering spaces to meet and interact with access to facilities and services that people require*”<sup>14</sup>. The emerging National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) supports the same principles<sup>15</sup>.

Scotland’s city and town centres were already facing significant challenges prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our living and working patterns in recent months have raised further fundamental questions about their future. Town centres have the potential to

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<sup>11</sup> French Duncan, [Scottish retail failures highest in five years](#)

<sup>12</sup> Scottish Borders Council, [Footfall Report 2019](#)

<sup>13</sup> Scottish Government, Place Principle: introduction, 2019, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/place-principle-introduction/>

<sup>14</sup> Scottish Government, Town Centre Action Plan: Scottish Government response, 2013, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/town-centre-action-plan-scottish-government-response/>

<sup>15</sup> Scottish Government, Fourth National Planning Framework: position statement, 2020, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-fourth-national-planning-framework-position-statement/pages/1/>

contribute a great deal to our response to climate change, and to meeting the future needs of our diverse population. By making better and more creative use of our settlement centres, we can significantly reduce the need to travel unsustainably whilst maintaining and enhancing the character and identity of our towns and cities to create vibrant places that meet our future needs.

This intervention can help our town centres to respond to current and future challenges so that they can adapt and be vibrant, creative, enterprising and accessible places to live, work and visit.

Transport Scotland has set a strong policy framework for the promotion of active travel, including in its Active Travel Vision for Scotland and Transport Scotland’s National Transport Strategy (NTS2) (2020). Through Places for Everyone funding, it is supporting the development and delivery of schemes to create safe, attractive, healthier places by increasing the number of trips made by walking, wheeling and cycling for everyday journeys at locations in Scotland’s villages, towns and cities, where local needs and opportunities are identified. The 2020 Programme for Government supported this outcome, with a commitment of over £500m of funding for active travel infrastructure and supporting measures over the next five years.

NTS2 puts active travel and well-being at the heart of its vision for the transport system, which will: *“enable us to make healthy travel choices: active modes will be a preferred method of travel and have a significant positive effect on individual health and wellbeing, both by making people more active and by improving air quality”*<sup>16</sup>.

And many local and regional plans support the same outcomes for place and active travel, including:

- The Highland Council’s Local Transport Strategy and Active Travel Masterplans: In partnership with HITRANS, The Highland Council are developing a series of active travel audits and masterplans for a number of settlements in the Highlands, including Fort William<sup>17</sup>.
- Tactran: The Regional Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan aims to *“Improve Walking and Cycling Links within the Region. Develop walking and cycling links to and within town and city centres and to employment, health facilities, services, leisure and tourism activities”*<sup>18</sup>.
- Angus Council: An Active Travel Strategy for Angus states that *“Walking and cycling are the most inclusive transport modes, that “Burgh centres are more vibrant if more people walk and cycle” and that “walkers and cyclists contribute to the leisure and*

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<sup>16</sup> Transport Scotland, National Transport Strategy, 2020 <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47052/national-transport-strategy.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Highland Council, Local Transport Planning, [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1523/transport\\_and\\_streets/121/local\\_transport\\_planning](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1523/transport_and_streets/121/local_transport_planning)

<sup>18</sup> Tactran, Regional Transport Strategy, 2015, <https://www.tactran.gov.uk/documents/RTSRefresh-FinalReport.pdf>

*rural economy of Angus*<sup>19</sup>.

The aspirations are also supported by the views of many of Scotland’s people. Over a quarter of Scottish adults are ‘looking to change’ towards increased rates of active travel<sup>20</sup>, and 70% or more of residents in the cities surveyed would like to see more investment in active travel<sup>21</sup>.

The package of active travel and public realm improvements will complement and go beyond those prior commitments. It will assist authorities in some of Scotland’s towns and villages to develop and implement active travel and placemaking measures, to create attractive centres to travel to, around, and to spend time in. It will improve facilities for people walking, wheeling and cycling to and within local communities.

#### Why now?

- Scotland’s town centres were already facing significant challenges prior to the global pandemic, however they have the potential to contribute a great deal to our response to climate change, and to meeting the future needs of our diverse population. By making better and more creative use of our settlement centres, we can significantly reduce the need to travel unsustainably whilst maintaining and enhancing the character and identity of our towns and cities to create vibrant places that meet our future needs.
- The development of low carbon and resilient places across Scotland, such as 20-minute neighbourhoods, will provide ready access to the facilities for our everyday lives, significantly reducing private car dependency and increasing walking, wheeling cycling and public transport use. This will be supported by a Place Based Investment Programme which will be implemented in 2021, linking and aligning all place-based funding initiatives to ensure we have a coherent approach to effectively progress our 20 minute neighbourhood ambitions. As part of this Programme, the Scottish Government will invest £275 million to support community-led regeneration and town-centre revitalisation, including the repurposing of buildings, maintenance and repairs, reallocating external space and community-led land acquisition. NPF4 will also guide future development and help to deliver infrastructure in a way that responds to the challenges of climate change.
- There is a strong national, regional and local policy context for active travel, to support investment in improved placemaking and

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<sup>19</sup> Angus Council, An Active Travel Strategy for Angus, 2016, [https://www.angus.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2017-07/401\\_AppA.pdf](https://www.angus.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2017-07/401_AppA.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Paths for All, National survey of attitudes and barriers to walking in Scotland, 2019, <https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/mediaLibrary/other/english/paths-for-all-national-survey---attitudes-and-barriers-to-walking-in-scotland.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Sustrans, Bike Life reports, <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life>

in healthy, inclusive and low carbon transport.

- Places for Everyone has demonstrated that well-designed active travel infrastructure is already being delivered in Scotland, and that there can be strong demand for its use, but further investment is required if the benefits are to be rolled out in a comprehensive manner across Scotland’s towns and villages.
- Active travel is increasingly important for wellbeing and social inclusion as well as an alternative to car use for shorter journeys. Well-designed spaces to travel via active modes which join up with public transport provides a sustainable and inclusive option for medium to longer length journeys.
- The COVID-19 lockdowns have increased emphasis on the importance of active travel, and of giving people good access to local goods and services.
- The Scottish Government has committed, in its 2020 Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032, to reducing total vehicle-km travelled on Scotland’s roads by 20% by 2030.
- The opportunity for change is large: over 80% of Scottish adults already walk either daily or several times a week; over a third of Scottish households have access to one or more bikes (though only 12% of adults cycle on at least a monthly basis). Despite the strong policy framework and some successful projects, active travel rates are not consistently increasing in Scotland.
- With the steady decline of Scottish high streets, action can help to address the rate of business closure and decreased pedestrian footfall in town and village centres.
- Experience demonstrates that transforming towns and villages into attractive places to be, coupled with the addition of high-quality active travel routes, can be transformative for towns and villages which result in a range of economic, social, health and environmental benefits.

5 Meeting the STPR2 Transport Planning Objectives

TRANSPORT PLANNING OBJECTIVE	CONTRIBUTION	SCALE OF IMPACT (-3 to +3)
A sustainable strategic transport system that contributes significantly to the Scottish Government’s net zero emissions target.	The reallocation of road space towards more active modes can be particularly effective at encouraging walking, wheeling and cycling for short and medium-length urban journeys. They will therefore enable an attractive alternative to many car journeys.	✓✓
An inclusive strategic transport system that improves the affordability and accessibility of public transport.	Improving accessibility to town and village centres for those walking, wheeling and cycling will improve access to public transport within the centres and beyond. Better active travel links also enable more people to access public transport services for longer journeys.	✓
A cohesive strategic transport system that enhances communities as places, supporting health and wellbeing.	Measures will be developed with placemaking at the heart of them, with improvements to the public realm playing an essential role in creating better places for those that live, work and visit them. Allowing for people to walk, wheel and cycle more safely will help support the health and wellbeing of communities and those that work in and visit them.	✓✓✓
An integrated strategic transport system that contributes towards sustainable inclusive growth in Scotland.	Well-designed active travel routes and associated placemaking can result in increased footfall and associated local retail spending of up to 30%, by encouraging more frequent and longer visits to retail centres. They also help more people to become economically active.	✓✓
A reliable and resilient strategic transport system that is safe and secure for users.	The reallocation of road space away from the private car and towards more active modes will enable people travelling by these modes to feel more safe and secure. Well-designed schemes ensure that the interaction between traffic and people travelling by active modes is minimised or that there is improved management of the interaction to improve perceived and real safety for those travelling by active modes.	✓✓

6 Addressing the Post COVID-19 Priorities

POST-C19 PRIORITIES	CONTRIBUTION
Employment	Improving active travel facilities within town and village centres allows easier access to employment for those who do not have access to a car, including younger people. Well-designed placemaking and public realm measures can increase footfall within town centres by up to 30%, hence increasing economic activity and therefore employment prospects.
Environment	The reallocation of road space away from the private car and towards active modes encourages modal shift. Accompanying improvements to streetscapes, including increased green space, can enhance placemaking and develop higher quality public realms, with potential benefits to biodiversity, landscape and sustainable drainage.
Education	The reallocation of road space towards active travel will aid healthy and inclusive access to schools, further/higher education and retraining opportunities. Children will be able to travel via active modes with the risk of interaction with traffic reduced. This will help promote sustainable transport and healthier children.
Equalities	Active travel provides the most inclusive transport choices, with accessibility benefits to many people that are commonly excluded from the transport system. Making centres more friendly for active modes will work to enhance access for some of Scotland’s most deprived communities, providing low-cost transport choices and accessible infrastructure for many people that are excluded by the current transport system. Well-designed placemaking and public realm measures will provide spaces for people to socialise and feel part of the community.

7 SEA, EqIA and Other Impact Assessments<sup>22</sup>

ASSESSMENT	COMMENTARY
SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)	Creating active and sustainable town and village centres will help deliver a modal shift from car to active travel, so reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality, subject to careful design to minimise any potential adverse environmental impacts. This intervention has potential benefits to amenity, human health, biodiversity, public realm and landscape and sustainable drainage. This intervention will therefore complement the SEA and help significantly progress the SEA objectives.
EqIA (Equality Impact Assessment)	Creating considered and inclusively designed active and sustainable town and village centres will provide improved transport choices and increased accessibility to people who are often excluded, including young and older people, people on low incomes, people with reduced mobility (including pregnant women) and people with physical or sensory impairments. It should be noted, however, that whilst active travel presents the lowest cost transport modes, people on the lowest incomes are still commonly excluded from cycling because of the cost of accessing a bike and associated equipment; complementary investment may be required to reduce these problems. Care is also required to ensure that the needs of disabled people are fully met to ensure safe and inclusive accessibility.
ICIA (Island Communities Impact Assessment)	This intervention will have the potential to help Scotland’s island communities, through making their towns and villages more attractive places to live, work and visit. This will bring associated health, economic and social benefits to Scotland’s Islands.
CRWIA (Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment)	Children and young people comprise one of the groups that is most currently most excluded from a full range of transport choices, in large part due to road safety concerns. Provision of space to safely travel by active modes is particularly beneficial to children and young people, as it enables access to independent and low-cost travel.
FSDIA (Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment)	Can provide significant benefit for inclusive accessibility, social cohesion and public health, including for members of target groups, especially if interventions are well designed to serve areas of highest need.

<sup>22</sup> All of these impact assessments are currently underway but no formal assessments have yet been undertaken. Please note SEA and EqIA scoping reports have been produced and consulted upon.

8 Implementability and Interdependencies

IMPLEMENTABILITY CRITERIA	COMMENTARY
Feasibility	The creation of active and sustainable centres is feasible within Scotland’s towns and villages, though much detailed development work is required to work with stakeholders identify the most appropriate locations and preferred fit with the urban form.
Affordability	Well designed and thought-out placemaking measures can be relatively low-cost, but overall costs is highly dependent on how many communities are prioritised for action. The reallocation of road space can have higher costs, but dependant on scale.
Public Acceptability	UK and international experience consistently shows good levels of public support for active travel and public realm infrastructure post-implementation, but also that debate and challenge should be expected during design and implementation phases. Stakeholder engagement and consultation will be critical to the success of schemes.

**Key Interdependencies**

Creating active and sustainable town and village centres through increased space for active travel and improved placemaking, in many instances, will involve competition for scarce road space and for use of public space. Particular attention will need to be paid to parking and public transport requirements. The development and implementation of well-designed schemes requires strong vision, political buy in and leadership. It is also critical to work with local communities from the outset to ensure that they meet the needs of, and are in the best interests of, the people who live there.

Reallocation of road space away from the private car towards active travel and the creation of high-quality, well maintained urban environment can be an effective way of enhancing the attractiveness of towns and villages, to the benefit of both residents and visitors. Recognising this, Transport Scotland has set a strong policy framework for the promotion of active travel, including in its Active Travel Vision and NTS2, a delivery framework through its partner led programmes such as Places for Everyone, and a measurement approach in its Active Travel Outcomes Framework. Developing this framework further is particularly relevant, given that active travel is increasingly important for social inclusion and as an alternative to car use as we live with COVID-19, and well-designed spaces to travel via active modes provides a sustainable and inclusive option for short to medium length journeys. This investment will complement the Place Based Investment Programme which will be implemented in 2021, linking and aligning all place-based funding initiatives to ensure we have a coherent approach to effectively progress our 20-minute neighbourhood ambitions. Transport Scotland should also work with communities and local authorities on a demonstrator project where the trunk road adversely impacts the quality of the public realm.

