

Local Authority Urban Design Forum

Chaired by Bea Nichol (Perth and Kinross Council) and Jennifer Horn (East Dunbartonshire Council)

Meeting #13 | 21st May 2019 | Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, Edinburgh

The Local Authority Urban Design Forum (LAUDF) is a network for local authority practitioners involved in urban design to share ideas on current issues, to learn from each other's experience and to build up resources for mutual benefit.

This newsletter covers the 13th LAUDF meeting. The theme of **Active Travel** was chosen by the steering group and an agenda was then developed by the co-chairs Bea Nichol (Perth and Kinross Council) and Jennifer Horn (East Dunbartonshire Council), with input from the steering group and Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS). The forum was attended by 49 professionals representing 24 different local authorities and public bodies.

Your own active travel habits

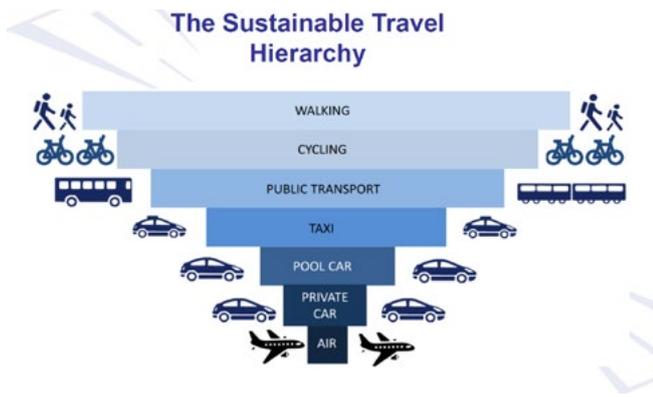
The afternoon began with group discussions where everyone shared what active travel means to them. This exercise intended to give a chance to reflect over what the theme stands for to participants as people, before exploring its meaning to them in their professions. Thoughts captured included what makes it easier and more difficult to make a habit of active travel; the mix of modes many active journeys include; ideas of what will make a difference to people's choices; the impact of distances between home and work and the opportunities for flexible working etc. A selection of the post-it output:

- Benefit of less stress
- Lack of connectivity for sustainable transport
- Lack of connections between council areas
- Glasgow is proactive in addressing connectivity

- Issues of journey times
- Cost of public transport
- Need for strategic vision
- Paradox "not safe to walk kids to school"
- Safety big issue – even other cyclists!
- Cycle maps good
- Need other options different routes
- Cycle to site visits hire bikes available through employer
- Can't take bike on the bus
- Active travel can be quicker than being stuck in congestion
- Pool bike system good but needs proper thinking through
- Showers at work help – storage for spare clothes
- Live and work in city makes it easier
- Distance/time between home and work
- More difficult with children to organise/fit in
- Leaving the car takes a bit of discipline
- Bike security – storage in city centre
- Reliability of public transport
- "terrified of cycling"
- Bikeability training
- Rural isolation
- Most people are pedestrians
- Behaviour of drivers puts people off cycling
- Car for shopping
- Home location dictates travel behaviour
- Big savings by not having a car
- Learning estates strategy – build in active travel
- Making it the easiest thing to do
- Transit orientated development
- E-bike trial at work



PRESENTATIONS



From National Transport Strategy, January 2016 Refresh

The national perspective

Jill Mulholland, Transport Scotland

Jill set out the national picture for active travel. Transport Scotland has restructured to bring Active and Sustainable Travel Teams alongside Bus, Smart Ticketing and Accessible Travel. They are keen to join up policy and delivery across public transport and beyond to related policy areas such as education, planning and housing. They want more people to make more sustainable travel choices overall away from single occupancy cars and incorporate active travel choices into everyday journeys.

Jill highlighted the strategic contexts for active travel including: the emerging Transport Bill; [the National Transport Strategy](#); the [Cycling Action Plan](#) for Scotland which sets out the shared vision for "10% of everyday journeys to be made by bike, by 2020"; the [National Walking Strategy](#); and the [Long Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland](#), which sets a vision for Scotland in 2030 and includes a strong focus on place.

Jill outlined the links between active travel and a range of broader outcomes including sustainable growth, addressing climate change and inequality and health and economic benefits. In respect of inequality, transport poverty is a major issue and while this means that in more deprived areas more people walk to work, this needs to be a positive choice, supported by safe, attractive infrastructure, good connections to public transport, access to bikes and clean air.

The Scottish Government's budget for Active Travel has been doubled to £80 million to help speed up the building of safer, high quality active travel infrastructure. Delivery partners include Sustrans, where funding has been simplified into one source 'Places for Everyone' covering all scales of project, Cycling Scotland and Paths for All who have a £2 million open fund 'Smarter Choices Smarter Places'.

Jill emphasised the important role place plays in incentivising active travel. She highlighted the need for projects to deliver more comprehensive, high quality environments based on the needs of local communities.

Important factors emerging for successful projects include; visible transformation of cities and towns with prioritisation for pedestrians and cyclists over cars, capture of strong evidence of what works, coherent vision and design with fully segregated end-to-end routes offering certainty you can complete a journey and supporting behaviour change programmes.

Finally, Jill highlighted the need for leadership and advocacy, for messaging in policy and strategy to prioritise active travel, for governance to align across plans and actions relating to active travel and for learning to be captured to support continuous improvement.

Funding Opportunities

Dave Keane, Sustrans

Sustrans work in partnership with local authorities, NHS, community groups, development trusts and public bodies to ensure that the people of Scotland have access to a network of safe walking and cycling routes. Funded by Transport Scotland, they manage an active travel budget (2018/19 = £15/head of population).

Sustrans tries to reduce gaps in towns' walking and cycling networks and work with communities to develop active travel projects. Dave gave an overview of projects Sustrans promote, including the National Cycle Network which seeks to create a network of traffic-free paths for everyone, connecting cities, towns and countryside.

The recently re-branded 'Places for Everyone' supports projects that seek to make Scotland's towns and cities friendlier and safer places for people to walk and cycle. There are different tiers of funding: Tier 1 to 3 includes safe routes to school, community links, and filling in gaps to provide coherent networks. Tier 4 focuses on big scale strategic projects involved in cycle and walking activity, and encouraging safer everyday journeys.

Six design principles ensure that Places for Everyone projects meet the aim of the programme:

- Develop ideas, collaboration in partnership with communities;
- Facilitate independent walking, cycling and wheeling for everyone, including unaccompanied 12 years olds
- Design places for people that priorities enjoyment, comfort and protection
- Equality of opportunity in public space: involve people in discussion
- Ensure proposals are context specific and evidence led
- Reallocate road space and restrict motor traffic permeability – prioritise walking, cycling and wheeling over motor vehicles.

The initial portal for applications for 2019/20 closed in May. Over 250 applications from 72 organisations were received and almost £40m was requested. Awards will be announced by the end of June. The portal reopens at the end of June for new applications.

PRESENTATIONS



A research perspective

Professor Tom Rye, Napier University

Tom's key message is that change can happen. A shift toward more active travel is possible. His presentation covered the following questions: What do we need to do to increase active travel? What evidence do we need? How do we bring about change and how does thing change? In short, by making it a little more difficult to use the car and easier to travel by other modes:

- Parking management: more difficult and/or expensive to park cars.
- Cutting motor traffic speeds
- Making driving routes less straight
- Shifting the relative journey times: car getting a bit slower, active getting a bit quicker
- Making it nicer to walk and cycle
- Improving public transport: active travel often forms part of public transport journeys
- Land use planning: where parking is placed, density of development with proximity to services, employment and recreation

In conclusion a mixture of incentives and disincentives. An important takeaway is to allow these changes to take time and be done incrementally – although there are examples of successful one-off changes to parking charges and traffic speeds.

What evidence do we have to argue the case for active travel? What evidence is missing?

+ Positive health impacts and increased physical activity are well researched and evidenced.

+ Local economic benefit is bigger per £ invested in active travel projects compared to big infrastructure project and creates more jobs. Overall cost/benefit ratio is much bigger for active travel investments.

Is it political/economic suicide to take action that makes it more difficult to use the car? There is only circumstantial evidence that suggest that cities that have shifted towards more active travel are also more than average economically successful and that it can contribute to higher ranking in quality of life indices.

However, that is part of a bigger context and no direct casual evidence is available.

Overall, there is less evidence from the UK and very little from rural/town settings. Robust data gathering can be difficult where populations are smaller.

Tom listed some conditions for successful implementation of changes that will improve active travel habits, such as: having a clear policy objective and a written policy document in place; availability of necessary resources; the characteristics of organisations; policy champions; bureaucratic power; collaboration and interaction between those involved in implementation; and the acceptance of opposition, conflict and ambiguities as inevitable and complex.

Resistance from local residents and businesses is a well-known hurdle to making changes to traffic and parking. There are examples of how consultations with many small groups for parts of the proposed changes have been successful.

Tom also recommended [Edinburgh Street Design Guidance](#) as a good example, saying that the minutiae of detailed design needs more research, but that also means that the received wisdom of traffic planning can be challenged.

Short Q&A:

Segregation vs. shared surface? There is evidence of successful mixing of transport modes, but not necessarily on a "shared surface", at low traffic speeds. At higher speeds, precedents from for example Scandinavia is still in favour of segregation. A shared or mixed space needs balance in numbers between pedestrians and vehicles to work.

Parking standards - policy contrary to active travel ambitions? The evidence is clear, more difficulty to park reduces car use, but it needs to mean that parking doesn't just move elsewhere.

LEARNING EXCHANGE SESSIONS



Falkirk's Take the Right Route school travel plan Pack

Falkirk school travel assessment

Lynn Slavin and Adam Watson, Falkirk

Action was first taken in response to complaints about congested routes in 2003. Falkirk has 7 school clusters, covering 8 High Schools and 50 primaries. Consultants were commissioned for a comprehensive consultation process, reporting on active travel issues and opportunities for each cluster in turn. Evidence was gathered on physical and behavioural barriers to active travel on routes to school from pupils, parents, carers and headteachers. Issues included speed of traffic, missing stretches of path, bullying and lighting in underpasses. Required improvements were reviewed for feasibility and considered alongside accident data. The process was intensive but the reports gave a strong evidence base to inform the public and elected members and support funding applications to improve infrastructure. A written travel plan is produced by each school, which helps establish ownership and give access to support for behaviour change including bikeability training. The council has produced a replicable action plan kit to make it easy and hassle free for each school to make their own. Travel plan awards incentivise participation. Learning points on positive outcomes and benefits of a strategic long term approach:

- A strong baseline understanding of issues/needs can shape improvements and target investment to where needed.
- A significant reduction in complaints and issues. A second phase of consultation with schools identified fewer issues.
- Building a culture of collaboration with schools and communities for joint ownership of issues. 100% of primaries now take part in the walk to school initiative each year. The perception that it's just the council's problem has gone. Longevity of commitment to approach within Council has helped.
- Close working between departments – here particularly transport, planning and education – improve outcomes. The reports are used for planning new developments, helping secure developer contributions and ensure new links or infrastructure go in up front.



Forth & Clyde Canal, Scottish Canals

Central Canals Project and Sustrans/ Visit Scotland microsite

Andy Macpherson, Central Canals Project, Mark Shields, Sustrans

Investment in active travel and tourism can stimulate local economy and inclusive growth. Tow path investments along the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals have been calculated to provide a £24 return on every £1. **The Central Canals Project** is looking at making the canal into an attraction in itself for the benefit of locals and visitors, boosting local businesses and community facilities and strengthening the Central Scotland Green Network. The project covers an area between Bishopbriggs and the River Almond and is co-ordinated by CSGNT, working in partnership with Scottish Canals, Sustrans, VisitScotland and local authorities. The project will be using the Place Standard tool to better understand the canal as a place and what interventions are needed.

Leisure cycling is a route in to everyday cycling – so how can this be harnessed on a local level? By drawing people in to local leisure routes and active tourism that is easy and accessible.

In partnership with VisitScotland, Sustrans has worked on a **cycle tourism micro-site**, embedded in VisitScotland's suite of online resources. Trialled on the Caledonian Way, there will be different levels of challenge to suit different levels of experience. Similar to the Central Canals Project, this aims to draw those in who might be new to or have little experience of active tourism and include family-oriented options. The routes will be connected to VisitScotland's other listings such as accommodation and events. The site being hosted by VisitScotland provides continuity and maintenance of content as well as national and international exposure. Local initiatives, such as the Central Canals Project, see the benefit of the online presence but as all project-based work it is difficult to maintain beyond the running of the project.

LEARNING EXCHANGE SESSIONS



Cycle network masterplan, Perth

Mike Morgan, Perth and Kinross Council

Perth & Kinross Council have been successful in progressing to the next round in their bid for funding from Sustrans Scotland's Community Links PLUS. Within the bid they identified 8 different active travel routes, each with 3 different options, for safe and direct walking and cycling into the city centre, linking to public transport and National Cycle Network routes, to encourage more active travel and help improve the look and feel of local areas. Routes are segregated where possible, but some are part segregated due to barriers within the current transport network. The Council are looking to deliver on 3 of the primary corridors through the bid, along with connecting routes, as part of a wider active travel network.

Following progression to the next round the Council undertook a series of public consultation events together with digital consultation through Commonplace and interactions through social media. Overall support was very positive, but there are areas to target going forward were highlighted. Support from Perth Traders and Chambers of Commerce, along with elected members, is strong. The Council are keen to pursue greater engagement with young people to pick up on to their ambitions, for example, how they see movement patterns in the future. Representatives from the Council had also taken part in a site visit to the Netherlands gathering valuable learning on what can be delivered whilst noting the challenges they faced.

The creation of a third bridge over the Tay solely for active travel was being considered along with proposals to introduce bus lanes in some areas of the city to allow more efficient travel and create an opportunity to implement lower speed limits.

Information gathered through the consultations was used to develop proposals for further public consultation in January 2019.

Useful links: [Perth City Plan](#), [City of Light Action Plan](#), Community Engagement via Commonplace: [Your place, your future](#) and [Active Perth proposals](#)

Proposals available on [issuu.com](#), search for Perth & Kinross Community Links Plus.



Purpose of the Consultation

The purpose of the consultation is to allow the community to review, discuss and leave feedback on the emerging detailed proposals for two areas in Balftron: The Clachan and Printer's Row, to support the development of designs to create a safe

Places for Everyone

Susan McDougall and Meg Johannessen, Stirling Council

Susan shared a community driven project in **Balftron**, west of Stirling, taken forward in partnership between the council, Sustrans and the local community council. In 2015 Balftron Community Council began a community consultation in response to concerns over Balftron's public environment. The results of this was eventually shared with Stirling Council who commissioned a review to help find tangible solutions that could be implemented.

The world cafe focused on one aspect of the project, a gateway to the village known as the Clachan, the northernmost gateway into Balftron. It has many listed buildings and is part of a Conservation Area. It has a high quality green setting and the iconic "Clachan Oak". The designs have gone through several permutations to establish community support, satisfy Sustrans funding rules and detailed traffic design regulations and has not yet reach its final conclusion.

The project shows the importance of partnership working, harnessing 'bottom-up' approaches to local issues. It's an example of developing active travel and road safety schemes in rural settlements and sensitive historic environments, and the importance of bespoke designs to address urban characters and constraints.

Walk, Cycle, Live – Stirling seeks to develop core active travel routes, based on segregated bi-directional cycle lanes, connecting key destinations including the City Centre, Stirling University and Forth Valley College. This project aims to integrate with the Raploch Street Design project which will form part of the route between the City Centre and Forth Valley College. Use of a place based design approach through different treatments in response to character areas and environments the routes will pass. On-street car parking can be retained in places, whilst it will be necessary to remove in others

The project has parallels with the Perth Cycle Network for a Great Small City Network.

LEARNING EXCHANGE & MORE INFO



Clydebank and Greenock

Raymond Walsh, West Dunbartonshire,
Alan Williamson, Inverclyde

Alan and Raymond shared some examples of current schemes involving active travel components in their areas.

Alan shared a project in Greenock, **Inverclyde**, where the local authority has been developing different options for improving public realm along what is currently a confusing and car dominated street. Initial designs, developed following a Charette in 2016, are being redeveloped to incorporate Sustrans 'Place for Everyone' principles following concerns over the street being overly car dominated. Different options are being explored in terms of separation of motor traffic / cycle / pedestrian routes along the street. Traders in the area are generally in favour of the proposed improvements however there are concerns from the general public over loss of parking in order to create a dedicated cycle lane.

Raymond talked about the **Connecting Clydebank project** in West Dunbartonshire. The project also came about through a Charette process and number of consultation events. The project looks at improving a critical transport link along a section of the A814 between Clydebank Library and to the west of the Argyll Road junction. Key design elements include: reducing speed limits (20 mph) and creating a new sense of arrival; stitching together Queens Quay and the Titan Crane with the town and Clydebank Rail through high quality pedestrian and cycle links (along Titan Boulevard); improved setting for the Town Hall; and investment in number of controlled crossings.

The project is on-going and applied for planning last November.

Soapbox session

One take home message is the difficulty of working in a (small) town context. There is lack of clear evidence and few examples to rely on for arguing in favour of active and sustainable travel and more reasons for people to use the car.



Paul Zochowski of East Lothian shared some of the barriers they have experienced:

- Retailers opposing schemes reducing parking / vehicle access as they are worried it will have a negative impact on business.
- Sustrans funding rules make requirements that can be difficult to square with businesses and communities.
- Good Musselburgh study on active/sustainable travel routes in and through the town and to important commuting destinations – but will be expensive to implement.
- North Berwick town centre improvement trial has had to be postponed as initial local support has turned to opposition.

Paul suggested it is worth looking at speaking to different groups, beyond community councils, to let other priorities be heard. For example engaging with pupils and parents through schools can be a way to get other adults to sit up and pay attention.

Meeting close

A warm thank you was extended from the co-chairs to all presenters and world café contributors. The event was buzzing with energy. A challenge with planning for travel, as one participant put it, is that we tend to want everything to be organised around ourselves, for the mode we happen to be using at the time.

Forum members can register with the online LAUDF [knowledgehub site](#) to view presentations from this and previous meetings. It is your site - use it to contact forum members, start discussions or post information in-between meetings.

More on LAUDF

LAUDF is a network for all local authority or public agency staff with an interest in urban design. Please encourage colleagues to attend future events. The next full meeting of LAUDF is proposed for winter 2019. The steering group meet on a quarterly basis and are keen to hear from anyone interested in contributing to developing future meetings. Contact info@ads.org.uk with any LAUDF enquiries.