

Active Travel Strategy

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
2025-2035



ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL 2025-2035

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ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL 2025-2035 FOREWORD



Councillor Scott Hamilton

As Executive Member for Economic Growth and Developing the Borders, I am delighted to present the Council's first ever Active Travel Strategy for the Scottish Borders. Active travel is any form of transport that involves physical activity such as walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding. The key aim of this strategy is to make active travel a safer, healthy, reliable and affordable means of travel.

Active travel positively contributes to the health and wellbeing of our residents, it can improve connectivity between our communities and across the border into neighbouring local authorities. It can also help boost economic growth, whilst also supporting Scottish Borders Council deliver on climate commitments and sustainability. This strategy recognises the potential for active travel to become a meaningful and central element of our daily lives. It has the ability to respond to many of the challenges we face as a region. It can help address the barriers to walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding, and promote other travel modes for everyday journeys.

One of our key aims in the strategy is the development of a strategic network of shared access routes between towns and villages throughout the Scottish Borders. Ambitious projects such as the Tweed Trail from Moffat to Berwick and the Borders Greenway which links Tweedbank and Eyemouth are part of this vision. However, it is also the opportunities for short local journeys within our towns and villages which we are looking to improve and promote. There are also key links to placemaking, which I know is currently underway in a number of our local communities. It is important that

we take these opportunities and work with communities and businesses to develop places that will make local people proud.

This includes making our streets feel safer to walk, wheel, cycle, play and spend time in, making active travel more appealing and a possibility for more people. These are the changes that will contribute to improving health and wellbeing, the local economy and connectivity, as well as helping to deliver on our commitment to achieve net zero. I am aware of the transport challenges we currently face in the Scottish Borders. We are a rural local authority and additional funding is scarce. This provides challenges around enabling and encouraging active travel and is why having a good and integrated public transport network is imperative. The key to doing this successfully will be collaboration across Council Departments, including our Passenger Transport Team and working closely with key stakeholders and partners.

I am confident that as a Council we will continue to explore funding opportunities and identify potential avenues for developing additional partnerships in the South of Scotland and beyond. This in turn will help us improve our existing facilities, build new safer routes and encourage and enable more walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding across our region.





ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY

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INTRODUCTION

About this strategy

This Active Travel Strategy sets out the vision to make active travel the natural first choice for everyday journeys across the Scottish Borders, wherever possible.

The strategy defines how active travel contributes to the transport needs of the Borders whilst incorporating the priorities of the region, in light of the climate emergency and Scotland's commitment to achieving net zero by 2045. It also recognises the important contributions all forms of active travel can make towards achieving the region's wider policy framework, including around health and social equity.

What is active travel?

Active travel is any form of transport that is primarily based on physical activity such as walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding (in the Scottish Borders there is a large and historic equestrian presence). Wheeling includes using any kind of wheeled mobility aid, including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, walking frames,

scooting, prams or buggies. In terms of cycling this includes the use of standard bikes, adapted bikes or trikes, e-bikes and other micro-mobility devices to support day to day trips.

Our commitment to increasing active travel

We recognise the importance of active travel in supporting economic development, creating stronger local businesses, enhancing community cohesion, improving mental and physical health, reducing car use (wherever possible) and improving air quality.

This also contributes to why we are taking a whole systems and preventative approach. A preventative approach is a prudent one: making a proactive investment in what keeps us all well, rather than just waiting for health and care systems to deal with ill health. Our whole systems approach involves applying systems thinking, methods and practice to better understand public health challenges and identify collective actions. These actions are typically across different council departments, the NHS, academic, private and third sector.

This new strategy and delivery plan will promote and drive change to make essential daily destinations accessible by active and sustainable modes and engage people with healthy lifestyles, regardless of age. Enabling people to move more, and more often in social and green settings, from a young age (to instil lifelong habits) is central to our active travel transition.

Changes in travel choices will align with the work of the upcoming Scottish Borders Council Local Transport and Access Strategy, and various other Council strategies, plans and further policies aligned with environmental quality, climate change and the opportunities for our region and local economies to thrive in a sustainable way.



ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY

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THE BENEFITS OF ACTIVE TRAVEL

Active travel as a tool for happier, healthier people and places

Enabling and encouraging people to make everyday journeys by active modes (walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding) not only has significant positive physical and mental health impacts on the individual but can also contribute to creating thriving, healthy and connected communities.

Walking - It is the most natural physical activity that most of us can do. It is simple and convenient for most people - free year-round exercise that can be incorporated into our daily routines at our own pace.

Walkable places have consistently been shown to have happier residents, who feel stronger connections and trust with others, whilst benefitting from being able to walk to places to attain their daily needs (local shops, schools, parks etc.).

Whilst walking suits shorter journeys, its role in our transport system should not be underestimated: it forms the 'glue' that links people's homes to public transport and on to their destination. Its simplicity and convenience could be the key to getting more people to use their car less often.

"Physical inactivity contributes to over 2,500 premature deaths in Scotland each year (that is around 7 a day) and costs the NHS in Scotland around £94.1 million annually"



Scottish adults would be prepared to walk to:

Local shop 64%

Public transport 63%

Nearest urban green space 50%

Their place of work 44%



"Walking is the most likely way all adults can achieve the recommended levels of physical activity" NICE Public Health Guidance

Cycling - is a very efficient form of transport. It is possible to cycle far greater distances than walking using much less effort. While it is an easy way to travel, there are barriers for many people to overcome, such as learning to ride, accessing or storing a bike. E-bikes are beginning to reduce barriers to cycling for some people (i.e. physical fitness, travelling longer distances etc.) – however e-bikes themselves present other barriers (i.e. cost).

Wheeling - can also provide similar benefits of exercise and efficiency. Wheeling includes using any kind of wheeled mobility aid, including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, walking frames, scooting, prams or buggies.

Horse riding - has a large and historic equestrian presence in the Borders and the region boasts more horses per capita of population than any other region in Scotland. This means that, unlike our urban counterparts, this Active Travel Strategy needs to include and be mindful of equestrians. Horse riding too is a cardio and strength workout that keeps many people physically and mentally well.

“Health professionals recommend children and young people get at least 60 minutes of vigorous activity every day and adults get at least 20-30 minutes of physical activity a day to stay healthy.”

**50% of trips in the
Scottish Borders are
under 3km**

**9% of women cycled
at least once a week in
comparison to 21%
of men**

(Sustrans/Arup, 2019)



Being active can improve your energy levels, general fitness, bone and muscle health and general wellbeing.

Almost all public transport journeys include a walk, wheel or cycle to or from the stop or station. This means integrating public transport with active travel will boost both means of transport.

The NHS considers air pollution to be the biggest environmental threat to health in the UK. Choosing to walk, wheel or cycle instead of driving once a week could save around 30kg in carbon (CO₂) a year.

If every journey under three miles in Scotland in 2019 was made by active travel, this would save around a quarter (23-28%) of carbon emissions from cars. This excludes emergency vehicles and cars owned by people living with disabilities.

Transport is Scotland's biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.



Every £1 spent on walking, wheeling and cycling leads to £13 of benefits returning to the local economy.

ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY

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WHY DO WE NEED A STRATEGY?

Active travel as a tool for happier, healthier people and places

We need an Active Travel Strategy to organise, communicate, manage, deliver and monitor current and future active travel projects and initiatives. We will do this by providing a framework for the council to deliver positive change in infrastructure and in our communities.

The development of a strategy is focused on encouraging people to make sustainable travel choices whenever possible. Looking at the best ways to meet our communities and the national aspirations for improved walking, wheeling, cycling and equestrian conditions.

This includes identifying and securing funding opportunities and coordinating multisector action to design and build active travel infrastructure, encourage and enable behaviour change, continue to maintain our existing networks and monitor our progress of this journey towards becoming an active, sustainable and net zero region.

The strategy allows us to align our work with national policies which are continuing to promote walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding, liveable neighbourhoods and net zero initiatives across Scotland. These national policies are important for the Scottish Borders to deliver on all goals (including social, environmental, economic and climate). We have therefore prepared a Delivery Plan which complements this strategy to guide our work in this area over the next 10 years.

PLACES THAT ARE PLEASANT AND PRACTICAL FOR WALKING, WHEELING AND CYCLING, WITH BETTER PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST SAFETY WILL IMPROVE PEOPLE'S LIVES IN MANY WAYS, INCLUDING FEELING CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY



ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY

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POLICY CONTEXT

It is imperative we tackle transport to reduce our carbon emissions and create healthier communities. Our net-zero ambitions have reinforced the interest in a more sustainable approach to how we move around in our neighbourhoods and towns.

National travel policy

The National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2, 2020) contains a vision for Scotland's transport over the next 20 years. A sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system, helping to deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, business and visitors. The importance of walking, wheeling and cycling is identified through the national 'Sustainable Travel Hierarchy'. They are prioritised above all other forms of transport.

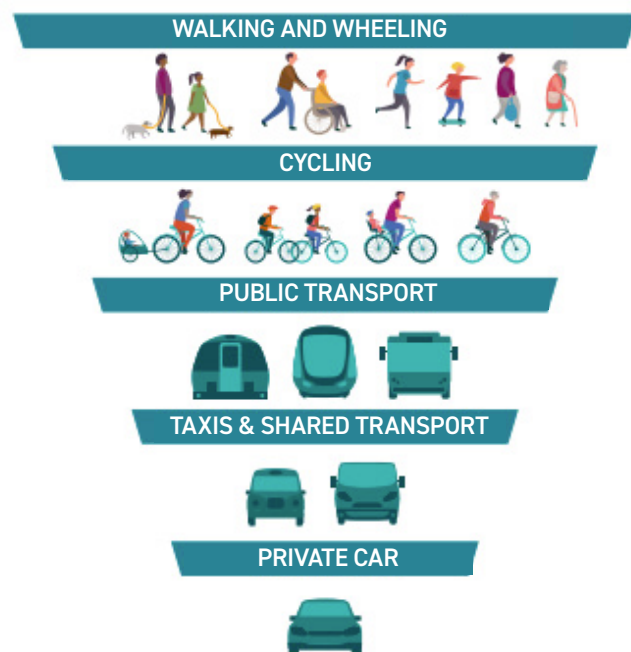
Liveable places

Scottish Government's National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2045 (NPF4) identifies Sustainable, Liveable and Productive Places as a central theme, and the 20 Minute Neighbourhood approach as being the key development opportunity to influence the way we plan places together with everyday local infrastructure to significantly reduce the need to travel.

NPF4 also places emphasis on embedding active travel as a planning priority for achieving sustainable travel, and the promotion of multifunctional networks including green infrastructure (green spaces, trees, and other natural amenities) to support biodiversity, environmental enhancement, air quality and climate comfort.

Green networks have leisure and physical activity potential; paths and natural connections through equipped green areas are a fundamental part of sustainable communities, especially in the South of Scotland where the landscape has significant potentialities for joining paths that benefit active tourism.

The Sustainable Travel Hierarchy



The Scottish Government's [2030 Vision for Active Travel](#) is that

“Scotland’s communities are shaped around people, with walking or cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys”

Policy alignment

This Active Travel Strategy is designed to reflect and align with a range of plans and strategies. That is because active travel and transport can contribute to a whole range of favourable policy outcomes as noted below.

Policy Outcomes	Policies
Climate and Environment	Climate Change Plan 2018-2032 – Scottish Government Decarbonising the Scottish Transport Sector – Transport Scotland Our Climate Change Route Map – Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan – Scottish Borders Council
Health and wellbeing	A More Active Scotland: Scotland’s Physical Activity Delivery Plan Active Travel Framework – Transport Scotland Road Safety Framework to 2030 – Transport Scotland Cycling by Design – Transport Scotland Let’s Get Scotland Walking - The National Walking Strategy Strategic Framework Health and Social Care – Scottish Borders Council Health and Social Care Partnership Cycling Partnership Strategy – South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership Physical Activity and Sports Strategy – coming soon Equestrian Trail and Tourism Development Plan – coming soon
Inclusion and equity	Community Plan – Scottish Borders Council Council Plan – Scottish Borders Council Fairer Duty Scotland – Scottish Government A Connected Scotland – Scottish Government
Inclusive growth	Scotland’s National Strategy for Economic Transformation – Scottish Government STPR2 Case for Change for the Scottish Borders – Transport Scotland Regional Prosperity Framework – City Region Deal Economic Strategy – Scottish Borders Council Regional Economic Strategy – South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership Responsible Tourism Strategy – South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership Cultural and Arts Strategy – coming soon

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OUR MAKE-UP



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116,820
total population



15%
of population 0-15
years old



26%
of population 65
years and over



48.7% male



51.3% female

23.5%

limited a lot or a little
by a long-term health
problem or disability



22%

with one or more
long term health
condition



16%
without access to
a car in Scottish
Borders



37%
households have
2 or more cars or
vans



Source: 2022 Census

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UNDERSTANDING ACTIVE TRAVEL CHOICES IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

People and behaviours

In terms of the age structure in the Borders, approximately **17%** of the population are children (15 and under), **62%** are of working age (aged 16 to 64), and **21%** are **65** and over.

The proportion of people **aged 65 and over** within the region was **6% higher than the national benchmark**. The largest settlements in the Borders are **Galashiels** and **Hawick**. Overall, the proportion of households with **access to a car is higher in the Borders compared to Scotland as a whole (79.5% compared to 69.4%, based on 2011 Census)**.

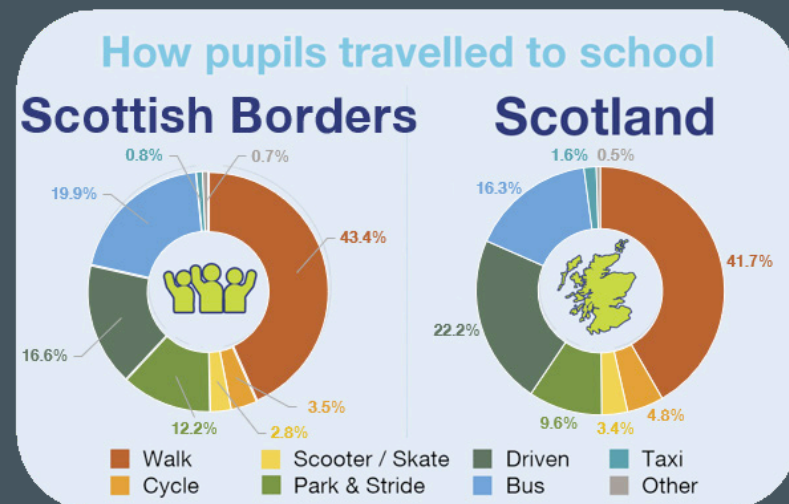
Travel to work by car is the dominant mode with **65.2%** of people commuting by car. **Bus** carries a total of **3.2%** of commuting trips, and **rail carries 0.6%**, whilst **13.4%** of people **walk** and **less than 2%** of people **cycle**.

The **majority of travel for work in the Borders is within the Scottish Borders local authority area; and the majority of movements out with the region are to the City of Edinburgh and the Lothians**. There are **small pockets of deprivation** across the Region, most notably around **Galashiels, Hawick and Selkirk**.

Within the Borders **6% of SIMD data zones are within the 20% most deprived and 2% are within the 10% most deprived**.

SIMD Health rankings indicate that **9% of data zones in the Borders region are ranked within the lowest quintile (20% most deprived) for health in Scotland**.

Our pupils are on par with the national average for active journeys to school, however there are opportunities to increase this number and understand any barriers families are faced with when it comes to active travel to school.



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HOW WAS THIS STRATEGY DEVELOPED

The planning and development of this Active Travel Strategy started in early 2024. The strategy will be subject to full public consultation, where feedback will be taken on board and the strategy will be produced in final form once approved by Elected Members. It has been collated from information from national data, stakeholder engagement and community consultation. The stages of its development are noted below:



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KEY THEMES AND FEEDBACK

A consultation exercise on Shared Access Routes took place in early 2024 as part of a wider strategy from the Council to help link communities together, promote more active travel and encourage opportunities for economic development and job creation.

A summary of feedback from this consultation can be found on Page 19 and some of the most popular routes were identified by the community (and also confirmed through data and desktop research).

○ **The five most highly requested routes were (not in order of priority):**

- Clovenfords – Walkerburn
- Denholm – Hawick
- Eyemouth – Tweedbank
- Lauder – Oxton
- Selkirk – Hawick



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○ Scottish Borders Core Paths

- Whilst core paths are not currently featured as Active Travel routes, their presence serves as an existing trail network that can be enhanced or repurposed.
- Details on our core paths can be found here:
[Scottish Borders Core paths | Scottish Borders Council \(scotborders.gov.uk\)](#)

As we set the precedence for Active Travel and our Shared Access Routes for the Scottish Borders, there will be a requirement as a Local Authority to reevaluate our priorities when it comes to our existing core path network. This is due to resource and funding constraints.

Prioritisation will help us ensure we focus our resource and funding on key routes that are highly utilised, have economic benefits (such as Scotland's Great Trails) and/or connect our key communities and services.

A summary of key feedback obtained from this consultation exercise can be found on the next page.



Key themes and feedback from the community

I think it's a wonderful idea to build a shared access network...

It will enable children, teachers and parents/carers to cycle to school thus lowering traffic on roads and improving health and wellbeing

It would be great for locals and visitors to have a safe path, away from traffic, to walk and cycle

More needs to be done to promote increased active travel use by all users

I'm very supportive of all shared access network ideas, but very keen to see progress on the Borders Greenway, which has already had some feasibility work

Shared access routes should be made available for all, whatever the disability

A survey conducted by Greener Duns on conclusion of the Tour of Britain in 2022 found that 80% of respondents said they'd be more likely to cycle if they had a traffic free cycle route

It all looks excellent and is SO necessary. We must do all we can to get and keep people active and safe while being so

This would be a great route linking up towns and villages across the Borders - good for people's health and for tourism opportunities

Make sure that shared access also includes provision for horse riding and associated facilities for horseboxes along routes

Excellent development for health and wellbeing and it would be wonderful to connect smaller villages into the network

Strengths, opportunities and challenges

A summary of some of the current strengths, opportunities and challenges we face in the Scottish Borders to achieve a more active future:

Strengths	Opportunities	Challenges
Actively working successfully with groups in the community from nurseries, to schools, through to the elderly.	Our natural landscape and geography present opportunities for active tourism and wider initiatives for the South of Scotland.	Longer distances and terrain within rural regions.
Increasing interests from local communities to run community-led projects.	There is national backing and emerging policies to fund more active travel, with increased interest from Transport Scotland in tackling active travel on trunk roads.	Demographic trends, with an ageing population and young people leaving the region.
The permanent 20 mph limit across all Borders towns and villages creates safer streets for active travel.	Utilise projects such as the Workforce Mobility Project to further understand demand patterns and where there is most potential for behaviour change.	Maintenance of infrastructure and path networks in such an extensive region.
A highly successful Walk It programme which encourages and facilitates walking throughout communities.	Cross departmental working and collaborations with active travel, transport, health, economic development, events, communities and environment can be used to make the case for joint funding applications and regeneration projects.	Income deprivation and inequalities in access to active travel equipment and facilities.
Green areas and open spaces within walkable distances are part of the assets that will enable more active travel.	Being a UCI Bike Region - recognising the region's commitment to both Elite cycling competition and cycling for all.	Integration of active travel with public transport, including travel to/from interchanges and bus stops, bikes on public transport, and coordination with different operators.
A number of new schemes being implemented throughout the region to facilitate everyday journeys and leisure.	As census data shows, the majority of travel for work in the Borders is within the Scottish Borders local authority area.	Joining up all the current and ongoing initiatives when there are so many interested and involved parties.

ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY

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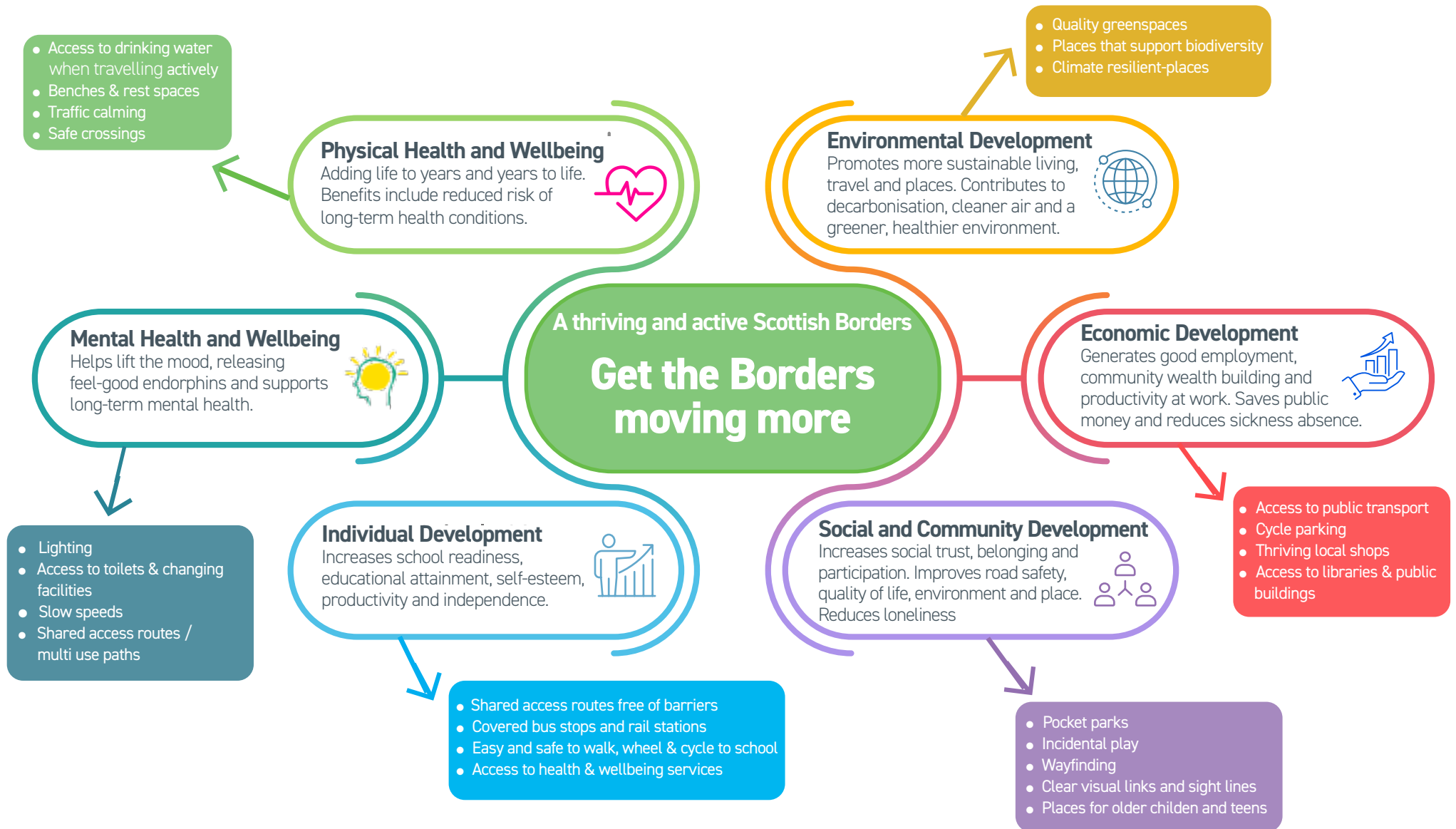
TOWARDS AN ACTIVE TRAVEL REGION



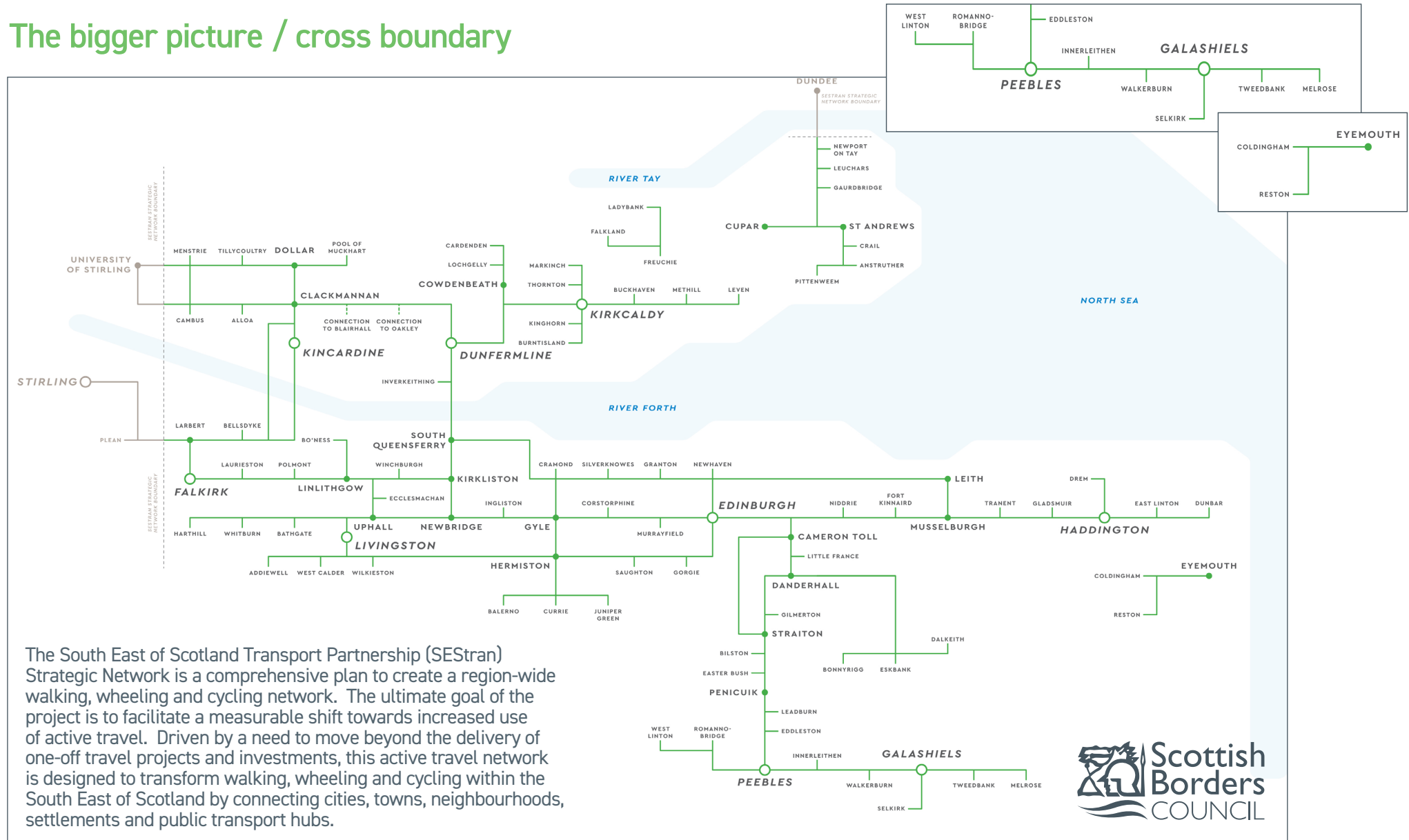
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OUR VISION

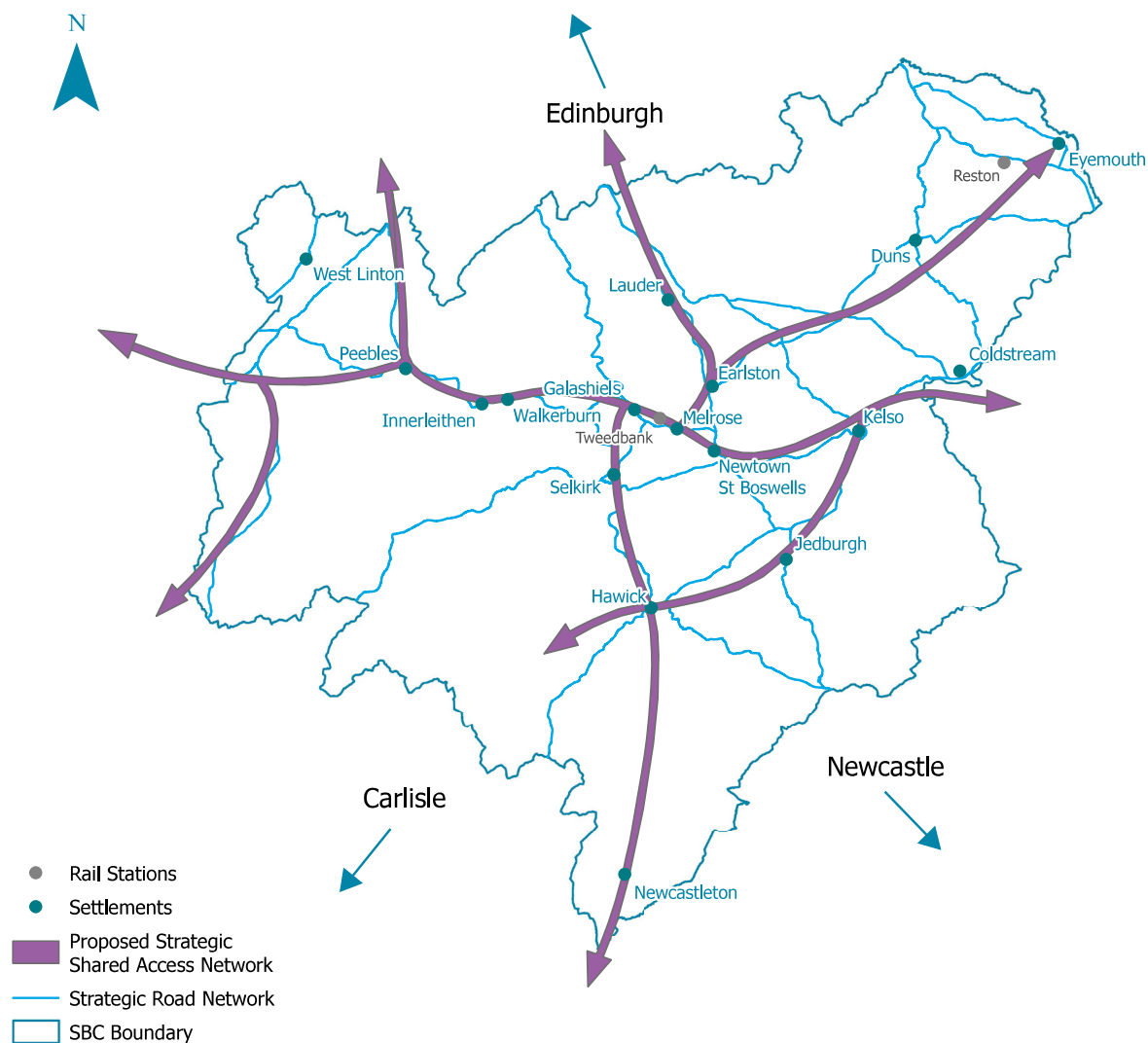


The bigger picture / cross boundary



The Local Picture

Proposed Shared Access Network for the Scottish Borders



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The Local Picture

CASE STUDY: Kirkpatrick Coast 2 Coast (C2C)

The Kirkpatrick C2C, South of Scotland's Coast to Coast cycling route, celebrates the South of Scotland's key role in the creation of the bicycle. The on-road route offers 250 miles of uninterrupted joy for experienced cyclists from Stranraer on the west coast to Eyemouth on the east coast. Almost 200 years ago Kirkpatrick Macmillan, a blacksmith from Dumfriesshire, created the first pedal-driven bicycle, the velocipede, an innovation that changed the world forever.

The route covers breathtaking landscapes with dramatic coastlines, rolling hills, and mesmerising historic architecture along the way, culminating in the picturesque harbour at Eyemouth.

Although a leisure route, it also facilitates the connections for experienced cyclists between some of key towns and villages including Eyemouth, Ayton, Kelso, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, Tweedbank, Galashiels, Selkirk, Lilliesleaf, Hawick and Newcastleton, whilst making cross boundary connections into Dumfries and Galloway.

This route discovers the places that have shaped Scotland: where fierce battles once raged, where legendary kings and queens struck deals that forged a nation, and where great poets drew inspiration for the ballads we still sing. This route has huge economic importance for the South of Scotland and is important in driving the narrative of an active region, where opportunities are there for the taking.

Further information on this route can be found [here](#).



The Local Picture



CASE STUDY: Destination Tweed

Destination Tweed is a unique project which aims to celebrate and share the nature, history and stories of this unique waterway and deliver significant economic, environmental, educational and social benefits to the South of Scotland and North Northumberland.

A major multi-year partnership led investment, Destination Tweed will deliver the River Tweed Trail, a spectacular new source to sea walking and cycling route starting at Moffat before climbing to the source of the river, and on to Berwick Upon Tweed where the river meets the sea.

The River Tweed Trail will offer locals and visitors with opportunities to spend time at stopping points connecting to the river environment, local communities and their stories. The route will support sustainable and active travel, cater to walkers and cyclists who want to tackle in whole, or in part, the new trail experience.

Further information on this route can be found [here](#)

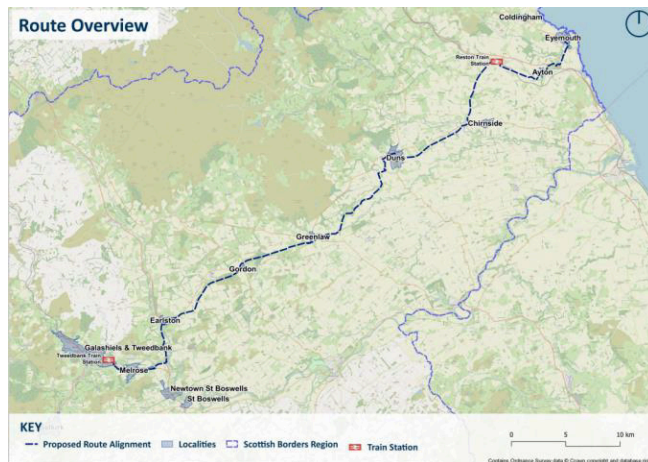
The Local Picture

CASE STUDY: The Borders Greenway

A new long-distance shared access pathway between Tweedbank and Eyemouth is under investigation by the Scottish Borders Council (65kms/40miles) and if progressed will provide options for active travel and leisure use for local communities and visitors.

The Greenway will be developed in stages over a period of several years. Existing walking, wheeling and cycling routes, linking the same communities, will be promoted while work on the Borders Greenway is in progress. Existing routes have been agreed with local communities.

Further information on this route can be found [here](#).



- Section 1 Tweedbank to Leaderfoot
- Section 2 Leaderfoot to Earlstoun (including the Earlstoun urban area)
- Section 3 Earlstoun to Gordon
- Section 4 Gordon
- Section 5 Gordon to Greenlaw
- Section 6 Greenlaw to Gavinton
- Section 7 Gavinton to Duns
- Section 8 Duns to Greenvale
- Section 9 Greenvale to Chirnside
- Section 10 Chirnside to Reston
- Section 11 Reston to Eyemouth (via Ayton)

In our towns and villages

CASE STUDY: Hawick Flood Protection Scheme

The Hawick Flood Protection Scheme is one of the largest and most significant flood defence projects ever carried out in Scotland. It will deliver protection from a one in 75 year flood event to over 900 residential and commercial properties at risk along the River Teviot and Slitrig Water, both of which have flooded and caused significant damage in recent years. Alongside the creation of flood defences, an opportunity was identified to create an active travel network.

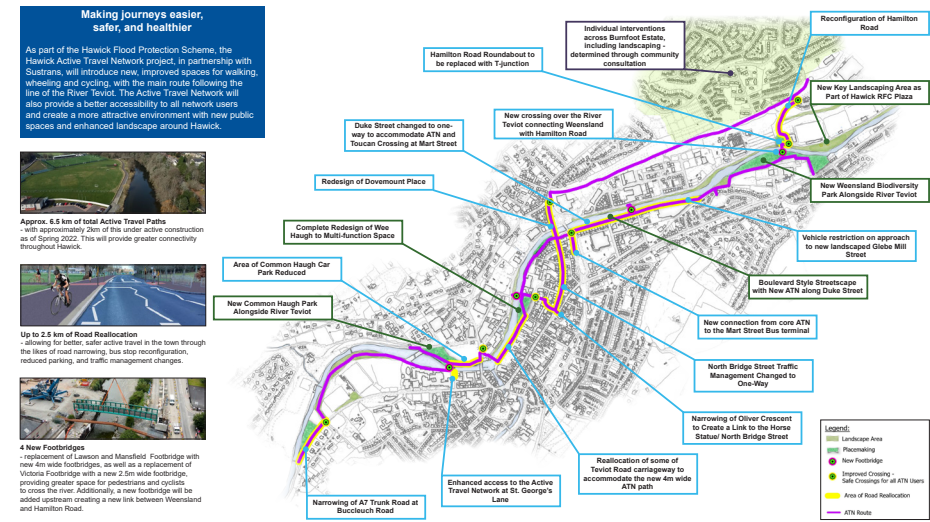
As part of these plans, traffic-free routes around key locations throughout the Scottish Borders town will be designed as a way of promoting active travel that can be accessed by everyone. These routes will encourage people to swap their cars and walk, wheel or cycle for their everyday journeys around the town. The active travel network will be over 6km in length and is being supported by over £12 million worth of funding from Sustrans.

The active travel network was progressed with the community through working groups led by the Flood Protection Scheme, helping to ensure it is designed with local people in mind. Once completed, the infrastructure will have a positive impact on physical and mental wellbeing of the local community, as well as providing environmental benefits.

As a region we want to encourage this trend to continue to promote healthier lifestyles and make it easier and safer for people to walk, wheel and cycle for everyday journeys. When completed the active travel network will represent a major enhancement to the facilities and the infrastructure of Hawick.

The next step will be to ensure the area is encouraged and supported to use the infrastructure through behaviour change initiatives. This scheme is an excellent example of the Scottish Borders aspirations as a region to improve our towns and villages.

Information Board - Active Travel Network Overview



Information Board produced by CPE Consulting on behalf of the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme



In our towns and villages

CASE STUDY: Peebles to Eddleston

A new 6km shared use path for walking, wheeling and cycling between Peebles and the village of Eddleston is off-road and provides a convenient and accessible route for local people and visitors; connecting communities and supporting businesses and services. The path also benefits equestrians in the area, providing a safe and more relaxed riding experience set back from the road.

The project was made possible by over £2 million of funding from the Scottish Government through Sustrans Scotland's Places for Everyone programme and South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE). Construction work started on the project in late 2021 and was completed in early June 2023. From the very beginning, the project was shaped by the ambitions of the local community. Local groups and campaigners were instrumental in calling for improved active travel infrastructure in the area. Peebles Community Trust led the design of the project once funding was secured, and feedback was gathered at every stage to ensure the Eddleston Water Path reflected the needs and wants of residents. The approach resulted in the creation of a well-loved community asset which has provided affordable access to employment opportunities, key services and treasured greenspace.

Before the Eddleston Water Path was constructed, travelling between Peebles and Eddleston was only possible via a busy and fast-moving road. Now complete, the path provides an alternative route where all residents and visitors to the area, regardless of age or ability, have the option to leave the car at home and walk, wheel or cycle instead.

This project is the epitome of our plans for the Scottish Borders. A project shaped by the local community, whilst an excellent example of linking up satellite villages to larger towns by sustainable modes, not only improving access but also positively impacting health and the economy.

“

“A dedicated path will ensure the safety of residents and visitors to the area whilst also encouraging others to choose more active methods of travel between the two settlements.”

”

CLLR JOHN GREENWELL, SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL



Our people and activities

CASE STUDY: Walk It Programme

Walk It is a showcase project for Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders. Paths for All (Scotland's leading walking charity) provide support and guidance for setting up Healthy Walking projects in Scotland.

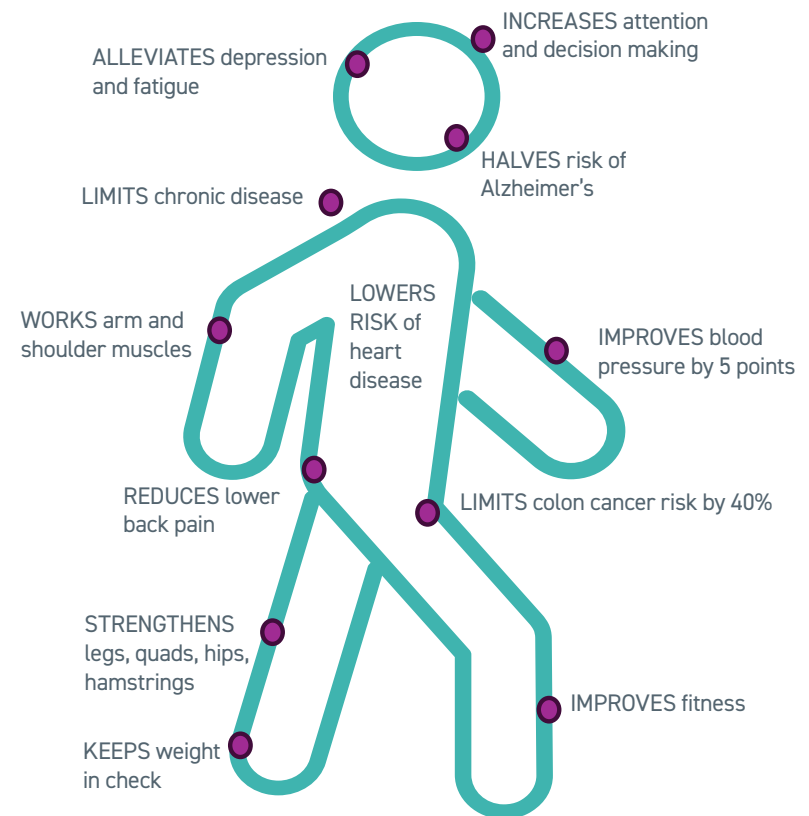
Walk It is the largest and most successful project for them. There are **43** mainstream 'health walks' in the Scottish Borders. The Walk It project has been running for over 15 years and was developed from a starting point of four walks in deprived areas. In 2022/23 alone, Walk It ran **1,232** walks with a total of **10,913** walkers attending. **75%** of all walks are now also dementia friendly.

The project is run by Volunteer Walk Leaders, of which we currently have **120** active volunteers. There are also some sub-projects - working with care homes, individuals with long term health conditions and a large training portfolio. External funding has supported the launch of the Walk It Easy Programme and in 2023-24.

For 2024-25 the Walk It Project has been out-sourced to Borders Wheels with funding from NHS Health Improvement and SEStrans People and Place Programme. This continues to offer new and exciting opportunities in the Borders, with the potential for growth and reaching more people for participation and training.

WALK your way to health

30 minutes of walking a day. . .



Equestrian facilities and tourism

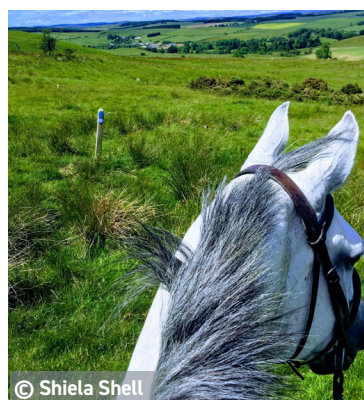
A summary

The Borders has more horses per head of population than anywhere else in Scotland. As a region we offer more than 450km of off-road riding which include drove roads, woodland trails, forest track and hill routes, many of which are part of Scotland's Great Trails.

Horses are woven into the fabric of our history in the Borders, from the Border Reivers to the eleven [Common Ridings](#). Horse riding plays a significant part of the lives of many of our residents and of course, the tourists who visit our area for these unrivalled facilities.

Maintaining and improving these facilities is a priority, alongside a number of other key deliverables being driven by South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA), but fully supported by Scottish Borders Council. These include:

- One single GIS platform for all South of Scotland horse trail mapping.
- One Team South equestrian development group incorporating all key equestrian, community and delivery partners and stakeholders across the South of Scotland.
- An SSDA led five-year development plan, with a clear vision of where we want equestrian trails and tourism to be by 2030.
- To update and expand the existing equestrian visitor information on Scotland Starts Here.
- Identify potential sources of funding and capacity to deliver the aforementioned plan.
- Engage with Common Ridings, so it is possible to support the events and better leverage our intangible cultural heritage.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

OUR OBJECTIVES ARE TO

INTEGRATE THIS STRATEGY WITH THAT OF THE LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY AND SOUTH OF SCOTLAND CYCLING PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY TO FACILITATE ACTIVE TRAVEL

INVOLVE COMMUNITIES IN THE IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVE TRAVEL PROJECTS

IMPROVE SAFETY (ROAD AND PERSONAL), AND PERCEPTIONS, WHICH CAN BE A SIGNIFICANT BARRIER

IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE TO MAKE ACTIVE TRAVEL ATTRACTIVE

IMPROVE OUR STREETSAPES INCLUDING ONROAD/ STREET PROVISIONS, SEGREGATED LANES, SIGNAGE, PARKING, STORAGE FACILITIES AND GREENSPACES

ENCOURAGE AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH PEOPLE, PROMOTE ACTIVE TRAVEL AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AND WIDER PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL SECTORS

INTEGRATE ACTIVE TRAVEL WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT

MAKE PLACES SAFER FOR PEOPLE TO WALK, WHEEL, CYCLE OR RIDE

IMPROVE FIRST AND LAST MILE CONNECTIONS TO/FROM PUBLIC TRANSPORT INTERCHANGES AND STOPS

HAVE MORE PEOPLE WALKING, WHEELING, CYCLING AND HORSE RIDING FOR EVERYDAY, SHORTER JOURNEYS

Active travel delivery plan

Delivery Plan

To complement delivery of this Active Travel Strategy an accompanying Delivery Plan has been prepared, alongside a number of other documents, as detailed on page 12.

The Delivery Plan is a live document, so stakeholders will continue to inform, question, validate and propose further action during reviews. The actions proposed are categorised into themes that have been created to best reflect our priorities as a region as we take forward the strategy. The four key themes are:

Theme 1 – Connecting people and places – rebalancing our streets and spaces, and connecting our communities

Theme 2 – Behaviour change – unlocking change and enabling everyone to move more actively

Theme 3 – Encouraging, motivating and creating sustained change – altering the approach

Theme 4 – Research and monitoring – compiling information to monitor the progress

This Delivery Plan will serve as a bank of proposed projects and measures that have been informed by desktop reviews, site audits, engagement, data collection and consultation. There is no set timeline and/or process by when each of these projects will be delivered as the majority will depend on external funding. However, it does provide a guide to help promote and drive change to make essential daily destinations accessible by active and sustainable modes including walking, wheeling, cycling and horse-riding.

Governance

Working in partnership and collaboration will be crucial for the successful delivery of this Active Travel Strategy. Actions will be carried out by a range of organisations and stakeholders with complex timelines and funding mechanisms in play. The Delivery Plan on the following pages provides more detail.

Funding

Different funding sources will be identified and pursued for different activities. External funding opportunities include the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and Sustrans; others will likely be identified over the 10-year lifetime of the strategy. Developing long term sustainable revenue funding sources will be particularly important, not least for the Strategic Shared Access Route Network.

Monitoring

Monitoring will be undertaken to gather data and information to assess the impacts of individual projects and the strategy as a whole. The first step will be to review existing data and monitoring sources to see what is already being gathered, before commissioning any new data gathering. Data and analysis will be made available to all interested parties and stakeholders.



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Theme 1 – Connecting people and places - rebalancing our streets and spaces, and connecting our communities

The necessary changes to the physical environment in the Scottish Borders that will support more walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding in and between key communities.

Connecting people and places			
Rebalancing streets and spaces to prioritise the needs of people, their health, wellbeing and ensuring our streets become people friendly, enjoyable and attractive spaces to spend time	Auditing our towns and villages in order of population size (taking on board efficiencies when prioritising) to identify improvements to rebalance our streets and spaces and improve connections to key destinations and public transport interchanges and stops.	Any redesign of streets will aim to increase space for pedestrian movement and placemaking, looking at how to enhance permeability and make more inclusive and enabling environments.	Place audits for Borderlands Towns or towns over 5,000 people: Hawick / Jedburgh / Eyemouth / Galashiels / Peebles / Kelso / Selkirk
	Small scale active travel improvements and potential funding avenues will also be investigated for opportunities within our smaller towns and villages.	Work closely with our Local Place Plan teams which are set up to present proposals for the development and use of land. They provide a chance for community stakeholders to voice their own ideas and aspirations about the place they live, work and spend time in.	
	Prioritise the maintenance of paths and routes that are highly utilised, have economic benefits (such as Scotland's Great Trails) or connect communities with key services.		
Connecting our communities	Progress with the next steps of delivery for the five priority routes to connect up our communities and key services, as identified in our public consultation. These routes include (but are not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyemouth – Tweedbank • Denholm – Hawick • Lauder – Oxton • Clovenfords – Walkerburn • Selkirk – Hawick 		Continue to listen to our communities over the coming years to identify other potential options for connecting up our towns and villages and opportunities to link to public transport for onward journeys, similar to the proposed Tweedbank Station to Melrose Active Travel Corridor.
	Look to add to existing safer walking, wheeling and cycling routes to school to ensure active travel is an easy option for most of our families. Ingraining these habits from a young age will enable us to become a healthier and more sustainable region in the longer term. As part of our street audits, we will specifically investigate links to school from the surrounding residential areas.	Safe secure cycle parking is vital infrastructure that is required at either end of a cycle journey. As part of our street audits, we will be reviewing and prioritising cycle parking near key destinations, including at/near home. This will include adequate parking for adaptive and cargo bikes in areas where we understand it would be beneficial. This will support our plans to expand the region's bike rental and loan provision.	Placing focus on active travel tourism , including horse riding as a means for economic development. Utilising larger scale schemes such as Kirkpatrick Coast to Coast, the Borders Greenway and Destination Tweed to not only boost the local economy but promote and encourage these as means of joining up our communities.

Theme 2 – Behaviour change – unlocking change and enabling everyone to move more actively

Unlocking potential for new active travel movements. Providing opportunities for people to travel actively with confidence.

Behaviour change		
Collaboration, engagement and branding	The development of a Scottish Borders Council Behaviour Change campaign with consistent branding, coordinated website and database. With resources to encourage and enable people to travel actively and move more. This will align with the work SEStran is undertaking at a regional level to ensure cross boundary travel is adequately addressed and that there are synergies as we move forward with both elements of work.	Support or create an Active Travel and Behaviour Change Forum / Working Group with all key stakeholders in the region to meet on a quarterly basis to share experiences, knowledge, results and ideas to ensure we are progressing our active travel and behaviour change initiatives collaboratively and in the best interests of our communities.
	Continue to expand the region's Walk It programme in collaboration with NHS Borders and Paths for All, increasing resource and participation and expanding into new areas as highlighted on page 30.	Scale up the provision of Walk and Ride Leader training to volunteers, to increase capacity for group activities. Work with the NHS and other third sector groups to ensure people who would benefit from these initiatives know they are available and feel comfortable participating.
	Work with major employers and the private sector to encourage and support sustainable commuting and visitor travel.	
Support individuals to build walking, wheeling and cycling into their everyday journeys	Investigate opportunities to support the development of Social Prescribing , working in collaboration with the NHS / Health and Social Care Partnership / Community Link workers and community organisations for delivery.	Work closely with key stakeholders such as Live Borders, our Outdoor Education Team and external providers to encourage and promote a range of walking, wheeling and cycling programmes for all ages and abilities across the region.
Provision within educational settings	Encourage participation in walking and cycling challenges throughout the year.	Continue to identify funding and delivery partners to deliver Bikeability to all primary and secondary schools throughout the Borders following a prioritised programme of works. Commence with incorporating cycling into secondary schools' curriculum via a pilot at Earlston High School.
	Host an annual shared learning event (including the Inspire Learning team) across school networks, to promote active travel, share good practice and celebrate success.	Encourage and enable active travel to and from nurseries and Early Learning Centre (ELC) settings.

Theme 2 – Behaviour change – unlocking change and enabling everyone to move more actively (Continued)

Unlocking potential for new active travel movements. Providing opportunities for people to travel actively with confidence.

Behaviour change continued			
Cycling specific	Continue to support cycle hire schemes , including e-bikes, adapted cycles and other nonstandard cycles across the Borders, where possible prioritising locations within the most deprived 20% of communities. Additionally supporting community projects which reduce costs for those facing socio-economic barriers.	Continue the work with Cycling Without Age in various towns. Roll out a similar programme(s) in other locations where infrastructure improvements have recently been implemented.	Continue to support Active Schools (or equivalent) to deliver discipline specific training and pilot projects in schools and out of school club activities.
	Support the growth and development of mountain biking as it can deliver a range of outcomes linked to skills, innovation and technology and can be leveraged to support investment in local communities.	Following on from the UCI Cycling World Championships in Glentress Forest - creating opportunities for all and enhancing enthusiasm for cycling , especially with the younger generation to leave a long-lasting legacy. This will require using a strategic partnership approach between the council, Live Borders, Scottish Cycling and national agencies to deliver a range of critically important initiatives, including the Mountain Bike Innovation Centre.	
	Continue to review and expand Bikes on Buses across the Borders in line with demand, placing emphasis on the first and last mile of trips to stops/interchanges to support this. We now have 23 Bike friendly vehicles available with either two to four spaces for bikes, which enables active travel for passengers across the Borders Buses network.		
	Support the delivery of the South of Scotland Cycling Partnership Strategy , whilst continuing to celebrate the South of Scotland being a UCI Bike Region. Work efficiently to deliver our key actions across the region, ensuring active travel is the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys and embedded into the daily fabric of the lives of our residents and experiences of our visitors.		
General provision of programmes within our communities which support walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding so that people of all abilities and ages are equipped with skills and confidence to move more and make active travel part of their everyday routines.			

Theme 3 – Encouraging and motivating people to continue to travel actively. Ensuring community buy-in, enabling active travel levels to grow and sustaining this change

Concentrate on encouraging and motivating people to continue to travel actively, ensuring community buy-in, enabling active travel levels to grow and sustaining this change.

Encouraging, motivating and creating sustained change			
Promotion and messaging to our communities around the active travel strategy and supporting behaviour change initiatives	Using a coordinated approach , via our Behaviour Change campaign identified on page 35 to distribute messaging and promotional campaigns, ensuring alignment with SEStran's regional plans.	Develop targeted campaigns with ongoing support that facilitate progress, in areas where it is felt support would be beneficial.	Shout about positive news stories , case studies and continue to develop good relations with local stakeholders to ensure positive coverage of initiatives.
	Promote cycle hire and loan schemes to visitors to the region to support economic development, ensuring the facilities are used and social media contributes to our success.	Strengthen our messaging using local campaigns but making use of and facilitating national active travel trends, resources and campaigns.	Plan for early communications and promotion within communities in advance of new active travel infrastructure being delivered to ensure community engagement and input to the design process, and to identify local social barriers to active travel are tackled.
	As part of the Scottish Borders Council Behaviour Change campaign with consistent branding, coordinated website and database, ensure this is a central online resource on active travel and multi-modal options, journey planning, advice and accessible information .		
Wayfinding	Provide clear and consistent wayfinding and direction signs between key destinations, as indicated in our site audit work.		Review the consistency of the wayfinding provision, incorporating active travel time to destinations.
Safety and infrastructure maintenance	Continue to support and work alongside SBC's roads teams and collaboratively look for ways to make active travel safer in our region.	To have successful active travel infrastructure, it must be maintained. We recognise that we need to meet the challenges of transitioning to the different maintenance requirements of active travel . This will involve prioritising key active travel routes, over maintaining all core paths, focussing predominantly on links in and between key communities, shared access routes and Scotland's Great Trails.	Continue with our successful Community Grants Maintenance Programme to ensure volunteers are equipped with the right tools to support their efforts and showcase the amazing work undertaken, to help encourage further take up. Future efforts to focus on priority paths as indicated on page 34.

Theme 3 – Encouraging and motivating people to continue to travel actively. Ensuring community buy-in, enabling active travel levels to grow and sustaining this change (Continued)

Concentrate on encouraging and motivating people to continue to travel actively, ensuring community buy-in, enabling active travel levels to grow and sustaining this change.

Encouraging, motivating and creating sustained change			
<p>The hosting of major sporting events in the Borders can act as a catalyst for change and present an opportunity for people to reconnect with their communities</p> <p>We must build on the awareness and momentum generated by these events through complementary measures such as activation events and careful targeting of legacy funding towards opportunities for residents to improve and sustain their levels of physical activity</p>	<p>Build on promotional opportunities from the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships, using this as a catalyst for meaningful change and progress in our region.</p>	<p>Investigate partnering with other regions and places (UK or internationally) to identify mutual learning opportunities from experiences of hosting major events and creating complementary legacy measures to support active travel.</p> <p>For example, Bentonville Bike Fest by Mobil1.</p>	<p>Utilise Tour of Britain Men Stage 1 Grand Depart and Finish 2024 in Kelso and associated activities to build momentum around road cycling and encourage future economic development in the region. The broadcasting of this race to a worldwide audience is a huge opportunity for the region. Using activities such as this for activation events around behaviour change is critical to creating, motivating and encouraging change.</p>
	<p>Seek to attract new / major events to the Borders in the future, working closely with internal Events, Tourism and Economic Development teams.</p>	<p>As part of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership, we will collectively identify and secure cycling events that will inspire people to ride bikes and act as a catalyst for change.</p>	

Theme 4 – Research and monitoring – compiling information to monitor the progress

Place focus on continued research and monitoring to ensure the strategy progress can be understood and built upon effectively.

Research and monitoring			
Using audits, data, partnership working, technology and user experience/case studies to research and monitor the progress of the strategy	We will set up a monitoring programme to measure success of delivery of infrastructure and understand changing behaviours leading to desired outcomes.	Use technology wherever possible to better understand walking, wheeling, cycling and horse-riding levels.	Use open source, partner organisation data and crowd source data wherever possible to get user experience at the heart of the decision-making process.
	Benchmark good practices for local trials and pilots and identify those to be replicated.	Proactively identify key locations for potential counters and sensors , using new technologies where suitable to track active and sustainable travel. This is especially important where new infrastructure has been delivered, or where we are building a case for new infrastructure.	Work with SEStran to ensure all our research, planning and monitoring takes into account the other local authority neighbours. Share learnings and advice wherever possible.
	Continue to encourage all schools to complete the Sustrans Hands up Scotland survey annually for regular monitoring of travel mode to school.	Work in partnership with Active Schools teams to incorporate school travel data into Sport Scotland data collection, to recruit volunteers and support campaign promotion.	Roll out a series of audits (as identified on page 34) to understand barriers, opportunities and data collections needs and wants.
	Collaborate with our new Active Travel and Behaviour Change Forum / Working Group (as identified on page 35) to gather user experience, insights and community mapping via local communities and volunteering programmes.		

