

Meadows to George Street

2017 Stage 3 Submission

Executive Summary

2017 Community Links PLUS Stage 3

City of Edinburgh Council

July 2017

Meadows to George Street Places for People

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Strategic Vision and Project Outcomes

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1. Strategic Vision and Project Outcomes

1.1 The Meadows to George Street Project – Creating a Place for People

This Community Links PLUS bid for the Meadows to George Street (MGS) project aims to transform the quality of cycling, walking and public realm along a major multi-modal transport corridor in the heart of Edinburgh. Continuing the delivery of the City of Edinburgh Council's Active Travel Action Plan (ATAP) 20mph project, and contributing to the shared vision set out in the June 29th Council Motion (see Section 1.4), this project offers an exemplar of how to put people back in first place in an historical environment that was not built for modern vehicles.

The project has the following key elements:

- A 1.1km active travel route from the Meadows along Forrest Road, George IV Bridge, the Mound and Hanover Street to connect with George Street. This will seek to re-allocate road space to active travel. Improvements will include upgraded on-road cycling provision and crossings as well as improved footways and crossings points for pedestrians.
- Public realm improvements along the whole route, with key focus on prominent locations.

The project contributes to a wider vision to fill important gaps in the 'QuietRoutes' active travel network within the City centre, notably connecting multiple routes in the Meadows to the emerging City Centre West-East Link (CCWEL) route.

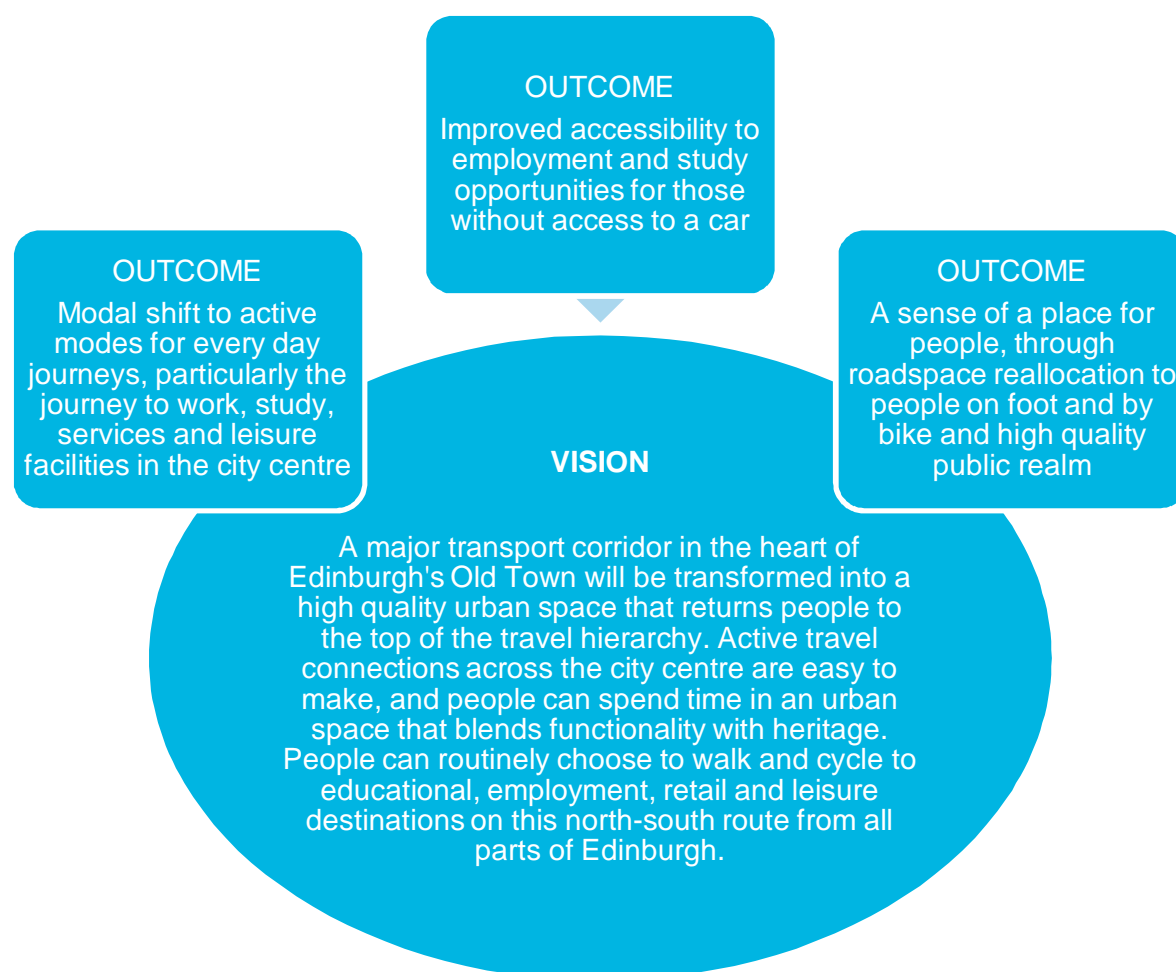
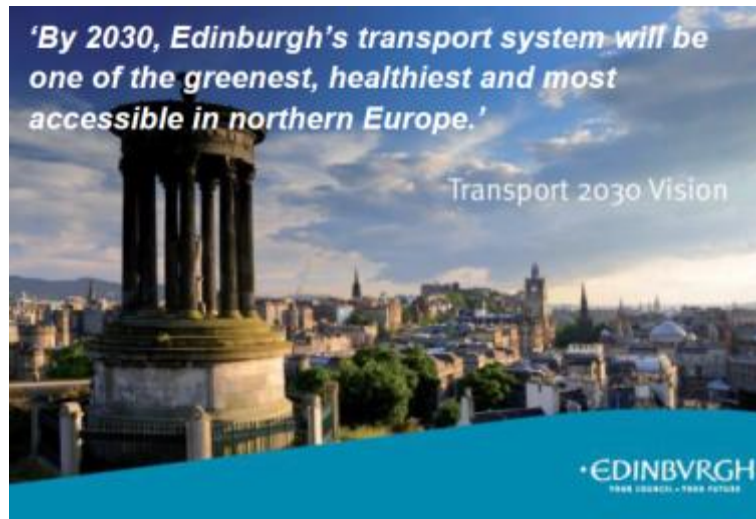


Figure 1.1: Strategic Vision and Project Outcomes

The project strongly reflects the city's Transport 2030 Vision and Local Transport Strategy 2014-2019, which set bold targets for cycling and active travel: 10% of all journeys and 15% of all journeys to work should be made by bike by 2020.

This project contributes to the City Centre South Arc Area Development Framework (2012), particularly by enhancing movement by walking and cycling on George IV Bridge.



1.2 Project Description

A summary of the project is presented below. This is discussed further in Section 2 of this Executive Summary and Appendix A Scheme Design and Development Plan (including Feasibility Study).

This scheme is at an early stage of development: engagement carried out as part of this bid is a first step towards establishing a collective vision. The corridor is subject to competing demands for road space and it is crucial that further work is carried out with the public and stakeholders to develop feasible and acceptable options.

A feasibility report was carried out on the corridor in 2016, considering various route section options, including:

- Forrest Road gyratory – segregated cycleways or shared space with varying degrees of restrictions on car movements.
- George IV Bridge – segregated cycleways and varying layouts for general traffic and buses.
- George Street to Bank Street via Hanover Street and the Mound – segregated cycleways on each side except for uphill cycleway only on the Mound.

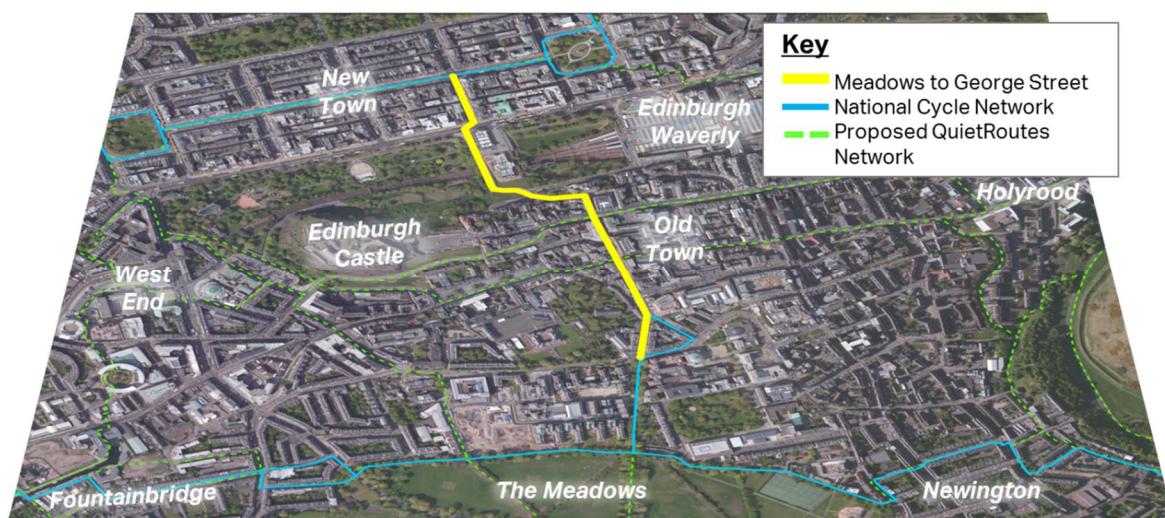


Figure 1.2: Overview of Route Corridor

1.3 Project Objectives

Detailed project objectives must be developed in partnership with the diverse communities within project area. That said, objective themes have been developed at this stage to guide proposal development. These directly contribute to the desired outcomes for the project.

Objective Themes:

1. *High quality walking and cycling facilities to support active travel modal shift.*
2. *Make streets and public spaces people friendly, complementing the Edinburgh's unique character and heritage value, particularly within the Old Town.*
3. *Create an inclusive environment with access for all.*
4. *Support multi-modal sustainable transport.*
5. *Reinforce and support the continued thriving business function of the area and Scotland's biggest concentrations of visitor attractions.*

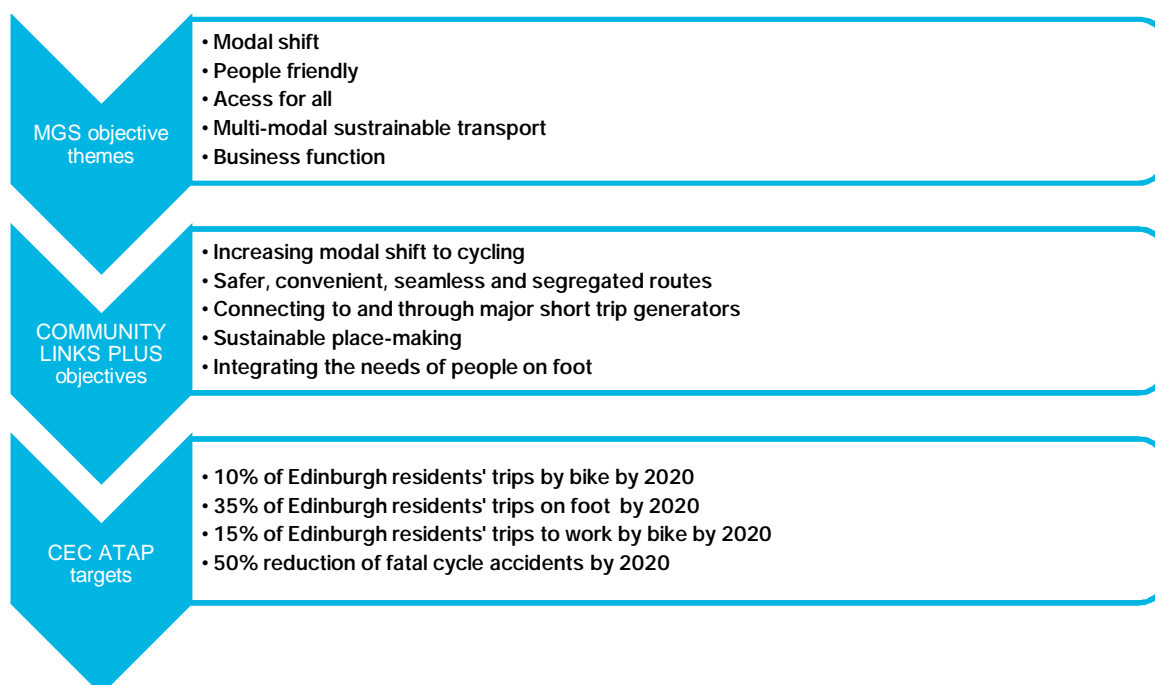


Figure 1.3: Synergy between Project Objective Themes and Competition Objectives

1.4 Council Action to Improve City Centre Conditions for Vulnerable Road Users

On the 29th of July 2017 CEC set out a motion outlining how the Council will to improve conditions for vulnerable road users, in particular on the City centre. The motion outlines reviews, actions, and progress reporting on how the Council will work towards these outcomes and committed to a continued roll-out of the CCWEL.

1.5 Why the Meadows to George Street Project?

The case for investing in active travel infrastructure in this project is built on a number of key factors:

- Travel demand within and to the area.

- The existing active travel network and critical gaps to support everyday active travel journeys, and build on committed and planned investment.
- The need to continue creating an inclusive, accessible environment and a place that prioritises people.

1.5.1 Travel Demand

The project connects into a number of major trip generators (Figure 1.5.1), including:

- University of Edinburgh's City Centre Campus.
- Numerous businesses in Edinburgh's Old Town.
- The City centre retail core (George Street, Rose Street and Princes Street) - accessed via Hanover Street.
- Key commuting neighbourhoods of St Leonards, Newington, Marchmont, Morningside, Duddingston, Craigmillar, Portobello, Niddrie and Brunstane.
- Some of Scotland's biggest visitor attractions including The Royal Mile, Greyfriar's Bobby, The National Museum of Scotland, The National and Central Libraries, The Meadows, The National Gallery and Edinburgh Castle.

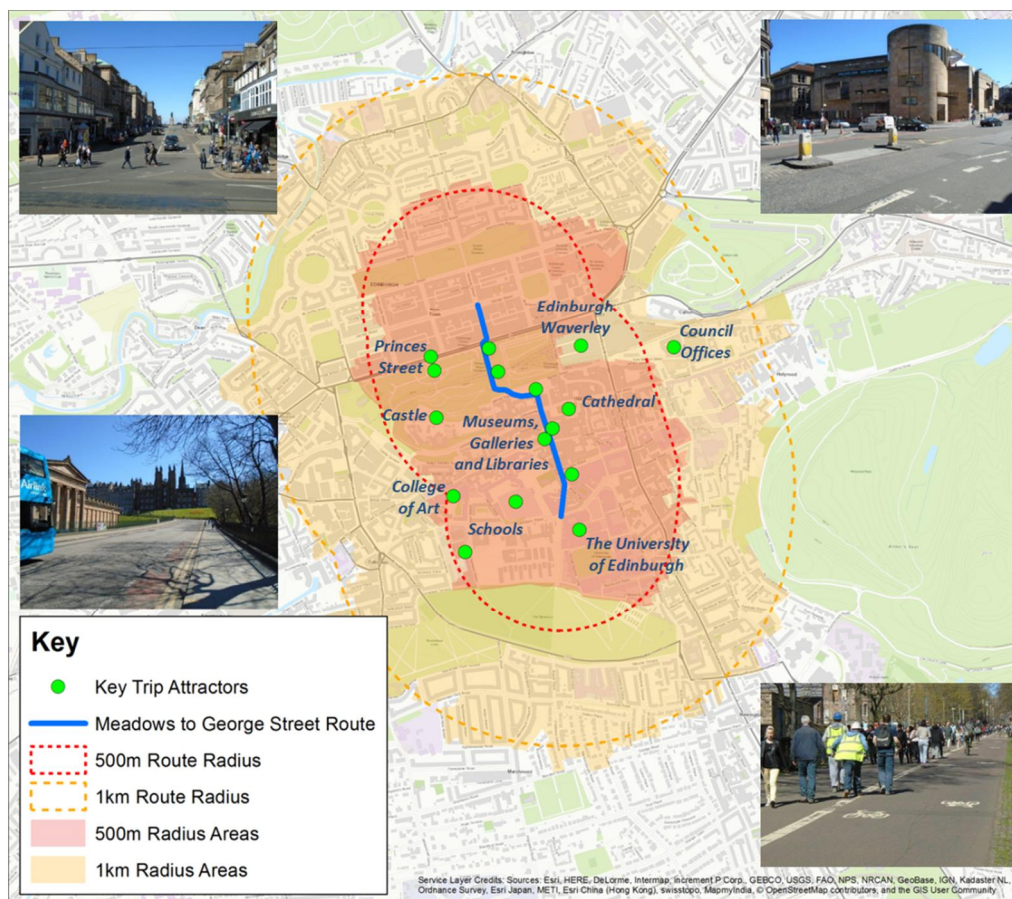


Figure 1.5.1: Key Elements of Travel Demand in the Project Area

Middle Meadow Walk is the busiest cycle path in Edinburgh and the confluence of National Cycle Network (NCN) Routes 1, 75 and QuietRoute 6. The streets are also very busy walking corridors into the city centre with high pedestrian flows. The two NCN routes proceed north from The Meadows to the city centre at George Street along the MGS route and are currently below the QuietRoutes standard.

This project seeks to exploit the high potential for cycling identified in Edinburgh's City centre, particularly from the south, by work undertaken for preparation of the first ATP in 2010 (Figures 1.5.1.1 and 1.5.1.2).

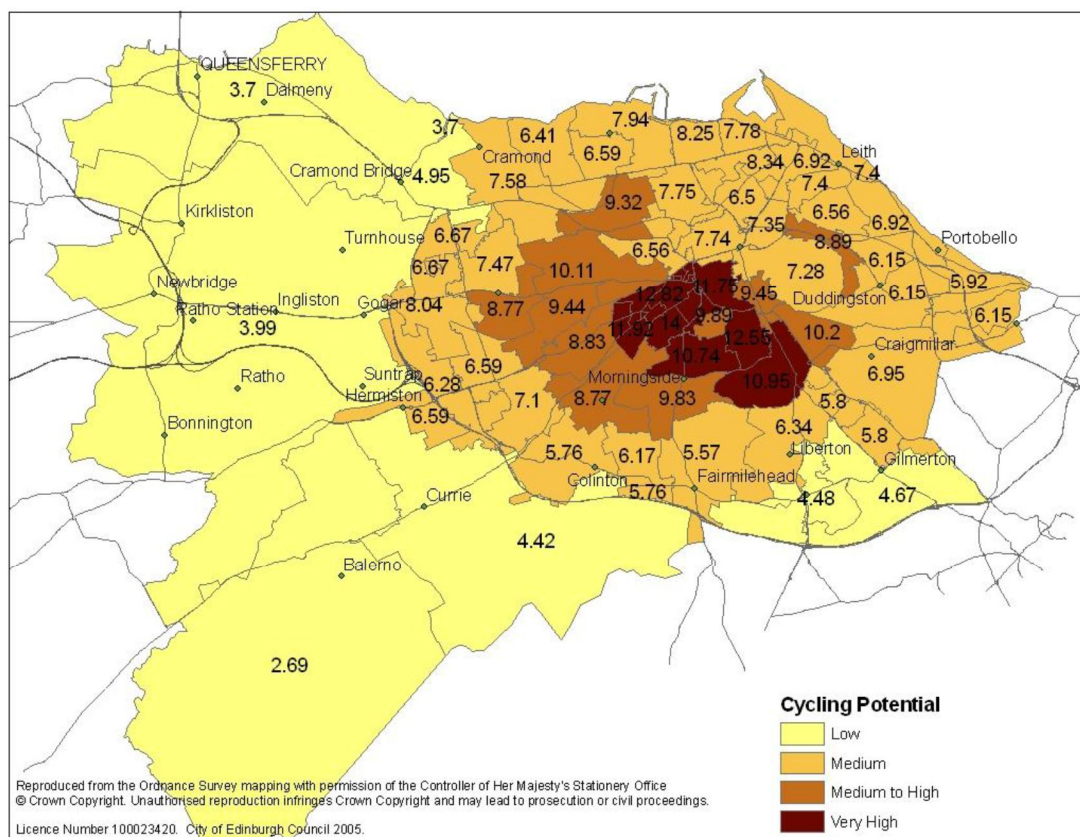


Figure 1.5.1.1: Cycling potential (2010 ATP)

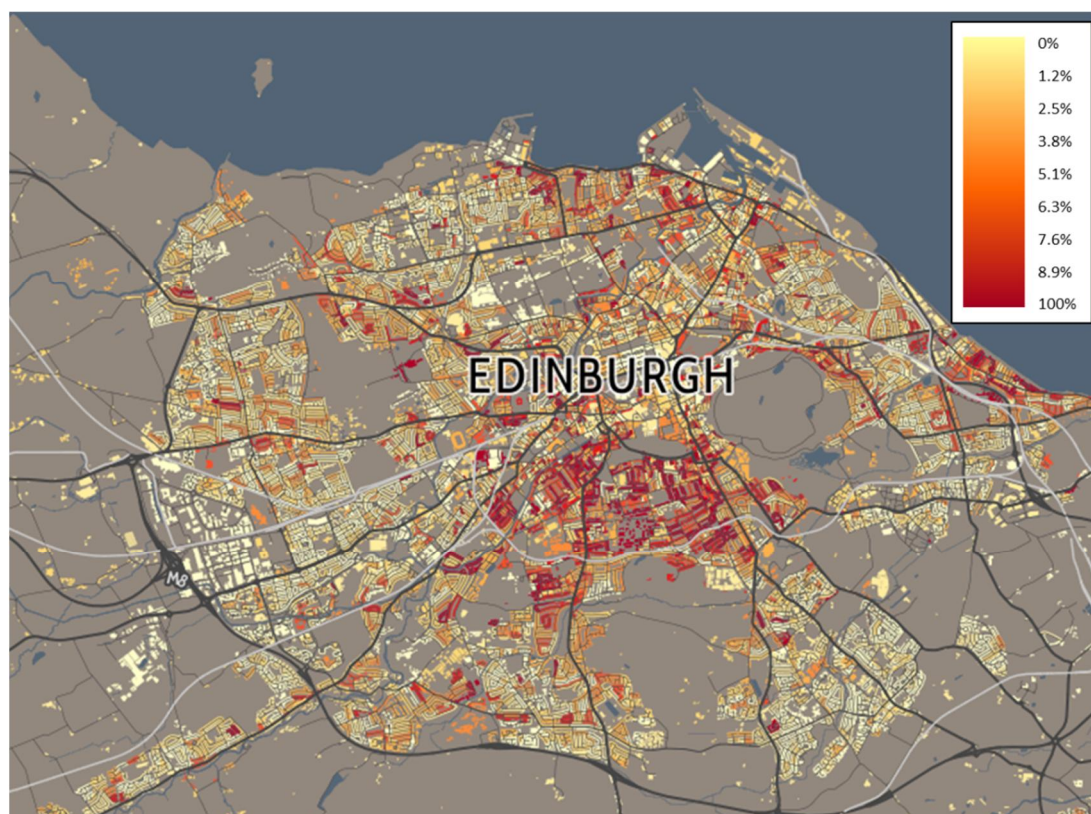


Figure 1.5.1.2: Cycle to Work or Place of Study (2011 Census)

1.5.2 Existing Strategic Active Travel Network, committed investment and filling the gaps

This project will continue to develop the active travel network in the City centre and Southside of Edinburgh.

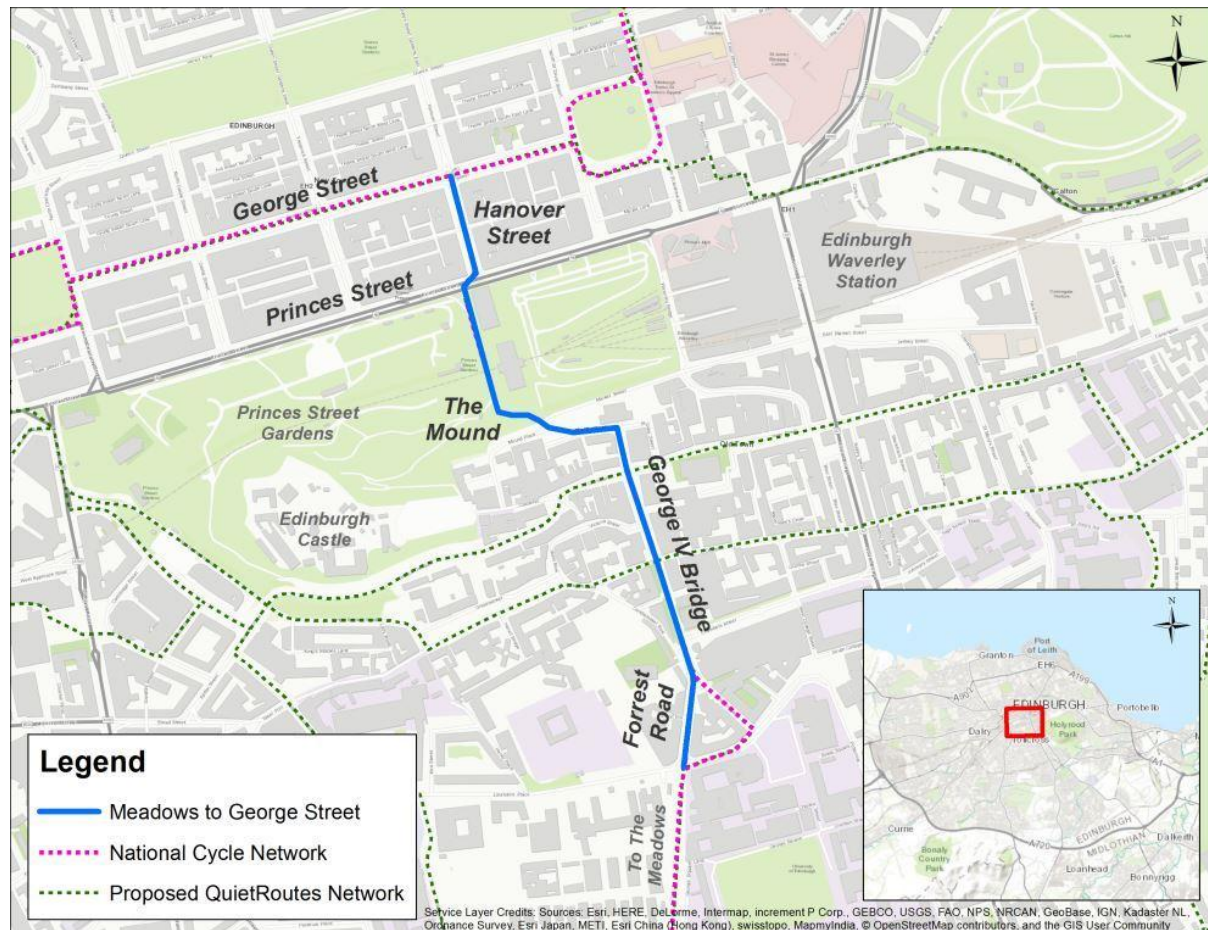


Figure 1.5.2: Existing Active Travel Network, proposed QuietRoutes Network and Proposed MGS Scheme

1.5.3 A High Quality Place for People

The Place Standard Tool has been used in workshops and focus groups to inform this emerging project (see Appendix B). Emerging issues include the complexity of use along this corridor, with movement competing with a sense of place. Focus group participants felt there were not enough public spaces along the route.

1.5.4 Equality of Opportunity for All

The scheme completes a vital missing active travel link across the City centre (Figure 1.5.4). In so doing, it completes a north-south active travel corridor between areas in Edinburgh which experience some of the highest social inequality, Niddrie and Craigmillar, with key employment opportunities in the City centre.

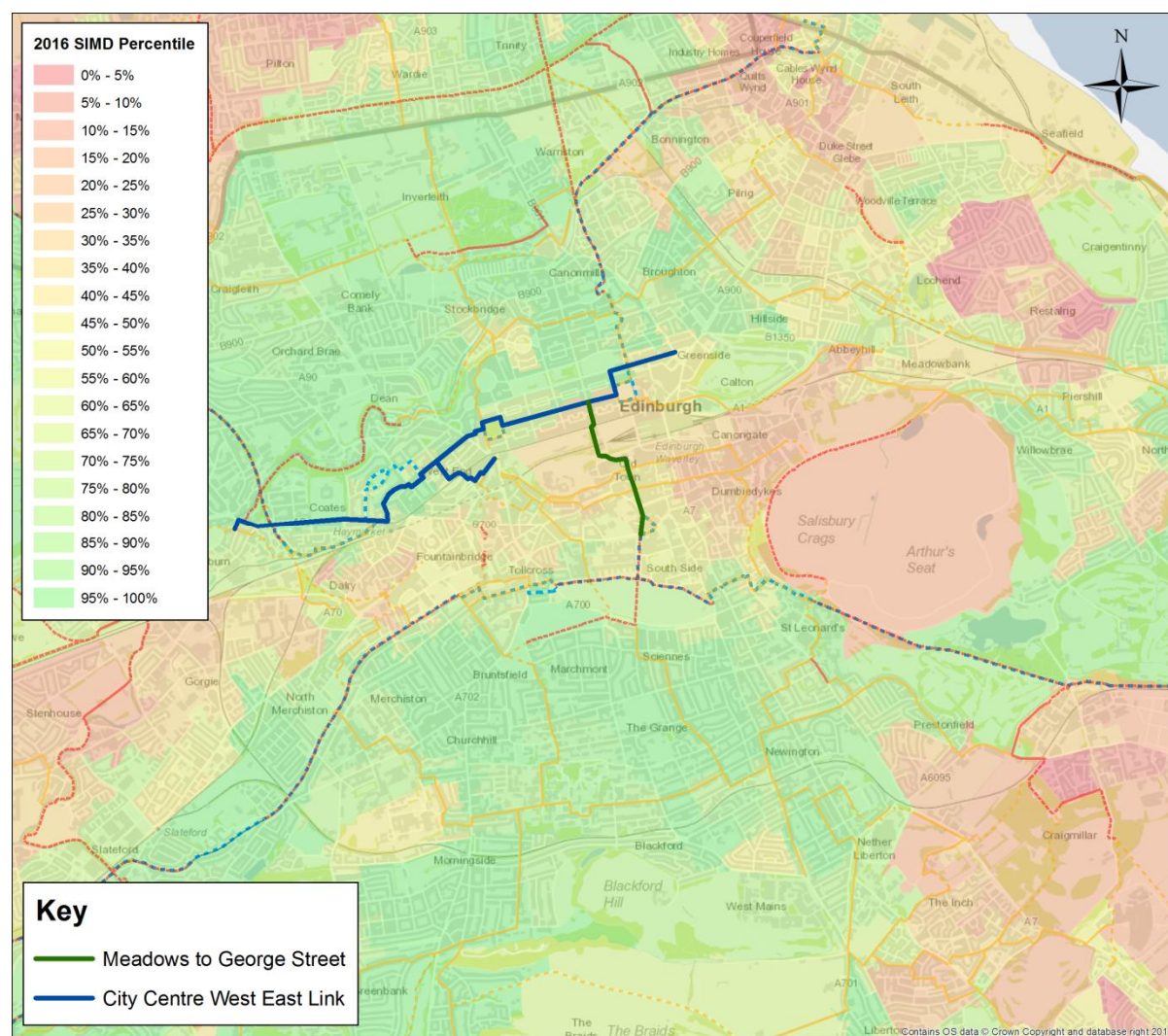


Figure 1.5.4: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and the MGS Corridor Connection



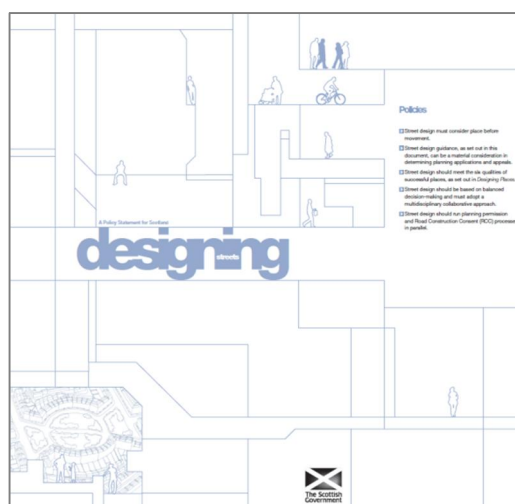
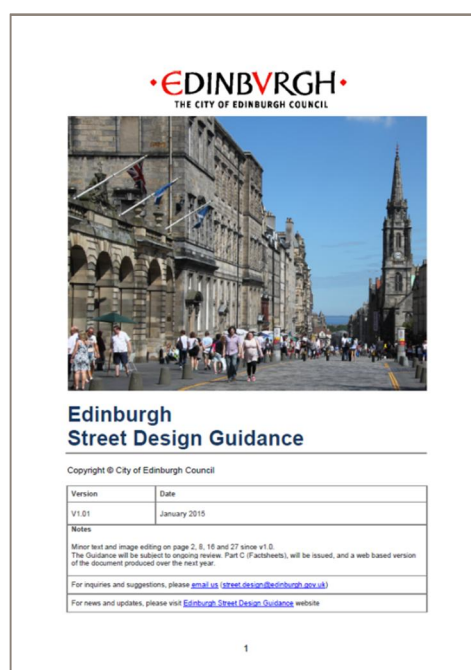
Design Standards, Quality and Innovation

02

2. Design Standards, Quality and Innovation

2.1 Edinburgh Street Design Guidance

The MGS will apply Edinburgh's Street Design Guidance; guidance developed locally and tailored to local needs. Walking and cycling are at the heart of street design in Edinburgh, and MGS offers an opportunity to show how space can be re-allocated for active modes in an historic environment. It will be used throughout this project to prioritise people-centred, innovative design which encourages active travel.



2.2 Design Process

Figure 2.2 sets out the design process for the project following best practice in terms of co-evolving designs with communities and stakeholders. Currently the project is between Stages 1 and 2.

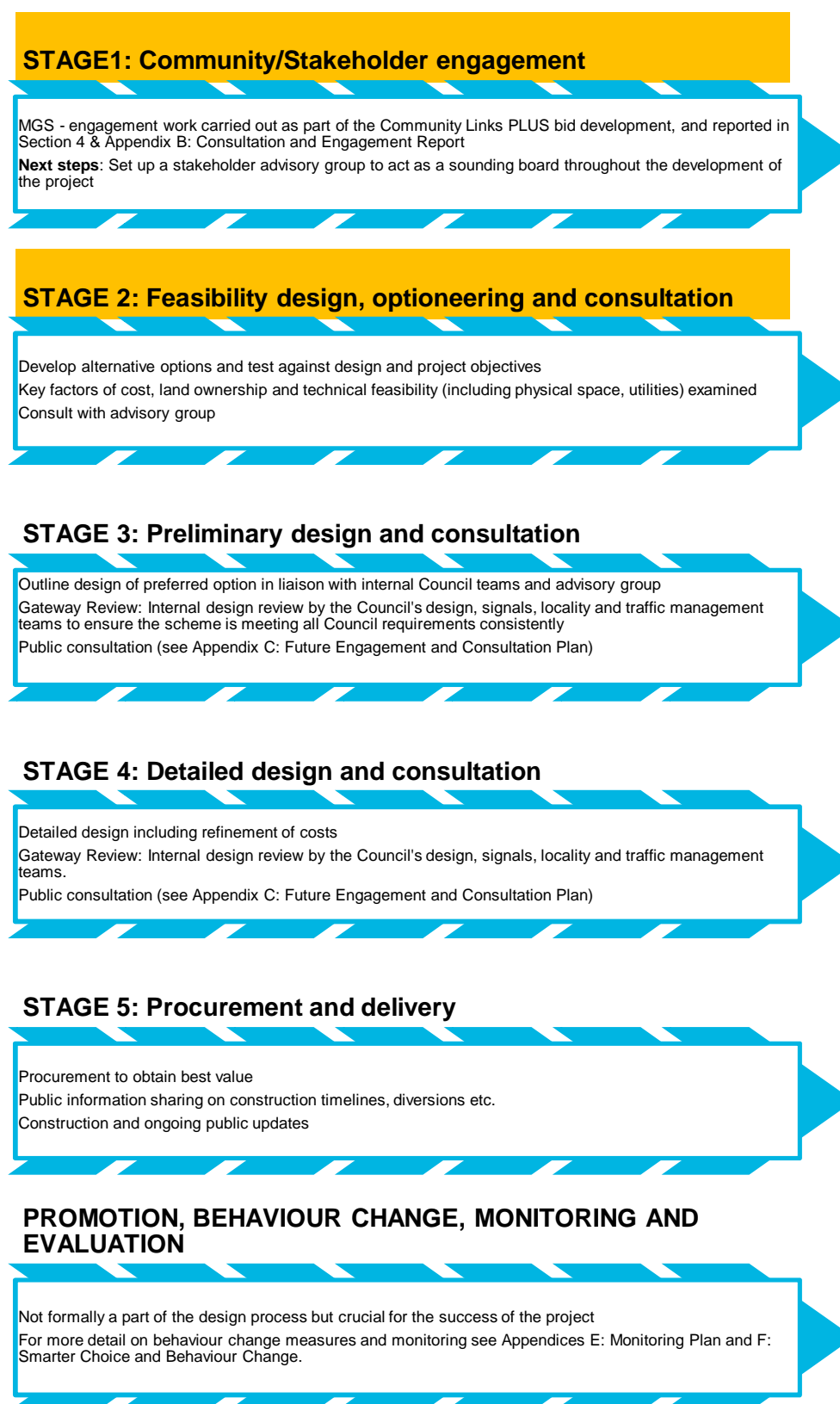


Figure 2.2: Project Development Process

2.3 Design Development

The Scheme Development and Delivery Plan (Appendix A) sets out in depth the design development process including the current project status and background Annexes on technical aspects, costings, governance, risk and feasibility designs.

2.3.1 Previous Report

The initial design has been developed during 2016 to establish the potential of with-flow segregated cycleways being established along the route.



Figure 2.3.1: Initial Design

2.3.2 Scheme Design – Focus Group

Place Standard tool design was used to assist the development of the design (see Appendix B).

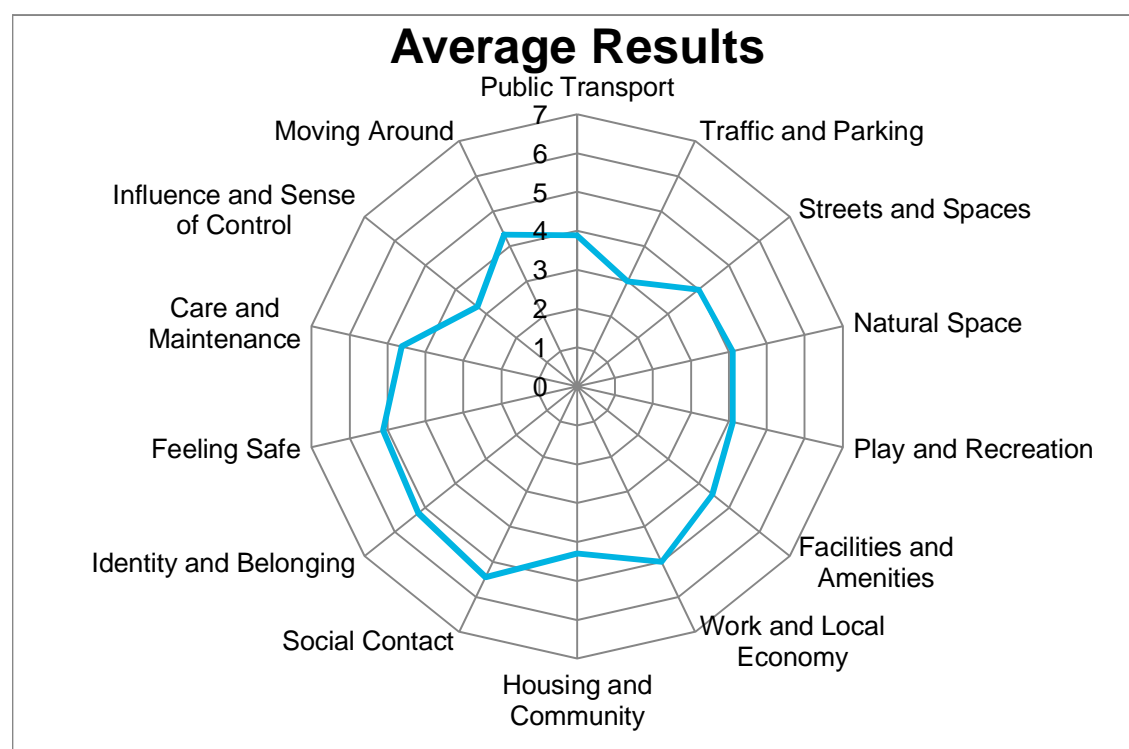


Figure 2.3.2: Place Standard Tool Results



Partnership
Working and
Deliverability

03

3. Partnership Working and Deliverability

The project is supported by a wide range of stakeholders and partners both within the Council and externally – crucial for delivery.

3.1 Partnership Working within the Council

The Council's Active Travel Team is pro-active in working collaboratively, across teams and departments. The ATAP has a Steering Group with representatives from the Council's Transport, Planning, Education and Parks and Sport Services and external stakeholders. A similar cross-departmental Advisory Board will be set up to deliver this project.

3.2 Deliverability

A delivery programme (Appendix A) has been created based on timeframes from similar, previously delivered, schemes. The project risks have been assessed with contingency and mitigation measures identified (Appendix A).

A full-time Project Manager and part-time Community and Stakeholder Liaison officer will be appointed to the project, with additional support from the Active Travel Team.

The Council has a long standing financial and political commitment to Active Travel. Further, endorsements for this scheme from key organisations and businesses in the area (Appendix H) demonstrate support.



Smarter Measures and Community Involvement

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4. Smarter Measures and Community Involvement

4.1 Smarter Measures

To maximise the effectiveness of the project's infrastructure investment, there will be a full Smarter Measures Behaviour Change programme (Appendix F) informed by public consultation. Its key interventions are:

- Continuing and expanding the Workplace Travel Plan programme with workplaces in the area, and increased activity to support visitor access by bike.
- Continued and new work with University of Edinburgh staff and students.
- Signage and mapping, and Google mapping.

4.2 Community and Stakeholder Engagement to Date

The MGS project is characterised by the beginnings of a strong approach to engagement with a diverse audience of users in a complex environment.

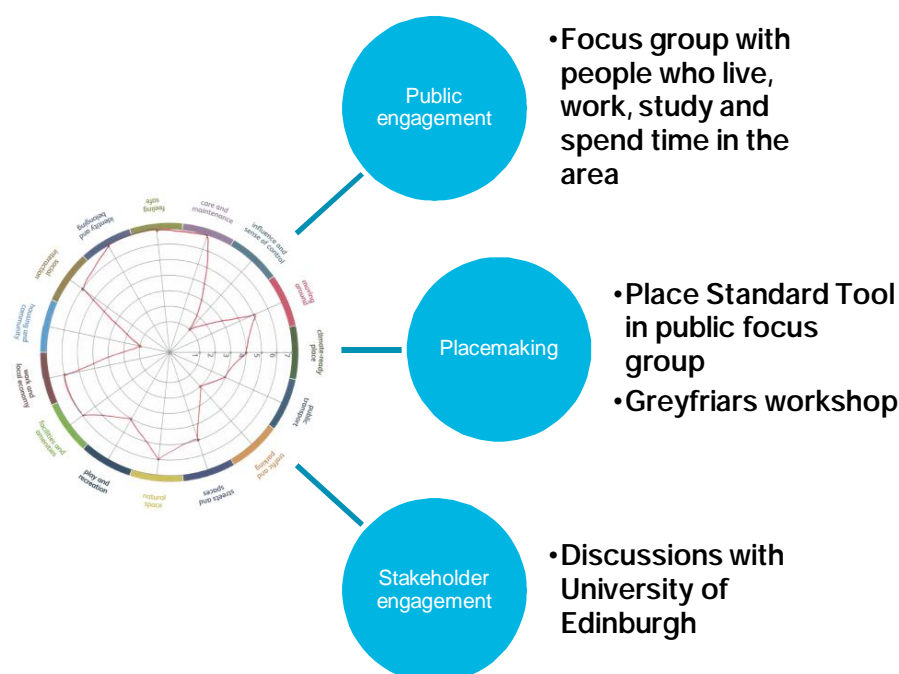


Figure 4.2: Place Standard Tool Results

4.3 Moving forward - Engagement and Consultation Plan

As demonstrated in Section 2.2, engagement and consultation has been, and will be an ongoing part of the project development (see Appendix C). Key mechanisms will include:

- The development of a Project Advisory Group.
- Public and stakeholder engagement at key points during project development including optioneering, preliminary and detailed designs.
- The Council's Active Travel Forum will be a touchstone for comment and feedback throughout the project.



Monitoring

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5. Monitoring

The Council currently has one of the most comprehensive active travel monitoring programmes in the country. A detailed Monitoring Plan is outlined in Appendix E.

5.1 Existing Monitoring

A highly comprehensive, multi-data source, approach to monitoring active travel in Edinburgh already exists via the ATAP and Bike Life (Figure 5.1). Communicating key information is critical to the monitoring process. Bike Life (Figure 5.1.1) exemplifies how we undertake this in an engaging and people friendly way.

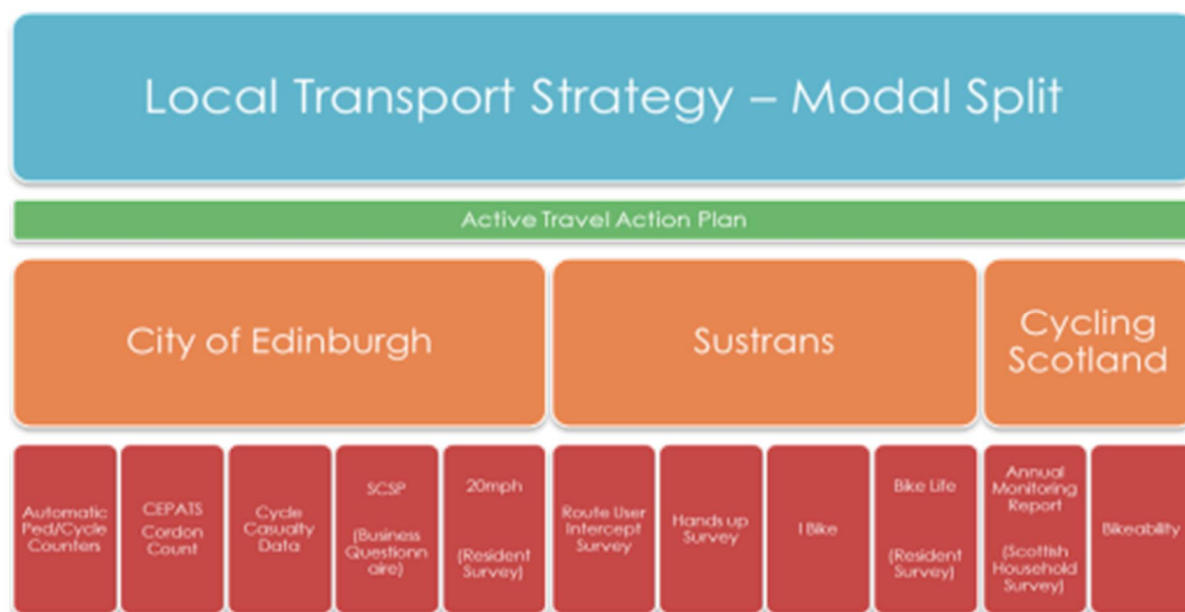


Figure 5.1: Core Contributors to ATAP Monitoring

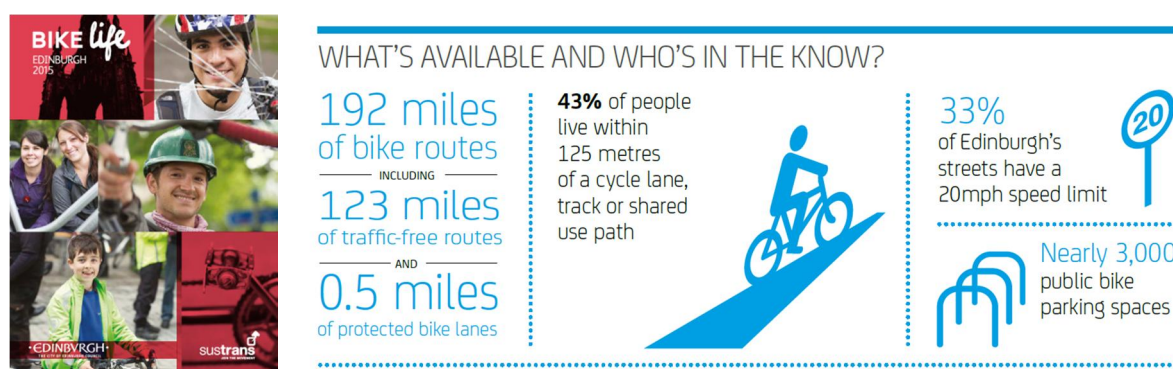


Figure 5.1.1: Extract of the Bike Life Report

5.2 Proposed Monitoring

A detailed monitoring plan is included in Appendix E. Key elements include:

- Developing key targets and indicators for each project objective alongside the advisory panel.
- Baseline and post-intervention residential surveys on travel behaviour.
- Existing and new cordon count and automatic counter data.
- Stakeholder and community before and after assessments via the place standard tool.

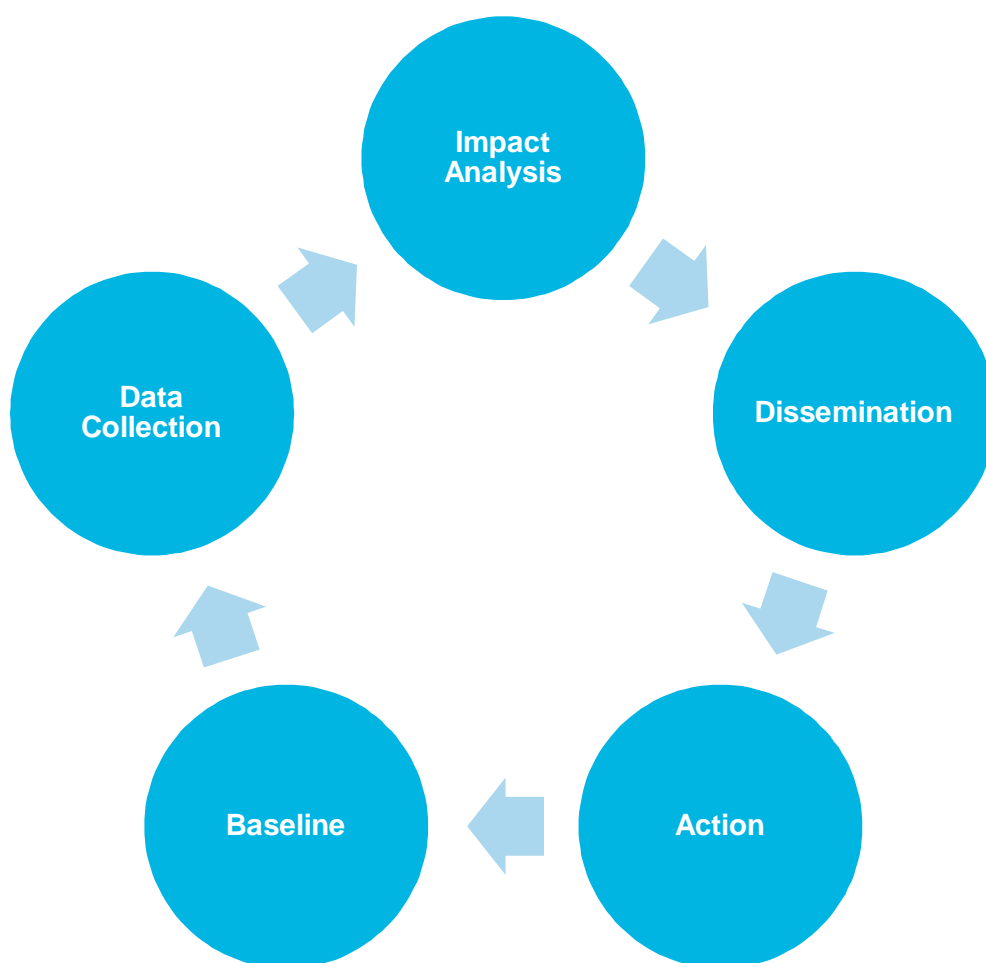


Figure 5.2: the Monitoring Process



Why Meadows to
George Street?

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6. Why Meadows to George Street?

Paul Lawrence, Executive Director of Place, City of
Edinburgh Council

*“The Meadows to George Street project would make a
lasting change to one of Edinburgh’s most iconic places
for generations to come.”*

