

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORT POLICY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL

VARIOUS ACTIVE TRAVEL STUDIES FUNDED BY SESTRANS & SUSTRANS

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to make the panel aware of various active travel proposals on seven routes across West Lothian funded by SEStrans and Sustrans over the last two years.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the panel notes and considers the following recommendations:

1. notes the contents of the report and the proposed active travel routes that would be incorporated into a forthcoming Local Development Plan 2 and the review of the council's Active Travel Plan.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources; and working in partnership.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Policy - Local Development Plan Policy TRAN 3 promotes and supports active travel. There are no legal, equality, health, SEA or risk assessment issues associated with this report at this stage.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Outcome 4 - We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities. Outcome 8 - We have the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.

VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None at this stage as consultancy options and design work funded by SEStrans and Sustrans. External grants to be sought for implementation and considered in the council's capital programme.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	This is the first time the PDSP has considered a report on this specific issue.
VIII	Other consultations	Roads & Transportation Services

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership for the South East of Scotland. SEStran encompasses eight local authorities: City of Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian.

SEStrans funded West Lothian Council to progress, via a consultant, several active travel route studies. Active travel is primarily defined as making journeys by walking, cycling and wheeling. It can also include horse-riding in some instances.

While an initial two studies were funded in 2019/20, they stalled due to the pandemic, but an additional five schemes were also awarded design funding by SEStrans in 2020/21 and the various options reports were received towards the end of 2021. The following sections set out the individual routes.

D.2 SESTRANS active travel studies across West Lothian

1) B8046 Ecclesmachan – Threemiletown

This route is indicatively shown in the Local Development Plan and was assessed to find the optional route. Ecclesmachan & Threemiletown Community Council have been very supportive of the proposal. Further work is required to negotiate with the two principal landowners.

Initial discussions with Sustrans over potential funding for implementation indicated they required a southerly connection to Uphall village centre and also onwards to Uphall Station. This additional study work was also funded by SEStrans. There remain difficult locations within Ecclesmachan adjacent to the burn on the east side of the B8046 to secure an adequate cycle route.

2) A89 Wester Dechmont – Ex-Bangour General Hospital – Blackcraig Rd

It has long been known the right of way adjacent to Wester Dechmont cottages allowed connection into the extensive Livingston greenway network at North Dechmont Lodge.

Improvements are required to the right of way track, as well as the track through the former Bangour General Hospital site that is owned by Scottish Enterprise, but leased to a local farmer. Negotiations would be required with this farmer and also at Blackcraig to the north on this right of way, that connects into the Bathgate Hills Quiet Roads Initiative (see 7 below).

3) A89 Parallel Route – Easton Road, Bathgate to Armadale

The Colinshiel Road runs parallel to the A89, but has no residential properties along it with a Farm at the east end and a scrap yard at the west / adjacent to the

A801 underbridge which has been problematic for fly tipping over the years due to lack of surveillance.

Discussions would be required with the farmer in relation to operation of their fields on either side of the route, as well as the scrapyards business on where to close the road to through traffic and convert for walking and cycling and the views of Armadale & Bathgate Community Councils.

4) A904 Newton – South Queensferry

This route would improve the link from the west side of Newton into the new cycleways associated with the M9 over junction at Echline, South Queensferry. There are topographical issues along the north side of the route and discussions will be required with the principal landowner, Hopetoun Estate.

SEStrans also funded an additional study of the route from the proposed new M9 Junction at Duntarvie related to the Winchburgh CDA, to link north along the B8020 to Newton and the options to the north east on the back road via Totley Wells and Westfield Farm, within the City of Edinburgh council area, to Echline.

5) A803 / A904 Linlithgow – Bo'ness (Links to Blackness & Falkirk).

This route would link Bo'ness, within the Falkirk Council area, to Linlithgow Station and is achievable with on-road and off-road improvements. It was promoted within the recent UK 'Levelling-Up Fund' that sought cross boundary schemes and also from councils within a category 1 areas, which involved Falkirk, but was unsuccessful. Discussions have been held with Falkirk Council's Active Travel Team.

6) B7008 West Calder – Harburn

West Calder & Harburn Community Development Trust are supportive on this route that tied in with their business plan and had community support to connect to Harburn village. Crossing the Bog Burn remains an issue and a separate adjacent bridge is not feasible or affordable, so changes will be required to the existing bridge carriageway. Negotiations will also be required with several farmers on the east side of the route in relation to field land take and related compensation.

7) Bathgate Hills Quiet Roads Initiative.

There has been a long standing proposal to promote a Quiet Roads Initiative (QRI) over rural, narrow roads surrounding and feeding into Beecraigs Country Park and linking communities such as Bathgate and Linlithgow, as well as Torphichen.

This study assessed various small roads within the Bathgate Hills to produce a network of quiet roads where cycling and walking would take precedence through low costs measures such as signage and entrance gateways. Further public consultation will be required with residents and farmers and landowners within the hills.

D.3 Other active travel route proposals with Sustrans

There are two other active travel routes that WLC Planning & Transportation have been involved in discussions with Sustrans in relation to the national cycle route:

a) National Cycle Route 75 – Blackridge Station

Sustrans have committed funding for consultancy design fees to realign the section of the NCN from Harthill Road, Blackridge and connect directly into Blackridge Station and avoid the low loop around Westrigg Bing.

Discussions are on-going with the landowner to resolve anti-social off-road bikes use and come to an agreed route and negotiated cost that will hopefully not involve promoting a compulsory purchase order.

Discussions have also been held with Network Rail and Scotrail on their various internal procedures related to connecting the cycle route into the south platform. Sustrans hope to receive funding for the scheme in their 2022/23 settlement from Transport Scotland.

b) National Cycle Route 75 – East Calder, via Kirknewton, to Balerno

Kirknewton Community Council brought to the attention of the council various deficiencies with the existing, promoted part of the NCN 75 route from East Calder to Balerno, as well as a number of opportunities to re-route it east of Kirknewton within City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) area to link into Balerno. Discussions have been held with CEC Active Travel Team.

The consultants looked at a myriad of route options and refined them. These have been shared with Kirknewton Community Council who have initiated some early informal consultation with landowners within their area to gauge any issues in advance of a more extensive public consultation to follow in 2022, should Sustrans receive capital funding to allow both councils to progress these projects.

Transportation Services are also involved with a number of other active travel scheme across West Lothian that are currently being progressed:

- A706/B7066 - Whitdale Roundabout Connection;
- A706/B7066 - Whitdale Roundabout to Boghead Roundabout;
- B7066 Heartlands to Whitdale Roundabout;
- Capstan Walk, Linlithgow - cyclepath improvements;
- Bathgate Water Regeneration Active Travel Links;
- Blackburn Corridor;
- Edinburgh Road, Bathgate - segregated cycleway;
- Stoneyburn Links Bents to A701;
- Stoneyburn Links - Stoneyburn to Addiewell;
- Wester Inch to Whitehill Ind Estate Link; and
- Whitburn Town Walk Improvements - Phase 2.

All these various studies will be helpful in the review and updating of the council's active travel plan in 2022. Transportation hope to undertake a review of this Plan, via consultants as there is currently no Active Travel Officer in post, when the relevant Sustrans grant portal re-opens. A brief for consultants is under preparation by Transportation Services.

It will also be useful to have had these options appraisals carried out and the issues identified and outline costs prepared that would allow schemes to be advanced should grant funding become available and match with any capital funding that the council can secure.

E. CONCLUSION

SEstrans, as well as Sustrans, have both been supportive of West Lothian Council in advancing route appraisals and option designs of various active travel routes

across West Lothian. Due to their length and complexity and also in some cases involving land negotiations which can be time consuming, as well as their significant cost to implement them, it may take several years to progress these schemes.

However, it has been most helpful to have the necessary consultancy design work funded and it is hoped that following public consultation on individual schemes that a combination of council capital funding and also external grants e.g.; from SEStrans +/- or Sustrans and others, will allow for these active travel schemes to be implemented.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

WLC Active Travel Plan 2016-2021 'Making connections' -
[https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/12492/West-Lothian-Active-Travel-Plan-2016-21-Making-Active-Connections/pdf/West Lothian Active Travel Plan 2016-212.pdf?m=635981217631570000](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/12492/West-Lothian-Active-Travel-Plan-2016-21-Making-Active-Connections/pdf/West%20Lothian%20Active%20Travel%20Plan%202016-212.pdf?m=635981217631570000)

Appendices / Attachments: one – General location plan of 7 SEStrans active travel studies in West Lothian.

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