



Transport Scotland – Active Travel Transformation

January 2024

Purpose

This note provides Local Authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships, National Park Authorities and national delivery partners with an update on a number of changes proposed through Active Travel transformation. It updates on intended delivery models for both infrastructure and behaviour change, and provides practical information on the Active Travel Infrastructure Fund.

It is to be noted that we continue to engage with CoSLA on these delivery models.

Background

The Active Travel Transformation Project was established to ensure that our increasing investment in Active Travel results in the kind of transformative change we all want to see. The scale of growth in funding in recent years means we have to look at how we deliver, not just how much we spend. Through the Project we have engaged with our partners to develop an improved system for Active Travel delivery in Scotland – one which delivers infrastructure quickly and efficiently to a high standard and in a planned and cohesive fashion, which enables people to make walking, wheeling and cycling their primary mode of transport for short, everyday journeys.

Transport Scotland undertook a significant programme of engagement through the Project to gather evidence and assess the existing landscape. This has informed a number of recommendations and changes for us to build into a new delivery model.

While elements of improved delivery have already been realised through the Transformation Project, including the Transformation Fund, the implementation of a major change programme for Active Travel delivery will commence from 2024-25. We are now writing to advise you of a number of intended changes to how Transport Scotland will deliver Active Travel in Scotland from 2024-25. Further detail will be provided in due course, with a further update to follow in the coming weeks.

Active Travel Transformation – Infrastructure Delivery

In the context of year on year increases in investment in Active Travel, our primary focus will be on investing in high quality Active Travel infrastructure, to make walking, wheeling and cycling safer and easier for more people in communities right across the country. We will continue to invest in interventions to help people choose Active Travel, particularly where it relates to accessing local infrastructure.

Recognising the need to ensure the delivery model for infrastructure is suitable for navigating both the challenges ahead and the opportunities that a significant increase in Active Travel investment will bring, a collaborative approach was

undertaken with stakeholders to inform design and implementation of a new approach .

In December 2022, a new [Transformation Fund](#) was launched to trial a new approach to delivery. This provides funding for approved projects directly to successful applicants (Local Authorities (LAs), Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) and National Park Authorities (NPAs)), and focusses on projects that are construction-ready. More recently, the [Verity House Agreement](#) (June 2023) confirmed the direction of travel towards more direct funding to LAs and for local control over that budget, with a driving principle of 'local by default, national by agreement'.

Tiered Delivery

It is intended that a Tiered Delivery Model will be implemented from 2024-25. The key themes of this model are summarised below:

Tier 1

- All LAs to receive capital funding through block grant allocation (previously CWSR).
- Distribution methodology to be developed and agreed with CoSLA prior to awarding in April.
- TS to have oversight and advise of key measurables for funding e.g. regarding outcomes data, and ability to track benefits.
- Match-free block grant for spend on activity across the Active Travel system - an integrated programme of infrastructure design and construction projects, with embedded behaviour change interventions to drive walking, wheeling and cycling.

Tier 2

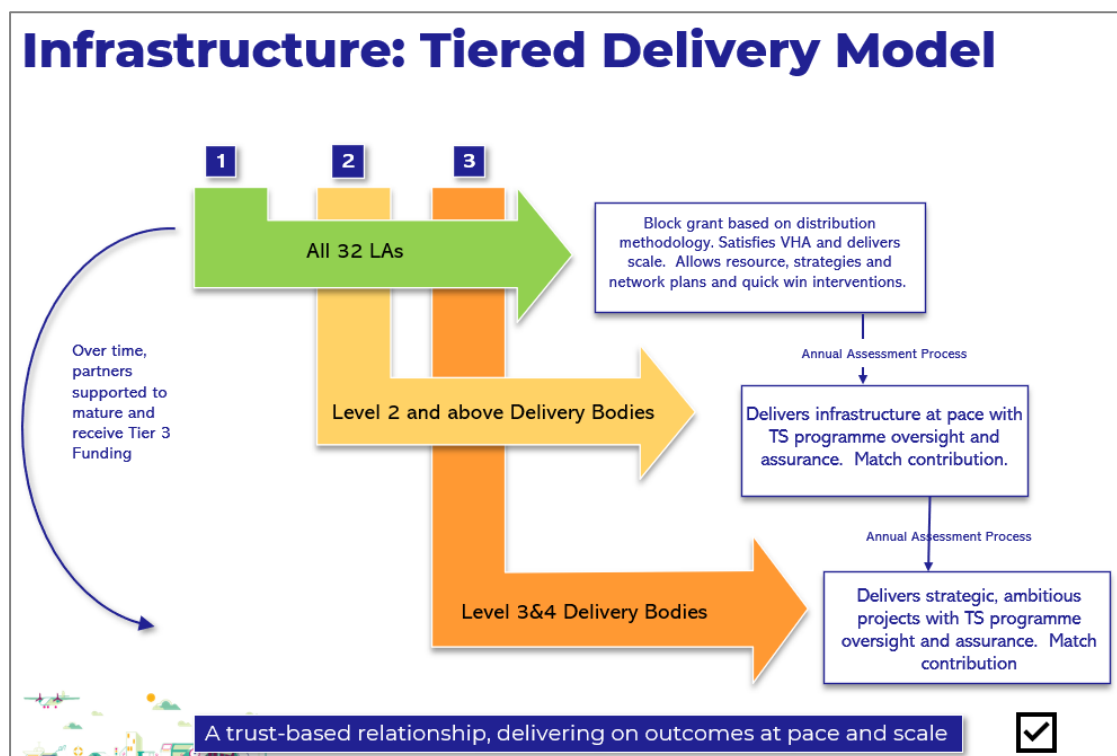
- Programme funding prioritised for those LAs most ready and able to deliver infrastructure quickly, with a project pipeline ready for construction in that financial year.
- This Tier may be expected to *broadly* cover those LAs assessed at Level 2 and above through the 2023-24 Transformation Fund process.
- Match contributions will be expected dependent on the size and nature of projects. In particular, funding contributions are to be provided by recipients for non-core elements such as placemaking, public realm features and benefits accrued by non-Active Travel modes.
- Similar principles as 2023-24 Transformation Fund to be applied, regarding reporting, benefits tracking, and management. LAs to report against progress and manage funds within their programme in discussion with TS (enabling project acceleration/ deceleration through the financial year as required).
- Successful projects to include supporting behaviour change initiatives that will ensure impact of the new infrastructure. It is for LAs/ RTPs/NPAs to identify delivery partners for support on this.

Tier 3

- Similar to Tier 2, the most ambitious and strategic projects (may include public transport integration) may be provided with funding.

- This Tier may be expected to *broadly* cover those LAs assessed as Level 3 and Level 4 through the Transformation Fund process.

The image below illustrates the Tiered Delivery Model



This approach will create a pathway for a greater number of LAs to qualify for a greater degree of funding through the direct funding model.

It is intended that the new tiered model will be introduced from April 2024. As part of the transition towards this new model, we will commence a wind-down of Sustrans' Places for Everyone Programme which will be completed by December 2025.

It is proposed that Sustrans will continue to manage existing construction projects and see them through where finishing prior to December 2025, and for **2024-25, Sustrans will continue to fund and manage concept to design stages of projects (0-4)**. Organisations other than LAs/RTPs/NPAs delivering projects that were previously funded by Sustrans will continue to be supported through the transition period to the end of December 2025.

Active Travel Infrastructure Fund – Applications for 2024-25

The 2024-25 Active Travel Infrastructure Fund builds on the 2023-24 Active Travel Transformation Fund, and is available to the following partners to support delivery of eligible **construction-ready** Active Travel schemes in 2024-25:

- Local Authorities;
- Regional Transport Partnerships; and
- National Park Authorities.

Delivery partners are invited to complete their application on the [Citizen Space](#) portal for eligible 'construction-ready' Active Travel projects for delivery in 2024-25 and do not need to undertake a self-assessment (as had been a requirement for the 2023-24 Transformation Fund). Guidance and information on how to complete the 'construction-ready' application has been provided and this will be updated throughout the application period. The timescale for Fund applications is as follows:

- Applications open for submission - 5 January 2024;
- Applications due - 2 February 2024;
- Assessment of applications and follow up with a view to complete the assessment – end February to mid-March;
- Provide grant offer letter - early April 2024; and
- Construction funding from April 2024 to March 2025 (annual budget).

Behaviour Change Delivery Model

With the introduction of the Verity House Agreement, and the move to increased funding and control toward LAs, it is important we take steps to increase the capacity and capability in LAs to ensure conditions are right for the benefits of future Active Travel investment to be realised. The long-term success of Active Travel depends on a closer relationship between infrastructure delivery and behaviour change activities.

Behaviour change programmes remain absolutely central to how we deliver on our vision as set out in the [Active Travel Framework](#), and the more recently published [Cycling Framework for Active Travel](#), and our delivery partners are critical to the success of this. However, *how* we deliver these interventions needs to change to give greater coherence and result in more people choosing walking, cycling and wheeling for everyday journeys.

Engagement has been on-going with delivery partners, LA representatives and RTPs since August to identify a suitable delivery model. Transport Scotland can advise that for 2024-25, it is intended that RTPs will receive funding directly to coordinate delivery (supported by delivery partners) of a People and Place Programme, comprised of interventions identified as priorities with their respective LAs across the following key themes:

- Schools and Young People
- Workplaces
- Accessibility and Inclusion
- Capacity and Capability Building

This means that with the exception of a small number of programmes (e.g. accredited training programmes with a strong emphasis on safety), there will be no programmes directly funded by Transport Scotland. Delivery partners will continue to have a vitally important role to play in the delivery of behaviour change and access to bikes interventions, and are already engaged with RTPs to support delivery of the 24-25 programme. RTPs are also engaging with LAs to ensure priorities for 2024-25 are identified and agreed, then communicated to delivery partners who can develop solutions and offers of support to address local challenges.

As part of our transition to the new model, alongside the direct funding to RTPs, we are considering two funding streams, intended to provide continuity for those projects and roles that play a critical role in delivery of active travel outcomes:

- A Community Projects Transition Fund, managed by Paths for All, will be available for community-led projects that align with the key themes of the People and Place Programme.
- With the closure of the SCSP Programme, we appreciate there will be a number of roles that had previously been supported by the LA Fund that would be at risk, and indeed proposed roles that would not be possible in the absence of available funding. We are considering direct resource funding to local authorities for the purpose of maintaining support for existing roles and projects or creating support for those deemed essential to the delivery of active travel outcomes (primarily effecting a modal shift toward active travel for everyday journeys). We therefore encourage LAs to continue to work on proposals they may have had in development in anticipation of the LA Fund. Transport Scotland will advise shortly on how this funding will be provided and reported on.

Future updates

We intend to provide a further update on Active Travel infrastructure and behaviour change delivery for 2024-25 in the coming weeks. All proposed funding is subject to the Scottish Government Budget for 24-25 passing through parliament and Transport Scotland's budget governance process.

Active Travel Team
Transport Scotland

23 January 2024