

Active Travel Frequently asked Questions

What does active travel mean?

Active Travel means walking and cycling for everyday journeys. This includes journeys to school; work, to the shops and to access health and leisure services. For the purposes of the Active Travel improvement plan, East Lothian Council has adopted the definition “Active travel is a concept of travel that includes only those forms of transport that require active use of the human body as a transport machine. Examples of the type of travel include walking and cycling, as this burns off energy in comparison to sedentary travel forms like driving or getting the bus”.

Why does East Lothian Council want to promote active travel?

Active travel is being promoted for many reasons:

- To improve the health and wellbeing of the population of East Lothian;
- To improve air quality and reduce the reliance on the car;
- To remove vehicles from busy streets;
- To create better places for everyone;
- and, to improve access to jobs, services and amenities.

Each of these reasons are key to help meet the vision of East Lothian Council “An even more prosperous, safe and sustainable East Lothian, with a dynamic and thriving economy, that enables our people and communities to flourish”

Why is recreational walking or cycling included in the plan?

Active Travel generally refers to journeys made for a functional purpose only, not for enjoyment, health or recreation. This Strategy covers all journeys made to get to a destination, for example going to work, school or college, shopping or to the bus or train station by an active travel means. It includes a Sunday walk to the beach or cycle to a local attraction. Each journey made by active travel means helps meet the main objectives of the plan and promote healthy lives.

Why does the Council want to develop a plan to deliver Active travel proposals?

The plan sets out proposals for the longer term including how the plan benefits individuals and communities. The plan is a supporting document of the Local Transport Strategy and provides an Action plan giving details of the initiatives, proposals and studies as to how these all come together to change travel and transport in East Lothian. The Plan also helps meet national targets from the Cycle Action Plan for Scotland, Scotland’s National Walking Strategy and Scotland’s Climate Change Plan.

What is a core path?

It was a duty for each local authority to draw up a core paths plan under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. After three rounds of public consultations, East Lothian Council adopted its plan in 2010. Core paths are the key routes chosen by the public and they link into the wider path network. They can be anything from a tarmac path to a route over a ploughed field. These paths provide an extra layer of protection and local authorities may promote and maintain them (although there is no duty to do so).

How do East Lothian Council propose to make these changes in the longer term?

Subject to public support and Council agreement, interventions would be delivered in accordance with the action plan. To facilitate further understanding of public requirements a series of studies, charrettes and workshops incorporating public engagement are necessary to understand the exact nature and degree of change that is appropriate in East Lothian.

How can the Council afford the proposals with all the competing demands placed on the public purse?

Roads Service annually invest £5.2 million into the maintenance of roads including footpaths, cycle ways, street lighting and structures. An element of that budget includes for improvement to road that include active travel infrastructure. The service undertakes to finance 5% on projects and initiatives to promote active travel but also through grant aid, developer contributions and match funding opportunities seeks to increase this commitment to £1m per year. The plan is instrumental in demonstrating to funders the Councils vision and how it intends to deliver the outcomes described.

What do you mean by “match funding”?

Match funding is considered a contribution of goods, or services made towards the overall project cost. This could be in the form of an in-kind contribution were a group or body contribute to a project without cost or funding being supplied from a partner organisation such as Sustran, SEStran or Cycle Scotland. The Scottish Government is also another source of potential match funding for specific schemes provided eligibility and criterion rules be met. Mostly, due to local government funding constraints match funding contributions are sought to deliver projects and the Council will continue to pursue, if at all possible funding opportunities were they exist.

Is there a requirement to monitor and evaluate the proposals/ actions?

Yes, evidencing outcomes is important, the Council and partners want to understand the effectiveness of investment, value for money, and lessons learnt to ensure we are investing into projects that make a real difference.

Why is there limited reference to road safety and speed limit reductions in the plan?

This Active Travel improvement Plan focuses on cycling, walking and other sustainable forms of transport. There is an East Lothian Council Road Safety Plan that covers road safety and an East Lothian Council Speed Limit Policy covers 20mph limits. While both of these issues have an impact on active travel, the ELC position on speed limits has already been agreed and the ELC road safety Plan is being consulted on alongside this plan.

The ELC Road safety Plan is here:

http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/19535/2518_east_lothian_local_transport_strategy-active_travel_improvement_plan

The ELC Speed Limit policy is here:

http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/12008/05_speed_limit_review_and_proposed_speed_limit_policy

What are the next steps?

Given the scope of the consultation, a report will be prepared by officials to identify priorities and key outcomes from the process. Feedback through the consultation process will be taken into account in the final drafting of the strategies and associated plans before coming back to Council for further scrutiny, debate and adoption subject to agreement.