

ACTIVE TRAVEL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Proposal to Area Partnerships from ELC's Sustainable Transport Officers Group

East Lothian Council is in the process of developing a Local Transport Strategy. This will be underpinned by an Active Travel Improvement Plan to encourage and assist people to make more sustainable travel decisions - choosing walking, cycling and/or public transport over the use of the private car. East Lothian Council is keen to ensure that communities have the opportunity to input into this process so that the actions included in this plan reflect local priorities.

Staff from the Council's Sustainable Transport Officers Group are aware that that need to improve walking, cycling and public transport options have come up in Area Partnership discussions across the County and that, although the specific concerns in each locality may vary, there seem to be a number of cross-cutting themes emerging. These include:

- A lack of awareness / information about existing local infrastructure and options;
- Identifying the most effective interventions / incentives to promote behaviour change;
- Gaps in infrastructure – where current provision does not support the types of journeys people want or need to make;
- Opportunities to better integrate active travel and public transport links;
- Sustainable options for developing community / demand responsive transport services to address local needs.

On this basis East Lothian Council has applied for and secured funding from Paths for All to hold a series of Community Engagement and Action Planning events across the county (which we are referring to as 'mini-conferences' till we come up with a better name) – **and we would like to jointly host these with the Area Partnership in each ward.**

The purpose of each of these 'mini conferences' would be to:

- a) increase local people's awareness and understanding of current active and sustainable travel opportunities in their area;
- b) explore the barriers to persuading people to adopt a more sustainable approach in their travel choices, i.e. time, money, weather, health, infrastructure, safety, security etc.
- c) allow local communities to identify specific gaps and barriers to increasing active and sustainable travel usage in their local area;
- d) allow officers and community representatives to collaboratively develop solutions - both practical/ infrastructure solutions and those designed to achieve behavioural change;
- e) develop local Action Plans that can be incorporated into Area Partnership Area Plans, East Lothian's Active Travel Improvement Plan and inform the wider priorities for relevant ELC policy and service delivery;
- f) identify 'seed projects' in each area focussed on behavioural change (up to a value of £10,000) that can be delivered within the 2015/16 financial year.

We hope that these 'mini-conferences' will take place between August and October 2015. All costs involved in holding the events will be met from the Paths for All funding package.

In addition we have managed to secure as part of this funding package up to £5000 per Partnership that can be used to deliver projects designed to achieve behavioural change this financial year. This funding can be accessed by each Area Partnership if they agree to match it with an allocation from their devolved funds or other funding available within their area. This would be used to fund the locally determined 'seed projects' referred to above.

What do we need from each Area Partnership at this stage?

1. Agreement from the Partnership that they are interested in jointly host a 'mini-conference' in their area focussed on improving access to and use of active and sustainable travel options.
2. Agreement from the Partnership to use this process to develop actions for inclusion in their Area Plan focussed on sustainable travel.
3. For the Partnership to identify 1 or 2 members to join a project Steering Group – made up of ELC officers from the Sustainable Transport Officers Group, Area Partnership members and representatives from key stakeholder groups eg RELBUS, the East Lothian Access Forum etc.

The role of Area Partnership members on the Steering Group will be to:

- Be the key link between their Area Partnership and the wider project – providing updates and reports on progress.
 - Be part of the process of appointing a consultant team to deliver the project (the contract for this work will be going out to tender in May)
 - Brief the consultant team on the specific local context in each ward – taking into account work already done in the area.
 - Help plan for the 'mini-conferences' in each area
 - Actively participate in the 'mini-conferences' and the local Action Planning
4. An in-principle* agreement to consider allocating £5000 to match fund the delivery of locally determined 'seed projects' within their ward area this financial year. This funding could potentially come from any of the 3 funding streams devolved to the Partnership depending on the nature of the projects identified in each ward.

**we understand that Area Partnerships are at a very early stage of determining how they will manage and use their devolved funding and thus realise that groups may not be in a position to make a firm decision on this at this time.*