North Ayrshire Council

Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy

2023 to 2028

North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Contents

1. Introduction

This Strategy replaces the Local Transport Strategy 2015 to 2020, which included supporting economic growth and seeking to ensure communities were connected.

What is a Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy?

The North Ayrshire Council Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy sets out how we intend to contribute to national transportation objectives and specifies actions which will achieve objectives that are distinctive to North Ayrshire.

The North Ayrshire Council Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy includes a detailed vision for improving transport and travel in North Ayrshire. It also outlines our strategic priorities and objectives and explains how we will achieve this in a Delivery Plan.

This Strategy replaces the Local Transport Strategy 2015 to 2020, which included supporting economic growth and seeking to ensure communities were connected. Whilst both an inclusive economy and connected communities are still relevant, the development of a new strategy also provides us with an opportunity to move towards a low carbon, less polluting transport network.

Recognising the focus given to active travel nationally, this new strategy highlights the importance of active travel with a specific chapter for the Active Travel Strategy.

This strategy has been developed through evidence gathering, consideration of the wider policy and strategy context, consultation with stakeholders and feedback from the members of the public.

Why Do We Need a Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy?

Enhancing the transport network is a key driver for: improving the local economy, improving the environment, increasing social inclusion, and delivering health benefits for all residents and visitors of North Ayrshire.

Transport has the potential to affect everyone in North Ayrshire, for example, to access employment, education, healthcare, social and leisure activities. An effective transport system facilitates and supports the development of a sustainable and inclusive economy, and regeneration in North Ayrshire. It contributes to addressing climate change and reducing inequalities.

This Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy provides a framework for investment and decision-making in transport up to 2028. It outlines the priorities for improving transport in North Ayrshire which can support investment in areas which have the potential to offer benefits to residents and businesses.

It is recognised that, while the Delivery Plan is not currently fully funded, it provides the basis to seek funding opportunities through partners for the projects that have been identified.

Delivering the Strategy

North Ayrshire Council alone are unable to progress all the actions and instead we wish to work in partnership with other organisations and operators who are responsible for transport services. North Ayrshire Council already works with many organisations to deliver and improve transport services in North Ayrshire. The roles and responsibilities of the principal organisations responsible for transport infrastructure and services in North Ayrshire are provided in subsequent pages.

The Delivery Plan is at the heart of the strategy and sets out actions to help work towards a transport system that meets the needs of North Ayrshire. While some of the actions included in the Delivery Plan are not the responsibility of North Ayrshire Council for example, the provision of public transport and ferries, feedback from stakeholders and members of the public has identified that they would like improvements to these transport modes. Therefore, the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy aims to address this feedback by influencing and collaborating with partners.

COVID-19

It is acknowledged that transport provision and travel patterns have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has created uncertainties in transport needs with fewer people travelling initially due to Government restrictions in movement and the ongoing reduced availability of transport services. More people are working from home and fewer people are commuting and travelling at the traditional peak times (in the morning and early evening).

People were discouraged from using public transport to reduce the spread of the virus and public transport services were reduced. While public transport service provision has started to increase in some areas, other services have been removed or continue to be reduced in parts of North Ayrshire. This has presented challenges for people in accessing services and maintaining access to social activities to support their wellbeing.

While there remain uncertainties about travel patterns in the future, it is important that action is taken to minimise any increase in car use due to reduced availability of transport services to support the Council's ambitions.

Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy Process and Timeline

The strategy has been influenced by local, regional, and national strategy, views, and opinions. It has been produced following a comprehensive process where local issues and opportunities were identified at an early stage to inform a detailed action plan to be put in place that will aim to provide positive solutions for all.

The strategy has been influenced by local, regional, and national strategy, views, and opinions.

The strategy has been informed by:

- A comprehensive review of the transport and active travel network
- A review of travel patterns
- An extensive consultation exercise between February and April 2022.
- Stakeholder Workshops
- A dedicated website for providing comments.
- A further consultation on the draft strategy between 24 February and 23 April 2023

The development of the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy has followed the principles and initial key stages of the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance. Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance provides a framework to assess evidence-based transport problems and opportunities.

This process, and the key stages of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance that have been followed, are set out in the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy Process diagram on next page.

Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy
Strategy Development Process
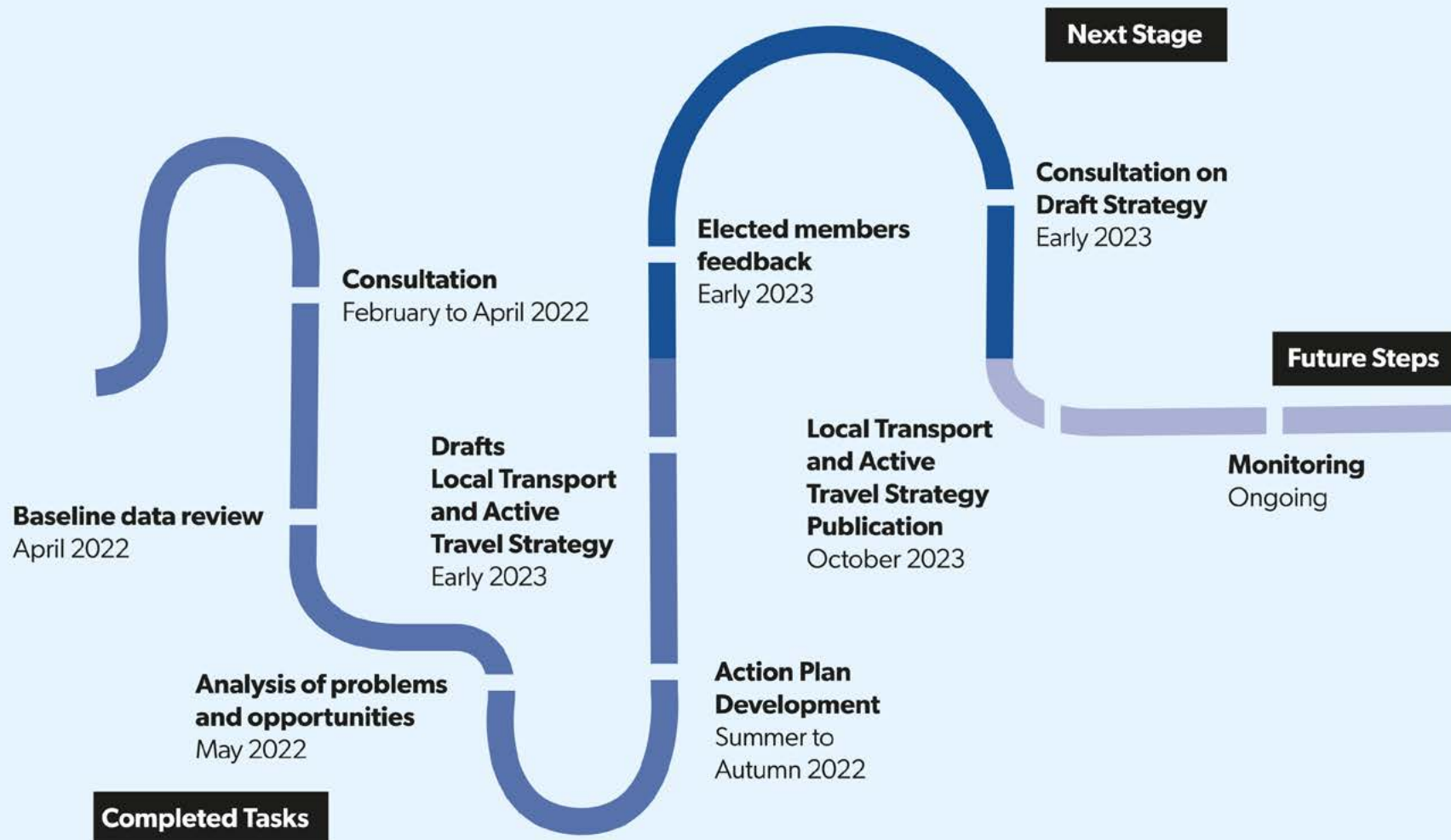
Next Stage

Consultation on Draft Strategy
Early 2023

Elected members feedback
Early 2023

Consultation
February to April 2022

Future Steps

Drafts Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy
Early 2023

Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy Publication
October 2023

Monitoring
Ongoing

Baseline data review
April 2022

Analysis of problems and opportunities
May 2022

Action Plan Development
Summer to Autumn 2022

Completed Tasks

The Council is committed to working in partnership with other organisations and operators who are responsible for delivering transport infrastructure and services.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy recognises that the Council is unable to progress all of the required actions in isolation. The Council is committed to working in partnership with other organisations and operators who are responsible for delivering transport infrastructure and services. The roles and responsibilities of the principal organisations responsible for transport infrastructure and services in North Ayrshire are shown in Table 1.1. This is a summary of the main organisations however the Council works with many more to deliver and improve transport services in North Ayrshire.

While some of the actions included in the Delivery Plan are not the direct responsibility of North Ayrshire Council, for example the provision of public transport and ferries, feedback from stakeholders and the public has identified the importance of improvements to these transport modes. The Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy therefore aims to address this by committing to influencing and collaborating with the responsible partner organisations.

Table 1.1 Selected Transport Roles and Responsibilities

Organisation	Roles or Responsibilities
North Ayrshire Council	• Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy • Maintenance of local roads and active travel routes • Design and implementation of new active travel routes, local roads and bridges • Street lighting • Local road safety • Parking management • Travel behaviour change projects
Scottish Government and Transport Scotland	• Rail projects • Management of ScotRail services • National Transport Strategy • Trunk road network • Major trunk road and bridge projects • National Concessionary Scheme • Aviation, freight, bus and taxi policy • Ferries, ports and harbours • Blue badge scheme
Strathclyde Partnership for Transport	• Regional Transport Strategy • Monitor commercial bus services • Procure subsidised bus services • Operate MyBus demand responsive bus services • Manage bus stops and shelters • Administer the Zonecard ticket • Manage Strathclyde concessionary travel scheme
CalMac	• Management and operation of ferry services in North Ayrshire
Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited	• Owns the ferries, ports and harbours for services operated by CalMac
Bus Operators	• Delivery of commercial and subsidised bus services
Network Rail	• Own and manage rail infrastructure
ScotRail	• Management and operation of rail services

2. Policy and Strategy Context

The Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy has been developed to align with and support key national, regional and local policies and strategies. While this policy and strategy summary is not exhaustive, it illustrates the key influences on transport in North Ayrshire.

Prioritising Sustainable Transport
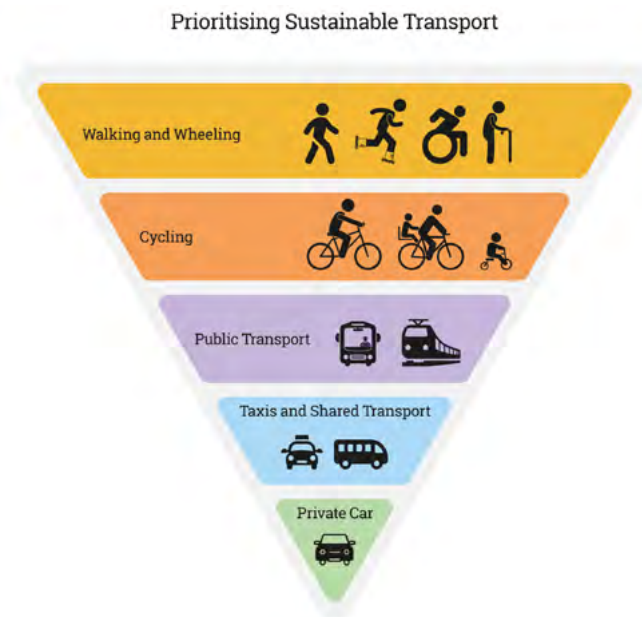
National

Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2, 2020 sets out an ambitious vision for the transport system and outlines four priorities: reducing inequalities, taking climate action, helping to deliver inclusive economic growth, and improving health and wellbeing.

The Sustainable Travel Hierarchy is embedded in Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2 and in decision-making by promoting walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use for the movement of people. Efficient and sustainable freight transport is also promoted for the movement of goods. This Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy adopts the sustainable travel hierarchy in line with national transport policy.

The Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 is a Scotland-wide review of the strategic transport network across all transport modes, as well as reviewing wider island and rural connectivity, which includes ferries and air travel.

The Scottish Government have adopted a new spatial strategy for Scotland that looks ahead to 2045. National Planning Framework sets out Scottish Ministers' policies and proposals for the development and use of land and plays a key role in supporting the delivery of Scotland's national outcomes and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 makes 45 draft recommendations that focus investment on sustainable transport options. Many of these will benefit communities and businesses across Scotland and some will have particular benefit to the Ayrshire and Arran area. The Update to the Climate Change Plan sets out the Scottish Government's approach to delivering a green recovery, with a focus on the period up to 2032. The transport related components of the plan build upon Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2 , with a specific commitment to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030.

Subsequently, an evidence report, and a national discussion on a route map has also been published. The route map acknowledges that the percentage reduction target is for an overall national reduction, and it does not expect car use in rural and island community areas to necessarily reduce at the same rate as in towns and cities.

The Scottish Government have adopted a new spatial strategy for Scotland that looks ahead to 2045. National Planning Framework 4 sets out Scottish Ministers' policies and proposals for the development and use of land and plays a key role in supporting the delivery of Scotland's national outcomes and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In recognising that better places will be an important part of achieving net zero in a way which also tackles longstanding challenges and inequalities, National Planning Framework 4 supports collaborative working to improve people's lives by supporting the planning and delivery of:

- Sustainable places, where emissions are reduced and biodiversity is restored and better connected
- Liveable places, where we can live better, healthier lives; and
- Productive places with a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

Local liveability, including through 20-minute neighbourhoods, and improving community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, leaning, work and leisure locally is an overarching spatial principle underpinning how future places are to be planned in accordance with National Planning Framework.

National Planning Framework 4 policy seeks to encourage, promote and facilitate developments that prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport for everyday travel and reduce the need to travel unsustainably through investment in transport infrastructure that supports connectivity and reflects place-based approaches and local living; more, better, safer and more inclusive active and sustainable travel opportunities and developments in locations which support sustainable travel.

Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation sets out the priorities for Scotland's economy as well as the actions needed to maximise the opportunities of the next decade to achieve the vision of a wellbeing economy. Transport has a key role to play in achieving this vision at a national and local level.

Regional

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport's Regional Transport Strategy sets out the vision for transport in the region that:

'The west of Scotland will be a well-connected, attractive and low carbon place with active, liveable communities and accessible, vibrant centres facilitated by a high quality, sustainable and resilient transport system shaped by the needs of all'.

The vision is underpinned by three priorities:

- A healthier environment, supported by a transport system that helps our region become a low carbon place with healthier natural and built environments for the benefit of all.
- Inclusive economic growth, underpinned by a transport system that supports regional economic development and growth, with better opportunities and fairer outcomes for all.
- Improved quality of life, supported by a transport system that helps everyone to have better health and wellbeing and lead active, fulfilling lives.

This Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy considers the actions in the Regional Transport Strategy that are relevant to North Ayrshire, and these are included in the Delivery Plan. Partnership working with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport will be essential for the delivery of several of the actions.

The Ayrshire Growth Deal is a partnership driven forward by the Scottish Government, the UK Government and East, North and South Ayrshire Councils. It has a vision for Ayrshire to be 'a vibrant, outward looking, confident region, attractive to investors and visitors, making a major contribution to Scotland's growth and local well-being, and leading the implementation of digital technologies and the next generation of manufacturing.'

The Deal has secured funding to help realise Ayrshire's potential as a world-class business region for the aerospace and space, energy, tourism, manufacturing and engineering industries, and reaffirms the commitment to the region and the collective desire to support ambitious plans for renewal and long-term sustainable growth. The provision of appropriate transport infrastructure is important to the delivery of the vision.

The Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy (2023) sets out a bold 10 year vision for the Ayrshire economy and for Ayrshire residents and businesses. It is the first strategy of its kind for the region, and the first in Scotland to feature Community Wealth Building as a founding principle. Its vision is that:

Ayrshire will be a region where wealth is shared fairly, to enable people of all ages to live full and healthy lives. Our region will be outward looking, attractive to investors and visitors, making a major contribution to Scotland's economic development.

We will also prioritise the protection of our natural wealth and culture. This is how our residents, communities, institutions and enterprises will rise to the opportunities and adapt to the challenges of the future.

Addressing the key transport challenges facing the Ayrshire economy including improving physical infrastructure by addressing poor road linkages and reduced and unreliable public transport and supporting a just transition to Net Zero are key priorities of the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy and Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy.

The Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy will to contribute to achieving the six regional priorities and associated outcomes including Good Health and Wellbeing and Stronger Places and Communities. A Delivery Plan is currently being developed for the Strategy and will consider potential transport interventions.

The Ayrshire Freight Strategy (2016) was developed by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, North Ayrshire Council and the Ayrshire Roads Alliance. This provides a strategic road network and freight access strategy to key freight locations along with an associated signing strategy. The strategy also sought to identify opportunities to provide HGV parking and examine options for transport hubs for freight transfer or local distribution.

Local

The Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy will interact with many other Council strategies.

Our Council Plan 2023 to 2028 explains how we will meet our communities' needs and expectations over the next five years. Our mission is Working together to improve the lives of our people in North Ayrshire to achieve our vision of a North Ayrshire which is fair for all. The strategic aims of the new plan are:

- To transition to a **wellbeing** economy, delivering prosperity, wellbeing and resilience for local people
- We will have active, inclusive and **resilient communities**
- To achieve **net zero** by 2030
- A **Community Wealth Building** Council that is efficient and accessible, maximising investment and focusing resources towards our priorities

The North Ayrshire Partnership Plan 2022 to 2030 sets out what the Council wants to achieve with our Community Planning partner organisations and influences how all partners operate locally. A number of Active Travel and Transport actions will help deliver the North Ayrshire Partnership Plan vision of 'North Ayrshire – Fair for All'. It has three key themes:

- Wellbeing – We will address health inequalities. We will promote children and young people's wellbeing. We will enable community wellbeing.
- Work – We will increase employment. We will develop volunteering. We will better support our young people.
- World – We will work together to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change. We will increase active travel. We will increase carbon literacy within our organisations and communities.

The Local Development Plan 2 (2019) has an essential link with the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy in terms of land use and transport integration. Well planned developments, with associated well-planned and designed sustainable transport provision will support the vision and strategic priorities of the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy.

The Community Wealth Building Strategy sets out North Ayrshire Council's ambitious plans to become a Community Wealth Building Council, working in partnership with communities and businesses to create a fair local economy, reducing poverty and inequality. Addressing transport inequality is a key aim of both the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy and Community Wealth Building Strategy.

The third Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (2021 to 2023) builds on the carbon reduction success of its predecessors and establishes a new target 'to reduce and remove emissions for North Ayrshire to achieve net-zero carbon status by 2030'. A refreshed strategy, Sustainable North Ayrshire, is currently being developed.

Addressing transport and travel is an important workstream in this plan. The strategy recognises that many initiatives are already underway to support carbon reduction from transport through the implementation of the Council's Electric Vehicle Strategy (2021 to 2025), which aims to increase the number of Electric Vehicles used in North Ayrshire, and also by implementing numerous active travel projects.

10-year local Island Plans have been developed with and for North Ayrshire's island communities. These aim to drive the development of community economic and environmental wellbeing of Arran and Cumbrae. Public transport and infrastructure and transport reliability are key thematic priorities for the Plans with a range of transport related actions identified to support their delivery.

Figure 2.1 presents a summary of some of the most important national, regional and local strategy documents which are relevant to the new Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy.

Figure 2.1 Summary of Key Policies

National
National Transport Strategy 2
National Planning Framework 4
Strategic Transport Projects Review 2
Update to the Climate Change Plan

Regional
Regional Transport Strategy
Ayrshire Growth Deal
Regional Economic Strategy
Ayrshire Freight Strategy

Local
North Ayrshire Council Plan 2019 to 2024
North Ayrshire Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
North Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2
Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy 2021 to 2023
North Ayrshire Council Electric Vehicle Strategy 2021 to 2025
Arran and Cumbrae Island Plans
North Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Strategy
North Ayrshire Regeneration Delivery Plan 2021 to 2026
North Ayrshire Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach
Green New Deal for North Ayrshire
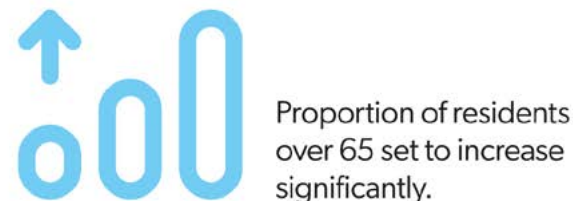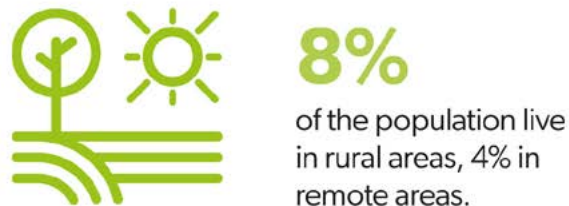North Ayrshire Inclusive Growth Report

3. Background Information

This chapter summarises key relevant demographic and transport statistics for North Ayrshire. These statistics provide context for the new strategy, highlighting some of the high-level issues and opportunities in the area and emphasising the differing needs of people within different parts of North Ayrshire.

The projected increase in the older population and presence of rural communities will result in an increasing need to enable transport access to key services such as healthcare as well as to employment.

North Ayrshire Overview

134,000
Total population

Population predicted to fall by 3.1% between 2018 and 2028.

8%
of the population live in rural areas, 4% in remote areas.

Proportion of residents over 65 set to increase significantly.

Deprivation and Employment

North Ayrshire has a total of 186 data zones in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data, of which 52 (28%) were in the 15% most deprived in Scotland in 2020, representing an increase compared with the 2016 data. The majority of these are in the Irvine and Three Towns areas. Since 2004 (the start of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data), the number of North Ayrshire data zones in the 15% most deprived in Scotland has increased by 58%, from 33 to 52.

There are also data zones in North Ayrshire which score among the least deprived in Scotland, mainly located in the North Coast. This variation in deprivation in North Ayrshire means that the new strategy must cater for the varying needs and priorities of different areas.

The relatively low employment rate presents a challenge to better connect people to jobs throughout North Ayrshire.

In 2018 the North Ayrshire Inclusive Growth Diagnostic report, a joint piece of work between the Office of the Chief Economic Advisor at the Scottish Government and North Ayrshire Council, was published aiming to assess what is holding back long-term sustainable inclusivity and growth in the area. The paper found that transport issues create real barriers to inclusive growth, with travel costs, frequency and connections between modes limiting the potential opportunities for people to access jobs.

Deprivation, as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, varies significantly across North Ayrshire, with the most deprived areas in Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Stevenston and Irvine.
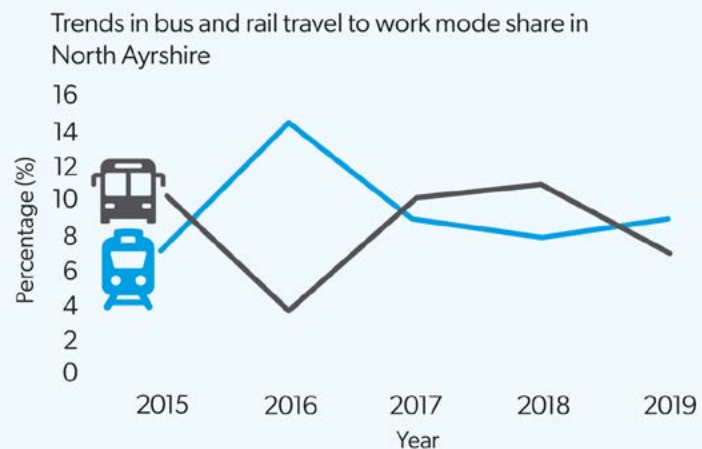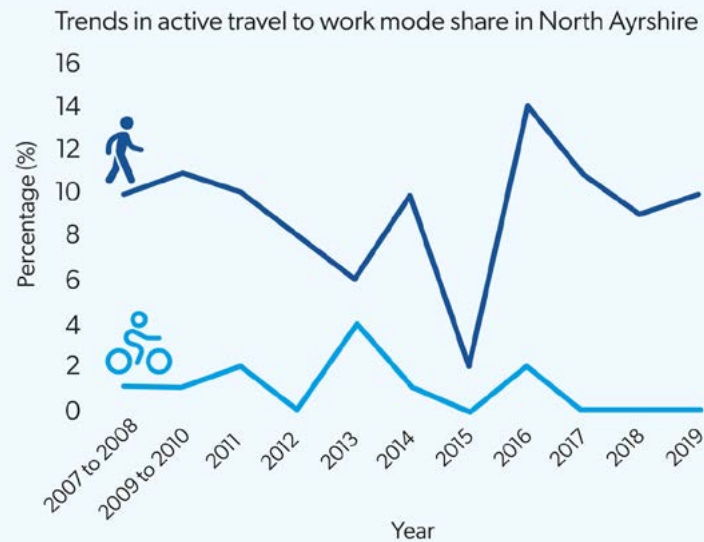
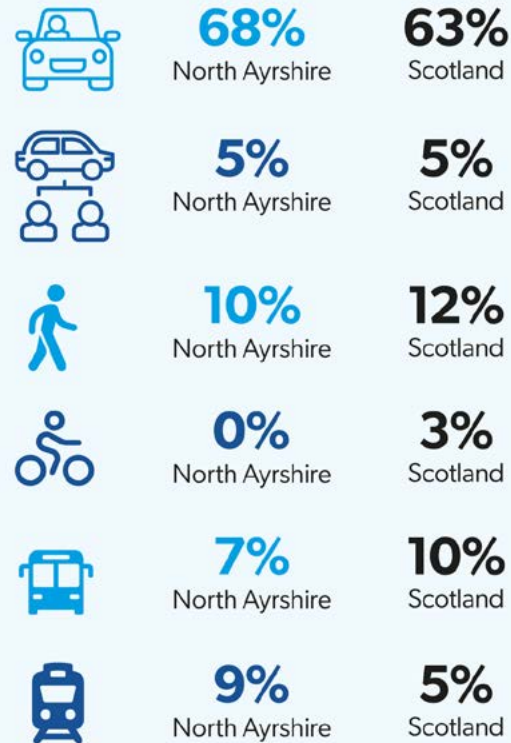Health and Employment deprivation is particularly high in North Ayrshire compared with Scotland as a whole.

At 73.6%, the employment rate in North Ayrshire is ranked 22nd of 32 local authorities in Scotland.

Travel – Statistics from the Scottish Travel Diary 2019

Trends in active travel to work mode share in North Ayrshire

Trends in bus and rail travel to work mode share in North Ayrshire

Usual Mode of Travel to Work (2019)

	North Ayrshire	Scotland
Car	68%	63%
Car share	5%	5%
Walking	10%	12%
Cycling	0%	3%
Bus	7%	10%
Train	9%	5%

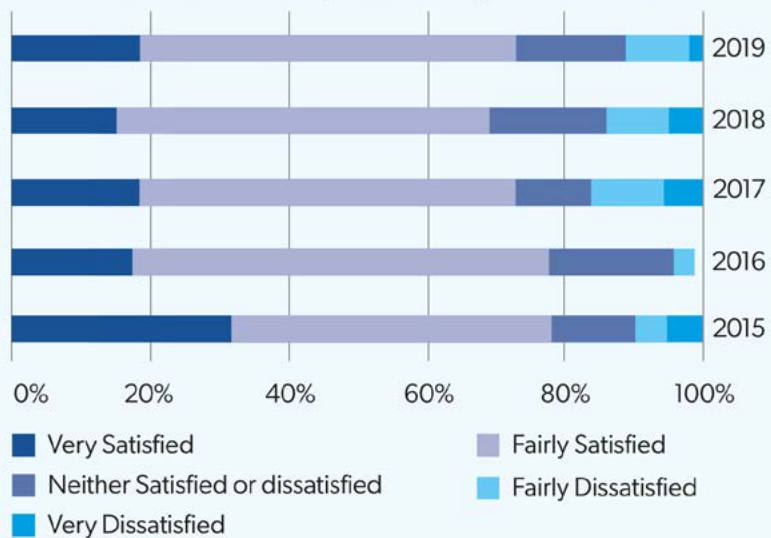**Key Points:**

- Travel to work by car is more popular in North Ayrshire than Scotland as a whole
- Bus use is generally on a downward trend in North Ayrshire
- Rail use is generally on an upward trend in North Ayrshire
- Walking and cycling did not see consistent or sustained growth from 2015 to 2019
- The above present challenges and opportunities for the new strategy

Satisfaction with Public Transport – North Ayrshire 2015 to 2019

Legend:
- Very Satisfied
- Neither Satisfied or dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied
- Fairly Satisfied
- Fairly Dissatisfied

Car Ownership in North Ayrshire and Scotland

No Cars

27% North Ayrshire   28% Scotland

One Car

45% North Ayrshire   42% Scotland

Two-Plus Cars

45% North Ayrshire   42% Scotland

Distance Travelled to Work in North Ayrshire

Distance	Percentage
Under 1 km	22%
1 to 2 km	13%
2 to 3 km	6%
3 to 5 km	11%
5 to 10 km	13%
10 to 15 km	10%
15 to 20 km	5%
20 to 40 km	15%
Over 40 km	6%
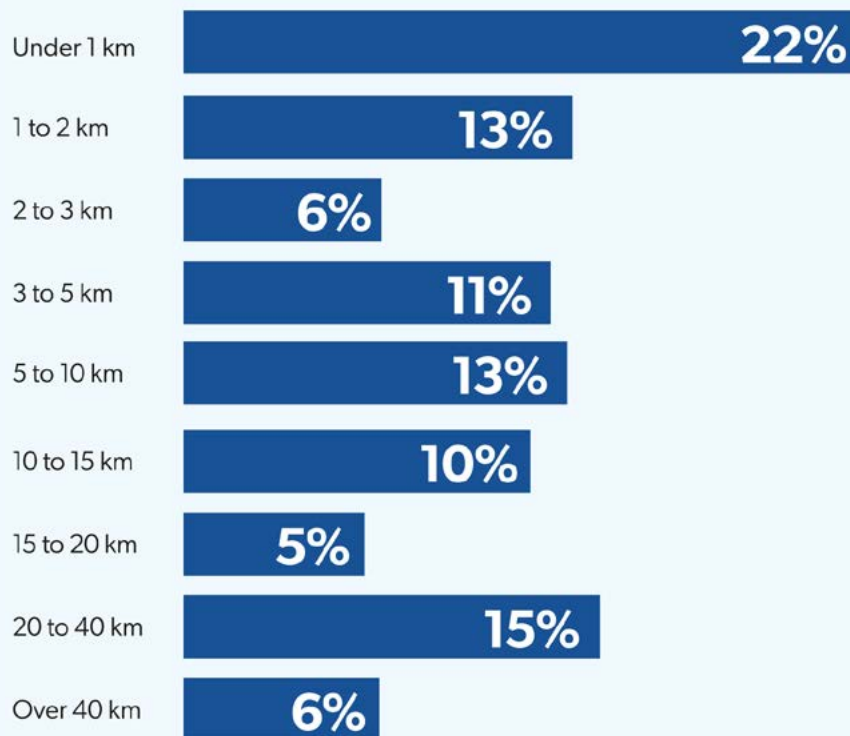
Key Points:

- Satisfaction with public transport services generally decreased from 2015 to 2019
- Overall car ownership is generally in line with national averages
- More than half (52%) of North Ayrshire residents travel less than 5km to work – this presents an opportunity for these journeys to be made by active and sustainable modes

4. Consultation and Vision, Strategic Priorities and Objectives

Public drop-in events were held in seven locations across each locality area in North Ayrshire: Irvine, Beith, Largs, Kilwinning, Saltcoats, Brodick and Millport.

Consultation

Overview

An extensive consultation exercise was undertaken between February and April 2022 to gather feedback on the key issues and suggestions relating to transport in North Ayrshire that the new Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy should seek to address. Given the recent pandemic, multiple methods were used to gauge as wide an opinion as possible on transport in North Ayrshire. This feedback has shaped the vision, strategic priorities and objectives for the strategy.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement was undertaken during 2022 via a series of online facilitated workshops. This included the following:

*   Elected Members Workshop
*   Accessibility Workshop
*   Stakeholder Workshops

Stakeholders were also able to respond to an online survey that was hosted on a dedicated website.

Online Consultation

An online survey was promoted through North Ayrshire Council's website and social media pages. This was aimed at gathering feedback from members of the public on their current travel behaviour and attitudes, views on active travel, and the issues and opportunities that should be considered within the new strategy.

Public Events

Public drop-in events were held in seven locations across each locality area in North Ayrshire: Irvine, Beith, Largs, Kilwinning, Saltcoats, Brodick and Millport. The events gathered qualitative feedback from the public on their views on issues and opportunities to improve active travel and local transport in North Ayrshire, as well as promoting the online survey. Information on the current strategy, along with local maps of the transport and active travel networks were shown at the events for people to comment on and feedback was collected at the events.

Street Surveys

On street surveys were also carried out in the same towns as the drop-in events. These aimed to gather both quantitative and qualitative feedback from the public on their current travel behaviour and attitudes, views on active travel, and any issues and opportunities with the current active travel and local transport network.

The full consultation process is shown below.

Consultation Timeline

Dates	February to April 2022	April to December 2022	Early 2023	October 2023
Tasks	• Elected members workshop • Accessibility workshop • Stakeholder workshop • Online consultation • Public drop-in • On-street surveys	• Vision, Strategic Priorities and Objectives • Draft Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy produced and • Internal North Ayrshire Council review undertaken	• Online consultation • Public drop-in events • Hard copies of draft strategy available throughout North Ayrshire	• Final Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy produced and submitted • Cabinet consideration and approval of Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy
Purpose	To gather feedback on the key issues and suggestions relating to transport in North Ayrshire Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy should seek to address.		To gather feedback on the draft Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy to inform the final version for cabinet.	

Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy Vision, Strategic Priorities and Objectives:

Developing the Vision, Strategic Priorities and Objectives

Our vision, strategic priorities and objectives build on the previous strategy and reflect the views expressed during the stakeholder and community consultation. These have been informed by workshops with stakeholders, feedback from the public and a background review of other relevant policies and strategies.

These outline what we want to achieve while having regard to the vision and priorities of related national and regional strategies. They reflect the impact of transport on the environment and the need to reduce carbon emissions from transport, in support of North Ayrshire Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency, and the three key themes of Wellbeing, Work and World from the North Ayrshire Partnership Plan. They also recognise the importance of supporting communities through inclusive access to employment, education and key services.

The Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy plays a vital role in enabling and encouraging people to walk, cycle and wheel more often, thereby creating healthier communities. This focus on active travel is shown by the inclusion of a detailed active travel strategy chapter.

The Vision, Strategic Priorities and Objectives are shown below.

Vision

North Ayrshire will have a sustainable and well-connected transport network that meets the needs of all, supports an inclusive economy, healthier communities and creates an attractive place in which to live, work, visit and do business

Strategic Priorities

Our three strategic priorities contribute to the overarching vision and provide a strategic context for what we want to achieve from our Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy.

Accessibility for All

Enhancing the range of sustainable transport opportunities to enable well connected access to employment, education and services

Inclusive Economy

Improving the transport network and connectivity in North Ayrshire and beyond to create an attractive place for businesses and communities to thrive

Healthier Communities

A transport network that enables sustainable healthy travel choices underpinned by a low carbon ethos to improve the quality of life for everyone

Objectives

The five objectives provide more detail on what the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy aims to achieve.

Access to Employment and Services

Improve accessibility, availability, affordability and safety of the transport system, ensuring everyone can access town centres, jobs, education, healthcare and other everyday needs

Reduce Emissions

Reduce carbon emissions caused by transport in North Ayrshire

Active Travel and Communities

Encourage and enable physical activity and improved health and wellbeing in the communities for all through active travel

Confidence in Public Transport

Improve the reliability, accessibility, safety, personal security, and integration of public transport services for all

Transport Network Condition

Maintain the condition of the existing roads and active travel network

Additional objectives have been developed for the dedicated Active Travel Strategy (Chapter 5):

Active Travel Strategy Objectives

Enable people to walk, wheel and cycle within their local communities and to key attractors by the provision of a convenient, attractive, high quality and safer active travel network.

Facilitate an increase in the proportion of all journeys made by walking, wheeling and cycling.

Deliver training, events and promotion of active travel to encourage and enable more people to travel by active means.

5. Active Travel Strategy

Overview

What is Active Travel?

Active travel relates to making journeys in physically active ways, such as walking, cycling, wheeling (i.e. the use of a wheelchair or other mobility aid) and horse riding. The benefits of active travel include improved health, improved community safety, and reduced environmental impacts.

Importance of Active Travel

Active travel has an important role to play in achieving carbon reduction targets by switching short journeys which are often made by car to walking, cycling and wheeling. This contributes to the Council's net zero ambitions and declaration of a climate emergency.

Replacing short car journeys will also contribute to reduced congestion and air pollution, creating a healthier environment for communities.

It is recommended that active travel networks are developed as part of a wider and coherent green infrastructure network, to ensure that multiple beneficial opportunities for both health and wellbeing and the environment are not missed.

Health and Wellbeing

Enabling better to access to employment and community services is essential to the health and wellbeing of our communities. Promoting equality is one of North Ayrshire's core values and this Active Travel Strategy offers ways in which people in North Ayrshire can improve their health by being more active and benefit their sense of wellbeing through the creation of personal connections through better accessibility and active travel initiatives. Active travel can also support increased tourism by making North Ayrshire an even more attractive place to visit.

Multi Modal Travel

Active travel modes also play a vital role in multi-modal journeys through walking, cycling and wheeling trips to and from public transport interchanges. Making these 'last mile' trips as attractive and convenient as possible can make multi-modal journeys more appealing than using a car for an entire journey and can create positive travel behaviour change. Integration between active modes and public transport is therefore essential in encouraging people to travel more sustainably.

COVID Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns impacted on active travel with more people walking and cycling, particularly within their local areas during travel restrictions. Emergency active travel infrastructure was implemented through the Sustrans Spaces for People initiative which involved widening and upgrading 18 key active travel routes and providing new cycle parking at 40 locations across North Ayrshire.

Monitoring of cycling levels in North Ayrshire (see Figure 5.2) found that were was a significant increase in active travel during the 2020 lockdowns, compared with previous years.

This illustrates that there is a significant opportunity, as we move forward from the pandemic, to capitalise on the increased interest and uptake in active travel by continuing to invest in high-quality active travel infrastructure and behaviour change programmes in North Ayrshire.

Strategy and Policy Context

National

In A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Programme for Government, 2021 to 2022, the Scottish Government made a commitment that at least £320 million or 10% of the total transport budget is spent on active travel by 2024 to 2025, ensuring greener, cleaner and better-connected communities.

This highlights the importance placed on active travel by the Government and a recognition of its contribution to securing a net zero carbon future in a just and fair way.

Active Travel Framework Vision

Scotland's communities are shaped around people, with walking or cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys.

Strategies and policies at national, regional and local levels provide a context for this Active Travel Strategy. Many of these policy documents are referred to in Chapter 3 and will not be repeated here. However, key active travel documents are outlined below.

The Active Travel Framework, 2019 brings together the key policy approaches for improving the uptake of walking and cycling in Scotland for travel.

The Active Travel Vision is accompanied by objectives that promote healthier, fairer, and more environmentally friendly choices while creating more pleasant, economically viable, safer and sustainable places:

- Cut carbon emissions and other pollution
- Deliver liveable, more pleasant communities
- Better health and safer travel for all
- Reduce inequalities – jobs, services, leisure
- Support delivery of sustainable economic growth

Let's Get Scotland Walking: The National Walking Strategy Action Plan 2016 to 2026 (Revised 2019) has the following strategic aims:

- Develop a daily walking culture – everyone, everyday
- Deliver on creating a culture of walking where everyone walks more often as part of their everyday travel and for recreation and wellbeing
- Develop walkable places and spaces for everyone
- Achieve better quality walking environments with attractive, well designed and managed built and natural spaces and places for everyone

A More Active Scotland – Scotland's Physical Activity Delivery Plan, 2018 has a vision of a Scotland where more people are more active, more often.

The Cycling Action Plan for Scotland, 2017 to 2020 set out a robust set of actions to work towards the vision of '10% of everyday journeys to be made by bike, by 2020'. A new **Cycling Framework and Delivery Plan** for Scotland is in development and is expected to be published during 2023.

Regional

The draft Regional Transport Strategy 2022 to 2037 was published by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport for consultation in summer 2022. It includes an ambition to develop and deliver a regional active travel network across the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport area.

Local

North Ayrshire Council Core Paths Plan (2009) ensures that each town and village in North Ayrshire has a basic framework of paths available for recreation and everyday journeys by local people and visitors.

North Ayrshire Council Outdoor Access Strategy provides a framework for reviewing the existing situation in terms of provision, use, policy and resources and a means for agreeing and co-ordinating priorities for future outdoor access.
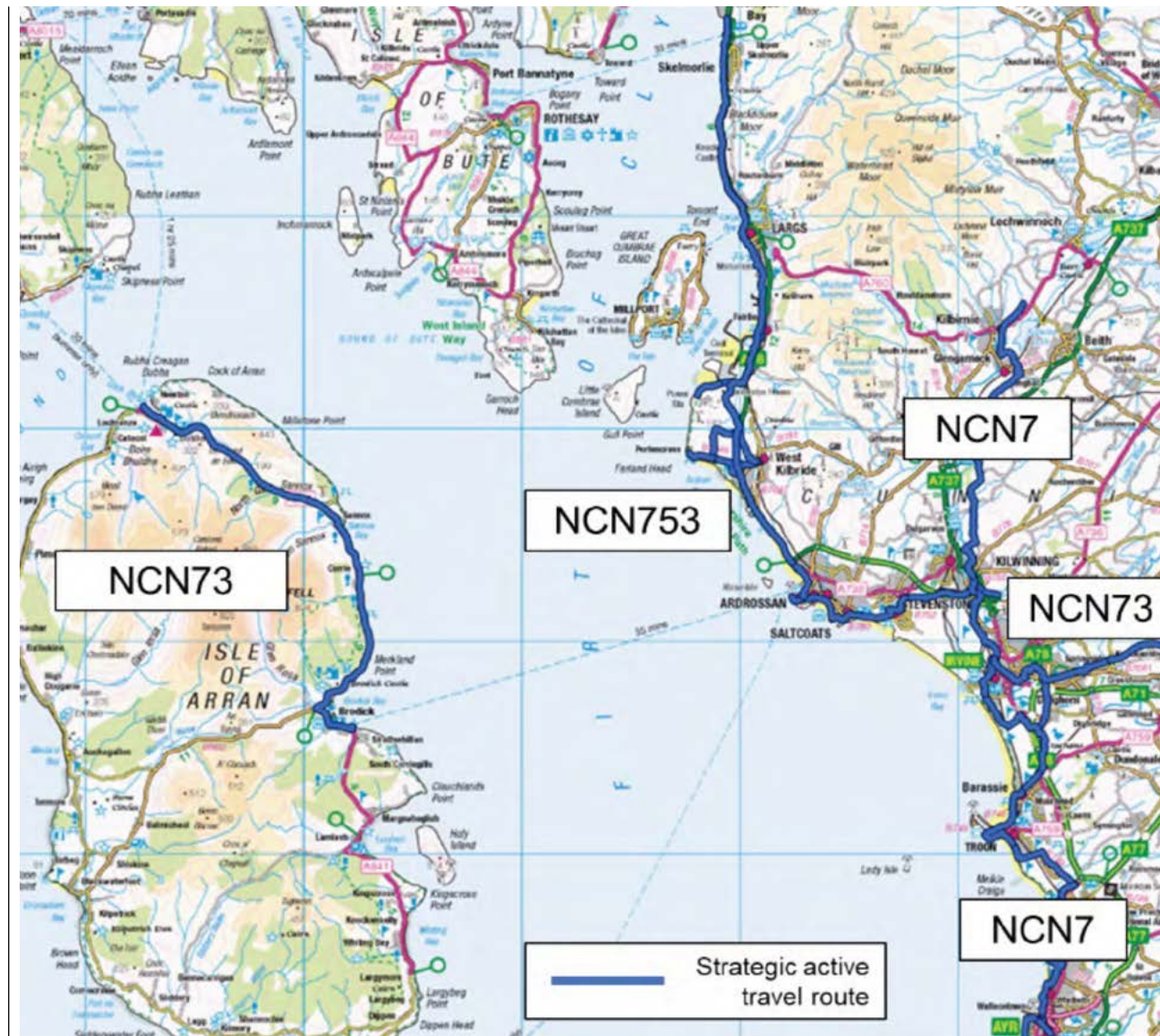
Planning

Planning policy will determine the future look and feel of North Ayrshire. Planning and active travel are closely linked, and when considered together, can result in significant benefits in terms of planning new developments and active travel routes.

Planning policy at a national, regional and local level encourages developments which provide, or are located near to, as many key services as possible to minimise the need to travel longer distances and to encourage active travel for short trips. Developments should also link into and enhance existing active travel networks whilst providing high-quality internal routes, enforcing the travel mode hierarchy set out in Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2 through physical layouts which control motorised traffic speeds and create accessible and permeable neighbourhoods.

Figure 5.1 Strategic Active Travel Network

NCN7

NCN753

NCN73

NCN73

NCN7

Strategic active travel route

Existing Active Travel Network

There are three National Cycle Network routes within North Ayrshire, as shown in Figure 5.1.

- National Cycle Network 7 runs from the border of South Ayrshire through Irvine, Kilwinning and the Garnock Valley, before continuing north towards Paisley and Glasgow.
- National Cycle Network 73 connects Kilmarnock to Ardrossan and continues on the Isle of Arran between Brodick and Lochranza.
- National Cycle Network 753 is still under development. It runs from Ardrossan to the North Coast. Work is continuing to improve this route and create additional off-road sections.

North Ayrshire has a number of nationally recognised and scenic walking routes, including the Arran Coastal Way and the Ayrshire Coastal path.

Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act, non-motorised users have a statutory right of responsible access to most land and inland water, provided that they do so in a responsible way. Likewise, land must be managed in a way that respects responsible access rights. North Ayrshire has an extensive wider network of core paths, developed as part of the Council's responsibilities under the Act. These are paths which give the public reasonable access to cross land, with no set physical standards. Core paths can therefore vary significantly in their construction from wide multi-user tarmac paths to narrow grass paths.

There is a strong horse-riding community in North Ayrshire who take advantage of the area's many outdoor spaces and path networks.

Active Travel Statistics

Key statistics have from the 2022 Annual Cycling Monitoring Report by Cycling Scotland have been analysed to understand the key trends for active travel in North Ayrshire. The statistics reported have been affected by changes to the methods of data collection for a number of data sources due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, most significantly is the Scottish Household Survey, previously mentioned. Data has, therefore, been taken from both the 2021 and 2022 reports.

Figure 5.2 Average Daily Pedestrians and Cyclists Across North Ayrshire (Source – North Ayrshire Council Counter Data)
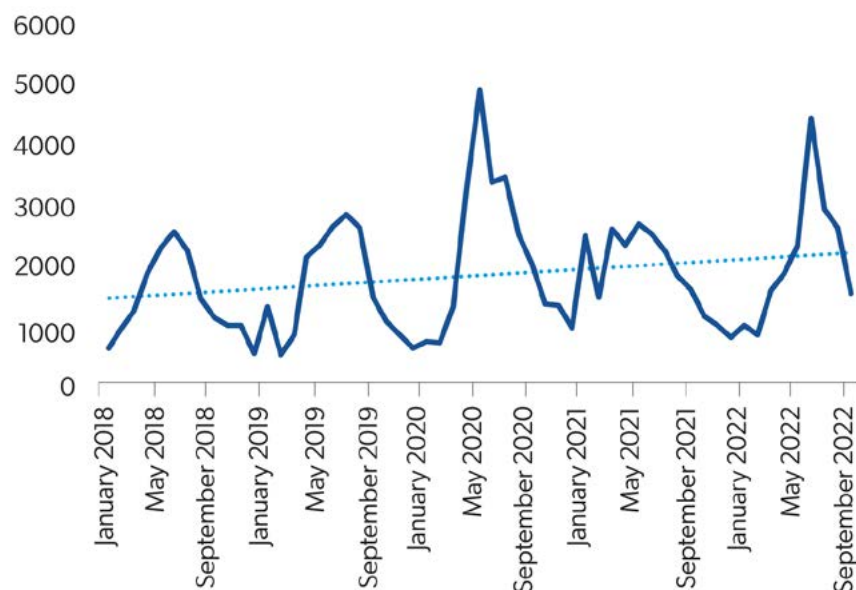
Key Stats and Trends

- Over half of journeys in North Ayrshire are less than 5km and therefore potentially suitable for active modes
- 41% of North Ayrshire residents have access to one or more bikes for private use, which is below the national average of 45%
- There is a general upward trend in active travel over the period of 2018 to 2022 (see Figure 5.2)
- The COVID-19 lockdowns during 2020 can be seen to have significantly increased active travel in the region, with a drop off in 2021, however in 2022 levels are close to those in summer 2020
- The proportion of employees cycling to work regularly in North Ayrshire in 2022 was higher than the national average data for 2019 (see Chapter 4) showed cycle to work rates were lower than the national average.

In North Ayrshire, there are currently nine Cycling Friendly Employers employing a total of 4,115 staff. North Ayrshire Council itself is a Gold-accredited Cycling Friendly Employer.

Workplaces

Based on the Cycling Scotland data, the proportion of employees cycling to work regularly in North Ayrshire is 2.7%, which is higher than the national average of 1.9%

The Cycling Friendly Employer Fund, financed by Transport Scotland, is awarded to organisations to develop projects that encourage staff and visitors to travel by bike. This funding can be used to install cycle parking, upgrade minor (workplace specific) pedestrian and cycle routes, upgrade changing areas, showers, lockers and drying areas etc. It can also be used to fund bike pools, hire fleets or maintenance areas and tools.

In North Ayrshire, there are currently nine Cycling Friendly Employers employing a total of 4,115 staff. North Ayrshire Council itself is a Gold-accredited Cycling Friendly Employer.

Schools

Compared to the period between 2014 to 2019, there has been an increase in pupils cycling to both primary and secondary school. The proportion of primary school pupils cycling to school has increased by approximately 7%, and secondary school pupils by approximately 38%.

Results from the Sustrans Hands Up School Surveys found that the proportion of primary school pupils in North Ayrshire walking to school was 43.2% in 2018, 43.0% in 2019, and 37.9% in 2020. For secondary school pupils, the walking figures were 48.8% in 2019, 48.9% in 2019, and 39.5% in 2020. The figures for 2020 may have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In North Ayrshire, there are 10 Cycling Friendly Schools, reaching 2,674 pupils. Cycling Friendly Schools receive funding to purchase equipment and cycle parking to help overcome barriers to cycling. Encouraging pupils to cycle builds confidence, keeps kids healthy, and engages hard to reach students.

Safety

The number of pedestrian and cyclist casualties resulting from road traffic accidents in North Ayrshire is decreasing as shown in Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4. Total pedestrian casualties have dropped by more than 50% since 2014 (from 37 to 18), with cyclist casualties decreasing by 50% from 16 to 8, demonstrating significant progress in improving road safety for vulnerable users.

Figure 5.3 Pedestrian Casualties (Source – North Ayrshire Council data)

Legend:
- Pedestrian Casualties Fatal
- Pedestrian Casualties Serious
- Pedestrian Casualties Slight
- Pedestrian Casualties Total

Figure 5.4 Cyclist Casualties (Source – North Ayrshire Council Data)

Legend:
- Cyclist Casualties Fatal
- Cyclist Casualties Serious
- Cyclist Casualties Slight
- Cyclist Casualties Total
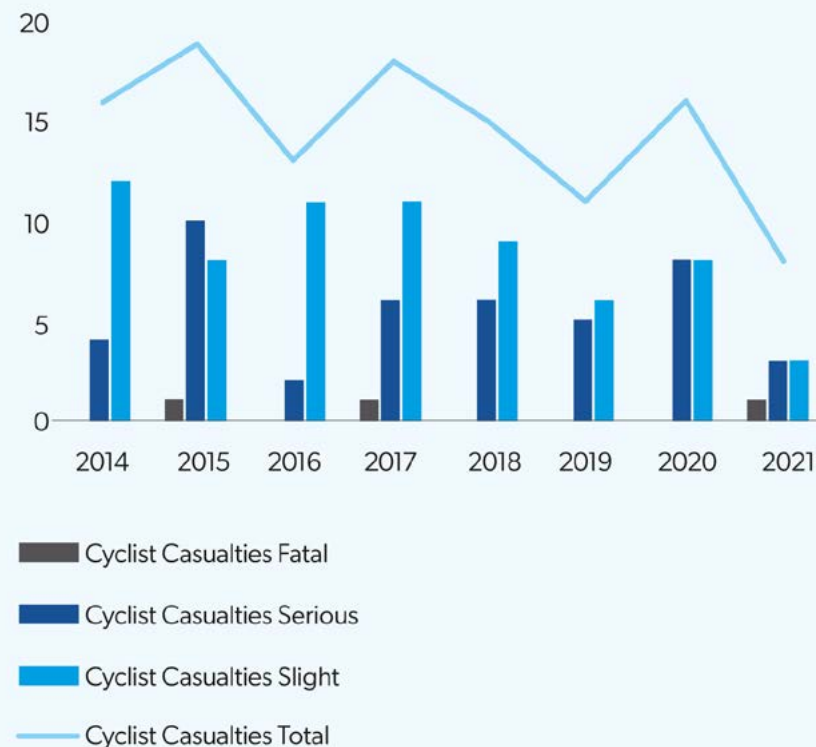
Active Travel Strategy Objectives

The Active Travel Strategy supports the overall vision, strategic priorities and objectives for the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy, as outlined in Chapter 5. It also has the following additional objectives:

- Deliver a well-connected and accessible active travel network
- Facilitate an increase in the proportion of all journeys made by walking, wheeling and cycling
- Deliver training, events and promotion of active travel to encourage more people to travel by active means.

Existing path at Tarryholme (shown in blue to the right) and constructing a new path between the A78 underpass and the i3 (shown in green).

Progress

The Council has implemented a variety of projects and initiatives to encourage people to walk and cycle more often. These focused on three areas: infrastructure, behaviour change, and improving access to active travel for all. Some case studies are provided below.

Infrastructure

Case Study – Tarryholme to i3 Enterprise Area Active Travel Link

The i3 Irvine Enterprise Area is located to east of Irvine and covers around 132 hectares. It is Scotland's largest Enterprise Area and focused on offering long term development opportunities to Life Sciences businesses or related industries. Currently, i3 is home to around 30 businesses with over 1,000 employees in the area.

Access to i3 is largely by car. There are bus stops to the north in Greenwood and the rail station is 2.2 miles away. There is a good network of local paths within this area, but they are not attractive or accessible. The nearest cycle route is the National Cycle Network 73 but there was no attractive or direct access into the i3 from this off-road route.

Funding was secured from Sustrans 'Places For Everyone' fund to build a new 3.5 metre all abilities shared use path to improve access to the site. This involved upgrading the existing path at Tarryholme.

This new off-road connection includes fencing, solar studs, resting points, signage, tactile paving and dropped kerbs.

This new link connects i3 to the residential area of Tarryholme. This provides a more attractive route towards Irvine town centre, rail station, leisure centre and various other visitor attractions. It also provides more equitable access to employment for those who don't or can't use other travel modes.

This new link connects i3 to the residential area of Tarryholme.
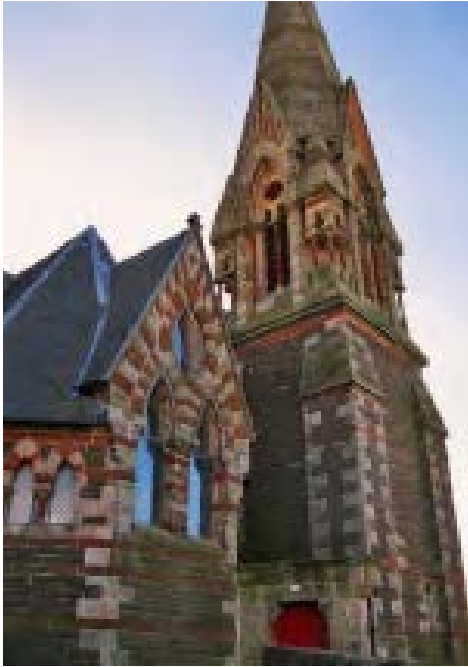
The Trinity Active Travel Hub is located in the former Trinity Church in Bridgegate, Irvine

Behaviour Change

Supporting and encouraging people to change their travel habits is a key element of efforts to reduce private car use for short journeys and increase the use of active modes. North Ayrshire Council provides significant support to residents, employers and community groups to facilitate behaviour change in schools, workplaces and other settings.

North Ayrshire Council's Active Travel team, including the Workplace Engagement Officer, Road Safety Officer and the Trinity Active Travel Hub, work together to increase cycling, walking and wheeling activities by raising awareness of new and existing routes and supporting people with training and confidence to use them.

Case Study – Trinity Active Travel Hub

The Trinity Active Travel Hub is located in the former Trinity Church in Bridgegate, Irvine.

The hub was opened in 2019 following significant funding support from a number of key partners including Transport Scotland and Energy Saving Trust with the European Regional Development Funds and the Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund, Additional support was also provided by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.

This combination of funding streams supported the development of the Active Travel Hub including kitting the building out with an office space, activity area and establishing a bike library. It was also used to create the Circuit, an off-road cycle loop at Quarry Road; upgrade paths leading towards Irvine town centre; installation of cycle repair stands at several North Ayrshire railway stations and to employ one full time staff member for 12 months.

The Trinity Active Travel Hub delivers a range of activities to support active travel as well as sign posting users to existing services. Activities are designed to raise awareness and develop confidence so that individuals are better informed and more confident to make active travel decisions. Activities include Nordic walking classes and health walks which are designed to give people the confidence that they can walk the short distances to their local shops and facilities. These are carried out across North Ayrshire with the support of North Ayrshire Council staff and volunteers. Cycle rides and skills training give new and inexperienced cyclists more confidence in using their bikes.

> "We had a fab morning. My wee boy had just learned to ride his bike the week before, having been really wobbly for a few weeks up until then and he had the best time."
>
> – Participant Quote.

The hub provides skills sessions such as basic bike maintenance and puncture repair, giving people the ability to fix minor bike problems when out and about. Basic learn to ride and 'come and try' e-bike sessions are held at the Circuit in Quarry Road. Bespoke walking and cycling activities can also be arranged to cater for the needs of specific groups. Volunteers who wish to support the Trinity's activities can be provided with training such as walk leader, cycle ride leader and first aid. The building is also used for drop-in information events. The Trinity team support partners events and promote our offer of services within the community. More information about The Trinity can be found on the Trinity website.

Events

North Ayrshire Council also hosts events aimed at promoting active travel and building community support.

The **Ayrshire Women's Cycle Festival** is an annual festival supporting and inspiring women in Ayrshire to cycle more regardless of their current cycling ability or experience. The festival has been running for five years and is delivered in partnership with the Kilmarnock Active Travel Hub, Ayr Active Travel Hub and Trinity Active Travel Hub.

In May 2022, **Pedal Irvine** offered a great opportunity for local families and people interested in cycling to come together and enjoy some of the best local cycle routes Irvine has to offer.

The fun, free and inclusive mass participation cycle event was organised by the Trinity Active Travel Hub and was supported by Active Schools and Cycling Scotland.

Over 300 people took part in the ride. All riders with a range of abilities, some as young as three years old, managed to complete the 8km route successfully.

In September 2022, the **Ayrshire Walking Festival** was held for the first time. The festival was hosted in partnership with the East, North and South Ayrshire Active Travel Hubs to promote walking for health and for a greener way to travel for short journeys. The festival featured led walks by local organisations, catering for all abilities, ages and interests. A total of 33 organisations and 147 individuals took part in 48 walks across Ayrshire. It is hoped that this will become an annual event.

Partnership Working and Access for All

It is vitally important that active travel is made accessible to people of all abilities and ages. The Council works closely with community partners such as Arran Access Trust, Eco-Savvy, Project Kilbirnie and the Beith Trust, amongst others, to offer support via training courses such as Cycle Ride Leader, Walk Leader, bike maintenance and more. Furthermore, the 'Community Outdoor Access Grant' is soon to be revamped and relaunched to allow Community Groups to bid for enhanced funding to deliver both active travel initiatives and access improvements.

The Trinity Active Travel Hub is based in Irvine. This works with partners across North Ayrshire to bolstering delivery throughout the area.

The Trinity Hub will continue to work with partners such as Paths for All, Transport Scotland, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and Sustrans to bid for and utilise grant funding to deliver our behaviour change programmes and improve our active travel network infrastructure.

Key Issues and Actions for Active Travel

The key issues identified through our research and engagement with the public and key stakeholder groups, as well as the main actions to address them are summarised as follows. A full set of actions for active travel can be found in the Delivery Plan in Chapter 9. Area specific proposals for each of the six localities in North Ayrshire are in the following sections.

What You Said	Related Actions
Concerns about potential conflict between modes on active travel routes	Continue to improve accessibility to active travel routes for all abilities access
Better maintenance of existing active travel routes is needed	Continue and expand programme of maintenance for existing active travel routes
More active travel routes between key places and to public transport interchanges are needed	Improve local active travel links to trip attractors and transport interchanges
Provide support for people who want to be more active	Continue to grow and expand behaviour change programme, including events and workplace engagement, through Trinity Active Travel Hub
Issues with safe routes for walking and cycling to schools	Improve active travel access to schools through improved routes and continue to expand cycle training at primary and nursery school level

Locality Proposals

Arran

The Isle of Arran has a section of National Cycle Network 73, which runs between Brodick and Lochranza. This route is almost exclusively on road. The geography and topography of Arran presents a challenge for active travel between the main settlements, although the popularity of e-bikes is leading to an increase in demand for better routes despite the gradients.

Arran is a popular tourist destination attracting people who enjoy the outdoors and like to be active. Several active travel initiatives have been implemented by Arran Eco Savvy Community to benefit residents through the Sustainable Island Life Project.

Case Study Sustainable Island Life project

Key Achievements:

- 209 tonnes of CO2 reduced
- eBike loan scheme
- eBike charging network established with 22 local businesses signing up
- Bike maintenance stations installed at the north and south of the island
- Workplace eBike scheme set up, launched and operated, with 43 participating businesses

Strategic Infrastructure Aspirations

Strategic active travel infrastructure aspirations for Arran are shown below.

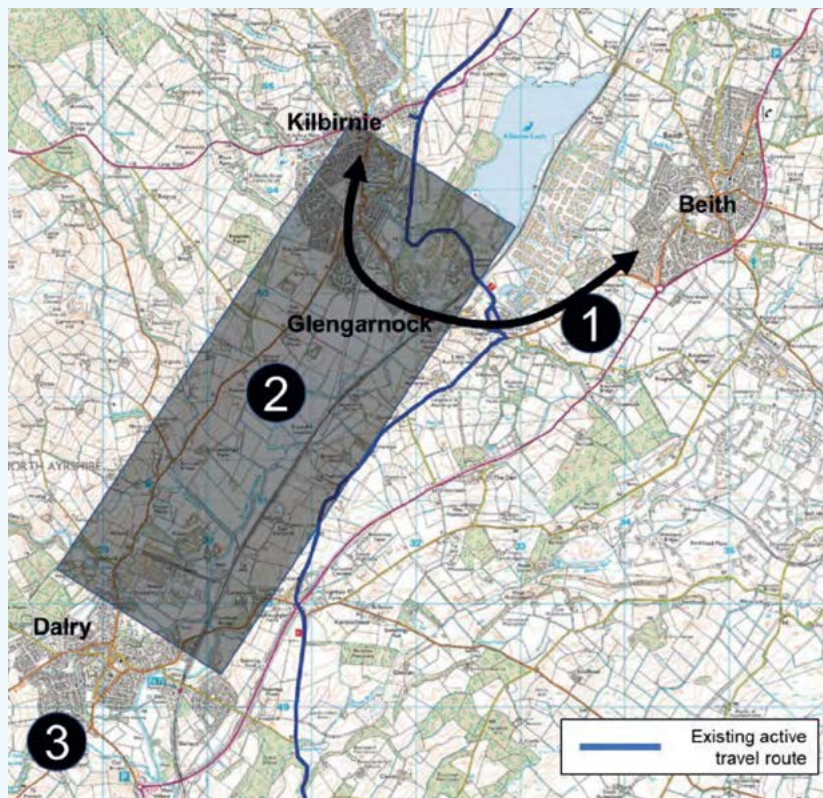| Map Reference	Route Name	Details
1	Brodick to Lamlash Strategic Corridor	Long-term aspiration for a new off-road active travel corridor between Brodick and Lamlash. It would offer residents and visitors to the island a viable alternative to car travel between the two towns. This route would be aimed at both commuters and island visitors.
2	Brodick to Corrie Route Improvements	Improved off-road route between Brodick and Corrie. The current National Cycle Network 73 is on-road.

Garnock Valley

National Cycle Network 7 runs through the Garnock Valley, to the east of Dalry, before heading through Glengarnock and Kilbirnie. The route is currently on-road between Dalry and Glengarnock, with an off-road route between Kilbirnie and Lochwinnoch to the North.

There is also an existing shared use path which provides a connection between Dalry Road in Beith and Glengarnock Community Campus.

Strategic Infrastructure Aspirations

Strategic active travel infrastructure aspirations for the Garnock Valley are shown below.

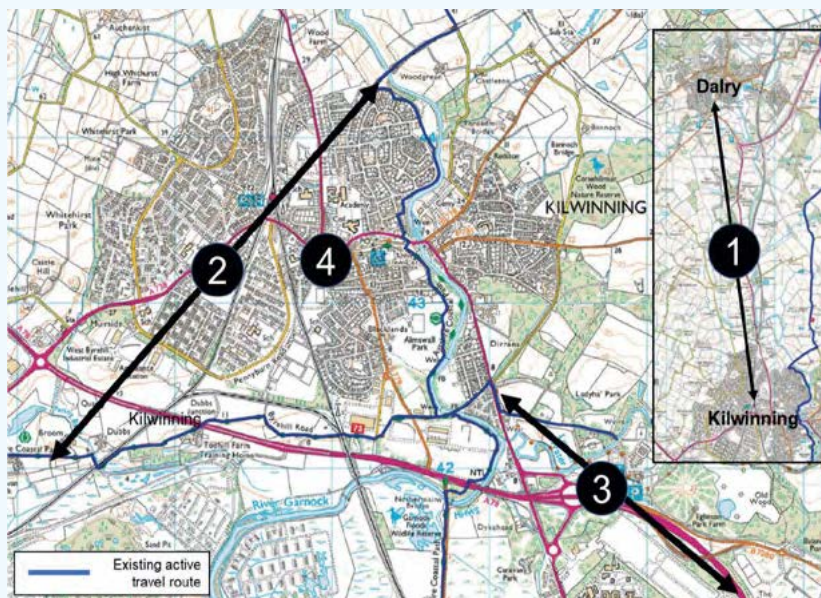| Map Reference	Route Name	Details
1	Beith – Glengarnock – Kilbirnie Strategic Corridor	Continue to improve links between Beith, Glengarnock and Kilbirnie by extending the existing connection between Beith and Garnock Community Campus to provide a strategic active travel corridor. The route should also provide new and improved connections to National Cycle Network 7 in Glengarnock and Kilbirnie, Lochshore and improved connections to Glengarnock rail station.
2	Dalry to Kilbirnie Strategic Corridor	Work is continuing to assess alignment options for providing an active travel route between Dalry and Kilbirnie. The long-term aspiration is to complete an off-road route between Kilwinning and Kilbirnie.
3	B714	Funding opportunities are being investigated to deliver an active travel route adjacent to the upgraded B714. Work is underway to deliver active travel connections to Dalry.

Kilwinning

National Cycle Network 7 connects Kilwinning to the Garnock Valley, via a predominantly on-road route to the north, and to South Ayrshire via Irvine. National Cycle Network 73 also connects Kilwinning and the Three Towns, via a mix of on and off-road sections.

A community and stakeholder engagement exercise was undertaken in Spring 2020 to identify improved local active travel connections in Kilwinning. The project was split into two schemes: 'The Small Links' scheme, which is a set of three short east-west links to be created or upgraded across Kilwinning, and a second scheme looking at improvements to routes across Blacklands Recreation Ground. Two of the three Small Links paths have been delivered. Work is progressing on the development of the other paths.

Strategic Infrastructure Aspirations

Strategic active travel infrastructure aspirations for Kilwinning surrounding area, with details provided on next page.

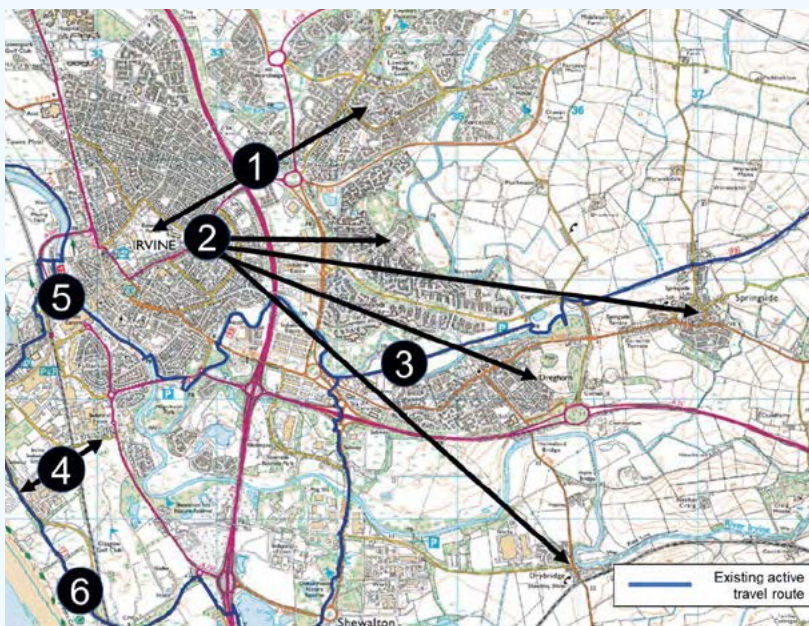| Map Reference	Route Name	Details
1	Kilwinning to Dalry Strategic Corridor	Aspiration to provide a strategic off-road route between Kilwinning and Dalry to form part of a wider strategic corridor between Kilwinning and Kilbirnie with view to realigning existing National Cycle Network 7 on-road sections to an off-road setting.
2	National Cycle Network 7 and 73 to Town Centre and Rail Station	New and improved connections between the town centre and rail station and the existing National Cycle Network Route 7 and 73 to improve local connectivity.
3	National Cycle Network connections – Castle Park, Irvine to Irvine Road, Kilwinning through Eglinton Park	Continue to work with Sustrans and other partners to create a quality off-road route through Eglinton Park linking Castlepark, Irvine to Kilwinning.
4	Blacklands Recreation Ground and McGavin Park	Improvements to walking and cycling routes in and around Blacklands Recreation Ground and McGavin Park.

Irvine

National Cycle Network 7 connects Irvine to Kilwinning and to the South Ayrshire coast. National Cycle Network 73 connects Irvine with surrounding villages such as Dreghorn, Springside and on to Kilmarnock.

The two National Cycle Network routes provide good connectivity between Irvine town centre, the rail station, and Irvine Beach Park.

Strategic Infrastructure Aspirations

Strategic active travel infrastructure aspirations for Irvine and the surrounding area, with details provided on the next page. These proposals are based on the findings of the 'Irvine Cycle Friendly Town' project and aim to better connect the different areas of Irvine and the adjacent villages.

Map Reference	Route Name	Details
1	Girdle Toll to Irvine	Seek to provide a strategic active travel corridor between Girdle Toll and Irvine.
2	Irvine Cycle Friendly Town Project	Improve and upgrade connectivity to wider Irvine area, i3 and surrounding villages, including Springside, Drybridge, Bourtreehill and Dreghorn.
3	National Cycle Network 73 Improvements	Incrementally upgrade sections of National Cycle Network 73 and improve connectivity.
4	Heatherhouse Road to National Cycle Network 7	Local connection between Heatherhouse Road and National Cycle Network 7 to the southwest
5	Town Centre Connections	Improved connections to Irvine town centre from the existing active travel network
6	National Cycle Network 7 Irvine to South Ayrshire	Improved and more direct National Cycle Network 7 alignment between Irvine and South Ayrshire.

North Coast

The North Coast locality features several local active travel connections but lacks longer distance strategic routes. A long-term aspiration is to fill these gaps with a view to creating a primarily off-road National Cycle Network 753 link from Ardrossan to the Inverclyde, north of Skelmorlie.

There is a shared use path between Seamill and the Montfode roundabout in Ardrossan alongside the A78, which has recently been upgraded by Transport Scotland to provide a 4m corridor. Recent works are also ongoing to provide a new off-road, coastal path through Fairlie.

There is also an existing off-road route between Kelburn and Largs, which ends at the promenade path in Largs. Work is underway to consider potential upgrades to this route to provide additional connectivity to Largs town centre and the ferry terminal.

Cumbrae is a popular island for leisure cycling, but there is significant potential for increased functional active travel trips on the island, particular for commuting between Millport and Largs. Early feasibility work has begun to identify improvements for active travel between the Cumbrae ferry slip and Millport.

Strategic Infrastructure Aspirations

Strategic active travel infrastructure aspirations for the North Coast, with details provided on next page.

Map Reference	Route Name	Details
1	Largs to Skelmorlie	Investigate options to provide an off-road or quiet route for National Cycle Network 753 between Largs and Skelmorlie and on to the boundary with Inverclyde.
2	Fairlie to Largs	Improve existing off-road route and connections between Fairlie and Largs. North Ayrshire Council have funding from Transport Scotland to complete Phase 3 of the Fairlie Coastal Path, which will provide an off-road active travel corridor from the Fairlie Viewpoint car park to Bay Street. This section is anticipated to be completed in 2023 to 2024 pending agreements being reached with landowners. North Ayrshire Council are also undertaking a study of 'Largs Promenade' to consider options to improve the corridor from Largs Yacht Haven along the promenade to Aubery Park.
3	Millport to Cumbrae Slip	Improved walking and cycling route between the ferry terminal and Millport.
4	Fairlie – West Kilbride and Seamill – Ardrossan	Investigate an improved alignment between Fairlie, West Kilbride, Seamill and Ardrossan.

Ardrossan Connections

Three Towns

The Three Towns of Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenston are served by National Cycle Network 73, which provides a connection to Kilwinning to the east, and onwards to Irvine and Kilmarnock. The route is predominantly off-road, with some quiet on-road sections.

Ardrossan Connections

Ardrossan Connections is a partnership project between Sustrans Scotland, North Ayrshire Council and Ardrossan Community Development Trust which aims to improve public spaces, improve transport connectivity and increase footfall within Ardrossan for the benefit of local people, businesses, and visitors alike.

Infrastructure improvements being considered include upgrades to the existing National Cycle Network , rerouting sections of the National Cycle Network and placemaking opportunities in Ardrossan.

A variety of behaviour change activities will also be delivered, including free cycling skills sessions, bike maintenance classes and led rides. Local businesses will be offered a package of activities to help enable employees to travel to work actively such as promoting Cycle to Work Schemes and helping employers access funding for cycle storage.

Strategic Infrastructure Aspirations

Strategic active travel infrastructure aspirations for the Three Towns are shown on the next page.
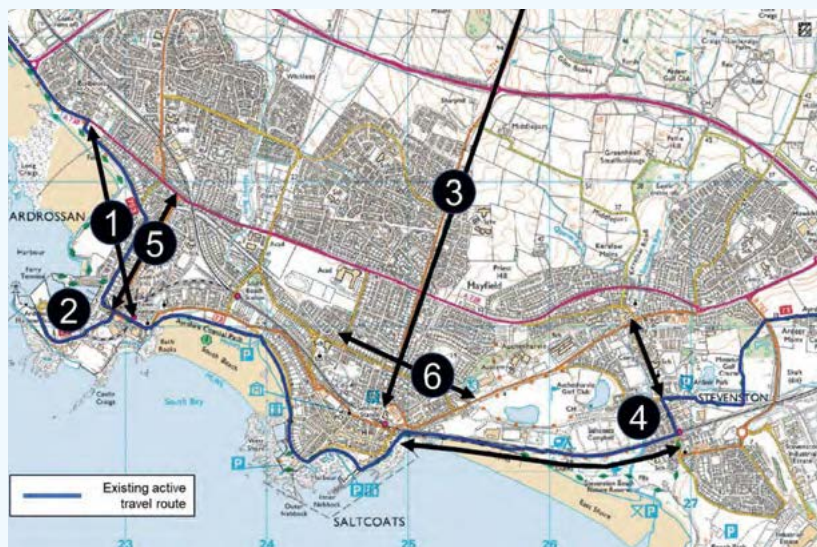
Map Reference	Route Name	Details
1	National Cycle Network 73 to National Cycle Network 753	Connection(s) between National Cycle Network 73 and National Cycle Network 753 to be delivered through the Ardrossan Connections and Ardrossan Coastal Path projects.
2	Ardrossan Harbour Improvements	Improved active travel connections and facilities at and around the ferry terminal and Ardrossan Harbour and Town rail stations.
3	B714	Funding opportunities are being investigated to deliver an active travel route adjacent to the upgraded B714. Work is underway to deliver active travel connections to Saltcoats.
4	Stevenston to National Cycle Network 73	New and improved local connections between Stevenston and National Cycle Network 73.
5	Glasgow Street and Princes Street	Active travel improvements along Glasgow Street and Princes Street as part of the Ardrossan Connections project
6	Old Caledonian Railway	Upgrade to existing route along the former Caledonian railway. Work is also underway to look at the feasibility of an eastern tie in point to the Old Caledonian Railway cutting at the Canal Street Bridge

6. Public Transport

Public transport is essential for connecting communities to key services, employment opportunities, and to each other. This is particularly important in areas with high deprivation and low car ownership.

Overview

North Ayrshire has an expansive public transport system, providing an alternative to travelling by private vehicle and, in some cases, a lifeline service for island, rural and remote communities. Public transport services include buses, rail and ferry services. There are several broad aims which may influence considerations about public transport service. These include:

- To provide a service for people who do not currently use public transport.
- To improve the quality of service for existing passengers; helping to maintain the existing passenger base and generating additional trips.
- To contribute to social inclusion; providing services for people without access to private vehicles and for whom walking and cycling are not viable.

Public transport is essential for connecting communities to key services, employment opportunities, and to each other. This is particularly important in areas with high deprivation and low car ownership.

Existing Network

Rail

The vast majority of rail passenger services in Scotland are operated by ScotRail whereas the rail infrastructure including tracks and signals is owned and operated by Network Rail. Funding for rail projects in Scotland is controlled by Transport Scotland and potential projects have to follow the Government's approval process.

North Ayrshire has 12 rail stations, situated on the Glasgow to Ardrossan and Largs and Glasgow to Ayr lines. These offer regular connections within North Ayrshire and onwards to Glasgow and Ayr.

Figure 6.1 Rail Network in North Ayrshire (source – ScotRail)
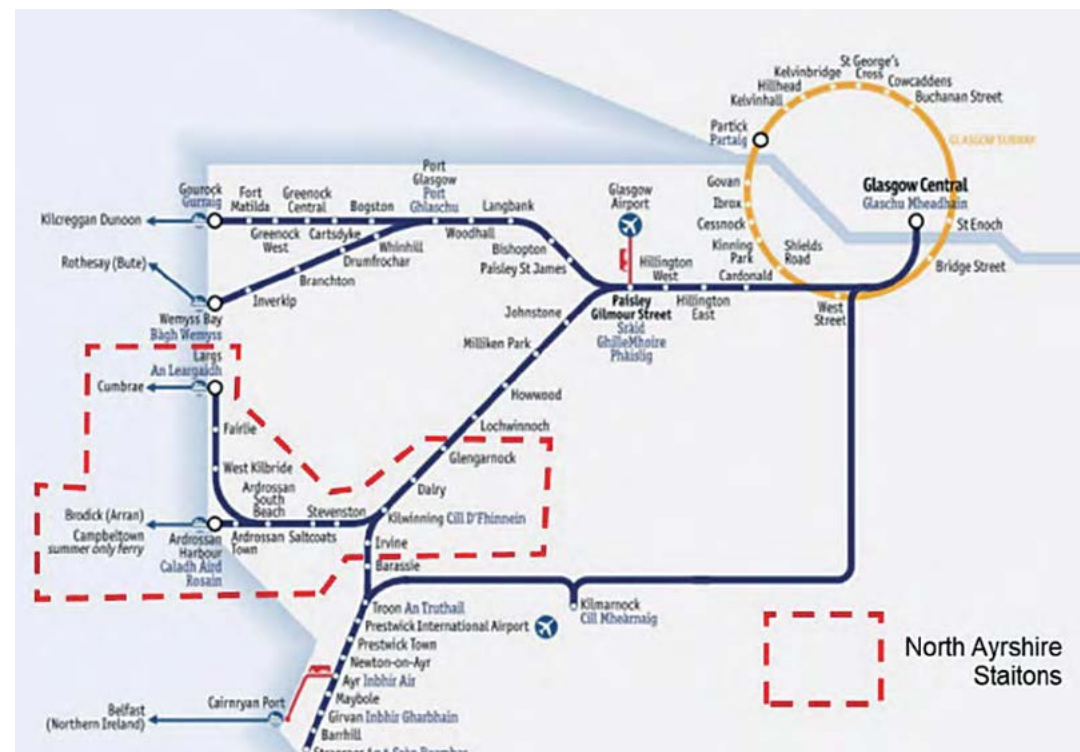
Figure 6.2 shows the total rail passengers (entries and exits) for the period 2004 to 2020. The figures demonstrate the steady and consistent growth in passenger numbers on services in North Ayrshire, with a 28% increase from 2004 to 2005 to 2018 to 2019 (the last year for which data was unaffected by Covid-19).
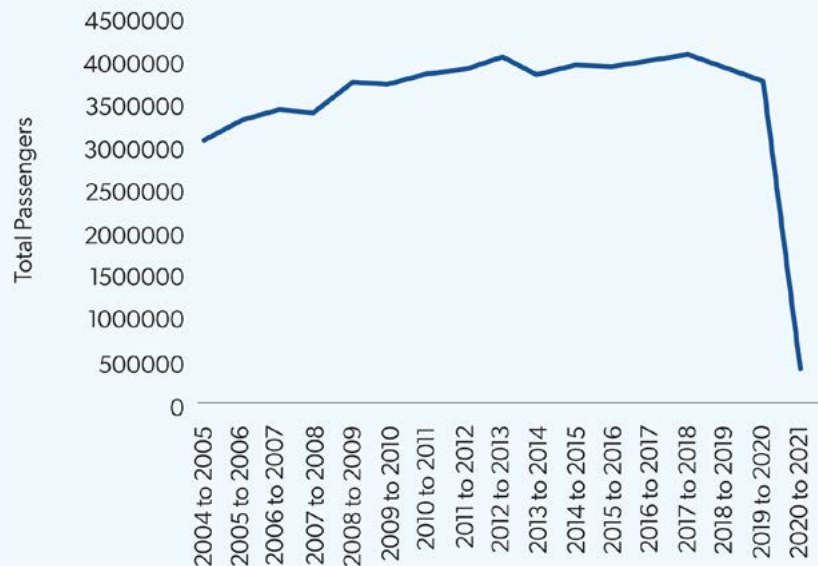
Figure 6.3 shows the busiest stations in North Ayrshire, with the size of the blue circles representing the number of passengers from 2021 to 2022. Kilwinning station has the most passengers (approx. 450,000) and operates as an interchange station, with Irvine second (440,000) and Largs third (250,000).

Figure 6.2 Total Rail Passengers in North Ayrshire (Source – Office of Road and Rail)

Figure 6.3 Rail Passengers at Stations in North Ayrshire (Source – Office of Road and Rail)
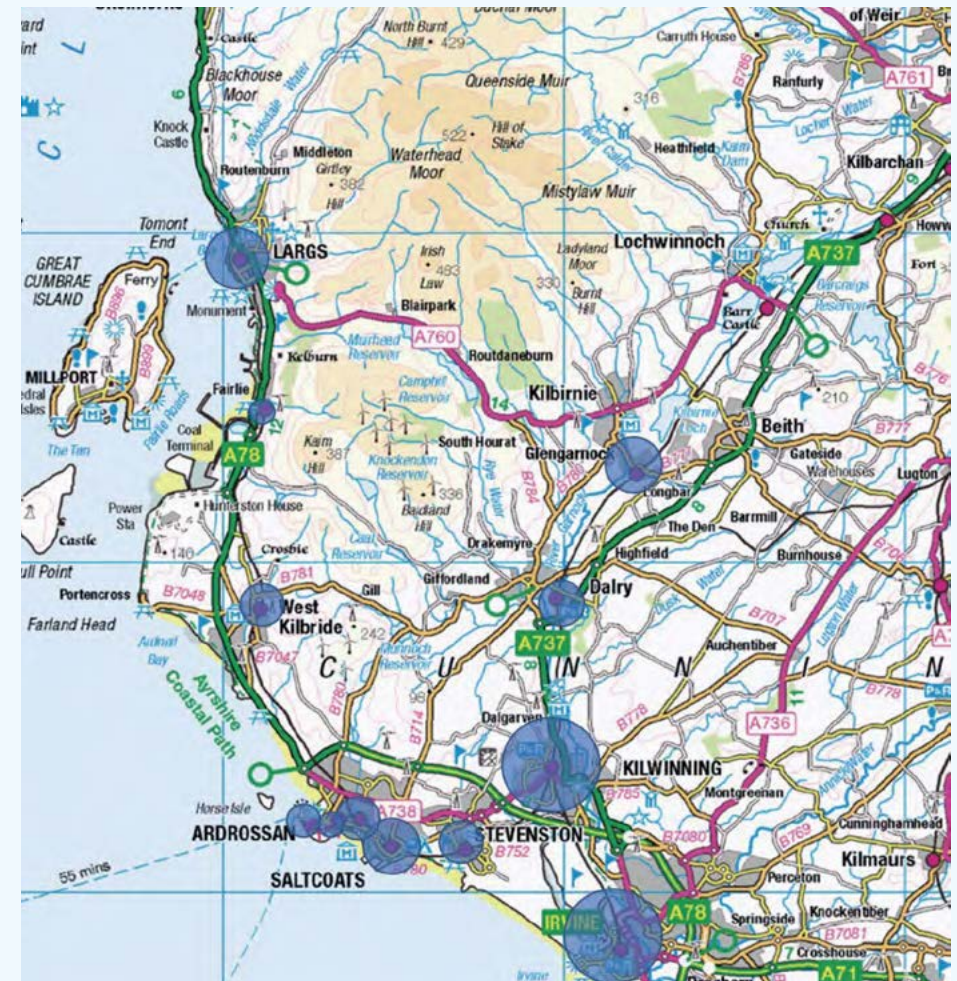
Bus

Bus services in Scotland are typically run by commercial operators. Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, as the Regional Transport Authority, can support socially necessary services in areas where there is no commercial provision. Funds, however, are limited and several factors have to be considered before decisions on subsidising a service can be taken.

In June 2022, new powers were announced in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 which allow transport authorities to run local bus services, giving them more flexibility over the operation of services to meet the needs of local residents. Further consideration of the powers provided through the Act will be taken alongside Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.

The main bus operating companies in North Ayrshire include McGill's, Stagecoach, ShuttleBus and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport's MyBus.

Notable key bus services include:

- Stagecoach service 11 connecting Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenston to Kilwinning, Irvine and Kilmarnock.
- Stagecoach Service 585 serving the Ayrshire coast from Largs, through West Kilbride, the Three Towns and Irvine, and towards Prestwick and Ayr.
- McGill's Buses' Clyde Flyer services (901 and 906) between Largs and Glasgow, via Inverclyde, and their 904 service connecting Largs with the Garnock Valley and Paisley.

Additional services are provided by Shuttle Buses, an employee-owned company, which operates smaller vehicle services between Kilwinning, Irvine and surrounding areas, and also the Largs circular service.

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport operates on an agency basis on behalf of North Ayrshire, including managing contracts for school bus services, maintaining bus stops, processing disabled persons National Entitlement Card renewals, administering the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport Zonecard and the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme.

Bus Service Issues

In general, the bus network in North Ayrshire has contracted and issues with availability of bus service routes, reliability, frequency and operating times were identified through the public consultation for the new Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy. People highlighted the lack of bus services as impacting their ability to access key services without using a car, particularly in rural areas. As a result, there is a significant reliance on subsidised bus services to meet residents travel needs with funding allocated to the provision of these subsidised bus service.

Service frequencies were reduced during the Covid-19 lockdowns, and many North Ayrshire residents highlighted that these have not been restored to previous levels following the lifting of travel restrictions. Furthermore, bus passenger numbers declined during Covid due to travel restrictions and concerns about using public transport and patronage has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

While bus service provision is of great concern to many people in North Ayrshire, it is encouraging that Stagecoach has announced that popular bus services in and around Ayrshire are being increased in a bid to help connect communities across the region.
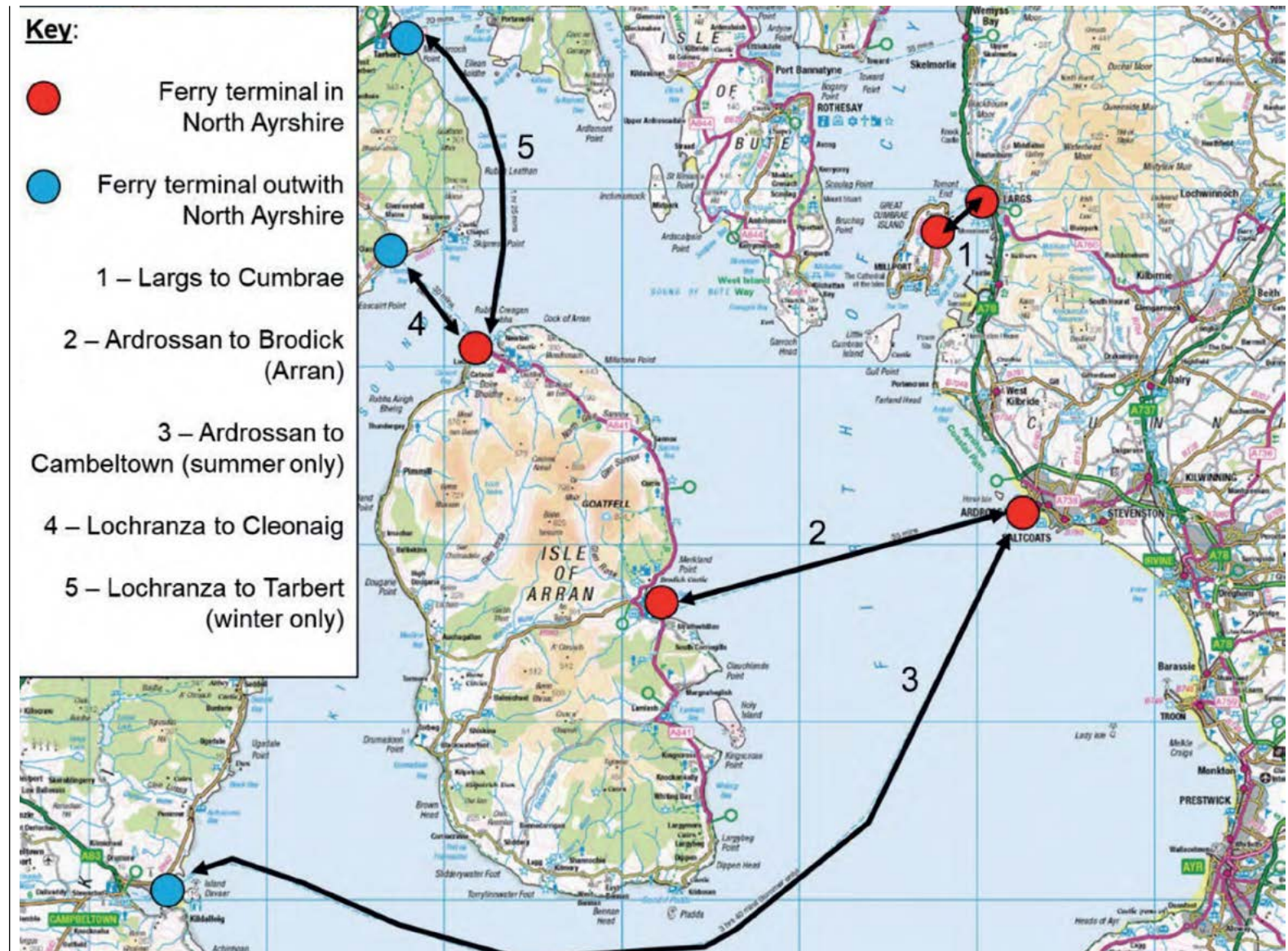
Ferry

Ferry services are an essential part of North Ayrshire Council's transport network. Transport Scotland is responsible for the provision of ferry services in Scotland. The ferry services in North Ayrshire are part of the Clyde and Hebrides network and are operated by CalMac Ferries Limited, with Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited managing the port infrastructure.

North Ayrshire Council work closely with Transport Scotland, CalMac and Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited to seek improvements to the ferry network and services. There are five ferry terminals within North Ayrshire:

- Ardrossan and Largs on the mainland
- Brodick and Lochranza on Arran
- Cumbrae Slip on Great Cumbrae

There are two key passenger ferry routes connecting mainland North Ayrshire to its islands of Cumbrae and Arran. These are essential to enable islanders to access mainland services and allow tourists to access the islands, thereby supporting their economies. Both routes are also substantially used for freight and commuting.

Figure 6.4 Ferry Services in North Ayrshire

Key:

🔴 Ferry terminal in North Ayrshire

🔵 Ferry terminal outwith North Ayrshire

1 – Largs to Cumbrae

2 – Ardrossan to Brodick (Arran)

3 – Ardrossan to Cambeltown (summer only)

4 – Lochranza to Cleonaig

5 – Lochranza to Tarbert (winter only)

Plans are in place for significant infrastructure improvements at the Ardrossan Harbour terminal. These works are required to accommodate a new vessel, which will operate on the Ardrossan to Brodick route and provide improved service reliability and resilience.

Figure 6.5 shows the number of passengers using the ferries on Arran. Passenger numbers were steadily increasing in the lead up to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions.

In 2014 Transport Scotland implemented the Road Equivalent Tariff fares policy on the Arran ferry routes, with the Largs-Cumbrae route following in 2015. The principle of Road Equivalent Tariff is that ferry fares should be equivalent to travelling the same distance by road, plus a fixed cost element. The aim was to reduce the cost disadvantage faced by island communities and promote the islands as a place to live, work, and visit.

Transport Scotland undertook an assessment of the impact of the Road Equivalent Tariff in the first year of its implementation on the Ardrossan-Brodick and Largs-Cumbrae routes against predicted numbers without the Road Equivalent Tariff. This found that passenger numbers increased on both routes and, in particular, the number of cars using the services increased significantly more so than overall passenger numbers.

A subsequent study was released by Transport Scotland in 2021 which assessed the longer term impact of the Road Equivalent Tariff. Figures show that passenger and car carryings continued to grow on the Largs-Cumbrae routes in 2017 and 2018, although the growth was significant than it the first year of the Road Equivalent Tariff. Passenger carryings on the Ardrossan-Brodick route continued to rise over the same period, however there was a slight drop in car carryings in 2018 compared with 2017.

The report goes on to detail results of surveys which aimed to identify the impact of the Road Equivalent Tariff on the residents of the affected routes. The Largs-Cumbrae and Ardrossan-Brodick routes were classified under Firth of Clyde Routes. Approximately 80% of respondents said that their use of the routes had been unaffected by the Road Equivalent Tariff, with the main reason being the widespread prior use of multi-journey discounted tickets meaning the Road Equivalent Tariff did not save them money.

In terms of the impact on residents, survey respondents were asked to agree or disagree with various statements on the impact of the Road Equivalent Tariff on their communities. The most agreed with impacts for Firth of Clyde residents were increased day trip visitors, parking on the islands becoming more difficult in summer, and roads on the islands becoming too busy or congested during the summer. The most disagreed with statements were that quality of life on the island had improved, and that there were improved leisure or eating and drinking or shopping opportunities.

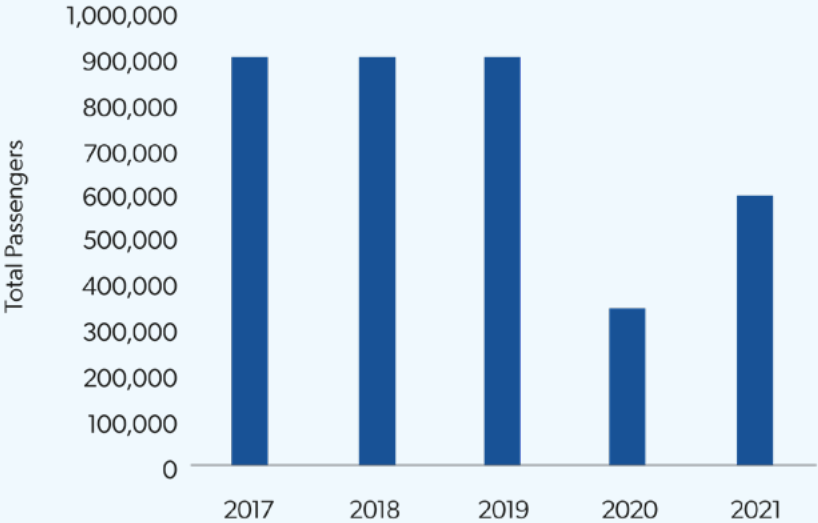**Figure 6.5 Passenger Numbers on Arran Ferry Services**

Figure 6.6 Passenger and Vehicle Increases on Ferry Services Against Forecast due to Road Equivalent Tariff (Source – Transport Scotland)

Route	Passengers	Cars	Coaches and CVs
Ardrossan – Brodick	+6%	+33%	-26%
Largs – Cumbrae	+7%	+15%	-32%

The increase in car trips has created demand management issues at and around the four ferry terminals, particularly Largs and Cumbrae, and has increased traffic volumes on Cumbrae and Arran.

Ferry Issues

The reliability and resilience of ferry services were frequently raised during the public consultation for this Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy.

Residents highlighted that delayed and cancelled services between the mainland and Cumbrae and Arran were causing significant disruption in terms of accessing key services, operating businesses, and for visitors to the islands.

The lack of reliability of the ferries has impacted on residents being able to access medical and other important appointments with the resulting impact on their physical and mental health and wellbeing. It has further resulted in a reduction in residents. It also affects supply chains for island businesses, creating barriers to developing the island economies.

Tourism has also been impacted, given the unreliability and cancellation of services, creating a barrier for people to access the islands.

Consultees called for better and more reliable ferries to support their way of life on the North Ayrshire islands.

Key Achievements

The key improvements for public transport over the period of the previous Local Transport Strategy have been focused on improving physical infrastructure.

The new **Brodick Ferry Terminal**, the main gateway to Arran, was opened in April 2018. The £30m project provided a new 110m, two-berth pier and a new two-storey terminal building. Improvements were also made to access, with increased queuing space for vehicles, six bus stances, and a 65-space car park.

A consultation exercise and associated options study was undertaken in 2022 to identify improvements that could be made to improve access for all users on the Largs-Cumbrae ferry service.

Following the completion of the consultation, the Council is progressing with improvements at both terminals, comprising:

- Largs terminal. Additional short queuing lane, footway widening, consideration of Variable Message Signing on the main approaches to Largs, and managing right turning traffic from Bath Street joining the queue

- • Cumbrae terminal. Realignment of carriageway to provide three queuing lanes closer to the ferry slip and improvements to the footway network. The Largs improvements are due to be implemented in 2022 to 2023, with the Cumbrae improvements to follow in 2023 to 2024.

Significant improvements have also been made to **bus stops** throughout North Ayrshire over the period of the previous strategy, including new and improved shelters and accessibility facilities, such as raised boarding kerbs, improved seating and upgraded access paths.

In many areas buses are the predominant form of public transport. Buses make effective use of limited road space and can therefore make a substantial contribution to reducing traffic congestion. However, buses themselves are often affected by congestion, leading to longer journey times and poor service reliability. Giving priority to late-running buses can help to protect bus services from these effects.

Bus Route Congestion Reduction Measures. North Ayrshire Council is currently implementing a Bus Priority System through Ardrossan, Kilwinning and Irvine. This is a key bus corridor which experiences delays at peak times including the high frequency Service 11.

The priority system will improve bus journey times by providing coordinated traffic signal timings using an Urban Traffic Control and late-running bus priority system. This will result in buses benefiting indirectly as the overall traffic flow is improved. This work is being done in partnership with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and Transport Scotland.

Key Issues and Actions for Public Transport

The key issues identified through our research and engagement with members of the public and key stakeholder groups, as well as the main actions to address them are summarised as follows. A full set of actions for public transport can be found in the Delivery Plan in Chapter 9.

What You Said	Related Actions
Difficulties accessing key services and employment due to the coverage, operating times and frequency of bus services	Work with operators and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport to improve public transport service coverage and operating times, and work with communities to improve and deliver community transport
Accessibility of public transport services	Engage with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and operators to enhance provision of and access to public transport information, and continue to improve accessibility to bus stops where appropriate
Poor reliability of public transport services causing disruption to residents and visitors	Enagage with Transport Scotland to prioritise the reliability and resilience of ferry services, and to maintain a reliable rail network
Affordability of public transport	Work with operators, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and Transport Scotland to make public transport ticketing more flexible, affordable and integrated

7. Road Network

Overview

North Ayrshire has three major trunk roads managed by Transport Scotland. The A78 follows the west coast between Inverclyde and South Ayrshire, while the A737 and A738 runs north-south through the Garnock Valley, connecting to Renfrewshire to the north, and joining the A78 at Kilwinning.

North Ayrshire Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of all other public roads.

Other key routes in North Ayrshire include:

- A738 connecting Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Stevenston
- B714 connecting Dalry to Saltcoats
- A760 connecting Largs and Lochwinnoch, via Kilbirnie. This is a major tourist route for travellers driving from Glasgow to Largs, and the ferry service to Millport
- A841 connecting the ferry terminals at Brodick and Lochranza, and serving Lamlash and Whiting Bay, making it a key route for tourism on Arran
- A71 connecting Irvine to Kilmarnock and onwards to Glasgow

Existing Network

The existing network is shown in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1 Key Roads in North Ayrshire

Vehicle Traffic

Figure 7.2 shows that vehicle traffic has been on an upward trend between 2014 and 2019, generally matching with a slight decrease in public transport use over the same period, as shown in Chapter 4. Increases in car journeys create issues in terms of increased emissions and congestion, as well as higher costs required to maintain the roads network. One of the key challenges for the new Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy is to reduce the number of unnecessary trips made by private car and bring down the overall level of traffic on the network.

20% Reduction in Car km by 2030

In its update to the Climate Change Plan in 2020 the Scottish Government has set the ambitious target to reduce the car kilometres travelled in Scotland by 20% by 2030, compared with a 2019 baseline. Producing over a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions, transport is the biggest contributor to climate change in Scotland, with car emissions accounting for 38% of all transport-related emissions.

The plan recognises that achieving this may be easier in urban areas and rural areas may experience particular and different challenges.

Figure 7.2 Total Vehicle Traffic in North Ayrshire (Source – North Ayrshire Council data)
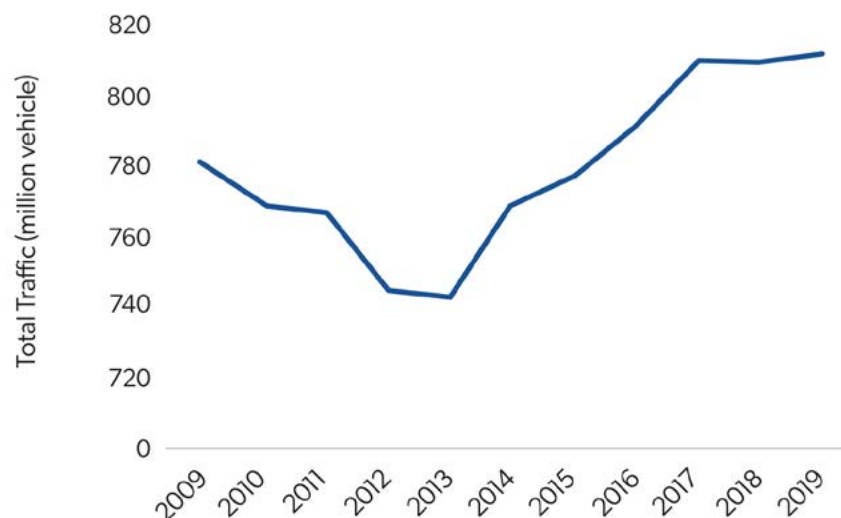
Road Safety

The Council's Road Safety Strategy 2022 to 2030 sets out the Council's key policies and actions for improving the safety of roads, in line with the national strategy: Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030.

Casualties resulting from road traffic collisions in North Ayrshire are on a downward trend from 2014 to 2021, as shown in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3 Road Collision Casualties in North Ayrshire (Source – North Ayrshire Council Data)

Legend:
- All Casualties Fatal
- All Casualties Slight
- All Casualties Serious
- All Casualties Total

Car Parking

North Ayrshire Council operates a number of car parks across North Ayrshire, including:

Car parks (Parking charges apply) at:

- Seafront Car Park, Largs
- Bellman's Close, Largs (short stay)

Long stay car parks at:

- Caledonian and Harbour Road, Irvine
- Union Street and The Braes, Saltcoats
- Woodwynd, Kilwinning

Short stay car parks at:

- West Road (Bridgegate), Irvine
- Kirkgate, Irvine
- Oxenward, Kilwinning
- Chapelwell Street, Saltcoats

Ferry terminal parking at Ardrossan, Millport and Brodick

The Blue Badge scheme is in operation in North Ayrshire, which allows disabled drivers, and those driving on their behalf, to park in specially marked bays (time limit may apply) and on single or double yellow lines without time limits, provided that it doesn't cause obstruction or danger to other road users.

The Council is introducing Decriminalised Parking Enforcement as part of our traffic management strategy to manage the traffic network effectively, improve or maintain traffic flow and reduce congestion. This improves road safety and the local environment and encourages, where appropriate, increased use of more sustainable and healthy forms of travel. The integration of enforcement powers and parking policy will enhance our accountability to the residents for the overall parking policy, as well as enable better monitoring of the effectiveness and value of parking controls to ensure that the parking policy is responsive to public needs.

Key Achievements

Dalry Bypass and The Den Realignment

The Dalry Bypass was opened in summer 2019 and encourages improved economic and employment opportunities through better journey time reliability for motorists and businesses along the length of the A737.

In addition, the Dalry Bypass helps separate local traffic from strategic traffic and improves safety for both rural road users and communities. The A737 has also been realigned at The Den. This 1km scheme bypasses a series of sub-standard bends, improves traffic flow and provides road safety benefits.

B714 Upgrade and Realignment

The upgrading of the B714 has been approved as part of a successful North Ayrshire Council funding bid to the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund. The B714 links the trunk road network from the A78 Sharphill Roundabout (Three Towns Bypass) to the A737, south of Dalry. It is a vital link for road users travelling to the West Coast and ferry links to Arran and Cumbrae.

The upgrade of the B714 will significantly improve connectivity between North Ayrshire and Glasgow, the Central Belt and wider motorway network. This will substantially increase the potential for tourism and economic development and provide enhanced links to the Arran and Cumbrae Ferry services. The improved alignment of the road and removal of bends will also provide road safety benefits.

It will contribute to the repopulation of our islands and rural areas by providing improved access between the ferry terminals, mainland settlements, Glasgow, the central belt and wider motorway network.

This will ensure that those living in our rural, remote and island communities are well connected and have equitable access to services as those living in the rest of Scotland. It will also divert a significant volume of traffic accessing the A78 away from Kilwinning as traffic will connect directly to the A78 via the new upgraded B714.

Once completed, the B714 Upgrade scheme will comprise over 6.5km of new single carriageway. Funding opportunities are currently being investigated to deliver a segregated 3m wide active travel route adjacent to the upgraded road.

Timber Transport Improvements

North Ayrshire Council has secured funding through the Strategic Timber Transport Fund to improve several roads on Arran which are associated with the transport of timber. This includes Ross Road, Sannox Road, Machrie Moor Road and the A841. The improvements undertaken include road widening, passing places, road strengthening and re-surfacing works. These improvements are aimed at reducing the impact of timber transport on residents and visitors to Arran.

Network Condition

North Ayrshire Council is responsible for 874km of roads and 1,015km of footways and footpaths. The condition of the network is managed through North Ayrshire Council's Road Assessment Management Plan. The Road Assessment Management Plan sets out the Council's approach to the management and maintenance of its road assets.

The overall condition of the network is measured by the Road Condition Index, produced from the annual Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey. This Statutory Performance Indicator is the percentage of the road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment.

A decrease in the reported Road Condition Index indicates an improvement in road condition. As shown below, North Ayrshire has an improved overall Road Condition Index but is above the Scottish average over the period (the lower the figures, the better the Road Condition Index is).

Road Condition Index Comparison to Scottish average

Measure	2015 to 2017	2016 to 2018	2017 to 2019	2018 to 2020	2019 to 2021	2020 to 2022	2021 to 2023
North Ayrshire	38.3	39.1	38.1	37.3	37.1	33.9	34.8
Scottish average	36.4	36.7	36.3	35.8	35.5	34.2	33.6
Comparison to Scottish average	Plus 1.9%	Plus 2.4%	Plus 1.8%	Plus 1.5%	Plus 1.6%	Minus 0.3%	Plus 1.2%

Key Issues and Actions for the Road Network

The key issues identified through our research and engagement with members of the public and key stakeholder groups, as well as the main actions to address them are summarised as follows. A full set of actions for the road network can be found in the Delivery Plan in Chapter 9.

What You Said		Related Actions
Concerns about the condition of road surfaces and road markings	▶	Continue to improve the condition of the roads network through a prioritised maintenance programme
Concerns about illegal parking and car park issues	▶	Implement Decriminalised Parking Enforcement with North Ayrshire
Traffic speeds and volumes making vulnerable road users feel unsafe	▶	Review and update speed limits on roads in North Ayrshire, where appropriate, to promote safety and continue programme of improvements to address road safety hotspots

8. Carbon Reduction

Overview

Reflecting the importance of reducing carbon emissions from transport and its significant potential contribution to North Ayrshire Council's net zero carbon target, this chapter outlines the key issues, opportunities and actions to support carbon reduction.

The National Transport Strategy 2 details the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy where walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options are prioritised over single occupancy private car use. Sustainable freight transport is also promoted for the movement of goods, particularly the shift from road to rail.

The national Sustainable Investment Hierarchy outlines that, when designing the transport system, options that focus on reducing inequalities and the need to travel sustainably should be prioritised.

Reducing the need to travel unsustainably

Maintaining and safely operating existing assets

Making better use of existing capacity

Targeted infrastructure improvements

Reducing emissions associated with transport and travel is about meeting future targets to protect the environment whilst also offering benefits to local air quality which is vital for our health and quality of life.

In May 2022, Cumbrae was announced as one of six Scottish islands to be supported by the Carbon Neutral Islands project, which aims to demonstrate the climate-resilience and low carbon potential of islands by 2040.

North Ayrshire Council has stated its commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030 in the Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (2021 to 2023) and acknowledges that rapid and far-reaching actions are required to achieve this. The net zero carbon target is reflected in this Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy which identifies ways in which changing travel and transport behaviour can contribute to reducing carbon emissions in North Ayrshire.

Reducing emissions associated with transport and travel is about meeting future targets to protect the environment whilst also offering benefits to local air quality which is vital for our health and quality of life. Travel behaviour change takes sustained long-term effort. It relies on providing sustainable alternatives to the car that are practical and easy to use.

The key carbon reduction challenges are to:

- Reduce vehicle trips and distance travelled by cars

- Encourage a modal shift to walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport from the car for short trips

- Support a higher proportion of low carbon vehicles in North Ayrshire Council's fleet, bus and community transport fleets, delivery vehicles and private vehicles.

- Promote greener, cleaner travel choices such as walking, wheeling and cycling

Key Achievements

Several actions have already been successfully implemented by North Ayrshire Council to support low carbon travel behaviours.

Electric Vehicles

The Council's first Electric Vehicle Strategy 2021 to 2025 sets out a vision to increase the number of Electric Vehicles being used throughout North Ayrshire by creating a robust network of Electric Vehicle charge points. Growth in Electric Vehicle ownership has been steadily growing from only 42 Electric Vehicles registered in North Ayrshire in 2015 to 217 Electric Vehicles by the end of 2020.

By December 2025, the Council's aspirational target is to have:

- One publicly accessible charge point for every nine plug-in vehicles
- 2% of total number of vehicles registered in North Ayrshire to be plug-in vehicles
- 80 workplace charge sockets

Figure 8.1 Plug-In Vehicles in North Ayrshire (Source – Department of Transport Stats VEH0131)
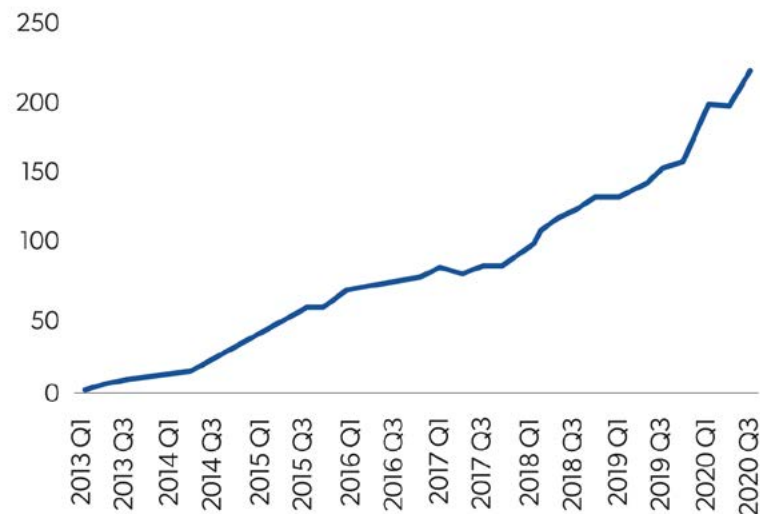
Electric Vehicle Charging

North Ayrshire Council launched a consultation exercise in Spring 2022 to gather feedback on the needs of people and businesses based in North Ayrshire with regards to electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The feedback will be used to support a business case for future funding for charging points. The existing network of publicly accessible Electric Vehicle chargers is shown in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2 Electric Vehicle Charging Points in North Ayrshire (Source – Zap-Map)
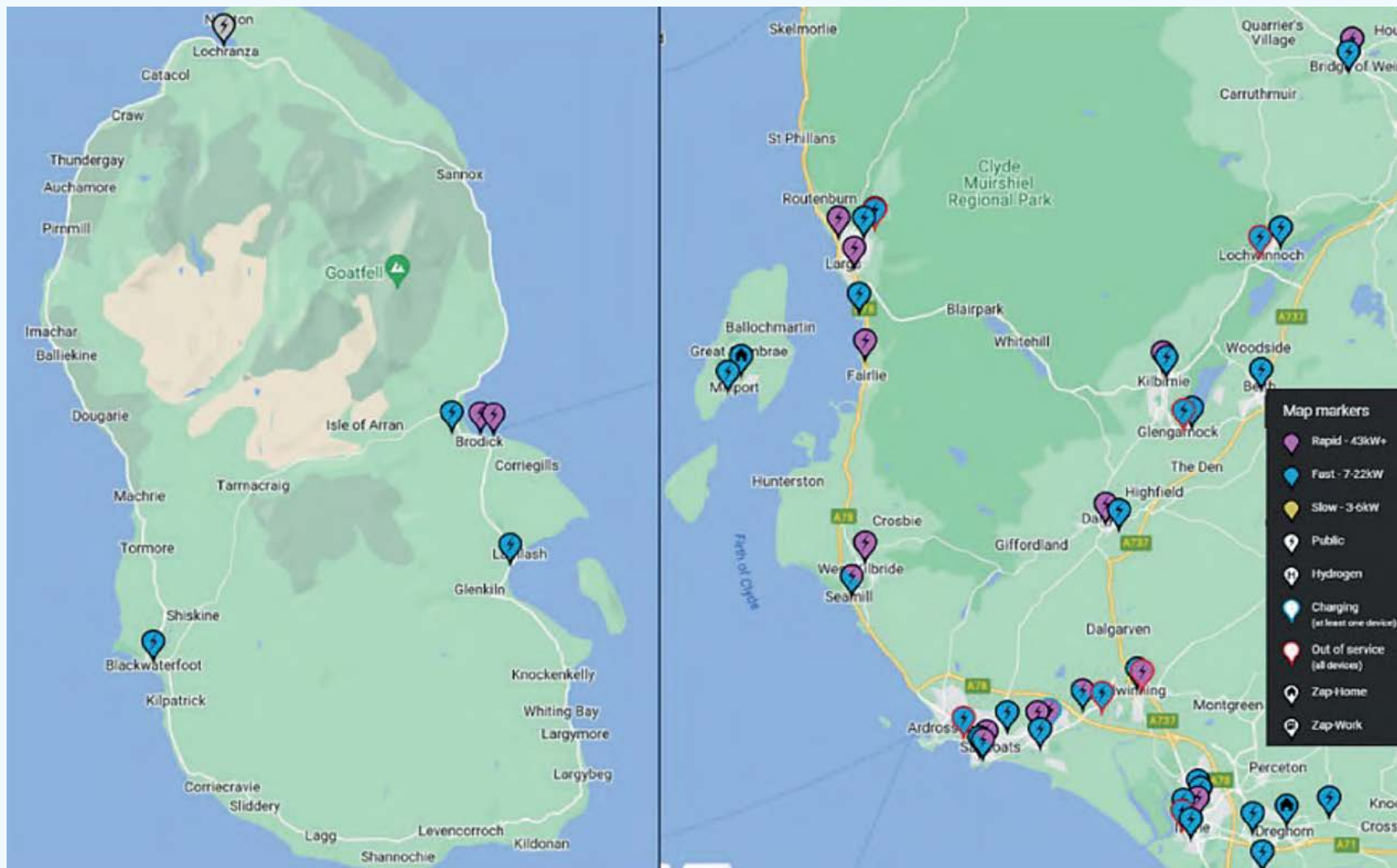
Electric Buses

Stagecoach and Shuttle Buses secured funding through the Scottish Zero Emission Bus Challenge Fund to help bring fully electric buses into their fleets serving North Ayrshire. 39 of these will be for Stagecoach services, and 5 will be for Shuttle Buses' services.

North Ayrshire Council's Vehicle Fleet

The Council established a car club scheme to reduce business miles travelled and associated emissions. The scheme, as of 2020, had 1,000 members accessing electric and low emission vehicles at various locations across the area. In 2019 to 2020, 275,868 miles were travelled using this initiative.

Further grant funding was received during 2019 to 2020 from the Switched-on Fleet initiative, allowing for three additional electric cars and five vans to be leased to further increase the electric vehicle fleet to 19.

Air Quality Improvements

We are required to compile and publish annual reports on air quality in the region. Previous monitoring reports identified two areas of concern in terms of emissions from road traffic – High Street, Irvine and New Street, Dalry – due to congestion. The 2022 Local Air Quality Management Progress Report sets out the changes in air quality following the implementation of mitigation projects to address these issues, which included public realm improvements on High Street Irvine, and the Dalry bypass. The report demonstrates that these measures resulted in immediate improvements in air quality in 2021. North Ayrshire Council will continue to monitor these areas to identify the long-term impacts with traffic levels returning to normal following the COVID-19 pandemic.

> "I sold my car and plan to use the bike and public transport as my main methods of transport. This is a more sustainable way of getting about and is much cheaper than travelling by car."
>
> – Participant Quote.

School Initiatives

Targeting young people and their parents to change behaviour by walking, cycling and wheeling more often to school is essential for both carbon emissions reduction and living a more active, healthier life. The following initiatives have been introduced in schools:

- iCycle – School cycle proficiency scheme run since 2013. During the Covid-19 pandemic, all primary schools were offered iCycle
- Go On Get Out There' scheme – grant offering £500 per school for projects that support active travel
- Installation of cycle and scooter racks in schools
- Play on Pedals – this is a training scheme provided by Cycling Scotland, starting on balance bikes, and aimed at teaching pre-school children the basics about bike parts, cycle control, how to fit a helmet correctly, and the basics of looking after their bikes. Nurseries and early years centres in North Ayrshire who have suitably trained Play on Pedals instructors receive a bank of bikes from Cycling Scotland.

Workplace Initiatives

A variety of initiatives have been introduced to encourage North Ayrshire Council employees to change their travel behaviour.

E-bikes have been loaned to more than 60 staff within the last 12 months at various workplaces for a two-week trial to encourage them to cycle more and be more active.

The **Cycle to Work** Scheme is available to employees and there have been almost 200 participants in the scheme to date.

North Ayrshire Council promotes a workplace **StepCount challenge** twice a year to encourage active travel, improved health and carbon reduction for workplace travel. The June 2022 challenge involved 199 participants (a 73% increase compared with the October 2021 challenge) across 40 teams, with a total distance of over 32,000 miles covered.

Key Actions for Carbon Reduction

The key actions for carbon reduction are shown below, organised under four key themes. The themes are derived from the key challenges for carbon reduction set out at the beginning of this chapter. The full set of actions can be found in Chapter 9.

Themes	Related Actions
Town centres are dominated by cars, leading to less healthy environment	Review the feasibility of reallocating road space for the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure and services, and review local parking policies to encourage more sustainable travel, particularly to town centres
Access to services not available by sustainable transport in some areas	Consider the feasibility of implementing 20-minute neighbourhoods and ensure new developments are accessible by sustainable transport modes
Workplace travel options	Continue to deliver Workplace Engagement Programme with local employers and deliver workplace active travel events such as step-count challenges and cycle to work days/weeks
Council's use and promotion of low carbon vehicles	Support the implementation of the Council's Electric Vehicle Strategy

9. Delivery Plan

Overview

This chapter sets out the Delivery Plan for the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy.

The proposed actions were assessed to ensure that they contributed to at least one of the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy objectives. The deliverability of each action was also considered.

Objective Title	Details
Access to Employment and Services	Improve accessibility, availability, affordability and safety of the transport system, ensuring everyone can access town centres, jobs, education, healthcare and other everyday needs
Reduce Emissions	Reduce carbon emissions caused by transport in North Ayrshire
Active Travel and Communities	Encourage and enable physical activity and improved health and wellbeing in the communities for all through active travel. Active Travel Strategy Objectives: • Enable people to walk, wheel and cycle within their local communities and to key attractors by the provision of a convenient, attractive, high quality and safer active travel network • Facilitate an increase in the proportion of all journeys made by walking, wheeling and cycling • Deliver training, events and promotion of active travel to encourage and enable more people to travel by active means
Confidence in Public Transport	Improve the reliability, accessibility, safety, personal security, and integration of public transport services for all
Transport Network Condition	Maintain the condition of the existing roads and active travel network

The Plan outlines the proposed actions, which objective(s) it meets and the indicative delivery timescales:

- Ongoing = continuation of existing work
- Short = 1 to 2 years
- Medium = 2 to 5 years
- Long = 5 Plus years

Partnership Working

Delivery of the actions will, in many cases, require continued and ongoing partnership working with national, regional and local partners, including the main transport operators serving North Ayrshire. North Ayrshire Council is committed to collaborating with relevant partners and forums to achieve this. The delivery plan identifies the key delivery partners for each action, where applicable.

Funding

North Ayrshire Council has been successful in securing external funding to deliver many projects identified in the previous Local Transport Strategy and will continue to seek funding to support the actions in this Delivery Plan through existing or new funding sources.

The Council works closely with partners such as Transport Scotland, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, Paths for All, the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme and Sustrans to secure funding for the delivery of transport projects.

Active Travel

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
Active Travel 1 – Carry out feasibility studies and technical design to develop strategic active travel corridors across the 6 localities.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Long
Active Travel 2 – Deliver infrastructure improvements on strategic active travel corridors	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Ongoing
Active Travel 3 – Continue to work with Sustrans to further develop, improve and grow the National Cycle Network	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ongoing
Active Travel 4 – Continue to investigate funding opportunities for an active travel route adjacent to the upgraded B714.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Short
Active Travel 5 – Improve local active travel links to key trip attractors, facilities and transport interchanges	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Medium
Active Travel 6 – Improve active travel connections to and through North Ayrshire's greenspaces	No	No	Yes	No	No	Medium
Active Travel 7 – Continue to work with partners to develop walking, cycling and wheeling opportunities	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ongoing

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
Active Travel 8 – Continue to work with community partners to deliver behaviour change projects through direct support, partnership working and grant funding (Community Outdoor Access Grants Scheme)	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ongoing
Active Travel 9 – Continue to create active travel mapping, videos and digital resources for all localities	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ongoing
Active Travel 10 – Continue to grow our workplace engagement programme to provide advice and support to encourage active travel	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ongoing
Active Travel 11 – Improve active travel access to schools through improved routes and continue to expand cycle training at primary and nursery school level	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Medium
Active Travel 12 – Undertake an audit of the active travel network to identify priorities for improvements	No	No	No	No	Yes	Short
Active Travel 13 – Continue and expand programme of maintenance for existing active travel routes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Ongoing
Active Travel 14 – Expand and improve facilities for active travel such as cycle parking, rest stops and bike maintenance stations	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Short

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
Active Travel 15 – Continue to improve accessibility to active travel routes for all abilities access, including equestrian users	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Ongoing
Active Travel 16 – Continue to grow and expand behaviour change programme, including events, through Trinity Active Travel Hub	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ongoing
Active Travel 17 – Work with operators and partners to improve active travel facilities at transport interchanges and increase capacity for bicycles on public transport services	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Short

Public Transport

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
Public Transport 1 – continue to engage with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and operators to provide a coherent bus network both within North Ayrshire and regionally	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Ongoing
Public Transport 2 – Supporting the delivery of the community transport pilot in North Ayrshire to establish demand for community transport, with a view to supporting future community transport delivery	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Medium
Public Transport 3 – Strathclyde Partnership for Transport to develop a Level of Service Framework for the region, which aims to maintain and improve lifeline transport services for islands, rural and remote areas	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Long
Public Transport 4 – Continue to engage with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and operators to enhance provision and access to public transport information	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Ongoing
Public Transport 5 – Support initiatives to improve real and perceived safety and security of public transport services.	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Ongoing
Public Transport 6 – Continue to engage with Transport Scotland to prioritise the reliability and resilience of ferry services	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Ongoing

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
Public Transport 7 – Continue to work with rail operators and Transport Scotland to ensure that North Ayrshire continues to be served by a frequent and reliable rail network	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Ongoing
Public Transport 8 – Continue to work collaboratively with operators to improve integration between public transport modes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Ongoing
Public Transport 9 – Promote free bus travel for concessionary travel and people under 22 years old	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Short
Public Transport 10 – Work with operators, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and Transport Scotland to make public transport ticketing more flexible, affordable and integrated	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Medium
Public Transport 11 – Work with partners, including Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, to explore the oPublic Transport ions for bus service operating models through the new powers granted under the Transport (Scotland) 2019 Act to ensure that our communities are well connected and not disadvantaged due to a lack of sufficient public transport	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Short
Public Transport 12 – Work with partners to investigate the potential to establish a Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP)	No	No	No	Yes	No	Medium

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
Public Transport 13 – Deliver the Ardrossan Harbour improvement and transport interchange works and cement Ardrossan's position as the 'Gateway to the Islands' hub	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Medium
Public Transport 14 – Work with operators, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and Transport Scotland to improve public transport accessibility to key employment areas and regional facilities (including local healthcare facilities and hospitals) for all North Ayrshire residents	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Medium
Public Transport 15 – Continue to improve the quality of bus stops including the provision of service information including Real Time Passenger Information, shelters and high access kerbs where feasible	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Ongoing
Public Transport 16 – Continue to investigate and deliver bus priority measures	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Ongoing
Public Transport 17 – Support partners and operators to transition to zero emission buses and taxis	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Medium
Public Transport 18 – Work with operators to improve access to public transport services for disabled passengers	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Medium

Road Network

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
Road Network 1 – Investigate reducing speed limits on urban roads and streets and implement 20mph speed limits in residential areas and streets throughout North Ayrshire	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Medium
Road Network 2 – Consider introducing appropriate speed limits on rural roads throughout North Ayrshire	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Medium
Road Network 3 – Continue to reduce the impact of traffic on communities and reduce casualties through reviewing road safety hotspots and identify a programme of improvements	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Ongoing
Road Network 4 – Ensure the condition of the roads and active travel network is maintained using an asset management approach	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Ongoing
Road Network 5 – Continue to seek funding for rural road widening and strengthening improvements to facilitate timber and goods transport, and bus services	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Ongoing
Road Network 6 – Work with partners to improve road connections between North Ayrshire and the greater Glasgow conurbation	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Medium

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
Road Network 7 – Upgrade the B714 to improve connectivity between North Ayrshire and Glasgow, the Central Belt and wider motorway network, providing enhanced links to the Arran and Cumbrae Ferry services.	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Medium
Road Network 9 – Support the implementation of Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030.	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Ongoing
Road Network 10 – Improve road connections within North Ayrshire, for example the A841 between Brodick and Lochranza and the A760 between Largs and the A737	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Long
Road Network 11 – Continue to engage with Transport Scotland to deliver improvements on the trunk road network	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Ongoing
Road Network 12 – Reduce the environmental impact of road construction works	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Ongoing
Road Network 13 – Implement Decriminalised Parking Enforcement within North Ayrshire	No	No	Yes	No	No	Short
Road Network 14 – Ensure that road improvement schemes in North Ayrshire also seek to improve facilities for active travel and public transport	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Short

Carbon Reduction and Travel Demand Management

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
Carbon Reduction 1 – Assess the potential for and implement the reallocation of road space for the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure and services, in line with the sustainable travel hierarchy	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ongoing
Carbon Reduction 2 – Identify and implement travel demand management measures which are required to achieve the national 20% car km reduction route map	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Long
Carbon Reduction 3 – Review and update North Ayrshire Council Town Centre Car Parking Strategy	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Short
Carbon Reduction 4 – Continue to support schools in developing and implementing travel plans	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ongoing
Carbon Reduction 5 – Update and implement the Council's Staff Travel Plan, including continuing to reduce the need for staff to travel for work	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Short
Carbon Reduction 6 – Continue to deliver Workplace Engagement Programme with local employers	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ongoing

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
Carbon Reduction 7 – Ensure that new developments are accessible by sustainable transport modes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Ongoing
Carbon Reduction 8 – Consider the feasibility of implementing 20-minute neighbourhoods	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Long
Carbon Reduction 9 – Continue and expand the Council's staff e-bike loan scheme	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ongoing
Carbon Reduction 10 – Promote the benefits of active travel for work, leisure and other journey types through the media and social media	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ongoing
Carbon Reduction 11 – Continue to deliver workplace active travel events and activities such as StepCount challenge and cycle to work days and weeks	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ongoing
Carbon Reduction 12 – Consider the feasibility of supporting community car clubs, including electric cars	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Short

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
Carbon Reduction 13 – Continue to promote and encourage car sharing services in North Ayrshire	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Ongoing
Carbon Reduction 14 – Encourage and support Transport Scotland to deliver the national Car Demand Management Framework	No	Yes	No	No	No	Medium
Carbon Reduction 15 – Promote benefits of using active travel and public transport for travelling to and on our islands	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Short

General and Multi-Modal

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
General 1 – Promote North Ayrshire's priorities within national and regional strategies, including Strategic Transport Projects Review processes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ongoing
General 2 – Work with partners to deliver North Ayrshire's Island Connectivity Study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium
General 3 – Work with island stakeholders and partners to deliver transport actions within the Arran and Cumbrae Island Plan annual action plans	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Short
General 4 – Support the implementation of the Council's Electric Vehicle Strategy	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Medium
General 5 – Consider the feasibility of introducing Mobility Hubs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Long
General 6 – Continue cross-boundary collaboration with other local authorities and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport to improve regional transport routes and services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ongoing

Action	Fit With Objective: Access to Employment and Services	Fit With Objective: Reduce Emissions	Fit With Objective: Active Travel and Communities	Fit With Objective: Confidence in Public Transport	Fit With Objective: Transport Network Condition	Timescales
General 7 – Support the implementation of the Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy	No	Yes	No	No	No	Ongoing
General 8 – Work with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and the Ayrshire Road Alliance to implement the Ayrshire Freight Strategy Action Plan	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Ongoing
General 9 – Support initiatives to improve freight access to ports and harbours in North Ayrshire in collaboration with users and operators	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Medium
General 10 – Work with the Timber Transport Forum to improve timber transport in North Ayrshire	No	No	No	No	Yes	Ongoing
General 11 – Work with our partners to apply and embed Community Wealth Building principles within transport activities and projects	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Medium

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

The Delivery Plan will be monitored annually throughout the lifetime of the strategy to establish progress made towards achieving the objectives, targets and delivery plan actions, ensuring that the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy remains relevant and on-track for delivery.

Outcomes and Indicators

In order to monitor the progress of the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy, a number of outcomes have been identified, along with indicators which will be used to measure progress against the outcomes. Data for the indicators will come from a range of national, regional and local datasets. While the Scottish Census 2022 has not been listed as a data source because its results have not yet been published, outputs from the Census will be considered when they are published.

The proposed outcomes and indicators for the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy are shown on the following page.

Outcomes	Indicators	Source
Increase the number of people choosing to walk, cycle and wheel in North Ayrshire	• Proportion of short everyday journeys by walking and cycling • Proportion of journeys to school by walking, cycling and wheeling • Use of existing active travel routes	• Scottish Household Survey • School Hands Up Survey • People counters on active travel routes
Increase in high quality walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure is available to all	• Length of additional or improved walking and cycling facilities	• North Ayrshire Council
Reduction in carbon emissions	• CO2 emissions estimates from road transport	• UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions published by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs • North Ayrshire Council's Baseline Emissions Inventory
Reduction in car kms	• Average journey distance	• Scottish Household Survey • Annual local traffic estimates (Transport Scotland) • Monitoring indicators from national 20% vehicle km reduction route map (under development)
Maintain road condition	• Road condition compared to the Scottish local authority average.	• Road Condition Indicators (via Roads Asset Management Plan)
Improved public transport satisfaction	• Proportion of adults who are satisfied with local public transport • Satisfaction of rail passengers with services • Satisfaction of bus passengers with services	• Scottish Household Survey • National Rail Passenger Survey • Annual Bus Passenger Survey