

## **PEOPLE AND PLACE**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the People and Place programme, focusing on developments since the last Board meeting.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Our approach for 2026/27 was to be one of stability after several years of significant change in this area, allowing projects to bed in and deliver on their outcomes.
- 2.2 On the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2025, the Board approved the following in relation to the 2026/27 People and Place grant rounds:
- Delegate to the Partnership Director the setting of the fund values as noted at paragraph 4.2 for grants to local authorities, grants to third parties, and the community grant fund.
  - Approve the eligibility and assessment criteria for grants to third parties, and delegate to the Partnership Director the ability to vary the project section of the eligibility criteria as set out in paragraph 4.9
  - Approve the eligibility and assessment criteria for the community grant fund and delegate to the Partnership Director the ability to vary these criteria to support joint working with other RTPs as set out in paragraph 4.12
- 2.3 In line with the last two points above, the People and Place grant round opened in January 2026 and closed on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026. Following this, all projects were scored by three team members against the approved scoring criteria as set out in the Grant Standing Orders, and the team met on 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> February 2026 to review the average scores for each project and make funding recommendations.
- 2.4 A funding panel was then held on 24<sup>th</sup> February where approval was given to progress on the basis of the recommendations, and provisional decisions were issued. Subsequent to this, Local Authority awards were also approved by the Partnership Director. This was all carried out on the basis of the grant award figures Transport Scotland had advised all RTPs to budget with.
- 2.5 On 1<sup>st</sup> April, Transport Scotland informed RTPs of a likely reduction to the revenue allocation of 60% following their internal approval process. This was confirmed on 9<sup>th</sup> April along with confirmation of a static capital budget. This decision was then communicated to all local authorities and funded partners on 10<sup>th</sup> April. These communications included requests for detail on where revenue funding was supporting existing staff roles, and where there was the possibility of capitalising revenue spend. Discussions were also held with some groups to run through options in more detail.
- 2.6 Throughout this process, first and foremost, our priority was to retain capacity in the sector and to ensure that any decisions regarding funding focused on protecting existing staff

roles. Following on from this, we looked to prioritise projects working with marginalised groups and in areas of high relative deprivation.

### 3 FUNDING REDUCTION PROCESS

3.1 Following on from the funding announcement, various options have been examined to bring the programme into balance in line with the priorities outlined above. This took a progressive approach over 3 rounds of funding reductions:

- Round 1 found simple savings to areas such as number of bikes purchased, non-essential costs which would not impact delivery, and ending school projects on 31st March 2027 (i.e. 9 months delivery instead of 12). This round saved £458,406.28 (£217,502.58 revenue and £240,903.70 capital)
- Round 2 necessarily went further, and involved removal of low scoring projects, blanket cost reductions of 60% to local authority revenue allocations and 20% to all other revenue budgets, plus further cuts to project budgets. This round took total savings to £747,754.38 (£891,443.93 revenue and -£143,689.55 capital). This round was then the basis for discussion with grantees about additional savings/where cuts would affect staff roles.
- Round 3 was informed by discussions with provisional grantees, where they were asked to confirm the assumptions made and to make additional savings – overall organisations were extremely supportive in this in looking at the costs savings to support delivery across the programme. Final adjustments were also made to capital budgets and SEStran costs. Savings at the end of this round totalled £1,266,365.95 (£1,265,859.10 revenue and £506.85 capital). As the programme was now balanced, no further reductions were needed.

3.2 Final grant awards for 2026/27 are presented elsewhere on this agenda for noting.

3.3 The summary of the reductions by fund area is as follows:

Fund	Projects Cut	Revenue Cut	Revenue Cut %	Capital Cut	Capital Cut %	Total Cut	Total Cut %
Community grant fund	3	£232,050	51%	-£15,946	-12%	£216,104	37%
Main grant fund	1	£423,762	69%	£131,414	6%	£555,176	21%
Local authorities	0	£470,850	60%	-£106,994	-5%	£363,856	13%
Regional projects	2	£139,197	50%	-£7,967	-4%	£131,230	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>£1,265,859</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>£507</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>£1,266,366</b>	<b>19%</b>

### 4 IMPACT ON PROGRAMME

4.1 Whilst the overall People and Place programme retains a similar value to 2024/25, the large reduction in revenue funding presents a significant challenge. Fundamentally, behaviour change relies heavily on revenue funding to be successful. In addition, we had purposely directed a higher proportion of revenue funding to local authorities and community groups, therefore they will be more heavily impacted by these reductions. Finally, revenue funding has increased importance for projects that work with more

marginalised groups and on projects that encourage increased rates of walking and use of sustainable transport – an even more capital heavy programme therefore risks entrenching inequality and being heavily focused on cycling while ignoring other modes

- 4.2 Whilst mitigation has been put in place to reduce the impact where possible, the scale of the funding reduction has meant that it has not been possible to completely negate it. For example, we have had to remove a provisional funding offer from project working in the Levenmouth area of Fife, and one that worked with primary school pupils to encourage increased rates of walking to school.
- 4.3 It has also not been possible to fully protect all staff roles that had been previously funded despite our best efforts to do so. We estimate that the direct impact of this funding reduction is a loss of 1.2FTE of staff roles in south east Scotland (assuming organisations cannot find alternative funding).
- 4.4 A full report on the impact of the funding reduction is attached as appendix 1. The summary from the document is as follows:

*The 60% reduction in revenue funding presents a fundamental challenge to the delivery of the SEStran People and Place Programme, significantly constraining the programme's ability to support behaviour change and community-based interventions. While capital funding remains stable, the shift in funding balance limits flexibility and places additional pressure on delivery models not designed to operate without sufficient revenue support.*

*Despite the rapid and effective response to reprofile funding and maintain programme continuity, the scale and timing of these reductions will have immediate impacts on project delivery and longer-term implications for outcomes across the region. There is a clear risk that progress made in recent years, particularly in addressing transport inequality, supporting sustainable travel behaviours, and enabling access to employment and services, will be slowed or reversed.*

*Looking ahead, continued uncertainty around future revenue funding will further challenge strategic planning and delivery. Sustained investment in revenue is critical to ensuring that capital interventions are fully realised and that the programme can continue to deliver meaningful, inclusive, and lasting transport outcomes across South East Scotland.*

## **5 2025/26 PROGRAMME EVALUATION**

- 5.1 To close out the 2025/26 programme, an evaluation has been undertaken by Urban Foresight along a similar model as in 2024/25. A full copy of the report is attached as appendix 2, with a summary below.
- 5.2 In 2025/26, the programme has continued to deliver a substantial and wide-ranging portfolio of interventions across the SEStran region, with £6.45 million invested across 149 projects in all eight local authority areas. Delivered through partnerships with local authorities, community organisations and the third sector, the programme has expanded from a predominantly active travel focus to a broader emphasis on active and sustainable travel, supporting walking, wheeling, cycling, workplace travel planning and accessibility initiatives. This evolution has strengthened the programme's ability to respond to local

needs, particularly through community-led, place-based delivery models that address barriers to participation and promote inclusive access to transport.

- 5.3 The evaluation provides strong evidence of positive outcomes across multiple areas, including increased participation in active travel, improved confidence and skills, and enhanced accessibility for groups facing transport barriers. Projects have supported tens of thousands of engagements, alongside significant provision of bikes, training, infrastructure and community-based activities. Evidence indicates increased walking, wheeling and cycling activity, alongside wider benefits including reduced social isolation, improved physical and mental wellbeing, and greater access to education, employment and services. The most effective interventions combine practical support (e.g. equipment and infrastructure) with ongoing engagement, confidence-building and social connection, enabling more sustained behaviour change.
- 5.4 The programme also demonstrated growing maturity in delivery and evaluation, with improvements in monitoring, stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering since 2024/25. Increased collaboration, shared learning events and capacity-building activity have strengthened organisational capability and regional partnership working. However, the evaluation highlights ongoing challenges, including variation in monitoring consistency, capacity constraints among delivery partners, and the limitations of short-term funding cycles in evidencing long-term behavioural change.
- 5.5 Overall, the programme has been found to be delivering clear and demonstrable value, not only in shifting travel behaviour but in contributing to wider social, economic and community outcomes, with further opportunity to strengthen impact through sustained investment and continued refinement of delivery and evaluation approaches.

## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Board is asked to note the contents of the paper and the changes to the programme made as a result of the reduction in funding.

Michael Melton  
**Programme Manager**  
19<sup>th</sup> June 2026

**Appendix 1:** Report on impact of funding reduction on People and Place  
**Appendix 2:** 2025/26 People and Place Evaluation Report

Policy Implications	The People and Place Delivery Plan aligns with the objectives of the RTS and therefore will help deliver on SEStran’s policy objectives
Financial Implications	Project management costs for 2026/27 are included in the overall programme budget, so there is no anticipated financial impact.

<p>Equalities Implications</p>	<p>In supporting people to travel actively, this programme should have a positive impact on equalities. Specific elements of the Plan have been designed to further support the accessibility of active and sustainable travel, with an objective include around this to ensure that this is measured. A programme wide IIA has been produced and published, and all projects will be expected to implement the recommendations of this where appropriate.</p>
<p>Climate Change Implications</p>	<p>In promoting behaviour change from private cars to active and sustainable travel, the People and Place Plan will support the transition to net zero.</p>

## **SESTRAN PEOPLE & PLACE PROGRAMME BUDGET REDUCTION IMPACT REPORT**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report details the immediate and anticipated impact of the 60% revenue cut to the SEStran People and Place Programme for the 2026/27 funding year.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At the beginning of April 2026, Transport Scotland informed RTPs that the revenue funding element of the People and Place Programme grant would be reduced by 60% nationally. This reduced the SEStran revenue budget from £2,130,271 to £844,976. There was no change to the level of capital funding.
- 2.2 The 2026/27 funding ratio for the programme now sits at 16% revenue to 84% capital (33% to 67% in 2025/26 and 36% to 64% in 2024/25). This level of revenue funding presents a fundamental challenge for a programme focussed primarily on behaviour change interventions. While there was no cut to capital overall, there was additional pressure on the capital budget to cover significant reprofiling of budgets to capital spend.
- 2.3 Following indicative funding figures from Transport Scotland earlier in the year, we had already been through our grant funding application process for the 2026/27 year and had made provisional funding offers to organisations in the region and our eight local authorities. These had been made with the proviso that final confirmation on budget was required from Transport Scotland.
- 2.4 Given this progress made by SEStran and partners and the timing of the revenue reduction confirmation, significant amendments needed to be made to the provisional grants and local authority awards extremely quickly. Within 2 weeks of notification of the funding reductions being revised the process was completed and grant offers updated.
- 2.5 At present, it is not known whether the revenue funding will remain at this lower level in future years, however even if it were to return to previous levels, there would be knock on implications for delivery in 2027/28 due to the scale of reductions made across the programme. There are also further impacts from a potential reduction in LADA funding (direct People and Place funding from TS to LAs), which has not yet been confirmed.

### 3 SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO THE SESTRAN 2026/27 PEOPLE AND PLACE PROGRAMME

3.1 The below summarises the changes that have been made to the programme to align with the reduced revenue budget.

Funding area	Revenue cut	% cut
Community Fund	£232,050.39	51
Main Fund (Delivery partners)	£423,761.98	69
Local Authority Delivery Support	£470,849.73	60
SEStran PM and projects	£144,197.00	52

- Schools projects previously funded until June 2027 have had funding reduced for delivery until March 2027.
- Local Authority revenue awards have all been reduced by 60%
- 1 existing and 2 new community projects were removed from the programme
- 1 existing regional walking project was removed from the programme
- 1 new cross RTP wheeling project was removed from the programme
- Eligible costs were capitalised across all projects where possible
- SEStran project management and direct delivery costs reduced

### 4 IMPACTS TO THE PROGRAMME

#### 4.1 Impacts on Local Authority delivery

The scale of Local Authority delivery has been reduced significantly as a result of the revenue cuts, where there is in general far fewer options to capitalise projects. The below two examples demonstrate the scale of the reduction. As we had made the decision in previous funding years not to support whole staff roles for LAs, our cuts to the programme will not substantially impact on the delivery capacity in LAs. However, LAs instead looked to LADA funding which was felt to be more secure long term for this, and so a reduction here may have a significant effect.

City of Edinburgh as an example has had a reduction in revenue from a provisional award of £278,000 to £111,000. This has reduced their revenue project list from 18 down to 4. With a loss of projects including delivering support to schools to increase cycling, promotion of car club across the city and a social prescribing project to address health inequalities.

Scottish Borders had a reduction in revenue from a provisional award of £128,255 to £51,302. Cuts were made to additional cycle training in schools including support for Learn to Ride sessions in younger pupils. This will have knock on impacts on the number of pupils being able to ride a bike and the numbers that will receive cycle training. This will also likely put additional pressure on future years training as more children reach the later years of primary school unable to ride a bike and take part in Bikeability Scotland training. This will also likely impact the ability to deliver a universal offer of Bikeability Scotland to schools.

## 4.2 **Impacts on community organisations**

For community organisations, a cut to revenue is particularly challenging, as they tend to rely more heavily on staff time and direct engagement to deliver projects. They are also less likely to have reserves to draw on, less ability to absorb budget changes and generally don't have the in-house financial expertise to capitalise costs or revise budgets at short notice.

Partial cuts were made to community projects staff time. It is harder to negotiate renewal or extensions of staff contracts when funding is partially cut, and smaller community organisations have less in-house capacity to navigate this quickly (and without further disruption to delivery).

Community organisations funded through the programme tend to work more directly with older people, disabled people, and those on lower incomes. This work tends to require higher levels of support per participant and as such will be more impacted by the cuts to revenue and reductions in funded staff time.

The three community projects that were removed from the programme would have worked closely within their local areas to engage people in walking and cycling more for everyday journeys. Two proposed to offer support for cycling and bike maintenance in areas of higher deprivation.

Overall, the cuts to community organisations will result in fewer staff days, fewer engagement opportunities and narrower geographic reach.

We are continuing to work with the other RTPs to develop additional support for community organisations. The proposal is based around providing community organisations funded across RTPs with a level of non-financial support.

This programme of non-financial support will support a co-ordinated approach across RTPs for community organisations and will work to lessen some of the challenges with the funding model as it stands.

## 4.3 **Impacts on delivery partners**

Larger delivery partners have to some extent been more able to adapt to the budget reduction than LAs or community groups. This is due to a greater proportion of project budgets already being capital heavy and a greater flexibility to capitalise costs in general. The larger organisations in particular are also more able to draw on reserves and absorb cuts as compared to community groups and smaller delivery partners.

There were still however substantial cuts to projects, within this area of the programme. It suffered the largest proportional revenue cut, at 69%. It was also necessary to remove a long-standing school-based national walking behaviour change programme delivered by Living Streets.

In 2025/26 the Living Streets project worked across 40 primary schools in the region, supporting children and families to make more active choices when travelling to school. The loss of the project will have a particular impact in Clackmannanshire,

where it was being delivered across 100% of schools and complemented the work of the LA.

A new cross RTP project was also removed from the programme. This project would have focussed their work across central Scotland ensuring young wheelchair users have both the confidence and ability to carry out everyday tasks and journeys, including allowing for door-to-door independent journeys, linking up with public transport, and using travel apps.

Ultimately the level of cuts to delivery partners will impact on both the scale and intensity of delivery and in-turn the ability to enable communities and individuals to make more active and sustainable transport choices.

#### 4.4 **Reduced investment in walking projects (generally fully revenue based)**

Walking projects are generally much more reliant on revenue funding, and will likely be more impacted by this cut overall and this impact will be compounded in future years if the revenue/capital split remains the same. Projects focussed on improving the accessibility of the public realm is one area in which walking projects can continue to be supported through capital funding.

#### 4.5 **Capacity and capability in the sector**

Our primary consideration at the start of revising the budget was to retain capacity in the sector, specifically for existing roles with someone in post. The scale of cuts did however mean that funded staff time was reduced and some projects had to be cut with the potential for jobs to be lost. As it stands this will directly affect 1.2 FTE across 2 roles, with further impact on support roles and freelancers delivering activity such as cycle training which is hard to quantify.

A reduced level of capacity overall will mean less staff time available to plan ahead and for community organisations, less time to explore and develop ways to become more self-sufficient in future.

As we had made the decision generally not to fund Local Authority staff roles through the programme, this cut has not as yet had a substantial impact on LA capacity.

Reduced confidence in the security of this funding more generally is likely to lead to greater hesitation to take on new staff or to fill vacant roles across all funded organisations. This will likely lead to reduced staff retention and reduced capacity to support engagement activity across the sector. Ultimately, vital skills and experience are being lost from the sector due to continuing uncertain and unpredictable annual funding cycles.

As part of the reductions in revenue, we cut the budget available to support knowledge sharing events. This will result in a reduction in the opportunities available for groups to come together and share best practice. We also had to reduce the budget available to support training, further reducing the potential to build capability in the sector.

The time required to reprofile the programme at the beginning of April took considerable staff time from SEStran and grantees. This took resource away from engagement, planning for the year ahead, and crucially for grantees, delayed their ability to start delivery of their projects. This is particularly impactful for active travel projects, this being an important time of year for engagement as the weather improves.

## **5 FUTURE IMPACTS**

- 5.1 Projects tied to the school year had previously been funded up to June 2027. We reduced funding to school projects for delivery to March 2027 rather than June 2027. This resulted in a revenue saving of around £305,000 from the 2026/27 budget. However, this will require to be covered within the 2027/28 budget of these projects are to continue. This will push additional pressure onto the 2027/28 budget and will result in further significant cuts having to be made across the programme if the revenue budget remains at this reduced level – the programme would in practice see a further revenue reduction of 36%. This will put at risk most projects that are funded, and will see significant impact on jobs roles, community projects, and projects working with schools which so far have been comparatively insulated from the reductions.
- 5.2 If the programme continues with this revenue capital split, there is a risk of an increasing volume of capital assets that do not have the associated resource to ensure they are effectively utilised. This will lead to assets with insufficient support, training or engagement activity and reduced utilisation resulting in lower value for money overall.
- 5.3 Reduced resource across the programme will result in reduced staff time to monitor, evaluate and maintain reporting. This will result in reduced and lower quality data coming through from projects and subsequently make it harder to carry out a robust evaluation of the programme. The programme wide evaluation will also be reduced in scope and scale. This in turn will impact on the ability to make properly informed decisions about best practice and future funding awards.
- 5.4 The late announcement of this funding cut resulted in significant work on reviewing the budgets that had been agreed in principle both for SEStran and the groups funded. The scale and timing of this cut has already eroded trust and confidence in the programme overall.
- 5.5 City of Edinburgh, Midlothian and Scottish Borders Councils will all be hosting the Grand Depart of the Tour de France in July 2027. The cut in funding will have a negative impact on the ability of these Local Authorities to maximise the socio-economic benefits and legacy of this world-famous sporting event coming to the region. This is the first time the event has come to Scotland, and it is unlikely to return for some time so this a significant loss of opportunity to harness the impact it will have in engaging the public in cycling.

## **6 SUMMARY**

- 6.1 The 60% reduction in revenue funding presents a fundamental challenge to the delivery of the SEStran People and Place Programme, significantly constraining the programme's ability to support behaviour change and community-based interventions. While capital funding remains stable, the shift in funding balance limits flexibility and places additional pressure on delivery models not designed to operate without sufficient revenue support.
- 6.2 Despite the rapid and effective response to reprofile funding and maintain programme continuity, the scale and timing of these reductions will have immediate impacts on project delivery and longer-term implications for outcomes across the region. There is a clear risk that progress made in recent years, particularly in addressing transport inequality, supporting sustainable travel behaviours, and enabling access to employment and services, will be slowed or reversed.
- 6.3 Looking ahead, continued uncertainty around future revenue funding will further challenge strategic planning and delivery. Sustained investment in revenue is critical to ensuring that capital interventions are fully realised and that the programme can continue to deliver meaningful, inclusive, and lasting transport outcomes across South East Scotland.

Michael Melton  
**Programme Manager**  
12 June 2026



Urban  
Foresight

# SEStran People and Place Programme

Evaluation 2025/26

PREPARED FOR

South East of Scotland Regional Transport Partnership (SEStran)



# Executive Summary

The SEStran People and Place Programme continued to support active and sustainable travel across the South East of Scotland during 2025/26.

A total of £6.45 million was invested across 149 projects delivered by local authorities, third sector organisations, community groups, educational institutions, and other delivery partners across all eight SEStran local authority areas.

The programme supported activity across four themes: Accessibility and Inclusion, Schools and Young People, Workplaces, and Capacity and Capability Building. During 2025/26, the programme broadened its focus beyond active travel to include a wider range of sustainable travel interventions and increased involvement from community organisations delivering locally tailored projects.

The evaluation found evidence of positive outcomes across all programme themes. More than 51,000 engagements with young people were recorded, alongside over 6,000 engagements through Accessibility and Inclusion projects. Across the programme, more than 1,800 cycles were distributed, over 2,500 cycles were repaired, refurbished or serviced, and hundreds of training sessions, led rides, workshops, and community events were delivered.

Evidence from project monitoring, stakeholder engagement, and participant feedback indicates increased participation in walking, wheeling, cycling, and wider sustainable travel activity. Participants reported increased confidence, greater use of active travel for everyday journeys, and improved perceptions of safety. Confidence-building emerged as one of the most consistently reported outcomes and was identified as an important precursor to longer-term behaviour change.

School-based projects supported increased cycling participation, skills development, and independent travel among young people. Accessibility and Inclusion projects were particularly effective in reducing barriers to participation through cycle access schemes, training, community engagement, and targeted support. Community-led projects demonstrated strong outcomes in engaging individuals experiencing financial, social, accessibility, and confidence-related barriers to active travel.

The programme generated a range of wider outcomes beyond transport behaviour change. These included improved physical and mental wellbeing, stronger social connections, increased independence, reduced transport barriers, and improved access to employment, education, services, and community opportunities. Evidence suggests that outcomes were strongest where projects combined practical support with ongoing engagement and community-based delivery.

The evaluation also found evidence of increased organisational capacity and stronger regional collaboration. Capacity and Capability Building projects supported skills development, partnership working, knowledge sharing, and organisational learning. Shared learning events strengthened relationships between local authorities, delivery partners, and community organisations, while stakeholders reported improved engagement, clearer monitoring expectations, and stronger evaluation practice compared with 2024/25.

Several challenges remain. Stakeholders highlighted the impact of short-term funding cycles on long-term planning, staff retention, partnership development, and the ability to evidence sustained behaviour change. Variations in monitoring approaches and organisational capacity also continue to affect the consistency and comparability of data across projects.

Overall, the evaluation concludes that the People and Place Programme is delivering positive transport, social, wellbeing, and organisational outcomes across the SEStran region. The programme's flexibility, emphasis on locally tailored delivery, and focus on reducing barriers to participation remain key strengths. Continued investment in community-led delivery, organisational capacity, partnership development, and proportionate monitoring approaches will be important in sustaining progress and supporting a longer-term shift towards active and sustainable travel.

# Foreword

This report marks the second year of our People and Place programme, which has continued to support and enable a wide range of active travel behaviour change projects across the region. Building on the foundations established in 2024/25, the programme has expanded its reach and deepened its impact, supporting initiatives such as cycle repairs, bike recycling, access to new cycles, and local street audits aimed at removing barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling.

It has been particularly encouraging to see how delivery partners have adapted and strengthened their approaches over the year, with many projects demonstrating sustained engagement and growing participation. Hearing directly from participants has remained one of the most rewarding aspects of this work. From young people gaining confidence to travel actively, to communities benefiting from improved local environments, these stories continue to highlight the tangible difference the programme is making.

While progress has been positive, 2025/26 has also been a year of continued learning. As Regional Transport Partnerships have become more familiar with their roles in managing and administering funding, processes have become more streamlined. However, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring consistency in data collection and capturing the full breadth of outcomes across diverse projects.

As with last year, this report does not capture the entirety of activity delivered within the programme. A number of projects extend beyond the reporting period, meaning that some outcomes will be evaluated and reported in future publications. This approach allows for a more robust and comprehensive understanding of long-term impacts.

We are pleased that this evaluation provides a valuable overview of programme performance in 2025/26 and identifies key insights and lessons that will inform ongoing development. These learnings will be instrumental as we continue to evolve and strengthen People and Place in the coming years.

Finally, we would like to thank all those who have contributed to the success of the programme and this report – including our partner local authorities, delivery organisations, and wider stakeholders. We are also grateful to Transport Scotland for their continued investment and support in enabling the delivery and growth of People and Place.

Brian Butler

Partnership Director

# In numbers

£6.45m	850
Total programme funding awarded and spent	Scooters provided
£4.33m	32
Capital funding invested	E-bikes provided
£2.13m	4
Revenue funding invested	Adaptive cycles provided
100+	4
Projects delivered across the SEStran region	Cargo bikes provided
8	199
Local authority areas supported	Cycle parking spaces installed
1,862	59
Cycles provided	Cycle storage units installed
1,029	38
Refurbished bikes provided	Cycle repair stations installed
833	
New cycles provided	

Supporting active travel across communities, schools, workplaces, and public spaces throughout the South East of Scotland.

# Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Foreword .....	3
In numbers .....	4
Contents .....	5
Introduction .....	1
About this report.....	1
Purpose of the evaluation.....	1
Continuity with 2024/25 evaluation .....	1
Structure of the report.....	1
Programme Context and Evolution.....	3
Overview of the programme.....	3
Policy and strategic context .....	3
Programme design and delivery (2025/26) .....	4
Key programme changes since 2024/25 .....	5
Programme Reach and Delivery .....	6
Overview of funded projects.....	6
Geographic and thematic distribution .....	6
Evaluation Approach and Methodology .....	8
Evaluation framework: Theory of Change.....	8
Methodology overview .....	8
Enhancements from 2024/25 .....	9
Data collection methods .....	9
Limitations and considerations .....	9
Programme Outcomes and Impact.....	11
Overview of intended outcomes.....	11
Headline figures .....	12

Integrated insights.....	13
Capacity and capability .....	21
Understanding behaviour change .....	25
<b>Understanding Impact: Lived Experience .....</b>	<b>27</b>
Personas .....	27
Stories of Change .....	29
What this tells us about behaviour change.....	32
<b>What Works, For Whom, and Why .....</b>	<b>34</b>
Key success factors.....	34
Barriers and challenges .....	34
Differences across themes / groups.....	35
<b>Capacity Building and System Change .....</b>	<b>37</b>
Capacity and capability workshop overview.....	37
Capacity and capability building in practice.....	37
Embedded change and progress since 2024/25 .....	40
<b>Reflections on Monitoring and Evaluation.....</b>	<b>42</b>
Improvements made in 2025/26 .....	42
Remaining gaps .....	42
<b>Conclusions and Recommendations.....</b>	<b>43</b>
Overall conclusions .....	43
Strategic recommendations .....	43
Priorities for 2026/27 .....	45
<b>Appendix I: Theories of Change (2024/25) .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Appendix II: 2024/25 Recommendations and progress summary ..</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Appendix III: Capacity and capability outcomes and indicators.....</b>	<b>55</b>

# Introduction

## About this report

The South East of Scotland Regional Transport Partnership (SEStran) commissioned Urban Foresight to undertake an independent evaluation of the People and Place Programme for 2025/26. This builds on the evaluation of the 2024/25 delivery year, providing continuity in approach while incorporating enhancements to reflect the evolving programme and improved data availability.

## Purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation aims to assess the impact of funded projects across the region, understand what works in delivering behaviour change, and identify opportunities to strengthen future programme delivery, monitoring, and evaluation.

The 2025/26 programme continues to support a diverse portfolio of projects delivered by local authorities, third sector organisations, and community groups, focused on enabling a shift towards active and sustainable travel for everyday journeys.

## Continuity with 2024/25 evaluation

This evaluation builds on the foundations established during the 2024/25 process. The 2025/26 evaluation has focused on:

- Strengthening the evidence base,
- Building understanding of project capacity and capability,
- Enhancing engagement with project leads and delivery partners.

## Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows:

**Programme Context and Evolution.** Introduces the programme, its aims, delivery model, and key developments since 2024/25.

**Programme Reach and Delivery.** Provides an overview of programme scale, thematic activity, geographic reach, and participant engagement across the SEStran region.

**Evaluation Approach and Methodology.** Outlines the evaluation framework, methodology, data collection methods, and key considerations informing the evaluation approach.

**Programme Outcomes and Impact.** Presents the findings of the evaluation, drawing on quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to programme outcomes and behaviour change.

Understanding Impact: Lived Experience. Explores programme impacts through stories of change, participant personas, and wider insights into behaviour change.

What Works, For Whom, and Why. Examines key success factors, barriers and challenges, and differences in delivery and outcomes across projects and participant groups.

Capacity Building and System Change. Explores organisational learning, partnership development, embedded change, and progress since the 2024/25 evaluation.

Reflections on Monitoring and Evaluation. Reviews improvements made during 2025/26 and identifies remaining gaps and opportunities relating to monitoring and evaluation processes.

Conclusions and Recommendations. Summarises overall conclusions from the evaluation and sets out recommendations for future programme delivery and evaluation.

# Programme Context and Evolution

The South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) is the statutory regional transport partnership for the South East of Scotland.

SEStran are responsible for developing and delivering the regional transport strategy (RTS) and comprises of eight local authorities covering: City of Edinburgh Council, Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish borders, and West Lothian.

## Overview of the programme

The SEStran People and Place Programme supports projects aimed at increasing participation in active and sustainable travel across the South East of Scotland. The programme funds a range of interventions designed to reduce barriers to participation, encourage behaviour change, and improve access to sustainable transport opportunities within communities across the region.

The programme builds on the first year of People and Place delivery during 2024/25, through which SEStran distributed approximately £6.4 million across around 100 projects. The programme continues to support projects delivered by local authorities, third sector organisations, educational institutions, community groups, and other delivery partners.

While the 2024/25 programme primarily focused on active travel interventions, the 2025/26 programme reflects a broader emphasis on both active and sustainable travel. This broader scope included projects supporting walking, wheeling, cycling, workplace travel planning, sustainable transport awareness activity, cycle access schemes, and wider accessibility initiatives.

The programme continues to support delivery across four core themes:

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

A notable development within the 2025/26 programme has been the increased involvement of community groups and locally embedded organisations delivering place-based interventions tailored to local needs and priorities. The programme also broadened its focus to include sustainable travel alongside active travel projects.

## Policy and strategic context

The People and Place Programme operates within a strong national and regional policy context focused on decarbonisation, public health improvement, accessibility, and behaviour change.

At a national level, the programme aligns with Scotland's National Transport Strategy, the Active Travel Framework, and wider ambitions to encourage a shift towards more sustainable and

inclusive transport systems. The programme also supports priorities relating to reducing inequalities, improving health outcomes, and enabling more connected and resilient communities.

At a regional level, the programme contributes to the delivery of SEStran's Regional Transport Strategy, supporting objectives relating to sustainable mobility, accessibility, community wellbeing, and reduced car dependency across the South East of Scotland.

Recent developments within the Scottish transport policy landscape have reinforced the importance of locally tailored and place-based approaches to behaviour change. Within this context, the People and Place Programme provides a flexible delivery mechanism capable of responding to differing local needs and opportunities across the region.

The programme reflects increasing recognition that transport behaviours are shaped by interconnected social, economic, environmental, and structural factors. As a result, many funded projects combine practical interventions with engagement, confidence-building, and community support activity.

## Programme design and delivery (2025/26)

The 2025/26 programme supports a range of delivery approaches designed to encourage participation in active and sustainable travel across different population groups and communities.

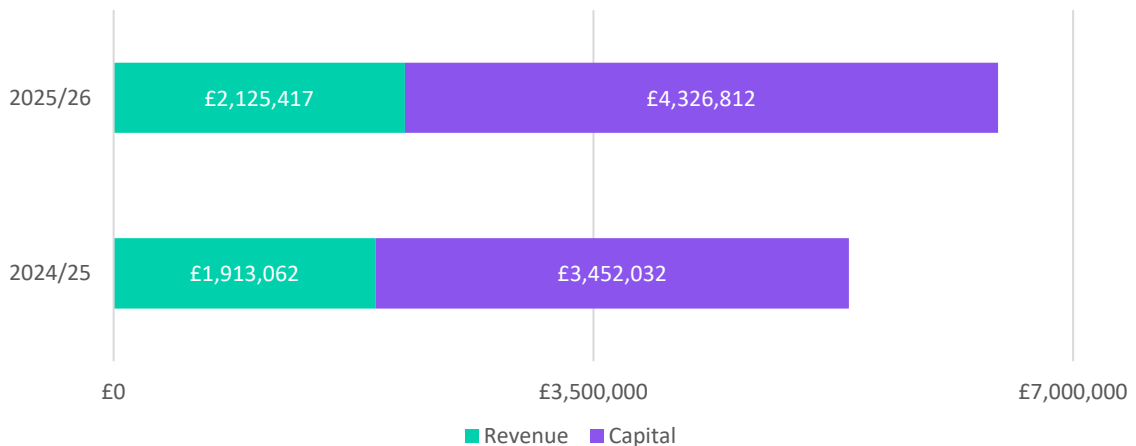
Projects funded through the programme include:

- School-based active travel initiatives
- Community walking and cycling programmes
- Workplace engagement and travel planning
- Cycle access and repair schemes
- Skills development and training
- Behaviour change campaigns
- Sustainable transport awareness activity
- Community-led accessibility and inclusion projects

Delivery models vary depending on local context, participant groups, and project aims. While some projects focus primarily on infrastructure and physical access improvements, others prioritise engagement, education, confidence-building, or community development approaches.

The programme supports a combination of capital and revenue-funded interventions. Capital funding has supported infrastructure improvements, cycle hubs, repair stations, cycle parking, and accessibility measures, while revenue funding has enabled staffing, training, volunteer development, engagement activity, and programme delivery.

## Total revenue and capital allocation



## Key programme changes since 2024/25

The 2025/26 programme reflects several important developments from the first year of People and Place delivery.

The most significant change has been the broadening of programme scope from a predominantly active travel focus towards a wider emphasis on active and sustainable travel. This has enabled greater inclusion of projects relating to sustainable transport awareness, accessibility, and wider behaviour change activity.

The programme has also seen increased involvement from community groups and grassroots organisations delivering locally tailored interventions. This has strengthened the programme's ability to engage communities experiencing barriers to participation and enabled more flexible delivery approaches.

From an evaluation perspective, the 2025/26 programme benefits from improvements to monitoring and reporting processes developed following the 2024/25 evaluation. These improvements included clearer expectations around data collection, suggested monitoring questions provided by SEStran, and increased engagement between SEStran and delivery partners on monitoring and evaluation requirements.

Stakeholder evidence suggests that these developments are contributing to a more mature and integrated programme model, although challenges relating to organisational capacity, data consistency, and yearly government funding cycles remain.

# Programme Reach and Delivery

## Overview of funded projects

The 2025/26 programme supported projects across all SEStran local authority areas, delivered by local authorities, third sector organisations, educational institutions, and community groups.

Funded activity spanned four core themes:

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

Projects included a combination of infrastructure improvements, behaviour change initiatives, training and skills development, community engagement activity, and sustainable transport awareness interventions.

The programme continued to support a mix of capital and revenue-funded activity, enabling both physical infrastructure improvements and engagement-led delivery approaches.

Table 1 provides an overview of the allocation and project numbers during the 2025/26 programme.

*Table 1: Project number and funding per theme*

Theme	Number of projects	Approx funding allocated	Percentage of total spend
Accessibility and Inclusion	79	£3.1m	48.5
Schools and young people	48	£2.3m	35.8
Capacity and capability building	17	£0.8m	11.9
Workplaces	5	£0.25m	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>£6.45m</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Geographic and thematic distribution

Projects were delivered across all eight SEStran local authority areas, alongside seven regional projects operating across multiple council boundaries. The largest concentration of projects was

located within the City of Edinburgh (34 projects), followed by East Lothian and Midlothian (17 each), the Scottish Borders (16), Fife and West Lothian (15 each), and Clackmannanshire and Falkirk (14 each).

Accessibility and Inclusion represented the largest area of delivery, accounting for 79 projects and approximately £3.1 million (48%) of programme investment. Schools and Young People projects comprised a further 48 projects and £2.3 million (36%) of funding, highlighting the continued importance of schools as a key delivery setting. Capacity and Capability projects accounted for 17 projects (£0.8 million), while 5 Workplace projects received approximately £0.25 million.

Across the region, the programme supported a diverse mix of infrastructure, behaviour change, inclusion, and capacity-building activity, with a particular emphasis on improving access to active and sustainable travel opportunities for communities experiencing the greatest barriers to participation.

*Table 2: Project number and funding by local authority area*

Geographic area	Number of projects	Approx funding allocated	Percentage of total spend
City of Edinburgh	34	£2.1m	31.3
East Lothian	17	£0.45m	6.9
Midlothian	17	£0.36m	5.6
Scottish Borders	16	£0.70m	10.9
Fife	15	£1.1m	16.3
West Lothian	15	£0.46	7.2
Clackmannanshire	14	£0.46m	7.1
Falkirk	14	£0.54m	8.4
Regional (cross-boundary projects)	7	£0.40m	6.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>£6.45m</b>	<b>100</b>

# Evaluation Approach and Methodology

## Evaluation framework: Theory of Change

The evaluation is guided by the Theory of Change developed during the 2024/25 evaluation process. The Theory of Change provides a consistent framework for understanding how programme activities contribute to intended outputs, outcomes, and longer-term impacts.

Using the same framework across both evaluation years has supported continuity in the evaluation approach, enabling comparison across years and contributing to a broader understanding of programme progress and development.

The framework provided a basis for understanding how intended pathways of change were being realised across different projects, themes, and participant groups. Improved monitoring processes and wider stakeholder engagement during 2025/26 also provided a stronger basis for understanding how change was occurring across the programme.

Findings throughout this report are structured around key outcomes and themes linked to the evaluation framework.

## Methodology overview

The evaluation drew on a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence sources. Quantitative analysis included quarterly monitoring returns, project reporting, programme documentation, and funding data submitted throughout the 2025/26 delivery year.

While the number of interviews represents a relatively small proportion of funded projects, interviewees were selected, where possible, because they had oversight of multiple projects. The 18 interviews therefore provided potential coverage of 80 funded projects, while also reflecting a spread of programme themes, geographies, and organisation types. Collectively, the organisations represented accounted for approximately 54% of total programme expenditure, providing insight into a substantial proportion of programme activity across the SEStran region.



Figure 1: Engagement summary

Additional qualitative evidence was gathered through a Capacity and Capability workshop, shared learning events, project case studies, and stories of change.

## Enhancements from 2024/25

The 2025/26 evaluation process benefited from several enhancements developed following learning from the 2024/25 evaluation.

These included improvements to reporting consistency and comparability across projects, alongside expanded engagement with project leads and delivery partners throughout the evaluation process.

Additional qualitative evidence gathering, including stakeholder interviews, stories of change, and persona development, also contributed to a richer understanding of programme impacts and participant experiences.

## Data collection methods

Evidence for the evaluation was gathered through a range of quantitative and qualitative methods, including:

- Monitoring and reporting data provided by funded projects
- Interviews and engagement sessions with project leads and stakeholders
- Stories of change developed through stakeholder engagement
- Personas reflecting common participant experiences and behavioural journeys identified across the programme

Using multiple sources of evidence helped strengthen and validate the findings presented throughout the evaluation.

## Limitations and considerations

As with the 2024/25 evaluation, several limitations and considerations should be acknowledged when interpreting findings.

While the use of a consistent evaluation framework supports comparison across years, differences in project activity, delivery models, and monitoring approaches can affect direct comparability between programmes.

While data quality and consistency improved during 2025/26, monitoring approaches continue to vary across projects. Variation remains in the quality, completeness, and depth of monitoring information provided by projects.

Survey response rates also remained relatively low across several projects, limiting the ability to draw conclusions from participant survey data alone. As a result, qualitative evidence, stakeholder interviews, case studies, and project reporting played an important role in understanding programme impacts and participant experiences.



# Programme Outcomes and Impact

## Overview of intended outcomes

The People and Place Programme seeks to support a shift towards active and sustainable travel through interventions designed to reduce barriers, increase confidence, and improve access to opportunities for walking, wheeling, cycling, and sustainable transport.

Consistent with the Theory of Change developed during the 2024/25 evaluation, the programme aims to:

- Increase uptake of active and sustainable travel modes
- Improve perceptions of accessibility, safety, and confidence
- Reduce transport poverty and barriers to participation
- Build long-term behavioural change
- Strengthen organisational and community capacity to support active and sustainable travel.

The evaluation framework remains aligned with Transport Scotland's Active Travel Framework indicators for People and Place, supporting continuity between delivery years and comparability with national objectives.

Core indicators for the People and Place Programme within Transport Scotland's Active Travel Framework are, in summary:

1. Proportion of short everyday journeys made by walking, wheeling, and cycling
2. Attitudes and propensity towards active travel
3. Journeys to school by active modes
4. Frequency of walking and cycling for leisure/exercise
5. Perceptions of safety
6. Identification of barriers to active travel

Analysis undertaken as part of this evaluation demonstrates evidence of positive change across a number of these areas, although the scale and consistency of evidence vary between themes and projects. As with the 2024/25 evaluation, evidence was strongest in projects with more mature monitoring processes and higher levels of participant engagement.

## Participant reach

Projects funded through the programme engaged a broad range of participants across all eight SEStran local authority areas. The majority of programme investment was directed towards the Accessibility and Inclusion (£3.1 million; 48%) and Schools and Young People (£2.3 million; 36%)

themes, reflecting the programme's focus on addressing barriers to participation and supporting behaviour change among younger people.

Community-based projects were particularly effective in engaging groups who may not traditionally participate in active travel. For example, Bikes for Refugees supported refugees and asylum seekers through bike access and repair schemes, while projects such as Stow Cycle Hub and Sea the Change combined bike access with community-led activities to support participation in rural communities.

School-based initiatives, including local authority programmes and I Bike projects, provided opportunities for young people to develop cycling skills, confidence, and independence. Across the programme, engagement was often strongest where practical support, such as access to cycles, training, and maintenance services, was combined with social and community-based activities.

## Headline figures

This section presents a programme-wide view of the activities delivered by funded projects throughout 2025/26. Reported figures have been aggregated to give a programme total against a number of key outcomes.

### Schools and young people

48 projects were funded under the Schools and Young People theme. These projects aimed to deliver holistic solutions for creating an environment where active travel choices are not only an option, but the most desirable way to travel for young people and families.

- 286 events were held and 51,127 individual engagements with young people were recorded
- 806 young people's cycle were serviced, fixed and refurbished
- 96 cycle loans were recorded
- 69 cycles given to young people

### Workplaces

Five projects were funded under the Workplace theme. These projects focused on workplaces and aimed to make active travel a realistic option for commuting. Across the funded projects:

- 198 cycle loans were recorded,
- 92 led walks and cycles were hosted,
- 23 separate cycle storage improvements were made in workplaces,
- Projects reporting participant engagement data recorded at least 416 participants across the Workplace theme.

### Accessibility and inclusion

79 projects were funded under the Accessibility and Inclusion theme. These projects aimed to improve and promote accessibility and inclusion and create opportunities for everyone to be able to make the choice to travel actively.

Across the funded projects:

- 944 cycles were given to participants, including adaptive cycles, and 910 cycle loans were recorded,
- 1,730 cycles were serviced, fixed or refurbished,
- 580 training sessions, led walks/cycles and events were held,
- 6,135 engagements through projects funded under the accessibility and inclusion theme.

### Capacity and Capability

17 projects were funded under the Capacity and Capability theme. These projects aimed to build the delivery capacity and capability of the active travel sector including within SEStran, the region's local authorities and third sector delivery partners.

- 3 FTE roles were created
- 18 different training sessions were delivered to staff

## Integrated insights

### Indicator 1: Proportion of short everyday journeys by walking/wheeling and cycling

Projects across multiple themes reported increases in walking, wheeling, and cycling participation. Evidence from led rides, workplace challenges, and community programmes suggests that participants increased both utility and leisure active travel.

Stakeholder analysis identified increased cycling participation as a particularly common outcome across projects. Community-based projects reported that participants often progressed from occasional or leisure cycling towards more regular everyday journeys.

Access to e-bikes have enabled a greater number of journeys to be made by active modes, as one participant shared:

“Having the e-bike meant that we took a lot of journeys by bike when we otherwise would have driven” – E-Bike Library, FEL Scotland

Cycling UK reported that 76% of participants were cycling for some short, local journeys, up from 42% before taking part in the Connecting Communities project. In 2024/25, post-intervention reporting identified 71% of participants cycling more for everyday journeys, from the same pre-intervention starting point of 42%. The similarity in findings across both delivery years provides further evidence of the project's ability to support sustained increases in everyday cycling.

Improvements in rates of active travel were particularly evident where projects combined practical access to bikes with confidence-building activities, route planning support, and opportunities to develop skills through real-world travel experiences.

Cycling UK's Connecting Communities programme, Transition University of St Andrews, CoMoUK's mobility hubs, the Bike Station's bike libraries, and community cycling projects such as Stow Cycle Hub all reported evidence of participants increasing their use of cycling for local journeys, commuting, accessing services, and travelling within their communities.

## Change in Weekly Cycling Participation

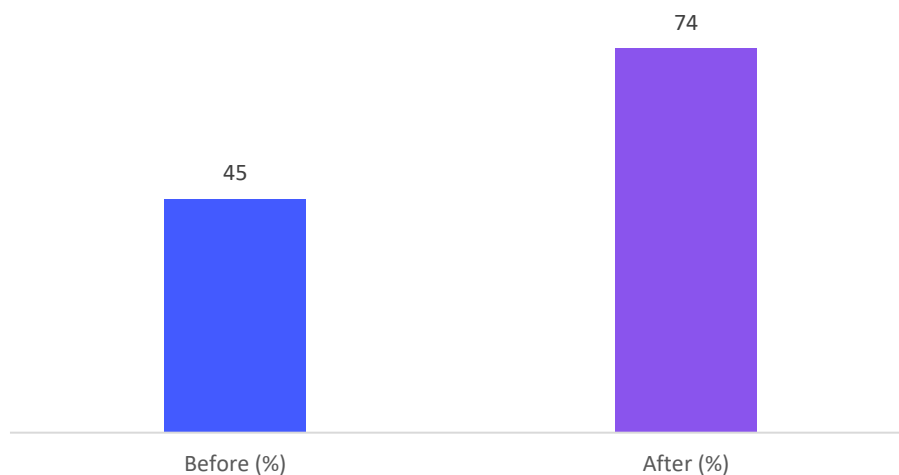


Figure 2: Cycling UK Connecting Communities participant survey data.

Evidence from project reporting suggests that increased use of active travel was often supported through sustained engagement activities that helped participants develop skills and confidence over time.

East Lothian Council ran two projects under the Workplaces theme aiming to increase the active travel share of staff commutes. Their 2025/26 staff travel survey showed a 3% modal share for cycling, increasing from 2% in 2024/25. The same survey showed a 6% modal share for walking, the same as 2024/25, sustaining a significant increase on previous years.

Across the programme, a range of practical activities were delivered to encourage active travel participation. FEL Scotland alone delivered 403 active travel sessions involving 2,833 pupils, including cycle skills training, led rides, maintenance workshops and active travel taster sessions. East Lothian Council's Learn to Ride programme supported more than 130 children to learn to cycle, with over 90 progressing into Bikeability Scotland training.

Similarly, Transition University of St Andrews combined cycle access with maintenance training and travel support to encourage sustainable travel among students, while CoMoUK's mobility hubs delivered led rides, Dr Bike sessions and travel awareness activities to help residents explore alternatives to private car use.

*“I’ve been cycling to work in Edinburgh. I’m doing different routes. When you use an e-bike, it’s not hard. Before, cycling was an exercise. I used to have to dress in sports clothes. Now, I’ll just go out in my jeans.”*

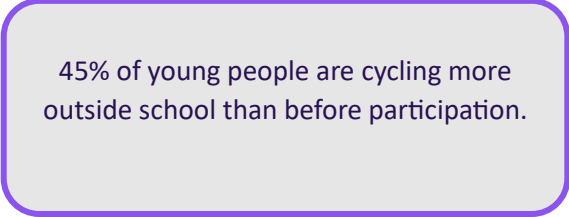
Projects were most effective where practical support was combined with opportunities to build confidence and develop skills. The evidence suggests that sustained engagement and hands-on participation play an important role in supporting everyday active travel.

**Evaluation:** Positive change where data was available, building on the positive change observed in 2024/25. However, data gaps prevent a programme-wide change in proportion being calculated.

**Indicator 2: Attitudes towards/propensity to walking, cycling and wheeling**

One of the strongest and most consistent findings across projects was increased confidence among participants. Stakeholder evidence indicates that confidence-building is a critical precursor to longer-term participation in active and sustainable travel, though this has not been widely captured in quantitative form.

Cycling UK's Connecting Communities project, SHRUB Cooperative's Wee Spoke Hub, Falkirk Council's cycle maintenance programme, Greener Kirkcaldy's Build a Bike project, and FEL Scotland's schools programmes all reported improvements in confidence, independence, and willingness to travel actively.



45% of young people are cycling more outside school than before participation.

Figure 3: The Bike Station – Wee Bike Library

Project reporting consistently identified confidence-building as a precursor to longer-term behaviour change. Participants reported increased willingness to cycle independently, greater familiarity with local routes, and improved knowledge of cycle maintenance and road safety.

*“I’m more confident cycling on the road and exploring the area. I previously wouldn’t have cycled on my own and now I can and often do!” – Connecting Communities project, Cycling UK*

Several projects demonstrated that practical workshops and supportive peer environments enabled participants to develop skills, independence, and confidence in maintaining and using bicycles. Falkirk Council's maintenance workshops enabled participants to learn practical repair skills and increase confidence in maintaining their own bikes. Greener Kirkcaldy's Build a Bike project supported participants to assemble and maintain cycles, while SHRUB Cooperative's Wee Spoke Hub used peer learning and practical workshops to build confidence among participants who may not otherwise have engaged with cycling activities.

In school-based projects, confidence outcomes were also more clearly linked to increased independence among young people, including greater familiarity with local environments, routes, and independent travel.

*“It has been incredible to see the confidence boost and increase in cycling engagement following our first Bikeability cohort.”*

For several participants, increased mobility also had broader social and economic impacts. Bikes for Refugees' New Scots Bike Inclusion project, for example, demonstrated how access to a cycle can improve access to healthcare, appointments, community activities, and social opportunities.

Projects also demonstrated that active travel interventions can support access to local places and services, helping participants develop familiarity and confidence in local routes.

Compared with 2024/25, this year’s evaluation provided stronger evidence of the role these interventions can play in improving confidence in accessing local places and services, particularly through increased familiarity with local routes and independent travel.

This suggests a broader range of wellbeing and developmental outcomes associated with participation than was evidenced during the previous evaluation period.

Confidence emerged as one of the most significant outcomes across the programme and appears to be an important precursor to longer-term behaviour change.

**Evaluation:** Positive change where data was available with increased confidence particularly evident, as in 2024/25.

### Indicator 3: Proportion of journeys to school by active modes

Evidence from school-based projects suggests that young people used active modes more, including journeys to and from school.

FEL Scotland's school programmes, The Bike Station's Wee Bike Library, Bikeability delivery in Falkirk, East Lothian Council's Learn to Ride programme, and local authority school travel initiatives all reported increased cycling participation among young people.

70% of surveyed students walk/wheel more after participating in FEL Scotland’s Schools programme, and 38% cycle more after taking part. The impact of this project is particularly significant, engaging more than 3,600 young people in 2025/26.

The Bike Station reported that 45% of young people engaged are doing more cycling outside of school than they used to (pre-intervention) after engaging with the Wee Bike Library project. This is a slight decrease on the 54% increase reported in 2024/25, though this could be attributed to the higher baseline as a result of last year’s success in participating schools.

### School-Based Active Travel Outcomes

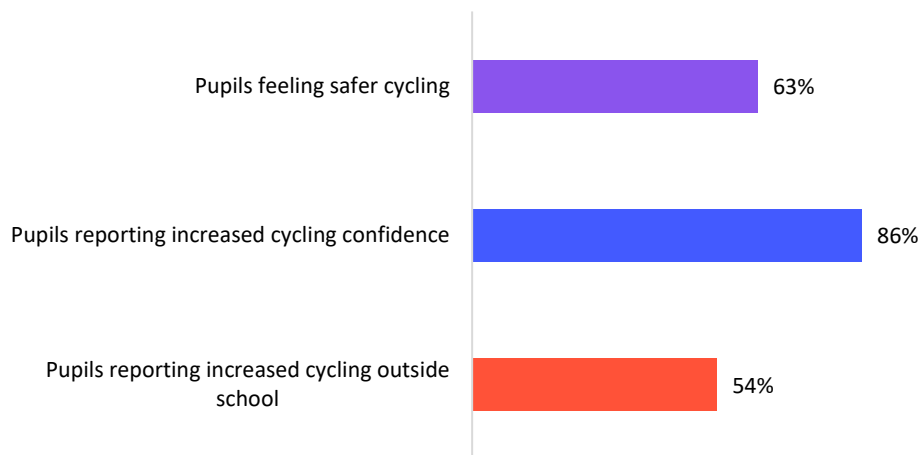


Figure 4: FEL Scotland Schools Programme and The Bike Station Wee Bike Library participant survey data

School-based projects combined access to equipment, skills development, and practical experience to support participation.

Across the programme, a range of practical activities were delivered to encourage active travel participation including cycle skills training, led rides, maintenance workshops and active travel taster sessions. East Lothian Council's Learn to Ride programme supported more than 130 children to learn to cycle, with over 90 progressing into Bikeability Scotland training.

Projects reported that access to bikes remained particularly important in supporting participation among pupils experiencing financial barriers.

“The bike has given me freedom to get around and do things independently.”

“Having our own fleet of bikes will make a real difference, it means every child can take part in Bikeability training regardless of family circumstances.”

Removing access barriers alongside providing skills development appears particularly important in supporting active travel among children and young people.

**Evaluation:** Positive change where data was available, building on the positive change observed in 2024/25. However, data gaps prevent a programme-wide change in proportion being calculated.

#### Indicator 4: Frequency of walking and cycling for pleasure/ exercise

Participants in projects frequently reported improvements in physical activity, mental wellbeing, and social connection.

In Cycling UK's Connecting Communities project, 68% of participants said that they were not meeting the NHS physical activity guidelines beforehand. After participating in the project, 69% of those said that the support they received through the project helped to increase the amount of exercise they do.

Borders Wheels' Indoor Walking survey discovered that 48% of surveyed walkers increased their physical activity with Walk It. 44% of participants reported improved feelings of social connectedness, 37% reported improved mental health and wellbeing, and 25% reported improved physical activity and mobility.

Qualitative evidence from across the programme demonstrated strong wellbeing outcomes associated with participation in projects. Many participants described improved mental wellbeing, reduced isolation, and stronger social connections.

Projects such as North Edinburgh Arts highlighted the importance of social and community aspects within active travel interventions. Several projects also identified wider health outcomes linked to increased activity levels, confidence, and participation.

“Since I got a bike, I started to exercise more often which resulted in me feeling healthier than before.” – Cycle Access Fund, Cycling UK

“I feel happier and healthier when I cycle to work” – Connecting Communities, Cycling UK

Thematic analysis suggests that wellbeing outcomes were often strongest where projects created supportive and welcoming environments. In many cases, the social element of projects appeared equally important to participants as the active travel activity itself.

This was particularly evident within projects such as North Edinburgh Arts and FEL where participants frequently highlighted the value of social connection, peer support, and inclusive group activity alongside the practical aspects of participation.

Projects including Borders Wheels' Walk It programme, North Edinburgh Arts, Sea the Change, Stow Cycle Hub, Cycling UK's Connecting Communities project, and CoMoUK mobility hubs all reported wider health and wellbeing outcomes linked to participation.

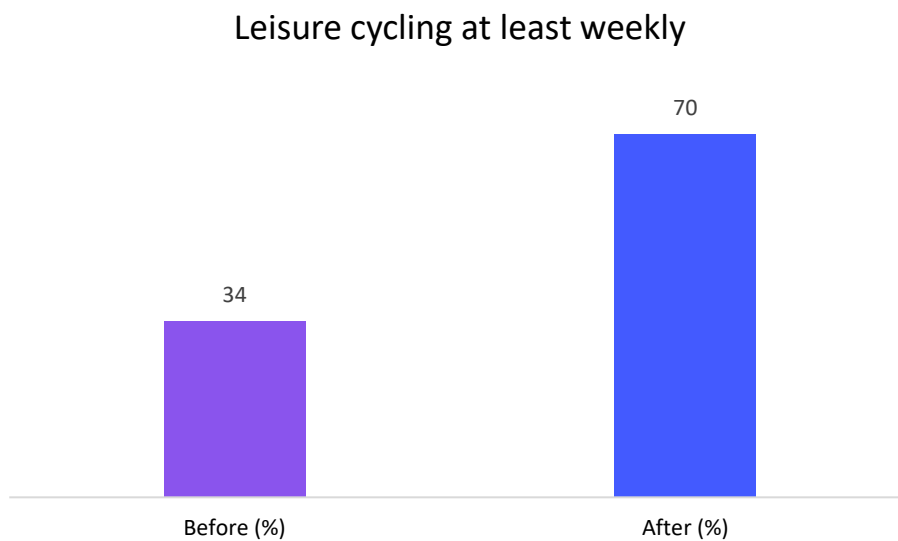


Figure 5: Cycling UK, Connecting Communities participant survey

Many projects highlighted that social connection was often as important to participants as the active travel activity itself.

“Cycling to work takes around 10–15 minutes, whereas before it took longer in the car because of congestion. I feel happier and healthier when I cycle to work. I’ve also saved money by not taking the car.”

The wider wellbeing benefits generated through programme participation appear to support continued engagement and may play an important role in sustaining behaviour change.

**Evaluation:** Positive change where data was available, with increased recognition of the wellbeing benefits driving an increased frequency of walking and cycling.

#### Indicator 9: Perceptions of safety when walking, wheeling and cycling

Perceptions of safety were supported through a range of activities designed to build practical skills, confidence, and familiarity with active travel. Across several projects, participants took part in:

- Cycle skills training
- Led rides and supported cycling activities
- Route planning and independent travel skills sessions

- Bike maintenance training
- Practical bike handling exercises, including ramps and cone-based activities

FEL Scotland's schools programme, Cycling UK's Connecting Communities project, Falkirk Council's maintenance workshops, Transition University of St Andrews, and Stow Cycle Hub all reported improvements in confidence and perceptions of safety.

81% Felt safer after participation

- FEL Scotland Schools Programme participant survey

Projects also supported perceptions of safety through a combination of practical skills development, confidence-building activities, and access to equipment.

Across the FEL Schools programme alone, delivery included 23 cycle skills sessions, 26 led rides, and 8 bike maintenance workshops. Projects also provided access to helmets, locks, loan bikes, maintenance support, and route planning activities, helping participants develop both the skills and equipment required to travel safely and confidently.

Data from the project in 2024/25 showed that less than 60% of young people felt safe walking and less than 40% felt safe cycling to school, indicating a substantial improvement in 2025/26. Similarly, 66% of participants in Cycling UK's Connecting Communities project reported that taking part in the programme helped them feel safer when cycling.

Projects supporting underrepresented groups continued to highlight the importance of inclusive environments and tailored support in reducing anxiety and enabling participation. However, compared with 2024/25, this year's evaluation provided stronger evidence around how confidence develops over time through gradual progression, peer support, and repeated engagement.

Participants frequently linked increased confidence with greater feelings of safety when travelling independently.

*"Every child has the opportunity to develop essential road safety skills and cycling confidence."*

Perceived safety remains a significant determinant of active travel participation. Behaviour change interventions appear to play an important role in reducing safety-related barriers.

**Evaluation:** Positive change, with significant improvements in perceptions of safety observed among young people.

#### Indicator 15: Proportion of people identifying barriers to walking, cycling and wheeling

While limited data was collected directly on participants' perceived barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling, evidence from project delivery provides valuable insight into the barriers that the programme was helping participants overcome.

In a staff travel survey undertaken by Forth Valley College for their Active and Sustainable Travel project, 43% of staff stated that improved bus/train connections would make it easier for them to choose active travel more.

The demand for cycle loans, the high utilisation of several cycle libraries and the number of cycles given out suggests that the upfront cost of cycling equipment is a major barrier to cycling. Improvements to feelings of safety across the programme, outlined under indicator 9, suggest that safety is a significant barrier for those without the training offered by the programme.

“For many of our pupils, owning a bike or a helmet is a luxury their families cannot afford. This equipment removes that barrier.”

Evidence from project delivery suggests that the programme addressed multiple barriers simultaneously. Across the programme, 1,344 cycles were distributed and more than 1,200 cycle loans were recorded, helping participants overcome financial barriers associated with cycle ownership.

While limited data was collected directly on participants' perceived barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling, evidence from project delivery provides valuable insight into the barriers that the programme was helping participants overcome.

Table 3 Cross project quarterly report synthesis

Barrier	Programme Response
Lack of confidence	Cycle training, Bikeability and led rides
Lack of equipment	Bike libraries, cycle loans and recycled cycles
Financial barriers	Free access schemes and donated bikes
Safety concerns	Skills development and route planning
Lack of knowledge	Maintenance workshops and travel advice
Social isolation	Community rides, walks and group activities

Projects including the ones led by Cycling UK, the Bike Station, Sea the Change, SCOREscotland, Greener Kirkcaldy and FEL Scotland combined access to equipment with practical support such as maintenance workshops, cycle training, bike libraries, recycled cycle schemes and travel planning assistance. Several projects also provided access to safety equipment, including helmets and locks, helping remove practical barriers to participation.

Many programme outcomes appear to be driven by projects addressing multiple barriers simultaneously. The combination of access, affordability, confidence-building and ongoing support appears particularly important in enabling participation among groups facing the greatest barriers to active travel.

**Evaluation:** Insufficient data, as in 2024/25, to show the change in identification of barriers.

## Sustainable transport

While much of the evidence focused on walking, wheeling, and cycling, several projects also supported wider sustainable travel behaviour change. Workplace travel planning initiatives, mobility hub projects, and sustainable travel awareness activities encouraged participants to consider a broader range of travel options, including public transport, lift-sharing, and car clubs.

Projects such as BioQuarter Sustainable Travel, Travelknowhow Scotland, and CoMoUK's mobility hub activities highlighted the importance of providing information, practical support, and local travel planning advice to help individuals reduce reliance on private cars and make more sustainable travel choices.

## Capacity and capability

A new indicator framework was developed during 2025/26 to assess outcomes associated with the Capacity and Capability Building theme. The framework was informed by the theme's Theory of Change and includes eleven indicators across five intended outcomes.

### Outcome 1: Increased local capacity and knowledge to deliver behaviour change

*Indicator 1a: Number of trainings, workshops, mentoring opportunities completed by project staff*

Several projects reported staff and volunteer participation in training and development activities intended to strengthen local delivery capacity. Through the Mini-Riders project, Scottish Cycling trained 18 prospective coaches to support future cycling activity.

Sea the Change reported three volunteers achieving Velotech Bronze qualifications, increasing local capacity for bicycle maintenance and repair. Other projects reported staff completing specialist active travel training, including Cycle Trainer, Cycle Ride Leader, Health Walk Leader, Play Together on Pedals, cargo bike, and tandem cycle training.

Evidence suggests that the programme supported both skills development and the growth of local delivery capacity.

*“Good to hear best practice around engagement, monitoring and success.”*

The evidence suggests that capacity-building outcomes are often embedded through practical delivery experience, peer learning and volunteer development rather than through standalone training activities.

*Indicator 1b: Increased staff confidence and capability to plan and deliver active travel behaviour change projects*

Project reporting identified examples of increased organisational capacity through dedicated staffing and delivery resource. During 2025/26, the City of Edinburgh Council established a 0.5 FTE active travel communications post, while Cycling UK and FEL Scotland reported recruitment of dedicated project staff to support delivery.

While limited evidence was collected specifically on staff confidence, project reporting suggests that organisations strengthened their ability to plan and deliver active travel initiatives through additional staffing, training, and delivery experience.

Several projects reported that capacity-building outcomes extended beyond the immediate delivery period. For example:

- Transition University of St Andrews combined cycle maintenance training, volunteer development and equipment access, helping build skills among students and volunteers that can continue beyond the funded activity.
- Falkirk Council's cycle maintenance activities enabled participants and staff to develop practical maintenance knowledge and confidence, creating opportunities for ongoing delivery and support.
- Community-led projects including Stow Cycle Hub and Sea the Change reported increasing levels of volunteer involvement, with participants progressing into volunteer and leadership roles.

**Evaluation:** Positive change, with evidence of increased staff skills and organisational capacity to support active travel delivery.

## Outcome 2: Place-based approaches to delivering behaviour change

### *Indicator 2a: Integration of place-specific priorities into behaviour change delivery*

Evidence suggests that projects were designed and delivered in response to local needs, opportunities, and barriers. Travelknowhow Scotland supported organisations to develop Staff Travel Plans based on local travel patterns and workplace needs, while Clackmannanshire Council's Schools Active Travel Programme aligned delivery with local priorities relating to school travel and active lifestyles. Stow Cycle Hub also adapted its offer in response to community demand, expanding from an e-bike loan scheme to include led rides, cycle skills sessions, and support for people with additional mobility needs.

### *Indicator 2b: Strengthened community engagement mechanisms*

Community engagement formed a central component of many projects. Sea the Change worked through local volunteers, events, and bike upcycling activities to engage residents, while Greener Kirkcaldy used community walking and cycling activities to support participation among local residents. Project reporting suggests that these approaches helped ensure activities reflected local needs and priorities.

**Evaluation:** Positive change, with evidence of locally tailored delivery and community-responsive engagement approaches.

## Outcome 3: Improved networking and relationships between stakeholders in the SEStran region

### *Indicator 3a: Number of new or stronger partnerships and collaborations*

Cycling UK's Connecting Communities project reported developing relationships with Midlothian Council's Active Travel Team, residents' associations, health organisations, and local cycling groups. Travelknowhow Scotland worked directly with employers to support travel planning activity, while the Edinburgh BioQuarter Sustainable Travel project brought together stakeholders from across the site to support travel behaviour change initiatives.

East Lothian Council also reported that accessibility audits had strengthened engagement with local communities and supported wider discussions across council teams regarding active travel and accessibility improvements. As one stakeholder reflected:

*“Historically, we would just patch up the road, not engaging to the level we do now with active travel. It's been quite positive; we've looked outside our traditional boundaries, and it's motivated good discussions inside and outside the council.”*

Project reporting highlighted the importance of partnership working in extending project reach and supporting delivery.

Partnership approaches were evident across a range of projects. For example:

- Women's Safety in Public Places brought together stakeholders from active travel, equality, community safety and planning backgrounds.
- School-based projects relied on collaboration between local authorities, schools and national delivery partners.
- Cycling UK's Connecting Communities programme supported networking between community organisations, contributing to new relationships and opportunities for future collaboration.

Projects consistently reported that partnership working enabled access to wider audiences, specialist expertise and additional delivery opportunities.

*“Felt connected as a region.”*

Collaboration appears to have strengthened delivery capacity across the programme and enabled organisations to draw on a wider range of skills, expertise and resources.

*Indicator 3b: Strengthened collaboration, awareness, and knowledge sharing through the programme*

Evidence suggests that participation in the programme increased awareness of active travel activity being delivered across the region. Organisations reported sharing learning, delivery approaches, and experiences through programme events and stakeholder engagement opportunities.

*Indicator 3c: Value of engagement events for collaboration and learning*

Shared learning events provided opportunities for organisations to exchange experiences and identify future opportunities for collaboration. A networking and showcase event delivered through Cycling UK's Connecting Communities project contributed to a subsequent funding application by Bridgend Farmhouse, demonstrating how engagement activity can support longer-term partnership development.

**Evaluation:** Positive change, with evidence of strengthened partnerships, collaboration, and knowledge sharing.

**Outcome 4: Local and community leadership**

#### *Indicator 4a: Increased empowerment and leadership among local actors*

Evidence of local leadership was demonstrated through volunteer participation and community-led delivery. Sea the Change reported 19 active volunteers contributing to bike upcycling, events, and community engagement activities. Greener Kirkcaldy also supported local organisations to develop and deliver cycling activities within their own communities, helping to build local ownership and delivery capacity. As one delivery partner explained:

“We don't know the people in all those areas, but we can support those who do. They can have a bigger impact than we would as an individual organisation.”

#### *Indicator 4b: Improved decision-making and governance supporting local leadership*

Limited evidence was collected specifically on governance and decision-making processes. However, project reporting suggests that local groups and volunteers played an increasingly active role in supporting project delivery and shaping activities within their communities.

**Evaluation:** Emerging positive change, with evidence of increased volunteer participation and local ownership of activities.

### Outcome 5: Self-sustaining programmes beyond People and Place funding

#### *Indicator 5a: Organisational learning and improved systems for long-term resilience*

Travelknowhow Scotland supported organisations to develop Staff Travel Plans and embed sustainable travel considerations within organisational processes. The Edinburgh BioQuarter Sustainable Travel project progressed work relating to travel planning and sustainable travel management, while Scottish Cycling's coach training activity increased the number of trained individuals available to support future delivery.

Supplementary evidence suggests that active travel activity is increasingly being linked to wider organisational and community priorities.

Project reporting demonstrated links between active travel and broader objectives including:

- Education and attainment.
- Health and wellbeing.
- Community development.
- Equality and inclusion.
- Environmental sustainability.

Examples included school travel planning activity, women's safety initiatives, and projects supporting access to education, employment and community participation through cycling.

“Learning more about other projects and how they overcome challenges.”

Many projects demonstrated that active travel can act as a mechanism for achieving wider social, educational and wellbeing outcomes, helping embed activity within broader organisational priorities.

#### *Indicator 5b: Organisational empowerment and resilience in future projects*

Evidence of longer-term sustainability was identified in a number of projects. Within workplace travel initiatives, one walking group continued to organise activities independently through a Microsoft Teams network established during project delivery, with participants arranging walks and encouraging involvement without direct project support. Sea the Change invested in volunteer development and technical qualifications, helping to build skills and capacity that can continue beyond the funding period.

These examples suggest that projects are developing skills, partnerships, and delivery approaches that may support future resilience, although the long-term sustainability of activities remains dependent on future funding and organisational capacity.

Project reporting also suggests growing recognition of the importance of evidence collection and outcome measurement across the programme.

Quarterly reports demonstrated increased use of case studies, participant feedback, stories of change and survey data to evidence project outcomes.

Projects including Cycling UK, Borders Wheels, FEL Scotland and North Edinburgh Arts provided a mixture of quantitative and qualitative evidence, enabling a richer understanding of participant experiences and programme impacts.

The increased availability of participant stories, outcome data and project-level evidence compared with previous years provides an indication of improving evaluation practice across the programme.

*“Good to hear about how projects are impacting communities.”*

While approaches continue to vary between projects, the quality and breadth of evidence available during 2025/26 suggests continued progress in monitoring and evaluation practice across the programme.

**Evaluation:** Emerging positive change, with evidence of increased organisational learning and resilience, although longer-term sustainability remains uncertain.

## Understanding behaviour change

Findings from the evaluation highlight the importance of sustained support, practical interventions, and local accessibility in enabling behaviour change.

Projects that combined multiple forms of support, such as access to cycles, training, social activities, and ongoing encouragement, frequently demonstrated stronger evidence of sustained participation compared with more limited or one-off interventions.

Importantly, the evidence suggests that behaviour change outcomes extend beyond transport mode shift alone. Many projects generated wider outcomes linked to wellbeing, confidence, social inclusion, independence, and community resilience.

# Understanding Impact: Lived Experience

To support the quantitative and qualitative insights gathered through the evaluation, this section presents a series of personas and stories of change.

Together, they illustrate how active and sustainable travel interventions are experienced in practice and help demonstrate the impact of the programme.

The personas are illustrative profiles developed from recurring themes identified through stakeholder interviews, project reporting, and participant feedback. They do not represent specific individuals, but instead demonstrate common participant journeys, barriers, motivations, and outcomes observed across multiple projects.

In contrast, the stories of change are based on real examples shared by delivery partners during the evaluation. Together, these approaches provide a richer understanding of how the programme has supported behaviour change, confidence, wellbeing, and participation across the SEStran region.

## Personas

The following personas demonstrate how programme activities can support different participants to overcome barriers, engage with active and sustainable travel, and achieve positive outcomes.

### Bikes for Refugees: Fraser

#### [Project case study](#)

The Bikes for Refugees project supports refugees and asylum seekers in Edinburgh by providing refurbished bicycles, access to shared cycle pools, cycle repair services, and maintenance workshops. The project works with people living in both community accommodation and hotel settings, helping to address transport barriers faced by those with limited financial resources.

Demand for the service remains consistently high due to the scale of need. Through the New Scots Bike Inclusion Project, Bikes for Refugees distributed 357 bicycles, delivered 27 repairs, and supported over 1,000 volunteer hours through bike refurbishment and maintenance activities across the SEStran region.

#### [Who is engaging and why?](#)

Fraser is an asylum seeker who fled their country and now lives in Edinburgh. They experience extreme financial and social hardship, as they have gone through significant trauma, cannot work, cannot access benefits, and are only given about £7 per day by the government to support their essential living costs.

Since a day ticket for Edinburgh buses is about £6, this limits their mobility, increases social isolation, and limits his ability to travel to essential health and legal appointments, and community support and social activities.

#### [What does engagement look like?](#)

Fraser heard about the programme from a friend, who recommended it because his hotel has a shared bike pool from Bikes for Refugees. They requested a bike and joined the waitlist and after a few months received the bike.

#### What is the impact on them?

Having a bike enables Fraser to cycle independently to essential health appointments, legal meetings, and other activities. They no longer has to worry about the expense or inconsistency of the buses while attending these important meetings.

Fraser also is able to spend more time outside and believes the activity is important for their wellbeing. The bike has given them greater mobility and autonomy, reduces isolation, and supports integration.

## SHRUB Coop: Alex

### Project case study

Shrub Coop delivers non-profit cycling workshops that help people develop bike maintenance and repair skills. Activities include puncture repair sessions and the Fix My Own Bike! (FMOB) programme, with a particular focus on creating welcoming spaces for groups traditionally underrepresented in cycling, including women and gender minorities.

Through hands-on support from mechanics and volunteers, participants build confidence, gain practical skills, and become more independent in maintaining their cycles. By reducing financial and knowledge barriers, the project supports more regular cycling while helping participants feel more connected to the wider cycling community.

#### Who is engaging?

Alex is a woman who has cycled a little bit before but has limited knowledge of bike maintenance and repairs. She often stops cycling for significant periods of time due to punctures and other repairs that she cannot fix on her own, and cannot pay to have fixed immediately. This makes her feel less confident in her abilities, excluded from the cycling community, and as a result, cycles less than she would like to.

#### Why are they engaging?

Alex joined one of Shrub Coop's Fix My Own Bike! (FMOB) sessions for women and gender minorities because she had an issue with her brakes that she did not know how to fix herself. She booked on the FMOB session because she wanted to learn from one of the mechanics how to fix the problem, so that she could become more confident in bike repairs so that she could learn more about how her bike works, save money, and gain independence.

#### What does engagement look like?

Alex attended the FMOB session and was assisted by staff and volunteers. She brought her bike to the Wee Spoke Hub and the staff helped her identify the issue, and provided the guidance, tools, and support to help her fix her brakes.

#### What is the impact on them?

Alex is more confident in diagnosing and repairing her own bike. She uses her practical repair skills to fix minor issues on her own bike, allowing her to cycle more consistently.

She was inspired to attend more sessions and events by the other female mechanics, and since regularly attending events feels apart of the cycling community, and has grown her knowledge significantly.

Alex is now more committed to cycling regularly due to her increased independence and confidence in the reliability of her skills.

## Fife Council: Sophie

### [Project case study](#)

Fife Council delivers a range of active and sustainable travel initiatives, including school travel planning, community cycling activities, and infrastructure improvements. One of the programme's most recognisable elements is the Fresh Air Frankie campaign, which uses creative and child-led activities to encourage young people to think differently about how they travel and to promote active travel within their schools and communities.

Through competitions, travel surveys, and engagement activities, the project helps pupils explore active travel options, contribute their ideas, and develop positive travel habits from an early age.

### [Who is engaging and why?](#)

Sophie is a Primary 6 pupil who is usually driven to school by her parent. She enjoys being creative and decides to get involved when her school takes part in the Fresh Air Frankie campaign and launches a competition to create a song and video promoting active travel.

### [What does engagement look like?](#)

Sophie works with her classmates to develop ideas for the campaign and helps create a jingle encouraging pupils to walk, wheel, and cycle to school. Through the project, she takes part in discussions about travel choices, completes school travel surveys, and learns more about the benefits of active travel.

The campaign makes Sophie think more about how she travels to school and encourages conversations at home about alternative ways to make the journey.

### [What is the impact on them?](#)

After taking part in the project, Sophie begins walking to school more regularly with friends and family. As her confidence grows, she becomes more aware of active travel options and starts to view walking as a normal part of her daily routine rather than something she only does occasionally.

The project also helps Sophie feel that her ideas can contribute to positive change within her school. By taking part in a creative, child-led activity, she develops a stronger connection to the active travel messages she helped promote and becomes an advocate for active travel among her peers.

## Stories of Change

The following stories of change demonstrate how participation in the programme has contributed to positive outcomes for individuals and communities, including increased confidence, social connection, skills development, and overall behaviour change.

### Connecting Communities Through Cycling

Stow Cycle Hub in the Scottish Borders was initially established to increase access to cycling through an e-bike loan scheme. Over time, the project evolved in response to community demand, expanding to include community rides, cycle skills sessions, a satellite hub in Lauder, recycled cycles for young people, and support for people with additional mobility needs.

The project reported that one of its most significant achievements was not simply increasing cycling activity but creating stronger links between communities and helping people build new social connections. Community rides were designed to accommodate a range of abilities and needs, helping participants develop confidence while exploring local routes and meeting others.

The project also observed wider impacts among participants, including increased confidence, volunteering, and social engagement. People who initially accessed the project through the e-bike hire scheme went on to become regular riders, volunteers, and ride leaders. The programme supported children, older adults, women returning to cycling, and people with disabilities, helping ensure that more people could participate in active travel.

As the project lead reflected:

“At the beginning we just thought we were getting people on their bikes. Linking communities together has been the best additional benefit.”

The project also highlighted the social value of participation:

“Things people talk about the most is joy of cycling. Getting out in the countryside, seeing it through the seasons. Meeting people in cafes in other villages. All kinds of spin offs. Connecting people and getting people on their bikes and stay on bikes.”

This example demonstrates how active travel interventions can generate wider social benefits when they are designed around community needs, creating opportunities for both participation and social connection.

### Increasing Independence Through E-bike Access

Mike lives in a rural community where public transport options have reduced significantly over the past decade. Following the loss of local bus services, travelling to nearby towns often depended on lifts from friends and neighbours, hitchhiking, or lengthy walks.

After attending an event run by Stow Cycle Hub, Mike began using an e-bike through the project's hire scheme. What started as a short trial developed into regular use, with Mike cycling almost 700 miles over the course of his involvement. The e-bike enabled him to access shops, public transport connections, and social activities more independently, reducing his reliance on others for everyday journeys.

Participation in the project also helped Mike develop practical cycling and maintenance skills. Through connections made at the hub, he learned how to service bikes himself and was able to purchase and maintain a second-hand electric bike as a long-term alternative.

As Mike explained:

“It has certainly changed my life. I don't have to rely on other people.”

This example demonstrates how access to active travel can support independence, reduce transport barriers, and improve quality of life, particularly for people living in rural communities with limited transport options.

### Building Confidence and Community Through Inclusive Cycling Support

A participant involved in cycling activities delivered through North Edinburgh Arts had initially joined the project with low confidence and limited experience of cycling in group environments. Concerns around confidence and feeling out of place within traditional cycling spaces had previously prevented them from participating.

Through regular involvement in inclusive led rides and supportive community activities, the participant gradually became more confident cycling independently and engaging with others. The project provided a welcoming and non-judgemental environment, helping them feel more comfortable participating in active travel activities.

Over time, the participant developed stronger social connections, became more physically active, and reported improved confidence and wellbeing. Stakeholder evidence highlighted that the social and community aspects of the project were particularly important in sustaining engagement and encouraging continued participation.

This example demonstrates the importance of inclusive and community-led delivery approaches in supporting confidence, wellbeing, and longer-term participation in active travel.

“Participants [have reported] gaining confidence, reducing social isolation and becoming more active”

### Improving Wellbeing and School Engagement Through Active Travel

West Lothian Council's Play Along the Way project was delivered through Armadale Hub and aimed to encourage children to walk to school through a structured route that combined active travel with play, social interaction, and a healthy breakfast provision. The project created a largely traffic-free route through Bathville Park and Black Moss, providing opportunities for children to be active and engage with others on their journey to school.

The project was particularly successful in engaging children who benefitted from additional support and routine. Around 10–15 children attended regularly, with positive feedback received from both school staff and the Hub. Project partners reported a range of benefits extending beyond increased walking participation, including improvements in wellbeing, behaviour, and school attendance.

Staff reported:

- Improved mental health and wellbeing among participating children
- Reduced behavioural issues
- Less disruption associated with children arriving at school without breakfast
- A reduction in recorded late attendance

The success of the project led Armadale Hub to seek additional funding to continue and expand the approach to other schools across West Lothian.

This example demonstrates how active travel interventions can support wider educational, health, and wellbeing outcomes when they are designed around the everyday needs of children and families.

### Supporting Skills Development and Re-engagement Through Cycling

Bridgend Farmhouse worked with young people referred through local schools, including individuals who were disengaged from education and facing barriers to participation and confidence-building.

Through the project, participants took part in cycling and bike maintenance activities designed to develop practical skills and provide structured engagement opportunities. Activities included learning to ride, bike maintenance training, and skills development sessions linked to accredited learning pathways.

Stakeholder evidence highlighted that participation helped several young people build confidence, develop routine and structure, and engage more positively with learning environments. The opportunity to achieve accreditation linked to Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ)-level skills was viewed as particularly valuable for young people who were struggling within traditional educational settings.

This example demonstrates how active travel projects can support wider educational, developmental, and wellbeing outcomes alongside increasing participation in cycling activity.

“Referrers have responded positively, highlighting that participants are leaving with practical skills and experience that they can demonstrate to future employers and education providers”

## What this tells us about behaviour change

Findings from the evaluation reinforce that participation in active and sustainable travel is often enabled through a combination of practical support, confidence-building, social connection, and local accessibility.

The evaluation highlights that interventions were often most effective where projects provided multiple forms of support simultaneously. For example, projects combining access to equipment, skills development, peer support, and ongoing engagement frequently demonstrated stronger evidence of sustained participation and confidence-building.

The findings also suggest that community-led and locally tailored approaches play an important role in supporting behaviour change. Delivery partners consistently reported that projects were

most successful where activities reflected the specific barriers, priorities, and lived experiences of local communities.

While many projects demonstrated early-stage behaviour change outcomes, stakeholders frequently highlighted the importance of sustained engagement and ongoing support in enabling lasting change over time.

# What Works, For Whom, and Why

## Key success factors

Stakeholder evidence identified several consistent factors that contributed to successful delivery and participant engagement across the programme.

Community-led and locally tailored approaches emerged as a particular strength, particularly within Accessibility and Inclusion projects, which accounted for a significant proportion of direct participant support activity during 2025/26, including the distribution of approximately 340 cycles and 277 loaned or borrowed cycles. Projects delivered through local organisations including Stow Cycle Hub, Sea the Change, and Thistle Outdoors, demonstrated particularly strong engagement with participants experiencing financial, social, or confidence-related barriers to participation.

Projects that combined practical support with ongoing engagement and social elements also demonstrated particularly strong outcomes. Interventions combining access to equipment, training, social activities, and ongoing encouragement frequently demonstrated stronger evidence of sustained participation than one-off activities alone.

School-based delivery models also continued to provide an effective mechanism for engaging young people and supporting early behaviour change. Schools and Young People projects supported significant infrastructure and access improvements during 2025/26, including the installation of 25 cycle and scooter storage facilities and 29 cycle parking or accessibility improvements.

Collaborative delivery approaches also supported wider reach and more joined-up delivery across several projects, with stakeholders highlighting the value of partnership working between local authorities, schools, community organisations, and delivery partners.

## Barriers and challenges

Despite positive outcomes across the programme, project leads and delivery partners also identified several ongoing barriers and challenges affecting delivery and participation.

Project leads consistently highlighted short-term government funding cycles as a significant challenge, limiting opportunities for long-term planning, staff retention, relationship-building, and evidencing sustained behaviour change over time.

Capacity constraints also affected several projects, particularly among smaller organisations and community groups. Limited staffing resources and competing delivery pressures affected the ability of some projects to undertake monitoring, engagement, and evaluation activity consistently throughout the year.

Participants across several projects also continued to experience wider barriers to active and sustainable travel, including financial constraints, limited access to equipment, infrastructure limitations, confidence and safety concerns, and accessibility challenges.

Project leads further highlighted the challenge of sustaining participant engagement beyond initial project activity. While many projects demonstrated strong early engagement, maintaining participation over longer periods was often dependent on continued support and ongoing opportunities for involvement.

For example, several community-based projects described adapting activities throughout the year through additional led rides, social events, maintenance sessions, and informal engagement opportunities in order to sustain participation and maintain relationships with participants over time.

Stakeholders also highlighted some ongoing variation in how monitoring information was collected and recorded across projects. There remains an opportunity to strengthen alignment with programme monitoring guidance and recommended question sets in order to support greater consistency and comparability across the evidence gathered.

Variation in monitoring approaches and reporting quality across projects also continued to present challenges from an evaluation perspective, despite improvements made during 2025/26.

Project leads provided detailed participant outcome evidence and qualitative reflections alongside monitoring returns, while others focused primarily on activity outputs such as attendance figures or infrastructure delivery. This variation affected the level of comparability possible across themes and projects.

## Differences across themes / groups

Findings from the evaluation suggest that different delivery approaches were effective for different participant groups and programme themes.

School-based projects frequently generated outcomes relating to confidence, independence, and early behaviour change among young people. Schools and Young People projects recorded more than 50,000 individual engagements with young people during 2025/26, alongside 286 events and activities delivered across the region. Stakeholders highlighted that schools provided a consistent environment for engagement and enabled projects to support wider wellbeing and educational outcomes alongside active travel participation.

Community-based projects often demonstrated particularly strong outcomes relating to social connection, inclusion, and confidence-building. These projects were frequently successful in engaging participants who may not otherwise have participated in active travel activity, particularly where delivery was led through trusted local organisations and informal engagement approaches.

Projects delivered under the Accessibility and Inclusion theme generated some of the strongest qualitative evidence across the programme relating to wider social outcomes, including reduced isolation, improved wellbeing, and increased independence. Many of these projects focused on reducing practical and financial barriers to participation through cycle access schemes, inclusive cycling support, and targeted community engagement.

Workplace projects generally focused more strongly on commuting and everyday travel choices. These projects often generated practical outputs linked to workplace cycle storage improvements, led travel activities, and encouraging greater use of active travel for everyday journeys.

The broadened focus on sustainable travel within the 2025/26 programme also enabled projects to engage participants through a wider range of transport-related activities beyond cycling alone, including workplace travel planning, accessibility initiatives, walking activities, and sustainable travel awareness interventions.

# Capacity Building and System Change

## Capacity and capability workshop overview

In December 2025, Urban Foresight held an online workshop with project leads and delivery partners to support the development and validation of a new indicator framework for the Capacity and Capability Building theme.

The indicators were developed through a review of the theme's Theory of Change, which identified five intended outcomes:

- Increased local capacity and knowledge to deliver behaviour change
- Place-based approaches to delivering behaviour change
- Improved networking and relationships between stakeholders
- Local and community leadership
- Self-sustaining programmes beyond People and Place funding

For each outcome, a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators was developed to capture changes in organisational capacity, partnership working, leadership, learning, and long-term resilience. The final set of indicators is provided in Appendix III.

The workshop provided an opportunity for project leads to review the proposed indicators and assess whether they were relevant, measurable, and applicable across different project types. Through facilitated discussions and breakout sessions, participants provided feedback on indicator wording, data collection approaches, and the practical challenges associated with measuring organisational and system-level change.

Feedback from the workshop informed the refinement of eleven indicators across the five outcomes. Participants highlighted the importance of capturing learning and knowledge sharing, recognising informal networks and partnerships, reflecting differences between local authority and community-based projects, and measuring organisational resilience alongside project delivery.

The final indicator framework therefore reflects both the programme's Theory of Change and the practical experience of organisations delivering behaviour change projects across the SEStran region.

## Capacity and capability building in practice

As part of the Capacity and Capability Building theme, SEStran delivered a programme of shared learning events designed to support knowledge exchange, networking, and collaboration between local authorities, delivery partners, community organisations, and other stakeholders involved in active and sustainable travel delivery.

Event	Participants	Purpose
-------	--------------	---------

Local Authority Learning Day (April 2025)	17 local authority representatives from all 8 SEStran local authorities, plus the SEStran team	To reflect on 2024/25 delivery, share learning between local authorities, discuss common delivery challenges, and contribute to the development of monitoring and evaluation approaches.
North & West Shared Learning Event (October 2025)	21 participants	To share project experiences, showcase delivery approaches, and support networking and peer learning.
Edinburgh & Lothians Shared Learning Event (October 2025)	19 participants	To facilitate knowledge exchange, highlight project impacts, and encourage collaboration between organisations.
Borders / South of Scotland Online Learning Event (October 2025)	19 attendees	To share learning across RTP boundaries and explore opportunities for future collaboration.
Local Authority Knowledge Sharing Day (February 2026)	Representatives from all 8 SEStran local authorities	To support planning for 2026/27 delivery, explore opportunities to scale successful projects, share learning, and strengthen collaboration between local authorities.

### *Shared learning and peer exchange*

The events provided opportunities for participants to reflect on project delivery, discuss challenges, share examples of good practice, and learn from approaches being tested elsewhere in the region. Participants in the sessions provided feedback on their value against the themes covered in the sessions, shown below.

Theme	What participants valued (based on their feedback)	What this tells us
Knowledge exchange	Hearing about project impacts, engagement approaches, monitoring practices, and local authority initiatives	Events provided practical learning opportunities and exposure to different delivery approaches across the region

Problem solving	Understanding how other organisations addressed delivery challenges relating to procurement, partnerships, and project delivery	Events helped participants learn from shared experiences and identify solutions to common challenges
Networking and collaboration	Opportunities to connect with new and existing contacts and organisations working in similar areas	Events supported relationship-building and strengthened regional connections
Regional awareness	Learning about projects and activity taking place elsewhere in the SEStran region	Events increased awareness of delivery activity and encouraged cross-area learning

### *Network and collaboration*

Networking emerged as one of the most frequently cited benefits of the events. Beyond making new contacts, participants highlighted the value of connecting with organisations and local authorities facing similar delivery challenges.

The Local Authority Learning Day, attended by representatives from all eight SEStran local authorities, provided a dedicated opportunity for peer exchange on topics including procurement, partnership working, engagement, monitoring, and project delivery.

94% of local authority attendees at the Knowledge Sharing Day in quarter 4 thought that there was sufficient opportunities to network, and all attendees rated the event as good or excellent overall. Participants highlighted the benefit of learning from approaches being tested elsewhere in the region and developing relationships with colleagues working on similar issues.

Across the two in-person shared learning events with local authorities, delivery partners and community groups, 95% of respondents reported that the events provided sufficient opportunities for networking, while all respondents rated the events as either good or excellent. Feedback highlighted opportunities to connect with both new and existing contacts and develop relationships across different sectors and geographic areas.

Networking feedback
Connections, opportunity to chat, and networking opportunities
Opportunities to network with new and familiar faces
Felt connected as a region

### *Event performance summary*

Measure	April 2025 LA Event	February 2026 LA Event	North & West Event	Edinburgh & Lothians Event
Rated excellent/Rated good	100%	100%	100%	100%
Themes relevant	93%	100%	N/A	90%
Sufficient networking opportunities	93%	94%	N/A	95%

### *Lessons for future delivery*

While feedback was generally positive, participants identified several opportunities to strengthen future events. Suggestions included providing more structured networking opportunities, increasing the use of themed sessions, sharing information about attendees in advance, and allowing additional time for presentations and discussion.

Participants also highlighted the importance of balancing accessibility, geographic coverage, and opportunities for in-person engagement when planning future events.

## Embedded change and progress since 2024/25

There is evidence that the programme has contributed to longer-term organisational and system-level change, with several areas of progress building on findings from the 2024/25 evaluation. Compared with the previous delivery year, stakeholders reported stronger engagement between SEStran and delivery partners, greater understanding of monitoring and evaluation requirements, and increased recognition of the importance of capacity and capability building.

In 2024/25, the Capacity and Capability Building theme was found to have built foundational infrastructure for long-term change, including plans, staff capacity, tools, local ownership, and cross-departmental collaboration. In 2025/26, evidence suggests that some of this activity had become more embedded within delivery approaches.

For example, Clackmannanshire Council continued to integrate active travel within wider education and wellbeing priorities through the development of school travel planning and engagement activity. Similarly, Edinburgh's Women's Safety in Public Places project strengthened links between active travel, equality, community safety, and urban planning, bringing together stakeholders from multiple sectors to inform future decision-making.

The programme also supported longer-term strategic development within local authorities, with Falkirk Council finalising its Behaviour Change Strategy during 2025/26 and West Lothian Council progressing a strategy expected to be completed in 2026/27.

Partnership working also appears to have strengthened since 2024/25. Last year's evaluation identified demand for more structured opportunities to share learning across the region, including regional events, local authority sessions, and greater visibility of funded projects. During 2025/26, SEStran responded through shared learning events that brought together local authorities, delivery

partners, community organisations, and other stakeholders to exchange learning, discuss delivery challenges, and build relationships. Stakeholders highlighted the value of learning from approaches being delivered in other areas and developing new connections across the region.

Evidence of sustained activity beyond initial interventions was also identified. Living Streets reported that active travel activity had become embedded within participating schools, with travel planning and engagement activities integrated into wider school practices. Greener Kirkcaldy also highlighted how participants continued to use routes, skills, and local networks developed through project activities after formal engagement had ended, helping to sustain participation beyond individual events.

However, stakeholders continued to identify challenges that may affect the long-term sustainability of programme impacts, particularly funding uncertainty, staff and resource capacity, and wider policy and infrastructure constraints. Continued investment in organisational capacity, partnership development, and shared learning will remain important in supporting long-term system change and sustaining behaviour change outcomes across the region.

# Reflections on Monitoring and Evaluation

## Improvements made in 2025/26

Compared with 2024/25, monitoring and reporting processes were generally viewed more positively by delivery partners. Stakeholders highlighted that reporting expectations were clearer, monitoring templates were more structured, and ongoing engagement throughout the year helped improve understanding of monitoring and evaluation requirements.

The evaluation process also benefited from stronger engagement with project leads compared with the previous year. Delivery partners were generally more responsive to requests for monitoring information, stakeholder engagement, and follow-up discussions than during the previous evaluation process, contributing to greater consistency across projects and stronger qualitative evidence.

Additional qualitative engagement, including stakeholder discussions and stories of change, also provided greater insight into participant experiences and wider programme impacts.

## Remaining gaps

Despite these improvements, challenges remain in relation to data consistency, reporting capacity, and evidencing longer-term outcomes.

Monitoring approaches continue to vary across projects, particularly where organisations have differing levels of resource and evaluation experience. The short-term nature of funding also limits the ability to capture sustained behavioural change and longer-term impacts.

Stakeholders also highlighted the challenge of consistently evidencing wider social outcomes, such as wellbeing, confidence, and reduced isolation, through standard monitoring approaches alone.

There is therefore an opportunity to continue strengthening monitoring and evaluation processes in future programme years through continued guidance, template development, and engagement support for delivery partners and proportionate approaches to data collection that reflect differing organisational capacity and project scale.

# Conclusions and Recommendations

## Overall conclusions

The 2025/26 People and Place Programme has continued to support a broad range of active and sustainable travel interventions across the SEStran region, building on the foundations established during the first year of delivery.

Evidence gathered through this evaluation demonstrates that the programme continues to generate positive outcomes across a broad range of participant, community, and organisational outcomes. Reported impacts include:

- Improved access to active and sustainable travel opportunities
- Increased confidence, skills, and independence
- Reduced transport poverty and social isolation
- Enhanced physical and mental wellbeing
- Stronger community connections and participation
- Increased participation in walking, wheeling, cycling, and wider sustainable travel activity
- Improved access to education, employment, services, and social opportunities
- Strengthened organisational capacity, partnership working, and knowledge sharing

The programme has also demonstrated increasing maturity in both delivery and evaluation processes compared with 2024/25. Improved engagement with delivery partners, stronger reporting consistency, and expanded qualitative evidence gathering have contributed to a more robust understanding of programme impacts and participant experiences.

A key strength of the programme continues to be its flexibility and ability to support locally tailored approaches. Community-led delivery models, trusted local partnerships, and inclusive engagement approaches were consistently identified as important factors supporting participation and behaviour change across different communities and participant groups.

The broadened scope of the programme during 2025/26 has also enabled greater consideration of wider sustainable travel outcomes and accessibility issues. This has strengthened the programme's ability to respond to differing local needs and barriers to participation across the region through a broader range of interventions, including accessibility initiatives, workplace travel planning, walking activities, and sustainable travel awareness projects.

At the same time, the evaluation highlights several ongoing challenges. These include variation in organisational capacity, differences in monitoring approaches across projects, and the limitations associated with annual reporting cycles when seeking to evidence longer-term behavioural change and sustained outcomes.

## Strategic recommendations

The 2024/25 evaluation developed a series of short, medium, and long-term recommendations to support the continued development of the programme. As the 2025/26 evaluation has taken place only one year later, many of these recommendations remain relevant and continue to reflect the longer-term direction of travel for the programme. An update on progress against these recommendations is therefore included within the appendices.

Based on the findings from the 2025/26 evaluation, several additional areas for consideration have emerged.

### Continue strengthening proportionate monitoring and evaluation approaches

While improvements were identified during 2025/26, variation in reporting quality and monitoring capacity continues across projects. Continued support for delivery partners through clearer guidance, simplified templates, and ongoing engagement will remain important in supporting consistency and reducing administrative burden. There is also an opportunity to further align reporting requirements with project scale, organisational capacity, and the type of activity being delivered.

There is also an opportunity to continue developing approaches for evidencing wider social outcomes, including wellbeing, confidence, social connection, and reduced isolation.

### Support longer-term delivery and sustainability where possible

Stakeholders highlighted the challenges associated with short-term government funding cycles, particularly in relation to sustaining staffing, partnerships, participant relationships, and longer-term engagement activity. Stakeholder evidence suggested that several projects required ongoing support and repeated engagement over time in order to sustain participation and behaviour change outcomes.

Where feasible, longer-term funding certainty or multi-year approaches could support stronger strategic planning, workforce stability, and the development of more sustained community relationships and behavioural outcomes.

### Continue supporting community-led and inclusive delivery models

Community-led and locally tailored approaches emerged as a consistent strength across the programme. Projects delivered through local organisations were often particularly effective in engaging participants experiencing barriers to participation or who may not traditionally engage with active travel activity.

The evaluation also highlights the importance of revenue funding in enabling this type of delivery. Revenue funding provided community organisations with the capacity to employ staff, build local relationships, deliver ongoing engagement activities, and respond flexibly to community needs. In many cases, these activities formed the foundation for the behaviour change outcomes observed across the programme.

There is therefore value in continuing to support flexible, revenue-funded delivery models that enable organisations to respond to local needs, priorities, and lived experiences while building trust and sustained engagement within communities.

### Strengthen opportunities for shared learning and collaboration

Stakeholders highlighted the value of opportunities to share experiences, challenges, and good practice across the programme. Continued facilitation of peer learning, networking, and collaboration between delivery partners could help strengthen programme consistency and support organisational development across the region.

## Priorities for 2026/27

Looking ahead, there is an opportunity to build on the progress made during the first two years of the programme and continue strengthening both delivery and evaluation approaches.

Key priorities for 2026/27 include:

- Maintaining support for community-led and inclusive delivery approaches through flexible funding models, continued partnership working, and locally tailored delivery
- Continuing to strengthen monitoring and reporting consistency across projects through clearer guidance, shared indicators, and proportionate reporting approaches
- Supporting longer-term behaviour change through ongoing participant engagement, repeat activities, and continued partnership working
- Continuing to build the programme evidence base to support future learning and strategic development.

The evaluation demonstrates that the People and Place Programme is delivering benefits that extend beyond transport outcomes alone, contributing to wider social, wellbeing, and community outcomes while supporting a longer-term shift towards more accessible and sustainable travel across the SEStran region.

# Appendices



# Appendix I: Theories of Change (2024/25)

A Theory of Change is a type of logic model that sets out a hypothesis about how interventions lead to intended outcomes. It provides a structured framework for understanding the mechanisms of change by identifying causal relationships between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

Grounding this evaluation in a Theory of Change guided the review of the indicators used and informed the prioritisation and organisation of datasets and the underlying assessment framework.

As the People and Place plan for 2024/25 did not originally include a Theory of Change, Urban Foresight co-developed with SEStran five theories of change to aid this evaluation and provide an overarching framework for delivery partners in future years. Theories of Change mapped the causal pathways between the projects' inputs and their outcomes and impacts, resulting in one for the overall programme and one specific to each of the four programme themes.

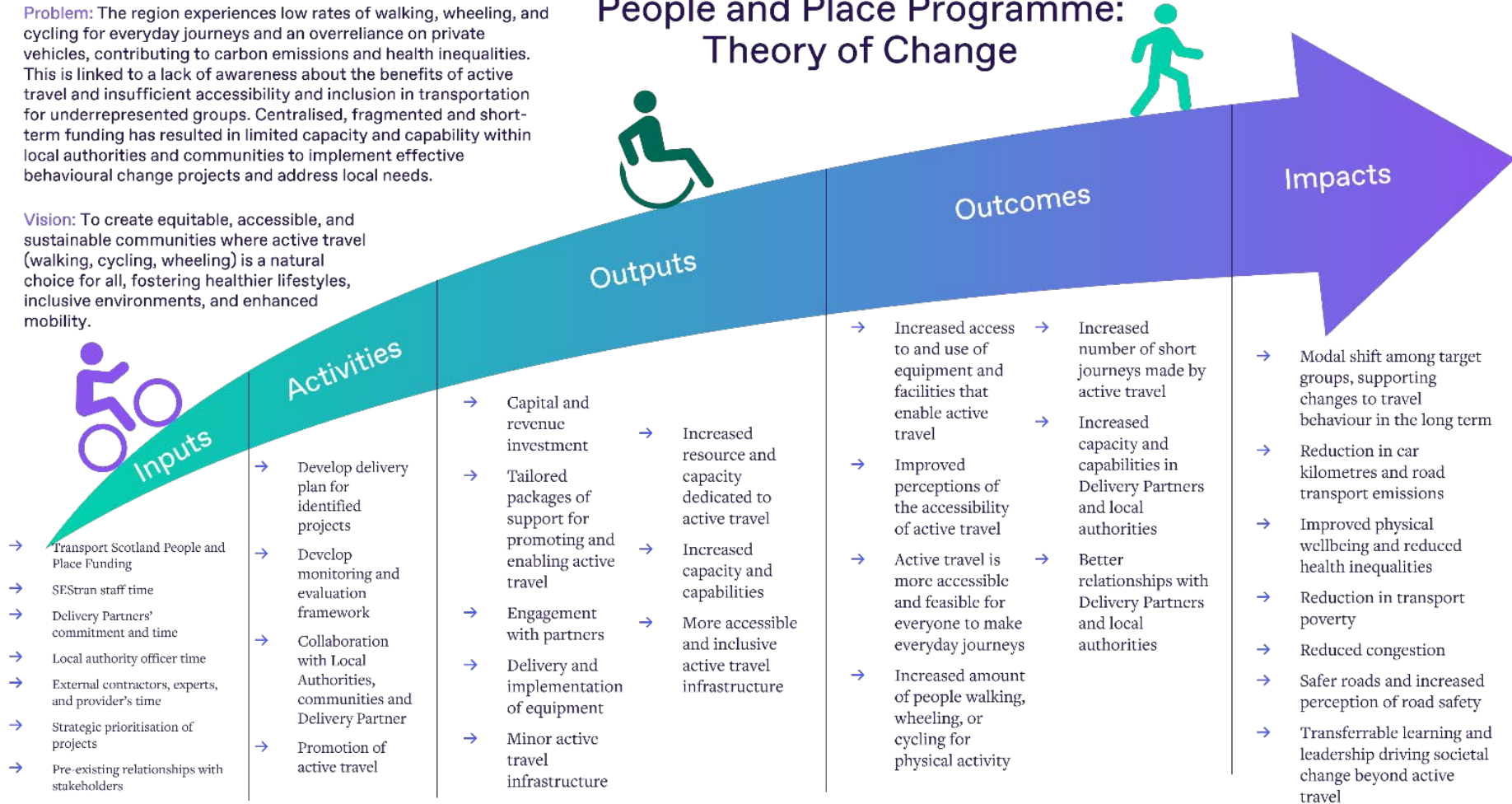
The Theories of Change were sense-checked with SEStran in a workshop held in March 2025. During the workshop, SEStran staff were invited to reflect on the draft Theories of Change, and Urban Foresight staff facilitated a conversation on each theory of change to understand how it could be adapted to better reflect each theme's activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

The feedback and comments from this workshop were compiled, and the theories of change were adapted to better align with the Programme goals.

**Problem:** The region experiences low rates of walking, wheeling, and cycling for everyday journeys and an overreliance on private vehicles, contributing to carbon emissions and health inequalities. This is linked to a lack of awareness about the benefits of active travel and insufficient accessibility and inclusion in transportation for underrepresented groups. Centralised, fragmented and short-term funding has resulted in limited capacity and capability within local authorities and communities to implement effective behavioural change projects and address local needs.

**Vision:** To create equitable, accessible, and sustainable communities where active travel (walking, cycling, wheeling) is a natural choice for all, fostering healthier lifestyles, inclusive environments, and enhanced mobility.

## People and Place Programme: Theory of Change



## Schools and Young People

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
<p>SEStran People and Place Plan funding</p> <p>Pre-existing relationships with schools and community organisations working with young people</p> <p>Willing and participating schools and organisations</p> <p>Time from school staff, SEStran staff, and other organisations to plan projects</p>	<p>Communication with relevant delivery partners and council departments</p> <p>Procurement of equipment</p> <p>Development of process for requesting or distributing benefits</p> <p>Delivery of cycling and active travel-related training</p> <p>Parent &amp; carer engagement</p> <p>Development of school travel plans</p>	<p>Delivery of bikes, related equipment, and cycle/scooter parking infrastructure in schools</p> <p>Development and dissemination of school travel plans</p> <p>Young people develop cycling skills</p> <p>Young people, school staff, and parents learn more about active and sustainable travel</p>	<p>Increased opportunities for active travel, particularly for children in deprived areas</p> <p>Increased number of journeys taken by active modes by young people and parents/carers to school and other commonly made journeys</p> <p>Positive experiences of active travel among young people</p> <p>Increased confidence and perception of safety for young people using active travel</p> <p>Improved perceptions of accessibility of non-car modes of transport</p> <p>Increased use of active travel infrastructure</p>	<p>Modal shift among young people and their families, supporting changes to travel behaviour in the long term</p> <p>Reduction in car kilometres and road transport emissions from travel to school</p> <p>Increased mobility for young people, unlocking access to extra-curricular and social opportunities</p> <p>Safer roads as a result of increases in active travel</p> <p>Increased use of active and sustainable travel among young people and families who face additional barriers</p>

## Workplaces

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
SEStran People and Place Plan funding	Engagement with employees to generate and maintain interest in participation	Staff awareness of new travel plans	Active travel is more accessible and feasible to make business journeys	Modal shift among employees, supporting changes to travel behaviour in the long term
Willing participating organisations	Assessment of baseline of active travel and provision of infrastructure	New or improved enabling facilities and infrastructure for active travel	Increased number of business journeys taken by active modes	Reduction in car kilometres and road transport emissions from business travel
Existing workplace travel plans	Development or updating organisation travel plans	Increased awareness of the benefits of active travel in terms of health, environment, cost and convenience.	Increased use of active travel facilities in workplaces	Increased employee health, wellbeing, and productivity
Pre-existing relationships with organisations and employers	Procurement of enabling infrastructure	Promotion and incentivisation of active travel in workplaces	Cultural shift within organisations towards active travel and sustainable behaviour	Reduced congestion
Existing data (regional travel data)	Mapping of potential sites for infrastructure or enabling facilities		Increased confidence and perception of safety of active travel	Safer roads as a result of increases in active travel

## Accessibility and Inclusion

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
SEStran People and Place Plan funding	Engage and build relationships with key community organisations	Targeted delivery of active travel equipment and infrastructure in deprived areas	Increased access to accessible/ adapted cycles and active travel modes	Modal shift among target groups, supporting changes to travel behaviour in the long term
Local Authority officers' time	Consultation with the community and key demographic groups	Accessibility audits	Access to more affordable modes of travel	Improved physical wellbeing and reduced health inequalities
Volunteer time	Market research on delivery solutions	Active travel promotion campaigns	Increased proportion of journeys taken by active modes	Increased mobility and independence
Inclusive design expertise	Procurement of equipment and infrastructure	Support packages (including financial) for individuals to access active travel	More positive attitudes and greater confidence using active travel modes	Improved quality of life
	Development of accessibility audit framework		Increased perception of safety of active travel	Reduction in car kilometres and road transport emissions
	Targeted range of activities to promote inclusive active travel			Reduction in transport poverty

## Capacity and Capability Building

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
SEStran People and Place Plan funding	Recruitment of dedicated behaviour change officers into local authority	Dedicated resource for driving the shift to active travel	Increased local capacity and knowledge to deliver behaviour change	Transferrable learning and leadership driving societal change beyond active travel
Staff looking to take on additional training	Provision of training on accessibility and behaviour change leadership	Upskilled officers	Place-based approaches to delivering behaviour change	Modal shift among target groups, supporting changes to travel behaviour in the long term
Staff time and capacity	Identification of gaps in current capabilities through research and consultation	Active travel strategies	Local and community leadership	Active travel embedded as a long-term priority in the region
External technical resources	Research on best practice	Increased organisational learning	Self-sustaining programmes beyond the People and Place funding	
	Development of active travel strategies	Workshops, events, and knowledge sharing opportunities	Improved networking and relationships between stakeholders in SEStran region	
		Seamless regional active travel networks		

## SEStran People and Place Plan

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
<p>Transport Scotland People and Place Funding</p> <p>SEStran staff time</p> <p>Delivery Partners' commitment and time</p> <p>Local authority officer time</p> <p>External contractors, experts, and provider's time</p> <p>Strategic prioritisation of projects</p> <p>Pre-existing relationships with stakeholders</p>	<p>Develop delivery plan for identified projects</p> <p>Develop monitoring and evaluation framework</p> <p>Collaboration with Local Authorities, communities and Delivery Partners</p> <p>Promotion of active travel</p>	<p>Capital and revenue investment</p> <p>Tailored packages of support for promoting and enabling active travel</p> <p>Engagement with partners</p> <p>Delivery and implementation of equipment</p> <p>Minor active travel infrastructure</p> <p>Increased resource and capacity dedicated to active travel</p> <p>Increased capacity and capabilities</p> <p>More accessible and inclusive active travel infrastructure</p>	<p>Increased access to and use of equipment and facilities that enable active travel</p> <p>Improved perceptions of the accessibility of active travel</p> <p>Active travel is more accessible and feasible for everyone to make everyday journeys</p> <p>Increased amount of people walking, wheeling, or cycling for physical activity</p> <p>Increased number of short journeys made by active travel</p> <p>Increased capacity and capabilities in Delivery Partners and local authorities</p> <p>Better relationships with Delivery Partners and local authorities</p>	<p>Modal shift among target groups, supporting changes to travel behaviour in the long term</p> <p>Improved physical wellbeing and reduced health inequalities</p> <p>Reduction in car kilometres and road transport emissions</p> <p>Reduction in transport poverty</p> <p>Reduced congestion</p> <p>Safer roads and increased perception of road safety</p> <p>Transferrable learning and leadership driving societal change beyond active travel</p>

# Appendix II: 2024/25 Recommendations and progress summary

2024/25 Recommendation Area	Key Recommendation	Progress in 2025/26
Monitoring and reporting	Standardise data collection tools and templates	Monitoring and reporting templates refined and annual reporting processes strengthened
Capacity and capability building	Introduce outcomes and indicators to measure capacity and capability	New Capacity and Capability indicators developed and piloted through stakeholder workshops
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	Require EDI and follow-up data collection	Ongoing
Training and support	Improve data quality through training and support	Workshops, one-to-one support, and shared learning events delivered throughout the year
Change management	Implement a change control and data audit trail	Risk management and change control process was implemented, although opportunities remain for further formalisation
Case studies and qualitative evidence	Develop case studies (testimonials)	Project interviews, case study videos, personas, and stories of change incorporated into evaluation activities
Digital reporting systems	Introduce a centralised digital reporting portal	Digital portal procured and built, being implemented from 2026/27
Wider impact measurement	Expand indicator coverage to capture wider impacts	Increased use of qualitative evidence and broader outcome reporting, though some gaps remain
Peer learning and knowledge exchange	Facilitate peer learning and data sharing	Regional shared learning and networking events delivered during 2025/26
Value for Money	Value for Money comparison	Initial data foundations strengthened, but a dedicated VfM assessment remains a future opportunity

# Appendix III: Capacity and capability outcomes and indicators

The following outcomes, indicators and example questions were developed during 2025/26 to support the monitoring and evaluation of Capacity and Capability Building activity within the People and Place programme.

The framework was developed through a review of programme objectives, stakeholder engagement and feedback from project leads. It is intended to capture organisational and system-level outcomes that are not fully reflected within the existing active travel indicators, including skills development, partnership working, local leadership, organisational resilience and long-term capacity for behaviour change delivery.

The example questions presented below illustrate how the indicators could be measured and adapted for future monitoring and evaluation activities.

## Outcome 1: Increased local capacity and knowledge to deliver behaviour change

Indicator 1a: Number of trainings, workshops, mentoring opportunities completed by project staff

Example Questions	Answers
How many trainings, workshops, or mentoring sessions on active and sustainable travel behaviour change have you attended or delivered during the People and Place Funding period? If yes, what type of learning/mentoring did you undertake?	None; 1-3; 4-6; 6+  Free text
People and Place has created opportunities for staff to develop new skills and expertise.	Strongly agree- Strongly disagree
Continuous learning and development have been actively supported as part of People and Place	Strongly agree- Strongly disagree
New training and learning opportunities have emerged directly as a result of People and Place.	Strongly agree- Strongly disagree

### Indicator 1b: Increased staff confidence and capability to plan and deliver active travel delivery change projects

Example Questions	Answers
Number of full-time and part-time roles that have been created as part of the programme	Numeric
How confident and capable do you feel in your ability to plan and deliver active and sustainable travel behaviour change projects?	Very confident Confident Not very confident Not confident at all

## Outcome 2: Place-based approaches to delivering behaviour change

### Indicator 2a: (LAs only) Integration of place-specific priorities into behaviour-change delivery

Example Questions	Answers
How well do your behaviour-change activities reflect regional or local needs and priorities?	Not at all / Somewhat / Mostly / Fully
To what extent were your project activities adapted to suit the local area or community?	Not at all / Slightly / Moderately / Significantly

### Indicator 2b: Strengthened community engagement mechanisms

Example Questions	Answers
-------------------	---------

Were new engagement mechanisms (e.g. workshops, local forums, partnerships) been established through the project?	Very confident - Not confident at all
Has community engagement been strengthened during the course of the project?	Improved a lot - Decreased a lot

## Outcome 3: Improved networking and relationships between stakeholders in the SEStran region

Indicator 3a: No. of (new or stronger) partnerships or collaborations (formal or informal)

Example Questions	Answers
Has your organisation developed any new partnerships, connections, networks, or collaborations as a result of the People and Place programme?	Yes/no
If yes, how many?	Numeric value
What level of awareness did your organisation have of other projects, events, or organisations involved in the People and Place programme?	Not aware, Somewhat aware, aware, very aware

Indicator 3b: Strengthened collaboration, awareness, and knowledge sharing through the People and Place programme

Example Questions	Answers
How effective do you consider the partnerships or collaborations developed through the People and Place programme in improving your organisation's ability to deliver projects and share learning?	Not effective / Somewhat effective / Effective / Very effective

Has your organisation's capacity to communicate expertise, share tools, or demonstrate leadership in joint initiatives improved as a result of participation in the People and Place programme?	Yes/No/Not Sure
To what extent has these new events, collaborations, or connections inspired new ways of thinking or innovative approaches?	Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a great extent

### Indicator 3c: Value of engagement events for collaboration and learning

Example Questions	Answers
To what extent have events supported collaboration, shared understanding, or the development of new opportunities?	Not at all / To a small extent / To a moderate extent / To a great extent

## Outcome 4: Local and community leadership

### Indicator 4a: Increased empowerment and leadership among local actors

Example Questions	Answers
How empowered do you feel to take a leadership role in future active-travel or community-based projects?	Not empowered / Somewhat empowered / Empowered / Very empowered
Have any local or community champions emerged or strengthened as a result of participation in the People and Place programme?	Yes / No / Not sure
In what ways have local actors influenced or raised the profile of active-travel behaviour-change initiatives?	Free text

#### Indicator 4b: Improved decision-making and governance supporting local leadership

Example Questions	Answers
Since the start of [Project], have decision-making or governance processes in your organisation improved?	Not at all / Slightly / Moderately / Significantly

## Outcome 5: Self-sustaining programmes beyond People and Place funding

#### Indicator 5a: Organisational learning and improved systems for long-term resilience

Example Questions	Answers
Participation in the People and Place programme has encouraged innovative thinking and the implementation of new practices that will continue beyond the programme.	Strongly agree – Strongly disagree
Are mechanisms in place to maintain project activities, learning, and outcomes beyond the People and Place funding?	Yes / No / Not sure
How do you plan to retain organisational knowledge and best practice from this project?	Open text

#### Indicator 5b: Organisational empowerment and resilience in future projects

Example Questions	Answers
How empowered and capable do you feel to take a leadership role in future active travel projects?	Not at all / Slightly / Moderately / Very



Urban  
Foresight

© Urban Foresight Ltd, 2026

The Catalyst, 3 Science Square  
Newcastle Helix  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 5TG  
United Kingdom  
+44 (0)191 814 2210

30 City Quay,  
Camperdown Street,  
Dundee, DD1 3JA  
Scotland  
+44 (0)1382 549946

[urbanforesight.com](http://urbanforesight.com)

[hello@urbanforesight.com](mailto:hello@urbanforesight.com)