

4 Prioritised Action Plan

4.1 The Solutions

- 4.1.1 This prioritised Active Travel Action Plan sets out the key measures needed to encourage walking and cycling in Dingwall. As well as incorporating the strategic Dingwall Active Travel Network, it also includes the development of a map which is an effective tool in the promotion of walking and cycling.
- 4.1.2 The Prioritised Action Plan therefore encompasses infrastructure improvements and promotional measures and has the following broad objectives:

Objective 1: Provide quality conditions for walking and cycling

Objective 2: Increase cycle parking provision

Objective 3: Promote active travel and its status

Objective 4: Improve the contribution to active travel from other projects – particularly the planning process

- 4.1.3 The following measures are the key priorities for encouraging active travel in Dingwall:

- **Priority 1:** Dingwall Schools Accessibility Plan
- **Priority 2:** Maryburgh to Dingwall School Walking and Cycling Route
- **Priority 3:** Install Cycle Parking in Dingwall Town Centre
- **Priority 4:** Improve Active Travel Infrastructure through planning gain
- **Priority 5:** North Dingwall Walking and Cycling Corridor
- **Priority 6:** Improve links to Business Park
- **Priority 7:** Town centre, train station and hospital to North Dingwall
- **Priority 8:** Develop an Active Travel Map

- 4.1.4 Each of these individual priorities are summarised below and form part of the wider Dingwall Active Travel Network outlined in chapter 3.

4.2 Priority 1 Recommendation: Dingwall Schools Accessibility Plan (Dingwall Active Travel Network reference Route C2, P8)

- 4.2.1 The new Dingwall Academy incorporating a new public library has now been built on the playing fields, south of the existing school. The planning application showed a number of paths through the site that have the potential to link residential areas to the site, but under existing management plans, locked gates will prevent access outside of school opening and closing times.
- 4.2.2 The new public library will also be housed in the new Academy so it is important to strike the right balance between preventing unwanted public access to the Academy, whilst still allowing access to this important public facility via active travel modes. The site presents an opportunity to create north to south and east to west, traffic free paths that will connect the large residential area in the north of the town to the library, leisure centre and links further south to the town centre. Without access through the site, residents will be forced to use Tulloch Avenue which is an unpleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists due to the high levels of HGVs and their journeys will also be longer and more convoluted, making active travel options less attractive.

4.3 Priority 2 Recommendation: Maryburgh to Dingwall School Walking and Cycling Route (Dingwall Active Travel Network reference Route C2, P6)

- 4.3.1 There is great potential to encourage more children to cycle and walk to school within Dingwall and the existence of the traffic free path from Maryburgh towards Dingwall is a key piece of infrastructure to encourage this aim. The provision of links from where the cycle track ends on Station Road to the Academy and the primary school is a potential scheme which could also provide a route to the town centre.

4.4 Priority 3 Recommendation: Install Cycle Parking in Dingwall Town Centre (Dingwall Active Travel Network reference Route C1, C3)

- 4.4.1 For motorists and cyclists alike, the availability of convenient, secure and free parking can be the principal motivation for carrying out some journeys. High quality cycle parking is relatively cheap to install, is virtually maintenance free and helps to raise the profile of cycling. A more expensive covered cycle parking compound may be suitable in some locations.

4.5 Priority 4 Recommendation: Improve Active Travel Infrastructure through planning gain

- 4.5.1 There have been some improvements in Active Travel infrastructure in Dingwall that have been secured through planning gain but it is now imperative that active travel is a key consideration as Dingwall continues to expand. Walking and cycling facilities to new developments in the town must be attractive, easy to use and have distinct advantages over motorised modes, such as shorter distances, acceptable gradients and priority at junctions. Failure to provide for the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at the planning stage will lead to the 'building in' of sedentary and unhealthy lifestyles for generations to come.

4.6 Priority 5 Recommendation: North Dingwall Walking and Cycling Corridor (Dingwall Active Travel Network reference C3, C4, P9, P11)

- 4.6.1 This east/west corridor in north Dingwall is an important strategic link as it creates a route linking the main residential areas to the Business Park, schools and local shops. There are sections of existing shared use footway and cycle track that would benefit from maintenance plus the improvement and extension of links to them.

4.7 Priority 6 Recommendation: Improve Links to Business Park (Dingwall Active Travel Network reference C3, C4, P9, P11)

- 4.7.1 The business park is key trip attractor in Dingwall and is served by a section of high quality off road footway has been constructed from Docharty Road to the business park. The path is not currently designated for use by cyclists although it is well used by them. Footways from Bridgend Avenue to the Docharty Road would benefit from resurfacing and the installation of dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

4.8 Priority 7 Recommendation: Town Centre, train station and hospital to North Dingwall (Dingwall Active Travel Network reference C1, P3, P7)

- 4.8.1 This route is a strategic active travel corridor from the main residential area to the town centre, train station and hospital. The route also has the potential to form an alternative National Cycle Network route 1 to avoid the busy Tulloch Avenue and the sawmill. The one-way streets are a deterrent to cycling and for the most part, facilities for pedestrians are good. Improvements to traffic signal timings and improvements to the footway are the main issues for pedestrians.

4.9 Priority 8 Recommendation: Develop an Active Travel Map

- 4.9.1 An active travel map serves a number of functions: it can help people to find new routes to places they initially thought they could only drive to and also promotes routes that were previously unknown to them, especially when considering a wider recreational network. A map can include other public service information such as health messages and safety information and help promote local shops. Advertising from other organisations can help pay for costs.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1.1 From the on site audits and the application of the methodology it is clear that the site of Dingwall Academy is key to providing infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling. It is the largest development in Dingwall so it is vital to ensure that it does not become a significant physical barrier between the north and the south of the town. This barrier will become more pronounced as residential areas to the north of the town continue to expand.
- 5.1.2 However, the compact nature of Dingwall suggests that it has significant potential to become an 'Active Travel Town' and with potential significant expansion in the near future there is a great opportunity to work with developers to create infrastructure that has physical activity built into the design and layout. The provision of high quality cycle parking for new flats and houses with direct and overlooked walking and cycling facilities that are well lit and offer more direct routes than car routes are some of the measures that can be provided in order to leave a more sustainable, healthy and attractive legacy for the future residents of Dingwall.
- 5.1.3 This report identifies a proposed active travel network for Dingwall and provides a sound basis for ensuring that future development helps improve and contribute towards the implementation of this network.