

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	8
Report No	ECI/29/26

Committee: **Economy and Infrastructure**

Date: **20 August 2026**

Report Title: **Integrated Transport Team Update**

Report By: **Assistant Chief Executive – Place**

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with a comprehensive update on the activities undertaken by the Highland Council's Integrated Transport Team. Significant progress has been made in advancing a range of active and sustainable travel initiatives alongside the delivery of targeted road safety projects and the delivery of statutory and non-statutory public transport services & initiatives, across the region. The team has also successfully secured additional external funding through national programmes to support the ongoing development and implementation of infrastructure that enables the transition to low-carbon transport solutions.
- 1.2 The paper outlines key achievements from 2025/26, highlights current project milestones, and sets out upcoming priorities. Strategic focus areas include the expansion of cycling and walking networks, improved integration of public transport services and continued investment in Sustainable Transport infrastructure. Members are invited to note the progress to date and endorse the proposed direction of travel, including sustained investment and collaborative working to deliver accessible, inclusive, and low-emission transport options for communities across the Highland area.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-
- i. **Note** the progress made by the Integrated Transport Team in delivering active and sustainable transport and road safety initiatives across the Highland area;
 - ii. **Note** the progress made to the 2030 national road casualty reduction targets;
 - iii. **Note** the successful securing of external funding to support low-carbon transport infrastructure and associated programme delivery; and
 - iv. **Agree** the continued delivery of active and sustainable transport and road safety initiatives aligned with the Council's strategies and national priorities.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – The delivery of sustainable transport projects is supported through a combination of internal staffing resources and external funding secured from national bodies such as Transport Scotland, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans), and the Scottish Government's active travel and low-carbon transport programmes. While some core staff costs are met from existing Council budgets, the scale and ambition of project delivery are increasingly reliant on the successful acquisition of external grant funding. There are ongoing pressures on internal capacity to manage and deliver a growing portfolio of projects, particularly in relation to design, community engagement, procurement, and reporting requirements. Continued investment in staffing and specialist support will be essential to maintain momentum and maximise drawdown of external funds. Any future expansion of the programme may require further consideration of resource allocation to ensure delivery remains effective and compliant with funding conditions.
- 3.2 **Legal** – There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, all active and sustainable transport projects delivered by the Council must comply with relevant statutory requirements, including those related to procurement, health and safety, road traffic regulations, and equalities legislation.
- 3.3 **Risk** – There are a number of risks associated with the delivery of sustainable transport projects, including potential delays to funding awards (Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF) Tier 2 and Bus Infrastructure Fund), procurement challenges, contractor availability, adverse weather, and community or stakeholder objections. Failure to deliver projects within agreed timescales may result in the loss of external funding as well as reputational impacts for the Council.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – There are no direct health and safety implications arising from this report. However, all sustainable transport projects will be delivered in accordance with relevant health and safety legislation and best practice, including the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM) where applicable.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** – There are no significant Gaelic implications arising directly from this report. However, in line with the Council's Gaelic Language Plan, the Integrated Transport Team will continue to incorporate bilingual signage and materials in relevant projects where appropriate.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Integrated Transport Team Activity 2025 / 2026

- 5.1 In February 2026 the public transport team joined what was the sustainable transport team to form the new Integrated Transport Team with a new team structure now in place from July 2026.

Appendix 1 presents the annual newsletter intended to inform Members of the key activities and achievements of the Integrated Transport Team. The newsletter highlights projects delivered through a combination of The Highland Council's Capital Programme, UK Shared Prosperity Funding and external funding secured from Transport Scotland's Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF), Bus Infrastructure Fund (BIF), Ian Finlay Path Fund, HiTRANS Cycle Parking Fund and Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans).

Notable accomplishments include the completion of projects spanning locations throughout the Highland Council area including Wick, Culbokie, Thurso, Inverness, Fort William, and Skye, with enhancements like new and / or widened paths, upgraded crossings and improved links between existing routes, dropped kerbs and barrier removal to improve access. In addition to construction, several schemes progressed through the design stage, preparing for future delivery, while smaller interventions such as cycle racks and ramps were installed to support local accessibility. The newsletter also outlines several road safety improvement initiatives including the delivery of route treatment work on the A939 Grantown to Nairn including the installation of PRIME markings particularly targeted at reducing motorcyclist casualties, installation of safety measures including high viz lining at fatal collision site at Granish, installation of A9 side road lining and signing works at 4 sites, installation of signalisation scheme at Sunnyside Railway Bridge, installation of signage, lining, reduced speed limit, lighting scheme at Culloden Battlefield and B9006 crossroads and delivery of 8 Standardised Gateway Sites.

5.2 Funding spent on Sustainable Travel initiatives in 2025/26:-

- Transport Scotland ATIF Tier 1 – £1,259,000
- Transport Scotland ATIF Tier 2 Construction – £3,500,636
- Transport Scotland ATIF Tier 2 Design – £32,726
- Transport Scotland BIF Tier 1 – £1,155,000
- Transport Scotland BIF Tier 2 – £1,192,622
- THC Active Travel Capital – £738,495
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund – £425,000
- Walk Wheel Cycle Trust – £88,861
- Ian Finlay Path Fund – £390,000
- HiTRANS Cycle Parking Fund – £84,099
- Developer Contribution – £121,565
- Transport Scotland Behaviour Change Fund – £216,946
- Road Safety Improvement Fund – £977,643
- 20mph Programme – £717,296
- Bikeability – £76,055

Total – £10,975,944

6 Active Travel (Walking, Wheeling and Cycling) Infrastructure 2026/2027

6.1 ATIF Tier 1

Direct award to Local Authorities (LAs) to support the delivery of active travel infrastructure projects. 2026 / 27 Programme:-

Caithness	Location	Improvement Scheme
Keiss	High Street	Village Improvement Scheme Design
Reay	A836	Footpath and Crossing Improvements
Wick	Newton Hill	Relocation of Central Island
Wick Newton Park	West Banks Avenue	Cycling Boulevard Crossing Improvements
Sutherland	Location	Improvement Scheme
Farr High/Primary	Achneiskich Road	Pedestrian Improvements on single track route
Bonar Bridge	A836	Footpath Extension/Bellmouth Works
Golspie	Hens Run	Footpath Improvement Works
Skye, Ross & Cromarty	Location	Improvement Scheme
Alness	Dalmore Road	Pedestrian Crossing installation
Conon Bridge	Settlement Wide	Dropped kerbs, footpaths, junction narrowings
Dingwall	Sports Centre to Old Evanton Road Footpath link	Scheme Design
Gairloch	A832	Investigation works for potential Raised Table
Lochcarron	A896	Safety Improvements at School
Muir of Ord	Seaforth Road B9169	Footpath Improvement Works
Munlochy	Littleburn	Crossing/Traffic Calming Works
Sleat/Kilbeg	A851	Crossing Safety Improvements, Footpath Investigation Works

Inverness	Location	Improvement Scheme
Balnain	Sraid-Na-Firrin	Crossing and Footpath Works
Balloch	Culloden Road	Village Improvement Works
Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis	A8082 Sir Walter Scott Drive	Part Time 20mph Limit
Culloden	Moray Park Avenue	Crossing Improvement Works
Inverness	Island Bank Road	Dropped Kerb Crossing Point
Merkinch	Kessock Road	Footpath Construction
Inverness Castle Area	Castle St/Castle Wynd/Ness Bank	Crossing Improvement Works
Lochaber	Location	Improvement Scheme
Ballachulish	Beinn Bhan Terrace	Footbridge Investigation Works
North Ballachulish/St Brides	B863	Traffic Calming, Crossing Improvement Works, Signing & Lining

6.2 **ATIF Tier 2 Construction – Rosskeen to Invergordon**

Construct a high-quality shared-use path for walking, wheeling, and cycling alongside the B817, linking Rosskeen to Invergordon and connecting with the existing route between Rosskeen and Alness. This project will significantly enhance active travel opportunities between Alness and Invergordon by delivering a continuous, fully connected corridor.

Currently, the route between Rosskeen and Invergordon consists of a narrow roadside path positioned in close proximity to vehicular traffic, leading to safety concerns and a perceived lack of security among users. The proposed development will address these issues by providing a 3-metre-wide shared-use path that is physically segregated from the road while maintaining a direct and convenient alignment.

The new infrastructure will be designed to be fully accessible, supporting a wide range of users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and wheelchair users. It will improve connectivity to key destinations such as employment areas, local services, retail centres, and transport hubs, while also enhancing accessibility for visitors, including those arriving via cruise liners.

6.3 **ATIF Tier 2 Construction – Muir of Ord to Highfield**

This project seeks to enhance active travel (AT) provision both within the settlement of Muir of Ord (“Village Paths”) and between Muir of Ord and the neighbouring communities of Canon Bridge, Maryburgh, and Dingwall (“Link Route”). It builds upon recently completed works and forms part of a broader programme of strategic improvements.

Village Paths – The Village Paths element aligns with the Active Travel and Road Safety team’s plans to improve internal connectivity within Muir of Ord. Existing infrastructure along key traffic-free routes is currently fragmented, comprising poorly surfaced paths and informal desire lines. The proposal will formalise and upgrade these routes through surfacing improvements and the completion of missing links, creating a safer, more accessible, and coherent network.

Link Route – Following funding secured last year to advance the design of a shared-use route between Muir of Ord, Conon Bridge, and Maryburgh, this project represents the next stage of delivery. Although these settlements are located only 3.5km apart, they are currently connected by the A862, which presents significant barriers to active travel due to its 60mph speed limit, narrow verges, long straight sections, and limited visibility at bends. This phase of the project will deliver a 465-metre section of shared-use path between Home Farm and Highfield crossroads.

6.4 **ATIF Tier 2 Construction – Edinbane (Skye)**

This project proposes the development of a 1.65km accessible active travel route linking Edinbane village centre with residential areas and visitor accommodation located along the A850 to the north of the settlement. The scheme will also provide a direct connection between Edinbane Campsite and key visitor facilities within the village.

The route will be delivered through a combination of interventions, including the upgrading of existing substandard roadside footpaths, the incorporation of sections of a disused former single-track carriageway, and the construction of new sections of roadside shared-use path where required. Together, these elements will form a continuous, coherent corridor.

The completed route will provide a 2-metre-wide shared-use path suitable for pedestrians, cyclists, and wheeled users. The design will incorporate appropriate safety measures, including signage, side road crossing treatments, and a new uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on the A850, improving safety, accessibility, and connectivity for both residents and visitors.

6.5 **ATIF Tier 2 Construction – West of Ness (Inverness)**

The purpose of this project is to transform the West of the Ness area into a vibrant, accessible, and inclusive environment where walking and wheeling are safe, attractive, and the preferred modes for everyday journeys. By strengthening active travel connections, encouraging community participation, and addressing key barriers such as transport poverty and lack of user confidence, the project aims to increase uptake of active travel for education, employment, and leisure. It will also contribute to enhancing the quality of the public realm, fostering a stronger sense of place, and supporting healthier, more connected communities.

A central element of the project is the introduction of a consistent approach to uncontrolled pedestrian crossings, including the provision of dropped kerbs and the improvement of narrow crossing points. These measures are intended to reduce vehicle speeds, minimise the time pedestrians and wheeled users spend within the live carriageway, and improve overall safety and accessibility.

In addition, the project seeks to address existing community severance caused by a wide avenue that currently lacks formal crossing facilities. By introducing safe and convenient crossing opportunities, the scheme will improve connectivity across the area and enable more cohesive movement for all users.

6.6 THC Capital Funding

The AT Transformation Capital Budget 26/27 will be directed towards walking, wheeling and cycling improvements in Inverness, Fortrose, Thurso and Fort William with active travel and accessibility being key to these infrastructure projects. Three projects are to be constructed in Inverness at Gilbert Street (works started on 6 April 2026), Assynt Road and Barn Church Road; at Assynt Road the Capital Budget will match Community Regeneration Funding to deliver a footpath connection to the canal path and on Barn Church Road designs will be prepared and construction carried out to improve the southern footway for better active travel and connection to the National Cycle Network.

At Fortrose a construction ready design has been prepared to improve walking and wheeling accessibility on the High Street, with new road crossing infrastructure and levelled and resurfaced footways. In Thurso plans will be engaged upon to improve the road crossing at Lovers Lane to the Railway Station and in Fort William there are plans to provide an improved footpath at Upper Achintore and design work will be carried out with the Roads Operations Manager to improve the footway on Glen Nevis Road (C1162) for active travel.

6.7 Active Travel Officer for Skye and Raasay

An allocation from THC Capital Fund has been made available to support Active Travel works on Skye and Raasay, and agreement will be sought from local Members to use this to deliver against a range of potential projects once more detailed costs and potential contribution requirements are known, including:-

- Broadford Hospital Path: To provide a direct and accessible Active Travel route between the village and Broadford Hospital/Medical Centre.
- Edinbane Link Path: Connect residents and visitors staying in the outlying townships north of Edinbane with community facilities located within the village.
- Portree Active Travel Masterplan: Six key actions from the Portree Active Travel Masterplan have been identified as having potential to be taken forward for feasibility study, design or construction within 2026/27.
- Portree Mobility Hub(s): To undertake more detailed work on the deliverability of emerging preferred options, better understanding of key factors, and an in-depth review of all shortlisted options with key stakeholders.
- Raasay School/Community Path: To carry out early-stage feasibility/concept design on a path connecting Raasay Primary School with Raasay Community Hall (and potentially extending to Raasay Community Stores' new location).

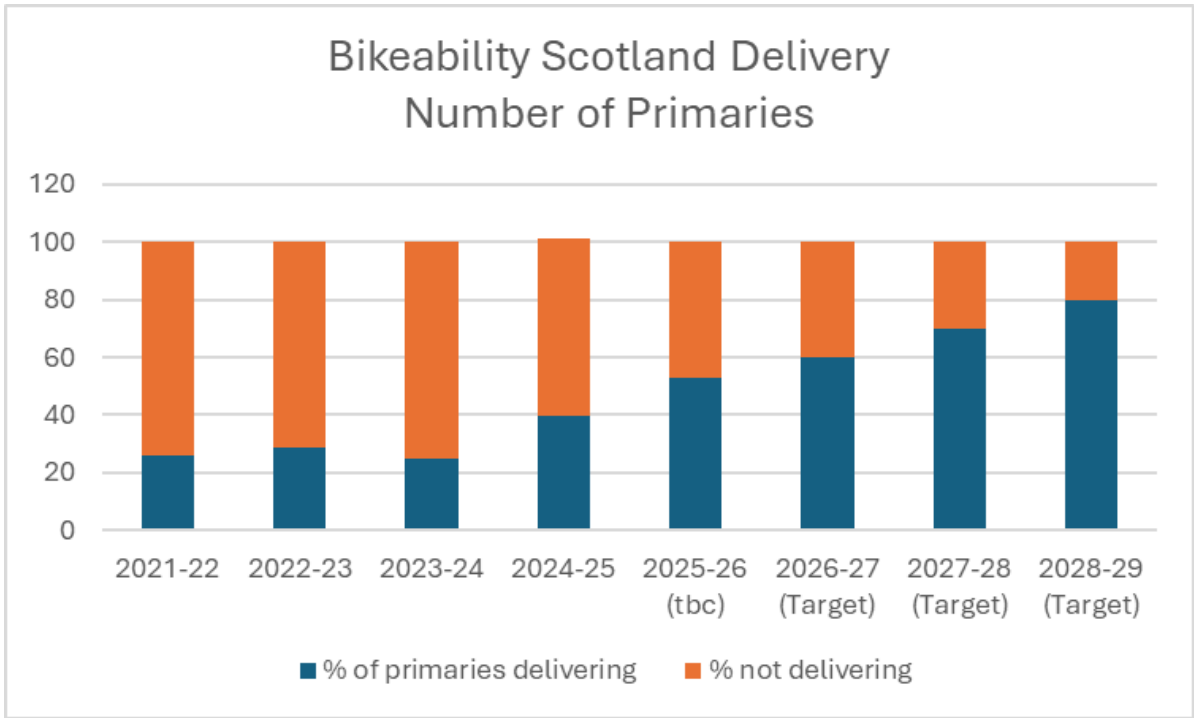
In addition to the above three applications for projects on Skye have been submitted to the Scottish Government's Active Travel Infrastructure Fund, as follows:-

- Design: A87 High Quality Active Travel Route – Develop a shared use walking, wheeling and cycling path adjacent to the A87, running for 2.4km from the Isle of Skye Candle Company/Las Cinema to Sluggans Wood.
- Design: A855 (Bridge Rd) High Quality Active Travel Route – To develop a shared cycle track, running for 40m at footway level along the A855 between the A87 and Somerled Square.
- Construction: Edinbane Link Path – Connect residents and visitors staying in the outlying townships north of Edinbane with community facilities.

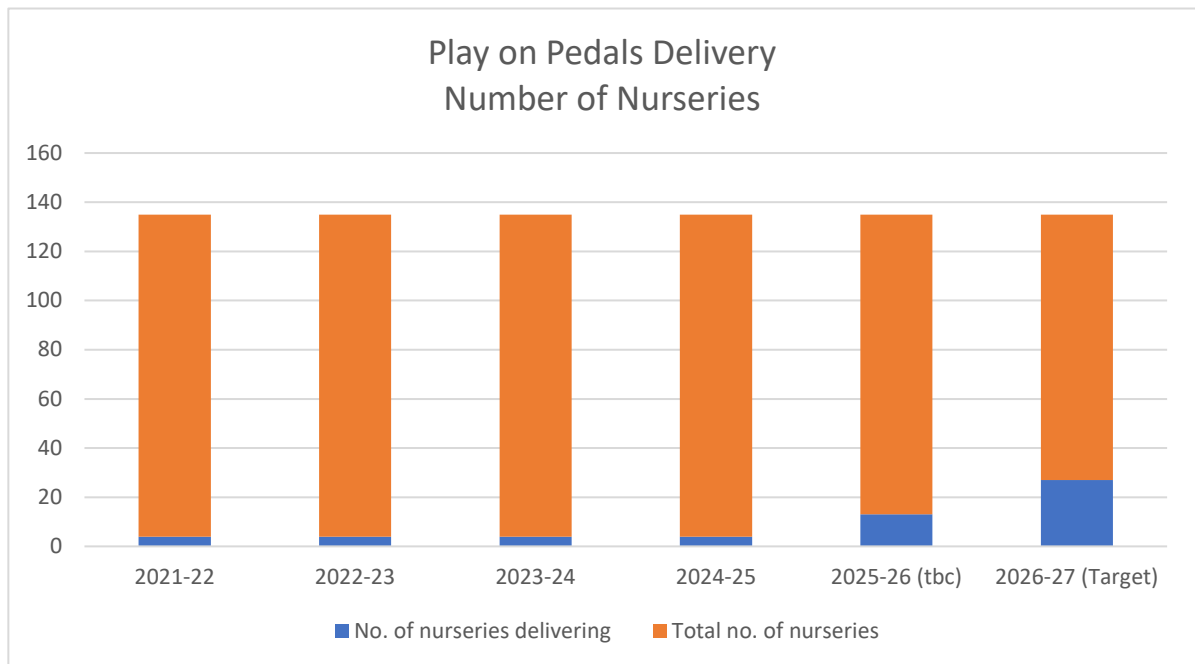
6.8 **Transport Scotland Funded Behaviour Change Initiative**

In 2025/26 the Local Authority Direct Award and HITRANS funded 4 Behaviour Change Officer (BCO) posts. The BCO's have covered a wide range of work including:-

Bikeability Scotland – The Highland Council was again successful in their bid to Cycling Scotland for Bikeability Scotland support in the form of funding for a Coordinator post, casual instructors, third party delivery and Dr Bike sessions. We now have 7 Casual Instructors in post who work alongside the Behaviour Change Officers. We reached our target of 40% of Highland primary schools delivering Bikeability Level 2 on road sessions during academic year 2024-25, delivery rates suggest we will also meet our target of 50% delivery in this current academic year, 2025-26, this is mostly down to the availability of the BCO's and casual instructors for delivery. Two of our BCO's have started to deliver Bikeability Scotland Instructor (BSI) courses. Funding will be sought from Cycling Scotland for the continuation of this programme.



Play on Pedals – This is a training programme that supports and develops the cycling skills of nursery-aged children. Coordination of this initiative has been taken on by The Road Safety Team from Education. THC secured funding from Cycling Scotland for the purchase of 80 balance and early pedal bikes to support Early Years settings to deliver Play on Pedals. The BCO Team have started delivering Play on Pedal Instructor Training (POPIT) courses and supplying nurseries with the bikes and helmets. In academic year 2024-26, 4 Highland nurseries delivered Play on Pedals. Thirteen nurseries have received bikes and training during the current academic year showing an increase of 225%. However, with 135 LA settings, we have a long way to go.



Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) – A JRSO event was held in Wick in September with over 60 P6 pupils attending. Activities and information were provided by SFRS, Civil Nuclear Constabulary, Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, HC Climate Change Team, HC Bikeability Team, HC Road Safety Team and Allan's Magic providing a road safety magic show. JSRO Scheme uptake promotion is continuing.

Road User Awareness Training (RUAE) – This is the first year the BCOs have delivered Road User Awareness Training on behalf of Cycling Scotland. The training has been delivered to S5/6 at 14 of our secondary schools, this equates to approximately 1300 pupils. The goal is to widen training delivery to interested businesses and community groups. Highland Council is the first business to be targeted, with training having been offered to all fleet drivers. Sessions are due to take place from July 2026.

Police Scotland Keep Left Campaign – The BCOs supported Police Scotland's 'Keep Left' campaign for visitors to the area in the summer of last year. Our BCOs attended events with them at 3 key visitor hot spots; Dunrobin Castle, Cairngorm Mountain resort and Ralia. Plans are in development to support further activity in the coming year.

General – Noss bike train continues to be successful, with a further three primaries interested in starting their own walking/bike bus/train. 1:1 learn to ride sessions have been delivered to a community member as well as a young carer. Support has also been provided to the Child Rights and Participation Service "Vision" event.

7 Road Safety Initiatives 2026/2027

- 7.1 The Highland Council has a statutory duty, under the Road Traffic Act 1991, to prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote Road Safety.
- 7.2 The cost in suffering and economic terms caused by road accidents is enormous and the human cost of a life simply cannot be valued. In Great Britain, in 2024, the average cost of each Fatality was £2,936,234, each serious casualty was £342,225 and each slight casualty was £34,423. The estimated total cost of all injury road accidents in Scotland in 2024 was £1,086m (Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2024).
- 7.3 Highland Council's Road Safety Team are responsible for managing the Council's Road Collision Data System and utilising the data to ensure any clusters or areas of concern are identified. They are also responsible for undertaking Collision Investigation on all Fatal Road Crashes that take place on the Local Authority Road Network. This work is key in the drive towards reducing collision on Highland's roads.
- 7.4 As per the Highland Council Road Safety Plan, Highland Council is working towards achieving the road casualty reduction targets set out in Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030.

The Interim Targets to 2030 (based on the 2014-18 baseline) are:-

- 50% reduction in people killed
- 50% reduction in people seriously injured
- 60% reduction in children
- 60% reduction in children (aged <16) seriously injured (aged <16) killed

- 7.5 A breakdown of the Collision Statistics for the Highland Council Area for the last 7 years can be seen in the table below. It is encouraging to note the reduction in both the number of collisions and casualties seen in 2025.

Collisions	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Fatal	20	14	13	24	15	16	19	121
Very Serious	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mod Serious	101	88	88	89	149	152	62	729
Less Serious	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	207	114	107	94	99	107	68	796
Damage	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Total	333	216	208	207	263	275	149	1,651

Casualties	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Killed	21	18	14	32	15	17	22	139
Very Serious	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mod Serious	128	106	115	120	188	187	79	923
Less Serious	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	340	173	167	158	195	203	154	1,390
Total	494	297	296	310	398	407	255	2,457

7.6 **Appendix 2** details the casualty statistics for Highland, and the progress being made, in relation to the 2014-2018 baseline in order to achieve the Scottish Government 2030 interim national targets. These figures are from both 'Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2024' and Highland Council's own Collision Database which uses Police Scotland's CRaSH statistics. Figures include both the Local Authority and Trunk Road network.

7.7 The Road Safety Improvement Fund (RSIF) is a key Scottish Government grant fund provided to Local Authorities to deliver schemes to enhance safety across the local road network. The funding is for specific use on targeted casualty reduction schemes. Highland Council's RSIF 26/27 Programme includes the following works:-

Intervention	Location
Enhanced Gateway Treatment	Bunchrew, Dunnett, Glenuig, Kilchoan, Kinlochbervie, Kinlochewe, Kinlochleven, Lochaline, Rogart, Teangue, Tore, Unapool/Kylesku
Road Safety Priority Route Treatment	A861 Ardgour
A9 Side Road Treatment	Continuation of 25/26 programme – potential 11 locations funding dependant
Enhanced Signing Investigation Works	Bealach Na Ba, Drumbeg Loop, Shore Road Tongue
Improved Crossing Infrastructure	Dunvegan Castle
Dornoch	Embo Street Area Improvement Investigation Design Works

8 Public Transport Improvements

8.1 Bus Infrastructure Fund – Overview and Tier 1

The Bus Infrastructure Fund supports the development, design and delivery of infrastructure that improves access to bus services, the quality and safety of bus infrastructure, integration with other modes of transport, and bus journey time reliability.

The funding allocation for this financial year is still to be confirmed.

Subject to confirmation of funding, the Tier 1 programme for 2026/27 is expected to focus on further improvements to existing bus infrastructure, building on work delivered during the last financial year. This will include the maintenance and improvement of existing infrastructure across Highland, alongside further targeted upgrades, including new bus shelters for Castle Street, Inverness.

8.2 Bus Infrastructure Fund – Tier 2 Project Pipeline

Several Tier 2 Bus Infrastructure Fund projects are continuing to progress.

Bus Links: The Blar Mhor and Upper Achintore bus link projects in Fort William are currently going through the planning process. Subject to the necessary approvals and confirmation of funding, construction is expected to commence during the current financial year.

Mobility Hubs: The Mobility Hub project, also referred to as Transport Hubs, continues to progress, with the launch of the distance park and ride survey on the Council's new engagement platform.

In collaboration with Scottish Canals and Jacobs Consultants, design work is being progressed for the site at Neptune's Staircase, Banavie. The proposals seek to formalise parking, improve the quality of the public space, and support onward connections by rail to Glenfinnan, by bus, and by walking, wheeling and cycling. Smaller mini-hub locations are also expected to be identified shortly. These will provide opportunities for more localised improvements to support better interchange between bus services and other modes of transport, including walking, wheeling and cycling.

Fort William Bus Station: A feasibility study undertaken by Austin-Smith in the last financial year has identified short, medium and long-term options for improvements at the bus station. Subject to confirmation of funding, BIF is expected to support the delivery of short-term improvements this financial year, focused on passenger facilities, accessibility, safety and the overall quality of the waiting environment. The final report is currently being prepared.

8.3 Inverness Interchange

During 2025/26, BIF supported feasibility work to consider the future of Inverness Bus Station as part of the wider Inverness Interchange and Station Quarter masterplan work. The study identified that the existing bus station is constrained and does not meet current or future operational, accessibility and passenger requirements. It also identified the opportunity to provide a replacement bus and coach station with improved interchange with Inverness Railway Station, as part of the wider regeneration of the Station Quarter.

Public and stakeholder engagement has been undertaken on the emerging options. Subject to confirmation of funding, the project is expected towards a preferred option during 2026/27.

The final consultant report from Austin-Smith: Lord and the associated consultation report and will help establish the next stages of design development, phasing and future funding requirements.

8.4 Cromarty–Nigg Ferry Contract Award

Members are advised that the contract for the operation of the Cromarty–Nigg ferry service for the period 2026–2031 has been awarded following a competitive procurement process. The successful operator, Highland Ferries, has demonstrated the capacity to deliver a safe, reliable and resilient service which meets the needs of both local communities and key economic sectors within the Inner Moray Firth. As part of the new arrangements, the Port of Nigg has agreed to provide financial support to enable operation of the service during April and May, extending the traditional operating season - as was piloted for the 2025 season with great success. This represents a positive example of collaborative working with regional stakeholders to enhance service provision and better reflect local demand. Sustainability and environmental considerations were also incorporated into the technical evaluation of bids. This marks an important step in aligning service delivery with the Council's climate and sustainability objectives, and in encouraging operators to contribute to a lower-emission future for transport across the Highland area.

These approaches reflect key elements of the Integrated Transport Team's evolving tendering strategy, including seeking opportunities to work with community and commercial partners to support service viability, and embedding environmental considerations within procurement processes.

8.5 Recognition for Community Transport and Notable Projects

Community transport providers continue to play a vital role in supporting accessibility and social inclusion across the Highland area, particularly in rural and remote communities. Partnership working between the Integrated Transport Team and community transport organisations represents some of the most valuable and meaningful work undertaken on a day-to-day basis, reflecting a shared commitment to supporting communities and improving outcomes for residents.

The Integrated Transport Team has introduced a quarterly Community Transport newsletter to improve communication, share best practice, and highlight the wide-ranging impact of the sector. In addition, from August 2025, quarterly Community Transport engagement events have been established, providing a regular forum for Council officers and community transport organisations to share successes, challenges, and opportunities for collaboration. These sit alongside the Community Transport Association's Highland Network events, which continue to offer valuable platforms for knowledge exchange and sector-wide engagement.

Ealing's Social Value Toolkit has been adopted by Highland Council as an umbrella framework to better capture and articulate the multiple layers of value delivered by community transport organisations. The Toolkit will support more informed decision-making, particularly in the context of budget constraints, by ensuring that considerations of best value for money reflect not only cost but also the wider social, economic, and community benefits of provision. This will enable a more consistent approach to evidencing outcomes and help to clearly demonstrate the intrinsic and multifaceted value that community transport initiatives bring to individuals and communities across Highland.

Community transport organisations continue to deliver a range of services on behalf of the Council. Most recently, a new school transport project has been successfully introduced, delivered by Communities in Motion Community Transport (CiMCT), who also operate the Wee Bus service in the Ferintosh area. Other organisations currently delivering Council-supported services include Gairloch Community Car Scheme, Applecross Community Company, and Wheels in Nairnshire, with further opportunities for community transport delivery being explored across Highland.

Officers will continue to work in partnership with community transport organisations to support service development, strengthen the resilience of the sector, and maximise the impact of available funding and delivery models.

8.6 Introduction of the £2 Fare Cap and "Pay What You Can"

Members are advised that the Highlands and Islands (HITRANS) and Shetland (ZETRANS) Regional Transport Partnership areas were jointly selected by the Scottish Government to deliver a pilot £2 bus fare cap scheme. The 12-month pilot, supported by approximately £10m of investment, has been introduced on a phased basis, including within Highland from 23 March 2026.

The pilot caps most single bus fares at £2 across participating services, with the aim of making public transport more affordable, particularly in rural and island communities where journey distances can be significant and fares comparatively high. The initiative also seeks to encourage increased bus patronage, support lower-income households, and contribute to wider objectives around modal shift and the sustainability of local bus networks.

Alongside the £2 fare cap, “Pay What You Can” initiatives have continued to develop as an innovative and community-led approach to improving transport accessibility on Section 19 routes. Within Highland, this model has been pioneered by Wheels in Nairnshire through the delivery of the Nairnshire Dial-a-Bus service. The approach has contributed to a strong sense of community cohesion while removing barriers to travel for those who may otherwise be unable to access services. Notably, experience to date indicates that many users choose to contribute above the suggested fare, reflecting both their appreciation of the service and their individual ability to pay.

Together, these initiatives support affordable access to transport, contribute to increased patronage, and help to reduce cost barriers for passengers. They align with national and local objectives to encourage modal shift, reduce inequalities, and support low-carbon transport choices.

Early indications suggest positive impacts in terms of passenger uptake and community accessibility, although ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be required to assess long-term sustainability and outcomes. The Integrated Transport Team will continue to engage with operators and partners to maximise the benefits of these initiatives and to inform future policy development.

- 8.7 The implantation of the new Pax system has improved the way passenger transport data is managed and processed. By bringing our data into a single system, Pax has reduced duplication, improved data accuracy, and created a more efficient end to end application process. The system has streamlined administration by enabling school transport applications to be processed consistently in the three areas (North, East and West) and gives greater visibility to Senior transport officers across the service. Through the reporting functionality, officers are now able to analyse transport demand and operational data quickly, generate bulk correspondence and produce timetables and passenger information at the touch of a button. Pax also supports improved planning and operational management through the use of QRoutes allowing for improved route optimisation for efficient allocation of transport resource. Overall, Pax has strengthened data management and provides tools that support a more responsive and efficient transport service

9 Wick PSO Update for 2026-27

- 9.1 Following the submission to Transport Scotland in October 2025 of a business case for continuation and expansion of air services from Wick by means of a Public Service Obligation (PSO) mechanism, in July 2026 Scottish Government confirmed that they would be providing grant funding support for these services until August 2027. The total funding for the project from August 2026-August 2027 is £2,402,812, with Scottish Government providing £1,779,112 and The Highland Council providing £623,700.

- 9.2 This funding has enabled the Council to award a contract to Air Charter Scotland to deliver a dual-destination PSO from Wick, offering connectivity to both Aberdeen and Glasgow.

The current timetable provides:-

Flights to Aberdeen

- Four flights each week to Aberdeen (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday)
- Two same day return options (Tuesday and Thursday)
- Onward travel to Glasgow on Monday and Friday services
- A return service from Aberdeen to Wick on Sunday

Flights to Glasgow

- Three flights each week to Glasgow (Monday, Wednesday and Friday)
- Two same day return options (Monday and Wednesday)
- Monday and Friday services operate via Aberdeen
- A return service from Glasgow to Wick on Sunday

The timetable has been designed to support business travel, healthcare appointments and leisure trips, including new weekend travel options to Glasgow. Flight times have also been selected to maximise opportunities for onward travel by air and rail.

- 9.3 Provision of these services enables the Council to meet its commitments under the P2.12 of the Local Transport Strategy (LTS), as endorsed by Members, specifically to:-

Work with partners to support the case for improvements to air travel, including enhancements to existing services and the establishment of new services recognising the role of aviation within Highland in getting people to hubs and across the region as well as supporting economic development. This should include consideration of using the Public Service Obligation (PSO) contracting system.

- 9.4 Regional and National priorities are also met by the continuation and expansion of the Wick PSO including:-

- support for the local economy of Caithness, particularly as it transitions towards renewable energy;
- securing sustainable transport links for one of the UK's most remote mainland communities; and
- improving equitable access to services for those living and working in the region.

Providing confidence for commercial project developers to invest in locating personnel in the region, addressing key concerns related to depopulation

10 Local Transport Strategy and Policy Update

- 10.1 As Members will be aware, the Local Transport Strategy 2025 – 2035 Delivery Plan was adopted by the Economy and Infrastructure Committee (E&I) in February 2026. The LTS Vision is “That our communities, businesses, and visitors to the Highlands are served by a low-carbon transport system that is sustainable, inclusive, safe, resilient, and accessible.” This Vision leads to four Objectives under which are grouped a number of Policies, delivered by Priority Actions. The Delivery Plan brings together in one place all transport-related activities in different workstreams across the Council to provide a strategic overview, to identify efficiencies and synergies across teams, and to improve consistency of decision-making. Governance is through a Steering Group of senior staff, meeting quarterly, and a Working Group of officers involved in delivering the Priority Actions, meeting monthly. The Steering Group will report annually to this committee.

Transport is complex, particularly in an area as large and diverse as Highland and affects every area of our daily lives. The LTS Delivery Plan provides a strategic overview and a structure for understanding progress, and interconnections, on transport-related actions across different workstreams.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Place

Date: 2 July 2026

Author: Integrated Transport Team

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Integrated Transport Team Newsletter
Appendix 2 – Highland Casualty Statistics

Integrated Transport Team Newsletter – June 2026

Welcome

Welcome to the Integrated Transport Team's second newsletter. We publish this annually but will be posting occasional updates on projects and initiatives on our web pages

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/walking-wheeling-cycling> and <https://www.highland.gov.uk/road-safety>

There are various workstreams in the Integrated Transport Team: Active Travel, Road Safety (including Behaviour Change), Bus Improvement Fund delivery, Community Transport, Public Transport and School Transport.

We have included below some highlights from our work programmes throughout the last year.

Kindest Regards

The Integrated Transport Team

Active Travel

With funding from Transport Scotland's Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF), three significant projects are almost finished: Culbokie Active Travel Village, Wick High Street and Muir of Ord / Chapelton to Home Farm.

Late confirmation of funding meant that delivery of these projects was delayed, and we sincerely thank residents in all three communities for their patience.

Active Travel Infrastructure Fund: Culbokie

In Culbokie the project involves widening and resurfacing of existing footways and construction of new sections, along with crossing improvements and new crossings. Also included are improvements to the public spaces at the school, at the green space in the middle of the village, at the old village pump and at the shop. Some pictures, as the project nears completion:



Improved footway to the football pitch and forest walks. Raised table to reduce vehicle speed.



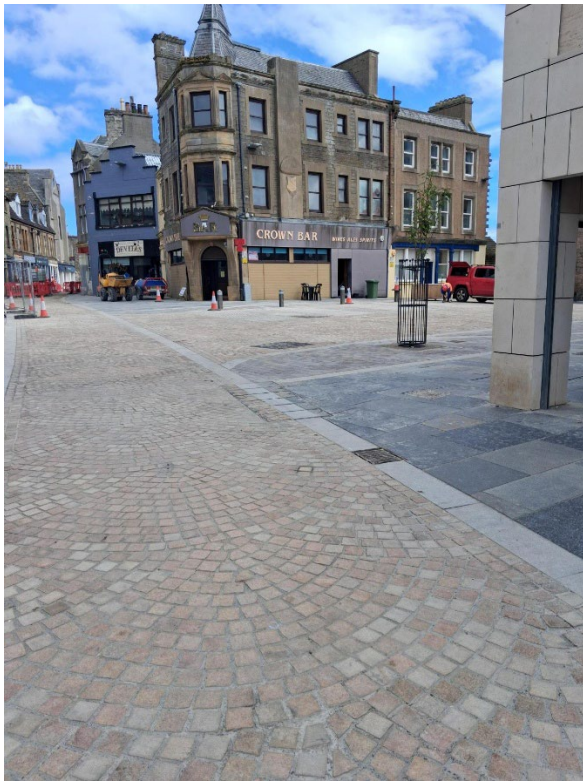
New native species planting and benches next to the school entrance. Footway / crossing improvements and raised table to reduce vehicle speed at the Primary School.



School's out! And new bench at the view over the Cromarty Firth.

Active Travel Infrastructure Fund: Wick

In Wick, the project is delivering improvements to the commercial and retail centre of the town to create a more welcoming and attractive space and to make it safer to walk, wheel and cycle. This includes widening the footways on Bridge Street, creating raised pedestrian crossings and making alterations to traffic signals and road layouts. The High Street and Market Place are being repaved with high-quality slabs; the project also includes upgrades of street furniture, signage and planting in the High Street pedestrian zone.



Active Travel Infrastructure Fund: Muir of Ord

In Muir of Ord the Chapelton to Home Farm path construction fills in a missing link between the edge of the village and the Home Farm minor road, which is popular for walking and cycling and connects to other local paths. The new verge-side path offers a safe, accessible and attractive option.



Before: desire line visible on grass verge, looking towards Home Farm road end on LHS.



After: new footway in place looking towards Home Farm road end



After: new footway in place, looking back towards Muir of Ord

New wayfinding signage in Inverness city centre

With funding from developer contributions, new signage in the city centre is supporting walking and wheeling, supporting Gaelic, raising awareness of destinations west of the river as the Culture and Leisure Quarter, and improving the public space:





CEÀRN CULTAIR & CUR-SEACHAD CULTURE & LEISURE QUARTER

Tha Gàidhlig is Beurla air an cleachdadh air a' phannal seo agus air iomadh soidhne eile.

'S i a' Ghàidhlig an cànan as sine a thathar a' bruidhinn ann an Alba. Tha i air mairsinn airson còrr is 1500 bliadhna, a dh'aindeoin geur-leanmhainn is dearmad.

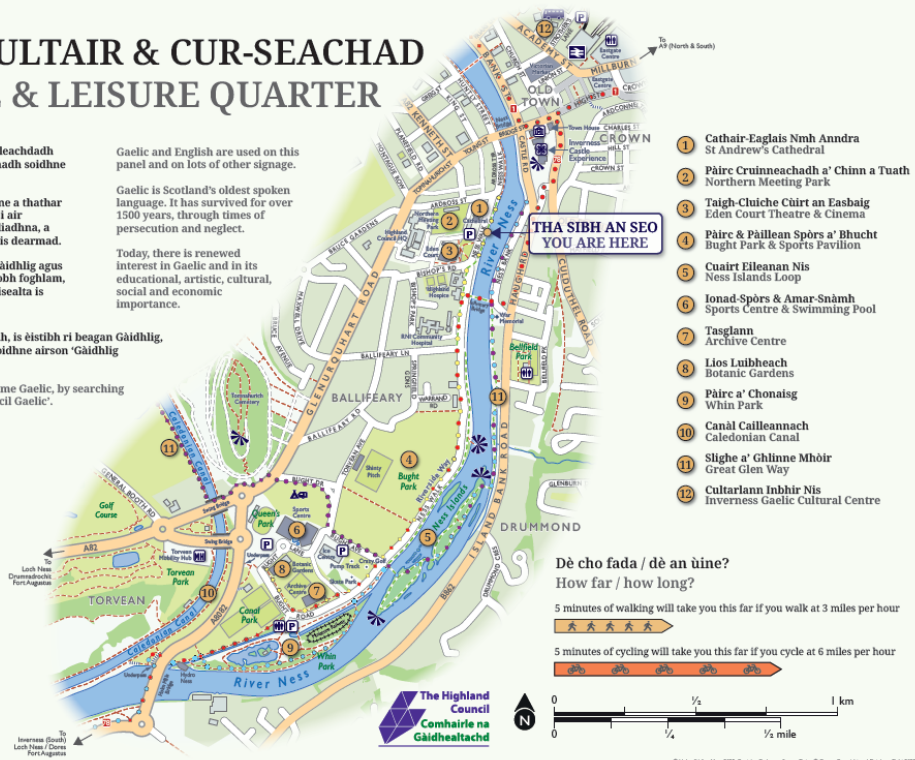
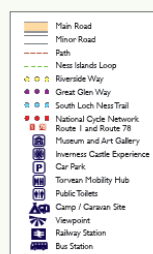
An-diugh, tha ùidh às ùr sa Ghàidhlig agus cho cudromach 's a tha i a thaobh foghlaim, ealain, cultar, agus nithean sòisealta is eaconamach.

Lorgaibh tuilleadh fiosrachaidh, is eistibh ri beagan Gàidhlig, tro bhith a' rannsachadh air-loidhne airson 'Gàidhlig Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd'.

Find out more, and listen to some Gaelic, by searching online for 'The Highland Council Gaelic'.

Gaelic and English are used on this panel and on lots of other signage. Gaelic is Scotland's oldest spoken language. It has survived for over 1500 years, through times of persecution and neglect.

Today, there is renewed interest in Gaelic and in its educational, artistic, cultural, social and economic importance.



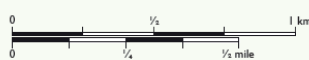
Dè cho fada / de an ùine?

How far / how long?

5 minutes of walking will take you this far if you walk at 3 miles per hour



5 minutes of cycling will take you this far if you cycle at 6 miles per hour



© Helen Skilling Maps 2015. Contains Ordnance Survey Data. © Crown Copyright and Database Right 2015

Working with HITRANS: public cycle shelters

We have worked this year with HITRANS and High Life Highland to install covered cycle shelters at the Leisure Centres in Thurso, Golspie, Invergordon, Dingwall and Ullapool. This simple measure is a real practical support to those who are already cycling to those facilities, and encourages those who are considering it.



Golspie Leisure Centre, new shelter



Dingwall Leisure Centre

We also installed new shelters in Alness at Crawl Park and in Nairn at the Bus Station and the High Street / Leopold Street. At the Bus Station, this provision helps those who cycle to then use the bus, and at Leopold Street it is helping to formalise cycle parking at a busy spot.



Nairn, Bus Station



Nairn, Leopold Street / High Street

Inverness – Nairn: new path linking Croy and Clephanton

In a partnership project between the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans), Community Councils, the West Nairnshire Safe Paths group, landowners and the Council a new path is under construction at Heathfield at the eastern edge of Croy. This path is filling in a crucial missing link between existing path networks to the east towards Nairn and to the west towards Inverness: at the moment people walking, wheeling or cycling have to share with vehicles on the B9091 which is a significant deterrent.

WWCT have a longer term aspiration to reroute National Cycle Network 1 between Inverness and Nairn to provide a more direct, flatter and largely traffic free route between Inverness and Nairn, better linking the settlements of Tornagrain, Croy, Clephanton and Cawdor. We look forward to progressing this in partnership with WWCT and other partners.



Looking eastwards towards Clephanton: new woodland section

Skye – Moll Road and Old Sleat Road Active Travel Routes

Working in partnership with local community groups including Sconser Community Council and Sleat Community Trust, with funding support from Walking Scotland through the Ian Findlay Path Fund (IFPF), the Council was able to deliver two major Active Travel capital projects on Skye.

The Moll Road project secured a total of £230,000 in funding from a combination of IFPF and the Council's own capital budget, to open up around 10km of single-track road for walking/wheeling/cycling, providing additional opportunities to local communities for active travel and providing a safe alternative route to an otherwise extremely challenging and dangerous section of the A87 which otherwise lacks active travel infrastructure.



Moll Road - before and after



Celebrating the new Moll Road route

The Old Sleat Road project secured a total of £240,000 in funding, primarily from IFPF, to open up around 7km of primarily off-road route adjacent to the A851 as an Active Travel route. It saw scrub cutting/verge clearance/scraping along existing segments of old road to restore the full width of the path, the connection of the Drumfearn Road end to the start of the route, ensuring safe Active Travel connections to the related bus stop, and additional signage to better indicate the availability of the route for Active Travel use.



Old Sleat Road, after clearing and scraping



Celebrating the opening

Local Transport Strategy 2025 – 2035: Delivery Plan

In February 2026 the Council's Economy and Infrastructure Committee approved the new Local Transport Strategy 2025 – 2025 Delivery Plan. This provides, for the first time, an overview of all transport-related actions within the Council and sets the framework for more consistent, efficient decision making to deliver a transport system fit for the future.

The vision of the LTS is that:

“Our communities, businesses and visitors in Highland will be served by a low carbon transport system that is sustainable, inclusive, safe, resilient and accessible.”

This vision is supported by four objectives:

- To invest in the safety, maintenance and resilience of the transport system to support the future prosperity of communities and businesses within Highland.
- To improve public, community and shared transport options that meet different user needs across the Highland geography.
- To improve walking, wheeling and cycling choices for everyone living in or visiting Highland to encourage active and healthy journeys.
- To reduce emissions from the transport system.

Find out more here: [Local Transport Strategy 2025 – 2025 Delivery Plan](#).

Active Travel Capital Works

Capital Works carried out in the financial period 25/26 included the construction and design of new walking, wheeling and cycling paths and infrastructure. There was also numerous small projects to install cycle racks, handrails and cycle ramps, etc and retention payments for construction projects carried out in 24/25. The main projects that the capital budget has funded are detailed below:

Thurso, 'The Mall'. Completion of construction on The Mall to widen the path to 2.5 metres wide for shared use, including realignment and upgrade of park entrances to Janet Street.

Thurso, Ormlie Road. Completion of construction associated with the upgrade of junction crossings on Ormlie Road and footway resurfacing and improvement.

Inverness, Hilton. Completion of footway improvements, including new drop kerbs and tactile paving at junctions on Cauldean and Dell Roads.

Inverness, Bught Road. Upgrade of the path surface at the side of the Botanic Gardens with tarmac to improve active travel links to the Riverside Way Path and Canal Path.

Inverness, Gilbert Street. Designs prepared to improve active travel and accessibility on Gilbert Street. Works to commence April 2026.

Inverness, Wayfinding. Contribution to new signpost layout in the City Centre, which was mostly paid for through Developer Contributions.

Inverness, Merkinch. Construction of footway improvement for accessibility at Grant Street.

Invergordon to Rosskeen. Contribution towards the development of a new coastal path for walking, wheeling and cycling between Invergordon and Rosskeen. Funding application submitted to Transport Scotland for construction of the path during funding year 26/27.

Fortrose, High Street. Construction ready designs developed to improve accessibility on the High Street, with improved road crossing infrastructure and resurfaced footways. Construction expected 26/27.

Fort William, Caol. Works carried out to improve accessibility at the junction of Glenloy Street/Kilmallie Road; narrowed road crossing, wider footways and new drop kerbs and tactile paving.

Fort William ,Upper Achintore. Designs developed to install a new footpath link between Angus Crescent and Aspen Wynd. Subject to agreement with Landowner.

Skye, Moll Road. Active travel improvements carried out in conjunction with the Area Roads Department to stop up a section of Moll Road damaged by landslide and make it accessible to walking, wheeling and cycling only.

Golspie, Promenade Path - contribution to the improvement of active travel on the sea front path in Golspie.

Newtonmore, Perth Road - development of a new path and improved road crossing on National Cycle Route 7 between Newtonmore and An t'Eilean (Newtonmore Camanachd Club).





UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF)

£435K of funding was provided for active travel through UKSPF in the financial year 25/26. Some of the works carried out with this funding were supplemented by the AT Capital Budget to deliver larger or more comprehensive projects as detailed below:

Wick, Willowbank Road to Staxigoe. Improvement of junction crossings along the route with new drop kerbs and tactile paving. Including footway improvements and vegetation clearance to improve accessibility by walking or wheeling.

Inverness, Smithton Road. Footway widening to 3 metres, new tarmac surface and uncontrolled road crossing infrastructure over 1KM. Project nearing completion with a delay due to unchartered fibre optic cables. This project is match funded by the AT Capital Budget.

Inverness, Milton. Three metre wide tarmac shared use path constructed adjacent to Milton Burn. This replaces an old narrow slab path to offer improved facilities for walking, wheeling and cycling. This project is match funded from the AT Capital Budget.

Feasibility Study into Mobility Hubs – carried out in Skye/Lochaber.

Road Safety

Safer Routes to School

Road safety concerns were raised by Smithton Primary School and its Parent Council on Murray Road and Smithton Park during drop-off and pick-up times. In response, a range of improvements were introduced to slow traffic, improve driver behaviour and make the area safer for pupils travelling to and from school, as well as benefitting the wider community.

The changes included extending the existing raised table, improving crossing points and refreshing road markings outside the primary school. Following further discussions with the Parent Council and the school, it was agreed that the existing zebra crossing on Murray Road should be upgraded to a puffin crossing, along with the introduction of an additional puffin crossing on Murray Road. This has supported a *'park-and-stride'* approach, encouraging use of the nearby church car park to reduce congestion at the school gates.

The raised table extension, completed in summer 2025, has led to a noticeable reduction in inappropriate parking. The new puffin crossings have improved safety and increased parents' confidence in their children travelling to and from school, helping to encourage more active and sustainable journeys in this community.



Tier 1 Case Study – Keiss

Community led project where Elected Members, Community Council, School, Local Community and Council Officers worked together to achieve the following project goals:

- Reduce congestion outside the school by decreasing the need for parents to drop off children by car, due to the risks associated with crossing the main road where no crossing patroller was in place.
- Encourage more elderly residents to use public transport by improving the safety of crossing the main road.
- Enable children to make greater use of the Safer Routes to School network.
- Improve safety for High School pupils who regularly cross the main road in low-light conditions, often wearing dark clothing.



Before



After



- The A99 splits the village of Keiss – main arterial route north to John O'Groats, Ferry at Gills Bay, Castle of Mey etc.
- A99 is the focal point of the Active Travel links in Keiss providing access to the Primary School, Community Hall, Church, Hotel, Garage etc.
- Concerns re vehicle speeds due to long straight with good visibility and lack of a safe crossing point where vehicles have to stop.
- Active Travel Improvements Delivered:
 - 1 Raised Table at the Crossing Point
 - 1 Lights Controlled Pedestrian Crossing
 - 2 sets of speed cushions – one at either end of the village
 - Junction narrowed to widen footpath and reduce crossing width
 - Advanced warning carriageway lining
 - Enhanced Gateway

Scheme Costs:

- £90,896.75 (Tier1)
- £33,500 (Road Safety Improvement Fund)



Testimony:

"Thank you so much, the results from the speed bumps and pedestrian crossing is remarkable. I live on the main street and it has been so so successful and we can't thank you enough for getting the job done and achieving our goals. Keiss is a far safer place to live and visit now".

School Street Zones Pilot

The Road Safety Team have recently launched a new School Street Zones pilot at Duncan Forbes, Kirkhill and Pennyland Primary Schools, designed to make the school run safer, healthier and more welcoming for children, families and local residents.

The initiative limits vehicle access during drop-off and pick-up times, helping to reduce traffic, improve air quality, prevent vehicles blocking resident driveways, and create calmer streets where pupils can walk, wheel or cycle more confidently.

The pilot will run for 18 months, during which the Road Safety team will monitor how it works and gather feedback from schools, parents and the local community to help shape the future of School Streets across the Highlands.

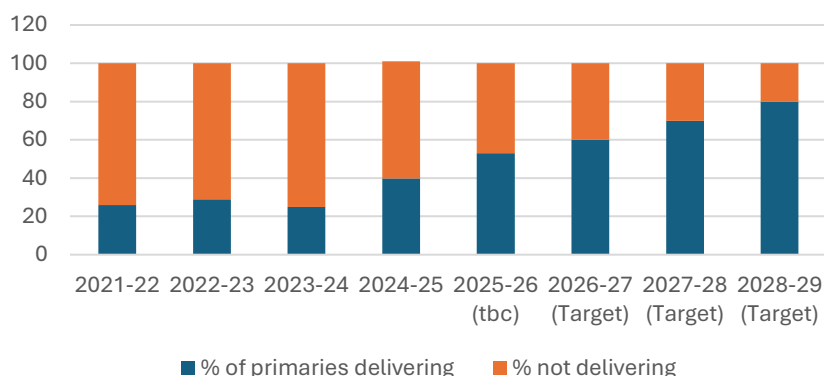


Behaviour Change Initiative

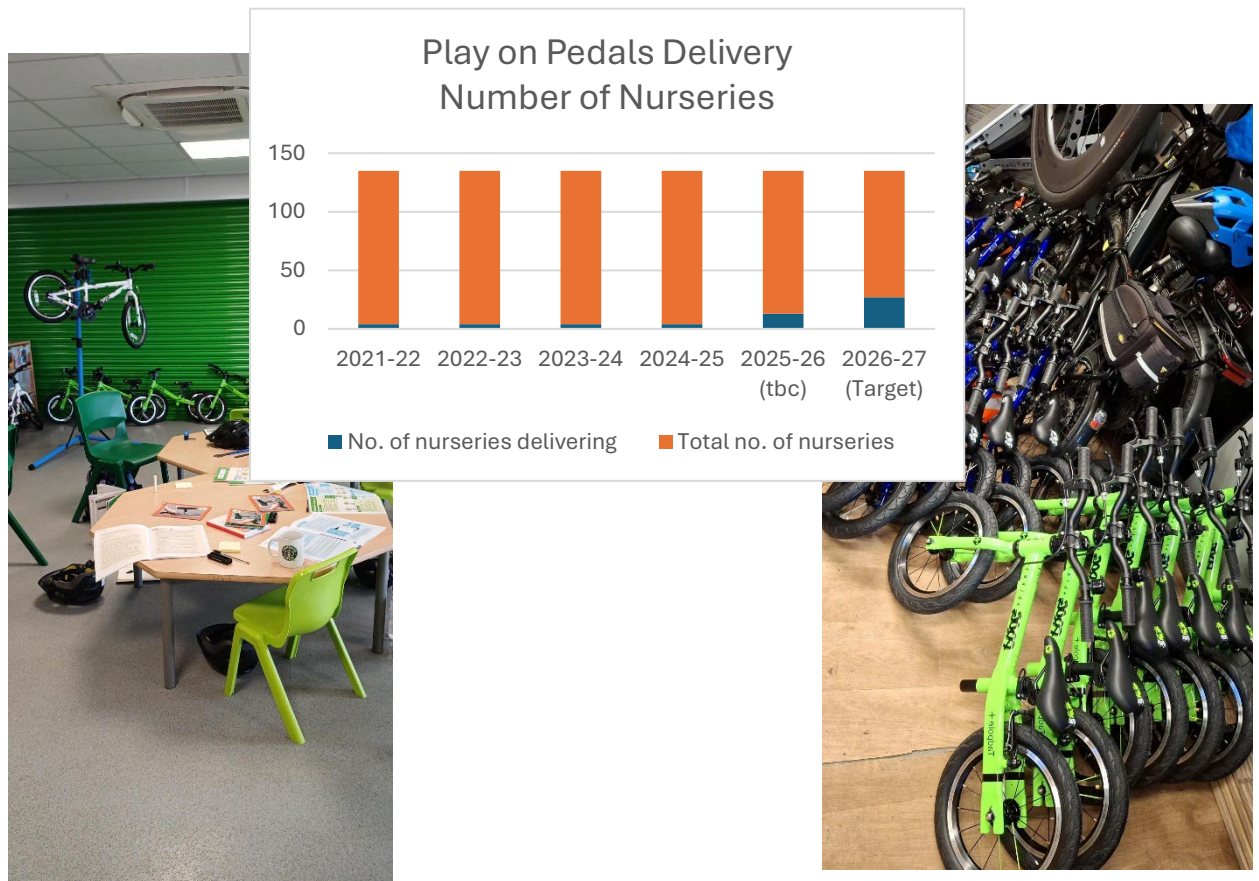
In 25/26 the Local Authority Direct Award and HITRANS funded 4 Behaviour Change Officer (BCO) posts. The BCO's have covered a wide range of work including:

Bikeability Scotland - Supported by the Bikeability Co-ordinator and seven Casual Instructors, the BCOs have been extremely busy delivering Bikeability across Highland. We achieved our target of 40% of Highland primary schools delivering Bikeability Level 2 on-road sessions in 2024-25, and current delivery rates indicate we will meet the 50% target in 2025-26. Two BCOs have also begun delivering Bikeability Scotland Instructor (BSI) courses.

Bikeability Scotland Delivery
Number of Primaries



Play on Pedals is a training programme that supports and develops the cycling skills of nursery-aged children. Coordination of this initiative has been taken on by The Road Safety Team from Education. THC secured funding from Cycling Scotland for the purchase of 80 balance and early pedal bikes to support Early Years settings to deliver Play on Pedals. The BCO Team have started delivering Play on Pedal Instructor Training (POPIT) courses and supplying nurseries with the bikes and helmets. In academic year 2024-26, 4 Highland nurseries delivered Play on Pedals. 13 nurseries have received bikes and training during the current academic year showing an increase of 225%. However, with 135 LA settings, we have a long way to go.



Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) – A JRSO event was held in Wick in September with over 60 P6 pupils attending. Activities and information were provided by SFRS, Civil Nuclear Constabulary, Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, HC Climate Change Team, HC Bikeability Team, HC Road Safety Team and Allan’s Magic providing a road safety magic show. JSRO Scheme uptake promotion is continuing.

Road User Awareness Training (RUAE) – This is the first year the BCO’s have delivered Road User Awareness Training on behalf of Cycling Scotland. The training has been delivered to S5/6 at 14 of our secondary schools. The goal is to widen training delivery to interested businesses and community groups. Highland Council is the first business to be targeted, with training having been offered to all fleet drivers. Sessions are due to take place from July 2026.

Police Scotland Keep Left Campaign – The BCO’s supported Police Scotland’s ‘Keep Left’ campaign for visitors to the area in the summer of last year. Our BCO’s attended events with them at 3 key visitor hot spots; Dunrobin Caste, Cairngorm Mountain resort and Ralia. Plans are in development to support further activity in the coming year.

General – Noss bike train continues to be successful, with a further three primaries interested in starting their own walking/bike bus/train. 1:1 learn to ride session with a community member have

been delivered. Support has also been provided to the Child Rights and Participation Service "Vision" event.

Road Safety Improvement Fund

The Road Safety Improvement Fund Grant has been used to deliver a programme of collision reduction schemes on the Council's local road network. Notable projects delivered in 25/26 include:-

- The introduction of gateways in Lairg, Elphin, Keiss, Reiss, John O'Groats, Watten, Auckengill, Lochinver.
- Road Safety Priority Route Treatment Works, including PRIME markings, A939 Grantown to Nairn and design works for the A861 between Ardgour and Drumsallie
- A9 Side Road Treatment Programme - signing and lining works
- Aviemore Granish - Safety Measures and Speed Limit
- Sunnyside - Speed Limit & Pedestrian Safety Signalisation Scheme at Railway bridge
- B9006 Culloden Battlefield Area and Keppoch Crossroads Safety Improvement Scheme

Examples of some of the works the Road Safety Team delivered in 25/26 are shown below:





Public Transport

In May, councillors on the Economy & Infrastructure Committee passed the ambitious new 10-year Public Transport Strategy, setting out a long-term vision to improve connectivity, accessibility and sustainability across the region.

The strategy responds to significant challenges facing public transport in the Highlands, including a shrinking commercial bus network, rising contract costs and changing travel patterns. It builds on recent progress, including expansion of Highland Council-operated bus services and ongoing partnership work such as the development of a Bus Service Improvement Partnership.

Full details here <http://highland.gov.uk/news/article/17280/committee-approves-ambitious-10-year-public-transport-strategy>

The next step is to carry out stakeholder engagement.

School Transport

School transport has successfully delivered safe and reliable provision for 7,582 passengers. This continued achievement reflects the co-ordinated effort across planning operational routes, and transport office delivery ensuring that school services run efficiently while meeting the needs of pupils, families and schools. The scale and complexity of operations require careful planning and strong collaboration with operators and despite geographical and a lack of contractors, Officers have ensured school transport services maintain high standard of safety, punctuality and accessibility, providing a dependable daily journey for thousands of children.

Alongside this success, a significant step forward has been taken in modernising day to day transport operations through the implementation of new passenger transport system (PAX) and route optimisation software (Qroutes). These systems enhance the ability to plan, monitor and manage transport provision in a more dynamic and data driven way. The introduction of PAX improves visibility and coordination across the network, while Qroutes will enable more efficient route design. Together, these tools will unlock opportunities for future savings and support the reshaping of the existing network to ensure it remains sustainable, responsive and fit for purpose.

This combined achievement not only highlights the strength of the current service delivery but also demonstrates a clear commitment to continuous improvement and innovation in school transport provision.

Community Transport

Community Transport across Highland continues to be rooted in the communities it serves—community-led, shaped by local knowledge, and sustained by the care and commitment of the people involved. This work is supported by Highland Council through grant funding, alongside ongoing guidance and collaboration with groups. Over the past year, the introduction of Community Transport Day events, beginning on 18 August 2025 (*pictured*), has helped raise awareness of the vital role these services play across our communities. These sessions, now taking place roughly quarterly, have been well attended by Elected Members, whose interest and support have been encouraging. In parallel, quarterly Community Transport Association (CTA) Highland Network meetings continue to strengthen connections, share learning, and support the wider Community Transport network.



In addition to the core support of grant funding and guidance, a number of projects are demonstrating how we are working in partnership with community transport groups to extend the reach and impact of the sector across Highland. This includes collaborative approaches to contract delivery, supporting groups to play a greater role in meeting local transport needs. Currently, four groups are delivering contract services which represent a savings to the Council (as compared to delivery by a bus contractor) and also enables the community to benefit from usage of the vehicle outwith home-to-school transport times. Pictured below are Applecross Community Company representatives and some of the children who benefit from both transport to school, and to activities that might otherwise not have been possible.



We are also developing and trialling innovative schemes aimed at addressing transport poverty and the wider cost-of-living challenges facing communities, including “Pay What You Can” models (such as on the Nairnshire dial-a-bus, *pictured below*) on Section 19 routes alongside the £2 bus fare cap pilot on registered routes (including Section 22 routes operated by Highland community transport groups). In parallel, we are exploring more transformative ways to evidence and articulate the full social value of community transport, drawing on tools such as Ealing’s Social Value Toolkit to better capture the wider benefits these services bring to individuals and communities.



In July 2026, applications will open for the next round of Community Transport grant funding, covering the period 2027–2030. This will represent a significant piece of work for the team, but also an especially rewarding opportunity to support and sustain the sector over the longer term. Recommendations will be brought forward to the November Economy and Infrastructure Committee, alongside the first draft of a dedicated Community Transport Strategy, developed as part of the wider Public Transport Strategy noted above.

At its heart, Community Transport represents the very essence of connection—often reaching those most at risk of isolation and ensuring they remain linked to their communities, services, and support networks. While accounting for just 1.7% of the overall passenger (public and school) transport budget, it delivers a value far beyond its scale, with a disproportionate and deeply meaningful impact on people’s lives – and is built on the commitment of communities and volunteers (such as Ann Henderson, Partnerships for Wellbeing volunteer driver, *pictured below*). It is also a part of the service that brings a great deal of pride and fulfilment to the team, reflecting the tangible difference this work makes every day.



Bus Infrastructure Fund (BIF)

The Bus Infrastructure Fund (BIF) has supported a range of projects aimed at improving bus infrastructure and the overall passenger experience across Highland. The two projects below provide examples of work delivered through this funding. They sit within a wider programme of improvements, with further projects expected to be taken forward if funding allows.

Torvean P&R

[Highland Council](#) and High Life Highland worked together to promote the Torvean Park and Ride through a linked offer with the Inverness Castle Experience Saltire Bistro. Passengers using Service 16 from Torvean could receive a 10% discount at the Bistro by showing their bus ticket. The joint initiative aimed to encourage greater use of [Park and Ride](#), support access to the Castle, and help reduce congestion and parking pressure in Inverness city centre.



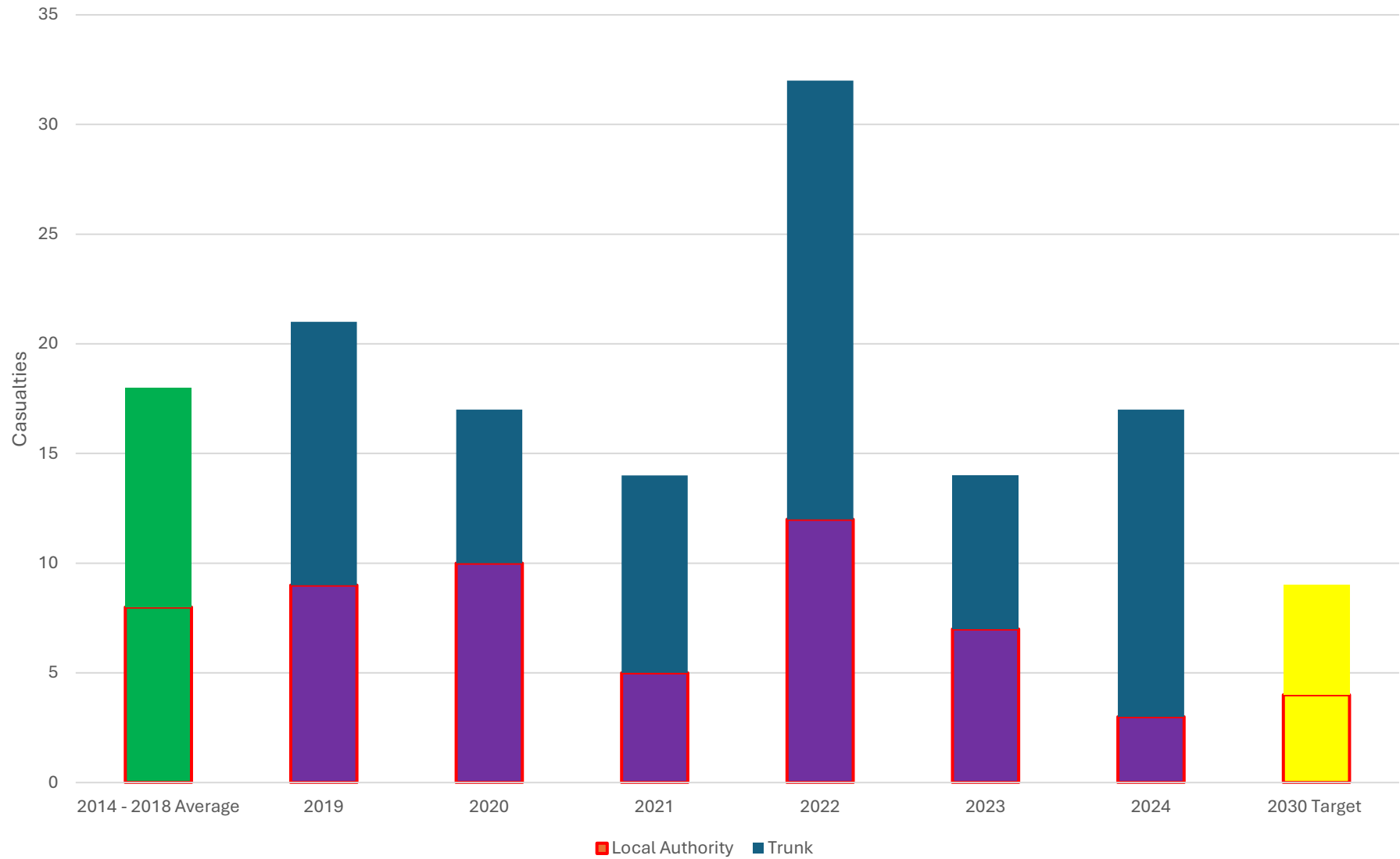
The Council's new double decker bus complete with Inverness Castle Experience branding

Bus Shelter Replacement Programme

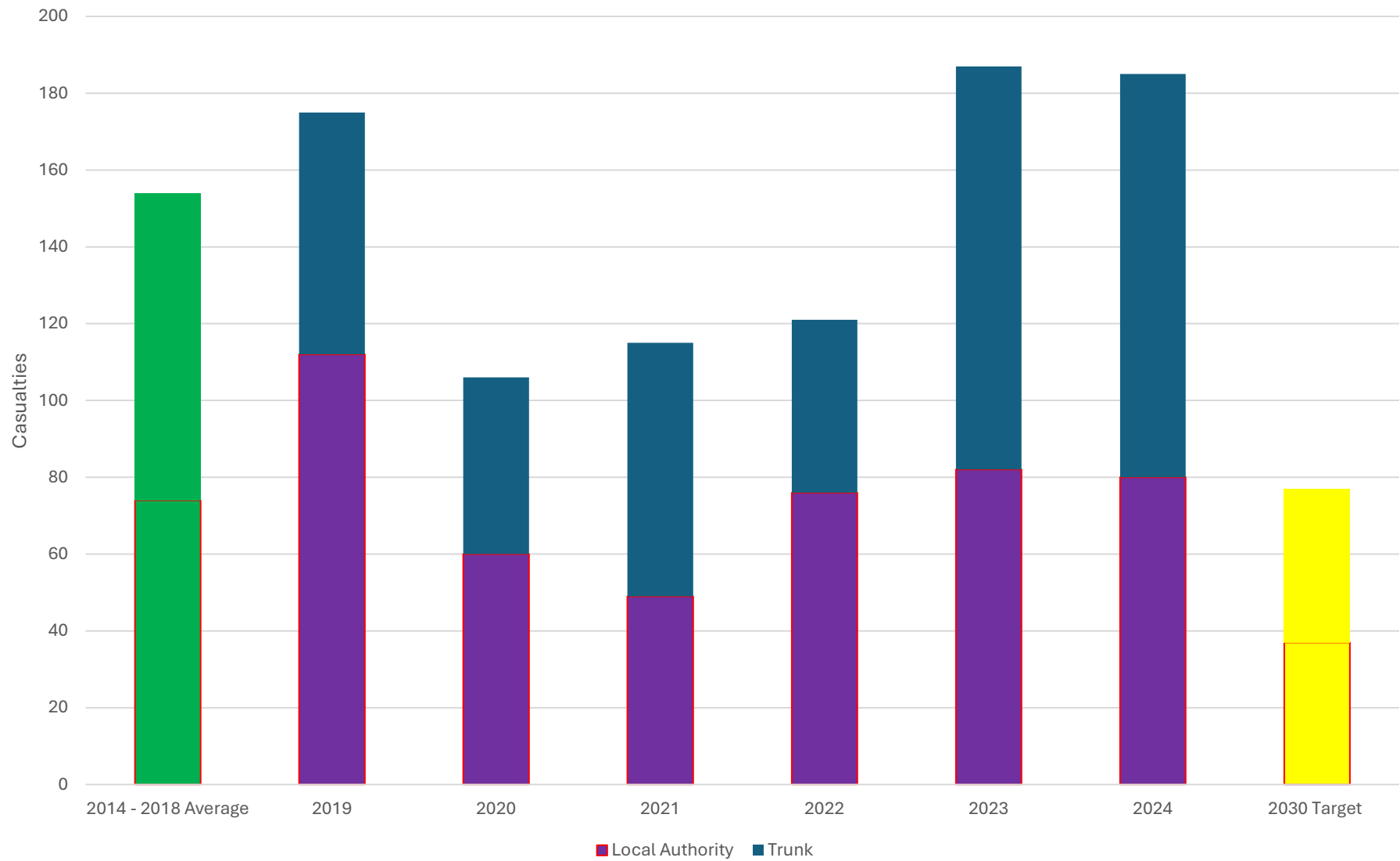
The bus shelter replacement programme supported the renewal of 50 shelters across Highland, helping to improve the quality, visibility and condition of passenger infrastructure. This formed part of a wider effort to upgrade the network and improve the waiting environment for bus users. Provision has also been made for further maintenance of bus infrastructure in the coming financial year, subject to funding availability.



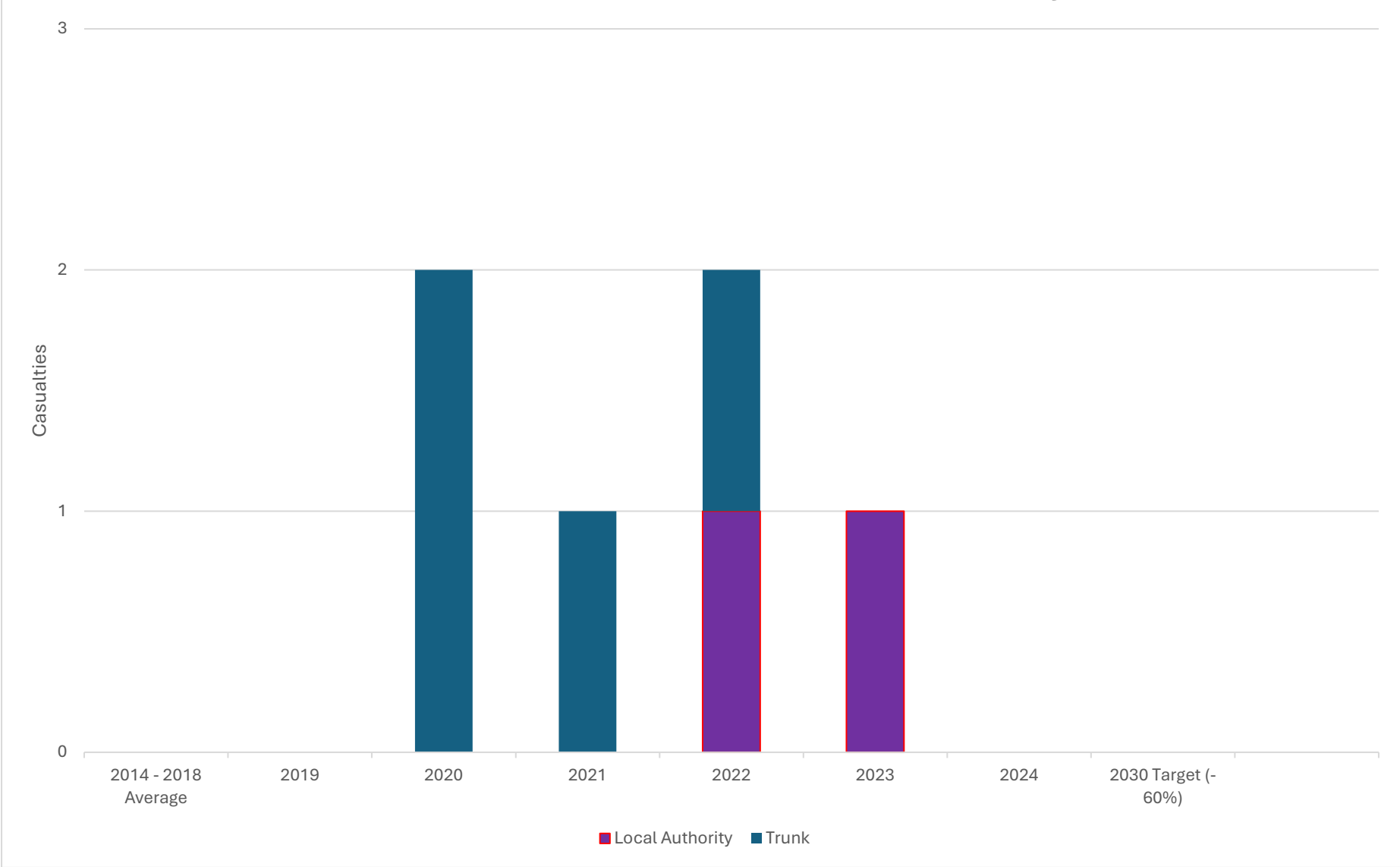
People killed (all ages) - Trunk and Local Authority



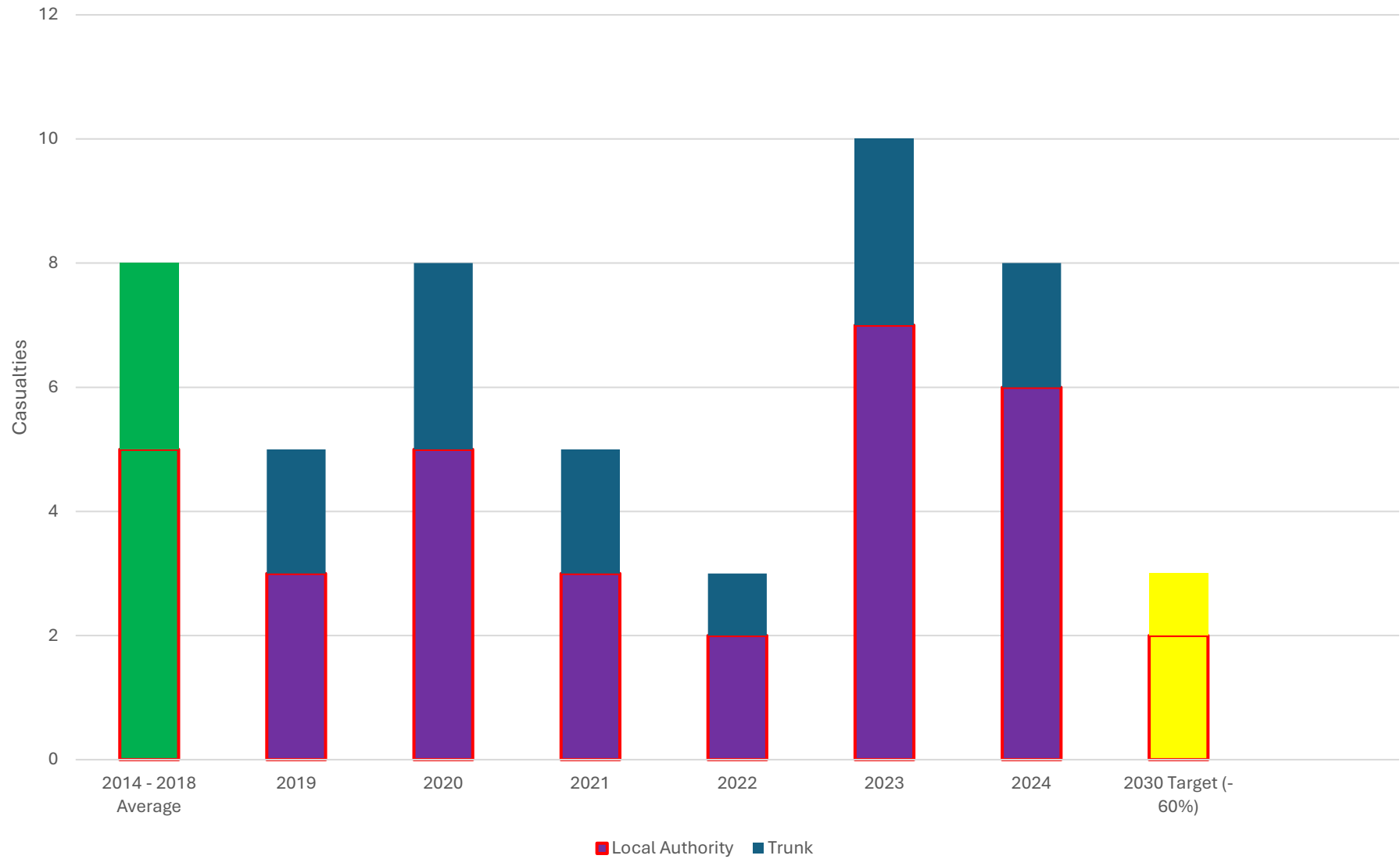
People Seriously injured (all ages) - Trunk and Local Authority



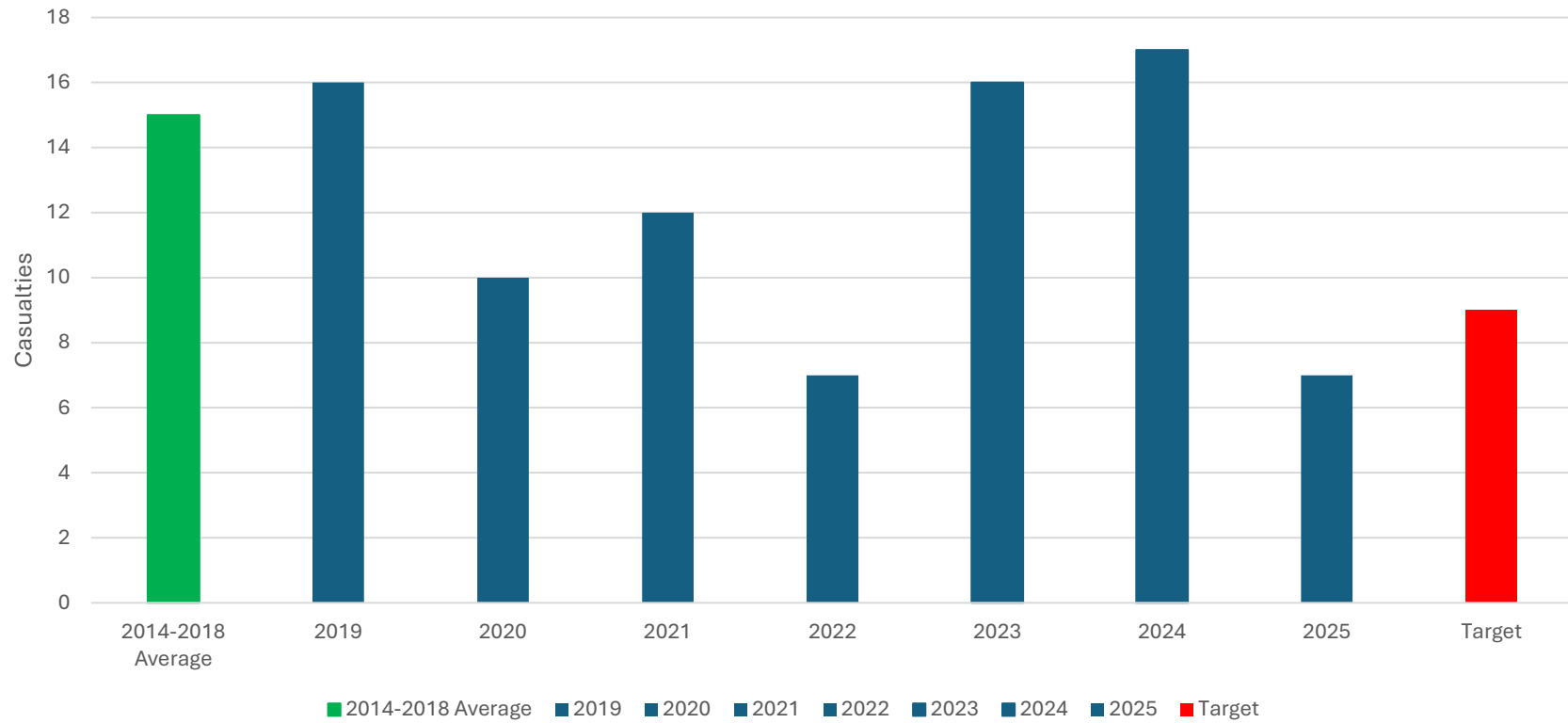
Children under 16 killed - Trunk Road and Local Authority



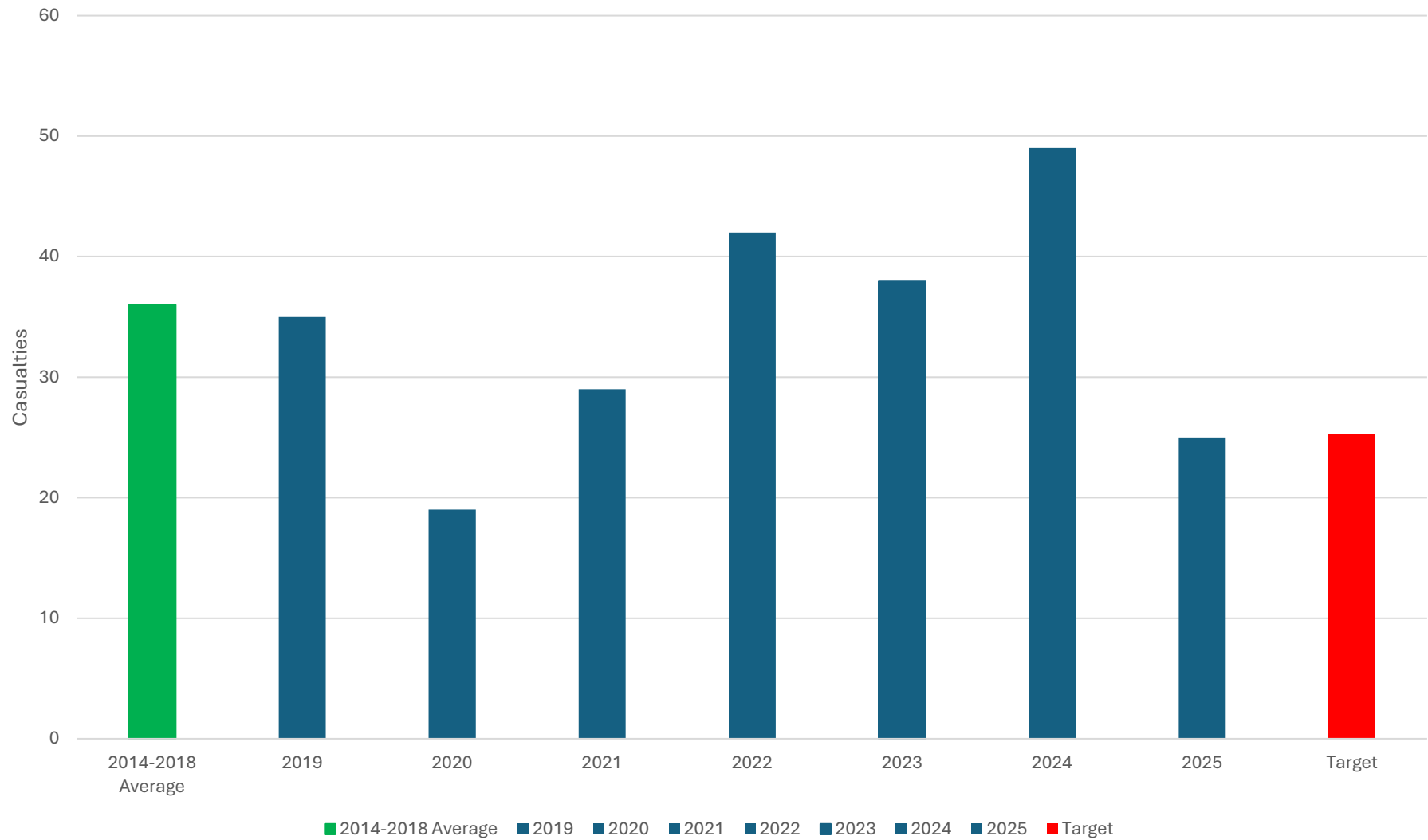
Children under 16 seriously injured - Trunk and Local Authority



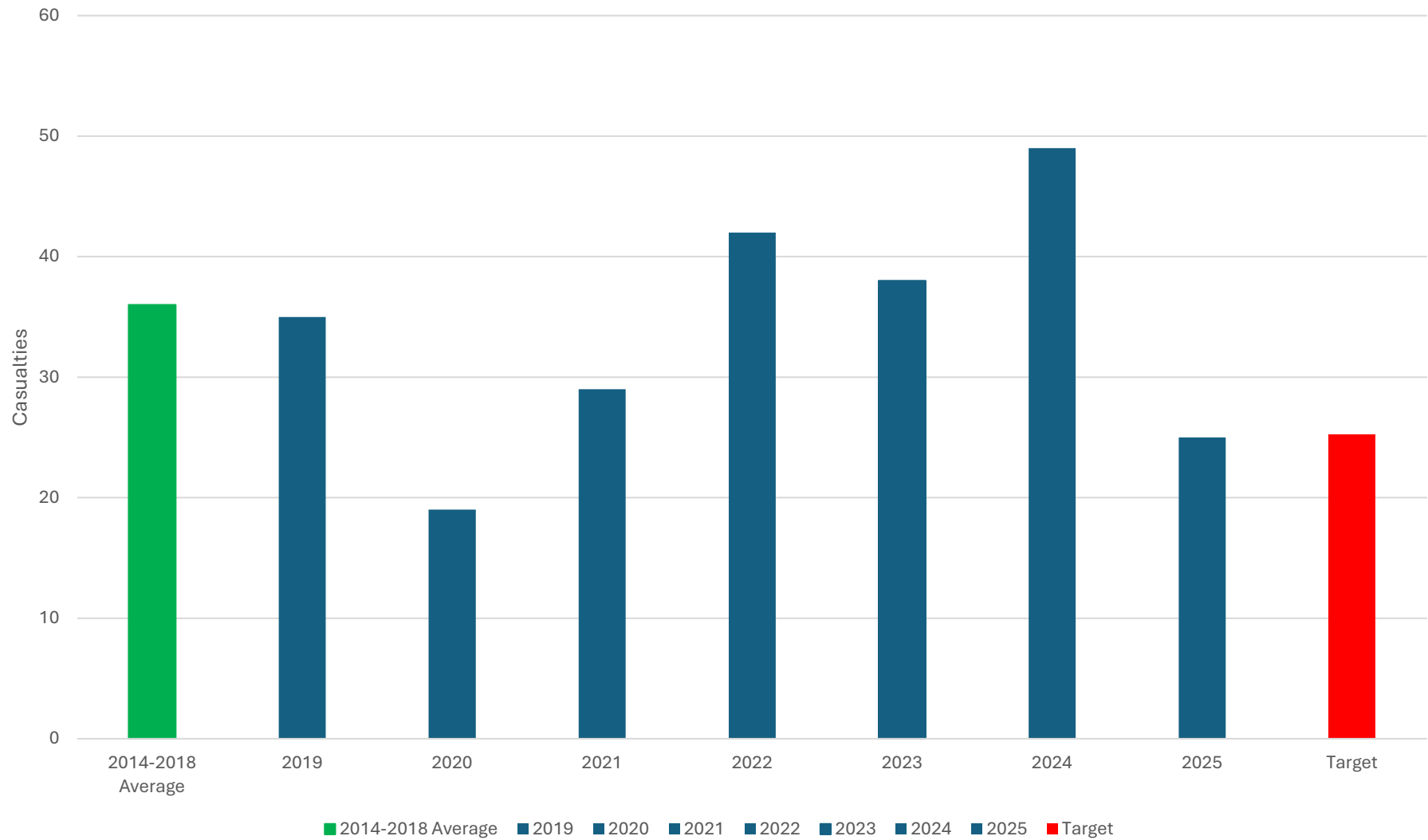
Pedestrians Killed and Serious



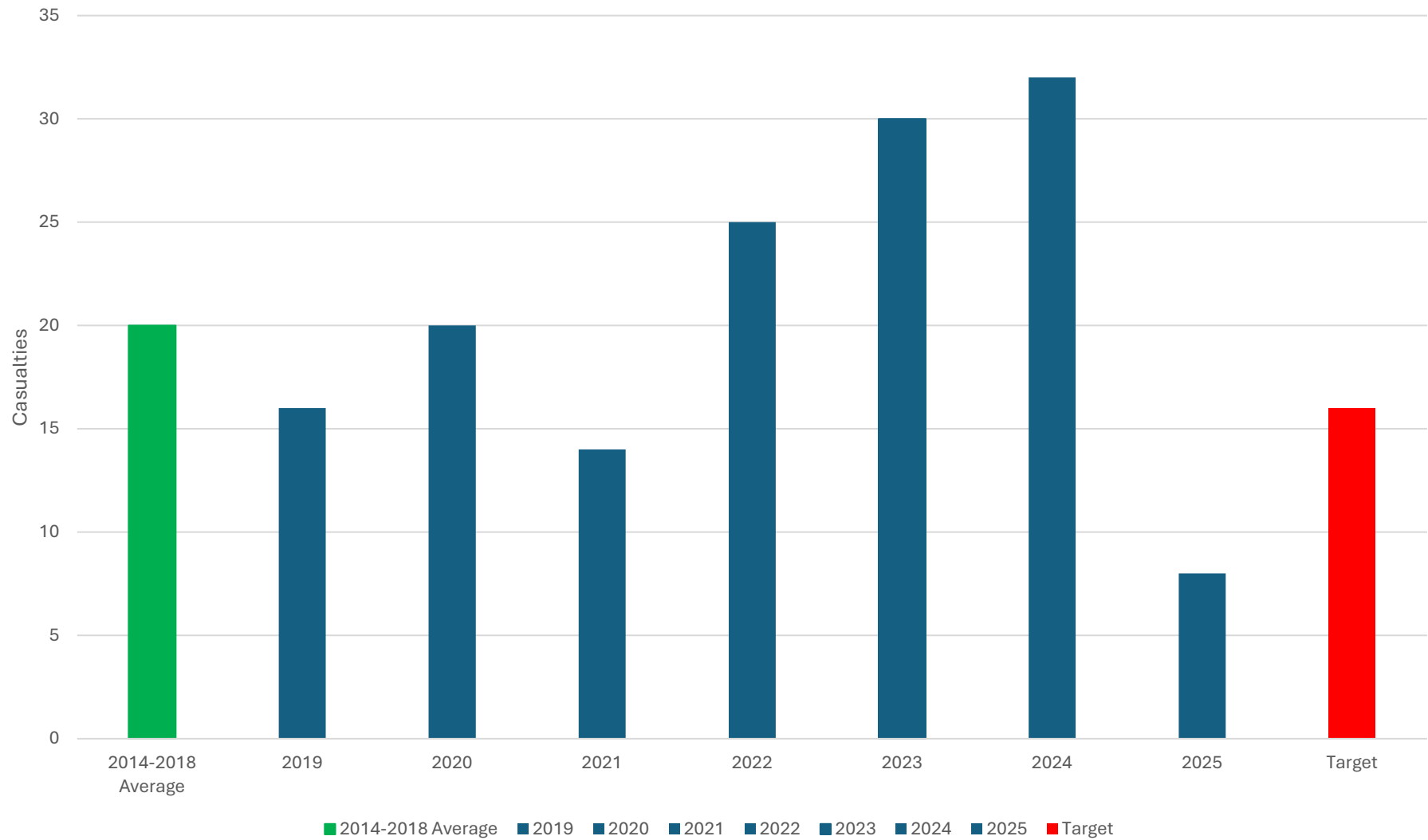
Motorcyclists Killed and Serious



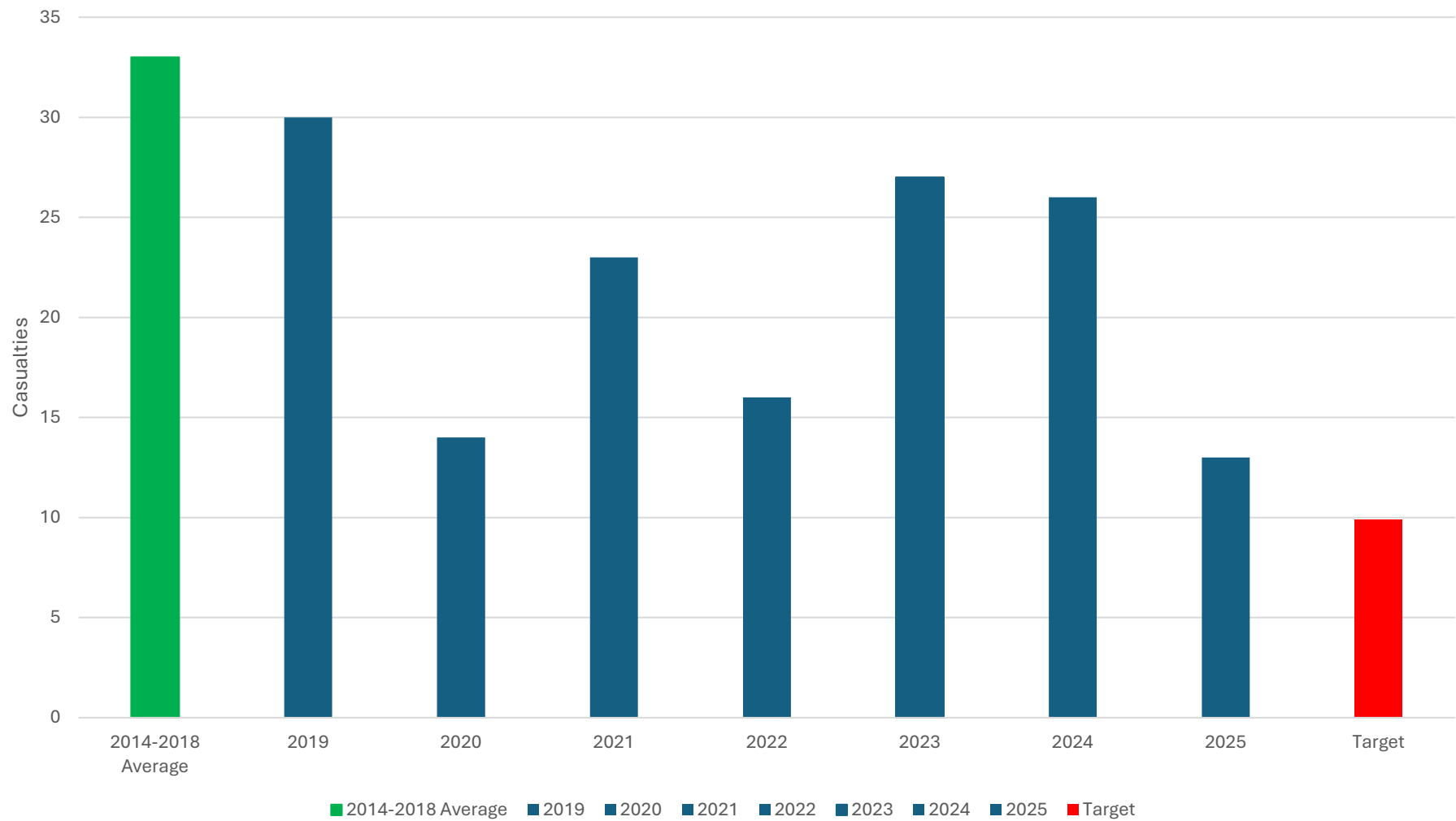
Motorcyclists Killed and Serious



Road users aged 70 and over Killed and Serious



Road users aged between 17 and 25 Killed and Serious



Cyclists Killed and Serious

