

EAST LoTHIAN CYCLE FORUM

Notes from meeting held on Wednesday 11th December 2024

14.00 – 16.00

Microsoft Teams

Present:

Cllr Shona McIntosh (SMc) – Chair
Cllr John McMillan (JMc) – Provost and Cabinet Spokesperson for Environment, Economic Development and Tourism
Chris Milne (CM) – ELC Active Travel Infrastructure Officer (Note taker)
Nick Morgan (NM) – ELC Access Officer
Richard Kerr (RK) – ELC Active Travel Behaviour Change Projects Officer
Brett Walker (BW) – North Berwick Coastal On the Move
Mark James (MJ) – Sustaining Dunbar
Philippa Barber (PB) – ELC Associate Instructor Outdoor Learning / Bikeability Scotland lead
Beth Harley-Jepson (BHJ) – SEStran
Steve Wands (SW) – ELC Club & Community Sports Development Officer
Angie Kinghorn (AK) – Cycling UK Development Officer East Lothian
Donald Smith (DS) – Haddington area
Fiona Crombie – (FC) – Preston Seton Gosford area
Louise Hastie (LH) – Sustrans I Bike Officer
Mark Holling (MH) – Cycleforth / North Berwick area
Niall Deans (ND) – ELC Sustrans Embedded Officer
Simon Law (SL) – ELC Active Travel Projects Officer

Apologies:

Ben Morse, Cheyne Hamm, Paul Ince, Evelyn Philp, Gordon Webber, Gill Harman, Nicola McNeill, Derek Williams, Ralph Averbuch, Tim Harding

		Action
1.	Welcome & Apologies Councillor McIntosh welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted. Project updates were issued ahead of the meeting and can be found on the East Lothian Cycle Forum web page .	
2.	Notes of Previous Meeting held on 22nd August 2024 Meeting notes had been circulated prior to the meeting. These were accepted as an accurate record.	
3.	Matters Arising CM provides updates on actions from the previous meeting as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Regarding previous discussion around new active travel maps, active travel signage and existing active travel maps no longer appearing on parts of ELC's website, CM passes over to RK. RK confirms that some work is under way in Fa'side area to map local active travel routes. When that is complete it will act as a template for other Area Partnerships. The active travel team will speak to Scottish Borders Council to hear more about how they approached this.<ul style="list-style-type: none">JMc asks that we assess what we have and what we need, citing the example of Denholm, where maps highlight places to get coffee. Ideally this would be a one-Council approach that links in with tourism and economic development.NM points to earlier active travel and core path maps all hosted on the ELCV website, which can be found here: Paths – ELCV.CM confirms that details of Cycling UK grant funding were shared around groups in Preston Seton Gosford, as previously agreed with Gordon Webber.CM confirms that it is possible for ELC to procure on behalf of groups, but that it would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis and based on available resource of ELC officers, given the amount of work that can be required for certain types of procurement, such as insurance.	RK

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RK highlights recent work with Sustaining Dunbar, where it was much easier for their group to agree appropriate insurance for cargo bikes than it was for ELC staff to procure the same. ● Regarding PB's comments at the last forum about traffic signals in Musselburgh (at Newbigging) not changing for groups of cyclists, CM discusses feedback from ELC Roads Engineering. They highlighted that sensors in signals are designed to pick up on traffic moving at more than 2mph. If anyone experiences issues like this, they can be reported to ELC, who should know whether there are faults with any sensors, as these would already be impacting road users. <p>BW highlights discussion at a recent Rail Partnership meeting, where a request was made by North Berwick community for toilet facilities at North Berwick Rail Station. BW asks that this be considered if any design work is undertaken on a Journey Hub there in the near future.</p> <p>BW also confirms that he has had discussion with North Berwick films about showing Women Don't Cycle during the documentary slot. The hope is that this could be screened at North Berwick Community Centre on International Women's Day in March.</p> <p>BW notes the Blindwells to Prestonpans Rail Station project update, which is to be delivered by the developer, and emphasises the need for infrastructure first, to avoid people becoming car dependant when they first move in. CM confirms that designs and RCC have been approved by ELC and that delivery of this path is the responsibility of the developer, Hargreaves.</p> <p>FC raises the coastal Aberlady to Longniddry path, referred to in the project updates, which has been discussed for a few years now, asking why this path hasn't received funding, but others, such as Elphinstone to Tranent, have. CM and ND explain that this is down to a combination of factors, including delays to funding in the current financial year, external grant funding being ringfenced for certain locations or priorities, and the fact that other projects, like Elphinstone to Tranent, began in the previous year and are simply moving on to the next stage of development. NM, ND and CM further highlight that the coastal path will need a different approach given the level of early development required to identify a deliverable route, and the fact that a lot of the land in that area is privately owned by groups such as Wemyss & March, who ELC have held initial discussions with about Aberlady to Longniddry.</p> <p>SMc emphasises just how challenging it has been for Local Authorities this year due to uncertainty and delays around active travel grant funding at a national level.</p>	
4.	<p>I Bike project update</p> <p>LH provides an update on the I Bike East Lothian project. I Bike is a Sustrans programme that helps people choose active travel. East Lothian has a schools programme that currently works closely with six schools and supports a further eight. I Bike East Lothian currently provides an 0.5 FTE officer; the only part-time programme in Scotland.</p> <p>I Bike supports all things active travel: it can be learn to ride, developing bike riding skills; taking classes out with scooters; led walks; campaigns like Big Walk & Wheel as well as the recent Leg it to Lapland; working with schools to support their active travel strategies; finding bikes for households that wouldn't otherwise get one; systems to secure bikes; working with parent groups (eg on bike/walking buses); training teachers, volunteers & school communities; positive parking campaigns; doing Dr Bikes; and more.</p> <p>In this financial year to date, I Bike has undertaken 172 activities, had contact with participants 1748 times, taught 20 students to cycle, fixed 129 bikes, had volunteer support on 44 occasions and loaned bikes, for a session or for weeks, 81 times.</p> <p>LH talks about the name I Bike being a misnomer, as her work is also very focused on scooting and walking. Recent work has taught children about hazards, sharing the path safely and having fun. Some 2024 activities include silent disco walks and audio recorded walking tours of towns. Time has also been spent working with children and families on Parking Pledges, which are a good talking point and a way of discouraging car travel.</p> <p>Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel is coming up in March and April 2025. Last year's East Lothian joint winners were St Mary's and Haddington Primary Schools. They will receive their prize this coming spring, with Haddington Primary School's playground due to be turned into a wheelie playground.</p>	

	<p>LH shares a story of a pupil who didn't have a bike that they could repair on the day, but who was given a Sustrans bike on loan while their volunteer carried out the repair works, paid for by Sustrans.</p> <p>LH provides a further example of Sustrans, Cycling UK, Heavy Sound and Belhaven Bikes working together to repair and supply bikes to a few households with school-age children.</p> <p>SMc highlights how successful a project this has been and encourages I Bike to promote good news stories in the press where they can. JMc echoes this.</p> <p>RK recognises the hard work that LH has put in to the I Bike role, noting how much the original I Bike programme was impacted by school closures and home-schooling between 2020 and 2022. It has built up a lot of momentum in a short space of time since then. RK confirms that SEStran directly fund Sustrans to deliver the I Bike programme.</p> <p>LH confirms that the schools currently offered support from I Bike are Cockenzie Primary School, Haddington Primary School, St Gabriel's Primary School, West Barns Primary School, Windygoul Primary School and Ross High School. RK confirms that ELC are trying to target this resource towards schools with higher levels of SIMD and those engaged in the school travel planning process.</p> <p>An I Bike newsletter is prepared a few times a year and shared with ELC. This can possibly also be shared with others who want to know more about the project.</p>	
5.	<p>Travel to School data</p> <p>CM presents a few slides that were prepared by ELC Officer Hedvig Ponten (HP), who had to send her apologies shortly before the meeting. CM thanks HP for working through a lot of data to provide this information.</p> <p>The source of data used was the Sustrans Hands Up Scotland Survey, which runs for one week every September and is calculated by the results that pupils give when teachers ask them the question 'how did you travel to school today?'. National results are published in the summer following each survey, with East Lothian Council receiving its own Local Authority dataset around the same time. CM caveats that these results only offer a snapshot taken during this single week each year, so they can fluctuate based on how many schools respond as well as factors such as weather. East Lothian generally has a very good response rate, but some schools will drop in and out occasionally, often due to staffing changes.</p> <p>HP's work compared data on travel modes between East Lothian and the Scotland average since 2008. This data shows that there has been a steady decline, both locally and nationally, in the proportion of children walking to school. In East Lothian this has reduced from around 60% to 44% while at a national level the reduction is from around 53% to 42%. However, over this same period the proportion of children cycling and scooting to school has risen. In East Lothian scooting has risen from around 3% to 10% of journeys to school, while cycling has risen from 8% to 12%. As the proportion of children being driven to school or choosing park and stride has stayed broadly the same within the county, this suggests that a large proportion of the decrease in children walking to school in East Lothian has been offset by the increase in pupils scooting and cycling.</p> <p>East Lothian compares well against the national data in the latest survey from 2023, with the proportion of children walking (44.1% to 42.6%), cycling (12.6% to 6.6%) and scooting / skating (10.2% to 5.1%) all higher than the Scotland average. The proportion of children who report being driven to school in East Lothian is much lower than the national average (15.8% to 25.5%). Park and Stride is the same as the national average at 12%.</p> <p>Further data from 2023 shows that the proportion of children walking to school was highest in the Musselburgh area (51.8%), while cycling was highest in Fa'side (18.3%). More children scooted to school in the Dunbar area (14.5%) than elsewhere in the county. As mentioned earlier, it is hard to conclude much from this type of data, as one school failing to respond can have a significant impact on results for that whole area.</p> <p>LH has been informed by Sustrans that schools receiving I Bike support are generally 5% above the Scottish average for walking and wheeling.</p> <p>DS asks if active travel can be presented as a whole figure in future, as this will look more impactful. CM confirms that ELC plan to update the Cycle Forum on this annually and will provide the</p>	

	<p>aggregated data for active travel as a single mode next time around. CM also confirms that ELC would like to provide I Bike and Bikeability training data alongside this assessment next year.</p> <p>LH talks about Park and Stride, as this isn't easily defined when asking children to self-report how they travel to school. Some children record this when being dropped off near the school gates.</p> <p>RK confirms that not all schools in the Dunbar area responded to the 2023 survey, which impacted overall figures there.</p> <p>SMc asks LH whether she sees evidence of e-scooters being used to get kids to school. LH confirms that she hasn't seen this at any of the I Bike schools, including Ross High School. RK confirms that e-scooters have been reported in a few instances. In those cases, schools are telling pupils that they cannot bring them in due to the potential fire risk.</p> <p>BW talks about being near schools in Prestonpans during pick-up time recently, where a very large number of vehicles were parked with their engines idling, causing a lot of fumes to be present right outside the school campus. LH notes that this may have coincided with one of the schools in the town being closed due to a gas leak, which resulted in far more traffic than usual congregating at other campuses. However, SMC and LH both emphasise that this shouldn't be happening and SMC questions whether more public awareness work is required.</p> <p>SW asks if 2023 and 2024 data can be shared with Sports Development to support Pump Track work. CM confirms that it can, with the 2024 survey data available around June 2025.</p>	
6.	<p>Cycling UK project update</p> <p>AK provides an update on the work that Cycling UK have been doing in East Lothian. The project has gone from smaller events to attending and supporting larger events, such as a festival day at the Museum of Flight, which allowed people to try out the cargo bikes as there was a large area of tarmac available. Alongside this the project attended events such as Dunbar Market and Haddington Goes Dutch, where bikes and kits were on display. This allows people to get a feel for the bikes and work out whether they are the right fit for them. Some people will then go on to borrow bikes. AK also attended the screening of Women Don't Cycle in Dunbar, which offered a chance for Cycling UK to chat about the film and share information on their project.</p> <p>The project has been collaborating with ELC's active travel team to support the hire of Brompton's and trailers. Co-ordinated work with ELC Outdoor Learning is also ensuring that Cycling UK are on hand to service and fix bikes in advance of Bikeability training taking place. AK has been in touch with Fixing for a Future in East Linton regarding maintenance training sessions.</p> <p>As mentioned in the I Bike update, there has also been strong collaboration between I Bike, Cycling UK and others throughout the year.</p> <p>In mid-October Cycling UK's Trustees and Senior Leadership Team visited Dunbar from Guildford, alongside funders and other invited guests. They were able to visit Belhaven Bikes, who, alongside Sustaining Dunbar, were recipients of Cycling UK Cycle Access Grant funding. This visit also looked at infrastructure around Dunbar with ELC staff.</p> <p>15 bikes are currently out on loan, with a few people trying multiple different bikes. Some previous users have bought their own bikes and child trailers after trying Cycling UK's.</p> <p>1 volunteer has been recruited, but AK is looking for more.</p> <p>A container is now in place in Musselburgh, which will provide a base for led rides or sessions running from locations such as Musselburgh Lagoons and Lewisvale Park.</p> <p>Looking ahead to next year AK is planning some maintenance sessions with MJ, as well as linking up with Beyond Boundaries regarding In Tandem East Lothian, who are setting up a charity to be based at Queen Margaret University. They plan to train up pilot riders in the new year, so if anyone is interested in supporting that they can contact AK for more information.</p> <p>AK is also planning to work with Occupational Therapists regarding exercise referral pathways for patients.</p>	

	<p>AK thanked FC for her Breeze Rides and for signposting people towards the Cycling UK project. FC talked about rides that she will be leading in Gullane in March, alongside a film screening and talk from Dr Brendan Hill. AK confirmed that Cycling UK will be involved in that work. FC confirmed that rides will be for all users from beginner level.</p> <p>FC talks more about work that she is doing to get women out on their bikes in the new year, with Doddie Aid and British Cycling Breeze offering good incentives to help people do that.</p> <p>DS asks if details of repair and recycle providers for bikes in East Lothian can be put on ELC's website. CM and SMC confirm that ELC will investigate this.</p>	ELC
7.	<p>ELC new capital projects 2024-25</p> <p>CM brings up some slides which highlight new capital works that are either under way or due to begin before the end of the financial year. Delays to funding meant that this update was not possible at earlier meetings. New works in 2024-25 now include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed construction of the new footpath at Tynebank Road, Haddington (subject to planning) as highlighted by SL. This has very strong support from the local community and will enable safer active travel journeys to 4 schools, a residential care facility and the local football club. Construction of an improved entrance to Dunbar Rail Station as further discussed by SL. Network Rail are currently designing the portion of this path that is within their land, after which construction of the whole project will be scheduled. This is being funded by Transport Scotland's Tier 2 Active Travel Fund and was the only rail station pilot project chosen for progression by Network Rail from a shortlist of 13. Construction of part of the Active Freeway at the East Linton Gateway as further discussed by SL. These works will run until the end of January and are funded by Sustrans and Transport Scotland. Construction of improvements at Markle Crossing, which will formally open in 2025. These improvements include several sections of new 3m wide shared use path. Cyclist lining at refuge islands, a package of which has been shared with ELC's lining contractor. However, there is not currently a date for when this work will be delivered, due to being part of a long list of lining works across the county, including many that were scheduled before active travel funding was released. The locations recommended for improvement are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dunbar Road, North Berwick Whitehill Farm Road, Musselburgh High Street / B1348, Prestonpans A199 / Edinburgh Road, Tranent A1087, West Barns A198 / Main Street, Longniddry Alder Road, Port Seton West Road, Haddington Spott Road, Dunbar Surfacing works at two locations on or near the National Cycle Network 1) NCN1 south of Whitecraig, near the Scottish Power facility, and 2) NCN1 formalising a 30m long desire line leading to Mayfield Park, Musselburgh. These works are being funded by Sustrans. A series of minor accessibility works around Musselburgh, Haddington and West Barns, focused on altering bollard and guardrail layout to create minimum 1.5m width access points to support wheelchair, mobility scooter and cargo bike users. These works are funded by Sustrans. Improvements identified as part of the Tranent accessibility audit, including altering fencing and bollard layouts, improved surfacing and dropped kerbs. These works are being funded by SEStran's People and Place fund. New user activated signage and crossing layout where the Pencaitland Railway Path crosses the A6093, as highlighted by ND. The new crossing is more direct and has tactile paving, with the signage designed to slow down drivers on approach to the crossing. These works have been funded by Sustrans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns have been raised locally regarding the impact of cold weather on the smooth new path surface on the north side of the road here. This feedback has been logged by ELC and Sustrans and any potential changes will be considered during spring and summer 2025. Footway build-out, provision of cycle racks and provision of a cycle ramp at Forth View, West Barns, to support families travelling to and from West Barns Primary School. 	

