

GD 0043/18

ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY 2018 - 2021



Isle of Man
Government

Reiltys Ellan Vannin

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Minister's Introduction

There is strong evidence that regular physical activity reduces the risk of a range of health conditions. The best way to increase physical activity is by making it easy for people to be active within their daily routine.

The Active Travel Strategy follows from a commitment in the Programme for Government and looks at ways people can use walking and cycling for journeys of purpose.

In preparing the strategy, the Department has worked closely with others from across Government, as this is something that has many linkages with other areas of work.

Moving forward, I hope that this collaboration will continue as we develop an action plan and deliver ways to make it easier for as many of us as want to, to travel by more active means.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RK Harmer', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Hon. RK Harmer MHK
Minister for Infrastructure

Executive Summary

- In early 2017 the Isle of Man Government determined what the priorities would be for the next five years and published them as the Programme for Government. One of these priorities was to increase the number of people using more active forms of travel on a regular basis.
- It was identified that in order to achieve this there would need to be a co-ordinated approach across Government and beyond. It was therefore agreed that there was a need for an Active Travel Strategy and the Department of Infrastructure was requested to prepare this document in close collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Care, Department of Education, Sport and Culture, the Road Safety Partnership (Department of Home Affairs) as well as the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture.
- An officer group was established with representatives across Government to consider the results of the public consultation exercise and to work to produce an action plan based on the contents of the consultation and its subsequent analysis. The action plan will be formulated to help achieve specific objectives from across Departments, for example health and fitness objectives from Public Health, and these will be attributed to measures of health for example health and wellbeing, general fitness, lowering levels of obesity etc. The officer group will be assisted with this work by external specialist consultants employed by the Department of Infrastructure ("the Department") who can ensure the action plan is being developed in line with evidence of how these targets could be achieved based on results from elsewhere.
- The long-term vision for the Isle of Man is: ***to be an Island where cycling and walking are normal and realistic transport choices for people of all ages and abilities.*** One of the main ways in which to achieve this vision will be to increase the number of people travelling actively.
- Active travel is defined as *"walking or cycling (including the use of electric bicycles) as an alternative to motorised transport (cars, buses, motorcycles etc) for the purpose of making everyday journeys. The Department will incorporate terms such as "walking" or "walker" as a generic term to include running as well as non-motorised uses for instance wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs, mobility scooters and other mobility aids, scooters and other means of self-propulsion"*.
- This strategy will be delivered by way of an action plan with identified tasks. The action plan will be prepared in collaboration with the officer group and the Department's appointed consultants who will assist and advise on whether what is proposed is likely to make a difference to levels of participation for people travelling actively.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In early 2017 the Isle of Man Government determined what the priorities would be for the next five years and published them as the Programme for Government. One of these priorities was to increase the number of people using more active forms of travel on a regular basis.
- 1.2 It was identified that in order to achieve this there would need to be a co-ordinated approach across Government and beyond. It was therefore agreed that there was a need for an Active Travel Strategy and the Department of Infrastructure was requested to prepare this document in close collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Care, Department of Education, Sport and Culture, the Road Safety Partnership (Department of Home Affairs) as well as the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture.
- 1.3 As part of the preparation for this strategy, the Department of Infrastructure launched a consultation exercise "Encouraging active travel for the Isle of Man" on 31 July 2017; this closed on 25 September 2017. A total of 379 responses was received. In general, many of the responses were supportive of the proposed work by the Department and agreed with most of the proposed definitions. The consultation report provides an overview of all these comments, and responses to these where appropriate. This report was made public in January 2018¹.
- 1.4 An officer group was established with representatives across Government to consider the results of the public consultation exercise and to work to produce an action plan based on the contents of the consultation and its subsequent analysis. The action plan will be formulated to help achieve specific objectives from across Departments, for example health and fitness objectives from Public Health, and these will be attributed to measures of health for example health and wellbeing, general fitness, lowering levels of obesity etc. As public health is a main driver for the promotion of active travel, it is essential that public health objectives are included as part of this strategy and the resultant action plan will aim to address and achieve these objectives. The officer group will be assisted with this work by external specialist consultants employed by the Department who can ensure the action plan is being developed in line with evidence of how these targets could be achieved based on results from elsewhere.
- 1.5 It is acknowledged that active travel will not apply to everyone, nor would it be appropriate for all. There are many barriers across the Island which can impede on an individual's ability to choose walking or cycling instead of motorised transport for some of their journeys, and many of these cannot be overcome as part of this initiative. There is also an individual's choice as to whether they wish to travel by car or by walking or cycling. However, it is hoped that as part of this work, the action plan could be formulated to consider these barriers and ways in which they can be overcome enabling more people to choose to travel actively for their everyday journeys made for a purpose.

¹ https://consult.gov.im/infrastructure/encouraging-active-travel/results/consultation-report_final.pdf

- 1.6 This document sets out the strategy for encouraging people to be able to choose to make regular everyday journeys by more active means. The action plan will include identified tasks to meet the objectives within this strategy.
- 1.7 The lifetime of this strategy will initially be until 2021 when the Island’s next Census will be undertaken. The results from the 2011 Census have been used to help identify the baseline conditions and initial targets in relation to active travel. The 2021 Census is the next opportunity to reconsider these baseline conditions and determine whether the initial targets have been achieved. This strategy and the associated action plan will be reviewed at that stage to ensure that the vision, aim and overarching principles are still relevant and appropriate to contribute towards achieving the targets for participation levels of active travel.

2. Vision and aim

- 2.1 The long-term vision for the Isle of Man is: ***to be an Island where cycling and walking are normal and realistic transport choices for people of all ages and abilities.*** One of the main ways in which to achieve this vision will be to increase the number of people travelling actively.
- 2.2 Having considered evidence gathered from the 2011 Census² and the 2016³ and 2017⁴ Social Attitudes Surveys, the Department is hoping to achieve an increase in the number of people travelling actively to work to **20% by 2020** as an initial target, and thereafter, aim to see an increase of **10%** from the 2011 Census baseline in the total number of active travel journeys per year (shown in Table 1). The 2021 Census will repeat this question to respondents and will provide the first opportunity to compare numbers against the 2011 figures and correct the baseline if necessary.
- 2.3 The action plan will include appropriate monitoring to enable the Department to consider different ways of calculating active travel journeys. Surveys such as the Social Attitudes Survey and the Health and Lifestyle Survey will also incorporate relevant questions to enable comparisons to be made each year. This will enable the Department to review the work that is being undertaken and determine whether it has been successful in increasing the levels of participation in active travel.

Table 1 Targets for increasing number of people travelling actively

Year	Total travelling to work (based on 2011 census)	Actual travelling actively	% travelling actively target
2011	43,134	6,143	14.24
2020		8,626	20 (estimate)
2021		9,489	22
2022		10,352	24
2023		11,214	26
2024		12,077	28
2025		12,940	30

² https://www.gov.im/media/207882/census2011reportfinalresized_1_.pdf

³ <https://www.gov.im/media/1352363/2016-06-15-social-attitudes-survey-final.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.gov.im/media/1358038/iom-social-attitudes-survey-2017-report.pdf>

- 2.4 There are a number of barriers (including distance, weather, safety, available facilities⁵ and topography) which could have the potential to prevent the delivery of the vision of increasing the total number of people travelling to work or other places by active means. Some of these barriers will affect some areas of the Island (and participants) more than others, most obviously the presence of hills or the distances between residential areas and centres. The action plan will look at ways in which some of these barriers could be overcome to further enable people to choose to travel actively.
- 2.5 The Aim of this strategy is to *"put in place a series of mechanisms which will help to facilitate the vision being realised"*. The strategy will outline partnerships to assist with the delivery of specific actions of the action plan within identified areas of expertise. It is for this reason that the officer group has the representation from the key Departments of Government.

3. **Overarching principles**

- 3.1 The overarching principles for this strategy and the action plan are to:
- enable more active travel by creating a safe, convenient and effective active travel network for people to use; and
 - encourage and promote a shift of choice to active travel modes for everyday functional trips.
- 3.2 The way in which these principles will be best delivered will be identified through the forthcoming action plan to be developed in collaboration with colleagues across Government and external consultants. As part of the preparation of this action plan, a number of key issues will be considered and tasks identified for the following:
- infrastructure provision;
 - behaviour change and improved education;
 - identification of a network of routes for people to walk and cycle on; and,
 - partnership working and delivery.

4. **Definition of Active Travel and why it is important**

- 4.1 Active travel is defined as *"walking or cycling (including the use of electric bicycles) as an alternative to motorised transport for the purpose of making everyday journeys. The Department will incorporate terms such as "walking" or "walker" as a generic term to include running as well as non-motorised uses for instance wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs, mobility scooters and other mobility aids, scooters and other means of self-propulsion"*.
- 4.2 The Department is keen that the definition of an active travel journey relates only to journeys that are made for a purpose. Cycling and walking for recreation and leisure will be covered as a broader piece of work. The purpose of this Active Travel Strategy is to encourage more journeys that are currently made by car or wholly on public transport to become more active and encourage a modal shift away from motorised transport. As such, the Department is defining an active travel journey as *"a journey for a purpose. It is a journey which replaces a trip normally undertaken by motorised means. It is also possible to consider journeys which may include an element of active travel where it is not possible to undertake the whole of the journey by these means"*.

⁵ as all identified in the 2017 Social Attitudes Survey page 71

4.3 **Why plan for walking and cycling?**

Active travel brings about a multitude of benefits not only to the individual undertaking the activity but to the wider environment too. Some of these benefits are summarised below.

4.4 **Improve health and wellbeing**

There is strong evidence that regular physical activity reduces the risk of a range of health conditions including cardiovascular disease, stroke, obesity, type 2 diabetes, some cancers (e.g. bowel and breast), osteoporosis, depression and cognitive decline. Evidence also shows that the best way to increase physical activity is by making it easy for people to include walking and cycling within their daily routine for journeys to work, school and so on. The impact of increasing physical activity is wide ranging: better health and wellbeing for individuals, reduced demand on and cost to health and care services, increase in people getting back into work after sickness and improved cognitive and academic performance in young people. Using active travel as a means to increase physical activity also has other benefits: reduction in congestion, reduction in vehicle emissions, improvements in local community environments and opportunities for social interaction.

4.5 Evidence from across the UK and other countries shows that active travel can work to deliver the improvements above and that active travel programmes offer value for money. An assessment of 12 projects across England showed a benefit to cost ratio of 5.5:1 (a £5.50 return on every £1 invested)⁶. Increasing physical activity through active travel is one of the 'best buys' for public policy. Unlike many other major public schemes, it is quick to implement – typically around two years compared to 8 – 10.

4.6 The evidence from elsewhere is strong and consistent across different areas and communities (for example, rural and urban). These findings should be applicable to the Isle of Man. In delivering our strategy we must make sure that we are getting the expected results. This will be done through a detailed, timed, costed and accountable implementation plan and a set of measures through which we can monitor whether we are doing what we set out to do and getting the results we expect.

4.7 **Create better places for people**

By improving the walking and cycling environment, there is an opportunity to create places less dominated by motor vehicles that are generally more welcoming for people to enjoy.

4.8 **Reduce carbon emissions**

The Isle of Man Government is committed to reducing surface transport carbon emissions as part of the Climate Challenge Mitigation Strategy 5 year Action Plan (2016-2021)⁷ by promoting a modal shift as part of the options for reducing emissions.

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/648822/local-sustainable-transport-fund-impact-summary-report.pdf

⁷ <http://www.tynwald.org.im/business/opqp/sittings/Tynwald%2020142016/2016-GD-0031.pdf>

4.9 **Improve air quality**

Walking and cycling are the ultimate zero emissions forms of transport so by increasing the number of journeys made this way will help improve local air quality standards.

4.10 **Reduce congestion**

Providing and promoting identified active travel routes around the Douglas area should see a reduction in congestion on the busier commuter routes during certain times of the day. Two of the main junctions within the Douglas area, the Quarterbridge and Governors Bridge continue to operate at greater than 85% capacity at peak times⁸. Encouraging active travel and a modal shift might improve the traffic flows for these junctions at specific times of the day.

4.11 **Social benefits**

In addition to the other benefits cited, there are possible social benefits from active travel also. It may result in more social interaction between commuters, between colleagues travelling to meetings, parents on the school run, and it could be a much less stressful way in which to travel to and from work. There may also be some benefits for the tourism sector as improved infrastructure for and along identified routes could encourage a wider travel appeal.

4.12 **Economy**

Walking and cycling are cheaper than other forms of transport. It is also possible that there could be localised benefits from people walking and cycling, particularly cycling as participants may wish to invest in the purchase of equipment locally. There may also be further benefits derived from tourism.

5. **Objectives**

5.1 The objectives for this Active Travel Strategy and action plan are to:

- ensure that walking and cycling are normal and realistic transport for people of all ages and abilities;
- increase participation of people travelling actively;
- encourage more people to make the switch from motorised transport to travelling actively;
- consider barriers to people travelling actively and aim to address them in the action plan;
- increase participation amongst the working population as part of their daily commute within a 2.5 mile radius of Douglas (centred on the Lord Street bus station); and,
- encourage active travel choices for pupils and students in all of the Island's schools and the University College, Isle of Man.

6. **Description of the current situation**

6.1 No comprehensive traffic survey has been undertaken to ascertain current levels of active travel on the Isle of Man. There are however a number of data sources which can be utilised to give an indication of the levels of participation in active travel including the 2011 Census, as well as the 2016 and 2017 Social Attitudes

⁸ https://www.gov.im/media/1350906/the-isle-of-man-strategic-plan-2016-approved-plan-15_03_16.pdf page 98

Surveys. Targeted questions were included within the recent Health and Lifestyle Survey undertaken by the Public Health Directorate and within the Social Attitudes Survey 2017. These questions will be repeated in future iterations of the survey (as and when appropriate) to assist in the monitoring of uptake and modal shift towards active travel journeys.

- 6.2 Where possible, the Department will work across Government to include active travel questions into surveys as and when appropriate to do so. This will assist as part of the monitoring and review of this work which will demonstrate whether the action plan is correctly helping to address the strategic objectives and determine if the results being returned are as would be expected.

6.3 Delivery of the Strategy

This strategy will be delivered by way of an action plan with identified tasks, and the means of achieving the strategy's Vision, Aim and objectives. The action plan will be prepared in collaboration with the officer group and the Department's appointed consultants who will assist and advise on whether what is proposed is likely to make a difference to levels of participation for people travelling actively. The consultants will also ensure that this initial action plan is developed in line with evidence from elsewhere to demonstrate what should work to achieve the Department's targets for increasing numbers of people travelling actively.

6.4 Links with other strategies

The Department is committed to preparing a cycling strategy for the Island. This will feed into the work of the Active Travel Strategy but will also be broader in scope than just every day journeys being made for a purpose, covering for example leisure cycling and the provision of cycle routes such as the heritage trail between Douglas and Peel which is scheduled for improvements for walkers and cyclists. The two strategies will complement each other; an example would be through network improvements that will enhance leisure and active travel. They are, however, independent of each other.

- 6.5 Other strategies which will be taken into consideration as part of this strategy will include the National Infrastructure Strategy, Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 and Area Plans, a Climate Change Mitigation Strategy for the Isle of Man 2016-2020 and the Road Safety Strategy which is currently in draft form. The strategy and resulting action plan will take into consideration any campaigns led by the Department of Health and Social Care and where there is a role for active travel to play in any campaign, this will be reflected in the strategy and action plan. Any future, relevant strategies to be produced by any Government Departments will be considered in future reviews of this strategy and accompanying action plan.

- 6.6 The Department will work to ensure that any future transport and highways projects and policy will support and promote active travel (walking and cycling) where possible across the Island.

7. Monitoring, Review and Long term funding

- 7.1 The vision for this strategy is clear – to increase the number of people travelling by active means for their journeys of purpose. There is a baseline from the 2011 Census data that at that time 14.1% of people made journeys to work by active means, upon which any increase can be measured. The action plan will include

provision for the monitoring and review of this target. The Department will keep this under review and can amend if and when it determines appropriate to do so.

- 7.2 An increase in active travel is a Programme for Government Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for the Department of Infrastructure and one which will be measured and reported on. The Social Attitudes Survey has identified some of the barriers which could prevent more active travel being undertaken. The action plan will look at ways to overcome these barriers and will provide the mechanism for these issues to be looked at in detail in relation to specific areas of the Island. With appropriate monitoring and review, the Department will be able to understand any of the changes to levels of participation for active travel and respond accordingly. The input from other Government strategies and surveys is essential and one of the main reasons for having a cross Department officer working group.
- 7.3 The Census in 2021 will provide a more comprehensive picture of active travel and will hopefully show an increase from the 2011 Census data as analysed in this strategy. The Department of Infrastructure may determine that some initial travel counts are required as part of the monitoring of the implementation of the action plan in order to provide interim data before the full 2021 census. These travel counts could also assist in understanding the baseline in 2017 and demonstrate any changes to the number of people travelling actively from the 2011 census figures.
- 7.4 There may be a requirement to review this strategy, the action plan and the initial targets for participation as more is understood about walking and cycling across the Island and how best to encourage and facilitate more active travel. Although it is initially envisaged that certain elements of the action plan may be focused on specific locations, should these initiatives prove successful in delivering the objectives of the strategy, future revisions to both the strategy and the action plan could look to extend such elements to other locations across the Island.
- 7.5 Whilst funding has been identified for the next four years, it may be that a long term funding stream will be required to continue the implementation of the strategy. As yet, longer term funding has not been identified or guaranteed but work on identifying funding sources will be undertaken if this is required.