

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 2 June 2015

National Walking Strategy Action Plan: Response to Consultation April 2015

Item number	7.6
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All

Executive summary

On behalf of the Scottish Government, Paths for All is currently developing an Action Plan for the [National Walking Strategy: Let's Get Scotland Walking](#). This was launched in June 2014.

The Council was invited to participate in a key stakeholder consultation to review the Action Plan, consider its 20 actions and provide answers to five questions.

It is recommended that the Council's draft response to the National Walking Strategy Action Plan Consultation, submitted on 2 April 2015, be approved retrospectively.

If Committee wish to amend or add to the responses, these comments will be forwarded to Paths for All.

The Convener and Vice-Convener were informed of the consultation response at a meeting on 23 April 2015.

Links

Coalition pledges	P43 , P46 and P50
Council outcomes	CO10 , CO18 , CO19 , CO22 and CO26
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4

National Walking Strategy Action Plan: Response to Consultation April 2015

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the Council's draft response to the National Walking Strategy Action Plan consultation which was submitted on 2 April 2015.

Background

- 2.1 The Scottish Government's National Walking Strategy: Let's Get Scotland Walking was launched in June 2014.
- 2.2 The Strategy was drafted by a working group consisting of the Scottish Government, COSLA and a range of groups from the sport, educational, heritage and voluntary sectors.
- 2.3 The three main aims of the National Walking Strategy are to:
- create a culture of walking where everyone walks more often as part of their everyday travel and for recreation and well-being;
 - generate better quality walking environments with attractive, well designed and managed built and natural spaces for everyone; and
 - enable easy, convenient and safe independent mobility for everyone.
- 2.4 The aims of the Strategy closely match those of the Council's Local Transport Strategy 2014-19 and its Active Travel Action Plan.
- 2.5 The working group produced a more detailed Action Plan, to help deliver the strategic aims and vision of the Strategy. The group requested feedback from the Council as one of the key stakeholders.
- 2.6 The intention is to publish the final Action Plan in summer 2015.
- 2.7 The Convener and Vice-Convener were informed of the consultation response at a meeting on 23 April 2015.

Main report

- 3.1 Paths for All invited the Council to consider the Actions in the Plan in relation to Edinburgh's plans and programmes for walking.

- 3.2 Council Officers drafted an interim reply in accordance with the Local Transport Strategy 2014-19, the Active Travel Action Plan and the Council's wider objectives. The draft reply is included as Appendix One: Draft Council Response to the National Walking Strategy Action Plan.
- 3.3 The response indicates that the Council supports the National Walking Strategy Action Plan. It has considerable scope to contribute to a range of important objectives and build upon the successes of the Council's current Active Travel Action Plan. However, there is scope to strengthen the plan and, with additional Scottish Government investment, there is potential to give it real momentum.
- 3.4 The five questions that the Council was asked to consider and a brief summary of each reply is provided below:

Are there any Key Actions or Actions missing?

- 3.5 Council officers suggested the inclusion of the following actions: to continue the *Smarter Choices, Smarter Places* project; change the default urban speed limit from 30mph to 20mph; and to provide additional training for developers on the principles of *Designing Streets*.
- 3.6 The Council sought more information from the Scottish Government on the nature of the guidance documents which the Council is required to produce as part of the Action Plan and on whether the Scottish Government intended to extend the Core Path Network.

Please consider the organisations that are listed as 'Champions' or lead organisations. Are they the most appropriate?

- 3.7 The Champions organisations were considered to be appropriate. However, the inclusion of the Landscape Institute was suggested.

Who should have roles in delivering these interventions? Have we listed all the appropriate partners? Are there others that should be added?

- 3.8 It was considered that governmental and third sector organisations should help to deliver these interventions.

What monitoring arrangements should be put in place? Have we identified the right milestones?

- 3.9 The inclusion of specific timed milestones were recommended by the Council as these can be helpful to monitor progress on long-term projects.

Are the priority levels appropriate for each action?

- 3.10 It was suggested that the 'priority' designation from those actions which were not 'high priority' was removed. This would make the document clearer. Activity on 'high priority' actions should start as soon as possible.

Measures of success

- 4.1 Paths for All consider the suggested changes and make suitable amendments to the Action Plan.
- 4.2 That clarification is provided for the questions that the Council has raised regarding the Action Plan.

Financial impact

- 5.1 There may, potentially, be opportunities for walking projects in Edinburgh to benefit from match-funding with the partner Champion organisations.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are a number of Actions which identify local authorities as either a main or co-champion which are responsible for delivering the necessary outcomes.
- 6.2 These impacts broadly include: street design guidelines, road safety, improvements to the pedestrian environment, planning conditions, street lighting and safer community design.
- 6.3 Therefore, as a result of this Action Plan the Council may be required to commit future resources to meet the objectives, monitoring and reporting commitments.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 The National Walking Strategy Action Plan includes the use of wheelchairs, buggies and similar mobility aids with the aim of ensuring easy and convenient independent mobility for all.
- 7.2 It is considered that the Action Plan will have a positive impact on health rights and on the protected characteristics of age and disability.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The impacts in relation to the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties were considered and there are expected to be no adverse impacts.
- 8.2 The proposals within the Action Plan may have a positive impact on reducing carbon emissions, improving the city's resilience to climate change and contribute to sustainable development as the Plan intends to make walking a more attractive way for people to travel while reducing private car use.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 This report sets out the Council's response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the National Walking Strategy Action Plan.
- 9.2 It should be noted that this was a targeted stakeholder consultation to seek the views of the Council and not a full public consultation.

Background reading/external references

Local Transport Strategy 2014–2019:

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/878/local_transport_strategy_2014-2019

Active Travel Action Plan:

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/1414/active_travel_action_plan

Climate Change Framework:

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/2027/city_of_edinburgh_council_climate_change_framework_2007

Sustainable Edinburgh 2020:

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20142/sustainable_development_and_fairtrade/841/sustainable_edinburgh_2020

Transport 2030 Vision:

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/download/120/transport_2030_vision

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Links

Coalition pledges	<p>P43 - Invest in healthy living and fitness advice for those most in need.</p> <p>P46 - Consult with a view to extending the current 20mph traffic zones.</p> <p>P50 - Meet greenhouse gas targets, including the national target of 42% by 2020.</p>
Council outcomes	<p>CO10 - Improved health and reduced inequalities.</p> <p>CO18 - Green - We reduce the local environmental impact of our consumption and production.</p> <p>CO19 - Attractive Places and Well Maintained – Edinburgh remains an attractive city through the development of high quality buildings and places and the delivery of high standards and maintenance of infrastructure and public realm.</p> <p>CO22 - Moving efficiently – Edinburgh has a transport system that improves connectivity and is green, healthy and accessible.</p> <p>CO26 - The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver on agreed objectives.</p>
Single Outcome Agreement	<p>SO4 - Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric.</p>
Appendices	<p>Appendix One: Draft Council Response to the National Walking Strategy Action Plan.</p>

Appendix 1: Draft Council Response to the National Walking Strategy Action Plan

The City of Edinburgh Council supports the National Walking Strategy Action Plan. It has considerable scope to contribute to a range of important objectives. It will help us build upon the successes of our current Active Travel Action Plan and will support future proposals. However, we feel that there is significant scope to strengthen the plan in some areas. We also feel that further support for the plan, via additional Scottish Government investment and in kind work such as training programmes, will be necessary to give it real momentum.

1. Are there any Key Actions or Actions missing?

Action 6 – Legislative Framework

We suggest that there is a case for this action including specific reference to the Scottish Government exploring in detail the incorporation of ‘presumed liability’ into Scots Law. Both the benefits and potential consequences have to be more fully explored and the Council would welcome more information relating to how various road users would be impacted by presumed liability. Given that taking the action forward would require legislative change; we feel that the Champion should be the Scottish Government.

Action 10 – Supporting mode shift

The Council would like to see the continuation of the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places fund for the foreseeable future. A long term funding stream would permit better planning of spend and will achieve increased awareness of the issues and of alternative travel options, providing the opportunity to deliver lasting change. The programme could cover walking for leisure as well as transport.

Action 13.1 - Design Guidance

We agree that local authorities develop design guidance over and above Designing Streets etc. However, we would suggest that the wording of this action should be clear that the intention is to encourage not only walking but other forms of sustainable transport and to contribute to place making.

Action 13.2 or 18.4 - Speed Limits

We would suggest that this action could be strengthened to include specific reference to encouraging and facilitating the introduction of urban 20mph speed restrictions. In addition the action could include consideration of changing the default urban speed limit from 30mph to 20mph, subject to devolution of suitable powers.

Missing action from Key Action 13 – Walking networks

There is a case for an additional action, with the Scottish Government as champion, relating to improved powers to tackle footway and double parking. These restrict pedestrian movement and create further hazards for people crossing roads.

Action 15 – support for good quality walking environments through Planning and Development

The principles of Designing Streets need to be adopted to ensure that places and people are considered before the movement of motor vehicles in all new developments. The Council is developing its own guidance document specifically for Edinburgh and SCOTS has prepared new guidance but engagement and buy-in from internal and external stakeholders is key. One of the key factors is professional training. However this is uneconomic for most individual local authorities to provide. So it is suggested that action 15 should include a Scottish Government funded training programme for developers, consultants and local authority practitioners.

Action 16 – Distance from paths and green space

Clarification is sought on the role of Core Paths in addressing this and other actions.

2. Please consider the organisations that are listed as ‘Champions’ or lead organisations. Are they the most appropriate?

The Champion organisations are considered to be appropriate. However, the Landscape Institute does not appear in the document anywhere as a partner. Given that it is generally landscape architects who design public realm and hard and soft landscaping proposals in areas of redevelopment or regeneration, it would be beneficial to work with the Institute.

3. Who should have roles in delivering these interventions? Have we listed all the appropriate partners? Are there others that should be added?

Clarification of the role of Access Forums in as potential Champions in taking forward action 16 would be welcome.

4. What monitoring arrangements should be put in place? Have we identified the right milestones? *NB. Some of the milestones will need to be discussed with the Delivery Forum.*

Our experience is that specific timed milestones are helpful, even for actions that are 'ongoing'. Otherwise there can sometimes be no specific driver for action at any given time. A number of the 'milestones' in the draft are in fact indicators. While the indicators make sense, they do not replace milestones.

The need to generate milestones might lead to the creation of some further useful action. For example action 13.4, regarding footway maintenance, could generate a milestone around setting up events/training courses on best practice in footway design and maintenance.

5. Are the priority levels appropriate for each action?

It is suggested that It might be clearer to remove the designation 'priority' from those actions which are clearly seen as not as important as the 'high priority' actions. Consideration could be given to whether this issue would better be dealt with through milestones – the highest priority actions should have the most activity taking place on them as soon as possible; lower priority actions may have to wait longer.