# Places for Everyone

## 2022–23 Infrastructure Impact Summary Report

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# Impact against Active Travel Framework

Places for Everyone (PfE) is a grant fund programme, open to a range of organisations in Scotland, including local authorities, public bodies and community groups, that enables the creation of infrastructure to make it easier for people to walk, cycle and wheel for everyday journeys. The programme is funded by the Scottish Government through Transport Scotland and is administered by Sustrans Scotland. The programme is evaluated by Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit (RMU).

This report presents the findings of the 2022–23 evaluation of the impact of the Places for Everyone programme, which aimed to assess the contribution of the programme to delivering Transport Scotland's Active Travel Outcomes and Strategic Objectives, as well as a number of specific PfE outcomes. The evaluation draws on programme level monitoring data, aggregated data from a sample of infrastructure projects and data from five project case studies. The main findings in this report come from monitoring and evaluation activities undertaken by Sustrans Research and Monitoring Unit (RMU).

The findings of the evaluation show that the Places for Everyone programme is contributing to the Active Travel Outcomes, Strategic Objectives and specific PfE outcomes.

The full evaluation report and case study reports are available on request.

## Outcome 1: Increase the number of people choosing walking, cycling and wheeling in Scotland

Based on a sample of projects, annual usage estimates (AUEs) confirm that **overall route usage increases at PfE sites after project delivery** – from around 4.2m before to 5.5m after project delivery (+29%) and from around 850k before to just over 1.37m 2-5 years after project delivery (+62%).

In 2020, active travel levels at 58 schools whose catchment areas overlapped with PfE projects were 53.3%, compared to the HUSS[1] national average of 51.2%. At a national level, this 2.1% increase would equate to **an additional 8,000 children travelling actively every day**.

In **Bowling**, West Dunbartonshire, the estimated **number of active travel trips** between 2019 and 2022 nearly **doubled**, from 113,000 before to 210,000 after project delivery.

At the **Cumbernauld Green Route** in North Lanarkshire, estimated **active travel trips increased** from 290,000 before to 350,000 after project delivery. Monitoring data shows that people are using the route more often and spending more time on it.

Monitoring at **Stockingfield Bridge** in Glasgow highlighted that the new bridge has **enabled more users to undertake short active travel trips** such as visiting friends and family (+16%), going to school/nursey (+15%) and going to work or study (+10%).

At **Gynack Gardens** in Kingussie the estimated **number of trips** through the garden was **271% higher** after improvements (from 74,000 to 274,000 annually) and the route outside the gardens saw a 69% increase in estimated annual trips (from105,000 to 177,000).

**South City Way** in Glasgow evidenced a **significant increase in active travel**, with the total number of trips rising from 78,000 in 2017, to over 100,000 in 2023, a 30% increase.

[1] HUSS: Hands Up Scotland Survey

## Outcome 2: High quality walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure is available to all

Across a sample of projects there was a 10-percentage point **increase in the proportion of respondents who strongly agreed that 'I like the surroundings of this route'**. Overall, before project delivery 90% of survey respondents agreed[2] with this statement, rising to 92% 2-5 years after project delivery.

At the **Bowline**, after project delivery **almost all users** (94%) strongly agreed or **agreed that the route is well maintained.**

After delivery of the **Gynack Gardens** project, **99% of route users agreed that the Gardens enhanced the area**. Similarly, 97% agreed that the route was well lit; 96% agreed the path was well maintained, and 94% agreed that the Gardens were fit for purpose.

In **Cumbernauld**, **98% of survey respondents reported that the route had a high-quality surface**. This improved from just 22% before project delivery. Similarly, **95% thought the route enhanced the local area**, compared to 23% before delivery.

After delivery of the **Stockingfield Bridge** project, there was an **increase in satisfaction with quality of the route**. In particular, satisfaction with connections increased from 29% before to 98% after delivery, whilst satisfaction with lighting increased from 10% to 96%.

At the **South City Way** the lack of active travel infrastructure meant that before project delivery, 63% of postal survey respondents cited a "lack of cycling infrastructure" as a barrier to Active Travel. However, **after delivery only 13% referenced a lack of cycling infrastructure as a barrier**.

[2] Agreed = Strongly agree or Agree.

## Outcome 3: Walking, cycling and wheeling is safer for all

The **majority of route users agreed that the PfE route they were using felt safe**. Agreement with this statement rose from 80% before project to 89% 2-5 years after project delivery. This general upward trend in perceptions of safety was also **reflected across route users travel mode** (walking and cycling), **gender and age**.

An analysis of 197 PfE projects (involving 401 unique route sections) highlights **significant reductions in casualty rates following project delivery.** The rate of casualties per km decreases in the years following the completion of a PfE route, despite the fact that usage levels often increase after, and 2-5 years after, project delivery.

Following delivery of the **Bowline** project, **99% of route users felt the route was a safe place to be** during the day and 98% felt the route was safe with regards to motor traffic.

After project delivery in **Cumbernauld**, **93% of users felt that the improved route allowed them to cross busy roads safely** (compared to 49% before project delivery).

At **Stockingfield Bridge**, **satisfaction with safety related to road traffic increased** from 67% before project delivery to 98% after project delivery. Further, satisfaction with safety related to crime and anti-social behaviour increased from 60% to 94%, and satisfaction with interaction between cyclists and pedestrians increased from 51% to 92%.

After improvements at **Gynack Gardens**, 96% of route users agreed the Gardens were safe during the day and **97% agreed the Gardens were safe at night**.

At **South City Way**, Traffic Speed and Volume data highlighted **a significant drop in the percentage of vehicles travelling over the speed limit** – from 52% in 2017, down to 33% in 2023 (Pollokshaws Rd) and from 39% down to 18% (Gorbals St).

## Outcome 4: Walking, cycling and wheeling is available to all

AUEs highlight that **increases in usage amongst male and female respondents were at similar levels** eg +174% and +170% when comparing usage before and after project delivery. In terms of age, whilst usage increases for all age-groups, usage amongst people aged 55+ increases at a slower rate. Whilst overall encouraging, there **remains a challenge to increase female usage and usage amongst older people** at the same rates as other user groups.

At the **Bowline**, since the opening of the new route, there has been an **increase** of 5 percentage points of **route users who were new to cycling or had started cycling again.**

Following changes at **Cumbernauld**, 98% of route users agreed that **the route could be accessed and used by people of all abilities** (compared to 61% before project delivery).

**Stockingfield bridge** has helped to almost double the number of monthly trips between two canal paths (from around 1,550 to over 3,000 trips). After project delivery, **98% of survey respondents lived within the local community** (compared to 72% before project).

At **Gynack Gardens, 100% of route users agreed the route was easily accessible.** The demographics of route users are broadly consistent with local population in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and disability.

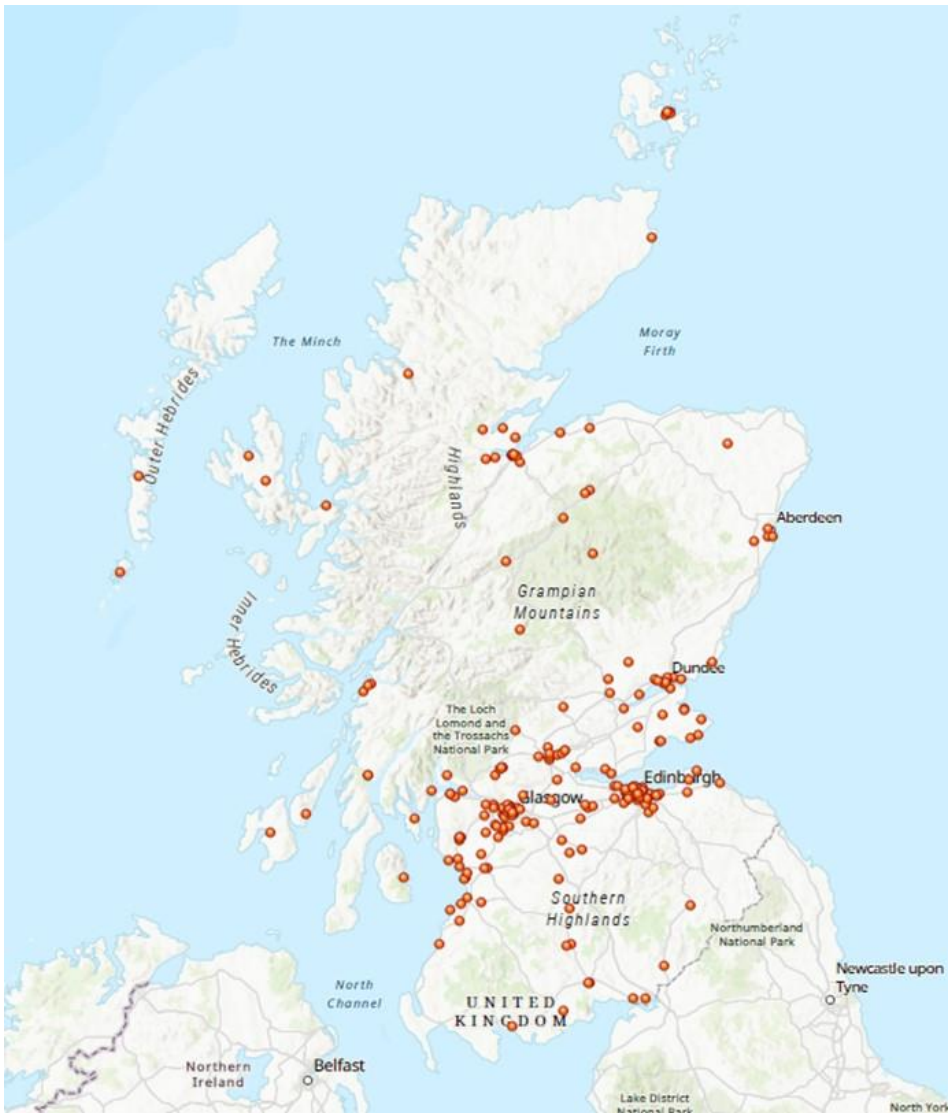
At **South City Way**, 75% of resident survey respondents **agreed that more walking and cycling would make the area a better place to live and work**. Support was generally higher among younger age groups when compared to those aged 65+.

## Outcome 5: Delivery of walking, cycling and wheeling is promoted and supported by a range of partners

Based on a sample of projects, almost **three-quarters (73%) of local residents agreed with their local PfE project proposal** before delivery and 70% believed the views of the community had been considered.

There are currently around 250 projects in development as part of the Places for Everyone programme. These **projects involve 31 of Scotland's 32 local authorities and over 60 other** national, regional and community partners.

**Figure 1: Geographic distribution of Places for Everyone projects as of December 2023**



The **Gynack Gardens** project was led by Cycle Friendly Kingussie, a community group which has aims to improve active travel in the town. The Highland Council provided input and permissions during parts of the projects and Sustrans provided monitoring and evaluation and design support for the duration of the project.

The **Cumbernauld Green Routes** project was delivered in partnership between Cumbernauld Living Landscape, Green Action Trust, North Lanarkshire Council and Sustrans. This partnership ensured the project addressed a range of outcomes relating to the local environment.

At **Stockingfield Bridge**, in addition to infrastructural change, an extensive programme of community engagement aimed to ensure the project had a social and cultural impact on North Glasgow.

## Strategic objective: Cutting carbon emissions and other pollution

In a trial exercise, the Emissions Factor Toolkit[3] was applied to four PfE projects. Emission rates[4] highlighted that **all four projects saw an estimated decrease in NOx** (34% average decrease) whilst **3 out of the 4 projects saw an estimated decrease in PM2.5** (29% average decrease), **PM10** (28% average decrease) **and $CO_2$** (27% average decrease)

**South City Way** in Glasgow was the project with the largest reduction in $CO_2$ (-53%). Assuming this value is consistent for the entire length of the project (2.5 km), we can estimate a **carbon saving of 618 tonnes per year.**

## Strategic objective: Better health and safer travel for all

AUE analysis highlights that the **number of route users who agreed that 'the presence of this route helped (me) to increase the amount of physical activity that (I) regularly take' rose** from 964,107 before to 1,603,982 (**+168%**) after project delivery. Similarly, the number of route users agreeing with this statement rose from 363,919 before to 713,963 (+196%) 2-5 years after project delivery.

[3] https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/air-quality/air-quality-assessment/emissions-factors-toolkit/

[4] Estimations of the total amount of pollutants emitted per km during 24 hours before and after construction.

Further, before project delivery 72% of Route User Intercept Survey **respondents agreed[5] that 'to get exercise' was an influence on their decision to use the PfE route**. This rose to 85% after project delivery and to 92% 2-5 years after project delivery, with a **19-percentage point increase** in respondents strongly agreeing with this statement.

## Places for Everyone outcomes

Key impact against Places for Everyone outcomes include:

- **Project application – quality**: Of 17 Equality Impact Assessments supported by the PfE Engagement Team, seven were good or passed with feedback[6], eight passed with conditions[7], and two failed.
- **Project application – suitability**: In 2022-23 195 projects from 55 different partners went through panel reviews. Of these, 104 (53%) were recommended to be given the full amount they requested.
- **Increased engagement in areas of multiple deprivation**: An analysis of 200 completed PfE projects highlights that 21% of the area (km2) covered were in the most deprived SIMD quintile (SIMD 1).
- **Fewer barriers for everyone to make journeys actively**: By the end of 2022-23 the infrastructure programme had delivered 154 kms of segregated infrastructure. This compares to 54 kms by the end of 2016-17.
- **Increase in walking, wheeling and cycling by those facing inequalities**: Analysis highlights a 3-percentage point shift in the balance of male and female route users when comparing before and 2-5 years after project delivery (from 42% to 45% female) and an increase in the proportion of route users who have a physical or mental health condition or illness (from 12% before, to 15% 2-5 years after project delivery).

[5] Agreed = Strongly agree or Agree.
[6] 'feedback' points are recommendations from members of the PfE decision-making panel.
[7] 'conditions' are set by PfE Grant Advisors and must be actioned as a condition of the partner receiving funds.

# Project case studies

The report includes five case studies from projects with post-construction monitoring undertaken in 22-23, as described below.

## The Bowline, Bowling, West Dunbartonshire

Bowling Harbour in West Dunbartonshire is a key link along National Cycle Network Route 7 towards Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park. The aim of the Bowline Project was to create a direct, attractive and traffic-free link for active travel trips from the heart of Glasgow along the Forth & Clyde Canal towpath towards Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park.

**The viaduct during construction (left). New linear park constructed (right). Credit: Sustrans**

The project was delivered by Scottish Canals and received PfE (formerly Community Links) funding during the 2018-19 grant iteration. The project received just under £4 million of funding in total. Construction started in March 2020 and the new route opened in September 2021.

Monitoring shows that trips along this route have nearly doubled after project completion. Creating a traffic free link and removing the need to cross at a busy junction has made active travel trips safer and more accessible for route users. Route users also feel that The Bowline has enhanced the local area.

## Cumbernauld Green Route, North Lanarkshire

The Cumbernauld Green Route links the centre of Cumbernauld and the surrounding communities via an accessible and green pathway. The project aimed to support healthier lifestyles, offering residents an attractive and safe option for walking, wheeling and cycling between Abronhill and Cumbernauld town centre.

The project was delivered by Green Action Trust and first received PfE (formerly Community Links) funding during the 2019–20 grant iteration. PfE awarded £215,000, with additional funding provided by the Scottish Government Town Centre Funds. In total the project received £550,000 of funding. Construction started in August 2020 with the route opened in September 2022.

**Before (Left) and After (Right) images of Kildrum Park, located along the Cumbernauld Green Route. Credit: Mike Batley, Green Action Trust**

The Green Route now features a series of linear parks, which are host to native plant species and newly planted trees, connected by a newly resurfaced route which has had road crossings redesigned and underpasses lit. Monitoring has shown an increase in route usage and that the Green Route was perceived to be of very high quality by local users.

## Cycle friendly Kingussie - Gynack Gardens, Highland Council

Gynack Gardens is a park at the centre of Kingussie. The project aimed to increase active travel in and around the Gardens by opening up access whilst improving the quality and safety of the park with a range of placemaking improvements.

**Picture taken of the flowers and sundial by one of the children during the focus group.**

Upgrades were led by Cycle Friendly Kingussie (CFK), supported by the Highland Council, and first received PfE funding during the 2018-19 grant round. Between 2018 and 2023 the redevelopment received approximately £240,000 from Sustrans (including indirect match funding) and approximately £57,000 from the Highlands Council. Construction took place from Autumn 2020 to March 2021.

Since completion, there has been an increase in active travel trips recorded within (271% more trips) and around (69% more trips) the Gardens, including an increase in cycling to school. There has also been an increase in the number of parked bikes in the town. Since the changes, there have been improvements in route users' ratings of safety, the accessibility of the space, the path surface, and the extent to which the space enhances the local area. Children interviewed also had positive views on the Gardens, especially the flowers, green space and ornaments. An increase in people walking and using benches in the park demonstrates the improved quality of infrastructure.

## South City Way, Glasgow

The South City Way (SCW) was the first winner of the Community Links PLUS competition in the summer of 2016. It provides a high-quality active travel corridor from Queens Park in the heart of the Southside of Glasgow to the City Centre. The SCW aimed to deliver a safer, more comfortable, faster, and more coherent cycle route that contributed to the expansion of Glasgow's cycle network.

**Cyclists and Pedestrians using the South City Way route in Glasgow. Credit: John Linton/Sustrans (Left) & Colin Hattersley/Sustrans (Right)**

The South City Way was delivered by Glasgow City Council (GCC) who received £3.5 million of matched funding to construct the project. GCC used their own funding as a partial match, bringing the project total to around £7m. The project was first funded during the 2016-17 grant iteration. Construction started in December 2017 and the route has been open since June 2022.

The Glasgow South City Way (SCW) project created a high-quality active travel corridor from the heart of the Southside of Glasgow to the City Centre, enabling everyday trips to be carried out in a sustainable manner by connecting key destinations. Monitoring shows that active travel trips along this route have increased by 30% since construction was completed.

The changes have also reduced the volume of motor traffic, as well as reducing the proportion of vehicles travelling over the speed limit by 20%.

## Stockingfield Bridge, Glasgow[8]

Stockingfield Bridge reconnects three communities that were divided by the Forth and Clyde Canal and provides an off-road active travel link between the towpaths on either side of the Stockingfield Canal Junction. The bridge completes the last linkage in the Forth and Clyde Canal towpath. The project aimed to reconnect the three communities of Maryhill, Gilsochill/Cadder, and Ruchill, and to support active travel and improve access for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelers.

**Stockingfield Bridge, Glasgow. Credit: reGlasgow.com**

The project was delivered by Scottish Canals, and first received Community Links funding during the 2018-19 grant iteration. The project cost £15 million in total, with 14.5 million awarded by PfE. Additional funding was awarded by Glasgow City Council. Construction started in summer 2020, and the route was opened in September 2022.

The bridge has made it easier, safer and quicker for people to travel by walking, wheeling and cycling when undertaking short, purposeful trips between local communities. There has been a marked increase in trips for work, school or to see family/friends, and in short trips under 4 miles. Furthermore, almost all the respondents surveyed after project delivery lived within the three communities previously divided by the canal, showing the importance of the bridge in connecting these areas and enabling a 20-minute neighbourhood.

8 The content of this case study has been adapted from the final evaluation report produced by EKOS, who were commissioned by Scottish Canals to monitor and evaluate the impact of the project. The case study also includes Sustrans RMU data collected from NCN counters in and around the project area.

# Lessons learned

In previous impact reporting we noted an over-reliance on certain data sources such as manual count data, and this year have aggregated additional data sources to provide broader evidence for programme reporting. Data aggregation efforts have been successful – we have included aggregate data from resident surveys, secondary data sources, our PfE project portal and GIS data in this year's reporting. However, the process of data aggregation has highlighted the need for consistent data formats across all data collection types. Work is ongoing to standardise data formats for automated traffic counts and future resident surveys to improve and automate the process of aggregation.

**Evaluation of Places for Everyone projects has highlighted learning that can be used to improve the impact of infrastructure delivery:**

- Our annual usage estimates highlight that active travel levels increased at 34 out of 43 PfE projects after project delivery. Whilst positive overall, this does highlight that nine projects did not see increases in active travel. There may be specific reasons for these findings, for instance some projects recorded increases in cycling but decreases in walking (linked to project aims). We will use available information to understand more about projects that do and don't lead to increases in active travel.
- With reference to analysis of a sample of projects, whilst overall route usage increases after, and 2-5 years after, project delivery, the profile of route users appears to remain quite similar, for instance in terms of gender, age and disability. This suggests that whilst PfE interventions have an overall positive impact on usage levels, there are still challenges in boosting usage amongst particular types of users.

Evaluation of Spaces for People (published in 2022) highlighted the importance of community engagement to ensure that communities buy-into scheme delivery and that their needs are met. Recognising the need to incorporate these lessons, in the 2022-23 delivery year, the PfE Engagement Team supported colleagues and delivery partners with developing and delivering their Equality Impact Assessments for PfE projects.

- From our project case studies:
    - In the **Bowline** project in West Dunbartonshire, issues identified by local businesses with regards to signage highlight the need to address snags and oversights during the bedding in phase.
    - In the **Cumbernauld Green Route** project in North Lanarkshire, negativity associated with anti-social behaviour highlights the importance of ongoing maintenance, and the need for more research to understand how project design and delivery can address these issues.

+ At **Gynack Gardens** in Kingussie we were able to include children's perspectives in our evaluation. This type of monitoring was possible because of strong links built between Sustrans and local stakeholders such as Kingussie Primary School.

+ On the **South City Way**, monitoring data highlighted the challenges of raising project awareness in areas of high population, reinforcing the need for publicity and in-depth consultation with community members and stakeholders throughout the design and construction process.

+ At **Stockingfield Bridge**, RMU's role as the monitoring and evaluation function came to the fore when monitoring plans/delivery were found to be insufficient. Highlighting the importance of effective communication with partners, legacy monitoring will now be crucial to understanding project impact.