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Glasgow Cycling & Urban Sports Strategy - DRAFT



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Contents

1. Introduction 1
   Vision 2
   Partnership approach 3
   Why Cycling and wheeled urban sports? 4
      Case Study 1 5
   Policy Context 7
      Case Study 2 9
   Outcomes 10
2. Challenges and opportunities 11
      Case Study 3 15
3. Delivery 17
   People 18
      Case Study 4 19
   Place 20
      Case Study 5 23
   Programme 24
   Expanding opportunities 25
      Case Study 6 26
4. Delivering the Strategy 27

Foreword



Councillor Angus Millar

Convener for Climate, Glasgow Green Deal, Transport and City Centre Recovery



Bailie Annette Christie

Convener for Culture, Sport and International Relations

Glasgow has a long and proud history of sport and culture, whether it's in our communities or as a host for international events like the 2014 Commonwealth Games and this year's World Cycling Championships. This strategy focuses on cycling and other wheeled urban sports like skateboarding: how they are a force for good, and how they can be supported in the years to come at every level.

As this strategy makes clear, the benefits of cycling and other wheeled sports should be felt by everyone. By removing barriers to participation, anybody who wants to "go a bike" or try skateboarding should be encouraged and able to. This strategy is all about enabling sport and physical activity for all.

The benefits are huge. Better individual health and wellbeing, tackling our city's deep health inequalities, and supporting the transition to net-zero by making it easier and more socially acceptable to travel around the city sustainably. This will increase the opportunities and empowerment of our citizens in fields as diverse as culture, sport, community development and help many individuals with their skills and confidence.

In other words, the prize for Glasgow of embracing cycling and urban sports is so much more than just sporting achievements alone.



Andy Waddell

Director of City Operations,
Neighbourhoods, Regeneration & Sustainability

This strategy for cycling and wheeled urban sports is part of a wider strategic approach under the umbrella of Glasgow's Transport Strategy, covering every aspect of movement around our city. The overriding outcomes are a successful and just transition to a net-zero carbon, clean and sustainable city; tackling poverty, improving health and reducing inequalities; inclusive economic success and a dynamic, world class city; and places where we can all thrive.

Cycling and wheeled urban sports should no longer be considered niche. This strategy explains how they have a vital role in enabling solutions to the challenges of climate change, inequality and inclusion, particularly by increasing opportunities for our citizens, by continuing to promote Glasgow as a world-leading events destination, and by creating more accessible sporting opportunities for all.

Using the themes of People, Place and Programme, this draft strategy shows how cycling and wheeled urban sports can and will encourage and enable physical activity and improved health & wellbeing through active travel, with myriad benefits.

Through engagement the actions needed for People, Place and Programme will be developed, allowing us to create the right environment for cycling and wheeled urban sports to be successful in Glasgow.

1. Introduction

People cycle and skate for commuting and everyday journeys, for fun, exercise, leisure, tourism, or for sport and competition. With ever-increasing numbers of people participating, this helps to embed and normalise these activities for everyone across the city.

Participation in cycling has expanded substantially in Glasgow in recent years, supported by Glasgow's Strategic Plan for Cycling (2016) which aimed for cycling to be the largest participation activity in the city by 2020.

That plan sought to build upon the city's preparation for and legacy from the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, by making best use of existing facilities, planning new infrastructure for cycling, and promoting participation in cycling as an everyday activity - whether for sport, leisure or as a mode of everyday transport.



The 2022 Active Travel Strategy (ATS) marked a step change in the approach to movement around our city. Active travel, along with other sustainable transport choices, plays a crucial role in achieving the desired transportation outcomes for the city.

This **Cycling and Urban Sports Strategy** is a direct output of the ATS. The two strategies combine to provide the framework to support everyone to cycle. Parallel to this is the Delivery Plan for the City Network and Travel Behaviour Change Strategy, which will deliver the 'hard' infrastructure and complementary 'soft' measures to generate modal shift.

The innovative inclusion of **wheeled urban sports** within this strategy broadens the potential audience, with greater resulting benefits to the city and us all. It also reflects how equality, accessibility and inclusion sit at the core of this strategy to ensure that cycling and wheeling opportunities cater to all abilities, maximising opportunities for all residents to participate.

But the impact of this strategy reaches beyond sport: wheeled urban sports equipment such as skateboards, skates, BMX bikes and push scooters are all means of transport in their own right. The mutual requirements for all wheeled mobility are for safe travel networks connecting vibrant places, and for good quality surfaces.

Vision

The vision for cycling and wheeled urban sports in Glasgow is:

"To create a vibrant city where cycling and wheeled urban sports are accessible, inclusive, safe and attractive to all regardless of gender or background".

Aiming to:

- *Create a vibrant cycling and wheeled urban sports city where activities are accessible, safe, and attractive to all.*
- *Develop cycling and wheeled urban sports infrastructure through investment in people, place, and programme, and by working with partners.*
- *Support and grow the diverse range of cycling and wheeled urban sports cultures that already exist in the city.*
- *Support continued development of, and participation in, cycling and wheeled urban sports at all skill levels.*
- *Seek opportunities to incorporate cycling and wheeled urban sports provision in both existing and planned development.*

This strategy will provide the City Council and its partners with a basis for identifying cycling and local wheeled urban sports needs and desired opportunities, based on best practice.

Participation opportunities developed through this framework will be welcoming and accessible, with a particular focus on areas of multiple deprivation.

The strategy will promote cycling and wheeled urban sport by building on the city's already extensive range of activities around people, place and programme.



We want cycling and wheeled urban sports in Glasgow to be accessible as an everyday activity through:

i. People - Coaches, teachers, leaders, officials, peer mentors and role models, and volunteers

ii. Place – Cycle lanes, parks, dedicated venues, hubs, schools, and community spaces

iii. Programme – Participation in sport, active lifestyle, commuting, exercise, recreation, social, formal, informal and events

The strategy will also assist in the development of the city's major cycling venues as hubs for active travel, incorporating training, extra-curricular youth activities, community events and activities, as well as attracting future major events to the city.

Partnership approach

The Council will be pragmatic in implementing this strategy, with a focus on working in partnership to bring People, Place, and Programme together in a holistic manner.

Working collaboratively with community and third sector groups is essential to expand participation in cycling and urban sports. When the council delivers in tandem with community groups, it brings a better focus to identifying local challenges and opportunities. This enables implementation that is bespoke to individual neighbourhoods and communities, all contributing to the overall city-wide vision for cycling and wheeled urban sports.



Glasgow BMX Centre



Loading Bay Skate Centre



Children's cycling activity

Why cycling and wheeled urban sports?

The global climate crisis as well as the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on local neighbourhoods and town centres, highlighting the importance of local public space within our city and the need to re-balance the use of our streets; to be more people friendly and better for socialising and playing.

Taking a human-scale approach to our city allows our streets and open spaces to be shaped around people. By creating more space and safer environments in which to cycle and wheel, we will create more people-friendly spaces and better integrate activity into our daily lives. The corresponding increase in social connections and physical movement in our day-to-day activities is known to have physical and mental health benefits.

Cycling and wheeled urban sports are increasingly recognised for animating our public spaces, provided that those spaces are designed so that different activities can take place safely. Access to wheeled urban sports promotes shared learning between a wide range of ages and social backgrounds, expanding boundaries and encouraging long term changes in behaviour towards active travel. This provides additional societal benefits in the form of health and wellbeing resulting from an active lifestyle, enhanced environmental engagement, habitability, leisure, sociability, cultural access, and equity (see graphic and footnote[1]).

The 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships presents a once in a generation opportunity to deliver a lasting impact by inspiring people to take part in cycling, taking advantage of Glasgow's unique urban form and latent demand for cycling and wheeled urban sports.

Benefits of cycling and wheeled urban sports

Health & wellbeing	Low-impact aerobic exercise that with regular participation can help maintain physical health and support longer, healthier lives; also improve mental wellbeing by reducing stress and anxiety. More active, healthier people result in savings for the NHS.
Environmental & climate	Low-cost, green, and efficient mode of transport and essential to helping reduce carbon emissions. Increasing participation helps reduce traffic congestion and make roads safer, improve air quality and reduce noise pollution, and free up space for people.
Social, cultural, and economic	Local travel helps support a broader range of retailers and fosters greater community connections. Increased demand for cycles / wheeled urban sports equipment creates job opportunities in a range of sectors including the circular economy and other innovations. Major sporting or other leisure events bring wider economic benefits and may encourage greater and sustained participation in cycling / wheeled urban sports.

[1] Transport Scotland's Cycling Framework for Active Travel highlights how cycling and wheeling address health and wellbeing and climate change.

Case Study 1

Girls Cycling Programme
A Glasgow Life - 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships Legacy Project

A group of S1 girls from Drumchapel High School completed a 10-week cycling programme as part of a wider multi partnership project involving girls from 11 other Glasgow schools, all made possible by the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships activation budget managed by Glasgow Life.

The target audience were girls transitioning from primary to secondary school, a pivotal point in a young girl's life, when dropping out of physical activity, peer pressure and increased stress become real issues.

Many girls taking part were disengaged in school, struggled to focus and often disruptive in class, while others were at risk of becoming socially isolated. Taster sessions in BMX, mountain biking, road and track cycling as well as interactive workshops were delivered.

Feedback from the girls and teachers alike has been overwhelmingly positive. The girls adapted to unfamiliar environments, and their overall wellbeing, focus and attentiveness in class has improved greatly.



Girls cycling programme at the Loading Bay

This strategy:

- Supports Glasgow's sustainability and health agendas.
- Promotes Glasgow's transition to net-zero emissions by 2030.
- Aligns with Glasgow's Active Travel Strategy and Liveable Neighbourhoods programme which put walking, wheeling, and cycling as the first and natural choice for everyday journeys in the city.
- Will act as an additional driver to deliver Glasgow City Council's plan for 270 kilometres of new walking and cycle routes as part of the road network by 2030.

Glasgow City Council's strategic plan for 2022 to 2027 identifies four key challenges for this city to address: Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities; Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens; Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow, and; Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative, and efficient way for our communities.

Cycling and urban sports can assist in enabling solutions to these challenges, particularly on increasing opportunities for citizens. It also supports a number of the missions which cascade from the city challenges, including promoting Glasgow as a world-leading events destination and creating more accessible sporting opportunities.

The strategy works alongside a suite of transport strategies to support walking, wheeling and cycling as a form of zero emission travel in the city. With transport being a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions, active travel plays an invaluable role in contributing to the city's race to become net zero by 2030.

This document acts as an additional support pillar for the overarching Glasgow Transport Strategy, by aligning with several of the objectives. Cycling and urban sports will encourage and enable physical activity and improved health & wellbeing through active travel, help to improve the safety and personal security of all transport users and the public spaces that they use and finally will contribute to delivering high quality public spaces which respect and respond to the natural and built environment.



Bike for Good charity cycling organisation leading a group ride

Policy Context

This strategy is supported by a multitude of national and local polices which strengthen the vision and purpose of this document. A range of utility, leisure and competitive cycling targets exist within Scotland, in addition to the array of plans to expand wheeled urban sports. The table below is a concise overview of the most relevant policies for this strategy.

Scottish Cycling's 2023 strategy 'Developing a Nation of Cyclists 2.0' seeks to "inspire the nation to participate in cycling and support the Scottish Cycling community to realise their full potential. To lead and enable our members, clubs and partners to develop cycling for everyone." It identifies eight priority areas that they will work in partnership to deliver: Clubs, Growing Participation, Events, Places to Ride, People, Influence, Governance, Business and Operations.

This scope of activity from Scottish Cycling will provide a key overlap with the people, place and programme framing of this strategy, directly supporting competitive cycling in the city.

Skateboard GB is the UK-wide governing body for skateboarding and in their 2021-33 Strategic Plan focus on four key pillars to grow the activity: Skate more, Skate better, Skateable spaces and Connect. It proposes objectives to grow the skateboarding population, to widen access and support the increasing diversity of this urban sport. It seeks to open up a clear and defined pathway for elite and professional skateboards, allowing them to compete at the highest level. It identifies the needs to continue expanding skateable spaces, whether they are skate dots or large skate parks.

Strategy / policy	National
Sport for Life – A vision for Sport in Scotland (sportscotland, 2019)	Sport
A More Active Scotland: Physical Activity Delivery Plan (Scottish Government, 2018)	Physical activity
Cycling Framework and Delivery Plan for Active Travel in Scotland 2022-2030 (Draft for consultation, Transport Scotland, 2022)	Cycling
Developing a nation of Cyclists 2.0 (Scottish Cycling, 2023)	Cycling
British Cycling – BMX Freestyle	BMX freestyle
Skateboard GB 2021-2033 Strategic Plan	Skateboarding
Scottish MTB Strategy 2019-2025 (Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland, 2019)	Mountain Biking
Long term vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030 (Transport Scotland, 2014)	Active Travel
Volunteering for All: national framework (Scottish Government, 2018)	Volunteering
Going Further: Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework (Scottish Government, 2016)	Accessibility
Skateboard Scotland	Skateboard
British Cycling – BMX Freestyle	BMX

A number of other Council documents sit above this strategy and set the direction of transport and development in the city over the coming decade. The overarching document is the Glasgow Transport Strategy, supported by the Active Travel Strategy (ATS) with its three core themes:

- **Connectivity, people and place** – develops the inclusive and accessible approach being taken to the delivery of the City Network and active travel at a local level.
- **Unlocking change** – the Travel Behaviour Change Strategy identifies the softer measures and approach that needs to take place with the delivery of infrastructure to assist in modal shift.
- **Thinking differently** - the C&USS describes the role of informal and informal sports as a gateway to active travel being part of everyday life.

Strategy / policy	Local
• Glasgow Transport Strategy • Active Travel Strategy 2022-2031 • Liveable Neighbourhoods programme	Transport Strategies
GCC Strategic Plan 2022-2027	
Glasgow Life Business Plan 2023-2025	
GCC City Development Plan	
GCC Open Space Strategy 2020	
A Legacy Framework for Glasgow's Sport and Physical Activity (Glasgow Sport)	Sport / Community



BMX riders at the Riverside Museum

Case Study 2

Glasgow Tandem Club

GTC was formed in 2018 by Anne Fraser, a keen tandem cyclist, who wanted to develop a club in the West of Scotland for visually impaired cyclists, similar to others that already exist in other parts of the country. A small group of ‘stokers’ and ‘pilots’ were identified and supported to develop their riding skills, and started going on regular monthly rides, via local roads and cycle paths. Through various funding sources the club obtained new tandems and a storage space at Bellahouston Park’s outdoor cycle track. Having a base at a training facility enables provision of taster and training sessions, along with the continuing programme of longer social rides.





Glasgow Tandem Club outings, images courtesy Anne Fraser

Outcomes

This strategy seeks to deliver overarching outcomes for Glasgow and its residents, delivering on the opportunities identified in this document and addressing the challenges that exist in the city. It intends to align with the six Active Scotland outcomes:

- Encouraging and enabling the inactive to be more active
- Encouraging and enabling the active to stay active throughout life
- Developing physical confidence and competence from the earliest age
- Improving active infrastructure
- Supporting well-being and resilience in communities through physical activity and sport
- Improving opportunities to participate, progress and achieve in sport

This strategy recognises the crisis of inactivity in the city and the need to provide solutions to deliver better health outcomes for citizens. There is also an increasing awareness of the importance of mental wellbeing and having tools available to support individuals experiencing poor mental health.

This document is supported by Glasgow's Travel Behaviour Change Strategy, working in tandem to deliver nudges to enable more active lifestyles and enable access to opportunities which can support health and wellbeing.

The vision of inclusive cycling and urban sports, with the objectives of the Active Travel Strategy, combine to deliver new protected active travel routes across the city, traffic-calmed neighbourhoods, lighting improvements and accessible facilities.

The desired outcome of this is to realise the goal of residents being more willing to walk, wheel and cycle around the city and importantly in the context of this strategy, to use active travel to access sporting facilities.

By widening access to opportunities and reducing barriers to participation in cycling and urban sports, we will begin to see a more active population which is more reflective of the diversity of Glasgow. The importance of representation in publicity materials and role models from different backgrounds is key to encouraging uptake and achieving the outcome of greater participation.

Glasgow has a global reputation for expertise in hosting events and can only go from strength to strength. This strategy seeks to build upon a strong base, delivering the outcome of greater expertise within the resident population for supporting large sporting events and facilitating new opportunities for cycling and urban sport. This strategy will deliver more community-based activity to widen accessibility and solidify Glasgow's position as a city which nourishes grass roots activity.

2. Challenges and opportunities

Glasgow has significant health disparities across the city with life expectancy often varying by postcode (see for example Glasgow Centre for Population Health). Many initiatives are ongoing to reduce these inequalities.

Health and wellbeing

This strategy has an important role to play in tackling these health inequalities and improving health outcomes. Engaging in wheeled urban sports or active travel can assist in mitigating the health effects of deprivation, such as poor mental health and society-wide issues like inactivity (see section 1 above).

This strategy will be able to work alongside and lever the outputs of the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme, utilising streets for people interventions as a valuable opportunity for street play, cycling and urban sport. Historically Glasgow's streets were a natural playground, but this has declined due to the dominance of the motorcar.

As we rebalance our streetscape once again, it opens opportunities for street play and creative uses of our city's residential streets. This is supported by the Glasgow's Road Safety Plan 2020-2030 to deliver Vision Zero by the end of the decade: a goal of no deaths or serious injuries on our roads. There is potential for this to be accelerated through the city-wide target for Net Zero and a 30% reduction in vehicle kilometres by 2030.



Children playing on bikes and a lorry, Glasgow, 1958. credit: Mayne, 2017

Funding

In the present climate, maintaining both capital and revenue investment presents a major challenge to realising the full ambition of the Council's strategies. The current era of tight resources highlights the importance of working in partnership to deliver for residents utilising match funding, planning gain and funding bids to maximise the potential monetary sources. Collaborating with stakeholder groups to assist in delivering the best opportunities for the city will help on community development and will benefit from existing knowledge and networks.

Capacity

There are many competing demands on the street space within our neighbourhoods, but we need to put people at the centre of decision-making. In rebalancing our streets and spaces, they have to be safe and inviting for people to walk, wheel and cycle.

Urban Sports Generate Cultural Activity

Glasgow is already a cultural hub, so expanding and embedding urban sports into the fabric of the city presents an opportunity to generate new cultural activity and strengthen the city as an international centre of culture.

Wheeled urban sports may be considered less formalised than other forms of sports, yet contemporary BMX, skateboarding and quad-skating practice are built from half a century of rich cultural history and technical development.

The nature of these sports ranges from casual play and occasional recreation, through being a form of transport, to dedicated progression and professional competition. At this stage they become a lifestyle with all the social and cultural dimensions that might be associated with more familiar forms of collective sporting activity.

The key difference between these and organised team sports is a less developed competitive and rules-based structure, these elements being replaced by a focus on personal progression, often supported organically through informal peer support. Urban sports allow each participant to define their own approach and set their own goals because they are inherently non-prescriptive and open to individual interpretation.

As a creative art form, members learn to document each other's tricks, editing and sharing videos, and even making music to go with videos. Complementary to this is creating artwork and graphics for boards and clothing.

Urban sports now have a credible profile, their influence on fashion and design being amplified to an ever-wider range of potential participants through social media and via well-established gaming platforms. These opportunities to engage young people in beneficial physical activities and in their attendant social and cultural dimensions are highly significant.

EDI – Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity

Glasgow is Scotland's most diverse city, but inequality of access and participation continues to exist amongst and between our local neighbourhoods and communities.

This strategy is committed to achieving Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity in its outcomes, and these themes are embedded throughout. Geographic location, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, language ability and any other demographic characteristic should not dictate a person's ability to access cycling and urban sports.

This strategy recognises the important role that cycling and urban sports programmes, activities and venues can play in enabling people from a wide variety of backgrounds, and with different lived experiences, to come together, as well as to making positive health and wellbeing changes.



Women on Wheels Pedal in Pollok

Accessible and inclusive sport

24% of the Scottish population have a long-term limiting condition (Scottish Household Survey 2019) and 80% of people with disabilities want to take part in more sport and physical activity (Activity Alliance 2019-20).

Despite a body of knowledge about the complex barriers to disabled people engaging in sport, significantly fewer disabled people are engaged with regular sporting and physical activity compared with non-disabled people. In addition to ensuring suitable facilities and opportunities exist for participation, terminology used in communication and representation through imagery is also key.

Glasgow as a feminist city

In 2022, Glasgow City Council adopted a Feminist Town Planning policy which recognises that to create public spaces that are safe and inclusive for women, and accessible for all members of the community, it is fundamental that women are central to all aspects of planning, public realm design, policy development and budgets.

This approach strives to develop a healthier city that is gender equal and considers walkability, proximity to services, mixed-use environments, a safe public realm, and open greenspaces. These factors are key considerations for creating a healthier, more liveable city for all, not only women, with positive impacts in terms of physical and mental wellbeing and air quality.

The consideration of gender when designing access to cycling and urban sport places and programmes, in addition to facilities on site, is core to ensuring inclusivity and realising the vision of this strategy.

Urban sport is on a trajectory to becoming more diverse in its participation, but effort is still needed to reduce the barriers experienced by certain members of society. For example, a recent study identified specific measures needed to overcome barriers for women and girls to skateboard and truly realise the vision of inclusive urban sports, including role models, targeted sessions, accessible facilities and prolonged support should be prioritised to widen access to skating. The continued dismantling of wider structural factors in society which prevent uptake in sport, are also influential and must be addressed too.

Partnerships

Partnerships are essential to delivering this strategy's ambitions. This strategy must be owned not just by the Council, but also its core partners who will help to make its vision a reality. Glasgow Life will be pivotal to this delivery. Building on existing partnerships is at the core of everything Glasgow Life does towards bringing culture and sport to everyone in Glasgow. Their city-wide reach and experience ensures that we will identify and make best use of all funding opportunities, to maximise on the outcomes. Glasgow Life will bring together and enable partner organisations to deliver inclusive programmes in priority areas of the city, to targeted audiences. This strategy will facilitate utilising existing networks and building new partnerships in order to reach out to the wealth of organisations across Glasgow, ensuring effective delivery.

Case Study 3

Pedal at Pollok Project, Women on Wheels

Women on Wheels (WOW), with funding from Glasgow Life, delivered a 10-week cycling programme, assisting 37 women in the Pollok area to get out cycling. The free activities included learn to ride sessions, confidence building led rides and two introductory mountain biking sessions held in Pollok Park. Cycles and use of an off-road track for the learn to ride and confidence sessions were provided by Pollok United and Blackwood Housing Association, while Scottish Cycling loaned mountain bikes for the Pollok Park sessions.

The Pollok Artist in Residence and The Village Story Telling Centre added a creative element to some of the confidence building rides, exploring how cycling made the women feel.

Local mum Helena attended all of the confidence building rides as well as the mountain biking introduction, saying that it was the first thing she had done for herself in 10 years: "*I have never felt so alive as I've just been on that bike. Never smiled so much!".*

Rachel learned to ride: "*As a complete beginner cyclist, aged 64, this has been an amazing experience for me. I have been able to do that little bit extra every week and I am doing things I never thought possible. It has been a great, supportive environment, and I was encouraged to go at my own pace".*



Women on Wheels – Helena (left) & Rachel (right)

Infrastructure

The network of interconnected routes being developed through Glasgow's Active Travel Strategy and the development of the City Network will have a significant role in not only supporting everyday cycling and wheeling journeys by residents, but also attracting cycle tourists to locations in Glasgow and beyond (see below).

Glasgow's City Network will provide an accessible, safe, coherent, and direct active travel network across Glasgow, connecting key destinations such as education, business, retail, and culture. The network of around 270km of new protected cycleways will pass within 400m of every primary school meaning safe, connected wheeled journeys to school can become an everyday reality for young people.

In addition to infrastructure improvements, marketing and promotion will also play a vital behaviour change role. Maps, digital resources, wayfinding, bike hire and events can all encourage people to explore their area and to travel actively.

Cycle tourism

This has seen significant global growth in the past decade, including in Scotland and by extension Glasgow. It offers considerable local economic benefits to the city. Cycle tourism can be considered in two distinct categories:

- Destination cycle tourists who are motivated to travel to places primarily because of their routes, trails and riding experience.
- Leisure cyclists who might ride whilst on holiday, but cycling is not the main activity or primary reason for their holiday.

Glasgow's significant off-road leisure cycling routes, developed over the past few decades, includes canals, parks, and the National Cycle Network promoted by Sustrans. These routes are essential for making connections to neighbouring communities and to local green spaces, as well as helping people to connect with nature. There is considerable potential to improve the connectivity of these routes and to promote them to leisure cyclists. This strategy will act as a catalyst to shape future bids and developments to expand that network of recreational routes within the city and connect it to neighbouring authorities, helping to grow this aspect of leisure and tourism in Glasgow.

The proximity of Glasgow to the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park and other key destinations places it well to continue building its reputation as a hub for cycle touring and attract cyclists wishing to explore the area. The routes radiating from the city allow it to act as a base for destination cyclists wishing to explore the region by cycle. Some visitors will have multiple interests due to the array of cycle venues and facilities, bringing in riders who wish to partake in amateur or competitive cycling sport as their reason for cycle tourism to the city.

3. Delivery

The delivery of this strategy is framed by three themes which are at the core of increasing and broadening participation in cycling and wheeled urban sports:

People, Place and Programme.

The following table gives a brief outline of what is meant by each.

People	Place	Programme
The volunteers, leaders, peer mentors, coaches, teachers, and officials who help to make cycling and wheeled urban sports happen. Growing and diversifying participation in cycling and urban sports requires us to support, retain and develop this essential people-resource.	The natural and built environment in which people can practice and participate in cycling and wheeled urban sports. Creating more and better-quality facilities, places and spaces that are safe and accessible will increase opportunities and remove barriers to participation.	The cycling and wheeled urban sports activities available to participants across Glasgow. Delivering diverse activity programmes across our communities provides the participation opportunities that many need to help them build cycling and urban sports into their lives.



Girls cycling programme, Glasgow BMX Centre

People

People refers to our host of volunteers, peer mentors, leaders, coaches, teachers and officials who enable cycling and wheeled urban sports. They are essential to facilitate and deliver activities, provide coaching and training and support events for participants at our venues and in our communities, across Glasgow.

Retaining and recruiting dedicated, high-quality and inspiring people, is key to sustaining and increasing the delivery of programmes of activities for cycling and wheeled urban sports throughout Glasgow.

To ensure we increase and diversify participation in programmes requires that our people delivering activities should also come from all backgrounds so that they reflect the diversity that exists within Glasgow's population. Participation in cycling and wheeled urban sports of all forms has been growing, prompted partly by experiences of the Covid19 pandemic, and by heightened visibility through sporting events. Skateboarding in particular has benefited from recent inclusion in the Olympics, with the resulting increased participation of girls and young women a significant cultural change. We must ensure this is capitalised on.

Increasing diversity among our people will help to attract and encourage a broader range of participants who are new to cycling or urban sports, including those who are inactive or disengaged from more mainstream sports. This is an opportunity to help them build a healthier, more active lifestyle.

We recognise that local peers can become champions, heroes and role models, particularly in the realm of wheeled urban sports, and helping to develop within the city a culture that accepts street play and practice as everyday activity. Part of this process which helps to grow participation is the use of social media content, such as sharing tricks and stunts**.**

The retention of people, particularly volunteers, is dependent upon ensuring they feel empowered, valued and rewarded with opportunities for personal growth. Transferrable skills developed may longer term improve employment opportunities. Important to the longer-term sustainability of our cohorts of people will be to support young people already active within their area of activity to progress towards leading and delivery roles.

From grassroots to elite levels, Glasgow is home to a rich scene of cycling and wheeled urban sport activity, thanks to the legions of people who have helped to create and develop this scene. They do so much, in so many ways:

- They work to increase opportunities and break down barriers to access within areas of multiple deprivation.
- They work with people of all ages, with a particular focus on children and youths.
- They work to increase participation by those under-represented in cycling and wheeled urban sports, particularly girls and women.
- They work with people with different abilities, to ensure all can take part, including those with a physical disability, sensory or intellectual impairment, medical condition or other hidden disability.

There are many pathways towards becoming qualified to deliver activities, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, whatever the discipline, and from competitive and elite sport to developing a club or more social-based activities.

Scottish Cycling and British Cycling, who together develop sport and competitive cycling in the city, have coaching pathways covering disciplines from track and road cycling to BMX freestyle and racing, but also supporting more social and leisure cycling. The coaching framework aims to support coaches in key areas such as working with disabled riders, women and girls and young people. The thriving club cycling scene in Glasgow is supported by the club development framework which aims to provide opportunities for everyone to play their part in the cycling community – and places People and Partnerships at the core of this.

Ride leader training is offered by organisations such as Cycling Scotland or Scottish Cycling. Over a decade of British Cycling's Breeze programme has built a network of trained female ride leaders to act as local champions to bring more women into cycling through fun, free rides.

Case Study 4

Glasgow Gals - Ride Leader experiences

"The best thing about being a ride leader is taking people on adventures they didn't know they could have. We don't do big epic rides, sometimes we just go round the park. It's more about getting people on a bike and making sure they enjoy being on a bike. Then seeing them progress to longer rides, cycling more days each week, going on the roads, trying other types of cycling, getting their own bike, joining other groups, the seeing the positive impact that cycling has on them."

Carol Thompson, Ride leader and Coach, Glasgow Gals and Sunny Cycles.

"As a ride leader for the Glasgow Gals Cycling Club, I find pure joy in showing new routes to my fellow riders. The club's incredible support system fosters a powerful sense of empowerment as we uplift one another on our cycling adventures."

Ania Przygoda, Ride Leader and Coach, Glasgow Gals.



Leading a cycle ride, at Glasgow Green. Photo courtesy Carol Thompson, Sunny Cycles

Place

The ‘Place’ theme recognises that the city needs to put more value on the spaces where people engage in cycling and wheeled urban sports, from dedicated venues to public spaces, cycle lanes, parks and community hubs. Such places can engage, encourage and enable people to access and participate in cycling and wheeled urban sports, as part of more active and healthier lifestyles.

Whether an international-level venue for track cycling, a high-quality civic space with designed-in skateboarding ‘dots’, or an off-road pathway suitable for a leisure ride, it is essential our places provide safe, welcoming and accessible spaces with good quality surfacing, and connections between them.

As well as providing opportunities for people to be more physically active, increasing the numbers of purpose-built facilities, investing in improving the natural and built environment, capitalising on the advantages offered by our off-road path networks, and ensuring connectivity with the city’s sustainable transport network will greatly enhance Glasgow’s liveability. They will enhance the city’s neighbourhoods and encourage residents to explore their local area.

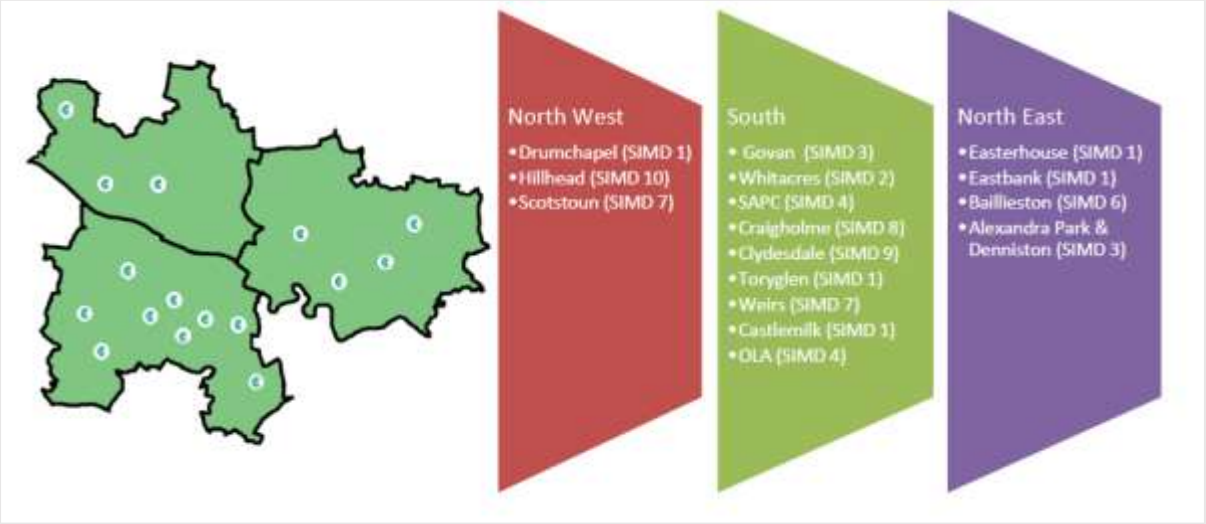
This links with implementation of Glasgow’s Liveable Neighbourhoods programme, where our streets and spaces are rebalanced towards people and community spaces begin to feel safer, especially when adequately lit. Integral to this transition is accepting more street play and its development into spontaneous and informal urban sport, which can help bring vibrancy to an area, and being more accepting of our civic spaces being more welcoming to young people.

Glasgow has an enviable mix of world class cycling venues thanks not least to the legacy of the 2014 Commonwealth Games and the 2016 European Championships. The key venues are:

- Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome
- Glasgow BMX Centre
- Cathkin Braes MTB Centre

These facilities have provided focal points for Glasgow Life’s sport development activities from grassroots outreach work to elite level sporting events, contributing to the development of clubs, coaches, volunteers and riders – our ‘People’ resource.

Glasgow also has a network of Community Sport Hubs operating either as individual venues or utilising multiple venues within a geographic area such as a community centre, schools and playing field pavilion. These bring together sport clubs and key local partners to develop and grow the sport offering in their community.



Community Sport Hubs in Glasgow

These hubs, along with the 20 Glasgow Club venues operated by Glasgow Life operates and numerous community organisations, are focal points for cycling-based activity.

Community organisations, including those with links to housing associations, have increasingly become a key part of the 'cycling picture' in Glasgow, offering programmes of activities to diverse audiences, and providing equipment and facilities that remove barriers to cycling for many.

Community hubs and sites often fulfil an important social role with facilities like community cafes, toilets, bike washing, storage space for adaptive or cargo bikes, space for clubs to meet and make connections, and focal points for community events.

Other cycle sport venues in the city include the Glasgow Cyclones Cycle Speedway track in Crosshill, with Glasgow Bike Polo based at the Barn Youth Centre (G5) and Mansfield Park (G11).

Wheeled urban sports usually takes place in either purpose-built facilities, such as skateparks (outdoor or indoor) or in public spaces and directly on streets. Skateparks can accommodate skateboarding, roller skating, BMX and scooting.

Glasgow offers a mix of indoor and outdoor spaces, incorporating vertical ramps, pump tracks and other dedicated facilities. The Riverside Museum, Gallery of Modern Art and the River Clyde frontage are all popular places for skateboarding or BMX. A number of skate facilities within Glasgow's boundary are listed on the Skateboard Scotland directory, however, many of these are ageing and in varying states of repair.

Whilst neighbourhood skateparks provide valuable larger areas for skating, there are many smaller **skate dots** and **spots** across the city – sites that make use of architectural features within public realm and at cultural and tourist landmarks. These free-to-use sites widen the accessibility of skating, and increase its geographic distribution across Glasgow, their use having evolved organically in parallel with the growth in participation in urban sports.

Participation has not been hampered by the under-provision of purpose-built spaces in Glasgow and a number of self-funded, self-built skateparks have emerged on vacant and derelict land across the city and serving increasingly diverse communities.



Skateboarding and BMX activity in Glasgow is widely recognised as a thriving cultural activity. Vacant sites and buildings often present opportunities to create new dedicated urban sports parks that could transform the built environment for urban sports riders, pedestrians, and spectators alike. For example, Glasgow's main indoor venue, the Loading Bay**,** combines skating with other disciplines. Proposals for an outdoor skatepark beneath the M74 on Glasgow's south side are in development, which would animate an underused place close to one of the City's key cycle routes.

Facilities that inspire and can host flagship events that excite new audiences, with the potential outcome that more high-level competing and professional riders emerge, and thus enhance Glasgow's presence on the world stage.

Despite facing significant budget reductions in the past decade, enhancements have been made to Glasgow's sports and open spaces infrastructure in recent years. We need to ensure that the legacy of all major sporting events encourages healthy lifestyles by maintaining and enabling the longevity of these facilities. We will work in partnership to identify new opportunities and maximise usage of what we already have; there is potential to explore previously untapped resources, such as extended school grounds and other open spaces.

Case Study 5

The Loading Bay, Glasgow

Glasgow's first indoor skate park, The Loading Bay, opened in 2019 following a six-year delivery partnership between Vision Ramps and Scottish Canals, with Glasgow City Council acting as primary funder.

Since its inception The Loading Bay has worked closely with multiple partners, including GB Snowsport, Skateboard GB and British Cycling to deliver a world-class facility. In 2023 The Loading Bay will become Skateboard GB's national hub with Scotland's first skateboard professional in post as 'hub lead'.

Located just a short walk from Glasgow city centre, it has become a successful and relevant centre for a diverse range of young people and Glasgow's BMX and skateboarding scenes and attracting 40,000 visitors a year.

The Loading Bay's collaborative education programme delivers approximately 1500 sessions per year through relationships with Glasgow Life and schools and community organisations from across Glasgow.

BMX Freestyle sessions were included within the 10-week Girls programme (see Case Study 6). Rated 'most popular' by Glasgow Life's school age participants, this huge success has prompted development of a wider programme, particularly in the run up to the UCI 2023 Cycling World Championships.



The Loading Bay, Glasgow

Programme

The ‘Programme’ theme is central to this strategy to ensure we support everyone, whether a commuter, recreational rider, a junior starting out on their sporting journey or an elite competitor, to experience the physical and social benefits from participating in cycling or wheeled urban sports: to have fun, improve skills and meet up with like-minded people. Having a good experience and learning appropriate skills will help ensure participation in cycling or wheeled urban sports is sustained, with the potential for people to go on to adopt healthier, more active lifestyles, including active travel.

Programme therefore focuses on delivering activities for different disciplines in the heart of our communities. These will aim to provide opportunities, remove barriers, increase accessibility and foster inclusivity for a larger and more diverse range of people to participate in cycling and wheeled urban sports.

Glasgow Life is a key player within the process of programme delivery in Glasgow, utilising its expertise in sport, culture, community and partnership working to maximise outcomes for the city. It seeks to identify funding opportunities and works with the best-placed partners to ensure delivery of activity on the ground.

The organisation has well-established strong partnerships with strategic-level organisations such as the NHS and sportscotland, the Council’s Education department, and an array of smaller organisations across Glasgow.

Glasgow Life’s cycling programmes prioritise the themes of EDI: Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (see section 2). Recent funding made available through the Go Cycle fund supported 29 projects across Glasgow, delivered by a range of community organisations. The audiences these programmes seek to engage with includes target groups within areas of multiple deprivation, New Scots, Young People, Disabled people, LGBTQ+, and minority ethnic communities. Case study 1 features the Active Life Club based in the south side of Glasgow, one of the successful applicants to the Go Cycle Fund.

Case Study 3 on Pedal at Pollok describes the multi-partner project which was made possible by funding from Glasgow Life with Women on Wheels identified as the best-fit partner organisation to deliver.

Working with Education’s PEPASS (Physical Education, Physical Activity and School Sports) department brings together multiple partners with a focus on increasing cycling within Glasgow’s schools, to complement formal Bikeability Scotland road safety training. Taking place during school holidays and after school hours, activities focus on having fun while developing skills. Teaching young primary children to cycle is a focus so that they can partake in cycle-based activities in the years prior to Bikeability.

Funding opportunities are discussed within the group. Bringing the different partners around the table helps to identify new opportunities and closes knowledge gaps.



Skateboarder in action

Expanding opportunities

Although wheeled urban sports have traditionally grown organically through on street practice and performance, in informal outdoor space, the development of venues such as the Loading Bay is starting to create a new delivery model. As BMX freestyle in particular grows in popularity with children and young people, new programmes can now be offered to school children. The venue offering a dry, warm space to defy the Glasgow climate, with an exciting and adaptable practice zone for delivering training sessions.

The following case study shows how Glasgow Life helped high school girls experience BMX freestyle at the Loading Bay, among other cycle-based activities.

The programme at the Loading Bay is increasing and includes regular term-time weekly sessions for 10-15 young people each session, and led by a diverse coaching group, week-day holiday camps for 30-50 young people, incorporating skateboard, BMX and parkour.

"BMX was the start of my interest in racing and provided the entry point into professional cycle racing, that ultimately led to Olympic medals" **Sir Chris Hoy**

Case Study 6

Active Life Club

The Go Cycle Glasgow fund has helped Active Life Club, based in the city's South Side, to develop a BMX freestyle cycling programme for young people from minority ethnic communities.

The funding has supported the purchase of BMX bikes and equipment, training for staff and volunteers and to provide coaching from fully qualified instructors. The project's BMX activities use public spaces as well as cycling-specific facilities within the city.

The initial 6-month project in 2023 is a foundation for young people to keep freestyle sports a part of their lives beyond the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships, developing creativity, sport, social inclusion and wellbeing through community action.

"Demand has been high so we're continuing to give as many of our service users as possible a chance to try it for themselves. It's really showcased the resilience and bravery of young people to try something difficult and overcome their fears whilst learning and developing quickly. Most importantly, it's making the sport accessible for young people who may otherwise not get to experience it."

Gregor Cree, Active Life Club Project Lead



Malls Mire Pump Track, photo courtesy Active Life Club

4. Delivering the Strategy

This document sets out the vision for supporting and delivering significant increases in cycling and wheeled urban sport in Glasgow during the coming decade. A number of factors need to be aligned – through People, Place and Programme - and undertaken in partnership with others in order to achieve this vision for the city. This strategy pragmatically identifies the challenges facing cycling and urban sports in contemporary Glasgow, whilst outlining the significant potential to unleash new opportunities in the city for all of these sports. It represents a substantial positive shift to how Glasgow City Council approaches cycling and other urban sports in the city.

Partnership delivery

Partnership sits at the core of this activity and actions from other organisations, stakeholders and the community are needed to fully realise the vision. The strategy will serve as a guide for all those involved as the city continues to grow its network of cycling and urban sports facilities, amenities, and programmes.

The strategy will help shape decisions for the development of future facilities to ensure a complete and diverse selection of options that are accessible and equitably distributed. It also begins to identify opportunities to tailor communication, support development, and expand leadership roles.

It seeks to enable a diverse range of opportunities across the city, catering for a wide variety of interests and all ages and abilities. It commits to equity and access; ensuring opportunities are available for all to access facilities, programmes and services regardless of background or location. The Council is committed to making a positive difference to peoples' health and wellbeing, by facilitating opportunities for residents to engage in physical activity via cycling and urban sports.

The successful implementation of this strategy's vision will benefit the community physically, mentally, socially, economically and environmentally. It will uplift Glasgow's reputation further as a global centre of expertise in hosting events and unleash a new cultural vibrancy to the city centred on urban sports.

It is a substantial initiative and forms a considerable positive shift to how Glasgow City Council approaches cycling and urban sports activity in the city. A key element of this document is the innovative incorporation of wheeled urban sports within the programme, formalising these activities and providing the framework for professional pathways alongside the more established opportunities within cycling.

Engagement and Call for Ideas

We want to co-design this strategy and its actions with the cycling and urban sports community. Once finalised, the strategy will be a living document that will be reviewed periodically and updated in line with local priorities and the Council's Strategic Plan.

In this draft strategy, we are suggesting seven initial priority actions to set delivery in motion.

Priority actions

- Integrating the delivery of this new strategy with the development of the forthcoming Glasgow's Sport & Physical Activity Strategy.
- Formalising Skateboard Scotland and Scottish Cycling's remit within Glasgow (and Scotland).
- Advance the creation of a 'Skateboard Lead' role funded by Skateboard Scotland, with a remit to inform local and national policy.
- Taking inspiration from the 2018 Youth Urban Games, and building on the 2023 UCI CWC, to investigate the hosting of a global skate/BMX street event in Glasgow within the next 5 years.
- Develop an urban sports map of Glasgow featuring skate facilities and connecting active travel routes.
- Progressing the development and growth of the city's Community Sport Hubs offering and associated participant communities.
- Continuing to address active travel surfaces to enable all scales of wheels and identify cost-neutral modifications to the material specification of public realm works that might enable increased participation and engagement.



But these actions will only be part of the story. We want to develop ideas collaboratively with all stakeholders and potential participants of cycling and urban sports.

The engagement process for this draft strategy is the opportunity for you to tell us what you think the key strategic actions should be under the three delivery headings of People, Place and Programme, and the role that you can play.

If you'd like to help make the Cycling and Urban Sports Strategy (C&USS) the best it can be, please go to the City Council's online Consultation Hub to complete our survey.