



Annex 2

Cairngorms 2030 Programme Quarter four 2025

Transport theme update

1. Contents and National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) action required.

Project	Action	Page
1. Summary	For information	2
2. Background	For information	3-4
3. Active Communities: Aviemore	For National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) approval – project scope change	4-10
4. Active Communities: Boat of Garten	For information	10
5. Active Communities: Nethybridge	For information	11
6. Active Communities: Newtonmore	For information	12
7. Project update: Hitrans Hi-Bikes partnership with Cycle Friendly Cairngorms project	For information	13-14
8. Budget change request: Sustainable Transport, Cycle Friendly Community and Changing Travel Behaviour projects	For NLHF approval – budget change request	15-17



2. Summary

This paper provides an update on the Cairngorms 2030 (C2030) Transport Theme, outlining proposed refinements to project scope, programme sequencing and budget allocations across the Active Communities and Cycle Friendly Cairngorms workstreams. These changes arise from technical constraints, evolving community aspirations and external delays to key partner funding, all of which have shaped the pace and direction of project development.

Despite these challenges, the Transforming Transport theme remains fully aligned with the approved purposes of NLHF funding. The revised approach continues to deliver sustainable, accessible and community led transport improvements that support behaviour change, inclusion and wellbeing. In Aviemore, the programme will focus on high quality walking, wheeling and public realm enhancements while progressing alternative cycling improvements that better reflect stakeholder feedback and technical feasibility. Complementary cycling investment will be strengthened through the Cycle Friendly Cairngorms project, including a partnership to deliver HiBikes as a visible, climate positive mobility option.

The proposed adjustments improve deliverability, respond directly to community priorities and ensure long term legacy by strengthening partnerships with Transport Scotland, HITRANS and The Highland Council.

Budget changes between transport projects are designed to maximise public benefit, enhance integration and support interventions with the greatest potential to influence modal shift. Taken together, these measures ensure the programme remains coherent, resilient and well positioned to achieve its intended NLHF outcomes.



3. Background

The C2030 Transforming Transport theme is designed to deliver sustainable, accessible and community led transport improvements within and between the National Park's settlements.

Delivering this theme has required careful navigation of a complex operating environment. External funding delays and evolving community aspirations have all influenced the pace and nature of project development. Throughout this period, our priority has been to ensure that the programme remains deliverable, locally supported and aligned with the approved purposes of NLHF funding.

Following extensive engagement and detailed technical advice, the main Active Communities programme has focused its investment in Aviemore, where the opportunity for transformational impact is greatest. This includes the core movement corridor linking Aviemore town centre with neighbourhoods, holiday accommodation, schools, the hospital, community facilities and key amenities. Within this area we remain committed to improving access for people walking and using wheelchairs, enhancing public transport infrastructure, and expanding cycling opportunities in ways that are deliverable, safe and supported by the community.

Recent design work and community feedback have highlighted a clear preference to prioritise improvements to pavements, crossings and accessible public realm along Grampian Road, rather than pursuing a segregated cycle track that has been shown to be technically impractical and not supported by local stakeholders.

This adjustment does not change the ambition of the programme. Instead, it refines the delivery approach to ensure the project remains viable and genuinely reflective of community needs. The proposed shift will enable high quality walking and wheelchair improvements that meet NLHF outcomes around inclusion, wellbeing and access to nature, while avoiding design solutions that present unresolvable safety or engineering constraints.



At the same time, the programme maintains a strong commitment to cycling. Complementary investment in community cycle fleets, secure storage, e-bike charging, tool stations and cycle parking will be progressed through the Cycle Friendly Cairngorms project. To support this expansion, we propose reallocating budget from the wider sustainable transport workstream into targeted cycling infrastructure that can be delivered effectively within the programme timeframe.

Taken together, these adjustments ensure that the Transforming Transport theme remains fully aligned with its approved NLHF purpose. They strengthen deliverability, respond to community priorities and ensure that Aviemore continues to act as a hub demonstrating what a more active, accessible and climate positive Cairngorms can look like.

4. Active Communities: Aviemore

This update covers project scope and rationale for change to the scheme based on what the project steering group approved following stakeholder engagement activity,

The Active communities steering group agreed to remove the cycle path from the Aviemore concept design, and proceed with a project which instead focuses on walking and wheelchair provision by:

1. Widening and improving the existing pavement.
2. Focusing on public realm enhancement.
3. Focusing on bus stop integration.
4. Providing a shared use path adjacent to Grampian (North of Dalfaber Drive only).
5. Road to enhance a short stretch of Speyside Way which plugs a gap between further built-up area route developments and the start point of the Aviemore to Carrbridge non-motorised user route that Transport Scotland will deliver via the A9 dualling programme.
6. Introducing additional traffic calming measures on the main carriageway
7. Developing an alternative cycle friendly route on Dalfaber Road.



4.1 Rationale for change

4.1.1 Technical

Review of the concept design against the topographical survey shows unequivocally that there is not enough space for a bidirectional cycle path without substantial land take, mature tree removal, and carriageway realignment. Such significant considerations will not be achievable within the life of the programme, but the findings will inform future road corridor improvement plans and will be passed to the Highland Council for future capital investment consideration.

4.1.2 Community feedback

Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council (AVCC) do not support designs which include a segregated cycle path on Grampian Road.

Recent consultation with the AVCC provides clear and constructive feedback that supports refinement of the Active Communities proposals while maintaining alignment with the approved NLHF purposes. The AVCC supports the programme's overall principles and welcomes improvements to walking, wheeling and signage. However, they have expressed significant concerns regarding the proposed segregated cycle track along Grampian Road and Dalfaber Drive. Their view is that this design is not practical or safe within the existing built environment, creates multiple conflict points with side roads, would not offer a meaningful improvement for cyclists, and would result in a loss of valued green space.

The AVCC strongly supports investment in cycling but recommends that resources are focused on more effective and deliverable routes. They identify opportunities to enhance cycling through Old Dalfaber Road, the Dalnabay and Silverglades area, and the parallel Speyside Way path, which they consider a low-cost quick win that better meets user needs.

Feedback also highlights opportunities to strengthen public transport provision, particularly through improved bus stop locations and consideration of a north Aviemore hub, which would increase access for residents. Additional comments support proposed



traffic calming, pedestrian crossings and improvements to accessible green routes such as the Speyside Way.

The consultation demonstrates strong support for the overarching goals of Active Communities while providing clear evidence that adaptations to route alignment and design will ensure the project is deliverable, locally supported and maintains the NLHF outcome of creating safer, more inclusive, more attractive active travel environments.

These insights directly inform the proposed project change and ensure continued alignment with the approved funding purposes.

4.1.3 Cycle provision

It is important to emphasise that the removal of the cycle path from the C2030 Grampian Road designs does not represent a reduction in ambition set out in the NLHF funding application.

Our commitment to delivering meaningful improvements for cyclists in Aviemore remains unchanged.

We will continue to progress enhanced cycling provision by focusing on the alternative route into the centre of Aviemore that uses Dalfaber Road and the National Cycle Network. This corridor offers a largely traffic free option that can take people from the Dalfaber Drive and Dalnabay areas into the village centre quickly, comfortably and safely. Improving this route allows us to deliver the same strategic benefit for cyclists that was envisioned in the original proposal; while responding to community feedback, technical constraints and the opportunities identified during design development.

To advance this work, we will progress project proposals and funding applications with relevant stakeholders and partners. These improvements will be fully integrated with the wider Aviemore project and will follow the same programme aims, with a view to delivery by the end of December 2028 or, if necessary, as a continued Park Authority commitment as part of C2030 legacy.



Through this approach we ensure that the original ambitions for more accessible and attractive cycling routes in Aviemore are maintained, and that the project continues to deliver the outcomes and benefits set out in the NLHF application.

4.1.4 Key risks

The highest risk remains lack of Transport Scotland or other funding continuity and availability in or across project years at the end of each financial year. Causes include Government budget delays having a knock-on impact on Government agency budgets (such as Transport Scotland), further funder decision making (such as Transport Scotland internal awarding process). The impact of this is that there is a risk to contract continuity, where if the ability to issue a “notice to proceed” to Stage 4 is delayed, the contract may expire. We are seeking to mitigate this risk as described in this paper.

4.1.5 Transport Scotland feedback and award timescale

Progress on the project has been affected by external funding timelines, particularly the two-year delay to initial Transport Scotland allocations. As a result, we were given an accelerated six-month window in which to complete the Concept Design (Stage 3). Despite this challenge, the team successfully delivered this stage on schedule and to the required standard.

We are now nearing the end of the current phase of funded design work with a clear understanding of the activity required and a refined programme that prioritises critical-path activities.

To mitigate the impact of the earlier delays, we have adopted a proactive and precautionary approach to managing the Transport Scotland annual grant. Because Transport Scotland funding is strictly annual and cannot be carried forward, our initial schedule deliberately included all potential activities that might be required, pending the outcomes of statutory processes. As the project has progressed, we have been able to confirm which of these activities are essential and which are not. This allows us to safely relinquish a proportion of the 2025/26 allocation and demonstrate responsible, transparent financial management.



Working closely with our technical consultants, Mott MacDonald, we are currently finalising formal adjustments to the activity schedule. These changes relocate noncritical path tasks into the next financial year, ensuring that resources are focused on design delivery, planning applications, and community engagement all of which sit on the critical path to construction. This refinement strengthens our ability to meet the December 2028 construction commencement deadline while prioritising programme certainty.

We also continue to manage the known risks associated with Transport Scotland's annual funding cycle. Funding applications for 2026/27 were submitted in January 2026, and we anticipate that any award will be delayed by required Scottish Government (SG) and Transport Scotland approvals and governance, the timetable for which may be extended because of the May 2026 Scottish Parliament elections and pre-election period.

Based on guidance from Transport Scotland, we expect confirmation in late Q1 or Q2 (June to August 2026). To mitigate the risk of discontinuous funding, we have adopted an anticipatory planning approach: Transport Scotland receives monthly updates, in both meetings and written progress reports, outlining our expected financial requirements for future years. This ensures they have visibility of upcoming commitments well in advance and enables them to support smoother annual approvals. The Park Authority, as accountable body for the C2030 programme, has also made financial provisions and risk mitigation to allow the project delivery to continue with minimal delays associated with financial decisions.

Through these measures of programme refinement, concentrated focus on critical path delivery, transparent financial management, and continuous engagement with Transport Scotland we are actively managing the residual risk associated with the compressed design window.

We remain confident that, with partners fully informed and aligned, the project can progress at pace and maintain its trajectory toward meeting the planned construction phase timeline.



4.1.6 Change of scope to NLHF application

Although there is a change of scope for cycling provision, the revised ambition will still deliver the aims and vision of the C2030 transport theme. We are recognising the community view and the practical findings of design work on the original proposals while proposing alternative, and potentially better quality, investment for cycling. The updated approach provides an enhanced route primarily for walking and wheelchair use, addressing barriers to free movement and making the journey to town easier, quicker and more enjoyable for residents and visitors alike.

We are also deeply embedding heritage aspects into the design throughout, and the attached early draft design options (Annex 1) demonstrates the potential for transformative change. The design will also propose on-carriageway changes to reduce traffic speeds and increase safety for on-road cycling.

4.1.7 Delivery timeline

Milestone	Estimated date of completion
Plans on basis that we will receive Transport Scotland (TS) funding in August. Dependent milestones marked with a *	
Aviemore	
First draft of Stage 3: Developed designs.	February 2026
Project publicised, and community engagement activities, both online and in-person, undertaken.	March 2026
Completion of Stage 3: Developed design package including completion of Stage 3 technical surveys and impact assessments.	March 2026
Statutory permissions applications submitted.	May 2026
First draft of Stage 4: Technical design package complete.	September 2026
Completion of Stage 4: Technical design package ready for tender.	March 2027

Design work in Aviemore is underway, several technical deliverables have already been received, and substantial engagement was carried out over December and ongoing into February.

It is necessary to remove, retain and move selected activities to Stage 4 for completion beyond April 2026. These relate to statutory permissions. We do also have Highland



Council commitment to allocate Project Design Unit time to the project, which will substantially expedite design delivery by allowing ongoing steer on Highland Council's own design requirements.

We are considering strategically extending the contract for Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 3 for Aviemore to allow further options appraisal of a small area of underutilised land which requires landowner and solicitor input, and which also acts as a “bridge” in the contract.

5. Active Communities: Boat of Garten

Boat of Garten's project design work has been developed considering contributions from the community at local stakeholder events.

Support for improvements to walking and wheelchair infrastructure have been generally supported with mixed feedback being received on the proposed central crossing and its impact on parking.

The development of designs will see a successful project being constructed, of which The Highland council have agreed to adopt the role of client and lead construction.

As previously, we are programmed to substantially complete RIBA Stage 3 developed design for Boat of Garten by the end of March.

5.1 Delivery timeline

Milestone	Estimated date of completion
Plans on basis that we will receive Transport Scotland (TS) funding in August. Dependent milestones marked with a *	
Boat of Garten	
Project publicised, and community engagement activities, both online and in-person, undertaken.	January 2026
First draft of Stage 3: Developed designs.	February 2026
Completion of Stage 3: Developed design package including completion of Stage 3 technical surveys and impact assessments.	March 2026
First draft of Stage 4: Technical design package complete.	September 2026



Completion of Stage 4: Technical design package ready for tender.	October 2026
Facilitate handover to Highland Council for construction	December 2026

6. Active Communities: Nethybridge

Nethy Bridge design work has been agreed as a contract extension and selected Stage 3 deliverables underway for completion by the end of March, with the inception meeting for this held on 28 January.

The submission is in line with our available budget. It will progress specific elements to Stage 3 but public consultation will progress after March. We will expect General Arrangement drawings and key cross sections (indicative) with initial placemaking proposals.

6.1 Delivery timeline

Milestone	Estimated date of completion
Plans on basis that we will receive Transport Scotland (TS) funding in August. Dependent milestones marked with a *	
Nethy Bridge	
Agree scope of work for Stages 3 and 4 and extend existing contract.	January 2026
Apply for Stage 3 and 4 funding for 26/27.	January 2026
Consultant review of Stage 1 and 2 work. Site visit undertaken. Inception meetings with Park Authority teams undertaken. Pre-planning advice initial meeting undertaken with The Highland Council. Statutory permissions requirements confirmed with The Highland Council. Equality Impact Assessment updated.	March 2026
First draft of Stage 3: Developed designs. Completion of impact assessments with recommendations made to mitigate any risks or issues arising.	September 2026
Project publicised, and community engagement activities, both online and in-person, undertaken. Community feedback compiled and accounted for in a further draft of Stage 3: Developed designs. Design-related actions defined in equality impact assessment incorporated into design.	October 2026



Completion of Stage 3: Developed design package including completion of Stage 3 technical surveys and impact assessments, Stage 4-5 programme and budget; including initial Bill of Quantities.	December 2026
First draft of Stage 4: Technical design package complete.	March 2027

7. Active Communities: Newtonmore

As with Nethy Bridge, design work has been agreed as a contract extension, and selected deliverables are underway.

This project is on the trunk road, a Transport Scotland asset, and outwith Highland Council's remit.

Transport Scotland has indicated that they will not act as client for construction and therefore require us to act as a third-party developer. This would require a full permissions process and minute of agreement between the Park Authority and Transport Scotland.

The main barrier to delivery by 2028 may therefore be internal capacity to manage the construction phase. We anticipated this possibility from the outset and mitigated this by including an opportunity for contract extension for the current consultants to manage the construction phase on our behalf, pending their own capacity. Procurement regulations indicate this extension would need to be offered within three years of the conclusion of the initial contract.

7.1 Delivery timeline

Milestone	Estimated date of completion
Plans on basis that we will receive Transport Scotland (TS) funding in August. Dependent milestones marked with a *	
Newtonmore	
Agree scope of work for Stages 3 and 4 and extend existing contract.	January 2026
Apply for Stage 3 and 4 funding for 26/27.	January 2026



Consultant review of Stage 1 and 2 work, including site visit and inception meetings.	March 2026
First draft of Stage 3: Developed designs.	September 2026
Project publicised, and community engagement activities, both online and in-person, undertaken. Community feedback compiled and accounted for in a further draft of Stage 3: Developed designs. Design-related actions defined in equality impact assessment incorporated into design.	October 2026
Completion of Stage 3: Developed design package including completion of Stage 3 technical surveys and impact assessments, Stage 4-5 programme and budget; including initial Bill of Quantities.	December 2026
First draft of Stage 4: Technical design package complete.	March 2027
Determination of requirements to act as client for construction or alternative, such as employing a construction phase manager.	June 2026

8. Project update: Hitrans Hi-Bikes partnership with Cycle Friendly

Cairngorms project

The C2030 programme is developing a partnership with HITRANS Regional Transport Partnership to install [HiBikes](#) in Aviemore as a key step toward delivering the programme's vision of a greener, healthier and more connected National Park.

Introducing an expanded HiBikes scheme directly supports the programme's commitments to reduce transport emissions, encourage active travel, and create more sustainable ways for people to move around the National Park.

Aviemore is one of the busiest settlements in the National Park and a key gateway for visitors. Providing high quality, accessible ebike share options in such a high demand location can play a meaningful role in reducing the reliance on private car travel for short everyday trips, tourism journeys, and 'last mile' connections to public transport hubs.

The proposal aligns well with national policy drivers, including the SG's commitment to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030, its Vision for Active Travel, and Scotland's Climate Change Plan targets. By working with HITRANS—an established transport



authority with operational experience in ebike schemes, the C2030 programme will draw on existing expertise, procurement frameworks and digital infrastructure, including access to a booking system already developed by HITRANS. This not only avoids the need to create a new system, but also ensures that a maintained, long-term solution remains in place once C2030 is complete. It also delivers a solution that meets national expectations for integrated, low-carbon travel systems.

There are clear and immediate benefits for the community. A publicly accessible e-bike network expands mobility options for residents who may not own a bike, have limited access to a car, or face affordability barriers. It supports young people, seasonal workers, and those living in areas with limited public transport provision. For visitors, HiBikes offer a convenient and environmentally responsible way to explore the village, access trailheads, and connect with attractions without adding to traffic, congestion, or parking pressures.

From a modal-shift perspective, e-bikes are proven to replace short car journeys, especially in rural and semi-rural communities where distances and gradients can be a barrier to active travel. Installing HiBikes in Aviemore would create a highly visible, practical alternative that normalises low-carbon mobility and encourages behaviour change at scale, an essential component of C2030's aims.

Looking longer term, an Aviemore HiBikes hub provides a stepping-stone toward a Badenoch and Strathspey wide network, enabling future expansion to other settlements and creating seamless, integrated mobility options across the Cairngorms.

The legacy opportunity is significant: a recognisable active-travel system that supports community wellbeing, reduces emissions, strengthens sustainable tourism, and positions the Park as a national exemplar in delivering climate-positive rural transport solutions.

The project details, Project Initiation Document (PID) and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) are currently being negotiated with HITRANS and Transport Scotland has confirmed it is willing to contribute and additional £95,000 match funding to support the proposal.



9. Budget change request

9.1 Sustainable Transport to Cycle Friendly Cairngorms

To further support the Hi-bikes initiative we propose to reallocate budget between two component transport projects to strengthen the delivery and long-term impact of the C2030 transport theme.

We seek approval to reduce the Sustainable Transport budget from £439,800 to £311,900 while still enabling delivery of priority elements such as the mobility hub in Ballater and improved bus shelters along the Glenmore Corridor and in Aviemore. This more focused approach reflects a move away from discretionary consultant designed shelter upgrades and toward investment in visible and widely accessible assets, including the on-street e-bike fleet, which offers a stronger return on investment for both communities and the wider programme.

The budget of £127,900 will be moved from the unviable Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) project proposal within the Sustainable Transport workstream to the Cycle Friendly Cairngorms and Changing Travel Behaviour projects.

The DRT proposal failed to attract a delivery partner and support from the local authority and regional transport partnership.

This reallocation will deliver clearer public benefit, stronger outcomes, and greater long-term value. This change ensures that NLHF funding supports interventions with the greatest potential to encourage travel behaviour change and improve sustainable access for residents and visitors.

By realigning budgets, the two transport projects are now better connected and more clearly positioned to deliver a coherent set of active travel improvements. The revised approach ensures sufficient resource for a fully supported on street e-bike facility, complemented by charging points, cycle storage, parking and tool stations.



Concentrating these improvements within Aviemore creates a more attractive and user-friendly active travel environment in a key hub community, supporting modal shift and enabling a more inclusive and accessible transport network.

Importantly, this change strengthens our partnership model. It introduces an additional long term delivery partner to the transport theme and deepens collaboration with The Highland Council. This broader partnership base brings the specialist expertise required to support high quality implementation, ensures stewardship of assets beyond 2028, and helps secure the long-term legacy investment.

This budget change proposal is a strategic realignment that delivers added value, enhances interconnectivity across projects, and ensures that the C2030 programme is better equipped to deliver sustainable, inclusive, and lasting benefits for people, place and heritage.

9.2 Change to budget allocation in Cycle Friendly Cairngorms and Changing Travel Behaviour projects

Elements of the Changing Travel Behaviour activity are integral to the successful delivery of the Cycle Friendly Cairngorms project, particularly in supporting cycle confidence and behaviour change within communities directly served by the new cycle hubs in Deeside and Badenoch and Strathspey.

Both projects have initiated cycle behaviour change activities, and it was identified that separate contracts from each of the two projects had gone to the same contractor, to deliver separate sessions (but in some instances at different times in the same day).

From a delivery and monitoring point of view these continue to be separate activities, but it was agreed that managing these activities within a separate project workstream created a risk of duplication, confusion over responsibilities and reduced delivery efficiency.

To support clearer accountability and more effective delivery, it has therefore been agreed that responsibility for this behaviour change activities will transfer to the Changing Travel Behaviour project. This reflects that the Project Lead for Changing



Travel Behaviour is best placed to plan and deliver these activities using existing skills, experience and delivery mechanisms.

This change does not alter the overall programme outcomes or approved NLHF purposes. Instead, it supports improved delivery by aligning responsibility for activity with the Project Lead best placed to deliver it, improving clarity of roles and responsibilities, reducing management complexity and increasing confidence that activity will be delivered effectively and to the required standard.

9.3 Budget changes

Summary of budget changes as follows:

Changing travel behaviours	20	Receiving	41,982
Cycle friendly Cairngorms	17	Receiving	85,918
Sustainable travel	19	Giving	-127,900

Full details are given in [C2030 Budget Change Requests.xlsx](#)