Midlothian Local Transport Strategy

On behalf of **Midlothian Council**

Midlothian

Project Ref: 332610018| Rev: 03 | Date: May 2025

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Document Control Sheet

Project Name: **Midlothian Local Transport Strategy**

Project Ref: **332610018**

Report Title: **Midlothian Local Transport Strategy: Working Draft**

Doc Ref: **v3.0**

Date: **May 2025**

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Revision	Date	Description	Prepared	Reviewed	Approved
v2.0	09/01/2025	Update following comments	RMT	RMT	SL
v3.0	28/05/2025	Update following comments	RMT	RMT	SL

Contents

Figures

Tables

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the LTS

1.1.1 **This Local Transport Strategy (LTS) provides a framework for the delivery of transport improvements in Midlothian over the next 10-year period (2025-2035).**

1.1.2 **Midlothian is the fastest growing local authority in Scotland**, with the number of homes in set to increase by approximately 29% by 2037. This rate of increase will have significant implications for transport demand and presents a significant challenge in terms of transport delivery.

1.1.3 While an LTS is not a statutory requirement, given this extraordinary rate of growth, it is recognised that there is a need for an overarching long-term framework to guide future transport decision making and investment. This document provides this framework, setting out a comprehensive picture of our approach to transport delivery and identifying our key priorities for change over the coming decade.

1.1.4 The LTS has been developed in line with Transport Scotland's Local Transport Strategy Guidance and the revised (2022) Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) . In 2024/25, we consulted on a draft **Stage 1 and 2 Technical Report (Case for Change)** seeking local views on the transport problems which should be considered in the LTS and the Outcomes the LTS is seeking to achieve. **We then carried out an options generation and appraisal** exercise, to test a range of options that could address the transport problems and achieve the Outcomes. The findings from these two stages have been incorporated into this LTS document. A **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)** undertaken as part of the LTS development process accompany this document.

1.2 Structure of the LTS

1.2.1 The remainder of the LTS is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** sets out the policy, demographic, socio-economic and development context in Midlothian
- **Chapter 3** provides an overview of our transport network and summarises the main transport problems, drawing on the Stage 1 and 2 Technical Report (Case for Change)
- **Chapter 4** sets out our LTS Vision and Strategy Outcomes
- **Chapters 5 to 13** sets out a narrative covering different aspects of transport and an accompanying set of Policies which we will be pursue over the lifetime of the LTS
- **Chapter 14** sets out our 10 Priorities for Change and outlines our emerging spatial strategy
- **Chapter 15** outlines how we will monitor the performance of our LTS and evaluate its success

2 Policy and Socio-economic Context

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 This chapter sets out the policy context in which this LTS has been delivered and provides a summary of the demographic and socio-economic profile of Midlothian in 2024 and a snapshot of the scale of future development and change underway.

2.2 Policy Context

2.2.1 To inform the LTS a review of national, regional, and local policy was undertaken. A summary of the key documents explored in this review is provided in Figures 2-1 and 2-2.

2.2.2 A number of themes can be identified in this wider policy which are relevant to and have informed the development of this LTS, including:

- reducing transport-based carbon emissions
- supporting health and wellbeing
- reducing the need to make unsustainable journeys, reducing unnecessary car use, and prioritising investment in active travel and public transport
- supporting the vibrancy of town centres
- developing liveable communities from which it is possible to reach employment, education, key services, greenspace, and leisure opportunities via active travel or public transport modes
- improving safety on the transport network
- encouraging the transition to low and zero emission vehicles
- making better use of existing infrastructure and transport assets
- ensuring the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive
- supporting access for all in our society in line with our requirements under the Equalities Act
- supporting economic growth, including through increasing economic participation and building on the growth of our sectors

2.2.3 Several specific transboundary projects with relevance to Midlothian are also identified in the wider literature. These include:

- **an Edinburgh and South East Scotland Mass Transit system, linking tram and bus based transit modes, and possibly including bus rapid transit (BRT)** – this is identified in the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) and National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and is intended to improve region wide connectivity by providing more options for cross boundary travel.
- **cross-boundary active travel links** – this is referenced in STPR2, NP4F, and the SEStran Regional Transport Strategy.

2.2.4 Improving transboundary transport connections will require collaborative work with regional partnerships and neighbouring councils to ensure transport delivery is fully co-ordinated.

National Policy

National Transport Strategy 2 (2020)

NTS2 sets out the overarching strategy for transport in Scotland until 2040. The document includes the following 'Vision': "We will have a sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system, helping deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors" and contains four 'priorities': reduce inequalities, take climate action, help deliver inclusive economic growth, and improve our health and wellbeing. NTS2 also established the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy (which prioritises active travel and accessible public transport ahead of car travel) and the Sustainable Investment Hierarchy (which prioritises reducing the need to travel unsustainably, maintaining and safely operating existing assets; and making better use of existing capacity ahead of targeted infrastructure improvements).

Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (2022)

The Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) sets out the Scottish Government's transport investment programme over the 20-year period to 2042, detailing how the government will deliver the Vision, Priorities and Outcomes of NTS2. STPR2 includes the recommendation to develop and Edinburgh and South East Mass Transit system, potentially comprising tram and bus-based transit modes including bus rapid transit (BRT) and bus priority measures. It also includes a wide range of more general recommendations including the development of a network of active freeways and active connections; connected neighbourhoods; expansion of 20mph limits; improved integration; integrated ticketing; decarbonisation of rail and bus; and zero emission vehicle transition.

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 and Climate Change Plan Update (2019)

The Scottish Government made a legally binding commitment to deliver net-zero carbon emissions by 2045. The Climate Change Plan Update also included a commitment to phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans and phase out the need for all new petrol and diesel vehicles in Scotland's public sector fleet by 2030.

National Planning Framework 4

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) sets out proposed priorities / policies for the planning system to 2045. The Spatial Principles are a just transition; conserving / recycling assets; living locally; compact urban growth; rebalanced development and rural revitalisation. NPF42 sets out the minimum level of housing to be provided in each local authority (the 'MATHLR') and identifies national developments, including a mass / rapid transit system for south east Scotland, a National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network, and a Central Scotland Green network.

Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030 (2021)

The Road Safety Framework published by Transport Scotland sets out a Vision for Scotland to have the best road safety performance in the world by 2030 and a long-term goal where no one is seriously injured or killed on our roads by 2050 as well as a number of interim targets including the number of people being killed or seriously injured on our roads will be halved by 2030.

Sustainable Travel to Stations (2023)

Sustainable Travel to Stations was produced by Scotland's Railways. It sets out an overarching aim to carry twice as many customers on our railways compared to pre-pandemic by 2035 equating to at least 19 m passenger journeys. Achieving this would involve a major shift to rail, requiring an increase in passenger journeys of 126 m from the 64 m carried in 2022/23.

Figure 2-1: Key national level policy documents which have informed this Local Transport Strategy

Regional Policy

SEStran 2035 Regional Transport Strategy (2023)

The SEStran Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) sets out the framework for the development of transport at the south-east Scotland regional level and mirrors the focus of the national level documents. It has four Strategy Objectives: transitioning to a sustainable, post-carbon transport system; facilitating healthier travel options; widening public transport connectivity and access; and supporting safe, sustainable and efficient movement of people and freight. The RTS includes a number of Regional Mobility Themes including shaping development and place; enhancing access to and accessibility of public transport; reallocating road-space on the regional and local network; delivering seamless multi-modal journey; decarbonising transport; reducing car kilometres; and enhancing and extending bus and rail services.

Local Policy

Midlothian Local Development Plan (2017) and Midlothian Local Development Plan 2

Our LDP sets out how we will deliver development in Midlothian. Our current LDP was produced in 2017, and we are currently preparing a new LDP which will reflect the principles of NPF4 and set out where the MATHLR for Midlothian identified in NPF4 will take place. MLDP2 is anticipated to be adopted in 2027 and will cover 2027 to 2037. This LTS has been developed in line with the principles of NPF4 and the emerging priorities of MLDP2.

Midlothian Public Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy

Our Public EV Charging Strategy will set out how public EV charging facilities in Midlothian will be developed. To support a just transition, the strategy will focus on ensuring there is sufficient charging facilities for those without access to home charging and that there is an equitable geographical spread of chargers across Midlothian.

On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone: 2024-2034 (2024)

Our Midlothian Active Travel Strategy sets out a ten-year plan for the development of active travel and has three key aims: expand the active travel network and improve accessibility, safety, connectivity, and maintenance; promote and enable behaviour change towards active travel uptake; and provide transparent monitoring of the delivery of all projects.

Single Midlothian Plan 2023-2027 (2023)

The Single Midlothian Plan is produced by the Midlothian Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) and sets out a shared plan to improve the lives of local people. Objectives include make Midlothian greener,; improve health and wellbeing; reduce poverty; and make progress towards net zero. Actions include **promoting active travel**; identifying opportunities for bike hire; increasing mobility hubs / multi-modal journeys; and establishing a shared transport scheme.

The Midlothian Strategy for Inclusive Economic Growth (2025-2030)

Our Strategy for Growth sets out strategy for inclusive growth, our economic development vision and key priorities. The Strategy includes six Priorities including developing Midlothian's proposition in the South East region enhancing skills and employability opportunities, supporting a Just Transition, embedding community wealth, re-imagining our town centres, and delivering infrastructure enhancements to support Midlothian's transition to a Wellbeing Economy.

Figure 2-2: Key Regional and Local Policy Documents which have informed this Local Transport Strategy

2.3 Demographic and Socio-economic Profile of Midlothian

- Midlothian is **strategically located** immediately south of the City of Edinburgh. In 2024, the estimated population was 98,260[1]. The majority of our **population is concentrated in the north**, with Bonnyrigg, Penicuik, and Dalkeith (the county town) together accounting for over 50% of the total population. The south of Midlothian is rural in nature with a lower population density which presents some additional challenges in terms of transport provision. To the north of the Edinburgh City Bypass, a new town, Shawfair, is currently being developed alongside Danderhall and Millerhill with 4,000 new homes planned as well as business / industrial units and leisure facilities.

- Employment is concentrated in the north, with a particular focus around the **Midlothian Science Zone (MSZ)** and **Straiton Retail Park**. MSZ is a world-leading centre for research in animal science and food security and is home to the University of Edinburgh Easter Bush Campus. Our strategic location and proximity to Edinburgh is a major draw for inward investment and business sectors and key growth areas **include food and drink, retail, business services, and tourism as well as energy (including renewables), life sciences, and the space industry**.

- The rate of growth in Midlothian is sustained. The population grew by an estimated 16% between 2011 and 2022, faster than any other local authority and considerably higher than the 3% growth seen at the Scottish level. The growth in population is reflected in **significant housing development** in the recent period, with new build completion rates in Midlothian consistently higher than other local authority areas on a per capita basis.

- **Our population is projected to further increase**, with National Records of Scotland (NRS) projections estimating a substantial growth of 31% between 2018 and 2043 – the highest figure of any local authority in Scotland. This increase will provide new **opportunities for growth and development** and bring **significant opportunities for inward investment** as well as greater potential for a more commercially viable public transport network. However, it will also place increased demand on our transport network, with potential for more acute capacity constraints and connectivity problems.

- Available projections suggest that, as the population grows, our current demographic profile – which includes a **high proportion of people in the youngest (15 and below) and oldest age categories (65 and above)** - will become more pronounced. This profile results in a high dependency ratio[2] and has the potential to create particular pressures on services such as public transport. Given the relationship between old age and health issues, our growing older demographic highlights an increasing need to ensure public transport is accessible to the widest range of users.

- A large proportion of our residents own a car, with just 8% of households without access to a vehicle. This compares to 20% at the Scottish level, 10% in East Lothian and 15% in West Lothian. We also have amongst the highest number of households with access to two vehicles. This reflects a high degree of **car dependence** and underlines a particular challenge for the LTS given the prevailing national policy context which is focused on reducing car dependency.

- Despite changes in travel since COVID-19 (a reflection of increased home-working), a high proportion of our residents still **travel outside of Midlothian for work** at least for some of their working week. Out commuting is significant, with our workforce larger than

[1] National Records of Scotland Mid-Year Population Estimates most recent data suggest the population was in 2023. This is now estimated by the Council to be approximately 98,600.

[2] The dependency ratio is the ratio between the number of dependents (those aged 15 and under and 65 and over) and the working age population (aged 15-64). Where the dependency ratio is large, it indicates that the working population faces a greater burden supporting the dependent population.

the number of jobs available in Midlothian.[3] A large proportion of **people travel into the city of Edinburgh**. There are also flows through Midlothian to the capital from the Scottish Borders. Available data, while limited, suggests that a high proportion of trips to locations outside of Midlothian are currently made by car, with peak time congestion into and out of Edinburgh a key issue, now more so Tuesday-Thursday.

2.4 Future Development

2.4.1 As noted in Chapter 1, Midlothian is the fastest growing local authority in Scotland with the number of houses set to increase significantly over the lifetime of this strategy. The level and the location of both new housing and employment land will have important implications on travel patterns. This section discusses the quantum and potential locations of the development which will be delivered over the lifetime of this LTS.

Housing Development

2.4.2 NPF4 sets out the minimum number of housing units to be provided (known as the minimum all-tenure housing land requirement or MATHLR) in each planning authority in Scotland. The MATHLR is designed to run concurrently with the lifespan of each planning authority's new LDP and is a minimum value with the new LDPs required to set out a Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR) (the total amount of land needed for housing) which exceeds the MATHLR.

2.4.3 As shown in Table 3-2, as a proportion of existing dwellings, **the MATHLR for Midlothian is considerably higher than that of all other local authorities in the SEStran region, equating to a 20% increase in the number of homes from 2022 levels.**

2.4.4 Midlothian's next local development plan, Midlothian Local Development Plan 2 (MLDP2), is timetabled for adoption in 2027 and will cover the 10-year period following its adoption (i.e. 2027-2037). The LHLR for MLDP2 is 8,851 homes. MLDP2 will therefore need to identify land capable of delivering 8,851 homes during its 10-year lifespan.

Table 2-1: Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement for Midlothian and the other local authorities in the SEStran region (Source National Planning Framework 4)

Local authority	MATHLR	Total dwellings (2022)	MATHLR as a percentage of 2022 dwellings
City of Edinburgh	36,750	261,000	14%
East Lothian	6,500	51,409	13%
Fife	7,300	181,405	4%
Midlothian	8,850	43,213	20%
Scottish Borders	4,800	59,557	8%
West Lothian	9,850	83,624	12%

2.4.5 Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2026, there are projected to have been approximately 3,500 new housing completions. This is separate to and is not included within the 8,851-unit LHLR for MLDP2. In total, when taking into account the sites to be delivered prior to adoption of MLDP2 and those which need to be delivered over the 10-year LDP period to achieve the LHLR, **Midlothian will therefore see a minimum growth in housing units of almost 12,500 (nearly 29% of the total dwellings in Midlothian in 2022) by 2037.**

[3] The most recent jobs density data (2021) which suggests a job density figure of 0.64 – i.e., there are 0.64 jobs in Midlothian for every Midlothian resident of employment age, so fewer jobs than people. This implies that the place of employment for a proportion of workers is based outside of the local authority area.

Where will new housing development go?

2.4.6 The large majority of the LHLR for MLDP2 is already identified in the 2024 Midlothian Housing Land Audit (HLA)[4]. The location of the sites identified in the HLA is shown in Figure 5-1, with concentrations around Shawfair and on the outskirts of our existing settlements in the north of the local authority area. By 1 April 2026, following estimated completion of new housing, the 2024 HLA projects an effective housing land supply of 8,008 units and an effective housing supply of 7,271 by 1 April 2027. These later figures exclude the further 1,080 of constrained units[5] and 600 of long-term safeguarded units[6].

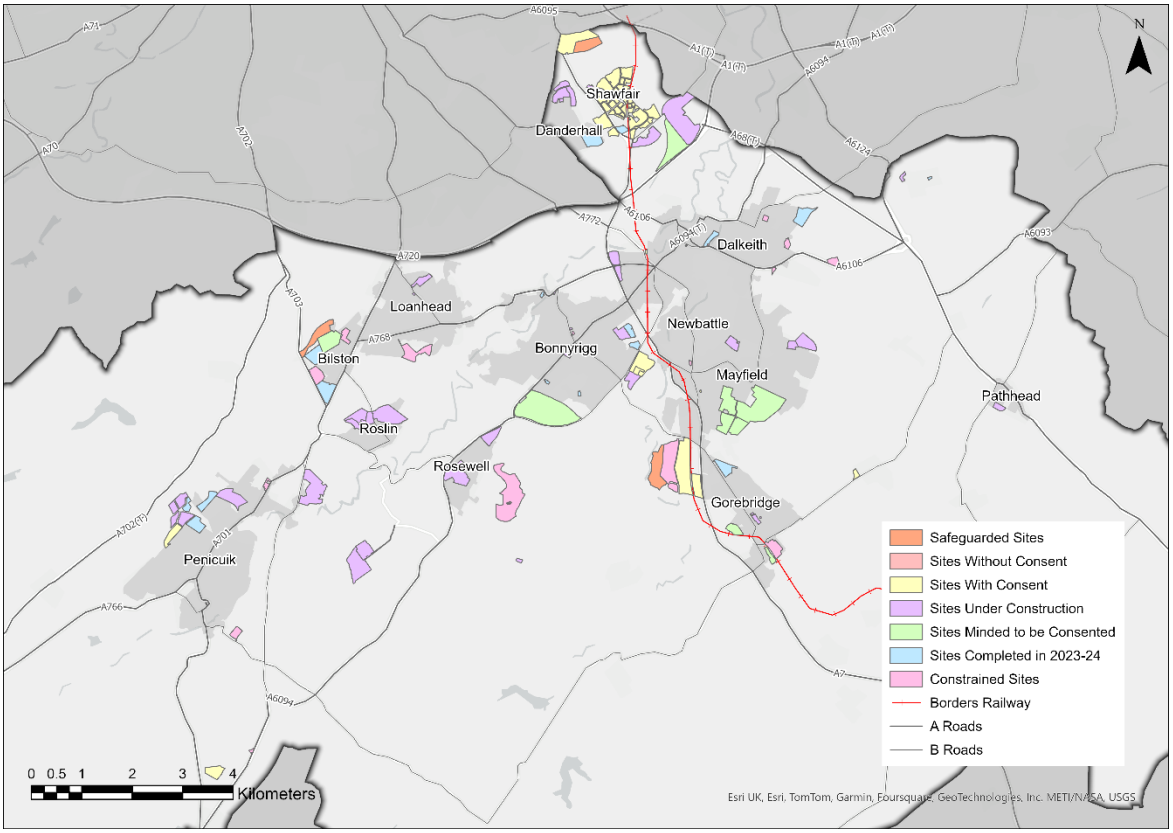


Figure 5-3: Location of Midlothian's housing sites (Source: Midlothian Housing Land Audit 2024)

2.4.7 Due to the shortage of brownfield land in Midlothian, the majority of the sites are on greenfield locations, with greenfield sites accounting for 62 of the 85 sites (73%) and 90% of the total area.[7] The dominance of greenfield sites has implications for transport delivery with development in greenfield locations leading to spatial expansion and reduced density, which can in turn make sustainable transport provision more challenging.

2.4.8 Clearly, the rate of planned housing growth in Midlothian is considerable and there will be significant impacts on both travel demand and travel patterns as a result. High rates of development have the potential to result in high volumes of car traffic and increased congestion – with the dominance of greenfield locations further increasing this risk. In order to

https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/download/409/housing_land_audit [5] Constrained sites are sites in the supply which are not effective and have obstacles preventing their development

[5] Constrained sites are sites in the supply which are not effective and have obstacles preventing their development

[6] Safeguard sites are sites associated with housing allocations which have potential for further expansion in the medium to longer term and which could be brought forward through the next development plan, if required

[7] A greenfield site is an undeveloped land that has never previously had buildings on it or been used for industry – in total, 62 of the 82 sites (73%) are in greenfield locations equating to 90% of the total area

overcome this issue, it is vital we ensure that our new developments are adequately served by public transport and connected to the wider area via high quality active travel links.

Employment Land

2.4.9 Midlothian Council produces an Employment Land Audit (ELA) which provides the most up-to-date position with regard to the supply and availability of employment land. The most recent ELA (2024) identifies 48 employment sites, equating to a total area of 593ha.

2.4.10 Figure 5-2 shows the location of these sites across Midlothian and Table 5-1 provides a breakdown of the sites and vacant land (ha) available by settlement. Overall, the most significant areas of employment land are around Loanhead (10 sites, 152ha), the MSZ (11 sites, 124ha), and Shawfair / Danderhall (5 sites, 147ha).

2.4.11 As noted above, there are currently insufficient jobs in Midlothian for our population and a key aim of MLDP 2017 was to promote local opportunities in order to reduce the reliance on commuting outside of Midlothian. If we are to achieve this aim, it is important that there are good public transport links from our communities to both our existing and future employment sites.

Table 14-2: Employment land supply breakdown by settlement (Source: Midlothian Employment Land Audit 2024)[8]

Settlement	Number of sites	Gross Site Area (ha)
Bonnyrigg*	4	20.6
Dalkeith	7	68.7
Easthouses	1	1.8
Gorebridge	1	9.8
Loanhead*	10	152.4
Mayfield	1	23.8
Newtongrange	3	25.8
Penicuik	2	7.0
MSZ	11	124.2
Rosewell	1	1.8
Roslin	2	10.3
Shawfair/Danderhall	5	147
Total	48	593.2

[8] Note: *indicates that this settlement's figures include both committed/allocated sites and also other economic sites with planning support

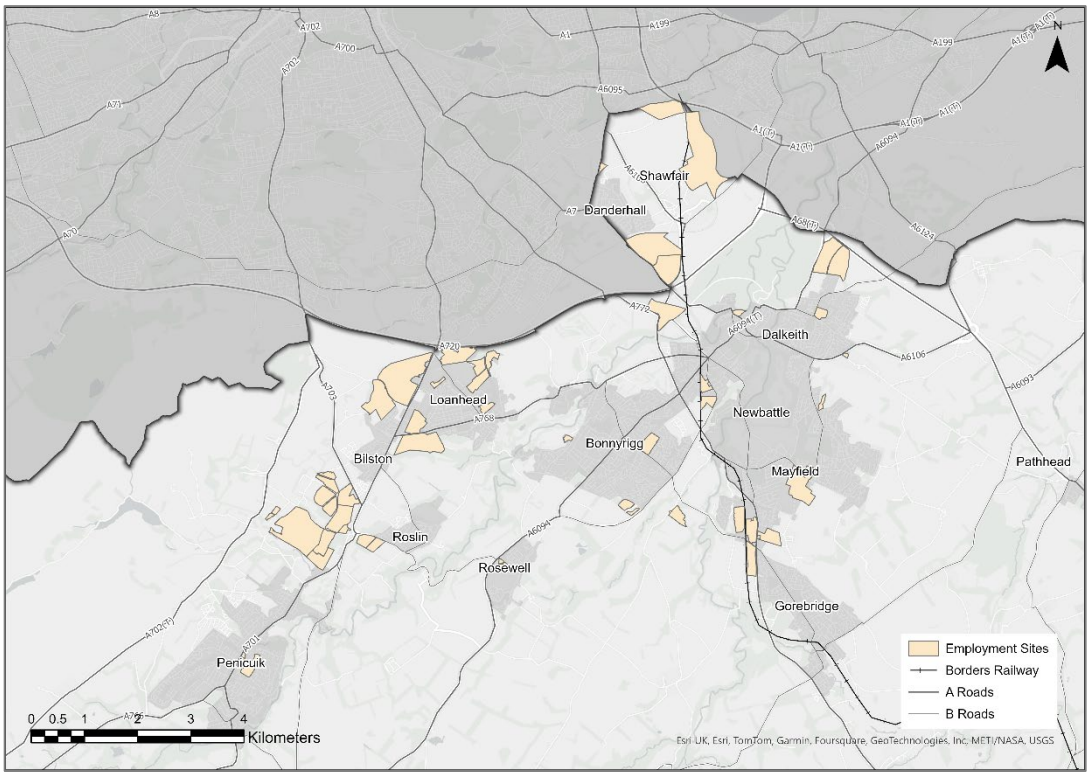


Figure 5-4: Location of Midlothian's employment sites (Source: Midlothian Employment Land Audit 2024)

3 Transport Network and User Problems

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 This chapter briefly profiles the transport network in Midlothian and key recent trends. It thereafter summarises the transport problems experienced by users which underpin the LTS.

3.2 Transport network

3.2.1 The bullet points below summarise our existing transport network and services:

- There are five **strategic A roads which route north-south through Midlothian**, including the A702, A701 / A703, A7, and the A68. All of these north south links connect to the A720 City of Edinburgh Bypass from which there are onward connections to **Edinburgh, Edinburgh Airport, Glasgow and the A1 corridor** In contrast to the north-south connections, direct east-west road connections within Midlothian are more limited with the bypass providing the primary east-west link for vehicles only. It is noted that the A68, A702, and A720 are all trunk roads.

- There are two unstaffed bus park and ride (P&R) sites; **Straiton P&R** located to the south of the Bypass near Straiton Retail Park, and **Sheriffhall P&R** located to the north of the Bypass / Sheriffhall Roundabout at Danderhall. Both sites are served by a number of bus routes into the capital but are currently underutilised.

- The **Borders Rail Line** provides direct rail connections from Midlothian to the capital. The line opened in September 2015 and provides connections to Edinburgh City Centre and Tweedbank in the Scottish Borders for the communities of Gorebridge, Newtongrange, Eskbank, and Shawfair. There are unstaffed rail park and ride facilities at each station. The service has long operating hours, with two trains per hour in each direction during the week and Saturdays, and an hourly service on Sundays. Journey times into Edinburgh are quicker than by car, particularly during the morning and evening peaks. While currently diesel powered, the rail line was built with passive provision for electrification and is due to be decarbonised in the next decade.

- The **SEStran RTS** defined **two 'regional corridors' in Midlothian**: i) Midlothian East: connecting the Bonnyrigg / Dalkeith / Gorebridge triangle to Edinburgh and beyond including the A7, A68 and the Borders Railway and ii) Midlothian West connecting Penicuik/Loanhead to Edinburgh and beyond and including the A702 and A701 / A703. These two corridors are also broadly defined by the River North Esk and this topography and the north south transport corridors have played a large part in defining Midlothian's economic geography.

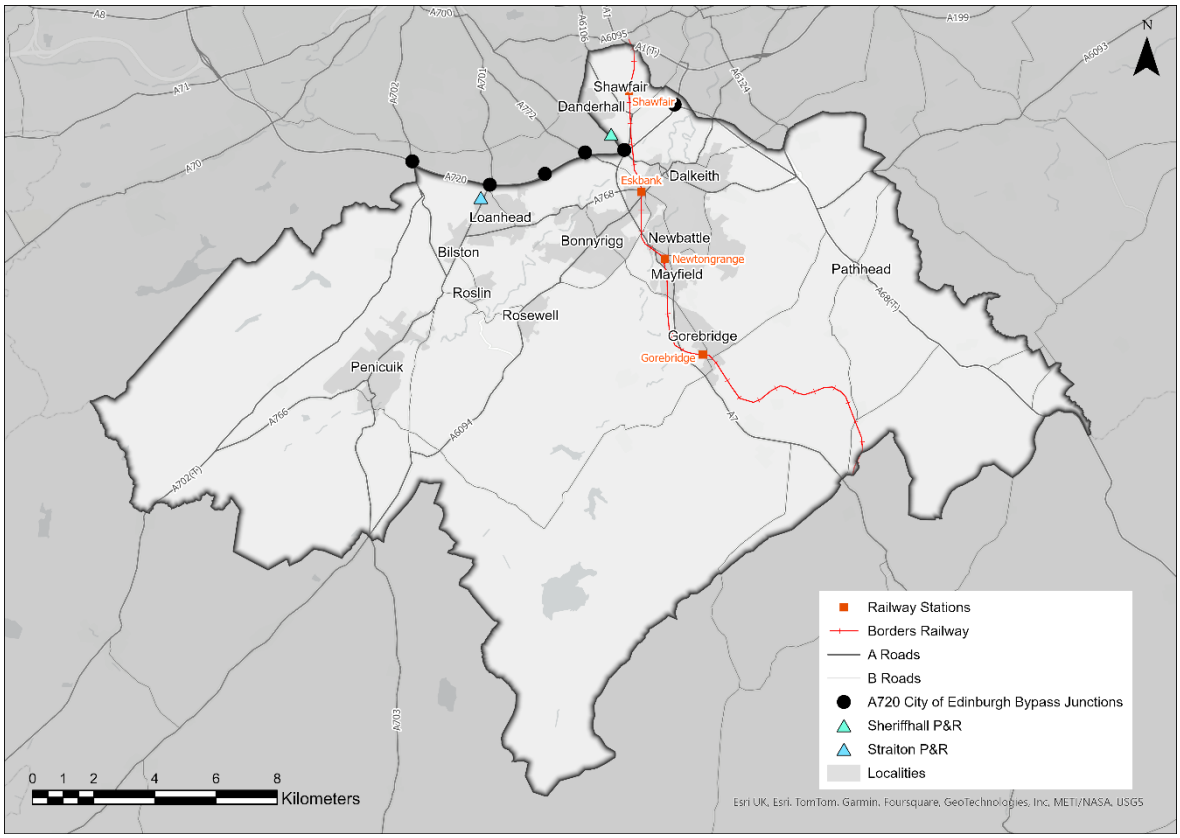


Figure 3-1: Primary road corridors, park and ride sites and the Borders Railway

- There are five local **bus operators** in Midlothian. The majority of **bus services** link to Edinburgh City Centre with services from the Borders traversing Midlothian. As shown in Figure 3-1, bus services are primarily focused on two of the five north south road corridors: the A701 through Bilston and Penicuik and the A7 via Danderhall. North of the bypass, the key corridors are the A701 through Bilston and Penicuik; Lasswade Road through to Bonnyrigg; the A772 Gilmerton Road and the A7.

- **Nearly all local bus services operate on a commercial basis**. Midlothian Council contributes to the cost of services that run through Midlothian from some neighbouring authorities. A small number of **community transport services receive Council funding** and offer door-to-door transport for those with mobility challenges or provide connections in areas which are less well served by the commercial network.

- Midlothian has **four existing cross boundary cycle routes**[9] connecting Midlothian to Edinburgh and East Lothian, with most of these made up of a combination of on road and off-road provision. There are also several longer shared use and on-road routes as well as a number of shorter connections within Midlothian.

- At the time of writing there is one council supported car club scheme in Midlothian with two vehicles available to rent by the hour or day at Loanhead and Dalkeith.[10]

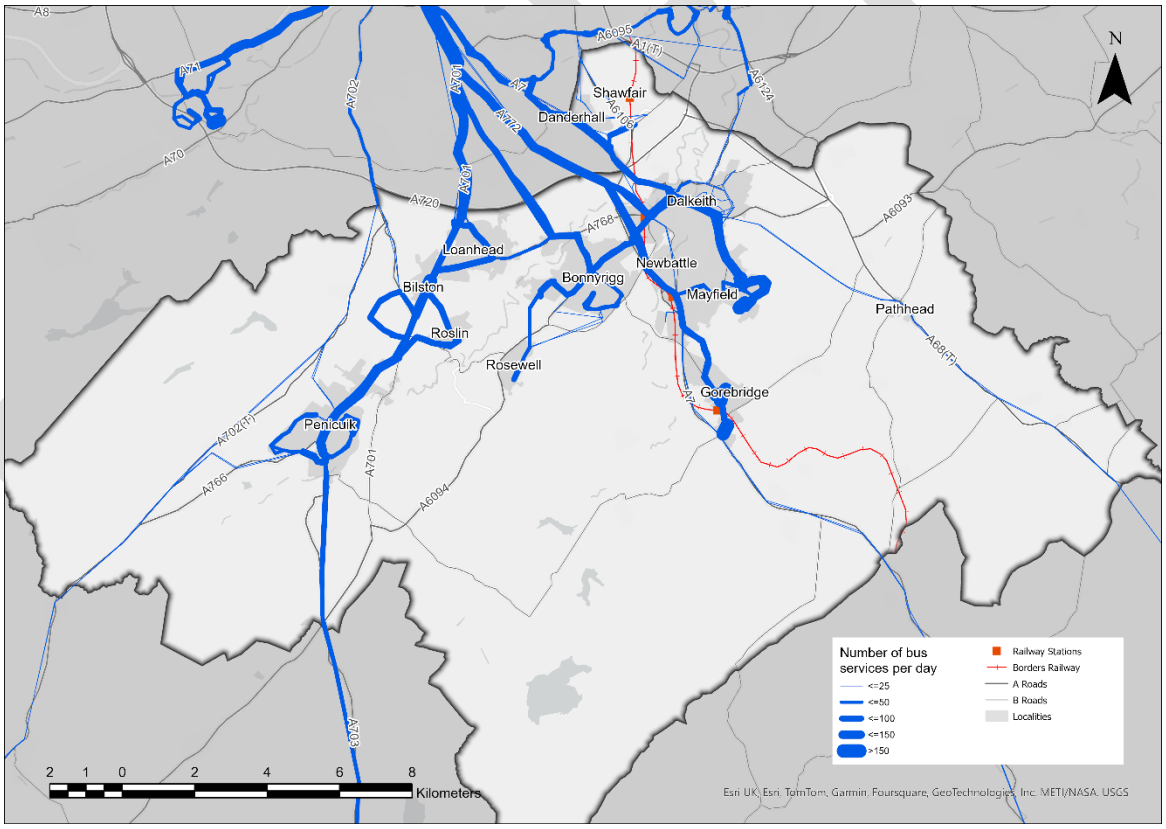


Figure 3-2: Cumulative number of buses (all services) on our roads between 0500 and 2359 on a typical weekday (with thicker lines indicating higher frequencies) (Oct 2023)

[9] National Cycle Network (NCN) route 1 (Newcastle to Edinburgh) which routes on the B7007 past Middlton, Temple, Carrington, Bonnyrigg, Dalkeith and onward into East Lothian; NCN route 196 between Penicuik and Dalkeith; Eskbank to Gilmerton; and Roslin to Shawfair.

[10] Council launches new affordable car club scheme | Midlothian Council

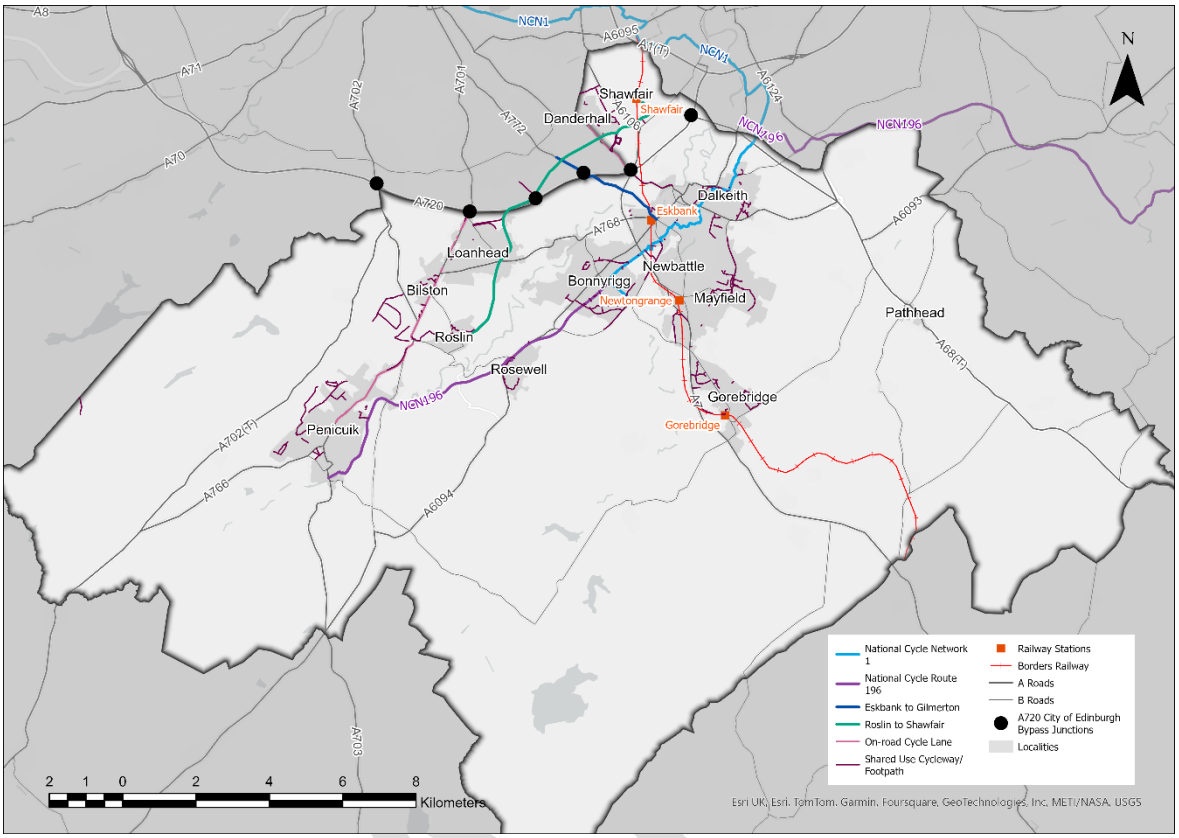


Figure 3-3: Our cross boundary active travel connections

3.3 Key trends in travel

3.3.1 As with all locations, COVID-19 resulted in a significant shift in travel behaviour in Midlothian. The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) publish a range of statistics about travel in Scotland. Analysis of this data between 2019 (pre-pandemic) and 2022 (the most recent data available) broadly suggests the following trends with respect to different aspects of travel:

- **Commuting to work:** an increase in car use, and a reduction in bus, rail, and active travel
- **Place of work:** an increase in working from home
- **Travel to school:** a reduction in walking and an increase in car-based travel with bus use remaining broadly consistent
- **Main mode of travel:** an increase in car use and walking and a reduction across all other modes
- **Car availability:** an increase in the proportion of households with two or more cars and a reduction in zero-car households
- **Car use:** a reduction in the proportion of people using their car every day and a slight reduction in the proportion holding a driving licence
- **Bicycles:** a small increase in rates of bicycle ownership
- **Walking:** a reduction in walking as a means of transport but an increase in walking for leisure
- **Use of buses and trains:** a reduction in bus and train use

- **Satisfaction with public transport:** a reduction in levels of satisfaction with public transport

- **Concessionary fares:** the proportion of people with a National Entitlement Card remained fairly consistent but some reduction in usage amongst holders

- **Distance travelled:** a reduction in the distance travelled per person

3.3.2 The above data on mode use is also supported by available road and rail traffic count data, which indicates that:

- traffic levels in Midlothian are increasing following the lows during COVID-19 and by 2022, had almost returned to pre-COVID levels

- use of the Midlothian Borders Railway stations is still considerably below that of the pre-COVID period.

3.3.3 Overall, whilst data at the Midlothian level is fairly limited, the above post-Covid trends appear to be diverging from many policy aims as outlined in Section 2.2. This clearly presents a range of challenges which this LTS will seek to address.

3.4 Transport Problems

3.4.1 The 'Case for Change' gathered detailed information on the transport problems in Midlothian from the perspective of the transport user. Key issues identified include:

- the **A720 City of Edinburgh Bypass creates a significant severance** across the north of Midlothian which impacts on safety for active travel, and on bus and road-based connectivity. There are five crossing points by road, four of which are grade-separated. All are experiencing increasingly high traffic volumes and **routine congestion** is evident particularly during peak hours, resulting in long and unpredictable car and bus journey times from Midlothian into the capital. Long queues on the trunk road at Sheriffhall roundabout are evident during and well beyond peak hours, which impacts bus, car and freight journey times. Accidents and other incidents on the bypass can cause north-south traffic accessing the bypass to queue back and block north-south travel, impacting the local road network in Midlothian and further reducing network performance.

- Related to the above, there are issues with both routine and less predictable **congestion** on many of the local roads in Midlothian resulting in **long and unpredictable journey times**. The level of routine congestion in Midlothian suggests that many local roads are currently operating beyond capacity. Given this, the additional traffic expected to result from the projected population growth and forecast new development can be expected to have considerable impact on congestion and economic productivity in Midlothian and for the region, with even small increases having the potential to lead to significant delays.

- **Bus journey times are generally long relative to car travel at present.** Incidents on the network and blocking back from the City of Edinburgh Bypass impacts bus journey time reliability. Passengers have also raised issues with bus capacity, particularly on some of our peak time express services. A relatively high proportion of our residents also live some distance away from their **nearest bus stop** which further adds to overall door-to-door journey times. This includes residents in some of our largest existing settlements as well as our more recent developments, with some of the latter relatively poorly served by public transport. **Bus service frequency** can also be low outwith the main route corridors and in some areas operates over a shorter day (e.g. finishing early evening).

- Current bus timetables and routeing options are heavily radially focussed, with most connecting to Edinburgh City Centre. There are relatively few bus services to other locations in Edinburgh and there are very few **east-west bus connections** across Midlothian, or regionally. The latter can act to reduce public transport connectivity for Midlothian residents to key Midlothian employment centres such as **Straiton** and the **MSZ**

as well as centres in the western parts of Edinburgh. There is also a **lack of regular bus connections to some of our key visitor locations such as Hillend**.

- While the east of Midlothian benefits from good rail links to Edinburgh via the Borders Rail Line, there are **no rail links in the west** and relatively **few bus services connect passengers directly to the rail stations**. Journey times by rail are also long in comparison to other rail services serving Edinburgh and there have been issues with both a **lack of capacity at peak times** and **poor reliability of rail journey times**, with, in terms of the latter, the most recent data suggesting that the Borders Railway is not currently meeting ScotRail's Public Performance Measure (PPM).

- Currently, **bus fares vary by operator with some providing flat fares equal to those in City of Edinburgh and other more regional operators applying longer fare staging zones**. This leads to a level of inconsistency across the network, with some communities paying a higher fare than elsewhere for broadly comparable journeys.[11]**Rail fares are considerably higher than bus travel** and rail travel is not included in the National or Under-22s Concessionary Travel Schemes. While rail season tickets and 'flexipasses' are available for regular rail travellers, the up-front cost of these can be prohibitively high, meaning that some groups are forced to purchase higher cost single or return tickets. At present, **integrated ticketing options are limited to OneTicket and PlusBus Schemes,** both of which need to be planned and purchased in advance and can be relatively complicated to understand and arrange.

- While there are a number of cross-boundary cycle routes, there are **relatively few routes which efficiently and safely connect our communities** and there is a **general lack of segregated cycle connections**. As with the road network, the Edinburgh Bypass creates **severance issues for long distance cycling**. There is currently no dedicated provision for cyclists at the A720 junctions. Crossing the bypass with a bike can therefore be challenging and can act as a barrier to active travel uptake, particularly amongst new and less confident users.

- **Traffic intimidation** as a result of high traffic volumes, speeds and / or a large number of HGVs can be an issue in some of our communities. This can make walking and cycling unappealing and is compounded by a **lack of safe, accessible and appealing facilities for active travel users**, including a lack of segregated cycleways and a lack of footways / poor footway provision, with the latter a particular issue in our more rural communities. There are also more general issues with walking routes, including a lack of lighting, poor surfacing, street clutter and barriers, all of which can restrict access, particularly for those with mobility needs; this is a key concern as our population ages.

- Scotland has a target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045 and has committed to phasing out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030. Transport is a major contributor of carbon emissions. Emissions from transport accounted for an estimated 36% of Midlothian's carbon dioxide emissions in 2022, with the overwhelming majority of this (98%) stemming from road transport.[12] Roads and road traffic also has a wide range of negative impacts on our communities including traffic intimidation, noise pollution, air quality13, vibration, road traffic accidents, environmental degradation, poor

[11] For example, residents of Pathhead and residents of the Scottish Borders have to pay the same amount for either a single (£5.80) or a day (£10.15) ticket for travel across the Borders Bus network, an area which includes Carlisle, Scottish Borders, Berwick, Lothian and Edinburgh. This means, for example, that someone travelling from Jedburgh to Edinburgh only pays £0.21 per mile whereas someone travelling from Pathhead to Edinburgh pays £0.83 per mile.

[12] UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, 2005 to 2022, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics-2005-to-2022

[13] Midlothian Council regularly assess air quality and report annually on air quality targets. Currently, there are no locations in Midlothian where there is an exceedance of an air quality objective, known as an air quality management area (AQMA). Further information on air quality can be found at https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200272/pollution/419/air_quality/1

visual amenity, community severance, and reductions in the ‘liveability’ of our communities.

3.4.2 Despite these challenges, a period of rapid growth offers significant **opportunities** for infrastructure development and transport improvements. Midlothian has a growing and highly skilled workforce and our strategic location and proximity to Edinburgh is a major draw in terms of inward investment. Population growth also provides an opportunity to grow the retail and leisure ‘offer’ in our towns and promote more local employment opportunities, helping to reduce ‘leakage’ to Edinburgh and grow the local economy. Continued development and growth do however require the provision of well planned, sustainable, accessible, safe and efficient transport network, which provides connections within our settlements and between our communities and Edinburgh and the wider region. **Identifying and supporting the delivery of these connections is the focus of this LTS.**

4 Vision and Strategy Outcomes

4.1 Strategy Vision

4.1.1 Our **Vision** is:

Our transport system enhances the life opportunities of our residents and enables people to travel more sustainably.

4.2 Strategy Outcomes

4.2.1 The LTS is intended to deliver five Strategy Outcomes:

- **Strategy Outcome 1:** Our new developments integrate transport planning and land use planning and deliver high-quality active travel and public transport connections
- **Strategy Outcome 2:** Our towns provide more space for people, and are more attractive for walking, wheeling, and cycling
- **Strategy Outcome 3**: Our settlements are connected by safe, attractive and accessible public transport and active travel routes
- **Strategy Outcome 4:** Our settlements are connected to key locations in Edinburgh and the wider region by fast accessible and affordable public transport and high-quality active travel routes
- **Strategy Outcome 5:** Transport in our area is decarbonised in line with national objectives through a mix of new technology and behavioural change

4.2.2 The rationale for the above outcomes and the impact on travel and consequent benefits for society which achieving the outcome would provide are set out in the table below.

Table 4-1: Anticipated travel responses and benefits for society

Strategy Outcome	Why?	Travel response	Benefits for society
LTS Outcome 1: Our new developments integrate transport planning and land use planning and deliver high-quality active travel and public transport connections	If transport planning is not integral to planning new developments, there is a risk that they will generate high levels of car use. The LTS seeks to integrate transport and land use planning and ensure development is well connected by active travel and public transport to neighbouring towns and villages and travel hubs.	▪ More journeys made locally within the settlement and to transport hubs (stations and interchanges) ▪ More journeys made by active and public transport ▪ Fewer journeys need to be made by car	▪ Increased footfall brings regeneration and a wider range of services available locally and boosting economic growth ▪ Greater integration of new communities in Midlothian ▪ Increased physical activity brings health benefits ▪ Fewer car kilometres improves air quality and reduces accidents, congestion, noise, vibration and global emissions
LTS Outcome 2: Our towns provide more space for people, and are more attractive for walking, wheeling, and cycling	Walking, wheeling and cycling is unappealing in many of our towns due to a combination of traffic intimidation and a lack of safe, accessible and appealing facilities for active travel users. By prioritising space for	▪ More journeys made locally ▪ There may be less of a requirement to travel into Edinburgh ▪ More journeys made by healthier modes	▪ Increased footfall brings regeneration and a wider range of services available locally and boosting economic growth, further increasing footfall ▪ Improved public realm reduces crime and fear of crime

Strategy Outcome	Why?	Travel response	Benefits for society
	people, the LTS seeks to make our towns more attractive, accessible, and inclusive places to live, work, and socialise, enabling people to make healthier and more sustainable travel choices, and encouraging more people to spend time and money on our high streets.	▪ Fewer local journeys need to be made by car	▪ Increased physical activity brings health benefits ▪ Fewer car kms improves air quality and reduces accidents, congestion, noise, vibration and global emissions
LTS Outcome 3: Our settlements are connected by safe, attractive and accessible public transport and active travel routes	Public transport services between some of our settlements are poor and opportunities for safe walking / cycling are limited. Bus services tend to be focussed on north-south travel with poorer east-west connections and this limits opportunities for those without access to a car. Improving the ease of travelling between our settlements by active and public transport will support those without access to a car or those who would rather not use a car, including our growing younger and older demographics.	▪ More journeys are made between our towns and villages ▪ There may be less of a requirement to travel into Edinburgh ▪ More journeys are made by healthier modes ▪ Fewer local journeys need to be made by car	▪ People can take up new opportunities for employment, educational, training, and leisure in Midlothian without the requirement for a car, and social exclusion and inequity due to transport exclusion is reduced ▪ Increased footfall brings regeneration and a wider range of services available locally and boosting economic growth ▪ Greater community coherence in Midlothian ▪ Increased physical activity brings health benefits ▪ Fewer car kms improves air quality and reduces accidents, congestion, noise, vibration and global emissions
LTS Outcome 4: Our settlements are connected to key locations in Edinburgh and the wider region by fast accessible and affordable public transport and high-quality active travel routes	Midlothian's proximity to Edinburgh inevitably means that many residents travel frequently to locations across Edinburgh and beyond, for work, education and training, healthcare, business and leisure. Travel time by bus currently tends to be long, and some localities are less well served by bus than others, thus many trips are made by car. Overall, those most poorly served by public transport and those without access to a car are less able to access opportunities.	▪ New journeys are made into Edinburgh by those for whom current transport provision represents a barrier to travel ▪ More journeys to Edinburgh are made by public transport and active modes ▪ Fewer journeys to / from Edinburgh need to be made by car	▪ People can take up new opportunities for employment, educational, training and leisure in Edinburgh without the requirement for a car, and social exclusion and inequity due to transport exclusion is reduced ▪ Improved labour market efficiency brings productivity benefits ▪ Increased physical activity brings health benefits ▪ Fewer car kms improves air quality and reduces accidents, congestion, noise, vibration and global emissions
LTS Outcome 5: Transport in our area is decarbonised in line with national	Scotland has a target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045. Transport is a major contributor to carbon	▪ Fewer journeys need to be made by car leading to reductions in per	▪ Decarbonisation is achieved in a fair and equitable way reducing inequalities

Strategy Outcome	Why?	Travel response	Benefits for society
objectives through a mix of new technology and behavioural change	emissions and roads and road traffic can have a negative impact on our communities. Our transport networks and services must adapt to meet national targets. The process must also recognise the needs of all groups and deliver a 'Just Transition'.	capita car-kilometres travelled	▪ Zero emission transport will improve air quality and reduces global emissions ▪ Fewer car kms improves air quality and reduces accidents, global emissions, energy use and also community severance ▪ Health benefits of improved air quality

4.3 Strategy Policies

4.3.1 The subsequent sections of this LTS are split into chapters, covering the following:

- Sustainably accommodating our new development
- Making our transport networks accessible and affordable for all
- Making our transport networks safer for all
- New and improved facilities for active travel
- Improving the coverage, journey times and reliability of our public transport
- Improved integration across our transport networks
- Improving the quality of our public transport
- Reducing the impact of transport on our local environment, decarbonising transport in Midlothian and adapting to climate change
- Making our transport networks more efficient

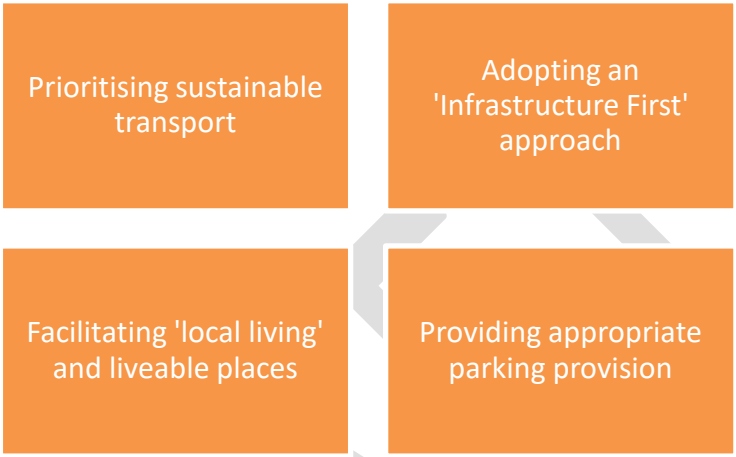
4.3.2 Each chapter includes a narrative and a set of **Policies** which set out a statement of intent or provide guidance around actions which we need to undertake in order to achieve our Strategy Outcomes. In some instances, they also articulate our position in relation to key strategic issues.

4.3.3 Subsequent to the agreement of the LTS, an accompanying **Delivery Plan** will be developed which will set out the activities we will undertake in the short, medium and long-term with respect to each Policy. It will include actions which can be delivered by Midlothian and those where Midlothian would look to partners to lead on delivery. The actions will include physical and non-physical interventions as well as analysis and appraisal work to identify new interventions to support the delivery of the LTS Vision, Outcomes, and Policies. The Delivery Plan will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis throughout the lifetime of the strategy as part of the ongoing Monitoring process set out Chapter 15.

5 Sustainably accommodating our new development

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 This chapter is focused on integrating transport and land use planning so as to minimise the need for car travel. The figure below sets out the topic areas discussed in this chapter.



5.2 Prioritising sustainable transport

5.2.1 In order to minimise car use and prevent car travel from becoming entrenched, our new development must be well connected to our communities and local centres by both high-quality active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) routes and public transport services.

5.2.2 In developing our land use approach and responding to development proposals, we will seek to maximise

- active travel connectivity to local centres, key amenities and transport interchange points
- public transport connectivity to more distant destinations, helping to facilitate longer distance sustainable travel.

5.2.3 We will use the planning system to secure the necessary developer contributions towards active travel and public transport provision.

5.2.4 In order to help embed sustainable travel practices at the outset, we will also continue to work with developers to ensure 'sustainable transport welcome packs' setting out the sustainable transport connections in the area are provided to all new residents in new build estates.

5.3 Adopting an 'Infrastructure First' approach

5.3.1 **We require an 'infrastructure first[14]' approach** whereby the potential impact of development on infrastructure and infrastructure needs, including transport provision and services, are considered early in the development planning process and delivered hand-in-hand with the development.

[14] Infrastructure First is defined in NPF4 as "putting infrastructure considerations at the heart of placemaking" where infrastructure includes existing and planned transport infrastructure and services, water management, communications, energy supplies / energy generation, health and social care services, education, green and blue infrastructure, and spaces for play and recreation.

5.3.2 With respect to public transport, we require **developers to evidence early engagement with bus operators** who run services near the development site with the aim of ensuring that our new developments incorporate appropriate bus infrastructure and are designed in a way to enable financially sustainable public transport services.

5.3.3 To ensure residents can use sustainable transport from the outset and prevent car use from becoming entrenched:

- active travel routes and infrastructure which meet national standards must be provided and ready for use prior to the very first residents moving in – this includes provision within the site boundary and connecting infrastructure from the site to local centres, key amenities, and transport interchanges

- access roads within new developments and connecting new developments to the wider area must be of an adoptable standard and designed and delivered in a manner which enables the development to be served by bus as soon as the first residents move into the development – this includes the provision of any required infrastructure such as bus stops.

5.3.4 The phasing of new developments must allow for early adoption of essential sustainable transport infrastructure. Sites that are built out in many phases and by a number of developers must provide active travel routes across the entire site as well as external connections to the wider community.

5.4 Facilitating local living and liveable places

5.4.1 **Local living** is the ability of residents to meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, preferably by active travel or using more sustainable transport options. Over the lifetime of this LTS and beyond, it is our aspiration to support and improve opportunities for local living and, in so doing, reduce the need to travel unsustainably. Ensuring our new development is connected to our communities and local centres by both high-quality active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) routes and public transport services will be a vital component to delivering this aspiration.

5.4.2 It is also essential to develop high-quality public realm and spaces where people want to spend time. We will adopt the **Place Principle**[15] and encourage, promote and facilitate a **design-led approach** with the aim of delivering successful places which are healthy, pleasant, distinctive, connected, sustainable and adaptable.[16] We will also encourage place-based measures to help reduce car dominance such as low traffic schemes, designing-in speed reduction measures, bus/cycle priority, and pedestrianisation.

5.5 Providing appropriate parking provision

5.5.1 Our Parking Standards and Building Standards set out requirements for different categories of development, including minimum and maximum parking provision. We will work with developers to ensure the delivery of appropriate facilities in line with these standards, including appropriate **EV and cycle parking** at all new developments.

5.5.2 Where practical, we will look to apply the principles of **Transit Orientated Development** (TOD)[17] whereby major trip generating developments are concentrated around public transport corridors, stops and stations so as to provide sufficient density to make high quality and regular public transport services viable. The application of TOD and local living principles may make it possible to explore the implementation of low or zero car developments. These could be supported by shared mobility solutions which allow people to access transport on an on-demand basis, helping to reduce the need for vehicle ownership. We have already applied

[15] See Place Principle: introduction - gov.scot

[16] National Planning Framework 4, p59

[17] Transit-oriented development is a type of urban development that maximises the amount of residential, business and leisure space within walking distance of public transport.

the principles of TOD in the design and delivery of our new settlement at Shawfair and will look to replicate similar approaches elsewhere where appropriate.

5.6 Policies (Sustainably accommodating our new development)

Policy 1: Major development must be well connected to our communities and local centres by both high-quality active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) routes and public transport services.

Policy 2: The LTS recognises the challenges and opportunities presented by new development and requires measures to minimise car dependency from developers

Policy 3: The LTS requires the concept of 'infrastructure first' to be implemented in relation to major developments in, and affecting Midlothian

Policy 4: New active travel routes and infrastructure which meets national standards must be provided prior to the first residents moving into a development - this includes provision within the site boundary and connecting infrastructure from the site to local centres, key amenities, and transport interchanges

Policy 5: Access roads within new developments and connecting new developments to the wider area must be of an adoptable standard and designed and delivered in a manner which enables the development to be served by bus services as soon as the first residents move into the development – this includes the provision of any required infrastructure such as bus stops

Policy 6: Parking provision at all new developments must fully comply with Midlothian Council Parking Standards

6 Making our transport networks accessible and affordable for all

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 This chapter is focused on addressing the barriers which either prevent some people making active travel and public transport trips or make travel by these modes a stressful experience, including issues associated with accessibility, personal security, and cost. The figure below sets out the topic areas discussed in this chapter.

6.2 Providing accessible travel information

6.2.1 To ensure everyone in our society can plan and make active travel and public transport trips, we need to ensure travel information is accessible and available at a range of locations, including in hard copy formats. The means to access this information also needs to be widely shared – if people do not know this information exists, there is little point in producing it.

6.2.2 To help improve access, it is also important to ensure that any resources produced include information on the location of key barriers to accessibility (such as the location of stairs, narrow paths etc.) and the availability of key services (e.g. accessible seating, help points and toilets).

6.2.3 Reliable and up-to-date hard copy information on timetables and fares should be provided at bus stops and railway stations as well as other community facilities. This is vital for those without access to the internet or who prefer not to use it

6.2.4 We recognise the significant accessibility and wider benefits of real time passenger information (RTPI) at bus stops and support the ongoing roll out of RTPI across Midlothian. This is discussed further under in Chapter 12.

6.3 Providing physical accessibility improvements

6.3.1 A lack of accessible infrastructure and / or physical barriers can prevent those with impaired mobility from using the transport network. This can result in a range of negative impacts

including reduced participation in the workforce, an inability to access key services and social opportunities and resulting loneliness and social isolation with the associated negative health impacts.

6.3.2 To provide access for all, we need to ensure that our transport environment is fully accessible to all users. Potential improvements could include:

- the provision of new sections of pavement or widening of existing pavements in line with accessibility guidelines
- rationalisation of street furniture and other obstructions / physical barriers which prevent access for all
- using street furniture to minimise the impact of high-speed motorised bikes on walking, wheeling and cycling paths
- the implementation of physical accessibility improvements, including provision of dropped kerbs, other accessible infrastructure, and the enforcement of pavement parking
- delivery of improved and accessible bus shelters at bus stops / journey hubs, including the provision of accessible seating and up-to-date and accessible travel information as referenced above
- improvements to the on-board experience when travelling by public transport – this is discussed further in Chapter 12.

6.3.3 We will follow the most up-to-date accessibility and equalities design guidance. Currently, this includes Inclusive Mobility[18], the Department for Transport's (DfT) best practice design guidance on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure 'Cycling by Design'[19], 'Walking for Everyone'[20], Wheels for Wellbeing's 'Guide to Inclusive Cycling'[21] and Sustainable Travel to Stations[22].

6.3.4 We will engage with the local community on proposals for improving access for those with disabilities, as well as other users of the transport environment, so that the day-to-day needs and experiences of all members of our society are considered and incorporated.

6.4 Implementing measures to facilitate independent travel

6.4.1 The tasks and experiences that form part of independent travel (such as locating the correct bus service, paying for bus travel, and getting off at the correct stop) can pose challenges for some people, including those with learning disabilities, neurodivergence or cognitive impairments, such as dementia. These issues can result in people either choosing to travel by car or not travelling at all which in turn can limit access to employment, education, key services, and social opportunities.

6.4.2 To ensure that all residents in Midlothian can participate fully in society, we:

- support the provision of accessible travel information as discussed above

[18] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-mobility-making-transport-accessible-for-passengers-and-pedestrians

[19] https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/cycling-by-design/, 2021

[20] https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/11493/sustrans-arup-walking-for-everyone-inclusive-walking-report.pdf

[21] https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FC_WfW-Inclusive-Guide_FINAL_V03.pdf#:~:text=A%20Guide%20to%20Inclusive%20Cycling.%20Contents.%20Foreword.%2001%20What%20is

[22] https://scotlandsrailway.com/assets/site/Sustainable-Travel-to-Stations-FINAL.pdf

- support transport operators to ensure all staff receive accessibility / disability awareness training

- advocate for the implementation of chaperoning services for the most vulnerable users

6.4.3 There are currently a number of flexible and community-based transport services available in Midlothian which are operated by the charities Lothian Community Transport Services (LCTS) and HcL Transport (see Case Study below). We recognise that these types of services are often seen as a less daunting travel option compared to more traditional fixed route bus services and support their expansion where required and where funding allows.

Case Study: Lothian Community Transport Services and HcL Transport

There are currently several flexible and community transport services operating in Midlothian, including:

HcL Transport Dial-A-Bus – which offers trips to Cameron Toll and supermarkets within Midlothian and operates Tuesday to Friday with travel free for anyone with a National Entitlement Card (NEC).[23]

HcL Transport Dial-A-Ride - which is available to those with mobility challenges who are residents of Midlothian. This includes older people; people with disabilities, additional support needs, illness or health condition (long term or short term) affecting mobility; or those rurally isolated. The service is door-through-door and operates 7 days a week, 365 days of the year including evenings. Registered users must call the office to book and travel can be arranged for trips across Scotland and into England. Dial-A-Ride is charged on a mileage basis at £6.50 for the first mile and then 90p per mile thereafter.

Lothian Community Transport Services (LCTS) Community Bus - which operates on a Monday and covers a range of destinations across Midlothian. The services are available to any member of the public with holders of the NEC travelling for free.

These services offer vital connectivity and support for our more vulnerable groups, helping to widen access, provide much needed connectivity to key services, and reduce social isolation.

6.5 Implementing measures to enhance personal security

6.5.1 In designing and delivering transport infrastructure and services, it is also important to consider feelings of personal safety and security. This is particularly important for ensuring certain groups in our society, including women, disabled users, young people, old people, ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ people have full access to our transport system and can benefit from the connectivity it provides.

6.5.2 Research with women and girls undertaken by Transport Scotland found that **concerns over personal security when using public transport resulted in women and girls being forced to adapt and curtail their behaviour** with resultant impacts on equality of access and the cost of travel.[24] Numerous self-protection strategies were identified in the research, including

[23] See Dial-A-Bus Midlothian: HCL Transport for Dial-a-Bus timetables

[24] Women and girls' safety on public transport, Transport Scotland, March 2023, Women and girls' safety on public transport | Transport Scotland

not travelling alone; not travelling at night; restricting travel to only familiar routes; extending or reducing journeys; being selective in the type of public transport chosen; and using taxis or private transport, especially late at night. The research also found that age, ethnicity, and disability intersected with gender to make certain groups feel more vulnerable.

6.5.3 The **design of our transport network and how we deliver transport services therefore has an important bearing on the extent to which all users can access services fairly and equitably and therefore the level of equality in our society**. We will consider personal safety and security in the design of all new transport infrastructure and advocate for improvements in how our existing transport services are delivered where appropriate. Interventions could include:

- ensuring new transport infrastructure (such as bus stops and walking, wheeling and cycling routes) are designed with personal security in mind – e.g., locating bus stops in areas which are not secluded, and where there is higher footfall, sufficient lighting and CCTV
- reviewing our monitoring processes and ensuring that there is a system for monitoring, reporting, and upgrading lighting / communication systems, with processes in place for immediate repair and redress where faults are noted
- exploring with operators and wider partners, the feasibility of increasing the presence and visibility of staff across our transport network, particularly at times when people feel most vulnerable (evenings and weekends) – this is a particular issue with respect to our P&R sites and railway stations which are currently unstaffed and less visible to passing traffic and footfall
- working with operators to help reduce the number of delays and cancellations – in the above Transport Scotland research, the risk of delays and cancellations to buses and trains was identified as a key deterrent for using public transport at night due to the risk of waiting alone in the dark. Concerns around the conditions when waiting for connections can also deter people interchanging between services.
- working with operators to provide information on how people can report incidents
- working with transport operators to ensure all staff receive appropriate training on how to protect and support passengers

6.6 Widening the availability of cycling

6.6.1 Rates of cycling differ significantly amongst different groups in our society, with rates of uptake lower amongst women, older people, those with disabilities, those on low incomes and those from ethnic minority groups. There are a wide range of complex reasons for this, including:

- social / cultural issues
- differential perceptions of cycling safety and security – with for example women, disabled people generally feeling less safe[25]
- a lack of or limited cycling infrastructure / higher car traffic in disadvantaged communities
- a lack of available cycle storage options for those in flatted developments
- cycling infrastructure which is not fully inclusive and which restrict access for those requiring adaptive bicycles

[25] See https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/13315/walking-and-cycling-index-2023-edinburgh.pdf

- the cost of owning a bicycle being prohibitive for those on low incomes - this is particularly the case for electric bicycles (e-bikes) and adaptive bikes which can cost significantly more

6.6.2 While uptake is lower amongst certain groups, available data suggests that the potential for growth is significant with, for example, results from a 2023 survey of residents in Edinburgh[26] indicating that 27% of women, 42% of ethnic minority groups, and 32% of disabled people do not currently cycle *but would like to*, with similar findings replicated in surveys elsewhere.[27]

6.6.3 We are committed to widening access to cycling and have produced a new Active Travel Strategy for Midlothian entitled '**On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone**'[28] which aims to encourage behaviour change across all groups in our society. As set out in the ATS, in order to widen access, a range of measures could be implemented, including:

- promoting the benefits of cycling *for all groups* – efforts to promote cycling should use inclusive language and imagery, emphasising the diversity of users and the benefits for all groups
- offering free cycle training for children and adults- such as our Bikeability sessions with schools, Cycling Scotland cycle training and led rides for adults and families (see Theme 4, Chapter 9)
- ensuring cycling infrastructure is inclusive and designed in line with best practice (this is discussed further in Chapter 9)
- improving access to bicycles and reducing cost barriers – this could be achieved through providing support towards the cost of purchasing / maintaining a bicycle; providing a bike loan service whereby bikes can be rented for longer periods; and / or implementing cycle hire / share schemes which include adaptive bike options.

6.6.4 In recent years, there has been a growth in cycle hire / share schemes in Scotland and evidence suggests that such schemes can encourage cycle uptake and provide a range of benefits. For example, according to the 2023 Scottish Bike Share Survey[29]:

- 48% of bike share users said that bike share had been a catalyst for them to start cycling again
- 93% reported exercise / physical health benefits from using their bike share scheme
- 84% reported mental health benefits as a reason why they choose to use bike share schemes
- 23% said they used their cars less often as a result of bike share

6.6.5 Cycle hire / share schemes could be integrated into our wider transport network, with facilities provided at key interchange points / journey hubs and opportunities for integrated ticketing options with public transport explored.

6.7 Improving wheeling access to our bus services

6.7.1 Under the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR), buses or coaches with a capacity of 22 passengers or more must be accessible to disabled users and be able to

[26] See Walking and Cycling Index 2023: Edinburgh, p16

[27] See https://www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life/

[28] On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone, 2024

[29] https://www.como.org.uk/documents/bike-share-annual-report-scotland-2023

accommodate wheelchairs that meet the reference wheelchair standard.[30] Currently, all bus vehicles which are part of the commercial network in Midlothian, and which fall under PSVAR meet these regulations. However, we recognise that access for disabled users is still restricted. For example:

- those travelling in wheelchairs which are larger than standard are sometimes unable to access services
- where only one wheelchair space is available, only one wheelchair user can travel on the service – this creates uncertainty and restricts access potentially leading to long wait times in sometimes poor environments, and can prevents disabled users travelling together

6.7.2 In addition, currently other users are required to free-up the wheelchair space on vehicle if it is required by a wheelchair user. Where vehicles are travelling at capacity, this can mean those travelling with a pram or pushchair are required to fold the pram / pushchair away and / or get off the vehicle and board the next service.

6.7.3 While we acknowledge that there may be practical and other challenges in doing so, we recognise that there would be benefits in providing additional and more flexible space for wheeling on some services. This could be achieved through the provision of vehicles specifically designed to exceed the current regulations and / or more frequent services. With regard to the former, it is notable that Lothian Buses' new fully electric double deck buses introduced in Edinburgh in September 2024 each include two wheelchair spaces (see Chapter 13).

6.7.4 We will work with bus operators to continually improve the accessibility of the bus vehicles used across our network in response to both the changing needs of our population and any updates to PSVAR and / or wider relevant legislation.

6.8 Reducing bus fares / providing greater consistency in bus fares across Midlothian

6.8.1 The absolute level of public transport fares can be a barrier to travel and can result in:

- spend on transport accounting for a disproportionate amount of household income, leaving households in financial hardship
- people choosing not to travel with resultant impacts on their ability to fully participate in society
- people choosing to travel by car due to perceived lower costs and / or greater benefits relative to the cost differential, with resultant negative impacts on levels of congestion, carbon emissions, and the liveability of our communities

6.8.2 As well as considering the absolute level of fares, in order to provide a level of equity and improve the usability of our bus network, we also need to ensure that fares are consistent across Midlothian. Currently, our bus fares vary by operator and multi-operator ticketing is limited. This leads to a level of inconsistency across our network, with some communities paying a higher fare than elsewhere for broadly comparable journeys.[31]

[30] The reference wheelchair standard is defined as a wheelchair designed to the International Organisation for Standardisation specifications – see Bus and coach accessibility and the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[31] For example, residents of Pathhead and residents of the Scottish Borders have to pay the same amount for either a single (£5.80) or a day (£10.15) ticket for travel across the Borders Bus network, an area which includes Carlisle, Scottish Borders, Berwick, Lothian and Edinburgh. This means, for example, that someone travelling from Jedburgh to Edinburgh only pays £0.21 per mile whereas someone travelling from Pathhead to Edinburgh pays £0.83 per mile.

6.8.3 We recognise that the cost of bus transport is a barrier to travel. However, bus fares are currently set commercially by bus operators and any reduction in bus fares would be dependent on either (i) a resultant increase in patronage sufficient to compensate the lost revenue associated with reducing the fare and / or (ii) the provision of additional public funding, whether via an expansion of subsidised or free fares or a reform of how bus services are delivered in accordance with the provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

6.9 Reduce rail fares in Midlothian

6.9.1 For communities living near the Borders Railway stations, rail travel to / from Edinburgh and beyond, and the Scottish Borders is an option. With rail journey times considerably faster than road-based modes, particularly during peak times.

6.9.2 Rail fares are determined by the Scottish Government and are considerably higher than bus travel, particularly when travelling at peak times. Rail travel is also not included in the National or Under-22s Concessionary Travel Schemes although there are a range of paid railcards and discounted tickets available.[32]

6.9.3 For regular travellers, season tickets and 'flexipasses' are an option, although the up-front cost of these can be prohibitively high for some groups, meaning that they are forced to purchase higher cost single or return tickets.

6.9.4 As with bus services, any reduction in rail fares would be dependent on i) a resultant increase in patronage sufficient to compensate the lost revenue associated with reducing the fare and / or ii) the provision of additional public funding from the Scottish Government as the ultimate owner and funder of Scotland's railway.

6.10 Improving the quality, accessibility and safety of taxi travel

6.10.1 The taxi industry in Midlothian provides additional connectivity where public transport is limited or non-existent.

6.10.2 Recognising the importance of taxis in facilitating essential journeys and filling connectivity gaps, we support the taxi and private hire industry as a vital component of the transport network.

6.10.3 In order to ensure access for all, we support increasing the number of fully accessible taxis and other measures to help widen access, including for example, the availability of text booking serviced (for the deaf), training in customer care for drivers, and increased in-vehicle CCTV coverage.

[32] See Railcards | Railcard Discounts | ScotRail

6.11 Policies (Making our transport networks accessible and affordable for all)

Policy 7: The LTS supports measures to improve the range and quality of fully accessible travel information

Policy 8: The LTS recognises that the physical environment and streetscape can be a barrier to travel and independence for some, and supports measures to address this

Policy 9: The LTS recognises that crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour is a barrier to travel for some and supports measures to address this

Policy 10: The LTS supports initiatives that give Midlothian residents more affordable access to cycling

Policy 11: The LTS recognises that being able to access taxis is a key element of transport provision across Midlothian, which alongside community transport can support people's everyday journeys and activities.

Policy 12: The LTS recognises that the cost of bus travel is a barrier to travel, especially where more than one bus is needed from different operators, and supports measures to reduce the cost of bus travel and make the cost of bus travel equitable for all Midlothian resident

Policy 13: The LTS recognises that the cost of rail travel is a barrier to travel and supports measures to reduce the cost of rail travel

7 Making our transport networks safer for all

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 This chapter is focused on enhancing the safety of our transport networks, including working towards delivering the Scottish Government Road Safety Framework vision and goals (see Chapter 2). The figure below sets out the topic areas discussed in this chapter.

7.2 Physical improvements to the road network

7.2.1 There are three trunk roads within or bordering Midlothian for which the Scottish Government is responsible. These are:

- A68: from A720 City of Edinburgh Bypass to Scottish Borders Council boundary
- A702: from Edinburgh City boundary to Scottish Borders Council boundary
- A720: Edinburgh City Bypass including Sheriffhall Roundabout

7.2.2 As the local highway authority, Midlothian Council is responsible for all remaining 'adopted' roads[33], as well as all walking, wheeling, and cycling routes.

7.2.3 In keeping with national guidelines, we monitor road traffic accidents which occur on our adopted road network as recorded via DfT statistics and use this information to implement infrastructure improvements aimed at reducing the number of accidents where appropriate. The infrastructure improvements we pursue may include, for example:

- greater segregation between different types of road user, including between i) walking / wheeling and cycling and ii) active travel and motor traffic
- changes to junction layout and / or junction types
- provision of protected right-hand turns / ghost islands
- changes to the existing road carriageway, including realignment to improve sightlines

[33] An 'adopted' road is a road which has been adopted by Midlothian Council. This excludes private roads, including some roads on new estates which have not been adopted by the Council and remain the responsibility of the housing developer or factor.

- improved road surfacing, including anti-skid measures
- increased advisory signage to highlight specific dangers

7.2.4 Where there are a high number of accidents on a route, there may be a need for a Route Action Plan that considers both the current and future needs of the network.

7.2.5 The above infrastructure improvements may be complemented by the implementation of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) that manage the transport network to help improve network efficiency and safety. The implementation of ITS is discussed further in Chapter 13.

7.3 Reducing traffic speeds

7.3.1 In some locations, it may be appropriate to introduce measures which are specifically aimed at reducing traffic speeds as well as reviewing and amending speed limits to reflect the characteristics of the road network and the nature of the environment.

7.3.2 We recognise that high traffic volumes and excessive speeds are issues in some of our communities, particularly those on our strategic routes, and that this can result in a range of negative impacts such as accidents, a poor perception of safety, noise, vibration, traffic intimidation, and community severance.

7.3.3 These issues could be targeted through a range of measures, including:

- reducing speed limits, including the implementation of 20mph limits in our settlements
- introducing speed reduction measures and other improvements to help slow down traffic and improve the liveability of our communities
- introducing speed enforcement in locations where there is a high collision rate attributable to speeding along with identified speeding issues
- enhanced Police Scotland enforcement of inappropriate driver behaviour

7.3.4 In April 2023, we completed a **Speed Limit Review** which considered speed limits across our council area with a view to adjusting speed limits to 20mph in appropriate locations. This identified 800 streets where it was recommended that the speed was reduced from 30mph to 20mph and this was subsequently taken forward. We recognise the significant benefits of reduced speed limits and will continue to review our road network and identify areas where potential improvements can be made.

7.3.5 With respect to cycling, as outlined in our ATS, we will also look to develop a **quiet route network** with a view to improving safety, the perception of safety for all road users, and providing an environment which is more conducive to walking, wheeling and cycling in our rural areas.

7.4 Behaviour change measures

7.4.1 The above physical improvements and speed changes will be considered at the design stage of any planned infrastructure works or project with ongoing initiatives to improve driver education and enforce penalties for unsafe driving behaviour. We recognise the importance of changing driver behaviour to help support safety and we will continue to work with our national and regional partners to develop road safety campaigns and wider behaviour change initiatives. Given that concerns around safety is a key barrier to active travel, these initiatives will include a specific focus on walking, wheeling and cycling.

7.5 Maintaining our transport network

7.5.1 Maintaining our transport network is vital to ensure it remains safe and fit for purpose. We also need to adapt our maintenance regimes to respond to the impact of climate change, including more extreme temperatures and weather events.

7.5.2 As noted in Chapter 7, the Scottish Government is responsible for the trunk road network, including, in Midlothian, the A68, the A702, and the A720 while Midlothian Council, as the local highway authority, is responsible for all 'adopted' roads[34], as well as walking, wheeling, and cycling routes and the winter maintenance programme.

7.5.3 We will continue to review and update our **Roads and Paths Inspection and Maintenance Schedule** and our **Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan** in response to changing travel patterns, infrastructure improvements, and climate change considerations.

7.5.4 We are committed to encouraging active travel and where funding allows will undertake additional maintenance activities to help support and encourage walking, wheeling, and cycling – the maintenance of our active travel networks is discussed further in Chapter 8.

7.5.5 In some cases, maintenance operations lead to road works and delays which negatively impact network performance. To help minimise disruption, we will continue to share information on road closures via the Scottish Road Works Register.[35]

7.6 Policies (Making our transport networks safer for all)

Policy 14: Midlothian's roads should be safe for all road users, and supports the Scottish Government's target of a 50% reduction in people killed and seriously injured by 2030

Policy 15: The LTS supports the principle of reducing speed limits and use of transitional speeds on our rural roads as a means to promote road safety

Policy 16: The LTS supports the continuing roll out of 20mph zones in our urban areas

Policy 17: The LTS supports appropriate maintenance of our roads to provide a safer environment for all road users

[34] An 'adopted' road is a road which has been adopted by Midlothian Council. This excludes private roads, including some roads on new estates which have not been adopted by the Council and remain the responsibility of the housing developer or factor.

[35] https://www.roadworksscotland.org/

8 New and improved facilities for active travel

8.1 Overview

8.1.1 This chapter is focused on improving and expanding our active travel network and promoting the wide-ranging benefits of active travel within our communities.

8.1.2 Active travel encompasses walking, wheeling[36], and cycling and can form part, or all, of a journey, including, for example, a short distance walk or wheel to reach a bus stop or nearby facilities as well as a longer distance cycle to work.

8.1.3 We are committed to improving and expanding our active travel network and supporting more people to travel actively. Our new Midlothian Active Travel Strategy entitled '**On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone 2024-2034**'[37] sets out a ten-year plan for the development of active travel and has three key aims:

- expand the active travel network and improve accessibility, safety, connectivity, and maintenance
- promote and enable behaviour change towards uptake in all forms of active travel
- provide transparent monitoring of the delivery of all projects

8.1.4 The ATS includes a wide range of **policy commitments**[38] and an **action plan** which identifies a list of **priority infrastructure projects** aimed at developing our active travel network. The latter includes upgrades to existing active travel connections and the delivery of new active travel routes.

8.1.5 This chapter reflects the policies and actions within our ATS and provides a broad summary of some of the key aspects. The figure below sets out the topic areas discussed. For more detailed information on how we plan to develop our active travel network and promote active travel, please refer to our ATS.

[36] Wheeling includes the use of wheelchairs, pushchairs, adapted bikes, cargo bikes, scooters, and skateboards

[37] On the Move Midlothian: Our Active Travel Strategy for Everyone, 2024

[38] Including behaviour change measures and promotional activities

8.2 Improving existing active travel routes

8.2.1 In order to encourage active travel trips, we need to improve our current walking, wheeling, and cycling connections so that they meet current best practice, guidelines and standards. Enhancements could include, but are not limited to:

- the provision of pavements / pavement widening
- increased segregation between i) walking / wheeling and cycling and ii) active travel and motor traffic
- improved crossing facilities, including at key junctions on our strategic road network
- new or enhanced signage, lighting, and surfacing
- rationalisation of street furniture and other obstructions / physical barriers which prevent access for all
- the implementation of physical accessibility improvements, including provision of dropped kerbs and the enforcement of pavement parking
- improved maintenance

8.2.2 Acknowledging that active travel trips, particularly walking and wheeling trips are often a key part of longer distance public transport trips, we need to ensure that connections to our bus stops, rail stations, and multi-modal interchanges are a key priority. This is discussed in Chapter 10.

8.2.3 We recognise that concerns around safety as a result of a lack of segregation from traffic and high traffic volumes is a key deterrent to active travel uptake and that this can be a particular barrier for certain groups in society, including women and disabled users (see Chapter 7).

8.2.4 To help overcome safety concerns improve the inclusivity of active travel, and provide more appealing and liveable spaces, we will look to reallocate road space away from general traffic to walking, wheeling, and cycling where appropriate. This could include:

- reducing road widths at junctions and tightening turning radii to slow down traffic
- widening existing walking, wheeling and cycling routes
- providing footways where there is currently no footway provision
- providing dedicated segregated space for cyclists

8.3 Investing in new active travel routes

8.3.1 In addition to improving our existing active travel connections, there is a need to invest in new walking, wheeling and cycling routes in order to create a coherent active travel network.

8.3.2 As noted above, our ATS includes **a list of priority active travel infrastructure projects** aimed at developing our active travel network and identifies a number of new walking, wheeling and cycling routes which we would like to deliver during the lifetime of this LTS.

8.3.3 As noted in Chapter 3, the **Edinburgh City Bypass causes major severance across the north of our local authority area**, acting as a key barrier between us and the City of Edinburgh. We recognise that, where funding allows, improving active travel connections across the bypass could provide a range of benefits, including higher active travel uptake; reduced car use; enhanced health outcomes; and a range pf potential economic and regeneration benefits (see Sighthill Bridge Case Study below).

8.3.4 In recognition of this, we have included in our ATS pipeline, the delivery of several routes which will improve connections across the A720 as set out below and will continue to pursue available funding opportunities to progress these:

- A703 to Fairmilehead via Hillend
- Straiton to Burdiehouse via the Straiton Junction
- Shawfair and Millerhill to Dalkeith Country Park and East Lothian
- active travel provision on the A7 approaches to Sheriffhall Roundabout (The roundabout itself is under the management of Transport Scotland)

8.3.5 In designing and delivering new active travel infrastructure, we will follow the most up-to-date best practice and design guidance. Currently, this includes 'Cycling by Design'[39], 'Walking for Everyone'[40] and Wheels for Wellbeing's 'Guide to Inclusive Cycling'[41].

8.3.6 The box opposite sets out the Core Design Principles included within 'Cycling by Design'[42], Scotland's current design guidance for cycling infrastructure. Alongside the Design Principles, the document also includes a set of level of service (LOS) indicators. The LOS are scored as follows:

- **high** - suitable for most users, including new and less confident users
- **medium** - may not be suitable for some users, particularly novice users

Cycling By Design – Core Design Principles

Safety – designs should minimise the potential for actual and perceived accident risk

Coherence – cycling infrastructure should form a coherent network which links origins and destinations

Directness – cycle users should be offered the most direct route based on existing and latent trip desire lines, minimising detours and delays

Comfort – cycle user comfort is criterial to journey experience and making cycling an everyday choice for users

Attractiveness – infrastructure should be designed in harmony with its surroundings in such a way that the whole experience makes cycling an attractive option

Adaptability – cycling infrastructure should be able to evolve and improve as cycle demand changes

[39] https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/cycling-by-design/, 2021

[40] https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/11493/sustrans-arup-walking-for-everyone-inclusive-walking-report.pdf

[41] https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FC_WfW-Inclusive-Guide_FINAL_V03.pdf#:~:text=A%20Guide%20to%20Inclusive%20Cycling.%20Contents.%20Foreword.%2001%20What%20is

[42] https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/cycling-by-design/, 2021

- **low** - not suitable for a range of users, including novice and intermediate users.

8.3.7 As outlined in our ATS, when updating existing and delivering new cycle routes, **we will adopt the Cycling By Design Core Principles and look to ensure the highest level of service is provided** unless solid reasoning against this is identified as part of the design review process.

Case Study: Reducing Community Severance: Sighthill Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Bridge, Glasgow

The new Sighthill Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Bridge opened in March 2023. The new bridge replaced an aging pedestrian bridge and provides a safe and accessible walking, wheeling, and cycling link across the M8 corridor, providing a more secure and more accessible connection between Sighthill and Glasgow City Centre.

The new bridge was funded through the Glasgow City Region Deal with additional funding from the walking, wheeling, and cycling charity Sustrans and is a key part of the £250m Sighthill Transformational Regeneration Area (TRA) Project, a major regeneration project focused on the Sighthill Community and the biggest such project in the UK outside London.

Sighthill TRA includes almost 1,000 new homes; shopping and commercial space; a new community campus school, incorporating a new joint-campus school and sports facilities; a road-bridge over the Glasgow-Edinburgh railway line improving the connections between Sighthill and neighbouring communities; extensive biodiverse parkland and green-space including sports and play opportunities; and a new public square.

Improving transport connectivity to / from Sighthill is a vital component of the regeneration and thanks to the new bridge, Sighthill is now just a ten-minute walk from Glasgow City Centre. The new bridge also connects residents to National Cycle Network Route 754 along the Forth & Clyde Canal as well as wider active travel links across Glasgow.

It is anticipated that the new car free, accessible bridge will encourage active travel trips ahead of car travel, contribute to sustainable economic growth through enhanced access to employment, education and other opportunities, and help attract businesses and jobs to Glasgow and the surrounding areas.

8.4 Providing more cycle parking / facilities

8.4.1 Alongside new routes, we need to ensure there is cycle parking and/or storage at the beginning and end of each journey. The attractiveness of a well-planned and maintained cycle network can be undermined if such facilities are not provided, with a lack of appropriate cycle parking a key deterrent to cycle uptake.

8.4.2 We will aim to provide / increase cycle parking as required at key origins and destinations, including:

- new developments as an integral part of the development planning process (as discussed in Chapter 6)
- at transport interchange points, including high volume bus stops, train stations, and journey hubs (see Chapter 10)
- in our town centres and other key destinations, such as shopping centres, visitor attractions, and recreational and leisure facilities
- in close proximity to existing residential buildings which do not have ‘built in’ cycle storage.

8.4.3 The box below sets out the 'Cycle Parking User Requirements' set out in 'Cycling By Design'43. We will use these requirements (as well as any subsequent updates to this guidance) as an appraisal framework and guide during the planning and delivery of cycle parking to help ensure that the facilities provided meet the needs of all users.

8.4.4 As set out in Chapter 6, our Parking and Building Standards set out the minimum cycle parking and facilities which should be provided for different categories of development, and we will work with developers as well as, where possible, existing employers and places of education, to encourage and support the delivery of appropriate facilities in line with these guidelines.

Cycling By Design – Cycle Parking User Requirements

Easy to use - adequate space in the parking area to facilitate easy manoeuvring and adequate provision of locking points to accommodate different types of cycle.

Accessible - Convenient, visible and prominently located near entrances, at other trip end destinations. Provision for 'non-standard' cycle vehicles should also be made.

Safe - located in areas that are naturally overlooked by the occupants of buildings or pedestrians, lit, secure and vandal proof, ideally with suitable CCTV or other security arrangement.

Suitable - Fit for purpose, i.e., appropriate type of facility and the needs of users.

Attractive - sympathetic to the wider environment to enhance its appearance, appropriate to the surrounding area and complementary to surrounding street furniture.

Coherent - sits within the context of a cycle route network connecting main origins and destinations, including public transport nodes.

Well managed and maintained - efficient to use, clean and free from damaged or abandoned cycles.

Durable - a robust design, constructed with appropriate materials and fixings, that will minimise the whole life cost of cycle parking provision and deter thieves.

8.5 Maintaining our active travel infrastructure and routes

8.5.1 We recognise the importance of regular maintenance of our active travel routes, with good quality surfacing and clear sightlines (e.g. unaffected by vegetation) vital for both pedestrian and cycle safety as well as the accessibility of routes for wheelchair users and those with visual impairments.

8.5.2 During the engagement undertaken to inform the development of our ATS, route maintenance was highlighted as a key concern and a particular barrier to participation in active travel. Key issues identified included:

- poor road / path surface conditions
- debris and vegetation overgrowth in cycle lanes and along shared paths
- lack of / limited gritting of active travel routes in winter
- poorly maintained street lighting along some routes

[43] https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/cycling-by-design/, 2021

8.5.3 As set out in our ATS, we are committed to encouraging active travel and where funding allows will undertake additional maintenance activities to help support and encourage walking, wheeling, and cycling. Maintenance activities will also be fully considered and costed during the design of all new active travel infrastructure with a view to the immediate inclusion of any new assets into our current inspection and maintenance programme.

8.5.4 As set out in our ATS, we are committed to pursuing improvements to our roads and paths inspection and maintenance programme with the aim of supporting and encouraging active travel. Maintenance activities will be fully considered and costed during the design of all new active travel infrastructure with a view to the immediate inclusion of any new assets into our current inspection and maintenance programme.

8.6 Promoting walking, wheeling and cycling as a means of travel

8.6.1 As well as infrastructure improvements, we also need to provide up to date information on active travel routes and promote the benefits of active travel within our communities.

8.6.2 This will be achieved through a range of activities including:

- producing and updating both web-based and hard copy material on active travel, including up-to-date mapping, and issuing these to public buildings, including our libraries, leisure centres and health centres on a regular basis
- keeping the public updated on any newly funded infrastructure and behaviour change projects, provide progress updates on any previously funded work, as well as advertise any upcoming events.
- developing our own **Midlothian Travel App** which will include a range of active travel information which can be accessed 'on-the-go'
- **working with Sustrans to promote their Network Planning Tool** which will allow users to plan journeys based on criteria such as gradient, fastest route, how quiet the route is etc
- **providing clear signposting of walking, wheeling and cycling routes** on all new routes and seeking to update signposting on existing routes where required
- offering a range of measures to **help improve access to bicycles** (see Chapter 6)
- **continuing to work with developers** to ensure 'sustainable travel welcome packs' setting out the sustainable transport connections in the area are provided to all new residents in new build housing estates
- **continuing to work with schools** through our Bikeability sessions and other initiatives including 'Bike to school week', 'Smoothie Bike', road safety activities, School Streets, and work with Junior Road Safety Officers
- **delivering cycle training sessions** in collaboration with Cycling Scotland for members of the public as well as led rides for adults and families

8.6.3 We will also continue to deliver bicycle maintenance sessions, including to secondary school age children as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

8.6.4 As set out in Chapter 6, it is important to ensure that any resources produced are accessible (i.e. available in a wide range of formats); include information on the location of key barriers to accessibility (e.g. the location of stairs, narrow paths etc) and the availability of key services (e.g. accessible seating, help points, and toilets); and use inclusive language and imagery.

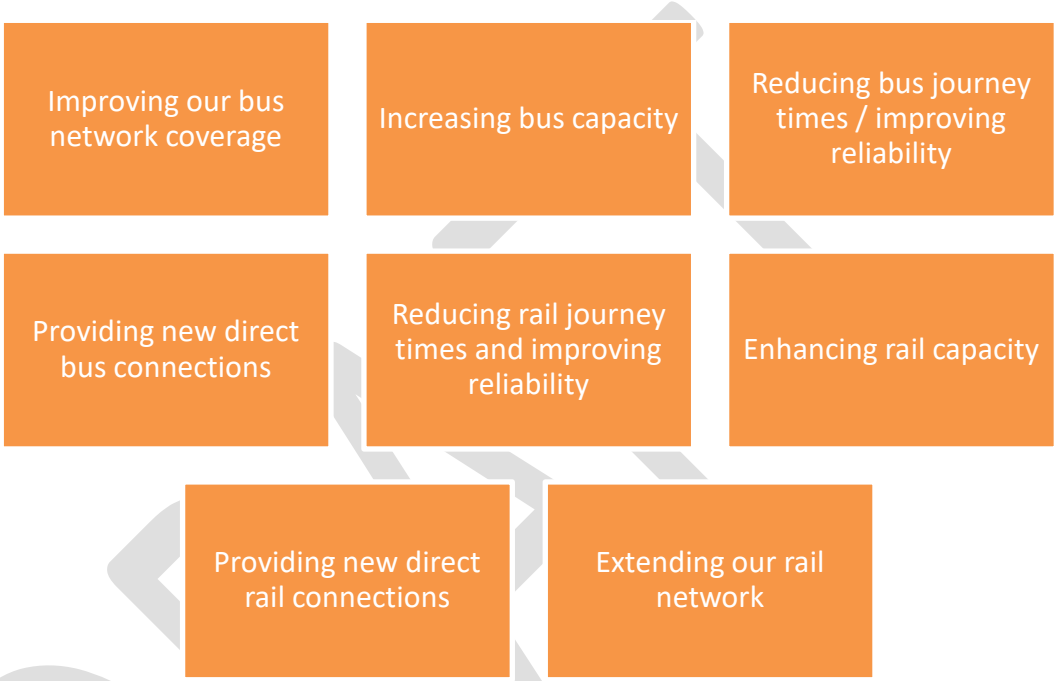
8.7 Policies (New and improved facilities for active travel)

Policy 18: The LTS supports the improvement of walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure so as to make it easier for people to make everyday journeys by active travel modes and to support health and wellbeing

9 Improving the coverage, journey times and reliability of our public transport

9.1 Overview

9.1.1 This chapter is focused on enhancing public transport services in Midlothian and between Midlothian and the wider city region. The figure below sets out the topic areas discussed in this chapter. The chapter includes separate sub sections covering bus and rail services.



Our bus services

9.2 Improving our bus network coverage

9.2.1 Bus frequency on the key road corridors in Midlothian is relatively high. However, beyond these, where urban density (and therefore demand for bus services) is lower, service frequency is much lower, particularly during the evenings. In addition, due to the concentration of services on certain corridors, some areas within the settlements served by the main line routes have relatively poor access to bus services.

9.2.2 As noted in Chapter 3, a relatively high proportion of our residents live some distance away from their nearest bus stop with analysis suggesting that 17% of households do not have *convenient access* to a bus stop *(i.e. they are between 400-800m away depending on rurality)*[44], and around 10% of those only have convenient access to bus stops which are served infrequently (less than one bus every hour). While some households with poor access are in more rural locations, there are also households in this category in our largest settlements, including pockets in Dalkeith and Danderhall as well as Newbattle. This includes residents of some of our more recent developments, some of which are relatively poorly served by public transport.

[44] Where 'convenient access' is defined using a three point typology based distance to the bus stop and level of rurality as follows i) located within 400m of a bus stop (in line with national guidance on the maximum desirable walking distance to a stop) and in a 'large urban area' or a 'other urban area', ii) located within 600m of a bus stop and in an 'accessible small towns' or a 'rural small town' or iii) located within 800m of a bus stop and in an 'accessible rural area' or a 'remote rural area'

9.2.3 Where access to bus stops and the walk to the bus stop is longer than what would be reasonably expected[45], people are less likely to use the bus. Long walks can also have a particular impact on certain groups in society such as those with disabilities and / or childcare responsibilities.

9.2.4 There is therefore a need to widen bus network coverage. This could be achieved via:

- **greater servicing of residential areas by existing bus services** – there is, however, a balance to be struck as increased servicing of residential areas would result in longer end-to-end journey times which may therefore lead to a reduction in patronage
- **improving the road network to support bus servicing**
- **provision of local feeder bus services, using smaller vehicles, to connect to main volume corridors** – this would require interchange from feeder services to limited stop or express services on the main routes and could be combined with the delivery of high-quality interchange or journey hubs and active travel connections (to support local journeys) – interchange / journey hubs are discussed further below and under Chapter 11.

9.2.5 In some locations, it may not be viable to provide timetabled feeder bus services due to low demand. In these locations, the provision of Demand Responsive Transport (**DRT) / or dial-a-ride services** could be used to enhance or replace traditional fixed route bus services at a meaningful level of frequency. A wide range of DRT based models[46] are available. In addition, advances in technology and software in the recent period have led to a new generation of 'enhanced' DRT schemes (EDRT) that are app-based and include dynamic vehicle scheduling, direct messaging, and GPS vehicle tracking and which potentially have broader appeal.

9.2.6 The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 also provides new powers in relation to buses, including the ability to introduce Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIP), local franchising and new/extended powers for local transport authorities to provide bus services to meet social needs. Through the Midlothian Bus Alliance these powers may help deliver the enhancements to the bus network required.

9.3 Increasing bus capacity

9.3.1 In addition to network coverage, a lack of capacity is an issue on some of our existing bus services. Key problems include:

- overcrowding, particularly on express services during peak times
- use of single decker buses which are too small to accommodate demand[47]
- overcrowding leading to restricted access for those with mobility issues, including wheelchair users and people travelling with a buggy
- buses leaving passengers at the bus stop due to insufficient capacity – where service frequency is low, this issue can act as a particular deterrent to bus use due to the long wait for the next service

[45] There is no clear definition of 'reasonably expected' with respect to distances to the nearest bus stop. Best practice suggests a maximum walking distance of 400 metres from a bus stop in urban areas. A typology based approach was adopted in the analysis as set out in the above bullet point which takes into account the rurality of the area.

[46] The term DRT covers an extremely wide spectrum of services from those operating a semi-fixed route and timetable to zonally based models with no fixed start or end point

[47] It is noted that single decker buses are used on some routes due to low bridges with height restrictions on the route

9.3.2 Improving bus capacity would require an increase in service frequency and / or the use of larger, higher capacity vehicles. These improvements could be focused on our main line corridors and could be aligned with wider regional proposals for a South East Scotland mass transit system[48], potentially comprising tram or bus based rapid transit solutions (BRT).

9.3.3 As referenced above, in order to maximise the potential 'reach' of higher capacity / high frequency services on our mainline corridors, such solutions could be combined with the delivery of interchange or journey hubs along with i) high-quality connecting active travel routes (to support local journeys) and ii) smaller feeder bus services / DRT / EDRT based solutions (to support journeys from communities based further away from our main line corridors).

9.4 Reducing bus journey times / improving reliability

9.4.1 There are a range of measures which could be introduced to reduce bus journey times and improve journey time reliability, including:

- providing bus priority measures including on road provision (e.g. bus lanes, bus gates) and signals technology (such as, queue relocation systems for general traffic, and traffic signal vehicle detection) to prioritise buses and other forms of sustainable transport ahead of general vehicular traffic. Further information on signal technology is included in Chapter 13.
- removing or lengthening bus stop lay-byes to help reduce delays
- implementing parking restrictions in specific locations on bus routes
- rationalising bus stops where frequent stopping adds unduly to journey times
- introducing more 'limited stop' or express services
- increasing bus capacity
- measures to reduce bus stop dwell times including e.g. ticketing systems which reduce or remove interaction time with drivers and multi-doored vehicles – the former are discussed further in Chapter 11

9.4.2 The above measures could be focused on our main line corridors and would dovetail well with the feeder service / interchange hub model discussed above.

9.5 Providing new direct bus connections

9.5.1 In addition to improving the overall coverage of our public transport network and improving capacity and journey times, there is a need for new direct bus connections. These include:

- **Intra-Midlothian east-west connections** –improving intra-Midlothian east west connections and enhancing links to key local employment centres such as Dalkeith, Straiton, Easter Bush and the MSZ would provide opportunities for our residents to work, shop etc. *in Midlothian* and help improve the labour catchment of our key business centres which is a key aim of our Economic Strategy.
- **locations beyond Edinburgh City Centre** - providing more direct orbital connections to key locations to the west of Edinburgh, potentially as part of a wider regional approach to transport delivery, could help improve connectivity and reduce car dominance.

[48] See STPR2 Summary Report and https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/29320/city-mobility-plan-2021-2030-updated-february-2024

9.5.2 As previously noted, delivering wider regional links will require close partnership working with local regional and national bodies, especially as larger strategic public transport projects will require significant public funding.

Our rail services

9.5.3 A number of organisations are responsible for managing and enhancing the rail network and services in Midlothian. Network Rail is responsible for maintaining and upgrading the railway network whilst ScotRail provide rail services. Transport Scotland specifies ScotRail services and funds infrastructure enhancements which are delivered by Network Rail. These varying organisations, collectively known as Scotland's Railway consequently have primary responsibility for delivering enhancements to the rail network or services.

9.6 Reducing rail journey times and improving reliability

9.6.1 As set out in Chapter 3, journey times from Midlothian to Edinburgh by rail are relatively long in comparison to other rail services serving the capital and there are issues with the reliability of rail journey times[49].

9.6.2 There are several underlying issues which contribute to long journey times and delays / cancellations on the line, many of which would require infrastructure improvements to address. These include:

- the line is single track with limited double-track sections – this means there are few opportunities for trains to pass each other, leading to capacity and reliability issues
- there are capacity constraints on the approach to Waverley Station, including at Portobello Junction, where the Borders Railway joins the East Coast Mainline, with Borders Railway services required to slow down, and often required to stop to await late running services through the junction
- there are a relatively high number of station stops, with six stations in the 12 miles between Newtongrange and Edinburgh
- use of diesel trains which are slower to accelerate and deaccelerate – this is a particular issue on the Borders Railway given the gradient of the route

9.6.3 The Council recognises that the issues associated with rail journey times and journey time reliability are complex but supports efforts to work in partnership to address these, and to implement targeted infrastructure upgrades to support improvements.

9.7 Enhancing rail capacity

9.7.1 Rail count data for 2023-24 suggests that use of the Midlothian Borders Railway stations is still below that of pre-COVID period[50], yet **overcrowding remains an issue on some peak time services**. In part, this is a result of too few coaches being used, although it is recognised that improvements in this respect have been made and some peak-time trains now run with paired units providing 4 or 6 coaches. The Council recognises that further increases in train capacity will be needed to support continued growth in passenger numbers and supports the implementation of further improvements in this regard.

[49] the most recent data suggests that the Borders Railway is not currently meeting ScotRail's Public Performance Measure (PPM) – see https://www.scotrail.co.uk/performance-and-reliability

[50] https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage

9.8 Providing new direct rail connections

9.8.1 Currently all north bound services on the Borders Railway terminate at Edinburgh Waverley, with no through services beyond Waverley. This means travel beyond Edinburgh, including to Haymarket requires users to interchange to another train or travel by another mode. This adds to journey time and can be a particular barrier for certain groups in society for whom interchange can be challenging, including those with mobility issues and those with neurodivergence or cognitive impairments, such as dementia. While we recognise there are wider practical constraints, we support the concept of through rail services to destinations beyond Edinburgh Waverley in order to enhance and widen access from Midlothian to west Edinburgh and the wider region.

9.9 Extending our rail network

9.9.1 Currently, the south bound Borders Railway services terminate at Tweedbank. However, in neighbouring Scottish Borders Council, there is a long-running aspiration to reopen the route to Carlisle, by using the disused alignment of the old Waverley Route and serving intermediate settlements, including Hawick in the Scottish Borders. Having through trains between Edinburgh and Carlisle could provide a wide range of benefits for Midlothian, including enhanced access to current and future employment, education, and leisure opportunities, increased inward investment and economic growth, and reduced car use and carbon emissions.

9.9.2 In 2021, the UK and Scottish governments committed £10m as part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal to deliver a feasibility study examining the benefits and challenges of extending the line from Tweedbank to Carlisle. Whilst the project was put on hold by the UK Government in September 2024, Midlothian Council recognises the benefits an extension of the Borders Railway could provide and supports the continued development of the feasibility study and business case for the railway extension.

9.10 Policies (Improving the coverage, journey times and reliability of our public transport)

Policy 19: The LTS supports measures to reduce journey times and improve the reliability and punctuality of public transport

Policy 20: The LTS supports direct bus services to part of the city-region where interchange in Edinburgh is currently required

Policy 21: The LTS supports improved east-west bus connectivity in Midlothian

Policy 22: All Midlothian communities should have equitable and proportionate access to public transport, either through scheduled mainline, feeder, or demand responsive transport

Policy 23: Our bus network supports young people making journeys to school and learning

Policy 24: The LTS supports the principle of mass rapid transit connections between Edinburgh and Midlothian

Policy 25: The LTS supports increased bus service frequencies on main corridors to reduce wait time, improve capacity and provide more options for those wheeling

Policy 26: The LTS supports infrastructure improvements to the Borders Railway to increase capacity and improve journey times and journey time reliability

Policy 27: The LTS supports through rail services to destinations beyond Edinburgh Waverley

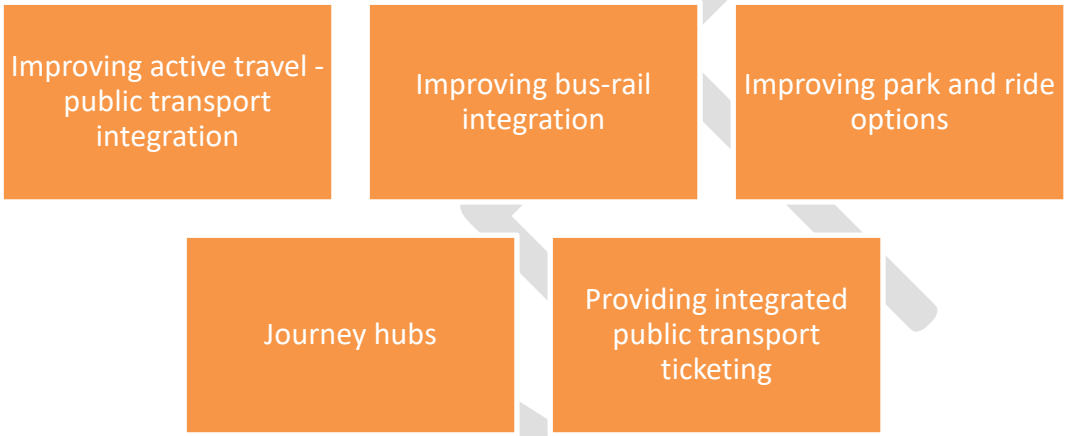
Policy 28: The LTS supports extending the Borders Railway to Carlisle

Policy 29: The LTS supports exploring opportunities around new and emerging data to help support evidence decision making

10 Improved integration across our transport networks

10.1 Overview

10.1.1 This chapter is focused on improving the integration between different transport services and modes and reducing the actual and perceived barriers to multi-leg journeys. The figure below sets out the topic areas discussed in this chapter.



10.2 Improving active travel-public transport integration

10.2.1 As discussed under Chapter 9, many active travel trips are undertaken as part of longer distance multi-modal journeys which involve public transport. In order to encourage such trips, we therefore need to prioritise improving and providing high quality active travel connections to our key public transport interchanges, including our high-volume bus stops and our railway stations.

10.2.2 In addition, in order to facilitate interchange between cycling and public transport for those who live further from stops and stations, we need to provide appropriate cycle parking or cycle hire / share facilities at transport interchanges and / or facilitate the carriage of bicycles on public transport services.

10.2.3 Working in line with the 'Cycle Parking User Requirements' set out in 'Cycling By Design'[51], we will aim to see new or increased cycle parking provision at all of our key transport interchange points. As discussed in Chapter 7, recognising their significant benefits, we will also explore the potential of implementing **cycle hire / share schemes** and fully integrating these within our wider transport network and integrated ticketing options.

10.2.4 In terms of the **carriage of bicycles on public transport services**, currently non-reservable cycle spaces are available on all Borders Rail services and on Borders Bus services X62 (Galashiels to Edinburgh City Centre via Penicuik) and X95 (Carlisle to Edinburgh City Centre via the A7). We recognise the benefits of providing space for cyclists on trains and buses, including the opportunities this provides in terms of cycle tourism, and support the expansion

[51] https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/cycling-by-design/, 2021

of such options, as well as the availability of options to reserve space for cyclists, where practical.

10.3 Journey hubs and opportunities for interchange

10.3.1 The potential creation of a network of journey or mobility hubs across our region provides an important opportunity to improve, formalise and promote integration between transport modes without requiring the large space needed for a full-scale park and ride site

10.3.2 Journey hubs are not a closely-defined concept, and they can be adapted to meet the needs of communities where they are located. They can bring together shared transport, public transport, parking and active travel and additionally can offer facilities such as EV charging points, bike hire, bike storage, parking and repairs, Wi-Fi, and post boxes / parcel lockers for pick up and returns. In more urban or town centre locations, journey hubs can also provide high quality public space, including seating areas, planting or other improvements.

10.3.3 In Midlothian, journey hubs could be co-located at railway stations or on key bus corridors and should be focussed on achieving:

- high-quality connections between active travel routes to the and public transport to allow more individual local journeys patterns to be made.
- support for higher capacity, higher frequency and limited stop bus services on key corridors
- support for any wider regional proposals for a South East Scotland mass transit system potentially comprising tram or bus based rapid transit solutions (BRT).
- terminating stops for smaller feeder bus services or DRT based services, to link passengers from communities based further away from our key public transport corridors.

10.4 Improving bus-rail integration

10.4.1 To improve connectivity between bus and rail services, a range of options may be explored, including:

- advocating for additional timetabled bus services which directly connect to our railway stations and are aligned with train timetables
- amending / adding stops on existing bus services which route near our railway stations, better aligning bus timetables with rail and / or increasing the frequency of bus services to reduce wait times
- supporting DRT or other bus services models, to connect local areas to our railway stations at peak times and late evening.

10.4.2 We recognise the significant benefits of improving connectivity between bus and rail services but acknowledge the significant challenges involved due to:

- the commercial nature of public transport services and the competition between operators
- difficulties coordinating bus and rail timetables given the above and the need for each to meet wider network requirements
- insufficient demand, resulting in a need for public sector subsidy.

10.5 Providing integrated public transport ticketing

10.5.1 Integrated public transport ticketing is an important element of a fully integrated public transport network. Due to the commercial nature of public transport provision in much of the UK, there are legislative, regulatory and financial barriers to delivering fully integrated ticketing challenging.

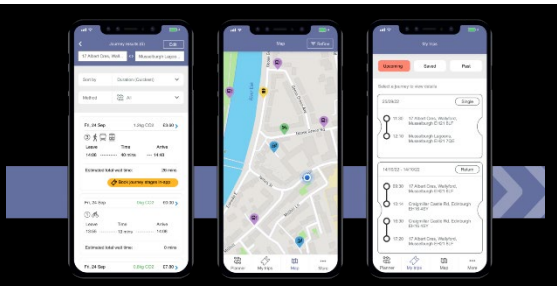
10.5.2 Recognising these challenges, the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 makes provision for a National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (NSTAB) which was established in November 2023 and is made up of different authorities, users, and experts. Its purpose is to advise Scottish Ministers on the strategic development of smart ticketing arrangements in Scotland. The Council welcomes any improvements to ticketing arrangements that can ensure passengers do not pay excessively for using more than one public transport mode in a journey.

10.5.3 Related to, integrated ticketing, **Mobility as a Service (MaaS)** is an emerging concept that allows transport users to purchase credits for use on a range of transport services (including public transport, pool car usage, access to active travel, taxi, demand responsive transport, etc.). The fundamental components of MaaS are:

- **multi-modal:** integration between multiple modes of transport including public transport, active travel, and shared mobility solutions
- **payment solutions:** users are able to pay for their travel across a range of modes directly through the MaaS platform with integrated multi-modal ticketing solutions in-built
- **one platform:** for everything including travel information, booking, ticketing and payments
- **integration:** bringing together customers, transport providers, public sector, payment processors, telecommunication companies and the platform owners
- **digital:** an online platform supported by telecommunications technology
- **user-focused:** centred around demand from customers and personalised to their needs.

10.5.4 MaaS is yet to be widely implemented. However, options which are built upon the principles of MaaS have started to emerge. For example, the GoSEStrans MaaS branded app (see Case Study below) allowed residents and visitors to plan, book and pay for end-to-end multi-modal journeys in a single transaction using their smartphone or desktop.

Case Study: Go SEStran App



The South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) launched 'GoSEStran', a pilot MaaS branded App in 2022 with the aim of improving accessibility to integrated transport services for residents, tourists and business travellers in the region and beyond.

The free-to-use app integrated multiple transport and travel options into one platform, providing more reliable journey planning capabilities, easier access to travel information, in-app ticketing and a hassle-free payment system. The app offered a range of available travel options based on journey duration, cost and predicted CO_2 emissions, including bus, train, taxi, car club, DRT, Liftshare and active travel routes.

GoSEStran was developed with support from Transport Scotland's MaaS (Mobility-as-a-Service) Investment Fund. The Fund's aim is to test, in a practical application, the viability of MaaS in Scotland. The success of the app was recognised in 2023

with awards for innovation at the Transport Times Scottish Transport Awards, SCDI Business Awards and CiTTi Magazine awards.

10.6 Improving our Park and Ride offer

10.6.1 Currently, neither of our bus-based P&R options operate at capacity, with Straiton particularly poorly used.[52] This is, in part, due to the location of the site, situated to the north of some of the congestion when travelling into the city with the result that, for many commuters, there are few benefits of using the facility. In the public consultation undertaken to inform this strategy, comments were also made about the lack of staff and the poor standard of facilities at both our bus and rail-based P&R sites. The latter is discussed in further detail under Chapter 12.

10.6.2 We recognise that our current P&R 'offer' is not currently meeting the needs of the public, including our residents, those travelling from other locations, or bus operators. The Council supports opportunities to create improved opportunities to switch from car to bus or train, particularly where this applies to key transit corridors. We will continue to work with neighbouring Councils to ensure that key routes provide opportunities for a change of mode closer to the start of a journey..The Council will continue to work with regional partners to ensure a coordinated approach.

10.7 Policies (Improved integration across our transport networks)

Policy 30: Walking, wheeling and cycling routes to our bus stops and railway stations should be clear, safe and attractive for all users

Policy 31: The LTS supports measure to make it easier to routinely take a bicycle onto a bus or train or securely leave a bicycle at a key location.

Policy 32: A combination of bus and rail travel can provide faster journey times to Edinburgh than bus alone. The LTS supports tackling timetabling, ticketing and fare barriers which make this an unattractive option for passengers at present

Policy 33: The LTS supports the integration of ticketing across all our bus and train operators

Policy 34: The LTS supports technology-based solutions to develop MaaS-style operations in Midlothian

Policy 35: The LTS supports measures to improve our strategic P&R offer.

Policy 36: The LTS supports the concept of journey hubs as a means to support interchange between bike, bus, train, car share

[52] According to the SEStran Park and Ride Strategic Study, produced in June 2020, Sheriffhall was 70% utilised and Straiton was just 25% utilised (pre-pandemic data). See SEStran-Park-and-Ride-Strategy.pdf

11 Improving the quality of our public transport

11.1 Overview

11.1.1 This chapter is focused on improving the overall quality of public transport services in order to make public transport more attractive to both current and prospective users. The figure below sets out the topic areas discussed in this chapter.

11.2 Improving the quality of journeys to and facilities at our bus stops

11.2.1 In order to improve the experience of bus users and encourage bus use, it is important that we improve the overall quality of the journey to, and the facilities at, our bus stops and wider interchanges / journey hubs. This may be particularly important for certain vulnerable groups such as those with mobility impairments.

11.2.2 A range of potential improvements to the quality of the journey to, facilities at our interchanges were identified in Chapter 6, Chapter 9 and Chapter 11 which are equally applicable here, including:

- physical accessibility improvements, including new sections of pavement or widening of existing pavements; provision of dropped kerbs and other accessible infrastructure; and the rationalisation of street furniture and other barriers
- increased segregation between i) walking / wheeling and cycling and ii) active travel and motor traffic
- improved crossing facilities, including to access bus stops and at key junctions on our strategic road network
- new or enhanced signage, lighting, and surfacing
- delivery of paired bus stops (where there is a bus stop on each site of the route) where feasible – this helps improve the usability of the network
- delivery of improved and accessible bus shelters at bus stops / journey hubs, including the provision of accessible seating and lighting
- high quality and up-to-date, accessible travel information at all bus stops / journey hubs
- co-location of other key services at high-capacity bus stops / interchange points / journey hubs, including cycle parking, cycle hire / share schemes etc
- improved maintenance of active travel routes to bus stops / key interchanges and facilities at bus stops, including shelters, seating, lighting etc

11.2.3 As well as the provision of up-to-date timetable information at bus stops, there would be significant benefits in providing **RTPI** at bus stops and key interchanges. RTPI enhances customer satisfaction and allows passengers to more effectively plan their travel, which in turn can encourage a growth in patronage. It can also encourage healthier lifestyles as people may walk to the next stop if they know there is a wait for their next service. RTPI is also extremely useful for visitors and infrequent travellers who may be less familiar with the bus network.

11.3 Improving the quality of the onboard bus experience

11.3.1 In addition to improving the quality of our streetscape and bus stops, it is also important to improve the quality of the onboard bus experience. A range of measures could be implemented in this regard including:

- the roll out of newer higher quality, comfortable vehicles across the fleet
- the provision of tables / Wi-Fi
- additional and more flexible space for wheeling on bus services (see Chapter 7)
- driver training and performance monitoring to help support the delivery of a high-quality passenger experience for all
- improved road surfacing / maintenance on key bus corridors
- enhanced cleaning and hygiene measures

11.3.2 We are committed to the transition to EVs and will work with bus operators to support the transition to EV buses. It is also possible that autonomous and connected vehicles (CAVs) will become an increasing part of the bus market over the lifetime of this strategy. While we recognise there are challenges associated with the latter, we will work with operators where opportunities arise in this area. These aspects are discussed further in Chapter 13.

11.4 Improving the quality of facilities at our railway stations

11.4.1 As with our bus stops, it is desirable to improve the quality of facilities at our railway stations in order to improve the experience of rail users and encourage rail use.

11.4.2 All four of the stations in Midlothian are single platform with step-free access and are therefore classified as ‘Category A’ (the most accessible) under ScotRail’s accessibility classification system. As discussed in Chapter 11, free parking is provided at all stations, including disabled parking, EV charging facilities and cycle parking provision.

11.4.3 There is no staffed ticket office at any of our stations. Eskbank and Gorebridge Stations are completely unstaffed, while Shawfair and Newtongrange have on-train staff who can provide help to boarding and alighting passengers. As referenced in Chapter 11, the lack of staff can cause personal safety and security fears, particularly for vulnerable groups when travelling at night and available shelter is sometimes insufficient for the number of passengers at peak times.

11.5 Policies (Improving the quality of our public transport)

Policy 37: The LTS supports measures to address overcrowding on Midlothian's train services during routine peaks and events

Policy 38: Bus stops and routes to bus stops should be high quality and well maintained

Policy 39: The LTS supports exploring partnership and other initiatives to improve the way bus services are delivered across Midlothian's settlements where this will provide a benefit to passengers

Policy 40: The LTS supports partnership working between local authorities and operators to deliver improvements for bus users and encourage new bus users

Policy 41: The LTS supports the ongoing roll out of real time information at bus stops across Midlothian

Policy 42: The LTS recognises that more flexible floorspace arrangements would benefit bus users dependent on wheeling

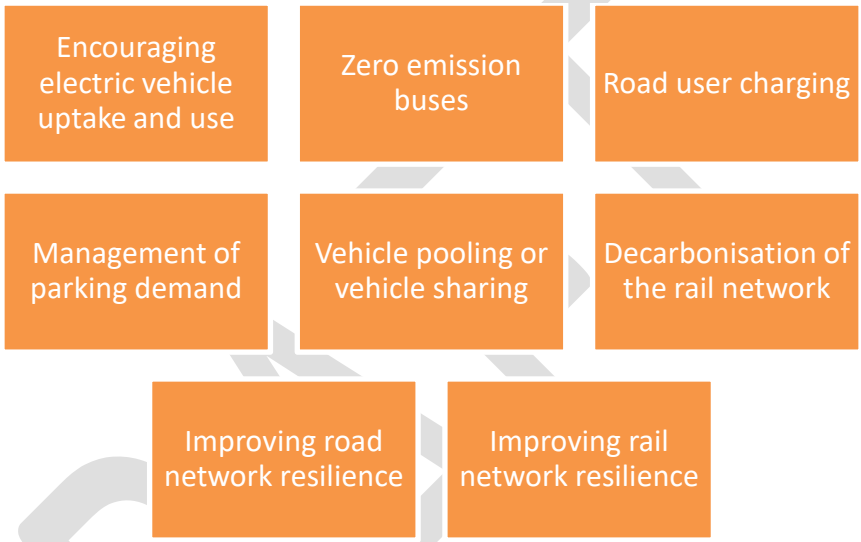
Policy 43: The LTS supports measures to bring together all public transport information into a single source / app

Policy 44: Public transport information should be accessible, readily understandable and up to date

12 Reducing the impact of transport on our local environment, decarbonising transport in Midlothian and adapting to climate change

12.1 Overview

12.1.1 This chapter is focused on reducing the negative impacts of transport on our local environment and transitioning to alternative fuel sources. The figure below sets out the topic areas discussed in this chapter.



12.2 Encouraging electric vehicle uptake and use

12.2.1 As discussed in Chapter 2, the Scottish Government has committed to phasing out the need for new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.

12.2.2 In order to facilitate this, it will be necessary for there to be a transformative shift to zero emission vehicles. **Battery electric vehicles (BEV) car registrations have grown considerably in the last 10 years, with BEVs accounting for 10% of all new cars registered in Scotland in 2023**.[53] BEVs offer zero tailpipe carbon emissions, resulting in significant improvements in air quality (excepting tyres and brake), and deliver a substantial reduction in whole life carbon generation compared to internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles.

12.2.3 In order to support our transition to BEVs, there is a **need to significantly expand our public EV charging network**. This is particularly important for residents who do not have access to suitable off-road parking (which facilitates the option to install at home charging facilities) and are therefore entirely dependent on the public EV charging network. It will also be important to ensure there is sufficient charging facilities for through traffic to support longer distance journeys by BEV.

12.2.4 While the private sector will increasingly provide EV charge points as the number of EVs grows, there remains a role for the public sector to ensure that access to charge points is equitable and the tariff structure adopted supports a just transition across our communities (noting that public charging is typically much more expensive than charging at home[54]). As with all new infrastructure, it will also be important to ensure charge points are **designed to be**

[53] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/vehicle-licensing-statistics-data-tables

[54] See https://www.zap-map.com/ev-stats/charging-price-index

accessible for all users. With respect to the latter, in October 2022, the BSI introduced an EV Accessible Charging Specification (PAS 1899:2022[55]) which sets out how to design accessible charge points and which we will aim to adopt in the design and delivery stages of all charge point infrastructure.

12.3 Zero emission buses

12.3.1 There is also a need to **transition our public transport vehicle fleet to zero emission vehicles**, with buses presenting the quickest win in terms of public transport decarbonisation. EV battery performance and range is rapidly improving, and bus operators are increasingly switching to fully electric vehicles. For example, Lothian Buses introduced its first fully electric double deck bus in September 2024 as part of the company's net zero emission strategy (see Case Study).

Lothian: Driving towards Net Zero

In September 2023, Lothian Bus published its fleet decarbonisation strategy called *Lothian: Driving towards Net Zero*. The strategy sets out a phased approach to the transition to zero emission vehicles and infrastructure with the ultimate aim of becoming fully net zero by 2035.

As part of the fleet replacement strand of the strategy, Lothian Buses introduced its **first fully electric double deck buses in September 2024** both of which currently operate in Edinburgh only. The Volvo BZL Electric buses offer customers improved comfort and quieter journeys, with each accommodating more than 70 passengers and featuring Wi-Fi, high back seats and USB charging points. **Each vehicle also includes two wheelchair spaces.**

To accommodate the buses, extensive works were undertaken at Lothian's Central Depot in Annandale Street to install the necessary charging facilities. Once plugged in, the new buses will take just 3-4 hours to fully charge.

Beyond this initial investment, subsequent phases of the strategy will consider the following types of vehicles:

- Fully electric with overnight charge capability that will cover the entire daily service with one charge
- Hydrogen fuel cell that will be refuelled at the end of service
- Fully electric with opportunity charging facilities within the route

Under the strategy, Lothian buses will also be undertaking an innovative scoping project which will explore the feasibility of repowering mid-life diesel buses to electric which would significantly accelerate the company's net zero plan.

12.3.2 While private operators are examining and investing in EVs, there is however a case for continued public sector support in incentivising the transition to more efficient and zero

[55] A Publicly Available Specification (PAS) is a fast-tracked standardisation document which defines good practice for a produce, service or process. PASs are often produced in response to an urgent market need and according to the BSI around 30% of PASs which BSI have published have gone forward to form the basis of an international standard. See What is a PAS? (Publicly Available Specification) | BSI (bsigroup.com)

emission vehicles. This may include the provision of incentives to commercial operators to modernise their fleet along with the provision of appropriate charging facilities on route.

12.4 Management of parking demand through parking restrictions and enforcement

12.4.1 The management of parking provision and the enforcement of parking restrictions is another policy means which can be used to directly impact the appeal of car travel and overall levels of car use. Currently, there are a number of issues with parking management and enforcement in Midlothian, including:

- a relatively large supply of free or low-cost parking in some locations which acts to encourage car use, with resultant negative impacts such as traffic intimidation, emissions, and noise
- use of free car parking by commuters leading to low turnover of parking spaces, especially around town and commercial centres which can result in lost trade for local businesses / reduced town centre vitality
- inappropriate / overspill car parking around schools and train stations and from some new developments which affects residential and nearby areas
- indiscriminate and illegal parking in some locations which can lead to safety issues and the degradation of the public realm / footways being blocked
- loading difficulties due to too few loading bays / poorly located loading bays in some locations
- a lack of blue badge parking resulting in poor access for disabled groups.

12.4.2 Managing parking provision for different types of users and improving enforcement is vital to help us meet our wider policy goals and can bring a wide range of benefits. We therefore support the improved management of parking provision across Midlothian and will seek to develop and update our **Parking Strategy** during the lifetime of this LTS.

12.5 Vehicle pooling or vehicle sharing

12.5.1 Our LTS seeks to provide **alternatives which make car ownership less necessary**, including through the use of **shared mobility** options such as vehicle pooling and vehicle sharing:

- **Vehicle-pooling** is ride sharing where people with similar travel requirements share one vehicle rather than making separate trips. Vehicle-pooling can be undertaken informally between friends / colleagues (as is highly common in islands), coordinated by an employer, or formally through an online platform or app that matches people who have no other connection other than similar travel requirements.

12.5.2 **Vehicle sharing** is where users access shared vehicles through a vehicle sharing organisation that provides a fleet of vehicles in their local area. Vehicles can then be booked online or via a smartphone app. The operator provides fuel, parking and maintenance with users paying a fee each time they use the vehicle. Midlothian Council recognises the benefits of both vehicle pooling and sharing services and supports the expansion of such options across Midlothian and the wider area. As referenced in Chapter 6, the implementation of shared mobility options along with the application of TOD principles could help support the delivery of low or zero car developments in some selected locations.

12.6 Decarbonisation of the railway network

12.6.1 As well as decarbonising our road network, it is also important to decarbonise our rail network. Transport Scotland has an ambitious plan to decarbonise all passenger rail services in Scotland by 2035.[56] As set out in Chapter 3, while currently diesel powered, the Borders Railway was built with passive provision for electrification and Network Rail has already commenced design development works for the electrification of the line.[57] As well as carbon reduction, electrification would also result in reliability benefits, reduced operating costs, and improved acceleration, helping to reduce overall journey times. We recognise the need to decarbonise our rail network and the benefits this can bring and fully support the electrification of the Borders Railway.

12.7 Improving road network resilience

12.7.1 Road network resilience, broadly understood as the ability of the road transport network to recover following an incident is an increasingly important consideration, particularly given the impact of climate change, including more extreme temperatures and weather events such as flooding. The latter will have a considerable impact on how we live and work, and we must ensure that our road network is able to accommodate these changes. We will work to understand the potential impacts of climate change on our road network and will review and update our **Roads and Paths Inspection and Maintenance Schedule** based on this and assist with making the case for wider investment where required.

12.8 Improving rail network resilience

12.8.1 Like the road network, the Borders Railway is also susceptible to disruption due to increasing extreme weather. It is important that the safety and integrity of our rail line continues to be carefully monitored and that improvements are made to improve resilience, including regular vegetation clearance. More generally, it is essential that new transport infrastructure, including infrastructure to support the electrification of the Borders Railway, is designed to mitigate the impacts of climate change such as increased severe weather events and flooding.

[56] https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47906/rail-services-decarbonisation-action-plan.pdf

[57] In August 2022, Network Rail submitted a screening request to Scottish Borders Council over electrification plans – see Borders Railway electrification bid revealed - Midlothian View

12.9 Policies (Reducing the impact of transport on our local environment, decarbonising transport in Midlothian and adapting to climate change)

Policy 45: The LTS supports a roll out of publicly available and affordable EV charging infrastructure to i) support households who cannot charge at home and ii) serve through traffic

Policy 46: The LTS supports the full decarbonisation of bus services in Midlothian and the provision of facilities to support this

Policy 47: The LTS supports suitable taxation measures for ICEs, EVs and other alternative-fuel vehicles that ensure their usage is managed in line with the NTS2's Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and which also accords with the 'polluter pays' principles

Policy 48: The LTS supports the principle of improving the management and enforcement of traffic and parking, including within our town and commercial centres, key transport interchanges and near schools

Policy 49: The LTS supports initiatives to reduce the requirement to own a car but still have occasional, affordable access to a car

Policy 50: The LTS supports the full decarbonisation of the Borders Railway

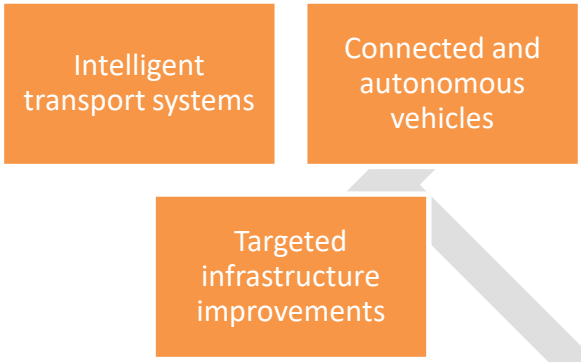
Policy 51: The LTS supports infrastructure and maintenance measures to reduce the impact of severe weather on our road networks

Policy 52: The LTS supports infrastructure and maintenance measures to reduce the impact of severe weather on the Borders Railway

13 Making our transport networks more efficient

13.1 Overview

13.1.1 This chapter is focused on making our transport networks more efficient by making best use of existing capacity as well as investing in targeted infrastructure enhancements in some locations as part of a wider package of sustainable transport improvements. The figure below sets out the topic areas discussed in this chapter.



13.2 Intelligent transport systems

13.2.1 ITS use real-time data, artificial intelligence, and communication systems to optimise traffic flow and network performance. A wide range of automated technologies are used to facilitate data acquisition, data processing, communication, and distribution, with technologies located both within the transport infrastructure and individual vehicles.

13.2.2 As well as optimising traffic flows, ITS can be used to **streamline public transport services**. For example, bus vehicles can be fitted with sensors which allow them to interact with traffic signals so that, as they approach, they are given priority (e.g., by initiating or extending a green light) through the junction. The implementation of ITS can result in a wide range of benefits for all types of road users and can help us achieve our wider transport, planning and environmental policy goals. Benefits include:

- reduced congestion
- reduced emissions and enhanced environmental performance
- improved safety
- better management of planned works and incidents on the road network
- improved journey time reliability
- enhanced observance of bus timetables
- reduced travel costs for individual users
- reduced operational costs for bus operators and freight transport companies

13.2.3 We recognise the significant benefits that ITS can provide and support its implementation where appropriate across Midlothian.

13.3 Connected and autonomous vehicles

13.3.1 **Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV)** are likely to play a more prominent role in our transport system in the coming years and have the potential to provide a wide range of benefits, including augmenting and facilitating enhanced ITS systems.

13.3.2 Automated features are already present in many cars on the market today, such as automatically regulating a safe distance to the vehicle ahead, lane assist technologies, blind spot detection and cameras and sensors when cars are reversing. As technology continues to advance, higher levels of automation are being developed and piloted with commercially driven advances in this sector being delivered by organisations who are competing to develop fully automated or 'driverless' vehicles. As such, it is plausible that higher standards of automated vehicles will move from pilot projects to operational within the lifetime of this LTS.

Whilst there are clear benefits to CAVs, there remain many issues to overcome, for example the allocation of liabilities in the event of a collision. In addition, it is important that automation contributes to other goals, including the delivery of net zero. Moreover, given that automation is largely market-led, it is essential that there is policy, regulatory and legal framework which governs the introduction of such vehicles onto our roads.

13.4 Targeted road infrastructure improvements

13.4.1 The LTS recognises that investment in new road infrastructure is a 'last resort' measure in terms of Transport Scotland's Sustainable Transport and Sustainable Investment hierarchies where investing in more sustainable modes and making the best use of existing assets is the priority.

13.4.2 In addition to making best use of existing capacity within our transport networks, in order to sustain network efficiency and enhanced safety, it may also be necessary to implement targeted road infrastructure improvements alongside a wider package of sustainable transport improvements

13.5 Policies (Making our transport networks more efficient)

Policy 53: The LTS supports technology-based measures to improve the efficiency and safety of our transport networks

Policy 54: The LTS supports the provision of appropriate facilities to support the movement of freight through Midlothian and within Midlothian including last mile deliveries

Policy 55: Opportunities for the more widespread usage of connected autonomous vehicles for the provision of bus services should be kept under review

Policy 56: The LTS supports targeted infrastructure improvements in selected locations alongside a wider package of sustainable transport improvements in order to sustain network efficiency and enhance safety

14 Summary and Priorities for Change

14.1 Overview

14.1.1 This document provides a comprehensive account of our approach to transport delivery. It sets out our policies and strategic direction and articulates our position in relation to key strategic issues.

14.1.2 Necessarily, the document covers a wide range of transport areas and includes policies covering our business-as-usual activities within transport (such as our continued assessment of safety on our adopted network, our regular maintenance programme and our Winter Service Policy) as well as policies covering key aspects of change which we intend to deliver over the next ten-year period.

14.1.3 To help articulate and summarise the latter more clearly, this section highlights our top ten 'Priorities for Change' for Midlothian and considers how these may be implemented spatially across our local authority area.

14.2 Priorities for Change

14.2.1 To help deliver the transformative change required, our 10 Priorities for Change are:

- **A bus ready network to support new developments and growth**
- **A step change in bus priority on key north south corridors**
- **Closing missing links and extending the reach of our active travel network**
- **Improved access to public transport for our residents**
- **Improved cross city bypass active travel options**
- **Improved east-west bus connectivity**
- **Improved management of traffic and parking**
- **More effective park and ride / journey hub / interchange options**
- **New developments which are better connected by active travel and public transport**
- **Working with regional partners to develop new mass transit options for travel to Edinburgh**

14.3 Spatial approach

14.3.1 Some of our key corridors and locations will require specific interventions to support people to make more sustainable journeys and to reduce congestion.

14.3.2 Figure 5-4 sets out an emerging spatial approach. As we progress with the implementation of this LTS and deliver the Actions within our Delivery Plan, we will further develop this approach.

14.3.3 We are supportive of proposals to improve mass transit in the region in principle, including the proposed expansion of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland (ESES) mass transit system into Midlothian. We will continue to work with Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Partners to ensure a coordinated regional approach to transport delivery and seek to ensure

mass transit enhances accessibility to services across Midlothian, benefitting all parts of our society.

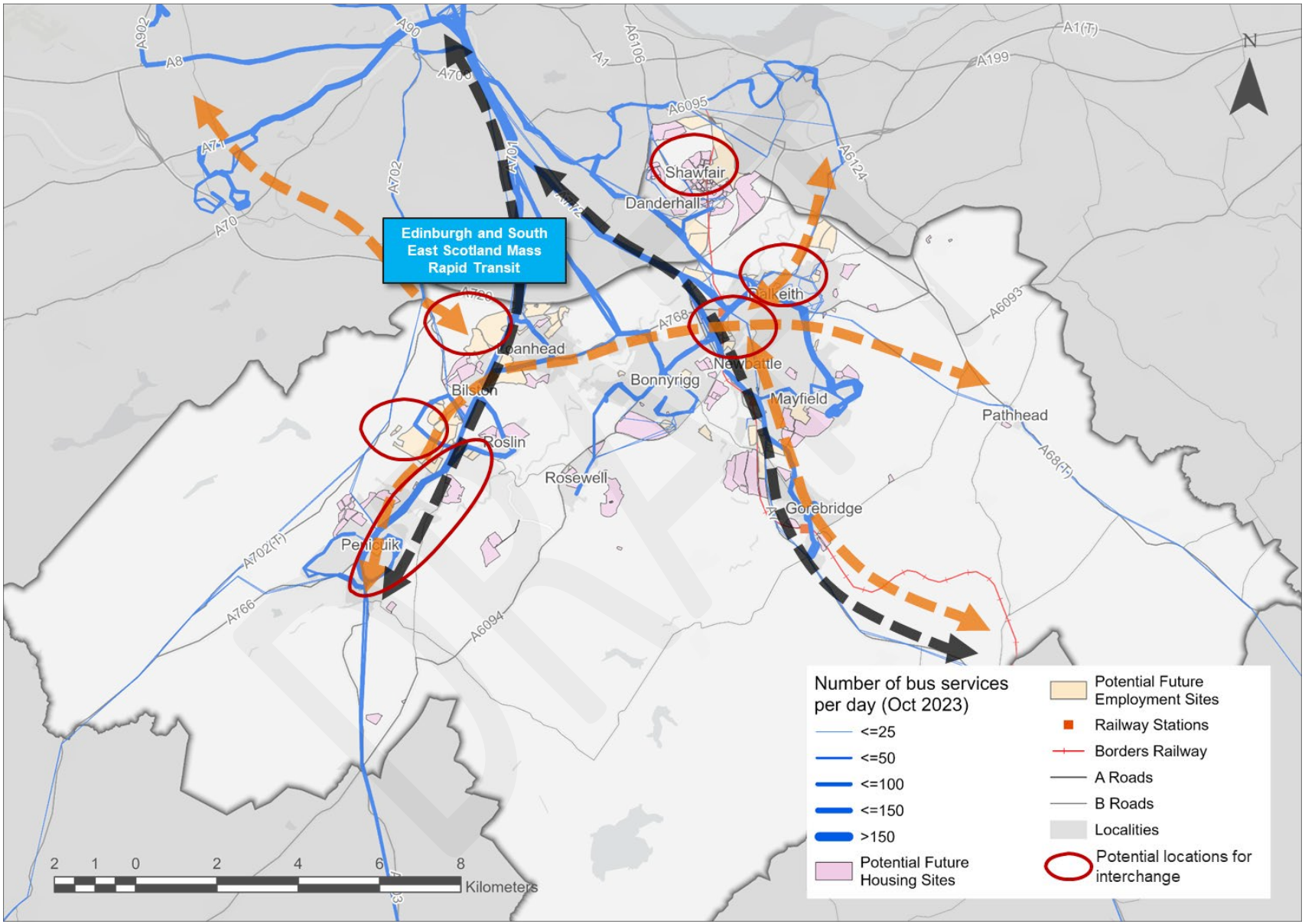


Figure 5-1: Local Transport Strategy – Emerging Spatial Approach

15 Monitoring and Evaluation

15.1 Overview

15.1.1 Monitoring the delivery of our LTS will be important to assess the extent to which our LTS Vision and Strategy Outcomes, as set out in Chapter 4, are being achieved.

15.1.2 To facilitate this, a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been identified. These are each linked to the Strategy Outcomes and are closely linked to those defined for the monitoring of the NTS2. They will be used to measure how the transport system performs over the lifetime of this LTS (2025-2035) against an established baseline prior to implementation.

15.1.3 As set out in Chapter 4, subsequent to the agreement of this LTS, an accompanying **Delivery Plan** will be developed which will set out the activities we will undertake in the short, medium and long-term with respect to each Policy. The Delivery Plan will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis throughout the lifetime of the strategy as part of the ongoing Monitoring process.

15.2 Key Performance Indicators

15.2.1 There are four types of indicators that will be used to monitor and evaluate progress in meeting the Strategy Outcomes against an established baseline:

- published data, such as that found in Scottish Transport Statistics
- published primary research
- indicators developed through bespoke analysis
- primary research

15.2.2 The latter will comprise a new **Midlothian Travel and Transport Survey** which will be undertaken every two years which will monitor the main trends in travel, views on different transport modes and the causal mechanisms which may drive changes in behaviour towards achievement of our Strategy Outcomes, at a greater level of detail than currently available.

15.2.3 The sections below set out a range of indicators which are specific to each Strategy Outcome. In addition to these, a range of published aggregate transport statistics will be used to track and report trends at the macro level, such as overall road traffic levels etc.

LTS Outcome 1: Our new developments integrate transport planning and land use planning and deliver high-quality active travel and public transport connections

Type	Indicators
Bespoke analysis	▪ assessment of convenient access to bus stops in new developments
Midlothian Travel and Transport Survey	▪ travel by mode for those in new developments ▪ cycle / car ownership for those in new developments ▪ satisfaction with different travel modes / barriers to use for those in new developments

LTS Outcome 2: Our towns provide more space for people, and are more attractive for walking, wheeling, and cycling

Type	Indicators
Published data	▪ annual average daily traffic within our settlements (Transport Scotland automatic traffic counts) ▪ travel to school mode for primary / secondary school children (Sustrans Hands Up Survey) ▪ road casualties by severity – with a focus on collisions occurring within our settlements (Scottish Transport Statistics) ▪ cycle count data from locations within our towns / villages (where available and substantive) ▪ Workplace Mobility Data showing Pedestrian Density (where applicable)
Midlothian Travel and Transport Survey	▪ travel by mode ▪ frequency of trave to Midlothian destinations ▪ cycle / car ownership ▪ satisfaction with different travel modes / barriers to use ▪ views on impact of transport in, and 'liveability' of, our towns

LTS Outcome 3: Our settlements are connected by safe, attractive and accessible public transport and active travel routes

Type	Indicators
Published data	▪ average annual daily traffic on key strategic routes between our towns and villages (Transport Scotland automatic traffic counts) ▪ rail passengers by station (ORR estimates of station usage) ▪ congestion delays experienced by drivers (SHS) ▪ road casualties by severity (Scottish Transport Statistics) ▪ cycle count data from routes connecting our towns / villages (where available and substantive)
Bespoke analysis	▪ public transport journey times from postcodes in Midlothian to destinations in Midlothian, including comparison of public transport and car journey time differentials ▪ public transport connectivity to employment, education and key services from origins in Midlothian to destinations in Midlothian ▪ assessment of public transport connectivity and deprivation across Midlothian ▪ assessment of convenient access to bus stops
Midlothian Travel and Transport Survey	▪ travel by mode within Midlothian ▪ frequency of trave to Midlothian destinations ▪ cycle / car ownership ▪ satisfaction with different travel modes / barriers to use ▪ perception of quality, safety and accessibility of active travel and public transport

LTS Outcome 4: Strategy Outcome 4: Our settlements are connected to key locations in Edinburgh and the wider region by fast accessible and affordable public transport and high-quality active travel routes

Type	Indicators
Published data	▪ rail passengers by station (ORR estimates of station usage) ▪ cycle count data from key strategic cross boundary routes (where available)
Bespoke analysis	▪ public transport journey times from postcodes in Midlothian to destinations in Edinburgh, including comparison of public transport and car journey time differentials ▪ public transport connectivity to employment, education and key services from origins in Midlothian to destinations in Midlothian, Edinburgh and the wider SEStran region ▪ assessment of public transport connectivity and deprivation across Midlothian ▪ assessment of convenient access to bus stops ▪ affordability of bus and rail travel between key origins and destinations
Midlothian Travel and Transport Survey	▪ travel by mode outwith Midlothian ▪ satisfaction with different travel modes / barriers to use ▪ views on how transport in Midlothian affects local and global environment ▪ perception of quality, safety, security and accessibility of active travel and public transport

LTS Outcome 5: Transport in our area is decarbonised in line with national objectives through a mix of new technology and behavioural change

Type	Indicators
Published data	▪ transport related CO_2 emissions in Midlothian (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) ▪ annual Midlothian air quality statistics (Midlothian Air Quality Progress Reports) ▪ licensed vehicle statistics by fuel type and body type in Midlothian (Department for Transport) ▪ roll-out of zero emission buses in Midlothian / rail network decarbonisation ▪ number of public EV charging devices (DfT EV charging infrastructure statistics)
Midlothian Travel and Transport Survey	▪ car ownership by fuel type ▪ travel by mode, including breakdown of car travel by fuel type ▪ satisfaction with different travel modes / barriers to use, including zero emission vehicles ▪ satisfaction with public EV charging infrastructure ▪ views on how transport in Midlothian affects local and global environment