

ZetTrans Regional Transport Strategy 2022-2042 Consultation

Cycling Scotland submission February 2023

The Regional Transport Strategy Vision is set out in Chapter 5 and is as follows:

"Our transport networks in Shetland and our connections to the rest of Scotland support our social and inclusive economic prosperity, provide equitable access to opportunities, enable people to live healthy and active lives, facilitate the development of sustainable and inclusive communities, and contribute to our net zero emission targets."

Question 5: Do you agree or disagree with this Vision?

- Strongly Agree

Strategy Objectives

The Regional Transport Strategy identifies six Strategy Objectives. These are set out in Chapter 5 and are as follows:

- Objective 1: To address the barriers which constrain access and /or impose unreasonable costs on travel and transport for all groups to / from the rest of Scotland
- Objective 2: To address the barriers which constrain access and/or impose unreasonable costs on travel and transport for all groups within Shetland
- Objective 3: To facilitate and encourage safe walking and cycling and wheeling for everyone, including for leisure and tourism
- Objective 4: To improve alternative, more sustainable travel options in Shetland for all including those without access to, or who would prefer not to use a car
- Objective 5: To transition towards an environmentally and financially sustainable, post-carbon transport system
- Objective 6: To support safe, resilient, and efficient movement of all people and freight across Shetland

Question 7: Thinking about Objective 1, "To address the barriers which constrain access and / or impose unreasonable costs on travel and transport for all groups to / from the rest of Scotland", do you agree with this objective?

- Agree

Question 8: Thinking about Objective 2, "To address the barriers which constrain access and/or impose unreasonable costs on travel and freight transport for all groups within Shetland", do you agree with this objective?

- Don't know

Question 9: Thinking about Objective 3, "To facilitate and encourage safe walking and cycling and wheeling for everyone, including for leisure and tourism", do you agree with this objective?

- Strongly Agree

Question 10: Thinking about Objective 4, "To improve alternative, more sustainable travel options in Shetland for all including those without access to or who would prefer not to use a car", do you agree with this objective?

- Strongly Agree

Question 11: Thinking about Objective 5, "To transition towards an environmentally and financially sustainable, post-carbon transport system", do you agree with this objective?

- Strongly Agree

Question 12: Thinking about Objective 6, "To support safe, resilient, and efficient movement of all people and freight across Shetland", do you agree with this objective?

- Agree

Regional Transport Strategy Themes

The Regional Transport Strategy identifies eight Themes. These are introduced in Chapter 5 and are as follows:

1. Enabling and encouraging active travel
2. Improving the quality of, and access to, our public transport
3. Extending bus connectivity
4. Connecting our islands
5. Enhancing our external connections and supply chain
6. Decarbonising our transport
7. Embracing new technologies
8. Enhancing network efficiency

The Themes have been used to shape the content of the RTS, with a separate chapter covering each theme and relevant Policies setting out the 'broad direction of travel' with respect to each theme included therein.

Question 14: Thinking about Theme 1 "Enabling and encouraging active travel", how important is this theme for you?

- Extremely important

Question 15: Please provide any comments on the Policies included within this Theme if you wish

- Measuring and growing the rate of cycling in Shetland is vital in achieving the vision and various national strategies including the reduction of car kilometres and as part of the new NPF4. As mentioned within the current Shetland Active Travel Strategy the improvement of walking and cycling facilities will be beneficial to both the tourism industry and post-pandemic recovery. However, everyday cycling can do so much more beyond the health outcomes mentioned including reducing pollution, saving costs, and bringing communities together. We welcome ideas that could work particularly well for the Shetland context such as increasing access to e-bikes in areas that may be hilly or far away to increase connectivity.
- Cycling infrastructure investment within Shetland is an effective way to reduce forced car ownership, identified as one of the main problems on the island. We note that currently there are no dedicated cycle routes in Shetland and this needs to change. Based on the feedback from residents in Shetland it would make sense to start in and around Lerwick due to the high population in this area, with 30% of Shetland residents being based there. Additionally, ensuring that the 10 miles radius of the largest settlements is accessible to people on bikes can support the modal shift in Shetland.
- We agree that there needs to be a focus on improving current paths to grow rates of active travel. Ensuring that paths are not too narrow, damaged, or uneven makes active travel accessible for all, and continuous auditing and reporting on path conditions beyond the 2026 strategy document is important to maintain a high level of standard to Cycling by Design levels. In particular, we are concerned with the lack of lighting as mentioned within the strategy, and with the lack of dropped curbs. Making these changes can help people feel safer and can make cycling more accessible.
- We support the ambition to ensure that cycling infrastructure accommodates nonstandard bikes as this could support and encourage disabled and older people to cycle. We also welcome initiatives that will consider access to bikes in general and investigation into a shared bike and e-bike scheme in Shetland. Projects such as the [Shetland Community Bike Project](#) have also shown that there is an appetite for e-bikes.
- The document highlights the need to upgrade cycle parking and storage. There is an opportunity for both Shetland Council and businesses within Shetland to apply for funding such as [Cycling Friendly initiatives](#) to improve storage and facilities, in particular as one in three people work within the public sector. Increasing residential cycle storage and secure overnight storage will make a difference for anyone wishing to use their bike for commuting rather than leisure. There is already an example from [Environs Hjaltland Housing Association in Shetland that received Cycle Friendly funding](#) for cycle storage.
- Improving connectivity is vital if we are to increase the rates of cycling. This includes making things easier for inter-island travel but also to/from the mainland. An example of this is [bike shelters installed at ferry terminals](#).
- We welcome the recognition that there is a lot to be done before quality paths are interconnected and call on the strategy to prioritise this as an action in order to ensure that people of all abilities and all confidence levels feel more comfortable to cycle.

Question 16: Thinking about Theme 2 "Improving the quality of, and access to, our public transport", how important is this theme for you?

- Extremely important

Question 17: Please provide any comments on the Policies included within this Theme if you wish

- This theme is key for reducing car dependency within Shetland and also an opportunity to increase cycling uptake through buses that accommodate bikes. Bookable spaces for bike storage on buses and more predictable bus service can encourage more people to combine bike and bus travel. The ability to undertake longer multimodal trips has also been mentioned as a missed opportunity. [An example of how more bikes can be accommodated on buses in Scotland can be seen through Border's Buses.](#)

Question 18: Thinking about Theme 3 "Extending bus connectivity", how important is this theme for you?

- Extremely important

Question 20: Thinking about Theme 4 "Connecting our islands", how important is this theme for you?

- Extremely important

Question 22: Thinking about Theme 5 "Enhancing our external connections and supply chain", how important is this theme for you?

- Extremely important

Question 24: Thinking about Theme 6 "Decarbonising our transport", how important is this theme for you?

- Extremely important

Question 25: Please provide any comments on the Policies included within this Theme if you wish

- In this section we welcome the recognition that EV's are not a zero- carbon option and that there can be risks associated with lower EV costs. EV's still produce pollution, increase dangers for vulnerable road users and also reduce the behaviour change towards active travel modes. This section rightly points out that there is a danger in increasing private vehicle travel, especially as car kilometres have risen

significantly in Shetland between 2009 to 2019, with only 13% of households without a car. Actions that suit Shetland's geography are needed here to reduce car usage, for example considering parking charges, incentivising the purchase of bikes and e-bikes through grants and loans, and improving bus timetables.

- We note that the strategy supports the reduction of private car travel 'subject to equality impacts', but does not mention that those on lower incomes [are less likely to have access to a car](#). This is a powerful reason to ensure that more residents in Shetland have access to work, facilities, and housing without relying on a car and we welcome the strategy objective four KPI that mentions measuring 'societal participation from those without access to car'.

Question 26: Thinking about Theme 7 "Embracing new technologies", how important is this theme for you?

- Important

Question 28: Thinking about Theme 8 "Enhancing network efficiency", how important is this theme for you?

- Extremely important

Question 29: Please provide any comments on the Policies included within this Theme if you wish

- We welcome the mention of climate change adaptation and especially increased maintenance of active travel routes. This will also have an impact on road safety and will become more important as adverse weather increase with climate change. We call on any plans that include cycle infrastructure to include parity with road maintenance for people driving. We also note that [with the rise in the cost of living more people may take up cycling to build financial resilience](#) and therefore ensuring that current and future infrastructure is adverse weatherproof is key.

Any Other Comments

Question 32: If you have any other comments on the Draft Regional Transport Strategy which have not been covered within the survey, please add them below. Please do not include any personal information in your response.

- We are supportive of the reference to placemaking and 20 minute neighbourhoods and the opportunities for more people to cycle as part of their everyday journeys. While projects like these require a Shetland specific approach, it is possible to incorporate them into future house building and planning.
- Transport emissions could be significantly reduced by enabling more sustainable development. This also gives an opportunity to create more cycle parking and storage which has been mentioned as a key barrier.

- We are supportive of the plans for road reallocation and note that there is strong public support for this in Shetland. There is a concern that currently ‘paths are often interrupted by busy road crossings, wide junctions, and narrow footways’ with road reallocation these issues could start to change to make travel safer and more direct for people cycling.
- More cycle infrastructure and sustainable development would also help in bringing in safety initiatives such as reduced speed to give more opportunities for people to walk, wheel, and cycle. Planning for active travel routes before approving planning is key as it would save money in the long run rather than retrofitting active travel infrastructure later.
- We welcome the reference to the installation of cycle monitors to measure rates of cycling at key locations – this data should be used for interventions in policy and changes in infrastructure to increase rates of cycling.