



FIFE COMMUNITY CYCLING ACTION PLAN

DECEMBER 2021

Credits: North Fife Cycling Group



Credit: Greener Kirkcaldy

1. INTRODUCTION

This Plan proposes ten actions to get more people commuting by bike in Fife. Greener Kirkcaldy created it on behalf of Fife Communities Climate Action Network (FCCAN), as part of the Climate Action Fife project.

Research¹ shows that the best way to increase cycling rates is to provide both:

- Improvements to infrastructure (e.g. cycle paths), and
- Local cycling activities to promote cycling and improve people's skills and confidence.

FCCAN spoke to local people to see which actions would have the greatest impact in Fife. We held stakeholder workshops and ran a community survey to gather people's views. We asked what the biggest barriers are to commuting by bike, and what people would need to overcome these. This plan presents our findings and recommendations.

We looked at travel to work, college and university. As we focussed on the potential to replace car journeys with cycling, we only engaged with people who were old enough to drive. We did not include school runs.

Many people are currently working from home because of COVID restrictions. We asked these people to complete the survey based on their likely commuting habits when they return to their workplace. Members of the public were asked to complete the survey about their own commute, whilst stakeholders were representing their wider community.



Credit: Averill Marks

¹ Investing in Cycling and Walking: Rapid Evidence Assessment, 2016, Brook Lyndhurst, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/606513/cycling-walking-rapid-evidence-assessment.pdf

The top ten recommendations are:

1. Create more segregated cycle paths, especially on rural roads and busy urban roads
2. Improve maintenance of paths and roads
3. Improve segregation of pedestrians and cyclists
4. Reduce speed limits on main urban roads and key rural roads
5. Install more cycle storage at homes and destinations such as workplaces
6. Provide more space for cycles on buses and trains
7. Undertake a public education campaign about the considerate use of paths and roads
8. Create cycle maps for local areas and improve signage for cycle routes
9. Increase the availability of affordable good quality cycles both for sale and for borrowing
10. Build skills and confidence for people to cycle, and to maintain their own bikes.

We hope that local community organisations across Fife will take some of these recommendations forward. Many community groups are interested in reducing their town's carbon emissions and providing more transport options to local residents. Their knowledge of the area and local residents means that they are well placed to run cycling activities. Communities could use this plan to influence Community Action Plans and Local Development Plans.

We would like Fife Council to consider the recommendations when creating their new Transport and Active Travel strategies. We also hope that local bus and train service providers will implement our recommendations about cycle storage.



Who are we?

Greener Kirkcaldy created this Action Plan on behalf of **Fife Communities Climate Action Network²**. FCCAN has 29 members, who are community-led organisations based in Fife. Several of these have a proven track record of delivering cycling projects over the past 13 years. This has included running second hand cycle shops, led rides, cycle training, bike maintenance classes, and bike loan schemes.

The development of the Action Plan was part of the **Climate Action Fife project**. Climate Action Fife brings together people and organisations to tackle the climate emergency. It also aims to make Fife a greener, fairer place to live. Climate Action Fife is a Fife-wide partnership between Greener Kirkcaldy, Fife Council, Fife College and Fife Communities Climate Action Network.

² <https://fccan.wordpress.com/>



Credit: Greener Kirkcaldy

2. WHY IS CYCLING FOR DAY-TO-DAY JOURNEYS IMPORTANT?

Cycling offers a wide range of benefits.

- **Reduced emissions**

Cycling is an important mode of transport. It can help to tackle the climate emergency by replacing short car journeys. This would help the Scottish Government to achieve its target of reducing car kilometres by 20% by 2030. Fife Council estimates that half of all journeys in Fife could be cycled within 15 minutes.³

- **Fairer society**

A quarter of households in Fife do not have access to a car.³ Making it easier for people to cycle can help to address inequalities, by increasing the range of viable transport options.

- **Mental and physical health benefits**

In 2012, a study found that health problems caused by physical inactivity were costing the NHS in Scotland £94.1million every year.⁴ Encouraging more cycling can improve people's health and help to reduce the pressure on the NHS.

- **More pleasant neighbourhoods**

Replacing car journeys with cycling will improve road safety, and reduce noise and air pollution.

This plan supports Fife Council's objective "To encourage walking and cycling for short trips and as part of an integrated journey to promote a healthier lifestyle."⁵

³ Fife Council Local Transport Strategy Main Issues Report (2021, unpublished).

⁴ Costing the burden of ill health related to physical inactivity for Scotland, Foster et al, 2012. <https://www.globalphysicalactivityobservatory.com/anexos/Letter%20s/Scotland/Scotland%20anexo1.pdf>

⁵ Fife Council's Local Transport Strategy 2006-2026, https://www.fife.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/286082/LocalTransportStrategy-2006-2026.pdf

3. ENGAGEMENT

FCCAN gathered views from community groups, other stakeholders, and members of the public. 277 people across Fife completed a survey to give their views on commuting by bike. We promoted the survey through in-person events, local radio and newspapers, and online through Greener Kirkcaldy and other local stakeholders.

In addition, 29 people from 24 stakeholder organisations attended our workshops. Six other groups gave us their views via emails and online surveys.

This plan has focused on commutes to work, university and college. We engaged with people who were over 17 and could potentially drive these journeys.

Of those surveyed, 38% were male and 61% female. 55% have a commute of 7 miles or less, so could realistically commute by bike within half an hour, on either a regular bike or an e-bike. 77% of those surveyed currently cycle, and 17% regularly commute by bike. This is a higher proportion than in the general population – the 2019 Scottish Household Survey⁶ found that only around 2% of Fife residents commuted by bike.

55% of those surveyed told us that they would like to commute by bike, but do not feel they can at the moment. This was a very useful group to hear from in the survey, because we wanted to find out what is stopping people who want to do so from commuting by bike.

We also engaged with national walking and cycling charity Sustrans Scotland, who provided valuable insights.



Credit: Greener Kirkcaldy

“Sustrans welcomes the launch of this new action plan, and we hope to see steps taken in Fife soon to encourage and facilitate more cycling and active commuting.”

The barriers to commuting by bike

We found that the main obstacles preventing people from commuting by bike are:

- Not feeling safe cycling on the road
- Absence of showers and lockers (for change of clothes, etc.) at their destination
- Not knowing how to fix their bike
- Lack of cycle storage at their destination
- Cycling being impractical for transporting things
- The journey taking too long by bike, and
- Not being fit enough.

⁶ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/transport-and-travel-in-scotland-2019-results-from-the-scottish-household-survey>

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

These are the top ten actions that FCCAN thinks would make the greatest difference in increasing the number of people commuting by bike.

We asked people what actions they thought would be essential, and which would be helpful. These recommendations are based on the feedback we got from the public survey and the stakeholder engagement.

ROUTE IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendation 1:

Create more traffic-free paths

Create more high quality traffic-free paths for cyclists, particularly along busy urban roads and key rural roads.

60% of those surveyed did not feel safe cycling on the road. As most people surveyed were already cyclists, this figure would probably be higher in the general population. Stakeholders and survey respondents agreed that creating more traffic-free paths is vital. 49% of those surveyed said they would not commute by bike without this, and a further 41% said that this would be helpful.

Some people do not feel safe cycling on any road, no matter how quiet it is. However, most stakeholders agreed that the priority for traffic-free routes should be on busier, faster roads. We recommend that main urban roads and key rural routes are the priority for segregated paths.

We have split the recommendations into three sections:

- **Route improvements**
- **Cycle storage**
- **Behaviour/attitude change measures**

Fife is a large and diverse county. Some areas are urban and some rural. Income and levels of deprivation also vary greatly in different locations. It is important that these recommendations are considered within the context of each local area.



Credit: Greener Kirkcaldy

“New cycle path between Burntisland and Kinghorn is excellent, it means I regularly cycle to Burntisland to do shopping, whereas before I would have driven. Also my children can now cycle there independently too.”

Fife Council is best placed to improve the network of cycle paths. Funding for active travel routes is available through programmes such as Places for Everyone.⁷

⁷ <https://www.showcase-sustrans.org.uk/places-for-everyone/>

Rural roads

Only 21% of those surveyed felt happy cycling by themselves on rural roads, which often have lots of fast traffic. However, people felt much safer cycling on quieter rural roads.

Half of the stakeholders thought that traffic-free routes should connect all villages and towns. This is particularly important in rural areas, where public transport is often poor and people see driving as the only option. Traffic-free routes also need to cover entire routes, rather than being piecemeal.

“Cycle paths are only really useful when for commuting if they actually link villages to towns without gaps. They always force you on the road at various places.”

Urban roads

People also want a network of safe cycling networks within towns. It is important that these include main roads, which most people do not feel safe cycling on by themselves.

On main roads, parked cars and hills both make cycling more dangerous. Drivers do not have space to overtake cyclists safely where there are parked cars. Cyclists also feel less safe when cycling uphill, as they think their slower speed makes drivers more impatient. Therefore, we recommend prioritising traffic-free paths on hilly routes.

“Any safe cycling provision needs to not hinder the access of riders - a cycle path is useless to many cyclists if it means stopping every half a mile or less. It also needs to not relegate the rights of the cyclist to use the existing roads - that would be a step back in cycling freedom.”

What should these routes look like?

People disagreed about what these routes should look like. In general, people prefer traffic-free routes away from roads, which are quieter, more scenic, and less polluted. However, people worry that these routes are unsafe, particularly after dark.

Paths next to main roads are likely to be more direct, and therefore more convenient for commuting. People feel safer using these when there is a barrier between the path and the traffic. The barrier does not need to be large - it could be just a strip of grass. Transport Scotland's Cycling by Design guidance⁸ supports this, recommending a buffer between the road and the cyclists' section of the path.

Ideally, we would like people to have a choice between these different types of route.

Cycle paths or shared use paths should be suitable for all kinds of cycle. A few people said that the surfaces of some existing shared use paths are not suitable for road bikes.

Faster cyclists do not like having to slow down for pedestrians or having to give way at every side road. Therefore, they often choose to use the road rather than shared use paths. This can irritate drivers, some of whom feel that cyclists should not be on the road if there is a shared use path available. Several people asked for cyclists to be given priority to cross side roads ahead of cars, to make shared use paths faster for cyclists. Cycling by Design agrees that it is important to reduce the number of times that cyclists need to stop.⁷

⁸ Cycling by Design, Transport Scotland, 2021. <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/50323/cycling-by-design-update-2019-final-document-15-september-2021-1.pdf>

Recommendation 2:

Improve maintenance and surfacing of paths and roads

Paths and roads should have well-maintained, smooth surfaces that are suitable for all types of cycle. Paths should be kept clear of litter, vegetation and parked cars.

It is important that shared use paths are well maintained so that they are suitable for all types of cycle. 31% of those surveyed said that better maintenance of cycle paths would be essential for them to commute by bike, and a further 58% said it would be helpful. A quarter of stakeholders agreed that this is vital.

People raised a number of points in relation to this:

Quality of surfaces

Cyclists on road bikes often choose to cycle on the road because of poor quality surfacing on paths. This may be because of poor maintenance, or the type of material used. Gravel paths and roads are unsuitable for some bikes.

“Many cycle paths are not suitable for road bikes, which is how I commute given the distance I need to travel.”

“St Andrews path is broken up with roots making it hard to cycle.”

In addition, potholes and drain covers cause problems for people cycling on the road. These are particular issues at the side of the road, where people typically cycle.



Credit: North Fife Cycling Group

Vegetation and litter

It is important to trim back vegetation so that it does not overhang shared use/cycle paths. The debris also needs to be cleared off the path, as thorns can cause punctures. In addition, it is important to keep the paths clear of litter.

“A lot of the areas that are cycleable the growth of vegetation is terrible (Bobligen Way).”

Pavement parking

In some locations, it is common for cars to park on shared use paths. This forces cyclists onto the road. Enforcement is needed to stop drivers from doing this.

Gritting

It is important that shared use paths are gritted in icy weather to ensure that they are still safe for cyclists to use.

“Ice and snow - bike paths are seldom cleared or gritted.”

Recommendation 3:

Improve segregation of cyclists and pedestrians

Cyclists and pedestrians sharing space causes a lot of conflict. Cyclists get frustrated when they have to slow down for pedestrians and dogs who get in their way. Pedestrians find it scary when cyclists speed past them. 28% of the people we surveyed said that better segregation of pedestrians and cyclists is essential, and a further 58% said it would be helpful. Almost half of the stakeholders agreed that this is vital.

The most effective way to segregate these groups would be to create separate paths for each. If this is not possible, people suggested several alternative measures:

Widen paths

Widen paths, so that there is enough space to segregate pedestrians and cyclists.

Install a physical barrier between pedestrians and cyclists.

Ideally, people would like something like small bollards, but even a strip of grass would help. Cycling by Design⁷ recommends a physical gap between cyclists and pedestrians where their paths are on the same level.

Improve signage

Clearer, more frequent signage on shared use paths would help to show who should be on which side of the line. Currently, people can be on a shared use path for a while before they see any of this signage.

Install “Share with care” signage

This would encourage pedestrians and cyclists to be more considerate of each other.

“Sometimes I think the signage in some places could be better. I’m sometimes not sure when a pavement is shared use and when it isn’t.”

“Cycleway signage needs to be better maintained. Many lines are almost invisible and shared use paths lack signs on many routes - all of which causes angst between cyclists and pedestrians.”

We recommend that Fife Council creates cycle paths that are as segregated from pedestrians as possible. They could do this either by putting them at different heights, or by putting a strip of grass between the two paths. In addition, we would like the council to improve signage of these routes to make it clearer who should be on which side.



Credit: Greener Kirkcaldy



Recommendation 4:

Reduce speed limit on main urban roads and key rural roads

Fast traffic puts people off cycling on the road. 29% of those surveyed said that they would only commute by bike if traffic was slower, and a further 49% said this would be helpful. Some stakeholders supported this, saying that it is key to reduce the speed limit to 20mph on main urban roads. A few also wanted the speed limit reduced to 40mph on a network of rural roads that could then be designated as cycle routes.

Stakeholders also highlighted a need for greater enforcement of speed limits, as well as the introduction of presumed liability⁹ in the UK.

Fast traffic can be off-putting to cyclists even if they are not on the road. It can make adjoining shared use paths feel less safe. This is why people have asked for some kind of barrier between fast roads and shared use paths, even if it is only a strip of grass.

“Lower speed limits on non-main roads would be amazing! There’s no need for people to drive that fast if they are choosing to travel off of the main road in the area and it makes it way more usable for cyclists. Even a drop from 60 to 40 or from 40 to 30 makes a huge difference!”

FCCAN recommends that Fife Council reduces the speed limit to 20mph on all urban roads that do not have a segregated path for cyclists.

We would also like Fife Council to designate key rural roads as cycle routes, and to reduce the speed limit on these to 40mph. This will help encourage confident cyclists to use these routes. However, segregated paths will still be needed to attract less confident cyclists.

⁹ Presumed liability' is an element of civil law that relates to crashes involving vulnerable road users (such as cyclists). It finds the more powerful road user liable by default unless it can be clearly proven that the vulnerable road user was at fault.

BIKE STORAGE

Recommendation 5:

Install more cycle storage at homes and destinations

More cycle storage at homes (particularly flats) and destinations, such as workplaces, town centres and public transport hubs.

There is a clear need for more cycle storage, both at people's homes and at their destinations.

Cycle storage at workplaces, colleges, universities and public transport hubs

Our engagement focussed on commuting to work, university and college – however, some responses also asked for more cycle storage in town centres. 40% of those surveyed said there is not enough cycle storage at these locations. 32% said that bike racks in these places are essential, and a further 26% said they would be helpful.

“Bike storage/parking is mostly unavailable.”

In addition, there is a need to better integrate cycling with public transport. 26% of those surveyed said bike racks are needed at public transport hubs, and 23% said that bike lockers are.

Stakeholders agreed that better public storage is essential, especially at bus stations and train stations. In rural areas, people may need to cycle to get to the nearest bus stop. Where this is the case, stakeholders felt that there should be cycle storage at these bus stops too.



Bike shelters/racks vs lockers

There is some disagreement about whether bike racks/shelters or lockers are the best option. Shelters and racks are easy to use and available to everyone. However, some people do not feel that their bike would be safe in these. People do not want the hassle of replacing their bike if stolen, even if their bike is low-cost. And people are less likely to want to leave expensive bikes on racks. This is important to note as e-bikes become more popular.

Lockers provide a higher level of security. However, they are much less user-friendly. Vertical lockers are awkward to use, and users need to be strong to be able to manoeuvre their bikes in vertically. They are not suitable for all cycles, e.g. they are not large enough to accommodate child seats. In addition, people can leave a padlock on a locker, meaning that it is unavailable to others even when it is not in use.

We recommend that some bike lockers are provided at key destinations, whilst racks and shelters are provided elsewhere. Where there are lockers, they should be user-friendly and accommodate all sizes and styles of bike, along with accessories, if possible.

“Bike lockers need to be bigger to be able to store bikes with child bike seats.”

Cycle storage at these locations could be installed by Fife Council, workplaces, Fife College or the two universities¹⁰. Cycling Scotland has funds these organisations could apply to for this.



Storage at home

Not all homes have suitable space for storing bikes. This is a particular issue for flats, where carrying bikes upstairs is awkward and chaining bikes to the banisters is often banned.

22% of those surveyed said they would only commute by bike if they had cycle storage, and a further 10% said it would be helpful.

Half the stakeholders felt that communal on-street cycle storage was vital in areas with flats. This should be well lit and overlooked (possibly with CCTV).

FCCAN recommends that all new housing developments be required to provide safe cycle storage for residents. For existing neighbourhoods with limited or no facilities (e.g. flats), we would like Fife Council and housing associations (where relevant) to install cycle storage, either on-street or in communal areas. Housing associations can apply for funding for this from Cycling Scotland's Social Housing Fund.



¹⁰ St Andrews University and Dundee University, which has a campus in Kirkcaldy.

Recommendation 6:

Install more cycle storage on buses and trains

Some people commute too far to cycle all the way. However, people would like to be able to combine cycling with public transport for longer journeys. There are several barriers to this, particularly the shortage of cycle spaces on buses and trains.

34% of the people we surveyed said that having more space for bikes on trains would be needed for them to commute by bike, and a further 37% said it would be helpful. A third of stakeholders agreed that this is essential.

Several people mentioned the importance of being able to take bikes on buses. This is particularly important as buses serve a much wider area than trains. We recommend that Fife bus services provide space for bikes on buses, in addition to the space they provide for pushchairs and wheelchairs. This storage should be user-friendly (as seen on buses in the Borders), where bikes can be wheeled onto the bus.

“Bike spaces on BUSES. Trains have limited routes - buses serve a much wider area.”

Taking a bike on a train comes with its own specific issues:

Shortage of spaces

Each train typically provides space for 2-4 bikes. This is not always enough. You cannot book your bike onto local trains, so there is no guarantee you will be able to take your bike on the train. Sometimes the cycle storage space has luggage in it.

“Bike transport on trains is currently woeful, particularly when transporting families (in/on bigger bikes/tandems). The standard class 170 Scotrail service has 4 bike spaces but they are often taken with luggage. The Inter7City HSTs only have 2 and they aren't ergonomic (the same can be said for the Cross Country and LNER trains that serve North East Fife).”

“Bike space on trains HAS to improve!”

Impractical cycle storage

Long distance trains provide less space for bikes, and require you to navigate your bike into a small space and hang it from a hook. This is very awkward to do.

Inadequate system for booking bikes onto trains

It is not possible to book your bike onto local train services. Whilst you can book it onto long-distance trains, it is not possible to do this until a week beforehand, which means that you miss out on cheaper advance fares.

We recommend that bus and rail companies serving Fife provide more cycle storage facilities on their vehicles. These should be easy to use, and measures should be put in place to keep these clear of luggage. We would also like train companies to allow people to book cycle spaces on their trains further in advance, to allow people to access cheaper fares.

BEHAVIOUR/ATTITUDE CHANGE MEASURES

Recommendation 7:

Undertake a public education campaign about the considerate use of paths and roads



Credit: Greener Kirkcaldy

A Fife-wide campaign aimed at cyclists, drivers and pedestrians, to promote the importance of sharing spaces with others in a considerate manner.

Our survey did not ask people about their attitudes towards other types of road/path users. Nor did it ask about other people's attitudes towards them. Despite this, there were 50 separate comments in the survey about this. It is clear that this is a significant problem that needs to be addressed.

Cyclists and pedestrians

Cyclists do not like sharing paths with pedestrians because:

- They have to slow down when they pass pedestrians
- Pedestrians often walk on the wrong part of the shared use path, and get in their way
- Pedestrians sometimes wear headphones and therefore cannot hear them coming, and
- Dogs can be unpredictable and get in their way.

"Better education/awareness for pedestrians would help. I'm confident on roads but other path users tend to be more of an issue."

"I feel that shared use paths can be dangerous as pedestrians often stray into the bike lanes, the surface of these routes are often poor and often there are dogs on leads (or worse still off leads) that are unpredictable. I prefer to cycle on the road."

Similarly, pedestrians do not like sharing space with cyclists because they feel that cyclists go too quickly and scare them. They sometimes also take up the width of the path and force pedestrians onto the road.

"Many cyclists cycle on the pedestrian pavement through Torryburn, Newmills and Low Valleyfield, forcing pedestrians onto the road. It happened more than 20 times to me and was one of reasons elderly said they were frightened to go for a walk outside their own front doors!"

"Cyclists completely ignore the rules of the road and are a serious threat to pedestrians."

Cyclists and drivers

Cyclists do not like sharing road space with cars because some drivers:

- Don't give them enough space
- Go too quickly
- Don't keep an eye out for cyclists, and
- Shout abuse at them.

"The road culture needs to change to allow free access for bicycles as current road environment only leads to resentment towards cyclists as they are seen as 'getting in the way'. As a result, my wife refuses to cycle."

"Abuse from motorists despite my adherence to rights and rules."

"It would be helpful to educate car drivers as to why cyclists ride 'in the middle of the road', the effect of a close pass, the awareness of cyclist, etc."

Similarly, drivers do not like sharing road space with cyclists because:

- Cyclists slow down the traffic
- Drivers often believe that cyclists don't follow the Highway Code (although it is possible that this is a misconception – for example, cyclists are allowed to cycle two abreast), and
- Cyclists sometimes move between pavements and the road unexpectedly.

"Motorists don't like bikes holding them up."

"As a car driver, it is disconcerting when a cyclist suddenly jumps from pavement to road. Cyclists need to observe the Highway Code!"

In addition, some drivers think that cyclists should not be on the road if there is a shared use path available. This can lead to drivers abusing cyclists who use the road in these places.

Creating dedicated paths just for cyclists would tackle these problems. In the meantime, improved attitudes between drivers, cyclists and pedestrians could help to make cycling safer and more enjoyable.

There is support from both stakeholders and those surveyed for a campaign to promote considerate use of shared spaces. This should include driver education around giving cyclists space. Comments from those surveyed highlight the importance of also including shared use paths in this campaign.

"People believe what they read, whether they previously believed it or not. So a campaign of large advertising boards re: car/bicycle road safety to promote tolerance and good road manners among all users would be advantageous to all. Would also give confidence to many of the cyclists I know who are too scared to attempt riding on the roads."

We recommend that a campaign aimed at all road and path users is delivered across Fife, using a range of communications channels and linking to national campaigns such as Cycling Scotland's Give Cycle Space campaign¹¹. This could be led by Fife Council or by local community organisations.



Credit: Greener Kirkcaldy

¹¹ <https://www.cycling.scot/what-we-do/campaigns/give-cycle-space>

Recommendation 8:

Create cycle maps for local areas and better signage for cycle routes

17% of those surveyed said that signage and maps showing cycle routes are essential, and a further 58% said this would be helpful. Stakeholders agreed about the importance of mapping all cycling routes.

Cycle maps such as the one created for Kirkcaldy¹² should be created for towns across Fife.

Stakeholders also highlighted a number of ways that signage could help to promote cycling:

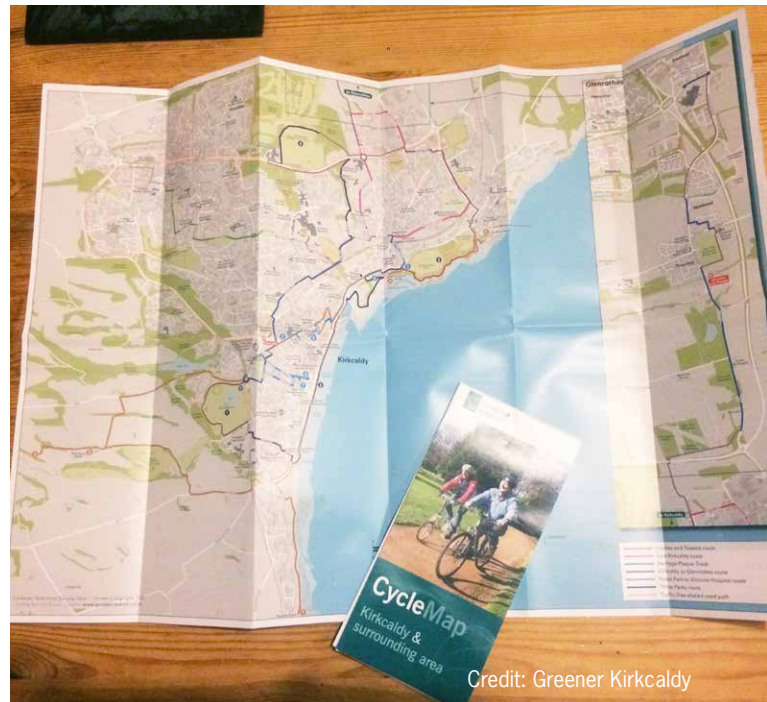
- showing the distance to destinations
- encouraging people to “share with care”, and
- highlighting designated cycling routes.

“Generally an up-to-date detailed map of cycle routes in Fife would be a start, none available.”

We recommend that Fife Council installs more signage on cycle routes. We would also like cycle maps for different parts of Fife, particularly for towns. These could be made by Fife Council or by local community organisations.



Credit: North Fife Cycling Group



Credit: Greener Kirkcaldy



Credit: North Fife Cycling Group

¹² Kirkcaldy Cycle Map, Greener Kirkcaldy, 2020. https://www.greenerkirkcaldy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/GreenerKirkcaldy-CycleMap_WEB-1.pdf



Recommendation 9:

Increase the availability of affordable good quality cycles, both for sale and for borrowing

Have a community cycle shop in every mid-sized town in Fife offering sales, loans, cycle servicing and repairs.

Stakeholders think that access to bikes is a significant barrier to people commuting by bike. Half believe that the ability to buy an affordable bike is crucial. They also feel that short-term access to bikes is important – this could be through bike loans or bike share schemes.

Whilst only around 7% of those surveyed said that these projects would be essential to them, a third agreed that they would be helpful. They also thought that it would be helpful to be able to get their repaired locally.

A third of those surveyed said they would only use these schemes if they included e-bikes. This highlights the growing levels of interest in e-bikes, and the importance of providing access to these.

Having local cycle shops throughout Fife would help to provide access to bikes (and having bike recycling projects would help to make these affordable). These cycle hubs could also operate bike loan schemes. It is important that these schemes also offer access to equipment such as helmets, lights and locks.

Greener Kirkcaldy has been running a bike loan scheme since 2017, and opened a community cycle shop in 2020, following strong community support. These have been very popular, and we would like to see these replicated in other towns.

We would like to see cycle shops offering affordable bikes for sale, bike repairs and servicing, and bike loans in every mid-sized town in Fife. Dr Bike events¹³ could help to provide repair services in smaller towns. A quarter of the stakeholders felt that regular Dr Bike sessions in local neighbourhoods were key, particularly for people without a car.

Local organisations could deliver these projects.

¹³ Local events that provide free cycle checks and basic repairs.

Recommendation 10:

Build skills and confidence for people to cycle, and to maintain their own bikes

Community bike maintenance courses, cycle training and led cycle rides.

39% of survey respondents do not know how to repair their bike. 7% of those surveyed said that they would only commute by bike if bike maintenance classes were available. A further 52% said that these would be helpful, and stakeholders agreed.

6% of those surveyed said that led rides would be essential for them to commute by bike. A further 36% said that these would be helpful.

The Leven Connectivity Project¹⁴ found even higher levels of support for these activities: 73% for led rides, 63% for bike maintenance classes, and 49% for cycle training.

Greener Kirkcaldy has been running these activities since 2018, following strong levels of interest from the local community. Activities now also include “Build a Bike” courses, where people build their own bike, and can keep it at the end. This is particularly helpful for people who cannot afford to buy a bike.

These activities would help people benefit from any improvements to cycling infrastructure.

“I am a lone parent who loves to cycle with my sons however repairing the bike is costly and I have no knowledge of how to repair.”

“Bike is broken and I have no money or knowledge to repair.”

We recommend that these activities be rolled out with communities across Fife. Local organisations are best placed to deliver these, because of their knowledge of the area and their communities.



Credit: North Fife Cycling Group



Credit: Greener Kirkcaldy

¹⁴ A joint project delivered by Sustrans, SEPA and partners to improve active travel opportunities in the River Leven area of Fife. <https://www.theleven.org/projects/connectivity-project/>



Credit: Greener Kirkcaldy

CONCLUSION

In this document, we have outlined what actions are most likely to get more people commuting by bike in Fife.

FCCAN focussed on the potential to replace car journeys with cycling, as this would result in carbon reduction. Therefore, we looked at travel to work, college and university, and we only engaged with people who were old enough to drive.

Our recommendations are based on stakeholder workshops, a community survey and information and knowledge gathered from FCCAN members. We have also engaged with Fife Council and Sustrans to create this plan.

It is clear that increasing the number of people commuting by bike will require a number of different actions to be taken. None of these measures by themselves will achieve significant increases in cycling.

The greatest impact will come from a combination of improvements to cycling infrastructure and activities to give people the skills, knowledge and confidence to cycle more. A campaign to encourage people to share the path and road networks more considerably is also key. Implementing this package of measures will require action from Fife Council, bus and train companies, and local organisations.

Fife is a large and diverse county, and these recommendations should be adapted to the local area. Relevant factors to consider include levels of deprivation, provision of bus and train services, distances between settlements, and how hilly an area is. All of these will affect cycling levels and the best ways to implement the recommendations in this plan.

We hope that local community organisations across Fife will take some of these recommendations forward. Local communities can use the plan to influence Community Action Plans and Local Development Plans. We would like Fife Council to consider these recommendations when creating their new Transport and Active Travel strategies. We also hope that the bus and train companies that serve Fife will act on our recommendations about cycle storage.

This Action Plan paints a picture of how we can get more people in Fife commuting by bike. A joined-up approach between stakeholders can help to realise this, with the wide range of benefits that this can bring to both individuals and communities.

