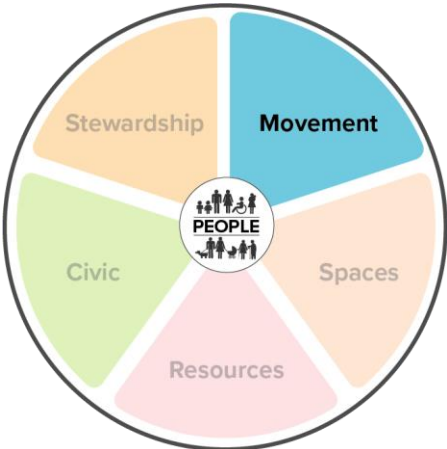




Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

Active Travel: Impact on Dalkeith's Community



Active travel can have a positive impact on people when:

- Everyone can easily move around using good-quality, accessible, well-maintained and safe segregated wheeling, walking and cycling routes and access secure bike parking.
- Everyone can wheel, walk and cycle through routes that connect homes, destinations and public transport, are segregated from, and prioritised above, motorised traffic and are part of a local green network.

This is why it is one of Scotland's Place & Wellbeing Outcomes.

Active travel simply means making journeys in physically active ways - like walking, wheeling (using a wheelchair or mobility aid), cycling or scootering.

The evidence for active travel¹

 <p>Active travel can improve health by increasing physical activity, weight loss and reducing obesity.</p>	 <p>Active travel is associated with reduced risk of death.</p>
 <p>Active travel can increase social interactions.</p>	 <p>Active travel is associated with improving mental health.</p>
 <p>Active travel can minimise harms to health by reducing motorised traffic.</p>	 <p>Safety is a key barrier to increasing active travel amongst women.</p>
 <p>Walking/cycling to school helps children achieve a healthy weight, with the benefit being greater for children in deprived areas.</p>	 <p>1/3 of Scotland's households don't own or have access to a car. This increases to 1/2 of households in deprived areas.</p>
 <p>Active travel can provide benefits to local economies.</p>	 <p>There is increased public support for investment in walking and cycling, particularly amongst people on low incomes.</p>

1. Source: [Evidence Behind Place Standard Tool & Place and Wellbeing Outcomes](#)

Active Travel rates in Midlothian²

10% of people use active travel to get to work in Midlothian compared to 16% across Scotland 2020

Midlothian is the 12th lowest local authority for active travel to get to work across Scotland 2020.

60% of children use active travel to get to school in Midlothian compared to 50% in Scotland 2022/2023

Midlothian is 4th highest local authority in Scotland for children to active travel to school. Over the past 5 years there has been a general decrease in active travel to school.

What we heard from a range of communities, organisations and practitioners in Dalkeith in 2023

Getting around Dalkeith

For people on low incomes, active travel and affordable public transport provide access to essential services and support, plus employment, training and volunteering opportunities.

With high levels of poverty and low car ownership, much of Dalkeith's population is dependent on public transport, especially buses.

There is a lack of clear connections and cycle routes between Dalkeith town centre and many of the surrounding areas, such as Woodburn, where there are also challenges with a steep gradient.

Potential for more cycle routes to connect to the Country Park, which is currently seen as a place for those who drive there from out of town.

Connections between the town centre and train station could be improved.

“ *There is an increase in people not having enough money to buy food or pay bills, so they are losing out on accessing services, as they can not afford to travel – local support worker* ”

Active travel to work and school

Road surfaces around the town centre are putting off the most experienced cyclists.

There are a few places in the town centre designated for bike parking, such as the bike racks outside the library. It is suggested that they are underused due to perceptions that they are not trusted secure places.

Police Scotland have been doing work around bike registers, free bike marking and providing security advice. They offer drop in stalls within the community or workplaces to help encourage people to use bikes too.

Employers could support staff to develop a green travel plan, supporting active travel and its benefits to people and planet.

There were e-bikes available a few years ago, but these were discontinued due to vandalism and dumping of bikes. Perhaps they could be reconsidered.

Whilst active travel rates to schools in Midlothian are good, compared to other regions, there is a lack of perceived safe routes to some schools in the Dalkeith area e.g. Cowden Park to the school and routes from the train station in Eskbank.

“ *The siting of the school campus to the North of Woodburn, away from the centre of the Dalkeith Area, has been a disincentive to active travel – family support worker* ”



Community transport services are a lifeline for those with mobility issues to support access to activity groups and services. Transport is a huge challenge if you can't make it to a bus stop – local charity worker



Knowledge and confidence around active travel

There was praise for “fantastic walking routes” which could be publicised more, perhaps with the opportunity of creating a heritage/mystery trail.

Increasing knowledge of routes may increase people’s confidence on where they can easily and safely walk or wheel about their local area.

There are local walking groups within the community which build confidence and route planning skills.

The development of opportunities to access adaptive bikes and cycling groups was an idea shared.



I would feel more confident getting around on my mobility scooter if there were more lowered kerbs across the town – Dalkeith resident



Collaboration and communication on active travel

From speaking with local stakeholders, we learned about a wide range of initiatives, activities and campaigns supporting active travel in Dalkeith and beyond in Midlothian.

However, there’s a lack of awareness of what’s available amongst local people. It was suggested that improved communication between organisations and more awareness raising with the general public is needed.

It was suggested organisations could collaborate more to secure funding based on current unmet needs within the community.



There appears to be more funding opportunities becoming available to support cycling and active travel that could be secured for the town – local charity worker



Visit the [website](#) for more information on [Dalkeith Project Town activity](#). Follow us on X (Twitter) [@place4wellbeing](#) to keep up to date with our latest news and place-based resources.