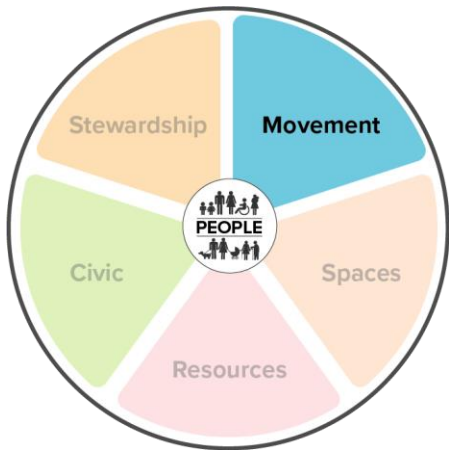




Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

Alloa Project Town

Active Travel: Impact on Alloa'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 tell us:¹

- Active travel can improve health by increasing physical activity, weight loss and reducing obesity.**
- Active travel is associated with reduced risk of death.**
- Active travel can increase social interactions.**
- Active travel is associated with improving mental health.**
- Active travel can minimise harms to health by reducing motorised traffic.**
- Safety is a key barrier to increasing active travel amongst women.**
- Walking/cycling to school helps children achieve a healthy weight, with the benefit being greater for children in deprived areas.**
- 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.**
- Active travel can provide benefits to local economies.**
- There is increased public support for investment in walking and cycling, particularly amongst people on low incomes.**

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

Active Travel rates in Clackmannanshire²

9th lowest local authority for active travel to work in Scotland in 2020, lower than Scottish average.

2020 saw an **increase in active travel to work**, following a steady 7-year decline.

2nd best local authority for active travel to school in Scotland in 2022/23, higher than Scottish average.

Active travel to school rates are generally steady, having seen a **general trend up** in the last decade.

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

A difference in professional vs public priorities on active travel was noted. When talking about movement generally, communities appear primarily concerned with improved public transport provision before active travel.

Active travel to school

The data above suggesting high levels of active travel to school was met with surprise by some of the local community - this does not appear to correlate with the perception of traffic during school pick-up and drop-off.

Barriers to pupils travelling actively to school include:

- Distance, particularly to secondary schools.
- Concerns about children and young people's safety in some areas of Alloa town or parks.
- Worries about blind spots near some schools.
- Parents with multiple children who may feel it is easier to travel by car.

Active travel engagement and training in schools is valued and welcomed. From 2024, all Clackmannanshire primary schools are taking part in Living Street's WOW active travel campaign. Bikeability Level 1 training is delivered to all Primary 5 pupils. Active travel hubs are delivered in two secondary schools.

Active travel to work

Barriers to travelling actively to work include:

- Distance, particularly when working outside of Clackmannanshire. Workers may choose to use a car as active travel does not feel viable, and public transport provision is not sufficient.
- Shift patterns making active travel difficult, particularly during Scottish winters.
- Low awareness of safe active travel routes. Employers could do more to promote this.

Getting around Alloa

Alloa itself is relatively small and so perceived as walkable to access the town centre, train and bus station. However, it is felt that a lot of people still choose to drive and use the free parking in the town centre.

It is noted that active travel routes are not segregated in places. Directions can be confusing where routes use existing residential roads and streets.

Respondents to a 2019 Place Standard Tool exercise rated Alloa 4.64/7 for ease of moving around.³

2. Data Source: [ScotPHO Profiles](#)

3. Data source: [Alloa Place Standard Tool 2019](#)

Walking

Safety and accessibility concerns discourage people from making journeys by walking or wheeling:

- Concerns about safety from anti-social behaviour near the bus station
- Women feeling particularly unsafe at night or in more enclosed streets/alleys
- Insufficient benches for people with reduced mobility to take a break on.

Cycling

Low bike ownership is highlighted, particularly for those living in poverty or low income. The closure of the Forth Bikes electric bike hire scheme has been a significant disappointment. There is frustration with the uncertainty of how and when this may be replaced.

“ The loss of Forth Bikes has been a major step back in Clacks and important to replace with a stronger and more extensive bike share system. (Local organisation staff member) ”

It is felt there is insufficient bike racks or maintenance stations in local parks. More could be done to encourage active travel as part of local leisure and tourism opportunities.

Low cycling proficiency and confidence was repeatedly raised as a barrier to active travel for adults. Whilst children may have bikes and receive cycling proficiency training in school, parents and other family members may not be able to afford or feel confident cycling. People spoke of a sense that some may feeling cycling ‘just isn’t for them’.

Walking rates in Clackmannanshire⁴

When surveyed about walking in the preceding week:

- 32% of adults in Clackmannanshire had not used walking at all as a form of transport.
- 23% had not walked for pleasure at all.

Bicycle ownership in Clackmannanshire⁵

49% of households do not have access to a bicycle for private use.

“ While the poor cycle routes should also be looked at, the priority should be to provide bikes, training, awareness and confidence for users. No point building cycleways if no one will use them! (Local organisation leader) ”

Care and maintenance

Issues with care and maintenance reduce active travel uptake:

- Broken pavements or flooding
- Dog fouling
- Vandalism of, and anti-social behaviour or smoking at, bike racks and shelters. This decreases community support for these initiatives when concerns about these unintended consequences outweighs the positives.
- Insufficient or broken lighting.

Care and Maintenance is another of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes.

4. Data source: Scottish Household Survey 2021

5. Data source: Scottish Household Survey 2021

There is a desire and need for shared approaches and initiatives to improving accessibility and uptake of active travel as part, or all, of journeys in Clackmannanshire. Third sector and statutory partners should work together to support changes in behaviour and infrastructure. Recommendations from Place and Wellbeing Assessments undertaken in Alloa in 2022-2024 highlighted the importance of active travel and public transport in improving accessibility of services.



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