

SHPF STA Submission 2023

6. Excellence in Walking, Public Realm and Cycling Subheading

Entries in this category need to demonstrate how particular policies and projects have improved the street environment. Examples of initiatives for this Award include environmental enhancement schemes, pedestrian schemes or parking and warden policies. Before and after photographs help the Judges with this category.

Alternatively, a cycling strategy may form the basis of a submission for this category or an individual scheme, which has brought significant benefits. Increased numbers of people cycling or reduced cycle casualties are two ways that you could document the success of your work.

Name of project

Increasing access to active travel through the Social Housing Partnership Fund

Who are we

Cycling Scotland is the nation's cycling organisation. Working with others, we help create and deliver opportunities and an environment so anyone anywhere in Scotland can cycle easily and safely.

As part of our behaviour change programme, we run the Social Housing Partnership Fund which makes it easier for social housing residents to walk, wheel and cycle.

This fund is delivered by Cycling Scotland in collaboration with Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Living Streets and Sustrans.

Project initiative or service overview

Not having somewhere safe and secure to store a bike is a major barrier to more people cycling, which particularly affects people living on lower incomes. In 2022, our independent research into bike storage estimated that a third of households in Scotland – approximately 1.5m people – are likely to be without suitable cycle storage. In the same year, a freedom of information request to Police Scotland had found that in Scotland a bike is stolen every two hours. For people living in high-rise flats and tenements, particularly those who rely on bikes to travel to work, education and vital services, this is a significant problem. Carrying bikes upstairs is also not practical for many people with limited mobility. A lack of suitable cycle storage means that bikes are often stored in communal areas, exacerbating potential fire, safety, and access issues, and can be a common point of tension between residents and housing providers.

Launched in 2019, the Social Housing Partnership Fund has been working to address barriers to active travel for residents in social housing. Our aim is to give residents the opportunity to walk, wheel and cycle, improving health, tackling the climate emergency and providing affordable ways to travel, particularly pertinent in a cost-of-living crisis.

While the most common funding request is for accessible, secure cycle storage, placemaking improvements to the pedestrian environment are also supported. Living Streets

conduct technical site audits on behalf of housing providers, consulting with residents, assessing housing sites, how people travel within an area and access services and identifying potential improvements. Recommendations can be as simple as resurfacing works or where to site benches but can include identifying missing crossing points or traffic calming measures. The site audits are then used to inform future works, develop area plans with the local authority, or as evidence to support placemaking improvements through the fund.

Key Results / Outcomes / Performance NB: Written as text as opposed to e.g. tabular / graphical. Comparison to previous years or national / regional average encouraged (2000 characters with spaces)

- Since 2021, the fund has awarded £1,064,000, across 34 projects, 105 sites and covering 16 separate local authorities. Including match funding the total value of projects supported is £2m.
- Over 13,000 households across Scotland have the opportunity to benefit from these funded projects.
- Among the funded organisations is Queens Cross Housing Association who were awarded funding for cycle storage at a high-rise housing development in Glasgow. Jamie Ballantine, Social Regeneration Manager at Queens Cross Housing Association, said: “Staff and residents alike have often told us how the lack of cycle storage is a barrier to bicycle ownership and active travel. Our new cycle stores were in regular use from day one, and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with all spaces now booked. Some residents have even said that they have been able to buy a bike for the first time, now they have somewhere to store it.”
- In Dundee, Angus Housing Association has also been funded for cycle storage. <https://youtu.be/4f8z3zcRtpU>
- Independent research which was the first of its kind, aimed to estimate the level of need across Scotland, collate current guidance, and identify common themes and issues in consultation with key stakeholders. Findings include: 1/3 households likely to be without cycle storage and made recommendations on how the provision of secure cycle storage could be improved. These include mandatory minimums for cycle storage spaces at new developments and improving guidance for developers and planners. It also summarises the key considerations for suitable cycle storage, which should be covered, secure, safe, convenient, accessible and inclusive.
- Since 2021 Living Streets carried out 47 site audits; a summary report collates the key issues and recommendations. These site audits have informed large-scale regeneration plans including at Albert Street in Edinburgh for Port of Leith Housing Association and in Cardonald for Southside Housing Association.