

Title: City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and Active Travel Fund approval – Ryhope Road

Report of: Toby Hughes, Director of Transport

Portfolio: Transport

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to approve the Ryhope Road Active Travel scheme, which is funded through the Active Travel Fund Round 4E (ATF 4E) funding totalling £2.108m and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) capital funding, totalling £2.125m, and to agree to establish a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) with Sunderland City Council for scheme delivery.

The project sits within the ATF4E programme which was endorsed by the North East Combined Authority (North East CA) Finance and Investment Board in March 2026.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive is recommended to:

- a. Approve the Sunderland City Council Ryhope Road Active Travel project which has a total project value of £4,608,000.
- b. Agree to establish a GFA with Sunderland City Council, enabling the payment of ATF4E/CRSTS grant funding of £4,233,000.

A. Summary of Investment Proposal (Context)

Project Outline	
Funding Source	Active Travel Fund Tranche 4E (ATF4E) and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)
Proposal Name	Ryhope Road Active Travel scheme
Lead Organisation	Sunderland City Council
Delivery Areas	Sunderland
Start Date	March 2026
Financial End Date	September 2027
Practical completion date (date by which all outputs will be achieved)	March 2027
Total Project Value	£4,608,000
Grant Amount Requested	£4,233,000
Budget Implications	The requested grant can be met within the overall ATF4E and CRSTS capital budget.

1. Background

- 1.1 ATF funding is awarded and managed by Active Travel England, the government executive agency responsible for active travel in England. Following the submission of a regional ATF4E bid, agreed by the former Joint Transport Committee (JTC) in February 2024, ATE selected schemes from the region to receive funding, in total the region was awarded £5,095,298 of funding from ATE. Of this total £2.1m was awarded to deliver the first phase of the Ryhope Road active travel scheme.
- 1.2 To fulfil ambitions to improve the entirety of the corridor which connects Sunderland City Centre with Ryhope via Grangetown, the remaining section of the route was put forward for consideration in the region's CRSTS programme. Ryhope Road forms part of the National Cycle Network (NCN). Following independent appraisal and further scheme development, the project was recommended to be included in the programme. At the July 2024 meeting of the North East CA Cabinet, Members agreed a programme of investment for delivery through CRSTS, which included a £2.3m allocation to a second phase of the Ryhope Road active travel scheme.
- 1.3 Subsequently at the March 2025 meeting of the North East CA Cabinet, Members both accepted CRSTS funding from the DfT and approved the Active Travel Programme business case (£106.4m), in which the Ryhope Road scheme sits (C75/03/25).
- 1.4 Each scheme within Active Travel Fund Tranche 4E and CRSTS has been individually developed, with designs reviewed and endorsed through the region's Design Review Panel (DRP). Following DRP endorsement a final submission to ATE was made for agreement.
- 1.5 This report confirms that all processes and assurance for the Ryhope Road Active Travel scheme have been successfully completed including ATE's agreement and recommends that the scheme is approved and a GFA is signed for scheme delivery.

2. The Investment Proposal

2.1 Overview of Project

- 2.1.1 The Ryhope Road corridor forms one of Sunderland City Council's core active travel routes identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan. The corridor which runs from Sunderland City Centre to Ryhope via Grangetown is strategically important as it links the city centre with the South Sunderland Growth Area and integrates with infrastructure delivered under the previous Transforming Cities Fund. Funding has been administered in two tranches (ATF 4E and CRSTS) which have combined to achieve the following deliverables:
 - 2km or 1.25 miles of segregated cycleway along Ryhope Road between The Esplanade (City Centre) and Ocean Road (Grangetown), forming a continuous step free route with lighting and drainage
 - Three signalised crossings and 13 unsignalised crossings to improve safety and access across the corridor
 - Secure cycle parking (eight spaces) at/near Vilette Road local centre
 - Continuous, step-free route suitable for cargo/adaptive cycles
 - Lighting, drainage, and wayfinding signage throughout
 - Engagement with local stakeholders to inform the design.
- 2.1.2 The scheme has been comprehensively reviewed by the region's Design Review Panel (DRP) to ensure it is a high-quality design that aligns to the Government's design guidance (LTN 1/20) and is safe and accessible. An Assurance Statement has been produced which confirms that this project can be fully delivered, and meets the overarching objectives of ATF4E and CRSTS the Local Transport Plan, and the North East CA's wider priorities for investment outlined in the corporate plan. Active Travel England have endorsed the proposal through their own assurance process.

2.1.3 The total project cost is £4,608,000. £2.108m of ATF4E grant is requested alongside £2.125m of CRSTS grant to deliver the scheme, with the residual £375k provided in match funding by Sunderland City Council.

2.2 Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	2026/27	Total
Miles of upgraded infrastructure	1.25	1.25
Signalised upgraded crossings	3	3
Secure Cycle Parking	3	3
Junction Improvements (unsignalised crossings)	13	13

Description of Outcomes	Timeframe for achievement	Total
Increase in walking and cycling in the vicinity of the scheme	One year post-completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)
Reduced cyclist–pedestrian conflict through segregation and formalised crossings.	One year post-completion	Reduction from baseline after 12 months
Modal shift from single-occupancy car to cycling, driven by improved comfort/directness (journey times targeted at ≤ 120% of car equivalents).	One year post-completion	Increase from baseline (identified in M&E)

2.3 Timetable for Implementation

Milestone	Forecast Date
Grant Funding Agreements	March 2026
Delivery Commences	March 2026
Delivery Completion	August 2027

2.4 Evaluation and Appraisal

2.4.1 Evaluation will be undertaken by Sunderland City Council; a monitoring and evaluation plan has been produced for inclusion within the grant funding agreement.

2.4.2 The scheme design was reviewed through the region’s Design Review Panel, which confirmed no critical issues are present with regard to the scheme’s design. The scheme has been independently assured and confirmed to offer value for money and comfort that proposals are sufficiently developed and pose limited delivery risk.

B. Potential Impact on North East Combined Authority Objectives

The Mayor’s Local Transport Plan and its associated Delivery Plan place a key focus on delivering a joined-up walking and cycling network and improving the safety of women and girls, and the delivery of the ATF4E and CRSTS programme will contribute to both of these objectives. The proposals set

out within this report directly contribute towards achieving these aims, and in turn, support the North East Combined Authority corporate objectives, in particular, delivering a North East we are proud to call home.

The benefits that will be realised through the delivery of the ATF4E and CRSTS funded scheme described in this report will improve the connectivity, safety and active travel provision within Sunderland, which will lead to more people choosing to travel sustainably.

C. Key risks

The key risk associated with this report is the ability of the scheme promoter to defray CRSTS and ATF4E capital expenditure within the overall programme timescales required by the Department for Transport (March 2027). However, this is mitigated by the inclusion of CRSTS in the forthcoming Integrated Settlement. Approval and agreement of the proposals outlined within this report aid in the delivery of interventions within required timescales

D. Financial and other resources implications

The financial profile for the scheme is outlined below.

Funding Source	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
<i>Active Travel Fund 4E</i>	-	-	£2,108,000	-	£2,108,000
<i>City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement</i>	£195,640	£932,440	£996,920	-	£2,125,000
<i>Sunderland City Council Match Funding</i>	-	-		£375,000	£375,000
Total	£195,640*	£932,440	£3,104,920	£375,000	£4,608,000

*Funding relates to Development activities undertaken by Sunderland City Council.

Status of match funding:

Match funding is required for CRSTS, Sunderland City Council are contributing an additional £375,000 towards the delivery of the scheme.

Funding availability:

The funding which has been identified in this report is fully allocated and previously been committed within the CRSTS and CATF programmes approved at Finance and Investment Board in March 2026.

E. Legal implications

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted.

F. Equalities implications

The North East CA follows the Public Sector Equality duty, and this report has due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. In June 2024 the North East CA adopted equality objectives to reflect the different roles of the Combined Authority as an employer, a commissioner and deliverer of services, and a civic leader. This project will improve accessibility on this corridor for those walking, wheeling and cycling.

G. Consultation and engagement

Extensive consultation and engagement was undertaken in the development and agreement of the CRSTS programme; as such, the Ryhope scheme has been consulted on and considered by Heads of Transport of the LA7 constituent authorities, Transport Advisory Board and at the July 2024 meeting of the North East CA Cabinet.

Sunderland City Council have undertaken extensive consultation and stakeholder engagement activities with local ward members, the public, and businesses whilst developing this scheme. This has been evidenced in the assurance process and has influenced the final design of the scheme.

Within the GFA, several clauses are included relating to publicity and communications. In addition, scheme promoters are issued with the North East CA's communication guidelines which assists in the creation of impactful communications which represent the North East CA in relevant and relatable ways and fairly reflect our role as a funder.

H. Appendices

None.

I. Background papers

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K. Glossary

ATE – Active Travel England
ATF4E – Active Travel Fund Tranche 4E
DRP – Design Review Panel
GFA – Grant Funding Agreement
NCN – National Cycle Network
North East CA – North East Combined Authority

L. Consultee

Cabinet Member:	Director/Head of Service:	Director of Finance and Investment:	Monitoring Officer:
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes