

## **TRANSITION BLACK ISLE “MILLION MILES” PROJECT BACKGROUND TO TRANSITION BLACK ISLE AND THE PROJECT**

### **Transition Black Isle**

Transition Black Isle (“TBI”) is a registered charity promoting local resilience in order to help with the move to much lower levels of fossil fuel use. The group is active throughout the Black Isle (the peninsula between the Beauly and Cromarty Firths, just north of Inverness) and has about 100 members. It is one of hundreds of Transition groups throughout the UK and worldwide, see [www.transitionnetwork.org](http://www.transitionnetwork.org) for more information.

TBI organises monthly community markets at North Kessock and Cromarty, has community gardens at Muir of Ord and Culbokie, organises events, films, talks and discussions on relevant topics, and lends “smart meters” to residents interested in monitoring their electricity usage. The group also set up the allotments in Rosemarkie, and provided support to Fortrose Academy in developing the use of smart meters in their lessons. Apart from a contractor who organises the North Kessock market, all these activities are carried out by volunteers.

### **The Million Miles Project**

The main aim of the project is to encourage Black Isle residents to reduce their car mileage by 1% - or a total of 1 million miles per year. The project has been funded by the Scottish Government’s Climate Challenge Fund for a three year period.

Research shows that travel behaviour is particularly entrenched, hence the three year duration. Intense publicity will be generated by personal contact with residents, community events, press coverage and physical resources. We will focus on three sustainable transport options: lift sharing, cycling and public transport. In the first year of the project we will concentrate on three Black Isle villages, and from this experience we will develop a programme to be run across the whole Black Isle in the following two years.

The main aspects of the project are as follows:

#### Lift Share

We have developed a local portal for the highly successful national Liftshare website – [highland.liftshare.com](http://highland.liftshare.com). This was achieved by securing additional project funding from the Highland Council Ward Discretionary Fund and has gone live in December 2012 prior to a promotional campaign with major highland employers and a high profile public launch planned for January 2013. Uptake will be promoted by means of the public launch, on-going publicity campaigns, and personal contact with users and local organisations.

#### Cycling

Studies in Scotland show that the principal barrier to cycling is the perception that it is unsafe. Our main strategy will therefore be a range of community cycle events and training to provide the skills and confidence to cycle safely on the existing road and cycle network.

We will arrange training for a team of Community Cycling Trainers, who will then run events such as accompanied bike rides, training in safe cycling and bicycle maintenance

as well as bike and accessory demos and sales. Some of these events will be organised in conjunction with local schools, others will be more widely available.

We will gather the views of cyclists and walkers to develop an Active Travel Map of the Black Isle, which will be made available both on-line and in a printed version. We will also lobby Highland Council to improve dangerous stretches of roads or tracks which we identify as constraining the active travel network.

#### Public Transport

We will undertake trials of improved bus timetable information tailored towards popular journeys in target communities. We will also promote the use of public transport in conjunction with other travel modes, e.g. through park-and-ride, and bike racks at bus stops.

#### Sustainable transport events

In addition to the specific work on lift-sharing, cycling, and public transport, we will also organise a number of events (film nights, debates, competitions etc) aimed at promoting sustainable travel more widely as a lifestyle choice.

#### Survey

We will quantify the impact of the project by conducting definitive surveys at the start and end of the project. We will also recruit a proportion of the survey respondents to give feedback about their changing travel habits at intervals during the project.

#### Project staffing and resources

The project will be co-ordinated by a full-time member of staff, the Travel Project Officer. At the start of the project we will also recruit a PR consultant to co-ordinate advertising, PR, and other aspects of promotion, and a bookkeeper to maintain financial records for the project.

The Community Cycling Trainers will be paid an hourly rate for their services. They will be expected to work 80 hours/ year in addition to attending a "Training for trainers" event.

We will recruit a number of volunteers ("Green Wheel Heroes") to assist with events and act as ambassadors to the local communities.

In addition to these resources, a number of TBI members are particularly interested in this project and are likely to be available to offer assistance and support.