



Active Fife

Evaluation of the Gallatown Bike Club

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1 Introduction

Policy context

- 1.1 The following brief overview of current policy with regard to sport and cycling in Scotland sets the context for the evaluation of the Gallatown Bike Club.
- 1.2 'Giving children and young people a sporting chance' ¹ - Scotland's sport strategy for children and young people lays out four principles for engaging young people in sporting activity:
- 1) Hearing the views of children and young people
 - 2) Collaboration is crucial
 - 3) There must be a focus on reaching children and young people who are disengaged
 - 4) Sport for children and young people must be fun
- 1.3 The Scottish Government's National Cycling Action Plan ² for Scotland sets out its key aspirations for cycling development in Scotland:
- Setting an ambitious vision for cycling
 - Investing in the strategic national cycle network
 - Working in partnership to ensure the national network links with local cycling and pedestrian access networks provided by local authorities
 - Working in partnership to make our roads safe for all, including cyclists
 - Facilitating the coordination of action by different partners
 - Seeking opportunities to ensure cycling (both on and off-road) is an integral part of decisions on planning, travel by other modes, training of professionals and travel planning by employers;
 - Developing the National Planning Framework for Scotland 2 (NPF2) which seeks to "promote development which helps to improve health, regenerate communities and enable disadvantaged communities to access opportunities."
 - Investing in community cycling, particularly focussed on those where the health benefits would be greatest, or those without access to a car or other convenient motorised transport, and in supporting good on-line local information.
- 1.4 The 2014 Scottish Parliament SPICE briefing on walking and cycling ³ provides some key statistics on cycling:
- There has been an annual increase of 13.5% in the total distance cycled in Scotland since 2007
 - The average number of cycle trips per head of population has decreased from 15 to nine since 2007
 - Since 2008, there has been a 23 per cent increase in pedal cycle casualties. Most casualties occur on slower roads in built up areas (75% of casualties are in urban areas and 90% occur on roads with a speed limit of 40 mph or less)

¹ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00453122.pdf>

² <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/06/25103912/0>

³ http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB_14-30.pdf

- 1.5 The Kirkcaldy community plan ⁴ is based around four themes:
- Improving Economy, Employment and Learning Opportunities;
 - Promoting Neighbourhood Development and increasing Neighbourhood Pride;
 - Improving outcomes for Families, Early Years and Young People; and
 - Improving Health and Well-Being.
- 1.6 The Fife Council Cycling Framework ⁵ aims to 'imbed a culture of lifelong cycling participation in Fife', and outlines five key priority areas:
- Funding, marketing and promotion
 - Facilities and infrastructure
 - Active Communities
 - All ability
 - Sport and leisure destination
- 1.7 The above overview of relevant policy highlights the value of community based cycling initiatives for young people (and adults) especially in less advantaged communities.
- 1.8 It is in this context that Active Fife commissioned Simon Jaquet Consultancy Services Ltd to undertake the evaluation of the Gallatown Bike Club.

The Gallatown Bike Club

- 1.9 The Gallatown bike club is a community initiative within the Gallatown Link Up project operated by Krikaldy YMCA as part of the national Link Up programme funded through Inspiring Scotland. It began in October 2012 and secured early support from the Youth Scotland 'Bike Club' programme. It developed quickly with bikes being donated by local people. It was loosely based on the US model of the 'Bike Coop' and the notion of 'building a bike for free'. Its aims were 'to provide free access to tools, skills and knowledge in bicycle mechanics and encourage people of all ages to get fixing bikes and (probably more importantly) get out cycling'.
- 1.10 The bike club has now been operational for two and a half years.

Evaluation of the Gallatown Bike Club

Aims and objectives

- 1.11 There were two principal aims to the evaluation. These were:
- 1 To identify which methods have effectively engaged project participants
 - 2 To identify the benefits gained by participants
- 1.12 The objectives were to identify:

⁴ <http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/news/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.display&objectid=AF050CB5-C7FB-386E-3F23FFC59E30E769>

⁵ <http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/news/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.display&objectid=E6B28B28-AFAF-F809-54DF4F1D36FB7E7F>

- a) The distinct user groups and their needs
- b) Which activities are the most popular
- c) Which facilities most encourage participation
- d) The best time of day for participation
- e) The elements which most encourage participation
- f) The impact of the cycling group in the community
- g) The key issues for professionals which support project replication

Methodology

- 1.13 A qualitative methodology was adopted as this was the approach most likely to provide in-depth data from the project's key stakeholders.
- 1.14 A limited amount of background documentation was made available, including the Youth Scotland Bike Club final report (July 2014) and the Fife Council Cycling Framework.
- 1.15 Two observation sessions were spent at the bike club, one in January, one in February.
- 1.16 Four focus groups were held with:
- Young people in the Bike Club (10)
 - Young people not involved in the Bike Club (4)
 - Parents of young people in the Bike Club (6)
 - Young volunteers involved in the Bike Club (4)
- 1.17 Interviews (face to face or by telephone) were conducted with:
- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Kirsteen Torrance | Cycling Development Officer, Fife Council |
| Shuggy Hughes | Community Development Worker, Link Up the Gallatown |
| Dave Seaman | Bike Mechanic, Dave's Bike Shed |
| Izzy Whyte | CLD Worker, Fife Council |
| Helen Florence | Learning Support, St Andrew's RC High School |
| Greg Ashelby | Cycling Officer, Sustrans |
| Julie Dickson | CLD Team Leader, Fife Council |
| Kevin Robertson | CLD worker, Fife Council |
| Danny Cepok | Area Services Manager, Fife Council |
| Liz Easton | General Secretary, Kirkcaldy YMCA |
| Julie Anderson | Head Teacher, Burntisland Primary School (formerly Head Teacher Pathhead Primary School) |
| George Shepherd | Bike Works |
| Tessa Sim | Youth worker, Fife Council and YMCA |
- 1.18 It had originally been intended to conduct an online survey of project participants and other stakeholders. As the interviews developed, it became clear that this would be difficult to administer, and would yield little, if any, new data, and it was agreed not to make use of it.
- 1.19 The evaluation was conducted between January and March 2015.

2 Findings: young people and parents

- 2.1 In this section, we outline the findings from young people and parents, reflecting discussions from a series of informal focus groups.

Young people

Participants

- 2.2 The young people in the focus group were aged 9 - 10 years old. They were asked why they got involved with the bike club. Responses tended to fall into two categories: because they thought it would be fun; because they wanted to learn how to fix bikes.

"I wanted to come because it sounded fun and I wanted to learn about how to fix bikes and learn more."

"Because I wanted a bike, and to learn to fix it."

- 2.3 The thing that they enjoyed most was mending bikes and going on cycle rides. There was a specific route that they regularly took that was a particular favourite.

"Fixing bikes and going on the bike cycles. We usually go the back of ASDA and see the horses."

"I just like how to fix bikes and preparing for going on a bike cycle. Putting your helmet on and learning how to put a light on your bike."

- 2.4 When asked if there was anything they did not enjoy, there was nothing of note. Everything was seen as good fun. One young person commented:

"Shuggy (Community Development Worker) - he's a menace!"

- 2.5 The group was asked if they had learnt anything as a result of their involvement with the club. Several responded that they were now able to fix bikes. Five (out of ten) could mend a puncture. One had clearly learnt a lot and could fix brakes, pedals, seats, gears, chains, handle grips. Two girls said they were able to put their chain back on. Typical comments included:

"How to fix a bike"

"I can kind of fix brakes but I need a wee bit of help."

"I would say how to fix the brakes because on one of my bikes the brakes totally didn't work and I learnt how to fix it, how to put a new wire in."

- 2.6 The bike club was a voluntary activity and it was important that the members 'had a laugh'. There were several stories told. One young person recounted the following:

"It was a few weeks ago. We were cycling up to the horses and it was all snowy. I came down a big hill and round a corner and slipped right off my bike. It was funny."

- 2.7 Most of the group seemed happy with present arrangements for the club, but there was a suggestion that it could be improved if they moved to premises where there was more space. The local community centre was suggested. Members of the group were asked to give an overall rating (out of 10) for the club. The average was 9.5, which, even allowing for a measure of positive peer pressure, reflects well on the group.
- 2.8 The group was asked to suggest five 'top tips' for running a good bike club. Suggestions included:
- Get a big space
 - Have people who can teach how to fix bikes and do skills on bikes
 - Have a trip every year to a bike place (eg bike trail)
 - Have adult supervisors
 - Be fun

Young volunteers

- 2.9 Four young men (all volunteers with the bike club) took part in an informal focus group. They were asked how and why they became involved. There had clearly been some cross-fertilisation between the bike club and the youth club which met on a different night at the same premises. One volunteer started at the youth club.

"I was involved with Active Kids, and got offered the opportunity to volunteer."

- 2.10 Another came along with a friend, started volunteering at the bike club, and then became involved with the youth club.

"I just like to get involved in the community - helping others."

- 2.11 Another volunteer saw his volunteering as a step towards further training.

"I'm planning to be a youth worker and go to college. I've worked with a lot of young people."

- 2.12 The group was asked why they thought that young people come to the club. Responses fell into two categories: the quality of the staff (Shuggy's 'banter'; 'he's a good guy and knows what young people want'); a desire to learn new things about bikes. The volunteers spoke about how they contributed to this.

"They learn how to fix a bike. Some have learned to cycle - we've done Bikeability."

"As we're fixing the bikes we show them what we're doing - say when we're fixing the brakes. If you don't explain, they're never going to learn."

- 2.13 They thought that the things the young people enjoyed most were the cycle rides and being able to fix their bikes.

"For the juniors, they like going cycling up to the horses behind ADSA, and feeding them."

"All they have to do is come here and fix up their bike - it takes up to three weeks. We lead them on."

- 2.14 The volunteers were asked what they themselves got out of volunteering. Some were in the process of doing a City & Guilds qualification which entails informal learning combined with a more formal element. One mentioned having got to do a stall at local gala. All felt they had improved their 'people skills'.

"How to cooperate with people. You do activities you've never done before - cycle over massive ramps and bends, trails."

"I've learnt what young people enjoy. I'm working at the big YM during the holidays. A couple of the young ones come to me. You need to know what young people want."

- 2.15 One was in the process of also developing some more specialist skills.

"I'm doing my emergency first aid at the YM for the bike club and the youth club. And I've done my sports leadership at the YM as well - taking a lead, being responsible, mature, confident. I was just coming to the bike club and the youth club. I wasn't a volunteer. Now I come every week. I volunteer here at the youth club on a Tuesday, here on a Wednesday for the bike club, and I volunteer on a Thursday down at the youth club."

- 2.16 One had a small informal business.

"I work from the house fixing bikes. It depends. If it's friends I wouldn't charge. Sometimes there's money in it. I've been doing it for quite a wee while."

- 2.17 The group was asked for their 'top tips' for an effective bike club. These included:

- Get yourself a Facebook page and put posters up to advertise it
- "Have good leadership skills. It's like a business, you need to know why you're doing it, and have someone professional who fixes the bikes."
- Make sure there's a good supplier of parts and bikes
- "Let the children have fun, even if it's going on a trip, or getting the bike fixed. If you're not having fun you're not going to learn anything."

Non participants

- 2.18 A discussion was held with four young women at the local youth club who were not part of the bike club. They were asked what they thought happens at the club. While professing not to know much, they had a reasonable idea of what went on.

"There's loads of wee ramps and you get to move them about so you can go on obstacle courses."

"They give you bikes so you can have a shot of one if you don't bring one."

- 2.19 They were asked why they did not go. Responses varied but tended to reflect the fact that nobody from their peer group was involved.

"No-one my age actually goes."

"I don't hear anyone talking about it."

"There's not really a reason I don't go it's just that my bikes too small for me."

"There's, like, no-one our age goes."

"I was always asked at the youth club if I would go. It used to get talked about a lot. It was the adults who were telling us at first."

- 2.20 They did not know of anything similar in the area, and suggested that it might benefit from some more exciting activities.

"I think they should teach you tricks. Jumping on it - bunny hops or something."

"At the bike club they should teach younger ones how to ride a bike properly and teach the older ones cool things."

- 2.21 They thought it should appeal to both boys and girls.

"Boys do tricks and show off, but girls ride their bikes to get somewhere faster and for fitness."

- 2.22 They had some suggestions for attracting more people to attend. These included:

- Posters
- Refreshments
- Telling people
- Website
- Teaching more skills
- Selling spare parts (bike chains)

- 2.23 Finally, one commented: "When I've got a bigger bike, I'll be going."

Parents

- 2.24 A group of six parents took part in an informal focus group. They discussed why their children had become involved. The focus on mending bikes was important.

"My daughter's been coming for a while now and she loves it. She gets her bike fixed. She can put her own chain on. The safety aspect as well. She's into riding her bike, she rides it everywhere now."

- 2.25 One girl had enjoyed watching bikes being fixed. The youth worker explained what all the bits were. This had had a direct impact on her ability to make minor repairs herself.

"Her chain comes off and she doesn't have to shout mum or push her bike home to get it fixed. She puts it on and away she goes."

- 2.26 This contrasted with the mother's own experience.

"When I was young, we couldn't afford to get the bike fixed. I stopped using it."

- 2.27 Being given the chance to try out practical skills was important.

"It's quite good too that the guys are able to stop and teach the children how to fix it. He's got the patience to say 'Do you want to sit there and try it?' They're not doing it all for them."

- 2.28 They also saw the bike club as giving the young people a measure of independence.

"They have their outing but they know they're safe. She (daughter) used to be scared going near roads but now she's fine."

"He's had his bike for two years but its only the last two months he's had the confidence to go on it."

- 2.29 Parental involvement was encouraged and this was seen as important.

"Some parents enjoy coming to see what's going on and how the kids interact. I'm planning on bringing my younger one and he's not learnt to ride his bike. He's had it for over a year. [Youth worker] said bring him over. It'll let us see what he's doing."

"Any other youth club, it's - you go, drop them off, you go away."

- 2.30 One woman had been attending as a helper, and she reinforced how this had boosted her self confidence.

"I've been coming up because my son has been coming the last few months, and I've been helping a wee bit, coming up and going out for bike rides with them and stuff like that. You learn how to maintain your bike, because I'm out on my bike a lot. I'm not very good at fixing things. The other day the chain came off my son's bike and normally I'd take it straight to my dad, but we actually fixed it and put it back on. It's not a big thing, but normally I wouldn't touch it. It's given me a wee bit more confidence."

- 2.31 One boy had been notably enthusiastic about the club.

"First time he came, that's all he went on about, told his teacher, told his friends. All week it's 'when when do we go, when do we go?'"

- 2.32 Some parents considered that the bike club has something of a profile in the area.

"It's quite well known now. They all seem to know what I'm talking about now. You don't get as many people asking 'what's that?'"

- 2.33 Others felt that there was room for more publicity.

"When we mention it, they say they've never heard of it but it's a great idea. People are getting more health conscious. It's encouraging people to be more healthy and active."

- 2.34 One parent pointed out the social benefits of her daughter's participation in the club.

"Coming here she gets to speak to lots of different kids from her school. She's a lot more sociable outwith here as well. She's usually really shy, but now she has friends everywhere. You go to ASDA and she points out friends."

- 2.35 There had been a 'knock on' effect in one family.

"On Sunday I said 'on Wednesday you're going down the prom with the bike club. Why don't we take our bikes out today and go on the prom and see what it's like?'. They'd normally go 'do we have to go all the way down there?' And we cycled all the way down the prom and back up. We knew we were going to be doing that here, so it gave us a wee practice."

2.36 There did not appear to be any negative feedback.

"You dinnae hear anyone moaning."

2.37 There were several comments about how the bike club had impacted on adults in the community. One focused on improved safety.

"I couldn't do anything on my bike before. I'm more confident, checking the bike before I go out. Before i would just jump on my bike and wouldn't think anything about it."

2.38 Another spoke of the health benefits.

"I use my bike all the time for exercise."

2.39 Bike use was good for transport.

"I know quite a few people who ride their bikes everywhere because it's quicker than walking, and you cannae get a bus. I cannae afford bus fares. I ride everywhere. I use it for all my shopping, all my transport."

2.40 The fact of there being no charge for the 'service' ran counter to expectation.

"I was surprised at the fact that the bikes got fixed. I thought they got taught how to go them, gave them more confidence and stuff. But [daughter] came back and said [youth worker] fixed my gears. I said ' Oh no! how much is that going to cost me then?' I came round and spoke to him and he said 'Nothing - it's what we do'. I didn't expect that. It was good."

2.41 The whole enterprise is dependent on the availability of bikes to 'do up', and at times getting bikes has been a problem.

"I've experienced people coming in and you say 'You'll need to wait a few weeks, we're waiting on bikes.'"

2.42 The group of parents was asked for their 'top tips' for a good bike club, and their comments included the following:

- The importance of free bikes:
- Having parental and community involvement
- Someone to help fix bikes
- Someone who has 'a good involvement with children. helpful, down to earth, cool - just like [Community Development Worker] and who cares about the area'
- Fun safe areas. (There was mention of the difficulty of floodlights not working for five years in the local park area. There were also problems with broken glass and dog dirt. These impact on any sport)

- 2.43 The supply of bikes for the bike club was clearly an issue, and there were comments about how mainly 'middle class' people were getting access to cheap bikes from an alternative bike project. It was suggested that this should be reviewed.

"We need bikes. I know there's tons of bikes being put into community recycling centres - 100s of bikes and only two being put out each week (from Bikeworks). Hundreds are being scrapped. The Council has an SLA with Bikeworks. They could be putting conditions on it."

3 Findings: professional staff

- 3.1 In this section we outline the findings from a series of interviews with a range of professional staff working in the Gallatown and the wider Kirkcaldy area.

Project history and development

- 3.2 Interviewees were very clear about the socio-economic profile of the Gallatown, and the lack of community facilities it had had to cope with.

"The whole community is deprived. In a mixed area people may come from a wealthier background. Everyone is living in levels of deprivation. They have no access to things people in a wealthier background would." (YMCA General Secretary, Kirkcaldy)

"It didn't have a good community infrastructure - there was one tenants association and that wasn't well attended. A lot of the community wasn't getting involved." (Area Services Manager, Fife Council)

- 3.3 The Gallatown bike club emerged from the Link Up the Gallatown initiative which adopted a community development approach to tackling the challenges of regenerating the area. Several people referred to the use of an 'assets based approach', where the starting point for working with people was the skills and understanding they already possessed, rather than the deficits or gaps they exhibited. It was important to start where the community was at.

"The assets based approach is not about fixing the community, but seeing what you're interested in." (Area Services Manager, Fife Council)

- 3.4 Interviewees mentioned the risk of initiatives which 'parachuted' into an area.

"There's always people coming into the community. It's things being done to them not with them." (CLD Worker)

- 3.5 This assets based approach had been used by the Community Development Worker employed through the Link Up the Gallatown initiative. This youth work approach had allowed him to respond opportunistically to the interests, concerns, and ideas of local people as he established relationships with them.

"How quickly we could get things up and going made a big difference for us. After we realised [Community Development Worker] was pretty serious, that helped. It raised people's aspirations." (Youth worker, local resident)

- 3.6 The Community Development Worker recounted how he had 'bumped into' four young men who were jumping over the wall of the local bowling club and using one of the greens 'illegally' to try out various manoeuvres on their bikes. The bikes were getting 'trashed', and the members of the bowling club were, unsurprisingly, irate. Discussions with the bowling club led to a mutually agreed arrangement whereby the new bike club would use the premises and grounds 'legally', in return for a rent and the construction of a shed which would also house the bowling club's lawn mower; a satisfactory deal for both parties.

Aims

- 3.7 The bike club was described as having developed organically. Its aims were reported as being 'to provide free access to tools, skills and knowledge in bicycle mechanics and encourage people of all ages to get fixing bikes and (probably more importantly) get out cycling'. As the local youth worker commented.

"From my point of view, it's for people to come along and build on their skills and learn new stuff.... and have fun." (Youth worker, local resident)

- 3.8 At the start, its focus was very much on providing free bikes for young people in the community, and for fixing bikes for those who already had them.

"It became apparent that lots of people had bikes but didn't use them because of something very simple, like a puncture." (YMCA General Secretary, Kirkcaldy)

- 3.9 In time its scope increased considerably

"When it started it was only about physical activity, being sporty. It's developed into employability, and City & Guilds are now being offered to adults." (CLD Worker)

- 3.10 Currently, the bike club can be seen as working across six interrelated areas of activity:

- **Bike provision:** making bikes available at little or no cost to members of the Gallatown community
- **Skills:** the development of cycling related skills, including bikeability, repair and maintenance, off road and trail biking
- **Leadership:** the development of community leadership skills among young people and local adults
- **Employability:** the development of employability skills, and the ability to access training and interview opportunities through the use of no-cost transport
- **Health:** promoting the benefits of physical activity and mental well being
- **Intergenerational activity:** providing opportunities for young people and adults to work and play together

"My team delivers employment opportunities. Bikes are a route to get to opportunities for employment and training. There aren't good transport routes in Kirkcaldy." (Area CLD Team Leader, Fife Council)

- 3.11 It was pointed out that the activities of the bike club make a contribution to all four themes of the community plan.

- Improving Economy, Employment and Learning Opportunities;
- Promoting Neighbourhood Development and increasing Neighbourhood Pride;
- Improving outcomes for Families, Early Years and Young People; and
- Improving Health and Well-Being.

Participants

- 3.12 Up to date figures for participation in the bike club were not available but the following statistics give an indication of levels of participation. During the 2013 - 14 financial year, the club worked with 165 males and 125 females (ages not specified). During the first quarter of 2015, there were 45 males and 37 females attending (ages not specified). Some light was thrown on the participation demographics through the interviews.
- 3.13 The bike club, as part of the Link Up programme, set out to engage young people who would not normally get involved in community activities.
- "The Link Up programme attracts people who wouldn't engage for other reasons. It attracts a wide range of people. It engages hard to reach young people who are not interested in the youth club, but are interested in acquiring bike skills." (YMCA General Secretary, Kirkcaldy)
- 3.14 While the bike club started out as a youth activity (attracting young people from late primary school age to those in their early 20s), it has since broadened its participation to include adults (parents and other local members of the community).
- "There are no barriers. We've literally had everybody, including the lady from the local store with her kids." (Bike mechanic)
- 3.15 A few interviewees mentioned that it has worked particularly well with young males.
- 3.16 Most people have been from the local Gallatown community, but visitors from further afield have 'not been turned away'.
- 3.17 The intergenerational aspect has been a key dimension, with young people and adults interacting naturally with each other over purposeful and enjoyable activities. This was mentioned by several interviewees.
- 3.18 The bike club has also acted as something of a 'triage' operation, drawing people in and enabling them to move on to other activities as a result of improved confidence and knowledge of what opportunities are available. Young volunteers have gone on to volunteer elsewhere, adults have taken up training opportunities.
- 3.19 Numbers in attendance vary. During the observational visit for the evaluation, numbers fluctuated between six and fifteen young people, with between one and five adults / parents. In the summer months there are reportedly up to 40 young people attending.

Activities

- 3.20 The bike club acts as a community 'hub', based around the core functions of bike repair and maintenance. There is a two hour session each week in the local bowling club. This is staffed by the Link Up Community Development Worker, a local youth worker, a bike mechanic, and between one and four young volunteers. The quality of the staff is important.

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"It's like having that safety net of someone who's had training to go out cycling, especially if they're not confident...It helps that I know them and their mums and stuff." (Youth worker, local resident)

- 3.21 Bike frames, tools and equipment (such as bike stands, and ramps for external use) are stored on the premises.
- 3.22 When the bike club began, the focus was on people getting access to a bike. Even at this stage however, there was an emphasis on people putting something back into the club.

"In the initial period, people rung up just to get a bike. 'Just gimme a tube'. [Community Development Worker] was always clear that you don't just turn up and take. You give something back. You either accepted it or went." (Bike mechanic)

- 3.23 The club acts as a 'drop in', with people arriving at different times to take part in activities. There is a welcoming, informal atmosphere.

"If they want to go up and just fix bikes, that's possible. If they want to come up and have a natter, speak to somebody about what they were doing at the weekend, that's possible too." (Youth worker, local resident)

- 3.24 Activities on club nights include cycle repair, bike rides, bike skills development, and increasingly a range of youth work activities and games. This latter dimension has grown since the employment of a youth worker in late 2014. Frames are free to members of the club, parts need to be bought.

- 3.25 The intergenerational dimension is increasingly important, and was commented on by several interviewees.

- 3.26 Outwith the club, there have been a number of other activities that the club has spawned:

- Work with 12 secondary school students on an alternative curriculum, doing City & Guilds in bike mechanics, accredited through MYDG in Edinburgh
- Involvement in community events, for example young volunteers servicing bikes at the local gala
- Approximately 20 young people trained as young leaders (in both cycling and leadership skills),
- The Community Development Worker helped out and trained people at the Pearl Izumi Tour Series in Kirkcaldy

- 3.27 The main costs of running the bike club are the staffing costs involved. This includes the time of the Community Development Worker, the youth worker, and the bike mechanic (specific costs not available). The YMCA estimated it spent £3,000 over the last 2 years (not including wages) on cycle stands, consumables (chains, tubes), and cycling equipment (helmets, lights). It also covered the costs of building two sheds at a total cost of £3,000 for both. The clear advantages of having access to funding - in this case through the Link Up the Gallatown initiative - were widely acknowledged.

"The beauty of Link Up is we have a bit of a budget. We can make things happen in a couple of weeks." (Community Development Worker)

"It has had some measure of success because of the resourcing it gets, staff in particular." (CLD worker, Fife Council)

3.28 Factors that facilitated the effective running of the bike club included:

- The availability of paid staff and volunteers
- The attitudes of staff
- The fact there was no charge for participation and there was free access to frames
- The youth work focus
- Access to specialist skills
- The fact that the bike club is a safe place
- The willingness to go at the pace of participants
- Cross-fertilisation between different Link Up community activities

"I get it every week. If I'm at the youth club, they're asking about the bike club. If I'm at the bike club, they're asking about the youth club. It helps if they've got any issues as well. It helps build relationships because it's not just two hours per week." (Youth worker, local resident)

3.29 The only real barrier identified was the uneven supply of bikes.

Impact

3.30 In attempting to establish the impact of the bike club, it is important to note that the club is one activity among many provided by the Link Up the Gallatown initiative. It is sometimes difficult to 'disentangle' the specific impact of the bike club from the impact of this broader suite of activities. That said, the integrated approach is seen as central to the work of the initiative, and interviewees were keen to stress this.

"It wouldn't have been a success if it had only been the bike club that parachuted in." (CLD Worker)

"The bike club is one facet of many that contribute to the whole community thing that Link Up is trying to do." (Bike mechanic)

Young people

3.31 Young people taking part in the bike club have experienced positive impacts. They were widely reported as having improved their confidence and self esteem. A crucial part of this was the active role they were encouraged to take in the club, especially with other young people.

"The kids are more than just attendees or participants. They help others." (Bike mechanic)

- 3.32 Young people have learnt a range of skills related to bike repair and maintenance. This has been striking in that children as young as nine have developed skills they would otherwise be unlikely to acquire. A group of six 14 - 16 year olds completed a leadership and cycling skills course, with four achieving City & Guilds level 3 and now attending college. The focus on practical 'craft' skills was seen as important.

"They can learn handtool dexterity. That's something we've lost because we rely on technology. Craft becomes important. It might lead to employment. One lad landed an appointment with Arnold Clark." (Bike mechanic)

"It gives them qualifications like the City & Guilds bike maintenance they're not going to pick up in school." (Cycling Officer, Sustrans)

- 3.33 In addition to this, 12 young people have done sports leader training. 12 young people have completed their City & Guilds at level 3 (beginners) with a further 12 currently 'well on their way'. Three have qualified at level 1 with another 5 under way, and two have qualified at level 2 (top level) with another 2 under way.

- 3.34 The bike club has encouraged young people to begin to address their physical fitness. While no statistical evidence is available for this, anecdotal reports support this. The former Head Teacher of the local primary school described the effect on her pupils.

"The school was one of the most deprived in the Authority but the number of bikes in school was incredible. There were so many children choosing to cycle to school, we needed an extra bike shed. Sometimes there were up to 30 bikes - out of a school roll of 225. This was affected by the bike club, getting a positive message from the community." (Former Head Teacher, Pathhead Primary School)

- 3.35 Several respondents mentioned the value of the intergenerational relationships that had been nurtured through the project. This was seen as relatively unusual.

"People are saying it's good to see young people and adults working together. It's been a natural vehicle for it." (CLD worker, Fife Council)

- 3.36 The impact of involvement in the bike club on one young man in particular was mentioned by several people. He had become an active volunteer in the club, and was described as having made significant progress both in his general outlook and confidence and in his development of bike related skills.

"It gives them self esteem and self confidence. I saw [young male volunteer] in the playground. He's not the most confident person in the world, but he was out on his bike and raving about it." (Cycling Officer, Sustrans)

- 3.37 The Sustrans Cycling Officer had also come across the impact of the bike club in his work with local schools.

"I'm always hearing about the bike club (when I'm) in Pathhead Primary School. There's a link between the school and the community. The kids have the link in their heads." (Cycling Officer, Sustrans)

Adults

- 3.38 Unusually for an activity whose main focus is young people, the bike club had also impacted on local adults. Indeed this was seen as an area of growing impact. At a practical level, the bike club had increased the number of functioning bikes available to people of all ages in the local community. Estimates varied, but it was agreed that over 100 bikes had been given away in the course of the project.

"Generally, people are, like, 'you cannae beat it, you can take a bike up there and get it fixed for nothing'." (Youth worker, local resident)

"The bike club has a really positive profile in the area. Families who'd not owned a bike, got one. The community came together to work together."
(CLD Worker)

- 3.39 The increased availability of bikes also meant, for example, that parents were more able to give bikes as presents to their children on birthdays and at Christmas.

- 3.40 Some adults had completed formal qualifications. Six adults had done Bikeability training (to enable them to deliver Bikeability to groups). Three adults were now qualified Ride Leaders, and two adults are 'well on their way' to becoming certified Trail Cycle Leaders.

- 3.41 The positive impacts on health were described by several people, with even short journeys contributing to fitness.

"For me, it makes you feel better. I cycle up and down to work and it makes me feel better, and that's just a two minute cycle." (Youth worker, local resident)

- 3.42 There was a particular value to single parents, especially women, with a knock-on effect on mental health.

"A lot of parents are women single parents in this area, and obviously the exercise is really good. It gets you out and emotionally and physically helps you." (Youth worker, local resident)

- 3.43 There were examples of how the bike club had impacted on whole families.

"There's been a knock-on effect on parents. Some women have got back on their bikes, and this has led to whole families going out cycling." (Community Development Worker)

"My sister stayed here, got a bike done up at the bike club. She had a wee trailer because she's got a wee boy and unless she had a buggy she couldn't take him shopping or anything. She used to cart him up in that." (Youth worker, local resident)

- 3.44 The important contribution of increased cycle use to improving transport was mentioned. This was especially valuable in the context of accessing employment opportunities.

"It's not just for your shopping or getting about. People are using them as a means of transport to get to places. Where someone had a part time job and they maybe wouldn't be able to afford bus fares, and they would have to walk to work. So at least they would have a bike to get there. It makes a massive difference." (Youth worker, local resident)

Community

- 3.45 The Gallatown was described as a 'better place to stay' compared to a few years previously. This was in part attributed to the work of the Link Up project in general, with the bike club making a distinctive contribution. Prior to the Link Up project, there had been little community infrastructure, whereas now the 'mood' of the community had changed. This was due to long term diligent work rather than sudden 'overnight' success. The contribution of the Community Development Worker was key.

"Firstly it helps overcome a sense of apathy and despair in the community. It gives people the chance to do things they wouldn't have the chance to do. It gives people self esteem and purpose. It's not a parachute project. [Community Development Worker] has a real knack, he's good at working with people and gleaning their interests." (Area Services Manager, Fife Council)

- 3.46 There was evidence of improved community relations, particularly between young people and older residents. This was especially true of relationships with the bowling club where a mutually beneficial arrangement had been established.

"People look at it positively now. Relationships have improved. The kids don't use the bowling green as a cycle track. They were trashing it, and the bowling club members saw them as teenage tearaways." (YMCA General Secretary, Kirkcaldy)

"The kids would have been run off the property two years ago. Now they shout 'hello' to each other. There's banter. That doesn't come from strained relationships!" (CLD Worker)

"With the dynamic with the bowling club, there were all the usual moans about exclusive use. There was some friction. But they got the internet and the building gets cleaned. It's a successful co-existence." (Bike mechanic)

- 3.47 There was also evidence of Link Up and the bike club helping to generate other community activity. The local community gala had been revived. Also a recent community consultation had benefited from the active engagement of community members.

"People involved in the community consultation wouldn't have got involved if not for the bike club. They got involved in wider community activities - especially males - the bike club has drawn them in." (CLD Worker)

- 3.48 A number of young volunteers had been recruited and trained up through the activities of the bike club. Although at a relatively early stage, this represented an important contribution to community capacity building, with a wider range of skills

now available for use in the community - for example in leadership roles in the local youth club.

Sustainability and replicability

Key features of an effective bike club

3.49 In order to establish how a venture like the bike club could be both sustained locally and potentially replicated elsewhere, the evaluation attempted to identify what were the key features of an effective bike club. There was broad agreement on what these are.

3.50 Firstly, it is important to work through local community relationships. Several people spoke of the risks of 'parachuting in', where an initiative or project is imposed externally on an area.

"It's entirely about what the people need in the community. I would be asking the people in whatever community you wanted to put it in what they wanted from a bike club." (Youth worker, local resident)

3.51 The right type of staffing is crucial, and needs to include the following:

- Someone to act as coordinator, able to work effectively and creatively with local people, to understand and be passionate about bikes, to understand how local communities 'tick', and be able to handle chaos!
- A qualified mechanic, so that appropriate repair and maintenance work can be undertaken safely and within health and safety guidelines
- Local people as volunteers, with the ability to build trust, credibility, and relationships - with other local people, between local people, and between older and younger people

3.52 The value of an effective team and the skills and aptitudes needed were summed up by several respondents.

"Having good relationships in the community makes a difference to any club running. I guess it's a mixture. We make a pretty good team. I'm from here, so people know my face. [Community Development Worker] is a bit off his rocker so he fits in well. Everyone's willing to muck in and stuff. There's nobody coming in and saying 'this is what you're getting, and this how we're going to do it' sort of thing. Shuggy comes in and says 'this is what we could do, so how shall we go about doing it?' He helps support us doing what we do....I'm feared to say this, but it's like being a bit easy ozy, and not being feared to let people like us make decisions." (Youth worker, local resident)

"The club needs a core of people - it's axiomatic for any project." (Area Services Manager, Fife Council)

"You need to be able to multi task - fix bikes and interact with people." (Bike mechanic)

"[Community Development Worker] was really committed. He would come into school on his bike. His passion was a key feature, showing strong leadership, being what he believed in. He was very approachable and good at linking up with parents. A lot of people trusted him." (Head Teacher, Burntisland Primary School)

- 3.53 A safe and warm space to meet is an important pre-requisite. This needs to be accessible, to have storage space available, and ideally have facilities for hot drinks - important if young people are returning from cycle rides in the winter.

"You need premises that are warm and secure, somewhere you can get a hot beverage, secure storage, and it needs to be central and accessible, because people are wheeling a broken bike!" (Bike mechanic)

"The big thing for bike projects is storage. If you have to transport kit in and out, it puts a different lens on the project." (Area CLD Team Leader, Fife Council)

- 3.54 There should be regular access to frames and bikes, and this should be 'as close to free as possible'. Several people emphasised the value of this dimension.

"The big thing is the fact that it's free. You take part, you get a bike for free." (Community Development Worker)

- 3.55 Bike tools (including bike stands) and a ready supply of 'consumables' (tyres, tubes, cables) need to be available. An annual estimate of anticipated expenditure on tools and consumables was given by the bike mechanic as approximately £750 - £1,000.

- 3.56 Good relationships with local agencies are important. In a community context, no project is an 'island', and strong partnerships support the core work of a community initiative.

- 3.57 In order for a bike club to 'bed in', it is suggested that a minimum time commitment of 18 months is required to allow things to be tried out and developed, and for the trust of the local community to be gained.

- 3.58 Funding is a perennial issue. While much can be done at little or no cost (or by contributions 'in kind'), there is a consensus that, for a bike club to be effective, funding is needed for three key areas - staffing, premises, and equipment. The local youth worker was brutally realistic about the need for this.

"Anything that's not sustainable will be gone surely. It's not sustainable the way it is. They would have to have income coming in to pay for the rent of the bowling club and [Bike mechanic's] wages. I'd probably just volunteer. They'd need to find funding." (Youth worker, local resident)

Sustainability issues

- 3.59 In the light of the above 'model' for a community based bike club, there are a number of issues and challenges for the Gallatown bike club that were mentioned by interviewees.

- 3.60 Maintaining a core of people to run the bike club in the medium to long term was seen as vital. This has implications for the development of local leadership skills and the requisite systems and processes to support the work. This is a recognised community development challenge, where an organically grown project needs to make the transition onto a more permanent footing. There was some concern expressed about this.

"I'm not sure from a community development model if it's being owned and run by the community.... It's a good piece of work, what there's a question about is what life it will have beyond the Link Up period." (CLD worker, Fife Council)

"You need someone like [Community Development Worker] to start it off - someone with the relationships, the passion, someone personable and empowering. Then you need other people to make it sustainable - building the confidence, trust, belief. So that people can see it's something they can achieve." (Head Teacher, Burntisland Primary School)

- 3.61 Connections to the wider community (especially schools) will be important. The bike club is known by local schools, but relationships are currently informal, with current school staff, for example, not able to comment in any detail on the work of the bike club.

- 3.62 Routine access to recycled bikes remains a problem. Several people mentioned the challenge of finding second hand bikes to 'do up'. Currently Fife Council policy means that all bikes received through the Council Waste Recycling Centres are passed on to just to one agency. There was a feeling that this policy could be reviewed.

"The council need to re-visit the idea that re-cycled bikes all go to one organisation. One organisation shouldn't get all the bikes to sell on at a fee." (YMCA General Secretary, Kirkcaldy)

- 3.63 A potential income generating function for the bike club was mentioned by a few people, including the idea of a social enterprise.

- 3.64 The importance of maintaining a public profile through social media, outreach work (for example job clubs, adult education classes, and schools) was felt to be important.

- 3.65 Relationships with partner agencies including policy makers and funders needed to be maintained. It was especially important to be able to demonstrate a relevance to the current policy agenda if funding and support was to be secured in the longer term. There was a need for clarity of thinking about the future of the bike club.

"A real challenge when something has grown organically is how to develop more structured networks.... As CLD team leader, I would have expected evidence on the direction of travel and longer term sustainability (of the bike club)." (Area CLD Team Leader, Fife Council)

Current opportunities for development

3.66 A number of potential opportunities for developing similar work with other organisations or communities were mentioned during the interviews. These included specific groups as well as broader ideas for development.

- A detached youth work group in Glenrothes
- Peer work through Youth Scotland
- CLEAR Buckhaven (Community-Led Environmental Action for Regeneration)
- CLD in Levenmouth
- YMCA youth cafe in Dysart
- Burntisland PS
- Capitalising on the Cycling Officer's current mailing list of 100 (40 are already volunteers)

3.67 There are also a number of potential dissemination opportunities for the evaluation findings.

- Fife Council
- Youth Scotland network
- YMCA network
- Link Up network

4 Discussion

4.1 In this section, we examine some of the issues and tensions that arise from the findings.

Context of the bike club

4.2 The bike club has developed over the past two and a half years within a very particular context: the establishment and growth of the Link Up the Gallatown programme (itself part of a Scotland wide programme). Although there was contact with the Bike Club programme developed by Youth Scotland and Cycling Scotland, the driving force - in terms of policy and practice - was Link Up. The table below outlines the Link Up logic model.

Table 1: Link Up logic model

Activities	Outputs	Aim 1: Outcomes for Individuals	Aim 2: Outcomes for Communities	National Outcomes
<p>Activities that increase social contact/ connections between individuals and groups in the community.</p> <p>Activities that involve individuals participating/ using and giving their skills and assets.</p>	<p>Number of hours of community activity.</p> <p>Number of new activities.</p> <p>Number of new and existing participants in activities.</p> <p>Number of volunteers involved in activities.</p>	<p>Increased levels of social interaction for individuals, which will in itself reduce isolation.</p> <p>Stronger connections and improved relationships based on trust and reciprocity between people in the community.</p> <p>Improved confidence and self-esteem.</p> <p>Improved health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Improved perception of their community as a place to live.</p> <p>Improved resilience and self efficacy.</p> <p>Development of new skills.</p>	<p>Increased level of community activity.</p> <p>Better community integration and cohesion.</p> <p>Increased capacity and motivation to influence what happens in their community.</p> <p>Improved perception of their community as a place to live.</p>	<p>We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger.</p> <p>We live longer healthier lives.</p> <p>We live in well designed sustainable places where we are able to access the services and amenities we need.</p> <p>We have strong resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.</p>

- 4.3 The Link Up programme has enabled a long term commitment of staff and resources to be invested in the Gallatown community. Its intended outcomes, as the table shows, are about changes to individuals' lives (across a range of indicators) and also broader community changes. They fit within the overall Scottish Government national performance framework.
- 4.4 This represents a relatively unusual state of affairs and, at the level of investment available, is far from a typical local community development initiative. This needs to be borne in mind when thinking about the broader implications for the Gallatown bike club.

Provision of bikes

- 4.5 Making a supply of bikes available to the local community at negligible or no cost is central to the work of the Gallatown bike club. This has proved to be both a strength and a challenge. By offering something tangible to local people, it has been able to have a clear 'offer' and that has paid dividends - in terms of credibility and practical benefits. Getting regular access to a supply of bikes to repair and to pass on, has not been without problems. Several people commented on the current Fife Council arrangement whereby all recycled bikes from its Recycling Centres go to only one social enterprise.

Skills development

- 4.6 What started primarily as a social and leisure time activity has developed into something with the capacity to impact on the development of skills among local young people and other members of the community. The commitment from the outset to 'do with' rather than to 'do to' has meant that an ethos has developed whereby the emphasis is laid on bike club participants to develop their own competences - whether in cycling, repair and maintenance, general cycling proficiency skills, off road cycling, or 'stunt' riding. It is significant that the young people interviewed saw 'fixing bikes' as one of the two most enjoyable aspects of the bike club. Both young people and adults had achieved cycling related qualifications.

Leadership development

- 4.7 Any community initiative that takes itself seriously needs to consider how it can develop its own leadership capacity. In real terms, the leadership of the Gallatown bike club resides largely within a small team of paid staff. Commendable work has gone into recruiting and training a small group of young volunteers who play an increasingly important role in supporting the staff team. They also represent an important link to the local community. The involvement of a paid youth worker who is also a local resident helps to provide roots into the surrounding area and an instinctive grasp of local issues and 'politics'.
- 4.8 There are challenges about how this model of leadership will be sustained without the funding available through the Link Up programme.

Employability

- 4.9 The bike club has demonstrated in small but significant ways how an interest in cycling can be the basis for improved employment potential. The club has made useful links with the local high school and has begun to deliver 'alternative curriculum' vocational qualifications with a small number of students through City & Guilds. The

credibility of the bike club in the community has enabled some otherwise disengaged young people to achieve some nationally recognised qualifications.

- 4.10 The potential for cycling as a low cost and accessible form of transport has been demonstrated in a few cases. This is particularly important for an area like the Gallatown which has relatively poor transport links. There are examples of people who now use their bikes to attend job interviews and to go to work.

Health

- 4.11 By establishing an informal, non-competitive environment where non-specialists and amateurs of all ages are welcomed, the bike club has made some tentative inroads into the health agenda. People spoke of the obvious benefits to physical health and fitness (comments were made about the improved health of club participants). The contribution to psychological well-being was also raised, and there are some examples of where the club had made a contribution in this regard, particularly with young adults.
- 4.12 Maintaining the balance between a 'leisure' service and a 'health' service remains a challenge. There is a risk in losing the 'fun' element.

Intergenerational work

- 4.13 The bike club began life as an activity for young people who were at a loose end in the Gallatown community. It has since acquired a much broader membership. While still functioning as a club for young people, the involvement of a range of adults has become a regular feature of the club. This is healthy, and several interviewees commented on the value of the informal intergenerational work that now takes place under its auspices. This has also had the effect of drawing in parents to help out with the running of the club.

5 Conclusions

5.1 In this section, we draw some key conclusions in response to the aims and objectives of the evaluation.

Overarching conclusion

5.2 The Gallatown bike club has been effective in engaging a significant number of young people and adults in the two and a half years of its existence. This has been achieved by the use of a well established 'assets based' approach to community development, whereby the aspirations, skills, and interests of participants are harnessed and used to inform and develop a community based programme. The bike club has used cycling as a means to attract participants and as a catalyst for a range of activities. It has impacted positively on individuals and on the community more broadly.

5.3 The work of the bike club is also consistent with much current policy. In particular it represents a good example of the principles laid out in Scotland's sport strategy for children and young people: hearing the views of children and young people; collaboration is crucial; there must be a focus on reaching children and young people who are disengaged; sport for children and young people must be fun.

Benefits gained by participants

5.4 Young people participating in the Gallatown bike club have:

- Increased their self confidence in a social setting
- Developed their technical cycling skills through the opportunity to access Bikeability training and regular accompanied cycle rides
- Learnt how to undertake basic cycle repair and maintenance (it has been striking that this includes many younger children of primary school age)
- Used the bike club as a 'route in' to other community activities

5.5 Young volunteers involved in the bike club have:

- Had access to, and achieved, City & Guilds qualifications
- Improved their leadership skills
- Volunteered in other community settings

5.6 Adults involved in the bike club have:

- Seen their children develop confidence and skills
- Been able to take part in intergenerational activities with local children and young people
- Had access to informal volunteering activities
- Had access to, and achieved, formal qualifications
- Improved their self confidence with regard to cycling

Effective methods

5.7 The methods that have been effective in engaging participants and retaining their involvement include:

- The use of a community development approach which starts from 'where the community is at'
- A long term commitment of time over several years
- The use of a multi-skilled staff team, including professional community development staff, a bike mechanic, and local volunteers (including adults)
- A safe, warm, and accessible place to meet with plenty of storage space
- A regular weekly programme of activities which includes bike repairs, guided cycle rides, bike skills development, and special events - all informed by a youth work approach
- A commitment to developing 'local talent'
- Regular access to a supply of frames and bikes
- Use of appropriate bike tools (including bike stands) and a ready supply of 'consumables' (tyres, tubes, cables)
- Good relationships with local agencies
- Funding to cover the costs of staffing, premises, and equipment

Sustainability

5.8 The Gallatown bike club has established itself as a feature of local life in the Gallatown. Its sustainability is largely reliant on the resources and funding provided through the Link Up the Gallatown programme. Without these, it would struggle to maintain its current programme of activities. In particular, the contribution of paid staff (community development and bike mechanic) is central to its effective working.

5.9 Given that the Link Up programme is of a fixed term nature, it will be important for the bike club to develop a sustainability plan that takes account of changed funding arrangements. There is scope to explore how volunteers may be able to lead the next stage of the bike club, but there is an overwhelming view among participants and other stakeholders that the use of professional staff (both community development and bike mechanic) is an integral part of the club's success.

Replication

5.10 There is an interest in the possible replication of the bike club model in other community settings. This should take account of the effective methods listed in 5.6 (above).

5.11 Bike club participants (young people, volunteers, and parents) were asked for their 'top tips' for a good bike club. This is a summary of what they suggested:

- Get a big safe space
- Get someone to coordinate who understands children and young people and is helpful, down to earth, and cool
- Involve people who can teach children and young people how to fix bikes and develop their skills on bikes
- Have a special trip every year (eg to a bike trail)

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- Have parents and other community members involved
- Provide free bikes
- Advertise through traditional methods as well as social media
- Make sure there's a good supplier of parts and bikes
- Have fun

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 In this section we make recommendations for the future development of the Gallatown bike club, and for the development of similar initiatives elsewhere.

Stakeholders

- 6.2 Maintain relationships with the current range of local partners and community organisations.
- 6.3 Develop stronger links with local schools, with a view to being able to offer activities in school and to attract new participants to the bike club.
- 6.4 Continue to develop 'local talent' through the programme of support to young volunteers.
- 6.5 Explore the scope to further involve local parents as volunteers.

Policy and strategy

- 6.6 Explore with Fife Council the potential for local bike clubs to secure access to recycled bikes from the Council's recycling centres.

Service development

- 6.7 Maintain the current range of services available to the Gallatown community through the bike club.
- 6.8 Explore the development of the bike club model in a small number of other settings in Fife, using the skills of the people in the Gallatown bike club as peer trainers and facilitators.

Impact

- 6.9 Disseminate the findings of this evaluation to key stakeholders in Fife Council, NHS Fife, Cycling Scotland, the Youth Scotland network, and the YMCA network.
- 6.10 Develop a sustainability plan for the bike club after the end of Link Up funding.