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The Strategic Investment Tool

Guidance notes

Delivered by Sustrans in partnership with:

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About Sustrans

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1. Introduction

The primary purpose of the Strategic Investment Tool (SIT) is to help local authorities and local enterprise partnerships develop large scale programmes of investments in active travel.

Using evidence from the evaluations of a wide range of active travel interventions the SIT calculates the typical impact and cost of an investment programme consisting of a range of different intervention types.

It can be used for a number of purposes. For instance, by using the SIT to develop an investment programme that achieves some long term strategic target for active travel, it is possible to demonstrate how that target could be delivered and the scale of the investment that could be needed.

We do not recommend that this tool is used for any geographical unit smaller than a local authority, nor that the tool should be used for investment programmes consisting of small numbers of interventions¹.

It is also important to recognise that the SIT does not provide a ‘one stop shop’ for developing an investment strategy for cycling and walking. The outputs of the tool should be seen to be indicative rather than precise estimates and incorporated into the development process accordingly.

This document details the inputs required by the tool, and explains the resulting outputs. We use a case study set in the imaginary city of ‘Edgecastle’ (in the grey sections) to provide an example of how to input the data to the tool.

Edgecastle

- Approaching 500,000 residents (from 2011 census)
- Of which 200,000 are employed (from NOMIS)
- 200,000 households (2011 census)
- 150 schools (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-in-england>)
- 325 medium and large employers (NOMIS)
- Two universities and 10 FE colleges
- 1 million cycling trips in 2015 (estimated from combination of automatic cycle count data and a cordon count)
- 6 million pedestrian trips in 2015 (estimated using data from the National Travel Survey)

When developing your programme of investment, you may find it useful to have this information to hand. Links to the data sources identified can be found at the end of this document.

1. The SIT was developed to respond to macro level inputs. While all values and assumptions in the tool are based on the best available evidence and optimism bias has been accounted for by using conservative assumptions, they will not hold true in all situations, particularly when either the geography covered by the proposed investment or the scale of the proposed investment is small.

2. Inputs

This section outlines the inputs to the tool.

2.1 Investment period

Before entering the details of your investment programme, you need to enter the year in which the programme is due to start and the number of years for which it will run. The tool has been developed so the maximum investment period is 10 years and can start in any year up to 2100.

It is recognised that discrete blocks of investment may not provide the optimum strategy for increasing cycling and walking. However, the SIT does not allow for overlapping programmes to be modelled within the same version of the tool. This can be resolved by using multiple copies of the SIT to model overlapping periods to simulate future funding plans.

The SIT uses financial years so it is assumed that the programme will start on 1st April in the first year and conclude on 31st March in the year following the final year.

The case study we use is due to start in 2017 and run for five years.

Figure 2-1 Investment period input

2.2 Investment location

You need to input the population of the geographical area covered by the investment programme to estimate the cost per person per year. This needs to include a forecast of how this will change over the period of the programme. If this forecast is not available, the current population should be used in all the cells.

The sub-national population projections provided by the Office of National Statistics show that the population of Edgecastle is forecast to grow from just over 480,000 in 2017 to nearly 490,000 five years later.

Figure 2-2 Investment location input
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/subnationalpopulationprojectionsexplorabledatasets>

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2.3 Investment programme

You now need to design your programme of investment. This should be designed around what is realistically deliverable within the geography and timescale being considered. For instance, there is little point in planning hundreds of new routes to schools when there are only a handful of schools in your area.

Table 2-1 provides all the information needed to construct your investment programme from the 12 different intervention types included in the SIT. The data sources for the different interventions are given in Annex A.

Research published by the Department for Transport (2014) suggests that the maximum return on investment in active travel is achieved with 20%-40% revenue spending², so we recommend that your programme follows this balance of funding. The split between revenue and capital can be seen on the Results tab.

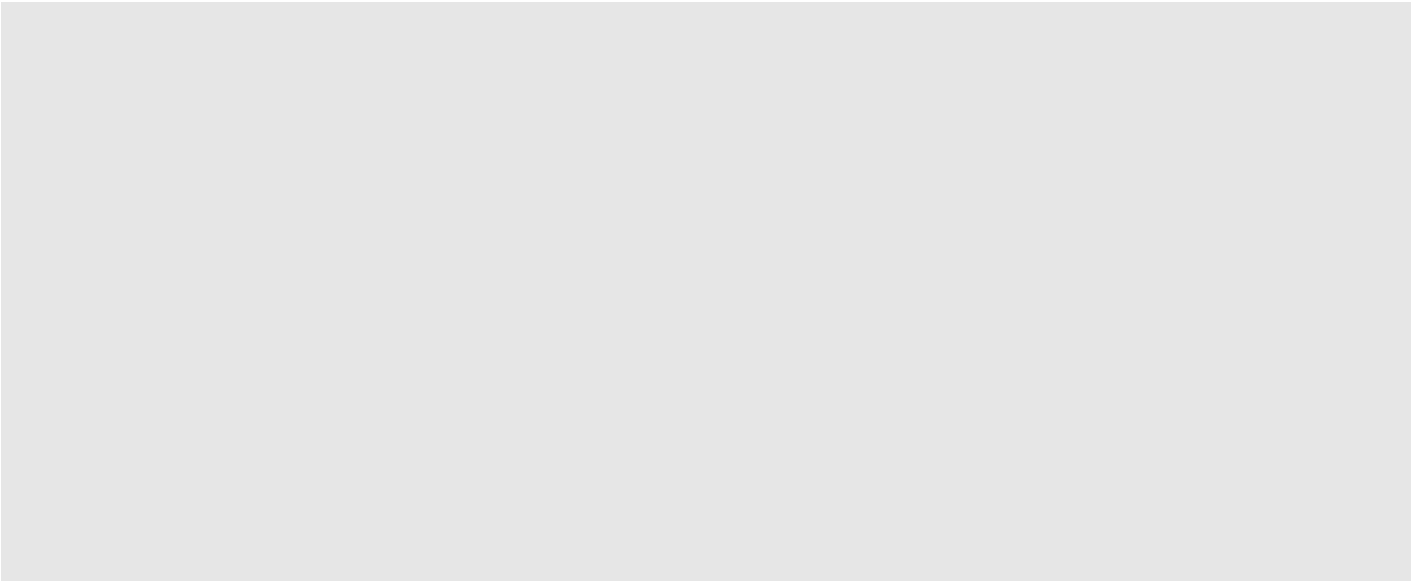
Data from national sources such as the Census and the Office of National Statistics

Note, this is a hypothetical example of what could be delivered in a geography like Edgycastle. It is not a recommended investment package and is for illustration purposes only.

Table 2-2 Edgycastle investment programme

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3. Outputs



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The costs of delivering these additional trips in Edgecastle comes to over £41 million over the ve years of the programme. This is nearly £17 per person per year. We can see that the programme that has been developed falls within the 20%-40% boundary

Figure 3-2 Cost output

Figure 3-3 Other impacts output

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3.4 Chart outputs

The SIT produces four charts that can be used to illustrate reporting around the use of the tool.

- A breakdown of the additional cyclist trips delivered by each intervention type in each year of the programme (example Chart 3-1)
- A breakdown of the additional pedestrian trips delivered by each intervention type in each year of the programme
- An annual breakdown of costs by intervention type
- The split between capital and revenue spending in each year of the programme

The charts are produced without titles so they can be easily incorporated into any reporting.

Chart 3-1 Additional cyclist trips delivered by the Edgecastle investment programme

4. Conclusion

The Strategic Investment Tool will help you to design a programme of investment that could be practically delivered in a geographically defined area, and calculates the resulting cost and impact of that programme.

Used correctly, although the outputs should be seen as indicative rather than precise estimates, the tool provides valuable information for planners and policy makers when developing a long term active travel strategy.

Useful links

Nomis: free access to the most detailed and up-to-date official UK labour market statistics

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Schools, pupils and their characteristics: statistics on the number and characteristics of schools and pupils.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-and-pupil-numbers>

ONS population projections:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections#datasets>

National Travel Survey:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>

2011 census:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata>

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