

ScotRail's Highland Explorer project has landed a top award at the Scottish Transport Awards 2023.

The active travel carriages scooped the award for *Excellence in Transport Design* at the prestigious ceremony on Thursday, 22 June.

ScotRail began operating the designated active travel carriages - a first of their kind for the UK rail network - in July 2021. The redesigned carriage boasts space for 20 cycles and bulky sports gear, including ordinary bikes, a limited number of tandem cycles and an e-bike charging socket – unique on a train in the UK.

Prior to their introduction, the carriages received a full interior and exterior refresh including the installation of larger cushioned seats, USB sockets, and plug charging points. They also feature table maps detailing the route, with recommendations on where to walk, cycle, and visit. QR codes at each table also provide links for further inspiration on places to visit in Scotland.

Services with the Highland Explorer carriages initially operated on the West Highland Line between Glasgow and Oban, but more recently, were introduced to the Mallaig branch of the iconic route.

The further rollout of the carriages to the Mallaig branch benefits local communities as well as adventure seeking cyclists, as the addition of the carriages on the route means customers benefit from 15 per cent more seats, more luggage space, and access to an additional toilet on board.

The prestigious Scottish Transport Awards brings the transport community together to recognise and celebrate industry achievements across Scotland.

Tom Smith, ScotRail Head of Fleet Technical, said: "It's fantastic to see the hard work of all of the partners involved in the introduction and delivery of our Highland Explorer carriages recognised at such a high level within the transport industry. The successful delivery of these carriages on the world-famous West Highland Line has been a welcome economic boost for rural communities, many of whom depend on tourism for their livelihoods. Since their introduction, we've listened to feedback from both customers and stakeholders on how to make the most of these fantastic carriages and deliver the best possible service, while supporting active travel and our continued recovery from the pandemic."