

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

12 DECEMBER 2016

ACTIVE TRAVEL ACT – INTEGRATED NETWORK MAP

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 and to outline the work being undertaken by BCBC to deliver the Integrated Network Maps, including opportunities for the Town and Community Council Forum to engage in the process.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

- 2.1 The duties placed on the Council through the Active Travel (Wales) Act, including the development of active travel routes and in particular routes which connect to key destinations such as education or employment facilities, can contribute to the achievement of the following corporate improvement priorities and their supporting objectives identified for implementation by 2017:

- **Supporting a Successful Economy**

- We want town centres, business premises and transport and communication networks that cater for the needs of residents, businesses and visitors, to ensure access to employment opportunities that are varied and secure in the long-term

- 2.2 Discharging the duties of the Act will assist the Council in addressing priority issues such as childhood obesity and mental wellbeing, encouraging and promoting life-long physical activity and promoting low-cost, more environmentally-friendly and accessible activities such as walking and cycling.

- 2.3 The continuous improvement in provision of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists required by the Act will also contribute to the development of the cycle tracks network which is identified in the Communities Directorate and Highway Services Business Plans. It is also a major element in both the Council's Walking and Cycling Strategy and its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP).

3. Background.

- 3.1 The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 came into force on 25th September 2014, and one of the duties of that Act makes it a legal requirement for local authorities in Wales to map and plan for suitable routes for active travel. Active Travel is defined as walking or cycling for everyday journeys with a purpose e.g. journeys to access employment, education, retail, health or transport services and other similar utility facilities. Statutory guidance for the delivery of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 sets out the processes and procedures that local authorities need to follow to meet their duties.

- 3.2 The legislation requires that two maps will need to be prepared. The first is an Existing Routes Map showing the existing active travel routes and related facilities in the county borough, which was submitted to Welsh Government in January 2016 and approved in August 2016. The second map to be produced is an Integrated Network Map (INM) which should set out the Council's plans for active travel over the next 15 years, and is to be submitted by 24th September 2017. The INM is likely to be used by Welsh Government as the basis for future funding allocations.
- 3.3 The provisions of the Act only apply to certain settlements as designated by the Welsh Government, where it is believed that there is potential for active travel. There are nine such designated settlements within the county borough. The direction designating localities can be found here: <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/det/publications/141002geographicalapplicabilityoftheactiveacten.pdf>.
- 3.4 This report sets out the work that is being undertaken to develop the Integrated Network Maps.

4. Current Situation / Proposal.

- 4.1 The Integrated Network Map can take the form of a single map, or several maps depending on the area covered. A detailed methodology for local authorities to follow when developing a network of cycle and walking routes as part of the INM process is set out in detail in the Welsh Government's Active Travel Act Design Guidance.
- 4.2 The six principal stages in the development of the INM, and the timescales suggested by Welsh Government are:

	Suggested Timelines
Stage 1 – Gather information	May to Sept 2016
Stage 2 – Journey mapping	Oct to Nov 2016
Stage 3 – Route assessment	Dec to Jan 2017
Stage 4 – Draft INM and scheme identification	Feb to Mar 2017
Stage 5 – Validation	Apr to Jun 2017
Stage 6 – Final plan and prioritisation	Jul to Aug 2017

- 4.3 As part of the Existing Routes Map development, an extensive 16-week public consultation exercise was undertaken which included a bilingual online survey with paper copies available in libraries/life centres, engagement events with a range of stakeholders, as well as events in schools and local communities. The consultation specifically included questions related to the development of future routes which could be used to inform the preparation of the INM.
- 4.4 The comprehensive information collected as part of that process, such as trip origins and destinations, routes currently used, desired routes and issues identified by respondents, has since been captured electronically on the Council's Geographic Information System (GIS) software. Together with data from a range of other key sources as set out in the Active Travel Act guidance documents, which includes other local policies and strategies and has also been captured on the GIS software.

This information will form the basis for developing the INM in line with the approved methodologies.

- 4.5 To aid local authorities in the delivery of Stages 1 and 2, Welsh Government has commissioned Sustrans to prepare additional “best practice” guidance and Bridgend is one of only two local authorities in Wales contributing to that process. Although all local authorities in Wales are currently awaiting the publication of the final guidance before completing Stage 2, work is ongoing to collate any outstanding information.
- 4.6 Stages 3 and 4 of the above process will identify the individual schemes that will constitute the active travel networks in each of the nine settlements in Bridgend County Borough. Following completion of Stage 4 and the production of the draft INMs, the Council will be required to undertake a minimum 12-week public consultation to validate the INMs as part of Stage 5.
- 4.7 It is during that period that the Council will be seeking the views of the public and key stakeholders, including Town and Community Councils. However, the Council is willing to engage with Town and Community Councils in advance of that consultation to discuss the routes and facilities they would like to see included on the INM for future improvement or delivery.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 There is no effect upon Policy Framework or Procedure Rules.

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been completed and is included as a background document.

7. Financial Implications.

- 7.1 In 2016/17, the Welsh Government allocated £10,000 to the Council under its Local Transport Fund programme to contribute towards the costs associated with the potential commissioning of consultants to audit the active travel routes, and the internal resources required to undertake the other preparatory works to enable submission of the Integrated Network Maps to Welsh Government. It is anticipated that this allocation will be spent in full by the end of the financial year.

8. Recommendation.

- 8.1 It is recommended that the forum:
- (a) note the report.

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Background documents:

Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Report