

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

16 FEBRUARY 2016

ACTIVE TRAVEL ACT – EXISTING ROUTES MAP

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 To provide an update to Cabinet on the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 and to advise Cabinet of submission to Welsh Government of the Existing Route Maps that were prepared in line with Welsh Government guidance.

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

- 2.1 The duties placed on the Council through the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 (the “Act”), and the development of active travel routes, 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:

- **Working together to develop the local 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

- **Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles:**

- We want to encourage more people across the county borough to live healthily and to see increased participation in physical activity across all population groups.

- 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 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 walking or cycling, or disabled people not walking or cycling who use motorised

wheelchairs, mobility scooters or other aids to mobility, for everyday journeys for a purpose defined in the Act e.g. journeys to access employment, education, retail, health or transport services and other similar utility facilities. The legislation requires that two maps will need to be prepared, an Existing Routes Map, which was prepared and submitted to Welsh Government on the 22nd January 2015, and an Integrated Network Map which is to be submitted by 24th September 2017.

- 3.2 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 at:
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/det/publications/141002geographicalapplicabilityoftheactivetravelacten.pdf>.
- 3.3 The first map which the Council is required to prepare is the Existing Routes Map which shows the existing active travel routes and related facilities in the County Borough. This report sets out the work that has been undertaken to develop the Existing Routes Maps

4. Current Situation / Proposal.

- 4.1 The Existing Routes Map (ERM) can take the form of a single map, or several maps depending on the area covered. In order to provide the necessary detail, and taking account of the number of settlements identified in the County Borough, a total of 18 maps have been prepared for submission in line with the guidance issued by the Welsh Government.
- 4.2 The process for preparing these maps included a number of stages. The Welsh Government commissioned a transport consultancy to collect data on the current routes and related facilities pan Wales, in order to provide local authorities with a base level of information on which to begin the preparation of their maps. The full data for Bridgend was provided by the consultants in June 2015, approximately six months later than originally envisaged.
- 4.3 Following the provision of the data, the routes were assessed for their suitability for use by pedestrians and cyclists using the audit tool included in the Welsh Government's Active Travel Act Design Guidance. Using the funding provided by the Welsh Government's Local Transport Fund programme for Active Travel Mapping, consultants were commissioned to undertake the audits of the routes once they had been identified by the Council's Transport Policy and Strategy Officer.
- 4.4 Those routes that met the standards set out in the Design Guidance, having been assessed using the audit tool, were deemed suitable for active travel and included on the draft ERMs ahead of a 16-week consultation to gather the views of stakeholders and the general public. The main body of the consultation ran from 2nd July 2015 and 23rd October 2015, and used a combination of different engagement techniques including an online survey, public engagement events at various locations and lessons at primary schools throughout the County Borough. The consultation report is included as a background document to this report.

- 4.5 Those routes that were seen as useful and suitable for active travel, but that did not meet the standards set out in the guidance, were also included on the maps and clearly marked as not meeting the standards. In addition, a statement detailing which routes do not meet the standards, together with an explanation of why they are still considered suitable for active travel, was also prepared for the consultation.
- 4.6 As part of the consultation, respondents were asked whether they walked or cycled any routes other than those included on the draft ERMs, and to identify any additional routes that they used which could be included in the final ERMs. A number of additional routes were proposed during the consultation, and whilst some were leisure routes and therefore not applicable to this mapping process, a number of other routes were audited to assess their suitability.
- 4.7 As a result, several additional routes have been included in the final ERMs when compared to the draft versions. Details of which routes were proposed, which were audited and which were deemed suitable are included within the consultation report. Copies of the final ERMs that are to be submitted to Welsh Government are also included as background documents to this report for information.
- 4.8 Once approved by Welsh Government the Council will keep the maps under review and revise annually.

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 was completed as part of the previous Cabinet Report seeking approval to begin the consultation process for the draft ERMs. A copy of the screening form has been included as a background document.

7. Financial Implications.

- 7.1 In 2014/15, the Welsh Government allocated £16,000 to the Council under its Local Transport Fund programme to contribute towards the cost of preparing and consulting on the Active Travel Maps. Of that funding, £15,300 was carried forward into the 2015/16 financial year with the agreement of Welsh Government and spent in covering the costs associated with commissioning consultants to audit the active travel routes, and the internal resources required to undertake the other preparatory works to enable submission of the maps to Welsh Government.

8. Recommendation.

- 8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet note the report.

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Background documents:

Equalities Impact Assessment Scoping Report
Consultation Report
Existing Routes Map Statement and Explanation
Existing Routes Maps