

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

14 DECEMBER 2021

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK MAP

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to submit the revised active travel network map (ATNM) to Welsh Government by the prescribed deadline of 31st December 2021.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 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 well-being objectives, which in turn contribute to the seven well-being goals set out under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**: -

1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
2. **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council’s well-being objectives.

- 2.2. The draft active travel network map is ambitious and will contribute to the Council’s Corporate Well-being Objective of ‘Supporting a successful sustainable economy’ under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This will be achieved through the provision of a comprehensive network of active travel infrastructure which will provide a genuine choice for those who choose, or depend upon, walking and cycling as part of daily routines associated with work, education or leisure.

- 2.3. The creation of improved accessibility for all modes of travel contributes to ‘Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient’ by removing reliance on car ownership to meet travel needs. A transport network which prioritised active travel will mitigate the increased congestion on the highway network and improve journey time reliability for those able to avoid motor vehicle queues, provide cost savings and create environmental and health benefits through reduced carbon emissions and increased exercise.
- 2.4. Additionally, the ATNM will contribute to a ‘Smarter use of resources’ by utilising land for the movement of people to best effect; the land requirements to facilitate active travel are significantly less than required for motor vehicles.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 requires local authorities in Wales to produce existing and future route maps of walking and cycling networks and to deliver year on year active travel improvements along the mapped routes and their related facilities.
- 3.2. ‘Active travel’ is a term used to describe walking and cycling as a means of transport to a destination and not solely for leisure. A pedestrian encompasses those travelling by foot, wheelchair or other mobility aid. A cyclist includes pedal cycles, e-cycles, adapted cycles and cargo cycles.
- 3.3. The current version of the ATNM was approved in 2017. As required by the Act, the revised ATNM which is to be submitted by 31st December 2021 has been developed through a rigorous process of data gathering, consultation, and evaluation.
- 3.4. Stage 1 of the ATNM public consultation took place between 18th December 2020 and 22nd January 2021. This exercise was undertaken through the online engagement platform ‘Commonplace’ and obtained feedback on barriers to walking and cycling. Despite Covid-19 restrictions, the consultation saw the following participation:
 - 911 people actively participating;
 - 3376 individual visitors;
 - 694 individual comments; and
 - 2405 agreements with comments.
- 3.5. In addition to the Commonplace consultation, elected members, community and town councillors, and internal BCBC departments were invited to an online webinar (9th February 2021) which was hosted by Sustrans to give an overview of the process and to encourage participation.

- 3.6. Following the Stage 1 consultation exercise, BCBC officers and Sustrans reviewed all comments and drafted the future route network, with due consideration of the requirements of the Act which requires all key trip attractors to be accessible.
- 3.7. Stage 2 of the ATNM public consultation took place between 3rd March to 26th April 2021 and sought to obtain feedback on the draft ATNM. The consultation recorded the follow participation:
 - 373 people actively participating;
 - 2164 individual visitors;
 - 271 individual comments; and
 - 742 agreements with existing comments.
- 3.8. Following Stage 2 of the ATNM consultation, BCBC officers and Sustrans amended the network which involved adding additional routes and removing routes where there was significant negative feedback.
- 3.9. A comprehensive pre-statutory engagement report, produced by Sustrans on behalf of BCBC is provided in Appendix 1 which documents additional engagement activities, including an email and social media campaign, distribution of paper copies of the consultation map and survey, printed posters, leaflet drops, engaging with people with protected characteristics and engagement with schools.
- 3.10. The final (Stage 3) statutory public consultation was launched on 1st September September 2021 and ran for 12 weeks until 24th November 2021. In addition, Welsh Government has undertaken a preliminary review and provided feedback.
- 3.11. As part of the process, Sustrans also prioritised the future routes based on a number of criteria, including proximity to education, employment, leisure, health and transport interchanges. This was combined with an allowance for the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation for the area to categorise each route into short, medium and long term (as listed in Appendix 1).

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1. BCBC officers are currently analysing all statutory consultation feedback and making final amendments to the ATNM.
- 4.2. Due to the prescribed deadline for submission of the ATNM to Welsh Government on 31st December 2021, authority is being sought to submit the ATNM, when finalised.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1. A key duty of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 requires local authorities to have regard to the ATNM in preparing transport policies and to ensure that there are new and improved active travel routes and related facilities.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions.
- 6.2 An initial EIA screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.
- 6.3 As schemes on the ATNM are progressed, Equality Impact Assessment forms part of the process.
- 6.4 An EIA screening report is provided in Appendix 2.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1. The effect of the ATNM on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has been assessed and a summary of the implications relating to the five ways of working is below:

Long-term: The implementation of the proposed active travel routes will provide a comprehensive network of routes which connect to all major trip attractors. It will therefore allow for greater opportunities of active travel with resulting environmental benefits associated with reductions in noise and air pollution; reduction in congestion and other associated economic benefits, promoting greater social inclusion and supporting the boroughs aims of a successful sustainable economy.

Prevention: The proposed active travel routes will help reduce congestion by allowing for more opportunities of active travel, resulting in a positive impact on communities.

Integration: Active travel can provide health benefits associated with increased physical activity; environmental benefits associated with reductions in noise and air pollution; reduction in congestion and other associated economic benefits, promoting greater social inclusion. Connecting communities and providing infrastructure that facilitates low cost modes of transportation, ensuring equity of opportunity for those without access to a car or who wish to use more sustainable modes. The promotion of active travel supports the work of other public bodies such as the local health board to encourage healthier lifestyles.

Collaboration: The production of the ATNM has required collaboration with external stakeholders and internally with various sections of the council

including local town councils, regeneration, engineering, traffic management, and planning in considering wellbeing objectives.

Involvement: Section 5 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 states: ‘A public body must take account of... the importance of involving other persons with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and of ensuring those persons reflect the diversity of the population’. This approach has been evidenced by the extensive engagement undertaken throughout the process.

- 7.2. Further engagement will take place on individual schemes as they are progressed.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1. There is no financial implication to the authority as all future active travel route studies and construction costs are anticipated to be funded by grants, such as the Welsh Government Active Travel Fund or through Section 106 payments as part of a planning approval.

9. Recommendation(s)

- 9.1. It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Note the information contained within this report.
2. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Communities to submit the final version of the ATNM and associated documentation to WG for approval.

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3rd December 2021

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Background documents: None