



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8TH DECEMBER 2015

SUBJECT: ACTIVE TRAVEL CONSULTATION ON EXISTING ROUTES MAP

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Members views on the draft Active Travel Existing Routes Maps and to report the responses from the statutory and public consultation, prior to its presentation to Cabinet and for approval.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 places new duties on local authorities in Wales to produce and publish Active Travel maps. The first stage of the Act requires local authorities to produce an 'Existing Routes Map' that has to be submitted to the Welsh Government for approval by 22 January 2016. The Maps prepared were widely consulted upon and of the 35 responses received, 80% agreed with the routes as proposed.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 To work towards the Council's corporate objective of improving peoples' living environment through targeted actions, regulation, information and advice.
- 3.2 Contributes to the Single Integrated Plan priority to 'improve local employment opportunities including access to opportunities across a wider geographical area'.
- 3.3 Contribute to the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan aim to 'provide a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and protects the environment; where public transport, walking and cycling provide real travel alternatives.'
- 3.4 Contribute to the South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan (LTP) objective to develop innovative walking, cycling and Smarter Choices programmes.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 came in to force in September 2014 and places new duties on local authorities in Wales to produce and publish Active Travel maps. The first stage of the Act requires local authorities to produce an 'Existing Routes Map' that has to be

submitted to the Welsh Government for approval by 22 January 2016. The Existing Routes Map relates to specific areas in Wales that are determined by population as specified in the Act.

- 4.2 The Act aims to make Active Travel the most attractive option for shorter journeys. It requires highways authorities in Wales to make year on year improvements in Active Travel routes through enhancements to routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in all new road schemes and to have regard to the needs of walkers and cyclists in a range of other highway authority functions.
- 4.3 Caerphilly County Borough benefits from a fairly extensive network of walking and cycling infrastructure across the borough. However it is not the intention that the Active Travel Existing Routes Map will show all walking and cycling routes in the county borough. The maps only include existing routes that meet the definition of an Active Travel route as set down in the Act. The 4 points below summarise the definition of an existing active travel route:
1. Routes suitable for walking and cycling (including the use of mobility scooters).
 2. Routes that are within or link to those communities/ areas that are included within the Act. For the County Borough these are:

Aberbargoed, Abercarn, Abertridwr, Bargoed, Blackwood, Caerphilly, Cwmfelinfach, Llanbradach, Machen, Nelson, New Tredegar, Newbridge, Penmaenmawr, Pontllanfraith, Pontlottyn, Rhymney, Risca, Wattsville, Ynysddu, Ystrad Mynach.
 3. Routes that fit with the active travel journeys definition i.e. 'a journey made to or from a workplace or educational establishment or in order to access health, leisure or other services or facilities'. This covers short-distance commuting, travel to school, travel to shops, travel to leisure facilities etc. The route has to connect to facilities and services and be suitable for utility, everyday journeys. It does not cover routes or sections of routes that are just used for leisure or recreational purposes.
 4. Routes that the Local Authority considers fit for purpose in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's 'Design Guidance Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 (December 2013)'.
- 4.4 The Existing Routes Maps prepared and consulted upon only include Active Travel routes in the County Borough that satisfy the 4 points detailed above, see Appendix 1. As such some routes indicated on the map form part of a longer distance network used for all journey purposes, including leisure or recreational journeys.
- 4.5 The engagement and consultation process was carried out over a 12 week period. All contacts and the public were directed to the consultation via email or co-ordinators or through press release and through the Caerphilly Newline free paper. The respondents were asked to complete an online questionnaire that was made available in English and Welsh and in other formats. Paper copies were also made available at all libraries. Two responses were received in paper form and these were entered by hand into the snap survey used to analyse the responses received. Of the 35 responses received, 80% agreed with the routes as proposed.
- 4.6 Further interactive engagement with young people has been promoted in schools and the first event was held at Bedwas High School on 13th October 2015. The event has collected useful information from young people, which will help develop local routes for Active Travel.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan has undergone Caerphilly CBC's Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) process. The information within the Active Travel Existing Routes Consultation Maps is a development of this Plan.
- 5.2 Stakeholders in affected minority groups were consulted during the consultation process in accordance with the Council's Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance document.
- 5.3 A full equalities impact assessment is not needed because extensive consultation has been carried out and Active Travel was included in the assessment carried out for the Authorities South East Valleys Local Transport Plan.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No direct financial implications in producing the Active Travel Maps. Developing a programme of improvements for Active Travel routes will form the basis of bids to the Welsh Government for transport funding.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The Active Travel Existing Routes consultation was extensive and all relevant responses have been incorporated into the final document presented here. The full list of consultees is shown in Appendix 3.
- 8.2 The consultation included statutory consultees, key external stakeholders, Caerphilly CBC Members and relevant officers, Town and Community Councils and equalities groups and neighbouring local authorities (See Appendix 3). There is also a WG requirement to consult with youth groups. Staff in the Transportation section have contacted schools to encourage participation. Bedwas High School hosted a successful morning event with pupils considering the local Active Travel Routes and requirements in their community. This activity will help promoted sustainable travel to young people and assist officers understand the needs of the community.
- 8.3 A total of 35 consultation responses were received, which have been reviewed and summarised in Appendix 2. The consultation report provides an overview of common themes or issues that were raised during the consultation. It also provides detail of any specific comments received that required consideration of whether changes to the Maps were needed. An overwhelming 80% agreed with the proposed active travel routes shown. One change is required to the proposed map to Link 13 (St. Cenydd Comprehensive school to Caerphilly town centre), which amends the origin of the Active Travel route to remove the road bridge. If the bridge becomes DDA compliant then the map can be reviewed in the future.
- 8.4 A general response was also received from a national body regarding good practice when designing infrastructure to accommodate those with particular disabilities. This information will be considered in the development and design of Active Travel infrastructure.
- 8.5 The comments received on this report from the list of consultees have been incorporated within the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To seek Members' views on the Active Travel consultation on existing routes maps prior to reporting to Cabinet for approval.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To provide the required submission to the Welsh Government by the 22nd January 2015 and meet the Council's statutory obligations.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013.

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Consultees:

Cllr T Williams – Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation & Engineering
Cllr D T Davies – Chair of Regeneration and Environmental Scrutiny Committee
Cllr E Aldworth – Vice Chair of Regeneration and Environmental Scrutiny Committee
Chris Burns – Interim Chief Executive
Christina HARRY - Corporate Director – Communities
Terry Shaw – Head of Engineering Services
Pauline Elliott – Head of Regeneration and Planning
Gail Williams – Interim Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
Mike Eedy – Finance Manager
Trish Reardon – HR Manager
David Thomas – Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Active Travel Existing Routes Consultation Maps
Appendix 2 – Summary of responses to the Active Travel Existing Routes Maps Consultation
Appendix 3 – Active Travel Consultation Distribution List

Background Paper:

Adoption of South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan – report to Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee 09-12-14