

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO:	Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	1 November 2021
LOCATION:	
TITLE:	Active Travel Network Mapping (ATNM) Review
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To advise the Committee of the arrangements for the preparation of Active Travel Network Maps (ATNM), and to inform the Committee of the increasing Local Highway Authority network of Active Travel routes and infrastructure to the Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) which is likely have additional resource implications to enable ongoing maintenance.
REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION:	<p>To review and approve the Ceredigion ATNM prior to submission to Welsh Government (WG) at end of December 2021.</p> <p>Public consultation ends 19th November 2021 and public comments will be reviewed with possible amendments to be made to the draft map prior to submission to WG.</p>

BACKGROUND:

The operative provisions of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 commenced on 25 September 2014. The Act placed a number of statutory duties on Ceredigion County Council including:

- Preparation of existing routes maps (Section 3 of the Act)
- Preparation of integrated network maps (Section 4 of the Act);
- Securing continuous improvement of active travel routes; and
- Annual reporting to Welsh Government.

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 defines Active Travel as a walking or cycling journey '*...made to or from a workplace or educational establishment or in order to access health, leisure or other services or facilities*'.

Active travel can play a well-documented and significant role in supporting a number of key Welsh Government and County Council plans and policy objectives including economic development, health and well-being, land-use planning, equalities, air quality and carbon reduction.

Ceredigion's Existing Route Maps (ERM) were approved by the Minister in August 2016 and the first Integrated Network Maps (INM) gained Ministerial approval in February 2017. These maps are publicly available to view on the County Council's website at: <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/resident/travel-roads-parking/active-travel/>

There is a statutory requirement for the next edition of the INM (now known as Active Travel Network Maps showing 'Future Routes') - along with updated Existing Route Maps - to be submitted by local authorities three years following the previous edition with a revised submission date of **31st December 2021**. This is a rolling 3 year review process as stipulated in the Act.

Members will be aware that under the provisions of the Act, the Welsh Government appointed three Ceredigion settlements as 'Designated Localities' for active travel - these being: **Aberystwyth, Cardigan and Lampeter**.

The Welsh Government had produced the following documents and guidance for local authorities when planning and delivering active travel improvements:

- Statutory Guidance for the Delivery of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013; and
- Design Guidance Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013.

These 2 documents mentioned above have now been superseded – on 16th July 2021 the Welsh Government have issued a revised 'Active Travel Act Guidance' document:

[Active Travel Act guidance \(gov.wales\)](http://gov.wales)

Planning and Delivery of Active Travel Schemes in Ceredigion

The development and construction of most active travel infrastructure schemes in Ceredigion is almost exclusively funded from applications to access Welsh Government capital grants, mainly Active Travel Fund and to a lesser extent Safe Routes in Communities.

The Welsh Government does not provide ring-fenced revenue funding assistance towards the maintenance and upkeep of new infrastructure, and it is a condition of accepting capital grant funding that the County Council becomes responsible for any future maintenance costs which clearly carries implications for service budgets.

All capital grant funding applications for active travel schemes are subject to a competitive application process, which are subject to application guidance and a Welsh Government assessment process based on a matrix for scoring against various criteria.

New routes predominantly for leisure/recreation purposes and routes outside of the three designated settlements and immediate active travel catchment area are thus likely to be unsuccessful and fail to attract funding.

During the last 2 years, there has been a greater Ministerial expectation that schemes deliver high levels of active travel use in order to achieve a substantial modal shift from car usage.

This provides a significant challenge to rural local authorities with low population numbers such as Ceredigion in so far as being able to demonstrate the high numbers that appear to be required for this purpose and may impact on the success of active travel grant applications.

Therefore, in order to meet the statutory duty to demonstrate continuous improvement, County Council capital funding budgets may be required to supplement external grant funding in the future.

Design and construction of new active travel infrastructure must comply with the Welsh Government's Active Travel Design Guidance.

This has implications in respect of wider footway standards and possible reallocation of road space in favour of pedestrians and mobility users and wider shared use path / cycle lane standards requiring a larger land take area and possible reallocation of road space in favour of pedestrians, mobility users and cyclists.

Scheme deliverability (including costs) may also be influenced on a location-by-location basis by security/ safety considerations, recently introduced SUDS Approval Body (SAB) drainage requirements and environmental and biodiversity mitigation measures.

The outcome of active travel scheme monitoring is reported to the Welsh Government on an annual basis and published on the County Council's website at:

<http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/resident/travel-roads-parking/active-travel/>

This links clearly to the attached Draft HES Level 3 Business Plan Objective 4 – Maximise external Funding for Active Travel, Local transport and Highways Refurbishment (Ref: CS1, CS4, G1-G4) and making this sustainable needs to be addressed.

Re-Submission of Route Maps

In the previous Financial Year, the County Council was awarded £200,000 by the Welsh Government as ATF Core Allocation funding to enable development and design work, land acquisition and minor works.

A proportion of this ATF Core Allocation has been directed at meeting the requirement to prepare and submit Active Travel Network Maps. The process requires a review and audit of the current routes and public and stakeholder engagement to develop new or improved routes, and to this end, the Council procured Sustrans to assist with these activities.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan was developed to demonstrate inclusivity and in line with corporate policy and guidance and this was submitted to the Welsh Government at the end of August 2020.

The Welsh Government has stipulated that all Welsh local authorities should use the 'Common Place' mapping tool for the community engagement work.

The engagement and consultation process is an opportunity for issues and barriers to making active travel journeys to be highlighted and also identify potential new active travel routes which could be added to the 'Future Routes Map' for Ceredigion.

The first phase of the ATNM consultation in Ceredigion ran for six weeks between 26 November 2020 and 6 January 2021 and was accessible through the online engagement platform Commonplace. In total, the consultation has seen:

- 675 people actively participating,
- 2663 individual visitors,
- 505 individual comments,
- 1619 agreements with existing comments.

The second phase of the consultation sought to obtain public feedback on the proposed Active Travel Draft Network Map. The second phase received a lower number of responses but still demonstrates considerable levels of engagement. Again, the Phase 2 consultation was made available through Commonplace and it was online for 3 weeks from 3rd to 22nd March 2021. In total, the consultation has seen:

- 328 people actively participating,
- 1533 individual visitors,
- 273 individual comments,
- 716 agreements with existing comments.

All Local Members were notified of the above consultations via Ceredigion Press Office and also via e-mail from Sustrans and were invited to contribute to the consultation.

Whilst not wishing to dismiss valid and helpful contributions, officers are aware that there will be significant expectations raised as part of the public engagement process and that there will be a need to focus contributions and manage those expectations.

The statutory 12 week public consultation period commenced on 27.08.2021 and will close on 19.11.2021: <https://ceredigion3.commonplace.is/>

The deadline for submission of Active Travel Network Maps was originally scheduled for 27th February 2021, but on 30th April 2020, the Deputy Minister wrote to local authorities advising them of a revised submission date of 30th September 2021, due to delays caused by the accumulated impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic elections and delays to the availability of the new Welsh Government Active Travel Mapping Platform.

On 14th October 2020, the Deputy Minister wrote to inform local authorities that the submission date had been further revised to 31st December 2021 to allow effective engagement in recognition of the continuing Covid-19 impacts and arrangements around the Senedd

elections in May 2021.		
WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why.	No. No changes to service provision are planned as part of this activity.
	Summary:	
	Long term:	n/a
	Integration:	n/a
	Collaboration:	n/a
	Involvement:	n/a
	Prevention:	n/a
RECOMMENDATION (S):		
Committee is requested to recommend that Cabinet endorse the ATNM Review and future expansion of the Highway network and Asset management responsibilities in connection with Active Travel provision.		
REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):		
To enable the Council's statutory duties under the Active Travel (Wales) Act.		
Contact Name:	Steve Hallows	
Designation:	Service Manager – Highways Development	
Date of Report:	04.11.21	
Acronyms:	Active Travel Network Maps (ATNM) Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) Existing Route Maps (ERM) Integrated Network Maps (INM) Welsh Government (WG)	
Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Letter dated 14th October from Deputy Minister. 2. Direction amending timescales for the resubmission of existing route maps and Integrated Network Maps. 3. Overview of Maintenance issues. 4. Sustrans Report. 	