

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

13 OCTOBER 2020

ACTIVE TRAVEL: REVIEW OF INTEGRATED NETWORK MAP

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT AND
FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT
PORTFOLIO HOLDER; CLLR A CRIMMINGS**

AUTHOR: Roger Waters, Service Director Frontline Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to commence a review, including a public engagement exercise, of the Council's existing Active Travel Integrated Network Map (ATINM). This report also outlines the reasons for undertaking this exercise.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- Notes the reasons for undertaking a review of the Council's existing Active Travel Integrated Network Map (ATINM), including a public engagement exercise.
 - Agrees to the Council undertaking a public engagement exercise during 2020 and 2021 as part of this review.
 - Receives a further report in due course on the outcome of this exercise, prior to the submission of the updated version of the ATINM to the Welsh Government in September 2021.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In November 2017, the Council submitted its first ATINM to the Welsh Government as part of the requirements set out in the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013. The ATINM contained details of the existing and planned network of active travel routes that the Council was seeking to develop in order to facilitate more widespread walking and cycling journeys across Rhondda Cynon Taf. A copy of the existing ATINM is shown in Appendix A below. It has been split into separate areas of RCT.

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ParkingRoadsandTravel/Travel/ActiveTravelandCycling.aspx>

- 3.2 The associated economic, health and environmental benefits of active travel are becoming increasingly recognised with policies to promote active travel being adopted not only by the Council but by other bodies such as Public Health Wales. Furthermore, with increasing funding and investment taking place to construct new active travel routes and improve existing routes, the Welsh Government has instructed local authorities to review their ATINM with the focus being placed on public engagement and consultation.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 As previously indicated, in November 2017, the Council submitted its first ATINM to the Welsh Government as part of the requirements set out in the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013. This submission followed a period of extensive public consultation and engagement involving local residents, businesses, organisations, community groups and other stakeholders.
- 4.2 As three years have almost elapsed since this date, the Welsh Government has instructed local authorities to review the information contained in their ATINM and update the contents. As part of this process, the Welsh Government is placing an increased emphasis on local authorities undertaking an extensive public consultation and engagement exercise prior to submitting an updated version of their ATINM by the end of September 2021. The Welsh Government will be making available materials and resources to assist local authorities and ensure that consistent standards are achieved.
- 4.3 In the context of the current legislation, it should be noted that a duty is placed on local authorities to develop policies and deliver infrastructure which promote active travel (walking and cycling) as a practical and convenient alternative for travelling by car to key facilities over short distances. The focus is on non-recreational (non-leisure) type of journeys such as travelling to work or college or to the shops etc.
- 4.4 Against this background, this report outlines the action the Council proposes to undertake during 2020 and 2021 to review and update its ATINM, prior to the revised version being submitted to the Welsh Government.

5. REVIEW OF ACTIVE TRAVEL INTEGRATED NETWORK MAP

- 5.1 Under the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, an ATINM is a document which sets out the plans of the Council for developing a network of active travel routes within its area over the next 15 years. It should be noted that the details shown in the ATINM are to be viewed as aspirational and do not commit the Council to implementing any of them. They could, for

example, include new routes or links that could emerge from future new developments.

5.2 As part of a review and update of its ATINM, it is proposed that the Council undertakes the following tasks:

- Amend the existing ATINM to take account of the route alignment of new active travel routes that have been constructed in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Correct any errors and omissions previously highlighted.
- Undertake an audit of those active travel routes which have been improved and upgraded using the Welsh Government template contained in the Active Travel Design Guidance Manual.
- Raise advance and ongoing awareness of the review and public engagement exercise through various media. This exercise must run for a minimum period of 12 weeks.
- Place a bilingual questionnaire and the updated ATINM on the Council's website which can be viewed. Also make printed copies of these documents available at libraries and One4All centres.
- Directly contact key internal and external stakeholders, organisations and bodies with details of the updated ATINM – particularly those organisations and bodies who represent people with protected characteristics.
- Arrange engagement events at public locations such as large supermarkets and community centres. These can help target residents who currently do not cycle and could be potential active travel users.

5.3 It is intended that the feedback obtained from the above tasks will be analysed and, in accordance with Welsh Government guidance, the outcome will be shown in the updated version of the ATINM and prioritised over a 15 year timeframe. Following the completion of this process, it is intended that a further report is presented to Members - prior to the submission of the updated version of the ATINM to the Welsh Government in September 2021.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time. The screening form can be accessed by contacting the author of the report.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 As indicated, the preparation of an updated ATINM will involve extensive consultation with the public and key stakeholders. This consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The preparation of the updated ATINM and planned consultation exercise will incur costs of approximately £50,000. It should be noted that all the projected costs being incurred as a result of these activities are being met by the Welsh Government, through its Active Travel core funding allocation in 2020 / 2021 of £726,000, and will have no impact on the Council's own budget. It is anticipated that this funding allocation will continue to be available in 2021 / 2022 in order to meet any further costs that could be incurred by the Council.
- 8.2 It is, however, recognised that in future years, funding constraints may limit the ability of the Council to achieve continuous improvement to active travel routes in Rhondda Cynon Taf unless appropriate funding is made available by Welsh Government to meet the new legislative requirements.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The activities of the Council described in this report are governed by the provisions set down in the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013. However, the implementation of proposals drawn-up in the updated ATINM may impact on the Council's functions under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and Traffic Management Act 2004, with subsequent maintenance responsibilities covered by the Highways Act 1980.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES / FUTURE GENERATIONS - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 10.1 The aim of the Active Travel legislation and related policies is to promote more sustainable forms of transport amongst the population, such as walking and cycling, for short journeys and non-recreational purposes. The aims and objectives being to improve the health and well-being of local residents and their access to key facilities and services, as well as reduce congestion and improve local air quality.
- 10.2 These aims are linked to the objectives covering health and prosperity set out in the Council's Single Integrated Plan and emerging Corporate Plan. They also meet a number of the goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. For example, a prosperous Wales, a more equal Wales, a healthier Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 Over the last 15 years, the Council has been actively involved in the development of an extensive network of Community Routes and Safe Routes in Communities that provide residents with an alternative means of accessing local services and facilities within their locality. This is particularly the case in communities where households do not have access to a private vehicle (such as a car) and where there are underlying levels of deprivation associated with poor health.
- 11.2 It is important to note that the work undertaken by the Council, in connection with the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, is on-going. Delivering an expanded network of active travel routes in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and maintaining this network to high quality standards, will present a challenge to the Council in the current financial climate. Notwithstanding this, the progress achieved by the Council to date will help inform it in the preparation of future bids for funding Community Routes and Safe Routes in Communities Schemes. It will also help to build upon the achievements to date.
- 11.3 The submission to the Welsh Government of an updated Active Travel Integrated Network Map in September 2021 will be in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government and the current legislation.