



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

17TH JUNE 2021

ONLINE ACTIVE TRAVEL CONSULTATION : OUTCOME OF EXERCISE

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER; CLLR A CRIMMINGS

**AUTHOR: Roger Waters, Service Director Frontline Services
(01443 494702)**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the outcome of an online active travel consultation exercise that the Council undertook a few months ago, in collaboration with the Welsh Government.
- 1.2 This report asks Members to note the outcome of this exercise, the Council's response to the comments received and the next stage of the active travel consultation process.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 For the reasons set out in this report, it is recommended that Members:
 - Note the comments received during the period the online active travel consultation exercise was live.
 - Note the response of the Council to the comments received.
 - Note the next stage to be undertaken as part of the ongoing active travel consultation process.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 places a statutory duty on local authorities to consult, plan and develop a network of high quality active travel (walking and cycling) routes within their area. Each local authority must produce an Integrated Network Map which sets out its aspirations for proposed new active travel routes within its area and improvements



to existing routes. Since this legislation was enacted, the Welsh Government has been providing support to local authorities to assist them in their duties implementing the provisions of The Act.

- 3.2 Walking and cycling is often undertaken as a leisure activity by individuals. However, the focus of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 and supporting measures is on facilitating walking and cycling for regular, short distance journeys made by individuals to key facilities and destinations, as a realistic alternative to making the same journeys by car. Welsh Government funding for Active Travel is focused on improving routes that enable these journeys to take place. The INM must also be focused on these routes and leisure routes must not be included.
- 3.3 The recent online active travel consultation exercise was undertaken in collaboration with the Welsh Government, as part of its role supporting local authorities. It has formed part of the policy of putting public consultation at the heart of measures to develop and encourage modal switch towards achieving more walking and cycling journeys over short distances.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Between 23 December 2020 and 12 February 2021, the Council (in collaboration with the Welsh Government), undertook an online active travel consultation exercise. Developed by software company Commonplace (which was awarded a contract by the Welsh Government), the consultation tool was a pilot and was launched by the Council in advance of the main (statutory) active travel consultation exercise that will be undertaken later this year and which has previously been reported to Cabinet.
- 4.2 The consultation tool was placed on the Council's website for a period of about 8 weeks. It enabled local residents to 'have their say' on an active travel (walking or cycling) matter in RCT. For example, a request for a new route between two points or reporting difficulties using an existing route, with the reasons given.

5. OUTCOME OF ONLINE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

- 5.1 Appendix A contains background details of the respondents who took part in the online consultation exercise. It can be seen that a broad demographic profile of residents across RCT became involved in this exercise.

5.2 A total of 695 comments were received by the Council which are summarised in Appendix B, together with the response of the Council. It can be seen that these comments are varied and cover a wide range of issues, some of them not necessarily in line with the aims and objectives of the active travel legislation and measures. In particular:

- Reporting incidences of pavement parking along the highway or anti social behaviour along an active travel route (both of which are a matter for Police enforcement) or a build-up of litter and dog waste (which are to be brought to the attention of the Council's Facilities Cleansing Team).
- Complaints about the speed of traffic at certain locations. Similarly, if vehicles are exceeding the designated speed limit then this is a matter for Police enforcement. However, it should be noted that the Welsh Government is progressing with proposals to introduce a default 20mph speed limit on non-primary roads in built-up areas as well as tackle the issue of pavement parking which can cause a significant obstruction for pedestrians – especially if they have a sensory or mobility impairment.
- Feedback concerning equestrian issues and requests for horse riders to be allowed to use active travel routes. The Active Travel legislation focusses on walking and cycling and does not recognise horse riding and the use of bridleways as a non recreational mode of transport. In addition, safety concerns have arisen over a potential conflict that could exist between horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians sharing a segregated active travel route.
- Feedback concerning public rights of way (PROW) and public footpaths. Many PROW are situated in open areas, are used for recreational purposes and do not meet current active travel standards. Comments relating to PROW matters will be brought to the attention of the Council's Parks and Countryside Section.

5.3 In addition to the details above, it will be necessary to refer a number of other comments for the attention of various Teams within the Council such as Traffic Management (eg requests for a crossing point or provision of traffic calming features), Highways (eg requests for dropped kerbs or wider footway) or Street Lighting (eg. requests for better lighting). Whilst these issues and comments outlined above cannot be directly resolved by the Active Travel Team, they are recognised as important considerations for the public and their propensity to travel actively. Left unresolved they are barriers to active travel and will limit the full potential for modal shift. It is therefore proposed that these issues



will be collated into a programme of actions for wider consideration and action.

- 5.4 Some comments relate to proposed new residential developments in RCT and ensuring that active travel facilities are incorporated within these new developments. Eg Llanilid. The current legislation places an expectation that active travel features in any planning application for a major new development that is likely to have an impact on local traffic movements and the highway network. This is the case in RCT and the inclusion of active travel routes serving known, major new developments are already shown in the Council's Integrated Network Map.
- 5.5 With regards to the Council's Integrated Network Map (which is being renamed by the Welsh Government as the Active Travel Network Map), some comments received will require the Council to update its INM / ATNM before undertaking the statutory consultation exercise later this year. In these cases, a prior site visit will be undertaken to examine each comment further.
- 5.6 Elsewhere, it can be noted from Appendix B that several requests / suggestions put forward for a new or improved active travel route have already been incorporated by the Council in the proposals set out in its INM / ATNM. Consequently, at this stage, no changes will be required to be made to the INM / ATNM. This clearly demonstrates the benefits achieved by the Council during the earlier active travel consultation exercise that was conducted several years ago.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has not been prepared for the purpose of this report. In a number of cases however, an EqIA may be required if the responses received during this online consultation exercise are actioned further.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 This report relates to a significant online consultation exercise drawing responses from 695 stakeholders as a pre-consultation event to inform a formal statutory consultation exercise later in the year.
- 7.2 Actions in response to consultee proposals set out in Appendix B will in themselves require further public and stakeholder consultation to enable implementation.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 It should be noted that many of the responses set out in Appendix B will have a financial implication for the Council. However, at this stage, the potential financial cost will only become known following more detailed study and analysis. The Active Travel Act demands continuous improvement of the active travel network and this expectation has been matched by increases in annual Welsh Government grant funding in recent years. The Council has submitted bids for this funding and has been awarded over £3.7M in grants for active travel in the 2021/22 financial year.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Progressing many of the responses set out in Appendix B (including any related Business Cases) are governed by various legal documents and pieces of legislation. These include:
- Wales Transport Strategy 2021
 - Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
 - Environment (Wales) Act 2016
 - Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013
 - Highways Act 1980
 - Traffic Management Act 2004

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

- 10.1 It can be seen that the comments from local residents detailed in Appendix B are varied, covering the highway, active travel routes, footways and bridleways. If actioned, many of these comments are aimed at facilitating greater use of sustainable transport options such as walking, cycling or horse riding, with the corresponding health, financial and environmental benefits that accrue. These options also support the aims and objectives covering health and prosperity set out in the Council's Single Integrated Plan and emerging Corporate Plan.
- 10.2 Furthermore, many of the responses in Appendix B will also meet a number of the goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. For example, a more equal Wales, a healthier Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.



11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The level of public response to the Council's recent online active travel consultation exercise was very encouraging. It demonstrated the interest that exists amongst residents to improve walking and cycling facilities and / or remove the barriers which can cause difficulties for them and prevent additional walking and cycling journeys from being made.
- 11.2 As well as updating the Integrated Network Map / Active Travel Network Map, where appropriate, and / or forwarding details of the comments received from stakeholders to other parties as necessary, it is intended that the Council will continue to undertake the statutory active travel consultation exercise, as previously reported, later this year.

APPENDIX A

ANALYSIS OF COMMONPLACE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

79% of respondents' sentiments were negative
 63% responded via mobile
 33% responded via desktop
 4% responded via tablet

AGE GROUP

Ages	% of Respondents
13 – 15	0%
16 – 24	2%
25 – 34	11%
35 – 44	22%
45 – 54	19%
55 – 64	11%
65 – 74	7%
75 – 84	2%
Not known	26%

GENDER

Category	% of Respondents
Female	37%
Male	33%
Prefer not to say	1%
Not known	29%

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Category	% of Respondents
Full time	43%
Part time	9%
Self employed	5%
Student	1%
Retired	11%
Unemployed	1%
Other	3%

Not known	27%
-----------	-----

HOW RESPONDENTS NORMALLY TRAVEL AROUND AREA

Category	****% of Respondents
Walking	54%
Walking with pram / pushchair	7%
Jogging	18%
Cycling	29%
Wheelchair / Mobility Scooter user	1%
Motorbike	1%
Bus	6%
Train	5%
Car as passenger	12%
Car as driver	48%
Not known	27%

****Some respondents have responded at least twice

HOW REGULARLY DO RESPONDENTS CYCLE

Category	% of Respondents
Every day	5%
At least once a week	19%
At least once a month	9%
Less frequently	17%
Not at all	21%
Not known	29%

MAIN REASON FOR CYCLING

Category	% of Respondents
To go to shops	2%
To go to college / school	4%
Leisure / recreational	44%
Other	10%
Not known	40%

COMMUNITY DETAILS

LOCATION OF COMMENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Pontypridd	78
Aberdare	63
Llanharan	63
Llantrisant	56



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Church Village	28
Taffs Well	28
Abercynon	18
Tonypandy	18
Treorchy	18
Rhydfelin	17
Hirwaun	16
Treherbert	15
Ferndale	14
Porth	13
Llanhari	11
Tylorstown	11
Tonyrefail	9
Mountain Ash	8
Beddau	4
Other	207