



**REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**10.00 am FRIDAY, 12 JULY 2019**

**COMMITTEE ROOMS A/B - NEATH CIVIC CENTRE**

**Part 1**

1. Declarations of interest
2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 5 - 8*)

To scrutinise information and monitoring issues being reported by:

**Head of Planning and Public Protection**

3. Problematic Empty Houses (Private Dwellings) (*Pages 9 - 24*)
4. Active Travel Report (*Pages 25 - 32*)
5. Forward Work Programme 2019/20 (*Pages 33 - 36*)
6. To select appropriate items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).
7. Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972
8. Access to Meetings to resolve to exclude the public for the following item(s) pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

## **PART 2**

9. To select appropriate private items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board Reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).

**S.Phillips**  
**Chief Executive**

**Civic Centre**  
**Port Talbot**

**4 July 2019**

### **Committee Membership:**

**Chairperson:** Councillor S.K.Hunt

**Vice  
Chairperson:** Councillor R.L.Taylor

**Councillors:** D.Cawsey, C.J.Jones, H.N.James, S.M.Penry,  
S.Purse, A.McGrath, S.Rahaman, N.T.Hunt,  
S.Bamsey and J.Evans

### **Notes:**

- (1) *If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*
- (2) *If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.*
- (3) *For pre scrutiny arrangements, the Chair will normally recommend forthcoming executive items for discussion/challenge. It is also open to Committee Members to request items to be raised - though*

*Members are asked to be selective here in regard to important issues.*

- (4) The relevant Cabinet Board Members will also be invited to be present at the meeting for Scrutiny/ Consultation purposes.*
- (5) Would the Scrutiny Committee Members please bring the Cabinet Board papers with them to the meeting.*

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## STREETSCENE AND ENGINEERING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

**Members Present:**

**24 May 2019**

**Chairperson:** Councillor S.M.Penry

**Vice Chairperson:** Councillor R.W.Wood

**Councillors:** A.R.Aubrey, S.apDafydd, W.F.Griffiths,  
A.McGrath, J.Hale, C.Galsworthy, D.Keogh,  
S.A.Knoyle and A.L.Thomas

**Officers In Attendance** D.Griffiths, M.Roberts, A.Lewis, S.Curran and  
T.Davies

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors E.V.Latham and A.Wingrave

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### 1. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 April, 2019, be approved.

### 2. **MISSED BIN COLLECTIONS**

The Committee received information in relation to Missed Bin Collections as contained within the circulated report.

Members were pleased to note that the number of missed bin collections was quite low considering the total amount of collections undertaken in Neath Port Talbot, and felt that the good news story should be shared with the public, in order to promote recycling.

Officers explained that in the event of roadworks or other blockages to a waste collection round, catch ups would be attempted sometimes 3 or 4 times in one day. Assisted collections were discussed and Members noted that previous issues had been resolved since crews had become more familiar with local routes over time.

Members discussed concerns around recycling equipment being thrown back onto the pavement by crews following their emptying into the recycling vehicle. It was noted that residents could order recycling equipment online if any of theirs had been damaged or misplaced. Officers also explained that reports of missed collections/ broken equipment were now being recorded against individual rounds in order to target supervision and allow further training of staff where necessary. This data would soon be available. Cameras on recycling lorries were in place mainly for the safety of refuse staff.

The Side Waste Policy was discussed and officers explained that residual waste had gone down while recycling figures had gone up.

Members requested a further update on this topic in 6 months.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

### 3. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following Cabinet Board items:-

#### Vehicle Procurement

Members received information in relation to the procurement of a new vehicle as contained within the circulated report.

Members queried whether staff who would be driving the proposed new vehicle (an Isuzu D Max double cab with Truckman top or similar) would have off road training. Officers confirmed that staff would receive the appropriate training from the Road Safety team within the Council.

Following scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by Cabinet Board.

#### Transport Regional Governance

Members received an overview of the circulated report, and regional and local level scrutiny was discussed, as well as the inclusion of more isolated rural areas. Officers explained that the detail around governance, voting rights, make up of the committees and scrutiny arrangements were still under discussion.

Following scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by Cabinet Board.

4. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2019-20**

Members noted that as this was the start of the new civic year (2019-20), arrangements would be made for a Forward Work Programme Workshop to take place, in order to populate the Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme going forward.

5. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED:** that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

6. **HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND RECYCLING CENTRE, LOWER CWMTWRCH**

Members discussed the private circulated report, including Powys' policy for admitting cars to the Household Waste and Recycling Centre at Lower Cwmtwrch, and permits for vans and lorries.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the private report be noted.

7. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF PRIVATE ITEMS**

The Committee scrutinised the following private Cabinet Board items:-

Officer Urgency Action 1284 and Officer Urgency Action 1285

Members discussed the two related private circulated reports.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the private reports be noted.

**CHAIRPERSON**





Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee**

12<sup>th</sup> July 2019

### **Report of the Head of Planning and Public Protection**

N. Pearce

#### **Matter for Information**

**Wards Affected:** All

#### **Problematic Empty Homes (Private Dwellings)**

#### **Purpose of the Report:**

To provide Members with an overview of the way Problematic Empty Homes are dealt with throughout Neath Port Talbot.

#### **Executive Summary:**

This report provides an update regarding the way Problematic Empty Homes are reported to the Environmental Health and Trading Standards department, together with the procedure Officers follow to ensure the empty homes are risk assessed and prioritised for action by the Environmental Health & Trading Standards Department.

## **Background:**

The Environmental Health and Trading Standards department created a new performance indicator (PI) for 2019/20 to show the number of problematic empty homes that are dealt with by the service through direct action. The current National Performance Assessment Measure 'PAM/13: percentage of empty private properties brought back into use' will continue but it differs as it measures all empty homes not just problematic empties.

Property owners have a responsibility to prevent empty houses falling into disrepair or becoming a nuisance. Long term empty properties are a wasted housing resource and can attract pests, vandalism, anti-social behaviour and unauthorised entry. Properties in a poor condition can also blight an area and reduce the value of nearby homes. Given the number of empty properties currently recorded within Neath Port Talbot, which will be outlined later in this report, it was considered necessary to start recording and reporting on these numbers and the actions taken by officers to address this increasing problem. This is especially important to ensure that Members are fully aware of the often lengthy and complicated investigations and legal action that are often required to bring these properties back into beneficial use.

Not all properties require such intervention from officers. The best and most efficient and cost effective solution is for owners to bring the empty property back into use of their own accord. This can be achieved by selling it, renting it or renovating it and living in it. Advice and even financial support are options that can be given to bring a property back into use.

### What is a Problematic Empty Home?

Problematic empty homes are empty houses that have been the subject of a complaint concerning its condition, or the property has been identified from Council Tax records as being empty for a significant period of time (i.e. over 5 years).

Unlike the National PAM, this indicator will seek to capture properties which have been un-banded by the Valuation Office Agency, due to their dilapidated and poor condition, and removed from the Council Tax database.

The typical direct action taken to deal with problematic empties will include providing advice about loans or other financial assistance and the options for bringing it back into use.

#### What is the scale of the problem in Neath Port Talbot?

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 there were 1697 homes throughout NPT that were classed as empty according to the Council Tax database. We are currently analysing this data and making contact with each home owner, where we will remove any houses classed as second homes, new build dwellings or owned by a Registered Social Landlord.

The Environmental Health team receive complaints from residents and Members where an empty property affects neighbouring property or the surrounding community. To-date, the EHTS problematic empty homes database has 405 empty homes assessed. 42 of these have been risk assessed as 'high priority' for pro-active enforcement action to bring them back into use.

#### How are complaints about empty homes dealt with in Neath Port Talbot?

##### Online complaint referral procedure

In 2018, the Environmental Health service introduced an online system to deal with Problematic empty homes. All complaints about an empty property should be made by completing an online form which can be found at [Empty Homes](#). Neath Port Talbot CBC call centre staff will assist members of the public complete the form if needed. The form requires details of the property, the complainant, and details of the problem that is being experienced. Once completed, details will be received by the department's Triage officers who will undertake background checks into the property's complaint history and ownership, and will visit the property to carry out a

prioritisation assessment, to enable the service to deal with the most serious problematic properties first.

### Prioritisation assessment

The prioritisation assessment considers the previous history of complaints received by the Environmental Health department, length of time it has been vacant, and its current condition. These factors calculate a score which places the property in a band which indicates its priority status of high, medium or low.

### **Enforcement action**

A range of enforcement measures are available to the Authority to deal with problematic empty homes ranging from securing the property from unauthorised entry, statutory nuisance (mainly damp) and overgrown gardens and waste accumulations (dealt with by the waste enforcement team in Streetcare services). These measures are short term and do not tackle the underlying issue that the property will remain empty. In January 2017, the Environmental Health and Trading Standards department introduced an Enforced Sale policy to provide a mechanism to bring long term empty property back into use. Enforced Sale is a complex lengthy legal procedure which enables the Authority to force the sale of a property to recover an outstanding council debt that exists on it, such as any works undertaken in default of a legal notice.

The Welsh Government have recently focussed more attention on addressing the rise in empty properties and are contacting all authorities in Wales offering training, on the basis that they consider adequate enforcement tools are already in place. We disagree with this assertion and are in the process of providing formal feedback to Welsh Government identifying the problems experienced on a day to day basis, including the lack of resources. Nevertheless we will continue to implement the tools we currently have available as effectively as possible.

## **Monitoring**

The service has created a local performance indicator to inform Members of the number of problematic empty homes that are brought back into use through the direct action of the service. This differs for the National performance measure that looks at all empty homes.

The benefits of bringing long term problematic empty homes back into use are numerous and would result in knock-on benefits to other departments such as Streetcare, who are responsible for investigating complaints relating to accumulations of waste within garden areas and on open ground, in addition to complaints relating to overgrown gardens and pest control issues in and around property. Investment in (if necessary) and the re-occupation of such properties could potentially alleviate further action from this section. Furthermore its re-occupation could also increase council tax revenue into the authority.

## **Proposal:**

To note the procedures currently being implemented to deal with problematic empty property in Neath Port Talbot to ensure they are dealt with in a systematic and methodical way thus ensuring the worst problematic empty homes in the County Borough are dealt with as a priority.

## **Financial Impact:**

A fund has been established for the service to enable direct action to be undertaken should it be necessary. This is a recyclable fund whereby recovered costs are deposited into the fund to enable us to deal with future action when necessary.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment:**

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring / information purposes.

**Valleys Communities Impacts:**

No implications.

**Workforce Impacts:**

No implications.

**Legal Impacts:**

No significant legal impacts.

**Risk Management impacts:**

None

**Consultation:**

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

**Recommendation(s):**

That the report be noted.

**Reason for Proposed Decision(s):**

Matter for monitoring. No decision required.

**Implementation of Decision:**

Matter for monitoring. No decision required

**Appendices:**

None.

**List of Background Papers:**

16. Neath Port Talbot Enforced Sale Policy –

[Enforced Sales Policy](#)

**Officer Contact:**

17. Nicola Pearce, Head of Planning and Public Protection.  
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Mark Thomas, Environmental Health and Trading Standards  
Manager. Tel 01639 685612 or email: [m.thomas2@npt.gov.uk](mailto:m.thomas2@npt.gov.uk)



**Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council**

**Planning and Public Protection**

**Environmental Health**

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**Enforced Sale Policy**



## **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework for Environmental Health to use the Enforced Sale Procedure under the Law of Property Act 1925 with a view of targeting long term problematic empty properties, and to bring these properties back into use where possible.

1.2 Neath Port Talbot Borough Council recognises the importance of bringing empty properties back into use, as they can be a source of many problems.

1.3 Long term empty properties can have a negative impact on the visual amenity in the immediate neighbourhood and cause nuisance to adjacent occupiers. They can also lead to increased fly-tipping, vandalism, arson, potential squatting and other anti-social behaviour.

## **2. POLICY BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Enforced Sales Procedure is a process by which the Council brings about the sale of a privately owned house. It is used as a means to “sell on” a long-term vacant house to a new owner, in circumstances where the present owner is either unwilling or unable to deal with the house and its problems; or the ownership is unknown.

2.2 By bringing about a change in ownership, it is hoped that a new owner will be more willing and able to invest in the property, and ensure its likely reoccupation, upkeep, and proper use.

2.3 The process of Enforced Sales is a method for the recovery of debt owing to the Council, and could be used to recover debts where the owner of a property has made no attempt to make payment.

### **3. IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITISING POTENTIAL PROPERTIES FOR ENFORCED SALE**

3.1 The Council uses a number of methods to identify empty private properties, including Council Tax information and referrals from members of the public, local Councillors, Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Planning Enforcement, Building Control and Waste Enforcement.

3.2 Environmental Health maintain a database of empty private properties, that is regularly reviewed using a risk based assessment, to identify priority properties that are suitable for proactive Statutory Action and the Enforced Sales process.

### **4. PRE-ACTION TO ENFORCED SALE**

4.1 When an empty property has been identified as a priority for intervention, steps will be taken to trace and contact the owner.

4.2 If an owner is identified, they will be contacted and provided with advice and a number of solutions to bring the property back into use. For example:

- We will inform the owner about the problems being caused by the property being empty, together with its impact upon the wider community.
- We will offer potential financial solutions, including the availability of Empty Homes loans or negotiate the private sale of the property.
- We will highlight the consequences of allowing the property to fall into further disrepair, including its market value depreciation and risk of enforcement action.
- We are able to inspect the property to identify if it is suitable for rental/letting, and inform the owner of the works required to bring it up to current standards.
- We can guide existing and future owners through the legal requirements of Rent Smart Wales registration and licensing.

4.3 The market value of the property should be discussed and the owner notified about any charges registered against the property. The owner will be

encouraged towards selling the property without our formal intervention at this stage. The Council is able to provide a service to the owner to facilitate the Voluntary Sale either privately, or to an interested Registered Social Landlord.

4.4 Each individual case will be assessed individually and the use of the Enforced Sales Procedure should be seen as a means of last resort. Properties will only be selected for Enforced Sales when the Council has exhausted all other reasonable options to resolve the existence of the empty property, remedy any associated problems caused by the poor condition of the property and the recovery of debt owed to the Council.

4.5 Environmental Health will liaise with other departments and agencies, particularly those with an enforcement or financial role with a view to putting pressure on the owner to deal with the property. Examples of matters to be considered include:

- Involvement of other Enforcement Authorities such as Building Control, Pest Control and Waste Enforcement, and Planning Enforcement.
- Removal of exemptions or relaxations for Council Tax payments.
- Debt Recovery processes should be actively chased.
- Involvement of mortgage lenders if appropriate.

## **5. SERVICE OF NOTICES & REGISTRATION OF CHARGES**

5.1 Environmental Health will ensure all of the Statutory Enforcement Notices have been correctly served, and will ensure the correct notices are served in accordance with the legal procedures.

5.2 Where works in default have been undertaken to comply with a notice, and a debt is owed to the Council, checks will be made to find out if the debt is registered against the property.

5.3 Where debts are not charges registered against the property, but are personal debts the Council may be able to pursue the debt at the County Court and secure an order against the property.

## **6. LEGISLATIVE BASIS FOR ENFORCED SALE**

6.1 The legal process for Enforced Sale is complex, and this section is provided for general information only.

6.2 There are various Acts of Parliament which allow the Council to make appropriate debts a charge against a property. These Acts give the Local Authority the power to enforce that Charge, so that the Enforced Sale Procedure under the Law of Property Act 1925 can be used to enforce the sale.

6.3 Section 7 of the Local Land Charges Act 1975, provides that a financial Local Land Charge takes effect, as if it had been created by a Deed of Charge within the meaning of the Law of Property Act 1925.

6.4 Section 101(1) of the Law of Property Act 1925, confers on a mortgagee a power of sale. An Order of the Court is not necessary as the legislation itself provides that power.

6.5 Section 87(1) of the Law of Property Act 1925, confers a right of possession. In addition, many of the statutes used by the Council, which enable works to be carried out in default, also give the Council a power of sale and a right of priority over other Charges.

6.6 The first step in pursuing the legal process for Enforced Sales is to serve a notice under Section 103 of the Law of Property Act 1925. The Council may not exercise the power of sale unless and until this Notice (requiring payment of the debt), has been given, and a default of payment has been made for 3 months after the service of the Notice.

6.7 The Council should write to the Owner requesting the Land or Charge Certificate. The Council must also write to the Owner, and any other Chargee, stating that it intends to carry out an enforced sale. If another Chargee should pay the outstanding money, this prevents the Council taking priority over their charge.

6.8 Likewise, if, at any stage prior to the actual sale of the property, the Owner should pay the outstanding debt, then Enforced Sale is no longer an option.

6.9 Once default of payment is apparent, the Council can apply to the Land Registry for registration of the Charge, claiming priority over all other Charges.

6.10 When the Charge Certificate is returned from the Land Registry, the property can be marketed for sale. Another letter will be sent to the Owner and any Chargees to warn them again that the charge is to be recovered by Enforced Sale.

## **7. PROCEDURE WHERE THE PROPERTY IS NOT REGISTERED**

7.1 In some instances, properties may be discovered which are not registered with the Land Registry. This will increasingly be the case for older properties, particularly where no recent sales have taken place, or the property has changed ownership without proper conveyancing. The Enforced Sale Procedure can be applied to unregistered property.

## **8. HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998**

8.1 Consideration of the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, must be taken into account by the Council. In particular, the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence and peaceful enjoyment of possessions. These rights need to be balanced against the general benefits and rights of neighbours and the surrounding community. For example, the need to deal with any dangerous or health risk conditions, the desire to bring a long term empty property back into use; and to reduce crime, arson, fly tipping and the negative impact of the empty property on the locality.

8.2 A statement that the intended action of the Council in exercising its power of sale is considered to be proportionate in accordance with the Act, and this should be included in the decision making document seeking authorisation to pursue an Enforced Sale.

## **9. RECOVERY OF COSTS**

9.1 If a debt can be registered as a local land charge then that should happen after the debtor has failed to pay the bill in relation to the works completed in default.

9.2 If the statute says a debt can be enforced as a charge then you can enforce that debt whether it is registered as a local land charge or not. In most cases, it is not important on whom the notice was originally served.

9.3 It does not matter, whether the property has subsequently changed ownership. Once the charge has been established, the land continues to be subject to the charge even if it has passed to subsequent owners.

9.4 Debts are affected by the Limitation Act, in that any debts over 12 years old (generally from the date when the expense was incurred) are no longer recoverable. Thus, any attempts to recover debts through Local Land Charges or by using the Enforced Sale Procedure, are not permissible after this time has passed.

9.5 All debts owed to the Council on the property are recovered on sale. In addition, reasonable costs incurred by the Council in pursuing the sale can also be deducted. This includes all legal, surveying, marketing and administrative costs.

## **10. MARKETING AND SALE**

10.1 Some of the processes which might normally be associated with the sale of properties are not possible when using the Enforced Sale Procedure. For example, there is no right of entry for prospective purchasers to view the property or its condition and there is no power to put up a 'For Sale' sign.

10.2 The Council has a duty to secure the best possible price for an enforced sale. Reasonable care will be taken to ensure the best sale price is achieved by the Council using either an Auction Sale or Sale by Private Treaty.

10.3 One of the intentions of the Enforced Sale Procedure is to try and change ownership of the property in a positive way. If the conditions of the property do not improve following the sale, further enforcement action will be considered and the Enforced Sales process repeated.

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Regeneration & Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee**  
12<sup>th</sup> July 2019

**Report of the Head of Planning and Public Protection**  
N. Pearce

### **Matter for Information**

**Wards Affected:** All

### **Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 – Update on progress implementing the Council’s Active Travel ‘Integrated Network Map’**

### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide an update on the progress being made implementing the Council’s Active Travel ‘Integrated Network Map’.

### **Executive Summary**

- 2 The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 (*the Act*) makes it a legal requirement for the Council to map and plan for suitable routes for active travel, including making year on year improvements within settlements specified by the Welsh Government.
- 3 Active Travel is defined as walking and cycling for everyday purposeful short-distance journeys, such as journeys to school, work, or for access to shops or services. Active travel does not include journeys purely made for recreation or social reasons.
- 4 Following approval by Welsh Ministers on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018, the Council is now in the process of implementing its Integrated Network Map (INM), seeking to deliver upon the wider aspirations set out in the INM and improve the active travel network wherever possible.

- 5 This report provides an update in terms of the funding received to date, the feasibility activities and improvement works undertaken, and a summary of the schemes and activities that are planned for the current financial year.

## Background

- 6 In November 2013, the Welsh Government introduced the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 (*the Act*) which makes it a legal requirement for local authorities in Wales to map and plan for suitable routes for active travel within settlements specified by Welsh Government.
- 7 Those settlements in Neath Port Talbot include: **Neath, Port Talbot, Pontardawe, Croeserw, Cymmer, Brynamman, Gwaun Cae Gurwen, Blaengwrach, Glynneath, Cwmafan, Seven Sisters and Resolven.**
- 8 Active Travel is defined as walking and cycling for everyday purposeful short-distance journeys, such as journeys to school, work, or for access to shops or services. Active travel does not include journeys purely made for recreation or social reasons.
- 9 The Act requires local authorities to prepare, publish and keep under review the following two maps:
- **Existing Route Map (ERM)** – informs the public of the existing routes in the County Borough that the Council considers suitable for active travel meeting Welsh Government standards; and
  - **Integrated Network Map (INM)** – sets out the Council’s aspirations for the next 15 years, identifying improvements to existing routes or new routes that the Council considers should be added to the network. The INM is therefore mainly a tool to enhance the forward planning of active travel and to support infrastructure development planning.
- 10 The latest version of the Council’s ERM and INM was approved by Ministers on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018. The approved maps are available to download from the Council’s website alongside an ‘Interactive Active Travel Map’ facility: [www.npt.gov.uk/activetravel](http://www.npt.gov.uk/activetravel)

## Implementation of the Integrated Network Map

- 11 On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018, the Welsh Government announced an enhanced funding commitment for active travel ‘cycle’ infrastructure across

Wales. Structured over a three year period, £10m was allocated for 2018/19, £20m for 2019/20 and £30m for 2020/21. This funding is widely seen to present a significant opportunity to boost the improvement and construction of prioritised cycle routes across Wales.

- 12 Local Authorities are required to submit annual funding applications and only schemes that have been identified on the respective INMs will be considered.

### **Improvement Works / Feasibility Activities (2017/18–2018/19)**

- 13 In 2017/18, Neath Port Talbot was awarded £282k for specific cycle route improvement works.
- 14 Works were subsequently completed to NCN 47 between Zoar's Ark in Neath and Crown Foods, including improved signage and road markings, along with the route being widened, tarmacked, vegetation cut back and barriers replaced with bollards where considered appropriate to do so.
- 15 In 2018/19, a further £775k was awarded comprising £235k for pre-work feasibility activities and £540k for improvement works.
- 16 In respect of the pre-work feasibility activities undertaken, a total of 18 INM routes have been considered to date. Pre-work activities included:
  - Land ownership checks;
  - Commencing negotiation with landowners (where required) including issuing correspondence and meetings;
  - Adopted highways checks (where required);
  - Public Rights of Way network checks;
  - Biodiversity/Ecological surveys; and
  - Design work.
- 17 Factors such as topography, viability, benefits to the local community and the potential for the new route to meet 'Active Travel Design Standards' were all taken into consideration when determining which routes should be taken to design stage. The 11 routes listed in Appendix 1 have now been designed as a result of this work.
- 18 Specific improvement works have been carried out to active travel routes along Fabian Way and the Neath Canal Towpath, with the

latter building upon the improvements completed to NCN 47 the previous year.

- 19 Work has included improving signage and road markings, tarmacking, vegetation cutback and removal of barriers. Only minor improvements (i.e. improved drainage, cycle signage and road markings) were needed on the Fabian Way route to bring it up to Active Travel Design Standards.

### ***Future Plans and Proposals***

- 20 For the current 2019/20 financial year, Neath Port Talbot has been awarded £319k core funding for further design work, minor improvement works, land negotiations and promotion of schemes.

- 21 Specifically, the intention is to utilise the funding for the following identified schemes and activities:

- ***Pontardawe Active Travel Route (Phase 1)*** – comprising resurfacing works, provision of signage / road markings, removal of barriers / vegetation and community engagement for Phase 2.
- ***Angel Street to Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive School*** – defining and improving the footway between the existing footbridge and Neath town centre, including resurfacing and the installation of dropped crossings/tactile pavings.
- ***Pre-Work Feasibility Activities (Various Routes)*** – comprising design, land negotiation and consultation / engagement.
- ***Active Travel Route Sign Audit and Design*** – conducting an audit to establish the number, type and suitability of signs in place across the Active Travel network and the design of new signage in accordance with national guidance.
- ***Audit of Access Control Measures*** – conducting an audit to establish the number, type and suitability of barriers in place across the network.
- ***Removal / Replacement of Access Control Measures (Phase 1)*** – informed by the audit, prioritised control measures will be removed or replaced where appropriate.
- ***Scheme / Route Promotion and Engagement*** – comprising public / stakeholder events and publicity, social media advertising and survey work.

- 22 In addition to the above, the Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities, partner organisations and developers in order to deliver upon the wider aspirations set out in the INM and improve/extend the active travel network wherever possible.
- 23 In respect of the 'Amman Valley Cycle Route' for example, discussions are ongoing with local Members, landowners, colleagues in Carmarthenshire and Welsh Government to consider what options are available to the Council in order to overcome the factors that are currently preventing the delivery of the two remaining missing links along the route – i.e. the Forge Washery, Lower Brynamman and the Cwmllynfell to Cwmtwrch sections.
- 24 Moving forward, the Council is also giving consideration to what feasible options are available to better monitor how the levels of use of active travel routes and related facilities has changed since the introduction of the active travel maps.

### **Financial Impacts**

- 25 Funding to carry out the pre-work feasibility activities and cycle route improvement works has been provided by the Welsh Government as part of the Local Transport Fund Grant. Costs have therefore been accommodated within existing budgets.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

- 26 There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring / information purposes

### **Valleys Communities Impacts**

- 27 No implications

### **Workforce Impacts**

- 28 No implications

### **Legal Impacts**

- 29 No implications

### **Risk Management Impacts**

- 30 No implications

## **Consultation**

31 There is no requirement for external consultation on this item

## **Recommendations**

32 To provide an update on the progress secured to date in implementing the improvements referred to within the Council's Active Travel Integrated Network Map.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

33 Not applicable.

## **Implementation of Decision**

34 Not applicable.

## **Appendices**

35 Appendix 1 – INM Routes at Design Stage

## **List of Background Papers**

36 The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

37 Statutory Guidance for the Delivery of the Active Travel (Wales) Act

38 The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 – Design Guidance

39 NPTCBC Existing Route Map & Integrated Network Map

## **Officer Contact**

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## APPENDIX 1 – INM Routes at Design Stage

**[Note: all schemes listed are subject to land agreements]**

Route Ref:	Type	Settlement	Description	Commentary
<b>CROESERW</b>				
<b>INM-CROE-C001</b> (NPT-CROE-C002)	Cycling	Croeserw	<b>Croeserw to Caerau via Menai Avenue:</b> A cycle route which links Croeserw to Caerau away from the road network.	Route surface has some defects in parts and would benefit from resurfacing. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving needed along the route. Off-road section of the route requires improved lighting and widening in part (adjacent to Tudor Park).
<b>CYMMER</b>				
<b>INM-CYM-C001</b> (NPT-CYM-C003)	Cycling	Cymmer	<b>NCN linking to Cymer Afan Comprehensive School &amp; Croeserw:</b> A cycle route linking the NCN, the Comprehensive School and Croeserw (including existing routes NPT-CYM-C002, NPT-CYM-C003 and NPT-CROE-C001).	Route surface has some defects in parts and would benefit from resurfacing. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving needed along the route. Improvements to the three highway crossing points along Glenavon Street would be required (e.g. in particular the crossing with the A4107). The off-road portion of the route between the School and the A4063 (Maesteg Road) is in part isolated and unlit. Improvements to the lighting would therefore be required.
<b>GLYNNEATH</b>				
<b>INM-GLYN-C001</b>	Cycling	Glynneath	<b>Abergarwed to Glynneath:</b> A cycle route which would follow an agreed route alignment on land between the B4242 and A465 (T) from Abergarwed to Glynneath.	The alignment of this longer term route is yet to be established. All alignment options and designs for new routes, along with the issues to be overcome, will be assessed in the future and considered in accordance with the Welsh Government design guidance standards for Active Travel routes.
<b>NEATH</b>				
<b>INM-NEA-C014</b>	Cycling	Neath	<b>Resolven to Aberdulais and Tonna:</b> A cycle route that has the potential to follow the alignment of the canal towpath connecting Resolven to Tonna (via Aberdulais).	The alignment of this longer term route is yet to be established. All alignment options and designs for new routes, along with the issues to be overcome, will be assessed in the future and considered in accordance with the Welsh Government design guidance standards for Active Travel routes.
<b>PONTARDAWE</b>				
<b>INM-PON-C007</b>	Cycling	Pontardawe	<b>Clydach to Cwmtawe School / Pontardawe Leisure Centre:</b> A cycle route which would cross the administrative boundary providing a link between the residential area at Clydach (City & County of Swansea) and Cwmtawe Comprehensive School / Pontardawe Leisure Centre.	The route has some defects in parts and need resurfacing. The route is narrow in part and would benefit from widening where possible. The route would benefit from the cutting back of encroaching vegetation and the removal of the barriers that exist at either end which currently make joining and leaving the route difficult.

<b>INM-PON-C008</b>	Cycling	Pontardawe	<b>Pontardawe to Godre'r Graig (via NCN Route 43):</b> A cycle route providing a link from Pontardawe town centre to Godre'r Graig following the alignment of NCN Route 43 to the south of the River Tawe.	The surface of the route will require improvement as it has some defects / ponding in parts. The route would also benefit from improvements to signage and road markings, particularly through the Industrial Estate. The route is also narrow in part and would benefit from widening where possible.
<b>INM-PON-C010</b>	Cycling	Pontardawe	<b>NCN Route 43 to Pontardawe Town Centre:</b> A cycle route providing a short connecting link between the town centre and the NCN Route 43.	The alignment of this longer term route is yet to be established. All alignment options and designs for new routes, along with the issues to be overcome, will be assessed in the future and considered in accordance with the Welsh Government design guidance standards for Active Travel routes.
<b>PORT TALBOT</b>				
<b>INM-PT-C006</b>	Cycling	Port Talbot	<b>Taibach to Goytre:</b> A part off-road / on-road cycle route providing a link from Schools in Taibach through to the residential areas in Felindre / Goytre.	Route has some defects in parts and need resurfacing. The route is also narrow in part and is adversely affected by on-street parking and therefore would benefit from widening where possible. There is currently no appropriate surface on the portion of the route behind Caradog Street. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving needed along the route. The installation of controlled crossing points will also be required along the route.
<b>INM-PT-C011</b>	Cycling	Port Talbot	<b>Baglan Moors to Neath Port Talbot Hospital (Baglan Way):</b> A cycle route linking the residential area at Baglan Moors with the NPT Hospital, following the alignment of Baglan Way.	Route has some defects in parts and need resurfacing. The route is also narrow in part and therefore would benefit from widening where possible. Improvements to signage and suitable road markings would also be required.
<b>INM-PT-C012</b>	Cycling	Port Talbot	<b>Neath Port Talbot Hospital Link:</b> A short cycle route providing a link through the Hospital site.	Improvements to signage and suitable road markings would be required, particularly at the entrance to the site off Baglan Way. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving needed along the route.
<b>INM-PT-C013</b>	Cycling	Port Talbot	<b>Goytre to Bryn:</b> An off-road cycle link between Bryn, Goytre and Felindre, Port Talbot.	The alignment of this longer term route is yet to be established. All alignment options and designs for new routes, along with the issues to be overcome, will be assessed in the future and considered in accordance with the Welsh Government design guidance standards for Active Travel routes.
<b>INM-PT-C016</b>	Cycling	Port Talbot	<b>Christchurch Road to Baglan Moors Retail Park:</b> A cycle route aligned along Christchurch Road providing a link between the retail park and other existing active travel routes.	Improvements to signage and suitable road markings would be required. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving needed along the route. The route would benefit from the introduction of controlled crossings thereby improving continuity for cyclists.



**(DRAFT)**  
**Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee**  
**Forward Work Programme 2019/20**

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Officer
7 <sup>th</sup> June 2019	Environmental Health and Trading Standards Charge for Business Advice Update	Nicola Pearce/Mark Thomas
12 <sup>th</sup> July 2019	Problematic Empty Houses (Private Dwellings)	Nicola Pearce/Mark Thomas
	Active Travel Report	Nicola Pearce
	Key Performance Indicators	Nicola Pearce
	Forward Work Programme Workshop	Naidine Jones
6 <sup>th</sup> September 2019		

18 <sup>th</sup> October 2019		
29 <sup>th</sup> November 2019		
10 January 2020		
14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2020		
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2020		
1 <sup>st</sup> May 2020		

To be built in:

City Deal Project Monitoring

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