



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

#### Report of the Head of Engineering & Transport (David W. Griffiths)

#### Matter for Decision

**Wards Affected:** All wards

#### **The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 – Neath Port Talbot Active Travel Delivery Plan (2024-2029)**

#### Purpose of the Report

To seek endorsement for the Active Travel Delivery Plan (2024-2029) for Neath Port Talbot to be adopted by the council and published.

#### Executive Summary

Active Travel is defined as walking and cycling for everyday purposeful short-distance journeys not including journeys purely made for recreation or social reasons.

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 (the Act) places a duty on local authorities to continuously improve active travel provision through securing new and improved active travel routes and related facilities within settlements specified by the Welsh Government. It also requires local authorities to prepare Active Travel Network Maps (ATNMs) showing existing active travel routes, alongside proposed routes.

The current version of the council's ATNM was approved by Ministers on 3rd August 2023 and shows the council's active travel aspirations for the next 15 years. The ATNM for NPT shows over 400 future routes and the Strategic Change Programme for NPT requires the development of an Active Travel

Delivery Plan to further develop these aspirations (including prioritisation) over a shorter time period of five years. In response to this the draft Active Travel Delivery Plan (2024-2029) has been prepared.

The Neath Port Talbot Active Travel Delivery Plan highlights the strategy and proposed actions that are needed to achieve two broad aims for the county borough:

1. To set out the strategic vision for active travel in Neath Port Talbot.
2. Demonstrate how the active travel network will be improved and extended in the next five years.

This report seeks endorsement of the final revised Neath Port Talbot Active Travel Delivery Plan (2024-2029) in order for it to be adopted and published.

## **Background**

In November 2013, the Welsh Government introduced the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 (*the Act*) which 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.

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.

The Act requires local authorities to prepare, publish and keep under review an Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) which comprises of:

- **Existing routes** – informs the public of the existing routes in the County Borough that the Council considers suitable for active travel meeting Welsh Government standards; and
- **Future routes** – future routes are either routes that do not yet exist, or routes that fall short of the threshold to be classified as an existing route and require improvement. These form the councils proposals for the next 15 years.

The current version of the Council's ATNM was approved by Ministers on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022. The approved maps are available to view on the Welsh Government website DataMapWales <https://datamap.gov.wales>

## **Neath Port Talbot Active Travel Delivery Plan**

Neath Port Talbot's ATNM is the first step to planning for active travel improvements in the county borough over the next 15 years. The ATNM has over 400 future routes, and it was considered necessary in NPT to further develop these aspirations. In response to this the NPT's Strategic Change Programme (2023/2024 update) stipulates the following key priority:

- To develop a Neath Port Talbot Active Travel Plan which sets out the strategic vision for active travel in Neath Port Talbot and demonstrates how the active travel network can be improved and extended through the County Borough over the next 5 years. At the same time extending and improving our active travel network whilst also maintaining our public rights of way, both of which contribute towards a reliance on private vehicles and encourage more people to walk and cycle.

As a consequence, the Draft Neath Port Active Travel Delivery Plan (see Appendix 2) has been prepared. The plan highlights the strategy and proposed actions that are needed to achieve two broad aims for the County Borough:

- To set out the strategic vision for active travel in Neath Port Talbot.
- Demonstrate how the active travel network will be improved and extended in the next five years.

The focus of the plan is to enhance the opportunity for active travel in Neath Port Talbot and to encourage the uptake of new modes of transport to assist with modal shift. Increasing levels of physical activity is central to improving the nation's health, in turn, benefitting the overall physical and mental well-being of the population, while also helping the environment, supporting tourism, and encouraging economic growth.

## **Strategic Vision**

The vision in the Active Travel Delivery was developed in collaboration with the Active Travel Stakeholder Group, a group of internal stakeholders who meet monthly to discuss active travel improvements in NPT.

The vision for the future of active travel in Neath Port Talbot for the next 5 years is:

***Making walking, cycling and wheeling the first choice for a cleaner, safer, healthier and more active Neath Port Talbot.***

In order to deliver this vision, the council proposes to:

- Expand the active travel network and improve facilities to enable all to walk, cycle and wheel.
- Encourage behaviour change by promoting active travel in Neath Port Talbot communities.
- Ensure that active travel is prioritised above all other forms of transport in developments where possible.

## Document Structure

The Active Travel Delivery Plan has been divided into ten sections:

1. **Introduction and Background:** explains what active travel is, and the benefits that increased active travel can have to communities in the county borough.
2. **Strategic Fit:** shows how walking and cycling is embedding into national legislation, regional and local policy,
3. **Drivers for Change:** details the overall vision, and a SWOT analysis.
4. **Mapping and Prioritisation:** explains the councils' requirements to map existing and future active travel routes, and how routes have been prioritised for development.
5. **Improving Infrastructure and facilities:** setting council targets for improving active travel infrastructure and facilities in the next five years.
6. **Education Development and Training:** details the training and practical support that is undertaken in the county borough to promote safe walking and cycling.
7. **Promotion of Active Travel:** describes previous work undertaken by the council in relation to promotion.
8. **Consultation:** sets out the two types of consultation required for active travel: specific scheme related and gaining community views during the ATNM revision.
9. **Monitoring:** specifies WG requirements for monitoring walking, cycling and traffic in the county borough.
10. **Action Plan:** brings together the actions set out in the previous sections of the plan, so that they are easily accessible and clear.

## **Financial Impacts**

No direct financial implications with this report. Capital funding can be applied for to undertake design, engagement and implement improvements, once improvements are made the maintenance of routes will need to be undertaken through the Councils existing revenue budget.

The Active Travel Delivery Plan sets out the strategic vision for active travel in Neath Port Talbot and demonstrates how the active travel network can be improved and extended through the County Borough over the next 5 years.

Grant funding to carry out the actions detailed in the NPT Active Travel Delivery Plan including active travel infrastructure improvements, ATNM development and active travel promotion has in the past been provided by the Welsh Government as part of the Active Travel Fund Grant. Applications for grant funding will continue to be made for future mapping, infrastructure improvements and associated works.

Members should also note that once schemes are implemented, the routes will need to be maintained by the Authority and no additional funds are currently available to maintain new routes. The Authority can only bid for capital grants to undertake improvements no grant funding is presently available for ongoing maintenance of these routes. It is therefore important that members lobby Welsh Government and we seek assurances via the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) that additional funding be built into the Local Government Settlement as new routes are approved and constructed.

The Councils Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) provides an integrated framework for the delivery of highway maintenance services across the Authority's road network and optimises resources for the management of the highway infrastructure.

During the development of the HAMP, the need for other important work has been identified in relation to the inspection and maintenance regime of Active Travel routes. This work still needs to be completed; however, it is proposed the attached document is endorsed whilst this is done. The review will take a significant amount of work to complete, hence it is recommended a further update is brought back when the Regional Transport Plan and cycleway work is complete.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)**

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in

discharging its legislative duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment, attached at Appendix 1, has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts**

There will be incremental positive impacts across the Valley communities as the implementation of the Active Travel Delivery Plan progresses and the network of routes and facilities are improved/extended wherever possible.

### **Workforce Impacts**

It is anticipated that actions contained within the Active Travel Delivery Plan be accommodated mainly by utilising the existing staff structure within the Highways team. This however will need to be kept under review, to ensure delivery is in accordance with the Active Travel Act (Wales) 2013 requirements.

### **Legal Impacts:**

No implications.

### **Consultation**

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

### **Internal consultation has been undertaken.**

Consultation took place with internal stakeholders between 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023-5<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Stakeholders included:

- Planning
- Network management
- Highways
- Playteam
- Countryside
- Biodiversity
- Environmental Health (Air Quality)
- Road Safety
- Tourism
- Energy
- Communications section

All comments received during the stakeholder engagement were considered and where appropriate the plan has been amended to reflect the comments.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2024, a meeting was held between relevant officers and the following councillors to further discuss the Active Travel Delivery Plan.

- Cllr. Wyndham Fryer Griffiths
- Cllr. Sean Pursey
- Cllr. Nathan Goldup-John
- Cllr. Cen Phillips
- Cllr. Nia Jenkins

As a result of the meeting and subsequent comments from Cllr Goldup-John, the report was revised to address the majority of comments. This included providing a proposed list of active travel schemes to be brought forward during the 5-year plan period.

The draft plan was also presented to the Cabinet Scrutiny committee held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2024 and further suggestions by scrutiny board members have been taken on board by officers as set out below.

- Annual monitoring reports on the active travel delivery plan will be presented to cabinet to update on progress.
- Officers to speak to IT to see if there is a system that can be implemented to allow members of the public to identify/pinpoint problems on the published network maps.
- That an all-member active travel seminar – TfW, Sustrans and officers be invited to present and,
- The Active Travel Delivery Report be amended to include:
  - Details of collaboration with other sections regarding the HAMP for maintenance, review of planning applications etc.
  - Information on the Healthy Travel Charter Status recently achieved by NPT – including a note about working with the health board, universities, and local businesses to encourage a behaviour change.

## **Recommendations**

Having due regard to the integrated impact assessment it is recommended that, Members endorse the Active Travel Delivery Plan (2024-2029) as set out in Appendix 2 of the circulated report.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

To further ensure that the council is complying with the requirements of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013.

## **Implementation of Decision**

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Integrated Impact Assessment (First Stage)

Appendix 2: Active Travel Delivery Plan (2024-2029)

## **List of Background Papers**

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 [Active Travel Act](#)

Active Travel Act Guidance – Welsh Government (July 2021) [ATAG](#)

NPTCBC Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) [datamap.gov.wales](http://datamap.gov.wales)

Highways Asset Management Plan HAMP [HAMP 2023-2026](#)

## **Officer Contact**

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