



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Regeneration & Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee
12th 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 27th 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 27th 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

Implementation of the Integrated Network Map

- 11 On 1st 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
CROESERW				
INM-CROE-C001 (NPT-CROE-C002)	Cycling	Croeserw	Croeserw to Caerau via Menai Avenue: 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).
CYMMER				
INM-CYM-C001 (NPT-CYM-C003)	Cycling	Cymmer	NCN linking to Cymer Afan Comprehensive School & Croeserw: 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.
GLYNNEATH				
INM-GLYN-C001	Cycling	Glynneath	Abergarwed to Glynneath: 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.
NEATH				
INM-NEA-C014	Cycling	Neath	Resolven to Aberdulais and Tonna: 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.
PONTARDAWE				
INM-PON-C007	Cycling	Pontardawe	Clydach to Cwmtawe School / Pontardawe Leisure Centre: 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.

INM-PON-C008	Cycling	Pontardawe	Pontardawe to Godre'r Graig (via NCN Route 43): 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.
INM-PON-C010	Cycling	Pontardawe	NCN Route 43 to Pontardawe Town Centre: 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.
PORT TALBOT				
INM-PT-C006	Cycling	Port Talbot	Taibach to Goytre: 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.
INM-PT-C011	Cycling	Port Talbot	Baglan Moors to Neath Port Talbot Hospital (Baglan Way): 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.
INM-PT-C012	Cycling	Port Talbot	Neath Port Talbot Hospital Link: 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.
INM-PT-C013	Cycling	Port Talbot	Goytre to Bryn: 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.
INM-PT-C016	Cycling	Port Talbot	Christchurch Road to Baglan Moors Retail Park: 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.