



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Scrutiny Committee

14th July 2023

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

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All wards

Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 – Update on progress implementing and revising the Council’s ‘Active Travel Network Map’ (ATNM)

Purpose of the Report

To provide an update on the progress being made implementing and revising the Council’s ‘Active Travel Network Map’.

Executive Summary

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.

Following approval by Welsh Ministers on the 3rd August 2022, the Council is in the process of implementing its revised Active Travel Network Map (ATNM), seeking to deliver upon the wider aspirations set out in the ATNM and improve the active travel network wherever possible.

The Act also requires that the ATNMs should be reviewed by Local Authorities every three years, or no later than a date specified by the Welsh Ministers. Therefore, Neath Port Talbot's ATNM needs to next be reviewed by 3rd August 2025.

This report also provides an update on the Active Travel funding received, feasibility, engagement and improvement works undertaken during the previous financial year, and a summary of the schemes and activities that are planned for the current financial year.

Background

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 designated localities. These designated localities are specified by Welsh Government and derived from the Office for National Statistics' Built Up Areas.

Settlements within designated localities in Neath Port Talbot include: **Neath, Port Talbot, Pontardawe, Croeserw, Cymmer, Brynamman, Gwaun Cae Gurwen, Blaengwrach, Glynneath, Cwmafan, Seven Sisters and Resolven.**

The assignment of designated localities, does not limit an authority's ability to develop network maps for other localities, **where there is demand for active travel routes and a high potential for their use.** Crynant received a large number of consultation responses during the ATNM consultations in 2021, which showed a demand for routes in this locality. As a result, future routes were added in Crynant during the revision of the Councils ATNM in 2021.

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 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.

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

Implementation of the Active Travel Network Map

In **2022/23** Neath Port Talbot was awarded £716K core funding for further design work, minor improvement works, land negotiations and promotion of schemes.

The following work has been completed:

- **Active Travel Network Map Renewal (ATNM)** – ATNM was submitted to WG on 23rd December 2021 and approved on the 3rd August 2022. Work has been undertaken on publishing the maps as per the WG Active Travel Act Guidance (ATAG), this has included a refresh of the active travel webpages (www.npt.gov.uk/activetravel) and designing user friendly pdf maps.
- **Southdown Road** – Improvements have been made to the active travel route on Southdown road to improve walking and cycling for everyday journeys.
- **Scarlett Ave/Purcell Ave** – A public consultation was undertaken into the implementation of speed reduction measures on Scarlett Ave/Purcell Ave. The public were unsupportive of the proposal.
- **Tonna Hospital Link** – Funding was used to develop the design of the active travel route at Heol Uchaf Tonna. The proposal will link the hospital and local community with the shop and public transport facilities in the area.
- **Neath to Cimla** – Funding was used to progress the design of the active travel route between Neath and Cimla
- **Neath station to NCN 47** – Options assessment for improvements between the national cycle network (along Neath canal) and the station has been undertaken.
- **Newbridge road bridge** – Feasibility into the construction of an active travel route at Newbridge road and Docks road has been undertaken.
- **Sandfields Master plan** – Prioritisation and feasibility has been undertaken into improvements to the active travel network in the Sandfields area.
- **Baglan Way Link** – Design of raised plateaus has been undertaken along with engagement with landowners.
- **Dwr-y-felin** – Funding has been used to look at the feasibility of converting the walking route on Dwr-y-felin road into a shared use path.
- **Promotion and Consultation** – A schools poster competition was launched to raise awareness about active travel among school children and their parents. The two winning entries each won £500 for active travel improvements at their school.

A radio campaign promoted a new free cycle stands for local businesses scheme.

To discharge our duties under the ATAG, promotion of the approved ATNM was undertaken in the South Wales Evening Post and social media.

User-friendly drawings were produced (bilingually) of Tonna and Bryn to Goytre schemes to be used in future consultations.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation** – Traffic count surveys were undertaken to determine the number of pedestrians and cyclists using routes as well as the speed and volume of traffic.
- **Audit of Active Travel Routes** – Route audits were undertaken in accordance with the ATAG on many of the councils future routes to determine if the routes are suitable to be placed on our ATNM as existing routes.
- **Removal/Replacement of Access Control Measures (Phase 4)** – 9 non-compliant barriers were removed or replace with compliant barriers.
- **Seating** – A stakeholder consultation was undertaken to determine where on the network seating is required. Proposed locations have been assessed and prioritised and seating was installed at 3 locations.
- **Cycle Storage** – An interactive map has been created to show where cycle storage is available in NPT, the map will be placed on the councils webpage allowing residents or visitors to view photos and locations of the available cycle storage before travelling. Cycle storage has been installed in Cymmer and at Aberavon Shopping centre.

In 2023/2024 Neath Port Talbot was awarded £470k for main schemes and £716K core funding for further design work, minor improvement works, land negotiations and promotion of schemes.

Main Schemes

Tonna hospital link

The scheme to be constructed in 2023/2024 will deliver improvements to the pedestrian route between Tonna hospital and Tonna. The proposal connects the village with the hospital while also linking a residential area to the local shops.

The scheme is show as an existing route ref NPT-TON-P003 and future route FR-TON-SU001 on the Active Travel Network map for Neath Port Talbot.

NPT-TON-P003 is on the ATNM as an existing pedestrian route; however, the route has failed the audit with an audit score of 64. The route is an important pedestrian route as it links to a residential area, Tonna hospital and the centre of Tonna, as a result the route has passed with statement. The audit showed that the route has critically failed due to the lack of suitable crossing points for

pedestrians. The proposal will address these issues while also bringing the route up to the standards in the ATAG.

The proposed route FR-TON-SU001 is classified as a shared use primary route. While the footway provision for pedestrians can be improved by reallocating road space, there is insufficient available space to construct cycle lanes or a shared use path. The volume of traffic in this area is relatively low; however, the speed limit on the road is 30mph making it difficult for many cyclist to cycle on road. It is proposed that the speed is reduced to 20mph over the extents of the scheme, with a transition being introduced to ensure that vehicles reduce their speed when exiting the 60mph zone (to the east) before entering the 20mph zone.

The proposal includes:

- Widening the existing footway to meet the standards set out in the ATAG.
- Improvements to the crossing facilities junctions to give priority to pedestrians, by the installation of raised crossings (other than at the entrance to the hospital where there will be dropped crossings with tactiles).
- Improvements to the crossing at the roundabout by the installation of a raised roundabout.
- Reduction in speed along the route from 30mph to 20mph and the introduction of a transition zone between the 20mph section and 60mph section.
- Installation of an uncontrolled crossing point to link the residential area and the hospital.
- Relocation of the bus stop to allow the improvement of the side road junction and bring the crossing point to the desire line.
- Installation of seating on the route.
- Installation of a green wall to enhance biodiversity and the local environment.

Bryn to Goytre

The scheme when complete will see the creation of an off road active travel route suitable for cyclists and pedestrians linking the communities of Goytre and Bryn. The route will enable the residents of Bryn to commute to Goytre and Port Talbot to access the everyday facilities they rely on.

The existing route is in poor condition, the track is very narrow and the running surface is poor quality with frequent ruts and potholes. There is also an existing footbridge at the Goytre end of the route; the bridge is narrow making it difficult for some users to access the route.

The replacement of the existing footbridge requires planning permission, the funding will be used to secure planning approval for the proposed footbridge and investigate the connections from Goytre to Port Talbot.

Core allocation

The following core allocation work has been approved by WG and TfW:

Neath to Cimla - Funding will allow the progression of the detailed design, public and statutory consultation, negotiations with CADW in relation to the listed structures affected by the scheme and the legal process to revoke the prohibition of cycling order.

Dwr-y-felin - Funding will be used to further develop the design to improving the walking route to a shared use facility.

Newbridge Road Link - Funding will be used to further progress the design of the scheme and undertake public consultation for the proposal.

Sandfields Master Plan - Building on the feasibility work that has been undertaken in 2022/23 the design of the highest prioritised routes will be taken forward.

Village road crossing - The proposal will see the construction of a toucan crossing point on Village road to allow residents of the Village Gardens estate to safely cross the carriageway. In addition to the formal crossing point, raised plateaus will be installed to slow the speeding traffic and traffic orders will be implemented to remove indiscriminate parking making it safer for users to cross. The proposed crossing point, will link the estate with the National Cycle Network 4 and the existing footbridge, which crosses the A4241 Afan Way. This will improve the designated safe route for pupils of Ysgol Bae Baglan and Bro Dur.

Monitoring - Traffic data to record the speed and volume of traffic, along with cycle and pedestrian counts, will be undertaken on routes. Firstly this will record baseline data and secondly will capture evidence to demonstrate the benefits that improving active travel routes create. This will allow NPT to discharge out duties under the Active Travel Act.

Promotion - During 2022-23 NPT's website has been updated to promote Active Travel and publicise the revised ATNM.

There is presently little information on NPT's website about the routes that have been created in recent years. It is propose that the website is updated to promote the good work that has been undertaken to enhance the network to both raise awareness and give users the confidence to utilise the routes for commuting.

ATNM Development - Routes identified on NPT's ATNM will be audited against a set of Welsh Government specified criteria to determine if they are suitable for walking, cycling or both.

An exercise will be undertaken to update the data held on DataMapWales to reflect the scores of the routes that have been audited in 2021-23.

The council will also undertake an exercise to audit and map our important publicly accessible related facilities. Related facilities are important as they support and enable active travel, related facilities include seating, cycle storage, toilets etc. This will enable the data held on DataMapWales to be updated.

Related Facilities - The funding will be used for the removal/replacement of access control measures to ensure that barriers comply with the Active Travel Act Guidance. This will build on works undertaken in previous years to replace non-compliant barriers and make NPT's routes more accessible.

During 2022/23 a map was produced to show where cycle storage is available within NPT. Gaps have been identified at many of the County Borough's key destinations points. Funding will be used to seek permission from estates managers (as necessary) to install cycle storage at appropriate locations.

Complaints have been received in relation to the lack of signage when users are navigating between NCN 887 and NCN 4. A review will be undertaken of the signage to determine if there are missing signs.

Future Plans and Proposals

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 ATNM and improve/extend the active travel network wherever possible.

In previous years the duty of active travel has been split between planning and the highways section.

Historically planning were responsible for the production of the ATNM, consultation on planning applications and answering queries. The highways section being responsible for the feasibility, design and construction of proposals as well as submitting the funding applications and managing the fund.

All duties relating to Active Travel will now fall under the highways section.

Financial Impacts

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

Valleys Communities Impacts

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

Consultation

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

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

Officer Contact

Hasan Hasan

Tel: 01639 686463 / Email: h.hasan@npt.gov.uk

Amanda Phillips

Tel: 01639 686483 / Email: a.phillips2@npt.gov.uk