

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 7 th December 2021
Report Subject	Active Travel Network Map - outcome of the formal consultation
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation
Report Author	Chief Officer, Streetscene & Transportation
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 2021 a report was presented to the Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee informing members of the 12-week statutory consultation required for the Council's Active Travel Network Map (ATNM), which would be launched in August 2021.

The Active Travel Act (Wales) 2013, requires all Welsh local authorities to periodically update their individual ATNM, which involves the re-auditing of existing routes as well as the investigation of future proposed routes with the next update required to be submitted for Welsh Government (WG) for approval on 31st December 2021.

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the process and outcomes of both the informal and statutory consultation exercises, which have enabled the required updates to be made to the Council's Active Travel Network Map.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee supports the work undertaken to complete both the informal and statutory consultation processes.
2	That the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee formally recognises the validity of the process utilised to produce the Council's updated ATNM, which will be submitted to Welsh Government by 31 st December 2021.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	Explaining the Active Travel Network Map Consultation
1.01	<p>The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 aims to make walking and cycling the natural mode of choice for short everyday journeys or as part of a longer journey in combination with other sustainable modes of travel. Its purpose is to enable more people to choose active travel as a viable alternative to using their cars, where it is suitable for them to do so.</p>
1.02	<p>In May 2021 a report was taken to the Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee to inform members of the 12-week statutory consultation on the Council's active travel network map (ATNM), which would be launched in August 2021. A copy of the original report has been included within Appendix 1 for information.</p>
1.03	<p>Local authorities have a duty to make year on year improvements to their active travel routes and related facilities. Under this duty, local authorities are required to build new active travel infrastructure, as well as improve the existing infrastructure. One of the ways that local authorities have to demonstrate to Welsh Government that they have delivered this duty is through the revision of the ATNM, which requires all Welsh local authorities to periodically update their individual maps. This requires the re-auditing of existing routes as well as the investigation of future proposed routes. The Act requires local authorities to submit their ATNM to Welsh Ministers no later than three years after the date on which their ATNM was last approved, though the act gives Welsh Ministers the power to specify a different time period by issuing a direction. At the three-year review point, there should be a measurable difference between the number and length of existing routes on any previous map and the new one.</p>
1.04	<p>Whilst updates to the local authority active travel maps were originally required for submission in September 2020, due to the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the submission deadline was extended to 31st December 2021.</p>
1.05	<p>In order to both develop and update the Council's ATNM, we have worked closely with Sustrans to undertake a review of the existing routes as well as the development of potential new routes for inclusion on the forthcoming ATNM. This important piece of work has allowed any already identified new routes to be updated on the Council's ATNM prior to engagement with key stakeholders.</p>
1.06	<p>A two stage consultation process was undertaken subsequently, which consisted of both an informal and a statutory consultation exercise. An overview of the process has been provided below for information: -</p> <p>Stage One – Informal engagement exercise</p> <p>Informal community engagement events began early in 2021, which allowed people to positively input into the process by identifying local issues and suggesting developments and improvements (which may include new routes) within their local areas.</p> <p>Running concurrently with this, audits were also undertaken to establish the suitability of any routes created since the last map submission and, where appropriate, these were added to the updated draft as existing routes.</p>

1.07	<p>Whilst in previous years, a number of workshops and community engagement events were held with schools, local forums and with Town and Community Councils, this approach has not been possible due to the restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Consequently, to assist with public engagement, we have utilised an online bilingual consultation tool known as 'Commonplace,' which was licensed for use through Welsh Government (https://flintshire.commonplace.is/).</p> <p>This online community engagement platform has made it easy for local communities to record and reference comments, suggestions and proposals via the use of a digital mapping system with over 4,000 visitors to the site and almost 3,000 contributions to date.</p> <p>The informal consultation was made available on the Council's website and was promoted through direct email to a list of stakeholders and through social media. Additionally, ward member specific workshops were conducted to ensure that local knowledge input was maximised in route identification.</p> <p>An opportunity was also provided for people to contact us directly via other mediums and for officers to add their input on their behalf.</p>
1.08	<p>Stage Two - Statutory Consultation</p> <p>Following completion of the informal engagement exercise, the draft ATNM was updated prior to the undertaking of the 12-week statutory consultation period, which commenced in August 2021 and has since ended on 1st November 2021.</p> <p>As per stage one of the process, the updated ATNM map was made available through a second Commonplace web page (https://flintshire2.commonplace.is/) which allowed people to review and check the additions and, if necessary, inform us of any errors or omissions in readiness for the final map submission to the Welsh Government.</p> <p>During this 12-week period, the consultation was made available on the Council's website and was promoted through direct email to a list of stakeholders and social media. The direct email to stakeholders included a link to the online map-based consultation with a 'call to action' to share the opportunity to verify the draft as widely as possible, whilst also requesting feedback on the proposals. Again, for those who may not be computer orientated, an opportunity was also provided for people to contact us directly via other mediums and for officers to add their input on their behalf.</p> <p>Data received during this process will be used to further amend the ATNM to reflect any errors and omissions with a view to a final draft of the map being submitted to Welsh Government for approval by 31st December 2021.</p>
1.09	<p>In addition to the statutory consultation and to ensure ongoing community consultation and engagement, an Active Travel Engagement Group (ATEG) has also been convened, which not only fed into the statutory process, but will also serve as a conduit for ongoing consultation and engagement with local communities.</p>

1.10	<p>Prior to the Council's updated ATNM being submitted to the WG in December 2021 and in order to form the basis of future bids to WG, any proposed routes and associated improvements will then be further assessed utilising a Welsh Government prioritisation matrix, which takes into consideration relevant factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cost • casualty data • traffic speeds/flows • proximity to - education, employment, retail, tourism, community, health, transport interchanges and enterprise zones • audit scores risks and deliverability
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The implementation of the updated ATNM will be funded via the Council's Core Active Travel Fund allocation provided by Welsh Government.
2.02	Any additional resource required for the undertaking of both the audit and prioritisation exercises will be funded via the Council's Core Active Travel Fund allocation provided by Welsh Government.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT	
3.01	Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact	
	Long-term	<p>Positive – The move to low carbon sustainable transport options aligns itself with the long term aspirations of The Environment (Wales) Act, The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act & The Air Quality Standards (Wales) Regulations. The concept is also strongly endorsed within the Council's Council Plan under the priority of a 'Green Council' for which is reinforced by the Council's approach to integrated and sustainable transport.</p>
	Prevention	<p>Positive – The development of sustainable transport options will reinforce the Council's commitment to climate change whilst also facilitating a vision for a zero carbon future as defined within WG legislation. Implementation of the required infrastructure will provide reliance to County's highway network also boost the Council's status as a 'key player' within the region thus reducing the risk of public abandonment in terms of tourism, residential and business growth.</p>

Integration	Positive – The development of multimodal integrated transport options (with an emphasis on Active Travel) is key to the success of a sustainable, integrated transport network.
Collaboration	Positive – The continual development of a fit for purpose Cycle Network contained within a wider Integrated Transport Strategy will enable FCC to work with local authorities across the region in order to standardise the provision of infrastructure. The nature of this approach recognises the importance of strategic cross-border movements to the local economy in terms of commuter movements, business and tourism.
	Positive – Progression of the Council’s Core Active Travel Network thus far demonstrates Flintshire’s engagement with key stakeholders both cross border and within WG.
Well-being Goals Impact	
Prosperous Wales	Positive – The continual development of a fit for purpose Integrated Transport Strategy with an emphasis on sustainable modes will boost the Council’s status as a ‘key player’ within the region thus reducing the risk of public abandonment in terms of tourism, residential and business growth.
Resilient Wales	Positive - The continual development of a fit for purpose walking and cycling network is key to the success of a sustainable, integrated transport network.
Healthier Wales	Positive - The promotion and utilisation of active and sustainable transport modes provide obvious benefits to air quality through the reduction of Co2 emissions as well as improving people’s fitness and mental wellbeing. This approach will also greatly assist the Council to achieve decarbonisation targets set within Central and WG legislation.
More equal Wales	Positive – Improved connectivity through the implementation of required infrastructure will benefit tourism, residential, business growth and inequality amongst deprived communities. Health

		benefits obtained from improved air quality and increased levels of exercise will benefit the Council's most deprived communities, often associated with densely populated areas.
	Cohesive Wales	Positive – The visible presence of active and sustainable transport options within the County will have a positive effect on public awareness whilst displaying the Council's outward commitment to climate change.
	Vibrant Wales	Positive – A move to active and sustainable transport modes will improve the quality and sustainability of the natural environment whilst providing benefits to the local and regional economy in terms of tourism, residential and business growth.
	Globally responsible Wales	Positive - The continual development of a fit for purpose Integrated Transport Strategy will reinforce the Council's commitment to climate change whilst also striving to achieve a zero carbon future as defined within Central and WG legislation.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Stage One - Informal engagement exercises undertaken in early 2021
4.02	Stage Two – 12-week statutory consultation undertaken between August and November 2021
4.03	Ward member specific workshops
4.04	Active Travel Engagement Group (ATEG) initiation and subsequent consultation
4.05	With Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Transportation
4.06	With Streetscene & Transportation Programme Board

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Informal Cabinet Report – Forthcoming Active Travel Consultation Process (May 2021) https://committeemeetings.flintshire.gov.uk/documents/s64428/Forthcoming%20Active%20Travel%20Consultation%20Process.pdf?LLL=0

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Guidance for local authorities planning and designing networks of walking and cycling routes - https://gov.wales/active-travel-act-guidance
7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Anthony Stanford Telephone: 01352 704817 E-mail: anthony.stanford@flintshire.gov.uk
8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS These are provided corporately on the Infonet (link) and maintained by the Executive Office
8.01	<p>(1) Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 - The Active Travel (Wales) Act aims to make it easier for people to walk and cycle in Wales, specifically to promote walking and cycling as viable modes of transport for everyday journeys such as to the shops, work or college. It places a legal duty upon local authorities in Wales to map, plan for and promote active travel journeys</p> <p>(2) Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) - This map sets out the existing and future infrastructure for walking and cycling within the areas covered by the Active Travel Act which must be reviewed and updated periodically.</p> <p>(3) Active Travel Act Guidance - Guidance for local authorities planning and designing networks of walking and cycling routes. Includes best practice on infrastructure design and gives guidance on how to provide related facilities such as cycle parking. https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-07/active-travel-act-guidance_0.pdf</p> <p>(4) Designated settlements - Under section 2(4) of the act the Welsh Ministers are empowered to designate localities in a Direction. The duty to map routes is specific to those designated localities. This is to ensure that there are plans in place for the creation of active travel networks in all the most populous areas in each authority. It does however 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.</p> <p>(5) Active Travel audit tools - Local authorities need to make use of the cycle and walking route audit tools (Appendix H of the Active Travel Act Guidance) to assess the appropriateness of designating infrastructure as part of the basic network.</p> <p>(6) Prioritisation tool/matrix - Prioritisation tools aid the decision making process regarding infrastructure projects and include specific active travel criteria. A scoring matrix to assist prioritisation of schemes identified in the ATNM, together with the associated scoring criteria (Appendix K H of the Active Travel Act Guidance).</p>

(7) **Active Travel Engagement Group** – Stakeholder engagement group whose primary focus is the oversight of and input into the development of the ATNM and associated proposed AT projects and schemes.

(8) **Accessible** – transport services and infrastructure that meet the relevant policy and regulatory standards on equality, access, human rights and the Welsh language, recognising the social model of disability.

(9) **Active travel** – for the purposes of this document ‘active travel’ refers to walking and cycling for everyday journeys – such as to go to work, or education or access services.

(10) **Decarbonisation** – the actions needed to cut greenhouse gas emissions and move towards a low-carbon economy. The Welsh Government is committed to net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

(11) **Infrastructure** – transport infrastructure includes all the things that enable transport services to operate – streets and roads, railway lines and active travel networks such as cycle-paths and footpaths. It also includes associated structures such as stations, bridges, embankments, car parks, signage, signalling, bus stops and transport interchanges and the soft estate – land and greenspace associated with transport. Ports and harbours, airports, and freight and logistics facilities are also important.

(12) **Transport for Wales (TfW)** – the body established by Welsh Government to deliver transport priorities in Wales.

(13) **Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WeITAG)** – a framework for assessing the impact and benefits of proposed transport interventions such as schemes to upgrade roads. It is aligned with the seven national well-being goals.