

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 25<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2021

REFERENCE FROM ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE: 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2021

“381 ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK – STATUTORY CONSULTATION PROCESS  
(REF) –

The Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport presented the reference from Cabinet of 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2021.

The report outlined that the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 placed duties upon local authorities in Wales to map, plan for, improve and promote opportunities for Active Travel. Initial Active Travel Network Maps (ATNM's) were approved by Welsh Government (WG) in November 2017 and updated ATNMs must be submitted to WG every three years. Current maps for the Vale of Glamorgan were available on the Council's website (Active Travel -valeofglamorgan.gov.uk).

The deadline for submission of the updated ATNMs was originally 27th February 2021, but due to Covid-19 this was extended by WG until 31st December 2021.

The settlements identified in the Vale of Glamorgan Active Travel area by WG included, Barry, Cowbridge, Dinas Powys, Llantwit Major, Penarth, Rhoose, St Athan and Sully.

The report advised that the criteria that Active Travel routes must meet were extremely high and did not reflect the Council's own maintenance standards, or that of the standards that Councils were legally bound to consider when carrying out risk assessments on walked routes to schools. Therefore, a route that was deemed available was an appropriate route to school, in accordance with the Learner Travel Wales Measure, may not meet the criteria as an Active Travel route. Likewise, the Council had its own standards for roads or footways when deciding whether it required maintenance works to be carried out. Hence, the routes for Active Travel reflected WG's aspirations for providing new facilities but were all heavily dependent on available funding to deliver such routes.

The routes were assessed using a scoring mechanism and there may be exception statements that could be used to allow a route to be an Active Travel route without it meeting all the criteria in the guidance. It was reported that each route must be assessed separately, which was judged as a long and resource intensive process. The scoring pass rate to enable a route to be considered an Active travel route for both walking and cycling, was 70%.

The ATNMs were a comprehensive plan. They included routes that were currently used but may not meet the standard of Active Travel routes, or they could be routes

that did not currently exist but that had been identified within other strategic plans or had been identified through the consultation process.

The Committee noted that WG had allocated funding of £2.5m to progress Active Travel schemes for the current financial year.

Councillor R. Sivagnanam commented on some of the feedback she had received from local residents in Penarth which were around the steep gradients and unsuitability of some paths. She also wanted to raise the safety issues around the connection between Windsor Road and the link to Cogan. Councillor Sivagnanam also referred to streets in Penarth such as Plassey Street, where the trees had been removed because they had caused damage to the pavement or road. Some of the paved areas also contained slippery stone which needed to be looked in to. She added that where the trees had been removed there had not been any indication whether the right sort of tree would be planted, and which did not cause the same sort of issues. The replanting of trees was important in terms of the street scene. In response, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport stated that for feedback it was important for comments to be fed into the consultation portal as it would allow members of the public to express a like or dislike of what had been written. She added that in terms of trees, this was something that would often be raised, but there was a balance between safety and the street scene. The Council was replanting trees, but these would not always be in the same location to the trees that had been removed. This work was something that would be covered within the Council's Tree Strategy, which would look at tree coverage across the whole of the Vale and was due for completion early next year.

Councillor L.O. Rowlands stated that it appeared that certain cycle lanes were infrequently used referring to comments he had received from cyclists that material on lanes caused damage to wheels and tyres. He therefore asked whether more could be done to encourage cyclists to use cycle lanes. The Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport commented that the Council would ensure that cycle lanes were properly maintained to high standards for the issues of road safety. It was recognised that the best way to encourage cycling was to have dedicated lanes with the best examples of these probably on 5 Mile Lane and Port Road. However, it was also recognised that some cyclists had a personal preference to use roads as opposed to dedicated cycle lanes. She agreed that information regarding the number of cyclists using routes and lanes would be shared with the Members.

Councillor A.R Robertson queried whether some of the routes on the map for Dinas Powys were already in existence and whether that meant there would not be any traffic. In reply, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport advised that for Dinas Powys there were a number of future Active Travel routes proposed that would be brought up to a higher standard. These were not exclusively for walkers or cyclists and improvements would usually mean the widening of pavements or the development of cycling facilities. There were also some routes such as St. Andrews where physical restraints limited the work that could be carried out.

In terms of overall costs, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport confirmed that the Council had received an initial amount of £2.5m to develop routes. Funding to deliver projects would be determined as part of the next phase.

Councillor M.G.J. Morgan commented from the rural perspective of the Active Travel network which appeared to be mainly concentrated in town areas. He referred to safety on rural roads and the unsuitability of parts of the rural network which made passing cyclists and horse riders dangerous. This problem was made more dangerous by the speeds that some drivers drove. Councillor Morgan therefore asked if something could be done to address these issues, and he suggested that the 60mph speed limit for single track country lanes should be reduced.

Scrutiny Committee, having considered the reference

**RECOMMENDED – T H A T** the views of the Scrutiny Committee be submitted as part of the consultation process and the views also referred to Cabinet for its consideration. The views being:

- To highlight safety issues that required the removal of trees which caused damage to pavements and cycle lanes. To also highlight the importance that trees had on the street scenes of towns, so a strategy was needed to ensure that the right sort of tree was planted which did not cause damage to pavements / cycle lanes etc.;
- For there to be a more holistic approach for the promotion of Active Travel to encourage greater use of cycle lanes;
- The Scrutiny Committee strongly supported the Active Travel improvements proposed for the A4055 between Barry and Dinas Powys;
- As a way to encourage walking and cycling in rural areas, there should be a campaign to reduce the speed limits on rural roads and lanes;
- The Scrutiny Committee wished to emphasize the importance for projects to be delivered successfully post consultation to make positive improvement to communities.

#### Reason for recommendation

To allow the views of the Scrutiny Committee to be fed into the consultation activity and to ensure that Cabinet are aware of those views.”