

To  
The Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee

From  
Rowland Pittard,  
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Penyfai,  
Bridgend .  
CF31 4NW  
12/02/18

Dear Sir,

I submit on behalf of Railfuture Cymru Wales a written response to your questions post-legislative scrutiny of the Active Travel Bill.

Please can you confirm receipt of this submission.

Rowland Pittard  
Secretary Railfuture Cymru/ Wales

Railfuture Cymru/Wales response to The [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee's](#) post-legislative scrutiny to build on initial post-legislative scrutiny undertaken by the predecessor Enterprise and Business Committee ([Active Travel: the start of the journey](#) February 2016).

To assess the implementation and operation to date of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, including:

**How far the stated objectives of the Active Travel Act are being achieved;**

The approved maps of existing active travel routes in a local authority area are unfortunately not comprehensive because they only cover designated localities as defined by the Act. They are not integrated with cycle ways which have been developed for leisure purposes and they are not integrated with the Local Authority's definitive map of rights of way. Local Authorities have to produce Right of Way Improvement Plans but this work is not integrated with Active Travel developments. The Active Travel Maps are discontinuous and only show areas which have Active Travel Routes. The colour key for the type of route is not present on every published map and there is considerable mapping of routes on roads. It is important to show traffic free routes in a clear manner.

We support the inclusion of all railway routes and railway and bus stations/interchanges on the maps.

A major obstacle to integration is the creation of separate budgets for Active Travel and Rights of Way usually administered by two different departments of the local authority.

We have seen little evidence of local authorities having regard to integrated network maps in preparing transport policies. There are examples of the development of Active Travel Routes to city and town centres in many cases provided for by speed restrictions and speed reducing measures on highways rather than discrete routes. Very few Active Travel Routes have been created to rail and bus stations to provide integrated travel with other modes of transport. Facilities for safe cycle storage are essential at railway and bus stations/stops and also in town centres and at places of work. Such safe facilities are few and far between and are usually found at the few stations in Wales that have full time staff and at places of work where employers encourage Active Travel.

The Act's requirement for Welsh Ministers to report on Active Travel in Wales illustrates that Active Travel is not clearly under the administration of just one Minister. The Annual Active Travel Conference has a limited audience and its findings are not published. Only two reports have been published whereas the requirement is for an annual report.

The final duty on Ministers and local authorities is to promote Active Travel and secure new and improved routes and related facilities. We have not seen any high powered promotions in recent years although Active Travel is an important contribution to the Nation's well being. We consider that opportunities have been missed for example no routes have been developed to the new transport interchange bus/rail at Port Talbot. No routes have been established through the new developments north of Cardiff Central railway station. Cycle capacity on trains in Wales is decreasing with the new IET trains operated by GWR in South Wales only having two cycle spaces. There should be an increase in carrying capacity for cycles on any future new trains.

### **The effectiveness of subordinate legislation and guidance made under the Act;**

We consider that the present guidance is adequate but difficult to implement because of lack of organisational integration and declining funding. There needs to be a revision of the guidance ensuring that developments to the Network are coordinated with other developments associated with the Right of Way Improvement Plans and are incorporated in one Government and one local authority department.

### **Any action which should be taken to improve the effectiveness of the Act and its implementation;**

Active Travel and Public Rights of Way must be an essential component of the new City Deals that are being developed in Wales. New integrated routes should also be considered where new housing, industrial, business parks and public service sites are developed. There are examples of business parks in Wales which do not provide for access on foot. Active travel routes should be incorporated as access into rail and bus networks. The Act must widen its horizons to include leisure travel and support tourism for the economic benefit for Wales. Power assisted bicycles and wheelchairs should be able to use Active Travel routes as should prams and pushchairs. Active Travel routes should improve accessibility to public transport in the most direct and safe way. They should not just be considered as well maintained high speed routes for cyclists. They should be a catalyst for healthy safe activity and improve the well being of residents and visitors to Wales. There are roads in Wales which could have Active Travel routes built using grass verges and at the extreme there are routes alongside roads which are suitable for Active Travel which prohibit pedestrians

### **How far the Act has represented, and will continue to represent, value for money.**

The Act will not provide value for money unless the Network is further expanded to provide integrated travel and not just for journeys to work. It must also cater for inter community travel which often is a shorter but a more frequent journey for residents. It must support tourism throughout Wales and provide safe routes not using main roads. Present day discontinuous routes should be connected to give through routes and the use of country lanes as Active Travel Routes is undesirable. We are concerned that money has been spent on discontinuous routes and have seen sections of cycle paths as short as 50 yards in length with full signage for both road and cycle path users. In one known case this links to a station approach road. It is important that Active Travel routes are the most direct routes between two locations which they link especially where it is between a community and its railway station or nearest bus stop. There are examples of routes which are circuitous and not direct or even the shortest route available. Sign posting must give accurate distances in preference to estimated times of travel.

### **The effectiveness of the Active Travel Action Plan;**

We consider that this has been limited and has not been used effectively to connect different forms of transport. We welcome the Metro Station Improvement Programme which funded £300k of active travel improvements at four railway stations, which included bike parking, improved footways and signage.

### **Whether sufficient funding and capacity are available to support implementation of the Act itself and wider active travel policy;**

There has not been sufficient funding for the concept of Active Travel to be developed to the level seen in some European countries. Staff reductions in local authorities and in Natural Resources Wales will curtail further developments. There are examples in the Netherlands

of multi story cycle parks with repair facilities at railway stations The only example in Great Britain is at Cambridge with a smaller facility at York .We note that £8.1 m has been allocated for 54 Active Travel schemes in 2018-9 and trust that sufficient money will be available to Local Authorities to maintain and expand their routes to railway stations and bus stations.

### **The operation of the Active Travel Board;**

Railfuture has had no contact with the Active Travel Board or its members. The Board has not made contact or consulted with Railfuture, a large nationwide organisation, which has supported Active Travel from its conception. Its remit appears limited and only two sets of very short minutes have been published. The proceedings appear to presentations with very little discussion of ways to improve and extend Active travel. The Board has not arranged meetings with other stakeholders and appears to not include members representing tourism, disabled and public transport interests.

Railfuture has met with the bidders for the new Wales and Borders Franchise and in its presentations emphasised the need for Active travel to and from railway stations and facilities for the conveyance of cycles on trains. This has been reiterated in consultations for the extension of the Great Western franchise.

Only two Annual Active Travel reports have been published whereas the requirement is for an annual report. The latest report does not give examples of new infrastructure developments that have been constructed to improve facilities for Active Travel. There are no statistics in the report so it cannot be used to compare progress from year to year. The report does however give a clear indication of the sources of funding and expenditure and the appendix gives details of responsibility and progress narrative of projects and strategic developments taking place. Rail future would like to see clear statistics in each report showing the development of Active Travel Routes to railway and bus interchanges/stations

### **Whether active travel is integrated effectively in wider Welsh Government and local government policy.**

There is little evidence for the integration of Active Travel in wider Welsh Government and local government policy.

Railfuture would like to continue to promote Active Travel in Wales but there is the need to have a central resource from which information can be extracted. The Active Travel developments in and the Network Maps for the twenty two local authority areas in Wales must be able to be accessed at one central location. There must be a coordinated and integrated website provided by Welsh Government for all inhabitants of and visitors to Wales to find the appropriate information. Active travel must not be promoted just as the journey to work the facilities provided for Active Travel routes must be available to all. We note that a National Communication Strategy for Active travel is being developed. This must be integrated with the data bases of Natural Resources Wales and with Travelline Cymru. There must be proper consultations for new developments to ensure value for money. The health advantages of Active Travel must be promoted. Cycle hire should be promoted and sponsored in cities in Wales as it is in London.

Rowland Pittard

For Railfuture Cymru/Wales