

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 12 May 2021
Report Subject	Forthcoming Active Travel Consultation Process
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for the Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer - Streetscene & Transportation
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 aims to make non-vehicular travel the most attractive option for most people's short journeys. Its purpose is to enable more people to choose active travel (walking and cycling) as a viable alternative to using their cars, where it is suitable for them to do so.

The Act, requires all Welsh authorities to periodically update their individual Integrated Network Maps (INM) as well as the re-auditing of their Existing Routes Map (ERM) for Welsh Government (WG) approval, for which the next update is required for submission on the 31 December 2021.

The purpose of this report is to inform Scrutiny of the forthcoming 12 week Statutory Consultation on both the Council's Active Travel Existing Route Map (ERM) and Integrated Network Map (INM) which will commence in August of this year and receive any comments or suggestions on the proposed consultation process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	That Scrutiny notes the timescales associated with the forthcoming consultation exercise for the Council's ERM and INM.
2.	That Scrutiny request a further report detailing the outcome of the formal consultation on the Council's INM, prior to submission in December 2021.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND
1.01	The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 aims to make non-vehicular travel the most attractive option for most people's short journeys. Its purpose is to

	enable more people to choose active travel (walking and cycling) as a viable alternative to using their cars, where it is suitable for them to do so.
1.02	The Act requires local authorities in Wales to produce active travel maps for the defined settlement areas and to deliver year on year walking and cycling improvements within them. It also requires Highway Authorities in Wales to make enhancements to the routes and to consider the needs and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in all new road improvement schemes as well as a wide range of other Highway Authority and Planning functions. It also requires Welsh Ministers and local authorities to promote active travel journeys in exercising their functions under the Act.
1.03	<p>The Act requires two sets of maps to be produced for each settlement area:</p> <p><u>The Existing Active Travel Route Map (ERM)</u> - primarily intended to inform the public of the existing safe and suitable routes for active travel and,</p> <p><u>The Active Travel Integrated Network Map (INM)</u> - intended to set out the plans of the local authority for the next 15 years which will form the basis of all future grant submissions (as defined within the authority's Integrated Transport Strategy).</p>
1.04	The Active Travel Wales Act requires all Welsh authorities to periodically update their individual INM as well as the re-auditing of their ERM every 5 years for WG approval. Whilst updates to the Council's mapping were originally required for submission in September of last year, due to the ongoing impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic, the submission deadline has been subsequently extended to the 31 December 2021.
1.05	The Council's Transport Strategy Team are currently working in partnership with Sustrans to undertake a review of the existing routes as well as the development of potential new routes for inclusion on the forthcoming INM. This important piece of work will allow any already identified new routes to be updated on to the Council's INM prior to the commencing of the Formal Consultation period.
1.06	<p>Public Engagement:</p> <p>It is proposed that the 12 week Statutory Consultation on both the ERM and the INM will commence in August 2021 and continue throughout the months of September and October. During this period, the consultation will be made available on the Council's website as well as being promoted through social media, press releases and via an on-line consultation. In addition to the above, Stakeholders will be emailed directly (for which a link to the consultation will be provided) requesting feedback on the proposals whilst also being given the opportunity to put forward any recommendations</p> <p>Whilst in previous years, a number of workshops and community engagement events were also held with schools, local forums and Community and Town Councils, it is regrettable that such an approach will not be possible due to the ongoing restrictions associated with the Covid 19 pandemic.</p>

	The consultation process will be publicised in both the local media and social media platforms and written submissions received during the consultation period will be accepted.
1.07	In order to assist with public engagement, the Council will be utilising an on-line bilingual consultation tool known as 'Commonplace' which has been developed and funded by Welsh Government. Commonplace is an online community engagement platform enabling comments, suggestions and proposals to be recorded and referenced via the use of a digital mapping system. This will enable local communities to raise awareness of local issues, developments and improvements and will be very effective in enabling the accurate collation of data.
1.08	Any routes that are identified as a result of the consultation process will then be assessed in accordance with Welsh Government's Active Travel Audit Tool Kit, which will take into consideration factors such as width, gradients, surface, visibility, dropped kerbs and accessibility in order to confirm if they meet the required active travel standards.
1.09	Completion of the Statutory Consultation process detailed above will inform the required updates to the Council's INM, which will then be brought back Scrutiny for comment before seeking Cabinet approval in November of this year, prior to submission to WG for final approval in December 2021.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The funding for the Consultation process will be via the Council's Core Active Travel allocation provided by Welsh Government.
2.02	Sustrans will be working in partnership with Flintshire County Council for both the assessment of ERM and the development of the updated INM.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT				
3.01	Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact				
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>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.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>Positive – The development of sustainable transport options will reinforce</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	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.	Prevention	Positive – The development of sustainable transport options will reinforce
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Prevention	Positive – The development of sustainable transport options will reinforce				

	<p>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	<p>Positive – The development of a multimodal integrated transport options is key to the success of a sustainable, integrated transport network.</p>
Collaboration	<p>Positive – The continual development of a fit for purpose 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.</p>
Involvement	<p>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.</p>
<p>Well-being Goals Impact</p>	
Prosperous Wales	<p>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.</p>
Resilient Wales	<p>Positive - The continual development of a fit for purpose Integrated Transport Strategy is key to the success of a sustainable, integrated transport network.</p>
Healthier Wales	<p>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</p>

		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	The 12 week statutory consultation on the Council's Integrated Network Map will begin in early August. During this period the consultation will be available on the Council's website and will be promoted through social media, press releases and further drop in events which will be advertised on the Council's website and in the press. Stakeholders will be emailed the link to the consultation and will be asked for their feedback on the proposals.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Flintshire County Councils <u>existing</u> Active Travel Existing Route Map (ERM); https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Streetscene/Active-Travel-Existing-Route-Map.aspx
6.02	Flintshire County Councils <u>existing</u> Active Travel Integrated Network Map (INM); https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Streetscene/Active-Travel-Integrated-Network-Map-Consultation.aspx
6.03	Flintshire County Councils - Integrated Transport Strategy

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Stephen O Jones Telephone: 01352 704700 E-mail: stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>(1) Active Travel (Wales) Act: A statutory document introduced in 2013, its purpose is to enable more people to undertake active travel for short journeys instead of using motorised vehicles where it is suitable for them to do so. An active travel route must be within a designated locality in a local authority area.</p> <p>(2) Sustrans (Sustainable Transport (British Cycling Organization): A UK walking and cycling charity and custodian of the National Cycle Network. Sustrans works with schools to encourage active travel (cycling, walking or scooting) among students. It also works with employers and local authorities. It administers several thousand volunteers who contribute their time to the charity in numerous ways, such as cleaning and maintaining the National Cycle Network, enhancing biodiversity along the routes, leading walks and rides and supporting communities to improve their air quality.</p>