

ATW16 Cardiff Cycle City

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus a Gweinyddiaeth Gyhoeddus | Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee

Teithio Llesol yng Nghymru | Active Travel in Wales

Ymateb gan: Cardiff Cycle City | Evidence from: Cardiff Cycle City

Cardiff Cycle City response to the PAPAC Inquiry into Active Travel

Cardiff Cycle City is the leading cycle campaign group in Wales' capital city. We were established in January 2014. We bring different individuals and groups together in one common vision: to make Cardiff the best cycling city in the UK. We aim to work constructively with Cardiff Council and other agencies to bring this about. We have over 1000 registered members and supporters, and an extensive reach through our social media channels. We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee's inquiry into active travel. We have organised our submission according to the themes set out in the letter requesting contributions.

Introduction

Active travel offers enormous benefits to Wales and particularly to our cities. Wales' Well being of Future Generations Act set out seven goals for our nation, active travel contributes to the achievement of all seven of those goals:

- It makes Wales healthier by encouraging physical activity which helps prevent disease such as diabetes type 2.
 - Displacing car journeys also has significant impacts on air quality.
 - Active travel contributes to a more equal Wales by providing an affordable alternative to motorised travel. Almost a quarter of Welsh households do not have access to a car.
 - It improves resilience by reducing carbon emissions and other harmful pollutants.
 - As the lowest carbon form of transport, active travel helps Wales meet its global obligations in reducing climate change.
 - It contributes to prosperity by reducing congestion and improving the health of the workforce.
 - Increased levels of walking and cycling lead to a greater level of social interaction creating greater cohesion in our communities.
-

- By providing an affordable alternative form of transport, active travel can allow many more people access to cultural activities and centres.¹

Cardiff Cycle City strongly supports the Active Travel Act's aim of making walking and cycling the 'most natural and normal way of getting about' in Wales. We believe that with sufficient resources and dynamic leadership, Wales could be a world leader in the most sustainable form of sustainable travel.

The Welsh Government's new active travel delivery plan, including any perceived gaps in coverage.

Cardiff Cycle City is a member of the Cross-Party Group on the Active Travel Act (CPGATA) and contributed to their review of the Active Travel Act. We fully supported their call for a national delivery plan and share their concerns about some of the weaknesses in the plan as it has been developed, in particular the lack of defined timelines for the development of national and local targets. We would like to see Cardiff, or at least part of the city, be developed as one of the active travel demonstration towns promised in the plan and are disappointed that the programme does not seem to be progressing.

Opportunities for improved mainstreaming of active travel considerations in wider policy and programmes.

We would like to see a much greater integration of active travel into the Welsh public sector. In particular:

- Making it easier for people to access medical services by walking or cycling by ensuring there is safe infrastructure within their estates – accessing services in the Heath hospital is currently extremely difficult for people travelling by bike; providing secure cycle parking; and including instructions on how to actively travel to appointments in invitation letters.
- Greater encouragement from the Welsh Government's education department for all schools to promote active travel to schools.
- Proper consideration for the needs of cyclists when planning and building new housing, ensuring there is safe storage for bicycles which has easy access to the highway.
- Encouragement to all public sector employees to walk or cycle to work with the provision of good facilities at the workplace to enable them to do so.

The developing role of Transport for Wales (TfW) as part of the delivery arrangements for active travel.

¹ Taken from the Welsh Government Active Travel Act Guidance, 2021, p.28.

We have found TfW willing to engage with us and other stakeholders in the development of infrastructure in our city. We believe it is important that there is a national centre of expertise in active travel in Wales and TfW is the appropriate body to deliver this.

The role and activities of the Welsh Government's Active Travel Board.

We fully support the need for an independent body to scrutinise the delivery of active travel in Wales. We would like the board to be more effective in making its work accessible to the public and organisations such as ourselves.

The Welsh Government's active travel spending and how it is distributed and prioritised between different schemes and types of intervention.

We are very concerned that the ring fencing of active travel funding will essentially end when control of the funding passes to the Corporate Joint Committees. If Wales is to realise the ambitions of the Active Travel Act and the Well-being of Future Generations Act, then long term consistent funding is essential. We must not return to the situation before the establishment of the Active Travel Fund when investment per capita was less than £5 and hardly any progress was being made in delivering quality infrastructure.

We would like to see much greater prioritisation of funding where it will produce the greatest modal shift away from the private motor car.

The extent to which local authorities are prioritising active travel and related investment, capacity constraints, and potential impacts from an increased emphasis on regional transport planning.

Cardiff Council has ambitious active travel plans, but it is clear that a lack of resources, particularly in staffing, is slowing down delivery. The council has delivered some impressive new infrastructure, notably Cycleway 2 and Castle Street and we are already seeing a significant increase in people using bikes on these routes. We would like to see faster progress in delivering small changes to existing networks that would increase safety and encourage greater use.

We have yet to be convinced that an issue as local as active travel needs to be administered at a regional level, other than for a few key routes that cross local authority boundaries. We are concerned that the CJsCs could add a level of bureaucracy and further increase the distance between where decisions are made and the communities affected by them.

Whether the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 itself remains fit for purpose, including its requirements around active travel network mapping.

We share the CPGATAs concerns about the failure to effectively implement parts of the Act as set out in their 2022 review of the Act. In particular we are still seeing new infrastructure being built without the opportunity being taken to incorporate improved

facilities for walkers and cyclists. We are also constantly encountering road works where no consideration is given to active travellers, for example when 'road closed' signs are erected when the road could easily remain open for walkers and cyclists.

However, we are convinced that the Act has helped put in place mechanisms that will allow the development of effective walking and cycling networks in Wales if they are properly resourced on a long-term basis.

The Act could be greatly improved by making the design guidance statutory. We would also like to see far greater detail included in the plans for future routes within Active Travel Network Maps. At the moment, far too many of the routes identified on the Cardiff map are simply identified as 'future walking and cycling routes' with no indication as to whether they will be shared use or provide some protection from traffic.

How best to drive behaviour change in support of active travel, and current barriers.

Cardiff Council has produced some excellent cycle infrastructure. However, there are still many routes that are incomplete. We know that cyclists, and particularly new cyclists, will not choose to make a journey by bike if parts of the route are unsafe. Filling these network gaps should therefore be a priority. There is also a major issue with the promotion of new routes. Because of a lack of revenue funding, little if any activity takes place to advertise new infrastructure and encourage people to use it. Similarly, there is little signage specifically for cyclists. Traffic lights are sometimes positioned in a way that makes them difficult for cyclists to see. There is also a problem with some traffic light sensors not picking up the presence of cyclists and thus failing to change to let cyclists safely proceed.

Journeys to work and to school should be key targets for achieving modal shift to active travel and we would like to see much greater effort at a national level to encourage this. Cardiff Council's outstanding work with schools, particularly their school streets and bike fleet programmes, could be used as a model for other authorities.

Ensuring active travel is accessible and inclusive, including around scheme design.

As an organisation, we work closely with Pedal Power, Cardiff's inclusive cycling centre, which performs wonders in making cycling accessible to people with all types of disabilities. We would like to see greater support for such centres with a view to creating a network across Wales.

We have campaigned locally for the removal of barriers on cycle routes. These barriers are often put in place ostensibly to stop unlawful access by motorcycles. In fact, they rarely stop such use but do prevent access by disabled cyclists who use tricycles or 'side by side' bikes, as well as cargo bikes and parent and child 'tag-alongs'. We would like to see clear national guidance outlawing such barriers.

Personal safety is a major issue for cyclists, particularly female cyclists, when travelling in the evening or at night. The lack of adequate lighting on some routes is therefore a barrier to their inclusive use.

Accessibility must be built into the design of active travel infrastructure. For this to happen it is essential that the design guidance embraces inclusivity, and that the guidance is then implemented. For this reason, we believe it is vital that the design guidance is made statutory.

Improving monitoring and evaluation and the Welsh Government's plans for enhanced data collection through a new National Travel Survey.

We welcome the new National Travel Survey, it is vital that multi-million pound decisions on transport interventions are based on robust data. We would also like to see far more consistent monitoring of local cycle routes so that their effectiveness can be accurately judged. The data from this monitoring also needs to be easily accessible.

