

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau/ Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
Committee
Deddf Teithio Llesol (Cymru) 2013 / Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013
Ymateb gan Julian Anstey / Evidence from Julian Anstey

This is my view of what I have seen so far of the implementation of the Active Travel Act.

Summary:

I support the aims of the Active Travel Act, but I am concerned about councils' attitudes towards implementation. The emphasis on routes is worthwhile but means that modal filtering is overlooked, which is a quick and cheap way of reducing motor traffic levels in residential areas.

My background:

I live in xxxx. I used to work about 5 kilometres away from home and cycled to work. The company I work for moved to Cardiff. I would prefer to continue cycling to work, but am put off by the motor traffic levels on roads that are often either narrow or multi-laned. I instead run a total of 5km each way, and take the train in between. I still have concerns about my safety due to conflicts with motor vehicles when crossing roads, and about health impacts due to pollution. I also believe that mass personal motorised transport will not be viable in the medium term due to insufficient availability of energy, whether oil or electricity.

Maps:

I responded to the consultations for the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff. I did not receive a response from Cardiff. I did receive a response from the Vale, but I have not seen any evidence in the published maps for either council that any of my suggestions were taken into consideration.

One specific problem with the Vale's consultation was that I thought I was responding to a map of proposed routes, but it seems that the map I was looking at mainly or solely consisted of the existing "most popular routes", which contain no specific provision for cycling.

I am concerned that, especially in the shorter term, the routes selected by councils are ones that are easier to implement rather than the ones that would lead to the biggest improvement for the greatest number of existing and potential cyclists.

Attitudes:

I have written to the Vale of Glamorgan Council several times about issues related to walking and cycling. My impression from their responses (when I have received a

response) is that they do not want to do anything that would have a negative impact on drivers of motor vehicles. For example, where a cycle track runs alongside a main road, they will not consider giving priority to the cycle track across side roads (or even across entrances to residential driveways in some cases), something that is normal practice in the Netherlands. This is a problem, considering that the Act aims to achieve modal shift from motor vehicles to active travel.

In general I am concerned about the quality of provision that councils intend to provide when we see recent offerings consisting of shared-use paths with "cyclists dismount" signs, and often no more than islands provided for crossing extremely busy roads with high-speed motor traffic.

Possible problems:

The Act's emphasis on routes is a good idea in that it tends to avoid one major problem of the recent past: piecemeal provision. However, one potential major area of improvement is modal filtering, where bollards or other physical measures are put in place to close existing rat runs to motor vehicles. By making a small number of interventions, residential areas can be transformed by allowing through routes for cyclists and pedestrians, but local access only for motor vehicles.

Again, this is common practice in the Netherlands. This is something that is relatively quick, easy and cheap to implement but can make a big difference.

The timescales are so long that I despair of ever being able to cycle to work again, or of my children being able to cycle to school. Perhaps increased funding from the Assembly could bring more change in a shorter time frame?

Finally, one apparently unacknowledged problem is parking of motor vehicles on pavements and cycle tracks. While it is against the law to drive on the pavement, this seems to be something that is completely unenforced.