

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 Pat Bates / Evidence from Pat Bates

Is the Active Travel Act working for Wales?

I only became aware of the Committee's work and consultation on the Active Travel Act yesterday (13 February) and in the limited time before today's deadline I wish to focus my response on one specific area.

This is that many older communities are effectively excluded from the benefits of the ATA through the very idealistic ATA design and delivery "guidance", which is not guidance but mandatory.

In such older communities roads are often extremely narrow and many lack pavements. These physical constraints mean that it can be impossible to develop solutions that comply with the ATA design & delivery guidance. This in effect means that some of the communities most in need of improvements can fail to receive them.

The ATA design & delivery guidance needs to take much greater account of the inability of such communities where space is 'tight' to retrofit new walking & cycling routes to the ideal standard to existing infrastructure. The issue of design and construction standards and "**retrofitability**" was raised with Welsh Government AT officers at the earliest opportunity both prior to the Act and since however the feedback seems not to have produced any changes to date.

A related comment applies to gradients. Communities situated in steep sided valleys frequently have roads and pavements where the slope of the side of the valley is already steeper than cycle route gradients are permitted to be constructed to (i.e. that are steeper than the disability discrimination act would permit). It is not always possible construct 'zig-zag' paths. Greater clarity around what would be permissible on such terrain would be beneficial, otherwise schemes may simply not be developed.