



Purpose

The Welsh Government wants to increase levels of walking and cycling in Wales to realise the many benefits which active travel brings, for individuals and for society. In the Programme for Government, we made a commitment to introduce legislation in support of this aim. The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 received Royal Assent in November 2013 and came into force in September 2014. It paves the way for a lasting transformation of how we plan and build walking and cycling infrastructure in Wales.

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 requires Welsh Ministers to ‘make and publish annual reports on the extent to which walkers and cyclists make active travel journeys in Wales.’ In addition to providing this data, the annual report also gives an update on progress with the implementation of the Act since its commencement on 25 September 2014.

1. Levels of active travel in Wales

We monitor progress with achieving the aims of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 through key indicators. These are:

- The proportion of the population (aged 16 and over) who frequently use a bicycle for active travel; that is at least once or twice a week. In 2014-15, this proportion was 6% (9% of men and 4% of women).
- The proportion of the population (aged 16 and over) who frequently walk for active travel purposes; that is at least several times (3+) a week. In 2014-15, this proportion was 43%. (A further 21% walked 1-2 times a week.)
- The proportion of primary school age children who typically walk to school. In 2014-15, this proportion was 49% for all primary school children, and 83% for those where the distance was up to half a mile.
- The proportion of secondary school age children who typically walk to school. In 2014-15, this proportion was 35% for all secondary school children, and 94% for those where the distance was up to half a mile.
- The proportion of primary school age children who typically cycle to school. In 2014-15, this proportion was 2% for all primary school children, and 5% for those where the distance was up to one mile.
- The proportion of secondary school age children who typically cycle to school. In 2014-15, this proportion was less than 1% for all secondary school children, and 1% for those where the distance was up to one mile.

More detailed statistical analysis can be found at this link:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/walking-cycling-action-plan/?lang=en>

2. Direction on Designated Localities

The Act requires local authorities to prepare and publish maps of, initially, existing active travel routes, and then of integrated networks for specified settlements.

The Direction specifying the currently 142 designated localities the Act applies to, and for which these maps have to be produced, was made on 2 October 2014. It can be found at this link: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/walking-cycling/activetravelact/implementation/?lang=en>, map at figure 1. The localities have been identified largely on basis of size, with a population threshold of 2000. The population threshold was applied to built-up areas, rather than administrative boundaries. This meant that the proximity to other towns and villages, and the subsequent potential for active travel, was considered as part of this process.

Local authorities have to produce existing route maps and integrated network maps for all the designated localities, but are not limited to them. Local authorities may map other places if they choose.

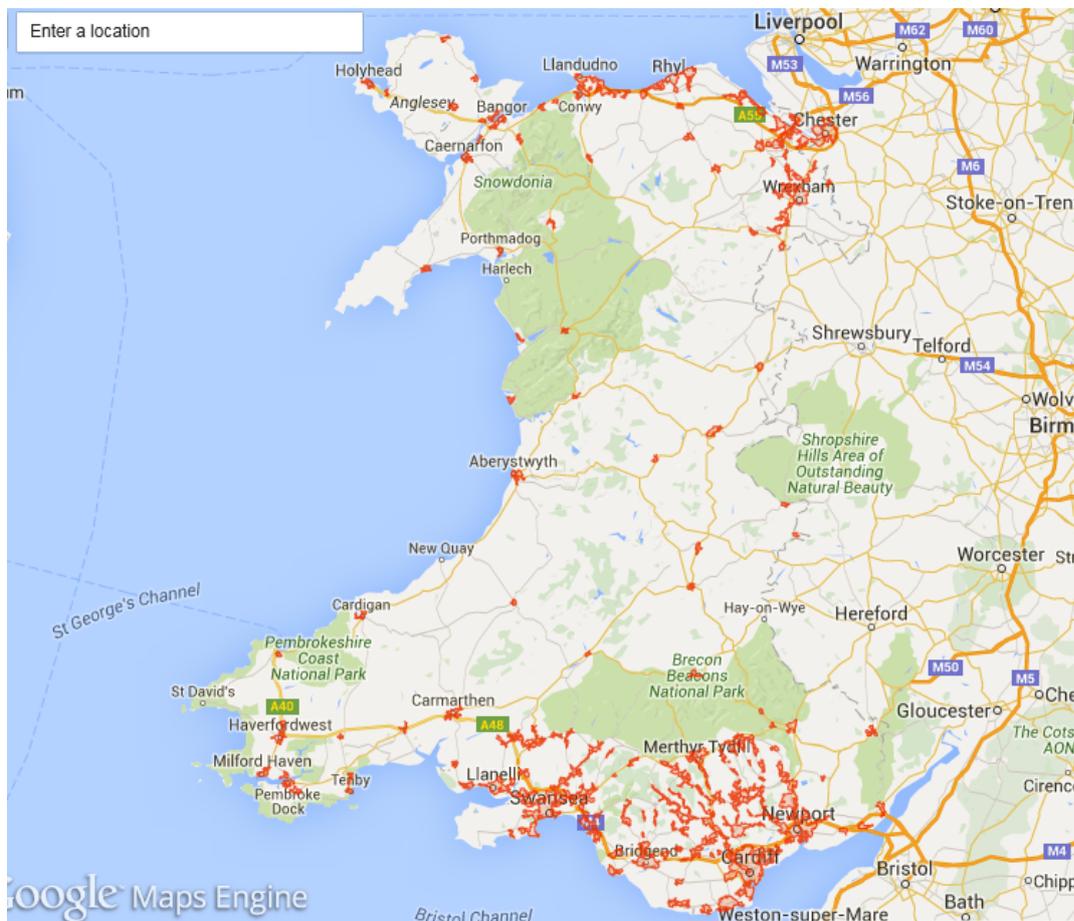


Figure 1 - Designated localities

3. Statutory Guidance

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 gives Welsh Ministers powers to issue guidance on active travel. Following consultation, Welsh Ministers have published guidance to local authorities on meeting their duties under the Act (the Delivery Guidance), and guidance on the standards that active travel routes and facilities should meet (the Design Guidance). Both sets of guidance were published in autumn of 2014 and can be found here:

Delivery Guidance: <http://gov.wales/docs/det/policy/141105guidanceen.pdf>

Design Guidance: <http://gov.wales/docs/det/publications/141209-active-travel-design-guidance-en.pdf>

4. Direction on submission of Existing Route Maps

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 was commenced on 25 September 2014. The first set of maps, showing the existing routes which are safe and suitable for active travel in the settlements covered by the Act, were originally due to be submitted by each local authority to Welsh Ministers by the 25 September 2015.

A Direction was issued to Local Authority Chief Executives on 01 June 2015, extending the submission deadline for the Existing Route Maps to 22 January 2016, to take account of delays in initial data collation and enable local authorities to consult fully, in particular with children and young people outside the summer holiday period. Local authorities were awarded a proportion of £0.3m to support the development of the Existing Routes Maps.

5. Active Travel Data Mapping System

The first step for all local authorities in Wales was the need to carry out an initial survey of walking and cycling infrastructure in their designated localities. To support local authorities in meeting their duties under the Act, the Welsh Government procured an initial data survey of all localities and the development of a central data management system. This enables all local authorities to work consistently to the same evidence base. The system also enables use of the same mapping format by each local authority.

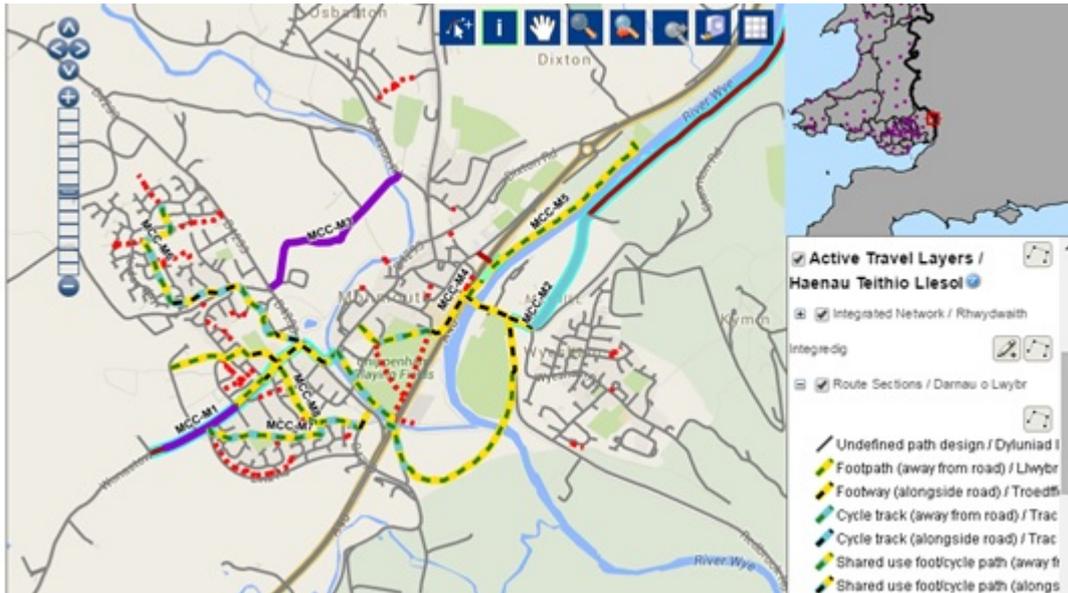


Figure 2 - screen shot of mapping system

6. Active Travel Board

The Active Travel Board was established in early 2014 to coordinate activity to support the effective implementation of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013. The Board has an independent chair and its members represent key government departments (Health, Education, Natural Resources, Economy & Transport), local authority and third sector partners, as well as Public Health Wales and Natural Resources Wales. The Board meets three times per year.

7. Active Travel Engagement and Training

The Annual Active Travel Conference was held on 5th November under the theme: “Wales - A Walking and Cycling Nation - Widening the Appeal”. The very well received event explored how planning and delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure and interventions can be done in an inclusive way, enabling a much wider range of population to experience the benefits active travel can bring.

Technical training on the Design Guidance is being provided this autumn to assist practitioners in local authorities and consultancies in using and understanding the new standards for walking and cycling infrastructure design in Wales.

8. Active Travel Promotion

‘Active Journeys’ is a new three year project to promote active travel in schools, which started in August 2015. The project builds on previous work under the ‘Bike It’ project and will continue to support Bike It schools. ‘Active Journeys’ will work closely with a large number of primary and secondary schools across Wales, and develop resources which will be available for all schools to encourage walking and cycling among pupils, staff and parents.

To promote active travel among employers and their staff, the Welsh Government funds Travel Plan Co-ordinators who work across Wales. Their aim is to support public and private employers to develop travel plans, to increase levels of walking and cycling, and reduce reliance on private cars.

The National Active Travel Challenge, led by the Department for Health and Social Services, is complementing this work.

9. Welsh Government funding to improve active travel routes

The Minister for Economy, Science and Transport has awarded £5.3m capital funding under the Safe Routes in Communities (SRIC) programme in 2015/16. Thirty-three schemes across Wales will benefit from funding to make improvements to local active travel infrastructure.

Fifteen of the successful schemes under the Local Transport Fund (LTF) this year were for Active Travel at an allocation of £4.9m. Many of the other approved schemes also included walking and cycling elements. Active travel routes along existing trunk roads are funded separately. In 2015/16 £1.65m was allocated to improve these.

Further schemes were funded through the Metro programme at a cost of £2.5m over two years. Additionally, a three year, £4.5m programme to make improvements to routes to schools on or near trunk roads was agreed.

10. Review of Active Travel Delivery

An independent review of current delivery of active travel schemes in Wales was carried out by Prof Stuart Cole. His report can be found here:

<http://gov.wales/docs/det/publications/transport/150916-professor-cole-active-travel-report-en.pdf>