

Post Legislative Scrutiny of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

June 2018



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Post Legislative Scrutiny of Active the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

June 2018





About the Committee

The Committee was established on 28 June 2016 to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising expenditure, administration and policy matters, encompassing (but not restricted to): economic development; transport; infrastructure; employment; skills; and research and development, including technology and science.

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Chair's foreword / Summary

When introduced, the Active Travel (Wales) 2013 Act was welcomed by many as significant and potentially life changing legislation for the people of Wales. It promised to transform our local communities by making active travel a reality.

Active travel, as we know, can deliver significant benefits: a healthier, better-connected community, cleaner air, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and an environment that is safer and more welcoming for all. Delivering these benefits can bring financial savings, not least to our strained health services, so that time and money spent on delivering the Act offers excellent value for money.

However, nearly 5 years after the Act became law, the numbers of people walking and cycling to work or for other essential journeys are static, and in the case of children travelling to school, have reduced. The Committee's inquiry found that the desire to deliver step change in this area has not diminished, but a lack of leadership, funding and ambition have contributed to the poor outcome to date. This has been compounded by a skills gaps and a so far missed opportunity to foster culture and behavioural change.

The Act was never going to change Wales overnight, but there are lessons to be learnt about delivery to date. This report and the recommendations contained in it seek to challenge the Welsh Government to deliver a generational change in this key policy area. If Wales is to deliver on the promises made in the Act, we need to see long established behaviours start to change. It's time now for the Government to change its own behaviour, show some real leadership and get the Act's ambitions on its feet and moving.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell George". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Russell George AM
Chair,
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. The Committee considers a lack of strategic leadership at both Welsh Government and local authority levels to be responsible for the lack of progress made to date. The ambition of the Act cannot be realised through the actions of a few dedicated cycling/transport officers alone. Leadership from the Welsh Government should be strengthened, and it's expectation of leadership at local level made clear..... Page 28

Recommendation 2. The Welsh Government should lead a lessons learnt review of the mapping process to streamline processes and improve the approach where need is identified..... Page 28

Recommendation 3. The Welsh Government should lead a lessons learned exercise on Active Travel consultation to seek best practice and capture innovative ways of reaching people who do not currently walk or cycle. Page 34

Recommendation 4. In future consultations, local authorities should involve the Access groups that exist across Wales..... Page 34

Recommendation 5. The Welsh Government should revise its statutory guidance to include co-production as a minimum standard for the delivery of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, involving stakeholders not only in the identification of an issue, but enabling them to be a part of the solution. Page 34

Recommendation 6. The Welsh Government should work with professional bodies for developers and civil engineers, local authorities and the Welsh Government's own staff to tackle the cultural barriers to implementing active travel guidance, particularly through training and culture change management.Page 43

Recommendation 7. The Welsh Government should use the current Planning Policy Wales review and the planning guidance review as an opportunity to strengthen support for active travel and restate the importance of considering active travel in all new infrastructure projects. Active travel should be considered a must have, not an option. Page 43

Recommendation 8. The Welsh Government should amend its guidance to enable "associated Settlements" to be brought within the Act, enabling the development of active travel routes between smaller rural settlements. Page 43

Recommendation 9. In its review of the design guidance, the Welsh Government should take steps to ensure the audit tool matches the standards of the guidance.
..... Page 43

Recommendation 10. The Welsh Government should consider making funding available to progress smaller rural walking and cycling schemes that do not necessarily deliver on active travel, but would be impactful for local communities who may otherwise miss out..... Page 43

Recommendation 11. The Welsh Government should make it clear that in cases where the guidance can only be applied flexibly, co-production with diverse local groups should be undertaken to ensure that as far as possible the solutions being developed are suitable for the needs of the community. Welsh Government funding for projects should be conditional on this expectation being met. .Page 43

Recommendation 12. The Welsh Government should reconstitute the Active Travel Board with an independent chair, and terms of reference that give it teeth and impact. The Board should be responsible for monitoring progress on the Action Plan, creating and agreeing targets for delivery with the Cabinet Secretary.
..... Page 50

Recommendation 13. Membership of the Board should be reviewed to ensure the right people are present. The Committee recommends that as the Board should be monitoring progress on the Action Plan, membership should not include members of the Welsh Government, or their officials..... Page 50

Recommendation 14. The Welsh Government should include the identification and sharing of examples of good practice in the Action Plan, alongside a target date for delivery that gives time for local authorities to include the learning in the next INM cycle. Good practice should be included in the guidance and updated as designs develop..... Page 50

Recommendation 15. The Welsh Government should use the infrastructure projects it is delivering to showcase the innovative active travel approaches it expects to see from local authorities..... Page 50

Recommendation 16. Obesity is a growing problem in the health sector. Active travel and active lifestyles are a relatively low cost way to tackle this problem. The Welsh Government should direct Public Health Wales to prioritise the promotion of active travel and behaviour change as one of its key aims for the remainder of this Assembly/next three years. As part of that role, Public Health Wales should be demonstrably intervening and holding stakeholders to account where they

consider opportunities to progress the active travel agenda are at risk of being missed..... Page 50

Recommendation 17. The Welsh Government should provide opportunities for people to try walking and cycling for the first time, including through the funding of walking initiatives such as Let’s Walk Cymru..... Page 50

Recommendation 18. The Welsh Government should create a recurring budget line for active travel funding, to reassure local authorities of the long-term commitment to this agenda. Capital and resource funding combined should be set at £17-£20 per head per annum. If additional funding cannot be found, then this will necessarily have to come from other areas of the transport budget.
..... Page 54

Recommendation 19. The Welsh Government should work with professional bodies and the WLGA to develop, and deliver on a regional basis, training for professionals and elected members. Following an initial training programme, active travel training should be incorporated into the continuous development training programmes that are already in place.Page 55

Recommendation 20. The Welsh Government should strictly apply active travel requirements when considering planning proposals for strategic programmes such as 21st Century Schools and the new Metro system, ensuring infrastructure and facilities are considered core outputs.....Page 59

Recommendation 21. The Welsh Government should work regionally with police and local authorities to agree innovative ways to tackle pavement parking, including raising awareness of its impact to change driver behaviour. Community co-production should be used to identify locations to target and potential solutions to this issue.Page 59

Recommendation 22. The Welsh Government should lobby the UK Government to include provision for adapted cycles to be included in the Cycle to Work Scheme.Page 59

Recommendation 23. The Welsh Government should create incentives to encourage the recycling of former Cycle to Work Scheme equipment and other good quality cycles back in to the community at an affordable price.....Page 59

Recommendation 24. The Welsh Government should encourage the provision of cycle maintenance classes in schools and communities across Wales.....Page 59

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. The Act, along with wider active travel policy, sought to bring about a modal shift, with walking and cycling becoming “the preferred ways of getting around over shorter distances”. However, static and dropping numbers of people walking and cycling show that clear progress has yet to be made. Given the long-standing dominance of the car and other motorised transport in our towns and cities, the modal shift to active travel, and all the benefits it brings, is likely to require far more momentum than has been achieved to date. Page 27

Conclusion 2. Strategic leadership has been lacking, at both Welsh Government and local authority levels. The ambition of the Act cannot be realised through the actions of a few dedicated cycling/transport officers alone. More needs to be done to put active travel at the heart of long term strategies and programmes. Page 27

Conclusion 3. Although the INMs set out the ambition of local authorities, it is clear that they are yet to become an integral part of wider planning and transport policies. The benefits of active travel are wide, reaching across many policy areas and responsibility for delivery of the Act must be just as broad. Page 27

Conclusion 4. Partly as a result of the first mapping exercise proving to be a time consuming task that diverted focus from the delivery of improved networks and facilities. Lessons must be learnt to avoid future mapping exercises impacting negatively on delivery. Page 27

Conclusion 5. The level of available funding is constraining the ambitions of local authorities when planning delivery of active travel policy, and the underfunding of the mapping process likely diverted resources from delivery of infrastructure to the creation of maps. The Committee considers funding in more detail in chapter six. Page 27

Conclusion 6. Evidence suggests that the statutory duty to “take reasonable steps to enhance the provision made for walkers and cyclists” in exercising highway functions are not being effective applied. Page 27

Conclusion 7. If the Act is to increase the number of people cycling and walking, the Committee considers it essential to for consultation to reach the people not currently doing so. That has failed to be the case to date. The next mapping exercise presents an opportunity to learn lessons from previous consultations and reach out to a new audience. Page 33

Conclusion 8. The Cabinet Secretary’s rejection of maps on the grounds of inadequate consultation is welcomed by the Committee, given the importance of consultation on these issues. The Committee notes the WLGA’s call for guidance on “the minimum level of consultation required” but considers the guidance contained within the Statutory Guidance for the delivery of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 to be clear, especially when read in conjunction with readily available good practice guides on the subject..... Page 33

Conclusion 9. Although good examples of consultation have been identified across a handful of local authorities, success elsewhere is patchy with some local authorities’ lack of capacity and concerns around managing expectations potentially hampering meaningful engagement..... Page 33

Conclusion 10. Consultation and co-production are essential factors for success when developing infrastructure that meets the needs of a diverse community. The people best placed to advise on local barriers to active travel are the people who use, or want to use, those routes. Meaningful consultation with local groups is therefore essential when developing new infrastructure, and wherever possible should extend to co-production..... Page 34

Conclusion 11. The Committee is concerned that the new guidance does not appear to have fostered a new approach to design. Greater leadership is needed in this area but in addition, more could be done to avoid the active travel guidance becoming a bolt on to other guidance that may be more familiar to planners and engineers. The Committee was concerned to hear reports of a cultural barrier to overcoming new challenges and feels that strong leadership is needed in this area, with the Welsh Government doing more to encourage and enforce change in this area..... Page 41

Conclusion 12. The disconnect between the guidance and audit tool is unhelpful. The current review of the guidance should also include the audit tool to provide clarity on the standards expected. Clarity should also be sought where existing guidance and active travel guidance are at odds, for example with the HEAT tool. Of course, guidance cannot anticipate the detail of every project and must be applied in the spirit it is intended. Welsh Government leadership is required in challenging those plans that do not embrace the new approach and deliver active travel only in the margins. The current Planning Policy Wales consultation is a key opportunity to strengthen guidance..... Page 42

Conclusion 13. The Committee considers the sharing of best practice to be important, as is strong leadership that sets the standards and the expectations high and celebrates successes. Both the Cabinet Secretary and the WLGA have made a commitment to the Committee that they will seek to actively share best practice in a meaningful way. The Committee welcomes this commitment and looks forward to swift and meaningful actions in this regard. Page 42

Conclusion 14. The Committee recognises the need for flexibility in applying the guidance, especially in areas where the geography presents particular challenges. However, there is a danger that in some cases the price of flexibility will be paid by those with greatest access needs. Page 42

Conclusion 15. The Committee fails to see how the ambitions of the Act will be delivered solely through retrofitting infrastructure while allowing new developments to avoid or under deliver on active travel. More should be done to avoid active travel being squeezed out or watered down in new design proposals. Training will be key in this area, as will effective planning policy and guidance that is applied consistently. Page 42

Conclusion 16. The Committee considers the Act’s definition of Active Travel and its focus on the connectivity of the routes being delivering as appropriate. There is, however, no reason why the routes identified in INMs cannot be delivered with the diverse needs of all potential users being considered, in line with the guidance. Page 42

Conclusion 17. The ambition of the Act can only be delivered by challenging traditional approaches and delivering strategically and innovatively. It is right therefore that feasibility studies are carried out and focus is given to routes that will deliver the best outcomes. Committee accepts that the Act has resulted in funding being drawn away from improvements to some “shovel ready” walking and cycling routes in rural areas that don’t meet the criteria of active travel. Page 42

Conclusion 18. While the Cabinet Secretary’s commitment to a possible reduction in the population threshold will alleviate the access to funding issue in some rural areas, the engineering challenge remains. Without innovative approaches and the will to find new solutions to provide appropriate routes, funding alone will not deliver change for rural areas. Page 43

Conclusion 19. Consideration should be given to how to balance delivery of smaller walking and cycling schemes in rural areas with the more ambitious active travel schemes that should be delivered elsewhere. Page 43

Conclusion 20. The Active Travel Board has developed a reputation for being a good way of sharing information, but it has missed the opportunity to share that information more widely, in particular with local authorities, many of whom are asking for examples of best practice and innovative approaches to solving some of the issues they face in delivering Active Travel routes.....Page 49

Conclusion 21. As evidenced by the shift in resources from delivery of routes to mapping, what is required to be delivered to a deadline will often take priority over what is not. Well developed and deliverable targets create a sense of clarity around expectations and provide a means by which to hold progress to account. An action plan without targets, deadlines and funding is in danger of being little more than a collection of aspirations that are continually overtaken by other pressures.....Page 49

Conclusion 22. The Committee agrees with the prevailing view that a shift towards active travel cannot be delivered without the involvement of all stakeholders and responsible delivery partners. The latest Action Plan does not go far enough in encouraging such cross-cutting approaches.Page 49

Conclusion 23. The Committee is clear on the impact active travel could have on key health concerns including obesity. It is also clear that behavioural change is a key part of the journey towards active travel. Behavioural change is a complex area and local authorities should not be expected to create change in isolation. The Committee was disappointed that the Action Plan promises a National Communication Plan, but no deadlines have been set and no progress reported to date.Page 49

Conclusion 24. There is scope for further work with schools to deliver opportunities and skills. There is also scope to encourage and support people across Wales to try cycling for the first time or join a walking group, but there appears to be little being done in this area. In fact, the Welsh Government has stopped funding for Let's Walk Cymru.....Page 49

Conclusion 25. The dissemination of best practice is necessary to promote future innovation and problem solving. There are a number of ways information could be gathered and disseminated, with the Active Travel Board being an obvious choice, but unless there are best practice examples to share, and suitable training in place, then this is an impossible task. Recommendation 3 of this report refers to the need for training for engineers, planners and other local authority staff.Page 49

Conclusion 26. The Committee considers it essential that staff delivering the priorities of the Act are suitably trained and have access to the support they need to embed this new way of working. However, the Committee was also surprised to hear that adequate training has not yet been delivered in the nearly five years since the Act was passed. Page 54

Conclusion 27. The Committee recognises that there are multiple competing demands for limited funding, but given the impact that can be achieved through relatively small (in transport terms) amounts of funding in this area, it makes an attractive invest to save option. Furthermore, without the right level of funding in place, the ambitions of the Act are likely to stay just that – ambitions..... Page 54

Conclusion 28. Active travel has cross cutting benefits across Government – so it should be supported in a way that reflects that..... Page 54

Conclusion 29. The ambitions of the Act will not be met without a significant increasing in funding, with multi-year commitments, covering both infrastructure development and behaviour change / promotion. The Committee notes the level of funding where active travel is well established, such as in London, Denmark and parts of the Netherlands. Page 54

Conclusion 30. Staff capability is key to delivering innovative schemes. The Committee is clear that support and training is needed and that support provided to date has been insufficient..... Page 54

Conclusion 31. The Committee agrees with witnesses that an integrated approach is key to delivering the ambitions of the Act with pace. The benefits of active travel are widespread and all stakeholders should take responsibility to create the change..... Page 58

Conclusion 32. Once built, ongoing accessibility of the routes is key. Maintenance of routes will be crucial too. Page 58

Conclusion 33. Pavement parking is an ongoing issue that has biggest impact on the most vulnerable in our society. It is a complex issue to tackle, but it remains a key symbol of the dominance of the car on our streets. Fewer cars will on the road will ease parking problems, but more should be done to tackle this issue now. Page 59

1. Introduction

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

- 1.** After becoming law in November 2013, the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 (the Act) came into force in September 2014. The term “active travel” means walking and cycling and the Act focuses on walking and cycling for transport rather than leisure. Section 2(7) of the Act defines an “active travel journey” as “a journey made to or from a workplace or educational establishment or in order to access health, leisure or other services or facilities”.
- 2.** The Act required local authorities to submit Existing Route Maps (ERMs) of existing active travel routes and related facilities to the Welsh Ministers before the end of the first year of the Act coming into force. The Welsh Government extended this deadline from September 2015 to 22 January 2016.
- 3.** Local authorities also had to prepare Integrated Network Maps (INMs) of the new and improved active travel routes and related facilities needed to create integrated networks of active travel routes and facilities in a local authority’s area. The Act required submission of their first INMs to the Welsh Ministers by September 2017 (the third year after the Act came into force), and revised versions every three years. This deadline was extended to 3 November 2017.
- 4.** Both ERMs and INMs must be published and local authorities must have regard to INMs in preparing transport policies and Local Transport Plans.
- 5.** The Act requires local authorities to deliver continuous improvement each year, delivering new and improved active travel routes and related facilities and positive outcomes for local communities such as cleaner air and more welcoming, safer streets.
- 6.** The Act requires the Welsh Ministers to report annually on the extent to which walkers and cyclists make active travel journeys in Wales.
- 7.** Both the Welsh Government and local authorities must take reasonable steps to enhance the provision made for walkers and cyclists in the performance of certain functions as highway authorities (particularly the construction, maintenance or improvement of roads and traffic regulation).
- 8.** The Act also requires the Welsh Ministers and local authorities to promote active travel journeys and secure new and improved active travel routes and related facilities.

9. The Act is supported by the Active Travel Action Plan which contains actions relating to leadership; legislation; standards and tools; infrastructure; promotion and behaviour change; skills and training; and, monitoring and evaluation.

10. The Act is also supported by the Active Travel Board. The Board's purpose is to coordinate activity to support the effective implementation of the Act. The Board has a role to play in reviewing the delivery of active travel projects, advising on the development and implementation of the Active Travel Plan and advising on wider activity to support the implementation of the Act and uptake of active travel.

Why is active travel important?

11. Respondents to the Committee's consultation were positive about the benefits of active travel. Sustrans told the Committee that active travel tackles:

“...issues like air pollution, physical inactivity, obesity and other public health concerns; congestion; road safety; community cohesion, isolation and loneliness; prosperity and retail vitality.”¹

12. The Royal Town Planning Institute were also positive about the benefits of active travel, telling the Committee:

“Many of the towns, cities and neighbourhoods in the UK and elsewhere most noted for the quality of their built environment are those where people can get around easily on foot or by bicycle. Active travel is a key component of ‘liveable’ communities.”²

13. Dr Tom Porter, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, set out the scale of the benefits that could be achieved through effective implementation of the Act, stating that active travel has:

“Direct impacts both on the individual in terms of cardiovascular disease reduction, respiratory disease, cancer, diabetes but...there are wider impacts as well. So, for example, if you have an increased rate of active travel in the community, then even people who aren't doing the active travel will benefit from fewer people in polluting cars, and so the air quality will be better more generally. Also, in order to enable active travel, you need to have better infrastructure...and that infrastructure that is more welcoming to walkers and cyclists then has a special

¹ **Consultation response 24 Sustrans Cymru**

² **Consultation response 08 Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI Cymru)**

impact on groups such as the young, older people, disabled people, where they start to feel welcome in those communities again.”³

14. The Act aims to achieve a healthier, more prosperous, more equal and greener Wales by increasing walking and cycling rates for those of all ages and abilities. If implemented effectively, it has the potential to be life changing for individuals and communities across Wales. However, according to the latest Welsh Government statistics on active travel for the year 2016-17, rates of travel have been relatively static since the Act came into force nearly 5 years ago.⁴ More worryingly, the rate of young people walking to school has dropped in that time.

³ Para 10, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

⁴ **Active Travel: walking and cycling**

ACTIVE TRAVEL (WALES) ACT 2013

The Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee has looked at the implementation of the Active travel (Wales) Act 2013. As part of its inquiry, the Committee conducted a survey to help it to understand how and why people in Wales walk and cycle, and why they don't.

2,506 survey responses were collected



Responses were categorised into the following groups:

Young people - **549** total responses.

Adult active travellers - **1,157** responses.

All other adult respondents - **520** responses.



37%
of **young people** surveyed
walk to school
most days



60%
of active travellers
rated cycling as
unsafe



63%
of active travellers rated
the **number** of
cycle routes as **poor**



55%
of active travellers rated
the **directness** of
cycle routes as **poor**

The Inquiry

15. The Committee's inquiry set out to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the Act and wider active travel policy and, where appropriate, to make recommendations intended to help the Welsh Government create momentum to deliver the impact the Act intended.

16. In December 2017, the Committee started its inquiry by carrying out a survey to explore how and why people cycle or walk, and why they do not. More than 2,500 people responded, including more than 500 young people. The survey results revealed that 6 out of 10 people feel unsafe when cycling and nearly 7 out of 10 people feel there should be more walking and cycling routes. Five focus groups across Wales considered the emerging issues in more detail and shared their views with us.

17. In December 2017, the Committee launched a consultation seeking written evidence. The Committee received 26 submissions from stakeholders including local authorities, campaigners, experts in the field and members of the public who had experience of active travel or had otherwise been affected by the Act.

18. In March 2018 the committee took oral evidence from five panels of witnesses; local authorities, campaign groups and experts on health, disability and the built environment. Finally, we took evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport, Ken Skates.

19. The Committee would like to express its thanks to everyone who filled in a survey, joined a focus group, submitted written evidence or gave oral evidence to this inquiry.

2. Progress to date

20. Successful implementation of the Act and wider active travel policy was expected to increase the number of people cycling and walking for essential journeys. But the latest figures⁵ show that rates of walking and cycling in Wales have been static, and in some cases have fallen since the Act came in to force in 2013.

21. The current monitoring criteria focus on the amount of money being spent on active travel, or the miles of infrastructure being delivered, rather than the number of people walking and cycling. The Cabinet Secretary recognised this as a “weakness”⁶ and is working with local authorities to move to measure the number of people using routes, rather than the inputs put in place to deliver them.

22. Although the number of people actively travelling has not yet increased as a result of the Act, there are some discrepancies in opinion regarding the progress to date. Some consultation respondents told the Committee that the mapping process had diverted resources from delivery and that as a result, there had been a slowing down of new route development. The Cabinet Secretary, on the other hand, told the Committee that “in terms of infrastructure...the spend has been considerable. Therefore, the infrastructure activity has been very significant”.⁷

23. Although infrastructure is important, it is not the only element needed to implement the vision of the Act. While walking charity Living Streets pointed to “hotspots” of behaviour change and effective infrastructure, it said “the vision to transform our country into an active travel nation is not being realised by the Act and those responsible for its implementation”.⁸

24. The Committee heard that the slow rate of change could be in part attributed to leadership. The Growing Mid Wales Partnership was “not at all convinced that...[the Act]...has brought about a meaningful change in attitude in the minds of the majority of opinion-formers and decision-makers or in the priorities for investment in local transport”.⁹

⁵ **Active Travel: walking and cycling**

⁶ Para 279, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

⁷ Para 264, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

⁸ **Consultation response 11, Living Streets**

⁹ **Consultation response 17, Connectivity and Infrastructure Group, of the Growing Mid Wales Partnership**

25. The Committee heard that during the first five years of the Act, progress on the ground has in some cases been down to chance, influenced by enthusiastic junior officers in some local authorities despite a lack of leadership at senior levels. Steve Brooks, National Director, Sustrans Cymru, told the Committee:

“Very often, by and large, where you’ve got a local authority that’s doing good stuff, quite often it’s because there’s a junior or a middle-ranking member of staff who knows their onions, has got really good connections within the local council, is trusted, and is then able to kind of push this. An Act really shouldn’t be dependent on a person’s personal relationships. An Act should be dependent on strict direction from Ministers and appropriate funding, or just repeal the Act if you’re not serious about it.”¹⁰

26. Rachel Maycock, Wales Manager, Living Streets, challenged the Committee “to think about whether we’re happy passing legislation in the Senedd that is left down to chance whether people are actually going to feel that impact. It’s not just about funding; it is about leadership as well”.¹¹

27. Other factors stalling the growth in active travellers include a lack of progress in delivering new and improved routes, limited and poorly co-ordinated behaviour change programmes, a lack of funding and failure to promote active travel widely. These are all considered in more detail throughout this report.

Mapping

28. The Act requires local authorities to map existing routes (ERMs), and create integrated network maps (INMs) that show where new routes should be created.

29. The Act sought in part to deliver good quality, integrated active travel routes that meet the needs of walkers and cyclists and, as far as possible, ensure they feel safe while travelling. Respondents to the Committee’s survey identified safety as the biggest barrier to cycling. Both adults and young people told us overwhelmingly that they did not feel safe when cycling. In fact, the more regularly our survey respondents cycled, the less safe they felt. However, the Committee heard from the Carmarthenshire Cycling Forum that in practice, instead of making an impact on the ground and creating safer routes “Councils

¹⁰ Para 88, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

¹¹ Para 20, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

have focused entirely on the ERM and INM processes to the extent that cycle route development and cycle facilities have been totally ignored”.¹²

30. The Growing Mid Wales Partnership agreed with this view;

“We have seen a shift away from funding walking and cycling infrastructure into delivery of the maps, which has meant that the planned programme of infrastructure delivery has slowed down and in some communities of less than 2000 has now stopped altogether.”¹³

31. The WLGA told the Committee that due to the small number of officers working on active travel, “the implementation of the...Act has naturally meant that [local authorities] have had to reallocate resources; both staffing and budgets”¹⁴ in order to meet the mapping requirements. Cardiff Council told the Committee the mapping work took 10 months for the ERM and a further 20 months for the INM.¹⁵ The process was made more difficult as the active travel platform provided by the Welsh Government for use by local authorities “is not compatible with the GIS formats that local authorities use daily”,¹⁶ a situation that led to the double handling of the data and the need for cross checking.

32. Local authorities were allocated a share of £700,000 funding from the Welsh Government to cover the costs associated with the first cycle of the mapping process. But the Committee heard that the funding was not sufficient to cover the full cost of the mapping process and did nothing to alleviate the pressure on staffing resource which is limited with only a “few cycling officers”¹⁷ employed by local authorities.

33. The WLGA reported that “the cost of preparation of the maps proved to be higher than originally estimated and as a result [local authorities] were required to subsidise the allocations from [Welsh Government] in order to complete the work packages”.¹⁸ Bridgend County Council calculated that “the funding provided represented only a third of the total cost of undertaking the work”.¹⁹

¹² [Consultation response 21 Carmarthenshire Cycling Forum](#)

¹³ [Consultation response 17, Connectivity and Infrastructure Group, of the Growing Mid Wales Partnership](#)

¹⁴ [Consultation response 13 Welsh Local Government Association \(WLGA\)](#)

¹⁵ [Consultation response 12 Cardiff Council](#)

¹⁶ [Consultation response 09 Pembrokeshire County Council](#)

¹⁷ [Consultation response 09 Pembrokeshire County Council](#)

¹⁸ [Consultation response 13 Welsh Local Government Association \(WLGA\)](#)

¹⁹ [Consultation response 15 Bridgend County Borough Council](#)

34. The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport recognised that “the primary objective at the commencement of the Act was to make sure that the maps were developed”. He argued that the mapping work was an essential first step and that “it’s only right and proper that the maps are delivered first and then the investment in the infrastructure follows”. The Cabinet Secretary also argued that there are good examples of where the Act has had an impact on the way new infrastructure is designed and delivered, although “there are also instances and examples where walkers and cyclists have not been considered at a sufficiently early stage in the development of programmes”.²⁰

35. Some responses to the Committee consultation cited a number of Welsh Government schemes that do not appear to meet the standards required by the Act.²¹

Existing Route Maps

36. The purpose of the ERM was not clear to the people involved in producing the maps. Cardiff Council described confusion over “whether it is a route-finding tool or whether it is an assessment tool”.²² Although Bridgend Council felt the maps would “make it easier for residents in the County Borough to identify”²³ suitable routes, Pembrokeshire County Council pointed out that the mapping system used is not “public facing” and so the maps are available to the public only as PDFs which are “wholly unsuitable in the majority of cases to adequately display the range of data contained on the system”.²⁴

37. Others saw the value of ERMs as a “technical assessment tool” but felt it was “not much use”²⁵ as a route planning tool. The Royal Town Planning Institute (Cymru) (RTPI) described ERMs as a “good spatial base” to inform the collaborative development of future networks. Living Streets argued that the “target audience is still unclear”.²⁶

38. The lack of clarity regarding the target audience was compounded by confusion over exactly what should be captured in the ERMs. In their consultation response, the Youth Hostel Association said:

²⁰ Para 348, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018](#)

²¹ [Consultation response 02 Paul Gannon](#); [Consultation response 26 Mr Jones](#)

²² Para 42, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018](#)

²³ [Consultation response 15 Bridgend County Borough Council](#)

²⁴ [Consultation response 09 Pembrokeshire County Council](#)

²⁵ Para 36, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018](#)

²⁶ [Consultation response 11, Living Streets](#)

“...the approved maps of existing active travel routes in a local authority area are unfortunately not comprehensive as they only map designated localities as defined by the Act. They are not integrated with cycle ways which have developed for leisure purposes and they are not integrated with the local authority’s definitive map of rights of way.”²⁷

39. The Act focuses solely on active travel for work, education or in order to access health, leisure or other services or facilities so their integration with leisure routes and rights of way are less of a priority in this context. However, the response highlights the wider confusion regarding the intended audience and use of the maps.

40. The Committee heard that a disagreement between Welsh Government engineers and policy makers contributed to the confusion. Pembrokeshire County Council told the Committee:

“WG engineers and policy makers were at odds with regards to the ERM. Planners wanted routes with statements included in the ERM as they wanted a full network of routes mapped. WG engineers wanted to fail ERMs that did not meet new design standards. This was a fundamental issue that should have been resolved before LAs submitted plans.”²⁸

41. Living Streets described the result of this approach telling the Committee that the ERMs that were produced in Cardiff map some routes, but they do not give an accurate picture of “the active travel routes that people are using”.²⁹

42. The WLGA told the Committee that the Delivery Guidance lacked clarity on “the level of data to be captured / presented on the maps”.³⁰ This report looks in more detail at guidance in chapter four of this report.

Integrated Network Maps and infrastructure enhancement

43. The INMs are aspirational maps that set out the active travel proposals for each authority over a rolling 15 year period. The Act was expected to focus and increase the ambition for active travel infrastructure. The Cabinet Secretary for

²⁷ **Consultation response 19 Youth hostels Association Wales (YHA Cymru Wales)**

²⁸ **Consultation response 09 Pembrokeshire County Council**

²⁹ Para 45, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

³⁰ **Consultation response 13 Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)**

Economy and Transport underlined that expectation, telling the Committee “local authorities shouldn’t be conservative in their bids”.³¹

44. However, the Committee heard that the ambition shown in the INMs was curtailed by the amount of funding available, with both planners and engineers seeking to make plans that were realistic and deliverable. The WLGA said Local authorities had been “wary of raising expectations about what can be delivered in the short to medium term” which may have resulted in “a lack of ambition shown in the development of plans”.

45. The RTPi told us the Act “is intended to be aspirational, but, nonetheless, any engineer or planner putting a plan for anything together will not do so regardless of the resources that are likely to be available. And...the level of resources coming through mainstream public sector funding for active travel is still very modest”.³²

46. The Cabinet Secretary told the Committee that “we’ve invested more than £60 million in infrastructure since commencement of the Act”³³ but it is not clear how much additional infrastructure that has provided for. Funding is discussed in more detail in Chapter six of this report, but it is clear that lack of available funding has an impact on the ambitions of local authorities when developing INMs.

47. In producing INMs, local authorities not only map their future ambitions, but they also create a tool for wider planning purposes. Local authorities are required to have regard to INMs in preparing transport policies and forming the basis of Local Transport Plans.

48. However, the Youth Hostels Association Wales (YHA Cymru Wales) told the Committee they have seen “little evidence of local authorities having regard to integrated network maps in preparing transport policies”.³⁴

49. In fact, the WLGA noted that “there are issues around the integration across a range of Welsh Government policy areas”, with planning being an “obvious issue”.³⁵

50. The Association for Consultancy and Engineering Cymru Wales identified a further constraint to ambition, referring to a “cultural rather than technical”³⁶

³¹ Para 293, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

³² Para 298, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

³³ Para 256, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

³⁴ **Consultation response 19 Youth Hostels Association Wales (YHA Cymru Wales)**

³⁵ Para 14, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

³⁶ Para 199, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

problem leading to active travel being an add on rather than being at the heart of innovative approached to infrastructure design. The cultural issue is discussed in more detail later in chapter four, but placed next to concerns around wider policy integration, it could be argued that the INMs have failed to act as a tool to enable active travel to become a central consideration for planners and engineers.

Continuous improvement

51. The Act requires local authorities to deliver continuous improvement each year, delivering new and improved active travel routes and related facilities. However, as previously noted, current monitoring criteria focus on the amount of money being spent on active travel, rather than the outcomes being delivered.

52. Also previously noted were conflicting opinions on the amount of infrastructure delivered to date. But in terms of continuous improvement, any short term improvements made since the Act will likely be projects that are easier to identify and deliver, rather than the long term continuous improvement required. The Committee heard that sometimes small changes can make a big difference, such as the removal of barriers on existing routes.³⁷ But infrastructure is only a part of the picture. For continuous improvements to be delivered, maps must be ambitious and strategic, and behaviour change is needed for routes to be well used.

53. Sustrans described the mapping process as an opportunity for local authorities to “really think strategically about the role of walking and cycling in its long-term ambitions and to site it alongside other things like your local authority transport strategy or your corporate plan/programme for government and your LDP”. However, they also felt that “there remains a question mark about the commitment of local authorities, at a senior level, to be able to push this forward strategically”.³⁸

54. The Committee notes concerns from a number of stakeholders about the further need to integrate active travel into planning strategies and wider policies. For example, Beicio Bangor and Safe Streets Anglesey told the Committee of their concerns that “the local draft well-being document...makes no mention of active travel anywhere”.³⁹

³⁷ Para 263, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

³⁸ Para 23, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

³⁹ **Consultation response 20 Beicio Bangor and Safe Streets Anglesey**

55. Given concerns around leadership and a lack of ambition, continuous improvement could become a challenge. Integration of active travel with transport strategies and cooperate plans are central to delivering on the scale anticipated. Without that strategic vision, local authorities in the future will struggle to identify the routes needed to enable change.

Highways responsibilities

56. The Act requires both the Welsh Government and local authorities to take reasonable steps to enhance the provision made for walkers and cyclists in the performance of certain functions as highway authorities (particularly the construction, maintenance or improvement of roads and traffic regulation).

57. However, Carmarthenshire Cycling Forum told us that “much of what is done in the way of highway maintenance is clearly done without the awareness of the duties set out in the [Act]”.

58. The WLGA noted that “in certain authorities all highway activity is starting to be viewed through the need to understand the active travel implications / opportunities of any maintenance or new development”⁴⁰ but consultation responses suggested that significant highway schemes have been developed and passed without reference to the Act⁴¹ including: the Third Menai Crossing; Pwll-y-Pan roundabout (Caerphilly); Mountain Ash Cross Valley Link (RCT); and Beddau Halt (RCT); and Talbot Green Roundabout (RCT).

59. Officials from RCT have since told the Committee that the schemes in their area give due regard to the Act and officials from Caerphilly have told the Committee that the Pwll-y-Pant roundabout has been future proofed to accommodate connection to a future cycling network, in line with the ambition set out in their INM.

60. It could be argued that the Welsh Government set the tone for these developments in its own delivery of the Caernarfon and Bontnewydd Bypass which, despite being the first major contract for a highway scheme awarded after the passing of the Act, it contained no provision for active travel whatsoever.

⁴⁰ [Consultation response 13 Welsh Local Government Association \(WLGA\)](#)

⁴¹ [Consultation response 21 Carmarthenshire Cycling Club](#)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion 1. The Act, along with wider active travel policy, sought to bring about a modal shift, with walking and cycling becoming “the preferred ways of getting around over shorter distances”.⁴² However, static and dropping numbers of people walking and cycling show that clear progress has yet to be made. Given the long-standing dominance of the car and other motorised transport in our towns and cities, the modal shift to active travel, and all the benefits it brings, is likely to require far more momentum than has been achieved to date.

Conclusion 2. Strategic leadership has been lacking, at both Welsh Government and local authority levels. The ambition of the Act cannot be realised through the actions of a few dedicated cycling/transport officers alone. More needs to be done to put active travel at the heart of long term strategies and programmes.

Conclusion 3. Although the INMs set out the ambition of local authorities, it is clear that they are yet to become an integral part of wider planning and transport policies. The benefits of active travel are wide, reaching across many policy areas and responsibility for delivery of the Act must be just as broad.

Conclusion 4. Partly as a result of the first mapping exercise proving to be a time consuming task that diverted focus from the delivery of improved networks and facilities. Lessons must be learnt to avoid future mapping exercises impacting negatively on delivery.

Conclusion 5. The level of available funding is constraining the ambitions of local authorities when planning delivery of active travel policy, and the underfunding of the mapping process likely diverted resources from delivery of infrastructure to the creation of maps. The Committee considers funding in more detail in chapter six.

Conclusion 6. Evidence suggests that the statutory duty to “take reasonable steps to enhance the provision made for walkers and cyclists” in exercising highway functions are not being effectively applied.

⁴² [Para 2.1, An Active Travel Plan for Wales, Welsh Government, February 2016](#)

Recommendation 1. The Committee considers a lack of strategic leadership at both Welsh Government and local authority levels to be responsible for the lack of progress made to date. The ambition of the Act cannot be realised through the actions of a few dedicated cycling/transport officers alone. Leadership from the Welsh Government should be strengthened, and its expectation of leadership at local level made clear.

Recommendation 2. The Welsh Government should lead a lessons learnt review of the mapping process to streamline processes and improve the approach where need is identified.

3. Consultation and engagement

61. Some local authorities considered consultation around the mapping exercise as risky, potentially raising expectations that could not be met. Ceredigion County Council shared their concerns, saying “the Authority was mindful not to raise expectations of the general public following promotion of a ‘what routes do you want to see introduced in your community?’ type message from certain sectors as part of the INM consultation process”.⁴³ This caution is understandable and played out in responses to the Committee’s consultation with one individual expressing disappointment that the ERM consultation proposed no new routes,⁴⁴ although that was not their intended purpose.

62. Carmarthenshire Cycling Forum claimed that the INM consultation in their area failed to reach “85%+ of non-cyclists who we needed to reach and ask why they don’t walk or cycle more regularly and what routes could alter their travel behaviour”.⁴⁵

63. The Assembly’s Cross Party Group on the Active Travel Act surveyed local authorities and found that “the public involvement in the consultations has generally been minimal and the consultations have frequently been process rather than outcome focused”.⁴⁶ The generally low level of response to the consultation shows that the process has not worked well. Some local authority’s maps were later rejected by the Cabinet Secretary due to inadequate consultation.

64. The Committee took evidence from disability campaigners who were critical of the involvement they had in the mapping process. Leonard Cheshire’s Policy and Public Affairs Officer, Rhian Stangroom-Teal said, “I speak, as you know, as one of the largest providers of social care for people with disabilities in the UK, and I can actively say that we weren’t engaged with at all”.

65. Kevin Rahman-Daultrey of Pedal Power highlighted the importance of consultation to take in to account the different experiences people have, to avoid the situation “where they lump all disability into the same pot”. When asked who should be delivering disability awareness to local authorities and health boards, Joshua Reeves, disability campaigner, was clear that it should be “people like me

⁴³ [Consultation response 14 Ceredigion County Council](#)

⁴⁴ [Consultation response 16 Julian Anstey](#)

⁴⁵ [Consultation response 21 Carmarthenshire Cycling Forum](#)

⁴⁶ [Consultation response 29 Cross Party Group on Active Travel Act](#)

and other people that have lived those lives, that have come across these obstacles".⁴⁷

66. Former RNIB Public Affairs Manager, Emma Sands, responded to the Committee's consultation in a personal capacity to highlight the need for meaningful consultation to take place at a local level. During the development of the ERMs, her team at the RNIB was contacted by many of the 22 local authorities who were seeking help to carry out equality impact assessments of their plans. She told the Committee that "whilst RNIB could provide general guidance on clear streets, local people are the only ones with the knowledge of the routes being proposed and the potential hindrances and opportunities". She called on Ministers to "exercise their powers to ensure that local authorities have consulted with local blind and partially sighted people and not just national disability bodies".⁴⁸

67. Some local authorities used the consultation process to add real value to their INMs. Cardiff Council, for example, has committed to producing a further INM within the next 12 months in order to address the concerns of local cycling campaigners. Others went "out of their way to seek out different population groups that are definitely not your usual suspects".⁴⁹

68. Others were less engaged. Guide Dogs for the Blind told the Committee:

"We did a piece of work with the active travel team in the Welsh Government around sending out advice on how to engage with people with sight loss, and it went into the active travel newsletter. It was very practical advice. It didn't involve them spending a lot of money. It wasn't even asking for a tactile map, which actually are—you know, they have costs associated, but this was suggesting other ways to engage. We've had no follow-up contact from any local authorities apart from, I must say, Cardiff, Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf. They're the three examples of local authorities who have got in touch. However, I have no idea of how these maps will work, because we haven't heard anything about making that process inclusive at all."⁵⁰

69. The Committee heard that good consultation can do more than shape the design of infrastructure: it also serves to promote active travel and create buy-in.

⁴⁷ Para 301, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

⁴⁸ **Consultation response 27 Emma Sands**

⁴⁹ Para 370, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

⁵⁰ Para 195, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

The Committee's consultation for this inquiry demonstrated this effect with one disability focus group in Pembrokeshire setting up a walking group as a result of their discussions with us. The group's discussion had identified confidence as a barrier to walking and so developed a solution that worked for them. The Committee wishes them every success in their new activity.

70. The danger of not consulting in a meaningful way is that infrastructure is delivered but is not welcomed or used by the local community. The WLGA said:

“The consultation processes that have happened have sometimes struggled to reach beyond the already active and understand what the community needs to become more active. Without this parallel behaviour change process there is a danger that where infrastructure is developed and not well used it becomes a stick to beat local elected members with as a sign of wasteful investment.”⁵¹

71. The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport recognised that there were a few local authorities who have done excellent work on consultation and that there was “a clear correlation between the degree of consultation that took place and the quality of maps that emerged”. On the other end of the scale, he rejected four INMs in March 2018 “on the grounds of failure to consult adequately”.⁵²

Co-production

72. Co-production takes consultation a step further, involving stakeholders not only in the identification of an issue, but enabling them to be a part of the solution. Rachel Maycock, Wales Manager of Living Streets told the Committee that she was unsure whether co-production took place during the mapping process. She called for future co-production “with people that are going to use the walking routes and cycling routes in those areas”⁵³ in order to make them successful, explaining;

“Local authorities defer to the minimum and, if you want to produce maps, infrastructure, schemes that work, you need the community to be involved in the design of them and not just at the start where it's the ‘nice-to-have’ wish lists, but right through the process so, when you end up with a scheme, the community really does use it and it's not a load

⁵¹ **Consultation response 13 Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)**

⁵² Para 366, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

⁵³ Para 50, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

of money spent on something that wasn't quite what people had in mind and doesn't link communities together, doesn't get people to school safely."⁵⁴

73. The RNIB told the Committee that sometimes even a well-placed route can become a “no-go zone”⁵⁵ for blind and partially sighted people. The RNIB has long campaigned against shared spaces, and guide Dogs Cymru have long campaigned against the use of shared surface streets in which crossings, kerbs and tactile paving are removed and space is shared by all road users and pedestrians. Shared spaces rely on visual interaction between users to negotiate the space, making them incredibly difficult to navigate for blind and partially sighted people.

74. In the context of active travel, Andrea Gordon raised concern about routes where “footways are divided between pedestrians and cyclists just by a white line, because that's not perceptible to blind and partially sighted people, and we're as much of a danger to cyclists as they can be to us”.⁵⁶

75. RNIB also told Committee:

“we mentioned shared space earlier just being an example of where it just doesn't work. One of the things we hear a lot at RNIB is, particularly when cyclists are using the same space and they're particularly narrow, they just become no-go zones for a lot of blind and partially sighted people and then they just aren't being used, because they feel intimidated.”⁵⁷

76. Co-production enables a variety of user needs to be considered and factored in to the design from the start, but although there are “pockets of good practice”,⁵⁸ Guide Dogs Cymru and RNIB Cymru referred to two examples where the space designed did not meet the needs of all users, the Maes in Caernarfon and the new Cardiff transport interchange. Referring to the development of integrated active travel networks, but the Guide Dogs Cymru and RNIB Cymru were clear that “there has been very little engagement with blind and partially sighted people, or with organisations that represent their views”.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Para 89, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

⁵⁵ Para 237, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

⁵⁶ Para 183, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

⁵⁷ Para 237, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

⁵⁸ Para 225, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

⁵⁹ **Consultation response 28, additional information from RNIB Cymru and Guide Dogs Cymru**

77. Steve Brooks, National Director, Sustrans, described a co-production programme in Scotland they were involved in. He told the Committee:

“We’re able to support local authorities to actually sit down, so when you are in an instance like that you’re able to talk to residents, talk to local businesses, talk to public service providers, find out what the needs are, talk to all the engineers and planners and understand technically what’s possible and look to create solutions that try and, if you like, meet as many of those problems as possible. It’s not always possible, but it’s a means of managing some of those tensions.”⁶⁰

78. Public Health Wales also supported co-production as a means to enable the population as a whole to share the challenge and the ownership of the solution.

79. This report considers behaviour change in more depth further on, but the correlation between consultation, co-production, improved design and behavioural change was noted by the Committee, and the Cabinet Secretary’s commitment to sharing the learning in this regard was welcomed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion 7. If the Act is to increase the number of people cycling and walking, the Committee considers it essential to for consultation to reach the people not currently doing so. That has failed to be the case to date. The next mapping exercise presents an opportunity to learn lessons from previous consultations and reach out to a new audience.

Conclusion 8. The Cabinet Secretary’s rejection of maps on the grounds of inadequate consultation is welcomed by the Committee, given the importance of consultation on these issues. The Committee notes the WLGA’s call for guidance on “the minimum level of consultation required”⁶¹ but considers the guidance contained within the Statutory Guidance for the delivery of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013⁶² to be clear, especially when read in conjunction with readily available good practice guides on the subject.

Conclusion 9. Although good examples of consultation have been identified across a handful of local authorities, success elsewhere is patchy with some local

⁶⁰ Para 108, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

⁶¹ **Consultation response 13 Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)**

⁶² **Statutory Guidance for the delivery of the Active Travel Wales (Act) 2013**

authorities' lack of capacity and concerns around managing expectations potentially hampering meaningful engagement.

Conclusion 10. Consultation and co-production are essential factors for success when developing infrastructure that meets the needs of a diverse community. The people best placed to advise on local barriers to active travel are the people who use, or want to use, those routes. Meaningful consultation with local groups is therefore essential when developing new infrastructure, and wherever possible should extend to co-production.

Recommendation 3. The Welsh Government should lead a lessons learned exercise on Active Travel consultation to seek best practice and capture innovative ways of reaching people who do not currently walk or cycle.

Recommendation 4. In future consultations, local authorities should involve the Access groups that exist across Wales.

Recommendation 5. The Welsh Government should revise its statutory guidance to include co-production as a minimum standard for the delivery of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, involving stakeholders not only in the identification of an issue, but enabling them to be a part of the solution.

4. Guidance

80. Following the passing of the Act, the Welsh Government issued design and delivery guidance along with an audit tool. The Association for Consultancy and Engineering Wales (ACE) told the Committee that:

“The [Active Travel Design Guidance] and audit tools were developed in collaboration with major campaign groups, cycling organisations and practitioners in the industry, giving them credibility. They capture lessons learnt from prominent schemes both in the UK and internationally.”⁶³

81. But Gail Bodley-Scott, of Cardiff Council, told the Committee of a disconnect between the guidance and audit tool:

“The design guidance was a fundamental part of the considerations that we had, and it was part of the methodology that we used in identifying schemes in the first place, which was rooted very much in the audit tool. And actually what we found then with the feedback that we got through the consultation process was that, in some respects, the audit tool lets things through of a lower quality than what the actual detail of the guidance suggests we should be aiming for.”⁶⁴

82. Others told the Committee that it was unclear how trunk roads should be treated and that “going forward, there needs to be a clear understanding on who should lead on implementing active travel routes which are located on the Trunk Road”.⁶⁵

83. The Committee also heard that some guidance for local authorities was not produced in a timely manner. The WLGA told the Committee that some local authorities “struggled with the timing of the relevant guidance compared to the submission timescales, its clarity and detail in places”.⁶⁶

⁶³ [Consultation response 07 Association for Consultancy and Engineering Cymru Wales \(ACE Cymru Wales\)](#)

⁶⁴ Para 161, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018](#)

⁶⁵ [Consultation response 17 Connectivity and Infrastructure Group of the Growing Mid Wales Partnership](#)

⁶⁶ [Consultation response 13 Welsh Local Government Association \(WLGA\)](#)

Flexibility

84. Although there seems to be inconsistency between the standards required in the design guidance and the audit tool, the Committee was told that there were additional problems in applying the guidance in all cases. Simon Shouler of ACE Cymru told the Committee that “the guidance is quite specific, and, if you have geographical constraints such as developing schemes in the Valleys, for example, you may not be able to meet the minimum or maximum gradient criteria for cycle ways”.⁶⁷

85. The Committee heard about the challenges of delivering active travel routes in rural areas from one of our focus groups. They said that as a result of two secondary schools in the area combining, from September 2018 secondary school pupils from Johnston, Haverfordwest, will travel 2 to 3 miles to attend Milford Secondary school. Access to the school is along a rural road with no cycle lane or pavement which they share the road with the lorries bound for Milford Haven. They view walking or cycling along it as “the most scariest thing ever”.⁶⁸

86. However, the Committee also heard that flexibility can be “quite worrying”⁶⁹ for those with the highest level of need. Kevin Rahman-Daultrey of Pedal Power gave an example of where disabled cyclists can be excluded when their needs are not met by the infrastructure:

“In Cardiff alone, we have 1,600 disabled cyclists who would love to use the infrastructure if it was there, and it simply isn’t. Perfect examples are things like the fact that, as part of cycling infrastructure, you’ll often find areas where they’ll ask a cyclist to dismount. You can’t dismount if you’re on a hand bike or if you’re on an adaptive trike.”⁷⁰

Changing culture

87. In practice, the design guidance sits alongside a number of other guidance and tools that engineers and other professionals have to have regard to when designing and delivering infrastructure. The Committee was told of a number of issues in the way the guidance came together to shape developments on the ground.

⁶⁷ Para 193, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

⁶⁸ **Active Travel: Focus Groups Summary**

⁶⁹ Para 342, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

⁷⁰ Para 181, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

88. Beicio Bangor and Safe Streets Anglesey highlight that key appraisal and design standards – Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) and Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB)⁷¹ – predate the Act. Unless reviewed, “cycling facilities will be undervalued and may well be so badly delivered as to waste almost all of the money spent on them” (an updated version of WelTAG has been published in 2017). Sustrans indicates that it has been involved in the review process.

89. Some witnesses felt the way wider guidance and tools sat together was sometimes clunky and created unintended consequences. For example, Simon Shouler of ACE Cymru Wales said:

“The health economic assessment tool (HEAT)—is being advocated through the WelTAG refresh... But, even using HEAT, it’s kind of flawed in that, because it’s all about physical activity, if you reduce journey times for walking and cycling, that’s actually reducing physical activity and you’re getting a negative cost. So, although well intentioned, it might not actually work that well for certain schemes.”⁷²

90. The Committee considers this to be at odds with the spirit of the Act, which seeks to make walking and cycling a regular and natural option, rather than increasing journey times and so discouraging the use of routes.

91. Simon Shouler further commented that the problem was a cultural one that needed a shift towards finding solutions “rather than finding a way of not doing something”. ACE felt that “standards and design guidance could be made to work; you may have to apply relaxations or departures, but I don’t see them as a barrier. I think it’s more of a cultural issue”.⁷³

92. Others felt the guidance gave sufficient information to include active travel in their designs. Cardiff Council, for example, told the Committee that “the latest WelTAG...points you in the direction of the Department for Transport guidance for assessing the wider benefits of proposals, and there is plenty within that for assessing the benefits of active travel routes”.⁷⁴

⁷¹ DMRB sets out design standards for use on trunk roads, but is also typically applied to local roads where possible. It is prepared by the UK Government Department for Transport, but is endorsed by all devolved governments. It is a non-statutory document but is enforced, for trunk roads at least, through construction contracts and variations from the standards must be justified.

⁷² Para 249 **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

⁷³ Para 199, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

⁷⁴ Para 147, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

93. The Committee heard evidence about the mindset of an orthodox engineering approach deferring to guidance, designed mainly for roads and bridges, for example, which resists the ethos of this new approach. Sustrans told the Committee that “you come up against a traditional engineering school that is like, ‘Ooh, we can’t do that,’ or, ‘We haven’t really done that kind of stuff before in Wales, so we’ll always do what we’ve always done’”.⁷⁵

94. The tendency to defer to more traditional approaches rather than seeking innovative solutions is compounded in part by the measures of success inherent in the guidance. Robert Jones, Associate Transport Planner, told the Committee:

“Inevitably, it’s more difficult to bring out the benefits for the walking and cycling aspects of those schemes. In fact, it’s very easy to put a cost to the aspects for walking and cycling, but the benefits are a lot more challenging and a lot less established.”⁷⁶

His solution links to the headline finding of this inquiry, that leadership on active travel needs to be strengthened.

95. A number of witnesses called for best practice examples to provide inspiration and generate new thinking in this area. Ryland Jones, Head of Built Environment for Sustrans told the Committee that “there are elements in Cardiff of good-quality infrastructure that are emerging, and I think we are starting to get a few examples in Wales of high-quality innovative aspects. But...they are somewhat piecemeal”.⁷⁷

New developments

96. Cardiff Council told the Committee:

“the statutory duties on Local Authorities under the Active Travel Act do not sufficiently extend to other functions undertaken by Local Authorities, for example Planning and Education, to the extent that delivering and maintaining active travel routes in relation to new development can be frustrating.”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Para 64, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

⁷⁶ Para 249, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

⁷⁷ Para 67, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

⁷⁸ **Consultation response 12 Cardiff Council**

97. Some raised concerns that when active travel is included in designs, it is inadequate and still comes from the premise that active travel should fit around cars. RTPI told the Committee:

“Too often, the provision of active travel facilities within new developments is prevented or compromised due to other considerations taking precedence. Where developments do manage to include provision, it is frequently the case that facilities are poorly-designed and do not adequately meet users’ needs.”⁷⁹

98. Several witnesses called for better guidance for developers outside of Wales to enable active travel to be included in plans from the start and to avoid any further costs associated with amending designs as proposals develop. It was recognised that the guidance and expectations are in place, but, as Public Health Wales pointed out, although “we’ve got some of the levers; we’re probably just not making the greatest use of them”.⁸⁰

99. The Committee was concerned to hear that where active travel has been included in a new development design, it can be the first thing squeezed back out again as part of the negotiations between planning authorities and developers.

100. The Committee was pleased to hear that the new iteration of Planning Policy Wales that is currently out to consultation contains far greater reference to active travel, but considers there to be a need for more dramatic improvements to be made.⁸¹ It should be essential for new developments to include provision for active travel as standard, not a desirable add on or something to retrofit later at additional expense.

Definition of Active Travel

101. Youth Hostels Cymru called for the definition of active travel (as set out in paragraph 1 of this report) to be widened, saying:

“The Act must widen its horizons to include leisure travel and support tourism for the economic benefit for Wales. Power assisted bicycles and wheelchairs should be able to use Active Travel routes as should prams and pushchairs. They should not just be considered as well maintained

⁷⁹ **Consultation response 08 Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI Cymru)**

⁸⁰ Para 57, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

⁸¹ Para 14, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

high speed routes for cyclists. They should be a catalyst for healthy safe activity and improve the well-being of residents and visitors to Wales.”⁸²

102. This was a view shared by other consultation respondents. A group of residents of Frongoch contacted the Committee to point out the benefits to the local community of having active travel links to Bala, linking local people with the activities and services they needed, and tourists with local shops and tourist attractions. The group argued that the provision of a path for one set of users could bring benefits to another.⁸³

103. The Committee took evidence on the impact of accessible walking routes for disabled people. Joshua Reeves, a disability campaigner and wheelchair user, told the Committee:

“I wanted to access my railway station, and I couldn’t, because there was this bumpy kerb in the way and these massive trees that were blocking my way, and I was scared—honestly, terrified—and that decreased my independence for a long time. That made me nervous for a while, and...I always used to ask my dad to drive me because I was nervous, because the pavements were so small I was too scared that I was going to topple over, and I have done before.”⁸⁴

104. The Act and the Action Plan make it clear that the definition of walking “includes the use of wheelchairs and mobility scooters, and ‘cycling’ includes the use of electric bikes, but not motorcycles”.⁸⁵

Designated localities

105. The WLGA told the Committee that “changes to the LTF [Local Transport Fund] criteria and funding regime mean that only schemes that have been identified as Active Travel routes are tending to get progressed”.⁸⁶ The WLGA argue that this has resulted in the unintended consequence of smaller rural communities and inter urban routes missing out.

106. Sustrans suggested that a change to the funding structure would address this issue, with funds being made available to local authorities for active travel,

⁸² [Consultation response 19 Youth Hostels Association Wales \(YHA Cymru Wales\)](#)

⁸³ [Consultation response 06 A group of Frongoch residents](#)

⁸⁴ Para 258, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018](#)

⁸⁵ [Page 4, An Active Travel Action Plan for Wales, Welsh Government, February 2016](#)

⁸⁶ [Consultation response 13 Welsh Local Government Association](#)

separate funding for more strategic regional corridors and another separate fund for other schemes that are “less about active travel and more about leisure”.⁸⁷

107. Some areas consider more could be done to connect rural settlements more effectively. Powys County Council told the Committee “we’ve got quite a lot of dispersed settlements that are not connected to the market towns, so that is an issue for us—that we are restricted within that very, very absolute three-mile limit”. They called for “associated settlements”⁸⁸ to be brought within the act to enable active travel routes between smaller rural settlements.

108. Pembrokeshire County Council told the Committee that guidance “emphasised the development of new routes but this was impractical in the tight boundary areas of the rural market towns”. They argued that there should be a review of the Act from a rural perspective as “no real thought has gone in to how rural settlements can engage in the process”.⁸⁹ Their experience of the mapping process resulted in the “shovel ready” improvements that local communities were calling for being shelved in favour of feasibility studies that attracted funding as a result of the Act.

109. The Cabinet Secretary rejected the suggestion that the Act was too urban focused, saying “it covers more than 100 communities across Wales, with populations of more than 2,000”. However, he also stated that he was open to “reducing the population threshold”⁹⁰ in order to address this issue. He also stated that the design guidance is under review and consultation and will be re-issued in mid-May.⁹¹

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion 11. The Committee is concerned that the new guidance does not appear to have fostered a new approach to design. Greater leadership is needed in this area but in addition, more could be done to avoid the active travel guidance becoming a bolt on to other guidance that may be more familiar to planners and engineers. The Committee was concerned to hear reports of a cultural barrier to overcoming new challenges and feels that strong leadership is needed in this area, with the Welsh Government doing more to encourage and enforce change in this area.

⁸⁷ Para 73, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018](#)

⁸⁸ Para 29, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018](#)

⁸⁹ [Consultation response 09 Pembrokeshire County Council](#)

⁹⁰ Para 352, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018](#)

⁹¹ Para 359, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018](#)

Conclusion 12. The disconnect between the guidance and audit tool is unhelpful. The current review of the guidance should also include the audit tool to provide clarity on the standards expected. Clarity should also be sought where existing guidance and active travel guidance are at odds, for example with the HEAT tool. Of course, guidance cannot anticipate the detail of every project and must be applied in the spirit it is intended. Welsh Government leadership is required in challenging those plans that do not embrace the new approach and deliver active travel only in the margins. The current Planning Policy Wales consultation is a key opportunity to strengthen guidance.

Conclusion 13. The Committee considers the sharing of best practice to be important, as is strong leadership that sets the standards and the expectations high and celebrates successes. Both the Cabinet Secretary and the WLGA have made a commitment to the Committee that they will seek to actively share best practice in a meaningful way. The Committee welcomes this commitment and looks forward to swift and meaningful actions in this regard.

Conclusion 14. The Committee recognises the need for flexibility in applying the guidance, especially in areas where the geography presents particular challenges. However, there is a danger that in some cases the price of flexibility will be paid by those with greatest access needs.

Conclusion 15. The Committee fails to see how the ambitions of the Act will be delivered solely through retrofitting infrastructure while allowing new developments to avoid or under deliver on active travel. More should be done to avoid active travel being squeezed out or watered down in new design proposals. Training will be key in this area, as will effective planning policy and guidance that is applied consistently.

Conclusion 16. The Committee considers the Act's definition of Active Travel and its focus on the connectivity of the routes being delivering as appropriate. There is, however, no reason why the routes identified in INMs cannot be delivered with the diverse needs of all potential users being considered, in line with the guidance.

Conclusion 17. The ambition of the Act can only be delivered by challenging traditional approaches and delivering strategically and innovatively. It is right therefore that feasibility studies are carried out and focus is given to routes that will deliver the best outcomes. Committee accepts that the Act has resulted in funding being drawn away from improvements to some "shovel ready" walking and cycling routes in rural areas that don't meet the criteria of active travel.

Conclusion 18. While the Cabinet Secretary's commitment to a possible reduction in the population threshold will alleviate the access to funding issue in some rural areas, the engineering challenge remains. Without innovative approaches and the will to find new solutions to provide appropriate routes, funding alone will not deliver change for rural areas.

Conclusion 19. Consideration should be given to how to balance delivery of smaller walking and cycling schemes in rural areas with the more ambitious active travel schemes that should be delivered elsewhere.

Recommendation 6. The Welsh Government should work with professional bodies for developers and civil engineers, local authorities and the Welsh Government's own staff to tackle the cultural barriers to implementing active travel guidance, particularly through training and culture change management.

Recommendation 7. The Welsh Government should use the current Planning Policy Wales review and the planning guidance review as an opportunity to strengthen support for active travel and restate the importance of considering active travel in all new infrastructure projects. Active travel should be considered a must have, not an option.

Recommendation 8. The Welsh Government should amend its guidance to enable "associated Settlements" to be brought within the Act, enabling the development of active travel routes between smaller rural settlements.

Recommendation 9. In its review of the design guidance, the Welsh Government should take steps to ensure the audit tool matches the standards of the guidance.

Recommendation 10. The Welsh Government should consider making funding available to progress smaller rural walking and cycling schemes that do not necessarily deliver on active travel, but would be impactful for local communities who may otherwise miss out.

Recommendation 11. The Welsh Government should make it clear that in cases where the guidance can only be applied flexibly, co-production with diverse local groups should be undertaken to ensure that as far as possible the solutions being developed are suitable for the needs of the community. Welsh Government funding for projects should be conditional on this expectation being met.

5. Developing Active Travel in Wales

Monitoring

110. Active travel is supported by the Active Travel Board and Active Travel Action Plan. The Act requires local authorities to report annually on progress, but monitoring to date has focused on the number of people cycling and walking, and the amount of funding being spent on active travel routes. The Welsh Government recognises the need for improvement in this area and is currently working with local authorities to develop more meaningful measures to quantify outputs, but further work is needed to measure outcomes.

Active Travel Board

111. The Active Travel Board's terms of reference require it to:

- provide input into, and review delivery of, active travel projects and support the implementation of any actions arising following consideration by Ministers;
- advise on the development and implementation of the Active Travel Action Plan; and
- advise on wider activity to support the implementation of the Act and the uptake of Active Travel.

112. Board membership consists of the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Welsh Government officials from the Transport, Health, Education and Environment Departments, the WLGA, Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales, Disability Wales and a range of walking and cycling stakeholders.

113. Sustrans considered the Active Travel Board a “useful forum to share information”, but they described the way the Board is currently constituted as “not fit for purpose”⁹² and called for it to be replaced with a National Advisory Board with a membership that included local authorities, other transport sector stakeholders, NGOs and experts.

114. The WLGA also called for improvements to the Board suggesting “wider representation on the board, or engagement through the board, would be

⁹² **Consultation response 24 Sustrans Cymru**

productive”.⁹³ Bridgend County Council suggested that greater involvement of local authorities on the Board would be useful. Cardiff Council felt that the Board could potentially “be a very dynamic body that can be seen to be driving forward this agenda”⁹⁴ but that it was not performing that role presently.

115. Witnesses also complained about the quality of information being disseminated from the Board, with the speed with which Minutes of the meetings were made available and their poor dissemination among local authorities being a particular issue.

116. Some witnesses called for the Board to have an independent Chair, with clearer terms of reference.⁹⁵

Action Plan

117. The Active Travel Action Plan is a non-statutory document intended to support delivery of the Act. Its purpose is to set out:

- the Welsh Government’s vision for active travel;
- how it will work with others to achieve the changes required;
- how it will embed consideration of active travel across different portfolios; and
- how it will monitor progress against actions and the rates of active travel across Wales.

118. The 2016 plan sets out a total of 28 actions under six headings; leadership; legislation, standards and tools; infrastructure; promotion and behaviour change; skills and training; and monitoring and evaluation.

119. However, Rachel Maycock of Living Streets pointed out that the Action Plan lacks “targets, milestones, deadlines, dates and funding”.⁹⁶ Without those key elements, it is difficult to implement change effectively and gain momentum. Steve Brooks of Sustrans agreed, saying “the action plan should be the means by which cross-Government priorities are taken forward. I don’t think it is at the

⁹³ Para 202, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018](#)

⁹⁴ Para 204, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018](#)

⁹⁵ [Consultation response 24 Sustrans Cymru; Consultation response 11, Living Streets](#)

⁹⁶ Para 129, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018](#)

moment”.⁹⁷ Bridgend County Council called for the Action Plan to be updated annually, with progress recorded against revised deadlines.⁹⁸

120. The inquiry also identified a need for the plan to be presented in a more cross cutting way. Cardiff Council highlighted how many actions within the plan “fall to transport, and, really, there needs to be far more actions that fall to education and other arms of Government”⁹⁹.

121. Dr Julie Bishop, Public Health Wales, called on the Welsh Government to consider how best to foster more cross-cutting approaches to delivering results. She reflected on the need to structure delivery “so that includes communities and statutory public sector bodies and third sector bodies and probably private sector organisations collectively tackling an issue” and called on the government to hold public bodies accountable for those outcomes.¹⁰⁰

Behavioural change

122. Throughout the inquiry, it was made clear to the Committee that passing an Act, creating maps and building infrastructure will not in itself deliver a modal change. Behavioural change has, since the Act came in to force in 2013, been patchy, inconsistent, un-coordinated and poorly planned.

123. Huw Brunt, Lead Consultant in Environmental Public Health, Public Health Wales, said:

“Behaviour change we’ve talked a lot about. There are different levels, aren’t there? If we’re talking about behaviour change within the public—changing cultures, changing the way that we all live our lives—then that is a very different thing to actually changing behaviour of a system of all public bodies or others within a system. And I think that we all as agencies and organisations have a duty and a role to champion and be the lead within the system, but, actually, changing the behaviour amongst the population and individuals within the population is a very different thing.”¹⁰¹

124. Dr Julie Bishop, Director of Health Improvement, Public Health Wales, told the Committee that:

⁹⁷ Para 133, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

⁹⁸ **Consultation response 15 Bridgend County Borough Council**

⁹⁹ Para 204, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

¹⁰⁰ Para 161, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

¹⁰¹ Para 86, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

“I would describe it as behaviour change rather than promotion, that actually hasn’t perhaps been given the attention that’s needed. So, we’ve had a lot of focus on infrastructure, and infrastructure is one way of promoting behaviour change. You need to give people the opportunity to change their behaviour, not just try and motivate them to do it. But we probably haven’t been quite as focused on looking at the other aspects of helping people to change their behaviour, one of which would be actually making them want to. You can build a cycle path, but it doesn’t mean to say people will use it. So, it’s joining up those different areas of working that probably is where we’ve got the potential to improve. So, I think it’s recognised that it’s part of it, and the plans describe behaviour changes as a component. But the sorts of activities that have gone on to date probably haven’t used the latest knowledge of behaviour change science, or been sufficiently at scale in their implementation to bring about a difference.”¹⁰²

125. The Active Travel Action Plan commits the Welsh Government to developing a National Communication Strategy, but it has not delivered this yet. Progress on this action would be welcomed by local authorities who are looking to the Welsh Government for assistance in progressing this important and complex area.¹⁰³

126. The Committee heard from a number of witnesses that enabling young people to become more active travellers could have the greatest impact long term, yet only 8% of schools are engaged in the Active Journeys to School Programme.^{104 105}

127. The Committee heard that the Welsh Government has ended its support for a successful walking scheme in Wales. Rachel Maycock, of Living Streets, said:

“The day before the anniversary of the active travel Act, Welsh Government stopped funding for Let’s Walk Cymru. So there are no Welsh Government funded walking schemes at the moment beyond the Active Journeys scheme, which is kind of ridiculous when you have an active travel Act to say that we should be investing more money here.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Para 64, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

¹⁰³ **Consultation response 13 Welsh Local Government Association**

¹⁰⁴ Paras 17 and 37, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

¹⁰⁵ **Consultation response 24 Sustrans Cymru**

¹⁰⁶ Para 78, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

Best practice

128. Throughout the inquiry, the Committee heard of the need to share best practice to showcase new ideas and inspire the local authorities and engineers responsible for finding solutions and delivering new active travel routes in their own area. At present, these are hard to find in Wales.

129. Cardiff Council called on the Welsh Government to provide “tangible, practical examples of good quality infrastructure” as part of Welsh Government infrastructure schemes, and for examples of best practice to be included in the guidance.¹⁰⁷

130. Ryland Jones, Sustrans Cymru, told the Committee;

“I think there’s an onus on Welsh Government to really help to drive the agenda now, to really bring forward some priority schemes that have been envisioned in these INMs. We need good examples from Wales. We need case studies that we can look to and say, ‘Yes, that’s a really good piece of work and that’s how we want to do it going forward.’ So, I think just really grasping the nettle to try and develop some good quality schemes in Wales on the back of some of the INM schemes now, and really be able to show what we can do locally, which will then, hopefully, encourage everybody to raise the bar in taking this forward.”¹⁰⁸

131. Vincent Goodwin of Powys County Council considered the sharing of best practice and training to be all the more important in rural areas where examples of active travel-friendly infrastructure are rarer.¹⁰⁹

132. The Committee was also told that consideration should be given to the impact that could be created by reducing the speed limit in urban areas to 20 mph. Given that the Wales Act 2017 has recently devolved power over speed limits in Wales to the Welsh Government, the Committee would be interested to hear if the Cabinet Secretary is considering using those powers to include speed reduction as part of future best practice.

¹⁰⁷ **Consultation response 12 Cardiff Council**

¹⁰⁸ Para 176, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

¹⁰⁹ Para 33, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion 20. The Active Travel Board has developed a reputation for being a good way of sharing information, but it has missed the opportunity to share that information more widely, in particular with local authorities, many of whom are asking for examples of best practice and innovative approaches to solving some of the issues they face in delivering Active Travel routes.

Conclusion 21. As evidenced by the shift in resources from delivery of routes to mapping, what is required to be delivered to a deadline will often take priority over what is not. Well developed and deliverable targets create a sense of clarity around expectations and provide a means by which to hold progress to account. An action plan without targets, deadlines and funding is in danger of being little more than a collection of aspirations that are continually overtaken by other pressures.

Conclusion 22. The Committee agrees with the prevailing view that a shift towards active travel cannot be delivered without the involvement of all stakeholders and responsible delivery partners. The latest Action Plan does not go far enough in encouraging such cross-cutting approaches.

Conclusion 23. The Committee is clear on the impact active travel could have on key health concerns including obesity. It is also clear that behavioural change is a key part of the journey towards active travel. Behavioural change is a complex area and local authorities should not be expected to create change in isolation. The Committee was disappointed that the Action Plan promises a National Communication Plan, but no deadlines have been set and no progress reported to date.

Conclusion 24. There is scope for further work with schools to deliver opportunities and skills. There is also scope to encourage and support people across Wales to try cycling for the first time or join a walking group, but there appears to be little being done in this area. In fact, the Welsh Government has stopped funding for Let's Walk Cymru.

Conclusion 25. The dissemination of best practice is necessary to promote future innovation and problem solving. There are a number of ways information could be gathered and disseminated, with the Active Travel Board being an obvious choice, but unless there are best practice examples to share, and suitable training in place, then this is an impossible task. Recommendation 3 of this report refers to the need for training for engineers, planners and other local authority staff.

Recommendation 12. The Welsh Government should reconstitute the Active Travel Board with an independent chair, and terms of reference that give it teeth and impact. The Board should be responsible for monitoring progress on the Action Plan, creating and agreeing targets for delivery with the Cabinet Secretary.

Recommendation 13. Membership of the Board should be reviewed to ensure the right people are present. The Committee recommends that as the Board should be monitoring progress on the Action Plan, membership should not include members of the Welsh Government, or their officials.

Recommendation 14. The Welsh Government should include the identification and sharing of examples of good practice in the Action Plan, alongside a target date for delivery that gives time for local authorities to include the learning in the next INM cycle. Good practice should be included in the guidance and updated as designs develop.

Recommendation 15. The Welsh Government should use the infrastructure projects it is delivering to showcase the innovative active travel approaches it expects to see from local authorities.

Recommendation 16. Obesity is a growing problem in the health sector. Active travel and active lifestyles are a relatively low cost way to tackle this problem. The Welsh Government should direct Public Health Wales to prioritise the promotion of active travel and behaviour change as one of its key aims for the remainder of this Assembly/next three years. As part of that role, Public Health Wales should be demonstrably intervening and holding stakeholders to account where they consider opportunities to progress the active travel agenda are at risk of being missed.

Recommendation 17. The Welsh Government should provide opportunities for people to try walking and cycling for the first time, including through the funding of walking initiatives such as Let's Walk Cymru.

6. Resource, capacity and capability

Funding

133. Sustrans told the Committee that “because Welsh Government fails to capture investment data accurately”¹¹⁰ it is difficult to estimate the total spend on active travel across Wales. That lack of clarity hampers scrutiny in this area, but it is nevertheless clear that funding for active travel delivers impressive returns on investment. Dr Tom Porter directed the Committee to NICE evidence that that £1 invested in cycle routes returns £14 in health benefits alone.

134. Sustrans claim that at the current investment level in Cardiff of £4 per capita, the city reaps a £28m benefit, including a saving for the NHS of £699,000 annually, equivalent to the average salary of 30 nurses. However, it seems logical to assume that the smaller the investment, the smaller the returns will be.

135. Simon Shouler of ACE was clear on the impact of funding on the ambitions of a project design. He told the Committee:

“Engineers will innovate and deliver what they’re paid to deliver...Wales’s annual spend on walking and cycling is about £3.30 per head; England is £6—and Cambridge £20; and £20-plus in Holland, Denmark, et cetera. So, if you have money there to deliver, people will innovate and spend that money wisely. But without the incentive, if you’re requiring active travel enhancement to bolt it on to projects, then people are guarded as to how much they can spend.”¹¹¹

136. Other witnesses to the inquiry were clear that the current level of funding is not enough to create a modal shift towards active travel. Martin Buckle, Chair of Wales Planning Policy and Research Forum described how potentially, the decrease in the number of cars on the road as a result of an increase in walking and cycling would reduce the amount of investment needed to maintain highways, resulting in more funding being available for walking and cycling.¹¹² However, initial investment must be made at a rate that enables the shift to take place.

¹¹⁰ **Consultation response 24 Sustrans Cymru**

¹¹¹ Para 232, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

¹¹² Para 305, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

137. Sustrans called for £20 per capita per year by 2020 as a funding ambition.¹¹³ There is clearly a need to fund the improvements required by the Act to a greater degree than is currently. The Committee recognised the Cabinet Secretary’s concerns that “the Act was passed at a severely difficult time for the public purse”,¹¹⁴ but the passing of the Act put a requirement on local authorities to continuously improve active travel routes and it is clear that they are constrained in those ambitions by the funding made available to them.

138. The Cabinet Secretary told the Committee he would like “to see a significant increase in the amount of funding available for active travel, and that it shouldn’t just come from one departmental budget, that we should be utilising on a cross-government basis, given the degree of significance of active travel to other departments”.¹¹⁵ In his written evidence, the Cabinet Secretary makes it clear that this cross departmental approach has already been put in place as “other departments have funded and currently support programmes aimed at increasing levels of active travel, often as part of wider initiatives”.¹¹⁶

139. The Committee heard that the structure of funding is important too. Without “consistent multi-year funding”,¹¹⁷ Sustrans considers it likely that routes will continue to be delivered through quick, one year schemes rather than strategic and more ambitious multi-year projects.

140. Witnesses throughout the inquiry spoke about the limitations of delivering infrastructure in isolation, and about the need for a behavioural change programme.

141. There were calls for contributions from the health sector. The WLGA said:

“the wider benefits of healthier and more connected communities also often reside in financial terms outside of the local authority and as such the wider budgetary impacts with potential reallocations from health should be considered.”¹¹⁸

142. Dr Tom Porter of Cardiff and the Vale University Health Board recognised the wider funding issue:

¹¹³ **Consultation response 24 Sustrans Cymru**

¹¹⁴ Para 289, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

¹¹⁵ Para 266, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

¹¹⁶ **Welsh Government, 21 March 2018**

¹¹⁷ Para 143, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

¹¹⁸ **Consultation response 13 Welsh Local Government Association**

“this shouldn’t be just a local authority funding issue. Actually, if we are building a particular healthcare centre, we need to be able to make sure we can get relevant funding for the relevant active travel infrastructure around that and into the local area. So, how can health access those funds? How can local authorities access health funds around this?”¹¹⁹

143. Dr Julie Bishop of Public Health Wales said “I think the solution is actually to focus on outcomes rather than inputs”¹²⁰ and called for a central fund to be made available to all stakeholders who are held accountable together for the delivery of active travel, be that through provision of active travel routes in a local authority or for inclusion of active travel facilities as part of a hospital build.

144. The Committee welcomes the First Minister’s recent announcement of £60 million funding over the three years for active travel. However, clarity on the total funding for active travel is needed.

Staff capacity and capability

145. A lack of specialist staffing with the skills and capacity to deliver the active travel agenda was a frequent theme in the evidence submitted to the Committee.

146. The WLGA identified the need:

“to ensure that a range of professional groups understand and deliver the requirements of the Act across a range of agencies and third sector groups. Thought should be given to how this training need can be met in a regional way that ensures that practitioners and elected members have the knowledge and skills required.”¹²¹

147. Cardiff Council suggested that a central resource should be established which “provides a technical resource that local authorities can call upon. It may be a pool of consultants who can come in and work with local authorities, sit at desks and deliver training internally and really build up that capability”.¹²² The Cabinet Secretary suggested that Transport for Wales (TfW) would be best placed to deliver that support, although the Committee notes that at present TfW does not have the specialist staff it would need to operate in this sphere.

¹¹⁹ Para 50, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

¹²⁰ Para 60, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

¹²¹ **Consultation response 13 Welsh Local Government Association**

¹²² Para 94, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

148. The WLGA supported the idea of local authorities working together to share expertise and learning in order to build resilience.¹²³

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion 26. The Committee considers it essential that staff delivering the priorities of the Act are suitably trained and have access to the support they need to embed this new way of working. However, the Committee was also surprised to hear that adequate training has not yet been delivered in the nearly five years since the Act was passed.

Conclusion 27. The Committee recognises that there are multiple competing demands for limited funding, but given the impact that can be achieved through relatively small (in transport terms) amounts of funding in this area, it makes an attractive invest to save option. Furthermore, without the right level of funding in place, the ambitions of the Act are likely to stay just that – ambitions.

Conclusion 28. Active travel has cross cutting benefits across Government – so it should be supported in a way that reflects that.

Conclusion 29. The ambitions of the Act will not be met without a significant increasing in funding, with multi-year commitments, covering both infrastructure development and behaviour change / promotion. The Committee notes the level of funding where active travel is well established, such as in London, Denmark and parts of the Netherlands.

Conclusion 30. Staff capability is key to delivering innovative schemes. The Committee is clear that support and training is needed and that support provided to date has been insufficient.

Recommendation 18. The Welsh Government should create a recurring budget line for active travel funding, to reassure local authorities of the long-term commitment to this agenda. Capital and resource funding combined should be set at £17-£20 per head per annum. If additional funding cannot be found, then this will necessarily have to come from other areas of the transport budget.

¹²³ Para 215, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

Recommendation 19. The Welsh Government should work with professional bodies and the WLGA to develop, and deliver on a regional basis, training for professionals and elected members. Following an initial training programme, active travel training should be incorporated into the continuous development training programmes that are already in place.

7. Next steps

149. There was widespread disappointment at the amount of new infrastructure delivered in the last 5 years, and at the rates of people walking and cycling. However, the Committee recognises that change cannot be delivered overnight. The next few years present an opportunity to learn from the process to date and create further impact at pace.

Integrated approach

150. Integration across government and local authority departments is essential for momentum. There is more to be done in this area, and there are several opportunities to deliver improvements.

151. The Committee heard about health boards who are trying to encourage staff to travel actively, but Public Health Wales admit there is more they can do to lead the way.¹²⁴

152. Cardiff Council shared concerns that the Active Travel Action Plan is too narrowly focused on actions for the Transport department. This runs the risk of suggesting to others that active travel can be delivered in isolation.¹²⁵

153. Despite the intentions set out in the Active Travel Act and the Well-being of Future Generations Act evidence presented to the Committee suggests that silo working is still an issue.

21st Century Schools Programme

154. The Committee has heard witnesses concerns that the Welsh Government-funded 21st Century Schools Programme has missed opportunities to encourage active travel.¹²⁶

155. Cardiff County Council told us:

“To date there appears to have been no specific requirement for new school projects funded through the programme to be integrated and connected with local active travel networks. Consequently, construction of new schools has focused on development within the site boundary

¹²⁴ Para 80, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

¹²⁵ Para 204, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

¹²⁶ Para 38, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 7 March 2018**

and school gate measures only, with limited funding available for off-site improvements for active travel.”¹²⁷

156. This represents a missed opportunity that could severely curtail the numbers of children and young people actively travelling to school.

Pavement parking

157. Even where good infrastructure already exists, pavement parking is limiting its accessibility. One witness explained how pavement parking increased his journey time by 20 minutes, draining the battery power of his electric wheelchair and limiting his ability to travel around college.¹²⁸

158. Some respondents to the Committee survey felt that pavement parking was not being tackled in their local area.¹²⁹

Linking public transport

159. For some, walking or cycling the entire journey to work or school will be impossible. However, creating links to public transport makes active travel a reality for many more. The Committee welcomes the new Cardiff cycle hire scheme and, while hearing calls for similar schemes across Wales, recognised that such schemes are only likely to be viable in large urban areas.

160. Network Rail and Arriva told the Committee they have “delivered schemes that have increased cycle storage capacity”¹³⁰ but the Committee heard that the reality is that commuters still need to book ahead to take their bikes on a train, and only two at a time are accommodated.¹³¹ The new rail franchise and Cardiff Metro schemes present opportunities for a new approach to integrating cycling with rail journeys, both through new rolling stock, and better provision at stations.

161. Railfuture called for “an increase in carrying capacity for cycles on any future new trains”.¹³²

162. In rural areas, integration with buses is likely to be more impactful. One focus group told the Committee that where distances were significant, the opportunity

¹²⁷ [Consultation response 12 Cardiff Council](#)

¹²⁸ Para 240, [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018](#)

¹²⁹ [Consultation response 14 Ceredigion County Council](#); [Consultation response 16 Julian Anstey](#)

¹³⁰ [Consultation response 10 Arriva Trains Wales and Network Rail](#)

¹³¹ [Consultation response 18 Railfuture Cymru Wales](#)

¹³² [Consultation response 18 Railfuture Cymru Wales](#)

to hire a bike once public transport had taken them to a bike hire station would help remove barriers to cycling.¹³³

Route maintenance

163. The Committee's survey results were clear on the need to maintain active travel infrastructure. 63% of active travellers considered the condition of cycle routes as poor to very poor. Some comments related to poor maintenance having an impact on safety, especially as the consequences of hitting a pothole when cycling are likely to be more severe than hitting one in a car.¹³⁴

164. Some local authorities told the Committee that maintenance for new routes was scheduled as part of the ongoing programme, but that some off road paths were more costly to maintain as they were considered an addition to the programme.¹³⁵

Access to bicycles

165. For some, bicycle ownership poses a challenge. Others may own a bike but struggle to maintain it to a roadworthy standard. The Committee heard calls for bike hire to be available more widely, and for training in cycle riding and maintenance to be more widely available in schools.

166. The Committee heard that there were limitations to the UK Government's Cycle to Work scheme, which encourages cycling by allowing employees to buy bikes up to a value of £1000 tax-free through their employer. Disability groups told the Committee that adapted bikes are not included as they are often priced above the upper limit of the scheme.¹³⁶

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion 31. The Committee agrees with witnesses that an integrated approach is key to delivering the ambitions of the Act with pace. The benefits of active travel are widespread and all stakeholders should take responsibility to create the change.

Conclusion 32. Once built, ongoing accessibility of the routes is key. Maintenance of routes will be crucial too.

¹³³ **Active Travel: Focus Groups Summary**

¹³⁴ **Active Travel: Summary of Survey**

¹³⁵ Para 141 and 143, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 21 March 2018**

¹³⁶ Para 315, **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, 15 March 2018**

Conclusion 33. Pavement parking is an ongoing issue that has biggest impact on the most vulnerable in our society. It is a complex issue to tackle, but it remains a key symbol of the dominance of the car on our streets. Fewer cars will on the road will ease parking problems, but more should be done to tackle this issue now.

Recommendation 20. The Welsh Government should strictly apply active travel requirements when considering planning proposals for strategic programmes such as 21st Century Schools and the new Metro system, ensuring infrastructure and facilities are considered core outputs.

Recommendation 21. The Welsh Government should work regionally with police and local authorities to agree innovative ways to tackle pavement parking, including raising awareness of its impact to change driver behaviour. Community co-production should be used to identify locations to target and potential solutions to this issue.

Recommendation 22. The Welsh Government should lobby the UK Government to include provision for adapted cycles to be included in the Cycle to Work Scheme.

Recommendation 23. The Welsh Government should create incentives to encourage the recycling of former Cycle to Work Scheme equipment and other good quality cycles back in to the community at an affordable price.

Recommendation 24. The Welsh Government should encourage the provision of cycle maintenance classes in schools and communities across Wales.