

Bill Summary

Bill summary: Active Travel (Wales) Bill

March 2013

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March 2013

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The Active Travel (Wales) Bill

1. Introduction

Introduction date: 18 February 2013

Member in charge: John Griffiths AM, Minister for Culture and Sport

Assembly Committee undertaking Stage 1 scrutiny of the Bill: Enterprise and Business Committee

Stage 1 reporting deadline: 24 May 2013

The *Active Travel (Wales) Bill* places a requirement on local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for walkers and cyclists and to prepare maps identifying current and potential future routes for their use. The Bill will also require new road schemes to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at the design stage.

Specifically, the Bill makes provision:

- for approved maps of existing active travel routes and related facilities;
- for approved integrated network maps of the new and improved active travel, routes and related facilities needed to create an integrated network of active travel routes and related facilities;
- requiring local authorities to have regard to integrated network maps in preparing transport policies and to make continuous improvement in the range and quality of active travel routes and related facilities; and
- requiring the Welsh Ministers and local authorities, in constructing and improving highways, to have regard to the desirability of enhancing the provision made for walking and cycling.

The Bill is intended to enable more people to walk and cycle and generally travel by non-motorised transport.

2. Background

2.1. Timeline

In **October 2007**, during the third Assembly, Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity, submitted a petition (P-03-077) to the Assembly's Petitions Committee, which read as follows:

We, the undersigned, call upon the National Assembly for Wales to seek powers to place a duty on the Assembly Government to develop and maintain a network of traffic free shared use paths for walkers, cyclists and disabled people across Wales, as set out in the proposed Legislative Competence Order attached¹.

The petition was referred to the Enterprise and Learning Committee, as it was at the time, and, in **July 2008**, the committee agreed to adopt it and work towards introducing a Legislative Competence Order as a committee-proposed Order². However, following the 'yes' vote in the referendum on **3 March 2011** giving the National Assembly primary law-making powers, it was withdrawn, as the powers to develop traffic-free paths were considered to be within the Assembly's legislative competence, as outlined in Subject 10 of Schedule 7 to the *Government of Wales Act 2006*³.

On **12 July 2011**, the First Minister, the Rt. Hon. Carwyn Jones AM, made a statement in Plenary on the Welsh Government's legislative programme for the following five years, which included a 'short Bill that will legislate to put a duty on local authorities to provide and maintain cycle paths in key areas'⁴. This reflected a commitment made by Welsh Labour in its manifesto:

Under Welsh Labour there has been a significant investment in cycle routes and other opportunities to improve movement away from cars, for recreation and health and well being. We will build on this and embed future needs by:

- Legislating to place a duty to provide cycle routes in key areas.⁵

On **9 May 2012**, the Welsh Government published its White Paper, [Consultation on the Active Travel \(Wales\) Bill](#)⁶. The consultation was mainly web-based, but also included four events, one led by Sustrans and the remaining three by the Welsh Government. The consultation period closed on **14 August 2012**, and a total of 358 responses were received by the Welsh Government. The consultation

¹ National Assembly for Wales, [P-03-077](#), Sustrans: a network of traffic-free shared-use paths, 17 October 2007 [accessed 8 March 2013]

² National Assembly for Wales, Enterprise and Learning Committee, [RoP \[para 139\]](#), 3 July 2008 [accessed 8 March 2013]

³ [Government of Wales Act 2006](#) (chapter 32) [accessed 8 March 2013]

⁴ National Assembly for Wales, Plenary, [RoP](#), 12 July 2011 [accessed 8 March 2013]

⁵ Welsh Labour, [Welsh Labour Manifesto 2011](#), p.98 [accessed 8 March 2013]

⁶ Welsh Government, [Consultation on the Active Travel \(Wales\) Bill](#), 9 May 2012 [accessed 8 March 2013]

responses themselves have not been published by the Welsh Government, but a [summary of consultation responses](#) and a paper [reflecting on the consultation responses](#) are available on the Welsh Government's website⁷.

The Active Travel (Wales) Bill was introduced on **18 February 2013**⁸ by Carl Sargeant AM, as Minister for Local Government and Communities. Following the Cabinet reshuffle on **14 March 2013**, however, John Griffiths AM, Minister for Culture and Sport, took over as the Member in charge of the Bill.

2.2. Existing support for active travel

The Welsh Government has supported a number of initiatives and organisations relating to cycling. These include **Safe Routes in Communities**⁹, and numerous trunk road improvement and transport grant schemes that provide new walking and cycling infrastructure.

The previous One Wales Government also launched [A Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009-2013](#)¹⁰ in December 2008, which aimed to:

- improve the health and wellbeing of Wales through increased physical activity;
- improve the local environment for walkers and cyclists;
- encourage sustainable travel to combat climate change;
- increase levels of walking and cycling through the promotion of facilities; and
- ensure that walking and cycling are prioritised in policies, guidance and funding.

2.3. Existing legislative provisions

The current legal framework for the development of cycle paths is found in numerous pieces of primary legislation and statutory instruments. These are summarised below.

- **Highways Act 1980**: section 1 establishes the Welsh Ministers as a highway authority for the trunk road network, while county or county borough councils are highway authorities for the local road network. Section 41 places a duty on the highway authority to maintain highways maintainable at public expense. Part 3 of the Act deals with the creation of new highways, while Parts 4 and 5 deal with the maintenance and improvement of highways,

⁷ Welsh Government, [Consultation on Active Travel \(Wales\) Bill](#), 2012 [accessed 8 March 2013]

⁸ Welsh Government, Carl Sargeant, (Minister for Local Government and Communities), [Active Travel \(Wales\) Bill](#), Cabinet Written Statement, 18 February 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]

⁹ Welsh Government, [Safe Routes in Communities](#) [accessed 8 March 2013]

¹⁰ Welsh Government, [A Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009-2013](#), December 2008 [accessed 8 March 2013]

respectively. Section 65 empowers a highway authority to construct a cycle track as part of a highway maintainable at public expense.

- ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981***: section 53 imposes a duty on local authorities to record certain highways¹¹ on definitive maps and statements, and to keep them under review.
- ***Cycle Tracks Act 1984***: section 3 permits a 'local highway authority' (i.e. a local authority), by Order, to convert footpaths into cycle tracks so that the public has a right of way both on foot and by pedal cycle.
- ***Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000***: section 60 requires local highway authorities to prepare and publish rights of way improvements plans.
- ***Transport Act 2000***: section 108 requires each local transport authority to develop policies for the 'promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport...to, from and within their area' and to implement these policies when carrying out their transport functions. The *Transport Act 2000* was amended by the *Transport (Wales) Act 2006* (see below).
- ***Transport (Wales) Act 2006***: section 1 imposes a duty on the Welsh Ministers to develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, sustainable, efficient and economic facilities and services to, from and within Wales. These include services and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Section 2 requires the Welsh Ministers to publish and keep under review a Wales transport strategy.

Section 3 and the Schedule to the Act **amended** the *Transport Act 2000* in a number of respects, in particular by requiring local authorities to develop policies to implement the Wales transport strategy when developing their local transport plans. Plans must be approved by the Welsh Ministers and be reviewed every five years. The Welsh Ministers have powers to modify aspects of the planning process by Order and to issue guidance. The Welsh Government subsequently made the ***Regional Transport Planning (Wales) Order 2006***¹², which permits local authorities to make transport plans on a regional basis.

¹¹ The highways to be recorded are: byways open to all traffic, restricted byways for travel by foot on horseback and for vehicles other than mechanically propelled vehicles, bridleways for travel on foot and horseback (cyclists also have a right to ride pedal cycles subject to local authority bylaws and orders), and footpaths that carry a right of way on foot only.

¹² [Regional Transport Planning \(Wales\) Order 2006](#), S.I. 2006/2993 (W.280) [accessed 8 March 2013]

2.4. *The policy context*

The main policy objective of the Bill is to enable more people to walk and cycle. The Explanatory Memorandum ('the EM') makes clear that the Bill aims to encourage non-recreational walking and cycling so that 'routes used wholly for recreational purposes will not be regarded as active travel routes'¹³.

The EM identifies three key barriers to walking and cycling:

- safety concerns related to the current infrastructure, the speed and proximity of traffic, and concerns for personal safety;
- practical difficulties including the storage of bikes and clothing, the logistics of transporting bags and children etc. on foot and by bike, and time constraints; and
- the lack of a walking and cycling culture, which means that these modes are viewed as abnormal and reserved for eccentrics or enthusiasts¹⁴.

The EM identifies a number of deficiencies in the current system, which are described as being a result of the fact that active travel is seen as a recreational activity, rather than a mode of transport. According to the EM, access for pedestrians and bikes is not given sufficient priority in new developments and new road schemes, while large-scale walking and cycling infrastructure such as the Wales Coastal Path and National Cycle Network are primarily for leisure purposes.

The EM highlights that varying standards for walking and cycling routes can deter modal shift as travellers do not have confidence in the quality of active travel routes. In addition, a lack of sustained investment is identified, with many local authorities using project-based funding, which prevents a strategic view being taken. Schemes are often prioritised based on what is easiest to deliver. Additionally, limited information is currently available about safe active travel routes. Rights of way maps do not include all walking and cycling routes, and such maps are not readily available. The Bill aims to address these obstacles¹⁵.

The EM states that increasing walking and cycling will achieve some of the Welsh Government's 'Programme for Government' objectives, namely:

- Better health for all with reduced health inequalities;
- Reducing poverty, especially persistent poverty amongst some of our poorest people and communities, and reducing the likelihood that people will become poor;
- To become a "one planet nation", putting sustainable development at the heart of government; and

¹³ Welsh Government, [Active Travel \(Wales\) Bill, Explanatory Memorandum](#), 18 February 2013, p.43 [accessed 8 March 2013]

¹⁴ Ibid. p.9

¹⁵ Ibid. pp.10-11

- To strengthen the conditions that will enable business to create jobs and sustainable economic growth¹⁶.

The EM states the Welsh Government currently provides around £14.3 million per annum to fund active travel projects. It emphasises that, once enacted, the Bill

‘will be supported by a broader programme of work to deliver a step change in active travel within Wales. This includes...a renewed Walking and Cycling Action Plan, and new design guidance for walking and cycling routes’¹⁷.

The EM also recognises that, alongside the infrastructure expected to result from the Bill, there is a need for a broader programme of work to encourage people to walk and cycle. Consequently, the EM refers to an active travel action plan to support delivery, with the Bill’s success measured by monitoring rates of walking and cycling:

The Active Travel Action Plan will support the delivery of the Active Travel Bill. It will set out the broader work programme that the Welsh Government will be carrying out to support our objectives of increasing rates of active travel, including behavioural change measures and other non-infrastructure measures as well as supporting infrastructure investment¹⁸.

Additionally, the EM confirms the commitment made in the White Paper to develop design guidance for walking and cycling infrastructure.¹⁹ The Bill does not make reference to this. The White Paper stated that this guidance was outside the scope of the Bill as its development did not require new legislation²⁰.

¹⁶ Welsh Government, [Programme for Government](#), 2011 [accessed 8 March 2013]

¹⁷ Welsh Government, [Active Travel \(Wales\) Bill, Explanatory Memorandum](#), 18 February 2013, p.11

¹⁸ Ibid. p.43

¹⁹ Ibid. p.11

²⁰ Welsh Government, [Consultation on the Active Travel \(Wales\) Bill](#), 9 May 2012, p.17 [accessed 19 March 2013]

3. The Bill

To achieve the policy objectives outlined, the Bill includes the following provisions:

Section 2 defines an ‘active travel route’ and ‘related facilities’. An ‘active travel route’ must be within a ‘designated locality’ (designated by ministerial direction) and will comprise highways or other routes that can lawfully be used by walkers and/or cyclists (i.e. not motorways or other roads to which similar rules apply, such as parts of the A55). Active travel routes must facilitate journeys that are not ‘wholly’ recreational and must be suitable for walking and cycling as a result of their ‘location, nature and condition’.

Sections 3 and 4 require each local authority to prepare both an ‘existing route map’, showing existing active travel routes and facilities, and an ‘integrated network map’ showing new routes and facilities and improvements to existing routes and facilities required to ‘develop or enhance’ an integrated network over a 15-year period²¹.

Section 5 requires local authorities to publish the approved maps in the manner that the authority considers appropriate, to distribute copies, and to make a copy available for inspection. In determining what is appropriate, local authorities must have regard to guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers.

Section 6 requires local authorities to have regard to the ‘integrated network map’ in preparing local transport plans and policies under section 108 of the *Transport Act 2000*. The EM highlights that these are currently prepared jointly by local authorities on a regional basis²².

Section 7 requires each local authority to make a continuous improvement to the range and quality of active travel routes and related facilities in its area. In doing so, the local authority must have regard to guidance given by the Welsh Ministers. The EM states that local authorities will be expected to make ‘year on year’ improvements, either by expanding the ‘amount’ of facilities or by upgrading existing facilities²³.

Section 8 requires local authorities and the Welsh Government to have regard to the desirability of enhancing walking and cycling provision when designing new roads or improving existing roads.

²¹ Welsh Government, [Active Travel \(Wales\) Bill, Explanatory Memorandum](#), 18 February 2013, p.19 [accessed 8 March 2013]

²² *Ibid.*, p.8

²³ *Ibid.*, p.45

Section 9 allows the Welsh Ministers to issue guidance to local authorities on how the Bill should apply to disabled active travellers who use mobility aids, and it requires local authorities to have regard to that guidance.

4. Financial Implications

4.1. Costs

The costings in the EM's Regulatory Impact Assessment ('the RIA') are separated into:

- mapping current infrastructure;
- providing integrated transport maps; and
- continual improvements.

The two mapping activities are costed over a 15-year period, with initial investment being between £500,000 and £700,000, with more modest re-mapping costs anticipated over the following 15 years. Continuous improvements have not been costed, as these will be dependent on the type, number and length of improvements identified and the impact on existing infrastructure. However, a table providing illustrative costs for road safety improvements is provided on page 27 of the RIA²⁴.

Mapping the current infrastructure

Mapping the current infrastructure is based on the following assumptions:

- the costs of surveying work are based on the consultancy rate costs of £350 per day mapping 24.5 km per day of minor urban roads (based on the experience of Swansea);
- re-mapping is estimated to take 10 per cent of the original survey time. The Bill requires maps to be resubmitted to the Welsh Ministers every three years;
- producing each map will take two days of design work; and
- one map will be printed for every 10 members of the population of the relevant towns, for distribution through schools, libraries etc.

According to the 'preferred option' as set out in the EM, these costs amount to initial mapping costs of £262,800 and re-mapping costs of £84,900, with the Net Present Value calculated at £509,300.

Integrated network maps

A further integrated network map is required as a visual representation of the improvements needed to provide a continuous, integrated active travel network. While many local authorities will have much of this information available,

²⁴ Welsh Government, [Active Travel \(Wales\) Bill, Explanatory Memorandum](#), 18 February 2013, p.27 [accessed 8 March 2013]

estimates are made based on the use of external consultancy, which is estimated at around £20,000 per authority, or **£400,000 in total**. There is a requirement for these to be updated every three years, but there is no mention of the process or costs.

The regulatory impact assessment ('the RIA') in the EM makes no mention of Welsh Government costs in monitoring or producing guidance for either of the mapping exercises.

Continuous improvements

The RIA states that:

local authorities will not be required to commit additional funding above what is already being spent on active travel as a consequence of this piece of legislation. However, they will be encouraged to invest in active travel, and the new duties should assist local authorities in prioritising funding more effectively in delivering active travel.²⁵

No additional funding is highlighted as being available. The RIA states that the Welsh Government currently provides £14.3 million per annum of direct funding for active travel related projects and through direct expenditure on the trunk road network. The expectation is that a proportion of this funding will be focused on developing the integrated networks. Any redirection of these funds will impact on projects receiving existing funding.

The need to consider incorporating provision for cyclists and/or pedestrians will result in an increase in the cost of some schemes. There will be additional maintenance costs to keep facilities maintained going forward.

4.2. Indirect costs

The following potential sources of indirect costs are highlighted, but are not costed, in the EM:

- the risk of additional accidents, particularly more serious or fatal accidents involving cyclists;
- the risk of increased exposure to pollution; and
- the risk of employers, schools and shopping centres needing to invest in bike storage facilities.

²⁵ Welsh Government, [Active Travel \(Wales\) Bill, Explanatory Memorandum](#), 18 February 2013, p.26 [accessed 8 March 2013]

4.3. Indirect benefits

The EM states that there are many potential gains by way of improved health to be weighed against these risks, both for individuals and employers. Various studies are highlighted to model these benefits against the administrative costs of the legislation. A study commissioned by Cycling England is used in the EM to estimate that, to justify the additional cost of the mapping exercise, **80 additional cyclists per year across Wales would need to be encouraged over a 15-year period**²⁶. However, the study does make a number of assumptions including that there would be no increase in accidents and associated costs.

4.4. Sensitivity analysis

The RIA includes a sensitivity analysis²⁷ to show how different consultancy costs and also the impact of different assumptions on re-mapping costs would impact on the policy options considered.

²⁶ Ibid. p.38

²⁷ Welsh Government, [Active Travel \(Wales\) Bill, Explanatory Memorandum](#), 18 February 2013, p.39 [accessed 8 March 2013]

5. Reactions

In his legislative statement on the Bill to Assembly Members in Plenary on 19 February 2013, the Minister for Local Government and Communities, Carl Sargeant AM, made the following comments about the Bill's aims and objectives:

The Active Travel (Wales) Bill is the lynchpin of the Welsh Government's active travel programme, which aims to change culture through hard and soft measures....We are doing this because we want to make walking and cycling the most natural and normal way of getting about. We want to do this so that more people can experience the health benefits, we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and we can help address poverty and disadvantage. At the same time, we can unlock issues to grow our economy, and take steps to unlock a sustainable economic growth package²⁸.

Byron Davies AM broadly welcomed the Bill on behalf of the Welsh Conservatives, stating that, 'Generally speaking, we on this side of the Chamber support the Bill'²⁹.

Speaking on behalf of Plaid Cymru, Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM stated that

I...welcome this Bill very warmly. As the Minister has said, this Bill breaks new ground, and it could certainly be revolutionary in terms of its impacts...However, the Minister recognises in his statement that there needs to be a culture shift alongside the introduction of this Bill³⁰.
[*Translation.*]

He also raised the issue of horse riding on active travel routes, which has been specifically excluded from the Bill:

[You] have said that you will not be introducing anything specific in this Bill for people who ride horses....You will know that there are a number of accidents on our roads as a result of the fact that there are no appropriate bridle ways for people who ride horses. I accept what you say on the evidence that horse riding does no[t] fall comfortably within the remit and requirements of this Bill, but I very much hope that we will receive an early statement from you in terms of what you are doing to ensure that there are safe routes for people who ride horses³¹. [*Translation.*]

The Minister replied:

I am trying to encourage more people to use bikes and to walk to the shops and to work. I accept that there are people, in some of our rural communities, who use horses on a daily basis. However, in terms of the mass of the population across Wales, I do not often see people going to the dentist on a horse. I wish to encourage people to go to their dentist on their bike or to walk³².

²⁸ National Assembly for Wales, Plenary, [RoP](#), 19 February 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

Speaking on behalf of the Welsh Liberal Democrats, Eluned Parrott stated that:

I...welcome the publication of the Active Travel (Wales) Bill. The Minister will know that my party is extremely supportive of the policy objectives that he is trying to achieve here³³.

We have a real issue with our thinking around pleasant walkways and cycle paths. It is not pleasant to walk or cycle along the side of a major road, and the most popular cycle ways are the ones that do not require people to do that. We do not have compulsory purchase power for things like cycle ways and footpaths. I wonder what consideration you have given to that and whether it is something that you looked at in the scope of this Bill³⁴.

I also wonder about the interface between active travel and other forms of public transport. Julie Morgan mentioned secure storage at railway stations, which is a very important and pertinent issue for people. The ability to take your bike onto a train or bus and use it again at the other end is also a very relevant issue for people who wish to use more active forms of transport on a regular basis³⁵.

In his response, the Minister stated:

This is just part of a suite of tools within the transport department that will make a real difference to transport in Wales. We have the Active Travel (Wales) Bill, but, as the Member will be aware, we have also changed the way in which we fund bus operations so that we have more flexibility as to how services will run. We have the train franchise coming up in 2018 and the new national transport plan in 2015. These will all fit nicely into place so that we can get a truly integrated travel plan for the whole of Wales. This Bill plays a fundamental part in the walking and cycling provision on the integrated network that we seek to deliver for Wales³⁶.

Several backbench Welsh Labour AMs³⁷ spoke in support of the Bill, including Ken Skates AM, who said:

Minister, I thank you for your statement today and I warmly welcome the introduction of the Active Travel (Wales) Bill. It is a very exciting Bill, which has the potential to deliver considerable societal benefits for people of all ages³⁸.

Labour AM Ann Jones raised the issue of disabled active travellers and the potential problems of shared surfaces:

I can see people getting excited about having cycle paths and ways in which we can have people back on cycles, but shared surfaces are a problem for many people, particularly those with a disability of a hidden nature, such as those who are deaf. If you are deaf, you cannot hear a cyclist coming up behind you, whether that cyclist rings the bell, shouts, hollers or does whatever—you just have no way of hearing that person. That is always a big problem

³³ National Assembly for Wales, Plenary, [RoP](#), 19 February 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ The other Members were Julie Morgan AM, Ann Jones AM, and Joyce Watson AM.

³⁸ National Assembly for Wales, Plenary, [RoP](#), 19 February 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]

with shared surfaces. Planners seem to think that shared surfaces are the answer, and I would argue strongly against that³⁹.

The Minister's response was as follows:

During the process of the Bill, we have had advice, for which we are very grateful, from groups such as Disability Wales and Guide Dogs for the Blind on the provision of this, and I would welcome their further comments and those of Members to ensure that safety is a paramount aspect, for all to take part in what I believe is a new opportunity for Wales to take active travel seriously; and when I say 'all', I mean 'all'⁴⁰.

Several Members⁴¹ raised the issue of funding. Byron Davies AM said:

Minister, you have made it very plain that there will be no new money to fund active travel. While the Bill will help us to spend existing money more strategically, Wales currently spends only £3.30 per head on walking and cycling. The Netherlands has spent £19 per head over a generation. That is equivalent to roughly £60 million a year in Wales—the equivalent of building some three miles of road⁴².

The Minister's response was as follows:

We do not have any new money for this programme, but we are making sure that the money that we invest is working effectively. The Member will be aware of the tight financial settlement in which we find ourselves, but nevertheless we must continue positively to ensure that we can deliver something that is right for Wales and for people who are keen to make the most of the new network that will be⁴³.

He went on to say:

The most convincing justification for spending public money on enabling people to walk and cycle comes from a World Health Organization report in 2002, which estimates that physical inactivity is responsible for around 10% of strokes, 20% of coronary heart attacks and 10% of all non-smoker cancer deaths in developed countries. It is estimated that the NHS in Wales spends around £73 million a year on treating diseases relating to obesity. If we get this right, there will be huge long-term health benefits for our nation⁴⁴.

A number of external stakeholders have also responded to the Bill's publication. For example, Sustrans said:

As many people die from physical inactivity each year as die from smoking. This Bill has the potential to make a real difference in improving the health of our nation⁴⁵.

³⁹ National Assembly for Wales, Plenary, [RoP](#), 19 February 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ The other Members were Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM and Eluned Parrott AM.

⁴² National Assembly for Wales, Plenary, [RoP](#), 19 February 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Sustrans, [Active Travel Bill has potential to be as effective as smoking ban](#), 18 February 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]

This landmark Bill is a very practical initiative to overcome some of the barriers people face and, properly implemented, has the potential to make a real difference to communities across Wales⁴⁶.

However, in its written evidence to the Enterprise and Business Committee, Sustrans has also stated that:

The main barriers to delivering the key provisions outlined in the Bill will be availability of funding, the skill-set and capacity in local authority transport departments, including the willingness to move away from traditional highways engineering, and the use of WelTag to identify the costs and benefits of different transport projects⁴⁷.

[The] Bill creates a duty to provide maps rather than a duty to promote active travel. Maps are a means to an end, we are concerned that the Bill as currently drafted is in danger of portraying them as an end in itself⁴⁸.

Another external stakeholder, Sewta, the south-east Wales transport alliance, stated in its written evidence to the committee that:

The availability of appropriate resources to deliver the requirements of the Bill is the single most significant potential barrier, both for the development of the plans and the delivery of the identified routes and related facilities⁴⁹.

In particular this relates to the availability and uncertainty of funding over the short-term due to the current economic climate, but also the availability of staff resources within local authorities⁵⁰.

In addition, in its written evidence, the Welsh Local Government Association has raised the issue of the amount of detail that is to be left to guidance, rather than being provided on the face of the Bill:

Much of the detail which will concern local authorities will be within the delivery and the design guidance....It is difficult to comment on the Bill when a significant level of detail is currently unavailable. It will be important that local government continues to have the opportunity to input to the development of delivery and design guidance⁵¹.

⁴⁶ South Wales Argus, [*Minister marks new cycling bill*](#), 19 February 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]

⁴⁷ National Assembly for Wales, Enterprise and Business Committee, [*Written evidence of Sustrans \[para 5.1\]*](#), 18 April 2013 [accessed 15 March 2013]

⁴⁸ Ibid. para 8.4

⁴⁹ National Assembly for Wales, Enterprise and Business Committee, [*Written evidence of Sewta \[para 5.1\]*](#), 20 March 2013 [accessed 15 March 2013]

⁵⁰ Ibid. para 5.2

⁵¹ National Assembly for Wales, Enterprise and Business Committee, [*Written evidence of the WLGA \[para 21\]*](#), 20 March 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]

In an open letter to the *Western Mail*, a group of health professionals⁵² stated the following:

SIR – We are experiencing an epidemic of obesity that has never previously been seen....The launch of the Active Travel (Wales) Bill by the Welsh Government is an exciting moment for our nation and has the potential to place Wales amongst the leading countries of the world with regard to providing safe walking and cycling routes for everyday journeys....A recently published study in *The Lancet* has estimated that increased walking and cycling has the potential to reduce NHS costs in England and Wales by £17bn within 20 years. If properly implemented this Bill will not just be about transport – it will lead to a more active Wales, a healthier Wales and a wealthier Wales.

As leading health professionals, we support the ambitious aims of the Active Travel (Wales) Bill, but to achieve its full potential it must be backed by appropriate funding. If we were matching European levels of spending on walking and cycling, the Welsh Government would be spending £60m a year. It currently spends just £15m. This may appear to be a considerable amount, but considering NHS expenditure on the treatment of preventable disease, the investment would pay for itself many times over⁵³.

On its introduction, the Bill was remitted by the Assembly's Business Committee to the Enterprise and Business Committee for consideration of the Bill's general principles at Stage 1 of the legislative process. The committee has issued a call for evidence on the Bill, which closes on 5 April 2013. The committee is due to report on the Bill's general principles by **24 May 2013**, ahead of the Stage 1 debate and vote in Plenary on **4 June 2013**.

⁵² The group comprised Dr Paul Myres, chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners, Wales; Nadim Haboubi MD FRCP, chair of the Wales national obesity forum; Eva Elliott, co-director of the Wales health impact assessment support unit; Dai Williams, national director Wales of Diabetes UK; and Dr Simon Williams, principal lecturer on sport, health and exercise science, at the University of Glamorgan.

⁵³ *Western Mail*, [*Spending on physical activity must increase*](#), 20 February 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]