# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Funding for local sustainable transport measures in response to Covid 19** |
| **DATE**  | **19 June 2020** |
| **BY** | **Lee Waters MS, Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport** |

Today I am allocating funding of £15.4m to local authorities to introduce measures to improve the safety and conditions for sustainable and active travel modes in their area in response to the Covid-19 crisis and to achieve sustained changes in travel behaviour in the future.

We received a total of 209 proposals for measures from all local authorities in response to the invitation for expressions of interest. This clearly demonstrates the need, and willingness of local authorities, to introduce measures to protect public health and safety and to enable people to choose the healthiest and most sustainable transport modes for shorter journeys now and in the future. During the lockdown period there were large increases in walking and cycling among individuals and families, both for exercise and to make necessary journeys. We now need to act to maintain these healthy and climate friendly travel behaviours and prevent a return to heavily car-dependent travel choices.

Among the diverse measures planned at the local level, I have asked local authorities to clearly prioritise delivery of those schemes which can be completed within the next three to four months and have the greatest impact in their local area.

£2m of the funding is being specifically used to implement schemes around schools. With children starting to return to schools in the next few weeks, it is important to enable children, whether on their own or accompanied, to make safe walking and cycling journeys to school and maintain social distance in the lead up to the school gates to form lifelong healthy travel habits.

The funding allocated today will improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists in both urban and rural areas.

For example in Carmarthenshire, we are funding a package of measures to promote active travel whilst facilitating social distancing specifically in rural towns. This includes upgrading of footways, wayfinding and signposting users to the best routes allowing them to maintain social distancing. It also includes reallocating road space for increased footway width and to enhance safety/capacity for cyclists.

In Denbighshire, we are funding measures in Rhyl town centre which involve suspending sections of on-street parking in order to free up this space for safe walking and cycling. This will also provide traffic free active travel routes to key destinations within the town.

Given the need to implement changes quickly to support the steps we must take during the Covid recovery phase, local authorities will be allowed further time to fully develop some of their proposals, to undertake equality impact assessments of the proposed measures and to engage constructively with affected groups. This will ensure we maximise the opportunities from our planned investments and cater for the needs of vulnerable groups in our communities.

Local authorities will also be expected to monitor the impact of the measures they are putting in place, and, where necessary, make adjustments. They can use up to 5% of their allocation to do so as well as promote and communicate the changes being made and encourage journeys on foot and by cycle.

In collaboration with the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government, it is our intention to follow up this first tranche and make further funding available where it is needed. We will work proactively with local authorities to develop further, ambitious interventions as part of the Transforming Towns programme.

A full list of successful schemes by local authority will be published on the Welsh Government website at this link <https://gov.wales/local-council-sustainable-transport-measures-allocation-funds>