

## Enterprise and Business Committee

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Meeting Venue:  
**Committee Room 3 – Senedd**

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Meeting date:  
**18 April 2013**

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Meeting time:  
**09:15**

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



For further information please contact:

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### Agenda

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#### Pre-meeting (9.15 – 9.30)

#### 1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions

#### 2. Active Travel (Wales) Bill: Stage 1 – Evidence Session 4 (9.30 – 10.15) (Pages 1 – 7)

Professor Colin G Pooley – Lancaster Environment Centre, Lancaster University

#### 3. Active Travel (Wales) Bill: Stage 1 – Evidence Session 5 (10.15 – 11.10) (Pages 8 – 18)

Lee Waters, National Director, Sustrans Cymru  
Jane Lorimer, Deputy Director, Sustrans Cymru  
Matt Hemsley, Policy Advisor, Sustrans Cymru

#### Break (11.10 – 11.20)

#### 4. Active Travel (Wales) Bill: Stage 1 – Evidence Session 6 (11.20 – 11.50) (Pages 19 – 41)

Rhyan Berrigan, Policy Officer, Access and Transport, Disability Wales  
Rhian Davies, Chief Executive, Disability Wales  
Andrea Gordon, Engagement Manager, Guide Dogs Cymru

Peter Jones, Wales Policy Officer, Guide Dogs Cymru

**5. Active Travel (Wales) Bill: Stage 1 – Evidence Session 7 (11.50 – 12.20)** (Pages 42 – 51)

Dr Nicki Pease, BMA Cymru Wales

Dr Mark Temple, BMA Cymru Wales

Hugo Crombie, Public Health Analyst, Centre for Public Health, NICE

**6. Motion under Standing Order 17.22 to Elect a Temporary Chair**

**De-brief (12.20 – 12.30)**

Enterprise and Business Committee  
Active Travel (Wales) Bill  
AT 9 - Professor Colin G Pooley - Lancaster University

## **Making walking and cycling normal: key findings from the understanding walking and cycling research project**

**Professor Colin G Pooley, Lancaster Environment Centre, Lancaster University**  
[c.pooley@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:c.pooley@lancaster.ac.uk)

### **Evidence prepared for the Welsh Government's Active Travel Bill**

#### **Introduction**

The first part of this submission summarises evidence from a large research project that examined the ways that people undertake everyday travel in urban areas and, especially, the barriers to active travel such as walking and cycling. The second half responds to specific questions posed in the consultation document associated with the Active Travel Bill. Although the research was carried out in four urban areas in England the findings are equally relevant to Welsh towns and cities.

#### **PART 1: THE UNDERSTANDING WALKING AND CYCLING RESEARCH PROJECT**

##### **Background to the research**

It is widely recognized that there is a need to increase levels of active and sustainable travel in British urban areas. The Understanding Walking and Cycling (UWAC) project, a collaboration between the universities of Lancaster, Leeds and Oxford Brookes funded by the Economic and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) 2008-11, has examined the factors influencing everyday travel decisions and proposes a series of policy measures to increase levels of walking and cycling for short trips in urban areas. This short paper summarises the research methods used, and outlines key results and policy proposals. The research focus is on understanding how individuals and households make everyday travel decisions, particularly the factors that prevent the use of more active and sustainable forms of transport (such as walking or cycling) even when individuals may be otherwise well-disposed towards sustainable travel.

A wide range of both quantitative and qualitative data was collected in four English towns (Leeds, Leicester, Worcester, and Lancaster). These were chosen to reflect a range of social characteristics, urban environments and existing interventions to promote active travel. Two separate questionnaire schedules were prepared, one focusing on walking and one on cycling. Questions were designed to collect data on the experience of and attitudes towards either walking or cycling and schedules were sent to a sample of households in all four study areas stratified using location and the index of multiple deprivation to produce a cross-section of the population. There was no attempt to specifically target walkers or cyclists. 15000 postal questionnaires were distributed evenly across the four areas with a response rate of almost 10% giving 1,417 usable returns (798 walking and 619 cycling). The sample of respondents was broadly representative of the total population. Spatial analysis of the four case study towns consisted of detailed land-use mapping and identification of the network of all routes that could be used for walking and cycling (which can differ significantly from the road network). Multiple Centrality Analysis (MCA) was then used to assess connectivity within the city. Network buffers of 800 metres for walking and 2500 metres for cycling (roughly the average acceptable distance travelled over 10 minutes to access everyday activities) were developed and used to calculate local and global measures of connectivity as well as prevalence of everyday services within walking and cycling distance of the home. These indices could then be correlated with self-reported data on levels of walking and cycling provided

by the questionnaire survey to assess the extent to which land use and connectivity influence levels of walking and cycling.

80 semi-structured interviews were undertaken with people selected (mainly) from their questionnaire responses to be broadly representative of the population structure and travelling characteristics of the population of each of the four towns. 40 interviews were undertaken in households and probed attitudes to walking and cycling and the reasons why people chose particular modes of travel, and 40 interviews were conducted as either walking or cycling 'go-alongs'. Respondents were accompanied on a 'usual' journey and the interview focused on the motivations for travelling on foot or by bike, on route selection and on the experience of the journey. Half of the mobile interviews were on foot and half were undertaken whilst cycling, and a small number of the cycle journeys were also recorded visually with a head cam. Household ethnographies were undertaken with 20 households (5 in each town). In each urban area one location was selected – designed to reflect particular characteristics – and all respondents were recruited from that location. This allowed the researchers to immerse themselves in the local community and begin to understand the ways in which people moved around. The purpose of the ethnography was to observe and understand the nature of everyday journeys within a community and this was done using a combination of research tools including interviews, go-alongs, mobility inventories, observations, mapping exercises and community participation. The precise nature of the ethnographic research varied across the four districts in recognition of the need to engage different communities in particular ways. Analysis of a large quantity of text was undertaken through careful reading and coding, together with a technique known as Q Methodology which was used to help identify key themes.

### **Key research findings**

Key findings of the research are that whilst attitudes to walking and cycling as expressed in the questionnaire and interviews are mostly positive or neutral, many people who would like to engage in more active travel fail to do so due to a combination of factors. These can be summarised as:

- Concerns about the physical environment, especially with regard to safety when cycling or walking. From our analysis of the influence of the physical environment on walking and cycling it is clear that traffic is a major deterrent for all but the most committed cyclists. Potential cyclists, recreational (off-road) cyclists and occasional cyclists are discouraged from using their bicycles for everyday urban journeys because of their fear of cars and heavy goods vehicles. For pedestrians, the major factor relates to footfall. Empty streets are perceived to be more dangerous and, again, although committed walkers are not deterred many potential or recreational walkers restrict their journeys on foot because of their perception of risk. For both walking and cycling the availability of local facilities and the structure of the built environment, although not insignificant, were not major factors determining levels of walking and cycling.
- The difficulty of fitting walking and cycling into complex household routines (especially with young children). Our research shows that, under the conditions which currently prevail across urban Britain, household and family commitments are significant factors in restricting the extent to which people use walking and cycling for everyday travel, even when their own values and attitudes incline them towards more sustainable forms of transport. For most people there is no single factor that restricts the use of more sustainable travel modes, rather it is a combination of circumstances including the logistics of organising and moving with (sometimes tired) children, pressures of time and other commitments, the ready availability of the paraphernalia needed for walking and cycling and parental concerns about safety. Unless such factors are explicitly recognised and tackled strategies to increase levels of walking and cycling for everyday trips are likely to have limited success.

- The perception that walking and cycling are in some ways abnormal things to do. Most people prefer not to stand out as different, but tend to adopt norms of behaviour that fit in and reflect the majority experience. In Britain, travelling by car is the default position for most people. Our research makes clear that the extent to which a household finds it difficult to incorporate walking and/or cycling journeys into its everyday routines reflects the degree to which car use has become normal, and habitual. We suggest that as walking and cycling are made more normal, more households will develop more strategies and systems to more easily accommodate walking and cycling into their ordinary, everyday movements. Ethnographic observation of households in which walking and cycling, and not driving, were usual modes of transport demonstrates this to be the case.

The key message that comes from this research is that at present in Britain using the car for short trips in urban areas is convenient, habitual and normal. It is what people expect to do, what most people expect others to do, and what many other people who have yet to benefit from car ownership aspire to do. Alternatives to the car – especially cycling and walking – are perceived to take too much effort, need planning and equipment that causes hassle, and may be risky and uncomfortable. They also run the risk of being perceived by others as eccentric or odd. These are all powerful reasons for not walking and cycling and for using the car for most short trips in urban areas.

### **Policy recommendations**

Solutions to this conundrum are obvious but difficult to implement because they require integrated policy and extend well beyond the usual remit of transport policy and planning. It is argued that to achieve any significant increase in levels of walking and cycling it is necessary to reverse the balance of power between different transport modes. In short, it is necessary to make travel by car for short trips in urban areas more difficult and, most crucial, make it feel abnormal and exceptional. In contrast, policies have to be put in place that make walking and cycling easy, safe, comfortable, and accepted as the normal and obvious way of moving around urban areas for most people. We identify several specific areas where policy change is needed.

First, it is essential that the urban environment is made safe for cyclists and pedestrians. This requires the provision of fully segregated cycle routes on all arterial and other busy roads in urban areas. It is clear from the research that most non-cyclists and recreational cyclists will only consider cycling regularly if they are segregated from traffic and that pedestrians are hostile to pavement cyclists.

Second, pedestrian routes must be made as welcoming as possible to increase footfall. This could include widening pavements, removing street furniture that obstructs pavements and ensuring that pavements are well lit, well maintained and kept free of leaves and ice.

Third, there need to be effective restrictions on traffic speeds, parking and access on all residential roads and other routes without segregated cycle and pedestrian paths so that both cyclists and pedestrians feel that they have a safe and convenient environment in which to travel. This could include 20mph speed limits and resident-only access by car in some areas.

Fourth, the system of legal liability on roads used by the public should be changed to protect the most vulnerable road users (cyclists and pedestrians). One approach would be to adopt 'strict liability' so that pedestrians or cyclists injured in an accident involving a motor vehicle do not have to prove fault in seeking compensation. Forms of 'strict liability' are adopted in much of continental Europe and while not changing criminal responsibility they place a civil responsibility on drivers to obtain insurance that will pay

vulnerable victims independently of fault. This may act as an incentive for car drivers to behave in a way that protects the most vulnerable road users.

Fifth, there need to be changes in the spatial structure and organisation of the built environment, enforced through planning legislation, to make accessing common services and facilities on foot or by bike easy. This would require the development of more neighbourhood shopping centres within walking or cycling distance of most people, restrictions on out-of-town developments, provision of secure bicycle parking facilities and the provision of cycle storage in most homes.

Sixth, there need to be wider societal and economic changes to give people the flexibility to travel more sustainably. Policies (that already exist in many countries) could include the greater use of flexi hours so that walking and cycling could be more easily fitted into a household routine, more family-friendly welfare policies so that in families with small children one parent could afford to reduce working hours and thus be less constrained by time commitments, and more equitable educational provision so that most children attended a school close to home.

Seventh, it is necessary to change the image of cycling and walking. To a great extent this should be consequential on the above changes: as more people walk and cycle then more people will accept it as normal. However, campaigns to promote walking and cycling as normal and something accessible to all and not dominated by super-fit or unusually committed specialists should also be adopted.

Clearly it is not possible to implement immediately all the solutions outlined above, but some can be put in place relatively easily and at minimal cost (for instance changes to legal liability and improved traffic management). While there are costs attached to the provision of segregated cycle routes these are small compared to the cost of new road schemes. Most crucially, we believe that there needs to be a coordinated and integrated approach to the delivery of active and sustainable travel in Britain with a real commitment from a wide range of governmental, charity and private-sector organisations. While improvements to infrastructure alone would be welcome, they are unlikely on their own to make a large difference to levels of active travel. A much more significant package of measures is necessary to create an urban environment where a significant proportion of the population feel confident cycling and believe that walking or cycling are the obvious and sensible choices for everyday travel. Only in this way will Britain achieve the levels of active travel currently seen in some other north-west European countries.

**For further information see:**

Pooley, C., Tight, M., Jones, T., Horton, D., Scheldeman, G., Jopson, A., Mullen, C., Chisholm, A., Strano, E. and Constantine, S. (2011) *Understanding walking and cycling: summary of key findings and recommendations* (Lancaster: Lancaster University). Available at: [http://www.lec.lancs.ac.uk/research/society\\_and\\_environment/walking\\_and\\_cycling.php](http://www.lec.lancs.ac.uk/research/society_and_environment/walking_and_cycling.php)

**Other publications arising from the research include:**

Pooley, C., Horton, D. Scheldeman, G., Harrison, R. (2010) 'Shaping the city for walking and cycling: a case study of Lancaster (UK)' *Built Environment* 36 (4) 448-61

Pooley, C., Horton, D. Scheldeman, G. Tight, M, Harwatt, H. Jopson, A. Jones, T., Chisholm, A. (2011) 'Household decision-making for everyday travel: a case study of walking and cycling in Lancaster (UK)' *Journal of Transport Geography* 19, 1601-7

Jones, T., Pooley, C., Scheldeman, G., Horton, D., Tight, M., Mullen, C., Jopson, A, and Whiteing, A. (2012) 'Moving around the city: discourses on walking and cycling in English urban areas'. *Environment and Planning A* 44, 1407-24

Pooley, C., Horton, D., Scheldeman, G., Mullen, C., Jones, T., Tight, M., Jopson, A. and Chisholm, A. (2013) 'Policies for promoting walking and cycling in England: a view from the street' *Transport Policy* 27, 66-72

Pooley, C. with Jones, T., Tight, M. Horton, D., Scheldeman, G., Mullen, C., Jopson, A. and Strano, E. (2013 in press) *Promoting walking and cycling: new perspectives on sustainable travel* (Bristol: The Policy Press).

**The full research team was:**

*Principal Investigator:* Colin Pooley (Lancaster University)

*Co-investigators:* Miles Tight (Birmingham University); Tim Jones (Oxford Brookes University)

*Core researchers:* Dave Horton and Griet Scheldeman (Lancaster); Alison Chisholm and Emanuele Strano (Oxford Brookes); Ann Jopson, Caroline Mullen, Helen Harwatt (Leeds).

*Project administrator:* Sheila Constantine

*Additional research was provided by:* Tony Whiteing, Helen Muir, Matthew Page and Emma Bill.

**PART 2: RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

1. *Is there a need for a Bill aimed at enabling more people to walk and cycle and generally travel by non-motorised transport? Please explain your answer.*

Yes, there is definitely a need for a Bill to promote more active and sustainable travel in Wales. As outlined in the above research summary British urban areas are currently configured to prioritise motorised transport and to marginalise walking and cycling. This means that many people have concerns about safety, convenience and normality when walking and cycling and are thus deterred from undertaking more active travel even if they would wish to. This situation will not change unless motorised traffic is restricted in urban areas and infrastructure for walking and cycling is improved. A Bill will not solve all the problems on its own but it is an important first step, providing a clear marker that the Welsh Government is taking this issue seriously. In this it is ahead of the rest of the UK and can set an important precedent to encourage and enable more active travel.

2. *What are your views on the key provisions in the Bill, namely –*

- *the requirement on local authorities to prepare and publish maps identifying current and potential future routes for the use of pedestrians and cyclists (known as “existing routes maps” and “integrated network maps”) (sections 3 to 5);*

Information about pedestrian and cycle routes is an important first step, and I strongly support the requirement that local authorities prepare and publish maps of walking and cycling routes. The provision of a fully integrated infrastructure, linked to public transport for longer journeys, is also essential. However, it is important that at the same time such routes are increased and improved (see below) so that over time maps may become less important because it can be assumed that almost all short journeys can be safely and conveniently undertaken on foot or by bike.

- *the requirement on local authorities to have regard to integrated network maps in the local transport planning process (section 6);*

One of the reasons why cycling and, especially, walking have been historically neglected is because they have been perceived as largely leisure activities and thus have not been seriously considered in transport

planning. There have been some recent changes in this regard with respect to cycling but walking remains largely ignored. It is thus essential that both walking and cycling should be viewed as important modes of everyday travel and should be fully integrated into the transport planning process. The clause requiring local authorities to actively plan for integrated active travel is thus essential.

- *the requirement on local authorities to continuously improve routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists (section 7);*

Current provision for pedestrians and cyclists is inadequate, as demonstrated by the research summarised above. It is not sufficient only to map existing routes but also it is imperative that all local authorities should be required to improve routes. This means both providing new routes and improving the maintenance and size of existing routes. How this is done will vary from location to location, and the needs of rural areas are clearly very different from those of urban areas, but it is essential that the improvement of facilities for walking and cycling is given legal backing.

- *the requirement on highway authorities to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists when creating and improving new roads (section 8)*

It follows from the above argument that all new road schemes must include within them proper provision for both pedestrians and cyclists. It is obviously easier to provide such facilities in new road schemes than it is to back-fit them (especially in urban areas), and any road improvements must be seen to set a high standard for the provision of walking and cycling routes. Legal backing for this is essential.

3. *Have the provisions of the Bill taken account of any response you made to the Welsh Government's consultation on its White Paper? Please explain your answer.*

So far as it is possible in this legislation the key evidence that I provided for the Welsh Government's consultation has been taken into account. However, while the Active Travel Bill provides a legislative framework for the promotion and development of walking and cycling it does not do anything to directly constrain the use of motor vehicles, especially for short trips in urban areas. I argue that unless there are also constraints on car use then schemes to increase walking and cycling may have limited success.

4. *To what extent are the key provisions the most appropriate way of delivering the aim of the Bill?*

The provisions to map, improve and provide new walking and cycling routes are appropriate ways to achieve the stated aims of the Bill. However, I would add two caveats. First, I believe that it is important that there is also a mechanism to ensure that such improvements are of a sufficiently high standard, including wherever possible fully segregated pedestrian and cycle routes, rather than the low-quality additions that already exist in many British towns. Second, there is no provision in the Bill to place any restrictions on car use. Without such measures the extent to which active travel is increased may be limited. These may need to be the subject of additional legislation or action.

5. *What are the potential barriers to the implementation of the key provisions and does the Bill take account of them?*

I identify three key barriers to implementation of the Bill. First, financial constraints that may limit the level of investment in new infrastructure (see below); second objections from those who see any attempt to promote active travel as an attack on motorists; and, third, the potential for inertia within a culture and society which sees motorised traffic as the norm. The Bill clearly outlines financial implications but also

makes it clear that improvements must take place within existing financial frameworks. Additional, or redirected, targeted funds would make it more likely that the Bill achieve its aims. The Bill clearly sets out the benefits of active travel, but does not (and probably cannot) do more to counter issues of car dominance and inertia. It is important that the Bill has both national and local champions to ensure that its provisions are fully carried out.

6. *What are your views on the financial implications of the Bill (this could be for your organisation, or more generally)? In answering this question you may wish to consider Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum (the Impact Assessment), which estimates the costs and benefits of implementation of the Bill.*

The Explanatory Memorandum provides a fair assessment of the financial implications of the Bill. The actual cost obviously depends on the rate and nature of investment in improved and new infrastructure but I would emphasise two key points. First, the costs of providing new and improved cycle and pedestrian infrastructure will be substantially less than investments in new road schemes and, second, that as the Memorandum demonstrates the potential costs of not acting are high. It is worth emphasising that the provisions of the Bill, and actions to increase walking and cycling, should not be seen as anti-car. Motorised transport will continue to be important in Wales – especially in rural areas – but the Bill does provide a platform from which a culture of more responsible car use is developed. As such the provisions of the Bill should not in any way impact negatively on the Welsh economy, and could provide a boost to the economy as reduced car use makes Welsh communities increasingly attractive places to live, work and invest.

7. *To what extent has the correct balance been achieved between the level of detail provided on the face of the Bill and that which will be contained in guidance given by the Welsh Ministers?*

This seems appropriate and in keeping with the aims of the Bill.

8. *Are there any other comments you wish to make on the Bill that have not been covered in your response?*

I have no other comments.

Colin G Pooley  
March 18<sup>th</sup> 2013

Kathryn Thomas  
Deputy Committee Clerk  
Legislation Office  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

11 April 2013

Dear Kathryn,

**Written evidence to Enterprise & Business Committee on Active Travel (Wales) Bill**

As requested, please find below a written submission to the Enterprise and Business Committee from Sustrans, ahead of our oral evidence session on Wednesday 20 March.

Sustrans believes that the Active Travel (Wales) Bill has the potential to be the most effective public health intervention in Wales since the introduction of the smoking ban. The evidence shows that the easiest way for most people to get more exercise is to build it into their daily routine, but even though most everyday journeys are short, many of us still choose to take the car – in fact 20% of our car journeys are less than 1 mile.

The key provisions in the Bill go some way towards delivering the culture change necessary and we have set out our response in answer to the questions suggested in the consultation letter.

Regards,

Lee

Lee Waters  
**National Director, Sustrans Cymru**

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**1. Is there a need for a Bill aimed at enabling more people to walk and cycle and generally travel by non-motorised transport? Please explain your answer.**

1.1 Six years ago Sustrans submitted a widely supported petition to the National Assembly calling for a legal duty on highways authorities to develop and maintain a network of routes for walking and cycling.

1.2 We did so because we identified a series of systemic blockages from developing a culture of active travel in Wales. We believe a duty to develop provision for walking and cycling is an important symbolic statement to Highways Authorities in Wales that their remit is not simply to provide roads for cars, but to provide for people to travel on foot or by bike too.

1.3 One of the initial barriers to making this a reality we identified was the availability of funding to maintain paths. When a Highways Authority creates a road there is funding available to maintain their asset. When a traffic free path is created there is no on-going maintenance funding available and authorities are in effect creating a maintenance liability for which they have no easy way of maintaining. As a result many of the small authorities refused to build anything on the basis that they couldn't afford to look after it. By redefining the traditional remit of Highway Authorities we wanted to remedy that problem.

1.4 A further barrier to increasing usage is the quality of the infrastructure that is provided, and the extent of the existing network. It is not uncommon for 'cycle routes' to start and stop randomly, and not connect people with the places they want to go. This is arguably a result of active travel not being taken seriously by Highway Authorities.

1.5 The current approach often results in road design standards applied to the development of walking and cycling routes. Furthermore local authority engineers will often apply different standards to schemes with different stated aims, for example, a 'road safety' scheme will be treated differently to a 'cycling scheme'. This is one of the reasons why users encounter sometimes bizarre design details which frequently bring investment into 'cycle schemes' into disrepute.

1.6 While this may seem like an opaque issue it goes to the heart of what we are trying to achieve: getting people who currently do not travel in physically active ways to do so. The lack of a 'user focus' to the design of routes means that infrastructure is often off putting to new or novice cyclists. Unless the detail of a route is sympathetic to a new user it will be unlikely to attract new people to use it. Attempts to remedy this through voluntary guidance have not resulted in a shift in professional practice and therefore best practice design standards underpinned by law is, in our view, the best way forward.

**2. What are your views on the key provisions in the Bill, namely –**

- **the requirement on local authorities to prepare and publish maps identifying current and potential future routes for the use of pedestrians and cyclists (known as "existing routes maps" and "integrated network maps") (sections 3 to 5);**

2.1 Preparing and publishing maps will play an important role, helping Local Authorities across Wales understand the network that currently exists. Crucially, it will also draw attention to the gaps in the network that, if completed, could enable an increased number of local journeys to be made actively. If the integrated network map is fully consulted on and comprehensive, it will ensure that future funding for active travel is spent in a more strategic way and in-turn offer better value.

2.2 For new walking and cycling routes to achieve their full potential, it is essential that local authorities take into account the need to raise awareness of new routes. Our research has shown that lack of information is the greatest subjective barrier to increasing use of sustainable transport. Most people simply do not know the times of the buses from their nearest bus stop, nor do they know where the nearest safe cycle route is or where it connects to. This in-turn impacts their perceptions of the amount of time it takes to travel other than by car. For

example, people perceive door-to-door journey times by car relative to public transport to be around twice as quick as they really are. Similarly, door-to-door journeys within towns are often quickest by bicycle, but this is not the common perception.

2.3 The provision of maps, therefore, is an important step in tackling one of the barriers to behaviour change. Evidence from the Welsh Government funded Personalised Travel Planning (PTP) project in Cardiff and Penarth has shown that simply providing people with tailored information for their regular journeys can have a major impact on levels of active travel. The interim project report from north Cardiff shows an 8% fall in single-occupancy car journeys and a trebling of cycling levels from 1% to 3% of all journeys (an increase of 196%). And it is noteworthy that the most commonly requested item was a local map.

- **the requirement on local authorities to have regard to integrated network maps in the local transport planning process (section 6);**

2.4 Until this coming financial year (2013/14) there has been no requirement on the Regional Transport Consortia to develop walking and cycling schemes. In anticipation of the Bill that has now changed, with the introduction of ring-fenced funding for active travel capital schemes.

2.5 The development of integrated network maps will help ensure that existing efforts to encourage greater levels of active travel are exercised more strategically. It is not uncommon for projects to be provided with grant funding within a single financial year, or for funding to be provided relatively late in the year as part of under-spend arrangements. This can lead to money being spent inefficiently and infrastructure designed around delivery constraints rather than best practice. Through ensuring that each local authority in Wales has a prioritised list of schemes that have been identified as having the potential to encourage more people to walk or cycle, this Bill has the potential to ensure existing transport investment is spent to greatest strategic effect.

2.6 Integrated network maps should play a crucial role in informing future local transport planning, highlighting key areas where improvements and additions to the active travel network could lead to an increase in regular journeys being made by an active method. The duty to have regard to the integrated network maps should also have the impact of mainstreaming walking and cycling with local authority transport departments.

2.7 The Bill requires authorities to take into account ‘the location, nature and condition’ of a route when determining the most appropriate. We believe the criteria should be widened to create routes that are “continuous, direct, safe and comfortable for walking and cycling”. If we want long term culture change then we need to make active travel options more attractive, pleasant and convenient than using a car for short journeys. As the landmark Making Cycling Irresistible study notes, *“The bicycling networks in.. [Amsterdam, Groningen, Copenhagen, Odense, Berlin and Muenster] include numerous off-street short-cut connections for cyclists between streets and traversing city blocks to enable them to take the most direct possible route from origin to destination. The result of such a wide range of facilities is a complete, integrated system of bicycling routes that permit cyclists to cover almost any trip either on completely separate paths and lanes or on lightly traveled traffic-calmed residential streets.”* (Pucher & Buehler, 2008 Making Cycling Irresistible: Lessons from The Netherlands, Denmark and Germany)

- **the requirement on local authorities to continuously improve routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists (section 7);**

2.8 Continuous improvement will be vital in ensuring that an increasing number of people living in Wales are able to benefit from safe walking and cycling routes. However, the Bill’s provisions are not clear on what will be regarded as ‘continuous improvement’. While the intention may be to create new routes over time, simply removing barriers, general maintenance and resurfacing could all be considered to be improvements. While the Bill states the need for local authorities improve the *“range and quality of their routes”*, the Explanatory Notes in Annex One (paragraph 20) uses the phrase *“either by expanding the amount that is available or by upgrading existing provision.”*

2.9 Sustrans believes that a stronger reference to achieving the network compiled in the integrated network map will be crucial. Indeed, the accompany Explanatory Memorandum states that the second map *“is intended to be a visual representation of the local authorities’ plans for active travel over a 15 year period”*. This aim should be reflected on the face of the Bill, and further clarity is needed in the accompanying documents.

- **the requirement on highway authorities to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists when creating and improving new roads (section 8)**

2.10 It is arguable that highway authorities already must ‘have regard to the desirability of enhancing the provisions made for walking and cycling’ via the WelTag appraisal tool – yet still too many new roads are built without facilities for pedestrians or cyclists.

2.11 Sustrans has long called for a re-appraisal of the WelTag system, which is biased towards road transport, and we raised this in our response to the White Paper on the Bill. Assuming the WelTag appraisal is not altered, it is therefore not clear what practical difference the provision in the Bill will make.

2.12 The Minister’s oral evidence to the committee implied that the duty in the Bill would over-ride WelTAG but we would welcome clarity on this point.

2.13 The Explanatory Memorandum states that *“At present, active travel is now always given serious consideration as a mode of transport”*. However, WelTAG current disadvantages schemes that promote physical activity. For example, although improved health and well-being can be included as a benefit, the range of health benefits that can be included is small. There is no way of valuing the health benefits of walking, for example, and all of the benefits are related to ill-health that you would associate with old age, rather than chronic illness, such as type II diabetes, that is increasingly associated with physical inactivity in children and young adults. Conversely any scheme that reduces levels of physical activity by, for example, encouraging people to drive short distances, or creating an environment that discourages walking and cycling, does not have this counted as a cost. Similarly, there is still no guidance from transport departments on how to appraise smarter choices initiatives and capture the benefits within WelTAG. As a consequence, smarter choices or active travel options tend to be dismissed at an early stage of the appraisal process.

2.14 As part of the guidance, Sustrans supports the inclusion of the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Health and Equality Impact Assessment (HEAT)<sup>1</sup> tool, which will provide robust calculations of the health impact of walking and cycling schemes. This tool is not currently part of the WelTag process.

2.15 Every opportunity to advance walking and cycling infrastructure should be seized and local authorities implementing new road developments should seek to identify how their development could link new communities/facilities into existing parts of the active travel network.

2.16 An example of where this has been successfully achieved is the traffic-free route that has been developed as part of the Church Village by-pass in Rhondda Cynon Taff. The path is away from the road and provides an attractive alternative route which recorded 86,000 trips in its first year. Paths away from the carriageway attract more users than those placed directly next to the road, therefore when constructing new road schemes consideration should be given to providing attractive routes away from traffic.

2.17 Demonstrating demand for walking and cycling infrastructure is not always either obvious or easy, especially where the opportunities for walking and cycling simply do not exist at present and so are not part of any local person’s routine journey. For example, until Pont y Werin was constructed to link Penarth with Cardiff Bay, levels of cycling between the two areas were very low, however, since the creation of a **direct, safe and comfortable route** usage figures have consistently been between 35,000 – 45,000 trips per month.

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<sup>1</sup> [tinyurl.com/3k8syj2](https://tinyurl.com/3k8syj2)

2.18 The predict and provide approach to managing traffic growth, still used by many transport planners, involves predicting future transport demand in order to provide the network for it, often by building more roads. This approach is frequently inappropriately applied to the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure: the model, using input data from a setting where active travel has been suppressed, predicts little or no walking and cycling in the future. Provision should be designed in these circumstances to encourage use.

### **3. Have the provisions of the Bill taken account of any response you made to the Welsh Government's consultation on its White Paper? Please explain your answer.**

3.1 Sustrans provided an official response to the consultation on the White Paper and also led a Conference in the Pierhead in June 2012 that brought together over 100 delegates from across Wales to discuss and challenge the key themes outlined in the White Paper.

3.2 Sustrans official response focussed on:

- The need for best practice design standards
- The provision of softer measures programmes e.g. adult cycle training
- The need for meaningful end-user engagement (strong consultation)
- Consistent monitoring and evaluation
- Funding to be allocated proportional to target levels
- A consistency across all policies that reflects the importance of walking and cycling

3.3 The Active Travel (Wales) Bill as introduced fails to take into account the majority of these issues, instead those that are mentioned are likely to be addressed in guidance accompanying the Bill.

3.4 The Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Bill states that *"The lack of clear standards can discourage modal shift because potential active travellers can lack confidence in the quality of the route."* Sustrans welcomes the expert panel that the Welsh Government has set up to look at design standards. However, it is vital that the standards are mandatory and not advisory guidance – there is already a plethora of good quality advisory guidance that is largely ignored.

3.5 Consultation is referenced in the Bill, but we are awaiting the publication of guidance to see what level of engagement with potential users will be recommended. In Sustrans view, the levels of consultation required in sections 3 and 4 of the Bill (producing the map of existing provisions and the integrated network map) will differ. Our conference threw up the importance of consulting with young people in particular.

3.6 The common themes raised from the conference were:

- End user consultation
- The importance of 20mph limits
- The need for support on Compulsory Purchase Orders
- The importance of a collaborative approach between different sectors (health, education, leisure services, regeneration, tourism etc)
- The need for a softer measures programme
- Need to improve skills in local authority transport departments
- Measuring success
- Identifying the difference between rural and urban areas

3.7 Again, the provisions of the Bill make minimal reference to these points. The Explanatory Memorandum makes references to a *"broader programme of work to deliver a step change in active travel within Wales."* However, there are no provisions within the Bill to ensure that this broader programme of work sits alongside new infrastructure provisions and as the Minister has made clear there is no additional funding.

3.8 The Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) that accompanies the Bill seeks to address the issues caused by Wales being a varied nation comprising both urban and very rural areas by providing a population threshold of 2,000, below which local authorities will not have a duty to provide mapping. Many journeys in and between rural communities could easily be converted to active travel, and Sustrans view is that the population threshold is a crude and inappropriate measure of dealing with the issue of applying the concept and aims of the Bill across Wales.

3.9 The Bill has the potential to be one of the most effective public health interventions in Wales, reducing the significant burden on our health services of diseases linked to physical inactivity and obesity. To achieve this, the Bill will need to spread wider than transport departments, working with both health and education. However, there are no provisions in the Bill for making this happen.

#### **4. To what extent are the key provisions the most appropriate way of delivering the aim of the Bill?**

4.1 It is not entirely clear what the aim of the Bill is. The White Paper set out an ambitious long-term vision, the Bill is principally concerned with the production of maps and the provision of infrastructure and does not address the wider elements that are needed to achieve that vision.

4.2 The White Paper for the Bill states that *“more is required than just providing a suitable route or showing people a map”*. Similarly section 3 of the Explanatory Memorandum entitled *“Purpose & intended effect of the legislation”* states that *“The provisions we would like to see in the Bill are aimed at both infrastructure improvements and enabling people to change their behaviour through promoting and normalising active travel.”*

4.3 However, the provisions contained within the Bill fall short of achieving the stated ambitions. In our submission to the consultation on the White Paper, Sustrans called for the Bill to follow the ‘Four E’s’ approach set out by the Department of Food and Rural Affairs in their document *“A framework for pro-environmental behaviours”*. This document states that *“There is not one but a multiplicity of ways of promoting greener lifestyles, confirming the need for packages of mutually supporting measures.”* We felt that the proposals set out within the White Paper failed to meet this approach and the Bill does not make any advances.

4.4 Evidence shows that providing new routes is simply not enough to deliver the culture change desired by the aims of the Bill. Evaluation of the Sustainable Travel Towns project in England showed that combining new infrastructure alongside softer measures has the greatest impact in increasing levels of walking and cycling. The report states *“where promotional measures were accompanied by improvements in the quality of the ‘offer’ (e.g. better bus services, or new cycle infrastructure), this yielded comparatively greater success. This was evident in Darlington in relation to cycling, and in Peterborough in relation to bus travel”* (The effects of Smarter Choice Programmes in the Sustainable Travel Towns, Sloman et al; 2010).

4.5 The provisions contained in the Bill, however, make no reference to softer measures/smarter choices programmes being offered alongside the new infrastructure, and the most appropriate method of achieving the aims of the Bill will be to combine new infrastructure with smarter choices programmes.

#### Targets

4.6 Both the British Medical Association (BMA) (*Healthy Transport, Healthy Lives*) and the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) (*Walking and cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel or recreation*) argue for the introduction of targets for increasing levels of active travel, and for these targets to be proportional to increases in funding.

4.7 Adopting a target-driven duty would ensure the overarching strategy developed and implemented by local authorities would focus on encouraging more people to travel in active ways. Targets based on increasing journeys – for example – to work or to school would help inform the basis for the integrated network map and ensure the future funding was directed in an effort to meet these targets.

4.8 The Bill also makes no provision for monitoring and analysing the interventions made in delivering the integrated network map. The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark are often revered as models of best practice in promoting a sustainable walking and cycling culture. This has only been achieved through implementing a total reformation of their transport, urban and land-use planning (Pucher & Buehler, 2008).

4.9 Recent Sustrans infrastructure projects delivered in Wales – the Valleys Cycle Network and the Connect2 programme supported by the Big Lottery Fund – included a requirement for local authorities to monitor the impact and use of the routes, through automatic counters and route user intercept surveys. The majority of routes delivered through Regional Transport Plans or the Safe Routes programme do not include scheme specific monitoring and as a result many local authorities in Wales have a lack of baseline data on walking and cycling.

4.10 The Bill creates an opportunity for the Welsh Government to collect baseline data across Wales and effectively monitor the impact of the work undertaken as a result of the Bill. However, the current provisions do not ensure this.

#### Compulsory Purchase Order powers

4.11 The Bill and accompanying documents make no reference to Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers, which are available for highways provision. However, their application for dedicated active travel infrastructure is unclear and local authorities would be better served with additional support on land-use. Without effective support to ensure that land is made available, key sections of route which could make everyday journeys viable could take years to be delivered, or not be delivered at all.

4.12 In order to apply for a CPO, local authorities must show that no alternative routes are suitable. In practice there are often alternative routes usually along busy roads, however, they would not succeed in encouraging more people to walk or cycle. As these are not factors taken into consideration by Inspectors, a CPO application risks being denied. As this can be a lengthy and costly process this often discourages local authorities from applying for a CPO and routes therefore do not get developed or follow the path of least resistance as it makes a route 'deliverable', but sadly rarely desirable.

4.13 We are unclear on whether additional powers are needed or whether this can be addressed by Active Travel guidance to Inspectors. The process for implementing Compulsory Purchase Orders for walking and cycling routes should only require local authorities to define a single option through feasibility studies and, provided there is a reasoned approach for arriving at a preferred option, this should be able to be determined favourably via a Compulsory Purchase Order process without undue risk.

4.14 The nature of network design should be considered alongside route design by the expert panel that has been set up by the WG to devise design standards. We would like to see their recommendations enshrined in the delivery guidance given to local authorities, and clear guidance about the use of CPO powers.

### **5. What are the potential barriers to the implementation of the key provisions and does the Bill take account of them?**

5.1 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 projects.

5.2 As mentioned in our answer to Question 4, local authority transport departments are largely staffed by experienced highways engineers with limited knowledge of best practice designs and desirability for encouraging people to use active travel for everyday journeys. This presents a potential issue in particular in the production of the integrated network maps and analysing which are likely to be the most suitable and desired

routes for active travel. As this is an additional duty on local authorities, there are also likely to be capacity issues.

5.3 In our answer to Question 2, and in our submission to the consultation on the White Paper, we have set out our concerns with the current WelTag transport appraisal system, which has a significant bias to road schemes. This could prevent a barrier to analysing the desirability of active travel routes when creating and improving new highways (as identified in the key provisions).

**6. What are your views on the financial implications of the Bill (this could be for your organisation, or more generally)? In answering this question you may wish to consider Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum (the Impact Assessment), which estimates the costs and benefits of implementation of the Bill.**

6.1 The Welsh Government is currently clear in that it will not expect local authorities to spend any additional funds in the delivery of the Active Travel (Wales) Bill.

6.2 As written, the limited scope of the Bill will result in few financial implications for local authorities and Welsh Government. The most notable will be how the maps are funded and in particular the potential knock-on effect on money available for delivering the desired continuous improvements. It's not clear from the Bill and accompanying documents whether the map production will take place from existing funding streams or out of council budgets.

6.3 There could also be financial implications if local authorities feel that they do not currently have the capacity or skill set within their staff to produce the maps. However, the RIA does provide some cost guidance on tendering out this process and we do not consider the costs to be prohibitive when considering the total size of transport budgets.

6.4 It is important to frame the costs within the context of the benefits that investment in active travel will bring. As well as producing long term economic benefits through reduced health costs, lower welfare costs and increased productivity<sup>2</sup>, active travel interventions also bring short term economic relief through reduced congestion and improved journey times.

6.5 The in-depth evaluation report on the English programme of Sustainable Travel Centres for the DfT concluded that **on conservative assumptions**, the benefit-cost ratio of the outcome achieved in the three towns, allowing only for congestion effects, is in the order of 4.5. They added "Including environmental, consumer-benefit and health effects on the basis of recent Department for Transport modelling could broadly double the congestion-only figure".

6.6 The World Health Organisation has developed a broader measure for capturing the economic benefits of investment in cycling named HEAT. By taking into account health benefits including better air quality and increased physical activity the tool shows that cycling schemes can typically bring a £9 return for every £1 invested. Indeed, using the HEAT tool to measure the impact of a project we managed to encourage the use of sustainable transport at 8 hospital sites across Wales, including at the UHW and Velindre, showed that for every £1 invested, a saving of £33.46 was made.

**7. To what extent has the correct balance been achieved between the level of detail provided on the face of the Bill and that which will be contained in guidance given by the Welsh Ministers?**

7.1 Sustrans has concerns about the balance between the detail on the face of the Bill and the accompanying guidance. In particular we have concerns that the strength of the guidance will determine the overall

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<sup>2</sup> There are over 80,000 JSA claimants in Wales. With 40% identifying transport as a barrier to employment, some 32,000 individuals could benefit from improved transport. We estimate that this amounts to over £100m of JSA payments and a loss of tax income of over £37m

effectiveness of the Bill, yet the guidance has not yet been published and it isn't clear how the guidance will be scrutinised. We are also concerned that guidance can be altered significantly at the whim of a future Minister.

7.2 The Bill suggests that local authorities will have to refer to yet unpublished guidance on directions when determining:

- What is a suitable active travel route?
- How to prepare, consult on and publish the existing route map
- How to prepare, consult on and publish the integrated network map
- What will qualify as 'continuous improvement'
- How disabled walkers and cyclists should be considered
- How to take into account rural communities and their proximity to densely-populated localities

7.3 We have raised some of these issues earlier in our submission to the Committee. For example, when considering 'what is a suitable active travel route' the Ministers are likely to issue guidance on best practice design standards. These will not be mandatory standards, but even if the guidance is strong it could be altered in future with no scrutiny. We know that poor provisions can make cycling more off-putting than no provisions, yet in determining 'what is an active travel route' future Ministers could decide to support poor provisions or lower standards.

7.4 Sustrans believes that more of this detail should be brought on the face of the Bill a) to ensure proper scrutiny now; and b) to ensure that in future the Bill cannot be drastically watered down at the whim of a new Minister.

## **8. Are there any other comments you wish to make on the Bill that have not been covered in your response?**

### Timescales

8.1 The Bill makes provision for local authorities to spend three years delivering the first map indicating the existing active travel provision in their area. This time period seems overly generous and we would recommend a period of one year maximum to produce this map. A comparison can be drawn with the Scottish Core Paths Plan (2005), which gave local authorities 9 months to map their existing paths, a more onerous task considering it includes all rights of way. Swansea City Council took 3 months to produce their cycle map.

8.2 Again, three years to produce the second map seems too long. Sustrans would like to see significant engagement with end-users in bringing this map together. With that in mind, we would suggest a time period of no more than two years would be suitable.

### Pre-amble

8.3 The pre-amble to the Bill reflects more on the limited nature of the provisions contained in the Bill than the aims and ambitions set out in both the White Paper and the Explanatory Memorandum to the Bill (as set out in section 3.17). We would prefer to see reference in the pre-amble to the broader aims of the Bill and not simply to the mapping process.

8.4 In short, 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 itself.

### Status of routes

8.5 The Bill also presents issues relating to the status of Rights of Way, where official clarification could be helpful. It is unclear whether an existing Right of Way identified in the integrated network map as a future active travel route would therefore lose its status as a Right of Way – as is the case with routes designated under

the Cycle Tracks Act 1984; or indeed if the reverse is true – would all new active travel routes automatically become a Right of Way?

8.6 Across Wales many routes exist that are neither classified as highways, nor Rights of Way. There are Permissive Rights of Way, whereby the land is leased from a landowner. If these routes are then included on the map, would this then convey a particular legal status on the route? Potentially, this could result in the need for renegotiations with landowners. We would welcome further clarity in the accompanying documents to the Bill.

8.7 There are also questions over maintenance of active travel routes that are not owned by the local authority. Will all routes identified and subsequently delivered as part of the integrated network map become the responsibility of local authorities to maintain? This would then lead to ongoing financial implications for local authorities. If so, will maintenance be included in guidance on continuous improvement? This could lead to a situation where local authorities could meet the terms of the Bill without delivering new routes.

### Shared Use

8.8 The empirical evidence shows incidents of conflict on shared use paths are extremely low, and our recent report, *Access for All*, draws out the benefits of routes which allow families – including older people and those with disabilities – to undertake activities together.

8.9 Indeed, our report quotes Sybil Williams, the Director of the Cardiff charity Pedal Power, who fully supports shared use paths. She said “Segregation is not the way forward – people are isolated enough, and as has been demonstrated there is a social element when getting out, and segregation would not encourage this. It is, however, important that all users are educated to respect each other.”

8.10 All users of shared use paths have responsibilities for the safety of others they are sharing space with. Sustrans, British Cycling and the national cycling charity CTC have come together to endorse a code of conduct for all users of shared use paths to be safe and responsible. We would like the committee to consider endorsing something similar to accompany the Active Travel Bill.

### 20 MPH

8.11 Local authorities have the power to implement 20mph limits and zones in their local communities but the complications they face in exercising this power often discourage them from doing so. To support them in implementing this duty, greater guidance is needed.

8.12 Importantly, local authorities should be encouraged to implement area-wide 20mph limits as opposed to just isolated streets. This will ensure that through-traffic is displaced to arterial roads (designed to handle it) and not simply shifted from one residential street to another, to the detriment of other walkers, cyclists and residents.

8.13 Whilst we recognise the WG do not have powers to impose area wide 20mph, local authorities can, and would like to see explicit reference to 20mph as one of the suite of solutions councils can apply in developing an effective network.

### Commissioner

8.14 Having a person independent of the Minister having oversight of the aims and objectives of the Bill, and being able to provide analysis on how the Welsh Government is doing in delivering this welcome new key aspect of transport policy, would pay an important role scrutinising the effectiveness of the Bill.

8.15 Sustrans appreciates that the creation of a new Active Travel Commissioner would perhaps be a step too far, but feel that the role could be assumed by the current Climate Change Commissioner as part of his overall responsibilities.

## **Sustrans – Supplementary evidence to the Enterprise and Business Committee on the Active Travel (Wales) Bill**

The below to be considered as a response to Question 8:

### Active Travel Routes

We have concern over the viability of a single definition for an “active travel route” – this would be an even more serious issue if there were minimum mandatory standards for the routes, as we advocate.

Much of the provision that currently exists falls below best practice standards. This would mean, in practice, that the existing route map could contain a very low number of routes.

Alternatively, and in particular if the standards are only issued as guidance, Welsh Ministers could sign off the existing route maps as agreed “active travel routes”. Therefore, in theory there would be no need for them to be improved as part of the Integrated Travel Map, because they would already have been signed off as an appropriate route.

Sustrans believes these sections in the Bill (which fall within sections 2, 3 and 4) need to be revised and clarified. One solution would be for the existing route map to be published including those that meet standards (an “active travel route”) and those that are routes but fall below standard (a new category of “provisional active travel route”). Come the publication of the Integrated Network Map, these provisional routes would have to be highlighted alongside other gaps in the network.



**Purpose – to provide evidence for the National Assembly for Wales Enterprise and Business Committee on the general principles of the *Active Travel (Wales) Bill*.**

1. Disability Wales is the national association of disabled people’s organisations in Wales. Disability Wales strives to achieve rights, equality and independence for all disabled people, regardless of physical, sensory or neurological impairment, learning difficulty or mental health condition. We recognise that many disabled people have different identities and can face multiple discrimination.

**Q1) Is there a need for a Bill aimed at enabling more people to walk and cycle and generally travel by non-motorised transport? Please explain your answer.**

2. Disability Wales welcomes the Bill as it promotes healthier lifestyles for all. However the Bill must recognise that private car use is absolutely essential for many disabled people to enable them to live independently in the community.
3. Yes there is a need for the Bill; a possible benefit would be that disabled people can choose to be more physically active. But this would only happen if all foot / cycle paths were fully accessible and safety measures were in place to ensure disabled people felt confident and comfortable using the cycle / footpaths.

**Q2) What are your views on the key provisions in the Bill, namely –**

**the requirement on local authorities to prepare and publish maps identifying current and potential future routes for the use of pedestrians and cyclists (known as “existing routes maps” and “integrated network maps”) (sections 3 to 5);**

4. Maps are a good idea. However, any map that is published by Local Authorities has to be made available in accessible formats for example, large print or tactile versions etc. It is worth noting that there is not a need to

‘reinvent the wheel’; making use of maps already in existence could assist in allaying Local Authority fear of publishing costs. Such maps include: Google maps; Street View in particular and other maps are already available such as Ordnance Survey (OS) maps. Local Authorities could modify these existing Map formats accordingly. Google maps or Ordnance Survey maps however do not provide accessible information other than, perhaps, OS path gradient. Creation of foot path / cycle path accessibility maps is something that could be developed, possibly in conjunction with Accessible Wales.

5. Active engagement with disabled people’s groups and organizations at the very beginning of the mapping and proposed enhancements is of paramount importance. Local disabled people are best placed to give advice on access issues and barrier removal of paths in their local area.
6. Accessible advertisement of routes affording access to disabled people should be a priority. It is worth noting that one of the three main access barriers disabled people face is communication barriers. Advertising online should not be the only method of promotion, as not all disabled people have access to the internet, and not all internet sites are accessible for disabled people. Offline promotion should also be carried out.

**the requirement on local authorities to have regard to integrated network maps in the local transport planning process (section 6);**

7. Integrated accessible transport is the key to providing real possible alternatives to private car travel for disabled people who can use public transport. Integrated network maps showing transitional ease of access between transport modes e.g. cycle routes and train stations would greatly benefit disabled people when planning their journeys. Footpath and cycle paths should be planned to ensure that they pass local amenities such as GPs, shops and recreational facilities to facilitate ease of access to the local community.

**the requirement on local authorities to continuously improve routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists (section 7);**

8. Route improvements are vital to sustainability of shared foot / cycle paths. Access improvements and maintenance of shared cycle and footpaths should

be carried out at regular intervals to ensure that disabled people's access is not hindered by wear and tear and footfall damage. Periodic monitoring would be useful. As set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 which requires Local Authorities to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. These improvements will be in terms of strategic effectiveness; service quality; service availability; fairness; sustainability; efficiency and innovation. One of these functions is shared cycle and footpaths.

9. The varying quality of the shared cycle and footpaths from the outset may put many disabled people off walking or cycling. A disabled person may start to cycle / walk on a path but then the terrain becomes less smooth or the gradient too steep which prevents disabled people from continuing their journey due to health and safety concerns.
10. Local Authorities should adopt a unified approach and standard disability access requirements for different types of path and facilities throughout Wales, thus ensuring minimum standards are adhered to, although good practice standards would be preferred.
11. There are safety concerns over proposed shared foot and cycle path space. Also in rural areas cycle paths could be open to horse riders; safety has to be in the forefront of any proposed changes.

**the requirement on highway authorities to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists when creating and improving new roads (section 8)**

12. The safety of all pedestrians is of paramount importance. Active engagement with disabled people and older people is a must to ensure their views are taken into account. Local Authorities should liaise with local access groups / disability groups to identify and address any barriers to disabled people using shared cycle paths and footpaths in their local areas.
13. When creating new roads The Highways Authority should have a duty to take into account access requirements of disabled pedestrians. For example; when separating pavements for walkers and cyclists the Highways Authority must ensure that there is a clear distinction between cycle and pedestrian lane markings.

14. Disabled people with mobility and or sensory impairments could find sharing footpaths with cyclists difficult or dangerous.
15. Eye contact is critical to establish who has right of way when a cyclist and pedestrian meet on paths. However establishing eye contact may not be possible for all e.g. people with visual impairments or conditions such as Autism. The speeds of which some cyclists travel on the cycle / footpath is of particular concern.
16. Speeding cyclists can injure mobility or intellectually impaired pedestrians because they cannot move out of the way quickly enough. Deaf and hearing impaired individuals would also be in danger as they cannot hear cyclists approaching from behind them; this could result in them being unable to move out of the way quickly enough leading to collisions and potentially very serious injuries.
17. If the paths are divided into two, one side for cyclists and the other for pedestrians, people with visual impairments may not be able to distinguish between the different paths. Visually impaired individuals need to be able to distinguish between the two designated sides for safety reasons; otherwise they could walk on the cyclists' side and injure themselves and their guide dogs if applicable. Because of this there needs to be clear colour contrasted and tactile delineator on adjacent routes.

**Q3) Have the provisions of the Bill taken account of any response you made to the Welsh Government's consultation on its White Paper?  
Please explain your answer.**

18. To some extent, however, the views and experiences of disabled people could be covered in greater detail. The safety of disabled pedestrians is a very real concern. The requirements of disabled cyclists who use tricycles and hand-cycles which have dimensions wider than a standard bike have to be considered when determining the widths of lanes on the shared cycle and footpaths.
19. Transport (Wales) Act 2006 – section 1 – requires Welsh Ministers to develop policies and encourage safe, integrated, sustainable, efficient and economic facilities and services for pedestrians and cyclists. Safe is the key word in this

paragraph. 'Disabled pedestrians and cyclists should be fully considered when shared cycle and footpaths are being deliberated at Local Authority level. Active engagement with these groups who are very often underrepresented is important.

20. There must be a reinforcement of the crucial importance of disability legislation such as the Equality Act 2010, Wales Specific Duties, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities etc in relation to accessibility of footpaths and cycle paths etc.

**Q4) To what extent are the key provisions the most appropriate way of delivering the aim of the Bill?**

21. One key provision that could be explored in more detail is the provision for disabled pedestrians, disabled and older cyclists. Provisions should seek to address access barriers to ensure active travel can be enjoyed by all who wish to take part.

**Q5) What are the potential barriers to the implementation of the key provisions and does the Bill take account of them?**

22. The cost of designing and implementing fully inclusive, accessible shared cycle and footpaths could be a barrier. However it is a statutory requirement to provide access to disabled people as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010 regardless of budget availability. However the type of reasonable adjustments made could depend on finance available.
23. One barrier could be that Local Authorities have different priorities when it comes to funding for the upkeep of the shared cycle / footpaths.
24. There could be a concern as to upkeep of construction and path maintenance. Cycle and footpaths are maintained to varying standards; shared use could mean more regular upkeep becomes essential. Changes to right of way legislation that do not include requirements to amend footpath furniture, signage or surfacing could be counterproductive as these are the very cause of many access barriers for disabled pedestrians.
25. There is often a lack of knowledge of disability access specific measurements and many follow what guidance exists to the letter as the bare minimum

criteria as opposed to 'Good Practice' which is often more generous in measurements than the bare minimum guidance. This will become a bigger barrier due to increase in size of wheelchairs and motor scooters whereby the minimum guidance is not suitable for larger mobility aides.

26. New design guidance is necessary to ensure a uniform approach is taken throughout Wales and that access requirement criteria is met to the same standard throughout the networks. Guidance should mean that disjointed notions of accessibility that varies according to location will, in theory, be prevented. Adherence to additional disability related guidance such as Technical Advice Note 12: Design (TAN 12) is important.

27. For more detailed information see the Sensory Trust website:

[http://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/information/factsheets/outdoor\\_ip.html](http://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/information/factsheets/outdoor_ip.html)

**Q6) What are your views on the financial implications of the Bill (this could be for your organisation, or more generally)? *In answering this question you may wish to consider Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum (the Impact Assessment), which estimates the costs and benefits of implementation of the Bill.***

28. The costs for Disability Wales' members could be serious risk of injury and even fatalities. Disabled people could be put in danger if shared cycle and footpaths are not adequately thought through. Although many disabled people do enjoy outdoor activities, some are deterred because of their fear of an impact with other path users. Access should be the key consideration at the design stage of footpath / cycle path design.

29. The financial impact of designing a shared path without considering disabled people's access from the outset could be damaging to Local Authority funds in the long term. Ensuring accessibility once the path has already been built may add extra costs to the project which could easily have been avoided if Local Authorities engaged with disabled people at the start. Active Travel (Wales) Bill guidance should help Local Authorities avoid expensive mistakes if the importance of engagement with vulnerable pedestrians and cyclists are given weight in the Bill.

30. Costs and funding allocations are very often determined by population thresholds – many disabled people do not feature within population thresholds due to inaccessibility of their environment; such as physical barriers

communication barriers and attitudinal barriers therefore their needs are in danger of being ignored.

**Q7) To what extent has the correct balance been achieved between the level of detail provided on the face of the Bill and that which will be contained in guidance given by the Welsh Ministers?**

31. Information in the Bill itself is succinct. The explanatory memorandum is essential to understand the complexities, content and scope of the Bill.

**Q8) Are there any other comments you wish to make on the Bill that have not been covered in your response?**

32. Disabled people could be put in danger by ill thought out plans of sharing space on cycle paths and footpaths. The health and safety of disabled pedestrians should not be overlooked in favour of active travel.
33. It is not always possible for disabled people to access more active forms of travel. Therefore access requirements of those who cannot cycle or walk due to their impairment should not be forgotten or demonised as 'gas guzzlers'.
34. The purpose of the Bill – to enable more people to walk and cycle and generally travel by non motorised transport is fine, however perhaps the sentence could specifically mention those who cannot walk and cycle.
35. The statement 'the Welsh Government wants to make cycling and walking the most natural and normal way of getting about' concerns us. It sounds like disabled people who cannot walk or cycle are not normal or are unnatural – it is rather a sweeping statement; the connotations of the statement can be misinterpreted.
36. Another statement that could be misinterpreted is 'the Bill will reinforce the idea of active travel as a viable mode of transport and suitable alternative to motorised transport for shorter journeys.' As we mention above, this is not true for many disabled people who rely on a private cars even for short journeys.

37. We would like to draw attention to the fact that there is a need for further research into how existing cycle paths and footpaths are used and how pedestrians and cyclists currently interact with each other on the paths.

38. One member's comment illustrates concerns about the path width.

*“while these paths can be a good thing, if they are not wide enough for the purpose for which they are being built, then I do not think they provide a safe route for either walkers or cyclists.”*

39. Research should also be carried out into good practice e.g. case studies. These positive examples could then be used to inform further guidance.

Enterprise and Business Committee  
Active Travel (Wales) Bill  
AT 8 - Guide Dogs Cymru

**National Assembly for Wales – Business and Enterprise  
Scrutiny Committee**

**Written Submission on Active Travel (Wales) Bill**

**Response from Guide Dogs Cymru supported by The Royal National Institute of Blind People, Wales (RNIB Cymru), Sense Cymru, Sight Cymru, Vision in Wales and Cardiff Vales and Valleys. References in this paper to blind and partially sighted people include people who are deafblind and have dual sensory loss.**

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## Consultation Questions

1. Is there a need for a Bill aimed at enabling more people to walk and cycle and generally travel by non-motorised transport?  
Please explain your answer.

### Response

Guide Dogs Cymru agrees that there is a need for better routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists: In our response we will explain how important it is for the pedestrian environment to support blind and partially sighted people, and how this Bill could therefore contribute to their safe independent mobility.

We see this as an essential consideration as one unintended consequence could be to make that harder, and we do not believe that this is the intention of the Welsh Government. We suggest that there is much in the Bill to support cycling and to make life easier for cyclists, but we would ask the Committee to bear in mind the challenges faced by many vulnerable pedestrians, not just those with sight loss, who cannot cycle, and will never have that choice

In Wales there are over 116,000 people with significant sight loss, of whom 20,000 are registered, (which means that they are known to Social Services and have received a needs assessment). A major element of their rehabilitation when sight loss is diagnosed will be on learning to deal with the external environment, cope with traffic, cyclists, public transport and getting around their community without sighted assistance. It is significant, therefore, that when we asked our survey group in Wales to identify the single issue which would bring about meaningful improvement in their lives they said greater public awareness and understanding. (ref. *Functionality and the Needs of Blind and Partially-Sighted Adults in the UK 2006*)<sup>i</sup>

The key to successful independent mobility for blind and partially sighted people is confidence: Going out alone with a guide dog or a long cane demands a level of experience and resourcefulness which has to be developed, learned and practiced. Accidents, trips and falls, as well as the fear of being knocked over or hit by a cyclist erodes self-belief and resilience. The less predictable the

environment, the more likely it is that blind and partially sighted people will avoid it, forcing them to find help they didn't previously need or to abandon the route completely.

This will also be the case for the many people with significant sight loss related to age who may not be registered and will therefore have received no mobility training. The number of people in this category is not known as for many older people sight loss is regarded as an unavoidable consequence of growing older, so they see no need to contact Social Services and get by in the best way they can. Many in this group will stop driving and use public transport for all but the shortest journeys. In support of this consideration, we cite the success of free bus travel for older people in Wales, and suggest that more of them would opt to use the bus rather than cycle, often because age related health conditions make walking and bus travel the only option.

For blind, deafblind and partially sighted people, the walking environment is fundamental to independent mobility, both for complete local journeys and for accessing and interchange with public transport services.

We would refer the Committee to the Welsh Government's Framework for Independent Living, which identifies public transport and the built environment as key areas for action.

To return to the specifics of how the Bill could support blind and partially sighted people, one illustrative example is the use of tactile warning surfaces to tell blind and partially sighted pedestrians that they are entering a shared walking and cycling route. We would therefore wish to see a mandatory requirement for tactile warning of this nature possibly enshrined in the guidance mentioned in point 9 of the Bill. We already have examples of where these are used successfully and in conjunction with signage for cyclists, tabled crossings and the conventional blister warning on the dropped kerb.

We are well known for our concerns about shared walking and cycling routes and so, in our response to the Committee, we have adopted a pragmatic approach. However, this does not take away from the danger and intimidation to blind and partially sighted people of sharing any route, but particularly those within a busy urban setting.

Even assuming the presence of tactile and colour contrasted warning and consistent blister paving on crossing points, a busy urban route where space is shared between pedestrians and cyclists is difficult for everyone: To quote from the Explanatory Memorandum:

“Research indicates that for many people the biggest barrier to walking and cycling is concern for their safety. These concerns relate mainly to the existing infrastructure, the speed and proximity of traffic, and concerns for personal safety.”

As we have said, certain design and engineering measures can mitigate against collisions and near misses between pedestrians and cyclists. However, we know that most accidents, and certainly most near misses, are likely to be unreported. People prefer to go home when they have had a shock. If this affects their confidence they are unlikely to use the path again. Even the fear of being hit can result in avoiding these routes. In this way the most vulnerable pedestrians simply disappear from any auditing exercises.

In order to redress this gap in evidence Guide Dogs commissioned a report by the social research company TNS-Social (now TNS-BMRB), examining the impact of shared use pedestrian/cycle paths on the safety, mobility and independence of blind and partially sighted people in the UK. Telephone interviews took place between 21 July and 1 November 2009. In total 500 interviews were achieved with blind and partially sighted respondents from around the UK and on average the telephone interviews lasted around 15 minutes.(ii)

The majority of respondents (86 percent) had concerns about using shared use pedestrian/cycle paths. Most respondents were able to provide specific explanations as to how their experiences of, or their feelings towards, shared use pedestrian/cycle paths have affected their independence and mobility. One of the factors mentioned is that they felt less confident and less safe, in regards to shared use pedestrian/cycle paths and that they caused wariness, anxiety or stress. 28 percent of respondents said they would go out of their way to avoid using shared use pedestrian/cycle paths.

65 percent of all respondents had had a collision or a near miss with a cyclist at some point. 88 percent of these accidents and near misses had not been reported: nearly 9 out of 10.

The vast majority of respondents in Wales (83 percent) had had an accident or a near miss involving a cyclist on a pavement or path, compared to 67 percent in England, 47 percent of respondents in Northern Ireland and 43 percent of respondents in Scotland.

*“It makes you feel very uncertain about walking and don't feel safe all the time because I'm worried bikes will ride into me.”*

*Blind respondent, England, with experience of shared use paths.*

*“I feel less confident at times and also it affects your confidence when a cycle whizzes past and you feel the speed of the bicycle quite near you sometimes.”*

*Blind guide dog owner, Wales, with experience of shared use paths.*

*“I think it dents your confidence. It makes for a most unpleasant experience. They are very, very frustrating and it is exhausting work.”*

*Blind long cane user, Wales, with experience of shared use paths.*

Annex 1 to this paper contains generalised feedback and verbatim comments from blind and partially sighted people, called together to discuss the implications of the Active Travel Bill on their freedom and safety.

In conclusion, we wish to make it clear that we support the intention of the Bill, as long as the detail and guidance for local authorities includes safeguards for vulnerable pedestrians and a recognition that careful consideration needs to be given to the environment where shared routes are proposed. We hope that it goes without saying that engagement with blind and partially sighted people is essential and a requirement within the Equality Duties in Wales.

2. What are your views on the key provisions in the Bill?  
Namely:

- The requirement on local authorities to prepare and publish maps identifying current and potential future

routes for the use of pedestrians and cyclists (known as “existing routes maps” and “integrated network maps”) (sections 3 to 5);

- The requirement on local authorities to have regard to integrated network maps in the local transport planning process (section 6);
- The requirement on local authorities to continuously improve routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists (section 7);
- The requirement on highway authorities to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists when creating and improving new roads (section 8)

Response to points 2.1 and 2.2.

We understand that mapping routes can encourage walking and cycling, and we agree that there is a need for more easily available reliable information. We would however point out that blind and partially sighted people walk to their destinations because they have no other choice. They do this without maps and often without any assistance, except the use of a long cane or a guide dog, using routes they have been taught by friends and family or by Social Services Rehabilitation Officers.

This reliance on “mind maps” is augmented by landmarks, which can be as obvious as junctions or as subtle as changes in the surface under foot. For a map to be of any value, therefore, it would have to indicate this kind of detail making it completely different from a conventional print map.

We are not clear how a local authority would, therefore, map routes which are “safe and appropriate” for blind and partially sighted pedestrians who would also want to know about obstacles on the route which are a significant risk to their safety.

These might include seats, signs, and trees, as well as the potential for junctions or intersecting paths, which can lead them in different directions. Currently, there is no system for mapping routes in a way, which is accessible to blind and partially, sighted people, (except for one off tactile plans which are bespoke and

expensive). It would therefore seem that either local authorities would have to disregard them and their access requirements in designing the maps, or develop some other measure to ensure that their needs are taken into account.

We note from the Explanatory Memorandum that all these costs fall to the local authorities, and we are concerned that the need to take a different approach to mapping routes to ensure that blind and partially sighted people understand and are involved in what is happening in their communities will lead to their specific needs being overlooked. We recommend that the “Guidance” which will be “provided by the Welsh Government to facilitate the mapping exercises” will stipulate the requirement for engagement with blind and partially sighted people and that the costs of that process be regarded of equal importance to the publication of print maps.

Response to points 2.3 and 2.4

- The requirement on local authorities to continuously improve routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists (section 7)
- The requirement on highway authorities to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists when creating and improving new roads (section 8)

Response

To answer the questions on the requirement to continuously improve routes and considering the needs of pedestrians and cyclists when creating new roads, we wish to draw attention to the specific duties around engagement and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) in Wales. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) guidance for public authorities on EIA states that:

The requirement to assess impact means that listed bodies must consider relevant evidence in order to understand the likely or actual effect of policies and practices on protected groups.

This includes:

- Ensuring the policy or practice does not unlawfully discriminate
- Identifying any adverse impacts on protected groups
- Considering how the policy or practice could better advance equality of opportunity
- Considering whether the policy will affect relations between different groups.

Having considered this, listed bodies must have ‘due regard’ (i.e. give appropriate weight) to the results of such assessments. This requires listed bodies to consider taking action to address any issues identified, such as addressing negative impacts, where possible.

With regard to ensuring that the policy or practice “does not discriminate”, we refer first to our concerns regarding access to the proposed maps. It would be extremely challenging for an authority to produce an accessible map (in a range of formats including tactile and large print), which would be of any practical use to blind and partially sighted people. The authority would therefore have to find an alternative method, which, we suggest, would have to take the form of rigorous engagement.

The EHRC guidance in this respect is clear:

#### Engagement when assessing impact

The specific duties require listed bodies to meet the engagement provisions as part of assessing the impact on protected groups. This will help listed bodies to understand better the impact of their proposals on different groups.

Engaging with blind and partially sighted people typically takes the form of face-to-face meetings, assuming, that is, the existence of a representative local group with whom the relevant local authority offices could meet. We have extensive experience of where engagement fails because there is no such group, or, much like Access Groups, there is no support from the local authority for meeting venues or transport.

Cardiff Council Access Focus Group is an excellent model of good practice where the authority funds an Access Officer and covers the cost of meetings and transport. The group (which represents people with a range of impairments and life situations) facilitates engagement on various Council proposals including the city's cycling strategy. Maps are not appropriate, as the blind and partially sighted members, and some of those with learning difficulties, or those who are dyslexic, could not read them. Instead site visits are arranged where new developments affect the public realm. Sadly, this example is not replicated across Wales, and is certainly not seen within the Transport Consortia.

It is therefore not clear to us as to how, in line with the engagement duties, local authorities will go about identifying "adverse impact", in creating new or improving existing walking and cycling routes. Our strong recommendation would be that further thought needs to be given to how local authorities will meet the engagement duties when the mechanisms for engaging are so poor regarding disabled people and those who are blind and partially sighted.

We do not feel that the Explanatory Memorandum helps in this regard:

Section 9. Guidance about Disabled Walkers and Cyclists.

Section 9 allows the Welsh Ministers to issue guidance to authorities on how the provisions of the Bill should apply to disabled active travellers. This is to ensure that the specific needs of walkers and cyclists who use mobility aids and / or adapted bicycles are properly considered and accommodated in the delivery of these schemes.

We are bound to point out that a guide dog and a long cane are mobility aids, so will the Welsh Ministers be issuing guidance to ensure that the specific needs of those who use them are "properly considered and accommodated"?

Linked to this point, we come secondly to the impact on infrastructure where new routes are being created or improved. It is hard to see how these could fail to impact negatively on the safe independent mobility of blind and partially sighted people if they are not appropriately segregated and delineated.

Safe and convenient routes should be provided for cyclists on the carriageway. Where this is not possible off-carriageway routes for cyclists should be separate, or clearly segregated from, pedestrian routes.

We recognise that most cyclists will be considerate of pedestrians. However even a considerate cyclist may find it difficult to avoid a blind or partially sighted pedestrian who steps in front of them because they did not see or hear their approach, or were disorientated by their approach and moved the wrong way. Just one near miss can affect the confidence of a blind or partially sighted person. Where pedestrians and cyclists share a route there should be a central delineator (a raised (with sloped sides) white line) and corduroy paving to denote each side, laid in a ladder-like pattern for the pedestrian and tram-like for the cyclists. See Department for Transport 'Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces' this can be downloaded at :  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/3622/tactile-pavement.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3622/tactile-pavement.pdf)

Segregated routes were designed to enable blind and partially sighted pedestrians to use shared routes safely and independently. Using just a painted white line as a delineator is not effective for partially sighted pedestrians as it is not textured enough to feel underfoot or with a cane and for blind pedestrians it does not exist.

The introduction of new cycling routes on footways and pavements could mean that no safe walking route remains, and that even on pavements that were previously safe from traffic the risk of being hit by a cyclist becomes yet another factor to take into account.

- 3 Have the provisions of the Bill taken account of any response you made to the Welsh Government's consultation on its White Paper? Please explain your answer.

Response

We are disappointed at how little account has been taken of our response to the consultation. We have referred in our answer to question one to the potential to enhance the environment for all

vulnerable pedestrians. There does however seem to be very little in the Bill to suggest that this will be the case. Regarding the maps, we are slightly encouraged to read the following in the Explanatory Memorandum:

“Each local authority will be required to make the map publically available and to promote the map ‘as appropriate’. There is some flexibility in how local authorities choose to publicise their map, however, it is assumed that a web version and a number of hard copies will be made available. The maps will also need to be produced in accessible formats. It is assumed that each local authority will print 1 map for every 10 members of the population of the relevant towns for distribution through schools, leisure centres, libraries and council offices etc.”

There is however no recognition here of the costs of meeting with blind and partially sighted people to facilitate engagement, and so it is likely that all available funding will be put into creating and distributing print maps.

We are also disappointed that there is no evidence that the feedback from the focus groups of blind and partially sighted people (attached here as annex 1), has been taken into account.

4 To what extent are the key provisions the most appropriate way of delivering the aim of the Bill?

Response

We have already made it clear that we believe this Bill to be biased towards cyclists rather than pedestrians. This is interesting as it would seem to contradict the Welsh Government’s commitment to caring for the more vulnerable members of society. As the population ages, and people live longer, we are more likely to need good quality walking routes. Generally, people are more mobile for longer on foot than on a bicycle, cycling can be prohibited by the natural consequences of age, such as diminishing sight and arthritis.

- 5 What are the potential barriers to the implementation of the key provisions and does the Bill take account of them?

#### Response

We have mentioned what we believe to be the major barrier in our answer to question 4.

- 6 What are your views on the financial implications of the Bill (this could be for your organisation, or more generally)? In answering this question you may wish to consider Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum (the Impact Assessment), which estimates the costs and benefits of implementation of the Bill.

#### Response

Guide dogs are trained to stop at kerbs or at the tactile blister surface commonly found on dropped kerbs. These are strong navigational aids to the dog and the blind or partially sighted person and form the basis of how we maintain orientation and safety. On a pavement, a dog will take a central position, as this is the most likely clear route. It will avoid lighting columns and other solid obstructions allowing clearance for its owner by estimating how much space it needs to pass by safely. A dog cannot analyse the danger of a moving object or person in the same way: Cyclists are therefore a very real danger as a guide dog cannot judge what path they will take.

For a long cane user, the mobility technique involves sweeping the space ahead keeping the tip of the cane on or very close to the ground. In contrast to a guide dog owner, a cane user will often seek the building line for orientation. The cane will always be well out in front describing an arc more than shoulder wide to protect its user from brushes with obstacles with each side to side motion. Cane users detect tactile surfaces only when they are prominent and consistent and if they were not installed on a shared route both cane users and guide dog owners would have no warning of the presence of cyclists.

We acknowledge that the development of more traffic free routes is essential to encourage more walking and cycling, but those routes need to be as safe as possible. Pavements are often the only refuge for blind and partially sighted people in busy urban environments, and if cycling on them becomes the norm there will be major implications

for how we train guide dogs and the mobility training we offer to blind and partially sighted people. These might include new techniques, new technology, where and if it can help, and high visibility clothing, and we do not know if it is possible to train a guide dog that pavements are not necessarily safe and that cyclists are as likely to collide with them and their owner as a vehicle on the road.

7. To what extent has the correct balance been achieved between the level of detail provided on the face of the Bill and that, which will be contained in guidance given by the Welsh Ministers?

In its present form, we would say that there is not enough detail on the face of the bill to protect vulnerable pedestrians. We note that Welsh Ministers can give guidance to local authorities, but this is ambiguous and falls a long way short of a demonstrable commitment to the Social Model of Disability or even a commitment to ensure that the interests and concerns of people with protected characteristics are taken into account.

8. Are there any other comments you wish to make on the Bill that have not been covered in your response?

Response

We have no further comments to make.

Annex 1

On 25 July 2012, Guide Dogs Cymru joined with RNIB Cymru, Cardiff Vales and Valleys, (CVV), formerly Cardiff Institute for the Blind, and Sense Cymru to discuss the Active Travel Bill. Blind and partially sighted representatives from CVV's local groups around Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff, The Vale of Glamorgan, Neath, Port Talbot and Swansea came together to discuss the implications of the Bill and to share their experiences of negotiating space with cyclists. These individuals represent over 3000 other blind and partially sighted people who use long canes or guide dogs to get out and about, and they are elected by their groups to convey their views. The groups are made up of people from a wide age range, and include people with dual sensory loss, those who have children, and those who live alone.

Guide Dogs Cymru has collated the following comments as evidence of the strength of feeling and real experience demonstrated within the group, and given by the participants as a true record of the concerns of the groups they represent. Where general discussion prevented direct quotations being noted, a summary of the key points is given.

“What is the point of having a map of walking cycling routes when it is inaccessible to us? All a map would do in that case is tell us where we cannot go, as we would avoid shared routes!”

“My daughter was knocked over by a cyclist in Queens Street, Cardiff. She was taken to hospital with broken bones and she can see, what hope is there for me?”

There was no support for any kind of shared route. Nobody could suggest any ways of developing shared routes that are safe as everyone without exception feels intimidated by cyclists.

“When you walk you want to enjoy your surroundings not be constantly on edge in case a cyclist is coming, you can't hear them, they frighten me.”

It was generally felt that a lot is being done to make the roads safer for cyclists but not for pedestrians. Everyone was worried about any move to open up existing footpaths to cyclists.

“In Queens Street, Cardiff, yesterday I was walking with my cousin and my cane suddenly got snatched out of my hand, I didn't know what was happening, my cousin told me the ball tip on my cane got caught in a cyclists wheels, he didn't even stop to ask if I was ok, I was very shaken”.

Everyone agreed that cycling is a life style choice where having sight loss isn't, and although they understood the need to get more people walking and cycling, they do not agree that developing more shared routes is the answer. The group wanted cyclists on the road, or on separate paths to pedestrians.

Nobody would feel able to pursue a cyclist who was going too fast or was rude or behaving dangerously. So the group wondered how they would ever be able to challenge inappropriate behaviour.

“I don’t walk alone on paths where there are cyclists like the Taff Trail any more. It’s just too frightening”.

The group discussed changes to infrastructure, and there was general debate about the dangers of allowing cycling on footways and pavements. Participants felt strongly that cyclists should use the road wherever possible, and that where this was too dangerous, separate paths alongside the road should be developed so that cyclists and pedestrians could travel safely.

“The truth is that we are powerless. There are so many obstacles we have to deal with when we are out, it takes such a big effort sometimes just to go shopping on your own, and cyclists are just one more problem. We don’t want to stop them, they’ve got a right to cycle like we’ve got a right to be out, but why doesn’t anyone understand that we need to feel safe!”

#### References:

- i. <sup>1</sup> Functionality and the Needs of Blind and Partially-Sighted Adults in the UK, Guide Dogs, 2006
- ii TNS-BMRB report JN:197367 March 201

The impact of shared surface streets and shared use pedestrian/cycle paths on the mobility and independence of blind and partially sighted people

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Fifth Floor, 2 Caspian Point, Caspian Way, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF10 4DQ



15 March 2013

## CONSULTATION ON ACTIVE TRAVEL (WALES) BILL

### National Assembly for Wales Consultation Paper

### British Medical Association Cymru/Wales

#### INTRODUCTION

BMA Cymru Wales is pleased to provide a response to the consultation by the National Assembly for Wales' Enterprise and Business Committee on the Active Travel (Wales) Bill.

The British Medical Association represents doctors from all branches of medicine all over the UK; and has a total membership of over 150,000 including more than 3,000 members overseas and over 19,000 medical student members.

The BMA is the largest voluntary professional association of doctors in the UK, which speaks for doctors at home and abroad. It is also an independent trade union.

BMA Cymru Wales represents some 7,000 members in Wales from every branch of the medical profession.

#### RESPONSE

### **1. Is there a need for a Bill aimed at enabling more people to walk and cycle and generally travel by non-motorised transport? Please explain your answer.**

BMA Cymru Wales fully reiterates its support for the intentions of this Bill. We believe that from a health perspective, there is very much a need for a Bill aimed at enabling more people to walk and cycle, and to generally travel by non-motorised transport. We believe there are huge benefits to be obtained to the health of the people of Wales by developing a sustainable transport environment where active travel and public forms of transport represent realistic, efficient and safe alternatives to travelling by car.

Currently there is significant year on year population growth in Wales' major cities (Cardiff – over 3,400 each year since 2001<sup>1</sup>; Swansea – average annual growth of approximately 1,000 people, +0.45%, each year since 2001)<sup>2</sup>. This means that to do nothing with regard to planning for future travel is not an option.

Within Cardiff alone the future need for jobs (40,000 new jobs) and homes (45,400 new dwellings) to support that population growth means that sustainable transportation solutions need to be supported.<sup>1</sup>

The Cardiff Local Development Plan 2012 states:

*"...Sustainable transportation solutions – Responding to the challenges associated with new development by setting out an approach aimed at minimising car travel, maximising access by*

<sup>1</sup> Cardiff Local Development Plan 2006-2026 <http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> Swansea Local Development Plan <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/>

**Welsh Secretary:** Dr Richard JP Lewis, CStJ MB ChB MRCGP Dip IMC RCS (Ed)  
**Chief Executive/Secretary:** Tony Bourne

*sustainable transportation and improving connectivity between Cardiff and the wider region. This can be achieved by making the best use of the current network, reducing demand where possible and widening travel choices. The aim is to secure a modal split of 50% car and 50% non-car modes...*"

To make an effective, lasting and useful change, transport planners have to understand the cycling versus walking 'journey'. These are very different journeys which need to be assessed and met differently.

Cycling is generally used in two different modes: repeated or a succession of short journeys for delivery of goods or services over distances up to about four miles; and for regular but single journeys over more than half a mile but less than eight miles.

Walking tends to be restricted to distances of less than a mile. (20 minutes appears to be the critical time limit.)

Commuting can be undertaken in a mixture of modes of transport – for example a 15 minute cycle ride to a train station where a cycle might be placed in secure storage, followed by a train journey and another 15 minute walk to the destination.

Successful commuting by bicycle needs to be timely, safe, easy-to-use and applicable to all. Facilities for cycling also need to be more joined-up, for instance by avoiding breaks in cycle paths which force riders into congested traffic for sections of their route. Unless cycle commuting is a simple and straightforward process which can be maintained year round, it is not likely to be sustained as a travel choice.

## **Evidence**

There is a significant and increasing worldwide body of evidence demonstrating the economic, social and health benefits associated with active travel; a workforce that cycles to work; and families who use active travel as one of their major forms of transport.

## **Health**

A Californian study of 24 US cities compared cities with high, medium and low use of bicycles for routine transportation (as a marker of active transport). It showed that traffic fatality rates fell as active travel rose (high biking cities averaged 2.5 fatalities per year per 100,000 residents compared to almost 9 deaths per year per 100,000 residents for the low biking cities). The decrease in fatality in high biking cities occurred for all classes of road users, including people in cars, and not just for people on bikes and on foot. In other words, an increase in active travel was shown to benefit all road users by helping transform streets into safer places. By contrast, all classes of road users were at greater risk of fatality in the low biking cities.<sup>3</sup>

Personal benefits include those that follow from the social interaction mentioned below, but also from the well-being elements that regular gentle exercise creates – including improved mental alertness, decreased obesity<sup>4</sup> (and illnesses associated with obesity) and improved cardiovascular and respiratory reserve.

An element that is often overlooked is the benefit of walking if it takes place in a green environment, in reducing blood pressure and improving antimicrobial resistance (by enhancing mood and white cell activity). It is not clear how these effects work, but they are comparable to the effectiveness of many therapeutic agents the NHS currently spends millions providing.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Norman Garrick and Wes Marshall (2011) <http://www.planetizen.com/node/50020>

<sup>4</sup> Russell P Lopez and H Patricia Hynes. Obesity, physical activity, and the urban environment: public health research needs. Environmental Health: A Global Access Science Source. Vol 5, p25, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Green spaces (2009) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/8307024.stm>

## **Economic**

A detailed 2012 review by the London School of Economics found that regular cyclists take on average 1.3 less sick-days per year, which saves the UK economy £128 million per year in reduced absenteeism. Over a 10-year period the net present value of such cost savings to the economy could rise to £1.6 billion. A 20 per cent rise in cyclists by 2015 could save a stretched NHS £52 million in costs.<sup>6</sup>

It costs less to build and maintain infrastructure that relies principally on mass transit for medium to long distances, with active transport for distances up to about 5 miles.

The reduced demand for hard surfaces also reduces drainage and heating/cooling costs in urban areas, as well as flood risks.

Increased active travel will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and improve air quality. The main source of emissions currently affecting air quality is road traffic, with nitrogen oxide being the main pollutant.<sup>1</sup>

There is evidence that streets in which cycling and walking are prioritised lead to a positive impact on the health/economy of local businesses, as cyclists and pedestrians then spend more per capita locally.<sup>7,8</sup>

People-friendly areas are pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly areas, which welcome and attract tourists and bring increased profit to a local economy.<sup>8</sup>

## **Social**

Active transport helps build communities by ensuring there are observers in all areas. This reduces crime rates and increases social inclusion. For this reason Swansea Council has set up a Public Transport Enquiry Panel with the purpose of look at how public transport can help to improve levels of social inclusion across different communities and groups in Swansea.<sup>2</sup>

A 20% increase in current cycling levels by 2015 could save the UK economy £207 million in terms of reduced traffic congestion and £71 million in terms of lower pollution levels.<sup>6</sup>

## **Crime and Disorder**

There appears to be a link between reduced crime and degrees of active travel. This may be linked to the social benefits given above, or it may be due to the greening effect of active travel. This was demonstrated in Chicago, where a study of 98 vegetated and un-vegetated apartment buildings showed that vegetated spaces cut crime by half, in addition to inspiring pride for surroundings that translated into less litter and less graffiti.<sup>9</sup>

Cardiff's LDP Vision as set out in the 10 year, 'What Matters' Strategy (2010-2020) is that:

*"By 2020... Cardiff will be a world class European capital city with an exceptional quality of life and at the heart of a thriving city-region.*

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<sup>6</sup> Grous A (2012) <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/news/archives/2011/08/cycling.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> Clifton K (2012) <http://bikeportland.org/2012/07/06/study-shows-biking-customers-spend-more-74357>

<sup>8</sup> Economides A (2012) <http://www.transportationissuesdaily.com/nine-reasons-to-create-a-bicycle-friendly-business-district/>

<sup>9</sup> Dr. Susan Barton (2008) Human Benefits of Green Spaces  
[http://ag.udel.edu/udbg/sl/humanwellness/Human\\_Benefits.pdf](http://ag.udel.edu/udbg/sl/humanwellness/Human_Benefits.pdf)

- *People in Cardiff are healthy;*
- *People in Cardiff have a clean, attractive and sustainable environment;*
- *People in Cardiff are safe and feel safe;*
- *Cardiff has a thriving and prosperous economy;*
- *People in Cardiff achieve their full potential;*
- *Cardiff is a great place to live, work and play; and*
- *Cardiff is a fair, just and inclusive society”*

From the evidence given, it can be seen that increasing active travel throughout Wales, and in its capital Cardiff, will significantly help achieve each of the above seven domains. However, to ensure they are met there has to be the ‘political will’ – with accountability, resolve and ‘teeth’. There has to be a social change – a move away from the culture of ‘car convenience’ and towards ‘normalising’ active travel. Potential active travellers need to feel that it is ‘just as easy to walk or take the bike, depending on the journey, as it is to take the car’. Currently this is not the case.

Within the UK, some 3 million people live in areas with 20 mph speed limits. The experience of this shows that not only do slower speeds save lives, but lowering the limit to 20 mph improves the way local streets function. The change has produced wide-ranging benefits – including less traffic; increased walking and cycling; greater independence for children, the elderly and infirm; better health; and calmer driving conditions for motorists.<sup>10</sup>

Until a balance of normalising active travel exists, the default for the population will be to take the car. This needs to be addressed and, for that reason and those outlined above, BMA Cymru Wales fully supports the aims of the proposed Bill.

## **2. What are your views on the key provisions in the Bill, namely –**

- **the requirement on local authorities to prepare and publish maps identifying current and potential future routes for the use of pedestrians and cyclists (known as “existing routes maps” and “integrated network maps”) (sections 3 to 5);**

BMA Cymru Wales fully supports the requirement on local authorities to prepare and publish maps identifying current routes for the use of pedestrians and cyclists and of related facilities. As well as providing useful information to provide people with the opportunity to make appropriate active travel choices, it will also provide a useful appraisal of what the current situation is and where it is lacking in provision for both cyclists and pedestrians. This in itself will help Welsh Government and local authorities to focus on what needs to be done to provide the level of improvement that is required.

The only concern we would have with this requirement is that we would have to wait three years for the first of these maps to be produced. We note that it has been estimated in the regulatory appraisal that such maps can be produced in a considerably shorter time period than three years. We therefore believe that the initial maps should be produced within a shorter time-frame than that which has been proposed.

The requirement on local authorities to prepare and publish maps identifying potential future routes for the use of pedestrians and cyclists and related facilities every three years is also welcomed and supported. Again, though, we have concerns that we would have to wait three years from the Bill coming into effect for the first such maps to be produced. We would like to see improvements coming into effect more quickly and suggest that the time-frame for the initial set of maps to be produced should be shortened.

We welcome the proposed requirement that the maps will need to be approved by Welsh Ministers but we believe more detail needs to be given of the expectation of Welsh Ministers on the level of improvement that will be required in each three-year period following the production of each set of maps.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.streetfilms.org/no-need-for-speed-20s-plenty-for-us/>

We also have concerns regarding how effective each map will be in delivering improvements in each local authority area unless the estimated costs of introducing the proposed future routes and related facilities outlined within each map are also required to be calculated at the same time. There should be a requirement for an estimate of the affordability of such proposed future routes to be considered to avoid the possibility that the maps merely constitute unrealistic and unaffordable wish lists. These maps will in effect become rolling lists of proposed improvements updated every three years, but unless there is some thought as to how much of what is proposed can realistically be delivered in each three-year period between the production of each set of maps, then there is a risk that we would not see a sufficient level of enhancement in the provision of active travel routes and related facilities compared to the current situation.

The remit of proposed guidance to be issued by Welsh Ministers should therefore be broadened to cover the need for the affordability and deliverability of proposed improvements in each three-year period to be assessed. We believe this will be required in order to ensure sufficient levels of improvement are proposed within the maps, in a manner which is both affordable and deliverable.

- **the requirement on local authorities to have regard to integrated network maps in the local transport planning process (section 6);**

We support this requirement, but have some concerns that it may in itself be too vague to be useful. Requiring local authorities to merely have regard to the integrated network map when forming a local transport plan provides no guarantee whatsoever, that any of the proposed future routes for cyclists and pedestrians will actually be incorporated within it. This requirement should therefore be strengthened to make the provision of active travel routes and related facilities as outlined in a local authority's integrated network map a priority within its local transport plan, with this being matched by a suitable allocation of resources to ensure that measures to promote active travel are actually delivered.

- **the requirement on local authorities to continuously improve routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists (section 7);**

BMA Cymru Wales fully supports the principle of this requirement. However, as the Bill is currently drafted, we are concerned that the wording is similarly too vague. We are concerned that it will not provide any guarantee as to the extent to which improvements will be delivered. We believe there needs to be a dramatic increase in the provision of improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and are concerned the wording of this requirement is not strong enough to ensure this will happen. Much will depend on what is laid out in an accompanying guidance from Welsh Ministers and it is difficult to fully judge the benefit of this without having some idea of what such guidance will require. We believe that this requirement should therefore be strengthened, including through the agreement of appropriate minima.

- **the requirement on highway authorities to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists when creating and improving new roads (section 8)**

This principle of this requirement is very much welcomed as it is something which is all too often overlooked at present. However, we also believe the requirement needs to be strengthened as merely requiring Welsh Ministers and local authorities to have regard to the desirability of enhancing the provision for walkers and cyclists will not necessarily ensure that such enhanced provision is actually delivered. We believe the Bill needs to include a significantly more robust requirement that would ensure improvements for pedestrians and cyclists are prioritised in built-up areas.

### **3. Have the provisions of the Bill taken account of any response you made to the Welsh Government's consultation on its White Paper? Please explain your answer.**

The Bill as drafted supports the broad aims of what we have previously called for in response to the Welsh Government's consultation on its White Paper, but there are a number of specific proposals for which we have previously called that have not been incorporated. These include:

- The need for the provision of dedicated and appropriate funding for new and enhanced active travel routes and related facilities.
- A specific requirement that maps of proposed enhancements should give consideration to longer routes, where public transport may form part of a journey. For instance, we called for safe secure areas where cyclists can leave their bicycles, such as at stations, before then continuing on a journey by public transport.
- A requirement that no new road schemes should be built without exploring the incorporation of provision for cyclists and pedestrians, with good reason having to be given if such provision is not to be made.
- A duty to make all trunk, A and B roads in urban areas safe for cycling on the carriageway.
- Avoiding the provision of off-road routes intended to be shared by pedestrians and cyclists in urban areas, as this places cyclists, pedestrians and dogs in conflict.
- Avoiding addressing safety concerns by simply imposing a ban on cycling, or providing sections of legalised pavement cycling, instead of designing (or re-designing) a road to give priority to walking cycling and public transport from within the same proposed budget.
- Placing a duty on local authorities to devise a plan to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport on existing and new main roads.
- Placing a duty on local authorities to reverse the rise in motor vehicle traffic in their area, and increase the percentage of journeys undertaken by foot, cycle and public transport.
- Agreeing regulations/standards on effective measures to achieve improved active travel routes, which might include such things as:
  - 20 mph speed limits in all urban areas
  - road layouts which prioritise cycling and walking
  - home zones
  - standard crossings at all main road junctions with no intra-urban roundabouts
  - active traffic management to keep through-traffic away from residential neighbourhoods
- Requiring consultation with Public Health Wales (PHW) and local health boards (LHBs) with regards to new statutory plans for prioritising walking and cycling along existing transport corridors.
- Requiring local authority officers involved in transport planning, policy and design to be professionally qualified in integrated sustainable transport methods, and for local authorities to provide adequate on-going training in this regard.

#### **4. To what extent are the key provisions the most appropriate way of delivering the aim of the Bill?**

The key provisions certainly take the agenda forward in the right direction and this is to be welcomed. However, as we have already outlined, we believe the provisions in the Bill need to be strengthened in a number of areas and broadened in scope. We believe this is necessary in order to provide a more effective regulatory framework that will guarantee the delivery of the required step change in improvements that is needed to effectively promote and encourage active travel.

#### **5. What are the potential barriers to the implementation of the key provisions and does the Bill take account of them?**

The main barrier to the implementation of the key provisions in the Bill is the lack of sufficient accompanying detail as to how the desired improvements in the provision of active travel routes and related facilities will be financed. There needs to be a stronger and clearer commitment to making available appropriate and dedicated funding, or at least to ensure that a sufficient percentage of existing transport expenditure by Welsh Government and local authorities is used for the provision of improved or new active travel routes, and related facilities. This could for instance involve requirements for Welsh Government and local authorities to prioritise the promotion of active travel routes and related facilities within any allocation of resources for transportation improvements, or a requirement that a certain percentage of the overall funding spent on transportation improvements needs to be directed to providing new or enhanced facilities designed to further the aims of the Bill.

We very much welcome the stated intention by Welsh Government to review funding streams from the Welsh Government Transport department to support the aims of the Bill, but believe this commitment needs to be elaborated upon in greater detail to provide the necessary level of confidence that this will be sufficient to ensure effective delivery of the Bill's stated aims. We also believe there should be a similar commitment derived from Welsh local authorities to also realign transport expenditure where necessary to promote improvements in the provision of active travel routes and related facilities.

We believe there needs to be a stronger requirement with regards to the extent that new and enhanced travel routes and related facilities are provided in each three-year period following the production of integrated network maps. Without a system by which appropriate targets are set and monitored, the intentions of this Bill may not be effectively realised.

**6. What are your views on the financial implications of the Bill (this could be for your organisation, or more generally)? In answering this question you may wish to consider Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum (the Impact Assessment), which estimates the costs and benefits of implementation of the Bill.**

The Explanatory Memorandum focuses primarily on the revenue costs of producing and updating maps but does not provide sufficient information as to the likely costs of implementing the improvements in infrastructure that will be required. We believe this is an area which requires more work to ensure that effective proposals to improve active travel routes and related facilities can be delivered to the desired level, and that any necessary shift in resources away from the provision of other transport expenditure can be effectively planned for by Welsh Government and local authorities.

We very much welcome the recognition within the Explanatory Memorandum that the greater promotion of active travel and provision of appropriate facilities could lead to cost savings to the NHS over a 20 year period of between £125 million and £517 million. We consider this to be a strong driver in support of the implementation of this Bill.

**7. To what extent has the correct balance been achieved between the level of detail provided on the face of the Bill and that which will be contained in guidance given by the Welsh Ministers?**

In line with concerns we have already expressed, we believe that some desired commitments may need to be more explicit within the Bill itself and this may be best achieved by increasing the level of detail provided on the face of the Bill.

The success of this Bill, as it is currently written, will be dependent on the extent of commitments and requirements provided by Welsh Ministers and/or placed upon local authorities in accompanying regulations and guidance. Without effective accompanying commitments, and without the provision of appropriately directed finance, this Bill could potentially fail to deliver against expectations.

**8. Are there any other comments you wish to make on the Bill that have not been covered in your response?**

We would merely reiterate that we fully support the aims and intentions of this Bill, but we believe it needs to be strengthened in a number of areas as we have already outlined in this response. Without such changes, we are concerned it might regrettably represent a missed opportunity for Wales to lead the UK to a healthier future at lower cost.

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## **NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE**

### **Active Travel (Wales) Bill**

#### **Memorandum from NICE**

#### **Introduction and summary**

1. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance and advice on promoting high quality health, public health and social care. Our role is to improve outcomes for people using the NHS and other public health and social care services. We do this by:
  - Producing evidence-based guidance and advice for health, public health and social care practitioners.
  - Developing quality standards and performance metrics for those providing and commissioning health, public health and social care services;
  - Providing a range of information services for commissioners, practitioners and managers across the spectrum of health and social care.
2. NICE has produced a range of public health guidance on how to increase levels of physical activity in the population, particularly through policies and programmes that encourage people to walk and cycle<sup>1</sup> but also create the conditions in which they are more likely to do so. We strongly support the intentions of this Bill.

#### **Cycling and walking and health**

3. Physical activity is essential for good health. It can help reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, obesity and type 2 diabetes. It also helps keep the musculoskeletal system healthy and promotes mental wellbeing. As well as a direct benefit from physical activity, walking and cycling offer pleasure, independence and exposure to outdoor environments. These benefits may be particularly significant for people with disabilities whose participation in other activities may be more restricted.
4. Cycling is the fourth most common recreational and sporting activity undertaken by adults in Britain. Bicycles are used for around 2% of journeys in Britain – compared to about 26% in the Netherlands, 19% in Denmark and 5% in France. Yet of all trips made in Great Britain in 2009, 20% covered less than 1 mile and more than half (56%) of car

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<sup>1</sup> The sources of the data can be found in the NICE guidance, ‘Walking and cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel and recreation’: <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH41/>

journeys covered less than 5 miles. In England on average, 10% of adults cycle at least once a week (although this figure varies from over 50% to less than 5% according to area). On average, 11% of adults cycle for at least half an hour at least once a month (a figure that, again, varies from 4% to 35% according to area).

5. NICE's public health guidance on physical activity focuses mainly on walking and cycling. In general, the objectives of achieving higher rates of cycling and walking are equally well served by interventions to encourage active modes of transport. However, the guidance cautions that walking and cycling are distinct activities which are likely to appeal to different segments of the population. A range of factors may be important in helping or restricting people from taking part. These will vary according to whether someone is walking or cycling for transport purposes, for recreation or to improve their health.
6. As has been noted, there is a considerable potential benefit in public health terms from increasing physical activity by promoting cycling. While the public health and transport sectors both have an interest in increasing cycling, there are, however, some differences in detail. In particular, from a public health point of view the overall aim is to increase levels of physical activity, especially among those who are not currently active. From a transport perspective the aim might be to move people from motor vehicles to cycles, irrespective of their current activity levels. As well as public health benefits relating to physical activity, a modal shift from motorised vehicles would be associated with reductions in air pollution. This would have an additional public health benefit.

### **NICE guidance covering cycling**

7. The most recent NICE public health guidance relevant to cycling and health is 'Walking and cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel and recreation' (PH41)<sup>2</sup>, which was published in November 2012. This guidance sets out how people can be encouraged to increase the amount they walk or cycle for travel or recreation purposes, thus helping to meet public health and other goals (for instance, reductions in traffic congestion, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions). The recommendations cover:
  - Policy and planning, including leadership on walking and cycling, walking and cycling in health and wellbeing board joint strategic needs assessments (JSNAs) and joint health and wellbeing strategies, and ensuring cycling and walking are considered in all relevant policies and plans.
  - Coordination of integrated, cross-sector programmes that link to existing national and local initiatives and which are based on an understanding of the behavioural and environmental factors that encourage or discourage people from walking and cycling.

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH41/Guidance/pdf/English>

- Strategies for promoting walking and cycling in schools, workplaces and the NHS.
8. The guidance is for commissioners, managers and practitioners involved in physical activity promotion or who work in the environment, parks and leisure or transport planning sectors. They could be working in local authorities, the NHS and other organisations in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. It is also aimed at employers, estate managers, highways authorities, those involved in land-use planning and development control, private developers, public transport operators, those involved in carbon reduction or sustainability planning, and others responsible for workplace travel, carbon reduction or sustainability plans.
9. The walking and cycling guidance complements earlier guidance. NICE's guidance on 'Physical activity and the environment' (PH8, 2008)<sup>3</sup>, which offered the first evidence-based recommendations on how to improve the physical environment to encourage physical activity, is aimed at local authority and other professionals who have responsibility for the built or natural environment, including local transport authorities, transport planners, and those working in the education, community, voluntary and private sectors. Its recommendations cover strategy, policy and plans, transport, public open spaces, buildings and schools. The recommendations are about:
- ensuring planning applications for new developments always prioritise the need for people (including those whose mobility is impaired) to be physically active as a routine part of their daily life;
  - ensuring pedestrians, cyclists and users of other modes of transport that involve physical activity are given the highest priority when developing or maintaining streets and roads;
  - planning and providing a comprehensive network of routes for walking, cycling and using other modes of transport involving physical activity;
  - ensuring public open spaces and public paths can be reached on foot, by bicycle and using other modes of transport involving physical activity.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

April 2013

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH8>