

## Cross Party Group on the Active Travel Act

### Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday January 17<sup>th</sup> 2024

12.00 to 1:30pm in Conference Rooms C&D, Ty Hywel & via Microsoft Teams

**Present & Apologies:** see attached lists.

**Welcome and Introductions:** Huw Irranca-Davies MS (Chair) welcomed participants to the meeting. He explained that a number of people who were unable to attend the meeting had requested that the meeting be recorded, and the video of the presentations be shared. This was agreed by the meeting.

#### Chair's Updates

The Chair reported on the following developments:

**Active Travel Delivery Plan** – the officers had met with the Deputy Minister for Climate Change in the autumn and convinced him of the need to strengthen the Active Travel Delivery Plan particularly in regard to prioritising schemes that will promote modal shift. A revised version should be published shortly.

**Duty to Promote Active Travel** – another important element of the Group's review of the Active Travel Act had been the call for the strengthening of the Active Travel Act's duty to promote active travel. The Chair had successfully moved an amendment to the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill which had added a new clause to the Active Travel Act providing an effective general duty to promote active travel, backed up by statutory guidance. The duty would initially apply to Welsh Government and local authorities but there was a provision to extend it to other public bodies and a commitment from ministers that they would make this happen. There was also a commitment to draw up the guidance and implement the new provisions within twelve months. The positive engagement that had taken place with the Welsh Government in negotiating the amendment had convinced them of the need for a wider revision of the Active Travel Act and they had promised to undertake a review with a view to amending the legislation in the next five years.

**Active Travel in the Planning System** - At our last meeting, the Deputy Minister had asked us to look at why Wales' active travel friendly development guidance was not producing the desired results. A small working group had been established to consider the issues. The group had met twice and produced some initial recommendations. Their headline findings were that a lot of the guidance was not active travel friendly. There was a significant number of pieces of guidance still in use that pre-date the Active Travel Act and favoured car centric development. The group had also identified a serious skills gap in applying the guidance. The Chair suggested that a special meeting be convened to consider the matter further and involving representatives of key players in the sector. This was agreed by the meeting.

**Common Standards for new developments** – having secured a new version of the Standards, which was now in accord with the Active Travel Act Guidance, the Group was continuing to press the Welsh Government to raise awareness of the new version, particularly amongst local authorities.

**Bikes and buses** – A constructive meeting had been held with the Chief Executive of Transport for Wales, principally to discuss bikes on rail replacement buses. At the meeting it was agreed to widen our scope and examine all issues of bike bus integration, and to involve trade unions as the representatives of the bus drivers who would have to make any new system work. A small stakeholders' group was to be convened, to prepare proposals for the Group to consider.

**Road Safety Strategy Consultation** – The Chair proposed that the Group respond by endorsing the 'Recommendations for a new strategy' contained in the 'Report on the Road Safety Framework for Wales 2013 to 2020' published by the Welsh Government and calling for the new strategy to be based on those recommendations. This was accepted by the meeting.

**10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Active Travel Act** – the Chair thanked everyone who had been involved in the very successful event organised by the Group.

### **Panel Discussion - Effective consultations for active travel projects.**

The Chair introduced the item explaining that it had arisen from a question raised at the Group's last meeting: 'how do you conduct effective consultations on detailed active travel proposals against a political climate whipping up opposition to any proposal seen as limiting car use'. There had been considerable interest in the topic, particularly following the political furore around the London ULEZ proposals and 20mph speed limits in Wales. It had therefore seemed appropriate to devote more time to the topic and hear from some experts in the field. The Chair introduced the Panel made up of Shayoni Lynn of Lynn Global, Patrick Williams of Sustrans Cymru and Liz Williams of the RNIB.

Shayoni outlined Lynn's mission and activities, including the Misinformation Cell. She emphasised the importance of their use of behavioural science, utilising primary research and embedding evaluation into everything they do. She believed they had a responsibility to protect people from misinformation, which she defined as: 'the proliferation of false information without intent', disinformation is with intent. Disinformation and misinformation were the product of an organised industry operating on a large scale, often based on an insightful knowledge of human behaviour. It was important to predict what the real impact of dis/misinformation would have on real behaviours outside of the artificial environment of social media. She advised expecting disinformation 'it's a when, not an if' – and it should be planned for. Information gaps should be filled with accurate information. Local campaign champions and influencers had a key role in their communities. She advised 'taking a beat' before engaging with dis/misinformation and to avoid amplifying false information. Having accurate data was vital. She talked of the need to weather the storm, particularly important in a transport context where opposition to a measure often diminished over time.

Patrick spoke of his long experience of engaging with people on specific developments, and particularly with children. It was important not to dismiss children's capacity for understanding and engaging with complex issues. Children were also a conduit to other audiences. People's behaviour was engrained, changing that required providing the skills to question the status quo. To emphasise the scale of the challenge he cited example of a parent who had suggested the adoption of a McDonald's style drive through for motoring

parents to be able to drop off their children at school. Difficult choices often had to be made, but people understood this and knew there may not be space to accommodate all the competing wants. It was important to be clear about the purpose of projects and to demonstrate their impact. Contact should be maintained throughout the project and it should be understood that engagement is messy.

Liz emphasised the RNIB's support for active travel; blind and partially sighted people were highly likely to be walking to access services since they generally were not able to drive cars. However, they often faced barriers when trying to navigate our streets. It was essential that their needs were given proper consideration in the earliest stages of the design of active travel infrastructure. She highlighted the problems caused by poorly designed bus boarders and the need for pedestrian only routes. Coproduction was to be encouraged, as was continual engagement throughout the project. It was important to ensure that communications were accessible, perhaps using larger fonts. Information on how to improve the accessibility of communications was readily available. She encouraged working with local organisations for the blind and partially sighted such as RNIB, Sight Life and Vision Support (north Wales). Making publications available in different formats, such as braille or audio, was desirable. PDFs and PowerPoint were not always compatible with screen readers; any images used online should have an 'alt text' description. 2D maps were ineffective but tactile maps were helpful. Meeting etiquette was important, particularly introductions. The chat function interfered with screen readers so providing a summary of the chat was helpful. Proximity to a bus route was key to making venues accessible. RNIB was happy to provide information, advice and training on all these matters.

The Chair thanked the panellists for their contributions and invited question and comments from the floor. In the ensuing discussion the following points were made. The importance of tailoring messages to accord, as far as possible, with the point of view of potential opponents. Early engagement was key, yet it could be difficult to persuade local authorities to do this as they feared over-promising. There was a tendency to try to set cyclists, pedestrians and bus users against each other as competitors for the same space, there was a need to avoid divisive narratives. Stories about cycling and cyclists were often used as clickbait by media outlets, pressure on journalists as the industry declines was exacerbating this. Developing counter narratives to inoculate against the negative messaging could be effective. Who could now be considered 'trusted intermediaries' given the vilification of politicians and experts? Stakeholder mapping and prioritisation could help identify them at a local level. Coproduction and codesign were effective in building trust. Tailoring messages and techniques to the characteristics of a particular community was vital. There was a need to get to a point where we value active travel infrastructure as much as we do the car.

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** The minutes were accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.

**Any Other Business:** None.

**Good practice in active travel delivery: Active Wheels – The Merthyr based inclusive social cycling group with the aim of supporting people of all abilities.**

The Chair introduced Phil Lewis, Chair of the Merthyr based inclusive social cycling group. Phil gave an account of the history of the group and some of the key figures who had helped develop it. Its focus now was on encouraging everyone to ride together to gain the environmental and physical and mental health benefits of cycling. The group received a grant from Sport Wales and were able to offer free rides on their fleet of bikes and trikes. Being able to provide free hire bikes to people who do not have, or could not afford, their own had increased the reach of the group. They also had access to a safe riding track at a local school. He described the range of people who used the group's services and how the group was helping them to overcome personal challenges. Their aim was to provide lots of opportunities for people to ride by organising a wide variety of events. They were also campaigning to eliminate physical barriers to cycling by removing barriers on routes that posed particular difficulties for disabled riders. They had been successful in persuading Merthyr council to make significant changes to the barriers. They were now applying for funding to provide e-bikes and developing more information on local routes. He invited anyone who would like more information to contact him at [contact@activewheels.wales](mailto:contact@activewheels.wales). In comments and questions, the work of the group and the dedication of the volunteers involved was highly praised. It was suggested that the group should be considered as a candidate for social prescribing.

Phil was thanked for his presentation.

**The meeting closed at 1.30pm**

## Attendance List

<b>Attended in Person</b>			
First Name	Surname	Job Title	Organisation
Ken	Barker		Cycling UK
Rebecca	Brough	Policy and Advocacy Manager	Ramblers Cymru
Nancy	Cavill	Senior Policy Officer	Senedd Labour Party
Dan	Coast	Secretary	Cycling Newport
Stephen	Cunnah	Policy and External Affairs Manager	Sustrans Cymru
Elliot	Davies	Account Manager	Lynn Group
Sian	Donovan	Director	Pedal Power
Richard	Evans	Chair	Cardiff Cycle Workshop
Natalie	Grohmann	Transport - Policy, Planning and Partnerships Officer	Welsh Government
Huw	Irranca-Davies	Member of the Senedd	Senedd Cymru
Meryl	James	MSS	Julie Morgan MS
Gwyn	Lewis	Active Travel	Welsh Government
Shayoni	Lynn	CEO & Founder	Lynn Global
Hugh	Mackay		Cycling UK VofG
Gwenda	Owen	Engagement Officer - Wales	Cycling UK
Gareth	Price	Clerk	Senedd Cymru
Chris	Roberts	Secretary	CPGATA
Kaarina	Ruta	Transport Assistant	WLGA
John	Sayce	Chair	Wheelrights
Phil	Snaith	Secretary	Carmarthenshire Cycle Forum
Tom	Wharf	Head of Design	Transport for Wales
Liz	Williams	Policy and Public Affairs Manager	RNIB (Cymru)
<b>Attended via Teams</b>			
First Name	Surname	Job Title	Organisation
Jackie	Aplin	MSS Joyce Watson	Joyce Watson MS
Ioan	Bellin	SCA	Rhys Ab Owen AS
John	Bradley	NHS Principal Public Health Practitioner	Public Health Wales
Richard	Brunstrom		Cycling UK North Wales
Joseph	Carter	Head of Devolved Nations	British Lung Foundation
Patricia	Denning	Case Worker	Heledd Fychan
Duncan	Dollimore	Head of Advocacy and Campaigns	Cycling UK
Helen	Donnan	Access Field Officer, Wales	British Horse Society
Ryland	Doyle	Communications and Research Officer	Mike Hedges MS
Donna	Edwards-John	Active Travel Officer	Torfaen County Borough Council
Gemma	Hobson		Public Health Wales
Keith	Jones	Director	ICE Wales Cymru

Phil	Lewis	Chair	Active Wheels
Richard	Lewis	Principal Public Health Practitioner	Public Health Wales (Gwent)
Hilary	May		ValeVeloWays
Chris	Perry	Director	Lynn Group
Paul	Pilkington	Consultant in Public Health	Public Health Wales
Louis	Preece	Active Travel Projects Officer	Newport City Council
Gemma	Roberts	Policy & Public Affairs Manager	British Heart Foundation
Alan	Tapp	Professor of Social Marketing	UWE
Greg	Tasker	Active Travel Manager	Newport City Council
Tom	Wells		Active Travel West Wales
Christopher	White	Lecturer in Health, Mental Health and Well-Being	Wrexham University
Patrick	Williams	National Programme Manager, Active Travel Fund	Sustrans Cymru

**Apologies:**

Heledd Fychan MS, Senedd Cymru

Matthew Gilbert, Active Travel Lead, Transport for Wales

Max Hampton, Design Advisor, Design Commission for Wales

Delyth Jewell MS, Senedd Cymru

David Naylor, Wheelrights Swansea

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS, Senedd Cymru

Paul Streets, Secretary, Cardiff Cycle City