

Cross-Party Group on the Active Travel Act
Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, June 17th, 2025
12.15pm to 1.15pm in Conference Room A and via Microsoft Teams

Present & Apologies: see attached lists.

Welcome and Introductions: John Griffiths MS (Chair) welcomed participants to the meeting. He congratulated Kirsty James on her appointment as Chair of the Active Travel Board.

Annual Meeting Business

Chair's Report

John reported on the Group's activities in defending investment in walking and cycling and reminding people of why the Senedd had passed the Active Travel Act in 2013. He had published an article in Nation Cymru, setting out how active travel benefitted Wales' health, environment and economy. The Group had held a useful and constructive meeting with the Cabinet Minister for Transport and North Wales, which had been followed up with detailed arguments for continued prioritisation of walking and cycling and dispelling some of the myths that were then circulating. The Group had also made a major contribution to the Senedd's Public Accounts and Public Affairs Committee's inquiry into active travel. Importantly, members of the Group had played a key role in securing significant funding for active travel in the current year's budget.

He spoke of the launch of the Bikes and Buses report, thanks to support from Aberystwyth University's THINK project. As part of the Group's long-standing commitment to ensuring active travel was as inclusive as possible the officers had met with participants in the Innovate Trust project to make the Welsh transport system and its governance more responsive to the needs of people with learning difficulties. The Group had maintained its presence on the Active Travel Board and continued to advocate for the recommendations set out in the Group's review of the Active Travel Act.

The new statutory duty to promote active travel, which was a result of the Group's amendment to the Active Travel Act passed via the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) Act, had come into force in January. A clear statement was still awaited from the Welsh Government on how it would extend this duty to other parts of the public sector beyond local authorities, in line with its promise to the Senedd. The Group had collaborated closely with the Welsh Government on the production of the statutory guidance which was essential to support the new duty and hoped to see it published imminently.

The Chair thanked all the members for their support for the Group's work.

Financial Report

The Chair reported that all the Group's activities had been carried out on a voluntary basis, consequently the Group had no expenditure and had not needed, or received, any income. However, he noted that the Group's collaboration with the THINK project at Aberystwyth

University on the Bikes and Buses report had been funded by THINK to the sum of £2000. All payments were made directly by THINK and no funds were handled by the CPGATA

Election of Chair

The Chair passed control of the meeting to the Secretary, who invited nominations for the post of Chair. John Griffiths MS was proposed by Cllr Dan De’Ath and seconded by Joseph Carter. There being no further nominations, John was declared elected as Chair for the coming year. He thanked the meeting for their support and resumed the Chair.

Election of Secretary

Chris Roberts was proposed by John Sayce and seconded by Cllr Dan De’Ath. There were no further nominations, so Chris was duly elected.

Ordinary Meeting Business

Active Travel & the Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) – Panel discussion with Cllr Anthony Hunt, Leader of Torfaen Council; Ben George, Head of Regional Transport, Transport for Wales; and Kaarina Ruta, Senior Policy Officer (Transport), Welsh Local Government Association

The Chair welcomed the panel and explained how active travel funding would be changing from 2026-27 with the CJCs allocating funding from a regional transport fund with no ring-fencing for active travel. There was still a lot of uncertainty about how the new system would operate. It was therefore important that the Group discuss the new arrangements and formulate the questions that needed to be raised in order to provide clarity and secure delivery. He invited the three panel members to make short opening speeches.

Cllr Anthony Hunt expressed a desire to hear the views of members so that he could advocate for active travel at the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) CJC. He expressed concern at the difficulty of promoting long term evidence-based policies in the current political climate, making it vitally important that we put forward the strongest possible case for active travel and all its benefits for health and the climate. It was important that CJCs adopted a wider view of well-being, embracing environmental and social issues, not a narrow, solely economic approach. There should continue to be a balance of large and small active travel schemes, since smaller interventions could make a real difference, walking buses being a good example. It was important that the challenges of developing active travel in rural areas and the valleys were addressed as the areas also offered significant opportunities. Ebikes offer an important means of overcoming topography but require better storage solutions, particularly at workplaces. He expressed a desire to maintain a dialogue with the Group to assist him in promoting active travel at the CJC.

Ben George described how the momentum for active travel had recently diminished. This was partly due to changing political priorities, pressures on local authorities and much of the ‘low hanging fruit’ having been taken. A further challenge was the long term, since 2009, decline in the Welsh Government’s transport spend. All this made effective advocacy for active travel even more important. The backlog in road maintenance was a major financial pressure. TfW had been providing objective advice to the CJCs on their Regional Transport Plans but there would inevitably be political considerations in the makeup of the plans. Competing local demands amongst the constituent local authorities were bound to cause

difficulties; there were no incentives for making regional rather than local decisions. Prioritising the plans had been particularly difficult, and it was still not clear what level of priority active travel would be given. The whole process was new to the CJs and this inevitably posed difficulties.

Kaarina Ruta expressed her concern over the potential threat to smaller scale active travel and road safety interventions as the shift to regional funding took place. There were positives with greater flexibility and longer-term funding for the CJs as well as a reduced administrative burden on the local authorities. CJs would still be required to work with TfW's programme managers to ensure cohesion with national policies. An integrated approach was essential.

In the general discussion that followed the key points raised were: a regional approach to issues such as inclusive design could lead to greater consistency; the importance of a bottom up approach, working closely with local communities and user groups, particularly the disabled; it was not clear whether the core funding for active travel currently granted to each local authority would continue; there were still many questions about how the funding would work, conversations were ongoing; given that design standards are enforced through Welsh Government funding conditions, how would the standards be enforced via regional funding; would CJs be exploring other sources of funding for active travel; a number of key politicians on the CJs, particularly in the CCR, understood the importance of active travel; there was a need for clear local active travel strategies developed through effective local engagement; deprived areas should receive a fair share of active travel interventions; how would an equitable distribution of funding across the local authorities be ensured; there is a need to recognise the role of cities in demonstrating the effectiveness of active travel; would the requirements of horse riders be properly considered; how could adherence to inclusive design standards be enforced regardless of the source of the funding for the intervention; there should not be a binary approach of active travel versus cars, rather investment in transport should be based on what is best for communities; the duty in the Active Travel Act to enhance facilities for walkers and cyclists when making changes to the highway is not being enforced, what action could the CPGATA take to have this important provision properly implemented; there are concerns over the accountability of the CJs, their openness to scrutiny and how local active travel groups could engage with them.

The Chair undertook to engage MSs on the issues raised in the meeting with a view to them putting questions and raising points in the Senedd. He would keep the Group informed of progress. He thanked the panel members and all attendees for their contributions to the discussion.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: The minutes were accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting with the correction that Ioan Bellin works for Delyth Jewell MS.

Matters Arising: None

Any Other Business: None.

The meeting closed at 1.20pm

Attendance List

First Name	Surname	Job Title	Organisation
Ioan	Bellin	SCA	Delyth Jewell AS
Ruth	Billingham	Head of Campaigns & Public Affairs	Living Streets
John	Bradley	NHS Principal Public Health Practitioner	Public Health Wales
Rebecca	Brough	Policy and Advocacy Manager	Ramblers Cymru
Joseph	Carter	Head of Devolved Nations	British Lung Foundation
Stephen	Cunnah	Policy and External Affairs Manager	Sustrans Cymru
Dan	De'Ath	Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport	Cardiff Council
Helen	Donnan	Access Field Officer, Wales	British Horse Society
Sam	Farnfield	Director	Pedal Power
Ben	George	Head of Regional Transport	Transport for Wales
Matthew	Gilbert	Active Travel Lead	Transport for Wales
John	Griffiths	Member of the Senedd	Senedd Cymru
Natalie	Grohmann	Transport - Policy, Planning and Partnerships Officer	Welsh Government
Anthony	Hunt	Leader	Torfaen County Borough Council
Kirsty	James	Campaign Officer	RNIB (Cymru)
Keith	Jones	Director	ICE Wales Cymru
Mike	Jones-Pritchard	Principal	@rchitecture
Phil	Lewis	Chair	Active Wheels
Hugh	Mackay		Cycling UK VofG
John	Mather		Cycling UK (N Wales)
Hilary	May		ValeVeloWays
Andrew	Minnis	Research Team Leader	Senedd Cymru
Gavin	Newman	Team Leader Highways, Traffic & Enforcement	Torfaen County Borough Council
Simon	Nicholls	Bus Coordinator	Newport City Council
Gwenda	Owen	Engagement Officer - Wales	Cycling UK
Louis	Preece	Active Travel Projects Officer	Newport City Council
Gareth	Price	Clerk	Senedd Cymru
Chris	Roberts	Secretary	CPGATA
Kaarina	Ruta	Transport Assistant	WLGA
John	Sayce	Chair	Wheelrights
Phil	Snaith	Secretary	Carmarthenshire Cycle Forum
Paul	Streets	Secretary	Cardiff Cycle City
Alan	Tapp	Professor of Social Marketing	UWE
Greg	Tasker	Active Travel Manager	Newport City Council
Tom	Wells		Active Travel West Wales
Mark	Weston	Director of Access	British Horse Society

Patrick	Williams	National Programme Manager, Active Travel Fund	Sustrans Cymru
Peter	Wong	Councillor	Cardiff Council

Apologies:

Davina Carey-Evans, Family Fund
Cllr Hazel Evans, Carmarthenshire County Council
Heledd Fychan MS, Senedd Cymru
Llyr Gruffydd MS, Senedd Cymru