

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales  
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau/ Economy, Infrastructure and Skills  
Committee  
Deddf Teithio Llesol (Cymru) 2013 / Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013  
Ymateb gan Beicio Bangor a Lonydd Llonydd Môn / Evidence from Beicio  
Bangor and Safe Streets Anglesey

To assess the implementation and operation to date of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, including:

- How far the stated objectives of the Active Travel Act are being achieved;

I take the objectives of the Act from “**An Active Travel Action Plan for Wales**”:

**Foreword:**

It offers a simple way of building physical activity into everyday lives and bringing associated health improvements; it reduces motorised traffic and with it air pollution, carbon emissions and congestion; it helps make people and communities feel more connected and boost local businesses; it offers low cost mobility, enabling access to education, jobs and services.

Realising these benefits requires a real change in how people in Wales travel for shorter everyday journeys. Whereas currently around 6 percent of adults cycle and 64 percent walk at least weekly for active travel journeys, our aspiration is to see this rise substantially by 2026. Encouraging and enabling this to happen will require the concerted efforts not just of the Welsh Government, but of our partners: local authorities, health professionals, the education sector, businesses, the third sector and not least the people of Wales...

**Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AM**

**Minister for Economy, Science and Transport**

...

**Vision**

**What are we trying to achieve?**

For people in Wales, we want walking and cycling to become the preferred ways of getting around over shorter distances."

**National results so far:**

Statistical Bulletin 10/2018 Walking and cycling in Wales: Active travel, 2016-17 30 Jan 2018 indicates a slight worsening of the situation. That can be put down to minor variation, but it certainly does not show any improvement.

<http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2018/180130-active-travel-walking-cycling-2016-17-en.pdf>

## **Maps of existing and integrated networks:**

Five years after the act became law, we are supposed to have audited maps of the existing facilities, and outline maps of the aspirations for an integrated network. In our area, the maps of the existing facilities were at least able to tell us that no complete routes of adequate quality exist. This may be a success of some sort, though it was not new information to us. However, the integrated maps, in our area, have been an unequivocal failure. The comment from one highways engineer was: "we decided that all we had to do was put in the things that we wanted to do within the next two or three years anyway."

Beicio Bangor has written to the Minister:

Dear Minister,

"The "consultation" period for the integrated maps required by the Active Travel Act 2013 is now over and the results are to be presented to yourself for approval - or, as the Act specifically permits, return for improvement. The maps produced to date by Gwynedd and Anglesey Councils do not fulfil the requirements of the Act. They are not integrated; they do not join up to form a network that allows complete journeys to be made. And they do not provide an aspiration for the next fifteen years, as they are also required to do. (In the context of the Netherlands' eight-year program that provided the best network of Active Travel facilities in the world, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuBdf9jYj7o>, this seems a modest requirement.) We have done our best to cooperate with the consultation process. At <http://www.beiciobangor.org.uk/index.asp?pageid=674048> we have produced an outline of a truly integrated map, within the meaning of the Act. And at <http://www.beiciobangor.org.uk/index.asp?pageid=644928> we have gone into more detail about possible plans for some local areas.

I hope that you will ensure that the plans, when finally approved, do indeed fulfil the requirements of the Act."

## **Current projects receiving funding**

We have been told in January 2018 that several projects for new active travel facilities in Anglesey and Gwynedd are to receive funding. As far as we know (we have not seen detailed plans), these all have critical points of failure, and even the continuous stretches are of marginal quality. It seems that, nearly five years after the Act became law, it has not given effective direction to local efforts.

- The effectiveness of subordinate legislation and guidance made under the Act;

For example, the instruction to include analysis of active travel in economic work. At the public consultation on preliminary plans for the third Menai crossing, we were informed that an executive decision had been made to leave active travel out of all the economic calculations, on the grounds that they couldn't be material to the results. We are confident that they could and would (<https://www.cyclinguk.org/campaigning/views-and-briefings/cycling->

[and-economy,  
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B79GiPQhHpoDUIhqNXFJUWN3YIE/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B79GiPQhHpoDUIhqNXFJUWN3YIE/view))  
and have felt obliged to write to the project director as follows:

### **"Economic benefits of effective cycle facilities**

The outline economic calculations need to take account of the benefits of effective cycle facilities. The standard WELTAG / DMRB methodology that has been used precedes the Active Travel Act. In order to comply with the Act, its results need to be adjusted in order to reflect the advantages of removing congestion both on and off the bridge, reduced demand for parking space, and the other benefits of active travel. Without explicit recognition of these advantages, the cycling facilities will be undervalued and may well be so badly delivered as to waste almost all of the money spent on them."

In short, we are unable to identify any such effectiveness to date.

- Any action which should be taken to improve the effectiveness of the Act and its implementation to date;
  - We would wish to see effective use of the powers in the Act to ensure that all planning, and the integrated network maps in particular, are adequately done and appropriately implemented.
  - Perhaps more importantly, the highway engineers and councilors who are required to implement the Act need education. As yet, in general, they do not have the relevant knowledge, skills, or attitudes that the Act requires. They need the knowledge of why active travel can ensure less congestion, better health, flourishing High Streets and connected communities. Despite the guidance of the Active Travel Act and the availability of best practice (and tours guided by experts, see <http://www.hembrow.eu/studytour/>) just across the North Sea, they do not have the skills needed to design and build integrated routes of adequate quality. And their attitudes are inappropriate; the mention of active travel elicits dismissal and mild contempt, any further pressing arouses active hostility.
  
- How far the Act has represented, and will continue to represent, value for money.
  - Answers will vary depending on how the calculation is done. From our local perspective, we have spent a lot of time on this and seen no concrete (or tarmac) result. On a higher level, we may be achieving something. We have been assured that the failures of planning in the Caernarfon bypass, where a strip of tarmac around the town was planned without crossing points for active travel, and without an exit point to allow motor traffic direct access to the bypass without first congesting the centre of town, are to be remedied and that no further such mistakes will be made.

To assess the effectiveness of wider active travel policy in supporting delivery of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, including:

- The effectiveness of the Active Travel Action Plan;
  - With its references to Ministerial leadership and effective local authority action, we see little reason to believe that it is of any more use than, for example, the 2003 walking and cycling strategy. The local draft well-being document, for example, makes no mention of active transport anywhere.

- Whether sufficient funding and capacity are available to support implementation of the Act itself and wider active travel policy;

Funding is always a problem - plans are no use unless implemented - but our main issue is the lack of capacity among the road-building professions to conceive of how active travel may be useful. We also question the capacity of one Minister to engage with his enormous range of responsibilities, and would welcome the idea of a Minister with narrower responsibilities who could really master the Transport brief.

- The operation of the Active Travel Board;
  - We cannot really comment.
- Whether active travel is integrated effectively in wider Welsh Government and local government policy.
  - So far we see rather limited signs of effectiveness, as detailed above.
  - I hope that this helps.