

Active Travel (Wales) Bill

Between May and August 2012 the Welsh Government consulted on an Active Travel (Wales) Bill, which was laid in the National Assembly for Wales on the 18 February 2013.

<http://wales.gov.uk/legislation/programme/assemblybills/active-travel-bill/?lang=en>

What is the purpose of the Bill?

The purpose of the Bill is to require local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists and to prepare maps identifying current and potential future routes for their use. The Bill will also require new road schemes (including road improvement schemes) to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at design stage.

Specifically, the Bill makes provision:

- for approved maps of existing active travel routes and related facilities
- for approved integrated network maps of the new and improved active travel routes and related facilities needed to create an integrated network of active travel routes and related facilities
- requiring local authorities to have regard to integrated network maps in preparing transport policies and to make continuous improvement in the range and quality of active travel routes and related facilities
- requiring the Welsh Ministers and local authorities, in constructing and improving highways, to have regard to the desirability of enhancing the provision made for walking and cycling.

What are the benefits of the Bill?

The Bill is intended to;

- enable more people to walk and cycle and generally travel by non-motorised transport;
- make walking and cycling the most natural and normal way of getting about (so that more people can experience the health benefits, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and help address poverty and disadvantage);
- help our economy to grow, and take steps that will unlock sustainable economic growth.

The Welsh Government is seeking to use legislation to reinforce idea of active travel as a viable mode of transport and a suitable alternative to motorised transport for shorter journeys.

The Government wants better information provision, and better forward planning processes, which allow a more strategic use of funding and drives activity so that it is focused on promoting active travel.

The ultimate aim of the legislation is to create an environment where it safer and more practical to walk and cycle and than it is at present.

Progress of the Bill

The Active Travel (Wales) Bill is currently at Stage 1 of the Assembly's legislative process. This stage involves the consideration of the general principles of a Bill by a committee, and the agreement of those general principles by the Assembly.

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