



North Pembroke Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – May 2013

National Assembly - Active Travel (Wales) Bill - Final Stage 1

Introduction

The Enterprise and Business Committee considered the general principles of the Active Travel (Wales) Bill between 20th February and 18th April. On 2nd May, in a private meeting, the Committee considered the key issues of the Bill, and on 24th May the Committee's Stage 1 report (including its recommendations) was laid before the Assembly.

Key issues in the Committee's Recommendations include:

- The requirement for consultation on draft guidance connected to the Bill. Draft guidance should be laid before the Assembly. Implementation of design guidance issued under the Bill should be mandatory.
- The "active travel route" definition should include facilitation of shorter journeys to more accurately reflect policy intention. Designation of route localities should primarily be based on the potential for journeys to be made by active means rather than by population. If population is used, it should apply to the combined population of groups of smaller communities and not on the size of individual settlements.
- "Continuous, direct, safe and comfortable for walking and cycling", more closely reflecting the needs of walkers and cyclists, should be used as route designations. Include a definition of 'walkers and cyclists' that makes explicit reference to persons with disabilities who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids.
- Crossings (essential elements of routes) should be taken account of when mapping and improving active travel routes.
- Guidance on the use of shared routes should be based on evidence and consultation with all relevant interest groups. The use and impact of shared route provision should be monitored to provide evidence on which to base any future review of guidance.
- The period for the submission of "existing routes maps" should be reduced from three years to one year.
- A definition of "continuous improvement" should be included in the Bill. Provide details of how continuous improvement will be measured and of the minimum requirements that local authorities will be expected to meet in order for them to comply with this duty.
- Enhanced provision should be made for walkers and cyclists in schemes for the creation or improvement of highways.
- An impact assessment of financial costs and benefits should be undertaken when developing guidance under the Bill and be made publicly available.
- Guidance to local authorities should include how permissive routes are to be shown on "existing routes maps" and "integrated network maps", and how to engage with landowners on matters relating to permissive routes.

Consideration of the Bill by the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee

The Committee has not been persuaded that the balance of the Bill is correct, and it calls for more detail to be set out on the face of the Bill. Powers to make regulations should, in some instances, replace proposed Ministerial powers to issue statutory guidance.

- Where (in the report) the Committee considers statutory guidance to be appropriate, the Minister should consider including on the face of the Bill a procedural mechanism to facilitate scrutiny.

The Committee does not want to see a trend developing of substantive provisions arising from primary legislation being delivered without any formal scrutiny. Recommended amendments to the Bill include:

- Provision of a clear set of minimum criteria to be used in determining what constitutes a designated locality.
- Power to make regulations to specify more detail of the criteria to be used to designate localities in a local authority area.
- Minimum consultation and other requirements for local authorities when preparing integrated network maps.
- Power to make regulations covering the requirements that local authorities must take into account when preparing integrated network maps.
- Definition of the meaning of the phrase “continuous improvement” by reference to minimum requirements that need to be met by local authorities.
- Provision for regulations to be made setting out how the duty placed on local authorities to make continuous improvement in the range and quality of the active travel routes and related activities is to be implemented and monitored.
- Enable the legislation to apply to users of mobility aids; expressly to include a definition that, for the purpose of this Bill, “walkers and cyclists” include persons with disabilities who use mobility aids, which may be prescribed in regulations.

Conclusion of Stage 1

The Motion to approve the General Principles of the Active Travel (Wales) Bill will be put to Plenary on 4th June. The Motion to approve the Financial Resolution of the Active Travel (Wales) Bill will also be put to Plenary on 4th June.

The two committee reports (including the recommendations) can be found on the following link: www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/g1715/Agenda%20Tuesday%2004-Jun-2013%2013.30%20Plenary.pdf?T=0&CT=2.

Changes to Irish Rail Departure Times on Rosslare Line Services

On 29th May Irish Rail announced that amended service times on the Rosslare line will operate from 4th June to 2nd September to provide greater connectivity for those returning to Ireland by ferry for The Gathering through Rosslare Europort. The new timetable can be downloaded from: www.irishrail.ie/media/08-DublinRosslareEuroport-0406131.pdf. Regrettably there is no rail connection to 09.00 sailings from Rosslare.

The Gathering, a tourism-led initiative, aims to mobilise the Irish diaspora to return to Ireland during 2013 to be part of specially organised local gatherings and events during the year. While the initiative is primarily directed at the Irish diaspora, and those with other links to the country, the organisers hope the experience for the general tourist will also be enhanced.

It is a pity that Irish Rail has taken such an extremely limited approach towards facilitating travel experiences for tourists travelling to and from Rosslare and Fishguard Harbour. Bernard Allan, an Irish member of the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum, reports that campaigners continue to work strenuously for permanent improvements to Rosslare rail-ferry connections.

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The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum is an independent voluntary group that works for the provision of an effective integrated transport system in the North Pembrokeshire area, promotes the benefits of public transport and works towards the greater use of public transport systems.

The Forum is a member of Bus Users UK Cymru, the Environmental Network for Pembrokeshire and the Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association.

The Forum's work is supported by:

Individual Members (£5 p.a.), Family Members (£8 p.a.) & Corporate Members (£12 p.a.)

(Corporate members include town and community councils, transport operators, and groups, organisations and associations with a transport interest)

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