

SUBJECT: ACTIVE TRAVEL INTEGRATED NETWORK MAPS

MEETING: County Council

DATE: 15 February 2018

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: all

NON-PUBLICATION

1. PURPOSE:

This report seeks to advise the Council of the results of the recent public consultation exercise on the Draft Integrated Network Maps (INMs) and seek approval for the final INMs to be submitted to Welsh Government (WG).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the council approves the INMs as attached at Appendices A and C and endorses their submission to WG.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013) places a number of duties upon local authorities in Wales to map, plan for, improve and promote opportunities for active travel.
- 3.2 These duties include the duty to develop, consult upon and submit to WG a set of so-called Integrated Network Maps for the seven settlements of Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow, Gilwern, Magor, Monmouth and Usk. These show a proposed network of key walking routes and a network of key cycling routes that the council wishes to implement within the next 15 years. As the INMs are a plan for the future, they include routes that are currently used but may not meet the formal standards of Active Travel routes as set out in WG guidance, or they could be routes that do not currently exist but that have been identified within other strategic plans, or have been identified through the consultation process.
- 3.3 The deadline for submission of these INMs to WG was 3 November 2017. Having failed to submit maps by this date MCC was granted an extension to 28 February 2018.
- 3.4 In line with WG statutory guidance, the extensive 12 week consultation process on the maps closed on 16 January 2017. This included an online questionnaire, community events in all seven settlements, secondary school 'show of hands surveys' and workshops for members, officers and stakeholder members of the MCC Strategic Transport Group and Strategic Cycle Groups. In advance and during the consultation it was publicised by

press releases, tweets and facebook post, to members of the Local Access Forum, and directly to anyone who had responded to the previous Active Travel Existing Routes Maps consultation and or who contacted the council wishing to be kept informed of active travel developments.

- 3.5 MCC received 33 responses via the online survey, plus a number of letters send directly to the council. More than 70 residents attended the events, nearly 900 students participated in the secondary school surveys. The council also received a number of petitions concerning various routes in Caldicot signed by more than 100 residents. Further details can be found in the draft Consultation Report (Appendix D).
- 3.6 No routes have been deleted from the draft maps as part of the consultation. A number of additional routes that have been suggested by consultees have been added. Many of the consultation responses also made specific comments on the current state of proposed routes, whether they were currently usable as a key walking or cycling route or whether work was required. At the same time, and in line with the WG guidance, MCC undertook a survey on the state of the draft routes, and how they score against the criteria for a suitable route set out in WG guidance.
- 3.7 However not all routes have been audited to date, as some are more long-term aspirations and will need to be assessing and further development in future when either further funding is available, or when opportunity arises for funding improvements as part of planning applications.
- 3.8 As required by the WG guidance, and based on the consultation responses, the auditing (e.g. the amount of work required) and the prioritisation exercises at the workshops, routes were sorted into short-term (to be brought up to the required standard within five years), medium-term (5-10 years) and long-term (10-15 years).
- 3.9 The list of walking & cycling routes proposed for adoption as the councils INMs and submission to WG, together with their audit score, the proposed short/medium/long term designation and a short comment on key issues can be found in appendix A. Appendix B provides maps showing the proposed routes and highlighting those proposed for short-term upgrade. Appendix C also shows the routes using the mapping system mandated by WG for submission of routes.
- 3.10 It should be noted that the Active Travel Act requires MCC to redo the INMs every three years.
- 3.11 It should further be noted that Active Travel, as defined by the Act, relates to walking and cycling as a mode of transport rather than as a leisure activity. However, some routes and facilities for active travel might also encourage recreational walking and cycling.
- 3.12 Also, as part of the INM submission MCC is also required to review its Existing Routes Maps (ERMs), which the council submitted to WG in 2015. The ERMs show the routes within the designated areas that are already suitable and appropriate for making Active Travel journeys in accordance with WG guidance. This defines suitable routes as those that have been audited and achieve a score of more than 70% against the criteria set out

in the WG guidance. The ERMs are intended to inform the public of the safe and suitable routes for Active Travel. As the public will need to have confidence that the routes on the maps are suitable for use, and as there are some issues with all audited routes that officers believe merits further investigation or improvements, it is proposed that no ERMs are added to those submitted to WG in 2015.

3.13 Furthermore, WG have made £5m available for local authorities across Wales with the specific purpose to support further scheme design, land acquisition and pre-works for active travel schemes identified through the INM process. MCC share of the funding is £175k which will become available once the MCC INMs are formally accepted by WG. It is proposed that officers will bring a further report on proposal to allocate the funding to a future Strategic Transport Group meeting.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Active Travel Act places duties upon local authorities. In this instance the statutory requirement is that the Council approves the Integrated Network Maps and that these are approved by Council prior to submission to WG before 28th February. The settlements to be considered are specified by WG along with how the information is to be submitted. As such the authority is obliged to structure and respond in the manner outlined in the report.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Members will from time to time receive reports surrounding Active Travel, any funding forthcoming from WG in support of assessing and creating active travel routes within Monmouthshire. The provision of INM's is a statutory requirement but the Maps are subject to formal review every three years which will form the basis of evaluation and revision.

6. REASONS:

- To allow Council to consider the responses received as part of the consultation process.
- To ensure the Council has Active Travel Integrated Network Maps as required by law.
- To enable all necessary maps to be submitted to WG within the revised deadline.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 There are no direct resource implications of passing the report.

7.2 Elements of the work that needs to be undertaken to deliver the duties within the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, and delivery of the future walking & cycling networks set out in the INMs will require a change in practices as well as additional resources. In terms of practices, MCC is working to ensure that the need to deliver the plans is understood by highway, transportation, planning, estates, leisure and countryside and other key staff. In terms of additional investment, this may come through the council, through grant, developer contributions or other private and voluntary sector contributions.

8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

8.1 Monmouthshire Draft Well-being Plan states that the Public Services Board will focus on “Enabling active travel and sustainable transport to improve air quality and give other health benefits” help” and that this links to

- Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life
- Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change
- Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.
- Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.
- A Future Generations and Equality Assessment is provided – Appendix E

9. CONSULTEES

All members were notified of the public consultation. A workshop for all members was undertaken on 8 January. The draft final INMs are to be discussed at the council’s Strategic Transport Group meeting on 7 February.

For details of the public consultation see appendix D.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix A – List of proposed Integrated Network Map routes

Appendix B – Maps of proposed Integrated Network Maps, including proposed short terms projects.

Appendix C – Maps of proposed Integrated Network Maps, using WG mandated mapping system

Appendix D – Draft consultation report

Appendix E – FGEA form

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