

PACTS response to:
Welsh Government
Consultation on Active Travel (Wales) Bill

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) is a registered charity and an associate Parliamentary Group. Its charitable objective is "**To protect human life through the promotion of transport safety for the public benefit**". Its aim is to advise and inform members of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords on air, rail and road safety issues.

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PACTS welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation as we support this initiative to encourage active transport. We agree that making walking and cycling easier and safer can have a significant positive impact on health, greenhouse gas emissions, and can help in addressing poverty and disadvantage.

However, while the draft bill acknowledges early on that safety concerns are a major barrier to walking and cycling, it does not fully address overcoming this barrier. Our concern on this point is expressed in response to questions 1 and 7.

1. What are your views on the proposals for Local Authorities to have a duty to:

- identify and map the routes within their areas that are safe and appropriate for walking and cycling;
- identify and map the enhancements that would be required to create a fully integrated network for walking and cycling and develop a prioritised list of schemes to deliver the network;
- deliver an enhanced network subject to budget availability and following due process;
- consider the potential for enhancing walking and cycling provision in the development of new road schemes?

We support this as a good way of improving infrastructure and encouraging walking and cycling. However, we have concerns about how the analysis is done and whether there are enough experts and resources available to conduct it.

It is not clear how local authorities are to assess which routes are safe for walking and cycling. We would suggest that an analysis of risk is added to this initial assessment stage. Local authorities could look at police collected STATS19 casualty data to identify high risk sites and the main causes of collisions. This would give a better informed foundation on which to base the second step where the local authority is required to plan enhancements to the network.

In the second bullet point, we would suggest the addition of the word 'safe':

- identify and map the enhancements that would be required to create a fully integrated, *safe* network for walking and cycling and develop a prioritised list of schemes to deliver the network;

2. How do you think the duty should be enforced?

In order to incentivise local authorities, the delivered outcomes should be measured and linked to future funding.

3. Do you think the type of routes and facilities that Local Authorities be required to map should be specified in guidance or regulation?

In order to ensure consistency across local authorities in Wales there could be some high level outline guidance, but ideally consistency could mostly be achieved through the sharing of best practice.

4. What are your views about revising rights of way definitions, for example allowing cyclists to use footpaths, or equestrians to use cycle paths?

We do not have any specific view on this.

5. What are your views of the proposal for new design guidance?

We support this proposal of new design guidance, as a means of ensuring high quality facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and value for money for investments.

6. What would the costs and the benefits of these proposals be to you or your organisation (or the people your organisation represents)?

These proposals could potentially serve as a demonstration of good practice for our organisation. If this Bill is successful in Wales there would be a strong argument for implementing similar legislation in the rest of the UK.

7. We have asked a series of specific questions. Is there anything else that you would like us to consider as part of the development of the Active Travel Bill, or wider activity to encourage walking and cycling

1. Evidence shows that when cycling increases, so do crashes and casualties. This very worthy initiative must have safety firmly integrated into its aims and processes to ensure that increased levels of walking and cycling does not lead to increased casualties.

2. The draft bill talks of engaging with local residents once the maps are complete (54, 55). We believe stakeholders should be consulted when compiling the map of possible enhancements to the network. We suggest consideration is given to setting up local working groups to review the recommendations and work together to implement agreed schemes.

3. We welcome the recognition that safety fears could be putting people off using active transport, and the encouragement to focus on where the potential of active transport is great.

Local Authorities would also be required to identify where significant numbers of shorter journeys are being made and there is no safe route to walk or cycle. (10) (45)

4. We support the proposed means of measuring success: by monitoring levels of walking and cycling.

Ultimately, this Bill will be a success if it leads to more people walking and cycling , and we propose to monitor this rather than measuring the physical improvements made to the infrastructure. We want Local Authorities to focus their efforts on the infrastructure improvements that will make the most significant difference for enabling more people to walk and cycle. This kind of enhancement could potentially be quite small scale, for example amending a local by-law to permit cycling in a previously pedestrian only area. Monitoring the outcomes we wish to achieve will incentivise Local Authorities to deliver the most effective changes to infrastructure, rather than encourage them to build large amounts of infrastructure where it will not necessarily have the most benefit. (76)

5. PACTS would like to commend the Welsh Government for the long termism of their vision for active transport and their endorsement of continuous improvement.