

Have your say about local walking and cycling routes

Welsh Government is pushing forward in its ambition to make active travel a realistic alternative by making it easier for people to tell their local councils where existing routes need to be improved and new routes built.

An interactive map to gather opinions from communities about local walking and cycling paths is being launched today in several areas across Wales.

Hosted by Commonplace, the website invites people to let their local councils know where they'd like to see improvements to walking and cycling paths. This could be because routes are interrupted, feel unsafe or even don't exist where they are needed. Each area will have its own Commonplace website which members of the public can access from the National site and people are encouraged to share with their friends, families and colleagues so that as many people as possible have their say.

Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport Lee Waters wants to see significant growth in people making short journeys on foot or on a bike and therefore that people who live in the area fully involved when Councils develop active travel network maps which plan for where major improvements will be made over the next 15 year period.

He said:

"We want to tackle the many barriers that people face when considering whether to make their everyday journeys by walking and cycling. We have greatly stepped up investment in walking and cycling improvements over the last few years to ensure we have high quality infrastructure and will continue to do so. But this investment will only lead to people choosing to travel differently if it really meets their needs."

"The Covid-19 pandemic has seen an increase in people walking and cycling as their chosen method to get around, whether to get to school, work when they can't work from home, the shops or for exercise and those shorter journeys where it isn't necessary to use private cars."

"We want to capture people's local knowledge while it is still fresh in their minds. Where did their active travel journeys become difficult? Were there areas where they felt unsafe? Are there any places where they couldn't continue their journeys? Are there journeys they'd like to walk and cycle but don't feel safe doing so?"

"Unfortunately, Covid-19 has also impacted the way Councils can conduct public engagement. In-person events go against Government advice of limiting the number of people we can meet indoors. We recognised the need to make high quality digital engagement tools available to local authorities and made this investment to make sure all the LAs have a level playing field when it comes to consulting with their communities."

Seven local authorities are using the Commonplace website this autumn with others to follow over the next few months.

Chair of the Active Travel Board Dr Dafydd Trystan Davies said:

"We want to see people in Wales choosing to walk or cycle for shorter journeys. This is a great opportunity for people to tell us what is stopping them from travelling actively at the moment and suggesting improvements and new routes to their local Councils."

"I am committed to ensuring that the significant investment that Welsh Government is making in active travel is based on the needs of local communities. This website will form an important part of improving the provision of active travel which will benefit the environment, health and the economy for all. I know of the enthusiasm within local areas for further developments and look forward to all Councils engaging with the website and further developing ambitious plans during the next 12 months."