

Active Travel Network Maps: Background information

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 requires local authorities in Wales to produce maps of walking and cycling* networks in their local area, known as Active Travel Network Maps (ATNMs). These maps are designed to show two main things:

1. **Existing routes** – those current walking and cycling routes that already meet Welsh Government active travel standards, meaning they can be readily used for everyday journeys, and
2. **Future routes** – new routes that the local authority proposes to create in the future, as well as current routes that are planned for improvement to bring them up to the standards.

* For simplicity, the terms walking and cycling are used on the maps. However, all pedestrians, runners, and users of mobility scooters, wheelchairs, pushchairs, adapted or non-standard cycles, and other mobility aids are included in the definition of walking and cycling.

Existing route limitations: As well as routes that meet Welsh Government standards, the maps also include a small number of existing routes that fall slightly short of the required standards, but which are deemed important enough by the local authority to be included. Where this is the case, there will be a short 'route statement' available explaining the route's limitations, to enable users to make an informed decision about whether the route is suitable for them or not.

Future route types: Where a future route is defined as both 'walking and cycling', this does not necessarily indicate that the route is a planned shared use route. 'Walking and cycling' routes encompass a range of future options including either shared or separated foot and cycle paths, away from or alongside a road. As routes are developed, all options for pedestrian and cycle provision will be explored in line with the Active Travel Act Guidance, with the exact configuration to be determined closer to the proposed build date.

Future route prioritisation: Future routes show how the walking and cycling network is planned to develop over time, and information about whether a route is prioritised for development in the short, medium or long term is available on the maps. Local authorities use criteria such as the number of people a route could benefit, and the extent to which a route addresses local needs, to help determine the order in which routes should be developed or constructed. Timescales provided by the local authorities are indicative and may be subject to change. In particular, within the context of infrastructure development, 'short term' is likely to indicate an intention to build within the next five years, rather than a commitment to an imminent start date.

Related facilities, barriers and crossings: The maps also show related facilities (such as toilets, cycle parking etc), barriers (e.g. steps or gates) and road crossings that may be relevant to people using the routes. Local authorities are planning to update this information in the near future, although at present it may not be fully up to date.

Extent of the maps: Local authorities have a duty to map and develop active travel routes in the most populous areas in each authority, which are known as ‘designated localities’. However, routes outside these areas may be included where there is demand and a high potential for their everyday use, for example, to connect an outlying community to a nearby designated locality. Designated localities can be shown on the Active Travel Network Maps by selecting the appropriate layer.

Status of the maps: The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 requires local authorities to submit their maps to Welsh Ministers every three years. Due to the continuing impact of the covid crisis, Welsh Ministers have authorised extended submission dates for this round of mapping. Those maps that have been submitted and already approved for publication by the Welsh Ministers are currently available on DataMapWales. The mapping for all remaining local authorities will be added once their maps have been approved by the Welsh Ministers.

Further information: More information on active travel in Wales, including the [Active Travel Act \(Wales\) 2013](#) and the [Active Travel Act Guidance](#) (including the route design standards), can be found [here](#).