

National Transport Plan 2015

Sustrans submission to Welsh Government consultation into National Transport Plan 2015 - Draft

March 2015

Executive Summary

1. Sustrans is a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.
2. Sustrans welcomes to opportunity to respond to the draft National Transport Plan (NTP) and in particular focus on elements relating to active travel, including support for the delivery of the Active Travel (Wales) Act.
3. We welcome the policy objectives and rationale set out for supporting active travel and the specific interventions listed. While many active travel schemes are best designed to fit into Local Transport Plans (LTPs), it is crucial that integration with active travel is seen as an important part of a national transport plan. National leadership towards increasing the mode share of sustainable transport is vital, and in particular with the unique opportunity afforded by the Active Travel (Wales) Act it is entirely necessary for the NTP to signal a clear lead in this area.
4. While the road and rail sections of the draft NTP contain specific schemes to be taken forward, the active travel section is more general and in the context of the comments made above we think this should be improved.
5. The NTP should prepare for the plans that will be brought forward by local authorities as part of their Local Transport Plans and continuous improvement duties under the Active Travel (Wales) Act. The NTP should have a section which clearly sets out the process and

expectations it has of the Act and sets out Government's planned governance arrangements in taking compliance issues forward. There are also gaps in existing nationally significant active travel routes, and trunk road interfaces that could be prioritised and delivered outside of the ATA / LTP process. We would therefore suggest the Welsh Government includes a forward plan scheme list for active travel schemes as part of the final NTP.

6. In addition it is our recommendation that active travel could be built into other areas of the draft NTP. Smarter Choices programmes have a significant impact on modal shift within transport. Our own work in schools sees a trebling of regular levels of cycling to school in the first year of engagement. Sustrans Cymru has recently delivered a programme of Personalised Travel Planning (PTP) on behalf of the Welsh Government, which has led to a reduction in single car occupancy journeys (12% reduction in Cardiff, full results to be published shortly).
7. Information sharing and promotion play a crucial role in encouraging people to shift journeys away from the private car to other modes. The development of the South Wales Metro provides an opportunity to build in a new round of PTP, in particular in the Newport corridor area. It should become the norm to deliver Smarter Choices programmes alongside new infrastructure as part of Government's commitment to managing demand for transport and encouraging modal change towards a higher take up of sustainable transport.
8. There would also be scope for providing more integration between transport modes as part of the NTP. For example, we would like to see an Access to Stations programme enable more people to walk or cycle safely to their local railway station (or major bus station) without the need for a car. This should be an integrated programme of infrastructure improvements (active travel routes serving the "final mile") and Smarter Choices promotional interventions to help people overcome the barriers and introduce new travel behaviours.

Active Travel Schemes

9. Sections 3.3 (road infrastructure) and 3.9 (rail infrastructure) provide clear lists of specific interventions for road and rail transport in Wales. However, section 3.7 on Active Travel doesn't follow the same approach, instead having more general aims.
10. As part of the Active Travel Act (highlighted in 3.7.1 ref: AT1), local authorities will be planning a strategic network of cycling and walking routes in designated localities within

their boundaries – and it is right that the NTP does not seek to pre-empt schemes that are brought forward as part of this process.

11. However, the National Cycle Network as an entity does provide a strategic importance as a national transport corridor which requires integrated and coordinated approach for its continuous development. Largely this will fall outside of the Active Travel Act process because some of the routes whilst having strategic importance will not be within the designated Built Up Areas. We believe the NTP would be enhanced by replicating the process used for road and rail infrastructure programmes to identify active travel programmes, to include the National Cycle Network [NCN] and key active travel projects on the trunk road network to be delivered by Welsh Government.
12. Accordingly, we have provided a list of schemes Sustrans believes could form part of an additional section of the NTP. We have included these in Annex A.
13. There is also scope for looking at missing links in the NCN. Many routes could link communities, but these gaps may not be identified as part of the Active Travel Act process because they fall slightly out of the designated Built Up Areas. For example, many NCN routes in Wales (and across the UK) are on former railway lines, which link communities and have the benefit of being reasonably flat. In some cases, it may also be worth looking at the feasibility of opening up former railway tunnels to provide key links. In the South Wales valleys for example some former railway tunnels could form viable active travel routes with the advantage of overcoming topographical issues between valley towns.
14. The commitment to understanding the role of the National Cycle Network as a strategic transport corridor by the inclusion of the map in figure 2.1 is welcome. Sustrans suggests this should be matched by including a prioritised list of active travel schemes that would complete strategic gaps within the NCN.
15. Using our own prioritisation appraisal tool, we are currently compiling a list of gaps in the NCN in Wales that could be delivered through a Welsh Government sponsored programme, enabling more people to cycle or walk between communities. Once these schemes are prioritised we would recommend that the list is included in the Annexes to the NTP on the same basis as other programmes.

Combining Smarter Choices with infrastructure

16. There is strong evidence that combining Smarter Choices initiatives (for example information provision) alongside new infrastructure has a significant impact on modal shift. Evaluation of the Sustainable Travel Towns (STT) project in England showed that combining new infrastructure alongside softer measures has the greatest impact in increasing levels of

walking and cycling. The final STT report states: “where promotional measures were accompanied by improvements in the quality of the ‘offer’ (e.g. better bus services, or new cycle infrastructure), this yielded comparatively greater success. This was evident in Darlington in relation to cycling, and in Peterborough in relation to bus travel.”¹

17. People use cars for short journeys because they perceive them to be the quickest and most convenient way to get about without knowledge of the alternatives. Cutting car use will require more sustainable forms of transport to be seen as the quickest and most convenient way to make everyday journeys. Closer integration between different forms of public transport - and with walking and cycling - is key to achieving that change. A more integrated transport system will require investment, and stronger integration of policy, governance and delivery arrangements.

18. Many of the issues faced by users can be explained by examining the development of public transport systems in Wales (and further afield). As the transport system has grown and developed over time, specialisation has occurred within specific networks and modes of transport. From the supply perspective, the concept of the whole journey is often forgotten as each operator focuses on their specific link in the journey. This is in direct contrast to customers, whose priority is to find the best means of travelling from A to B considering all the elements that are involved. Moreover, from the individual’s perspective, the most difficult part of the journey is often outside the main mode used.²

19. The draft NTP variously mentions Information and Transport Choices (section 3.17) and Integrated Transport and Metro (3.23), but there is little linkage between the two sections. Ref CCRM14 highlights the need to improve travel information. This section should be strengthened to set out a clear intention to combine the significant new infrastructure provided by the Metro programme with Smarter Choices initiatives designed to maximise modal shift. This is particularly important around the M4 Newport corridor where the Welsh Government’s own consultation paper highlighted that 43% of journeys on that section of the motorway were under 20 miles in length³ – local journeys within south Wales, many of which could be shifted onto an effective public transport system.

20. Sustrans Cymru recently delivered a programme of Personalised Travel Planning in communities across Wales (Cardiff & Penarth, Caerphilly, Pontypridd and Mon a Menai) on behalf of the Welsh Government. These results have been provided to Welsh Government, and in Cardiff & Penarth the results show a reduction in ‘car as driver’ trips of 12% -

bearing in mind this initiative was not directly combined with any new infrastructure offer, the results show how powerful an intervention PTP is.

21. To strengthen delivery of the National Transport Plan, we recommend that a Smarter Choices programme, including Personalised Travel Planning, should be delivered as a specific intervention as part of the Metro programme and included in the NTP.
22. There should also be clarity over the continued future of other Smarter Choices interventions in Wales, for example work in schools that encourages pupils to cycle or walk the journey to school. Smarter Choices interventions, if well designed and delivered, are known to be highly effective in achieving modal shift. The Sustrans' Bike It project, for example, has consistently trebled the number of pupils cycling to school where it has been delivered.
23. A national programme of cycle training should be included in the National Transport Plan, with targets for the percentage of pupils who are able to access National Standards training and by the age of 13 reach level 2 of the National Standards for Cycle Training. Currently provision of cycle training to this standard is unequitable, with some local authorities' choosing not to deliver to the standard at all. A national programme, committed to in the National Transport Plan is therefore needed to raise standards and secure provision. Equipping young people with the skills and confidence to make short journeys on local roads is an essential component in creating future generations who chose sustainable and active travel over the car for local trips.

Access to Stations

24. To further support integration between modes, the NTP should also include clear plans to link transport modes, and in particular enable more people to reach their local rail or bus stations by active travel, providing a door-to-door journey possible without the need for a car, thus helping to tackle transport poverty⁴ as part of 'Tackling Poverty', one of the five key priorities for the NTP.
25. In England, Sustrans has worked with local authorities on an 'Access to Stations' programme, which received funding through the Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).
26. The programme was designed to reduce congestion by cutting car journeys to stations, cut CO2 emissions and provide an integrated journey.⁵
27. Providing improved access to stations will support economic growth and access to employment by enabling those without a car to access the public transport network. We know that in some parts of Wales over a third of households do not have access to a car,

and up to two-thirds have only one car.⁶ Reducing the need to use a car to access public transport will help more people access jobs and services.

28. The delivery of the NTP would be strengthened by the inclusion of such a package, and Sustrans would recommend this is included as a medium-term ambition.

29. In England the Access to Stations LSTF programme had both capital and revenue components combined, and we would recommend a similar approach in Wales, with a single organisation coordinating on behalf of local authority and Train Operating Company delivery partners. A similar modal should be looked at for Wales.

Other issues

30. The draft NTP has no information on funding models, or timescales. Sustrans Cymru is not alone with its concern that the vast majority of capital funding for active travel schemes is provided to local authorities on an annual basis, with limited funding permitted for pre-works, meaning that more complex schemes (either involving engineering or planning challenges) tend not to be brought forward by local authorities.

31. The NTP should signal a move to a multi-year funding provision for active travel schemes, with the ambition of implementation this regime from 2017/18 – the year that Integrated Network Maps are published as part of the Active Travel (Wales) Act process.

32. England is now moving ahead with a Walking and Cycling Investment Strategy, included as part of the Infrastructure Act recently passed at Westminster.⁷ In the next parliament Ministers will have to come forward with a five-year funding strategy for cycling and walking in England, providing medium-term certainty over funding levels. The Pucher and Buehler academic study “Making cycling irresistible” highlights the funding levels and models that have been used in European countries that are leading the way in cycling levels.⁸

33. Sustrans Cymru believes that the Welsh Government should attempt to follow the lead of Westminster with the introduction of a Walking and Cycling Strategy, and that this should be set at a minimum of £10 per head of population per year (approx. £30 million), and be designed to increase – to match the investment made by leading cycling nations.

34. This funding arrangement could be modelled on the Local Sustainable Transport Fund in England, which provided multi-year funding for councils to deliver improvements in their area designed to improve public transport, walking and cycling.⁹

35. This approach would be consistent with the approach and timescales established through the Active Travel (Wales) Act. The multi-year active travel programmes could be directed towards schemes which score most highly using the Design Guidance prioritisation tool. There could also be themed programmes which are aligned to other Welsh Government

national transport programmes e.g. Access to Education or Access to Stations. Sustrans would welcome the opportunity to offer specific advice on how these national programmes could be designed to ensure greatest impact and value for money. We are currently undertaking a similar piece of work on behalf of the English based Active Travel Alliance, commissioned by Department for Transport.

Annex A – Walking and Cycling Schemes on trunk road network

As highlighted in our response, Sustrans Cymru believes that a programme of active travel schemes on the trunk road network should be prioritised as part of the NTP, in the same way that road and rail schemes are detailed. We provide the below schemes for inclusion in Section 3.7 (of the draft NTP).

The following schemes are either shovel ready, or require a short amount of pre-works and are ready to be delivered. Welsh Government should support the delivery of these schemes as part of the NTP.

Ref	Intervention	Rationale from the evidence	Timing	1	2	3	4	5	Local/Regional
	NCR 43/49 Brecon – Senny Bridge (A40) (First phase Brecon to Llanspydidd)	Upgrading this route would give the community easy access to local schools and facilities and provide access to a wider range of services and public transport provision in Port Talbot. Providing a great place to exercise, meet other people and enjoy the fantastic nature of the Afon Valley all in a safe traffic free environment.	Short						Regional
	NCR 49 and 47 Towy Valley - Llandeilo Bypass (A40)	The Towy Valley Scheme provides the opportunity to create a safe and attractive active travel route for communities living in the valley who need to access Llandeilo for everyday services, schools and work.	Short						Regional

	NCR 449 Fishguard to Haverfordwest (A40)	NCR 449 Fishguard to Haverfordwest (plus Milford Haven) A strategic route that will link major towns in Pembrokeshire. This north-south link combines some on road sections via quiet lanes, new shared use and existing traffic free routes. Existing sections of route already link to key interchanges including Haverfordwest Station and the ferry port at Fishguard/train station but there are missing links in between.	Short						Regional
	Steynton / Studdolph (A4076)	Potential improvements to Steynton/Studdolph junction proposed – opportunity to include active travel as closely linked to existing schools	Short						
	Slade to Milton (A477)	Final phases of sections of shared use route between Pembroke Dock and Sageston.	Short						
	NCR 887 Pontrhydyfen to Efail Fach	Upgrading this route would give the community easy access to local schools and facilities and provide access to a wider range of services and public transport provision in Port Talbot	Short						Local
	Usk - Pontypool (Mon and Brec canal to Mamhilad Park Industrial	Joins NCN route 49 (which links to Newport, Cwmbran, Pontypool, Pontypool and New Inn station	Short Shovel ready						Regional

	Estate) A4042/NCN466	and Blaenavon) to the huge industrial estate at Mamhilad making this an excellent commuter route.							
	Brynmawr High level A465/NCN46	Will link to works being done as part of section 3 A465 dualling and designs proposed for section 2	Short/Medium term						Regional
	A494/A550 Aston Hill, Deeside	Mynydd Isa, Buckley & Ewloe would be connected to Queensferry and the wider Deeside network. Would provide access to schools and services in the Deeside area and access to various employment sites within the DEZ. Would also provide access from Deeside towards Mold and surrounding areas.	Short						Local/Regional

The follow schemes either requiring land purchase, planning applications or more detailed design a pre-works. The Welsh Government should support these processes, and give consideration to taking forward these schemes.

Ref	Intervention	Rationale from the evidence	Timing	1	2	3	4	5	Local/Regional
	St Clears – Banc Y Felin (A40)	Develop a shared use path linking the village of Banc Y Felin to the large centre of St Clears, also opportunity to link to NCN 4 and the St Clears Heritage Trail	Medium Concept						
	NCR 46 and links (A465)	Missing links on Route 46 between Neath and Glyn Neath. Need to create a section of traffic free route here in order to have a safe, accessible and continuous active	Medium						

		travel route that can be used for walking and cycling. There is a missing link to Crynant, and also between Glynneath and Pont Walby.						
	A487 – NCR 5 & 8 Treborth, Bangor	Local active travel route would provide access to Ysbyty Gwynedd & Parc Menai employment sites from Menai Bridge and parts of Upper Bangor, whilst also benefitting the two NCN routes. NCN already uses the road so provision of route would improve safety, especially uphill.	Short/Medium					Local/Regional
	A483 – Llandrindod to Crossgates	Provision of this route would allow access to schools, services and employment sites in Llandrindod.	Medium					Local
	A55 – Mona Terrace, Llanfairfechan	Improvement to NCN5 east of Llanfairfechan would provide easier access to schools & services as well as improve connections to local employment sites.	Medium					Local/Regional
	A487 Cardigan to Penparc	Provision of missing link to Penparc would provide access to employment, schools and services in Cardigan. Missing link connects route further north east to Tremain, Blaenannaerch & Blaenporth as well as West Wales airport and enterprise zone	Short					Local/Regional
	A487 – Aberystwyth to Derwenlas	Multiple local route phases combined to create longer distant regional route connecting severed communities along the A487 corridor	Medium/Long					Local/Regional

		(Glandyfi/Furnace/Tal y Bont/Bow Street) to Aberystwyth & Machynlleth.						
	HoV Baverstocks A465/NCN 46	One of 3 missing links on NCN 46, there is no alternative route in this area.	Short/Medium					Regional
	Wye Bridge Junction, Monmouth A40 & 466/NCN423	This will provide a much needed link between Monmouth and Wyesham which is currently cut off by the A40	Medium					Regional
	HoV Caerphilly A465/NCN 46		Short/Medium					Regional
	M48 Caerwent/Future NCN 4		Short.					Local/Regional
	Usk Bridge – Abergavenny A4143/NCN 46	New walking and cycling bridge over the river Usk to avoid the old busy and narrow existing bridge. Offers good direct link from new housing developments in Llanfoist to Abergavenny town centre.	Medium/Long					Regional

Priorities: 1) Economic Growth, 2) Access to employment, 3) Tackling poverty, 4) Sustainable travel and safety, 5) Access to services

Contact Details

Sustrans Cymru
123 Bute Street
Cardiff
CF10 5AE

Tel: 029 2065 0602
Email: sustranscymru@sustrans.org.uk

Head Office
Sustrans
2 Cathedral Square
College Green
Bristol
BS1 5DD

Tel: 0117 926 8893

Email: policysubmissions@sustrans.org.uk

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VAT Registration No. 416740656

¹ The effects of Smarter Choice Programmes in the Sustainable Travel Towns, Sloman et al; 2010 - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/4408/chap1.pdf

² Givoni and Bannister, 2010 Integrated transport: From policy to practice

³ Welsh Government: M4 Corridor around Newport Consultation paper

<http://gov.wales/docs/det/consultation/130923m4consen.pdf>

⁴ Sustrans Cymru: Access Denied: Transport Poverty in Wales 2011

http://www.sustrans.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/files/Access%20Denied_eng.pdf

⁵ Sustrans: Access to Stations programme <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/policy-evidence/the-impact-of-our-work/access-stations-better-cycle-rail-integration>

⁶ Sustrans Cymru, Access Denied, Ibid.

⁷ Infrastructure Act <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/7/part/2/enacted>

⁸ Making cycling irresistible: Lessons from the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark, Pucher and Buehler 2008 <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01441640701806612#.VP7Vt0TdVCg>

⁹ Department for Transport, Local Sustainable Transport Fund

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-sustainable-transport-fund>