

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Menter a Busnes](#)

[The Enterprise and Business Committee](#)

20/01/2016

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Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

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ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

The proceedings are recorded in the language in which they were spoken in
the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation
is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Mick Antoniw	Llafur Labour
Rhun ap Iorwerth	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Mohammad Asghar	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Jeff Cuthbert	Llafur Labour
William Graham	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Conservatives (Committee Chair)
Eluned Parrott	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Rhodri Griffiths	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr, Polisi, Cynllunio a Phartneriaethau Trafnidiaeth, Llywodraeth Cymru Deputy Director, Transport Policy, Planning and Partnerships, Welsh Government
Edwina Hart	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth) Assembly Member, Labour (the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport)

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Martha da Gama Howells	Clerc Clerk
Elfyn Henderson	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Rachel Jones	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 11:41.

The meeting began at 11:41.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **William Graham:** May I welcome Members and members of the public to the meeting this morning? The meeting is bilingual and headphones can be used for simultaneous translation from Welsh to English on channel 1 or for amplification on channel 2. The meeting is being broadcast, and a transcript of the proceedings will be published later. May I remind Members and witnesses that there is no need to touch the microphones? In the event of a fire alarm, we'd ask people to follow the directions from the ushers. I have apologies from Gwenda Thomas, Mick Antoniw and Keith Davies.

[2] **Mick Antoniw:** I'm actually here. [*Laughter.*]

[3] **William Graham:** Sorry, Mick.

[4] **Mick Antoniw:** In body and in spirit.

[5] **William Graham:** Yes, very true. [*Laughter.*] I do apologise.

Deddf Teithio Llesol (Cymru) 2013—Craffu ar Waith Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013—Scrutiny of the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport

[6] **William Graham:** Our main item today, our sole item for discussion, is the Active Travel (Wales) Act. We're very grateful to the Minister for coming today. We appreciate that you have a very busy schedule this morning and we're most grateful. So, could I ask for the first question, please, which is from Rhun?

[7] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** A very good morning to you, Minister. Just a general overview, I suppose—. Considering that we're still in the process of establishing the initial maps for active travel, what's your overall impression of the way our ambitions for active travel are being implemented at the moment? Due to the slow progress, are you currently having to reassess what you think might be able to be achieved in terms of active travel growth in the

short to medium term?

[8] **The Minister for Economy, Science and Transport (Edwina Hart):** I think the legislation was exceptionally aspirational, but it's not just a responsibility, I think, of Government in terms of legislation; it's our partners and everything. We've obviously funded the survey work that was undertaken to get the complete picture of walking and cycling infrastructure in localities, and that has gone quite well, but I'll be honest that I was saddened by perhaps some of the slow progress we had initially, and we had to extend to local authorities some further time to have the work undertaken that we did require in this particular area.

[9] Some local authorities have been very good because, on top of everything, they've identified other areas besides that limit of 2,000-plus in terms of population. Some local authorities are really very keen on this particular agenda, and that comes through in terms of dialogue. I think, in terms of aspiration, we've got to look at the long-term aspirations for this. The overall group I've got looking at it, which is chaired by Professor Stuart Cole, is doing an excellent job, because he has a level of expertise. But I do think that there will be more to do in giving encouragement out there to our partners in a lot of key areas on that. I don't know whether there's anything you want to add, Rhodri, on the progress.

[10] **Mr Griffiths:** It is new. Nowhere else in the UK is delivering on what we've done in terms of the design guidance and the delivery guidance for local authorities. So, I think those are key things in terms of driving the active travel agenda forward. And, as we see the existing road maps coming in later this week, we'll be able to take a look at exactly what needs to be done to drive this forward again.

[11] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** In effect, are we just in this stage of setting baselines, rather than delivering growth in active travel at this point? If that is the case, should we perhaps have been seeking to do that within the first 12 months after the passing of the Act, rather than, as we are, two and a half years afterwards?

[12] **Edwina Hart:** I think we've got to realise that the commencement of the Act was in September 2014 in terms of the responsibilities that came along. No, I don't think we've been tardy. I think we've taken a lot of people on board. We've chosen our partners, we've had a lot of dialogue and discussion, but we are in the early stages of this. In terms of the legislation,

this has got a long haul to get people to change the way they are.

11:45

[13] The enormous benefits from the discussion, even, on the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 and everything that we've done has been that people realise that health and wellbeing are at the centre of this as well as other issues. I think to get those key messages across is sometimes difficult, and the practical issues all around implementation are difficult. There's a huge lobby out there on active travel, who I understand that you've, obviously, been meeting this morning. Everybody has an opinion on everybody and everything, everybody thinks that they should be on every committee that exists, everybody thinks it should be done differently. In many ways, whatever we do, we will be criticised, but you can't, I don't think, criticise our commitment as a Government, because it is a high priority for us as a Government, and I think we've shown that by the oversight that we're giving in terms of the people that are involved in the board with Stuart, the fact that we discuss things, the fact that my officials support all these particular areas. This is not an easy agenda to change what we do. We recognise that there's progress elsewhere in the UK—not as much, I don't think, in England. The Scots have taken a slightly different view in how they set up their boards and everything; they've got an arm's-length body. On the other hand, that's been criticised in Scotland because it's seen as too close to Sustrans, which is regarded as the cycling lobby, because this is actually about walking and cycling. So, there are a lot of issues in this. I think we're on the right level now, and I think we've got good leadership in terms of the involvement of the people that are involved.

[14] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** I don't know, in Dafydd's absence, if you'd like me to just continue on that.

[15] **William Graham:** Yes, please. Thank you very much.

[16] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** There was criticism this morning from stakeholders, not doubting the commitment of the Government in wanting to make active travel work and for the Act to actually take us somewhere—obviously, you want that—but that there's somehow a lack of leadership across Government in your determination to implement real change, and that we're not hearing from Ministers across the board what they're actually doing now in health, in education, to push the active travel agenda. Do you accept that there's ground for criticism there?

[17] **Edwina Hart:** No, because I think you talk to the parties that will always criticise, irrespective of what the Government do. To be frank, I can actually start to criticise some of the parties that are involved in this, in that I don't think they perhaps deliver enough to us in terms of help and assistance. I don't say that comment lightly. Sometimes, when we ask for stuff we don't necessarily get it to help us in terms of the development of policy. I've appointed an independent expert Chair. He engages; there's knowledge and scrutiny there with him. In terms of the Government, it's core to the health agenda in many ways, because it's all about walking and cycling, and getting people more active. Also as well, it's core to my agenda in many ways about how I look at the way that people are transported to work, what they do, what they undertake. We look at the tourism agenda, and we want to get more people out walking and cycling for other arrangements. Across the piece there is an absolute commitment. You've only got to look at my colleague Carl Sargeant, I think, in terms of the wellbeing of future generations Bill. All of this impacts on this agenda. Just because people don't talk about it all the time, or necessarily ask questions about it, it doesn't mean that there isn't a cross-Government commitment to it all.

[18] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Again, the commitment I don't think anybody could doubt, because why would you not want this to work as much as possible? But you mentioned the future generations Act—active travel isn't a key indicator in that Act, for example, and had there been a real drive forward, maybe Government would have insisted that it was in there, and maybe we'd be seeing more in terms of actual implementation rather than just hearing about the commitment.

[19] **Edwina Hart:** Well, I think there's actual implementation going on in terms of what we do in terms of our utilisation of budgets, for instance, and the focus I put, in budgetary terms, on trying to develop projects, I think, indicates that the Government does put money where it intends to put money in relation to active travel.

[20] **William Graham:** Thank you. Oscar.

[21] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Chair, and good morning, Minister. We know that your colleague, John Griffiths, was the chair of the active travel board in the past, and that Professor Stuart Cole, who is a guru of travel, is the present ATB chair. Could you please clarify the role and status of the ATB and outline the contact you have with the board at present?

[22] **Edwina Hart:** Well, I have regular discussions with Professor Stuart Cole because it's important that I can have an open dialogue with the chair of that board. I have every confidence, because he has the status that's required for the independence and the scrutiny that he provides of all our policy. You can see, I think, by what Professor Cole has said in his report, that he doesn't necessarily agree with me about the levels of funding or money and is prepared to actually say what he thinks. Now, that's the importance of having a chair that's well-respected within the community and understands the issues. I have an ongoing dialogue, obviously, on a regular basis with Stuart Cole. My officials have ongoing dialogues as well with other people that are involved in this and I think, in very real times, that the access that Stuart Cole has is excellent to Government in terms of getting his points across in terms of active travel and what we're doing.

[23] **William Graham:** Thank you. Jeff.

[24] **Jeff Cuthbert:** On that point that Oscar just mentioned, it was said—and I take your point, absolutely, about witnesses that we've just met in the open forum—they will, of course, have their points of view that they'll want to get across, I understand that, that's fair enough—but the point was made that there appeared, to them, to be perhaps a downgrading in that the Minister did used to chair the active travel board, Professor Stuart Cole does now, and no-one doubts his credibility, except he has apparently said that active travel is not his particular area of expertise; that's what was said to us. So, do you feel that the active travel board still has the same clout that it had when it was chaired by the Minister?

[25] **Edwina Hart:** Yes.

[26] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Okay. Shall I go on?

[27] **William Graham:** Yes, thank you, Jeff. Please.

[28] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Right. In terms of the new active travel action plan, we understand that this is due to be published at the end of February. Some representatives said that they haven't seen a draft for a little while. Again, I don't know how true that is, but that was certainly said on my table. Is it right that it's going to be published towards the end of February and will you be publishing the consultation responses, as well?

[29] **Edwina Hart:** Yes, I will be publishing the consultation responses on the issues. Where are we in terms of timescale on that?

[30] **Mr Griffiths:** The active travel board meets three times a year. There is a meeting in February—I think 4 February is the next meeting. They've seen drafts of the action plan and their meeting on the fourth is to provide the Minister advice on the final—

[31] **Edwina Hart:** The final thing, and then we'll publish the report on the consultation at the same time, so February is probably the indicator in terms of when we'll do it, but, obviously, we're running up to an election, so I would like to get some of these things dealt with.

[32] **William Graham:** Okay. One point that was made at the event that we've just had is that the previous plan did have a statement of ambition in it, in its foreword, in terms of a target for the amount of times that people could walk or cycle, or should try to. Now, I understand that that's not going to appear. Is that correct? Will there be a statement of ambition or not, and, if not, why?

[33] **Edwina Hart:** Well, I haven't yet approved any paperwork from my officials or the people who are advising me, or decided what the final format of the plan is. So, it is all very interesting that people can comment on a document that I have not yet signed off as Minister.

[34] **Jeff Cuthbert:** They're commenting on earlier drafts.

[35] **Edwina Hart:** They can comment on earlier drafts, but the final draft is for my decision, and I will be influenced by what my board finally tell me on that and about anything that has come through on consultation about these particular issues.

[36] In life, it's easy to establish targets, but what I want to achieve is a change in lifestyle and the way that we actually do things. It think it's important to recognise that active travel isn't about the number of times you walk a week or you cycle, et cetera; I have to put opportunities in place for people to be able to walk, so there's a big built environment agenda in this. I've got to look at how I deal with transport, so that people can walk and cycle, and I've got to look at the reality around changing people's behaviours. Hence why the focus, sometimes, on active travel has been particularly on children and young people in some of the stuff we've done on

safe routes to school. So, it may or may not. It'll depend on what comes out and further advice. No doubt, the event that you were at this morning, there were people there who'll be coming back to tell me what was said at that particular event. But it's not very helpful sometimes to comment on drafts, because drafts change.

[37] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Okay. So, it could change, yes.

[38] **Edwina Hart:** And, of course, I'm not sure when the committee's report itself will be available, Chair, for me to consider in the final analysis before I produce anything.

[39] **William Graham:** Eluned.

[40] **Eluned Parrott:** Thank you. Minister, I'd like to examine the idea of priorities. Now, clearly, we've talked about your commitment to active travel, clearly, the Government thought it was a high enough priority that it should legislate, and it's the only area within your portfolio that this Government has chosen to legislate on. So, given that, why haven't you attended the active travel board yourself?

[41] **Edwina Hart:** I fail to understand the issue about what my attendance at various things is. I have loads of committees, I have loads of sector panels. I don't attend them. I see sector panel chairs, I see the chairs of the enterprise zones, I've occasionally gone to a city region because it's new, and I regularly have dialogue with the chair of my panel. This is normal Government business. The reason my colleague who previously had this portfolio decided to do it a certain way is the way that he decided to deal with matters as a Minister. I am content that I have the expertise within that panel, with an excellent chair, to advise me appropriately, and I have to say that the groups that are obviously interested in them are not backwards in coming forward in writing and asking and doing things, so I don't see that that is particularly an issue for me.

[42] **Eluned Parrott:** Fair enough, Minister; I'm sure that they are not backwards in coming forward. Can I ask, then, given the cross-cutting nature of the delivery, and you've talked about it being around health, about behavioural change, what other Government departments engage proactively in this agenda? For example, do health or do natural resources officials attend things like the active travel board, or do you have formal structures, where you discuss progress on projects within active travel?

[43] **Edwina Hart:** We talk across Government about all issues like this. As I indicated in a response earlier, obviously the health department has had a great interest in the issues with the active travel board, because they regard this as core to the public health agenda. Obviously, my colleague Carl Sargeant, with his responsibilities in that, and previous Ministers who've had responsibilities, also take an interest. In terms of the board, we have groups like Disability Wales and others as key members of this board, because they're bringing another dimension into the dialogue, and, in terms of officials, there's dialogue across all the departments, yes, Rhodri?

[44] **Mr Griffiths:** Yes, there is. Public Health Wales particularly; Natural Resources Wales are there as well.

[45] **Eluned Parrott:** Okay. Thank you. We talked last week in budget scrutiny about the fact that there's no specific budget line for active travel. You talked last week about £24 million having been allocated in the budget for active travel. Can I ask where in the budget is that to be found?

[46] **Edwina Hart:** Yes, I think I was doing a note in response last week to all the general budget queries, which has not come to you, Chair, because it's not yet been cleared in terms of the issues. In terms of active travel, the local transport fund contribute, Safe Routes in Communities contribute, trunk roads contribute; there's also safe routes to school and the trunk road programme. There's also active journeys, cycle training, pedestrian training, travel plan co-ordinators. Studies—there's the delivery with Professor Cole; there's issues around railway towns in Rhondda, which also contribute to the issues around walking and cycling, and that takes it up to quite a large amount. But, in view of the specialist nature of the query, I will break it down when I reply on the budget scrutiny from last week.

[47] **Eluned Parrott:** Thank you. I think there is a difficulty in assessing the investment that's going into active travel when it is across so many different areas of the budget—potentially, even areas that are outside of your purview could be investing in that. Do you have an idea of the proportion of the funding that is going on things like the mapping exercise, as opposed to, for example, some of the cultural change elements that are necessary to the success of this Act, and, in particular, how much funding is going to reach some of those hard-to-engage groups? Clearly, schools are perhaps a relatively easy audience to attract, but what about working in communities? What about working with older people? What about encouraging people to do

more walking journeys rather than perhaps cycle journeys as well?

[48] **Edwina Hart:** Yes, I think we've got to recognise, and I think you make a very good point, that it isn't just the responsibility of my department. It's across the piece in society, and the wider public sector and everyone needs to be involved in the discussions on these particular things. So, it's more, effectively, for us to be providing a clear prioritisation and a clear idea of what we want delivered in it. So, we've got local authorities involved in this, because local authorities might well be spending money and engaging in this particular area as well. So, you can't just—you are quite right—consider transport budgets on their own; it's about how others help in terms of the whole. I think that would be very difficult to break down in terms of—whether it be health boards or others—what work they're doing in that area. We'll give some thought, perhaps, at official level, about if there's an indication at all, Rhodri, about what we could do to break this down for your question, because I think it's very valid, what you're saying about not just what goes into the frontline, but what else goes in elsewhere, because it's not all, as you said, within my portfolio, because I have a knock-on effect into other portfolios and vice versa.

[49] **Eluned Parrott:** But making that clear investment is the clearest leadership signal you could send as a Minister, by demonstrating very, very clearly where that funding is coming from and where it is going to, and that investment is coming from the Welsh Government and that you are leading from the front—that you are expecting local authorities to invest themselves, but you are leading from the front. And the dispersed nature of the funding for active travel is a problem from that point of view because it hides the light under a bushel, if indeed there is a light to be hidden. Now, one of the things that has been suggested is a dedicated fund for active travel routes, similar to the fund, I think, operating in England, where there is a fund that local authorities can pitch to to deliver active travel routes on the ground—again, so that there is that visible and clear sign that there is change happening on the ground. That change at the moment is very patchy across our local authorities. Will you give some consideration to creating something like that?

12:00

Edwina Hart: I'm always happy to give consideration, but I currently spend about £14 million a year on new and improved active travel routes. Also, if you look at the chancellor's autumn statement, over four years I think he's

earmarked £1.40p per head, I think we understood, for that figure. Figures are not comparable; it is quite clear that our spending figures per head are much higher in Wales. People talk about what's going on, which means we facilitate all this to look at investing in walking and cycling facilities. We do direct investment in walking and cycling and it's very important, I think, that we do look strategically and effectively at this, as a result of the Act. I think that we are doing this.

It's not a question of my leadership. I have given leadership in terms of my budgets and other departments have given leadership in terms of the message, whether it be public health or the health department. I think that we've got to recognise with local authorities that some local authorities are very committed to this agenda, but local authorities are bodies that we do not control—they are elected locally and they have priorities. I think there also needs to be a recognition in these times of difficult budget decisions that local authorities and others will look at their core responsibilities in terms of social services and education and will try and do the best they can within certain areas, because there isn't this huge pot of money that's going to be allocated across the piece.

So, I think, in terms of your remark, that's easy for people to say, when they don't have control of budgets and they don't have control of the priorities. We have prioritised what we can. I think we're doing a good job in terms of our priorities and I would like to think that, if more money became available, we could look at this agenda, and I look with interest at the committee's views about finances and how we need to deal with them. I am, however, with you on transparency and I will, as I indicated to the Chair, look to see if we can get more information out, perhaps, from local authorities and others about what money is available or what's going on and give a more detailed note to the committee. That I'm quite prepared to do. Whether I'll find anything that you require will be a totally different matter.

Eluned Parrott: Just finally, very briefly, if I may, Chair, from me—stakeholders obviously have difficulties with a year-by-year funding cycle, as indeed do many other Government projects that are delivered on a year-by-year basis. Professor Cole has suggested to us that you have moved to an indicative three-year funding cycle. I just wondered if you could confirm that.

Edwina Hart: Yes, I have, because I've been very concerned that we don't know what money we might have in one year. It's very important that people have a list of where you might go if the funding is available and coming. I

have done that because it's what I did on safe routes to school.

Eluned Parrott: Okay. Thank you very much, Chair.

William Graham: Rhun, did you have a short supplementary?

Rhun ap Iorwerth: Yes, in addition to that really. What discussions have you had about identifying direct funding from other Welsh Government departments towards active travel as budget lines in themselves?

Edwina Hart: In terms of active travel, you've only got to look at very basic decisions in terms of health: if they've got a GP surgery coming into existence et cetera, we'll ask them to look immediately at those types of routes. So, if they're looking at that as part of that dialogue, obviously some cash from that is actually going into it. So, it's the way you change the ethos of thinking of Government rather than how you do it. It becomes part and parcel of their normal activity and not something in terms of additionality. The discussion, largely, here has been about additionality, but we see some of these issues as integral.

It also applies to any housing sites that might be coming as well. That's got to be integral to the development of housing. If it's social housing and there's an impact from a grant, that will be taken into account there in that discussion. It's very important that, when local authorities give planning permission, I would suggest, for housing developments to look at those routes and active travel in the context of that. So, I can't tell you, 'That's cost £2,000 from that or £3,000 from that.' I can only say that, as far as we're concerned, promotion and improvement is all about putting us at the core of the way that people think. That's going to take longer than the commencement of the Act to now—it's going to take a long time to change the mindsets about what is required in the built environment and the way we run transport. I think it's important to recognise that.

Eluned Parrott: Just very briefly, Chair, putting that at the core is absolutely right. Have the Welsh Government installed any bike parking facilities at Cardiff Airport yet to take into account the network of cycle routes that have been installed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council?

Edwina Hart: The airport, of course, is an arm's-length company for the Government and they have operational responsibility for those matters.

William Graham: Mick.

Mick Antoniw: A lot of what you're saying actually comes within the ambit or the framework of the future generations Act, doesn't it, which is essentially about changing the way of doing things? Have you noticed any sort of specific impact now, as decisions are being taken, in the way in which the future generations Act is being looked at and utilised, particularly, I suppose, sections 3 and 4?

Edwina Hart: Yes, we have. I think that my officials now are even more aware of the responsibilities they have within this agenda, as a result of the future generations Act. We consider it at every level when we look at submissions in terms of how it is integrated and our responsibilities under the legislation. It's more than taking our responsibility seriously and ticking a box. It's about changing the way that we think and that we develop our policy agenda. I think we are moving definitely in the direction that will improve policy development and improve the outcomes for people by taking into account the future generations Act. I think we see that particularly when we've looked at some of our streams of funding on young people, on safe routes to school and the dialogue we've had with youngsters about what they see things are. I think we've got to continue and grow on the base level of that Act to make it a reality across Government work.

Mick Antoniw: I suppose it's interesting, Minister, that the sustainability commissioner may have a specific role that actually fits into this. Is that being looked at?

Edwina Hart: Yes. I think the sustainability commissioner will have a specific role in this regard, because I think the sustainability commissioner is there to make sure that we're all doing our jobs properly, but also to help and encourage in terms of policy development. Because I think you can take big-stick approaches but they don't necessarily work. It's a question of winning hearts and minds, I think, on all of this agenda. We've got all the good words. We've got all the good intentions. It's really to make it a reality. I very much welcome the appointment of the sustainability commissioner, who will be able to aid with this agenda. But I have to say, we've had excellent help across the piece on a whole range of issues from Peter already in his former role in terms of the development of issues within my economic brief that looks at sustainability. I'm sure that that work will continue.

William Graham: Joyce.

Joyce Watson: Just following on the same theme, Minister—it's a question that was raised this morning on capital projects and linking in. You've mentioned a few this morning. One of them that was brought to the table was the rail electrification and Network Rail's delivery arm. It was said that any new infrastructure will be like-for-like, if it effects a particular existing highway. How, Minister, able are you to try and influence companies like Network Rail, which are clearly not within your control, or any other, in that respect?

Edwina Hart: I think it's actually quite difficult, because we don't have responsibility for Network Rail. Even when we're talking about some of the key issues on rail, it is very hard. I think that Network Rail should be more cognisant of what we're doing in Wales in terms of this particular agenda. We can make our representations to Network Rail, representations to the UK Government, obviously, that do control Network Rail, and have direct discussions at the highest level with Network Rail. I think it's important for people really to indicate where they think the key issues are for us in terms of how we lobby Network Rail and how we try and force Network Rail to take this agenda into account. It's interesting, I don't think I've received any correspondence at all on the Network Rail issues regarding cycling and walking—that I can recall. I'm not sure if you have, Rhodri. So, I think it's important that people recognise that now is the opportunity—as we're discussing with the DfT what's happening with electrification, and also when we're discussing what's happening with our own franchise and what improvements we might want to make to stations as well—for people to get in touch about what is possible to do, what we would like to do, and what we would aim, perhaps, to do if the resources became available. So, I think that's an excellent point that has been made. But I think it's difficult when you can't even, as it were, get sense on some quite large issues with Network Rail, for instance on what's going on with north to south and some additions and issues from Wrexham to Saltney. I'd be lying if I said I had a great deal of influence over Network Rail until we have rail powers.

William Graham: Minister, some of the stakeholders were concerned about the sufficient resources, perhaps, and expertise from your department, particularly questioning the existing routes maps—they're due by the end of this week—and how they will be assessed.

Edwina Hart: Can I say, it is a point that Stuart Cole has actually raised with me—the whole issue around expertise? I would accept that. I think, at the

end of the day, we have got a lot of partners that we can utilise, but I do think we do need to look at the level of expertise as we move forward on this work. We are well supported, can I say, when we ask for advice et cetera and do things? The active travel guidance has shown that, when you involve people, you can do, actually, good guidance. It's been a very inclusive process. Over time, I think we've built more experience internally. In Wales we have a host of qualified skills strategists—planners, network personnel—and we do need to use them, and we need to get the innovation to use them. But it's key that the disciplines deliver things together. But I do think it's important—the point that has been made, which is valid, about expertise.

William Graham: Thank you. Jeff.

Jeff Cuthbert: Yes, thank you. The supplementary from Mick dealt, I think, very well with the issue of integrating with other Welsh Government policy areas, such as the wellbeing of future generations Act, so I don't think there's any need to go over that again. But there are other Acts, of course, and Bills that will impact upon matters like this: the Public Health (Wales) Bill, the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and other issues. Do you want to comment as to how well you think active travel can be integrated within the delivery of those as they become Acts? On a separate matter, the proposed south Wales metro: to what extent will the issue of active travel be accommodated within the development of the metro.

Edwina Hart: If I can deal with the first point first: we were very lucky in terms of public health and planning that, of course, we've got Ministers who have taken their responsibilities in terms of active travel very seriously in how they wanted to deliver it through the legislation and through what they're doing within their departments. So, there are no issues on that. I think that public health is actually the key to some of the issues around active travel. Also, planning—we've got to look at the issues around planning.

With regard to the south Wales metro, it does allow an opportunity to look at active travel, safe walking and safe cycle routes as part of the overall progress. I would urge everyone to get involved in the consultation there is now, ticking the boxes, saying what they think we've missed and things that they think we need to look at. So, this is a very open policy. I think it's very important, if there's additionality coming into the system, that that additionality is fit for purpose in terms of what routes we can provide. It's important that we recognise that we need safe routes for walkers as well as cyclists.

Jeff Cuthbert: Thank you.

William Graham: Joyce, did you have any other questions on that?

Joyce Watson: No, I think the Minister has addressed it. I was going to ask about capital projects, and the Minister sort of mentioned that. But one of the specific ones that was mentioned this morning was the twenty-first century schools programme, which has been fantastic. Very often, it was stated, it looks at a safe parameter within the school, but not necessarily linking up to the safe routes to school. I know, Minister, that you dealt very effectively with one issue that I had on this. The other thing—and you've mentioned it—is behaviour. One of the key identifications was parents' behaviour: parking outside school gates and then complaining that the children aren't safe at the same time.

Edwina Hart: Where angels fear to tread here, Joyce.

Joyce Watson: Well, I know, I know. I was wondering whether you might be able to influence through this, in other policy areas, when you're making major capital investment, the outcomes that might be expected.

Edwina Hart: I have every sympathy for the points that have been raised on this. At the end of the day, when I go out and meet children and when I go out to take safe routes to school, they are so acutely aware of the parking on the lines outside—in fact, even when they go into their own parents' cars—and how dangerous this can be. Obviously, it has been taken into account to a greater or lesser degree, but I do think there is room for us to have more dialogue on this, because local authorities look at the location of these particular schools. So, it's important that they take into account the wider issues around active travel and safety when they are undertaking this. Some do, and I would say, to a great extent, perhaps, there's always going to be a mixed bunch on this. But I would be very happy, if the committee was making a recommendation on this, to take some further issues forward, because the safety of the child, I think, is so important on this.

William Graham: Eluned, and then Oscar.

Eluned Parrott: I just wonder, Minister, if you would, with that in mind, undertake to have a look at the law around pavement parking. There is a lot of confusion about what is, and what is not, illegal. The current law perhaps

needs reviewing to make it clearer.

12:15

[50] **Edwina Hart:** I would be happy to do that because it's not just about outside schools—people with disabilities and everything, people with pushchairs, and anything like that. This pavement parking is an absolute nightmare for individuals and it's impacting on their safety on our roads and it's very important. I cannot believe sometimes how irresponsible people are in terms of what they do in terms of parking. They worry about what damage might occur to their cars; we should be more concerned about what damage occurs to an individual.

[51] **William Graham:** Oscar.

[52] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you, Chair. Minister, there are certain areas, I think, of active travel that you should be looking at. I travel a lot from Newport to Blackwood, Merthyr, from Newport to Brynmawr, Newport to Tredegar—those areas. There are so many black spots or turnings where there is no light there. There have been a lot of fatalities. I have written to the authorities concerned. There are three county councils: Newport, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly and nobody—. There have been a lot of fatalities during the year. The thing is also it is pretty dark where there is a more than 45 per cent bend there, and pretty dark. There are not many services available for ourselves and tourists. That is another area. When you drive for at least 45 minutes to an hour, elderly people need some refreshment and everything and it's not available. So, could you consider that because that will improve travel for people going on those routes and give tourism a big boost?

[53] **Edwina Hart:** Yes, and, of course, we do have a lot of tourists for walking and cycling all across Wales, so it is important that we look at all the relevant issues on this. I have very much taken your point about where there are dark spots, especially when cycling, and those types of issues. Obviously, we'll try, in the broad way that we look at these issues, to look at these points for you.

[54] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you.

[55] **William Graham:** Rhun and then Joyce.

[56] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** I've a question on communication. In terms of budget scrutiny, it's clear that any money that you have spent and intend to spend will be wasted—or money spent on infrastructure, I should say, will be wasted—unless the promotion works. There was a feeling among some stakeholders this morning that there seemed to be no clear strategy on that promotion issue, on communicating with communities at large and with specific groups. Is there such a strategy? In accepting that it's cross-cutting as you mention, from GP surgeries to schools and all parts of Government, is there a strategy and is that a strategy that we can see, that we can assess? Is it a strategy that the active travel boards have and should be aware of?

Edwina Hart: Well, I'm thinking very carefully before I respond to this because I do think there is a strategy in place. Whether the strategy delivers everything that's required, of course, is a different matter. I think in terms of our active journeys programme, which has been formally launched as Bike It, that has been good. We've also, as well, in terms of promotion, done a lot on safe walking and cycling, particularly for children, which I think is very important, and we're spending quite a lot per head on that. We've also got the active journeys promotion for schools, about £200,000 a year. So, you're concerned, I think, in terms of your question, more about promoting active travel as a key duty under the Act and what more could be done probably. I can certainly have a word, I think, because I've got funding travel co-ordinators. I fund those. I've got a national active travel challenge as well. I have an active travel conference. I've just done a conference recently with businesses about things, so I think we are doing a good level of promotion, but I am more than happy for Professor Cole's group to look at the whole issue of what further promotional work can be done in light of comments.

[57] **William Graham:** Joyce.

[58] **Joyce Watson:** We know, Minister, that there is a central data capture system that is held within Welsh Government. The question that arose this morning was whether that would be made more widely available to other people outside of Government? We understood the issues with not doing that this morning, because they were raised quite clearly, and if that's the case, because it is a data system that will produce maps, whether there is a desire for those maps to be fairly consistent in the way that they're written, so that they're easily understood wherever you might be.

[59] **Edwina Hart:** Yes. We did do a big data mapping project, didn't we?

[60] **Mr Griffiths:** Yes, and that was very much the underlying rationale for doing that to make sure that there's consistency of approach across all the local authorities. If I can expand on that, perhaps, Minister.

[61] **Edwina Hart:** Yes.

[62] **Mr Griffiths:** Yes, absolutely, our aspiration is to allow access to the public to those data services, so we can use things like Google apps, we can have app development, all those sorts of things. I think we're at a stage at the moment, particularly when the existing routes maps come in and we'll take a look at those, to see how effective that data-handling system has been and whether we can enhance that process and the outputs that come from that. Once we've had a look at the existing routes maps, I think we'd be talking to the active travel board for ideas and understanding as to how we might improve those data tools and make them more accessible. But that, absolutely, is the aspiration.

[63] **Edwina Hart:** So, we would like to be able to do that as soon as possible.

[64] **Mr Griffiths:** Yes.

[65] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you. The apps were particularly mentioned by people who had no sight or very little sight, in that they'd be able to navigate themselves around. They'd still need the assistance they currently have, but they're critically important for those people.

[66] **Edwina Hart:** Yes.

[67] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you.

[68] **William Graham:** Minister, Professor Cole suggested, perhaps, that there should be an arm's-length body for active travel as in Scotland. Have you had any chance to consider that?

[69] **Edwina Hart:** No, it won't be an active travel body at arm's length as in Scotland. The Scots, as I indicated earlier, have already been criticised by other groups because it went to Sustrans, I think, to organise in Scotland. People feel that that is a cycling body and active travel is more than just cycling.

[70] **William Graham:** Are there any other questions for the Minister? No. Thank you very much for your attendance here this morning.

[71] **Edwina Hart:** And can I thank you very much, Chair, for your indulgence because I had a meeting relating to steel? I thank the committee for the courtesy of allowing me to come a little later.

[72] **William Graham:** Thank you very much.

12:21

Papurau i'w Nodi
Papers to Note

[73] **William Graham:** I will just, if I may, ask you to note the papers. Yes, noted. That ends our formal committee, thank you.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 12:21.
The meeting ended at 12:21.