

CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

(TYWI VALLEY SHARED USE ROUTE)

COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2023

STATEMENT OF REASONS

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1. DEFINITION AND INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Definitions used in this Statement have the following meanings:
- “1976 Act” means the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
 - “1990 Act” means the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
 - “1981 Act” means the Acquisition of Land Act 1981
 - “1998 Act” means the Human Rights Act 1998
 - “Council” means the Carmarthenshire County Council
 - “County” means the Administrative County of Carmarthenshire
 - “EIA” means Environmental Impact Assessment
 - “EIASO” means Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion
 - “ES” means Environmental Statement
 - “LDP” means Local Development Plan
 - “Order” means The Carmarthenshire County Council (Ffairfach to Whitemill Shared Use Route) Compulsory Purchase Order 2023
 - “Order Schedule” means the schedule of lands and rights to be acquired forming part of the Order
 - “Order Land” means the land comprised in the Order
 - “Order Map” means the map bearing the title The Carmarthenshire County Council (Ffairfach to Whitemill Shared Use Route) Compulsory Purchase Order 2023
 - “Plot” means an identified area of land within the Order and given a plot number
 - “Rights” means new rights to be acquired under the Order
 - “Scheme” means the construction of all such parts of the proposed Shared Use Route which remain unbuilt for the purpose of accommodating pedestrian and cyclist traffic including the construction of bridges to carry the same and all works ancillary thereto including but not limited to the creation of amenity, access areas and habitat mitigation areas
 - “Site” means the land required to accommodate the Scheme including land to facilitate and enable the construction of the Scheme.
 - “Shared Use Route” means the land comprising the entire length of the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route including, where applicable, existing lengths of publicly maintained highway and areas of land already secured for use by pedestrians and cyclists.
 - “SAC” means Special Area of Conservation
 - “SSSI” means Site of Special Scientific Interest
- 1.2 On the day of Two Thousand and Twenty Three the Council made the Order pursuant to the Council’s resolutions of the 13th March, 2023
- 1.3 The Order is made under Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, *Section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976* and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981
- 1.4 The extent of the land proposed to be compulsorily acquired is set out at Section 2 below and is more particularly described in the Order Schedule and shown on the Order Map
- 1.5 *Section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 enables the Council to compulsorily acquire new rights over land to enable construction and maintenance works to be carried out to deliver and maintain the Scheme*
- 1.6 The purpose of the Council in seeking to acquire the Order Land through compulsory purchase is to secure the delivery of the proposed Scheme which the Council is confident will improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the resident living along the Site and beyond as well as to those visiting and working in the area.
- 1.7 This is the Council’s Statement of Reasons for making the Order in accordance with Compulsory Purchase in Wales and ‘The Crichef Down Rules (Wales Version, 2020)’ (Circular Reference 003/2019).
- 1.8 The Order, as made, has been submitted to Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW).
- 1.9 Circular Reference 003/2019 paragraph 63 indicates that acquiring authorities are expected to evidence that they have made meaningful attempts at negotiation whilst paragraph 62

recognises that there are situations where it is appropriate to make a compulsory purchase order at the same time as seeking to purchase land by agreement. The Council is satisfied that reasonable attempts to acquire outstanding interests by private treaty have been made and it has made the Order to secure all the interests required to enable the implementation of the Scheme. Discussions will however continue with owners of the relevant interests to seek to acquire their land by agreement.

- 1.10 The Council recognises that the Order can only be made, and subsequently confirmed, if there is a compelling case in the public interest (paragraph 53 of Circular Reference 003/2019) which justifies the overriding of private rights in the land sought to be acquired. It is considered that a compelling case exists in this case and this is set out in greater details in Sections 3 and 6 of this Statement.
- 1.11 Moreover, paragraph 41 of Circular Reference 003/2019 identifies the availability of funding to be a relevant factor in determining whether or not an Order should be confirmed.
- 1.12 The Council is satisfied that funding is available and that there is a reasonable prospect of the Scheme being implemented. Further details on funding are given in Section 7 below. The Council recognises that planning permission will need to be granted but knows of no planning reasons why this should be withheld nor, once the Order is confirmed, of any other impediments to delivery of the proposed Shared Use Route.

2. DESCRIPTION AND USE OF THE ORDER LAND, LOCATION AND PRESENT USE

- 2.1(a) The Order Land required for the Scheme lies within the County and is located to the East of Carmarthen Town. The Western extremity of the Order Land is adjacent to the eastern end of the unclassified road (U2183) leading to Abergwili Concrete Works and extends from this point in a general easterly direction for approximately 4.2 kilometres along the valley floor to the village of Nantgaredig where it meets an unclassified road leading past Nantgaredig Rugby Club to its junction with Station Road (B4310). Part of the Shared Use Route will utilise a short length of each of these public highways. Therefrom the Order Land continues in an easterly direction following, in part, a route contiguous to the river Tywi before terminating at a point adjacent to the Principal Road A476 at Ffairfach, Llandeilo.
- 2.1(b) The extent of the Order Land is shown edged red on the Order Map and is more particularly described in the Order Schedule and covers an area of 45.75 hectares (113 acres) along a linear route of approximately nineteen decimal point two two (19.22) kilometres and is in multiple ownership. The Order Land comprises land that is predominantly flat with few gradients and consists of areas of pastureland mainly used for grazing or for growing crops to provide winter fodder for animals and includes hedgerows and trees and small pockets of broad leaved woodland, public footpaths (Ref: 2/27, 41/1, 41/2, 41/6, 31/27, 42/1 and 44/3) which traverse over pastureland, the route of an historic railway track, private access roads and rivers and streams.
- 2.1(c) The land to be acquired for the purpose of delivering the Scheme is located within the County's lower Tywi Valley. It is linear in nature and follows the Tywi river in a broadly east-west alignment and connects to Ffairfach in the east and to Whitemill in the west. The proposed Shared Use Route is approximately twenty-one (21) kilometres in length and is of varying widths but being not less than three (3) metres wide and a significant part of this route correlates with the route of the former Carmarthen to Llandeilo railway line which historically was supported by a man-made embankment constructed along the wide valley floor. The former railway was constructed during the 19th century and was closed in 1964. The old railway infrastructure is still in place for much of its length, including significant lengths of railway embankment and some sections of cutting.
- 2.1(d) The eastern boundary of the Order Land is adjacent to the western boundary of the field enclosure immediately to the west of Number 1 Llys yr Onnen, Ffairfach. From here it extends

in a general westerly direction skirting the outer boundary of the grounds of the Ysgol Bro Dinefwr Site before continuing through a wooded area known as Lovelodge Woods. Beyond the woodland the Order Land reverts back to farmed pastureland with the exception of two small areas which encompass in part access tracks, one leading to Dŵr Cymru sewage treatment works and the other leading to a property known as Glan yr Afon. After the latter access track the Order Land diverts onto the route of the former Carmarthen to Llandeilo railway and with the exception of short deviations over pastureland at Hendy Farm and Pentrecwn Farm it continues along the aforementioned redundant railway line past the Coleg Sir Gâr Gelli Aur site and on towards the former Golden Grove station building where it is dissected by the Class III publicly maintained highway (Reference C2145). Beyond the western boundary of the publicly maintained highway the Order land then remains on the route of the former railway line for approximately 1.8 kilometres travelling through a woodland area known as Riverbed Wood before diverting for a distance of approximately 341 metres into pastureland and then re-joining the former railway line for approximately 2 kilometres where it is again dissected by the Class II Road-B4297 adjacent to the former Dryslwyn Station building now occupied as a private residence. From the western side of the B4297 the Order land continues on the former railway track for approximately a further 2.6 kilometres passing through Glantowy farm, having first crossed the River Gwynon, and past the former Llanarthney station building now used and occupied as a dwellinghouse before terminating at a point approximately 500 metres beyond the said station. The Order Land then reverts to farmed pastureland for approximately 2.2 kilometres before crossing the River Tywi from land being part of Bremenda Isaf to the south of the river to Abercothi Farm on the north side. From this side it crosses a field enclosure in a northerly and then westerly direction (including part of public footpath Number 41/6) to join an unclassified road (Reference U4448). A short distance west of this point the unclassified road veers in a north westerly direction and the Order Land continues in a westerly direction by re-joining the route of the disused railway line. The former railway line and the corresponding Order Land extends to the River Cothi where, like all the previous river crossings, a bridge structure is required to be constructed before continuing towards the village of Nantgaredig and the Class II Road B4310 known as Station Road Nantgaredig. Shortly before connecting with Station Road the Order Land comprises of a short section of privately owned grassed verge adjacent to a private road. Approximately 85 metres south of the junction where the grassed verge area adjoins Station Road the Order Land continues from the west side of Station Road over managed pastureland adjacent to the hedgeline of Maesydderwen field leading onto an Unclassified Road (Reference U2178) for a short distance. At the termination of the unclassified road the Order Land reverts to a length of private access road heading towards a residential property known as 'the Folly' before returning to managed pastureland which accommodates a section of public footpath Number 41/1 which leads to public footpath 2/27. The Order land at this location is parallel to the River Tywi and extends for approximately 1.4 kilometres, substantially following the same route as footpath 2/27, before re-connecting with the alignment of the former railway line at Danyralt farm. The railway embankment is no longer in place at this location and the field enclosure, is currently managed for agricultural purposes. It does nevertheless extend to and is adjacent with a section of the completed shared use route at Whitemill. This completed section which is adjacent to the Carmarthen Anglers car park at Whitemill village measures approximately 230 meters in length, is three (3) metres wide and finished with a green tarmacadam surface. Thereafter, the Order Land comprises of open land located behind Whitemill Garage which continues as managed pastureland for a further 1 kilometre before joining the unclassified road (U2183) between Fronun Farm and Swn y Coed slightly to the west of Whitemill village.

2.2

The Council as part of the process for the intended delivery of the Scheme has identified equipment and structures of the statutory undertakers being Western Power Distribution, Openreach Limited, Mainline Pipelines Limited, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and National Grid plc which will be protected, replaced, diverted, extended or improved as necessary.

2.3 In addition to the land required the implementation of the Order requires the acquisition of new rights over Plot Numbers 2, 7, 16/b, 16/c, 17/b, 18/a, 18/c, 18/f, 18/g, 19, 25/a, 25/c, 32/a and 36/a comprising (inter alia) of pastureland, access tracks, river beds and embankments. The rights are required to secure a right of access to this part of the Order Land to enable both the construction of the Scheme (including bridges and the rights of the public to pass over the same) and thereafter suitable access to enable proper maintenance of the Shared Use Route including where appropriate the siting of a temporary compound to accommodate plant, machinery and materials. Plot number 32/a will be utilised solely as an emergency access at times of flooding. The Order Schedule provides full details of the rights to be acquired in respect of the relevant Plots however the Council will continue to seek to acquire the rights by agreement.

2.4 Current land use

The Order Land comprises in the main of land in agricultural use as part of wider agricultural holdings, a waterway which has the benefit of fishing rights, and woodland areas along with sections of tracks which are used to exercise shooting rights. The track in part also serves as an access to adjoining land.

The topography of the region is a wide a flat river valley bottom, with a meandering river, circa 10 meters above ordnance datum (AOD). The hills on either side typically reach heights of circa 150 meters on the north side and 200 meters on the south side of the valley.

3. NEED FOR THE SCHEME

3.1 Background

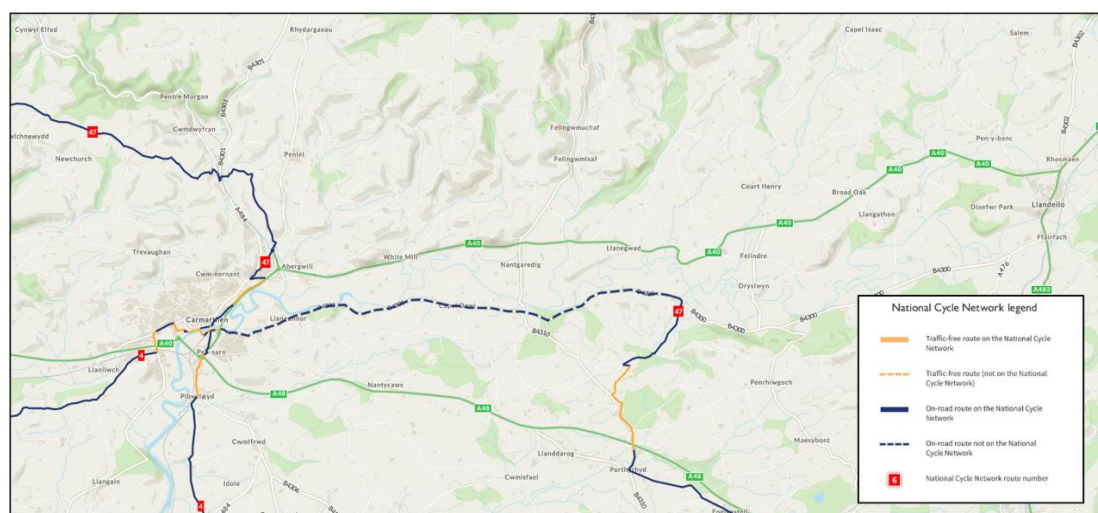
3.1.1 The Shared Use Route was previously referred to as the 'The Towy Valley Cycleway'. The Lower Tywi Valley runs in an East to West alignment between Llandeilo and Carmarthen. The Towy Valley Transport Corridor - WelTAG Option Appraisal (WelTAG Stage 1, August 2013) (Document Number 1), and the Tywi Valley Path WelTAG Stage 2 Final Report February 2021 (Document Number 2), identify significant deficiencies in existing sustainable transport infrastructure within the Tywi Valley with significant potential benefits to be achieved by the introduction of the proposed Shared Use Route. The disused railway line between Whitemill (located 3 miles east of Carmarthen Town) and Ffairfach (near Llandeilo) is now considered as the core alignment route as identified in the 'Towy Valley Transport Corridor Feasibility Study January 2014' (Document Number 3), undertaken by Atkins Consultants in 2014.

3.1.2 The feasibility studies undertaken to date (as referenced in Tywi Valley Path WelTAG Stage 2 Final Impact Assessment Report February 2021 (Document Number 4), and Tywi Valley Path WelTAG Stage 2 Final Report February 2021) reference the economic, social, and environmental benefits, including health, tourism and leisure benefits associated with the Scheme and consequently the entire Shared Use Route. Tywi Valley Path, The Economic, Social and Environmental Well Being Consequences of the Proposed Shared Use Route October 2022 prepared by WSP (Document Number 5), demonstrates how, if the Order is confirmed so that the Scheme can be delivered, the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will contribute to improvements of the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area.

3.1.3 The Shared Use Route, which would provide a safe walking and cycling route between Carmarthen and Llandeilo which would utilise in large part the disused railway line running along the Tywi Valley as identified in the reports (WelTAG Stage 1 & 2 Reports). A number of small, medium and large settlements were highlighted alongside tourist attractions, such as the National Botanic Gardens of Wales, Aberglasney Gardens, Dinefwr Park, Dryslwyn Castle,

Brechfa Mountain Biking Centre and Gelli Aur Agricultural College, that would benefit from improved accessibility through the Scheme.

- 3.1.4 The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route contributes to creating a comprehensive network of paths and has the potential to be included as part of a route on the National Cycle Network by enhancing the National Cycle Network Route 47 (NCN 47) East of Abergwili (subject to further discussion and agreement with Sustrans). Figure 3.1 shows the current gap in NCN 47 (dotted blue line). Once the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route is complete this could fill this missing gap in the current network.



NCN 47 (Source: Sustrans¹)

The route from Carmarthen would also encourage access to the Heart of Wales rail line at Ffairfach and Llandeilo. There are also close links to Carmarthen Museum at Abergwili with further connections to the Gwili Railway station adjacent to West Wales General Hospital at Glangwili also being investigated. Connections can also be generated to the local hospitality trade including hotels, B&Bs, restaurants and public houses increasing trade in the area.

3.2 Objectives of the Scheme

- 3.2.1 The objective of the Scheme is to provide a new shared use path, approximately 21km in length (from Abergwili to Ffairfach) running along a disused railway line for the majority of its length. Under section 226(1)(a) of the 1990 Act a local authority has the power, on being authorised to do so by the Welsh Ministers, to acquire compulsorily any land in their area if it thinks the acquisition will facilitate the carrying out of development, re-development or improvement on or in relation to land.
- The authority must not exercise the power under section 226(1)(a) of the 1990 Act unless it thinks the development, re-development or improvement is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objects:
- (a) the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area;
 - (b) the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area; and,
 - (c) the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area.

The Council is confident that the Shared Use Route will improve and extend the current tourism product in rural Carmarthenshire resulting in increased visitor spend within the area

¹ <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/find-a-route-on-the-national-cycle-network/route-47/>

and new employment opportunities within the sector along with providing a key active travel link for the County.

3.3 Justification for the scheme

3.3.1 The Council recognises that a compulsory purchase order can only be made if there is a compelling case in the public interest which justifies the overriding of private rights in the land to be acquired. It is considered that a compelling case exists here on the basis that without the Scheme, the funded Shared Use Route will not be secured and thus delivered. It is the Shared Use Route which will have a positive impact on the social economic & environmental well being of this part of the Tywi Valley between Carmarthen and Llandeilo and well beyond. The Council believes it is appropriate and necessary to use the compulsory purchase power in section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in order to acquire land which is suitable for and required to secure the carrying out of the Scheme because its implementation will contribute to the objectives therein described.

3.3.2 Surveys conducted as part of the Tywi Valley Path WelTAG Stage 2 process show overwhelming public support for this shared use route. A total of 1690 members of the public responded to the consultation questionnaire issued in July 2020 with 79% of respondents stating they were very supportive of the proposal and a further 12% saying they were quite supportive. The survey with 'locals' conducted in 2019 as part of the 'Tywi Valley Path, The Economic, Social and Environmental Well-being Consequences of the Proposed Shared Use Route Report, October 2022', highlighted that 46% of respondents stated that 'off-road routes' and 29% stated that 'regularly managed routes' would encourage them to walk/ cycle on a more regular basis. Further, 78% of respondents were aware of the proposed route and of these, 96% said they would use the proposed route and 57% thought that the route would help reduce their car use. A show of hands survey conducted by teachers at three secondary schools within the Tywi Valley catchment area in April and May 2019 with a total response of 1859 pupils showed that over a quarter of pupils (27%) surveyed, stated that the proposed Tywi Valley Shared Use Route would encourage them to walk/cycle to school.

These survey results show strong support for the proposed shared use route, with the high probability that this will translate into many future users of the route.

3.3.3 The Order Land represents the minimum necessary to deliver the Scheme and thus the Shared Use Route. The Council has given careful consideration to the need to include each parcel of land and each new right within the Order land. Without ownership and control of the entire Order Land it is not possible to deliver the Scheme and thus the Shared Use Route as currently proposed.

3.4 The justification for using S226 (1) (a) well being powers

3.4.1 Economic Well-being Benefits

An economic appraisal of the Scheme was undertaken by consultants WSP on behalf of the Council in July 2018 and has been updated regularly, with October 2022 being the latest version (Tywi Valley Path, Business Case – 2022 Update, WSP) (Document Number 6). This document presents both construction and operational economic impacts. The construction impacts are significant (with additional jobs and GVA supported). The operational impacts will also be significant and will occur on an annual basis going forwards. The construction and operational impacts presented in the aforementioned Business Case are summarised as follows:

Construction Impacts

The following benefits will arise:

- Construction jobs supported (direct employment): FTE 202
- Indirect construction jobs supported: 52
- Induced construction jobs supported: 25
- TOTAL JOBS SUPPORTED: 279
- TOTAL Gross Value Added (GVA) IMPACT: £13,880,749
- GVA SPENT IN LOCAL AREA: £3,608,995

Operational Impacts

The 'operational' economic impacts outlined in the Tywi Valley Path, Business Case – 2022 Update, WSP are presented in annual terms in following Table:

Table Forecast Operational Impacts

Activity	Estimated Revenue per Annum
Additional day spending benefits	£2.4 million
Additional overnight (serviced) spending benefits	£711,000
Additional overnight (non-serviced) spending benefits	£1.3 million
Additional commuting spending benefits	£119,000
Business turnover impacts*	£2 million
Additional GVA impacts*	£2.9 million

* Business turnover impacts and additional GVA impacts are two methods of calculating additional impacts and should not be added together as this would result in double counting.

** All the benefits stated above are annual amounts that will accrue each year during the business case appraisal period. This is assumed to be 30 years.

Source: Tywi Valley Path, Business Case – 2022 Update, WSP for Carmarthenshire County Council

This Shared Use Route will provide safe, attractive and affordable access for those living in the Tywi Valley and beyond to employment, education, health, leisure and retail opportunities by cycle or on foot at Carmarthen and Llandeilo, as well as providing a link between existing rural settlements all of which would not be available to those who do not have access to a private motorised vehicle. The average annual cost of owning and running a car in the UK is approximately £3,556². The annual running costs for a bicycle between Carmarthen and Llandeilo are roughly £396³, significantly cheaper than the costs to own and run a car. By providing affordable travel access to education and employment, this scheme contributes to reducing levels of rural poverty, breaking the cycle between transport costs and access to employment.

Access to education and employment along with challenges of diversifying and creating new employment offers within rural communities are significant barriers affecting a change of circumstance for economically inactive people in rural areas. This scheme provides both a means of accessing existing employment at Llandeilo and Carmarthen, but also will be a catalyst for new opportunities within the rural communities related to tourism, hospitality and heritage. Table 3.1 shows the impact of tourism and hospitality benefits for the Shared Use Route with estimated additional day spending benefits of £2.4 million per annum, additional overnight (serviced) spending benefits of £711,000 per annum and additional overnight (non-serviced) spending benefits of £1.3 million⁴ per annum. This extra spending

² <https://www.nimblefins.co.uk/cheap-car-insurance/average-cost-run-car-uk>

³ [Cyclator – Commute Cost Calculator | Halfords UK](#)

⁴ Tywi Valley Path, Business Case – 2022 Update, WSP for Carmarthenshire County Council

within the local economy will result in new job opportunities for the community of the Tywi Valley.

3.5 Social Well-being Benefits

The Shared Use Route will provide a number of social benefits including:

- 3.5.1 Increased safety benefits to both pedestrians and cyclists by the provision of a dedicated Shared Use Facility. Currently, the most direct route between Llandeilo/Ffairfach and Carmarthen is either via the Class II Road B4300 or the A40 Trunk Road. Much of these routes are national speed limit (60mph) zones, with limited sections of footway. National road safety charity 'Brake' highlight that "rural roads pose three times the risk of a fatal crash to bike riders (both motorised and pedal)". In addition, the Transport Research Laboratory have found that 30% of pedestrian deaths occur on rural roads, which highlights the danger of walking and cycling along rural roads⁵.
- 3.5.2 The construction of the Shared Use Route will improve amenity for local pedestrians (including those walking to and from the local primary and secondary schools) and cyclists. A show of hands survey conducted by teachers at three secondary schools within the Tywi Valley catchment area in April and May 2019, with a total response of 1859 pupils, showed that over a quarter of pupils (27%) surveyed, stated that the proposed Tywi Valley Shared Use Route would encourage them to walk/ cycle to school⁶.
- 3.5.3 The uptake in Active Travel provided by the Shared use Route will lead to improved mental and physical health of the population. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) rates in Carmarthenshire are at 334.2 per 100,000 people - above the Wales average of 289.7⁷. Cycling UK makes a comparison between the potential of physical activities such as cycling, to helping combat CVD, and also states that "cycling to work is linked with a 45% lower risk of developing cancer, and a 46% lower risk of CVD when compared to a commute by car or public transport"⁸. The Public Health Wales document, 'Creating healthier places and spaces for our present and future generations', published in 2018, outlines that being physically active benefits individual and population health and reduces the risks of obesity and chronic conditions, stating that 'inactivity cost the NHS in Wales £35 million in 2015'. Walking and cycling has been identified as a 'best buy' to increase physical activity levels and it is estimated that living in an activity-friendly neighbourhood can provide between 32% and 59% of the 150 minutes of weekly physical activity that is recommended for adults to maintain good health⁹.
- 3.5.4 The Share Use Route will provide a cost-effective mode to access services and opportunities, thus addressing rural poverty, where caused by a lack of transport options. The 2021 Carmarthenshire Public Service Board Well-being Assessment outlined that almost a third of children in Carmarthenshire are living in poverty with the cost of living rising across the UK pushing more working families into experiencing poverty with in-work poverty becoming more of a problem within Carmarthenshire. The Public Policy Institute of Wales (PPIW) describe poverty in the rural counties of Wales (which includes Carmarthenshire) as a 'Hidden Problem', citing a lack of public transport and poor access to services as key contributors¹⁰.

⁵ Tywi Valley Path, The Economic, Social and Environmental Well-being Consequences of the Proposed Shared Use Route, October 2022' and Tywi Valley Path WeITAG Stage 2 Final Report February 2021

⁶ Tywi Valley Path, The Economic, Social and Environmental Well-being Consequences of the Proposed Shared Use Route, October 2022' and Tywi Valley Path WeITAG Stage 2 Final Report February 2021

⁷ Tywi Valley Path, The Economic, Social and Environmental Well-being Consequences of the Proposed Shared Use Route, October 2022' and Tywi Valley Path WeITAG Stage 2 Final Report February 2021

⁸ Tywi Valley Path, The Economic, Social and Environmental Well-being Consequences of the Proposed Shared Use Route, October 2022' and Tywi Valley Path WeITAG Stage 2 Final Report February 2021

⁹ Creating healthier places and spaces for our present and future generations' Policy, Research and International Development Directorate, Public Health Wales, April 2018

<https://phwwhocc.co.uk/resources/creating-healthier-places-and-spaces-for-our-present-and-future-generations/>

¹⁰ Tywi Valley Path, The Economic, Social and Environmental Well-being Consequences of the Proposed Shared Use Route, October 2022' and Tywi Valley Path WeITAG Stage 2 Final Report February 2021

Many of the wards through which the proposed route travels rate amongst the 10% most deprived in Wales for level of access to services¹¹, the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will therefore help to combat this, as active travel provides a more affordable and accessible option for people without access to a car.

- 3.5.5 Improved opportunity for journeys to be made by sustainable means of travel, encouraging movement away from dependence on motorised vehicles. The path will provide a commuter link between the two key hubs of Carmarthen and Llandeilo/Ffairfach that is achievable within 1hr on a bicycle.

3.6 Environmental Well-being Benefits

- 3.6.1 Environmental Benefits of the proposed Shared Use Route include:

A modal shift from the private car to active travel for local journeys has the potential to improve air and noise pollution within the Tywi Valley. The A483 through central Llandeilo (from the A476 Ffairfach junction to the A40 junction) is designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). An additional AQMA is also in place in Carmarthen. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route would provide connections between the two key hubs of Carmarthen and Llandeilo/Ffairfach that is achievable within 1hr on a bicycle. Thus, helping to address air quality issues within the AQMA's and help meet the Welsh Governments Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2: 2021-2025 (Document Number 7) targets (e.g. demand reduction and modal shift: Policy 31 – Increase trip mode share of active travel from a current estimated proportion of 27% to 33% by 2030 and at least 35% by 2040¹²).

- 3.6.2 A 21-kilometre shared usage route through the Carmarthenshire countryside has potential to allow those who are currently travelling along the A and B roads in motor vehicles or on public transport to connect with nature along their journey. This increased access to this Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will bring a greater awareness and respect for nature for local residents and visitors, young and old, resulting in potential fitness and mental health benefits for all.

Welsh Government Circular 003/019

Part 2 Section A of Welsh Government Circular 003/019 outlines the key factors which contribute to the promotion or improvement of well-being. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route would support many of these as outlined in Table 3.2.

Table Part 2 Section A of Welsh Government Circular 003/019 – Well-Being Factors Supported by the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route.

Part 2 Section A (Circular 003/019) Well-being Factors	How Factor Supported by the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route
(a) Economic factors such as the availability of suitable and high-quality jobs, measures to encourage local small businesses, efficient and effective transport links, lifelong learning, training and skills development, the provision of infrastructure and new information and communication technologies	• Provision of new infrastructure - 21km long (from Abergwili to Ffairfach) • Construction of the route is expected to support 202 construction jobs (direct employment), 52 indirect construction jobs, and 25 induced construction jobs (279 in total)¹³. • Construction of the route could generate a e local total GVA of £13.8 million, with GVA of £3.6 million spent in the area¹⁴

¹¹ Tywi Valley Path, The Economic, Social and Environmental Well-being Consequences of the Proposed Shared Use Route, October 2022' and Tywi Valley Path WeITAG Stage 2 Final Report February 2021

¹² Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2: 2021-2025, Welsh Government

¹³ Tywi Valley Path, Business Case – 2022 Update, WSP (October 2022)

¹⁴ Tywi Valley Path, Business Case – 2022 Update, WSP (October 2022)

	• Positive forecast 'operational' economic impacts such as 'additional day spending • benefits' of £2.4 million and 'Business turnover' impacts of £2 million. • Business development opportunities along the route itself e.g. bike and e-bike hire, leisure activities and cafes • Route would provide an efficient, effective and cheaper transport link providing access to those without a private car to employment opportunities throughout the Tywi Valley.
(b) Social factors such as the promotion of good quality and affordable housing; safe communities; the encouragement of the voluntary sector; looking after the needs of children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable; access to the arts or leisure opportunities; access to education.	• Shared Use Route would provide access to arts, leisure and tourism opportunities along the route • Shared Use Route would provide access to education (A show of hands survey conducted by teachers at three secondary schools within the Tywi Valley catchment area in April and May 2019 with a total response of 1859 pupils showed that over a quarter of pupils (27%) surveyed, stated that the proposed Tywi Valley Shared Use Route would encourage them to walk/ cycle to school)¹⁵ • Lifelong health benefits from encouraging the young to cycle and imbed long term sustainable travel habits. The Shared Use Route provides a safe facility for the young to cycle uninhibited.
(c) Health related factors such as the promotion of good physical, social and mental health and developing and promoting policies which have a positive impact on health outcomes, especially on health inequalities.	• The Share Use Route will encourage more healthy and active forms of transport to be undertaken promoting good physical, social and mental health (Cycling UK states that cycling to work is linked with a 45% lower risk of developing cancer, and a 46% lower risk of Cardiovascular Disease when compared to a commute by car or public transport)¹⁶. • Health equality will be promoting as the Shared Use Route will be free to access by all. • Wellbeing benefits of physical exercise and being 'close to nature'.
Part 2 Section A (Circular 003/019) Well-being Factors	How Factor Supported by the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route

¹⁵ Tywi Valley Path, The Economic, Social and Environmental Well-being Consequences of the Proposed Shared Use Route, October 2022' and Tywi Valley Path WeITAG Stage 2 Final Report February 2021

¹⁶ Tywi Valley Path, The Economic, Social and Environmental Well-being Consequences of the Proposed Shared Use Route, October 2022' and Tywi Valley Path WeITAG Stage 2 Final Report February 2021

(d) Environmental factors such as the availability of clean air, clean water, clean streets, the quality of the built environment, the removal of objects considered hazardous to health, protecting communities against the threat of climate change, freedom from a high risk of flooding, improving and promoting biodiversity and accessibility to nature.	• Shared usage route will help project communities against the threat of climate change by encouraging modal shift to more sustainable travel modes, thus reducing carbon emissions. (Public Consultation on the shared route showed 78% of respondents were aware of the proposed route and of these, 96% said they would use the proposed route and 57% thought that the route would help reduce their car use). • Route will directly improve people's accessibility to nature (both residents and visitors to the area), being able to walk or cycle for 21km directly through the Tywi Valley.
(e) Promoting sustainable development in ways which: - promote social justice and equality of opportunity; and - enhance the natural and cultural environment and respect its limits - using only a fair share of the earth's resources and sustaining cultural legacy.	• Equality of opportunity will be promoted by the route through providing free travel opportunities to all within the Tywi Valley, to access new opportunities in employment and education. • The Shared Usage Route is a sustainable development, designed to be implemented to comply with the surrounding local environment and support sustainable access for a range of journeys for generations to come. • Cultural aspects of the Tywi valley will be promoted through the production of an interpretation strategy for the route. • All signage will be bilingual • The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route runs in proximity to many tourist attractions in the Tywi Valley, including the Carmarthenshire County Museum and Picnic Site, and Dryslwyn Castle and Picnic Site and will promote sustainable access to these locations.

4. THE SCHEME

4.1 Design and Associated Considerations

The Scheme will comprise of a corridor measuring not less than 3 metres in width running from the west of Whitemill to Ffairfach, Llandeilo with the surface of the path being predominantly of tarmac but also, where appropriate, comprising of lengths of hard surfacing where circumstances dictate. In accordance with design standards specified in Welsh Government Active Travel Guidance there will be a one metre verge either side of the surfaced area and occupying an area of 3 metres in width or thereabouts. However, in certain areas this may increase or reduce depending on the spatial requirement and topography of the ground.

The Western section is primarily off road and the Shared Use Route will be constructed upon what is now mainly pastureland however it will utilise the unclassified road (U2138) leading to Abergwili Concrete Works for a short distance and also a section of the unclassified road known (U2178) leading to Station Road, Nantgaredig. A number of culvert crossings on this section will result in some small bridge structures being constructed.

The Eastern Section of the Shared Use Path will commence from a point adjacent to Station Road, Nantgaredig and will travel largely over a disused railway and pastureland. This section will accommodate two major bridge structures which are required to be constructed over the rivers Tywi and Cothi and there will also be the necessity to construct a number of culvert crossings along the same route. The Shared Use Route crosses the Class II Road B4297 in Dryslwyn and continues thereafter along the disused railway, pastureland and woodland until it reaches Ffairfach, Llandeilo.

The Scheme will generally be constructed at existing ground levels although there are embankments on the approaches to the new bridges, the creation of boardwalk structures where ground conditions dictate and there is a cutting towards the eastern end of the Scheme to accommodate acceptable ground profiles in this section. Cattle grids will be installed on the boundaries of each relevant land holding to prevent animals travelling between farmsteads.

The general arrangement of the scheme is shown on Drg. No. FEAS 01 Rev A (Document Number 8)

The following are integral elements of the scheme –

- Groundworks, site preparation and drainage solutions where necessary.
- Surfacing works utilising asphalt concrete, and alternative hard surfaces where required.
- Construction of bridge structures. The main structures over the rivers Tywi and Cothi will be predominantly steel whilst the structures over the small tributaries and ditches will be a mixture of steel and wooden decks.
- Landscaping works including the translocation of existing hedgerows;
- Fencing including badger and otter fencing where appropriate;
- Amenity items including benches, tables, bins and signage.

5. PLANNING BACKGROUND

5.1.1 Carmarthenshire Council Local Development Plan 2006-2021

The Carmarthenshire Council Local Development Plan 2006-2021 (Document Number 9) sets out the spatial vision for the future of Carmarthenshire and a framework for the distribution and delivery of growth and development.

The Second Deposit Revised LDP has been published for public consultation, with the closing date for responses being 14 April 2023. It sets out several strategic objectives which the delivery of the Shared Use Path would contribute to, notably SO2, SO4, SO8 and SO13. The western section of the Shared Use Path lies in the defined cluster of Carmarthen (a regional centre) and its rural areas is a defined cluster whilst to the east Llandeilo is a key service centre in the Upper Tywi cluster. Policy INF2 and TR2 support proposals which provide for active travel and infrastructure as does SP17 (3). TRA1 supports transport improvements of the Joint Transport Plan for South West Wales 2015-2020 which included the Towy Valley Cycleway. SP11 supports developments related to the visitor economy. In addition, land-use planning policies and proposals which are used in the determination of planning applications and in guiding future opportunities for investment and growth. These policies include land-use allocations for different types of development (i.e. housing, employment, retailing, education, open space etc.) as well as criteria for assessing individual proposals. The Plan

has a direct effect on the lives of every resident of the County as well as major implications on investment programmes, other plans and strategies, communities and landowners alike.

Until the Revised LDP is adopted, the 2006-2021 LDP will remain in place for all planning decisions, in line with advice issued by the Welsh Government. There has been a delay in the production of the Revised LDP due to publication of new targets by Natural Resources Wales (NRW)¹⁷. The new targets by NRW seek to reduce the phosphate levels in special areas of conservation, including the Tywi River.

The Shared Use Route is highlighted in the 2006-2021 LDP as a “Proposed cycle route TR4”. Land required to facilitate the improvements to the cycle network will be safeguarded.

The policy states that “Developments should, where appropriate seek to incorporate, or where acceptable, facilitate links to the cycle, rights of way and bridleway network to ensure an integrated sustainable approach in respect of any site.”

Delivery of the Shared Use Route would be consistent with both the existing development plan and the Second Deposit Revised LDP.

5.1.2 Planning Application

The Scheme has been divided into two sections namely Western and Eastern.

Detailed planning applications for the western section (application Nos W/34225, E/37932 and W/39127 refer) were submitted by the Council in July 2016, October 2018 and July 2019 respectively. These applications were granted consent, subject to conditions on the 6th April 2017, 28th November 2018 and the 7th July 2020 (Document Number 10) and are currently being implemented.

Works relating to securing planning permission for the Eastern section i.e. from Nantgaredig to Ffairfach are ongoing, with a planning application seeking consent to the formation of a combined pedestrian and cycle path submitted on 2nd February 2023 (Application Ref: No: PL/05353).

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-services/planning/search-for-a-planning-application/#.ZBnOccLP1D8>.

The Pre-Application Consultation (PAC), which took place between Monday 3rd October 2022 until Monday 31st October 2022, revealed significant support for the delivery of the Scheme amongst those who engaged in the process.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) response to the PAC addressed the findings and conclusions the Flood Consequence Assessment (FCA) which advised that the impact of the proposed route on the existing flood risk to third parties is negligible. NRW accepted these conclusions and are in overall agreement with the findings. They did however note that although *the proposal does not technically comply with TAN15 A1.14 (and nor is it likely to, as there will be an element of flooding and flood risk due to the location of the path along the existing (old) railway line); It is ultimately down to the Local Planning Authority to consider the acceptability of the flooding consequences of this proposal*. Accordingly, the Local Planning Authority will need to balance the potential benefits of the Scheme against any potential issues taking into account the proposed mitigation measures.

Regarding Planning Policy, the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route contributes toward the goals of both National and Local Planning Policies. It is in accord with Policies 11 and 12 of The Future

¹⁷ [Local Development Plan 2018 - 2033 \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/local-development-plan-2018-2033)

Wales: National Plan 2040 (Document Number 11) by its prioritisation of active travel, and its role in creating a comprehensive network of paths, as well as supporting the sustainable transport hierarchy which is a “*fundamental Welsh Government principle that underpins Future Wales*”. The Scheme also satisfies the requirements of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, 2021) (Document Number 12), specifically those relating to improvements to active travel promoting healthier places, creating recreational spaces and community facilities, facilitating transport, tourism, and green infrastructure. The route is safeguarded under Local Plan Policy TR4, and also complies with all other relevant Local Plan Policies including EQ4, EQ5, GP1, SP1, SP14, SP9 and TR6.

The Council is satisfied that the proposed development complies with the provisions of the relevant National and Local Planning Policies and there is no reason to believe that planning consent will not be forthcoming.

5.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.2.1 Environmental Impact Assessment

In consequence of the Scheme falling within the scope of projects described in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 by virtue of the scale of the area, and that it crosses a SAC it was Screened for an EIA. The EIASO Request was submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in January 2017. The LPA issued the EIASO confirming the proposed development required an EIA in November 2017.

By virtue of the LPA adopting a Screening Opinion that the development comprises ‘EIA Development’, an EIA Scoping Report was submitted in April 2018 to determine which matters require further examination within an ES (Document Number 13) to be submitted in support of the planning application for the Scheme. The Scoping Opinion issued by the LPA in November 2018 confirmed the following items could be ‘scoped out’ of the ES:- Traffic and Transport; Noise and Vibration; Climate Change; Risk of Major Accidents or Disasters, Air Quality, and elements of Human Health, Ecology, Materials and Waste and Water. Whilst the following aspects were ‘scoped in’ and assessed in the ES which reached the following conclusions - as summarised below:

Landscape and Visual

Landscape and visual amenity impacts were assessed to be significantly adverse within 1km only during construction the construction phase. However, during the operation phase, and as the new mitigation planting matures, the effects would become non-significant.

Heritage and Archaeology

The Proposed Development would result in the removal of archaeological remains associated with the site of Abercothi (HER21266) during the construction phase. The moderate negative effects of the removal of the asset could, however, be partly offset following an archaeological watching brief. The adverse effect would not be offset entirely though, as preservation by record cannot replace the loss of a historic asset.

Biodiversity

The Proposed Development will result in direct impacts to the River Towy SAC / SSSI through disturbance to primary reasons for designation (otters and fish). Without appropriate mitigation, indirect impacts, particularly from the risk of pollution events, could occur. The embedded mitigation used in the design of the footbridge, combined with the mitigation measures to be employed for the protection of species using the River Towy SAC / SSSI and its qualifying features will result in negligible residual impacts.

The Scheme will provide a range of landscaping and ecological mitigation measures and will include the following:

- (a) Planting of hedgerow and translocation of existing hedgerow where appropriate;
- (b) Native marginal planting;
- (c) Otter, Bat and Badger mitigation

Planting will be done to provide ecological as well as landscape benefits by including planting of ecological value.

Surface water run-off from the Shared Use Route will predominately drain into adjoining land.

Water Environment and Flood Risk

There remains a direct and temporary residual effect on the River Towy and the River Cothi of moderate to large significance due to the proximity of the works to the river channel. However, this would be a temporary effect during the construction phase and is not considered to pose long term impacts once the works (including sediment mitigation measures) adjacent to the watercourses are complete. There are no significant residual effects predicted assuming the appropriate implementation of mitigation measures.

A significant proportion of the Proposed Development is located within Flood Zone 2 and 3 on NRW's Flood Map for Planning. However, the FCA undertaken concludes that the risk from surface water flooding is very limited. Flood warning signs will also be strategically placed along the length of the route as mitigation.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

The assessment process identified that there would be no significant long term residual effects on ground conditions resulting from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. However, some agricultural land classed as best and most versatile will be used by the development.

Population and Human Health

There are several impacts anticipated during the construction phase including temporary disruption on private property and agricultural land (slight adverse, not significant) and temporary diversions during construction for the PRoW (slight adverse, not significant). In terms of the construction phase there are potential increases in noise, loss of visual and landscape amenity, and the temporary diversion of some PRoW, but these are not considered significant. In respect of the operational phase, the Proposed Scheme will have a beneficial impact on human health once operational.

Materials and Waste

No significant effects are considered likely during the operation phase and hence will not be considered within the Materials and Waste assessment.

6. THE NEED TO USE COMPULSORY PURCHASE POWERS

The Order Schedule lists all parties with a qualifying interest in the Order Land as defined by section 12(2) of the 1981 Act including:

- (a) Owners, lessees, tenants and occupiers of the Order Land,
- (b) Those with the benefit of rights within the Order Land or restrictive covenants that affect titles that make up the Order Land, and
- (c) All other parties with a power to sell, convey or release an interest or right over the Order Land and any parties entitled to make a compensation claim under section 10 of the Compulsory Purchase Act 1965

The Order Schedule has been prepared following an extensive referencing exercise by the Council and is based on information gathered through inspection of the registers held by the Land Registry including associated documents referred to therein, site inspections and enquires with occupiers of land, agents and responses to notices requiring information issued under section 5A of the 1981 Act.

Disregarding the land already in the ownership of the Council there are in total an additional 32 separate landholdings and Council has been in negotiation with the respective landowners in an attempt to acquire land and rights necessary to enable the Scheme to proceed. During those discussions, the Council has explained the implications of the Scheme to landowners and its desire to enter into dialogue with them over the purchase of their land. The Council has had regard to their individual concerns while balancing those concerns against the wider economic, social and environmental objects of the Scheme. Reasonable attempts to acquire the remaining interests by private treaty have been undertaken but have not progressed sufficiently.

To date the Council has already purchased three properties (being plot numbers 3, 5 and 6 on the Order Map with plot numbers 19, 19/a, 19/b, 21, 21/a, 21/b and 44 being already in its ownership) and agreement has been reached in principle to purchase a further two properties (being plot numbers 9, 9/a, 9/b, 9/c and 10 on the Order Map) and the transfer of the same are currently or will shortly be processed by the legal representatives of the respective owners. Agreement has also been reached in respect of easement rights (being plots 7, 25/a and 32/a on the Order Map). Thirty properties remain to be acquired and agreement has not yet been reached with the owners. Absent confirmation of the Order, the Council is satisfied that it will be unable to acquire the whole of the land required to enable the construction of the Scheme, and thus the Shared Use Route, to go ahead. This is particularly relevant if the Council is to meet the timescale required by the funding body to deliver the Scheme. Further delay runs the risk of jeopardising access to secured public funds and so delivery of the Scheme and the Shared Use Route.

Sole ownership by the Council of the Order Land is essential to ensure that the appropriate parts of the Shared Use Route can become a highway maintainable at the public expense, along with it being necessary to acquire third party easement rights to safeguard future maintenance thereafter. The Council fully recognises the rights of individuals who have an interest in the Order Land and is mindful that compulsory powers should be used as a last resort. The Council will continue discussions with the remaining owners of the relevant interests to try to acquire their land by agreement and these negotiations will continue to be carried out in parallel with the process of seeking confirmation of the Order.

The Order Land comprises of several plots along the entire length of Scheme which are required solely for the purpose of facilitating the construction of the shared use route. On completion of the Scheme plot numbers 1/a, 1/c, 4/a, 4/b, 8/a, 8/b, 8/c, 9/a, 9/b, 9/c, 11/b, 11/c, 14/a, 15/a, 17/a, 18/e, 20/a, 23/a, 25/b, 34/b, 35/c, 37 and 44/a will be deemed to be surplus land and the Council in disposing of the same will adopt the Crichel Down Rules.

The Council is mindful that there are a number of existing third party rights affecting the Order Land and except for the extinguishment of vehicular rights over Plots 25 and 27 which had historically been reserved all other lawful remaining rights of access over the shared use route which are necessary to access property or to undertake agricultural operations on adjoining land will remain.

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHEME

7.1 Scheme Costs

The Scheme is estimated to cost a total of £21.067 million and takes into consideration the cost of acquiring the Order Land, design and project management fees (including planning costs and professional fees) and construction of the Scheme. This estimated amount includes an element of costs already incurred since the inception of the proposed scheme in 2014.

7.2 Funding

The Council have allocated £1,863,879 capital funding towards the Scheme. £16,774,912 has been secured from the UK Government's Levelling up fund.

This funding will ensure that there is no financial impediment to the Council acquiring the Order Land compulsorily following confirmation of the Order and thereafter the works associated with the delivery of the Scheme.

7.3 Delivery Programme

The Council intends to acquire all the interests in the Order Land (unless it is expressly stated in the Order Schedule) either by agreement or by exercising its compulsory purchase powers as set out in this statement. The Council will pursue the acquisitions of all qualifying interests in accordance with the 1981 Act to secure the implementation of the Scheme.

The Council is keen to commence the Scheme as soon as is reasonably practical. The present intention is for construction to commence in a phased manner in 2023 with an anticipated build of around 18 months.

The western section of the Scheme which extends from Abergwili to Nantgaredig already has the benefit of planning consent and, following the submission for planning consent for the remainder of the Route from Nantgaredig to Ffairfach, it is not anticipated there will be any planning impediments to the implementation for this section. There are time constraints on the timetable for development in order to comply with the funding requirements which currently need to be drawn down by March 2024 although this may be extended.

In summary the Council is satisfied that there are no financial, physical, planning or legal impediments to the Scheme proceeding and there is every reasonable prospect that it will proceed to the completion, so the Shared Use Route can be secured, once the Order is confirmed.

8. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL STATEMENTS, POLICIES AND FRAMEWORKS

The Scheme complies with national and local strategies and policies at a number of levels which are detailed below:-

8.1 Local Policies & Strategies

8.1.1 Carmarthenshire Council Local Development Plan 2006-2021

The Shared Use Route is highlighted in the Carmarthenshire Council Local Development Plan 2006-2021 as a "Proposed cycle route TR4". Land required to facilitate the improvements to the cycle network will be safeguarded.

The policy states that "Developments should, where appropriate seek to incorporate, or where acceptable, facilitate links to the cycle, rights of way and bridleway network to ensure an integrated sustainable approach in respect of any site."

There has been a delay in the production of the Revised LDP for the new plan period due to publication of new targets by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The Second Deposit LDP has been published for public consultation, with the closing date for responses being April 2023. The published evidence base includes an assessment of Green Infrastructure (GI) of which public rights of way are a part. It recognises that investment in GI contributes to the economic, social and environmental success of the area. The Scheme underlying the CPO represents GI infrastructure. The new targets by NRW seek to reduce the phosphate levels in special areas of conservation, including the Tywi River. Until the Revised LDP is adopted, the

Carmarthenshire Council Local Development Plan 2006-2021 will remain in place for all planning decisions, in line with advice issued by the Welsh Government.

8.1.2 Carmarthenshire Well-being Plan: The Carmarthenshire We Want 2018 – 2023 (Document Number 14)

The Carmarthenshire Public Services Board have developed a well-being plan for Carmarthenshire (2018-2023). The consultation period for the 2023-2028 Well-being plan has been undertaken and ended in January 2023. Based on the findings from the Carmarthenshire well-being assessment and further engagement with stakeholders, the 2018-2023 plan focuses on the delivery of four objectives:

- **Healthy Habits:** People have a good quality of life, and make healthy choices about their lives and environment;
- **Early Intervention:** To make sure people have the right help at the right time; as and when they need it;
- **Strong Connections:** Strongly connected people, places and organisations that are able to adapt to change; and
- **Prosperous People and Places:** To maximise opportunities for people and places in both urban and rural parts of our county.

The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will contribute toward encouraging 'Healthy Habits' and increasing levels of physical activity. Currently settlements within the valley are connected via the A40 and B4300 (as well as smaller country lanes), the opening of the route along the old railway line allows communities to be reconnected by means of an off-road route, thus promoting 'Strong Connections'. The Shared Use Route will also help to achieve 'Prosperous People and Places' by providing a means of free travel access to educational and employment opportunities for those without a private car within the Tywi Valley.

8.1.3 Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire: the next 5 years (2018) (Document Number 15)

Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire has identified 100 priority projects, schemes or services to be delivered by the end of 2023. The aim of delivering these projects and programmes is to contribute toward making Carmarthenshire "the best place to live, work and visit." One of the aims of this plan is to establish Carmarthenshire as the 'Cycling Capital of Wales'. Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire targets developing opportunities for leisure and well-being through delivering projects as ways to achieve this, identifying the delivery of the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route as one of these key projects. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will increase physical and mental well-being in the Tywi Valley by providing an active travel route suitable for both leisure and commuting.

8.1.4 Carmarthenshire Corporate Strategy, 2018 – 2023 (Updated April 2021) (Document Number 16)

Carmarthenshire's Corporate Strategy follows the direction of the county, as outlined in Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire (2018), to make Carmarthenshire "the best place to live, work and visit." Carmarthenshire's Corporate Strategy summarises the Council's vision into 4 categories:

- Start Well;
- Live Well;
- Age Well; and,
- Healthy, Safe & Prosperous Environment.

Within these 4 categories, there are 15 Well-being objectives, with the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route used as an example of meeting Well-being Objective 11 (Improving the highway and transport infrastructure and connectivity), which contributes toward creating a Healthy, Safe & Prosperous Environment.

8.1.5 Carmarthenshire: The Cycling Hub of Wales Cycling Strategy (2018) (Document Number 17)

The Council has developed a Strategy with an aim to becoming the Cycling Hub of Wales. A number of aims and objectives are outlined within this document, which focuses on developing infrastructure and facilities, education, training and development, events, tourism, marketing and branding. The Strategy recognises the benefits of cycling describing it as a multi faceted activity open to all ages. An action plan is identified which includes a focus on infrastructure and facilities; the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route is specifically mentioned within the document, with the route providing a number of opportunities to help contribute towards the vision of the Cycling Hub of Wales.

8.1.6 Moving Rural Carmarthenshire Forward (2019) (Document Number 18)

The Moving Rural Carmarthenshire Forward report was published by the Rural Affairs Task Group and was the first ever wide-ranging strategy that had been developed to regenerate the rural communities in Carmarthenshire. The report captures the unique characteristics of the rural settlements in Carmarthenshire and sets out how to build on them so that future generations can appreciate their wealth and value.

The report itself recommends exploring the feasibility of developing cycle paths on redundant railway lines across the County in light of the success and development of the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route. There are also various other recommendations throughout the report that the development of the Tywi Valley can contribute to addressing such as the demise of services in smaller settlements and improving connectivity within and across smaller settlements.

8.1.7 Carmarthenshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2019 – 2029 (Document Number 19)

This document outlines how as an authority the Council can better manage local Rights of Way networks and undertake improvements. It does this by listing a series of aims which form the basis of the ROWIP. These are as follows:

1. Ensure the that Rights of Way network is easy to use and enjoyable;
2. Provide a reliable, accurate, up to date, and widely available digital Definitive Map & Statement;
3. Ensure the opportunities for countryside access are easy to use and enjoyable;
4. Continue to work in partnership with all relevant, interested parties to achieve improved facilities for countryside access; and
5. Promotion – maintain and improve the range and quality of public information on access and PROW, as well as make it more widely available in appropriate formats.

The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will provide access opportunities to the countryside which are easy to use and enjoyable. The route will provide the users with a close experience with nature, along with separation from the busier roads (B4300/A40). The route will include bilingual signs and information posts that inform users of the path and PROW.

8.1.8 A strategic regeneration plan for Carmarthenshire 2015-2030 – Transformations (Document Number 20)

The Transformational Strategy aligns with the key priorities of the Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy 2013-2030 and focusses on job creation, business growth, improving workforce skills, developing the knowledge economy and creating distinctive places. The strategy aims to create more than 5,000 new jobs and endeavour to create an economy within Carmarthenshire which is at 90% of the UK's average GVA level.

A key priority within the strategy is to create Walking and Cycling facilities as a tourism attraction whilst also offering sustainable travel options to access employment sites, schools and tourism attractions including a scheme within the lower Tywi Valley.

8.2 Regional Policies & Strategies

8.2.1 Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy 2013-2030 (Document Number 21)

Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy represents an ambitious strategic framework to support South West Wales and its future economic development. The objectives are to:

- Change the sectoral mix of the city region economy, with a clear shift towards higher value sectors.
- Change the occupational mix of the city region economy, through a shift towards higher level occupations.
- Reduce the GVA per employee deficit to 90% of the UK average by 2030.

The Framework comprises five Strategic Aims that will be tackled. It also contains four Cross Cutting Themes. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will support Strategic Aims 3 & 5 which focus on maximising job creation for all and creating distinctive places with competitive infrastructures.

8.2.2 Joint Transport Plan For South West Wales 2015-2020 (Document Number 22)

The Regional Transport Plan for 2015 – 2020 outlines a number of problems and associated desired outcomes that have helped shape a vision for transport in the region:

“To improve transport and access within and beyond the region to facilitate economic regeneration, reduce deprivation and support the development and use of more sustainable and healthier modes of transport.”

The Tywi Valley Transport Corridor is specifically mentioned within the plan as Priority 8 of 12 for Carmarthenshire County Council's list of schemes for the 2015 - 2020 period. The route has the potential to help achieve the visions of the document by improving access to more sustainable modes of transport and to support a reduction of the adverse impact of transportation on health and climate change. An opportunity of a new off-road shared use route may also improve safety, both perceived and actual, for walkers and cyclists wishing to travel between settlements in the Tywi Valley.

8.2.3 South West Wales Regional Cycling Strategy (2020) (Document Number 23)

The purpose of the South West Wales Regional Cycling Strategy is to provide a clear direction and co-ordinated partnership for walking and cycling development in south-west Wales over the next ten years.

The Strategy recognises that one of the main barriers to increasing levels of cycling continues to be the provision of safe cycle routes to known trip attractors and destinations. Developing the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will provide a safe and continuous route to a number of trip attractors and destinations across the Tywi Valley Region.

8.3 National Policies & Strategies

8.3.1 The Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013)

The Active Travel (Wales) Act aims to make active travel the most attractive option for shorter everyday journeys (journeys to work, school, to access shops or services, etc. i.e. not purely recreational). Enabling more people to undertake active travel will mean more people can enjoy the health benefits of active travel, help reduce greenhouse emissions, tackle poverty and disadvantage and help the economy to grow. The Active Travel Act Guidance was updated in 2021 (published in July 2021). This provided an update to the two original statutory guidance documents produced in 2014.

The Act requires local authorities in Wales to produce active travel maps for certain named settlements and deliver year on year improvements in active travel routes and facilities. It requires highways authorities in Wales to make enhancements to routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in all new road schemes and to have regard to the needs of walkers and cyclists in a range of other highway authority functions. It also requires the Welsh Ministers and local authorities to promote active travel journeys in exercising their functions under this Act.

The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route links a number of rural villages and Llandeilo with Carmarthen which is a major employment area in the County. The Shared Use Route will provide people an opportunity for people living in the linked rural settlements to commute on foot or by bicycle.

8.3.2 Welsh Cycling Strategy – Inspiring Wales to Cycle (Document Number 24)

This document sets out Welsh Cycling's priority which is to grow participation in the sport of cycling and increase international and national sporting success. The overall vision for Welsh Cycling will be delivered in conjunction with partners and stakeholders.

The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route project will help achieve the following outcomes:

- More young people riding & racing regularly, developing their skills and confidence
- The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will provide a safe cycle route that will encourage children and families to encourage healthier lifestyles by the increase of walking and cycling. The Tywi Valley is especially well placed in terms of environmental benefits thus providing users with opportunities for contact with nature.
- More people participating and retained in organised cycling activities, achieving their personal goals
- The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will provide a traffic free, multidiscipline cycleway that will enable the safe delivery of cycling activities and expand the opportunities for everyone to participate in cycling.

8.3.3 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act seeks to ensure that public bodies work collaboratively and consider future generations in the decisions made today. The Act outlines Seven well-being goals, as follows:

- A prosperous Wales;
- A resilient Wales;
- A healthier Wales;
- A more equal Wales;
- A Wales of cohesive communities;
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language; and
- A globally responsible Wales.

The Act describes how the above should be achieved via 5 ways of working, which are as below:

- Long term;
- Prevention;
- Integration;
- Collaboration; and
- Involvement.

As outlined, the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route seeks to contribute to all seven goals but in particular will contribute to the four goals of, A prosperous Wales, A healthier Wales, A more equal Wales and A Wales of cohesive communities, by providing a safe opportunity to undertake cost effective active travel journeys between settlements and trip attractors in the Tywi Valley. The route will help to create sustainable economic benefits and reduce carbon emissions through model shift.

The five ways of working have been integrated into all process related to the Tywi Valley Shared Route scheme including route design, option appraisal and project implementation work. Collaborative approaches have been taken including the engagement of a range of stakeholders through extensive consultation both as part of the planning application process and beyond, which has resulted in a long-term solution aiming to prevent future issues such as climate change. The shared route integrates with many surrounding schemes and projects.

A wellbeing Plan for the Shared Use Route has been prepared which outlines how the five ways of working have been addressed in regards to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and is provided within the Tywi Valley Path, Impacts Assessment Report, WelTAG Stage 2, Final Report, February 2021.

8.3.4 An Active Travel Action Plan for Wales, 2016 (Document Number 25)

The Active Travel Action Plan for Wales introduces a vision of:

“For people in Wales, we want walking and cycling to become the preferred ways of getting around over shorter distances.”

The plan acknowledges that opportunities for travelling via foot or by cycle vary greatly between rural and urban areas but sets out a number of priority areas in which to focus investment. A number of these priority areas focus upon schools. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route aims to increase the opportunities for pupils to travel all or part of their journeys to school via an active mode. It will pass within the vicinity of a number of primary schools and

Ysgol Bro Dinefwr secondary school, as well as being within the catchment areas for other secondary schools based in Carmarthen.

8.3.5 Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The Environment (Wales) Act puts in place the legislation needed to plan and manage Wales' natural resources in a more proactive, sustainable and joined-up way.

The Act places a duty to reduce emissions within the Welsh Government carbon budgets. The interim emission reduction targets are:

- 2030: 45% reduction; and
- 2040: 67% reduction.

The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will encourage the shift to sustainable modes, reducing the reliance on private motorised transport for all short/medium distance journeys between Carmarthen and Ffairfach. With this 'modal shift', the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will contribute to the carbon reduction targets set by the Welsh Government.

8.3.6 Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales, 2019 (Document Number 26) and Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 (2021-2025)

In April 2019, Welsh Government declared a climate emergency and produced a 100-point Low Carbon Plan which sets out details on how Wales can become carbon neutral by 2030. Within the Low Carbon Plan, Proposals 12 and 13 directly promote an increase in active travel and achieve a modal shift.

In addition to these proposals, the following policy also outlines plans to increase active travel:

Policy 46 – Increasing Active Travel

This policy outlines the benefits of walking and cycling to people's health and the environment through reduced emissions. The policy's vision is for active travel to become the preferred way of travelling shorter distances, a vision the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route can help to achieve within Carmarthenshire.

The Net Zero Wales Plan is a five-year plan of action that shapes the next stage of Wales' aim to be net zero by 2050. It is the next emissions reduction plan, following on from Prosperity for all: A Low Carbon Wales, which covered the first carbon budget (2016-20).

The Net Zero Wales Plan identifies that reducing emissions from transport has a significant role in the overarching aim of Wales reaching net zero, as well as playing a role in "generating wider benefits across health, air quality, accessibility and the economy." Promoting a modal shift toward sustainable modes is one of the identified areas of mitigation; the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will contribute towards this shift by providing the Tywi Valley with the infrastructure needed to support walking and cycling.

8.3.7 Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020-2025 (Document Number 27)

Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020-2025 aims to grow tourism "for the good of Wales". The plan aims to achieve these 4 goals whilst accommodating a growth in tourism;

- Economic growth that delivers benefits to people and places
- Environmental sustainability

- Social and cultural enrichment
- Health benefits

To achieve these goals, the plan aims to provide “high-quality, year-round experiences that are good for visitors and host communities” through a local approach (Bro) and a global approach (Byd).

The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route runs in proximity to many tourist attractions in the Tywi Valley, including the Carmarthenshire County Museum and Picnic Site, and Dryslwyn Castle and Picnic Site. The route will enable tourism, providing a walking and cycling route from settlements in the Tywi Valley to the many tourist spots, which will in turn contribute to the goals set by the Welcome to Wales plan. The path may also be seen as a tourist attraction itself, attracting leisure users to the area, further boosting the local economy.

8.3.8 The Clean Air Plan for Wales: Healthy Air, Healthy Wales (2020) (Document Number 28)

The Welsh Government's Clean Air Plan for Wales aims to reduce air pollution and to support improvements in public health and the natural environment. Proposals in the plan include:

- Enhancing our air quality monitoring and assessment capabilities;
- Proposals for a fit for purpose legislative and regulatory air quality management framework for Wales;
- Increasing public awareness about air pollution and behavioural change communications to help everyone improve air quality and encourage others to do the same; and
- Promoting the shift from the private motor vehicle to active travel and public transport.

By promoting a shift away from private motorised transport, the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will encourage active travel, contributing to improvements in air pollution and reducing carbon emissions. Both Llandeilo and Carmarthen have AQMAs for nitrogen dioxide focused around their town centre. With large sections of the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route isolated from major roads, (e.g. the A40 and B4300) the path will “reduce the impacts of air pollution on human health”, one of the aims of the Clean Air Plan for Wales.

8.3.9 Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 (2021)

Future Wales is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining, and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of communities.

Growth should be shaped around sustainable forms of transport and places that make us and the environment healthier.

The spatial strategy outlined in Future Wales lists 33 policies, two of which directly related to transport and improving connectivity. These are as follows:

Policy 11 – National Connectivity

The Welsh Government will work with Transport for Wales, local authorities, operators and partners to support the delivery of the following measures to improve national connectivity:

- Rail Network – Transform the rail network and improve the quality of rail services for passengers.
- Bus Network – Invest in the development of the national bus network, fully integrated with regional and local bus networks, to increase modal share of bus travel and improve access by bus to a wider range of trip destinations.
- Strategic Road Network – Invest in road improvements to reduce journey times, deliver a safer and more resilient road network, and improve air and noise quality. Create a network of rapid-charging points to enable longer distance travel by electric vehicles throughout Wales.
- National Cycle Network – Revitalise the National Cycle Network to create a network of traffic-free paths connecting cities, towns and countryside across Wales.

Policy 12 – Regional Connectivity

In urban areas, to support sustainable growth and regeneration, our priorities are improving and integrating active travel and public transport. In rural areas our priorities are diversifying, supporting and sustaining local bus services. The Welsh Government will work with Transport for Wales, local authorities, operators and partners to deliver a set of measures. Highlighted is one of the measures to improve regional connectivity:

- Active Travel – Prioritising walking and cycling for all local travel. We will support the implementation of the Active Travel Act to create comprehensive networks of local walking and cycling routes that connect places that people need to get to for everyday purposes.

The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will contribute to the objectives and policies of the National Plan 2040, contributing to the Welsh Government’s aims to “reduce the need to travel, particularly by private vehicles, and support a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport”. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route prioritises active travel, which will support the sustainable transport hierarchy which is a “fundamental Welsh Government principle that underpins Future Wales”. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will support policies 11 and 12 by its prioritisation of active travel, and its role in creating a comprehensive network of paths, with potential to be included as part of a route on the National Cycle Network (NCN) (subject to further discussion and agreement with Sustrans). Page 51 refers to the importance of the NCN and that all planned improvements are supported. Accordingly the National Plan supports both the Scheme underlying the Order and the Shared Use Route.

8.3.10 Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy (2021) (Document Number 29)

The vision of Llwybr Newydd is for ‘an accessible, sustainable and efficient transport system’. The Strategy includes short-term priorities for the next 5 years, which are:

- Bring services to people in order to reduce the need to travel;
- Allow people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable and efficient transport services and infrastructure; and
- Encourage people to make the change to more sustainable transport.

Improvements to active travel infrastructure in the study area with the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will directly connect communities to an active travel network that will promote walking/cycling and encourage a shift away from private car use, and toward more sustainable modes.

The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will contribute to the specific short-term priority for active travel, to ‘continuously develop a network of local routes for walking and cycling to connect people with the places they travel to for everyday journeys.’

The Strategy also sets out four longer-term ambitions for the next 20 years, which link closely to the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The ambitions are for a transport system that is:

- Good for people and communities;
- Good for the environment;
- Good for the economy and places in Wales; and
- Good for culture and the Welsh language.

The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will be good for people and communities, and the environment, by promoting active travel modes as an alternative to private motorised transport for travel purposes, as well as promoting physical activity for leisure purposes. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will connect tourist attractions and communities, promoting Welsh culture. The route will generate economic benefits for the region increase job opportunities as well as provide a means of cost-effective access to new job opportunities. It will contribute to the Vision for an accessible, sustainable and efficient transport system encouraging people to make a modal shift.

8.3.11 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, 2021)

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the Welsh Government's planning policies for land use in Wales. The primary objective of the PPW is to ensure the planning system contributes to delivering sustainable development and improve well-being in Wales, as required by the WBoFGA.

PPW forms part of a suite of documents at the heart of the planning system in Wales and promotes actions at all levels through a series of Strategic and Spatial outcomes, which are strategic and spatial choices, active and social places, productive and enterprising places and distinctive and natural places.

Proposals are also required to be assessed against the National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes. These are as follows:

- Creating and Sustaining Communities;
- Growing Our Economy in a Sustainable Manner;
- Making Best Use of Resources;
- Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact; and
- Facilitating Accessible and Healthy Environments.

The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will meet the define outcomes through improvements to active travel promoting healthier places, creating recreational spaces and community facilities, facilitating transport, tourism, and green infrastructure. It will also help to enable sustainable communities by providing an active travel alternative for journeys within the Tywi Valley.

8.3.12 Welsh Government Programme for Government – Update (December 2021) (Document Number 30)

The Programme for Government - Update (December 2021) incorporates the Co-operation Agreement. The programme sets out the ten well-being objectives that the government will use to maximise its contribution to Wales' seven long-term well-being goals and the steps that will be taken to deliver them.

The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will contribute towards meeting several of the Welsh Government's well-being objectives. Through the improved provision of active travel

infrastructure, connectivity to schools, healthcare, and other services, the Shared Use Route will help to create equal opportunities for larger groups of the population, as well as supporting a greener economy through progress towards decarbonisation. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will improve the 'liveability' of the towns and communities in the Tywi Valley, making Wales's "cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work".

8.4 UK Policies and Strategies

8.4.1 Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain (July 2021) (Document Number 31)

The Department for Transport's Decarbonising Transport report aims to reduce the carbon emissions and negative environmental impacts of the transport system in the UK. Regarding walking and cycling, the plan aims to make 'public transport, cycling and walking the natural first choice for all who can take it', with focus on shorter journeys and commutes. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will contribute to the below commitment:

- We will deliver the Prime Minister's bold vision for cycling and walking investing £2 billion over five years with the aim that half of all journeys in towns and cities will be cycled or walked by 2030.

To deliver its commitments, Decarbonising Transport sets out 6 strategic priorities. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will contribute toward the first strategic priority set out in the plan, accelerating modal shift to public and active transport, aiming to increase the share of journeys taken by cycling and walking for short journeys and commuting.

9 HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS AND ANY OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 Human Rights Act 1998

Section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 prohibits public authorities from acting in a way which is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights ("ECHR"). Various convention rights may be engaged in the process of making and considering the Order, including those under Articles 6, 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol.

Article 1 of the First Protocol which states that "regard must be had to the fair balance that has to be struck between the competing interests of the individual and of the community as a whole". Therefore, compulsory purchase powers must be proportionate. Both public and private interests are to be taken into account in the exercise of the Council's powers and duties as a Local Highway Authority. Similarly any interference with Article 8 rights must be "necessary in a democratic society", meaning proportionate. The Council is of the view that in pursuing this Order, it has carefully considered the balance to be struck between individual rights and the wider public interest. Interference with Convention rights, if there is any, is considered to be justified in order to secure the economic regeneration and public benefits which the Scheme will bring and to secure compliance with planning policy.

Entitlement to a fair and public hearing in the determination of a person's civil and political rights (ECHR, Article 6). This includes property rights and can include opportunities to be heard in the consultation process. The statutory procedures, taken with the right to object and judicial review, satisfy the requirements of Article 6.

Rights to respect for private and family life and home. Such rights may be restricted if the infringement is in accordance with the law, has a legitimate aim and is fair and proportionate in the public interest (ECHR, Article 8). It is considered that such interferences as may occur as a result of the Order are in accordance with the law, pursue a legitimate aim and are proportionate having regard to the public interest in the Scheme referred to in this Statement.

Peaceful enjoyment of possessions (including property). This does not impair the right to enforce such laws as the State considers necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest (ECHR, Article 1 of the First Protocol). It is considered that the Order will strike a fair balance between the public interest in the implementation of the Scheme and those private rights which will be affected by the Order. Compensation will be available under the compensation code to those who can prove they have a legitimate claim arising from the exercise of compulsory purchase powers.

9.2 Equalities Act 2021

Compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty, an Initial Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was undertaken in 2019, which concluded that the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will not present a negative impact to any groups with protected characteristics. The EqIA was updated in 2021.

The impact on a range of groups with protected characteristics was considered:

- Age – The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route aims to reduce road traffic casualties amongst less experienced and vulnerable users, including adolescent and elderly groups. Creating a safer environment will increase walking and cycling activity in all age groups, which will have physical health benefits, including improved mental health. Increased travel independence for both older and younger people due to a safer, more cost-effective transport option that does not rely on the ability to drive.
- Disability - The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will improve road safety and reduce road traffic casualties amongst less experienced and vulnerable users, including those with a disability. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will be accessible to those with a disability and will include all relevant DDA design features. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will be designed to Welsh Government Active Travel Design Standards which takes account of the needs of all user groups. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route will allow access to the countryside, town centre facilities and tourism attractions for a range of users with disabilities, which at present may only be accessible by car.
- Gender Reassignment – Unlikely to have an identified negative impact.
- Race – Evidence from Natural England suggests some people from minority ethnic communities have never been to the countryside and feel they have no entitlement to be there. The path gives free access to the countryside for all and an opportunity for participation in the natural environment by minority ethnic communities.
- Religion/Belief - Unlikely to have an identified negative impact.
- Pregnancy and maternity - An improved pedestrian/cyclist environment will increase mobility for all, including pregnant women and those with young children. Increased travel independence for pregnant women and those with young children as The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route provides a cost-effective alternative for travel particularly for those without access to a car.
- Sexual Orientation - Unlikely to have an identified negative impact.
- Sex – Sustrans Survey data indicates that Women can be underrepresented in the activity of cycling. The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route looks to address this by providing a safe route for use by all. Some sections of the off-road route may feel remote leading to some user groups feeling vulnerable. To address this all relevant safety and security design features will be included.
- Welsh language - All publicity, advertising and interpretation material developed as part of the Tywi Valley Shared Use Route project will be produced bilingually thus promoting the importance of the Welsh language.

The EqIA recommends no formal measures in response to any negative impacts. However, to ensure the input of those with protected characteristics are gained several groups e.g.

Carmarthenshire Disabled Access Group, Carmarthenshire Disability Coalition for Action, have been invited to stakeholder events. This engagement via workshops, surveys etc will continue as the project develops to ensure those with protected characteristics are represented.

10 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments located within the boundaries of the Order Land and no part of the Order Land is located with a conservation area although there are assets within the wider study area considered in the ES supporting PL/05353. CADW have no objection to the application PL/05353. The River Tywi is a SAC & SSSI and whilst a bridge will oversail the river at one location no works are anticipated to be undertaken therein. There are no issues concerning special categories of land defined in Part 3 of and Schedule 3 to the 1981 Act crown land or renewal areas with the Order Land.

11 STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS

Where statutory undertakers' apparatus is affected by the Scheme arrangements efforts will be made to protect or divert the apparatus under the provisions of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991. Detail on statutory undertakers' apparatus has been obtained via utility searches and statutory requisitions of information and include Western Power Distribution, Openreach Limited, Mainline Pipelines Limited, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, Wales and West Utilities and National Grid plc. These organisations can contact the council by writing to Sam Palmer, Environment Department, Block 2, Parc Myrddin, Richmond Terrace, Carmarthen, SA31 1HQ

12 COMPENSATION ISSUES

Provision is made by statute with regard to compensation for the compulsory purchase of land and the depreciation in the value of affect properties. More information is given in the series of booklets published by the Welsh Government listed below:

- (a) Booklet 1 – Your home and compulsory purchase
- (b) Booklet 2 - Your home and nuisance from public development
- (c) Booklet 3 - Your business and public development
- (d) Booklet 4 - The farmer and public development
- (e) Booklet 5 - Insulation against traffic noise

Copies of these booklets can be obtained from the Welsh Government or can be viewed online at <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/roads/land-acquisition-compensation/?lang=en>

Specific claims in relation to this scheme may be addressed to Mr Hywel Humphreys, Economic Development Department at County Hall, Castle Hill, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP

13 SUMMARY

The Tywi Valley Shared Use Route would provide a unique opportunity to provide communities within Carmarthenshire with a cost effective and sustainable form of transport to access jobs, services and education. It would provide access for a range of utility journeys (to schools, places of work etc) along with leisure and tourism journeys and journeys to help promote individual well-being.

With this comes the real and tangible prospect of securing future well-being benefits (those defined both by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and those outlined within Part 2 Section A of Welsh Government Circular 003/019). However, securing these

well-being benefits relies on the Order being successful to secure the right to deliver the funded scheme in the wider public interest. Without the Order, the shared use route cannot be delivered, and the well-being benefits will not be secured for the local community and future users of the proposed Tywi Valley Shared Use Route. There is a compelling case in the public interest for early confirmation of the Order.

14 THE ORDER, ORDER MAP AND STATEMENT OF REASONS

Copies of the Order, Order Map and Statement of Reasons may be inspected free of charge at:

- the Council's Customer Service HWB at St Catherine's Walk, Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire,
- Carmarthen Library, St Peter's Street, Carmarthen,
- Llandeilo Library, Crescent Road, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, and
- May be viewed online at <https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/business/development-and-investment/tywi-valley-path/>

15 OBJECTING OR SUPPORTING THE COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER

Any person wishing to support or object to, or support or make a representation in the respect of the Order may do so by writing to:

Planning and Environment Decisions Wales, Crown Building, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ
Should interested parties wish to support or object to the Scheme and the Order then correspondence will be considered by the Council who may need to consult with people and organisations outside the Council and as part of this process the Council may pass information to them, including information interested parties may have given including personal data. The Council will only disclose personal details where it is necessary to do so in order to deal with issues brought to its attention.

If interested parties do not wish for certain personal data to be forwarded to third parties, they should state why when submitting correspondence and the Welsh Ministers will copy the representations to the appropriate third parties with the name and address removed.

Specific enquires in relation to this scheme may be addressed to Mr Samuel E Palmer, Environment Department at Block 2 Parc Myrddin, Richmond Terrace, Carmarthen, SA31 1HQ

16 PUBLIC LOCAL INQUIRY

Inquiry Procedure Rules

This Statement of Reasons for making the Order is not intended to discharge the Council's obligations under the Compulsory Purchase (Inquiries Procedure) (Wales) Rules 2010 in the event of a Public Local Inquiry being held.

Documents

Should the Order become the subject of a public inquiry, correspondence will be seen by an inspector. All correspondence will be kept in a public inquiry library and become publicly available. In the event of Public Local Inquiry the Council would intend to refer to or put in evidence the following documents which will be put on deposit and may be inspected at a stated time and place. This list is not intended to be exhaustive and the Council may refer to or put in evidence further documents:-

DOCUMENTS

1. Towy Valley Transport Corridor - WelTAG Option Appraisal (WelTAG Stage 1, August 2013)
2. Tywi Valley Path WelTAG Stage 2 Final Report February 2021
3. Towy Valley Transport Corridor Feasibility Study January 2014
4. Tywi Valley Path WelTAG Stage 2 Final Impact Assessment Report February 2021
5. Tywi Valley Path, The Economic, Social and Environmental Well Being Consequences of the Proposed Shared Use Route October 2022
6. Tywi Valley Path, Business Case – 2022 Update, WSP
7. Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2: 2021-2025
8. General Arrangement Plan
9. Carmarthenshire Council Local Development Plan 2006-2021
10. Granting of Planning Permission for Application Ref. W/34225, E/37932 and W/39127
11. Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 (2021)
12. Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, 2021)
13. Environmental Statement
14. Carmarthenshire Well-being Plan: The Carmarthenshire We Want 2018 – 2023
15. Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire: the next 5 years (2018)
16. Carmarthenshire Corporate Strategy, 2018 – 2023 (Updated April 2021)
17. Carmarthenshire: The Cycling Hub of Wales Cycling Strategy (2018)
18. Moving Rural Carmarthenshire Forward (2019)
19. Carmarthenshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2019 – 2029
20. A strategic regeneration plan for Carmarthenshire 2015-2030 – Transformations
21. Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy 2013-2030
22. Joint Transport Plan For South West Wales 2015-2020
23. South West Wales Regional Cycling Strategy (2020)
24. Welsh Cycling Strategy
25. An Active Travel Action Plan for Wales, 2016
26. Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales, 2019
27. Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020-2025
28. The Clean Air Plan for Wales: Healthy Air, Healthy Wales (2020)
29. Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy (2021)
30. Welsh Government Programme for Government – Update (December 2021)
31. Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain (July 2021)