

ACTIVE TRAVEL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REPORTS

MERLIN CRESCENT - BRYNTIRION



FEBRUARY 2025

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction	4
1.1 Scheme overview	4
1.2 Objectives of the Scheme:	4
2.0 Summary of Public Engagement	7
2.1 Methods of promotion	7
2.2 How often do you walk or cycle in your daily travel?	7
2.3 What current difficulties are there with walking or cycling in your area? (Please tick those that apply).	9
2.4 Will this scheme encourage you to walk or cycle more than you currently do?	11
2.5 Do you support the scheme?	13
3.0 Pupil Engagement Session	15
3.1 Sustrans survey data	15
3.2 Do you think this scheme will improve walking & cycling to/from school?	15
3.3 Questions asked by the pupils	16
4.0 Petition	18
5.0 Conclusion	21
5.1 What happens next?	21
6.0 Appendices	22
Appendix A: Copy of the Merlin Crescent survey	22
Appendix B: Screenshot of the letter sent to residents	24

Figure 1: A map showing the three phases of the Merlin Crescent active travel route and dropped crossing points in relation to existing and future active travel routes in Bryntirion and Cefn Glas.	6
Figure 2: Clustered column chart showing the results from question 1 of the survey.	8
Figure 3: Pie chart of the combined results from question 1 of the survey.	9
Figure 4: Clustered column chart showing the results from question 2 of the survey.	10
Figure 5: Pie chart of the combined results from question 2 of the survey.	11
Figure 6: Clustered column chart showing the results from question 3 of the survey.	12
Figure 7: Pie chart of the combined results from question 3 of the survey.	12
Figure 8: Clustered column chart showing the results from question 4 of the survey.	14
Figure 9: Pie chart of the combined results from question 4 of the survey.	14

Table of Tables

Table 1: Results from question 1 of the survey.....	7
Table 2: Results from question 2 of the survey.....	9
Table 3: Results from question 3 of the survey.....	11
Table 4: Results from question 3 of the survey.....	13
Table 5: Sustrans 'Hands Up' survey results.	15
Table 6: Results from the Pupil Engagement survey.....	16
Table 7: Questions and answers in Pupil Engagement session.....	17
Table 8: Comments and officers' responses from petition.....	20

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 This report presents the outcome of the recent community engagement undertaken as part of the active travel plans through Merlin Crescent. The proposed scheme will be a segregated foot/cycle path along with dropped kerbs in selected localities through Bryntirion and Cefn Glas.
- 1.0.2 There are three sets of data compiled from three different engagement sessions to gain an understanding of the public's views and opinions on the Merlin Crescent scheme. The three sessions were:
- Pupil Engagement Session – 22nd of May 2024. This was an hour from 14:00 until 15:00 with pupils and enthusiastic staff from Bryntirion Comprehensive School. The purpose of this approach was to gain insight into the views pupils have towards sustainable transport/active travel.
 - In-person Community Engagement – 15th of July 2024. This was 16:30 until 19:00 for residents to drop into Bryntirion Comprehensive School and discuss the proposals with officers. This was to gain all user resident opinions. 40 people completed a survey at the in-person session.
 - Online Survey - The survey was advertised and released online for a two-week period from the 29th of July 2024 to 12th August 2024. This was recommended by a local member to get interest from those in surrounding areas of Bridgend and those who could not attend the in-person session resulting in a larger response rate. This proved to be a beneficial decision creating a further 98 responses.
- 1.0.3 Local Councillors were present at both the in-person engagement session and the pupil engagement. The Leader, Luke Fletcher MS and the cabinet member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing were also present at the in-person engagement session. The same survey was used for both of these with the results combined in this report for analysis, this survey can be seen in Appendix A. A petition has also been raised with the points being addressed in the latter stages of the document (Chapter 4).

1.1 SCHEME OVERVIEW

- 1.1.1 The scheme consists of three phases, color-coded as blue, red, and orange (please see Figure 1).
- Phase 1 (Blue): Establishes an active travel link along Merlin Crescent, near Bryntirion Comprehensive School, this general arrangement was also shown at the engagement session.
- Phase 2 (Red): Complements the active travel link along Merlin Crescent, developed concurrently with Phase 1.
- Phase 3 (Orange): Represents subsequent years to complete the entire active travel route.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME:

- Create a partially segregated walking and cycling route from the existing active travel network map (ATNM) to Bryntirion Comprehensive School.
- Form widened access throughout the community, benefiting school journeys, local shops, amenities, and bus stops.

- Create prioritisation of active travel over motorized vehicles by providing safe off-road facilities, reducing carbon emissions.
- Focus on the scheme's alignment with local and national policies, including the Local Transport Plan (2015-2030), Well-Being Plan (2018-2023), and Net Zero Carbon Strategy (2021-2025).

1.2.1 A section of the route comes with a challenging gradient which has been highlighted by a road safety audit. The issues raised by this audit have been taken into account in the design of the route and measures put in place to ameliorate them. The scheme therefore meets all other Active Travel Act Design Guidance (ATAG) requirements including junction priority for walkers and cyclists.

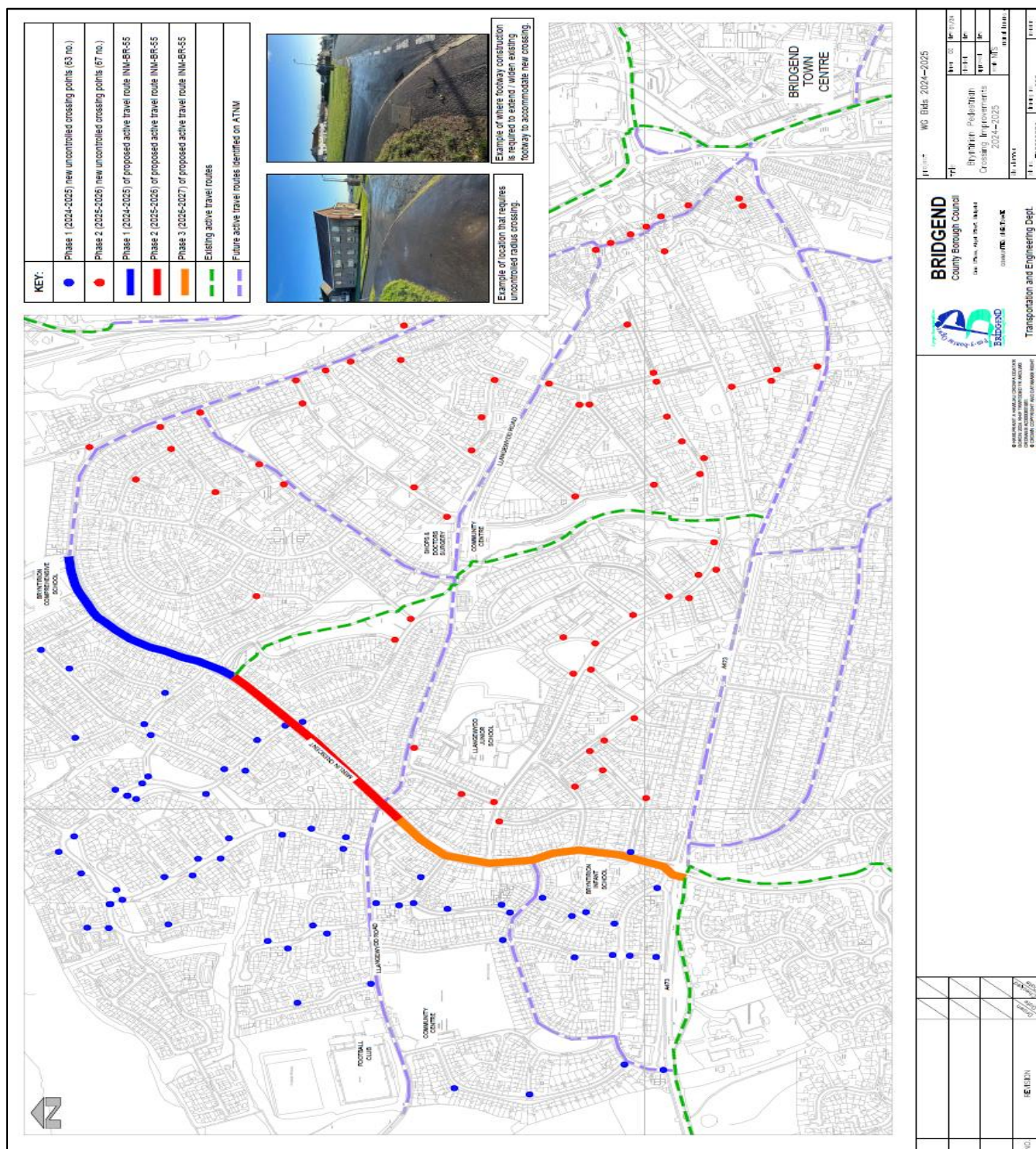


Figure 1: A map showing the three phases of the Merlin Crescent active travel route and dropped crossing points in relation to existing and future active travel routes in Bryntirion and Cefn Glas.

2.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 2.0.1 Chapter 2 contains the results of the in-person engagement session and the online survey both of which consist of the same information, the outcomes have then been combined for analysis. The survey contains 4 questions and the results for each question can be seen from Section 2.2 to 2.5. There was a total of 138 participants who filled out the survey (combining both online and in-person).
- 2.0.2 Each question starts with a table, which is the raw results that have been tallied by an officer. A clustered column chart is then presented to bring this table to life. Finally, each question finishes with a pie chart that shows the combined results and outcome of the question.

2.1 METHODS OF PROMOTION

- 2.1.1 Local Members were informed of the scheme in advance of the sessions to give them time to answer any questions that residents may have. Local Members were advised by officers to post the scheme on the community hubs. Letters were sent by post to residents along Merlin Crescent which is the focus of the active travel route (approximately 100 houses), this letter can be seen in Appendix B. The scheme was also placed on BCBC (Bridgend County Borough Council) social media platforms. All correspondence that was sent out was translated into Welsh.

2.2 HOW OFTEN DO YOU WALK OR CYCLE IN YOUR DAILY TRAVEL?

- 2.2.1 The first question of the survey is asking residents how often they use sustainable transport in their daily commute, whether this be visiting Bridgend town centre, neighbours or local services. This question has been included to get an understanding into how often people would choose not to drive and gather initial interests in an improvement to active travel infrastructure. The survey shows that there was a total of 138 participants, 29% who completed the survey at the in-person engagement session and 71% who completed one online.

Q1: HOW OFTEN DO YOU WALK OR CYCLE IN YOUR DAILY TRAVEL?									
	7 days a week	5-6 days a week	2-4 days a week	Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Less often	Never	Total
IN-PERSON SURVEY	8	9	9	3	0	0	2	9	40
ONLINE	22	13	22	9	1	5	7	19	98
COMBINED	30	22	31	12	1	5	9	28	138

Table 1: Results from question 1 of the survey.

- 2.2.2 The outcome of the first question highlighted two extremes. 28 of the 138 participants stated that they never walk or cycle in their daily travel. Reasoning to this was given at the in-person

engagement session where some would explain it was down to uncontrollable factors such as the gradient of the hill or health issues.

- 2.2.3 The other end of the chart highlights that people are using sustainable modes of transport in their daily commute. 83 of the 138 participants will walk or cycle 2-7 days a week, some explained this was on their commute to work and others highlighted they do it for fitness and leisure e.g. dog walks. These results have been evidenced below in Figure 2.

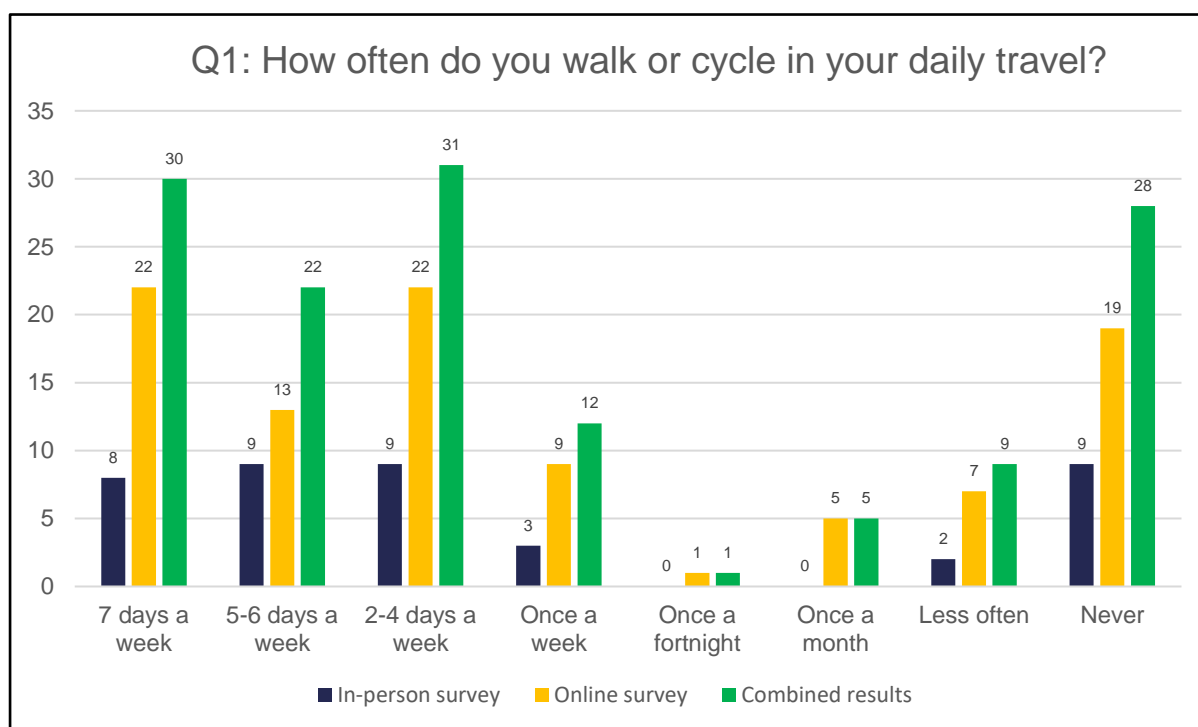


Figure 2: Clustered column chart showing the results from question 1 of the survey.

- 2.2.4 Figure 3 will help show the combined results and overall outcome to the first question. 22% of people who completed a survey will walk or cycle in the area 7 days a week. 20% of people wouldn't consider using sustainable modes of transport due to uncontrollable and controllable factors. Section 2.3 will help get a better understanding into why some participants may not consider walking or cycling along Merlin Crescent.

Q1: How often do you walk or cycle in your daily travel?
(combination of online and paper surveys)

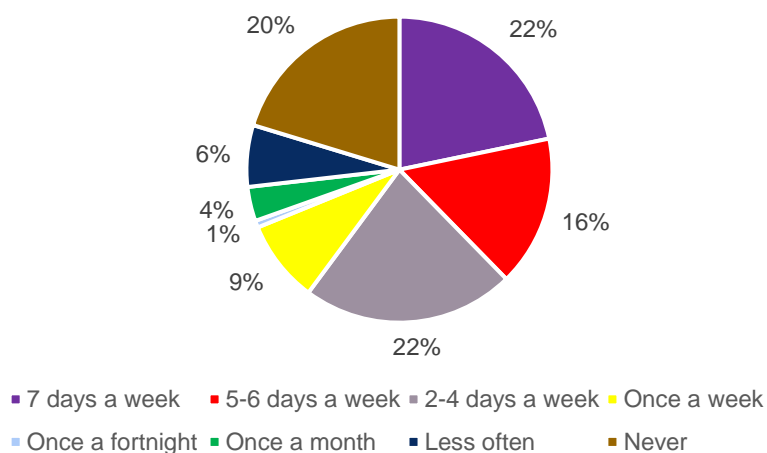


Figure 3: Pie chart of the combined results from question 1 of the survey.

2.3 WHAT CURRENT DIFFICULTIES ARE THERE WITH WALKING OR CYCLING IN YOUR AREA? (PLEASE TICK THOSE THAT APPLY)

2.3.1 The second question was to gauge a further understanding as to why people may not consider active travel as their preferred mode of transport and delve into those initial conversations held in Question 1. Many residents selected more than one option as advised for this question, where they believe there are many difficulties with walking or cycling along Merlin Crescent.

Q2: WHAT CURRENT DIFFICULTIES ARE THERE WITH WALKING OR CYCLING IN YOUR AREA? (PLEASE TICK THOSE THAT APPLY)						
	Health reasons	Convenience	Safe crossings	Lack of active travel facilities	Time consuming	Other
PAPER SURVEY	11	3	8	5	6	13
ONLINE SURVEY	13	12	28	12	18	39
COMBINED RESULTS	24	15	36	17	24	52

Table 2: Results from question 2 of the survey.

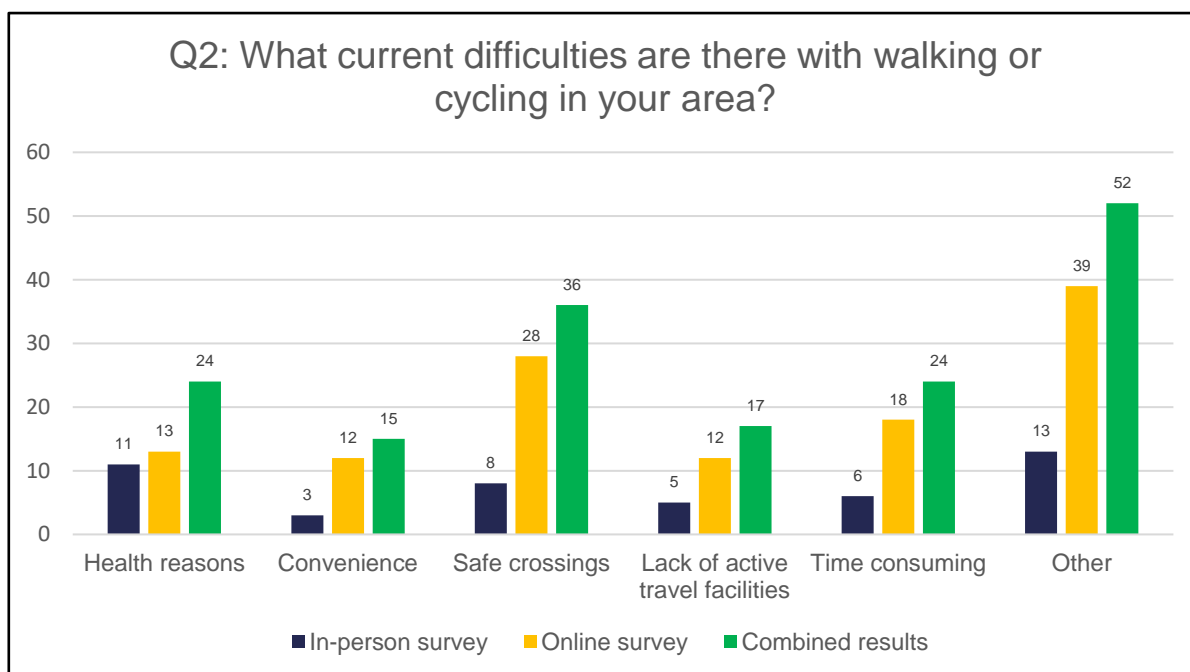


Figure 4: Clustered column chart showing the results from question 2 of the survey.

- 2.3.2 Table 2 is evidence that a big concern for many residents in the Bryntirion area is the lack of safe crossings especially during school opening/closing hours. 36 of the 138 participants (22%) wanted to see an improvement in the safety of getting across the road with vehicles travelling above the speed limit. The standout outcome in question 2 is that 52 participants (31%) wanted to raise 'Other' difficulties with officers, it is worth noting that some did not select the options provided but wrote them in the 'additional comments' box e.g. "it is not safe to cross".
- 2.3.3 Many of the surveys had comments on the speed/volume of traffic becoming a danger to everyone who is walking/cycling, especially during school opening and closing times. Online additional comments were made to highlight the gradient of the hill, stating that it is too steep for cycling and therefore an improvement of active travel facilities wouldn't encourage them to walk/cycle more. The charts below help bring to light the findings from this question. Most of the comments that were left in these boxes have been addressed in the petition later on in the report by an engineer (Table 8).
- 2.3.4 It is worth noting that 14% of participants explained that they do not use sustainable modes of transport due to health reasons which is an uncontrollable factor, some of these explained that they would still like to see an improvement to facilities for the safety of others such as the pupils. These trends can be seen in Figures 4 and 5.

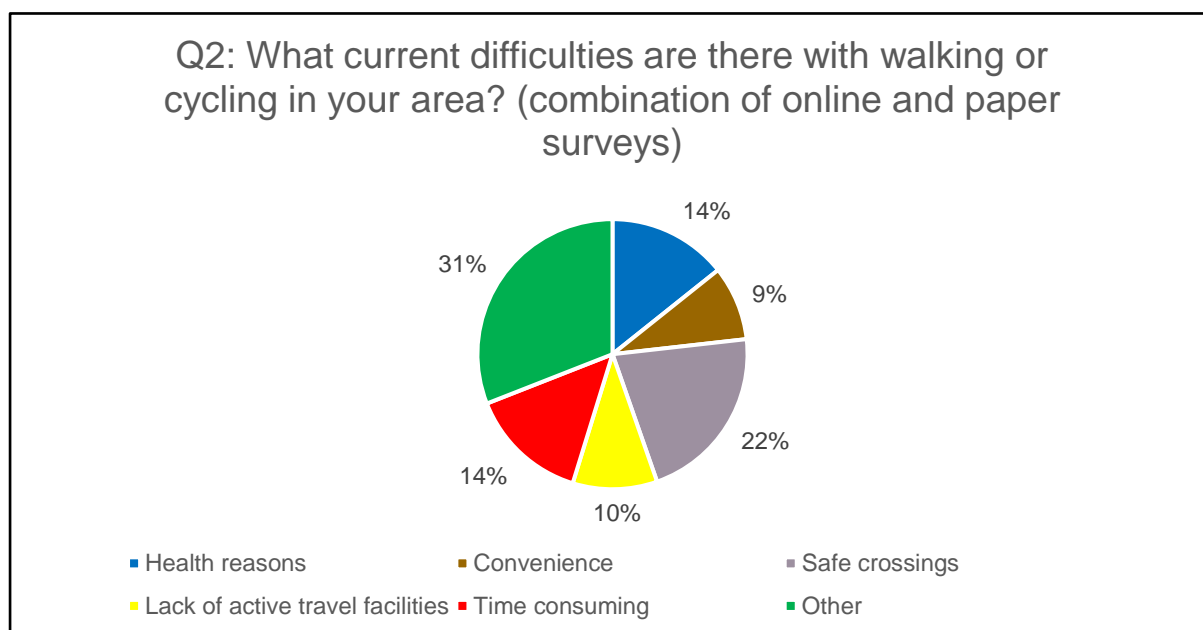


Figure 5: Pie chart of the combined results from question 2 of the survey.

2.4 WILL THIS SCHEME ENCOURAGE YOU TO WALK OR CYCLE MORE THAN YOU CURRENTLY DO?

2.4.1 The purpose of the scheme is to create a safe environment for cyclists and pedestrians to travel to Bridgend town centre, surrounding services and schools. Officers decided to get an understanding as to if the development of active travel facilities in the area would reduce the number of users choosing to travel by single car occupancy.

Q3: WILL THIS SCHEME ENCOURAGE YOU TO WALK OR CYCLE MORE THAN YOU CURRENTLY DO?		
	Yes	No
PAPER SURVEY	7	33
ONLINE SURVEY	14	84
COMBINED RESULTS	21	117

Table 3: Results from question 3 of the survey.

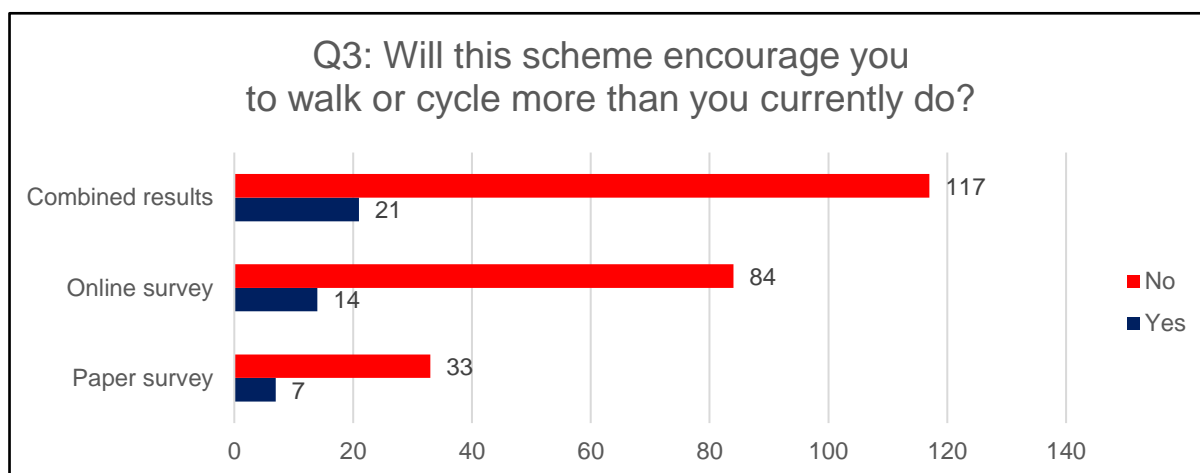


Figure 6: Clustered column chart showing the results from question 3 of the survey.

2.4.2 85% of participants stated that an improvement to the active travel facilities will not encourage them to walk or cycle more than they currently do, this could be down to the uncontrollable factors stated in question 2. Some residents at the in-person engagement session stated that the current conditions of the footway do not need improving. On the opposite side, 15% of participants who took part in the survey stated that an improvement will encourage them to consider sustainable methods of travel on their daily travel.

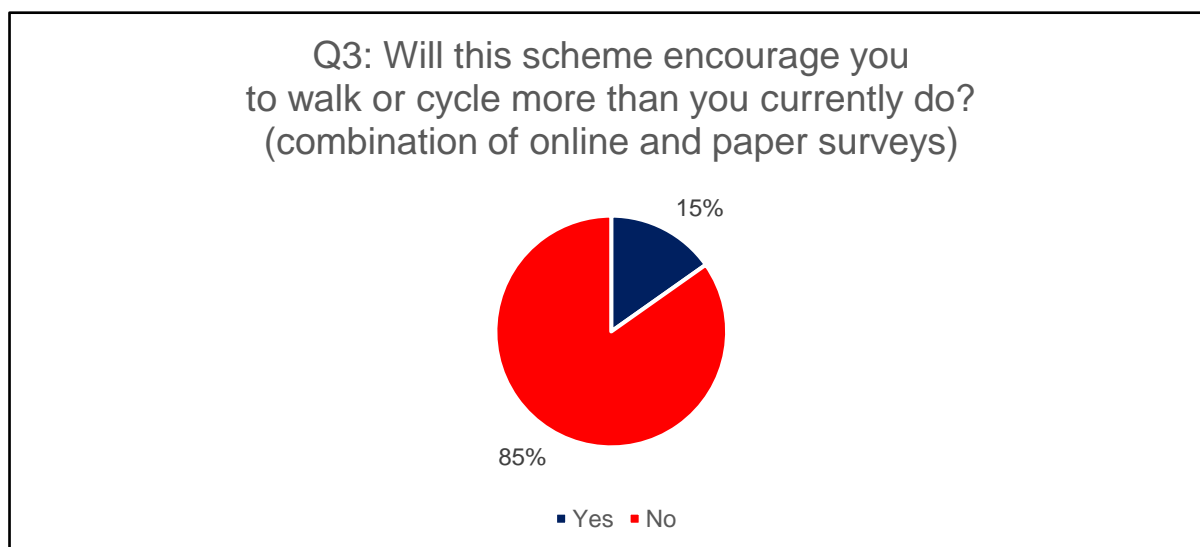


Figure 7: Pie chart of the combined results from question 3 of the survey.

2.5 DO YOU SUPPORT THE SCHEME?

- 2.5.1 The last question of the survey is to get an overall understanding of how many people are in support of the scheme. Both questions 3 and 4 highlighted that a majority of the survey's participants were not in support of the proposals.

Q4: DO YOU SUPPORT THE SCHEME?			
	Yes	No	UNDECIDED
PAPER SURVEY	8	29	2
ONLINE SURVEY	17	74	7
COMBINED RESULTS	25	103	9

Table 4: Results from question 3 of the survey.

- 2.5.2 Figures 8 and 9 below give the overall outcome of the survey with many leaving comments on the reasons behind their choice. 75% of people who participated in the survey are not in favour of the scheme going ahead.
- 2.5.3 Residents are concerned about exiting their driveways with the speed of cyclists coming down the hill and they do not wish to be held accountable for accidents occurring. Questions have also been raised in the 'Additional comments box' around how many will use the cycle path after construction due to the steep gradient of the hill. Other concerns and reasons for voting 'No' on question 4 is the congestion of the site during and after construction works, stating accidents can arise when waiting for buses and parents parking during peak school hours. Residents along Merlin Crescent do not wish for the grass verges to be removed due to surface water runoff with supporting points raised around flooding at the bottom of the hill. Some additional comments were left to explain that parents of the school are going to ask their children to use the opposite side of the road, with major concerns of safety around traffic congestion. Many of these points that have been raised on the survey have been addressed in the Petition section later on in the report (Table 8).
- 2.5.4 18% were in favour of the scheme, with residents leaving comments to say that if the paths were all linked up, they would walk miles every day. One participant explained that they would use the improved infrastructure to cycle to work on the industrial estate. Those who are in favour of the scheme still wish to provide feedback on what they think could be improved along Merlin Crescent explaining that parking restrictions are important to create a modal shift in the area. The speed of traffic has also been mentioned and that it would be great to incorporate traffic calming along Bryngolau. Those in support of the scheme wanted to see an improvement to the existing infrastructure to improve safety and encourage a healthy lifestyle for the pupils.
- 2.5.5 After looking at the proposals and speaking with officers, 7% of the survey's participants were left undecided on the scheme, it is unknown how they felt before seeing the proposals or coming to the session.

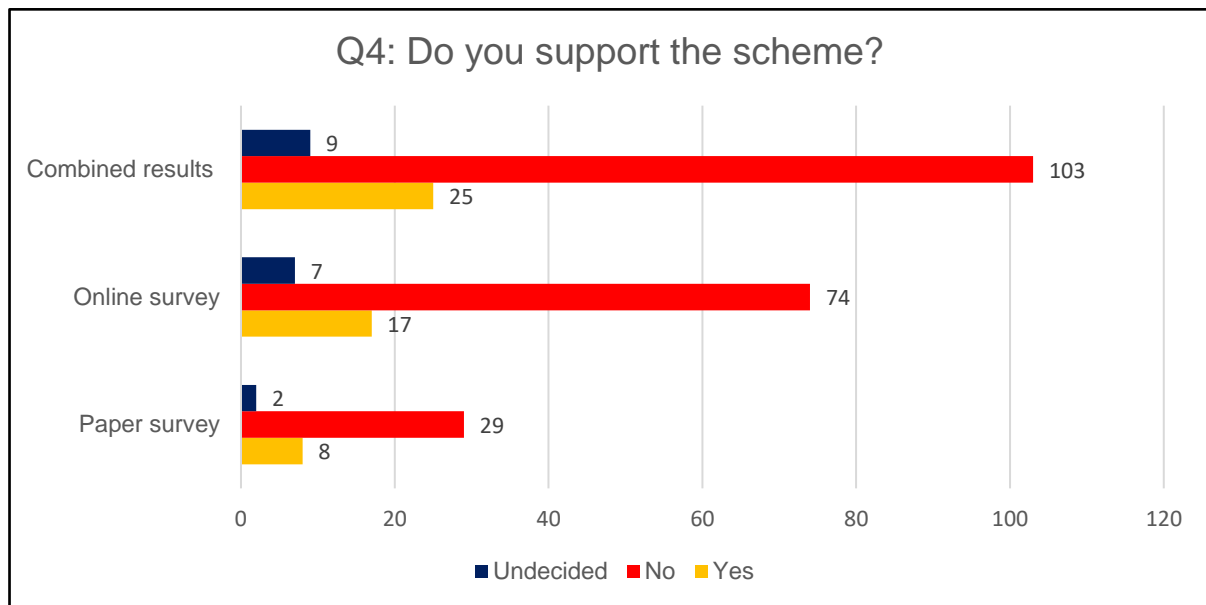


Figure 8: Clustered column chart showing the results from question 4 of the survey.

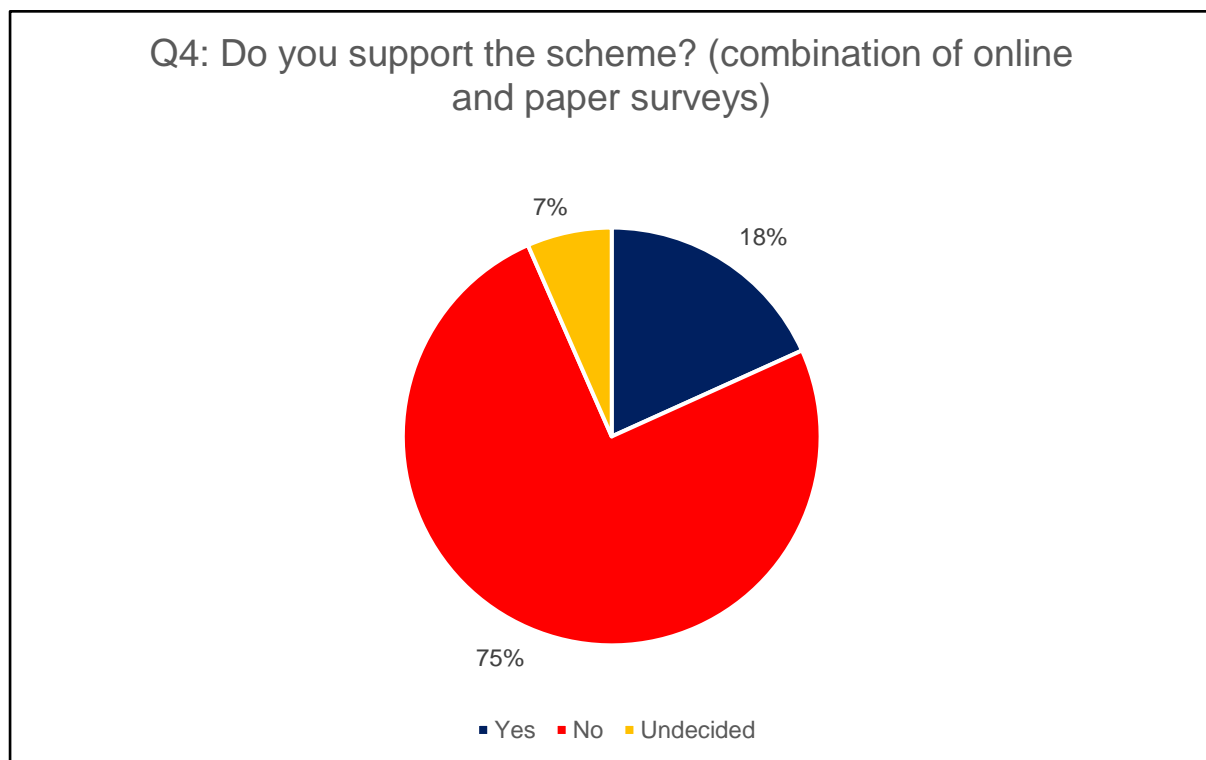


Figure 9: Pie chart of the combined results from question 4 of the survey.

3.0 PUPIL ENGAGEMENT SESSION

- 3.0.1 The first session of 2024 was with representatives and pupils of Bryntirion Comprehensive School which took place for an hour at the end of a school day. This has been kept separate from the other data as different questions were asked and the session had a different format. The hour session was separated into two presentations, the first was a volunteer from Sustrans who wanted to get a general understanding for pupil's feelings towards active travel (please see Table 5). The second presentation was from a BCBC officer who went into scheme specifics to answer any questions that the pupils or staff may have (Section 3.3/Table 7).
- 3.0.2 Before leaving the presentation, pupils were kindly asked by the assistant head teacher to vote if they believe this scheme will improve their choices of transport to and from school. The results can be seen below in Table 6 which has been split into different age groups. A total of 15 voted no and 11 voted yes, which is a more closely matched percentage than the findings from the survey.

3.1 SUSTRANS SURVEY DATA

- 3.1.1 The information gathered from Sustrans is difficult to highlight any trends as it was done through a 'hands-up survey' approach. Towards the end of a session, it was difficult to get exact numbers with duplication. The statistics of how pupils would consider travelling before and after the presentations have still been included below.

Mode	Before presentation	After presentation
Walking	10	7
Scooter	0	3
Cycle	0	3
Park and stride	1	0
Car	12	4
Bus	1	1

Table 5: Sustrans 'Hands Up' survey results.

3.2 DO YOU THINK THIS SCHEME WILL IMPROVE WALKING & CYCLING TO/FROM SCHOOL?

Year Group	Yes	No
Year 7	5	4
Year 8	0	5
Year 9	4	0

Year 10	1	4
Year 11	0	0
Year 12	0	0
Year 13	0	2
Staff	1	0

Table 6: Results from the pupil engagement survey.

3.3 QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE PUPILS

Question from pupil	Officer response
How will you get the residents on board with parking	Residents will work and therefore be away from the house during certain times, therefore they'll avoid the parking restriction times.
Have the houses opposite the school agreed to the scheme?	It is difficult to get everyone on board, but the priority is safety and it's about balance with the parking restrictions.
Is the hill too steep?	It is steep, but pupils are young and there is the option of an E-bike/walking. The more practise you have in doing this the better you will get e.g., the first time will be difficult and maybe the first few weeks, but you will get fitter each time.
Will the weather impact the number of cyclists using the route?	There is no getting around the weather, but it should not restrict our freedom especially those in a comprehensive school. We want youth to take advantage of our freedom and use the youthfulness to experience the outdoors.
How will the school facilitate the increased number of bicycles?	Right now, there are lots of spaces in the school and if there is demand for it, expansion can take place.
Pupils can feel unsafe cycling	This can be down to an incident they have had on a bicycle previously, but the only way to gain confidence in it again is practise. We are looking to reduce the risk of accidents with cars and create a safe space for active travel. The aim of the scheme is to increase the confidence that

	pupils have cycling to and from school and discouraging single car occupancy.
When will this be put into practise?	Right now, we're checking what pupils' thoughts are on the scheme. There is then going to be a community engagement session on the 15th of July 2024, after we have gauged people's thoughts on the scheme, it will be considered when deciding what to do next.
Whilst it is being built, how will we access the school?	The two zebra crossings will be built first to separate people from construction. Construction will also take place in parts and the route will not all be developed at once.
What about parking and driveways on the hill?	Cars must be careful when using hills and driveways just as they must be now, officers then educated pupils on the highway code.
What happens if people park on the street after the work is done?	The area outside the school will be the only place where you cannot park, it will slow speeds to help make the school a safer place to enter/exit.
What about parking for houses opposite the school?	The zig zags will have designated times where you can and cannot park opposite the school.
Narrowing the road at the top of the hill may cause issues accessing the street	We are trying to encourage parents to not use cars to drop off, hopefully parents will realise this. Narrowing the street will help with safety through reduced speeds.
What about the bollards?	They are there to stop people parking on top of the cycle track and will not block driveways.
Some people may not want to move their cars	Every household along phase 1 has a driveway that can fit a minimum of 1 car.

Table 7: Questions and answers in pupil engagement session.

4.0 PETITION

- 4.0.1 In July 2024, the council received a 17-point petition from the residents of Merlin Crescent and Bright Hill who would like it submitted against the proposed active cycle path stages 1,2 & 3 from Bryntirion Comprehensive School to Broadlands. The issues that they raised and corresponding responses by officers can be seen in Table 8 below. A subsequent 137-signature petition raised against the scheme between September and October 2022, and submitted to the council in July 2024, is equally as important to mention in this report.

Comment	BCBC Response
Safety to residents entering and leaving driveways.	Drivers need to take care when accessing/exiting driveways and wait until it is clear before proceeding as per the Highway Code.
Residents held accountable for accidents.	Welsh Government (WG) transport hierarchy places greater responsibility on those with the potential to cause the most harm.
Standing on cycle path while catching buses.	Bus stop bypass provided with pedestrian priority. Similar arrangement is already in use on Cowbridge Road and throughout South Wales.
Digging up pavement with shallow gas and electric services in pathways.	Utility supervision to be used as required. Contractor to provide appropriate risk assessments and method statements.
Length of time construction would take.	Traffic sensitive route due to the school. Safety is the priority therefore construction will be subject to reduced working hours and will take longer.
House kerb appeal removed, and house values reduced.	Not necessarily. This is a subjective opinion.
Excessive speed of cyclists.	All highway users should travel with due care and attention. Cycle lane has been segregated from the pedestrian footway.

9-degree Gradient of existing pathway is over the permitted 5 degree stipulated by the Welsh government active travel guidance.	Impossible to adjust the gradient. There are no viable alternatives for this route.
Removal of grass verges causing issues with runoff water causing flooding at the bottom of the hill. (Sustainable Drainage Systems SUDS).	Highway drainage to collect surface water. Additional gullies will be provided.
Danger to pedestrians being hit by speeding cyclist.	All highway users should travel with due care and attention. Cycle lane has been segregated from the pedestrian footway.
Narrowing the width of the road will cause congestion.	Narrowing the carriageway will help reduce vehicular speed.
Residents, visitors, and home maintenance vehicles unable to park outside their houses.	Use driveways or park on the carriageway.
Reduced road width, Buses unable to run along merlin crescent at peak school times.	Drivers should take care when parking not to obstruct driveways or the carriageway.
Parents picking up children will be parking on it as they do on grass verges now.	Bollards proposed to prevent this. Drivers should take care when parking not to obstruct driveways or the carriageway.
Cycle track being used by illegal electric scooters and bikes.	Electric bikes are not illegal. Use of illegal vehicles is an enforcement issue.
Residents unable to place recycle bags / boxes outside their houses with fear of accidents happening to walkers and cyclists.	No different to many other locations throughout Bridgend CBC. Residents will still be able to place their recycling at the kerb edge for collection.
No consideration given to the elderly, disabled or dog walkers who live in the street and surrounding area.	The elderly, disabled people and dog walkers will be able to use the newly resurfaced footway. Cycle lanes are suitable for use by mobility scooters.
Two-way cycle path to close to the many school children that are walking too and leaving school on mass".	School children will be able to use the route should they wish to cycle to and from school.

	The school would be asked to remind pupils to use the footway when walking rather than the cycle track.
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Table 8: Comments and officers' responses from petition.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.0.1 The survey was distributed both online and at in-person engagement sessions, which may have led to some duplicate responses. However, it generated significant community participation, with strong opinions expressed both in support of and against the scheme.
- 5.0.2 The current footpath is used for a variety of active travel modes, but participants frequently highlighted challenges related to active travel, such as accessibility and convenience. A number of respondents expressed a preference for single-car occupancy, citing various reasons for choosing this mode of transport for their daily commutes rather than opting for active travel.
- 5.0.3 When it comes to infrastructure improvements, 85% of respondents indicated that such changes would not encourage them to walk or cycle more frequently. In terms of overall support for the scheme, 75% of respondents opposed it, while 18% were in favour. The remaining 7% of respondents were undecided.
- 5.0.4 This summary reflects the community's feedback and provides valuable insights into the challenges and opinions that need to be considered when evaluating the proposed scheme.

5.1 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- 5.1.1 The outcomes of this consultation will be reported to Cabinet for consideration, where all accounts will be reviewed, and a decision will be made on whether to progress the scheme. Input from the engagement sessions outlined in this report, along with the submitted petition, will be taken into account as part of the decision-making process.

6.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: COPY OF THE MERLIN CRESCENT SURVEY



15/07/2024

How often do you walk or cycle in your daily travel?

Frequency	Please Tick
7 days a week	
5-6 days a week	
2-4 days a week	
Once a week	
Once a fortnight	
Once a month	
Less often	
Never	

What current difficulties are there with walking or cycling in your area? (Please tick those that apply)

Health reasons	
Convenience	
Safe crossings	
Lack of active travel facilities	
Time consuming	
Other (please specify)	

Will this scheme encourage you to walk or cycle more than you currently do?

Please Tick	
Yes	No

Do you support the scheme?

Please Tick		
Yes	No	Undecided

Further/additional comments:

Name:

Email Address:

APPENDIX B: SCREENSHOT OF THE LETTER SENT TO RESIDENTS



Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line:
Gofynnwch am / Ask for:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dyddiad / Date: 26/06/2024

Dear residents,

**Resident engagement and information drop-in
Merlin Crescent Active Travel Route**

We are writing to you in relation to the proposed segregated foot/cycle path along Merlin Crescent and selected dropped kerbs in Bryntirion.

This will be an engagement session where officers will be present to highlight drawings and plans to members of the community. Local councillors and community councillors have also been invited.

Drop in to Bryntirion Comprehensive School, Merlin Crescent, CF31 4QR anytime between 16:30 and 19:00 on the 15th of July 2024.

Please let us know as soon as possible whether you have a Welsh language preference so that we can have sufficient time to organise translation services.

Yours sincerely,