



Impact of Active Travel Schemes

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Introduction

Planning for the future should involve measuring current levels of traffic, making predictions on future levels and assessing its impact.

Context

This has been normal practice for decades in the design of roads for motorised traffic where a Traffic Impact Assessment can run to several hundred pages with computer analysis assessing every junction.

In countries with high levels of cycling, equivalent procedures are carried out for bicycle schemes. In Kildare, there is rarely a measurement of existing levels of walking or cycling and no forecast of future use of proposed infrastructure. As a result there is no benchmark to assess the success of a scheme or even if walking or cycling is reduced.

If Kildare County Council estimates future usage of new walking and cycling infrastructure which would include modal change from car to active travel, it would ensure that the infrastructure is fit for purpose. The health benefits of walking and cycling should be costed using the WHO's Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT). It would also allow the different active travel schemes to be compared and the ones with the greatest returns on investment to be identified.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Kildare County Council estimates future levels of walking and cycling and applies the WHO's HEAT analysis to active travel schemes.