

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau/ Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
Committee
Deddf Teithio Llesol (Cymru) 2013 / Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013
Ymateb gan John Dewis / Evidence from John Dewis

I have read in my local paper about the Active Travel Act and the review by the Assembly's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee.

I would like to share with you my personal experience of what is not working on improving conditions for people journeying by foot or bicycle. Where I live, costing hundreds of thousands of pounds, currently grass verges are being dug up and trees lost to widen a cycleway that duplicates an existing, Sustrans preferred, cycle path running parallel with it on an old railway track and ending at the same destination. The proposed widened cycle/pathway/grass verges outside my home will have no segregation between pedestrians and cyclists, no segregation with the flow of pedestrians and cyclists both ways, has nine household driveways passing through it and is completely unlit. To join up with the Sustrans Route 88 route, onto the safe former railway track, cyclists and pedestrians have to negotiate a steep incline with steps. Persons using mobility scooters, families with prams/buggies on reaching this part of the route are either forced to turn back or continue on the pavement which due to its limited width means going onto the road facing ongoing traffic. How the Council can say this is a safe cycle/pathway defeats me. I am a cyclist so welcome every opportunity to cycle away from traffic but some of the cycleways are just silly, some ending nowhere with cyclist having to join the main road, some on the road facing oncoming traffic and some just metres in length. After having read the Active Travel Act Guidance document the Vale of Glamorgan Council has been informed of many sections of the guidance that they are not adhering to, they continue though to insist it is safe. The diggers have already commenced the destruction of the grass verges and residents have not been given a reasonable time to express their concerns as the Council only gave one working days notice of their plan, just one example of them ignoring the requirements of the Active Travel Plan.

I am also concerned about the environmental issues as grass verges act as soakaways whereas non permeable tarmac does not and also heats up during the day which is released at night adding to Global Warming. This area of cycleway/pathway is in a registered flood plain.

Annex A

Further to my email of the 29th January 2018 I would like to add the following sections of the Active Travel Act/Guidance that I believe the Vale of Glamorgan Council are currently ignoring in their determination to destroy large areas of grass verges on Lavernock Road, by Cosmeston Country Park.

Active Travel Act/Guidance

5.6.44 As part of the public engagement events (see Stage 1), local residents should be asked to highlight specific infrastructure issues, to help identify possible improvement schemes. Further analysis should be undertaken to critically assess the scale and nature of the issues raised by the public, with a focus on issues that have been raised by multiple residents.

Vale of Glamorgan Council gave residents one working days notice of the work

4.1.3

However, it is also important to note that they are distinct modes of transport with important differences. People on cycles and people on foot travel at different speeds and have different needs, which require different approaches to planning networks and designing infrastructure. In some circumstances pedestrians and cyclists can share the same space safely and effectively, and the design of such areas is discussed further in Chapter 6. **However, most pedestrians and cyclists would prefer to have their own spaces so that both groups can travel at their own speed and without concerns over conflict.**

The route in question will not be segregated, will be two way and will not meet the requirements above

4.7.6 Unnecessary and badly placed street furniture, which can include pole-mounted signs, utility boxes, phone boxes, litter bins, A-boards, bollards and guard railing, reduces the available width of footways and is a particular hazard for visually impaired people. While some items of street furniture are important, unnecessary and badly-placed items will have

a detrimental effect on pedestrians. Low obstacles of less than 60cm in height can be a trip hazard and are particularly difficult for visually impaired people to detect. The amount of street furniture should be minimised **with remaining items located in a street furniture zone out of the pedestrian flow.**

As the total width of the cycle/pedestrian pathway will be available to all users there is no furniture zone out of the pedestrian flow

4.5.3 Fears over personal safety can be a major barrier to walking. **Street lighting** is an important influence on the public's perception of what constitutes a safe street **and local authorities should ensure streets and paths are well lit at times they are likely to be well-used**, with an even and continuous distribution of lighting, avoiding glare and pools of light and shadows. Street lighting should provide an attractive street environment which provides reassurance for pedestrians and any faults should be repaired quickly.

6.10.7 Pedestrians and cyclists are much more exposed to their environment than people in motor vehicles, **so a key element of link design is improving the quality of the experience when using a particular section of route**. Routes should:

- look attractive and be interesting
- integrate with and complement their surroundings
- contribute to good urban design
- **have good public security, be well overlooked and lit**

Page 89 Routes should be appealing and be perceived as safe and usable. Well used, well maintained, **lit**,

10.12.1 If walking and cycling are to play an important role as an alternative to the car for short journeys they must be promoted as around-the-clock means of transport, rather than just a daylight activity.

10.12.2 Many walking and cycle journeys will be made after dark, especially during the winter months, and **routes should normally be lit to provide an adequate level of safety, both real and perceived**. It is recognised that some authorities are looking to reduce lighting to reduce costs and light pollution, but the benefits of lighting a walking or cycling route include enabling users to:

- orientate themselves and navigate the route ahead
- identify other users ahead
- detect potential hazards
- discourage crime and increase a sense of personal security

10.12.3 **It is important that the provision of lighting is considered at an early stage in the design process**, so that the issues can be properly considered and the needs of users taken fully into account in the choice of equipment and the design of the scheme.

10.12.4 Routes along urban and many rural highways will be lit by the existing highway lighting

The Vale Council have confirmed that street lighting will not be added to the scheme of works, currently there are no street lights.

4.20.03 Routes for cyclists must provide the most direct and fastest route from origin to destination. In order to make cycling preferable to driving, routes for cyclists must be at least as direct – and preferably more direct - than that available for private motor vehicles. An indirect designated route for cyclists may result in some of them choosing the more direct, faster route, even if it is unsuitable for cycling

Route 88, the old Penarth to Barry railway line runs parallel with this route along Lavernock Road and Route 88 is the preferred SUstrans Route according to their website.

6.11.9 Segregation should normally be achieved using design features such as contrasting materials, a change in levels or a grass verge (see Photo 6.3). Material choices that give a good tonal contrast will help all users to understand the separation between types of user, and particularly valuable for visually impaired pedestrians. Typically this might involve using asphalt for cyclists and light coloured pavements for pedestrians.

The pathway will not be segregated, will be two way flow and include pedestrians, cyclists, mobility scooters, prams/pushchairs, horses from the nearby livery and visually impaired persons

5.8.51 Where there are a number of potential routes between points, they will all need to be assessed to determine which is the most direct in terms the factors given in Table 5.2 namely distance, time (stopping frequency and delay) and gradient. Reference should also be made to the basic user needs given in Chapter 4.

Table 5.2 Routes should follow the shortest option available or as near to the 'as-the-crow-flies' distance as possible.

Route 88 meets their criteria and is the safer route being away from heavy traffic

Page 88 routes should also be avoided where a cyclist is exposed to fumes and noise from heavy traffic over long distances.

The pathway runs parallel to Lavernock Road which has large volumes of heavy traffic whilst Route 88 is away from traffic

6.12.17 Steps should usually only be provided in conjunction with a ramp in order to retain accessibility for mobility impaired pedestrians. Steps can provide a useful shortcut to maintain desire lines where it is necessary to also provide a ramp to accommodate a change in level or grade. Steps should be well designed with highlighted nosings/edges and handrails

to both sides, incorporating corduroy warning paving to the top and bottom, and visual contrast between elements should be used to highlight features such as steps, edges and handrails

At one end of the cycle/pedestrian pathway there are steep steps to climb with no ramp. Persons on mobility scooters will be unable to climb them and continue their journey, visibly impaired persons will have great difficulty. They will have to turn back or continue on the pavement where one section is so narrow that you have to go onto the road facing oncoming traffic.

6.27.2 Cycle tracks should be of adequate width, comfortable, continuous and link into surrounding cycling infrastructure. **Preferably they will be provided through reallocation of road space from the carriageway; in most urban locations the conversion of footways to shared use should be the last resort.**

This route is not the last resort as we have a far better provision running parallel, namely Route 88 Sustrans preferred route

page 145 any feature that may present a hazard to users if encountered at speed should be clearly highlighted such that it is visible in daylight and darkness.

this will not be the case during darkness as the area will not have street lighting and current telephone posts, and signage will be within the cycleway

10.8.6 Where a footway or cycle track is provided adjacent to a higher speed, or more heavily trafficked road the footway should be separated from the

adjacent carriageway by a verge, typically at least 1m in width, in order to provide a margin between the active travel path and vehicular traffic. In most cases this margin is likely to be grassed.

There is no provision in the Councils plans for a grassed verge to separate vehicular traffic from Cyclists and Pedestrians, indeed it is this current provision of a grass verge that is to be dug up and covered in tarmac, so no separation with fast moving traffic which generally exceeds the speed limit for this section of the road.

10.8.7. On off-carriageway routes, a verge of between 0.5m and 1m should be maintained each side of the path, as mown edges prevent the vegetation encroaching and making a footpath of cycle track unusable, or reducing the extent of usable width. The remainder of the verge may be left and can be of value to wildlife.

No such verge will be incorporated in the finished layout

Given the Welsh Assembly is funding the Vale of Glamorgan Council for this Cycle/pedestrian pathway and at a considerable cost at times of austerity I question the logic of such a decision given we have a much better, safer and well used Route 88 that take people from and to the same places as this badly thought out scheme. I would suggest it is just a scheme like this that your committee would be interested to hear about as "what is just not working"