

# SWANSEA ACTIVE TRAVEL STAKEHOLDER GROUP

## Meeting Notes

**Wednesday 21 June 2023 (09:30 – 11:00)**

**Microsoft Teams**

### In Attendance

Chloe Lewis	(CL)	Swansea Council
Jack Palmer	(JP)	Swansea Council
Ioan Brannigan	(IB)	Swansea Council
Jenni Nellist	(JN)	British Horse Society
Cllr Joe Hale	(JH)	Swansea Council (Cycling Champion)
Caroline Carter	(CC)	Wheelrights
Cez Matthews	(CM)	Bikeability
David Naylor	(DN)	Cycling UK / Wheelrights
Cari Jones	(CJ)	Swansea Disability Liaison Group
Claire Fauvel	(CF)	Swansea University Health Board

### 1. Welcome / Introductions

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Andrea Gordon, John Sayce, John France, Jayne Cornelius, Neil Williams, Louise Peck and Cllr Andrew Stephens. CL welcomed stakeholders to the meeting and facilitated a round of introductions of the names, roles and organisations of different stakeholders.

### 2. Update: ATF bids and grant awarded for 2023-2024

- 2.1 JP provided an update on the outcome of Swansea's Active Travel Fund (ATF) bid for 2023-2024. Swansea Council submitted a funding bid to the Welsh Government's Active Travel Fund in February 2023. The Welsh Government has announced the outcomes of this process and Swansea

Council accepted that funding at a meeting of Cabinet on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> of June.

- 2.2 An ATF bid is made of up two elements. One is main 'package' bids for the construction of new active travel routes in 2023-24, including some 'multi-year' schemes which will be delivered in phases with some parts constructed in 2023-24 while other phases are still in development or consultation. The other element is 'Core Allocation' funding – this is provided annually to Local Authorities based on the population of the area for options assessment, design work and engagement to support the development of potential future schemes, and for 'minor works' which improve infrastructure or support with uptake of walking and cycling across the whole network.
- 2.3 JN asked whether minor works could be used to revisit issues with completed scheme, and highlighted issues with surfacing for horse riders in some locations. JP responded that this fund is used to target themes of work, such as signage and wayfinding or the removal of physical barriers, but that follow up with the scheme lead from the project in question would be arranged. CL added that anything outstanding which was proposed in schemes should be addressed and that would be followed up with the delivery teams, but that in general completed schemes are not resubmitted for ATF funding.
- 2.4 £50m of grant funding was available across all of Wales for Councils to bid for, and Welsh Government received bids totalling £75.5m in a competitive application process. The total value of bids submitted by Swansea Council to the Active Travel Fund was £6,697,500 and following assessment the Council was awarded £5,367,000 for the financial year 2023-24, which represents 80% of the total grant bid for. This was a very positive result, with Swansea Council securing the second highest grant award across all Local Authorities in Wales (just over 10% of the total available funding).
- 2.3 JP went on to give an overview of the 'main' delivery packages (and schemes within them) which had received grant funding for 2023-24.
- 2.4 Swansea Northern Strategic Route includes full funding for first phases of delivery and further consultation for multi-year schemes such as 'Pontarddulais Connect' and 'DVLA to Morriston Hospital'. Partial funding was awarded to continue design development only of the 'Loughor to Gowerton' scheme. Of the £2,259,000 applied for, £1,740,500 has been awarded for this package.
- 2.5 The Swansea Valley Links package includes full funding for 'Morriston North Walking Link', which will deliver a safe route to and from the Riverside Holiday Park, and partial funding for development only of a scheme proposing a link

along Clasemont Road to Morryston. Of the £1,278,000 applied for, £786,000 has been awarded for this package.

- 2.6 Full funding has been awarded to deliver the remaining section of the 'Clyne Common' route in the West Swansea Links package (5.15) and full funding has also been awarded for 'Mumbles Foreshore Widening' as part of the Mumbles coastal defence project. With both projects fully funded, £1,285,000 has been awarded to this package.
- 2.7 CJ asked what opportunities there were for active travel routes to stretch to communities further out in Gower such as Pennard and Southgate, which currently have dangerous conditions for walking and cycling on rural roads. JP confirmed that routes leading to these specific communities were identified on the Council's Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) as potential future routes, and that schemes such as the link from Mayals to Bishopston help bring the network closer to these communities, but that active travel schemes need to demonstrate a high impact in numbers of people switching from private cars to walking and cycling for commuting. CL added that routes on the ATNM do not extend all the way into Gower as there are fewer or no built-up areas, and that connecting built-up areas is a requirement of active travel schemes which is part of a rigid framework in which the authority can bid for funding.
- 2.8 Full funding of £445,000 has been awarded for surfacing and widening improvements on the existing active travel network between 'Kingsbridge and Grovesend'. DN commented that the route between these two locations is currently inadequate and is in need of upgrading and welcomed the opportunity to bring this section in line with the quality of more recently delivered routes in the area.
- 2.9 JP went on to give an overview of Core Allocation which had been awarded funding for the development of future schemes. The Welsh Government allocates Core Allocation funding to every local authority based on population, to develop future active travel schemes, and carry out minor works across the whole network. Swansea Council has been awarded £1,110,000 of core allocation funding for 2023-24 for the schemes. Some further information is being provided to Transport for Wales to confirm their approval of some schemes.
- 2.10 CC raised concerns regarding the 'Blackpill Active Travel Improvements' scheme that there is already a cycle path and pedestrian routes in that area apart from the narrow bridge on the promenade over the Clyne River, and was concerned that there was not a business case for improvements in this area compared to other areas of Swansea where walking and cycling routes are being developed. CC also commented that she felt there was not demand

for improving facilities here and was concerned that a potential bridge option over Oystermouth Road would benefit motorists. JP responded that the area being considered for this scheme was significantly important for Swansea's active travel network, as it was an intersecting area of two of the county's busiest cycling routes which served large populations of the city, and that the Council did not have to choose between funding schemes as all were submitted in a competitive bids process to Welsh Government.

- 2.11 CL concurred that the reason Blackpill has been chosen for assessing options was that it is a strategically important area and added that the scheme is assessing all of the options that are available as a long list and the Council takes that forward to a shortlist as part of scheme development. Public engagement has been undertaken to inform this process and the Council is considering the responses from members of the public. Another round of public consultation on a preferred option will take place this year as part of that scheme development. DN commented he approved of the existing crossing at Blackpill, but that the Clyne Valley route itself to the north could do with improvement as it is a very busy and important route in Swansea.
- 2.12 CJ queries whether public transport initiative such as trams would be considered in the Blackpill and shorefront areas, as this is something which was historically provided. CL advised that this was not something there is a business case for, nor funding, from the Council or Welsh Government, but that light rail transportation was being considered in other areas of Swansea as part of the Swansea Bay & West Wales Metro, with the business case for rail improvements being led by Transport for Wales.
- 2.13 JP went on to deliver a summary of the 'minor works' which had been approved funding, which includes signage and wayfinding, access barrier removal, cycle hire strategy development, cycle parking development and funding for promotion and engagement. CJ commented that cycle parking should be sympathetic to the requirements of different-shaped cycles, such as trikes, which are used by people with disabilities, and that it was important to have secure storage facilities. JP agreed that this was important for people with different cycles and for people with increasingly expensive cycles, such as e-bikes.
- 2.14 CC asked if any further funding was needed for a route to be completed between Penllergaer and Cadle as that was listed as a 2022-23 scheme. JP replied that there were works being completed for this route, but that no further funding was necessary from the Welsh Government to do so.
- 2.15 CJ commented regarding cycle hire that Bikeability have a wide range of cycle available for hire and should be involved in discussions about cycle hire

strategy. CM (manager at Bikeability) commented that the organisation does a lot of cycle hire for tourists and residents, and has been working with Swansea University on maintaining their ‘Santander’ cycle hire scheme, which will be extended for another year. She also noted that Bikeability was becoming an e-bike hub, which people could rent from to try before they buy.

- 2.16 JP concluded this agenda item by thanking all the stakeholders in the active travel group for their past feedback and support for identifying issues and opportunities, and for informing the development of schemes which made up Swansea’s successful ATF bids.

### **3. Update: Big Walk and Wheel 2023**

- 3.1 JP provided an overview of the ‘Big Walk and Wheel’ campaign, which is an annual competition organised by the walking and cycling charity Sustrans. The Big Walk and Wheel inspires pupils to make active journeys to school, improve air quality in their neighbourhood and discover how these changes benefit their world. This year, over 5,000 pupils from 17 schools in the Swansea area took part, one of which was a Special Education Needs school. In the 2023 competition, schools completed 14,725 ‘Walking / Wheeling’ journeys and 2,787 ‘Cycling / Scooter’ journeys, which would have accounted for 35,024 car trips, or over 12,000kg of carbon dioxide. Active school runs also help to reduce congestion and air pollution outside the school gate. A 2021 YouGov study showed nearly half of UK children worry about air pollution near their school, and that children thought active travel was the best way to bring down these pollution levels. The Council hopes to build on this with some targeted school engagement over the coming year.

### **4. Update: ‘Time to talk’ Public Health Wales**

- 4.1 JP introduced an update regarding a survey undertaken by Public Health Wales regarding active travel. ‘Time to Talk Public Health’ is a nationally representative panel of Welsh residents aged 16+ years established by Public Health Wales to enable regular public engagement to inform public health policy and practice. Panel members were invited to participate in regular surveys and provide insight into key public health issues. This report presented findings from a survey in April 2023, covering issues including physical activity, active travel and climate change. The 1,051 participants who were invited and completed the survey were weighted to reflect national population demographics.
- 4.2 The latest survey from Public Health Wales’ Time to Talk Public Health panel has revealed that most people in Wales support reallocating road space in

their local area for walking (75 percent) and cycling (68 percent), which infer that creating an active environment is essential to support people to be physically active. Understanding why people in Wales might or might not choose active travel can help inform action to support active travel. The top three reasons why people would choose active travel are to improve their physical health (73%), to improve their mental health and well-being (60%), and to save money on fuel costs (40%). 30 percent of people reported concern about road safety as a reason why they might find it difficult to use active travel. The introduction of 20mph speed limits across Wales is one of the tangible ways Welsh Government is working with communities to support active travel. Additionally, 27 percent of people said a lack of facilities, such as walking and cycling paths, was a reason why they might find it difficult to travel actively.

- 4.3 CF noted that this study provided valuable insight into how people engage with active travel, and that developing the network and infrastructure is really important. She also noted that anecdotally staff in her organisation have reflected that despite the weather and despite the distance they actually get to the office much quicker if they use the bicycle as opposed to using the car during congested periods of motor travel. JH added that providing an alternative for commuting to motorised traffic is vital, particularly in already congested areas such as the Fabian Way Corridor where further developments are proposed, and that physical severance between communities and key destinations caused by busy main roads also needs to be addressed as part of the active travel programme.
- 4.4 CJ commented that there should be closer engagement with Planning applications so that active travel can be integrated into the design of new developments around Swansea. CC supported this and suggested that representatives from Planning should attend this meeting. CL replied that the Transport Strategy team does act as a stakeholder within the Council and regionally, and that one of the key pieces of work which the Council will focus on in the coming year or so which will involve both Transport and Planning at a more strategic level in the development of a new Regional Transport Plan for the South West Wales region. This is being led by the 'Corporate Joint Committee' which is a recently established body of the 4 Local Authorities in the South West Wales region and will help take a wider strategic approach to planning, transport and linking up with future developments.

## **5. Any Other Business (AOB)**

- 5.1 CC asked whether there was any funding available to deal with the issue of pavement parking, particularly on active travel routes next to main roads. CL acknowledged that this is a difficult issue to manage, and that the Police are

generally looked to enforce highway obstruction. CL advised that for new routes it would be helpful if in the first instance any issues with obstruction of shared use paths is reported to the authority in order that full consideration can be given to any physical interventions that could be implemented. This issue will also be discussed with the parking enforcement team within the authority.

- 5.2 CJ queried whether the Active Travel team were the correct point of contact for issues of erosion on coastal paths in Gower. CL replied that these fell outside of the active travel network, but that the Council's Countryside Access team would be able to advise.

**6. Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 20 September 2023 (09:30 – 11:00)