

Swansea Bay Strategy Consultation- Response by Sustrans Cymru

Sustrans welcomes the opportunity to participate in the consultation process and comment on the strategy document. Broadly, we welcome the opportunity the strategy presents to improve amenities along the Swansea Bay foreshore which have the potential to increase the attractiveness of an already extremely popular section of the National Cycle Network and associated link routes.

We would make the following specific points:

There is a concern that the strategy aims to accommodate the interests of a disparate group of stakeholders, including those with business and development initiatives, without sufficient consideration of the likely impact on transport in the Bay area. It is likely that, unless specific measures are included to actively favour and promote sustainable transport modes, traffic levels from private motor transport will increase to accommodate these demands, leading to further pressure on the existing highway infrastructure. Promoting Public Transport and active travel modes as primary access to the bay area would help to mitigate any adverse effects of this development.

As a consequence of the above development focus, several new car parking areas are being proposed. Sustrans considers this to be misguided in that this infrastructure will only exacerbate problems from the growth of private motor transport in the future and is a poor use of public amenity space, both aesthetically and functionally.

There is an opportunity to utilise the bay train as a mode of transport to take people from town centre car parks to access the bay and Mumbles area. Providing further inducement for visitors to drive to Oystermouth only to travel back to Blackpill on the train is not logical and will exacerbate congestion along Oystermouth Road. Conversely, enhancing and promoting cycling and walking routes along the bay will mitigate these effects.

Providing links from National Cycle Route 4 to key destinations such as Singleton Hospital and the University is essential in maximizing the potential of these routes to cater for utility journeys. The hospital has already implemented a sustainable travel plan and incorporated on site facilities for cyclists and walkers as a result, but there is currently no direct traffic-free link into the wider cycle route network. Oystermouth road represents a considerable barrier to provision of continuous, attractive walking and cycling links and additional crossing points should be provided.

The proposed cycle/pedestrian bridge at Blackpill would have a limited benefit for users as it does not take account of cyclist and pedestrian movements adjacent to Oystermouth Road. The current at-grade signalized crossing provides a more accessible interface, but signal timings should be reviewed to reduce waiting times for pedestrians and cyclists.

The route along the seafront would benefit from low level lighting in keeping with the bay setting but providing an attractive environment for users after dark, which is currently not the case. Opening out vegetation in enclosed sections would also assist.

The proposals to provide toilets and café amenities are welcomed and will considerably enhance the experience for visitors and residents of the bay. It is important these are located with good access from both the bayside promenade and popular recreational areas such as Singleton Park and St Helens.

Sustrans supports the proposal to widen and enhance the existing walking and cycling infrastructure, although it should be remembered that minimizing user conflict is largely achieved by allowing responsible use by all modes rather than hard engineering which can often exacerbate the problem, particularly physical access controls and inappropriate signage. Sustrans recommends that National Cycle Network design guidance should be used to achieve best practice in this regard.

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