

A48 Clasemont Road / Pentrepoeth Road - Consultation

This responds to Swansea Council's invitation to comment on the plans (shown on the drawings in [file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Active travel enhancements on A48 Clasemont Road and Pentrepoeth Road -3.pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Active%20travel%20enhancements%20on%20A48%20Clasemont%20Road%20and%20Pentrepoeth%20Road%20-3.pdf).) I do so on behalf of Cycling UK, whom I represent for the Swansea area.

Broadly the plans have our support, in particular in Section 1, west of Vicarage Road, and the link to the recently upgraded Tirpenry SUP in Section 3. However we have reservations about the junction crossings in Section 1 and the switching of the path from the south to the other side of the A48 east of Vicarage Road. Our main concern about the latter is the lack of a west side off-road alternative and that on an east side SUP fast descending cyclists are a danger to other path users.

We welcome the SUP in Section 1, that it is on the south side of the road, is 3m wide (provided it is and not 2.5m as shown in Section A-A.) and that raised table crossings of Long view Road and Mount Crescent are planned. But the large junction radii (c. 6m) at these two junctions are a concern. They allow cars to make a left turn into them too fast. An example of where this is already a hazard is the junction of Fairwood Road with Mayals Road in west Swansea. (This has been drawn to the Council's attention but they have not yet done anything about it. There, the danger is enhanced because the dragon's teeth markings are faint and the table rises so gradually that a motorist turning left is barely aware of it.) Also, because the SUP is bent in to clear the bell-mouths, it is not clear that path users have the right of way. The junction treatment detailed in DE309 in the Welsh Active Travel Guidance solves this problem by specifying tight junction radii (seemingly $\leq 2\text{m}$), thereby enabling the path to be taken across them without a bend-in. We recommend that the plans be altered accordingly.

In Section 2, immediately east of Vicarage Road, the SUP switches to the north side, remaining on that side (now the east) down Pentrepoeth Road to the junction with Pentrepoeth School Road. The question is why is it switched? Why is it not kept on the same side with a crossing to Pentrepoeth School Road just before Morryston library? Relevant to this is that the fall from west to east across all three sections is steeper east of Vicarage Road, steepening from less than 5% in section 1 to locally 10% round the bend immediately east of Vicarage Road. There is also the question of whether the path on Pentrepoeth Road should be a SUP or should cyclists be separated from other path users? It seems there is a case for both switching and not switching the path. My assessment of the pros and cons of each is as follows:

East side path (as planned): pros and cons).

Three pros are identified:

- (1) For about 150m uphill from Springfield Road the gradient is less than on the west, about 8% compared with 10% on the west side. This makes it preferable for cyclists.
- (2) The properties at the top end on the east side have driveways while most of those on the west don't. This means that there is less of a 'dooring' danger on the east side. Also there is less development than on the west.
- (3) The carriageway is set back further from the property boundaries.

The cons are:

- (1) To access homes on the west side (where there are more than on the east) and facilities such as shops and Morryston Library the road has to be crossed.
- (2) If the path is a two-way SUP as we assume it will be (Not however explicit on the drawings: the typical sections show just one cyclist on the road side.) descending cyclists, who, due to the gradient, will likely go too fast, will be a hazard to pedestrians and other path users. Being on the left side, cyclists who would normally use the road are faced with a dilemma: should they continue on the road or use the SUP? They may perceive the road as safer because being hit by vehicles exiting driveways is less likely than on an SUP and is free of pedestrians and ascending cyclists. Another reason for using the road is that because it is downhill and quite steep their speed would be comparable with motorised traffic so they would not cause congestion.

West side path: pros and cons.

The cons for an east side path are the pros for a west side. A key reason for keeping the path on the west is that it provides an off-road alternative for ascending cyclists who would otherwise hold up traffic. This would ease congestion, gain support from motorists and make it safer and more pleasant for cyclists. If shared with pedestrians ascending cyclists would not be a problem as, due to the gradient, they would not be going fast enough to be a danger to them; for the same reason 'dooring' would be less of a hazard. This hazard can, and should, be minimised by providing a buffer between the SUP and the parking bays.

The use of a west side SUP by descending cyclists should be discouraged as, for the reason given above for an east side SUP, they present a hazard. However its use for access and by cyclists lacking the confidence to use the road (provided there are not too many of them) should be acceptable. Measures to encourage descending cyclists to use the carriageway east lane should be taken. Narrowing it to less than the 'critical' width (3.1 – 3.9m) would make it safer. According to the guidelines it would then meet the requirements of a cycle audit. There are local precedents for this, eg on Mayals Road.

A further advantage of west side provision is that it provides ready access to the homes of local residents and to facilities such as shops and Morrision Library – ie the reason given above (con 1.) for the path *not* being on that side!

Further considerations.

One presumes that a factor in the Council's decision to locate the SUP on the east side of Pentrepoeth Road is pressure from local residents who don't want cyclists passing in front of their homes, especially if they have a car parked alongside. Less weight seems to have been given to the factors which favour west side provision. This goes against the spirit of active travel; so we ask: should the Council give in to such pressures?

It is pertinent that the same thinking appears to have been applied to Gorseinon Road where the issues are similar. There cycle provision was made on the south side (corresponding to the east side of Pentrepoeth Road) rather than on the north where there is a housing estate. The disadvantage of this has however been mitigated by their providing a 3m wide cycle track in addition to a footway on the south side instead of an SUP. This removes the danger to other SUP users of fast descending cyclists.

If the provision is to be on the east side of Pentrepoeth Road (which we question) we ask that it be a cycle track, separate from the footway, as on Gorseinon Road.

An alternative which would make sense if the space is available would be to provide one way stepped (aka hybrid) cycle tracks on both sides, as on Mayals Road but (unlike on Mayals) which meet the guidelines, ie 2m wide (narrowing to 1.5m if necessary where there are restrictions) with a ≥ 0.5 m berm separating the track from the carriageway or parking bays where it passes them.

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