

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT IN CARMARTHEN RD.

1. CONTEXT

Carmarthen Rd. is a dual carriage way that runs from the North Western edge of the Swansea urban area to the centre of the city. It passes through several built up residential communities as well as industrial and commercial estates. Within 400 metres of this road are to be found Fforestfach Industrial Estate, Cwmdru Trading Estate, Pontarddulais Rd. Retail Park, 5 Primary Schools as well as 2 local shopping centres and many social and community buildings and play areas.

Carmarthen Rd. bisects or is adjacent to 5 electoral wards, namely Cockett, Penderry, Cwmbwllra, Townhill and Castle Wards. These 5 wards contain 12 Lower Super Output areas (LSOAs) which contain some of the most deprived communities in Wales (defined as the lowest 10%). These 12 LSOAs represent 70 per cent of the most deprived areas in Swansea despite having just 21% of Swansea's entire population. Consequently, there are low rates of car ownership compared to the most affluent areas in Swansea West. Households without access to a motor car/van amount to 34% in our study area compared to just 14% for a similar sized area in Swansea West (Sketty to Mumbles).

These figures are also mirrored in the unequal provision of cycle infrastructure in the city. In the Swansea West area, just over 90% of residents have access to the City cycling network (defined as living within half a mile of a safe cycle way). This enables residents to cycle to the City Centre, the Enterprise Zone and other districts in the city. In the 5 wards next to Carmarthen Rd. just 20% of residents have a similar access (i.e Entirely those living in Castle Ward). None of the industrial areas, schools and retail areas mentioned in the first paragraph above are connected to the Cycle network .

In the last 15 years Swansea's bus services have suffered a 55pc reduction in frequency of services – This mirrors the situation in all other Local authorities in Wales. At the present time there are 29 weekday services that stop at Fforestfach Cross – a figure which is slightly less than the frequency at Sketty Cross which is also situated on an arterial road out of Swansea. The only bus service in Swansea that has seen a growth in frequency over the last decade has been the one that joins 2 University campuses on Swansea Bay's coastline.

2. CARMARTHEN ROAD CORRIDOR

Swansea has 3 other dual carriageways that serve the city centre; namely from Ynysforgan, Blackpill and Port Tennant. All of these routes have Shared Use Paths (SUPs) that run parallel and usually at a distance from the dual carriageway, thereby reducing the effect of air pollution and noise. To improve the experience of those who use these SUPs, many environmental and 'green' enhancements are found

nearby. These include raised banks, grassy areas, wildflowers, shrubs, trees, undergrowth, playing fields, beach, sand dunes, rivers, dockside, marshy areas, seats, artwork, and a lido.

Carmarthen Rd. does not have any separate cycle or walking provision away from the road side. Unlike the other 3 arterial roads mentioned above, our study area has numerous buildings lining the route. Most of these buildings are residential, with nearly 400 houses facing directly onto to the road itself. In this respect, Carmarthen Rd. is very unusual, as the other 3 dual carriageways in Swansea have barely a handful of residential properties. Furthermore, the frontage of about 90 of these homes lies within 4 metres of the carriageway kerb, presenting a mix of problems to these residents, constant noise, air pollution, dirt and grime deposits, no social space for interaction, lack of greenery, ever present traffic danger and vibration to name a few. In addition, the Carmarthen Rd corridor from Middle Rd to Gendros Cres. is one of the 3 districts in Swansea that have been subject to an Air Quality Monitoring Area for more than a decade.

The need then is to re-evaluate the role of this corridor which has been seen up until recently as transport link for motorists and lorry drivers to commute, deliver, shop and join the M4 motorway. Unlike other dual carriageways in Swansea, it is a place where perhaps a thousand people call their home, a place where they are living, sleeping and raising families within a few yards of a very busy main thoroughfare. This study then should focus on the needs of these people, so that walking cycling and public transport are seen as the norm and not the exception. One personal aside is that parts of Carmarthen Rd currently represent the most hostile environment to cycle in the whole of Swansea.

3. ATTAINABLE GOALS

A) That the number of children and parents walking and cycling to the 5 primary schools shows a sustained increase after any improvements have been put in place.

B) That there is a segregated cycle provision along the whole of Carmarthen Rd. Consideration should be given to reducing the width of the lanes from 8 m to 6 m. or using 1 lane for sustainable travel.

C) That there will be cycle ways and bike stands in the 3 main destinations , namely Pontarddulais Rd Retail Park, Fforestfach Industrial Estate and Cwmdru Trading Estate.

D) That there is alternative access to these 3 zones for walkers. Currently all have to be accessed via Carmarthen Rd. e.g. One access point via Cwmbach Rd. to Queensway was blocked off in the 1970s. [See Appendix One]

E) That there is a plan to increase the green space and biodiversity to enhance the wellbeing of the residents.

F) That the current number of crossing points on the road should be reviewed and that there are no waiting areas in the middle of the road

G) A survey of the local transport needs of the area's residents should be undertaken to see how bus services especially can better answer people's needs .

H) That connections to the existing SUPs on Gors Ave, Cwm Rd. and Heol-y-Gors Rail bridge should be implemented.

CONCLUSION

Achieving the goals mentioned above will allow this area to have the same transport provision and environmental benefits as currently afforded to the residents of Swansea West.

John Sayce, Chair.

Wheelrights, Swansea Bay's Cycling Campaign.

Appendix One - Access point via Cwmbach Rd. to Queensway

This route in particular represents an opportunity for a huge win at relatively little cost.

There is already an access road in place across the railway that links you into Queensway from Cockett. It is currently fenced off near the point where it crosses the railway. This route would open up a huge area of the Fforestfach Industrial Estate to safe access for many residential areas in Swansea (Cockett, Townhill and beyond). A feature of these residential areas is considerable deprivation and low car ownership. Currently Cockett Rd and Carmarthen Rd are intensely heavily trafficked and used as a matter of last resort by cyclists.

Fforestfach Industrial Estate is home to a large number of employers, and Gower College Swansea's training facility at Jubilee Court.

With relatively little effort the route could be connected through to the Gors Avenue cycle route (and the wider network), via the quiet streets of Church Gardens and Brynffordd.

