

Paper 1: Widening of the Existing Route in Clyne Valley (Blackpill to Killay)

Context and Concerns

The recent decision by Swansea Council to reallocate **£1.4 million** originally provided by the Welsh Government for an **active travel route along Walter Road/Sketty Road** has raised significant concerns among Wheelrights members. Instead of funding a high-priority urban active travel scheme, the money has been redirected to projects that largely involve widening existing routes or making improvements that should have been covered under routine maintenance budgets.

Our key concerns with this **reprioritisation** are:

1. Active Travel Funding Used in Place of Routine Maintenance Budgets

Swansea Council has chosen to spend a significant portion of this active travel funding on resurfacing and widening existing walking and cycling routes, including **£680,000 for Clyne Valley**. While maintenance and upgrades are necessary, this approach diverts active travel funding away from its intended purpose—**developing new, high-quality, and safe cycling infrastructure that encourages modal shift**.

The concern is that **active travel money should not replace what should be core council spending on the upkeep of walking and cycling routes**. By treating this funding as a substitute for regular maintenance budgets, the council is not investing in **new strategic routes** that could substantially improve active travel in Swansea.

2. Late Reprioritisation Limiting Strategic Impact

The decision to abandon the Walter Road scheme came **very late in the funding cycle**, meaning that instead of allocating money based on strategic priorities, the Council was left with **a short time frame to find alternative projects that could be delivered quickly**.

As a result, much of the funding has been **spent on widening existing paths rather than creating new, high-impact infrastructure**. While some improvements may be welcome, the value-for-money and long-term benefits of this approach are questionable, especially when compared to the potential of the **Walter Road scheme to provide a critical active travel link**.

Details of Works at Clyne Valley (Blackpill to Killay)

The **Clyne Valley route**, a well-used walking and cycling corridor, is currently undergoing widening works as part of this reallocated funding.

Key Features of the Upgrade

- The new width is approximately **3 metres** in most places.

- Some sections appear **ragged**, with uneven finishing in places.
- Two posts remain around a foot from the new edge, which may present a **hazard** for cyclists.
- Concerns over **drainage**, with ballast piled up along the edge of the route towards the Railway Inn.
- While the widening is **needed and welcomed**, it is **no substitute** for the high-impact infrastructure that would have been delivered by the Walter Road scheme.

The **widening of Clyne Valley does improve an existing route**, but it does not provide the same benefits as a **new, dedicated active travel corridor in a high-demand urban setting** like Walter Road.

Wheelrights remains concerned about the **strategic decision-making process behind this funding shift** and urges Swansea Council to ensure that **future active travel funding is used for transformative projects, not just stop-gap maintenance improvements**.

Pictures from 7th March 2025 overleaf:





Paper 2: Reallocation of Active Travel Funding – Gowerton

Overview

Swansea Council has reallocated **Welsh Government Active Travel Funding** originally intended for **improvements to the active travel route between Penclawdd and Gowerton**. Due to **land ownership issues** that could not be resolved within the required funding timeframe, the council has **redirected the money to minor improvement works within Gowerton itself**.

As with the Clyne Valley scheme, Wheelrights is **unhappy with this reallocation**, which **prioritises small-scale resurfacing and maintenance-based improvements** rather than investing in **new, high-impact infrastructure that adds strategic value to the active travel network**.

Details of the Reallocated Funding

Original Plan (Now Cancelled)

- The funding was initially earmarked for improvements to the **existing route between Penclawdd and Gowerton**.
- Due to unresolved **land ownership issues**, the scheme was deemed **undeliverable before the end of the financial year** and was therefore withdrawn.

Revised Scheme in Gowerton

The funding has now been redirected to **small-scale improvement works** within Gowerton, including:

1. **Resurfacing the existing segregated path** between **Pont Y Cob Road and Ffordd Beck Roundabout** to form a **non-segregated shared-use path**.
2. **Resurfacing another existing segregated path** between **Ffordd Beck Roundabout and Ffordd Beck junction** (near Mill St/Victoria Rd junction).
3. **Crossing improvements** at **Ffordd Beck Roundabout**.
4. **Installation of raised side road entry treatments** at Ffordd Beck junction and the entrance to Gowerton Car Park.
5. **Removal of the central dividing white line** on the bypass between Mill St/Victoria Rd junction and Gowerton Car Park to form a **non-segregated shared-use path**.

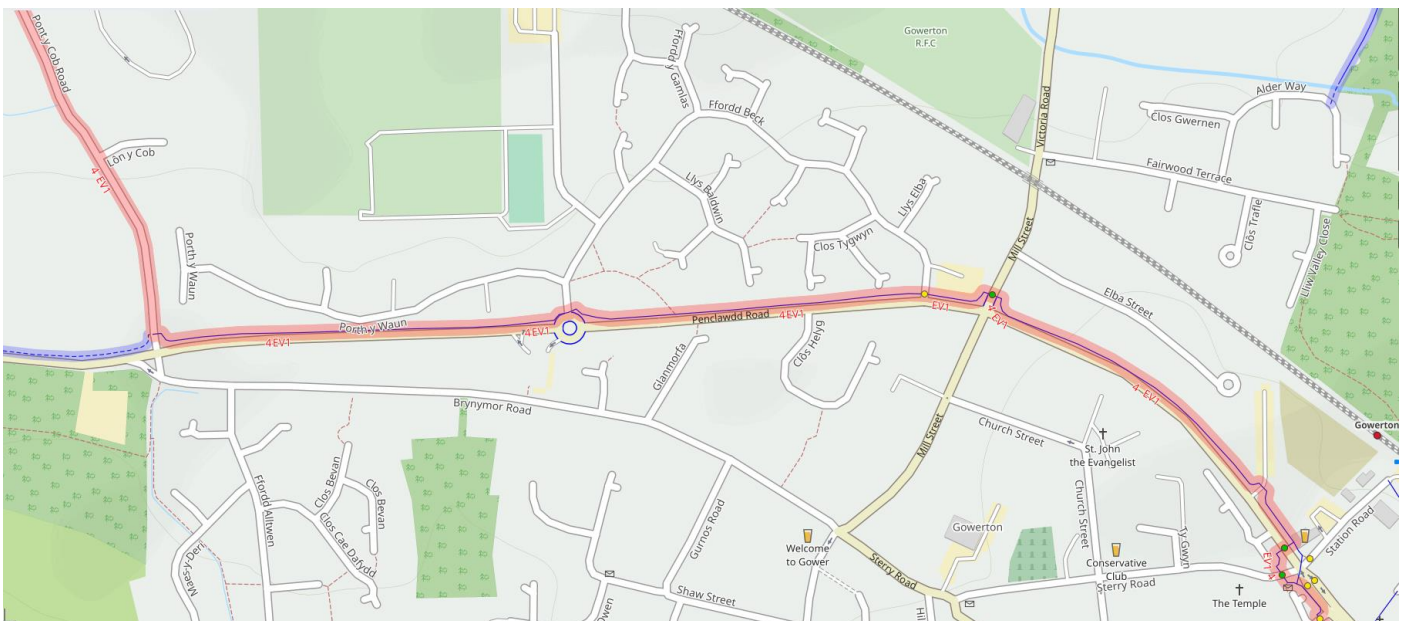
Timescales for the Works

- The **resurfacing and crossing improvements** are expected to begin **in the coming weeks**.
- The council is awaiting **confirmation from contractors** on the exact start date.
- Sections of the **paths will be temporarily closed** once work begins.
- Future improvements to the **Penclawdd–Gowerton route** may still be pursued under **the ‘Core’ Active Travel Fund scheme**.

Wheelrights' Concerns

- 1. Active Travel Funding Used for Minor Upgrades Instead of Strategic Improvements**
 - The **originally planned Penclawdd–Gowerton link** was a key missing link in the active travel network.
 - Instead of reinvesting the funding in a **new high-value scheme**, the money is now being spent on **resurfacing and minor crossing improvements that should be part of the council's routine maintenance budget**.
- 2. Last-Minute Reprioritisation Resulting in Limited Impact**
 - The **late withdrawal of the Penclawdd–Gowerton scheme** left the council with little time to develop meaningful alternatives.
 - The **new works were chosen based on deliverability within a short time frame**, rather than being a **genuinely high-priority investment** in active travel infrastructure.
- 3. Failure to Add Value to the Active Travel Network**
 - The reallocated funding does not **deliver a new route or significantly improve connectivity**.
 - It represents **maintenance rather than expansion**, meaning the money **does not contribute to increasing active travel uptake or network reach**.

Map of Gowerton area where the revised scheme is being carried out, with Route 4 marked in red:



12th March 2025