

WHEELRIGHTS' RESPONSE TO THE L.D.P. CONSULTATION

Wheelrights is Swansea Bay's cycling campaign group, aiming to promote cycling for everyday journeys to the shops, schools, surgeries and other activities. We were founded over 25 years ago and currently have over 80 members. We have been campaigning hard for many years to extend Swansea's cycle network to all parts of the city.

Any transport response to the LDP has to consider what is currently in place to assist cyclists to complete a journey safely and without fear or anxiety. All our surveys have consistently shown that many cyclists (especially women) are fearful of sharing the road with motor traffic. Research in the U.K. and on the continent has shown that cycling is more dangerous in areas where there is not a critical mass of cyclists on public roads. Swansea's very low rate of cycle commuting means that the cycle network rather than public roads is the preferred option for most cycling. Indeed, in the last survey (2011) of commuting habits of citizens of the 36 largest U.K. cities, Swansea was the second most dependent city for the use of the private car to get to work. There is little to suggest that has changed.

KEY ISSUES

In the Environmental section, the document rightly talks about "increasing the rate of cycling and public transport use... to deliver a modal shift to more sustainable transport". We think that the elephant in the room in delivering this aim is the private car. We would therefore wish to see a reference to the decreasing use of private car use which will also help deliver the aim of reducing levels of air pollution within the city. We are concerned that there is no mention of the need to increase the rates of walking.

Within the social issues, the document talks in broad terms about "reducing inequalities" without specifying which inequalities this document seeks to address. There are for example many areas, e.g personal incomes that are the responsibility of the national governments in the UK and should not concern the LDP2. In transport terms the Council has control of the formation and improvement of the Cycle network. There is a gross inequality in the provision of the cycle network. Swansea's urban area has 48,000 people who live in the top 10% of wealthiest Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wales. Nearly all of them (93%) has access to the Swansea cycle network which takes you to the city centre and Enterprise Zone (Access is defined as living within half a mile of the network). Swansea has 25,600 people who live in the bottom 10% of most deprived LSOAs in Wales. Just 35% of them have access to the Swansea Cycle Network. So, residents living in the areas with the lowest car ownership rates are doubly penalised in transport terms by often not having access to affordable buses and safe cycleways that offer a cheap and healthy alternative to the private car. This inequality is also seen in spatial terms as the North West of Swansea (comprising, Waunarlwydd, Fforestfach, Cwmdru, Cwmbwlra, Gendros, Ravenhill, Portmead, Penlan, Clase and Treboeth) have no safe cycle ways at all despite having a population of over 40,000 people.

LDP2 OBJECTIVES

Wheelrights welcomes the Objective 13 which seeks to 'create environments that encourage promote a shift to active travel and sustainable transport'

FUTURE SCALE OF GROWTH

Given Swansea's location as a large city on the western edge of the UK, it is unlikely to see a large growth in jobs. At the moment, the city is heavily dependent on public service jobs. In the Centre for cities study of 63 UK cities published in 2023 Swansea was in the bottom 10 cities for:

- Population increase between 2011 and 2021
- Start up rates for new businesses.
- Overall number of businesses
- Proportion of private sector to public sector jobs.

So, the LDP2 should consider the baseline economic forecast as there is no contra-indication that we are aware of.

SPATIAL APPROACHES TO FUTURE GROWTH

Wheelrights would favour two of the five approaches, namely, the urban/brownfield approach and the highly connected approach (15 minute Communities). The paper presents some false choices between, for example, greenfield and brownfield, in so much as that it did not present the detailed arguments between choosing either, such as loss of habitat when choosing a greenfield site, as well as the lack of connection to public transport. This would thereby force residents people to use private transport.

The Swansea Cycle network is largely based on the use of redundant rail lines which radiate out from the City centre. The main four routes are

- The West of Swansea from Mayals to Mumbles and Newton,
- The communities of Gowerton ,Gorseinon, Penllergaer and Pontarddulais
- The Swansea Valley communities of the Hafod, Plasmarl, Morryston , Clydach, Bon-y-maen, Trallwn, Llansamlet and Birchgrove.
- The Eastside communities of SA1 , Dan-y-graig and Port Tennant.

All the other cycle paths in Swansea fail to connect to the main network that allows travel to the city centre and the Enterprise zone. In areas other than the four mentioned above we should not see any further developments until active travel routes to these communities have been provided.

In terms of public transport and in particular bus services, we would point policy makers to the Centre for cities publication called 'Fare Outcomes' which compares transport provision in the four biggest Welsh cities, Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham. Below is the section on policy implications for Swansea.

"Like Newport, the low density nature of Swansea tips the balance in favour of private over public transport. The future development of the city should aim to better concentrate both jobs in existing sites and housing to make public transport more viable, as well as exploring ways to provide low-frequency, high provision services to its main employment sites that match the shift patterns of the employers there."

Wheelrights would endorse this need to concentrate any new developments in existing areas rather than on greenfield sites. We would strongly oppose any future developments where there was not an existing connection to the cycle network or a public transport system that was unable to decrease the usage rate of the private car.

John Sayce
Chair on behalf of Wheelrights
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