

Letter to Swansea Councillors

10 February 2021

Re : The Mayals Road Cycle Track Scheme

We, the undersigned 144 residents of Mayals and neighbouring districts, consider that Swansea Council's proposal for this scheme is inherently unsafe. The areas we perceive as dangerous include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Pedestrians.** On the SUP sections, pedestrians will be sharing with cyclists who may potentially be moving at speed. There is a particular danger in the section near Mumbles Road, where a narrow SUP will pass Mumbles Bay Court retirement flats and Clyne Chapel. Families, children and the elderly will be at risk. (See also 9 below)
2. **Pedestrians crossing the road.** Two new light-controlled crossings are proposed, positioned to suit users of the cycle tracks. Existing central refuges, installed only comparatively recently after a local safety campaign, will be removed. No provision will be made for children crossing at Mayals Green, or for users of Clyne Gardens. Pedestrians, parents with small children in buggies and users of wheelchairs will be expected to navigate cycle tracks and both lanes of traffic in one dash to cross the road.
3. **Vehicle drivers.** Under the Council's plan the carriageway will be narrower, obliging vehicles to drive close to the kerb, with the danger of HGVs over-hanging the 'hybrid cycle tracks'. Any blockage (see 6 below) could lead to dangerous overtaking unless the oncoming road is clear. No parking will be allowed along the whole length of Mayals Road.
4. **Vehicles joining from a side road.** At junctions any driver will have to halt further back, where sight-lines may be obscured, and look for approaching cyclists and pedestrians at the same time as judging gaps in traffic.
5. **Residents.** Exiting from domestic driveways onto the road will mean crossing either a two-way SUP cycle path or a one-way 'hybrid track' without blocking it, as well as finding a gap in the traffic and negotiating the narrower lanes.
6. **Deliveries and services.** Delivery vehicles and other short-stop users, such as refuse collection trucks, will block either the road or the Cycle Path or both. Similarly for care staff visiting house-bound or elderly people and emergency service vehicles.
7. **Proficient cyclists.** The 'hybrid track' sections will be narrower than the minimum specified in design guidance as they will be immediately beside the road. Passing HGVs and buses will be a particular danger (see 3 above). The hybrid will be raised 125mm above the road so any avoidance of debris or obstructions could dump a cyclist onto the carriageway. On the lower SUP no width allowance has been made for the stone wall. For these reasons, proficient high-speed cyclists are likely to continue to use the road, which could lead to dangerous overtaking (see 3 above).
8. **Less proficient cyclists.** With the amount of traffic on the Mayals Road, a safe cycle path separated from traffic is essential to encourage cycling. But with no barrier or buffer zone the hybrid sections will be dangerous, as in point 7 above. If slower cyclists use the carriageway instead the narrowed road will actually be more dangerous for all users (see 3 above).

9. **'Pinch-point' problems near Clyne Chapel.** At the lower end of Mayals Road near the junction with Mumbles Road the carriageway narrows to pass an area of raised private land enclosed by a high stone wall. Currently, HGV drivers passing this automatically allow themselves a 'safety zone' of half a metre to clear the wall. The Council's proposal is to narrow the roadway still further at this point by installing an SUP on the already-narrow footway. The roadway will then be the bare minimum, or even below that, as specified in the Design Manual for Roads & Bridges,. No 'swept path analysis' or equivalent appears to have been carried out to ensure that two heavily laden HGVs travelling in opposite directions can safely pass at this point.
10. **Bus passengers, including children going to school.** Mayals Road is on a public transport and schools-service bus route, with four bus stops in its length. The proposed 'hybrid cycle tracks' will apparently be routed behind bus shelters, effectively taking users onto the footway at these points, where onward visibility will inevitably be obscured (even with the glass shelters advocated in the inadequate 'safety report'). This provision also takes no account that bus passengers, particularly children on their way to school, may not all be standing together immediately next to the kerb. The planned removal of the central refuge near Fairwood Road (see point 2 above) is also of concern as this is crossing point used by large numbers of schoolchildren and other bus users.

We consider there to be an obvious potential risk of accidents and possible fatalities if this scheme is completed. This has been repeatedly pointed out to Swansea Council and its officers in correspondence from residents, Members of Senedd and the constituency MP.

However, the proponents and supporters of the scheme within the Council have steadfastly refused to acknowledge or address these risks and dangers and have, in consequence, continued to progress the scheme.

We consider it inevitable that due directly to this scheme accidents and injuries will occur, and that damages, and probably litigation fees, will be incurred.

It is undoubtedly the case that Swansea Council and its officers have been put on notice to the dangers involved and so liability will be difficult, if not impossible, to avoid.

Should liability be an issue, then any future claimant should feel free to rely on this letter, and, if necessary, the objectors to the scheme will provide oral testimony in support of any claim.

Because the proponents of the scheme within Swansea Council (both councillors and officers) have chosen to recklessly ignore these warnings, we see no reason why the council-tax payers of Swansea should bear the financial responsibility of this flawed and potentially dangerous scheme.

Such responsibility should lie, jointly and severally, with the proponents of the scheme. This is especially relevant as any public liability insurance will in all likelihood be compromised because Swansea Council have been put on notice as to the dangers concerned, and have chosen to ignore them.

Yours sincerely

*** 144 signatories. ***

The Safe Mayals Road Campaign