

**Providing Council with Written Responses to Questions asked at Council
4 May 2023**

1 Councillor Wendy Fitzgerald

In relation to Minute 170 – Consultation and Engagement Strategy

She stated that consultation had not taken place regarding the Penllergaer Cycle Path. The Leader of the Council stated that a written response outlining the actions taken by Council would be provided.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure

Swansea Council developed two maps in 2017, as required under the Active Travel act, an Existing Route Map (ERM) and an Integrated Network Map (INM). The INM produced a comprehensive plan setting out the short, medium and long-term capital infrastructure walking and cycling routes that the local authority will seek to deliver, for the improvement of active travel across the City and County of Swansea.

The draft INM was published for comment as part of a statutory twelve-week public consultation period, as required by the Act. The Consultation ran from 12th June to 8th September 2017, and included online consultation, a series of workshops held at Civic Centre, Clydach and Gorseinon, alongside consultation with a number of schools and stakeholders.

The community engagement events were advertised by Swansea Council, alongside the opportunity to take part in the consultation through the Council's website. The consultation exercises engaged with the public and gave individuals the opportunity to share their views and help shape the INM throughout Swansea.

The twelve-week consultation was formally advertised to the public in line with the statutory requirements. Additionally, stakeholders who had requested to be notified when the consultation went live were emailed to signpost them to the consultation. There were stakeholder responses from groups such as Wheelrights, Sustrans, Public Health Wales and Associated British Ports (ABP).

The public consultation in 2017 followed the same standardized approach that is undertaken for all public consultations Swansea Council undertakes.

The proposed alignment for an active travel route between Penllergaer and Gorseinon was included in the INM consultation under the reference SWA-AS0006.

Only routes on the INM (since replaced by a revised and reconsulted Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) in 2022) can be put forward for Welsh Government Active Travel Fund (ATF) funding to develop the proposed alignment into a design proposal.

The Penllergaer to Gorseinon active travel scheme was put forward for design and development funding for the 2019/20 financial year. The resultant proposals were put forward and discussed with ward members in both Gorseinon and Penllergaer, with wider consultation taking place with the local

community in July 2021. This included letter drops to residents along the route, a dedicated webpage with plans, several meetings with local ward members and engagement with other stakeholders.

Feedback received from residents on the original proposal to construct a shared use path, where pedestrians and cyclists share the space, along the entire route, resulted in the scheme design being updated as a direct result of this consultation with the community. The proposals were updated to reflect the comments received, with the design amended in one section which segregated pedestrians and cyclists, as opposed to continuing with a shared use section. Following this feedback and subsequent design revisions, a revised design was published on Swansea Council's dedicated webpage in March 2022, and further comments were invited from the local community. All comments received from the public were considered and a response provided, and hard copies of the proposed scheme drawings were issued directly to residents. Officers continued to outline, discuss, and consult with local ward members, holding virtual meetings and responding to extensive email correspondence throughout the development and delivery of the proposals.

As the scheme has progressed through the design stage and on to delivery, further consultation activities have taken place to support the introduction of the active travel route between Penllergaer and Gorseinon. A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was advertised for consultation, concluding on 26th August 2022 formalized elements of the scheme that required a change to the highway. Throughout the TRO consultation period properties adjacent to the Penllergaer to Gorseinon scheme received letters to advise them, and informed of the intention to commence works. Notices of intent were erected along the scheme delivery area, with all subsequent feedback recorded and residents who submitted objections provided with a response and feedback.

A further letter drop was conducted in November 2022, capturing all businesses and residents along Gorseinon Road, informing them of the start date of works. The Council has worked with the appointed contractor to ensure that there is clear communication of the works on-site, and to reduce and mitigate disruption to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

In 2021, Welsh Government instructed local authorities across Wales to update their ERM and INM with a replacement Active Travel Network Map (ATNM). Extensive engagement and consultation were undertaken throughout 2021 with a wide-ranging engagement and consultation process established to develop the new ATNM.

Once again, the alignment between Penllergaer and Gorseinon was included on the draft ATNM under route references 5 and 53, respectively.

Members of the public, ward members and stakeholders were signposted to the numerous engagement and consultation activities undertaken throughout the year, culminating in a formal 12-week statutory public consultation of the draft ATNM.

This consultation was promoted across the various social media channels that the Council utilizes, featured in local newspapers and their associated online content, ward members were provided with dedicated communications and briefing notes at the various stages of engagement and consultation, to share

with their communities, in addition to online surveys, school engagement, stakeholder sessions and five face-to-face public sessions.

The first public engagement undertaken was supported by the Welsh Government, providing a facility for members of the public and organizations to place their comments on a map of Swansea to indicate where improvements for walking and cycling were needed. The Penllergaer to Gorseinon alignment received 14 comments within the extents of the scheme, with many more comments in the surrounding areas. The activity across the whole of the City and County area returned 3210 contributions from 785 respondents and shaped the development of the draft ATNM. The 'Commonplace' engagement activity took place from February to April 2021. A formal 12-week consultation took place from late August to mid November 2021 on the draft ATNM, and received a further 346 responses and a number of detailed letters and emails from stakeholder groups. Swansea's revised ATNM was approved by Welsh Government and Ministers in August 2022.

Further details on the whole development, engagement and consultation of the ATNM can be found on the Council website (link below).

https://www.swansea.gov.uk/media/11567/Active-Travel-Network-Map-ATNM-development-report-2023/pdf/Active_Travel_Network_Map_ATNM_development_report_2023.pdf?m=1676988427763

2 Councillor Peter May

In relation to Minute 171 – Councillors Questions (Q1)

He asked a technical question regarding the depth of resurfacing that the authority uses and the methods of pothole repairs used for compaction etc.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure

There are many different methods of resurfacing roads and many types of road construction.

In general, for the majority of our resurfacing schemes we plane off the top 40mm of the road (the topcoat/surface course/wearing course). This is replaced like for like by a proprietary surface course typically a modified stone mastic asphalt. The lower courses of the road will vary in depth depending on date of construction and methods used at that time.

The Authority also uses a large quantity of micro asphalt, this is a poured system which is a much thinner layer that coats the existing surface, this is a preventative measure which is very durable and cost effective but only applicable in certain situations. This does not give as good aesthetic value as standard resurfacing.

In terms of potholes, this will again depend on the type of defect and road.

Standard potholes will be cut square to a minimum of 50mm and asphalt concrete used and compacted in layers, typically used in larger areas and in relation to significant defects identified by inspectors or other teams.

Surface deterioration, the majority of the potholes reported currently, are not safety defects that breach intervention levels, typically 40mm in depth with a flat bottom, individual potholes will be reported to the pothole teams, larger areas will be added

to the jet patcher workload. Generally there is no compaction as the work is by sprayed bitumen emulsion.

Pothole initiative, all depths below approximately 20mm are repaired using a specific pothole material, no cut out and only hand compaction is required. These form the bulk of publicly reported issues and can be laid in the rain and is very durable but not necessarily neat as there is no cut edge.

3 Councillor Sam Bennett

In relation to Minute 171 – Councillors Questions (Q6)

He stated that he was “concerned about the volume of sewage discharge into the River Tawe. There is a perpetual foam which I am told is algae Bloom into the Tawe. Sewage was dumped into the Tawe a total of 1,818 times in 2022 - lasting 13,981 hours.

The response refers to discharges only occurring during storms and heavy rain. I appreciate we get a lot of rain but not this much. I note in the response there is limited detail about how the Council are working with Dŵr Cymru / Welsh Water or Natural Resources Wales (NRW) about preventing ongoing discharges into the Tawe.

How will the Council be addressing this.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance.

The topic was raised during the Climate Change and Nature Scrutiny Performance Panel, on 22nd November 2022, and addressed by the lead regulatory body, Natural Resources Wales (NRW). NRW are the responsible authority regarding discharges into controlled waters i.e., rivers, most lakes and the sea and work with the Council when looking into potential Public Health impacts of some discharges.

NRW advised that there are storm overflows in Swansea around the coast and near rivers which are designed to spill excess water, which gets into the sewerage system during heavy rainfall, into the environment to stop homes getting flooded. NRW informed the panel that lots of work has been done over the last 10 years, and on our most valuable stretches of coast, overflows only spill in extreme conditions.

NRW will be continuing their work to identify which problem overflows still exist and to prioritise with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) and OFSTAD which of these get investment for improvement. DCWW have a responsibility to stay within permitted discharge limits and will be informed, by NRW, if there are any issues relating to their assets, with follow up enforcement of this if needed.

NRW further advised that they would always be looking for infrastructure in Swansea to be investigated and improved if needs be. NRW will be asking for improvements on high spillers in Swansea area, which tend to be on the Tawe rather than Mumbles. Council officers will continue to work with colleagues in NRW to provide input when required.

4 Councillor Peter Black

In relation to Minute 171 – Councillors Questions (Q6)

He asked what discussions have the Council had with Welsh Water regarding upgrading their sewage treatment plant on Fabian Way

Response of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance.

Discussions are ongoing with DCWW regarding upgrades to their odour abatement treatment that operates at the Sewage Treatment Works (STW). Several visits have been carried out since the previous planning application was submitted in 2020, which was subsequently withdrawn in 2021. The application was withdrawn because DCWW continued to monitor the odours generated by the raw sewage and observed that a change had occurred during the 'Lock Down' period of the Pandemic that required a new approach.

DCWW have created and installed an odour monitoring network at the STW in order to better understand the potential sources of odour from their operation. This was discussed at a site visit on 6th February 2023 with me, local ward members, DCWW Officers and Officers from the Housing and Public Health Service. During this site visit, DCWW informed that investment is being looked at for upgrades of the abatement plant as part of the Asset Management Plan (AMP) cycles and that the installation of new equipment for a part of the process is currently in the design stage. Additional dosing systems have been utilised in the network in order to reduce the odour of the raw sewage input and therefore the output from the site.

The Pollution Control and Private Sector Housing Team continue to work with DCWW looking to address complaints received and assess the monitoring data that is being collected to work towards further reducing odour complaints. Further updates are expected in June 2023.