



Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan

Hearing Session 10 Miscellaneous Matters MATTERS ARISING

Examination 2010

Caerphilly County Borough Council submission

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MA 10.2

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TR1.9 – Network Links from Blackwood/ Pontllanfraith (Cycle Routes)

The current statement has been received from Sustrans and directly relates to the development of TR1.9. This statement therefore supplements information provided in MA10.1 Section 2.

1. Current position

- 1.1 The alignment of the route has been shown on the Sustrans website mapping for some time and we see this route as a key part of the Valleys Cycle Network (VCN).
- 1.2 The development of the route between Blackwood and Crosskeys is being developed in partnership with Caerphilly CBC, Blaenau Gwent CBC and Sustrans. This work includes upgrading sections of the canal near Cwmcarn that will feed into the route between Crosskeys and Tredegar and to complete sections of route in the Hollybush area to join up sections in preparation to developing the route between Blackwood and Crosskeys. The amount of funding for these schemes is approximately £1,000,000. Our preferred route would be as per the LDP proposal.

2. Justification for need of route on this side of the river.

- 2.1 To encourage walking and cycling, which is good for both the environment and people's health, Sustrans need to provide paths that are easy to use. The alignment of TR1.9 provides that in being relatively flat.
- 2.2 Sustrans has also found that people want pleasant conditions in which to travel, again this alignment gives that feature and is away from heavily trafficked roads which deter people from walking and cycling.
- 2.3 A third point would be that this alignment makes use of existing infrastructure so that a new route would be constructed in the most cost effective way.
- 2.4 The ideal alignment would have been to follow the alignment of the old railway. However this is no longer possible because Sirhowy enterprise way has been constructed.

3. Timescales and Deliverability

- 3.1 The construction of a cycle route often follows the pattern of land acquisition, funding, planning permission (often in parallel with funding), then detailed design and construction.
- 3.2 In reference to TR1.9, Sustrans are well advanced and British Rail Residuary Board is pushing to transfer their assets to Sustrans.
- 3.3 An example of timescales and deliverability is the Clydach Gorge route near Abergavenny. This route took 10-15 years to assemble all the land, funding about 18 months and construction about 9 months.

4. Land acquisition

- 4.1 Sustrans are in negotiations with Llanover estates and British Rail Residuary Board. These negotiations have been going on for some time and

at are an advanced stage. The land will include the old railway line where available from Crosskeys to Hollybush. This in total is approximately 6 miles and would include liabilities for the structures along the route (tunnels, retaining walls, bridges and culverts), which will be a huge undertaking.

4.2 A target date to conclude the negotiations and have the land handed over has been set at 01/12/2010.

4.3 Funds are being sought to fully survey the Bryn Tunnel at Pontllanfraith, which will be a key part of this scheme. Funds are not officially in place for these surveys, however £40,000 is currently being secured to carry these out.

5. Route development with regards to funds

5.1 Sustrans are constantly looking for opportunities for funding and current projects total approximate £16m in value in the valleys area. In addition to that we have the Connect 2 project, which has 5 projects in SE Wales and is worth proximately £4m. All of our current projects have to be finished by March 2012 or March 2013

6. Future funding.

6.1 Sustrans are currently looking at landfill tax via Biffa (up to £500k) to fund some of our future projects as well as having the support of over 30,000 supporters in the UK. We also work closely with Sewta (south east Wales transport alliance) who are an alliance of the 10 local authorities in SE Wales. They administer the regional transport funding of which walking and cycling pays a major part and is worth approximate £2m this year.

7. Conflict.

7.1 Sustrans receive some reported conflict, and as with many of these issues is caused by a small majority. The majority of complaints are received about horses rather than cyclists or motorcycles. However conflict can be reduced by good design.

7.2 Anecdotal evidence suggests that 95% of dog walkers keep their animals under control and allow cyclists to pass. Horses are not so common on cycle routes and where possible, Sustrans would always advocate separate adjacent lanes. For example, Sustrans constructed and manages a route near Taffs Well that has an adjacent horse route that has been very successful and is very heavily used being part of the Taff Trail. Records of complaints are kept and over the past year; 4 (3 horses, 1 stone throwing) out 78 were concerned with conflict.

7.3 There were no complaints received concerning conflicts between cyclist, disabled users or vehicles.