

ATISN 16590 – Captured Information

Reference	Date	Content
TO/LW/01095/20	08/12/20	<p data-bbox="635 349 1391 573">Dear XXX, I am writing to you to express our serious concerns regarding the misuse of Active Travel Scheme funds by Swansea Council. The mail below was sent to the responsible Swansea Council officers- including XXX 8 days ago - with no response.</p> <p data-bbox="635 607 1391 1305">Swansea Council has failed to follow the UK statutory guidance for the Active Travel Scheme (2013, 2020) – there has been a total absence of any engagement with the local community, stakeholders or daily users in order to construct a network of 3m wide highways through our ancient heritage woodland. The proposals pose a serious threat to the local biodiversity and health and safety risk for all users (walkers, families, cyclists, horse-riders, children, dog walkers plus various local clubs - ramblers, orienteering club, runners etc). The proposed 3m wide paths will actively exclude users. The H&S risks have not been assessed and evidenced by serious accidents on the existing current tarmac 4mile cycle path through Clyne woodland (https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/clyne-valley-swanea-gowerton-mumbles-18512402).</p> <p data-bbox="635 1339 1391 1597">A local community group "Clyne Woodland Group" was set up last week - after being given 7 days' notice by the Council to close our heritage ancient woodland for 6 months - with no consultation. The community group is now growing daily and has thousands of supporters, who have now applied to start a UK Parliamentary petition at Westminster.</p> <p data-bbox="635 1630 1391 2000">Please could I ask you personally to investigate how Swansea Council's scheme is being managed and implemented. We have major concerns over the way funding allocated by the UK Government to the Senedd is being used by Swansea Council to pay for a scheme "OLCHFA LINKS SHARED USE PATHS (SUPS) Scheme" in our local protected ancient heritage woodland - Clyne Valley Country Park. We request Swansea's City Council cease work on these SUPs until all the points raised below</p>

		<p>have been satisfactorily addressed and the required documents delivered.</p> <p>We have the following major concerns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of evidence of demonstrable need for SUPs on the route proposed through the natural heritage woodland. Cycling provisions are already extensive within the woodland and include a 4-mile cycle path (NCN4) for road bike users plus multiple designated woodland areas for the sole use of mountain and trail bike users. 2. Failure by Swansea Council to fulfil their statutory duty in required engagement and consultation with all stakeholders, local community and daily users of Clyne woodland as outlined in Reference 1: Ch6 & Ch11 "Consultation and Engagement" and Well-being of Future Generations Act. Lack of any legitimate Consultation document. 3. Lack of a required Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which would have identified potential ecological risk to the biodiversity, including to endangered protected species (one endangered species only found in two other localities in Wales), and contaminant seepage from an old landfill site. 4. Lack of any Safety Risk Assessment and mitigating measures to address potential conflicts between cyclists and other users. Reference 1: Ch12 "User Needs". 5. Potential damage to artefacts related to the historical heritage of Clyne Valley. 6. Closure of sections of the woodland footpaths for up to 6 months when people are being encouraged to exercise locally and will be denied access to the natural environment during a global pandemic. Clyne woodland is currently a sanctuary for the local community, contributing significantly to the community's health and wellbeing. <p><u>References:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welsh Government Active Travel Guidance, February 2020 <p>Please see also the document (attached) that I sent to local Councillors on 12 November - after first hearing about the Council woodland plans. Councillors have received hundreds of similar letters from local residents outraged by the misuse of vast amounts of taxpayers money without any of the required statutory consultation. These local</p>
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		<p>Councillors set up a local petition and within weeks have hundreds of signatures.</p> <p>.Swansea Council have attempted to now post two notices over the past month - each with 7 days notice but have been forced to abandon plans since they clearly had not followed legislative requirements governing The Active Travel Scheme. Swansea Council are ignoring all local residents' communications, concerns and complaints.</p> <p>Please can we ask you to fully investigate all the issues above. Please do not hesitate to contact me to assist in providing any further information/evidence.</p> <p>Thank you and kind regards,</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>active-travel-guidance_1.pdf</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Clyne_woodland - redacted.pdf</p> </div> </div>
LW/01109/20	09/12/20	<p>I am writing directly to as someone who appears to be the senior person in charge of the Welsh Government Active Travel Scheme. I have been in contact with officers in Swansea Council about their plans to put a 3 m tarmac 'road' through an ancient woodland. I have had to follow the route of a freedom of information request to the Council to provide evidence of an EIA. This morning I have been told that the report should come soon but I suspect that it was hastily obtained after a decision was made to plough on with a scheme that has enraged the local community.</p> <p>I am concerned that Swansea Council is not following the guidance provided by Welsh Government in your document Active travel Guidance, February 2020. The Council maintains that they undertook a public consultation exercise in 2017 (before there were any plans for where the place the cycle routes) but they failed to seek any opinions from residents and the multitude of walkers that already use this woodland for exercise and leisure. The existing path forms part of an ancient route from Gower to Swansea that was taken by farmers heading their sheep to market and is currently a mixture of cobbles, bricks from Swansea</p>

		<p>Brick Company and soil. This will be covered by tarmac or similar surfacing.</p> <p>I have emailed twice to the email address given in your documentation but received no reply (I believe this is not in line with the requirement for government to respond within 5 working days). Perhaps you should check that someone is looking at these e-mails and passing them to whoever is responsible for the Active Travel Scheme funds.</p> <p>I ask that you investigate the potentially anti-democratic actions of Swansea Council. They are acting recklessly, damaging an ancient woodland that includes one species only found in this area, failing to carry out consultation and wasting funds provided in good faith by your Government. I ask you to request that they stop work that is planned for early January before an appraisal of the EIA, evaluation of the cost-benefit analysis and meaningful and transparent consultation with residents and user groups.</p> <p>Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to a prompt reply to this enquiry.</p>
LW/01112/20	14/12/20	<p>Dear XXX, XXX, XXX</p> <p>I wish to complain at the high handed attitude of Swansea City Council in pushing through the construction of a cycle path through Clyne woods without following the proper consultation process.</p> <p>The issue is that Swansea City Council should follow the proper public consultation process. In failing to do so they are effectively ignoring the law and being very heavy handed. Any consultations seem to be very limited and no one in the wider community as far as I am aware have been consulted. Most of the Councillors Labour and Lib Dems representing the residents of the immediate area affected by this proposal are vehemently opposed to it - Swansea CC are not apparently, listening to their views.</p> <p>I refer you to the Welsh Assembly Governments own policy statement:-</p> <p><i><u>"The Active Travel Act emphasises the importance of effective consultation in the development of existing route and integrated network maps. This will</u></i></p>

	<p><i>ensure that the views of active travel users, potential users and <u>those potentially otherwise affected</u> by plans can be fully considered.</i></p> <p><u>Broad and active consultation and engagement on plans for active travel requires significantly more effort than a very basic consultation</u> process, but it will also increase awareness and likelihood that people will use the infrastructure when it is in place, and hence take on a promotional role. The promotion and engagement toolkit will support local authorities in these activities.”</p> <p>Please can you explain why Swansea City Council should ignore completely the Welsh Governance on this issue.</p> <p>In addition, there has been no Health and Safety Assessment - the current paths are used heavily by the elderly, parents with children taking exercise together with animal walkers. The present paths prevent inconsiderate cycle users although they are used by mountain bikers who prefer the paths as they are - they cannot speed along because of the terrain and walkers have a chance to move out of the way. Can you imagine an elderly couple being frightened to death by speeding cyclists on a smooth cycle path - its bad enough trying to walk safely on the cycle path along Oystermouth Road - without mixing more leisure walkers with some of the inconsiderate cycle users.</p> <p>There has been no Environmental assessment which is normally required on most construction projects particularly in sensitive habitats. By all means, the Council can encourage people to use the woods as they are - you do not need a hideous cycle path to do this but to destroy the current natural habitat based on a false ideology is outrageous. The construction will disturb the present ecology and wildlife - resident squirrels, foxes and birds probably causing permanent environmental damage to the sensitive eco balance.</p> <p>In this respect there has been no study to ascertain whether a cycle path is required in this location - certainly it would not aid commuters or cut car usage. In particular, there is no demonstrable need for this path - certainly from cutting commuter pollution - it won't save a single car journey at peak times. Most commuter cyclists appear from evidence</p>
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		<p>given by one of Swansea CC's own traffic managers to prefer to cycle to work on main roads rather than cycle paths!!</p> <p>This path will encourage crimes to proliferate - drug dealing, congregations of pupils from nearby schools smoking etc due to easier access to areas of cover.</p> <p>There are also many heritage structures in the Woods that will be damaged by the works.</p> <p>More than 600 people have signed a petition to stop the Construction of the cycle path and protect the Clyne Woods and there have been public demonstrations in the Woods.</p> <p>So I request that you intervene with Swansea City Council to halt the works until the proper public consultation process has been gone through which i believe will demonstrate that the majority of people in Swansea want Clyne Woods left as they are. The Council will simply not listen to our local representatives and the large body of the population opposed to this scheme.</p> <p>Kind regards</p>
TO/LW/1105/20	14/12/20	<p>Dear XXX</p> <p>I am writing to request that you investigate how Active Travel Funding is being managed by Swansea City Council.</p> <p>The community have major concerns over the way the council is using the Active Travel fund for the scheme " Olchfa Links Shared use paths"(SUP's)in the ancient woodland of Clyne Valley Country Park .To widen the existing bridleways to 3 meters and resurface to accommodate cyclists.</p> <p>The major concerns are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of demonstrable need for this work to be carried out on the bridleways as they are already established shared use bridleways. There is already a cycle route through the woodland on the Old Railway path (part of NCN 4) which runs in the same direction as the bridleways, also there are

	<p>purpose built Mountain bike trails on the west side of the woodland.</p> <p>Under the Active Travel scheme the council are currently undertaking work a Shared Pavement Scheme, less than 350 meters from the entrance to the proposed Olchfa Link which again will travel in the same direction . Effectively there will be 3 routes travelling in the same direction almost running paranell with each other, for the same area,, yet other close communities have none.</p> <p>2. There has been no engagement /consultation with stakeholders, local community or daily users of Clyne Woodland, as set out in the Active Travel Guidance 2013 & 2020. There was a consultation document published for the "Preparation of the Map" in 2017, but there was no mention of proposed projects for Clyne Woodland and there is no evidence of any consultation since that date.</p> <p>3. Lack of the required Environmental Impact Assessment to assess risk to the woodland biodiversity & potential damage historical artefacts in Clyne Valley Woodland. Various rare species of fungi have been identified along the bridleways and a newly discovered species, the only known occurrence in the world. see attached link to Clyne Valley Community Project for more details.</p> <p>4. Lack of Health & Safety Risk assessments with regard to the contaminant seepage from an old landfill site over which the bridleway runs and Risk Assessment for flooding in areas of the woodland.</p> <p>5. Also no detailed Health and Safety risk assessments of the proposed measures, to reduce the speed of cyclists to protect the safety of all users and no details of the measures to be introduced to avoid potential conflict between users. Which regularly occurs on the Old Railway NCN route 4 and have done for a number years and therefore excluded many users. .</p> <p>6. Without consultation the decision to close sections of the bridleways for 6 months, while work is undertaken, when the woodland has become a sanctuary for all its users especially during the pandemic. Access is so important for the health and wellbeing of the community.</p> <p>Clyne Woodland is not just a route to travel, in the same way as a Shared pavement or a Cycle lane on a road. The woodland is a place where people of all ages spent time, enjoying the peaceful, beautiful surroundings. People enjoy tranquil walks, a</p>
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		<p>leisurely cycle taking in the surroundings, children have great fun exploring the woods and playing pooh sticks on the bridge over the stream. People walk their dogs daily, come rain or shine and equestrians can ride knowing the current surface is safe for their horses. We are not saying that the bridleways could not benefit from some surface repair, the council are working in partnership with Clyne Valley Community project, to repair some paths and bridleways in the valley, they are using natural loose stone which is in keeping with the woodland environment.</p> <p>We want to protect the woodland environment now and for the future and ensure that users are not excluded, because they fear for their safety. Therefore we ask that all the work on the bridleways is put on hold, so that consultation and engagement can take place, as set out in the Active Travel Guidance Wales 2013 & 2020 and The Environmental, H&S Risk Assessments can be undertaken (Environment Act 2016, Future Generations Act</p> <p>https://clynevalleycommunityproject.uk/</p>
TO/LW/01129/20	16/12/20	<p>Dear Minister</p> <p>These two cycle paths in the Swansea area have both caused a large amount of outrage and concern amongst local people which could have been avoided had the planning been handled properly. There was no consultation on the plans until it was far too late to change anything. Implementation must be delayed until proper consultation has taken place.</p> <p>The Mayals Road is a wide road, lined with mature trees, with two steep parts and heavy traffic use. Cyclists travel slowly uphill and very fast downhill. These features make it very difficult to find space for a cycle track suitable for all cycling abilities. The proposal to reduce the road width provides insufficient width for a safe cycle path but that is what is planned and local cyclists will, for the most part, continue to use the road. The narrower road has no space for pedestrian refuges and will make it dangerous for vehicles to overtake cyclists. There are other problems but this cycle path will make it <i>more</i> dangerous for everyone, householders, pedestrians and cyclists. These problems should have been resolved before any application was made for funding.</p>

	<p>The Clyne Valley is a very popular area for local people to walk. There is already a Cycle Path on an old railway line which is not used by walkers because of the danger of collision with high speed cyclists. The proposed Cycle Path will run parallel to the existing one for half of its length but will spoil the safety of the present walking area and will greatly reduce the space where it is safe to allow dogs and children to run free. There is an alternative route which would use more of the existing cycle path and avoid this precious safe space completely. Again, there is considerable outrage that there has been no consultation with local people with this plan being made public only in October.</p> <p>The common thread between these is that Swansea Council has completely ignored the best practice described in the Design Guidance. Local people have not been involved in the creation of these plans at a any stage. In reply, Swansea Council has pointed to the ‘consultation’ which preceded the approval of the Integrated Network Map (INM). As you know, this shows where Cycle Paths exist and where there are gaps which could be filled. In no way does the INM provide the detail which has lead to the local complaints so it cannot be considered to constitute valid consultation. The design Guidance for Active Travel projects is very clear that <i>“the contents [of the Design Guidance] must be considered when designing and maintaining active travel routes”</i>(para 1.2.1). Then, <i>“Consultation on the maps, however thorough, does not mean that the schemes or networks shown can be delivered without any further engagement with those affected”</i> (para 3.1.2) and <i>“Consultation should result in better design and better schemes. As such, it is best carried out at several stages: from the development of the network to individual schemes”</i> (para 3.1.3).</p> <p>The only discussion on the Mayals Road scheme was held on November 3rd at a Zoom meeting called by the local Residents Association as a result of which 19 pages of questions and comments were submitted. The answers showed no willingness to engage with the legitimate concerns expressed, understandably since the time for rethinking had been 10 months prior. There has been <i>no</i> public discussion at all on the Clyne Valley scheme. For both, the expiry on the funding is end March 2021 and no time to make any significant amendments. Where we are now is that these two schemes, both deeply flawed and creating enormous local</p>
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		<p>animosity, are to be started in January and Swansea Council seems able to ignore best practice with impunity. I have written earlier to Dr Dafydd Tristan Davies, Chair of the Active Travel Board, to suggest that the Design Guidance should be written into the Active Travel law. Alternatively, any Active Travel funding could be made conditional upon the Design Guidance being adhered to. This should not be necessary since Councils ought to wish to follow best practice, particularly since it is so clearly available. Any action of this sort will only improve future Active Travel routes but it will not redeem the two I am concerned about unless extra time can be made available to start the process for these two routes again.</p> <p>I appeal to you to insist that the provisions in the Design Guidance are applied to these two schemes and, to make time to achieve this, that the expiry date on the funding be extended.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
OC/00026/21	30/12/20	<p>Dear XXX</p> <p>Thank you for your email. I'm pleased that your WG office recognises the importance of the Consultation process as a legislative requirement in implementing the Active Travel Scheme. However, unfortunately your generic mail (identical reply to other complaints to Lee Waters) <u>does not</u> address any of the issues (1-6) that I raised in my 8 December 2020 email below.</p> <p>Are you suggesting in your reply email that the Swansea Council Officers themselves have reviewed their own mismanagement of the Clyne Woodland Active Travel Scheme? If not, please can you advise who has actually reviewed the Clyne Woodland Scheme documentation? Please can you provide me with Review documentation you mention. I presume that if FOI requests are made, the public are able to access the full review documentation?</p> <p>As you are aware, hundreds of local residents and users of Clyne Woodland, have made similar complaints to both the XXX and Lee Waters. Swansea Council has not engaged with any of the Clyne woodland community, stakeholders or users. Shockingly, no Users or stakeholders of Clyne woodland knew about the proposed Swansea</p>

		<p>Council network of "Tarmac Woodland Highways" through our ancient woodland - until 7 days Notices were posted on woodland gates advising of a 6 month closure.</p> <p>Neither Swansea Council or Welsh Government Ministers seem to be able to provide the essential legally-required Active Travel Scheme Consultation document for Clyne Woodland or Impact Assessment Documents (bullet points 2-4 below). Users of the woodland have now resorted to formal FOI requests to access documents. <u>Through these FOI requests, it appears that NO Active Travel documents exist for Clyne Woodland.</u> As you would understand - this is a breach of Welsh and UK Active Travel Legislation. I would advise that any woodland construction work that Swansea Council commences (under XXX instruction and management) without the appropriate Legal Consultation and assessments for Clyne Woodland - will likely result in Swansea Council and individual Officers being liable for reckless environmental destruction and serious risks to Users' Health and Safety.</p> <p>I would ask you again to now address and review my bulleted concerns below. Please provide me with the requested legally-required documentation for Clyne woodland <u>within 7 days</u>. If neither you or Lee Waters are unable to do so, please can you advise me of the formal Welsh Government complaint route. If our Clyne Woodland complaints are now not taken seriously by Welsh Government - Clyne woodland Users will now be forced without delay - to all escalate formal complaints directly to UK Ministers at Westminster - Grant Schapps and others responsible for allocating the significant £5.1 million Active Travel Funding to Swansea Council - that appears to be mismanaged.</p> <p>Thank you and kind regards,</p>
OC/00027/21 Email 1	31/12/20	<p>Dear XXX</p> <p>Thank you for your email dated 30 December 2020. You have stated that it is for each local authority to satisfy themselves they have undertaken all the required impact assessments. Swansea City Council have been asked by a variety of people on</p>

	<p>numerous occasions to provide the documentation for all the Environmental Impact Assessments, Health and Safety Assessments, Contamination and Flood Risk assessments and have failed to provide any documents. So if it is the councils responsibility to carry out all these assessments and they fail to do so, to whom should a complaint be raised?</p> <p>Also you have stated the importance of early and continuous engagement with local communities, through out the development of Active Travel Schemes, to allow issues to be raised and addressed. There has been no consultation with the local community, we only became aware of scheme when notices were posted on the relevant bridleways on 11 November 2020, a week before the work was to begin. Since that date the community have contacted the Council individually to raise issues and over 500 people signed a petition, to ask for evidence of the demonstrable need for this development, reasons for the lack of consultation with stakeholders and the lack of Environmental Impact Assessment, also raising issues of the potential damage to the woodland environment. The Council have still made no attempt to consult or engage with the community.</p> <p>Therefore alerting the Council for the need to improve their consultation and engagement practices, at this late date, is not acceptable. The Active Travel guidance has been in existence since 2013 and clearly sets out the procedures to be followed, which they have failed to follow. So who is responsible for overseeing that Councils are managing these schemes correctly, this is tax payers money and we have a right to be consulted.</p> <p>During 2020 the Council carried out drainage work on two of the bridleways in the woodland (not part of Active Travel). This work was undertaken without any prior notification on any of the bridleways, no Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out and neither was a Health and Safety assessment conducted. While this work was being carried out using large machinery, no path was closed or even sectioned off, the public just walked right past, a major health and safety issue. Also you will see from the attached pictures the damaged caused to the environment, saplings torn up. trees cut down and uprooted and nothing has been done to maintain this</p>
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area.
I think you can see why the community are concerned about any further work to be undertaken by the Council, when they have not provided the necessary documents.

I have also attached photos of the “existing
“bridleways over the landfill site that is due to be resurfaced.

The community want to ensure that the woodland is protected and safe for all users and we ask that any issues and concerns are addressed by the Welsh





		
LW/0004/21	04/01/21	<p>Dear XXX,</p> <p>Clyne Woodland: works planned for early January:</p> <p>This morning I and a friend were walking in Clyne Woods. We met workmen who were entering the woods. It looks like the concerns which have been voiced through petition and e-mails have not been dealt with but that these plans are going ahead anyway without proper consultation with the community.</p> <p>Despite our grave concerns Swansea City Council are still proposing to start their work on Clyne Woodland, without undertaking the legally required Active Travel Consultation with the stakeholders and users.</p> <p>Here are some questions and concerns received from users of Clyne Woodland, that remain unanswered by Swansea Council.</p>

		<p>Environmental Risks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who assessed and who will monitor the damage to the woodland habitat. Can the council provide the Environmental Impact Assessment documents? 2. The bridleway across the old, contaminated landfill site, is to be widened and resurfaced with tarmac. Where are the specialist reports for this work? 3. What measures are to be taken to stop cyclists using the woodland as a mountain bike track? 4. Cyclists are not allowed on the woodland footpaths and permissive paths? How are the council proposing to stop them being used? 5. Is there really a need for another cycle route, this is Ancient woodland already used by all. It's not a cycle lane or a shared pavement route. Surely the money could be better spent elsewhere <p>Health & Safety Risks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where is Health & Safety risk assessment for all users? 2. Tarmac surface is dangerous for horses. 3. Wet leaves and surface water on tarmac can be lethal for all users. 4. How will cyclists speed be controlled? There are steep gradients and blind bends on all the bridleways. 5. I cycle and walk in the woods and find that the loose stone (compacted) already used on other bridleways, works for all users. 6. What about the flooding, a real danger if they are to be used by children to travel to school. 7. As a cyclist I think the paths should be segregated into 3 sections. Safer for all users. 8. Can I ride my e- scooter on these new cycle paths? 9. Who will have the right of way on these shared paths? How will this be monitored? We do not want the same problems that still exist on the Old railway path! <p>I am requesting answers to the above and asking further: why is this being pushed through without proper research and consultation? Why is the planned track being thought of at all, especially</p>
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		<p>using tarmac? It is difficult to trust a local authority when it appears to be refusing to engage fully with the reasonable concerns raised by locals.</p> <p>I understand there is a great ambition to advance cycling paths in Wales and to encourage more people to take up cycling. I have been a keen cyclist for decades but destroying a beautiful woodland path cannot be the answer. I would suggest you visit the area if you have not already done so and meet with someone from: the Clyne Woodland Group where we could show you what the woods are like now.</p> <p>--</p> <p>With best regards,</p>
OC/00027/21 Email 2	05/01/21	<p>Dear XXX</p> <p>Further to your email of 30 December 2020, in which you pointed out, the importance of early and continuous engagement and communication to ensure local communities are involved and informed in the development of Active Travel Schemes. I thought it should be brought to Mr Waters attention that the Clyne Valley Woodland (Olchfa Link) is not the only project, that Swansea City Council have failed to consult on with the local community. There are five other current Active Travel Schemes ,where there has been no engagement with the community, these are all "Shared Pavement Schemes" therefore directly effecting residents, who again have not been consulted or even made aware of these projects.</p> <p>According to Active Travel Guidance- chapter 6-13.6 Full consideration should be given to options for the suitable provision for cyclists on the carriageway or in a separate space for cycling – either through motor traffic speed / volume reduction, junction treatment and reallocation of carriageway space – before considering taking space away from pedestrians to create cycle tracks or shared use paths.”</p> <p>Some questions that have been asked:- How are these Shared Pavements to be sign posted? Who has the right of way? Will they be segregated, some parts are just too narrow.</p>

		<p>Most involve steep hills, how will speed be controlled? Is it not illegal to cycle on a pavement? What about elderly pedestrians and people with hearing and sight problems? Safety issues outside Primary School. All the houses on this road have driveways that cross the pavement, a major safety issue. Is there really a need to spend all this money on cycle paths, when people are struggling to feed their families?</p> <p>As with Clyne Valley so many people have genuine concerns and have the right to be consulted. The council should be engaging with the community now, these projects are current, but they have made no effort.</p> <p>I read recently that the Department of Transport have set conditions, if these are not met, Mr Shapps Transport Secretary has made it clear, future funding allocations will be reduced and claw-backs could be imposed.</p> <p>Councils must: Publish plans to show how they will consult their communities. inc residents, businesses, emergency services, among others. Show evidence of appropriate consultation prior to schemes being implemented. Submit monitoring reports on the implementation of schemes 6-12 months after opening, highlighting how schemes have been modified based on local feedback to ensure they work for communities. Something Welsh Government should consider.</p> <p>Also I was under the impression that the Active Travel scheme was to encourage walking and cycling, but the more you read about the scheme and see what is being implemented, it becomes apparent that it is targeted more towards cyclists than walkers. This is being aired local radio and marketed online.</p> <p>Neath/Port Talbot councils campaign "Have Your Say" about Active Travel, with the chance to win a £100 voucher for a bike shop!</p> <p>I do hope that Welsh Government will take all these issues seriously.</p>
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TO/LW/00109/21	31/01/21	<p data-bbox="627 192 783 226">Dear XXX</p> <p data-bbox="627 264 1378 667">We are writing to you again as a final attempt to address directly the serious failures by Swansea Council in managing the significant Active Travel funds allocated for the Clyne Woodland. We are a group of hundreds of local residents who actively use Clyne Woodland (diverse user groups) who were originally given 7 days 'Notice of Closure' posted on a woodland gate on 18th November 2020 - advising of Swansea Council's intention to start Active Travel construction work in our Ancient Heritage woodland. This raised the alarm.</p> <p data-bbox="627 705 1386 1070">Firstly, we would like to highlight that Swansea Council failed to provide the legally required documentation for scheme approval for the Clyne Woodland Scheme in July 2020. Swansea Council did not have a single document mentioning Clyne Woodland and yet the scheme was approved. Having advised Swansea Council of these failures in writing from November 2020, no attempts have been made to rectify these concerns regarding the mis-use of public tax payers' money.</p> <p data-bbox="627 1108 1374 1290">Secondly, we are also particularly concerned with the ongoing false and unsubstantiated statements/claims being made by Swansea Council with respect to the Active Travel Schemes in Swansea. Please see the video links below.</p> <p data-bbox="627 1328 1362 1509">XXX and the Swansea Council officers responsible for pushing this scheme through during the COVID lockdown, have failed to satisfactorily answer ANY questions or complaints from hundreds of local residents and daily users of the woodland.</p> <p data-bbox="627 1547 1374 1912">The disgraceful attitude demonstrates a total disregard for the democratic process and lack of respect. This was evidenced during the Swansea Council meeting on 28th January, 2021 when XXX refused to answer questions on their failings related to the Active Travel Schemes across Swansea including Clyne Woodland. False statements were repeatedly and knowingly made. This was uncovered during further questioning. See video links below.</p>
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	<p>We would now request that Welsh Government watch this video evidence and take appropriate action:</p> <p>Part 1 – Active travel Questions started 21 minutes in</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGFEZpPi-sY&t=567s</p> <p>Part 2 – 9 minutes in</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXcwkgPDamM</p> <p>In November 2020, we wrote expressing the public's serious concerns about the lack of required Reports and documentation for the proposed construction of smooth, fast highways through the Ancient Clyne Woodland.</p> <p>The serious concerns bulleted below, were collated from our hundreds of Clyne woodland users (who have also raised these issues with Swansea Council and WG) and together represent the needs of diverse user group (walkers, horse-rides, cyclists, elderly, families with children, joggers, various recreational clubs eg rambblers, orienteering, disabled, dog walkers etc) and relate to the following overarching issues. It should be noted that we started this Facebook group only on 27 November 2020 (2 months ago!) following the 7-day notice, and now have a diverse group of hundreds of Clyne woodland users engaging with us. There is absolutely no reason why Swansea Council could not have engaged with Clyne Woodland users in the same way.</p> <p>The overarching serious concerns of our users relate to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failure to undertake the legally required consultation process with users and stakeholders. The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 legally requires full Consultation with users and stakeholders affected by the Scheme. This Consultation is underpinned by the published Welsh Government Guidance for Active Travel (2013 and 2020) that outlines the full and complete required process in two full chapters describing the planning, design and implementation of all Schemes must be undertaken
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	<p>with all user/stakeholder groups. Clyne Ancient woodland is used by over 10 local communities for their health and wellbeing aligned with the Well-being for Future Generations Act 2015.</p> <p>Not a single user of Clyne Woodland has been notified of any consultation or attended a consultation for the proposed Active Travel Scheme, despite recent unsubstantiated claims by Swansea Council to Welsh Government.</p> <p>2 Failure to undertake and consult on a required Environmental Impact Assessment of potential destruction of ancient woodland habitat. The 'ecology' report produced on 5th January 2021 completely fails to address major issues related to the impact of proposed construction work. It also fails to mention a rare species on the protected list, as well as a species discovered last year named after Clyne – the only location globally.</p> <p>3. Failure to undertake and consult on a required Safety Risk Assessment of the proposed multi-use shared woodland highways that involve diverse user groups of all ages and animals.</p> <p>4. Failure to undertake and consult on a required Technical Report to assess surface material of intended woodland highways to avoid both environmental damage and discrimination to current user groups.</p> <p>5. Failure to undertake a required Accessibility Risk Assessment to avoid discrimination of some users with disabilities in terms of bridleway gradients.</p> <p>6. Discrimination of Swansea residents by Swansea Council by preferentially selecting some areas for Active Travel consultation, whilst claiming other Active Travel Schemes and affected users are less important (video evidence above).</p> <p>7. Failures to recognise a public petition (with 650+ signatures from local users) that highlighted the mismanagement of the Swansea Council's Active Travel Scheme - proposing construction of woodland highways through for Clyne Ancient Woodland.</p>
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		<p>https://www.swansea-gower-libdems.wales/clyne_valley_links</p> <p>We believe that Swansea Council have a public statutory duty and responsibility to the citizens of Swansea who they serve, to manage the significant Active Travel funds (£5.1 million of taxpayers' money) both fairly and accordance to Welsh and UK Laws - and in the manner in which they were intended i.e to improve conditions for ALL citizens and not discriminate against user groups to the advantage of others.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has a duty to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure full accountability of these significant public funds (Welsh tax payers' money). - Ensure a democratic and fair decision-making process in managing these WG funds by local Councils, that is not discriminatory. - A public duty to protect our natural resources in Wales for the future generations (Environment Act, 2016, Well-being of Futures Generation Act 2015). <p>We are offering a final request to Swansea Council to respect the rights of the public and the Welsh/UK Law - to now address these serious failures of the Swansea Active Travel Schemes and demonstrated lack of democracy and respect for the public whom you are serving.</p> <p>Please reply within 10 working days advising us of your position before we take further action.</p> <p>Regards</p>
TO/LW/00281/21 Email 1 Sent to UK Government	11/03/21	<p>Dear XXX</p> <p>Our local Welsh Clyne Ancient Woodland habitat and biodiversity are under immediate threat from significant construction works. We are seeking any assistance or advice you may be able to provide. The ancient woodland is a sanctuary to a very large number of European Protected Species (described in the letter below) and we understand that these species and their habitats are afforded strict protection under the UK legislation for</p>

		<p>protected species (Habitat Directive 2017, red listed species).</p> <p>We are a community group of over 600 woodland users, set up to protect the ancient woodland habitat for future generations. We are gravely concerned about the significant impact of the imminent construction work on the irreplaceable ancient woodland habitat and biodiversity - not least in the midst of the spring breeding season.</p> <p>Last year, Swansea Council Highways Department secured significant funding from Welsh Government (£5.1 million) for development of Active Travel routes in Swansea. An assumption would be that this funding was not granted by Welsh Government for the destruction of an ancient Welsh woodland habitat. The Council developed and consulted their Active Travel routes with only 3 organisations (Funding Application Attached). ALL three organisations were cycle organisations (Sustrans, Wheelrights and Bikeability), with no input at all from any other community Groups, the public, community users, stakeholders or even local Councillors - all of whom knew nothing about the significant proposals. Also, Clyne Ancient Woodland was not mentioned in the Application document to secure funding from Welsh Government.</p> <p>The Swansea Council Highways department started to bulldoze through the local ancient woodland yesterday - breaching UK laws for protected species and their habitats - to convert current shared-use bridleways that have existed for centuries, into a vast network of 3m wide tarmac fast tracks for cyclists. None of the proposed work has followed the UK statutory requirements for User/Stakeholder Consultation, Environmental Impact Assessment or Safety Audits - under the Active Travel Act (2013) or associated Welsh Government Guidance 2013, 2020).</p> <p>Please find copied below a letter to provide more information and context. Our woodland community group also has a Facebook Page, with more details: Clyne Woodland Group.</p> <p>Many thanks for your support - it is much appreciated! If you require any more information, please do not hesitate to contact us.</p>
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		Thank you,
TO/LW/00281/21 Email 2	18/03/21	<p>Dear XXX</p> <p>Please can you advise WHY significant funding was granted by Welsh Government to Swansea Council for the Olchfa Link in Clyne Ancient Woodland in July 2020, when the Council funding application (attached):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failed to provide the required detailed Active Travel Integrated Network Map (INM) or plans of the routes. Clyne Ancient Woodland was not even mentioned. 2. The required statutory Active Travel Consultation with all stakeholders/ users had not been undertaken. 3. Failed to follow the Travel Act (2013) Act with associated published Welsh Government Guidance (2014, 2020), required processes. 4. Failed to demonstrate any Environmental Impact Assessment of Clyne Ancient Woodland's legally Protected Species. 5. Failed to demonstrate any Safety Assessment/Audit. <p>This Active Travel application involves conversion of current shared-use bridleways that have been in existence for centuries, into wide fast tarmac 'highways' - designed by cyclists, consulted on entirely by cyclists and for the benefit of cyclists. We are a group of 600+ Clyne woodland users from all user groups (families, walkers, horse riders, disabled users, elderly, dog walkers, recreational club users, vulnerable users and more) - none of whom have been consulted.</p> <p>The funding application (attached) states very clearly on Page 18: that Swansea Council had only engaged/consulted with 3 organisations. These were ALL cycle groups, listed on the funding application as Wheelrights, Sustrans and Bikeability. There is also NO evidence of any other Active Travel Consultations for the Olchfa Link-Clyne Ancient Woodland Scheme (involving all other stakeholders/users) since the Integrated Network Map 'consultation' with cycle organisations/groups in 2017.</p>

	<p>The Swansea Council funding application clearly evidences the sole Active Travel partnership between Swansea Council and 3 named cycle organisations. It states they have held their quarterly meetings during which the Active Travel routes have been developed across Swansea, failing to include any representation from any other community groups or organisations. The Meeting minutes evidence the major role these 3 cycle organisations have had in developing Active Travel routes across the whole region and over many years at the exclusion of the rest of the community:</p> <p>pre 2018: https://www.wheelrights.org.uk/news/hold.htm 2018- : https://www.wheelrights.org.uk/news/notes.htm</p> <p>This evidences very clear discrimination and exclusion. In the case of the Olchfa Link scheme through Clyne Ancient Woodland, this discrimination is extreme for the elderly, disabled and people with mobility issues. It is very apparent to everyone that this woodland site is not suitable for these users. There are at least five steep gradients which clearly cannot be adapted in any way to accommodate all users. So WHY was it considered for an Active Travel route, when the guidance clearly states that <u>everyone's needs should be considered in the planning of these schemes and that there should be no discrimination or exclusion of individuals or groups.</u></p> <p>There are viable alternative options in this area for Active Travel. In addition, a shared-used tarmac path already exists through the woodland - plus, Swansea Council are currently installing an Active Travel Shared-use pavement in the same areas, that will run in exactly the same direction, is well lit and is safe to use for all users, throughout the day/night. Also, the dense woodland tree canopy in Clyne woodland creates a dark environment for all users in quite a remote setting. The woodland is in darkness for long hours during autumn and winter months. With this combined dark and remote setting, Clyne woodland is not a safe Active Travel route for school children, vulnerable adults and/or unaccompanied women. It should never have been considered for an Active Travel route based on the Scheme criteria. We ask for an explanation as to WHY hundreds of thousands of pounds of Active Travel funds were granted for a Scheme, that is clearly not fit for</p>
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		<p>purpose and discriminates against vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Regards,</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>210224 FOI - Olchfa Link - Active Travel F</p>
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The Welsh Government received the following correspondence as copy recipients only.

Reference	Date	Content		
TO/LW/01113/20	14/12/20	<p>Form Submission</p> <p>Making a complaint</p> <hr/> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px;"> <p>Swansea Council is the data controller for the personal information you provide on this form. Your information will be used in the exercise of our official authority and will not be used for any other purpose. We will not share your data with third parties unless we are required or permitted to do so by law.</p> <p>Data protection law describes the legal basis for our processing your data as necessary for the performance of a public task. For further information about how Swansea Council uses your personal data, including your rights as a data subject, please see our corporate privacy notice on our website.</p> </div> <p>Your complaint</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="635 1832 1375 2038"> <tr> <td data-bbox="635 1832 890 2038">What do you think we did wrong or failed to do?</td> <td data-bbox="890 1832 1375 2038">The council failed to consult on the proposed track in clyne woods(a consultation does not just mean asking children in a local school) No environmental</td> </tr> </table>	What do you think we did wrong or failed to do?	The council failed to consult on the proposed track in clyne woods(a consultation does not just mean asking children in a local school) No environmental
What do you think we did wrong or failed to do?	The council failed to consult on the proposed track in clyne woods(a consultation does not just mean asking children in a local school) No environmental			

		What comment would you like to make?	study has been undertaken and made publicly available. The track is a designated bridleway and the proposed surface does not follow BHS guidelines.
		Does this complaint relate to Social Services?	No
		Your details	
TO/LW/00003/21	24/12/20	<p>Dear XXX,</p> <p>It is regret that once again we are in receipt of yet another email from you - with no questions answered or requested documents provided.</p> <p>In reply to your generic answers:</p> <p>1 We have supplied all the relevant information already. Where are the documents please XXX? You have provided us with none of the requested documentation.</p> <p>2.1 We have provided you with the link to our required consultation. Yet again we must explain to you XXX -You have directed hundreds of residents to simply the initial “scoping exercise” undertaken by Capita in 2017. That documents initial conversations about exercise – walking and cycling– “a mapping exercise” with no specific locations/sites for development. There was no mention at all of any works proposed in Clyne woodland. <u>THIS IS NOT A CONSULTATION DOCUMENT AS REQUIRED BY THE ACTIVE TRAVEL LEGISLATION. We suggest you read the Active Travel (Wales) 2013 LAW and accompanying legislative Guidance: WG Active Travel Guidance 2020 (Links below).</u></p> <p>2.2 As there was no planning permission required, no Environmental Impact Assessment was required. No XXX. You are intending to significantly WIDEN ancient woodland bridleways from 1m to 3m over a distance of many kilometers with NO Consultation</p>	

		<p>on Clyne woodland and No Risk Assessments. The work would result in SIGNIFICANT HABITAT LOSS OF OUR ANCIENT WOODLAND AND BIODIVERSITY RISK = <u>IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE.</u> <u>YOU ARE REQUIRED BY ENVIRONMENTAL LAW TO UNDERTAKE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT BEFORE COMMENCING ON SUCH WORK.</u> We understand that with your background in manufacturing that you may not be fully aware of the UK and Welsh environmental legislation, but we are - and hence we have copied in Lesley Griffiths: Minister for Environment.</p> <p>2.3 All necessary risk assessments have been carried out. I can assure you that all necessary consultation, Health and Safety, and Environmental checks that are required, have been carried out.</p> <p>Please provide us with the requested RISK ASSESSMENT documentation. Local residents have submitted FOI requests and unfortunately it appears that in fact - <u>There are no risk assessment documents = you have not undertaken ANY Risk Assessments or associated required consultation - as you falsely claim.</u></p> <p>We ask you to yet again - to please provide us with the above requested dated documents XXX BEFORE any work commences. We do not require your "assurance" as you state - rather we require the requested EVIDENCE in the format of CONSULTATION and RISK ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTS.</p> <p>We would advise you as of this email dated 24 December 2020 - to STOP proposed construction work plans in our ancient heritage Clyne Woodland until you have adhered to the legislative requirements as outlined in the Active Travel (Wales) 2013 Act and associated Welsh Government Guidance (2020, 2013).</p> <p>Regards,</p>
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