

Road Safety in Radyr and Morganstown: the Community Council's response to Cardiff Council's draft scheme layout for highway improvements

Introduction

Radyr and Morganstown Community Council has been invited by Cardiff Council to respond to a draft scheme layout for highway improvements in Radyr and Morganstown. In our response we also discuss items which we think should be added to the layout - and the impact of the proposed works on pollution and noise levels.

Background

The improvements have been proposed in order to calm traffic - whilst also reducing the use of Heol Isaf and Ty Nant Road by traffic from outside the city, as rat-runs into the centre of Cardiff (via Llandaf and Fairwater). It is important to bear in mind, therefore, that - according to Cardiff Council - this scheme will have a wider, strategic importance with regard to easing congestion and reducing pollution throughout many parts of the city.

As such, Radyr and Morganstown Community Council welcomes Cardiff Council's proposals to make our community a better and safer place to live.

Currently, the volume of traffic using the route far exceeds the design limitations of the road, which is narrow, twisting and dangerous at times. Over 13,000 vehicles per day travel along the road, past homes, schools, a shopping centre, a home for disabled people and sheltered housing for elderly residents. Nothing but a kerb separates pedestrians from the traffic - and many parts of the road have a sub-standard pavement, or no pavement at all.

In addition, the presence of short, wide, tree-lined sections of road encourage motorists to break the speed limit. As they leave these sections, many drivers continue at speed, around bends, into areas which are narrower, congested and busy with pedestrians.

For many years, road safety in Radyr and Morganstown has been the subject of considerable interest and discussion across the community. Residents who live along the road have recently come together to campaign for improved road safety. The community council fully understands their concerns - along with the concerns of all other residents for whom Heol Isaf and Ty Nant Road act as a source of risk and danger.

It is a road that divides and separates.

Our response

a) General issues

Radyr and Morganstown Community Council wants to work with Cardiff Council to agree a comprehensive scheme that will make our community a better and safer place to live.

The scheme should cater for pedestrians, cyclists, safe bridleways and motorists.

We also want to agree with Cardiff Council a timetable for delivery of the scheme within as short a time as possible. To this end (and bearing in mind the wider, strategic importance of the scheme) we believe that Cardiff Council should work closely with the Welsh Government and Plasdwr developers to secure the necessary funding as a matter of urgency.

The aim must be to ensure that the community is safe from traffic by making use of up-to-date road design standards. Providing only a limited number of improvements to make some parts of the road safe, whilst leaving other parts in a dangerous condition, should not ever be thought of as 'enough for now'.

The community council established a working group to consider these issues and to prepare advice. The working group consisted of community councillors and members of the public. The paper prepared by them is enclosed with this response.

b) Initial works

We recognise that not all of the required funding is in place to deliver all of the draft scheme layout immediately.

The only funds currently available are £300k of Section 106 money, provided by Redrow Homes, the main Plasdwr developer. The fact that Redrow has agreed to provide this money far in advance of the statutory timetable for doing so is something that is hugely appreciated and welcomed by the Community Council. Therefore, given the current shortfall in funding, this response addresses where we think work should begin.

To this end, we believe that the work should begin with:

- new tabled zebra crossings at Morganstown, Min-y-Coed and Radyr Health Centre
- additional provision by Radyr Comprehensive School.

The first three projects would provide new, safe crossings at key points along the road where there are currently none - and where pedestrians often need to cross (for access to the Morganstown bus stop; to access the health centre, church and tennis club - and to gain access to the pavement at Min-y-Coed from a side of the road where no pavement exists).

We also believe that steps should be taken to improve the safety of school-children on their journeys to and from Radyr Comprehensive School. A clear issue of concern here is the congestion and risk to safety caused by vehicles used to deliver and collect children, especially those vehicles parked along Heol Isaf at the end of the school day.

Cardiff Council has estimated that a 'school safety zone' here would cost £160k. However, there is already a zebra crossing and safety camera near the school site - and given that there are no safe crossings at Morganstown bus stop, Min-y-Coed and Radyr Health Centre, we would be content for the first amount of funding to be used for those areas, with any remaining 'Redrow money' used to begin the task of improving safety near the school (to be followed by additional work, as necessary, when additional funds become available).

We also believe, however, that no work should be undertaken with regard to a school safety zone without prior consultation with the school community.

In addition, we believe that any school safety improvements will not be as effective, in making our children safer on their walk or cycle to school, as introducing a 20mph zone encompassing Radyr and Morganstown (see below).

c) Remaining works

With regard to the other traffic calming measures proposed in the draft scheme layout, Radyr and Morganstown Community Council agrees that existing zebra crossings should be tabled - but queries why only the crossing at Morganstown is to be upgraded to a Toucan Crossing (catering for pedestrians and cyclists). We would like to see all crossings catering for cyclists, if possible.

We also agree that the crossing near Station Road should be upgraded to a Puffin Crossing (which will revert to green when no more pedestrians are detected on the crossing by infrared detectors and mats), whilst also catering for cyclists.

We note that Cardiff Council proposes the introduction of a 20mph zone for the whole of Radyr and Morganstown. The aim will be to create calmer driving and a steadier speeds, which will deliver road safety, public health and active travel benefits to our community, including along Heol Isaf and Ty Nant Road. Importantly, it should help reduce the volume of traffic as some commuters who currently use this road as a rat-run may opt for other routes without this lower speed limit. And, as calming measures such as new tabled crossings are introduced, it would make sense to introduce the 20mph limit as well. As such, Radyr and Morganstown Community Council would support the early introduction of a 20mph limit, based on best practice.

We also note that Cardiff Council proposes the installation of 'Gateways', as part of the 20mph zone. We would like to discuss what types of 'Gateways' are envisaged.

d) Additional work (not included in the draft scheme layout)

There are issues that could improve road safety, which were not included in the draft scheme layout. We would like to see these addressed in the comprehensive scheme referred to above, in order to make our community a better and safer place to live.

They are:

- i) A tabled, Pegasus crossing near Radyr Farm Lane (these crossings can be used by horse riders without dismounting). This would enable pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders to cross safely at this point, where the bridleway crosses Heol Isaf before making its way to Woodfield Avenue and on, via Taff Terrace, to the Taff Trail. At present, this crossing is particularly unsafe for those on horse-back.
- ii) Thought should be given to providing safe passage for motorists living east and west of Heol Isaf and Ty Nant Road, as they seek to turn left and right onto those roads. (This, of course, could affect how the existing and proposed pedestrian crossings should be dealt with).
- iii) A safe-cycling strategy should be developed for Radyr and Morganstown (in liaison with local cycling groups, Sustrans and similar organisations) along with a sufficient supply of cycle racks at Station Road, the Old Church Rooms, the medical centre and similar locations.

iv) The risks associated with the junction of De Clare Drive with King's Road need to be addressed, as well as safe passage from the station roundabout along King's Road. At present, pedestrians are at risk as they descend King's Road and cross the road at the station roundabout.

v) A pavement should be installed along the short length of Windsor Road which does not have one at present.

vi) An intelligent camera system to help enforce the weight restriction in place for Heol Isaf and Ty Nant Road.

vii) Golf Club Lane is clearly not fit for purpose - and will become less so as more housing is developed along Llantrisant Road and throughout Plasdwr - and more and more people use the lane as a rat-run. In addition, the works proposed for Heol Isaf may encourage more people to use Golf Club Lane, to avoid obstacles such as the tabled crossings.

Various options should be considered, with a risk assessment prepared in each case, including:

- leaving it as it is
- introducing one-way traffic
- closing it to traffic (for the benefit of walkers and cyclists).

As an aside, urgent steps should be taken to discourage fly tipping on Golf Club Lane. This could include installing signage suggesting that the lane is monitored by CCTV.

viii) Cardiff Council and the community council should continue to lobby Keolis Amey and Transport for Wales, requesting that they alter ticket pricing, so that commuters from outside Cardiff gain no benefit by travelling through Radyr and Morganstown to catch a train at Radyr Station. For example, ticket prices from Taffs Well should be the same as prices from Radyr. This could help reduce the volume of traffic flowing through Radyr and Morganstown - and help ensure that parking is available at the station for local commuters.

ix) The need to improve the safety of pedestrians crossing the lower end of Drysgol Road needs to be considered. The road is here is very wide - and Drysgol Road descends a very steep slope as it approaches Heol Isaf.

x) Thought should be given to any possible unintended consequences of the work described above. For instance, drivers may seek other routes through Radyr and Morganstown, transferring risk to other sections of road. The closure of Golf Club lane may help prevent this - but other measures may also need to be introduced.

Pollution and noise

Radyr and Morganstown Community Council has received a number of representations from local residents about the impact of the proposed works on pollution levels. We very much appreciate and share their concerns.

Our view is that traffic moving at a steady 20mph could emit less pollution than traffic accelerating and braking between 0 and 30mph (or more). However, the science around this issue would require some sophisticated mathematical modelling, based on traffic data for future road layout and usage scenarios. We

believe that obtaining an accurate prediction under these circumstances would be difficult, if not impossible.

Rather, we prefer to base our view with regard to the impact of the proposed works on pollution levels on the fact that these works:

a) coupled with the proposed park and ride schemes; possible congestion charging; more hybrid and electric cars - and improved public transport services should, taken together, lead to a decrease in the volume of polluting traffic traveling along Heol Isaf and Ty Nant Road. (It is hoped that the proposed works will deter traffic from using Radyr and Morganstown as a rat-run). This should lead to a subsequent decrease in pollution levels. With this in mind, we will be very keen to see fast delivery of the park and ride schemes and improved public transport services - not only to benefit the residents of Radyr and Morganstown, but also to improve the lives of all who live in Cardiff.

b) coupled with the proposed 20mph zone, should ease congestion, reduce mean speed, acceleration and deceleration and improve cycling rates, casualty rates and deliver a net improvement in air quality (as shown by studies undertaken by English local authorities and Cardiff Council's own implementation of 20mph zones).

With regard to noise pollution, we accept that tabled crossings can lead to increased noise, affecting those living nearby. As set out above, however, we hope that the impact of the proposed works will lead to a decrease in the volume of traffic traveling along the route, with a subsequent decrease in the number of vehicles creating noise as they traverse the tabled crossings. In addition, a steady-state of calmer traffic should reduce the noise and acceleration / deceleration associated with tables.

Summary

Radyr and Morganstown Community Council:

- welcomes the proposed works
- wants to work with Cardiff Council to agree a comprehensive scheme that will make our community a better and safer place to live.
- wants to agree with Cardiff Council a timetable for delivery of the scheme within as short a time as possible.
- believes strongly that providing a limited number of improvements, making some parts of the road safe whilst leaving other parts in a dangerous condition, should not be thought of as 'enough for now'.
- believes that the work should begin with new tabled zebra crossings at Morganstown, Min-y-Coed and Radyr Health Center - along with additional provision by Radyr Comprehensive School.
- agrees that existing zebra crossings should be tabled
- wants to work with Cardiff Council to ensure successful delivery of a 20mph zone, as an integral part of the scheme
- would like to see all crossings catering for cyclists, if possible.
- agrees that the crossing near Station Road should be upgraded to a tabled Puffin Crossing
- would support the introduction of a 20mph limit, based on best practice
- requests a tabled Pegasus Crossing near Radyr Farm Lane, to enable pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders to cross safely

- requests that thought be given to providing safe passage for motorists living east and west of Heol Isaf and Ty Nant Road, as they seek to turn left and right onto those roads
- believes that a safe-cycling strategy should be developed for Radyr and Morganstown
- requests that the risks associated with the junction of De Clare Drive with King's Road should be addressed,
- requests that a pavement should be installed along the short length of Windsor Road which does not have one at present
- requests that various options should be considered with regard to the future use of Golf Club lane
- asks that signs be erected to discourage fly tipping on Golf Club Lane.
- supports changing train ticket pricing to remove the incentive to catch trains from Radyr rather than Taffs Well
- requests that the safety of pedestrians crossing the lower end of Drysgol Road should be considered
- requests that Cardiff Council considers measures to ensure that the proposed works do not result in drivers using other routes through Radyr and Morganstown, thus transferring risk to other sections of road.

Conclusion

We believe that the delivery of the proposals set out above will make Radyr and Morganstown a better and safer place to live.

We look forward to discussing this response with Cardiff Council and others.

This paper has been sent to Councillor Caro Wild (Cardiff Council's Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport); Paul Carter (Head of Transport at Cardiff Council); Mark Drakeford AM; Kevin Brennan MP and the Welsh Government.

*Radyr and Morganstown Community Council:
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