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**NEATH PORT TALBOT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:  
INSPECTOR'S HEARING: SESSION 16; 21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2015.**

**MATTER 10: CULTURE AND HERITAGE. STATEMENT BY  
SWANSEA CANAL SOCIETY.**

The SCS fully supports the statements submitted to the Inspector's Hearing made by both the Inland Waterways Association and the Canal and River Trust concerning policy BE3 of the Final Deposit Local Development Plan.

However, the Swansea Canal Society wishes to stress that policy BE3 of the LDP is not sound as it does not take account of the Wales Spatial Plan (updated 2008) in which the Swansea Bay Waterfront and Western Valleys including the Tawe valley and the Swansea, Neath and Tennant Canal are one region. This region is defined by the WSP as "A network of interdependent settlements with Swansea at its heart which pull together effectively as a city region."

This 'pulling together' is not evident in relation to policy BE3. While Swansea Council are progressing towards restoration of the Swansea Canal by:-

1. Protecting the whole proposed route from Swansea Docks to Clydach in their Final Draft LDP, and:-

2. Entering into potential partnership with CRT and SCS to restore the Swansea Canal buried under the Highways depot in Pontardawe Road, Clydach,

the NPT LDP is considering downgrading the protection of the section north of Godre'r Graig to Ystalyfera Aqueduct and the section between Pontardawe Playing fields, Trebanos and Herbert Street, Pontardawe.

I consider this to be a statement of fresh information as the two Swansea Council/CRT/SCS initiatives have progressed enormously since the SCS made its

Alternative Site Consultation submission.

We have also now heard that the Waterway Recovery Group will once again be working on the restoration of the Trebanos Locks in July this year while the SCS Work Party Group is even now building new walls there and planting willow withies to widen and protect the banks of the channel. This is within four hundred yards of the Trebanos to Pontardawe piped section, the protection of which the LDP seeks to downgrade.

This year the Waterway Recovery Group will be upgrading the canal even closer to this last named section as they will also be repairing the wash holes (eroded walls) on the tow path side at the very junction of the canal and the start of the piped section which the LDP will only protect from development 'where possible'.

Further fresh information is that the SCS has submitted an application for grant funding to the Rural Development Plan in Neath Port Talbot to build a Heritage Trail along the other Section whose protection is to be downgraded by the LDP (that is, the section from Godrer Graig Nature Reserve northern exit to the Ystalyfera Aqueduct). We have just submitted our second stage Expression of Interest to the RDP.

So, while the SCS, supported by Swansea Council, the Waterway Recovery Group and the Canal and River Trust work positively to restore the Swansea Canal in its entire length in accordance with the Wales Spatial Plan, the Neath LDP seeks to move in the opposite direction by downgrading the protection on two vital sections, by stating that development which would prevent the reinstatement of the canal will only be resisted "where possible". This action does not accord with Wales Spatial Plan for the Swansea Bay Waterfront and Western Valleys region and, therefore, the LDP, in regard to the Swansea Canal sections mentioned above in BE3, is not sound.

The Swansea Canal Society, therefore, asks that policy BE3 paragraph 2 be deleted and the protection accorded by paragraph 1 is extended to cover the full length of the canals mentioned.

Martin Davies,

Secretary, Swansea Canal Society.

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