

# Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	<b>Cabinet</b>	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	<b>23 June 2021</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		<b>E 3284</b>
TITLE:	<b>Active Travel Fund Schemes</b>	
WARD:	Bathwick, Kingsmead, Widcombe & Lyncombe	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<p><b>List of attachments to this report:</b></p> <p>Appendix 1 - Consultation Outcome Summary</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Amended scheme drawing proposals</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment</p> <p>Note published on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021: Two of the drawings for Upper Bristol Road have been replaced (UBR – 3 and UBR – 4) because they had mistakenly not included changes that were intended to be part of the proposals. The changes are the addition of a 0.5 metre 'buffer' area adjacent to a 3 car parking bay and a 0.5 metre 'buffer' area adjacent to a bus stop.</p>		

## 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The council consulted on three proposed active travel schemes in February and March this year. A decision needs to be made on whether those schemes should proceed to the next stage of consultation.
- 1.2 Two of the three schemes would be funded from the government's Active Travel Fund. The government, in recent funding announcements, withheld funds from authorities that did not submit bids or those that were considered weak. There are potential implications on future government funding for active travel schemes if they do not go ahead or if they are not built in accordance with the latest design standards.
- 1.3 This report outlines the results from the consultation, provides options and potential amendments to the proposals to take account of feedback from the consultation, and recommends next steps.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

## **The Cabinet is asked to;**

- 2.1 Approve proceeding to the Traffic Regulation Order stage of consultation for the amended Upper Bristol Road scheme (as outlined within the report);
- 2.2 Approve proceeding to the Traffic Regulation Order stage of consultation for the Beckford Road cycle lane scheme;
- 2.3 Agree that, should the Upper Bristol Road and Beckford Road schemes go ahead following the Traffic Regulation Order stage, a review of both schemes should be undertaken once they have been in place for 12 months;
- 2.4 Agree that officers explore external funding streams to cover the £140,438 difference between the Active Travel Fund allocation and the cost of the Upper Bristol Road and Beckford Road proposals. If such funding cannot be secured, delegated approval will be sought to use the £150,000 funding already allocated in the 2021/22 Transport Improvement Fund for the development of walking and cycling schemes;
- 2.5 Agree that officers should commission a citizens' jury or other suitable process of deep public engagement, to determine the most appropriate safe, strategic cycle route to improve between the city centre, the University of Bath and the large employment and education sites in the Claverton Down area, which will take place before the end of this financial year;
- 2.6 Approve proceeding to the Traffic Regulation Order stage of the Combe Down to University of Bath scheme as part of the wider business case development work being undertaken to improve walking and cycling routes between Combe Down, the city centre and the University of Bath.

## **3 THE REPORT**

### **The Active Travel Fund**

- 3.1 In May 2020 the [Secretary of State for Transport announced](#) additional statutory guidance under the Traffic Management Act in response to Covid-19. He stated that he expected traffic authorities to make significant changes to road layouts to make more space for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.2 He also announced there would be funding to introduce such measures to enable social distancing and to encourage active travel. It was initially called the Emergency Active Travel Fund. The fund was split into two tranches. Tranche 1 was to help provide new temporary facilities for walking and cycling in the early months of the pandemic. The council installed temporary access restrictions and pavement widening measures using this funding.
- 3.3 Tranche 2 funding is for temporary low cost and permanent walking and cycling schemes. The Department for Transport's (DfT) fund criteria is very specific in that the schemes must provide a meaningful reallocation of road space including strategic corridors. Local authorities were invited to submit schemes with brief details of the proposals. The B&NES bid was submitted through the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) in accordance with DfT instructions. DfT confirmed WECA's Active Travel Fund allocation to WECA in November 2020. WECA split the funding in proportion to the three unitary authorities' populations.

B&NES has been allocated £560,000 for its Tranche 2 schemes. The DfT requires the schemes to be completed by the end of March 2022.

- 3.4 The DfT has confirmed that schemes which do not meaningfully alter the status quo on the road will not be funded. It is a requirement of the fund that schemes are built in accordance with the latest design standards for cycle infrastructure, [Local Transport Note 1/20](#). These new standards are a step change in how cycle infrastructure should be built. This means, other than in short sections, new cycle lanes should have some form of physical segregation from motor traffic. DfT also states “schemes which do not follow this guidance will not be funded.” The publication [Gear Change](#) outlines the government’s plan for walking and cycling.
- 3.5 In launching a new Capability Fund earlier this year, which is a revenue fund for supporting active travel measures, the DfT stated “we are withholding payment from a minority of authorities whose Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 bids last year were assessed as being the least strong, or who have indicated that they do not wish to install infrastructure to the standards set out in our previous letters, in *Gear Change*, and in the Local Transport Note published alongside it. We made clear in these documents that future funding would depend on adherence to those standards.”
- 3.6 The government is in the process of launching a new inspectorate, Active Travel England, which will enforce the new design standards and audit schemes implemented by local authorities that have been funded by the government. The DfT has advised that future funding may be reduced to authorities that do not follow the standards.
- 3.7 One of the main factors that deters people from cycling is concern about safety. [The National Travel Survey \(2020 release\)](#) found that 66% of adults over the age of 18 agreed that “it is too dangerous for me to cycle on the roads.” The figure was even higher for women, at 71%. It is clear there needs to be significantly better cycle routes across B&NES to help remove this barrier. Routes for walking need improving too.
- 3.8 The new national cycle design standards will mean that better infrastructure is provided but it will be challenging to deliver. Reallocating more road space for walking and cycling will inevitably mean it has an impact on parking and road space for motor traffic. This will affect future schemes, not just those being considered under the government’s Active Travel Fund. It is important to emphasize that as well as supporting B&NES transport strategy and our plans for tackling the climate emergency, this approach is also part of national government policy as set out in *Gear Change*. The government has set a target for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be taken by walking or cycling by 2030. In Bath, 42% of all journeys under 3km are made by private car. These are short, local journeys that could be made on foot or by bicycle, by those who are able.

### **The proposed schemes**

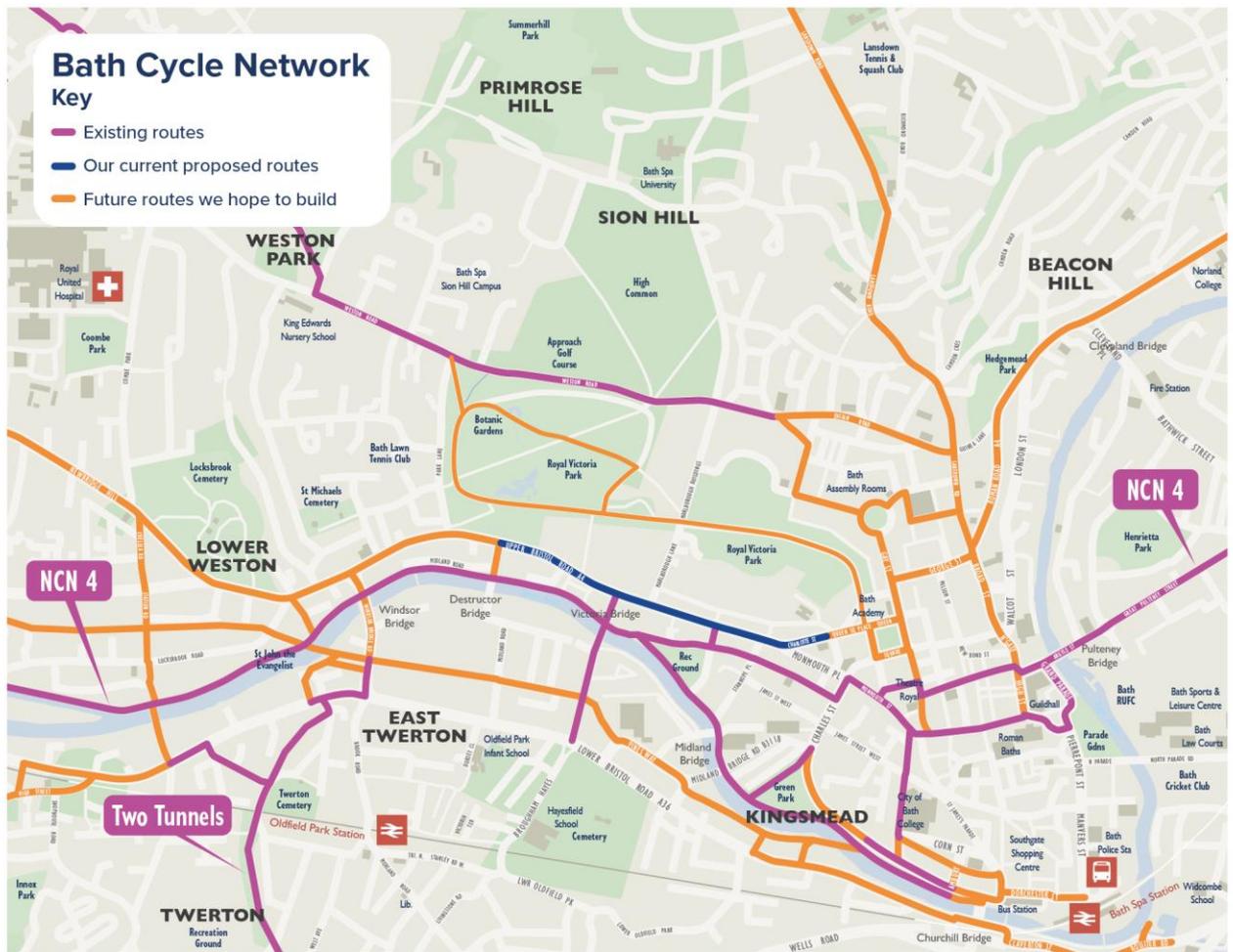
- 3.9 Details of the schemes can be found on the consultations web page [www.bathnes.gov.uk/activetravelschemes](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/activetravelschemes) A summary of the schemes consulted on are as follows:

#### **(i) Upper Bristol Road proposals**

- New cycle lanes on both sides of the road using ‘light segregation’ (short lengths of divider devices placed at regular intervals along the cycle lane with ‘wands’ in each one (a narrow bollard) to separate motor vehicles from cycle traffic. These would be between the junctions with Charlotte Street and Midland Road. This requires the removal of all 40 on-street parking in this section, a new restriction on loading in the morning and afternoon peak hours and removal of right turn lanes;
- Provision of 19 new permit holder parking spaces through removal of yellow lines in a number of other roads in Zone 6, converting 14 shared use parking bays to permit only in Marlborough Lane and converting 12 pay & display bays in Royal Avenue to permit only;
- Cycle lanes continue through bus stops so cyclists don’t have to pull out around buses, using a ‘floating bus stop’ design;
- ‘Continuous footways’ at most side road junctions – raising the level of the road to the same height as the pavement and change of surfacing which makes it look like the pavement continues across the entrance of the side road. This gives pedestrians priority over traffic turning into or coming out of the side roads;
- Narrow the entry to Marlborough Lane to make it easier for people to walk across;
- New refuge island to help people cross the road near the junction with Charlotte Street;
- Speed limit reduced to 20mph (between junctions with Charlotte Street and St Michael’s Road).

3.10 In its guidance on the identification of suitable schemes to submit to the Active Travel Fund, the DfT encouraged use of the [Rapid Cycleway Prioritisation Tool](#), which identified Upper Bristol Road as being one of the top routes in the West of England with greatest potential for increasing the volume of cyclists.

3.11 Although the riverside path (National Cycle Network Route 4) runs parallel to Upper Bristol Road, it is shared with pedestrians, is narrow along much of its length and cannot feasibly be widened to current standards without significant expense. At times there is no capacity for it to take any further cycle traffic. In July 2019 an average of 934 cyclists a day were recorded using this path. The actual number is likely to be higher because the current automatic counter can only count bicycles with a metal frame.



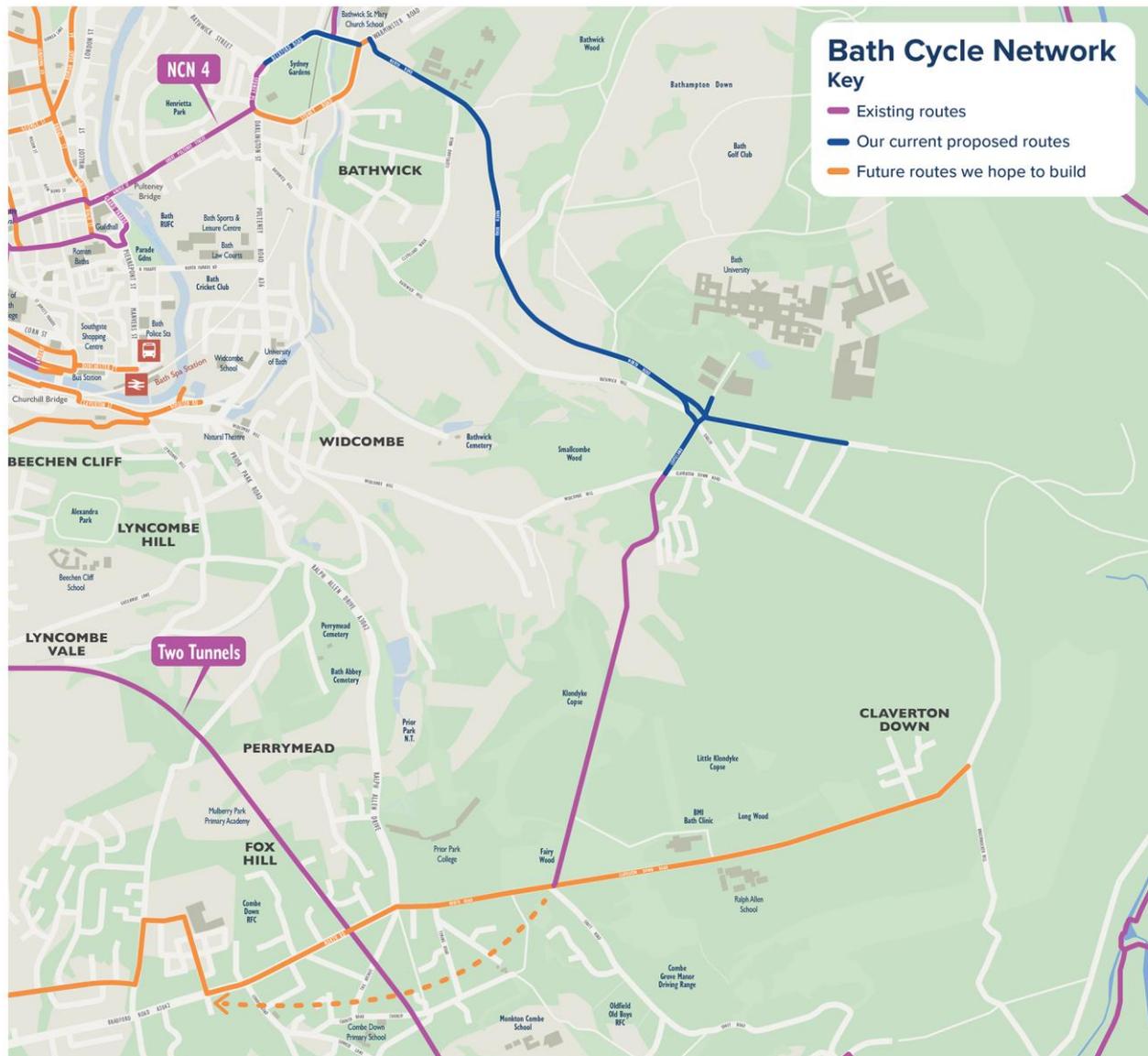
3.12 Cycle lanes on Upper Bristol Road would link with existing cycle infrastructure and routes. This includes a direct link to Victoria Bridge and the south of the city. It would also enable a link to Bath Western Riverside via Midland Road and Destructor Bridge and a new signalised junction on Upper Bristol Road with improved pedestrian and cycle facilities for crossing. The map above illustrates existing and proposed cycle routes in this part of Bath, with the current Upper Bristol Road proposal shown in dark blue.

3.13 The Bristol to Bath Mass Transit and Metrobus schemes have the potential to use this route. These schemes have to consider walking and cycling. The proposed active travel scheme will complement the mass transit/Metrobus scheme.

### (ii) City Centre to University of Bath proposals

- New cycle lane on the north side of Beckford Road using ‘light segregation’ and cycle lane continues through the bus stop so cyclists don’t have to pull out around buses. This requires the removal of 20 unrestricted parking spaces and eight time limited parking spaces;
- Provision of four permit parking spaces in Forester Road, five time limited parking spaces in Warminster Road and three in North Road by removing yellow lines;
- ‘Continuous footways’ at all of the side road junctions of Beckford Road;

- Experimental camera-enforced bus gate on North Road east of King Edward's School to provide a largely traffic-free route for cyclists;
- Experimental one way restriction in Cleveland Walk;
- New three metre wide cycle path on the existing closed section of The Avenue, which would not have to be shared with pedestrians.



3.14 This route was selected as a means for improving cyclist access to the university because it carries the least traffic and has the lowest gradient when compared to Bathwick Hill and Widcombe Hill. It would also provide a connection to the NCN4 canal towpath cycle route and a new signalised crossing being planned on Beckford Road near Sydney Gardens as part of another scheme.

### (iii) Combe Down to University of Bath proposals

- New 'parallel' zebra crossings at the junctions either end of Copseland. These are zebra crossings which can be used by pedestrians and cyclists;

- Continuous footways at either end of Copseland;
- Realigned and improved bus stop at the top of Bathwick Hill which would allow traffic to safely pass a stationary bus and enable people boarding and alighting a bus to do so onto a hard standing rather than a verge;
- Cycle link between North Road and Soldier Down Lane/The Avenue;
- New pedestrian refuge island in North Road at its junction with Bathwick Hill.

3.15 This scheme is not being progressed under the Active Travel Fund and would be funded under the council's Transport Improvement Programme. However, we consulted on the scheme at the same time because of its strong links to the City Centre to University of Bath scheme.

3.16 It would significantly improve an existing walking and cycling route from Combe Down through Rainbow Woods to the university and forms part of the Scholar's Way route, where further improvements are being planned to link schools, places of employment and the universities.

### **Consultation results**

3.17 The timescales of the Active Travel Fund are challenging. The funding award was only confirmed in November 2020 and the schemes have to be completed by March 2022. The council did not have schemes ready to implement and consult on which met the fund criteria and the latest design standards. This meant that when the criteria for Tranche 2 was announced in July 2020 with a deadline for submissions in August 2020, the council had only a matter of weeks to identify appropriate schemes. Whilst the council did not have to submit schemes to the fund, this was an opportunity to secure funding for important improvements, where there have been low levels of government funding available in recent years. The government expected authorities to apply for the funding and, as noted above, where it has assessed authorities' plans as being weak in terms of road space reallocation or poor with regards to design standards, it has already started to reduce other funding grants to such authorities.

3.18 Given the short timescales, the council only had details of the schemes available which were suitable to begin consulting on towards the end of 2020. The Active Travel and Accessibility Forum was consulted initially because of some of its members' expertise in walking and cycling schemes and in particular on design. Consultation was then carried out with ward members, bus operators and the emergency services prior to the public consultation, which took place between 26 February until 21 March 2021.

3.19 The Consultation Outcome Summary report in Appendix 1 provides further details of how the consultation was undertaken and provides detailed analysis of the results. This includes information on responses submitted by individuals and those submitted by organisations. The headline information is provided here.

3.20 2,380 completed questionnaires were received together with further comments sent by email and letter. 91% of responses were from residents,

students or business owners within Bath. Respondents were able to respond to just one, two or all three scheme proposals.

3.21 There was overwhelming support for the Upper Bristol Road and Combe Down to University schemes, although for the North Road bus gate element of the City Centre to University scheme the level of support compared to opposition was more evenly balanced.

#### **(i) Upper Bristol Road consultation outcome**

3.22 69% of respondents to this scheme strongly agreed and 7% agreed to the statement “I support reducing space for motor vehicles and parking to create cycle lanes on the A4 Upper Bristol Road.” 19% strongly disagreed and 4% disagreed.

3.23 67% strongly agreed and 10% agreed to the statement “I support separating the cycle lanes from motor traffic by using bollards, islands and cycle bypasses at bus stops.” 17% strongly disagreed and 4% disagreed.

3.24 For this scheme proposal and the others, the level of support for the scheme according to respondents’ postcodes can be seen on maps in figures 5-7 to 5-12 of Appendix 1. In general, the level of support for the schemes was lower from respondents with a postcode in the immediate vicinity of the schemes’ location.

3.25 The survey questionnaire allowed respondents to provide comments. The most common points raised in support included:

- General support for making cycling safer and reducing intimidation from motor traffic;
- Removing on-street parking permits for guest houses;
- Continuous footways supported;
- Extend scheme further west.

3.26 Common points against the proposals:

- Removal of parking and difficulties it will cause for unloading, builders, feeling vulnerable walking back at night from parking further away, impact on parking for businesses in the road, impact on parking for allotment users, puts more pressure on rest of Zone 6;
- Cycle lanes duplicate routes along riverside path and Royal Victoria Park;
- Cycle bollards are dangerous;
- Insufficient demand to justify scheme.

3.27 It should be noted that during the first week of the consultation an incorrect map of the parking proposals was displayed on the consultation web page. The web page text with parking information had correctly described the proposal of mitigating the impact of the removal of parking in Upper Bristol Road by removing sections of yellow line restrictions in various locations in Zone 6 which

would create 19 new permit only bays, plus 12 Pay & Display (P&D) bays in Royal Avenue would be changed to permit only and 14 'shared use' P&D/permit bays in Marlborough Lane would be changed to permit only.

- 3.28 The incorrect map showed 17 new permit bays through removal of yellow lines in various road and 23 P&D bays in Royal Victoria Park which would be changed to shared use with permit holders.
- 3.29 Whilst it is possible that some people who responded to the consultation in the first week before the correct map was displayed may have responded differently had they seen it, the likelihood is that the proposals shown in the corrected map would have been seen more favourably. However, should this proposal proceed to the next stage of consultation, the Traffic Regulation Order, people will still have the opportunity to comment.

### **(ii) City Centre to University of Bath consultation outcome**

- 3.30 This scheme is split into three parts: Beckford Road segregated cycle lane, North Road bus gate and The Avenue cycle path.
- 3.31 49% of respondents strongly agreed and 15% agreed to the statement "I support reducing space for car parking to create a new eastbound (uphill) cycle lane on Beckford Road." 20% strongly disagreed and 7% disagreed.
- 3.32 In North Road, two bus gate options were presented. 40% strongly disagreed and 5% disagreed with the statement "I support the use of a two-way bus gate on North Road to restrict traffic in both directions". 37% strongly agreed and 10% agreed.
- 3.33 39% strongly disagreed and 8% disagreed with the statement "I support the use of a one-way bus gate in North Road, to restrict southbound (uphill) traffic only." 27% strongly agreed and 16% agreed.
- 3.34 An option to make part of Cleveland Walk one way in combination with the bus gate was also proposed. 37% of respondents strongly agreed and 14% agreed with "I support the proposal to restrict southbound traffic on Cleveland Walk (between junctions with Sham Castle Lane and North Road)." 34% strongly disagreed and 5% disagreed.
- 3.35 With respect to The Avenue between its junctions with Beech Avenue and Norwood Avenue, 49% strongly agreed and 16% agreed with the statement "I support the proposed creation of a separate cycle lane and pedestrian footpath on The Avenue." 15% strongly disagreed and 3% disagreed.
- 3.36 The most frequent positive comments concerning the Beckford Road proposals were:
- General support to make cycling safer and particularly noting it's a road with a high level of HGVs;
  - Would be a good facility for linking to the canal towpath (cycle route NCN4);
  - Will improve cycle access to Bathwick St Mary School and Cleveland Pools.

- 3.37 Frequently made negative comments were:
- Cycle lane not required/insufficient demand;
  - Sydney Road or through Sydney Gardens would be a better route;
  - Loss of on-street parking, difficulties receiving deliveries.
- 3.38 The most frequent supportive comments concerning the North Road proposals were:
- Will improve cycle access to the university and Ralph Allen School;
  - Cycling uphill requires more support than downhill;
  - Bus gate required in both directions to support safe cycling.
- 3.39 Common negative comments regarding North Road were:
- Traffic diverted onto other routes will cause congestion, pollution and safety problems;
  - North Road is unlikely to be used by the majority of students who live in the south and west of the city;
  - Traffic issues relating to King Edward's School not considered.
- 3.40 Regarding the proposed cycle path in The Avenue, there was general support for the improvement as a new cycle facility. Objections were mainly related to it not being needed and a waste of money and concerns about poor visibility at the junctions with Woodland Road and Beech Road.

### **(iii) Combe Down to University of Bath consultation outcome**

- 3.41 74% of respondents strongly agreed and 14% agreed with the statement "I support the proposal to install zebra crossings for pedestrians and cyclists to cross Oakley and Claverton Down Road, to the north and south of Copseland." 7% strongly disagreed and 2% disagreed.
- 3.42 54% strongly agreed and 19% agreed "I support the proposed modification of the bus stop at the top of Bathwick Hill." 6% strongly disagreed and 2% disagreed. 19% gave no opinion.
- 3.43 From the comments submitted, those in support of the scheme often referred to:
- The new crossings will improve safety;
  - Copseland as a suitable low traffic route.
- 3.44 Frequently expressed negative comments were:
- No need for the crossings or that the crossing at Oakley would cause congestion;

- Problems associated with banning left turns out/right turns in at the Widcombe Hill end of Copseland;
- Concerns about over engineering of the Widcombe Hill end and that measures to slow traffic down are needed rather than a formal crossing.

### **Amendments to the proposals**

3.45 The DfT's fund guidance acknowledges that schemes may need to be altered following consultation and if they are still within the scope of the fund they can still go ahead. Although schemes can be removed following consultation and replaced with another (if still within the scope of the fund), in practice this is not possible because there would not be enough time to undertake feasibility, design, consultation and construction to meet the March 2022 completion deadline. If no alternative solution can be found, the DfT states it may recover funding for schemes by reducing a future grant payment to the authority.

3.46 The following sections identify potential modifications to the proposals to take into account feedback from the consultation.

#### **(i) Upper Bristol Road – potential amendments**

##### Add 12 parking spaces in Upper Bristol Road

3.47 The biggest concern relating to this scheme was the loss of parking spaces, where the proposal requires removal of 30 shared use permit holder/two hour spaces and 10 permit spaces. There were also concerns about difficulties unloading shopping, receiving deliveries, space for skips for building works and elderly residents or visitors who have mobility issues.

3.48 The design has been reviewed with the aim of retaining some parking but not compromising the objective of providing a direct route that separates cyclists from motor traffic. Amended proposals are shown in Appendix 2. By altering the design of bus stops and relocating the existing pelican crossing to the east of the Nile Street junction it will be possible to provide 12 parking spaces. At these points there would be short sections where there would be no physical segregation between the cycle lane and motor traffic. There would be a 'buffer' space between the edge of the parking bay and the cycle lane. There is not enough space to take the cycle lane behind the parking. It is recommended that these spaces should be limited to 30 minutes parking between 8am and 6pm each day to enable a frequent turn-around of use during the day, which would enable drop-off and delivery. Any vehicle could park in these bays without restriction between 6pm and 8am. Residents of Upper Bristol Road who are blue badge holders and keep a vehicle would be able to apply for a disabled bay to be provided in one of these spaces.

3.49 Outside of the Hop Pole public house a loading bay would be provided together with a disabled parking bay in response to comments raised. Due to the narrower width of the road at this point these bays would have to be marked across the cycle lane, but the maximum stay permitted in the loading and disabled bay would be 30 minutes. This would enable loading activities to take place and for a disabled passenger to be dropped off, but for the most part of the day it would also mean the bays would not be occupied, leaving the cycle lane clear for the majority of the time.

### Other changes to increase parking

3.50 In Midland Road, parallel to the river, there is an unrestricted length of road where 20 cars can park. This could be converted to additional Zone 6 permit parking. The foliage next to the side of the road would be cut back. It is not possible to provide parking in the main section of Midland Road due to the queuing that forms for the recycling centre and as part of the forthcoming signalisation of the junction with Upper Bristol Road it will be necessary to provide a cycle link to Destructor Bridge.

3.51 The amended proposals would provide the following parking:

New permit holder parking spaces		
Nile St, Nelson Place West, Great Stanhope St, Norfolk Crescent, Marlborough Lane, New King St, James St West	17 new permit spaces (takes account of 1 space to be used for cycle hangar)	Through removal of sections of yellow line restrictions
Midland Road	20 new permit spaces	Use of current unrestricted parking space
Total	37 new permit spaces	

Other spaces prioritised for permit holders		
Royal Avenue	12 permit spaces	Conversion of 12 existing Pay & Display spaces
Marlborough Lane	14 permit spaces	Conversion of 14 existing shared use Pay & Display/permit holder bays

3.52 Zone 6 permit holders can currently park in Charlotte Street car park free of charge between 5.30pm and 10am.

3.53 The council wants to introduce two further car club vehicles within the Zone 6 area, one of which would be in Charlotte Street car park. Discussions are currently taking place with the commercial operator.

3.54 There is also a proposal, which has been consulted on separately, to change how hotel, guest house and holiday let permits operate which will remove competition for on-street residents' permits by moving these users into the council's off-street car parks. There are currently 41 such permits in Zone 6. A decision is expected to be made by Cabinet in the summer.

### Improved crossing and cycle parking

3.55 In order to retain some parking on Upper Bristol Road it will be necessary to relocate the existing pelican crossing from the west to the east side of the junction with Nile Street. However, this crossing has reached the end of its serviceable life and is in need of replacement anyway. Moving the crossing not only enables parking to be provided on the south side of the road, but it also

means it can be converted into a toucan crossing, which enables cyclists to use it. This will provide a direct link from both sides of Upper Bristol Road to Nile Street and the riverside path.

- 3.56 It will be necessary for two trees within the footway on the north side of the road to be removed in order for the crossing to be moved. However, these will be replaced with three trees at the locations along the road shown in the proposal drawings.
- 3.57 The original proposals included a new pedestrian refuge island near the junction with Charlotte Street, which will remain, and the existing toucan crossing near Victoria Bridge Road is unaffected. There is a separate piece of work to this scheme for signalling the junction with Midland Road, which is required as part of the planning consent for the Bath Western Riverside development. It will include a signalised pedestrian crossing at this point of Upper Bristol Road, providing much better place to cross to Royal Victoria Park and will incorporate facilities for cyclists. It is anticipated there will be a scheme design available for the public to see towards the end of the year.
- 3.58 If the decision is made to proceed with the active travel fund scheme the council will work with local residents and ward members to provide a cycle hangar in the New King Street/Norfolk Crescent/Great Stanhope Street area, to be implemented at the same time as this scheme. The estimated £7,000 cost for the installation of the hangars would be funded through the Liveable Neighbourhoods budget (subject to approval at Cabinet on 23/6/21). Users of the hangars would pay a small annual rental to cover maintenance costs. A second hangar can be provided if there is sufficient demand.
- 3.59 Other additions to the proposals which would be implemented under this scheme include eight new cycle stands located near the junction with Nile Street, near the junction with Victoria Bridge Road, at the junction with Marlborough Lane and near Phase One Gym.

#### Changes to bus stop designs

- 3.60 There are four bus stops within the section of road covered by the scheme. In order to provide a direct and uninterrupted route for cyclists and to avoid them having to overtake stationary buses, which can be intimidating, the scheme consulted on included bus stop designs featuring 'floating islands'. The cycle lane would proceed up a ramp to the same level as the adjacent footway, which passengers would then cross onto the island and then to/from a bus stopped in the carriageway. In order to accommodate some parking on Upper Bristol Road it will not be possible to proceed with this design because of the space they require.
- 3.61 The revised proposal drawings in Appendix 2 show the amended bus stop design at each of the four locations. They retain the ramp and raising the cycle lane to the same level of the footway as it passes the stop, but there would be no island.
- 3.62 Although this design is included within LTN 1/20 and is being used across London, the RNIB have raised concerns nationally and do not support them. They are concerned that a blind or partially sighted bus user could inadvertently step on the raised cycle lane and that cyclists would not give way. The RNIB's

regional representative has raised similar concerns in a discussion with officers. As a result of this the design will be enhanced in order to provide 'corduroy' tactile paving between the edge of the footway and the cycle lane, which will be coloured red at this point in order to provide contrast with the footway. There will also be corduroy paving across the cycle lane as it approaches the stop, signage to tell cyclists to give way to pedestrians in the cycle lane together with give way road markings at the approach to the stop.

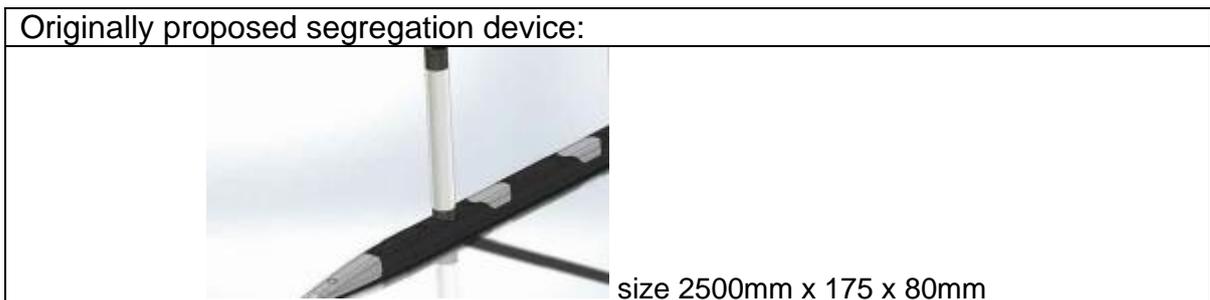
3.63 If this is implemented we will review the stops on-site with RNIB as a post-construction audit once it has been in place for several months and put a hold on the use of such designs elsewhere in B&NES until that has taken place.

3.64 All existing bus shelters would remain in place. It had been hoped that a new shelter could be provided at the relocated Comfortable Place (westbound) stop but on further investigation this has been ruled out because the shelter would obstruct visibility from a private vehicular access and pose a safety issue. However, the amended proposals do include the provision of a new electronic real time information (RTI) display on services within the bus stop flag. This stop does not currently have RTI.

Changes to the devices used to separate cyclists from motor traffic

3.65 Avon Fire & Rescue Service raised concerns that the 'light segregation' devices to be placed at regular intervals along the cycle lane to separate it from motor traffic would prevent traffic from pulling over to allow fire engines responding to an emergency to pass. A number of individual public responses also raised the same concerns. B&NES Waste Team also raised issues relating to having to stop alongside these measures when collecting household recycling and refuse. Further details can be found in section ATF2 of the Consultation Outcome Summary in Appendix 2.

3.66 The proposal consulted on included cycle lane segregation devices which were 2.5 metres long spaced at 1 metre intervals. These would have reflective 'wands' on them, a type of narrow bollard.



3.67 The scheme design can be amended to use different segregation devices. The one shown below on the left incorporating the wand would be placed so there are 15 metre gaps between each wand, allowing space for vehicles to pull over to allow an emergency vehicle to pass. It would also allow a refuse vehicle or fire engine to pull up the kerb edge. In the sections between the wands would be four of the separator devices shown on the bottom right, spaced evenly apart.

Amended proposal segregation devices:	
 <p>size 1000mm x 175mm x 80mm</p>	 <p>size 720mm x 120mm x 50mm</p>

### Changes to 'continuous footway' designs

3.68 Further work has been progressing on the detailed design for the 'continuous footways'. The original proposal was for a design that would raise the level of carriageway in side roads where they meet Upper Bristol Road to the same level as the footway and use block paving material which extends beyond the mouth of the junction. The design has been amended so that the level of the footway would now taper down to carriageway level across side roads. It would still use block paving material. This is the most important part of the design because it is necessary for the footway to contrast with the road surface of the main road in order that the footway looks continuous. This change has been made due to concerns of the longevity of a blocked paved carriageway ramp and the need to avoid implementing a scheme that could require a significant level of ongoing maintenance.

### **(ii) City Centre to University of Bath – potential amendments**

#### North Road

3.69 This aspect of the proposals received the least support in consultation responses, with the main concerns being whether the traffic which would be diverted onto other routes would cause congestion and questioning if this was the right route to link the city centre to the university. It is acknowledged that this proposal would cause some inconvenience to residents and those going to and from the golf club, King Edward's School and the university, which are a considerable proportion of the traffic using the road and would still need to use it.

3.70 The level of traffic and parking associated with the end of the day at King Edward's School presents difficulties for introducing a bus gate that were not fully understood when the proposals were drawn up. The school does not have space to accommodate cars collecting students within its grounds which means that drivers collecting students wait in their vehicles along North Road and Cleveland Walk, much of this taking place on double yellow lines. Although parking on yellow lines is not permitted, stopping on them to pick up or drop off is allowed. Whilst many of the vehicles may be stopped for ten minutes or longer, since the driver remains in the vehicle it means enforcement is challenging. This is a common situation at many schools, although the issue can be worse at those schools which have a wide catchment area where more students are brought in by car.

- 3.71 A two way bus gate (ie restricting traffic in both directions) located where the 20mph limit currently becomes 30mph would mean that drivers who have collected children would either have to turn into Cleveland Walk or make a u-turn in North Road. The option of making Cleveland Walk one way towards North Road was included in the proposals to reduce the amount of traffic that may divert there if the bus gate goes ahead. However, doing this would mean any vehicle entering North Road from Warminster Road to collect children would have to u-turn to get out. Whilst the wide junction with Cleveland Walk could be used for vehicles in North Road to turn around, it is likely that not all drivers would choose to turn around here.
- 3.72 Parking in North Road to collect students also takes place further south in North Road on what would be the other side of the bus gate. If it also restricted downhill traffic it would mean drivers who have parked there to pick up children will have to do a u-turn in what would effectively become a long cul-de-sac.
- 3.73 A considerable level of u-turning vehicles could therefore occur as a result of a two way bus gate. This could be a hazard to cyclists, particularly those coming downhill at speed. If a bus gate were to go ahead it is recommended that it should only apply in the uphill direction and that no one way restriction should be applied to Cleveland Walk. This would remove the need for u-turning.
- 3.74 The road is not wide enough to provide a cycle lane with segregation and maintain two way traffic.

#### Beckford Road

- 3.75 The same changes to the cycle lane segregation devices can be made in Beckford Road to enable refuse vehicles to pull up to the kerbside. The bus stop design is also the same as that in the amended proposals for Upper Bristol Road.
- 3.76 Although the cycle lane proposal will require the removal of all the on-street parking, all but four of the properties which front Beckford Road have rear access or some off-street parking. They all entitled to Zone 10 parking permits.
- 3.77 To help mitigate for some of the time limited parking bays which would need to be removed the proposals included the provision of three new time limited parking bays in North Road. King Edward's School have advised that vehicles parked here are likely to cause problems for coaches going to and from the school and therefore these bays will need to be removed from the proposals.
- 3.78 If the North Road and/or The Avenue parts of the scheme do not go ahead the cycle lane in Beckford Road would still be an important, strategic scheme on its own. It provides a link from the city centre to the canal towpath, which is part of the National Cycle Network route 4. It would also link to a new toucan signalised crossing being planned separately on Beckford Road which will provide a crossing to Sydney Gardens. Officers are confident that the cycle lane in Beckford Road as a separate scheme still meets the objectives of the Active Travel Fund.
- 3.79 A cycle lane on the other side of Beckford Road did not form part of the proposals because this would have required the removal of one of the two city-bound lanes. This in turn would have led to modifications to the layout of the

signalised junction with Sydney Place/Bathwick Street. The level of design work, traffic modelling and works required would not have been within the timescales or funding of the Active Travel Fund. An uphill cycle lane as proposed provides the greater benefit for cyclists because some cyclists can wobble when pedalling up hills, which puts them at greater risk of collision with motor traffic.

### The Avenue

- 3.80 No changes to this proposal are being made other than the addition of 'give way' markings at the north end of Beech Avenue so that vehicles turning left into The Avenue have to give way to cyclists from the right, which drivers may not currently be expecting.
- 3.81 If the North Road bus gate does not go ahead this part of the scheme could not be introduced under the Active Travel Fund on its own because it does not form enough of a route to meet the fund objectives. It does, however, remain a sensible addition to the cycle network and the existing footpath is already used by cyclists. This could be taken forward as a separate scheme in future if alternative funding is identified

### **(iii) Combe Down to University of Bath – potential amendments**

#### Bathwick Hill/Copseland junction

- 3.82 A number of consultation responses raised concerns that the design for this crossing, which requires the right turn lane into North Road to be removed, would cause congestion. Although it would mean that a right turning vehicle would block vehicles from behind from going straight ahead, the current right turn lane is only long enough for two vehicles to wait. In addition to this, the current bus stop arrangement itself means that when an eastbound bus is at the stop it causes vehicles behind to queue, sometimes blocking North Road. The proposed bus stop layout with the crossing would allow cars to pass a bus.
- 3.83 Vehicles do attempt to pass a bus at the stop in the current arrangement but have to drive over the hatching for the right turn lane and can come into conflict with a vehicle heading in the opposite direction intending to make a right turn.
- 3.84 No amendments to the proposed design for this location are being put forward.

#### Widcombe Hill/Copseland junction

- 3.85 Some of the main objections to this part of the proposals were related to people questioning a need for a formal crossing given the relatively low traffic flows and the problems that restricting turning movements at the junction would have (it would not be possible to provide a crossing here without banning left turns out and right turns into Copseland). This would be a particular issue for refuse vehicles. There were also some concerns about the speed of traffic approaching this crossroads, although officers' view from observations at this specific location is that most vehicles are travelling at a safe speed. The parked vehicles outside of Clarence Terrace act as a form of traffic calming for downhill traffic.

- 3.86 It is not difficult to find gaps in traffic on Widcombe Hill/Claverton Down Road in order to cross between Copseland and Quarry Farm, even at peak hours. For cyclists positioned at the centre of Quarry Farm and Copseland to cross over, visibility is relatively good. It is therefore considered to be unlikely that most cyclists would use a parallel zebra crossing as proposed because it is not on their direct path across the junction. Whilst very young child cyclists would be more likely to benefit from a parallel crossing here, the youngest frequent users are likely to be secondary school age students who would be confident in crossing at the junction.
- 3.87 Given the ability of cyclists to cross the junction as it is and the likelihood that they would not use the proposed parallel crossing, the proposals can be amended to remove the crossing but with other changes instead that would still provide benefits to pedestrians. The radius of the east side of the Copseland junction is large in relation to the width of the road. This means that the single side footway in Copseland leads pedestrians away from the direction of Quarry Farm and it has been observed that as a result many pedestrians crossing from Copseland into Quarry Farm step into the mouth of the Copseland junction to wait and cross Claverton Down Road.
- 3.88 The revised proposals include tightening up the kerb line of the junction to provide a new informal crossing point for pedestrians. A raised section of carriageway could also be provided at the entry to Quarry Farm in order to emphasize the pedestrian and cycle priority here. The amended proposal is shown in Appendix 2.
- 3.89 Since funding is not available to implement the Copseland schemes in 2021/22, the second stage of consultation, which involves formally advertising the proposal for the new parallel zebra crossing on Bathwick Hill/Oakley, will not be undertaken until a later date (see 3.94 below).

### **Next steps**

#### Schemes to take forward to next stage of consultation

- 3.90 Whilst the level of support for the proposals was lower from consultation respondents who were from the immediate vicinity, other than for the North Road bus gate, there was a significant majority in favour of the proposals. These roads and footways are used by people from all over the city and beyond. The main aim of the proposals is to enable more people to make journeys on foot and by bike, both locally and those from further afield.
- 3.91 It is therefore recommended that the amended design for Upper Bristol Road as described in this report and shown in Appendix 2 is taken forward to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) stage of consultation. As well as the benefits to cyclists, the scheme will introduce a 20mph speed limit, a safer environment and better facilities for people walking.
- 3.92 It is also recommended that the proposal for a bus gate in North Road is not progressed further at this stage since there was not a majority of people responding in favour and because of the difficulties a two way bus gate could cause. The council is, however, fully committed to providing a safe, strategic cycle route from the city centre to the university and the large educational and employment sites in the Claverton Down area. The council will be commissioning

a citizens' jury or other process of deep public engagement which will take place as early as possible and before the end of this financial year, to involve the wider community in route selection and design for such active travel schemes. Once a route has been agreed design work can then be undertaken on a scheme to provide measures for cyclists and pedestrians. There is the potential that this will still result in North Road being identified as the preferred route, but alternative measures to make the road safer for cyclists would be considered.

3.93 If the North Road bus gate is not progressed it will still be possible to continue with the Beckford Road cycle lane under the Active Travel Fund, and it is recommended that this continues to the TRO consultation stage.

3.94 The improvements to the walking and cycling route at both ends of Copseland should be progressed because of the benefits they bring in providing a better link between Combe Down and the university, subject to the amendments described above. This is not funded by the Active Travel Fund and instead would be funded through the WECA Investment Fund as part of a wider project to improve walking and cycling routes between Combe Down, the city centre and the university. Work will be undertaken in 2021/22 to produce an outline business case for that project and delivery of schemes is to be undertaken in 2022/23, which is when it is anticipated the Copseland schemes can be built, subject to the outcome of the second stage of consultation, which would be undertaken as part of the business case process. This means the next stage of consultation would take place after that for Upper Bristol Road and Beckford Road. This is not being delayed and is within the timescales that had been planned.

3.95 The cycle path on The Avenue could potentially be included with the Copseland scheme and this will be considered further as part of the outline business case work.

#### Next stage of consultation

3.96 For Upper Bristol Road and Beckford Road, if approved for progressing further, the next stage is to advertise the TROs. This is the opportunity for anyone to formally object to proposed changes to parking and loading restrictions and speed limit changes. Legally, the council is only required to invite objections to TROs but it will also invite those who support the proposals to respond too. There is a statutory 21 day period when objections and other comments would be invited. This would commence within a few weeks of a Cabinet decision to proceed to the TRO stage of consultation.

3.97 As with the first stage of consultation, letters would be sent to all properties fronting the sections of road affected by the proposals and emails sent to those in the relevant parking zones who have permits. Notices would be displayed on the affected roads and there will be publicity in addition to raise awareness. The consultation web page would be used to enable people to submit objections or support.

3.98 Feedback from the first stage of consultation identified that some people found the proposal drawings, similar to those in the appendices to this report, difficult to understand. Improved maps will be used if this progresses to the next stage.

3.99 The approval of Traffic Regulation Orders is an officer delegated decision made by the Director of Place Management. A report will be produced with a summary of the objections and other comments received, and the Director will make a decision on whether the proposed TROs should go ahead. This will be done in consultation with the ward members and the Cabinet Members for Transport and Climate & Sustainable Travel.

3.100 Given that the Upper Bristol Road and Beckford Road schemes would be the first in B&NES to use the new LTN 1/20 design standards, it is recommended that both schemes are reviewed after being in place for 12 months if they are implemented following the TRO stage. This will help ensure a continuous improvement of design as more walking and cycling infrastructure is planned across B&NES and identify any issues which have emerged that may need resolving.

#### **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 The council has a statutory Network Management Duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004. In May 2020 the Secretary of State issued additional statutory guidance which all traffic authorities must regard in delivering their network management duty under the act. The additional guidance stated that authorities with high levels of public transport use should take measures to reallocate more road space to walking and cycling.

4.2 The council has powers to construct traffic islands, provide and amend crossings and introduce traffic restrictions under the Highways Act 1980 and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

4.3 It is necessary to produce Traffic Orders to introduce or amend speed limits and parking and loading restrictions. The process for doing so is governed by The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

#### **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

5.1 The council has been allocated £561,652 for its Active Travel Fund schemes. This is the council's share of a funding award made to the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) from the Department for Transport (DfT). The DfT required bids to the fund to be submitted and managed by combined authorities. The funding awarded was split between the three unitary authorities based on populations.

5.2 So far approximately £55,000 has been spent progressing the schemes which includes design fees, surveys and consultation costs. This leaves £506,562 remaining.

5.3 The original bid to the Active Travel Fund included high level cost estimates because when those bids were submitted in July 2020 there had not been enough time to undertake detailed design. At that point the Upper Bristol Road scheme was estimated to cost £283,000 and the City Centre to University scheme was estimated at £317,000.

5.4 The amended Upper Bristol Road proposal will cost an estimated £506,000 to implement. The costs have increased since the original estimate due to various

changes in the proposals such as the provision of continuous footways and other junction improvements, changes to drainage needed for the scheme, and moving and upgrading a signalised crossing.

- 5.5 Implementing the Beckford Road scheme without the North Road bus gate or The Avenue cycle path will cost an estimated £141,000.
- 5.6 The combined cost of the Upper Bristol Road and Beckford Road schemes is £647,000. After taking account of the Active Travel Fund remaining funds of £506,562 This leaves a shortfall of £140,438 for the enhancements to the Upper Bristol Road scheme. Officers are currently exploring potential external sources to fund this. If such funding cannot be confirmed it is recommended that delegated approval be sought to use £150,000 that has already been allocated in the 2021/22 Transport Improvement Programme for the development of walking and cycling schemes (TCS0014).
- 5.7 The proposals at the Copseland junctions cost an estimated £176,000. This scheme was not part of the Active Travel Fund but was consulted on at the same time due to its close links to the City Centre to University proposal. WECA has allocated £10m from its Investment Fund for walking and cycling infrastructure and has approved £250,000 of this to each of the three unitary authorities for initial development work. It has been agreed that £80,000 of the B&NES allocation will be used to develop routes from Combe Down to the city centre and the university during 2021/22. It is expected that the authorities will implement some of the schemes in 2022/23, subject to approval of a business case. The Copseland schemes form part of that route and since they are already well developed it would be possible to construct them in 2022/23.
- 5.8 The Avenue cycle path, estimated to cost £116,000 could potentially be included, depending on the outcome of the business case. If that is not possible it will be considered for funding in a future year's Transport Improvement Programme, subject to its relative priority to other transportation schemes.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.
- 6.2 The recommended amendments to the Upper Bristol Road and City Centre to University of Bath (now Beckford Road only) schemes mean that these both differ from the scheme information that WECA submitted to the DfT in its bid to the Active Travel Fund. Whilst the DfT fund guidance acknowledges that changes to schemes can be made following consultation and can progress so long as the schemes continue to meet fund objectives, there remains a risk that future grant awards from DfT could be reduced if it later decides these schemes do not meet the criteria. However, the greater risk would be not progressing with the Active Travel Fund schemes because the DfT has stated it has already reduced funding to other authorities who have not participated or whose schemes have not met the new design standards.
- 6.3 WECA is required to submit an update to DfT in June on progress with the Active Travel Fund schemes and the decision from Cabinet will be included in the B&NES update, where any changes to the proposed schemes will be reported.

6.4 The DfT's deadline for the completion of the Active Travel schemes is the end of March 2022. A final decision on the schemes, which will be the TRO stage, needs to be taken by the early autumn to enable this deadline to be met.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken prior to the start of the public consultation. It has subsequently been reviewed and updated as shown in Appendix 3.

7.2 Potential adverse impacts of the proposals include the design of bus stops. Issues raised during consultation have been taken into account and will be incorporated into the design and a review will take place shortly after they have been built to determine if any other changes should be made.

7.3 The other potential adverse impact of the schemes includes the loss of parking space outside of people's homes. The nature of on-street parking means that residents and visitors are never guaranteed to be able to park close to where they live or are visiting. No disabled bays are being removed as part of the scheme. Neither of the schemes will prevent vehicles from stopping to enable people to get out or be picked up. However, should any resident wish to be considered for a disabled parking bay the council will consider where one can be provided in the nearest suitable location, subject to meeting its standard criteria for such bays.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

8.1 Enabling more journeys to be taken on foot and by bike, which these schemes aim to help achieve, will have a positive impact on the council's target of reaching carbon neutrality by 2030 by reducing transport emissions.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

9.1 The council could decide to proceed with all the schemes to the TRO stage of consultation without making any amendments. However, the council is required to take into account the consultation responses received when reaching its decision; not making the amendments would be in conflict with those consultation responses.

9.2 Alternatively, the council could decide to go ahead with only some or none of the schemes put forward. Doing so could jeopardise the funding allocated to B&NES as well as future funding grants to the council. It would also mean these important improvements, which form part of the council's wider plans for walking and cycling routes, would need a different and as yet, unidentified, source of funding in the future.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

10.1 This report has been agreed by the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

10.2 The Consultation Outcome Summary Report in Appendix 1 provides details of who was consulted and how with respect to obtaining feedback on the proposals.

<b>Contact person</b>	Paul Garrod, 01225 394336
<b>Background papers</b>	None
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	