

# Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	<b>Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>	
MEETING DATE:	<b>11<sup>th</sup> July 2024</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: <i>[Cabinet reports only]</i>
		<b>E 9999</b>
TITLE:	<b>Active Travel Masterplan</b>	
WARD:	All	
<b>OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Active Travel Masterplan Equality Impact Assessment		

## 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 We need to make walking, wheeling and cycling the natural choice for a lot more of our journeys. Currently, over a third of car trips across Bath and North East Somerset are less than 5km.
- 1.2 The importance of walking, wheeling and cycling, or 'active travel' as an affordable and accessible mode of transport has become increasingly apparent over recent years. Within Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) we need to make walking, wheeling and cycling the natural choice for a lot more of our journeys. The Active Travel Masterplan covers the whole of B&NES and will form the basis for a public consultation starting on 9th July. The Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel has an opportunity to consider, discuss and provide its views on the masterplan presented. These views, alongside comments received during public consultation, will help to inform the revised plan.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

**The Panel is asked to;**

**Consider the Active Travel Masterplan and provide its views, alongside the wider public consultation, in order to help inform the revised plan.**

## 3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 Increased active travel can help tackle some of the biggest challenges we face - improving air quality, combatting climate change, improving health and wellbeing, addressing inequalities, and tackling congestion on our roads. Bold action is needed to help create the places we want to live and work – with better connected, healthier and more sustainable communities. It will help deliver clean growth, by supporting local businesses, as well as making it more pleasant to move around and between our rural areas, towns, and city.
- 3.2 When walking, wheeling and cycling, people are vulnerable when they mix with motorised traffic. Experience elsewhere in Europe clearly indicates the benefits of delivering safe active travel networks that protect people from busy motor traffic. These networks can enable a high proportion of our trips to be made by sustainable transport.
- 3.3 The Active Travel Masterplan will be the first time B&NES has had a comprehensive plan to work towards showing how all the parts of our existing network will join up. Having a district-wide plan will give us the ability to bid for large funding opportunities through government funding streams and create whole length routes. It will also allow us to secure funding through S106.
- 3.4 The Active Travel Masterplan will be a comprehensive plan that sets out the existing and future network of active travel infrastructure required to enable and provide for sustainable and healthy forms of transport, as well as addressing the climate emergency, reducing inequalities, improving air quality, tackling obesity and reducing traffic congestion across Bath and North East Somerset. The plan will be for all types of active travel whether it is for commuting, leisure, business or everyday journeys such as travelling to a local shop, school or doctor's surgery.
- 3.5 The Plan will identify where the improvements and measures are needed to enable those people who can, make the change in their travel habits, keeping the roads clearer and improving journeys for people who have no other option than to drive. It will also establish how we can ensure that more of our roads and public spaces can be used by those on active modes.
- 3.6 The amount of funding currently spent on active travel is among the most secure investments that government can make. For every £1 spent, active travel infrastructure has an average return on investment of £5.62, and these returns increase over time. In comparison, average road building returns are £2.50 for every £1 spent, while some projects realise no return on investment at all.
- 3.7 Walking and cycling infrastructure is varied across the B&NES district. In urban areas, there are well-established networks for active travel, through the provision of footways running alongside carriageways, our Public Rights of Way network, shared walking / cycling routes as well as some dedicated cycleways. The main considerations for these networks include the provision of continuous and coherent routes, and ongoing challenges to maintenance amidst funding shortages. The shared pedestrian, wheeling and cycle routes which are adjacent to carriageways and the on-carriageway cycle lanes are less attractive for pedestrians and cyclists respectively when compared to segregated facilities dedicated to a single mode.
- 3.8 In rural areas, provision for active modes is less established, less utilised and often limited to within rural settlement boundaries, although some strategic

cycling routes connecting settlements are available. Walking, cycling and wheeling are mostly associated with leisure uses and infrastructure is often not designed to be accessible for all users including wheeling. There are several flagship strategic active mode routes within the district, including The River Avon / Avon and Kennet Canal shared-use towpath (part of National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 4) through Bath City Centre, the Bristol to Bath Railway Path (part of NCN Route 4), and the Two Tunnels Circuit

3.9 A map showing the proposed active travel network for the district has been developed. It is noted that routes have been proposed in areas beyond the B&NES district and will require collaboration with neighbouring councils. These routes will help to broaden the opportunities of active travel users and propose routes to neighbouring communities. The routes that are proposed outside of the district boundary would require discussions and collaboration with the relevant highway authorities.

3.10

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 Equalities, sustainability, planning, human rights and public health.

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

5.1 The plan contains possible improvements which will be delivered through a wide range of programmes and will be funded from various sources.

5.2 The consultation will be resourced through current internal staff and budgets.

## **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.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

7.1 B&NES is committed to promoting active travel as a sustainable and inclusive mode of transportation, ensuring that everyone can enjoy the benefits of active travel.

7.2 Our choices around active travel are affected not only by the existence of safe walking, wheeling and cycling routes, but other factors such as accessing a cycle, skills and confidence, security concerns, or individual health conditions. There are groups of people across B&NES currently under-represented in walking, wheeling and cycling. The Active Travel Masterplan identifies the barriers and makes recommendations to address them.

7.3 The plan is being presented to the IEAG (Independent Equality Advisory Group) on the 11th July for their feedback. This group includes several local voluntary and community sector organisations who support our local communities.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

8.1 Active travel offers a sustainable solution to address the climate emergency by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating the environmental impacts associated with transportation.

8.2 Active travel enables zero-emission modes of transport and reduces the need for motorised vehicles, thereby decreasing congestion and pollution. Active travel modes also have a much lower level of embodied carbon which is the carbon associated with materials and the manufacturing process. To effectively combat the climate crisis, a greater emphasis must be placed on promoting and investing in active travel as a practical transport mode.

## 9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 Consideration was given to the various formats for a consultation. Given the importance of the measures included, combined with B&NES' commitment to give people a bigger say, a full public consultation was deemed the most appropriate.

## 10 CONSULTATION

10.1 The Plan has been informed by numerous stakeholder events and public consultation:

January 2023 – internal officer workshops

February 2023 – community stakeholder workshops

July 2023 – internal and external stakeholder workshops

February 2024 – Local Plan Regulation 18 Options Consultation

10.2 A public consultation for this draft plan has been organised and will start on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and run for six weeks. There are several public consultation events organised as outlined below:

Location	Venue	Date	Time
Somer Valley	The Hollies Council Chamber, High Street, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2DP	18/07/2024	1500-1900
Keynsham	Keynsham Library, 5 Temple St, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 1HA	22/07/2024	1500-1900
Bath	The Guildhall, High St, Bath BA1 5AW	23/07/2024	1500-1900
Whitchurch	Whitchurch United Reform Church, 24 Bristol Rd, Bristol BS14 0PQ	30/07/2024	1500-1900

10.3 The public consultation is supported by a web page, including PDF versions of the full documents and a questionnaire for people to give us their views. Paper copies will also be held at libraries and community libraries across the district, totalling 8 places.

10.4 There will be an interactive map included where the public can view all the routes and make drop pins to suggest additional routes, tell us where there are missing footways and suggest changes to the routes we have proposed.

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Claire Nimmo, Transport Policy &amp; Developments Manager</i>
<b>Background papers</b>	<i>N/A</i>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	