

Bath & North East Somerset Council

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| MEETING/ DECISION MAKER: | Cabinet | |
| MEETING DATE: | 10th December 2020 | EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: |
| | | E 3238 |
| TITLE: | Liveable Neighbourhoods Consultation Outcome | |
| WARD: | All | |
| AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM | | |
| List of attachments to this report: Appendix LN1 – Consultation Outcome Summary | | |

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The B&NES Climate Emergency Action Plan, approved in October 2019, recommends a major shift to mass transport, walking and cycling to reduce transport emissions. Liveable Neighbourhoods are an important aspect of proposals to tackle the climate emergency and to improve health and wellbeing across the area. The ambition is for Liveable Neighbourhoods is to breathe new life into residential areas by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles. We strive to reconsider how road space is utilised to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, enhance road safety and promote healthy lifestyles. The idea is to provide fairer access for those travelling on foot and by bicycle, creating healthier outdoor spaces for everyone to enjoy. This includes better walking and cycling routes, and vibrant local high streets where people can relax outside and connect with others.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to:

- 2.1 Review the responses to the consultation on the proposed Liveable Neighbourhood strategies.
- 2.2 Delegate the decision to adopt the three Liveable Neighbourhood strategies (Low Traffic Neighbourhoods; Residents' Parking Schemes; and On-Street Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy) with minor amendments, updates and corrections, to the Director of Partnerships and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Joint Cabinet Members for Transport.

2.3 Support the need to allow all schemes once implemented to be in place for a minimum of 6 months to allow behaviour change to occur.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 The council has developed a structured approach to delivering Liveable Neighbourhoods through addressing the issue of traffic volumes, residents parking, electric vehicle (EV) charging, air quality and road safety. The three strategies that form the approach were subject to public consultation from 9th September to 18th October 2020. This report sets out the feedback on these strategies.

3.2 The draft strategy documents issued for public consultation comprised:

- [Low traffic neighbourhood strategy & appendices;](#)
- [Residents' parking schemes; and](#)
- [On-street electric vehicle charging strategy.](#)

3.3 An online survey was issued to gauge public opinion on these documents. A summary of the results is presented as Appendix LN1 to this report.

3.4 The overarching aim of Liveable Neighbourhoods is to turn streets that are noisy, polluted and dangerous into pleasant, healthy and safe places for people to live, work, and connect with others. They are a relatively cost-effective way to reduce the dominance of vehicles in residential areas and prioritise active travel (walking & cycling) and public transport improvements. Schemes will maintain vehicle access to homes and businesses and can be designed without disadvantaging disabled people and other people with restricted mobility. The aim is to reduce overall vehicle use, rather than divert traffic elsewhere.

3.5 The Liveable Neighbourhood concept encompasses an overarching strategy to turn the tide on the way motorised vehicles have increasingly dominated our urban streets over the past 50 years. It aims to reverse a vicious circle where an over-reliance on cars for our everyday travel needs has denuded the quality of the urban environment to such an extent that fuels even greater car use. Liveable Neighbourhoods strive to create a virtuous circle in urban areas, with demand longer-distance through car trips suppressed and the vehicles themselves excluded from minor roads. Short car trips will be replaced by walking and cycling, with all the environmental, health, safety and community benefits that will manifest.

3.6 A range of measures will be deployed to make Liveable Neighbourhoods in B&NES a success including:

- modal filters will reduce long distance trips on minor roads which have no business in the neighbourhood;
- expansion of residents' car parking will reduce the supply of free and convenient all-day commuter parking, suppressing the demand for car-

commuting and encouraging the use of alternative travel modes, including cycling, public transport and park & ride.

- school streets, implemented as part of Liveable Neighbourhoods, will make active travel the natural choice for our young people travelling to/from school;
- local streets will become places that are attractive, safe and convenient for people to walk and cycle;
- strategic corridor improvements to facilitate and encourage walking, cycling and public transport that will build capacity for these modes, generating a modal shift towards sustainable travel; and
- investment in on-street electric vehicle charging to assist in facilitating the phasing out of cars propelled by combustion engines, generating improvements in local air quality and assisting in meeting the council's climate emergency goals.

3.7 In the short term, there will undoubtedly be issues as people adjust to new travel behaviours. However, when implemented as a comprehensive package, Liveable Neighbourhoods will promote sustainable local travel alongside an overall reduction in the use of motorised vehicles for many decades to come.

3.8 Respondents to the consultation expressed considerable support for the concept of Liveable Neighbourhoods and the proposed measures. A summary of the results is presented below.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN) - Key Principles

3.9 Respondents expressed overwhelming support for the key principles of low traffic neighbourhoods with between 78% and 85% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposed key principles, with 10% to 16% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

3.10 Within the free text responses, respondents highlighted several common themes. These included strong support for the creation of safer spaces, improving resident's wellbeing and improving air quality; as well identifying a numerous areas and streets that residents felt would benefit from being designated a liveable neighbourhood.

3.11 The impact on parking provision in residential areas, specifically in relation to older residents and those with restricted mobility was highlighted. Numerous respondents expressed concern regarding the level of student's cars present in their neighbourhoods.

3.12 Many respondents highlighted concerns about traffic volume, speed, pollution and air quality. The resulting impact on the health, safety and well-being of residents was also a concern. The Clean Air Zone will be implemented in Bath from March 2021. This will support Liveable Neighbourhoods work in terms of reducing emissions and improving air quality.

3.13 In relation to walking and cycling, respondents commented on the need for improved infrastructure to support these modes. Improved health opportunities and safer travel for all were also noted. Particular importance was attributed to

supporting children walking and cycling to school and the need for safer routes to facilitate these trips. The need for improved links for cycling from areas outside of Bath to the city was also highlighted. Some responses expressed concern regarding the impact of Bath's topography on the ability to promote active travel.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods - Local Priorities

- 3.14 Again, overwhelming support was awarded to the identified local priorities with between 74% and 87% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the listed priorities and 6% to 13% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.
- 3.15 Within the free text response, respondents raised several concerns and recommendations regarding the implementation of Liveable Neighbourhoods. Themes were often inter-related. For example, the effect of Bath's topography on active travel was raised again, particularly for residents with mobility issues. This suggests that improvement for alternative modes, such as public transport and e-bikes should be developed where topography is a key issue within specific Liveable Neighbourhood schemes.
- 3.16 Many respondents were concerned about the impact of parking restrictions on local businesses. Particularly since many business owners were already struggling due to Covid-19. In contrast, others recognised the positive impact Liveable Neighbourhoods could have on local business, yet that the council would need to communicate this effectively. Many respondents flagged fairness and justice issues around the potential displacement of traffic onto main roads. Therefore, the council must enhance capacity on the highway network for public transport, walking and cycling to mitigate this impact as part of the overall strategic delivery plan.

Liveable Neighbourhoods Approach to Developing Schemes

- 3.17 Respondents to the questionnaire were very supportive of the proposed approach to developing Liveable Neighbourhood schemes with between 65% and 85% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the elements of the proposed approach, with between 3% and 10% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.
- 3.18 The council's proposed approach is consistent with government guidance contained in *Gear Change, a bold vision for cycling and walking*, Department for Transport, July 2020 (page 18 refers) which proposes creating a community right to close side streets and create low traffic neighbourhoods, with groups of residential streets able to petition local authorities for rat-run closures.
- 3.19 Within the free text responses, a significant number of responses suggested adjustments to the methodology. This included a simplified approach to encourage engagement and the council taking a stronger lead on scheme development. The LTN strategy proposes that communities should express a desire to be considered for LTN interventions and scheme development will be on the basis of co-design. However, in some areas community groups have a much lower profile or representation at a grass roots level is limited. In this case the council can, in consultation with local Members, take a stronger lead. Public

consultation should be undertaken to ensure that these areas are not disadvantaged in selection for LTN interventions.

Residents Parking Schemes

3.20 The publication: *Residents Parking Schemes: Approach to implementation of residents' parking schemes in B&NES* (the Residents' Parking Strategy) aims to reduce carbon emissions, encourage the use of public transport systems, improve both residential amenity & quality of life and deliver a more pleasant residential environment. The Assistant Director of Highways and Traffic is responsible for assessing revisions to existing restrictions, evaluating extensions, implementing these restrictions on the public highway and the daily operation, such as permit allocation and enforcement.

3.21 In 2014, the council's Parking Services issued two documents:

- Purpose of Residents Parking Schemes; and
- Guidance on the Introduction of Residents Parking Schemes.

3.22 These documents were designed to encompass the primary objectives of residents parking schemes. Priority over limited kerb space is given to residents to enable a consistent approach to their introduction, operation and enforcement. This policy framework was formerly adopted on 7th February 2018 within *Balancing your needs - a parking strategy for Bath & North East Somerset, CH2M for B&NES Council*. This document introduced a hierarchy of users for kerb space, to further balance the competing needs of different stakeholder groups during the development and introduction of residents parking schemes.

3.23 Respondents to the consultation questionnaire were very supportive of the proposed approach to reviewing and expanding residents parking zones with between 52% and 88% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposed approach and between 4% and 9% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing

3.24 In the text responses, strong support was voiced on both sides regarding the expansion of residents' parking zones. Many people identified benefits, but others were concerned about cost, enforcement and the needs of disabled people. Parked vehicles generated by student households and hotels/guest houses were also raised as concerns.

On street electric vehicle charging

3.25 The council's declared climate emergency demands a fundamental step-change in methods of travel adopted by residents, visitors and employees. It requires a major shift from car use to walking, cycling and public transport in order to reduce transport emissions. However, going forward in the short term, there inevitably remains a role for the private car for some trips and for some users. In this situation the council's aim, in line with national policy and industry changes, is to encourage the use of zero or low-emission vehicles. Electric vehicles have potential to offer significant benefits and are an important part of the overall toolkit for improving air quality in B&NES and addressing the climate emergency.

- 3.26 Respondents to the survey demonstrated strong support for EV charging infrastructure, with 64% to 84% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposed measures, with 5% to 20% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. The 20% disagreeing figure related to the statement proposing that EV charging equipment should be located in the carriageway rather than the footway (as a means to reduce obstruction to pedestrians and mobility impaired people, in particular). It's likely that this relates to a concern about reduced levels of non-EV car parking, following introduction of an on-street EV charging facilities and dedicated parking spaces.
- 3.27 In the text responses to EV charging many comments were positive in nature but some highlighted the public and private cost implications and that electricity should be provided from sustainable sources.

Next steps

- 3.28 The Liveable Neighbourhood Strategy sets out that communities that wish to be considered for low traffic neighbourhoods should submit requests through their ward Member. The council will develop an assessment and scoring methodology to identify schemes that will generate the maximum benefits. This will feed into a prioritised programme for implementation.
- 3.29 The Residents' Parking Strategy identifies the need to consult on proposed changes to existing residents' parking zones, which will be undertaken in 2021. Further consultation will also take place in developing new zones. Work is already underway to expand residents' parking zones in parts of Bath. Consultation on some of these schemes is expected to commence in early 2021, subject to approval of the Residents' Parking Strategy.
- 3.30 The on-street EV charging strategy identifies further steps in preparation to implement schemes, including equipment specification and parking controls to restrict use to electric and plug in hybrid vehicles.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The council has the necessary legal powers to implement the proposed schemes using existing highways legislation. The government's declared intention to enact Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (expected in Spring 2021) will allow the councils outside London to enforce a broader range of moving traffic offences (rather than the police) which will provide the option to install modal filters with limited vehicular access enforced by automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras, in addition to physical road closures. In *Gear Change, a bold vision for cycling and walking, Department for Transport, July 2020* the government signalled their intention that a warning may be issued for the first offence.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 Funding to implement these schemes is identified as follows:-

- £200K allocation with the 2020/21 Transport Improvement Programme; and

- A Provisional Allocation in the current Council Capital Programme, identified as Transportation Delivery Programme; 2020/21 £120k, 2021/22 £1,480k and 2022/23 £500k.

5.2 Provisional allocations will seek full approval through future decision making as a detailed programme of works develops further.

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 A series of equalities impact assessments have been undertaken for each of the three strategies. Potential impacts for disabled people and communities living in socially and/or economically deprived localities (plus rural areas to a lesser extent) have been identified together with proposed measures to eliminate or mitigate this impact. Separate equalities impact assessments will be undertaken for each scheme based on local area impacts, which cannot be fully understood until identified during scheme design.

7.2 During 2020, Councillor Joanna Wright, Joint Cabinet Member for Transport, made two accompanied tours of Bath city centre to understand how disabled people and people with sight loss are affected by street layouts. Cllr Wright was accompanied by Susan Charles, Honorary Chair of the Access B&NES Group and Steve Hyde, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Regional Campaigns Officer. These experiences will help to ensure that the needs of disabled people and people with sight loss are addressed during scheme design.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 A climate emergency was declared across Bath & North East Somerset in 2019. The B&NES Climate Emergency Action Plan approved in October 2019 recommends a major shift to mass transport, walking and cycling to reduce transport emissions. Liveable Neighbourhoods are an important part of proposals to tackle the climate emergency and to improve health and wellbeing across the area.

8.2 In the slide presentation entitled 'Climate Emergency Study Discussion Pack, Anthesis for B&NES Council, September 2019' Anthesis estimated that the transport sector accounts for 29% of carbon emissions within the district, making it a key contributor to climate change. The council's highway, transport and parking functions will play a key role in reducing emissions. *The Joint Local Transport Plan 4, West of England Combined Authority, March 2020* estimates that if no action is taken to address the increasing levels of forecast traffic forecast across the West of England, transport CO₂ emissions will rise by a further 22% by 2036.

8.3 The climate emergency progress report considered by full council in October 2019, indicated that for transport to achieve the required reduction in emissions, the council will need to enable a major shift from private car travel. This requires a 25% cut in car and van mileage per person per year by 2030, coupled with a

76% switch to electric cars on the road by 2030. The council has a vital leadership and facilitation role to help deliver this target in partnership with other key local organisations, stakeholders and the community.

8.4 The Council's Corporate Strategy, adopted in February 2020, cites Liveable Neighbourhoods as a key intervention to help meet the council's climate emergency target.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 Liveable Neighbourhoods will be co-designed with the community such that a range of measures can be considered for implementation.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 A formal consultation on Liveable Neighbourhoods was held between 9th September to 18th October 2020. The consultation opportunity was publicised digitally via the council's website, twitter account, a press release and parish liaison meetings. Additionally, a presentation was made to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny panel on 21st September.

10.2 Queries were available for submission to the Liveable Neighbourhoods project team email address: LNconsultation@bathnes.gov.uk, through Council Connect or through elected Members of the council. During the consultation period, two webinars were conducted via Zoom where officers and Members discussed the proposals and responded to questions from the public. Recording can be found on at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lorggE9UjA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXech8bUbQM>

10.3 A web-based survey was developed using Survey Monkey to seek views on the concept of liveable neighbourhoods as well as the three draft strategies that will help shape them.

10.4 A consultation summary document was prepared alongside the survey to give guidance on the Liveable Neighbourhoods concept. Hard copies of both were made available upon request from Council Connect.

10.5 Following the results of the consultation, the strategy documents have been updated and a framework will be developed to help guide the identification, design and development of liveable neighbourhoods, working closely with local communities.

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| Contact person | Chris Major 07530 263 334 |
| Background papers | <p>A series of draft strategy documents were issued for public consultation between 9th September and 18th October 2020. These documents included (with web links):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation summary brochure • Low traffic neighbourhood strategy (Draft 2020) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix A: Low traffic neighbourhood policy review • Appendix B: Types of interventions and measures • Appendix C: Low traffic neighbourhoods case studies and best practice • Appendix D: low traffic neighbourhood proforma • Residents' parking schemes (Draft 2020) • On-street electric vehicle charging strategy (Draft 2020) |
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