

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	<b>Cabinet</b>	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	<b>5<sup>th</sup> May 2022</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		<b>E 3358</b>
TITLE:	<b>Journey to Net Zero: Reducing the Environmental Impact of Transport in Bath</b>	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Appendix A – Journey to Net Zero: Reducing the Environmental Impact of Transport in Bath Appendix B - Journey to Net Zero – Consultation Findings Report (first consultation) Appendix C - Journey to Net Zero – Consultation Findings Report (second consultation)		

### 1 THE ISSUE

1.1 In March 2019, B&NES declared a Climate Emergency, which included a commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030. Transport currently accounts for 29% of carbon emissions in the B&NES area. The B&NES Climate Emergency Plan identified the scale of change required to meet the carbon neutrality target. There are many potential pathways to achieving this target. One scenario would require:

- 7% decrease in the number of car journeys across the local authority area
- 25% reduction in kilometres travelled per person by car each year
- Electric cars: 76% pure battery, 14% petrol hybrid
- Buses: 76% electric, 24% hybrid
- Rail: 37% of freight rail is electric, 100% passenger rail is electric

1.2 The current ways in which we travel will not get us to carbon neutrality by 2030. This plan sets out the changes needed to decarbonise Bath's transport system in line with our climate emergency and to create places we want to live and work; with better connected, healthier and genuinely sustainable communities.

1.3 The declaration of the climate emergency provides an unparalleled opportunity to look at B&NES as a whole and to develop a coherent, long-term vision and plan for transport in the city. No single mode of transport will be dominant. Instead, people will have a choice between a range of modes of transport – each of them accessible, viable and more sustainable than the private car.

- 1.4 We are committed to doing everything within our power to provide the necessary infrastructure and policies within Bath and the wider North East Somerset District to ensure that we achieve our target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. However, we cannot do this alone. Our commitment needs to be met with an equal commitment from transport operators, regional and central government to provide the necessary support, funding and powers to make the Journey to Net Zero Plan a reality.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

**The Cabinet is asked to;**

- 2.1 Formally adopt the Journey to Net Zero: Reducing the Environmental Impact of Transport in Bath

## **3 THE REPORT**

- 3.1 The Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy (GABTS) was adopted in 2015 and covered the period up to 2029. The Strategy identifies increasing the numbers using sustainable transport as the key overarching aim whilst supporting growth. As part of the strategy a set of performance targets were agreed up to 2020. Those targets for walking, cycling and bus passengers have now been delivered.
- 3.2 The Journey to Net Zero plan (Appendix A) provides a holistic approach for meeting the transport needs of those living, working and visiting Bath from 2020 onwards. The plan identifies how transport will respond to and support delivery of the targets set out in the Climate Emergency.
- 3.3 In April 2020, the Transport Delivery Action Plan Phase 1: Current and Future Report (Current and Future Report) was published by B&NES, setting out the current and future situation for transport into, out of and around Bath, and the need for significant and focused improvements. The report looks at the ways in which we currently travel, and provides the evidence base that underpins the consideration of future transport measures set out in this plan.
- 3.4 Combined the Current and Futures Report and Journey to Net Zero transport plan identifies the challenges that Bath faces in terms of transport both now and in the future, and also the measures required to overcome these to support the realisation of the Councils' core policy theme to tackle the climate and ecological emergency.
- 3.5 In November 2014, B&NES approved the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy. This Strategy set out the vision and objectives for transport in the region. To reflect the importance of the climate emergency declaration on our future ambitions, this vision and objectives have been updated:

### **Vision**

“Bath will enhance its unique status by adopting measures that promote sustainable transport and decision making, whilst reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the intrusion of vehicles, particularly in the historic core. This will improve the quality of life for local people, enable more economic activity and growth, while enhancing the special character and environment of the city.”

## Objectives

- Reducing vehicle carbon emissions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030
  - Improving air quality and health
  - Promoting sustainable mobility
  - Supporting and enabling economic growth, competitiveness, and jobs
  - Widening travel choice
  - Widening access to opportunities: jobs/learning/training
  - Safeguarding and enhancing the unique historic environment and World Heritage Site status
  - Improving quality of life in the city
- 3.6 We have placed people at the centre of the Journey to Net Zero, focusing on providing transport infrastructure and environments that will encourage the use of sustainable modes by making them a genuine alternative to the car. This will involve reducing the dominance of the private car while maintaining access for those whose needs cannot easily be met by more sustainable modes. No single mode of transport will be dominant. Instead, people will have a choice between a range of modes of transport – each of them accessible, viable and sustainable.
- 3.7 This plan focuses primarily on the City of Bath, but also recognises the importance of the travel corridors between the city and the wider district. In light of this the plan includes measures to improve transport connections along the main corridors into Bath.
- 3.8 The plan sets out the steps that we have already taken and those that we are currently working on. The plan considers projects in three groupings based on level of development:
- Current projects – these are projects that are already underway and are either being developed by the Council or have been delivered. These projects have been consulted on, and assuming the resource and funding is available will be delivered (if they have not already)
  - Developing projects – these are projects which are under development and are subject to consultation and approval
  - Future projects – these are emerging projects that are not currently under development, but could be pursued by the Council in order to support the ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030
- 3.9 These projects include those that we are developing and consulting on together with the Combined Authority. We will continue to consult on projects in development and future projects in detail in the future, ensuring that local people are able to give their views on the proposals
- 3.10 The plan includes a range of transport measures that the Council will seek to deliver over the short, medium and long term and identifies the scale of carbon reduction that can be attributed to each of these individual measures at a high level.
- 3.11 The Journey to Net Zero plan includes a separate detailed evidence-based study into what is possible in terms of a mass transit system in Bath, and what would work best for the city. This study is being developed alongside work currently taking place at a regional level to assess a new and ambitious mass

transport system that will revolutionise the way we travel around the West of England.

3.12 We will continue to monitor our progress against our target to reach carbon neutrality by 2030, and as the individual projects progress and become clearer will undertake a more detailed, quantified assessment of their likely impacts on modal shift and carbon reduction.

3.13 In order to ensure the Journey to Net Zero remains on track to deliver the reductions in transport related carbon emissions required, regular reports and updates will be provided to the Local Development Framework Steering Group, a cross party group of members that provide a steer to the Cabinet leads for Transport and Sustainable Transport on the development of policies, strategies, proposals and guidance.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

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

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

5.1 The Journey to Net Zero Plan and the projects contained within it will be delivered through a wide range of projects which will be funded from various sources principally, but not exclusively, the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and Investment Fund.

5.2 In the 2021 Spending Review a City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement of £540m was made to the West of England to be spent on sustainable travel between 2022 and 2027. Following this the Combined Authority submitted a business case to the Department for Transport setting out which schemes would be funded. Of the total allocation, £129m has been allocated to the B&NES area matched by over £17m in local contribution. This funding will be used to develop and deliver a number of the projects identified in this plan.

5.3 The Settlement Fund will be used to fund some of the measures identified within the BSIP, and included in this plan. Other elements of the BSIP are seeking funding through the Bus Transformation Fund.

5.4 The funding landscape is constantly evolving, we will continue to track announcements of new funding opportunities from Central Government for which we are eligible.

## **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 An Equalities Impact Assessment report has been undertaken for the Journey to Net Zero Report to assess the effects of the policies and to ensure they are fair and meet the needs of our residents as well as those who work, visit and study in Bath and that they are not inadvertently discriminating against any protected group.

7.2 In addition to this a full Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken for each of those schemes that are taken forward as part of the Journey to Net Zero Plan as part of their development.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

8.1 The main objective of the plan is to identify how to reduce transport related carbon emissions and support delivery of the 2030 climate emergency targets. The Journey to Net Zero sets out a plan to tackle some of the biggest challenges our society faces: combating climate change, improving air quality, improving health and wellbeing and tackling congestion.

8.2 The current ways in which we travel will not get us to carbon neutrality by 2030. This plan sets out the changes needed to our transport system to create places we want to live and work; with better connected, healthier and genuinely sustainable communities. We have placed people at the centre of the Journey to Net Zero, focusing on providing transport infrastructure and environments that will encourage the use of sustainable modes by making them a genuine alternative to the car. This will involve reducing the dominance of the private car while maintaining access for those whose needs cannot easily be met by more sustainable modes.

8.3 B&NES remains fully committed to becoming carbon neutral in transport terms by 2030 and the measures identified in this plan will provide us with the opportunities to do this. This commitment however needs to be met with an equal commitment from transport operators, regional and central government to tackle the issue of climate change. B&NES will endeavour to reduce its transport related emissions but cannot do this alone, we need to ensure we have the necessary support, funding and powers provided to us to make the Journey to Net Zero Plan a reality.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

9.1 Given the Council's commitment to addressing our climate emergency there is a need to make significant changes in the way people travel into, out of and around Bath.

9.2 The alternative is to maintain the status quo in terms of travel habits which will likely result in higher dependency on private car ownership leading to higher transport emissions and the Council failing to deliver on its Climate Emergency.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

10.1 Two separate rounds of public consultation have been undertaken on the Journey to Net Zero plan. The first of these was a 6-week full public consultation that took place from 15th January to 1st March of last year, seeking the public's views on a range of transport themes and concepts that added a level of (non-geographic) detail to the theme. The results of this consultation were published on the Council's website and were used to develop the initial Journey to Net Zero Consultation Document. A copy of the report setting out the results of this first consultation is available as Appendix B to this report.

10.2 The Journey to Net Zero Consultation Document was then subject to a further 4-week public consultation between 10th January and 7th February of this year. A copy of the Journey to Net Zero Consultation Document that was consulted on earlier in the year as part of the second consultation is included as

Appendix C to this report. The consultation was published on the Council’s website and included an online questionnaire that asked the public to give their views on the ‘future projects’ that were identified. The questions sought to gauge the strength of support for the schemes put forward and the extent to which each measure would reduce an individual’s transport carbon footprint. In addition to these a number of meetings were held to raise awareness and increase levels of input to the plan including:

- A meeting with ward Councillors
- A public webinar event hosted by B&NES with a presentation and Q&A session
- Two meetings with Stakeholders followed up with a Stakeholder Pack that provided Stakeholders with a suite of messaging and graphics to use in their own publications and websites to increase awareness with their members.

10.3 As part of the consultation, respondents were able to leave further comments on any aspect of the Journey to Net Zero Consultation Plan in an open text box at the end of the survey. In total 546 people responded to the consultation, with the most supported future projects being:

- Independent travel to school
- Promotion and investment in travel by bike
- Improvements to the pedestrian experience

10.4 The responses received from the second consultation have been analysed alongside the feedback received from the various webinars and correspondence.

10.5 Below is a table that sets out some of the most frequent comments we received from the consultation as well as how these have been responded to.

<b>What you said</b>	<b>What we have changed</b>
Bath is very hilly, which makes trips by bike and walking difficult	We recognise that Bath has a challenging topography. Within <i>Providing for travel by bike and on foot</i> we have added in further detail of the benefits of e-bikes to overcome this
There are some journeys for which I need my car i.e. transporting heavy goods, disabled access, tradespeople, carers	We are not advocating zero journeys by car and fully acknowledge that some journeys will still need to be undertaken by car in the future. However, there are a significant number of trips for which there are sustainable alternatives. We have now included within the plan a transport hierarchy that we believe aligns with our net zero ambitions and acts as a useful guide to help people think about how they could improve the environmental impact of their journeys
The current public transport network does not allow me to leave my car at home	We have added further detail to the measures included within the West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) so you can better understand the far-reaching improvements we are planning to make to the

	public transport network which will provide huge improvements to existing bus services
The future projects will negatively impact on businesses in the city centre	We have included a number of case studies from the UK and internationally where restricting car access and improving the public realm has had a positive impact on businesses
I have nowhere to charge an electric vehicle and they are too expensive	We have included more detail on the potential future models for car ownership and electric vehicles. The use of car clubs will make electric vehicles accessible to more people whilst also reducing the space taken up by private parking
Ghent is used as an example of restrictions for car in the city centre, but there are a lot of differences between Ghent and Bath	It was not our intention to draw a direct comparison between Ghent and Bath but rather to show what is possible and has been achieved elsewhere when such measures are introduced. Given this is a relatively new approach there are limited examples where cross-city traffic restrictions have been implemented, therefore we have drawn on Ghent to provide an illustration of where it has been done. Other UK cities are currently considering these measures also, and we will monitor these.
What will happen to general traffic as a result of these measures?  Where is the traffic circulation plan of the city?	We have included a commitment to produce a traffic circulation map as a standalone project within the <i>Creating improved places to live and work</i> section. This will show where we want the traffic to be able to access within Bath and in doing so allow future projects to come forwards
How will this all be paid for?	We have added into the plan detail of potential future funding streams
The introduction of traffic cells in the city centre will result in traffic diverting through residential areas	In recognition of the significant number of people who live in the city centre we have now changed the term traffic cells to city centre liveable neighbourhoods. This better reflects what we're trying to achieve through the measure and better aligns with the wider Liveable Neighbourhoods project.  We have also emphasised that the creation of city centre liveable neighbourhoods is a longer-term project and would be one of the last initiatives introduced.  Finally, we have committed to consulting on the development of any city centre liveable neighbourhoods to ensure it works for the city as a whole.

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<b>Background papers</b>	Appendix A – Journey to Net Zero: Reducing the Environmental Impact of Transport in Bath Appendix B - Journey to Net Zero – Consultation Findings Report (first consultation) Appendix C - Journey to Net Zero – Consultation Findings Report (second consultation)
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	