

There are two concerns I want to make the council aware of tonight.

Concern Number One!

The Somer Valley Links consultation (<https://haveyoursaywest.co.uk/>) that ends on the 6th of August proposes that all cycle traffic from Hallatrow, Paulton, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, and Peasedown St John should be funnelled into Bath using the Two Tunnels via the Wellow to Midford permissive path. This privately owned path is an isolated, heavily cratered, bound gravel path that is a muddy mess and extremely dangerous after dark. At most this is a poor leisure route.

I would strongly urge all North East Somerset councillors to attend the consultation events and push for a much safer 3m wide shared path along the A367 between Radstock and the Bath Odd Down Park and Ride site. Making the A367 good for walking, wheeling, and cycling is critical and also serves the residents of Marksbury, Timsbury, Priston, Tunley, Camerton, and Carlingcott much better. Funneling the residents of North East Somerset that choose to use sustainable modes of travel via a muddy isolated dangerous privately owned farm track is frankly completely nonsensical.

Concern Number Two!

At the Cabinet meeting last week, two single member decisions were taken to proceed with the Mount Road and Temple Cloud Liveable Neighbourhood. Councillors should be made aware that both decisions have the following paragraph:

“To note that the proposed shortlist was next subject to technical review, both in terms of alignment with the Liveable Neighbourhoods strategy and other factors such as cost, practicalities and timelines, as summarised in Appendix B of the report.”

It should be also noted that the Mount Road decision explicitly states that:

“For clarity the proposed scheme contains no modal filters at either end of Mount Road.”

Reading the list of measures I could not identify a single intervention that would be classified as a traffic reduction measure and fundable through WECA's Sustainable Transport Settlement program.

I'm guessing the council will end up spending funds from its own coffers and other wards will lose out on road safety measures while Temple Cloud gets new benches for its playing field.

My big concern here is not about the money. My concern is about wasting precious officer time. If the cabinet wants to waste officer time on procuring and installing benches rather than running hugely transformative modal filter trials like Church Lane, Southlands, and Queen Charlton, then that is on them BUT you will not deliver on your Liveable Neighbourhood manifesto commitments.

It would be much better to create a phased delivery where ward councillors help trial and install traffic reduction interventions and only then are able to bid for other types of intervention.

Councillors need to recognise that the fast track Liveable Neighbourhood trials focused on traffic reduction measures have, quite frankly, been a huge success and should be replicated again and again over the coming three years. You really do not have the luxury to waste limited officer time installing benches while having fights with Dan Norris over who is going to pay for all this stuff.