

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	9th November 2023	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E N/A
TITLE:	Journey to Net Zero Update	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1: PowerPoint presentation		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Bath and North East Somerset Council declared both a Climate and Ecological Emergency, committing to provide leadership to enable carbon neutrality within B&NES by 2030.
- 1.2 Transport currently accounts for 29% of carbon emissions in the B&NES area. Ensuring the transport network can enable residents to shift to more sustainable modes and that sustainable transport is the first choice of travel in all cases is an essential part of the Journey to Net Zero (JtNZ) strategy.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel / Committee is asked to;

- 2.1 Note the range of projects underway to deliver the ambitions of Journey to Net Zero strategy, and the early stage of development of the overarching programme.
- 2.2 Note the progress of key projects, such as the CAZ and CRSTS programmes of work.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 In May 2022 B&NES Council adopted the Journey to Net Zero, a document which outlines a new direction for our new transport system – one which opens up and enables new travel choices which will not only reduce our collective

impact on the environment, but create healthier and more attractive communities.

3.2 This is encapsulated in the vision of the JtNZ:

Bath will enhance its unique status by adopting measures that promote sustainable transport and decision making, whilst reducing carbon 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.

3.3 To achieve this vision, the JtNZ sets a number of objectives which are outlined here, including:

- Reducing vehicle carbon emissions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030
- Improving air quality and health
- Widening travel choice

3.4 The emphasis on widening travel choice is vitally important. People's ability to move around is essential for our communities, and central for our thriving economy and vibrant society. The JtNZ strategy is therefore not about curbing mobility, but rather offering our residents and communities different, less environmentally harmful, and more healthy ways in which to travel.

3.5 The JtNZ Strategy set out a number of projects that had been identified as helping us to achieve our aim of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, within the following four categories:

- Better Public Transport Options
- Creating Improved Places to Live and Work
- Cleaner Greener School Travel
- Connecting Bath to Rural Communities and Market Towns

3.6 Work is continuing at pace across these four objectives, at both a strategic and local level, and the attached presentation outlines a number of projects for discussion at the Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel meeting on the 9th November.

City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS): In Development

3.7 Of particular note, at a strategic level and working across the four categories of JtNZ listed it at 3.5, is the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.

3.8 In 2022, the West of England Combined Authority successfully secured £540m for the delivery of transport improvements between 2022/23 and 2026/27.

3.9 Over the course of the CRSTS funding period, B&NES will receive over £120m. The CRSTS programme is a significant uplift in capital funding relative to current levels and presents an unprecedented opportunity.

3.10 Through the CRSTS programme, we will deliver significant public transport infrastructure, improving connectivity across our district and enabling better and more equitable access to sustainable transport choices for all communities. In particular, the Strategic Corridor projects passing through rural communities will offer improved access to sustainable travel options in the following projects:

- Bath To Bristol Sustainable Travel Corridor
- Bath Sustainable walking and cycling schemes
- Midsomer Norton Transport Improvements
- Somer Valley Links
- Bath Centre
- Manvers Street Maintenance
- Liveable Neighbourhoods Programme

3.11 At each stage of the development of CRSTS programme, we will engage with our local communities, welcoming input and comments on the proposals to ensure that the benefits of CRSTS are maximised both not only for strategic through travel, but also for local communities along the route.

Clean Air Zone: Year 2 of delivery

3.12 It is also important to note the significant progress being made to improve air quality in Bath. A Clean Air Zone was launched in Bath on 15 March 2021, aiming to tackle harmful levels of air pollution.

3.13 Official air quality data from 2021 was submitted to the Government's Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) for review which has now officially declared that the Bath & North East Somerset Council has passed its 'State 2' assessment. State 2 is a checkpoint in determining if the Clean Air Zone is achieving success by improving air quality. The report confirms nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations have decreased.

District-Wide Walking and Cycling Masterplan: In development

3.14 The Active Travel Masterplan for Bath and North East Somerset will be a comprehensive plan that sets out the existing and future active travel infrastructure required to enable and provide for sustainable and healthy forms of transport in order to reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions across Bath and North East Somerset. The plan will be for all types of active travel whether it's for commuting, leisure or utility.

3.15 The plan will set out in detail the active travel improvements needed to create genuinely sustainable, better connected and healthier communities we want to live and work in. Communities where cycling and walking are the natural choice and people can move around safely and freely on foot and on bike.

3.16 By implementing infrastructure improvements and behaviour change campaigns, the Active Travel Masterplan will improve the safety, accessibility,

and attractiveness of active travel options, while reducing carbon emissions from transport and promoting the health and wellbeing of residents.

- 3.17 It is intended that this plan will form part of the Regulation 18 consultation for the local plan, which will commence in the New Year.

School Streets: In development

- 3.18 While strategic level interventions are vitally important in progressing our aim to achieve net zero, the Council is equally committed to, and recognises the importance of, local improvements to transport networks, working hard to deliver these across the breadth of the district.

- 3.19 B&NES has invested significant funds in the delivery local improvements to tackle obstacles to those who want to walk, cycle and use public transport. A key example of this is the programme that has just commenced to identify and trial a series of School Street interventions to enable school children to travel sustainably to school.

- 3.20 Through a collaborative and co-design approach between schools, parents, pupils and ourselves, the JtNZ Strategy outlined a commitment to developing a trial of school streets, with interventions such as improvements to bike routes and footways surrounding schools, or temporary traffic restrictions on roads alongside and adjacent to the school so that pupils, parents and staff do not need to compete with through traffic when travelling to school.

Car Clubs: In development

- 3.21 Shared mobility is an increasingly important part of our transport network, offering opportunities for different mobility solutions for our communities. A car club enables members to access a car when they need it, without having to own or lease their own vehicles with all the cost that entails. Car clubs can also support net zero aspirations through the use of lower or zero emissions, as well as reducing the number of cars in totality. Recent evidence from CoMoUK suggests that in 2021 every one car club vehicle replaced 20 privately owned vehicles.

- 3.22 We are currently working with a national charity market specialist who will support on policy and demand and advise on commercial models for car clubs across the district in B&NES. They will support us with market engagement to deliver a competitive tender process. We hope to be in a position to commence a new car club in Spring 2024.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 All projects will progress through the appropriate statutory considerations as they develop.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 N/A

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 Equality and Diversity Assessment & Plan will be submitted alongside each of the projects developed as part of the JtNZ Strategy.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 B&NES declared both a Climate and Ecological Emergency, committing to provide leadership to enable carbon neutrality within B&NES by 2030.

8.2 Ensuring the transport network can enable residents to shift to more sustainable modes and that sustainable transport is the first choice of travel in all cases is an essential part of the Journey to Net Zero strategy.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 N/A – this is an update report.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 All transport schemes developed as part of the JtNZ strategy will be developed following consultation with residents, businesses and the general public.

Contact person	Pam Turton, Head of Transport Strategy
Background papers	Journey to Net Zero update presentation Journey to Net Zero Strategy: Journey to Net Zero (bathnes.gov.uk)
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	