

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Climate Emergency & Sustainability Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING DATE:	09 November 2023	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		Not applicable
TITLE:	Cabinet Member for Highways portfolio update	
WARD:	Multiple	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
None		

1 RECOMMENDATION

The Climate Emergency & Sustainability Scrutiny Panel is asked to;

1.1 Note the update on the Highways Portfolio.

2 THE REPORT

2.1 Resident Parking Zones (RPZs) implementation

Our approach to RPZs aims to reduce the dominance of vehicles in residential areas, particularly through-traffic, whilst maintaining vehicle access to homes and businesses, and supports our core policies of tackling the climate change and ecological emergency.

Following extensive consultation with communities, seven RPZs have been successfully introduced in 2023, including schemes in Sion Hill, Chelsea Road, Snow Hill, Walcot and Claremont Road area, and Oldfield Park and Westmoreland.

Following further feedback from the community in Oldfield Park and Westmoreland about the possible impact of the RPZ on businesses and other key organisations, the launch of the scheme was deferred by 4 weeks to allow for extra visitor parking bays to be added under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO). In addition, some businesses have been provided with digital permits for their staff to support adaptation to the new parking arrangements. Initial feedback about the scheme has been largely positive with comments from residents about the reduction of circulating traffic in the area, a calmer, quieter area and the ability to park their vehicle during the day. Businesses have also welcomed the provision of the temporary permits to help them provide reassurance to staff who live outside of the area and have no other option but to drive a vehicle to work. The use of the extra visitor parking spaces

be monitored for at least 6 months up until March 2024 when a review will take place as part of the ETRO process on whether the spaces should be retained.

As the schemes embed, officers will continue to monitor parking behaviour including the displacement of vehicles into areas outside of RPZ boundaries. Where necessary, mitigations will be introduced to ensure the safety of pedestrians is maintained and consideration given on whether the boundary of the RPZ needs to be altered.

2.2 City Centre Security

The aims City Centre Security Project in protecting our streets are well documented and, following approval through Council's budget setting process in February 2023, have an approved budget of £7.4m. To date the project has delivered Hostile Vehicle Measures (HVM) on time and budget in:

- York Street (completed May 2023)
- Cheap Street (completed October 2023)*
- Hot Bath Street (completed October 2023)

* the final static bollards supporting the sliding bollards on Cheap Street will be completed by 10th November 2023

The programme of City Centre Security works has now moved to Upper Borough Walls, where advanced works are taking place. These works commenced on 11th September 2023 and are due to finish ahead of the Christmas embargo, prior to recommencing in January 2024 until completion in July 2024.

Upper Borough Walls is a challenging location, due to the complexities of the vaults and major utility lines under the road surface. Coupled with this is the requirement to maintain pedestrian access north and south of the City, and access to business premises throughout.

Extensive advanced communications, including a drop-in session on 7 September 2023 for businesses and residents, have assisted in temporary measures to ensure the management of waste and deliveries during construction, which are now in place and to date are working well. Traffic marshals are in place to assist with traffic management.

Work is currently underway on the diversion of a 300mm gas main at Upper Borough Walls. Other utility diversion works for Wessex Water and National Grid are programmed to be progressed prior to Upper Borough Walls being reinstated and opened during the Christmas embargo period.

In January and February 2024 statutory undertaker diversion works will be completed and excavation works for the sliding bollard foundation slab will be commenced. As much of this excavation work is above cellars, we will carry out further cellar condition surveys prior to these excavations being carried out.

Due to the nature of the work and the need for excavations above cellars to be carried out in sections, it is anticipated that the works at Upper Borough Walls will not complete until July 2024.

2.3 Cleveland Bridge

The temporary 18-tonne weight limit in place on Cleveland Bridge in Bath is to be extended for another year as the project team continues to monitor this historic structure.

The 18-tonne weight limit has been in place on the Grade II listed bridge for 12 months since October of last year, following a recommendation for a staged approach to reopening.

When the bridge reopened to traffic, engineers installed a monitoring system which can detect changes to the characteristic 'fingerprint' response of the structure and provides ongoing confidence that the bridge remains safe.

The temporary weight limit, which would have expired on 15 November, has been extended for up to 12 months through a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) so monitoring can continue.

2.4 Emissions Base Parking

Aims to continue improving air quality in Bath are being supported with the introduction of vehicle emission-based parking charges in council-owned car parks in Bath that commenced on 8th September 2023.

The new charges aim to incentivise motorists that own more polluting vehicles to use more sustainable alternatives when visiting the city centre, such as the Park & Ride, and encourage a shift to public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling.

The new variable charging structure will only affect motorists with more polluting vehicles, with many drivers not seeing any change in the price they pay.

The price of parking will depend on vehicle emissions, in line with the bands used for DVLA vehicle exercise duty. Drivers of non-diesel vehicles with emissions below 131g/km will not see prices increase. More polluting vehicles, like diesel vehicles, will now pay a higher rate.

Emission-based parking charges have been introduced at numerous local authorities throughout the country, however Bath & North East Somerset Council are the only local authority continuing to offer its customers a cash payment option, providing payment flexibility and making it easier to pay for stays.

Parking at the council's three Park & Ride sites will remain free for those using the bus service, helping to encourage its use and reducing vehicle intrusion into the city.

Foreign registered, or vehicles not registered with the DVLA, will be charged the highest price for the chosen duration. This is to encourage visitors to use sustainable alternatives such as our Park and Ride sites, and those with unregistered vehicles to adhere to the legal requirements.

2.5 Transport Improvement Programme

The Transport Improvement Programme is a £1.1m capital grant from the DfT for local highway improvements. The funds are allocated to WECA who passport the funding to B&NES. The draft programme is included in the February Budget Report that is approved by Full Council.

The programmes typically include:

- area parking reviews,
- accident investigations / improvements,
- speed limit changes,
- accessibility improvements, pedestrian and wheeling improvements,
- sustainable transport schemes
- traffic management measures.

The 2023/24 programme, approved at Full Council, is progressing well with schemes at different stages in the delivery process which includes design, consultation and Traffic Regulation Orders. Schemes delivered to date:

- 20 mph speed limits for Lansdown Road and the Avenue Timsbury
- B3110 Midford Road sharp bend safety improvements
- Area Parking review South West Bath, North West Bath, and Keynsham and Saltford.
- Mobility improvements

Contact person	Manda Rigby, Cabinet Member for Highways
Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	