

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING DATE:	11 th July 2024	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: <i>[Cabinet reports only]</i>
		E 9999
TITLE:	Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset: The Journey to Net Zero	
WARD:	Keynsham North, Keynsham East, Keynsham South, Saltford, Publow and Whitchurch, High Littleton, Paulton, Midsomer Norton North, Midsomer Norton Redfield, Westfield, Radstock, Peasedown, Timsbury, Bathavon South	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Summary Report - Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset: The Journey to Net Zero Full Report - Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset: The Journey to Net Zero EqIA – Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The Council has a duty under the Network Management Act to manage its network and consider the more efficient use of the network for all traffic which includes buses, pedestrians, cyclists as well as motor vehicles. The Council's Corporate Strategy outlines the need for our transport system to deliver more travel choices to make it easier for all people to undertake their journeys. A Transport Strategy which covers key locations in North East Somerset has been prepared and will form the basis for a public consultation starting on 9th July. The Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel has an opportunity to consider, discuss and provide its views on the draft strategy presented. These views, alongside comments received during public consultation, will help to inform the revised transport strategy.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to;

2.1 Consider the Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset: The Journey to Net Zero document and provide its views, alongside the wider public consultation, in order to help inform the revised transport strategy.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 Transport affects all aspects of our life: from the air we breathe, to the jobs we can access, and the quality of our place – it is an integral part of Creating Sustainable Communities.

3.2 As outlined in our Corporate Strategy, our transport system needs to deliver more travel choices to make it easier for all people to walk, wheel and use public transport. This will help enable the different types of journeys we want for the places we live and work – creating better connected, healthier and more sustainable communities.

3.3 It is important to have an up-to-date Transport Strategy to lever funding opportunities such as City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), Active Travel Fund or Section 106 as examples. To secure funding we need to have a project pipeline which links into a clear vision, objectives and policy. It also allows us to demonstrate visibility to our communities of how individual projects all fit together into a meaningful and comprehensive whole.

3.4 After extensive public consultation, we adopted The Journey to Net Zero (JtNZ) which outlined our communities' ideas on how we can transform our transport network within Bath to better meet the needs of our communities, businesses and visitors. This Transport Strategy seeks to broaden and accelerate our approach to Creating Sustainable Communities across the District over the next 20 years, specifically in:

- Keynsham & Saltford
- Somer Valley
- Hicks Gate
- Whitchurch Village

3.5 The Transport Strategy seeks to open up more travel choices for our communities, providing attractive options which enable people to choose sustainable transport options without having to compromise on time or cost, to help to build healthy communities and places.

3.6 To do that, we need to look at the whole transport system, recognising that there is no one-size-fits-all solution – not every mode of travel will suit every trip and every individual, and we need to ensure that as well as providing more travel choices for people. We are also thinking about how those choices work together as a network, enabling people to change between modes. This could be as simple as cycling to a bus stop, or getting a bus to a train station - we need to make these journeys as seamless as possible. It is also important, including from an equity perspective, that we make it easy to string multiple trips together, such as home – school – doctors – shops – home. Just one missing link in the chain can mean relying on a car to do the whole chain, or unnecessary hardship.

- 3.7 We have held workshops with internal officer groups from across the Council to understand the key issues and challenges starting January 2023.
- 3.8 We held workshops with community representatives and key stakeholders in January to March 2023. These sessions were organised by area, and the aim was to talk to local people, to gather information on the most important issues and priorities for stakeholders and communities in that part of the district.
- 3.9 We have extracted the key issues, priorities and recommendations from each of the engagement sessions, and these are set out in the Transport Strategy together with a possible improvement to address the issue.

The purpose of this strategy is to provide more travel choices in the communities of North East Somerset. This is about investing in a transport network which meets the needs of our communities, now and into the future.

- 3.10 Delivering this type of change will take time, and significant investment. We need to reflect the level of ambition from within our communities and the council, within realistic timeframes. This includes the realities of time needed to develop schemes, engage with communities, progress Business Cases, and deliver on site. As such, this Transport Strategy sets out our proposed improvements into short-, medium- and long-term projects.
- 3.11 Delivery will be through a combination of public sector funding, such as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), and third-party local contributions. We are working with stakeholders such as the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (WECA) on these programmes, to ensure the delivery of the Transport Strategy.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

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

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 The transport strategy contains possible improvements which will be delivered through a wide range of programmes and will be funded from various sources.
- 5.2 The consultation will be resourced through current internal staff and budgets.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issues and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 Transport is not an aim in itself, it is mobility and accessibility - the ability for people to move from place to place and access services, employment and facilities. Car use is a mobility tool, but there are other mobility tools available (e.g. walking, cycling, public transport) which are more affordable and have fewer negative impacts on society. However, it is recognised that for some people, or certain types of trips, car usage is essential and necessary, as walking, cycling and public transport are not an option.

7.2 Car usage is inherently inequitable as the most advantaged in our society tend to have greater access and benefit the most, whilst the least advantaged tend to have less access and suffer the most disadvantages. The Transport Strategy is intended to play a part in reducing vehicle mileage per person in the District, which is a key element of the Climate Emergency target. In doing so it intends to reduce the impact of car travel, including safety, severance, health (including air quality and inactivity), carbon, and congestion. Many of these impacts disproportionately affect groups with protected characteristics, who also typically have lower levels of car ownership and usage. The transport strategy will set out measures to improve walking and cycling environments and potentially enhance public transport. However, it also recognises that car travel is an essential component of mobility for many and safeguards against potential negative impacts in terms of reducing mobility, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

7.3 By reducing the impact of car travel, supporting availability of travel choices, and safeguarding necessary car usage, the Transport Strategy is inherently equitable.

7.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Journey to Net Zero Transport Plans. A key issue identified is:

- A need to ensure that the views and experiences of those with protected characteristics who will potentially be disproportionately impacted by the Journey to Net Zero are sought and considered when developing the final Plan.

Our action to address this is:

- Ensure that the final Plan takes account of views across all spectrums of society within Bath and North East Somerset including those with protected characteristics.

7.5 The Transport Strategy is being presented to the IEAG (Independent Equality Advisory Group) on the 11th July for their feedback. This group includes several local voluntary and community sector organisations who support our local communities.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 In response to the declared Climate Emergency and the commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, the Transport Strategy is strategically focused on transforming B&NES's transport landscape. The Transport Strategy prioritises sustainable travel options and is specifically designed to reduce transport-related carbon emissions. By enhancing infrastructure for active travel and public transport, these initiatives directly tackle the urgent need for a more sustainable transport system in the district.

8.2 The Transport Strategy represents a paradigm shift from the conventional "predict and provide" approach to the deliberate "decide and provide" approach. Instead of projecting future car usage and increasing road capacity to accommodate it, B&NES is choosing to define its ideal sustainable future first before providing the means to work towards that. By deciding on a vision of reduced car dependency and enhanced sustainable travel, and then providing the necessary infrastructure to realise that vision, B&NES is actively working to

transform its transport network in a way that directly addresses the climate emergency while promoting equitable and inclusive access to mobility.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 Consideration was given to the various formats for a consultation. Given the importance of the measures included, combined with B&NES' commitment to give people a bigger say, a full public consultation was deemed the most appropriate.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 The Journey to Net Zero (JtNZ) and the Active Travel Masterplan (ATM) have been informed by numerous stakeholder events and public consultation:

January 2023 – internal officer workshops

February 2023 – community stakeholder workshops

July 2023 – internal and external stakeholder workshops

February 2024 – Local Plan Regulation 18 Options Consultation

10.2 A public consultation for this draft transport strategy has been organised and will start on 9th July 2024 and run for six weeks. There are several public consultation events organised as outlined below:

Location	Venue	Date	Time
Somer Valley	The Hollies Council Chamber, High Street, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2DP	18/07/2024	1500-1900
Keynsham	Keynsham Library, 5 Temple St, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 1HA	22/07/2024	1500-1900
Bath	The Guildhall, High St, Bath BA1 5AW	23/07/2024	1500-1900
Whitchurch	Whitchurch United Reform Church, 24 Bristol Rd, Bristol BS14 0PQ	30/07/2024	1500-1900

The public consultation is supported by a web page, including PDF versions of the full documents and a questionnaire for people to give us their views. Paper copies will also be held at libraries and community libraries across the district, totalling 8 places.

Contact person	<i>Claire Nimmo, Transport Policy & Developments Manager</i>
Background papers	<i>N/A</i>

Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format