

Malcolm Baldwin statement to Council 18th July 2024

"Liveable Neighbourhoods: an essential future-proofing".

Good evening,

A quotation: "We will continue to work with residents on designing and delivering meaningful improvements, such as [to] rat-running and speeding, through our Liveable Neighbourhood programme."

Source: B&NES Liberal Democrat Election Manifesto - May 2023.

So the voters responded with an overwhelming majority for a political ethos in which the concept of the introduction of Liveable Neighbourhoods into our city was more than implicit and part of a thorough and ongoing consultation process.

The above being said there is no 'one fits all' Liveable Neighbourhood (LN) solution to significantly differing areas of our city.

For those of us who support the principle of LNs we have a responsibility to listen to any expressed concerns but also to fully explain the context relating to the introduction of any particular LN that we might support.....for the context and priorities may differ.

That errors may have been made in early LN implementations is less important than the fact that key councillors and appropriate officers have listened and remain actively involved and continue to encourage ongoing consultations.

The importance of the context relating to the implementation of LN traffic-management interventions within my own Circus Area zone is not merely the 'icing on the cake' of significant public realm improvements, which we continue to initiate with the support of key Council officers. Rather such traffic-management interventions are an essential ingredient within the overall and vitally necessary improvements to our particular area's public realm.

For us as a local community the debate about LNs has never been about mere traffic flow intervention measures, rather about a real vision of how we can make a positive difference to our local community, its residents, its visitors and as a consequence to its local businesses and local economy as a whole. This is the context of a meaningful Liveable Neighbourhood.

The difficulties, fast increasing for key heritage areas such as our own [which are vitally important to our overall city economy, require imaginative intervention and significantly improved resolution to the toxic

mix of vastly increased local and visitor footfall and the continued and dangerous culture of motor vehicle speeding and rat-running.

Additionally, my particular catchment area may not yet be suffering from over-tourism although we are likely, in some respects, to be close to that point.

Those who applaud, perhaps understandably, the Netflix or Bridgerton effect upon our city's visitors numbers and local economy must begin to realise that if we are not yet quite suffering from over-tourism, certain areas, such as my own, are certainly suffering from 'under-management' of tourism.

Hence, when we look at the background context of a particular LN implementation, priority to future-proof not only for climate or ecology criteria but also for specific local catchment area issues remain an important ingredient and will reinforce the success of specific Liveable Neighbourhoods.

Malcolm Baldwin.

Chair - Circus Area Residents Association (CARA).