

Sarah Toy statement

BNES presentation 19th September 2024 – Evidence in support of making permanent the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) Sydney Road closure

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Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to present. I am speaking as a chartered civil engineer and a transport expert. I have more than 25 years' experience designing, implementing and evaluating sustainable travel schemes that aim to improve public health, safety and wellbeing and reduce emissions. In other words, initiatives that improve people's lives.

My interests in this local scheme are strategic and professional, as an employee at the University of Bath. In 2020 I worked with BANES to co-create the 2030 net zero carbon One Shared Vision. The Bath Liveable Neighbourhoods strategy is key part of delivering this vision. I am currently employed as researcher at the University of Bath's Institute for Sustainability and am conducting a global study to identify cities which are implementing transport policies to incentivise healthier, fairer and low carbon forms of mobility. The BANES Liveable Neighbourhood programme could position Bath as world leader in sustainable transport, and the experimental closure of Sydney Road offers an exemplar "lighthouse" intervention for the city's LN programme. With the introduction of a cheap and simple road closure, you have initiated the opportunity to increase active travel, improve air quality and reduce noise levels in the area. You have also created a safe and attractive route to the schools, park and city centre for visitors as well as local people.

So, whilst there will be complaints from people who might have to drive for a few minutes more, the council's focus should be on the silent majority who will benefit from this closure now and in the long term. The ETRO needs to be made permanent to lock-in the benefits everyone.