

# Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	<b>Cabinet</b>	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	<b>13<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		<b>E 3594</b>
TITLE:	<b>Active Travel Masterplan</b>	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Appendix A – Active Travel Masterplan Appendix B – Active Travel Masterplan Route Map Appendix C – Active Travel Masterplan – Consultation Report Appendix D – Active Travel Masterplan – Equalities Impact Assessment Report.		

## 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The importance of walking, wheeling and cycling, or ‘active travel’ as an affordable and accessible mode of transport has become increasingly apparent over recent years. Within Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) we need to make walking, wheeling and cycling the natural choice for a lot more of our journeys.
- 1.2 As outlined in our Corporate Strategy our transport system needs to deliver more travel options making it easier for people to walk, wheel and use public transport to reduce transport emissions
- 1.3 Increased active travel can help tackle some of the biggest challenges we face - improving air quality, combatting climate change, improving health and wellbeing, addressing inequalities, and tackling congestion on our roads.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

**The Cabinet is asked to;**

- 2.1 Formally adopt the Active Travel Masterplan

## 3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Active Travel Masterplan is a comprehensive plan that sets out the existing and future network of active travel infrastructure required to enable and provide

for sustainable and healthy forms of transport, as well as addressing the climate emergency, reducing inequalities, improving air quality, tackling obesity and reducing traffic congestion across Bath and North East Somerset. The *Journey to Net Zero* strategy identified that a 25% reduction is needed in vehicle mileage per person in Bath & North East Somerset in order to achieve net zero movement, and definition of a strategic network of safe active travel infrastructure is a requirement to help facilitate that transition.

3.2 The plan will be for all types of active travel whether it is for commuting, leisure, business or everyday journeys such as travelling to a local shop, school or doctor's surgery. The term "active travel" within the Active Travel Masterplan refers to walking and cycling, and wheeling (which includes the many other modes of wheel-based travel that can help enable a shift away from journeys being made by a private car), as well as referring to horse riding.

3.3 The Active Travel Masterplan, guided by a progressive vision and a set of ambitious objectives, seeks to transform our communities into well-connected, vibrant, healthy, and environmentally sustainable spaces, resilient to climate change. The vision for the Active Travel Masterplan is set out below:

*"In our envisioned future, streets and pathways will be inviting and accessible, supporting an active lifestyle, reducing the need to travel by car and contributing towards carbon neutral mobility."*

3.4 Our vision extends beyond meeting local needs; we aim to emulate the success stories witnessed across Europe by increasing the proportion of journeys made walking, wheeling and cycling. By replacing a proportion of journeys currently made by car with active modes, we will not only enhance the health and quality of life for our residents but also make substantial strides towards achieving carbon neutrality. The experiences of cities and regions in Europe underscore the transformative potential of prioritising active travel, not only in terms of health and wellbeing but also as a catalyst for sustainable urban development

3.5 B&NES is committed to a transformative approach towards active travel. Our approach extends beyond mere infrastructure improvements; it encompasses a fundamental shift in how we perceive and prioritise walking, wheeling, and cycling within our transport network.

3.6 The Plan identifies where the improvements and measures are needed to enable those people who can, to make the change in their travel habits, keeping the roads clearer and improving journeys for people who have no other option than to drive. It also establishes how we can ensure that more of our roads and public spaces are able to be used by those on active modes.

3.7 By implementing infrastructure improvements and behaviour change campaigns, the measures identified in the Active Travel Masterplan will improve the safety, accessibility, and attractiveness of active travel options, while contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions from vehicular transport and the health and wellbeing of residents through supporting them to change their travel habits

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

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

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 5.1 The Active Travel Masterplan and the projects contained within it will be delivered through a wide range of funding sources principally the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, and the West of England Combined Authority's Investment Fund.
- 5.2 The West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) aims to transform active travel across the sub-region. Developed collaboratively by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and local councils, the plan proposes capital investment of £411 million by 2036. The primary aims of the LCWIP are to enable active travel by providing high-quality infrastructure, improving connectivity through continuous and safe routes for cyclists and pedestrians, supporting health and environmental goals by promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing environmental impact, and boosting economic growth by improving access to jobs, education, and services.
- 5.3 In the 2021 Spending Review a City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) of £540m was made to the West of England to be spent on sustainable travel between 2022 and 2027. Following this the Combined Authority submitted a business case to the Department for Transport setting out which schemes would be funded. Of the total allocation, £129m has been allocated to the B&NES area matched by over £17m in local contribution. Work is now underway to secure further funding through the second round of CRSTS funding that will cover the period 2027 to 2032. This funding will be used to develop and deliver several of the projects identified in this plan.
- 5.4 The funding landscape is constantly evolving, and we will continue to track announcements of new funding opportunities from Central Government and apply for those which we are eligible.

## **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 Equalities Impact Assessment report has been undertaken for the Active Travel Masterplan to assess the effects of the policies and to ensure they are fair and meet the needs of our residents as well as those who work, visit and study across B&NES and that they are not inadvertently discriminating against any protected group.
- 7.2 The Active Travel Masterplan was an agenda item at the Independent Equalities Advisory Group to assess the impact of the work, specifically in relation to the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. The feedback received from the group has been considered as part of the consultation process.
- 7.3 In addition to this, a full Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken for each of those schemes that are taken forward as part of the Active Travel Masterplan as part of their development.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

- 8.1 The Active Travel masterplan acknowledges that it is no longer enough for us to acknowledge the issue of climate change: we must now act with greater urgency to confront this challenge head on. It is no longer enough to expect everyone else to change their behaviour or rely upon technology to solve the issue. Both the Journey to Net Zero transport plan for Bath and the Climate Emergency Strategy identify that a 25% reduction is needed in vehicle mileage per person in Bath & North East Somerset in order to achieve net zero carbon movement, and definition of a strategic network of safe active travel infrastructure is a requirement to help facilitate that transition.
- 8.2 The policies and initiatives set out in this plan enable the increased use of active modes of transportation to support decarbonisation of our transport system
- 8.3 The main objective of the plan is to identify how to reduce transport related carbon emissions and support delivery of the 2030 climate emergency targets. By setting out a strategic network of continuous, safe active travel infrastructure, it enables an increase in the proportion of journeys made across the district by active means, particularly for shorter and medium length journeys. It also improves physical connectivity by identifying the active travel connections needed to link the places people live to where they work and access key facilities including public transport for onward travel.
- 8.4 The Active Travel Masterplan sets out the changes needed to our active travel transport network to enable the mode shift required to create places we want to live and work; with better connected, healthier and genuinely sustainable communities. We have placed people at the centre of the Active Travel Masterplan, focusing on providing transport infrastructure and environments that will enable the use of active modes by making them a genuine alternative to the car, while maintaining vehicle access for those whose needs cannot easily be met by active modes.
- 8.5 B&NES remains fully committed to becoming carbon neutral in transport terms and this masterplan sets out the strategic network to provide for the active travel elements of this transition. We will aim to provide the infrastructure to enable residents to reduce their transport related emissions insofar as is possible within the constraints of budget and powers available to a unitary authority, but acknowledge we cannot enable the transition alone. Our commitment needs to be met with an equal commitment from transport operators, the West of England Combined Authority (as our Transport Authority), central government, with support from our business community, from residents, and from civil society, to make the network of routes set out in this plan a reality as a key plank enabling net zero movement.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 Given the Council's commitment to addressing our climate emergency there is a need to make significant changes in the way people travel around B&NES including our city, towns and rural areas.
- 9.2 The alternative is to maintain the status quo in terms of travel habits which will likely result in higher dependency on private car ownership leading to higher transport emissions and the Council failing to deliver on its Climate Emergency

commitment. It will also result in greater inequalities between those who have access to a private car and those who don't.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

10.1 It is important to ensure that the Active Travel Masterplan takes account of the views and knowledge of the community, stakeholders and experts to ensure that it reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of residents in the district.

10.2 The success of the plans hinges on the 'buy-in' of the local community. To date, we have carried out engagement with a range of Council Officers and key stakeholders representing the community. This includes the following:

- Internal Officer Workshops were held in January 2023 to listen to the views of Officers from across different parts of Bath and North East Somerset Council.
- Stakeholder Community Workshops were held in February 2023 to identify issues and opportunities for each of the four locations, from key stakeholders within each local community.
- In July 2023, further workshops were held with both internal and external stakeholders, to inform them of the emerging proposals and obtain their feedback.
- As part of the Local Plan Regulation 18 public consultation, the summary plans were consulted upon as evidence to the Local Plan.

10.3 Following this the draft Active Travel Masterplan was subject to a 6-week public consultation between 10<sup>th</sup> July and 23<sup>rd</sup> August. A report setting out outcomes of the public consultation including the feedback received, and the changes made to the Active Travel Masterplan in response to the feedback is included as Appendix B to this report.

10.4 The consultation was published on the Council's website and included an online questionnaire that asked the public to give their views on the transport improvements that were identified. This included an interactive map where respondents could leave feedback, both on missing active travel links as well as the alignment of proposed active travel routes.

10.5 The questions sought to gauge the strength of support for the proposed active travel measures and routes put forward, and to ensure they meet the needs of residents. By gathering comprehensive feedback from the community, we sought to refine and adapt the schemes to better serve the interests and priorities of the residents. This process was crucial in making informed decisions that reflect the collective voice and preferences of the community.

10.6 Through the consultation process, we received 820 responses, 380 of which were online survey responses, 335 were comments based on the interactive map with 55 emails.

10.7 In addition, a number of separate consultation events were held alongside attendance at public meetings to raise awareness and increase levels of input to the plan including:

- Parish Liaison meeting – 17th July 2024
- Midsomer Norton – Public Consultation Drop In Event – 18th July 2024
- Keynsham – Public Consultation Drop In Event - 22nd July 2024
- Bath– Public Consultation Drop In Event – 23rd July 2024
- Whitchurch– Public Consultation Drop In Event – 30th July 2024

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<b>Background papers</b>	Appendix A – Active Travel Masterplan Appendix B – Active Travel Masterplan Route Map Appendix C – Active Travel Masterplan – Consultation Report Appendix D – Active Travel Masterplan – Equalities Impact Assessment Report.
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