

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	13 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3593
TITLE:	Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset: The Journey to Net Zero	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
<p><b>List of attachments to this report:</b></p> <p>Appendix A - Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset: The Journey to Net Zero</p> <p>Appendix B - Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset: The Journey to Net Zero – Consultation Report</p> <p>Appendix C – Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset: The Journey to Net Zero – Equalities Impact Assessment Report.</p>		

## **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1 After extensive public consultation, Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) adopted The Journey to Net Zero – Reducing the Environmental Impact of Transport in Bath (JtNZ) in May 2022. This outlined our communities' ideas on how we can transform the transport network within Bath to better meet the needs of our communities, businesses and visitors.
- 1.2 The Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset – The Journey to Net Zero transport strategy seeks to broaden and accelerate our approach to creating sustainable communities across the rest of the District, specifically in:
  - Keynsham and Saltford;
  - Somer Valley;
  - Hicks Gate; and
  - Whitchurch Village.
- 1.3 As outlined in B&NES Corporate Strategy our transport system needs to deliver more travel options to enable people to make the choice to walk, wheel and use public transport. This 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 thriving, healthy communities and places.

- 1.4 The Journey to Net Zero transport plan for Bath and the Climate Emergency Strategy (2019 – 2030) both identify that a 25% reduction is needed in vehicle mileage per person in Bath & North East Somerset in order to achieve net zero movement, and this strategy sets out a vision for movement in the larger communities in North East Somerset that will help facilitate that transition.

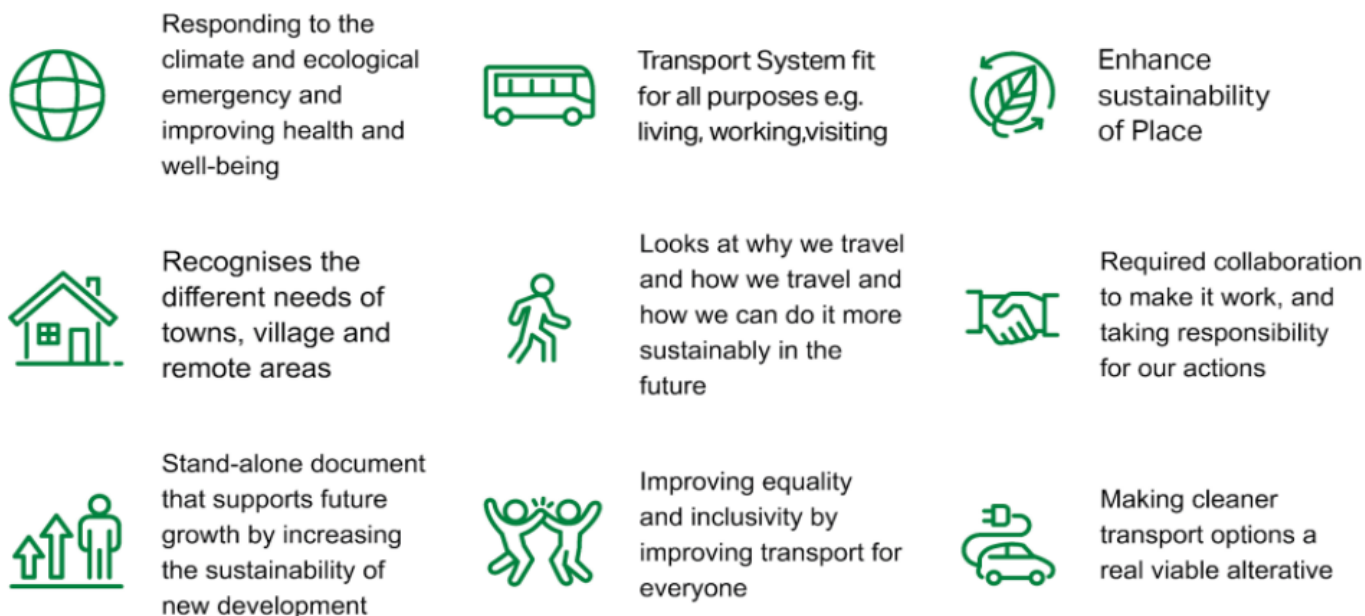
## 2 RECOMMENDATION

**The Cabinet is asked to;**

- 2.1 Formally adopt the Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset: The Journey to Net Zero.

## 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 options to enable people to make the choice to walk, wheel and use public transport. This will provide genuine travel choice for the different types of journeys we want for the places we live and work – creating better connected, healthier and more sustainable communities.
- 3.3 The Creating Sustainable Communities strategy sets out the vision for the transport system for the next 20 years. The strategy looks to the long term and includes proposals needed to provide a transport system that is fit for purpose for those living, working and visiting the area. The strategy defines a pathway for how future transport across North East Somerset will contribute to addressing the climate emergency through improvements that enable more travel via sustainable modes. It signals the future direction of transport and seeks to enhance the sustainability of the existing place, in line with the Vision and Objectives.
- 3.4 The scope of this transport strategy are shown below:



- 3.5 Whilst focussing on the key areas of Keynsham and Saltford, Hicks Gate, Whitchurch village and the Somer Valley, the benefits gained from the improvements set out in this strategy will extend to the whole of North East Somerset, recognising the different needs of its towns, villages and remote areas. This strategy considers why we travel and how those trips can be made both now and in the future by walking, wheeling, cycling and bus. It also sets out how future technology will be catered for through the inclusion of mobility hubs, ultra-low emission vehicle charging and micro mobility including both e-bikes and e-scooters.
- 3.6 The Journey to Net Zero transport plan for Bath and the Climate Emergency Strategy (2019 – 2030) both identify that a 25% reduction is needed in vehicle mileage per person in Bath & North East Somerset in order to achieve net zero movement, and this strategy sets out a vision for movement in the larger communities in North East Somerset that will help facilitate that transition.
- 3.7 The Creating Sustainable Communities Transport Strategy sets out the future direction of travel for movement in our North East Somerset communities, seeking to identify and propose solutions to current challenges for sustainable movement in these communities, and enhance the sustainability of the existing place, in line with the Vision and Objectives. Whilst supporting the aims of the Local Plan, the Creating Sustainable Communities strategy is a stand-alone document.
- 3.8 At the heart of this Transport Strategy is the recognition that we need to make a significant change in our current travel behaviour which requires the provision of attractive, affordable, accessible and sustainable travel options.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

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

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

- 5.1 The Creating Sustainable Communities strategy and the projects contained within it will be delivered through a wide range of projects which will be funded from various sources principally, but not exclusively, the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and West of England Combined Authority Investment Fund.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 The Settlement Fund will be used to fund some of the measures identified within the BSIP, and included in this plan. Other elements of the BSIP are seeking funding through the Bus Transformation Fund.

- 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 Creating Sustainable Communities transport strategy 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 Creating Sustainable Communities transport strategy 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 through the transport strategy as part of their development.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

- 8.1 The Journey to Net Zero transport plan for Bath and the Climate Emergency Strategy (2019 – 2030) both 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 main objective of The Creating Sustainable Communities strategy is to provide a vision for movement in our North East Somerset Communities that enables transport mode shift as defined in the Climate Emergency Strategy. This plan also addresses other key challenges our society faces: improving air quality, improving health and wellbeing, and tackling congestion.
- 8.3 The current ways in which we travel will not get us to carbon neutrality by 2030. This strategy sets out the changes needed to our transport system 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 Creating Sustainable Communities transport strategy, focusing on providing transport infrastructure and environments that will enable the use of sustainable modes by making them a genuine alternative to the car. This will involve reducing the dominance of the private car while maintaining access for those whose needs cannot easily be met by more sustainable modes.
- 8.4 B&NES remains fully committed to becoming carbon neutral in transport terms and this strategy sets out a vision for transition in our North East Somerset communities. 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, along with support from our business community, from residents, and from civil society, to make the vision 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 North East Somerset, specifically Keynsham and Saltford, the Somer Valley, Whitchurch and the Hicks Gate area.
- 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 this transport strategy 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 plan 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 Creating Sustainable Communities transport strategy was subject to a 6-week public consultation between 10<sup>th</sup> July and 23<sup>rd</sup> August. A report setting out the outcomes of the public consultation including the feedback received and the changes made to the strategy 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. The questions sought to gauge the strength of

support for the schemes put forward and to ensure they meet the needs of residents.

10.5 Through the consultation process, we received 75 responses, 63 of which were online survey responses with 10 emails and 2 paper surveys.

10.6 In addition to this, a number of separate consultation events were held in addition to 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

<b>Contact person</b>	Nick Simons (01225 394185)
<b>Background papers</b>	Appendix A - Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset: The Journey to Net Zero Appendix B - Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset: The Journey to Net Zero – Consultation Report Appendix C – Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset: The Journey to Net Zero – Equalities Impact Assessment Report.
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	