

## **FoBRA Transport Group Report – June 2022**

### **Milsom Quarter Masterplan: Consultation closes 5 July 2022 (5pm)**

The Milsom Quarter Masterplan is a long-term plan for development of the area around Milsom Street, Broad Street and Walcot Street. The [consultation](#) includes an overview and video explanation, with fuller details of the masterplan being available in links from the [View the Masterplan Documents](#) page. It includes new development at the Cattlemarket and Broad Street car park, repurposing of unused upper floor accommodation as housing, closure of lower Broad Street to traffic, and creation of a new square in front of St Michael's church. The overall timescale is long – ca. 20 years. As far as transport is concerned key issues to be considered are the full closure of the Milsom Street and Northgate Street bus gates to vehicles other than buses (currently closed only between 10am and 6pm), eventual full closure of Milsom Street to buses (currently served by Lansdown Park & Ride buses), closure of lower Broad Street, and re-routing of buses from Northgate Street to Broad Street via Saracen Street.

The changes envisage closing key routes serving cross-city commuter traffic and school-run journeys outside current bus gate hours. There is no significant proposed reduction in parking provision within the area, whilst the increased density of living and commercial accommodation will generate more traffic in terms of deliveries, services etc.

The changes do not include any proposals for addressing the large amounts of traffic that will be displaced by the proposed road changes, and with the continuing absence of any traffic circulation plan this seems a major defect. We have previously highlighted in the reply to the Journey to Net Zero consultation the essential need for neighbouring areas to be protected from such traffic displacement before further main road closures are introduced, a point that will clearly need to be reiterated.

### **Journey to Net Zero Forum**

B&NES are initiating a new Forum for stakeholder discussions on transport within B&NES. The inaugural meeting in May was attended by a wide range of people from both Bath and wider B&NES, and was concerned essentially with process so it is too early to say whether this will fulfil B&NES's aspiration for it to be the main forum for discussion of transport matters in B&NES

### **Bus services**

First Bus, and presumably other bus companies likewise, are currently suffering from a shortage of drivers, exacerbated by poaching from HGV companies and Covid affecting drivers at short notice. Longer term, there are serious threats to bus funding, and there are ongoing discussions between WECA and the local council leaders about the Transport Levy, which is putting many bus services in and around B&NES at risk. This is in addition to already reduced services and considerable unreliability.

The tender for Park & Ride services was discussed at the May Cabinet Meeting and authority delegated to officers to take a decision to proceed subject to various points. Much of the supporting information was exempt from publication, but it appears that movement towards much less expensive Park & Ride tickets and extended hours is not included. It therefore remains to be seen whether bus services will be able to become a significant measure within B&NES's Journey to Net Zero plans.

### **Liveable Neighbourhoods**

B&NES is currently engaged in a process it calls “co-design” with the areas that are proceeding with potential LNs. Except in a couple of simpler locations this will involve workshops at which local people can contribute ideas for addressing issues specific to their areas. Residents who live in one of the relevant areas are able to sign up to be considered as a workshop participant, selecting the relevant workshop/date for their area from the list provided on the [Sign up to a Co-design Workshop page](#).

### **Cleveland Bridge**

An [update](#) was issued on 31 May. The current contractor is nearing completion of the contracted work, with resurfacing to take place overnight between June 12 and June 20. The bridge will be closed between 7pm and 6am on those dates. This will not include the repairs of the recently discovered serious defect, for which investigations and development of a solution continue. It seems that the road will continue with one open lane until the other side of the road can be made safe.

### **CAZ**

The first year report on the CAZ and the 2022 B&NES Air Quality Report (for 2021 data) are both due to be published in June. Both will be of great interest, but their usefulness to future transport planning will be limited by impact of Covid and Cleveland Bridge works.

### **Citizens’ Panel – Active Travel route from City Centre to Bath Uni**

The principal interest of the Panel to FoBRA is that Councillors have previously indicated it is a potential template for decision-making on other matters. Therefore, in due course the Transport Group will review the process with a view to submitting comments to B&NES. Initial impressions are that the process isn’t sufficiently transparent, there is a lack of clarity about selection of panel members and selection of the evidence base, and there has been insufficient care and transparency about framing the Panel’s remit.

### **Update on various matters**

- Following a recent consultation, new powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions are being taken up by B&NES in various locations. The national legislation came into effect on 1 June.
- Following consultations on Traffic Regulation Orders, the Active Travel schemes on Upper Bristol Road and Beckford Road are to proceed.
- A public inquiry was held on 26 April relating to outstanding unresolved objections to the proposed permanent closure of a section of York Street between 10am and 6pm. The outcome is awaited. The part of York Street outside the new World Heritage Centre is already pedestrian-only.
- A consultation on continuation of the Milsom Street bus gate has recently closed.

Transport Group

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