

Agenda item 11

For information: Travel and Transport in the town

Written by: Councillor Tim Trimble



Background

Town Councillors met with residents to discuss travel and transport at a public meeting at Kingston House on Saturday 23 February.

Notes from the meeting: A vision for travel and transport

Bradford on Avon suffers badly from the adverse effects of motor vehicles passing through the narrow town centre streets and over the single, narrow bridge crossing the river.

On 28 January 2023, the Town Council organised a meeting for representatives of various local groups interested in tackling the issues of pedestrian and cyclist safety, traffic volume and poor air quality which are the primary concerns of many residents.

The following is summary of the vision painted by the various contributors:

Active travel

Develop Active Travel corridors to 'nearest neighbour' towns and villages, notably:

- Winsley - the recently widened path is excellent.
- Trowbridge - the shared use path from Widbrook to Trowle is a good start, and there is a 'Greenway' plan to link Trowle with Trowbridge station.
- Westwood.
- Holt.

Note there is an opportunity to link better transport with improved biodiversity via the concept of 'track and tree', i.e. planting and landscaping alongside new routes.

- More work is needed within town to link these 'spokes' to the town centre 'hub', particularly on Trowbridge Road.
- Include better signage and frequent resting and sight-seeing places which will also improve the overall townscape.

For information

- Work with local schools to encourage walking and cycling to school, including setting up 'walking trains'.
- Provide more secure cycle stands – and covered shelters for bikes.
- Work with Wiltshire Council's Highways team to model and implement an improved traffic system for the town - most likely incorporating some sections of one-way traffic. This could create space in the narrow town centre streets for safer active travel routes.
- Develop and improve the walking and cycling routes to important cities and towns nearby, like Bath and Melksham.
- Use bollards and coloured and textured road surfaces to influence driver behaviour and create safer routes for active travel route users.
- Create a unique selling point for Bradford on Avon as an accessible, inclusive and child friendly town, in spite of our hilly and historic constraints.

Accessibility

- Wheelchair accessibility is needed along all streets, conforming with British Standard 8300 (Inclusive Design Strategy)
- Increased provision for disabled parking will be required - though not an overall increase in car parking spaces.
- Progress plans for a new pedestrian crossing over the river. This idea was supported by 69% of respondents in the 2022 'Future of Transport' consultation.
- Lobby Wiltshire Council to implement 20mph speed limits as widely as possible, including primary routes, to enhance the take up of Active Travel options.
- Investigate the viability of Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras (ANPR cameras) to enforce speed limits and as possible way to impose a toll on the town bridge.

Other

- Progress electric bike and electric car hire schemes (e-bikes and e-cars)
E-bikes can help encourage cycling on our steep hills.
Shared use e-cars are less polluting and can reduce overall private car numbers.
- In conjunction with local businesses and supermarkets, look to implement an electric cargo bike 'last mile' delivery service.

For information

- Encourage Wiltshire Council to increase the number and capacity of electric vehicle (EV) charge points in public car parks.
- Look to do the same on land owned and managed by the Town Council when the opportunities are there.
- Work with businesses to increase EV charging facilities elsewhere in the town.
- Work with rail companies, Wiltshire Council, and user groups to create a Mobility Hub at the rail station - improving pedestrian and cyclist access; linking in bus services, car hire and bike hire; and providing secure cycle storage.
- Lobby Great Western Rail (GWR) to improve regularity and capacity of train services.
- Protect the ticket office from closure - and if necessary - work with user groups and third parties to expand ticket office hours and services.

Buses

Improve bus services, working with Wiltshire Council, nearby towns, user groups and bus companies to:

- Expand and where possible, electrify services.
- Bring electric buses in on the town route and extend to surrounding villages.
- Examine the case for a 'demand responsive' bus service; and-or a community bus.
- Restore the D1-D1X service to Bath and Trowbridge to the pre-pandemic half-hourly service.

Many of these measures would improve the quality of life in the town by reducing vehicle traffic and improving air quality which is beneficial from a health and well-being point of view.

The townscape would also be enhanced, creating space for locals and tourists to wander and enjoy the many pleasant vistas we have to offer. Studies have shown that the increased 'linger' time would also be likely to benefit local businesses.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, these measures would also mean a significant reduction in the carbon footprint of our town.

For information

Whilst this note depicts an overall town vision for transport, many of the objectives here would also slot into the Neighbourhood Plan which the Town Council will be updating in the not-too-distant future.