



**The Bear Flat  
Association**

for those living and working in Bear Flat, Bath



# **BFA Response on the B&NES Active Travel Masterplan Consultation, July 2024**

Bear Flat Association (BFA)

If you have any queries or comments on our response please contact us at:

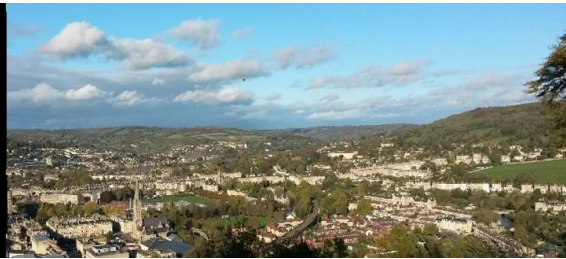
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[www.bearflat.org.uk](http://www.bearflat.org.uk)



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## 1 Support

BFA considers that this is an important and well-structured document, that sets out a clear strategy for more sustainable travel in the area, in accordance with national planning policy.

Many of the proposals support the BFA's *Vision for Bear Flat*, published in 2020, <https://bearflat.org.uk/a-vision-for-bear-flat-centre/> . Thus, BFA particularly supports:

- Sub-section Enhancing safety and accessibility on improved infrastructure design and public education. This is in line with BFA's ambitions for improvements to Wellsway, Hayes Place and The Gore.
- Sub-section Boosting economic prosperity and local businesses on making our high streets more attractive to those who walk, wheel or cycle is in line with BFA's aspiration for our local centre to be less traffic-dominated and more of a village hub; and
- Sub-section Infrastructure and Paragraph 2.7 on reallocating road space, including 20mph zones and better wayfinding and signage, are in line with BFA's proposals for the provision of more active travel infrastructure and a 20-mph limit in our local centre on Wellsway.

## 2 Active travel and public transport

The definition of active travel makes no reference to public transport. This is regrettable as the use of buses and trains involves some active travel, usually walking both ends of each trip. Public transport is preferable to private car use for environmentally beneficial reasons and should be included here, or at least mentioned.

Sub-section, Responding to the Climate Emergency and 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 make positive if brief reference to public transport, but the masterplan should do more to make connections between active travel and public transport.

## 3 Behaviour change

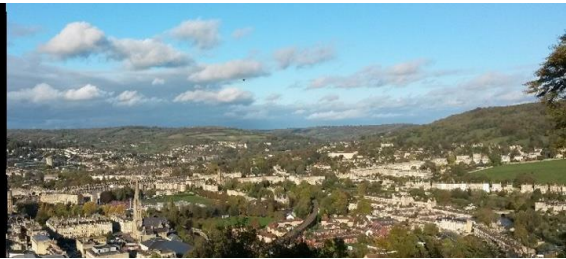
Sub-section Behaviour change and education is essential if the Active Travel Masterplan is to achieve its objectives and make Bath a better place for future generations. The sub-section supports campaigns to promote more walking and cycling that BFA would wish to help with.

Encouraging people to use their cars less, and take buses and trains, if not bicycles, e-scooters and feet more, is key to achieving environmental



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improvements. Many people are unaware or not convinced by the reasons for behavioural change.

The BFA, in an area well-placed for more walking, cycling and bus usage, promotes non-car travel in its communications with BFA members e.g. information about bus services, identifying walking routes, changes to Public Rights of Way etc. More residents' associations and similar bodies could be encouraged to do the same.

The Council itself might trial nudging projects that have boosted non-car travel elsewhere through leaflets delivered to households and other marketing. The emphasis is a positive one on information and opportunity (even incentives), not exhortation and implied criticism.

Material should provide data on, among other things, matters such as:

- accident levels in 20 and 30mph areas
- fatality rates for pedestrians from different age groups; and
- air pollution levels in the city over time - perhaps before and after the introduction of lower speed limits, RPZs and LTNs

The Council could engage with major employers and trip generators about their role in fostering non-car modes. For example, outpatient appointment letters issued by RUH give ample information about car parking but little on walking, cycling or buses.

The document describes safe behaviour as a key aspect of B&NES objective for Vision Zero. 30mph speeds are said to increase the risk of death for pedestrians in road accidents by five, compared with 20mph. 20mph limits are being introduced on several key roads in Bath, and BFA wants their introduction through the local centre along Wellsway.

## 4 National policy

Paragraph 1.6 states that from the 1960s to 1990s, transport policy followed the "predict and provide" principle, building more and more roads and parking facilities to cater for rising car ownership and usage.

While the statement is generally true, the desirability of predict and provide was seriously questioned in London in 1970 by the "Homes before Roads" campaign that led to the abandonment of the London ringways.

Also, the West Yorkshire Transportation Studies 1975-77 sought to relieve transport problems through a range of measures including traffic management, and better public transport enhancement, as well as limited road building.



It is unclear whether this statement (above) refers to England or the more local area of Bath. Paragraph 1.6 should more clearly differentiate transport policy nationally/West Country/ B&NES.

Section 3 refers to Active Travel England, Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body and West of England Combined Authority and the roles of these bodies and their connections to each other are unclear.

## 5 **Schools**

Paragraph 2.5 states that active travel offers benefits for children and young people, laying the foundations for its inclusion in everyday activities in adulthood. This strengthens the case for effective School Travel Plans for all schools B&NES.

BFA has put pressure on Beechen Cliff School (BCS) to produce an effective Travel Plan and commit to its implementation. The Masterplan will underpin the efforts of BFA, councillors and officers to bring about a suitable Travel Plan for BCS.

On School Streets the document states that comprehensive traffic reduction measures will be explored. The school run is described as a major contribution to congestion, noise and air pollution, and a generator of unsafe conditions around parking and maneuvering. There is an ambition for all secondary school children to be able to travel independently to school. BCS and other schools should be engaged in these ambitions.

7.3.5 is backed by BFA: we see improvements at Bear Flat, notably a crossing of Bloomfield Road at the Gore, as important for a safe route to BCS

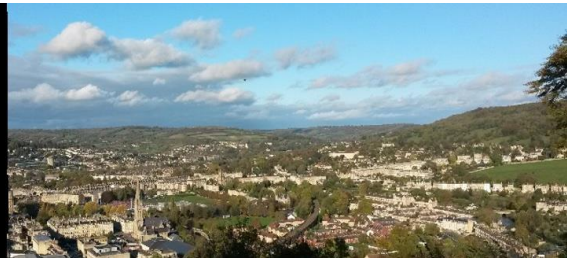
The Council should liaise with secondary school leaders and experts in transport planning and development to deliver talks and classes which explain the benefits of sustainable travel modes and encourage people to assess their travel behaviour on a regular basis.

Issues associated with the use of the car (RTCs; pollution from exhaust emissions, tyres and brakes; noise and disturbance; and harm to the character and appearance of urban areas especially those of heritage significance from high traffic flows and on-street parking) should be discussed and debated more widely.



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## 6 Barriers

Chapter 6 identifies constraints on walking and cycling, from gradients to a lack of continuous infrastructure, to street clutter and fear of injury. Regarding improvement schemes, it is noted that London spends £24 per head, whereas authorities in the West of England spend only £10. Public perception is a constraint in many areas, with active travel often seen as inconvenient. Better education is seen as a measure which could improve behaviour.

## 7 Measures

Chapter 7 begins with Children – Safe Streets. Over 1,000 communities have taken part in schemes to close streets to traffic to allow safe play for children. This sounds great, but it is difficult to identify a potential area of Bear Flat where this could be introduced.

The case for good road safety to enable elderly people to take more physical exercise (walking and cycling) is made, and arguably reinforces the case for improvements to Bear Flat local centre. Statistics show that elderly people account for 19% of all miles walked, and 43.6% of all pedestrians killed.

Chapter 8 focusses on routes and networks. The role of development management in preventing developments, even small ones, in areas heavily dependent on cars for movement should be emphasised; similarly, the role of planning, mainly the Local Plan, in steering growth to areas suited to active travel and public transport.