Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

AECOM

Bath and North East Somerset

Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset

The Journey to Net Zero

Draft for Consultation

July 2024

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1. Introduction

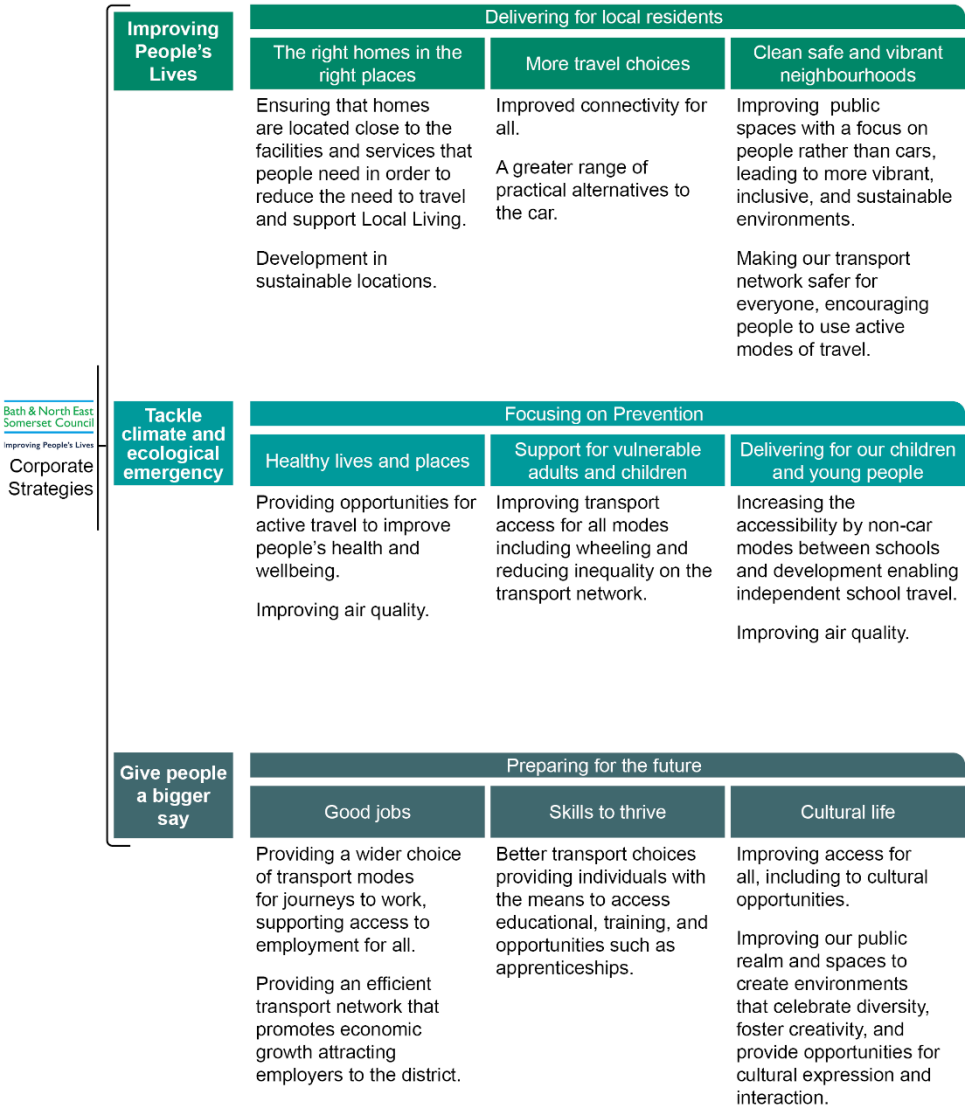
1.1 What does Transport Mean for Us?

1.1.1 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.

1.1.2 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.

1.1.3 The way we provide for travel choices needs to align with our Corporate Strategy, which underpins everything we do as a Council. The ways in which transport contributes to our strategic priorities, is outlined in Figure 1-1 below.

Figure 1-1 Strategic Priorities for Transport



1.1.4 After extensive public consultation, we adopted The Journey to Net Zero (JtNZ) in May 2022, which outlined our communities' ideas on how we can transform our transport network within Bath to better meet the needs of our communities, businesses and visitors.

1.1.5 This transport strategy seeks to broaden and accelerate our approach to Creating Sustainable Communities across the District, specifically in:

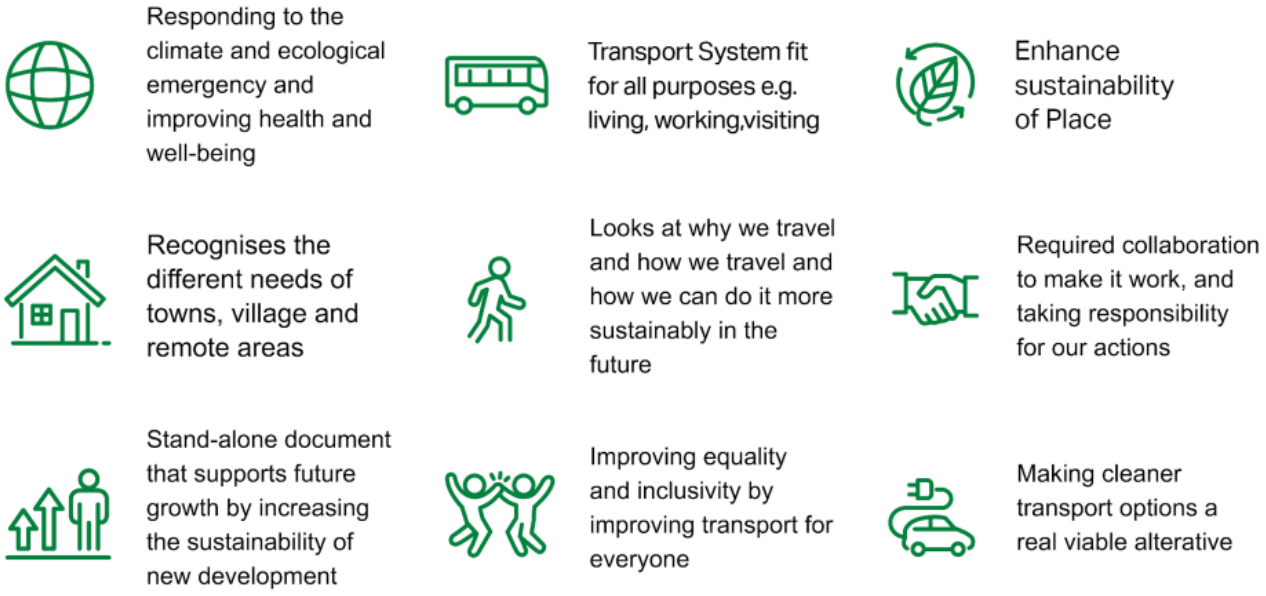
- Keynsham and Saltford;
- Somer Valley;
- Hicks Gate; and
- Whitchurch Village.

1.1.6 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 healthy communities and places.

1.1.7 To do that, we need to look at the whole transport system, recognising that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. We need to ensure that as well as providing more travel choices for people, we are also thinking about how those choices work together as a network, enabling people to change between modes. This could be as simple as cycling to a bus stop, or getting a bus to a train station - we need to make these journeys as seamless as possible. It is also important, especially from an equity perspective, that we make it easy to string multiple trips together, such as home – school – doctors – shops – home. Just one missing link in the chain can mean relying on a car to do the whole chain, or unnecessary hardship.

1.1.8 The key elements of the scope of this transport strategy are shown in Figure 1-2.

Figure 1-2 Scope of this transport strategy



1.2 The Process

1.2.1 We have engaged across our communities and with local stakeholders, to get an understanding of what people find difficult about our transport network, and we have reviewed the evidence of how people travel now, and the improvement plans that are already in place.

1.2.2 This document summarises those concerns, and proposes some options about how to address them in the short, medium and long term. We now want to hear your views on whether these are the right options, and how we can enhance the strategy. Following the close of consultation, we will review and revise the strategy, and seek Council adoption.

1.2.3 The anticipated timeline for the Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset is as follows:

- May 2022 - Journey to Net Zero Transport Plan for Bath is adopted.

- February 2023 - Targeted engagement: We held workshops with community representatives and key stakeholders to identify issues and opportunities for each of the four areas.
- July 2023 - Further workshops were held with both internal and external stakeholders.
- August 2023 to January 2024 - Site visits, data review and analysis.
- February 2024 - Public consultation on our summary plans for Creating Sustainable Communities in North East Somerset.
- February 2024 - Review and amend draft based on feedback gathered at consultation.
- July to August 2024 - Public consultation and engagement with stakeholders.
- September 2024 to Autumn 2024 - Review responses and work towards a document that best meets the needs of our communities.
- Autumn/Winter 2024 - Adopt strategy and Active Travel Masterplan.

1.3 Delivery

1.3.1 The purpose of this strategy is to provide more travel choices in the communities of North-East Somerset, to create a transport network which meets the needs of our communities, now and into the future.

1.3.2 Delivering this type of change will take time, and significant investment. We need to reflect the level of ambition from within our Communities and the council as a whole, within realistic timeframes. As such, this transport strategy sets out our proposed improvements into short-, medium- and long-term projects.

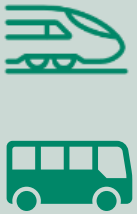
1.3.3 Delivery will be through a combination of public sector funding, such as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), and third party local contributions. We are working with stakeholders such as the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (WECA) to ensure the delivery of this transport strategy.

2. Keynsham and Saltford Transport Strategy

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Our previous engagement with the communities in Keynsham highlighted a number of concerns with the current transport network. This is set out in Table 2-1.

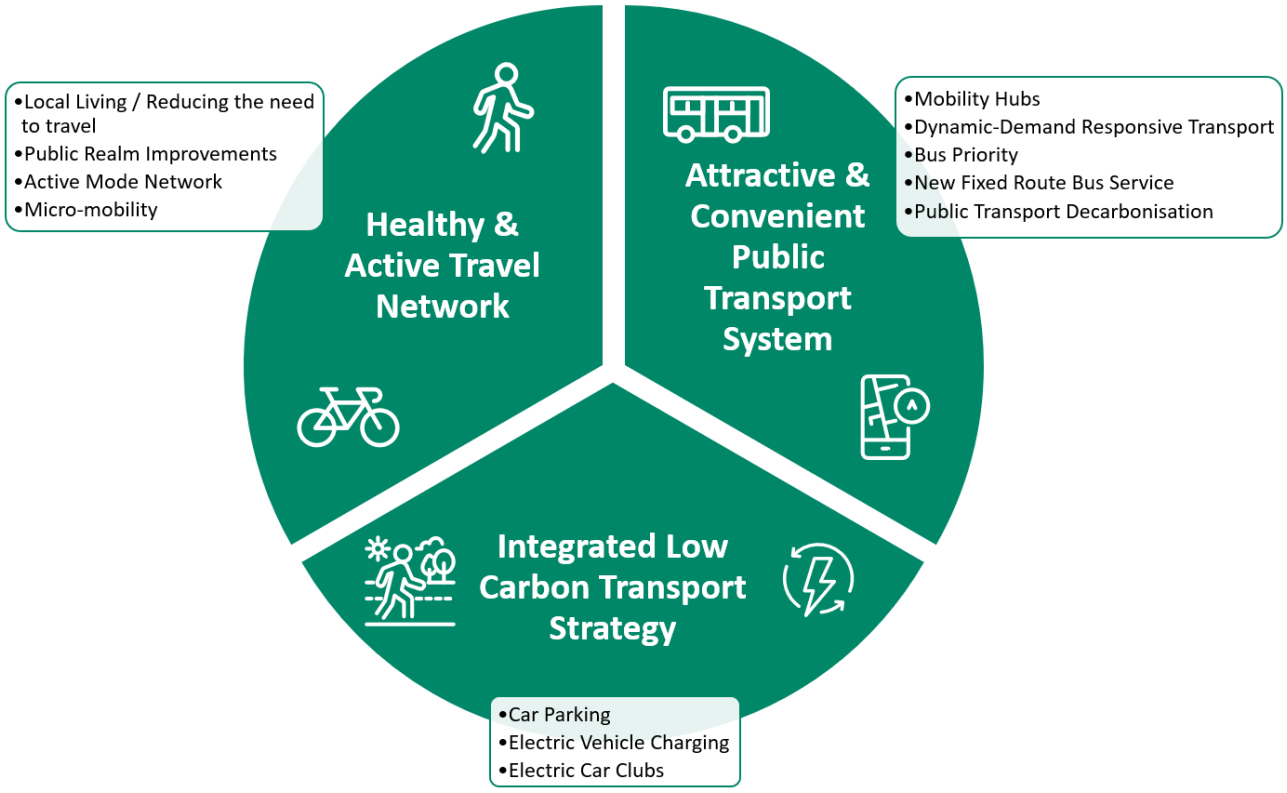
Table 2-1 Keynsham and Saltford - Issues and Challenges

Transport Challenges		
	**Public Transport**	• It is often easier to drive than to take public transport as car parks are closer to popular destinations. • A lack of bus priority measures, and congestion on bus routes, means that bus journey times can be unreliable • It is reasonably easy to get to/from Bristol and Bath by public transport, but much harder for other destinations • Rail station access: Buses are not able to access the station itself to pick up and drop off passengers and there is limited cycle parking, without CCTV and good lighting. • The A4 and rail lines make it harder for people to walk and cycle between the town and the station. • No permanent rail ticket office for the purchase of tickets and travel assistance.
	**Congestion**	• Congestion, particularly on the A4 corridor, impacting both Keynsham and Saltford. • Lack of good quality transport links between the A4 and A37 means that residential roads and rural lanes often take high volumes of traffic. The “main” route using West Town Lane is often heavily congested. • It is easier to drive through Keynsham than travel on foot, by bicycle or on the bus. • Congestion on main roads can result in drivers taking routes through more sensitive areas. This can make walking and cycling less attractive. • Car parking in Keynsham is easier and cheaper than public transport. • There is a reasonable level of car parking in Keynsham, not all of which is fully used. • Limited availability of public Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP).

Transport Challenges		
	**Travel Patterns**	• The proportion of journeys to work by private car is higher than both the national average and the average for the South West.
	**Active Travel Network**	• The cycle network in Keynsham is not well joined up. Gaps in cycle infrastructure make it difficult to travel by bike. • No direct, off-road access to the Bristol Bath Railway Path route from Keynsham. The connection at the Bird in Hand pub, Saltford, is steep or stepped and not accessible to all. • Walking routes between residential areas to the south of Keynsham and the town centre are often not direct.
	**Public Realm**	• Public space is more balanced towards cars and parking over people. Often seen as easier to drive than to walk, wheel, cycle or take public transport. • Congestion makes it harder for people to walk around. • Challenges with the Keynsham High Street on-street cycle lane.

2.1.2 In order to respond to the findings identified above whilst reflecting the overarching policy backdrop of decarbonising the transport network to achieve net zero targets, key themes of the Plan have been developed as set out in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1 Transport Strategy for Keynsham & Saltford Key Themes

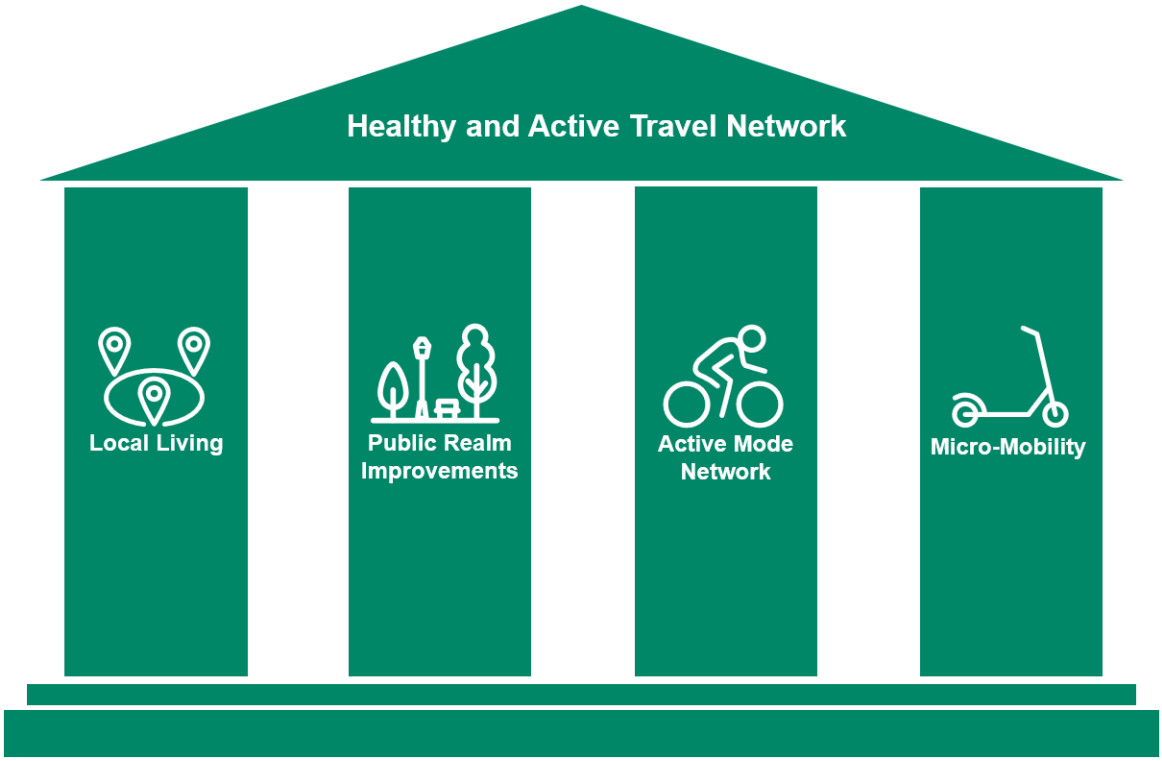


2.1.3 The remainder of this chapter sets out each theme of this transport strategy in further detail.

2.2 Healthy & Active Travel Network

2.2.1 This transport strategy proposes development of an attractive and convenient transport network across Keynsham and Saltford, comprising the following elements shown in Figure 2-2.

Figure 2-2 Healthy & Active Travel Network



Local Living / Reducing the Need to Travel

What the evidence shows:

2.2.2 The 2011 census data shows that private car use for journeys to work was higher in Keynsham than for the B&NES district, South West region and for Great Britain as a whole, with bus and cycle use for journeys to work correspondingly lower in Keynsham.

2.2.3 Keynsham has relatively high levels of congestion and the town centre is located beyond desirable walking distances for large parts of Keynsham but within cycling distance if appropriate routes are provided. This is evidenced by Keynsham's higher level of car ownership than we might expect for a town with a lot of day-to-day facilities. As such, it suggests a lack of connectivity to the level of amenities for travel by sustainable modes.

2.2.4 The A4 forms a barrier to access for Ashmead Industrial Estate. A comparison of 2021 census data to the 2011 census shows that, mirroring the national picture, Keynsham has experienced an increase in the distance that residents are travelling to their place of work. There are limited employment, leisure, and shopping opportunities within Saltford, resulting in longer journey distances outside of the area to Keynsham or Bristol, with a greater reliance on the private car.

What the community has told us:

2.2.5 The community has said that Keynsham's roads are very busy and the recent residential development traffic has further exacerbated this as traffic movements pass through the centre, reducing the sense of place and making it unattractive for people walking.

2.2.6 The community has told us that any new development in Keynsham should provide benefits for existing communities, and that new transport infrastructure should be delivered before any new development takes place.

2.2.7 Ideas have been put forward to pedestrianise the High Street in Keynsham to link with the Memorial Park, making it more accessible, reducing congestion and providing better opportunity for street entertainment and markets.

2.2.8 Engagement feedback also highlighted that Saltford is adversely affected by reliance on cars and congestion along the A4, and that Saltford High Street would benefit from more community spaces, either in pop up form or permanent form.

2.2.9 The feedback indicates that there is generally not enough industrial land and office space available within Keynsham and Saltford, thereby creating commuter trips to Bath and Bristol.

2.2.10 Digital inclusion was raised as an important point and the need to address barriers to employment opportunities such as Wi-Fi connection in rural areas and home working opportunities, as well as smart street furniture and traffic sensors.

Plan Response:

2.2.11 Enabling local living in Keynsham would create convenient communities where residents can access the amenities required to meet their daily needs within a walking or cycling journey. Additionally, excellent internet connectivity, home working and digital services could reduce travel demand building on Keynsham's above B&NES average home working employment.

2.2.12 Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel could be enabled through the following measures:

- Supporting remote working;
- Facilitating virtual access to services; and
- Improving proximity and access to jobs and key services.

2.2.13 An overview of the opportunities within the Local Living section of the Plan is provided in the following paragraphs. The aim is giving better access to services residents need closer to home, thereby encouraging a change to existing trip patterns and reduce the current high car dependency.

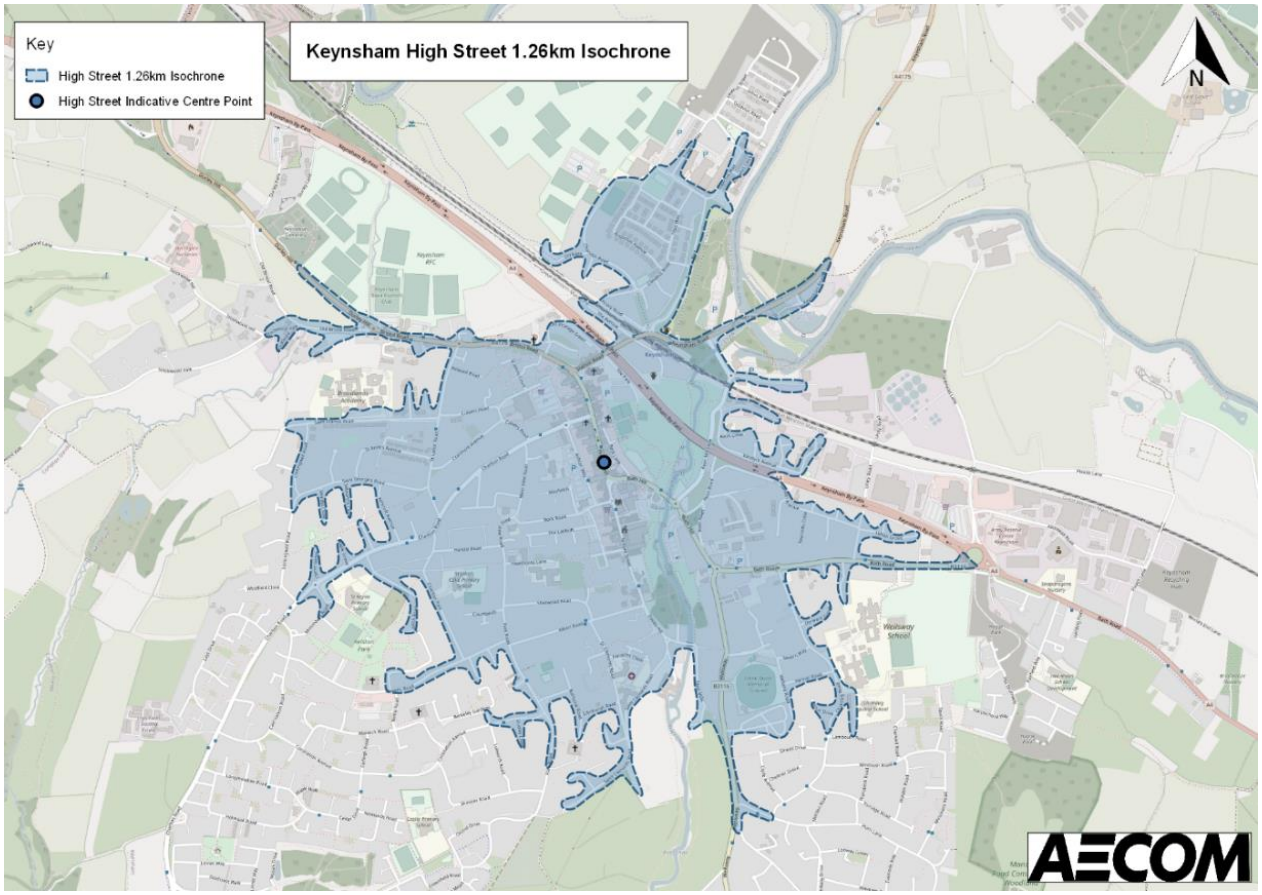
Figure 2-3 Local Living Opportunities

Source: 'Living Locally: The role of housing and planning within local councils', APSE and TPCA, July 2023

Rationale

2.2.14 The map below shows areas within a 15-minute walking/wheeling journey from Keynsham High Street.

Figure 2-4 Keynsham High Street - 15-Minute Walking Isochrone



2.2.15 The outer edges of Keynsham are not within a 15-minute walk of the High Street, highlighting the importance of local centres to support people's needs closer to home, and of providing safe cycling routes to the High Street.

2.2.16 Providing good walking and wheeling infrastructure could help reduce the need for journeys by car, and in turn promote healthier lifestyles and environments to live in. This Plan supports the re-vitalisation and improvement of local centres. Studies have shown that people who travel to their local centre by walking or wheeling spend more time and money during their visit. For example, the Transport for London (TfL) Town Centres Report (2013) concluded that people who walk to the high street spend 40% more than those who drive.[1]

Supporting Remote Working: Mobility Hubs

2.2.17 The proposals for Mobility Hubs are set out later in this chapter. The development of Mobility Hubs would include café / community spaces with Wi-Fi connectivity and could help facilitate remote working. This is intended to support a shift in travel behaviour towards reducing travel demand.

Supporting Remote Working: Broadband Coverage/Digital Connectivity

2.2.18 Provision of high-speed broadband within all new development and supporting the roll out of future generations of cellular and communications technologies could help enable remote working and reduce the need to travel. Opportunities for remote working include community spaces and cafes located within Keynsham, including Keynsham Library, which has self-service kiosks, computers and telephones that enable users to access online services with assistance available to those who may need it.

[1] https://content.tfl.gov.uk/town-centres-report-13.pdf

Proximity and Accessibility to Key Services

2.2.19 Health, education, childcare, retail, employment, leisure and community facilities are available within Keynsham. Further co-location of land uses combined with active mode connectivity between could help to ensure that travel demand within Keynsham is reduced as residents are able to access a full range of key services within a walking / wheeling and cycling journey. The planning process has an important role to play here by focussing development in sustainable locations where opportunities exist for walking / wheeling, cycling and public transport journeys to key amenities.

2.2.20 Additionally, improvements to walking / wheeling and cycling infrastructure within Keynsham and Saltford offer the opportunity to overcome existing barriers and make journeys by active modes to key services more attractive and the natural first choice (rather than travelling via a private car). Improvements to walking/wheeling and cycling infrastructure are discussed later in this chapter.

Keynsham Town Centre / Public Realm Improvements

What the evidence shows:

2.2.21 Evidence set out in the Issues and Opportunities Report shows that Keynsham experiences traffic congestion within the town centre, in particular on Station Road during the AM and PM peak hours.

2.2.22 Despite recent improvements, more public space is afforded to vehicles rather than people. The resulting congestion in the town centre contributes to an unwelcoming environment for people walking and cycling and can discourage people from active travel and spending time in the town centre.

2.2.23 Challenges in Keynsham Town Centre include the following:

- Vehicle dominated public realm;
- Reports of trip accidents between footway and cycleway;
- Delays to bus journey times as a result of high traffic volumes;
- High traffic volumes on High Street, including a proportion of through traffic; and
- Through traffic on residential streets.

What the community has told us:

2.2.24 Keynsham is highly congested and recent residential development traffic has further exacerbated this as traffic movements pass through the centre, reducing the sense of place and harming the environment for pedestrians.

2.2.25 Ideas have been put forward to pedestrianise the High Street in Keynsham to link with the Memorial Park, making it more accessible, reducing congestion, and providing better opportunity for street entertainment and markets.

Plan Response:

Overarching Approach

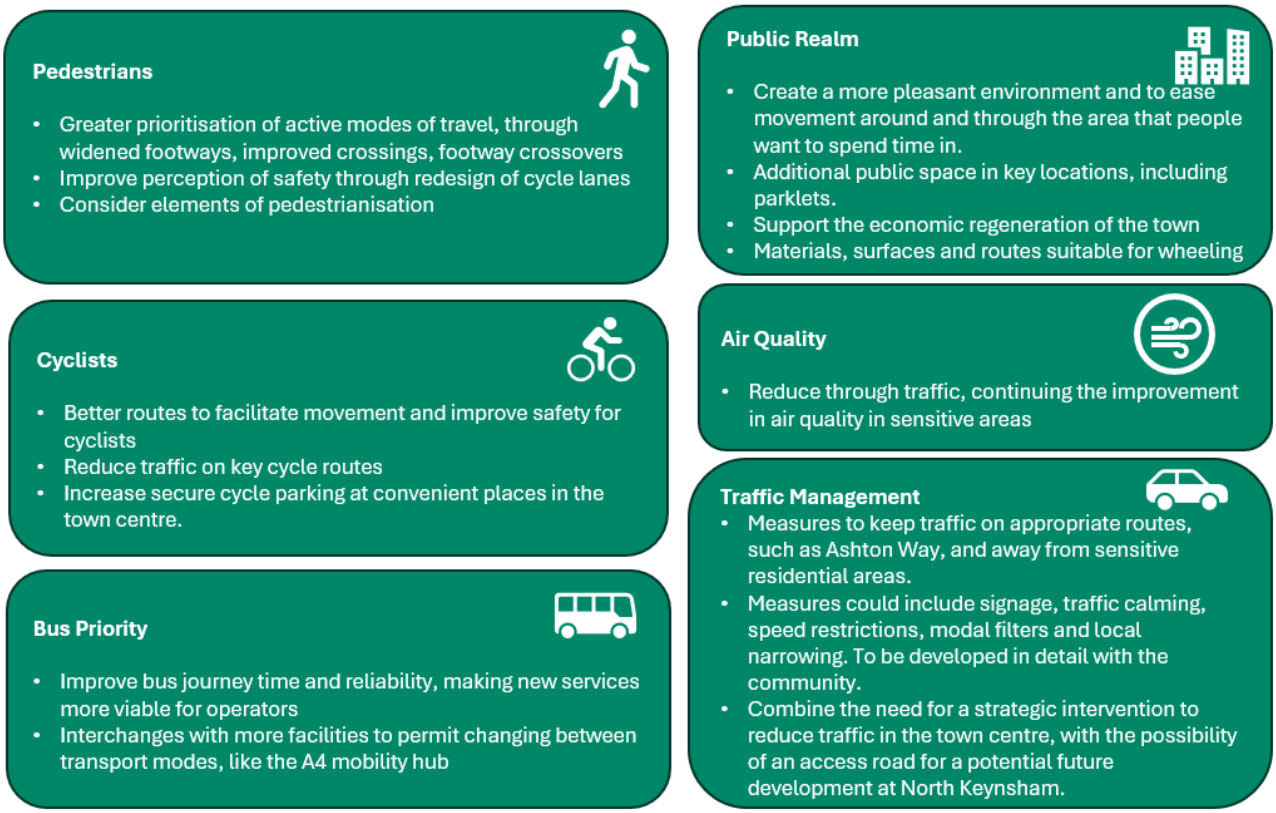
2.2.26 The evidence and proposals from the stakeholder engagement activities have given us a number of ideas to reduce the impact of vehicles in Keynsham town centre. This transport strategy considers what this could involve and sets the direction for a more detailed study to take place.

2.2.27 The overarching aim of the study will be to reallocate highway space to give all modes a share of the space, and improve the public realm in the centre of Keynsham, supporting the economic prosperity of the town. This will create a more pleasant environment and facilitate movement around and through areas that people want to spend time in.

Ideas and Benefits – what could this involve?

2.2.28 To achieve this, the following ideas and benefits have been considered. A future scheme could involve elements of these items and have similar benefits.

Figure 2-5 Keynsham Town Centre - Ideas and Benefits



Scope of the scheme

2.2.29 There is an opportunity to change the High Street to create a better place. This would require a comprehensive study and community engagement to re-imagine Keynsham town centre to improve the quality of place, support sustainable transport, and deliver economic prosperity.

2.2.30 At present, the High Street is one-way southbound with a contraflow cycle-lane between Charlton Road and Temple Street. The study would consider options for the current one-way section of the High Street, including pedestrianisation, bus priority, and pedestrian and public realm improvements.

2.2.31 It would also be possible to extend the scope of a scheme to include the full length of the High Street as far north as Station Road, and to include Charlton Road between the High Street and Ashton Way.

2.2.32 A wider extent of the scheme would potentially offer more substantial benefits but would also have a wider reaching effect on the vehicle movement network. We would have to carefully consider the effects, including whether interventions would be needed to improve alternative routes and/or to avoid unintended effects on sensitive routes.

2.2.33 The current vehicle movement network through Keynsham is pervasive and results in vehicle dominance. Keeping through traffic to strategically chosen routes will allow traffic impact to be managed and other improvements to be made. This requires defining a vehicular movement network through Keynsham and Saltford.

North Keynsham Strategic Access Link

2.2.34 Significant traffic volumes pass through the centre of Keynsham with no origin or destination within the town. This is, in part, because traffic travelling between the A4135 North and A4 East has limited alternative to passing through the town centre, or using Avon Mill Lane. This prevents introduction of quality walking and wheeling routes, negatively impacts public transport reliability and journey times, worsens air quality, and creates an unpleasant environment for those walking, cycling and wheeling.

2.2.35 Previous studies considered opportunities for a new road which would run from Avon Mill Lane to the A4 between Keynsham and Saltford which would offer the opportunity to re-imagine Keynsham town centre and deliver exceptional benefits in terms of public transport priority, LTN1/20 compliant walking and cycling routes, improved economic prosperity, air quality, safety for vulnerable road users and considerable public realm improvements. It would also enable a reduction in traffic through the centre of the town, supporting the delivery of local improvements.

2.2.36 This would provide a strategic benefit in terms of increasing the potential to deliver sustainable transport improvements on routes within and to the Town Centre. An Option Assessment Report titled 'A4 Bristol to East Keynsham Corridor Study, May 2018' was completed and publicly consulted in 2018[2].

Town Centre Active Mode Connections

2.2.37 As part of public realm improvements, this Plan proposes town centre active mode connections, to provide throughput of active mode journeys between the High Street, proposed Mobility Hubs and Keynsham railway station.

Temple Street Public Realm Improvements

2.2.38 B&NES Council has recently delivered public realm improvements on Temple Street. Provision for cycling could be enhanced between Carpenter's Lane and the High Street. This would link a relatively quiet active travel route from South Keynsham with the facilities on the High Street, and the railway station beyond. There is a reasonable level of highway space available to achieve this.

Cumulative Benefits

2.2.39 The benefits of these public realm improvements are:

- Greater prioritisation of active modes of transport, particularly for those on foot, who would benefit from widened footways alongside Temple Street and the High Street. This would create a more pleasant environment and ease of movement through and around areas where people would want to spend more time. This could be used to greater effect for social / commercial activities, such as pavement cafes, and help to boost economic viability of the area;
- Bus services would benefit in terms of journey time savings, from the introduction of bus priority measures, making the bus more attractive, thus reducing car journeys and making bus services more commercially viable for operators to retain in the long run. This creates a clear advantage for public transport over car usage. It would also enable local town "loop" services to access the High Street easily, and for passengers to then access strategic services between the Bath to Bristol Strategic Corridor (BBSC) and Bath at the A4 Mobility Hub[3];
- Pedestrian connections across the High Street would also be improved to facilitate movements to / from the proposed Mobility Hub and Keynsham railway station; and
- Opportunities to provide enhanced crossing points to better meet desire lines; and
- Improving the attractiveness of sustainable modes would have the benefit of encouraging a change in preferred travel method towards active / public transport.

[2] https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/document-and-policy-library/strategic-transport-studies

[3] A "Mobility Hub" is a recognisable place with an offer of different and connected transport modes supplemented with enhanced facilities and information (CoMoUK, 2019). Further details can be found in Section 2.3

Active Travel Network

What the evidence shows:

2.2.40 Data from the 2021 Census also shows that the Keynsham area has a lower proportion of walking and cycling commuting trips compared to B&NES and the South West region.

What the community has told us:

2.2.41 Saltford was recognised as having a “great” Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network, however accessibility is an issue as those with mobility issues often find it difficult to use the paths.

2.2.42 North East Somerset has an abundance of green space and attractive walking routes. Priority should be given to the creation and improvement of these. Active travel should be enabled as much as possible through the implementation of more walkways and cycle routes – many of which could be dedicated nature or heritage trails.

Plan Response:

2.2.43 This Plan proposes development of a high quality, attractive, safe and integrated network of walking and cycling infrastructure. This would connect the existing, often fragmented, sections of cycle infrastructure to create a continuous, coherent, high-quality cycle network.

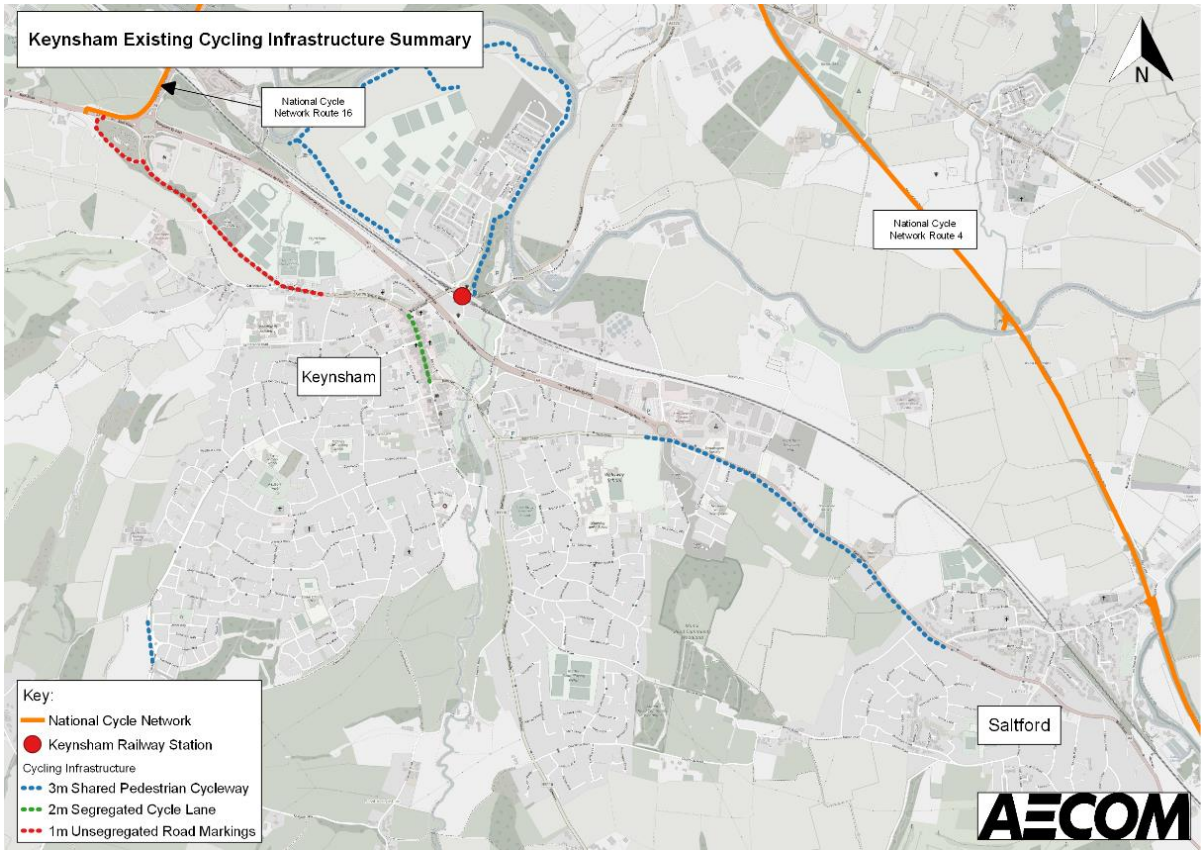
2.2.44 This would include new segregated cycle lanes, as well as repurposed country lanes where appropriate, providing a clear network of attractive primary and secondary routes connecting key amenities and facilities.

2.2.45 Once this is achieved, travel by active modes could become the genuine first choice for most local trips and a viable option for many further afield: improving health, alleviating congestion and lowering carbon emissions. It could also help boost the local economy, capitalising on existing excellent assets such as the Bristol and Bath Railway Path, by encouraging cycling not only for commuting, but also for leisure and tourism.

Existing Cycle Infrastructure

2.2.46 For ease of reference, the existing cycling infrastructure in Keynsham and Saltford is summarised in the below figure.

Figure 2-6 Keynsham Existing Cycling Infrastructure



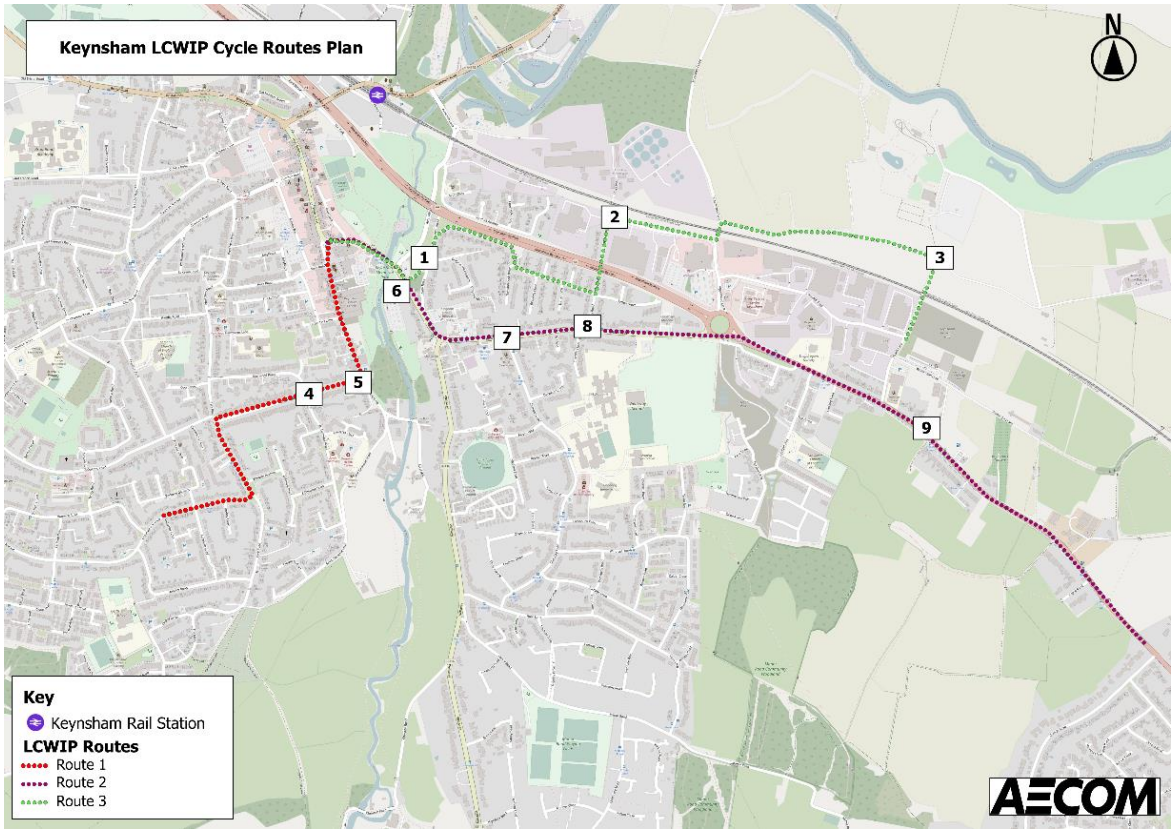
2.2.47 The existing cycling infrastructure in Keynsham is fragmented and does not connect to form a comprehensive and legible network. It is also of inconsistent quality, for example, the 1 metre wide unsegregated cycleway within the carriageway on the A4175 is, in practice, unattractive due to high traffic flows and speeds and is likely to only be suitable for a small proportion of confident cyclists. In stark contrast, the NCN Route 4, also known as the Bristol to Bath Railway Path, represents a genuine and attractive opportunity for a wide range of users to travel via bicycle between Keynsham / Saltford and Bristol / Bath.

2.2.48 By providing a connected, legible network of primary routes of consistent quality, a wider range of users would have the confidence to switch trips that they otherwise would have taken by private car to cycling.

West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2020 – 2036: Keynsham Routes 1, 2 and 3

2.2.49 The West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) 2020 – 2036 set out a plan for providing high quality cycling infrastructure in Keynsham. The below figure is adapted from the LCWIP.

Figure 2-7 West of England LCWIP 2020 - 2036: Keynsham Cycle Routes 1, 2 and 3



2.2.50 As shown above, when delivered, the infrastructure included in the LCWIP for Keynsham gives many more options than the existing cycling infrastructure in the town, by providing continuous connections between key destinations (e.g. Keynsham High Street, Wellsway School, Ashmead Industrial Estate) and surrounding residential areas.

2.2.51 For ease of reference, the numbers included above correspond with the references in the West of England LCWIP summarised below:

1. Removing parking and installing a mandatory cycle lane;
2. Improve visibility, reduce speed limit to 20mph and provide cycle infrastructure;
3. Cycle infrastructure to link with potential future development;
4. Junction improvement at Albert Rd/St Clements Rd/Sherwood Rd and potential modal filter at Sherwood Road southern entrance;
5. Improvements to make cyclists more visible and help cyclists to keep to the correct side of the road;
6. Measures to improve safety for right-turning cyclists at Fox and Hounds Lane Roundabout;
7. Provide uphill mandatory cycle lane on Bath Hill and in both directions on Bath Road between Bath Hill/Unity Road;
8. Provide pedestrian/cycle refuge island with right hand turn lane for cyclists to connect to shared-use path east of Unity Road so cyclists can avoid roundabout; and
9. Upgrade shared use path to provide two-way segregated path on south side of A4 between Ellsbridge Close and Grange Road and continuous footways at Copse Road and Grange Road.

2.2.52 It should be noted that there are a number of caveats attached to the LCWIP including that improvements are subject to detailed analysis of consultation responses, further design and technical work, scheme/route specific consultation and funding requirements. Notwithstanding this, if the above routes can be established and successfully designed in line with DfT Local Transport Note 1/20 as intended, this could help achieve the goal of creating a high quality, attractive, safe and integrated network in Keynsham.

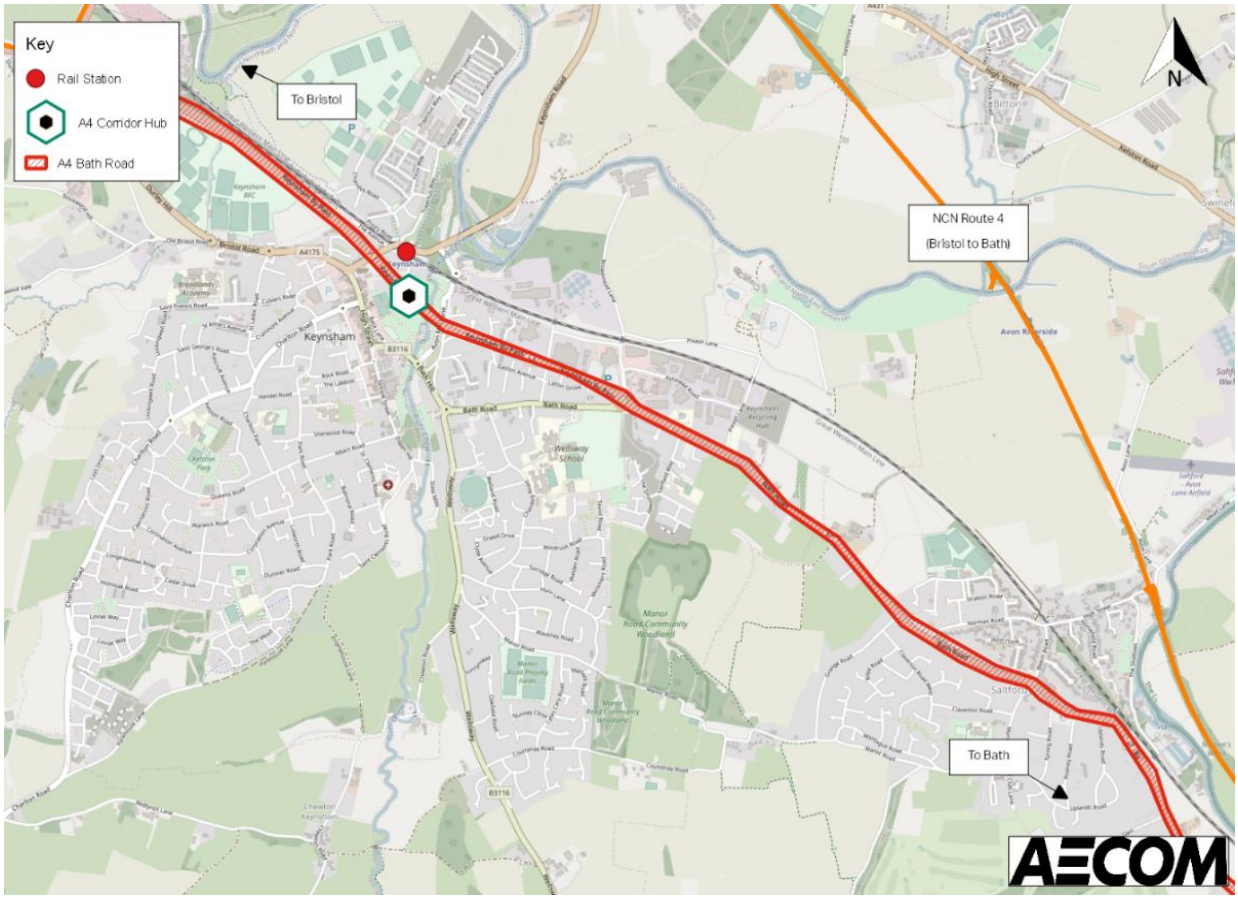
2.2.53 The above LCWIP measures should be combined with improvements to walking and cycling at the residential local neighbourhood level to improve links to nearby amenities and other routes.

2.2.54 Routes 1 and 2 of the LCWIP are committed improvements to be delivered through the East Keynsham developments, and secured as part of those planning consents.

Recommended Improvements to Keynsham Cycle Network

2.2.55 As part of any forthcoming A4 Bath to Bristol Strategic Corridor study, opportunities to provide cycling infrastructure adjacent to the A4 linking Hicks Gate and Saltford should be considered, as summarised in the below figure.

Figure 2-8 A4 Corridor Study Illustration



2.2.56 The above figure illustrates that the potential for a direct route for those travelling between Bristol – Bath via Keynsham and Saltford as part of the A4 Bath to Bristol Strategic Corridor Study. The particular benefit would be increased directness when compared to the existing Bristol to Bath Railway Path (NCN Route 4) for trips to / from Bristol.

2.2.57 Consultation on initial proposals for the A4 Bath to Bristol Strategic Corridor has been held, closing on 1st October 2023. Full details of the proposals can be viewed at https://b2b.haveyoursaywest.co.uk/. The Outline Business Case (OBC) for the scheme has been approved, and work is progressing towards Full Business Case (FBC) and delivery.

2.2.58 There is a need to improve walking and cycling to connect people to key facilities and amenities. Any forthcoming development would need to provide walking and cycling provision in line with B&NES Council's Transport and Developments (T&D) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which includes making improvements to the existing network.

2.2.59 Improving active mode infrastructure adjacent to the A4 could provide a genuine opportunity to replace trips that would have otherwise been undertaken by private car. Any proposals would need to ensure separation of cyclists from motor traffic and measures to make the route attractive and safe for users.

2.2.60 These priorities are in line with the A4 Bath to Bristol Strategic Corridor (BBSC) programme. This, in addition to a strategic public transport corridor, proposes the implementation of a continuous, direct, high-quality strategic cycle route between Bristol and Bath which is segregated from general traffic and buses in accordance with LTN 01/20, as well as new/improved crossings for pedestrians and cyclists to enable access from communities and railway stations.

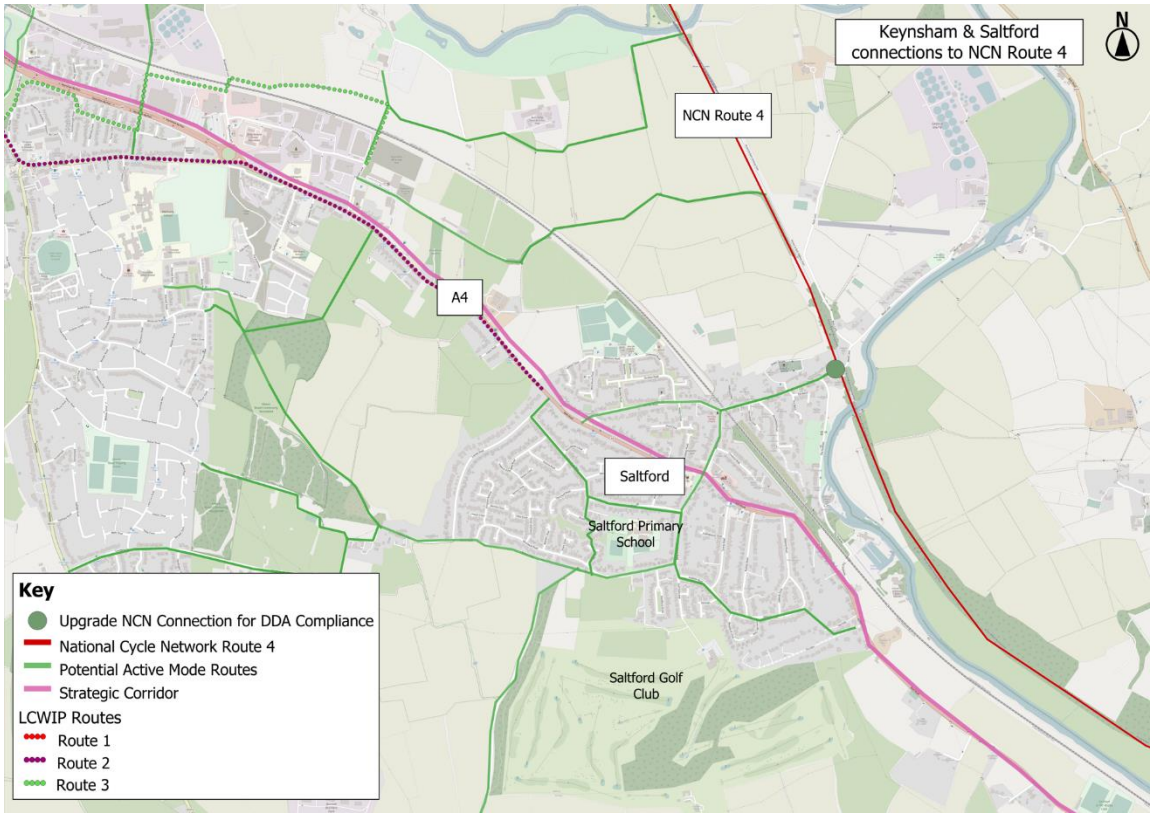
2.2.61 The programme would provide the necessary step-change in cycling connectivity that will complement the existing and future bus network and encourage connected walking and cycling trips. This is in line with national ambitions for public transport, active travel and decarbonisation and could encourage mode shift to bus and active travel modes consistent with the objectives of this Plan.

2.2.62 Additionally, there is an existing need to provide opportunities to expand, and fill gaps in, provision for cyclists. Any improvements should align with the LCWIP proposals so that they form part of a coherent cycling network rather than piecemeal, isolated improvements that don't provide continuous routes between origins and destinations. It is understood that links to NCN Route 4, and delivery of LCWIP improvements will be brought forward through the planning permissions for East of Keynsham consented developments. There is a consultation ongoing simultaneously with this one on the Active Travel Masterplan where comments can be made on the proposed future B&NES cycle network.

2.2.63 It is a recommendation of this Plan that a high-quality continuous route should be established between the western extent of LCWIP Route 3 (A4) and the NCN Route 4 Bristol to Bath Railway Path. The nearest access to the NCN Route 4 from this location is at Mead Lane in Saltford, which can be routed to via Norman Road / High Street. The connection to NCN Route 4would require upgrade in order to be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

2.2.64 The consented East of Keynsham development has committed the extension of active travel route from the eastern extent of Worlds End Lane, over the rail bridge for connection to NCN Route 4. Upgrading these connections could go further, not only providing an alternative to the car for residents but also providing an opportunity to help boost the local economy by encouraging destination cycling at Keynsham and Saltford for leisure and tourism. The proposed active mode routes for connections to NCN Route 4 are shown in the figure below.

Figure 2-9 Illustrative route between LCWIP Route 3 and NCN Route 4 (Bristol to Bath Railway Path)



2.2.65 There is a genuine opportunity for a wider range of users to regularly make longer distance cycling trips via the Bristol to Bath Railway Path. This could be achieved via the consented 'East of Keynsham' developments, the route highlighted on the above plan, or alternatives through the north Keynsham area. It is acknowledged that the illustrative route highlighted above has constraints including narrow carriageway width, a detailed study is therefore need to explore feasible options for infrastructure/upgrades.

2.2.66 These connections to the NCN Route 4 would require upgrade to be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The link shown between the A4 and NCN Route 4 through Saltford is an existing link which is well used, however gradient issues mean that there are steps in place which mean that this is not suitable for some users.

Whitchurch Village to Keynsham Active Travel Improvements

2.2.67 Whitchurch Village is in the catchment for Broadlands School and school children are currently bused between Whitchurch and Keynsham. It is therefore important to develop safe routes for active travel between these two places to improve the linkage. Car drivers taking inappropriate routes between South East Bristol, Whitchurch Village and Keynsham using Stockwood Lane, Charlton Road and Queen Charlton Lane, creates barriers to active travel, and reduces safety. A strategic approach to route choice and hierarchy is needed.

2.2.68 Stockwood Lane has a steep gradient and would be challenging for many cyclists. Charlton Road, with Woollard Lane is most appropriate for vehicle movement. Queen Charlton Lane is the most direct and flattest route between Whitchurch Village and Keynsham and therefore offers the greatest opportunity for active travel.

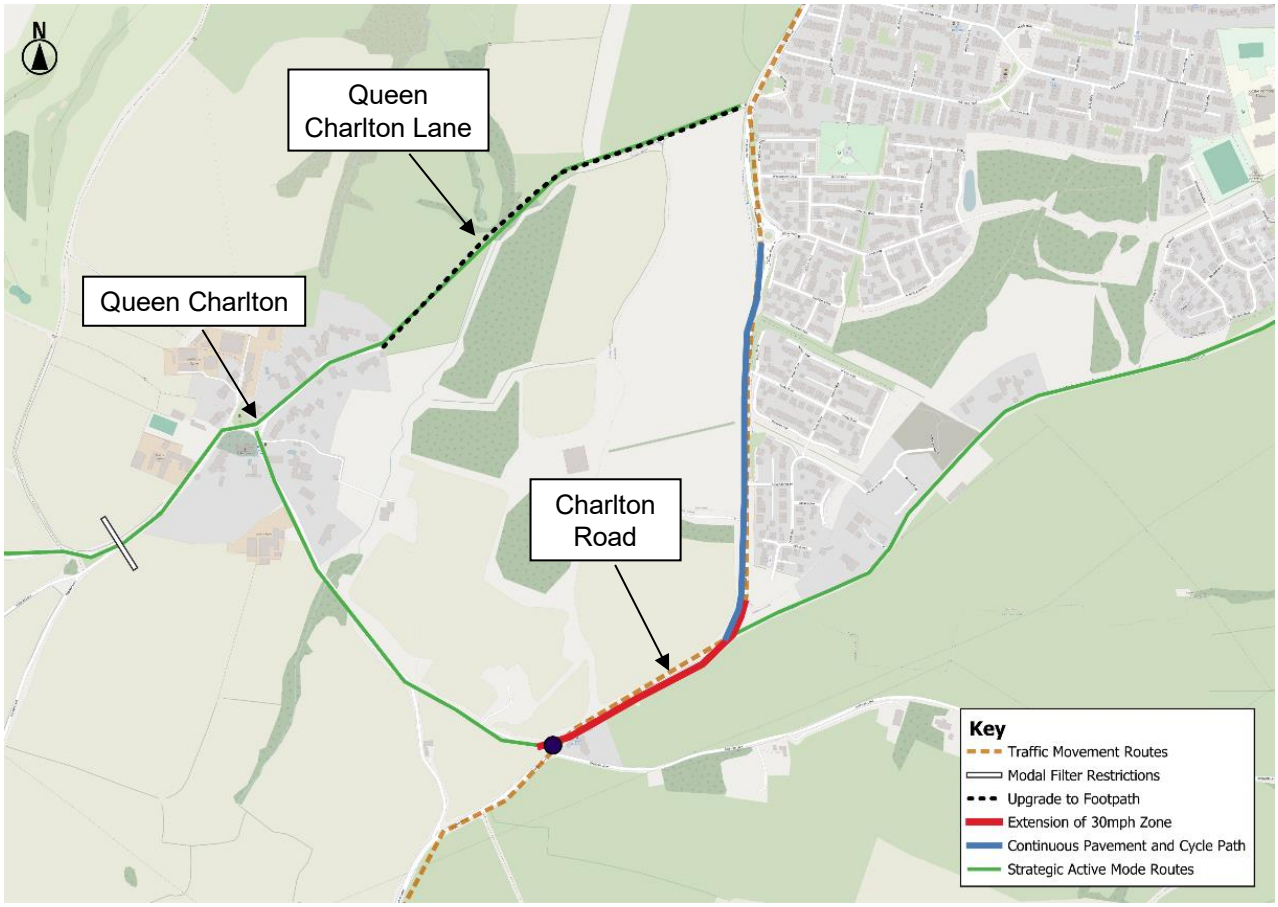
2.2.69 There is currently a modal filter in place on Queen Charlton Lane, which supports active travel between Whitchurch and Queen Charlton. However, there are sections of the route overall requiring improvements. The section of Charlton Road between Redlynch Lane and Alexander Road to the southwest of Keynsham is currently considered to be unsuitable for less confident active travel users.

2.2.70 Proposed interventions to facilitate active modes along this key radial route between Keynsham and south Bristol could comprise:

- Implementation of continuous footway and cycleway provision along Charlton Road between its junctions with Parkhouse Lane to the south and Linnet Way to the north. Adding designated active travel lanes would enable smooth passage of both cars and bikes, as well as reducing traffic on this busy stretch of road as users switch to alternative modes of transport. This would improve walking and cycling / wheeling connections between Keynsham and Queen Charlton. The intervention would involve discussions with landowners for land, given the existing drainage scheme in place adjacent to Charlton Road;
- Redesign of the Redlynch Lane / Charlton Road junction to provide safe crossings for pedestrians, cycling / wheeling users and horse riders. This is the western extent of a pinch point on the highway network, where two major cycle routes meet. This junction is also currently an accident hotspot, including risks that traffic speeds on Charlton Road in a southwest-bound direction away from Keynsham have the potential for causing rear shunts to vehicles and cyclists waiting to turn right onto Redlynch Road;
- Consideration of the possibility of extending the current 30mph speed limit zone eastward along Charlton Road to the junction with Parkhouse Lane, as part of the strategy to facilitate safe active travel along Charlton Road for connection into and through Queen Charlton towards south Bristol;
- Rationalisation of off-road provision on Charlton Road; and
- Upgrade of the existing off-road PRoW to the northeast of Queen Charlton, to facilitate improved walking and cycling / wheeling connections between Queen Charlton and Charlton Road for access to Keynsham. However, it is noted that this is a steep route.

2.2.71 These active mode interventions could be implemented alongside a traffic movement route for implementation along Charlton Road. A summary diagram of these possible interventions is set out in the plan below.

Figure 2-10 Proposed Charlton Road Interventions



2.2.72 It is also necessary to ensure cycling connections between the southern extents of Keynsham and the town centre. There is already a reasonably well-developed network of lightly trafficked streets and pedestrian / cycle routes between residential roads. It is recommended that we consider Liveable Neighbourhoods (LNs) style schemes, co-developed with local communities, to provide attractive routes to accommodate inclusive cycling. These could also link local communities with primary schools and local centres.

Manor Road Green Route

2.2.73 Manor Road currently links Saltford and Keynsham as an alternative to the A4. The road is rural in character and provides no refuge for vulnerable road users or active mode users. In addition to vehicles, the road is used by school children walking or cycling to Wellsway School, as well as by cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians for journeys between Saltford and Keynsham and for direct links to the Manor Road Community Woodland. However, the road is often used by drivers as an alternative to the A4 at times of congestion.

2.2.74 The road is currently subject to the national (60mph) speed limit, which has been acknowledged as unsafe by both Saltford Parish Council and Keynsham Town Council, who have approached B&NES Council to request a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to change the speed limit on the highway to 20mph, with TRO consultation set to be held in 2024.

2.2.75 Further to the above, Manor Road has the potential to be an attractive walking and cycling route. The Plan recommends that this route becomes a “Quiet Route”, to provide for active travel trips. This might incorporate a Modal Filter, or other traffic restrictions, to ensure traffic flows and speeds are low enough to enable safe active travel.

Active Travel Promotion Through Modal Filters

2.2.76 There is potential to use traffic restrictions which might include full or part time modal filters to support active travel on key routes. These might take the form of school streets, which improve safety for school children by providing for part time restrictions at school drop off and pick up, reducing traffic flows on sensitive and inappropriate routes. The following options should be considered as part of a co-ordinated programme to enable active travel, improve safety and reduce the impact of traffic on sensitive routes:

- Targeted filters as part of liveable neighbourhoods style interventions between Manor Road and Wellsway School;
- Filters on roads approaching the town centre and either side of links crossing the A4 Bath - Bristol Strategic Corridor and the Bristol – Bath railway line, thus prioritising active modes for movements along these roads, reducing barriers created by strategic infrastructure. Locations could include Avon Mill Lane, Broadmead Lane, and Pixash Lane. This would take motor traffic towards the main traffic priority routes, away from the town centre;
- Modal filter on Sherwood Road at the junction with Albert Road, to enable a quiet route from St Clements Road and residential areas of Keynsham to the South, to link with Temple Street; and
- The successful experimental modal filter on Queen Charlton Lane has recently been made permanent at the request of local residents, due to the benefits it has provided.

Further Active Mode Interventions

2.2.77 Additional interventions might include:

- **Controlled Parking Zones** (CPZs) - meaning an area in which, during specified controlled times, every length of street within a CPZ is subject to either a restriction on waiting, or is a permitted parking place. At each entry point to the CPZ area, vehicular traffic signs indicate the boundary of the CPZ and the times of restriction;

  • Haphazard and pavement parking can reduce the benefits afforded by schemes set out within this section, such as liveable neighbourhood style interventions, by obstructing walking and wheeling. Coupling CPZ schemes with liveable neighbourhoods is likely to be important in ensuring their success. CPZ schemes should incorporate Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) car club provision to provide access to cars for those who need them occasionally. Ahead of implementation, such schemes always consider the impact on residents, tradespeople and businesses in the area, involve Equalities Impact Assessment, and include full consultation on detailed design with local residents and businesses;
- **A4175 Improvements** – the Somerdale development will provide junction signalisation at the A4175 / Avon Mill Lane junction to manage the flow of traffic at the junction and provide safe crossing facilities for those walking and wheeling, facilitating safe connection towards Keynsham town centre and the rail station. The existing footway will be widened and the off-road cycle provision extended, linking the station with the Picnic car park;
- **Station Road Rail bridge** – Greater space for walking and cycling on this key link between Keynsham railway station / Somerdale and Keynsham town centre could be provided through re-allocating space used for parking. The current parking on the bridge is understood to have been introduced to serve the St Augustines doctors surgery, which has since relocated;
- **Durley Hill** – Improve the existing cycle provision on Durley Hill to provide better connections between the Hicks Gate Interchange and Keynsham town centre. It is understood that an enhanced segregated cycling facility is identified as part of the Bath to Bristol Strategic Corridor project;
- **Old Bristol Road to Broadlands Academy –** scope for providing a cycle connection between the academy and the local highway network to facilitate cycle movements associated with the A4 Strategic Corridor and north Keynsham;

- **Traffic signal configuration –** active travel green times and staging will be investigated at traffic signal locations across Keynsham to provide additional time for pedestrians and cyclists to cross. This could also include part-time signals for energy saving and on-demand pedestrians phases and 'rest in red' configuration as the resting state with no traffic demand, thereby assuming priority for active mode users; and
- **Saltford Village Centre –** Measures to reduce the impact of the A4 on the centre of Saltford are being considered through the Bath to Bristol Strategic Corridor (BBSC) programme which would provide a continuous, direct, high-quality strategic cycle route between Bristol and Bath segregated from general traffic and buses, in accordance with LTN 01/20, as well as new/improved crossings for pedestrians and cyclists to support access from communities and railway stations.

Strategic Active Modes Network Summary

2.2.78 Based on the above, this Plan helps to identify routes within Keynsham and Saltford which have the potential to be prioritised as a network of strategic active mode routes. This network would connect the extents of Keynsham and Saltford together with their local centres by active modes, encouraging more road users to choose active modes for short, local journeys, reducing unnecessary car trips and positively impacting health, wellbeing and the environment.

2.2.79 Increasing ease of access to e-bikes will reduce barriers to cycling. Whilst cycling will not be possible for all road users or all trips, safe cycling provision makes for a more attractive and accessible option for many.

2.2.80 The active mode routes could be achieved through introducing traffic calming, speed reduction measures, traffic restrictions and targeted Modal Filters to better serve active travel modes. It is important to note that the traffic / environmental impacts of converting existing roads should be adequately studied to minimise adverse impacts, and that high levels of engagement and consultation with local residents and other stakeholders is undertaken to progress from Plan to delivery.

2.2.81 There is also the potential to develop the network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) to increase the proportion of local journeys undertaken by active modes.

Micro-Mobility

What the evidence shows:

2.2.82 32% of residents in Keynsham travel less than 5km to their place of work, however only 1.4% of residents stated that they cycled to work in the 2021 census, down from 2.3% in 2011. Micro-mobility modes such as e-bikes and e-scooters could provide the key to getting more people cycling in the area by alleviating barriers including topography within Keynsham.

2.2.83 As shown in Figure 2-14 of this Plan, the Council's Loan Bike Scheme is operated by local bike shops, giving the opportunity for try-before-you-buy for new forms of transport. This is intended to enable modal shift away from private cars towards cycling. This scheme includes e-bikes that are available for two to four-week rentals.

2.2.84 An e-scooter trial has been running in some parts of the WECA region, including some of Bath city, since October 2020, now extended until May 2026. It comprises 4,000 E-scooters, and 1,500 e-bikes across the region, with 20 e-cargo bikes added from Autumn 2023. Take up of the e-scooters has been high in Bristol and Bath, replacing trips from all types of transport and being used in combination with public transport for 10-20% of journeys. The e-scooter rides have been largely short distance with 50% of trips less than a 25-minute walk (2.1km) in Bristol and 19 minutes (1.6km) in Bath.

2.2.85 The University of the West of England (UWE) carried out an evaluation report into the West of England E-Scooter trial, reporting in May 2023 (Chatterjee, K., Parkin, J., Bozovic, T. & Flower, J. (2023). West of England E-scooter Trial Evaluation Final Report. Report to West of England). Key findings include that, overall, the trial has reduced travel related carbon emissions. Take up has been high due to ease of use and time saving capabilities, replacing trips from all types of transport. E-scooters are used in combination with public transport for between 10% and 20% of journeys.

Plan Response:

2.2.86 There is currently a gap in short-term hire micro-mobility provision within Keynsham and Saltford that could be served by an extension of the WECA trial, already within the Councils plans. E-scooters and e-bikes represent a significant opportunity in terms of increasing the distances that people can travel without a car, overcoming hilly terrain that would make pedal cycles unfeasible for most people. The provision of micro-mobility rental therefore increases the accessibility of the cycle measures being proposed as part of this Plan.

2.2.87 Extension of the e-bikes and e-scooters rental scheme should be combined with multi-modal interchanges such as Mobility Hub proposals, where e-bike charging stands and Mandatory Parking Zones for e-scooters can be installed, so as to enable people to combine sustainable transport modes.

2.2.88 There may not be the critical population density to support a hire scheme similar to that in Bristol / Bath within Keynsham and Saltford. Provision of secure e-bike charging and storage should be a priority, and, if the law changes to permit the use of personal e-scooters on the public highway , then providing supporting infrastructure (potentially as part of a Mobility Hub), for safe, secure e-scooter storage, repair and or charging in key destinations across the Keynsham should be considered. The advent of micro-mobility also maximises the benefits of the walk and cycle measures being proposed as part of this Plan.

2.3 Attractive and Convenient Public Transport System

Overarching Challenges

2.3.1 Keynsham is currently served by key radial bus routes to the northwest and southeast of the town, in addition to services along the A4 corridor and the 349 service which serves the southwest portion of Keynsham. However, the services outside of the main routes to Bristol and Bath can be less frequent.

2.3.2 Several fixed route services ceased in April 2023. A trial Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) WESTLink service was introduced at this time. DRT will help to address bus provision lost within the residential areas of Keynsham. However, the underlying challenges of town centre congestion, unreliable bus timetables, and high availability of low-cost town centre car parking mean that fixed route bus services are often not an attractive or convenient transport choice for journeys to, from and within Keynsham, compared with car use.

2.3.3 For example, bus use for journeys to work for Keynsham in 2011 (3.7%) was lower than the average for the B&NES district (4.6%), the South West region (5.3%) and less than half of the average for Great Britain (8.0%). In 2021, bus use in Keynsham had decreased to 3.2% and was still below the national average of 4.2%, when census data was affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

2.3.4 Conversely, census data on car ownership shows that between 2011 and 2021,the number of households in Keynsham without access to a vehicle has reduced by 3.8%. This is a slightly higher reduction than both the B&NES and Great Britain average. The proportion of households in Keynsham with access to two or more vehicles has increased by 2.4% over this period, which is in line with the B&NES and Great Britain averages.

2.3.5 Stakeholder engagement feedback consistently raised town centre congestion and lack of public transport connections to Keynsham railway station. This limits the attractiveness of bus services for interchange with Keynsham railway station for onward journeys to Bristol and Bath. As such, specifically in relation to Bristol - Bath public transport connections, the B&NES Council BBSC Covering Report (December 2021) states that:

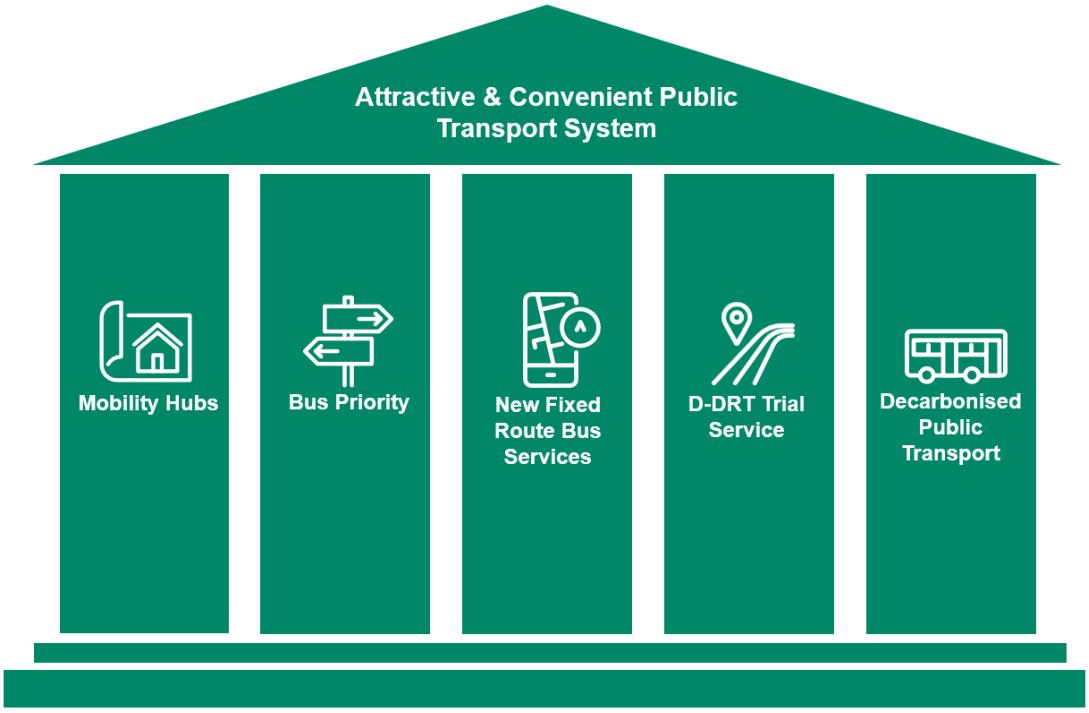
- *Long journey times for bus services and poor connections between services mean that bus as a mode is not an attractive transport choice for journeys along the Bristol to Bath corridor. In addition, rail connectivity (along the corridor) is only provided at Keynsham, residents with the option to do so are likely to choose car for journeys from locations along and neighbouring the corridor; and*
- *Limited bus priority along the corridor means that congestion along the corridor has a significant impact on the reliability of bus journey times. Unreliable bus journey times make bus a less attractive mode for residents along the corridor travelling to Bristol or Bath.*

2.3.6 These issues pose challenges to public transport patronage, with an underutilised public transport system contributing to greater vehicular congestion, air pollution, journey times and user dissatisfaction.

Interventions

2.3.7 The following package of interventions could contribute to creating an attractive and convenient public transport network across Keynsham.

Figure 2-11 Attractive and Convenient Public Transport System Interventions



Mobility Hubs

What the evidence shows:

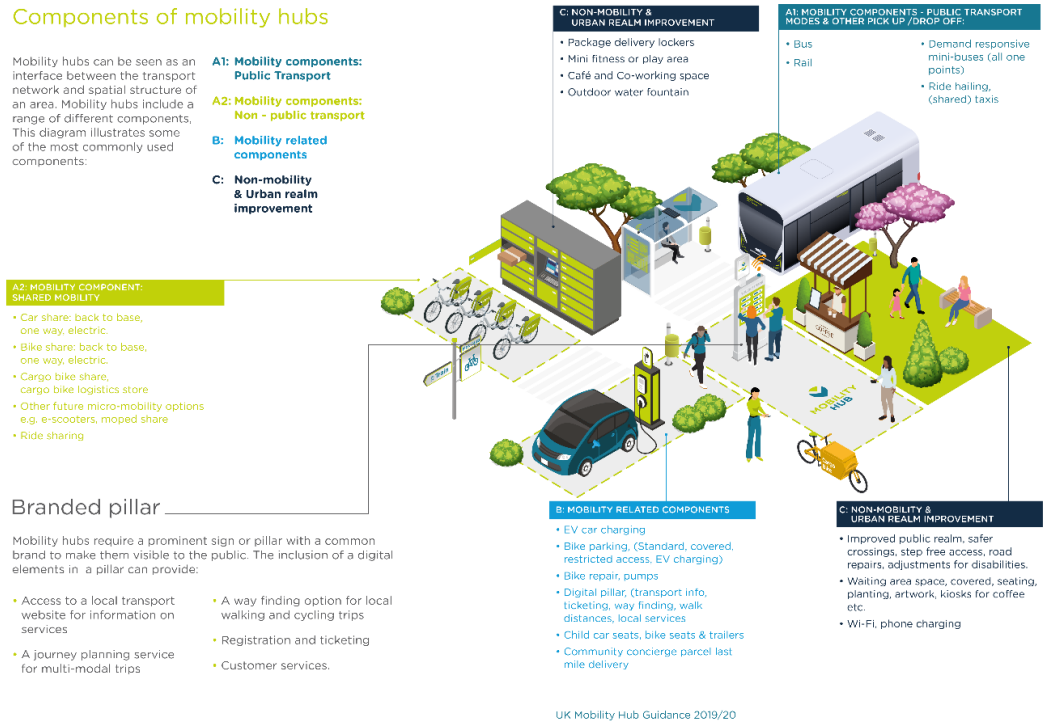
2.3.8 A “Mobility Hub” is a recognisable place with an offer of different and connected transport modes supplemented with enhanced facilities and information (CoMoUK, 2019). It facilitates access to and between modes, including active modes, public transport and shared mobility schemes such as bike hire and car clubs. Bespoke Mobility Hubs can be designed to suit the needs of a local area. A hub can also provide access to digital services and community facilities for local residents and visitors.

2.3.9 Keynsham's position at the halfway point on the strategic corridor between Bristol and Bath and its proximity to surrounding rural areas provides focal points for public transport, DRT and shared mobility and micro-mobility trips, in addition to providing a hub for community uses and events.

2.3.10 The benefits and components of a Mobility Hub are set out in the figures below.

Figure 2-12 Potential Benefits of a Mobility Hub

Figure 2-13 Potential Components of a Mobility Hub



Source: Collaborative Mobility UK (CoMoUK), 2019, Page 8 & 9. Mobility Hubs Guidance. CoMoUK, Leeds.

What the community has told us:

2.3.11 The community told us that Keynsham would benefit from the implementation of Mobility Hubs to support multi-modal trips. They are unconvinced that existing public transport routes serve locals' needs, and consider that services prioritise links to the centre over trips between communities. Many rural communities are currently disconnected from public transport services into Bristol or Bath, and convenient sustainable transport links to a Mobility Hub may provide for sustainable alternatives to the car.

Plan Response:

2.3.12 A Mobility Hub on the A4 is proposed as part of the Bath to Bristol Strategic Corridor project. This is located immediately east of Keynsham town centre and would provide for direct access to the town centre via direct and high frequency bus services.

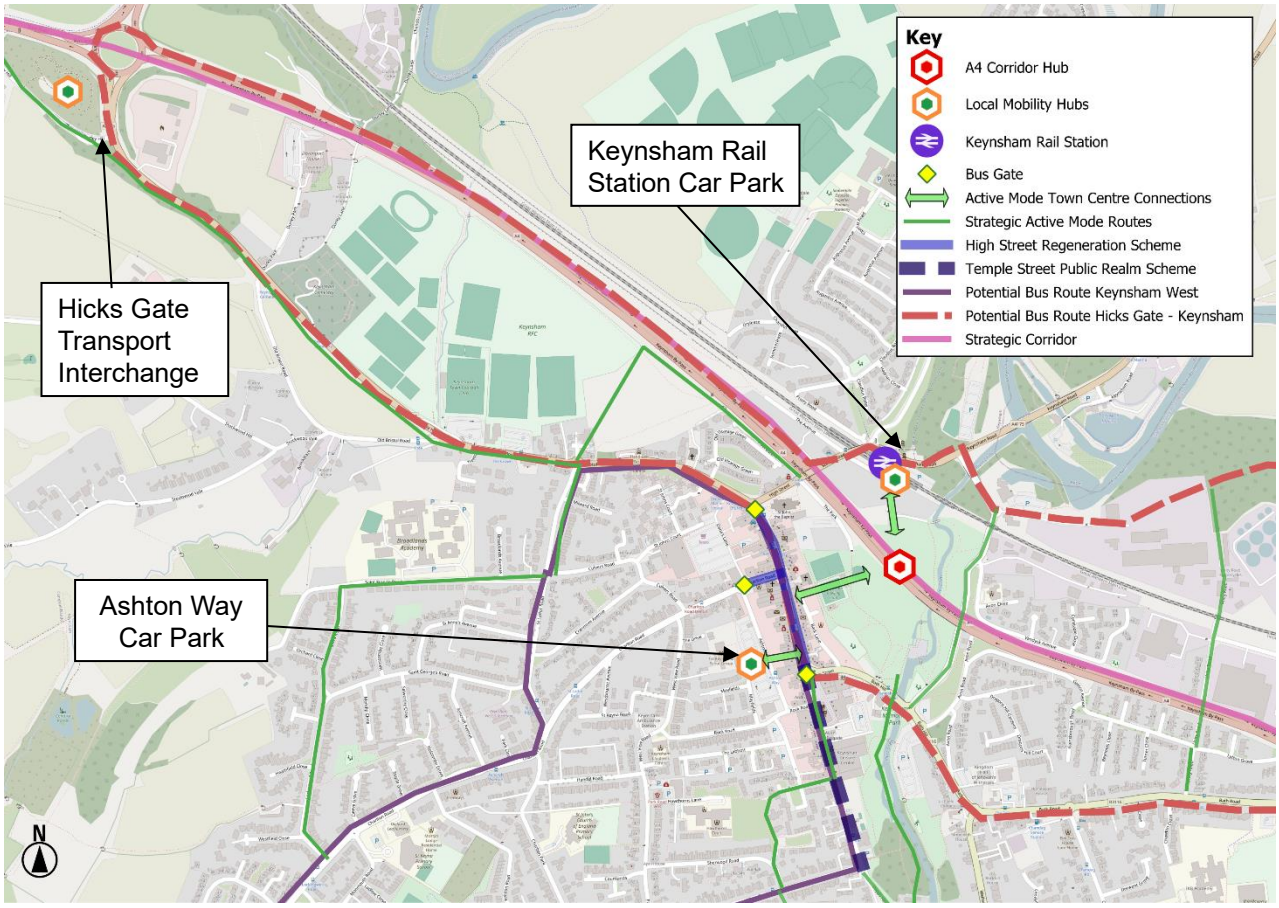
2.3.13 Following analysis of existing transport conditions, including on-street and off-street car parking data for Keynsham summarised in this Plan, further indicative locations for local Mobility Hubs are highlighted below. Mobility Hubs would be adapted to be sensitive to the local context and needs and tailor-made to provide solutions to transport constraints in Keynsham.

2.3.14 These indicative locations have been considered due to their close proximity to Keynsham railway station, Keynsham High Street and their alignment along fixed bus corridors. The indicative locations for local Mobility Hubs are set out as follows:

- Keynsham Railway Station Car Park;
- Ashton Way Car Park; and
- Hicks Gate Transport Interchange.

2.3.15 The proposed locations for local Mobility Hubs and proposed active mode connections between them are shown in the plan below.

Figure 2-14 Indicative Mobility Hub Locations



2.3.16 Mobility Hubs could incorporate additional facilities such as a café, community hub, Wi-Fi and secure bike storage for users. As part of this, it is proposed that the pedestrian environment in Keynsham town centre is improved through the provision of active mode connections including crossing points / signals that can be provided to Keynsham High Street and Keynsham railway station. Based on this, the Ashton Way Car Park hub is considered to be a key site, in addition to the A4 Bristol to Bath Corridor hub.

2.3.17 The Hicks Gate Transport Interchange will be a key node in the transport network and form a strategic function, as well as enabling local connections between Keynsham and the wider area. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

2.3.18 Local Mobility Hubs could also act as a nucleus for DRT services such as the WESTLink service that began operating in Keynsham in April 2023, providing a connection point to the more frequent public transport services. As Mobility Hubs more broadly can perform several functions, these local hubs also have the potential to provide a flexible remote working / community space, either within the hub or as a standalone development.

2.3.19 These local Mobility Hubs are not required to be located on fixed bus routes; however, this is considered beneficial as the Hubs act as an interchange between public transport, active modes, shared mobility and micro-mobility journeys. Alternatively, wayfinding can be implemented to highlight routes towards fixed bus routes.

2.3.20 Furthermore, the parking data[4] analysed as part of this Plan indicates that there is excess capacity at existing car parking locations that could potentially be better utilised in the form of Mobility Hubs to support sustainable transport, improve the public realm and facilitate transfers between different modes of transport. This is as opposed to existing parking provision for the private car which can be detrimental to the public realm and an inefficient use of space.

[4] Report Network Mobility Study 2023-02-03 (bathnes.gov.uk)

2.3.21 The above locations will be studied further to assess viability and potential benefit as part of any wider, forthcoming corridor study. Additionally, further Mobility Hubs could be placed within forthcoming / future development.

2.3.22 This Plan envisages that further smaller hubs should be located in residential areas near local centres. Such complimentary or standalone local hubs can be considered within community areas such as local shops at Chandag Road or Queens Road and be designed to provide active mode links towards public transport links.

Saltford Rail Feasibility

2.3.23 A feasibility study will be undertaken into a potential new rail station at Saltford.

Bus Priority

What the evidence shows:

2.3.24 There are currently limited bus priority measures within Keynsham town centre, with buses getting caught in peak hour congestion. Bus journey times are also extended by congestion, with journeys from Keynsham to Bath Spa and from Saltford to Bristol city centre taking significantly longer by bus than by car.

What the community has told us:

2.3.25 The A4 was described as a currently congested corridor with relatively poor bus services. The X39 bus is the main commuter bus which links Bristol and Bath along the A4.

2.3.26 The engagement highlighted the need for general improvement of the buses in the area, including enhancing reliability and providing greater access to the Keynsham railway station.

Plan Response:

2.3.27 Bus priority measures would be considered as part of the wider High Street / town centre study referenced in Section 2.2 and Figure 2-14. Such interventions would provide bus journey time benefits for buses travelling to / from Bath and through Keynsham by avoiding existing congestion. These interventions also improve the ability to operate town bus services, connecting residential areas with the town centre and Mobility Hubs.

2.3.28 Improving bus services and reliability would increase the attractiveness of public transport for travel, as compared to the private car.

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)

What the evidence shows:

2.3.29 DRT is a flexible shared transport service that provides shared transport to users who can specify their pick-up location, time and drop-off (for example, from home to work).

2.3.30 A Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) known as the 'WESTLink' service launched across B&NES in April 2023[5], using a £3 million investment secured by WECA through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The WESTLink service runs between 07:00-19:00hrs from Monday-Saturday across the majority of the West of England, including large parts of North Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Up to 30 minibuses run in these zones designed to get people to key transport corridors where they can then pick up another bus or train. Up to 12 passengers and a wheelchair space at a time are able to use a WESTLink bus in their local zone to link up to their local main routes.

2.3.31 As shown below, Keynsham is located in a shared zone between Boyd Valley and Bath Rural zones, with the majority of Saltford incorporated into the Bath rural zone. Travel is only permitted within each zone, with Keynsham WESTink travel applicable to both zones. Figure 2-16 also shows the Livery of the WESTLink service.

Figure 2-15 WESTLink Service Zones

Source: https://travelwest.info/westlink/

[5] https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/news/more-buses-their-way-north-somerset-communities

Figure 2-16: WESTLinkService Livery

Source: https://travelwest.info/westlink/

What the community has told us:

2.3.32 As part of stakeholder engagement activities, several suggestions were made surrounding the idea of community transport and how it could be utilised. Given the lack of buses, the suggestion was made to provide residents with a community bus service to access the train station.

2.3.33 Those who took part in stakeholder engagement discussions also questioned whether existing public transport routes serve local needs, and whether routes prioritise links to the centre over trips between communities. Rural communities are seen as disconnected from public transport services into Bristol or Bath, and links to a Mobility Hub to connect to these services could improve this.

Plan Response:

2.3.34 A well-designed and publicised DRT can complement fixed route public transport on the main corridors by providing connections into these existing services, thereby improving mobility and social inclusivity, especially in low-density rural areas which have recently seen a reduction in their services. For example, if a fixed bus route does not operate at a certain time of the day, providing a DRT service can provide individuals an opportunity to retain access to a destination or service during these times.

2.3.35 A well-designed DRT can provide the incentive for households to reduce car ownership if their mobility requirements can be adequately accommodated. DRT could also be used to connect to the proposed Mobility Hubs within Keynsham town centre, where passengers can access a connecting bus or rail service. Importantly, DRT can fill gaps in transport provision where opportunities to provide bespoke walking and cycling infrastructure are limited, where the topography is too challenging / distances too great, and users do not have access to a car. Therefore, DRT is highly complementary to other proposed measures and can have a range of benefits.

2.3.36 This Plan supports utilisation of DRT services in relation to proposed Mobility Hubs within Keynsham. Notwithstanding this support, we recognise that significant improvements are needed to the current DRT provision and the way it operates. This should include improvements to reliability, communication and potentially partial timetabling of services to, for example, support access to schools. Decarbonisation of DRT services, through the use of ultra-low emission minibuses would contribute towards a wider decarbonisation of public transport, as discussed later within this Plan.

New fixed route bus services

What the evidence shows:

2.3.37 Several fixed bus routes serving Keynsham (636 Whitchurch – Keynsham, 663 Somerdale – Chandag Road and 683 Keynsham – Wells) ceased in April 2023. These routes are now covered by the WESTLink DRT services launched in April 2023.

2.3.38 Fixed route bus services have been lost from areas including East Keynsham and Somerdale. The 663 service between Somerdale and Chandag Road provided a key public transport link between Somerdale and Keynsham town centre via the railway station. The discontinuation of this fixed route service has contributed to disconnection between Somerdale and Keynsham, including for employment journeys, potentially locking in car dependency when coupled with missing walking and cycling links along this important route.

What the community has told us:

2.3.39 The community has said that there is a need for general improvement of the buses in the area, including increased reliability, and enhanced access to Keynsham railway station. Given recent reductions in fixed route bus services, the suggestion was made to provide a community bus service to access the train station.

Plan Response:

2.3.40 The potential for new fixed route bus services is set out in Figure 2-14. It is vital that lost bus services are restored by bus operators and / or the West of England Combined Authority (as Transport Authority) at the earliest possible opportunity. Key routes include:

- Between Keynsham and Somerdale along Somerdale Road to connect key trip attractors to the northern section of Keynsham, and provide a direct route into and through the town centre;
- Opportunities provided by Mobility Hubs and bus priority measures on Keynsham High Street to create further fixed bus loop services between:
  - Hicks Gate, Keynsham town centre and Ashmead Industrial Park, routing via the North Keynsham Strategic Access Link; and
  - Keynsham town centre and residential areas within West Keynsham, routing via Coronation Avenue.

Public Transport Decarbonisation

What the evidence shows:

2.3.41 The UK's Decarbonising Transport plan sets out the commitment to deliver the National Bus Strategy vision of a transformed bus industry and a green bus revolution. This will involve delivery of 4,000 new zero emission buses to support the UK's objective of net zero emissions by 2050. Whilst conventional buses remain one of the least carbon intensive forms of road vehicle transport per passenger mile in the UK; zero emission buses accounted for just 1% of the nationwide bus fleet outside of London in 2020,. 84% were diesel-powered.

2.3.42 Zero emission buses can provide a range of benefits, including helping local authorities achieve their net zero targets, cleaner air, supporting green growth, and improving health and wellbeing in Keynsham. The UK Government have also committed to supporting the uptake of zero emission buses, including through reform of the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), and intends to set an end date for the sale of new non-zero emission buses, with consultation on this undertaken during 2022.

2.3.43 In line with this, the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) jointly submitted to the Department for Transport by WECA and North Somerset Council includes a commitment that all buses operating in the BSIP area will be zero-emission by 2030.

Plan Response:

2.3.44 B&NES will work with bus operators and other key stakeholders to decarbonise the bus fleet in the Somer Valley area. Whilst conventional buses remain one of the least carbon intensive forms of road vehicle transport per passenger, per mile in the UK, zero emission buses will help our local authorities achieve its net zero target (2030) and cleaner air, encourage green growth and improve health and wellbeing. For passengers, zero emission buses can also offer an improved passenger experience through reduced noise and vibration.

2.3.45 Zero emission buses will require supporting charging infrastructure to operate. Requirements include a combination of overnight charging at depots using plug-in charge points, and opportunities for charging during the day, including at the bus depot, at a bus station or at set points along the bus route, or alternatively wireless charging through road surfaces. It is likely that bus services relevant to Keynsham would make use of a combination of overnight charging and opportunity charging.

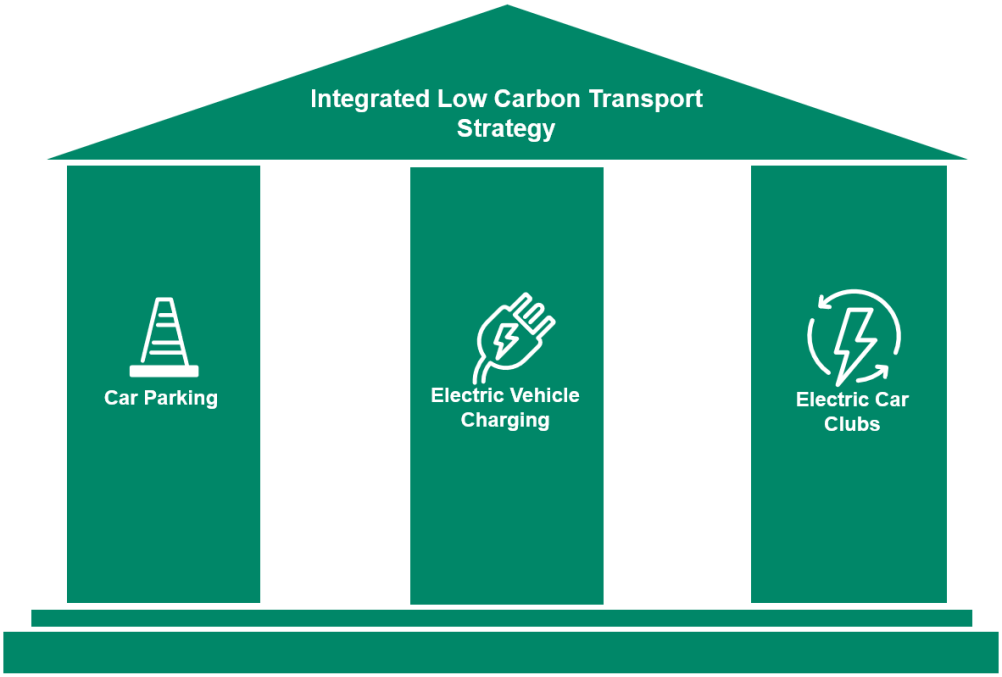
2.3.46 Implementation of zero emission buses would pair well with other interventions included in this Plan, including proposed Mobility Hubs and DRT services. Promoters of development proposals e.g. developers or local authorities should therefore engage with bus operators to develop plans to decarbonise the bus fleet in the Keynsham area.

2.4 Integrated Low Carbon Transport Strategy

Overview

2.4.1 The Plan includes development of transport measures across Keynsham to enable an integrated low carbon transport system summarised as follows:

Figure 2-17 Integrated Low Carbon Transport Strategy Interventions



Car Parking

What the evidence shows:

2.4.2 Keynsham has experienced a greater than national average increase in the number of households with access to a private car between 2011 and 2021.

2.4.3 B&NES Council commissioned parking surveys across seven off-street car parks and eight on-street locations within Keynsham town centre on a 24-hour basis over a seven-day period during November 2022, with the results showing that:

- Off-street car parking analysis showed that during the study period, at the median peak time of 11:00hrs there was an overall excess parking capacity of 23%, equivalent to approximately 227 car parking spaces. The lowest occupancy occurs at the Railway Station and Picnic Car Parks where there appears to be excess capacity; and
- On-street analysis showed a mean occupancy of 64% which is equivalent to 35 parking spaces occupied (out of a total of 54) at 20:00hrs.

What the community has told us:

2.4.4 Our consultation with stakeholder groups suggested that some view car parking Keynsham as extremely easy and cheap, which has the effect of encouraging car use, whilst disincentivising more sustainable options. It was stated that there are good levels of footfall in Keynsham town centre, however, and it has been emphasised that the centre serves visitors from surrounding areas, including hamlets and villages south of Keynsham, Longwell Green, Whitchurch Village and other areas in Bristol's East Fringe accessed from the A4174 Ring Road.

2.4.5 Parking provision and pricing should be kept under review as access to sustainable modes is improved, and should be considered in the context of the convenience and cost of alternative, more sustainable modes such as the bus, whilst ensuring access is maintained for disabled people and those with no alternative but to use the car.

Plan Response:

2.4.6 The conclusion of the study of off-street parking survey data is that there is potentially an under-utilisation of car parking within the immediate vicinity of Keynsham railway station at Picnic Car Park and Keynsham Railway Station Car Park. This excess car parking capacity could potentially be reallocated to alternative use including Mobility Hubs. Further data will be needed to explore this and potential options.

2.4.7 The off-street parking survey data also concluded that there is a potential underutilisation of car parking within the vicinity of Keynsham High Street. This excess car parking capacity could potentially be reallocated to:

- Retail / employment developments to support the economic viability of the town centre;
- Sustainable social housing sites where car ownership tends to be lower and would therefore be more reliant on close/convenient links to public transport; or
- A Mobility Hub e.g. at Ashton Way Car Park which is relatively large and centrally located.

2.4.8 In terms of on-street parking:

- Station Road is notable in that it was poorly utilised during the study period, with an overall 7-day mean occupancy of 34%. This finding identified the potential to reallocate space to active modes to support journeys to and from the railway station, and connections between Somerdale and Keynsham High Street; and
- High Street North has the highest percentage occupancy, with the three spaces available being fully occupied regularly and exceeding capacity at multiple times throughout the day including at 14:45 and 17:30hrs.

2.4.9 Therefore, consideration should be given to restraining both car parking supply in line with current levels of demand, and managing its ease of use, to make it more attractive to travel using sustainable modes where appropriate.

2.4.10 Success in enabling modal shift from the car to more sustainable modes will result in a virtuous circle, whereby reduced congestion results in faster bus journey times and safer cycling, in turn making those modes more attractive, and reducing car use still further.

2.4.11 Emission-based car parking charges are currently being proposed by the Council for all council-owned car parks in Keynsham and The Shallows car park in Saltford. This would include car parks switching to a variable charging structure linked to a vehicle's emissions, meaning more polluting vehicles will pay more[6].

2.4.12 Such car parking strategies can result in parking displacement and may require off-site mechanisms such as Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to ensure reduced car parking supply does not adversely affect nearby highway operation and local residential amenity.

2.4.13 In summary, proposals in relation to car parking could include:

- Reallocating road space from parking to active modes on Station Road, on the bridge over the A4 between the town centre and railway station;
- Incorporating Mobility Hub facilities into the Ashton Way Car Park; and
- Keeping parking provision and pricing under review as access to more sustainable modes is improved, whilst ensuring access is maintained for disabled people and those with no alternative but to use the car.

[6] Proposed parking charges review to go before councillors | Newsroom | Bath & North East Somerset Council (bathnes.gov.uk)

ULEV Charging

What the evidence shows:

2.4.14 We need to facilitate the switch in how transport is fuelled. For example, in 2035, all new conventional Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) (petrol and diesel) cars and vans are set to be banned from sale in the United Kingdom. However, at the time of writing, there are just 37 Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) charging devices across nine locations in the vicinity of Keynsham and Saltford. Furthermore, there are currently no ULEV charging facilities provided on residential streets.

2.4.15 Keynsham currently has greater than average private car mode share for employment trips and high car dependency, which has increased between 2011 and 2021. These trends reinforce the need to facilitate the switch to ULEVs in line with the transition away from the ICE. However, the limited availability of public charging infrastructure creates a barrier to the uptake of ULEV's for residents in the Keynsham and Saltford area without a private driveway.

Plan Response:

2.4.16 Improving ULEV charging infrastructure to assist in developing a climate resilient transport network is a key part of the Plan and will facilitate the transition away from the ICE. This Plan therefore supports implementation of the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) across B&NES, inclusive of Keynsham and Saltford, to "increase the availability of on-street charging points in residential streets where off-street parking is not available".

2.4.17 Implementation of on-street ULEV chargepoints pairs well with other proposed interventions set out in this Plan, including the creation of Mobility Hubs, and plans to introduce zero emission buses, which together will help remove barriers to the uptake of ULEVs across Keynsham and Saltford.

2.4.18 Resident Parking Zones (RPZs), a form of CPZ, are active around Rock Road adjacent to the town centre and also on The Shallows around the Old Brass Mill in Saltford. Implementing ULEV chargepoints within expanded RPZs across Keynsham and Saltford will support uptake of ULEVs by residents.

2.4.19 A ULEV on-street charging study could be used to inform an on-street ULEV charging strategy and identify investment priority areas within Keynsham. Such a study should use a range of analysis tools to identify priority areas for ULEV chargepoint infrastructure, such as a binomial logit model, - a methodology for calculating the likelihood of ULEV adoption per Lower Super Output Area (LSOA). Such a model uses data on attitudes to the uptake of renewable energy (considered to be a reasonable proxy for ULEVs) coupled with corresponding individual / household characteristics available from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Public Attitudes Tracker (PAT) database.

2.4.20 This assessment can be based on a combination of the following available variables, with each variable assigned a co-efficient value using a data processing tool called 'Solver' built into Microsoft Excel:

- Property type (KS401EW–- Dwellings, household spaces and accommodation type);
- Gross household income (Income estimates for small areas, England & Wales, financial year ending 2018);
- Gender (QS104UK – Sex);
- Age (QS103EW–- Age by single year);
- Social grade (QS611EW–- Approximated Social Grade);
- Work status (KS601UK–- Economic activity); and
- Household tenure (KS402EW – Tenure).

2.4.21 These variables can then be prioritised for further appraisal prior to installation of on-street charging infrastructure.

2.4.22 The ban on the sale of petrol / diesel vehicles means that people living in dwellings with no off-street parking will soon require a way to charge their vehicles. National and local guidance requires that charging must not compromise access to active modes, for instance through impacting footways. Methods to address this include:

- **Standardisation of Equipment**;
- **On-Street Charging Infrastructure Trials** – B&NES has an EV Charging Policy, albeit we acknowledge that an update is required in this fast moving technical area. We will listen to residents' requests for EV charging infrastructure and seek to deliver provision in line with our Policy and the needs of our communities. This will involve an assessment of the most appropriate technology to use at any given location and we can expect to see a systematic roll out of charging infrastructure across the district. This will be according to criteria that will be set out in the updated EV Charging Policy, and are likely to include charging hubs with associated car club provision.;
- **Cables across Footways** – Progress the B&NES Cable Channel Trial approved March 2023 as rapidly as possible;
- **Pro-Active Partnering** – for example, with community hubs, car clubs, sharing economy and local authorities;
- **Future Proofing Parking Permit Schemes**– potential for introduction of ULEV chargepoint infrastructure in association with future ULEV Parking Permit schemes, used to manage the use of parking bays if required;
- **Power Generation**– maximising the potential of ULEV chargepoints using renewable sources as part of a wider strategy of green infrastructure; and
- **Intelligence Gathering** – residential surveys, potentially involving a targeted survey of prioritised streets (to validate Logit assessment findings) but also a general survey of residents.

ULEV Car Clubs

What the evidence shows:

2.4.23 Analysis of census data for the Keynsham area shows a high dependence on cars for satisfying mobility needs, with over 30% of households having access to two or more vehicles and only 17% of households having no access to a vehicle. If access to a car is taken as a proxy for car ownership, within Keynsham there is potential to reduce these figures and bring them more into line with the rest of B&NES (28% for two or more vehicles). It should be noted that reducing car ownership does not necessarily mean "zero car". In some cases, it could mean reducing the number of cars owned by multi-car households.

2.4.24 Research by the RAC suggests that the average car is parked at home for 80% of the time, parked elsewhere for 16% of the time, and only in use for 4% of the time. This represents an inefficient use of resource and suggests significant potential for a proportion of people's needs to access a vehicle to be met by a shared resource rather than private ownership.

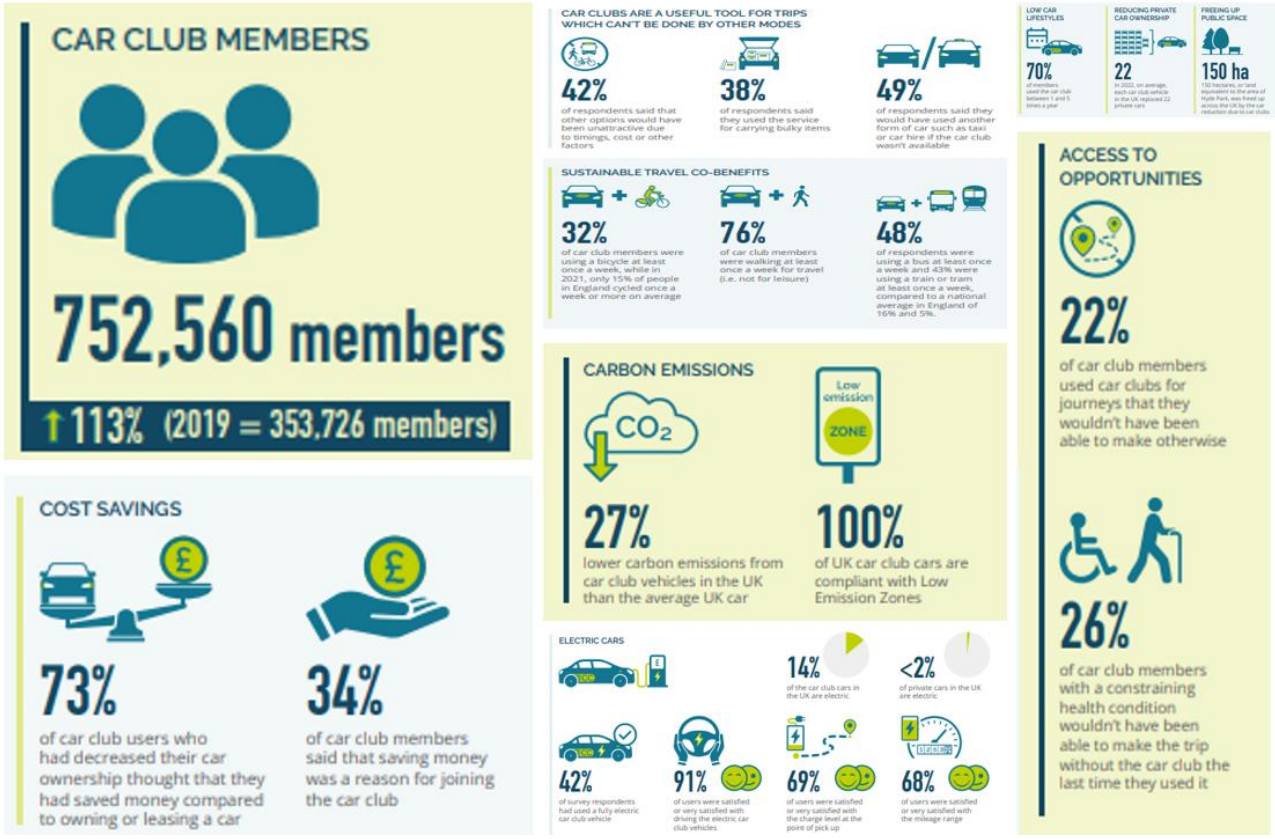
2.4.25 Several car clubs are in place across the B&NES area including Enterprise Car Clubs. There is one Enterprise Car Club located in The Chocolate Quarter in Keynsham. Cowheels, Hiyacar and Zipcar are other car club operators, however their existing operation is solely in Bristol city centre.

Plan Response:

2.4.26 Implementation of car clubs into Keynsham and Saltford could provide households with the confidence that reduced private car ownership is a viable proposition. Car clubs can also help create a fairer society as only paying per usage would benefit those on low incomes who are increasingly being "priced out" of access to opportunities due to the increasing cost of car ownership. This would help to ensure that the transport system is as inclusive as possible, providing residents with a range of travel choices that meet their needs.

2.4.27 The figure below sets out information adapted from within the shared transport charity CoMoUK's Annual Car Club Report 2022 in order to summarise the wide-ranging benefits of car clubs nationally.

Figure 2-18 UK- wide Car Club Statistics



Source: Adapted from CoMoUK Annual Car Club Report 2022

2.4.28 Car clubs offer an alternative model to private car ownership for individuals and businesses. They reduce the need for private parking and can help people reduce car ownership whilst allowing for occasional car travel. Cars are parked in designated bays and can be booked online or via phone, and there are no extra costs for insurance, fuel, and maintenance costs. Car club fleets are increasing use of ULEVs, so they also provide an environmental benefit. Information included in the figure above shows that on average in 2022, each car club vehicle in the UK replaced 22 private cars and that 14% of the car clubs in the UK in 2022 comprise of ULEVs.

2.4.29 Many car club operators work with other shared transport providers to drive a modal shift towards shared transport. Car clubs should be located at Mobility Hubs and incorporated into new development in areas that are easily accessible via walking and cycling. Details of the method for signing up and booking cars can be provided within the mobility hub setting to help raise awareness amongst local residents and visitors. The expansion of ULEV charging in Keynsham can in turn help to facilitate ULEV clubs, with potential for car club spaces to be implemented as part of Mobility Hubs supported by this Plan. Increased publicly available and on-street ULEV charging capability would make it easier for car club users to charge the vehicles and could increase their take-up across Keynsham and Saltford.

2.4.30 The Council is currently working with Industry Leaders to determine the optimal strategy for ensuring our communities have access to electric car clubs.

2.5 Summary

2.5.1 Table 2-2 below sets out a table summarising potential transport interventions for Keynsham and Saltford.

Table 2-2: Keynsham and Saltford - Summary of Potential Interventions

Improvement		Description	How it could be achieved
	**Active Mode Routes**	High quality, attractive, safe and integrated network of walking and cycling infrastructure.	• New segregated cycle lanes, as well as changes to country lanes where appropriate, providing a clear network of attractive and safe routes connecting the places people want to go. • Improved walking and cycling connections within the town centre, including to the High Street, bus stops and the rail station. • Complete delivery of Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan routes in Keynsham, and other routes committed by recent developments. • Direct and segregated Active Travel connection along the A4 between Hicks Gate and Broadmead roundabout, to improve the directness of Bath - Bristol journeys as an alternative to the Bristol Bath Railway Path or routes through Keynsham. • Cycle link on Durley Hill to connect Keynsham with cycle routes at Hicks Gate, and potentially a new Transport Interchange. • Improved cycle route between Whitchurch and Keynsham, connecting the two communities and supporting sustainable travel to Broadlands Academy. • Potential for Manor Road to become a “Quiet Lane”, providing a safe and attractive walking and cycling route between Keynsham and Saltford. • Measures to improve the pedestrian environment in the centre of Saltford, including making it easier to cross the A4.

Improvement		Description	How it could be achieved
	**Local Living**	Supporting residents to access the amenities required to meet their daily needs within walking or cycling distance.	• Support remote working through improved digital connectivity and local remote working facilities in community spaces. • Support local centres, particularly on the outer edges of Keynsham, through providing good walking and cycling links.
	**Modal Filters / Liveable Neighbourhoods**	Modal filters have the potential to support active travel on key routes and reduce traffic in sensitive areas.	Investigate, with the community, the potential to utilise modal filters as part of broader measures to support active travel. Such as: • Targeted filters as part of Liveable Neighbourhoods-style interventions to link residential areas with local centres and town centre. • Filters on roads approaching the town centre and either side of links which cross existing infrastructure pinch points. • Filters on roads to implement Quiet Routes/Lanes.
	**Micromobility**	Extension of short-term e-scooter and e-Bike rental within Keynsham and Saltford.	• Support the expansion of e-scooter and e-bike rental schemes into Keynsham and Saltford to improve local travel options. • Improved storage with appropriate range of services e.g. charging, maintenance, lockers.
	**Keynsham Town Centre**	There is an opportunity to reallocate road space to prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and bus users, to achieve mode shift and create better places	• Comprehensive study and community engagement to re-imagine Keynsham town centre to improve the quality of place, support sustainable transport, and deliver economic prosperity. Consider options for pedestrianisation of the existing one-way section of the High Street or a more comprehensive scheme along its full length. • Measures to reduce the impact of traffic. This could include opportunities to keep traffic on appropriate routes, away from more sensitive areas. It could also include a potential North Keynsham Strategic Access Link, which would reduce traffic in the

Improvement		Description	How it could be achieved
			town centre, enabling significant improvements to be made. Combined, such measures would support delivery of sustainable transport and public realm benefits. • Investigate opportunities to prioritise pedestrians, including re-allocating road space to people over cars. E.g. widened footways, improved crossings, footway crossovers, and more public space. • Improve facilities for cyclists, including safe routes and cycle parking provision. • Support improvements to bus journey times and journey time reliability, improving the level of service and the ability to run viable bus routes. • Make it easier to change between travel modes. • Provide improved public space, creating a more attractive local environment where people want to spend more time.
	**Mobility Hubs**	Mobility Hubs are places that bring together a host of transport options in one place including shared transport such as car clubs and e-scooters with public transport and active travel modes. A network of Mobility Hubs allows people to travel between and around places without the need for a car.	• New Mobility Hubs on the A4, within Keynsham town centre and in proximity to Keynsham rail station, to make it easier to get around. • Provision of Mobility Hub facilities at existing car parks, such as Ashton Way. • A new Transport Interchange at the Hicks Gate Roundabout, supporting better connection between an increased range of public transport services.

Improvement		Description	How it could be achieved
	**Bus Priority**	Interventions to provide bus journey time benefits, by prioritising buses over private vehicles.	• Targeted bus priority measures.
	**Rail**	Rail is an attractive option for long distance public transport.	• Feasibility study into a potential rail station at Saltford.
	**Fixed Route Bus Services**	Support the provision of new bus services where there is a demonstrated demand.	• Support the community in encouraging the West of England Mayor to improve the bus network to ensure residents have a reliable bus service to meet their needs. • This should include connections between the High Street, residential areas including Somerdale, a new Transport Interchange at Hicks Gate, Saltford, and industrial areas north of the A4. • Bus priority measures to improve journey times and journey time reliability.
	**Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)**	DRT can complement fixed route public transport on the main corridors by providing connections into these existing services, thereby improving mobility and social inclusivity.	• DRT could be used to connect to the proposed Mobility Hubs within Keynsham town centre, where passengers can gain access to a connecting bus, e-bike or rail service to complete their journey. • DRT could also be used to connect to a new Transport Interchange at Hicks Gate.

Improvement		Description	How it could be achieved
	**Public Transport Decarbonisation**	Zero emission buses will help local authorities achieve their net zero targets, cleaner air, encourage green growth, and improve health and wellbeing.	• Work with bus operators and other key stakeholders to decarbonise the bus fleet. Charging infrastructure may be required in Keynsham.
	**Car Parking**	Availability, convenience and cost of parking, in comparison with other modes, are key factors in people's travel choice. Furthermore, the use of public land for parking has an opportunity cost in terms of what else it can be used for.	There is the potential to review the use of public land for parking, and how that parking is managed. For example: • There is potential to improve the walking and cycling route between the rail station and Keynsham town centre, by reallocating car parking on Station Road over the A4. • Mobility hub facilities could be introduced into car parks, such as Ashton Way. • Parking charges and management could be reviewed in order to improve the attractiveness of public transport and active travel in comparison with driving.
	**Ultra-Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV) & Car Clubs**	It is recognised that car travel will remain a necessity for many. Transitioning to shared ownership and ULEV vehicles is therefore important in reducing the impact of cars on our communities.	• Study into ULEV on-street charging strategy, to support people without access to off-street parking to transition to ULEVs. • Introduction of ULEV car clubs to provide people with access to a vehicle without having to own it.

3. Somer Valley Transport Strategy

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Our previous engagement with the communities in the Somer Valley highlighted a number of concerns with the current transport network, summarised in Table 3-1.

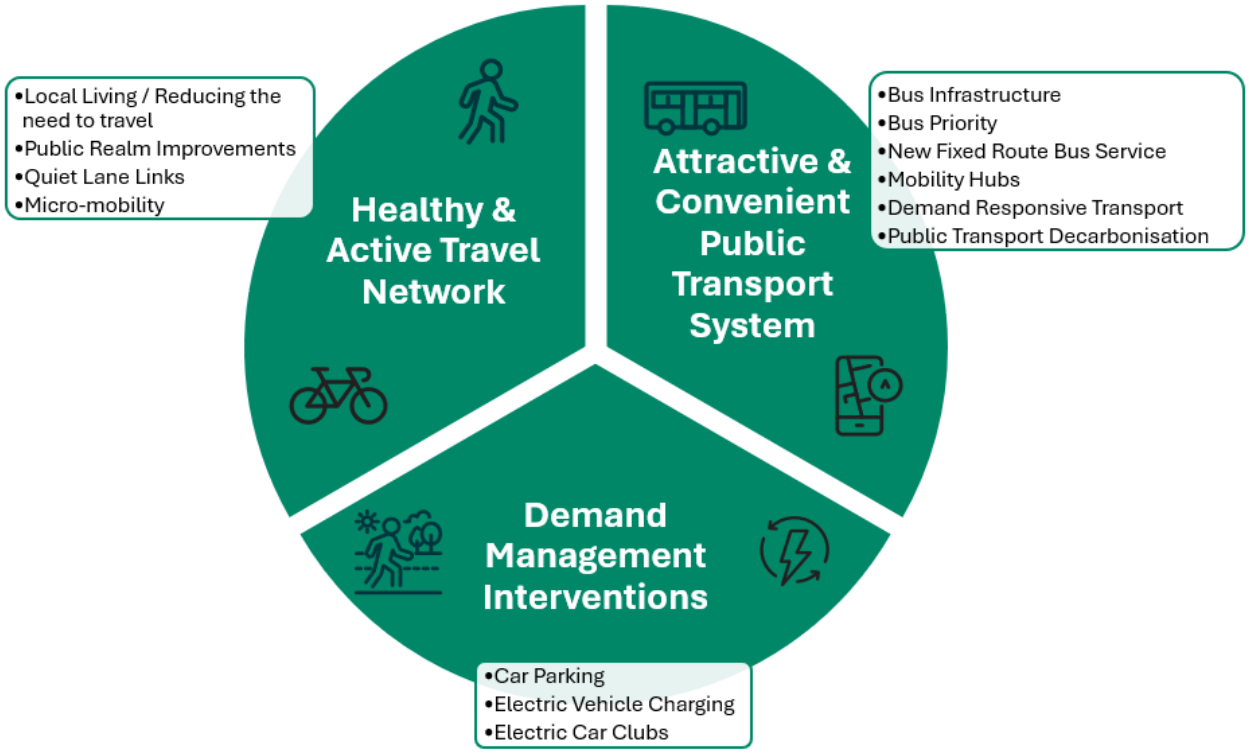
Table 3-1 Somer Valley - Issues and Challenges

Transport Challenges		
	**Topography and Distance to Major Centres**	• The Somer Valley is hilly and settlements and facilities are spread over a wide area. This can make it harder to travel on foot or by bike within the Somer Valley. • Distances to major centres such as Bristol, Bath and Frome result in high levels of car dependency.
	**Lack of Local Job Opportunities**	• There are more homes than jobs in the Somer Valley. • There is a mismatch between the type of jobs available within the Somer Valley and the local labour force. • This results in a high level of out-commuting. • Significantly more people in the Somer Valley travel more than 10km to their place of work, compared with the B&NES average.
	**Public Transport**	• Residents need to travel to Bath, Bristol or Frome to access national rail services. • Recent loss of bus services within the Somer Valley. • Limited bus connections between the east and west of the Somer Valley, poor services in rural areas and lack of connections between villages. This can leave people with limited alternatives to travelling by car. • Bus services are often infrequent, circuitous and expensive with long journey times, compared to the same journey by car.
	**Town Centre Congestion**	• Road traffic in town centres makes it harder to walk and cycle, worsens air quality, and dominates public space. • The double-mini-roundabout in Radstock creates an unpleasant environment and makes it hard to walk and cycle.

Transport Challenges		
		• A limited road network results in congestion on key routes into, out of, and within the Somer Valley.
	**Active Travel Network**	• Limited dedicated and joined up cycle infrastructure to connect towns and villages within the Somer Valley.
	**Distance to Road Links and Severance / Barriers to movement**	• Significant distance to the strategic road network, with the M5 and M4 motorways a long drive from the Somer Valley. • Roads in the Somer Valley carry a mix of short and long-distance traffic, including freight, travelling for many different purposes. • High levels of HGV traffic travel through the communities on A Roads in the Somer Valley e.g. Radstock & Westfield on the A367, Farrington Gurney, Clutton and Temple Cloud along the A37 and parts of Midsomer Norton on the A362. This can be intimidating for people walking and cycling. • Many residents live on or close to a major A road or need to travel along one to access services or town centres. This can both make car usage a natural choice for journeys due to ease of access, and make it harder to walk and cycle.
	**Limited Travel Choices**	• No access to e-scooters, no car clubs, limited buses, no rail services and lack of a comprehensive cycle network results in higher private car ownership and usage. • Factors set out above result in long travel distances, limiting the number of alternatives to car usage.

3.1.2 In order to respond to the findings identified above whilst reflecting the overarching policy backdrop of decarbonising the transport network to achieve net zero targets, key themes of the Plan have been developed as set out in Figure 3-1 as follows.

Figure 3-1 Transport Strategy for the Somer Valley Key Themes



3.1.3 The remainder of this chapter sets out each theme of this transport strategy in further detail.

3.2 Healthy & Active Travel Network

Local Living

What the evidence shows:

3.2.1 There are limited employment, leisure and shopping opportunities within the Somer Valley, resulting in longer journey distances outside of the area, and correspondingly, a greater reliance on the private car, due to higher costs and uncompetitive journey times by bus. The Census data shows that a third of Somer Valley residents travel over 10km to their place of work, with 25% travelling between 10-20km. This is significantly higher than B&NES, the South West and the national average. Bath and Bristol are key destinations, particularly for employment. Wells and Frome are important destinations for retail and leisure, as they are easier places to drive to than Bath / Bristol and provide a wider variety of facilities.

What the community has told us:

3.2.2 The community said that a high proportion of residents travel outside of the Somer Valley for work e.g., Bath and Bristol, but also for leisure, shopping and other activities, with destinations such as Frome, Wells and Trowbridge also regularly visited.

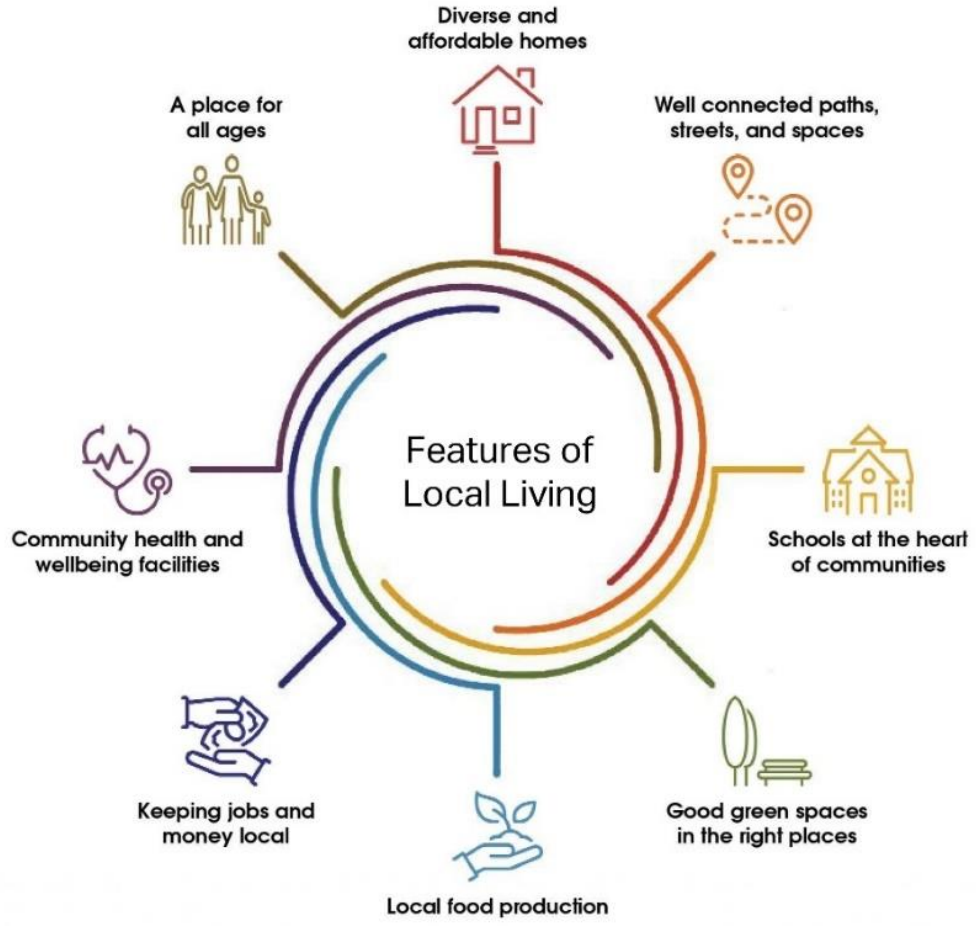
3.2.3 Some people are put off by the local traffic congestion and travel to Frome and Wells. Frome has undergone regeneration recently and is attracting people from other areas.

3.2.4 There was a consensus that Radstock town centre needs improving. The improvements mentioned by the community included reducing traffic dominance, the provision of more facilities / diversifying the type of facilities and providing a better retail offer within Midsomer Norton / Radstock so that people stay for longer.

Plan Response:

3.2.5 When services and amenities are located closer to people's homes, people are better able to walk or cycle or travel easily by public transport. Reducing the need to travel means reducing the number or length of journeys or both. The proposals to promote local living and reduce the distance which residents of the Somer Valley are required to travel are set out in the following paragraphs. The aim is that all residents would benefit from the proposals, thereby encouraging a change to existing trip patterns and reducing the current high level of car dependency.

Figure 3-2: Features of Local Living



Source: 'Living Locally: The role of housing and planning within local councils', APSE and TPCA, July 2023

3.2.6 The Census data review and anecdotal evidence from Stakeholder Engagement activities indicates a high proportion of external travel from the Somer Valley for work, retail and leisure purposes, with the majority of work trips travelling to Bath and Bristol, anda reasonable proportion of leisure and retail trips also travelling to places such as Frome, Trowbridge and Wells. If a greater proportion of these trips could be internalised within the Somer Valley, this could have multiple benefits in terms of transport, but also in relation to economic resilience and community cohesion.

3.2.7 Encouraging more people to make full use of the resources within the Somer Valley will require putting the right conditions in place. The focus for internalisation in the Somer Valley is on retail and leisure trips where there are more opportunities to:

- influence travel behaviours by providing enhancements to the public realm;
- increase the number and quality of walking and cycling links from residential areas and the surrounding villages to the key centres of Midsomer Norton and Radstock; and
- provide a more attractive high street through the planning process.

3.2.8 Internalisation should also focus on encouraging and enabling more services to go out to the rural communities, for example, mobile hairdressers, pop-up post offices, libraries, bicycle repair, pet grooming, car repair / tyre fitting, food delivery services.

3.2.9 There is a long-term aspiration to provide more jobs within the Somer Valley that align with the skill set of the residents, including as part of the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone, and thus reduce the amount of out commuting. However, it is recognised that there are structural challenges that mean addressing this fully will take some time. As a result, the priority for commuting journeys is to provide realistic alternatives that allow people to travel to work in areas outside of the Somer Valley sustainably.

3.2.10 Enabling a greater proportion of residents to live, shop and undertake leisure activities within the Somer Valley could help reduce dependence on the car, reduce traffic, and increase health and wellbeing. To achieve this, land should be allocated within the Local Plan which is, or can through mitigation measures, be made accessible for pedestrians and cyclists so that active travel is the natural first choice mode of transport. It will also be important that a range of employment, retail and leisure / community uses are provided for, to create choice, diversity and resilience.

3.2.11 Encouraging local living within the Somer Valley would help to create more welcoming, healthy and resilient communities where residents can access the amenities required to meet their daily needs within a short walk or cycle ride from their home. To achieve this requires improvement of existing local centres and the access to them.

3.2.12 In terms of infrastructure, to create the most effective conditions for successful local living, provision should be targeted at pedestrians and cyclists to ensure that they are the natural first choice modes. This could result in measures that provide the necessary infrastructure for active travel journeys in combination with reducing the current ease and attractiveness of car trips. For example, providing more protected cycle lanes, secure storage for bicycles, and implementing public realm improvements to dedicate more road space to pedestrians and cyclists and / or traffic management schemes which increase accessibility for active modes.

3.2.13 It will also be necessary to ensure that walking and cycling networks meet the core design principles set out in LTN 1/20 to be Coherent, Direct, Safe, Comfortable and Attractive. To that end, key routes within and between communities should be established. This could be achieved by a review of the road hierarchy, with the view to identifying a set of segregated quick routes that run alongside the main roads in tandem with suitable routes for ”Quiet Lanes”. . Roads would need to be audited to identify volumes /speeds /type of traffic, and missing and / or defective infrastructure, for example a protected cycle lane or missing tactile paving at key crossing points on routes to primary schools. These works have begun as part of developing the Active Travel Masterplan. Such types of measures would benefit the whole of the active travel community, and particularly those who are less confident / more vulnerable.

3.2.14 Other non-transport-based measures such as facilitating high speed internet connectivity to enable online shopping, providing for home / hub working, and providing digital services could also assist in reducing the need for travel outside the Somer Valley. The provision of mobile services should also be considered, to reduce the need to travel.,

3.2.15 Whilst residents can still travel further afield, creating vibrant, thriving, connected communities within the Somer Valley will reduce the need to travel on a regular basis, thereby reducing pressure on the transport network.

Radstock Public Realm Improvements

What the evidence shows:

3.2.16 Evidence shows that Radstock experiences traffic congestion throughout the day, but it is considerably worse in the AM peak and PM peak (See Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4). The A367 and A362 converge within Radstock, and the current traffic gyratory and double roundabout configuration makes it difficult to navigate as an active mode user, creating an intimidating and noisy environment as well as causing a barrier to movement for pedestrians. There is a significant imbalance in the level of public space afforded to vehicles over people. The resulting congestion in the town centre contributes to an unwelcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists, obstructing movement on foot and by bike, and discouraging people from spending time there. Additionally it detracts from private investment and regeneration of the area.

3.2.17 Notwithstanding this, both the A367 and the A362 are strategically important through routes for HGVs, and there are limited alternatives available. There is likely to be some opportunity for mode shift, but safe and suitable passage for HGVs and buses through Radstock must be retained.

Figure 3-3 Radstock Traffic Congestion

Typical Wednesday 08:30 Typical Wednesday 17:30

Figure 3-4 Radstock Town Centre (Wednesday 08:30)

What the community has told us:

3.2.18 Through discussions with the local community, it was noted that it can be difficult to cross the road in Radstock, particularly around the double mini-roundabouts.

3.2.19 The community said that Radstock is perceived as a place people pass through on the way to somewhere else. Some people do not see it as a destination in its own right, even though there is a good range of independent shops.

3.2.20 Consensus was that there could be a greater focus on independent shops in Radstock, that the pinch-point (double mini-roundabout) needs to be addressed and the public realm requires improvement.

Plan Response:

3.2.21 The existing transport challenges in Radstock Town Centre can be seen summarised in Figure 3-5 below.

Figure 3-5 Existing transport challenges in Radstock Town Centre

Journeys by bus less attractive as delayed by traffic congestion from the Westfield direction

Congestion on A362 and A367, focus on vehicles not pedestrians

Walking route to town centre narrow and intimidating

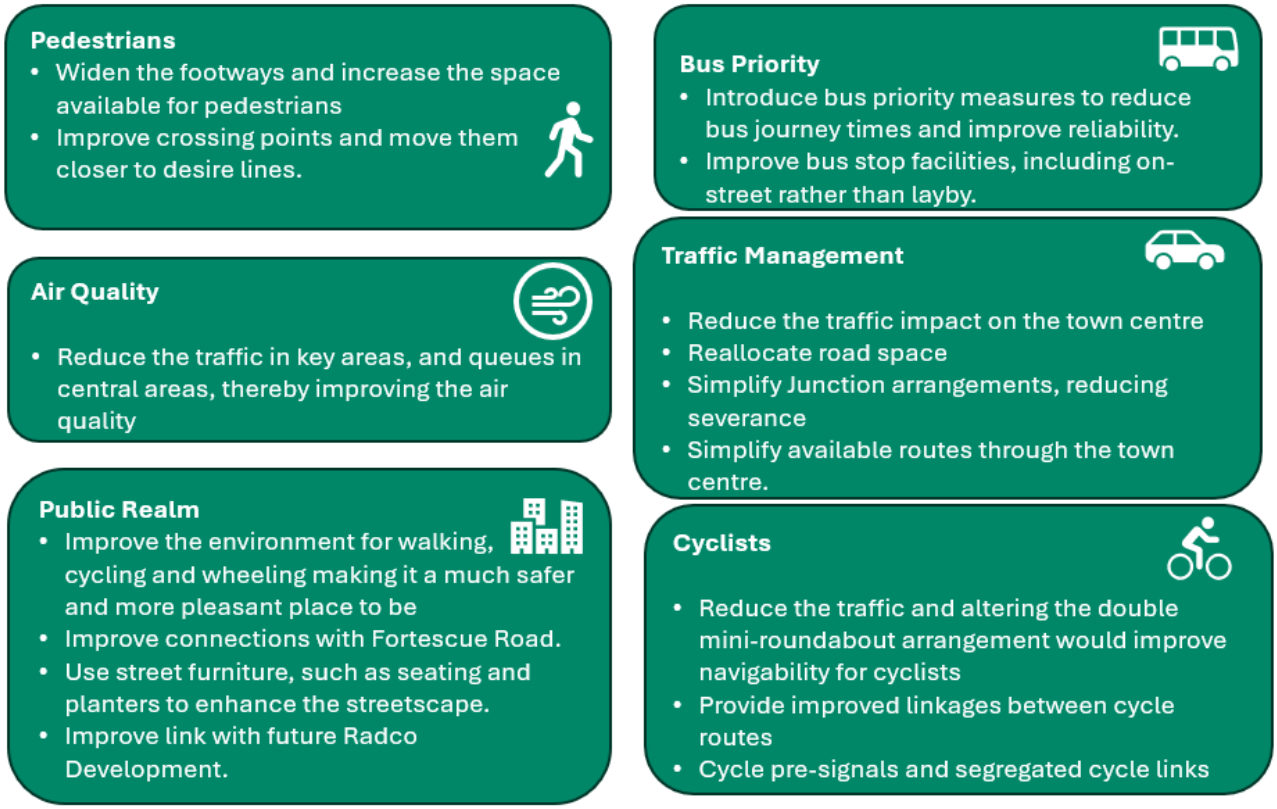
Double mini-roundabout difficult for active modes – focuses on traffic movement

Negative environmental effects of traffic creating noise and air quality impacts

Access between cycle routes hampered by busy roads

3.2.22 The evidence presented in the baseline report and the findings from stakeholder engagement activities point to a need to investigate potential options to reduce the current impact of vehicles around Radstock Town centre. Such a scheme would aim to improve the public realm in the centre of Radstock, reduce the impact of traffic, and support the economic prosperity of the town. Ideas and options for things which could be done are set out in Figure 3-6 below.

Figure 3-6 Ideas and Options for Radstock Town Centre



3.2.23 All options which would be considered would, as a minimum:

- Connect the three strategic cycle routes which converge on Radstock
- Reduce barriers to movement and move crossing points closer to pedestrian desire lines
- Provide additional footway and public space

3.2.24 In addition, we will consider a range of options which take a more comprehensive approach to limiting the impact of traffic in the town centre, and improving conditions for sustainable modes. At present, both Frome Road and the A367 / The Street, enable through movements by traffic. This offers the potential to explore options to alter traffic routing.

3.2.25 Focusing traffic on one route would allow the double-mini roundabout arrangement to be altered to a three-arm junction, with crossings brought closer to desire lines, reducing the barriers to movement at the junction. Bus priority could be introduced on an arm not taking general traffic, which would provide buses with an advantage over general traffic. There would be opportunities to provide additional footway space, and cycle facilities.

3.2.26 A study to consider options and refine and develop preferred option(s) would be taken forward with engagement with the community.

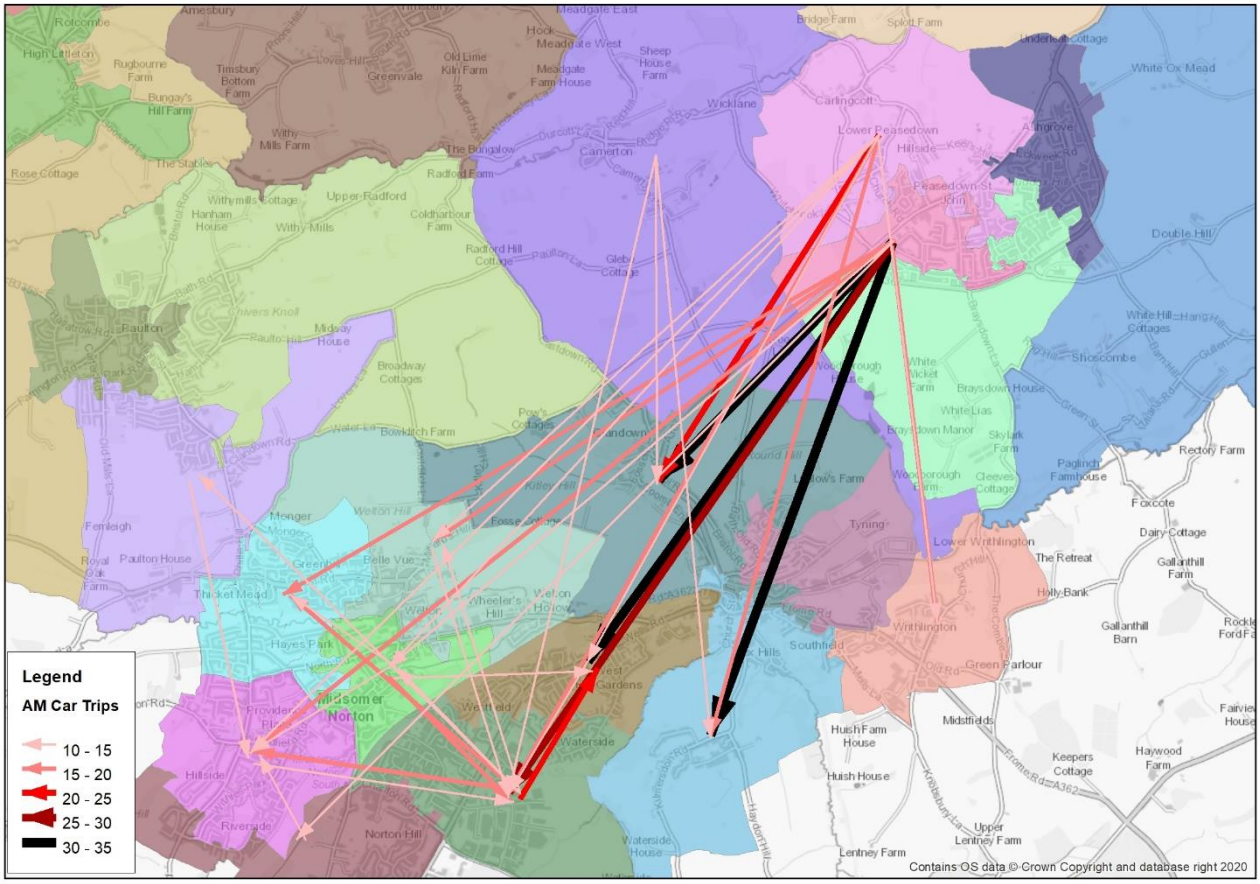
Quiet Lane Links

What the evidence shows:

3.2.27 Nearly 15% of residents in the Somer Valley travel under 2km to their place of work, with 11% travelling between 2km and 5km, distances which are generally accepted to be cyclable by some people. Areas of the Somer Valley such as Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Paulton and Peasedown St John all feature in the top 10 destinations for people travelling to work by car from the Somer Valley.

3.2.28 The West of England Regional Transport Model (WERTM) has been interrogated to show car trips between different zones within the model area for all types of journeys. Figure 3-7 shows that in the AM peak the highest movements are between Peasedown St John and Haydon (South Radstock), North Westfield and North Radstock (between 30-35 car trips). The next highest level of demand (25 – 30 car trips) is between Peasedown St John and Westfield South. There are a lower number of east / west movements between Westfield and Midsomer Norton and vice versa. The WERTM model shows that most journeys originate in Peasedown St John, and that there is a lot of movement between the villages within the Somer Valley which creates challenges particularly for bus service provision. Overall, the majority of trips are through trips or to a destination outside of the Somer Valley.

Figure 3-7: AM Peak Journeys across the Somer Valley



3.2.29 Data from the 2021 Census also shows that the Somer Valley area has a lower proportion of walking and cycling commuting trips when compared to the average for B&NES and the South West region. This highlights that there is the potential to encourage a switch to active travel modes if walking and cycling / wheeling connections were improved, particularly along the east / west A362 corridor between Radstock and Farrington Gurney, which benefits from a more level topography suitable to everyday / utility cycling.

What the community has told us:

3.2.30 The community said that there is a need to better connect villages by active modes, and to improve active mode connections from the villages to Midsomer Norton / Radstock. We should consider the potential to increase the walking / cycling network into areas not currently served.

3.2.31 There are many Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the Somer Valley which are often more direct that the highway links. Working with farmers / landowners we should consider the potential to convert strategic PRoW into year-round, fully segregated walking / cycling routes.

3.2.32 The community said that improvements to wayfinding are required with Midsomer Norton and Peasedown St John cited as places where navigating can be challenging. Poor wayfinding was also seen as a barrier to walking as a means of transport.

Plan Response:

3.2.33 It is proposed that a review of the road hierarchy in the Somer Valley is undertaken to identify routes which have the potential to be converted into Quiet Lanes. A network of Quiet Lanes, connecting villages and local centres together by active modes would be beneficial for encouraging more vulnerable road users to choose active modes for short, local journeys, which would in turn help reduce unnecessary car trips and have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and the environment.

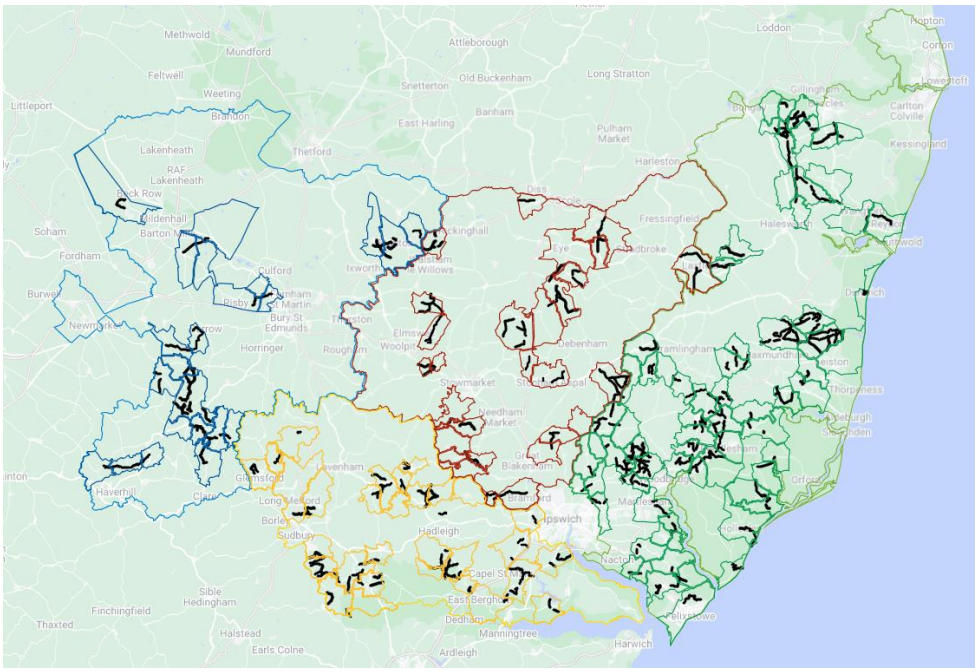
3.2.34 The review has considered the availability of suitable routes between settlements, and where multiple routes exist, the potential to make the shorter and flatter alternatives into Quiet Lanes. It is recognised that for some the topography in the Somer Valley is a barrier to active travel. Therefore, the advent of e-mobility is important in helping to overcome this barrier, alongside the provision of secure cycle lockers at the end of a journey.

Case Study: Quiet Lanes Suffolk

A county-wide project supported by Suffolk County Council's Suffolk 2020 Fund, supporting Parish Councils to establish Quiet Lanes from the initial identification of suitable lanes, through the local consultation and application process to final sign-off.

The project has provided Quiet Lanes throughout Suffolk, including in the village of Glemsford where an already popular route used for activities such as walking, cycling, jogging and horse riding has been designated as a Quiet Lane.

Figure 3-8: Map of Quiet Lanes in Suffolk



Source: www.quietlanessuffolk.co.uk

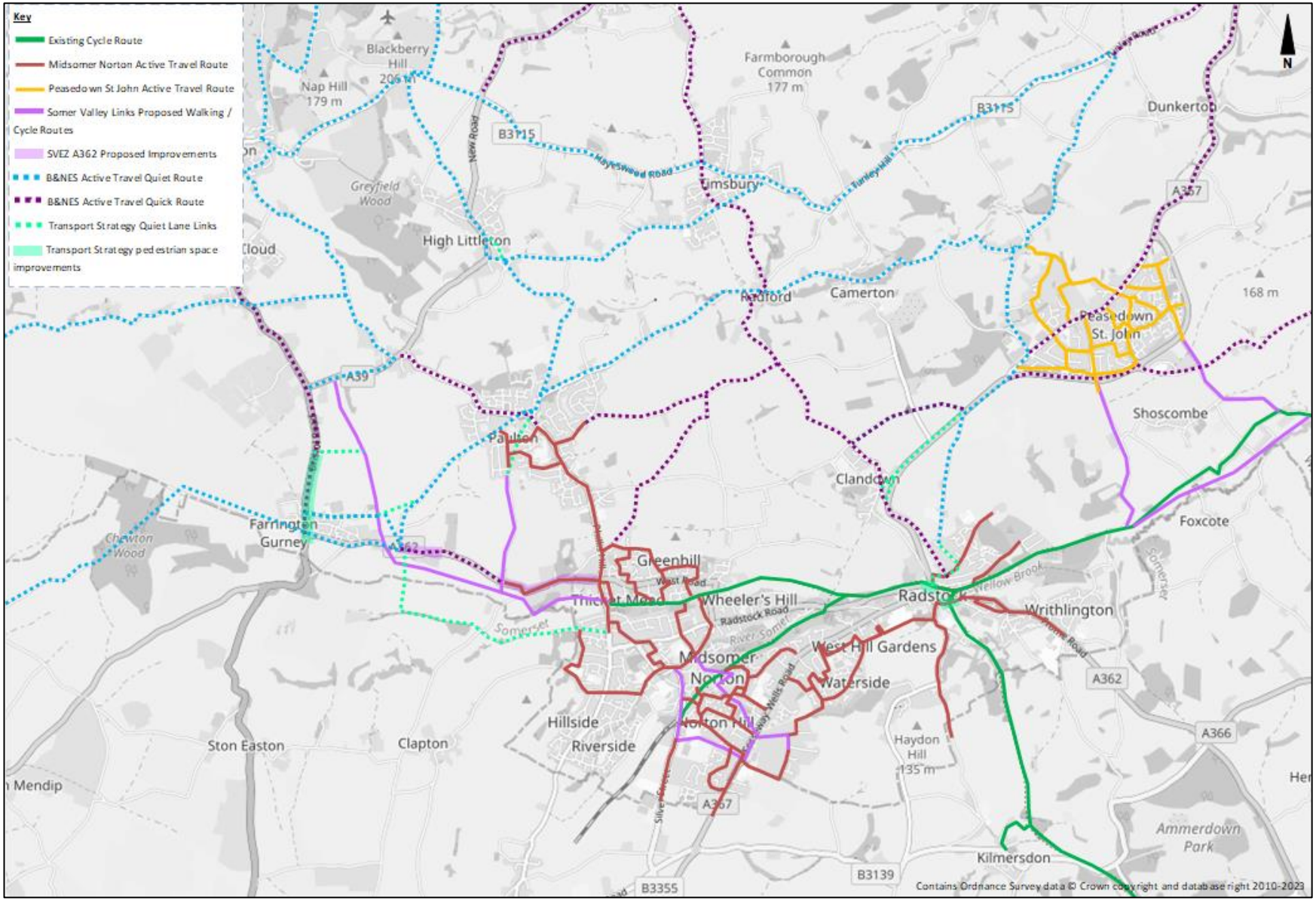
3.2.35 Potential Quiet Lanes links are presented on Figure 3-9 (dashed green lines). These are shown alongside the proposed walking / cycling quiet routes as part of the Somer Valley Links project including the proposed Old Railway Cycle Path, the A37 Quiet Route, the Old Mills Quietway and Quiet Lane Links to Peasedown St John, which are described in more detail in Table 3-2 below.

Table 3-2 Somer Valley Pedestrian / Cycle Improvements

Proposal	Description	Source
Midsomer Norton to Hallatrow Old Railway Path	Off road cycle track between Midsomer Norton and Hallatrow, following the former Midsomer Norton to Hallatrow Railway Line which would link to Norton-Radstock Greenway. This route would provide a safe and attractive walking and cycling route between Midsomer Norton and Hallatrow and would connect Hallatrow / Farrington Gurney with the existing cycle network in the east of the Somer Valley. This route was proposed as part of B&NES Levelling Up Funding bid.	Somer Valley Links
A362 Alternative Shared Footway	An alternative option to the Old Railway Path is a shared use footway along the A362 that would maintain separation of cyclists and general traffic from Main Street to Phillis Hill.	Somer Valley Links
Old Mills Quietway	There are currently very few cycle connections between Paulton and the wider area, however, Old Mills Lane provides a country lane connection between Paulton and the A362. Old Mills Lane could potentially be converted to a Quietway to connect Paulton to the proposed Old Railway Path.	Somer Valley Links
Somer Valley Route 1 and 2	Midsomer Norton currently has a good cycle connection to Radstock and Bath along the Norton-Radstock Greenway and National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 24. The Somer Valley Route Proposals look to provide improved cycle links along several residential streets in the south of Midsomer Norton to connect into the Norton-Radstock Greenway and may also benefit more local active travel trips such as accessing Norton Hill High School and the Westfield Industrial Estate.	Somer Valley Links
A37 Quiet Route	The provision of a quiet route which connects Hallatrow, Temple Cloud, Clutton, Pensford, Publow and Whitchurch Village is proposed as an alternative route to allow cyclists to more safely navigate the A37. The proposed route would predominantly utilise country lanes and employ traffic management measures to create a safer environment for cyclists. The route ties in with the Midsomer Norton to Hallatrow proposal and the Avon Cycle Way, providing an onward route to Keynsham and NCN 3 towards Whitchurch.	Somer Valley Links
Shoscombe to Peasedown St John Quiet Lane	This Quiet Lane is proposed to provide a link to the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 24 via Shoscombe, making use of the existing bus link between Wellow Lane and the A367. Connecting Peasedown St John into the NCN 24 would allow onward active travel connections north to Bath and south to Radstock / Midsomer Norton.	Somer Valley Links
Proposed Littleton to Peasedown St John Quiet Lane	This Quiet Lane route is proposed to provide a link between Peasedown St John and the intersection between the existing and the proposed National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 24. Connecting Peasedown St John to NCN 24 would allow onward active travel connections north to Bath and south to Radstock / Midsomer Norton.	Somer Valley Links
Proposed National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 24 Extension	There is an existing NCN24 on-street link running between Green Street and Wellow, but there is the potential to create an off-carriageway cycleway following the alignment of the former rail line.	Somer Valley Links
Farrington Gurney pedestrian environment	Improvements to the pedestrian environment in Farrington Gurney through the provision of crossing points / signals and a reduction in the speed limit to 30mph on the A37 and the A362.	Transport Strategy

Farrington Gurney to Paulton via Church Lane and Paulton Road	Proposed to link Farrington Gurney with Paulton via Church Lane and existing PRoW between Church Lane and Paulton Road. Will also link to the proposed Old Railway Path cycleway to the north of Farrington Gurney via existing PRoW.	Transport Strategy
Paulton to High Littleton	Quiet Lane link proposed between Paulton and High Littleton via Bristol Road and Goosard Lane.	Transport Strategy
High Littleton to Timsbury	Proposed Quiet Lane link between High Littleton and Timsbury via Bungay's Hill, Loves Hill and South Road.	Transport Strategy
Timsbury to Radstock via Clandown	Proposed Quiet Lane link between Timsbury and Radstock, via Radford and Clandown, using Radford Hill, Eastdown Road, Smallcombe Road and Bristol Road. Quiet Lane links also proposed on Northdown Road and Bath Old Road, linking to the A367 to the north.	Transport Strategy
Midsomer Norton to Farrington Gurney	Proposed link between Midsomer Norton and Farrington Gurney, from Underhill Lane in Midsomer Norton west along existing PRoW to Hill View in Farrington Gurney.	Transport Strategy
Hallatrow to White Cross Junction Footway	Footway link between Hallatrow and the A37 at the White Cross Junction.	Transport Strategy

Figure 3-9 Somer Valley Network Improvements



3.2.36 Quiet Lanes could be achieved through introducing traffic restrictions and / or targeted Modal Filters to better serve active travel modes. Traffic and environmental impacts of converting roads to Quiet Lanes should be modelled to maximise usage by ensuring people can travel safely whilst at the same time minimising adverse impacts. High levels of engagement and consultation with stakeholders and residents will be needed to progress from strategy to delivery. There is also the potential to develop and upgrade the network of PRoW to increase the proportion of local journeys undertaken by active modes.

3.2.37 As illustrated in Figure 3-9, the individual routes explained in Table 3-2, if implemented as a whole, would create a comprehensive and well-connected network of active travel routes across the Somer Valley, greater than the sum of its parts. The extension of the Norton – Radstock Greenway along the A362 corridor would for example provide important east / west connectivity. This route is currently poorly served by public transport services, so extending the cycle route provision would provide residents with the opportunity to connect into the public transport corridor that connects to Bristol along the A37. The north / south routes proposed as part of the Somer Valley Links project would also provide better connectivity between the villages in the north of the Somer Valley (i.e. High Littleton, Paulton, Camerton, Timsbury) to the more urban area of Radstock and Midsomer Norton. Links between these villages would also be enhanced, reducing the need for short car trips.

3.2.38 Within the more urban areas e.g. Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Peasedown St John and Paulton the focus of this transport strategy will be on connecting residential areas with local / town centres by active modes. Encouraging more active travel within a community could have many positive benefits including those shown in Figure 3-10.

3.2.39 Liveable Neighbourhoods (LNs) are already being implemented in a number of locations in the district as part of the community-led LN programme[7]. Creating LNs will require a combination of

- **traffic management interventions** such as the introduction of Modal Filters and traffic regulation orders to restrict who can use routes, park and the speeds with which they travel;
- **improvements to the walking and cycling infrastructure** along the route, such as better crossings, provision of footways and cycle lanes; and
- **street furniture** such as benches, parklets and cycle parking along routes and at destinations.

3.2.40 Where communities are adversely affected by traffic, for example the A37 running through Farrington Gurney and the A367 / A362 through Radstock, this transport strategy proposes ways to reduce the severing effect on active / sustainable roads. Within Radstock, a town centre scheme would improve connectivity for active modes across the A367, allow for improvements to the public realm, and improve journey times on public transport services. In Farrington Gurney, improved connectivity across the A37 would also be achieved through upgrading the existing pedestrian crossing to include pedestrian activation. Speed limit enforcement is proposed to be introduced along the A37 at Farrington Gurney. Reducing the speed limit on the A362 at Farrington Gurney from 40mph to 30mph would also provide benefits for active modes and provide consistency along the route.

[7] https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/what-liveable-neighbourhood-0

Figure 3-10 Benefits of Living in a Liveable Neighbourhood

Micro Mobility

What the evidence shows:

3.2.41 26% of residents in the Somer Valley travel less than 5km to their place of work; however, only 1% of residents cycle to work. Barriers to cycling in the Somer Valley include the hilly topography and the distances to the main employment centres. Micro Mobility (electric bikes and e-scooters) could therefore assist in shifting mode share away from the car, towards more active / sustainable modes. Shared mobility schemes can provide residents with access to an EV, e-scooter or e-bike without having to own one.

3.2.42 To date, there are no dedicated micro-mobility schemes / trials within the Somer Valley, although the West of England Combined Authority E-scooter trial is expected to be extended into the Somer Valley.

3.2.43 An e-scooter trial has been running in some parts of the WECA region, including some of Bath city, since October 2020, now extended until May 2026. It comprises 4,000 E-scooters, and 1,500 e-bikes across the region, with 20 e-cargo bikes added from Autumn 2023. The e-scooter rides have been largely short distance with 50% of trips less than a 25-minute walk (2.1km) in Bristol and 19 minutes (1.6km) in Bath.

3.2.44 The University of the West of England (UWE) carried out an evaluation report into the West of England E-Scooter trial, reporting in May 2023 (Chatterjee, K., Parkin, J., Bozovic, T. & Flower, J. (2023). West of England E-scooter Trial Evaluation Final Report. Report to West of England). Key findings include that, overall, the trial has reduced travel related carbon emissions. Take up has been high due to ease of use and time saving capabilities, replacing trips from all types of transport. E-scooters are used in combination with public transport for between 10% and 20% of journeys.

Plan Response:

3.2.45 E-scooters and e-bikes represent a significant opportunity in terms of increasing the distances that people can travel without a car, overcoming adverse terrain that would make pedal cycles unfeasible for most people and thereby replacing the car for short trips.

3.2.46 An e-bike hire scheme is proposed for the Somer Valley (Midsomer Norton) with the indicative programme proposing a launch date in Spring 2025. Further expansion of this scheme across the Somer Valley would be the logical progression of this scheme, to increase penetration and reduce car use for short, local journeys. This could also include a trial scheme for e-cargo bikes which could serve the hardware stores and industrial units throughout the Somer Valley. The aim would be to put a scheme in place alongside the cycle lanes and Quiet Lanes, ensuring safe and attractive options for cycling within the Somer Valley.

3.2.47 If the law regarding the use of personal e-scooters on the public highway changes, this could have a significant and beneficial impact for local mobility. The advent of micro-mobility also maximises the benefits of the walk and cycle measures being proposed as part of this transport strategy.

3.2.48 Secure storage should be provided in key destinations across the Somer Valley for people to store bikes and e-bikes and if the law changes e-scooters. Providing supporting infrastructure (potentially as part of a Mobility Hub), for safe, secure storage, repair and or charging in key destinations across the Somer Valley should be a considered a prerequisite alongside any infrastructure improvements, such as cycle lanes.

3.3 Attractive & Convenient Public Transport System

3.3.1 As illustrated in Figure 3-9 there is a lot of movement between the towns and villages in the Somer Valley. Catering for these varied and disparate journey destinations is particularly challenging for a bus operator in the current climate when government funding is being cut and operators are focusing on their commercially viable routes. The resultant services covering areas such as the Somer Valley are therefore often circuitous, long and of lower frequency and consequently unattractive compared to a comparative journey by car.

3.3.2 There is however a real opportunity for public transport within the Somer Valley, as the topography and distance between some of the settlements will mean that active travel and micro-mobility options are unfeasible for some residents. So, ensuring that motorised transport is as sustainable as possible, i.e. carrying multiple passengers, in clean / green vehicles is important for transitioning towards net zero targets.

3.3.3 A successful public transport system does not solely focus on routes. The interventions proposed should therefore be seen as a package, which when implemented together would create a sustainable, successful and connected public transport system for the Somer Valley.

Bus Infrastructure

What the evidence shows:

3.3.4 Provisions at bus stops vary throughout the Somer Valley and the various towns / villages. Generally, bus stops in the main areas include a bus shelter, for example most of the bus stops on Bath Road through Peasedown St John. Many of the bus stops further out of the towns / villages and in the smaller villages are simple signed bus stops. Of these, some are on narrow footways (e.g. Church Street and Winterfield Road in Paulton) or on a verge (e.g. Paulton Road in Hallatrow). Only a few stops include real-time passenger information (RTPI), for example the Victoria Hall bus stops within the centre of Radstock.

Plan Response:

3.3.5 All bus stops / shelters within the Somer Valley should be audited, with a view to providing a consistent level of provision across the area, for example providing seating, shelter and RTPI. Upgrades would improve the passenger experience and could help to encourage a shift towards increased usage of public transport.

3.3.6 WECA are currently undertaking a bus stop update programme delivering upgraded shelters, improved seating, green roofs, improvements to paving and RTPI displays with the aim of providing an accessible, sustainable and reliable public transport network.

Bus Priority

What the evidence shows:

3.3.7 There are currently no bus priority measures within the Somer Valley, resulting in buses becoming stuck in congestion, for example within Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Paulton and along the A37 during the AM and PM peak periods.

3.3.8 Bus journeys already take longer than the private car and this is accentuated by congestion. For example, a journey from Midsomer Norton to Bath Spa takes approximately 50 minutes by bus, compared to approximately 25-30 minutes by car. It takes approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes to travel from Radstock to Bristol on the 172 bus service, compared to a typical 40-60-minute journey by car. The journey to Frome from Midsomer Norton takes approximately 40 minutes by bus, compared to approximately 22 minutes by car.

What the community has told us:

3.3.9 Public perception is that bus services are unreliable and expensive, and evidence shows that bus routes are circuitous with long journey times (as highlighted above) compared to travelling by car.

Plan Response:

3.3.10 Bus improvements along the A37 and the A367 being developed as part of the Somer Valley Links project have the potential to act as catalysts for further improvements in public transport provision to connect the wider Somer Valley to the higher frequency bus corridors between Wells and Bristol and Wells and Bath. Bus priority measures are being considered as part of that project and provided along the A37 and A367 corridor, for example at the A362 / A37 junction in Farrington Gurney and the A37 / A39 junction at Hallatrow alongside improvements to bus frequency. Our aspiration is for a fully segregated bus route between the Somer Valley and Bath along the A367. The Council will also investigate mass transit along these routes.

3.3.11 Improving bus services by making journey times quicker and more reliable, including more direct/express services, to encourage residents to use public transport for more of their journeys.

3.3.12 There is also potential for a bus gate in Radstock as part of wider public realm improvement measures which would provide significant bus journey time benefits for buses to/from Bath as well as buses travelling through Radstock/Midsomer Norton.

New fixed route bus services

What the evidence shows:

3.3.13 Several bus routes serving the Somer Valley and providing connections internally ceased in April 2023:

- the 82 between Radstock and Paulton;
- the 178 between Midsomer Norton and Brislington Park and Ride;
- the 179, between Bath, Timsbury, Paulton and Midsomer Norton;
- the 379 between Bristol and Bath via Midsomer Norton; and
- the 768 between Midsomer Norton and Bath.

3.3.14 The 172 service is being extended to replace service 379 and a new 522 and 2V routes have been created, which replaces the 349 service. Despite this, the Somer Valley has lost a significant proportion of its fixed route bus services resulting in increased reliance on the private car and increased social exclusion for those who cannot afford to run a car, choose not to have a car, or are unable to drive. The new 522 and 2V routes use temporary BSIP funding.

3.3.15 One factor that has influenced the viability of bus routes in recent years is the Covid pandemic. The DfT's 'Daily domestic transport use by mode: Great Britain, since 1 March 2020' statistics present the level of transport use as a percentage of the equivalent period prior to the Covid-19 lockdown. These data show that during the lockdown in April 2020, bus travel fell to just 11% of the pre-Covid baseline. In April 2021, bus travel had recovered to just 52% of pre-pandemic levels. Bus use has been increasing since however. As of September 2023, it was at 94% of the pre-covid baseline.

3.3.16 The Government has responded through the 'Bus Back Better' funding and the provision of the £2 fare cap, which was extended until October 2023 and further to November 2024.

3.3.17 This situation has been compounded recently by particularly high inflation in the bus industry, which has increased the cost of subsidising buses and means that Councils are not able to afford to continue subsidising the same number of bus services as in the past.

3.3.18 The five key bus services in the Somer Valley are the 376, 172, 173, 174 and 522.

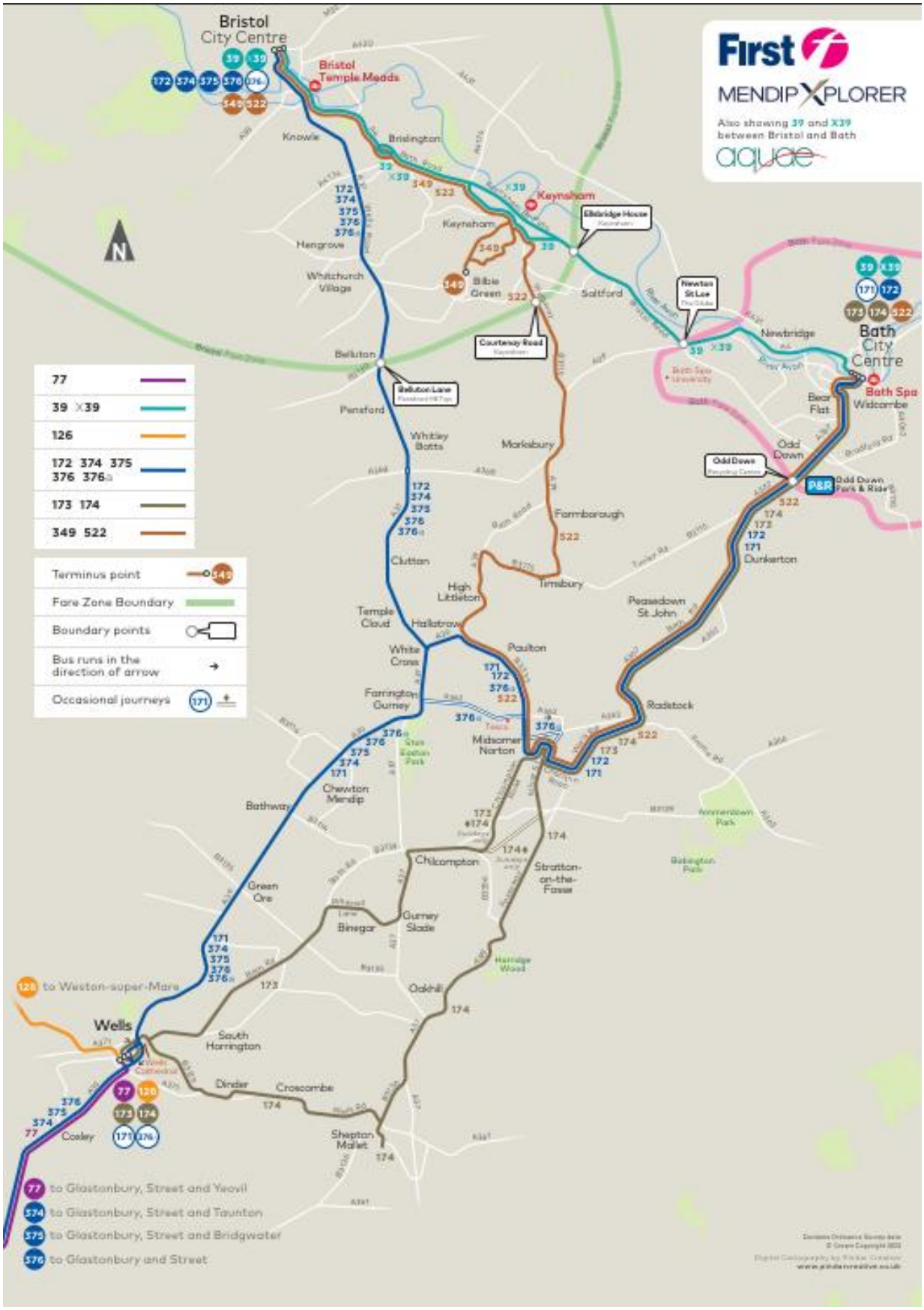
- The 376 service, or Mendip Explorer as it is branded, runs between Street, Glastonbury, Wells and Bristol with stops in villages located along the A39 and A37. The 376 has a half hourly service during the weekday and Saturdays and runs an evening service with the last bus leaving Bristol just before midnight. The 376 service runs hourly on Sundays and Bank holidays.
- The 172 runs between Bath - Peasedown St John – Radstock - Midsomer Norton - Paulton – Hallatrow – Bristol, with some occasional services which route via Farrington Gurney and then take the A39 towards Wells. The 172 has a half hourly service during the weekday and runs an evening service with the last bus leaving Bath at 00:10. The Sunday and Bank holiday service is evenings only in both directions.
- The 173 runs between Bath - Peasedown St John – Radstock - Midsomer Norton – Chilcompton – Wells. The 173 has an hourly service during the weekday. The last bus departs Bath at 19:47 or Midsomer Norton at 20:29 (southbound) and departs Wells at 18:49 (northbound). No Sunday service operates on this route.
- The 174 runs between Bath - Peasedown St John – Radstock - Midsomer Norton – Stratton-on-the-Fosse – Shepton Mallet – Wells. The 174 has an hourly frequency all days of the week. The last bus departs Wells at 18:10 and Bath at 20:15 (weekdays).
- The 522 Bath - Peasedown St John – Radstock - Midsomer Norton – Paulton – High Littleton – Timsbury – Farmborough – Keynsham – Bristol. This service has an hourly service during the weekday. The last bus departs Bristol at 19:35 (south eastbound) and Bath at 21:33 (south westbound). There is no Sunday service on this route.

3.3.19 Public transport coverage between Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Bath is high, with four of the five services running along the route, providing on average six services per hour. Connections to Bristol are also good with a half hourly service being provided by the 172 service. Paulton also benefits from on average four buses per hour. The more rural areas however, such as Timsbury and High Littleton, are less well served with on average two buses per hour, to limited destinations resulting in much poorer levels of public transport accessibility. For all areas of the Somer Valley connections to other key locations across the district are limited with no easy way to travel to Keynsham or the Chew Valley by public transport.

3.3.20 As shown in Figure 3-11, the key bus routes are circuitous and less direct than a comparative journey by car, increasing journey times and reducing their attractiveness. For example, a journey from Peasedown St John to Keynsham on the 522 would take 1 hour 15 minutes, whereas an equivalent car journey would take just 28 minutes by using a much more direct route.

3.3.21 Figure 3-11 also shows a gap in east-west public transport services along the A362 between Farrington Gurney and Midsomer Norton. This also reduces the accessibility to key services as well as retail and employment opportunities around Thicket Mead.

Figure 3-11 First Bus Plan



What the community has told us:

3.3.22 The community suggestions regarding bus services include:

- Higher frequencies on the arterial routes (A37 and A367) to offer passengers a 'turn up and go service' and remove perceptions that public transport is unreliable;
- Look to change perceptions about travel by public transport e.g., the bus is perceived as a low-quality option and demand responsive transport is seen as a service for the elderly or mobility impaired; and
- Better evening and weekend bus services are required to access the night-time economy in Bath, Bristol and Wells.

3.3.23 It is also noted that the recent bus service reductions have worked against the aims of decarbonising our transport network leaving many communities in the Somer Valley without access to a regular bus service and reliant on the use of their cars.

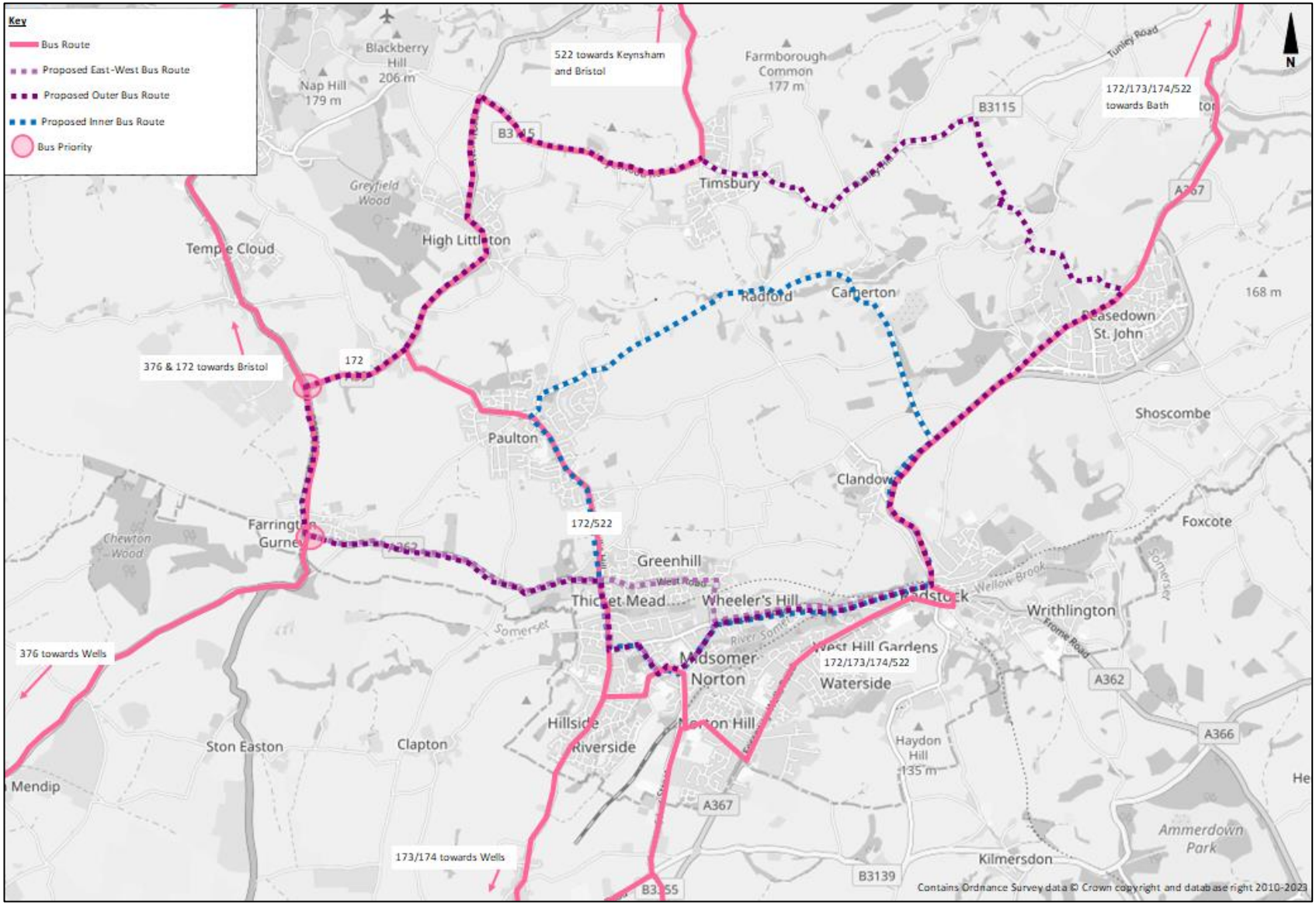
Plan Response:

3.3.24 There is a notable gap in east / west bus service provision along the A362 between Farrington Gurney and Radstock. The 172, 173, 174 and 522 provide connectivity between Midsomer Norton and Radstock and onwards to Bath and Bristol, however the routes go via Paulton on the B3355, bypassing Farrington Gurney. The route also travels along Charlton Road to access the A367 which is a less direct route adding time to the journey, making it less attractive. The missing link along the A362 also misses key trip attractors such as future employment opportunities at the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ) and retail / commercial opportunities around Old Mills, potentially locking in car dependency when coupled with missing walking and cycling links along this important route.

3.3.25 The potential for a new fixed route high frequency shuttle bus service along the A362 should be considered to connect key trip attractors and provide a more direct alternative. The potential to make some journeys on the 172, 173, 174, and 522 'express services' is critical to improve bus journey times and make public transport a more attractive option for those who currently choose to drive. The Mobility Hubs proposed within the Somer Valley could act as the main stops on the express routes. Therefore, ensuring connectivity to the Mobility Hubs by active modes or other public transport services is key to providing a comprehensive sustainable transport network.

3.3.26 Other fixed route options include an inner and outer orbital route around the Somer Valley. The inner route would effectively work as a town bus service that would connect Paulton, Midsomer Norton and Radstock. The outer route would provide improved connectivity for the smaller villages in the north of the Somer Valley to the main high frequency bus routes on the A37 and the A367 by improving connectivity to Farrington Gurney and Peasedown St John respectively. Again, linking with Mobility Hubs on the key corridors would be critical to the success of the outer orbital route. Routes options are shown in Figure 3-12 (dashed lines).

Figure 3-12 Potential Fixed Bus Routes



Mobility Hubs

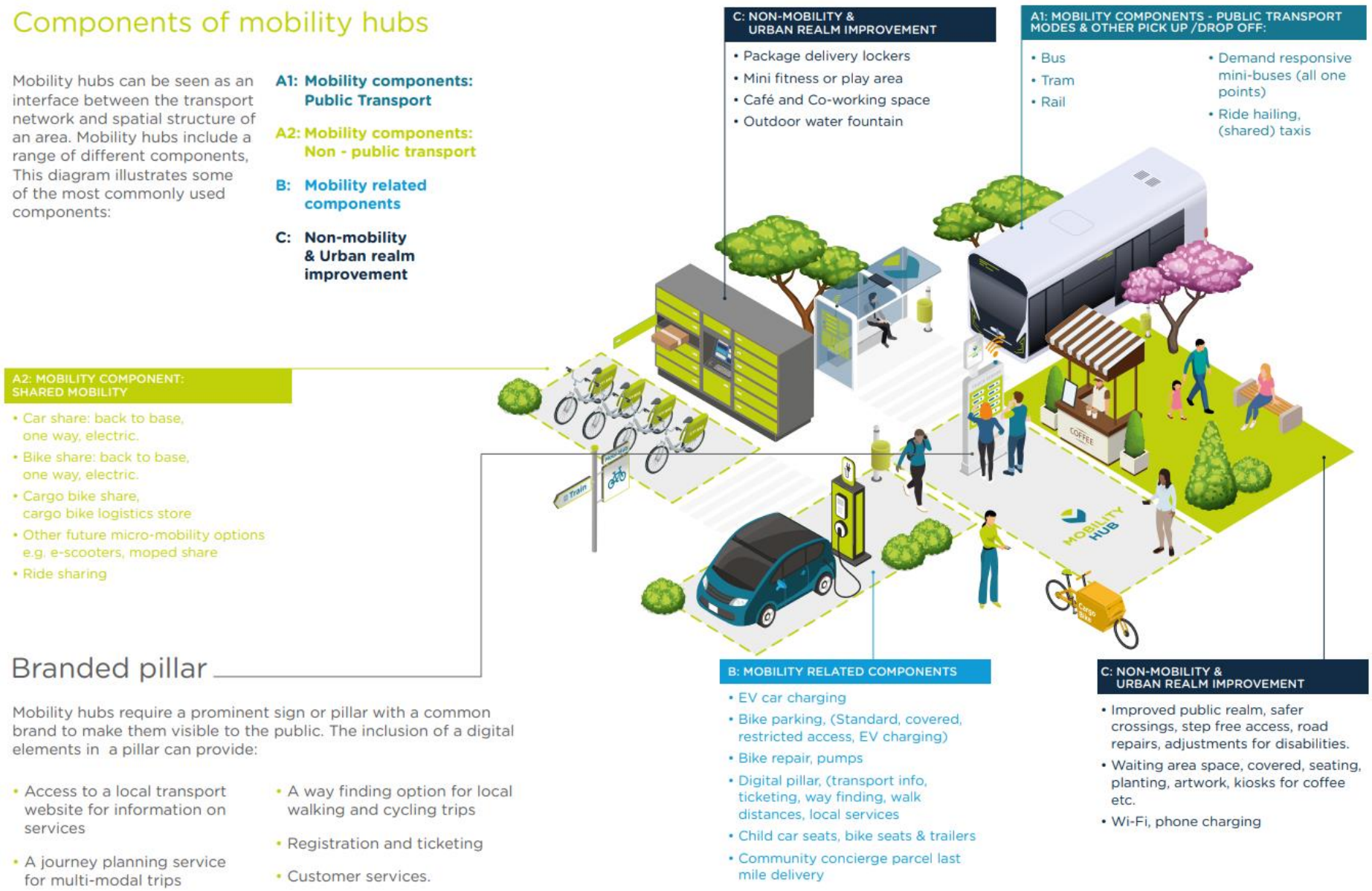
What the evidence shows:

3.3.27 Mobility Hubs are a focus point for public transport, active travel and shared mobility schemes such as bike hire and car clubs, and bespoke hubs can be designed to suit the needs of a local area, negating the need for a one size fits all approach (Figure 3-14). The benefits that a Mobility Hub can bring are presented in Figure 3-13.

3.3.28 Within the Somer Valley, both Farrington Gurney and Peasedown St John are attractors for bus travel as they are on the corridor services to Bristol and Bath respectively. However, connecting into these services by public transport from other parts of the Somer Valley is problematic, as east / west services are not very good or do not exist. The Census data indicates that Peasedown St John has the highest levels of bus use for travelling to work of the Somer Valley areas, at 5% compared to 2-3% for the other areas, presumably because of its proximity to Bath and several bus routes converging to provide a good level of service. Farrington Gurney attracts people using the 376 bus service into Bristol.

Figure 3-13 Potential Benefits of Mobility Hubs

Figure 3-14 Potential Components of a Mobility Hub (*Source: Co-mo.org.uk*)



What the community has told us:

3.3.29 The community said that it is currently difficult to change between different modes of transport within the Somer Valley. The transport system needs to become more integrated.

3.3.30 The 376 bus service, which runs from Wells to Bristol along the A39 / A37 through Farrington Gurney, attracts passengers from across the Somer Valley. As there are currently no public transport and active mode connections these journeys are made by car, resulting in passengers parking their vehicles within Farrington Gurney, essentially using the village as an informal Park & Ride site.

3.3.31 Local Mobility Hubs on key corridors incorporating walking / cycling / demand responsive transport connections could facilitate increased patronage on traditional public transport services. Local Mobility Hubs could also offer a link to shared mobility modes such as e-bike hire, and car clubs.

Plan Response:

3.3.32 The Somer Valley Links project is proposing to deliver a network of Mobility Hubs across the Somer Valley to support an improved public transport offer and increase public transport's attractiveness compared to journeys by car. As noted in Figure 3-14, the range of facilities provided at hubs can vary depending on their function, purpose and setting, so a hierarchy of Mobility Hubs is proposed within the Somer Valley to reflect this.

Table 3-3 Proposed Mobility Hub Hierarchy for Somer Valley

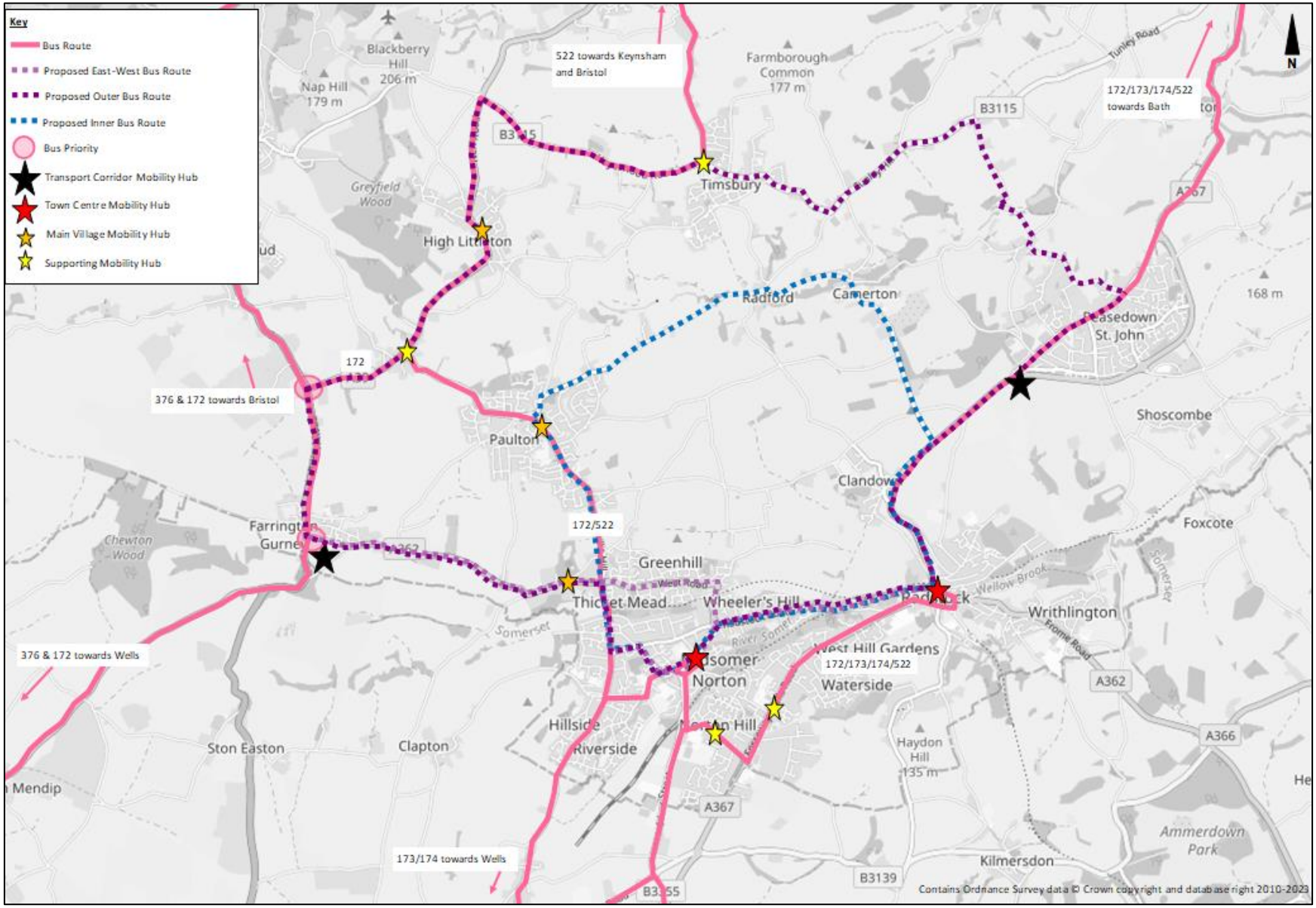
Type of Mobility Hub	Proposed Location	Function / Purpose	Key Facilities
Transport Corridor	A37 Farrington Gurney A367 Peasedown St John	Facilitating onward connectivity onto bus routes on key corridors. Focal point for supporting local bus services e.g. DDRT, orbital routes. Provide community facilities to reduce the need to travel Facilities for decarbonising car trips	Car parking, ULEV Charging (cars and e-mobility), Bus Stops (multiple buses), Café facilities, Toilets, Waiting areas, WiFi, Community Workspace, Taxi Drop off, Real Time Information (RTI), Secure cycle / scooter parking, Information, CCTV, Parcel Lockers, subject to location ULEV Charging / Car Club spaces
Town Centre	Midsomer Norton, Radstock	Pick-up / set down point for express bus services Pick-up / set down for regular bus services / DDRT Community facilities and community space Subject to location and space facilities for decarbonising car trips	Bus stop and shelter (multiple buses), Coffee Van, WiFi, RTI, Secure cycle / scooter parking, Information, CCTV, Parcel Lockers, Wayfinding, Public Space, subject to location ULEV Charging / Car Club spaces
Main Village	Paulton, High Littleton, Thicket Mead / SVEZ	Where appropriate pick-up / set down point for express bus services Pick-up / set down for regular bus services / DDRT	Bus stop and shelter (single bus), WiFi, RTI, Secure cycle / scooter parking, Information, and CCTV.
Supporting	Timsbury, Charlton Road (MSN), Westfield, Hallatrow	Where appropriate, pick-up point for express bus services Pick-up / set down for regular bus services / DDRT	Bus stop and shelter (single bus), WiFi, RTI, Secure cycle / scooter parking, Information, CCTV – Smaller scale than main village

3.3.33 The provision of a Mobility Hub with an appropriate level of car parking to cater for existing and future demand in Farrington Gurney could help to resolve existing issues in the community. By providing an attractive interchange point with additional facilities such as a café, community hub, Wi-Fi, secure bike storage, etc, it could potentially attract more passengers, and remove traffic from the A37.

3.3.34 As noted above, Peasedown St John is also a key attractor for bus travel. The Somer Valley Links project is already exploring opportunities to improve public transport provision along the A367, but for more people to benefit from shorter journey times from Peasedown St John, a strategically placed Mobility Hub on the A367, coupled with other sustainable access improvements, could help to maximise public transport usage and reduce congestion on this key corridor into Bath. Additional bus priority measures on the A367, particularly on the sections leading to the centre of Bath could benefit public transport journey times, closing the gap between car and bus journey times. This, coupled with newer fleet and better branding to improve the passenger experience could also help attract more passengers and reduce congestion levels, along the A367. Our aspiration is for fully segregated bus routes from the Somer Valley to Bath.

3.3.35 Mobility Hubs could potentially also act as a nucleus for future demand responsive transport services pending the outcome of the trial that started in the Somer Valley in April 2023. Mobility Hubs could provide a connection point to the more frequent public transport services along the A37 and the A367 corridors. As Mobility Hubs can perform several functions, they also have the potential to provide a flexible remote working / community space, either within the hub or as a standalone development, as well as an interchange between multiple bus services or different transport modes.

Figure 3-15 Public Transport and Mobility Hubs



Demand Responsive Transport

What the evidence shows:

3.3.36 As noted previously, the Somer Valley has lost the following fixed route bus services:

- 82 between Radstock and Paulton
- 178 between Midsomer Norton and Brislington Park and Ride
- 179 between Bath, Timsbury, Paulton and Midsomer Norton
- 768 between Midsomer Norton and Bath
- 349 section to Midsomer Norton (replaced by 522 service)
- 379 between Bristol and Bath via Midsomer Norton (replaced by extended 172 service)

3.3.37 This has had an impact on the smaller villages within the Somer Valley, such as Timsbury and Paulton which have seen a significant reduction in the services available.

3.3.38 WESTLink, a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) is currently being trialled within the Somer Valley. DRT is a flexible service that provides shared transport to users who can specify their pick-up location, time and drop-off (for example, from home to work) and potentially offers a more flexible and economically efficient way of providing bus services.

3.3.39 DRT services are being launched across the UK with positive impacts being recorded. For example, the 'Fflecsi' scheme introduced by Transport for Wales in May 2020 has seen people who never used general bus services before using the new DRT service and 73% of passengers with cars now driving less[8].

3.3.40 The WESTLink DRT service started operating across the West of England from April 2023. People can book minibuses via an Uber-style app, web or phone in the eligible areas. The services run between 7am and 7pm Monday to Saturday and ticket prices match the recently reduced fares on West of England buses. Algorithms are used to combine similar origins and destinations with minibuses that run in zones designed to get passengers to key transport corridors to pick up onward bus or train services. For those onward journeys that can't be accessed via a connecting service, the WESTLinkservice will take passengers door to door. It is hoped that the new DRT services will provide an affordable alternative to those affected by the recent cuts to bus services. The trial is due to run for two years, after which a decision will be taken about its future long-term viability.

3.3.41 The Somer Valley is covered by WESTLink Bath rural zone. As shown in Figure 3-16, the Bath rural zone covers an area to destinations such as Paulton, Radstock and Midsomer Norton in the south of the zone and destinations such as University of Bath and Bath Spa University to the north. Travel is only permitted within each zone, but travel into a shared area, such as Farrington Gurney, Temple Cloud, Pensford, Whitchurch and Keynsham, is allowed.

[8] https://ridewithvia.com/resources/articles/data-shows-that-demand-responsive-transport-is-the-mode-that-best-matches-the-uks-new-travel-patterns; Source: fflecsi rider survey 2022

Figure 3-16 WESTLink Service Zones

What the community told us:

3.3.42 The community said that DRT could be great to connect more rural areas to key bus corridors, town centres and facilities. However, there was significant scepticism on its viability and workability. It would need to be accessible to all, and not reliant on technology to access.

Plan Response:

3.3.43 In the context of the Somer Valley, a well-designed and publicised DRT could complement fixed route public transport on the main corridors by providing connections into these existing services, thereby improving mobility and social inclusivity, especially in low-density rural areas, which have recently seen a reduction in their services. For example, if a fixed bus route does not operate at a certain time of the day, providing a DRT service can provide individuals an opportunity to still have access to a destination or service during these times. It could also provide a service to those destinations that are not served by fixed route public transport which for the Somer Valley primarily includes Keynsham and the Chew Valley. It is important to publicise DRT in terms of what service is available and how residents can use it.

3.3.44 A well-designed DRT could also contribute to decarbonisation by replacing private car journeys and facilitating multi-modal travel, for example, linking users to a train station or fixed route bus service. With more people working from home, more families are starting to question the need to own multiple cars. In the Somer Valley where around half of households have access to more than two vehicles, DRT could provide the incentive for households to reduce car ownership if their mobility requirements can be adequately accommodated. DRT can provide the safety net that provides access to on demand public transport on those occasions where two cars may otherwise be needed.

3.3.45 DRT could be used to connect to the proposed Mobility Hubs on the A37 and A367 where passengers can access a connecting service to complete their journey. Importantly, DRT can fill gaps in transport provision where journeys cannot be walked or cycled, and users do not have access to a car. This could be particularly important for connecting the smaller settlements in the Somer Valley, where the

opportunities to provide bespoke walking and cycling infrastructure are limited, or where the topography is too challenging or the distances too great.

3.3.46 This Plan supports utilisation of DRT services in relation to proposed Mobility Hubs within the Somer Valley. Notwithstanding this support, we recognise that significant improvements are needed to the current DRT provision and the way it operates. This should include improvements to reliability, communication and potentially partial timetabling of services to, for example, support access to schools. Decarbonisation of DRT services, through the use of ultra-low emission minibuses would contribute towards a wider decarbonisation of public transport, as discussed later within this Plan.

Public Transport Decarbonisation

What the evidence shows:

3.3.47 The UK's Decarbonising Transport plan sets out the commitment to deliver the National Bus Strategy's vision of a transformed bus industry and a green bus revolution, supporting the delivery of 4,000 new zero emission buses to support the UK's aim to have net zero emissions by 2050.

3.3.48 Further funding for zero emission buses was announced by the government in September 2023, with prioritisation being given to rural communities.

Plan Response:

3.3.49 B&NES will work with WECA as the Transport Authority, bus operators, and other key stakeholders to decarbonise the bus fleet in the Somer Valley area. Whilst conventional buses remain one of the least carbon intensive forms of road vehicle transport per passenger, per mile in the UK, zero emission buses will help our local authority achieve its net zero target (2030) and cleaner air, encourage green growth and improve health and wellbeing. For passengers, zero emission buses can also offer an improved passenger experience through reduced noise and vibration.

3.4 Demand Management Interventions

Car Parking

What the evidence shows:

3.4.1 Car parking surveys were undertaken in November 2022 at six town centre car parks and five on-street parking locations in Midsomer Norton, and three town centre car parks and four on-street parking locations in Radstock. Car parking within the Somer Valley is currently free of charge in all the major public car parks, and the results show that although the car parking areas are well used, there is spare capacity across the car parks in Radstock and Midsomer Norton. The results indicate that the car parks are most often used for short stays, with a high proportion of stays under 30 minutes and most stays under two hours. This supports the perception that people pop in and out of the town centres for what they need, not staying longer than necessary.

3.4.2 The results of the on-street parking surveys suggest slightly higher usage / turnover, also in line with the perception that people tend to pop in and out for what they need, but the results do indicate that there is still spare capacity at the locations surveyed.

What the community told us:

3.4.3 The community said that parking within the town centres is necessary as it serves a wide catchment area, much of which has limited alternatives to private car use. However, it is currently very convenient and free to park, so it is more attractive to drive than use other modes of transport for local residents.

Plan Response:

3.4.4 The Census data has shown that Midsomer Norton and Radstock are among the top 10 destinations for car driver trips to work within the Somer Valley, with 15% of residents travelling less than 2km to

their place of work. Data from the National Travel Survey indicates that the average trip length in England in 2021 was six miles. The availability of car parking is a major determinant of travel mode and the parking assessment has demonstrated that it is not difficult to park in either Radstock or Midsomer Norton.

3.4.5 The aims of maintaining access to the town centre to ensure its viability; supporting the needs of the catchment population; and reducing carbon emissions from transport, are not contradictory. However, the availability of free parking increases the attractiveness of driving as compared with more sustainable modes, resulting in higher carbon emissions for transport.

3.4.6 The majority of Midsomer Norton is located within 2km of the High Street, which suggests a reasonable residential catchment which can walk, or cycle, to the town centre, although it is noted that there are other barriers to active travel in addition to distance. It is likely that some people currently choose to drive rather than walk or cycle due to the availability of free parking, and the convenience it offers. There are bus routes connecting the town centre with other parts of the town and the wider Somer Valley, although it is noted that service frequencies and journey times are not currently favourable in comparison with private car usage.

3.4.7 Parking provision and pricing should be kept under review as access to sustainable modes is improved, and should be considered in the context of the convenience and cost of alternative, more sustainable modes such as the bus, whilst ensuring access is maintained for disabled people and those trips where people have no alternative but to use the car. It is noted that the Council is due to consult on emission-based parking charges at Council -owned car parks in Midsomer Norton and Radstock in July 2024.

3.4.8 Overall, it is important to retain the ability for people to drive to, and park in, Midsomer Norton and Radstock to protect the viability of the centres, particularly as they serve a significant rural catchment. Any approach needs to balance the needs of retaining the accessibility of the centre and our obligations to reduce car usage under the Climate Emergency Declaration.

Reducing Car Ownership / ULEV Car Clubs

What the evidence shows:

3.4.9 The Census data for the Somer Valley shows a high dependence on cars for satisfying mobility needs, with around half of households in the area having access to two or more vehicles and only 12% of households having no access to a vehicle.

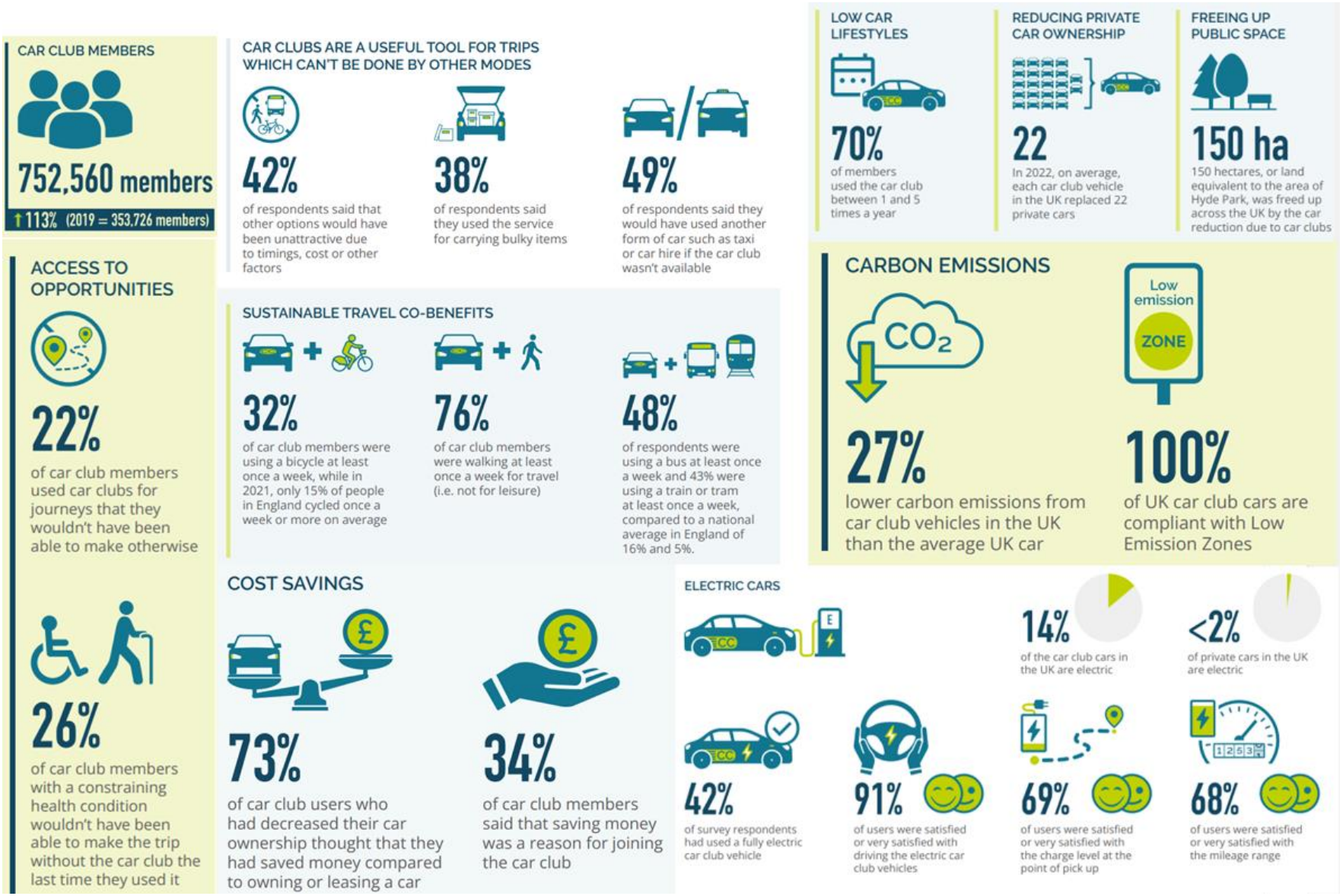
3.4.10 If access to a car is taken as a proxy for car ownership, within the Somer Valley there is considerable potential to reduce these figures and bring them more into line with the rest of B&NES (38% for two or more vehicles). It should be noted that reducing car ownership does not necessarily mean “zero car”. In some cases, it could mean reducing the number of cars owned by multi-car households.

3.4.11 Research by the RAC suggests that the average car is parked at home for 80% of the time, parked elsewhere for 16% of the time, and only in use for 4% of the time. This represents an inefficient use of resource and suggests significant potential for a proportion of people’s needs to access a vehicle to be met by a shared resource rather than private ownership. Figure 3-17 has been adapted from the 2022 CoMoUK Annual Report on Car Clubs and provides an overview of usage and the benefits reported by car club users.

3.4.12 As a result of the pandemic there are now a significant number of people home working, 31% at the time of the 2021 Census within the Somer Valley and nationally 44% reported home or hybrid working (at home and in the office) between September 2022 and January 2023[9]. This means that families that may have previously had two or more cars may now be able to reduce the number of cars they own, which strengthens the case for introducing car clubs into more rural communities.

9 https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/characteristicsofhomeworkersgreatbritain/september2022tojanuary2023#:~:text=Overall%2C%2044%25%20of%20workers%20reported,reporting%20working%20from%20home%20only.

Figure 3-17 Car Club Key Statistics (*Source: Adapted from CoMoUK Annual Car Club Report 2022*)



What the community told us:

3.4.13 The community said that they have no alternative but to own multiple cars per household to provide independence, particularly in a rural area such as the Somer Valley, where bus services are less frequent, journey times are longer, and the perception is that the cost of bus travel is high.

3.4.14 Residents are accustomed to the comfort and flexibility that car ownership affords them and are less likely to want to sacrifice this for less convenient modes of transport.

Plan Response:

3.4.15 To bring about a reduction in car ownership levels, a multi-faceted approach would be required and all elements, many of which are covered under the other areas of this strategy, will need to contribute. For example, infrastructure provision for active modes, high quality interchange options in convenient locations, and reliable and frequent public transport services. Only when residents have confidence in the transport network as a whole, are they more likely to reduce their reliance on the private car.

3.4.16 In addition to the above, and measures to reduce the need to travel, it is important to acknowledge that car use would still play a part in many residents' lives given the rural nature of the Somer Valley. Therefore, opportunities like electric car clubs and moving towards more shared mobility, are considered to have the potential to create a less car dependent society, creating the potential to reduce the number of cars per household, e.g., from three to two, or two to one. There are currently no car clubs located in the Somer Valley, with the nearest car club vehicles in Bristol and Bath, and one vehicle now available in Keynsham. Increasing the coverage of car clubs into the Somer Valley could provide households with the confidence that reduced private car ownership is a viable proposition.

3.4.17 Car clubs could also help create a fairer society as only paying per usage would benefit those on low incomes who are increasingly being "priced out" of access to opportunities due to the increasing cost of car ownership. This helps ensure that the transport system is as inclusive as possible, providing residents with a range of travel choices that meet their needs.

3.4.18 Car clubs offer an alternative model to private car ownership for individuals and businesses. They reduce the need for private parking and can help people reduce car ownership whilst allowing for occasional car travel. Cars are parked in designated bays and can be booked online or via phone, and there are no extra costs for insurance, fuel, and maintenance costs. Car club fleets are increasingly using electric vehicles, so they also provide an environmental benefit. Research from the shared transport charity CoMoUK shows that on average in 2022, each car club vehicle in the UK replaced 22 private cars and 14% of car club vehicles in the UK in 2022 were electric.

3.4.19 Provision of electric car club vehicles is in line with national policy for transport decarbonisation and the B&NES Climate Emergency declaration. Having access to an electric vehicle through a car club may give people confidence to switch to an electric vehicle, and the additional ULEV charging infrastructure provided would increase the presence and public perception of electric vehicles.

3.4.20 Many car club operators work with other shared transport providers to drive a modal shift towards shared transport. Any future car club vehicles should be located at shared transport Mobility Hubs and incorporated into new development in areas that are easily accessible via walking and cycling.

ULEV Charging

What the evidence shows:

3.4.21 We need to facilitate the switch in how transport is fuelled. For example, in 2035, all new conventional Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) (petrol and diesel) cars and vans are set to be banned from sale in the United Kingdom. However, at the time of writing, there are just two Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) public charging points[10] in Radstock and six in Midsomer Norton, and no on-street charging devices. The limited level of publicly available charging creates a barrier to the uptake of electric vehicles for residents in the Somer Valley area, particularly those without a private driveway.

[10] Public car parks

Plan Response:

3.4.22 Improving ULEV charging infrastructure to assist in developing a climate resilient transport network is a key part of the Plan, and will facilitate the transition away from the ICE. This Plan therefore supports implementation of the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) across B&NES, inclusive of the Somer Valley, to "increase the availability of on-street charging points in residential streets where off-street parking is not available".

3.4.23 Implementation of on-street ULEV chargepoints pairs well with other proposed interventions set out in this Plan, including the creation of Mobility Hubs, and plans to introduce zero emission buses, which together will help remove barriers to the uptake of ULEVs across the Somer Valley.

3.4.24 A ULEV on-street charging study could be used to inform an on-street ULEV charging strategy and identify investment priority areas within the Somer Valley. Such a study should use a range of analysis tools to identify priority areas for ULEV chargepoint infrastructure, such as a binomial logit model, - a methodology for calculating the likelihood of ULEV adoption per Lower Super Output Area (LSOA). Such a model uses data on attitudes to the uptake of renewable energy (considered to be a reasonable proxy for ULEVs) coupled with corresponding individual / household characteristics available from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Public Attitudes Tracker (PAT) database.

3.4.25 This assessment can be based on a combination of the following available variables, with each variable assigned a co-efficient value using a data processing tool called 'Solver' built into Microsoft Excel:

- Property type (KS401EW—- Dwellings, household spaces and accommodation type);
- Gross household income (Income estimates for small areas, England & Wales, financial year ending 2018);
- Gender (QS104UK – Sex);
- Age (QS103EW—- Age by single year);
- Social grade (QS611EW—- Approximated Social Grade);
- Work status (KS601UK—- Economic activity); and
- Household tenure (KS402EW – Tenure).

3.4.26 These variables can then be prioritised for further appraisal prior to installation of on-street charging infrastructure.

3.4.27 The ban on the sale of petrol / diesel vehicles means that people living in dwellings with no off-street parking will soon require a way to charge their vehicles. National and local guidance requires that charging must not compromise access to active modes, for instance through impacting footways. Methods to address this include:

- **Standardisation of Equipment**;
- **On-Street Charging Infrastructure Trials** – B&NES has an EV Charging Policy, albeit we acknowledge that an update is required in this fast moving technical area. We will listen to residents' requests for EV charging infrastructure and seek to deliver provision in line with our Policy and the needs of our communities. This will involve an assessment of the most appropriate technology to use at any given location and we can expect to see a systematic roll out of charging infrastructure across the district. This will be according to criteria that will be set out in the updated EV Charging Policy, and are likely to include charging hubs with associated car club provision.;
- **Cables across Footways** –- Progress the B&NES Cable Channel Trial approved March 2023 as rapidly as possible;
- **Equipment Recommendations** – The Council could evaluate whether charging infrastructure within street lighting columns is the best solution for Keynsham or whether bollards/rapid chargepoints are better suited;
- **Pro-Active Partnering** – for example, with community hubs, car clubs, sharing economy and local authorities;
- **Future Proofing Parking Permit Schemes**–- potential for introduction of ULEV chargepoint infrastructure in association with future ULEV Parking Permit schemes, used to manage the use of parking bays if required;
- **Power Generation**–- maximising the potential of ULEV chargepoints using renewable sources as part of a wider strategy of green infrastructure; and
- **Intelligence Gathering** – residential surveys, potentially involving a targeted survey of prioritised streets (to validate Logit assessment findings) but also a general survey of residents.

3.5 Summary

3.5.1 Table 3-4 below sets out a table summarising the transport interventions for Somer Valley.

Table 3-4: Somer Valley - Summary of Potential Interventions

Intervention		Description	How it could be achieved
	**Local Living**	Enable a greater proportion of residents to live, shop and undertake leisure activities within the Somer Valley.	• Improve local walking and cycling links to local facilities. • Revitalise Midsomer Norton / Radstock town centres. • Support more mobile services for rural communities, e.g. library and hairdressers.
	**Public Realm**	Reduce the current impact that vehicles are having on our towns by improving the public realm and reducing the dominance of traffic	• Look at options to support walking, cycling and public transport and reduce the impact of traffic on our town centres. • Make our towns places where people want to spend more time by making them more welcoming/attractive, safer and vibrant. • Explore with the community what types of public realm improvements would most enable them to walk, wheel and cycle more. • Reduce the impact of traffic in rural communities. This could include increasing provision of safer pedestrian crossing facilities, reducing vehicle speeds and providing more dedicated active travel infrastructure.
	**Radstock Town Centre**	The road network in Radstock creates barriers for people, and affects the quality of the environment.	Investigate potential options to reduce the impact of traffic in Radstock Town Centre to support sustainable transport and the economic prosperity of the Town. Options would be worked up with the community and could include: • Increasing space available to pedestrians through widening footways and increasing crossing points. • Making cycling routes better connected. • Improving public transport facilities, potentially including bus priority.

Intervention		Description	How it could be achieved
			• Simplifying traffic network and junction arrangements, reducing barriers to walking and cycling. • Improving the public realm and making the environment more pleasant for people to spend time in.
	**Quiet Lanes**	The villages need to be better connected for walkers and cyclists. Identifying minor rural roads that can work as Quiet Lanes would provide safer routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders away from traffic.	• Review the purpose of the highway network, i.e. which lanes should connect settlements by vehicle, and which would be more suited to active travel. • Create a network of Quiet Lane links. Identify whether targeted traffic management e.g. modal filters, reduced speed limits, traffic calming, would be needed to support walking and cycling. • Improve wayfinding.
	**Micromobility**	Shared and e-mobility schemes can support people in travelling short and medium distances by sustainable modes. Extension of short-term e-scooter and e-Bike rental to the Somer Valley.	• E-bike hire stations within towns / villages. • Expanding coverage of the e-scooter network to the Somer Valley • Trial e-cargo bikes around industrial areas within the Somer Valley. • Improved storage with appropriate range of services e.g. charging, maintenance, lockers.
	**Cycling**	Dedicated cycle lane provision	• Creation of an Active Travel Network including dedicated cycle lanes that link key facilities, jobs and schools to communities within the Somer Valley.
	**Mobility Hubs**	Mobility Hubs are places that bring together a host of transport options in one place including shared transport such as car clubs and e-scooters with	Range of Mobility Hubs to meet the needs of the area and the types of journeys they serve:

Intervention		Description	How it could be achieved
		public transport and active travel modes. A network of Mobility Hubs allows people to travel between and around places without the need for a car.	• Transport corridor hubs, e.g. Farrington Gurney and Peasedown St John • Town Centre hubs, e.g. Midsomer Norton and Radstock • Main Village hubs and • Supporting hubs.
	**Bus Infrastructure**	Improvement of bus infrastructure to encourage a greater use of bus services.	• Upgrade bus stops / shelters with seating, shelter and Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI).
	**Bus Priority**	Interventions to provide bus journey time, and journey time reliability benefits, by prioritising buses.	• Bus priority measures to make journeys by public transport faster and more efficient. • Investigate opportunities to provide bus priority improvements between Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Peasedown St John, and Bath.
	**Fixed Route Bus Services**	There is a lot of movement between towns and villages in the Somer Valley, but bus services are limited. The provision of new bus services would support this travel.	Support the community in encouraging the West of England Mayor to: • Connect communities to faster / more frequent services on the key corridors. • New east- west service along the A362 to connect Farrington Gurney, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, and Peasedown St John. This would support east-west movement in the Somer Valley, and improve bus connections to Bath and Bristol • Better connect smaller communities with each other and key towns.

Intervention		Description	How it could be achieved
	**Demand Responsive Transport**	DRT can complement fixed route public transport on the main corridors by providing connections into these existing services, thereby improving mobility and social inclusivity.	• Enhanced DRT provision, building on WECA's DRT trial; • Extend DRT provision to include partial fixed timetables to support journeys to school. • Improve the effectiveness of DRT through the use of Mobility Hubs to provide better connectivity.
	**Public Transport Decarbonisation**	Zero emission buses will help us achieve our net zero targets and cleaner air, encourage green growth, and improve health and wellbeing.	• Work with bus operators and other key stakeholders to decarbonise the bus fleet.
	**Car Parking**	Ease and cost of parking can be one of the main influences in deciding whether to travel by car.	• Keep parking charges and management measures under review as improvements are made to the sustainable transport network. • Maintain sufficient parking to serve rural hinterland and disabled / mobility impaired users.
	**Car Clubs**	Car clubs allow members access to locally parked cars, therefore supporting lower car ownership	• Introduce electric vehicle car clubs to provide households with an alternative to owning multiple cars.
	**ULEV Charging**	Increased public ULEV charging infrastructure will enable individuals to use ULEVs, helping us achieve our net zero target and cleaner air, encourage green growth and improve health and wellbeing.	• Introduce more ULEV charging points in public car parks. • Introduce ULEV charging points in the villages, for example, at key local facilities such as Community Hubs. • Roll out on-street ULEV charging infrastructure.

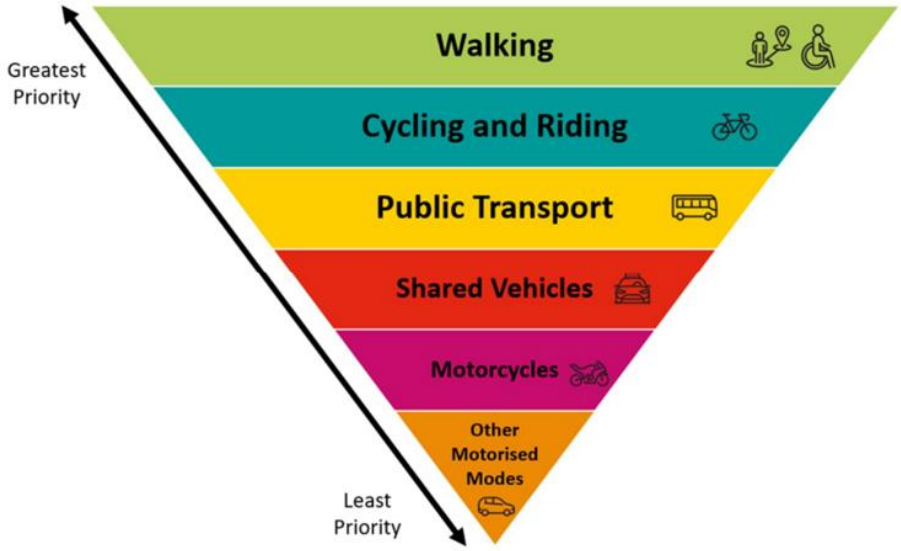
4. Hicks Gate Transport Strategy

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section of the report sets out the key elements of this emerging transport strategy for the Hicks Gate area. The Hicks Gate transport strategy differs from the other transport strategies in that there is not an existing community at Hicks Gate. These proposals represent the foundation stone of a significant sustainable transport intervention serving communities along the length of the A4, as well as north into South Gloucestershire. The improvements will benefit existing users who pass through the area, as well as enhancing sustainable transport options throughout the District, as a key part of the transport network.

4.1.2 This strategy includes measures to benefit a range of transport modes within the overall high-level framework of the Movement Hierarchy which is shown in Figure 4-1.

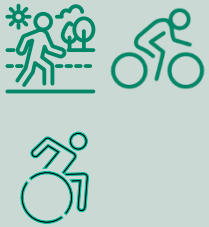
Figure 4-1 Movement Hierarchy



4.2 Existing Challenges

4.2.1 Hicks Gate was included within the community engagement for Keynsham and Saltford, as those people have regular experience of the area. Our engagement highlighted a number of concerns with the current transport network. This is set out in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1 Hicks Gate - Issues and Challenges

Transport Issues and Challenges		
	**Strategic Movement**	• Hicks Gate is at the intersection of major routes the A4 and A4174, which are strategically important arteries in the region, particularly for freight journeys. They connect Bristol and Bath, and provide for orbital travel around Bristol's East and North Fringe, as well as linkages with Keynsham. • This means the area has a high volume of traffic with congestion at peak times. • Currently, Hicks Gate is a place that prioritises vehicle movement. New transport infrastructure should enable travel by a range of modes, creating more travel options for the whole community.
	**Active Travel Network**	• The heavy traffic flows, and high numbers of large goods vehicles, can make it difficult to walk and cycle. • It is difficult to cross at major junctions within Hicks Gate, such as the Emery Road Crossroads. • The local area is steep in places, making walking and cycling challenging for some.
	**Public Transport**	• Buses get caught in the general traffic congestion, as there are limited priority measures.

Transport Issues and Challenges		
	**Congestion**	• Traffic congestion at Hicks Gate Roundabout encourages traffic to avoid the bypass and travel through the centre of Keynsham instead, mostly via Avon Mill Lane and Keynsham Road (A4175). • There is also congestion and queueing at the Callington Road to West Town Lane junction within Bristol.
	**Severance / Barriers to movement**	• The amount of traffic makes it difficult to walk and cycle within the Hicks Gate area. • This is exacerbated by the large numbers of heavy good vehicles as well as general traffic, and the high speeds. • The river and railway also create a barrier to people moving about.

4.3 Walking and Cycle Routes

4.3.1 Hicks Gate offers an opportunity to create a strong coherent network of pedestrian and cycle connections and limit vehicle dominance. There are significant desire lines between communities on the edge of Bristol, along the East Fringe, and in Keynsham. All of these could be better linked by active travel routes, including using a new Transport Interchange as a focal point, and addressing current barriers to movement such as busy roads. This approach incorporates the existing network, integrating and enhancing, where necessary.

4.3.2 This transport strategy proposes the establishment of a high quality, attractive, safe and integrated network of walking and cycling infrastructure. Hicks Gate and the surrounding areas could connect the existing, often fragmented, sections of cycle infrastructure to create a continuous, coherent, high-quality active travel network. Once this is achieved, travel by active modes could become the genuine first choice for most local trips and a viable option for many further afield: improving health, alleviating congestion and lowering carbon emissions. It could also help boost the local economy, capitalising on existing excellent assets such as the Bristol and Bath Railway Path, by encouraging cycling for leisure and tourism.

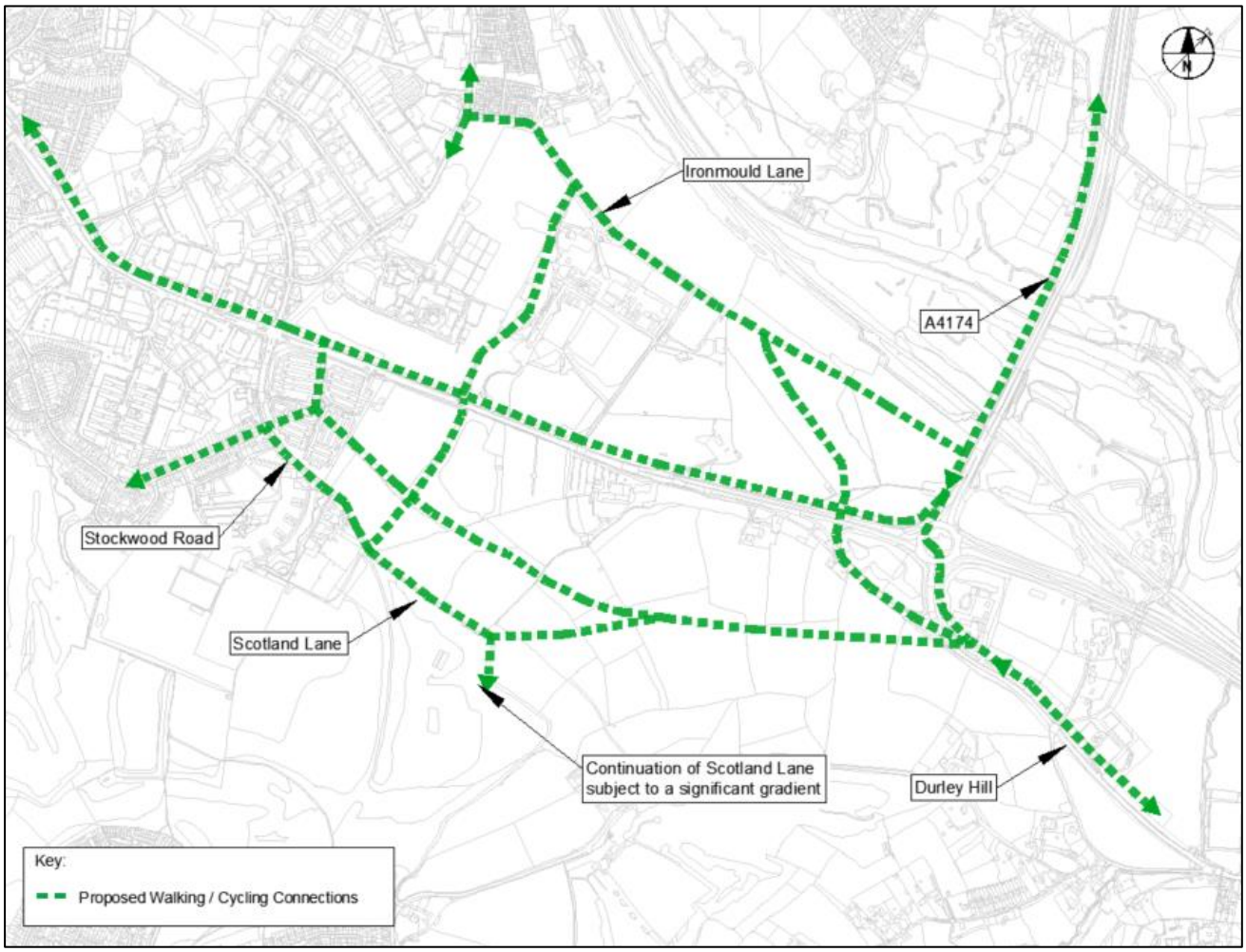
4.3.3 The intention is to create a permeable and well-integrated network with a strong, legible network of high-quality, LTN1/20 compliant, active travel routes with a particular focus on accommodating the desire lines between the Transport Interchange and wider residential areas. This could include improved provision for pedestrians and cyclists on Durley Hill, which would be attractive to some cyclists, particularly those on e-bikes which could provide connections between the proposed Transport Interchange and Keynsham.

4.3.4 Walking and cycling connections are also proposed to the north and south of the A4, with the former linking the A4174 to Ironmould Lane, and filling the missing link between existing PRoWs. To the south, an east-west route is proposed between Durley Hill and Stockwood Road, where there is currently little to no provision for east-west movement by active modes. The potential diversion of Stockwood Road would make this less attractive as a through route for traffic and, therefore, it is likely to serve only as a local vehicular connection, making it more amenable as an active travel route.

4.3.5 Existing pedestrian and cycle connections could be enhanced and integrated with new proposals to provide commuter routes north-south and east-west, connecting the Hicks Gate opportunity area to Bristol, Stockwood, and Keynsham. Pedestrian and cycle links could also be improved along the river corridor. Walking and cycling could be the modes of choice for local trips, and access to public transport along the A4 corridor would be convenient and attractive along the proposed Bath to Bristol Strategic Corridor and at the Transport Interchange.

4.3.6 The proposed walking and cycling connections are shown on Figure 4-2.

Figure 4-2 Proposed Walking and Cycling Connections



A4 Corridor

4.3.7 The A4 Bath Road has a critical function as a major movement corridor as a signed freight route as well as a key public transport route between Bath and Bristol and destinations in between. Congestion on the A4 causes it to be a barrier to active and sustainable modes of travel. There is a lack of crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists on the A4, particularly to the east of the existing Brislington Park &Ride (P&R) site and approach to Hicks Gate Roundabout.

4.3.8 Creating a space that can suitably accommodate sustainable travel modes, through provision of additional crossing points, as well as rebalancing road space, would reduce the barriers to movement at the A4 and support people in travelling by active modes.

4.3.9 The Bath to Bristol Strategic Corridor (BBSC) project aims to improve travel between Bath and Bristol through better bus services and enabling more cycling and walking. The scope of the project includes bus priority measures, road space reallocation, enhancement to bus stops, improved walking and cycling facilities and improvements to green infrastructure and public realm.

Rationalising Vehicular Movement

4.3.10 There is potential to close the Stockwood Road arm of the A4 / Emery Road / Stockwood Road junction to vehicles, instead providing vehicle connection between Stockwood Road and the A4 in the location of the existing P&R access. The current four-arm junction is not only a major congestion hotspot, but is a significant barrier to pedestrian and cycle movement with long wait and multiple stage crossings. To do this would rely on the delivery of the Transport Interchange, and for that to form a long replacement to the Brislington Park and

Ride, which is discussed in Section 4.4.

4.3.11 Changing this to a three-arm junction has the potential to make significant improvements for pedestrians and cyclists, and free up road space for re-allocation to public transport and dedicated cycle facilities along the A4. This could also reduce inappropriate use of Stockwood Lane, reduce effects of vehicle dominance, and support the integration of communities along the south of the A4.

4.3.12 Vehicle access to existing areas south of the A4 could be via existing connection points to the A4 at the Flowers Hill and Park and Ride junctions. These may be re-modelled, but are likely to remain as four-arm signalised junctions. There would be limited benefit for vehicles in using routes south of the A4 internal route between the two A4 connection points as a through route for traffic.

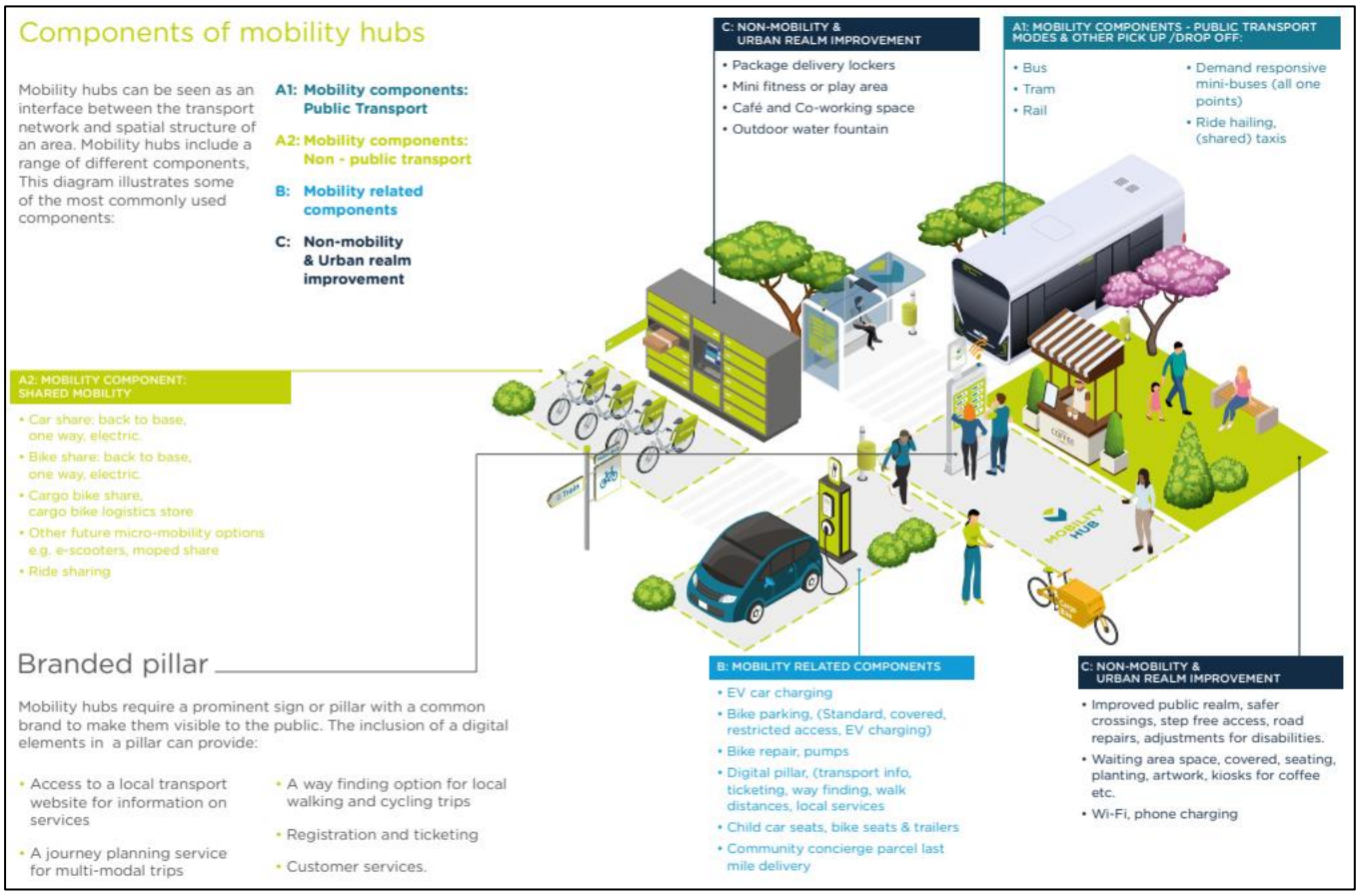
4.4 Public Transport

4.4.1 Our communities need to be well-connected to the public transport network. Public transport needs to be safe, simple to use, convenient and attractive, when compared to private car usage. The proposals to promote public transport and increase the public transport mode share are set out in the following paragraphs.

Transport Interchange

4.4.2 There is an opportunity to provide a new Transport Interchange at Hicks Gate. This forms part of the West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 4 and is a key part of the transport strategy, and would also provide an opportunity to relocate and transform the Brislington Park & Ride. The traditional form of interchange is a Park & Ride site which intercepts car trips towards a city centre and provides a high frequency direct bus service. However, we need to consider transport as mobility, regardless of mode choice, and expand origins and destinations beyond the traditional periphery-core model. The Transport Interchange could accommodate a multi-modal interchange facility, with potential components identified in Figure 4-3Figure 4-3.

Figure 4-3 Potential Components of Mobility / Interchange Hubs



Source: Como.org.uk

4.4.3 Traditional Park & Ride facilities are designed solely for use by car drivers. However, this facility will enable convenient interchange between a range of different modes. It will provide safe access for walking, wheeling and cycling, as well as secure, sheltered, cycle and scooter parking. It will incorporate both ULEV car club vehicles and e-bike and e-scooter hire options, in addition to car parking, and all of these modes will be connected with frequent, fast bus services not only to the city centres, but also to more local destinations. This degree of integration will provide for sustainable transport options for a wide range of journeys

4.4.4 The Transport Interchange expands the concept of Park & Ride and enables people to interchange between a range of modes. It would support orbital and radial movements, as well as providing opportunities for people to access the countryside by sustainable modes. It will function as a connection point for a range of communities, including Keynsham and communities along the A4 and Bristol's East Fringe.

4.4.5 Facilities could include safe and secure cycle parking, electric bike hire and charging, micro-mobility such as e-scooters, walking infrastructure and wayfinding, electric vehicle charging, last mile freight consolidation, coach parking and interchange with a range of public transport services including the integration of local bus services.

4.4.6 The site at Hicks Gate would be accessible from the A4174 Bristol Ring Road, potentially aiding in relieving the congestion that currently takes place around the existing Park & Ride site access. Seven site options were identified as part of the Option Assessment Report (OAR) for the Southeast Bristol and Whitchurch Transport Package (2018), with a sifting exercise concluding that a potential location for the Transport Interchange would be in an area to the south west corner of the Hicks Gate Roundabout.

Bus Services

4.4.7 Bus service improvements which could be brought about by the proposals for the Bath to

Bristol Strategic Corridor would provide a tangible benefit to the accessibility of the area. The Transport Interchange should accommodate the proposed changes to the bus network, including the introduction of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services, as set out in further detail later in this section. According to data from the 2021 Census, the Hicks Gate area has a bus mode share which is slightly lower than the average for B&NES, with 5.5% as compared to 5.7% for B&NES as a whole. With the proposed improvements to bus services, this shows there is potential to further increase the bus mode share.

4.4.8 Walking routes to new bus stops should be convenient, safe and direct. Interchange opportunities, at existing bus stops and also at a new Transport Interchange Hub, should be provided to accommodate bus journeys onwards to Bath and Keynsham, where rail connections are available from Bath Spa and Keynsham rail stations respectively.

4.4.9 Consideration should also be given to the provision of improved orbital bus services connecting the communities of South Bristol and those along the A4, including connecting to the proposed Transport Interchange at Hicks Gate Roundabout. A benefit is this would widen the range of destinations served by bus services from the Interchange. Potential for bus priority measures to support this should be considered. Integration with bus services between the North and East Fringe on the A4174 Ring Road would be required. South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) is investigating improvements to the Ring Road to improve public transport connections. which demonstrates how the Interchange would form a key node in a wider orbital network.

Bus Priority Measures

4.4.10 Bus priority measures should be considered and provided along the A4 corridor, alongside improvements to bus frequency. Improving bus services and reliability would encourage further uptake of public transport by residents. This is being undertaken for the A4 Bath to Bristol Strategic Corridor Study as part of the DfT's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).

Demand Responsive Transport

4.4.11 Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) is a flexible service that provides shared transport to users who can specify their pick-up location, time and drop-off (for example, from home to work). A well-designed and publicised DRT could therefore complement fixed route public transport on the main corridors by providing connections into these existing services, thereby improving mobility and social inclusivity, especially in low-density rural areas, which have recently seen a reduction in their services. It is important to publicise DRT in terms of what service is available and how residents can use it.

4.4.12 A well-designed DRT could also contribute to decarbonisation by replacing private car journeys and facilitating multi-modal travel, for example, linking users to a train station or fixed route bus service. With more people working from home, more families are starting to question the need to own multiple cars.

4.4.13 The proposed Transport Interchange at Hicks Gate provides the opportunity to connect existing bus services with DRT services.

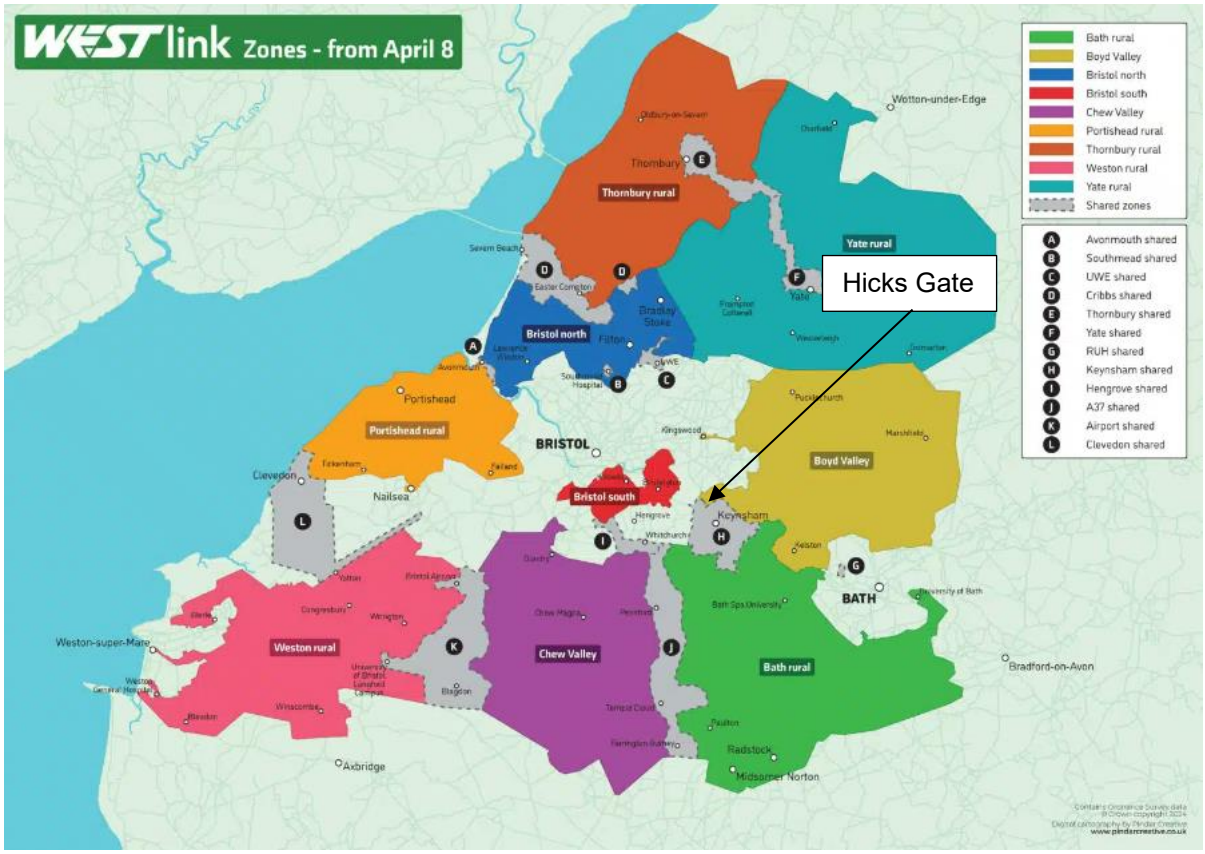
4.4.14 The 'WESTLink' DRT service was launched across the West of England on 3rd April 2023, using a £3 million investment secured by WECA, through the Bus Service Improvement Plan. The WESTLink DRT service runs between 7am-7pm from Monday-Saturday across large parts of North East Somerset and Bristol.

4.4.15 Green minibuses run in zones designed to get people to key transport corridors where they can then pick up another bus or train. Passengers are able to use a WESTLink in their local zone to connect to their local main routes.

4.4.16 The current mapping (shown at Figure 4-4) for WESTLink DRT zones in B&NES and Bristol shows zones are currently located immediately to the east and west of the Hicks Gate study area, and include both the A4 / Emery Road crossroads junction and Hicks Gate Roundabout.

Consideration should be made towards extending either of the surrounding DRT zones to incorporate the Hicks Gate, as a key node in the transport network.

Figure 4-4 Current DRT Zones Surrounding Hicks Gate



Source: Travelwest

4.4.17 We recognise that significant improvements are needed to the current DRT provision and the way it operates. This should include improvements to reliability, communication and potentially partial timetabling of services to, for example, support access to schools. Decarbonisation of DRT services, through the use of ultra-low emission minibuses would contribute towards a wider decarbonisation of public transport, as discussed later within this chapter.

4.5 New Mobility

4.5.1 New Mobility involves building a transport system that provides better choice and access for everyone. It refers to a range of existing and emerging transport modes, services and technologies to meet people's movement needs without being reliant on travel by car. It is, therefore, intertwined with each element of this transport strategy. This section sets out how shared forms of mobility and clean technologies could deliver a better transport system for the Hicks Gate area. This will also help to build a climate resilient transport network.

ULEV Car Club

4.5.2 In line with the intention to develop a less private car reliant transport system in which those on low incomes are "priced out" due to the cost of car ownership, car clubs comprised of a fleet of ULEVs should be accommodated and provided. It should also help meet the aim of creating a less car dominated urban environment, where households are confident to own fewer cars, with reliable travel options for day-to-day trips, and access to electric car clubs for occasional usage.

4.5.3 The proposed Transport Interchange at Hicks Gate would be an ideal location for an ULEV car club. Not only because it would allow for an interchange between other modes of sustainable transport, but also because it would plug a gap in the existing network of car club

and ULEV charging points, as illustrated in Figure 4-5.

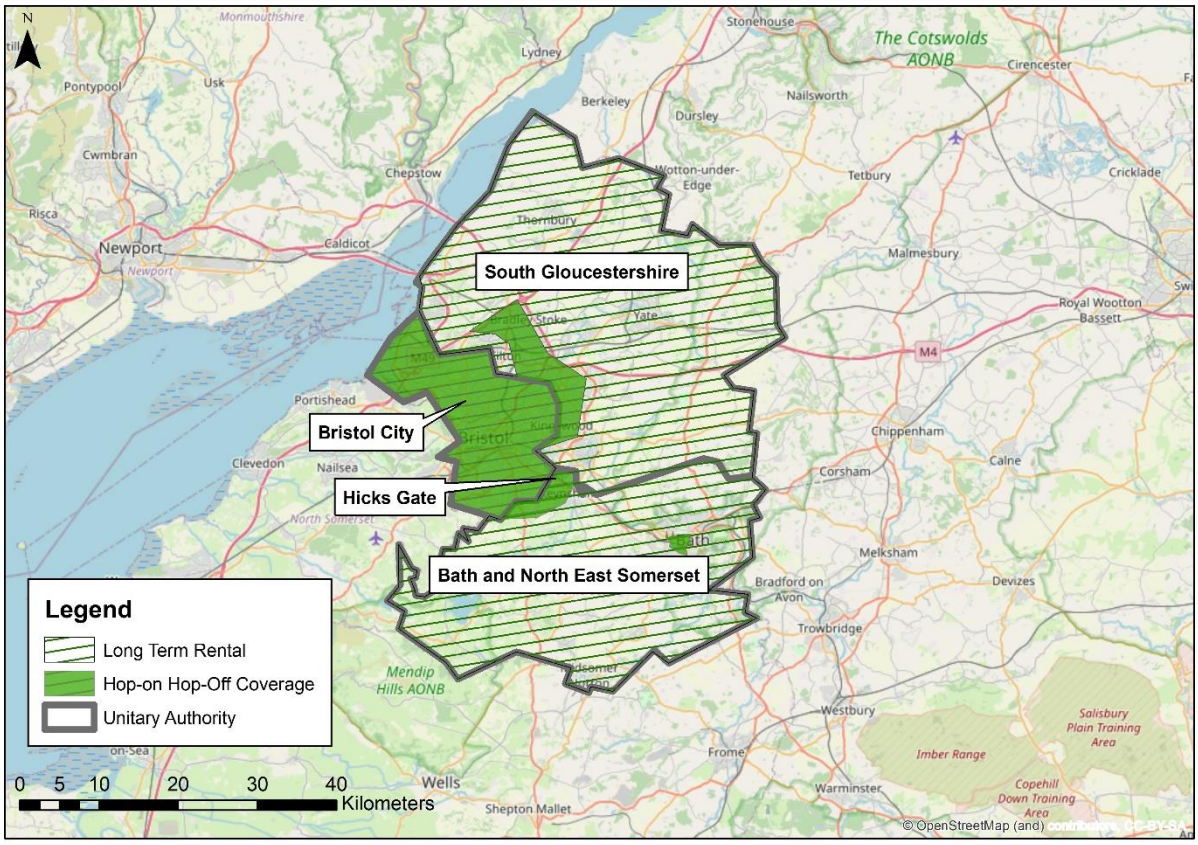
Figure 4-5 Existing Car Clubs and ULEV Charging Point Locations

Shared Micromobility

4.5.4 An e-scooter trial has been in place in WECA areas since October 2020 and has been extended until May 2026. This includes 4,000 e-scooters and since Autumn 2023 has included 1,500 e-bikes and 20 e-cargo bikes. Take up of the scooters has been high in Bristol and Bath, replacing trips from all types of transport and being used in combination with public transport for 10-20% of journeys. Scooter rides have been largely short distance with 50% of trips less than a 25-minute walk (2.1km) in Bristol and 19-minute walk (1.6km) in Bath.

4.5.5 E-scooters are available on both a long term rental and a hop-on-hop-off basis, e-bikes only on a hop-on-hop-off basis. Hop-on-hop-off provision should be extended to Hicks Gate to enhance the area's function as a key node in the transport An example of this is shown ion Figure 4-6.

Figure 4-6 Scope to Expand Hop-On Hop-Off Coverage to Serve Development at Hicks Gate



4.5.6 This would need to tie in with improvements to the sustainable transport network, such as the Active Modes Network set out in Section 4.3, to make onward connections more attractive. The advent, and increasing uptake levels, of e-bikes, and potentially e-scooters, would unlock further destinations by breaking down distance and topography barriers. The Transport Interchange may include hire, charging and storage facilities to support micro-mobility travel.

Decarbonising Vehicles

4.5.7 In 2035, all new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans are set to be banned from sale in the United Kingdom. We need to ensure that the infrastructure is provided to accommodate the shift to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.

4.5.8 At the time of writing, there are nine electric vehicle charging devices at six locations in proximity to Hicks Gate. Furthermore, there are no on-street charging devices. In co-ordination with the WECA EV Charging Strategy, there will need to be provision for expanding the network of electric charging points in the Hicks Gate area. Supporting the shift to electric vehicles would facilitate the transition away from the internal combustion engine.

4.5.9 Engagement will be needed with WECA and bus operators to support plans to decarbonise the bus fleet in the Hicks Gate area. Whilst conventional buses remain one of the least carbon intensive forms of road vehicle transport per passenger, per mile in the UK, zero emission buses could help us achieve our net zero targets (2030), cleaner air, encourage green growth and improve health and wellbeing in the Hicks Gate area. For passengers, zero emission buses can also offer an improved passenger experience through reduced noise and vibration.

4.6 Summary

4.6.1 Table 4-2 below sets out a table summarising the potential transport interventions for Hicks Gate.

Table 4-2: Hicks Gate - Summary of Potential Interventions

Improvement		Description	How it could be achieved
	**Mobility Hubs**	Mobility Hubs bring together a range of transport options for example shared transport such as car clubs and e-scooters, public transport and facilities for cycling. A network of Mobility Hubs allows people to travel between and around places without the need for a car. A "Transport Interchange" is a Mobility hub on a larger scale with a more strategic function.	• A new "Transport Interchange" at the Hicks Gate Roundabout, supporting better connection between an increased range of public transport services. • This would support connectivity between a wide range of destinations through a choice of modes. This would include linking Bristol, Keynsham, and Bristol's East and North Fringe. • In the long term, it may replace the Brislington Park & Ride.
	**Bath to Bristol Strategic Corridor**	Significant investment to improve facilities for walking, cycling and public transport along the A4 corridor.	• Schemes to make it easier to travel between Bath and Bristol, and the destinations in between, by public transport. • Measures to reduce the negative impact of the A4 on communities, including better crossing facilities and speed reduction measures. • Better facilities for people walking and cycling along the A4, as well as tree planting, making it safer and more attractive. • Better facilities for buses, meaning they can avoid traffic queues, delivering better journey times.

Improvement		Description	How it could be achieved
	**Public Realm Improvements**	Investment in improving public spaces and routes, including crossing facilities to encourage people to use active modes of travel.	• Improve crossing facilities on the A4 for people walking and cycling. • Improve the network for people walking and cycling, to ensure that there are commuter routes connecting the Hicks Gate area with places such as Bristol City Centre, Bristol East and North Fringe, Stockwood, and Keynsham. • Cycling and walking links along the river corridor. • In future, replacing the Brislington P&R with a new Transport Interchange could offer opportunities to improve the road network. The P&R junction could be used to connect areas to the south, with the A4, potentially as a diversion of Stockwood Road. This would change the Emery Road Crossroads to a three-arm junction, providing opportunities to improve facilities for walking and cycling.
	**Micromobility**	Extension of short-term e-scooter and e-Bike rental within Hicks Gate.	• Introduce e-bikes and e-scooters to Hicks Gate • E-bike hire stations. • Improved storage with appropriate range of services e.g. charging, maintenance, lockers.
	**Bus Services**	Improve bus services, including bus infrastructure, routes and bus priority measures.	• Additional bus routes to link with a greater range of places, such as Keynsham, Whitchurch Village and Bristol's East Fringe. • Bus priority measures along the A4 corridor.

Improvement		Description	How it could be achieved
	**Demand Responsive Transport**	DRT can complement fixed route public transport on the main corridors by providing connections into these existing services, thereby improving mobility and social inclusivity.	• Introduce WESTLink DRT zones. DRT could be used to connect a Transport Interchange at Hicks Gate, where passengers can gain access to a connecting bus or rail service to complete their journey.
	**Public Transport Decarbonisation**	Zero emission buses will help us achieve our net zero targets and cleaner air, encourage green growth, and improve health and wellbeing.	• Work with bus operators and other key stakeholders to decarbonise the bus fleet in the Hicks Gate area.
	**ULEV Charging**	Providing electric vehicle charging points encourages individuals to use electric vehicles which will help us achieve our net zero targets and cleaner air, encourage green growth, and improve health and wellbeing.	• Introduce ULEV charging points at the new Transport Interchange.
	**Car Clubs**	Car clubs allow members access to locally parked cars, therefore supporting lower car ownership.	• Introduce electric vehicle car clubs at the Transport Interchange to provide households with an alternative to owning multiple cars.

5. Whitchurch Transport Strategy

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This transport strategy for Whitchurch Village needs to reimagine how the transport network meets current and future needs, whilst protecting the rural character of the surrounding area and enhancing the lives of its residents. The key existing transport issues it aims to address are:

- A high level of traffic on the A37 causing issues with congestion and barriers to movement for pedestrians;
- Traffic permeating through residential areas due to congestion on the A37;
- Gaps in existing public transport provision with opportunities to better connect bus and rail services;
- A distorted hierarchy prioritising ease of access and accommodation of vehicle movement over pedestrians and cyclists; and
- A fragmented active travel network that doesn't provide convenient and direct routes between residential areas and the services, facilities and employment opportunities that residents require access to.

5.1.2 Our previous engagement with the communities in Whitchurch Village highlighted a number of concerns with the current transport network, summarised in Table 5-1.

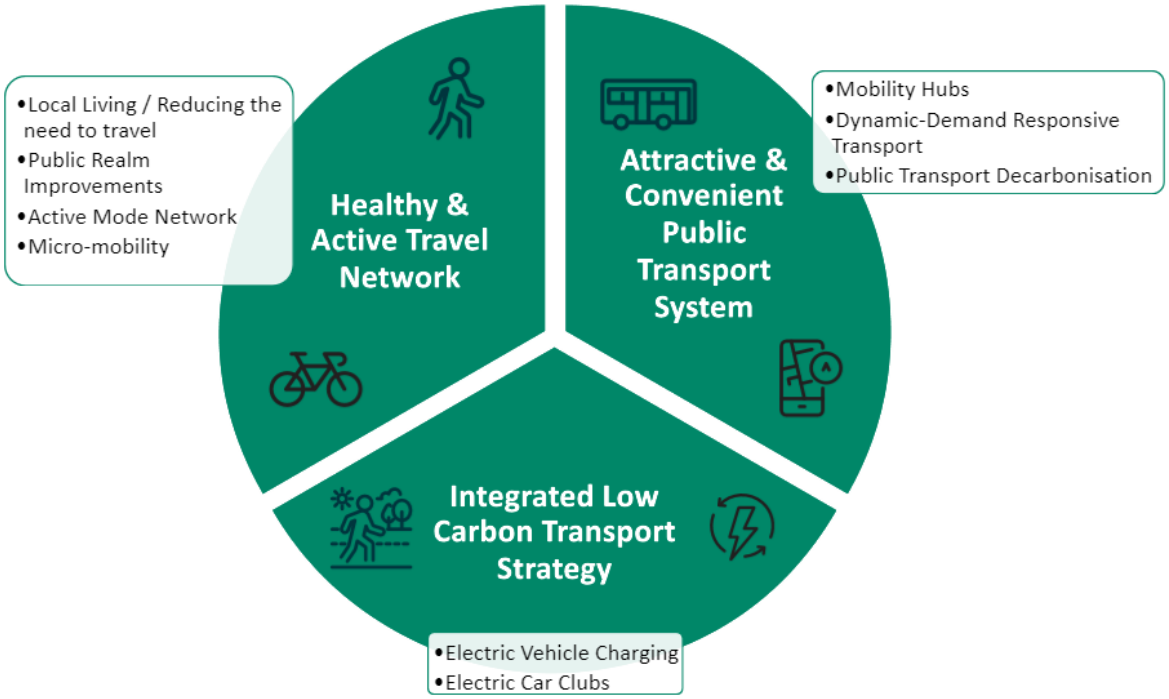
Table 5-1 Whitchurch Village – Issues and Challenges

Transport Challenges		
	**Orbital Connectivity**	• Limited orbital connectivity between Whitchurch Village, and Keynsham, the A4 corridor at Hicks Gate and Bristol's East Fringe. • As a result, traffic uses residential roads and rural lanes, causing congestion and making it less safe and attractive to walk and cycle.
	**Severance / Barriers to movement**	• The A37 cuts through the heart of Whitchurch Village. It carries high levels of traffic and makes it harder to walk and cycle. • There are multiple traffic routes within Whitchurch Village. Many of these routes are used as alternatives to main roads at congested times. This can make it harder to walk and cycle.
 	**Public Transport**	• A37 corridor has a half hourly bus services into Bristol. However, there is poor east-west connectivity into Keynsham and the A4 into Bath. • Bus services are considered inadequate by many local residents.

Transport Challenges		
	**Lack of Local Job Opportunities and facilities**	• Limited local employment means that a high proportion of people travel out of Whitchurch Village for work. • People often need to travel outside of Whitchurch Village to access day-to-day facilities. An example of this is children attending secondary school at Broadlands Academy, Keynsham.
	**Active Travel Network**	• National Cycle Network (NCN) route 3 currently connects Whitchurch Village with the Chew Valley to the south and Bristol to the north. From this route it is possible to access Bristol city centre and Bristol Temple Meads. • Currently no dedicated east to west routes to Keynsham and Bath.

5.1.3 In order to respond to the findings identified above whilst reflecting the overarching policy backdrop of decarbonising the transport network to achieve net zero targets, key themes of this transport strategy have been developed as set out in Figure 5-1 as follows.

Figure 5-1 Whitchurch Village Transport Strategy Key Themes



5.1.4 The remainder of this chapter sets out each theme of this transport strategy in further detail.

5.2 Healthy and Active Travel Network

5.2.1 The transport strategy includes development of an attractive and convenient active transport network across Whitchurch Village. This includes:

- Local Living / Reducing the Need to Travel;
- Public Realm Improvements on the A37;
- Active Travel Network; and
- Micro-mobility.

Local Living / Reducing the Need to Travel

What the evidence shows:

5.2.2 Whitchurch Village is positioned immediately south of the Bristol urban area and to the west of Keynsham. Whitchurch Village's location close to Bristol and Keynsham supports out-commuting. 2021 census data shows that private car use for journeys to work was higher in Whitchurch Village than for the B&NES district, South West region and for Great Britain as a whole, with cycle use for journeys to work correspondingly lower in Whitchurch Village. This shows that out-commuting is currently predominantly by car. This transport strategy aims to promote sustainable modes and support remote working, in order to broaden the travel choices available to residents.

5.2.3 There are limited local facilities within Whitchurch Village and a greater range in the wider area. This transport strategy aims to provide better connections by sustainable modes to the local facilities to which residents require access to meet their daily needs and therefore negate the need to travel further afield.

What the community told us:

5.2.4 The community said that the A37 carries heavy traffic, is a freight route and “cuts the village in half”, creating issues with accessing local facilities. There is a concern that recent development in the area has created more traffic issues.

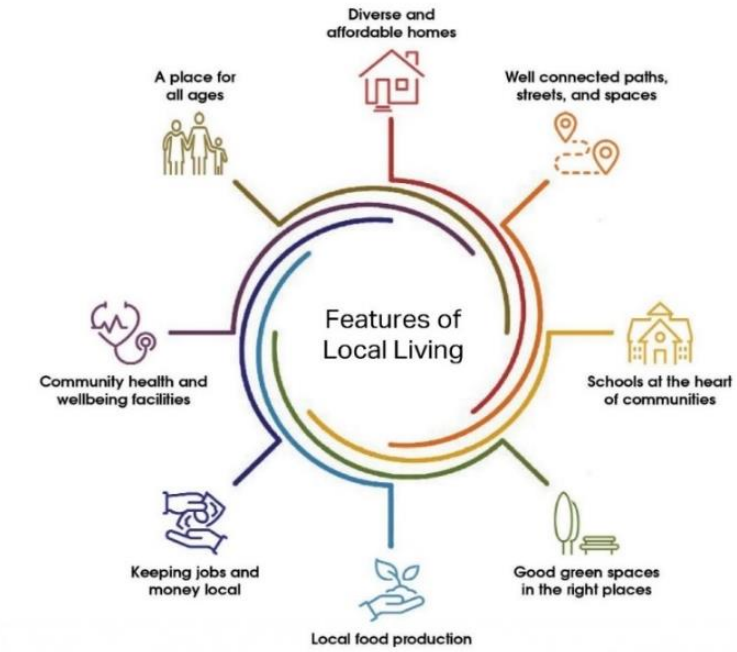
5.2.5 Feedback from engagement indicates that there is a feeling that the focus of development to date has been to benefit Bristol and residents worry that Whitchurch Village will be subsumed into Bristol.

5.2.6 It is fundamentally to bring more sustainable transport infrastructure to this area and public transport connections to Bristol.

Plan Response:

5.2.7 There are many opportunities to facilitate local living, as set out in Figure 5-2. The transport benefits are that it reduces the number or length of journeys or both.

Figure 5-2 Local Living Opportunities



Source: ‘Living Locally: The role of housing and planning within local councils’, APSE and TPCA, July 2023

Proximity and Accessibility to Key Services

5.2.8 When services and amenities are located closer to people’s homes, people are better able to walk or cycle or travel there more easily by public transport. Currently, there are limited health, education, childcare, retail, employment, leisure and community facilities available within Whitchurch Village, with residents often being required to travel further afield to access these facilities. Given the existing barriers to travel by active modes, such as the barriers to movement at the A37, these journeys are often made by private car.

5.2.9 This transport strategy proposes that the pedestrian routes between residential areas in Whitchurch Village and the key services which residents require access to in the near vicinity and across administrative boundaries, should be enhanced. It is important to improve access routes for pedestrians to facilities in South Bristol, including the South Bristol Community Hospital and the Leisure Centre. Improvements to infrastructure for active modes offers the opportunity to overcome barriers to active travel and make journeys by active modes to key services more attractive and the natural first choice for residents.

Support Hybrid / Remote Working

5.2.10 The shift to hybrid / remote working reduces the demand for travel and enables fewer journeys to be made. In the Whitchurch Village area, cafés / community spaces with Wi-Fi connectivity could accommodate the needs of those working from home / remotely. Such a facility could also be combined with a Mobility Hub, which is accessible by a number of sustainable transport modes.

5.2.11 Residents in the Whitchurch Village area could be offered residential personalised travel planning, to support hybrid working as well as essential work journeys to outside the home. This could include individualised travel marketing; with the production of customised local travel information such as stop specific bus timetables and neighbourhood sustainable travel maps.

Public Realm Improvements

What the evidence shows:

5.2.12 Evidence shows that Whitchurch Village experiences traffic congestion throughout the day, but it is worst in the AM peak and in the PM peak (See Figure 5-3). The A37 runs through the middle of Whitchurch Village and prioritises the vehicular movement over active travel modes and the public realm creating barriers to movement for pedestrians. There is an imbalance in the level of public space afforded to vehicles over people. The resulting congestion contributes to an unwelcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Figure 5-3 Whitchurch Village Traffic Congestion

Typical Wednesday 08:30 **Typical Wednesday 17:30**

What the community told us:

5.2.13 The community said that the A37 carries high levels of traffic which “cuts the village in half” and creates issues for pedestrian accessing local facilities. The highway dominates the area, and there is a lack of clear local focal points. Traffic permeating through residential areas also adds to this, with Sleep Lane being identified as an example for carrying through traffic at times when the A37 is congested.

5.2.14 There are also poor walking links to community facilities, for example the Whitchurch Village Playpark is located adjacent to the A37 away from the centre of the village and is difficult to access via active modes.

Plan Response:

5.2.15 This transport strategy has investigated potential ways to reduce the impact of vehicles in Whitchurch Village, thereby enhancing conditions for active modes.

5.2.16 Public realm improvements could be focussed on the A37, to address the barrier to movement created for pedestrians through the dominance of traffic using the route. The Strategy proposes two areas along the A37 for public realm improvements One area of improvements is the village centre near Church Road and Staunton Lane and a second area for public realm improvements is proposed north of Queen Charlton Lane. The proposed pedestrian crossing on the A37 immediately north of the junction with Queen Charlton Lane will better meet desire lines, as part of the Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme discussed in the following section, including those created by the Whitchurch Village Playpark.

Active Travel Network

What the evidence shows:

5.2.17 Data from the 2021 Census also shows that the Whitchurch Village area has a lower proportion of walking and cycling commuting trips as compared to the average for B&NES and the South West region. This highlights the potential to support a switch to active modes if walking and cycling and wheeling connections were improved.

What the community told us:

5.2.18 The community said that the barriers to movement from the A37 discourages making trips by active travel. The highway dominates the area, and there is a lack of clear local focal points.

5.2.19 During the stakeholder engagement workshops, the following opportunities for active travel were suggested:

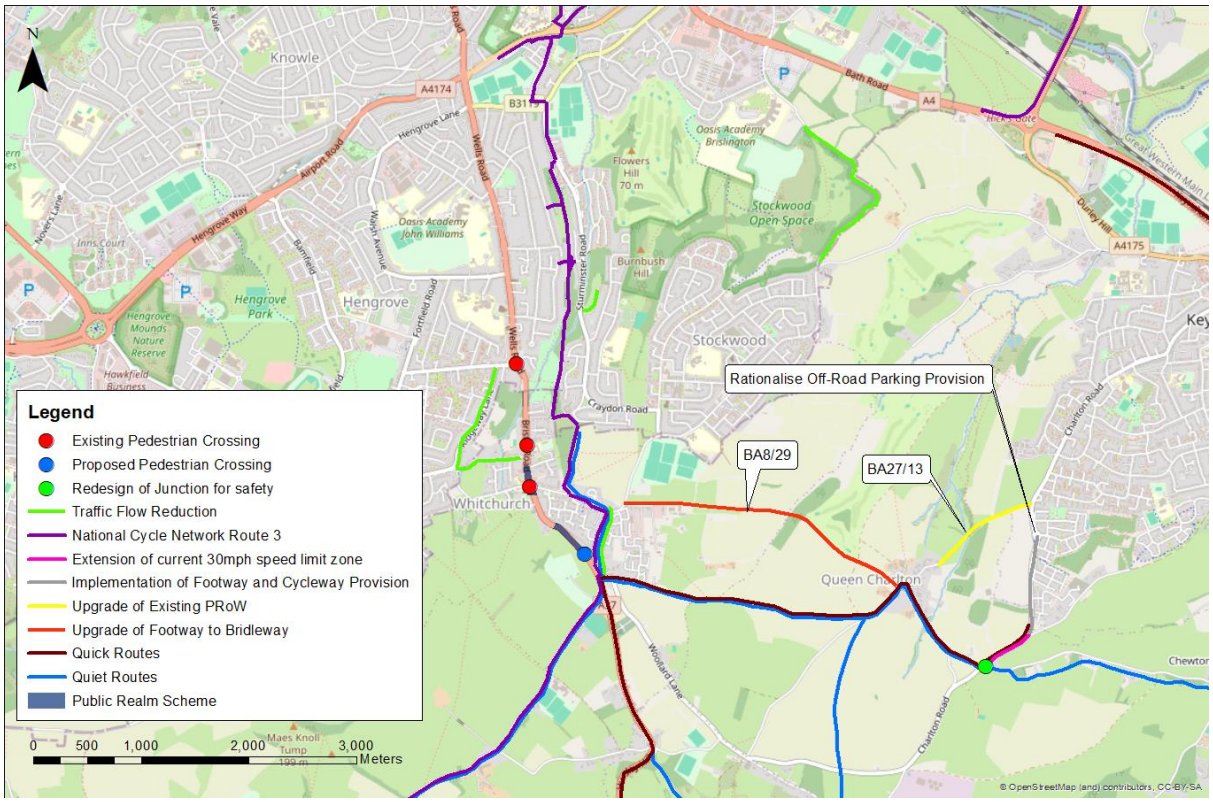
- Convert strategic PRoW into year-round, fully segregated walking / cycling routes;
- Potential to extend the walking / cycling network into areas not currently served;
- Improvements to wayfinding and road layouts to make cycling safer;
- Increasing active mode trips to primary and secondary schools;
- Prioritising active modes over the car;
- Protected cycle routes segregated from vehicles, potentially using old railway lines for active modes; and
- Reducing the speed of traffic to enable more people to travel via active modes.

Plan Response:

5.2.20 This transport strategy proposes the potential development of a high quality, attractive, safe and integrated network of infrastructure for walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding. This could be achieved through improvements to existing routes, traffic calming and speed reduction, introduction of modal filters, repurposed country lanes where appropriate, and also by reducing the barriers to movement from the A37 to promote active travel.

5.2.21 The potential package of measures is summarised in Figure 5-4. Any package of measures could be scaled dependent on need and community engagement.

Figure 5-4 Potential Active Mode Improvements



5.2.22 If this transport strategy were to be implemented, Whitchurch Village and the surrounding areas would connect the existing, often fragmented, sections of cycle infrastructure to create a continuous, coherent, high-quality cycle network.

5.2.23 The intention is that travel by active modes could become the genuine first choice for most local trips and a viable option for many further afield: improving health, alleviating congestion and lowering carbon emissions in line with Net Zero Targets. It would provide a clear network of attractive primary and secondary routes connecting key amenities and facilities. It would also help boost the local economy, capitalising on existing excellent assets such as the Whitchurch Railway Path, by encouraging cycling for leisure and tourism.

5.2.24 As part of the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme, B&NES is proposing a new scheme to improve walking and cycling connections and facilities on the A37. The proposals include the following improvements:

- A new 5.2m wide 'toucan' crossing on the A37 to the north of the junction with Queen Charlton Lane with dropped kerbs and tactile paving.
- Moving the two existing bus stops 30-40m to accommodate the new crossing and the provision of bus shelters and real-time information at the relocated bus stops.
- Reduction in width of the A37 / Norton Lane junction and the A37 / Queen Charlton Lane junction to slow approaching traffic.
- Widening the shared path that forms part of the NCN 3 from 1.5m to 3m.
- A new pedestrian refuge island on Queen Charlton Lane.
- Widening the footway to the south of the proposed crossing on the eastern side of the carriageway from 1m to 2m.
- Improvements to the existing traffic island opposite the Norton Lane junction to protect the safety of right-turning vehicles.
- Removal of existing bus stop on the A37 south of Norton Lane to improve visibility.

5.2.25 The location of the existing and proposed crossing points on the A37 is shown in Figure 5-5.

This shows that the proposed pedestrian crossing accommodates the desire line from southern parts of the village to the Whitchurch Village Play Park.

Figure 5-5 A37 Pedestrian Crossings – Existing and Proposed

Existing Cycle Infrastructure

5.2.26 The existing cycling infrastructure in Whitchurch Village is comprised of National Cycle Network Route 3, which is illustrated in Figure 5-6.

Figure 5-6 National Cycle Network Route 3

5.2.27 Figure 5-6 shows that although Whitchurch Village benefits from the National Cycle Network (NCN) 3 which provides a north-south connection onwards to Bristol, there is currently no equivalent east-west route to Keynsham. Additionally, to address local barriers to movement and deliver a more comprehensive network, there are opportunities to improve connections onto NCN 3 from surrounding residential areas. This would ensure that it is accessible from all parts of Whitchurch Village, not just the areas which it serves directly.

Whitchurch to Keynsham Active Travel Improvements

5.2.28 Keynsham has a range of local facilities, shopping and employment opportunities which are accessed from residents of Whitchurch Village, since comparable facilities are not available locally within the Village. This includes Broadlands School on Saint Francis Road in Keynsham. Whitchurch Village is in the catchment for this school, since there isn't a secondary school in the Village. School buses transport pupils between Whitchurch Village and Broadlands School. However, it is also important to develop safe routes for active travel between these two places and onwards to Keynsham town centre.

5.2.29 The impact of traffic between South East Bristol, Whitchurch Village and Keynsham, using Stockwood Lane, Charlton Road, and Queen Charlton Lane, has been a significant issue. This creates barriers to active travel movement and safety, and a strategic approach to route choice and hierarchy is proposed.

5.2.30 Queen Charlton Lane is the most direct and least undulating route between Whitchurch Village and Keynsham, and therefore offers the greatest opportunity for active travel. There is currently a Modal Filter in place on Queen Charlton Lane, which supports active travel between Whitchurch Village and Queen Charlton. This is part of the Liveable Neighbourhoods Programme, and has been made permanent following a successful trial.

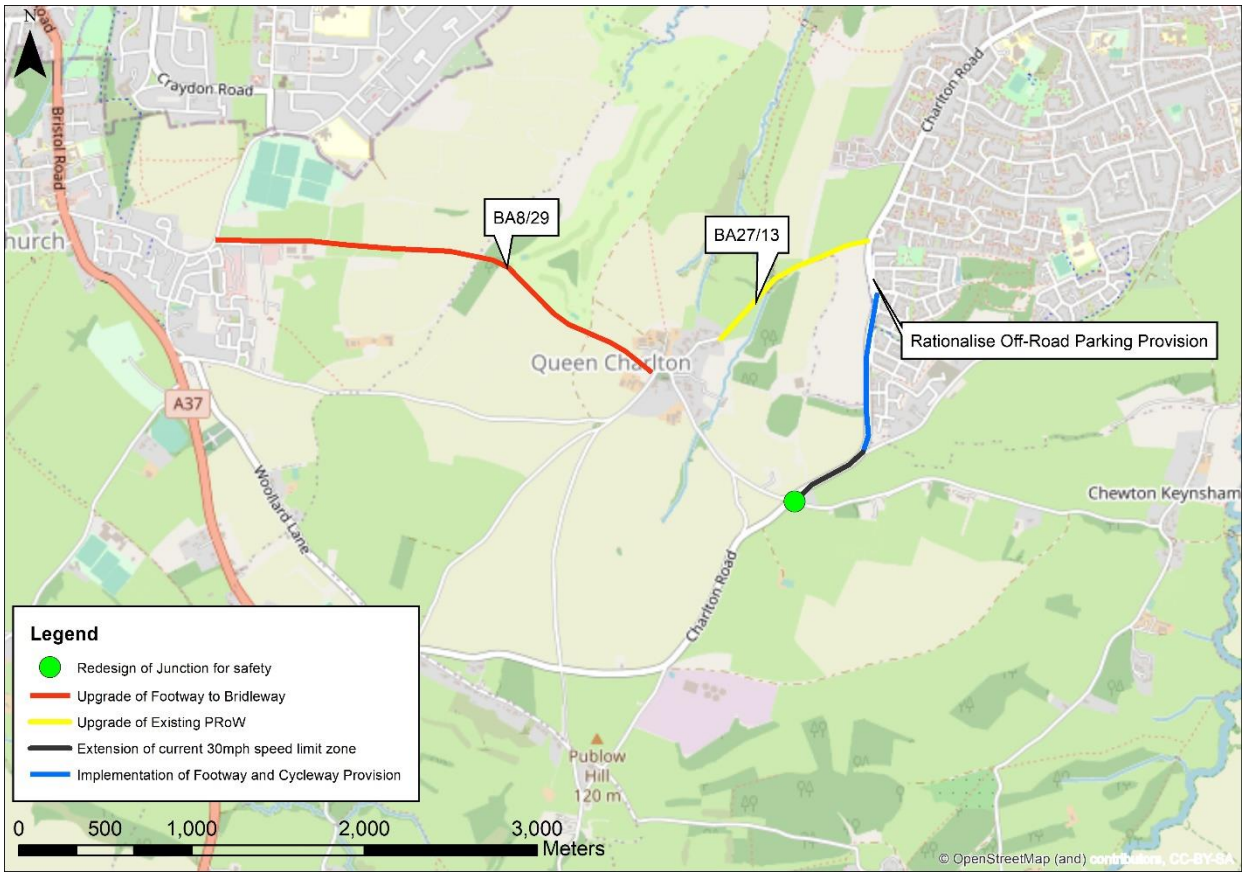
5.2.31 Stockwood Lane has a steep gradient, which presents a challenge for cyclists with a traditional pedal cycle, rather than e-bike. Charlton Road, with Woollard Lane, is most appropriate for vehicle movement. However, there are sections of the route overall requiring improvements. The section of Charlton Road between Redlynch Lane and Alexander Road to the southwest of Keynsham is currently considered to be unsafe for active travel.

5.2.32 Proposed interventions to facilitate active modes between Whitchurch Village and Keynsham therefore comprise:

- Implementation of continuous footway and cycleway provision along Charlton Road between its junctions with Parkhouse Lane to the south and Linnet Way to the north. Adding designated active travel lanes would enable smooth passage of both cars and bikes, as well as reducing traffic on this busy stretch of road as users switch to alternative modes of transport. This would improve walking and cycling / wheeling connections between Keynsham and Queen Charlton. The intervention would involve discussions with landowners for land, given the existing drainage scheme in place adjacent to Charlton Road;
- Redesign of the Redlynch Lane / Charlton Road junction to provide safe crossings for pedestrians, cycling / wheeling users and horse riders. This is the western extent of a pinch point on the highway network, where two major cycle routes meet. This junction is also currently an accident hotspot, including risks that traffic speeds on Charlton Road in a southwest-bound direction away from Keynsham have the potential for causing rear shunts to vehicles and cyclists waiting to turn right onto Redlynch Road;
- Consideration of the possibility of extending the current 30mph speed limit zone eastward along Charlton Road to the junction with Parkhouse Lane, as part of the strategy to facilitate safe active travel along Charlton Road for connection into and through Queen Charlton towards south Bristol;
- Rationalisation of off-road provision on Charlton Road;
- Upgrade of the existing off-road PRoW to the northeast of Queen Charlton, to facilitate improved walking and cycling / wheeling connections between Queen Charlton and Charlton Road for access to Keynsham. However, it is noted that this is a steep route; and
- PRoW number BA8/29 - this route is currently designated as a footpath and it would be necessary to upgrade it to a bridleway to permit use by cyclists and horse riders. It may

also require resurfacing to accommodate cyclists. Therefore, there are challenges associated with the deliverability.

Figure 5-7 Whitchurch Village - Keynsham Active Travel Improvements



Quiet Lanes

5.2.33 Quiet Lanes can be created using a number of methods. They have the potential to support active travel on key routes by reducing inappropriate traffic volumes and speeds. These include speed reductions, traffic calming, and modal filters. In discussion with the community, the potential for the creation of Quiet Lanes will be considered in the following l locations:

- Maggs Lane, an important east-west route for pedestrians to access the A37;
- Scotland Lane; Sleep Lane; and
- Sturminster Road.

5.2.34 Quiet Lanes could be implemented as part of an expanded liveable neighbourhoods programme, worked up through co-design with the community. The aim of the programme would be to improve residential streets and encourage safe, active and more sustainable forms of travel, such as walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding. Complementary improvements which are typically suggested by communities include better crossing points on heavily trafficked roads and walk-to-school routes, wider footways, better cycle lanes and secure on-street bike storage, traffic-calming measures such as speed cushions.

Micro Mobility

What the evidence shows:

5.2.35 49% of residents in Whitchurch Village travel less than 5km to their place of work however only 2% of residents cycle to work. Barriers to cycling in Whitchurch Village include the hilly topography, therefore micro-mobility modes such as electric bikes could assist in supporting more people cycling in the area.

5.2.36 An e-scooter trial has been in place in WECA areas since October 2020, now extended until May 2026 comprising 4,000 e-scooters and with 1,500 e-bikes and 20 e-cargo bikes from Autumn 2023. In December 2022, the WECA e-scooter trials expanded to include Whitchurch Village. Scooter rides have been largely short distance with 50% of trips less than a 25-minute walk (2.1km) in Bristol and 19 minutes (1.6km) in Bath.

5.2.37 The University of the West of England (UWE) carried out an evaluation report into the West of England E-Scooter trial, reporting in May 2023 (Chatterjee, K., Parkin, J., Bozovic, T. & Flower, J. (2023). West of England E-scooter Trial Evaluation Final Report. Report to West of England). Key findings include that, overall, the trial has reduced travel related carbon emissions. Take up has been high due to ease of use and time saving capabilities, replacing trips from all types of transport. E-scooters are used in combination with public transport for between 10% and 20% of journeys.

Plan Response:

5.2.38 E-scooters and e-bikes represent a significant opportunity in terms of increasing the distances that people can travel without a car, overcoming adverse terrain that would make pedal cycles unfeasible for most people and thereby replacing the car for short trips. The provision of micro-mobility also maximises the benefits of the walk and cycle measures being proposed as part of this transport strategy.

5.2.39 As such, this strategy supports extension of short-term e-scooter and e-bike rental within Whitchurch Village. This could facilitate mode shift away from short-distance private car trips in addition to encouraging trips to multi-modal interchanges such as Mobility Hub proposals, where e-bike charging stands and Mandatory Parking Zones for e-scooters can be implemented.

5.2.40 If the law regarding the use of personal e-scooters on the public highway changes this could have a significant and beneficial impact for local mobility. If the law does change, then providing supporting infrastructure (potentially as part of a Mobility Hub), for safe, secure e-scooter / bike storage, repair and or charging in key destinations across Whitchurch Village should be considered. The advent of micro-mobility also maximises the benefits of the walk and cycle measures being proposed as part of this Strategy.

5.3 Attractive and Convenient Public Transport System

Overarching Public Transport Challenges

5.3.1 Whitchurch Village is currently served by bus services along the A37 corridor between Bristol City Centre to the north and the Somer Valley to the south. In addition, the 92 service serves the western part of Whitchurch Village.

5.3.2 Several fixed route services were removed in April 2023, including the 636 service (Whitchurch Village – Keynsham). A trial Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) WESTLink service was introduced at the same time. DRT will help to address bus provision lost within the residential areas of Whitchurch Village. However, the underlying challenges of congestion and unreliable bus timetables that fixed route bus services are largely not an attractive or convenient transport choice for journeys to and within Whitchurch Village.

5.3.3 For example, bus use for journeys to work for Whitchurch Village in 2011 (4.3%) was lower than the average for the B&NES district (4.6%), the South West region (5.3%) and less than half of the average for Great Britain (8.0%). In 2021, bus use in Whitchurch Village had increased to 6.2% and was above the national average of 6.1%, when census data was affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

5.3.4 In addition, census data on car ownership data shows that between 2011 and 2021 Whitchurch Village, in line with B&NES, the South West region and the GB national average has seen a reduction in the number of households with access to no car by up to 0.6%, whilst all have seen an increase in households with access to two or more cars. Whitchurch Village has seen a greater increase in households with two or more cars than the other regions with an increase of up to 4.6%.

5.3.5 These issues pose challenges to public transport patronage, with an underutilised public transport system contributing to greater vehicular congestion, air pollution, journey times and user dissatisfaction.

5.3.6 A successful public transport system does not solely focus on routes. The interventions proposed should therefore be seen as a package, which when implemented together would create a sustainable and successful public transport system for Whitchurch Village.

Interventions

5.3.7 In order to respond to the challenges posed to public transport within the area, this transport strategy proposes development of the following opportunities, which as a package of interventions could contribute to creating an attractive and convenient public transport network across Whitchurch Village. These comprise the following:

- Introduction of a Mobility Hub on the A37;
- Implementation/continuation of DRT Trial Service;
- Promote a new bus service between Whitchurch Village and Keynsham;
- Bus priority measures at key junctions on the A37 (part of the Somer Valley Links project). Our long term vision is for free-flowing bus movement along the A37 corridor; and
- Public Transport Decarbonisation.

Mobility Hubs

What the evidence shows:

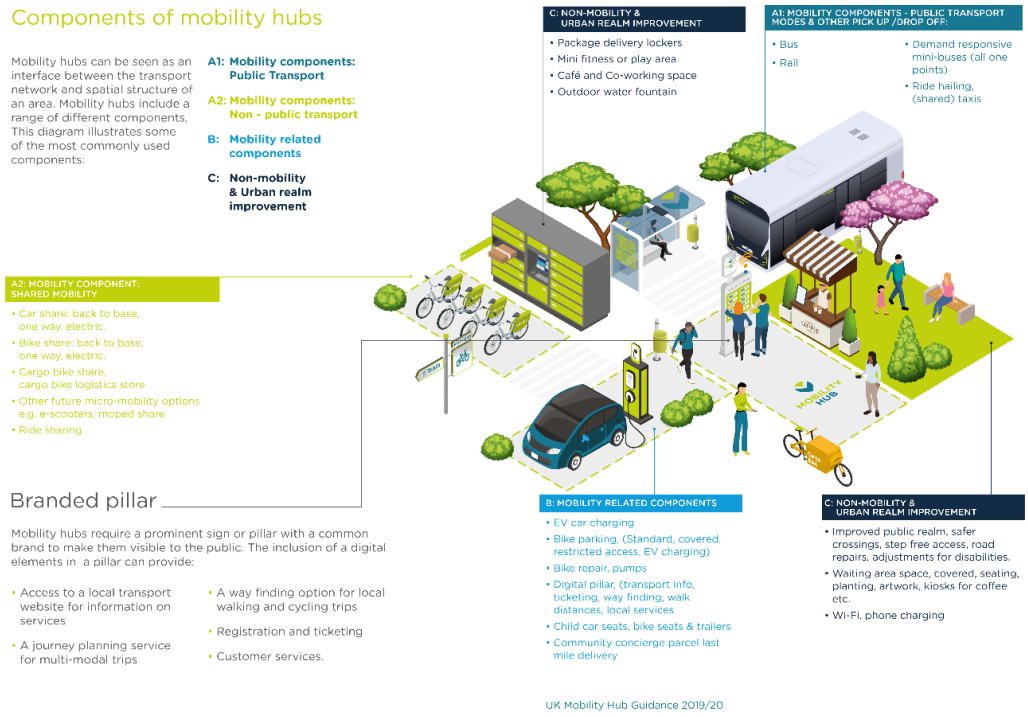
5.3.8 Mobility Hubs are a focus point for public transport, active travel and shared mobility schemes such as bike hire and car clubs. Bespoke Mobility Hubs can be designed to suit the needs of a local area, negating the need for a one size fits all approach (see Figure 5-9). The benefits that a Mobility Hub can bring are presented in Figure 5-8.

5.3.9 Whitchurch Village's proximity to the A37 a strategic route that leads into Bristol and its proximity to surrounding rural areas provides focal points for public transport, DRT and shared mobility, micro-mobility trips, in addition to a hub for community uses and events.

5.3.10 The benefits and components of a Mobility Hub are set out in Figure 5-8 and Figure 5-9.

Figure 5-8 Potential Benefits of a Mobility Hub

Figure 5-9 Potential Components of a Mobility Hub



Source: Collaborative Mobility UK (CoMoUK), 2019, Page 8 & 9. Mobility Hubs Guidance. CoMoUK, Leeds.

What the community told us:

5.3.11 Although no specific comments were made about Mobility Hubs during stakeholder engagement activities, it was frequently commented by the community that the existing public transport service is inadequate and unreliable. Comments were made in respect of the creation of more accessible travel corridors with better public transport and widening of footpaths. Mobility Hubs can act as a focal point for public transport services, allowing for interchange with other sustainable modes.

Plan Response:

5.3.12 The focus of the Mobility Hub at Whitchurch Village should be to provide an interchange facility for sustainable modes. It would be an important connection point between the bus services on the A37 corridor and the proposed DRT services. It should also provide facilities for e-bikes and cycles. No car parking is proposed at the Mobility Hub.

5.3.13 This would assist in improving public transport facilities and service reliability in the area. Furthermore, providing a Mobility Hub close to the A37 would remove traffic travelling into Bristol before it passed through the villages reducing congestion and providing a more pleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)

What the evidence shows:

5.3.14 As noted in Chapter 3, the 636 bus service (Whitchurch – Keynsham) ceased to operate in April 2023. The loss of this service has had a particular impact on the eastern part of Whitchurch Village, which it served, since it has not been replaced with an alternative fixed time service.

5.3.15 A Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) is currently being trialled within parts of the West of England. DRT is a flexible service that provides shared transport to users who can specify their pick-up location, time and drop-off (for example, from home to work) and offers a more economically efficient way of providing bus services.

5.3.16 The DRT service known as the 'WESTLink' service launched across B&NES in April 2023, using a £3 million investment secured by WECA through the Bus Service Improvement Plan. The WESTLink service runs between 07:00-19:00hrs from Monday-Saturday across large parts of North East Somerset and Bristol. Minibuses run in these zones designed to get people to key transport corridors where they can then pick up another bus or train. Passengers are able to use a WESTLink in their local zone to link up to their local main routes.

5.3.17 As shown in Figure 5-10, Whitchurch is located in a shared zone between the Chew Valley zone to the west and Bath rural zone to the east. Travel is only permitted within each zone, with Whitchurch WESTLink travel applicable to both zones.

Figure 5-10 WESTLink Service Zones

What the community told us:

5.3.18 The community said that there is limited public transport infrastructure and connections with Bristol provided in Whitchurch Village.

Plan Response

5.3.19 DRT can complement fixed route public transport on the main corridors by providing connections into these existing services, thereby improving mobility and social inclusivity, especially in low-density rural areas, which have recently seen a reduction in their services. For example, if a fixed bus route does not operate at a certain time of the day, providing a DRT service can provide residents to continued access to destinations.

5.3.20 The DRT service uses minibuses to contribute towards decarbonisation of public transport, replacing private car journeys and facilitating multi-modal travel, for example, linking users to a train station or fixed route bus service. DRT could provide the incentive for households to reduce car ownership if their mobility requirements can be adequately accommodated.

5.3.21 DRT could be used to connect to the proposed Mobility Hub within Whitchurch Village, where passengers can gain access to a connecting bus or rail service to complete their journey. Importantly, DRT can fill gaps in transport provision where opportunities to provide bespoke walking and cycling infrastructure are limited, where the topography is too challenging /

distances too great, and users do not have access to a car. Therefore, DRT is highly complementary to other proposed measures and can have a range of benefits.

5.3.22 Although WESTLink is currently only a trial service, this transport strategy supports the potential introduction of DRT services in the future. Notwithstanding this support, we recognise that significant improvements are needed to the current DRT provision and the way it operates. This should include improvements to reliability, communication and potentially partial timetabling of services to, for example, support access to schools. Decarbonisation of DRT services, through the use of ultra-low emission minibuses would contribute towards a wider decarbonisation of public transport, as discussed later within this Plan. The suitability of routes to accommodate buses, or DRT, would need to be investigated as the New Local Plan is progressed.

Bus Priority Measures

What the evidence shows:

5.3.23 There are currently no bus priority measures within the vicinity of Whitchurch Village. This results in buses experiencing the same levels of congestion as general traffic, which causes delays and irregular bus journey times. Bus journeys already take longer than the private car and this is accentuated by congestion.

What the community told us:

5.3.24 The community said the bus schedule and reliability of the bus services should be improved. It was felt that there is an inadequate public transport service which struggles to maintain regular timings and often gets cancelled, leaving residents stranded.

Plan Response

5.3.25 The Somer Valley Links project proposes the following upgrades to the A37 corridor:

- Improved junction between the A37 and A39 Wells Road at Hallatrow with upgrade traffic signals and wider footways; and
- Improved junction between the A37 and A362 at Farrington Gurney with upgraded traffic signals.

5.3.26 Bus priority measures along the A37 have the potential to help regularise bus journey times along the entire length of the A37 corridor, thereby benefitting Whitchurch Village. Improving bus services by making journey times quicker and more reliable, including more direct / express services, would encourage residents to use public transport for more of their journeys.

5.3.27 The Council will work with the West of England Combined Mayoral Authority and Bristol City Council to improve public transport on the A37 that is within their district.

Public Transport Decarbonisation

What the evidence shows:

5.3.28 The UK's Decarbonising Transport plan sets out the commitment to deliver the National Bus Strategy's vision of a transformed bus industry and a green bus revolution, supporting the delivery of 4,000 new zero emission buses to support the UK's aim to have net zero emissions by 2050. Further funding for zero emission buses was announced by the government in September 2023. Of this, WECA has secured £6.6m of funding, with further investment from First Bus, to provide 74 electric buses to replace more polluting vehicles by the end of 2025.[11]

Plan Response:

5.3.29 Bath and North East Somerset Council will work with bus operators and other key stakeholders to develop plans to decarbonise the bus fleet in the Whitchurch Village area.

[11] https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/news/regional-mayor-secures-cash-to-power-up-70-electric-buses/

Whilst conventional buses remain one of the least carbon intensive forms of road vehicle transport per passenger, per mile in the UK, zero emission buses could help us achieve our net zero targets and cleaner air, support green growth and improve health and wellbeing. For passengers, zero emission buses can also offer an improved passenger experience through reduced noise and vibration.

5.4 Integrated Low Carbon Transport Strategy

Overview

5.4.1 This transport strategy includes development of transport measures across Whitchurch Village to enable an integrated low carbon transport system. This includes:

- Electric Vehicle Charging; and
- Electric Car Clubs.

ULEV Charging

What the evidence shows:

5.4.2 We need to facilitate the switch in how transport is fuelled. For example, in 2035, all new conventional Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) (petrol and diesel) cars and vans are set to be banned from sale in the United Kingdom. However, at the time of writing, there are no Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) chargepoints within Whitchurch Village.

5.4.3 Whitchurch Village currently has greater than average private car mode share for employment trips, and generally high car dependency, which has increased between 2011 and 2021. These trends reinforce the need to facilitate the switch to electric vehicles in line with the transition away from the internal combustion engine. However, the lack of publicly available charging creates a barrier to the uptake of ULEVs for residents in Whitchurch Village who do not have a private driveway to accommodate an ULEV charger.

Plan Response:

5.4.4 Improving ULEV charging infrastructure to assist in developing a climate resilient transport network is a key part of this transport strategy and could facilitate the transition away from the ICE. This Plan therefore supports implementation of the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) across B&NES, inclusive of Whitchurch Village, to “increase the availability of on-street charging points in residential streets where off-street parking is not available”.

5.4.5 Implementation of on-street ULEV chargepoints pairs well with other proposed interventions set out in this Plan, including the creation of Mobility Hubs, and plans to introduce zero emission buses, which together will help remove barriers to the uptake of ULEVs in Whitchurch Village.

5.4.6 A ULEV on-street charging study could be used to inform an on-street ULEV charging strategy and identify investment priority areas within Whitchurch Village. Such a study should use a range of analysis tools to identify priority areas for ULEV chargepoint infrastructure, such as a binomial logit model, - a methodology for calculating the likelihood of ULEV adoption per Lower Super Output Area (LSOA). Such a model uses data on attitudes to the uptake of renewable energy (considered to be a reasonable proxy for ULEVs) coupled with corresponding individual / household characteristics available from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Public Attitudes Tracker (PAT) database.

5.4.7 This assessment can be based on a combination of the following available variables, with each variable assigned a co-efficient value using a data processing tool called 'Solver' built into Microsoft Excel:

- Property type (KS401EW—- Dwellings, household spaces and accommodation type);
- Gross household income (Income estimates for small areas, England & Wales, financial year ending 2018);
- Gender (QS104UK – Sex);
- Age (QS103EW—- Age by single year);
- Social grade (QS611EW—- Approximated Social Grade);
- Work status (KS601UK—- Economic activity); and
- Household tenure (KS402EW – Tenure).

5.4.8 These variables can then be prioritised for further appraisal prior to installation of on-street charging infrastructure.

5.4.9 The ban on the sale of petrol / diesel vehicles means that people living in dwellings with no off-street parking will soon require a way to charge their vehicles. National and local guidance requires that charging must not compromise access to active modes, for instance through impacting footways. Methods to address this include:

- **Standardisation of Equipment**;
- **On-Street Charging Infrastructure Trials** – B&NES has an EV Charging Policy, albeit we acknowledge that an update is required in this fast moving technical area. We will listen to residents' requests for EV charging infrastructure and seek to deliver provision in line with our Policy and the needs of our communities. This will involve an assessment of the most appropriate technology to use at any given location and we can expect to see a systematic roll out of charging infrastructure across the district. This will be according to criteria that will be set out in the updated EV Charging Policy, and are likely to include charging hubs with associated car club provision.;
- **Cables across Footways** —- Progress the B&NES Cable Channel Trial approved March 2023 as rapidly as possible;
- **Equipment Recommendations** – The Council could evaluate whether charging infrastructure within street lighting columns is the best solution for Keynsham or whether bollards/rapid chargepoints are better suited;
- **Pro-Active Partnering** – for example, with community hubs, car clubs, sharing economy and local authorities;
- **Future Proofing Parking Permit Schemes**—- potential for introduction of ULEV chargepoint infrastructure in association with future ULEV Parking Permit schemes, used to manage the use of parking bays if required;
- **Power Generation**—- maximising the potential of ULEV chargepoints using renewable sources as part of a wider strategy of green infrastructure; and
- **Intelligence Gathering** – residential surveys, potentially involving a targeted survey of prioritised streets (to validate Logit assessment findings) but also a general survey of residents.

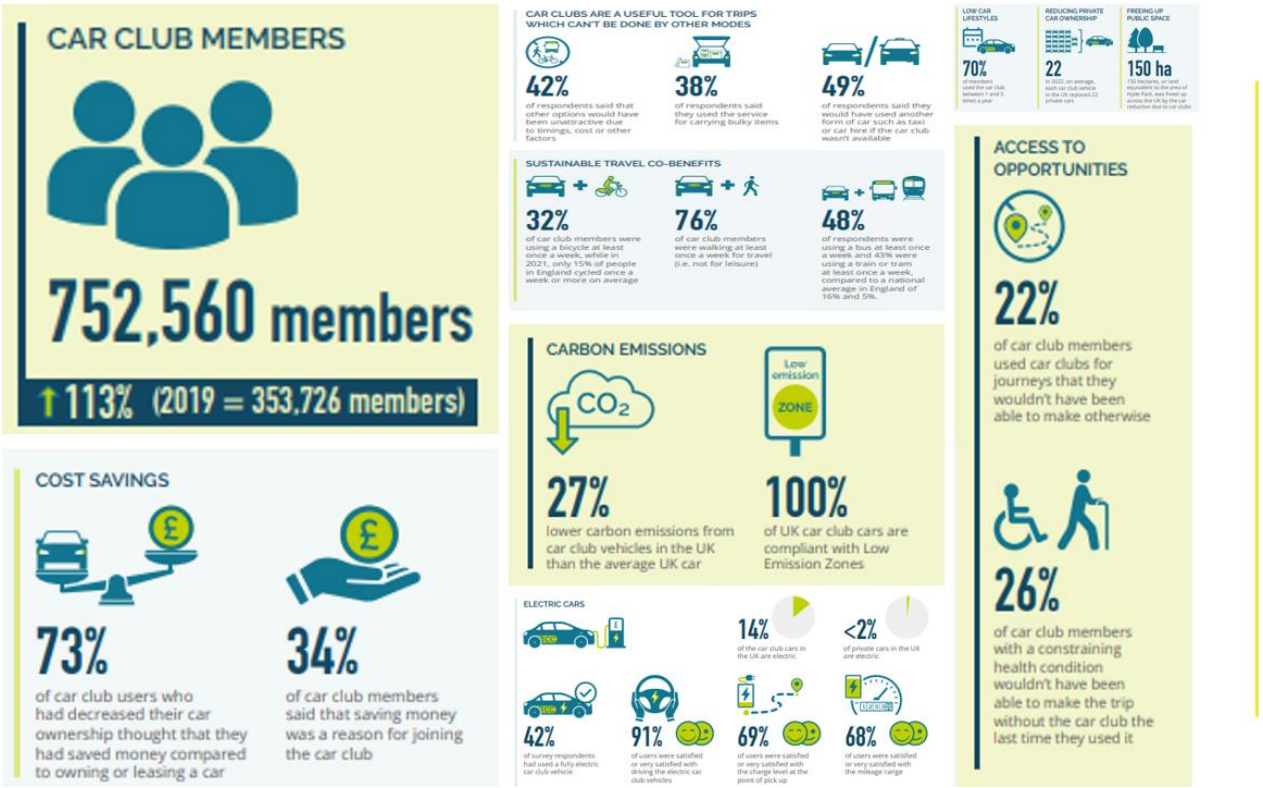
Reducing Car Ownership / ULEV Car Clubs

What the evidence shows:

5.4.10 The 2021 Census data for Whitchurch Village shows a high dependence on cars for satisfying mobility needs, with over 40% of households in the area having access to two or more vehicles and only 16% of households having no access to a vehicle. If access to a car is taken as a proxy for car ownership, within Whitchurch Village there is potential to reduce these figures and bring them more into line with the rest of B&NES (38% for two or more vehicles). It should be noted that reducing car ownership does not necessarily mean "zero car". In some cases, it could mean reducing the number of cars owned by multi-car households.

5.4.11 Research by the RAC suggests that the average car is parked at home for 80% of the time, parked elsewhere for 16% of the time, and only in use for 4% of the time. This represents an inefficient use of resource and suggests significant potential for a proportion of people's needs to access a vehicle to be met by a shared resource rather than private ownership. has been adapted from the 2022 CoMoUK Annual Report on Car Clubs, and provides an overview of usage and the benefits reported by users.

Figure 5-11 Car Club Key Statistics



Source: Adapted from CoMoUK Annual Car Club Report 2022

Plan Response:

5.4.12 To bring about a reduction in car ownership levels, a multi-faceted approach will be required and all elements, many of which are covered under the other areas of this strategy, will need to contribute. For example, infrastructure provision for active modes, high quality interchange options in convenient locations, and reliable and frequent public transport services. Only when residents have confidence in the transport network as a whole, are they more likely to have the confidence to reduce their reliance on the private car.

5.4.13 Opportunities such as electric car clubs can create a less car dependent society with the potential to reduce the number of cars per household, e.g., from three to two, or two to one. There are currently no car clubs located in Whitchurch Village according to Travelwest. The nearest car club vehicles to Whitchurch Village are in Bristol and Bath, with one vehicle available in Keynsham. The main operator in the Bristol and Bath region is Enterprise Car

Club. Cowheels, Hiyacar and Zipcar are other car club operators, however their existing operation is solely in Bristol city centre. Increasing the coverage of car clubs into Whitchurch Village could provide households with the confidence that reduced private car ownership is a viable proposition.

5.4.14 Car clubs could also help create a fairer society as only paying per usage would benefit those on low incomes who are increasingly being “priced out” of access to opportunities due to the increasing cost of car ownership. This helps ensure that the transport system is as inclusive as possible, providing residents with a range of travel choices that meet their needs.

5.4.15 Car clubs offer an alternative model to private car ownership for individuals and businesses. They reduce the need for private parking and can help people reduce car ownership whilst allowing for occasional car travel. Cars are parked in designated bays and can be booked online or via phone, and there are no extra costs for insurance, fuel, and maintenance costs. Car clubs’ fleets are increasingly using electric vehicles, so they also provide an environmental benefit. Research from the shared transport charity CoMoUK shows that on average in 2022, each car club vehicle in the UK replaced 22 private cars. 14% of the car clubs in the UK in 2022 were electric vehicles.

5.4.16 Provision of electric car club vehicles is in line with national policy for transport decarbonisation and the B&NES Climate Emergency declaration. Having access to an ULEV through a car club may encourage people to buy their own electric vehicle and the ULEV charging infrastructure provided would increase the presence and public perception of electric vehicles.

5.4.17 Many car club operators work with other shared transport providers to drive a modal shift towards shared transport. Car clubs should be located at shared transport Mobility Hubs and incorporated into new development in areas that are easily accessible via walking and cycling.

5.5 Summary

5.5.1 Table 5-2 below sets out a table summarising the potential transport interventions for Whitchurch Village.

Table 5-2 Whitchurch Village - Summary of Potential Interventions

Intervention		Description	How it could be achieved
	**Local Living**	Enable a greater proportion of residents to live, shop and undertake leisure activities within Whitchurch Village.	• Improve local walking and cycling links within Whitchurch Village, including making it easier to cross the A37 corridor. • Support the delivery and retention of viable local services and amenities through reducing the negative impact of traffic through the area.
	**Public Realm Improvements**	Improving public spaces and routes, including crossing facilities, to enable people to use active modes of travel.	• Build on the existing Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme (Queen Charlton) to create greener, safer spaces for people, including improved quieter routes for walking, wheeling and cycling. • New safe pedestrian and cycle crossings on the busiest routes to improve the safety of those walking, wheeling and cycling and reduce the dominance of vehicles.
	**Active Travel Routes**	Support travel by walking, wheeling and cycling by improving the routes connecting people with where they need to go.	• Improve crossing over the A37 to better link up the NCN3 Cycle route between the Chew Valley and Bristol City Centre. • Improved crossing facilities over the A37 to link with the children's playground and sports facilities. • Expanding and improving the active travel network to connect Whitchurch Village with Keynsham and Bath. • Improve access routes for pedestrians to facilities including South Bristol Community Hospital and Hengrove Leisure Centre, to reduce the need to travel further afield. • Consider targeted improvements including traffic calming and modal filters to support active travel on key routes, and reduce the level and speed of traffic on inappropriate local routes.

Intervention		Description	How it could be achieved
	**Quiet Lanes**	Identifying minor rural roads that can be designated as Quiet Lanes to provide safer routes for pedestrians, cyclist and horse riders away from fast traffic.	• Investigate the potential to link Whitchurch Village into a wider network of Quiet Lanes that provides the community with more pleasant routes away from busy main roads, especially the existing north-south corridor into and out of Bristol.
	**Micromobility**	Extension of short-term e-scooter and e-Bike rental within Whitchurch Village.	• Support the extension of the e-scooter trial to Whitchurch Village.
	**Mobility Hubs**	Mobility Hubs are places that bring together a host of transport options in one place including shared transport such as car clubs and e-scooters with public transport and active travel modes. A network of Mobility Hubs allows people to travel between and around places without the need for a car.	• Whitchurch Village's proximity to the A37, a key route that leads into Bristol and its proximity to surrounding rural areas makes it an ideal focal point for improved public transport, DRT services, shared mobility, and micro-mobility trips, in addition to a hub for community uses and events.
	**Bus Services**	Improve bus services, including bus infrastructure, routes and bus priority measures.	• Bus priority measures could be considered and provided along the A37 corridor. • There is a need for Whitchurch Village to have good access to the facilities and services in Keynsham, such as Broadlands Academy. Support the community in encouraging the West of England Mayor to deliver a new bus service between Keynsham and Whitchurch Village.

Intervention		Description	How it could be achieved
	**Demand Responsive Transport**	DRT can complement fixed route public transport on the main corridors by providing connections into these existing services, thereby improving mobility and social inclusivity.	• WESTLink South zone runs through the middle of Whitchurch Village. DRT could be used to connect communities with a Mobility Hub within Whitchurch Village, where passengers can gain access to a connecting bus or local rail station to complete their journey.
	**Public Transport Decarbonisation**	Zero emission buses will help us achieve our net zero targets and cleaner air, encourage green growth and improve health and wellbeing.	• Work with bus operators and other key stakeholders to decarbonise the bus fleet in the Whitchurch Village area.
	**Car Clubs**	Car clubs allow members access to locally parked cars, therefore supporting lower car ownership.	• Introduce electric vehicle car clubs to provide households with an alternative to owning multiple cars.
	**ULEV Charging**	Providing electric vehicle charging points encourages individuals to use electric vehicles which will help local authorities achieve their net zero targets and cleaner air, encourage green growth and improve health and wellbeing.	• Introduce ULEV charging points, including at key local facilities such as Community Hubs.