

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**8 September 2020**

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**Statements and Questions from Andrew Nicolson – Cycling UK – Right to Ride  
Rep about Bradford on Avon Social Distancing Highways Scheme**

**Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation**

**To Cllr Bridget Wayman – Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste**

**Statement 1**

In the Bradford on Avon Neighbourhood Plan 2013-2026, which was Made October 2017 after a referendum with 94.68% voting 'yes', Objective 6 is "*to improve the pedestrian environment in the town, encouraging people to walk or cycle rather than use their cars thereby assisting in the improvement of the overall environment and air quality.*"

**Question 1:**

Will the Cabinet Member now cave in to local social media pressure to remove the one-way working traffic lights on the Town Bridge, or will she stand by this Wiltshire-led experimental project, letting Highways complete the works, install the monitoring & run the project long enough for user behaviours to adapt, leading on to careful evaluation and potentially a more permanent scheme?

**Response:**

The one-way system and traffic lights on the Town Bridge were introduced as a trial primarily to improve conditions for pedestrians and assist social distancing. Early in the trial it became clear that the temporary traffic signals on the Town Bridge were leading to excessive delays, traffic flows have increased with the schools returning. Consequently, the decision was taken to remove the signals.

The operation of the one-way system and other alterations to the road layouts will remain in place for the time being and will continue to be monitored.

**Question 2:**

Will Wiltshire Council also be open to trialling further adjustments to the Scheme, based on review and consultation with Bradford Town Council etc., within the overall

objectives of encouraging active travel and making room for social distancing in this deadly COVID-19 pandemic?

**Response:**

The Council has already made adjustments to the scheme by removing the temporary traffic signals. Further changes will be made as considered necessary.

The views of residents and the Town Council have been taken into account and will continue to be considered. However, Wiltshire Council is the local highway authority and has responsibilities under the Highway Act and the Traffic Management Act with regard to the safety and operation of the highway network.

**Statement 2**

Second, on **Cycling and the Scheme**. The Cabinet member may have read her copy of my 23 August email asking to be brought in on meetings about the Project as a stakeholder, the Cycling UK representative for West Wiltshire.

The Government guidance on "**Network management in response to COVID-19**" says Councils "*should take measures to reallocate road space to people walking and cycling*". With Experimental TROs, authorities need to "*carry out ongoing consultation once the measure is built*" and "*Authorities should seek input from stakeholders during the design phase.*" There have been at least two closed meetings in the last two weeks alone between Wiltshire and the Town Council. As it is now, this scheme puts walkers first, drivers second and people while cycling third, with worse conditions than before, even with a new cycle diversion. It has been claimed that there is no room to do anything for people cycling, so riders must get off and push among the pedestrians. This is unenforceable, unsafe, unfair and potentially illegal.

**Question 3:**

Is Wiltshire Council going to **disregard or accept** this Government guidance on consultation and input from stakeholders like myself, who are trying to support and further improve the Scheme, by keeping us informed and bringing us into the loop to offer our feedback and input?

**Response:**

The Council has been following the latest Government advice regarding the implementation of road space reallocation and schemes to encourage active travel and will continue to do so. The one-way system in Bradford on Avon was introduced using an experimental scheme. This will enable changes to be made to the scheme and its operation to be monitored.

It is currently proposed to operate of the scheme for at least six months, during which period its operation and safety will continue to be monitored.

The Traffic Regulation Order will be the subject of formal consultations if it is considered that the scheme should remain, and it is anticipated that this would take place within eighteen months as legally required with a scheme of this type.

**Question 4:**

If it can be shown that cycle facilities can in fact be provided by altering the Scheme safely, within government guidance and subject to the needs of drivers and people walking, will the Council review such proposals, with a presumption in favour of implementing them as soon as possible during the trialling of the Scheme?"

**Response:**

There is flexibility to make changes to the existing scheme, and we are always interested in ideas to improve the scheme. However, with limited road space and competing demands it may not be possible to meet the requirements of all the road users.