

MINUTES

Meeting: Bradford on Avon Area Board

Place: St Margaret's Hall, Bradford on Avon

Date: 1 November 2023

Start Time: 7.00 pm

Finish Time: 9.00 pm

Please direct any enquiries on these minutes to:

Cameron Osborn,(Tel): 012225 7182214 or (e-mail) cameron.osborn@wiltshire.gov.uk

Papers available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

In Attendance:

Wiltshire Councillors

Cllr Johnny Kidney (Chairman), Cllr Trevor Carbin and Cllr Tim Trimble (Vice-Chair)

Wiltshire Council Officers

Liam Cripps – Strategic Engagement & Partnership Manager

Caroline LeQuesne – Area Board Delivery Officer

Cameron Osborn – Democratic Services Officer

Highways Matters Team

Cllr Caroline Thomas – Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene and Flooding

Samantha Howell – Director of Highways and Transport

Dave Thomas – Head of Highways Asset Management & Commissioning

Total in attendance: c. 120

<u>Minute No..</u>	<u>Summary of Issues Discussed and Decision</u>
<u>Highways Matters</u>	
43	<p><u>Chairman's Welcome and Updates</u></p> <p>The Chairman noted the ongoing consultation on the Local Plan Review, and drew attention to the written briefing notes in the agenda pack from Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS) and the Wiltshire Police road safety team.</p> <p>The Chairman then handed over to the Highways Matters panel to introduce the Area Board-hosted event.</p>
44	<p><u>Highways and Transport Matters</u></p> <p>The panel for the Highways Matters event comprised the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Caroline Thomas - Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene and Flooding • Samantha Howell – Director of Highways and Transport • Dave Thomas - Head of Highways Asset Management & Commissioning • Councillor Tim Trimble – Lead Representative of Bradford-on-Avon Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG). <p>Councillor Caroline Thomas introduced the event, providing context about the importance of highway infrastructure in Wiltshire and of balancing their positive and negative consequences.</p> <p>The panel gave an overview of how highways in Wiltshire were funded and what investments the Council planned on making in the future, such as projects to tackle fly-tipping, speeding and flooding. The panel also described the Local Transport Plan and its role as a strategy for growth, using transport as an enabler for development.</p> <p>Turning their attention specifically to Bradford-on-Avon, the panel acknowledged that the town had several legacy highways issues that continued to cause significant problems. The panel noted feedback from the public concerning highway maintenance, traffic modelling, recent road closures, road safety, air quality, river crossings, the parish steward scheme and flood prevention and provided updates on them, including findings from the traffic modelling and upcoming documents on air quality.</p> <p>Dave Thomas delivered a presentation on highway maintenance, touching on</p>

	<p>potholes, resurfacing, bridges, road signs, markings and street lights. The panel also mentioned the important partnership between Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Police regarding road safety and speeding.</p> <p>Councillor Tim Trimble noted in feedback to surveys, almost all of the Bradford-on-Avon residents surveyed on transport considered traffic to be a problem in the town. He also explained that priorities for residents included reducing traffic volume, improving pedestrian and cyclist safety, air quality and sustainability. Feedback suggested that residents found the one-way system through the centre of town employed during the Covid-19 pandemic to be generally less problematic than the current system. He also commented on road safety findings on crashmap.co.uk, which highlighted that the majority of incidents occurred either side of the town bridge. He touched on the aspiration of a safer pedestrian river crossing to promote sustainable travel, but suggested that there was a need to prove a positive benefit-to-cost ratio. Finally, he remarked that nitrogen dioxide levels in the town were decreasing but still high, with concentrated pollutants found in canyon-like areas like Mason's Lane.</p>
45	<p><u>Question and Answer Session</u></p> <p>The panel then opened the meeting up to the floor and invited questions and comments from those present. They also explained that they would provide written responses to the questions submitted in advance of the meeting in a separate document attached to the minutes. A summary of the questions and responses from the meeting is provided below.</p> <p>Q1: The volume of traffic and the efficient flow of traffic are separate issues and should be treated as such. The panel responded that they aspired to make highway transport quicker and easier while also reducing its prevalence on the roads.</p> <p>Q2: Is there a possibility of demand-responsive transport in Wingfield, where there is inadequate public transport? The panel responded that they were committed to improving existing bus services and adding new ones but added that the traditional bus model was not necessarily a universally sustainable one and so demand-responsive transport in certain areas was a definite possibility being considered in the public transport strategy review.</p> <p>Q3: There is no evidence of gulley-clearing in certain areas of Bradford-on-Avon, which is a risk for an area so prone to flooding. The panel responded that gulley-clearing was definitely occurring across the county but encouraged members of the public to report areas of concern either online or over the phone.</p> <p>Q4: Has the Council considered a toll on the Town Bridge in Bradford-on-Avon for non-residents to reduce the volume of traffic? The panel responded that they considered other methods of reducing traffic</p>

volume more viable and added that toll roads were a significant legislative challenge.

Q5: Why has there been no progress made towards a new pedestrian bridge crossing despite the obvious safety concerns on the Town Bridge?

The panel responded that the town needed to make a sound business case for a new bridge after the failure to produce one in 2017. They explained that there was no timescale in place yet, and that the funding would almost certainly need to come from the Department for Transport rather than Wiltshire Council.

Q6: Why are micro-particulates not being considered in the air quality research, despite being a more significant contributor to long-term health issues than nitrogen dioxide?

The panel responded that Bradford-on-Avon was an Air Quality Management Area for micro-particulates until 2021, and that micro-particulates are gradually reducing, in large part due to higher-quality diesel engines, tires and road surface materials. The panel acknowledged that micro-particulates were an issue but suggested that advancements in technology would contribute to an improvement in the situation over time in the absence of a better short-term solution.

Q7: There are a sparsity of buses going through Bradford-on-Avon and an absence of off-road parking on the north side of town, which is in turn affecting the local economy.

The panel responded that there had been recent successes in securing grants pertaining to public transport and added that a key element of the local transport plan was the car parking strategy, which may well address problems in north Bradford-on-Avon in that respect.

Q8: The air quality in Bradford-on-Avon is unacceptable and contributing to health problems amongst its residents. Why does the town not have a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) like Bath?

The panel responded that in the absence of an air quality expert on the panel, they would be better served taking the question away with them and later providing a better-informed response and recognised that it was an important and complex issue.

Q9: Are Wiltshire Council predisposed towards adopting more 20mph speed limits?

The panel responded that there was clear intent but drew a distinction between speed limits and speed zones. They added that they were conscious of Department for Transport protocol and that such changes would go through the LHFIG process, and that many roads locally qualified, with several negotiations either imminent or ongoing. The Chairman remarked that in his experience, Wiltshire Council were relatively poor at setting speed limits compared to other local authorities.

Q10: With the traffic on Frome Road often too heavy to open road-facing

windows, the 20mph speed limit routinely ignored by motorists, and Wiltshire Council determining that a speed camera was not possible, how will the situation improve?

The panel responded that speeding was first and foremost a police matter rather than a Wiltshire Council one and advised reporting it to Wiltshire Police accordingly. They also advised that the town can consider a Speed Indicator Device (SID), which can deter speeding and inform prospective police enforcement. The panel remarked that the Community Speed Watch team could also intervene. The meeting heard that the team would begin work again shortly, following the re-opening of the road through Staverton.

Q11: It appears to be virtually impossible to retro-fit the existing highway system in Bradford-on-Avon, so is it not best to build a bypass around the town?

The panel responded that national government was typically steering away from building new roads and so a bypass was highly unlikely for the foreseeable future.

Q12: The data collected from the social-distancing traffic system in Bradford-on-Avon would have little to no bearing on a prospective one-way system today due to the exceptional circumstances in which the data was collected.

The panel responded that this was true to an extent and that more extensive traffic modelling and data collection would be required before any decision was made.

Q13: How will the transport strategy aim to reduce the volume of traffic in Bradford-on-Avon?

The panel responded that reducing traffic volume is very difficult, and that the focus would instead be on improving the flow of traffic, making traffic less intimidating to pedestrians, encouraging active travel modes and public transport, providing adequate parking opportunities, and addressing issues with HGVs and freight.

Q14: With the reopening of St. Margaret's Street fast approaching, there remain significant safety concerns and the opportunity for preventative measures should be taken before the road reopens.

The panel responded that this was a recurring concern and that they would revisit the issue imminently with proposals for engagement and consultation.

Q15: There has been a spate of poor-quality repairs conducted by highways contractors that are especially dangerous for cyclists.

The panel responded that contractors and utility companies were legally obligated to reinstate a road to its previous standard, with enforcement apparatus in place if they fail to do so. The panel encouraged people to report such instances to Wiltshire Council.

Q16: The weight limit on the Town Bridge in Bradford-on-Avon is currently

	<p>18 tonnes but there is a proposal to reduce it to 7.5 tonnes. The panel responded that the weight limit on the bridge is an environmental rather than a structural limit but added that they were unsure about the provenance of the 18-tonne limit and would follow up on it.</p> <p>Q17: The impact of potholes on cyclists was an important one to consider, and if Wiltshire Council operatives are only looking out for potholes travelling by car, they would get a very different perspective doing the same thing by bicycle. The panel responded that while sending operatives out on bicycles was likely not a viable option, they took the point and would carry it forward in considerations.</p> <p>Q18: The SID on Winsley Road resulted in noticeable improvements for the few weeks it was working but was removed months ago. Why has it not been reinstated? The panel responded that the SID developed a fault soon after installation and was removed to be repaired. The panel added that it had now been delivered back to the Town Council and was due to reinstatement imminently.</p>
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Area Board Business

46	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sarah Gibson.</p>									
47	<p><u>Minutes</u></p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2023.</p>									
48	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>									
49	<p><u>Area Board Funding</u></p> <p>Older & Vulnerable Grants:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;">Ref/Link</th> <th style="width: 40%;">Grant Details</th> <th style="width: 40%;">Amount Requested</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="background-color: #e0f2e0;">ABG1376</td> <td>The HUB at BA15 - Continuing Support for Older And Vulnerable Residents</td> <td style="background-color: #e0f2e0;">£1,250.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #e0f2e0;">ABG1381</td> <td>Wiltshire Music Centre - Strictly Seated Dance Class</td> <td style="background-color: #e0f2e0;">£500.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ref/Link	Grant Details	Amount Requested	ABG1376	The HUB at BA15 - Continuing Support for Older And Vulnerable Residents	£1,250.00	ABG1381	Wiltshire Music Centre - Strictly Seated Dance Class	£500.00
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Young People Grants:

Ref/Link	Grant Details	Amount Requested
ABG1374	Mighty Girls CIC - Mighty Girls Projects 2024	£4,500.00
ABG1379	Bradford on Avon Town Council - youth club service expansion	£4,450.00

The HUB at BA15 requested £1,250 towards continuing their support for older and vulnerable residents. The Chairman moved to grant the funding in full and was seconded by Councillor Trevor Carbin.

Resolved:

To grant The Hub at BA15 £1,250.00 towards continuing their support for older and vulnerable residents.

Wiltshire Music Centre requested £500 towards their Strictly Seated dance class geared towards those with mobility problems. The Chairman moved to grant the funding in full and was seconded by Councillor Trimball.

Resolved:

To grant Wiltshire Music Centre £500.00 towards Strictly Seated dance classes.

Mighty Girls CIC requested £4,500 towards their programme of Mighty Girls projects for 2024.

Bradford-on-Avon Town Council requested £4,450.00 towards an expansion of their youth club service.

The Committee noted that as there was not enough youth funding available to fully grant both requests, as to do so would result in a £947 overspend, so they agreed to instead award a reduced amount to both applicants.

The Chairman moved to grant £4,000 to Mighty Girls CIC and was seconded by Councillor Carbin.

Resolved:

To grant Mighty Girls CIC £4,000 towards their programme of projects for 2024.

Resolved:

To grant Bradford-on-Avon Town Council £4,000 towards their youth club service expansion.

50	<u>Urgent items</u> There were no urgent items.
51	<u>Future Meeting Dates</u> The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 21 February 2024, with the Chairman stating that it would have a focus on environmental issues.