

Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Bridgwater

Date: Monday, 22 January 2024

Time: 7.00 pm - 8.07 pm

Location: Bridgwater Cricket Club - The Club House

Chaired by: Town Cllr Tim Mander

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Cllr Hilary Bruce	Somerset Council
Cllr Kathy Pearce	Somerset Council & Bridgwater Town Council
Cllr Leigh Redman	Somerset Council & Bridgwater Town Council
Cllr Brian Smedley	Somerset Council & Bridgwater Town Council
Cllr Tim Mander (Vice-Chair)	Bridgwater Town Council

Officer attendance:

Name:	Representing
Emmaline Kay	LCN Team
Tom Parkinson	IT

Helen Phillips	Somerset Council
Steve Taylor	Democratic Services
Emily Window	LCN Team

Other attendees:

Name:	Representing
Jess Barham	Town Wardens
Colin Gummer	Bridgwater Area Cycling Campaign
Bryan Kennedy	Bridgwater Without Parish Council
Kate Lang	Bridgwater Without Parish Council (Clerk)
Stephen Leahy	Bridgwater Chamber of Commerce
Iwonia Medrala	Village Agents
Gary Perrett	Bridgwater Area Cycling Campaign
Jacqui Pierce	Hamp Community Association
Marie Trubic	Westfield United Reform Church
Rev. Dean Whitaker	Holy Trinity Church

Virtual attendees:

Name:	Representing
Cllr Andy Dingwall	Somerset Council
Kate Hellard	LCN Team
Luke Jackson	SASP & Connect Somerset for Bridgwater
Kerry Jones	Transport Development
Ally Laing	Somerset Council

Tracey Mock

On Your Bike

Keira Scott

Bridgwater & Taunton College

Cllr Gill Slocombe

Somerset Council & Bridgwater Town
Council

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Apologies:

Name:	Representing
Cllr Diogo Rodrigues	Somerset Council
Cllr Lance Duddridge	Somerset Council

Summary of discussion:

Agenda Summary of key points of discussion and outcome: Action by: item:

Item 27: Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Diogo Rodrigues and Lance Duddridge.

Item 28: Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

Item 29: Notes from the Previous Meeting

The notes of the previous meeting held on 20 November 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

Item 30: Public Question Time

The only question raised was about the financial situation of

Somerset Council, which Kate Hellard briefly addressed and she referred to the upcoming budget decisions to be made by the council on the 20th February. She said that the city, town and parish councils had been updated regularly on the assets and services that were likely to be devolved. The latest proposals would be considered by both the Executive and Scrutiny and that more information could be found on the Council's website.

Item 31: **Presentation on Active Travel – Update from working group (Discussion points)**

It was explained that the group had met for the first time on 9 January and at this meeting Gary Perrett of the Bridgwater Area Cycling Campaign had given a presentation on safe travel in and around Bridgwater which was then given to the LCN highlighting:

- Bridgwater Area Cycling Campaign's vision and drive
- The infrastructure issues
 - The need for inner and outer routes around Bridgwater
 - The pinch points of Bath Road and Westonzoyland Road bridges
- Bridgwater LCNs priorities:
 - Smarter Towns
 - Reducing congestion
 - Introducing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
 - Creating 20 mph zones and pedestrianized areas
 - Opening up green spaces to active travel
 - Street design
 - Public Safety & Schools
 - Embed active travel into schools
 - Safe routes (traffic free?) across town
 - Street and path lighting
 - Paths regularly maintained
 - Local Businesses
 - Working with employers
 - Supporting local businesses and the High Street
 - Improving health and wellbeing
 - Leisure and tourism
 - Active Travel Hub

- Community hubs for all (cyclists, pedestrians, wheelchair users etc.)
- Bike hire, share scheme, servicing and sales
- Secure undercover parking hub
- Café and a restful location
- Raising Awareness
 - Asking for people's thoughts
 - At local events and markets
 - Running regular led and social rides
 - Creating good awareness communications
- Bridgwater Transport Forum

Kerry Jones, of Transport Development for Somerset Council, gave an outline of the Mobility Hub plans for Taunton. She explained that mobility hubs were recognised places that connected different transport modes, supplemented and enhanced facilities and information to attract and benefit the traveller. As well as being an active travel hub it could be organised to facilitate easy access between different modes of transport e.g. cycles, scooters, car clubs as well as access to public transport.

In Taunton they were currently going through the design process for the repurposing of the old bus station on Tower Street, near Castle Street. They were hoping to develop it into a mobility hub, and also establishing it as more of a community centre where there will be access to bike stands, top-up water facilities, a café and all the components that might appear at an active travel hub, but with a bit more to it. There would also be access to Wi-Fi, signposting for information. If anyone was interested in looking at more information she recommended www.como.org.uk as CoMoUK, were one of the leaders in mobility hubs.

The LCN then split into groups to consider the following questions:

1. What are the key priorities for active travel in Bridgwater
2. How do we know this?
3. What ideas/measures can be put in place to improve this?

Each group then fed back one and all the following points were

captured:

Key Priorities for active travel in Bridgwater:

- Safe and secure routes
- Joining up existing cycle routes – using off-road routes
- Secure bike parking – CCTV
- Improved cycle routes
- More money!
- Infrastructure of routes
- Links to the Town and businesses
- Pinch points
- Safety
- Street lighting
- Routes could be used by mobility scooters/trikes
- Pathways kept in good condition and maintained
- Will routes be litter picked
- Will people feel safe if routes not looked after and it looks a rough area?
- Provision of bins
- Elderly people have great difficulty in accessing transport – no longer able to drive
- Public transport severely lacking. What there is, is infrequent and drivers are often unhelpful
- Active travel improves mental and physical health; especially important as people get older
- Minibuses could help
- Volunteer drivers are important
- Mobility from outlying villages is also important for young people (e.g school/college/ young working age)
- Beat the street
- Safety & security of bikes and their accessories
- The pinch points of Bath Road and Westonzoyland Road

How we know this:

- People tell us
- Forums
- Bridgwater Transport Forum
- Active Travel Forum
- Knowledge of area/experience
- Perception – initial sight of location

What ideas/measures could be put in place to improve this:

- Incentivise companies to issue green tokens/vouchers for green travel to work
- Local businesses to provide sponsorship
- Where you can't change the infrastructure in the town centre change how roads are used – make fast ways into slow ways
- Not accepting lights out in developments still run by developers
- Awareness of safe/easy cycle routes – celebrate what we have
- Sponsorship of routes
- Being able to get a prosecution for bike thefts – if covered by CCTV. We need to see less theft. Street Pastors have radios
- Active Travel Hub – see what worked/didn't in Taunton
- SASP work scheme
- Changing attitudes and training
- Safe storage of bikes in places that lead into safe walking routes
- The Bowerings' building at the Docks – ideal cycle/mobility hub

Item 32: **Updates from mapping workshop Youth Provisions**

The Vice-Chair explained that the Working Group had met on the 15 January 2024 and had heard from PC Charmaine Dyne about the Youth Violence Programme and the Safe Space initiative and also, from Jessica Hanson on the Barnardos and Co-Op partnership that aimed to provide a youth-led service providing access to food, activities and services.

The Working Group was still putting together 'map' of youth provision in Bridgwater. This 'live' map would be easily accessible to the community, particularly young people, and would be regularly updated. He encouraged everyone to keep the Group updated with any youth provisions that they may be aware of, or actively working with.

Item 33: **Actions**

It was confirmed that the actions would be collated and the priorities around active travel fed back to the Working Group and any youth provisions that they were not aware of would be added to the 'live' map.

Item 34: **Dates and high priority issues**

The date of the next meeting was stated as 20th March 2024.

UPDATE

The date of the next meeting has now been CONFIRMED as Monday 11th March 2024 – Venue To Be Confirmed.

The AGM has now been scheduled for Wednesday 5th June 2024.

Contact officer for meeting: LCN Team lcn@somerset.gov.uk