



CARA Bulletin

4 October 2020

Liveable Neighbourhoods Consultation - Have your say!

Dear members, in our recent "CARA Autumn News" we indicated that B&NES Council had commenced a process of consultation with all residents in respect of its "Liveable Neighbourhoods (LN) Strategy".

The importance of this LN strategy to our city's future is paramount in the positive impact it could well have, if effectively implemented, on the overall lifestyle, environment and general well-being of our residents. As such, it justifies this additional CARA Bulletin dedicated to such a subject which could have potentially long-term influences upon how our city and local catchment areas function and potentially improve in terms of life-style quality in the future.

At this stage, as indicated by Council Leader Dine Romero, the ".....Liveable Neighbourhood Strategy is asking for people's views on the principles and policy....." and therefore is not about detailed implementation of any specific neighbourhood's proposals. However, these principles and the general policy are important in establishing the criteria against which specific local proposals from individual residents associations and other organisations will be judged.

We all have the opportunity, both as residents associations and as individuals, to comment upon and contribute to the current consultation process. It is important that we bring to your attention and further highlight the current opportunity: TO HAVE YOUR SAY!

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

Well, the Council has currently developed three related strategies which form the basis of its Liveable Neighbourhoods Policy. These are:

- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods Strategy (LTNs)
- Residents' Parking Scheme Strategy
- On-street Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy

LTNs:

A key element in its overall policy relates to the promotion by B&NES of LTNs. The Council's consultation document recognises the importance of the introduction of LTNs on the general environmental and well-being condition of its residents.

Last November CARA consulted with its members to determine whether there was a positive appetite for your Committee to examine the feasibility of introducing an LTN within our catchment area. Following a positive reaction your Committee, despite the restrictions imposed by the ongoing Covid-19 regulations in terms of direct contact with council officers, has continued to progress the examination of options of how an effective LTN might function within the CARA zone.

We previously defined to members an LTN as being:

"Groups of streets, bordered by main or distributor roads (the places where buses, lorries, non-local traffic should be) where 'through motor vehicle traffic is discouraged or removed. There are lots of ways you can create a low traffic neighbourhood but the main principle is that every resident can drive onto their street, get deliveries etc but it is harder to drive straight through from one main road to the next".

An integral part of the LTN suggestions we have been working on includes the most significant aspects of an effective LTN. These include: significant improvement in air quality, environmental improvements to the public realm, increase in more personally active modes of travel and movement and vitally important, a reduction in unnecessary through-traffic movements within a defined catchment zone. We have been awaiting as a Committee the publication of the Council's own "Liveable Neighbourhoods" consultation document prior to circulating to all members our own detailed thoughts on a possible LTN for our own CARA catchment area. These suggestions for your consideration and feedback we would look to commence consultation with all members over the next weeks.

However, in respect of the B&NES "Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy", the general principles with regard to the Council's LTN proposals your Committee would certainly endorse.

RESIDENTS' PARKING SCHEMES:

Complimentary to the LTN strategy, B&NES is proposing to review and update its Residents' Parking Schemes that should give priority to residents over non-residents. This potentially introduces the possibility of a significantly larger number of residents-only parking spaces than is currently the case.....something CARA's Committee has continued to push for on your behalf for some considerable time. We would, therefore, as a Committee be generally in favour of supporting the principles in respect of residents parking outlined in the consultation document.

In addition, equally important changes are potentially envisaged in terms of 'blue badge holders' parking facilities, details of which can all be found in the Council's public consultation documents.

ON-STREET ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING:

Here, B&NES is proposing plans to promote uptake of low emission/electric vehicles and has broad aims for providing on-street EV charging and in some cases perhaps utilising 'brown-field' locations. This, in fairness, is not something that CARA has actively considered but something that your Committee would be broadly supportive of assuming that designs do not contribute unduly to cumbersome 'street furniture' and are sympathetic to the aesthetics of a heritage area.

The importance of the Council's "Liveable Neighbourhoods" consultation process cannot be over-emphasised! So your Committee will be responding to, we hope, fairly support the general aims and principles of the policy detailed in the consultation document. We also would urge all individual members to also "HAVE YOUR SAY!" and contribute to the debate by filling in the appropriate questionnaire.....it is important!

FOR ACCESS TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS ONLINE: www.bathnes.gov.uk/liveableneighbourhoods Recommendation: click on "Consultation summary brochure (20 pages)" for a more manageable summary of the Council's proposals.

Those without access to the Internet can call 'Council Connect' on 01225 394041 to request printed copies of the summary brochure and survey questionnaire.

PLEASE NOTE: The public consultation process expires on 14th October 2020.

My apologies, for returning to this subject a second time.....I only do so in the belief that this particular public consultation and our collective responses to it are important to each and everyone of us.

Best wishes,

Malcolm.

Chair – Circus Area Residents Association

Contact: malcolm.baldwin1@virgin.net. Tel : 07584 197157

CARA Committee 2020/21		Our email addresses are on our website www.carabath.com	
Malcolm Baldwin	Chairman/FoBRA	Sally Rothwell	Licensing/Public Realm
Richard Brown	Vice Chairman/Traffic	Stephen Taylor	Planning
George Feiger	Traffic	Ron Temperton	City Centre Action Group
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