



# CARA Bulletin

6 November 2020

The Circus Area Residents Association (CARA) represents the views of local residents and businesses.

## **A 'Low Traffic Neighbourhood' - Have your say!**

In our recent 'CARA News', we indicated that Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Council had commenced a process of consultation with all residents across B&NES in respect of its 'Liveable Neighbourhoods' proposals.

A key element of the Council's Liveable Neighbourhoods proposals relates to its strategy of introducing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) across Bath.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible for us to engage in a normal meeting format with our CARA members for some considerable time and the medium-term outlook, with regard to Covid-19 restrictions, looks no more promising. That being the case and with our Council moving ahead with key public consultations which could significantly impact on the character of our neighbourhood, we feel it essential to gain your views on all matters of potential importance to us as a community.

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 to our members consultation, your Committee has examined options of how an LTN might function effectively within our residential area.

The CARA Committee is now seeking feedback from its members and other residents to a more detailed LTN concept. This concept is summarized in the following pages. We welcome views from all residents so that we can have more detailed discussions with the Council on how an LTN can be implemented successfully.

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## **What is a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN)?**

A Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) may be defined as “*groups of residential 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 make a low traffic neighbourhood but the main principle is that every resident can drive onto their street, get deliveries etc but it is harder or impossible to drive straight through from one main road to the next*”.

Residential areas in our city, of which our CARA area is typical, are often used by excessive volumes of through-traffic, which creates noise, pollution and other hazards to health and well-being. LTNs aim to promote and prioritise walking, cycling and public realm improvements without disadvantaging people with mobility restrictions.

## **Why are we recommending an LTN in our catchment area?**

The city of Bath currently allows road traffic uncontrolled access throughout the CARA catchment area. The impact of this informal policy is evident through two main aspects:

- a network of 'rat runs', and
- uncontrolled penetration by 'non-residential' traffic facilitating destination parking.

Although Bath benefits from free-flowing traffic and visitors who stop in the city, the traffic levels seen in our largely residential area have brought unquantified 'costs' to local residents. This is evident in several areas, particularly in air pollution, noise pollution, the risk to road safety and the adverse impact on the tourist 'offer'.

Not every area is suitable for an LTN but our neighbourhood is certainly potentially suitable. An LTN should be around 1km square in area, taking no more than 15 minutes to walk across, otherwise people are more likely to drive. In determining the boundaries of an effective LTN, it is important to remember that areas that are too small or too linear (i.e. predominantly only a single road) could push traffic and parking onto other less appropriate roads and neighbourhoods.

The CARA catchment area with arterial road boundaries to the north (Julian Road), east (Lansdown Road) and south (George Street) and 'parkland' to the south-west lends itself perfectly in terms of topography to the introduction of a very credible and effective LTN.

Indeed, our CARA area with an LTN effectively implemented and subsequently monitored would include a number of the key characteristics of a successful LTN. Such characteristics could well include:

- Improved traffic management with what are termed "modal filters" such as attractive planters, bollards and selective no-entry signage.
- Carefully selected and designated one-way streets.
- Traffic calming restrictions.
- A dominance of residents' 'permit-only' parking spaces.
- Time limited but specific parking bays for business and commercial deliveries.
- Street improvements for residents, pedestrians and cyclists (with effective cycling controls).

The drawback admittedly is that, on occasions, residents or visitors may have to drive for slightly longer or in a more circuitous route to reach a main road but this is offset by very significant environmental, health and general well-being improvements.

### **What is our LTN concept?**

We believe that the problems caused by uncontrolled 'rat-run' traffic and non-residential 'destination parking' traffic would be solved by the introduction of an LTN.

The suggested LTN concept for our CARA catchment area is one of an inner 'cell' or zone, bounded at its margins by the arterial roads of George Street, Lansdown Road and Julian Road.

There are multiple options in structuring an LTN to remove 'rat run' traffic and generally improve our environment. However, at this stage and as a basis for discussion with the Council, we have structured an LTN concept as shown in the map on Page 6.

This LTN concept involves the following group of options:

- Gay Street (upper section) would be closed, in both directions, at the junction with George Street.
- A number of restrictions on the Julian Road entrances to the CARA catchment area, including:
  1. Crescent Lane would become 'no entry' and used only as an exit from the LTN area.
  2. Upper Church Street would become accessible only to traffic turning left from the Lansdown Road direction. There would be 'no right turn' signage to prevent traffic turning right into Upper Church Street.
  3. Gloucester Street would become 'no entry' and used only as an exit from the LTN area.
  4. Rivers Street would become accessible only to traffic turning left from the Lansdown Road direction. There would be 'no right turn' signage to prevent traffic turning right into Rivers Street. Rivers Street would be adapted into a one-way only traffic flow system from its western, Upper Church Street end to its junction with Russell Street.
  5. Rivers Street Mews would become one-way (in a northerly direction) from its junction with Circus Mews to its junction with Rivers Street. Additionally, planters or bollards located between the western end of Circus Mews and Catherine Place would be sited to further manage the directional flow of traffic and inhibit any continued rat-running at that location.

The main entry and exit point for all general traffic movements into the LTN zone would be via Bennett Street from the main Lansdown Road. However, access from Julian Road left into Upper Church Street (for access to Royal Crescent) and Rivers Street would remain.

As Bennett Street would be the main entry and exit point in the proposed LTN zone, we believe that the Council would need to improve the traffic flow along Bennett Street. Currently, the 'herringbone' parking on the south-side of Bennett Street creates a 'pinch point' for two-way traffic; a better model may be to introduce parallel parking.

It is viewed, perhaps as an additional enhancement to the introduction of an LTN catchment zone within the CARA area to include Alfred Street, albeit a traffic cul-de-sac, into the overall proposal.

Finally, it is viewed as essential as part of any traffic management dialogue with B&NES Council to reinforce the arguments for far greater residents' 'permit-only' parking spaces.....ideally, with the aim of creating a predominantly residents-only parking zone.

### **What are the probable advantages of an LTN?**

We believe that an LTN in the CARA catchment area (shown on the map) would have the following benefits for residents:

- Reduced traffic volumes. Lower traffic volumes and an improved streetscape will more appropriately present The Circus and neighbouring streets as world-class heritage assets truly reflective of a World Heritage Site.
- An improvement in air quality and a reduction in noise pollution. This would help in addressing environmental concerns.
- Greater opportunities for more 'active' modes of transport. This would fit with broader plans across Bath to encourage environmentally-friendly modes of mobility. Cycling and walking would increase as participants would feel safer.
- Opportunities for additional landscaping and 'greening' ('parklets').

### **What are the probable disadvantages of an LTN?**

We believe that an LTN would create some challenges:

- The financial cost of implementing LTN. As envisaged in our proposal, the financial capital cost would be minimal and would be largely limited to internal B&NES costs such as planning, legal and signage. At present, these are unquantified but we do not expect them to be material.
- Some traffic displacement onto neighbouring main roads. The removal of road traffic going through our neighbourhood would displace some traffic onto neighbouring main roads. However, evidence from other LTN schemes suggests that the creation of LTNs does lead to overall lower traffic volumes.
- Road closures would require some adjustment to driving routes. The LTN will necessitate certain road closures that residents will need to adjust to. However, over time, we believe that the benefits to residents from an LTN will more than compensate for these changes.

### **How long will the process take?**

This depends on the outcome of the Council consultation. We expect to hear the results of the consultation in December with the Council determining the way forward and timeframe at that time.

### **What are the next steps?**

We are encouraging all residents to have their say by commenting on the concept in this document. Assuming a favourable outcome of the current consultation, CARA will then take this concept to the Council to make its case for an LTN in our neighbourhood.

## How can I submit my opinion?

The CARA Committee welcomes any comments or suggestions that you, as a resident, may have.

If you would like to comment on the concept in this document, please e-mail Richard Brown of CARA on [mailbox@rbrown.co.uk](mailto:mailbox@rbrown.co.uk). Please respond by Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> November.

To explain the concept more fully, we have arranged two 'Zoom' conferences. If you would like to participate in one of these conferences, please e-mail your name/address to Richard Brown on [mailbox@rbrown.co.uk](mailto:mailbox@rbrown.co.uk) with your preference for one of the following dates.

- Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> November at 6.00 pm.
- Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November at 6.00 pm.

We shall respond with dial-in details in due course.

## Will B&NES Council be consulting further?

Yes. As any LTN would be implemented via a Traffic Regulation Order, the Council is legally required to put the final proposals to the public for formal consultation. Residents will, therefore, have further opportunity to provide comments/object.

CARA Committee 2020/21		Our email addresses are on our website <a href="http://www.carabath.com">www.carabath.com</a>	
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
Mike Richardson	Treasurer	Rosie Tunstall	Social Secretary

