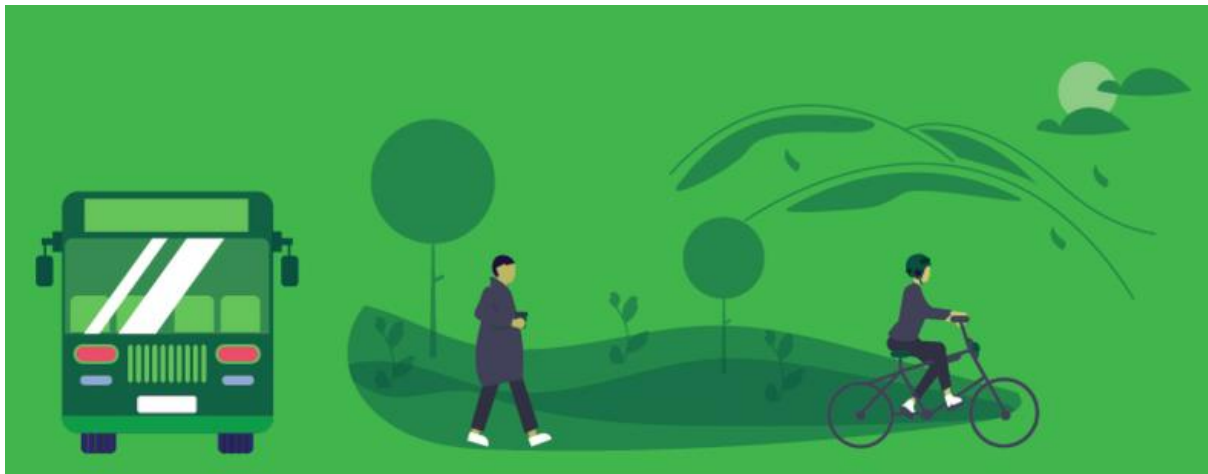


City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Programme Update

Updates for B&NES area fora



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CRSTS programme update

Context

In April 2022, the West of England Combined Authority was awarded £540m to improve the transport system in the West of England region, with the aim of providing more sustainable travel choices for residents, helping to achieve targets for net-zero Carbon whilst also working to level-up the region and deliver growth and productivity. This funding grant, for capital infrastructure, is known as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).

The Combined Authority has been working collaboratively with Bath & North East Somerset Council to develop proposals across the area, with a programme of investment focussed on a range of projects spanning public transport, walking, wheeling, and cycling.

Previous information sharing

In 2023, information was presented to various area fora meetings specifically to update on projects that were taking initial concept design proposals to public engagement. This included:

- **Somer Valley Links**, which seeks to provide improvements to public transport, walking, wheeling, and cycling, and better ways of transferring between different transport modes, focused on travel to, from, and within the Somer Valley area and along the key corridors of the A37, A362 (towards Bristol) and the A367, towards Bath. Information on the concept proposals and public engagement was presented by Combined Authority and B&NES officers at the Somer Valley, Chew Valley, Keynsham, and Bath area forum meetings in July 2023 during the public engagement period. A written update was taken to the Bathavon forum.
- **A4 Bath to Bristol strategic corridor**, which seeks to provide improvements to public transport reliability, journey times, and accessibility, and provide improvements in end-to-end walking, wheeling, and cycling improvements along the A4 corridor. Information on the concept proposals and public engagement was presented by a B&NES officer at the Keynsham and Bath area forum meetings in July 2023, ahead of the public engagement which took place between August and October 2023.
- **Bath city centre**, which proposed two sets of proposals for changes to transport in the city centre area, including: a better, safer and more direct route for cyclists through the city centre – connecting to existing cycle routes; and changes to St James's Parade and the Ambury Gyratory to speed up bus journeys. A brief trailing of the public engagement was given at the July 2023 Bath area forum meeting, with the public engagement subsequently taking place between November 2023 and January 2024.

All materials that formed part of these public engagement exercises are available on the 'Have Your Say West' website (<https://haveyoursaywest.co.uk/>) which is managed and maintained by the West of England Combined Authority.

Current project status and updates

Somer Valley Links

Following last summer's public engagement exercise, the Combined Authority has developed the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the scheme, which sets out the justification for the project proposals and rationale to continue with the further development, review, and refinement of proposals and their design.

The results of the public engagement exercise have been collated and are presented in the 'Engagement Report'. This contains factual information on the responses received. This report is publicly available and can be accessed via the 'Have Your Say West' website, or via the following link:

<https://haveyoursaywest.co.uk/documents/Somer%20Valley%20Links%20engagement%20report.pdf>

The OBC was considered by the West of England Combined Authority Committee meeting on 26 January 2024. A decision was taken at that Committee meeting to approve the OBC and to approve the draw-down of funding to develop the proposals in more detail, including production of the Full Business Case (FBC). It was also noted that, going forward, further development of the project would be led by B&NES, rather than the Combined Authority.

Presently, the commissioned consultants are involved in the update and refinement of proposals to consider feedback received at the public engagement exercise, and further comments received following technical review and more detailed information on highway widths being made available. The revised proposals will be considered at a further public consultation event later in 2024, anticipated to take place in the summer.

A4 Bath to Bristol

A public engagement on the initial concept proposals was held between 21 August and 10 October 2023; attendance at the public events was high, and there were a large number of responses to the questionnaire and additional feedback provided by individuals and communities. An 'Engagement Report' is currently being prepared by the appointed consultants on behalf of the Combined Authority; it is intended that this will be published on the 'Have Your Say West' website once complete.

Some initial work has been undertaken to develop some components of the proposals further, but the main refinement to incorporate feedback from the public engagement and to fix the designs to measured highway widths will take place should the project progress to the next phase.

Currently, it is planned that the Outline Business Case (OBC) is taken to West of England Combined Authority Committee, scheduled for 15 March 2024. Should approval be given at that meeting for the project to continue, further work to refine

designs and further develop the scheme proposals could then be undertaken, with a corresponding public consultation on the revised proposals being held later in 2024.

The project will continue to be led by the West of England Combined Authority.

Bath city centre

The initial public engagement for the Bath City Centre project completed on 02 January 2024. The responses to the public engagement are currently being reviewed and collated as part of the process to ensure all feedback can be appropriately captured and summarised in an 'Engagement Report'.

It should be noted that, to date, the project has been led by the West of England Combined Authority with support from B&NES. It is currently anticipated that the project will be handed over to B&NES for further development and delivery during March 2024.

Other CRSTS projects coming forward in 2024

In addition to the above projects, the following schemes that are also part of the CRSTS programme are planned to be developed and have public engagement in 2024. Further detail on these schemes will be made available later in the year.

- **Bath Sustainable Walking and Cycling Links**, which will consider improvements to several routes in Bath identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) to improve facilities for walking, wheeling, and cycling users;
- **Midsomer Norton and Westfield Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Links**, which will consider improvements to two routes between Midsomer Norton and Westfield, as identified in the LCWIP, improving facilities and accessibility for walking, wheeling, and cycling users.

Future updates

As plans for the projects progress, we will bring additional updates to the area fora at appropriate times. Dependent on the stage of the project, this may involve more detailed presentations, or further written updates.