

# Integrated Transport Strategy - Policy Review

## Introduction

Transport for Greater Bristol is developing an Integrated Transport Strategy for Bristol. Having undertaken its own work and adopted plans on Traffic Management, Parking, Buses, and Rapid Transport, this plan will be overarching, bringing this work together in a clear vision. As part of this work, Mobility Lab UK have undertaken a review of the policies and plans of relevance to the this plan, to better understand the policy context within which the plan sits. This document constitutes the policy review.

Whilst aligning with national and local policies on transport and planning are not an essential pre-requisite for this plan, doing so enables Transport for Greater Bristol to understand the strategic fit of the plan, and areas in which the plan can achieve policy goals, and make changes in others.

## Methodology

The purpose of this review was to identify the key policy priorities that are of relevance to Transport for Greater Bristol. Accordingly, the method chosen was a review of literature.

This focused on the relevant transport, land use, and placemaking policies adopted that drive decision making locally and more widely. At a neighbourhood level, this focused on plans adopted by parishes and neighbourhoods within the Greater Bristol area. For the local authorities, this focused on the policies and plans of the authorities of Bristol City Council, Bath and North East Somerset, and South Gloucestershire

Practically, this incorporated reviewing the following types of policy document:

- International Policy
- National Policy
- Local Transport Plans
- Local Development Plans
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Community and Place-based strategies
- Economic Development Strategies
- Local Healthcare Plans

In reviewing the documents, policies and plans relating to the following were noted and analysed, reflecting their relevance to the Integrated Transport Strategy:

- Strategic objectives
- Place-based policies
- Local neighbourhood priorities

## Main findings

For the Integrated Transport Strategy to have significant clout, it needs to generally align with the policy framework that drives decision making on transport and planning. Whilst transport is important, it is impacted by other decisions driven by other policies, some of which have a statutory basis. This is not to say that it should align precisely, or that it must agree with strict definitions of policies in other plans, but that it should work towards the general policy goals in other plans.

Much of the difference comes down to interpretation. This was most notable in the difference between strategic policies and local, place-based policies. For instance, many national plans considered sustainability and reducing climate impacts while investing in significant road projects. Whilst local plans mentioned the need to actively promote the use of sustainable travel and managing parking. The Integrated Transport Strategy's value is not in reflecting these plans in its own plan (that role has largely been undertaken by the Local Transport Plan). But to provide a new vision that brings together these different perspectives as best it can.

In reviewing the documents, a number of key conclusions can be identified, that should be considered when developing the Integrated Transport Strategy.



**The overall objective of tackling climate change.** This was one area on which there was common agreement across all strategy documents. Certainly in terms of being a policy priority.



**There are different interpretations of what integrated transport constitutes.** It is notable that in the Local Transport Plan, this integration focusses on capacity enhancements and partnership working with transport providers. At the neighbourhood planning level, this is about integrating land use and transport policy decisions. The concept at strategic level is about integrated strategic decision making at a national and sub-regional level.



**Parking is an overwhelmingly local issue.** To the point that even the Local Transport Plan does not pay as much attention to it compared to the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Strategy and Neighbourhood Plans.



**Making strategic decisions is about guiding decision making generally.** Whilst strategic plans reference specific projects, they focus on setting out the decision making framework for projects and priorities

Much of the devil is in the detail when it comes to policies. And schemes can often be justified on some policy wording in a document somewhere. To which we now turn our attention to.

## Strategic objectives

<b>Most relevant strategies:</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy One City Plan Network Rail Western Route Specification National Infrastructure Strategy
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The most significant strategic objectives to be considered, and ones that are directly referenced in the One City Plan, are the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. These 15 goals are a key driver of a significant amount of strategy work, and the UK is a signatory to these goals.

Improving transport and connectivity contributes to achieving nearly all of these goals in some way. Much of this contribution is indirect. For example, by improving access by non-car modes of transport to jobs and services, it helps to alleviate poverty. But for some goals, the impact of transport is more direct.

 <p><b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	 <p><b>9</b> INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	 <p><b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>	 <p><b>13</b> CLIMATE ACTION</p>
<p><i>By encouraging active travel through better walking and cycling infrastructure and 15-minute neighborhoods</i></p>	<p><i>By providing opportunities for innovative solution, and investing in infrastructure improvements</i></p>	<p><i>By investing in and encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport for personal travel and deliveries</i></p>	<p><i>By reducing the carbon emissions and air pollution issues associated with the internal combustion engine.</i></p>

Regardless of whether it is just these goals where the impact of transport is greatest – and there is a case for other goals where a direct impact could be demonstrated – the themes covered are common in other strategies:

- Climate action
- Social justice
- Sustainable development

In the UK, the Government's planned Decarbonisation Plan is likely to play a significant strategic role in reducing carbon emissions from transport. In its Setting the Challenge document, the Government states that the evidence indicates a rapid acceleration of policy delivery is needed just to achieve a target of zero carbon emissions from transport by 2050. This includes:



Significantly accelerating modal shift to the lowest carbon forms of transport (walking and cycling) and use of public transport, and away from single occupancy car use.



Decarbonising vehicles through the uptake of low emission solutions. This includes rolling out electric vehicle charging points, and continuing to encourage the electrification of fleet vehicles.



Decarbonising goods through a range of mechanisms. This includes adoption of battery technology for heavy goods, investing in developing this technology, and the use of cargo bicycles for local deliveries.



Place-based solutions where local transport and planning policies actively encourage more sustainable patterns of development that encourage local trips.



Technology and innovation, establishing the UK as a leader in the development and deployment of decarbonising transport technology.

Some of these themes and the Sustainable Development Goals are also developed in the Government's Future of Mobility: urban strategy. This document is probably the closest thing that the Department for Transport has to a city-based policy. It establishes several key principles by which future transport technologies should be delivered:

1. New modes of transport and new mobility services must be safe and secure by design.
2. The benefits of innovation in mobility must be available to all parts of the UK and all segments of society.
3. Walking, cycling and active travel must remain the best options for short urban journeys.
4. Mass transit must remain fundamental to an efficient transport system.
5. New mobility services must lead the transition to zero emissions.
6. Mobility innovation must help to reduce congestion through more efficient use of limited road space, for example through sharing rides, increasing occupancy or consolidating freight.
7. The marketplace for mobility must be open to stimulate innovation and give the best deal to consumers.
8. New mobility services must be designed to operate as part of an integrated transport system combining public, private and multiple modes for transport users.
9. Data from new mobility services must be shared where appropriate to improve choice and the operation of the transport system

These are particularly applicable to Bristol, because the West of England was chosen as one of 4 areas that has been designated a Future Transport Zone. With £24 million in funding secured, the aim is to create a Living Lab that will co-design, trial and demonstrate replicable transport innovations that can improve connectivity, enhancing regional productivity, widening access to employment and creating a globally significant demonstrator to drive trade and inward investment. This includes:

- Building Data and Mobility Hubs that will improve digital and physical connectivity;
- Develop a Mobility as a Service platform
- Trialling new mobility services, such as demand responsive transport routes

The One City Plan takes this idea further. It expands the role of digital connectivity and technology back into a more digitally inclusive agenda. There is a key intersection in the plan between investing in technology as part of everything that the city does, and developing the digital skills of everyone who lives in the city. But more specifically at transport and connectivity, the plans aims to:



Create mass transit systems that enable people to get around the city in a sustainable way. This is particularly focussing on Metrobus, and providing high frequency public transport corridors.



A new bus deal delivering the first priority bus corridor, and completing the city centre bus route network.



Make progress towards cleaner air in the fastest possible time by working with city partners on successfully planning for the launch of a Clean Air Zone in 2021, promoting behaviour change and increasing walking and cycling opportunities in the city centre.

In some instances, strategic documents do specify a number of improvements that are being planned in the Bristol area, which are a mixture of schemes that are committed, in development, and at feasibility stage. It is important that the Integrated Transport Strategy takes account of these planned schemes. A summary of some of the major schemes and initiatives identified in strategic documents are set out in Table 1.

*Table 1 – Strategic transport projects identified in strategic policy documents*

<b>Type of scheme</b>	<b>Project name</b>	<b>Potential impact</b>	<b>Current status</b>
Rail	Bristol East Junction Upgrade	Increased reliability and capacity of local rail services.	In delivery
Rail	Filton Bank Four Tracking	Increased capacity of local rail services.	Completed
Rail	Bristol Portway Station	New connections and improved accessibility of local rail services	In delivery
Road	M49 Avonmouth Junction	Improving access to Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise Area	Completed
Road	M4 Junctions 19 to 20 and M5 Junctions 16 to 17 All Lane Running	Improving journey time reliability and providing more road capacity at this key junction.	In planning

## Place-based policies

<b>Most relevant strategies:</b>	Local Transport Plan Local Plan Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan
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Place-based policies determine the sort of place that Bristol wishes to be. Not just in terms of amount of development and its location, but how land use policies and transport investment is prioritised across Bristol. The specific policies set out in the likes of the Local Transport Plan (LTP), Local Plan (LP), and Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) are many and varied, but all appear to coalesced around a number of themes worthy of consideration.

Bristol prides itself as a Smart City, and one of the pioneering cities in embracing digital technologies and its potential to improve public services. But across all policy documents the theme of digital inclusion came across strongly, so there is a fine balance between this and the role technology plays in making services better.

The One City Plan states that

*World class communication infrastructure (should) underpin all that we do.*

This is an important distinction for any strategy. This is not just about creating good websites, the best app, and laying superfast broadband everywhere, but identifying how digital technologies can improve getting around Bristol for everyone. The One City Plan talks of taking a digital-first approach to public services. Meanwhile, the Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy states, as its second principle, of

*The benefits of innovation in mobility must be available for all parts of the UK, and all segments of society.*

This is important for the Integrated Transport Strategy for two reasons. Firstly, new transport systems and networks are expected to be designed with technology as an integral part of the service and solution from the outset. This digital-first approach is no longer seen as an option, but is now expected. But by focusing benefits of deploying this technology on those without the means to easily access it, then the benefits can be felt by all.

This digital approach to the delivery of services is important for the Station Travel Plan to consider. Whilst there has been significant investment in new technologies on the line over the years - such as the deployment of Real Time Passenger Information Screens - there is an increasing expectation in policy circles of adopting a digital first approach. This is an approach whereby delivering services is shifted from traditional channels (e.g. bus timetables at stops) towards more digital channels (e.g. online journey planners and apps), but designed in a manner that is easily accessible for anyone.

## Focussing growth in Bristol

The Core Strategy for Bristol, part of the Local Development Framework, was adopted in 2011. As the current adopted Local Plan, it constitutes the official development plan for the city, and consequently guides development in the city.

The demand for travel is dictated by both the quantity and mix of development that takes place. Higher density mixed use developments generally favour the use of public transport, walking, cycling, and working from home. This is mainly due to the economics of high density development favouring the use of more space-efficient transport. consider buses, for instance. If there is a high density of people living within 400 metres of a bus stop (a generally accepted walking distance used for planning purposes), that means more people who can use buses. For working from home, this is mainly driven by the types of work undertaken by occupants, with higher density locations often being favoured by those who have the ability to work from home.

The document itself summarises the Bristol transport issue as so:

*Improving transport movement and accessibility to employment and community facilities throughout Bristol, with particular need to improve public transport linkages within and between communities in the Lockleaze area and in South Bristol within Hartcliffe, Hengrove, Knowle, and Whitchurch areas, and to ease congestion in the centre.*

This relates to the key elements of the spatial vision, which are:

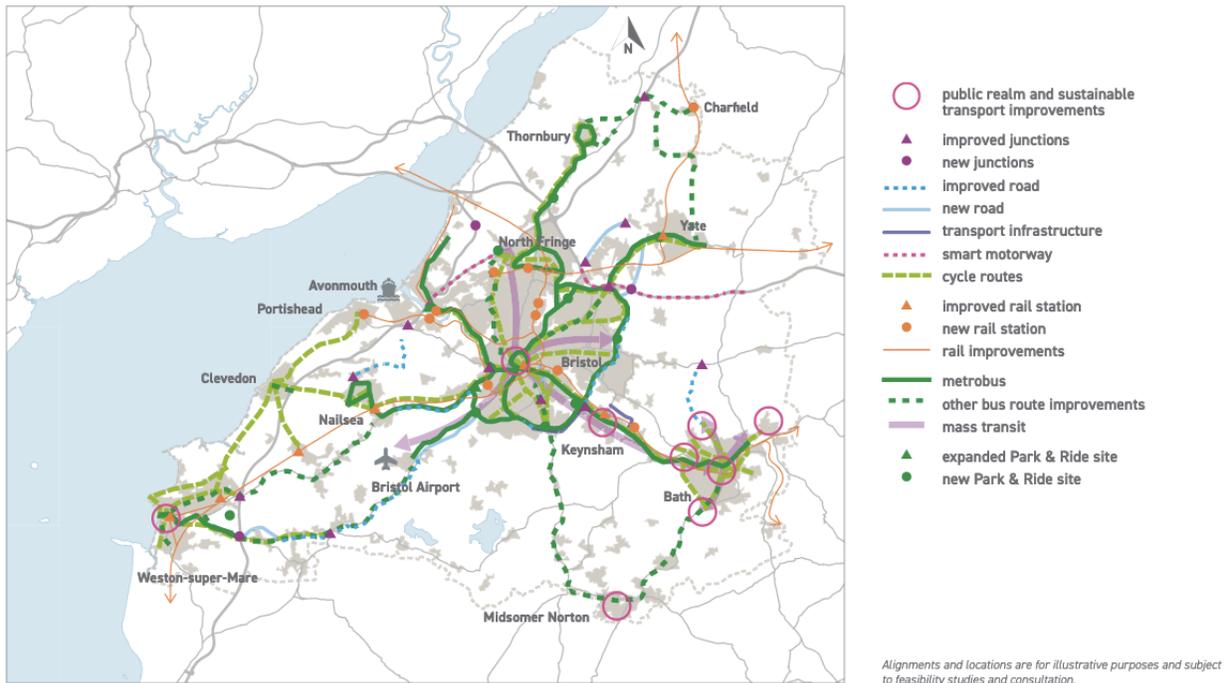
- **A transformed South Bristol**, focussing on a new mixed use development at Hengrove Park and a regeneration of Knowle West and Hengrove;
- **A growing city centre**, including expanding the city centre to take in St Phillips, building on the centre's competitive advantage as an office area, improving as a transport hub, and delivering a variety of mixed use developments;
- **Regenerate North and Inner East Bristol**, delivering community-based regeneration projects and a new super hospital
- **Balancing industrial renewal with environmental protection at Avonmouth**, including an expanded role for the port and safeguarding biodiversity.

This is mapped spatially in the below key diagram, taken from the Local Plan.

The Local Plan is currently being reviewed, and the policies and plans contained within are considered a material consideration when deciding planning applications. As of present, there is a call for new sites and a review being undertaken into the evidence required to support the Local Plan Review across the sub-region.



The delivery plan is where the priorities of the Local Transport Plan are the most acutely demonstrated. Under the transformational schemes identified in the plan are the planned expansion to the MetroWest schemes, two of which are already being delivered. This is supplemented by several early investment schemes constituting an upgrade to the M49 at Avonmouth, and a series of local area transport packages. Combined with other schemes at various stages of development, this constitutes a comprehensive package of works.



It is notable that the delivery plan identifies a current funding gap of around £6 billion to deliver the transformational change that the plan says is needed. The plan itself identifies options for overcoming the shortfall in required investment, including raising income and new funding sources as they become available.

What the Local Transport Plan demonstrates is the various intricacies that need to be considered when delivering measures to improve transport in the area. One of the plans strengths is that major improvements are set within a context of making local improvements to change connectivity in the area. If a step change in rapid transit capacity is delivered, then a step change in local connectivity is also needed.

The Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan delves into more detail specifically on the need for more investment in walking and cycling infrastructure. The plan calls for £411 million of investment in improving infrastructure over the coming years, the majority of which is currently unfunded. Schemes are prioritised for funding based upon:

- Deliverability
- Current status of the project

- Whether co-funding or co-delivery opportunities for the project are available
- Any criteria that is specified by the funder

The plan itself stresses that no one type of improvement to walking and cycling infrastructure will be the silver bullet that will create an attractive walking and cycling environment. But that a suite of measures are necessary based upon the local context. This can, and does, include matters such as reducing through traffic, priority cycle lanes, pop-up infrastructure (e.g. parklets), reducing speed limits, school streets, and blocking access to vehicles. The plan states:

*All walking and cycling infrastructure schemes will need to optimise usability and safety, while focussing on user needs and the opportunity to improve the built environment. All schemes will adhere to the latest best practice design standards, which will be set out in the Government's Local Transport Note and is expected to have a greater emphasis on segregation between modes.*

The plan then links back to wider challenges and priorities for transport in the sub-region, but most importantly translates those challenges into a context of how walking and cycling helps to tackle them, as well as create challenges on its own terms. This includes the following:

- A forecast increase in trips across the sub-region over the coming years, and how walking and cycling can increase capacity in the transport system overall by being one of the most space-efficient modes of transport;
- Poor air quality, and how walking and cycling as near-completely non-polluting modes of transport can reduce the impact of car travel by substituting car trips for walking and cycling
- The majority of trips are short distance, and that walking and cycling offer an excellent opportunity to substitute some short distance trips
- Public opinion actually favours increasing walking and cycling

Being an investment plan, the plan itself then details proposals for infrastructure schemes across the sub-region that can be delivered. What is notable is that there is no set priority for the type of scheme to be delivered in individual areas, but that the scheme types are based upon the local context and priorities identified in partnership with local communities. Many of the schemes themselves are also caveated with phrases such as 'if feasible' and 'if possible.' Reflecting the fact that they are indicative schemes at this stage.

## Neighbourhood priorities

Neighbourhood Plans are part of the statutory Local Development Plan (covered under planning policy). It is a formal mechanism by which local communities can influence the *planning* of the area in which they live and work. This includes, but is not limited to, locations of new developments and infrastructure improvements that the community

wishes to see delivered over the course of the Neighbourhood Plan. These are typically developed by the Town or Parish Council.

A neighbourhood plan must meet certain specified 'basic conditions'. These ensure plans contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, have regard to national policy and guidance and are in general conformity with adopted strategic local planning policies.

The process for developing a Neighbourhood Plan can be summarised in 3 stages, which are a mixture of statutory (S) and non-statutory steps:

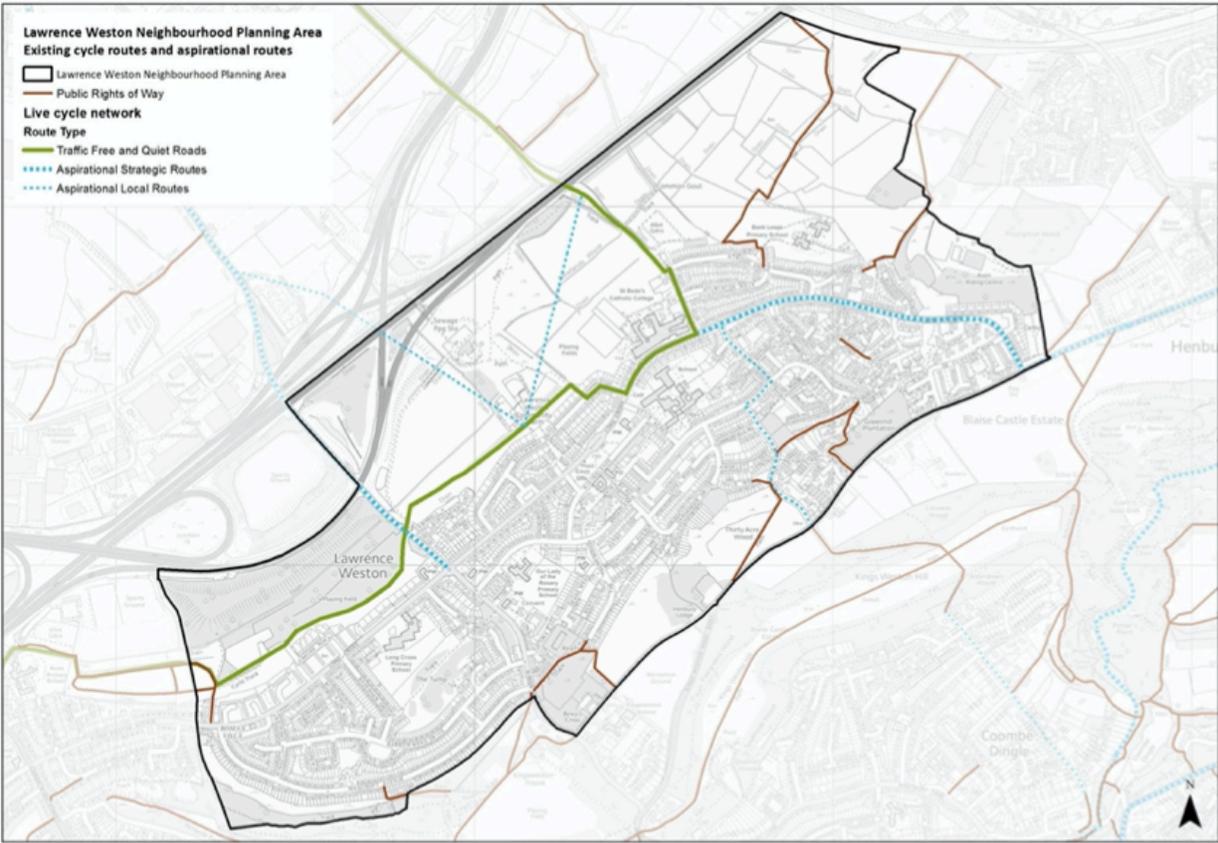
- **Stage 1 - Getting established**, including designation of the neighbourhood area (S), designation of a neighbourhood forum (where no Town or Parish Council exists), building an evidence base, and engagement;
- **Stage 2 - Preparing the plan**, including drafting the plan, meeting the conditions for the plan (S), and pre-submission consultation (S);
- **Stage 3 - Bringing the plan into force**, including submission (S), publicity (S), examination (S), and local referendum (S).

The Neighbourhood Plans across Bristol, and their current status, are summarised in Table 2. To date, there are only two neighbourhood plans formally adopted across Bristol.

*Table 2 - Neighbourhood Plans across Bristol, and their current stage of development*

<b>Stage 1 - Getting Established</b>	<b>Stage 2 - Preparing the Plan</b>	<b>Stage 3 - Bringing the plan into force</b>
Lockleaze Knowle West	Redcliffe	Hengrove and Whitchurch Park Lawrence Weston Old Market

The Lawrence Weston Plan focusses its transport policies specifically on encouraging more people to walk and cycle. The plan itself sets out the improvements to walking and cycling routes that it wishes to see, and under Policy MA1 sets out that development in the area should prioritise provision of walking and cycling facilities, especially to nearby industrial areas in Avonmouth, Filton, and Patchway.



In Hengrove and Whitchurch Park, the plan accepts that the levels of car ownership are higher compared to other areas of Bristol, due to its location in the suburbs. Meanwhile, there is a significant concern locally about the levels of increased traffic that are likely to result from major development proposals in Hengrove. In fact, much of the plan focusses on the continued build-out of the Hengrove Park site from a planning application on a former airport in the area, originally consented in 2005.

The main sustainable transport policy states that:

*Development on the Hengrove Park Site should include charging points for electric vehicles and parking for personal cycles and the Bristol shared use cycles, spread around the site. A car club for residents both new and existing should operate from points within the site and other car-sharing schemes should also be encouraged. Links to surrounding cycle routes and facilities should be strengthened and improved with any road crossings made safer with the provision of crossing facilities to suit predicted levels of motor vehicle traffic. Cycle and pedestrian links across the site should be direct, with a sealed surface and well lit, but not intrusively so*

This is an interesting choice of wording for a policy. It focuses significantly on car-based forms of getting around like electric vehicles and car clubs, with improvements to other modes suited to predicted levels of traffic. But it should be noted that other policies within the plan favour siting key services in locations that are accessible to all, and providing high quality open spaces for walking and cycling among other leisure pursuits.

The Neighbourhood Plan for Old Market aims to rebalance movement in the area, focussing on “people, street activities, and businesses instead of traffic.” In particular, the Old Market Quarter should be retained as a major transport hubs for the city. To enable this, the plan identifies policies relating to foot and cycle traffic, business parking, and residential parking. For walking and cycling, the policy states:

*Policy T1: Development proposals should be designed to reduce the environmental impact of vehicular traffic and encourage movement on foot and by bicycle.*

For business parking, the policy is more balanced with the need to retain parking spaces while encouraging sustainable travel:

*Policy T2: Development proposals for businesses are expected not to reduce existing on-street parking and to provide cycle parking stands in accordance with BCC standards as a minimum.*

Whilst residential parking does set minimum standards for parking provision, they are relatively low in comparison to national practice:

*Policy T3: Residential development proposals on sites more than 100 metres from Old Market Street or West Street will be expected to provide on-site car parking spaces at a minimum ratio of 1 car space for every 2 dwellings. All residential development proposals will be expected to provide cycle parking in accordance with BCC standards as a minimum.*

In Redcliffe, a draft plan was produced in 2016, though the plan has yet to be formally adopted by the Council or the Neighbourhood Forum. This draft plan does contain a mix of policies relating to sustainable transport:

*Policy M1: Sustainable Transport. Development as appropriate to its scale and location should include proposals that enhance the attractiveness of walking, cycling and public transport. Measures to reduce the impact and where possible volume of traffic through the Redcliffe neighbourhood will be expected.*

Reducing the impacts of traffic on local streets:

*Policy M2: Secondary Streets. Proposals to protect and mitigate against the impact of traffic on streets with predominantly residential or community or food and beverage uses, will be permitted. Such proposals may include:*

- a) traffic calming and gateway treatments to deter through traffic;*
- b) shared space treatments to create ‘home zones’;*
- c) temporary use of streets as social space, for example play streets;*
- d) protected public realm areas that encourage social exchange and congregation.*

Improving accessibility for everyone:

*Policy M3: Accessibility for all. Proposals that improve the accessibility of The Plan Area for all sectors of society including the elderly and disabled will be permitted.*

And finally appropriate levels and design of car parking:

*Policy M4: Car Parking. Proposals should provide a sufficient level of car parking appropriate to their scale as set out in BCAP29, and should also meet the following criteria:*

- a) Semi-basement, undercroft or decked parking should not be visible from the street.*
- b) On-street parking will be supported where it contributes to the pedestrian safety and vitality of a street and does not disrupt the continuity and enclosure of street frontage.*
- c) Car parking formats which could be converted readily to other uses, and used for temporary purposes including special events, will be permitted.*

The importance of these plans are how they translate more strategic objectives into local policy, that is delivered practically in their respective neighbourhoods. Among all of the neighbourhood plans, traffic and transport were consistently raised as issues, but the approach to tackling the issues varied significantly dependant upon the location of the area relative to the rest of the city. In a general sense, the more centrally located a neighbourhood, the greater mention is made of walking, cycling, and public transport.

A notable gap in local plans is accepting the need for strategic movement, with the exception of Redcliffe which mentions the need for some streets to provide for through traffic. The reason for this lack of consideration may be the focus of these plans on local issues, and serving the needs of residents, as opposed to ignorance of the need for strategic movement. Additionally, whilst the value of public transport was often noted, none of the neighbourhood plans contain any details of plans for improving public transport.