

COUNCIL: 22 OCTOBER 2020

STRATEGIC PLANNING & TRANSPORT STATEMENT

Castle Street Update

The Council recognises that the closure of Castle Street has divided opinions, with strong arguments being made in favour and against the changes that have been implemented in recent months. Alongside a detailed modelling exercise on future traffic flows, we propose to undertake a comprehensive consultation exercise, involving city centre businesses, local residents, and citizens across Cardiff, to help determine the final plan for the street.

The Council is considering re-opening Castle Street to buses, taxis and emergency vehicles as a temporary measure while public consultation is undertaken on the future of the thoroughfare. The proposed re-opening – which may be ready by mid-November – will help buses and taxis cross east to west and west to east and give a boost to public transport. This temporary design will seek to ensure that the cross-city pop-up cycleway, which will run from Leckwith Road up Newport Road to the junction with Broadway, will be retained throughout the public consultation.

The temporary measure under consideration may include the pavement alongside the shops and bars opposite the castle being extended into the road to provide a wider walkway for people to socially distance. It could also create an opportunity for hospitality businesses to have more space outside their premises to trade. It is anticipated that the proposed scheme would bed-in before the Christmas season begins.

The Council is keeping a close eye on congestion and air quality levels around the city. Any future plans will involve detailed modelling of impacts on surrounding areas and mitigations that may be required.

City-wide Recovery – District Centres and ‘Pop-Up’ Cycleways

A public consultation is being held on the Phase 2 proposals for Wellfield Road, which include the introduction of a one-way system on Wellfield Road and ‘lower’ Pen-y-Lan Road, together with a two-way segregated cycle lane and footway widening on Wellfield Road. Revised parking arrangements are also being put forward which will reinstate some parking on Wellfield Road itself as well as improving provision in the surrounding streets. The proposals have been developed following a review of the pilot scheme, together with the comments received from members, residents and local businesses.

The cross-city pop-up cycleway is currently under construction. It will be installed along Leckwith Road, onto Wellington Street, before joining the current cycleway

on Castle Street. The cycleway then continues along Boulevard de Nantes and Dumfries Place onto Newport Road to the junction with Broadway. Public engagement is underway on further phases of the pop-up cycleways in the city.

School Streets and Active Travel to Schools

Work to support the safe re-opening of schools is continuing. In addition to the introduction of new 'School Streets' and the enforcement of parking restrictions, a large number of concerns around driver behaviour, parking and provision for social distancing are being investigated. This is happening in conjunction with the ongoing Active Travel to Schools programme and road safety initiatives.

I had the opportunity recently to highlight the work being done in Cardiff towards creating 'School Streets' at a UK-wide seminar on 21 September 2020, which was organised by Living Streets and also included speakers from Greater Manchester and Lambeth. The 'School Streets' approach to prioritising safety outside our schools is now being taken up by other local authorities in South Wales, including Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil Councils.

A new scheme for schools has been launched to encourage children and young people to take up cycling and promote Active Travel. The School's Bike Fleet scheme provides schools with a fleet of bikes for pupils to use in school for the delivery of cycle training. It is a partnership project between the Council, Welsh Cycling and British Cycling and has been funded by Welsh Government. This project was created through our partnership with British Cycling and Welsh Cycling. The Council and Welsh Cycling came up with the Schools Bike Fleet in order to increase the number of children taking part in cycling by embedding cycling into schools' curriculums and encouraging and increasing Active Travel, as well as improving the physical and emotional well-being of pupils (as set out in Capital Ambition), providing additional play opportunities for children in schools and supporting Cardiff as a Child Friendly City.

This year's Bike to School Week from 28 September to 2 October 2020 was marked with the provision of National Standard Cycle Training to pupils at Ysgol Gymraeg Pwll Coch, Ysgol Glan Morfa and Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Eirwg. Coverage of two schools taking part in the scheme, Trelai Primary School and Ysgol Glan Morfa, was shown on ITV and S4C respectively, with pupils using the new bike fleet equipment for the cycle training.

Active Travel

The latest phase of cycleway is currently under construction in Sophia Gardens. The route will eventually link the City Centre with residential communities in Pontcanna and Llandaff and, eventually, to the new housing developments in the north west of the city. The current work provides a safe route for cyclists away from vehicles and will help reduce conflict with pedestrians along the Taff Trail. The scheme also avoids the felling of any trees. Details on the scheme can be found at: <https://keepingcardiffmoving.co.uk/project/cycleway-4-1/>

As I mentioned in my previous Council Statement last month, I was pleased to join John Jackson from BusinessNewsWales' Built Environment section recently to discuss the boom in cycling and active travel in Cardiff. A copy of the article based on this discussion can be found at: <https://businessnewswales.com/cardiff-cycling-streets-ahead/>

Bus Emergency Scheme Funding and Buses

Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) funding to increase bus service levels in Cardiff has been allocated to the end of October 2020, with a further £35m approved by the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales (as BES 1.5) to cover the period from 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021. The previous BES Phase 1 funding may also be carried on until the end of the financial year, using data from 2019/20. Work is continuing on BES Phase 2.

Councillor Caro Wild

Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport

15 October 2020