

**Bristol Walking Alliance submission to the Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Commission working group looking at how the Emergency Active Travel Funding is being used - the strategy and the delivery of the projects.**

We write following the workshop session on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020 attended by Alan Morris and Roger Gimson of BWA.

1) General support for the Council

We have no issues with the choice of schemes for EATF Tranches 1 and 2. We particularly support the high street changes and Baldwin Street/Bristol Bridge closure in tranche 1, and the point closures in tranche 2, because they are good for improving the environment for walking.

We applaud what the council has done so far. We support the fast-track implementation using quick and dirty measures, but we are very conscious of the need for public engagement, and we welcome the approach to future engagement described by Helen Wigginton at the meeting (including early engagement, agreeing the engagement plan with ward councillors, web-page, drop-in engagement on the street).

2) High street changes.

2.1 We suspect that the high street changes will not stick, because people will not see the point of them whilst they remain as ugly roadworks barriers, and whilst the space is not much used by businesses. The exceptions will be where the local businesses have of their own initiative got together to agree some positive changes, particularly in Clifton Village and Cotham Hill, where point closures are feasible.

2.2 We would have liked to have seen more Council engagement with businesses and the community to help 'sell' the high street changes, encourage business to use the space outside their premises, and to talk round issues raised. It is clear that the Transport Engagement Team's priorities will not be the high street schemes. Hopefully the two recruits for Jason Thorne's Business Support Team, and money from the High Streets Safety Fund, will help. But both are starting too late.

(We understand from Jason that the lateness is partly because the government has been slower off the mark with providing the funding and guidance than for the active travel funding, and the funding conditions have not facilitated quick action.)

2.3 To some extent, the lack of engagement makes the high street changes seem the 'cinderella' of the various EATF measures. But we recognise that the Council has had money from government only for quick and dirty changes, and its resources have been stretched. We reluctantly accept that more permanent changes will have to await later funding.

2.4 We are keen that the value of the experimental high street changes is captured in some way for future use. We are interested to hear that the Transport Engagement Team will be conducting a survey of businesses and customers about the temporary high street changes, to be used as evidence for when further funding becomes available. We would be interested to know what survey questions will be asked and how the feedback will be used.

3) Miscellaneous

- ETROs: we support the use of ETROs, on the basis that they allow people to experience the positive impact of changes, thus defusing some of the fears they would have expressed if the changes were implemented only after prior consultation.

- capacity for engagement: the Council will only have resources for a limited number of consultations at once. Point closures may be controversial, and may be challenged by organised groups. ETROs consume consultation resources in the initial six-month period. We wonder if the Council can stretch to engaging on all the Tranche 2 proposals before the deadline of March 2020.

- public information: we are concerned that there is a general lack of understanding of the benefits of the changes being made, and the vision behind them. The planned engagement will help, but perhaps it might be complemented by a public information media campaign ?

- future neighbourhood schemes: Adam Crowther made the point that implementing point closures causes pain to motorists without seeing some of the benefits, eg public realm improvements, that come with neighbourhood schemes. It would therefore seem important to give some advance publicity to plans for the public realm improvements that could come later through Liveable Neighbourhood schemes.

- parking spaces: we are glad to hear that loss of parking revenue will not be a barrier to removing parking spaces