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What the budget means for active travel and outdoor investment

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In a series of focused press releases we'll be looking at areas where North Somerset Council will be investing in services which will improve outcomes for local people following the setting of the budget at last Tuesday's Full Council (Tuesday 23 February) meeting.

Cllr James Tonkin is North Somerset Council's executive member whose portfolio includes planning, highways and transport.

"Last year saw us come up with some initiatives to make sure residents could enjoy the great outdoors - we put in place social-distancing measures in public spaces to enable people to move safely in areas with higher footfall. We were one of only two councils to get reward funding in both rounds of the active travel fund.

Cllr Tonkin said that encouraging active travel is a key priority for the council because it supports the climate emergency targets and encourages healthier and active lifestyles.

"In the coming year we'll be developing the £2.09m pier to pier cycleway between Clevedon and Weston, enhancing our section of the England coastal path and delivering more improvements to the Strawberry Line. We'll establish a quiet lanes network of cycle and pedestrian routes between Yatton, Clevedon and Nailsea, while maintaining essential and farm accesses.

"We're also investing tens of thousands of pounds in our 'Great Lakes' project - enhancing the marine lakes at Clevedon and Weston as well as Portishead Lake Grounds, as well as £300,000 on work on our public rights of way, encouraging residents to explore what's on their doorstep. " Cllr Tonkin added that other projects include improvements to Hill Road and the Beach in Clevedon with a one-way system to allow better pedestrian access and cycling; creating a cycling corridor on Baker Street and Milton Road in Weston-super-Mare, introducing a 20mph limit, preventing rat-running of cars and offering better links from residential areas to the town centre.

"We'll deliver several school schemes that offer safe cycling and walking routes to school for children and parents as well as introducing more 20mph limits - getting children to school safely and supporting more active travel and liveable neighbourhoods. And we plan to introduce a residents' parking scheme in Weston following on from the success of the new scheme in Leigh Woods.

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