

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

DOWNS COMMITTEE

31 January 2010

Report of: *Strategic Director for City Development*

Title: **Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN) proposals for Blackboy Hill**

Ward: N/A

Officer Presenting Report: Steve Riley, GBBN Project Manager

Contact Telephone Number: (0117) 903 6715

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee approve the GBBN Project Team to submit the proposed exchange of common land paperwork for Secretary of State approval (net gain of 620m² Downs/common land).

Summary

The A4018 Whiteladies Road-Westbury Road is one of eight BCC corridors in the GBBN project. Part of the proposal is a remodelling of the Blackboy Hill gyratory, with traffic signals installed to improve the reliability of journey times for buses and all traffic. The proposed changes for this junction, along with minor revisions near White Tree roundabout and Parry's Lane, require a transfer of land between highway and Downs/ common land, with the Downs seeing a net gain of 620m².

The significant issues in the report are:

- *That the prescribed consultation has been carried out to prepare for seeking Secretary of State approval for an exchange of common land that totals 620m² in favour of the Downs.*
- *That the GBBN Project Team has discussed the request from the Downs Committee for a widening of Stoke Road.*

Policy

1. The GBBN project is a major scheme to create 10 'showcase' bus corridors across Bristol and the sub-region as part of the Joint Local Transport Plan.

Consultation

2. Internal:

These proposals have been discussed and approved in principle by the cross-departmental GBBN Project Team and Project Board. A meeting has also been held with the Downs Ranger, from which a number of suggestions have been incorporated into the project's designs.

3. External:

First, as project partners, sit on the Project Board and approve of measures to improve bus reliability at such a key location. Non-statutory public consultation on the proposals was carried out between October and December 2010.

Context

4. Tackling one of two key pinch points on the A4018 Whiteladies Road-Westbury Road corridor (the other being the Triangle), a remodelling of the Blackboy Hill gyratory is proposed as part of the GBBN project. The proposal is for all three corners of the junction to be signalised, allowing better control of traffic movements to improve journey time reliability and provide safer pedestrian crossings.
5. As described in the report to the September 2010 Downs Committee meeting, this scheme will provide average peak-hour travel time savings of 80 seconds per car and 30 seconds per bus.
6. Further minor improvements are proposed for White Tree roundabout and Parry's Lane. To accommodate these proposals, small areas of Downs land are required to become highway, while other areas of current highway land will be given over to the Downs, leading to a **net gain of 620m² of Downs land**.
7. The consultation necessary to apply for ministerial consent for the land transfer has now been completed, with the public element of it carried out as part of the overall non-statutory consultation on our corridor proposals.

Proposal

8. Consultation on the proposed land transfer was carried out with the following registered commoners:
 - Clifton Theological College
 - Hornby's Dairies Limited
 - Bristol University
 - F.O. Wills Esq
 - Personal Representatives of Harold Gotch Robinson Esq Deceased
 - Trustees of St Monica's Homes
 - Personal Representatives of Hardwick Lloyd Hardwick Esq
 - Badminton School Limited
 - Bristol Corporation
 - M.A. Wilson Esq
 - George James Esq
 - Hugh Threapleton Esq
 - "Holmwood"
 - R.S. Redwood Esq
9. Consultation on the proposed land transfer was carried out with the following organisations:
 - Natural England
 - Open Spaces Society
 - Bristol Natural History Consortium
 - Avon Wildlife Trust
 - Avon Gorge and Downs Project
 - Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge
10. This consultation was carried out using the letter attached as Appendix A.
11. The Open Space Society responded with support in the following statement: "The Open Spaces Society has no objection to the proposal which is beneficial to walkers and cyclists and encourages the use of public transfer".
12. The Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge gave a mixed view with the following points:
 - Extension to Parrys Lane. As a matter of principle this strip of redundant road should be returned to open space use. The proposals make no case for its continuing as a non Downs user facility. i.e. Lorry, commuter car and bus park.
 - Exchange of land. There appears to be no reference to the quality of the areas concerned. Their size and location in relation to this unique open space is foremost, an environmental / landscape issue.

- Pedestrian/cyclist desire lines coupled with severance of the open space. No reference to assertion whether these matters have been considered.
13. The Avon Wildlife Trust responded with the following statement: “We have no concerns about these proposals provided that impacts to species and habitats are minimised and that overall there is a net gain to biodiversity as outlined in biodiversity and planning policy legislation. The report details that a small amount of common land is affected but that there is an overall increase of 620m² of common land. Presumably the seeding referred to for the land being restored will be native species and of local provenance appropriate to adjacent areas”.
 14. The University of Bristol replied with a reference to their overall consultation response, which does not specifically refer to these areas.
 15. The public consultation on the closure of the unnamed road produced 10 written responses in support and 35 in opposition. However:
 - Nine of the negative comments referenced traffic being able to avoid the Blackboy Hill junction by using this road, but the new signal scheme will improve traffic flow out of Stoke Road
 - Eight were concerned over the loss of parking
 - Six wanted the route to be for cyclists as well as pedestrians, which it will be
 - Five were concerned that the bus priority provided by this road was being lost, which is not the case due to the improvement in traffic flow out of Stoke Road as a result of the signalisation.
 - Of the members of public discussing these proposals at the ‘consultation shop’, there was a much higher level of support than among those submitting written comments.
 16. The public consultation on the reversal of the one-way on Parry’s Lane produced 2 responses in support and 53 in opposition. However, of those in opposition, 49 were for traffic reasons and just four against the provision of facilities for the catering outlet (as specifically requested by the Downs Ranger).
 17. In summary, we believe the consultation to have been broadly supportive. The GBBN Project Team now wishes to progress this scheme by applying for Secretary of State approval for the exchange in common land.

Additional note:

18. With reference to Cllr Hugill’s concerns recorded in the minutes of the November 2010 Downs Committee meeting, I would like to confirm that the GBBN Project Team has looked at the possibility of using the wide

pavement to widen the carriageway of Stoke Road. We see the benefits that this would provide, but do not have any funding available. Banning the parking on one side of the road would produce similar benefits, but is not thought a suitable proposal due the extremely high demand for these parking spaces, particularly at times generally considered 'off-peak' in traffic terms.

Other Options Considered

19. Concerns were initially expressed about a traffic signal solution in this location. An alternative solution was sought, and only one was viable enough to be taken to detailed modelling by transport consultants Mott MacDonald: a roundabout at the Westbury Road-Redland Hill junction.
20. The micro-simulation modelling showed that the roundabout scheme did not provide equal improvements to traffic flows, and required more land to be taken from the Downs. This scheme was not chosen to be taken forward and the traffic signal scheme has been approved by the Project Board as the plan to go through to the consultation stage.
21. An additional benefit of the modelling process was that it showed that the proposed bus lane on Stoke Road is not required, taking away some of the additional land take from the Downs in the original scheme.

Risk Assessment

22. A risk register exists for the project as a whole. With reference to this specific element, failure to agree to the proposed course of action could result in delays to the project in Bristol, damaging our reputation with the Department for Transport and our partners. More pertinently, a delay or failure to implement these measures could see Bristol City Council fail to meet our spending profile and lose approved central government funding.

Equalities Impact Assessment

23. A draft Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Report for the whole project has been prepared, and is attached as Appendix B.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal:

The Commons Act 2006, section 16, provides that owners of registered common land must apply for ministerial consent to deregistration and exchange of such land.

Subject to obtaining the requisite statutory approval referred to above, in order to achieve the various traffic management and highways measures

referred to in this report, it will be necessary for the City Council to initiate certain prescribed procedures including traffic regulation orders (TROs) under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This will entail statutory advertisement of TRO proposals and consideration of any objections which may be received before any decision is made by the relevant decision maker.

As highways and traffic authority for the area, the Council also has powers under the Highways Act 1980 to vary the relative widths of carriageway and footway/pavement without the need for an order. However, where a new highway (eg a new footpath) is to be created, this will need to be by way of formal express dedication by the relevant freeholder sub-soil owner. Where a highway is to cease to be a highway, this will require extinguishment by administrative order promoted by the Council or order of the Magistrates' Court.

Legal advice given by: Frances Horner (Senior Solicitor: Leisure) and Peter Malarby (Senior Solicitor: Highways)

Financial:

(a) Revenue *There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.*

(b) Capital *There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.*

Financial advice given by: Tony Whitlock, Principal Accountant

Land

As detailed above.

Personnel

None.

Appendices:

Appendix A The letter used for the exchange of common land consultation

Appendix B Draft Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Report

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None



Exchange of Common Land, Clifton Downs, Bristol

Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN) Exchange of Common Land, Clifton Downs, Bristol

Introduction

GBBN is a sub-regional project to improve 10 major bus corridors through introducing new bus priority measures (bus lanes and intelligent traffic signals), improved bus stops with raised kerbs, new buses, and better information (including RTI), alongside improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, and other road users.

As part of the proposals for the A4018 (Whiteladies Road–Westbury Road) corridor, changes to Westbury Road and the Blackboy Hill gyratory system are proposed. These have a small impact on common land managed by the Downs Committee (established by the Downs Act of 1861).

In order to seek approval for the land exchange proposed, a prescribed consultation process is required, of which this is part, followed by an application for ministerial consent.

The impact on Common Land

As one of two key pinch points on this important corridor, improving traffic flows around the Blackboy Hill gyratory is proposed through GBBN, assisting buses and all other road traffic. The proposal is for all three corners of the junction to be signalised, allowing better control of traffic movements to improve journey time reliability and provide safer pedestrian crossings (see plan in Appendix 1). This scheme will provide average peak-hour travel time savings of 80 seconds per car and 30 seconds per bus.

Further minor improvements are proposed for White Tree roundabout and Parry's Lane, also adjacent to common land (see Appendix 3). To accommodate these proposals, small areas of common land are required to become highway (marked in pale blue on the plans, 'proposed carriageway construction' in the key). These are:

- Land adjacent to White Tree roundabout, for widening the roundabout to improve capacity: 172m².
- Land behind the bus stops south of White Tree roundabout, to provide a high quality bus shelter and waiting environment: 88m².
- A loss of 260m² of common land.



On the other hand, the proposals result in some highway land being given over to common land (marked in mid green on the plans, 'verge/ landscaping' in the key). These are:

- Removal of most of the unnamed road leading from close to the water tower to the junction of Westbury Road and Redland Hill (a 3m wide cycle and pedestrian route will remain): 717m².
- Re-seeding of the partial closure of Parry's Lane achieved by reversing the one-way movement: 116m².
- Re-seeding of the former pavement behind the outbound bus stop lay-by north of White Tree roundabout, which is being removed: 49m².
- A gain of 882m² of common land.
- **A net gain of 620m² of common land.**

In addition to these exchanged areas of land, there are two areas of land whose maintenance is intended to rest with the Downs Committee (see Appendices 1 and 2 where they are marked in orange, 'footpath/ build out construction' in the key). These are not part of this consultation as the Downs Committee approved this element in its meeting of 6 September 2010.

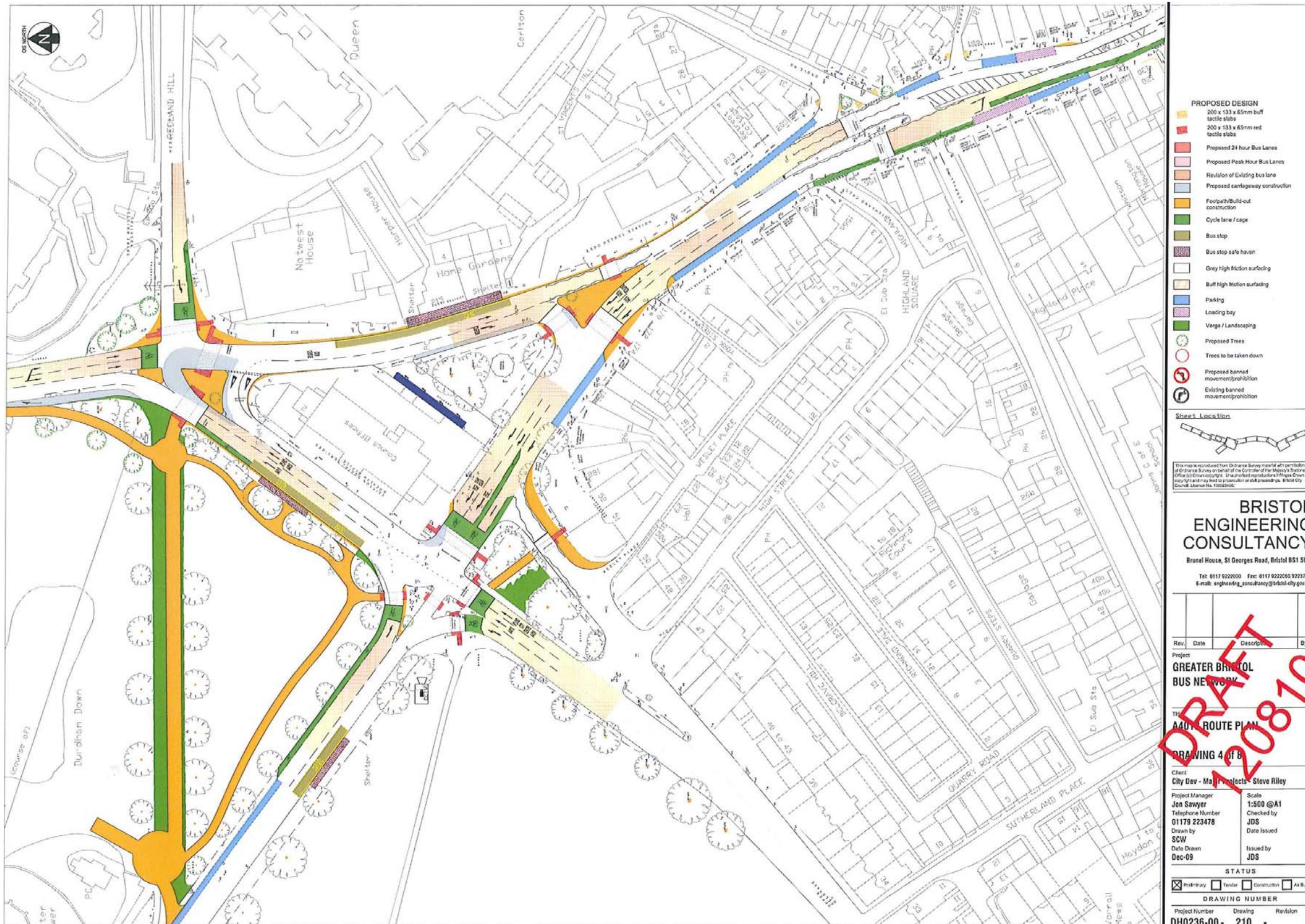
Purpose of this consultation

As part of the formal process of deregistering common land, you have been sent this information through your involvement with one of the following groups: active commoners, all those with any legal interest in the land, Natural England, English Heritage, AONB, Conservation Board, or Joint Advisory Committee, the Open Spaces Society, and local wildlife trusts or access forums. We have already discussed these proposals with the Downs Committee, and are involving local inhabitants through the current informal consultation being carried out for the whole corridor.

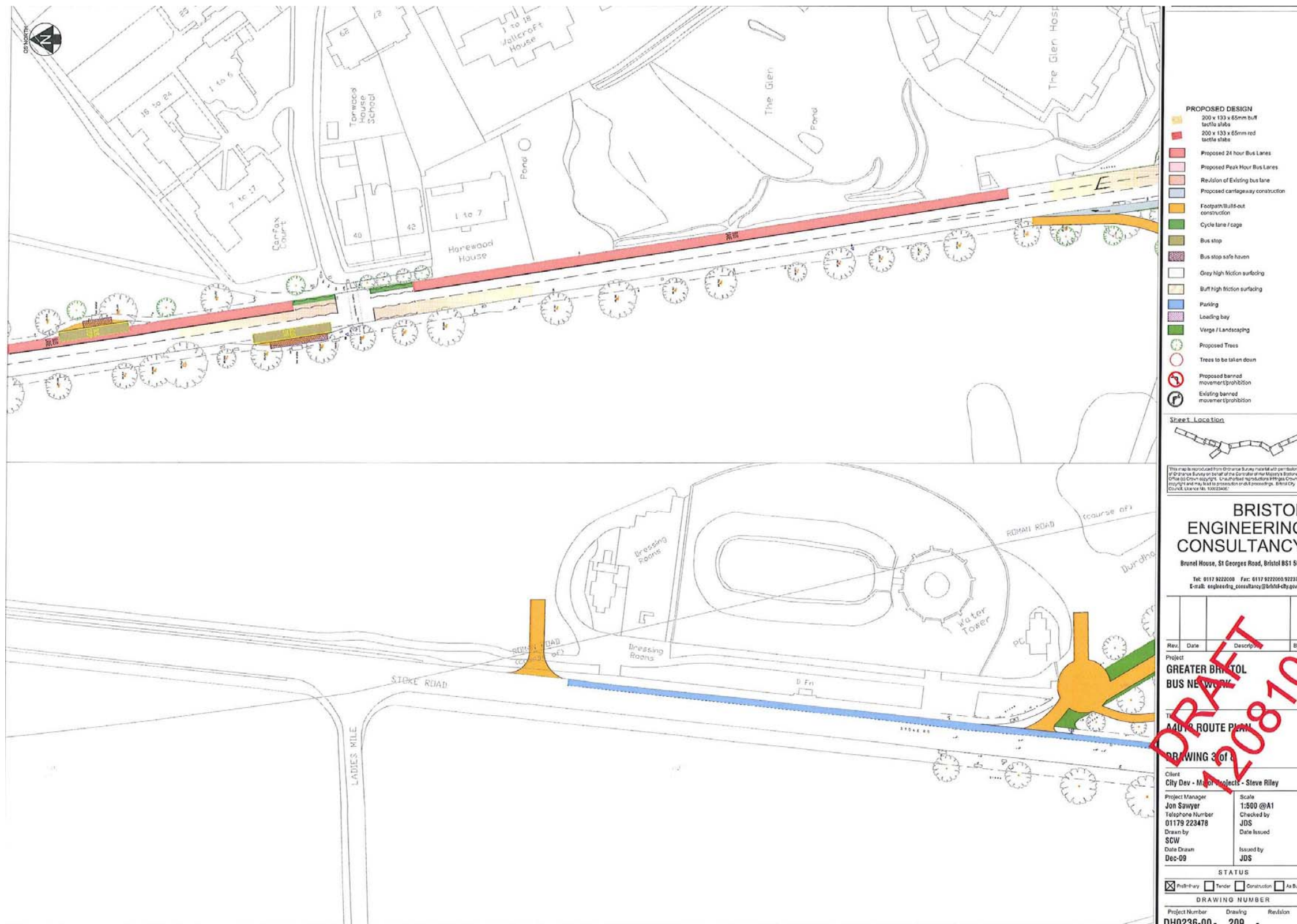
Please could you provide your comments on this increase in common land to the postal or e-mail address below by Friday 3 December 2010, following which an application will be made for ministerial consent:

Huw Williams
Project Support Officer
Wilder House
Wilder Street
Bristol, BS2 8PH
huw.williams@bristol.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Proposed improvements to Blackboy Hill



Appendix 2: Proposed changes to Westbury Road and around the water tower (Stoke Road)



Appendix 3: Proposed changes to Westbury Road and Parry's Lane



BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
Equality Impact Assessment – Part One - Screening

Part one of an EqIA – the screening – should be carried out at the planning and development stage of a policy, project, service, contract or strategy. This form should be used in conjunction with the guidance and as the first part of a full EqIA.

Name of policy, project, service, contract or strategy being assessed	Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN)
Directorate and Service	City Development, Major Projects
Names and roles of officers completing the assessment	Steve Riley, Project Manager
Main contact telephone number	(0117) 903 6715
Date	20 August 2010

Summary

This is a sub-regional project (with partners Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire Councils, and bus operator First) to improve bus ten corridors, eight of which come within the Bristol boundary. The project aims for increased bus use, cycling, and walking and decreased private car use with the resultant reduction in congestion and pollution. Additionally, the project seeks to improve accessibility to education, employment, and health and social facilities.

The improvements will be delivered through the introduction of bus priority measures, which will include bus lanes, bus gates, and traffic signal controlled junctions that will assist bus priority and general traffic flow, while providing controlled pedestrian crossing facilities.

A significant element of the project will be public consultation on the three main GBBN corridors, which has already been carried out for Bath Road and Fishponds-Stapleton Road; Whiteladies Road is programmed for September 2010.

1. Identify the aims of the policy, project, service, contract or strategy and how it is implemented

	Key Questions	Notes / Answers	Any actions needed? By whom?
1.1	Is this a new policy, project, service, contract or strategy or a review of an existing one?	A new project	
1.2	What is the main purpose of the policy, project, service, contract or strategy?	An improvement in the provision of bus priority and information on ten corridors across the West of England sub-region, eight of which enter the BCC boundary	
1.3	What are the main activities of the policy, project, service, contract or strategy?	The design and construction of bus priority measures (including bus lanes, bus gates, and upgraded traffic signal junctions) and improved bus stops (including raised kerbs, 'safe haven' surface treatment, improved information (RTPI when appropriate), and new shelters where required)	
1.4	Who are the main beneficiaries? Whose needs is it designed to meet?	The main beneficiaries are existing and prospective bus users; however, many road users should see benefits	
1.5	Which staff carry out the policy, project, service, contract or strategy?	Design and consultation: BCC staff. Construction: external civil engineering contractors from existing frameworks or spot contract assessment.	

		Supervision of construction: BCC staff. Provision of bus services: private bus operating companies, some operating services under tender to BCC, other local authorities, or UWE.	
1.6	Are there areas of the policy or function that could be governed by an officer's judgement? e.g. home visits "where appropriate". If so, is there guidance on how to exercise this to prevent any possible bias/prejudice creeping in?	Yes. However, all design and implementation ideas are debated and approved by the Project Team (representatives of all transport teams along with Urban and Landscape Design) and ratified by the Project Board; this acts as a kind of 'peer review'	
1.7	Is the Council working in Partnership with other organisations to implement this policy or function? Should this be taken into consideration? e.g. Agree equalities monitoring categories Should the partnership arrangements have an EqIA?	At a sub-regional level, the overall programme is a partnership of Bristol City Council with Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire Councils, and bus operator First. Within BCC, there are no direct partnerships, although a co-operative working arrangement with First will be required to ensure the project delivers successfully. It could be argued that the partnership arrangements should have their own EqIA, however it is not felt that BCC can demand	

		<p>this of the other authorities or complete one on their behalf.</p> <p>Please note: This EqIA only covers Bristol, the other authorities should have completed their own.</p>	
1.8	<p>Taking the six strands of equalities, do you have any initial thoughts that any of the six equalities strands have particular needs relevant to the policy or function?</p> <p>Or is there anything in the policy, project, service, contract or strategy that you can think of at this stage that could discriminate or disadvantage any groups of people?</p>	<p>All groups Some groups may feel a perceived safety risk waiting for and using public transport.</p>	<p>New 'safe haven' shelters with improved lighting will be provided. In addition, improved reliability, 'Real Time' information provision, and CCTV in new buses should reduce this.</p>
		<p>Some groups may feel they have poor access to transport if they do not have their own car.</p>	<p>Better public transport provision will improve accessibility for those unable to use a private car. All GBBN routes serve wards with low car ownership.</p>
	Gender (include Transgender)	See 'all groups'	

Disability	Some disabled people may feel that access to public transport is difficult.	Raised kerb bus stops and low floor buses will improve access, with the associated dropped kerbs at local road crossings.
	Some disabled people, especially those with a visual impairment, may feel that timetable information is difficult to access.	'Real Time' information displays at key stops will be provided with an audio facility activated by a key fob.
	Some disabled people may feel that a relocated bus stop worsens their access to public transport.	All bus stop relocations will be analysed in detail to ensure that all aspects of accessibility and other aspects are taken into account.
	Some disabled people may feel that access to public transport is made more difficult if an entire bus service route is not equipped with the raised kerbs.	Although GBBN funding is committed to key corridors, local LTP top-up funding has been identified for improving bus stops over as wide an area as possible.

		Some people with a hearing impairment may feel excluded from consultation if they cannot discuss issues with staff at the Project Information Centre.	Translation into British Sign Language will be provided on request (as happened in April 2010 during the A432 consultation).
	Age	Some young or old people may feel that a relocated bus stop worsens their access to public transport.	All bus stop relocations are analysed in detail to ensure that all aspects of accessibility and other aspects are taken into account.
	Race	Some people whose first language is not English may feel excluded from consultation if they cannot understand the consultation materials.	Translation into relevant community languages will be provided on request (as happened in April 2010 during the A432 consultation, with Urdu and Punjabi).
	Sexual Orientation	See 'all groups'	
	Faith/Belief	Some faith/belief groups may feel that a 24-hour bus lane near their place of worship could lead to a reduction in available parking spaces.	Discussion will always be provided with potentially affected groups. There has been no take up of two offers

			of a meeting with the Sikh temple on Fishponds Road where they may be an issue.
	Do any other specific groups have particular needs relevant to the policy, project, service, contract or strategy?		
1.9	Did you use any data to inform your initial thoughts above? What data do you already have?	There is extensive data on the BCC website showing the make-up of each ward by equalities strand; this would be valuable information for establishing different impacts in different areas.	
1.10	Are there gaps in the data that require you to do further work? What are these gaps?	It appears that the likelihood for significant negative impacts may be limited and that further investigation may not be necessary.	

If the result of the screening process is that there is the potential for a significant impact on any equality group or if any equality group has significantly different needs, then a full equality impact assessment must be carried out. If you are unsure please seek advice from a directorate or corporate equalities officer.

Signed
Service Manager
Date

Signed
Directorate Equalities Adviser
Date