

Committee Report

PURPOSE: Final Decision Report

KEY OR NON-KEY DECISION: Non-key decision

COMMITTEE: Transport and Connectivity Committee

DATE: 20 March 2025

TITLE: Response to Full Council Golden Motion 'Make Bristol the UK's most accessible city'

Ward(s): Citywide

Officer presenting the report: Adam Crowther **Job title:** Head of City Transport

Committee Chair: Cllr Ed Plowden

Executive Director lead: John Smith: Executive Director for Growth & Regeneration

Proposal origin: Councillor

Purpose of Report:

To respond to the Golden Motion approved at Full Council on 8 October 2024 and to discuss the 'Bristol Climate and Nature Partnership's Inclusive Transport Vision for Bristol'. As part of the Golden Motion, 15 measures have been listed with officer responses to each one. This forms part of a wider motion for Bristol City Council which will lay out how it intends to become the UK's most accessible city.

Evidence Base:

This council notes:

17.2% of people in Bristol have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses and whose day-to-day activities were limited in some way. 8.3% of Bristolians describe themselves as disabled and as having their day-to-day activities limited a lot.

Bristol City Council is committed to the Social Model of Disability which recognises the right to self-identify as a Disabled person and that people are Disabled by barriers in society such as lack of physical access and lack of accessible communication, not by their impairment (including mental, physical, sensory, health conditions, learning difficulties among others).

Across the UK there is a "transport accessibility gap", with a recent Sustrans report finding that disabled people take 38% fewer trips across all modes of transport than non-disabled people. This pattern is similar for walking and wheeling with disabled people in England taking 30% fewer walking trips than non-disabled people. This is an experience mirrored in Bristol with disabled people continuing to face a number of barriers in Bristol. Whilst improving the lives of disabled people is clearly a cross-cutting issue, some of the most prevalent issues relate to transport. This motion lists policies the council could undertake to demonstrate its commitment to the issue.

For too long shared space was relied on for non-motorised traffic modes, rather than proper segregation as emphasised in the most recent Cycling and Walking infrastructure guidance from government, Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN1/20). However, we have a significant amount of legacy infrastructure due to many years of prioritising sustainable modes of transport that will be tough to retrofit with current budgets.

Currently, the Diamond Bus Pass is not valid before 9am, but the exceeds the statutory minimum of 9.30AM unlike London and many other core cities.

The new UK Govt has made a commitment to review the approach to funding being competitive between Councils, which is a positive commitment – despite Bristol being relatively successful. Maintaining and investing in our infrastructure should not be framed as a competition between authorities.

This council believes:

Ensuring everyone shares in Bristol’s success means the council needs to do its utmost to support its disabled citizens.

Bristol should aim to be the most accessible city in the country. Achieving this means taking far-reaching action that cuts across council policy areas and working collaboratively with city partners.

This council resolves:

To aim to be a highly inclusive and accessible council, by improving the lives for disabled and older people living, working, or visiting our city.

To call on all Policy Committee Chairs and One City Partnership to ensure disabled people’s voices are heard by undertaking to participate in ongoing dialogues with disabled people’s organisations. As part of this, committees and council officers will need to work with disabled people and organisations such as Bristol Disability Equality Forum, the Disability Equality Commission, the West of England Centre for Inclusive Living, and other key partners to develop further plans.

To ensure that all projects being brought forward are co-designed with people affected by it whenever possible.

To call on committee chairs to report back to Full Council on progress made on this aim in twelve months’ time.

Full Council resolves to instruct the Transport and Connectivity Committee / Chair to undertake the following measures:

1. Place the Bristol Climate and Nature Partnership’s Inclusive Transport Vision for Bristol on the Transport and Connectivity Committee’s Forward plan for a discussion at the committee

Officer response:

The transport policy team will ensure this is actioned before the end of the 24/25 financial year

2. Work with Visit Bristol to improve or provide accessible information on a website where visitors can see information about disabled facilities.

Officer response:

The council’s City Centre and High Streets team will work with Visit Bristol and such like to facilitate an enhanced website for information about disabled facilities by the end of summer 2025

3. Reiterate to contractors the council’s expectation that pavements and cycle lanes are treated with the same care and attention as the carriageway and comply with best practice such as LTN1/20

Officer response:

The council highways team will reiterate to works promoters the importance of applying the legal statutory Guidance and Codes of Practice to all road users with the particular attention being applied to vulnerable users.

4 Ask officers to work to remove or adapt physical barriers on all highways infrastructure that are not LTN 1/20 compliant, and seek budgets to do this, to ensure accessibility for adapted cycles mobility scooters, double buggies etc.

Officer response

Bristol CC transport officers will work with Sustrans to unlock funding for the removal of barriers on the National Cycle Network in Bristol that facilitates strategic active travel routes. For all other barriers in the city, officers will look at options for removing non compliant barriers working with colleagues in maintenance and understanding available funding streams to do so. Officers will provide an update to the committee in autumn/winter 2025.

It is important to note some of the city's barriers will have been put in place following local campaigns to tackle Anti Social Behaviour and such like and will need to be considered when progressing these works. Officers will come back to the T & C committee once there is a better understanding of available funding streams and resourcing.

5. Ask officers to Work to identify all pavements that are not friendly for the partially sighted and do not have ramps or other accessible measures at key crossing points and separation from people on bikes and scooters wherever possible. Ensuring that amending this is integral to the design of any major projects and seek to identify budgets to work on and other priority pavements and crossings where this is clearly needed.

Officer response

Currently any civils improvement project on the highway will look at whether the existing surrounding infrastructure meets current accessibility standards and seek to improve these if required. We will promote and incorporate this approach as part of the A4018/A37 works to showcase best practise.

There is no current funding or resources available to undertake a city-wide audit of pavement accessibility and therefore officers suggest that Area Committees be asked or requested to identify locations that should be prioritised for the installation of dropped kerbs. These priorities will be submitted to BCC's highways team to review, and an installation programme will be provided for delivery, possibly using Neighbourhood CIL funding.

6. Call on the DfT to respond to the pavement parking consultation which closed in November 2020 and make it easier for Councils to enforce anti-social pavement parking

Officer response

The Parking & Kerbside Task & Finish Group will be picking this issue up. BCC will formally write to the Department for Transport in March 2025 to press for accelerated assistance to ensure the Council can make significant progress on this issue in 2025.

7. Ask officers to bring forward proposals to Make improvements to legibility for all, subject to funding, to include, but not limited to, painting cycle lanes a single colour and removing unnecessary street clutter.

Officer response

Transport officers are drafting a paper on painted cycle lanes to ensure consistency of design on the highway. A trial will take place to understand the legibility of painted cycle lanes, and a report is on the Forward Plan for July 2025. Addressing Bristol street clutter will be partly covered in the Transport Development [Management Design Guide](#) which lays out key design requirements for developers. The Council is also currently developing its own Kerbside Strategy which aims to address accessibility and legibility in the city and will lay out key actions to address issues such as street clutter

8. Ensure every bus stop in Bristol is accessible and continue to lobby the West of England Combined Authority to make sure every train station caters for those with mobility needs.

Officer response

The vast majority of bus stops in Bristol are fully accessible, with raised kerb platforms and other measures provided. We will shortly be undertaking a review of our asset database and will be able to identify those stops that do not yet have a raised kerb, with a view taken on what may be required at each stop. This will be supported by the use of the inclusive mobility guidance.

We will continue to work with the Combined Authority regarding train stations and support the work that is happening at train stations to improve accessibility, with two particular priorities including works at Parson Street and Lawrence Hill stations. We will also work with the Combined Authority to make sure that all of the passenger information displayed at bus stops and train stations is fully accessible to all.

Bus operators will also have an important role to play in this, by continuing to operate fully accessible vehicles that are capable of integrating with our bus stop infrastructure to enable step-free access, and we will continue to liaise with operators in this regard.

9. Investigate and consider impacts of allowing [disabled tax class vehicles](#) through bus gates to allow their users easier access to disabled parking spaces, noting that Blue Badges are for the person not the vehicle.

Officer response

The council will be developing an exemptions policy over the coming months using learnings from the East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood (EBLN) and other related schemes as well as benchmarking policies from other authorities across the UK. It should be noted that BCC currently offers bus gate exemptions for disabled tax class vehicles in the project area. It is envisaged the council will be able to share a draft exemptions policy in Autumn 2025 for consideration via the relevant channels. Blue Badge holders, who live in the East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood are being invited to nominate one car for an annual exemption to the East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood Bus Gates as part of the trial.

10. Encourage bus operators in the West of the England to update their fleet to provide at least two disabled wheelchair spaces on all buses.

Officer response

We have an ongoing dialogue with operators on this issue and we will continue to encourage them to operate vehicles that can accommodate two wheelchair spaces. To strengthen the obligation on this for operators, we will also engage the Combined Authority to request that this is put forward as a proposed measure for inclusion in the next review for the Enhanced Partnership.

11. Include within the work of the Parking and Kerbside TFG a Review of disabled parking space provision, with a view to increase the availability, and work with private sector partners on this where

needed.

Officer response

This has been added to the Kerbside Task and Finish Group agenda. The TFG will consider demand and revenue impacts on a case-by-case basis which may vary by location. It should be noted that BCC's power to influence private sector partners is potentially limited. The learnings from the Kerbside Task and Finish Group will be brought to Committee in summer 2025.

12. Ask officers to undertake work to prioritise requests for disabled parking bays, in order to bring down the wait time for requests

Officer response

It currently takes an average of 16 weeks from application to installation.

There are multiple teams involved with processing disabled parking bay applications; from assessing eligibility to identifying an appropriate location for each bay which meets road safety criteria. It has taken an average of 6 weeks to complete these processes and a further 10 weeks for the Council's contractor to paint the bay markings as the physical installation is weather dependent.

Historically, there have been some single points of failure within the end-to-end process, however, there has been some upskilling and cross training within the teams recently to remove these risks and officers are confident the process is now more robust. In addition, our contractors are scored via regular contract review meetings and monitoring of key performance indicators and we will use this to try and improve delivery the delivery times once the contractor has been instructed.

13. Ask officers to bring forward proposals to increase the number of disabled bays in central council-owned car parks where demand can be demonstrated.

Officer response

Blue badge holders can park for free and without time restriction in any marked bay (providing it is not specifically signed for another use ie Permit Holder only). There are 31 designated disabled bays in city centre surface car parks, but we do not have designated bays in all locations. The council will undertake demand surveys to understand where an increase in provision can be considered in spring 2025. Following this an implementation plan will be considered based on findings from the surveys

14. Remove any parking charges for disabled users for the first three hours, in line with blue badge holders' entitlement, and work with operators of private car parks to extend this as appropriate.

Officer response

Blue Badge holders can already park for free and without time constraint in:

- *all on street P&D parking bays (providing they are not restricted for specialist use as loading)*
- *all BCC surface Car Parks (which is above and beyond the statutory requirement).*

Blue Badge holders can also park without charge:

- *on double of single yellow lines for up to three hours providing they do not cause an obstruction and there is no loading ban in place.*
- *in on street designated Disabled Bays (some of which have 3-hour time restrictions to ensure turnover.*

The only place where Blue Badge holders are currently charged is at Trenchard and West End MSCPs which have a barrier-controlled payment system which can't recognise or validate Blue Badges. Officers will consider technical solutions to this issue when the equipment is next re-procured. It is envisaged that finding a viable solution could prove challenging, but the Council will test the market to explore options.

Many other authorities and private operators already charge Blue Badge holders. Private operators working on a commercial basis may be reluctant to offer concessions.

15. Work with the West of England Combined Authority to assess options for extending the hours of operation of the Diamond Bus Pass scheme

Officer response

The Diamond Travelcard scheme allows pass holders to have free travel from 9am onwards Monday to Friday, and all day on Saturdays and Sundays. Blind or partially sighted residents that have our Platinum Travelcard upgrade can already use their card at all times.

In addition, we have also engaged with the Combined Authority and have reached agreement for them to extend the hours of operation for disabled card holders, allowing disabled travellers to use their card at all times. It is expected that this will be implemented from April 2025, and we will continue to engage with the Combined Authority to monitor the effectiveness of this.

Officer Recommendations: -

That the Committee for the Transport and Connectivity Committee

1. Approves the officer response to the 15 measures outlined as part of the green amendments to the Golden Motion

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. A more efficient, sustainable, and inclusive connection of people to people, people to jobs and people to opportunity.
2. Tackle health inequalities to help people stay healthier and happier throughout their lives.

City Benefits:

1. Healthy, resilient, and inclusive neighbourhoods with fair access to decent, affordable homes.

Consultation Details:

1. Bristol CC will ensure disabled people's voices are heard by undertaking to participate in ongoing dialogues with disabled people's organisations such as the Bristol Disability Equality Forum, the Disability Equality Commission, the West of England Centre for Inclusive Living.

Background Documents:

[Golden Motion Approved at Full Council 8 October 2024](#)

Revenue Cost	£0	Source of Revenue Funding	n/a
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Capital Cost	£0	Source of Capital Funding	n/a
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	If yes - existing or new saving? N/A OR Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

1. Finance Advice: This report requests approval to respond to 15 measures suggested at Full Council to demonstrate Bristol City Council’s commitment to disabled citizens. A number of the measures have financial implications which will need to be assessed when brought to policy committees for approval.

Finance Business Partner: Ben Hegarty, Finance Business Partner Growth and Regeneration, 9 December 2024.

2. Legal Advice: No comment.

Legal Team Leader: Legal Team Managers

3. Implications on IT: I can see no implications on IT regarding this activity.

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson – Lead Enterprise Architect – 10 February 2025

4. HR Advice: There are no direct workforce implications evident

HR Partner: Celia Williams, HR Business Partner, 3 December 2024

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	YES
Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	YES
Appendix C – Environmental Impact Assessment	NO
Appendix D – Decision Risk Assessment	NO
Appendix E – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix F – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix G – Options appraisal matrix	NO
Appendix H – Business case / financial analysis	NO