

Portway Park & Ride: Bus junction improvements February 2023



Contents

1. Background 3

2. Improvements to the A4 Portway Park & Ride..... 3

3. Entrance and exit expansion 3

4. Light touch consultation 5

5. Results..... 5

5.1 Stakeholder engagement..... 5

5.2 Stakeholder session 5

5.3 Stakeholder feedback 8

6. Public Results 9

6.1 On Site session 9

6.2 Public feedback 10

1. Background

Over the past decade changes have been made to the road network in Bristol to improve bus journey times and encourage walking and cycling. However, the transport network in Bristol still faces challenges, including growth in housing and employment areas, unreliable journey times, and high levels of congestion and air pollution.

To address these challenges, and help Bristol reach its 2030 carbon neutral target, radical changes to Bristol's road network are required. These changes will need to make a transformational difference to bus travel, and act as an enabler for cycling and walking.

Over the next 10 to 15 years Bristol and the West of England Combined Authority have committed to developing and improving bus services as a priority for the region, in collaboration with bus operators.

2. Improvements to the A4 Portway Park & Ride

There are several planned improvements taking place at the Park & Ride. The main change is the installation of a new railway station, which is due to open in 2023. As part of this work the car park is being expanded. Separately, there are plans to enhance the existing Park and Ride facilities to create a new mobility hub. This will see better cycle parking, micro mobility parking, parcel lockers, more seating and upgrades to the toilet facilities.

With new housing developments, the YTL Arena in Filton, and the expansion of employment areas such as Avonmouth, the need to improve the Park & Ride to serve as a key transport hub is required to meet the extra demand.

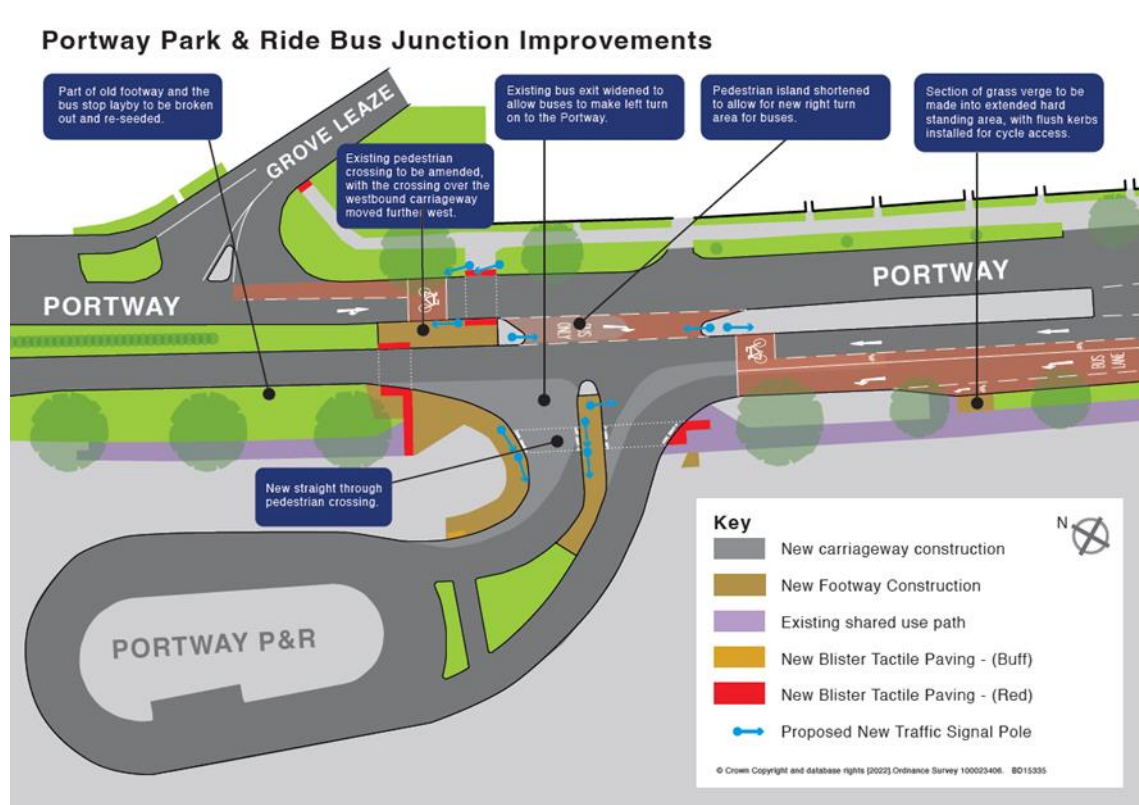
As part of the early engagement held in Summer 2022 people were asked about the Portway Park & Ride and what improvements they would like to see on the A4 Portway route. One theme that has come out of that early engagement was the desire to see more connecting bus routes to the Portway Park & Ride site. To allow this to happen the bus entrance and exit to the site would need to be expanded.

3. Entrance and exit expansion

This project proposes to widen the bus entrance and exit junction so buses can turn left travelling northbound towards Avonmouth employment area, Filton, Cribbs Causeway, and help to mitigate the impact of the new arena. The ability to turn left would also serve the railway replacement bus services and the YTL Arena shuttle bus. The proposed changes are shown on the following plan and would include:

- upgrading the bus entrance and exit junction to allow bus services to enter and exit the site when travelling to and from the north
- moving the existing pedestrian crossing over the westbound side of the carriageway further west
- upgrading the crossing to a new signalised crossing at the bus entrance to the Park & Ride site

- adding advanced cycle stop lines at the junction to give cyclists priority and a widened ramp that leads cyclists from the bus lane to the shared use path
- realigning the traffic island at the bus entrance
- upgrading the traffic signals
- removing 7 trees and replacing them with 13 more as part of the landscaping plan



Trees

As part of this proposal seven trees would need to be removed and three would need to be temporarily removed whilst the work is carried out and put back once the works are complete

We have been through a design appraisal process and considered other designs for this scheme, however, they were discounted for reasons including major arboriculture impact, with some design ideas requiring the removal of 20 or more trees. Further option development led to the identification of the proposal presented here, which was the most preferable with regards to the loss of trees.

We have carried out an Arboriculture Impact Assessment, which has provided detailed information on the exact trees to be removed, including their quality, useful life expectancy, and the number of replacement trees required in line with the Bristol Tree Replacement Standards.

The proposed mitigation is to plant 13 new trees on the park and ride site and ensure the three trees that are being temporarily removed are put back on the central reservation.

The delivery of these improvements will be subject to approval of a Business Case.

4. Light touch consultation

As the proposals are for the bus entrance to the park and ride it was felt that a light touch consultation was appropriate. This approach included:

- Contacting local groups and key stakeholders
- Providing one virtual stakeholder workshops via Teams which involved a short presentation about the project and what we are trying to achieve, followed by a discussion about the proposal. The date was:
 - Wednesday 18 January – 6pm to 7.30pm
- On site event at the Park & Ride on Wednesday 25 January 2023 from 8am to 9.30am to talk to bus users
- Letter drops to local properties

The light touch consultation started Monday 9 January and finished on Sunday 5 February 2023.

The letter drop was to 674 local properties in the vicinity of the bus entrance. The letter detailed the reasoning for the proposal and outlined them in a written format and was accompanied by a plan which showed the proposals in a visual way. People were asked to comment or ask questions and could contact the team by email at transport.engagement@bristol.gov.uk, by phone 0117 9036449 or by writing to Portway bus entrance, Transport Engagement, PO BOX 3399, 100 Temple Street, Bristol, BS1 9NE.

5. Results

5.1 Stakeholder engagement

The team identified key stakeholders who were contacted via email at the launch of the consultation asking for their thoughts and comments. The key stakeholders list includes:

- local ward members and local MP Darren Jones,
- emergency service providers,
- transport providers such as First bus, Stagecoach, GWR, taxi forum
- campaign groups such as Bristol Walking Alliance, Bristol Cycle Campaign, Bristol Tree Forum
- accessibility groups such as Bristol Disability Equality Forum and WECIL
- local groups such as SevernNet

These groups were also invited to the virtual stakeholder session.

5.2 Stakeholder session

The stakeholder session was held on Wednesday 18 January at 6pm. There were six attendees who ranged from the local ward member and a representative from the local MP's office to local transport groups who represented walking, cycling and accessibility.

The session began with a 14 page presentation on the project which covered:

- background to the project,

- location of the P&R,
- current junction layout
- proposal of new layout
- benefits and why we are proposing this
- areas of sensitivity
- next steps

The meeting was then opened for a question and answer session and to allow each stakeholder to make comments. The main themes of the session included questions about traffic signals and how these affect the ability for people and cyclists to cross the roads and what impact that will have on the buses and traffic.

Questions were also asked about the funding of the project and stakeholders wanted to know how this linked with the mobility hub, the new railway station and the YTL arena development. Other comments were made about the trees and the facilities at the park & ride and whether there was scope to improve them. Below is a summary of the questions and answered recorded at the meeting:

Question and Answer session

Each stakeholder was given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions and below is a summary of questions and responses:

Q1 Is it the case that buses coming into P&R from city centre will be light controlled?

A1 Buses travelling inbound from Bristol will be light controlled as they enter the site.

Q2 Are there going to be light for pedestrians and cyclists at this junction?

A2. Yes, there is a light controlled crossing to help pedestrians and cyclists to cross the mouth of the junction to avoid conflict

Q3. Will the default for the lights be a green stage for pedestrians and cyclists?

A3. Apologies there was a mistake in the answer given at the stakeholder session. Upon further investigation of the signal phasing diagram the default traffic signal phase is for both lanes on the A4 Portway to be on green, this includes the indicative green arrow for right turning buses into the site. Due to the indicative green arrow for right turning buses in this phase it is not possible to keep the pedestrian crossing on the 'green man' continuously as this would lead to a conflict between those crossing and buses turning into the site. We are still making final amendments to the traffic signal phasing and if it is still not possible to run a continuous green man at the pedestrian crossing across the bus entrance / exit, it should be possible to engineer the traffic signals to ensure that pedestrians are not waiting long to cross.

Q4. Looking at the pedestrian crossing on the Portway itself, have you considered how people using scooter and ebikes provided by the new mobility hub will integrate with pedestrians crossing from the Grove Leaze direction?

A4. People can cross the Portway from Grove Leaze to the P&R site and vice versa using the signal controlled crossing which is split into two sections to cross the carriageways. The crossing is a shared facility for all users.

Q5. Has a straight crossing without a staggered leg been considered as this break in the crossing feels as though there is potential for conflict between users using the crossing?

A5. Yes it was considered but is not possible due to mature trees and due to proximity of the junction with Grove Leaze.

Q6. Is the YTL arena development contributing to this project?

A6. This project is funded through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement

Q7. How much travel disruption might be expected during construction? And are you keeping two way traffic movements?

A7. To achieve the two way traffic during construction period are exploring options that may turn central reservation into a running lane for traffic which will allow us to keep safe space for contractors. We have been working with Bristol City Council's Network Management Team and National Highways and are keen to avoid travel disruption and avoid 3 way lights.

Q8. Will there be any new additional secure bike parking and e scooter charging points in P&R?

A8. We will put you in touch with the Project Manager of the Mobility Hubs at WECA who can comment further on that point.

Q9. How wide is the shared use path on the Portway?

A9. It varies in width but not sure of the exact width.

Q10. Trees and leaves are an issue on Portway and can create a barrier for people with limited mobility. If I got off at the P&R, can I walk / push back up to the shared use pathway?

A10. Yes, this section is just not on the map to ensure the focus is on the new infrastructure proposed.

Q11. With new facilities at the P&R which includes a new train station. Will there be an increase to toilet facilities?

A11. We would need to confirm that with WECA colleagues

Q12. Will there be a covered walkway from the train station to the bus stop?

A12. That is something the project team can take away and consider.

Q13. Looks great for buses, very bus centric. Wondered if the whole corridor had been shelved due to costs?

A13. No, just fast tracking this element of the project

Q14. Much wider pavements are needed for people to use. Trees are constraining the width of the path. Never seen a queue in bus lane westbound, could that space be used to widen path?

A14. This is something that could be looked at but would be unlikely due to catering for bus movements.

Q15. Need better signage as there is a great shared use path but need better signs. Could finger posts be installed to point people to the route for Shirehampton Village etc?

A15. Way finding will be picked up as part of the car park expansion and will be improved.

Q16. Shared use signs are needed if keeping cyclists on the pavement

A16. Noted.

Q17. Better not to have shared infrastructure. Did notice an error on the map. Should there be tactile paving on the crossing on the mouth of the junction?

A17. Yes that is an omission on the drawing.

Q18. How much busier will the P&R be if there are all these buses going north and south? Is the bus stop going to be big enough? How many buses can you fit into the bus stop section?

A.18 Shuttle buses for the arena will run continuously so no risk of queues of buses. Also, in the evening so risk of clashing with normal buses is low. Currently modelling based on one bus every 10 to 15 mins from both directions.

Q19. If you have lots of buses unloading, do you have a raised kerb and shelters to cope with this demand?

A19. We have a longer bus stop there now and any expansion will be subject to review as part of wider corridor project.

Q20. If people would like to comment on the tree discussions where we sometimes must compromise on good infrastructure because of the positioning of existing trees that would be encouraged?

A20. Stakeholders can contact the team directly with any specific comments.

5.3 Stakeholder feedback

We had responses from the following stakeholders:

SevernNet

Great to see the P&R entrance progress and hope the whole corridor can benefit from a significant upgrade for active travel. It seems the buses flow freely westbound and the weakness especially in terms of safety is with active travel.

Could the signal controlled crossing across the P&R entrance remain on green for active travel users? Cyclists typically use the 'shared use' pavement so would like to see the focus on the shared use path being improved, shared use signs and width increased.

Could include a few fingerposts with wayfinding e.g. West for Avonmouth, Lawrence Weston, Pill, NCN41 and across Portway for Shirehampton on foot etc. Shared use signage is missing identifying the pavement as shared use.

BWA (Bristol Walking Alliance)

Bristol Walking Alliance commented on the crossing points and asked about a continual green man for pedestrians and cyclists. However, this is not possible due to the indicative green arrow for right turning buses in this phase so the pedestrian crossing cannot be on the 'green man' continuously as this would lead to a conflict between those crossing and buses turning into the site.

BWA commented that if pedestrians can only cross the mouth of the site when both lanes of the Portway are halted, it will inevitably lead to unnecessary delay for pedestrians and cyclists, encouraging them to cross on red. They wanted the team to see if it is possible for entering buses to be separately signalled so that the pedestrian crossing is green by default and only turns red when a bus is approaching.

Bristol Tree Forum

The Bristol Tree Forum were sent the details about the trees that are proposed to be removed. There was a query about 3 specific trees which has been addressed and they also asked for the project to be submitted as a planning application. However, the project is deliverable under permitted development.

Avonmouth Planning Group

This group would like the project to consider improvements to the safe walking entrance for pedestrians coming from Avonmouth and the lower end of Shirehampton. As the layout now means anyone walking from this area and entering via either Victoria Rd or The Portway have to walk on the road that vehicles use to either enter or exit the site.

They also ask that the running times of the 902 be looked at and encourage that the last bus back should leave the centre of Bristol by 11pm or 1115pm to enable and encourage theatre goers to use the service, thus also preventing pollution in central Bristol. This is out of the scope of this consultation but has been noted as part of the wider strategic corridor work.

6. Public Results

6.1 On Site session

The project team ran a drop in session at Portway Park & Ride which was aimed at public transport users. The team carried out a walk around of the site and spoke to passengers waiting to board the bus. The main comments were very positive and people who regularly use the service were happy to hear about the plans to improve the bus exit and the possibility to expand in the future. They also referred to the punctuality of the existing bus service and would like the service to run later.

6.2 Public feedback

There were 647 letters sent out to local people asking for any comments or concerns. The team did not receive any feedback from the letters except for one phone call asking about the bus services at the site.