

# Transport and Connectivity Policy Committee

## 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024



## Public Forum

### **Public Forum Questions**

The following Public Forum Questions have been received for the Transport and Connectivity Policy Committee 11<sup>th</sup> July:

Questions 1 and 2: Councillor Rob Bryher – *No agenda item assigned*

Questions 3 and 4: Ian Pond, Bristol Cycling Campaign – *No agenda item assigned*

Question 5, 6 and 7: Matt Sanders – *No agenda item assigned*

Question 8, 9 and 10: Nicholas Davies – No agenda item assigned

Question 11 and 12: Suzanne Audrey, Chair of TRESAcic – Item 8. Strategic Corridors update

### **Public Forum Statements**

The following Public Forum Statements has been received for the Transport and Connectivity Policy Committee 11<sup>th</sup> July:

Statement 1: Matt Sanders

Statement 2: Christina Biggs, Bristol Rail Campaign

***Please note: The views and information contained within the public statements are those of the individuals concerned and not of the Council.***



## Public Forum Questions

### Questions 1 and 2: Councillor Rob Bryher

Preamble:

In early June, there was a week to ten days' overrun of planned roadworks on Church Road near the junction with Chalks Road (<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/main-bristol-road-closed-long-9319203>). Local residents have expressed frustration to me about many of the issues arising from this and it has spurred me to ask some basic questions about roadworks and different contractors overrun times so we have a clear picture of the performance of each contractor.

**Question 1:** Please can you tell me all the contractors Bristol City Council currently engages to run roadworks and/or maintenance schemes and the additional time they have each required for each discrete job?

#### Officer Response:

There are many contractors across the various types of asset work. There are a several regular contractors:

- ETM defect repairs and large highway projects
- Griffiths bridge repairs and large and small highway projects
- Centregreat street lighting works
- Shappire solutions drainage cleansing and repairs
- Kier preventative maintenance surfacing
- Core TM traffic management support
- Eurovia major resurfacing
- Glamorgan lining reinstatement and refresh of lining
- Pronin footway preventative maintenance Etc.

The list above is not all the contractors who can work on the highway only BCC maintenance main suppliers. See note.

No schemes are given additional time unless there is an agreed compensation event to extend the time, due to unforeseen circumstances i.e., an unknown electric cable or utility, adverse weather preventing progress, etc.

**Question 2:** What more can be done to ensure roadworks and/or maintenance can be completed in a timely manner so that residents and all road users are not needlessly delayed by overrunning schemes?

#### Officer Response:

Officers are working with contractors to make sure realistic timescales are communicated to the public in its noticing and communications. Officers will continue to work with its supply chain to ensure suitable contingency is built into initially communication and informed to all road users. The highway network is a complicated network above and below ground therefore this complexity can sometimes cause delays which officers will endeavour to ensure is communicated clearly and effectively.

Note: It needs to be noted that a large number of contractors working on the network, which the authority are required by law to allow, to undertake their works. The example above, which was a developer's connection into a sewer are not employed by the authority, but we are required to accommodate their works. Whilst we monitor and endeavour to manage their requirements, we have very little influence over their timescales and any delays caused. Therefore, not all roadworks or street works are the responsibility of the authority.

### **Questions 3 and 4: Ian Pond, Bristol Cycling Campaign**

#### **Question 3: Nelson Street**

##### **Background**

At the Full Council meeting held on 8 November 2022 1 one of our members asked a question about the Loading Bay that had been installed on the footway / shared space on Nelson Street without a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). The unauthorised Loading Bay remains on Nelson Street without a TRO. A formal TRO consultation (BCC ref: CAE/NMT/P-1275) for a proposed Loading Bay closed on 8 September 2023 2. The outcome of the formal TRO consultation is still unknown. Further information on Nelson Street is available at [www.bristolcycling.org.uk/nelson-street](http://www.bristolcycling.org.uk/nelson-street)

**Question 3:** When will the outcome of the formal TRO consultation be published, and what steps are the Council taking in the meantime regarding the unauthorised Loading Bay?

##### **Officer Response**

We will produce a notice of making of the order in the next few weeks and this will likely be published in the press in August. Objectors will be notified of the decision within the next couple of weeks prior to the order being sealed. The outcome of the TRO consultation and process was to approve the TRO for a 24 hour loading bay.

#### **Question 4: University Road**

##### **Background**

A temporary modal filter was implemented at the southern end of University Road (at the junction with Queen's Road) in 2020 as part of the Covid measures. Following a formal TRO consultation in November and December 2021, the modal filter was made permanent in January 2022 3. A new formal TRO consultation opened (BCC ref: CAE/NMT/P-1262) proposing to remove the modal filter and re-open University Road to all traffic. The consultation closed in May 2023. The outcome of the second formal TRO consultation is still unknown. Further information on University Road is available at [www.bristolcycling.org.uk/university-road](http://www.bristolcycling.org.uk/university-road)

**Question 4:** When will the outcome of the formal TRO consultation be published, and why was the Council proposing to remove the modal filter?

##### **Officer Response**

The council has considered the objections to the proposed TRO to reopen University Road and has decided not to proceed with the proposed reopening of University Road. The TRO decision report will be published in the next 2-4 weeks. The council will be considering how best to make the current temporary layout permanent as proposals for the A37/A4018 strategic corridor scheme are developed.

## **Questions 5, 6, and 7: Matt Sanders**

### **Question 5: Cumberland Road Warning Letters**

Preamble:

The Cumberland Road Bus Gate was installed in August 2023, with the Enforcement Camera following on September 21st.

On December 11th, the camera was turned on, and over the next three weeks it detected 6,705 contraventions, so the Council sent Warning Letters to those drivers.

If this rate of non-compliance were extrapolated for the coming year, it would predict more than 100,000 contraventions in 2024.

That would make this the all-time second-highest-grossing Bus Gate in the entire country.

(For context, in 2021 its closest local rival, the Victoria Street Bus Gate, issued 36,000 Penalty Charge Notices.)

It was therefore obvious to the Council's Transport Department in December '23, that the Cumberland Road Bus Gate was NOT operating correctly. So there was an opportunity at this stage, to pause the process, assess the situation, and see if any adjustments were required.

Sadly, the timing of the Warning Letter period meant that this data only came to light over the Christmas period, when key decision makers were on holiday.

Instead of pausing to take stock, on January 2nd the Parking Services Department pressed on with enforcement — and issued nearly 12,000 PCNs in the first month.

And so the Council passed the point of no return.

It now became IMPOSSIBLE to make adjustments to the Bus Gate, without them being seen as admissions of failure, and leading to countless demands for refunds. The Council has therefore CONTINUED to enforce this restriction, without taking ANY remedial measures.

(The addition of Red Tarmac does not count, as that was in the original design drawings, so should have been part of the main installation in August, yet was mysteriously omitted.)

**Question 5:** In December 2023, were any efforts made to analyse the available data of excessive contraventions, and to consider remedial measures, before the Council was led down this path of continuing to enforce a clearly defective Bus Gate?

### **Officer Response**

The signage installed at Cumberland Road is compliant with the latest guidance and legislation from the Department for Transport, and the number of signs exceeds the requirements set out in the Traffic Signs Manual. An electronic traffic sign was put in place for a month after the bus gate was installed in September 2023 to further highlight the new bus gate. Anyone who continued to drive through the

bus gate was issued with a warning letter prior to the first Penalty Charge Notices being issued four months later in January 2024.

The above details the significant work carried out by the council, much of which is in addition to the minimum required from national legislation. Data is analysed on a regular basis to understand the number of contraventions. There is a limit to what additional measures the council could put in place over and above what had already been implemented. Red surfacing was installed in March to further highlight the bus gate.

#### **Question 6: The SS Great Britain Honey-Trap**

The Cumberland Road Bus Gate only restricts eastbound traffic, and was located to the east of Gas Ferry Road, with the specific brief to retain access to the SS Great Britain, from BOTH directions.

The Transport Dept erected a number of warning signs for attention of EASTBOUND traffic, arriving from Cumberland Basin.

However, most out-of-town visitors to the SS Great Britain will of course be arriving from the M32 and City Centre, so will approach along Cumberland Road in a WESTBOUND direction, and therefore see NO warning signs.

Having visited the ship, in order to re-trace their steps, they exit Gas Ferry Road, and turn left onto Cumberland Road, where they immediately drive through the Bus Gate.

Rather than being placed AT the junction, (as in ALL the Bus Gate diagrams in the Traffic Signs Manual), this Bus Gate is positioned several metres BEYOND the junction — so is not visible to those drivers, until they make the left-turn.

Department for Transport guidance stipulates the exit of Gas Ferry Road should have received a 600mm “No Left Turn” sign, with an exemption plate listing the permitted vehicles. And the Council correctly used signs like this, at each end of Bristol Bridge, to warn drivers who might otherwise turn left from Redcliff Street or Bridge Street, and thus blunder into the Bus Gates there.

Unfortunately, instead of using a 600mm “No Left Turn” sign at Cumberland Road, the designers instead specified a small Advance Direction Sign, with a 300mm “Bus Route” roundel.

Predictably, this was NOT effective, and has led to countless contraventions by visitors to this locale. In early May, the Transport Dept added a small yellow sign, with the baffling message “Turn right except exempt vehicles”. So the Council acknowledged there was a problem, but implemented a wholly inadequate “solution”.

Despite their specific brief being to retain access to the SS Great Britain from BOTH directions, the designers failed to specify adequate signage for attention of those visitors arriving from the EAST.

The Parking Services Department is continuing to enforce penalty charge notices, for countless contraventions, which were directly caused by the Transport team’s negligence.

**Question 6:** Will the Council now immediately replace these inadequate signs with the CORRECT measure specified by the Department for Transport, and also previously used at other Bristol Bus Gates, which is a 600mm “No Left Turn” sign?

And if not, then why not...?

**Officer Response**

At the Gas Ferry Rd junction, a descriptive sign tells all vehicles to turn right (except exempt vehicles), in addition to the bus gate regulatory sign showing the bus gate to the left and all other traffic to turn right. Any vehicle stopping to give way at the Gas Ferry Rd junction would also be able to see the bus gate immediately to their left before they make a turn. We believe this provides adequate signage and is clear for drivers.

**Question 7: Junction Priorities at Bus Gates**

Preamble:

The Traffic Signs Manual advises local authorities that, when assigning priorities at a T-Junction, “the route carrying the highest traffic flow should normally be given priority.”

As well as being Department for Transport guidance, that is obviously common sense.

When a Bus Gate is placed on a formerly busy route, the majority of traffic is then diverted down the junction’s other, previously-MINOR, branch. That is the whole point of the exercise.

In this scenario, “the route carrying the highest traffic flow” obviously CHANGES, and so the junction priorities should be REASSIGNED.

This is supported by the Manual’s “Bus Gate” road diagrams, which ALL show the Bus Gate located on the MINOR branch of a junction, so that the MAJOR route’s road-lining guides “Other Traffic” AWAY from the restriction.

The designers of the Bristol Bridge Bus Gates apparently did not understand this issue, so all three Bus Gates were placed on the approaching major routes, WITHOUT reassigning the priorities of junctions, to guide traffic AWAY from them.

The road lining instead guided all traffic TOWARDS those Bus Gates, and in their first year of operation each of these restrictions had over 30,000 contraventions.

Following criticism from the Traffic Penalty Tribunal, in 2021 junction priorities were reassigned at Baldwin Street, to guide traffic into Queen Charlotte Street instead, and the number of contraventions suddenly dropped.

But the other two Bus Gates at Victoria Street and High Street have NOT been corrected in a similar way, so in recent years have continued to experience more contraventions.

In 2022, the Cumberland Road Bus Gate was designed. Yet again, the restriction was placed on the MAJOR route, and yet again the junction priorities were NOT reassigned, so the road lining continues to guide all traffic TOWARDS the Bus Gate, instead of away from it.

Predictably, this has been catastrophic, with Cumberland Road experiencing 40,000 contraventions, in the first half of this year.

Had the junction priorities been reassigned, non-permitted eastbound drivers would have been guided into Gas Ferry Road, where they could safely turn around.

And visitors to the SS Great Britain would have been guided to turn right when leaving Gas Ferry Road – so would also have been less likely to contravene the Bus Gate.

**Question 7:** Having reassigned the junction priorities at Baldwin Street, less than a year before, why did the Council's engineers NOT reassign the junction priorities, when they designed the Cumberland Road Bus Gate?

**Officer Response**

All junctions are different and need to be considered in their own context. Council designers considered this option and considered on balance that the current layout was preferable to the diverted priority as proposed. There are a number of reasons for this related to safety, visibility and traffic movements particular to this junction. As the question states, in general the priority should be given to the main traffic flow. For westbound traffic this is clearly the through movement along Cumberland Rd not the right turn out of Cumberland Rd. The design proposed which would prioritise traffic exiting out of Gas Ferry Road would not meet the requirement set out in the question. This is one example of the complexities that need to be considered when designing junctions. Guidance is just that, guidance. Engineering judgement needs to be used at all times to interpret the guidance and ensure the most suitable layout for each specific junction is achieved.

It is also worth noting that one of the Key reasons for the bus gate is to prioritise buses. The layout suggested would require buses travelling in both directions to stop and give way to any traffic exiting Gas Ferry Rd which would be counter-productive to the aims of the scheme.

**Questions 8, 9, and 10: Nicholas Davies**

**Question 8:**

Can we see a complete list of CRSTS schemes, with details, at their various stages of development? By now we trust there are full details for CRSTS1 schemes which are more advanced, designed, costed etc and indications of the corridors and schemes being considered for CRSTS2.

**Officer Response**

The list of CRSTS schemes has been regularly provided at various public meetings. The last scrutiny session before the election provided an update on the CRSTS Strategic Corridors programme as well as an update on active travel schemes across the city including those funded by CRSTS which is just one of our funding sources. Papers are available on the council's website – from Page 66

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission, 07/03/2024 17:00 \(bristol.gov.uk\)](#)

Schemes are brought forward at appropriate points for sign off, at either cabinet previously or committee in future, to sign off business case elements and designs. As per the update the schemes are all at various stages of development, some are being delivered on the ground, others have been consulted on and are heading to tender, others are still in design development. Work is beginning across the region on potential schemes for delivery through CRSTS 2.

**Question 9:**

2 Development of CRSTS schemes has so far proceeded without input from Bristol Cycling Campaign until the formal public consultation stage, despite our requests. In other cities, with impressive, recent records of delivering cycle routes, informal consultations (collaborative designs, discussions, meetings etc) take place from the earliest stages. Will the committee commit to such early informal consultations in future?

**Officer Response**

This is a question directed to committee however officers would confirm that all schemes generally go through an informal engagement stage well in advance of formal public statutory consultation stage and this has been the case for CRSTS schemes to date. Bristol Cycling campaign are invited to comment on schemes at this stage as are other stakeholders.

**Question 10:**

The Portway is a CRSTS scheme. The concept design scheme passed by the Cabinet of the previous Administration is very disappointing, not transformative at all. It consists of pointless bus lanes where buses speed along but nothing where they are held up. For walking and cycling it offers "minor pavement widening", where there is space for full segregation. It does not comply with Local Transport Notes 1/20 and 1/24. Will the committee commit to its redesign?

**Officer Response**

This issue has been discussed with Bristol Cycling Campaign following the submission received. BCC believes the scheme is compliant with Local Transport Notes and is in discussion with Active Travel England on those points and it should be noted that the provision of a shared path is compliant with LTN 1/20 bearing in mind the pedestrian and cycle flows along the corridor.

The scheme is very ambitious and seeks to provide a transformative impact to bus journeys and a significant rebalancing of priority towards sustainable modes by reallocating road space away from general traffic. The strategic case for this scheme is clear, encouraging use of both the Portway and Long Ashton Park and Rides and the recently built Portway Rail station. The anticipated reduction in bus journey times for Portway buses is just under 3 minutes, a significant change at around 20% of current journey time. The bus priority facilities proposed for the A370 and through Hotwells also benefit North Somerset buses.

The council must balance the needs of all modes when designing schemes as well as considering the budget available. The Portway carries as many bus passengers (160) in the peak hour as there are cyclists in an entire day and several times more bus passengers than pedestrians. It is therefore appropriate that the scheme focusses on improving the bus priority provision while providing significant upgrades to walking and cycling provision along the corridor. The scheme has been carefully



considered and all options weighed against the needs of all users and the budget available which resulted in it being signed off by the previous cabinet.

### **Questions 11 and 12: Suzanne Audrey, Chair of TRESAcic**

**Background.** With regard to the A37 strategic corridor through Totterdown, Totterdown residents have very serious concerns about the closure of the Bellevue Road/Wells Road junction. We expressed these during the consultation but they appear to have been ignored. TRESA supports attempts to promote sustainable transport but the concerns about the proposed closure are serious and legitimate.

**Question 11.** Is the proposed closure of the Bellevue Road/Wells Road junction going ahead?

#### **Officer Response**

The closure of Bellevue Rd/Wells Rd junction will be consulted on as part of the statutory consultation for the wider scheme. This does not mean it will automatically proceed but we do want to get people's view on the full scheme. The closure proposal is being considered alongside other work to bring forward a South Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood and no final decision has been taken as yet whether to proceed with the closure or to consider it as part of the wider scheme.

**Question 12.** What can TRESA, and local residents, do to make officers fully aware of the implications of the junction closure?

#### **Officer Response**

Officers are well aware of the concerns raised and are discussing next steps with the Committee Chair and will give due consideration to the issues raised. We would encourage residents to respond to the statutory consultation that will launch shortly and provide their views on the proposals.

## **Public Forum Statements**

### **Statement 1: Matt Sanders**

#### **A Public Statement - The Cumberland Road Bus Gate**

##### **THE RATIONALE**

In recent years, the Council proposed a new Bus Gate on Cumberland Road, with the stated rationale being to improve air quality, and aid the smooth running of the M2 bus service.

No data was presented to demonstrate how air quality would be improved, when one factors in the inevitable displacement of traffic to congested parallel routes like Coronation Road.

And the half-mile stretch of Cumberland Road "improved" by this Bus Gate represents just 5% of the M2's nine-mile route, and just 2% of its 50-minute journey time. So any slight benefit which may have been gleaned, has little impact on the M2's overall performance.

In July 2022, the Consultation Report contained overwhelming opposition from local stakeholders, with over 80% of respondents rating the scheme as “Poor” or “Very Poor”.

## THE FEASIBILITY

This location on Spike Island faced significant geographical issues, including:

- This was formerly a major route into the city centre;
- This is a narrow ISLAND, with limited access at each end by Cumberland Road, and no other way of escape;
- Cumberland Basin has a tangled spaghetti of four routes feeding in to Cumberland Road. So it was necessary in this locale to prevent drivers proceeding onto Spike Island, and to somehow communicate that fact, despite the restriction being half a mile away.
- The SS Great Britain sits half-way along the island, bringing a constant stream of new drivers unfamiliar with the locale, so inevitably relying on their satnavs.
- As the Bus Gate only restricts eastbound traffic, it was placed east of Gas Ferry Road, to maintain access to the SS Great Britain from both directions. But Gas Ferry is a no-through-road, so could not be designated as the official “Escape Route”.
- Therefore, the PREVIOUS junction with Hanover Place was designated the Escape Route. But that notion relies upon drivers (including first-time visitors) turning left 60 metres BEFORE the Bus Gate, in order to avoid it. Any sign would struggle to convey the importance of this manoeuvre.

Regardless of any political justification, these logistical problems should have rung alarm bells, when assessing the feasibility of this project. Indeed, many of these issues were flagged during the Consultation.

Nonetheless, a decision was taken to proceed.

## THE DESIGN

During the Design phase, numerous mistakes were made.

- While ALL the Bus Gate diagrams in the Traffic Signs Manual have the restriction placed AT a junction, in this case the Bus Gate was placed 30m BEYOND the junction. So vehicles which drive up to it, must then reverse back around the corner, or perform a U-turn or three-point-turn, so risking an accident.
- It appears the Bus Gate was positioned like this, to accommodate a Turning Lane for westbound vehicles, awaiting a gap in the eastbound traffic, before turning right into Gas Ferry Road. But the whole purpose of the Bus Gate is to reduce eastbound traffic to a trickle. Which means there was no need for a Turning Lane, so no need to displace the Bus Gate from the junction.
- ALL the Manual’s diagrams show a Bus Gate on a T-junction’s MINOR branch — so the Major route’s road-lining guides Other Traffic AWAY from it. At Cumberland Road, the Bus Gate was instead placed on the junction’s MAJOR route — so the road-lining instead guides ALL Traffic TOWARDS it.
- This could have been averted by reassigning the priorities of the junction, to guide eastbound drivers into Gas Ferry Road, where they could safely turn around. And drivers emerging from Gas Ferry

Road would have been guided to turn right, and so avoid the Bus Gate, too. It appears this solution was not even considered.

- The designated Escape Route down Hanover Place requires a very tall sign, displaying TWO left turns. But the signage specified is far too small for a 30mph road, and mounted so high that at night-time an approaching car's headlights cease illuminating it, before the driver gets close enough to read it.
- ALL other warning signs at Cumberland Basin, Cumberland Road, and various side roads, are also smaller than stipulated by the DfT guidance.
- All the yellow signs at Cumberland Basin are a much darker shade than the "Lemon" yellow specified by the TSRGD, so are less legible than they should be, and fail to prevent drivers entering Cumberland Road.
- While a number of signs were erected to warn EASTBOUND drivers approaching the Bus Gate from Cumberland Basin, there are no signs to warn drivers from the City Centre, who approach this locale in a WESTBOUND direction.
- Consequently, having visited destinations like the SS Great Britain, when they try to retrace their steps, they emerge from Gas Ferry Road, and turn left onto Cumberland Road, so blunder through the Bus Gate, which is not visible until they have made that turn.
- To prevent this, the exit of Gas Ferry Road should have a No Left Turn sign, as specified by the DfT guidance — yet a small Advance Direction Sign was erected instead, and has clearly be ineffective.
- The "BUS GATE" road marking is not correctly painted, to comply with the TSRGD specification, so is not legible from the expected distance, when viewed obliquely by an approaching driver.
- When building the Bus Gates around Bristol Bridge, the Council added yellow backing boards, to make the Bus Route signs more noticeable, yet inexplicably did not do the same here.
- And even though a red surface treatment was shown on this Bus Gate's design drawings, it was inexplicably omitted during the main installation, and then only added three months after enforcement commenced.

## **CONCLUSION**

Unsurprisingly, this Bus Gate has been contravened more than 40,000 times since January, making it one of the all-time least successful (but highest-grossing) Bus Gates in the entire country.

Yet, despite all these obvious flaws being identified months ago, the Council has failed to take ANY remedial action, and is continuing to enforce the restriction, as if nothing at all is wrong.

## **Statement 2: Christina Biggs, Bristol Rail Campaign**

Please see the statement appended below here: