

Response to Consultation

Bristol Cycling Campaign

Jan 2016

South Gloucestershire Cycling Strategy



Ref: <https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/cyclingstrategy/consultationHome>

Bristol Cycling Campaign welcomes the development of a cycling strategy for South Gloucestershire and many of the aims and aspirations expressed therein. However all good things can be made even better, so here are our comments on the documents which have been presented for consultation.

Bristol Cycling Campaign believes that everyone in Greater Bristol, whatever their age or ability, deserves safe and inviting space for cycling. This should never be to the detriment of walking. We have the following general comments on this consultation drawing on the [Bristol Cycling Manifesto](#), and the [Making Space for Cycling](#) guide for street renewals which set out how to achieve Space for Cycling:

1. The strategy aims to “make cycling more attractive” and “make better places”, but this is not carried through to the rest of the strategy. Too many of the current and proposed routes in the South Gloucestershire area are alongside and close to main roads with unpleasantly high volumes of motor traffic. Making cycling attractive and comfortable by creating a more pleasant environment for cycling routes is important for encouraging more people to cycle.
2. We strongly encourage and expect a fully integrated approach with Bristol City Council in delivering a unified and seamless cycle network across the whole of Greater Bristol. This should apply to all relevant issues including design standards, signing and routes. There should be a close match between the [Bristol Cycle Strategy](#) 2015 and the final one for South Gloucestershire.
3. The aspirational network of cycle routes should include all those strategic and neighbourhood routes identified by Bristol Cycling Campaign as set out on the following maps [South Gloucestershire North](#), [South Gloucestershire South](#), [South Gloucestershire Outer](#).

Comments on the Draft Cycle Strategy

4. Targets (page 5): We support the aims listed, but the only numerical target stated is that cycling will account for 10% of commuter trips by 2020. This presumably compares with a figure of 3.9% of journeys to work in 2011 quoted on page 8? It would be helpful to have a more recent figure (or at least an estimate). Given the time it takes for new measures to be implemented and to take effect, 10% may be the most ambitious target which can realistically be achieved by 2020, but we urge that the council aims for much higher figures than this in the slightly longer term, at least 15% by 2025 and 20% by 2030. Many places in the Netherlands already have much higher levels than these, so with sufficient commitment, they should be achievable. Also, what is the definition of "commuter trips", e.g. does it include journeys to school or college? If not, then the strategy should also specify data and targets for these journeys. Finally we urge that targets for the percentage of all journeys be specified.
5. Developing Better Places through Cycling (page 9): This section also needs to mention the importance of direct and efficient cycle routes across new developments, i.e. for journeys starting and finishing outside the development.
6. Think Cycle (page 11): In the first sentence "cycling issues" should be changed to "transport issues", since most transport schemes affect cyclists, and cycle provision should be given priority in the overall scheme design and not just inserted as an afterthought when the rest of the design is complete.
7. This section is welcome aspirational thinking but the current draft lacks a credible statement of how cycle thinking will be embedded in South Gloucestershire systems and processes, eg route choice, scheme design, project management, quality assurance. development control.
8. Physical, Operational, Behavioural Measures (page 12): Table not found.
9. The hierarchy of cycle routes: On core routes, some form of lighting is desirable even outside urban areas (page 13). We are concerned that defects more than 20mm deep, but slightly less than 10cm square might not be repaired under these guidelines. Such defects could be very damaging to cycles (page 14).
10. Implementation (page 16): Out of the funding sources which are under their control, we urge the council to make a commitment to allocate a significant and specified proportion towards cycling improvements.
11. It is absolutely essential that an action plan be defined. In its current form, the strategy contains many fine aims and aspirations, but too few firm commitments to actually deliver on them.

Comments on the Technical Guidance

12. Network Planning: The map should be improved (page 9). Bradley Stoke Town Centre (Willowbrook Centre, Leisure Centre, etc.) should be classified as a key destination. The key destinations listed in the text should be shown on the map. UWE, Bristol Parkway Station, Southmead Hospital and some others need adding.
13. Clarify the meaning of "urban grain composition" (page 10)?
14. We agree with the text "alignment of approach should avoid severe angles" (page 17), but the 45 degree angles shown on the diagram are uncomfortably severe for cyclists. The aim should be to create gentle curves (like on motorway slip roads).
15. The "local route" shown from Bradley Stoke Town Centre to Cribbs Causeway via Little Stoke, the railway bridge just north of Patchway Station and Charlton Hayes should be reclassified as a strategic route and shown on the other maps where relevant (08_Bradley_Stoke_Inset_Map.pdf & 07_North_Fringe_Inset_Map_v2.pdf).
16. There should also be an aspiration to provide reasonably direct cycle routes eastwards across the M4 from Bradley Stoke Town Centre towards Yate, and south-eastwards towards Emersons Green.
17. The map 01_SGC_Area_v2.pdf should be extended to show destinations outside South Gloucestershire and should include:
 - a. an aspirational cycle route across the 2nd (M4) Severn Crossing towards Newport (although this is obviously outside the Council's direct control, it should use its contacts with the Highways Agency to promote this route)
 - b. an aspirational cycle route south-eastwards from UWE across the Frome towards Fishponds and Staple Hill, as proposed on page 14 of <http://johngrimshawassociates.co.uk/downloads/UWE.pdf>
18. As a general comment, the routes shown seem insufficiently ambitious. The aspiration should be to provide the most direct and convenient routes between the key destinations, not simply the routes which are easiest to deliver. Sometimes the best routes will follow main roads, but where shorter and more pleasant routes can be provided away from main roads, then that should be the aspiration, in order to "make cycling more attractive" and "make better places" as stated in the "cycling aims" on page 4 of the main strategy. Making cycling attractive and comfortable by creating a more pleasant environment for cycling routes is important for encouraging more people to cycle.

19. A practical example of this is the route proposed on the maps for the North Fringe Trunk Route in the vicinity of the East of Harry Stoke New Neighbourhood. The proposed route follows the new Stoke Gifford Transport Link and then joins the Ring Road. A more direct and pleasant route could be provided parallel to the Ham Brook and under the M32 using the shortly-to-be-redundant underpass near Faber Farm at Hambrook. For more detail see this consultation response <http://bristolcyclingcampaign.org.uk/attachments/article/492/BristolCyclingCampaignResponsetoConsultationHarryStoke.pdf>
20. We understand that officers are concerned that they may encounter some problems delivering this better route and that it probably wouldn't be possible to deliver it quickly, because the new development will be constructed gradually over several years. We are happy for a less satisfactory route to be provided as an interim measure, but surely the aspiration should be to work to overcome any obstacles and ultimately to provide the best possible route. If the council is not willing to invest the necessary effort to achieve such outcomes, then very few of the admirable aims and aspirations set out in the strategy are likely to be achieved in practice.

[ENDS]

CONTACT

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References

1. **[Bristol Cycling Campaign \(BCyC\)](#)**

We been campaigning since 1991 to make cycling in Bristol so easy that everyone does it. We produced the [Bristol Cycling Manifesto](#) in 2013 which has now been signed by over 4,000 people. This sets out a 12 year strategy to quadruple cycling in the city which has been endorsed by the Mayor of Bristol and has influenced the Bristol Cycling Strategy.

2. **Lots of people ride bikes in Greater Bristol**

The 2011 census showed that cycling to work in Bristol had doubled over the past 10 years and that Bristol had significantly more cycling than any other major English city. On census day in 2011 16,211 Bristolians said that they usually cycled to work. (1 in 12 of the 104,729 who travelled to work at that time). A telephone survey for HM Government indicated that in 2012 nearly a quarter of adult Bristolians cycled at least once a month for one reason or another. Bristol City Council data collected by observers

between 2010 and 2013 show that at peak times there were over 10,000 cyclists on Bristol roads and 7% of all city traffic measured at these times were cyclists. Across the city, some routes carry 300-500 cyclists per hour and at four busy points on roads into the city cyclists constitute over a quarter of all traffic during peak hours.

<http://samsaundersbristol.wordpress.com/2013/02/12/considerate-cycling-27-bristol-compared/>

3. Improving and extending the cycle network is a West of England priority

A strategy for cycling in Bristol is emerging. The [Bristol Cycling Manifesto](#) set out a [network of strategic cycle routes](#) and these are supplemented by local links. These have now been incorporated into the road network plans of Bristol City Council. All measures on these routes must include a high level of cycle provision, or at the least 'cycle proofing' for the future.

4. Cycling is a national priority

The Times newspaper 'Cities Fit for Cycling' campaign supported a parliamentary inquiry by the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group that was published last month. It was prepared by Professor Phil Goodwin of UWE. In his forward he says: "I, like most professional transport planners, providers and researchers of my generation, have grown up thinking that cycling, though worthy, is of small significance compared with the great questions of cars, traffic and public transport, or the universal significance of walking. [...] We were wrong. The evidence demonstrates quite clearly that [...] cycling is the mode of transport 'on the cusp of greatness'".

http://allpartycycling.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/get-britain-cycling_goodwin-report.pdf

5. More cycling is a health priority

Recently published guidelines by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence have set out how local authorities must invest in walking and cycling. In February this year the government's chief medical officer, Dame Sally Davies said: "I think that investment in cycling to drive up physical activity might emerge as one of the 'best buys' in some areas."

<http://publications.nice.org.uk/walking-and-cycling-local-measures-to-promote-walking-and-cycling-as-forms-of-travel-or-recreation-ph41/recommendations>