

# Issues and Opportunities for Improving Transport in North Bristol



## Introduction

**North Bristol SusCom is a partnership of large employers in North Bristol, representing over 40,000 employees. Employers are located primarily along the A4174 ring road. There are two inter-related objectives for the continued presence of partners in North Bristol, which are the ability to expand economic activities whilst mitigating carbon emissions and other pollutants.**

North Bristol SusCom has undertaken baseline work to understand the factors that would encourage more walking, cycling, car sharing and use of public transport amongst staff across the North Fringe.

An Issues and Opportunities map has been compiled to highlight the common issues with staff travel to / from workplaces in north Bristol. The information on the map is drawn from:

- Interviews with Employer representatives undertaken in January / February 2010.
- Results from a staff survey in April 2010. There were over 3,000 responses to the survey in total, including 250 individuals who made specific comments about 'barriers' to non-car transport in north Bristol. In addition, respondents were also asked about good sustainable travel experiences.
- Individual representations from Bike User Groups – Hewlett Packard, MoD, Airbus, GKN and UWE. Around 75 individuals provided comments.
- Public Transport advisers to the NBTWP.

The map is available from your North Bristol SusCom representative.



## Key Issues

Key transport issues shared by a number of organisations include:

- Congestion along the A4174, particularly between the Sainsbury / MOD roundabout and the M32, as well as east of the M32 (towards Emersons Green and the location of Science Park and adjacent housing development). The A4174 is also a barrier that pedestrians and cyclists find difficult and dangerous to cross. In addition there is a pinch point for cyclists where the A4174 passes beneath the railway line.
- Lack of regular orbital bus services linking to residential areas and a focus on radial routes (e.g. most services run in a north / south direction via the A38, Filton Avenue or M32). A number of employers also cite that this reduces potential non-car accessibility to/from Bath.
- The railway tunnel adjacent to Bristol Parkway Station which is a pinch point and unattractive for cyclists and pedestrians. Along with adjacent junctions it also contributes to peak hour traffic congestion along Brierly Furlong (northbound towards Bristol Parkway). Provision of an adjacent bus link via New Road has provided a priority link for public transport in this location which has helped address the issue of journey times. However, the railway tunnel remains a pinch point for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Congestion and access problems at the MoD roundabout on the A4174, particularly affecting staff from MoD and HP. Firstbus services no longer enter the MoD / HP access road due to delays getting in and out during peak hours, meaning staff must walk to the ring road stops.
- Poor rail frequencies and/or reliability to Filton Abbey Wood and Patchway Stations. North Bristol SusCom understand the issue is rolling stock and track capacity and will seek further dialogue with authorities and operators on how this can be addressed.

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The April 2010 staff survey asked about a number of barriers to sustainable travel. The availability of public transport was the most frequently raised barrier, which appears to correlate with the analysis of postcode data and employers assertions about lack of orbital services. 'Public transport takes too long' and 'public transport is too expensive' was the second and third most frequently raised barriers respectively. 'I live too far to walk and cycle' was the fourth most frequently raised barrier.

With regards to cycle paths, the detailed comments of Bike User Group members (75 responses received) can be grouped into broadly three issues:

- Maintenance of routes, particularly road surface and road markings.
- Areas where there is a lack of route continuity (from which key pinch points have emerged).
- Safety concerns at junctions or where there are potential conflicts with pedestrians or cars. There were comments about a number of locations where narrowing to provide a pedestrian crossing leaves cyclists feeling vulnerable to conflicts with cars.

## Key Opportunities

There were 250 comments as part of the April 2010 staff survey. Common suggestions were as follows:

- Shower facilities and improved cycle paths.
- A need to remove the perception of risk associated with walking and cycling (results to other survey questions suggest that safety is of particularly high concern to Rolls Royce and Airbus Staff).
- A need for public transport to be reliable, frequent, clean and affordable, for example by providing priority and introducing some form of integrated provision and ticketing (e.g. the smartcard). Frequency, affordability and convenience were core themes.
- Contra-flow traffic lanes (as available in Cardiff) were suggested as being potentially beneficial to public transport services.

The Issues and Opportunities map identifies a number of specific suggestions, the most common of which are coloured red on the plan. These include:

- Potential for an improved bus connection between the MoD and HP sites, overcoming the need for buses to use this section of the ring road and avoiding congestion at the MoD roundabout and A4174 / Coldharbour Lane junction.
- Improved linkages between the cycle route south of MoD (from Bonnington Walk) and the HP site. HP is currently investigating design solutions, which involve a more direct access to the HP campus from the south.
- Providing continuous cycle network along the A38 Gloucester Road.
- Improving pedestrian, cycling and public transport movements at the pinch point under the railway bridge near Parkway station, together with removing conflicts and improving safety on Hatchet Road (mini roundabouts in particular).
- Pedestrian islands which force cyclists into the middle of the road and in conflict with cars on Southmead Road, Coldharbour Lane and Hatchet Road (see map for locations).
- Cycleways in Bradley Stoke, Filton and Stoke Gifford to be maintained and cleared of debris.

## Conclusions

It is vital that the West of England has a direct route to the voice of business in the North Bristol area. North Bristol SusCom is able to provide this route. The Issues and Opportunities map has been prepared by North Bristol SusCom to highlight the common issues with staff travel to / from workplaces in north Bristol. Information has been drawn directly from staff responses to survey questions. North Bristol SusCom hope this map provides the framework for further dialogue and engagement with local authorities and operators to improve transport in North Bristol.