A4 Bath To Bristol Consultation - Walk Ride Bath (WRB) Response

General Comments

Investment in walking, wheeling, and cycling is very much welcomed.

Brislington to Saltford (Norman Road) is exceptionally good. The Keynsham bypass with the transit hub is a particularly exciting element as it considerably reduces the Bath to Brislington (Bristol) distance for active travel with high quality infrastructure and brings much better public mass transport and active travel connectivity to the area. The proposed Keynsham Mobility Hub should also be recognised for creating new active travel routes connecting onwards to Bitton along the South Gloucestershire council proposed Keynsham Road improvements.

However Saltford (Norman Road) until Bath (Windsor Bridge) is considered poor in terms of enhancing active travel, with no increases in walking, wheeling, cycling, or scooting travel choice that wasn't already being delivered by private developers. It feels like the sustainable transport hierarchy has been upended by putting buses at the top, not the correct way up of walking/wheeling, then cycling, and only then buses.

There is also disappointment that the schemes failed to connect to the communities and employment/education centres they will serve, specifically:

- upgrade of the path between the Globe roundabout and Newton St Loe
- connecting the Keynsham mobility hub to Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Keynsham Route 2 (Temple Street).
- a shared path on the south side of Bath Road that runs through Saltford, crossing at the Shallows and continuing on to the Globe Roundabout and Bath Spa University.
- a cycle route between the missing Newbridge Park and Ride Mobility Hub and the Royal United Hospital/Locksbrook Trading Estate.
- Upgrade of the Locksbrook Bridge connecting the private developer delivered sections of the Bristol Bath Railway Path Extension (BBRPE), "decycling" the river path and Newbridge Road.

A network is only as strong as its weakest link.

Our perception of this consultation is that it is primarily a bus improvement scheme which ran out of money, particularly the Saltford to Bath section. The mechanism used in Brislington to split the deliverables into short term and long term proposals should have been used to create a cohesive long term vision which could have been delivered by City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement 2 (CRSTS 2) 2027-2032.

General Recommendations

- All paths should be machine laid. Historically some paths have been hand laid resulting in poor surfaces for wheeling and cycling.
- Active Travel infrastructure (footways, shared paths, cycleways) should be continuous across side roads. It is noted that in the proposal walking, wheeling, and cycling infrastructure and even bus lanes "give up" at side road junctions.
- Bus lanes, when used as cycle infrastructure (not National LTN 1/20 Cycle Design Guide compliant), create delays to bus services and extremely poor dangerous interactions with cyclists and scooterists. Any modelling should limit bus travel to 12.5mph (Hire eScooter speed limit) on bus lanes where parallel cycle infrastructure is not provided. This should be lower on uphill sections.
- Parallel (tiger) crossings are preferred to signalised toucan crossings as they prioritise pedestrians and cyclists.

- Rework the Saltford to Bath section of the scheme into a coherent short term and long term proposal. This should include the following proposals:
    - Shared path through Saltford all the way to the Globe roundabout,
    - Newbridge Park and Ride Mobility Hub (recognising its relationship to the RUH ergo cycle lanes along Newbridge Road protected by floating the parking),
    - Refurbishment to Locksbridge Bridge completing the missing link that delivers the full Bristol and Bath Railway Path Extension (BBRPE),
    - Redesign of Windsor Bridge junction as a CYCLOPS style junction, connecting it to the existing Upper Bristol Road infrastructure and supports delivery of the North of the river East-West Active Travel route.
- WECA/BaNES should pursue a policy of developing shovel ready good proposals that, while they cannot be delivered within current budgetary constraints, may be deliverable as and when future funding becomes available. CRSTS underspend, CRSTS 2, Active Travel Fund, and even CAZ revenue provide funding opportunities that can be leveraged.

Brislington - Keynsham

Very strong with no particular concerns but Walk Ride Bath members are not particularly familiar with the area.

Recommendations

- Short term measures are supported.
- On the long term measures, option 1 is preferred as this creates a socially safe active travel route along the abandoned railway while delivering transformational changes to an existing section of the A4. It is right to call this a road re-allocation scheme.

Keynsham - Saltford (Norman Road)

The proposed Keynsham Mobility Hub would provide a good walking/wheeling/cycling link for the east of Keynsham for those trying to access express bus services and the railway station.

Recommendations

- The paths coming out of the mobility hub do not follow desire lines. This would create muddy worn paths in grassy areas. For example, the proposed connection from Station Road to the hub loops around the skate park rather than providing a direct path.
- Given the S Glos Active Travel improvements to the Keynsham Road between Keynsham Railway Station and Bitton care should be taken to ensure there is a good connection to the hub.
- The hub proposal stops at Bath Hill. This needs to be expanded to connect to LCWIP Keynsham Route 2 (Temple Street).

Saltford (Norman Road) to Bath (Windsor Bridge)

The general improvements proposed in the Saltford area are welcomed. It is assumed this would include upgrading the muddy path at the bottom of Norman Road up to the railway path. However, we have concerns on various aspects which are stated below.

Anyone in Keynsham/Saltford wanting to get to the Bath Spa University campus would still cycle/scoot along a very narrow shared path along the A4.

Connectivity to Royal United Hospital - If an RUH employee drove to the Newbridge P&R, transferred to an eBike or eScooter, you would still be forced to ride along Newbridge Road, then cut up Rosslyn Road (opposite the filtered Osborne Road Junction, then dog leg into Evelyn Road and into the rear of the RUH.

It is surprising that the river path is being considered as a primary active travel route into the city as it is very narrow in several places which cannot be resolved, there is already conflict between different users, it has no lighting (particularly deterring use by women), and, at its eastern end, regularly floods, notably in winter. The BBRPE is the recognised route in the Bath Enterprise Master plan with the river path being identified as a leisure route. It is important to understand that the WECA Local Walking Cycling Infrastructure Plan identifies the river path incorrectly as a suitable active travel corridor. The Upper Bristol Road Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 scheme correctly recognised that the river path is a leisure route. It should also be noted that TIER escooter/ebikes are geofenced off the river path.

It is difficult to critique a scheme that appears essentially to be a bus service improvement plan that has left out key elements and that appears to have run out of money.

The failure to include the refurbishment of the Locksbrook Bridge means the Bristol and Bath Railway Path Extension (BBRPE) is fundamentally broken. Connecting private developer elements north of the river to private developer elements south of the river via refurbishment of Locksbrook Bridge refurbishment is critical to completion of the BBRPE.

The proposal also fails to deliver a Windsor Bridge CYCLOPS junction, in the process abandoning the exemplar cycle infrastructure on Upper Bristol Road and the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funded Bath North of the river East-West Active Travel route (BNEW) between Walcot Street and Oldfield School, Newbridge Hill.

It is surprising that the Newbridge Park and Ride Mobility Hub has not been presented in this scheme and nor has the key relationship the Park and Ride Site has with the Royal United Hospital. Inclusion of this hub would have required the proposal to recognise the steady stream of 12.5mph speed limited eScooters travelling on the proposed Newbridge Road bus lane slowing down bus service while creating dangerous interactions at each bus stop. While highly effective in the right place, bus lanes are not active travel infrastructure and are specifically not included in LTN 1/20 as such.

Recommendations

- A wide shared path on the south side of Bath Road (A4) through Saltford should be built, reducing the width on the north side if necessary. This shared path should cross to the north side at The Shallows and continue on to the Globe Roundabout.
- At the Globe Roundabout, the footway up Pennyquick to Newton St Loe should be widened to create an accessible route to the village.
- The use of controlled crossing on Pennyquick would be better served by reducing the speed limit to 30mph (or even 20mph) around the roundabout and implementing parallel crossings, not lights. If this is not possible then lights should be pedestrian prioritised with no longer than a 10 second wait before changing.
- Add the Newbridge Park and Ride Mobility Hub, design a route that accommodates the significant potential eBike and eScooter hire traffic between the hub and RUH (and back!) along Newbridge Road, up Rosslyn Road, and into the Evelyn Road RUH entrance.
- Consider a companion modal filter on Rosslyn Road to support the Osborne Road filter and create a good RUH (and Newbridge Primary School) active travel access route.
- The crossing adjacent to the Newbridge P&R to Brassmill Lane/Westfield Park South should be improved to enable a safer active travel route to the Bristol and Bath Railway Path and BBRPE to the south.
- Use of the Bristol and Bath Railway Path as the main active travel corridor between Saltford and Bath needs to recognise the isolation of the route and the inherent socially unsafe space this creates. The

scheme design should support access but should not consider it to be the main route for Saltford to Bath active travel traffic. Twerton Fork to Brassmill Lane should be fully lit.

- The Bristol and Bath Railway Path Extension (BBRPE) is not viable without delivery of the strategically important Locksbrook Bridge. Attached as a separate annex is the WRB summary of where the BBRPE (formerly STR) stands in terms of introducing a proper high quality active travel route to and from Brassmill Lane in the west to Green Park on the edge of the city centre.
- Consider a CYCLOPS junction at Windsor Bridge. What is proposed does not support the existing infrastructure on Upper Bristol Road or the BNEW active travel route.
- Consider an access road onto Kelston Road from Newbridge Park and Ride. This would alleviate traffic ingress from Kelston into the city trying to access the Newbridge Park and Ride and, with careful design, could provide a safe route to school for Oldfield Park and become part of the BNEW.
- Consider providing a consistent cyclist experience from Newbridge Park and Ride along Newbridge Road to the exemplar Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 Upper Bristol Road scheme. This means cycle lanes protected by floating the parking where space is available using CYCLOPS junctions.

It should be noted that the recommendations effectively deliver a significant portion of the BNEW along a new route overcoming the space constraints on Newbridge Hill.

Attachment - Bath to Bristol Railway Path Extension Project (BBRPE) (previously Strategic Transport Route (STR)
File: A4 Bath To Bristol Consultation - BBRPE.pdf