



an independent force for a **better Bristol**

## Response to draft Bristol Transport Strategy

### 1 Introduction

**We welcome this document.** By pulling together Bristol's transport aims in one place, and sitting between the Joint Local Transport Plan and more detailed Bristol policies and plans, it fills a gap. We generally agree with the analysis – vision, challenges, and the breakdown between city centre, corridors, local centres, neighbourhoods and residential streets. There is much in the outcomes and actions which we agree with. There are a number of references to place-making, and we welcome the recognition that this is not just about transport and movement.

**However, it is a strategy, not a plan, and we await a plan.** The draft BTS contains:

- a huge list of Explore/Enable/Deliver actions under 15 outcomes
- an initial framework for delivery under the headings of Partnerships and stakeholders for delivery, Implementation timescale, Potential funding sources.
- a very high-level timeline.

Detail is left to other documents yet to be developed, which will be mode- or area-specific (p18). But almost all the more detailed documents will be strategies, not plans.

This does not provide clarity on how a prioritised plan will be put together. What is needed is a plan showing the sequence of the key BTS actions: for instance, do Park and Ride sites have to be in place before any reallocation of roadspace takes place? Do mass rapid transit routes have to be in place first? We understand that the Joint Local Transport Plan will provide a plan. We wait to see whether the JLTP provides sufficient information on planned schemes, and their timing and sequencing.

**The draft BTS is good as far as it goes, but we are impatient for faster progress!** This strategy document has been a long time in gestation, and it will take time to turn it into a planned list of schemes, and even longer to deliver the schemes. The timeline (page 73) pushes back most changes till beyond 2023. It is accepted that big schemes take time to deliver, but we look for the political will to make transformative changes at pace.

We have a number of specific comments, as below. We start with our main comments by theme, and go on to detailed comments going through the draft document page by page.

## 2 Main comments on the draft document

### 2.1 Underground mass transit and its costs

The proposal for underground mass transit routes on a north and an eastern corridor have been received with scepticism in some quarters. But we agree with the BTS analysis (page 61) that the need for more movement capacity is real and there are constraints on other solutions. We await with interest the results of the mass transit feasibility study. We note (page 70) the need to tap in to new funding sources to deliver such a major scheme, and we support some combination of a Workplace Parking Levy, congestion charge, and increased business rates in the areas around the new stations that will benefit from the new rail connection.

### 2.2 Shorter-term measures

Whilst we support exploring the feasibility of mass transit, this should not be a diversion from shorter-term measures. We think the following measures will have the greatest effect, and we would like to see more emphasis given to them:

- bus improvements, particularly bus priority measures like bus lanes and bus gates – because buses are the best way to give a network of public transport covering the whole city
- congestion charging – because as car drivers we do not pay the fair cost for our use of road space at different times. Congestion charging, properly done, can reduce congestion at peak times to a level where bus travel becomes reliable and preferable to car travel for most commuters.
- segregated cycle lanes – because there is untapped potential from people who would like to cycle but consider it too risky, and tapping into this potential increases efficient use of road space.

### 2.3 Re-allocation of street space

The section on citywide movement (p7/41) rightly recognises that "we need to make changes in the way we use our street space" and adopts an approach of "Make space and improve safety for movement by sustainable modes". The BTS makes some specific proposals on this via the map on page 48, which marks certain stretches as road as "focus for new bus priority".

But marking up a map does not turn into a commitment until the implied reallocation of roadspace is accepted. And 'outcomes' such as 4/5/6 on public transport/walking/cycling are mode-specific and do not face into the issue that making space for one mode will take away space from another mode. The role of an over-arching transport strategy should be to take a holistic view, and the BTS is not credible unless it proposes a strategy that proposes outcomes and actions that are mutually compatible.

If the BTS aim of making changes so that our roads carry high numbers of people most efficiently is to be achieved, some bold decisions need to be made. We understand such decisions will be deferred until each road corridor scheme is considered, but this feels inadequate.

## 2.4 Liveable neighbourhoods

There are a number of references in the BTS to place-making, which we welcome, but there should be more emphasis and promotion of it. The document proclaims Bristol as “part of a global movement for healthy liveable cities” (page 16), but does not explain enough what that means by way of place-making. We cite some instances of where the document could be improved in our detailed comments below.

The BTS could describe a case study of a Liveable Neighbourhood scheme, eg Walthamstow. TfL has produced useful guidance on Liveable Neighbourhoods.

## 2.5 Masterplans

We welcome the following commitment:

“Parts of the city will come forward at different times for development to accommodate housing and jobs. In order to ensure sustainable transport is embedded from the outset, **we will produce detailed masterplans** for each area to ....” (page 17).

Such masterplans (or spatial frameworks) should cover not just movement and transport, but also place-making. We believe the council should play a proactive role in this, and give strong guidance to developers.

## 2.6 Funding for walking, cycling and public realm improvements

Improvement of the public realm and the environment for walking tends to rely on funding via schemes for other modes of transport. The risk is that such improvements are sidelined, with the focus being given to the big transport schemes. The same is also partly true for cycling improvements. There needs to be a 'strategy' to stop this happening.

For instance, when funding bids are made schemes for other modes, an explicit budget could be included in schemes to provide walking improvements as part of the scheme. This requires some prior thinking so that the amount allowed for is sufficient to include high-quality improvements.

Additionally, the council could commit to a certain percentage of unrestricted transport budgets to be directed to walking, cycling and public realm improvements, and encourage WECA to do the same. There are precedents for this. Edinburgh committed to spend 5% of its 2012/13 transport budgets (capital and revenue) on projects to encourage cycling as a mode of transport in the city, and agreed that this proportion should increase by 1% annually. Greater Manchester allocated 60% of its Transforming Cities funding to cycling and walking infrastructure.

## 2.7 The need for a Regional Transport Authority

A Regional Transport Authority would help to ensure a joined-up approach across the four West of England local authorities. For instance:

- to ensure a Workplace Parking Levy is applied in South Gloucestershire as well as Bristol, thus avoiding a distortion in the employment land market

- to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent implementation of Park and Ride sites

## 2.8 Clean Air Plan

The references in the BTS to Clean Air Plan and Clean Air Zone are to the current government-mandated short-term actions to meet the EU directive. A long-term strategy like the BTS should be driven by longer-term air quality goals to meet the lower WHO emissions limits.

## 4 Detailed comments

Where in the document	Comment
Challenges	
Better places (pages 21 and 30)	The description of the “Better places” challenge could be improved. The wording is rather technical and refers to “functions”, whereas it could be more visionary, using words and phrases like “place-making”, “places to stop and linger”, “quiet”, “clean air”, “human-scale”, “easy to walk”. See for instance TfL’s work on Healthy Streets, and the UWE research cited on page 50 of the BTS. The simplest and best approach would be to include the Tf:L10 Healthy Streets Indicators wheel.
The strategy	
Vision (page 39)	<p>Modal split targets: whilst the current modal split of journeys to work is quoted (p28 – Challenges - Health), it is notable that there is no target for modal split in the future (unlike London plans, and unlike the JLTP). It is understood that the reason is because current statistics are based only on travel to work, but this does not seem a strong enough reason for excluding them. Especially as it is central to the vision; “We aim to reduce current levels of congestion and tackle the transport challenges we face, by increasing sustainable transport use for more journeys in line with leading liveable cities around the world.”</p> <p>Similar goals could be produced for travel to school, which would be even more oriented towards walking and cycling.</p> <p>(Note: given the forecast increase in total movements, the targets should be expressed as numbers as well as %s. Measuring %s alone is misleading.)</p>
Objectives – Better Places (page 40)	The following wording of the place-making objective could be improved to bring out what “better” means in place-making terms – see comments above on the Better Places ‘challenge’ section. “Create better places that make better use of our streets and enable point to point journeys to be made efficiently.”
City wide movement (p41)	The graphic comparing road space usage is valuable. However, it compares cars, buses, bikes, but not pedestrians. Is it possible to have a graphic that includes pedestrians ?

<p>City wide movement Outcome 1: manage demand – parking (page 42)</p>	<p>Control of car parking spaces is particularly effective in achieving modal transport change: people will only leave their cars at home if they cannot park at their destination. The document leaves parking changes to a future Parking Strategy, but there is an opportunity now to make policy changes in the Local Plan currently under review.</p> <p>Bristol could in the current Local Plan review reinforce its policy to discourage new city centre multi-storey car parks. The policy could say that there would be a presumption against any development that would attract more private cars into the central area. The policy could also add that when circumstances arise the Council will encourage the redevelopment of central area multi-storey car parks for other uses.</p>
<p>City wide movement Outcome 7: network (page 54)</p>	<p>We particularly support the action: “Deliver &amp; Enable a new Transport Asset Plan linked to a Maintenance Manual, setting out 2-3 year programme of maintenance and prioritising spending. Use maintenance works to implement change and also identify where transport projects can contribute to maintenance.”</p> <p>This is an untapped resource for making small but important improvements to streets.</p>
<p>City wide movement Outcome 9: new developments (page 56)</p>	<p>We welcome and await with interest the publication of a Technical Development Management Guide. The BTS does not say whether the design guidance will apply to Council schemes as well as private sector developments.</p> <p>It is unclear whether the ‘actions’ listed in the draft BTS to deliver requirements under this ‘outcome’ refer to requirements that will be included in the TDMG or not. It would be odd if they were not part of the TDMG ?</p>
<p>City Centre (page 59, and Outcome 10: city centre on page 60)</p>	<p>The draft BTS defers to the City Centre Framework for more detail on the movement plans for the city centre. But the ‘How Bristol works’ section of the BTS (page 12) defines the city centre area as a wider area than the CCF’s area, including for instance Redcliffe, Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone, Harbourside.</p>
<p>City centre (page 59, and Outcome 10: city centre on page 60)</p>	<p>The BTS cross-refers to the City Centre Framework, which was consulted on earlier this year. The Society was disappointed in what the CCF proposed for walking, and said so in its consultation response. We await sight of the revised CCF.</p>
<p>Corridors Outcome 11: corridors (pages 61 to 63)</p>	<p>This section makes no reference to pedestrians, except to show that they currently account for 14% of movements. The actions make no reference to pedestrians. The BTS actions for corridors should include creating pleasant and convenient routes for pedestrians, as well as making improvements for other modes.</p>
<p>Local centres Outcome 12 (page 66)</p>	<p>In the phrase “Supported and enhanced local centres and high streets ...”, the meaning of “supported” and “enhanced” is unclear. It would be better to emphasize “place-making” by using words and phrases like “places to stop and linger”, “quiet”, “easy to walk”. This would be in line with TfL’s Healthy Streets approach.</p>

<p>Neighbourhoods Outcome 15: Liveable neighbourhoods</p>	<p>We particularly support the action: Deliver &amp; Enable neighbourhoods to reduce the negative impact of through traffic and ensure through routes are appropriate to improve local air quality. Indeed, we think more emphasis should be given to this. The BTS could describe a case study, eg Walthamstow. See for instance TfL's work on Liveable Neighbourhoods.</p>
<p>Implementing and funding (page 69)</p>	<p>Step 1 in the 11-step process is: "Schemes and projects identified in Bristol Transport Strategy (or for schemes affecting the West of England as a whole, the Joint Local Transport Plan, as informed by the Joint Transport Study)" But the BTS does not identify schemes and projects ? The 'outcomes' and 'actions' do not go to that level of detail. We understand that a five-year plan will follow (though it is not mentioned in the BTS), and we await that with interest. It will presumably be a prioritised list of schemes and projects.</p>
<p>Timeline (page 73)</p>	<p>The timeline suggests no improvement in 10 out of 15 outcomes in the "short-term" (to 2023). This seems unsatisfactorily slow.</p> <p>In particular, public transport (Outcome 4) shows improvement only from 2023. That includes Park and Rides. But such improvements are very important for more efficient movement of people, so need to happen quickly.</p> <p>The timeline does not make reference to outcomes 14 and 15.</p>