



Sustainable Westbury on Trym (SusWot) - briefing note to Cycling City, May 2009

Thanks for coming to our meeting on 21 May. We're delighted the Cycling City project is up and running, and hope it will make a significant impact on cycling in the greater Bristol area.

As promised, here's a briefing note to help guide our discussions at the meeting. We'll also share this document with other stakeholders in the area, such as schools, councillors, our MP, the PACT team, Neighbourhood Partnership, Westbury on Trym Society, Sustainable Henleaze, etc.

The following traffic issues which currently hinder local cycling have been collated from a number of sources, but are all from people who live locally or who cycle through this area. This includes feedback from cyclists who took part in our ChooseDay initiative last November - see www.suswot.org.uk/chooseday/

Many of the issues listed also impact heavily on pedestrians.

Most of the issues are not unique to Westbury on Trym; they are Bristol-wide, if not nation-wide. Some require a national response, others a local response. We've therefore put our suggestions into corresponding categories. Before we got into that detail though, here's an Executive Summary of our views:

- We need much greater enforcement of speed limits, and more done to address the frequent parking on double-yellow lines and zig-zags.
- There's much support for pedestrianising the centre of the village
- The 30mph speed limit on residential streets is a relic - bring in 20mph asap.
- Speeding is endemic on the direct route into town - the A4018 (Falcondale Rd/Passage Rd).
- Cycle paths on The Downs are well overdue.

A. Recommendations for national issues

1. The UK needs to come into line with much of Europe and change the law so that in an accident between a cyclist and a motor vehicle, the default position is that the motor vehicle is deemed to be at fault, much as powered craft must give way to sailing craft on water. The courtesy to cyclists it generates in Europe is remarkable. SusWot recently submitted this proposal to the Council under the Sustainable Communities Act.

2. High performance cars designed for racing conditions should have no place on public roads. All agencies need to lobby for a law change.

B. Recommendations for Bristol-wide issues

In the Dept for Transport's recently published guidance on Cycle Infrastructure Design (Local Transport Note 2/08), there's a restatement of the Hierarchy of Provision for cycling. The hierarchy prioritises reducing the volume and speed of traffic as **the** major actions to encourage cycling. We believe reducing the speed of traffic is achieved through a combination of enforcement and lower speed limits.

Speeding

Speeding has to become as unacceptable as drink-driving. We are encouraged by the Council's imminent use of CCTV to enforce the proper use of bus lanes, and Safer Bristol's recent use of roadside ANPR (Automated Number Plate Recognition) systems to flag up disqualified drivers and unroadworthy cars. And backed up with accompanying media campaigns. We'd like to see similar advanced technology for speed enforcement, with the use of speed guns to conduct frequent random and covert speed checks across the city. This is already done to a certain extent, but there are significant resourcing issues at present - more on this below.

Lower speed limits

You'll know as well as us that children's deaths and injuries could be reduced by 67 per cent if 20 mph were the speed limit on residential roads. (Health Development Agency).

At 20 mph, drivers make eye contact with and engage with the people in the street they are passing through. This contact really matters: people in the street know they've been seen. It also makes drivers less inclined to bully their way along 'their' road, and more inclined to share the space.

At speeds over 30 mph, drivers begin to become disassociated from the area they are passing through – treating it principally as a traffic thoroughfare for getting quickly from A to B. The current default of 30 mph was set in 1934 when there were 1.5m motor vehicles. Now there are 33m.

We are delighted with the 20mph pilot schemes that Cycling City is progressing. However, we feel the whole of Bristol's residential areas are ready for 20mph, and the pilot process may take a long time. If, however, the above-recommended speed enforcement is in place first, the city-wide adoption of 20mph can happen far quicker. SusWot endorses the "Twenty's Plenty for Bristol" initiative.

C. Issues in the Westbury on Trym area

Location	Issue	Suggestion
Westbury Village centre	Speed of traffic, parking on zig-zags/ double-yellows.	Pedestrianise / 20 mph limit. More enforcement.
Residential streets	speed of traffic	20mph limit / More enforcement
Eastfield Rd (near Chock Lane) -	Speeding. Weight of traffic.	Speed checks / Pedestrian crossing
Chock Lane	Rat run: speeding traffic, no pavements for pedestrians.	Close / make access only (but will then need a crossing on Eastfield Rd (as above), as traffic turning into Chock Lane currently make an improvised crossing point as they slow

		down other traffic.
The Downs	Gross lack of cycle lanes	Cycle lanes
Passage Rd (Cycling City project 8)	Speed humps outside WOT primary school are too low. 4x4 etc don't need to slow down.	Raise them.
Parry's Lane and Reedley Rd	Speeding in the vicinity of the Elmlea primary schools. Elmlea Junior is a Bike-It school.	Speed checks / pedestrian crossings
Stoke Lane	Speeding on bend near shops (Charlecombe Rd) and beyond up to junction with Parry's Lane.	Speed checks / pedestrian crossings
Falcondale Rd - junction with Westbury Rd.	Very busy junctions, with poor visibility.	Can you update us on the planned works at this spot (changes to zebra crossing?)
Falcondale Rd - between Stoke Lane traffic lights and junction with Westbury Rd.	Cars / motorbikes use this stretch as a drag strip, seeing what speed they can reach between the traffic lights and the top of the hill.	Speed checks
Falcondale Rd & Canford Lane traffic lights	Continual speeding and red-light jumping. Known accident spot. Also, pedestrians trying to cross diagonally have to wait for two cycles of green lights as the crossing time is too short to cross 2 roads in one phase.	Speed checks
Falcondale Rd/Henbury Rd junction	Red-light jumping, speeding	There's a speed camera for Falcondale Rd direction, nothing though for Henbury Rd direction?
Falcondale Rd/Passage Rd/Greystoke Ave junction	Weight of traffic	Needs roundabout/traffic lights/pedestrian crossing
Falcondale Rd/Southdown Rd Junction & Henbury Rd/Hillsdown Rd Junction	Used as rat run.	Make access only left turn from Falcondale Rd into Southdown Rd and access only right turn from Henbury Rd into Hillsdown Rd/yellow box on Falcondale Rd Southdown Rd junction.
Henbury Rd / Northover Rd junction	Weight of traffic on Falcondale Rd	Zebra crossing / traffic island after the Northover Rd turning
Passage Rd/The Ridgeway junction	Speeding cars coming up from Crow Lane roundabout	Speed checks
Southmead Road near Lake Rd	Very difficult to cross	Pedestrian crossing
Southfield Rd	Dangerous parking blocking the view of people turning onto Westbury Rd	Double yellow lines near Westbury Rd/parking on one side of Southfield Rd only
The path at the back of David Lloyd leisure centre (Greystoke Ave)		Tarmac it to encourage more people to cycle to the gym
National Cycle	Lack of continuity	There needs to be a

Network Sustrans route 4		continuation of the route outside Westbury Fields homes through the grounds of Royal Victoria Park to Knole Lane and then to Catbrain Lane and Cribbs Causeway as planned. Currently the hold-up is Royal Victoria Park.
Encourage cycling by making it easier to use pathways (not pavements) for cycling by adopting “dual use” as the standard, with likewise cyclists giving way to pedestrians, e.g. the cycleway the University built between their playing-fields at the end of Redhouse Lane ends at a kissing gate at the entrance to the cemetery which is extremely difficult to get a bike through and impossible if you have a child trailer. Also the kissing gate at the Coombe Dingle car park end of Blaise estate requires a bike to be upended to pass through it – again impossible for child trailers		

The view from the ground

We've spent much time in the past year looking into the issues raised above. Time and again we hit resource issues - lack of Council funding for traffic calming, lack of staff to enforce safe parking, lack of police to enforce speeding as much as they'd like. Yet at the same time, there are many initiatives around (such as the Neighbourhood Transport Initiative, Safer Routes to School, and Bike-It) which do offer access to funding, but typically rule out using it for traffic-calming, which is the thing people want the most. In other words, the goodwill of many agencies is there, but the creative approach to problem-solving is lacking. Section 106 contributions in particular could play a vital funding role in traffic-calming.

We've been working hard to strengthen a co-ordinated approach to these issues. We attend PACT meetings, and our Neighbourhood Partnership, which launched recently. A transport sub-group is being set up within this, and the Partnership's October meeting will focus on transport. We hope the Partnership will enable creative solutions to flourish (using the Safer Bristol model), and give local people the opportunity to shape their communities for the better. This includes contributing to Cycling City's Executive Stakeholder Panel 10-year plan.

Miscellaneous questions

1. Can you update us on:
 - a) The Road Review of the Clifton Down/Whiteladies Rd stretch?
 - b) Project 18 - Henbury to Cribbs Causeway Area
2. Is the council's list of planned traffic works published?
3. What can the Cycling City grants be used for?
4. How much is available?
5. Can you talk a little about the Executive Stakeholder Panel 10-Year Plan for cycling in Bristol?

Thanks for your time.
SusWot's Transport sub-group