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Draft v2

Bristol Civic Society response to the Temple Meads southern gateway consultation

February 2025

1 Summary

Any scheme of transport access to a major station is a balance involving choices and trade-offs. The strategic decision was made in the adopted Temple Meads masterplan, which is part of the Temple Quarter Development Framework.

The scheme of transport access to the station is constrained by the site. As a result, access points are dispersed around the site. Bus stops are not at a single 'hub'. Pick-up and drop-off points are not as convenient as at some other stations.

The balance of accessibility by the different transport modes is changed by the introduction of the Southern Gateway, particularly for those arriving by car. The planning gain from developing the site of the current parking on the north side of the station is achieved at the cost of increasing the time taken by car users to access the trains, and lengthening the walk to the station from the car park. Car users include people with reduced mobility, wheelers, and those with much luggage.

Within this context and these constraints, the Society welcomes this consultation on the Southern Gateway. We think it provides a coherent proposal that caters for many transport modes: pedestrians, wheelers, cyclists, bus, private car – both long-term parking and drop-off/pick-up. The walkway provides level access to the station for many users.

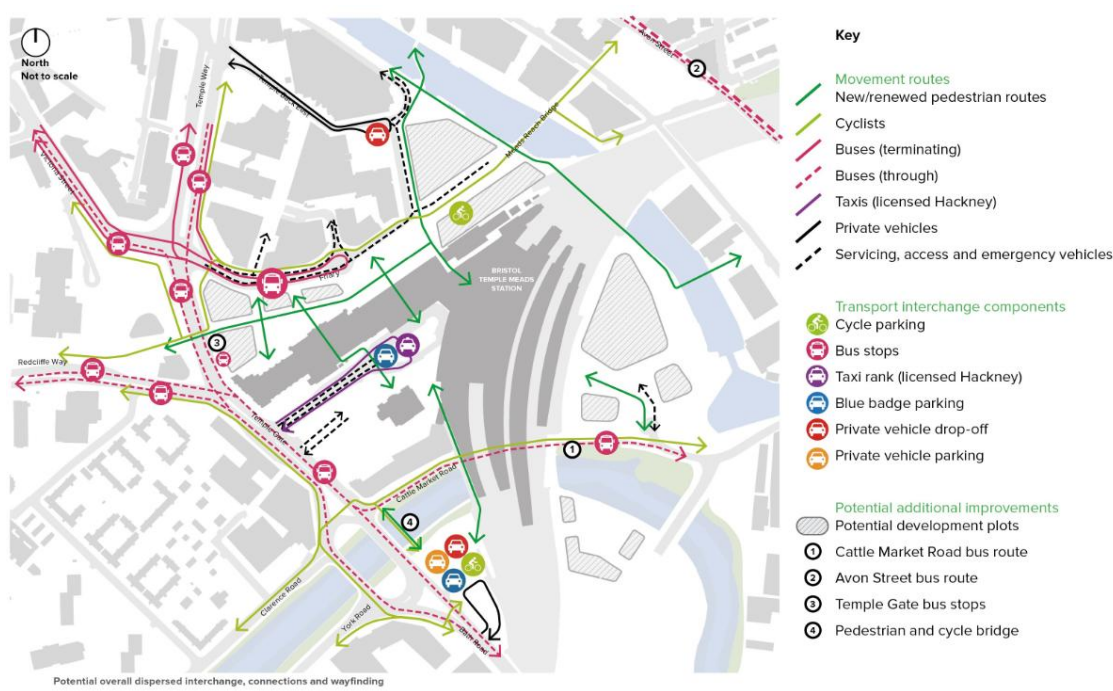
BUT:

- (1) Much more analysis is needed to show that it is workable. We await detailed design and analysis in the planning application (due in April) to demonstrate that the traffic flow impacts, car park operation, and collision risks can be well-managed and mitigated against. (We will also wait for the planning application to enable us to comment on the detailed design of the buildings.)
- (2) We think the walkway should be covered
- (3) We think that there is a missed opportunity in that the Council is not reviewing the configuration of Bath Bridges roundabout at the same time.

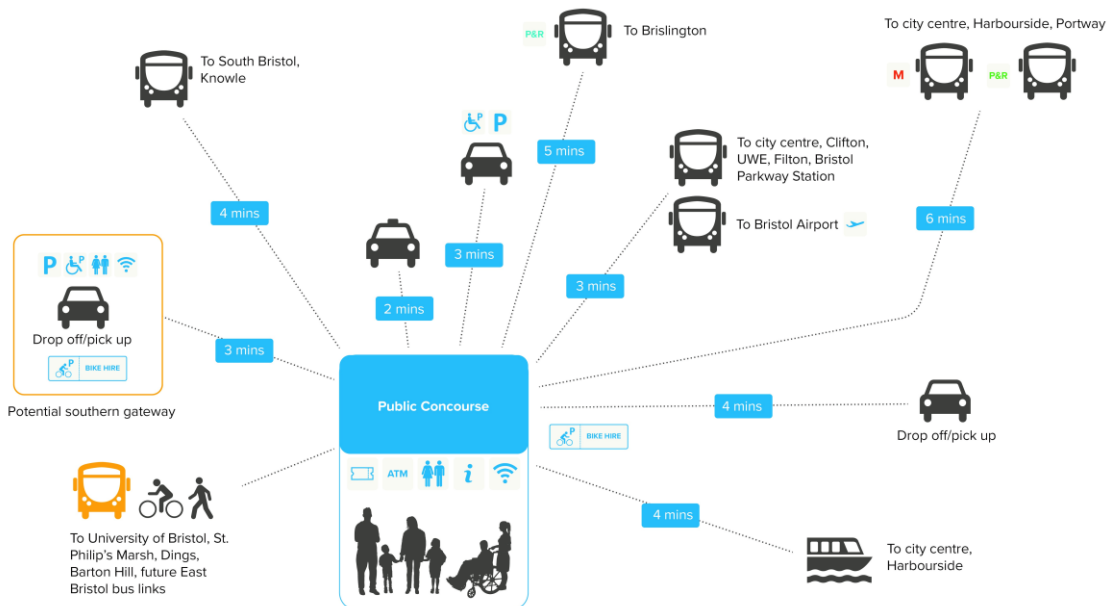
2 Introduction: the context of the Temple Quarter Development Framework

The Southern Gateway consultation adds more detail to what was already known via the Bristol Temple Quarter Development Framework (see TQDF diagrams reproduced below).

The figure below shows the proposed overall transport interchange detailed routes and stops for different modes of transport:



The Onward Journey graphic is a representation of onward journey options detailing approximately how long it would take to get to different routes and travel options:



See

<https://www.ask.bristol.gov.uk/temple-meads-level-3-5-the-masterplan-proposals>

In previous consultations we have supported the TQDF plan as follows:

“We support:

- pedestrians being placed at the top of the transport hierarchy*
- the larger public realm area outside the entrance at the top of the ramp (currently the domination of the public realm close to the entrance by taxis, and the associated pollution from idling vehicles, is unacceptable even if they are Euro 6)*
- the large public realm area between the Brunel Mile crossing of Temple Gate and the northern entrance*
- for disabled travellers and other drivers, the new level station access from the planned new permanent car park on the Kwik-Fit site on Bath Road south of the river*
- the decision not to allow a through-route for bus and private motor traffic from Temple Back East to the Friary.*

The configuration of connection points to taxis, buses and private cars is sub-optimal, but probably the best that can be achieved given the physical constraints.”

In addition, we now note that the TQDF plan also takes away the need for traffic coming from the south for drop-off on the Station Approach to travel via Redcliffe Hill and Redcliffe Way, except for taxis. By taking drop-offs away from the Approach, it reduces the 'stop' time on Temple Gate at the traffic lights at the junction with the Approach. And reduces traffic on Redcliffe Way, which helps to 'calm' Redcliffe Way, which has been a long-term aim of the Society and local groups like Redcliffe Forum.

3 Southern Gateway: bus access from the south

The Southern Gateway consultation claims that “our proposals will improve access to the station, particularly from the south of the city”. However, the consultation proposals improve access for some but not all station users. Specifically they do not improve access for those coming from the south by bus: there is no inbound bus stop opposite the car park.

However, we understand from meeting with the project team that, following comments from others, a north-bound bus stop opposite the car park is now being considered. We support this. We look forward to seeing further detail in the planning application to be submitted in April.

4 Impacts on traffic flows

Whilst we support the Southern Gateway in principle, we do have concerns about its impacts on traffic flow circulation. The Gateway will be situated at one of the busiest nodes in the road network: where the merged Bath Road and Wells Road meet the inner circuit road. The impacts include:

- the consultation diagrams show that you can turn right out of the car park, which will require traffic lights, slowing down traffic flows on Bath Road.
- traffic from South Bristol that previously might have approached Temple Meads from Redcliffe Way will instead be drawn to Bath Bridges roundabout, coming from Bath Road, Clarence Road, or York Road.
- the signalised pedestrian crossing of Bath Road near Fowlers will be used more, slowing down traffic flows.
- traffic coming into the car park may queue back on to the Bath Road, slowing down traffic on Bath Road.

All these will impede traffic flows on the critical link between Bath Bridges and the Three Lamps

junction, already a major pinch-point. There is no resilience in flow here at peak hours, at both ends of the day, let alone for unexpected roadworks or accidents. From our meeting with the project team, we learned that more traffic modelling work is needed to properly assess the impact. We look forward to seeing the results of that impact analysis in the planning application to be submitted in April.

Given the criticality of Bath Bridges roundabout in the road network, being at the confluence of the inner loop and the Bath and Wells Roads, it seems a missed opportunity that BCC is not reviewing the configuration of Bath Bridges roundabout at the same time as introducing this scheme that will impede traffic flows, especially when the Council is reviewing Bedminster Bridges as part of the City Centre Transport scheme.

5 Other comments

We make some comments on particular aspects of the scheme:

Operation of the car park: no doubt the operability of the car park will be modelled, but we have concerns. We note that the diagram shows two entry lanes/barriers, but only one exit lane/barrier from the building. Major train arrivals cause traffic surges, and we suspect that the time to exit from the top storey at peak times will be long. This will be exacerbated by mixing both short-stay and long-stay users in the same exit queue. A comparator is Trenchard Street car park when the Hippodrome audience exits. If the car park does not function well, it will gain a reputation, potentially affecting both its own revenue and actual train use, which is surely the reason it is being built.

Covering the walkway: the Gateway consultation says re the link from the car park to the station "A new walkway giving direct step-free access into Bristol Temple Meads station over the River Avon. The walkway will have covered rest areas." We understand that it will be 3.5 to 4m width, and will be see-through on either side.

We understand from meeting with the project team that the reason for it not being covered is that a roof would cost too much and overload the Network Rail bridge, allowing for the required terrorist-proof design and materials it would entail. (Certain assets are Grade-1 listed, but we were assured that the reason was not heritage-based.) Users will have a 250m walk with luggage, much of it open to rain and wind and possible icing given the uncertainties of the bridge micro-climate. We think that a covered walkway would be of benefit and the current thinking should be revisited.

Direct access to platform 2: We understand from the project team that direct access at the end of the walkway on to Platform 2 is being considered. We would support this. We would support such access being open into the evening each day, but Network Rail would need to accept the staffing implications.

Pedestrian movements and risk of collision: The plans introduce conflicts between pedestrian and other movements:

- the cycle lane and pedestrian route alongside Bath Road run parallel to each other. The two need to be at different levels to ensure separation between the two.
- crossing the road from Fowlers will take pedestrians and cyclists on to a route where there are multiple movements of cars, buses, e-scooters etc. Clear crossing points across the cycle-way will be required, which can be zebra crossings, which as they cross the cycleway are raised to

pavement level. The zebra crossings should be of sufficient width.

- the 'floating' bus stop, ie a cycle way behind a bus stop, requires pedestrians to cross the cycle way. A railing or other barrier along the length of the bus stop will be needed, as with the floating bus stop on Prince Street, and we understand from the project team that this is planned.

It will be hard to design all this to eliminate the risk of collision and injury. We look forward to seeing the detailed mitigations proposed in the planning application to be submitted in April.

There will also be a conflict between pedestrians and cyclists travelling along the A4 Bath Road and the entrance and exit of cars from the car park. We understand that the cycle and pedestrian crossings of the entrance/exit will be signal-controlled to reduce the risk of collision.

Mis-use of bus lay-by: If there is no private car pick-up/drop-off facility, the bus lay-by will inevitably be used by some for drop-off. We believe that the only way of effectively enforcing this would be to use cctv cameras.