

Engagement summary

Lime Kiln | public transport design proposals

Date of report: July 2024

Context: Lime Kiln and the Bus Service Improvement Plan

This is a summary of feedback we received from our engagement with communities on proposals for public transport improvements in the area of Lime Kiln roundabout which took place between Friday 9 February and Friday 22 March.

Lime Kiln context

- The A38 Lime Kiln roundabout is a major junction on the outskirts of Bristol and a source of significant congestion which also impacts buses.
- The south-eastbound approach to the roundabout from A4174 Colliters Way currently features a bus lane, bus gate at the traffic signals, and a passenger waiting area.
- The roundabout is used by the following popular bus routes which link Lime Kiln and surrounding areas to and from Bristol, between 13 and 16 times an hour:
 - A1 Airport Flyer between Bristol and Bristol International Airport
 - A4 Air Decker between Bath and Bristol International Airport
 - U2 Unibus between Bristol and University of Bristol veterinary school at Langford
 - National Express services between Cardiff and Bristol International Airport
 - Falcon bus services between Bristol and Plymouth.
- The A1 Airport Flyer alone carries more than 100,000 passenger journeys a month, and demand is accelerating. The A1 is currently running at an increased frequency of one bus every 12 minutes.
- The U2 and Falcon services each carry around 10,000 passenger journeys a month.
- Bus priority infrastructure changes at Lime Kiln, alongside others on the A38, are part of a bigger picture of important changes needed to secure the long-term future and expansion of our bus services.
- The joined-up highway improvements BSIP plans to deliver on the A38, including at Lime Kiln, alongside traffic signal upgrades, will enable bus operators to reduce total average journey times. This in order to become financially sustainable, and therefore continue to meet the needs of the community once temporary BSIP funding ends.



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- The wider programme of changes would enable the A1, for example, to become more efficient by speeding up journey times and encouraging more people onboard to maintain its 12-minute frequency, while also reducing operational costs.
- Plans to step up the A1's frequency from every 12 to every 10 minutes an hour would be supported by delivering the wider A38 BSIP programme to improve journey times.

The Bus Service Improvement Plan context

- Our communities tell us they want more reliable, frequent and affordable bus services – and that's what we're working hard to deliver.
- The North Somerset Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is a joint initiative between North Somerset Council (NSC), the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), the Department for Transport (DfT), bus operators, and other stakeholders. Its aim is to create a modern and affordable public bus network our residents can rely on for years to come. To do this, we need to create commercially sustainable bus services for our growing population that are more efficient, reliable, and well-used
- One of the ways the North Somerset BSIP aims to achieve this is by implementing a package of bus infrastructure improvements, called bus priority schemes – including bus lanes, traffic signals or other measures that give buses priority over other traffic. These mainly focus on a chain of changes along three of our key routes, or bus corridors – the A38, A369 and A370 – where we are also investing time-limited funding in temporary fare subsidies and more frequent buses.
- Without bus priority improvements to help make bus travel faster, more reliable and more efficient, bus services in North Somerset may have to be cancelled, or significantly scaled back, once the Department for Transport's financial support through BSIP ends. As a local authority, we simply do not have the funds to subsidise bus services in North Somerset, and this situation is unlikely to change in the future.
- North Somerset has faced this situation before: in 2022, around a quarter of North Somerset's overall bus network (in terms of miles covered) was lost - from entire routes being withdrawn to a drop in service frequencies, as these could not be financially sustained by operators.
- In the last few months, BSIP teams have been actively engaging with North Somerset communities on a number of different concepts, proposals, and works for the next phase of bus priority schemes, including at Lime Kiln.
- The information, knowledge and views that residents share with us through our engagement activity is invaluable to the design and build process for BSIP. It is an



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important part of our process for checking and testing whether proposals will be effective, and further developing, remodelling, or refining scheme proposals before any final decisions are made to progress to construction.

About the proposed BSIP scheme for Lime Kiln

The initial concept designs engaged on for Lime Kiln included:

- New bus lanes, with bus gates, where the A38 approaches the roundabout, as well as on the north-westbound approach from the A4174 Colliters Way. These new facilities would allow buses to bypass queues before being given priority to enter the roundabout ahead of general traffic. We are looking to run the signalised roundabout under a more efficient signal arrangement for all users.
- The possibility of installing toucan crossings for pedestrians and cyclists on the Colliters Way arm and the A38 Bristol Airport arm of the roundabout.

Summary of engagement activity undertaken to date

We invited local people to give their feedback and help shape the proposals. Views were collected through an online survey, open for public comment for over six weeks (Friday 9 February to Friday 22 March 2024). Paper copies of the survey were also available on request. We also actively engaged directly with the local businesses and residents adjacent to the proposed scheme.

140 online surveys were completed during this period.

Survey overview

Of the **140** total responses to the survey:

- **77** answered they lived in 'Wider North Somerset', while **35** lived in Bristol, and **13** each in Long Ashton and Dundry.
- **31** of the 139 respondents who answered this question (22%) said they regularly use a bus that runs through Lime Kiln roundabout.
- There was a near equal split in the stated gender of respondents, with **68** answering female, and **63** answering male.
- **7** of the respondents said they considered themselves disabled.



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- The survey was predominantly quantitative (numeric), with two qualitative (free text) questions. Analysis was conducted to identify key themes across the responses.

! An important note on this survey

- **The purpose of the survey and engagement period was to gather local views and insight to help inform the development** of an appropriate bus priority scheme for Lime Kiln that supports the current and future needs of a growing population and decarbonisation.
- **The survey was based on a self-selecting sample of participants.** It was not a survey of a representative sample of the local population. For a survey to be considered representative, the participant sample would have to be weighted to reflect local characteristics in terms of age, gender, income bracket, ethnic heritage, disability, and so on. This means any outputs should be considered with this in mind.
- **The survey contained two open-ended (qualitative) questions (two out of 10 questions).** Analysis has been conducted to identify the most common themes across these free-text responses. More than one theme per answer was allowed when analysing free-text responses.
- **This survey is one part of shaping proposed designs, alongside technical testing, monitoring and data gathering at proposed scheme locations.** We consider all data sets alongside community representations in order to make informed, technically sound recommendations about the design of each scheme.
- **Not all survey participants answered all questions.**

Of the 140 people who took the survey, responses saw:

Question: Installing new bus lanes on the A38

'We propose bus infrastructure improvements at Lime Kiln roundabout on the A38 to reduce bus journey times and make buses more reliable. We plan to install new bus lanes on both A38 approaches to the roundabout to allow buses to bypass queuing traffic. There will be



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new bus gates at the ends of the new bus lanes to give buses priority when joining the roundabout. The proposal will keep the current car lanes. Do you agree with this proposal?

- 121 respondents answered 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree'
- 17 respondents answered 'Agree', 'Strongly Agree', or 'Neutral'.

Question: Installing Toucan crossings for pedestrians and cyclists

'We propose installing toucan crossings for pedestrians and cyclists on the Colliters Way arm and the A38 Bristol Airport arm of the roundabout. Do you agree with this proposal?

- 82 respondents said they 'Strongly Disagreed' or 'Disagreed'
- 58 respondents said they 'Agree', 'Strongly Agree' or are 'Neutral'

'Do you have any further comments you'd like to make on the proposals?'

The following four themes were the most prevalent in the 117 free-text comments on the proposals (more than one theme noted per answer):

- Perception that the scheme would be a 'waste of money' (appeared in 35 comments)
- Concerns the proposed scheme would result in more queues for buses and motorists (appeared in 25 comments)
- Negative perception of Barrow Gurney bus priority (appeared in 24 comments)
- Opinion that the existing junction doesn't need changing (appeared in 17 comments)

Actions and next steps following scheme engagement period

- Reducing congestion and bus delays at the Lime Kiln junction is critical for improving the reliability and commercial sustainability of local bus services, and alleviating the pressure on our road network as our population grows (see Context).
- We are grateful to everyone who took part and had their say on early proposals for bus infrastructure changes at Lime Kiln through our survey. This includes the local businesses and residents in the immediate vicinity.
- We received a lot of detailed comments and useful local insights, which we are continuing to work through, and will now be undertaking further technical testing and surveys to understand the issues raised and consider all information available to us.



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- The Lime Kiln scheme is part of the North Somerset Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), funded by the Department for Transport (DfT), and we are asking DfT for an extension to the delivery timetable for all remaining BSIP schemes.
- This will give us more time to review proposals for all remaining BSIP schemes, plan works over a longer period and reduce disruption as far as possible. That might mean moving forward with the original proposal, revising a concept design, identifying alternative measures or not progressing with schemes that don't deliver the intended benefits.
- This extension means no decision on any Lime Kiln junction scheme will be made before August 2024.

Our work over the coming months will include:

- Reviewing data to help establish the appropriate location and length of any bus lanes
- Considering traffic light signal configuration at the junction
- Updating the junction modelling
- Considering the location of the A38 bus stop
- Reassessing the condition of the existing site
- Updating scheme design drawings to reflect further technical work
- Undertaking lessons learnt using new Government guidance and the launch of the first few BSIP schemes

Once all the above work has been completed, we will:

- Share information on any new proposals with Ward and Parish Councillors.

Please note: Council approvals for BSIP schemes are completed in two stages. The first approval stage is in consultation with the BSIP Formal Board and Executive Member, and the final approval is an Executive Member Decision. This happens before a scheme can proceed to construction.

The anticipated date of the Executive Member decision will be published in the Council's Forward Plan. We will not make a decision on the Lime Kiln A370 junction before August 2024.



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