

Brighton Area Buswatch



We are a branch of Bus Users, the national charity representing bus passengers

Buswatch News – July/August 2021

Active Travel Fund rejects new bus lanes

Brighton Area Buswatch wrote to members of the Brighton & Hove City Council Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee prior to its special meeting on 21 July to try to agree its Active Travel Fund proposals. Here is a summary of the bus related issues we raised with Councillors, based on the Council's report.

A23 between Patcham roundabout and Preston Road

It is particularly disappointing to see no significant new bus lanes despite our suggestions in meetings and lobbying by Brighton & Hove Buses. Some parts of the road look wide enough for bus lanes + cycle lanes especially the section between Old London Road and Patcham roundabout where cars currently park on both sides of the road. This would be a huge benefit for the Park & Ride trial in Mill Road (see below) and would help to speed up out-of-town buses which bring people into the City who might otherwise travel by car.

The Committee report proposes two types of bus stop designs where there are new cycle lanes. 'Floating bus stops' where the cycle lanes go behind the bus stop waiting area work well. We already have these in Lewes Road. 'Bus Borders' are where the cycle lanes are between the shelter and the kerb. There are a few examples at the Brighton end of Old Shoreham Road. However these bus stops are little used as there is only an hourly bus service. The A23 is a completely different environment with much busier bus stops and frequent bus services. Bus Borders are not suitable here.



This photo of a 'bus border' in Old Shoreham Road shows the problems. The cycle lane is between the shelter and the road. The kerb line where buses pull in is outside the cycle lane. This means passengers must step cross the cycle lane to get on and off buses. In addition, the cycle lane is not clearly marked. There are no warning notices for bus users or cyclists or extra lighting. Bus borders present a significant risk to the safety of bus passengers, especially those with a visual or hearing impairment.

Traffic lights and single lanes at Carden Avenue will slow traffic flows and create delays for buses. Reduced traffic lanes at Preston Drove junction will also slow traffic and make buses slower.



Re-locating cycle lanes to the parallel road within Preston Park could have allowed bus lanes to be added on the main highway. This suggestion was not adopted yet clearly many cyclists already prefer to use this road.

Western Road

The revised Western Road/Dyke Road junction is very welcome and should improve the flow of buses through the clock tower junction. Unfortunately, that is the only positive for bus users. Removing the Clarence Square bus stops will mean longer stop times for buses at Churchill Square but there will be less space for buses to stop at Churchill Square with a new wide pedestrian crossing by M&S.

The main reason for moving the westbound Waitrose stop further back was to allow for two lanes of westbound traffic at the traffic lights but this has not been achieved. The relocated westbound stop has space for only one bus which is no better than now, and queuing buses will block Sillwood Road. This location will also make it more difficult for Waitrose delivery lorries which come up Preston Street and need to access Hampton Place, which is already a tricky manoeuvre.

Old Shoreham Road

There was huge public opposition to the Old Shoreham Road scheme, and we know it would have an impact on buses over a wide area as other traffic seeks alternative routes to avoid congestion. The ETS Committee deferred a decision on this scheme.

A259 Kingsway

The A259 scheme is partly formalising what already exists. Narrowing the westbound lanes at the Hove Street junction is our main concern because it could increase congestion. There is also an issue at Langdale Road where the proposal is to remove or relocate the westbound stop. This stop should be retained nearby if possible.

Conclusion

Sadly, our overall view is that little has been done to help bus users. Many of these proposals risk making buses slower and less attractive. Our bus network has enjoyed 25 years of spectacular growth against the national trend, much of which was achieved through innovative bus priority measures which received enthusiastic all-party support. It now feels as though our buses have become too successful so people must be encouraged to use other active travel modes.

Park & Ride trial in 2022?

Brighton & Hove Buses has put forward a proposal to run a Park & Ride scheme in summer 2022, based on Mill Road. This has received a surprisingly positive response from Brighton & Hove City Council. Credit is due to Brighton & Hove Buses for developing and presenting a carefully thought through scheme. It is a pity some Councillors found it necessary to start scaremongering in the media, with comments about a 5,000 space car park in the South Downs National Park. This has never been suggested by proponents of Park & Ride.

Surprisingly the Council has agreed to fund a £250,000 feasibility study into the benefits of Park & Ride in Brighton & Hove. This follows recommendations last year from the Climate Assembly and a report by transport consultants Steer on a Liveable City Centre. To be effective the new study needs to look beyond the city boundaries and discuss plans with neighbouring transport authorities. Park & Ride should be about discouraging people in East & West Sussex and beyond from driving into the city. It should not make it attractive for local residents to drive to the nearest P&R site instead of using local buses. For that reason, some suggested locations such as Brighton Marina and Portslade should be dismissed; they would just risk increasing local congestion along the A259 and other roads. Mill Road is much more suitable because it is on the edge of the urban area, not directly connected to residential roads but close to the A23. It is already successful as a part time P&R site.

Newhaven might be a suitable location. A Park & Ride east of the town near Sainsbury's could have potential to reduce traffic levels in the town centre as well as along the A259 through Peacehaven, Saltdean and Rottingdean, bringing benefits to parts of East Sussex as well as Brighton & Hove. P&R users could use an improved 12X service and would also have the option of using train services from Newhaven Town station. Brighton & Hove Buses is bidding for Government funding with East Sussex County Council to introduce hydrogen fuel cell buses on Coaster services between Brighton and Eastbourne. If successful people will be able to travel into Brighton on almost silent zero emission vehicles.

Summer opportunities

Some of the best bus trips to explore the surrounding countryside or coastline:

- The Coaster services 12/12A/12X from Brighton Station to Eastbourne run frequently. The limited stop 12X is the best way to reach Seven Sisters as it is 15-20 minutes quicker than the all stops 12A. 12X buses leave Brighton every 20 minutes during the day. In addition, the 13X to Birling Gap, Beachy Head and Eastbourne is now running half hourly. **From 25 July the service was extended to Eastbourne Pier and runs daily until September.**
- The Stagecoach Coastliner 700 goes westwards from Brighton, Old Steine and Hove to Shoreham, Worthing and Littlehampton, every 10 minutes (every 20 minutes on Sundays). **Night Service N700 has been re-introduced on Friday and Saturday nights between Brighton, Worthing and Durrington.** N700 buses leave Brighton Old Steine at 00:35, 01:35, 02:35 and 03:35.

- Brighton & Hove service 2 also serves Shoreham and buses continue to Upper Beeding, Bramber and Steyning every hour. At the eastern end of the No 2 route there are some spectacular views between the racecourse and Woodingdean en route to historic Rottingdean.
- Heading North, the Regency routes 28/29 go to Lewes frequently, then to Uckfield and Tunbridge Wells (every 30/60 minutes) while Metrobus 270/271/272 go to Haywards Heath and East Grinstead (270) or Crawley with the 272 serving Wakehurst Place (not 271 as published last month). The 273 also goes to Crawley via Hurstpierpoint (www.Metrobus.co.uk for times). Stagecoach route 17 goes to Henfield and Horsham, hourly.
- Don't forget the excellent Breeze up to the Downs services from Brighton on Saturdays and Sundays:
 - 77 to Devil's Dyke – **now running daily every 45 minutes**
 - 78 to Stanmer Park – every 70 minutes
 - 79 to Ditchling Beacon – every 70 minutes

This is just a summary, there's an excellent leaflet [here](#) which shows all the opportunities with a superb map with times available on the [Brighton & Hove Buses](#) website. A One Day Discovery ticket (£9 for one person or £17.50 for a family ticket) is valid on most buses throughout Sussex and beyond without restricting you to one bus operator

Brighton Area Buswatch meetings

In normal circumstances, meetings with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council are held four times a year. We hope to be able to resume meetings in the Autumn. In the meantime, please send in your comments and we will take them up with the operators or the Council.

Buswatch News is produced and edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. Contributions and suggestions are welcome.

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