

Marine Parade bus lane consultation report

Background

In 2022, the council was awarded £28 million by the Department for Transport for our Bus Service Improvement Plan. The money is being used to improve bus services and provide lower fares across the city.

Some of the funding has been provided to speed up buses. This includes a new bus lane on the westbound side of Marine Parade between the junctions of Lower Rock Gardens and the Sea Life Centre. As this part of the road is very wide, there wouldn't be any need to reduce the number of traffic lanes.

The bus lane would operate 24 hours a day and could also be used by taxis and cyclists. It would be installed under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO).

A consultation on proposals took place between Friday 10 May and Friday 28 June, 2024¹.

Headlines

- The consultation asked for comments on the proposals to inform how the plans could be developed and improved. The purpose was therefore not to ask a 'for' or 'against' type question. It should also be noted that people are typically more likely to leave comments when they are unhappy with aspects than if they are supportive or neutral. Nevertheless, of the 895 people who left comments, 349 were categorised as broadly positive, 362 as broadly negative and 184 as not clearly positive or negative. Suggestions or criticisms made will be used to inform changes to the proposals.
- Highest numbers of respondents live within the city but not in the immediate vicinity of the scheme proposals.
- There was low interest in the scheme from people living within the direct vicinity of the scheme (9.7% of total respondents).
- Over 18% of respondents live outside of the city.
- Around 50% of all comments on bus travel stated that the bus lane should be made longer. In addition to this about a third also thought that the proposed bus lane would speed up journeys.
- Highest numbers of comments about the pedestrian environment were centred around concerns about the removal of the pedestrian island and a quarter of these were made by people with disabilities.
- Highest numbers of comments about cycling raised concerns about not including a segregated cycle lane and safety for cyclists, although many respondents thought that this proposal would increase safety for cyclists.

¹ This was 3 days earlier than planned as Royal Mail were ahead of schedule for delivery of leaflets and postcards.

- 110 respondents commented on a loss of parking². Over 25% of these people have a disability.
- Disabled people commented more on a potential increase in traffic congestion or pollution than on a loss of parking.
- Highest levels of general concern for all respondents were that the scheme would increase traffic congestion and pollution.

Methodology

Information leaflets were sent to an area of 3295 addresses (both business and residential) along the proposed route that could be directly affected by the proposals. A further 4019 addresses from an outer area along the route, were sent postcards with brief information about the scheme proposals. All people written to were invited to visit the council’s digital engagement platform ‘Your Voice’ where they could access more information and be able to comment on the proposals. Respondents were also invited to ‘follow’ the project on Your Voice which will enable them to receive automatic updates as the project progresses onto its next phase.

In addition, emails inviting comments on the scheme were sent to relevant stakeholders from our external and internal stakeholder list.

The consultation was also promoted via the council’s social media channels and Brighton & Hove Buses assisted by sending details of the consultation to their distribution list of around 280,000 people.

Full results

1252 valid responses were received³. People were asked whether they lived in, worked in or visited the city. Some people fitted into more than one category:

	Number of respondents	% of all respondents
I live in Brighton & Hove	1004	80.2
I work in Brighton & Hove	368	29.4
I live outside of Brighton & Hove	197	15.7
I visit Brighton & Hove	172	13.7
I work outside of Brighton & Hove	65	5.2

The following table shows distribution of responses⁴. Two respondents gave no address meaning they couldn’t be categorised and included in the table below, although their comments were included in the analysis.

² 12.2% of all respondents who left a comment

³ 85 duplicate responses were removed from the analysis. Comments from these respondents were merged into the primary response to ensure all comments were captured. Some people told us that they revisited Your Voice for a second or even third time to add to their primary response.

⁴ Address details given were used to categorise responses into these areas.

Leaflet Area		Postcard Area		Other responses from within the city	Other responses from outside the city
No.	Response rate	No.	Response rate		
121	3.7%	77	1.9%	816	236

There were low levels of interest shown from respondents living within the mailed areas. 9.7% of total responses were received from the leafletted area and 6.2% for the area sent a postcard. The overwhelming numbers of responses came from people living in other areas of the city (65.2%) with a further 18.8% responses from outside the city as follows⁵:

Area	Number
Peacehaven / Telscombe Cliffs	110
Seaford	23
Lewes	20
Eastbourne	12
Shoreham	11
Newhaven	10
Southwick	5
Lancing	4
London	4
Haywards Heath	3
Uckfield	3
Worthing	3
Chichester	2
Crowborough	2

Higher numbers from non- Brighton & Hove respondents came from areas east of the city boundary, reflecting the east-west bus routes that run along Marine Parade. Respondents living in the Peacehaven and Telscombe Cliffs alone, showed higher levels of interest in the scheme than residents in the postcard area and almost as high as those in the directly affected leafletted area.

News of the consultation reached the respondents as follows:

How did you hear about this consultation?	Number of respondents	% of all respondents
Social Media	332	26.5
Leaflet	179	14.3
Website	108	8.7
Local Press	87	6.9
Word of mouth	76	6.1
Postcard	44	3.5
Other	0	0

⁵ Only areas mentioned more than once are included here, 3 responses came from other countries.

Analysis of comments

357 (28.5%) respondents made no comment on the proposal.

895 (71.5%) respondents commented on proposals. Comments have been themed into changes relating to⁶:

- Walking
- Cycling
- Bus use
- Parking
- Taxi and loading bays
- Other subjects

The most comments related to the bus lane followed by comments about parking . The least comments were made about the pedestrian environment.

The following tables present results for:

- all comments grouped by themes (as above)
- top ten themes made by disabled people.
- top ten themes made by respondents who live close to the scheme area, other respondents from within Brighton & Hove also respondents from outside the city.

All comments grouped by themes

Walking	No. of comments
Don't remove pedestrian island / move towards New Steine if anything. It's an important route to beach, St James's Street, from late night venues. It will create a long gap between crossing places	39
Don't want 2-stage crossing / will be dangerous (for disabled people) / it doesn't comply with design guidance	14
Approve of new crossing / its location	12
Widen pavements / currently dangerous for pedestrians	4
Adding another traffic lane / cycle lane will make it more dangerous for pedestrians to cross	2
Need more places to cross not less	2
It will be safer for pedestrians	2
Total	75

⁶ Comments reported here are only those that have appeared more than once.

Cycling	No. of comments
Want segregated cycle lane/ funding was for segregated cycle lane / does not meet LTN 1/20 standards	33
These proposals could make cycling unsafe	26
Will make it safer for cyclists / will help cyclists / I support the cycle lane	22
Cycle lanes are not joined up to other areas ⁷	5
The two-stage crossing will result in a dangerous pinch point for cyclists	5
Include an advanced stop line at Lower Rock Gardens	5
Total	96

Bus lane and bus travel	No. of comments
The bus lane is too short / needs to be longer	120
It will speed up buses/ help buses run to timetable / will ease congestion / will improve bus travel	91
Allow motorcycles in bus lane	14
Not in favour of bus stop being moved	13
Bus lane should operate at peak times only	10
Approve of new bus stop location	2
Total	250

Parking	No. of comments
Concerned about loss of parking	95
Concerned about loss of disabled parking	29
Concerned about loss of parking revenue	14
Remove the parking	2
Add more disabled parking	3
Replace lost parking spaces elsewhere	2
Total	145

15% of all comments related to the loss of parking. People with disabilities showed proportionately higher levels of concern despite the proposals showing no disabled bays being removed .

Taxi and loading bays	No. of comments
Time-control the taxi and loading bay / loading bay peak times only/ keep the taxi bay 24/7	6

⁷ Does not include comments made regarding this scheme linking to Valley Gardens Phase 3 scheme, see separate table on p 6

Remove / move loading bay	4
Remove /move the taxi bay	4
Total	14

Other comments	No. of comments
The scheme will cause more congestion / pollution	189
Fix Potholes / resurface roads instead	30
Will adversely affect business / tourism	22
Want to see modelling / data / justification / spend	17
The proposals are anti-car	12
The proposals are designed to raise money in fines	9
It's not going to ease congestion	4
Want a Park & Ride	4
Total	287

In addition, comments not directly related to the scheme proposals centred around the upcoming implementation of Valley Gardens Phase 3 (VG3).

Other comments relating to the implementation of Valley Gardens 3	No. of comments
Cycle lane does not link to VG3 scheme ⁸	14
VG3 scheme will lead to more congestion	7
This scheme is to pre-empt congestion that will be caused by VG3	6
This is designed to mitigate changes at the Aquarium Roundabout as part of VG3	6
Works need to be timed to fit around works for VG3 / don't make any changes before VG3 implemented	2
Total	35

In addition to the themed comments with specific feedback, some people responded as follows without giving context relating to the scheme proposals:

	No. of responses
General support for these proposals (without specific feedback)	124
General lack of support for these proposals (without specific feedback)	43

⁸ The proposed Marine Parade scheme does link up to planned cycling facilities in Valley Gardens Phase 3 but does not provide a segregated cycle facility on Marine Parade.

There were also some comments unrelated to the proposals eg about the use of Your Voice.⁹

Stakeholder and local businesses comments

41 responses were received from local businesses and stakeholders. General comments have been fed into the tables above. Specific comments or issues raised by businesses and organisations are also summarised here.

Bus Operators: Brighton & Hove Buses have expressed support for the scheme and the need for it.

Cycling related: A business, a consultant 'Transport Initiatives' and 3 stakeholders (Bricycles, Shoreham-By-Cycle and Brighton and Hove Cycling UK) between them have requested:

- for an advance stop-line at Lower Rock Gardens.
- to provide a bi-directional cycle lane on the south side of Marine Parade, which is part of the recently approved Valley Gardens 3 project, to meet the new crossing so that eastbound cyclists can cross safely to continue their journey on the north side of the road.
- for the two-stage crossing to be replaced with a single-stage crossing with a built-out kerb on the south side in line with LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design guidance.
- to address the refuge island of the signalised crossing creates a pinch point for people on cycles travelling east on Marine Parade.
- for a temporary westbound cycle lane on the pavement on the south side of Marine Parade, from Rock Place to Margaret Street, where the bus lane is below the minimum 4.5m recommended width for a shared lane, to prevent buses close-passing cyclists and prevent buses being held up by cyclists.
- for assistance to eastbound cyclists.
- to address the proposed taxi-bay which will be an obstruction for cyclists.

Parking: A hotel is concerned about the removal of parking spaces affecting their business; however, they are not located alongside the proposed bus lane or on adjoining side roads so are some distance from the parking that is proposed to be removed.

BADGE (disability access/ Blue Badge group) have commented on the loss of a disabled parking bay and 15 other bays which are essential for blue badge users who wish to park towards the bottom of Madeira Terrace. This is of special importance on event days at Madeira Drive when the blue badge parking is removed. For clarity, it is noted that no dedicated disabled bays are being removed, despite this being mentioned in responses. It is true to say that blue badge holders, along with all

⁹ The use of Your Voice as a consultation tool is new to the council. Any issues relating to its use for this consultation will be fed back to the implementation team.

drivers, will no longer be able to use the dedicated general parking bays which will be removed.

Accessibility: A business opposite the pedestrian island has questioned whether a disability focus group looked at this as it is the only remaining access ramp to the beach.

Kemptown Residents Association: have raised a question as to what happens to cyclists when buses merge with the regular traffic lanes to avoid the proposed taxi/loading bay opposite Broad Street. Are they expected to try and merge too, competing with the buses, which have notorious blind spots? They also raise doubts that cyclists will want to share a lane with buses and so will cycle on the pavements. In addition, the issue of coach parking has been raised. Marine Parade has been an unofficial pick-up point and request that Madeira Drive is made available for coaches.

The former MP for Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven¹⁰ also raised the issue of coach parking, advocating for a coach drop-off by the Sealife Centre.

Living Streets Brighton and Hove: Would prefer to see speed reduction measures along Marine Parade and increased pedestrian crossings, rather than measures to increase bus and traffic speeds. Crossing should run straight across the road and not be dog-leg style where pedestrians have to wait in the middle of the road, in the middle of speeding traffic and pollution.

Two **taxi drivers** state that as buses will still need to use the middle and right lane to turn right which will result in queuing traffic behind them.

Top ten themes made by disabled people

243 respondents said they had a disability (26%)¹¹

Comments - disabled people	No. of times mentioned
Will increase congestion / pollution	31
Concerned about loss of disabled parking	17
The bus lane is too short / needs to be longer	12
Don't remove pedestrian island	10
Concerned about loss of parking	7
Will adversely affect business / tourism	7
These proposals could make cycling unsafe	5
It will speed up buses/ help buses run to timetable	5
Fix potholes / resurface roads instead	5
Not in favour of bus stop being moved	3

¹⁰ Pre July 2024 General Election

¹¹ 26% of the 1106 respondents who answered the question on disability in the Equalities Monitoring section of the questionnaire

Concerned about loss of parking revenue	3
The proposals are anti-car	3
The proposals are designed to raise money in fines	3

Top ten themes made by location of respondents

198 (15.9%) respondents live closest to the scheme area either within the area leafletted or sent a postcard. Their top ten comments are as follows:

Respondents living close to the area	No. of times mentioned
Will increase congestion / pollution	33
The bus lane is too short / needs to be longer	20
Concerned about loss of disabled parking	17
It will speed up buses/ help buses run to timetable	16
Want segregated cycle lane	8
These proposals could make cycling unsafe	8
Don't remove pedestrian island	7
Concerned about loss of parking	7
Will adversely affect business / tourism	7

816 (65.2%) respondents live in other areas of Brighton and Hove. Their top ten comments are as follows:

Respondents from other areas of Brighton and Hove	No. of times mentioned
Will increase e congestion / pollution	119
The bus lane is too short / needs to be longer	79
It will speed up buses/ help buses run to timetable	61
Concerned about loss of parking	61
Concerned about loss of disabled parking	26
Don't remove pedestrian island	25
Fix potholes / resurface roads instead	23
Want segregated cycle lane	21
These proposals could make cycling unsafe	16
Will improve safety/ I support the cycle lane	16
Will adversely affect business / tourism	13
Want to see modelling / data / justification / spend	13

Respondents from outside the city

236 (18.8%) respondents live outside the city. Their top ten comments are as follows:

Respondents from outside the city	No. of times mentioned
The scheme will cause more congestion / pollution	37
The bus lane is too short / needs to be longer	21
Concerned about loss of parking	18
It will speed up buses/ help buses run to timetable	14
Don't remove pedestrian island	7
Will adversely affect business / tourism	7
Fix potholes / resurface roads instead	4
Want segregated cycle lane	4
Will improve safety/ I support the cycle lane	4
The proposals are anti-car	3

Demographic Information

Age	Number	%
U18	6	0.7
18-24	35	4.0
25-34	90	15.0
35-44	140	16.0
45-54	188	21.5
55-64	259	29.6
65-74	116	13.3
75+	41	4.7
Total	875	100

What gender are you?	Number	%
Male	647	59.7
Female	404	37.3
Non-Binary	24	2.2
Other	9	9
Total	1084	100

Do you identify as the gender you were assigned at birth?	Number	%
Yes	1013	98.1
No	20	1.9
Total	1033	100

How would you describe your ethnic background?		Number	%
White	White English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British	828	77.4
	Irish	20	1.9
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	4	0.4
	Any other white background	139	13.0
Asian or Asian British	Bangladeshi	3	0.3
	Indian	8	0.7
	Pakistani	1	0.1
	Chinese	2	0.2
	Any other Asian background	5	0.5
Black or Black British	African	6	0.6
	Caribbean	0	0.0
	Any other Black background	2	0.2
Mixed	Asian & White	11	1.0
	Black African & White	3	0.3
	Black Caribbean & White	8	0.7
	Any other mixed background	13	1.2
Any other ethnic group	Arab	2	0.2
	Any other ethnic group	15	1.4
Total		1070	100

Disability	Number	%
Yes, a little	149	13.5
Yes, a lot	94	8.5
No	863	78.0
Total	1106	100

Of those who answered “yes”, disabilities were as follows:

Please state the type of impairment which applies to you.	Number
Physical impairment	150
Sensory impairment	23
Learning disability/ difficulty	19
Long-standing illness	95
Mental health condition	75
Development condition	5
Autistic Spectrum	33
Other	15