

Minutes

South Gloucestershire Cycle Forum

Location: Kipling Suite, Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre,

Time & Date: 6 pm on Wednesday 19th November 2014

Attending:

Cllr Brian Allinson - BA

Cllr Pat Hockey - PH

Cllr Roger Hutchinson - RH

John Seddon (SGC) - JS

Lee Lodder (SGC) - LL

Anne O'Driscoll (SusCom) - AOD

Andrew Gough (Bristol Cycle Campaign) - AG

Eric Booth (Bristol Cycle Campaign) - EB

Matt Barnes (First Great Western) - MB

BUGS reps

Local cyclists

Bicycles on Trains

Matt Barnes, First Great Western's Regional Development Manager for the Bristol area, spoke about capacity issues on trains and in particular on the Severn Beach Line (SBL). Large increases in passenger numbers (5-10% annually on the SBL) are leading to increased competition for space at busy times, and there is no possibility of adding additional rolling stock within the next 3 years.

New rolling stock is being purchased through the IEP programme (linked to the electrification of the Great Western Line), and other rolling stock is being re-allocated to the FGW area from the South-east. There may be an opportunity to involve cycle groups in the re-configuration of such rolling stock. It was noted that the use of "flip-up" seating to provide additional space for wheelchair users and cyclists seems to work well.

FGW has commissioned an independent survey of cycle users on the SBL, together with 2 focus groups in order to better understand how and why cyclists were using the service. MB had hoped to present the results to the forum tonight, but delays in arranging the focus groups mean that these results will not now be available until early December. Once they are available MB will provide results to LL who will distribute to the forum.

PH asked whether the survey had included cyclists who don't currently use the train. MB replied that it didn't as these groups were difficult to reach, but that they would consult with cycling groups, such as this forum.

AG questioned how cyclists should lobby for better cycle provision on trains. MB confirmed that he should be the first point of contact, but warned that there would always be some conflict for space on trains.

MB confirmed that FGW had no intention to ban cycles all day on any service, although peak period restrictions may continue to apply due to capacity issues.

Other Cycle-Rail issues

Regarding the provision of step free access at stations, MB confirmed their next Access for All funding would focus on projects at Weston-Super-Mare and Cheltenham stations. Some bridges are being replaced as part of the electrification programme and, where possible, improvements will be made at these to ensure step-free access,

MB reported that the FGW bid to the DfT's Cycle Rail Fund is focussed on providing a Cycle Hub at Clifton Down station on the SBL.

JS reported that SGC are working with FGW to provide interchange improvements at Parkway Station, which would include looking at improving the secure cycle locker provision. A Brompton Dock station is proposed at Parkway funded through the LSTF programme. This should be installed in 2014/15.

The new cycle parking at Filton Abbeywood station was welcomed.

Greater Bristol Strategic Cycle Network

Eric Booth, chair of the Bristol Cycling Campaign (BCC), presented their Bristol Cycling Manifesto, including the vision for a strategic cycle network comprising of commuter focused freeways (providing direct and segregated routes), leisure focused quietways and cycling neighbourhoods.

EB highlighted the aim for 200 miles of segregated route across the Greater Bristol area. Delivering this network was estimated as costing £109M, and would effectively result in a "MetroBike" network. EB also noted that the health benefits of cycling led to Cost Benefit ratios of 10:1 or greater, which were so high that it leads to them not being believed by planners.

EB reported that the Manifesto identified five "asks" of local authorities, these being:

- Set a target to increase cycling to 20% of all trips by 2025 (EB recognised that this might be harder to achieve in South Gloucestershire compared to Bristol).
- Fix a plan to deliver the cycling network by 2025.
- Commit to investment in cycling of £16 per head of population per year.
- Implement the plan.
- Engage a Cycling Commissioner.

EB encouraged the forum to use www.space4cycling.org to encourage councillors to sign up to support cycling. It was noted that there had been relatively little response from SG Councillors to date.

AOD noted that SusCom members felt that the A38 should be the priority route to be improved, and that she liked the idea of MetroBike.

The importance of the A38 corridor, and the need to improve cycle facilities both along and across the corridor, was supported by other forum members. The A4174 ring road, especially through Filton, was also highlighted as a priority, along with a need to improve the cycle routes through Winterbourne.

It was noted that the major schemes for MetroBus and MetroWest required substantial funding up-front to develop the proposals and to secure national funding support. A similar approach would be required for the strategic cycle network identified in the Manifesto, and the difficulties in securing resource for the development of schemes were noted. SGC PTSE Lead Members noted the resource issues and confirmed that they are looking at these in the context of the wider Council budget.

BA praised the presentation provided by EB and invited him to repeat it at a future JTEC meeting.

The benefits of design engineers attending study tours, such as the recent BCC tour to The Netherlands, were recognised by all, but it was noted that council budget reductions made it difficult to justify spending on such events. RH, PH and BA agreed to discuss this further to see what could be done. EB will contact SGC with a proposal to make a study tour more affordable.

Other Issues

The use of Electric bikes was discussed, EB noted that sales of electric cycles are increasing dramatically, and that they are an excellent way to get people into cycling.

AG requested that the forum be made aware of relevant consultations early enough to enable them to provide input. JS will remind colleagues of the need to consult the forum.

SGC has responded to the DfT consultation on the Cycling Delivery Plan. The consultation period has been extended to 27th November.

The response had been circulated to forum members, along with the current list of cycling issues raised by forum members.

JS noted that due to two long inclusive discussions we were unable to get through the whole agenda tonight, but hoped that attendees found the debates informative and

engaging. PH asked that approximate timings be given on the agenda for future meetings in order to move the debates along. LL to action this.

The dates of forum meetings for 2015 had been included in the agenda. Any comments on these or on suggested venues (Kingswood or Yate) should be made to LL.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm.