



Somer Valley Links:

Response to the consultation concerning the proposals for Bath City Centre from the Bear Flat Association (BFA)

1 Introduction

BFA supports the aims of the Somer Valley Links project and welcomes the Consultation.

We took part in the Consultations on the A367 and had a meeting and site visit with Nik Bowyer from the WECA/BANES team in 2022.

Although our area lies outside the study area this time, BFA is commenting on the proposals for **St James's Parade and Ambury Gyrotory** because they will affect our journeys to and from town by bus, taxi, cycle or car (less so on foot).

We are *not* commenting on the proposals for Cross-city Centre Cycling - Pulteney Bridge – Green Park.

2 Support for the Scheme

Buses and taxis northbound would be able to turn right from the bridge into the bus station or Dorchester Street instead of going round by Ambury, so saving time. Buses and taxis southbound would also save time through the bus-only link to the bridge, avoiding queues likely to extend back to Ambury once there is only a single lane southbound on the bridge.

Buses would gain in particular by no longer having to turn left into St James's Parade. Buses waiting for a substantial gap in which to manoeuvre round the tight corner has been an absurd spectacle for many years. Buses would travel to St James's Parade in virtually in a straight line.

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Some **car** routes would be longer, most obviously Dorchester Street to Churchill Bridge.

On balance, BFA considers that the **benefits** for bus, taxi and cycle users would outweigh the inconvenience to car users. It would encourage active travel, boost bus and taxi use and mildly discourage car use in, from and to the City centre. So it would be beneficial to air quality and health.

3 Other Comments

Although we support more provision for **cycling**, we ask that the cycle route envisaged for the west side of Churchill Bridge is subject to careful analysis to check that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. The introduction of the cycle route would mean that southbound traffic had only one lane and therefore queuing would extend much further north than is the case now. The scheme *generally* needs to be underpinned by good traffic data. Cyclists from the west may cross the river via Bath Quays bridge, while those from the east have North Parade Bridge and Halfpenny Bridge. That leaves cyclists from the south. Our local knowledge tells us that few cyclists currently use Wells Road and Holloway to get to Churchill Bridge. Flows might increase as cycling receives greater encouragement, but our point is that projected use of the new cycle route on the bridge needs to be significant enough to outweigh the loss of one southbound lane for general traffic. Were the bridge to retain four vehicular lanes, bus/taxi-only lanes in both directions would be feasible.

The proposed scheme appears to set up a **quasi cul-de-sac** for general traffic. It seems not to provide for a car travelling north into the city wishing to get back again: there is nowhere to turn around on street (though of course car parks and the train station involve a turn round). So some cars must drive via the Midland Bridge as the nearest way to return. We suggest that signage for northbound traffic warns of this before they cross the river.

Apparently, the pedestrian **subway** on the eastern approach to the gyratory south of Churchill Bridge is not part of this scheme. It did not feature either in the A367 proposals. Has it fallen between the two stools? We'd like to see consideration of an at-grade crossing at this point for pedestrians and cyclists, so enhancing journeys for both (and removing a perceived barrier to walking, especially for lone pedestrians at night). This would have the incidental benefit of relieving queues northbound on Wells Road while the crossing lights are red.

We hope that **trees and landscaping** will be considered as part of this scheme. The trees by the river just east of Churchill Bridge should be retained in particular. There may be opportunities to enhance the public realm..

Bear Flat Association

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