Muller Road improvements
Public consultation report

Transport Projects Team
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Muller Road improvements – Public consultation report

Purpose of this report

Public consultation is important in understanding the views and concerns of local residents, users of Muller Road, stakeholders and the general public. Responses from public consultations, along with other factors, are taken into account when making final decisions. Feedback we received as part of the consultation has led to changes being made to our initial proposal.

The Muller Road improvements proposal has been created because of the proposed new housing in Lockleaze. Around 1,200 houses are proposed, and in order to avoid congestion becoming worse throughout the local area we need to act now. Otherwise, if we wait until the houses are built, it will be too late to put in place measures that encourage residents to use the bus, walk and cycle.

This report will summarise some of the major changes, and what decisions we’ve come to. Later in this document, we will also discuss the impact on trees on Muller Road.

To understand all the changes, large and small, please read the Design Review document which identifies every change from our original proposals.
Common issues raised by respondents

A number of common issues were raised by respondents, which can be summarised as follows:

1. Concerns regarding Glenfrome Road banned right turn: 221 responses
2. Concerns regarding parking restrictions: 122 responses
3. Concerns regarding poor provision for cyclists: 120 responses
4. A range of comments regarding Brent Road, Draycott Road, and Springfield Avenue: 107 responses
5. Concerns regarding the impact on the Old Library: 95 responses
6. Concerns regarding 24-hour bus lanes: 76 responses

Below we will set out our response to each of these issues.

Some of these issues are interconnected. For example, 43% of the responses that mentioned the Old Library also mentioned 24-hour bus lanes. We may combine our response to some issues as a result, as any changes we make impact a number of the issues at once.
Quality of life improvements based on your feedback

Apart from the big issues raised, there were a number of smaller issues raised that we’ve tried to find an answer to. We understand that the small day-to-day irritations can sometimes have more of an impact.

**Ensuring improvements to bus services as well as things like bus lanes**
At consultation events, a common theme was that improvements to bus reliability are most effective when combined with more frequent bus services – or more bus services.

Alongside the Muller Road improvements there are already plans by First to put double-decker buses on the 24 route to increase the number of passengers that can use the bus, and Lockleaze has been identified as a major growth area for increased bus usage.

**The rear-access lane connecting Elmcroft Crescent and Shaldon Road.**
You’ve told us that this rear-access lane is used consistently by people avoiding the lights at Shaldon Road, and even by people taking a complicated route from Lindsay Road to avoid the queue further up.

This has led to dangerous driving, including pedestrians being struck when walking down the lane.

We are proposing to put in place bollards just to the east of the T-junction in the rear-access lane, to prevent both of these dangerous activities. This will still allow access by residents.

**Removal of Parkstone and Darnley one-ways**
A number of residents were unhappy with the one-ways proposed on these roads. As our goal with these was for the benefit of residents, we’ve removed them as residents are not happy with them and don’t feel they’re required.

**Double yellow lines at Shaldon Road junction**
We’ve heard from a number of people that currently people park very dangerously right on the Shaldon Road junction. We’ve made sure that we retain our proposal for double yellow lines at the junction, and we’ll be enforcing parking restrictions there if the scheme goes ahead.

**Re-opening Ashley Down train station**
Several respondents suggested that joined-up transport would require the re-opening of Ashley Down (aka Ashley Hill) train station. Re-opening this station has been part of the MetroWest project for a number of years, and is projected to happen in 2022.

**Flooding improvements at Station Lane**
Several residents have mentioned that Station Lane floods regularly. While we can’t look at this as part of the Muller Road project, the team working on re-opening Ashley Down train station will be able to take forward improvements that should reduce the chances of this happening.

**Improvements at Concorde Way crossing**
A number of respondents that cycle felt that we could be doing more at Petherbridge Way junction, where Concorde Way path crosses Muller Road. We’ve not suggested improvements in this area as there is another project team looking at improving Concorde Way – this work is at an early stage but is looking at ways to improve this junction.

**Double yellow lines at corners of Bedford Crescent junction with Downend Road**
A local councillor expressed concerns that Bedford Crescent has no parking restrictions on the corners of its junction with Downend Road, meaning that it’s very difficult to travel in and out safely. We’re now including this in our scheme.
M32 roundabout

Many residents understandably brought up the impact of the M32 roundabout on traffic flows in the area. While our information shows that there are issues caused by Muller Road as well, it’s fair to say that the M32 roundabout has a big impact. The scale of the M32 roundabout means we can’t make changes as part of this scheme, but it is being looked at as part of the council’s work on the M32.
Our original plans proposed banning a right turn on the junction of Glenfrome Road and Muller Road. The restriction would be on vehicles travelling south-west on Glenfrome Road turning north-west on Muller Road.

This right turn is the only one on the junction with its own filter light, meaning all other traffic is held at a red light for up to 15 of every 120 seconds so that vehicles can turn right here.

This right turn is very popular for through traffic, as Glenfrome Road connects up to Frenchay and Stapleton. The aim of banning this turn was to improve the operation of the Muller Road junction, while reducing the amount of through traffic on Glenfrome Road.

We received 221 responses on this issue, as well as a large number of conversations at the drop-in sessions. Concerns raised include:

- The impact on Glenfrome Primary School
- Vehicles being required to use the M32 roundabout, inconveniencing drivers and lengthening journey times
- Banning the turn will possibly encourage vehicles to make dangerous or illegal turns

**Action:** As a result of your feedback, we have been looking at other ways we can make traffic flow better at this junction. The changes we propose to our plans as a result of this issue are:

- We are no longer proposing to ban the right turn.
- **Result:** there are no banned turns at this junction.
- Full upgrade of the traffic light equipment at this junction. This equipment is very old, and upgrading it will make a big difference to the efficiency of the traffic lights.
  - **Result:** significantly improved traffic flows and shorter journeys
- Linking all the traffic lights along Muller Road, so that it’s possible to easily change traffic light timings to respond to changes in the way Muller Road is used over the coming years.
  - **Result:** the traffic lights on Muller Road will adjust to changing habits, unlike the current situation where they are fixed and cannot be changed.
- Removal of the right turn filter, so that this right turn is the same as all the other right turns on this junction.
  - **Result:** anybody travelling on Muller Road will have more time to get through the junction, including buses and pedestrians.

These changes will result in big improvements for everybody using the junction, including pedestrians. The traffic lights will better detect pedestrians, resulting in fewer unnecessary red lights if there’s not someone waiting and shorter waits for pedestrians when there is someone waiting.

The traffic light timings will also be able to respond to traffic flows, so will work better with the lights at the M32 roundabout and further up Muller Road.

These changes mean that vehicles will still be able to turn right from Glenfrome Road and queues should be reduced, especially on Muller Road itself.
Concerns regarding parking restrictions

By and large, concerns about parking restrictions focused on the proposed 24-hour bus lanes, so our response to this issue will be interlinked with a later response to concerns regarding the bus lanes. In addition, 26% of people with concerns about parking restrictions also expressed concerns about the Old Library.

Most of the parking restrictions proposed along Muller Road are a result of the proposed bus lanes. One of the aims of the Muller Road project is to improve bus reliability and punctuality along the whole road – there are a number of ways to achieve this, but putting in bus lanes gives both improved punctuality when traffic is at normal levels and provides insulation from unexpected queues (for example, if there’s an accident on the M32).

Both those improvements mean that individuals are more likely to use the bus, as on sections of bus lane the bus will be more reliable than using the car.

However, most of the time putting in place bus lanes means reducing traffic capacity for other vehicles or removing on-street parking, so we have to balance a number of different factors when proposing them.

We have sought to address the balance to reflect the concerns that respondents expressed.

**Actions:** As a result of your feedback and other factors, we’ve reduced the impact of the scheme on parking:

- We’ve looked in detail at how the Glenfrome Road traffic lights work, and shown that it’s possible for buses to get through the lights even with a slightly shorter bus lane. With this in mind, we’ve reduced the length of bus lane near the junction so that it finishes before the Old Library. This retains parking for the Old Library and nearby residents.
  - **Result:** parking retained for Old Library and residents near Glenfrome Road junction
- We’ve changed the parking provision we were planning for the shops near Brent and Draycott Road. The proposed parking on Brent Road didn’t work for the shops there, so we’re proposing a dropped kerb outside the shops with a reinforced pavement so that vehicles are able to pull up in front of the shops (not on the pavement itself).
  - **Result:** shops can still benefit from passing trade, while the bus lane can still go ahead.
- We’ve reduced parking restrictions near Darnley Avenue and Parkstone Avenue, to provide more space for parking.
  - **Result:** there is more spare capacity for parking in this area

We’ve tried to balance benefits for buses and the impact on parking. Our proposed design will still provide excellent bus improvements while impacting less on the Old Library and local residents.
Concerns regarding poor provision for cyclists

The comments that we received on this topic focused on providing more space for cyclists, and suggesting that we provide priority and segregation between cyclists and pedestrians wherever possible.

The space available to us on Muller Road is relatively narrow, so we’ve again had to balance what we can do for cyclists while considering a number of other factors. Long stretches of Muller Road are a ‘green corridor’ which is very important to local residents, so we have to balance our transport aspirations and the ecological impact that would result from widening the highway significantly.

**Actions:** Our proposed design has a number of improvements for cyclists:

- Between the railway bridge and Stottbury Road, we have created segregated provision – so cyclists have their own space and pedestrians a separate space.
  - **Result:** more than half of the proposed shared path is now a segregated cycling and walking facility.
- Between Stottbury Road and Dormer Road, we have widened the proposed shared path by half a metre – it’s now 3.5m wide. In this area, we are constrained by the trees and embankment on each side. While we would prefer to put in place a segregated provision, we have balanced this against further loss of trees.
  - **Result:** there is now more space in this section for pedestrians and cyclists to travel without conflict.
- Signage will be improved along the route, including signs to St. Werburghs (down Boiling Wells Lane) and signs to the Frome Greenway (down Heyford Avenue/Tackley Road).
  - **Result:** it will be easier for cyclists to choose routes that are quieter, easier and more direct.
- We have put in place an advisory cycle lane northbound between Ralph Road junction and Downend Road junction (protected by parking restrictions) so that cyclists are safer in this area. Cyclists can also travel through the proposed road entrance closures at Springfield Avenue, Draycott Road and Brent Road.
  - **Result:** although there isn’t space to put in off-road cycling infrastructure here, the advisory cycle lane means that cyclists have their own space on the road going northbound, and can use the bus lane travelling southbound.

We understand that advisory cycle lanes and other on-road measures are not the perfect solution, but as in every aspect of the project we have to work within the constraints of Muller Road – taking into account all other users of the road.
In our original proposal we proposed closing the junction of Muller Road and Springfield Avenue, and making Brent Road and Draycott Road one way in opposite directions. However, feedback from residents was that this wasn’t the right solution. The majority of respondents agreed there was a problem, however, with both speeding and accidents on Springfield Avenue.

To try and make sure we got the right solution here, we held a meeting with local residents. In this meeting, local residents and councillors mapped their own proposed changes to the area to identify what their preferred solution would be.

We are now proposing one of these solutions, and we’ve circulated it past some local residents to ensure it’s what they would like to happen.

Instead of making Brent Road and Draycott Road one-way, both junctions with Muller Road will be closed to vehicles (as well as the original closure of Springfield Avenue). This will significantly reduce the number of vehicles using Brent Road, Draycott Road, and Springfield Avenue to get through to other areas of the city.
Concern regarding the impact on the Old Library

Most of the concerns on this topic focused on the impact on parking, as a proposed bus lane ran outside the Old Library.

As stated earlier we’ve balanced the need to improve bus punctuality with other improvements, such as improvements at the Glenfrome Road junction, and are now able to finish the bus lane earlier.

The bus lane will now finish just before the Old Library, and it is proposed to put in place single yellow lines outside the Old Library which will restrict parking in peak hours. This will mean that the area can’t be used by people parking there for multiple days, ensuring that the Old Library is able to make use of the space outside of peak hours.

This means the proposal is now to put in place single yellow lines (that restrict peak-hour parking) but to allow parking at other times. We’ve consulted on this with the Old Library to ensure they’re happy with it.

This result also means that the lanes are wider near the Old Library. The trees near the Old Library are very close to the road, so with a bus lane passing close by there was potential for damage to the trees that might result in their removal. Wider lanes stop this from being an issue, so the trees can be kept.
Concerns regarding 24-hour bus lanes

A number of people were concerned with the introduction of 24-hour bus lanes, stating that bus services are not 24-hour.

24 hour bus lanes have been chosen due to a number of factors:

- If there’s an issue on the roads that means there are long queues on Muller Road, buses still have priority and can maintain their reliability. Without a 24-hour bus lane, in those situations the bus won’t be more reliable than using a private car.
- If sections of the bus lane were 24-hour and others only for rush hour, cars parking outside of rush hour in the bus lane would require the buses re-entering traffic repeatedly. Many responses told us the bus lanes were too ‘stop-start’ and should be longer, but making the bus lanes not 24-hour would make this worse.
- We’ve added an additional lane without taking away any road capacity for other vehicles. To do this, lanes on Muller Road will be narrower than before. These narrow lanes can be dangerous for cyclists (due to close overtakes by vehicles) so a 24-hour bus lane provides a space for cyclists to be in relative safety. A rush hour bus lane would mean that cyclists have to squeeze past parked cars and moving vehicles. This is also true for motorcyclists, who are recognised in the Joint Local Transport Plan as poorly supported by current layouts.
- In addition to the point above, a 24-hour bus lane also means that the emergency services are able to use Muller Road without issue, while at present queues sometimes cause difficulties.
- 24-hour bus lanes are Council policy and show the commitment of the Council to sustainable travel. The Joint Local Transport Plan emphasises the importance of bus lanes, and in fact recommends where possible the removal of a general traffic lane to be replaced with a bus lane.

As a result, we propose for the bus lanes to remain as 24 hours.
Impact on trees on Muller Road

As a result of feedback from the consultation, we’re providing better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists alongside our original improvements for all other vehicles using Muller Road. We’ve tried to incorporate this feedback in a way that is a compromise between the impact on the trees bordering Muller Road and providing high-quality, safe facilities for all users.

Whenever we remove a tree, we plant another one – when the trees are larger trees, like on Muller Road, we plant at least two trees for every tree removed. These trees will be planted where our ecology specialists advise; they’ll usually be planted in the local area and we can take input from local people on where might be best.

Most of the trees removed will be in the embankment between the Fairfield School building and Muller Road, as we need to widen the highway at this point to be able to provide better facilities to all road users. While we will be removing a number of trees here, this will give us an opportunity to replant with native species that encourage biodiversity and support a wider range of wildlife.

Around 90 trees will be removed on Muller Road as part of these works, around 75% of which are in the embankment between the Fairfield School building and Muller Road.

We are required to provide for the planting of at least 196 trees as a result, meaning a net increase of over a hundred trees which we will aim to plant in the local area, including in the areas where we have to remove trees.

A number of other trees will be removed near Fairfield School playing fields, although we have negotiated with Fairfield School a land purchase that allows us to limit the impact here – rather than widening the path by removing the trees, we can construct the path behind the trees. The remainder of the trees are in ones and twos to allow for safe, accessible use by pedestrians and cyclists or to enable other improvements.

Next steps

We will now be submitting our proposal to the West of England Combined Authority for consideration. We will also be starting working on Traffic Regulation Orders and a planning application that are required before we can start any work.

Both a Traffic Regulation Order and a planning application require further consultation, so there will be opportunities to share your views. We will publicise the Traffic Regulation Orders and planning application to ensure you get a chance to have your say.