

Briefing Note for BMC SW Area Meeting September 7th 2019

Bristol City Council consultation regarding traffic routing options in the Western Harbour Area

Bristol City Council (BCC) has launched a consultation regarding future options for traffic routing in the 'Western Harbour' area of Bristol (<https://bristol.citizenspace.com/growth-regeneration/western-harbour/>).

The existing Plimsoll Bridge over the Cumberland Basin is now 50 years old. The bridge and its ramps and superstructures will need a major refit to make them suitable for the next 30 years.

BCC has the laudable aim of freeing up land to provide additional space for housing, and are so considering replacing the existing bridge and road complex with a new arrangement. Thus they are consulting on the benefits/disbenefits of three alternative traffic routing options. These options are described in https://bristol.citizenspace.com/growth-regeneration/western-harbour/supporting_documents/WST102%20WestHarbour_A0_V21_Print.pdf.

Two of the options (The Western and Hybrid) described would have, if either were to be implemented, have some impact on the Avon Gorge.

The SW Area, with the support of the BMC Access Officer, are free to make representations during the consultation period.

The most likely issues of concern to us are:

- There appear to be no direct benefits to climbers in terms of providing improved access to the Suspension Bridge Buttress area. Currently it is an area where it is very difficult to cross the road safely;
- The schematic plans indicate that there will be some kind of circulatory system just south of the Suspension Bridge. This implies that air and noise pollution are not likely to decrease but potentially would be made worse in the vicinity of the Suspension Bridge Buttress;
- These options show a bridge or bridges across the Avon just south of the Suspension Bridge. Many of our members would not be at all happy at the degradation of scenic amenity – indeed nationally iconic scenic amenity – implied by the building of such bridge(s);
- These options would have an environmentally detrimental effect on the tidal mudbank on the west (Somerset) side of the Avon, due to having to build road superstructures over the river margin (note that the schematic diagrams do not show this clearly);
- Similarly these works would impact negatively on the Pill Path, a path used by walkers and cyclists for quiet leisure and by climbers for access to some of the Leigh Woods quarries;
- Refurbishment/modification of the existing structures would almost certainly be the least disruptive and economical compared to the three options described.

Subject to the agreement of the meeting, I would be happy to draft a letter to BCC on our behalf, raising whichever points our members feel that BCC need to take into account for the next phase of their possible project. The consultation closes on September 15th.

Colin Knowles (01/09/19)