

## **Let's Get Yate Moving Yate Travel and Transport Recommendations.**

A working group of Yate and Dodington Councillors, concerned at the lack of any strategic approach to the transport issues affecting our town has interrogated local authority data, and spoken with residents to identify key strategic issues facing Yate. This Paper identifies the issues facing the town and calls upon South Gloucestershire Council as transport authority to respond to these issues and identify specific funding, action plans and associated timelines.

The paper addresses the current problems identified as arising from current residential development, for which catch up funding is required. It calls upon South Gloucestershire Council as highways authority to set out a strategy for addressing the traffic and transport problems our residents face on a daily basis.

All new development gives rise to additional demands.. Our responses to the Draft Joint Strategy Transport Plan (December 2016) identify our concerns about the proposed land use strategy and highway implications, but this document is focussed upon the very real problems we currently face as a community and calls for action on those.

The recommendations are based on the data we have gathered from statutory agencies, and from the views and experiences of the residents of our town through residents' surveys delivered door to door by us as their councillors.

### **1. Commuters**

As long ago as the 2010 Joint Transport Plan the problems for commuters in and out of Yate were recognised. We are surprised that despite that South Gloucestershire Council has no origin and destination data from the town, only basic traffic monitor figures show the daily movement in and out of the three key western exits from the town.

This data shows movements are about equal<sup>1</sup> from each main exit, but does not show origin or destination data, so it is impossible to use the limited data to map demand patterns or model changes in transport opportunities. It does show the total movements in and out of the town per day is over 63,000, spread across 5 possible routes. The key westbound routes are trying to cope with over 500 vehicles an hour in the peak periods. There is no data on congestion delay duration, but queues on the A432 regularly reach back to Nibley and on the Iron Acton bypass as far as Iron Acton. There is evidence from the accident data about the impact of these queues on cycle/motor cycle accidents.

#### **Recommendation 1. That origin and destination data be obtained as a matter of urgency to facilitate traffic modelling and prioritise action.**

The 2010 Joint Transport Plan included a 'Yate Package' but no detail was specified in the Plan, and the 'Package' was included within Policy CS4 and Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy. South Gloucestershire Council has been unable to give any indication as to the implementation of the Package. We have commented on the draft 2016 Plan and call for more detail together with an implementation timeline to ensure action in this next plan period.

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<sup>1</sup> Two way AADT data 2015 on Goose Green Way/ North Road junction 16185 – 11938 of which continue along towards Winterbourne, the turning off e.g. at Latteridge; two way AADT on A432 by the station 15088; two way AADT data 2015 on the Westerleigh Road between Rodford Elm and Westerleigh village 13029 . Additional smaller flows of 8194 head north to Wickwar and 10852 head east through Old Sodbury.

The Package is described in the Atkins 2012 report as comprising:

- Improved bus services between Chipping Sodbury and Yate and Bristol and North Fringe;
- Extension of future Rapid Transit services using the Temple Meads – Emersons Green route to Yate via Westerleigh;
- A new ‘Yate town’ bus service;
- A Yate / Chipping Sodbury walking and cycling network;
- New cycling routes from Chipping Sodbury and Yate to Bradley Stoke and Downend;
- Nibley Park & Ride;
- Improvements to Yate railway station, car park and passenger interchange, together with provision of a half-hourly train service to and from Bristol;
- Contributions towards the Ring Road Package, Greater Bristol Metro and extension of the A38 Showcase Bus Corridor to Thornbury; and
- Extension of smart ticketing opportunities.

None of this in the vicinity of Yate has been implemented in whole or part, (despite being part of the 2010-2016 strategy). We require it all to be implemented.

This was the Package in the 2010 Joint Transport Plan, and consultation is currently under way towards implementing the next plan. The only element which has had any money spent on it has been the Ring Road work, but that does not address the immediate congestion and transport problems faced in and adjoining the town. We consider this complete failure to invest in implementing this aspect of the plan to be inexplicable and unacceptable and we ask that this is rectified.

We are concerned at the continuing delays in implementation of even the rail frequency – with it being delayed technically, and then delayed for discussion with Gloucestershire about through running to Gloucestershire, then subject to possible delays because of the changes between Temple Mead and Parkway and then track doubling at Filton, and major works at Temple Meads East. The physical capacity of the trains is actually preventing growth in use, as trains are sometimes so full people are not allowed on.

**Recommendation 2: That the Yate related elements of the Package be delivered within three years to a costed timeline. And that the improvements to rail services be introduced this spring (2017).**

However, since then the problem has worsened. The loss of employment sites in the town to residential development, coupled with the growth in population from the additional 671 dwellings completed in the past three years - a growth of 10% in dwellings- means more people need to commute to work., with all but a handful of those dwellings being on former employment land.

Commuting imposes a disproportionate burden on those in low wage jobs, as the cost of commuting represents a proportionate percentage of their gross earnings. We are disappointed that South Gloucestershire’s Core Strategy allocated less land for employment than the new housing represents, therefore producing a net increase in the need for people to travel out of town to work. This is exacerbated the lack of any progress by South Gloucestershire Council in relation to the intensification of the current employment areas to the west of the town.

South Gloucestershire Council has been unable to supply any data on the loss of jobs within

the town, and its impact on commuting, but even with the 10% growth in housing the growth in commuting must be more than that as there has not been additional employment provided in the town for these new dwellings and they are all built on former employment land. Data on jobs trends as well as housing trends needs to be gathered and analysed by the highways authority to understand the growth in commuter problems. Does this need to be a standalone recommendation?

Young people are particularly reliant upon public transport to access employment, and so we are not surprised that in the latest data published by South Gloucestershire Council on youth employment (June 2015 Labour Market Briefing) Yate Central has the highest percentage of 18 – 24 year olds claiming JSA of any ward in South Gloucestershire. Lack of transport has a real impact on accessing the work place. Across all age groups Yate has above national average out of work benefit rates, as of May 2016, matched only by the other priority neighbourhoods. With over 11% of the 16-64 age group population in the area adjoining Station Road being in receipt of out of work benefits and 20% of children living in poverty.

Yate is showing the same resistance to home working as is seen across Europe – with negligible growth in it.

The 2010 JTP was based upon the 2001 census, but we have drawn upon the 2011 census (itself predating the more recent housing growth). Over 73% of people living in Yate and Chipping Sodbury travel to work by car according to the 2011 census, 9% walk, - a figure that has not changed since 2001. Slightly fewer now cycle (3.6% against 4% in 2001) and dramatically fewer travel by bus (2.7% compared to 4% in 2001) and 1.6% travel by train. These figures run counter to more general trends, with the reduction of cycling and dramatic reduction in reliance upon buses for commuting. This correlates with the feedback from residents who complain that buses do not go to centres of employment, and services change so frequently that they cannot rely upon buses for employment decisions. Just under 13,000 commuters travel by car every day from Yate/Sodbury.

We are not the first to identify this crucial and growing problem, for example the Atkins Report in 2012 identified traffic congestion in peak periods including the town centre junctions, A432 and, B4069 and to this we would add the Westerleigh /Rodford Elm/ Nibley lane area. We have identified the following current rush hour issues:

- rush hour queues in and out of town on Station Road and Goose Green Way
- rat running through Rodford Elm and Nibley Lane to avoid Station Road congestion
- congestion on Scott Way and Goose Green Way approaching the town centre at school times, rush hours and weekend peaks
- congestion at the A432 Lozenge roundabout
- congestion on ring road and A432 junction onto the ring road from the Yate direction and the Hambrook junction from the Yate direction.
- lack of access to main employment centres in under 30 minutes (JLTP fig 7.4)
- inadequacy of modal shift opportunities
  - lack of bus routes to key employment centres e.g. Emersons Green or Filton distorting where people can work
  - inadequacy of train services in terms of frequency, capacity, hours of operation and destinations
  - cost of public transport
  - lack of access to transport hub in town centre / parking for bus hub
  - public transport cost to centres of employment and the unreliability of those public transport routes discourage public transport reliant employment (for example the changes this year to bus routes to Emersons, Southmead, UWE and Bristol undermine public transport reliant commuting)

South Gloucestershire Council needs to compile data on key employment locations within 30 / 60 minutes' drive, map appropriate commuter routes and seem to ensure there is adequate capacity for residents to access those sites, by chosen mode, whether cycle, car or public transport. Does this need to be a standalone recommendation?

We are extremely concerned that in response to our inquiries, South Gloucestershire Council has been unable to identify any current funded proposals to address any of these issues (or even to carry out basic data gathering). Whilst some might be addressed in a future phase of the Metrobus scheme, nothing is currently allocated and funded.

**Recommendation 3 We call for an integrated town commuter strategy to ensure access at low cost of key centres of employment, and a reduction in congestion. This will need to include modeling to demonstrate the impact on in town commuter flows (including rat running) and flows on routes from the town to employment centres. We believe this will need works that enable vehicles to leave town by the nearest key route, rather than cutting across residential rat runs to key routes – but we consider modeling followed by public consultation on detailed options is required to seek to address even current congestion needs.**

The considerable increase in commuting since the 2010 plan means there is a need for more radical solutions. We consider there is an urgent need to

- Build the Stover Link Road, to connect the Iron Action bypass/Goose Green Way roundabout to the A432, to enable people to enter and leave the town centre by the nearest route and reduce pressure on Station Road.
- Improve Nibley Lane to reduce the accident dangers from vehicles using it to avoid Station Road congestion.

These are essential without waiting for any major new roads which may or may not be funded in the longer term.

**Recommendation 4 We call upon South Gloucestershire Council to draw up a fully funded implementation plan to address all of these issues within 3 years. These are current problems and need to be addressed before additional vehicles from new development add to the problems. This will need to include the Stover Link Road and Nibley Lane improvements set out above.**

The position in relation to access to hospitals and other key services has worsened dramatically since the Package was identified in 2010. At that point none of Yate was within access of a hospital within 30 mins in JLTP fig 73 and that was BEFORE Frenchay closed. Now, with Southmead as the nearest hospital and only limited public transport access, there is a crisis in access to health facilities. We are encountering massive pressures on community transport facilities to try to address this problem. The Package needs to be revised to include specific provision for access to hospital facilities for patients and visitors.

**Recommendation 5 That the Package be revised to make specific provision for reliable and suitable public transport access to Southmead as the nearest hospital for patients and visitors.**

## **2. Moving about within Yate**

Our second package of concerns relate to the impact of the growth in the size of town of 10% already upon town centre issues. The town centre is increasingly used as a sub regional

destination, with a growth in traffic movements into the town centre far higher than the growth in housing numbers to date.

The Town Centre owners funded South Gloucestershire Council to carry out a Town Centre study as part of their consent to build Tesco. This has now been open five years, but the study has not been published, and no remedial action taken. We have sought to obtain the information via a FOI request, but have been refused access on the basis it remains a draft report. We consider this unacceptable after five years.

We are particularly concerned about the congestion in the town centre at school rush hour, particularly at each end of Link Road.

Cotswold Way / Heron Way junction – this has historically been an accident black spot, with the current turning bans doing nothing to prevent fatal accidents, but greatly inconveniencing local people. People from Heron Way wanting to head into Chipping Sodbury have to turn left, go onto the Scott Way roundabout and execute a U turn. This adds to congestion on what is currently a dangerous roundabout. Work is needed to redesign the Cotswold Way / Kennedy Way /Heron Way junction to make it safer and enable a full set of turning movements.

**Recommendation 6 That the Town Centre Traffic Study be published immediately for consultation and that urgent action be taken to resolve the Heron Way / Cotswold Road Junction, and to ease school rush hour congestion in the town centre.**

The JTP 2010 Package included a proposal for bus routes within the town to enable people to get about within the town easily. The 2012 Atkins report included recommendations for this, for improved pedestrian and cycling routing, and for enhanced car access to the town centre. No action has been taken to implement these recommendations.

Congestion in the town centre (and difficulty of accessing buses to other locations that only go through the town centre) makes it vital to put in place quickly a public transport network within the town, low cost, one day £1 ticket to enable travel anywhere in the town for a £1 for the day to encourage movements by public transport; a round town bus route to enable movements within the town. Since the 2010 plan the new town centre bus area has been installed. Despite overwhelming local protests this continues to provide inadequate shelter and needs extension.

**Recommendation 7 That a round town bus and £1 all day bus fare be implemented immediately together with improved bus shelters in the town centre.**

Atkins in 2012 identified a problem with poor links to the train Station and industrial areas from most of the town, and particularly by bike and cycle from the north of the town. They also identified that the signage of pedestrian and cycle links is poor and does not give directions to destinations such as the town centre and station, in Atkins words (2012) ‘ it is therefore difficult for someone new to walking or cycling to negotiate the network comfortably’. We have witnessed a deterioration of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists - most particularly despite our objection consent has been given for more housing on Broad Lane, which is a primary cycle and pedestrian route to Brimsham Green School and the site of two serious accidents in the five year period for which figures have been supplied.

**Recommendation 8 That development control protects existing cycling routes and extends them wherever opportunities arise, and that an integrated signage strategy for within the town is implemented.**

The Atkins report in 2012 identified limited passenger facilities at Yate Station, the hourly service, and poor access to the station, poor bus interchange facilities and lack of measures for cyclists using Station Road as key issues requiring action. Accident figures confirm the issue for cyclists on Station Road. We have sought funding to address these issues as a community project, unsuccessfully from GWR and now require it to be done from SGC funding.

We are told that the draft LTCP for 2016/17 included a provision scheme for the A432 at the station junction. Nothing has been done to implement it. This is an important and urgent scheme with high levels of pedestrian movements and vehicle turning movements at peak times. We were also informed that traffic signal coordination enhancements would be carried out on Station Road to improve peak period traffic flows. We have not seen any noticeable improvement.

**Recommendation 9 That the facilities at Yate Station be improved to provide shelter, covered ticketing area, better access, better bus interchange, self-service bike hire stands and better measures for cyclists on Station Road. And that the improvements to Station Road in the draft LTCP for 2016/17 be implemented this year.**

### **3. Accident blackspots in town**

We have analysed the accident figures for the town for the period 1 January 2010 – 30 November 2015. Apart from the Rodford Way junction, the following issues need to be addressed:

- Scott Way / Link Road roundabout  
The problem here is a lack of lane marking, with vehicles going from Link Road into Scott Way i.e. straight ahead, behind hit by vehicles coming down the A432 from the east and not recognising the vehicles are going straight on. This is the source of the most near miss complaints as well as producing a number of reported accidents
- 2 cyclist injury accidents, on Broad Lane, one serious. This is the main approach to Brimsham green School, is a cycleway as well as having extensive pedestrian access movements to School but with only a narrow pavement. There are further residential development applications there
- Goose Green Way / Peg Hill traffic light junction – rear end chunts, possibly caused by the different phasing of sections of the lights misleading drivers
- The A432 and Goose Green Way are the source of most serious accidents (7/12) and both fatal accidents. An analysis of the accidents is needed to establish common features (vehicle turning movements?)
- We are also concerned at the puzzling distribution of serious accidents by time. There are only two serious injuries between midnight and 1pm, with the serious accidents spread through the afternoon and evening, with both fatal accidents in the evening. The peak period for accidents of all kinds is 5 – 7pm, with more accidents then than between 7pm and 8 am. This suggests the evening rush hour congestion is not merely about congestion and frustration but also produces a disproportionately high number of accidents (20 in each hour).
- Width of pavement outside Firgrove House leading to pedestrian risk
- Vehicles turning, reversing and pedestrian movements outside Westerleigh Road stores
- Turning movements from Station Road into Andrew Millman Court / the rear of Ridgewood
- Station Road past the Cow Mills - the layout makes the width for cyclists limited, and vehicles go past them too tight.

- White Lion Station Road/ Church Rd junction and puffin crossing produces a range of issues.
- Issues for pedestrians and cyclists at the Lozenge roundabout at the junction of Westerleigh Road / Station Road
- North Road / Goose Green Way junction causing rear end chunts
- Church Road – bridge lights and speed humps causing rear end chunts
- A number of cyclist turning movement related issues on Station Road – along the length from the Station to the Lozenge where there are multiple turning movements of cars and cycles. Some of this is the result of congestion leading to cyclists moving past stationary cars.
- We note the number of cycle accidents involving roundabouts where drivers are not paying attention to cyclists.

**Recommendation 10: That urgent action be taken on the Scott Way roundabout, Heron Way junction Station access junction and Broad Lane, and to investigated and include the other items in the work plan as quickly as possible.**

#### **4. Governance and Vision**

We are concerned that whilst we have a joint cycleways group, that brings together the highway authority local user groups and parish councils, there is no equivalent forum for other transportation issues.

**Recommendation 11: That an effective forum be established for local residents, users, providers and senior council figures with decision making responsibility be convened regularly to look across the full spread of travel and transport needs for the Yate area, to establish a travel and transport strategy and monitor its implementation.**

Our future vision for travel and transport for Yate is:

- Improved connectivity and accessibility by sustainable modes throughout the town linking to the town centre and across the town
- High quality well signposted links for pedestrian and cycling links throughout the town
- A step change in bus services to transform accessibility to key centres of employment and key services such as hospitals
- Park and Ride at Nibley
- Improved quality and frequency of rail services
- Mitigation of traffic congestion in the town, key commuter routes, and rat running through junction improvements and new road links
- Improved travel choices

**Recommendation 12: That a vision for travel and transport for Yate be adopted by the Highways Authority following consultation with residents, and steps taken to implement the required actions.**

#### **Appendix: Yate Town Council Submission to Joint Strategic Transport Plan Consultation 2016**

*Q8 Are there any other schemes you would like to see in the package?*

We would like to see more conversion of the current and future Metrobus routes to light rail and the introduction of tram trains, for example to get to the Mall at Cribbs Causeway. It is important that services from north of the M4 are express services,

not ones that stop frequently within the urban Bristol area, otherwise journey times will be too long to be attractive. We would like an expansion of the MetroWest project, with more station openings.

The proposals for the Yate area are woefully inadequate.

- Station improvements – we have been promised these improvements for many years, in successive plans, but they have not been delivered. Our current services often leave people on platforms with trains too full to squeeze people on, so there is a risk these proposals will just deliver a catching up not a radical improvement. We welcome the proposals, as a contribution to sorting out the problems but are concerned to ensure this is not seen as a solution to commuter issues as it only serves about 2% of commuters
- MetroBus – It is noted that this would be “ordinary buses”, and we have very recent local history of bus services being reduced and eliminated by First Bus at their sole discretion. The Metrobus services must have a firm contractual basis to make sure that this does not happen again. However it is unclear how space will be found for it in the urban area, given the 40% growth of population and therefore the corresponding town centre pressure.
- Park and Ride – This has been promised for so long that the land originally zoned for it is now not large enough. The original concept was that it would only be served by the buses that were passing anyway on the main road. The Park and Ride needs to be much better integrated into the Metrobus system – and needs to be provided immediately not in the distant future. Pinchpoint schemes and junction improvements – Not enough information about what you see as pinchpoints has been provided to enable us to comment.
- We are extremely concerned that there is no mention of any work to address traffic and transport problems with the Yate /Sodbury conurbation. You may consider that a ‘detail’ but it is not more of a ‘detail’ than addressing ‘pinchpoints’. We consider the document should recognise the need to invest in a traffic and transport project within the town as well as between the town and other locations. The two are inextricably linked, not least given the plan appears to show the Metrobus running right through the town centre, reducing highway capacity.
- Winterbourne / Frampton Cotterell bypass – A proper link needs to be established all the way from North Yate to the Avon Ring Road, without gaps in the middle of this strategic B4058 route, which already has traffic backing up in both rush hours.
- New road to M4. If this is to be built, it is essential that it serves all parts of Yate/Sodbury and careful modelling is carried out to ensure it will not worsen rat running through the town or villages e.g. it must extend from Nibley across to the Iron Acton bypass to take traffic from the north of Yate as well as the south.

We also wish to propose additional traffic mitigation measures:

- Yate also needs a proper link from the Station Road A432 corridor to the B4058, possibly on the lines of the Stover Road Link that was proposed some time ago. This should include walking and cycling facilities – and to ensure traffic from the northern part of the town can access the A432 and proposed M4 link, rather than rat running through the town.
- Most of the proposed Yate / Sodbury strategic development locations are isolated from the existing settlements, and close attention needs to be paid to integrating them with the present towns. Not everyone will be able to travel by car, nor is this desirable. Public transport, walking and cycling routes will be very important.
- Therefore walking and cycling packages need to be added to the mitigation measures.
- Walking and cycling also need to be integrated into any major road developments.

Re-prioritising the A432 corridor for public transport and cycling will reduce the effective capacity for other users. This supports the need to improve the B4058 corridor and links, and possibly other routes from Yate / Sodbury to employment areas.

It is very disappointing that the Yate Spur and North Yate to Winterbourne cycle routes are not mentioned at all, even though they have already been identified as strategic links in the South Glos Cycling Strategy. Both these routes have a potential to increase the number of people able to cycle from residential areas of Yate/Chipping Sodbury to work places and educational establishments in the East Fringe and development and enterprise areas, and also to reduce cyclist accidents. In fact we were disappointed by the lack of detail regarding strategic routes and cycle routes in general despite the emphasis placed on them in the text.

The North Yate to Winterbourne cycle route would need to be integrated if the proposed Winterbourne / Frampton Cotterell 'bypass' proceeds and our suggested B4058 improvements between the bypass and the Yate fringe.

The proposed "new road and cycle link north from this (new) motorway junction to Yate" needs to be discussed with local cycling groups so that it can be integrated into the existing facilities at both ends – for example, where is it going to link into south of the M4?

The Badminton Road/Station Road corridor is already heavily congested, with the Nibley/Stover Road area an existing pinch point. The new houses allocated in the North Yate New Neighbourhood in the Core Strategy will significantly worsen the congestion there. Adding in traffic from another 2,600 homes around Yate/Sodbury and 1,500 at Coalpit Heath and a motorway link funneling yet more traffic into this pinch point will bring the area to a standstill. There is no mention in the JTS of how this problem might be addressed.

Pinchpoint schemes and junction improvements". Re-designing junctions is not

enough, there needs to be a comprehensive analysis of the current and predicted traffic flows around Yate and major measures, such as a new by-pass, are likely to be required to maintain satisfactory circulation. Otherwise people will not be able to access the Park and Ride and the station. Local shuttle buses also need to be considered to help people access the core public transport routes and reduce congestion caused by local journeys.

We would like to see a self-service, bike sharing scheme at public transport nodes and other locations, like the one in London, with good signing including distances for walking and cycling.

We also believe that the next 20 years will see an increase in people wishing to work from home as an alternative to commuting. Therefore the provision of high speed broadband everywhere is an important element of reducing congestion on our roads and making more locations sustainable places to live.

*Q9 Do you have any other comments about the proposed transport vision?*

We believe the ambition in this study is much too low for an area growing as rapidly as the West of England. There is far too much reliance on non-segregated bus routes, which we do not believe will provide the swift, reliable journeys that will make public transport an attractive alternative to car use. The timing of the delivery of the infrastructure in relation to the delivery of the new housing is critical.

The current plans for a Park and Ride at Nibley are insufficient to mitigate even the existing development allocated in the Core Strategy, let alone further development in the area. The package proposed includes prioritising Badminton Road for buses and cyclists but even with a new motorway link road, it would be difficult to provide a segregated lane through Coalpit Heath due to the constraints of the built environment and the need for people living there to be able to drive to and from their properties. In Q3, we agreed with the principle of diverting non-local traffic but the top priority should be to divert people on to public transport rather than simply diverting their vehicles on to new roads. The new road connections mentioned in Q7 should be primarily to facilitate the public transport and cycling routes, by providing somewhere to which you can divert non-local traffic and enabling people to access public transport nodes like Park and Rides and railway stations..

In addition we are disappointed in the lack of detail regarding freight movements outside the major urban areas. Heavy goods vehicles already cause serious congestion and danger/damage on many minor roads, and also existing congestion on the Yate / Sodbury links to the Ring Road and Bristol deters employment in this sector locally – transport firms need to minimise travel times, and they will not relocate to congested areas without the appropriate supported infrastructure being available.