

Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



A branch of Bus Users UK

Buswatch News – November 2018

Valley Gardens Phase 3 Public consultation closes 25 November Make sure you have your say

We make no apology for returning to this consultation again. This is the most serious issue for buses for many years. Current plans will result in slower bus journeys through the Old Steine area and less space at bus stops. We fear the Old Steine/St James's Street junction could become gridlocked on a regular basis with northbound buses ousted from the Royal Pavilion bus stops and southbound buses heading towards North Street having to use the same lanes as all other traffic.

Bus companies are pressing hard for a southbound bus lane between Edward Street and the south west arm of Old Steine (by the Royal Albion Hotel) to give buses some priority. They fear buses turning right at the War Memorial by Sainsbury's Local (bus stop H) will become stuck in traffic, blocking the outside lane so vehicles behind will find it difficult to pass. At present buses use a special lane serving the long bus stop H and the next stop is half way up North Street. Current proposals place a stop directly opposite the War Memorial (towards North Street), immediately after the right turn.

Around 100 buses an hour would benefit from a new southbound bus lane, carrying far more people through this area than other vehicles. That would make it one of the busiest bus lanes in the UK. A staggering 50 million bus journeys a year are made by bus in Brighton & Hove, that's more journeys per head than anywhere outside London. As most bus routes pass through Old Steine this scheme will have an impact on bus users all over the city and beyond. So delays at Old Steine would be felt in Mile Oak, Shoreham, Peacehaven, Patcham, Lewes etc.

The consultants appointed by Brighton & Hove City Council to design the scheme say a new bus lane cannot be justified, because it would slow traffic generally. Buswatch believes this is unacceptable and a solution must be found to allow bus priority measures at this critical location, as suggested by Brighton & Hove Buses on its website: www.buses.co.uk

Despite these serious concerns, a report to the Brighton & Hove City Council's Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee on 27 November claims the scheme will result in:

'smoother flows for bus traffic, removing the current bottleneck to the east of the war memorial and with a more efficient distribution of stops'

Anyone familiar with the Old Steine who has seen the Council's proposals can see that this scheme will **not** improve bus journey times, for the reasons we have outlined above.

We urge Councillors to carefully study the implications for buses before approving the business case.

The public consultation is open until 25 November on the Council website. www.brighton-hove.gov.uk

If you are a bus user, please make your views known.



(Left photo courtesy of David Grimstone)

Present and proposed stop locations for northbound buses.

It is hard to see how the location on the right is an improvement, although we understand Lewes Road bound buses (24, 25, 25X, 28, 29, 48 & 49) will now have a separate stop on the new northbound carriageway, close to existing stop F by the Royal Pavilion.

Brighton & Hove Buses launches Contactless payments

From 25 November, passengers on Brighton & Hove Buses will be able to use Contactless Visa, Mastercard, ApplePay and GooglePay cards instead of paying by cash on all its buses plus those operated by Metrobus. Contactless payments are already accepted by Compass Bus and Stagecoach. Brighton & Hove intends to extend contactless payments further early next year with the introduction of Pay As You Go with touch in and touch out facilities.

Brighton Area Buswatch meeting

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be at 5pm on **Wednesday 23 January 2019** in Brighton Town Hall. Meetings are open to all, but space is limited so please contact Buswatch at the address below if you wish to join us.

Buswatch News is produced and edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. We welcome your contributions and suggestions. The next issue is due mid-December 2018.

E mail: brightonbuswatch@gmail.com. Phone: 01273 620215



brightonbuswatch.org



Brighton Area Buswatch is a branch of Bus Users UK www.bususers.org