

2 October 2010

Tel: 0117 924 7 8 7 2

Dear transport team,

JOINT LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 3: ENGAGEMENT DRAFT, JULY 2010

1. I am writing on behalf of the Ramblers' Avon Area to comment on the engagement draft. The Ramblers is Britain's walking charity, dedicated both to working for better quality walking environments and to encouraging more people to walk. We have over 2000 members in our Avon area, which covers Bath and North East Somerset; Bristol; and South Gloucestershire.

Consultation process

2. We welcomed opportunities to discuss the plan at the Annual Joint Transport Forum in July and to debate Bristol's walking strategy at a stakeholder forum the same month. We are less convinced of the value of the questionnaire the public has been invited to complete: the plan's five key goals and the various elements of the action plan are complementary and all deserve attention. It would have been more helpful to produce costed scenarios with a different mix of elements from which people could choose.

The goals

3. The five key goals are an improvement on the four priorities of the current JLTP as they are more people-oriented. We particularly welcome the greater emphasis on active health and quality of life.

The action plan: the positives

4. We welcome the frequent references to the value of walking in the executive summary and main plan, and the recognition in the walking supplementary document that walking can contribute to all five of the plan's goals. The benefits of walking, the barriers to it, and the role of Rights of Way Improvement Plans and 'greenways' are well-described, in general terms.

The action plan: the negatives

5. We have some major concerns about the plan, as follows:

- **Lack of walking targets.** Without any specific target, it is hard to believe that a serious attempt will be made to increase walking overall. The suggested use of the impact on other key targets is inadequate. Reductions in car journeys to school and in single occupancy car commuter journeys can be achieved by other means and in any case give only a partial view. We do not accept that a walking target need be difficult and costly, more likely to measure pedestrian activity than walking as a mode of transport (para 12.4.43 of the plan). ***As we said at the Forum, we would welcome an opportunity to work with the team to develop an appropriate target, as there is already for cycling.***
- **Lack of costed proposals and data.** The walking supplementary document makes no attempt to cost the many proposals it contains so it is impossible to judge just what investment is proposed. Similarly, it describes many barriers to walking but without hard supporting information on their extent and relative importance.

- **Lack of priority for walking.** We found para 7.1 of the executive summary hard to understand. We are well aware of the current financial uncertainties but hope that these do not mean that the ideas in Box B, which include the implementation of Rights of Way Improvement Plans and the reduction of barriers to safe walking and cycling, are a low priority. These must be some of the least expensive elements in the plan and represent some of the best value for money.

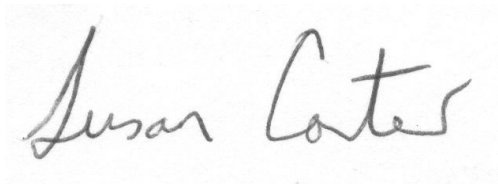
Detailed points

6. There are two points of detail:

- **Public transport routes.** We are generally supportive of public transport improvements, which can help reduce the traffic congestion which often makes walking unpleasant and unsafe and which can also be used by walkers for part of their journeys. We are concerned, however, by proposals which would improve public transport at the expense of walkers. The proposed Bristol Rapid Transport Scheme, for example, would spoil popular walking routes while adding to the number of vehicles coming into the city.
- **School transport in Bath.** Traffic congestion in Bath could be reduced by the provision of more school buses.

7. We should be grateful if our comments could be taken into account when revising the plan.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Carter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and 'C'.

Susan Carter
Environment and Planning Officer