

Bus Times **WEST**

December 2024

The latest news on what we're doing to give North Somerset residents a more reliable, frequent and affordable bus network they can rely on, for years to come.

Welcome to the Bus Times newsletter!

Here we'll update you on what's happening across North Somerset to help create better bus services for residents, throughout their lives.



Latest headlines



December birthdays enjoying free travel thanks to the Birthday Bus!

December birthdays can now travel on the bus for free, all month long!

Artists from Weston Wallz have created three birthday cards which also contain all the information you need to sign-up for your Birthday Bus Pass.

You can find them in North Somerset libraries. The three unique designs are by Tanith Gould, Nick Roberts and Jayde Perkin.

Grab a birthday card and celebrate with someone whose birthday is coming up! Register now for a birthday treat you can use all month long: www.birthdaybus.co.uk

The Birthday Bus pass lets you travel across North Somerset and the West of England Combined Authority areas for free during your birthday month. And, if you're under 21, you'll get two months of free bus travel!

With more than one million bus rides taken last year, this scheme has helped to transform travel routines, with nearly 6,800 trips recorded on the busiest day.

Feedback from last year showed that 73% of participants made bus trips they wouldn't have otherwise taken, 48% took the bus instead of driving, and 46% are going to use the bus more in the future.



Feedback from our November Bus Forums

In November, we invited anyone interested in the future of local bus transport to join our 2024 Bus Forum – with an online session on Monday 25 November and a Clevedon session on Wednesday 27 November.

We engaged with around 50 North Somerset residents on bus services, passenger experience initiatives and local services. We collected feedback and ideas on local stops and shelters, WESTlink, supported bus services, offers and promotions.



Our team is currently working on a request from one of the Bus Forums to make a stop on Locking Road in Weston-super-Mare more accessible to the community. This forms part of our programme to improve accessibility for various stops across the region. We will share our progress on other key pieces of feedback with attendees in the New Year.

In our Forum events, we also made key announcements about continued government funding for bus services, stop and shelter updates, and First Bus' electrification initiative. We look forward to holding our next forums in May 2025.

Bus stop upgrades get under way

We're rolling out a series of upgrades to bus stops and shelters across North Somerset to help improve the waiting and travel experience for bus passengers. The first of our new style bus shelters has now been installed at Saltings Close, Clevedon. The main bus stop programme will commence in January 2025 along Locking Road and New Bristol Road in Weston-super-Mare with further improvements taking place across the district in several waves over the next 15 months. The type of upgrade will depend on the existing bus shelter type or stop location, and will include one or more of the following features:

- Accessibility improvements: New shelters with extra space for wheelchairs and pushchairs.
- Real-time updates: High-contrast real time information (RTI) displays and text-to-speech announcements for visually impaired passengers.
- Comfort and convenience: Bench-style seating with armrests made from recycled plastic (where space allows) and better visibility with shelters positioned to face the road.
- Safety first: Enhanced signage and layouts to ensure ease of use for all.

This programme of improvements is being funded through the government's Bus Service Improvement Plan as part of our vision to create a well-connected, popular and sustainable public transport system.

Extra funding announced






The Department for Transport has announced it is allocating just over £4.8 million of additional funding for North Somerset to help us work with local bus operators to maintain and improve vital bus services, and keep fares as low as possible for passengers.

We'll be planning how the funding is used as soon as we receive more detail, with the first priority to be maintaining existing services and preventing cuts.



The BSIP in a nutshell

Our vision for buses...

-  Quick and reliable bus journeys
-  A comprehensive and integrated bus network
-  Straightforward ticketing and great value fares
-  And excellent passenger experience
-  And emission-free bus system.

We have a bold plan for better bus travel in North Somerset, funded by UK Government.

It include five joined-up packages of improvements, working together, to help get us on board, today and tomorrow.

These help us to...



Learn more at n-somerset.gov.uk/bsip

Status update:

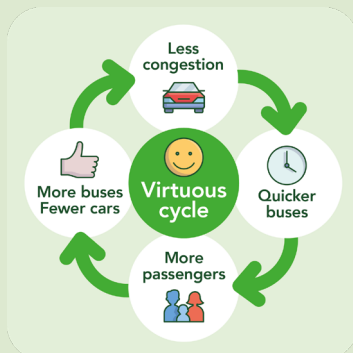
Our bus infrastructure schemes

A quick status update on all live schemes.

How do better buses benefit everyone?

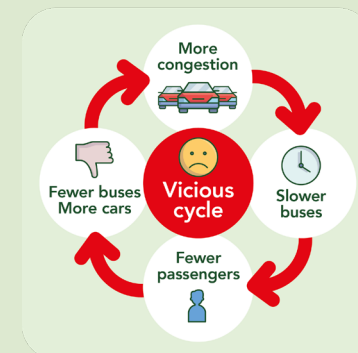
Our population is growing. With better buses, more people can travel sustainably.

It means less pressure on our roads, better use of public space, a cleaner environment – and long-term, vital services for the people of North Somerset. It's a virtuous cycle, and we all need to get on board.



What happens if we don't have better buses?

Our population is growing. Without better buses there will be even more pressure on our roads, leading to worse congestion, impacting our environment and air quality. It could also mean losing bus services which are lifelines for communities. It's a vicious circle that we need to break.



We're sharing updates at n-somerset.gov.uk/bsip when we have them, as well as in Bus Times.

Main transport hubs

We're looking forward to our next meetings with town councillors to discuss how our co-created designs for three main transport hubs in Nailsea, Clevedon and Portishead are evolving. This will follow our four dedicated public and business engagement events in Clevedon and Portishead in November.

Transport hubs are intended to offer useful community facilities such as making it easier and more appealing to travel on foot, by wheel and by bus – providing a central location to continue

your journey by bus or by coach. They also offer an attractive focal point and a boost for town and village centres.

Smaller transport hubs

Early concepts for potential smaller transport hubs in Pill, Weston General Hospital, Long Ashton, Yatton, Congresbury, Backwell, Worle High Street and Cleeve/Claverham are in development. These smaller hubs could include cycle parking, parcel lockers, modern and

comfortable seating areas and landscaping. We'll share any further opportunities for shaping ideas locally, and concept updates, when we can.

Worle High Street

We carried out extensive early engagement within the community in autumn and winter 2023 to 2024 to gather initial ideas and feedback to enhance Worle High Street. Since then, we've been working behind the scenes on refining an appropriate design that benefits the community, and makes the High Street a vibrant, revitalised, and safer place to live, work and visit.

No formal decisions have been made to proceed with a specific scheme or design, and we will be back in touch soon with further information.

Lime Kiln roundabout near Bristol

Plans to future-proof the A38 Lime Kiln roundabout on Bristol's outskirts are approved. The junction will now be reconfigured to better support local traffic growth and improve travel experiences for all road users. Preparations can now get underway for works to begin on site, with a provisional start date of spring 2025.

Read the full story at: n-somerset.gov.uk/news/green-light-given-upgrade-vital-a38-roundabout

Churchill crossroads

We've now published a summary report on feedback received through our engagement period, which can be viewed at:

Under the concept designs for the Churchill junction – where the A38 and A368 meets between Churchill and Langford – the crossroads would be converted into a roundabout with smart traffic signals. The changes would aim to improve traffic flow for all road users, enhance bus travel

and accommodate additional traffic expected through future development.



A370 Wood Hill junction

The Wood Hill exit onto the A370 Bristol Road/Rhodyate Hill reopened at the end of November.

While the main period of work to reconfigure the junction has now finished – and we have now refreshed the road markings and additional two-way arrows on Wood Hill road – we have some further work to do next to the road, such as:

- resurfacing the footpath on the north of the A370 Bristol Road
- installing new, permanent, bus stops and shelters
- First Bus will also visit to christen the lane (which has been built within national guidance).

The new bus lane will be fully opened once these steps are complete. We'll be monitoring the junction in the months ahead, as the changes bed in.

Backwell junction

Proposals for a bus priority and congestion easing scheme, bus stop updates and community transport hub(s), have been under review following our engagement period in winter 2023-24.

The initial concept designs for Backwell included proposals for a bus lane on the A370 south-westbound, a bus priority traffic light system, new pavements, and changes for Dark Lane and Church Lane.

We are continuing to develop holistic proposals and options for the A370 Backwell area, following further discussions with local members and Backwell Parish Council representatives. We'll share more information and next steps in the new year.

Smallway junction, Congresbury

We've recently been engaging on our plans to update the A370 Smallway junction in Congresbury. Smallway crossroads is one of the more congested junctions in North Somerset, as a key interchange for motorists travelling between Yatton and Bristol.

The planned improvements to Smallway will work alongside the recent changes to the nearby Wood Hill junction. Once complete, traffic will be able to flow more freely through the sister junctions, helping to improve local traffic flows on the road network.

We'd like to thank everyone who came to our fully booked public information event in Congresbury on the plans, and who took part in our SNAP survey (now closed), inviting practical feedback on specific design elements.

We've begun working through the comments received and will be able to give an update on next steps in the new year.

Weston-super-Mare: Queensway junctions and B3440 slip roads

Crucial junction changes aimed at improving general traffic capacity and flow are being considered for Queensway and the B3440 slip roads in Worle.

Updates to the junctions have been long sought-after to help address local issues, and discussions with local ward members and Weston-super-Mare Town Council have been underway since 2023.

We're expecting a decision on the schemes in the new year and we will be able to share further information with businesses and the wider public in the weeks ahead.

Rownham Hill junction

After engaging with the public and local councillors at all levels earlier in the year – alongside additional monitoring of traffic and latest insights into Bristol's Clean Air Zone – we have decided to refresh our approach for the Rownham Hill scheme.

We are now exploring other improvements for supporting better bus journeys, active travel, and traffic flow along the A369 at the Bridge Road / Ashton Court junction – a key location on the road network. We're looking into upgrading traffic signals to improve staging for general traffic flow and bus priority; installing larger bus shelters; and improving pedestrian and cycling facilities at the junction, including the Ashton Court entrance. We will not be moving ahead with either of the originally proposed bus lanes.

Once developed, this revised proposal will go to our Formal Board for approval.

Martcombe Road junction with Portbury High Street

We've been reviewing proposals to turn the current westbound car-share lane (or High Occupancy Vehicle 2+ or HOV 2+ lane) on the A369, Martcombe Road over the last 12 months, monitoring traffic flow and engaging with local members. In light of this work, we are now resuming discussions on a reduced proposal for Martcombe Road, alongside potential

improvements to the A369 junction with Portbury High Street. We have been engaging with ward members, town and parish councils to discuss the scheme, and will be moving to public engagement in the new year.



Clevedon schemes

Following initial engagement with the general public, ward members, the town council and additional monitoring of the area, we have decided to no longer put in place bus lanes on Southern Way and Central Way. Instead, we will be adding additional road markings to the roundabout entries to help with traffic flow.

We are continuing to test our proposed design changes on the Moor Lane/Northern Way elements of the proposal, as well as Tickham Road roundabout and All Saints Lane. We will be in touch to share these, and to provide further updates for the Clevedon plans, as soon as we can.

Noticeboard

Become a champion!

Want to work with us to help secure a sustainable transport future in North Somerset?

We're keen to hear from people who want to help with

- spreading the word about sustainable travel
- collecting and providing feedback on services and schemes for bus travel, active travel, and other forms of sustainable travel.

Sounds like you? You can read more, and sign up, here: [Become a Travel Champion | North Somerset Council](#)

Sustainable Travel Champions is a relaunch of our Bus Champions initiative.

Find out more...

Visit our new **BSIP webpages** and 'like' the North Somerset Council **Facebook** page.

Got a question for us? Email

bsip.engagement@n-somerset.gov.uk and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.

APPLY NOW FOR FREE BUS TRAVEL.

