

4<sup>th</sup> December 2017

### **Conservatives unveil efficiency savings on metrobus extension**

On Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December, South Gloucestershire Council Conservatives agreed a change of policy on the Cribbs Patchway Metrobus Extension (CPME).

As the main Metrobus programme has overspent, with South Gloucestershire Council liable to find £10m at present, it is imperative that the CPME project stays within budget.

Currently there are delays in planned railway maintenance, and as the extensive works required to widen the road and cycle/way under the railway bridge on Gipsy Patch Lane need a lengthy track closure, these can only be done over either the Easter or Christmas holidays. Any delays will cost upwards of six-figures, which would require the Council to make savings elsewhere to meet.

With that in mind, the Cabinet was presented with two recommended ways forward to continue the project. The first option the Cabinet considered was to continue with the project as planned, but to shoulder the additional financial risk that has arisen. The second option was to cancel the proposed southbound bus lane on Hatchet Road in Stoke Gifford, with any savings made from doing this to be held in reserve to meet any potential overspend on the wider CPME project.

Speaking of the decision, Council Leader Cllr Matthew Riddle said:

“When the facts change it is important to stop and take stock. With this new risk arising with the bridgeworks on Gipsy Patch Lane it’s important to be clear that we are responsible with taxpayer’s money and where a risk of overspend arises we should make plans to avoid overspend. We back the extension to Metrobus, but it has to be within budget as far as we can make it.”

Local councillors for Stoke Gifford Cllrs Brian Allinson, Ernie Brown, and Keith Cranney said: “We have long campaigned to see the cancellation of this bus lane and we are pleased to see it not go ahead.”