

The Bristol Method

# how to increase public transport use

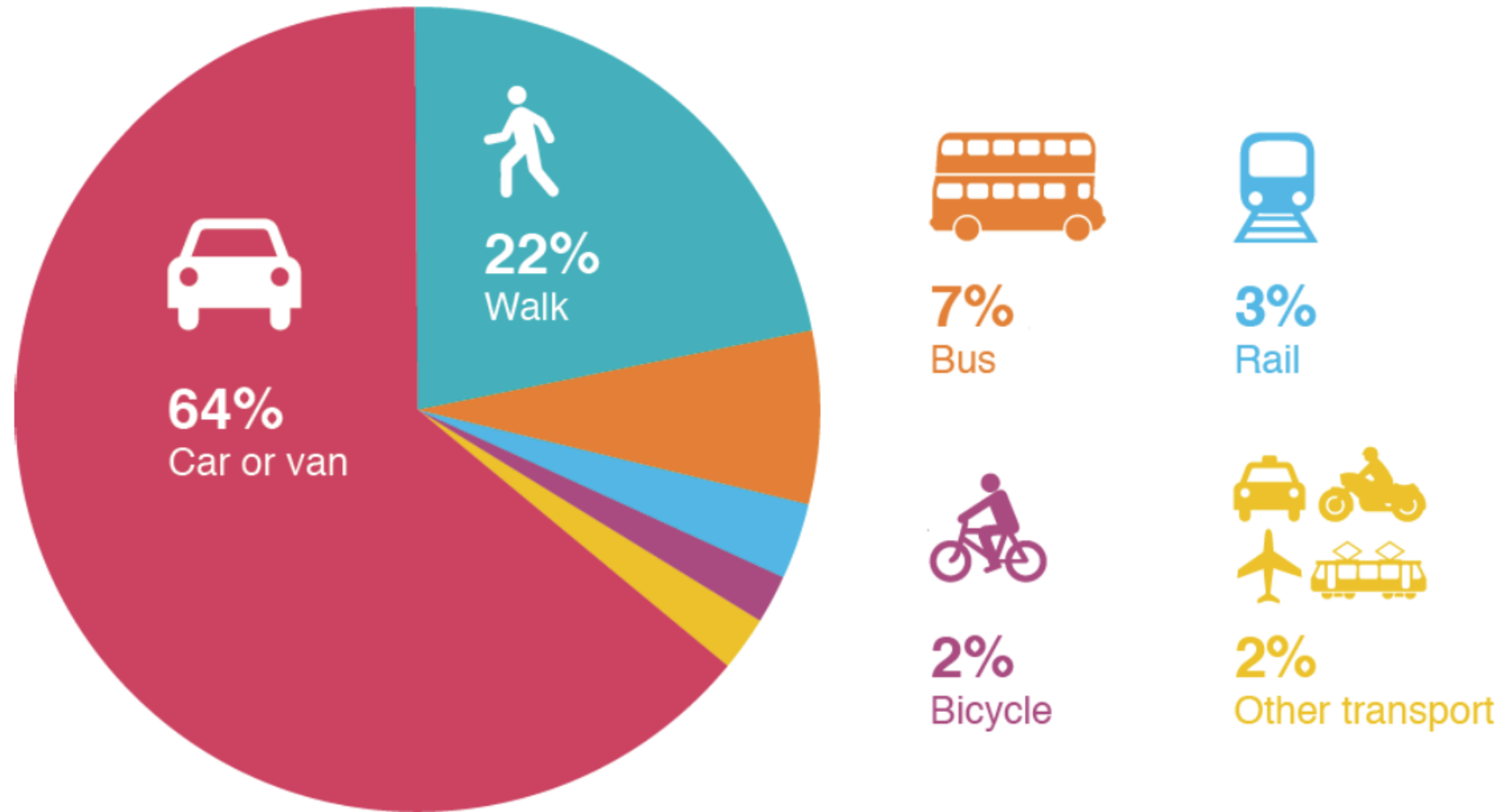
In it for good

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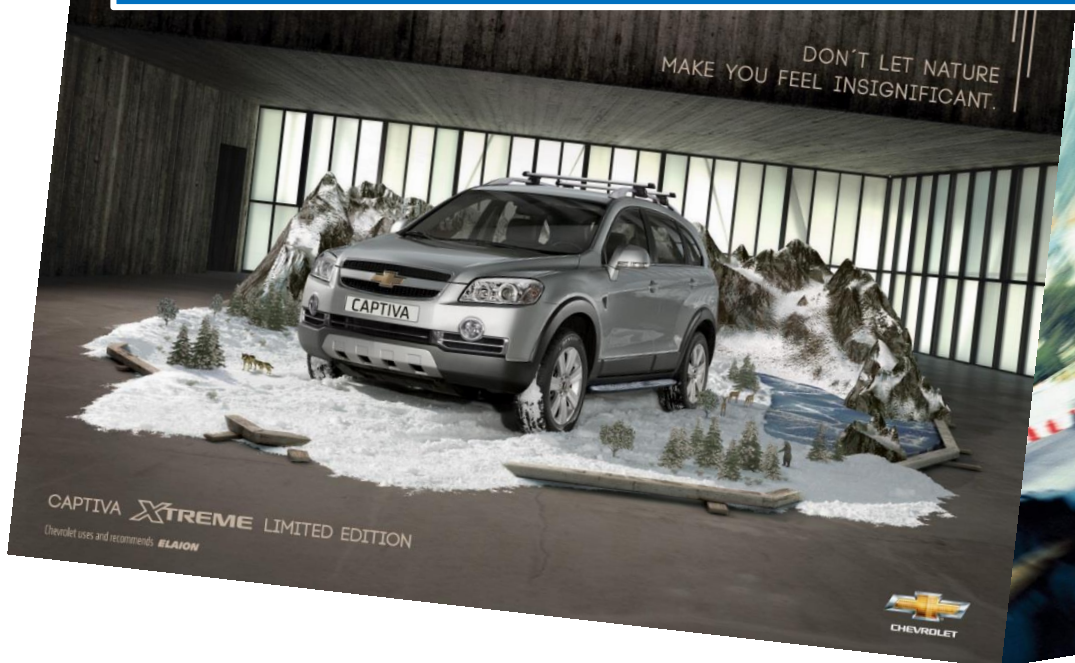
# Mode share in England – number of trips in 2013

Source: Transport Statistics Great Britain 2014 - DfT





*“A man who – beyond the age of 26 – finds himself on a bus can count himself as a failure”*



# The value of bus travel

- The bus network is ascribed significant value by the government
- Stated to be an important aspect of efforts to bring about positive environmental, social, and health policy outcomes:
  - Reduce urban congestion
  - Mitigate social exclusion through providing access to services
  - Mitigate community degradation through connecting people within and between different areas
  - Help encourage more active travel and combat health crises such as obesity and heart disease

*‘Public transport should be planned, designed and operated to work for all members of society. (...) Society imposes a moral burden on transport to provide access to the means by which fundamental rights are delivered. It should therefore provide the resources to enable this to happen’*

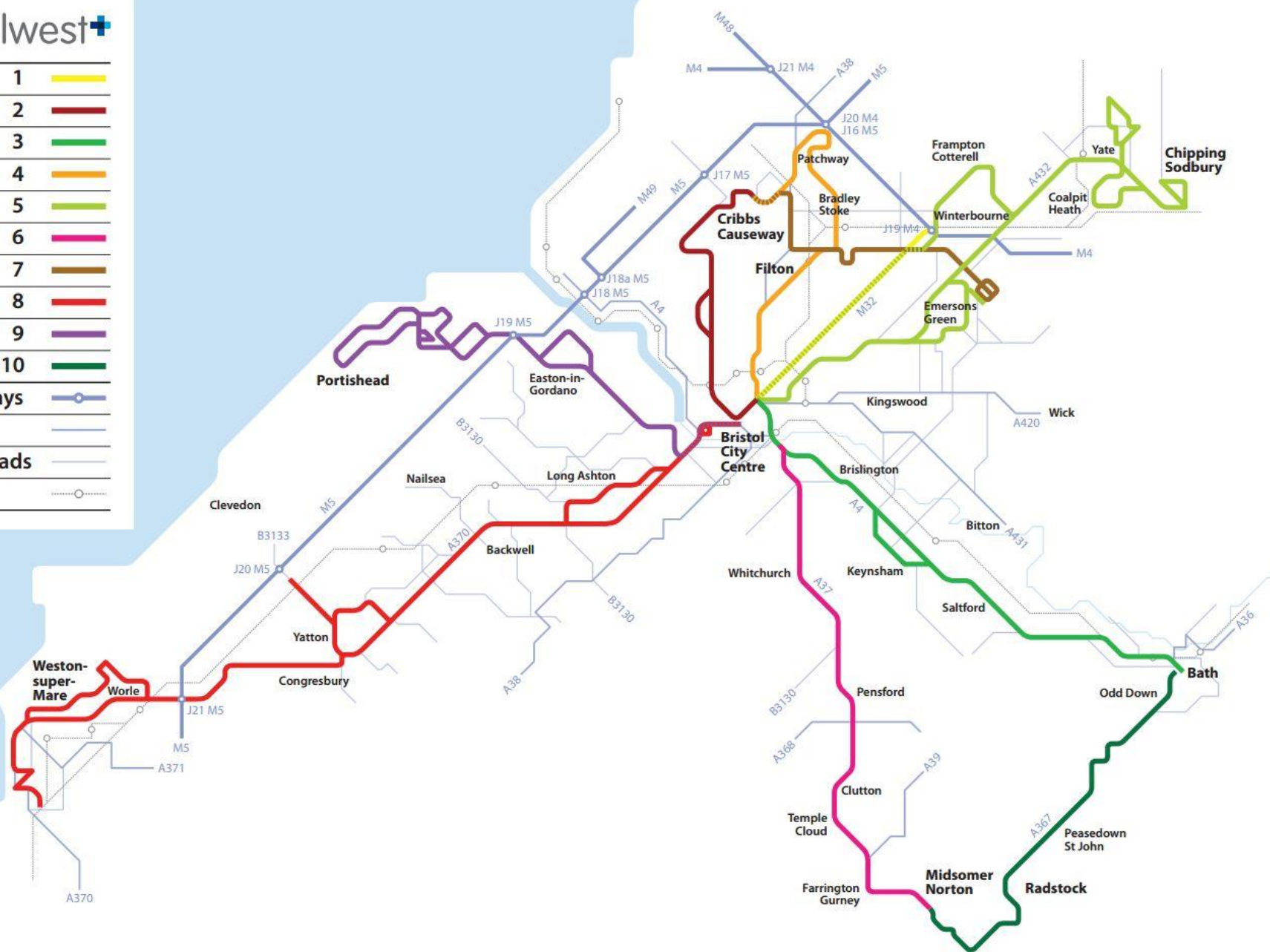
(Tyler, 2002, p. 504)

# Bristol's challenges

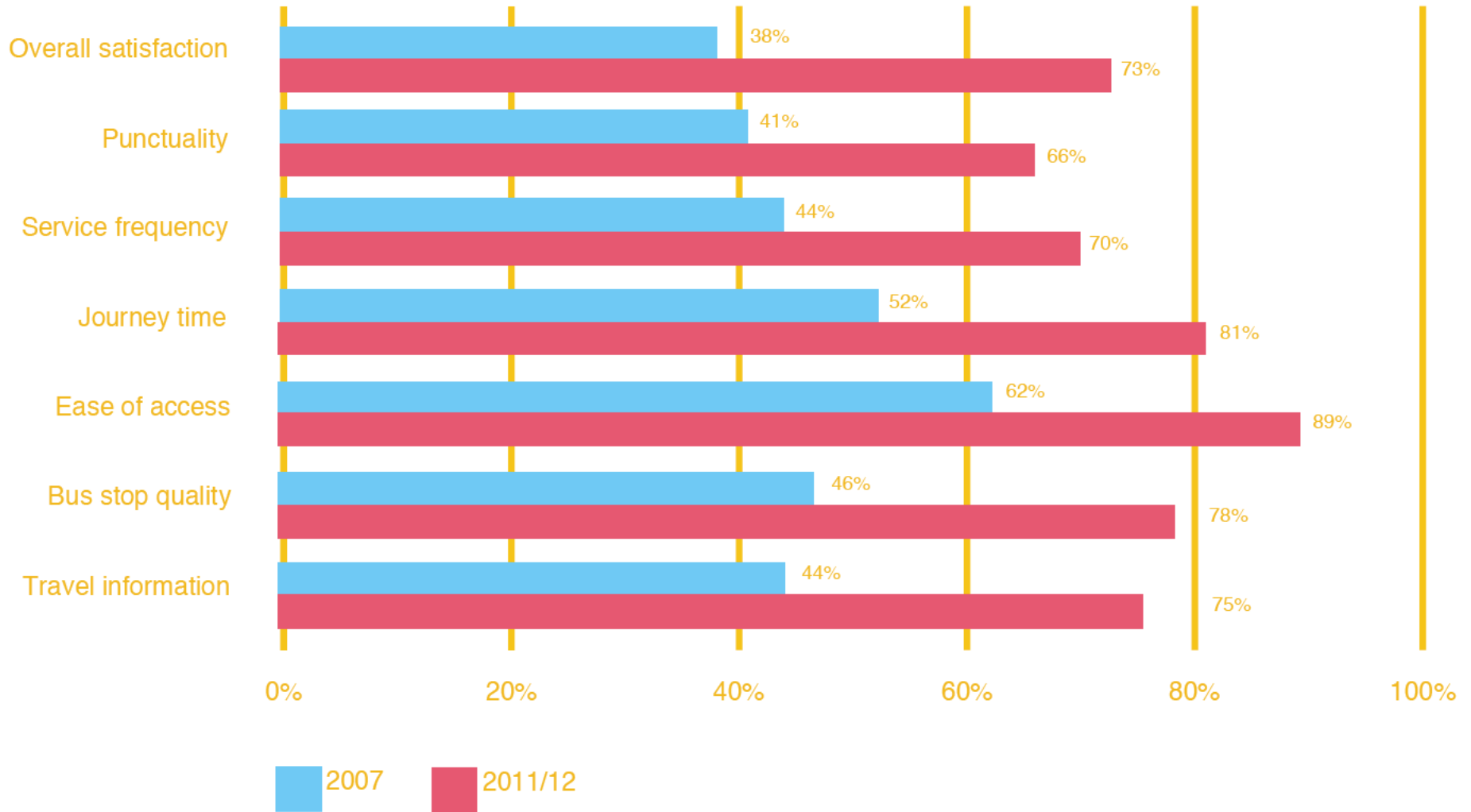
Bristol faces significant challenges in developing a transport network which is not dominated by the car

- Four separate authorities
- A historic city
- Past underinvestment
- Little authority control
- Severe congestion

- Corridor 1
- Corridor 2
- Corridor 3
- Corridor 4
- Corridor 5
- Corridor 6
- Corridor 7
- Corridor 8
- Corridor 9
- Corridor 10
- Motorways
- A-roads
- Minor roads
- Rail line



## Satisfaction with bus services before and after GBBN





- West of England Sustainable Travel project (WEST)

- “Fairer Fares”

- MetroBus

- MetroWest

# Key messages and advice

Below are the five key messages from Bristol's public transport journey. These are the lessons that Bristol will reflect upon and follow as it embarks on the next stages of its transport infrastructure improvement plan, and we hope that these can be useful to other cities seeking to create a more sustainable, accessible, and popular public transport network.

## 1 Working together is the key

Bristol's experience has shown that working in partnership, rather than in competition, is the most important aspect of addressing large challenges such as transport sustainability. The big change in Bristol's approach to transport came when the four local authorities in the West of England began working together. More recently this attitude of partnership and cooperation has extended to working with the local operators, and it is evident that this has had a very positive effect on the city and sub-region's public transport system.

## 2 Funding must be made available

Through investing in the transport network, local, national, and international governments can bring about progress on sustainability. The improvements to Bristol's transport infrastructure are the vision of the city and the people, but they would not have been possible without the ongoing financial support which is necessary to make these visions of a better city a reality.

## 3 'It's about reframing the transport culture'

Bristol (and the UK more generally) is still very much in the grip of 'car culture'. The car is the dominant mode of transport, and moreover holds the status as the icon of personal travel in popular media and culture. To have a car is to be successful, whereas to use public transport or active travel is not. There is evidence that this culture is beginning to weaken, and this is particularly true in places which have an excellent, attractive, and accessible public transport system – for example London (where driving around the city is often not seen as the best way to travel). The message is that if you can change cultural perceptions of transport, then it will become more acceptable to use public transport. To do this requires an integrated and comprehensive network which can offer a reliable alternative to the car.

## 4 Public transport must be affordable

One of the strongest outcomes from Bristol's transport journey has been the positive change in levels of patronage and customer satisfaction with fares since the introduction of the updated tariff. This result is proof that people want to use public transport, but only if it is perceived to be both accessible and affordable. Having fares set to an attractive level starts off a virtuous cycle: more people are attracted to the service, revenues increase, more investment in the network becomes possible, services improve further, and yet more people are attracted to public transport.

## 5 Change is possible

Just a decade ago things did not look good for Bristol's public transport network. With dwindling passenger numbers, and satisfaction with services at a low, it seemed an impossible task to turn the situation around. The change that has happened since then has been huge. Bristol still has a very long way to go before it has a fully sustainable, attractive, public transport network. However through working together on large-scale infrastructure projects, the local authorities and operators have turned the situation around; passenger numbers are now rising, and satisfaction with the bus network is improving dramatically.

## 6 Car demand restraint (controls on access, parking availability and costs)

This will also be key to effecting significant modal shift to public transport and cycling and walking and unlocking the congestion to further improve public transport journey times. The implementation of 15 residents' parking areas in Bristol has significantly advanced this element of the West of England Transport Strategy.

# Questions

Is a local bus network akin to a “social service”?

- If yes, should it be fully publically subsidised, why?
- If no, should it be publically subsidised at all, why?