

A comparison of three shopping centres – walkability in the context of other factors

What is this report ?

Purpose: This is a report of a walkability audit walk event, which was part of the Bristol Walk Fest 2019. It compares and contrasts three nearby shopping centres – Westbury-on-Trym village, Stoke Lane and Henleaze. This walkability audit walk complements an audit walk in Westbury village which took a detailed look at the quality of the street environment for people on foot, and what could be improved. This audit walk is more high-level, comparing and contrasting how well the 3 centres work as places, including walkability as part of that. This will primarily help in assessing the health of Westbury-on-Trym as a centre, so as to inform the consideration of possible improvements.

Definition of walkability: walkability is anything that affects attractiveness, comfort, directness, and safety for walking.

How the report will be used: The report provides context for possible streetscape improvements in Westbury-on-Trym (W-o-T) village, which could be part of Bristol City Council's A4018 scheme. This is a project to improve transport flows along the A4018 from Crow Lane roundabout to the top of Blackboy Hill. However, this report may have wider use as context for considering other possible improvements.

Audit walk attendees:

Walks 1 and 2 - 8th May 2019. Alan Morris (Bristol Walking Alliance), Richard Pedlar (conservation architect), David Moore, David Memel, David Joseph, Councillor Geoff Gollop, Jackie Aslan, Neil James.

Commentary

Westbury-on-Trym is an historic village, which predates the city of Bristol. Henleaze dates from 1900. In planning policy, Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze rank as two of 11 suburban town centres across the Bristol local authority area, whilst North View (close to Henleaze) ranks as a District Centre, and Stoke Lane (close to W-o-T) as a Local Centre. Stoke Lane was included in the walk not because it is comparable in size to the other two centres, but it has different characteristics to contrast with the other two centres.

There is a feeling that Henleaze is doing slightly better as a centre than Westbury-on-Trym, despite W-o-T being more of a historic and community centre, and having better transport connections. Much of the discussion on the walk centred on trying to understand why this is. The answer seems to be a number of small differences rather than one big thing. Those small differences come under the heading of 'the offer', 'place quality' and 'local area', as itemised in the following table.

Layout and topography

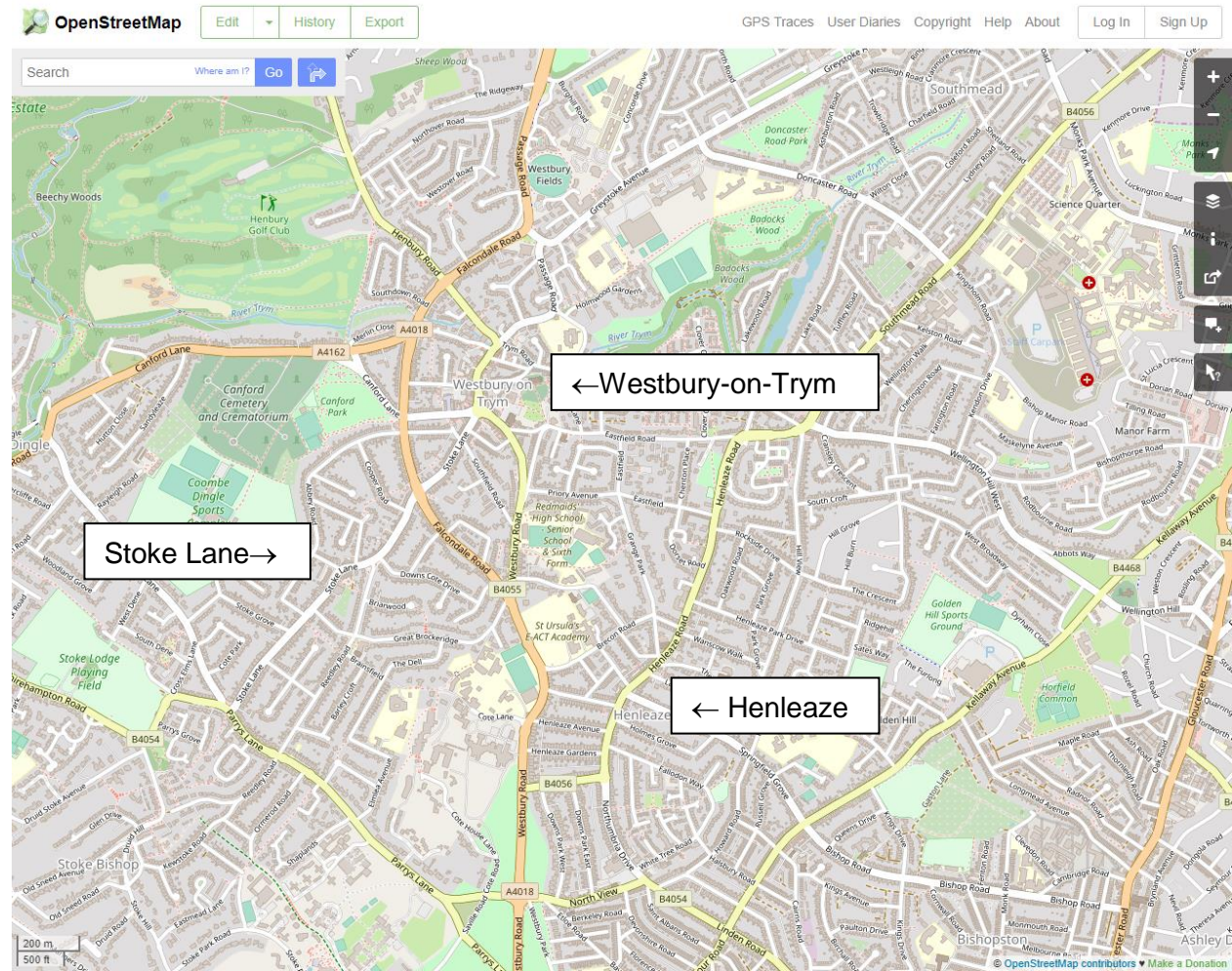
The map shows the location of the three centres. The layout and topography is very different between the three areas.

For Westbury-on-Trym, the map shows how the arterial road between Bristol city centre and Cribbs Causeway and further north bypasses the village centre (along Falcondale Road). However, some north-south and all east-west motor traffic goes through the village centre.

The Stoke Lane shops lie on a route into Westbury village from a large residential area with little shopping provision.

The Henleaze shops are in a row along a single road (Henleaze Road), which is a significant route for motor traffic

The Henleaze shops are surrounded on all sides by residential roads, whereas Westbury village is less permeable from the east for all transport modes



Comments made from all aspects – the offer, place quality, the local area

	Westbury-on-Trym	Stoke Lane shops	Henleaze
<u>The offer</u>			
Shopping offer	eg 5 banks, post office, food, cafes, pubs, hardware, repairs. Need more independent shops ?	eg food (supermarket, baker, deli, but no greengrocer), chemist, cafes. Lost its post office	eg 1 bank, post office, chemist, food, cafes, butcher, fishmonger. A better mix ?
Community offer	In the centre: 2 churches, GP, Nearby: library, village hall, 3 schools	In the centre: (just shops) Nearby: church, pubs	In the centre: (just shops) Nearby: library, 2 churches, cinema
Pedestrian access	along radial roads, Falcondale Road – feels like a barrier?	from local residential roads	from side streets
Car parking	2 car parks + on-street	on-street	on-street less car parking so people come on foot ?
Bus routes	well served N/S. E/W routes too.	none	well served N/S.
<u>Place quality</u>			
Traffic and noise	Constant traffic flows, N/S and E/W Westbury Hill and High Street dominated by traffic and noise	Although constant flow of traffic, it does not dominate because buildings are set back	Lots of traffic, but wider road and less stop/start/accelerate - seems quieter
Openness/greenness	Wider pavement and trees on Canford Lane – improves the feel – more open	Shops set back – improves the feel – more open	Wider pavement – improves the feel – more open Leafy side roads off
Character	identity through layers of history - organic growth some shop fronts a bit tatty ?	Suburban – soulless 1920s (Art Deco) and 1960s buildings	suburbia 1890s, 1920s (arts and crafts) shop fronts – look smarter, feels more prosperous ?
Walkability	Narrow pavements, some poor quality, with wall of parked cars Lack of crossing points away from the village centre Dominated by motor traffic Difficult side road crossings	for pedestrian it is dominated by parked cars difficult to cross the road because of parked cars, and bend in the road.	Wider pavement, good quality, with few obstructions Zebra crossing at both ends
Vibrancy	Carlton Court - quiet since Lloyds chemists closed	No shop vacancies	No shop vacancies
<u>Local area</u>			
Competition from other centres	competition from Stoke Lane shops ?	Stoke Hill shops	complemented by shops on North View. Waitrose brings trade, not the opposite?
Layout	Roads converging to a point. Centre dominated by tarmac, could be attractive public realm	Through route - no focal point	Single road, with many residential side roads

	Westbury-on-Trym	Stoke Lane shops	Henleaze
	Less permeable from the east		
Topography	In a dip.	level	on a rise - cleaner air ?
Residential	Victorian terraced houses around parish church and Stoke Lane, otherwise 1920/30s semis	Nearby Victorian terraces, but otherwise 1930s semis	Edwardian 3-storey terraces, 1920/30s semis. Leafy roads. Denser than WoT
Demographics	Older than average Middle class to the west, south and east. But also close to Henbury and Southmead.	As WoT	Older than average but less than WoT. More younger people in the area – for access to schools ? (not borne out by 2011 census data)

Demographics data

2011 census data for ...	Westbury-on-Trym	Henleaze	England and Wales
population	10,754	10,402	-
median age	44	42	39
18-29	9%	11%	16%
>65	24%	20%	16%
>85	6%	4%	2%
Population density (persons per hectare)	38	50	-
% in managerial, profl and associated occpns	59%	72%	41%
% with degree qualification	51%	60%	27%

Source: <http://www.ukcensusdata.com>