



# Report on the Walkability of Bristol

## No 4 – On the Streets Around Broadwalk Shopping Centre, Knowle, Bristol

May 2019

Living Streets wants a nation where walking is the natural choice for local, everyday journeys. Our mission is to achieve a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more.

### Executive Summary

This is a report of the experience of the pedestrian on the streets around a suburban shopping centre in south Bristol, Broadwalk Shopping Centre. The shopping centre is a focus for pedestrians in all directions. Volunteers walked the streets around the perimeter of the centre looking at the walkability for people making their way to and from the shops, or passing on their way somewhere else, and recorded their observations, which highlight key issues and pointers to make the experience better for the pedestrian.

This is a report by enthusiastic volunteers based on their direct experience. The Department for Transport's Walking Route Audit Tool was not applied in this case due to resources. Further work will be required to record the experience of someone using a wheelchair or with visual impairment.

The route was not always easy to follow with narrow, busy pavements in places. Also, there were obstacles to walking, narrow bits of pavement, street clutter and avoiding ruts in the footpath. There were other unnecessary obstacles presented by pavement parking and pavement cycling.

The experience of the pedestrian could be improved by simple changes. Here is a list of the four top issues we identified:

1. Close the junction of Wells Road and Redcatch Road and, now with no through traffic, develop the street for resident and short-stay parking, a public space between the coffee shop and the church and a continuous pedestrian route on the Wells Road from the shops to the bus stop
2. Restore neighbouring Oakmeade Park to two-way traffic to carry the B3122, including bus route 511
3. Reduce waiting time at the two-stage crossing on Wells Road outside the post office
4. Install bollards on both sides of the Wells Road in front of the shops to separate the pedestrian from fast, dense traffic and end pavement parking – bicycle racks at the kerb parallel with the road might be a cost-effective solution

## The report is in three parts with an appendix:

Report – Introduction, Findings & Recommendations

Appendix – Feedback by volunteers on obstacles and benefits around the target site

### Introduction

This is a report of the pedestrian experience on the streets around the Broadwalk Shopping Centre, Knowle, Bristol. The shopping centre, built behind the existing shops on Wells Road and Broadwalk (ie the street of this name) in the early Seventies, is a focus for local communities in the neighbouring districts of Knowle, Knowle Park and Knowle West. The main entrance faces into the junction of Broadwalk and Wells Road. The only other access is from the multi-storey car park to the rear of the shopping centre.

Volunteers walked the streets around the perimeter of the shopping centre looking at the walkability for people passing on their way somewhere else or making their way to and from the shops.



Broadwalk Shopping Centre went into administration in 2017 and subsequently a development company has proposed to build blocks of flat to cover the cost of refurbishment and replacing the existing, worn-out car park. This redevelopment is locally controversial because some residents of neighbouring streets fear that they will be over shadowed and overwhelmed by the new towers and the additional numbers living on the site. Follow the link to the [developer's website](#) for details of the proposals. See the [Bristol Post](#) for an overview. Critics of the development have formed the Broadwalk Redevelopment Community Group, which can be found on [Facebook](#).

This walkability audit is not about the redevelopment of the site but improvements to the walking environment could be an outcome if Bristol Walking Alliance and Living Street Bristol are able to influence the relevant people at the right time. One key aspect of the

redevelopment is to open the shopping mall on the side facing west into Redcatch Park and create a public space with relevant amenities including catering.



View of the car park of  
Broadwalk Shopping Centre  
from Redcatch Park

There is no access from the  
Park to the shopping centre

May 2019

## Context

### ‘Walkability’ – what it means

Pedestrians (including wheelchair users) in an urban setting should use the pavements and are recommended to cross roads at designated and signposted places. Where this experience is easy, pleasant and safe, we would say that there is a high level of ‘walkability’. Where this experience is difficult, unpleasant or dangerous, we would say that there is a low level of ‘walkability’. And yet, walkability is subjective and will be different for the young, fit and nimble compared to the older, less fit and less mobile people. In addition, an area may be walkable by day, but much less so by night and, an otherwise high walkability route will be rendered less so by pavement cycling. A high level of walkability is a precursor to active and public modes of transport. Some people finding the street unwalkable may instead use a motor vehicle or stay at home.

### Living Streets – <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/what-we-do>

Living Streets wants a nation where walking is the natural choice for local, everyday journeys. Our mission is to achieve a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more. As a nation we’re walking a third less today than we did twenty years ago. Within a

couple of generations, we've effectively engineered walking out of our lives. This report provides evidence of what needs to change to improve the experience of the pedestrian.

### **Healthy streets - <https://healthystreets.com/>**

The Healthy Streets Approach™, developed by Lucy Saunders through her research into the health impacts of transport, public realm and urban planning, is a useful pointer for volunteers auditing walkability. Lucy's "10 Healthy Street Indicators"™ (in alphabetical order) are,

- Clean air
- Easy to cross
- Everyone feels welcome
- Not too noisy
- People feel relaxed
- People feel safe
- People to choose to walk and cycle
- Places to stop and rest
- Shade and shelter
- Things to see and do

### **Department for Transport – walking route audit tool ([www.gov.uk/government](http://www.gov.uk/government))**

The primary function of the Department of Transport's Walking Route Audit Tool (WRAT) IS to assess the current condition and suitability of a walking route. It uses a set of criteria to assess how well a route meets design requirements: attractiveness, comfort, directness, safety and coherence, each with subcategories totalling 20 criteria.

Scoring for each criterion is "0" for poor provision, "1" for provision which is adequate but should be improved if possible and "2" for good quality provision. The Department for Transport has set 70% as the threshold for minimal provision (i.e. 28 points of a possible 40).

On this occasion we were unable to find the resources to apply audit tool to sections of the study. This may be done when a revised version of the audit is conducted.

### **Bristol Transport Strategy Consultation, September 2018:**

The Mayor of Bristol launched a consultation on a new transport strategy on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018. This strategy is designed to fit the requirements of the transport strategy for the West of England Combined Authority. Documents are available on the Bristol City Council [web-site](#). Outcome 5 of the draft strategy is relevant to this report.

#### **Outcome 5: Walking to be safe, pleasant, accessible and the first choice for local journeys and combined with public transport for longer journeys.**

We want to make walking safe and attractive to connect people from their homes to local facilities and to public transport stops to connect to points across the city and

beyond. Walking can feel unsafe if routes are not well lit or overlooked, or it can be unpleasant if a route is next to busy roads so we need to improve this. We are currently writing a plan with our West of England colleagues that sets out a walking network to make improvements across the region. We also plan to create a walking strategy for Bristol that contains more detail on this.

Also relevant is Outcome 6 because bicycle use on the pavement is increasingly bringing down “walkability” for many pedestrians.

**Outcome 6: Cycling to be safe, simple, accessible and convenient, either as an option for the whole journey or as a part of a journey combined with public transport.**

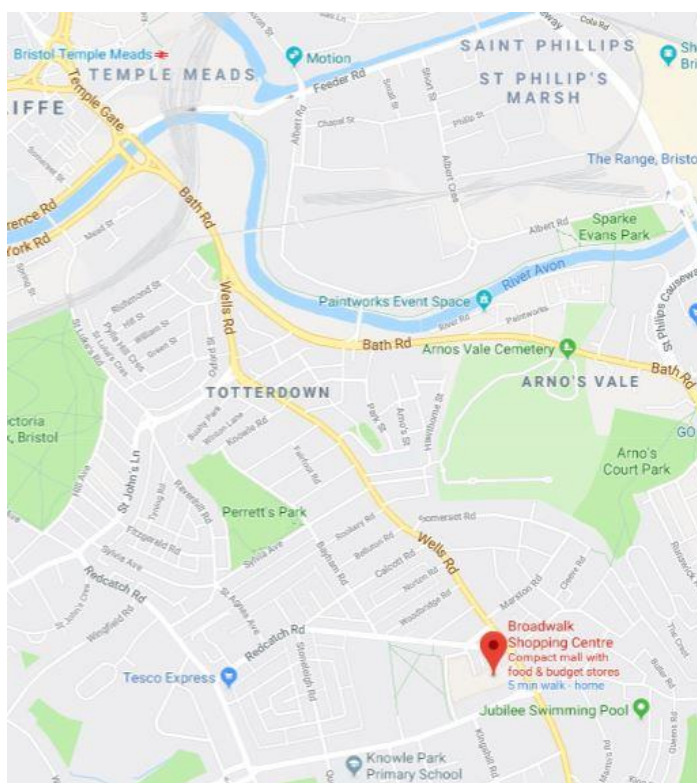
We want to create safe cycling paths and lanes that everyone feels safe to cycle around the city. We want people of all ages and abilities to feel confident to be able to cycle to where they need to be across the city. We want people to be able to cycle to bus stops or rail stations and park their bikes safely and securely to get on the bus or train to connect to places that may be too far to cycle. We are currently writing a plan with our West of England colleagues that sets out a cycling network to make improvements across the region. We also plan to create a cycling strategy for Bristol that contains more detail on this.

**The location of the study**



The map above marks the location of Bristol in the UK.

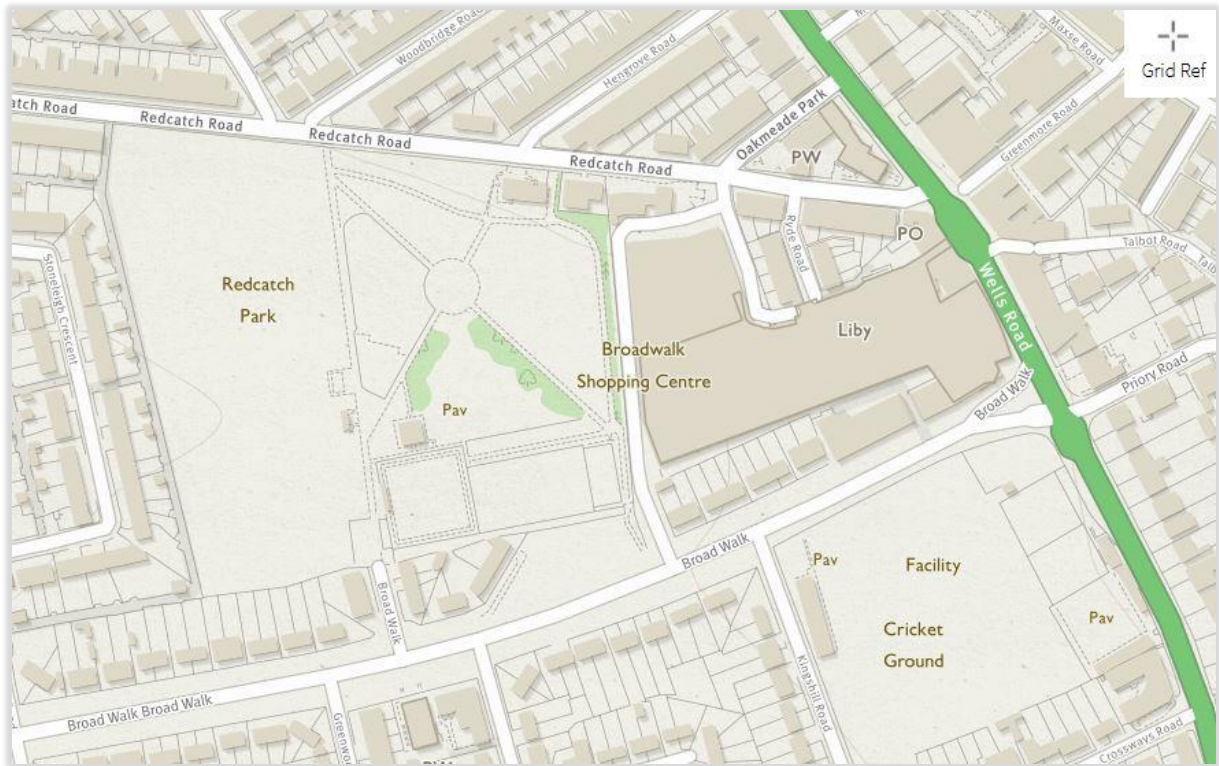
The map on the right marks the location of Broadwalk relation to Bristol Temple Meads Station in the south of the City of Bristol



## The streets we walked

Volunteers walked the streets around the Broadwalk Shopping Centre, Knowle on two occasions – Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> May at 6pm and Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at 2pm for about an hour on each occasion. Seven people contributed to the audit.

Map of the area covered

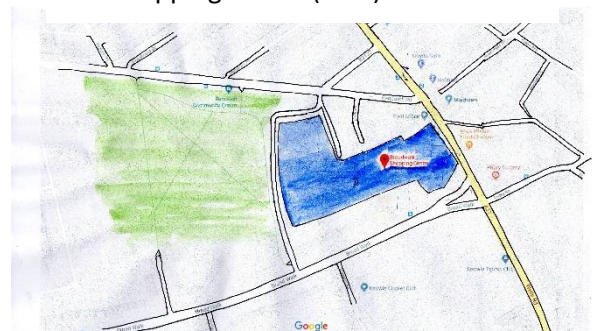


Starting from Redcatch Park, we followed a clockwise route round the perimeter of the shopping centre, along Redcatch Road, Wells Road and Broadwalk as far as the Kingshill Road junction (orange line). We then crossed the road and walked up Broadwalk to the traffic lights, crossed Wells Road, crossed Priors Road, crossed to the other side of Wells Road again at the light-controlled, pedestrian crossing by Greenmore Road (blue line), and retraced our steps to Redcatch Community Centre (orange line).

Sketch of the route



Sketch showing the park (green) and the shopping centre (blue)



## Findings

Detail of findings are in an appendix. Here is a summary of what we found.

### Walking the streets around the shopping centre, we felt:

1. Encouraged by the benefit of well-placed benches, bicycle racks, litter bins and trees – leading to recommendations 4, 10 & 11 below
2. Encouraged by the presence of the convenient light-controlled crossing at the junction of Broadwalk and Kingshill Road with an 8 second wait
3. Pleased by the number of buses servicing stops around Broadwalk taking you in all directions
4. Pleased by the width of the pavement in front of the shops on Broadwalk
5. Pleased to find that protection of pedestrians by the installation of bollards at the kerbside had been considered important in the past
6. Disappointed to find roadworks in three places and only one with provision for the pedestrian – leading to recommendations 12 below
7. Intimidated by the speed and proximity of traffic on the one-way section of Redcatch Road (B3122) whilst walking on a narrow, sloping footpath and negotiating roadworks – leading to recommendation 1 & 2 below
8. Inconvenienced needlessly by two-stage, light-controlled crossing (i.e. Pelican, Puffin or Toucan) on Wells Road outside the post office. It seems that the pedestrian waits for no reason. It would be better if the Green Man were to be displayed immediately on pressing the button. Typically, this is what happens,
  - Pedestrian presses the button
  - Pedestrian waits for the Green Man
  - Pedestrian gets an opportunity to cross the road in a break in the traffic
  - Pedestrian crosses the road
  - Lights change to stop the traffic and indicate Green Man
  - Traffic stops at a red light with no one crossing
  - No one is happyLeading to recommendation 3
9. Inconvenienced by multiple stages to crossings, eg Wells Road outside the post office; making the diagonal crossing of the Wells Road junction with Broadwalk and Priory Road – leading to recommendation 3 & 9.

10. Inconvenienced by the pedestrian crossing arrangements at light-controlled junction, such as we found at Wells Road/Broadwalk/Priority Road junction:
  - Wait time too long – 60 seconds
  - Crossing time too short (6 seconds)
  - Necessity to wait twice if you're crossing diagonallyLeading to recommendations 9
11. Intimidated by the lack of even an informal crossing for pedestrians at the junction of Wells Road/Redcatch Road, which presents a hazard to the unwary pedestrian as vehicles turn from the main road at speed – leading to recommendation 1 & 2
12. Put at risk by the hazardous state of the pavements – paving slabs sticking up and foundations of former street furniture not made good – leading to recommendation 13 below
13. Troubled by the air quality
14. Inconvenienced by the distance of public toilets from the main streets – leading to recommendation 8 below
15. Inconvenienced and disregarded by clutter on the footpath (A-boards, bus stops, inappropriately placed bicycle racks and litter bins), eg Broadwalk in front of the shops, Wells Road on the east side pavement – leading to recommendations 4 & 7
16. Intimidated on the amount of pavement parking, particularly by delivery vans, which also results in damage to the footpath and development of puddles when it rains – leading to recommendations 4

## **Recommendations to improve the pedestrian experience:**

### **Top four**

1. Close the junction of Wells Road and Redcatch Road and, now with no through traffic, develop the street for resident and short-stay parking, a public space between the coffee shop and the church and a continuous pedestrian route on the Wells Road from the shops to the bus stop
2. Restore neighbouring Oakmeade Park to two-way traffic to carry the B3122, including bus route 511
3. Reduce waiting time at the two-stage crossing on Wells Road outside the post office
4. Install bollards on both sides of the Wells Road in front of the shops to separate the pedestrian from fast, dense traffic and end pavement parking – bicycle racks at the



kerb parallel with the road might be a cost-effective solution

## **The rest**

5. Find a solution to the narrow sloping pavement in Redcatch Road in order to bring it up to standard for wheelchair users
6. Investigate public/private ownership of the wide pavement on Broadwalk in front of the shops to find a solution to vehicular access and danger to the pedestrian
7. Give more thought to the installation of bus stops and shelters on the footpath so as not to become a barrier to through pedestrian traffic
8. Investigate local merchants providing toilet facilities for customers and people on foot
9. Improve the light-controlled junction of Wells Road/Priory Road/Broadwalk to improve the crossing time for the pedestrian with consideration of diagonal crossing option
10. Install more benches
11. Plant more trees
12. Issue guidance to contractors for minimum standards of temporary provision for the pedestrian, including penalties for failure to comply
13. Publicise and create effective use of [Fix My Street](#) for reporting problem with the footpath

**Report compiled by the Living Streets Bristol Group**  
**Enquiries and feedback welcome: [bristolgroup@livingstreets.org.uk](mailto:bristolgroup@livingstreets.org.uk)**  
**End of the Report**