

**Comments by Bristol Walking Alliance on the West of England Local
Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2020-2036 (LCWIP)**



Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) welcomes the attempt to identify a range of walking infrastructure investments contained in LCWIP.

But we are disappointed that the document does not distinguish or prioritise the different kinds of potential improvements that could secure future funding.

Introduction

Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) is one of the stakeholders that has been consulted by Bristol City Council officers during the preparation of LCWIP. BWA is a consortium of organisations and individuals campaigning to improve Bristol's walking environment. We want to create an environment for pedestrians that is welcoming, safe, convenient and inclusive.

BWA fully supports the need to increase the use of active travel, especially for shorter journeys and in order to access public transport. We agree that this will help to reduce congestion and pollution from cars and to improve health and wellbeing.

We applaud the attempt to identify specific walking infrastructure issues that could be addressed by future investment. No previous plan has attempted to do this at this level of detail across the Bristol area as a whole.

The approach taken to identifying issues, particularly by carrying out detailed audits of the chosen Core Walking Zones using a standard template, is a methodology that we hope can be applied across the whole area in due course. It has already proven useful in raising awareness of local issues with walking routes by groups such as Bristol Living Streets and Let's Walk Bedminster.

In the resultant LCWIP document, however, it is easy to lose focus. Our comments are mainly aimed on how the document could be made clearer and therefore more useful as means of prioritising investment.

Clarity of the LCWIP document

In explaining the purpose of LCWIP, it would be useful to include the list of things it is not (as we have seen used on slides presenting LCWIP) as well as what it is.

Mention is made on Page 7 of a WECA Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy which will complement LCWIP through shared aims and outcomes. Some examples would be useful.

On Page 8, more examples should be given of the benefits for those walking and using mobility aids on the footway. The two existing accessibility examples are both related to cycling.

Low-level interventions, such as ensuring A-boards do not block pavements, though important, are mixed in with major investments, such as building new bridges.

Some walking interventions appear in the cycling maps but not in the walking maps. They may be funded for both modes, but it will be important that pedestrians get a chance to comment even if a scheme is primarily seen as a cycling one. In particular, new cycle routes should 'do no harm' to the existing pedestrian environment.

Highlighting the larger investments

Though some responsibility for this choice of presentation may be due to the government guidelines under which the document was created, we believe it will be easier to make the case for, and prioritise, specific investments, especially larger ones, if they could be separately enumerated from, or distinguished in, the detailed maps.

The detailed suggestions included in the walking maps (and in some of the cycling maps) are in many cases for interventions that could equally be applied to most urban walking routes. These should be considered whenever any development is taking place in a locality, not just as part of LCWIP schemes.

For example, the following interventions are likely to occur in many places throughout the area, not just in the specific zones mentioned in the document. We have added some, indicated by [+], for which we couldn't find examples in the document, but we believe should be considered.

- Ensure A-boards or café chairs and tables do not block footways: hardly warrants being in a document about infrastructure, though it is an ongoing problem for pavement users that should be addressed by dissuasion and enforcement.
- Cut back vegetation: again hardly warrants being in a document about infrastructure, but should be addressed by regular maintenance and enforcement.
- Drop kerbs: essential for making routes accessible to those who use infant buggies, shopping trolleys, wheelchairs or mobility scooters.
- Improve wayfinding: making it clear that many facilities are within easy walking distance.
- [+] Toilets and seating: necessary for many, particularly for the old and the young, to venture very far out of the house on foot.
- Prioritise crossings: giving pedestrians 'green time' priority at lights-controlled crossings.
- [+] Re-site bin storage: if no other off-footway storage space exists, creating shared bin storage areas in the road in place of parking spaces.
- Remove obstructions: removing redundant signs and other obstructions on footways, or re-siting if badly sited.
- Give way at entrances and exits: ensuring vehicles entering and exiting across the footway from sites such as petrol stations give way to pedestrians.
- Reduce junction widths: slowing turning traffic and making it safer and quicker for pedestrians to cross.
- Install continuous footways: giving pedestrians stronger priority across minor junctions that otherwise interrupt their progress.
- Create parklets / plant trees / add benches: improving the public realm, if necessary by selectively replacing parking spaces.
- Road space re-allocation: allowing widening of the footway.
- [+] Full pedestrianisation: removing all vehicles from selected streets.

We suggest all of the above are included in the 'Types of improvements' section. This section is currently mainly a glossary explaining the terms. It could be turned into more of a set of guidelines for interventions relevant to walking and cycling (separately), indicating when they would be appropriate, and what the benefits would be. That would include, for example, indicating when shared use was not appropriate because of contention between pedestrians and cyclists.

By accepting that the kind of general improvements mentioned above should be made whenever development or infrastructure work takes place, it then becomes easier to focus on the larger investments needed in specific locations.

Applications of the generic interventions to specific routes could remain on the scheme maps, but the other larger interventions - listed in Appendix A - could be emphasised. In this way the larger items for each scheme would be easier to identify.

Significant omissions from LCWIP

There are other large-scale schemes that we believe should be taken forward as actions, and referred to by the LCWIP document, even if they are additional to the schemes that are included in the LCWIP process.

1) **Low Traffic (or 'Liveable') Neighbourhoods** could play a much more significant role in improving the walking and cycling environment, as well as the overall quality of life for residents of such neighbourhoods.

The only two instances of this approach cited in the document are on maps W13 (Southville) and C08 (St Werburghs). This may be because many of the Core Walking Zones were selected to be town centres based on through traffic routes, whereas low traffic neighbourhoods will typically occupy the areas between through traffic routes.

2) Potential **walking schemes in the city centre** have been excluded, whereas cycling schemes have been included. We would like to see firm plans for identifying city centre walking interventions in order to give a balanced picture, while realising that they may be funded from other sources. In particular, there are zones, such as the Queen's Road Triangle, that are in need of attention but may not necessarily be considered as part of the centre.

Concerns about some of the specific proposals

In Appendix B we identify some specific concerns that have arisen from the current document. These are in no way exhaustive. It is recognised that local knowledge is usually needed to understand how an intervention may affect a locality. We have not had time to solicit feedback for the majority of the Bristol proposals, but would try to do so if any of them looked like being put forward for funding.

Prioritisation

The LCWIP document suggests that prioritisation of interventions will depend on the nature of the funding streams that may become available.

We suggest that it is important to identify where the need for improved walking infrastructure is most urgent. In that way, funding can be sought that will achieve the best outcome for the walking environment. It may be that some of the more urgent changes do not cost a lot compared to the overall transport budget, and should be funded from existing capital funds rather than wait for special funding to become available.

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Appendix A – List of larger walking investments extracted from the Bristol maps

The following could be highlighted within the Bristol maps of the current document.

- W07: Reduce parking and widen footways in Clifton Village to give better pedestrian access throughout. Make Cotham Hill one-way to allow wider footways. Widen footways and improve crossings along Queen's Road.
- W08: Shirehampton High Street traffic calming, junction redesign and public realm improvements.
- W09: Widen footways and improve crossings within Westbury-on-Trym, including along Passage Road.
- W10: Redesign Gloucester Road / Elton Road / Zetland Road junction. Redesign Cheltenham Road / Cotham Brow junction.
- W11: Improve footways and crossings around Broadmead Shopping Centre.
- W12: Increase footway widths, remove pinch points and improve junction safety in Fishponds. Multiple interventions to improve footways and crossings in Church Road.
- W13: Reduce road and junction widths in North Street. Widen footways along Dean Lane. Remove obstructions and widen footways along East Street.
- W14: Redesign junctions of Hareclive Road with Silcox Road and with Bishport Avenue.
- C07: Redesign Ashley Road / Arley Hill junction to improve pedestrian and cycle safety. Future changes to St James Barton Roundabout incorporate safe crossing opportunities for pedestrians.
- C09: Redesign Netham Lock junction to improve pedestrian and cycle safety. Redesign St Anne's Road / Wyatt's View roundabout to provide safe crossing points.
- C10: Improve shared path layout on southern perimeter of Queens Square reflecting high pedestrian and cycle flows. Ensure any future improvements to Bedminster Bridges incorporate walking and cycling priority and safety. Improvements at Three Lamps Junction to improve cycle and pedestrian safety.
- C11: Explore options for new bridge across the New Cut to take pressure off of Gaol Ferry Bridge.

Appendix B – Some areas of specific concern (not exhaustive)

- W09: The proposals for Westbury village centre should be more ambitious on reallocating road space. Replacing the roundabout with a T-junction should be considered, as well as enhancements of existing footpaths leading to the centre of the village.
- C06: The Downs Committee has already accepted that the path on the western side of Westbury Road should be segregated, not shared.
- C07: The central reservation along Whiteladies Road has made it much easier for pedestrians to cross at intermediate points and must be retained.
- C08: Widening the delineated walking/cycling route through Castle Park would lead to detrimental loss of green space. Road space around the park, not green space in the park, should be used instead.
- C10: It is divisive to propose further changes to the width, lighting and access to the cycle route through Victoria Park, especially given the previous heated debate about its provision, and the newly created solution based on community consultation. It is suggested that this proposal is removed from the document for a number of reasons that the local community will make explicit.