

Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) objects to this development which forces a diversion of the main pedestrian route between the Floating Harbour and Ashton Court, is not sufficiently sustainable, and does not consider its obligations to improving travel in the surrounding area.

Festival Way pedestrian route

Currently, there is a main pedestrian and cycle route, known as 'Festival Way' (including Canada Way), between the Floating Harbour and Ashton Court and the UWE Bower Ashton campus which passes inside the western edge of the site to be developed. The route is constrained at the south-western end by the need to cross the railway line via a bridge. At the north-western end it passes under Brunel Way and crosses Brunel Open Space to Ashton Avenue Bridge. It forms part of National Cycle Network Route 33 from Bristol via Long Ashton to Nailsea.

The proposal is to re-route this shared pedestrian/cycle path through the centre of the development, but along straight lines with two right-angle bends as it passes between the blocks of buildings. The path will also include several ramps (with a gradient of 3.7% - 4%) and be constrained to 3m width along most of its length. In the ramped section, where it is constrained by retaining walls on each side, the width marginally increases to 3.5m.

BWA has several objections to the proposed path re-routing. This development should be an opportunity to improve this important pedestrian and cycle route to encourage more people to use the route to get to Ashton Court and the UWE Bower Ashton campus.

This is particularly important when there are events taking place at Ashton Court, such as the Bristol Balloon Fiesta, which regularly causes road traffic problems in the area. But it is also important to encourage active travel for commuting from the direction of Long Ashton.

In particular we object that the proposed route:

- is less direct
- is too narrow for pedestrian/cycle shared use on a route that requires improvement
- introduces an additional road crossing
- introduces pinch-points through sharp corners at the road crossing and the ramp
- will be a safety hazard at the sharp corners, especially on the ramp where constrained by retaining walls
- sends pedestrian and cycle traffic through the middle of residential open space where children might be playing

We believe that this development should contribute rather than detract from the Festival Way by increasing the width to allow segregation of the walking and cycling paths by at least a kerb. The best way to achieve this is likely to be to retain the current route along the western boundary of the site rather than redirecting it through the middle of the site. Redirecting the route to the east of the site, by providing a more direct link between the railway bridge and the west side of the Metrobus route, would offer an alternative but would require rethinking the gradients at the entrance to the site.

Other pedestrian routes around the site

The Clange Road roundabout already has extremely high footfall, especially for access to Ashton Park School at school times and for the sports facilities at the school. However, the walking facilities are very poor and should be upgraded as part of this development. The poor facilities are glossed over in the proposals by making them sound good. There are positive words about the 1.5m footway, which is too narrow and runs alongside a very busy road, shared at school start and end time by two-way walking and cycling traffic.

Sustainability of the site

Given the climate emergency, it is no longer appropriate to assume residents will primarily access the site by car. Indeed, this site, with its difficult road access especially at peak hours, is a prime candidate to be a car-free development. The need for regular site road access to cross the Metrobus route is also a potential source of hazard and delay for bus passengers.

Bus connection into the city should be good using the Metrobus stop, but good walking connections to local facilities are also essential. The site, along with the adjacent one on Paxton Drive, is severed from shopping and the city by the A370 (Brunel Way). Walking links could be improved with another direct link under or over the A370 to Greville Smyth Park to create the most direct walking link possible to North Street and its shopping and entertainment facilities. Even small deviations will deter walking. This should be designed with safety for walking at night in mind. If additional cycling routes are also provided, they should be segregated from the walking routes by at least a kerb.

The limited amount of shared open space within the current plans seems at odds with the intensity of the development.

Bristol Walking Alliance
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