

The following comments are in response to the Broad Plain Public Realm Strategy Consultation document of May 2020, a subsequent walkabout and an online discussion in September 2020.

We welcome the continuation of the direction set in the initial public engagement in 2019 and support the *Public realm vision* for Broad Plain set out in Chapter 5 of the 2020 consultation document. We also support this area being developed as a Low Traffic Neighbourhood.

Our comments mainly focus on the *Place and movement* proposals for the area and in particular the needs of pedestrians.

The Subway

We agree that the Subway is too dark and dirty and too narrow for the number of cyclists and pedestrians who wish to use it. We hear it would be too difficult to make the Subway larger, so we do not see how it can be made adequate for the increase in active travel we would all like to see. Just widening the approaches to the Subway will do nothing to improve the tunnel itself. It is never likely to be a route that feels safe for pedestrians, especially at night.

During discussions, the possibility was raised of making the road junction of Avon Street with Temple Way a full, lights controlled T-junction. This would permit two-way bus services along Avon Street and allow their right-turn from Avon Street onto Temple Way. However, it would also have the benefit of allowing an additional, lights-controlled, surface-level pedestrian crossing of Temple Way part-way between the crossings at Old Market roundabout and the junction with Temple Back. We see this as an attractive alternative pedestrian route to the use of the Subway, which would also allow the Subway to be primarily used by cyclists travelling east-west through Broad Plain.

The north-south pedestrian route

The primary pedestrian route between Temple Meads Station and Old Market is currently badly defined and still affected by development, especially along Sles Lane. We see it as very important that this route is improved, with appropriate pedestrian-friendly road crossings, route markings, active frontages and segregation from cycle traffic.

The route is forced to take several turns, such as doglegs along Avon Street and Old Bread Street, and around three sides of the rectangle of the Bristol Post garden and car park entrance. Signage alone will not be enough to indicate the route. Instead we advocate distinctive surface treatment of the pavement to make clear the direction of this primary pedestrian route.

We were disappointed to see that the Soapworks plans did not include any active frontage along Sles Lane. Though there will be an alternative pedestrian route through this development, we do not see that as being sufficiently direct to be the preferred route to the west end of Old Market and on to Cabot Circus. We would like any development on the western, Glassfields side of Sles Lane to include active frontages, pocket parks, seating etc to improve the only remaining part of this route that has not yet been redeveloped.

East-west routes through Broad Plain

We agree with the proposal that the east-west cycle route (National Cycle Route 4) through Broad Plain, which goes through the Subway, should go along Unity Street rather than Straight Street. That would allow Straight Street to be pedestrian-only, where currently there is contention between cyclists and pedestrians. It would also allow Straight Street to be more attractive and greener, with trees, planters and seating, as well as perhaps allowing outdoor use for hospitality businesses.

Broad Plain

In Broad Plain itself, we agree with the need to reduce through motor traffic. We would also like to see as much of this area reclaimed for green, quiet space as possible because of the general lack of green space for residents in this area. The consultation document puts forward two options for traffic within Broad Plain.

Option 1. This proposes to make Broad Plain and Unity Street one-way eastbound, with a single entry only from Temple Way. It has the advantages of simplifying traffic flow and providing sufficient space on Unity Street for the cycle route to be segregated two-way. In particular, it allows a lot of Broad Plain itself to be reclaimed for green space and for pleasant north-south and east-west pedestrian routes. Its biggest disadvantage is that it will not reduce the amount of motor traffic in Broad Plain since it will be the main route to the Gardiner Haskins car park.

Option 2. This proposes to close access for motor traffic to Broad Plain from Temple Way. However, to service the area, it would require Unity Street to remain two-way and in particular for there to be a large turning circle in Broad Plain itself. It has the advantage of reducing motor traffic to the minimum. However, the cycle route along Unity Street would have to share the road with motor vehicles. Its biggest disadvantage would be the need to retain a large amount of road space in the middle of Broad Plain for the vehicle turning circle.

On balance, and particularly because Option 2 allows significantly less green space, BWA favours Option 1. This is in the expectation that in the future, after the development of the Gardiner Haskins car park, it would not be necessary for traffic accessing the new development to enter from Temple Way, but could do so via Midland Road. The access to Broad Plain from Temple Way would only be necessary for vehicles servicing the immediate vicinity.

Gardiner Haskins car park

While we recognise that it may be some time before development is proposed for this site, we encourage strong guidance on what development might be acceptable. It should remain permeable, with key east-west and north-south pedestrian routes crossing it.

Key connective routes would link Hannah More Primary School/Jubilee Street both east-west to Straight Street and also north-south across to Unity Street and Jacob Street. Both these routes are shown in the Old Market Quarter Neighbourhood Development Plan, March 2016.

As we said in our response to the initial public engagement, the strategy could do more than protect pedestrian routes in the area. It could propose features for if/when this site is developed, such as where a public space could go and how these pedestrian routes could be enhanced.

Other pedestrian routes

New Kingsley Road, including the entrance to Hannah More Primary School, should be considered for a School Street. It will improve the school entrance, including increasing road safety and minimising pollution, if motor traffic except buses and service vehicles could be largely excluded from New Kingsley Road / Horton Street particularly at the beginning and end of the school day.

Where the path across the Gardiner Haskins car park emerges onto New Kingsley Road there needs to be a pedestrian road crossing to get over the road to the school. At minimum there should be a raised table crossing at this point, and there should be no need for pedestrians to double back around the existing roadside metal barriers at this point.

Some secondary pedestrian routes shown (on page 9 of the consultation document) as included in current development proposals don't appear to have been carried over to the plan on page 51. The strategy should explicitly encourage pedestrian permeability of new developments by ensuring these routes are included in the secondary pedestrian network.

The consultation document points out that many footways in the area are narrow, but does not suggest particular improvements. It should state that wherever possible, narrow footways should be brought up to minimum width standards, if necessary by removing on-street parking.

Green spaces

The green space in Broad Plain itself should include new planting of trees, shrubs and planters as well as areas of grass with seating. A key objective should be to shield the space from the noise and pollution of Temple Way. We suggest this could be achieved by installing a *living green wall*, a densely planted trellis or even a conventional hedge on the western side of the space, on either side of the narrow road entrance for Option 1. Seating would be primarily located towards the quieter eastern side of the space.

We suggest generally reducing the amount of on-street parking. Because of the presence of the Gardiner Haskins car park, this should be possible without a drastic overall loss of parking spaces. Not only would this enhance the benefits of a low-traffic area, but it would enable more greening through street trees and planters.

Every opportunity should be taken to increase green infrastructure throughout the area, especially along pedestrian routes and roads, as a further contribution towards the climate emergency. This particularly applies to Straight Street and Sles Lane, where there should be no vehicles, but all roads should be candidates for additional street tree planting.

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