



Bristol Walking Alliance

campaigning to improve Bristol's walking environment

Response to Spatial Development Strategy consultation December 2020

The Bristol Walking Alliance 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.

Introduction

1. The Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) welcomes this consultation. We have found it difficult to respond using just the questionnaire survey because of our specialist interest in walking and our focus on Bristol. Our survey answers are annexed, but we thought it might be helpful to set out our main concerns separately.

Priority 1: reduced car use

2. Question 2 in the survey rightly links car use and climate change. But car use needs to be reduced for many other reasons: for pedestrians cars bring danger, poor air quality, obstructed pavements, noise and visual intrusion. Driving is bad for people's health. Road building is destructive.

3. We argued in 2016 for sustainable transport to be the top priority in the emerging Joint Spatial Plan (JSP): it remains our priority now. This requires a settlement pattern throughout the WECA area that encourages the use of trains, trams, light rail and buses for long journeys, and cycling and walking for short ones. We welcome the suggestions in question 9 that parking might be restricted and more low traffic roads created but those are ideas that tend to transfer the problems rather than removing them if the alternatives to car use are unattractive.

Priority 2: Green Belt review

4. Making protection of the Green Belt top priority in the Joint Spatial Plan produced a settlement pattern so unsatisfactory that planning inspectors rejected the Plan. That mistake must not be repeated: 48% of the WECA area should not be regarded as inviolable when there is such an urgent need for land to be developed. The Green Belt assessment prepared for the JSP showed that much of the Green Belt was failing to serve even most Green Belt purposes. Most Green Belt land is of no value to walkers or to the public as a whole.

5. We suggest that the three WECA authorities and North Somerset review Green Belt boundaries urgently. The review will need to follow the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (para 138) to give first consideration to land well served by public transport. The advice continues: " [Plans] should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through

compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land”.

6. The Green Belt guidance published in July 2019 included ‘new or enhanced walking or cycling routes’ among the improvements that might be sought. We see such routes as important links to other forms of sustainable transport, as well as encouraging walking in its own right.

Priority 3: 15 minute neighbourhoods

7. Question 3 asks what features and facilities are most important to access within easy reach (15 minute walk) of people’s homes. This is an important question if people are to leave home on foot on most trips rather than in a car. We do not think it realistic for them to undertake all journeys on foot – specialist services, secondary schools and employment require larger catchment areas – but proximity to efficient public transport could make car use unnecessary.

8. In compiling our list, we have taken account of the limitations of the planning system. The system can and should ensure that everyone has easy access to the following:

- outside public space with a children's playground and seats for social interaction
- accessible green space
- attractive and safe walking routes
- attractive and safe cycling routes
- bus/tram stop/station for good public transport to other essential facilities.

Planners should also seek as far as is possible to ensure the following are within walking distance:

- shop for daily essentials, with a post office counter
- nursery and primary school
- indoor space for social interaction
- doctor and dentist

Priority 4: liveable/low traffic neighbourhoods

9. We would like the strategy to endorse the concept of liveable/low traffic neighbourhoods which have been successfully introduced elsewhere in the country. Limiting vehicular through-routes in certain neighbourhoods and making public realm and other environmental improvements, makes neighbourhoods more attractive for walking and many other aspects of life.

Bristol Walking Alliance

14 December 2020

ANNEX: BWA QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Qu. 1. Which of the following statements do you consider to be the most important for the vision of the future of the region?

Please rank in order of importance with one being the most important. You can rank as many options as you like. For example, if you want to select your three most important, rank using numbers 1-3.

- Everyone can access a quality home that they can afford
 - Low carbon communities can cope with the impacts of climate change
 - Wildlife is thriving, and everyone has access to nature
 - The economy is successful and clean, with good access to jobs
 - The region is well connected by a sustainable transport network
 - Communities are healthy, sustainable and connected
 - Places are attractive and people are proud of where they live
 - Other (please specify)
- If you selected 'other', please write your answer in the space below

BWA response: all of these elements are important. (The second is oddly expressed: we hope that all communities will be able to cope with the impact of climate change. Low carbon ones will have the satisfaction of contributing less to the problems.)

Qu. 2. How important are the following in planning for clean, inclusive recovery and growth in our region?

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
Reduce the use of cars to minimise climate change	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve and protect nature and wildlife	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve access to green space and nature	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide more affordable homes and workplaces	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve air quality	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support regeneration of places and help	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
them adapt to change					
Provide enough space for businesses to innovate and grow	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve access to local services close to peoples homes	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Make sure everyone can enjoy a safe and healthy neighbourhood	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide enough housing, jobs and infrastructure to support a growing population	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you selected 'other', please write your answer in the space below

BWA answer: all these are very important.

Qu 3. What features and facilities do you consider to be most important to access within easy reach (15 minute walk) of your home?

One idea that has emerged from lockdown is the '15 minute neighbourhood', where the things that you need are within a walkable distance from home. This principle could apply to a town, city neighbourhood, suburb or village.

Important features that could be considered part of the 15 minute neighbourhood might include:

- local shops, schools and services
- green spaces, planting and trees
- places for social interaction and play
- places to work

- space for walking and cycling
- well designed buildings

BWA answer:

The planning system could and should give everyone easy access to:

- outside public space with a children's playground and seats for social interaction
- accessible green space
- attractive and safe walking routes
- attractive and safe cycling routes
- bus/tram stop/station for good public transport to other essential facilities.

Planners should also seek as far as is possible to ensure the following are within walking distance:

- shop for daily essentials, with a post office counter
- nursery and primary school
- indoor space for social interaction
- doctor and dentist.

Qu 4. Which of these are the most important when deciding where new development should be limited?

Please rank in order of importance, with one being the most important to protect / avoid. You can rank as many options as you like. For example, if you want to select your three most important, rank using numbers 1-3.

- Significant heritage features and assets
- Special landscapes
- Wildlife conservation areas
- The existing Green Belt extent
- Quality farmland
- Flood risk areas
- Other (please specify)
- If you selected 'other', please write your answer in the space below

BWA answer: it will be important to avoid development where there is a severe risk, or it will increase the risk, of flooding. The other categories will need to be taken into account, in accordance with national planning guidance, along with other factors when considering development proposals. The existing Green Belt extent is least relevant: it requires review.

Qu. 5. How important are the following when considering opportunities for new development?

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
Focus new growth close to public	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
transport corridors					
Focus new growth close to town centres and employment areas	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Review the Green Belt whilst maintaining its role and function	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prioritise areas where local renewable energy is possible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create mixed neighbourhoods bringing employment and housing closer together	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safeguard existing employment areas in anticipation of recovery	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prioritise areas that support improvements to wildlife and nature	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you selected 'other', please write your answer in the space below

Qu 6. How important are the following considerations for reducing the carbon footprint of new development?

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
Access to sustainable travel options	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Efficient buildings that reduce the need for heating	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local renewable energy generation and use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Space for clean, green businesses to grow	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reuse of previously developed land and buildings	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using technology to reduce the carbon footprint of construction	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you selected 'other', please write your answer in the space below

Qu 7. How important are the following considerations for adapting to the impacts of climate change?

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
Planting and tree cover to provide shading, cooling and shelter	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flood defences and water management to protect against flooding	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Building design and insulation that adapts to	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
extreme temperatures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you selected 'other', please write your answer in the space below

Qu 8. How important are the following considerations for planning in response to the ecological emergency?

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
Protect and improve natural areas for wildlife to thrive and recover	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide green spaces and planting in new developments	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide gardens or access to private outdoor spaces in all new homes	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Plant more trees on streets and in public spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve water quality to support river and marine ecosystems	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve the variety and extent of habitats to support biodiversity	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you selected 'other', please write your answer in the space below

9. How important are the following to ensure new development can support green travel choices?

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
Ensure new development is close to public transport connections	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensure new development is close to walking and cycling connections	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve the quality, reliability and frequency of public transport	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide electric vehicle charging points	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create more low traffic streets	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve digital connectivity to support home working	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restrict parking to discourage car use and make efficient use of land	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you selected 'other', please write your answer in the space below