

Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) supports the improvements being proposed to high streets, but urges they must be seen as more than temporary interventions.

We welcome the proposed changes to local high streets and neighbourhood roads using Active Travel Fund grants.

Improvements for walking

The changes should be designed to make those places more welcoming, safe, convenient and inclusive for those on foot.

We believe it is very important that local neighbourhoods should be tested against the [Indicators for Healthy Streets](#), including: having clean air, feeling safe and not being too noisy.

To do this we believe it should be a priority to: remove through-traffic and congestion; widen pavements; and provide places to cross the road, to stop and rest, and for shade and shelter.

In general, we encourage the use of filtered permeability rather than one-way streets for controlling traffic. Also, we prefer full closure to timed closure of through routes to avoid doubt about whether traffic will be present. However, in order to gather local support, the plans must go further than simply stopping traffic: there must also be improvements in the public realm.

Community engagement

We support the intention for greater community consultation and involvement in these schemes, in the expectation that their success will depend largely on how the doubts of a few people are sensitively addressed.

We understand the current round of measures will be implemented initially in a temporary fashion, so that their effects can be assessed.

We have the following concerns.

1) The problems of the first round of Emergency Active Travel Fund high street interventions may be repeated. For instance:

- Temporary barriers were seen as inconvenient and unsightly and sometimes moved by local detractors.
- Tables and chairs were encouraged outside without leaving adequate passage for accessibility. Even temporary measures must be fully navigable by those with disabilities. The council's engagement needs to include engagement with individual businesses that want to spill out on to the street, so that this can be done in a way that meets everyone's needs.

2) If further funding is not forthcoming, the necessary improvements to make the measures permanent will not be possible. When announcing the scheme designs, we urge that it should be clearly stated what will happen temporarily, but also to show how the measures will be made permanent if they prove to be successful. It is important to set expectations in this way.

For example, permanent changes should include removal of unnecessary ramps and kerbs that interrupt pedestrian movement, especially for those using wheelchairs, mobility vehicles or children's buggies. Permanent measures should also include planting of street trees or use of other greenery whenever possible.

3) Whilst the benefits of the changes have been explained clearly in the online engagement, the changes should also be explained in the context of Bristol's wider transport strategy.

Bristol Walking Alliance

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