

***Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) welcomes these proposals to enhance the environment around Bedminster Green. However, pedestrian routes don't seem to have been given fair consideration in the overall plans.***

### **Summary**

- We generally welcome the improvements along the Malago River.
- Pedestrian links to East Street and to bus stops are not as direct as they could be.
- It is very disappointing that direct pedestrian access to Bedminster Station is no longer part of the plans.
- The pedestrian route northwards along Clarke Street has not been given the attention it deserves.
- We prefer Option 1 for access to Windmill Hill via the railway bridge.
- The intersections of pedestrian and cycle routes need further attention.

### **Key pedestrian routes**

In the Bedminster Green Framework document of February 2019, key pedestrian routes were identified (pg. 75) that linked Bedminster Green: to Bedminster Station; to the city centre and Bedminster Parade along Clarke Street; and along three different routes to get to East Street.

We were disappointed that the current consultation document does not, as the Framework did, show the pedestrian network, and the proposed pedestrian routes are not as direct as they might be, and therefore not as legible and accessible as they might be. We expand on this in the sections below.

We do, at least, welcome the improvements to the pedestrian environment along Dalby Avenue, including the pocket park, soft landscaping, 3m pavement width and continuous pavements at junctions.

### **Access to East Street**

It is not clear what route pedestrians should take to reach East Street from Bedminster Green. There are three proposed pedestrian crossings of Dalby Avenue: halfway between Church Lane and Little Paradise, opposite Stafford Street, and towards St Catherine's Place. However, Stafford Street is proposed as an unsegregated main cycle route, so is a poor choice for also being the main pedestrian route.

The possibility of a new pedestrian route along the line of Mill Lane, as proposed in plans by the developers of Plot 2, would be a much better choice. An improved route through to St Catherine's Place is also to be welcomed. Both of these would provide good pedestrian links to East Street.

## **Bus routes and bus stops**

With both inbound and outbound bus routes now proposed to go along Malago Road and Dalby Avenue, the position of bus stops becomes of great importance both for the developments around Bedminster Green and to allow easy access to and from East Street.

The offset positioning of an outbound bus stop opposite St Catherine's Place and an inbound bus stop between Little Paradise and Stafford Street is particularly poor. It means that the most direct routes for pedestrians trying to access either East Street or Windmill Hill are different from each bus stop, reducing legibility of the area.

An improved pedestrian route through St Catherine's Place or a route through Plot 2 along the line of Mill Lane would suggest the inbound bus stop be sited between these two preferred routes.

## **Access to Bedminster Station**

Pedestrian access to Bedminster Station was acknowledged as poor in the Bedminster Green Framework document of February 2019, and it was suggested that development provided the way to improve this. It proposed the creation of a prominent frontage and accessible entrance to the station with a direct link to East Street.

It is therefore very disappointing that direct pedestrian access to Bedminster Station is no longer part of the plans. Even if not possible in the timescale of the current proposals, we strongly recommend this possibility is kept as an option in the development of Plot 5. It means that, in the meantime, improving the pedestrian access to the station under the railway bridge towards Windmill Hill becomes essential.

## **Walking routes to the city**

When BWA commented on the initial ideas for Bedminster Green improvements in March 2020, we advocated improvements to the three main walking routes from the area into the city: crossing East Street towards Gaol Ferry Bridge; via Clarke Street and Stillhouse Lane towards Bedminster Bridge; and via Whitehouse Lane, Whitehouse Street and York Road towards the Langton Street (Banana) Bridge to Temple Meads.

As discussed above, improved pedestrian routes to East Street and beyond have not been clearly identified in the current proposals. Neither has an improved route been proposed along Clarke Street and Stillhouse Lane towards Bedminster Bridge and the city centre – that has been left dependent on proposals for Plot 3, with no commitment to taking it beyond that. We believe that the strategic CIL funding allocated for improvements to this area should also be used to improve this important route.

We do, at least, welcome the widening of the southern pavement along Whitehouse Lane on the route towards Temple Meads, necessary to compensate for the loss of pavement for the proposed cycle way on the northern side of the road.

## **Motor traffic reduction**

When BWA commented on the initial ideas for Bedminster Green improvements in March 2020, we suggested closing some roads to motor vehicles to enhance opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport in the area.

Making Hereford Street and Whitehouse Lane one-way is a small step towards traffic reduction.

Even better is **Option 1** (our preference) of closing the Windmill Hill railway bridge to motor traffic, enabling widening of pavements on both sides under the bridge on this key pedestrian route to the station.

Option 2, of allowing one-way traffic and two-way cycling under the bridge, means pedestrian access is still restricted to a 2m-wide pavement and adds greater complexity in turning movements for both motor vehicles and cycles that could confuse pedestrians crossing at either end of the bridge.

During discussions with officers, we learned that it was possible there would be a third option, of adopting neither of the two options shown in the consultation and continuing with two-way traffic under the railway bridge. We would strongly object to this given the existing inadequate pavements under the bridge, further limited by handrails, and exacerbated by the elimination of the possibility of improving access to Bedminster Station via a separate entrance.

In the current consultation, the option diagrams for the footways and cycle ways near this junction show a potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists in some places. In Option 1, a zebra crossing is shown for pedestrians to cross the cycle way going under the railway bridge. We believe a similar zebra should be shown for pedestrians to cross the cycle way alongside Whitehouse Lane (in both options) and for pedestrians to cross both the road and cycle way heading towards Windmill Hill (in Option 2).

We look forward to being able to comment on the more detailed plans for the area, when they become available.

### **River restoration and landscaping**

We support the proposals for the restoration of the Malago River and the other enhancements to the environment around Bedminster Green.

We have no strong preferences between the two options presented for accessing the amphitheatre. Any option must provide for access using wheelchairs or other mobility aids and for those who cannot manage steps. We believe consultation with disability groups will help determine the best approach.

The removal of trees should be kept to a minimum. Compensation in terms of new native tree planting should be within the same overall area to retain as far as possible the benefits of reduction in air pollution, summer shade and ecological benefit that trees provide. In particular, there should be planting of appropriately sized trees as well as other flora along the newly created river banks to improve the ecology and biodiversity of the area.

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1 March 2021

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