

Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) supports improvements to Concorde Way including potential route changes between Muller Road and Constable Road. We give our opinion on the route options and list the improvements we would like to see in any future design proposals.

We use 'walking' and 'pedestrian' to include all people moving at walking speed, including those who use wheelchairs, mobility scooters or other aids to movement.

Context

Concorde Way provides an important route connecting the city centre with the northern fringe for travel to work, school, shopping and leisure. Pedestrians use all sections of the route, usually for shorter journeys. Improvements should anticipate future growth in both walking and cycling.

Between Muller Road and Constable Road, the pedestrian part of Concorde Way currently consists mainly of pavements alongside Muller Road, Petherbridge Way, Dovercourt Road and Constable Road, with a short section that is shared use with cyclists between Petherbridge Way and Dovercourt Road. The current pavements are adequate, but suffer from uncontrolled pavement parking, particularly along Constable Road, including over the railway bridge.

The early engagement consultation offers the prospect of providing an off-road route, closer to the railway line, between Petherbridge Way and Constable Road.

There is already a new housing development planned (see outline planning application 22/00632/PB) at the southern end of Dovercourt Road. This includes access roads between the housing and the railway line. The planning application mentions the desire to re-route Concorde Way to the east of the development, and while this application has no specific plans for a through pedestrian/cycle route, it safeguards the alignment for future implementation. Road access to the housing development is planned from Dovercourt Road, though the local residents group has objected and suggested it should instead be via Petherbridge Way.

Route Options and Improvements

In the Transport Assessment associated with the outline planning application for housing (see above), Bristol City Council states the long-standing aspiration to provide an off-road route for Concorde Way between Petherbridge Way and Constable Road.

For this section, there is the possibility of routing pedestrians and cyclists (or perhaps just pedestrians) away from Dovercourt Road in a more direct route closer to the railway line.

1. New route off-road to west of railway line

This option would create a new route through the grounds of the Dovercourt Road housing development, with at least pedestrian (and perhaps cycle) access from Petherbridge Way. It is hoped this would be possible without removing any more trees, though any new route should be segregated from housing access roads.

North of the housing development, any new route that did not cross the railway line would have to pass between the Dovercourt Road allotments and the railway line, almost inevitably requiring removal of some existing mature trees. To reach Constable Road, a new route would then have to pass through the former gasometer site, which is potentially where a new railway station could be built. While this would provide direct access to any future station, it might put Concorde Way users in conflict with station users.

2. New route off-road crossing to east of railway line

This option, like option 1, would go through the grounds of the housing development from Petherbridge Way. However, it would then make use of the existing footbridge over the railway line to join up with a new section on the east side of the railway line that would directly connect with the existing Concorde Way crossing on Constable Road, so eliminating the on-road section on Constable Road.

The route on the east side of the line would go through scrubland under the power cables, so would not involve removing any trees. However, for pedestrian accessibility (and if also to be used by cycles) there would need to be a new ramp up to the footbridge on the west side of the railway line.

This is the indicative future alignment shown in the housing development transport assessment.

3. Existing route

The early engagement also suggests the option of leaving Concorde Way along its existing route. For pedestrians, this means continuing to use the existing pavements along Dovercourt Road and Constable Road. However, if the new entrance to the housing development is on Dovercourt Road, this introduces a road crossing with limited visibility of emerging vehicles. It should at least require a continuous pavement along Dovercourt Road with traffic calming for vehicles exiting from the housing development.

Measures must also be taken to limit pavement parking along Dovercourt Road and Constable Road, the latter being particularly bad and so obstructing pedestrian access along Concorde Way. If improvements to the existing cycle route involve limiting parking along Dovercourt Road, this has the potential to make the pavement parking problem worse.

Muller Road and Petherbridge Way

The section of Concorde Way along the east side of Muller Road, between the signalised crossing and Petherbridge Way, is shared use between pedestrians and cyclists. This is unsatisfactory, particularly given that it forms part of the pedestrian route to Fairfield School.

It is not clear how cyclists should use the section of Concorde Way along Petherbridge Way. The pavements are too narrow for shared use. The transition for cyclists going north from the pavement on Muller Road on reaching Petherbridge Way is not marked.

The junction on Petherbridge Way at the entrance to the Aldi store is dangerous for pedestrians to cross and has no dropped kerbs. It is a candidate for being a continuous pavement, or at least requiring a traffic calming table.

Additional Considerations

After dark, some pedestrians will avoid routes away from roads, even if lit, due to safety concerns. If an off-road route is provided, it should be lit, as is the route north of Constable Road, but it will also be important to retain the existing lit pavement along Dovercourt Road as an alternative.

Any improvements should meet the standards set out in LTN 1/20. That includes separating walking from cycling with kerbs or level differences, even in routes that are away from streets.

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