

**Objection by Bristol Walking Alliance on Avon Crescent re:
22/05943/X | Application for the removal of conditions 4, 10 and 13
following grant of planning application 16/05853/X for the variation
of condition number 18 - Phase 1 - 13/05648/FB**



Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) objects to Avon Crescent being returned to the configuration it had prior to the closure of Cumberland Road with no consideration being given to pedestrian routes.

We agree that the original proposal for Avon Crescent to be shared space is wrong. But simply removing the original conditions, as set out in the current proposal, would result in a situation worse than that proposed in 18/02968/X, which was itself refused because of the lack of safety for pedestrians. We suggest that the temporary restrictions that have made Avon Crescent into a cul-de-sac for motor vehicles should be made permanent.

Avon Crescent forms part of the popular pedestrian route around the harbour, either via Underfall Yard or, when that is closed, along the whole length of Avon Crescent. The only pavement, on the east side of the road, is narrow. In addition, the shared pedestrian/cycle route to Ashton Avenue Bridge, which in turn connects to Southville, Ashton Gate and Ashton Court, emerges onto the west side of Avon Crescent with no infrastructure to support crossing the road.

Original proposal

In the original planning application 13/05648/FB, associated with the introduction of the Metrobus route to Ashton Vale, it was proposed that Avon Crescent should become a shared space that was one-way for motor vehicles (towards Cumberland Road) with a contraflow cycleway. Within the shared space, four pedestrian crossings of Avon Crescent were to be demarcated using pennant stone paving. The junction of Avon Crescent with McAdam Way was to be narrowed with tree planting in this area.

One-way introduced

A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was made to introduce one-way operation of Avon Crescent for motor vehicles and allow a contraflow entrance for cycles from Cumberland Road. However, this did not address the safety issues that the original proposal set out to solve.

Refused revision

A proposed revision 18/02968/X to the original application was made for Avon Crescent on the grounds that cost overruns on other aspects of the scheme would not allow the full scheme to be implemented. This revision retained the one-way flow of motor traffic with cycle contraflow but removed the 'shared space' surface treatment. It added an uncontrolled crossing point for pedestrians at the Cumberland Road end of Avon Crescent, a speed table to slow traffic for safer crossing where the shared pedestrian/cycle route emerges and an extended footway area between Avon Crescent and McAdam Way.

This application was refused on the grounds that "The proposed development would be harmful to conditions of highway safety, especially for pedestrians". In particular, objectors were concerned that due to the continued one-way motor traffic it would not achieve the stated aims of cutting vehicle speeds and vehicle volumes.

Temporary restrictions

When Cumberland Road had to be closed in order to repair the river bank, temporary restrictions were introduced at the junction with Cumberland Road which made Avon Crescent into a cul-de-sac for motor vehicles but allowed cycles to enter or leave at this end. The associated lack of through traffic has made the pedestrian route along Avon Crescent and crossing the road safer and more pleasant.

Current proposal

The current planning application 22/05943/X asks for three conditions associated with the original application 13/05648/FB to be removed. This would mean, when the current temporary restrictions are removed, Avon Crescent would again become one-way for motor vehicles travelling towards Cumberland Road. There would be no shared space. No measures would limit the speed of vehicles entering from the Merchants Road direction. There would be no support for pedestrians trying to cross the road on the route via Ashton Avenue Bridge.

Our objection

Bristol Walking Alliance objects to the consequences of the current proposal.

We agree that the original proposal for Avon Crescent to be shared space, with pedestrians and traffic at the same level, is wrong. Shared space has rightly been deprecated because of the danger of mixing pedestrians and motor traffic. It is particularly difficult for the visually impaired who cannot easily detect when they may walk in front of moving vehicles.

However, the removal of constraints as set out in the current proposal would result in a situation worse than that proposed in 18/02968/X, which (as described above) was itself refused because of the lack of safety for pedestrians.

In addition, the lack of tree planting, if Condition 4 is dropped, will be detrimental to the improvement in air quality and the provision of shade to mitigate excess heat in the summer.

Our suggestion

We suggest that the temporary restrictions that have made Avon Crescent into a cul-de-sac for motor vehicles should be made permanent. This would be a simple and cost-effective solution that has been proven to work during the many months that the temporary restrictions have been in place.

By preventing motor vehicles from leaving Avon Crescent into Cumberland Road, and by restricting the width of the entry/exit point into McAdam Way, the number and speed of vehicles would be reduced sufficiently to allow pedestrians to cross the road easily. There is already good access for motor vehicles to the western part of Cumberland Road, in via Ashton Avenue or out via Smeaton Road.

Bristol Walking Alliance
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