

**Objection by Bristol Walking Alliance to proposed installation of Pulse Smart Hub advertising units in Bristol City Centre and associated advertising approval**



***Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) objects to the proposed installation of 3 Pulse Smart Hub units and their associated advertising to the detriment of the safety and amenity of Bristol City Centre.***

The proposed Pulse Smart Hub units are essentially similar to the previous BT Street Hub units which were proposed in 2021-2022 and refused permission by the Bristol City Council. We believe the same reasons for refusal should apply to these applications.

We object to these installations for their obstructive siting and their visual effect on safety and the public realm. Each of these general objections is outlined in the following sections. Specific issues with individual sites are also noted.

The applicant appears to have chosen sites that correspond to those for which previous permission was requested by Euro Payphone Ltd and granted on appeal in 2018. However, those applications were for call boxes rather than for what are primarily advertising signs, and did not present the same issues of public safety. The current applications must be considered on their different implications.

Because of the prevalence of mobile phones, the demand for static communication terminals is negligible. For the phone and tablet functions of the proposed units, their use will be affected by lack of shelter and privacy for the user, and by adjacent road noise. These and the other functions of the proposed units are also likely to attract anti-social behaviour.

### **Obstruction**

The reason for the applications is primarily for the advertising revenue they could bring to the applicant. Their siting would be on busy pavements in the city centre where pedestrian numbers are high and where walking is encouraged as a sustainable mode of travel. Bristol Walking Alliance objects to the installation of any unnecessary pavement furniture on the functional grounds that it limits the free flow of pedestrian movement and is detrimental to safety. Pavement obstacles are a particular hazard to those with impaired vision.

The submitted plans are misleading in the amount of space they would occupy. The phone and tablet panel is situated on the edge of the monolith, so anyone using the phone or tablet panel will occupy additional pavement space, adding a further (say) 0.5m to the effective width of the monolith. It should also be noted that the locations (northing and easting) given in the application forms for each of these sites is inaccurate by many metres.

### **Visual impact**

We also object to these monoliths on appearance grounds. Their excessive size is due purely to their advertising potential, since the communication functionality could be provided on a simple pole.

Advertising, by its nature, is designed to grab the attention of those who are sighted. It can therefore distract the attention of pavement users, or road users, presenting a potential safety hazard to those navigating their way along, across or beside roads. This may be particularly true for modern, brightly illuminated, changing display panels.

Given that their key visual impact is the presentation of advertising, the excessive size of these units would be detrimental to the overall streetscape and to the amenity and enjoyment of the urban scene for all. This is particularly the case when sited in conservation areas.

### **Specific additional issues with individual sites**

#### **24/03082/F**

The unit will be **detrimental to safety** because:

- It will present a pavement obstruction.
- It will be a hazard for pedestrians with visual impairment.
- The remaining space (allowing for space taken by any user of the phone/tablet) will be too constrained (less than 3m) for pedestrians and cyclists to safely pass each other on the shared use pedestrian/cycle footway on which it would be sited.
- It would potentially block the mutual view of pedestrian and cyclists having to share the footway, leading to greater risk of collisions.
- It will be a distraction for drivers on the road approaching a very busy junction.

#### **24/03084/F**

The unit will be **detrimental to safety** because:

- It will present a pavement obstruction on a shared use pedestrian/cycle footway.
- It will be a hazard for pedestrians with visual impairment.
- It would potentially block the mutual view of pedestrian and cyclists having to share the footway, leading to greater risk of collisions.
- It will be a distraction for drivers on the road approaching traffic signals.

#### **24/03086/F**

The unit will be **detrimental to safety** because:

- It will present a pavement obstruction on one of the busiest footways in the city.
- It will be a hazard for pedestrians with visual impairment.
- It will be a distraction for drivers on the adjacent road, particularly where it is important for them to have undistracted sight of pedestrians using the nearby zebra crossing.

In addition, it will cause a **loss of visual amenity** in a conservation area.

### **Advertising**

We also object to the 3 associated advertising consent applications:

**24/03083/A, 24/03085/A, 24/03087/A**

As well as objecting to the siting and visual impact of these units, we believe Bristol City Council should also refuse to approve the use of advertising on these units if such advertising would not have deemed assent. In particular, the advertisements would be illuminated and would appear on more than one face of the unit. One unit would be in a conservation area.

Bristol Walking Alliance

29 September 2024

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