

Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) welcomes the Harbour Place Shaping Strategy (HPSS). It provides a detailed framework for the future development of the harbour and its immediate surroundings. In addition to leisure uses, we would like to see more consideration given to pedestrian travel routes in the area. Our comments highlight proposals that we welcome as well as those that we believe need more consideration.

General Comments

We support the overall vision for the future of the Harbour and appreciate the detailed consideration provided in the strategy documents.

As well as its role as a tourist and leisure destination and a means of providing water transport to connect destinations in the city centre, it also contains key routes for both leisure and travel walking.

The leisure pedestrian walkway around the harbour is very popular and well-used. We welcome all actions that enhance this route, reduce bottlenecks and improve wayfinding. The presentation of proposals for the various areas goes into a lot of detail, but may miss some overriding issues. For example, the provision of publicly accessible toilets and seating at reasonable intervals around the harbour walkway needs better consideration. This should encompass the needs of disabled people and those with young children for whom much of the harbour walkway is attractive for providing a level and accessible leisure route.

The 20-year vision expressed in HPSS appears to centre on the harbour as a destination, but the harbour also provides a means of through travel, particularly for pedestrians. There are very well-used pedestrian travel routes along and across the harbour area that unfortunately receive minimal attention in these proposals. In many cases the bridges across the harbour and New Cut act as barriers and are inadequate for the existing, let alone future, pedestrian flows. This is particularly the case when they have to be shared with cycling, scooting etc. Please see our comments below on Gaol Ferry Bridge, Prince Street Bridge and Pero's Bridge. Any 20-year plan for the harbour must consider how these bottlenecks can be eased by providing new crossings.

For both leisure and travel purposes, we would want to see estimates of current and proposed pedestrian traffic to enable better planning around the removal of bottlenecks and the provision of appropriate facilities.

In the following sections, we provide some comments on each of the documents which form the HPSS, with reference where possible to the numbered interventions described within the documents.

At the end we draw attention to some further points relevant to HPSS from our 50 Ways document that looks at general interventions that would benefit pedestrians in Bristol.

Baltic Wharf Plan

BWP2, BWP4: We welcome public realm improvements to both of the walkways at Avon Quay and Nova Scotia Place. This is a location that is crying out for better toilet provision.

BWP3: The route around the western end of the harbour, which includes Avon Crescent, needs improvement. We welcome the proposal to widen pavements, separate cycling provision and introduce clear wayfinding. We hope there will be close collaboration with the planning for Western Harbour, which includes this area within its remit. It is not clear whether this HPSS or the forthcoming Western Harbour masterplan is intended to provide the definitive approach.

BWP6: There is an opportunity to improve the accessibility of Vauxhall Bridge as well as its connectivity to Baltic Wharf.

Hotwell Road Plan

HRP1: The Quayside Walkway between the Pump House and Mardyke Ferry Landing is currently shared between pedestrians and cyclists, to the detriment of both. We ask that an alternative route be found for cyclists to allow greater scope for the public realm in this section to be improved with greenery and seating as proposed.

HRT2: The part of the leisure route around the harbour between the Pump House and Underfall Yard, including Merchant's Road Bridge, is narrow and has poor signage. We would expect this to be properly addressed in the Western Harbour masterplan, though it receives minimal attention in their current consultation.

Spike Island Plan

SIP1, SIP2: This section of the harbour walkway around the Marina and Albion Yard needs clearer delineation and segregation from motor vehicle movement.

Wapping Wharf Plan

WWP3: A better signposted and lit connection between Museum Street and the Chocolate Path would be welcome, especially if it includes a crossing of the railway tracks towards the Buttery as shown on the associated plan.

This item mentions wider ambitions to improve north-south connections over the New Cut. We have maintained for several years that there should be an additional bridge over the New Cut to relieve the pressure on Gaol Ferry Bridge and to enable segregation of pedestrians and cyclists at this crossing point.

WWP5: We support the proposal to integrate the reopened railway lines to create level surfaces to improve accessibility and safety. This is an important issue and the intervention should apply along all Princes Wharf and Wapping Wharf.

WWP4, WWT3: Prince Street Bridge should be closed to motor traffic. That would enable proper segregation between pedestrians and cyclists on each half of the bridge, which in turn would allow adequate space at the bridge entry to accommodate the large number of people who have to pass this bottleneck in their route around the harbour.

WWT5: There is an urgent need to introduce segregation for pedestrians and cyclists crossing at Gaol Ferry Bridge. This can only be achieved by commissioning an additional bridge along this stretch of the New Cut.

Canon's Marsh Plan

CMC4: We welcome the proposal for a tree-lined waterside walkway around the perimeter of the amphitheatre and the integration of a new ferry landing here.

CMP1: Canon's Road could be largely pedestrianised. We support it being made greener and with active frontages to surrounding buildings. It is currently an unwelcoming space for pedestrians going along what is a secondary pedestrian desire line.

CMT4: Pero's Bridge is another bottleneck which cannot support cyclists as well as pedestrians. What about adding a dedicated cycle route from Prince Street to Anchor Road via Assembly Rooms Lane, over a new bridge, and then into Canon's Road?

City and Backs Plan

CBP1, CBP2, CBP3: Improvements to these three walkways (Bathurst Basin, Welsh Back, Phoenix Wharf) are welcome. Within a 20-year perspective, it should also be possible to envisage an additional pedestrian/cycle bridge crossing the harbour between King Street and Redcliffe Quay.

CBC2: We welcome the proposed water-level walkway beneath Bristol Bridge connecting Welsh Back to Castle Park, which will provide an alternative quiet route avoiding the signalised crossing of the road above the bridge.

Waterspace Plan

See comments on *CMC4* (amphitheatre ferry landing stage) and *CBC2* (Castle Park water-level walkway) above.

TQW3: We welcome the proposed Floating Harbour Walkway connecting Temple Meads ferry landing to Totterdown Basin. However, as we have previously pointed out, this route cannot safely be shared with cyclists, as was originally proposed in a planning application in 2019.

Also, it is not just aspirational, but essential, that there should be a pedestrian bridge linking the Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus to Avon Street and the associated academic buildings and student accommodation on each side of the harbour.

The transport options provided by ferry services are highly complementary to walking as a means of travel, and we are pleased to see that improvement to the accessibility of ferry landings is proposed.

50 Ways to Better Walking

Bristol Walking Alliance has recently produced the second edition of '*50 Ways to Better Walking*' which proposes a range of measures to improve the pedestrian environment in Bristol (see <https://bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk/50-ways/>).

We would draw your attention to the following points, extracted from the list of 50, that are relevant to the Harbour Place Shaping Strategy:

6. Audit and upgrade pedestrian routes across the Feeder Canal, River Avon, River Avon New Cut and the Floating Harbour
8. Ensure footways are wide enough to provide safe and convenient access for people using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and walking aids, and people with pushchairs
9. Audit walking routes, providing dropped kerbs where they are missing, alternatives to steps where possible, and handrails where there are steps
10. Work with visually impaired people to audit pedestrian routes and crossings, ensuring compliance with national guidance for audible beeps, rotating cones and tactile paving
11. Work with equalities groups when developing transport schemes and making changes, including temporary changes, that affect the pedestrian environment
18. Audit and improve the provision of fully accessible toilets for public use in areas of high pedestrian footfall
33. Position street furniture such as benches, signs and lampposts, to maximise the useable footway width and remove redundant street furniture
34. Segregate pedestrians from bicycles and e-scooters on key walking routes
37. Ensure key walking routes are well-lit with sufficient oversight, and prioritise 'active frontage' in planning applications
40. Protect and plant street trees, and provide and maintain other green infrastructure e.g. parklets
43. Work with communities, developers and businesses to improve streetscapes by providing benches, lighting, interpretation boards, and public art as appropriate
46. Include walking destinations and timings on information panels at key points in the city centre and in neighbourhoods, building on the work of Bristol Legible City

Bristol Walking Alliance
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