

***Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) would like to offer the following input to current policy-making on Parking and Kerbside Strategy. For pedestrians, we see the most important outcomes of such a strategy being: (i) reduced footway obstructions, (ii) better safety and accessibility and (iii) improved health.***

## **Introduction**

As a group looking to improve the walking environment for pedestrians, BWA is pleased to see policy being developed in this area. We would like to offer the following comments as our initial input to the discussions currently underway by the Parking and Kerbside Strategy Task and Finish Group of the Transport and Connectivity Policy Committee. We have focused more on the Kerbside Strategy than the Parking Strategy.

## **Scope**

The highway has many uses: this strategy must set priorities for the use of the part of the highway that is the road space next to the kerb.

The scope of the Parking and Kerbside Strategy (P&KS) Task and Finish Group [1] is to develop policy around:

- a) Management of on-street, off-street and residents parking schemes
- b) Improving conditions for different kerbside uses
- c) Articulating a vision for kerbside uses
- d) Reallocation of kerbside space in city centre, strategic corridors and residential areas
- e) Improving the accessibility of the kerbside
- f) Financial and enforcement implications

We think this is a good scope to start from. We would however add a fourth category to (d) - local shopping centres.

## **Approach**

According to the Bristol Walking and Cycling Index 2023 [2]:

- 74% of Bristol residents want nicer places along streets to stop and rest, including more benches and trees
- 69% of Bristol residents want fewer cars parked on the pavement
- only 22% of Bristol residents think that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles
- 65% of Bristol residents support banning vehicles parking in the pavement

In a later section we look at how other councils have set their priorities.

We suggest a Parking Strategy should review how to adapt and improve Bristol's existing Residents Parking Schemes, look at best practice elsewhere, and consider how RPSs should relate to School Street schemes and Liveable Neighbourhood schemes.

We would suggest a Kerbside Strategy which:

- distinguishes between different types of place
- has specific actions, but does not have an unmanageably long list of them
- goes some way towards considering how they could be funded and implemented
- is enforceable, such as through area parking schemes.

In our detailed comments we look at how we would wish to prioritise use of the kerbside.

## Detailed comments

The highway is public space mainly dedicated to **travel**, including footways for pedestrians, cycle lanes, bus lanes and bus stops, delivery services and other private vehicles. But the highway also supports **public services** such as drainage and waste disposal and more generally providing **public open space** that, through trees, greenery, seating etc, can provide a healthier city environment.

We group our comments to roughly align with the scope of the P&KS Group's scope/remit.

### Management of parking

One of the biggest problems for pedestrians is the prevalence of **pavement parking**, where motor vehicles obstruct the footway. We are still waiting for central government to decide whether general powers to prohibit pavement parking should be provided to local authorities, and this has meant that pavement parking in itself is not within scope of the current P&KS Group.

However, we note that in streets where specific on-street parking places are marked out, which includes Residents Parking Scheme areas, the prevalence of pavement parking appears to be considerably reduced. We therefore **support the expansion of Residents Parking Schemes** to more areas.

Parking permit charges should relate to the pollution potential of a vehicle in order to reduce the **health impact** of polluting vehicles on residents. Pollution can be caused by emissions from fossil fuels or by tyre wear which is greater for heavier vehicles.

Parking permits should not be given to vehicles that exceed the width of a parking space to discourage parking with wheels on the footway.

The use of front gardens for motor vehicle parking should be discouraged. It introduces additional hardstanding with implications for rain run-off and heat retention; it takes up kerbside space for entry that could be used for other purposes; and it is an additional crossing hazard to pedestrians moving along the footway.

Importantly, the management of parking requires **enforcement**, whose funding should be an essential part of the proceeds from parking charges. Physical barriers may be necessary to control parking in places that are prone to illegal parking.

### Use of kerbside by vehicles

Apart from the need to allow passage for travel, there are various reasons why vehicles may need to stop or park at the kerbside.

Transport services including buses, taxis, delivery services and waste collection services need to temporarily stop to allow passengers to alight or embark, or goods and parcels to be delivered, or bins to be emptied.

Parking is required for shared transport modes such as shared cycles, e-scooters and car clubs. We have advocated for many years that it is **inappropriate for space on the footway to be used for new transport services**, such as parked e-scooters, when they are not intended for use on the footway and can often cause an obstruction to pedestrians.

**Obstructive parking**, such as parking on pavements, parking on corners and parking across dropped kerbs can make the highway unsafe, or even impassable, for pedestrians.

Parking of private motor vehicles on the highway in residential areas should be managed through registered disabled parking spaces and Residents Parking Schemes. Parking management using regulated spaces will become even more important as on-street electric vehicle charging points are introduced more widely. The revenue generated by Residents' Parking Schemes, through permits and penalty charges, should enable greater enforcement against inconsiderate and dangerous parking.

### **Use of kerbside for other public benefit**

As well as the use of the highway for vehicles and travel, the public space it provides should explicitly be configured to help the well-being of people and their environment.

For those living in homes with no private outdoor space, the highway can provide **space for outdoor play**. Playing Out already advocates for residents to be able to close streets to vehicles for limited periods to allow this to happen.

For those walking to school, **School Streets** help to prevent motor vehicles from causing a safety hazard, and from contributing to air pollution, during school arrival and departure times. We would like to see more extensive support for **school walking routes** leading to and from schools.

In some places, footways are unnecessarily obstructed by **waste and recycling bins**. Where it is not possible for bins to be stored off the highway, suitably designed enclosures for shared bins should be provided at the kerbside where they can be easily accessed and emptied.

**Street trees** and other greenery can reduce pollution and heat stress, making it more likely that people will walk or cycle. Street trees in footways can face issues with underground services, lack of pavement width and closeness to houses. A footway buildout with a tree can allow a bigger tree, calm traffic and offer a safer crossing point between parked cars.

By providing **green spaces** and **seating** it also becomes a place where people are more inclined to stop and meet, contributing to a better sense of community. When space allows, parklets may be better placed towards the rear of footways so it is not necessary to sit next to passing traffic.

Increased use of sustainable urban drainage systems along highways can also help to reduce excess run-off and flooding from rainstorms, and contribute to greenery and corridors for wildlife.

### **Reallocation of kerbside space**

Our suggested priorities for use of kerbside space are as follows for each type of area (adding local shopping centres as a distinct type).

#### **City Centre:**

1. Widened footways where space is insufficient for the volume of pedestrians
2. Access to public transport, such as bus stops and modal interchanges
3. Time-limited space for disabled access, deliveries and servicing
4. Street trees and other greenery in footway buildouts

5. Places to stop and rest with addition of seating

**Local shopping centres:**

1. Widened footways where space is insufficient for the volume of pedestrians
2. Off-footway parking for bikes and e-scooters
3. Footway build-outs for informal crossings
4. Physical barriers to prevent pavement parking at key points
5. Time-limited space for disabled access, deliveries and servicing
6. Street trees and other greenery in footway buildouts
7. Places to stop and rest with addition of seating
8. Outside seating areas for hospitality businesses

**Strategic corridors:**

1. Public transport has priority, including bus lanes
2. Cycle lanes that are segregated from the footway (and from motor vehicles)
3. Parking restrictions (cf. 'red routes') to reduce obstructive stopping in peak hours

**Residential areas:**

1. Widened footways where less than the minimum standard width
2. Controlled parking schemes to reduce obstructive parking
3. Parking spaces close to homes for registered disabled
4. Facilities for shared services such as cycle/scooter, car club parking and waste/recycling bins
5. Kerb space for deliveries and service vehicles where otherwise all the space is taken by parked cars
6. New infrastructure, such as EV charging, that does not encroach on footway space
7. Street trees and other greenery in footway buildouts
8. Places to stop and rest through addition of seating

**Improving accessibility**

Better **regulated vehicle parking** would make a significant contribution towards improving accessibility for pedestrians. Eliminating obstructive parking would allow pedestrians to more freely use the footway and to more safely cross the road. This is particularly important to those who are less mobile, are visually impaired, use mobility aids or have small children.

Other measures that would improve safety and accessibility for pedestrians include:

- installing **dropped kerbs** where they do not currently exist
- adding **parking restrictions** on corners to increase visibility when crossing
- providing **buildouts** at intervals along the roadway to make it safer to cross the road between parked vehicles

New modes of transport should not introduce additional barriers to pedestrians. E-scooter and cycle parking should be on the road, not on the footway.

EV charging should not require the use of cables or channels across footways, nor additional street furniture that requires the footway to be narrowed.

## How others have set priorities

We have looked at how some other councils have set priorities.

In a survey of Londoners [3], the top two priorities for use of street space were:

1. Trees and other green space
2. Pavements free of clutter

On-street parking for residents came fifth in the list.

As guidance for a parking and kerbside strategy, we agree with the **order of priorities** set out in the Lambeth Kerbside Strategy [4]:

1. Enable accessible and active travel
2. Create places for people
3. Increase climate resilience
4. Support a reduction in traffic and emissions

However, the actions in their document are somewhat vague.

The Hounslow Kerbside Strategy [5] can be summarised in its ‘Spatial Framework & Kerbside Hierarchies’, which distinguishes between four ‘urban typologies’.

Hounslow Kerbside Strategy 2024

**Table 1: Spatial Framework & Kerbside Hierarchies**

Priority	Town Centres / High Streets	Movement Corridors	Residential Areas	Neighbourhood Initiatives
Essential	Safety and access Public transport access Parking for disabled users			
Higher Priority	Areas for deliveries, servicing, pick-up and drop-off	Shared micro mobility provision	Shared micro-mobility provision	Shared micro-mobility provision
	Green, recreational and community space including parklets	Short stay cycle parking	Cycle hangars and short-term cycle parking	Cycle hangars and short-term cycle parking
	Shared micro-mobility provision	Areas for deliveries, servicing, pick-up and drop-off	Car clubs and electric vehicle charging	Car clubs and electric vehicle charging
	Short stay cycle parking		Green, recreational and community space including parklets	Green, recreational and community space including parklets
Lower Priority	Car clubs and electric vehicle charging	Rapid electric vehicle charging	Areas for deliveries, servicing, pick-up and drop-off	Areas for deliveries, servicing, pick-up and drop-off
	Short-stay visitor parking	Green, recreational and community space including parklets	Electric vehicle charging	Electric vehicle charging
	Cycle hangars and residential parking	Car clubs parking, residential and short stay parking	Residential and short-stay (visitor) parking	Residential and short-stay (visitor) parking

Kerbside uses such as vehicle parking, electric vehicle charging, cycle routes and bus facilities, are not included in this strategy as the design, implementation and management of these uses are covered in other Council documents.

It also sets out actions that are more specific than Lambeth’s and includes maps of where interventions should be prioritised for car clubs, micro-mobility, on-street cycle parking, urban greening, place making and parklets, freight delivery and servicing, and taxis. The list of actions is possibly too long to be realistically achievable.

## Conclusion

From the point of view of pedestrians, we see the following benefits that could be derived from a suitably shaped Parking and Kerbside Strategy and how they would be achieved.

- Reduced pavement obstructions
  - prevent vehicle parking on pavements
  - provide kerbside waste bin collection points where bins would otherwise be left on pavements
  - move cycle and e-scooter parking off the pavement onto the road
  - put EV charging on dedicated buildouts
- Better safety and accessibility
  - prevent vehicle parking on corners
  - provide buildouts to enable pedestrians to safely cross between parked vehicles
  - ensure adequate disabled parking spaces
- Improved health
  - more street trees
  - extra greenery
  - reduce traffic pollution

## References

[1] *Parking and Kerbside Strategy Task Group Scope*, Transport & Connectivity Policy Committee, October 2024.

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[2] *Bristol Walking and Cycling Index 2023*, Sustrans, March 2024.

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/13264/bristol-walking-and-cycling-index-2023.pdf>

[3] *Reclaim the kerb: The future of parking and kerbside management in London*, Centre for London, March 2020

[https://centreforlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Centre\\_for\\_London\\_Future\\_of\\_parking.pdf](https://centreforlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Centre_for_London_Future_of_parking.pdf)

[4] *Lambeth Council Kerbside Strategy*, January 2023

<https://moderngov.lambeth.gov.uk/documents/s143755/Appendix%20A%20-%20Lambeths%20Kerbside%20Strategy.pdf>

[5] *Hounslow Kerbside Strategy*, July 2024

[https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4355/hounslow\\_kerbside\\_policy.pdf](https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4355/hounslow_kerbside_policy.pdf)

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