

Comments by Bristol Walking Alliance on the draft Western Harbour Masterplan



Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) welcomes some aspects of the draft Western Harbour Masterplan. But we are concerned that the pedestrian infrastructure is not being considered separately from the cycle infrastructure. There are also specific details of pedestrian routing and accessibility that, while it may not appear important at the abstract level of the Masterplan, it will be important to decide at this stage in order to prevent them being excluded at the next level of detail.

Overall aspirations

We welcome the overall approach that reduces redundant road space and emphasises connectivity for active travel through the area.

The high density of the proposed housing means that access to open spaces for the residents will be important. The proposed Avon footbridge adjacent to the Avon Bridge is therefore welcome as providing easier access to Ashton Meadows and beyond.

We also pleased about:

- the provision of good leisure routes around the perimeters of the waterways, integrated with flood defences where necessary,
- the new walkway along the south side of the New Cut / Avon river,
- no building on Ashton Meadows.

Separation of pedestrian walkways from cycleways

The current diagram of primary and secondary connectivity routes shows a comprehensive network of utility and leisure routes, but the proposed pedestrian walkways and cycleways are shown without distinction.

We assume (though the plan does not show it) that the routes along the raised flood defences will be pedestrian only. They would be a hazard if expected to be shared with cyclists.

For the main connectivity routes across the area, we would expect full segregation of footways from new cycle infrastructure in such a concentrated urban setting, following the approach of Active Travel England and the guidance given in LTN 1/20.

Typically, pedestrian desire lines will follow the most direct route, whilst cyclists may prefer to take a route that minimises interaction with pedestrian and motor traffic.

For example, the primary route between Ashton Avenue Bridge and Merchants Road Bridge is shown as taking an indirect route either side of new housing (though again, it is not clear whether this is intended to be primary for cyclists, pedestrians or both). The pedestrian desire line would be more direct, closely following the existing shared use route along the old railway connection from Ashton Avenue Bridge to the north end of Avon Crescent which runs behind the existing housing on

Ashton Avenue. However, this route is not shown as either a primary or secondary route on the proposed connectivity diagram.

Access towards the Portway and Clifton

For those travelling from the south, across either Ashton Avenue Bridge or the proposed new Avon footbridge, and going towards Clifton and the Portway, it is unclear which routes will be appropriate.

We would like to see the routes over the lock gates, shown as secondary routes in the connectivity diagram, be fully accessible for pedestrians. The Leisure trail diagram suggests a route towards Cumberland Piazza where Brunel's Other Bridge used to cross the Cumberland Basin entrance, which we would support.

The existing pedestrian overbridge that connects the lock side to Cumberland Piazza and to Granby Hill uses stepped ramps, and so is not accessible for those using wheelchairs or mobility vehicles. It would be better to incorporate a signal-controlled road-level crossing to align with the outer lock gates crossing.

Merchants Road and Junction Swing Bridge

Given that Merchants Road will still provide the main road access to the new development, we would expect to see improvements to allow better pedestrian access over the water. The current east-side footway over the Junction Swing Bridge is too narrow for this well-used part of the Harbour perimeter walk. There is also likely to be more motor traffic over this bridge as there will no longer be direct access from Brunel Way. We understand there is the possibility of widening this bridge, which we would support.

The primary pedestrian route along the north side of the Harbour needs a zebra or signal-controlled pedestrian crossing over the north end of Merchants Road.

Avon Crescent

We agree that the road connection between Merchants Road and Cumberland Road should avoid Avon Crescent. This should allow Avon Crescent to be provided with a minimum 3m wide footway that forms the alternative route around the Harbour when Underfall Yard is closed.

Greening of the area

We are pleased to see there will be significant tree planting in the area. These trees should be chosen not just to be decorative, but to provide shade and shelter, particularly along the main pedestrian connections and leisure walks.

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