

Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Commission 25th January 2023 Public Forum



Public Forum Statements:

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Public Forum Statements

PFS1: Alan Morris - Bristol Walking Alliance:

Statement to Bristol City Council Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Commission 25th January 2023

Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) would like to take the opportunity of the committee's agenda item "Active Travel/Walking and Cycling Strategy" to give BWA's assessment of provision for walking in Bristol, and Bristol City Council's plans. Our comprehensive assessment is in our 50 Ways progress report 2022. In this paper to Scrutiny, we highlight some items from the full list.

Pedestrians - everywhere but nowhere

Most people walk, but almost all the transport talk tends to be about vehicles. We forget the sheer numbers of pedestrians on our streets, and the provision we should be making for them. Recent research by Bristol City Council and the University of the West of England has shown that on a single day over 6000 people walk across Gaoi Ferry Bridge, 22000 cross Bristol Bridge, 15000 cross Prince Street Bridge, 29000 cross the Centre, 18000 walk along Queens Road at the Triangle. We rarely count numbers of pedestrians to help plan transport provision: we should do more of it.

Providing for walking: what's good

We welcome the following recent developments:

- restriction of motor traffic on Baldwin Street/Bristol Bridge
- pedestrianisation schemes at Old City, King Street, Cotham Hill, Princess Victoria Street
- public realm scheme at Arnside in Southmead
- the pilot Liveable Neighbourhood scheme in St George
- the School Streets schemes
- continuous footways across side roads are accepted as good practice by Bristol City Council, and they are being implemented in strategic corridor schemes
- there is a steady flow of schemes to improve pedestrian crossing points
- the Council's new moving transport enforcement powers
- development of Mobility Hubs (WECA)

Providing for walking: what could be better

- the development of Liveable Neighbourhoods could be quicker. We acknowledge the careful community engagement in the St George pilot, but the pace is much slower than in other local authorities. The second pilot scheme promised by 2024 has yet to be announced.
- we welcome the regular announcement of new schemes, but the roll-out of School Streets is slow compared with other local authorities. Now that several schemes have been delivered, we suspect that the process could be streamlined to quicken the pace. The Council's new moving transport enforcement powers could be used in future schemes
- we supported the bus gate proposed on Park Street in the A37/A4018 corridor scheme as it would improve the environment for pedestrians. Disappointingly, it seems that this will not proceed due to a mixed response from traders.
- highways maintenance. Within a stretched budget, the team is not able to respond to all reported issues: it prioritises safety issues. Dropped kerbs are important for wheelchairs and buggies, but there is no budget for responding to reports of missing dropped kerbs, nor a proactive programme for adding them.

Providing for walking: what's bad

- we recently considered our 10 top Bristol sites requiring improvement. We list them overleaf.
- pavement parking. We despair at the creeping encroachment of vehicles on to pedestrian space. Long overdue central government action on improving local authority powers will help, but

implementation will still require scarce council resources. (Sheffield City Council has recently banned pavement parking, but only for a small city centre area.)

- e-scooter parking. We argue for e-scooters to be parked in the road, not on the pavement.
- traffic signal crossings. The Council's traffic signals team has done some good work on optimising signal timing to benefit pedestrians, but the work has stalled for lack of staff and the overall framework continues to prioritise motor traffic flow.
- public toilets. Provision has been cut across the country, not just in Bristol, and is a symptom of government underfunding of local authorities. This particularly affects older people, small children and their parents, disabled people, people with incontinence problems, and women. The community toilet scheme is not working well, and we think the Council should allocate more officer time to managing and developing the scheme. The government's Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill may reinforce the responsibility that Councils have.

Planning/organising for better provision for walking

- a transport decarbonisation plan: we are impatient for imminent government guidance to local authorities, and WECA's consequent development of local policy and the resulting JLTP5, which should drive the change in transport priorities that is needed.
- we are concerned by the Council's latest proposed budget cuts, and restructuring of the Transport function. We fear that less provision for pedestrians may be an outcome.
- we are concerned about WECA's capacity to deliver. WECA has seen churn at senior officer level, a breakdown in relationships between its constituent leaders, and a sudden huge increase in workload from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) schemes. On top of this upheaval, we suspect WECA may not be in a position to accept a move of staff from the Council
- WECA's self-assessment of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) capability (cycling and walking combined) is:

Criterion	Level (scale 0-4)	Interpretation of level
Local leadership and support	2	'some' (next level up is 'strong')
LCWIP development	3	'comprehensive plans'
Schemes delivered	1	'isolated interventions'

Source: completed Active Travel England questionnaire, obtained by Freedom of Information request

There is scope for improvement. We await sight of Active Travel Fund 4 3-year funding bids, and the Active Travel England funding awards in the light of the self-assessment.

- It would be good to have a Council plan for walking (specifically 'walking', not 'active travel' or 'cycling and walking') that brings together in one place what the Council aims to do support walking. We do not want a strategy with lots of warm words that sits on the shelf: we would like a plan that responds to our 50 Ways to Better Walking list of possible improvements, updated once a year.

Bristol Walking Alliance

January 2023

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PFS2 – Councillor Ed Plowden

Councillor Ed Plowden – Item 10: West of England - Local cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan and any subsequent revisions needs to be formally incorporated into the Local Plan in order to:

- (1)** Safeguard land for existing/potential/planned for walking/cycling alignments
- (2)** Secure high quality, safe walking and cycling provision through the development management process (both on-site provision and developer contributions)
- (3)** Connect new development with existing/planned walking/cycling networks.

This is supported by:

1. **DfT LCWIP Technical guidance**, paras. 2.26- 2.30
2. **Chapter 14 of LTN1/20**
3. **Gear Change (DfT 2020 Cycling and Walking policy document)**, eg p26: “While many local plans already say the right things, they are not always followed consistently in planning decisions. Developments often do little or nothing meaningful to enable cycling and walking. Sometimes they make cycling and walking provision worse. We want new developments to be easily and safely accessible and navigable by foot and bike, and to make existing cycling and walking provision better.”
4. **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DLUHC)**, para. 104: “Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that: ...

c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;...” *[underlining added]*

Given there is a welcome emphasis on Local Centres, as part of a 15 minute City, Bristol’s LCWIP needs to be updated to ensure that there is a walking plan or consideration of how people will walk to their local centre, especially where this is not already in place and the LCWIP also needs to include the proposed new Local Centres.

One is proposed for Bedminster Road in the ward of Windmill Hill, but many people have already told me that it is a difficult and dangerous road for people to cross, in need of more pedestrian refuges and safe crossing facilities.

Finally the whole LCWIP needs an overhaul. As a quick piece of work it met the Government’s criteria for a first iteration, which was focussed on making sure that Local Authorities had a pipeline of projects for forthcoming funding and it did indeed set out priority walking and cycling routes for investment.

However, it now reads like a prospectus for a few, piecemeal interventions, rather than a comprehensive plan for improving the cycling and walking network. Things have moved on and what we now need is a clear network of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, School Streets and the Walking and Cycling Network to join them up. Having this as part of the Local Plan will make sure that all relevant developments pay their part in creating a quality network.

Accompanying this needs to be a movement plan to show where traffic is acceptable and how walking and cycling will be accommodated within it.

I would like to see the LCWIP represented in the Local Plan in any case and for the updates to the LCWIP I have suggested to then be automatically adopted as part and parcel of the Local Plan.

PFS3 Ian Pond – Bristol Cycling

Public Forum Statement to Bristol Council Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission on agenda item 10: West of England - Local cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Bristol Cycling Campaign (BCyC) would like to make the following statement to the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission.

The WECA LCWIP is an important document for active travel in our region, however we are glad to see that the Strategic City Transport team acknowledge at the outset of their paper that the LCWIP is not a comprehensive description of Walking & Cycling initiatives.

The position regarding the narrow scope of the LCWIP is consistent with the published LCWIP Consultation report from 2020 it states that *“The LCWIP will be changed to make clear its scope as a plan and not a strategy or policy covering all aspects of walking and cycling in the region”*.

We would expect that a cycling strategy & delivery plan would address each component of any journey. This would include:

- To enable access to bikes through transport switching grants and a viable bike share scheme
- To make bike ownership practical for households who don't have secure storage space by deploying on-street cycle hangars.
- To empower people to be confident on the roads through free to access training.
- To deliver a comprehensive, city-wide network of joined-up cycleways that offer people the right level of protection for the conditions.
- To empower parents to feel it's safe for their children to cycle to school by accelerating the roll-out of school streets.
- To implement consistent wayfinding signs across the city not only to assist walkers & cyclists, but to also reinforce to everyone how quick & easy journeys can be without using the car
- To implement high quality secure cycle parking at all transport hubs and destinations.

The absence of a cycling plan was the issue that BCyC raised through a successful e-petition and full council debate 9th Nov 22. Specifically, that the Bristol Cycling Strategy from 2015 has not been updated and re-issued, as was committed to in the 2019 Bristol Transport Plan. The resolution of the debate was the mayor publishing a blog post article. In the article emphasis is placed on the role of the adopted West of England LCWIP as the Bristol mayor stated, *“cycling plans are published in our Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)”*. The submission to the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission appears to contradict that statement. i.e. LCWIP is not a comprehensive statement of cycling plans.

The submission paper is a list of items, but it is not a delivery programme. It offers no timing or prioritisation of activity. As such it provides no insight as to how progress can be made towards transport mode shift required to meet the 2030 Net Zero objectives? BCyC offer their assistance to BCC in creating a new Bristol Cycling Plan, as we did in 2015.

Finally, in the Bristol Full Council debate on 8th Nov'22, the cabinet member for transport informed the chamber *“Just to give a bit of strategy background the LCWIP, which is our guiding strategy is the West of England document. So now we are handing over much, most of our strategy work to the region, quite rightly too. So, the LCWIP is what guides us...”* Is it the case that responsibility for active travel “strategy” has been delegated to the West of England combined authority by this administration?