



an independent force for a better Bristol

14th October 2019

The Society's response to the Broad Plain Public Real Strategy Consultation

Summary

The Society supports the adoption of a strategy that builds on the Old Market Quarter Neighbourhood Plan (OMNP). The area has recently seen rapid social and economic development. The character of the area has changed from a decaying industrial district to flatted residential quarter. There are several large developments proposed which make a development framework a critical planning resource. We support the principal aims of :

- Reducing the domination of motor traffic to encourage walking and cycling.
- Creating new or improving existing public spaces to create people friendly streets.

The Society support the proposals throughout the plan area to reduce the impact of traffic which includes:

- Reduced road widths and tighter junctions
- Wider footways
- Continuous pavements
- Better signage for pedestrians and cyclists.

Although the proposed Framework is scoped as a Public Realm Strategy, it is really a movement framework. We suggest that the Framework could include local bus routes - existing and potential.

1 Delivering the plan

The availability of funding determines the delivery of public streets and spaces policy. The Society suggests that the Council takes a project-based approach which prioritises the projects into short term, medium term and long-term opportunities which reflects the approach of the OMNP. It would add to public confidence if the Framework describes the possible funding sources for these projects. Which projects could the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 contributions fund? Which projects could attract Government funding for community facilities or other funding sources? It is unfortunate that developer contributions are agreed for several developments before the adoption of the Framework.

2 Open spaces, Broad Plain project

The developments along Unity Street, Broad Street and Straight Street bring the opportunity to replan Broad Plain to reduce motor traffic and create a public square which should link with the planned Hawkins Street green space. To achieve this major planning gain it would be necessary to:

- Restrict motor vehicles to a one way west/east route along the northern arm of Broad Plain and Unity Street. Traffic calming measures could make this route even less attractive to motor vehicles. It would not surprise the Society if the destination of most of the vehicles using the route is the Gardiner Haskins car park. If this assumption is correct there could be further traffic rerouting opportunities.
- The Society supports the principle of closing the Straight Street cycle route to create a new Unity Street cycle route which would segregate the cycle route from the Straight Street pedestrian route. The exclusion of cyclists from Straight Street would remove possible conflict with any street level activity that the redeveloped Gardiner Haskins Warehouse building introduces. We recognise that there are potential conflicts in a one-way Unity Street between cyclists and motor vehicles and between cyclists and the large pedestrian flows that the new and projected student accommodation will produce at certain times of day. Wider pavements would mitigate this problem.
- If Broad Plain becomes one-way east west this would give the opportunity to create a traffic-free paved public realm to the south, with provision made for access to the southern range of buildings. Additionally, there would be an opportunity to reduce the carriageway width at the junction of Temple Way and Broad Plain that would be consistent with the entrance to a residential square.
- To continue on-street parking on Broad Plain and Unity Street would be incompatible with the aim to create a green and attractive space.

3 Walking routes

The Bristol Walking Alliance will make a detailed submission on this aspect of the consultation. These are the Society's comments:

- **The Temple Way underpass project**

The underpass is an unsatisfactory shared route by cyclists and walkers which does not work well. The tunnel is an unpleasant experience for pedestrians and is dangerous during heavy flows of cyclists. The Society would support the exclusive use of the underpass by cyclists if there is adequate signage to the improved grade-level pedestrian crossings at the Old Market roundabout.

The disadvantage of this proposal is that it would introduce a detour for a pedestrian who walks via Old Market roundabout if they want to cross straight to Counterslip. Currently, the Old Market roundabout is another poor pedestrian experience. We do not know the proposals for the improvement of the Old Market crossing, but count-down pedestrian crossing lights synchronised to avoid long waits would be an

improvement. We note the proposals to remove the clutter at each end of the underpass which would not materially benefit pedestrians.

- **The Old Market/Temple Meads path project**

This long-projected north/south route has been continuously interrupted by redevelopment. The Framework should include a project to improve the signage of this route at the completion of the Avon Street and Soap Works redevelopments. This important pedestrian route could benefit from more ground-level activity along its length.

- **Other north/south pedestrian projects**

The Society knows that the developers of the Soapworks plan greater permeability of that site and there may be other opportunities. There is potential for pedestrian routes through the Gardiner Haskins site - N/S and E/W from the bend in the road of New Thomas Street/Russ Street

The Society would like to see better signage of pedestrian routes and a better alignment of routes to the south of Old Market Street with routes to the north. Although outside the Framework area this route/pedestrian crossing realignment should support the continuation of the Temple Meads path project to Redcross Street and through to Broad Weir. We recognise that Redcross Lane is currently closed.

4 Better signage project

Enhancing the treatment of key pedestrian crossing points could be given more emphasis, for example:

- The crossing of Avon Street by the key N/S pedestrian route
- The crossing of Midland Road heading towards the Railway Path
- The crossing from the top of David Street to Old Market roundabout

5 Cycling routes - Midland Road project

The Bristol Cycling Campaign will make a detailed submission on this aspect of the consultation. These are the Society's comments:

If, as the Society suspects there may be compelling arguments that would make a project to make the Midland Road a cycling only route impractical, we would support proposals to give cyclists priority in the Midland Road. We support the removal of on-street parking to create space for wider pavements and cycle lanes.

6 Gardiner's car park

Gardiner's car park dominates the area. The Framework could do more than protect pedestrian routes in the area. It could propose features for if/when the car park is redeveloped. For example, should there be new public space and where should it be? How could redevelopment enhance the protected pedestrian routes? Should there be a new pedestrian route on a desire line from Jacob Street towards Hannah More School as the OMNP proposes?