

# BRISTOL PARKS FORUM

6 February 2021

## Initial Consultation on the Direction of the Bristol Parks Forum Position Statement on Cycling and Walking Infrastructure

This is a consultation for Bristol Park Forum members, to inform an 2<sup>nd</sup> much wider consultation on the direction of a position statement.

Please read the document and reply by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to  
Email: [info@bristolparksforum.org.uk](mailto:info@bristolparksforum.org.uk)



Photos – copyright Chopsy Bristol, Flickr, Bristol Culture

## 1 The Current Consultation:

The Bristol Parks Forum represents groups and individuals involved in the publicly accessible green spaces in Bristol City Council's area (known from here on as "Parks").

Parks can be formal or informal; and used by people and wildlife for a wide range of reasons. Areas can be extensive or very small.

During the COVID lockdowns the importance of accessing Parks; and the ability to cycle and walk has increased in importance.

Infrastructure here means both new and improved infrastructure which crosses an area recognised as a publicly accessible green space (known here as infrastructure or proposals).

Following the publication of the new Forum Vision in 2019 ([Vision – Bristol Parks Forum](#)) it was decided to produce six position statements relating to issues which may need further work to ensure that the Vision is understood.

Cycling and Walking infrastructure was one of them.

The whole of the document is open for comments, but a number of Feedback Questions have been raised where there is a need to received detailed feedback that could help prepare the next stages.

In its initial preparation for the Position statement, and its own experience, the Forum has found that the subject of providing new and improved cycling and walking infrastructure in Parks can be controversial, to the point that projects are delayed, "us and them" conflict situations arise; and there is a breakdown of trust and understanding between the parties involved.

As work progressed the Forum found that a clear statement of the requirements of the Parks Forum was interpreted in a number of ways – from "absolute statements" for instance "in parks all infrastructure shall be no more than 3m wide"; or "contextual statements" such as "if the site is xxxxxxx, xxxxx shall apply"; through to "options statements" such as "if the site is xxxxxx, either xxxxxx or xxxxx shall apply".

Additionally, when asking people what was a "good example" of infrastructure, the response varied, even about the same cycleway/footpath (eg: Castle Park delineated path next to the river). Similarly, there was a variance as to what is acceptable published advice.

The majority of advice so far reviewed has concentrated on the requirements of the infrastructure and less on the context around it. For parks the context is a critical element of the considerations to be made in the process of considering new and

improved infrastructure. Some parties wish to see consistent standards for walking and cycling; while others are seeking a flexibility to respond to individual situations.

The Parks Forum committee are now suggesting that instead of a “position statement” it develops an Information Pack, Framework or Protocol which could be used to help the consideration by Parks Groups of what is to be considered if infrastructure is proposed, about the issues that need to be considered; and the “ways of working” that could be applied.

*FEEDBACK QUESTION A: Do you think the document should be an information pack, framework or protocol?*

*FEEDBACK QUESTION B: Do you think the document should be aimed at Parks Groups, or could potentially be used by a wider range of groups?*

While this may not be as direct as technical design guidance for a Park situation, the question has to be asked whether this approach is more helpful for dealing with the issues and opportunities that come along in the future.

Copies of the 2nd consultation document will be sent to:

- Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation
- Bristol City Council Cabinet Members for Parks and for Transport (Cllr Asher Craig and Cllr Kye Dudd)
- Bristol City Council Parks Department (Jon James, Richard Fletcher, Paula Spiers)
- Bristol City Council Transport Department – Policy, Design and Project Teams (Jacob Pryor, David and James Coleman)
- Bristol City Youth Council
- Bristol Cycling Forum and its members
- Bristol Disability Equality Forum and its members
- Bristol Physical Access Chain and its members
- Bristol Parks Forum and its members
- Bristol Walking Alliance and its members
- Sustrans

*FEEDBACK QUESTION C: Is this list right – are there corrections needed or others to be included? Please note that distribution through Forums etc is suggested to save sending out individual emails.*

## **2 Proposed contents of the information pack/statement/framework:**

The statement/framework is divided into four sections:

- Introduction – setting out the purpose of the document, the reasons why it is needed and how it has been developed. Statements about the benefits of parks,

cycling and walking. Overview of the legislative and policy drivers for parks and new infrastructure.

- Principles – setting out simple pointers or models which can be used when considering developing infrastructure.
- Design issues – a list of the issues that need to be considered, perhaps in checklist format. A list of useful guidance, supported by an annex of sources.
- Ways of working. Probably, the most important section of the document. It will set out best practice on how to take forward infrastructure in various ways, built on relationships, communications, transparency and trust.

### **3 Outline of the proposed sections of the statement/Framework**

#### **1 Introduction**

What the document is seeking to do. Its purpose.

“Guidance for Parks Groups involved in new and improved infrastructure in Parks.”

What is meant by terms such as publically accessible parks, new and improved infrastructure.

Describe the current situation and background to the statement/protocol.

Descriptions of the importance of parks, cycling and walking – economically, social, environmentally and culturally, including from the perspectives of:

- Legislation
- Policy
- Plans

Potential list of legislation, policies and plans to be covered. If necessary, use an Appendix to summarise these points.

- Bristol City Council Parks Strategy (2008)
- Bristol Equality Charter (undated)
- Bristol Parks Forum Vision (2019)
- Bristol Transport Strategy (2019)
- Bristol Walking Strategy (2011)
- Bristol Shared Users Routes Policy (undated accessed 9/2/20)
- Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (2020)
- Local Nature Reserve legislation (1949)
- One City Plan (2019 onwards)
- Women’s Cycling Charter (2020)
- WECA - Joint Local Transport Plan 4 (2020)
- West of England Green Infrastructure Strategy and Plan (2020)

*FEEDBACK QUESTION D: Is this list right – are there things which need to be deleted or added?*

*FEEDBACK QUESTION E: Are there specific pieces of legislation which applies to parks; and also active travel?*

Description of importance to individuals and groups – active travel, sense of pride, feelings of ownership, sense of place, sense of well-being, sense of contributing to a better world

Implications of COVID; and a post COVID situation.

The importance of funding for parks, cycling and walking infrastructure for joint opportunities and implications of timetables, and links to other parts of Statement/Framework.

Implications of future changes to modes of transport or power sources.

This document is not a magic wand.....

Date for review of statement/framework.  
Feedback on it to “email address”.

## **2 Principles**

The following principles could be used to inform the processes involved in design the infrastructure:

- Consider each situation as an individual case. Eg: standards may be useful in some circumstances; other situations may need sensitive refinement of those standards.
- In some circumstances new infrastructure may not be the solution or create new issues which need to be dealt with. Alternatives must be considered appropriately.
- Examine the context for the infrastructure, the park, cycling and walking – spatially and over time. (eg: along the route and beyond – now and in the future).
- Examination of current and future usage of the park and infrastructure (eg: both spatially and over time).
- Identify interfaces between park, cycling and walking users – are their potential conflicts or benefits? Is the infrastructure just a matter of getting from A to B or are their other ways the proposals could be used by people?

- Consider the Hierarchy of Measures – from physical segregation of cyclists and other users, through delineation, to shared use, pedestrian priority etc.
- Take into account the sensitivity of the park to change using an assessment of the characteristics and functions of the park from environmental, social, economic and cultural perspectives.
- Take into account the needs of those with protected characteristics or requiring specific measures to access the Park or use their mode of transport.
- Mitigation of negative effects on features in parks – from avoidance, to mitigation, to compensation to enhancement/net gain.
- While Value for Money and Benefit Costs Ratios are important, due weight must be given to other “softer” issues and benefits.
- Opportunities for joint benefits of proposals to be explored and identified; and carried forward if agreed.

*FEEDBACK QUESTION F: Is this the right list? Are there any other principles that should be considered?*

*FEEDBACK QUESTION G: Is a hierarchy of Measures a useful principle to have? Are their examples of such a hierarchy?*

### **3 Design Issues**

Following a review of the following documents design issues relevant to the Parks situation will be identified.

- Bristol Parks Strategy – proposals for improving Parks and Green Spaces (2008)
- Local Transport Note – 1/20 – (July 2020)
- Royal Parks Walking and Cycling Technical Design Guidance (2016)
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges – CD 143 (May 2020)
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges – CD 195 Design for Cycle Traffic (May 2020)
- Manual for Streets 1 and 2 (2007 and 2010)
- BCC shared pedestrian and cycle space review
- BS5: One route objectives and designs (2019 onwards).
- Legislation, Policy and Plan documents listed above
- LCWIP (2020)
- Correspondence on initiatives from organisations – eg: replies to proposals such as LCWIP and BS5: One Plan if they can be made available.
- Milton Keynes Council – Cycle Routes and Redways from Council website.

*FEEDBACK QUESTION H: Is this the right list or are there any others?*

So far, the following design related issues have been identified:

- Future use of the route – numbers and types of users
- Requirements of people with “protected characteristics” and those using special modes of transport.
- Route design – type and size
- Transitions/Entrances between outside the Park and inside.
- Changes to the characteristics and use of the Park
- Potential conflicts due to speed or type of user
- Potential for conflicts at crossing points.
- Visibility requirements
- Unexpected users – are some groups likely to use the infrastructure more than before, or use it for purposes which are not part of the original?
- Colours and textures of the infrastructure (eg: surfaces)
- Role of seating, stopping points and social areas
- Role of signage – both on the ground or at eye level for instructions, identification of areas or features etc.
- Role of lighting
- Role of mitigation hierarchy when considering negative effects of infrastructure
- Benefits of communication about the infrastructure after completion either on site or elsewhere – welcoming etc.
- Construction period implications
- Long term maintenance
- Long term enforcement if there are issues
- Opportunities for improving the understanding of the park
- Opportunities for enhancements in the area around the infrastructure – art, wildlife based, improvements, or things to help management of the park.

Not all issues would be relevant to all situations, however the items should be checked to ensure that they are properly considered.

*FEEDBACK QUESTION 1: Is this the right list – should items be deleted or others added?*

An appendix would be provided to summarise direct guidance about infrastructure in parks from the above documents and context in which it was produced (eg: LTN – relates to xxxx; DMRB to xxxxxx). There is a risk that there is actually very little direct published guidance relating to parks and cycling and walking infrastructure.

## 4 Ways of Working

This will build on the process outlined in the City Council's Transport Strategy (website: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/bristol-transport-strategy> see Page 73) as a series of steps, with involvement/engagement carried out as early as possible in Step 3 and again later in the process.

"3. Work with community, residents and stakeholders to shape initial plans, gaining valuable insight on existing local transport situations."

This would be "amended" to parks situations as well as transport situations.

There will be a statement of the ideal situation which "ways of working" could achieve around the need in the development of proposals for:

- Proactive relationships
- Listening and understanding – acknowledging positions
- Positive inclusion of parties
- Maintaining dialogue
- Apologising where necessary (yes, things go wrong, people sound off, people get the wrong end of the stick)
- Seeking long term solutions
- Working Collaboratively
- Being transparent
- Try to involve a wide range of individuals and organisations affected
- Seek a sense of ownership of the process, delivery of the measures and the maintenance of the measures from all parties.

During the development of proposals ask if there are opportunities for

- Co-Creation/Co-designing of infrastructure
- Co-funding/Co-delivery of improvements to the infrastructure and Park

Possible models for working could include:

- Steering Groups
- Working groups
- Liaison meetings
- Open access to all information

*FEEDBACK QUESTION J: Is this the right way forward? Should things be deleted or added from the list above?*

*FEEDBACK QUESTION K: Is the Bristol Transport Strategy model of project delivery the best model to use for this purpose?*

Not all ways of working will be necessary in all circumstances, or possible to deliver.



#### **4 Conclusions**

We hope that this document will stimulate a debate about the best way forward. Following the consideration of all of the responses to the first consultation, responses will be considered and the document updated ready for a second consultation. Once the direction is agreed there is a large amount of work to be done to get the draft information pack/protocol/ framework in place, and a further consultation arranged.

Finally, can we thank all of those involved in parks, cycling and walking; both individuals and groups who have offered their time to provide guidance and thoughts this far.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Bristol Parks Forum Committee  
February 2021

BPF Consultation