



## **BRISTOL PARKS FORUM**

**April 2021**

### **Report on the results of the initial consultation on the Direction of the Bristol Parks Forum Position Statement on Cycling and Walking Infrastructure**

#### **1 Introduction:**

This report gives details of the responses to the above consultation, and sets out how those comments have been used in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Consultation on the direction of the Position Statement.

The decision was taken by the Forum Committee to undertake a two-stage consultation. The reason for this was to allow Parks Forum members to comment, before going out to a much wider audience.

The consultation started on 6 February 2021 and ran until 28<sup>th</sup> February. Bristol City Council Cabinet Members for Parks and Transport; and their relevant Departments; plus Cycling and Walking groups were sent copies and the situation explained to them.

A total of 7 replies were received from individuals (4) and groups (3) as follows:

A number of groups had indicated that they would be replying, but no other replies have been received.

The document posed a number of direct questions, but it was also open to other comments as well.

A short summary of these results will be given in the consultation document.

## **2 Responses to direct questions – and changes to be made to 2<sup>nd</sup> Consultation:**

The following analysis give the responses to the direct questions posed.

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

Two comments were made in support of the Position Statement changing into one of these.

Some comments agreed with one or more of the options.

	No of Responses
Information Pack	5
Framework	3
Protocol	4
No View	1
Need to understand what is meant by each of those terms	1

*Alteration to be made: Text to be changed to say that it is proposed to be an information pack; and an explanation of what an information pack, framework and protocol is. Because of the much wider 2nd consultation the same question will be asked again.*

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

	No of Responses
Parks Groups	5
Others if they wish/if it helps/it is desirable.	6
It needs to include other groups eg: cyclists, planners.	1
To be used by Parks Groups to assess their own space.	1
The document should be an all-encompassing document, which could direct changes and influence policy decisions.	1

Response to “all-encompassing document” comment – this would be difficult to achieve without the sign up of other groups involved in walking and cycling infrastructure. As an information pack for Parks Groups, with others able to use it if they wish, it would be unlikely to achieve this.

*Alterations to be made: Focus text on Parks Groups usage, but confirm others can use it if they wish.*

*Original question to be altered to ask whether this is the right approach.*

QUESTION C: List of consultees for 2<sup>nd</sup> Consultation – is this the right list – are there corrections needed or others to be included?

Add – Life Cycle, Bristol Aging Better/Age UK, Walking for Health Coordinators. *All added – except Walking for Health where no central point could be found.*

*Same question to be asked again due to the wider consultation.*

QUESTION D/E: List of potential legislation, policies and plans. Is this list right – are there things which need to be deleted or added? Are there specific pieces of legislation which applies to Parks and also Active Travel?

Add – Parks Bylaws, Access to the Countryside and National Parks Act 1949 (Local Nature Reserves), Public Rights of Way Act 1990, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Highways Act 1835 (Sections 72, 76, and 78), Bristol Clean Air Strategy, Bristol Local Plan Policies 2014 and 2018. *All suggestions added.*

*Same question to be asked again due to the wider consultation.*

QUESTION F – Is the list of Principles to be considered in the provision of new and improved infrastructure correct?

Comment	Response
Does the list of principles reflect the changes in use of parks by cyclists and walkers in the future due to COVID? Could be difficult to judge?	The implications of COVID in the consultation document to be reflected in the introduction. Suggest review situation when main document prepared.
There needs to be clearer consideration of wildlife in the principles.	Two principles to be amended to include Wildlife – Identify interfaces between.... Take into account the sensitivity
There needs to be consideration of topography and visibility issues	Explain better the concept of context for the infrastructure, either in the principles or a “jargon buster”.
Add a new one – Pedestrians have priority in parks	To be considered alongside the Hierarchy of Users point below.
Please rewrite, or give examples, it is in highways engineering and civil servant type jargon – needs to be in plain English.	Examples of points to be added and a “jargon buster” produced. Eg: why avoidance, then mitigation and compensation.
Concerned that Value For Money and Benefit Costs Ratios override what else is important in our situations, and these points must be given due weight.	Introduction to Principles to make this point.

*Alterations to be made – amend documents as above.*

QUESTION G – Is a hierarchy of measures a useful principle to have? Are their examples of such a hierarchy?

Comment	Response
Not sure what is meant by a Hierarchy of Measures – it could be useful thing to have	Describe hierarchy more fully in the next consultation document either in the principles and/or a “jargon buster”.
A new principle about a Hierarchy of Users of parks could be useful to have this?	Create a new principle about this, perhaps based on Active Travel concepts, plus vulnerability of park users. Describe more fully in the next consultation document what it means either in the principles or a “jargon buster”.
Add a new principle about a hierarchy of cycle/walking routes?	Describe a proposal in the next consultation document for comment based on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) concepts. Could be covered in context above rather than this section.
Add a new principle about a hierarchy of needs for each proposed development based on individual sites – eg: wildlife at the top for nature reserves.	Consider this alongside the hierarchy of users proposal.
Yes, it gives direction, focus and purpose	Thank you
Could be difficult to get agreement.	Agreed, but may be others feel differently?
Probably a good idea. Walking should come first. (x2)	See point above about hierarchy of users.

*Alterations to be made – amend documents as above and add questions about the other hierarchies.*

QUESTION H: Sources of potential design issues is this the right list or are there any others?

Comment	Response
Don't know of any others	Noted
The list looks good	Thank you
Yes, all are good design related issues that should be considered	Thank you
Don't know	Noted
What is LCWIP?	Need to ensure all initials are in full in new document and documents explained in either in introduction and/or "jargon buster".
Local Plan parks and green spaces designations	To be picked up in principles above within "context".
Why Milton Keynes – very much unlike Bristol.	Milton Keynes is considered by some – regardless of topography and age of the City to be a good example of design issues.
Doesn't West of England CA have relevant documents	LCWIP is WECA based.

QUESTION I: List of design related issues is this the right list – should items be deleted or others added?

A good checklist, because things often come to mind just because there is a list	Thank you
No suggestions x 2	Noted
Would be a good idea to start with an agreement on the character of the space including users before the impact of introducing new infrastructure is considered? So that everyone understands what is important about the park, what to retain and what to improve – may be a Strengths/Weakness/Opportunity/Threat Analysis	To be explained in principles above – and ways of working later rather than this section.
Needs to cover Topography, Wildlife and Dark Sky Status	Add to list under Route Design type and size, Unexpected users and Role of Lighting.

Very well thought through.	Thank you.
Yes, all are good design related issues that should be considered.	Thank you.
List looks comprehensive. Better to provide a very wide-ranging list because that way groups are reminded of everything to take account of.	Noted
Where is the do-nothing option?	Principle about alternatives to be change to cover this.
There is a huge change in how people see parks – especially what they are for in terms of physical and mental health. There needs to be a clear recognition of the potential for conflict between users in some situations.	Review Introduction and Principles to cover these points. See links to COVID.

*Alterations to be made – amend documents as above and use the same question for the wider consultation.*

QUESTION J: Ways of Working – is this the right way forward? Should things be deleted or added from the list above?

Need to ensure that there is working with the community.	Add “community” to proactive relationships
No comments/Suggestions (x2)	
Seems like a positive and inclusive way forward, albeit resource intensive.	Thank you.
This looks about right	Thank you
Sounds good. Need to ensure that problems arising after can be tackled by by-laws in certain places.	Reinforce text on “seek a sense of ownership”.
Feels like a document written by and for the City Council and not for Parks Groups It feels very prescriptive and heavy going.	Review the language in this section, consider using simpler language and/or have items in “jargon buster”.

*Alterations to be made – amend documents as above and use same question.*

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

Not familiar with the process.	Improve presentation in the consultation document with actual “steps diagram” from Transport Strategy.
Confused by question.	As above.
No this needs rewriting with predominant pedestrian priority	See hierarchy of users above – clarify purpose of this section.
Not sure/Don’t know	Improve presentation and non-jargon wording of section.
Might be for the Council, but this is a Parks Forum document which needs to be read by Parks Groups	As above

*Alterations to be made – amend documents as above. Help people understand the model using the original “steps chart” from the Strategy. Change the question in response to link to “steps diagram”.*

## OTHER COMMENTS

Other comments received not covered in the questions above are listed below.

Comment	Response
It will be tough to keep this document up to date as so much changes over time. It will be good to programme in reviews and state the date of creation.	Agreed
The importance of clean air grows, so will the push to get people out of their cars and onto other forms of transport. It seems very likely this will spawn new forms of transport, we well as increasing the use of existing non-polluting, single-passenger vehicles, which will impose a great load on new infrastructure, that cannot yet be imagined.	This needs to be built into the final document, as part of the ongoing review.
There is a need to ensure that safeguarding children and vulnerable adult’s requirements are complied with.	Needs to be built into consideration of safety and also access issues – and the hierarchy of users.
Mechanically assisted vehicles (MAVs) – any carriage or vehicle which gains momentum from power sources whether	Needs to be built into design issues, and also longer-term review if the types of MAVs involved change.



human, mechanical or natural, need to be carefully considered. Incidents between MAVs and pedestrians occur, sometimes due to pedestrians, but also as the result of MAV users riding too fast in shared space or on paved areas where should not be riding.	
First and foremost there should be a pedestrian priority always since they are most at risk.	See Hierarchy of Users above.
A regulation is needed stating that all path users should travel on the left whenever possible. A significant number of MAV riders do not observe laws, rules or advice.	This would not be covered by this document.
Consideration could be given to all riders of MAVs having a minimum insurance requirement	This would not be covered by this document.
Present enforcement is inadequate at dealing with hazards associated with MAV issues on pavements, whether shared use or not.	This would not be covered by this document.
As pollution reduction, space on roads and the need to travel in isolation become more important, the possibility of ever-more creative and alternative means of travel, becomes much greater. Law enforcement typically will not keep up with progress, but this document could start the debate about the future of travel on our footpaths and walkways; and how best to manage the risks and potential for chaos.	The document will draw attention to the potential future changes to transportation and seek to deal with the implications in parks; but it is unlikely to start the debate. It could be that this response itself will be part of the wider debate.
Different types of non-MAVs such as scooters, skateboards, roller-skates, wheel chairs, prams and buggies – all need separate consideration.	The potential hierarchy of users may help this.
Newly built shared use paths need to be five metres wide, personal distancing has shown us that many existing paths are too narrow and need widening wherever possible.	To be considered in the final document, however, in some locations it is either impossible to do this, or will cause significant change to the park.
Discretionary use of the “no-carriages-on-walkways” law is often interpreted in favour of cyclists, when it should be used to protect pedestrians. This law does not appear to cover other MAVs.	This would not be covered by this document.

<p>Children can move quickly, unpredictably in an erratic manner, particularly in parks where they feel safe and where they should be safe.</p>	<p>Safety of children to be included in design issues and hierarchy of users. See point above.</p>
<p>Vulnerable people, such as the sensory impaired, might not be aware of approach MAVs from any direction.</p>	<p>Safety of vulnerable people to be included in design issues and hierarchy of users. See point above.</p>
<p>In most parks dogs are allowed off leads, at times it can cause a conflict situation if a dog strays across a cyclepath or footpath. Cycling speed in shared spaces should be limited to more than a lazy jogger.</p>	<p>Speed is a design issue. The text in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Consultation document will be altered to reflect the reasons for its inclusion.</p>
<p>Where statute law fails to deal with conflict issues, perhaps by-laws could be created in some cases.</p>	<p>This would not be covered by this document.</p>
<p>The development and improvement of walking and cycling infrastructure in green spaces is to be welcomed for the benefits these activities have for improving health, air quality and for their potential contribution to tackling climate chaos.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>There will always be the potential for conflict between different user groups and that dialogue and compromise are necessary for resolution.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>We broadly agree with the approach proposed in the document, and wish to add the following points for consideration.</p> <p>Infrastructure development and improvement schemes should include consideration of the needs of all users and not just walkers and cyclists. User groups should always include the following:</p> <p>Wildlife – particularly in nature reserves and green spaces protected for wildlife, in these spaces any proposed changes to infrastructure should always begin with a consideration of the impact on wildlife – flora and fauna. The aim should always be for new developments to enhance nature recovery.</p>	<p>The proposed hierarchy of users may help with this, plus changes to principles mentioned above.</p>

Walkers, joggers and runners	
Users of mobility scooters, pushchairs, scooters, roller skaters/bladers, horse riders and operational vehicles – accessibility should always be a key issue for consideration.	
Vulnerable users, including the very young and the very old.	
Infrastructure improvements should include consideration of toilets, benches, cycle racks/stands, lighting, signage, waste recycling, as well as paths, shared and segregated.	This will be reflected in design issues text.
An Equality Impact Statement should accompany all development proposals	This will be reflected in addition text to ensure relevant assessment of infrastructure are carried out, in Ways of Working. It is understood that assessment requirements can change over time, and different situations (eg: for funds, for Council sign off) can mean different requirements.
The complexities of each separate situation, plus the wishes of different communities will vary throughout the city.	This may mean that it is difficult to be too prescriptive in the way the final document is written. Noted.
It was felt that whilst this might be a useful guide for parks, it was not very relevant to nature reserves.	Text in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> consultation especially issues and hierarchy of users to be amended to reflect this better.
The document was very heavy going.	In addition to more explanations, jargon busters, more use will be made of weblinks and diagrams in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> consultation to try and help people understand things.
It needs a punchy summary of a few, easy to assimilate, lines of information.	Agreed. This can be done in the introduction, in a draft purpose for the document and in the way the results of the first consultation are presented.
Definition of “infrastructure” as “new infrastructure” was not helpful, and we needed to know more what infrastructure is.	Agreed. This paragraph was not well written to be reconsider to define what is – and what is not covered. Paragraph made clearer.
The use jargon continued throughout the document. What is “active travel”?	See commitments above to improve people’s understanding made in answer to comments on individual questions. “Jargon buster” etc.

<p>There is a strong concern that cycling is given too much emphasis, too much priority in parks especially those where there is insufficient space and where there would either never be sufficient space to accommodate “proper” shared or segregated cycling or providing shared paths would forever change the site to its detriment.</p>	<p>Care will be needed in the way proposals are brought forward and consideration; or changed or even dropped. It is hoped that the document overall approach and its detail, will for the park’s situation help allow that consideration to take place.</p>
<p>Cyclists and motorised scooters can be a real hazard, along with runners and joggers; and on top of very large numbers of dog walkers with or without dogs on leads, can make walking, cycling and jogging etc hazardous.</p>	<p>It is recognised that not all parks will be suitable for all types of potential users – therefore it is important to consider as many users as possible all in the hierarchy of users, principles and design issues.</p>
<p>The consultation period needs to be longer.</p>	<p>The period will be extended to six weeks. People will be encouraged to ask questions. Where resources allow people may be able to attend meetings to help explain things.</p>
<p>There needs to be a support document in a format where questions are able to be copied into a reply document, perhaps in Microsoft Word.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>Some parks are local nature reserves and many of the paths a little more than natural paths; and are not and should not be suitable to become some sort of cycling super-highway. Even permitted cycling under by laws can be an issue for users. The made paths (many of which are tarmacadamed) are not suitable for upgrading for cyclists and if they were upgraded to make cycling easier it would simply speed up/increase the usage to the detriment of walkers/dog walkers.</p>	<p>This need to be reflected in the way that the principles and the design issues are considered in the final document.</p>
<p>Walking should come first. Most users walk in some form, some people cycle. Walkers are the most vulnerable so all provision must be sure to put them first.</p>	<p>See Hierarchy of Users point above.</p>
<p>Since the beginning of the pandemic many more people have been both walking and cycling in parks and open spaces. The increased walkers are often the more elderly and many of the cyclists are inexperienced cyclists. Cyclists keep on cycling no matter who is in their way and we want to see a greater</p>	<p>This concern to be reflected in text on the principles and design issues. While no one document is going to stop conflict issues seen on certain sites, it could be that a Hierarchy of Users approach may help. It is possible of course that cyclists etc feel the same in reverse, or agree with this?</p>

<p>emphasis on cyclists <b>not</b> having the right to cycle any path in Parks but rather they must only cycle if there is no one in their way. The pushing of people out of the way, off paths onto muddy slippery areas by cycle users, for example, is causing conflict. In almost all cases if they can cycle they can walk. Cyclists are also not social distancing when they pass walkers. Social distancing is going to be a thing for a long while we would suggest or at least a greater recognition of giving a wider berth than in previous years. Even on designated shared paths pedestrians should still have priority. Especially where the path is on a slope as cyclists just fly down them at speed. Regardless of whether they hit people or not, the act in itself is intimidating and if challenged cyclists have been known to assert that they were completely in control and the walker is being unreasonable etc etc</p>	
<p>Not sure if this is the right place to put it but there needs to be a clear recognition of the conflict between fast users of parks and green spaces – cyclists / joggers / runners for example – and those with mobility or other disability issues. For example our site is frequented by blind people walking on their own and / or with their guide dogs (for exercise) as well as a range of people with visual and other impairments. Also deaf people who cannot hear cycle bells, yells, huffing and puffing and footsteps of joggers and runners. Those in the moving fast category assume that those in their way can hear or see them or indeed dodge out of their way easily even if they are clearly using walking sticks. Those disabled or mobility compromised users feel unprotected from the cyclists, joggers etc and it can seriously impact adversely on their enjoyment and ability to use their local open space. This has been very evident during the past 12 months and we have had many reports of people not only in our in green space forcing the less mobile off paths.</p>	<p>See comment above.</p>

<p>Even buggy and pram pushers have seemed unable to recognise the need to give way to elderly or disabled visitors. This is different completely from issues of disabled access almost all of which in our experience is focused on gates being easy for wheelchair users to use.</p>	
<p>Half the time we are just trying to get the existing footpath maintained so that walkers don't end up in the river, let alone make it suitable for cyclists!</p>	<p>The document is not going to help with this.</p>

## CONCLUSIONS

As a result of this work alterations will be made to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Consultation document as described above, which will be present as a consultation on the approach of an Information Pack for Parks Groups, rather than a Position Statement.