

Comments by Bristol Walking Alliance on Legibility of College Green / Queen Square / Brunel Mile

BWA recognises that these proposals for improved City Centre shared space legibility are limited changes to address some 'bugbears', but the money is not available to do all the changes we would like. Our comments should be taken in that context.

Our first overall comment is that signage should be consistent wherever possible across the city, so that both pedestrians and cyclists can become familiar with, and rely on, the message it gives.

Our second overall comment is that flow data should be used to determine the suitability of proposed solutions, as recommended in the Design Guidance section of the BCC Shared Pedestrian/Cycle Space Review document. It may be that, as cycling and walking grow in popularity, it is no longer appropriate for Queen Square, for example, to include shared or delineated spaces, and that fully segregated solutions must be found.

Our detailed comments on the affected areas follow. All these areas would benefit from 'Share with Care' signage if approved by the Department for Transport. Some of the budget could be set aside for this now, whilst awaiting approval from DfT.

College Green

The cycle route across College Green is already mainly segregated by low upstands, however its purpose is not clear to many pedestrians or cyclists.

The BCC proposal is to improve signage by putting more 'delineated' signs on existing lampposts and by putting 'give way' markings on the cycle route where it meets shared use space.

We agree with this, but in addition suggest:

- Using engraved-white 'cycle' tiles, in pairs to show to show two-way cycling, at the ends of the segregated sections of the cycle route, as well as at intervals along the route. There are currently broken red engraved tiles at the ends, which are filling up with moss and need to be replaced anyway. The purpose is to indicate where cycling is allowed - and where it is inadvisable for pedestrians to linger, even if crossing the cycle route mid-way.

Queen Square

The pavement along the south side of Queen Square is already has a delineated cycle route, which forms part of the 'Brunel Mile' walking and cycling route between Temple Meads and the Harbourside. The delineation of the cycle route currently consist of a line of 'corduroy' tactile tiles along the centre of the pavement and indicating the ends of this section, and occasional engraved 'cycle' tiles, with minimal colour contrast. Both pedestrians and cyclists complain that users do not realise it is delineated space, which creates conflict.

The BCC proposals are: to have more frequent engraved-white 'cycle' tiles, in pairs showing two-way cycling, at intervals along this section; to replace the 'corduroy' tiles with cobble setts (matching

those already used in Royal Oak Avenue - see below) as delineation along the centre of the pavement; to add more 'delineated' signs on existing lampposts.

Our comments are:

- There should also be 'give way' markings whenever the cycle route meets shared use space (to be consistent with College Green, Broad Quay etc).
- We would want confirmation from the appropriate special interest groups that the tactile effect of cobble setts would be recognisable and of sufficient indication to the visually-impaired for delineation of the cycle route. (BCC plan to consult Bristol Physical Access Chain about this).

Queen Square - Royal Oak Avenue

At the south-west corner of Queen Square, Royal Oak Avenue provides a continuation of the route to Prince Street, where a new crossing will be made as part of the Prince Street cycle path. This is currently shared use, with no delineation.

The BCC proposals are: to make this section delineated, using the same cobble setts as already used as a base for the cycle racks at the Prince Street end; to re-align the bollards at each end to match the delineation; to reclaim some pavement area by slightly reducing the cycle rack area; to move the legible city signpost to the Queen Square end of this section.

We suggest:

- Adding engraved-white 'cycle' tiles to show two-way cycling, similar to those in Queen Square, at the ends and mid-point of the delineated section.
- Adding 'give way' markings where the cycle route meets shared use space.
- Keeping the signpost at the junction with Prince Street but moving it in line with the end of the cycle racks. An extra signpost could be added in Queen Square when funds allow.
- Checking the overall width to see if cost can be saved (to be spent on the extra signage we have suggested) by not re-aligning the cycle racks - but only if this does not create a pinch-point for pedestrians.

Queen Square - Bell Avenue

At the south-east corner of Queen Square, Bell Avenue provides the connection to Redcliffe Bridge and beyond. This is currently shared use, with a shared crossing at Welsh Back.

The BCC proposals are: to make this section delineated, using the same cobble setts and engraved-white 'cycle' tiles as along Queen Square, but on the south side of the pavement so that it aligns with the Welsh Back crossing and segregated cycle path beyond; to re-align the bollards at each end to match the delineation; to replace 'shared use' signs on posts with 'delineated' signs.

Our comments are:

- The switch of delineated side for pedestrians and cyclists between Queen Square and Bell Avenue creates a severe point of conflict at the south-east corner of the Square. This is exacerbated by pedestrians and cyclists coming in from the diagonal across the Square.

Though it would be a benefit to create more separation between pedestrians and cyclists along Bell Avenue by making it delineated, this cannot be at the expense of creating a more dangerous junction.

- It would be prudent to see if any precedent can be found for such a crossover of delineation in other cities, so that any lessons can be applied.
- At the least we suggest the ends of the delineated cycle sections should be further back from the corner than in the current proposals, to give all users more space to manoeuvre.
- It will be even more important to add 'give way' markings where the cycle route meets the shared use space, and preferably include additional signage to indicate pedestrian priority.
- The shared use areas at the corners of Queen Square are difficult to design well, and the current proposals will be only a partial solution. We would recommend trying changes on an experimental basis to see what works before they are made permanent. The changes could include bollards, planters or similar objects which provide natural legibility so that cyclists slow down at the meeting of flows in different directions.

Brunel Mile

The remainder of the Brunel Mile route runs on the pavement on the south side of Portwall Lane and is shared use between pedestrians and cyclists. It is too well used, and also not wide enough, to be delineated.

The BCC proposal is to increase the number of 'shared use' signs on posts along the route, and to embed engraved-white 'shared use' tiles in the pavement surface.

We agree with this as an interim measure, but also comment:

- This route is too busy, especially at peak times, to be shared use. We understand that the current budget does not allow a better solution. However, we strongly recommend that, as development takes place in this area, a fully segregated cycle path be provided - without reducing the width of the pedestrian area - as befits a key active travel route. Such a proposal is included in the draft Redcliffe Neighbourhood Development Plan.

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