

Bristol Walking Alliance

campaigning to improve Bristol's walking environment

Bristol Walking Alliance comments on the Department for Transport's Accessibility Action Plan consultation 2017

Bristol Walking Alliance is a consortium of organisations and individuals campaigning to improve Bristol's walking environment. We want to create an environment for pedestrians that is welcoming, safe, convenient and inclusive. **The alliance includes Bristol organisations that represent people with disabilities and mobility impairments, and we use the word "pedestrians" to include them.** Our website is bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk.

Bristol Walking Alliance has the following concerns with regard to the Accessibility Action Plan consultation:

Action 1 We will commission a research project to scope the updating of the 'Inclusive Mobility' guidance by the end of summer 2017. As part of this project we will also examine updating our guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces. We will then consider the recommendations and determine a way forward.

- there would be major benefit from the use of **continuous or raised paving at all junctions** where minor or side roads meet a main road. It would improve the walking experience and give appropriate priority to pedestrians. It would make use of the pavement on the main road much easier to navigate especially for those using wheeled assistance, whilst reminding motorists they are entering a minor road and therefore need to be more careful.

Local authorities should be encouraged to implement continuous pavements as part of their road maintenance programme. If expense is an issue, continuous pavements can be implemented by surface paint, including setting the motorists' Give Way sign back from the junction.

- The use of **tactile paving** must be improved if it is to be safe and easy to use. There are two areas where mistakes are made:
 - The tactile paving is often stopped short of the actual edge of the paving meaning blind pedestrians might miss the tactile paving and therefore the crossing etc.
 - The wrong paving is sometimes laid leading a blind person to expect a road edge or crossing rather than steps.

Action 2: We will continue our involvement with CIHT on their work on shared space. After we receive their report by the end of 2017, we will consider the recommendations and announce how we will take them forward.

Action 3: We will refresh our guidance in Local Transport Note 2/08: Cycle Infrastructure Design to ensure that local authorities can continue to design good, safe and inclusive schemes that work for everyone in accordance with legislation.

- **sharing pavements and paths between pedestrians and cyclists** can be to

the detriment of the pedestrian experience in terms of safety, perceived safety, and ease of use. It can be frightening or unsettling. It can conflict with the desire that people using the pavement should be able to linger and socialise. Sometimes it leads to some pedestrians avoiding the route. In these ways, such design is not 'inclusive'. The problem is worse where the pavement or path is narrow, as it quite often is. The guidance needs to require adequate separation between cyclist and pedestrian to take account of the significantly different speeds of these two modes of transport. With the growth in the number of cyclists, there is a greater need for segregated cycle routes

Action 39: We will begin a survey to gather evidence and identify examples of improvements that could be made to the wider process for making Traffic Regulation Orders, by autumn 2017. This evidence will help inform our approach to tackling pavement parking.

We understand that the survey is intended to investigate the practical issue of how the existing TRO process could be made easier for councils, because implementing the London approach would force all councils to review every road in their areas to establish where limited footway parking should still be allowed.

- Instead of a survey, which will delay change, Bristol Walking Alliance would like action to be taken now to **give local authorities similar powers to those in London**, where pavement parking is banned unless specifically permitted. Action is needed *now* to address the severe problems experienced by disabled people as a result of pavement parking are already well-known and documented by organisations such as the RNIB, Guide Dogs and Living Streets.
- **the practical difficulties of implementing the change should not be the only driver for the change. The London approach, where the default is that footway parking is not allowed, sends the right message about what society regards as the norm for acceptable behaviour.**
- If there is to be a survey about the practical issues, then:
 - it should not just be about the practical difficulties of using TROs. It should be about whether the practical difficulties of TROs are more or less than the practical difficulties of applying the London approach.
 - the DfT should get on with it ! The planned date for the survey has slipped more than once. The AAP document says it will be done by "autumn 2017", but at today's date (November 22), it has not yet been issued.

Action 47: We will support work with local authorities to raise their awareness of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to local transport and transport facilities.

- The 2010 Act may have made provision for local authorities to seek the views of disability groups before undertaking any major work but this is becoming ignored, exacerbated by the budget cuts forced on councils. Bristol Council has a consultation framework for disabled groups, but in the last few months no work or guidance has been sought. Good advice given at the appropriate time can save very large amounts of money from making changes that do not work for disabled people and have later to be taken out and redone.