



April 2018

## BWA comments on the Local Plan review and Urban Living Supplementary Planning Document

The Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) is a consortium of organisations and individuals (see [bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk](http://bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk)) committed to making Bristol the best city for walking in the world. We want to create a pedestrian environment that is welcoming, safe, convenient and inclusive. We want to build on the achievements of Bristol's designation as European Green Capital, and the Good Transport Plan for Bristol.

The BWA supports the general thrust of the consultation responses submitted by the Bristol Civic Society, Sustrans and the Ramblers, and has the following comments relating specifically to walking.

### Local Plan review

The BWA is supportive of the general direction of the changes proposed in the review, but believes that there are **serious risks of erosion of the quality of the environment and of social life if 'densification' is not implemented well**: risks of cramped and overlooked privately-rented flats where people will stay for a long time only if they can't afford anywhere else; of families compelled to live in developments that aren't designed for children; a proliferation of cars, using and often parking on existing roads.

It is essential that the Local Plan is **integrated with transport plans**. Infrastructure that positively enables active travel will be an essential component of liveable densely developed neighbourhoods, and of their integration into the city as a whole. The planning process should promote and enable changes in travel behaviour, not just 'respond'. We are concerned that this doesn't emerge sufficiently clearly in the proposals.

In particular, we think that ULH3 on Urban Living should refer to **'locations with good accessibility' in terms of active travel** as well as public transport.

**New developments** should:

- preserve and enhance public pedestrian routes ('permeability');
- enable active and sustainable travel, in order to address air pollution, traffic congestion and poor health
- have access to safe, accessible recreational open spaces, or else new ones must be provided.

These requirements should be included, as appropriate, in proposed policies ULH3, HW1, HW3.

**Primary and secondary pedestrian routes** should be defined so that new adjacent development can contribute to the improvement of these routes. In particular, the Central

Area Primary and Secondary Pedestrian Routes currently defined under policy BCAP30 in the Central Area Plan routes should be extended to cover and link the proposed central development areas at Bristol City Centre (CDS1), Bristol Temple Quarter (CDS2), St Philip's Marsh (CDS3), Western Harbour (CDS4), Lawrence Hill (CDS5), and Central Bedminster (CDS7).

**Existing parks and green spaces** must be protected as Specially Protected Local Green Space.

### **Urban Living SPD**

We agree that denser development has the potential to provide much-needed housing in the most sustainable way, and we are encouraged by the references to the need to promote healthy lifestyles, to 'walkable, compact neighbourhoods' and to 'well-used primary pedestrian routes'. But, as noted above, there are serious risks.

We believe that successful 'densification' will only happen if there is **strong leadership from the planning system to ensure that quality infrastructure is provided** as an integral part of development. We regret that these factors do not figure more strongly, for example in the proposed quality standards for residential schemes, checklists and requirements of Design and Access statements. We hope that the proposed Transport Development Management Guide will be of great relevance in this context.

Whatever the arrangements for individual developments, we believe that the successful development of the 'Urban Living focal areas' will require **spatial frameworks** setting out clear expectations of developers. We are concerned that leaving this to 'stakeholders' will not prove satisfactory, and we would like to see the **Council taking the lead**.