

Response to Consultation

Bristol Cycling Campaign

Dec 2016

Filwood Quietway - Victoria Park



Ref: [Planning Application 16/06497/F](#) ([Overview of Filwood Quietway](#))

Our overall position on this consultation is: **SUPPORT**

Bristol Cycling Campaign believes that every Bristolian, whatever their age or ability, deserves safe and inviting space for cycling on all Bristol's streets. This should never be to the detriment of walking. We welcome the ambitious target in the council's [Bristol Cycle Strategy](#) for 20% of trips to work by bike by 2020. We have the following general comments on this consultation drawing on the [Bristol Cycling Manifesto](#), and the [Making Space for Cycling](#) guide for street renewals which set out how to achieve Space for Cycling:

Space for Cycling	<i>Does this measure provide for 1) Protected space on main roads; 2) Remove through motor traffic; 3) Safe routes to school; 4) Cycle friendly town centres; 5) Cycle routes in green spaces; 6) 20mph speed limits?</i>	Green - overall benefit
Road Danger Reduction	<i>Does this measure seek a genuine reduction in danger for all road users by identifying and controlling the principal sources of threat?</i>	Amber - overall neutral
Triple A Quality (All Ages and Abilities)	<i>Will this measure be attractive to all ages and abilities using all kinds of cycles?</i>	Green - overall benefit
Strategic Cycling Network	<i>How does this measure contribute to the development of Bristol Council's planned integrated and coherent strategic cycle network?</i>	Green - overall benefit
Cycle-proofing	<i>How far does this measure provide for Triple A Space for Cycling in the future?</i>	Green - overall benefit

Bristol Cycling Campaign has the following specific comments on this consultation:

1. The cycle route through Victoria Park is an important element of the Filwood Quietway. This was one of the key Space For Cycling issues identified for [Windmill Hill ward](#) during the May 2016 elections. Politicians and planners need to be brave. Cycling schemes aren't going to make everyone happy, but if they can improve life for the majority then they need to be pursued, no matter what.
2. We are pleased that both [Windmill Hill councillors](#) gave strong supporting statements about Space for Cycling in Bristol and the BCyC [councillor manifesto](#). The two [ward councillors for Knowle](#), Gary Hopkins and Christopher Davies, are also S4C supporters. We hope they will be as good as their word in supporting this proposal.
 - a. Jon Wellington: *"I'm delighted to support the Space for Cycling campaign. As someone who cycles to work every day and uses my bike to get around the ward I'd be very keen to see improvements not just in the ward but on routes in an out of the city centre and to Temple Meads as well as to our neighbouring communities in Bedminster, Knowle, Filwood and further afield. If elected I will work with the Mayor of Bristol, other councillors, the Neighbourhood Partnership and other agencies to bring safer cycle routes to the ward and to the city."*
 - b. Lucy Whittle: *"This is an important campaign, as a cyclist myself and having children who regularly cycle, it is essential to me that we have a safe and welcoming city for cyclists. More cyclists is better for everyone, even those who can't or don't want to get on a bike. Let's not make this an "us or them" issue, more cyclists is win:win for us all, it means less pollution, less congestion, less road rage, and fitter, healthier and happier communities."*
3. Some objectors worry about the route between St Luke's Road and St Mary Redcliffe junior school, used by schoolchildren. Some objectors worry about the amount of park perimeter space taken up, which includes the length of Hill Avenue on the southern side of the park. Some objectors are suggesting a route up Nutgrove Avenue, which is hillier and would cross pedestrian desire lines (as the proposed route does). These are all valid concerns, but the question is whether there is a better solution to what is proposed. We don't think there is. An earlier proposal to take the cycle route under St Luke's railway bridge was ruled out due to local opposition. This remains an issue that must be resolved, at a later date.

4. We have some sympathy with the objections to the route along the edge of the park by Hill Avenue, which is a flat area of ground near a quiet road, hence good for picnics and recreation. It is also the one part of the proposed route which differs from the current route. A cycle route fully segregated from motor traffic along Hill Avenue might be an (less suitable) alternative, but could only be done by removing on street parking. Hill Ave isn't pleasant with cars parked either side and single file traffic so people on bikes keep stopping to let cars through, and then there's the ramps. Many currently prefer to use that over going through the park because it's flat, there are no barriers to negotiate and there are fewer pedestrians.
5. The scheme designers are proposing segregated cycle and pedestrian paths with substantial width (like the one in eg Castle Park), in line with consistent feedback that segregated paths are preferred. The objectors are saying that a wide path has the feel of a road, and is a bad thing. This is a fundamental design question for cycle routes in parks. In the royal parks in London, they have done away with segregated paths, on the basis that they encourage higher cycle speeds. We do not think there is a 'right' design answer, but it is down to users being considerate and a design that enables this to happen.
6. The consultation process on this project has been particularly strong and thorough. Any planning proposal involves balancing different interests. We are in agreement with most of the "You Said, We Did" section on lighting, route choice, segregation, width and barriers.
<https://travelwest.info/projects/cycle-ambition-fund/bristol/filwood-quietway/victoria-park-proposals>
7. We believe the estimable Victoria Park Action Group have been co-opted by a fundamentally anti-cycling group whose true agenda is shown by their name, FOG (Filwood Opposition Group). Their purpose is to resist the whole Filwood Quietway route and they've quite rightly identified the Victoria Park section as the point where they can hide their true aims under a cloak of appearing to care about parks and pedestrians. These are indeed real issues, but an objective perspective will show they've been largely resolved by the thoughtful design and adaptations. FOG, under the guise of VPAG, have been effective at distributing selective information, which is designed to mislead and resulted in a disproportionate and unrepresentative number of negative comments on the application so far.
8. The park group objectors may have been less angry about this if the scheme showed a better balance of benefits between cyclists and pedestrians across the whole park. Unfortunately, the remit of this government-funded project is for a

cycling route only, so the improvements can not be spread across the park. We would like to see more benches and detailing on the route to encourage socialising and people making use of the park for 'hanging out' rather than just 'passing through'. There are some worrying objections to this idea as 'encouraging young people and anti-social behaviour'. We believe it will improve the park and slow speeds by increasing the presence of people enjoying themselves.

9. It is important to remember that this scheme is NOT about those who currently cycle, nor is it for 'cyclists'. The whole point must be that although Bristol has many people who feel able to do something as simple, affordable and quick as cycling, about 2 out of every three people will not even consider it, mostly due to fear of traffic. These are the people who will benefit from this kind of pleasant route through green spaces. This route will particularly attract children, older people, women and the less able bodied. The overriding factor that stops potential cyclists from starting is the fear of danger from motorized vehicles. The Victoria Park section of the Filwood Quietway will help reduce that fear. An integrated Filwood Quietway route will offer immediate & long term financial / health reward to the people of Bristol in many ways.
10. The benefits to inclusivity have not been set out clearly enough. At the moment people in wheelchairs, double buggy users, mobility scooter users find it difficult or impossible to access the park and these plans will be a great improvement. The park will become more open and welcoming to all.
11. We support the innovative use of sensor-based lighting, and important element in opening access to more people.
12. Enjoyment of parks and green spaces is not restricted to those on foot. Riding a bike on a traffic free route free from traffic danger, noise & pollutants is one of life's great pleasures, enjoyed by tens of thousands of Bristolians, with more every year. The Council has a duty to enable the widest appreciation and enjoyment of our city's green spaces.
13. The scheme designers are proposing segregated cycle and pedestrian paths with substantial width (like the one in eg Castle Park), in line with consistent feedback that segregated paths are preferred. The objectors are saying that a wide path has the feel of a road, and is a bad thing. This is a fundamental design question for cycle routes in parks. In the royal parks in London, they have done away with segregated paths, on the basis that they encourage higher cycle speeds. The general view, and experience, is that segregated and wider paths reduce conflict and narrower and shared ones produce conflict. The [DfT study on Shared Use](#) in 2012 sets out the evidence and specifically says of

Bristol (section6):

6.6.1 There is a relatively high level of compliance with segregation by both pedestrians and cyclists during weekday peak period, though typically, the level of compliance decreases at the weekend.

6.6.2 There is a high level of on-road cycling adjacent to the shared use facility during commuting periods, supporting the view that the road network is the preferred choice for many commuter cyclists.

14. It would be wholly unacceptable for there to be narrow paths that made no provision for the city aspirations for 20% of trips by cycle. The effect of narrow paths may indeed reduce the speed of some cyclists, but they do this by increasing perceived obstacles, congestion and conflict. They force other park users into a wholly unwelcome role as living 'traffic calming'. Better by far to provide sufficient width for normal respectful sharing. Please see [BCyC Policy – Shared Space Streets and Shared Use Pavements](#)
15. This will be a particularly important resource for children to cycle to school and cycle for recreation in a safe environment, families would be able to use it to teach children how to cycle.
16. We feel the health facing us are still not being taken anywhere near sufficiently seriously. Bristol has the 4th most polluted air quality in the UK with an estimated [200 lives lost each year](#). Access to green space and active travel are essential to our wellbeing and future (see the [Essential Evidence](#) series) and this is exactly the kind of project that Local Authorities are being urged to undertake by national policies such as [those set out by NICE](#).

[ENDS]

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References

1. [Bristol Cycling Campaign \(BCyC\)](#)

We been campaigning since 1991 to make cycling in Bristol so easy that everyone does it. We produced the [Bristol Cycling Manifesto](#) in 2013 which has now been signed by over 4,000 people. This sets out a 12 year strategy to quadruple cycling in the city which has been endorsed by the Mayor of Bristol and has influenced the Bristol Cycling Strategy.

2. **Lots of people ride bikes in Bristol**

The [2015 Bike Life Report Bristol](#), and 2011 census, showed that cycling to work in Bristol had doubled over the past 10 years and that Bristol had significantly more cycling than any other major English city. On census day in 2011 16,211 Bristolians said that they usually cycled to work. (1 in 12 of the 104,729 who travelled to work at that time). A telephone survey for HM Government indicated that in 2012 nearly a quarter of adult Bristolians cycled at least once a month for one reason or another. Bristol City Council data collected by observers between 2010 and 2013 show that at peak times there were over 10,000 cyclists on Bristol roads and 7% of all city traffic measured at these times were cyclists. Across the city, some routes carry 300-500 cyclists per hour and at four busy points on roads into the city cyclists constitute over a quarter of all traffic during peak hours.

<http://samsaundersbristol.wordpress.com/2013/02/12/considerate-cycling-27-bristol-compared/>

3. **Improving and extending the Bristol cycle network is a council priority**

Bristol City Council's [Cycle Strategy](#) and the [Bike Life 2015](#) report show how cycling benefits the city and set targets of 20% for commuting and trips to school. These incorporate the cycle network set out in our [Bristol Cycling Manifesto](#). All measures on these routes must include a high level of cycle provision, or at the least 'cycle proofing' for the future.

4. **Cycling is a national priority**

The Times newspaper 'Cities Fit for Cycling' campaign supported a parliamentary inquiry by the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group that was published last month. It was prepared by Professor Phil Goodwin of UWE. In his forward he says: "I, like most professional transport planners, providers and researchers of my generation, have grown up thinking that cycling, though worthy, is of small significance compared with the great questions of cars, traffic and public transport, or the universal significance of walking. [...] We were wrong. The evidence demonstrates quite clearly that [...] cycling is the mode of transport 'on the cusp of greatness'".

http://allpartycycling.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/get-britain-cycling_goodwin-report.pdf

5. **More cycling is a health priority**

Recently published guidelines by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence have set out how local authorities must invest in walking and cycling. In February this year the government's chief medial officer, Dame Sally Davies said: "I think that investment in cycling to drive up physical activity might emerge as one of the 'best buys' in some areas."

<http://publications.nice.org.uk/walking-and-cycling-local-measures-to-promote-walking-and-cycling-as-forms-of-travel-or-recreation-ph41/recommendations>