

Frequently Asked Questions and Way Forward

What is the scheme for?

The proposal is a build out to the west of the junction of Archfield Road/Pitch Lane to help pedestrians cross the road by improving visibility and slowing traffic.

Why were these proposals suggested?

The Transport Statement for Cotham School Expansion noted that 'the junction of Cotham Grove and Archfield Road is considered unsafe to cross. At present, some pupils use Pitch Lane as a more direct shortcut from Cotham Road to Cotham Grove. On-site observations noted that although Pitch Lane is a narrow lane with narrow footways along both sides of the carriageway, the use of this road is restricted to 'access only' to the small number of garages lining the lane for all motor vehicles and the road includes double yellow lines along its entire length.

As such, Pitch Lane is a suitable walk route for pupils given its limited traffic movements. Pitch Lane emerges onto Archfield Road directly opposite the wide junction entry at Cotham Grove. Furthermore, due to the broad width of Archfield Road and its close proximity to the nearby junction with Cotham Road, pupils crossing in this location may experience vehicles turning into the road and approaching before they have completed their crossing movement safely.

To make pedestrian safety improvements on Archfield Road, it is considered that the introduction of the measures would help to formalise crossing movements into a safe location and offer some degree of protection for pupils who regularly make crossing movements in this location.'

These findings are backed up by the number of enquiries both from local councillors and the former Neighbourhood Partnership who have received requested improvements at this location.

Who asked for this scheme?

The proposal was recommended by Planning and Transport officers of Bristol City Council to mitigate the effects of the development (expansion) of Cotham School. Cotham School is acting as developer through the planning process.

Why are you proposing to put the build out here?

The highway works package, which was secured through the application for the Cotham School Expansion, tries to address a problem specific to the planning proposal. This was to provide an improved crossing point at a location that has been identified locally as difficult to cross, and was secured in order to address the desire lines of school children crossing to and from the expanded school site. The proposals were identified by officers as necessary to mitigate the increase in traffic and to improve safety for pedestrians associated with the increase in pupils at the school.

Why are you proposing to provide a build out here when Cotham School do not want it?

Cotham School is acting as 'developer' and employed consultants to mitigate the effects of their expansion. Bristol City Council directed the consultants to existing problems for Cotham School students. It is immaterial whether the developer (Cotham School) wants the scheme as the Planning

and Transport departments of Bristol City Council recommend that this junction is improved for pupils to cross.

What happened to the original Neighbourhood Partnership scheme?

This junction was subject to a feasibility study funded by the Neighbourhood Partnership, which made recommendations to address the issues experienced at this junction. The current proposal draws directly on the findings of the feasibility study and incorporates its recommendations. It should be noted that there has never been any Neighbourhood Partnership funding identified for implementing this scheme.

Why can't you change the priorities?

Analysis work was undertaken in 2014 – see the document 'Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Neighbourhood Partnership Transport Sub-Group Report' for more information.

Option 1 suggested the implementation of a left turn ban from Archfield Road to be able to provide a build out on the north east side of Cotham Grove. This was not recommended this as it would be impossible to enforce and could lead to a false sense of security for pedestrians.

Option 2 suggested the reversal of the junction priorities to aid bus movements from Cotham Brow into Archfield Road and vice versa but highlighted several issues and did not meet visibility requirements.

The report concluded that a revised Option 1 should be considered in which a build out is introduced on the north west corner. The current proposal draws directly on the findings of the feasibility study and incorporates its recommendations. It should be noted that there has never been any funding identified for implementing this scheme through the Neighbourhood Partnerships.

How many parking spaces will be lost?

No parking spaces will be lost. There is an informal Keep Clear Marking present which by its nature indicates that the area should be kept clear, which protects access to the Nursery being blocked. There are not allowed to be provided to reserve the highway space for Nursery parking.

No other parking restrictions are proposed. The build out will remove part of the area that deliveries and parents currently use to drop off. There are still available parking spaces in the Residents Parking Scheme. The nursery's transport statement accompanying their recent expansion application noted the availability of parking in the area to accommodate dropping off which demonstrated that there would be more than enough on-street parking for the nursery. Their application to expand was granted on this basis.

Are you building a zebra crossing?

No. The proposal is a build out with dropped kerbs and tactile paving. Bollards will also be installed to prevent parking on the pavement.

Why did you change the original proposed location in the original planning documents?

Subsequent alterations were made to the proposals following more in-depth assessment of the site with regard to pedestrian activity and engineering practicalities and the scheme was altered to better serve these pedestrians and the location. When Highways officers visited the site, it quickly became apparent that pedestrians are choosing to cross the other side of the road than the original proposal.

The condition discharge documentation was made available on the Planning Portal. The Engineers went out on site and noted that the proposal didn't work out in terms of drainage, camber, etc. and taking into account the Neighbourhood Partnership feasibility recommendations; it was felt that it would be better moved.

There is a Grampian condition that the works as shown in principle in the application were implemented - further details to be agreed in the condition. As with most highway schemes, not all of the engineering details can be finalised before permission is given because of timescales, so that's why we ask for more detail at condition stage.

How will nursery deliveries access the car park?

The proposal has been designed as a vehicle cross over and access will be retained.

How will children be dropped off for the nursery?

It is recognised that the nursery operators are concerned with the impact on their ability to drop off on the public highway directly outside the site. However, the use of the public highway to provide a scheme to improve pedestrian safety and reduce conflict at a location identified locally as problematic is more in line with the City Council's road safety, transport and planning policies than the retention of public highway specifically for dropping off to serve a private business.

Schools, nurseries etc. often have Keep Clear zig zag markings to prevent parents driving and other vehicle users from parking in the vicinity of the child care setting. This is to reduce the conflict between vulnerable road users and parked vehicles. Drivers dropping off children do not have a right to drop their children off directly outside the child care provider.

The Nursery's expansion planning application demonstrated that there were plenty of parking spaces within the Residents Parking Scheme area to allow drop off.

Have you undertaken a Road Safety Audit?

No. The Council are not required to undertake Safety Audits on minor schemes implemented by themselves, as Highway Authority. Notwithstanding this, the scheme is being designed by qualified Road Safety Auditors.

Have you undertaken pedestrian surveys?

A number of surveys have been undertaken as a result of enquiries, to confirm which side of Pitch Lane pedestrians/pupils are crossing from. Results show during nursery/school drop off times that pupils are choosing to cross from Archfield Road southern footway to the west of Pitch Lane and vice versa.

Why are you spending tax payers money on this?

The funding for the scheme has come from the planning application for the expansion of Cotham School.

Why can't you spend the money on the kids education?

As this is a planning application, the funding must be spent on highway measures. It is the duty of the council to improve safety and promote sustainable transport to school children as well as to educate them.

Who has been consulted?

The proposals for an informal crossing point were included in the planning application documents. In terms of the consultations carried out on the original consent there was a site and press notice and 63 neighbours consulted; all the plans were available to view online.

On reflection, it would have been helpful to consult local residents when the discharge of condition details were submitted for the highways works, however, it is not a planning requirement to publicly consult on discharge of condition applications. The planning application was decided at the DC Committee in November 2017.

The off-site highway works often evolve as part of the planning application and so this would not have necessarily be known from the beginning of the process (when the consultations are done). Given the works are also proposed as improvement works for highways safety reasons this would not ordinarily be contentious.

In this instance, given the sensitivity of the site and number of objections raised to the off-site highway works it is recognised that it would be prudent to consult further on the proposed highway works/ revised design with a subsequent application. Further alterations to the scheme will therefore be addressed through the submission of a section 73 (condition variation) application.

BCC Transport are acting as agents for the Developers and implementing the scheme on their behalf, and consult on all schemes in line with the Traffic Calming Regulations, regardless of Traffic Regulation Orders.

Why did you not consult with the Nursery originally?

There was no direct consultation with the nursery on this scheme during the planning process as the highway works are quite remote from the school. In view of this, on such schemes where the Council are implementing the works, we undertake further consultation at the highway design stage.

After this, out of courtesy officers delivering the works contacted the Nursery to inform them that there was a buildout proposed, attaching the indicative plan, and that further consultation would be forthcoming following more design work. A further response was sent after the nursery raised objections, clearly outlining that there was going to be an additional further consultation on the scheme when further design has been undertaken.

What happens now?

To summarise, the scheme is the reallocation of public highway from informal drop off space used at the start and end of the nursery day, to a measure which creates additional space for pedestrians at all times, aids crossing movements for all, including children from the nursery, and draws from a safety concern identified by the Neighbourhood Partnership.

We have now undergone informal consultation for the build out proposal that was approved through the planning process. There were 67 separate comments on the proposals with 61 objections, 5 in favour and 1 neutral.

Bearing in mind the level of objection in mind, it is proposed that the design is revisited. The new proposals will be submitted as a variation to the original condition on the planning application and officers will ensure that affected frontagers are consulted as part of this process.