Chapter 4 Public realm vision
Public realm vision

Nelson Street will become an attractive quarter of the city centre, where the historic fabric is part of a lively pedestrian environment framed by exemplar new buildings. It will be an improved pedestrian route of choice linking Broadmead, Harbourside and Christmas Steps.

SPD8, para 2.1

The public realm vision for Nelson Street sits within a wider aspiration for high quality streets and spaces across the city. This section explores what is meant by a high quality public realm and how this will be achieved in the Nelson Street study area.

Public realm objectives

**Characterful**
- streets and spaces that respond to local context, well grounded within an identifiable area
- streets that enhance existing historic and high quality assets and are distinctive places
- streets that create a great first impression, helping to reinforce the image and identity of Bristol
- streets that use public art and lighting to reinforce key buildings and routes

**Animated**
- streets with active frontages, providing interest, overlooking and opportunities to dwell
- streets that provide the canvas for public art and the creative, sociable and playful opportunities of city life
- a public realm that supports public events and festivals of different scales

**Convivial**
- street and spaces that encourage positive social interaction for all members of the community
- streets that provide seating, shelter and space for informal relaxation
- a range of spaces providing a variety of experiences, with areas of green and significant street tree planting
- creative lighting that reinforces key spaces, establishing a welcoming and stimulating atmosphere
- streets that employ a creative and imaginative approach to traffic management

**Comfortable**
- streets and spaces that are designed to be safe, inclusive and attractive places in which to meet, gather, work, relax and move through
- streets that accommodate traffic but provide generous footways and cycle routes
- streets without clutter - signs, advertisements, street markings are minimised
- streets that are well lit and feel safe
- streets that provide places to rest away from the main activity of the street or space
- streets that reflect microclimate

**Resilient**
- streets that use a co-ordinated and limited palette of high quality materials and street furniture that are easy to source and maintain
- streets with significant green infrastructure, primarily through comprehensive tree planting
- streets and spaces that exploit the best available techniques, such as SUDS, and locally sourced materials

**Connected**
- streets that provide good direct routes to key destinations, positively encouraging walking, cycling and public transport
- routes that are legible and with clear line of sight from one way marker to another
- streets that use of materials and design to provide visual keys to assist wayfinding
Good design: Principles for Bristol

### Design for People
1. Application of a user hierarchy – consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists first
   - a. Pedestrians
   - b. Cyclists
   - c. Public transport
   - d. Private cars
   The needs of disabled people are considered within all of the above modes
2. Recognising the importance of the community function of streets
3. Balancing the needs of different user groups
4. Promoting an inclusive environment that is welcoming and accessible for all ages and abilities

### Design for Safety
1. Moving away from standard road layouts and junction solutions
2. Design for 20mph
3. Provide schemes that are legible, integrated and co-ordinated
4. Identity and support pedestrian and cycle desire lines
5. Ensure good lighting and surfacing, especially on primary routes
6. Use the minimum of highway features and reduce clutter

### Realising the potential
1. Establish a clear vision and objectives
2. Develop master plans and design codes
3. Developing street character types that respond to local distinctiveness
4. Encourage innovation with flexibility of approach
5. Create street networks that provide permeability and connectivity
6. Consider an appropriate scale of change - from low key interventions through to more comprehensive redevelopment

### Delivering Long Term Success
1. Understand the needs and aspirations of the area and its community
2. Undertake a collaborative approach
3. Develop and maintain quality audit processes that demonstrate how design meets best practice, policies and objectives
4. Use sustainable, maintainable materials and details
5. Monitor schemes
6. Evaluate outcomes and lessons learned

The User Hierarchy
- a. Pedestrians
- b. Cyclists
- c. Public transport
- d. Private cars

The needs of disabled people are considered within all of the above modes.
Good design: Principles for Nelson Street public realm

Re-establishing connections

Nelson Street will become an attractive, accessible route of choice between The Centre and Broadmead.

Nelson Street will be reconnected with the Old City and Christmas Steps, both physically and through the use of materials and signage.

Historic permeability in the area will be re-established, breaking down the large monolithic blocks to create new pedestrian routes.

The materials vocabulary of Broadmead will extend to create a more coherent shopping quarter experience.

Pedestrian crossings will be enhanced and link new, high quality, spaces.

Rupert Street/Lewins Mead will have less general traffic, making it a higher quality, more pleasant pedestrian environment with better crossing points.

Materials

Materials will be used to reinforce the distinction between the three zones of public realm, locating each place clearly within Broadmead, Old City or the Lewins Mead/Rupert Street corridor.

Primary pedestrian routes will be defined by high quality materials, creating a visual and material continuity with the high quality spaces in the city centre, especially The Centre and Broadmead.

Existing historic materials and details, paving, kerbs, channels etc, will be retained and reinforced with new stone, in particular to highlight landmark buildings and associated spaces.

A limited palette of new paving materials will be used that is durable, cost effective and complements retained historic materials.

Paving materials will extend from the footway into building frontages in places to increase the apparent width of the public realm.

Traffic management

Public transport, walking and cycling will be prioritised.

Through traffic will be reduced.

Speed tables will be used to reinforce key nodes, reducing traffic speed and flow of vehicles, providing a safe and clear cycle route and safer crossings for pedestrians.

Opportunities to replace the stairwell that impedes the footway on Nelson Street will be sought.

Opportunities to reallocate road space to create more pedestrian/cycle friendly uses will be promoted.

The development of a segregated cycle route along Nelson Street will be promoted.

On-street parking will be reconsidered and reduced where appropriate to enable a high quality environment for the listed buildings.
Good design: Principles for Nelson Street public realm

Street planting
Existing trees that are healthy specimens will be retained. Where trees are removed they will be replaced.

Trees that have been removed as part of the development sites will be replaced in their public realm improvements.

Additional tree planting opportunities will be sought in the area, particularly along the main transport corridors, but will inevitably be limited due to existing footway widths and underground services.

Species will be chosen according to site conditions, for example, to tolerate shade. The form and habit of the selected species must also be appropriate to the confined spaces and pathways.

Street furniture
Street furniture will reinforce the distinction between the three zones of public realm, Old City, Broadmead and the Lewins Mead/Rupert Street corridor.

Opportunities for new seating will be explored, both within the highway and on the frontages of new developments.

Seating will respond to the local microclimate and be located where possible on the sunny side of the street.

Street lighting will reinforce the primary pedestrian route from the Centre, continuing the same lighting column through Nelson Street to Broadmead. Street lights will have brackets for banners to support events etc.

General decluttering will be undertaken, rationalising signage and locating cctv on lighting columns where possible.

Wayfinding and Public art
Primary routes will be clearly identifiable and have high quality materials.

Legible city signage will be reviewed to promote new pedestrian links and opportunities.

Street name plates will be reviewed and Legible City plates added where appropriate to reinforce the area's location within the Old City/Broadmead.

Public art will highlight key routes and spaces, assisting legibility and navigation through the area.

Public art will reflect the diverse character of the area, respecting the historic whilst engaging the new residential community.
The Nelson Street area has been isolated historically from the wider city centre, firstly through its location outside the town wall and more recently by the monolithic block structure of post-war architecture, planning and transport decisions.

This strategy seeks to use the opportunity provided by the substantial redevelopment of the area to expand the character and materials of the adjacent Old City and Broadmead to reintegrate Nelson Street with the wider city centre. In addition, the transport corridors will be enhanced with new tree planting and improvements to building frontages and incidental public spaces, creating a more attractive and permeable pedestrian environment.

The public realm enhancements will:

- Connect spaces and enhance transport routes with trees and high quality paving
- Reconnect Old City with Nelson Street using high quality materials
- Continue Broadmead townscape and materials across Union Street to create a more coherent, high quality, shopping experience
Public realm principles

Key:
- Improve primary pedestrian routes with high quality materials
- Speed tables at nodes to reinforce place and reduce traffic speed
- Improve pedestrian permeability
- Improve incidental public spaces
- Art interventions reinforce gateways and assist legibility
- Develop segregated cycle route

Not to scale
Public realm vision

Materials palette - Old City

Paving

The palette of paving materials will be limited to complement the historic fabric and buildings and create a timeless quality that will continue to look good over the years. Paving will be:

- high quality and robust to reflect the intensive city centre location, reducing on-going maintenance
- designed to withstand vehicular runover from loading vehicles etc.
- fully accessible
- locally sourced where possible

Primary routes will be paved with natural stone, linking Nelson Street with the new high quality public realm on The Centre and creating a more coherent public realm across the city centre. Secondary routes will have high quality concrete slabs.

Paving materials will be:

- sawn Scoutmoor York stone paving slabs in general footway areas. This will be 45-60 cm wide and random lengths laid perpendicular to buildings
- flamed Welsh blue pennant stone paving slabs and channel stones. Slightly darker and greyer than the York stone, the flaming gives textural interest.
- secondary routes will have Marshalls conservation textured paving slabs, silver grey
- other materials will be considered within the frontages of new developments

Speed tables will be Marshalls tegula pennant grey laid herringbone (or similar approved).

Hot rolled asphalt will be used on road surfaces

Kerbs and channels

The traditional detail in Bristol is for kerbs, both cast iron and stone to be accompanied by stone gutter channels. This detail continues into more recent design where standard concrete kerbs still usually sit next to a concrete channel.

All kerbs will be laid with a stone or concrete channel.

Cast iron kerbs

Existing cast iron kerbs will be retained and any gaps infilled with reclaimed units. New kerb units can be cast as straights and to suit corner radii where required.

Pennant stone kerbs

Existing stone kerbs will be retained and any gaps infilled with new or reclaimed units. New kerbs will be sawn Welsh pennant stone, 125mm wide x250x 700-1000mm random length with bevelled top edge.

Granite kerbs and bus kerbs

Granite is a robust and traditional material suitable for heavily trafficked corridors and withstand bus damage. Tooled Portuguese granite kerbs - 300mm wide x 250mm deep x 700-1000mm long - and bus kerbs will be used along the major public transport routes unless there are existing cast iron/stone kerbs.
Public realm vision

Materials palette - Old City

Lighting
The silver twin headed Philips Milewide street lighting columns will be continued from Broad Quay and the new Centre space, through Nelson Street to Broadmead, visually reinforcing the primary route. These will be LED energy units to reduce electricity consumption in the area. As in The Centre the new units will be dimmable to enable specific events and allow lower energy consumption at quiet times if appropriate.

Lighting columns will have fixings for banners to create another dimension and support the street being used for events. Opportunities for more artistic and creative use of lighting to highlight specific buildings and spaces should be explored.

Seating
General seating will be Benchmark Centreline CL003 stainless steel. These are robust and able to withstand the tough city centre environment.

Other seating styles within the frontages of new developments will be considered on an individual basis, subject to them being sufficiently robust.

Cycle racks
Stainless steel Sheffield stands will be used to match others across The Centre. End racks will have tapping rails.

Litter bins
Litter bins will be Benchmark Centreline CL052/54 stainless steel. These are robust and able to withstand the tough city centre environment.

Bollards
Bollards will be kept to a minimum and, in accordance with the Highway Protocol, will reflect their immediate surroundings. They will be:

Cast iron
Manufactured by Broxap, these are unique to Bristol and used across the Old City

Stainless steel
Will be Marshalls Rhino RS001 stainless steel with hazard banding
Street furniture and paving within the primary routes - Nelson Street and Union Street - will continue the palette established in the recent Broadmead public realm works to create a more coherent primary shopping experience. The existing materials are:

**Paving:**
- Honey-coloured concrete slabs/blocks type
  - Breccia Giallo, 100*200*80mm (5mm chamfer)
  - Breccia Giallo, 200*400*100mm (3mm chamfer)
- Charcoal fine picked granite sets 100x100x100mm
- Eluna blue glazed blocks 200x100mm

**Street furniture:**
- Litter bins - Voss Lb10 elliptical stainless steel
- Bollards - Voss Tb20 stainless steel oval bollard
- Tree grilles - Area Baltimore 1500mm stainless steel
- Seats - Voss Bs10 stainless steel and hardwood benches

New kerbs will be:
- Silver grey granite
New paving outside the primary routes will be:
- Marshalls conservation textured slabs - silver grey
Public realm vision

Public realm strategy

Public realm improvements will reinforce the primary routes and maximise the potential of the direct and accessible connections between The Centre and Broadmead, the Old City and Christmas Steps.

The following plans illustrate the principles of how paving materials, street furniture and traffic management will realise this objective.
Public realm vision

Plan 1

Nelson Street Public Realm Strategy
December 2014
City Design Group
Public realm vision

Seek removal of stairway from footway to enable pedestrian/cycle improvements
Public realm vision

- New build out highlights entrance and existing lamps
- New seating area, extending Broadmead materials and furniture
- Cycle lane widening improvements
- Old Bridewell Police station
- Odeon/H+M

Plan 3
- Silver St
- Union St
- Union St
- Bridewell St
- Nelson St
- Bridewell St
- Fairfax St
- All Saints St

Plan 4
- Silver St
- Nelson St
- The Station
- A38
- Bridewell St
- Old Bridewell Police station
- Cycle lane widening improvements
- New seating area, extending Broadmead materials and furniture
- Odeon/H+M
Nelson Street indicative section 1

Development site ownership tree planting and bench seating

Footway

One-way single carriageway

Widened cycle lane

Footway

St. John’s church

Raised speed table

Pennant paving

Pennant paving

Pennant grey tegular block paving in herringbone pattern

Pennant paving

0 1 2 5 metres
Public realm vision

Nelson Street indicative section 2
Chapter 5 Public consultation
Public consultation

Consultation activity and summary

The study will be consulted upon internally prior to consultation with external stakeholders. A summary of feedback will be inserted and a note of any changes made to the body of the report following the consultation period.
Delivery

Chapter 6 Delivery
Step based approach to delivery

SPD8 identified a mechanism for funding the public realm in the area, with each redevelopment opportunity being identified with the enhancement of a particular zone.

Since 2006 the economic climate and planning system have changed significantly however. The consented schemes (Magistrates Courts and New Bridewell) are undertaking the enhancement of considerably smaller areas of public realm than was originally envisaged, reflecting issues of viability in a difficult financial climate. St Lawrence House, which was identified as the mechanism for improving Bell Lane, has been granted ‘prior approval’ for a change from office to residential use under the new permitted development rights. This change would previously have needed planning permission and attracted a S106 contribution to fund the public realm works, but under the new regime no such contribution is required.

CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) has also changed the ability of the Planning Authority to achieve public realm improvements local to a development, with monies being collected centrally for agreed infrastructure projects. It is possible that Nelson Street could be agreed to be one of the Corporate infrastructure priorities.

These changes raise challenges for the comprehensive delivery of a high quality public realm linking The Centre to Broadmead.

There are some positive developments too however. Some major new projects, such as Metrobus, have come forward that were not envisaged within SPD8. The reduction of general traffic in the area that this will bring, the enhancement of public transport provision on Rupert Street and the complete reworking of the southern gateway around the Cenotaph, will perhaps effect the most significant change to the quality of the environment of Nelson Street, making it more attractive to use as a pedestrian and cycling link.

It is, however, inevitable that the public realm improvements in the area will be undertaken incrementally rather than in one grand scheme, and that more of the burden for this will fall on the Local Authority.

Public realm improvements will be achieved through:

- planned maintenance - by seeking agreement with Highways Asset Management to increase the specification of specific works. This may itself be done incrementally, eg by investing in higher quality kerbs, which are the most expensive element and most disruptive to lay, but then using standard concrete paving. Over time this approach will raise the overall quality of the area.
- funding bids, e.g. Local Sustainable Transport Funds, which support schemes promoting public transport, cycling and walking
- Neighbourhood Partnership, who are able to prioritise works in their areas
- the Council’s remaining capital programme

Map 3.4 from SPD8 showing public realm enhancement packages
Chapter 7 Summary
The current redevelopments will include substantial improvements to the public realm. This strategy will inform these public realm and public art works and future investment from new developments. It will also guide future city council investment and funding bids. The public realm works will:

- reinforce the importance of the primary pedestrian routes through the city, improving the connections and pedestrian experience in the main transport corridors and more closely associating the area with the neighbouring Old City and Broadmead.
- contribute to a high quality segregated cycling network through the city centre, encouraging wider participation and making it an improved route of choice for cyclists
- contribute to making Nelson Street an attractive city quarter, where people want to live and work

Summary

Nelson Street Public Realm Strategy

Summary and next steps

SPD8 (2006) provided a vision for the regeneration of Nelson Street

Nelson Street will become an attractive quarter of the city centre, where the historic fabric is part of a lively pedestrian environment framed by exemplar new buildings. It will be an improved pedestrian route of choice linking Broadmead, Harbourside and Christmas Steps.

SPD8, para 2.1

Nelson Street is centrally located and provides a key, accessible, pedestrian and cycling route between The Centre and Broadmead, The Old City and Christmas Steps. It contains a significant number of key historic buildings, but suffers from the mistakes of post-war planning which, with its brutalist architecture, high level walkways and blank facades, contributed to the area's decline into an unloved and underused corridor.

Nelson Street has started to improve over recent years, with the advent of new cycling infrastructure, major street art interventions and new leisure and cafe uses. The area is now undergoing substantial redevelopment that will radically change the character of the built environment - with more active frontages and sympathetic architecture; improved public transport infrastructure - reducing the impact of traffic, and create new public spaces and a more permeable pedestrian and cycling environment. The influx of new residential uses will bring life and vibrancy to the streets.
Appendix A - Alternative traffic solutions
Appendix A: Alternative traffic solutions

Bridewell Street one-way (south) vehicular traffic option

Public realm improvement opportunities

SPD envisaged Bridewell Street as a shared space with minimal parking, but did not recommend any specific traffic management changes. There is, however, an opportunity to further reduce through traffic movements in the area by making it one-way south, i.e. coming in from Rupert Street, as there are already vehicular traffic options for egress via Silver Street and for buses via Union Street. This has positive benefits in terms of reducing traffic movements, pedestrian safety and public realm improvement opportunities.

The pavement along the Old Police Station could be widened to open out the frontage and express the attractive facade of the building whilst still providing parking bays for some Police emergency response vehicles and loading bays. Existing kerbed corners can also be extended as a result of one-way traffic movement. The width of pavement offers opportunity then for additional street tree planting, whilst allowing a 3.5 width single carriageway and a contraflow cycle lane.

Opportunity exists for a build-out of paving to the entrance of the Old Police Station on Nelson Street, allowing additional pavement space and improved setting for the buildings associated lamps.

New Yorkstone paving on both sides of the carriageway will greatly enhance the quality of setting to the existing Old Police Station and New Bridewell redevelopment.
Option 1

1. One-way south only with contraflow cycling on Bridewell Street. Otherwise retain existing vehicle movements.

   This would provide little benefit to pedestrians and cyclists, retaining the current vehicular zig-zag movements through Nelson Street.

Option 2

1. One-way south only with contraflow cycling on Bridewell Street

2. One-way south on All Saints Street, creating a crossroads at Nelson Street junction

3. Speed tables at junctions to prioritise pedestrian movements

4. Pedestrianisation/removal of parking/traffic restrictions eg buses only at all times with limited loading windows on Bridewell/Fairfax Street

5. Opportunity to improve junction and space

6. Continue one-way down The Pithay to All Saints Street

SPD8 proposed changes to vehicular movement in Fairfax Street and All Saints Street as part of the redevelopment of the NCP car park and Sterling House. These could, however, be brought forward sooner if a satisfactory solution could be found to the NCP entrance and bring wider public realm benefits. These changes could be added to the proposed one-way on Bridewell Street.

Appendix A: Alternative traffic solutions