

## Introduction

The council has a duty to provide for the needs of the city's population by encouraging activity and reducing air pollution. Along with other factors, physical inactivity – caused by increasing urbanisation, sedentary jobs, and passive modes of transport – is contributing to chronic disease. Walking is an effective form of exercise and can lead to health benefits, improve community cohesion and reduce the impact of air pollution. This policy aims to make walking in the city easier, safer and more pleasant for everyone.

Studies have shown that good pedestrian infrastructure and walkability can have a significant beneficial impact on property values in both the short and long term. Getting pedestrian infrastructure and good place planning right in the first place is therefore also economically beneficial. The layout and design of any development should aim to provide safe, continuous, direct, secure, legible and visually attractive routes for pedestrians. Slower vehicle speeds are therefore required to ensure safe environments for pedestrians.

The Equality Act 2010 requires public sector authorities to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty in carrying out their functions. This includes making reasonable adjustments to the existing built environment to ensure the design of infrastructure is accessible to all. It is therefore important that gradients and footway widths allow for accessibility. Consideration is also needed of a wide range of disabled users, including people in wheelchairs, people with visual or mobility impairments, as well as people with learning difficulties or dementia.

Provision is needed to allow all users – be they able bodied or mobility impaired, elderly or young, to use streets to walk alongside each other, pass one another, overtake and stop to interact with one another.

Footway widths must accommodate passing pedestrians and additional buffer area to accommodate highway features, such as street furniture and trees. Additional buffer space is also recommended alongside busier roads or where there are higher levels of larger vehicles, especially where there is no on-street parking. What remains of the footway after these considerations is the 'effective' footway width, which is the available width for users. To reduce conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, shared surface streets will not be encouraged where the presence of traffic is likely to intimidate pedestrians. In view of this, we recommend that shared space streets are not used as the sole design solution throughout larger developments but can be incorporated as part of a coherent hierarchy of street types. Traditional roads with pavements are preferred for most developments, unless traffic flows and speed are very low, and conflict can be minimised. We would expect wider footways to be provided in busier areas such as the city centre, outside hospitals and public buildings, or where there are lots of children with parents.

## Objective

This document sets out the principles by which Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) will manage the installation of street furniture and trees on the public highway.

The objective of this document is to provide guidance and minimum design widths on footways and carriageways to ensure safe use and access for all, while permitting changes to the streets of Brighton and Hove.

This policy aims to aid the transformation of streets into walkable places that are more welcoming. Pedestrian access, permeability and design are key for ensuring that people have access to various amenities, services and destinations while any construction works affect the footways. Footways, footpaths and other pedestrian spaces should be designed and set out in an inclusive way to allow for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users. Construction items such as scaffolding/hoarding, mobile access platform, skips and portable toilets can limit pedestrian space and obstructing routes. At worst, these can fully restrict access for some users. Therefore, the policy recommends that a balanced approach needs to be taken while placing installing items on footways, while considering access remains for all users.

## What does the policy document cover?

This policy document sets out tools and processes to maintain a high-quality environment for Brighton and Hove City and best suits it's local land-uses and the wide variety of users accessing them, while permitting construction activities around the city.

This document aims to encourage better design by providing clear guidance by promoting a high level of design and maintenance of footways and carriageways during any construction activity being undertaken by them. This policy will therefore promote best practice design principles to be applied across Brighton and Hove City.

This policy document forms part of a collection of policies which should be read in conjunction with one another, to ensure the highway is managed in a way to best suit Brighton and Hove City and those using the highway.

Street furniture, signs, bins, bollards, utilities boxes, lighting and other items which tend to accumulate on a footway can clutter the streetscape. Clutter is visually intrusive and has adverse implications for many disabled people. The agencies responsible for such items and those who manage the street should consider ways of reducing their visual impact and impediment to users.

Footway widths can be varied between different streets to take account of pedestrian volumes and composition. Streets where people walk in groups or near schools or shops, for example, need wider footways. In areas of high pedestrian flow, the quality of the walking experience can deteriorate unless sufficient width is provided. The quality of service goes down as pedestrian flow density increases. Pedestrian congestion through insufficient capacity should be avoided. It is inconvenient and may encourage people to step into the carriageway.

There is no maximum width for footways. In lightly used streets (such as those with a purely residential function), the minimum unobstructed width for pedestrians should generally be 2 m. Additional width should be considered between the footway and a heavily used carriageway, or adjacent to gathering places, such as schools and shops. It is acknowledged that there are circumstances in narrower footways where this desirable width may not be

achievable. The inclusive Mobility guidance does recommend that a minimum of 1.5 m can be adopted when the footway is constrained.

Trees to be sited within or close to footways should be carefully selected so that their spread does not reduce pedestrian space below minimum dimensions for width and headroom.

## How and when should I engage with Brighton and Hove City Council?

Developers should consult with the Highway's Development Control team (hereafter referred to as 'the Department') at Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) when advice is needed on specific details of design.

## Do I require approval?

The majority of works that could implement street furniture is carried out by internal teams within the council. All works should conform to this policy and the guidance set out previously. Developers works are normally managed through the S278 process by the Department.

## How should I request approval?

As set out above internal teams should conform to the policy and developers can seek advice from the department through the councils web site.

## Integration with existing policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the other policies governing the design for highways within Brighton and Hove City, such as:

- BHCC Plan for 2020 to 2023
- BHCC Streetscape Design Guidelines First Edition

