



# **Bath River Line**

## **User-Centred Research & Community Engagement Report**

**June 2021**

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# 1.0 Introduction & Purpose of Study

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This interim report details an initial phase of user research and community engagement undertaken to inform the development of design proposals for the Bath River Line project.

The Bath River Line project (BRL) will create a linear park following the River Avon from Batheaston to Newbridge. Covering 10km, the BRL will connect beautiful green spaces and city landmarks, tempting pubs and peaceful water meadows.

A key part of the project is creating a high-quality route for walking and cycling. But the aspiration is also to offer opportunities to stop, sit back and enjoy the beauty of the river, the city, and the landscape beyond.

To this aim, Streets Reimagined has been working with partners at Churchman Thornhill Finch and B&NES to undertake an engagement process with a wide spectrum of users to develop deeper understandings around the current lived experience of the riverside from different perspectives.

This initial phase of research has been undertaken alongside spatial analysis and has helped to inform emerging design proposals.

The delivery phasing for the BRL, will see the western section of the river line come forward first, from Newbridge to Green Park. A later second phase will consider the eastern section (from Pulteney Weir to Batheaston). This section of the route will be defined following further consultation and is shown indicatively as a dotted line. A final phase will consider the central section, from Bath Quays to Pulteney Weir.

Therefore, this report is particularly focussed on the proposed western section of the BRL.

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## 2.0 Context & Constraints

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It is worth noting that this research and engagement exercise was undertaken in a challenging context with a number of constraints.

Firstly, the study was undertaken between January 2021 and May 2021, and for the majority of this period there were limitations in terms of social gatherings due to Covid-related legislation. Indeed, for much of this period it was not permissible to meet more one person from outside your household. As a result, it was not possible to undertake more conventional approaches to community engagement such as holding community events and face-to-face workshops etc.

Also, it is also worth highlighting the geographic scale of the project. The ambition for the River Line is for it to extend along the entire length of the river within the city of Bath - a distance of at least 10km. And, along the way, taking in a multitude of parks and beautiful green spaces.

Whilst, this initial phase of the project focussed on the western section, this still contains at least five areas of open space and a length of path which collectively can take several hours to walk.

The challenge therefore was to develop a practical and effective methodology that could;

- deliver initial findings within 1-2 months to help shape the early development of proposals
- enable the participation of a very large number of interested parties
- provide 'deep dive' qualitative analysis from a wide spectrum of different user types.
- Provide opportunities for participants to hear in detail about how the proposals that had been developed and to have an opportunity to feedback on the proposals.

In the next section we introduce the methodology developed to adapt to these constraints and requirements.

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# 3.0 Multi-Method Approach

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A mixed-method research approach was developed for this initial phase of the project. This involved secondary research by way of a review of previous studies and evidence. It also involved primary research including interviews, an interactive website, a walking focus group and a webinar.

Below we summarise the scope and rationale for each element;

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## Desktop review of previous studies and evidence

As a starting point, a review of previous consultations and studies was undertaken with the aim of drawing on the learnings and to shape the engagement process to provide new insights.

The previous community engagement exercises and studies reviewed included;

- Water Space Study: 2016 Boater Survey
- Water Space Study: 2016 Resident's Survey
- B&NES Liveable Neighbourhoods Community Forum (Interactive Map) 2020
- Green Space Observational Analysis (August

2020)

- Autumn / Winter 2021 'Soft Consultation' (based on schematic designs for the open spaces)
- UWE / WECA Green Space Study July 2020
- B&NES Green Space Study 2015
- Walking and cycling on Shared-Use paths: the User Perspective (UWE 2016) - study focussed on user behaviour along the Bristol-Bath Railway Path in Bristol.

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## Semi-Structured Interviews

Initially, a stakeholder mapping exercise was undertaken to identify different interest and user groups. Then, through a process of reaching out, a diverse group of individuals with different insights and perspectives on the River Line were interviewed over the phone or via video call using a semi-structured interview schema.

The aim was to develop more in-depth qualitative understanding from a diverse range of user perspectives.

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# 3.0 Multi-Method Approach

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The interviewees included;

- A local resident of Bath Riverside
- A local resident of Widcombe
- 2 X local residents of Norfolk Crescent
- Local councillors for Westmoreland, Bathwick and Lambridge.
- A run coach who leads groups runs along the river
- A liveaboard boater and outreach worker for Julian House
- A Newbridge resident and parent of three (5, 9, 11) girls under-10 who use push along scooters and travel along the current path to school.
- A regular cycle commuter, walker and local resident of Newbridge
- A 'Walks for Health' walk leader, Bath Ramblers representative & Widcombe resident
- A wheelchair user
- A keen cyclist, regular user of the path and local resident
- A cycling advocate and Bath resident

In addition, the team interacted via email with;

- A representative from RNID and B&NES resident
- A representative from Sustrans (National Cycle Network)
- A representative from Walk Ride Bath

# 3.0 Multi-Method Approach

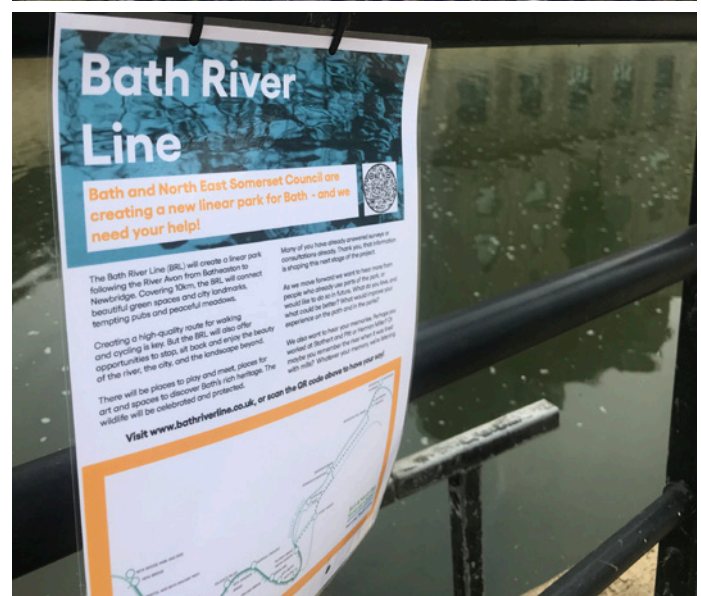
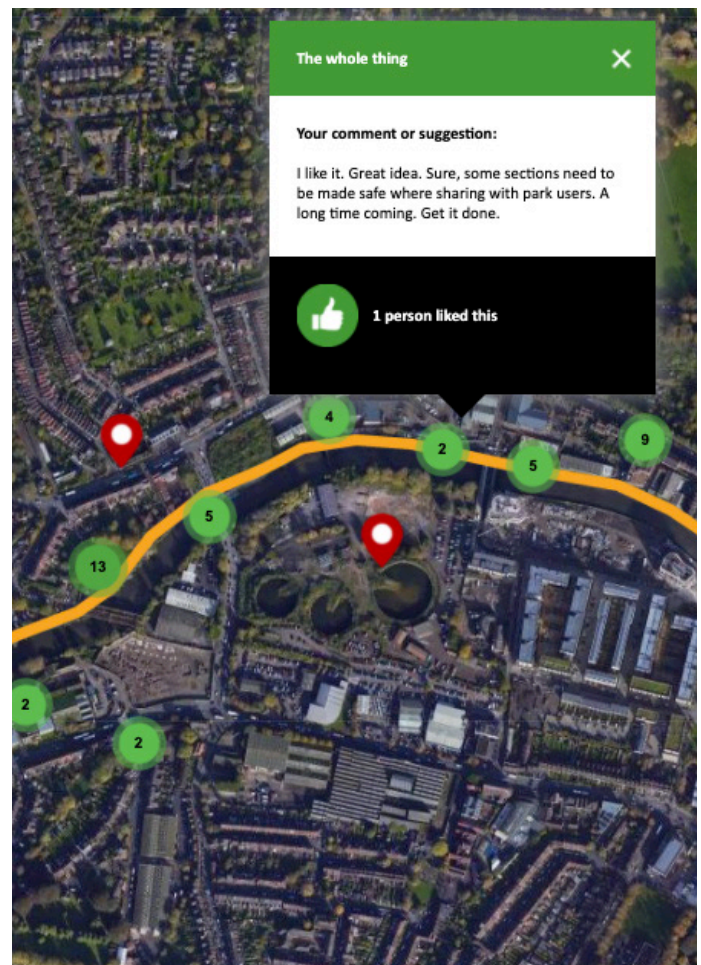
## Interactive Digital Platform

Whilst the interviews enabled more in-depth discussions with a small number of diverse users, the aim of the digital platform was to enable a wider level of engagement with the project.

The website invited participants to post comments, including things they liked and disliked and also ideas and memories about the riverside. The website received more than 25,000 visits and there were more than 400 comments / ideas posted on the interactive map.

To ensure a wide range of people were made aware of the site, the team contacted different local groups along the river and shared the website address via local and social media networks. There was also posters distributed along the western section of the riverside.

All of the feedback received from the interactive map, interviews and desktop research helped to shape the initial concept designs.



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## 3.0 Multi-Method Approach

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### Walking Focus Group

The Walking Focus Group was undertaken once the initial concept plans had been developed. They consisted of a small group of participants with a variety of perspectives and lived experience. For example, a wheelchair user, local residents and a regular cyclist.

The group walked the majority of the proposed western section of the BRL from Brassmills Park to Green Park.

The key aims for the session were;

- To further enable spatial and user experience analysis of the River line from different user types
- To test and gain feedback on design proposals from a range of perspectives / user types
- To develop new insights that help to shape the emerging proposals along the river line as well.

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### Webinar & Feedback Survey

The team also hosted a webinar which involved a series of presentations setting out the analysis, research and concept design proposals.

As part of the session, there was also an opportunity for attendees to ask questions to the project team.

A recording of the session was also uploaded to the website alongside the proposals.

Around 60 people attended the live webinar and many more (we estimate 200+) viewed the recording of the webinar via the project website.

Additionally, a feedback survey was uploaded to the website. And, all registrants to the webinar were invited to complete their feedback which included both open and closed questions to enable both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

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# 4.0 Findings: Desktop Review

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## Desktop Review

Below we outline some of the key findings;

- Improvement/new provision to parks and recreation grounds, footpaths and cycle paths, access to wildlife and areas for water recreation are high priorities for B&NES residents. (Green Space Study 2015)
- 40% of resident respondents of the Water Space Study (2016) agreed that waterways in B&NES were not being used to their full potential in terms of recreational activities
- In terms of the current riverside path, amongst the key issues highlighted are a narrow path width, low quality surfacing, limited visibility and the need to cut back vegetation. (Liveable Neighbourhoods Community Forum).
- The majority of the boats are used as permanent homes (78.4%). However, only 25.5% of those surveyed have a home mooring. (Water Space: Boater Survey 2016)



*“More residential moorings [are needed], they don’t need to be serviced, but so many people are forced to live on legal grey areas, either because their mooring isn’t really residential or because they are forced to try and CC [continuously cruise]”*

[respondent to Boater Focus Group 2016]



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## 4.0 Findings: Desktop Review

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- A 'Soft Consultation' in Autumn / Winter 2020/21 also highlighted the Liveaboard boating community were keen to make the point that riverside is a living space. In particular, respondents were keen to see more '14 day moorings' i.e where you can live without a residential mooring. Also, the need for good access and storage.
  - Types of activities such as dog walking seems more prevalent in the spaces around areas with high residential density such as Elizabeth Park and Brassmill Green.
- Observational Analysis undertaken in August 2020 highlights the varying usage and characteristics of different open spaces along the western section;
  - The most central and busiest park seems to be Green Park, with a relatively younger crowd and groups of friends.
  - Brassmill Green seems to be more of a family park, perhaps because it has a playground and football goals.
  - Average time spent in each space seems relatively short, less than half an hour for each space. (Although, this may be due to the relatively average weather).
- UWE / WECA study was undertaken over the summer of 2020 looking into how lockdown had impacted people's usage of green space. It asked people what five factors were important in their decision to visit a particular green space. The most popular factors both before and during lockdown were the green space being close to home, within easy walking distance, the amount and quality of the open space, and the presence of trees. Proximity and walkability from home and the amount of open space were slightly more common during lockdown compared with before. Other important factors were the availability of good paths and being able to see wildlife. Also, the ability to avoid people in the green space for social distancing.

## 4.0 Findings: Desktop Review

- The UWE study, "Walking and cycling on Shared-Use paths: the User Perspective" highlighted the importance of understanding local context and local user culture for efficient and enjoyable use with the suggestion of 'locally influenced codes of conduct for shared-path use' in the context of a width-constrained path, a key finding is that while pedestrians generally prefer segregation as they feel safer and more prioritised, cyclists favour non-segregation, as enabling them to make more efficient progress. A width of 3 m, as on the Bristol to Bath Railway Path is "*clearly too narrow to allow for effective segregation, whereas 6 m, as in Castle Park, is sufficient*"



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# 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map

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## Key Themes

- **Feeling Safe**

Amongst the most pertinent findings from the interviewees was the level of fear of using the riverside in certain locations and in the evening, in particular when there was reduced light or visibility. This was particularly relevant for women and girls;

*"the girls will go to Hayesfield but I currently don't feel it is safe for them to use the route in the afternoon / evening.. lighting needs to be better"*  
(interviewee: parent of three girls)

*"I don't feel safe to use the path in the evening"*

*"I wouldn't use it after about 5.30 / 6 in the evening.."*

*"Lack of lighting along the riverside is quite a big issue, particularly for women travelling evening/ night. While perhaps seen as being potentially expensive, it should be identified as a requirement and costed."*



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## 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map

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Whilst others highlighted that the frequent bridges meant there were areas that weren't overlooked and felt "scary", for example the area near Sainsburys and Churchill bridge was described as "awful".

Also, it wasn't just women that expressed concerns about safety, an adult male resident from riverside noted;

*"I wouldn't use the path in the dark from the destructor bridge out because it wouldn't feel safe"*

And our male wheelchair user interview noted;

*"Lighting and feeling safe is a massive issue"*

Indeed, many of the proposed responses to this issue were related to improved lighting. Although, some respondees did also highlight the potential for thinning trees to improve sightlines to / from the path.

One location highlighted was close to Norfolk Crescent;

*"Norfolk Crescent and the public green space in front of it is almost completely screened from the river by the fence, trees etc. It would be great if views could be opened up and this section of the river path felt less narrow and enclosed. The green space is provided for everyone to enjoy but there is nothing there but grass and some lovely trees. Some benches or picnic facilities would be good so that people can stop and enjoy the space"*

However, this was unpopular with one interviewee from Norfolk Crescent;

*"I don't like the idea of gaps in trees.. residents don't want a view of new development proposed at Homebase"*

Another idea was around encouraging more people to use the riverside and thus making it feel safer to use:

*'If people used it more often, other people would use it more often'*

# 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map



- **Different Types of Users Sharing a Narrow Path**

A recurring theme on the interactive map and also regularly mentioned by the interviewees was the challenge of different types of users sharing and interacting on a relatively narrow path.

In particular, between people walking and people on bikes.

By way of example;

*"When I'm a cyclist I'm annoyed by pedestrians and when I'm a pedestrian I'm annoyed by cyclists"*

(local resident who regularly cycle)

*"Its a little bit stressful due to the number of cyclists that use it"*

*"Along this section the path is very narrow and can't accommodate bikes and pedestrians" (Riverside path from bridge to bottom of Avondale Road)*

*"Towpath is very narrow - too narrow to share with cyclists"*

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## 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map

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It was also noted that there were several pinch points and blind corners along the path. For example under the former railway bridge between Windsor Bridge Road and the Destructor Bridge.

*"I have found parts of the existing towpath route very dangerous as a walker because of cyclists riding too fast, particularly commuting ones, who tend to ride at speed"*

Many respondents expressed a preference for widening the path and creating segregated routes for different users;

*"I'm not a big fan off dual use paths, as cycles tend not to use their bells and dominate the paving. So width is going to be an issue. It need to be wide enough to allow pedestrians and cyclists to be separate" (Interviewee: Wheelchair user)*

*"Widen to maximum width at all locations where possible" - (10 people liked this statement on the interactive map)*

"Obviously widen path where able"



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## 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map

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*"This should be a wide accessible route that any person in a mobility scooter can use which can easily cope with the 2m turning circle or at least provide regular wide passing points."*

*"thought must be given to properly delineating space for walking and cycling, keeping them both separate and safe"*

*"This is an amazing path, however the main problem has always been that sharing it with both cyclists and pedestrians just doesn't work... I cycle, and it always feels a little dangerous because of the pedestrians, but I also walk, and I find it impossible to walk my dog along here because of the cyclists. Separating cyclists from the pedestrians is the only answer."*

Some respondents felt there should be;

*"affirmative 'etiquette' signage to reinforce considerate use of this shared space. Basic things such as 'please keep to the left-hand side wherever possible"*

Whilst others noted that it *'was too narrow for multiple users'* and proposed creating alternative, more direct routes for people on bikes on the highway and away from the designated National Cycle Network route;

*"Where possible we'd appreciate a separate cyclist route"*

In one location where this was proposed, close to Brassmill Lane, there were also views expressed about the safety of these proposed alternative routes;

*"there is through traffic on Brassmill Lane, there are heavy vehicles, and worst of all - there are parked cars right next to where bikes would normally go"*

*"If this path can't be widened, then at the very least Brassmill Lane needs a parking ban and a fully segregated bidirectional bike lane. It is not suitable for children or beginner cyclists in its current state."*

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## 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map

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*"This area is extremely dangerous for cyclists. Huge lorries unload at Rotork using forklifts which come onto the main road, this also at the junction of Avon park, and both cars and cyclists using the road, make it a really dangerous part of the cycle way".*

Also, respondents noted that Locksbrook Road is currently set up for one-way traffic and would require a contra-flow arrangement to create an alternative route.

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### **Ease of Access & Connectivity**

Another theme was around access to and from the path. For example, ensuring connectivity with other proposed active travel routes (walking/ cycling) for example how the BRL could link up with proposed improvements to the A4, Upper Bristol Road.

Another popular suggestion (5 likes on the interactive map) was to provide better links with the Bristol To Bath route and the BRL;

*"You can walk through the scrub and access the Bristol & Bath Railway path here so please clear it and put a proper joining link here.. Would be great to highlight this area as direct link access to the Bristol & Bath Railway Path to save people having to cross the river by using the main A4 Newbridge Road bridge which has steps and is a very narrow pavement."*

Also, a number of respondents referred to the disused railway bridge (between Windsor bridge road and the Destructor Bridge);

*"Reopen this bridge for pedestrian and bicycle access providing connections between the river and the new development at the corner of Windsor Bridge Road and Lower Bristol Road and the start of the Linear Park towards the Two Tunnels Greenway."*

Also of concern was ensuring access points along the BRL could be accessed by all users. For example;



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## 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map

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*"The path between the Locksbrook Inn, humpback bridge and bus depot - too narrow, badly lit and feels very claustrophobic. Not easily accessible for buggies, pushchairs, bikes, and even very bad visibility for people walking. The humpback bridge is very nice to look at but a difficult turn from the path due to the bridge corners and the incline."*

Other access points highlighted as not providing effective, inclusive access were Brassmills lane / Brasmill Lane Park, the pedestrian access from Twerton due to a chicane fence at Fieldings Road (crossing to Lidl) and the gate to Norfolk Crescent. Also related to connectivity, was the issue of signage and route legibility. There were also a number of important 'nodes' which required more clarity. For example, around Fieldings Road Footbridge;

*"It becomes incredibly busy here with cyclists trying to get from riverside to meet up with (Sustrans) Linear way cycle path making it very difficult for everyone involved. Better access is required here. Signage is awful here too and needs upgrading.. it. Needs a sister bridge to segregate cyclists from pedestrians. It's way too busy."*



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## 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map

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- **Surfacing**

There were also a number of suggestions relating to path levelling to address the surface pooling. For example, the area between Victoria bridge and midland road bridge:

*"This part of the path forms full width puddles when it rains that make it very difficult to pass on foot without stepping on the mud verge the narrow concrete holding the fencing"*

Also, re-grading areas to introduce ramped access for example around bottom of the Destructor Bridge and around Churchill Bridge.

Numerous respondents also stated a preference for smoother sealed surfaces to enable use by a variety of different wheels. This included our interviewee in a wheelchair and also our interviewee with three daughters that liked to scoot along the path to school. Also, there were a number of respondents who wanted smoother surfaces for other activities like roller skating / dance.



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## 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map

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- **A place to live**

Another key role of the riverside is to provide a home to a liveaboard boat dwellers. It was noted from our initial research that some liveaboard boat dwellers feel overlooked as a stakeholder. Also, that the limited number of affordable residential moorings make it challenging for many who then fall into 14 day continuous cruising requirement. The advice the team received from initial investigations was to engage with the boating community once there were more developed and tangible plans for moorings.



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## 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map

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- **Celebrate Nature**

Numerous interviewees highlighted the rich wildlife that exists along the riverside;

*"There is some fab nature along this path. Regularly see herons and cormorants, otters and swans and once even a fawn (though that was bizarrely in the bushes by Norfolk Crescent!) Some nature boards along the path to help identify what you can spot would be great"*

*"One day I was crossing this bridge and within a few minutes 3 cormorants and 2 swans flew quite low overhead - it was a beautiful moment of feeling connected to wildlife whilst in the middle of the city. A little further down the riverside path heading west there was a large tree where 8 cormorants were perched looking very satisfied with life"*

*"I've watched a kingfisher fishing here recently, perching on the bushes behind Lidl and along the river bank."*



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## 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map

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And, there were a number of comments related to retaining the natural setting;

*"Please don't destroy too much of the natural vegetation on the riverbank in an effort to 'tidy up' the area. Vegetation cover so important for wildlife".*

Also, a number of people expressed a fondness for the wilder feel of the far western section of the route;

*"This is a beautiful part of the walkway, however very underused."*

- **History**

There were a couple of interesting suggestions and historic memories to help inspire the design including;

*"There's a very unofficial sign here to show that the path was used by Halie Selassie. An official sign/small monument would be and interesting feature along the path."*



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## 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map

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*"As a child, about 70 years ago, I can remember Farmer Bill Kelson and his sister who ran the small farm located around the small park known as Kelson's field. Bill Kelson was a big man who used to wear boots and gaiters, a big leather belt under his belly and a collarless shirt with his sleeves rolled up. He was a regular at the Windsor Castle pub. His sister, a small lady, always used to wear wellington boots and brown overall coat. They had two cart horses and small herd of cows and of course chickens and ducks. As kids we used to help Farmer Kelson and ride on the cart to Locksbrook cemetery to cur the hay with a scythe and then bring it back to the field to build a haystack."*

- **Green & Blue Spaces**

Below we outline some of the comments specifically related to the open / green spaces along the BRL:

Kelson's field:

*"This is a lovely area, which does sometimes feels a little unloved. Some nice planting would be lovely here, as well as a few more park benches, as it's often used as a resting place for cyclists and walkers."*



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## 4.1 Findings: Interviews & Interactive Map

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Weston Lock:

*"This is a beautiful part of the walkway, however very underused. Perhaps some picnic tables in this area, as well as some information signage giving the history of the lock would be nice."*

Green park:

*"Perfect, and I mean amazing, location for a public amphitheatre"*

Grassed Area south of Howdens:

*"Add some benches"*

Norfolk Crescent:

*"The green space is provided for everyone to enjoy but there is nothing there but grass and some lovely trees. Some benches or picnic facilities would be good so that people can stop and enjoy the space."*

*"The Norfolk Crescent green is a wonderful community space. Please don't be tempted to 'improve' it by adding stuff!"*

*"If you are making any changes to our Green, please consult with local community and residents."*

*"This is a VITAL open space for the many people living in high density accommodation"*

## 4.2 Findings: Walking Focus Group

Below, we outline some of the key areas of feedback received as part of the walking focus group activity;

### The Path (Overall)

- The camber of the path needs to be improved to ensure inclusive access. Currently the surface is very variable with a significant slant meaning people using wheelchairs are constantly being tilted towards the river.
- Number of ramped accesses to/from the path (e.g. new ramp near Midland Bridge) have significant cambers in them and do not work for wheelchair users .





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## 4.2 Findings: Walking Focus Group

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- There was positive feedback on the proposed changes to the river path between Dutch Bridge and Weston Lock and also on the proposed nooks and other seating/resting opportunities
- It is important to consider the accessibility to the BRL from surrounding spaces. E.g. from car parks ensuring there are dropped curbs, level surfaces etc.
- Branding and wayfinding: signs should indicate important amenities e.g. toilets, coffee shops, train station. It might also be worth creating/renaming a bus stop the “Bath River Line” at a key point along the route (possibly Brassmill Lane) to help people to easily access the route.



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### Brassmills Lane Park:

- Positive to see new path provided in plans to the gate with riverside path.
- Brassmills Lane Park - need to engage with local residents to ensure proposed food growing space will be wanted, well-used and maintained.
- Support for opening visibility between Brassmills Lane Park and the riverside path.

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### Connections

- Could the links between the BRL and the Upper Bristol Road (e.g. by Hope Pole pub and One fitness Gym) be resurfaced and improved – and, ideally, widened.

## 4.2 Findings: Walking Focus Group

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### Weston Lock Area:

- In the approach from the west, the path is very narrow and the camber makes it difficult to use in a wheelchair - therefore proposals to widen path in this location were positively received.
- The grade of the path as it rises up to the humpback bridge at the Locksbrook makes it very hard to access for those in a wheelchair.



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## 4.2 Findings: Walking Focus Group

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- There was a positive response to the proposals for Weston Lock Green. Where possible there was a preference to see local businesses near to the river line brought into the process and enabled to expand their business in connection with the BRL – rather than introducing rival businesses. An example would be inviting the Electric Bear to have a pop up at Weston Lock Green, or the Grocer Café having a pop up in Kelson’s Field
- There was a desire to see a launching point for paddle boards into the canal and river at Weston Lock

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### **Kelson’s Fields:**

- It was report that the entrance to Kelson’s field often has cars obstructing the footpath/ route, making it inaccessible for those in a wheelchair or with a pram etc.



## 4.2 Findings: Walking Focus Group

- Kelson's Field was seen by some of the group as unwelcoming and unsafe – largely as it's not overlooked and activity/movement is only along the river edge.
- Having a bright/white edge on steps to Fielding's Bridge would make them much easier to navigate for the visually impaired, particularly those suffering from depth perception issues.

### Fielding's Bridge Area:

- Some of the group thought it would be preferable to focus on the missing link of the Bath to Bristol path before creating a new/additional bridge at Fielding's bridge
- It was noted that placing bollards in the middle of no through routes can sometimes obstruct wheelchair users – consideration can be given to placing off centre.
- There was some interest expressed in creating public access to the café at the Herman Miller building / and surrounding green space



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## 4.2 Findings: Walking Focus Group

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### Norfolk Crescent;

- Some of the local residents in the group were concerned around safety and the use/sale of drugs in the area and there was a suggestion to provide low level lighting and opportunities for 'passive surveillance'.
  - There were some reservations about the inclusion of benches in the proposals.
  - Some local residents in the group wanted to make sure there was still enough space for kids to play (concerned they might damage the flowers).
  - There was support for the wildflower labyrinth from some of the local residents in the group, although there was also concern from others that it might not be properly maintained.
  - It was reported that bins without a flap have been used as drug drops at Norfolk Crescent according to one resident, would prefer bins with flaps in future.
- It was reported that the existing density of shrubs and undergrowth creates hidden spaces for anti-social behaviour
  - There was Discussion around challenges of access due to roots of mature trees pulling up pavement along edge of green with the road. Best opportunity for inclusive access thought to be around Nelson Lane - where a path is proposed.

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### Green Park:

- There was general support for the proposals at Green Park, although the importance of engaging with local residents and boaters were highlighted.

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## 4.3 Findings: Webinar & Feedback Survey

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### Key Themes

- **Positive Support**

The majority of feedback was positive and there was a lot of excitement about the proposals as represented in the questions and comments made at the webinar and via the feedback survey;

*"Lovely Plans'*

*"It's amazing. I'm so excited, and thank you to all involved"*

*"Bravo Team - this is so exciting. We've been really impressed with your presentation"*

*"excellent presentation and this will form the basis of a great transformation of the corridor."*

*"The plans look and sound wonderful, and very ambitious."*

*"I was REALLY impressed with the proposals. I think there is a tension between some of the main user groups (nature / families / cyclists) and actually the presentation showed how the River Line could enhance and nurture nature, while still providing a delightful place to be, and to play... I was impressed with the approach to the parks - which I always found a little unloved when my children were smaller. I loved the ideas about supporting pop-up art, coffee vans and injecting history and nature information. It just made the whole area feel interesting, vibrant and loved - a destination and not just a nondescript and litter strewn water course... please get going, your proposals are fantastic and I think will help make Bath a better place to live and visit."*

- **Maintenance & Management**

There were a number of questions about the scheme would be maintained into the future;

*"Money for future maintenance and upkeep????"*

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## 4.3 Findings: Webinar & Feedback Survey

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*"major major major MAJOR issue is the poor and difficult verge maintenance. Even now the path is becoming narrow as nettles grow. Will a 0.5-1m mow strip be provided either side of the path? This is absolutely vital as the busiest summer months can see the path narrowing to 1m."*

- **Norfolk Crescent**

There were a number of comments specifically from some residents of Norfolk Crescent that tended to want little or no change in that location;

*"SPECIFIC TO NORFOLK CRESCENT GREEN.. Leaving as is and not including in the BRL"*

*"Please leave the green as it is or proceed with sensitive and minimum intervention.. The proposals of hardscaping and "furniture", opening "vistas" for river traffic and Western Riverside residents will destroy the tranquillity of the green."*

*"Benches on Norfolk Crescent Green.. are problematic when we have already a well documented perennial problem with drug dealing"*

*"Definitely do not support punctuating the tree canopy."*

Whilst others took a more mixed view;

*"I live on NORFOLK CRESCENT GREEN and my comments specific to this area. - I welcome wildflowers etc to enhance biodiversity - I do not support removal of trees or clearance of shrubs that might adversely affect wildlife - I do not support new paths, playground areas or other infrastructure on the grass, there is no need, the simplicity of layout gives this residential green versatility and charm, there are plenty of other areas with paths, play areas etc - I do support perhaps one or two benches, any more might encourage ASB which is already an issue especially during summer"*

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## 4.3 Findings: Webinar & Feedback Survey

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- **Retaining Nature & Wildlife**

There were also a number of comments around retaining the wildness of the river and bio-diversity;

*"If you genuinely want to improve bio-diversity then you will need to create spaces which are isolated from our human activities.... There needs to be some spaces that are set aside where access is restricted. "*

*"One of the currently valued things about this area is the wildness and even some of the decay."*

- **Dogs in Green Space**

There were a number of comments relating to dogs in shared green spaces;

*"Park areas with wild / bulb flower planting - very laudable and attractive, but these are places currently used by dog owners to exercise them and allow them to relieve themselves. This causes damage to flowers. Dogs should be kept on leads and not allowed to crash around spoiling the planting. Play areas should be fenced off and dogs not allowed."*

*Whilst, others asked;*

*"what about dogs - they are used to running free in norfolk crescent and green park. But dogs, picnics and small children do not mix. If most of the parks are being changed to play areas and picnic spots - where can I take my dog for a free run in Bath?"*

- **Access to the Water**

Another key theme was how the emerging proposals could achieve better access to the water;

*"Weston Lock – could access via the lock be improved for paddle boarders? At present it's not really possible to transfer between water levels."*

*"Can pontoons be put along the whole length of the river, particularly where the river has the walls? Good for liveboaters and also to provide better drowning prevention."*

*"Have you considered creating floating path in parts"*



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## 4.3 Findings: Webinar & Feedback Survey

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- **Sharing the Path**

Another theme was around how different users of the path share the space;

*"More should be done to separate these users, if necessary banning or re-routing wheeled traffic in order to preserve the desired peacefulness of the riverside"*

However, others cautioned this approach, pointing out;

*"The path is key for children being able to cycle safely in Bath (off the busy roads). Isn't the proposal potentially discouraging the young people of Bath becoming cyclists? The slowest are not always the most vulnerable"*

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# 5.0 Summary Findings

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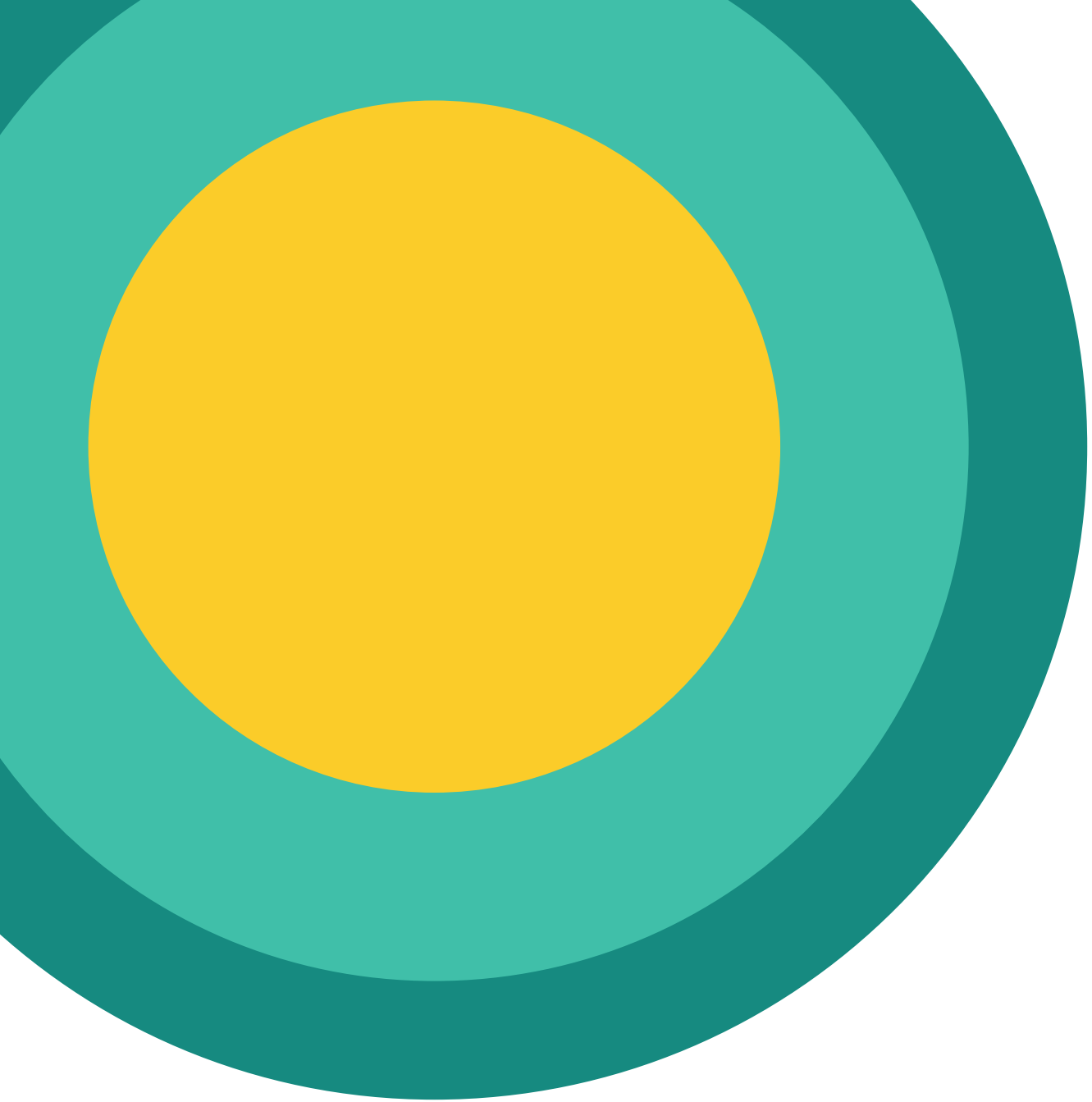
## Key themes from pre-design phase

- There is a desire to make the river line feel safer to use during the day and evening - to be achieved through improved lighting and/or better passive surveillance e.g. visibility to/from the path.
- Nature and Wildlife was highly valued along the river and there was a desire to see this protected, enhanced and also celebrated.
- There was a concern around how different types of users interact and share the path (e.g. between people cycling and people walking) - to be addressed through changes to layout of path and introduction of a code of conduct.
- There was a preference for creating smooth path surfacing to enable usage by different types of users e.g. kids scooting to school.
- There was interest in seeing the rich history of the river line celebrated e.g through better interpretation.

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## Feedback on Concept Designs

- There was a broad level of support and excitement for the concept proposals.
- There was a desire to see more access to the water included in the proposals e.g. to enable paddle boarding from weston lock.
- There was a strong desire to see nature and wildlife retained and enhanced in the emerging proposals.
- There were some local concerns at Norfolk Crescent around the provision of benches and creating improved visibility to/from the path.
- There was some concerns about the longer-term maintenance of the proposals and the approach to access for dogs.
- There was a desire to see local businesses supported to create pop-up cafes etc. at key locations along the river line such as at Weston Lock.



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