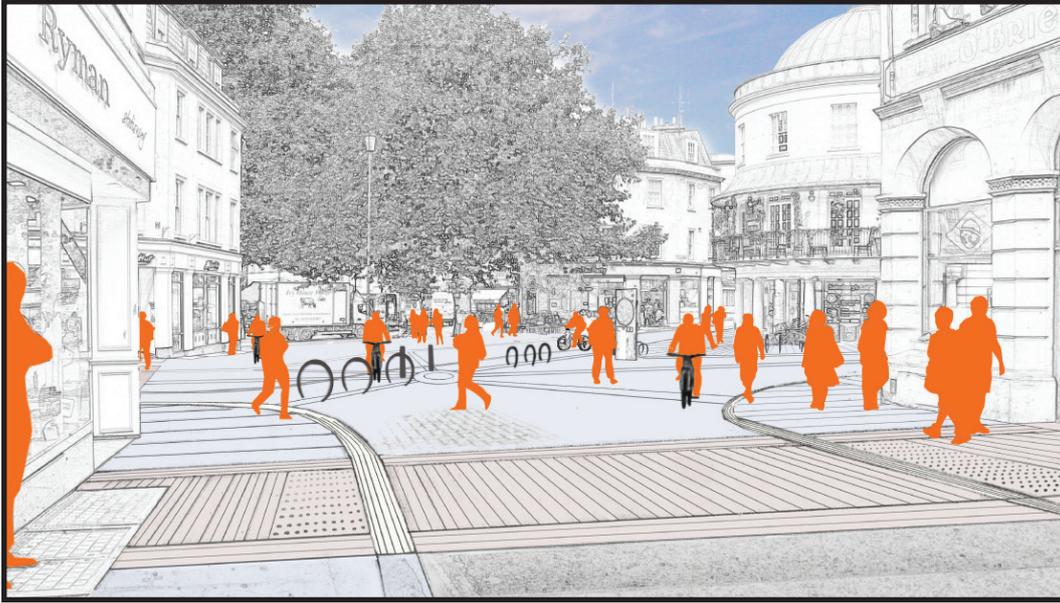


Seven Dials cycling & pedestrian improvements

Frequently Asked Questions



Artists impression of how the space could look following the changes

What is happening?

Last year, the Council were awarded a substantial grant from the Department for Transport under its Cycle City Ambition programme. The grant recognised plans to improve the quality of the pedestrian experience around the Seven Dials area, while integrating the requirements of cycle movement and accessibility by the addition of designated contra-flows on streets leading into and away from this area.

How is this project going to make cycling in Bath easier?

We know that more people want to cycle but are put off by concerns about traffic. Therefore, we are working with our partners in the West of England and organisations such as Sustrans to progressively remove barriers to cycling and expand a network of 'quiet routes'. These will enable less experienced or confident people to cycle to key destinations with fewer obstacles. The designated routes created by this project will create a link between NCN4 (National Cycle

Network 4) in the north of the city centre to destinations in the south such as the railway station, via Saw Close.

The area around Seven Dials is to become 'shared space'. What does this mean?

Bath has the ambition to become England's most 'walk-able' city, and shared space contributes to this aim. More pedestrians than cars currently use the area around Seven Dials, but they are forced onto crowded footways by motor traffic. The aim for Seven Dials is to create a public space with a greater focus on pedestrian and cyclist needs using shared space. The established boundaries and hierarchy between road users and pedestrians are broken down and everyone has an equal right to move about this space. Walking around is easier for pedestrians and spending time in the area is more pleasant. Constructing a 'flush' surface here, i.e. removing kerbs, will make it easier for people with reduced mobility too as they won't have to find dedicated dropped crossing points.

How can mixing cars, bicycles and people in the same area be safe?

Because the area is so busy, pedestrians don't have enough space on the footway and often step into the road putting them at risk from traffic. Removing conventional road signage and traditional rights of way makes the space safer because people have to be more aware of other users, communicating and co-operating rather than assuming they have priority.

Why can't normal priorities be retained here?

An area like this demonstrates that people are equal and should be treated as such. Once a motorist has parked their car, they become a pedestrian. Likewise, a pedestrian can get onto a bicycle to continue their journey. Individuals should not have different rights depending on their mode of transport. Therefore the aim is for people to use this space courteously and considerately.

Does this create problems for blind or partially sighted people?

We have worked with disability groups to ensure that people without full vision can use this area. The inclusion of specific 'tactile' areas within the surface will indicate different areas and enable them to navigate safely through the space whilst avoiding traffic.

What are the benefits for those living, working or trading around Seven Dials?

Integrating our improvements here with the planned development in Saw Close will increase the overall visitor appeal of this area, making it a far more pleasant space to shop and socialise.

We want to increase the attractiveness of Seven Dials as a destination in itself, rather than simply a 'through route' between other landmarks.

Why does the Council invest in cycling, when it accounts for a small percentage of road use?

The Council's vision is to reduce congestion and allow people to move around more freely within Bath. This will provide greater opportunities for economic growth and increase social vitality, while enhancing the city's special character. Since we do not have space to expand the road network, we have to make more efficient use of our existing assets. This means working actively to encourage the use of sustainable transport; not only cycling but also walking and public transport, to reduce car dependency. Improving air quality by reducing vehicle carbon emissions will also make the quality of life better for local people.

How much is this costing? Shouldn't the Council be using the money on services elsewhere?

The majority of the £1.2m cost of this project is being paid for by the grant from the Department for Transport. Investment in cycling gets "more people cycling, more safely, more often" and high benefit to cost ratios are achieved, especially when the health benefits are included. That the Government awarded this funding to us shows that they consider our proposals to be good value for money.

The money cannot be used by the Council for other services and would be reclaimed by the Government if not spent on these improvements.