

Broadwalk Shopping Centre Redevelopment



KNOWLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GROUP - EASY READ SUMMARY of our response to 'Redcatch Quarter' Pre-Application Consultation



21 June 2022

1. WHO ARE KNOWLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GROUP (KNPG)?

We are a group of volunteers who live or work in Knowle. We are passionate about our local community and interested in **housing, services and the space around us**. We are not paid and do not have any funding.

KNPG is independent of the Council, political party or other organisations. We want to

- Make Knowle to be a better place to live and work in
- Keep the best of what makes Knowle a good place now
- Know what people think about possible local changes to share and publicise.

Anyone who lives or works in Knowle can join KNPG - including business or community organisations. It is free. Find out more about us if your street has a WhatsApp group we are in touch with – or ask to get regular information to yours from us. Join us on our Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/knowlenpg/>. We are part of Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network with other local areas.

2. 'MAKING KNOWLE A BETTER PLACE' MEANS THAT KNPG...

- Find out what we can about new plans for change (like this one for Broadwalk)
- Help local people and business understand the changes proposed
- Collect in views and facts on plans to spot local issues and levels of support, or not
- Explain how to be involved and make sure people's views are reported
- Find out the planning rules and guidelines - how and if they are being applied
- Work with the developers and share what we learn with them
- Let the Council, and each other know, what KNPG and local people think.

KNPG gets sent new plans in advance so we can comment on them. We look at the plan very carefully even when they are big and complicated. Our neighbours with work or personal experience help us make sense of it all. KNPG say what we support and what we don't. We suggest ways to improve the plans. When we don't agree with a plan, we explain the evidence for our views. We say what local people and businesses think.

A plan to update Broadwalk Shopping Centre and build 420 flats was agreed by the City Council in 2019. However, the whole site was sold before anything happened.

Now there is a new and different plan for Broadwalk. The site will be knocked down and rebuilt as **Redcatch Quarter**. The owners employ others to make their plan happen. They are known as **the developers**. They will keep some of what was agreed in 2019.

The developers asked local people and businesses what they thought March – May 2022. KNPG sent them our response on May 6th 2022. We also sent it to the City Council. It is over 100 pages long. This is a short, simpler version of the most important points.

KNPG MET WITH THE DEVELOPERS IN MID-JUNE 2022.

They explained they are looking at changing some things due to feedback before sending their final plan to the City Council. We have shared some of the more significant changes the developers may make in italics. Please remember these may or may not happen.

3. THE NEW PLAN FOR REDCATCH QUARTER.

Today Broadwalk Shopping Centre has...

- 100% of its space dedicated to shops, local services and entertainment
- It is an indoor shopping mall you enter through the front entrance (Wells Rd)
- It has a free car park with 414 parking spaces. Only 280 are operational today
- 0% or no housing provision for local people
- 338 local full-time jobs. More people are employed because some are part time
- Currently 16 shops including an Iceland, Greggs, Pharmacy, Locksmith, Travel Agency, Charity shops etc
- 4 places to eat or get take away food and drink from
- 11 community services there including a Gym, Dentist, Public Library, Beauty Salon, Snooker Club, Bingo Hall, Job Centre and Soft Play area.

The developers have explained what they want to do on the Broadwalk site. KNPG has summarised it below AND looked at how that is different from today AND what was agreed in the earlier 2019 plan. The new plan calls for:

(i) UP TO 880 FLATS ON THE PARK IN BLOCKS OF FLATS

- 880 studio, 1 or 2 bed flats for people to buy and live in. There are no 3 bed flats.
- Of those 11% are affordable. These have less expensive rents for some people. It is sometimes called social housing. This is 2.4% less than agreed in 2019
- The 880 flats will be built in blocks. Many will be 10 or 12 stories high
- Some flats will have balconies. Some will have courtyards or garden terraces
- The flats will be built around an open-air pedestrian shopping street running through the site that opens up into Redcatch Park
- KNPG estimate 2,000++ additional people will live in Knowle in the flats
- Today there are no homes. Only shops, community and leisure services
- In 2019 it was agreed there would be 420 flats (1, 2 and 3 bed - no studios)
- There was one high rise 12 storey block facing Redcatch Park and Ryde Road
- In 2019 it was agreed there would be access to the park through an open-air plaza at the end of the covered shopping centre. The Plaza included places to eat and drink. It also gave access into the park.

In mid-June the developers told KNPG they may change their plan to build some 3 bed flats. Also, some 2 bed flats that can accommodate 3 or 4 people. There will still be up to 880 flats but more people (up to 2,500). There will be more 10-12 storey blocks but designed differently. This allows more light and space in the shopping street through to Redcatch Park.

(ii) 300 PARKING SPACES

- 150 spaces are for the 880 flats. 150 spaces are paying - for shoppers & visitors. There will be 2,000 spaces for cyclists
- 1 Residents Parking Zone for some nearby houses (who and where is not clear)
- Today there are 414 free spaces (only 280 are operational)
- In 2019, 420 spaces were agreed. 240 were paying spaces for shoppers/visitors. and one Residents Parking Zone was agreed.

In mid-June the developers told KNPG there was no change to the number of parking spaces. There may be more detail on the Residents Parking Zone

that the City Council is considering. It may extend up to 10 minutes walking distance from the Broadwalk site.

(iii) LESS SPACE FOR SHOPPING AND SERVICES

- The shopping space created will be for small shops rather than larger shops
- The shops will mainly be on a new pedestrian road through the flats
- The new road will run from the entrance today on Wells Rd to Redcatch Park
- There will be space for a small supermarket
- There will also be some community services like the library and dentists
- Today it is mainly shops with some community services (like the library) or leisure services (like the Bingo Hall or Snooker City). Some shops are bigger
- There will be 56.7% less shop, local services and entertainment space than today.
- It is 13.3% less space than was agreed in 2019.

(iv) WHAT HAPPENS TO LOCAL JOBS IS NOT DISCLOSED IN THE NEW PLAN

- There is no information available on what happens to jobs in the new plan
- Today 338 full time equivalent jobs exist in Broadwalk (some will be part time)
- The plan agreed in 2019 created 355 full time (or equivalent) jobs.

4. MAIN OBJECTIONS REPORTED BY LOCAL PEOPLE INCLUDE

Height of the flats

- The height of the blocks of flats (up to 10/12 stories) is too big and imposing
- Light and privacy in nearby homes and gardens will be lost
- Shadow will dominate especially from the higher blocks

Hyperdensity – too many people for the space

- Worry about the numbers of people expected to live on a small site (hyperdensity)
- It's too many new homes for Knowle - its double what was agreed in 2019
- 2000+ extra people will put too much pressure on our GPs, schools and dentists

Parking issues – not enough spaces

- There is not enough parking provided for new residents, shoppers, visitors etc
- People living or using Redcatch Quarter will park in nearby streets blocking them for residents. It will make them less safe, more polluted, busy and noisy
- No information on the one proposed Residents Parking Zone - who it is for, terms.
- No other options to limit parking elsewhere or more resident parking zones

Survival of business and shops through demolition and rebuild

- Concerns about traffic and noise during the demolition and build – local disruption
- How will services including the library and dentists continue through it?
- Damage to local business that may close for a bit - will they survive? Or stay?
- Potential damage to nearby homes in the demolition

Types of Home, Security and Design

- Lack of affordable homes
- Worry about the 'rabbit hutch' sized homes on offer
- Poor design. It's all too blocky, overwhelming and different to other local homes
- Concerns about private landlords buying up the flats to rent over local people
- Garden security for those currently protected by high gates and security cameras

Redcatch Park

- Potential antisocial behaviour with 24-hour access to Redcatch Park
- Overcrowding at Redcatch Park especially at the Tennis courts, football pitch etc
- Making the most of the park without losing its character

Shops and Access

- Reducing the size of our town centre - less shops, community and leisure services
- Turning the Ryde Rd cul de sac into a pedestrian through route

Some of these have a particularly detrimental effect on roads very near the site including Ryde Rd, Redcatch Rd, Oakmeade Park, Hengrove Rd and Broad Walk.

5. KNPG WELCOMES AND SUPPORTS...

- Money and investment into the Broadwalk site which is urgently needed
- Investing in the shopping, leisure and entertainment services locally is essential
- Making an open-air street for shops through to the park is a better plan
- Setting aside a space for a mini supermarket which is desperately needed
- Smaller spaces for shops that it is hoped attract local, independent businesses
- Cycling spaces that are secure for shoppers, visitor and residents
- Commitment to a Residents Parking Zone for some nearby houses.

6. KNPG WANTS SOME CHANGES TO IMPROVE REDCATCH QUARTER AND DISAGREES IN SOME OTHER AREAS

(i) THIS IS NOT A SMALL CHANGE FROM THE PLAN AGREED IN 2019

In 2019 a shopping centre with 440 homes was agreed. Now it is housing development of up to 880 flats with a small number of shops and services. It downgrades the shopping centre in favour of housing. It is not the small change stated.

(ii) BROADWALK SITE IS NOT SUITABLE FOR 2,000++ EXTRA RESIDENTS

This is a 129% increase from what was agreed in 2019. This level of people to space is called 'Hyper Dense'.

The level of 'hyperdensity' proposed at Broadwalk is above national and planning guidelines. This amount of people to space is not even recommended in Central London. KNPG believes it is too densely populated for us here.

KNPG want to see more evidence that Broadwalk is a sustainable location for an additional 880 homes. Part of that must be an **Environmental Impact Assessment**. KNPG do not agree that this assessment is not necessary.

In mid-June the developers examined they are considering changing the size and types of flats. This may mean up to 2,500 new residents – a 20% increase in the number of people in Knowle.

(iii) PARKING IS INADEQUATE & LOWER THAN OTHER LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS

Of great concern is the 2,000++ extra residents in Knowle with only 150 car parking spaces available (and another 150 for shoppers, visitors, workers etc).

KNPGs research shows in other local areas recently developed with new homes there have been quite a lot more parking spaces created than is planned here. For example, at the Paintworks, Finzels Reach and Canons Marsh.

In fact, Redcatch Quarter has the second smallest parking spaces ratio to new homes created in 8 schemes recently developed within 4 miles of Broadwalk.

(iv) THERE ARE TOO MANY BLOCKS OF FLATS - AND THEY ARE TOO HIGH

The 2019 plan had one 12 storey tower near to Redcatch Park. The new plan has many 10 and 12 storey blocks especially walking through to Redcatch Park.

This affects light, shadow and privacy all around, to people's homes and in the new shopping road. It is out of character for Knowle which is mainly 2 storey houses with front and back gardens – often Victorian.

Research shows blocks of flats below 6 stories are significantly better to live in, for the environment and for a local area. Low rise blocks are a better fit for Knowle.

KNPG has found good local examples of lots of people living in lower blocks of flats. Keysham's Somerdale have lower blocks whose height increases gradually alongside the space between the blocks. Mulberry Park (Bath) has high numbers of people in lower blocks.

Day light modelling must be undertaken and shared for comment. It shows where light and shadow falls at different times of the day, who is most affected and how.

(v) WE WANT MORE SHOPPING SPACE, LESS HOUSING

KNPG does not believe the balance is right for Knowle in this new plan yet.

We don't believe a 56.7% reduction in shopping, leisure and entertainment space is ok. We do accept more people shop on line. We agree that small shops is the right direction to go in. We also want and support a small supermarket.

However, KNPG also believes more shop space will work because:

- more people are now using local shops post pandemic partly due to home working
- there will be more people living locally to use the shops
- the shops being described will be more popular than the current shops
- much loved services like Snooker City or the Bingo 3000 do not seem to have a home in the new plan. They are less affected by the increase in on line shopping.

(vi) WE WANT THE OUTDOOR SHOPPING STREET SPACE IMPROVED, TO BRING BACK THE PLAZA AND PROVIDE SOME INDOOR SOCIAL SPACE

The 2019 plan had a plaza by the park with food and drinks shops on it. This was popular with the local community and residents. We want this back as part of the road of shops to Redcatch Park. We also want more light on this road of shops.

Shops or eating/drinking places could also be placed on the edges facing into Redcatch Park.

KNPG also want some indoor or covered space that is free to access and will allow people to gather and socialise informally. This is one of the key things that the current Shopping Centre is used for and will be missed.

In mid-June the developers told KNPG they were considering making more space near the entrance to the park so more of a plaza can be set up. They said that there was no change to the space for shopping, leisure or community services but may include a 'community hub'. Initial thoughts are to include some indoor rooms to rent for community activity.

(vii) MAKE SAFE, PEDESTRIAN SPACES THAT DON'T DISRUPT RESIDENTS

The proposal has roads into Redcatch Quarter for service vehicles above ground. This may be disruptive to local residents in their homes. Opening up the cul de sac of Ryde Road for people to use to walk into the shopping area will fundamentally change its character. It will have a negative impact on residents there.

In mid-June the developers told KNPG they may make the service road to the site bigger and suitable for pedestrians. It will take pressure off Ryde Road.

(viii) SUSTAINABILITY IMPROVED AND A LOT MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

KNPG wants an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT with a chapter on

- **GP appointments.** These are already struggling with long wait times
- **NHS patients at the dentists** – currently closed for up to 18 months
- **Health Services** – and the impact of 2,000+ new residents
- **Nursery, primary and secondary** school places for children within walking distance of their new homes. Today these are already oversubscribed.

Without an assessment ALL the environmental, social or economic effects cannot be fully understood. With an assessment ALL of these things can be improved in Redcatch Quarter. **This will be better for everyone – including the developers.**

KNPG want a commitment for all builders and managers to

- hold an Environmental Management System accreditation (ISO141001)

KNPG want more information shared locally about what the plan means for

- **Energy efficient materials and the renewable energy generation** talked about
- **Day light modelling** especially for the where there are 10 /12 storey blocks
- **How waste water services, sewage and drainage** will avoid local flooding or a make local water pressure weaker
- **Whether there will be a grey water system** (for relatively clean waste water e.g. from washing machines, baths etc)
- **How else to build the relationship with Redcatch Park?**
- **Impact on community activity**, entertainment, food vendors etc
- **Impact on shops** and their chances of success
- **How new independent shops** can be supported and rents be made affordable

7. CONCERNS ABOUT PUBLIC CONSULTATION (MARCH – MAY 2022)

Local people have told KNPG that they have been:

- Disappointed with the poor consultation process and lack of detail available. Key detail has been hard to find or not centre stage (e.g. number of flats, or parking spaces being planned) or absent.
- Concerned that only small number of people and businesses around the site were consulted. Views from local business, community services or residents who use Broadwalk from areas like Knowle West, Filwood, Hengrove, Wedmore Vale, Brislington, Totterdown have not been sought out.
- Frustrated by how limited the consultation has been. It was mainly based on one limited distribution leaflet, one zoom call, an exhibition in Broadwalk, and a web site with standard responses to emails. It has been very reliant on technology. The exhibition was missed by many people as there were no signs to it. It was also located at the far end of the shopping centre where many did not pass by.
- Meeting local business, community stakeholders (like the Churches or Friends of Redcatch Park), nearby neighbours and KNPG is welcomed and necessary.

However, it is not a substitute for more and better opportunities for local people and residents to meet the developers – including face to face. This is especially true now post pandemic. People want to be able to talk, ask questions, understand what is going on as well as influence and improve Redcatch Quarter.

KNPG wants all forms of future communication, connection and engagement activity extended to all those within 15 minutes of the Broadwalk site.

Also, for it to be more structured, detailed, interactive and accessible for local people.

This must go on through the different stages – planning, demolition, building, opening and review.

KNPG believe doing this will improve Redcatch Quarter and how it works – and that it is important for its success both commercially and for local people.

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS SUMMARY

It covers some key issues but it is not everything. The full KNPG response contains:

- A lot more detail on everything
- Explores the issues in more depth and highlights others
- Works through local planning guidance more
- Shares views of local residents who are also architects or planners

Our full response was posted on our Facebook Group on 6th May 2022

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/knowlenpg/>