# Campaigners demand apology over East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood installation



Campaigners in East Bristol are calling for an apology from Avon and Somerset Police and Bristol City Council following the contentious installation of infrastructure related to the East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood scheme earlier this month. The installation included ‘modal filters’, road blockages, and bus gates in the areas of Barton Hill and Lawrence Hill, sparking considerable discontent among local residents.

Melanie Topping, a prominent local campaigner, expressed her frustration after encountering significant difficulties accessing her home for the first time since the installation took place. Topping, who utilises a disability-accessible camper van, had been unable to park due to the new restrictions. On Thursday, she attempted to reach her designated parking spot on Victoria Avenue, but was forced to reverse through a no-entry sign after finding that the access routes to her home had been closed off. “I don’t have any other words for it, unfortunately, other than rude ones, I’m afraid,” she remarked, highlighting her anger and disappointment with the situation.

Friday saw Topping join fellow residents and activists in voicing their concerns about the police's involvement during the installation process, which was conducted at 3am. Many participants wore masks depicting the faces of the councillors linked to the scheme. During the gathering, Fadumo Farah, a tenants' representative from nearby Barton House, addressed the crowd, asserting that trust had been broken between the community, the police, and the council. Farah demanded transparency from the police regarding their collaboration with the council, stating, “The police have to share the minutes of the meetings that they had with the council before this happened.”

The police presence during the installation has been a focal point of criticism. Farah condemned the police’s conduct, sharing that threats had been made regarding potential arrests and stressing that the community's rights should be respected. “We need to stand up and say I do not want to feel uncomfortable again,” she remarked, indicating the distress among locals due to police actions and the early morning installation.

In response to the backlash, Avon and Somerset Police clarified that their role was solely to facilitate peaceful protest and maintain order during the installation. Police and Crime Commissioner Claire Moody indicated that an investigation would be launched to review the circumstances surrounding the operation.

In a separate statement, Councillor Ed Plowden, who chairs the transport and connectivity committee for Bristol City Council, defended the early morning operations. He explained that the decision for a 3am installation was made to mitigate any risks for both residents and contractors, given the potential for protest that could impede the installation process.

Plowden reassured residents that all streets would remain accessible, albeit potentially via alternative routes. He also acknowledged the mixed opinions surrounding the trial, emphasising that feedback would be sought from the community following the six-month trial period.

The changes implemented are part of a broader strategy designed to create safer, greener streets and to enhance air quality in the area. Local consultations prior to the installation had been ongoing for three years.

Community feedback will be crucial as residents assess the practicality of these changes visualised under the East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood project. The council has promised to update the community with details regarding the operational status of the new bus gates and further developments linked to the ongoing trials.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/streets-travel/transport-plans-and-projects/east-bristol-liveable-neighbourhood> - This URL supports the claim about the East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood scheme, including its goals and the installation of bus gates and modal filters in areas like Barton Hill.
* <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/people-and-communities/liveable-neighbourhoods> - This URL provides additional information on the concept of Liveable Neighbourhoods in Bristol, including their focus on community engagement and improving infrastructure for walking and cycling.
* <https://www.bristol247.com/news-and-features/features/liveable-neighbourhood-worst-thing-area-60-years/> - This article corroborates the community's mixed reactions to the East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood scheme, highlighting concerns and opposition from local residents.
* <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-meetings/committee-meetings/transport-and-connectivity-committee> - Although not directly mentioned, this URL could provide context on the transport and connectivity committee chaired by Councillor Ed Plowden, which is involved in decisions related to the Liveable Neighbourhoods.
* <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2024/february/statement-from-police-and-crime-commissioner-claire-moody/> - This URL could potentially provide statements from Avon and Somerset Police regarding their involvement in maintaining order during the installation of the Liveable Neighbourhood infrastructure.