

Barford Estate Improvement Scheme Consultation Analysis Report

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1 Consultation Process

1.1 Background

The scheme aims to improve the A457 Dudley Road by reducing traffic congestion through junctions and improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. This is an area of the city where we expect a lot of changes to happen in the next few years and for travel patterns to change.

The Revised Main Scheme develops the principles set out in the Birmingham Emergency Transport Plan (May 2020) which has identified new challenges and opportunities for travel that the Covid-19 pandemic has presented. New data indicates that during this period many of us are choosing to travel by walking and cycling, which has reduced congestion on the highway network and provided an opportunity to free up valuable road space for potential walking and cycling provisions alongside public transport travel as Birmingham builds on the recovery.

- **Providing increased capacity** - The scheme will include upgraded sections of carriageway incorporating new bus lanes, a new footbridge over the Soho Loop Canal, widened footways and improved pedestrian and cycle links to Dudley Road Local Centre, the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital and Summerfield Park to accommodate additional capacity for multi-modal users along the route.
- **Improving accessibility to Birmingham City Centre** - Highway improvements along the route will help to decrease congestion, improve journey times and provide a corridor to directly access Birmingham City Centre from the northwest of the city. Furthermore, accessibility will be improved to major developments and businesses along the route; including the Soho Loop Development, Icknield Port Loop Development and the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital.
- **Improving journey time reliability (including for public transport)** - Journey time will be improved through improvements to the existing road layout and ensuring the corridor can provide increased traffic capacity. Key pedestrian crossings will be upgraded, alongside upgrades to junctions along the route.
- **Providing safer infrastructure for all road users** - As part of the Dudley Road Highway Improvement scheme, the design proposes major upgrades to several junctions along the route. Changes include improvements to the signalised junction at Icknield Port Road / Dudley Road, a new signalised junction at Heath St and the closure of Northbrook Street. The changes to the junctions at (Winson Green Road/ Dudley Road and Icknield Port Road/ Dudley Road) will provide safer and efficient infrastructure for all road users.
- **Providing upgraded facilities for cyclists** - The highway improvements at Dudley Road will provide upgraded cycling and pedestrian facilities throughout the entire corridor. This will primarily be in the form of a segregated cycling route on the North side of Dudley Road and shared space facilities where highway space is prohibitive.
- **Northbrook Street closure** - To facilitate the improvements to Dudley Road, it is necessary for the access to Northbrook Street to be closed. Previous scheme consultations detailed the left turn only proposal, however, the new road alignment will dictate the need for the closure in order to minimise structural enhancements to Lee Canal Bridge and to provide the necessary widening to the junction with Heath Street.

Following the November 2020 public consultation for the wider Dudley Road Scheme, Birmingham City Council have taken on board comments from members of the public and tried to include these with the revised design.

As a result of feedback from the consultation and a review of the proposals, we are looking to make some changes to those that were originally proposed in the Barford Estate. Birmingham City Council contacted residents within the North Summerfield community to provide the

opportunity to deliver feedback on these alternative proposals for the area. Details of the changes to the scheme are outlined below:

- The road closure of Northbrook Street at the junction with Dudley Road is retained. However, the opportunity is being taken to provide a public space outside No.1 to No.29 Northbrook Street by extending the closure to Willow Gardens.
- To no longer open the cul-de-sac between Barford Road and Northbrook Street to through traffic.
- The section of Northbrook Street between Willow Gardens and Coplow Street to remain open to traffic.
- Improvements would be made to cycling and pedestrian provision from the junction of Coplow Street /Northbrook Street across North Summerfield Green to Barford Road, to enable better access and crossing facilities.

The consultation was launched on Monday 18th October 2021 and ran until Monday 8th November 2021. A total of eight consultee and one stakeholder responses were received.

Publicising the consultation

Birmingham City Council, along with its delivery partners, utilised a number of different channels of communication to spread the word about the A457 Dudley Road Improvement Scheme consultation. This included:

- Existing stakeholder and community networks;
- Existing email and other electronic communications (corporate BCC, Birmingham Connected);
- Roadside signage; See Figure 1
- Letters delivered to all residents and commercial properties within the proximity of the scheme. See Figure 2 for location plan;
- Traditional media;
- Social media activity including Facebook and Twitter



Figure 1: Consultation Signage

Dudley Road Single Scheme Consultation Plan Issue 1

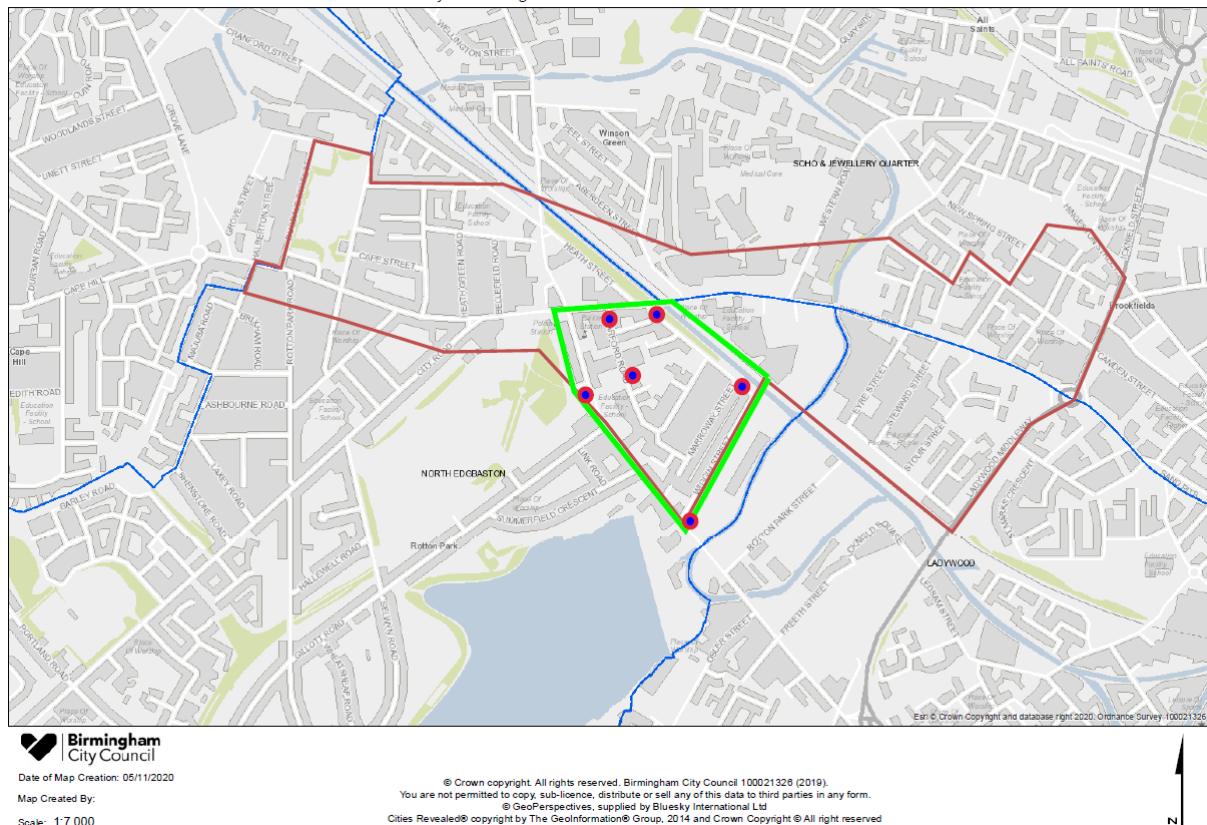


Figure 2: Consultation area (bordered green)

1.2 Response channels

Where contact was made through a channel other than Be Heard, we encouraged people to also complete the questionnaire online.

1.2.1 Online – Be Heard

All publicity directed citizens to Be Heard at

<https://www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/economy/barfordestate/>

The following documents were available to view or download on the Be Heard site:

- CGI images – before and after; and
- Proposed technical plan of the scheme area.

Respondents were asked to submit their feedback about the proposals through the online questionnaire, including closed and open questions and providing the opportunity for respondents to give additional comments.

1.2.2 Email correspondence

All email correspondence sent to transport.projects@birmingham.gov.uk was logged, acknowledged and responded to where relevant and appropriate.

2 Methodology

2.1 Confidentiality

All responses to the survey were made anonymously and confidentially, with no personal details being requested that could identify the respondent, however postcodes were collected in order to ascertain how people living in different locations responded to the survey. The respondent's personal data was held by Birmingham City Council as the data controller. The survey was conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

2.2 Consultation Survey

The survey was a mixture of qualitative and quantitative questions, with the qualitative questions requesting people's comments in order to explain their views and give suggestions.

2.3 Analysis of Consultation Responses

2.3.1 Quantitative Analysis

Analysis was conducted on all responses to the quantitative questions. Percentage figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number for the majority of questions and, as a result, not all responses totals may equal 100%.

2.3.2 Qualitative Analysis

Each of the qualitative responses was analysed and assigned to a theme or themes relevant to the question asked.

3 Findings

3.1 About you

3.1.1 How often do you travel to and from this area (North Summerfield/Barford Road/Northbrook Street)?

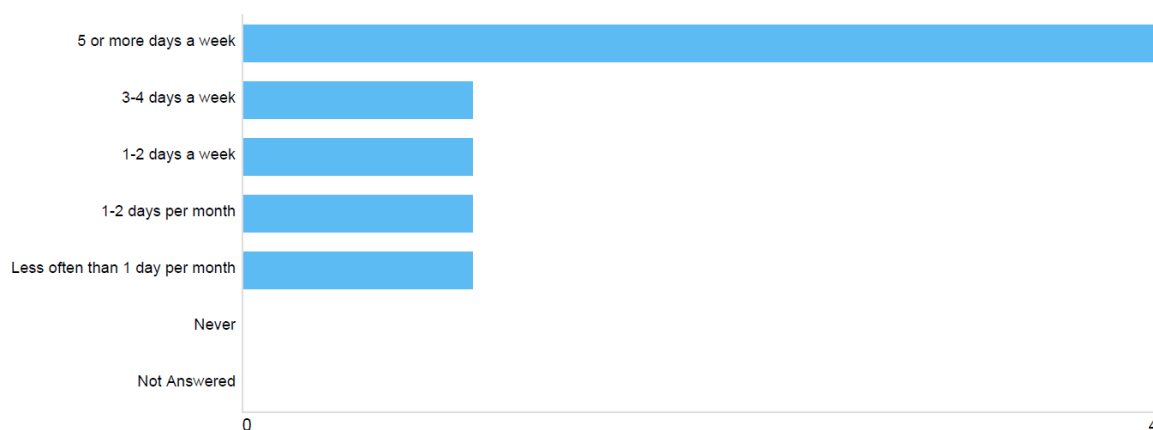


Figure 3: Frequency of visits to and from area

Over half of respondents revealed they travelled to and from the study area five or more days a week. Question 2 revealed that of these journeys, 62.5% were made by foot or cycleing and 25% of journeys were made by car.

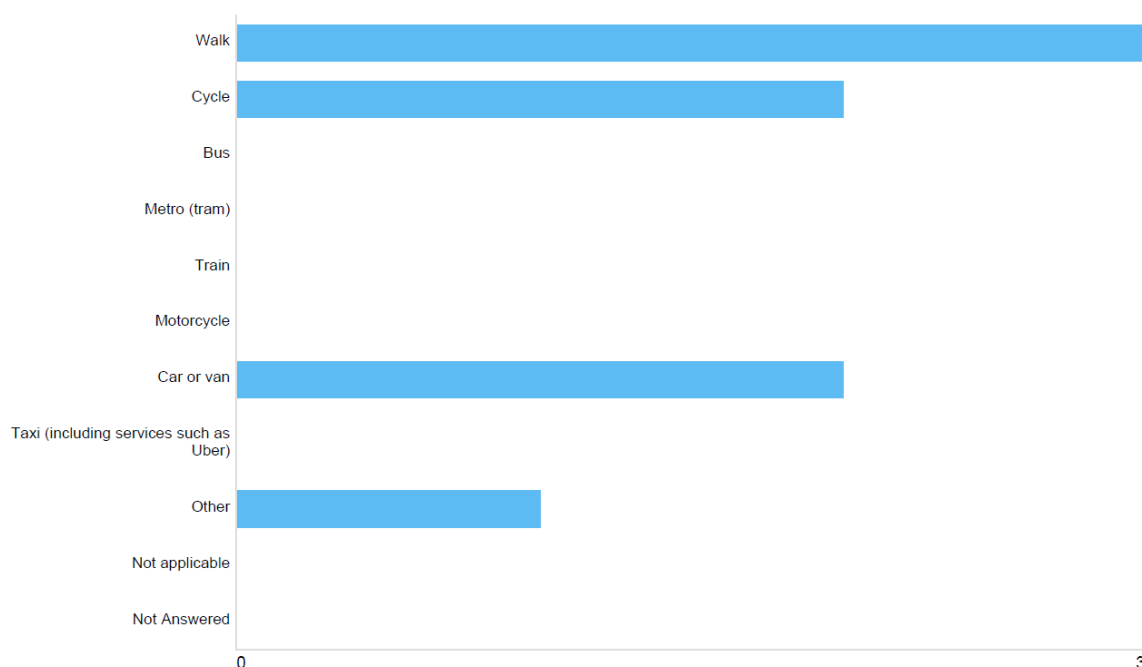


Figure 4: When travelling to and from this area (North Summerfield/Barford Road/Northbrook Street), what mode(s) of transport do you most often use?

The 62.5% of responses revealed the predominant purposes of travel were work, education and residency in the locality.

Which of these would you say best describes your journey around North Summerfield/Barford Road/Northbrook Street?

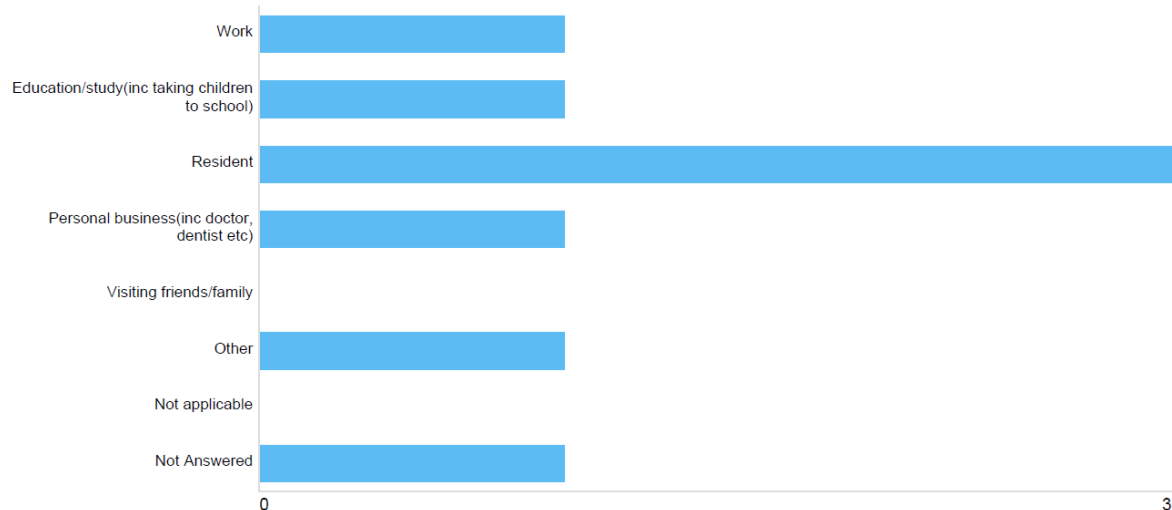


Figure 5: When travelling in this area (North Summerfield/Barford Road/Northbrook Street), typically what is the purpose of your trip?

3.2 About the Scheme

3.2.1 What do you think of the revised proposals for Barford Estate?

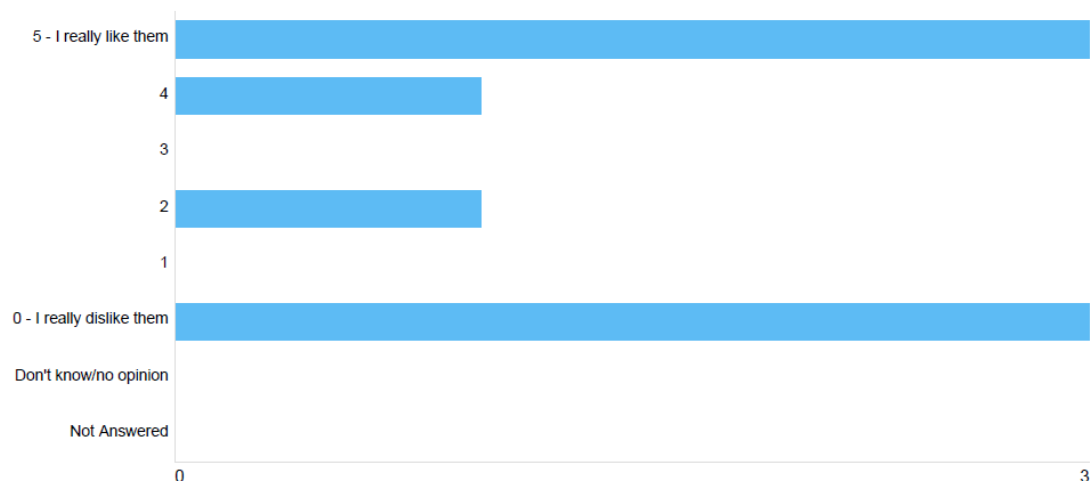


Figure 6: What do you think of the proposals for Barford Estate?

A range of responses were received with regard to the revised proposals for Barford Estate. The respondents were asked to rate the options on a scale of 0 (really dislike them) to 5 (really like them).

Of the responses, 37.5% rated the proposals “5 – I really like them”. Whereas 37.5% also rated the proposals “0 – I really dislike them”. Other responses rated the designs as 2 and 4 respectively.

Within the detailed responses to the scheme proposals, a number of themes were apparent:

Position	Theme
Positive	Speeding cars and aggressive driving are a problem on Northbrook Street The need to encourage parents to walk children to Barford School Creation of a new public space and reduce rat-running through the area onto the Dudley Road Improvements to cycling provisions are most welcome in particular the new crossing at Barford Road Primary School Reducing parking on footpaths
Suggestions/ Improvements	Lengthen cycle lane down whole of Northbrook Street to tie into Port Loop development Additional parking restrictions on Wiggin Street
Negative	Increased traffic at the junction of Barford Road and Dudley Road Removal of parking on Northbrook Street Potential for anti-social behaviour in new public realm area Wheelchair access to pavements

Examples of participant responses fully supporting the scheme

- *"Better improvements in the area"*
- *"Good proposal. Speeding cars and aggressive drivers a problem on Northbrook Street. Parents should be encouraged not to drive their children to Barfield Primary School. Walk or cycle there instead."*
- *"I really like the scheme, particularly the carriageway closure to facilitate the creation of a new public space and reduce rat-running through the area onto the Dudley Road."*
- *"Closing Northbrook street would make the area safer - there is too much speeding going on and always a bit tricky to cross both on bike and on foot - it's a very popular shortcut to Icknield Port Rd."*
- *"The improvements to cycling provisions are most welcome in particular the new crossing at Barford Road Primary School - this area is usually blocked by residents and parents parking on the pavement especially during the school run."*

Examples of participant responses reacting negatively to the proposals

- *"As a wheelchair user that can't drive I rely on taxis to get around and these changes are going to make simply leaving my house far more expensive given the huge detour through the massively congested dudley road junction that is suddenly required. Congestion that is just going to get far worse as the hundreds of extra homes being built get added. This will make my life harder & reduce my freedom further. The wheelchair access to pavements around here is already atrocious with people parking over lowered kerbs because the ridiculous cycle path no one ever uses took it away and made the road far less safe."*
- *"The junction of Barford Road and Dudley Road is an extremely difficult and dangerous one to get in and out of by car. This is because a) the bus stop on the corner means busses are constantly making the turning more difficult and b) cars park and stop on the corner of Barford Road/Dudley Road all the time in order to access the shops and takeaways in the area. There is an even higher level of parking when the Masjid on Barford Road is open for prayer on a Friday."*

The congestion Barford Road is heightened by parents taking children to and from the local school, especially at the beginning and end of the day, and by school staff parking there.

Finally the blocking of the Dudley Road Northbrook Street Junction cuts off an important access route for emergency vehicles, with the A & E just opposite on Dudley Road, and the Fire Station only a short way down Icknield Port Road."

- *"My family lives in this area and we have a very big problem with this scheme. We have a car on our property that we need to park and we won't be able to park our car if the road at Northbrook Street at the junction with Dudley Road is closed. We also require the cul-de-sac between Barford Road and Northbrook Street to be open to traffic so that we can enter. Also, we are unhappy about additional spaces being opened on the road parallel to the canal, since we don't feel safe having people there, especially since it can attract unsafe behaviour from people in the middle of the night if there are extra spaces for people to stay there. Road closures will also cause more traffic in this area which already has a lot of traffic due to the schools nearby. So during school hours, the traffic is tremendous in this area and having an extra road to drive through to get out of the traffic and have a different route to go is essential in order to avoid bottlenecks which these road closures will inevitably create."*

Additional Suggestions

- *"why does the bi-directional cycle highway stop halfway down Northbrook Street? Are there plans to extend it further down the street and into the future phases of Port Loop?"*
- *"It is assumed that a certain amount of traffic will divert down Icknield Port Road and up Wiggin Street. Wiggin Street also has very restricted access, due to excessive parking whenever there is an event at the H Suite opposite. In addition it will itself soon become more congested due to being a major access route to the new Icknield Port Loop Development - which will reach that road in the near future."*

3.3 Key Stakeholder Response

Further to the original scheme consultation, no additional comments have been received from key stakeholders. Ward Councillors have been consulted and no adverse comments have been received.

West Midlands Ambulance Service and West Midlands Fire Service had no comments at this moment in time.

West Midlands Police have provided the following feedback: *"I am from the local neighbourhood team that cover the Barford estate. We have reviewed the plans on the website and have a few concerns that we would like to bring to your attention. While we support the closure of Northbrook Street with Dudley Road, we are concerned that this may push traffic down Barford Road. We find that a lot of traffic uses the Barford Estate as a cut through to avoid the lights further up on Dudley Road, through the closure of Northbrook Street it may mean these drivers choose to use Barford Road instead to cut out the lights. We already have a number of issues with parking and traffic around Barford Primary school at school drop off and pick up time, we are concerned that by more traffic using this road it will exacerbate these issues."*

4. Key Themes Discussion

4.1 Traffic

Responses highlighted the potential problem of increased through traffic being redirected to Dudley Road via Barford Road following the closure of Northbrook Street. However, there is already a noticeable perceived problem of “rat running” and speeding vehicles throughout the estate as exemplified by responses to this consultation. One respondent noted *“Closing Northbrook street would make the area safer - there is too much speeding going on and always a bit tricky to cross both on bike and on foot - it’s a very popular shortcut to Icknield Port Rd.”*

If the scheme is implemented, the distance for traffic travelling through Barford Estate increases by approx. 66% which in theory should help to reduce the problem of “rat running” as identified by many resident responses. However, the issue of “rat running” is also related to time (avoiding traffic signals at Icknield Port Rd / Winson Green junction). Therefore, providing the additional justification for the traffic calming measures to reduce speed in the estate which should help to assist in reducing traffic further.

A planned road closure of the junction of Northbrook Street and Dudley Road in December 2021 to facilitate utility works will provide an opportunity to assess any changes in traffic flow through the estate with feedback incorporated into scheme proposals.

4.2 Street parking

The proposals aim to rationalise on street parking on Northbrook Street and prohibit parking on existing crossings and dropped kerbs at junctions throughout the estate. The proposals allow for resident parking bays north of the junction with Willow Gardens. Existing on street parking to the south of Willow Gardens will be retained.

One respondent noted the problem of excess street parking blocking Wiggin Street in relation to the parking for the conference facility on Icknield Port Road. Revised proposals for rationalising on street parking in the southern section of the study area will be incorporated into scheme delivery.

4.3 Access for all

One respondent noted that the *“...wheelchair access to pavements around here is already atrocious with people parking over lowered kerbs because the ridiculous cycle path no one ever uses took it away and made the road far less safe.”*

The proposals aim to rationalise on street parking on Northbrook Street and prohibit parking on existing crossings and dropped kerbs at junctions throughout the estate. Furthermore, the scheme will introduce a new signalised crossing point on Barford Road to provide improved east / west connectivity and enhanced access from the formalised segregated cycle link on Northbrook Street to Summerfield Green.

The existing Emergency Travel Plan “pop up” cycle lane is to be formalised in advance of the proposed works to provide a permanent link from the Dudley Road corridor to the Birmingham Mainline Canal and Summerfield Park.

The pedestrianisation of the northern section of Northbrook Street will help to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the wider estate and encourage a reduction in “rat running” between Icknield Port Road and Dudley Road.

4.4 Recommendations

- Southern section of Wiggin Street to be included in TRO/parking restrictions to help alleviate parking issues
- Ensure proposals prohibit parking on existing crossings and dropped kerbs at junctions throughout the estate.

5. Conclusion:

A consultation took place between 18th October 2021 to 8th November 2021 with stakeholders and the general public, where consultees were asked to complete a questionnaire seeking their views as to whether the proposal would meet the scheme objectives and whether they would support such a scheme. Eight consultees and one stakeholder responded to the consultation exercise.

Analysis of the responses provided indicates both strong support and disapproval of the revised proposals. Key themes of improving access, rationalising on street parking, reducing traffic speed and “rat running” have been identified which will be fed back into scheme designs.

Some valuable comments have been received by the local businesses and residents, which have assisted in revising the scheme to make further minor improvements, which as a result will help to assist in alleviating the problems raised.