

# **Kings Heath Local Centre Consultation Report**

**June 2022**

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# 1. Introduction

In 2020, an area of on-street parking was suspended in local centres to enable social distancing, queuing and outdoor hospitality.

In Kings Heath the following parking was suspended:

- 35m bay for short term parking (Mon-Sat 7am-7pm, 30 min, no return within 1 hour), to the west side of the High Street (A435) outside NatWest and William Hill.
- 58m bay for short term parking (Mon-Sat 7am-7pm, 30 min, no return within 1 hour), to the east side of the High Street (A435) from D&S Bargains to Vodafone.

Also in 2020, the Kings Heath Places for People project removed on street parking and loading from York Road. This was not part of this scheme but sets some context. The following changes were made:

- Approximately 65m (north) plus 45m (south) of short term parking removed (Mon-Sat 7am-7pm, 1 hour, no return within 1 hour).
- Approximately 45m of unrestricted parking removed
- 1 loading bay removed, approximately 10m (Mon – Sat 9am-5pm 20 min, no return within 20 min)
- 1 loading bay retained, approximately 20m (Mon – Sat 9am-5pm 20 min, no return within 20 min)

## 1.2 You said, we did

In winter 2020/21 we conducted a review of the Places for People project delivered in Kings Heath and Moseley, alongside other schemes implemented during COVID-19, and in February/March 2021 we asked for your views to inform phase two of the project.

Several consultation responses noted that the extra footway space created by suspending on-street parking on the High Street has been left for too long with temporary barriers and signs, creating an unattractive area for shoppers.

We will permanently remove the former areas of on-street parking on Kings Heath High Street (as listed above) and widen the footway area. Discussions have taken place with the Kings Heath Business Improvement District manager and businesses regarding their loading requirements, which have been assessed, and suitable space will be made for these.

For the majority of visitors choosing to drive to Kings Heath, the off-street car parks provide suitable parking facilities. An audit of on-street parking for Blue Badge holders has been conducted and this has informed the proposals.

We expect these proposed High Street improvements to be made in Spring/Summer 2022.

## 1.3 What now?

We are now consulting on the next stage of Kings Heath's local centre consultation. Through this, the scheme will be made permanent and new measures will be added along the High

Street such as widened footways, new loading bays, blue badge holder parking bays, planters and planters.

## 2. Consultation Methodology

The full consultation information (including plans) was made available online at: [Birmingham BeHeard](#). Prior to the consultation, Kings Heath BID spoke to all affected frontages and received feedback from them, which we used to inform the scheme.

Further background to the scheme remains online at [Birmingham City Council](#) as well as wider information on local centres across Birmingham.

Key documents (consultation plans, further consultation information, paper copy of questionnaire) were all made available in Kings Heath library.

Messages informing people about the consultation and directing them to the website were shared across appropriate channels including:

- Letters drop (to be delivered to approx. 500 properties in the scheme area, including boundary roads, during the first few days of the consultation.)
- Existing email and other electronic communications (corporate BCC, Birmingham Connected)
- Existing stakeholder/community contacts and networks
- Roadside signage and on street posters
- Social media

One virtual and one in-person event were held to present consultation information and to enable conversations with the project team.

### 2.1 Response channels

Responses were primarily be collected online via Be Heard. Paper questionnaires were also available in Kings Heath library and at face-to-face events, but online responses were encouraged wherever possible. Where contact was made via a channel other than Be Heard, we strongly encouraged people to also complete the questionnaire online or on paper, if they were able to.

An email address was advertised for any queries ([connected@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:connected@birmingham.gov.uk)). Anyone who emailed was also encouraged to respond via Be Heard.

### 2.2 Programme and schedule of events

The consultation was held between 16 May and 10 Jun 2022

Two events were held to present consultation information and to enable conversations with the project team. Table 1 summarises the schedule of events.

**Figure 1** Summary of scheduled events

<b>Event</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Date/time</b>
Teams Live Event	Open to all	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 5:30- 6:30pm
Public drop in event (KH community centre)	Open to all	24 <sup>th</sup> May 4pm-7pm

During the consultation, officers aimed to avoid meeting with specific resident or campaign groups individually, but still encouraged them to join drop-in events. This allowed different groups to also hear one another's views and will avoid any concerns that any group has more influence than another, or than individuals who are not part of a group.

During the events, attendees were encouraged to respond to the online consultation questionnaire or given a paper version to respond via, to ensure their views were accurately recorded.

### 3. Analysis:

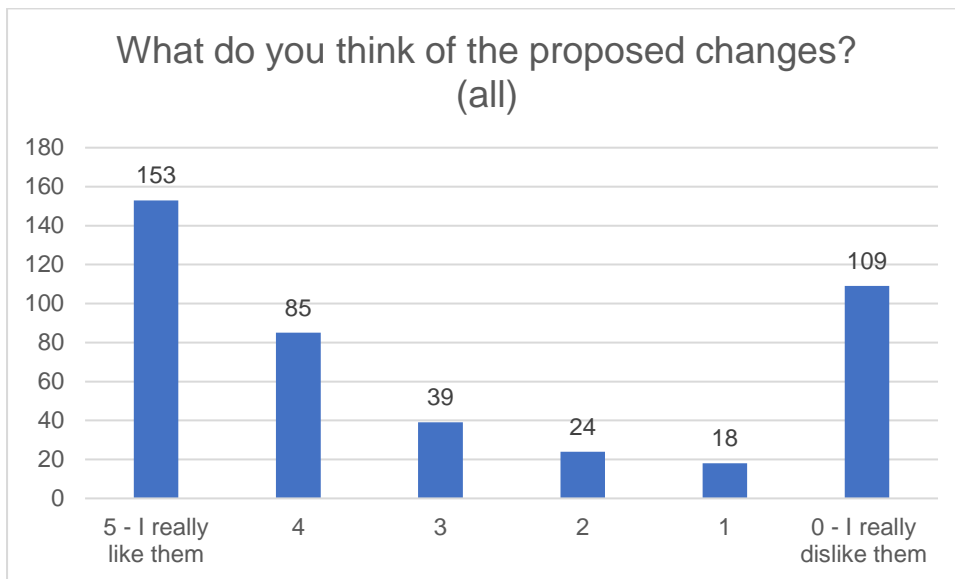
#### 3.1 Analysis introduction:

The online consultation received 418 responses, with an additional 11 paper survey responses. These responses were analysed alongside each other, therefore the combined total number of 429 responses have been used for analysis. Of these responses, 6 came from a representative of a group, business or organisation, with the remaining 423 coming from individuals. We also received 2 responses from organisations via email, which will be summarised within the business section.

#### 3.2 What do you think of the proposed changes?

All respondents were asked how they feel about Kings Heath Local Centre proposals, the responses have been summarised below.

**Figure 2** What do you think of the proposed changes? (all)



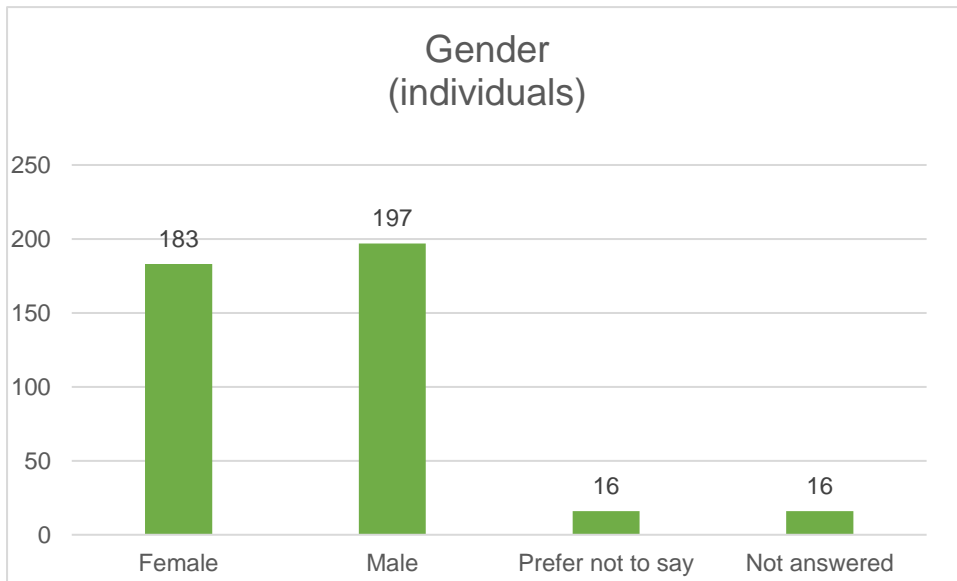
Overall, 238 respondents (55.5%) felt positive or mostly positive about the proposed changes, of these, 35% strongly supported the changes. On the other hand, 127 respondents (29.6%) felt negative or mostly negative about the proposed changes, with 25% of them strongly opposing them.

## 4. Individual responses

### 4.1 Demographic responses

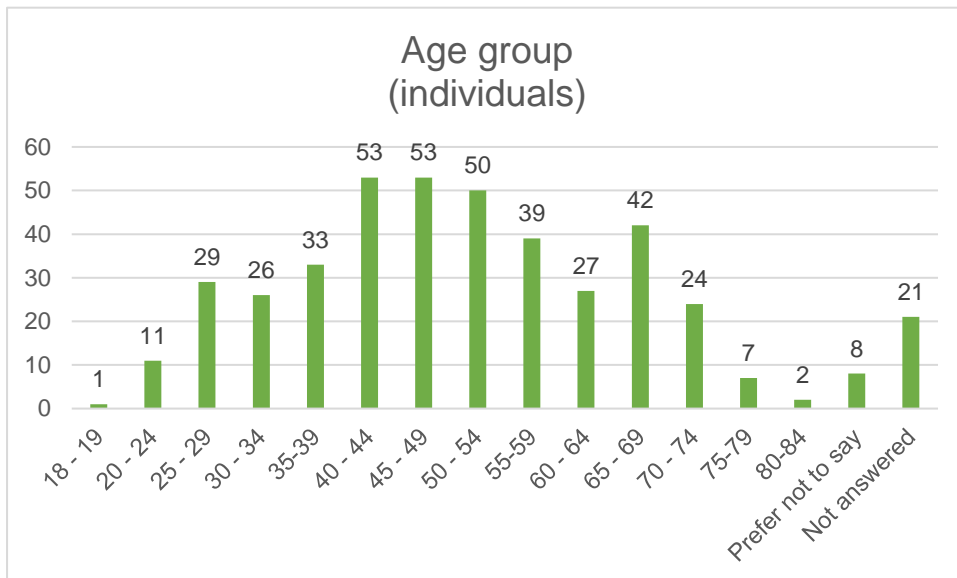
In terms of the demographic of individual respondents, there was a relatively even split of female and male respondents. 43% of respondents were female and 46.5% were male, as evidenced in the graph below.

**Figure 3** Gender of individuals



The age ranges of respondents were fairly broad ranging. The majority of respondents were aged between 40 and 69 with this demographic making up 62.4% of respondents. The least amount of responses were received from the 18-19 and 80-84 age groups.

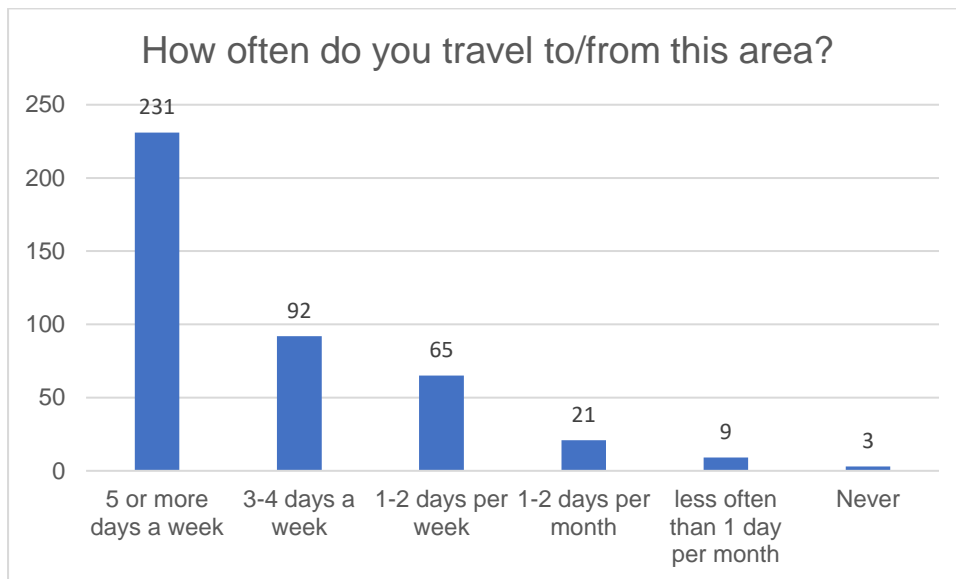
**Figure 4** Age group of individuals



## 4.2 Travel related responses

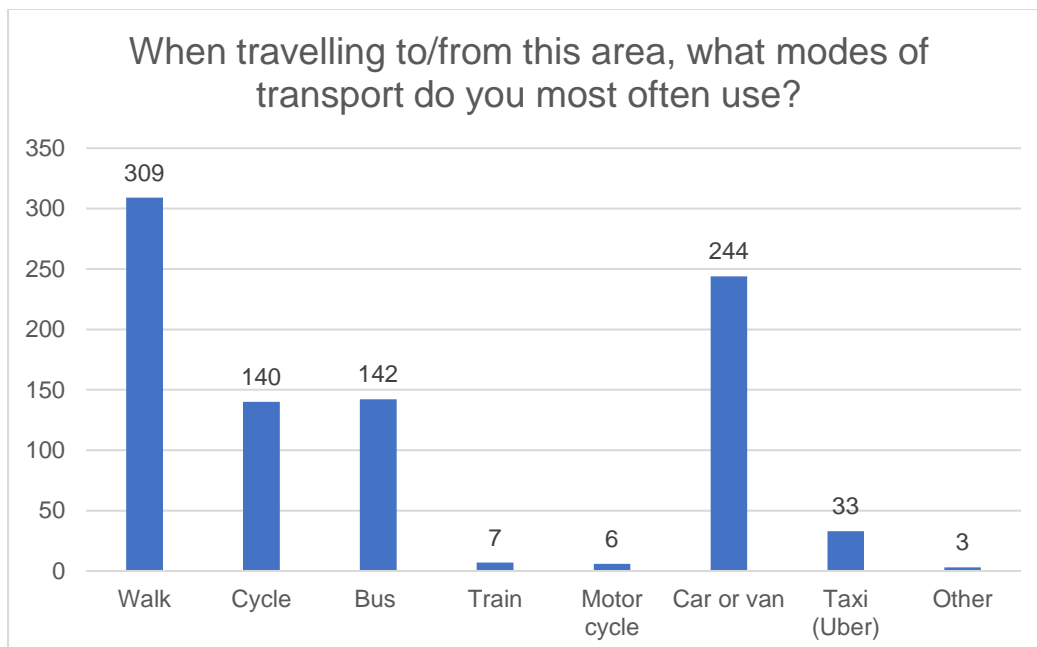
We asked all individuals how often they travel to and from this area, which 421 respondents answered. Results are displayed in figure 4. For this question, the most common response was '5 or more days a week' with 231 respondents selecting this option, and the least common response was 'never' which 3 respondents selected. 92.16% of respondents who answered this question travelled to and from the area at least once a week.

**Figure 5** How often do you travel to/from this area?



We also asked respondents how they tend to travel within the area. For this question, respondents were able to select multiple methods of travel. Walking was found to be the most used mode of transport, with a total of 309 respondents selecting it. The second most common was car or van, which 244 respondents selected, followed by bus (142) and cycling (140). The least common modes of transport were taxi, train, then motorcycle.

**Figure 6** When travelling to/from this area, what mode of transport do you most often use?

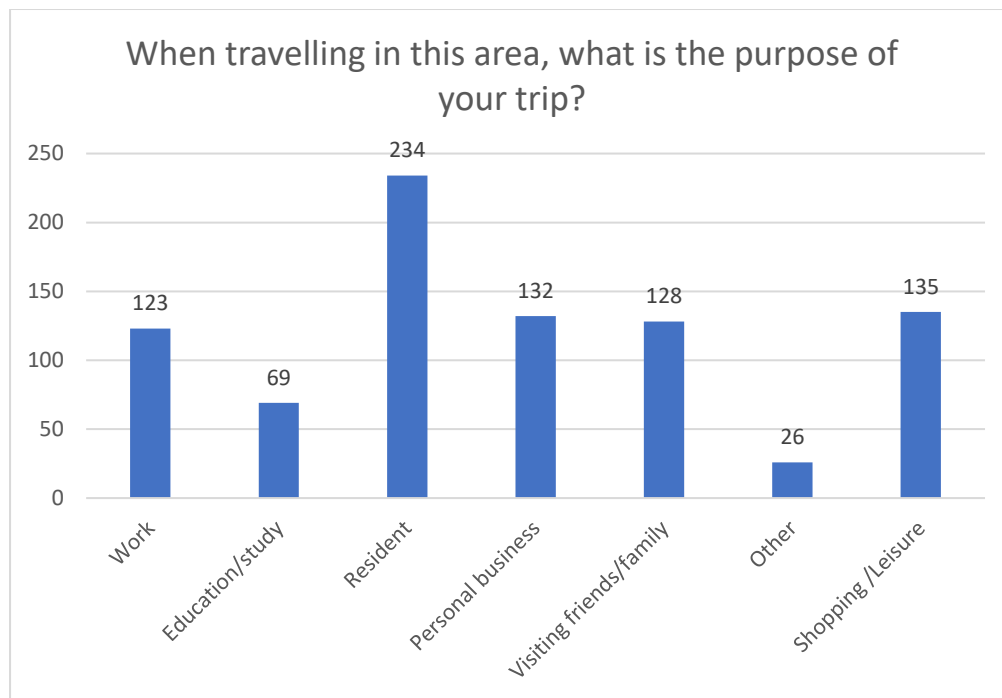


Finally, for travel related questions we asked, 'When travelling in this area, what is the purpose of your trip?'; again, respondents were able to choose multiple options. The most common



response for this question was 'resident', which was selected by 234 people. This was followed by 'shopping/leisure', which wasn't initially an option for people to choose on BeHeard, however upon analysing the data, a large majority of people who selected 'other' specified the purpose of their trip as being shopping/leisure. Therefore, we added this category in now. The next most popular option was personal business (132), followed by visiting friends and family (128), work (123) and then finally education (69).

**Figure 7** When travelling in this area, what is the purpose of your trip?



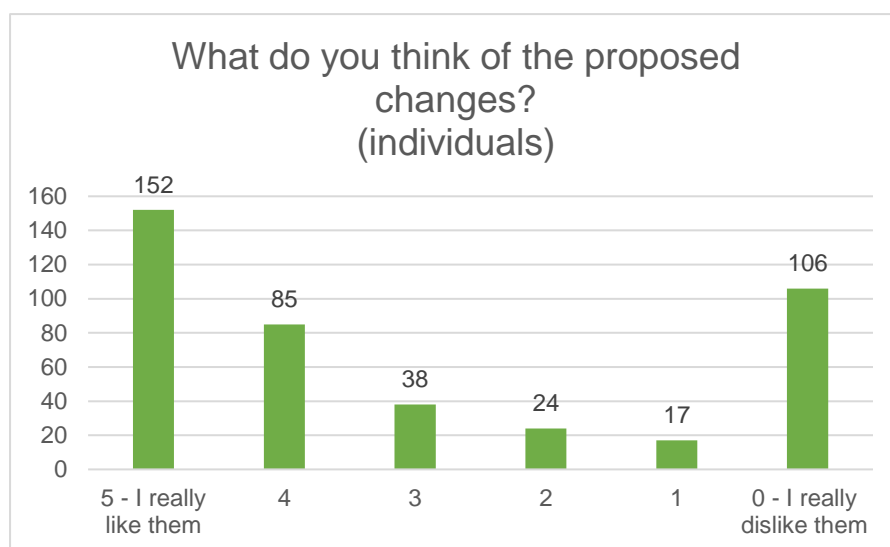
### 4.3 Views on the scheme

All respondents were asked the following question regarding the scheme:

- 1) What do you think of the proposed changes in this consultation? - Do you have any comments about the proposals?

When considering the responses from individuals only, the opinion largely mirrors that of all respondents, with a total of 237 respondents (56%) supporting the proposals, and 123 respondents (29%) disliking them. With the remaining 79 respondents (15%) falling somewhere in the middle.

**Figure 8** what do you think of the proposed changes? (individuals)



Out of the total 423 individual respondents, 340 wrote responses to the first question, 'What do you think of the proposed changes in this consultation?'. All responses were analysed, and a table summarising the common themes was created. Many respondents had similar concerns about the proposals and similar areas of success. 16 main categories were identified during this analysis, detailed in the table below, ordered from most common response to least.

**Figure 9** Table of responses received by individuals, ordered from most common to least

Comment	Number of responses	% out of 340 (total responses received)
Reckless/illegal parking/displacement. Enforcement needed	86	25%
Cycle infrastructure	75	22%
Negative impact on businesses	39	11%
Pavements are wide enough	32	9%
More space/footway- pedestrian friendly	27	8%
Remove the planters	27	8%
More blue badge bays needed	23	7%
Plant trees	22	6%
Pointless/waste of money	20	6%
Pollution/congestion	17	5%
Reinstate parking bays	14	4%
Helps traffic flow	10	3%
Bus layby	10	3%
Insufficient parking	10	3%
Car park capacity/signage	8	1%
Loading bays are unnecessary	6	1%

Reckless/illegal parking/displacement:

- The most common response from individuals mentioned reckless and illegal parking, both along the high street itself and on side roads. Many individuals expressed the importance of introducing penalties for cars who do not comply with disabled spots and

loading bays. There was a strong consensus among individuals that parking enforcement is needed to combat this issue. 9 individuals mentioned that disabled spots specifically may be abused and will need enforcement.

#### Cycle infrastructure

- The need for cycling infrastructure was the second most common response received, with 19% of individuals advocating for a segregated cycle lane along the high street. Some individuals expressed concern over the viability of adding a cycle lane, alongside the widening of the pavement. Therefore, some individuals called for a cycle lane *instead of* the footway widening. Many comments mentioned that currently the provisions for cyclists are not enough, and that it can be dangerous to cycle along the high street. Many individuals believe that a cycle lane will increase active travel within the area.

#### Negative impact on business

- 10% of individuals expressed that the proposals would have a negative impact on businesses along the high street. Most of these responses felt the reduction in parking along the high street will result in less customers visiting the local shops. A small number of these responses mentioned that they themselves have begun to shop elsewhere.

#### Pavements are wide enough

- 9% of individuals believe the proposed footway widening is unnecessary. The majority of these comments felt that the footway is wide enough as it is. Some responses mention that a cycle lane would be more beneficial than the widened footway. A few individuals suggest that parking spaces along the high street would be more beneficial.

#### More space/footway. Pedestrian friendly

- 7% of individuals mentioned that the experience for pedestrians on the high street will be improved by the footway widening. Some responses mentioned the benefit this will have for people pushing pushchairs, and those in wheelchairs. Some individuals suggested that seating/benches be placed on the pavement and asked whether the additional space could be used by cafés.

#### Remove the planters

- Most of the 6% of comments advocating for the removal of the planters from the scheme felt that they were counteractive, as they take up additional space on the widened footway. Some individuals said they would rather see trees planted instead of installing planters, as trees may be more effective at preventing illegal parking. Some individuals expressed the worry that planters may be abused, and so need to be consistently maintained. A few individuals raised concerns that planters may be obstructive to pedestrians.

#### More blue badge bays needed

- 6% of individuals expressed that 3 disabled bays are insufficient, and more are needed along the high street.

#### Plant trees

- 20 individuals mentioned that they would like trees planted, some of these responses wanted trees instead of planters, and some wanted them alongside the planters. The reasons for this were commonly that trees are aesthetically pleasing, they can absorb pollution, and that they may deter illegal parking.

#### Pointless/waste of money

- Most of the comments about the scheme being 'pointless' specifically related to the widening of the footway. Some people were referring to the proposed parking spaces as they may be abused. Some individuals stated that the money going into the scheme should be used for other things.

#### Pollution/congestion

- 4% of individuals mentioned pollution and congestion in some way. Many of these comments related to existing schemes within Kings Heath, although some expressed concern that these proposals may increase congestion on the high street.

#### Reinstate parking bays

- 14 individuals want all parking bays to be re-instated to the way they were before the initial changes were made, pre Covid-19.

#### Helps traffic flow

- 3% of individuals believe the proposals will improve the flow of traffic, as cars stopping to park cause obstructions and can slow down traffic.

#### Bus laybys

- 10 individuals suggested that the additional space be used as bus laybys to assist with the free flow of traffic.

#### Insufficient parking

- Similarly to the 'more blue badge bays needed' category, 10 individuals felt there is insufficient parking along the high street in general.

#### Car park capacity/signage

- 8 individuals expressed that there are enough car parks within Kings Heath that provide alternative parking to the high street, 4 of these individuals mentioned that clear signage indicating the car parks would be beneficial.

#### Loading bays are unnecessary

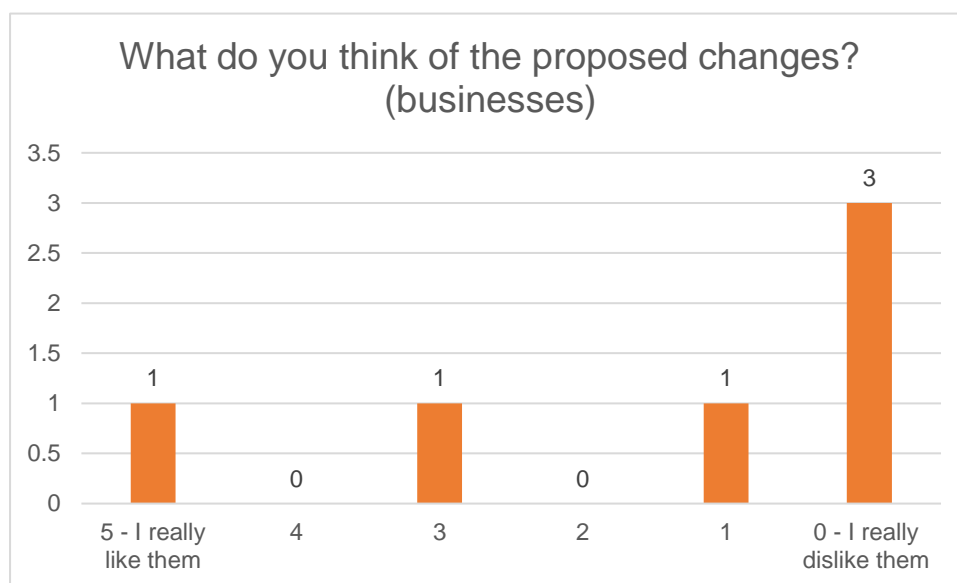
- 6 individuals mention that the loading bays are not necessary, as organisations are able to use rear access and side streets. A few individuals mentioned that organisations have likely adapted to having no loading bays.

## 5. Business/organisation responses

The consultation received 6 responses from businesses, with an additional 3 emailed into Birmingham Connected. The 6 who responded via BeHeard were asked the same questions as individuals.

The business' response to the question 'what do you think of the proposed changes' differs from responses received from individuals, as seen in figure 6, it is evident that 66% of businesses oppose the proposed changes, with 16% in favour of them. However, it should be noted that this comes from a very small base of only 6 businesses/organisations.

**Figure 10** What do you think of the proposed changes? (businesses)



### 5.1 Views on the scheme

Out of the 6 business respondents, 5 left a comment to the question 'what do you think of the proposed changes?'. All responses were analysed and a table summarising the common themes was created, as seen below.

**Figure 11** Table of responses received by businesses

Comment	Number of responses	% out of 5 (total responses received)
Negative impact on business	3	60%
Insufficient parking	2	40%
Reckless/illegal parking/displacement. Enforcement needed	1	20%
Signpost to carparks	1	20%
Cycling infrastructure	1	20%

#### **Negative impact on businesses, insufficient parking, and signpost to carparks**

The main concern raised by businesses was that the proposals would have a negative impact on them. Insufficient parking was lower down on the priority for individuals, however for

businesses it appeared to be the second main issue they identified. One business pointed out that side streets are being blocked up by cars and raised concerns specifically about access to Heathfield Road by larger delivery vehicles, which they report is currently impeded by blue badge holder parking bays.

The lack of parking went alongside the negative impact on businesses, as they expressed the worry of custom reducing due to a lack of parking directly outside of stores. One business argued this could be combatted by using signage to direct people to the alternative available parking, as people are unaware of it.

### **Reckless parking**

Similarly, to the individual responses, concerns regarding reckless and illegal parking were raised, specifically that the loading bays and disabled bays proposed in the scheme will likely be abused.

### **Cycling infrastructure**

One business suggested that the current plans should be cancelled and replaced with a segregated cycle lane on the northbound side of the Alcester Road. They also suggested that the current parking on the south side of Silver Street be repurposed for disabled parking, rather than having disabled bays on the high street itself.

## **5.2 Kings Heath BID**

The Kings Heath Business Improvement District were one of two organisations who emailed in a response to the consultation. The BID has ensured that the information regarding the local centre consultation has been shared with its business community, and the BID manager revisited the businesses spoken to at the start of the year. From this, a small majority of businesses wished to see the car parking re-instated.

Similarly to other businesses, the BID emphasised the issue of reckless and illegal parking, and that the proposed loading bays and disabled bays will likely be abused. They also identified that illegal parking has increased on the following side roads:

- Heathfield road
- York road
- Institute Road
- Kingsfield Road
- Silver street

In order to combat this, the BID would like to see further increases in the levels of parking enforcement patrols. They also feel improved signage to the available car parks is an important addition to the scheme.

In terms of the appearance of the high street, the BID is supportive of the proposed planters, and would welcome more. They have also offered support with the maintenance of planters. To make the high street more accessible the BID proposes the installation of benches and seating along the high street. They also propose that the existing paving along the high street is levelled and that the paving matches the existing public realm on the high street.

### 5.3 Pushbikes

The second organisation who emailed in a response was Pushbikes, who object to the proposals to permanently widen the footway. Instead, they would like to see a cycle lane implemented along the length of the high street. Pushbikes would like an assessment of the local cycling network to be carried out, so that a local cycling network plan can be drawn up before plans to make changes to the temporary measures are finalised.

Pushbikes support the removal of on-street parking on the high street, noting that there are sufficient alternative parking spaces, and that the removal of parking will facilitate the smooth flow of motor traffic.

### 5.4 Sustainable Travel West Midlands

The final organisation who emailed in a response was Sustainable Travel West Midlands (SUSTRAVWM), formerly known as West Midlands Campaign for Better Transport. They are supportive of the proposals, stating the proposals will improve the urban realm along Kings Heath High Street and will make the high street more attractive for people to visit and shop.

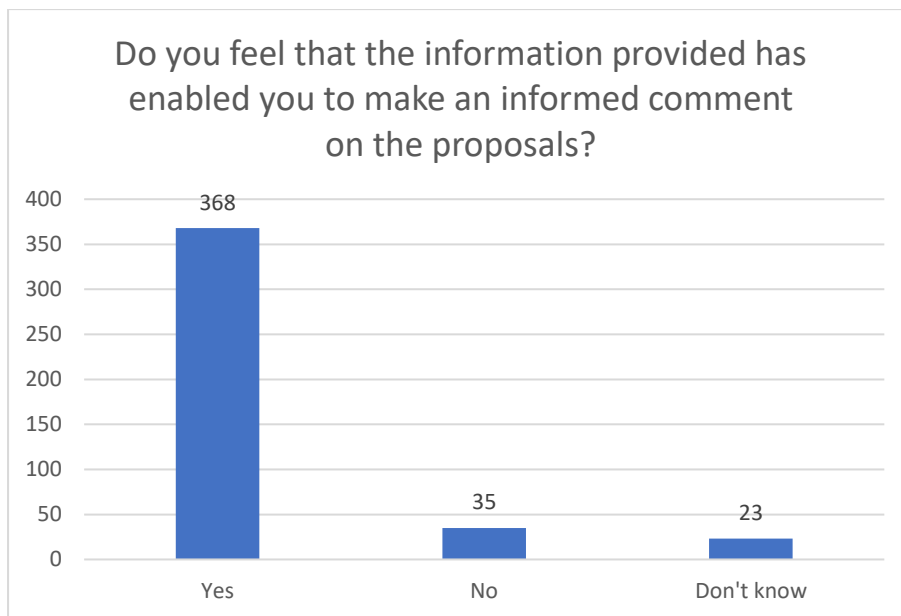
They also expressed concerns of dangerous and inconsiderate parking along the high street. They propose that in order to combat this issue, the council must work closely with West Midlands Police to deter offending motorists.

## 6. Views on the consultation

Respondents were also asked if they felt that the information provided had enabled them to make an informed comment on the proposals. The responses are shown below.

86% of respondents felt that they had been given sufficient information to make an informed comment on the proposals. 8% of respondents said they weren't provided enough information, and 5% selected the 'don't know' option.

**Figure 12** Do you feel that the information provided has enabled you to make an informed comment on the proposals?



## 7. Conclusion/ next steps

Following this consultation, we will create a detailed design for both sides of Kings Heath High Street.

That design will then be turned into an Traffic Regulation Order (TRO, the legal document needed to make changes on roads) and the scheme will be implemented, likely later in 2022.