

Spring Hill Landscape Proposal 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.

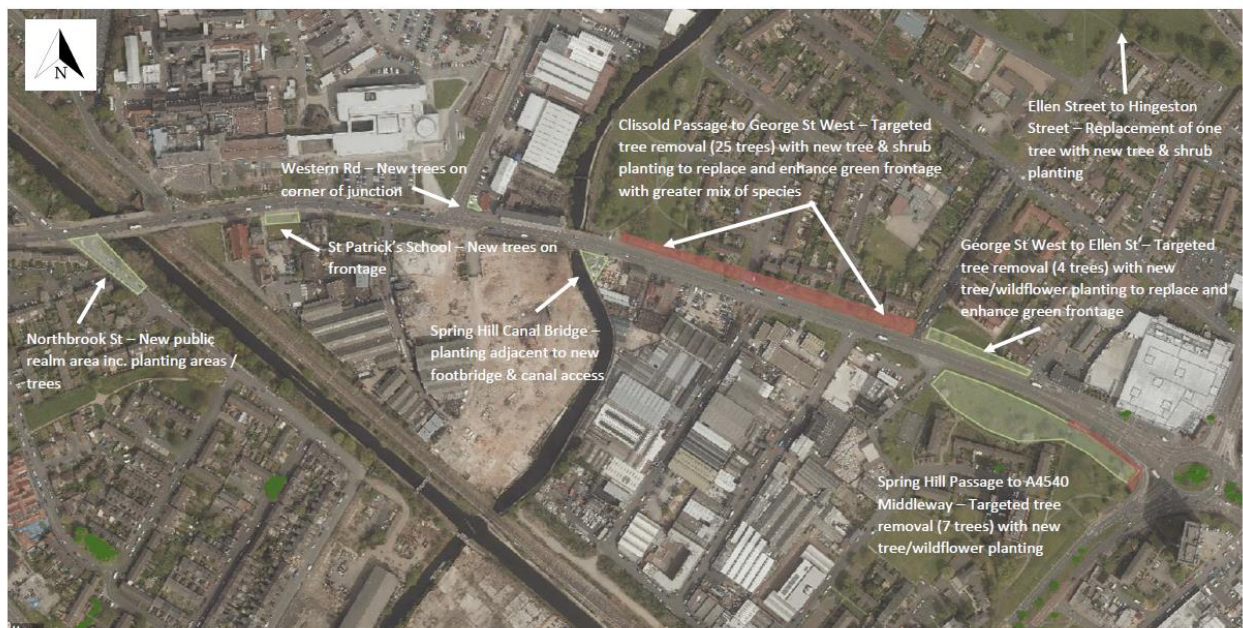
- **Providing increased capacity** - The scheme will include upgraded sections of carriageway incorporating new bus lanes, a new footbridge over the Soho Loop Canal, widened footways and improved pedestrian and cycle links to Dudley Road Local Centre, the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital and Summerfield 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.

To facilitate the improvements to Spring Hill, Western Road and Barford Estate it is necessary to implement a comprehensive landscaping proposal through the corridor.

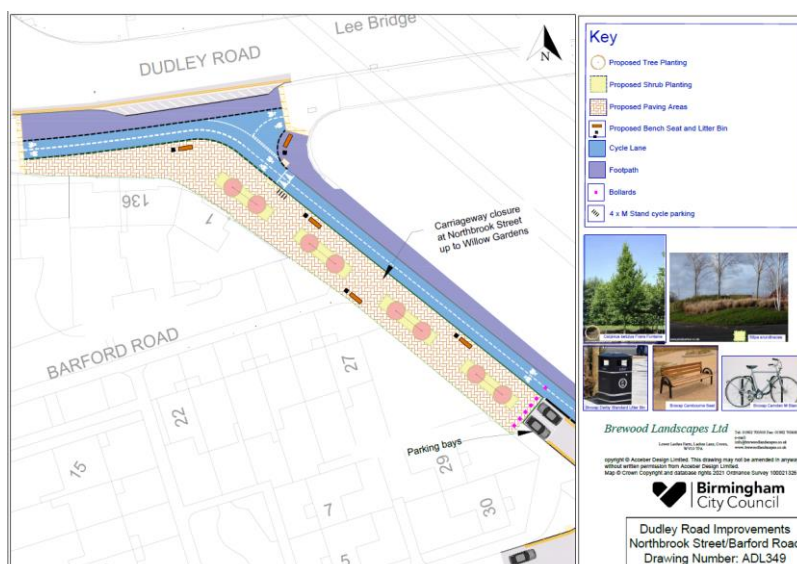
The landscape proposal ties together the early phases of the Dudley Road Revised Main Scheme delivery and provide continuity and a sense of place through the corridor. The original Revised Main Scheme public consultation did not detail these plans therefore additional public engagement was required.

The latest scheme design requires the targeted removal of existing trees & vegetation on the northern boundary of Spring Hill between Spring Hill Canal Bridge/Clissold Passage and Ellen Street to facilitate the construction of the segregated cycle link. Landscape proposals will look to enhance the green frontage screen to properties between College Street and George Street West in lieu of the vegetation removal.

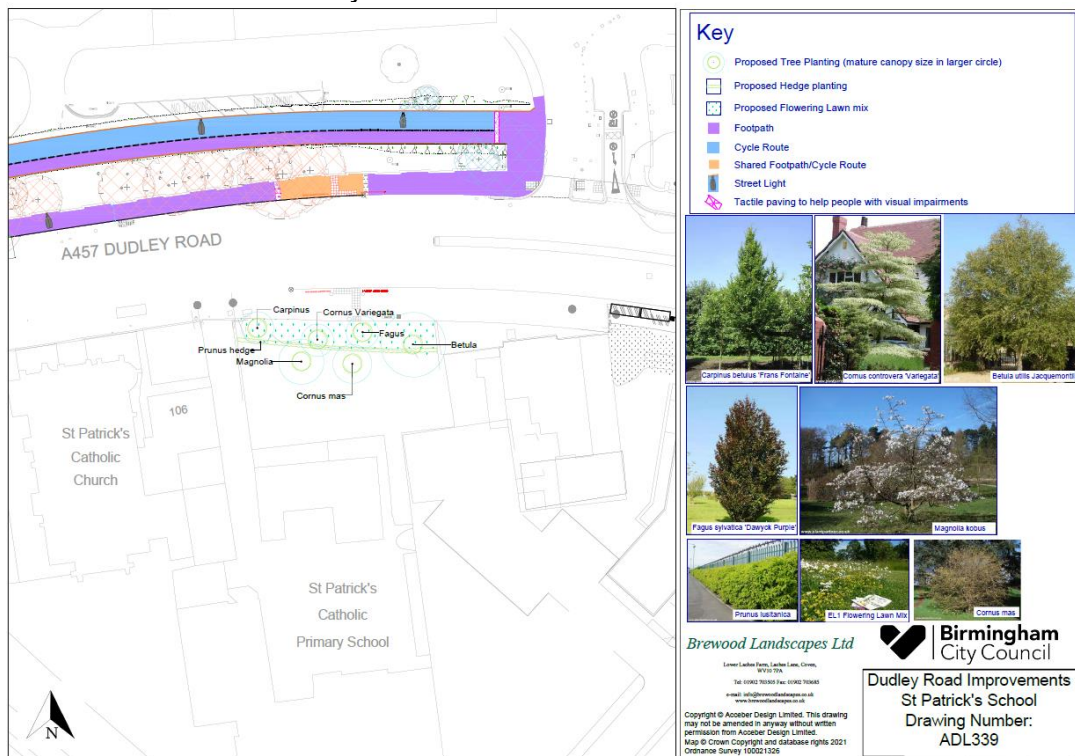


Details of the landscaping proposal are outlined below:

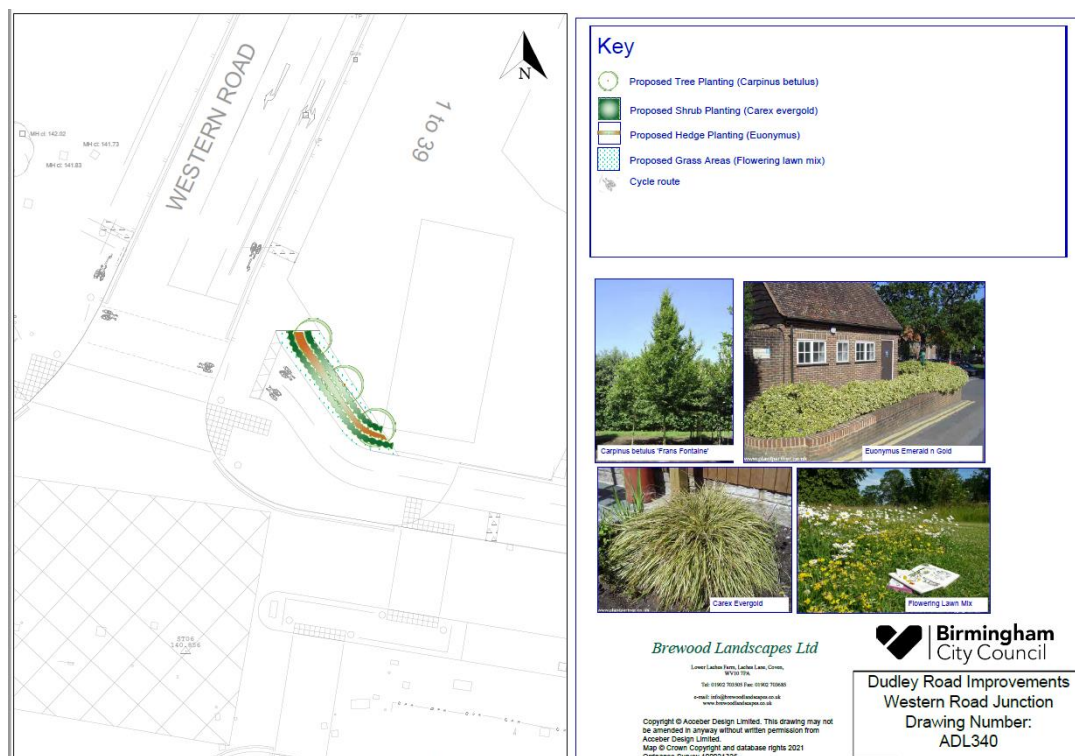
1. Creation of a new pedestrian space, including proposed shrub & tree beds, as well as cycle stands, seating benches, and litter bins on the section of Northbrook Street between Dudley Road and Willow Gardens



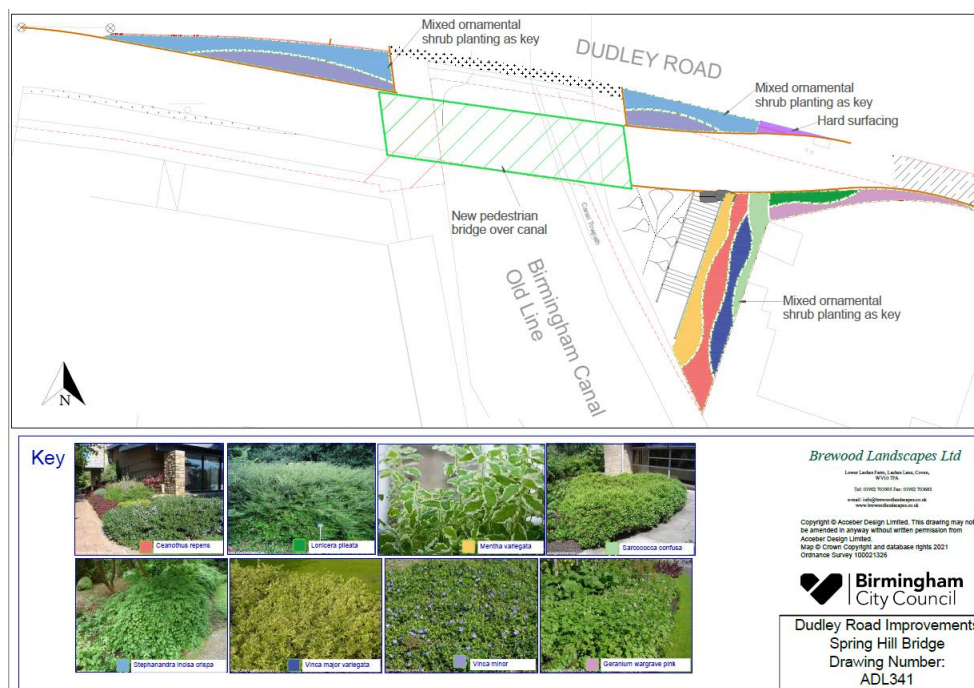
2. Hedging, flowering lawn and a variety of trees is proposed at the boundary with St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School



3. A section of hedging, shrubs, grass and trees is proposed at the back of the footway on the north east corner of the junction of Western Road with Dudley Road.



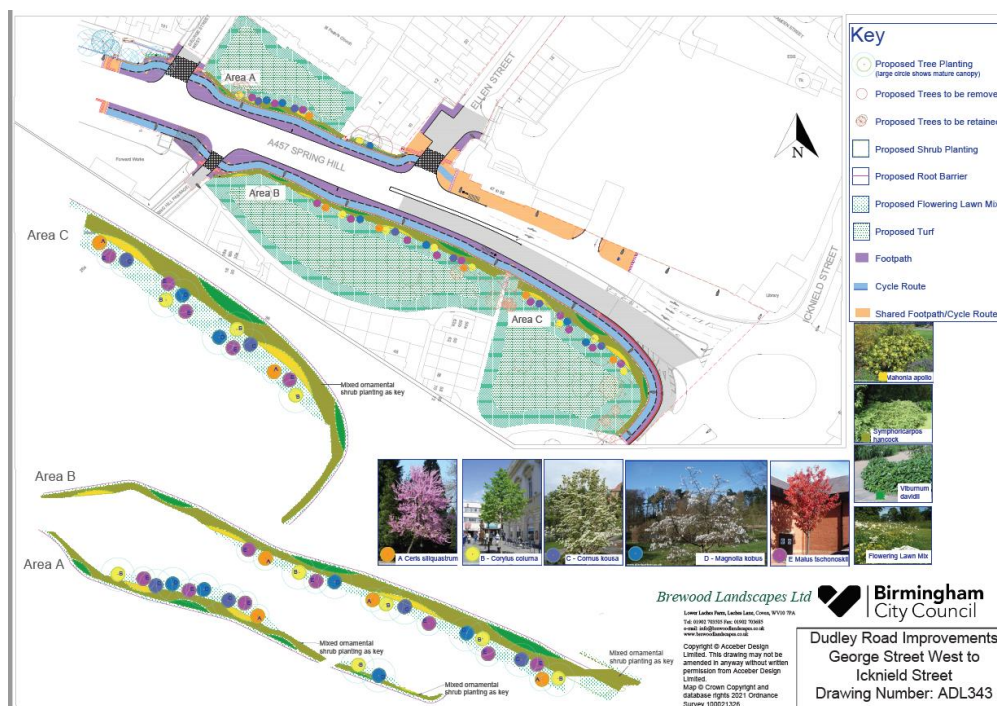
4. A mixture of ornamental shrub planting is proposed at the new canal access point on the south side of Spring Hill at Spring Hill bridge



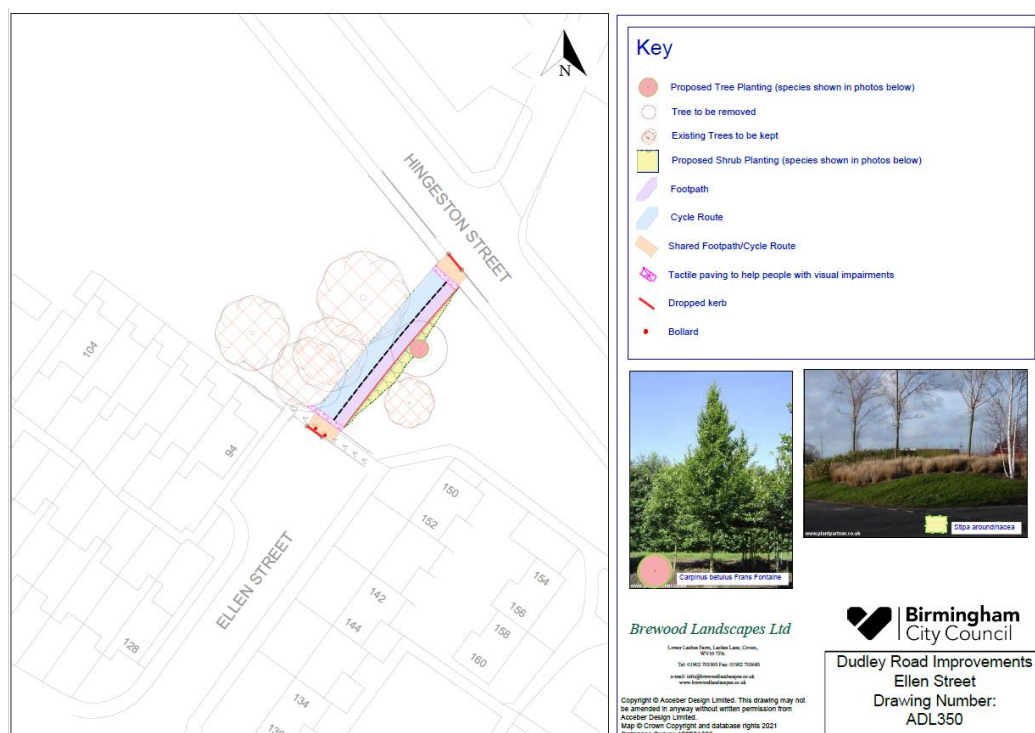
5. On the north side of Spring Hill from Spring Hill bridge to George Street West, a number of existing trees need to be removed, and it is proposed that these will be replaced with a variety of trees, shrubs and an area of flowering lawn. It is anticipated that the new tree planting would take place in early 2022 before the removal of any existing trees to allow the new trees time to establish themselves



6. Between George Street West and Ellen Street on the north side of Spring Hill, and also on the south side of Spring Hill between Spring Hill passage and Icknield Street (A4540 Middleway), a number of existing trees need to be removed and it is proposed that these will be replaced with a variety of trees and shrubs plus areas of new turf and flowering lawn.



7. Shrub and tree planting is proposed adjacent to the existing footpath that connects Ellen Street with Hingeston Street. One tree will need to be removed, but this tree will be replaced.



The consultation was launched on Monday 17th January 2022 and ran until Monday 7th February 2022. A total of 15 consultee and one stakeholder responses were received.

Publicising the consultation

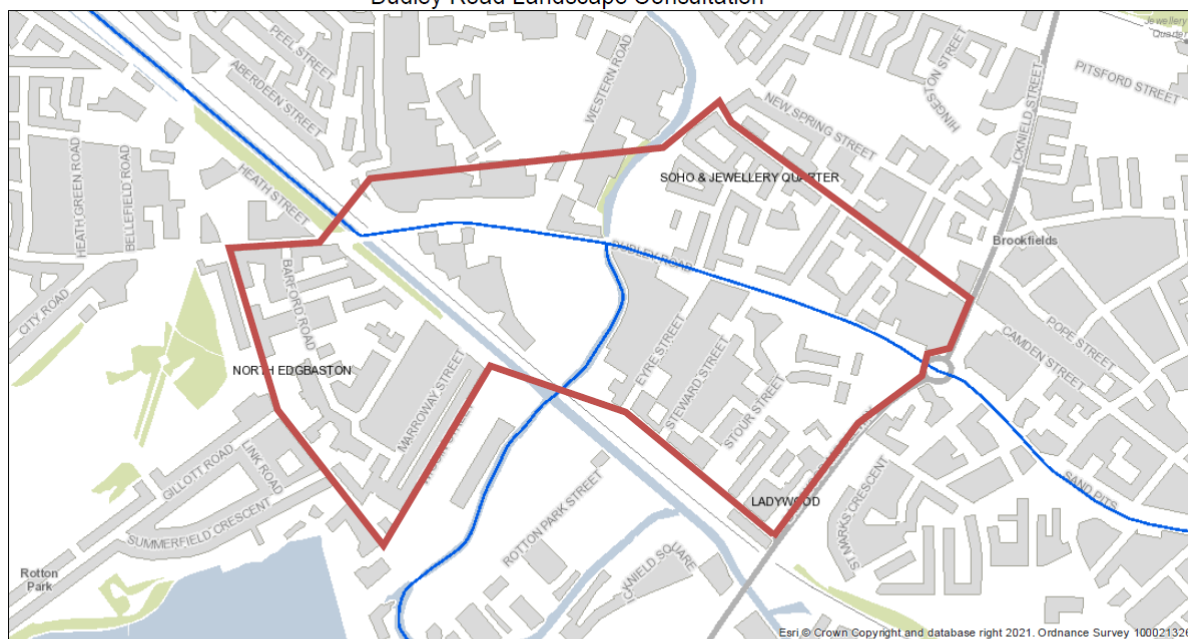
Birmingham City Council, along with its delivery partners, utilised a number of different channels of communication to spread the word about the A457 Dudley Road Improvement Scheme consultation. This included:

- 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 on Dudley Road and Northbrook Street

Dudley Road Landscape Consultation



Date of Map Creation: 25/11/2021

Map Created By:

Scale: 1:7,000

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Figure 2: Consultation area (bordered red)

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/springhill/>

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

- CAD images – illustrating the proposals
- 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.

1.2.3 Stakeholder Communication

Emails were sent to key stakeholders inviting them to give their views on the proposals via BeHeard. Attached to the email was:

- Scheme summary
- Website link to proposed scheme plans
<https://www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/economy/springhill/>

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%.

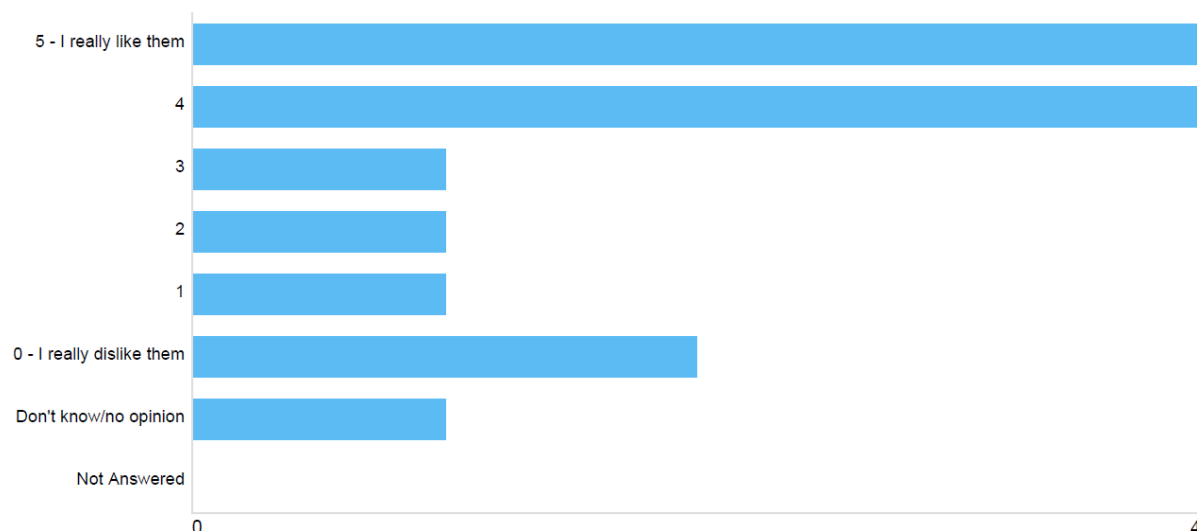
2.3.2 Qualitative Analysis

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

3 Findings

3.1 About the Scheme

3.1.1 What do you think of the landscape proposals for Spring Hill?



Option	Total	Percent
5 - I really like them	4	28.57%
4	4	28.57%
3	1	7.14%
2	1	7.14%
1	1	7.14%
0 - I really dislike them	2	14.29%
Don't know/no opinion	1	7.14%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Figure 3: What do you think of the landscape proposals for Spring Hill?

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

Of the responses, 57.14% rated the proposals “5 – I really like them” and “4” . Whereas 21.43% rated the proposals “0 – I really dislike them” and “1”. Other responses rated the designs as 2 and 3 respectively.

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

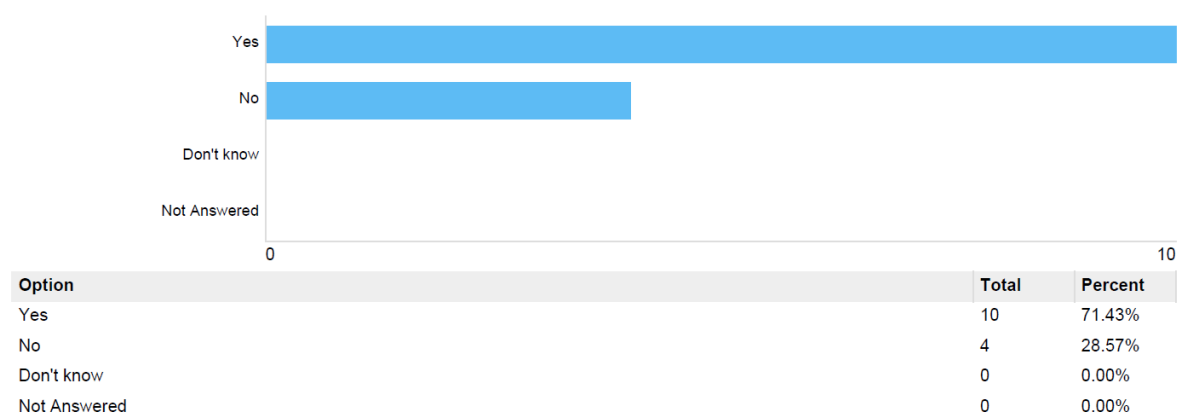


Figure 4 Do you feel that the information provided has enabled you to make an informed comment on the proposals?

The majority of feedback received suggests that the quality of the consultation information provided enabled the consultee to make an informed comment on the proposals.

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

Position	Theme
Positive	Improved green space, opportunity for native wildflowers, potential to reduce fly tipping
Suggestions/Improvements	Inclusion of native/local wildflowers/trees & shrubs in planting proposals, ongoing maintenance, retention of existing trees
Negative	Removal of existing trees, access to properties

Examples of participant responses fully supporting the scheme

- *“Please put as MUCH green space as possible along with more bike paths. This area is so deprived, grey and with lots of traffic. We value and need green spaces with more air filtration and less traffic pollution as possible!”*
- *“The only thing I would add is that it would be nice to see the 'Foxglove' flower being used on many stretches of the proposed areas. It has been named the county flower of the West Midlands, and it's distinct bright colour would make it a lovely addition to the public realm rather than the usual green shrubs.”*
- *“Honestly, really liking the idea that more green spaces will become part of Dudley Road. It is heavy road into and from the city as well as Sandwell, Cape Hill, Winson Green and Edgbaston. More focus on inviting people to the canal via bike and walking is important and while it is not directly in these plans connecting these to the Edgbaston Reservoir would also be something that could bare some fruit. Make sure there is a distinction between the cycle paths and pedestrian ways and that near schools and other publicly used buildings bins are provided, there is a lot of rubbish accumulating across the city. Also the pedestrain bridge should be able to manage both pedestrian and cycles.”*
- *“Generally looks good. Want to reinforce the desire to maintain as many mature trees as possible”*

Examples of participant responses reacting negatively to the proposals

- *"To take fully grown trees out of deprived areas is a crime, with the levels of pollution in these areas. It always is the easiest and quickest option especially in communities that are deprived. Replacing with grass flower beds and a few young samplings will not provide same benefit. When in the wealthy parts of Birmingham you retain as many mature trees as possible and your development plans supports that. Mature trees need to be retained at all costs."*

Additional Suggestions

- *"The section from Spring Hill bridge down to the Middleway is constantly full of rubbish and fly tipped materials - how do you intend to prevent this carrying on happening whilst maintaining all the work and effort that has gone into making the area so attractive?"*
- *"Can the existing trees be kept and those scheme still implemented alongside them"*
- *"...If mature trees are removed they should be replaced at a ratio of 2 to 1. New trees should be a broad range of native tree species rather than a narrow range of mainly non-native trees, as proposed here. Trees which provide berries, nuts, seeds should be planted to provide food for wildlife. Native scrub and hedges should be planted instead of the proposed non-native ornamentals shrubs.."*
- *"Never mind planting trees you need to stop messing around and get the roads open up again then decide about trees"*
- *"My concern is section at the end of George St West & Springhillwill there still be access to drive car onto our driveways. Also by removing all the trees will this not propose pollution problems to our houses as well as more noise from the traffic....I am concerned about noise pollution (and fume pollution) as a result of almost all of the large established trees in the section in front of the houses on the northern side of Spring Hill between Clissold Passage and George Street West being removed, in particular the northern side section of Spring Hill between Herne close pedestrian passageway and George Street West. The houses are set back from the main road and there is currently a row of large trees which block a lot of the noise and fumes from the main road which can be very busy. The planned changes will remove the large trees and also move the road nearer to the houses as it becomes widened. The section of the landscape design plan that I believe refers to this section is 'Tree and wildflower planting on the northern side of Spring Hill between Spring Hill Canal Bridge/Clissold Passage and Ellen Street, in front of houses. My two main concerns/feedback are:*
 - 1. What are you doing to reduce noise pollution for these houses? I see there is some planting planned but from what I can see this in no way replaces the row of large trees that currently screens the houses from the noise and fumes of the traffic. The proposed planting is more decorative and quite spread out, which will likely look nice, which is great but doesn't solve the problem of increased noise pollution and fumes from the road.*
 - 2. While you are planning works to this stretch of road that will cause significant disruption to those living in the area, can you also consider creating a slip road so that the houses in this stretch on the northern side of Spring Hill between Herne Close pedestrian passage and George Street West have road access to the frontages for their cars? There is plenty of space to do so and will make a big difference to tidying up the area in front of the houses which has been a mess for a long time now with the large bank, mud, rubbish and leaves everywhere. This is likely because there is currently no access so this footpath area never gets cleared or cleaned. It will also help avoid congestion and difficulty parking as George Street West is already difficult to park on and also services the church in terms of parking. With the new congestion zone in Birmingham, more people are parking on George Street West and there simply isn't enough parking space for all of the Springhill houses also. This will at least offer some improvement to the Springhill houses and not just disruption and increased fume and noise pollution."*

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.

National Express WM have provided the following feedback: *"Before I would make any comments I would like to see any design CAD's and also the type of tree that will be planted. and how close to kerb side. I am concerned regarding height of new saplings (and as they grow) versus height of our buses and other large vehicles...So many planners and designers have a mindset stuck on small vehicles like cars and vans and forget there are larger vehicles on the highway."*

The Spring Hill Landscape team replied: *"The landscape proposals have been designed to be set back from the new road layout to accommodate the new segregated cycle path (this is the problem we're addressing with the existing vegetation on Spring Hill).*

For example, the main areas of planting on Spring Hill are offset from the road circa 5.0m to accommodate a 2.0m footpath and 3.0m cycleway.

Hope this clarifies and please do not hesitate to forward any additional queries regarding the proposals to us."

4. Key Themes Discussion

4.1 Removal of Trees

As expected with a clearly emotive subject, two responses cited the perceived negative impact of removing existing vegetation. An extensive review of existing trees has been undertaken with the intention that as many of the existing trees will be retained as possible. However, following detailed site investigations, the tree root structures and soil depth mean that it is not possible to keep them all or to move and replant existing trees.

During the design stage, the possibility of minimising the impact of the proposed works on the trees identified for removal was investigated and a number of options were evaluated:

a) Realignment of carriageway

In order to realign the proposed carriageway whilst retaining the requirements in terms of carriageway and footway/cycleway widths, it would be necessary to shift the entire design to the south, such that the back of proposed footway/cycleway on the northern side of Spring Hill aligns to its current location.

From Clissold Passage to College Street this would not be possible due to the presence of the commercial properties to the southern side which present a fixed boundary.

From College Street to Ellen Street this would be partly possible, however there are still constraints related to adjacent commercial properties and there would be a need for additional land acquisition over and above that already budgeted for as part of the scheme. Additional technical issues would increase costs excessively.

This option was considered to not be feasible due to the following;

- Adjacent fixed land boundary constraints
- Additional land acquisition requirements
- Excessive construction costs associated with moving the entire carriageway
- Excessive Statutory Undertakers/Utility diversion costs
- Only likely to be adequately realigned over a short section of Spring Hill

b) Reduction of provision

Consideration was given to reducing the requirements in terms of carriageway and footway/cycleway widths. Options included reducing carriageway widths, reducing footway/cycleway widths, provision of a narrower shared space.

To reduce the carriageway width it would be necessary to reduce the running lane dimensions through this section to below the preferred minimum width considered to operate safely. This would result in the scheme not meeting a number of its objectives related to increasing capacity, reducing congestion and providing safer infrastructure.

To reduce the footway/cycleway width it would be necessary to reduce the allocated space below the desirable minimums of 3.0m and 2.0m respectively and provide non-comppliance with the guiding principles of LTN 1/20 (DfT design standards for cycle infrastructure). This would result in the scheme not meeting a number of its objectives related to providing facilities for cyclists including segregated tracks, providing improved access, providing high quality and continuous facilities for cyclists and providing safer infrastructure.

A shared use provision was considered through this section however this would result in the scheme not meeting a number of its objectives related to providing facilities for cyclists including

segregated tracks, providing high quality and continuous facilities for cyclists and providing safer infrastructure.

This option was considered to not be feasible due to the following;

- Failure to meet the schemes primary objectives
- Non-compliance with local and national standards
- Reduced safety for all motorised and non-motorised users
- Retention of a network pinch point

c) Retain design as proposed and use retaining feature to minimise the requirement to remove trees

Throughout Spring Hill the widening and realignment of the highway results in the need to construct new infrastructure within the root protection area of the majority of the existing trees. Additionally, the fact that the trees are located on embankments above the existing footways increases the extent of excavation works required within the root protection area due to the need to regrade the earthworks slopes beyond the back of the proposed.

Consideration was given to retaining the design as proposed and providing a retaining structure at the back of the new footway/cycleway to minimise the need to regrade the earthworks, therefore minimising the excavations around the trees. To ascertain if this was a feasible solution a trial hole investigation was carried along the line of the proposed retaining feature. The results of this survey are presented below.

Trial holes were carried out by McPhillips at back of the excavation required for the footway on the northern side along a section of Spring Hill to identify which excavations would result in the need for the removal of trees. A joint site visit was carried out with Birmingham City Council's Arboricultural officer to review the excavations and after discussions it was agreed that in the majority of instances the roots of the trees would be impacted to such an extent that retaining the trees in conjunction with the currently proposed layout was not viable.

Images from excavated trial holes are shown in the site photos below.





This exercise resulted in the identification of several trees which could be retained with the addition of a local retaining feature, however the majority of the excavations confirmed that even with a retaining feature the roots of the trees would be compromised to such an extent that removal would be necessary.

d) Provision of compensatory landscape planting

Following extensive investigations into the possibility of retaining trees along Spring Hill and discounting the possibility of making amendments to the proposed design whilst still meeting the project objectives, the use of compensatory landscaping across the scheme is proposed as a means to mitigate the impact of the loss of existing trees.

It is proposed that in advance of the highway works being commenced along Spring Hill, planting of any additional trees shall be carried out to allow them to become established such that when the existing trees are removed this does not result in a full loss of the current screening afforded to adjacent properties, in particular the section between College Street to George Street West.

Birmingham City Council's Tree Policy (February 2018) recommends, that for any highway or improvement design development where trees are likely to be affected the following should be carried out;

- A tree survey compliant with BS 5837 2012 (to identify tree constraints).
- A valuation of affected trees.
- Appropriate consideration of retention, mitigation, replacement and compensation for trees.
- Engagement with the Council's Arboricultural officer to obtain their recommendations.

During the design development process, assessments and investigations have been carried in line with the above recommendations to identify the trees located within the scheme, the extent of the impacts of the works on those trees, their value, and engagement with the Arboricultural officer to obtain his recommendations.

Extensive reviews of the proposed design have been carried out aiming to retain the existing trees, however due to a number of constraints imposed by the scheme objectives, the local environment, the design standards, the safety of alternative design and the location of the existing trees in relation to the existing highway corridor it has not been possible to retain the majority of the trees.

It is therefore recommended that in line with the above Birmingham City Council's Tree Policy (February 2018) that replacement planting and compensation for trees is provided in all available green spaces throughout the extent of Spring Hill.

4.2 Illegal vehicular access to properties on Spring Hill

Three responses raised the issue of illegal vehicular access to properties on Spring Hill. The purpose of the Spring Hill Landscape public engagement was to provide feedback on the specific landscape proposals – not the wider scheme. It is important to note that the scheme proposals detailing the new cycle path/footway/George Street West crossing layout were consulted on in November 2020 and received no comments. The safety hazard of vehicles driving on a public footpath via the footpath crossing on the corner George Street West has been identified and logged with BCC Highways. BCC Highways have confirmed that there are no approvals in place for a vehicular access to these properties via HMPE (Highway Maintainable at Public Expense). The illegal vehicular movements also cross an existing service chamber which is not designed for vehicle loading.

4.3 Opportunity to improve existing open spaces

Responses highlighted the opportunity to improve existing open spaces in a deprived area of inner city Birmingham: *"...Please put as MUCH green space as possible along with more bike paths. This area is so deprived, grey and with lots of traffic. We value and need green spaces with more air filtration and less traffic pollution as possible!"*

To facilitate the improvements to Spring Hill, Western Road and Barford Estate it is necessary to implement a comprehensive landscaping proposal through the corridor. Extensive consultation with BCC Landscape Architect and Principal Arboriculturist/Principal Ecologist was undertaken to develop landscape proposals.

The landscape proposal ties together the early phases of the Dudley Road Revised Main Scheme delivery and provide continuity and a sense of place through the corridor. The original Revised Main Scheme public consultation did not detail these plans therefore additional public engagement was required.

The latest scheme design requires the targeted removal of existing trees & vegetation on the northern boundary of Spring Hill between Spring Hill Canal Bridge/Clissold Passage and Ellen Street to facilitate the construction of the segregated cycle link. Landscape proposals will look to enhance the green frontage screen to properties between College Street and George Street West in lieu of the vegetation removal.

Landscape proposals will look to enhance the green frontage screen to properties between College Street and George Street West in lieu of the vegetation removal with a mixed level planting proposal – increasing the number of trees, filling existing gaps in vegetation, diversifying the number of species and enhancing biodiversity.

The responses also offer opportunities to enhance the proposals. Inclusion of additional native tree, shrub and wildflower planting in the proposed planting areas will be evaluated.

The improvements offer an opportunity to address existing issues of fly-tipping faced by residents on Spring Hill with improved infrastructure, site deterrents and improved maintenance & reporting mechanisms.

4.4 Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that in line with the Birmingham City Council's Tree Policy (February 2018) that replacement planting and compensation for trees is provided in all available green spaces throughout the extent of Spring Hill.

5. Conclusion:

A consultation took place between 17th January 2022 to 7th February 2022 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. A total of 15 consultees and one stakeholder responded to the public engagement exercise.

Analysis of the responses provided indicates both strong support and disapproval of the revised proposals. The key themes of providing enhanced compensatory planting has been identified and retention of trees where reasonably practicable have been fed back into scheme designs.

Some valuable comments have been received by the local stakeholders and residents. These comments have been incorporated in revisions to the scheme; making further minor improvements to help to alleviate the problems raised.