



Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership

Application for Local Growth Funding

Full Business Case – Digbeth Public Realm Phase 1

Appendix S4 – Public Consultation Report

Digbeth High Street Public Realm Consultation Analysis Report

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1 Consultation Process

1.1 Project background

The Eastside area of Birmingham city centre, including Moor Street Queensway and Digbeth High Street, will be transformed over the coming years.

Major transport investment through Metro extension, new Sprint routes and the arrival of HS2 will see significant improvements to public transport and enhanced public realm, while new developments such as Smithfield will change how this area is used. This will all contribute to the vision for a sustainable, green, inclusive, go-anywhere network set out in the draft Birmingham Transport Plan.

Birmingham City Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority are bringing forward enhancements to Digbeth High Street. We want to create an attractive, pedestrian-friendly space, with major improvements to public transport, and reduction in traffic.

The design has been developed following stakeholder workshops during 2017/2018.

The proposals include:

- Two way Metro running on the southern side of Digbeth (closest to the coach station).
- A wide area of attractive public space. Areas of planting, potentially including a green tram track section, have been proposed. Subject to sufficient space (utilities etc.), efforts will also be made to include new trees.
- One lane in each direction for general traffic on the northern side.
- Removal of some turning movements for traffic onto and off Digbeth, and at junctions on nearby side roads and changes to the direction of traffic flows on some of the surrounding roads.
- A 'bus, cycle and hackney carriage only' restriction on one part of the road to remove through traffic while allowing access for local servicing. Provision for loading will be from some designated bays and certain side streets.

These proposals complement similar plans being developed for Moor Street/Moor Street Queensway which look to restrict overall traffic movement through this area.

Subject to securing funding from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership's Enterprise Zone it's proposed to implement most of the scheme during 2021/2022, to be ready in time for the Commonwealth Games. Work on the Metro services will happen at a later date, co-ordinating with HS2 construction.

1.2 Publicising the consultation

The consultation was launched on Monday 2 March 2020 and was originally planned to run for 4 weeks until Friday 27 March 2020, with 4 public consultation sessions scheduled during this period.

However, in light of government guidance on the escalating Covid-19 outbreak, the Council made a decision to cancel the final 2 public consultation sessions. As a result, the consultation period was extended for a further 2 weeks until Friday 9 April to allow more time for people to respond.

Birmingham City Council, along with its partners, used a number of different channels of communication to inform the public in regards to the Digbeth High Street Scheme consultation. This included:

- Existing stakeholder networks;
- Existing email and other electronic communications (corporate BCC);
- Leaflets delivered to residents and commercial properties within the proximity of the scheme. See Figure 1 for location plan;
- Social media activity e.g. Twitter; and Facebook
- A survey and consultation details were added to Beheard, the Council's online consultation portal
- 2 public drop-in events (3 and 10 March 2020)

1.3 Response channels

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

Two public drop-in events were held on Tuesday 3 March 2020 between 3pm and 6pm and Tuesday 10 March 2020 between 3pm and 6pm at the Custard Factory, Gibb Street, B94AA.

1.3.1 Online – BeHeard

All publicity directed citizens to BeHeard at

www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/economy/digbeth-high-street/

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

- The leaflet that went out to residents and businesses; and
- Traffic movements plan
- 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.

1.3.2 Email correspondence

All email correspondence sent to PlanningandRegenerationEnquiries@birmingham.gov.uk were logged, acknowledged and responded to where appropriate.

1.3.3 Public drop in session

Two face to face drop-in sessions were held in the Digbeth area. The event attracted different levels of interest. Overwhelmingly, feedback at both events confirmed wide support for the proposals.

Table 1: Time, location and number of attendees for each of the public consultation events

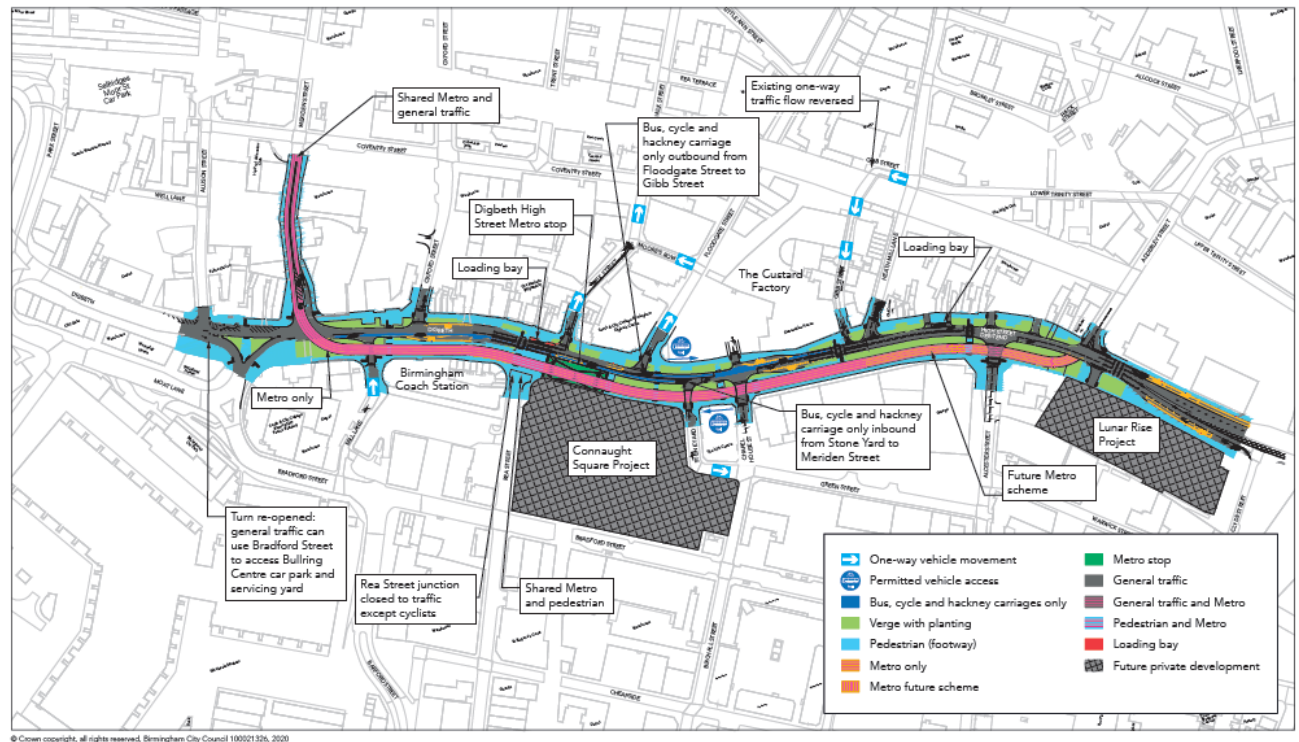
Location	Event date	No. of attendees
Custard Factory, Gibb Street	Tuesday 3 March 2020 between 3pm and 6pm	Approx. 25
Custard Factory, Gibb Street	Tuesday 10 March 2020 between 3pm and 6pm	Approx. 25
	Total	50

1.3.4 Stakeholder Communication

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

- Consultation leaflet containing proposed public realm scheme plan and a traffic movements plan: For consultation leaflet plan see Figure 1.

Figure 1:



2 Methodology

2.1 Confidentiality

All responses to the survey were used solely for the consultation and will be kept confidential.

The purpose of the public consultation was to invite comments on the public realm proposals for Digbeth High Street. Following the end of the consultation period, the proposals are now to be reviewed taking account of the representations received, which will inform the detailed design stage. Any comments used during this stage will be kept anonymous and individuals will not be identified.

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 on BeHeard 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

The 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 read, analysed, and assigned to a theme or themes relevant to the question asked.

3 BeHeard Responses

3.1 About you

3.1.1 Q3. Are you responding to this consultation as an individual or on behalf of a business /organisation?

The majority of respondents to the survey confirmed they were responding as an individual (91.34%) with a small proportion of responses from businesses / organisations (8.66%).

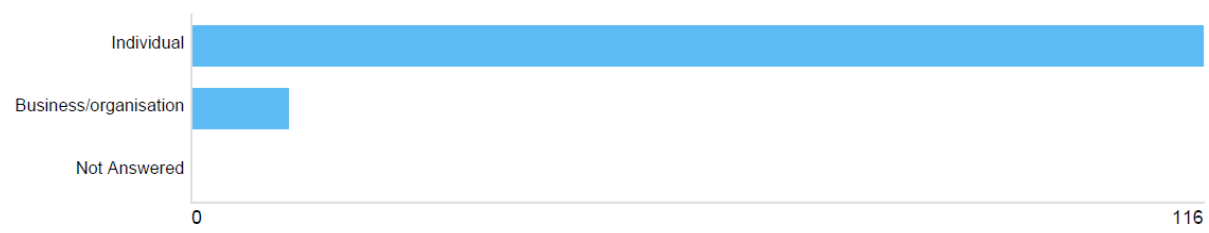


Fig x: Responses to the consultation as an individual or on behalf of a business / organisation

Option	Total	Percent
Individual	116	91.34%
Business/organisation	11	8.66%
Not Answered	0	0%

3.1.2 Q5. Does your business / organisation make and / or receive deliveries

91.34% of respondents did not answer this question, they were responding as an individual so it did not apply.

In terms of the remainder of respondents, 5.51% confirmed their business / organisation do make or receive deliveries and 3.15% confirmed that their organisation / business does not make and / or receive deliveries.

Deliveries



Fig x: Does your business / organisation make and / or receive deliveries

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	7	5.51%
No	4	3.15%
Not Answered	116	91.34%

3.1.3 Q9. Why do you currently travel into Digbeth High Street?

127 responses were received to the BeHeard survey, all respondents answered to this question. It was possible to provide multiple answers. 70.08% of respondents said that they use the high street for leisure / recreation destinations, 40.94% travel through on foot, 39.37% to access public transport (coach station, bus stops etc) and the same figure travel through by car. 33.86% use the high street for business / employment destinations, 32.28% travel through by bike and the same figure travel through on public transport.

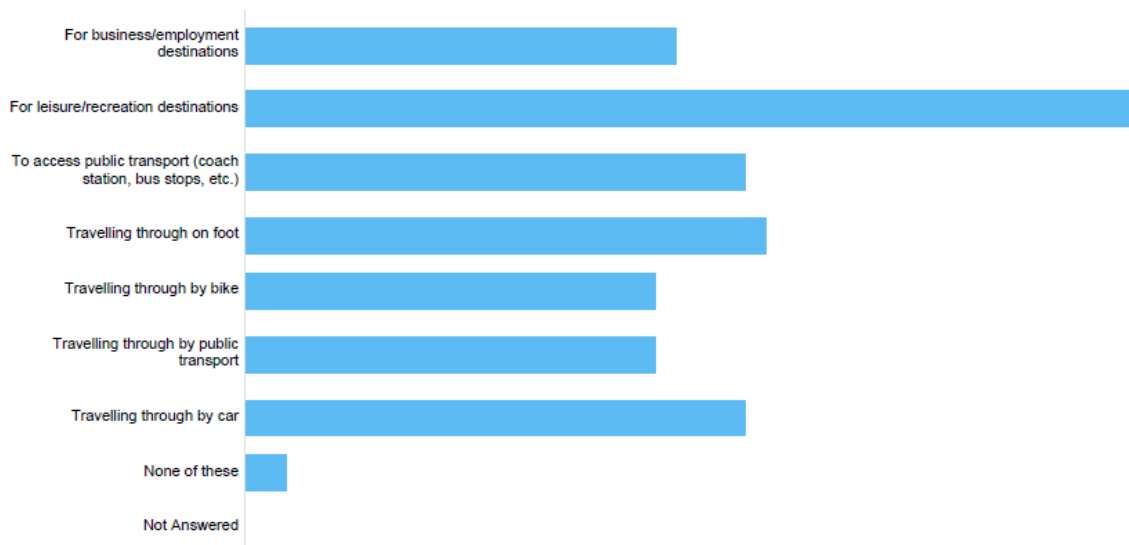


Fig x: Why do respondents currently travel into Digbeth High Street

Option	Total	Percent
For business/employment destinations	43	33.86%
For leisure/recreation destinations	89	70.08%
To access public transport (coach station, bus stops, etc.)	50	39.37%
Travelling through on foot	52	40.94%
Travelling through by bike	41	32.28%
Travelling through by public transport	41	32.28%
Travelling through by car	50	39.37%
None of these	4	3.15%
Not Answered	0	0%

3.2 Responses to the scheme

3.2.1 Response findings

All 127 respondents provided an answer to this question, out of which a large majority of 77.95% confirmed that they agree with the principles of the proposal, the remaining 22.05% were not in favour of the proposals.

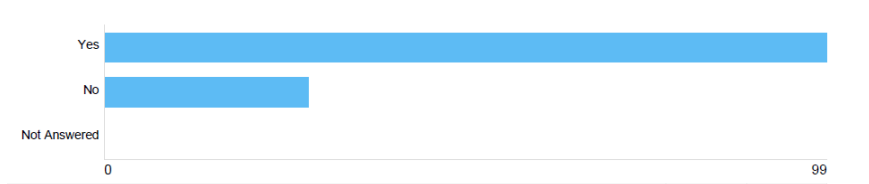


Figure X: Do you agree with the principles of the proposal?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	99	77.95%
No	28	22.05%
Not Answered	0	0%

Position	Themes
Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is much needed and is to be commended. We need to widen the city core and Digbeth is a key element of this. Digbeth has suffered for years through a lack of connectivity with the city centre. The plans are great and need to go ahead ASAP. Desperately needed This is exactly what's needed. These proposals seem likely to further improve the character of the area, and will promote the use of sustainable transport modes I think this is a great idea, it has the potential to be a vibrant flourishing community but still has a reputation as being quite dinghy in places.
Suggestions/ Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for segregated cycling infrastructure Transport improvements are required prior to public realm enhancements Additional green space

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration given to Uber Taxis • Further consideration given to business loading facilities in some areas
Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative impact on businesses. • Cause congestion elsewhere • Plans are detrimental to the motorist • Discriminating against people that can not walk or use public transport

3.2.2 Example comments

Supportive of the scheme

The majority of the respondents (almost 80%) expressed support for the scheme. Respondent's comments included:

"Anything that takes back public space from motorists and distributes it to everyone else is welcome".

"Really support the ambition of the proposals, particularly taking the carriageway down to a single carriageway, which will really help people cross the road and widen the footways".

"Public and active travel options, and a reduction or removal of private motor vehicles, are crucial to make the area safer, cleaner and more welcoming for visitors".

"This is much needed and is to be commended. We need to widen the city core and Digbeth is a key element of this. Digbeth has suffered for years through a lack of connectivity with the city centre. We need to encourage more people into the area and build critical mass which then has positive effects on safety, retail, leisure and so on".

"These principles address all that is wrong with the High Street".

"This is essential if the City is going to become more liveable".

These proposals seem likely to further improve the character of the area, and will promote the use of sustainable transport modes

Propose suggestions and express reservation

Reservations and proposes suggestions to improve the public realm scheme included.

"I agree with the principals, however, cyclists should not be sharing with buses and taxis. There should be a segregated lane(s) for cyclists"

"I would be more encouraged by the plan if there was any work already being carried out on the metro line to Digbeth and as this plan is set to be rolled out in 2021-2022".

"Sounds good in principle if you also maintain the surrounding area as part of this".

"Would be nice to attract some streetfood vendors and cool, non-chain bars and restaurants".

"Green areas must be maintained".

While improvements to public transport and more space for pedestrians is great we need to protect local businesses that rely on deliveries and customers being able to access their premises.

Generally support the plans, but they need to be a little more ambitious. Digbeth High Street needs to have a unique and strong identity and be a statement pedestrian and public transport link between the city core and Digbeth and Deritend.

Against the scheme

A small number of respondents responded negatively to the proposed scheme. Respondent's comments included:

"you need to leave a route open for people to get into the city centre, you are killing the city centre with these reducing traffic ideas, an alternative like park and ride or something similar is needed".

"Constant obstacles put in the way of traffic by Birmingham city council without much realistic alternatives in place. We should be able to drive around the city easily".

"You are discriminating against people who for one reason or another can't use public transport. The areas leading in to the city are unsafe to walk through. Not because of the amount of cars. I'd gladly walk from Erdington to the city centre if there was a police presence on every street I would have to walk through".

3.2.3 BCC's Response to Common Responses

Common Response	BCC Response
Concern at lack of segregated cycle infrastructure on Digbeth High Street	<p>Detailed work has been undertaken by Birmingham City Council and the Midland Metro Design team to assess options for the inclusion of formal cycle facilities on Digbeth High Street.</p> <p>This work has concluded that formal cycle facilities can not be implemented without compromising the benefits for pedestrians / public realm and affecting the level of service for buses and their passengers and Metro passengers on Digbeth High Street.</p> <p>As an alternative, Bradford Street has been identified and recommended as a suitable alternative for a dedicated cycle facility. Bradford Street runs parallel to Digbeth High Street, is relatively wide at around 15m and is a direct route towards the city centre.</p> <p>The aspiration for a cycling facility on Bradford Street is set out within the <i>Birmingham Walking and Cycling Strategy 2020</i>, which is identified as a <i>Last Mile Regional Priority Route</i>. Birmingham City Council are in the process of undertaking further design and development in regards to the Bradford Street proposal.</p>

<p>Scheme is detrimental to the motorist</p>	<p>The scheme is in line with Birmingham City Council's wider transport vision for a sustainable, green, inclusive, go anywhere network. Safe and healthy environments will make active travel – walking and cycling – the first choice for people making short journeys. A fully integrated, high quality public transport system will be the go-to choice for longer trips. A smart, innovative, carbon neutral and low emission network will support sustainable and inclusive economic growth, tackle climate change and promote the health and well-being of Birmingham's citizens"</p> <p>The reallocation of road space on Digbeth high street to sustainable transport as part of the public realm and BEE projects will help to reduce the number of single occupancy private vehicles within the city centre.</p>
<p>Why can't the public transport be provided first – you risk killing city businesses without this in place</p>	<p>The Metro is interdependent on construction of HS2 which isn't due for completion until approx. 2026</p> <p>However, there was an agreed need to deliver the public realm benefits ahead of the metro to facilitate wider development plans in the Digbeth area and in time for the Commonwealth Games.</p>
<p>The scheme will lead to more congestion in the area or move congestion to other parts of the city</p>	<p>The scheme is part of Birmingham City Council's wider plans to reduce the number of single occupancy private vehicles within the city centre, encourage active travel – walking and cycling and to provide a fully integrated public transport system for longer trips.</p>
<p>Safety concerns – including how will anti-social behaviour be managed in green areas? General safety concerns raised regarding safety on public transport and walking into the city</p>	<p>The public realm will be designed to improve walking and to create an attractive environment along the high street, encouraging further regeneration, with increased numbers of people living and working in the area thus discouraging opportunities for anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Planting strategies will consider avoiding creation of concealed 'trouble-spots'/hiding places and ease of maintenance. CCTV and other safety requirements will be integrated into the design for the footways and bus/tram shelters etc.</p>
<p>There is a need to enforce turning bans</p>	<p>The Council will look to discourage the need to make the manoeuvre by promoting the alternative routes</p>

	and where possible, will redesign junction to make the manoeuvre difficult.
Why are you only allowing Hackney Carriages to use who of high street and not Uber Taxis?	Not all of the High Street will be unavailable for private hire vehicles to access, as the proposed bus lanes are not the full length. However, the ability to legally drop off/pick up within the existing dual carriageway is already limited and limitations will continue to be necessary within the proposed scheme in order to minimise impact upon buses. The BCC Policy on bus lanes and private hire vehicles remains the same – only Hackney Carriages are allowed to use them.
Green space seems to be a low priority	Planting and green space is a key part of the proposals but the scheme also needs to maintain sufficient paved areas for walking and frontage access.
How will I now service my business	This is dependent upon where your business is located. Birmingham City Council will review how you access/service your business now and then discuss how the scheme would change that where appropriate. It may require you/your customers to access via a different route.
Opposed to recent CPZ	A separate consultation exercise was undertaken for the Digbeth CPZ and all comments were considered by the City Council's Parking Services team.

4 Key Stakeholder Responses

4.1 Responses to the scheme

Emails were sent on Monday 2 March to the key stakeholders listed in the table below inviting them to give their views on the proposals.

Below table gives detail about all major stakeholders who has been contacted in this period. And there responses key themes of those who participated and registers there response.

Key Stakeholders/Organisation	Response key theme
Emergency Services	
West Midlands Police	No Response
West Midlands Fire Services	Queries raised regarding bus gate and reversal of one-way, response provided.
West Midlands Ambulance Services	No Response
St Johns Ambulance	No Response
National Express	Queries raised regarding Sprint stops and Rea Street, response provided.
Network Rail	No Response
TfWM	In principle support the scheme, questions raised regarding wayfinding strategy, cycling and Sprint. Highlighted points to consider during construction period. Response provided.
Traffic Management	In principle support the scheme, highlighted points to consider as part of detailed design process including signing, exemptions and road markings. Working with the Traffic Management teams through the detailed design process.
Businesses / Developers	
Balfour Betty	No Response
Court Collaboration	In principle support scheme – questions raised regarding bus gate, working with developer via the detailed design process.
Oval Estates	In principle support scheme – questions raised regarding displaced traffic, servicing and loading for businesses, cycling and private hire vehicles. Discussions taken place with Oval Estates regarding their concerns.
Salhia Investments	In principle support scheme
Stoford Estates	No response

Groups / Organisations	
Access Brum	No Response
Aston University	No Response
Bike West Midlands Network	Concern raised around cycling facilities. Attendance at the Cycling Forum to discuss issues.
Birmingham City University	In principle support the scheme, question regarding servicing. Contact made with BCU representative.
Birmingham Guide Dogs	No Response
Canals & Rivers Trust	No Response
Changing Our Lives	No Response
Cycling UK	No Response
Deaf Plus	No Response
Digbeth BID	No Response
Focus Birmingham	No Response
FTA	No Response
Historic England	No Response
HS2	No Response
JC Decaux	No Response
Lenchs Trust	No Response
Living streets Birmingham	No Response
Midland Mencap	No Response
NFBUK	No Response
NHS	No Response
Pushbikes	Concern raised around cycling facilities. Attendance at the Cycling Forum to discuss issues.
Sport England	No Response
Sustainable Travel West Midlands	In general supportive of proposals but raised questions around reinstatement of right turn on Moat Lane Gyratory, cycling dock hire and wider regeneration of Digbeth
Sustrans	No Response
Wheels for Wellbeing	No Response