

Transport Delivery Committee

Date	10 February 2020
Report title	Petition Update Note A435 Alcester Road/Moseley Road and Highgate Middleway Bus Priority Revitalisation
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Report has been considered by	Transport Delivery Committee only

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

- (i) Note the petition submitted by Birmingham Friends of the Earth, considered by 6 January Transport Delivery Committee raising objections to the A435 Alcester Road/Moseley Road and Highgate Middleway Bus Priority Revitalisation project;
- (ii) Note a change to the project relating to tree removal and its associated interaction with the petition report; and
- (iii) Note a final decision to proceed with the project will be retained by Birmingham City Council (BCC) as Local Highway Authority by the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment through a Cabinet Member report.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 At 6 January Transport Delivery Committee (“TDC”), members considered a petition received on behalf of Birmingham Friends of the Earth (BFoE) objecting to the A435 Alcester Road/Moseley Road and Highgate Middleway Bus Priority Revitalisation project (“the project”). The petition has been submitted following a public consultation exercise completed in October & November 2019. The January report can be found at <https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s3796/Petition%20BFoE.pdf>
- 1.2 Consideration of the petition followed new protocol agreed at September Transport Delivery Committee (TDC) whereby petitions receiving over 250 signatures are referred to TDC via Putting Passengers First Lead Member Reference Group.

- 1.3 This report advises a change to the project design, reflecting further project development which affects TDC's consideration of the petition.

2. Background

- 1.4 Since the January TDC report, officers have continued to review the project to finalise a full business case (FBC) pursuant to submission to Birmingham City Council's Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment who will make the final decision on the project.
- 1.5 In developing the FBC, continuous review of the project design has taken place to both take on board the continued engagement with the local community and stakeholders but also to refine the technical design.

Tree Impact

- 1.6 TDC will recall the scheme consulted upon included the removal of six mature trees through Balsall Heath. Following consultation and further design review, it was considered possible to retain three trees meaning that only three trees would require removal. The TDC report included a visual tree plan (shown in annex 1 of this update) showing the trees that 4, 5 and 6 could be retained.
- 1.7 TDC was also advised that, following detailed site investigations to identify tree pit locations, it will be possible to replant 16 trees through Balsall Heath local centre (as well as further tree planting along Highgate Middleway) to mitigate the impact of tree loss. This would be complemented by further soft landscaping features incorporating greenery as part of the wider public realm scheme.
- 1.8 On this basis, TDC accepted the recommendation of the officer petition panel that *'the proposed reduction in tree removal and replacement tree strategy would, in principle, address the issues set out within the petition around tree impact. This would be subject to final confirmation of the tree/landscaping scheme to be taken to, and considered by, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) Key Network Board and the BCC Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment as part of the FBC'*.
- 1.9 Following detailed site investigations, however, it will now unfortunately be necessary to remove additional trees in order to implement the project. This follows review of the horizontal alignment through Balsall Heath which identifies the need to extend the merge point where the proposed northbound bus lane joins the general traffic lane (outside Balsall Heath Library).
- 1.10 There are two options to achieve the requisite merge length; both have impacts on trees:

Option 1

- 1.11 This option would necessitate the removal of two trees, adjacent to Lime Grove on the east side of the carriageway. These trees are referenced as trees 4 & 5 in annex 1. This effectively

reverts the segment of Moseley Road to the original alignment consulted upon albeit still retaining tree 6 on the corner of Moseley Road and [Old] Moseley Road.

- 1.12 This option carries additional benefits in allowing a new push crossing facility to be installed outside Moseley Road baths and the relocation of an existing bus stop outside the baths to a point further north. These elements have been welcomed by stakeholders and were in the original consultation scheme but removed in order to retain trees.

Option 2

- 1.13 The option would necessitate the removal of a tree on the west side of the carriageway immediately north of Balsall Heath Library, outside 'Gurdwara Guru Ramdas Singh Sabha'. This tree has previously not been identified for removal during consultation. This option would require minor additional footway incursion outside the Library. An image of the tree is shown as tree 7 in annex 1.
- 1.14 TfWM officers now intend to work with BCC tree and highway officers to further review the horizontal alignment and determine the most suitable option for consideration by BCC's Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment.
- 1.15 However, on the basis of a maximum of two additional trees being removed (resulting in a maximum loss of five mature trees through Balsall Heath) it is considered that the proposed replanting of semi-mature 16 street trees and further soft landscaping remains sufficient to mitigate the tree impact. That notwithstanding, further opportunities for tree planting on side roads along Moseley Road will reviewed and identified to BCC's Cabinet Member in the final FBC and Cabinet Member report.
- 1.16 On this basis, TDC is again asked to take no further action on the petition. The BFoE petition will form part of, and reported within, the FBC to be considered by BCC's Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment.
- 1.17 As outlined above, the BCC Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment will make the final decision on the scheme, balancing the loss of trees against the benefits of the scheme, including mitigations. This will be covered in a Cabinet Member report.

3. Financial Implications

- 1.18 There are no financial implications as a direct consequence of this report. The full financial implications of the project would be covered within the FBC.

4. Legal Implications

- 1.19 There are no legal implications as a direct consequent of this report. The full legal implications would be covered within the FBC.

5. Impact on Delivery of Strategic Transport Plan

- 1.20 The project is being brought forward to deliver on the objectives of the Strategic Transport Plan. The scheme is a specific output of the 2026 Delivery Plan.

6. Equalities Implications

- 1.21 An equality assessment has been completed and would be included within the Full Business Case. The assessment does, however, conclude that there are no aspects of the scheme which could contribute to inequality. The facilities and measures proposed are for all users and non are excluded.

7. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 1.22 There are no inclusive growth implications as a direct consequent of this report. The full inclusive growth implications would be covered within the FBC.

8. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 1.23 The petition relates to the project's impact through Balsall Heath, covering the wards of Balsall Heath West.

