

## QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC



Please return your completed question form to Chief Executive's Business Support, Plymouth City Council, Ballard House, West Hoe Road, Plymouth, PL1 3BJ or email [ChiefExecutiveBusinessSupportUnit@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:ChiefExecutiveBusinessSupportUnit@plymouth.gov.uk)

Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

<p><b>Question submitted by: Ryan John Aldred</b></p>
<p><b>To the Cabinet Member or Chair for:</b> Transport Councillor Jonathan Drear</p>
<p><b>To be asked at the next Full Council Meeting: Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January</b></p>
<p><b>Question (to be no longer than 50 words):</b></p> <p>Considering over 11,000 signatories expressing opposition to felling the Armada Way trees and calls from the Woodland Trust and Devon Wildlife Trust for more public engagement, why has there been no public consultation opened during the pause in the redevelopment plan? Will there be public consultation of the revised plan?</p>
<p><b>Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question?</b> Yes</p>
<p><b>Response:</b> ( for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs)</p> <p>Thank you for the question. The petition was validated by the City Council's Democratic Services on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at considerably less than 11,000 signatures. There were circa 5,500 signatures who reported to be from the PL post codes within the city. Moreover, I have had questions raised directly with me by the public questioning the authenticity of the petition as they were, without challenge, able to make multiple entries under the same name on the petition. Democratic support had to discount around 1,400 duplicates, signatures without</p>

postcodes and those being outside of the south west and therefore outside the travel to work area to meet with the requirements of the City Council constitution.

The announcement that I made at the City Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022 was quite clear. I said that I would agree to a short pause on the Armada Way project so that the concerns that had recently been raised by the campaigners could be considered before the final design was completed. Those concerns related to the retention of the existing trees so it was obvious from the outset what we were being asked to consider which did not necessitate or indeed require another consultation exercise. I said a multi-disciplinary design team would explore if some of the existing trees could be incorporated within the project, or relocated elsewhere, whilst maintaining the overall integrity of the scheme and its wider benefits. I went on to say that whilst this work happens there would be no further trees removed although I made the point that some further enabling works would continue. I concluded by saying that I expected the pause to be for a few weeks and my intention was to publish a final proposal very shortly on the City Council web site after the concerns that have been expressed had been considered by the design team.

That is exactly what has happened. We have done what we said we would do. Although I personally spoke to some of the campaigners on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022, I have made it clear all along that I was more than happy to meet with them. But there was no point meeting them when the design work was on-going and the position regarding which of the existing trees could be accommodated within any modified design had been properly considered. If I had met the campaigners before this design work had been completed, I would have simply been unable to answer their many detailed questions. The design work with the Christmas break was not completed and presented to me until 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023. I asked officers to then arrange a meeting with the campaigners and the Plymouth Tree Partnership who had also directly asked for a meeting which was arranged for 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 but they were unable to attend. It should be noted that since the November 2022 City Council meeting, there have been multiple emails, Freedom of Information Requests, Environmental Information Regulation requests and other communications from the campaigners with many members of this council and numerous officers. To suggest, as some have sought to do, that we have not engaged at all with the campaigners is nonsense. Members and officers, specialist advisors and the contractor did in fact previously meet with the campaigners on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 to present the scheme and discuss their concerns.

I published a modified plan on the City Council's web site on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023, in accordance with the commitment I made to the City Council on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022. As to whether that should be the subject of further public consultation, this is currently under consideration.