

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member



REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

Executive Decision Reference Number – L34 22/23

Decision	
1	Title of decision: Better Places Programme: Armada Way Scheme
2	Decision maker (Cabinet member name and portfolio title): Councillor Richard Bingley, Leader The TCF Programme Board have delegated powers under the approved TCF Assurance Framework agreed with the Department for Transport to “provide necessary approvals form one delivery stage to the next” in relation to the TCF programme, of which Armada Way forms a part. The TCF Programme Board can, however, where there is a ‘significant political impact’ that cannot be managed by the TCF Board refer the matter to Cabinet. Under the Leaders Scheme of Delegation at section 1.1, the Leader can delegate and take back functions as he sees fit.
3	Report author and contact details: Paul Barnard, Service Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Contact: paul.barnard@plymouth.gov.uk
4	Decision to be taken: 1. To note the outcome of the Engagement exercise as set out at appendix C. 2. To consider and agree the proposed amended design for Armada Way, to include additional tree planting within Armada Way and a revised tree planting schedule, together with the investigation of wider tree planting within the City Centre and set out at B in the report. 3. To agree with the implementation of the final design and for the redevelopment of Armada Way to recommence without further delay.
5	Reasons for decision: The Armada Way element has been paused since 2022 November Council. At Council on the 30 January a resolution was made requiring a pause to the project until meaningful community engagement had been undertaken without causing significant delay to the project. Following meaningful community engagement in February this decision approves the final scheme design, revised tree planting schedule and the recommencements of works on site. The rational for taking this decision are provided in Appendix A and summarised as follows: - Reduces disruption of city centre events; - Reduces delays due to nesting birds;

	- Reduces the impact of construction city centre business; - Reduces city centre anti-social behaviour; - Reduces impact of cost increases over time; - Reduces the impact of inflation.										
6	Alternative options considered and rejected: Option 1 – Abort the Armada Way project completely: this was rejected as this would not be in accordance with the commitments set out in either Policy PLY6 of the adopted Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan, or the award of funding from the Department for Transport following the submission and approval of the Strategic Outline Business Case for the Transforming Cities Fund Tranche 2 of which Armada Way was a part. Option 2 – Abandon the current scheme and re-design the whole project to accommodate all or most of the existing 129 trees: AND Option 3 – Revise the pre-engagement design for Armada Way to accommodate all or most of the existing 129 trees: These options were rejected as the consideration of further design options since November 2022 and including as a result of the Armada Way Engagement Programme 2023, have clearly demonstrated that the retention of all or most of the existing trees are incompatible with the other design objectives and outcomes for the project. Further starting the whole design process again, or making any wholesale changes or fundamental amendments to the design, is likely to result in challenges from the department of transport regarding the delivery of the scheme whilst the Assurance Review process for the Transforming Cities Fund programme is underway. It could ultimately result in funding being clawed back by the TCF where other prolonged delays in progress and spend occur. .										
7	Financial implications and risks: There is a risk that the funding from the Transforming Cities Fund could be lost if the project is not implemented quickly.										
8	Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)	<table><tr><td>No</td><td>Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:</td></tr><tr><td>No</td><td>in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total</td></tr><tr><td>No</td><td>in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1 million</td></tr><tr><td>No</td><td>is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.</td></tr></table>	No	Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:	No	in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total	No	in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1 million	No	is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.	
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	If yes, date of publication of the notice in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions	N/A									
9	Please specify how this decision is	The delivery of the Armada Way scheme is consistent with									

	linked to the Council's corporate plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget:	several policies in the Plymouth Plan and the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan.
10	Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)	The final Armada Way final design results in the loss of 129 existing trees of, in most cases, limited longevity and health. In addition the wider climate and sustainability benefits include the provision of sustainable walking and cycling improvements; the provision of a sustainable urban drainage system; an ornamental watercourse linked to the SUDs system predominately gravity powered and supplemented with solar powered electrical pumping and naturally filtered by reed beds to contribute to the biodiversity enhancements and new habitat creation; The provision of new high mast low energy street lighting using LED lanterns to replace the aging building mounted lighting infrastructure; futureproofing for the continuation of a District Heating Network; upgrading existing and provision of new and more efficient power and water services for public events use; a high quality planting scheme using 169 semi-mature trees of up to 8m height with floriferous under planting, to promote city centre biodiversity net gain in the region of 23% and contributing to greening the city centre; and reusing substantial amounts of the existing materials.

Urgent decisions

11	Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public?	Yes	X	(If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice)
		No		(If no, go to section 13a)

12a Reason for urgency:

The reasons for urgency are set out at the Appendix A to this Decision.

12b	Scrutiny Chair Signature:		Date	14/03/2023
		Confirmed via email		
	Scrutiny Committee name:	Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
	Print Name:	Councillor John Riley		

Consultation

13a	Are any other Cabinet members'	Yes	✓	
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	portfolios affected by the decision?	No		(If no go to section 14)			
13b	Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?	Councillor Mark Shayer, Deputy Leader, Finance and the Economy Councillor Jonathan Drean, Cabinet Member for Transport Councillor James Stoneman, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Governance Councillor Bill Wakeham, Environment and Street Scene					
13c	Date Cabinet member consulted	23 February 2023					
14	Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision?	Yes		If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer			
		No	√				
15	Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?	Name	Anthony Payne				
		Job title	Strategic Director for Place				
		Date consulted	01 March 2023				
Sign-off							
16	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:	Democratic Support (mandatory)	DSI 17 22/23				
		Finance (mandatory)	DJN.22.23.402				
		Legal (mandatory)	EJ/1098/14.2.23(1)				
		Human Resources (if applicable)	N/A				
		Corporate property (if applicable)	N/A				
		Procurement (if applicable)	N/A				
Appendices							
17	Ref.	Title of appendix					
	A	Reasons for Urgency					
	B	Armada Way Executive Decision Briefing Note					
	C	Armada Way Engagement Report					
	D	Equality Impact Assessment					
Confidential/exempt information							
18a	Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information?	Yes		If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for			

		No	✓	publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in 18b below. (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain)				
		Exemption Paragraph Number						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18b	Confidential/exempt briefing report title:							
Background Papers								
19	Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.							
Title of background paper(s)		Exemption Paragraph Number						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22/01549/MOR Armada Way Public Realm Enhancement Works Pre-Application Advice								
City Council - Monday 30 January 2023 2.00pm Minutes and Committee Reports								
City Council – Monday 21 November 2022 2.00pm Minutes and Committee Reports								
Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monday 10 October 2022 5.30pm Minutes and Committee Reports								
Cabinet Member Signature								
20	I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached.							
Signature		Richard Bringley		Date of decision		14 March 2023		

Print Name	Councillor Richard Bingley, Leader of Plymouth City Council
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APPENDIX A**Reasons for urgency (decision to be taken pre-election):**

The Council is approaching pre-election period, starting on the 27 March 2023 at 10pm.

The absolute minimum time period officers would need to allow for an Executive Decision to be made and be subject to call in would be 14 working days, to allow for as follows (days being working days):

Day 1 – decision made

Day 6 – call in ends at 4:30pm

Day 7 – call in considered and replied to and, if call in is valid, summons issued to a meeting of the relevant OSC

Day 8-12 – the five clear working days for the summons

Day 13 – call in meeting

Day 14 – recommendations of OSC considered and, if appropriate, decision confirmed and implemented

The issue with this is that it allows insufficient time for the process of call in before the pre-election period given that reports were not able to be ready for the 7 March (the final day that it would have been possible to take a decision pre-election and allow for call in). If it is not taken before pre-election period there are some significant consequences for the Council and the city centre as the decision will not be able to be taken until post May elections, as set out below.

I. Timescales for scheme delivery & summer events

There are 12 weeks of work remaining for the piazza area, from the point works restart. Flavour Fest, one of the largest city centre events, is booked on 26-28 May 2023.

To be ready to open the piazza up to allow Flavour Fest to take place the works required for this section of Armada Way would take six weeks, assuming there are no further delays. They need to be completed and the piazza cleared a minimum of 2 weeks before Flavour Fest in order to allow for time to set up.

If the decision was taken and works commenced the week before the start of the pre-election week works would take until at least the 8 May 2023. This would leave a little over two weeks to clear the site and allow the set up before Flavour Fest.

The only other suitable location for the Flavour Fest event is the Hoe. This will not have the same benefits for the city centre and there is no guarantee at this moment it could be hosted there.

If the project cannot recommence before the pre-election period, the works will remain on hold and Flavour Fest will not be able to go ahead in the city centre. There will be a knock-on affect for all other events over the course of the summer as, if it needs to wait until post-election, it would be significantly into the summer before works can be completed.

Following Flavour Fest work would then need to recommence for the final 6 weeks, therefore continuing well into the summer season, and therefore having a potentially significant impact on tourism for the city.

The Events team have advised that there are a number of large events which around which construction cannot take place, in June 2023, including Army recruitment over several weekends, Ford Electric promotions, Halloween and Half-term. Thereafter there will be severe limitations running up to the Christmas period from 17th November to early January 2024. If a decision is not taken pre-election the knock-on effect will be to events in the autumn and the Christmas period which are likely to cause issues with the delivery of the project within any revised date agreed with the Department of Transport for the completion of the project under the Transforming Cities Assurance Review process.

To ensure that the impact on events is minimised, and that the piazza is available, substantial works can be undertaken leading up to Flavour Fest, with the remaining slab replacement works undertaken following the event, working around retail concessions planned for the space. The contractor will be able to undertake the substantial works for the bases of the lighting columns, including setting the concrete foundations, with the lighting columns added in between events in the piazza.

2. Bird nesting

We have now within the bird nesting season. Once a bird is nesting in a tree it is a criminal offence to interfere with the nest.

Whilst works to trees can be undertaken in bird nesting season, it needs advanced confirmation from an ecologist to assess and certify that the tree does not contain a nesting bird.

The likelihood of birds nesting increases as trees grow more leaves and become denser in their cover. As Spring approaches this risk is increasing daily.

Even if a small number of trees are required to be protected due to nesting birds, this has a very real risk of resulting in a significant impact on the deliverability and costs of the project. Depending on which trees are used by nesting birds, it could mean that a bird nesting in a location could prevent the Council from undertaking any of the following key works, and therefore progressing the project:

- works to the underground sustainable drainage system
- utilities works
- the water rill or any of the essential re-grading works
- the provision of the cycleway

The project, and therefore delivery, is split in to three zones. Even one tree with a nesting bird in each zone could have a significant impact on the delivery of the scheme as there is a risk that the contractor would not only be unable to undertake works to the tree in question, but also adjacent tree to avoid disrupting the nesting birds around it.

As such, as the risk of nesting increases, so does the pressure to the project in terms of delay (potentially until end of September 2023). It will also lead to additional costs due to the need for re-phasing and re-scheduling planned works because of the nesting birds. The budget for the scheme cannot accommodate this and the other inflationary pressures already impacting on the scheme. The cost of pausing the work for several months to date will be unsustainable and will prejudice the delivery of the entire project.

3. Impact on city centre businesses

With the support of the City Centre Company the inevitable impact and disruption of the Armada Way works have to date been largely mitigated. However as was acknowledged by full Council in its resolution on 30th January 2023, that any final scheme needed to be implemented speedily, the resulting delays with the construction works are unduly impacting on a number of city centre. There have been a few concerns recently raised regarding further delays to the project which is

now having a cumulative impact on the city centre businesses who are worried by the loss of trade into the summer. The summer is the best trading period for the city centre due to the increase in footfall through tourism and city centre events and therefore there is an urgency to minimise the disruption of the construction works by allowing the phased opening of sections of the completed works in Armada Way.

There is the risk that the City Council will see claims submitted to it for loss of income. With the summer approaching, any delay until post-election for the decision (and therefore delay in completing works and opening the city centre) could be more significant for affected businesses.

4. Impact on crime and anti-social behaviour in the City Centre

There have recently been concerns raised from Devon and Cornwall Police regarding the construction site hoardings and these impeding CCTV sight lines. Following a serious incident in the city centre in recent weeks, where due to the hoardings CCTV cameras could not capture the assault, the police have raised a concern about how long these will remain in place. It has already been identified that the hoardings do not contribute towards safety in the city centre and if the decision is delayed until post-election, the hoardings will remain up for considerably longer period of time.

5. Additional project costs

The current estimated weekly costs incurred by the Council for delays (provided by the contractor) are as follows:

<i>Prelims - Time Related Costs</i>	£	25,371.00
<i>SDA Prelims (Site Set Up) Time Related Costs</i>	£	2,140.63
<i>OH&P (2.2%)</i>	£	605.26
Weekly Cost for Delays (MS Direct)	£	28,116.89
<i>Subcontract Prelims</i>	£	10,066.55
<i>Subcontract Standing Time (assume 2 Gangs)</i>	£	63,340.50
<i>OH&P (2.2%)</i>	£	1,614.96
Subcontract Weekly Costs (assumed Groundworks Only)	£	75,022.01
Potential Weekly Costs	£	103,138.89

These are high level costs and estimates, with actual costs depending on the delays and impacts in question. The figures above accounts for the Groundworks Team and plant only. If there were further delays affecting the Pavers and Landscapers, there would be additional costs above those shown which cannot be quantified at this stage.

With this in mind, there is a real risk of a significant cost being incurred by the Council where the project is delayed until post-election. Using these high-level estimates, in a worst-case scenario this could be as much as £928,000. As the project is fully funded, and given the wider financial position of the Council, such an increase in cost could impact the ability to deliver the project at all.

6. Indexation / inflation – cost increases

At present inflation is still projected to remain high / increase in 2023 until at least the middle of the year as stated by the [Bank of England in February 2023](#).

As of November 2022 the [Building Cost Information Service \(BCIS\) projected](#) that in 2023 the indices relating to construction costs will continue to rise, and that building costs will increase by 2.5% despite the fall in inflation that it projects.

As such any further delay in the project could lead to a substantial increase in build costs for the project. As the project is fully funded and given the wider financial position of the Council, such an increase in cost could also impact the ability to deliver the project at all.

ARMADA WAY

Executive Decision Report



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report seeks to bring together the information on Armada Way, following the Engagement Exercise undertaken in February 2023 for consideration and a decision to be taken on the way forward with the scheme. The Scheme forms part of the Transforming Cities Fund programme of works, which is funded in the main by the TCF grant from government.
- 1.2. The report contains a lot of background information, chronology and history to the scheme which was relevant to the decision to undertake the redevelopment in the first instance. Given the change in administration since the TCF funding was awarded and the agreement entered into it is considered that it is necessary to set out the background to add context to the decision now to be taken and ensure that the decision maker is fully briefed and cited on the project, given they were not involved in decision making at the outset.
- 1.3. The scheme complies with the TCF funding criteria, spending in a manner compliant with s11 of the Local Government Act (LGA) 2000. We have considered the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the Equalities Impact Assessment is appended at appendix D to the Decision. That we have complied with Plymouth City Council's commitment to follow the replacement cycle way design guidance (LTN 1/20) as a condition of our funding, and will continue to do so.

2. HISTORY OF ARMADA WAY



"We have permitted ourselves the one monumental feature of the whole of Plymouth rebuilding – a great view seen from the forecourt entrance, across the shopping and civic centre to the Naval War Memorial on the Hoe".. "the vista will be the visitors guide".

(A Plan For Plymouth, Abercrombie & Watson 1943 page 67)

- 2.1. Following the impact of the blitz on the City Centre A Plan For Plymouth, Abercrombie & Watson 1943" was produced. A critical element of this was Armada Way, which presented a wide, ceremonial and direct boulevard connecting the Hoe to the Station, designed to inspire a spirit of rebirth in the post-war period, and inspire confidence for the future of the city.
- 2.2. Taking into account the topography of the land, with the city centre effectively lying within a basin, the overriding aim was to achieve a grand vista toward the Naval War Memorial. The idea was that visitors arriving by rail would have a clear route into the city centre along this key axis, with the view to the Hoe and memorial as a constantly visible landmark, central to Abercrombie's vision.
- 2.3. Armada Way formed the backbone of the original Beaux-Art plan, with the 'Heritage Audit & Statement of Significance for Plymouth City Centre' (2014) stating that Armada Way is "probably the best realised element (of the plan), making it a heritage asset of **high significance**". Armada Way

was to be a kilometre long processional, tree lined route for the people of Plymouth, running directly through the commercial centre, bisected by the smaller streets of the grid, whilst maintaining superiority and prominence over them.

3. THE CASE FOR CHANGE

- 3.1. Armada Way has long been identified as a priority area for public realm led regeneration in the city on the basis it will act as a catalyst to the wider regeneration of the city centre. The rationale for the project is multifaceted and is of strategic importance for the future economic and environmental prosperity of the city centre.

Changing City Centre

- 3.2. Plymouth's city centre, along with most city centres, needs to change to adapt to changing shopping habits and changes to how people use their public spaces. Plymouth has an exceptionally large city centre, around twice the size required and larger than other cities in the country with two or three times the population as well as a vast area of public realm, significantly more than comparable cities.
- 3.3. Plymouth city centre was designed first and foremost around the car, with wide streets and a zonal approach to land uses which resulted in a large retail footprint. With bricks and mortar retail in serious decline, the city centre needs to adapt quickly to ensure it is relevant and fit for the future as the regional centre.
- 3.4. Our ambition is to bring a large amount of residential development into the centre, giving new leases of life to tired, vacant buildings, with some extending upwards, encouraging more people to dwell in and use the city centre both day at night. We know there is demand for city centre living in Plymouth but a lack of supply. The current environment does not encourage investment nor inspire confidence to developers, and this is clear from the lack of change to date. The ambition for Armada Way is to create a new urban linear park, providing a wealth of activities and new uses which will form an attractive 'front garden' for new residential development along the boulevard.
- 3.5. Our approach to the redevelopment of Armada Way is supported by Homes England, Historic England, the City Centre Company, Plymouth and Devon Chamber of Commerce, Environment Agency, South West Water, and partners and statutory bodies, with their correspondence appended to this report at appendix 3.

A tired, dated landscape



3.6. The existing public realm features within Armada Way were constructed in the 1980s when the majority of the city centre streets were pedestrianised and, with the exception of the Piazza area, have not been updated since. This landscaping was based around winding stream and a series of curved landscapes, very much removed from the more formal and geometrical design intent in the original plans for Armada Way as acknowledged in the City Centre Heritage Audit which states that "The curved ornamental paving and artificial streams are at odds with the rectilinear geometry of the space and feel out of character with Abercrombie's strongly-planned Beaux-Arts axis"

3.7. Over the last 35 years or so, the hard landscaping has gradually become tired, damaged, broken and in

some places dangerous to use by the public. The stream was switched off around 15 years ago due to the heavy cost of maintenance and difficulty in replacing the parts needed to keep it running. This, combined with the general sense of dilapidation in the public realm hard landscape features, areas concealment and large swathes entirely unused, gives the impression of an unloved city centre space, not the vibrant, exciting, busy and modern city centre which the Council is striving to achieve.

Night time economy

- 3.8. It is recognised that a successful city centre requires a high level of activation and footfall across the day and into the evening in order to thrive. At present Armada Way, as with much of the city centre, is desolate after retail closing hours. We must invest into creating a modern public realm which encourages use of the space into the evening, and which will subsequently encourage businesses to remain open later into the evening and potentially new evening uses to open up along Armada Way.
- 3.9. Redevelopment to provide residential uses along Armada Way will also bring more footfall into the space during hours of darkness, and facilitating this redevelopment is a core objective of the project. To encourage this redevelopment however the city centre needs to develop to be a vibrant which is inviting to live in as it is welcoming, safe and provides good means of egress and access for residents within and out of the city centre.

Safety, including Women & Girls



3.10. Armada Way currently does not offer an attractive environment into the evening. The space is dark, primarily due to building mounted lighting being some distance from many parts of the space, a layout which creates a large number of areas of concealment, and over-developed planting which block long views within the corridor.

3.11. CCTV coverage along Armada Way is patchy, with large areas under no surveillance, and this is further exacerbated when the existing trees are in full leaf when views along the space are almost entirely concealed. This is a matter raised by Devon & Cornwall Police, as well as Plymouth Against Retail Crime (PARC) officers and our own CCTV operatives.

3.12. These poor levels of lighting, considerable areas of concealment, combined with lack of visibility to surveillance are very real concerns, particularly given the Council's commitment not only to improving the safety of women and girls, but all residents and visitors to the city. There are also considerable

issues of antisocial behaviour, including street drinking and drug use which is primarily focused on the heavily concealed area north of Mayflower Street. Over 200 incidents of ASB were recorded by PARC during a ten month period to October 2022 (letter of support appended to this report). This is a matter which has been raised by businesses which front onto this space and from the City Centre Company.

Usable and inaccessible spaces

- 3.13. The 1980s's landscaping arrangement and stream bisecting the space has resulted in large areas of the public realm being inaccessible or unusable in the modern city centre. The arrangement of levels within the space also results in large areas essentially inaccessible to anyone. This is particularly acute to persons with limited mobility who are unable to safely access and use swathes of the public realm due to considerable level changes, uneven surfaces and breaks within areas of



footway, therefore resulting in accessibility issues and an equalities impact on those with protected characteristics. Creating accessible and safe to use spaces along Armada Way is supported by the Plymouth Area Disabled Area Network – whose letter of support for the scheme is appended to this report.

3.14. The adjacent image shows the results of a study undertaken of the public realm on Armada Way by the Council at the early stages of the Better Places programme. It plan illustrates the study findings which concluded that on Armada Way 68.6% of the space was pedestrian circulation hard space (not all of this being accessible) with the remaining area being 27.3% inaccessible green space, and only 4.1% of space classified as usable green space. This area includes the grass strips outside of Mayflower House, areas either side of Braille Garden.

3.15. The lack of usability and accessibility for the public is not acceptable given that Armada Way is the city centre's showpiece boulevard which should provide a range of spaces accessible to all, and therefore considerable re-grading of land to create dynamic and usable spaces is required to make the city centre a space welcoming for all.

Encouraging safe, active and green travel

- 3.16. Armada Way, as the primary city centre public space, needs to promote and encourage travelling by active and sustainable travel methods. At present there is no defined route for cyclists north-south along the boulevard, resulting in cyclists travelling at speed traversing, sometimes erratically, with large volumes of pedestrians including vulnerable groups. This is exacerbated by the limited amount of Armada Way that is open to pedestrians and cyclists generally, as above at 3.14. Given its importance as the only direct north-south route through the city centre, and therefore direct connection from the station to the waterfront and all the associated amenities, it is imperative that a legible, safe cycle way is provided which meets necessary standards of design. This will support the Council in seeking to encourage more green travel in the city.
- 3.17. Due to the conflict between pedestrian and cycle users that naturally occurs when both use the same location, the cycle way needs to be woven into the fabric of the public realm, not added as an afterthought. Doing so will avoid this risk conflict with existing infrastructure and result in a design which better supports the safe use of Armada Way by all.
- 3.18. Creating a wide, level and safe to use pedestrian space is also of primary importance. At present the space is disjointed, with broken footways, changes in level and a mis-match of materials – a space of such importance as Armada Way deserves a holistic and cohesive design with high quality materials to encourage use by pedestrians. Consistency in materials will also make the area easier to maintain in the future.

Long term resilience and sustainability

3.19. Armada Way has extensive mature and overdeveloped planting which is largely a result of the 1980s planting regime following the redesign as a result of pedestrianisation. Our knowledge of trees has developed considerably in the period since these trees were planted, and now we would not planting these types of trees in the conditions and locations in which they are currently planted.



centre environment and last for the next 100 + years alongside considerable biodiversity gains.

3.20. Design team arboricultural experts have advised that due to the assumed limited rooting volumes originally provided, along with the 1980s hard landscaping, the trees are not able to reach their full potential, and many are not thriving in the conditions they have been given. The majority of trees have generally already reached their optimum, having exhausted their conditions, and are now considered to be in decline. Many of the trees are also not appropriate for the space and should not have been planted in their locations – this includes the horse chestnuts along the flanks which have been successively pollarded and crowns reduced to avoid hitting the buildings or impacting on pedestrians and the blue light routes. These are not trees which have been able to flourish and grow to their natural size and form, but have been subject to cyclical hard pruning works which have wounded the trees over time, leaving them susceptible to disease.

3.21. A major part of the plan for a new Armada Way as therefore been a driver to ensure that it is the ‘right tree, right place’ to allow for a natural environment with long term resilience to changing climate and environmental conditions. The design team arboricultural experts have advised that the current trees are unlikely to withstand these changes, and it is therefore important that new planting allows for species which will thrive in a harsh, city

Enhance heritage, identity and purpose



The People’s Way was one suggestion, Armada Way it became, but to be truly worthy of The People it needs to be the clear walkway, worthy of those seafarers who gave their lives and who are commemorated on the Hoe Naval War Memorial. At present there too many wrong trees unnecessarily in the wrong places. This shouldn’t be about saving them, it should be about planting more trees in more appropriate places and creating the pedestrian boulevard that was planned during the war, leading people straight to that memorial as a bold statement that had real integrity. It is long overdue and will at last recognise the significance of the principal post war axis of Royal Parade and Armada Way that will put this once war torn city well and truly on the map.



3.22. Through the designs for the redevelopment of Armada Way one of the key ambitions has been to open up the sight line from the station to the Hoe, to achieve the original ambitions of its design. In the Abercrombie ‘Plan for Plymouth’ Armada Way is the showpiece and fundamental to the composition of the Beaux-Arts plan which is of international significance. The entire purpose of the boulevard was to connect the Hoe with the station,

with the Naval Memorial being the constantly visible way-marker to guide people towards the waterfront, something the project team have sought to realise through its work.

- 3.23. As outlined in the 2014 Asset Heritage Audit, the modern planting along the centre of Armada Way “closes off the green, open space he [Abercrombie] envisaged” and the “curved paving, artificial streams, and heavy planting themselves do not reconcile well with the open spaces and geometric forms expressed in the 1943 plan. Notably, the planting, although pleasant, blocks much of the intended view down towards the Hoe.” It is also stated that “the vista along Armada Way is of high significance but it could be improved at its northern end” (north of the sundial).
- 3.24. Further the Heritage Audit, on the point of the vista, recognised that a “Traditional Beaux-Arts street planning uses formal planting in order to create vistas and promote certain views and this is certainly what was intended by Abercrombie. Such a layout creates a clear sense of legibility but allows public use of the space for movement, recreation, street markets etc. This has been diminished in Plymouth through the implementation of more ornamental planting in the early 1980s. A return to the formal, rectilinear planting of Abercrombie’s Beaux-Arts scheme would benefit the legibility of Abercrombie’s grid as well as the setting of the buildings which inhabit it.” It is also stated that the “the planting on Armada Way – North is too developed for the space. Notably, this diminishes the vista along Armada Way towards the Hoe.”
- 3.25. The original design and subsequent appraisal of Armada way lend support to the proposal to seek to open up the vista along Armada Way and it is clear that the importance of opening up this clear vista is of enormous significance to Plymouth and its identity as Britain’s Ocean City, through this and this once in a generation opportunity to restore this glorious boulevard to its original scale and ambition through clearing the central area and releasing the powerful vista, as proposed by the redevelopment plans.

Maintaining a high quality space



3.26. Due to the current layout the maintenance of Armada Way is a significant liability for the Council. These difficulties have resulted in the obvious degradation of both the hard and soft landscaping along the corridor.

3.27. The hard landscaping is disjointed, therefore hard to clean and repair, and is

formed of many different materials and across multiple levels. This makes it difficult to maintain effectively, at reasonable cost and in a manner that is safe for those maintaining it. Issues with the maintenance include, for example having to lift mowing equipment manually to mow ad-hoc strips of grass amongst cobbles and rocks every few weeks.

- 3.28. A large number of the existing trees have grown out of their constrained underground planting pockets as a result of planting within post-war rubble, which are now presenting hazards to the condition of the footway and impacting on buildings in some instances. The landscape is also aging, and the maintenance regime to keep an aging landscape looking tidy is resource intensive for minimal return and not sustainable in the long term.
- 3.29. Armada Way, in common with most of the city centre, is littered with a wealth of both live, dead and undefined utilities, many of which are unrecorded, which makes undertaking works and repairs a considerable process. There are also numerous points where drainage systems, including the post-war combined sewer system, have failed resulting in leaking into the ground. It is essential that these issues are dealt with in order to futureproof the city centre and create a long term, sustainable and adaptable environment.

4. ARMADA WAY IN POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 4.1. The proposed scheme for Armada Way has been shaped by the MacKay Vision for Plymouth and the City Centre Strategic Masterplan, whilst responding directly to and adhering with Strategic Objectives and Policy within the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan and the requirements outlined within the City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP).

MacKay Vision for Plymouth (2003)



4.2. A 'Vision for Plymouth' was launched in November 2003 and sets out a clear vision for the city, showing exactly how it is going to become a reality. The vision focuses on the city centre as one of the key areas for large scale intervention proposing that a greater intensification and density of mixed use development be introduced to include new residential, leisure and cultural evening uses. Improvements to the quality of the built environment and the public realm with improved links to the waterfront:

- Taller buildings
- Shared attractive spaces
- Quality landmark buildings
- Improved public transport interchanges

4.3. The Vision sets out that *"the original purpose of Armada Way – a grand vista linking the train station to the Hoe – is recovered through a simplified landscape design, with movement enhanced by the introduction of a public transport link"* and that

"as a structuring element of the city, Armada Way is responsible for the connection and movement from the station to the waterfront, and indeed beyond the station to the north into Central Park."

- 4.4. MacKay also states that *"We feel it is important to retain the route as predominantly pedestrian, and propose that a new cohesive landscape strategy is developed, with an emphasis on clarity and flow, as opposed to the current obstructions. Regular lines of trees should be introduced to mark the formality and scale of the axis, with the ability to provide other items of street furniture as required to define and animate individual areas. We propose that the central area is kept clear of all obstructions, to allow for events, processions, markets etc., and advocate the preservation of a 6m lane on the eastern side for a future transport system. Where more carefully considered existing landscaping is found, such as between Royal Parade and Notte Street, this must be essentially retained within any new proposals."*
- 4.5. In this context the redevelopment proposals have been developed.

City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) (2022)



4.6. A large part of Plymouth city centre's post-war plan was adopted as a Conservation Area in 2019, and represents the UK's first post-war city centre conservation area. Councils are required to "formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement" of conservation areas within their jurisdiction, in the case of Plymouth this is the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP).

4.7. Prepared in accordance with best practice and Historic England guidance the CAAMP defines and

records the special interest of conservation areas, analyses the characteristics that make it special, as well as setting out a plan for managing change to ensure its on-going protection and enhancement. This includes Armada Way. The CAAMP also aligns with local planning policy namely the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034 and its accompanying Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

- 4.8. The CAAMP makes reference to the importance of Armada Way in numerous areas, emphasising the original design to take *“advantage of the topography to gain long views through the redeveloped city centre to the Naval Memorial and Smeaton’s Tower on the Hoe”* and being *“perhaps the most important public street in the city centre”* (para. 5.1 and 5.4).
- 4.9. At page 43, the CAAMP considers not only the original purpose of Armada Way but also the identifies how this is prejudiced by the existing planting: *“Armada Way forms the backbone of the Conservation Area and was, from its earliest conception, designed to hold the Plan for Plymouth together, providing a broad boulevard from the mainline railway station to the Hoe. Its conception therefore was as a thoroughfare that both literally and figuratively tied the city together and to the rest of the country. It was originally an open vista, sloping down from its highest point at North Cross, down to the Civic Square, where it begins to rise again up to the Hoe. Views along Armada Way both from within the Conservation Area and its setting, therefore make a significant contribution to its special interest, however these have begun to be compromised by the original planting schemes reaching maturity and subsequent additional tree planting.”*
- 4.10. It then continues to state that *“Following its pedestrianisation in the 1980s, curved raised beds lined in composite stone and decorative planting characterised the boulevard north of the Conservation Area. Trees both in the central planted area and the pedestrian avenues on either side have matured and now unfortunately screen the best views down to the Civic Centre, the Guildhall tower from the upper stretches of Armada Way, although there is more visibility in the winter months.”*
- 4.11. The issue of the impact of the planting is again raised within Theme 1: Streets and Spaces, where it outlined that *“the shrubs in the Civic Square have grown considerably since they were planted more than half a century ago and these now frequently obscure important views north and south from the square. This is similarly the case towards the north end of Armada Way (outside the Conservation Area boundary) where trees screen views down Armada Way into the Conservation Area and beyond”*
- 4.12. The CAAMP includes recommended improvements, stating that there should be consideration of opportunities to *“restore the long vistas both within and across the Conservation Area, for example down Armada Way”* and the *“to ensure that this characteristic of the historic environment is maintained and enhanced, there is a need for sensitive management and design of the natural landscaping along Armada Way.”*
- 4.13. In developing the proposals for the redevelopment proper regard was given to this by officers.

Plymouth and SW Devon Joint Local Plan (2013-2034)



4.14. The Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan was adopted in 2019. Of significance to Armada Way are Strategic Objective SO3, Policy PLY6 and Policy PLY37, all of which are set out at appendix I of this report, with the elements relevant to Armada way italicised.

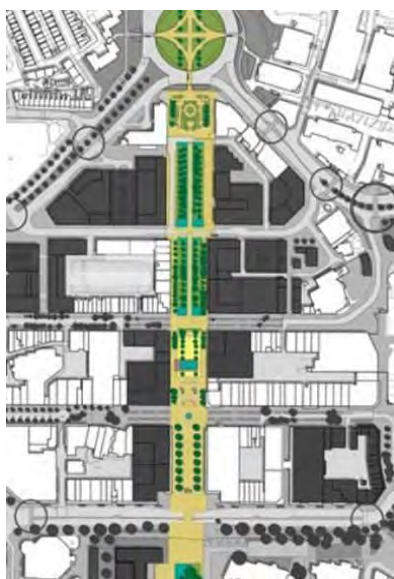
4.15. The relevant sections of the Joint Local Plan have been considered and informed the proposed for the redevelopment and design, for example:

- **SO3** refers to realising the potential of the City Centre and Waterfront Growth Area as a regionally significant growth

hub through improving sustainable *transport facilities and connections throughout the area, and particularly between the City Centre and the waterfront at Millbay, The Hoe and Sutton Harbour. This is contributed towards with the proposed improvement of cycle paths which are embedded within the design of the area.*

- **PLY6** refers to development that “*Respects and celebrates the centre’s mid-twentieth century built heritage, including the Beaux Arts grid of the 1943 Abercrombie Plan and the highest and good quality non-designated assets identified in the City Centre Masterplan*”. As set out above this has been a key aspect of the design, seeking to reinstate the intended prominence of Armada Way through introduction of the vista and seeking to maximise the potential of the key city centre open space.
- **PLY37** refers “*City Centre public realm and transport improvements to improve circulation and encourage investment, including [...] Armada Way public realm; incorporating City Centre Strategic Cycle Network and walking improvements*”. In the development of the scheme, with improved cycle path and pedestrian routes, including seeking to open up the area in terms of its overall accessibility, this has been a key aim of the design.

Plymouth City Centre Strategic Masterplan (2017)



4.16. The City Centre Strategic Masterplan describes Armada Way as the stunning centrepiece of the City Centre Grid, which deserves recognition as one of the greatest civic spaces of any city in Europe and indeed has a vista of scale and ambition capable of standing on an international stage. A single, simple overarching public realm plan for the route was deemed essential. It defines Armada Way’s identity as a “singular and spectacular processional route” which has been gradually eroded over 70 years by piecemeal changes which have “domesticated the scale of the route and introduced elements which interfere with long range views”.

4.17. The masterplan states that Armada Way should be planned as the pre-eminent route in the City Centre and be read as a single continuous linear urban park connecting multiple neighbourhoods across the City Centre from the train station to the waterfront. The aim is to develop an overarching plan and design principles

which can be implemented over time to open up views and provide the opportunity to walk and cycle down the centre of Armada Way to allow an appreciation of the scale of the route and help realise its potential.

4.18. The key objectives of the design for Armada Way are to:

- Recapture scale and grandeur of the route by opening up views, allowing movement through the centre of the space allowing the route to be appreciated as one single linear space.
- Give the route primacy over other City Centre streets by introducing greater continuity in design language and giving the sense that Armada Way is continuous and other routes are crossing it.
- Ensure that the continuity of the route extends from the Train Station to The Hoe with improved crossings, improved visibility and more consistency in materials.
- Allow local variations in character to reflect different parts of the City Centre.
- Seek to ensure that tree planting and replacement is primarily be contained within avenues, using species which maintain a compact form to allow visibility along the length of the route with the exception of the listed gardens in front of the Civic Centre, using strong avenue tree planting to emphasise the scale and linearity of the space.
- Incorporate opportunities for sustainable urban drainage.
- Declutter and rationalise planting and materials to achieve a simple, elegant design which infers manageable ongoing maintenance.

- Use Armada Way to increase the presence of the Waterfront in the City Centre, not just through improved connections but through introduction of bold water features, installations and public art which reference the Waterfront.
- Incorporate clearly defined provision for cyclists along the centre of the route to take advantage of funding secured to deliver walking and cycling improvements in the city centre.
- Introduce a soft public space such as lawn to the north of the public toilets to allow a greater range of activities to take place within the City Centre including play

5. BETTER PLACES PROGRAMME & CONSULTATION

- 5.1. The object of the Better Places initiative is to address the years of underinvestment in city centre streets and spaces, and will dramatically turn around the look and feel of the city centre. This initiative falls within the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) programme of works. The Armada Way project budget is a combination of TCF (£2.7 million) and local match funding from our capital programme (£10 million).
- 5.2. Other overarching aims including to support and lever in further future inward investment in retail, leisure, employment and housing; to bolster local pride in the city centre; and to enhance the overall experience and perceptions of the city centre. Work is already underway at Old Town Street and New George Street, with the finished scheme planned to reopen in phases from June 2023. Work at the Civic Square has also recently begun which is due to restore they key historic assets of the space and introduce a new cycle connection.
- 5.3. Armada Way is the singular largest and most transformational project within the Better Places programme, and has been designed to address the key criteria of Better Places, including raising the bar in quality to support the experience of the city centre, connecting the city's best assets, and encouraging a diversification of uses to support new residential, office and evening economies, provide outdoor amenity and children's play space. Other key criteria being addressed by the scheme include delivery of a comprehensive sustainable drainage systems with new trees and planting, de-cluttering and enhancing the pedestrian and cycle movement, and tackling barriers to people with disabilities and resolving conflict between modes.
- 5.4. The Better Places programme dates back to 2017 and has transcended numerous political administrations since that period. LDA were commissioned as designers for the programme, and extensive engagement was undertaken with Councillors and relevant stakeholders on the lead up to, and during the Better Places consultation in 2018.

Better Places Consultation: 2018



locations, such as Plympton Ridgeway and Plymstock Library.

5.5. An extensive consultation event was held between 15th March 2018 – 26th April 2018 where the public, visitors, stakeholders and interested parties could attend a series of events providing more information on our Better Places proposals.

5.6. Recognising the desire of the public to shape the future of their city centre, the team organised a total of 19 days of public consultation events. The events were held at a range of locations across the city, both in city centre and local neighbourhood



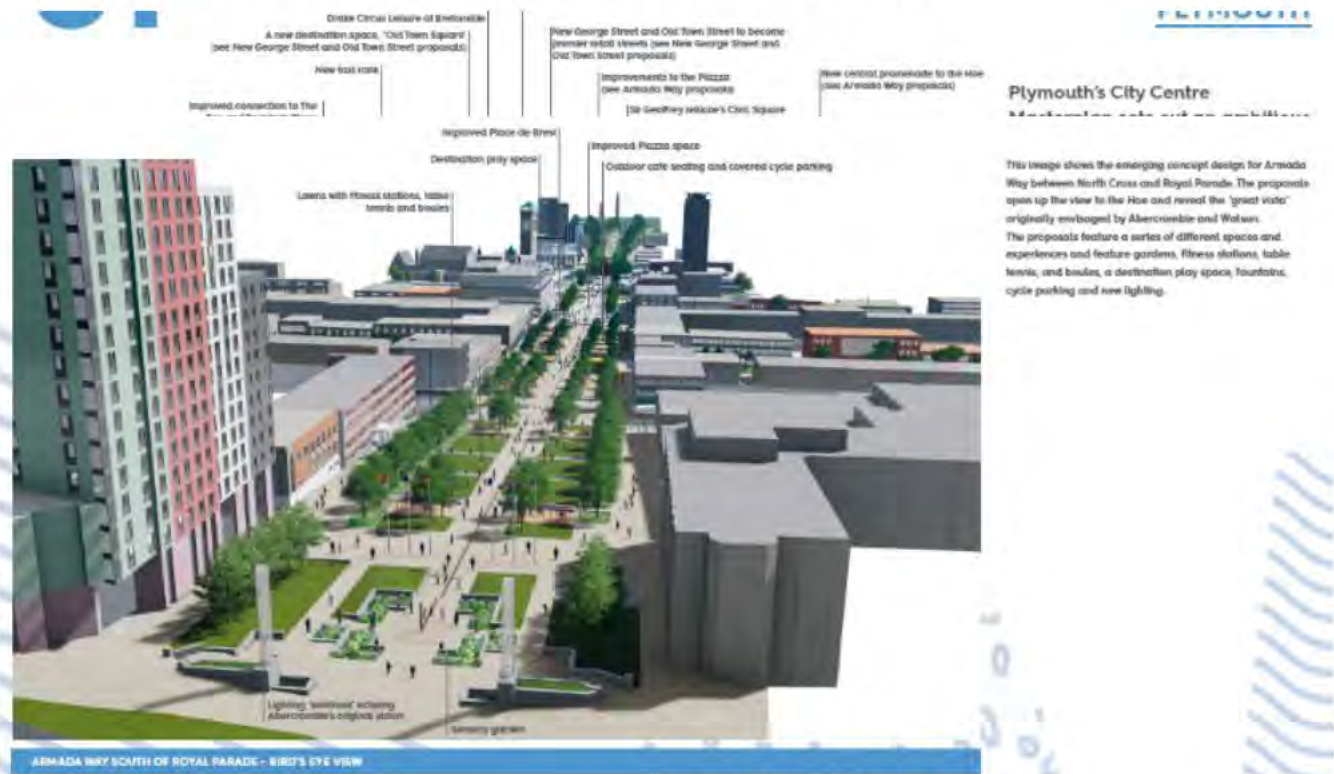
5.7. The events were advertised across all social media channels, on the Council website, and the local press encouraging people to come along and provide their feedback to our plans.

5.8. A number of stakeholder workshops were also undertaken, including Historic Environment Workshop, Health & Accessibility Workshop, Access, Events Infrastructure and Emergency Planning workshops.

5.9. These workshops were attended by a diverse range of stakeholders, including Historic England, Plymouth Cycling Campaign, Environment Plymouth,

Plymouth Tree Partnership and PADAN.

- 5.10. All events during the consultation were very well attended. A total of 178 formal responses were received, 86% of which was from people residing within Plymouth.
- 5.11. Specifically relating to Armada Way, Question 12 of the Consultation form asked to give views on the ideas proposed. Of those respondents that indicated a preference of an option (109) 92 people (84%) indicated their support for the proposals, of which 12 respondents had some reservations about specific elements of the scheme, and 16% (17) weren't supportive of the proposals.
- 5.12. Specifically there was support for opening up vista of Armada Way and the sweeping route south to the Hoe. There were some concerns about loss of mature trees, with representatives also stating that they would wish to see a mixed variety of species in the tree lined boulevard as opposed to single species. There was also comment that the Oak on Citadel Road could be felled, with subsequent planting elsewhere to mitigate, to release the view to the Naval Memorial more fully. It was recognised in the comments that cycle lanes were needed to avoid pedestrian conflict.
- 5.13. The images provided below were displayed during the exhibition and included a number of bird's eye view/axonometric plans with associated labels, alongside a series of visuals showing the proposals for Armada Way at pedestrian level at various locations.





6. ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION EVENTS

Armada Way Public Information Event 29th September



Thursday 29 September 2022 - 12noon until 6pm
Third floor, Drake Circus

Plymouth City Council is inviting residents to an information event to see the latest proposals for the regeneration of Armada Way. The ambition is for a reimagined Armada Way as a new linear park, restoring its original design intent as a grand boulevard leading to the waterfront, while offering an exciting and engaging space fit for a modern city centre.

Council officers along with the design team for the project will be on hand to discuss the proposal and answer any queries.

The £12.7 million investment project, aiming for completion in Spring next year is funded through the Government's Transforming Cities Fund and matched by Plymouth City Council.

- 6.1. Following the commissioning of a design team and extensive design work responding directly to requests of Members, an information event was held on 29th September 2022 from 1200-1800 in Drake Circus. The purpose of the event was to update the public and interested parties on the updated design for Armada Way and the improvements and environmental enhancements which had been made following the 2018 consultation event. A detailed description of the final plan is included within this report, which includes improvements to the proposed sustainable drainage system, integration of more and varied areas of play space, more variety in habitat, and a greater number of trees and of more diversity.
- 6.2. The event was advertised on all social media platforms, PCC website, BBC Spotlight and radio stations, and on posters distributed around the city centre and public buildings.
- 6.3. A display setting out the modified plan with 3D CGI images and explanatory boards focusing on issues such as the proposed sustainable drainage system and the new general

tree removal and replanting, the arrangement plan were presented.

- 6.4. The information event was attended by approximately 200 members of the public, including local business owners, who had the opportunity to discuss the plans with the scheme designers and council officers. 17 formal comments were received, with 75% of comments being supportive of the scheme. One comment referred to the loss of mature trees.

Post Public Way Information Event (winter 2022)

- 6.5. From the 30th September 2022 the information boards displayed at the information event were retained and displayed at the Central Library for a period of over 2 weeks.



- 6.6. In the intervening period, the Council were made aware of a petition which was started by the campaign group 'STRAW'. Following a discussion with the former operators of the Climate Hub, who offered as mediators, the project team agreed to meet with representatives of 'STRAW' on the 3rd of November 2022. The meeting was attended by numerous members of 'STRAW' alongside members of the project team including the

Arboricultural expert from YGS, Morgan Sindall project manager, PCC project manager, and the Deputy Leader Cllr Mark Shayer. Members of the design team ran through the history and design ethos behind the scheme and answered any questions or queries 'STRAW' representatives wanted to make. Clarification was given for why more existing trees could not be retained into the scheme from a technical and/or arboricultural perspective due to all of the competing demands and requirements to be met within the design for the space.

Growth & Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 6.7. Armada Way was considered by the Growth & Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee the 10th October 2022, with Members considering the detail of the Armada Way scheme as part of the City Centre improvement item. Robust discussion was had on matters relating to the cycle way, project timeline and funding. The committee requested a technical note of the cycle way design ethos and how it is anticipated to operate was to be provided, which was sent to Members of the Committee on 29th November 2022. The minutes of the Committee and Report to it are referenced in the list of background papers to this report.

21 November 2022 City Council Meeting

- 6.8. At the meeting of Council the Cabinet Member for Transport was asked a question concerning Armada Way and the trees. Recognising the concerns raised by some members of the public relating to the original plan to fell 136 trees, the Cabinet Member for Transport agreed to undertake a pause to consider whether any additional trees could be integrated into the design. The minutes of this meeting are referenced in the list of background papers.
- 6.9. As a result of this pause and direction from the Cabinet Member the scheme was reconsidered in terms of what was possible. This resulted in the modified scheme, where an additional 7 existing trees were planned to be retained, and a further 3 new trees added. This brought the total number of trees planned to be felled to 129, with 150 new trees proposed.

30 January 2022 City Council Meeting

- 6.10. A Petition was received from STRAW on 6th January 2023 which had over 5000 valid signatures under the Council's Petitions Guidance, meaning it triggered a debate at full Council. The petition called upon the Council to save more of the existing trees on Armada Way.
- 6.11. At the Council meeting a representative of STRAW was given 5 minutes to present their petition to the meeting, following which there was a debate by members. The minutes and agenda item

are listed in the background papers to this report however, following a full debate, full Council resolved as follows:

“Plymouth City Council firmly believes that the residents and businesses of Plymouth deserve a thriving and prosperous city centre to deliver high quality jobs and places to live.

We recognise that the strategic policies set out in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan adopted in March 2019 commits us to delivering a vibrant mixed-use regional shopping centre and attractive visitor destination. We remain committed to delivering Policy PLY6 of the adopted Joint Local Plan (‘Improving Plymouth’s City Centre’) which, amongst other things, specifically supports respecting and celebrating the centre’s mid-twentieth built heritage, a coordinated programme of investment in public realm, and improvements to surface water drainage systems.

We note the substantial support that has been expressed for the Armada Way scheme by local residents, many city centre businesses, the City Centre Company, the Environment Agency, South West Water, Homes England, Historic England, the Twentieth Century Society and others.

We recognise the concerns that have been expressed regarding the engagement arrangements for the scheme, the tight funding deadlines for the project to be delivered, and the potential for funding to be lost if the scheme is not implemented. We therefore call on the Cabinet Member for Transport to undertake a comprehensive review of the engagement arrangements for the scheme and commit to publishing the results of this review to inform this and delivery of future city centre schemes. We also call on the Cabinet Member for Transport to publish a detailed statement regarding the maintenance costs of the Better Places Programme projects.

Plymouth City Council recognises the concerns expressed in the petition regarding the loss of existing trees but agrees that a balance has to be struck with the achievement of other regeneration and environmental objectives for the city centre, including the city’s climate change commitments. We note that the scheme has many environmental benefits, for example the creation of new walking and cycling infrastructure, a sustainable urban drainage scheme, and provision for future district heating initiatives. We call on the Cabinet Member for Transport to set these out in detail for the benefit of local businesses and the public.

Plymouth City Council welcomes the pause to the Armada Way scheme announced by the Cabinet Member for Transport on 21st November 2022. We note that the modified scheme that has been published seeks to directly respond to the request in the petition to ‘incorporate a bit more of what we already have’.

Plymouth City Council calls upon the Cabinet Member for Transport to note its dissatisfaction with the lack of public engagement and suspend tree felling whilst undertaking a meaningful community engagement process in February, which considers the natural environmental and climate resilience before finalising the designs for Armada Way. The Council further acts that no work be carried out that could prejudice the survival of the existing trees until the design is finalised. Having undertaken this process and published the results, the Council supports and requests that the Cabinet Member implements that final design quickly to avoid on-going disruption to city centre businesses from the construction works.”

Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee – Petition appeal

- 6.12. An appeal against the resolution of Full Council was launched by ‘STRAW’, resulting in a debate at the Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee on 22nd February 2023. The items and minutes for this meeting are set out in the background papers. After consideration of each ground of appeal individually by the Committee and a full discussion on the appeal, the Committee supported the resolution of full Council with one further recommendation to Cabinet

being added as follows: petition was rejected by the Committee, however the Committee agreed the following:

6.13.

“That the Cabinet Member for Transport write to the Parliamentary Minister for Transport requesting an extension to the programme of works/ funding for the Armada Way Development Scheme”

Engagement Event February 2023

6.14. Following the Council resolution at its meeting of the 30 January 2023, a community engagement process took place in February. This included an intensive period of engagement with the public, as agreed by with the Portfolio Holder, opposition groups and ward members. This ran from Monday 6th until Saturday 11th February.

6.15. The engagement included an event at the Guildhall for the public to attend, see the information concerning the schemes, ask questions of the professionals and officers present and feed back comments in person. This event was held over a series of days as follows:



- Monday 6 February, 12 noon to 5pm
- Tuesday 7 February, 10am to 4pm
- Wednesday 8 February, 10am to 4pm
- Thursday 9 February, 10am to 7pm
- Friday 10 February, 10am to 7pm
- Saturday 11 February, 10am to 4pm

6.16. There were also a range of other ways in which engagement was undertaken, including dedicated workshops with STRAW, other locations in the city centre for people to attend and an online

engagement. The further details of the Engagement process is set out in detail in the “Armada Way Engagement Report” at appendix C of the decision report. For feedback there was a response form provided, this was available in hard copy at the events and online. Respondents were asked for their name, postcode and then 9 questions with space for feedback.

6.17. In terms of promoting the event, it was on the front of website (from 3 February) and lead article on the news page. A [press release](#) (with an update issued) led to coverage in the media, including Plymouth Live: [Plymouth City Council starts 'short sharp engagement' on future of Armada Way trees - Plymouth Live \(plymouthherald.co.uk\)](#) and [Armada Way protesters call council's 'meaningful engagement' an 'insult' to Plymouth - Plymouth Live \(plymouthherald.co.uk\)](#)

6.18. Information was included in our resident’s newsletter to 26,252 people on 3 and 10 February and social media advertising started from 4 February reaching 38,000 Plymouth residents, resulting in 1,500 clicks to the press release (and 159 comments on social media). Social media posts on our corporate Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts resulting in over 7,000 clicks on Facebook with an average reach of 17,362 and average engagement of 70.

6.19. A detailed breakdown of all information submitted online and in-person at the event and the results has been included at appendix C of the Decision in the Meaningful Engagement Report.

7. ENGAGEMENT DATA AND CONSIDERATION TO ISSUES RAISED

7.1. A diverse range of responses were received from both those resident within the city and outside of it. The Engagement Report sets out in detail an analysis of the responses and considers factors which are relevant to note when considering them, including the spread of responses from people residing further afield, how they were impacted in term of a campaign by STRAW to result in ‘standard’ responses with limited value in terms of qualitative feedback on the scheme. .

7.2. Comments in favour of the scheme primarily echo support for the regeneration of the city centre with a well thought through and innovative design. Specific comments include support for features

such as new wildlife benefits and a range of spaces to enjoy, opening the view and appreciation of the Abercrombie plan. There was support for making the city centre safer and more usable across the day and night, including more space for events, as well as for upgrading the footway areas to reduce trip hazards, and improving seating. Other comments included welcoming the introduction of new areas of play space and range of interactive water features.

- 7.3. Comments against the scheme primarily focus around designing a scheme that incorporates the existing trees. There were also comments in favour of keeping existing trees and planting more. Other comments not in favour of the scheme include concerns about the cost of the scheme and how money could be better spent on other things; the time it will take to achieve the biodiversity net gain; maintenance both in terms of regime and cost; and concerns about the cycle lane, particularly the desirability of the route, speed of cyclists, conflict with pedestrians and safety around the water jets. There are also comments about the wind tunnel effect, lack of interest in the design and a preference for restoration of the existing water feature rather than installing a new one. There were a number of comments questioning the interplay between the ornamental water feature, the irrigation and the SUDS.

Responses and suggestions from the Armada Way Engagement Programme 2023

- 7.4. There were a range of suggestions made in feedback received during the engagement event, some very detailed and specific. However there are some common themes which have been outlined below with a response provided.

7.5. Enhanced Lighting:

Some comments were received relating to lighting, including provision of vibrant colour lighting or mood lighting, lighting to planting spaces to avoid trouble makers, and renewable energy provision. A primary objective of the scheme is to improve the lighting along Armada Way which at present are poor, resulting in large areas of darkness. Lighting plot plans been concluded by lighting engineers and experts which show complete and compliant lighting lux levels across Armada Way, including all planted areas. To add vibrancy and activation of the space into the evening, we will also be introducing GOBO projectors in various locations which will project patterns and animation onto the hard surfaces to adding to the level vibrancy in the evenings and during special events. We are reviewing options for renewable energy generation to power certain aspects of the scheme using solar voltaic panels as part of the further detailed design refinement.

7.6. Sufficient Supportive Seating (including covered seating):

Feedback from the engagement event included a number of suggestions that provision was made for seating with backs and cover, as well as tilted seating so that they do not stay wet. Whilst we need to consider the comfort and usability of all seating, we are proposing a range of seating types along Armada Way, some with back support, for example along the edges of the raised parterre areas, and others without backs acting as benches. We will be including more seating with sufficient supportive backing following these comments, and the design team are reviewing opportunities for the provision of covered areas of seating at specific locations along Armada Way. We will discuss the provision of seating with backs and covered areas of seating with local disability and accessibility groups.

7.7. Improved / more CCTV coverage

Improving safety and the perception of safety along Armada Way is a primary objective of the scheme. At present the trees are too large and when in leaf, considerably block CCTV coverage around Armada Way and in particular, long views. Comment received was that more CCTV should be provided in Armada Way. Through the carefully considered planting plan, the new scheme will allow for significantly improved CCTV sight lines both across and along Armada Way. Now a final design and planting plan has been fixed, we will continue to work with CCTV

operative teams to understand whether additional CCTV is required and will implement new cameras accordingly. Underground infrastructure and other necessary ducting for CCTV will be implemented within the scheme to allow for futureproofing.

7.8. More colour to balance the grey

Comment was received that the city can appear too grey. We recognise that some earlier public realm works in the city centre have been considered too grey in tone, and we are proposing to bring different tones of granite into the design for Armada Way. Originally this was at key junctures in the design such as the sundial and performance area, however we are now undertaking amendments to the design to increase the amount of tonal change away from purely greys and introducing more buff tones for areas of significant new paving to bring more colour and warmth into the design.

7.9. Adaptations to the cycle lane and cycle provision

The design team have met with Plymouth Cycling Campaign who made some relevant comments regarding the cycle lane design, such as ensuring that the corners are not 45 degrees and instead are more curved, which we will be working through in the design refinement to provide. Comments from the engagement event include providing prominent speed limit signs for cyclists and concerns about pedestrian crossings, that the cycling lane would be better if straight, and that more obstacles should be provided to prevent cyclists misusing the scheme. We have discussed the plan with Sustrans, who are fully supportive of the cycle proposals, and the cycle scheme has passed its independent assessment for checked for compliance with LTN 1/20. PADAN have also been briefed on the arrangements. In a city centre environment we need to consider how pedestrians and cyclists can share the space successfully and create a cohesive public realm which works for all users. We will look to address the comments made through thoroughly reviewing the proposed cycle and pedestrian signage, way markers and monoliths to ensure that the expectations of cyclists and pedestrians within the space is clear and legible. We will continue engagement with Sustrans and cycle groups on the detailing of pedestrian cross-over areas and signage through the detailed design refinement.

7.10. More habitats for wildlife

The scheme provides for a much greater range of habitat creation than currently exists in Armada Way. We are targeted at achieving over 20% biodiversity net gain for the scheme, which is above the 10% prescribed by the Council for developers. This figure is a real achievement when considering all of the other aims of the project which need to be addressed, and shows that nature and wildlife has been put at the heart of the proposals, with new habitats ranging from wildflower meadows to reed beds, created where ever possible. Some comments were received stating that we should provide some spring-bulbs and climbing-plants or bushes - with annual flowers. This is being considered as part of the detailed planting plan and will take this comment into account. It was also asked whether flat roofs could have wild flower gardens to attract bees and butterflies. There are currently no new flat roofs proposed within the scheme, however we will look to provide green roofs where possible to any covered seating areas provided. A comment was received raising concern that we would be planting pampas grass (believed to be mistaken for the reed beds) and this is not out intention.

7.11. Variety of suggestions considering different sorts of play and active features

We are proposing a number of new play areas, including green, tactile and natural play spaces for children. We anticipate the tactile play space to be a flagship space for the city centre, which currently has no children's play areas. We are also introducing dancing water jests and boulders with hand pumps and rills for children to interact with, taking best practice examples from other major cities where they have transformed use of public spaces. Some comments received included providing more food growing space and provision of 'quiet spaces' so that it isnt not all about

‘play’ and ‘performance’. We are working to include some areas of the design as community growing spaces, which will be adapted once there is a considerably community base in the city centre. We have also taken into account people’s requirements for quieter, calmer spaces, and the design of some of the parterres has been aimed at achieving that. Comments also included providing numerous play areas for children, large objects for little ones to climb on, in and around, outside water filling stations, and to incorporate more bins and more attractive bins than the existing. As the detailed design develops, we will take on board comments for large objects for children to play with, as we have already introduced at the Drakes Leat play area, and consider how these can be used in other play spaces. We will consider options for water filling stations in key locations along Armada Way as part of our refinement exercise of the utilities and services plans, and we are also working with our waste team on providing better designed, and more, bins across Armada Way.

7.12. Other

Other suggestions were made at the engagement event which could not be considered as part of this specific project. These included ensuring adequate toilets were provided, statues of famous persons and Plymouth heroes were provided, painting the buildings in the city centre were provided. Comments referring to providing suitable groundworks / planting areas to ensure good tree health have been taken into account by the design team, working within best practice guidelines for tree planting. A suggestion was provided that we should replant trees after removing them. This was discounted following advice from our own natural infrastructure team, as well as the design team and external experts as not being considered good practice given the low chance of survival for the tree, and the associated cost implications. Comments were also provided at the engagement event requesting that sufficient maintenance is allocated to the design, and that robust contract and service agreement is in place for water feature pump and parts. This is being managed by the design team as the detailed design progresses and manufacturers are determined. Further information on maintenance is provided within section 9 this report.

8. TECHNICAL MATTERS

Planning Advice

- 8.1. Pre-application advice was sought from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to provide clarity on a number of points relevant to the works at Armada Way. A response (22/01549/MOR Armada Way Public Realm Enhancement Works) was received from the Local Planning Authority on 25th October 2022 (as referenced in the background papers to the report).
- 8.2. The response set out the LPAs informal advice that, on the basis of the information submitted to it:
 - There were no listed buildings within the development site (red line plan submitted)
 - The demolition works did not constitute a ‘relevant demolition’, therefore not triggering the need for planning consent.
 - The construction work was capable of being undertaken using permitted development rights on the understanding that the works are located entirely on Highway Maintainable Public Expense.
 - That none of the trees within the boundary of the site (shown on the red plan submitted) were subject to a TPO, though works to any trees in the Conservation Area (south of the sundial) would require a section 211 notice to be served on the LPA 6 weeks in advance of relevant works (including pruning)
 - That, considering the provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2000 and the information provided the proposed development did not fall within Schedule 2 and fell outside of the requirements of the Act.

Highway Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE)

- 8.3. Armada Way is, in the vast majority, designated as highways. The areas that are HMPE are the footpaths and pedestrianised areas that run the length of Armada Way on its eastern and western flanks, as well as some other paths which are un-adopted highway. The central grassed areas are not classified as Highways Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE) and are instead Corporate Property.
- 8.4. Until 1998, on the formation of the Council, the records concerning highways were held and kept by Devon County Council as the Highways Authority. When the responsibility transferred to Plymouth City Council the highways register was provided and used to create the current digital register.
- 8.5. The ownership of the land has been reviewed by the Legal department at the Council. It is confirmed that the entirety of Armada Way is within the ownership of the Council, including the central grassed areas, and that works undertaken since the 1950's would have been done so by the relevant local highway authority. The roads/highways at the top end of Armada Way have been used by the public since the 1950's/1960's. Where there is an absence of evidence of actual express dedication or adoption of a road or way as a highway, due to the length of use by the public dedication is implied in law, with no formal adoption being required. The record of this informal adoption through public use is recorded on the highway register.

Tree Surveys

- 8.6. A tree survey of the entire city centre area was completed by WSP in 2017 and used to inform the baseline information relating to the development of the Better Places projects in their entirety. The report concluded that all trees in the Armada Way corridor (as per the modified scheme extents) were Category C (trees of low quality) with only a single tree identified as Category B (trees of moderate quality).
- 8.7. Due to the time between the consultation event and the finalisation of the design, in 2021 a further tree survey was undertaken by YGS. The objective of this survey was to go above and beyond the BS5837 tree survey standard, and provide as much additional information on the condition, impacts from, and future proposed longevity of the existing trees in the corridor. This report has been the basis on which the designs for Armada Way were then developed.
- 8.8. The YGS tree survey concluded that trees in Armada Way specifically are of varying condition ranging from dead/dying to 20+ years of further life, with one having 40+ years expected life remaining. Many trees were identified as causing impacts on footways and buildings, having restricted growth, being unable to reach their expected natural form, or have been pruned and pollarded severely. The majority of issues identified stemmed from the fact that the species of existing tree is now considered 'wrong tree, wrong place', having inappropriate and appropriate underground conditions or having been planted in too close a proximity to buildings. The tree survey also showed an over-provision of particular species beyond what would be considered good practice and therefore replanting of tulip, European Lime and common ash should not be included, with limited planting of genera Betula, Prunus, Sorbus, Acer and Liquidambar. More information on the breakdown of trees by Category specifically for Armada Way are included below.

Arboricultural Impact Assessment

- 8.9. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment was undertaken by YGS for the original proposed design, and revised for the further modified plan which now included the retention of the single Category A tree and the increased number, and amendments to the specification of, new trees. The table below outlines the tree removals by category.

Tree category	A	B	C	U - Unsuitable for retention-dead or dying
	High quality	Moderate	Low quality	

Removal	0	73	43 plus two tree groups	11
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- 8.10. The report concludes that “the Proposed Development has been designed to create a resilient, sustainable and socially valuable commercial area within Plymouth City Centre.

In total, 24 tree features within the Site boundary are to be retained. 129 tree features are required for removal to facilitate the Proposed Development, formed of 127 individual trees and two minor tree groups.

The removal of 129 tree features is anticipated to have a significant negative affect on Site amenity and local landscape character in the short-term. However, in the long-term, a significant increase in amenity is anticipated through provision of a significant new tree planting scheme facilitating: seasonal variation, flowering, fruiting, bark interest, autumnal colour, leaf shape and colour differences, and a diverse mosaic spatial arrangement of tree heights, forms and overall sizes. The tree removals therefore represent a significant investment in the long-term amenity of ‘The Greenery’ within Armada Way, most notably in relation to increasing resilience.”

Preliminary Ecological Assessment

- 8.11. A preliminary ecological assessment (PEA) was undertaken by TOR Ecology in 2017. At this point, the Armada Way scheme was proposed to run in continuity from North Cross to the Hoe, however as a result of financial pressures the decision was taken in 2022 to reduce the scope of the scheme to the primary core of the city centre between North Cross and Royal Parade only.
- 8.12. The TOR PEA confirmed that:
- there was ‘low potential only’ for bats (roosting) and that species are unlikely to be present or assumed present at the site and that a detailed survey was not needed to clarify impacts and mitigation measures.
 - that there was potential suitable habitat for breeding birds, and House sparrow, Herring Gull were present, but that further detailed study was not necessary in either instance.
 - that there was no potential impact from the proposals on any non-statutory wildlife designations or non-statutory geological designations.
 - that there would be no potential impact on any statutory designations, with the exception of Plymouth Sound and Estuary’s SAC which was to be confirmed via the HRA screening process.
- 8.13. The TOR PEA report recommended:
- Undertaking a HRA screening once plans were finalised
 - Any required removal of vegetation suitable for nesting birds outside of bird breeding season, or preceded by a nesting to be checked by ecologists
 - Where trees identified within the report as having Low bat roosting potential proposed for removal, that they should be soft felled
 - Provision made for the installation of biodiversity enhancement
 - Guidance to be followed in relation to lighting design to limit the negative impacts of it upon nocturnal wildlife, such as birds and bats
- 8.14. An updated PEA was undertaken by Simon Geary Ecology Services (SGES) in December 2022 following extensive design development and refinement (SGES PEA). The survey was undertaken not only as a new report, but to provide an update to the findings of the 2017 report. The study was an extended Phase I Habitat Survey and included a bat tree roost assessment. This report was solely focused on the area between North Cross and Royal Parade as per the updated scheme extents.
- 8.15. The SGES PEA report summarised that most of the habitats on the proposed development site are of negligible ecological importance per se and unlikely to support protected species (ie. dwelling or resting space) on a permanent or long term basis. The report states:

- whilst trees and shrubs have higher ecological importance per se and provided habitat for flora and fauna, the city centre is subject to intensive management and high levels of human disturbance reducing the functionality for wildlife.
- some 15 trees planned to be felled contain potential for bat roost features and further survey is required to evaluate these trees prior to felling.
- At least one bird nest (presumed disused due to time of year) was recorded and therefore a pre-felling assessment of should be undertaken for nesting birds trees.
- There should be an ecological watching brief during felling of identified trees depending on the results of the pre-felling surveys.
- That the redesign will includes significant areas of new planting as part of compensation and biodiversity net gain measures.

Bat Report

- 8.16. As outlined above, the originally commissioned PEA undertaken by TOR Ecology in 2017 assessed Armada Way as having low habitat potential for bats. The SGES PEA identified low potential, but recommended a further bat roost assessment.
- 8.17. As a result a further assessment of potential bat features was commissioned by Simon Geary Ecology Services and completed in 2023. The assessment included a detailed endoscopic inspection of trees to check for direct or indirect evidence of bats. The final report produced confirmed that there were no signs of bats or bat roost constraints in the trees on Armada Way and there was therefore no further ecological constraints to tree felling including important habitats or other protected species.

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

- 8.18. The Project team has set a desired target of at least 20% net gain for the project, which exceeds the Council's BNG policy requiring development to achieve at least 10% net gain.
- 8.19. Following completion of the further modified design, the Environment Partnership (TEP) undertook an update to the assessment. The TEP report (67CA09-YGS-ZZ-XX-RP-J-009 BNG Design Stage Report) states that there will be a **+23.07%** for area based habitats, and a net gain of **+768.5%** for linear habitats (hedgerows) within the set period used for the calculations. The report also concludes that no further offsetting is required as part of the scheme.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- 8.20. An application under Regulation 77 of the Habitat Regulations was submitted together with associated information pertaining to Environmental Management Plan and Construction Methodology. This application requires the local planning authority to undertake an appropriate assessment which is submitted to Natural England to understand the impact of the construction works on the Plymouth Sound and Estuary's protected area. Confirmation has been received from Natural England confirming that there is no likely significant effect on the special protected area from the construction works.

Forestry Commission

- 8.21. The Project Team contacted the Forestry Commission to clarify whether a permit for felling of the trees was required. The Forestry Commission confirmed that, as the scheme is classified as Permitted Development, their view was that tree removal would not require a felling license, if the works are conducted as outlined in the pre-application enquiry to the LPA (Local Planning Authority). The Project Team will be ensuring this is the case.

9. THE FINAL PROPOSED SCHEME



9.1. The ambition for Armada Way is for a completely transformed stunning urban park where people will play, eat, enjoy as well as come to the city centre to shop. The plan has been through a series of revisions, from the original plan released in September 2022, the modified plan released in January 19th 2022, and the further modified plan which was a result of some further design refinement after the engagement event in February 2023. This section, where it comments on the ‘plan’ refers wholly to the further modified plan following the engagement event in February 2023.

9.2. The plan allows for a complete redevelopment of the public realm on Armada Way to restore the original design intent of the grand boulevard (see section 2), whilst also being contemporary, future proofed and catering for all users in a safe and accessible environment. The plan has been designed to bring dramatic enhancements for the business community, visitors to the city centre, as well as benefits for the anticipated future residential community which, will front directly onto it.

9.3. Fundamentally, the design is based around being environmentally sustainable for the future, creating a significant increase in the level of green space amenity for future generations to come, whilst addressing long-standing issues of maintenance and contributing substantially to making the city centre more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Cycling

9.4. Armada Way is a well-used route for cyclists, and of primary importance to the scheme is the provision of a new cycle and pedestrian route through the centre. The cycleway will start at North Cross and meander around the enhanced Braille Garden and amphitheatre space, before re-joining the central alignment towards the sundial.

9.5. The cycle way has been designed to be compliant with LTN 1/20, which recommends a ‘soft segregation’ approach to cycle paths in town and city centres. It will run adjacent to the rill on one side, with the raised parterres and green space on the other for large sections of the route. It will also connect with a new mobility hub at Mayflower Street. Given the width of the space and volume of pedestrians, the route will become shared with in-ground markers from the sundial, through the piazza to Royal Parade. The design ethos and proposal has been fully endorsed by Sustrans, the preeminent voice on matters of walking and cycling in Britain. Through further detailed design, will take into account providing more gentle curved radii on the chicane elements and review of cycle signage and pedestrian cross-over points.

Sustainable Urban Drainage System

- 9.6. The city centre is a critical drainage area, and therefore providing a purely ornamental water feature recycling treated water would not have sufficed.
- 9.7. The proposed SUDs system for Armada Way combines an ornamental rill, providing the noise and movement of running water, with a comprehensive sustainable drainage system which uses and reuses water smartly and responsibly. In this new system, rainwater which lands on the hard surfacing of Armada Way will be channelled either into the green spaces, or the rill.

- 9.8. It will then permeate down and feed into underground storage tanks which are being retrofitted from the original 1980s system. At night, the water stored in the tanks will re-circulate to water the trees, with excess water again permeating down and being reused.
- 9.9. Water will also be filtered through the natural reed beds as opposed to relying entirely on mechanical filtration. The scheme has been designed to accommodate 1 in 100 year + 20 year flooding events, not only reducing the amount of water ending up in the combined sewer system, leading to discharge events into Plymouth Sound marine park, but also allowing capacity within the system for future redevelopment along the corridor.
- 9.10. Both the Environment Agency and South West Water fully support the plans and conclude that this scheme is an exemplar of how to fully integrate sustainable drainage networks into an urban public realm. The design team will continue engaging with South West Water and the Environment Agency through the entire design process.

Green Infrastructure

- 9.11. The proposal will create a new urban linear park with green space at its heart. Whilst opening up the central vista at a minimum of 12m in width, the plan includes for a great variety of new usable



green spaces, as well as wildflower meadows, reed beds and hedgerows. The further modified plan includes an additional 19 new trees in addition to the 150 new trees included on the plan shown at the engagement event, increasing the number of new trees to 169, as well as the retention of 24 existing trees. The new trees will be more appropriate to a harsh city centre environment and will be more fastigate in form than the existing, so as to not cause impact to buildings.

include the single Category A tree which is located on the south side of Mayflower Street, and following discussions with Plymouth Tree Partnership, the planting plan has been amended to



9.12. The design has been modified to include more evergreen trees, including pines, and some larger specimens with wider spreading canopies in place of clusters of fastigate trees. The trees will be supplemented by dense under-planting of shrubbery for ornamental and pollinator benefit, with rain gardens and swales along the flank walkways to soften the edges and provide new habitats which currently do not exist in Armada Way.

9.13. We will be retaining the piazza trees, improving their planting conditions through removing the concrete rings and creating 3m wide rain gardens around their

bases.

- 9.14. All of this combined provides a significant betterment over the existing situation and a substantial increase in biodiversity at 23.07% net gain (TEP report), whilst creating an urban green space which will be more resilient to climate change and impacts of changing weather patterns and temperatures.

Play and activities

- 9.15. A key objective of the new scheme is to provide a range of accessible and usable play and mixed use games areas for all ages, something which the current arrangement of Armada Way does not offer.
- 9.16. The scheme includes for a range of tactical, green and natural play spaces, with a focus on the area around the alignment of Drakes Leat for water-based play space. This will include dancing fountain jets, boulders with hand-pumps and rills for children to play with.
- 9.17. The 1950's Braille Garden will be enhanced and brought back to life with the integration of a new stepped amphitheatre space for smaller scale performance by local groups and theatres. The Phoenix fountain at the northern end of Armada Way will also be enhanced with a new feature piece of artwork at its centre to signify the rebirth of Armada Way, in association with one of the local universities.
- 9.18. The current topographical and level issues will be dealt with through regrading of the space, allowing for the creation of a series of accessible 'parterres' which will be level on their northern edge, raising to around 1 metre on the southern edges. These spaces will include a range of activities including outdoor gym equipment for visitors and residents of Armada Way to use, boules pitches and table tennis tables.
- 9.19. A new flagship children's play space will be provided close to the sundial area, attracting families to linger and dwell in the space across the day. Green play will be integrated across the corridor allowing children to interact with nature and learn more about their new green space. We have reviewed all comments from the engagement event relating to play space and will be looking to integrate suggestions, where appropriate them into the designs as this part of the design refinement process. Some suggestions, such as an outdoor piano which were suggested, cannot be taken forward at this time due to issues of maintenance associated with ad-hoc items.

Improvements for Business



9.20. A fundamental objective of the scheme is to enhance the attractiveness of Armada Way for existing and new businesses. The scheme will provide an entirely new, high quality public realm to replace the tired and outdated landscaping which is failing to add vibrancy and any sense of confidence in the future ambition of the city centre.

9.21. The plan includes for new wide footways, with a good sized offset to the green space and new trees to allow for pedestrians to move about the flank

walkways without obstruction and for the frontages of the buildings to be more visible both in long and cross views over Armada Way. The plan provides multiple areas of improved outdoor seating spaces for businesses along Armada Way to use adjacent to the footway, but within the central 'green corridor'.

- 9.22. The redesign seeks to provide a range of spaces for people to stop and rest for all users of the city centre, including large areas of new seating with the aim of allowing people to sit and enjoy the space for a longer periods of time. Following the engagement event, we will be reviewing opportunities for providing backs to more seating and investigating how covered areas of seating could be integrated into the design.
- 9.23. The new play spaces, as outlined above, will attract more people to come to and engage with the public realm, creating additional footfall along Armada Way – crucially at the northern end where footfall is currently low. Broken footways will be replaced, and the sundial and external elements of the subterranean toilets enhanced to create a more welcoming and environment and the confirmation that the city centre is well cared for and appreciated space. We have taken on board

comments from the engagement event and will be looking into providing more tonal contrast in the footway materials to add warmth and create a more welcoming environment.

- 9.24. We know that there is strong demand for the scheme from the existing business community and investors looking at Plymouth. This scheme cements the Council's commitment to the city centre and will be a significant sign of economic confidence for the future. Letters appended to this document from the Plymouth & Devon Chamber and the City Centre Company confirm the transformational effects that this scheme will have for the city centre.

Safety and Security

- 9.25. We will be addressing the safety and security issues of the current Armada Way layout through improving lighting and CCTV coverage across the corridor. We will also be redesigning the space



to remove the heavily concealed areas as a result of the 1980s landscaping and over-developed planting.

9.26. The new lighting will be mast mounted as opposed to building mounted and will provide the appropriate level of lux levels across all of the space. Some masts will, in time, be mounted with GOBOs to provide projections onto the hard surfacing to create some animation into the evening. Enhancing CCTV coverage was raised at the engagement event, and through the removal of the trees and planting of more

appropriately located specimens, we be enhancing long-range CCTV views along Armada Way, something which particularly when trees are in leaf, is very difficult for large parts.

- 9.27. The new scheme will bring more people into Armada Way than current, and act as a catalyst for new businesses to move in, bringing more surveillance and footfall well into the evening. This, along with new open spaces and good cross-views through the spaces, will enhance the perception of safety for all users of the space.

Maintenance

- 9.28. The scheme has been designed to be as low maintenance as possible while providing the best scheme possible for the city centre for the long term. We are currently working with experts on regime and budget requirements for a 30-year maintenance period and have been working with Street Services & Waste and Facilities Management on refining the maintenance regime within the existing budgets. Given the financial position of the Council the need for this to be achieved has only increased since the development of the project commenced.
- 9.29. We have provided for enhanced maintenance for two years for all the new soft landscaping, including replacement and replanting, within the scheme budget, and our Street Services teams will be working alongside the maintenance team to ensure that it is clearly understood what the on-going requirements are.
- 9.30. A key factor of reducing our maintenance liabilities is the replacement of the current surfacing with hard wearing robust surfaces which can better accommodate plant and machinery, including our new cold wash machine being brought in shortly and the scheme is being designed to accommodate. It is important to note that, over the past 9 years, £410,000 has been paid in damages for trips and falls in the City Centre. This scheme, through totally repaving the majority of Armada Way, will result in less risk of claims from these types of incidents.

- 9.31. We are also reviewing other future maintenance options and opportunities, including possible section 106 funding agreements and other funding mechanisms, such as a levy, with future city centre developers, particularly properties fronting onto Armada Way.

10. CORRESPONDENCE ON THE SCHEME

- 10.1. There has been a degree of correspondence sent to Officers and Councillors which comes from those not supporting the scheme. The vast majority of these are from those who are objecting to the principle of the development solely based on the removal of existing trees. As addressed in the report there are identified and assessed constraints with the existing planting which means a large proportion of the trees have no or limited life span. Whilst the Council understands that the trees represent a significant concern for some members of the public the removal of the existing trees will be mitigated by a replacement programme with more appropriate specimens, suited to the urban environment. There will also be additional planting introduced, with the resulting Biodiversity Net Gain being in excess of 23%.
- 10.2. The tree planting is one of many important considerations in the redesign of the scheme, as set out within this report. Though Officers have worked hard to identify where existing trees can be retained, to achieve the desired outcomes there is a balance to be struck which will always result in replacement of a number of the existing trees to realise all the benefits to the fullest extent.
- 10.3. A range of local, regional and national organisations have written to the Council to lend their support to the Armada Way scheme. These letters and emails of support are appended to the document and include
- Environment Agency
 - South West Water
 - Sustrans
 - Homes England
 - Historic England
 - Plymouth City Centre Company (BID)
 - PCCC Board Directors and Undersigned Businesses/Organisations
 - Plymouth Area Disability Action Network (PADAN)
 - Devon & Plymouth Chamber
 - Devon Gardens Trust
 - Twentieth Century Society
 - Plymouth Against Retail Crime
 - Destination Plymouth
 - Visit Plymouth
 - Retail expert – High Streets Task Force
- 10.4. The Council and Members have received a large number emails in support of the scheme from both businesses and members of the public. The Business Liaison officer from Morgan Sindall undertook, and will continue to undertake, weekly visits to businesses on Armada Way. The comments received so far from businesses include:
- *Happy for a nice, clean look outside of the business”*
 - *“Georgia has explained the bigger picture, we think the project is exciting and will improve the city”*
 - *“Original concern regarding the trees, however Georgia explained in more detail and now I feel more confident and happy about the project”*
 - *“Customer feedback has been mainly positive especially around the open space and improvements. Only minor negative has been about the trees but overall the project is well handled and exciting”*
 - *“No real concern at the moment, happy with the advice given to us – is a counter petition possible?”*
 - *“Upon seeing the plans, we can’t wait to see the improvements. The city is dull now. I’m sold on the design!”*

- *“Will visit the Knowledge Centre soon. Looks / sounds good”*
- *“Not affected business. Thankful for security. Support the improvements”*
- *“Happy for regeneration, hoping for more trade. No business effects yet”*
- *“Want project to go ahead. Regeneration is needed as a city is dull. Trees cause problems including rats. Support overall scheme”*
- *“Slight concern with the footfall due to hoarding. The regeneration is promising”*
- *“Hoarding has reduced footfall; hoping work goes ahead soon”*
- *“Support project – happy for works”*
- *“Supports scheme, welcome the ideas”*
- *“No concerns and are happy with the works proceed”*

II. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

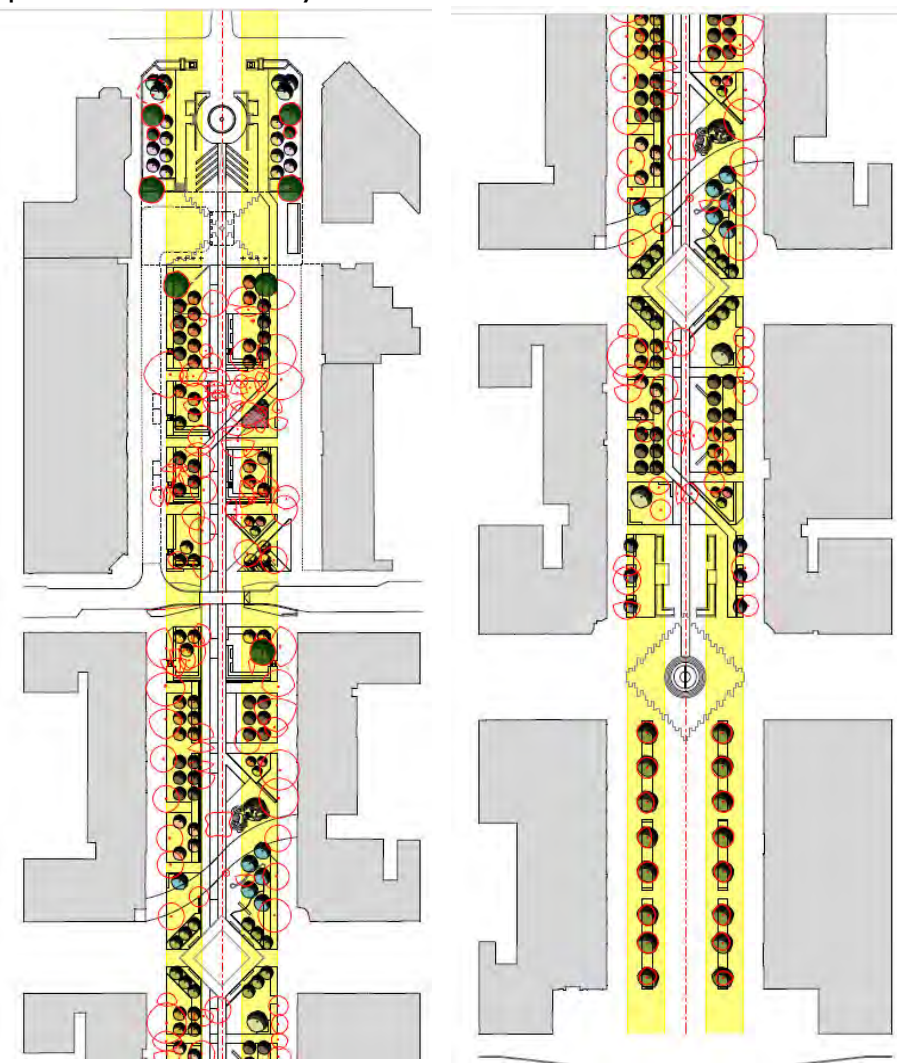
II.1. From the Council meeting in November 2022 and subsequent to the meeting on the 30 January 2023 and engagement exercise the project team have been focusing on how to retain as many trees as possible whilst achieving the overarching aims of the scheme. Though addressed within the report, the benefits of the scheme for ease includes:

- Responding to the Abercrombie vision in contemporary idiom;
- LTN 1/20 compliant north-south direct cycle and pedestrian route;
- Comprehensive sustainable drainage system network;
- Creating usable and accessible spaces;
- New lighting and CCTV coverage;
- Reduced long term maintenance liability;
- Restoration of the vista to the Hoe;
- Minimum 20% biodiversity net gain and new tree planting;
- Running water feature the length of Armada Way;
- Dancing jets and water play equipment,
- New outdoor seating spaces for businesses;
- A range of children’s play spaces;
- Facilitating development along Armada Way;
- Allowing for a new District Heating System connection;
- Work in conjunction with other planned public realm improvements
- Allow for new event spaces including the northern end of Armada Way;
- Integrating a mobility hub at Mayflower Street;
- Plus many more as the design process continued

II.2. Enabling and delivering such a hugely complex public realm scheme of this scale to be effective and support the range of requirements put upon it not only be users of the city centre, but from operationally by teams within the Council responsible for maintaining it, requires an entirely holistic design solution. This solution needed to capture all of above points, and more, into a single cohesive plan which could be delivered in one tranche of works. Part of this process was understanding the condition and health of the trees, their expected longevity, whether they are ‘right tree, right place’ and on balance, what was the best route forward for the future of the city centre not just for now, but for generations to come. Arboricultural advice from the design team experts was also that you could not simply raise land, or reduce land levels, surrounding trees as this will cause impact on the root network and ultimately kill the tree, and this allows for little degree of compromise when working around the existing tree features.

II.3. The design of the scheme was subject to bi-weekly design team meetings where the thought process and interventions were challenged, debated and in some cases compromises or

resolutions were made to ensure that the scheme presented covered as many of the demands as possible in the best way.



11.4. Specifically pertaining to the trees, it was argued on numerous occasions whether or not additional existing trees along the corridor could be retained, whilst achieving the best design and maintaining the overall scheme integrity. The design team concluded that, with the overall objectives listed, and their relative youth, the piazza trees could be easily integrated into the design, whilst also undertaking further works around the bases and underground planting conditions to allow them to thrive more fully.

11.5. A key driver for the scheme was the setting out of planting into distinct corridors or zones along Armada Way, which allowed for a regular, ordered

approach to planting whilst still allowing for considerable variation in the layout of planting within the zones. The zones are crucially linked to the re-grading of the levels along Armada Way to make it accessible and usable, an issue which the current arrangement does not necessitate. The zones are also important for maintaining the 12m wide grand vista towards the Hoe and Naval Memorial, which as outlined earlier, is the entire purpose of Armada Way's existence as a piece of urban planning. The zones also allow for the wide, unrestricted and uncluttered flank footways on either side of Armada Way which have been provided at an appropriate width for blue light services and to provide a substantial offset from the new tree line and canopies to the building. A plan showing the planting zones is included adjacent split into two sections (North Cross – Place de Brest and Place de Brest to Royal Parade).

11.6. It was concluded that in order to provide a holistic, entirely interwoven design between the large number of factors and requirements, that it would be incorrect to design around trees which are the wrong trees in the wrong place, with limited longevity and have already reached and surpassed their optimum health and growth. This redevelopment scheme is to support the future prosperity of the city centre, and represents a significant investment in both the long term environmental and economic sustainability of the city centre and is a key part of our ambitions for enhancing walking and cycling and dealing with drainage in the critical drainage area. These overarching benefits would be considerably watered down, and in some cases not possible entirely, if trees (beyond what is proposed) were to be further retained and incorporated. It would not only have an impact on the integrity of the scheme, but would lead to continuing issue of failing tree stock, inability to fund to dig up and replace when they do fail, and a public realm scheme delivered in disparate parts with an overall lack of consistency.

- 11.7. We already had a diminishing tree stock in Armada Way which has resulted in felling the tree and leaving stumps behind – including instances of hard landscaping designed specifically around a tree which has now been felled. This would have a subsequent significant impact on increased future costs for the life of the design as a result of large scale work required in the not too distant future (eg. 10+ years as trees fail).
- 11.8. There is no budget certainty that managing and replacing declining trees or upgrading public realm around failed trees could be dealt with, and nor is there any certainty that future capital funding will become available to deliver Armada Way in a piecemeal fashion. The issue of maintenance above the already reactive maintenance pruning and pollarding, will only become worse as the trees continue to decline and the landscape becomes even further more tired and degraded.
- 11.9. Adapting the design further to accommodate more existing trees will also prevent the design from achieving the image of the city centre which the Council wants to deliver through this strategic public realm intervention, and the resultant benefits from a piecemeal scheme would be less in terms of the expected increase in visitors, new businesses and economic growth.
- 11.10. The Council has also been required to pay our considerable sums of money due to trips and falls as a result of the surface conditions and other hazards along Armada Way over the past few years. The Council is not in a position to continue to allocate resource to maintain a declining landscape, and the opportunity of this capital project should be to ensure that the new trees are planted correctly, in the right underground conditions, from the outset so as to not result in significant maintenance liability in future, as per the existing arrangement.



12. PROGRESS SO FAR

12.1. Since the approval of the Executive Decision for undertaking the short-form delivery agreement, Morgan Sindall, the principle contractors for all Better Places schemes, have established the compound which includes a Knowledge Centre for businesses and members of the public to attend. The centre opened back in December and has seen a steady flow of visitors who have been in to speak with the customer liaison officer.



and new cycle way-markers



12.2. Site works have involved hoarding off the majority of Armada Way, clearance of some shrubbery and removal and cleaning of boulders, granite kerbs and setts. The Phoenix fountain at the top of Armada Way has also been emptied of soil and cleaned in preparation of its re-imagining under the proposed scheme. Subject to approve under this decision the next phase of works that would commence would be on the piazza to bring in new lighting, rain gardens, seating, improved surfacing to replace the broken slabs

13. CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

13.1. Though there has been concern, and therefore focus, on the proposed felling of trees in the redevelopment, the Armada Way proposal consists of multiple ambitions, proposals and benefits beyond just the issue concerning trees.

13.2. To ensure climate and environment resilience, we are also planning for and delivering the following:

- Sustainable Walking and Cycling Improvements: a central walking and cycling link through the middle of the city centre joining with other similar cycling initiatives and connecting routes to and from the city centre. The new cycle route will join in with the National Cycle Network and other cycling projects the Council is delivering through the “Transforming Cities Fund programme. Enabling and encouraging high quality cycling and walking routes will help facilitate low to zero car ownership residential development in the city centre, and promote access to and around the city centre by sustainable modes of transport for the wider population and visitors;
- A unique, large scale Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs): The city centre is a Critical Drainage Area, meaning it is at capacity, and therefore we are required to “use water wisely”, by removing surface water from our combined sewer system into a new surface water drainage system allowing capacity for city centre growth in the form of residential development. The rainfall that lands on Armada Way will be stored in underground tanks and within surface SUDs infrastructure such as rain gardens, which will act as surface exceedance routes. This water will be reused for irrigation of our new green spaces and trees, resulting in less water entering the combined sewer and in heavy rainfall events discharging into Plymouth Sound;
- An Ornamental Watercourse linked to the SUDs system; predominately gravity powered and supplemented with solar powered electrical pumping, water storage with a smart controlled system. The system will power the children’s play used for civic effect in fountains and is naturally filtered by reed beds and UV light to be as sustainable as it’s possible. The natural filtration for the water will provide further green elements to add interest to the scheme and contribute to the biodiversity enhancements and new habitat creation;
- The provision of new high mast low energy street lighting using LED lanterns to replace the aging building mounted lighting infrastructure;
- Futureproofing for the continuation of a District Heating Network to connect in with new residential and mixed use development along Armada Way;
- Upgrading existing and provision of new and more efficient power and water services for public events use;
- A high quality planting scheme using 169 semi-mature trees of >8m height with floriferous under planting, to promote city centre biodiversity net gain in the region of 23% and contributing to greening the city centre. The trees will be more appropriate to their setting, planted in large tree pits with rooting infrastructure allowing for healthy, long term growth and survival in a harsh environment where issues of climate change in the longer term will be particularly pertinent;
- Reusing much of the existing robust hard landscaping material into the new design to reduce the inbuilt carbon cost of the scheme. This includes reusing the hundreds of granite kerbs, setts, blocks and boulders.

13.3. Alongside the commitment to ‘right tree, right place’, one of the key reasons for many for the existing trees being removed is that it is not possible to successfully deliver these multiple critical benefits which are embedded in a layout that is ordered and forms a central clean avenue of sight, accommodating ordered infrastructure below and above ground.

Plymouth’s Climate Emergency Action Plan (2019)

13.4. On 18 March 2019 the City of Plymouth councillors voted unanimously to declare a climate emergency, committing to meet the most significant challenge facing the city and our planet

through achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is very clear that limiting global warming to 1.5°C by 2030 is necessary to prevent significant global worsening of floods, droughts and extreme heat. Plymouth recognises the opportunity we have to lead on the de-carbonisation agenda, providing local vision and delivery. The scheme for Armada Way will assist in delivering reductions in greenhouse gases, contributing significantly towards our aim of becoming a green, sustainable city that cares about the environment.

- 13.5. Plymouth city centre is a dense urban environment, and the largest expanse of hard surfacing in the city overall, which is affected by many emissions into the urban atmosphere, these come from our buildings and the heat plants used to keep them warm and cool, from the extensive road network that encircles the city centre, and the many cars buses and vehicles that use them, and the mix of uses including light industry.
- 13.6. The change proposed within Armada Way will see a complete reimagining of green infrastructure in the city centre for the future. Though trees will be removed, the replacement trees, as well as having best practice in-ground rooting environments within which they can grow, will benefit from an advanced irrigation system to ensure they have sufficient water directly fed from the planned SUDs system so the chances of them establishing and thriving is very good.
- 13.7. Plymouth City Council has an excellent track record of establishing semi-mature trees in our city centre such that over the past 6 years we have established and nurtured 60 semi-mature trees of similar scale to those proposed in Armada Way, such as the New Coach Station, Market Way, and Millbay Boulevard and in that time has lost only one. The scheme is covered by a 2-year maintenance period by YGS Landscapes where any trees that do happen to fail will be replaced and replanted during this critical establishment period.

Proposed design & Climate Action

- 13.8. The additional 164 new semi-mature trees coupled with the existing 24 retained specimens will contribute to capturing carbon from our urban atmosphere typically locking between 3.8 and 6.2 metric tonnes of CO₂ per year. These trees will also moderate the urban microclimate for the long-term by reducing localised temperature, offer usable shade, and take up and store rainwater in the extensive fastigate canopy, helping to moderate high rainfall events. Annually, transport accounts for 35% of the carbon emissions in the city, according to the city's decarbonisation report undertaken by Regen SW in November 2022. For Plymouth to achieve our reduction target by 2030 we need to act three times faster than envisaged by the current government policies. Armada Way is contributing to this by promoting safe walking and cycling routes to encourage higher take up of these modes, whilst utilising funding in respect of the Transforming cities Fund Tranche 2.
- 13.9. Met Office data shows that the South West of England is experiencing almost 10% more rainfall across the year now than it did in 1961. Seasonal rainfall is highly variable, but since 1961 it has decreased by 9% in summer and increased in autumn by 28% and in winter by 16%. Our winters are also milder – on average per year, South West England has almost 21 fewer days of air frost than it did in 1961.
- 13.10. The proposals for Armada Way with its Sustainable Urban Drainage System, will have many benefits, principally it creates an entirely new storm water drainage system that removes rainwater from the existing dated combined sewer system then uses that water wisely for the new environment. It uses that rainwater to feed the proposed ornamental watercourse planned to run down the new layout, it uses that water to irrigate the new green infrastructure at times of drought and at times of exceedance captures volumes and stores it for reuse and release when the event is over. All this has the effect of protecting the rainwater catchment from flooding and uses water wisely at the point it falls from the sky and reduces the amount which discharges into Plymouth Sound, a protected marine site and National Marine Park.
- 13.11. Two key partners, the Environment Agency (EA) and South West Water (SWW) are supportive of the scheme for its environmental credentials. SWW reports that Armada Way will:
 - Reduce sewer flood risk due to lowering of peak flows,

- Creation of headroom at downstream treatment facilities due to lower flows arriving at treatment works,
- Lower energy and carbon implications due to less flow, less energy requirement for pumping, and reduced chemical use at the treatment plant,
- Opportunity for runoff to be used as a resource rather than a problem,
- Contribute to protection of bathing water quality in Plymouth Sound due to reduced storm overflow discharges.

13.12. SWW also added that :

“The redevelopment of Armada Way represents a once in a generation opportunity for storm runoff from impermeable areas historically connected directly to the combined sewer network to be separated out and be dealt with in a sustainable way. The city centre area is the largest single area of paved area connected to the combined sewer in the Plymouth Central catchment and the removal of this flow from combined sewerage through the sustainable drainage elements of the public realm project will have a significant benefit across all of the above measures.”

“We therefore fully support the proposals for Armada Way and the many benefits that this project will generate through better storm water runoff management. In our view this urban redevelopment is exemplar in the way surface water management has been incorporated into the design as a core principle. The benefits go far wider than simply creating a more inviting urban environment.”

13.13. The Area Director for the Environment Agency, Devon & Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly reported:

“The scale of the redevelopment plan for Armada Way is welcomed and this helps to support the aims of the Government’s National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England, by increasing the resilience to climate change by utilising sustainable drainage solutions. This project will provide a key part of the new surface water drainage system that will link to other parts of the city centre, such as the current works on New George Street and the future works for the Derry’s Cross area. The proposed Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) incorporated into the overall landscaping plan will support the better management of water quality by filtering surface water and storing it during heavy rainfall, which is forecast to increase with climate change. Your proposals will also help support the nature of the local area and allow for better management of periods of drought.”

“These outcomes support the city with its marine park status and the development of a high-quality public realm, that responses to our environmental challenges will enhance the growth of Plymouth as the ocean city.”

13.14. The decarbonisation report on Plymouth’s heat (including cooling) challenge undertaken by Regen SW (2022) reports that this represents 38% of Plymouths carbon emissions in line with the Country’s total. Measures to deliver a district heating system and contributions to making this operational are extremely valuable and the Armada Way works will be playing a critical role by proving ducting for this future scheme over active road crossings and soft dig areas. This will allow for the future network to be ‘plugged into’ as and when new development comes forward along the corridor, thereby significantly reducing future carbon emissions.

Council’s Plans for Trees

13.15. The Plan for Trees is about tree management and making sure the right tree is in the right place, with the right infrastructure and right aftercare to establish and grow well – “Right tree, Right place, Right care” The current trees have no infrastructure underground to support healthy, long term growth and longevity.

- 13.16. The new trees and those existing of being capable of retention will have large areas to grow into and be watered through our Sustainable Urban Drainage System and able to gain the nutrients they need to thrive, not struggle growing in cement, brick and post war rubble. One tree where the hub is now was planted in just 30 cm of poor soil, another was planted near a manhole and its roots had grown all over it. We've had to remove numerous trees, as you can see on Armada Way where there are stumps, because they have failed.
- 13.17. There is nothing fundamentally at odds between the plans for Armada Way and the tree management principles or its delivery programme in the Plan for Trees.
- 13.18. In the last two years the Council's Tree Planting Programme has resulted in 10,644 trees being planted in the city. This year (2022/2023) the Council will be delivering 30 tree planting schemes. These are funded predominantly through the Trees for Climate Fund. We are expected to plant a further 5,763 trees across these various schemes in the coming months. The Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan supports tree planting and other decarbonisation initiatives which over time, as these and the new semi-mature trees in Armada Way mature, increase tree canopy cover in the city.

14. RESPONSE TO RESOLUTION OF FULL COUNCIL

- 14.1. As outlined in the Engagement section of this report, on the 30th of January 2023 Full Council debated the petition presented by STRAW. The resolution concludes by calling for the *"Cabinet Member for Transport to note the Council's dissatisfaction with the lack of public engagement and suspend tree felling whilst undertaking a meaningful community engagement process in February, which considered the natural environment and climate resilience before finalising the designs for Armada Way."* The resolution continues to recommend that the *"Council further acts that no work be carried out that could prejudice the survival of the existing trees until the design is finalised. Having undertaken this process and published the results, the Council supports and requests that the Cabinet Member implements that final design quickly to avoid on-going disruption to city centre businesses from the construction works."*
- 14.2. This report and the Armada Way Engagement Report appended to Decision outline the process which the Council project team undertook following the resolution of Full Council.
- 14.3. Outlined within this document, and appended as a full plan, is the further modified layout plan for the scheme. This is the finalised design which has taken on board comments from the public where possible, and those who attended the discussion forums and made representations. The final plan includes for:
- An additional 19 semi-mature trees
 - Retention of the existing single Category A tree
 - Provision of evergreen and wider canopy trees
 - Detailed design amendments following engagement event are included in section 7 of this report
- 14.4. The new proposal also seeks to go above and beyond the resolution, and will commit to the planting of a further 142 trees in the St Peters and the Waterfront Ward, doubling the total number of trees that currently exist in Armada Way.
- 14.5. To accord with the resolution, to implement the final design quickly to avoid on-going disruption to the city centre businesses, it is recommended that the Executive Decision agreed and proceeding with the final plan is approved.

Appendix I - Joint Local Plan Extracts

- **SO3 - Delivering growth in Plymouth's City Centre and Waterfront Growth Area**
- To realise the potential of the City Centre and Waterfront Growth Area as a regionally significant growth hub through:
 - *Establishing and reinforcing the City Centre's role as a regional centre for shopping, employment, leisure, a university centre, a strategic transport hub and a sustainable community in its own right.*
 - *Utilising the City Centre and waterfront's economic assets, including its waterfront infrastructure, to drive economic growth in the area.*
 - *Improving sustainable transport facilities and connections throughout the area, and particularly between the City Centre and the waterfront at Millbay, The Hoe and Sutton Harbour.*
 - *Protecting and making best use of the unique historic environment and landscape of the City Centre and waterfront, in particular Devonport waterfront, Royal William Yard and Devil's Point, The Hoe and The Barbican.*
 - *Capitalising on the potential of the City Centre and waterfront to deliver a world class cultural and visitor offer, with well connected destinations, high quality visitor accommodation, facilities to deliver major events and improved public realm and waterfront access.*
 - *Delivering new residential-led mixed-use developments that integrate successfully with existing communities and enhance community cohesion.*
 - *Improving city gateways, arrival points and key transport routes and delivering high quality architecture and urban design.*
 - *Delivering improved public access to and along the waterfront as well as enhancements to key public spaces and heritage assets.*
 - *Delivering water transport improvements and integration with other transport modes that will improve access to key locations including The Barbican Mount Batten, Sutton Harbour, Millbay, Royal William Yard, Devonport and Mount Edgumbe.*
 - *Safeguarding and enhancing the environmental status of the Plymouth Sound and estuaries, including the European Marine Sites, and making the City Centre and waterfront communities more resilient to the effects of climate change.*
- **PLY6: Improving Plymouth's city centre**
- Plymouth City Centre will be renewed and enhanced through a combination of major new developments, proactive management of change and support for community and trader led initiatives. This will deliver a modern, high quality, vibrant, accessible and adaptable centre that reflects its status alongside the waterfront as the showcase of Plymouth. This will be achieved through making sure that development and change:
 - Capitalises on and strengthens the City Centre's role as a regional centre.

- *Respects and celebrates the centre's mid-twentieth century built heritage, including the Beaux Arts grid of the 1943 Abercrombie Plan and the highest and good quality non-designated assets identified in the City Centre Masterplan.*
 - *Recognises the importance of reinforcing the primacy of Armada Way as the principal thoroughfare from the station to the Hoe. This will be achieved by focusing larger development - building heights of six to eight storeys - on the Armada Way frontage to provide enclosure to the space and to maintain a degree of consistency to these increased building heights to respect the Abercrombie Plan's form and historic context.*
 - *Supports the intensification and diversification of uses through redevelopment of City Centre blocks, with specific sites identified where tall buildings will be acceptable in principle.*
 - *Addresses the size and need for a clearer focus of the retail area, through prioritising the prime retail role to the east of Armada Way and through diversification of uses for the centre as a whole.*
 - *Strengthens the role of the West End as an Independent Quarter, anchored by the City Market, which supports independent traders, niche retail and food shopping to serve the nearby residential communities, and provides for the introduction of alternative higher value business uses, cultural uses, community uses and creative business clusters.*
 - *Delivers a vibrant mix of uses to diversify the centre including, in addition to retail:*
 - *Regionally significant office uses and the coordination of public sector investment as a catalyst for transformational change.*
 - *A vibrant destination, with leisure, culture, visitor accommodation and food and drink uses, especially making best use of key assets such as the Armada Way boulevard and piazza, and creating greater synergy with the cultural hubs at Royal Parade, The Hoe and historic waterfront, and North Hill / Tavistock Place.*
 - *A new residential community, through development and environmental changes which provide high quality urban living environments.*
 - *Education and community uses, optimising the benefits from the proximity of Plymouth University and Plymouth College of Art, and the potential for a more vibrant mix of uses especially along Armada Way and to its west.*
 - *Student accommodation, but only where it is targeted to support prioritised regeneration opportunities, and delivers new housing and/or office accommodation and ground floor active uses as part of mixed use development.*
 - *Supports a diverse and active evening and night time economy catering for a wide cross section of the public.*
1. *Delivers high quality public car parks in strategic locations around the edge of the centre with excellent pedestrian connections to key attractions.*
 2. *Facilitates easier movement in and around the City Centre for all modes of transport, including reconnecting the City Centre with its neighbouring areas - which include Millbay, Sutton Harbour and the Hoe – by high quality walking and cycling links.*

3. *Supports the delivery of a coordinated programme of investment in the public realm, and delivers structured environmental improvements, creating a safe accessible and attractive environment for the community and visitors alike, and exploring opportunities for weather protected spaces.*

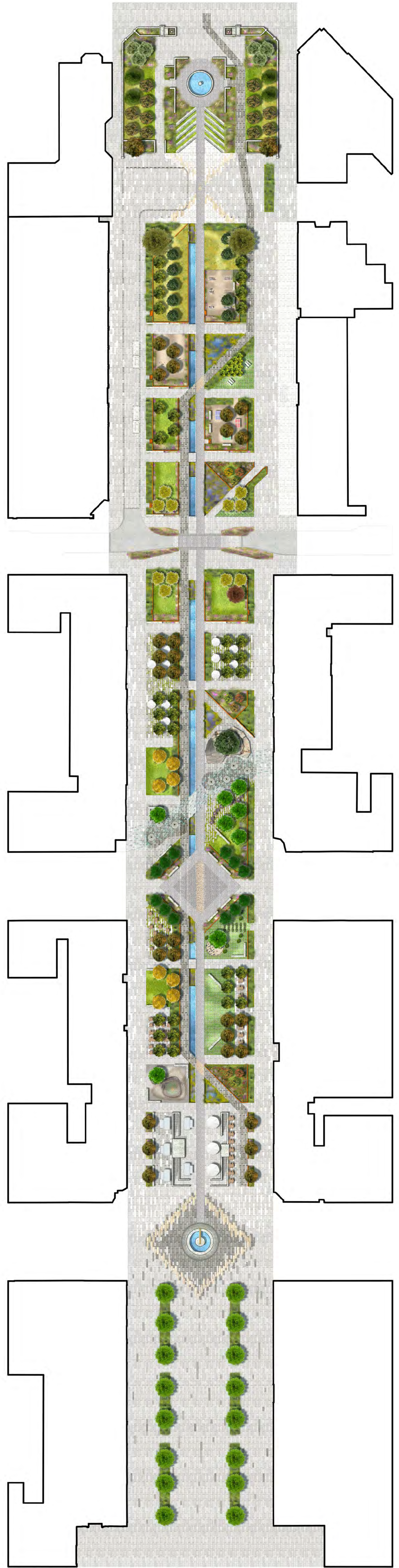
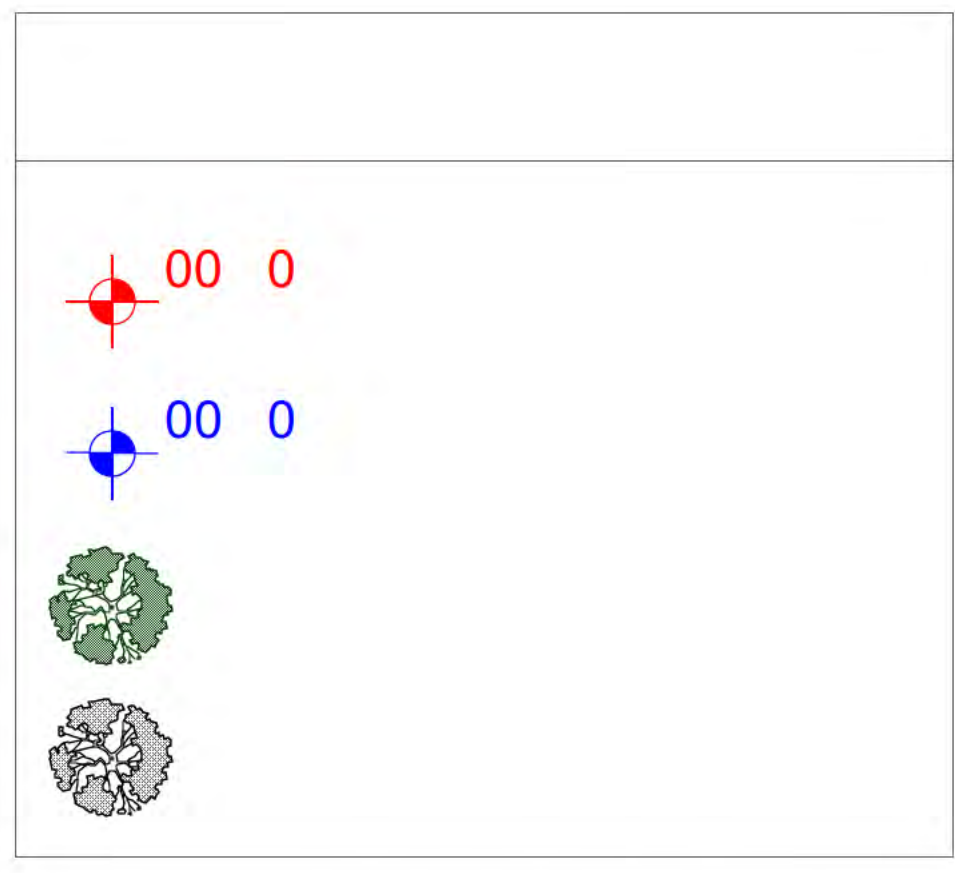
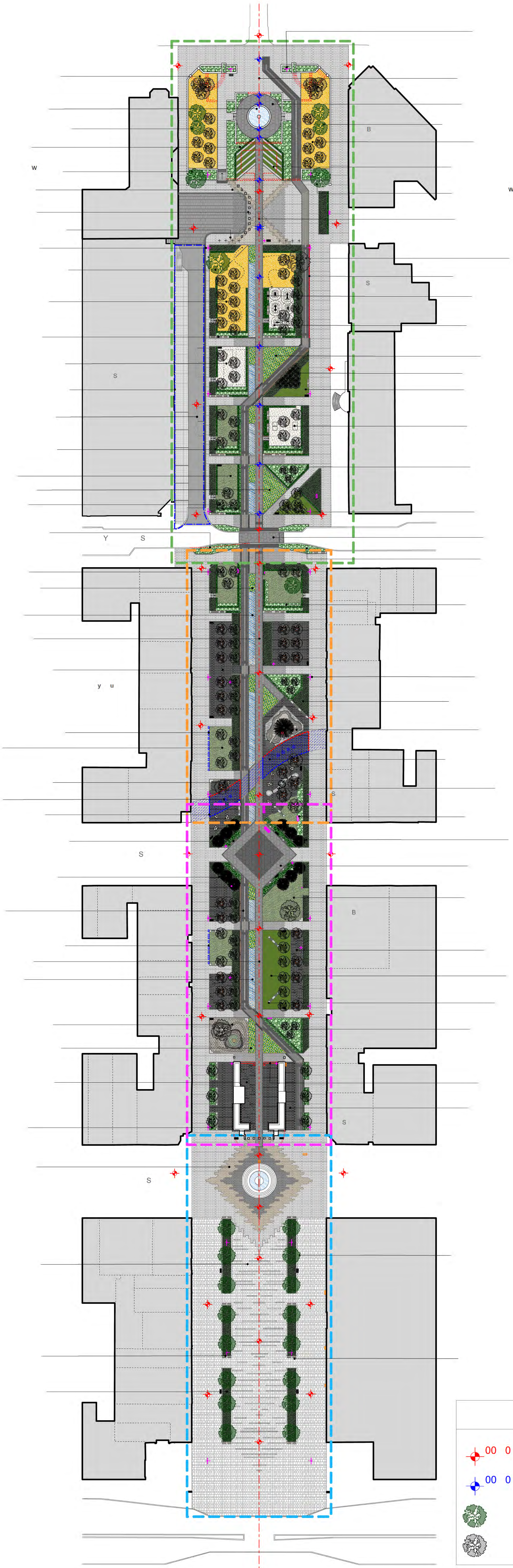
Delivers proposals that are resilient and respond to the challenges of climate change and protect the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries European Marine Site from pollution, providing where appropriate improvements to flood management infrastructure, surface water drainage systems, and future connection to critical drainage infrastructure and district heat networks relevant to the site. **Policy PLY37: Strategic infrastructure measures for the City Centre and Waterfront Growth Area**

The following key strategic infrastructure measures will be provided during the plan period, in addition to proposals identified in other policies of this plan, in order to support the delivery of the strategy for the City Centre and Waterfront Growth Area:

The following key strategic infrastructure measures will be provided during the plan period, in addition to proposals identified in other policies of this plan, in order to support the delivery of the strategy for the City Centre and Waterfront Growth Area:

1. *City Centre public realm and transport improvements to improve circulation and encourage investment, including:*
 - I. Capacity increases, including bus priority improvements, to the A374, A379 (Exeter Street) and the A386 including North Cross roundabout, Charles Cross, Western Approach, Union Street, St Andrews Cross and Derrys Cross and Drake Circus junction improvements.
 - II. *Armada Way public realm; incorporating City Centre Strategic Cycle Network and walking improvements*
 - III. *Improvements to Royal Parade to ensure a positive sense of arrival and sufficient capacity for buses.*
2. Millbay Boulevard and related public realm and transport improvements to enhance the link between the City Centre and waterfront.
3. Improvements to international ferry facilities and a new cruise liner terminal, and associated local road network improvements.
4. Other City Centre and waterfront public realm and transport improvements to support Mayflower 400.
5. New coach station at Mayflower Street.
6. New and improved public car parking in the City Centre.
7. *Strategic drainage improvements.*
8. *City Centre / Waterfront Strategic Cycling and Walking network improvements.*
9. Upgrading of flood defences, maritime and harbourside infrastructure including:
 - I.Replacement of Sutton Harbour Lock Gate and Bridge.
 - II.Improvements to West Pier.
 - III.Completion of flood defences around Millbay.

IV. Monitoring the condition of the breakwaters and other structures within Plymouth Sound and, in case of deterioration, identifying strategies to ensure the current benefits provided at the coast during coastal storms are retained.



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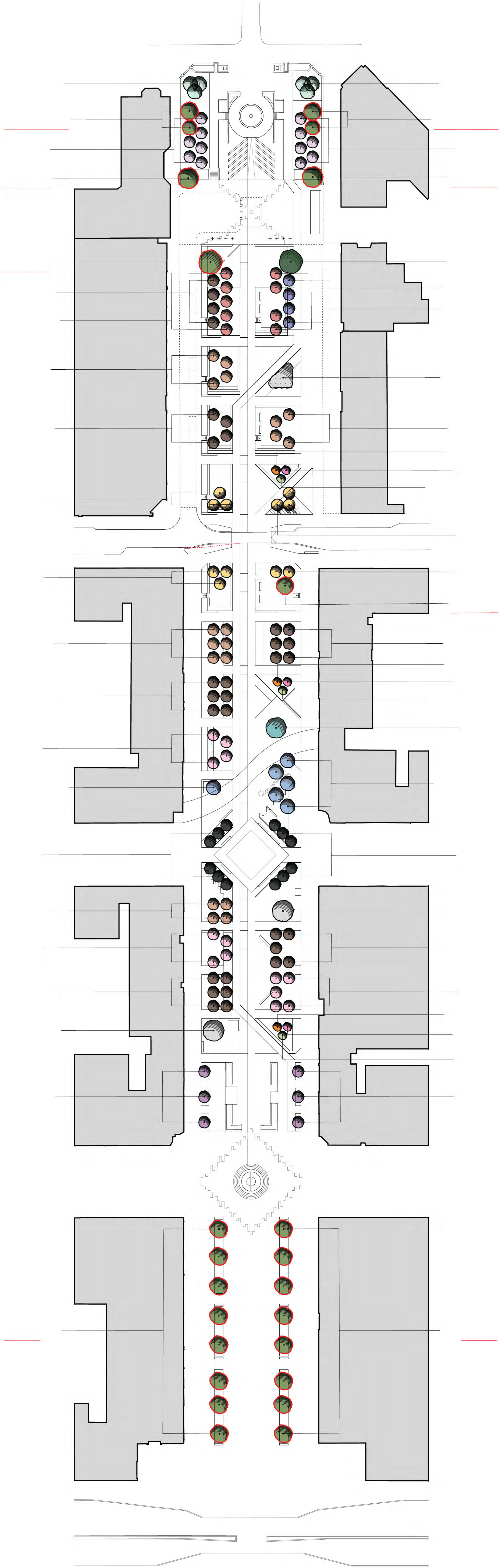
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To a T e s 93 n l d n g 4 n o x s n g e i e d

Cllr Richard Bingley and Anthony Payne
Plymouth City Council

Our Ref: 16651

Date: 23 December 2022

Via email: Richard.Bingley@plymouth.gov.uk and anthony.payne@plymouth.gov.uk

Dear Cllr Richard Bingley and Anthony Payne,

Armada Way Public Realm Redevelopment Proposals

I'm writing regarding your proposals for the redevelopment of the public realm area of Armada Way in Plymouth city centre. This has been a long-awaited project and it's excellent that your plans are developing well, and you have a route to delivery. We have been working for over 7 years in partnership with your Council and South West Water to develop methods to better manage surface water and urban drainage across Plymouth as part of our Integrated Urban Drainage Management (IUDM) work.

A key area has been the Millbay catchment, which Armada Way is in as most of the rainwater falling on the urban area is routed into the combined drainage system, being pumped, and treated at Plymouth Central sewerage works. Our joint aim is to create a new surface water drainage system within the Millbay catchment to allow surface water to be separated from the combined drainage system. Your proposals in Armada way are a key part of achieving this.

The scale of the redevelopment plan for Armada Way is welcomed and this helps to support the aims of the Government's National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England, by increasing the resilience to climate change by utilising sustainable drainage solutions. This project will provide a key part of the new surface water drainage system that will link to other parts of the city centre, such as the current works on New George Street and the future works for the Derry's Cross area. The proposed Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) incorporated into the overall landscaping plan will support the better management of water quality by filtering surface water and storing it during heavy rainfall, which is forecast to increase with climate change. Your proposals will also help support the nature of the local area and allow for better management of periods of drought.

The environmental outcomes from these works are to support the aim of decreasing surface water flood risks to the Union Street area by providing a new surface water drainage system for the city centre. This in turn will allow surface water to be separated from the existing combined drainage system, which will result in less sewage spills into the sea, which will lead to bathing water quality improvements in Plymouth Sound. These outcomes support the city with its marine park status and the development of a high-quality public realm, that responses to our environmental challenges will enhance the growth of Plymouth as the ocean city. Overall, we are keen to continue to be part of the development of this project and please continue to include us as you progress through the next design phases.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact our Customers and Engagement Team, who will be happy to help you. You can contact the team at DCISenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk.



Peninsula House, Rydon Lane, Exeter, EX2 7HR
www.southwestwater.co.uk

Date: 20th December 2022

Cllr Richard Bingley
Leader of Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
West Hoe Road
PLYMOUTH
PL1 3BJ

Dear Cllr Bingley

ARMADA WAY PUBLIC REALM REDEVELOPMENT

I am writing to express support for the above project and in particular the sustainable drainage elements of the design.

Plymouth is served by a predominantly combined sewer network as a legacy of extensive post-war rebuilding of the city, previous crude discharges to the sea and the few natural watercourses in the city. Through the ongoing Integrated Urban Drainage Management (IUDM) collaborative project with Plymouth City Council and the Environment Agency we are continuously looking at opportunities to remove unwanted rainfall runoff from the combined sewer networks. There are many benefits to separating surface water runoff from the foul sewers including;

- Reduced sewer flood risk due to lowering of peak flows,
- Creation of headroom at downstream treatment facilities due to lower flows arriving at treatment works,
- Lower energy and carbon implications due to less flow, less energy requirement for pumping, and reduced chemical use at the treatment plant,
- Opportunity for runoff to be used as a resource rather than a problem,
- Contribute to protection of bathing water quality in Plymouth Sound due to reduced storm overflow discharges.

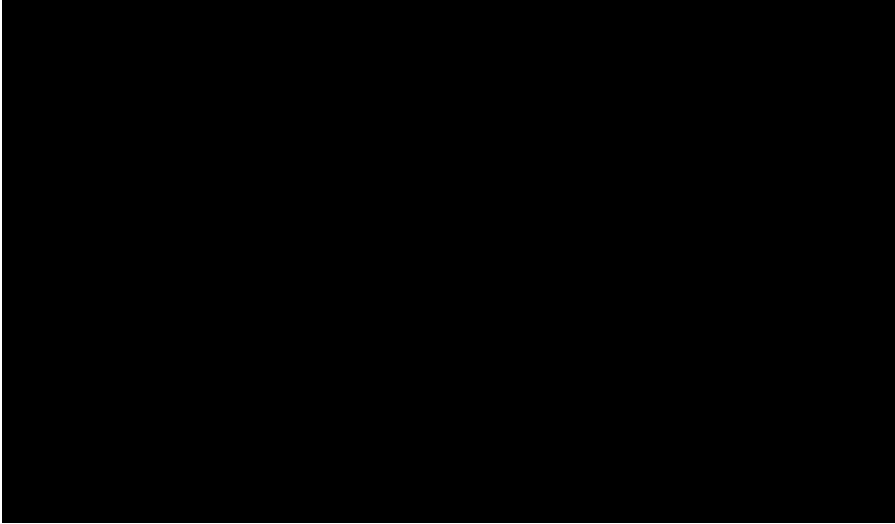
The redevelopment of Armada Way represents a once in a generation opportunity for storm runoff from impermeable areas historically connected directly to the combined sewer network to be separated out and be dealt with in a sustainable way. The city centre area is the largest single area of paved area connected to the combined sewer in the Plymouth Central catchment and the removal of this flow from combined sewerage through the sustainable drainage elements of the public realm project will have a significant benefit across all of the above measures.

We therefore fully support the proposals for Armada Way and the many benefits that this project will generate through better storm water runoff management. In our view this urban redevelopment

is exemplar in the way surface water management has been incorporated into the design as a core principle. The benefits go far wider than simply creating a more inviting urban environment.

We look forward to continuing our partnership working with Plymouth City Council and the Environment Agency on the IUDM project and the future opportunities for similar projects that may be identified through this work.

Yours sincerely,



cc. Jonathan Dean – Cabinet Member for Transport, Plymouth City Council
Paul Barnard – Service Director (SP&I), Plymouth City Council
Richard Bara – Urban Designer (SP&I), Plymouth City Council

Paul Barnard
Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure
Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
West Hoe Road
Plymouth
PL1 3BJ

17 February 2023

Letter of support for Plymouth City Council - Armada Way Regeneration

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute. Sustrans works in partnership, bringing people together to find the right solutions for their local area.

Our strategic priorities are Paths for Everyone – growing a UK network of traffic-free paths for everyone connecting cities, towns and countryside, loved by the communities they serve and Liveable Cities and Towns for everyone – places that connect us to each other and what we need, where everyone can thrive without having to use a car.

Sustrans has worked in partnership with Plymouth City Council (PCC) over many years. Projects include major infrastructure links (Laira Rail Bridge), network development (Connect2 and National Cycle Network), behaviour change (Bike It Plus) and more recently on working within communities to develop more liveable neighbourhoods.

We support the Armada Way regeneration plan as it works towards delivering a more liveable space with improved access for everyone. It is a forward-thinking plan that looks at the future challenges of how the city centre needs to develop. The plan makes several recommendations on how to meet the identified challenges, which include a range of exciting place-making projects that will help revitalise the area. The proposed recommendations will also improve access to the National Cycle Network (NCN 2 and NCN 27).

Armada Way is one of Plymouth's most important and iconic routes; it is busy area required to balance the needs of many different types of users. We feel that the regeneration plan goes a long way to balancing multiple needs through providing a variety of routes, improving safety, and increasing the number of places to sit, meet and play. We appreciate that PCC has taken on board the views of women and girls, stating that Armada Way currently does not feel a safe and welcoming space. We welcome PCC's intention to engage with and seek input from the Plymouth Area Disability Action Network (PADAN) on the final designs, following the current public engagement, ensuring that the newly designed space will be more inclusive. The proposed cycle route is designed to encourage considerate cycling in a location shared by a range of users, which meets our vision of making the benefits of walking, wheeling and cycling available for everyone.

We recognise that removing the existing mature trees has been a real concern for local community members, and we welcome the recent consultation to address these concerns. Some of the trees are dead or dying and the regeneration plan proposes to balance the removal of these trees with new tree planting that is designed to increase and enhance the future biodiversity of the area, contributing to climate resilience through improved green canopy and sustainable urban drainage. A biodiversity net gain of over 25% has been calculated, which goes beyond the statutory requirement. Unfortunately, from an accessibility perspective, tree roots can prevent people with visual and /or other impairments from being able to use this space, so consideration to their placement is vital.

We look forward to working with PCC to support the Armada Way regeneration plan.

Yours sincerely





Mr Anthony Payne
Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
West Hoe Road
Plymouth
PL1 3BJ

Direct Dial: 0117 975 0717

Our ref: PL00351363

16 January 2023

Dear Anthony,

RE: Better Places Plymouth: Armada Way public realm proposals

I write further to a request from your officers for advice on proposals for the re-landscaping of Armada Way, following public opposition to proposals to remove some existing trees.

As you know, Historic England and its predecessor organisations have championed the unique qualities of Plymouth's City Centre for many years. No other city in England was re-planned on such a grand scale following the devastation of World War II, and the properties flanking its broad boulevards are some of the best buildings built anywhere in the 1950s.

Plymouth City Council recognises the significance of its City Centre, and recently conferred conservation area status on its core. Through the National High Street Heritage Action Zone programme, Historic England and Plymouth City Council are currently making a joint investment of over £4m to celebrate, enhance and adapt the City Centre's post-war heritage to make it a more attractive, engaging and vibrant place for people to live, work and spend time.

Professor Jeremy Gould wrote about the significance of Armada Way in the book *Plymouth: Vision of a modern city*, published by Historic England, which details the design and execution of the new city by Patrick Abercrombie and James Paton-Watson. "Abercrombie erased the whole of the old centre, its streets and most of its buildings and then drew a grand axis through them from the Naval Memorial on the Hoe to the railway station at North Hill. He declared the space a 'vista' for public enjoyment 'to be enriched by the landscape architect's and gardener's art'"

In recent years the Armada Way streetscape has become tired and overgrown. The intended grand vista from North Cross to the Royal Naval Memorial is less apparent and the public realm is cluttered and incoherent.

In our previous consultation response to the public realm consultation on the Better Places initiative (letter of 13 May 2018) my colleague David Stuart advised on the



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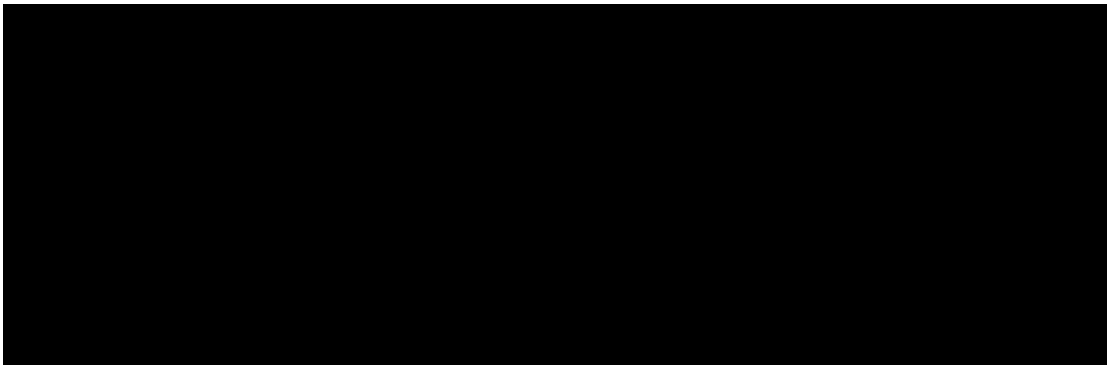




proposals for Armada Way, noting "The proposals for Armada Way are particularly impressive and we can see how they derive from the original Abercrombie aspirations for this route while attempting to improve upon some less successful aspects of their execution. Care will need to be taken that the significant tracts of hard landscaping will not unwittingly create areas which seem austere as an experience; the space is clearly at a grand scale and it is important that, however subtly, aspects of humanity and intimacy are allowed to feature to encourage people to dwell as well as parade."

We think this previous advice on Armada Way still holds true. We admire the attempt to recapture the grand scale of the original design concept, but care will be needed to ensure it is also an environment in which people are encouraged to linger. Armada Way was built for traffic and pedestrians, but the traffic has long been removed, leaving very broad areas of public realm which require an imaginative response if they are to be animated.

We recognise the value of the existing trees, and the strength of feeling at suggestions for their removal. We note that the plan proposes planting replacement trees, and we hope that a balance can be found between recapturing some of the original scale and grandeur of Armada Way, while addressing environmental and ecological concerns.



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HistoricEngland.org.uk





10 November 2022

Armada Way Regeneration

Letter from Nigel Godefroy, chair of the Plymouth City Centre Company

I write as Chair of the Plymouth City Centre Business Improvement District, which represents more than 500 businesses within our city centre.

We have been consulted with throughout the development of this exciting scheme and are fully supportive of it. We regard it as a must happen if the city is to adapt positively to the challenges faced by all Cities.

We are fortunate that this city is blessed with a city centre which is unique amongst Cities in this country. Like our waterfront it differentiates Plymouth from every other city in the UK and as such it can be a huge asset. However, for years it has been neglected which means investors have turned their back on the city centre and in particular the central band of Armada Way and the West End. This scheme starts addressing the issues. Whereas we have seen that poor quality public realm discourages investment, quality public realm does the opposite. This scheme will turn the tide, it will create momentum for investment and development not only along Armada Way but will then spill into Cornwall Street, New George Street West and into the West End. Our view is that this is probably one of the most important regeneration interventions into this city in the last twenty years. Without it the city centre will continue to be an area of decline.

The scheme itself is exciting, it creates the confident boulevard linking North Cross and the gateway of the railway station to the Waterfront. Rather than being an area encouraging anti-social behaviour, it is split into zones as different points of interest, an urban park. We see this urban park as being another major attraction for visitors and residents. We approve of the uses and of the quality and accept that it will mean that some trees must be replaced but this is for longer term gain. We believe the scheme will attract more visitors and locals to the city centre, ensuring continued commercial viability of existing businesses and encouraging badly needed mixed use investment. It will reignite the city's residents' sense of pride in the city centre.

This represents a once in a generation opportunity to place the city centre as progressive when it comes to tackling climate change with the planting of the right trees and plants, adopting up to date best urban design practices and green spaces where people want to spend time.

The officers have done a tremendous job in pulling together this scheme. We understand the current concerns particularly around the issues of the loss of mature trees, but we urge members to fully support the scheme for the benefit of our business members, further investment and job creation as well as for the wider regeneration of our city.

Yours sincerely



Richard Bingley, Leader, Plymouth City Council
Tracey Lee, Chief Executive, Plymouth City Council
Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
West Hoe Road
Plymouth
PL1 3BJ



5th December 2022

Dear Richard and Tracey,

We have noted with some concern the campaign surrounding the removal of trees in Armada Way.

As was previously outlined in a letter from our Chair, Nigel Godefroy, the Board of the Plymouth City Centre Company believes that it is of fundamental importance for the future prosperity of the City Centre, and the continued commercial viability of our businesses, that commencement of works for the scheme progresses and as soon as practically possible.

We have been fully behind the scheme, as currently proposed, for some time. However, given the concerns surrounding the removal of trees we have reviewed our stated position with full debate at our latest meeting of the directors and discussion at our annual meeting which followed, and which was attended by a number of City Centre businesses.

We had full attendance of voting directors at the Board meeting and there was unanimous agreement that we should re-state our position that the scheme as proposed should go ahead. This was a view shared by the businesses in attendance at our annual meeting.

The board has noted, and welcomed, that the scheme has been designed with consideration of the climate emergency and that the introduction of new plants and established trees will be more resilient and appropriate to an urban environment.

We are supportive of the council's opinion that, currently, we have the wrong kind of trees in the wrong places, and that they are not thriving. We welcome the council's decision to plant 150 new mature trees and whilst we have appreciated efforts to preserve more trees with some minor changes to the scheme this can only be acceptable if the fundamental design integrity as proposed is not undermined. We do urge the council to continue with the plans to remove most of the trees as planned in the central section of Armada Way north. In our view, the opening up of Armada Way with the creation of a new tree-lined boulevard from North Cross to the Hoe as originally envisaged in the post-war plans provides the city with the opportunity to create one of the finest urban street parks in Europe.

Additionally, we welcome the carefully considered uses within the scheme for leisure and play. This has been called for by our businesses and potential investors for many years and the benefits of these different areas have been seemingly missed by dissenters worried about the perceived loss of green space.

Despite what is being said in some quarters, the central section is not loved by the majority of the general public and does not provide a safe and welcoming environment. Indeed, the current trees encourage anti-social behaviour. The large number of trees make it impossible to provide proper CCTV cover in that area. There is the added issue that upper floors of many of the buildings are in the perpetual shadow of the trees. Opening it up as proposed will make it safer and more welcoming to all.

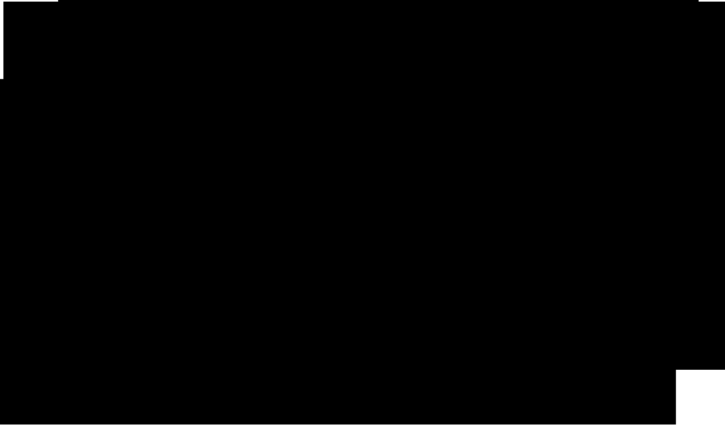
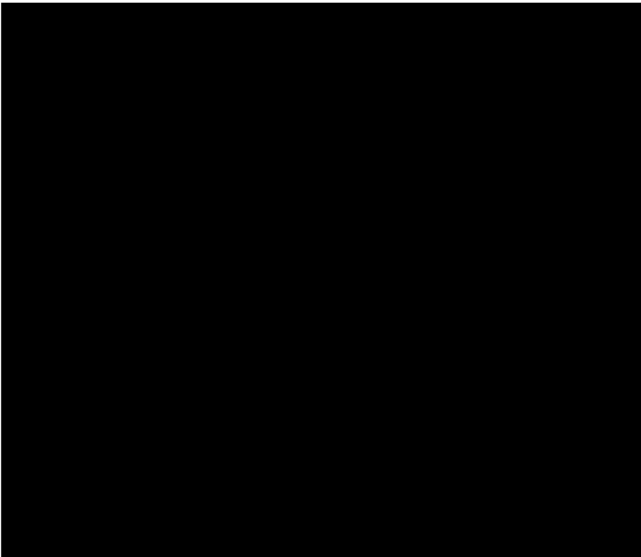
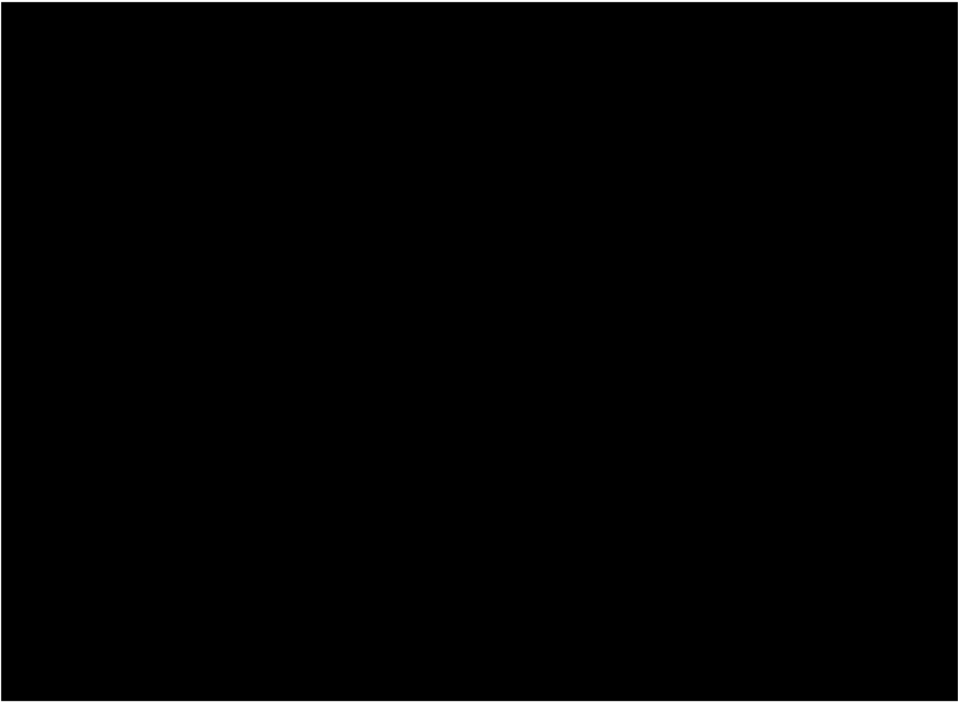
Our vision for Armada Way includes the unlocking of the potential for residential development on upper floors above shops, many of which have been empty for several years in part because of the poor quality of the public realm, and to reimagine the street scene with new uses for empty units and development sites with far more café seating – a city park for the people by day and night.

We believe this scheme will be transformational for the city centre, providing us with a gateway to be proud of and complementing other recent multi-million pound investment schemes. Investment in quality public realm represents a hugely positive message to potential investors. The City Centre without this scheme provides a good reason not to invest.

We, the undersigned Directors of the Plymouth City Centre Company, which represents the interests of more than 500 businesses, welcome this investment in the city and urge you to press ahead with the plans as currently proposed.

Yours sincerely





Cllr Richard Bingley
Leader, Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
West Hoe Road
Plymouth
PL1 3BJ

Monday 16th January 2023

Dear Richard,

RE: ARMADA WAY REDEVELOPMENT

On behalf of the Devon & Plymouth Chamber of Commerce I write to support the redevelopment of Armada Way, Plymouth.

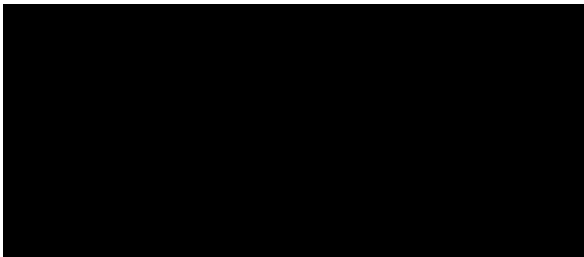
The city centre is in dire need of improvement to attract people and trade to the businesses in the area. Years of under-investment has allowed the area to become run-down and completely unsuitable.

Unfortunately, the current layout has also encouraged anti-social behaviour and vermin, and also discourages people moving along its whole length in a linear way.

The trees that were planted there are unsuitable for an urban environment and those replacing it should sequester more carbon.

The new scheme is far more befitting of a modern city centre that will enhance the visitor experience and encourage consumers back into the centre.

The Devon & Plymouth Chamber fully supports this redevelopment.





Chairman
Mr Bruce Abbott.



1st March 2023.

Dear Mr Barnard

Plymouth Area Disability Action Network would like to express their thanks to Richard Barra and the team who attended our meeting on Friday 23rd February, to inform us about the Armada Way Development.

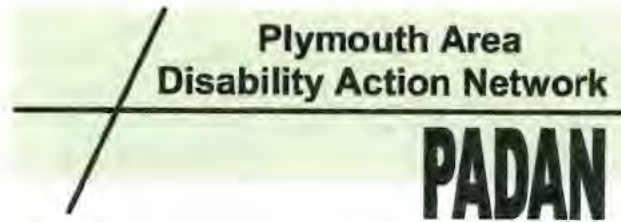
The members were pleased that they were able to discuss the details of the design and raise any questions they had. The processional route was well defined, the description about the depth of the leat reassured us and the variety in the types of benches situated throughout the area were welcomed by mobility impaired people. The spaces adjoining them will mean that people in wheelchairs, or on mobility scooters, can be alongside family and friends enjoying a get together.

The proposals for the cycle paths were welcomed, the clear differentiation by the colour variation of the paving was reassuring. However, monitoring of the area, once in use, will be required to make sure sight and sound impaired people are safe.

The design did cause one of our members, who is sight impaired, to be concerned as he would have to 'learn' a new route. We suggested that Richard contacts Julie Williams, Manager at Sensory Solutions, Improving Lives Plymouth, Ernest English House, Plymouth PL1 2DA sensorysolutions@improvinglivesplymouth.org.uk for her views. We wondered if Sensory Solutions would be able to provide 'walk through' orientation sessions for those who were interested. As technology allows, could the tourist information team invest in an app to aid movement through the area and add in descriptions to enhance the experience?

Whilst the presentation pack was detailed, and difficult for some members to view easily, they were generally supportive of the plan. They understood that this was a good plan to enhance

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Web: www.padan.org.uk



the city centre. The varieties within the planted areas, the use of the water features to be able to provide the correct watering needs of the that planting, was met with approval.

The innovative use for several areas was explained to us. Members understood that use of spaces had been carefully considered to maximise enjoyment and to provide areas suitable for outdoors entertainment and events.

For several it had been the first time they had viewed and listened to the proposals. They understood it was clearly about the regeneration of the city centre, they agreed that there was a need to increase the variety of shops, improve accessibility and also the plan to increase the development of accommodation within the city centre too.

We agreed that this was an exciting plan and look forward to being updated on its progress. We would also appreciate that any changes to the design are brought back to us for our input.

Once again, thank you to Richard and the design team.



Cllr Richard Bingley
Leader of Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
West Hoe Road
Plymouth
PL1 3BJ

January 17th 2023

Dear Cllr Bingley,

Letter of Support for Armada Way and City Centre regeneration project

On behalf of the Board of Directors for Destination Plymouth, I am writing formally to support the proposed project to re-develop Armada Way and the public realm in the city centre.

The aim of the project to create a new urban park for the city centre, lined on either side by avenues of around 150 trees will address years of under-investment in the city centre streets and spaces, which affects the city in terms of destination competitiveness. As well as restoring the historically significant view to the Hoe to create a more impressive and grand welcome into the city centre, the new features appearing will encourage footfall from locals and visitors alike.

As 'Britain's Ocean City, Plymouth is a key regional city, shopping centre and attractor for over 5.2 million visitors from the UK and overseas annually (2019 data). These visitors expect the best experience while they are here and a welcoming environment, safe city centre and pleasing outlook are crucial in terms of visitor satisfaction. We anticipate that improving this will not only encourage more visitors and locals alike to enjoy the new urban spaces but will also attract a significant amount of further retail and business investment to the city.

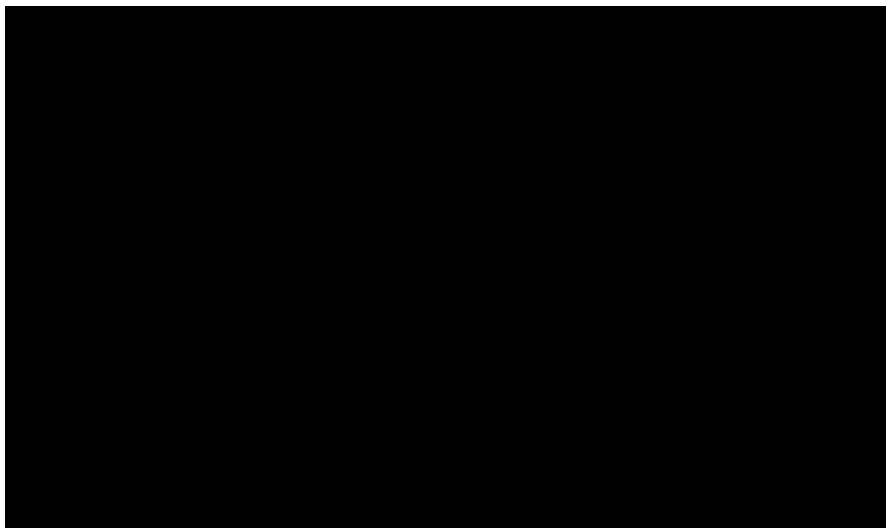
Destination Plymouth Ltd. is a private / public sector partnership and the formally recognised Destination Management Organisation for Plymouth with responsibility for driving the city's brand and place making objectives and growing the visitor economy over the next 10 years up to 2030, delivering the objectives outlined below:

- To grow visitor spend by **30% from £347 million to £450 million** in a decade
- To increase the total visitor numbers by **15% from 5.4 to 6.2 million** by 2030



- Make international tourism worth **£60 million a year spend** in the city, that's **65% growth** by 2030
- Grow UK staying visits by **25% to achieve £150 million spend**, focusing on leisure short breaks
- Make business meetings and conference tourism worth **£25 million a year** in spend to the city, a **55% increase** in a decade, using Plymouth's industry strengths to create a strong positioning

Plymouth has seen a huge increase in visitor numbers and spending over the past five years. In fact, we have seen 92% growth in jobs in the sector since our baseline figures in 2008. It is vitally important therefore that as a sector we are able to ensure that while driving tourism visits we also continue improving, protecting and preserving the very environment, which they are visiting.



Homes England – 19/01/23 Ref: Armada Way Redevelopment

Homes England has stated: *“Homes England are keen to see the proposed works completed along Armada Way. The designs are to be commended and will encourage opportunities for residents, workers and tourists to rest, shop, exercise, eat and play. The city centre is in need of regeneration and the works to Armada Way will help attract private sector redevelopment and investment, which in turn will help grow the local and regional economy. Public sector commitment to Plymouth on this scale, with a kilometre long public park, sends a clear and positive message to the market. It is exciting times for Plymouth, as the city centre gears up in its ambition to transform into a thriving multifunctional place, with a mixed use community fit for Plymouth’s prosperous future.”*



Armada Way Regeneration Scheme
Statement from Plymouth Against Retail Crime

"Plymouth Against Retail Crime endorses the scheme as this will improve the public realm areas making the city centre a nicer place to visit and work in. The new open spaces will make it safer giving less opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour day or night. So far this year we have dealt with 93 anti-social incidents , 201 street drinking incidents , 11 drug offences , 95 verbal abuse incidents and 13 violence incident in Armada Way. CCTV coverage will be improved as well as there will be less blind spots through the entirety of the street."

Comment from Graham Soult, Retail Consultant and High Street Expert

From my experience working in and visiting town and city centres across the country, it is clear that creating modern, quality public realm is a crucial ingredient in curating places that are attractive to shoppers, workers, visitors and investors. Where I work in Chester-le-Street, for example, the revamp of the previously bleak Market Place has resulted not only in a more attractive area to sit and gather, but is also credited with attracting new businesses to the buildings that face it. Occupancy in those locations is now at 100% for the first time in years.

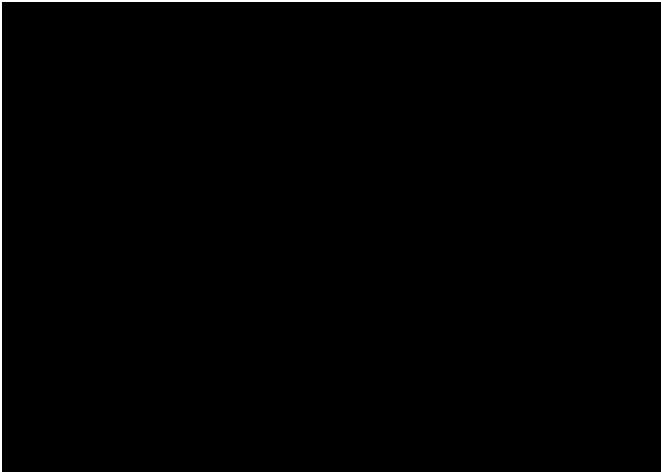
Plymouth is a city with a unique character that I have loved visiting ever since childhood holidays to Devon. Revisiting on behalf of the High Streets Task Force last year, it was exciting to see and hear about new developments such as the Barcode, Box, and redevelopment of the former Derrys site. Plymouth is clearly a city that is going places.

Walking from the railway station to the Hoe, however, I was struck by the opportunities to create a much better experience for those who use Plymouth city centre. Some of the areas I walked through were dark and unattractive due to the over-dense canopy of trees - especially after dark - and it was challenging at times to get one's bearings. Overall, much of the public realm felt dated and unloved, which I highlighted in my feedback at the time. Moreover, one of Plymouth's best assets is its seafront, yet at present it is possible to arrive in the city centre and be unaware that the sea is even there.

Though change can be challenging, such as in the case of Armada Way, leaving the city centre public realm unchanged would clearly act as a barrier to Plymouth realising its potential, especially in terms of developing a better mix of city centre uses and growing the evening economy. By investing in public realm that is more open and attractive, the city will create a place that feels safer and more welcoming, and will be better equipped to attract and retain businesses that bring vibrancy and prosperity to the city.

Hull is another city that I visited on behalf of the High Streets Task Force, and I regularly cite that city's recent investment in quality public realm as an exemplar. Modern, beautiful and well-maintained public space not only creates an environment in which people want to meet and linger, but is also a powerful statement about the city and its pride and aspirations. Plymouth is right to be just as bold in its ambitions.

Graham Soult visited Plymouth on behalf of the High Streets Task Force last year.





ARMADA WAY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME 2023



Armada Way Engagement Report 09 March 2023

ARMADA WAY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

March 2023



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Armada Way engagement programme 2023 is an additional engagement stage for this part of the wider city centre public realm 'Better Places' programme. This tranche of works, funded by the DfT Transforming Cities Fund, dates back to inception in 2017.
- 1.2. An extensive consultation event was held between March and April 2018 where the public, visitors, stakeholders and interested parties could attend a series of events providing more information on our Better Places proposals. A 19 day programme of public consultation events were held at various locations around the city. These events were advertised on our website, across all our social media channels and in the local press. A consultation form was available for people to complete to gather feedback on the proposals and 178 formal responses were received. Alongside the public consultation programme, a series of workshops were undertaken on a range of topics. These were attended by a range of local groups and organisations.
- 1.3. An Armada Way public information event was held on 29 September 2022 at Drake Circus to provide an update on the design of the scheme. The purpose of the event was to update the public and interested parties on the updated design for Armada Way, which presented considerable environmental enhancements over the previous plan. The event was advertised on all social media platforms, the Council's website, BBC Spotlight and radio stations and on posters distributed around the city centre and public buildings. 17 formal comments were received during this information event. Following the public information event, the information boards were then displayed at the Central Library for a period of over two weeks.
- 1.4. Following a petition to Full Council at its meeting of the 30 January, Council resolved to recommend that the Cabinet Member for Transport undertake "meaningful community engagement process" in February. This report summarises the engagement process that was undertaken in relation to the Armada Way public realm proposals during February 2023, sets out the objectives of the engagement, how it was carried out and the results of the engagement.
- 1.5. All the comments have been read and analysed and a high-level summary is provided later in this report. All the responses can be read in full on our online portal (<https://plymouth-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/event/37324>).
- 1.6. The resolution of full Council was as follows:

Plymouth City Council firmly believes that the residents and businesses of Plymouth deserve a thriving and prosperous city centre to deliver high quality jobs and places to live.

We recognise that the strategic policies set out in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan adopted in March 2019 commits us to delivering a vibrant mixed-use regional shopping centre and attractive visitor destination. We remain committed to delivering Policy PLY6 of the adopted Joint Local Plan ('Improving Plymouth's City Centre') which, amongst other things, specifically supports respecting and celebrating the centre's mid-twentieth built heritage, a coordinated programme of investment in public realm, and improvements to surface water drainage systems.

We note the substantial support that has been expressed for the Armada Way scheme by local residents, many city centre businesses, the City Centre Company, the Environment Agency, South West Water, Homes England, Historic England, the Twentieth Century Society and others.

We recognise the concerns that have been expressed regarding the engagement arrangements for the scheme, the tight funding deadlines for the project to be delivered, and the potential for funding to be lost if the scheme is not implemented. We therefore call on the Cabinet Member for Transport to undertake a comprehensive review of the engagement arrangements for the scheme and commit to

publishing the results of this review to inform this and delivery of future city centre schemes. We also call on the Cabinet Member for Transport to publish a detailed statement regarding the maintenance costs of the Better Places Programme projects.

Plymouth City Council recognises the concerns expressed in the petition regarding the loss of existing trees but agrees that a balance has to be struck with the achievement of other regeneration and environmental objectives for the city centre, including the city's climate change commitments. We note that the scheme has many environmental benefits, for example the creation of new walking and cycling infrastructure, a sustainable urban drainage scheme, and provision for future district heating initiatives. We call on the Cabinet Member for Transport to set these out in detail for the benefit of local businesses and the public.

Plymouth City Council welcomes the pause to the Armada Way scheme announced by the Cabinet Member for Transport on 21st November 2022. We note that the modified scheme that has been published seeks to directly respond to the request in the petition to 'incorporate a bit more of what we already have'.

Plymouth City Council calls upon the Cabinet Member for Transport to note its dissatisfaction with the lack of public engagement and suspend tree felling whilst undertaking a meaningful community engagement process in February, which considers the natural environmental and climate resilience before finalising the designs for Armada Way. The Council further acts that no work be carried out that could prejudice the survival of the existing trees until the design is finalised. Having undertaken this process and published the results, the Council supports and requests that the Cabinet Member implements that final design quickly to avoid on-going disruption to city centre businesses from the construction works.

2. WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT?

- 2.1 The objective of the engagement was to seek the views of the general public on the modified design for Armada Way in a meaningful way. By that, we wanted residents to be able to look at the proposed design and supporting information and be able to reach their own informed view as to whether they supported it or not, as well as being able to suggest changes which they feel could be made to enable them to support the scheme.
- 2.2 The works were initially paused by the Cabinet Member for Transport, as announced at Full Council on 21 November 2022 so that the design could be considered to see if any additional trees could be integrated into the design. This resulted in a modified scheme where an additional seven existing trees were planned to be retained, and a further three new trees added. This brought the total number of trees planned to be felled to 129, with 150 new trees proposed. This is the scheme which was presented in the recent engagement exercise.

3. HOW WAS THE ENGAGEMENT CARRIED OUT?

- 3.1 A six day engagement programme was developed in agreement with the Cabinet Member, lead opposition members and local ward councillors. This included a range of events and methods through which the public could engage and make comments.
- 3.2 The largest events were held at the Guildhall in the City Centre from the 6th – 11th February 2023 during the following times:
 - Monday 6 February, 12 noon to 5pm
 - Tuesday 7 February, 10am to 4pm
 - Wednesday 8 February, 10am to 4pm

- Thursday 9 February, 10am to 7pm
 - Friday 10 February, 10am to 7pm
 - Saturday 11 February, 10am to 4pm
- 3.3 The consultation events were supported by City Council officers, including from the project team, and the external design team. They were in attendance throughout the course of the week to explain the proposals and answer any questions.
- 3.4 All of the exhibition material available to view in person at the Guildhall was made available on the Council's website (<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/armada-way>) and the online portal (<https://plymouth-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/event/37324>).
- 3.5 A smaller event at the Knowledge Centre on Armada Way was open from 10am – 4pm Monday – Friday 6th – 9th February (except for staff breaks when the Centre was closed for a short period) where staff from Morgan Sindall (the contractors) or PCC officers were available to talk through the modified scheme.
- 3.6 The exhibition at the Guildhall and Knowledge Centre consisted of three display boards showing the details of the scheme and a series of visualisations of the completed scheme from various points along Armada Way. A number of more technical drawings and supporting evidence was available at the Guildhall:
- Bat Tree Roost Inspection Report (Simon Geary Ecology Services, January 2022)
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Design Stage Report, Draft (The Environment Partnership, December 2022)
 - Tree/Tree Pit/Arborcraft (plants, specification, crates, soiling ALL ZONES) (Rathbone Partnership, December 2022)
 - Proposed Cycleway Strategy (Rathbone Partnership, November 2022)
 - Proposed General Arrangement Masterplan – All zones (Rathbone Partnership, January 2023)
 - Baseline Tree Survey Report (YGS Environmental Consultants, November 2021)



3.7 The engagement work was promoted via our corporate channels in the following ways:

- Promotion on the front of the website (from 3 February)
- Lead article on the news page (from 3 February)
- [Press release](#) (with an update issued) - with coverage in the media, including Plymouth Live: [Plymouth City Council starts 'short sharp engagement' on future of Armada Way trees - Plymouth Live \(plymouthherald.co.uk\)](#) and [Armada Way protesters call council's 'meaningful engagement' an 'insult' to Plymouth - Plymouth Live \(plymouthherald.co.uk\)](#)
- Dedicated page on the council website (ongoing) which contained details of the engagement activity, the times the exhibition at the Guildhall was open, a link to the online portal to complete the response form, and the engagement material and supporting documentation
- Information in our resident newsletter to 26,252 people on the 3 and 10 February, resulting in 358 clicks to the website
- Social media advertising commenced from the 4 February reaching 38,000 Plymouth residents – resulting in 1.5k clicks to the press release (159 comments on social media)
- Social media posts on our corporate Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts (7 posts on Facebook / 8 on Twitter / 1 on Instagram and 1 on LinkedIn – resulting in:
 - Total Facebook engagement across all organic posts:*
 - Clicks: 7,018
 - Average reach: 17,362
 - Average engagement: 870

Total Twitter engagement across all organic posts:

Clicks: 104

Average impressions: 1,677

Average engagement: 43

- 3.8 A response form was prepared to gather views on the proposed scheme from persons attending the events at the Guildhall and the Knowledge Centre, asking 9 key questions. A copy can be found at Appendix 1. It was designed to capture the views on the different components of the scheme and provided the public with an opportunity to tell us whether they supported each element or not, or whether changes were needed to enable them to support that part of the proposal. This approach was felt appropriate because the scheme is a complex one, with many elements, and it was important to help people comment in a way that responds to the nature of the project actually being proposed and directs attention to the individual elements for comment. In addition to the hard copies at the event(s), an electronic version was available via the online portal.
- 3.9 Though it was widely reported on social media that this was a vote on the issue, this was not the case. The intention of the form was to capture people's thoughts and feedback. The questions were asked in such a way as to allow both a qualitative and quantitative analysis to be carried out for a comprehensive review of all responses.
- 3.10 In addition to the engagement events, a series of three invitation-only Discussion Forums were held on Friday 10th February with 'STRAW' (Save the TREes Armada Way), Plymouth Tree Partnership (PTP) and local ward councillors. Council officers from the project team and representatives from the design team participated in these discussions. The discussion forums were independently facilitated by an arboricultural and tree specialist.
- 3.11 The purpose of these sessions was to outline the process of how the modified design for Armada Way was arrived at and provide opportunity for those in attendance to ask questions of the design team. Participants were also invited to make suggestions on further changes to the designs for Armada Way for consideration by members.
- 3.12 All of the specific comments and suggestions made at the discussion forums held with 'STRAW', the Plymouth Tree Partnership and Ward Councillors held on 10 February 2022 will be considered when the final decision as to whether Armada Way scheme proceeds in its existing form, in a final modified form, or not at all.
- 3.13 It is also highlighted that STRAW in particular engaged significantly with the events that were held, not just through the dedicated discussion forum. STRAW members were observed spending considerable time at the exhibition and engaging in robust discussions with the officers and the design team. Through their extensive activity in the city and on line at the time of the engagement events they also assisted in raising public awareness of the engagement and project.
- 3.14 Part of the planned engagement programme was to hold Q&A sessions with a specialist from the design team covering drainage and tree issues should people have detailed technical questions. It was not possible to organise a dedicated Q&A session during the week however drainage and tree experts from the design team attended the exhibition and the discussion forums.
- 3.15 Also part of the planned engagement programme was an offer from the City Council to have further meetings to outside organisations on the scheme design.

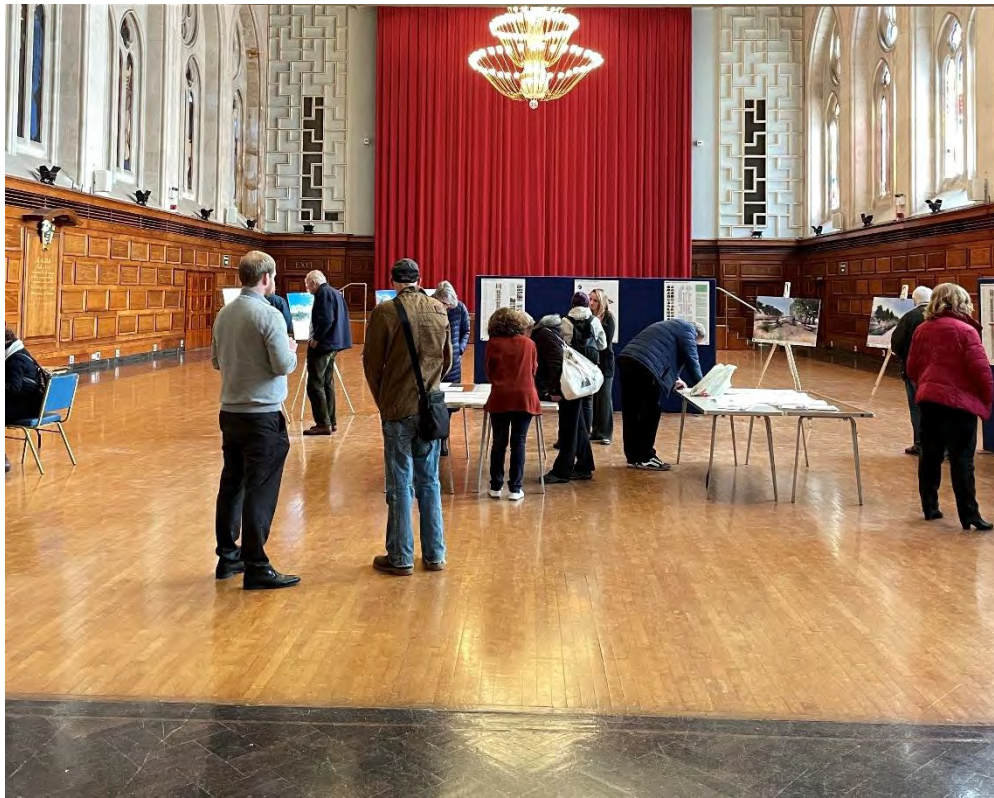
4. HOW MANY PEOPLE DID WE ENGAGE WITH?

- 4.1 We received 2314 responses during the six-day engagement period.

- 4.2 23 comments did not include a name and/or postcode. As this was community engagement and it was not possible to verify their location these do not form part of the analysis and are not made public.
- 4.3 16 responses were duplicated. These have been merged into one response. There was no suggestion that duplicate responses were being made to influence the numbers. In some cases, people had made comments on-line and then came into the exhibition and made further comments on the paper form. In others, two on-line forms had been submitted. Where comments have been merged, this is made clear on the on-line portal.
- 4.4 One respondent did not wish for their comments to be published.
- 4.5 8 responses have been censored for the use of inappropriate language but are considered in the analysis.
- 4.6 As a result of the above, this left 2274 responses for analysis. 1925 of those responses were received via the online portal. 349 responses were received in hard copy at the Guildhall or the Morgan Sindall Knowledge Centre on Armada Way.
- 4.7 It is worth noting that not every question was answered by each respondent which will account for different numbers of respondents per question.
- 4.8 Over the six days we saw around 592 people at the Guildhall.

Day	Time	Count
Monday 6 th February	12 noon – 5pm	78
Tuesday 7 th February	10am – 4pm	73
Wednesday 8 th February	10am – 4pm	76
Thursday 9 th February	10am – 7pm	92
Friday 10 th February	10am – 7pm	147
Saturday 11 th February	10am – 4pm	126
	TOTAL	592

- 4.9 Between 5pm-7pm on Thursday and Friday we saw 11 and 7 people respectively. These evening slots had been specifically scheduled to allow for those who were working or unable to get to the Guildhall during usual working hours, to attend. There was also a Saturday session.



- 4.10 309 comments out of the 2274 were received from outside the PL postcode area (13.5%). 16 of these were received by hard copy response form and 293 were received via the online portal.

- 4.11 The map below shows where comments were received from, shown by purple circles.



5. WHAT DO THE RESPONSES TELL US?

- 5.1 2274 responses have been read and analysed. The bar charts that detail the analysis for each question are available to view at Appendix 3. It is worth highlighting that not all respondents answered every question and hence the numbers presented below do not always add up to the total amount of responses received. Similarly, not all the percentages add to 100% due to rounding.
- 5.2 When considering all of the responses received (2274) there would seem to be overwhelming objection to the proposals across all of the 8 questions. 68% (1537) of all respondents do not support the investment in improving the open spaces on Armada Way with 16% (365) in support and 15% (330) answered yes with changes. See table 1 below.

Table 1: All responses from all sources (online portal and hard copy), showing percentages and count

Question (all responses)	No (% and count)	Yes (% and count)	Yes with changes (% and count)
Question 1 Investment in improving the open spaces	68% 1537	16% 365	15% 330
Question 2 Striking the right balance	78% 1771	12% 264	3% 70
Question 3 SUDs	61% 1376	18% 419	9% 200
Question 4 Play, activity and leisure spaces	65% 1482	18% 401	10% 232
Question 5 Biodiversity enhancements	62% 1404	16% 358	11% 240
Question 6 Active travel	60% 1355	17% 385	9% 203
Question 7 Planting	68% 1538	12% 269	4% 100
Question 8 Climate emergency objectives	65% 1486	13% 294	4% 82

- 5.3 An identified social media campaign encouraged members of the public to answer 'no' to every question (some examples are provided at appendix 2 of this). This also appeared to generate a significant number of comments from people across Great Britain (see para 4.11), with similarities to the postcode mapping for the petition submitted by STRAW to the Council. It should be noted that 510 respondents answered no to every question and left no comments. A further 164 respondents only left a comment on question nine (any other comments) and answered no to questions one to eight (leaving no comment). 30% of the total responses (2274) therefore left either no comment at all or only left a comment to question nine.
- 5.4 If you look at the same results for those who responded from within the city boundary, the results are similar. 65% (1068) answered no, 18% (280) said yes and 10% (259) said yes with changes. The table 2 below sets out the responses to each of the questions, with percentages and count shown for all responses received from those who live within the city boundary.

Table 2: All responses from all sources from within the City boundary (online portal and hard copy), showing percentages and count

Question (all responses from within the city boundary)	No (% and count)	Yes (% and count)	Yes with changes (% and count)
Question 1 Investment in improving the open spaces	65% 1068	17% 280	16% 259
Question 2 Striking the right balance	76% 1242	13% 212	3% 54
Question 3 SUDs	59% 965	21% 339	9% 141
Question 4 Play, activity and leisure spaces	63% 1023	19% 316	11% 175
Question 5 Biodiversity enhancements	60% 981	17% 283	10% 170
Question 6 Active travel	59% 956	18% 294	9% 148
Question 7 Planting	66% 1084	13% 216	5% 76
Question 8 Climate emergency objectives	64% 1050	14% 234	4% 59

- 5.5 To try and understand the impact of the 'No' responses where no comments were left, and therefore where there was no detailed or reasoned feedback, officers considered the figures excluding those responses that were 'No' without comment. This does reveal a very different picture of the engagement, resulting in total of 309 responses, 259 of which are in the city boundary.
- 5.6 In analysing the 309 responses in relation to question one (investment in improving the open spaces on Armada Way):
- 36% (110) do not support the investment
 - 43% (132) supported the investment, responding yes
 - 20% (60) responded as yes but with changes.
- 5.7 Table 3 below sets out the responses to each of the questions, with percentages and count shown for all responses received in hard copy excluding those responses which answered no to every question and didn't provide comments.

Table 3: All responses received by hard copy response form, excluding responses that answered no to every question and no comments, showing percentages and count

Question (all hard copy responses excluding responses that answered no to every question and no comments)	No (% and count)	Yes (% and count)	Yes with changes (% and count)
Question 1 Investment in improving the open spaces	36% 110	43% 132	20% 60
Question 2 Striking the right balance	49% 151	38% 115	9% 28
Question 3 SUDs	34% 104	48% 148	10% 32
Question 4 Play, activity and leisure spaces	36% 109	48% 147	11% 35
Question 5 Biodiversity enhancements	38% 115	44% 136	12% 36
Question 6 Active travel	36% 109	43% 133	16% 48
Question 7 Planting	43% 133	39% 120	11% 35
Question 8 Climate emergency objectives	42% 127	41% 125	9% 27

- 5.8 Looking at this analysis for respondents from within the city boundary only, 39% (100) said they didn't support the proposals, 39% (102) said they did and 21% (54) said yes with changes. Table 4 below sets out the responses to each of the questions, with percentages and count shown for all responses received in hard copy excluding those responses which answered no to every question and didn't provide comments from those who live within the city boundary.

Table 4: All responses received by hard copy response form from within the City boundary, excluding responses that answered no to every question and no comments, showing percentages and count

Question (all hard copy responses excluding responses that answered no to every question and no comments from those within the city boundary)	No (% and count)	Yes (% and count)	Yes with changes (% and count)
Question 1 Investment in improving the open spaces	39% 100	39% 102	21% 54
Question 2 Striking the right balance	51% 132	35% 90	10% 26
Question 3 SUDs	35% 91	45% 117	11% 29
Question 4 Play, activity and leisure spaces	37% 96	46% 119	11% 29
Question 5 Biodiversity enhancements	40% 103	42% 108	11% 29

Question 6 Active travel	37% 97	41% 106	16% 41
Question 7 Planting	45% 117	36% 94	12% 30
Question 8 Climate emergency objectives	44% 113	39% 100	8% 22

- 5.9 Graphs showing the results as in table 1 to 3 are available at Appendix 3.
- 5.10 In terms of a qualitative analysis, there was a considerable range of comments submitted. There are a number of key themes which emerge in both for those in support and against the scheme.
- 5.11 131 comments contained phrasing elements that were identical to an email that was circulated by STRAW providing model answers (see appendix 2). Whilst they are clearly responses which people decided to submit, they are not able to provide any qualitative data as to reasoning or thoughts on the proposals and why they are replying with 'no'. It is hard therefore to draw any conclusions as to the objections to the scheme in order to feed in to considering how the scheme might be reconsidered.
- 5.12 Comments in favour of the scheme primarily echo support for the regeneration of the city centre with a well thought through and innovative design. Specific comments include support for features such as new wildlife benefits and a range of spaces to enjoy, opening the view and appreciation of the Abercrombie plan.
- 5.13 Where respondents have provided comments supporting on a no response the key comments against the scheme primarily focus around designing a scheme that incorporates the existing trees. There are objections to losing any of the mature trees due to considerations around environmental impact, their aesthetic value, the shade they provide, the cost of removing and replacing them, replacing them with non-native species, mental health benefits provided by existing mature trees, urban cooling, flood alleviation and the time it would take for new trees to mature. There were also comments in favour of keeping existing trees and planting more.
- 5.14 Other comments not in favour of the scheme include concerns about the cost of the scheme and how money could be better spent on other things; the time it will take to achieve the biodiversity net gain; maintenance both in terms of regime and cost; and concerns about the cycle lane, particularly the desirability of the route, speed of cyclists, conflict with pedestrians and safety around the water jets. There are also comments about the wind tunnel effect, lack of interest in the design and a preference for restoration of the existing water feature rather than installing a new one. There were a number of comments questioning the interplay between the ornamental water feature, the irrigation and the SUDS.
- 5.15 A number of suggestions were also made about further changes that could be considered, some very detailed and specific. However some common themes include suggestions around enhanced lighting, sufficient supportive seating (including covered seating), improved CCTV coverage, more colour in the design rather than being excessively grey, adaptations to the cycle lane and cycle provision and more habitats for wildlife. There were also a variety of suggestions considering different sorts of play and active features.
- 5.16 All of the responses received via the online portal and in hard copy at the Guildhall and Knowledge Centre have been digitised and are available to view in full on the online portal (<https://plymouth-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/event/37324>).

6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY

- 6.1 If the total submission figures (excluding those without a name or postcode) are considered the responses demonstrate an overwhelming majority of respondents are opposed to the scheme in any way (table 1).
- 6.2 If the total submission figures from within the city boundaries are considered the responses again demonstrate an overwhelming majority of respondents are opposed to the scheme in any way (table 2).
- 6.3 If the submissions less those which responded with no qualitative response, just saying no with no reasons or views expressed, then the scheme has significant support, though some comments are that this is the case with changes made (table 3).
- 6.4 If the submissions are those in the city less those which responded with no qualitative response, just saying no with no reasons or views expressed, then the scheme has significant support, though some comments are that this is the case with changes made (table 4).
- 6.5 Though any member of the public has the legitimate right to protest and to freedom of speech, and the Council is not seeking to discount responses resulting from that, there is evidence from the analysis that the campaign by STRAW has had a significant impact upon the responses to the engagement process. Though all responses which have a name and postcode should be considered there is a degree of caution in considering those responses which appear to not offer meaningful responses in terms of qualitative data compared to those which do, and in considering those which are not within the city boundary.

7. APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: RESPONSE FORM

ARMADA WAY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

February 2023

Name:	
Organisation (if relevant):	
Address & postcode:	
Email address:	

Your name and postcode are required for comments to be taken into consideration.

QUESTION 1

Do you support investment in improving the open spaces within Armada Way? <i>(please tick one)</i>					
Yes		No		Yes with changes	
Please set out what changes you feel need to be made to enable you to support this part of the scheme					

QUESTION 2

Do you think the Council's modified design strikes the right balance between creating improved spaces for everyone, the provision of new trees and the retention of some of the existing trees?

(please tick one)

Yes		No		Yes with changes	
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Please set out what changes you feel need to be made to enable you to support this part of the scheme

QUESTION 3: SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE (SUDs)

The proposals include a combined ornamental stream and a sustainable urban drainage system which will form part of the wider city centre drainage works. This means that all rain that lands on Armada Way is stored underground and re-used in the green spaces to water the new trees. This will help reduce flooding and reduce discharge events into the Sound, therefore improving water quality.

Do you support these proposals? *(please tick one)*

Yes		No		Yes with changes	
-----	--	----	--	------------------	--

Please set out what changes you feel need to be made to enable you to support this part of the scheme

QUESTION 4: PLAY, ACTIVITY AND LEISURE SPACES

The proposals include for a wide variety of play, activity and leisure spaces. These include interactive water play activities such as hand pumps and rill channels, dancing fountains and large scale play equipment. Uses include table tennis facilities, outdoor gym space and a pétanque pitch. In addition there will be a range of new outdoor seating areas, including areas for businesses to use.

Do you support the provision of a wide range of activities on Armada Way to bring people to the space? *(please tick one)*

Yes		No		Yes with changes	
-----	--	----	--	------------------	--

Please set out what changes you feel need to be made to enable you to support this part of the scheme

QUESTION 5: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS

As part of our commitment to enhancing nature in the city centre, the proposals include an extensive range of new green spaces, including wildflower areas, grass spaces, a range of native shrubbery and hedging, reed beds and 150 new trees plus 24 existing. This will result in a Biodiversity Net Gain of 25.09%, which means a 25% increase of plant and animal life in Armada Way.

Do you support our plan for achieving and enhancing biodiversity? *(please tick one)*

Yes		No		Yes with changes	
-----	--	----	--	------------------	--

Please set out what changes you feel need to be made to enable you to support this part of the scheme

QUESTION 6: ACTIVE TRAVEL

A key element of the scheme is the introduction of high quality wide and direct walking and cycling routes through the city centre. This will support active lifestyles, residents living in the city centre and encourage people to visit local city centre business on foot and by bike.

Do you support our plan encouraging active and sustainable travel into and around the city centre? *(please tick one)*

Yes		No		Yes with changes	
-----	--	----	--	------------------	--

Please set out what changes you feel need to be made to enable you to support this part of the scheme

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QUESTION 7: PLANTING

The proposal includes the retention of 24 existing trees, removal of 129 trees and the addition of 150 new semi-mature trees up to 8m tall which are more appropriate for a city centre environment. The existing trees were largely planted in the 1980s, with 11 now recommended for immediate removal due to condition. Others are considered inappropriate for a city centre conditions, diseased, have limited longevity, causing damage to footways, or are too close/impacting on buildings, or do not allow for the other aspects of the scheme to be delivered and the wider benefits of the scheme to be achieved.

Do you support our plan for retaining 24 existing trees and providing 150 new trees? *(please tick one)*

Yes		No		Yes with changes	
-----	--	----	--	------------------	--

Please set out what changes you feel need to be made to enable you to support this part of the scheme

--

QUESTION 8

Do you think the proposals are consistent with the Council's climate emergency objectives by providing sustainable urban drainage, 150 new trees, reed beds and other planting, and re-use of existing materials?

(please tick one)

Yes		No		Yes with changes	
-----	--	----	--	------------------	--

Please set out what changes you feel need to be made to enable you to support this part of the scheme

QUESTION 9: ANY OTHER COMMENTS

Do you have any other feedback on the proposals not covered by the earlier questions?

Please hand your completed form to a member of staff. You can also complete your feedback online by visiting <https://plymouth-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/event/37324>

Alternatively, you can send your completed form by post to: Armada Way Engagement, Plymouth City Council, Ballard House, West Hoe Road, Plymouth, PL1 3BJ.

ALL COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 4PM ON SATURDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2023 TO BE CONSIDERED.

The information being processed is for the purpose of the Armada Way Public Realm Works engagement and will only be used for the purposes of this scheme. Your comments and contact details may be shared only for the purposes of progressing the development of the Armada Way Public Realm Works.

The information being collected is being processed under the Data Protection Act legal basis of

- Your comments: legitimate interests

We will never share or use your information for marketing purposes.

Your comments will become part of the Council's permanent records. It will be stored and processed in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018. You have certain rights under the Data Protection Act and the EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), which include the right to access, rectification and erasure. To enforce these rights or enquire about any other aspects of data protection, please contact

Data Protection Officer, Plymouth City Council, Ballard House, West Hoe Road, Plymouth PL1 3BJ.

Email: dataprotectionofficer@plymouth.gov.uk

Plymouth City Council is registered as a data controller with the Information Commissioner's Office (registration number: Z7262171).

APPENDIX 2: INFORMATION CONCERNING STRAW'S CAMPAIGN

Appendix 2: Email from STRAW titled 'Plymouth's Tree Massacre: 3 days left!' sent via SumofUs on Wednesday 8th February 2023 at 4.43pm

Dear friends,

It's crunch time in our fight to **save Plymouth's trees from the chainsaws**, and we need your urgent help to win.

We only have **3 days left to flood Plymouth City Council's public consultation** with our responses against this tree massacre. If, like us, you want to protect ALL 129 trees in our city centre, please **answer NO to all the questions in the survey**, and leave an optional comment if you wish.

It will only take you a minute to have your say, but it will mean the world for all of us **fighting to save these beautiful trees**:

 [**CLICK HERE TO TAKE PART IN THE CONSULTATION**](#)

Tips on how to respond:

Please be aware: If you answer 'Yes' or 'Yes with changes' to any of the questions, the Council might perceive it as if you support the felling, or partial felling. So it's crucial to mark all questions with NO.

Below are some ideas on what you could say in the comments, but feel free to use your own words:

QUESTIONS 1

Do you support investment in improving the open spaces within Armada Way?

NO. I do not support investment if it comes with unacceptable stipulations which result in damage to the natural assets of Plymouth and result in developments being rushed through without public consultation.

Do you think the Council's modified design strikes the right balance between creating improved spaces for everyone, the provision of new trees and the retention of some of the existing trees?

NO. Not even close - a new and interesting design could have improved space for everyone and incorporated our existing beautiful trees.

Continued below

QUESTIONS 2

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

NO. All rainwater that lands on Armada Way will not be stored underground and reused. This is false. I do not support the design for SuDS. SuDS could have easily been designed around the existing trees. I do not support the provision of any activities if they are installed at the expense of even one healthy mature tree.

Play, activity and leisure spaces

NO. I do not support the provision of any activities if they are installed at the expense of even one healthy mature tree.

Biodiversity enhancements

NO. The biodiversity net gain from the proposed plans will not be achieved for 30 years, and that's only if maintained properly. The biodiversity net gain will be higher if we keep the existing trees and improve planting around them.

Active Travel

NO. An alternative cycling route can easily be built around the existing trees and meet your project brief.

Planting

NO. I do not support the removal of the 129 mature trees.

Do you think the proposals are consistent with the Council's climate emergency objectives by providing sustainable urban drainage, 150 new trees, reed beds and other planting, and re-use of existing materials?

The carbon produced in the development of this scheme will take decades to offset. A less destructive design that retains our established trees is much more environmentally sustainable.

QUESTIONS 3

Any other comments?

I reject this plan in its entirety and demand it is redrawn from scratch to incorporate all our existing trees. The new design for Armada Way must begin with the trees.

Thanks for everything you do,
Ali, Mark and the STRAW Campaign

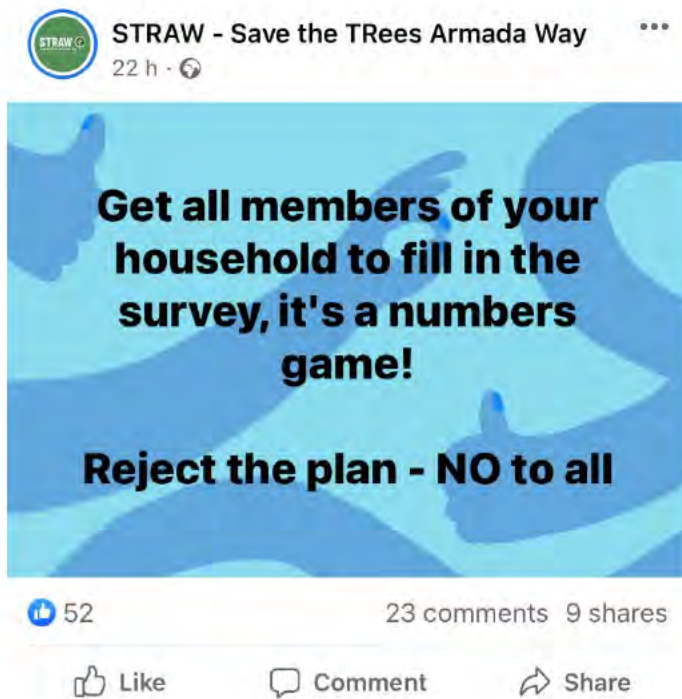
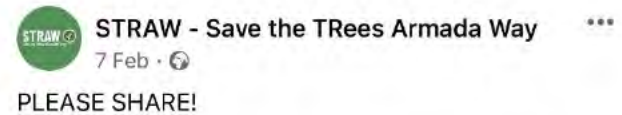


Photo 1: STRAW Facebook post



Photo 3: QR code link to response form



Let's be crystal clear. Any question on the survey which mentions "our plan" to which you do not respond NO will likely be taken as support for the scheme and therefore support for the felling. "Yes with changes" will probably be taken as support.

They will likely disregard 99% of your comments. Comments don't go on pie charts. NO to all!

The only way forward now to save the trees is for us all to be heard as one voice which cannot be ignored.

Make sure, if you want to save more than a handful of trees, you reject this plan and all aspects of it. Get everyone in your household to do the survey.

SAY NO and MEAN NO to this destructive plan.

<https://plymouth-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/event/37324/form/37324/page/001>

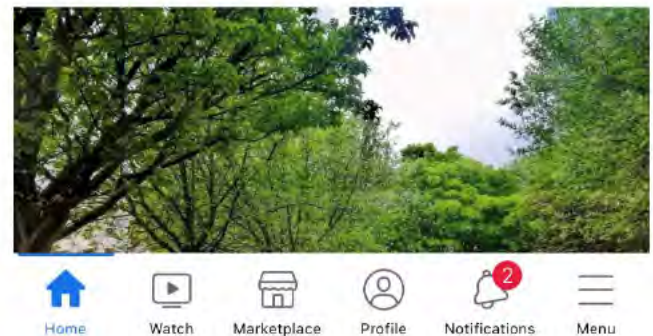
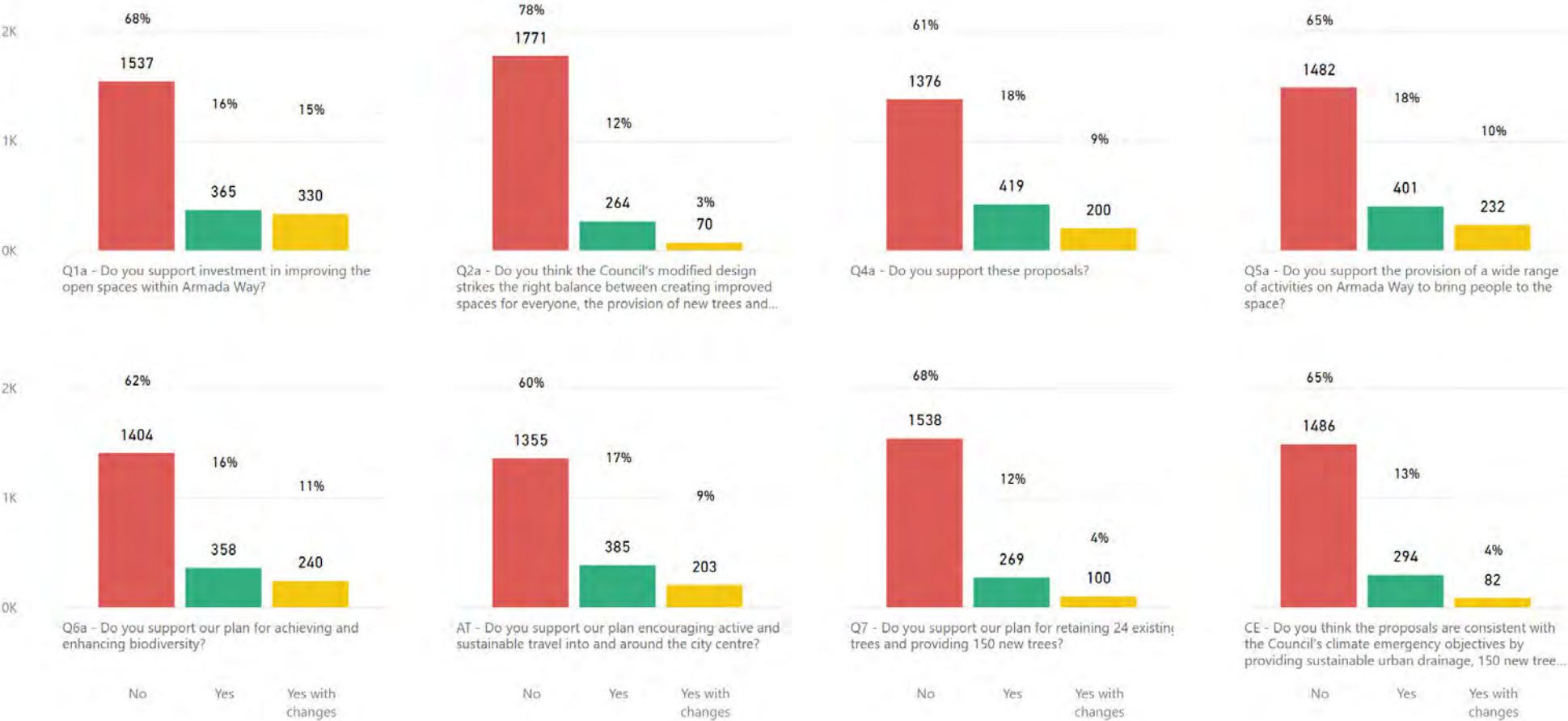


Photo 2: Extract from STRAWs facebook

APPENDIX 3: RESULTS

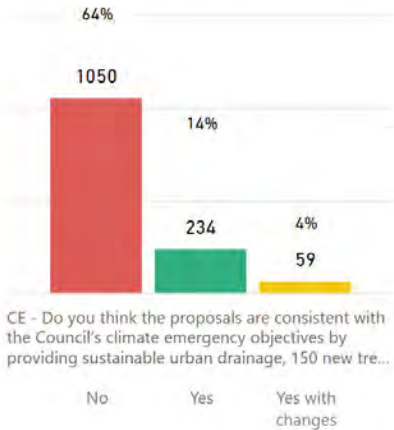
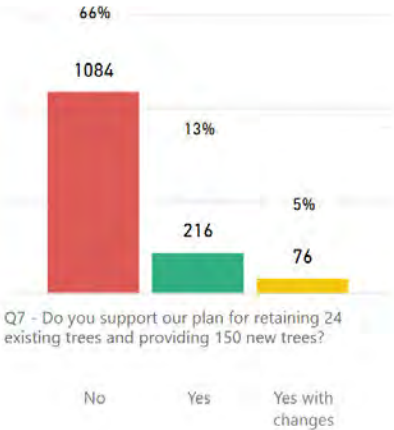
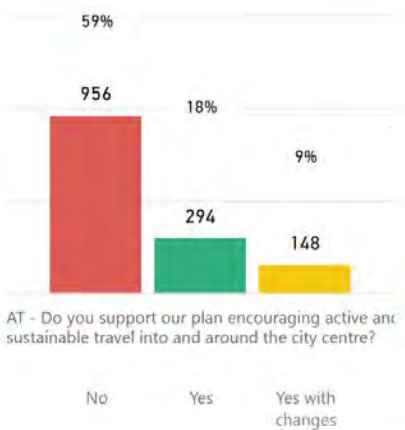
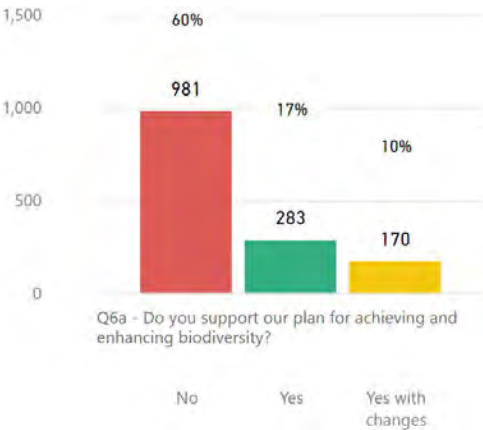
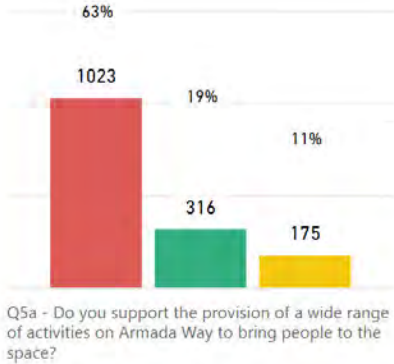
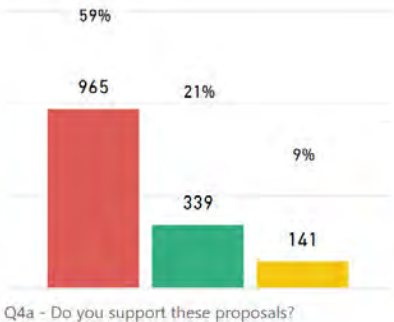
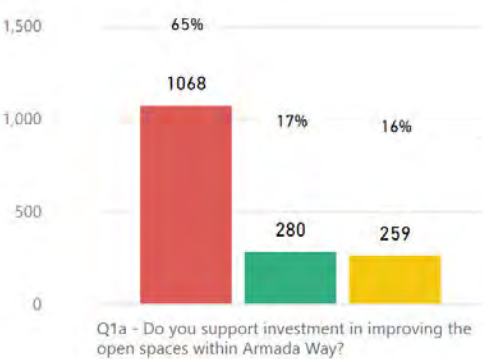
Bar graphs to show all responses from all sources (online portal and hard copy), showing percentages and count

This data does not include inadmissible responses (e.g. no name and/or postcode as required by the response form). Charts show all admissible responses, including responses from outside the Plymouth boundary.



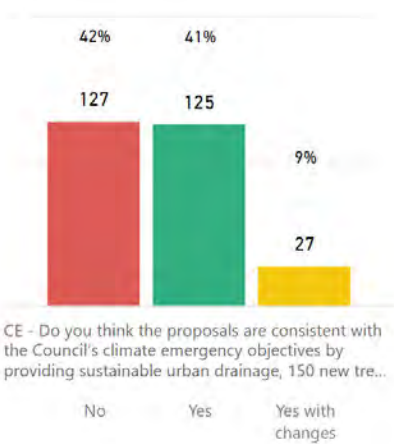
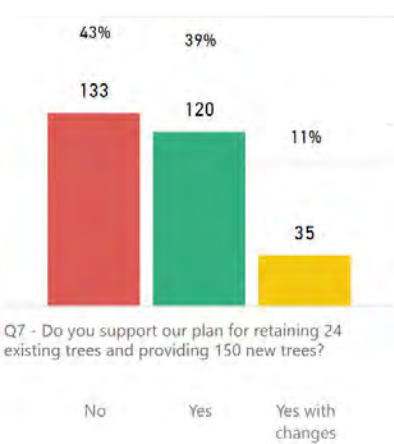
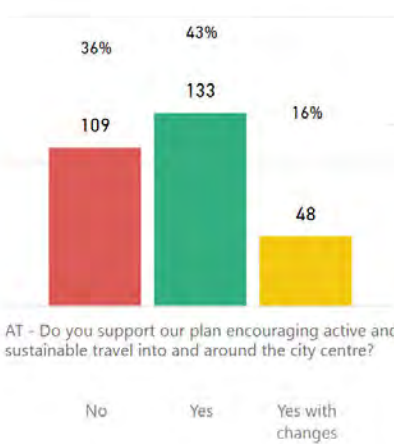
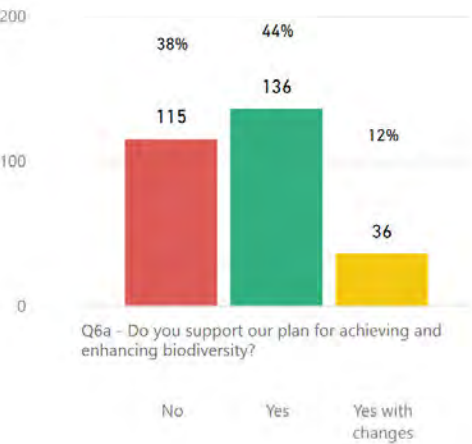
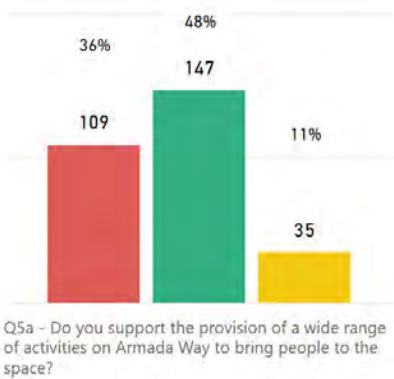
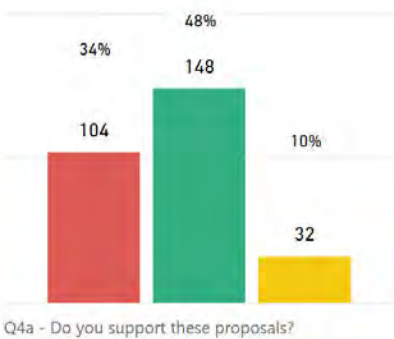
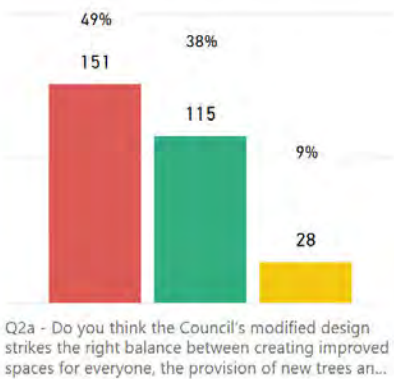
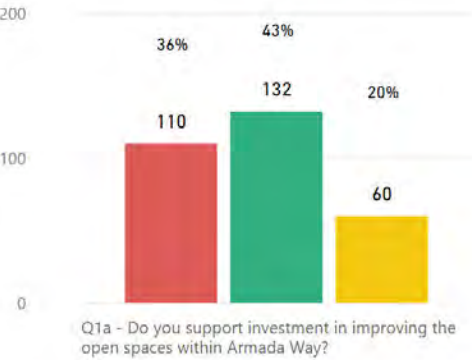
Bar graphs to show all responses from all sources from within the City boundary (online portal and hard copy), showing percentages and count

This data does not include inadmissible responses (e.g. no name and/or postcode as required by the response form). Charts show all admissible responses. Data covers only the Plymouth area (city boundary).



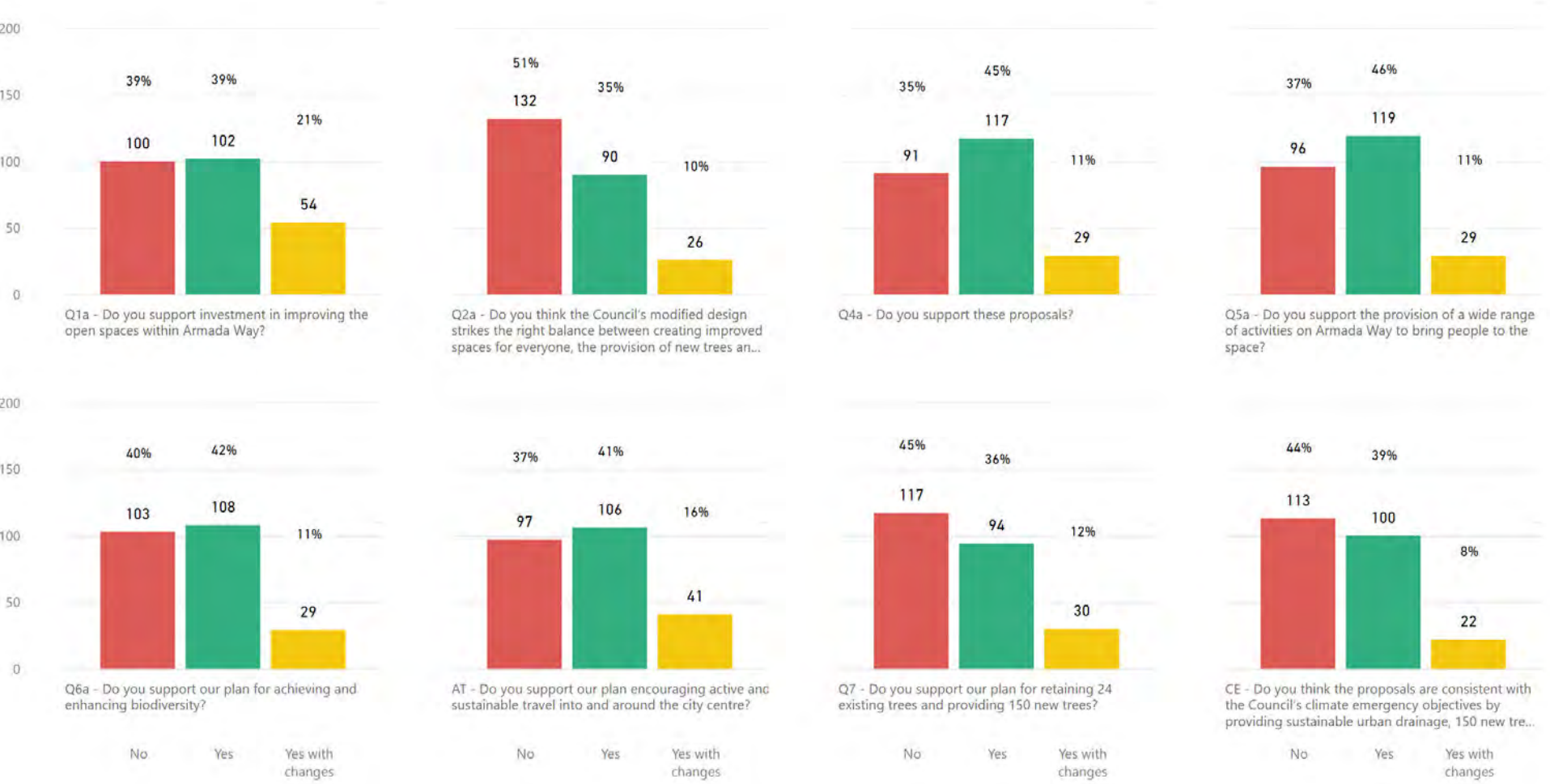
Bar graphs to show all responses received by hard copy response form, excluding responses that answered no to every question and no comments, showing percentages and count

This data does not include inadmissible responses (e.g. no name and/or postcode as required by the response form). Charts show all hard copy responses, and only where a comment has been left. Data covers all areas.



Bar graphs to show all responses received by hard copy response form from within the City boundary, excluding responses that answered no to every question and no comments, showing percentages and count

This data does not include inadmissible responses (e.g. no name and/or postcode as required by the response form). Charts show all hard copy responses, and only where a comment has been left. Data covers only the Plymouth area (city boundary)



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ARMADA WAY

SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Author(s): This is the person completing the EIA template.	Helen Trenerry	Department and service:	Strategic Growth, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure	Date of assessment:	02/03/2023
Lead Officer: Please note that a Head of Service, Service Director, or Strategic Director must approve the EIA.	Paul Barnard	Signature:		Approval date:	03/03/2023
Overview:	Detailed design and construction of public realm improvements to Armada Way as part of the Better Places programme. This directly ties into the Joint Local Plan policies PLY6, improving Plymouth's City Centre by making best use of key assets such as the Armada Way boulevard and piazza and PLY37, looking at strategic infrastructure by incorporating the City Centre Strategic Cycle Network and walking improvements into Armada Way.				
Decision required:	Approval to proceed with project				

SECTION TWO: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING TOOL

Potential external impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact service users, communities or residents with protected characteristics?	Yes		No	
Potential internal impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact Plymouth City Council employees?	Yes		No	
Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (if you have answered yes to either of the questions above then a full impact assessment is required and you must complete section three)	Yes		No	

If you do not agree that a full equality impact assessment is required, please set out your justification for why not.

SECTION THREE: FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Protected characteristics (Equality Act, 2010)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and consultation feedback)	Adverse impact	Mitigation activities	Timescale and responsible department
Age	All data is from the 2011 Census except for age and sex which has been updated with 2021 data. Data will be updated with the 2021 Census data as it becomes available. Plymouth 16.4 per cent of people in Plymouth are children aged under 15. 65.1 per cent are adults aged 15 to 64. 18.5 percent are adults aged 65 and over. 2.4 percent of the resident population are 85 and over. South West 15.9 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14, 61.8 per cent are aged 15 to 64. 22.3 per cent are aged 65 and over. England 17.4 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14. 64.2 per cent of people are aged 15 to 64.	There will be some disruption during construction.	Ensure the detailed design process, construction methodology, procurement of contractors and execution of works allows for the safe movement of people of all ages throughout the construction process with advance notice of works and clear signage for diversions to pedestrian routes.	Main Contractor and Principal Designer throughout design and construction process.

	18.4 per cent of people are aged 65 and over. (2021 Census)			
Disability	9.4 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a lot' because of a physical or mental health problem. 12.2 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a little' because of a physical or mental health problem (2021 Census)	Enhancing the safe movement of people of all abilities is one of the guiding principles of the Better Places programme and as such the completed schemes (including Armada Way) will improve the environment for people with disabilities. There will be some disruption during construction.	The design team will work closely with groups including PADAN, Age Concern, Dementia Friendly and Public Health through the detailed design process to attempt to address specific needs and concerns. Streets and spaces will be designed to meet requirements under the Equalities Act 2010, Inclusive Mobility Standard DFT Guidance wherever possible and Building Regulations. Approved Document Part M for access to any buildings. Ensure the construction methodology, procurement of contractors and execution of works allows for the safe movement of people of all abilities throughout the construction process	Senior Responsible Officer, Design team, Main Contractor and Principal Designer throughout design and construction process.

			with advance notice of works and clear signage for diversions to accessible pedestrian routes.	
Gender reassignment	0.5 per cent of residents in Plymouth have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth. 0.1 per cent of residents identify as a trans man, 0.1 per cent identify as non-binary and, 0.1 per cent identify as a trans women (2021 Census).	There are no adverse impacts anticipated.	No action required.	
Marriage and civil partnership	40.1 per cent of residents have never married and never registered a civil partnership. 10 per cent are divorced, 6 percent are widowed, with 2.5 per cent are separated but still married. 0.49 per cent of residents are, or were, married or in a civil partnerships of the same sex. 0.06 per cent of residents are in a civil partnerships with the opposite sex (2021 Census).	There are no adverse impacts anticipated.	No action required.	
Pregnancy and maternity	The total fertility rate (TFR) for England was 1.62 children per woman in 2021. The total fertility rate (TFR) for Plymouth in 2021 was 1.5.	There will be some disruption during construction.	Ensure the construction methodology, procurement of contractors and execution of works allows for the safe movement of women who are pregnant or in maternity throughout the construction process with advance notice of	Main Contractor and Principal Designer throughout design and construction process.

			works and clear signage for diversions to accessible pedestrian routes.	
Race	In 2021, 94.9 per cent of Plymouth's population identified their ethnicity as White, 2.3 per cent as Asian and 1.1 per cent as Black (2021 Census) People with a mixed ethnic background comprised 1.8 per cent of the population. 1 per cent of the population use a different term to describe their ethnicity (2021 Census) 92.7 per cent of residents speak English as their main language. 2021 Census data shows that after English, Polish, Romanian, Chinese, Portuguese, and Arabic are the most spoken languages in Plymouth (2021 Census).	There are no adverse impacts anticipated.	New or replacement signage where proposed to be assessed for ease of understanding.	Senior Responsible Officer.
Religion or belief	48.9 per cent of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion. 42.5 per cent of the population identified as Christian (2021 Census). Those who identified as Muslim account for 1.3 per cent of Plymouth's population while Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh combined totalled less than 1 per cent (2021 Census).	There are no adverse impacts anticipated.	No action required.	
Sex	51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census).	There are no adverse impacts anticipated.	No action required.	
Sexual orientation	88.95 per cent of residents aged 16 years and over in Plymouth describe their sexual orientation as straight or heterosexual. 2.06 per cent describe their sexuality as bisexual, 1.97 per cent of people describe their sexual	There are no adverse impacts anticipated.	No action required.	

	orientation as gay or lesbian. 0.42 per cent of residents describe their sexual orientation using a different term (2021 Census).			
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SECTION FOUR: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Human Rights	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
	No implications		

SECTION FIVE: OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

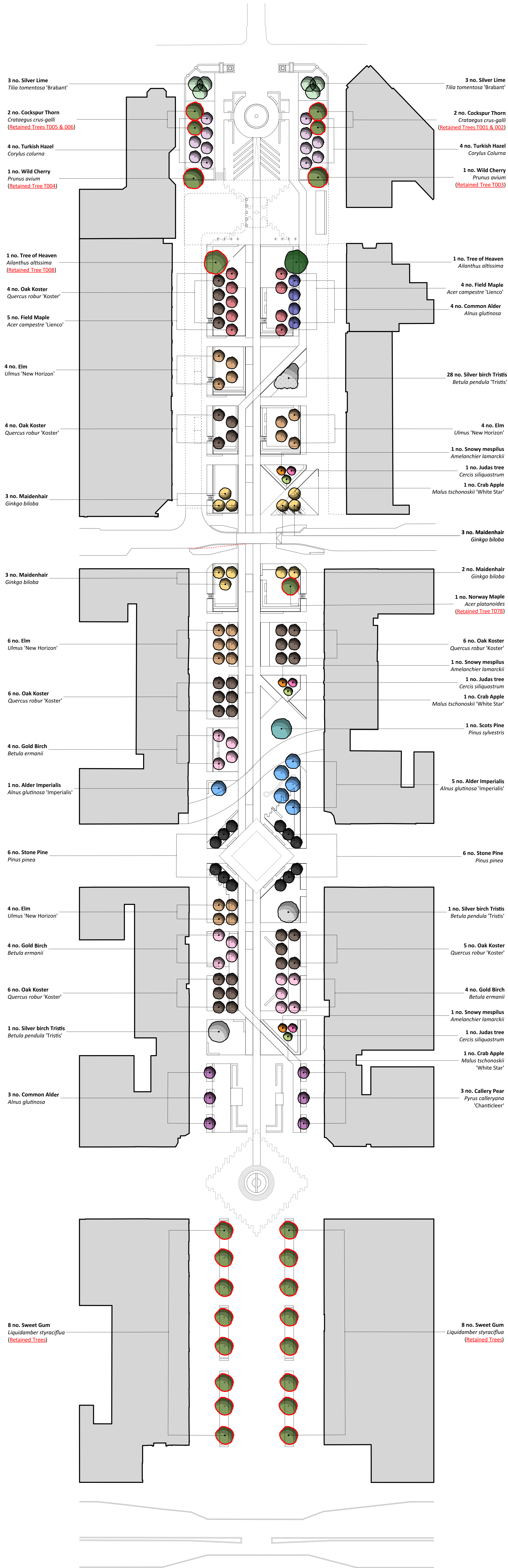
Equality objectives	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
Celebrate diversity and ensure that Plymouth is a welcoming city.	Positive impact – improved public spaces within the City Centre will promote increased use by all sectors of the community and host more and better events. A number of new play spaces and other activity areas are being proposed which will encourage participation and physical exercise for children. This supports the delivery of the Joint Local Plan policy PLY6 includes creating a vibrant destination, with leisure, culture, visitor accommodation and food and drink uses, especially making best use of key assets such as the Armada Way boulevard and piazza. Improved cycling links are also being proposed which will encourage more		Benefits to be realised upon completion of selected schemes, expected to be autumn 2024. Senior Responsible Officer.

	cycling through and within the city centre. This supports the delivery of the joint Local Plan policy PLY37 which includes incorporating the City Centre Strategic Cycle Network and walking improvements within the Armada Way public realm.		
Pay equality for women, and staff with disabilities in our workforce.	No implications.		
Supporting our workforce through the implementation of Our People Strategy 2020 – 2024	No implications.		
Supporting victims of hate crime so they feel confident to report incidents, and working with, and through our partner organisations to achieve positive outcomes.	Positive impact – improved public spaces with clearer views, improved street lighting and enhanced CCTV coverage.		Benefits to be realised upon completion of selected schemes, expected to be autumn 2024. Senior Responsible Officer.
Plymouth is a city where people from different backgrounds get along well.	Positive impact – improved public spaces within the City Centre will promote increased use by all sectors of the community and host more and better events.		Benefits to be realised upon completion of selected schemes, expected to be autumn 2024. Senior Responsible Officer.

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ARMADA WAY PUBLIC REALM
- MASTERPLAN TREE SPECIES
67CA09-STA-ZZ-XX-SK-L-XXXX-004 - REV P02



PROPOSED NEW TREE SPECIES

Spring/Summer	Autumn	
		Field Maple <i>Acer campestre</i> 'Lienco' 9 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 20-25cm
		Tree of Heaven <i>Allianthus altissima</i> 1 no. existing retained in situ, 1 no. addition Specimen Girth: 35-40cm
		Common Alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> 4 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 20-25cm
		Alder imperialis <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> 'Imperialis' 6 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 20-25cm
		Snowy mespilus <i>Amelanchier lamarckii</i> 3 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 20-25cm
		Gold birch <i>Betula ermanii</i> 13 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 20-25cm
		Silver birch Tristis <i>Betula pendula</i> 'Tristis' 30 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 2 @ 35-40cm & 28 feathered
		Scots Pine <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> 1 no. specimen Specimen Girth: 45-50cm
		Judas Tree <i>Cercis siliquastrum</i> 3 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 20-25cm
		Turkish Hazel <i>Corylus colurna</i> 12 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 20-25cm
		Maidenhair <i>Ginkgo biloba</i> 11 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 35-40cm
		Crab apple <i>Malus tschonoskii</i> 'White Star' 3 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 20-25cm
		Callery Pear <i>Pyrus calleryana</i> 'Chanticleer' 6 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 35-40cm
		Oak Koster <i>Quercus robur</i> 'Koster' 31 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 20-25cm
		Silver Lime <i>Tilia tomentosa</i> 'Brabant' 6 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 35-40cm
		Elm <i>Ulmus</i> 'New Horizon' 18 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 20-25cm
		Stone Pine <i>Pinus pinea</i> 12 no. specimens Specimen Girth: 20-25cm

Total Trees = 193 (Including 24 no. existing retained)

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