

Report Title

Stretford Public Realm Improvements Update

In 2015 the Council commissioned Gillespies/WSP to prepare a movement and public realm study for Stretford Town Centre providing a clear strategy for improving movement for pedestrians and cyclists within an enhanced public realm and physical environment.

Public Consultation

The draft improvement proposals were subject to public consultation between 25 September and 16 October 2015. Consultation boards and feedback questionnaires were made available at Stretford Mall and on the Council's website throughout the consultation period.

In total 307 survey responses were received over the public consultation period, plus an additional 25 emailed comments. Overall the feedback received has been generally positive with a majority of respondents supportive of both the overall vision and themes and the vision for specific project areas. Three quarters of respondents to the consultation left additional feedback. It is noted that a number of comments received relate to issues outside the scope of this consultation exercise; in particular the mix of uses within Stretford Mall, vacant town centre buildings and the condition of building frontages along the A56, Kingsway and Edge Lane.

There were a number of recurring themes expressed which are set out below:

- The general consensus in relation to the proposals is positive although there are a wide range of opinions on their effectiveness in addressing the challenges faced by Stretford Town Centre.
- Several comments noted that the proposals should be more radical and in their current form amount to 'window dressing'.
- Almost 3/4 of respondents support the proposed removal of the subways.
- A strong desire is expressed for an enhanced evening economy within the Town Centre.
- Addressing the poor quality of the physical environment and vacant buildings along the Edge Lane corridor is identified as a particular priority.
- Several comments were made that any works to the gyratory must ensure sufficient green landscaping remains in place.
- Some perception expressed that Stretford has not received the same attention as other town centres within Trafford and that previous proposals have not come forward.
- A very detailed submission was made focused on the potential tunnelling of the A56 through Stretford Town Centre that was also referenced by some other respondents.

Specific cycle provision headlines included:

- 1 in 10 respondents indicated that they travel by bicycle.
- Several requests for Dutch style / segregated cycleways through the Town Centre.
- It was noted by some that cycle provision shouldn't just be for competent cyclists.

Project Areas

The final study proposes a series of integrated public realm and movement improvement projects for the Town Centre that aim to encourage inward investment and greater economic confidence, stimulate community pride and rejuvenate failing areas of the Town Centre. These projects are focused around the retail core and at key gateways and are broken down into the following opportunity areas:

- A56 / Edge Lane Gateway
- New King Street & Barton Road
- A56 Southern Gateway

It is anticipated that the projects identified will be implemented over the short, medium and long term. Many of the public realm improvements rely upon the adoption of new traffic proposals and the sequence in which projects are ultimately realised will be determined by economic considerations, availability of funding, securing planning permissions and traffic regulations orders and the needs and expectations of the local community and businesses.

Proposed Phase One

The programme of improvement works for Stretford is entirely dependent on funding being realised; including Section 106 monies from Barton Square which have yet to be received. However delivery of a first phase reflecting the funding currently available could commence in early 2017 using Local Growth Fund monies that have been secured via TfGM.

It proposed that detailed design work is now commenced for a first phase of works focused on the A56/Edge Lane Gateway and will include the following:

- New at-grade pedestrian crossings
- Retention of the A56 North subway
- Enhanced public realm using the proposed 'Stretford Materials Palette'
- Signature lighting columns and lighting art work feature
- Additional right turn lane from A56 onto Edge Lane, accommodated within the existing carriageway width, to ease congestion
- New landscaped area adjacent to Stretford Public Hall

Next Steps

The detailed design works for phase one will commence in late February 2016 and will take into account all consultation responses received so far. There will be further consultation with residents and key stakeholders as this detailed design work progresses.

Updated information on the consultation is now available on the Council's website at the link below:

www.trafford.gov.uk/stretfordpublicrealmconsultation