1. Background

Following the initial consultation during April 2014 a second consultation was carried out in January 2015 in order to inform stakeholders about progress with the ongoing scheme development process. The initial consultation and traffic analysis has shown that two of the scheme options presented, A and D, would not satisfy the requirements that people said they wanted from an improved Birchley island. The second consultation therefore presented the reasons why options A and D would not be progressed further and why options B and C should be considered for further scheme development. People and organisations were invited to give their views on how the proposals might affect them using the same methods as the initial consultation. Consultation is an important part of the scheme development process and helps to ensure that links are maintained with those who could be affected both during and after the construction phase.

The four improvements options presented in the consultation literature were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option A</th>
<th>Minimum Modifications</th>
<th>Widening the links between M5 junction 2 and Birchley island to four lanes in each direction plus signalising the Churchbridge and Wolverhampton Road approaches.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option B</td>
<td>Two-way Hamburger</td>
<td>Option A plus Wolverhampton Road (“Hamburger”) passing through the junction in both directions next to the electricity sub-station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option C</td>
<td>One-way Dual Hamburger</td>
<td>Option A plus “Hamburger” option (northbound lanes only) linking Wolverhampton Road and the link from M5 junction 2 to Wolverhampton Road and Churchbridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option D</td>
<td>Non-roundabout</td>
<td>Widening the links between M5 junction 2 and Birchley island to four lanes in each direction and the formation of a signalised junction on the site of the current island.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The consultation was publicised through various forms of media, including press articles, posted letter/leaflet, Sandwell Council’s Facebook social media account, Sandwell Council’s website and word of mouth. According to Question 4 of the questionnaire (appendix A) the majority of respondents (47.0%) became aware of the consultation through social media, followed by website (17.2%), press articles (15.5%) and delivered leaflet (15.5%). Leaflets (appendix B) were posted to over 250 addresses on the approach roads to the island, along with other organisations and businesses in the area who are stakeholders in the Birchley island project. Each Sandwell Council member was provided with a leaflet and copies were available to the public at the One-stop Shop, Sandwell Council House. An additional amount of people from the April 2014 consultation, 370, were emailed because they stated that they wished to be kept informed about progress with scheme development.

Both the online and leaflet based information included a questionnaire form with 10 questions asking people about their satisfaction with the remaining two scheme options, B and C, and if they had any other comments they wished to make. The responses to the questionnaire are outlined below.
2. Response Rate and Respondent Profile

A total of 349 questionnaire forms were submitted either online or on paper and were subsequently added to a database for subsequent analysis. Facebook comments totalled 114 with many people also completing the online questionnaire.

In terms of responses received, there was no particular targeting of people by age, gender and ethnic group. It was assumed that views from the range of people in such groupings would be represented on the basis of whether or not they are users, residents or representatives of workplaces related to Birchley island. Residents and workplaces with frontages on the approach roads to Birchley island were however specifically targeted because they are likely to undergo disruption should one of the proposals progress to the construction stage.

Home postcodes were supplied by 331 respondents to the questionnaire. The distribution of the 270 Sandwell respondents (81.6% of the total) by town area is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oldbury</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smethwick</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowley Regis</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesbury</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipton</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bromwich</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As expected, interest in the proposals is very high in the immediate vicinity of the island, although the island is also an important part of longer journeys from further afield.

Some businesses near to the junction have expressed issues relating to the proposals and the nature of the construction phase (traffic management), but these have been received directly by email and telephone calls.

3. Support for Proposals

Question 1 of the questionnaire asks whether or not respondents are in favour of the proposal to improve Birchley island. Of the 349 respondents who answered the question, 94.6% are in favour, 3.7% are against and 1.7% do not know. The various congestion and safety problems at the island are clearly generally regarded as serious enough to require some form of intervention. It should be noted however that the desire for a scheme to be implemented has invited additional ideas to the options presented in the consultation literature.

Respondents were asked to record their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the two options for Birchley island (Question 2) which were presented in the consultation literature. Figure 1 shows the relative amount of dissatisfaction or satisfaction for each option. Option B has generated a significant level of satisfaction with 83.1% of respondents stating that they are satisfied overall, which includes 52.5% of respondents who are very satisfied. There is slightly more dissatisfaction than satisfaction with option C, 43.4% compared with 37.1% respectively, and a greater proportion of people who are neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, 19.2%.
Using the actual number of respondents who have indicated their dissatisfaction or satisfaction for each option, it is possible to calculate a net satisfaction percentage (those who are satisfied minus those who are dissatisfied divided by total respondents). Figure 2 shows that the net satisfaction for option B is 72.0%, possibly because the consultation information states that it is the best performing option in terms of reducing queues and congestion at the junction.

The net satisfaction for option C is -6.3%, possibly because the layout is regarded as complicated and some respondents cannot visualise how it will be used.

4. Further Comments on Proposals

About 34% of respondents chose to make general comments on the proposals under Question 3. The most common type of comment related to concerns over the suitability of any option to address safety, traffic management and congestion problems at the current junction. Respondents also expressed support for one of the two options, with 23% of respondents making a choice and over half of such people choosing option B.
Due to the amount of comments relating to safety and traffic management in relation to question 3 and the April 2014 consultation exercise, it would perhaps be prudent to carry out some re-lining and re-signing of the roundabout in the period between now and when the proposed option is constructed.

5. Other Consultation Discussion Outcomes

Some businesses contacted Sandwell Council directly to ask for more information about the proposals and how they might affect their businesses both during construction and afterwards. At this stage of the scheme development process it is only possible to state that Sandwell Council will require all roads to remain fully open during the construction period. A particular traffic management plan would need to be devised by the contractor to enable this and any requirement for road closures would be restricted to short periods and/or late/early hours of the day. Such periods are likely to be necessary for joining newly constructed sections to existing roads.

The January 2014 consultation revealed that two businesses (David Manners Ltd and Cemex) on the southern A4123 Wolverhampton Road approach are interested in the access from the A4123 to their premises. A safer vehicle crossing/turning point which is common to all the consultation options has been designed. Discussions are however ongoing with respect to the proposed non-provision of a right turn onto the A4123 from these premises.

Comments on the consultation options were received through Sandwell Council’s Facebook account, amounting to 114. The range of comments was similar to that submitted under question 3 of the questionnaire form. Comments relate to safety, experiences of using the island, suggestions about how to change the island (eg provide underpass, flyover) and preferences (or otherwise) for particular consultation options. Although comments were stated on Facebook, many users probably went on to complete the consultation questionnaire.

As with the January 2014 consultation, respondents were asked if they wished to be kept up to date about the proposals by email. A total of 197 respondents from a potential 349 provided email addresses. These will be added to a database and information will be emailed at appropriate points during the scheme development process. For example, before committee reports are presented, when the preferred option is chosen, on submission of the business case to the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, after funding announcements.

6. Conclusion

Of the two options consulted upon, option B was regarded by respondents as the most satisfactory because of its ease of use compared with option C and because it appears to offer more capacity than the existing roundabout. A greater degree of satisfaction for options B and C may have been recorded if respondents had been provided with more details on how the proposals will address the current problems relating to poor lane discipline and confusion over which lane to use for each exit from the island.

The preferred scheme option for Birchley island will be identified after a combination of traffic, value for money, safety and construction related aspects for each option have been assessed. The results of the consultation exercise will also help to inform this assessment.
Appendix A  Consultation Questionnaire

Having looked at the proposals for the A4123 Birchley Island / M5 Junction 2 Improvement, either on the web page [www.sandwell.gov.uk/birchleyisland](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/birchleyisland) or the consultation information leaflet, we would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire to tell us what you think. This questionnaire can also be completed online at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/birchleyisland](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/birchleyisland).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Generally, are you in favour of the proposal to improve Birchley island?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the proposed options for Birchley island?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option A: Minimum Modifications</td>
<td>Development of this option not to be progressed further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option B: Two-way Hamburger</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option C: One-way Dual Hamburger</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option D: Non-roundabout</td>
<td>Development of this option not to be progressed further</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Q3 | If you would like to make any comments on the proposals, please do so here. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>How did you hear about these proposals? Please tick all that apply.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letter &amp; leaflet through your door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q5 | **What best describes your interest in Birchley island?**
---|---
I am a resident who lives near Birchley island | 1
I am a representative of a business whose transport operations require access to Birchley island | 2
I am a user of Birchley island | 3
Other | 4

Q6 | **What is the postcode of your residence or business?**

Q7 | **If you wish to be kept informed by email of any progress on the proposals, please enter your email address here.**

Q8 | **Are you:**
---|---
Male | 1
Female | 2

Q9 | **How old are you? Please state your age in years.**

Q10 | **Which of the following groups do you consider you belong to?**
---|---|---
White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British | Pakistani | 1
White - Irish | Bangladeshi | 2
Gypsy or Irish Traveller | Sikh | 3
White European | Chinese | 4
Any other White background | Any other Asian background | 5
Mixed - White & Black Caribbean | Caribbean | 6
Mixed - White & Black African | African | 7
Mixed - White & Asian | Any other Black background | 8
Any other Mixed background | Arab | 9
Indian | Any other background | 10

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**

Please return this questionnaire by **Friday 16th January 2015** in the reply-paid envelope provided or take it to the following address:

Transportation Planning, Regeneration & Economy, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, B69 3DE.

Alternatively, you can complete an online version at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/birchleyisland](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/birchleyisland).
Appendix B  Birchley Island Consultation Leaflet

Where can you find out more?

This leaflet can only give a brief outline of each option. Plans showing the two options in more detail can be viewed at Sandwell Council House during normal office hours until January 16th 2015. Officers will be able to answer any questions you might have.

Alternatively, you can contact the Transportation Planning team at Sandwell MBC on 0121 569 4201/4889/4849/4249 or transport@sandwell.gov.uk for more details regarding the proposals.

If you would like a copy of this information in a format more suited to your needs, please contact us using the details opposite.

Getting to Sandwell Council House

You can travel to Sandwell Council House using bus services 4, 4H, 4M, 19, 20, 67, 89, 103, 121, 122, 128, 287.

Sandwell & Dudley railway station is 10 minutes walk from the building.

Cycle and car parking is available at the Freeth Street entrance.

Journey planning options can be found at www.travelwisewestmidlands.org.uk.

The Ordnance Survey mapping included in this publication is provided by Sandwell MBC under licence from the Ordnance Survey in order to fulfil a function as Planning Authority. Persons viewing this mapping should contact Ordnance Survey to license their use. Ordnance Survey mapping for their own use.
We want your views

Sandwell Council is developing a scheme for Blichtley Island, the junction of the A4123 and A4034, which also has a short link road to M5 junction 2. The junction acts as a major “gateway” to Sandwell from the M5 and also provides access to Wolverhampton, Birmingham and Dudley.

A consultation exercise on four scheme options was carried out during April 2014 in order to find out how people and organisations that use the junction could be affected. The consultation survey also revealed the issues that people wanted an improved junction to address, for example: queue reduction, good cycle and pedestrian facilities, improved safety.

Scheme options not to be developed further

A stated on the consultation materials Sandwell Council publicised during April 2014, the development of underpass and flyover options has not been progressed. This is because of expense, technical and land-take issues.

Option A - Minimum Modifications

- No impact on journey costs compared with the existing situation.
- Queue reduction in journey costs would be less than options B and C.
- Overall level of satisfaction with option A less than for other options.

Option B - Two-way Hamburger

Option A plus Wolverhampton Road (“Hamburger”) passing through the junction in both directions next to the electricity primary sub-station.

- This arrangement would perform the best of all the options in terms of reducing queues, improving safety and providing good cycle and pedestrian facilities.
- The previous consultation revealed that around 55% of survey respondents were satisfied with this arrangement.

Option C - One-way Dual Hamburger

Option A plus “Hamburger” option (northbound lanes only) linking Wolverhampton Road and the link from M5 junction 2 to Wolverhampton Road and Churchbridge.

- This arrangement would perform the second best of all the options in terms of reducing queues, improving safety and providing good cycle and pedestrian facilities.
- The previous consultation revealed that around 50% of survey respondents were satisfied with this arrangement.

What happens next?

The responses to this consultation will be presented to Sandwell Council’s Cabinet in February 2015 along with the full details of the traffic analysis. A preferred option will then be chosen. Following this, a business case will be submitted to the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Only a scheme with a strong business case is likely to attract funding.

Please return your questionnaire by January 16th 2015.