



Executive
13th November 2006

**Report from the Director of
Environment and Culture**

For Action

Wards Affected:
Dudden Hill/Harlesden/Willesden
Green

Church End Regeneration & Transportation Consultation

Forward Plan Ref: E&C -06/07 013

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The Council has undertaken consultation on a set of physical regeneration planning proposals for the Church End area during October 2006. At the same time council officers consulted local people on a number of highway proposals to improve bus services and create a new development site at the heart of Church End. This report summarises both the transport and the regeneration proposals, and local community reaction to them. It proposes that the council proceed with the Transportation proposals using government funding and works to implement the planning proposals as set out in the report.

2.0 Recommendations

That the Executive:

- 2.1. Agree the proposals as set out in paragraphs 3.13 – 3.22 of this report as informal planning guidance;
- 2.2. Instructs the Director of Environment and Culture to bring forward a report on the disposal of the land at Mayo Road; and
- 2.3. Notes the procedure being followed for the procurement of the highway works and agrees to proceed with the transportation improvements as set out in paragraphs 3.5 – 3.12.

3.0 Detail

Purpose of this report

- 3.1 Council officers have been working on bringing forward a number of proposals that would bring about the regeneration of the heart of Church End. They amount to a package of potential development and highway proposals that in combination are intended to lift the area. There are two key strands: a set of highway proposals that central government have agreed to fund and a set of planning development proposals.
- 3.2 The highway proposals are intended to improve bus services within the area and create a town centre site for redevelopment by reducing part of Church Road South (currently a dual carriageway) in size including the large roundabout at the junction of Neasden Lane and Church Road South. Traffic studies have demonstrated that it is possible to reduce the road and roundabout without significantly affecting traffic movements.
- 3.3 The planning proposals are housing led developments that as a consequence provide new shops, a new market square, new jobs and in a new park and games area. It is your officers' view that this beneficial regenerative development will not occur without the housing developments creating value. The other benefits of the housing development are the provision of much needed affordable housing, although the emphasis in this area is on the creation of homes for sale. The quantity of housing proposed fits well into the Local Development Framework growth area concept agreed by members at Executive on 9th October 2006 (Church End is designated as a housing growth area).

History

- 3.4 The Planning Service has been working with Fortunegate Community Housing (part of Catalyst Housing Group) who own significant areas of land in the Church End area to draw up regeneration proposals for sites in Church End area since Officers reported to planning committee in March 2005 and Executive in April 2005. Fortunegate has been already redeveloped most of the Resiform estate in Church End and is constructing the remainder of the new housing. Despite the significant improvement in the estate, there is evidence of deteriorating environmental quality in the wider area. In short the wider area needs significant new investment if its decline is to be halted. In October this year, the Planning Service reported to planning committee to inform members of the proposals and the initial consultation planned.

Transportation Improvement Proposals

- 3.5 The Council has secured £2 million of Growth Area Funding (GAF) from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to improve public transport links. GAF monies were bid for by the council in 2005/6 in order to assist in the provision of new housing. It was recognised by DCLG that improved linkages into and out of the area were important to attract new housing and other investment for the benefit of local residents. The GAF funding must be spent by March 2008 and if this money is to be spent before

that date, the detailed design must be completed very soon so that the construction works can be delivered to programme.

Summary of Transport Proposals

3.6 The improvement of public transport will make a vital contribution towards the regeneration objectives for the area. The £2 million The following improvements are proposed for the area (see appendix 2 for a map of these proposals):

- Improved Public Transport Links – New Bus Stops and Bus stands will allow the extension of bus routes 6 and 98 from Willesden Bus Garage, and the extension of route 92 via Neasden Station
- Better use of the road space – narrowing the dual carriage way road and roundabout to make more space for pedestrians
- Reducing the roundabout creates a larger development site at Church Road car park (site F).
- Improved Pedestrian and Cycle facilities – new crossing facilities and new high quality footways and cycleways.
- New On-Street parking – on both Church Road and High Road set back bays will be created for parking.

3.7 The transport proposals were agreed by DCLG after the council bid for GAF monies in 2005. DCLG will pay the £2m total cost of the highway works as set out in the council's GAF agreement and summarised above. It cannot be used for other works and the council will lose any monies not claimed for by March 2008. The works have been carefully costed by outside consultants. Included in those costs are significant contingencies that will allow for any cost overruns. Unlike more difficult projects involving land acquisition and complex structures, such as the Stadium Access Corridor this is altogether less complex a project. Officers are therefore confident that risks of any overspend are minimised. In the unlikely event of cost overrun then various of the many elements that make up the package of proposals could be re-evaluated and amended. The council also has S106 non car access funds from existing and emerging projects that could deal with any future funding gaps.

Procurement of Highway Works

3.8 The transportation improvements require various works to be carried out to the highway, which must be completed by March 2008 in order to meet the DCLG funding deadline. The estimated value of the works is £1.2m. As these are standard works, they fall within the terms of the council's highway maintenance term contract, as approved by the Executive on 28th May 2003. It is proposed that these works are "called off" under the terms of this contract. There is therefore no need to go through a separate procurement exercise for the main highway works, which will greatly assist in achieving the DCLG deadline and will allow more flexibility to meet the budget. The Transportation Unit will supervise the works and their fees, together with the highway work costs, can be properly recovered from DCLG under the terms of the GAF agreement.

- 3.9 The outline design was prepared by JMP Consulting, which submitted the lowest cost quotation (£39,750) out of four returned tenders in respect of this work. A relatively minor amount of work (estimated to cost in the region of £20,000) will be required to convert the outline design to construction drawings and officers from the Transportation Unit will commission this as required in accordance with Standing Orders.
- 3.10 Other substantive costs will be incurred by statutory undertakers, installing traffic and pedestrian crossing signals and moving underground services as required. These works will be procured by the Transportation Unit, under their normal arrangements with the statutory undertakers. These costs are also recoverable from the agreed GAF funding.

Statutory Consents for Highway works

- 3.11 The works currently proposed to the highway do not involve closing the highway or changing the use of the highway. Therefore, there is no requirement for a stopping up order or any planning consent at this stage of the proposals. However, the Executive may wish to note that, in order for site F+ to be developed for non highway purposes, both a stopping up order and planning consent would be needed at that time.

Conclusions on Transport Proposals

- 3.12 The Transport proposals have been carefully costed and will be wholly paid for by central government. The transport improvements would be a very welcome improvement to local people and are an essential element of the vision for Church End which is outlined below.

Planning Proposals

- 3.13 As well as the highway improvements, a number of new developments are proposed that will kick start a new phase of regeneration in the area. These are set out below. The Executive are not asked to approve each of the schemes in detail but to support the broad approach of each scheme. Detailed proposals will then be presented at further Executive meetings or at Planning Committee as appropriate.
- 3.14 A number of developments are proposed that are linked together to form a comprehensive package to uplift Church End. These include:
- A brand new park and sports facilities;
 - New shops and space for a market square;
 - New architect designed homes mostly for sale;
 - New jobs; and
 - Improved health facilities.
- 3.15 These developments will also help the remaining existing businesses in the area through bringing in new residents with money to spend locally. To assist in the achievement of these aims, the following developments are proposed:

Mayo Road (Site A on map in appendix 1)

- 3.16 A development of mainly family housing is proposed on the underused and insecure open space at Mayo Road. This small strip of open space is not overlooked and has suffered a number of crimes and anti-social acts. The objective is to develop the site for housing and replace the open space that is lost with a new park for the heart of Church End, funded by the housing development (see below). The Council has been working with St Mary's School and Fortunegate to construct a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) adjacent to the school which can be used by both the school and the local community outside of school hours. This would be substituted for the existing play area designated to the school, the licence for the use of which would be surrendered. This was originally proposed on the Mayo Road open space but the school would much prefer it to be located on part of the old cemetery land which would also be incorporated into the new park. This is because it can be located next to an existing playground and would be better overlooked. It also has benefits in terms of public access. The part of the old cemetery it could be located on has no remaining memorials. The MUGA will be paid for out of a successful £100,000 BIG Lottery bid, but must be started before March 2007 in order to secure this funding. No interred remains would be disturbed.
- 3.17 Officers will bring forward proposals for the disposal of the Mayo Road open space to Fortunegate Community Housing. Fortunegate are an important regeneration partner in the area and are key to the successful implementation of the wider regeneration 'masterplan'. Future reports to Executive will show the benefits if disposed to Fortunegate.

New Park at St Mary's (Site B on map in appendix 1)

- 3.18 Part of the proceeds of the housing development on Mayo Road open space will pay for the creation of a new park on land which is currently part of the St Mary's Cemetery (also known as Willesden Old Cemetery) and partly on housing amenity land to the front of Church Road. For the avoidance of doubt, the proposal does not include St Mary's church yard itself, but the southern part of the non-consecrated, council-owned cemetery (see site B on plan at appendix 1). The new park would be situated on the part of the cemetery with fewer memorials, most of which are very old. The memorials affected would be relocated to the rear of the cemetery and incorporated into a proper setting. The cemetery has not been used for new burials for over 100 years although some existing family plots may have been re-used subsequently. It is expected that any rights, claims or interests in the graves in this section of the old cemetery can be resolved but plans may need to be revisited if rights are claimed. This part of the proposed new park would be used for passive recreation (aside from the MUGA). A new play area would be located on the former housing amenity land. The proposals would provide much needed amenity space for residents and visitors alike. It would create a new park at the heart of Church End. If members are minded to support the general idea of re-using this part of the cemetery, officers will carry out the necessary statutory consultation required before memorials could be relocated. It is expected that any rights, claims or interests in the graves in this section of the

old cemetery can be dealt with. Should there be significant concern raised then this matter will be reported to the Executive.



Redevelopment of Church End Local Centre & Car Park (Site F and F+ on map in appendix 1)

- 3.19 An architectural competition has been held by Fortunegate to appoint architects to work up initial proposals for this site. This site is planned to be one of the first sites to be developed, and the proposals include new housing, new public space for the re-location of the market into a new market square (from its current temporary location on the car park) and new shops at ground floor level. Development could potentially rise to up to 7 storeys, although this would only form a small proportion of the development, with the majority taking the form of 4/5 storeys. The proposals could redevelop the northern area of shops, or a new development could be fitted in to avoid selective replacement. Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers would be required where a more comprehensive approach is taken. This will be part of the next stage in developing proposals and will be reported back to members as any scheme is progressed.

Former White Hart Hotel & Church of Miracles Signs & Wonders (Site E-map in appendix 1)

- 3.20 An application has already been approved on this site, not in connection with the regeneration proposals. The application was for development up to 6 storeys including an indoor market, 61 residential units and car parking. It is still hoped that this site could be included as part of the regeneration proposals.

Asiatic Carpets Warehouse (Site D-map in appendix 1)

- 3.21 Mixed use development would be supported on this site, creating new industrial/business units facing the existing industrial units to the east of the

site, with residential development using the rest of the site. There is the potential to create a courtyard in the centre creating a pleasant public and residential amenity space.

Ebony Court & Vicarage (Site C on map in appendix 1)

- 3.22 This site is considered suitable for family housing to the north of the site, and for mainly flats to the south of the site nearer to the roundabout. The vicarage would be moved to land adjacent to St Mary's Church freeing up a significant sized development site.

Consultation

- 3.23 The above proposals and the associated transport improvement proposals were consulted upon in the local area during October 2006. The Council sent out leaflets and questionnaires attached at appendices 3 and 4 and held an exhibition at Fortunegate's Offices on Saturday 14th October and Monday 16th October, displaying the proposals and talking to residents (approximately 30 people attended over the 2 days). There was also a public meeting on the evening of 17th October in the new community centre in Church End which was attended by 16 people (3 of which were councillors). Concerns were raised over the creation of a new park on part of the old cemetery land and also over the development of the vicarage site. Bringing new quality shops into the area was also raised as an important issue and concerns over safety and security were raised.

- 3.24 The planning service also presented the regeneration proposals at both the Harlesden Area Consultative Forum (ACF) on 3rd October and at Willesden ACF on 10th October.

- 3.25 A summary of the responses and issues raised during the consultation period for the transport and regeneration proposals is set out below and full details of responses can be found at appendix 5. There were 67 returned regeneration questionnaires and the results are summarised below.

- The overwhelming majority of the respondents agreed that the Church End area outlined in the questionnaire needed improving (93% in favour).
- 73% of the respondents were broadly in favour of the regeneration proposals set out in the leaflet.
- 55% supported the building of a new multi use games area on land next to the school partly on old cemetery land (37% do not support this).
- 55% were in favour of a new park on part of the cemetery and other open space (36% do not support this)
- 79% support the development of new homes, shops and a new market on Church End car park site.
- 53% support proposals for the development of new housing at Ebony Court and the Vicarage (36% do not support this)
- 68% support the proposals for the redevelopment of Asiatic Carpets for housing and business units.

- 3.26 6 of the respondents out of 67 commented that they strongly disagree with the proposals to build on the cemetery land stating that the “dead should be left to lie in peace” or similar. One other respondent commented that the cemetery plot should be kept special as it enhances the feeling of the area. 9 people raised concerns about retaining the vicarage as it is important to keep a good clergyman in the area and it is a community resource.
- 3.27 63 transportation questionnaires were returned, which have been summarised at appendix 5. 83% of respondents were in favour of the transportation improvements proposed. Most of the concerns raised were regarding car parking, and that new development would increase demand for car parking in the area. 8 people thought that the level of car parking proposed was inadequate.
- 3.28 All comments have been summarised and responses to these are set out in Appendix 5 (note: larger A3 copies of detailed regeneration questionnaire results to be distributed at meeting). Your officers conclude that there is broad support for the general thrust of the transport and regeneration proposals.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Transportation proposals are paid for completely out of GAF funding. Costs can be comfortably contained within existing GAF budgets. Otherwise there is an opportunity to amend the scheme (funding is on the basis of a set of proposals and not on the detailed execution of every part of them) or to bring in available S106 resources to cover any shortfall.
- 4.2 Around £20,000 has been spent and about £50,000 expenditure has been committed to this project, which could be at risk of claw back if the Executive did not wish to proceed. Expenditure to date has included work on the outline design of the transport proposals, topographical and services surveys and public consultation. The grant agreement contains standard breach of conditions clauses which set out the circumstances under which the grant would have to be repaid if the works are not delivered. These are standard conditions and the risks of breaking these are considered to be low.
- 4.3 If the total cost of the works were to exceed grant availability we would seek to agree with DCLG a reduction in the specification for works in order to meet the available budget. In the light of comments in the main report we consider this outcome to be highly unlikely. In addition to this, the use of term contractors to undertake the works will allow more flexibility in tailoring the works to meet the budget.
- 4.4 The Council has landholdings in the area but it should also be made clear that the proposed informal guidance should be considered on its planning and regenerative merits and that the Council’s position as land owner should not influence any decision made on planning grounds.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The proposals set out above are intended to form informal planning guidance and this will not carry as much weight in planning terms as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). However, the guidance will assist in indicating to developers the forms of development that officers are likely to be able to recommend to members on the various sites but obviously any planning applications would have to be considered on their merits. Due to time constraints there is not sufficient time to undertake the formal process that would be required to produce SPD and your Officers feel that the initial priority is to bring forward development on key sites and these are either in the Council's or Fortunegate's ownership. Where other sites fail to come forward we will produce SPDs to enhance the legal status of guidance on such sites and will be producing an SPD for the wider area at a later date.
- 5.2 The Council should consider CPO powers as a last resort to achieve its redevelopment objectives. CPO powers will only be exercised where a development partner meets all the cost of acquisition and so indemnifies the Council. It should also be noted that it is not essential to have adopted a SPD on a particular site in order to make use of CPO powers.
- 5.3 The reuse of land which has actually been used for burial purposes will be subject to the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Churches, Places of Religious Worship and Burial Grounds) Regulations 1950 as to the disposal of monuments. These Regulations provide for the publishing of notices in a local newspaper and putting a notice in the burial ground of the intention to remove the monuments. This gives the personal representatives or relatives of any deceased person the opportunity to undertake the removal of the memorial themselves.
- 5.4 The total estimated cost of the design work is below the threshold at which it would be subject to the EU Regulations in full but the general principles of transparency and non-discrimination will apply. The contract for the design work is a Low Value contract under standing orders and three quotes are required to be obtained before the contract is awarded.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 Brent's Statement of Community Involvement (adopted in June 2006) highlights the importance of engaging the public in the preparation of planning applications and planning policy documents. An inclusive approach is being undertaken to ensure that different groups have the opportunity to participate and are not disadvantaged in the process.
- 6.2 In addition to this an INRA has been completed for the transportation proposals, which considers diversity issues and implications of the proposals. It is considered that the transportation improvements would have a positive impact for the elderly, single parents and people of black Caribbean and black African origin, who have lower than average car ownership.

7.0 Staffing Implications

7.1 None

8.0 Environmental Implications

8.1 The creation of a new park and the redevelopment of underused sites would improve the environment of the area, although a small area of open space will be lost at Mayo Road, the land is not currently used by the school as it is insecure and suffers from vandalism and general crime.

Background Papers

- Executive Report 12th April 2005
- Planning Committee Report 16th March 2005
- DCLG Grant Conditions Document, 2006

Contact Officers

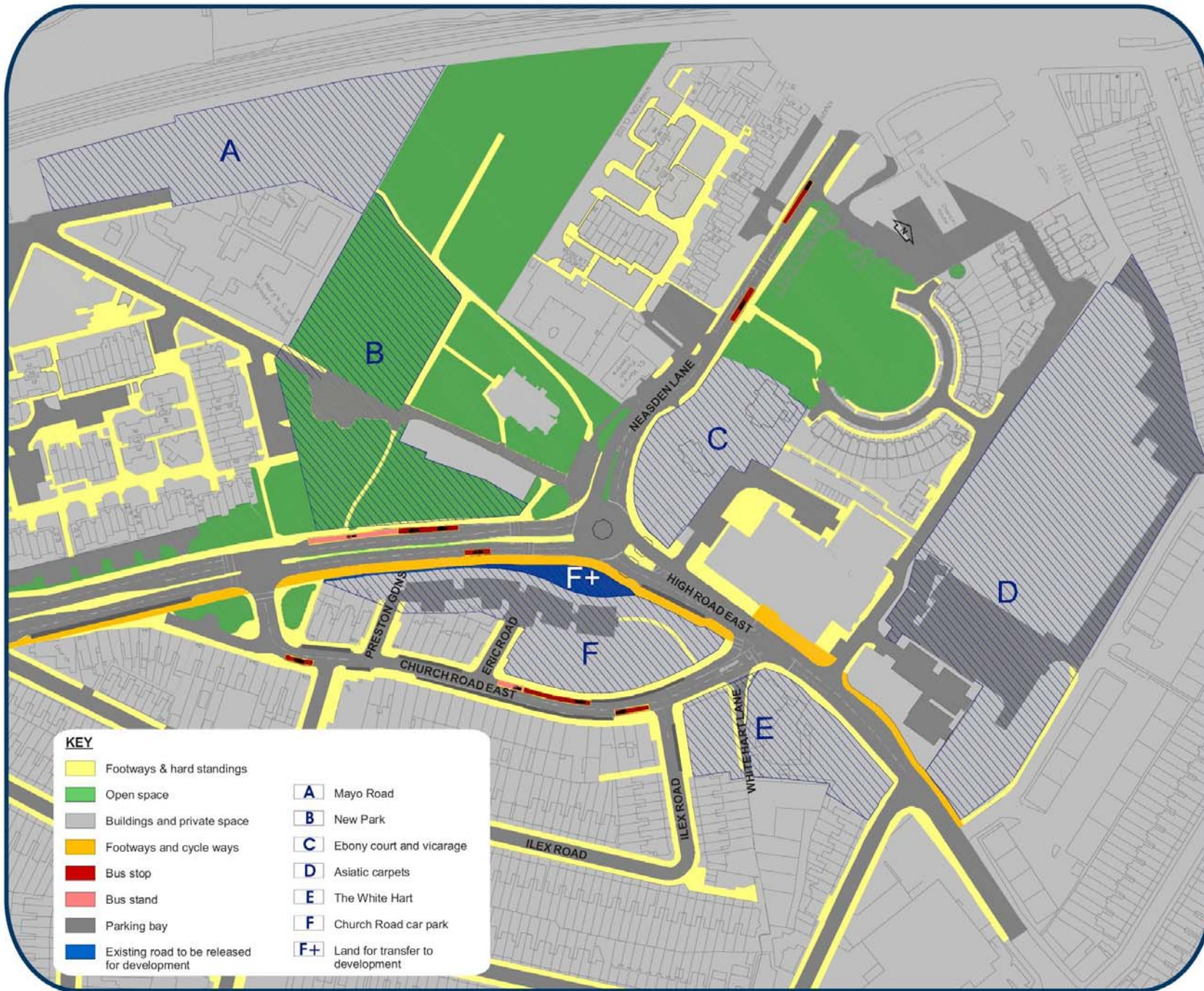
Mary-Ann Bye
Planning Service
Brent House
349 High Road
Wembley
Middlesex HA9 6BZ
Telephone: 020 8937 5368
Email: mary-ann.bye@brent.gov.uk

Richard Saunders
Director of Environment & Culture

Chris Walker
Director of Planning

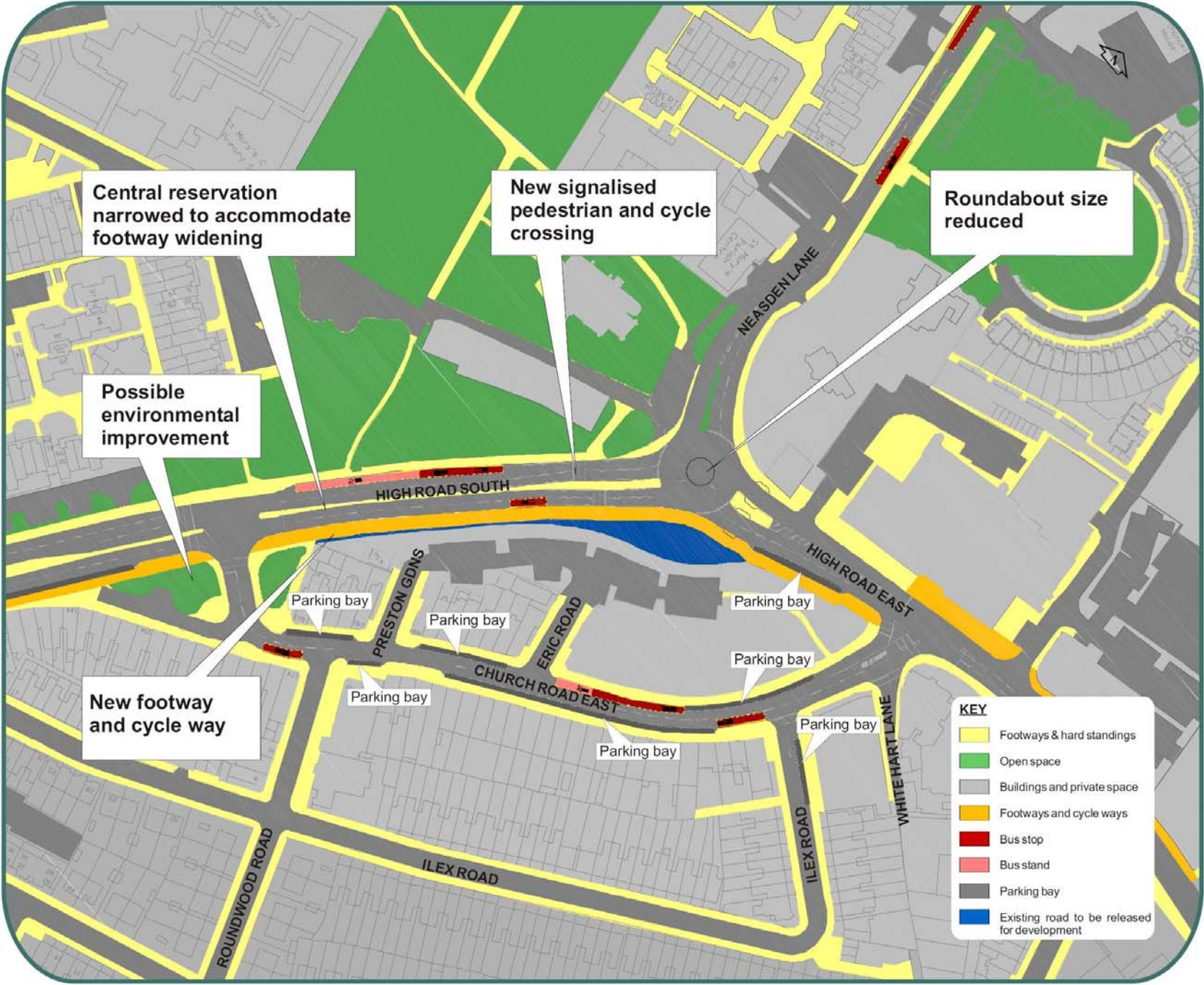
APPENDIX 1 – Location Map of Sites

(colour copies will be distributed at the meeting)



APPENDIX 2 – Location map of Transport Proposals

(colour copies will be distributed at the meeting)



Central reservation narrowed to accommodate footway widening

New signalised pedestrian and cycle crossing

Roundabout size reduced

Possible environmental improvement

New footway and cycle way

Parking bay

Parking bay

Parking bay

Parking bay

Parking bay

Parking bay

Parking bay

- KEY**
- Footways & hard standings
 - Open space
 - Buildings and private space
 - Footways and cycle ways
 - Bus stop
 - Bus stand
 - Parking bay
 - Existing road to be released for development

APPENDIX 3 – Regeneration Leaflet

(colour copies will be distributed at the meeting)

APPENDIX 4 – Transportation Improvements Leaflet
(colour copies will be distributed at the meeting)

APPENDIX 5 – Responses to Public Consultation

(note: larger A3 copies of regeneration questionnaire responses to be distributed at meeting)

CHURCH END CONSULTATION TRANSPORTATION SUMMARY

In total there are 63 questionnaire responses.

Questionnaire Responses to Question 1

Question	In Favour		Against		No Opinion	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Are you in favour of the proposals to improve transportation in Church End?	48	83	7	12	3	5

N.B. Questionnaires that did not answer either in favour, against or no opinion are classified as missing and not included when calculating the percentages. Instead percentages have been calculated from only those that answered the question.

Questionnaire Responses to Question 2

By what means of transport do you normally travel in this area?	No.	%
Car / Van / Motorcycle	28	45
Lorry	0	0
Bus	44	70
Tube / Train	19	30
Bicycle	4	7
Walk	31	50

Respondents View on Question 1 by Transport Mode

Question	In Favour		Against		No Opinion	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Are you in favour of the proposals to improve transportation in Church End?						
Who Travel By Private Vehicle	23	88	2	8	1	4
Who Travel By Bus	35	83	5	12	2	5
Who Travel By Tube or Train	18	100	0	0	0	0
Who Travel By Bicycle	3	100	0	0	0	0
Who Travel By Foot	23	79	4	14	2	7

Questionnaire Responses to Question 4

Do you live, work or own a business along the route or in adjacent roads or are you just visiting?	No.	%
Live	55	27
Work	6	10
Own a business	2	3
Visiting / Shopping	10	16

Comments on Scheme with 2 or more responses

Comments	No. of responses	Response / Observation
The proposals will increase the demand for parking. Area may require permit parking. Provisions for parking appear in adequate.	8	The most appropriate method of controlling parking has yet to be decided. Any proposals would be consulted on separately. All residential developments will be required to provide their own parking facilities. Under the proposed arrangements there will be fewer public spaces available, however these spaces will be of a higher quality and better managed.
All Improvements to the current public transport is welcomed	7	Comment noted
Bus route 92 should be extended.	5	Comment noted
A CCTV system is needed to reduce speeding along High Road as well as monitor Fly Tipping in various areas.	2	A CCTV system is being considered for the area, although there is no funding currently available.
Why are you replanting more trees on High Road? The trees currently obscure the street lighting for pedestrian at night.	2	Our aspiration is to replace every tree removed with two additional trees. These would be placed in locations suitable to the new layout and should not reduce the effectiveness of street lighting.
A wider variety of high street supermarkets/stores are needed such as ASDA, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Boots.	2	Comment noted
Residents are concerned about how much parking will cost.	2	No decision has been made, whether parking is to be charged. However, should charges be introduced the charge would be set appropriately in order not to discourage visitor parking.
Church Road and High Road East should be made one-way in order to reduce congestion.	2	The current traffic operation has been studied under the existing and proposed scenarios, in both cases the results showed the road network operating significantly below saturation. Therefore there is no cause to change the current traffic operation.
The footway needs to be upgraded as many slabs are completely broken or damaged	2	A newly constructed southern footway along Church Road and High Road is proposed. In addition, the footway at identified locations will be widened in the form of build-outs.