

## GROWTH & REGENERATION Economy of Place



### Decision Report for Highway Tree Removal Proposals

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**To:** Director: Economy of Place

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**Highway tree removal proposal:**

A4018 Passage Road Transport Improvement Project

**Project summary:**

This work is the first phase of a series of transport improvements in preparation for the thousands of new homes that are being built nearby in South Gloucestershire as part of the Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood on the former airfield in Filton.

This project will help the reliability of the Number 1 bus and support additional passenger journeys from the new housing developments in South Gloucestershire.

Work has started along Passage Road, between Crow Lane roundabout and Charlton Road, to improve the sustainable transport network by building:

- A segregated two-way cycle lane on the eastern side
- Peak-hour (7-10am and 4.00-6.30pm) bus lanes running in either direction
- Relocation of the pedestrian crossing by the roundabout to be closer to the Knole Lane-Crow Lane desire line
- A new pedestrian crossing to the north of Dragons Wells Road

**Removal of trees**

In order to create space for the cycleway and relocated central reservation, 21 trees need be removed from the footways and central reservation. Of these, 17 are small (trunk circumference approximately the same as a lamppost), believed to be around 10 years old. Some smaller self-sown vegetation will also be removed. As part of the new scheme design, 29 new trees will be planted.

**Consultation**

Consultation on the tree removal was previously completed through the only means available at the time, within the public consultation on the whole scheme, which was signed off by the Transport Cabinet Member in 2021.

On 23 November 2023, new legislation was introduced (Section 115 of the Environment Act 2021) which implemented a statutory duty on local authorities to consult with residents on the felling of street trees where no exemption applies. This project falls within this requirement. These new rules only came into force once we had progressed the project further into the start of delivery, resulting in this tree felling consultation being undertaken whilst the project has started to be constructed.

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The consultation ran from Monday 24 March 2025 to Monday 21 April 2025 and was advertised on the council website: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/ask/projects/tree-management>.

Notices were also put on or near to (where direct display was not possible) the street trees affected, and copies of the notices were available at the council offices for the 28-day period.

### **Consultation Summary**

The consultation has now completed, and 35 comments were submitted following the publication of the notice.

The comments have been categorised into 7 themes and summarised as shown in the table below:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>% of responses</b>
Opposed	Object to cutting down saplings to build roads. Why plant trees if you are just going to cut them down. We need more trees, not taking down trees that are finally growing and thriving.	35%
Negative opinions of wider project	Unacceptable- the bus lane and the cycle lane are unnecessary and is causing more congestion than it did in the first place. Why is all this work being done when there is only one bus along this route? Residents don't want the bus lane and the cycleway will never be used.	26%
Supportive	Supportive of the improved bus and cycle lanes, and very supportive of the additional tree planting to replace those felled. This looks like a very sensible plan of action – the trees being removed are being replaced and none look like established growth.	18%
Waste of Money	The whole scheme is a waste of our money for a bus lane and cycle path that is hardly ever used. The whole scheme is a total waste of money and is causing traffic congestion and increased pollution. The money should be invested in more urgent facilities.	18%
Wildlife Concerns	Concerns around felling trees during nesting season. Concerns that there was no mention regarding protected species surveys being undertaken. Environmental concerns about using the felled trees as biomass – should offset the CO2 created.	18%

	Don't fell the trees because they absorb the pollution and give us oxygen, as well as host a variety of insects & wildlife which would take a hundred years to regain.	
Management of new trees	Could the trees be dug up and replanted elsewhere, rather than planting new trees. Use native and local species that are high quality for wildlife. Ensure new trees are cared for (watered etc.) as concerns around previous trees dying.	21%
Plant more trees	More trees should be planted, in addition to current plans.	12%

*Note: percentages may not add up to 100% as comments can be allocated to more than one theme.*

### **Consultation Outcome**

Having considered all comments received, officers remain of the opinion that the proposed tree felling is necessary and therefore it is recommended that the proposals should proceed.

### **Reasoning**

The trees need to be removed to create space for the cycleway along the eastern side of Passage Road. The central reservation is also being removed (to create space for the north and south bus lanes) and therefore these trees also need to be removed.

The trees cannot be relocated as the success rate of relocated trees can be quite low, and they require a high level of extensive maintenance to become established. By planting trees that have been grown in nurseries, it is hoped that they have a better chance of becoming established and thrive, subsequently providing the benefits that they do more quickly. They will be planted and 'handed over' to Bristol City Council with initial establishment and watering maintenance in place.

The specific trees in question have been considered for being relocated. However, this is not considered likely to be successful (for the reasons given above) or cost effective. The programme for the construction works means that the trees would need to be removed over a year before the land for replanting them would be available. During this time, the council would need to pay for these trees to be put in pots, stored somewhere, and maintained to ensure that they are fit to be replanted, which would be far from certain.

The felling will be scheduled outside of bird nesting seasons where possible. Should felling be necessary within the nesting season, the trees will first be examined by an ecologist to assess whether felling can take place, with felling delayed if any bird nesting is identified.

We will endeavour to prioritise composting as the method of disposing the trees being removed. The Council's tree contractors aim to generate logs and woodchip, where this is feasible.

The species of the new trees to be planted is yet to be determined and will be of native or naturalised species, appropriate for the area.

**Approvals:**

**Director: Economy of Place**

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Heam" followed by a checkmark. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025