

Paston Parkway dualling: Statement on landscaping, April 2008

The Paston Parkway dualling scheme was completed on the 28th February 2008 and the contract has entered a 12 month period of 'Maintenance'. Maintenance is defined as the period whereby the Council can call back the contractor to correct any defects and additional non-defect works can be instructed.

With regard to landscaping, 300+ trees have been planted and all of the compensatory planting presented at the public exhibition and subsequent planning application has been completed.

Further to concerns raised by local residents a review of the compensatory planting has been undertaken and the key findings are as follows:

- In terms of habitat, there is a good variety of areas where there are well-established trees, there are single trees growing in open ground, there is grass/scrubland and areas of established ground vegetation such as brambles;
- From observation, it is apparent that some areas of the fence are better screened than others, however, it is difficult to form a balanced view (given the existing landscaping is almost entirely deciduous) during the winter/spring months;
- The matter of compensatory planting is complicated by the presence of a high pressure gas main which precludes planting on a five meter strip directly above the pipe. This necessitated that the original planting schedule focused on municipal land outside of the tree belt area;
- The recently planted areas will take between 5 years and 10 years to reach full impact;
- With regard to noise attenuation, the density of the tree belt is not a significant factor. The acoustic fence has been designed to mitigate opening and future traffic noise levels in isolation taking into consideration the surrounding terrain.

The Council has listened to residents concerns and reviewed the findings of the landscaping review and proposes the following course of action:

1. A further review of the landscaping effect of screening will be undertaken in the summer when the canopy spread of mature trees can be assessed in context with the recently planted areas. This review will inform the final decision on whether any additional planting is required. The Council has set aside a budget for additional landscaping should it be required.
2. A number of 'before' noise surveys were undertaken during the summer of 2007 to inform the fence design, these surveys will be repeated during the summer 2008 and the results will be available for public scrutiny.

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