

Bridgend town centre: Access survey Consultation report

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1. Overview

A public consultation reviewing the perceived impact of reintroducing traffic to Queen Street, Dunraven Place and Market Street in Bridgend town centre was undertaken over a 12 week period from 8 August 2016 and 24 October 2016. The consultation received 2,437 responses from a combination of the consultation survey, engagement events held across the county borough and social media interactions. This paper details the analysis associated with the consultation.

2. Introduction

A public survey based on the perceived impact of reintroducing traffic into Bridgend town centre was conducted over a 12 week period. The survey was available to complete online through a link on the consultations page of the council's website¹ or by visiting www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation. Paper copies of the consultation were sent to 40 local businesses and were also made available at local libraries, the ten engagement stands, or alternatively, they could be sent directly to residents upon request in either English or Welsh. The content of the webpage remains available online.

In total there were 13 questions optional questions for the respondents to complete and all survey responses offered the option of anonymity. The council's standard set of equalities monitoring questions were also included at the end of the survey, as is now recommended good practice for all public facing surveys carried out by the council.

Comments regarding the consultation were also invited via letter, email and phone call.

3. Promotional tools and engagement methods

Details of the consultation were sent as part of a press release emailed to the following stakeholders; Bridgend business forum and business directory, councillors, Bridgend town and community council, members of the Local Service Board (LSB), the Youth Service Council (YSC), Bridgend Equality Forum (BEF), and local media outlets.

Residents who have previously stated an interest in receiving key consultations or expressed interest through the Citizens' Panel were sent a link to the survey to complete online.

Facebook and Twitter had been used to promote the consultation including a Facebook advert promoting the campaign.

¹<http://www1.bridgend.gov.uk/services/consultation/hub/shaping-bridgends-future.aspx>

3.1 Social media

The council tweeted its 7,932 @Bridgend CBC followers and posted to its 6,161 Facebook fans about the consultation on several occasions during the consultation period to help raise awareness.

One live social media debate was held with Darren Mepham, Chief Executive and Mark Shephard, Corporate Director – Communities on the 1 September 2016 held between 18:00 – 20:00. The event was promoted leading up to the debate to generate awareness and interest.

3.2 Local and national press

The consultation featured in the Glamorgan Gazette newspaper on the 11 August 2016 and 29 August 2016². Information on the consultation also featured in members' columns in local publications. Prior to the consultation launching the Glamorgan Gazette also released an article³.

The consultation received national interest after BBC Wales covered the story on television using a vox pop on 29 August 2016. The media outlet also wrote a supporting press release on their website⁴ including a link to the consultation webpage.

3.3 Online and paper survey

Paper copies of the survey were shared with local businesses as part of local press packs sent to encourage residents and tourists to respond to the survey. In total 40 businesses signed up to receive at least one press pack with over 3,000 paper copies being distributed.

The online survey gave respondents the ability to respond on a variety of devices including laptops and smart phones. The surveys were accessible by visiting www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation or by following the advertisement on Facebook.

A qualitative section within the survey allowed respondents to suggest any alternative considerations residents would like the council to review.

3.4 Community engagement stands

Ten community engagement stands were undertaken across three locations in Bridgend County Borough: a three day event at McArthur Glen's designer outlet, a three day event at Bridgend town centre market, followed by a three day event at Tesco Extra (Bridgend). All engagement stands were held between 10:00 – 15:00. A one day event held at Bridgend College's Freshers' Fayre was also attended on 6 September 2016. During the events passers-by were offered to take part in a straw poll to show if they agree or disagree with

² <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/bridgend-council-chief-plans-social-11814641>

³ <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/new-report-examine-partial-scraping-11379770>

⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-east-wales-37201604>

the proposal using coloured counters. Qualitative comments were also posted onto an A2 board for others to see. Paper surveys and business cards directing recipients to the online survey and online debate were also made available at the stands.

3.5 Bridgend Equality Forum and Bridgend Youth Cabinet

The consultation and engagement officer met with Bridgend Equality Forum members on two occasions. On 23 May 2016, the consultation team had a pre-consultation meeting with the members to gather views prior to creating engagement documentation to understand any underlying concerns that needed to be addressed as part of the consultation. A second meeting on 14 September 2016 was attended to promote the launch of the survey and encourage responses.

On 31 August 2016 the consultation, marketing and engagement assistant attended the Bridgend Youth Cabinet meeting to encourage its members to promote the consultation within their schools and with their peers. Particular focus was drawn to the fact the survey could be completed using smartphones and tablet devices.

4. Response rate

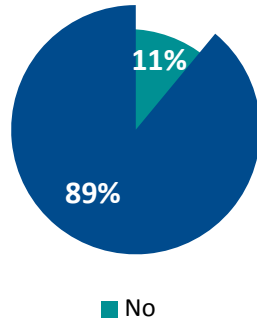
The response rate has been segregated into several areas: the consultation survey responses, comment cards received during community engagement stands and social media interactions.

- 2,437 responses to the consultation were received in total. Of the responses received, there were 1,221 online submissions and 803 paper versions of the survey returned. There were 151 social media interactions in total and 262 interactions received from the community engagement events.
- In total, there were 262 interactions at the community engagement events across the county borough.
- During the social media question and answer session there were a total of 4 interactions from Twitter and 147 interactions from Facebook, being seen a total of 8,562 times on Twitter and 12,069 times on Facebook respectively. During the consultation period there were a total of 151 interactions using social media.
- One email was received before the close of the survey. No comments were received by letter or telephone call.

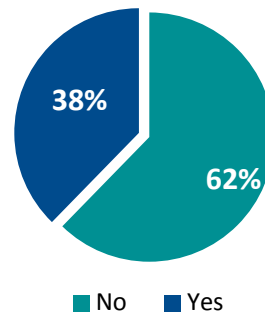
5. How effective was the consultation?

The consultation was conducted over a 12 week period in which a range of marketing methods were used to create awareness of the consultation and encourage members of the public to engage with the council. The social demographic data reflects a good cross section of the county borough's population (1,737 respondents lived in Bridgend and 225 outside the area).

Are you a resident of the county borough?



Are you a parent?

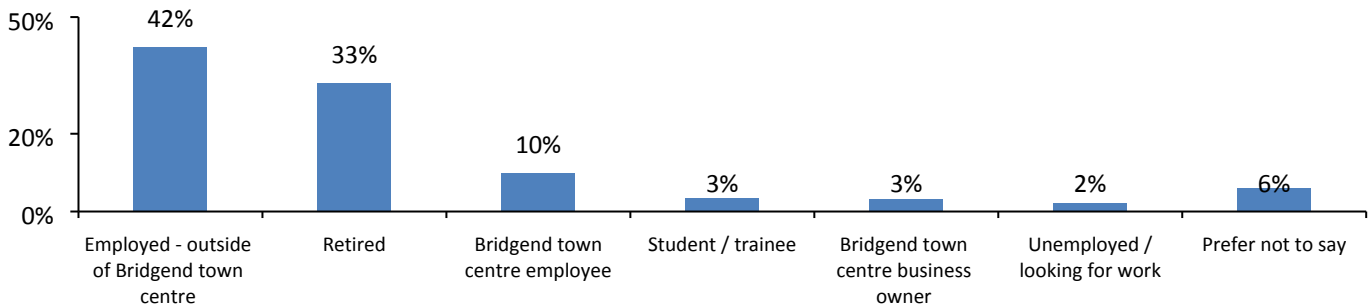


In total there were 2,024 responses received to the question 'are you a resident of the county borough?' Nine in ten (89%) identified they were currently living within the county borough with the remaining 11 per cent residing elsewhere. Of the 1,956 responses to the 'do you have a caring responsibility for a child/children?' two in five (38%) identified themselves as parents. Of those with a caring responsibility for a child, the most popular age group was 6 – 11 years of age with two in five (41%).

	0 – 5 years old	6 – 11 years old	12 – 16 years old	17+	Total
#	276	298	203	187	729
%	37.9	40.9	27.8	25.7	100.0

Three in five (59%) of the respondents to the survey identified themselves as working or in training, one in three (33%) were retired and two per cent of respondents classified themselves as looking for work.

Employment status



Age	Under 18	18 - 24	25 – 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65+	PNTS	Total
#	21	95	224	312	395	426	454	19	1,946
%	1.1	4.9	11.5	16.0	20.3	21.9	23.3	1.0	100

When analysing responses by age, the response rate for under 18's was too low to consider independently and as such the responses were combined with those aged between 18 – 24 to create an 'under 24' age category.

When asked respondents completing the survey were most likely to visit the town centre on a weekly basis (39.1%), followed by monthly (29.2%).

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	PNTS	Total
#	296	566	423	130	33	515
%	20.4	39.1	29.2	9.0	2.3	100.0

The paper and online surveys used as data collection methods were both developed using plain English to increase understanding.

Data validation measures have been undertaken to ensure that the same respondent could not submit more than one response by cross comparing the consultation response details. A sample of 2,024 is robust and is subject to a maximum standard error of ± 2.16 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level on an observed statistic of 50 per cent. Thus, we can be 95 per cent confident that responses are representative of those that would be given by the total adult population, if a census had been conducted, to within ± 2.16 per cent of the percentages reported. This means that if the total adult population of Bridgend had taken part in the survey and a statistic of 50 per cent was observed, we can be 95 per cent confident that the actual figure lies between 47.84 per cent and 52.16 per cent.

6. Headline figures

- 6.1 Approaching eight in ten (77.0%) of respondents agreed with the proposal against one in five (20.1%) respondents who disagreed. Tourists were even more supportive with 86 per cent selecting agree or strongly agree.
- 6.2 Of those who supported the proposal, three in four (74.1%) would like the roads to be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Full vehicle access was supported by the following demographic factors: residents (58.9%), tourists (73.5%), parents of young children (55.4%), respondents without young children (63.9%), disabled (61.7%) and non-disabled (60.5%).
- 6.3 One hour parking was the most popular response overall with over two in five (42.1%) selecting the option followed closely by 40 per cent selecting 30 minute parking bays.

- 6.4 Residents, regular visitors, respondents under 65, parents of young children and the disabled were all more likely to select one hour over 30 minute parking bays. Whilst tourists, non-frequent visitors, the elderly, respondents without children and the non-disabled preferred a 30 minute parking bay.
- 6.5 Over seven in ten (75.8%) thought the introduction of the proposal would have a positive impact on the town centre.

7. Question and Analysis - Consultation Survey

Section seven of the report looks at the questions asked in the consultation survey – with 2,024 respondents in total.

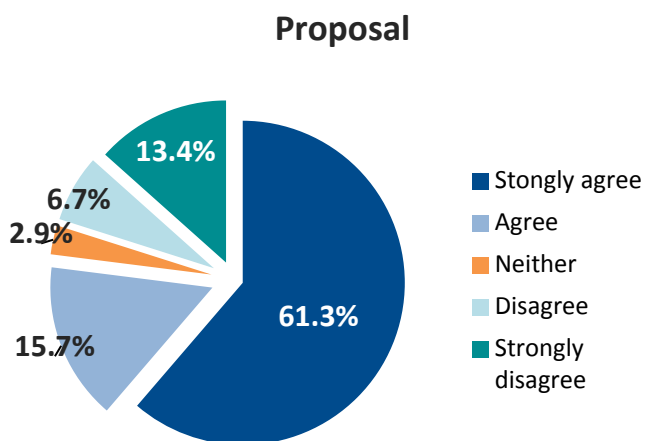
7.1 Please select a language to begin the survey.

Respondents to the consultation survey were initially asked which language they would like to complete the survey in. Overall 99 per cent of respondents selected English with one per cent selecting to complete the survey in Welsh.

Language	#	%
English	1,999	98.8
Welsh	25	1.2
Total	2,024	100

7.2 The proposal

7.2.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal?



The proposal was supported by over three in four respondents (77.0%). Of which, over half of all respondents (61.3%) strongly agreed with its introduction.

One in five (20.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal with the remaining 2.9 per cent selected neither option.

Tourists were even more supportive of the proposal's introduction with 86 per cent selecting agree or strongly agree.

Those who visit the town annually were the most likely group to support the reintroduction of traffic with more than four in five (83.9%) selecting agree or strongly agree. Those who visit Bridgend town centre weekly had the highest level of opposition (but still the majority supported the proposal) with 23 per cent.

By age group, those aged 25 - 34 had the lowest level of support for the proposal with 70.4 per cent – still a majority of support. Those aged between 65+ had the highest level of agreement with four in five respondents (83.9%).

Similarly, those who defined themselves as students had the lowest level of overall agreement where three in five (69.7%) supported the proposal against 90 per cent of Bridgend town centre business owners for the same measurement.

Respondents who identified themselves as disabled were more likely to support the survey with four in five (80.2%) against 76 per cent who have no disability.

The consultation received an email response from Guide Dogs Cymru “*Any scheme which requires them [blind and partially sighted people] to share an area with no clear physical separation of the road from the pavement is potentially dangerous. We do of course support the introduction of dropped kerbs to facilitate access by wheelchair users and other pedestrians, but these must be marked with the appropriate tactile paving. We appreciate that the business community see this differently, but we do not support a solution which puts people with sight loss, and other vulnerable pedestrians, including older people and children, at risk.*” Thus, the project would be supported providing appropriate tactile paving is introduced which the consultation document highlights that both options being considered by the council (option three and option four in the survey) will include tactile paving as standard.

Parents of young children supported the proposal with over seven in ten (73.2%), in comparison to respondents without children who were more likely to support the proposal with 79.0 per cent agreeing.

7.3 Introducing access at particular times

The second question in the survey asked respondents to choose one of four access options or to propose their own idea by selecting ‘other’. One option was not to introduce the proposal, under one in five (18%) selected this which verifies the previous question.

	Full time access	Do not introduce	Access before 6pm	Pedestrian only time (11am – 3pm)	Other	Total
#	1,192	352	196	176	44	1,960
%	60.8	18.0	10.0	9.0	2.2	100.0

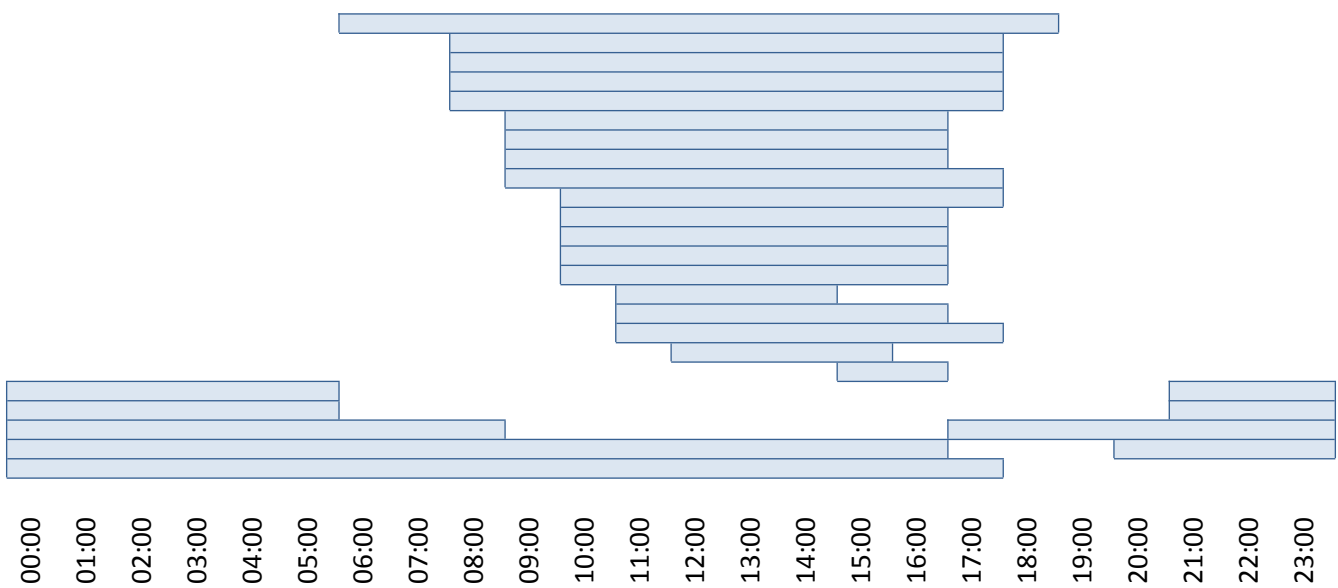
Excluding those who opposed the proposal the following percentages apply:

	Full time access	Access before 6pm	Pedestrian only time (11am – 3pm)	Other	Total
#	1,192	196	176	44	1,608
%	74.1	12.2	10.9	2.7	100.0

Over seven in ten (74.1%) of those who supported the proposal would like full time vehicle access.

The table below shows the proposed pedestrian times suggested by residents:

Table – proposed pedestrian times.



Other suggestions that did not specific regulated pedestrian times were:

Alternative suggestions	#
Pick up and disabled access only	2
Share space plan	1
No large vehicles after 9am	1
Different route	1
No weekend vehicle access	1
Delivery only between 8-10am and 3-6pm	1
Ped zone after 6pm on weekends	1

Full vehicle access was supported by the following demographic factors: residents (58.9%), tourists (73.5%), parents of young children (55.4%), respondents without young children (63.9%), disabled (61.7%) and non-disabled (60.5%).

Similarly, regardless of how often a respondent visited Bridgend town centre, full vehicle access was supported by the majority.

Less than half of those aged 25 – 34 year olds (48.9%) supported full time vehicle access however, this was still the highest responses. Seven in ten (71.5%) of those aged 65+ supported full time access.

Support for full time access by profession ranged from over half (52.3%) for students and trainees to nine in ten (90.6%) for Bridgend town centre business owners.

7.3 Parking / loading options

	One hour parking	30 minute parking	20 minute parking	Other	Total
#	821	777	180	171	1,949
%	42.1	39.9	9.2	8.8	100.0

All respondents were then asked about parking / loading bay options should the proposal be introduced. One hour parking was the most popular response overall with over two in five (42.1%) selecting this option.

Tourists were more likely to select 30 minute parking access (53.2%) against residents selecting one hour parking access (38.2%).

Those who visit the town centre annually would prefer 30 minute parking bays (53.8%), one hour parking bays were preferred by those who visit more frequently. Similarly those aged 65+ preferred 30 minute parking bays (48.5%) against all other age groups supporting one hour parking.

Town centre business owners and students / trainees were the only professions to select 30 minute parking bays (53.8% and 45.5%) over one hour parking bays (51.8% and 37.9%).

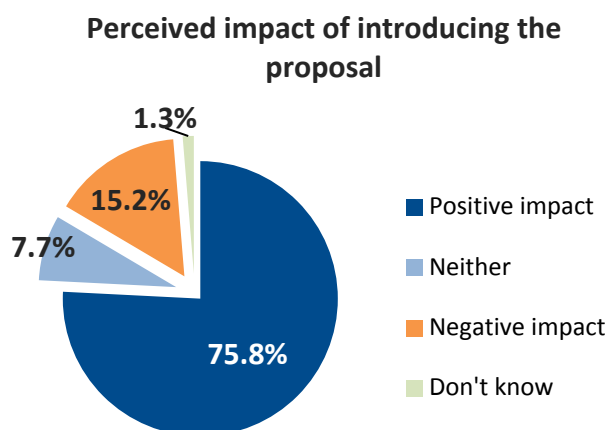
Those with children selected one hour parking bays (44.7%) whilst those without children preferred a 30 minute slot (42.2%). Similarly those with a disability were more likely to choose a one hour parking allowance (48.0%) against non-disabled residents who selected 30 minutes (41.8%).

Of those who selected 'other' there were 146 comments in total, of the 146 comments, 62 did not answer the question asked and as such were removed from the table provided below.

Alternative suggestions	#
No car parking	24
2 hours	14
Disabled parking only	12
No time limit	9
3 hours for disabled drivers, one hour for others	6
3 hours	4
Pick up and drop off only	4
1 – 2 hours	3
Up to 4 hours	2
Over 1 hour	2
1+ hours for disabled drivers	2
45 minutes	1
Longer for town centre workers	1

There were 24 responses stating that no car parking should be offered, the majority of whom (67%) did not support the introduction of the proposal. Two hour parking was selected by 14 respondents, followed by 12 respondents who believed there should only be disabled parking made available.

7.4 Overall impact



Over seven in ten (75.8%) thought the introduction of the proposal would have a positive impact on the town centre. All forms of further analysis found each sub-group (e.g. disabled respondents) believed as a majority that the introduction of the proposal would have a positive impact.

Respondents were then offered the opportunity to provide a qualitative response to the question. In total 579 individual comments across 11 themes included a response to the qualitative section. Each response received from all methods across the survey were read and subsequently themed. Each theme was then measured to provide a quantitative figure to the qualitative responses.

Key themes	#	%
		

Potential trade boost from introducing the proposal	149	25.7
Easier access will encourage more families and visitors	105	18.1
Fear surrounding potential accidents	89	15.4
The proposal will not produce the desired outcome(s)	73	12.6
The proposal will benefit disabled / elderly people accessing the town	58	10.0
Parking issues currently stop respondent using Bridgend town	30	5.2
The changes will have a positive impact	26	4.5
Trade would benefit from opening the closed shops	19	3.3
Respondent worried about environmental impact	15	2.6
The changes will have a negative impact	10	1.7
Other	5	0.9

One in four (26%) of the topic responses reference that the proposal will potentially boost trade, followed by almost one in five respondents believing the improved access will encourage more families and visitors (18%). The most popular negative response surrounding the proposal referenced fears around the safety of residents with one in seven (15%) highlighting this concern.

7.5 Final comments and alternatives.

The final question regarding the proposal specifically offered respondents the opportunity to add any comments regarding the survey or to propose alternative considerations. In total there were 1,313 valid theme responses to the question. Where responses to question four (section 7.4) were not appropriate the response was added to this section.

Key themes	#	%
Need to attract big retail names / increase variety of shops	173	13.2%
Not value for money / money should be spent elsewhere (or saved)	155	11.8%
Reduce parking rates / free parking	131	10.0%
Open up the town	124	9.4%
Do not allow traffic into the town or make any changes	87	6.6%
Create better access which is inclusive for all users	80	6.1%
Support of option three	59	4.5%
Suggested changes won't make a difference	55	4.2%
Spend money on making the town more appealing and cleaner	55	4.2%
Lower business rates	34	2.6%
Parking would need to be policed properly	34	2.6%
Changes would be too dangerous and unsafe	30	2.3%
The proposed route should be different / include more roads	28	2.1%
Support for option four	23	1.8%
Create better atmosphere in town	22	1.7%
More disabled parking bays	22	1.7%
Other	202	15.4%

8. Conclusion

A response rate of 2,024 to the survey questions is robust and is subject to a maximum standard error of ± 2.16 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level. This means that if the

total population of the area had taken part in the survey and a statistic of 50 per cent was observed, we can be 95 per cent confident that the actual figure lies between 47.84 per cent and 52.16 per cent.

8.1 Proposal based on responses

Based upon the feedback received respondents would like to introduce the proposal (77.0%), allowing full-time access (60.8%) and one hour parking bays (42.1%).

8.2 Impact of proposal

Overall over seven in ten (75.8%) perceive the proposal will have a positive impact. When analysing further based upon sub-groups (e.g. disabled respondents), all areas believed the proposal will have a positive impact.

When analysing by non-residents, tourists were more supportive of the proposal than residents with 86 per cent selecting agree or strongly agree. Tourists were also more likely to select 30 minute parking access (53.2%) against residents selecting one hour parking access (38.2%).

Parents of young children supported the proposal with over seven in ten (73.2%), in comparison to respondents without children who were more likely to support the proposal with 79.0 per cent agreeing.

Those with children selected one hour parking bays (44.7%) whilst those without children preferred a 30 minute slot (42.2%). Similarly those with a disability were more likely to choose a one hour parking allowance (48.0%) against non-disabled residents who selected 30 minutes (41.8%). Parents of young children and disabled both support the proposal overall. A full EIA will also be undertaken.

A response from Guide Dogs Cymru (appendix 4) stating: *“We do of course support the introduction of dropped kerbs to facilitate access by wheelchair users and other pedestrians, but these must be marked with the appropriate tactile paving.”* The response falls in line with the outcome of the Capita report referenced in the consultation.

9. Appendices

Raw data.....Appendix 1

Social Media Information Report.....Appendix 2

Equality Impact Assessment.....Appendix 3

Guide Dogs Cymru has concerns about the proposal to allow traffic into previously pedestrianised areas. We note that risks to blind and partially sighted people have already been identified in the proposal, and limiting traffic to 20MPH will not reassure people with sight loss. Any scheme which requires them to share an area with no clear physical separation of the road from the pavement is potentially dangerous. We do of course support the introduction of dropped kerbs to facilitate access by wheelchair users and other pedestrians, but these must be marked with the appropriate tactile paving. We appreciate that the business community see this differently, but we do not support a solution which puts people with sight loss, and other vulnerable pedestrians, including older people and children, at risk. I attach research from Guide Dogs which informs our position on this issue and below is a report on the death of a child in a shared space in St Helier, Jersey, CI

Guide dogs would be interested in working with local people with sight loss and the council to reach a solution based on inclusive access, and we look forward to further discussion as part of the consultation process.