

BRIDPORT TOWN CENTRE CONSULTATION

**Consultation August-October 2017: report of
responses**

Bridport Town Council



Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Background to the survey	5
3. Methodology	6
4. Summary	7
5. Breakdown of responses	9
Appendix A - Questionnaire	14
Appendix B - Full comments from the consultation (to follow)	18

1. Introduction

At its meeting on 28 March 2017, Bridport Town Council agreed that a consultation exercise be undertaken on town centre traffic, including seeking views on a trial closure of South Street and town centre speed limits.

The consultation ran from 7 August for 8 weeks until 1 October. This report presents the results, which will be considered by the Town Council at its Council meeting on 21 November 2017.

2. Background to the survey

In summer 2001, the Town Council undertook an extensive public consultation exercise on the “possible closure of South Street for a trial period. Over 60% of the residents who responded supported the selective closure of South Street on market days. A number of traders, mostly from South Street, opposed the closure. The proposal was not taken forward at the time.

The issue was raised again formally at the Town Council in 2004 and during 2008-2009, when the Council considered a number of recommendations for the town centre, including changes to crossings and loading bays. These were subsequently agreed for implementation by Dorset County Council, the Highway Authority. There was consultation undertaken at that time on town centre traffic with local organisations. Comments from the public were again invited. The possible closure of South Street was raised by some respondents to that consultation. The Town Council said at the time that it would re-visit this issue.

The Town Council’s latest Town Plan included a priority project to “consider and consult on a town centre traffic feasibility study including options for South Street.”

In 2016, the Town Council agreed a brief to Dorset County Council for feasibility work on town centre traffic, including South Street. The feasibility study findings were reported to the Town Council in March 2017.

The Feasibility Study recognised that there was no significant evidence-based analysis of traffic movements for any of the options. The impact on traffic flows of the occasional closures for events had also not been monitored. The Feasibility Study stated that to accurately forecast traffic flows, would require a detailed and expensive traffic model. The Town Council felt that the costs of this detailed model would be prohibitive and that to accurately assess the impact of the closure of South Street, a temporary trial closure for up to 3 months should be considered. The main focus of the proposed consultation

would therefore be to seek views on a trial temporary closure. The results would enable the Town Council to assess the strength of feeling and support, before any further work is undertaken.

The related issue of traffic speeds in the town had also been raised and would be included as part of the consultation.

The Town Council in March 2017 therefore agreed that a consultation exercise be undertaken on town centre traffic, including seeking views on a trial closure of South Street and town centre speed limits, subject to the wording and format of the consultation being reviewed and agreed. The questionnaire wording was subsequently approved. Due to Local and then national elections in May and June respectively, the start of the consultation was put back until August.

3. Methodology

The survey questionnaire was available online alongside a copy of the report to Council with details of the County Council's Feasibility Study, a Questions and Answers document and copies of the press release announcing the start of the consultation.

Hard copies of the questionnaire were also available in the Tourist Information Centre, Library and Mountfield.

The start of the consultation was widely advertised both in the press and through contact with stakeholders including businesses via the Chamber of Trade and Commerce and by visiting businesses in South, East and West Street. Separate notifications were sent to taxi drivers, bus companies, fire/ambulance services, statutory agencies, and local transport services. Local community organisations were also notified through the Bridport Local Area Partnership circulation network.

4. Summary

This section provides a headline summary of the responses, which are detailed in the next section.

- The majority of respondents to the consultation (82%) live in the Bridport area with 16% of respondents having a business in the Bridport area.
- Most people access the town centre either by car (50% of respondents) or on foot (42% of respondents).
- When asked what most needed to be improved in relation to the town centre and traffic, the top four responses were:
 - Available car parking (23%)
 - Improving the movement of traffic around the town (traffic flows) (20%)
 - Access to town centre shops and businesses (14%)
 - Public transport (14%)
- In response to the question about whether a trial closure of South Street should take place, 69% of all respondents were against and 29% in favour (2% replied 'don't know'). When this was split into responses from business owners, the rate against a trial closure was 73% and from visitors to the area, it was 76% against a trial closure.
- There was a majority of respondents (59%) in favour of a speed limit of 20 mph on all town centre roads, as indicated in the questionnaire.
- Question 4 in the questionnaire asked for any other comments in relation to the above options but also in relation to any other issues that people wished to raise. This elicited a large number of responses on a wide range of topics, which are being categorised. The document itemising all the comments will be published separately as an Appendix to this report.
- An initial review of the comments however, shows that in terms of the comments on the trial closure of South Street, the main reasons given for voting against a trial include:
 - Concerns regarding additional pressure /displacement of traffic on to other roads, particularly Gundry Lane;
 - Concerns about harm to businesses in the area; and
 - Concerns about the costs of a trial or suggestions for alternative spend
- In terms of the responses supporting a trial, the main reasons given include:

- Benefits for businesses (footfall, dwell time etc).
 - Pedestrianisation could lead to improved traffic flow in other areas
 - Benefits of pedestrianisation in terms of public safety and enjoyment
- A number of respondents have also suggested a 'middle ground' where South Street may be pedestrianised for market days/Saturdays only

Note: All of the comments made by respondents have been reviewed and are in the process of being grouped by category. All comments will be made available as an appendix as soon as this process is completed. No comments have been deleted or edited, but many have been split where more than one topic has been discussed; this will make it easier to view the comments by topic area and see ideas or issues where there is a collective view. This process will not alter the information summarised above.

5. Breakdown of responses

Number of online surveys completed	643
Number of paper surveys completed	639
Letters, emails and other submissions received	18
TOTAL	1,300

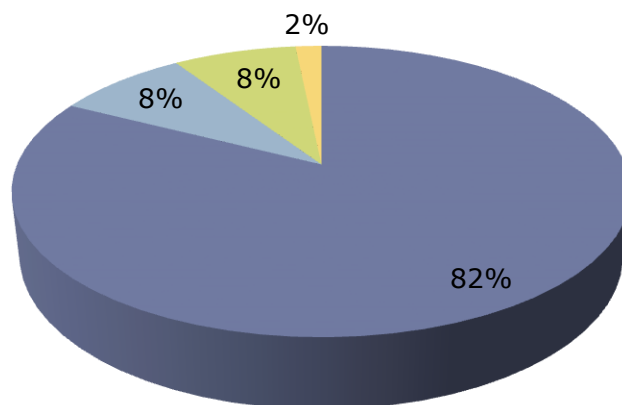
Not all respondents answered every question, so there are some differences in totals for some questions.

Profile of respondents:

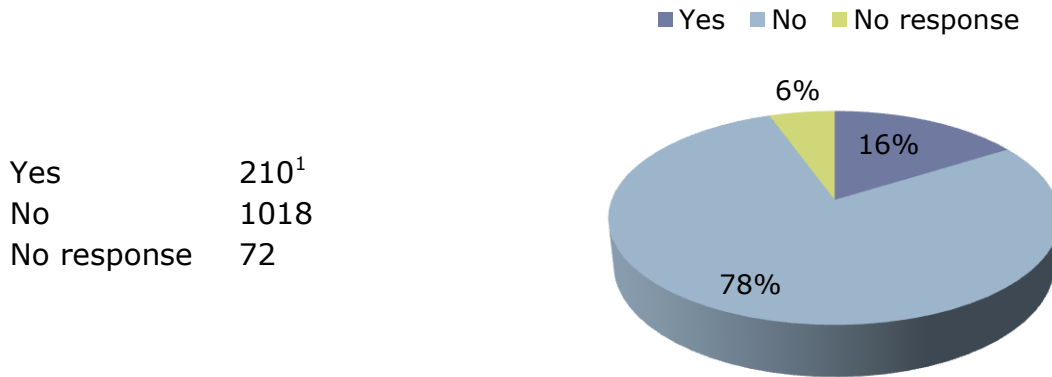
Do you live in or are you a visitor to the Bridport area?

	Number
I live in the Bridport area	1,072
I am visiting the area	107
I live near and/or work in Bridport	100
No answer given	21
Total	1,300

■ Live in Bridport ■ Visiting the area
■ Live near/work in Bridport ■ No answer given

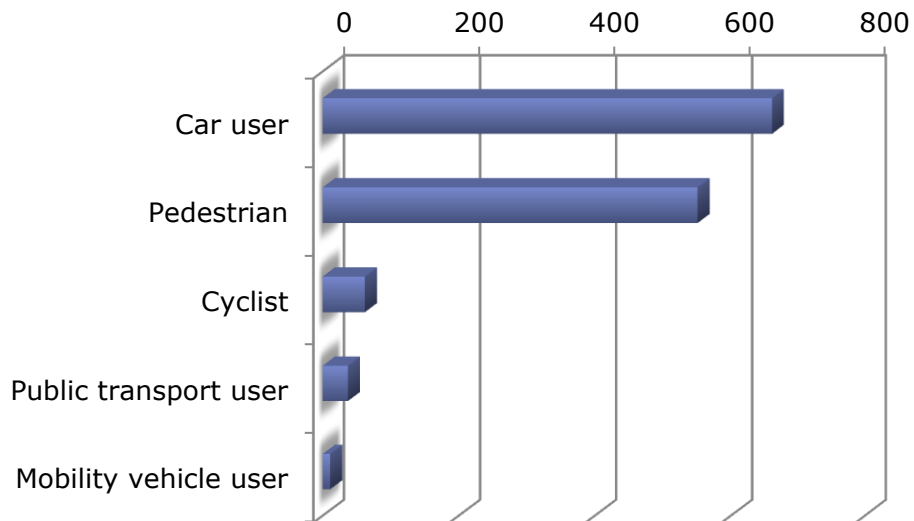


Do you have a business in the Bridport area?



Do you mostly access Bridport town centre as a:

	Number	%
Car user	661	50.0
Pedestrian	551	41.7
Cyclist	62	4.7
Public transport user	37	2.8
Mobility vehicle user	11	0.8
Total	1,322	100

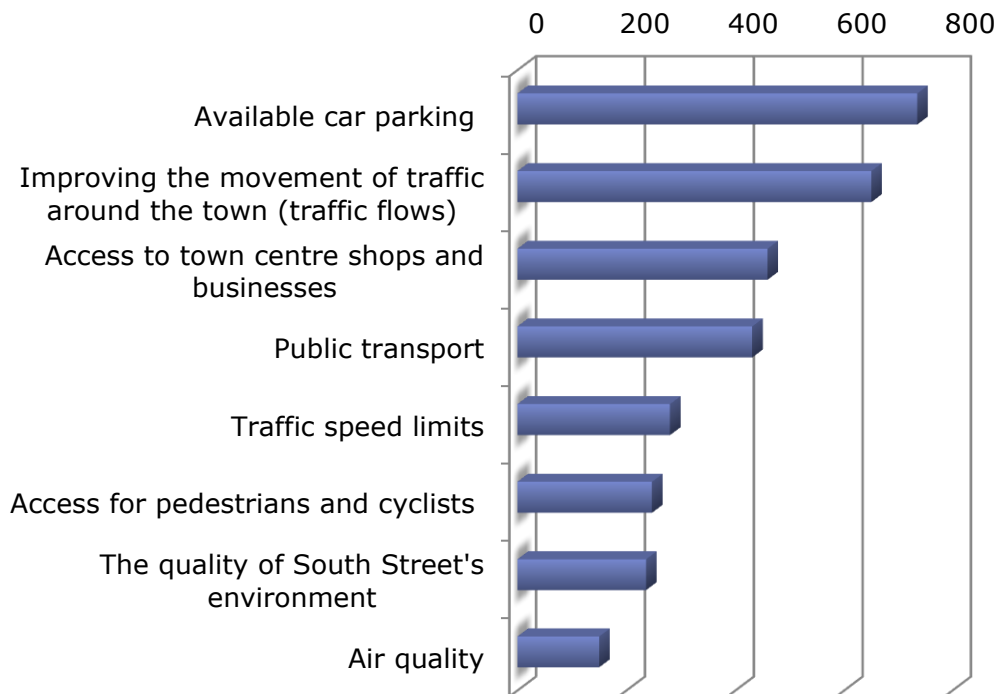


¹ This includes some market stall holders

Views on town centre traffic:

What do you consider most needs to be improved in relation to the town centre and traffic? (respondents could provide up to 3 choices)

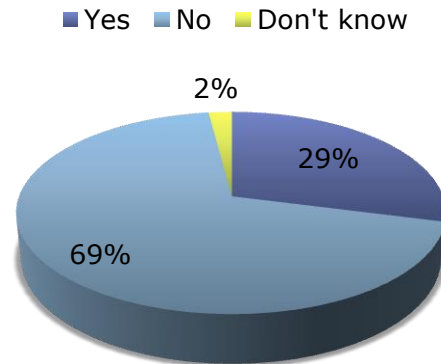
	Number	%
Available car parking	735	23.1
Improving the movement of traffic around the town (traffic flows)	650	20.4
Access to town centre shops and businesses	459	14.4
Public transport	431	13.5
Traffic speed Limits	280	8.8
Access for pedestrians and cyclists	247	7.7
The quality of South Street's environment	236	7.4
Air quality	150	4.7
TOTAL	3,188	100



Do you think a trial closure of South Street should take place?

All respondents:

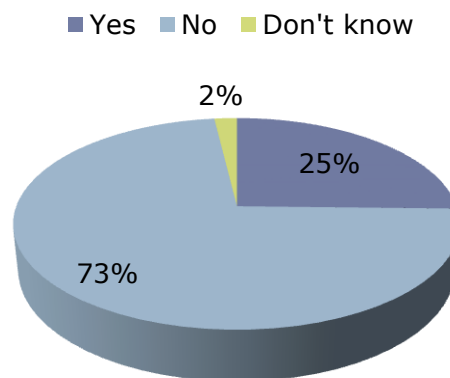
Yes	370
No	880
Don't know	26



Do you think a trial closure of South Street should take place?

Business owners only:

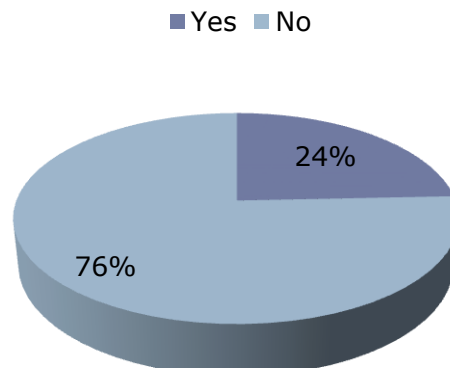
Yes	53
No	152
Don't know	4



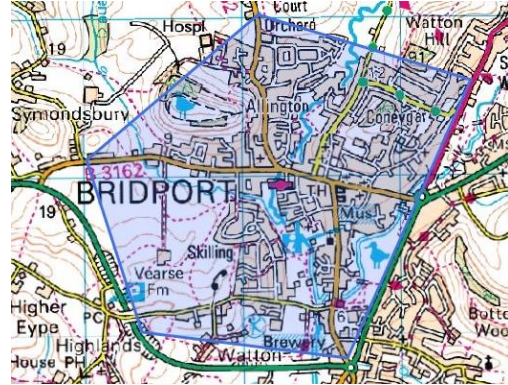
Do you think a trial closure of South Street should take place?

Visitors only:

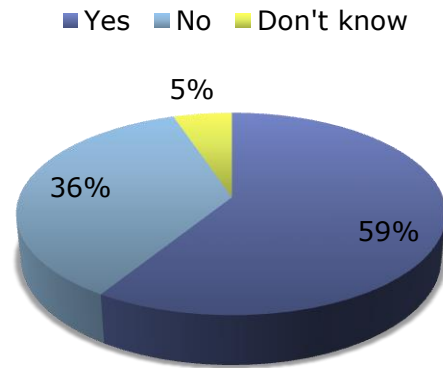
Yes	18
No	56



Would you support a speed limit of 20 mph on all town centre roads included within the blue shaded area in this map?



Yes	742
No	453
Don't know	65



Appendix A - Questionnaire

Bridport Town Centre Consultation

Bridport Town Council would like to know your views on town centre traffic, including a trial closure of South Street and town centre speed limits.

The County Council, as the Highway Authority, has to approve any highway or traffic changes. The options for the town centre and South Street in particular have been discussed with the County Council and the potential impacts identified but it is recognised that there is no real evidence assessing the impact of a closure of South Street on the town centre, including traffic movements in and around the town.

The Town Council feels that to accurately assess the impact of the closure of South Street, a temporary trial closure for up to 3 months should be considered. However, before a decision is taken on whether to apply to the County Council for a trial closure, it was agreed that a consultation should be undertaken to seek views on the proposal. The results would enable the Town Council to assess the strength of feeling and support, before any further work is undertaken.

The estimated costs of a trial closure of South Street including order making could be between £20,000 and £50,000 but would be confirmed before any decision was taken on whether to apply for a closure.

Timescale:

- Consultation ends 1 October 2017
- Town Council considers responses and way forward October 2017

If there is support for a trial closure of South Street :

- Draft proposals November 2017
- Order Making Process, including statutory consultation - December - February 2017/18
- If approved: Experimental closure could be introduced March - May 2018 (up to 12 weeks)

Other town centre issues - traffic speeds etc.

Depending on the outcome of the consultation, these matters would be discussed with Dorset County Council regarding the next steps.

Consultation questions overleaf

Issued by Bridport Town Council August 2017

General town centre and traffic

1. What do you consider most needs to be improved in relation to the town centre and traffic? (Please tick no more than 3 issues from the list. You can comment on your answer or suggest other issues under question 4).

Improving the movement of traffic around the town (traffic flows)	
The quality of South Street’s environment	
Traffic speed Limits	
Air quality	
Access for pedestrians and cyclists	
Available car parking	
Public transport	
Access to town centre shops and businesses	

South Street

The Town Council is considering the pedestrianisation of South Street for a trial period of up to 3 months, to assess the impact on the town centre. South Street would be closed to vehicular traffic from the junction of Gundry Lane to the Town Hall junction. There would continue to be access for deliveries to businesses and residents, emergency services and vehicles used by people with disabilities.

2. Do you think this trial closure of South Street (as described above) should take place? (Please tick)

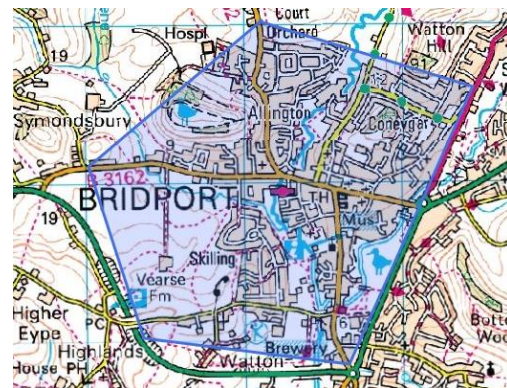
Yes		No		Don’t know	
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Speed limits

3. Would you support a speed limit of 20 mph on all town centre roads included within the blue shaded area in this map?

(Please tick)

Yes	
No	
Don’t know	



Any other comments

4. If you wish, please add any other comments on any of the questions 1 to 3 (you can add a separate sheet if needed)

About you

5. Do you live in or are you a visitor to the Bridport area? (Please tick)

I live in the Bridport area	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please continue to questions 6&7
I am visiting the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please go to question 8

6. Please provide your postcode:

Your postcode:	<input type="text"/>
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7. Please provide the name of your street:

Your street name:	<input type="text"/>
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Please continue to question 9 overleaf

8. Where are you visiting from?

<input type="text"/>

Please continue to question 9 overleaf

About you

9. Do you mostly access Bridport town centre as a (please tick ONE):

Pedestrian	
Public transport user	
Car user	
Cyclist	
Mobility vehicle user	

10. Do you have a business in the Bridport area?

Yes		Please continue to questions 11&12
No		Please go to question 13

11. Please provide your business postcode:

Your business postcode:	
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12. Please provide the name of the street your business is in:

Your business street name:	
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13. If you would like to be kept informed of the results of this consultation, please provide your email address:

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Thank you - you've reached the end of the survey!

Completed surveys can be returned to the following locations until

1st October 2017

Council Offices, Mountfield

Bridport Tourist Information Centre

Bridport Library

Any questions, please call the Town Council on 01308 456722

or see the website: www.bridport-tc.gov.uk

Appendix B - Full comments from the consultation (to follow)