

Liss Placemaking project

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Stakeholder Engagement: Key Outcomes



CONTROL SHEET

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1. About the project

Introduction

Liss Parish Council has commissioned Hampshire Services (Hampshire County Council’s in-house transport planning consultancy service) to undertake a study to identify potential placemaking improvements in Liss village centre (shown in Figure 1 **Error! Reference source not found.**).

The study will help to realise the aim of the local Neighbourhood Plan, supported by 80% of residents, of making the village centre “an attractive place to live, by improving the built environment (...) and managing the impact of traffic, and improving walking and cycling.”

The starting point of the study was to engage with the local community to understand how the village centre is used, what people like, and what could be improved. Community engagement activities were undertaken during the months of June to August 2022. This report serves as a summary of these engagement activities. Each section sets out what these activities were and details the key findings from the feedback received. Specific issues and suggestions raised within different segments of the study area are also summarised.

Following the feedback from the community, Hampshire Services will develop concept designs for the village centre, which the community will have an opportunity to comment on.



Figure 1: Liss village centre study area

2. Engagement activities

This section will set out why we engaged the public, what the engagement activities were, how they were undertaken and who was engaged.

Why did we engage?

Local residents and visitors are the experts on their local area. It was therefore crucial that there was a clear understanding of their experiences of the village centre before any proposals for improvements of the village centre were developed.

How did we engage?

1. Stakeholder site walks

Site Walks are a way in which the community can be involved in identifying issues in their area. Two site walks were held in the study area with local stakeholders (see “who did we engage” below) in June and July 2022, with 30 attendees in total. The stakeholders were introduced to the Healthy Streets indicators that form the framework for this project (shown in the image on the right). Then, as they walked around the village centre, they were asked to look at different sections of the village centre and compare their expectations to their experience of each of the sections, using the indicators. For example, they might have expected that there was plenty of shade and shelter but experienced the area differently on the day. Detailed analysis is included in the **Site Walks Engagement Report**, which is available on the Liss Parish Council website.



2. Online engagement and surveys

An online engagement platform was built, to which there were 1,307 visits, 440 survey responses (208 responses to the Liss Village Centre survey; 95 to the Station Road survey; 77 responses to the Hill Brow Road survey; and 60 responses to the Mill Road survey). There were also 11 ‘pins’ placed on the interactive map. 158 people subscribed to project updates. The Parish Council also printed paper copies of the survey and made them available in key locations in the village. Responses were then manually entered into the engagement site and are included in the totals above. Detailed analysis is included in the **Engagement Findings Report**, which is available on the Liss Parish Council website.

3. Business survey

A survey was sent out to local businesses by the Parish Council, focusing on those businesses that the Parish Council felt were most affected by issues relating to the current layout of the village centre parking and any impacts of the level crossing. The survey asked about the travel habits of business employees, customers and how deliveries are made. Most of the respondents were retail businesses within the Station Road segments of the study area.

The businesses themselves undertook a customer specific survey asking how customers travel to the village centre. The project teams also visited some of the businesses who were unable to respond to the paper survey. Detailed analysis is included in the **Business Engagement Report**, which is available on the Liss Parish Council website.

4. Pop-up event: Village Centre

Hampshire Services and Liss Parish Council project team spent a half day on a Saturday in July in the village centre. During this bustling event, the community was informed about the project and how they could contribute to its development. Flyers with information about the project and the online surveys were handed out and left with some local businesses.

Who did we engage?

1. Stakeholder site walks

Participants in the site walks around the village centre included parents, including those with walking with buggies, people with visual and physical impairments and those who are retired. Those aged 45 years and above and male were in the majority.

2. Online engagement

The survey was launched 14th July and closed on 28th August. It was publicised online via the Parish Council's social media channels and through targeted Facebook adverts covering Liss village. The Parish also put posters throughout the village centre. 57% of those who completed the surveys and dropped pins on the map live in Liss village, with 12% within the village centre itself. 30% lived outside of Liss village. Women and men were almost evenly represented, with the number of women slightly higher at 53%. The ages of the respondents were mostly evenly split over the 25-74 range. The 25-44 age range was the most well represented, counting for 24% of all responses. The age ranges that were under-represented were 13-15, 16-24 and 85+, all counting for 1% each of the total responses. The vast majority of respondents were white, accounting for 97% of responses.

3. Business survey

The majority of businesses who responded were retail and located on the Station Road-Riverside Walk to Lime Close (roundabout) segment of the study area. The Parish Council felt that these were the businesses that were most strongly impacted by issues in the village centre. It is recommended that further engagement is undertaken with Tesco and the pub

during the next phase of engagement, as they did not participate in the survey and are key businesses in the village centre.

3. Key findings

This section of the report summarises the key and frequent themes that emerged from each of the individual engagement reports.

Hampshire Services (HS) has produced detailed reports for each of the engagement activities undertaken, setting out the engagement methodology and results. As the pop-up event mainly served as an information event, no report has been created for this. All reports are available on the [Parish Council website](#).

**Each engagement activity used a different approach to gain feedback about Liss village centre. It is for this reason that some of the results presented below vary as the focus of the questions were slightly different. This will be noticeable for the online engagement and Site Walks results as they relate to the segments presented within this report*

3.1 Key themes

Two key themes were repeated throughout all of the engagement activities;

- Traffic and its negative effects;
- The visual appearance of the village centre, with the number of empty or tired looking shops frequently mentioned as a contributory factor.

The roundabout and Station Road were the locations that received the most comments and feedback, particularly the area on Station Road, between Riverside Walk and Lime Close (roundabout).

Traffic

Traffic was highlighted as the biggest issue across the whole study area and affects people's experiences of the village centre. These experiences include:

- Difficulty crossing the roads in the study area, particularly by the roundabout;
- Traffic speeds and the limited number of crossing points; and
- Overall noise and air pollution.

Visual appearance

The visual appearance of the village centre was frequently highlighted as being an issue across the study area, affecting people's desire to spend time there. These issues included:

- The village centre needing a visual update; and
- The lack of use of the existing empty premises, making the village centre look tired.

The reported impact of these experiences was people wanting to spend less time in the village centre, visit fewer businesses and make fewer trips into the village centre.

3.2 Other frequent themes

Parking

Parking featured both negatively and positively within the business survey and online engagement. Positive responses appreciated the amount and availability of parking, ensuring accessibility for business operations and those with mobility issues close to the shops.

Negatively, the impact of parked vehicles/location of parking bays on the movement of traffic was highlighted, as it leads to traffic queues and creates issues for those wishing to the roads on foot. Illegal and/or inconsiderate parking also affects the flow of traffic, particularly on the Station Road – Riverside Walk to Lime Close segment, as well as creating difficulties walking and crossing.

The level crossing

The length of time the level crossing is down is perceived to contribute to and/or have the following effects on the village centre;

- Air and noise pollution, due to idling cars; and
- Drivers making illegal manoeuvres.

Physical environment

The lack of shade and shelter and need for places to stop and rest came out most strongly during the site walks. This could also reflect the fact that this experience is more noticeable when spending a lot of time in the village centre.

A need for more places to rest, in order to socialise, was also reflected in the online engagement feedback.

A lack of greenery throughout the village centre was reported in the commonplace surveys.

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour was mentioned, particularly by the railway station. It was suggested this could be linked to a lack of social opportunities for young people in the village.

4. Feedback on *travelling through* the village centre

This section of the report summarises how, why and when people travel through Liss village centre, and what their reported experiences were. It also outlines suggestions to improve these experiences.

Why do people travel to the village centre?

Shopping, medical appointments or collecting prescriptions, and socialising were the main reasons given by participants in the Site Walks and the online engagement surveys for visiting the village centre.

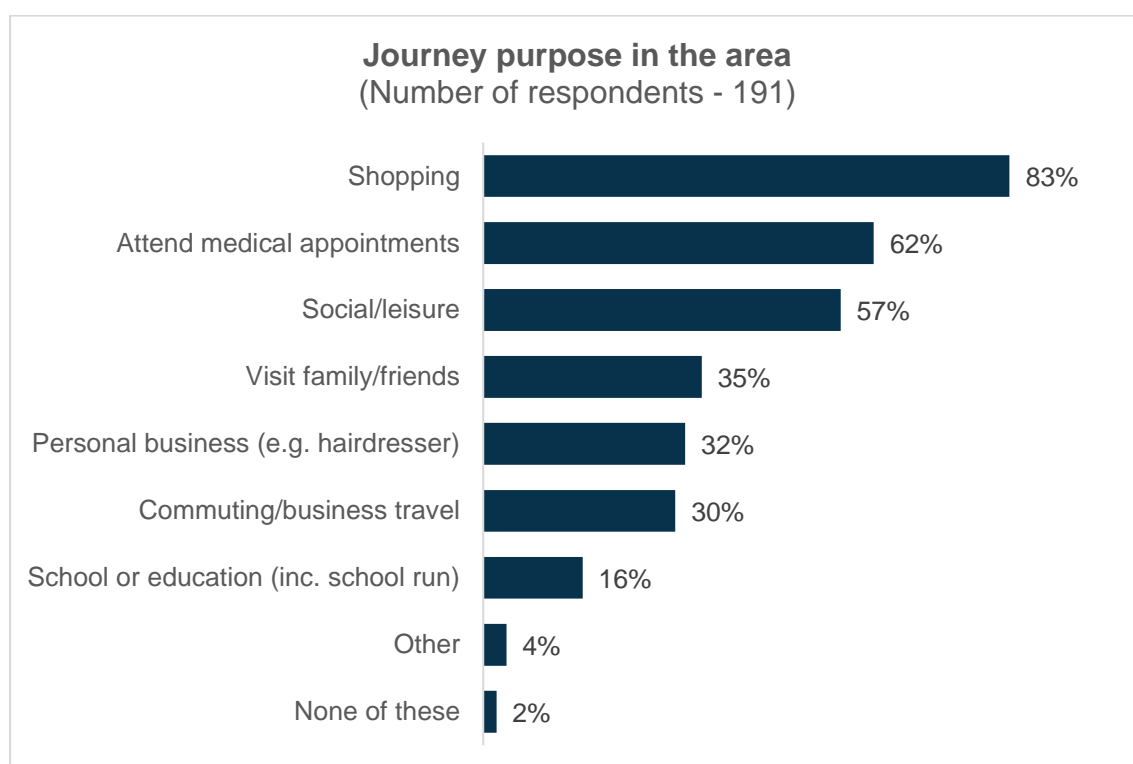


Figure 2: Purpose of journeys to the village centre from respondents to online engagement. Respondents could choose more than one purpose. Source: Engagement Findings Report, Slide 54.

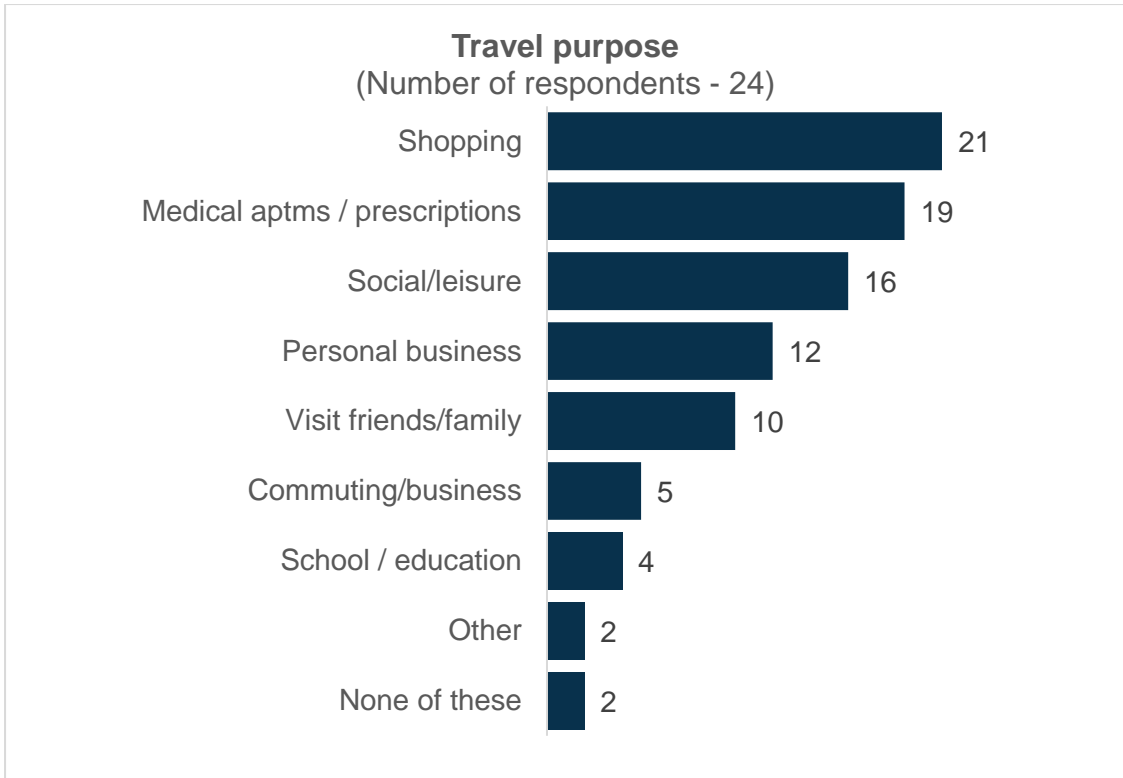


Figure 3: Purpose of travel for Site Walk participants. Participants could choose more than one purpose. Source: Site Walks Engagement Report, Slide 24.

When do people visit the village centre?

The hours of 9:00-14:00 were the most popular to visit the village centre on weekdays, across all surveys. Whilst for weekends it was any time of the day, from both the online engagement surveys and the Site Walks. The businesses surveyed suggested that 10:00-13:00 was the busiest, which falls broadly within the overall most popular period for visiting the village centre above.

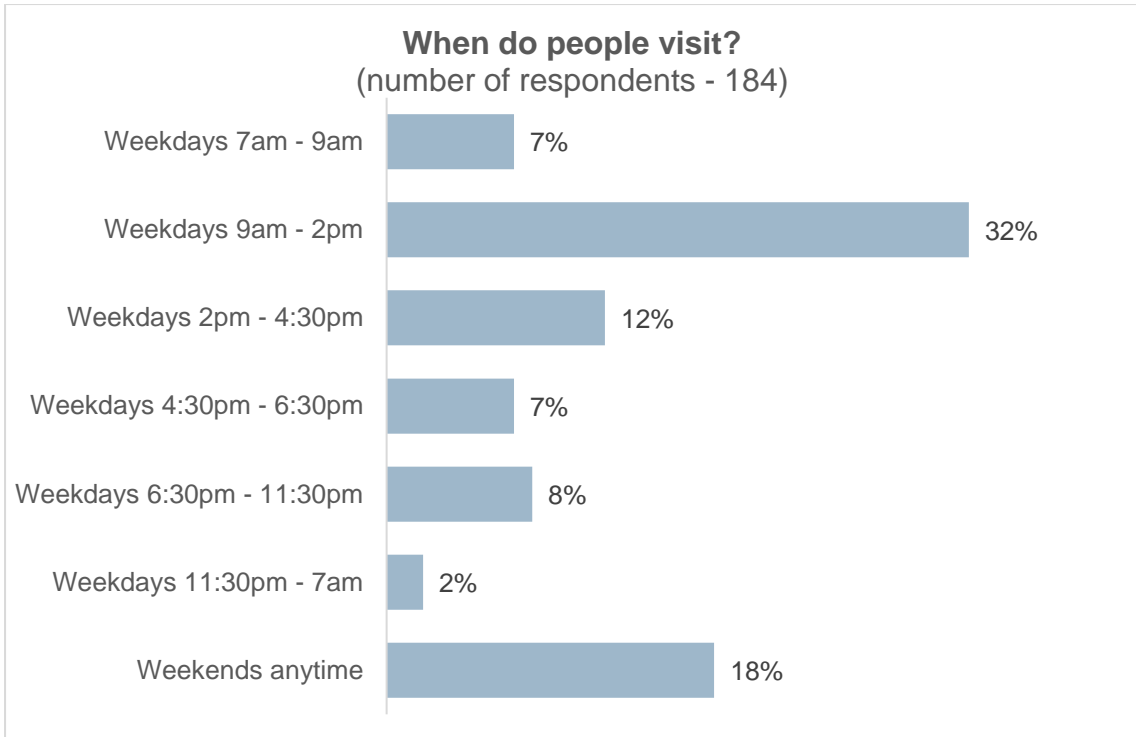


Figure 4: Chart displaying what times of day people visit Liss village centre. Source: Engagement Findings Report, Slide 54.

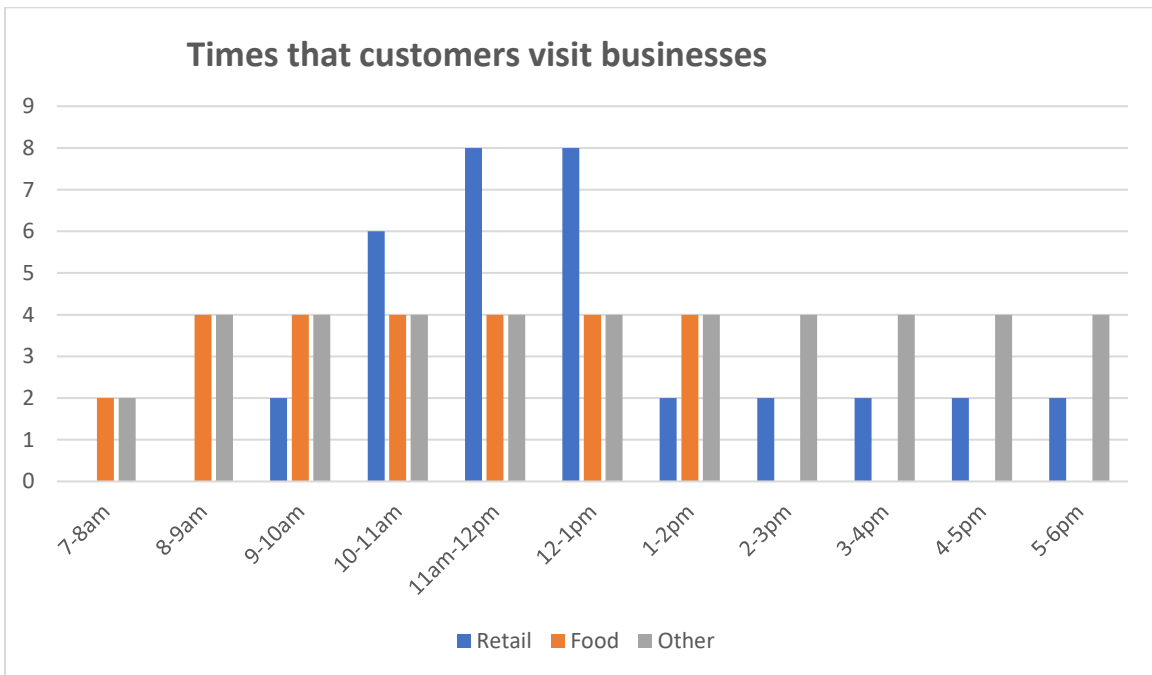


Figure 5: Popularity of times that customers visit businesses within the village centre. Source: Business Engagement report.

How do people travel to the village centre?

The most common modes of travel to the village centre are walking and driving, as highlighted in all three of the main engagement activities. Train and cycling were also fairly frequent.

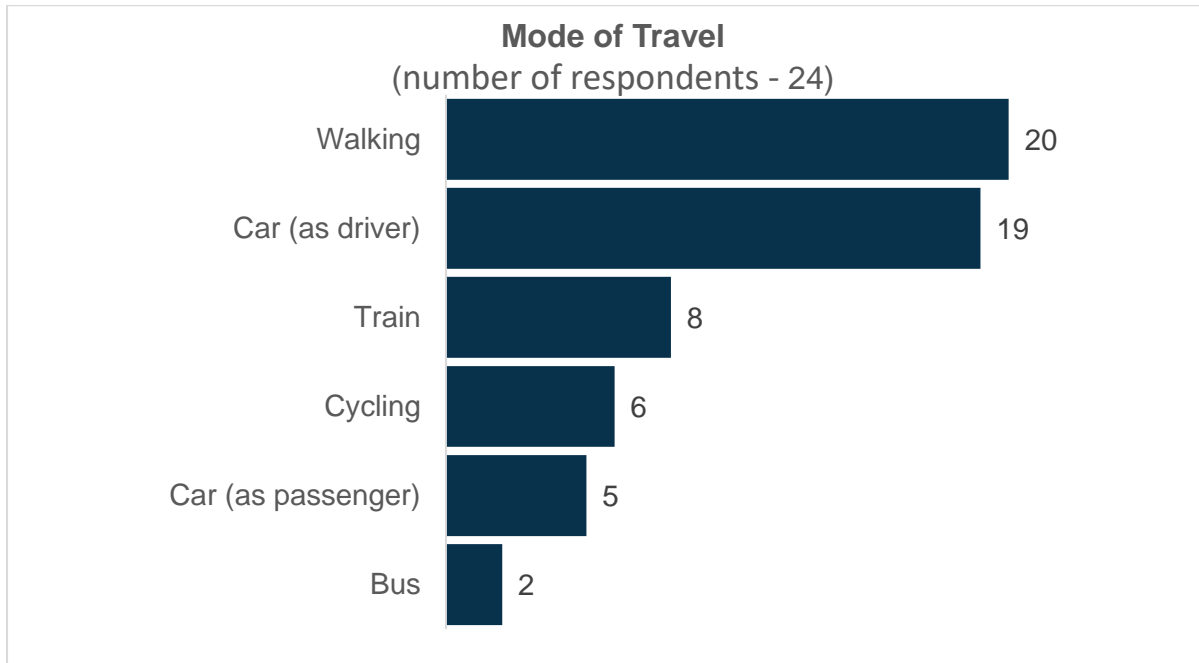


Figure 6: Mode of travel of Site Walk participants. Participants could choose more than one mode of travel. Source: Site Walks Engagement Report, Slide 23.

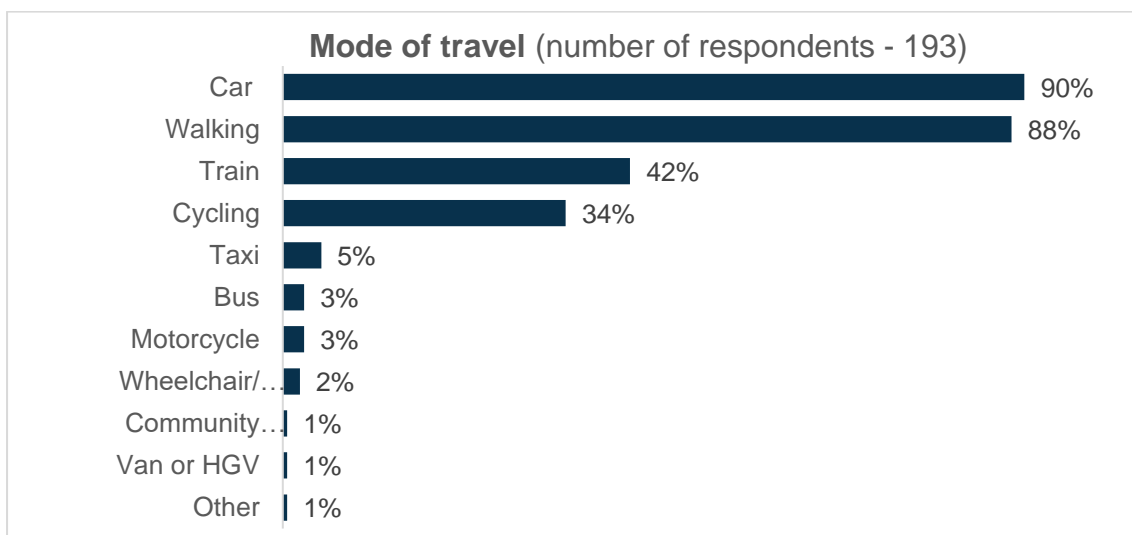


Figure 7: Mode of travel of online engagement respondents. Respondents could choose more than one mode of travel. Source: Engagement Findings Report, Slide 55.

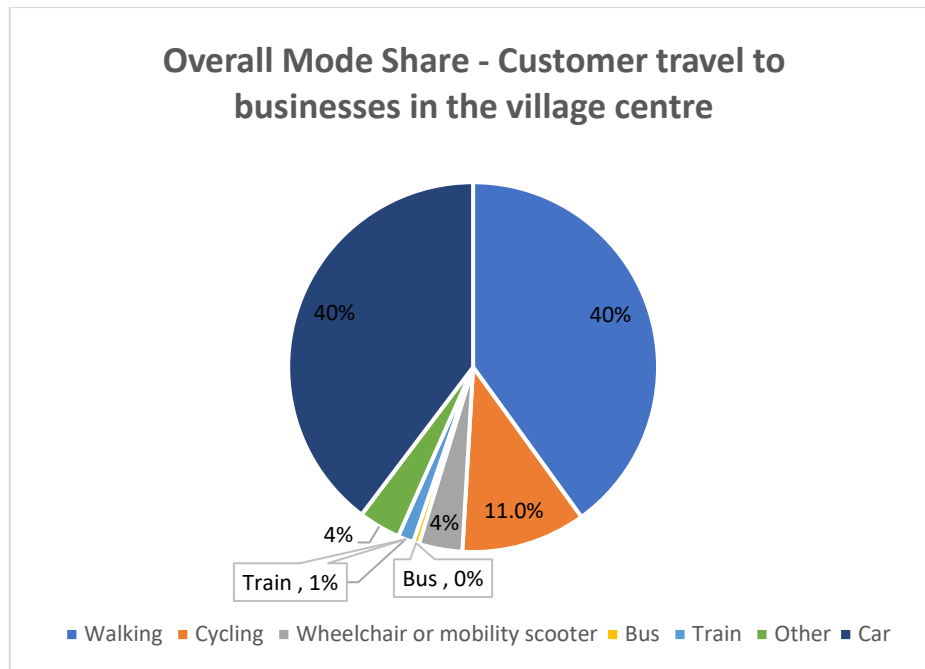


Figure 8: Overall mode share of customers travelling to businesses in the village centre. Source: Business Engagement Report.

What are people’s experiences of travelling to the village centre?

People walking without impairments or children had the most positive experience, based on the larger sample within the online engagement findings. Those who cycle, use buggies, use mobility scooters or wheelchairs had the most negative experiences.

Examples of negative feedback from online engagement survey about travel around the village centre:

“Vehicles regularly park on double yellow lines the restrictions need better enforcement.” (Aged 55-64)

“Crossing road in the village centre is treacherous and the new crossing near the school is also dangerous.” (Walker, aged 45-54)

“Often issues with lines of vehicles when the railway gates are down, some go in the wrong lane to the roundabout to avoid waiting.” (Driver and walker, aged 55-64)

Source: Engagement Findings Report, Slide 17.

What could be improved?

The most frequent suggestions highlighted in the online engagement surveys were:

- reducing the amount of poor/illegal parking;
- making the roads in the study area easier to cross; and
- reducing traffic delays when the level crossing is down.

These are also aspects that are mentioned in the business survey as having an impact.

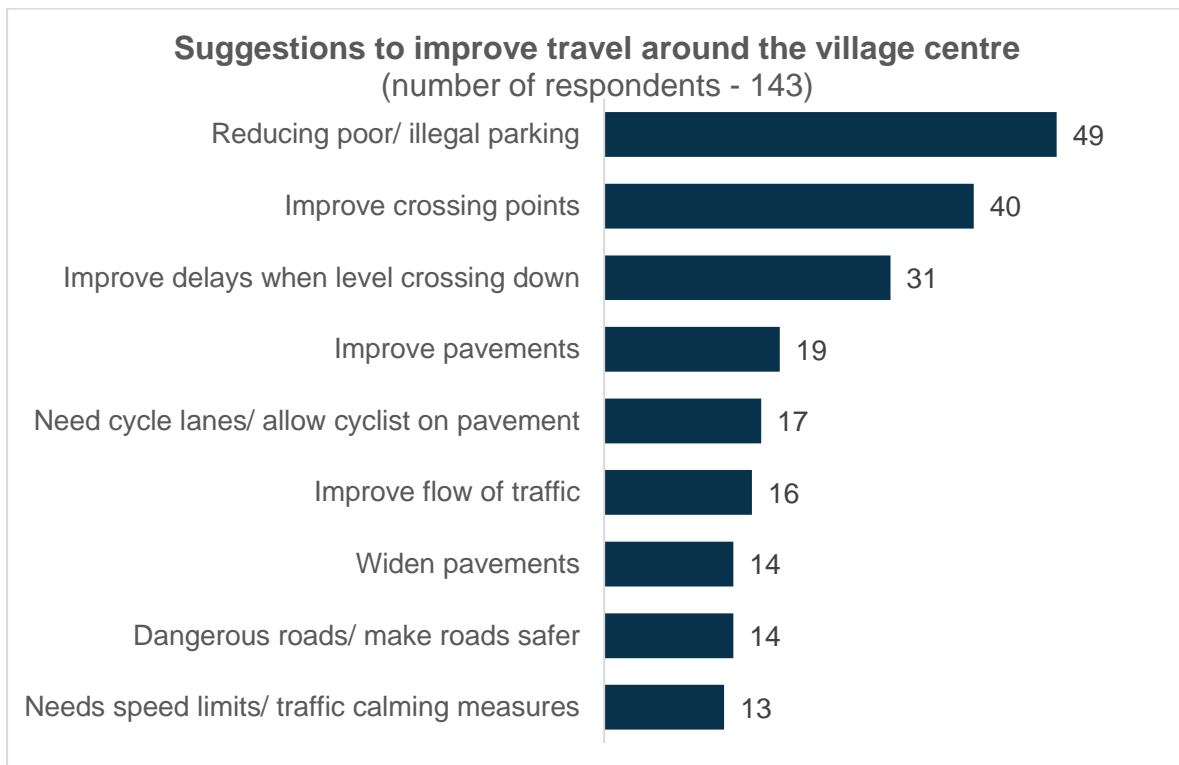


Figure 9: Suggested improvements to travel around the village centre. Source: Engagement Findings Report, Slide 17.

5. Feedback on *spending time in the village centre*

This section details the feedback received about the experience of spending time in the village centre and how respondents believe this could be improved.

What are people's experiences of spending time in the village centre?

There were both negative and positive feelings about the village centre. The Site Walk results reflected a more negative feeling about the village centre, whilst the online engagement survey results were evenly split.

The positive raised were linked to the café and the village centre being a good place to bump into people.

The negative feelings raised related to traffic impacts, the limited things to do and the village centre being tired, with room for improvement.

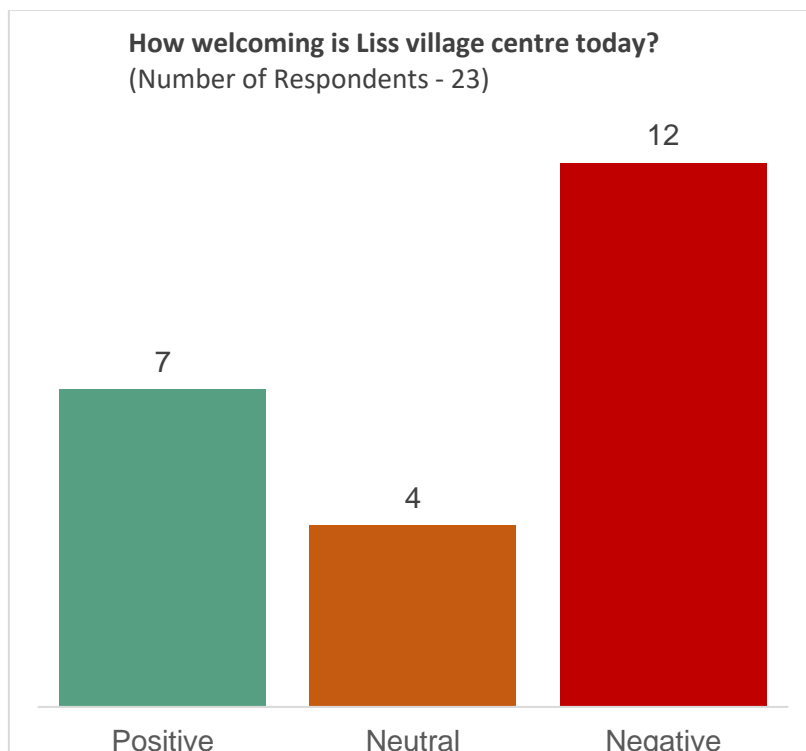


Figure 10: Frequency of positive and negative responses for how welcoming participants found Liss village centre to be. Source: Sites Walks Engagement Report, Slide 13.

Quotes from the feedback about experiences of spending time in the village centre

"Without doubt, crossing the roads anywhere near the mini roundabout is always very dangerous." (Aged 45-54)

"Central location with cafes etc. Can often do a range of shopping e.g. Tesco, bakers, newsagents etc." (Driver, cyclist and walker, aged 45-54)

"Many shops need a good repaint and some window displays are just awful. It looks as if no one cares about what could be a pretty place." (Driver, aged 75-84)

"I wouldn't socialise in town outside of a coffee shop or pub. The benches do not look at anything nice and it would feel like loitering." (Driver, cyclist and walker, aged 35-44)

"Because of the very good community spirit Liss has." (Driver, cyclist and walker, aged 45-54)

"It looks quite tired in places compared to other local towns like Haslemere or Petersfield." (Driver and walker, aged 25-34)

"There are lots of places to meet friends to socialise, eat and relax. The large pedestrian area outside Tesco allows plenty of space to chat while shopping." (Driver and walker, aged 55-64)

"Too busy with cars rushing past, noise and pollution." (Walker and cyclist, aged 25-34)

Source: Engagement Findings Report, Slides 29-31 and 49.

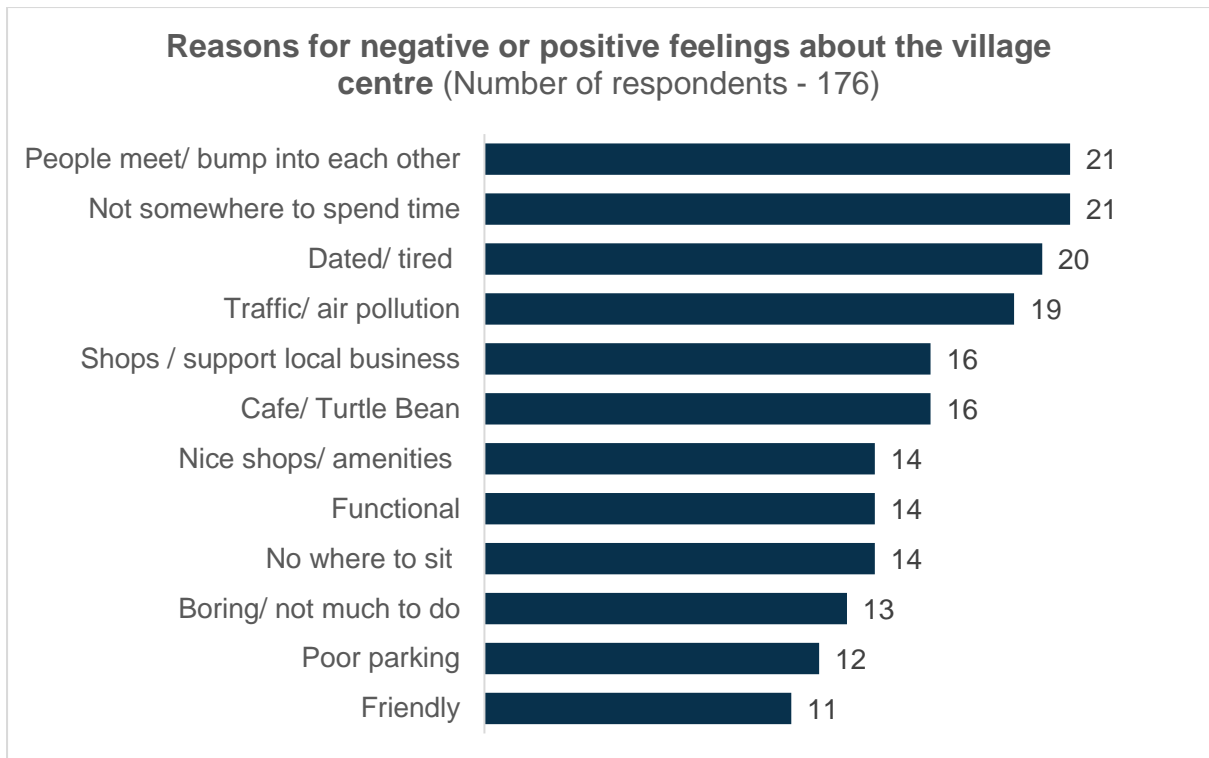


Figure 11: Reasons for positive and negative feelings about the village centre. Source: Engagement Findings Report, Slide 31.

What could be improved?

Based on the online engagement results, the most common suggestions for improving the village centre were:

- Addressing the impacts of on-street parking; and
- updating the look of shops/ buildings in the area and using the empty shops

The business survey also included suggestions relating to ensuring that parking remained free to attract customers and rejuvenating and renovating empty shops. Giving pedestrians priority was also among the suggestions.



Figure 12: Suggestions to improve the village centre from the online engagement. Source: Engagement Findings Report, Slide 49.

Examples of feedback from online engagement survey about improvements to make the village centre more welcoming:

“It is a small village but growing and there are not enough amenities, more are required”

“More welcome signs would be great”

“More relaxing space, safe crossing and trees”

“Improvements to pedestrian and cyclist safety, the built environment and tree planting would help”

Source: Site Walks Engagement Report, Slide 13.

6. Issues and suggestions for improvement by segment of the study area

This section looks at the feedback received specific to each segment of the study area, focussing on the issues highlighted and the suggestions received to improve these.

The three segments were:

- Segment 1: Station Road: Riverside Walk to Lime Close (roundabout)
- Segment 2: Station Road: Lime Close (roundabout) to Mill Road
- Segment 3: Hill Brow Road to the roundabout

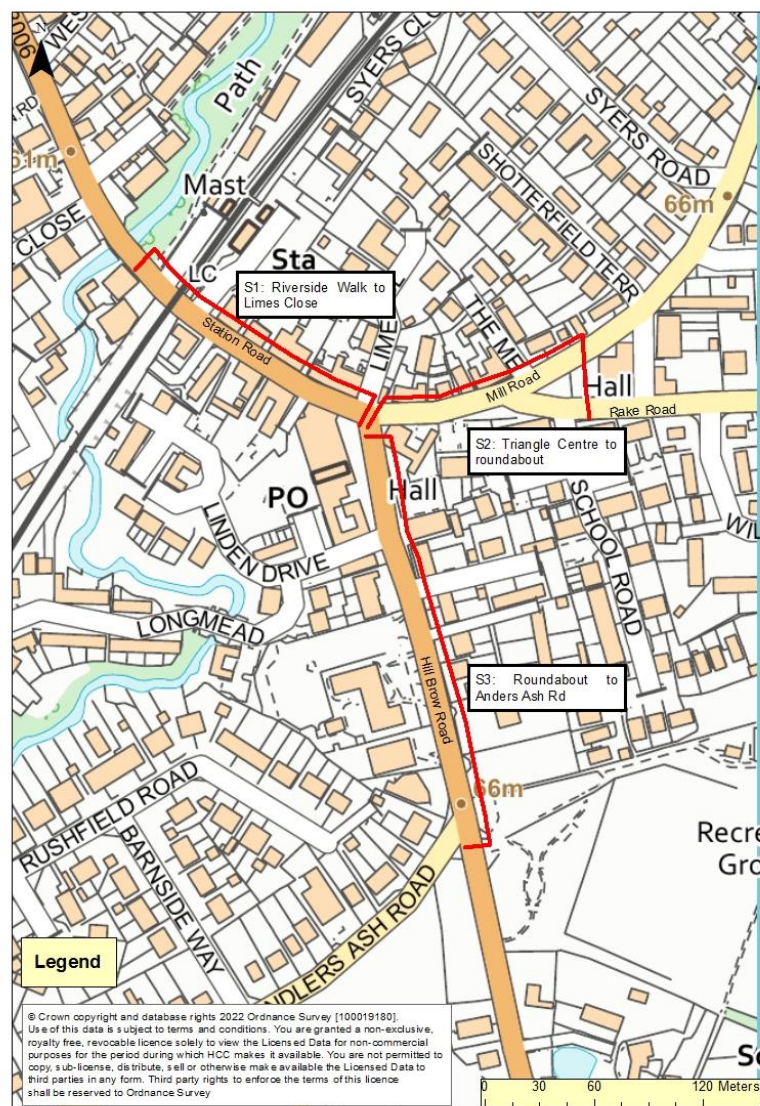


Figure 13: Segment map of the village centre study area.

The roundabout scored poorly across all sections for the Site Walks survey and when mentioned within the online engagement survey.

6.1 Segment 1: Station Road- Riverside Walk to Lime Close (roundabout)

What were the issues here?

From the Site Walks, the Healthy Street indicators 'Shade and Shelter' and 'Places to Stop and Rest' scored the lowest, followed by 'Ease of Crossing' and 'Not Too Noisy'. 'People feel safe' was the highest scoring indicator.

From the online engagement survey findings, the most important issue in this segment was traffic (81%), followed by the area being visually unappealing and unattractive (73%).

People using wheelchairs and those with young children had the most negative experiences of traveling along this segment. Overall, the experience is negative for those with travelling by a non-motorised method of transport.

Quotes about this segment from the online engagement survey report included:

"Length of time the crossing is down and the impact on waiting traffic and air pollution. We joke "the train has just left Portsmouth" as the crossing comes down." Driver, cyclist and walker, aged 45-54)

Traffic does build up due to parked cars on the road and delays when waiting for the rail crossing. It is not overly pleasant walking/crossing the road during these times" (Driver and walker, aged 25-34)

"The pavements are too narrow making it difficult to pass other pedestrians especially on the right as you go into the village." (Driver and walker, aged 55-64)

Source: Online engagement survey, Slide 33

What could be improved?

Respondents most frequently mentioned resolving the issues caused by the parking in the area, with both illegal parking and the use of the existing bays causing congestion, particularly when the level crossing opens after being closed. Also frequently mentioned was updating the appearance of shops and building fronts and decreasing the delay at the level crossing when it is down as ways of improving experience of this section.

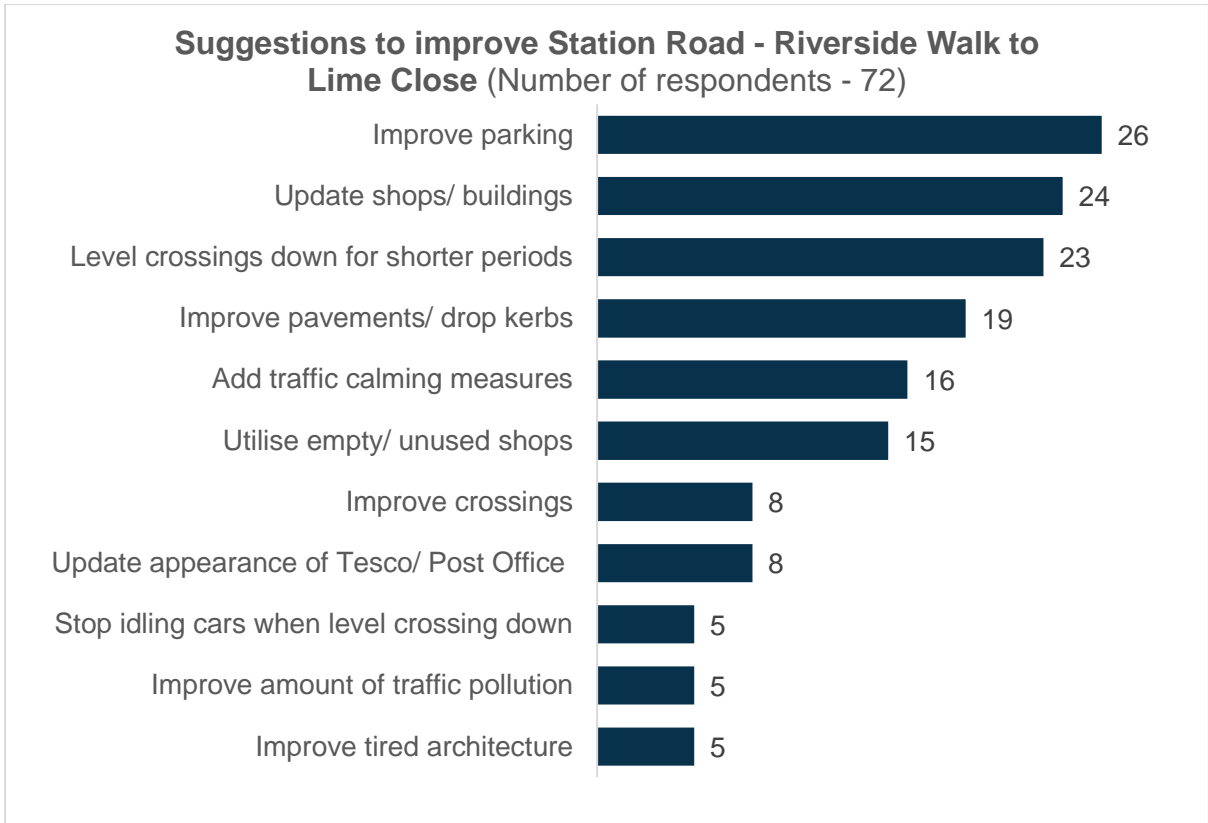


Figure 14: Suggestions to improve segment 1. Source: Engagement Findings Report, Slide 33.

6.2 Segment 2: Station Road- Lime Close (roundabout) to Mill Road

What were the issues here?

During the Site Walks, 'Shade and Shelter' scored lowest of the Healthy Streets indicators, followed by 'Places to Stop and Rest'. 'People feel safe' was the highest scoring indicator.

The most important issue raised in the online engagement here was the amount of traffic (59%), followed by the area not being relaxing to travel through (46%) for those that responded to the online engagement surveys.

Wheelchair users had the most negative experiences of traveling on this section of Station Road, closely followed by those with a buggy and with young children.

What could be improved?

Respondents most frequently mentioned unsafe/illegal parking, improving pavements and reducing the amount and speed of traffic.

Quotes from the Online engagement survey report:

*"Pavements could be wider at some points, block paved ones are uneven."
(Driver, walker and cyclist, aged 35-44)*

*"Cars parked by shops causes potentially dangerous situations." (Driver,
walker and cyclist, aged 45-54)*

Source: Online engagement survey, Slide 35.

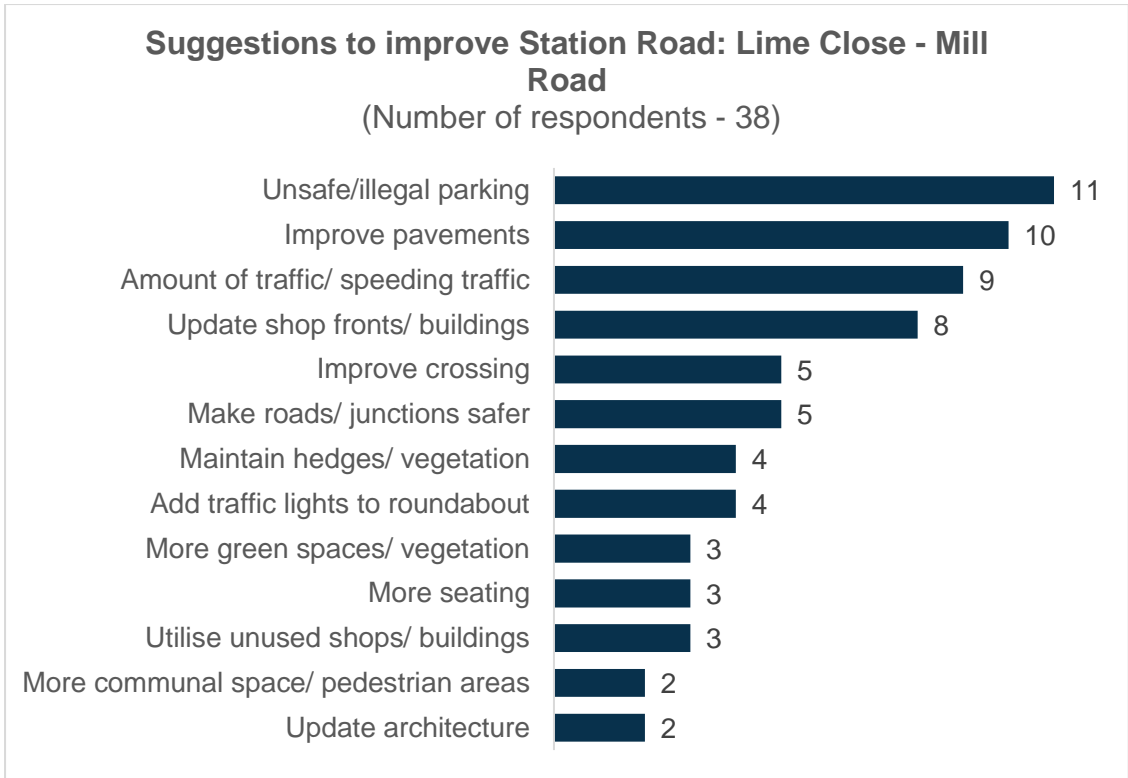


Figure 15: Suggestions to improve segment 2. Source: Engagement Findings Report, Slide 35.

6.3 Segment 3: Hill Brow Road to the roundabout

What were the issues here?

The Site Walks survey found that ‘Shade and Shelter’ scored highly, followed by ‘Easy to Cross’ and ‘Not too Noisy’. ‘People feel safe’ was the highest scoring indicator.

The most significant issue raised in the online engagement was the amount of traffic in the area (71%), followed by the area not being relaxing to travel through (55%). However, 45% of respondents agreed that that the area was clean.

People with buggies and young children had the most negative experience traveling along this road.

What could be improved?

Enforcing the use of car parks, removing on street parking and adding traffic control and calming measures were the suggestions most mentioned by those who participated in the online engagement survey. Badly parked cars/vans were also mentioned in the business survey results.

Quotes from the online survey engagement report:

“Parking should not be allowed between Public House and Village Hall. There is enough free parking in the car park.” (Driver and walker, aged 85+)

“There are no safe crossing places and few ramps for pushchairs.” (Walker, aged 65-74)

Source: Online engagement survey, Slide 37.

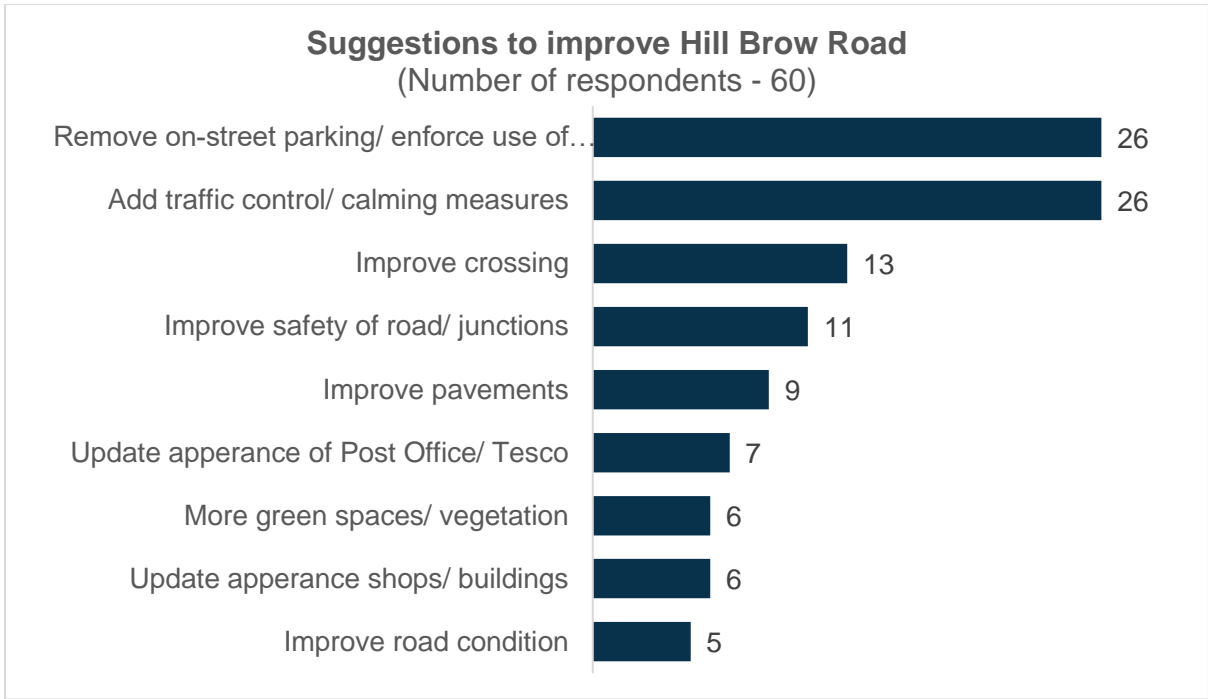


Figure 16: Suggestions to improve segment 3. Source: Engagement Findings Report, Slide 37.

The issues and suggestions raised in each segment will be used to help identify potential improvements in the village centre.

7. Next steps

This section sets out a summary of the findings, how these findings will be used and what the next steps for the project are.

Summary of findings

From the engagement activities, the following themes will be given consideration through the development of concept designs:

- There were positive sentiments about the village centre expressed, including the community feel and praise of some of the existing facilities.
- Responding to issues related to traffic, as that is the top factor affecting the experiences of the village centre. Issues to address include improvements for people walking, improving feelings of road safety, and reducing traffic noise and fumes.
- The roundabout, which is in the centre of the study area, is a key location for a number of issues identified in the survey. These include safe crossing, noise pollution and drivers undertaking illegal manoeuvres connected to the level crossing waiting times
- The level crossing and its impact in association with the parking on Station Road is recognised as one of the causes of traffic issues, and the Parish is taking this issue forward with Network Rail.
- The physical appearance of the village centre in terms of visual impact of the empty shops and overall need for regeneration was also highlighted across all surveys, however, this falls outside what this project can do.
- In relation to on-street parking, a balance will need to be struck between the operational needs of the local business, disabled customers and the negative effects on the traffic in the village. The village also has plenty of off-street free car parking that be used by the majority of visitors.

How will the findings be used?

These findings will now be combined with the following other assessments and data to take the project forward:

1. The results of the Healthy Streets Design Assessment, which scores the three segments against the Healthy Streets indicators from a technical point of view
2. Relevant transport and planning policies
3. Other data, including traffic surveys undertaken

Next steps:

- 1) Draft concept designs are being developed, based on the community feedback and other information outlined above.
- 2) Engagement phase two activities to be organised. These will include:
 - A workshop for local stakeholders to feedback on the concept designs;
 - A pop-up event for the community to feedback on the concept designs; and
 - An online engagement for community to feedback on the concept designs.