
Tonbridge Station Transport Interchange Improvements

To: Tonbridge Joint Transportation Board, 13th March 2017

By: Tim Read – Head of Transportation, KCC

Classification: Unrestricted

This report outlines the consultation on the proposal to Improve Access to Tonbridge Station.

A recommendation is sought as to whether to progress to the detailed design stage.

1. Introduction

Funding of £500,000 has been allocated from the West Kent Local Growth Fund (LGF) to improve the Transport Interchange at Tonbridge Station. The aim is to improve interaction between users at the station, provide more space for pedestrian movements and to create an interchange suitable for one of the busiest stations outside of London. The aim is to link the design to other redevelopment projects such as the High Street and Pembury Road.

The programme is forecast as follows:

2016/17 – Consultation
2017/18 – Detailed design
2018/19 – Construction

On the 26th September 2016 the Tonbridge Joint Transportation Board gave their recommendation to take a proposed scheme to public consultation.

2. The Design

The key proposals included:

1 - Bus lane removed from outside station entrance and relocated to outside Lidl. This would allow for a much larger pedestrian area in front of station entrance (the 6 bay 'kiss & drop' to remain).

2 - 3m wide diagonal pedestrian crossing from the station towards Priory Road following the desire line.

3 - 3 way traffic light controls (Waterloo Road, B2260 North & South) to allow pedestrians' safe movement, particularly at peak times such as after school. The

lights to be controlled to allow for optimal pedestrian and vehicle flow within the space.

4 - Existing bus layby outside Lidl to be removed and converted to new pedestrian area. New bus stops for three buses to be created using some of the existing carriageway space.

5 - Extend the existing bus stop located outside Quarry Hill Parade

3. Forecasting Traffic Flow

Congestion in the South East is forecast to rise by between 8 and 17% in the next 20 years.

Currently, in the evening peak the section of Quarry Hill Road from the station to the roundabout at Vale Road is running at over 92% capacity.

To combat roads becoming blocked in the future, local authorities need to encourage walking, cycling and bus use where possible while balancing the needs of car drivers.

KCC commissioned some traffic modelling work to look at this scheme to assess the potential impacts on congestion. There are many factors that influence the traffic flow in this area so it is not possible to accurately forecast an increase or decrease of traffic flow with any degree of certainty. However, analysis was undertaken looking specifically at the Waterloo Road Junction arm in relationship with the Quarry Hill Road North and South flows.

The proposed scenario assessments indicate a slight worsening performance in highway capacity terms by 2029 compared with the existing situation, however, these do not take account of the wider benefits to other road users, particularly buses and pedestrians. Furthermore, some of the existing road arms are projected to be running at over 100% capacity by 2029 with no intervention, leading to junctions becoming blocked.

Therefore it could be argued that there is a need to improve provision for sustainable modes of transport such as buses, trains, walking and cycling in this area as vehicle congestion is set to get progressively worse in the future.

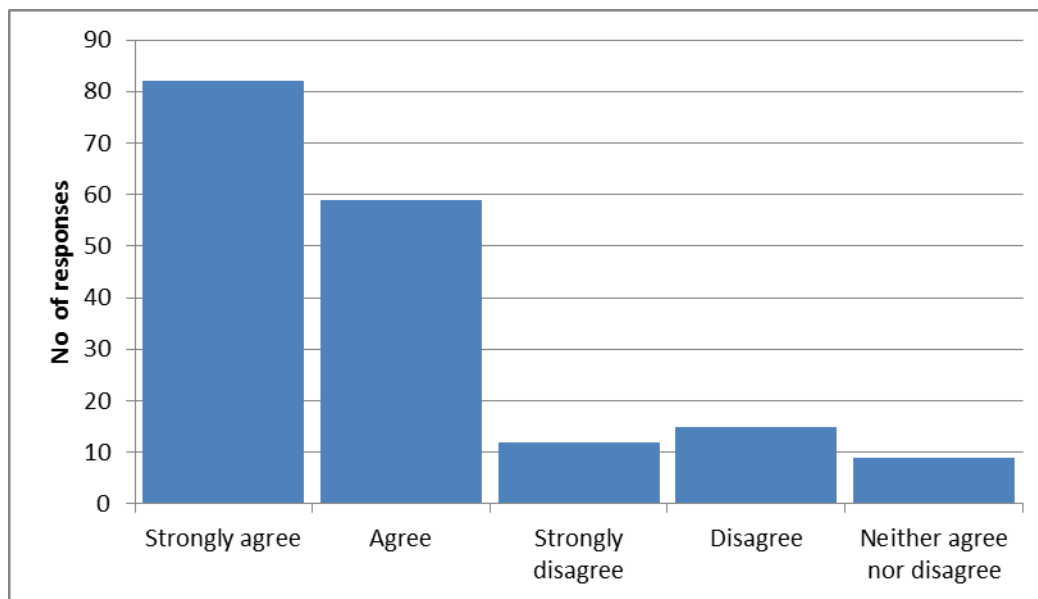
4. Consultation

The consultation ran for six weeks from **31 October to 11 December 2016**. This was to ensure that it fell within term time to engage with schools particularly, as young people are a large user group of the station for both trains and buses.

Additionally KCC consulted via the Tonbridge Youth Hub, KYCC, Tonbridge Youth Forum and Engagement and with local Schools.

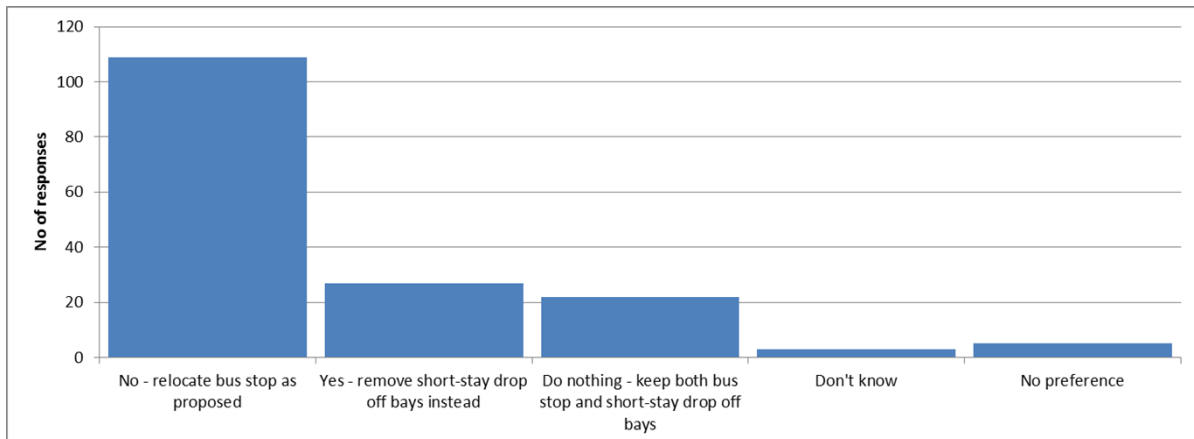
Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Proposal 1 to increase pedestrian space directly outside the main station entrance by relocating the bus stop

There were 177 responses to this question



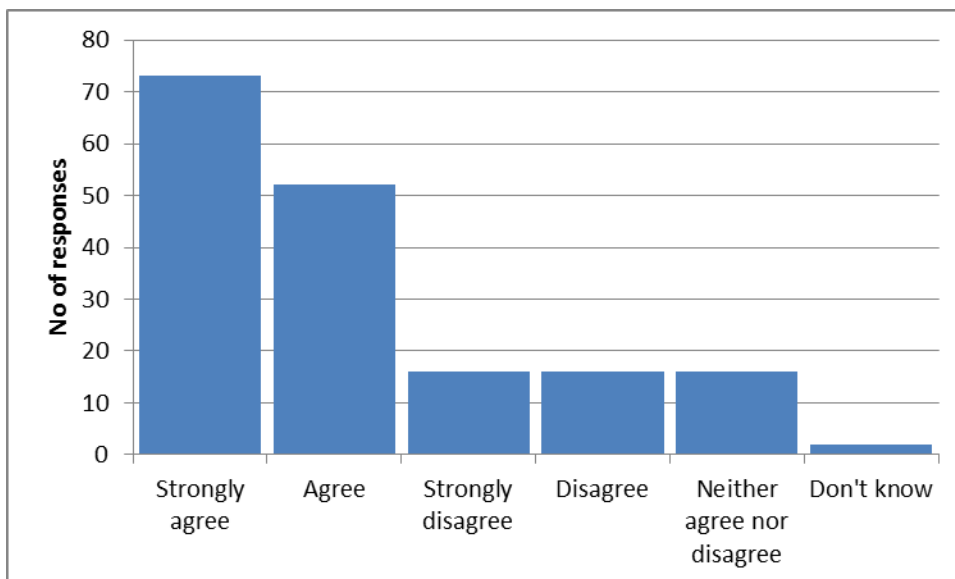
Q4a. Would you prefer to keep the bus stop directly outside the main station entrance and instead remove the short-stay drop off bays?

There were 156 responses to this question



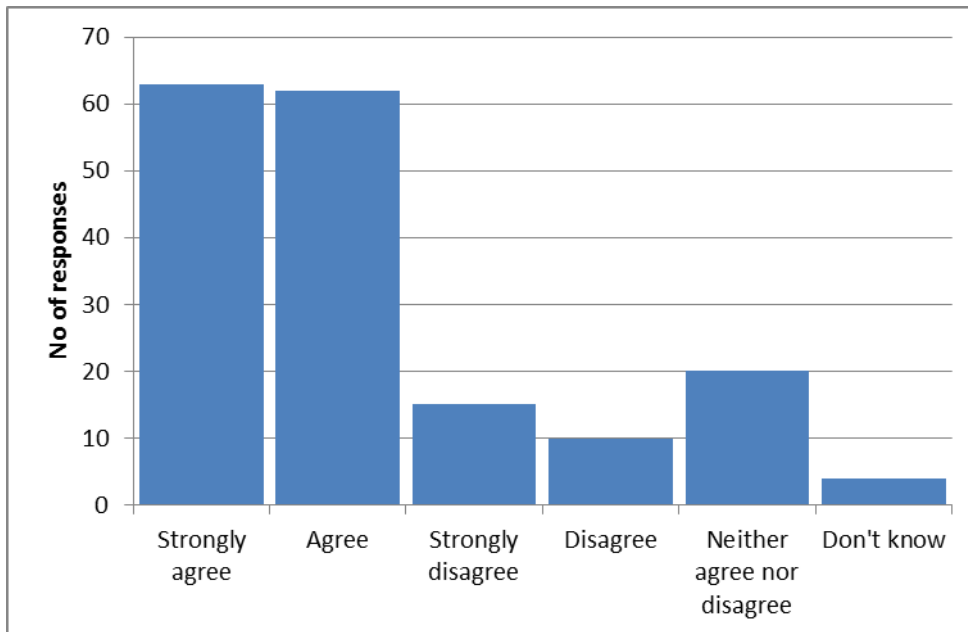
Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Proposal 2 to create a new pedestrian crossing from the station to the East side of Quarry Hill Road?

There were 175 responses to this question



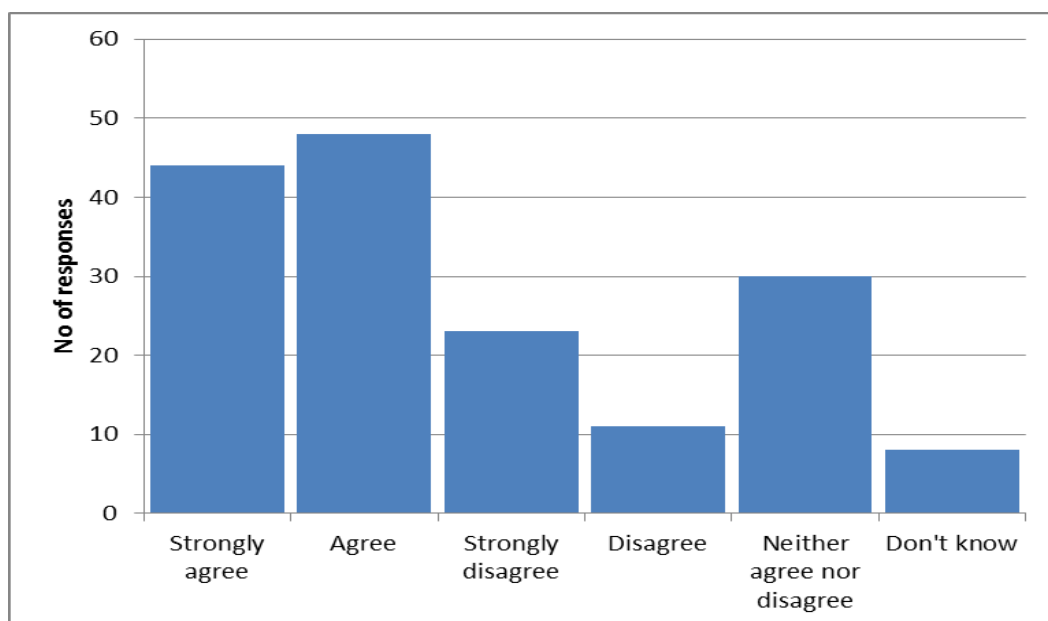
Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Proposal 3 to install traffic controls at the Quarry Hill Road / Waterloo Road junction?

There were 174 responses to this question



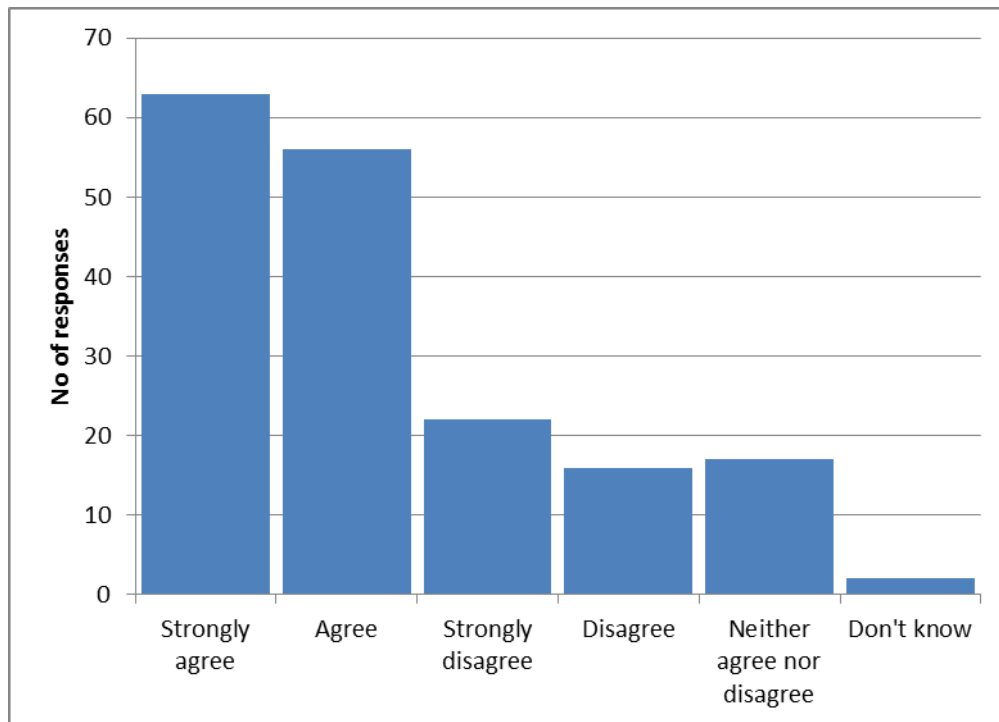
Q6a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the right turn into Priory Road?

There were 162 responses to this question



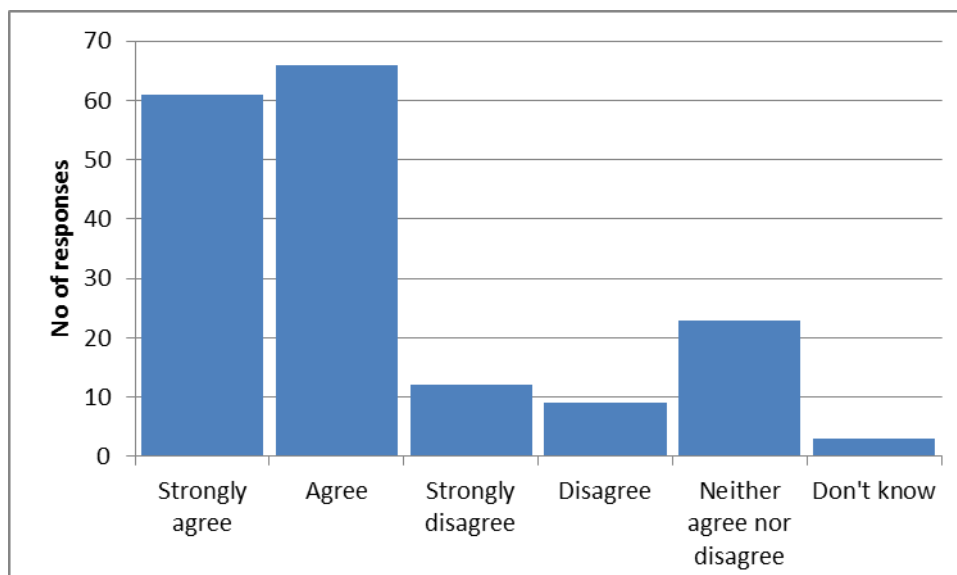
Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Proposal 4 to extend and improve the existing bus stop on West side of Quarry Hill Road (outside Lidl)?

There were 176 responses to this question



Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Proposal 5 to extend and improve the existing bus stop on East side of Quarry Hill Road (outside Quarry Hill Parade)?

There were 174 responses to this question



These results are taken from the Consultation Report, provided alongside this report and available at www.kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation.

The report outlines all the consultation activities that took place and gives more detail with regards to the comments made as part of the consultation.

The results above are a simplified version of responses and it is advisable to read the consultation report to gain a fuller picture of the feedback gained.

Some key themes that cropped up:

Concern about traffic flow

There is a concern that this scheme could slow down traffic flow. There was much mention of the High Street scheme and particularly the bus stop outside Costa as the cause of a slow-down of traffic and increase in pollution and many respondents are keen to avoid the same happening here.

This concern is particularly focussed around the new extended bus laybys that have the potential to create a 'pinch point'.

This is a concern for KCC officers so modelling has been undertaken to attempt to forecast the impact. This would need to be looked at closely during the detailed design process.

Waiting buses and replacement bus services

Comments were made about the bus drivers needing somewhere else to wait on their breaks before commencing a journey. They currently wait outside Lidl – often for long periods of time. This will need to be addressed in the detailed design through consultation with the bus companies.

Similarly the issue of rail replacement buses will need to be addressed.

Enforcing correct use of the bus stops and drop off bays

There was concern that the current bus stops are used by car drivers to stop off and visit the shops. Any scheme will need to address this concern through partnership working with TMBC.

Additionally there was repeated mention that drivers abuse the short stay drop off bays to park for longer periods of time.

Cyclist provision

There were some comments stating that this scheme did not go far enough to address the provision for cyclists. KCC are keen that this scheme promotes cycling and officers are keen to tie this scheme into the other cycle route works taking place along the A26 and from the A21. This will be looked at fully in the detailed design scheme.

5. Recommendation required:

To give backing to KCC to use the learning from the consultation to begin the detailed design process for this scheme.

Future Meeting if applicable:	Progress reports will be presented to the JTB in the future.
--------------------------------------	--

Contact Officers:	Tim Middleton, Principal Transport Planner (03000 412457)
Reporting to:	Tim Read, Head of Transportation (03000 411662)