

# Improving Access to Tonbridge Station

## Consultation Report



kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation  
Consultation period: 31 October to 11 December 2016



Paper copies of the booklet and questionnaire are available at Libraries and the Gateway or by emailing tonbridgestation@kent.gov.uk. For an alternative format please email [alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk](mailto:alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk) or call 03000 421553 (text relay 18001 03000 421553). This number goes to an answering machine, which is monitored during office hours.



## Public Consultation

31 October – 11 December 2016

### Alternative Formats

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

Kent County Council (KCC) has secured funding of £500,000 from the Local Growth Fund, allocated by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership to improve the area outside Tonbridge Station.

Tonbridge Station is the busiest station in Kent in terms of footfall, with over 4 million customers using the station in 2014/15. The ticket office itself has been improved in recent years but the area directly outside the main entrance, which is used by many school children, commuters and leisure users on a daily basis, is no longer fit for purpose. At peak times, the area does not have the capacity to serve the large numbers of people using the space.

Working with our partners, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC), Network Rail and Southeastern Railway, KCC is aiming to improve the space available for customers at the station, provide more room for pedestrian movements and to link the design to the recently improved High Street.

The scheme aims to improve the safety of pedestrians, particularly when crossing the roads at peak times and encourage more sustainable modes of travel such as use of the train, buses, cycling or walking.

DHA Transport consultants were commissioned to survey the area and produce an initial design. They have made a number of site visits to the area, and recorded traffic and pedestrian movements to gain evidence on which to base their initial proposals.

The draft proposals were presented at the Tonbridge Joint Transportation Board (JTB) on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016 who gave their recommendation to proceed to public consultation.

## **1.2. Purpose of the Consultation**

The purpose of the public consultation was to inform the public and stakeholder organisations about the proposed design in order to provide them with the opportunity to 'Have their say' and to help KCC gain feedback to inform changes or improvements to the scheme. The consultation gave the opportunity to:

- Understand why changes are being proposed to the area around Tonbridge Station
- Consider the possible impacts and benefits of the proposed proposals
- Ask us questions and provide their views on the proposals.

This public consultation offered the opportunity to open a dialogue with stakeholder organisations and the public so their comments and concerns could be incorporated into this report and the on-going work to finalise a scheme.

## **1.3. Purpose of this Report**

This report presents the analysis and findings of the responses to the public consultation on the proposals. In addition the report summarises the consultation process and the engagement and promotional activities that took place. The report also states how the feedback will be used to progress the proposal and identifies the next steps in the project development process.

## 2. Consultation Process

This chapter outlines the process followed to deliver the consultation and details the activities and documentation developed to support the delivery of the consultation. The consultation was divided into the five stages shown in Figure 2.1. Detailed information on each section is given below.

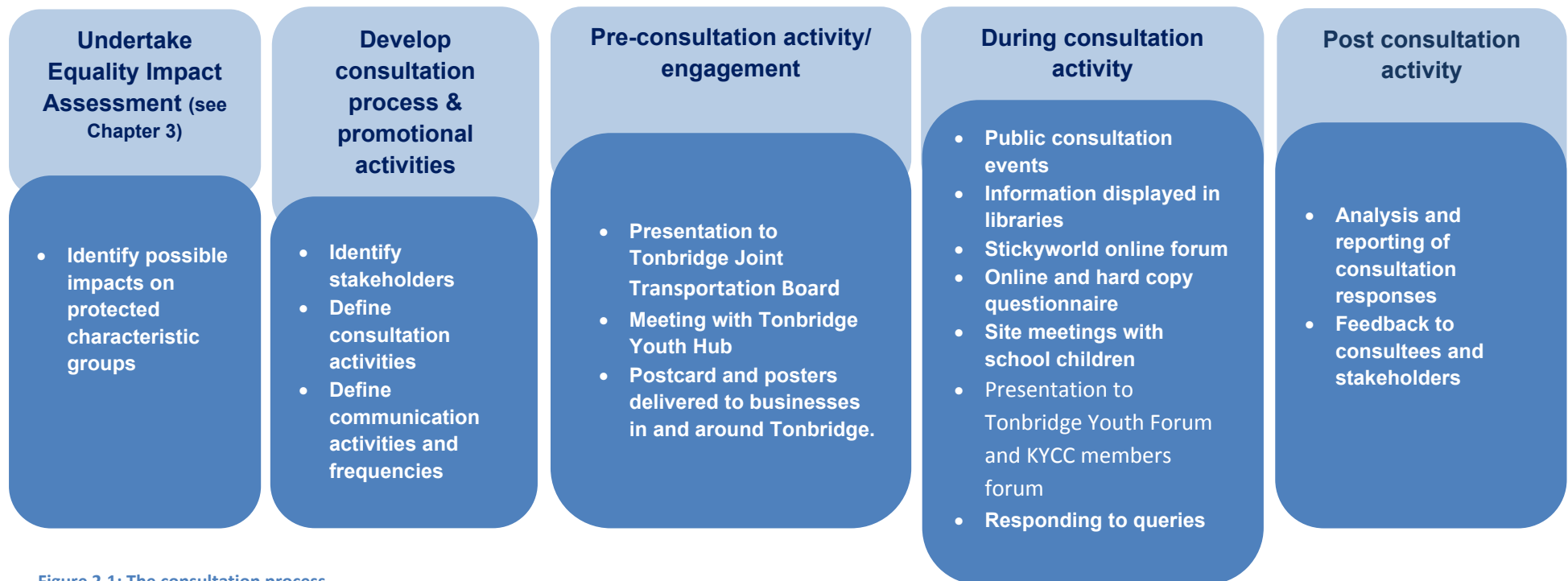


Figure 2.1: The consultation process

## 2.1. Promoting the Consultation

The consultation process was developed by KCC with the aim of involving residents, community groups and interested parties throughout the project to help develop the proposals, drawing on local knowledge and expertise.

### Promoting the Consultation

The following promotional activities were undertaken to support the delivery of the public consultation:

- Consultation poster displayed in local shops, business and public places
- Postcards delivered to Tonbridge & Malling Seniors Forum (TAMS),
- Presentation to TAMS (28/10/16)
- Presentation to Tonbridge Youth Forum (17/11/16)
- Posters displayed at Tonbridge Station
- Postcards distributed at Tonbridge Station (11<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> November am and pm peak times)
- Posters displayed on TMBC notice boards around town.
- Discussed consultation with local shop owners
- Email to 262 businesses in Tonbridge (TMBC emailed directly)
  - 40.8% open rate (industry average of 23%)
  - Newsletter was opened a total of 407 times (a number of people opened it more than once)
  - 7.6% click rate (industry average of 2.9%)
- Press release issued to local media outlets (24/10/16)
- Community liaison officer promoted the project to their network
- Page on KCC's Consultation Directory on Kent.gov.uk updated as consultation and project progressed
- Delivered Consultation booklets to all the local secondary schools and some local primary schools
- Consultation posters and booklets in Tonbridge libraries.
- Tweets from KCC account

Please note: materials are available for reference at [www.kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation](http://www.kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation)



Figure 2.2: Consultation poster

which is monitored during office hours.

## 2.2. Pre-consultation Engagement Activities

- KCC officers met with young people at the Tonbridge Youth Hub to discuss their use of the station, what they felt worked and what didn't and their ideas for how it might be improved. Their views were fed back to DHA Transport to inform their initial proposals.
- Presentation to Tonbridge Joint Transportation Board

## 2.3. During Consultation Activities

A number of activities were undertaken during the consultation period.

### Consultation Events

Four exhibition days were held (12, 19, 24, 28 November). These were timed to be inclusive to commuters and those in work and were held on Saturdays and weekday afternoon/evenings. The purpose of the events was to provide attendees with a forum to discuss the proposal with DHA Transport and KCC officers, and ask any questions.

The Saturday events were held from 11am – 3pm and the weekday events from 2pm – 7pm and 3pm - 8pm at the Chamber, Tonbridge Castle.

In total **74** people attended the exhibitions.



Figure 2.3: Photo taken on the exhibition days



### Consultation exhibition boards

The consultation exhibition boards provided information on the:

- Background of the project
- The proposed plan
- Details of the 5 proposals
- The next steps, and how people could provide their feedback

The boards were available to view and download from the consultation webpage [www.kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation](http://www.kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation). Hard copies of the Consultation Booklet were available in hard copy at the Tonbridge Gateway and the libraries.

- ✓ In total the Consultation Booklet was downloaded **350** times in pdf format and **78** times in word format.
- ✓ In total the Consultation Boards were downloaded **30** times

The exhibition boards were accompanied by a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document, which was updated, when required, after each exhibition event.

### Feedback mechanism

People were asked to provide feedback via a consultation questionnaire, which was available online and in a paper version. The paper version was available at the exhibition events, from the Gateway and Libraries and on request via telephone or email.

### Stickyworld Online Forum

KCC hosted an online forum via Stickyworld. This was a virtual version of the Consultation exhibition offering the public the opportunity to comment on the specific aspects of the scheme. The information gained was invaluable and allow KCC officers to communicate directly with the respondents.

In total Stickyworld gained:

**420** views          **73** comments

### Engagement with young people

On the 17<sup>th</sup> November a KCC officer attended the Tonbridge Youth Forum and KYCC members forum to conduct a presentation. The feedback has been fed into this report.

On the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> November KCC staff met with a group of year 7 children from Weald of Kent Grammar School on site. The proposals were explained in detail and accompanied by a site walk around the 5 main proposal areas. The children completed a feedback questionnaire.

On the afternoon of the 24<sup>th</sup> November a group of year 6 children from the Woodlands Primary School came for a similar exercise with representatives from DHA Transport. They completed a specially formulated questionnaire while conducting a site walk.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> November a KCC officer visited the Tonbridge Youth Hub for a follow up meeting to show them the proposals and gain their feedback. All feedback gained has been fed into this report.

**Note:** There were comments on a Tonbridge Facebook page, which were largely against the scheme. However, these comments have been not included in this report as the authors did not ask them to be taken as official responses. The KCC officers involved were alerted by other KCC officers to the page.

## 3. Equality and Accessibility

### 3.1. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

The EqIA provides a process to help us to understand how the proposals may affect people based on their protected characteristics (age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion / belief or none, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership and carer's responsibilities).

An EqIA was completed prior to commencement of the consultation and was available as one of the consultation documents during the consultation. The EqIA was used to shape the consultation process. This document was downloaded **34** times in pdf format and **39** times in word format.

We have carried out an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on the proposals to identify how people may be impacted. The EqIA is available to view at [kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation](http://kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation). We will use the feedback gathered from the consultation to update the EqIA before the outline design is finalised.

The following steps were defined in the Action Plan and additions were made as the project developed. All were taken to ensure the consultation was accessible to all:

- In addition to the consultation being available online, four events were held to provide the opportunity for people to view the material and ask the team questions. Hard copies of the online questionnaire were available and staff on hand to provide support. This was particularly important to ensure the consultation was accessible to people who could not or did not want to access the consultation online. The events were held at an accessible venue. The consultation events were replicated on Stickyworld and the exhibition banners were made available online for anyone who was unable to attend the events.
- Hard copies of the Consultation booklet, Questionnaire and FAW document were available in the Gateway and local libraries throughout the consultation period.
- All publicity material included a phone number and email address for people to request hard copies and alternative formats of the consultation material. Word versions of the Consultation booklet, EqIA and questionnaire were provided to ensure accessibility of documentation to consultees using audio transcription software.
- The Gateway acted as a delivery station for hard copy questionnaires.

Equality analysis of the consultation data was undertaken (Chapter 5) to identify any new issues that would impact a particular protected characteristic group. The EqIA will be updated to consider outcomes of this consultation and will be available online at [www.kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation](http://www.kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation) .

## 4. Response Profile

This chapter summarises the number of consultation responses received and who responded to the consultation.

There were a total of **191** respondents to the consultation:

- Of the 191 responses to the consultation questionnaire **121** were received online and **70** were hard copy responses
- There were **9** emails or letters written to KCC whereby the comments were manually added to the formal consultation responses and included in this report
- More than **74** people attended the consultation events.
- There were **73** comments on the Stickyworld Online Forum. The comments have been fed into the Theme of Comments but the respondents have not been included in the statistical information.

### 4.1. Respondent Demographics

The following section documents the demographics of the respondents. This data was collated using the 'About You' questions in the questionnaire.

Please Note: sometimes the percentages of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with a proposal will not add up to 100%. This is because some of the figures have been automatically rounded up or down to the nearest percentage point. It is not a fault with the data.

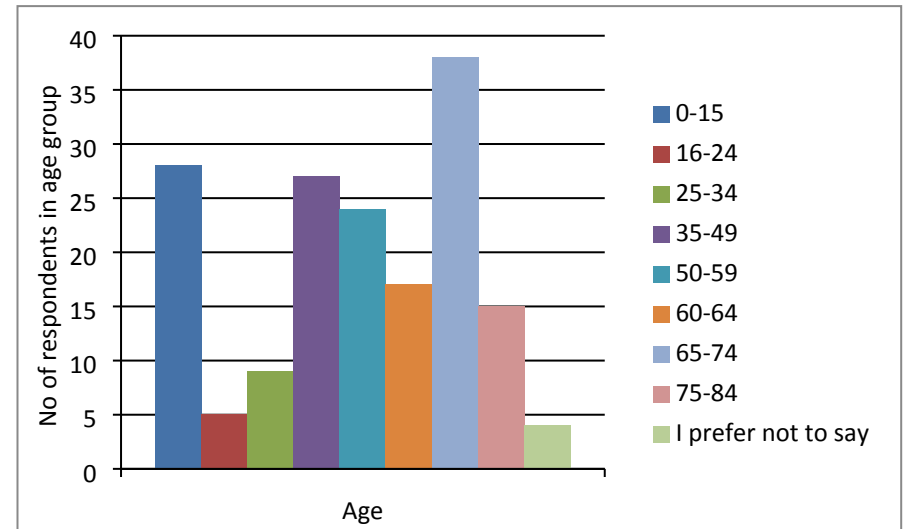


Figure 4.1: Respondents by age

#### 4.1.1. Age

Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents' age. A large proportion of respondents were aged between 65-74 year olds but also a large proportion were aged under 15, which are traditionally a difficult group to reach.

#### 4.1.2. Gender

- 60% of respondents were men
- 38% of respondents were women
- 2% of respondents preferred not to state their gender.

#### 4.1.3. Disability

- 88% of responded did not consider themselves having a disability
- 9% of responded did consider themselves having a disability
- 3% preferred not to say.

Of those that stated they considered themselves having a disability, the impairments that affected each respondent are shown in Figure 4.2.

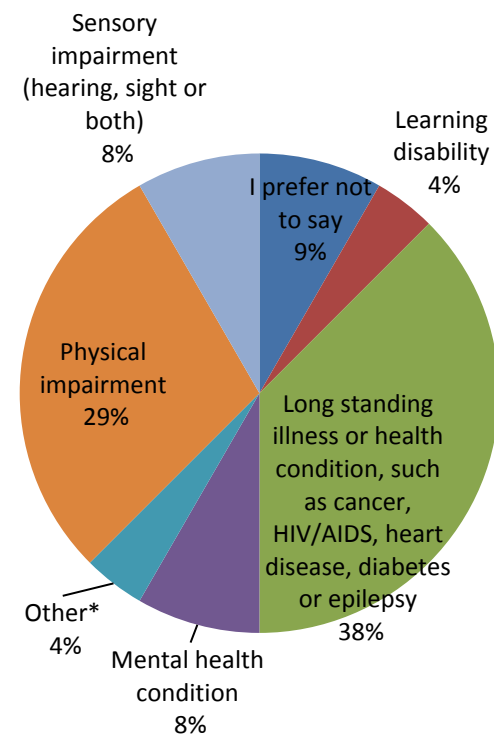


Table 4.2: 'Disability impairments'

## 4.2. Respondent Groups

The 191 questionnaire responses were analysed together to give an overall picture of the attitude towards the proposals. Where this data is presented it will be described as coming from the 'All' group. The results showed that on the whole concern regarding congestion was most likely to originate from motorists, which is to be expected. Additionally cyclists were most concerned about cyclist provision and road safety.

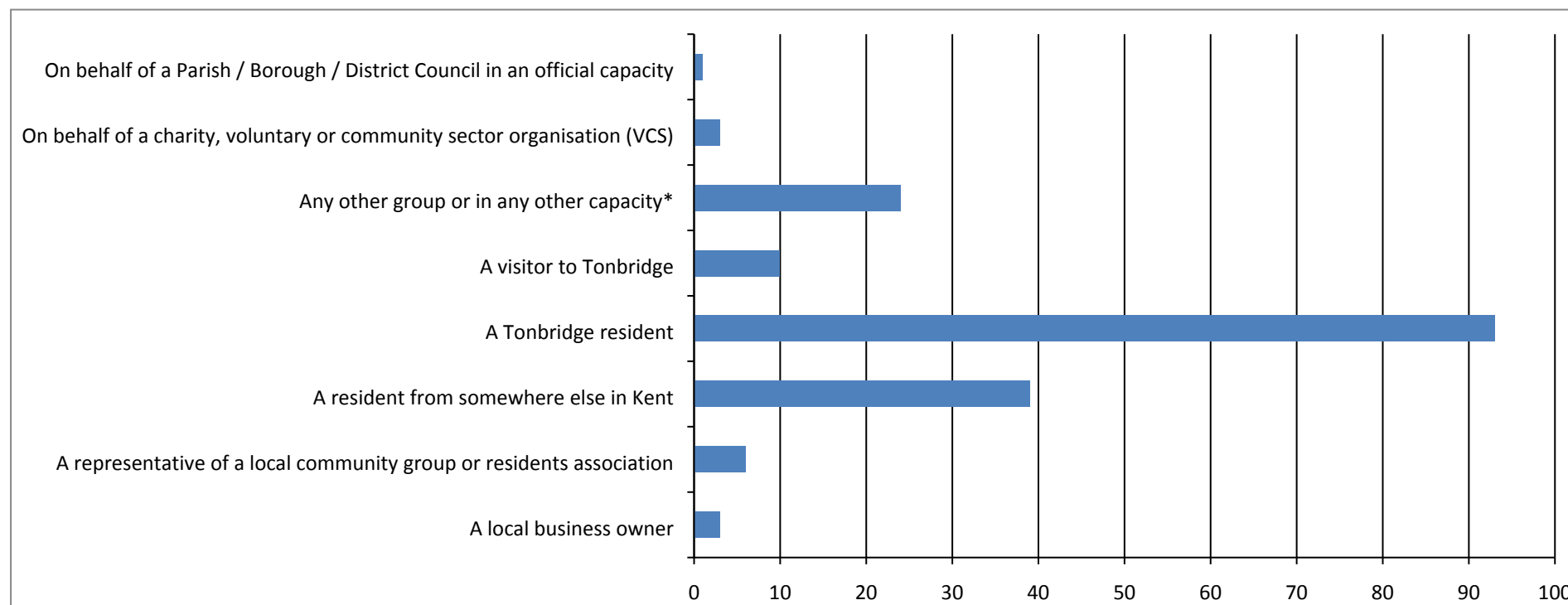


Table 4.3: 'Respondent Groups'

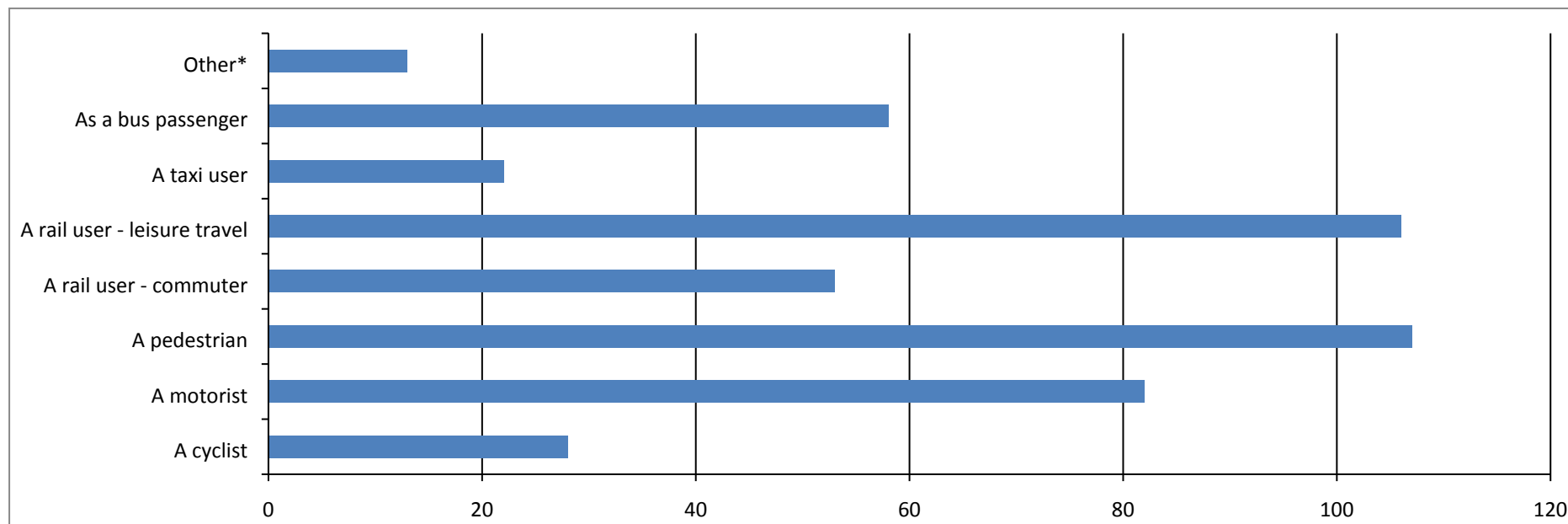


Table 4.4: 'Respondent Groups' Use of the station

The group 'other' included entries from mobility scooter users, bus operators and disabled users.

### 4.3. Respondent locations

The responses to the questionnaire were mapped to show where the respondents live. This was based on the postcodes given. Figure 4.5 maps the postcodes of people responding to the questionnaire. These results show us that the vast majority of the people who took part in the consultation live in and around Tonbridge.

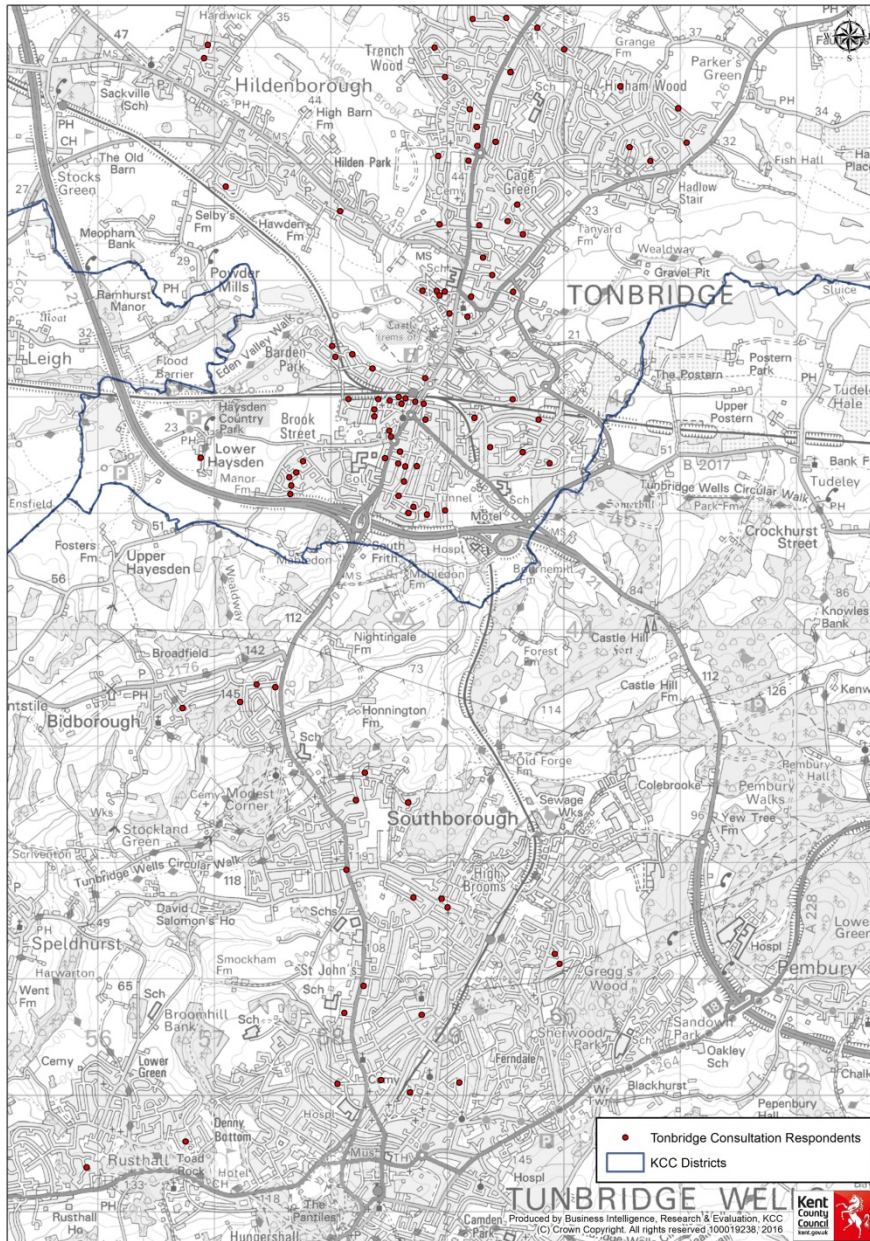


Figure 4.5: 'Respondent Groups'  
Origin Location



## 5. Consultation Results:

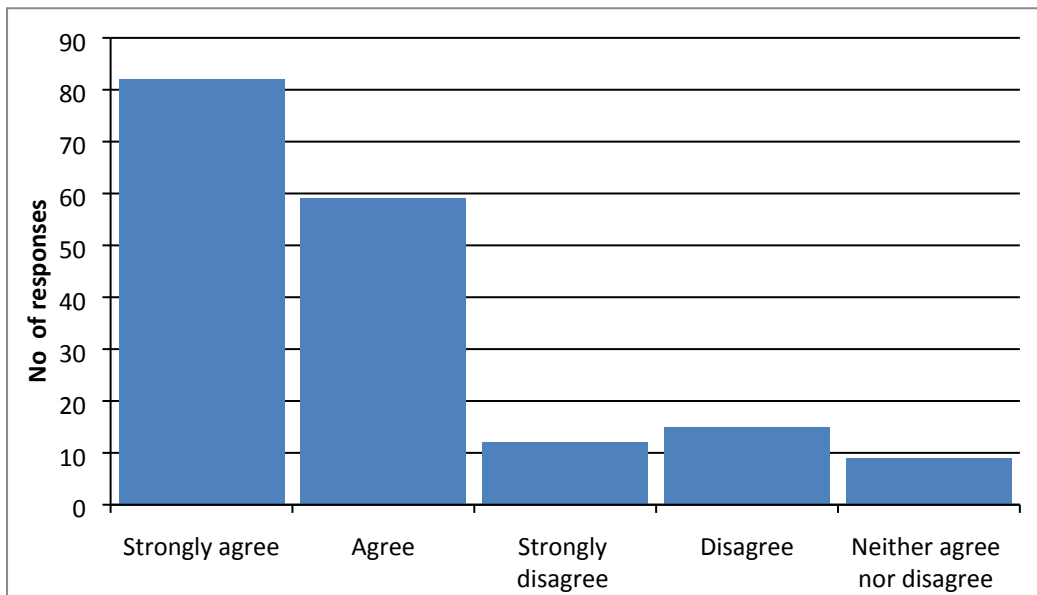
### 5.1. Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Proposal 1 to increase pedestrian space directly outside the main station entrance by relocating the bus stop

There were 177 responses to this question

79% of respondents agreed

15% of respondents disagreed

5% of respondents either did not know or did not agree nor disagree



Theme of comments	Number of comments
Concern about traffic flow	15
Do not lose short term drop off bays	13
New bus stop would be too far from the station	12
Where will replacement buses park?	8
Drop off bays currently abused	8
Where will bus drivers park to take a break?	7
Do not think cyclist safety is considered enough	7
Complaining about High Street congestion	6
No need to provide extra cycle storage	6
Use space outside Lidl for drop off bays and put buses outside the station	5
Include cycle parking in the scheme	3
Concern the proposal will increase pollution	3
Widen pavement on hill leading to High Street	3
Plant trees and provide benches outside station	3
Reinstate staircase on outside of station	3
No smoking outside station entrance	3
Relocate drop off bays	3
Other comments	26

*"Buses stopping in the road will make traffic build-ups even worse, as has been seen in the high St."*

*"It is essential to retain the current drop off bays"*

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

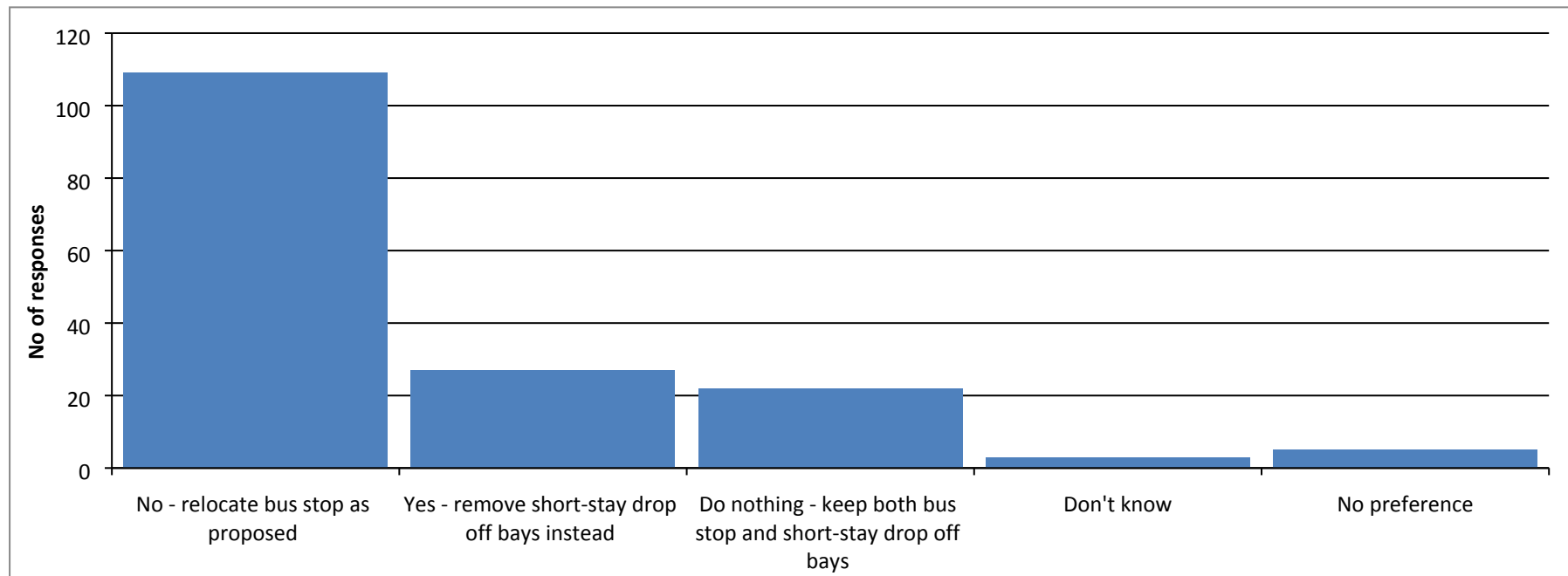
There were 156 responses to this question

66% of respondents suggested moving the bus stop as proposed

16% of respondents suggested removing the drop off bays instead

13% of respondents suggested keeping both the bus stop and drop off bays

5% of respondents had no preference or did not know



### 5.3. 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

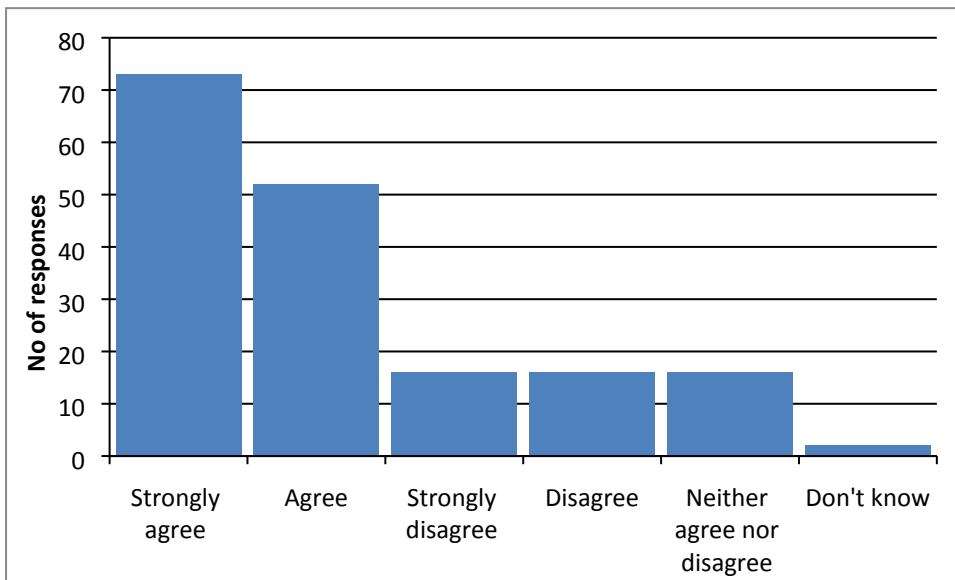
72% of respondents agreed

18% of respondents disagreed

10% of respondents either did not know or did not agree nor disagree

Theme of comments	Number of comments
Concern about traffic flow	26
Do not believe crossing will be used properly	10
Like the idea of a count-down timer	9
Implement a standard crossing instead	5
Ensure there is disabled access to the crossing.	4
Other comments	10

'Other comments' were made covering topics such as to extend the 20mph zone and need more provision for cyclists but no comment received more than 2 responses and therefore have not been included in the themed results.



*“Traffic is already held up badly by pedestrian lights and the roundabouts at the bottom of Quarry Hill and by the Sainsbury's roundabout.”*

*“Quite often, cars, buses, pedestrians are all fighting to get across or around the curb. Who really has the right of way?”*

*“Count down timer a very good idea.”*

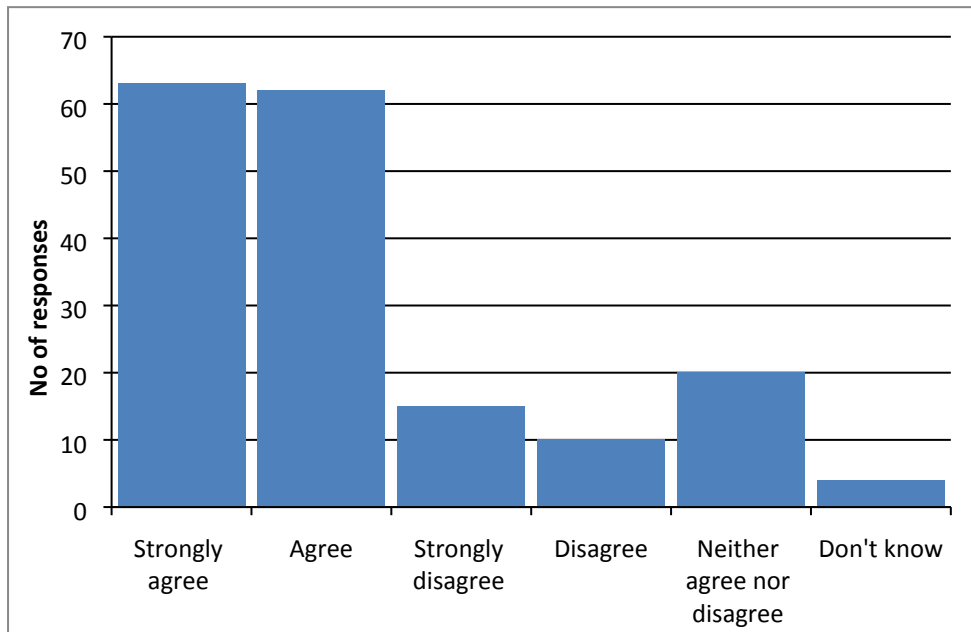
#### 5.4. Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Proposal 3 to install traffic controls at the Quarry Hill Road / Waterloo Road junction?

There were 174 responses to this question

72% of respondents agreed

15% of respondents disagreed

13% of respondents either did not know or did not agree nor disagree



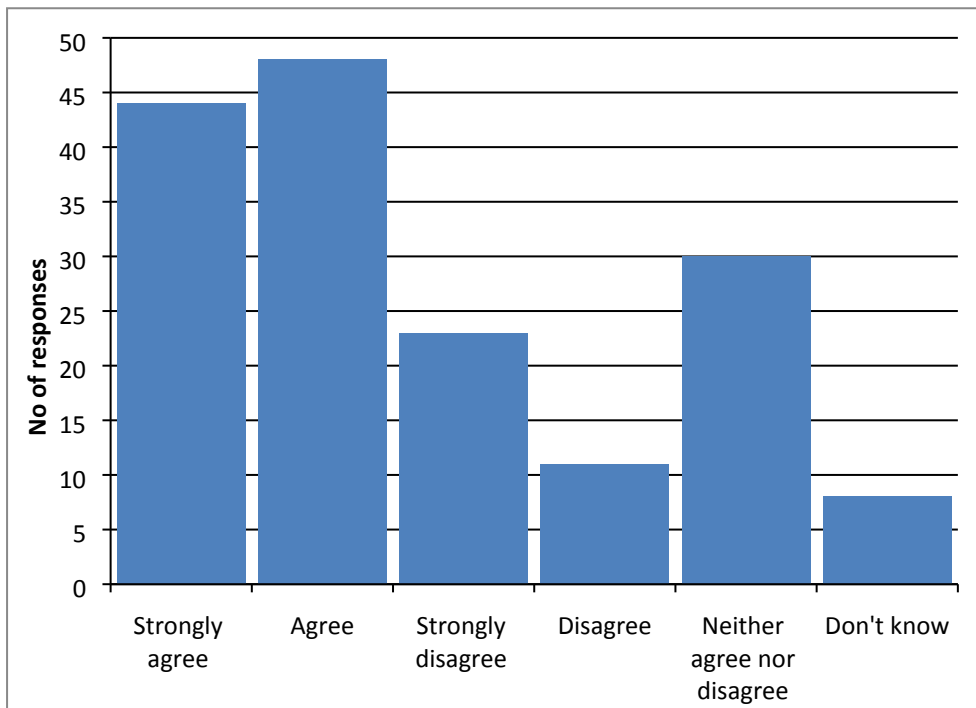
### 5.5. Q6a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the right turn into Priory Road?

There were 162 responses to this question

56% of respondents agreed

21% of respondents disagreed

23% of respondents either did not know or did not agree nor disagree



Theme of comments	Number of comments
Concern about traffic flow	22
Closing Right turn to Priory will negatively impact other side roads	8
Right turn ban will be ignored	5
Place a pedestrian crossing on Priory Road	4
Businesses in Priory Road will suffer	4
Should still allow right turn for cyclists into Priory Road	4
Coaches will struggle to navigate side roads if not allowed to turn into Priory Road	3
Make Waterloo Road one way	3
Other comments	7

'Other comments' were made covering topics such as create other crossings that no comment received in the themed results.

*"...we do not want more traffic lights to slow down the movement of traffic."*

*"...these are narrow residential roads, with cars parked down both sides, and I foresee these becoming "cut throughs" or "rat runs"..."*

**5.6. 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)?**

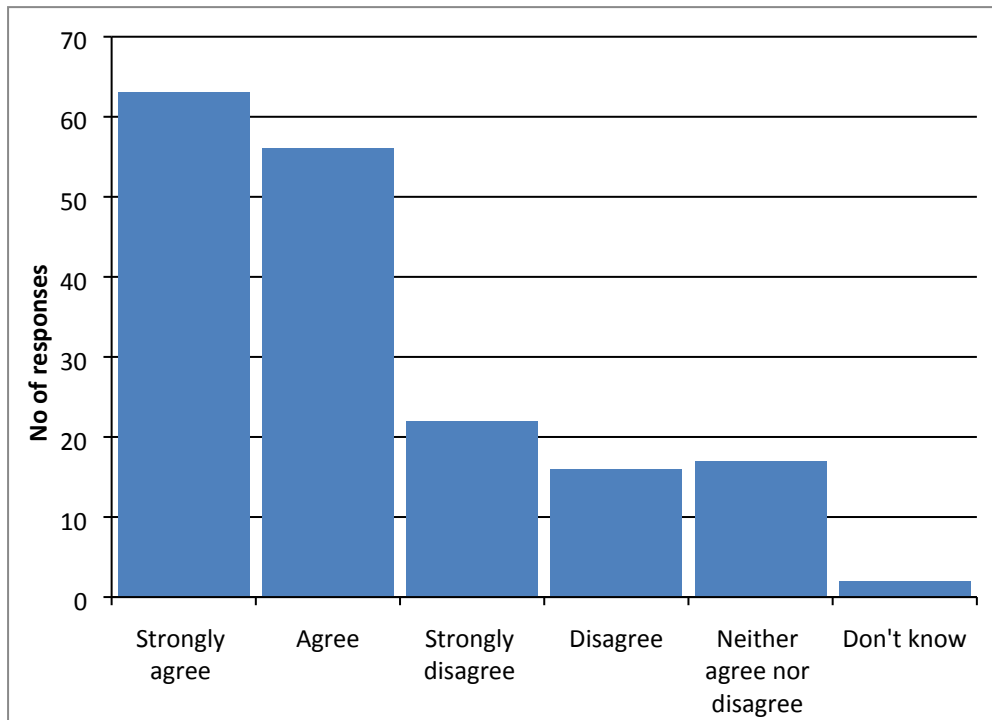
There were 176 responses to this question

**68%** of respondents agreed

22% of respondents disagreed

11% of respondents either did not know or neither agreed or disagreed

Theme of comments	Number of comments
Concern about traffic flow	40
Where will bus drivers park to take a break?	17
Need to enforce bus stops from car drivers	10
Where will replacement buses park?	9
Reduce street clutter	3
Other Comments	17



'Other comments' were made covering topics such as set the bus stop back into the pedestrian area and proposed bus stop is not long enough but no comment received more than 2 responses and therefore have not been included in the themed results.

**5.7. 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)?**

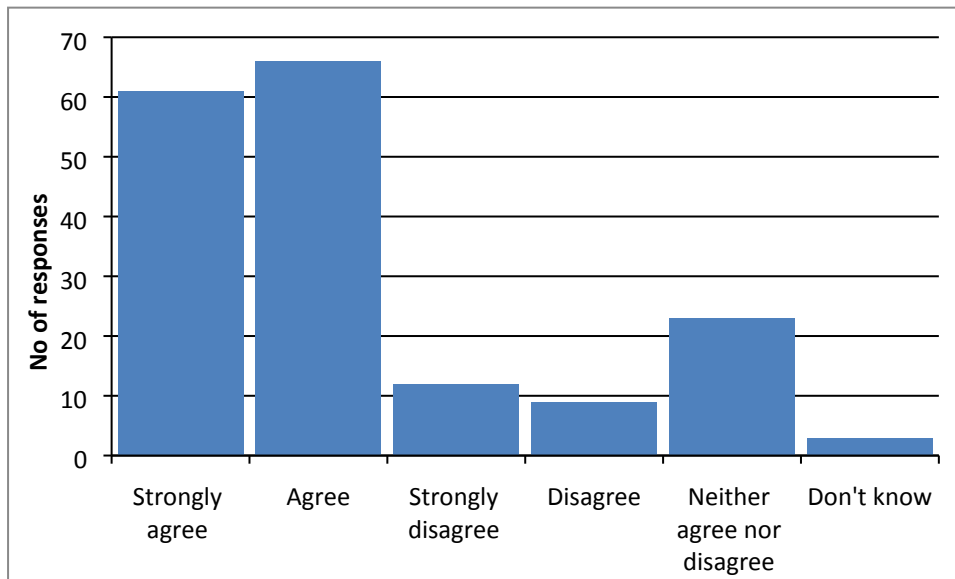
There were 174 responses to this question

73% of respondents agreed

12% of respondents disagreed

15% respondents either did not know or neither agreed or disagreed

Theme of comments	Number of comments
Need to enforce bus stops from car drivers	38
Concern about traffic flow	18
Need dedicated provision for cyclists	3
Other comments	11



'Other comments' were made covering topics such as buses may park up and block the traffic and the bus bays aren't long enough but no comment received more than 2 responses and therefore have not been included in the themed results.

*"How do you propose stopping the cars parking in that area to use the Take-Aways, The E-Cigarette shop, the Laundry & the Firework shop?"*

*"The road is already fraught and congested at that area and removing some of the road for the buses will not improve that situation."*

*"Concerned about safety for cyclists"*

**5.8. Q9. We have completed an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the proposals put forward in this consultation.**

There were 44 responses to this question.

<b>Theme of comments</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
Why is an Equality Impact Assessment needed?	6
The scheme will benefit disabled	4
Other comments	14

'Other comments' were made covering topics such as the scheme has not properly assessed the impact on vulnerable groups and ensure disability standards are adhered to in the design but no comment received more than 2 responses and therefore have not been included in the themed results.

*"I would like some "What on earth has the proposal to change the roads to do with gender, race, sexual orientation or religion?"*

*"Any measure to safeguard the safety of vulnerable persons - whether improved crossings or dedicated bus parking- can only benefit all travellers."*



### 5.9 Equality and diversity feedback

We analysed the feedback to see if it identified any specific potential impacts or issues for people because of a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion / belief or none, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership and carer's responsibilities). The following issues were identified for people with a disability:

- One resident requested access ramps to disabled parking bays
- Some residents were concerned that their access to the bus stops would be reduced if they were forced to cross a road to access their bus.
- Some residents were concerned about a lack of provision for cyclists
- Some residents requested suitable access for mobility scooters.

## 6. Next Steps

On 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017 the Joint Transportation Board (JTB) will review this feedback and advice from officers to determine whether to recommend to proceed to detailed design for the scheme. This work would be carried out during 2017 with the works projected to begin nearer the 2018/19 financial year.

This report is available on our website [kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation](http://kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation) and we will send a notification to those who have provided contact details throughout the process, including stakeholder organisations.

Hard copies of this report will be on display in the Tonbridge library and Gateway.

When the detailed design is complete this will be published alongside a document explaining how the consultation responses shaped the final design.