

Improving Access to Tonbridge Station – Revised Design Consultation Report



Consultation period: 16 January to 12 February 2018 kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation



Public Consultation 16 January – 12 February 2018

Alternative Formats

This document can be made available in other formats or languages, please email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or telephone 03000 421553 (text relay service 18001 03000 421553). This number goes to an answer machine, which is monitored during office hours.



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Contents..... | 2 |
| 1. Introduction | 4 |
| 1.1. Background | 4 |
| 1.2. Purpose of the Consultation | 4 |
| 1.3. Purpose of this Report..... | 5 |
| 2. Consultation Process | 6 |
| 2.1. Promoting the Consultation | 7 |
| Promoting the Consultation..... | 7 |
| 2.2. Pre-consultation Engagement Activities | 7 |
| 2.3. During Consultation Activities..... | 8 |
| 3. Equality and Accessibility..... | 10 |
| 3.1. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) | 10 |
| 4. Response Profile..... | 12 |
| 4.1. Respondent Demographics | 12 |
| 4.1.1. Age | 12 |
| 4.1.2. Gender | 13 |
| 4.1.3. Disability | 13 |
| 4.2. Respondent Groups | 14 |
| 4.3. Respondent locations..... | 16 |
| 5 Consultation Results: | 17 |

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 5.1 | Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the scheme design? | 17 |
| 5.2 | Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase pedestrian space directly outside the main station entrance by relocating the short stay drop off spaces to Priory Road? | 20 |
| 5.3 | Q6. We have completed an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the proposals put forward in this consultation. We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything we should consider relating to equality and diversity. | 23 |
| 5.4 | Equality and diversity feedback..... | 24 |
| 6 | Next Steps | 25 |

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

From 16 January - 12 February 2018, Kent County Council (KCC) consulted on the revised design to Tonbridge Station. This follows on from a consultation held in partnership with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC) in December 2016, whereby the previous design was presented to improve access to Tonbridge Station.

Tonbridge station is the busiest station in Kent with over 4.4 million customers expected to have used the station in 2016/17.

Working in liaison with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Network Rail and Southeastern, KCC aims to improve the space available for customers at the station, provide more room for pedestrian movements, encourage further take up of sustainable transport and to link the design to the recently improved High Street. The latter scheme is also being reviewed in order that the two schemes together could improve both the access and amenity value of Tonbridge town centre.

This scheme would be using funds secured from the Local Growth Fund, allocated by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

1.2. Purpose of the Consultation

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

- Understand why changes are 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 consultation offered the opportunity to continue the 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.

This report will be published and presented to the Tonbridge Joint Transportation Board (JTB) which is made up of elected members from TMBC and KCC, who will make a recommendation on the proposals to KCC's Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport & Waste. The Cabinet Member will then make a final decision on the scheme.

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.

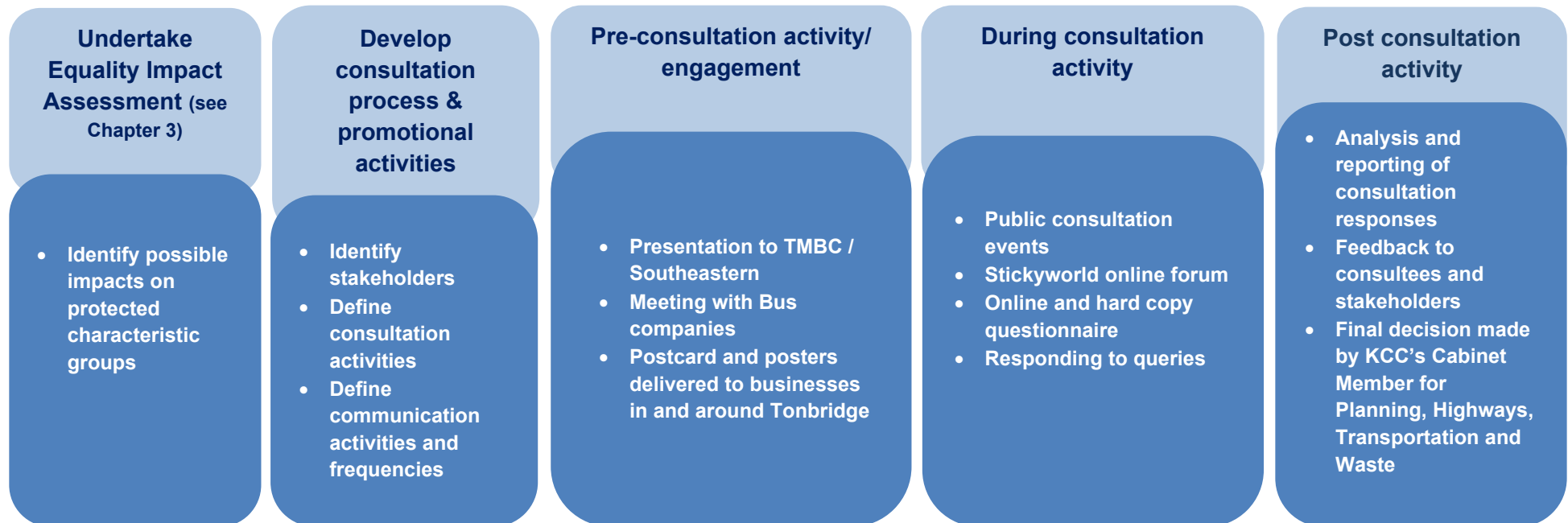


Figure 2.1: The consultation process

2.1. Promoting the Consultation

The consultation process was developed with the aim of involving residents, community groups and interested parties 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:

- Postcards delivered to residents and businesses in proximity to the station and high street
- Presentation to Tonbridge & Malling Seniors Forum TAMS (26/01/18)
- Posters displayed at Tonbridge Station on both platforms
- Posters displayed on TMBC notice boards around town
- Email to stakeholders including 262 businesses in Tonbridge (TMBC emailed directly)
- 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
- Tweets from KCC account (gained 15 retweets & 50 clicks) & TMBC business account

Please note: materials are available for reference at www.kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation

2.2. Pre-consultation Engagement Activities

- KCC officers met with the local bus companies to see how the proposals may affect their services (15/8/17)
- KCC officers met with TMBC officers and members to discuss the proposals before consultation (30/10/17)
- Presentation to Tonbridge Joint Transportation Board (27/11/17)



Figure 2.2: Consultation poster

2.3. During Consultation Activities

A number of activities were undertaken during the consultation period.

Consultation Events

Two exhibition days were held at the Chamber, Tonbridge Castle:

- Saturday 27 January 11am – 2pm
- Thursday 8 February 3pm – 7pm

These were timed to be inclusive to commuters and those in work. The purpose of the events was to provide attendees with a forum to discuss the proposal with KCC officers, and ask any questions.

The events were well attended with an estimate of over 100 attendees.

Consultation material

A consultation booklet was created and hard copies were available at the Tonbridge Castle Gateway throughout the consultation. Copies could also be downloaded from the consultation webpage kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation or delivered on request.

- In total the Consultation Booklet was downloaded **832** times in PDF format and **187** times in Word format.
- In total the Word version questionnaire was downloaded **27** times
- In total the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was downloaded **54** times in PDF format and **9** times in Word format

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 Tonbridge Gateway and on request via telephone or email.

Stickyworld Online Forum

KCC hosted an online forum via Stickyworld. This provided the opportunity for the public to comment directly on to the draft plan on the specific aspects of the scheme. The information gained was invaluable and allowed KCC officers to communicate directly with the respondents.

In total Stickyworld gained:

522 views

107 comments

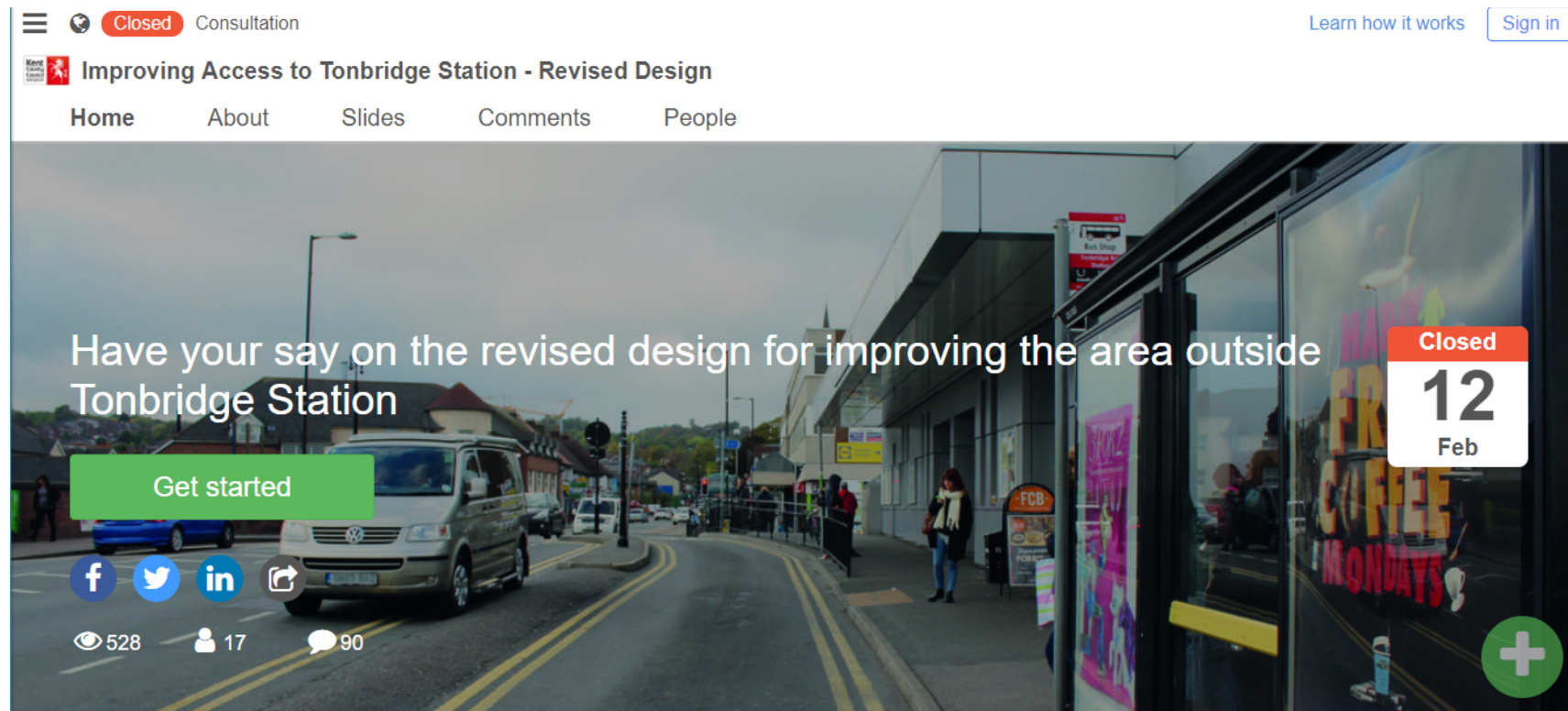


Figure 2.3: Online Forum home page

3. Equality and Accessibility

3.1. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

The EqIA provides a process to help us 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).

We have carried out an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on the proposals to identify how people may be impacted. This document was downloaded **54** times in PDF format and **9** times in Word format. The EqIA is available to view at kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation. We will use the feedback gathered from the consultation to update the EqIA for the detailed design.

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, two events were held at an accessible venue 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 plans were replicated on Stickyworld and the printed material was made available online for anyone who was unable to attend the events.
- Hard copies of the Consultation booklet and Questionnaire were available in Tonbridge Gateway 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.

4. Response Profile

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

There were a total of **203** respondents to the consultation:

- Of the 203 responses to the consultation questionnaire, **132** were received online and **63** were hard copy responses
- There were **8** emails or letters written to KCC whereby the comments were manually added to the formal consultation responses and included in this report
- There were **107** 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.

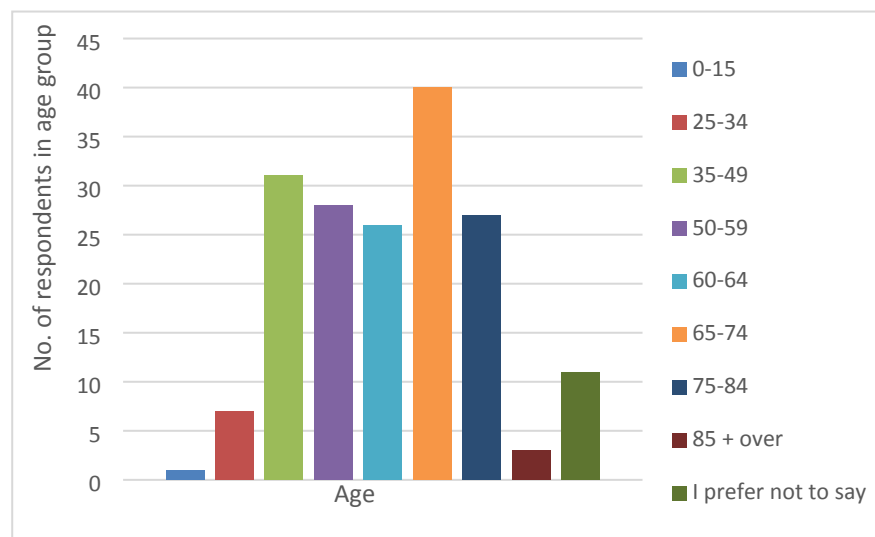


Figure 4.1: Respondents by age

4.1.1. Age

Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents' age. A large proportion of respondents were aged between 65-74 years old. Not all respondents told us their age.

4.1.2. Gender

- 58% of respondents were men
- 36% of respondents were women
- 6% of respondents preferred not to state their gender

4.1.3. Disability

- 83% of respondents did not consider themselves having a disability
- 7% of respondents did consider themselves having a disability
- 9% 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.

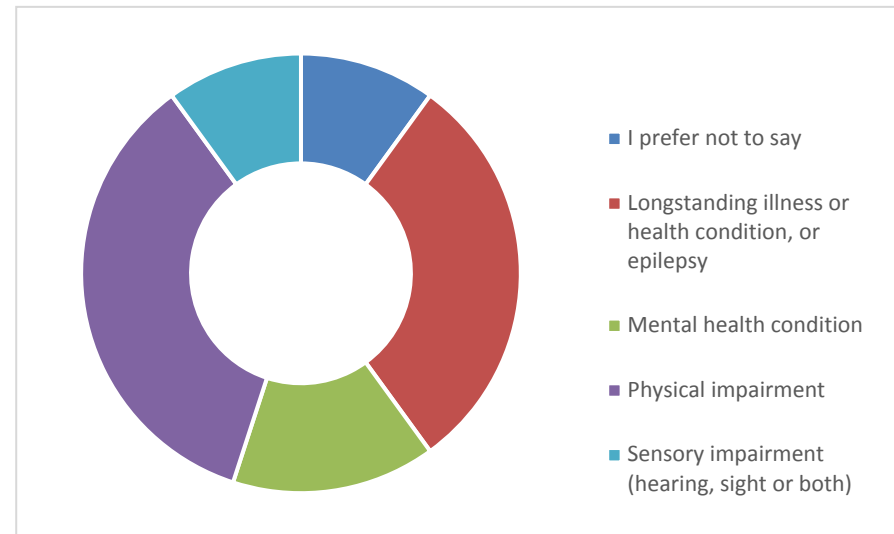


Table 4.2: 'Disability impairments'

4.2. Respondent Groups

The 203 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.

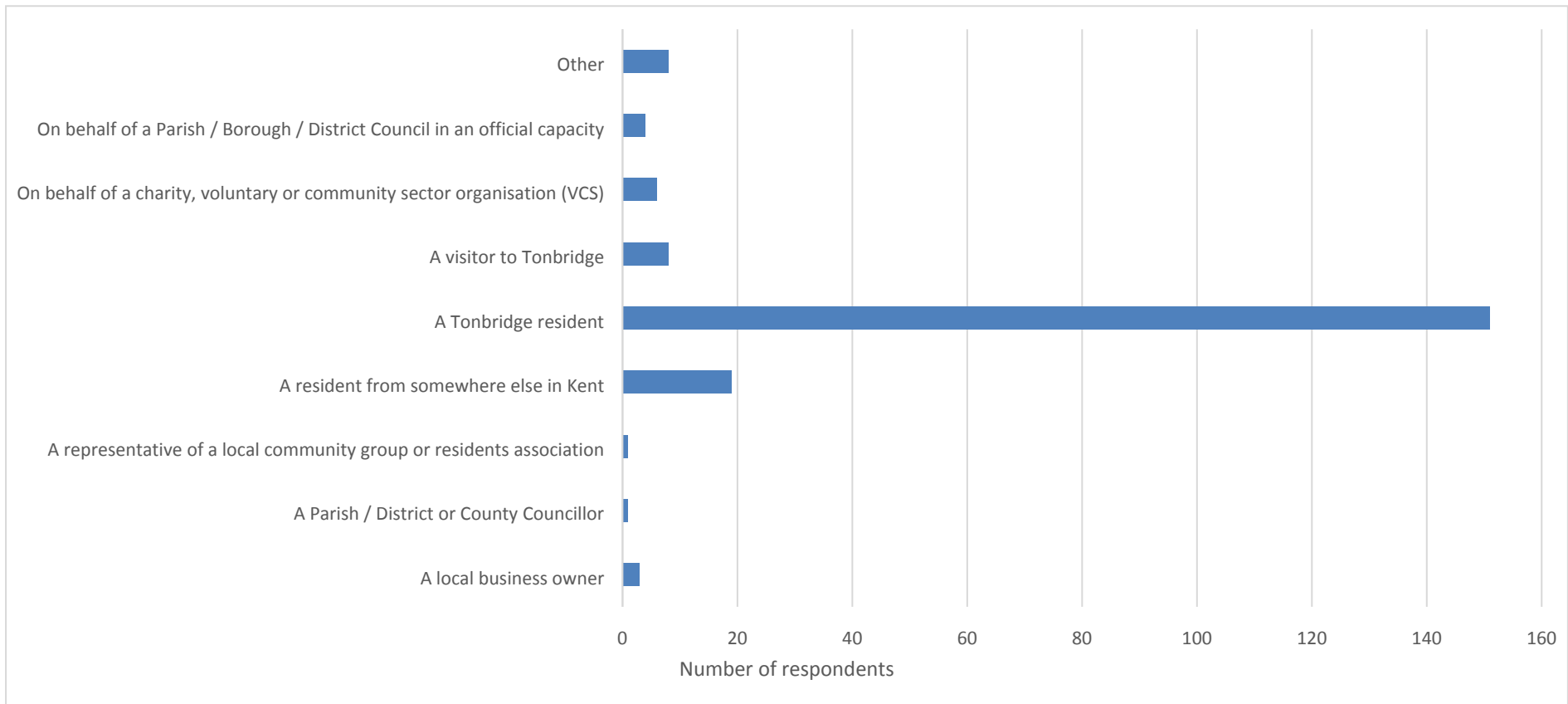


Table 4.3: Respondent Groups: *Please tell us in what capacity you are completing this questionnaire:*

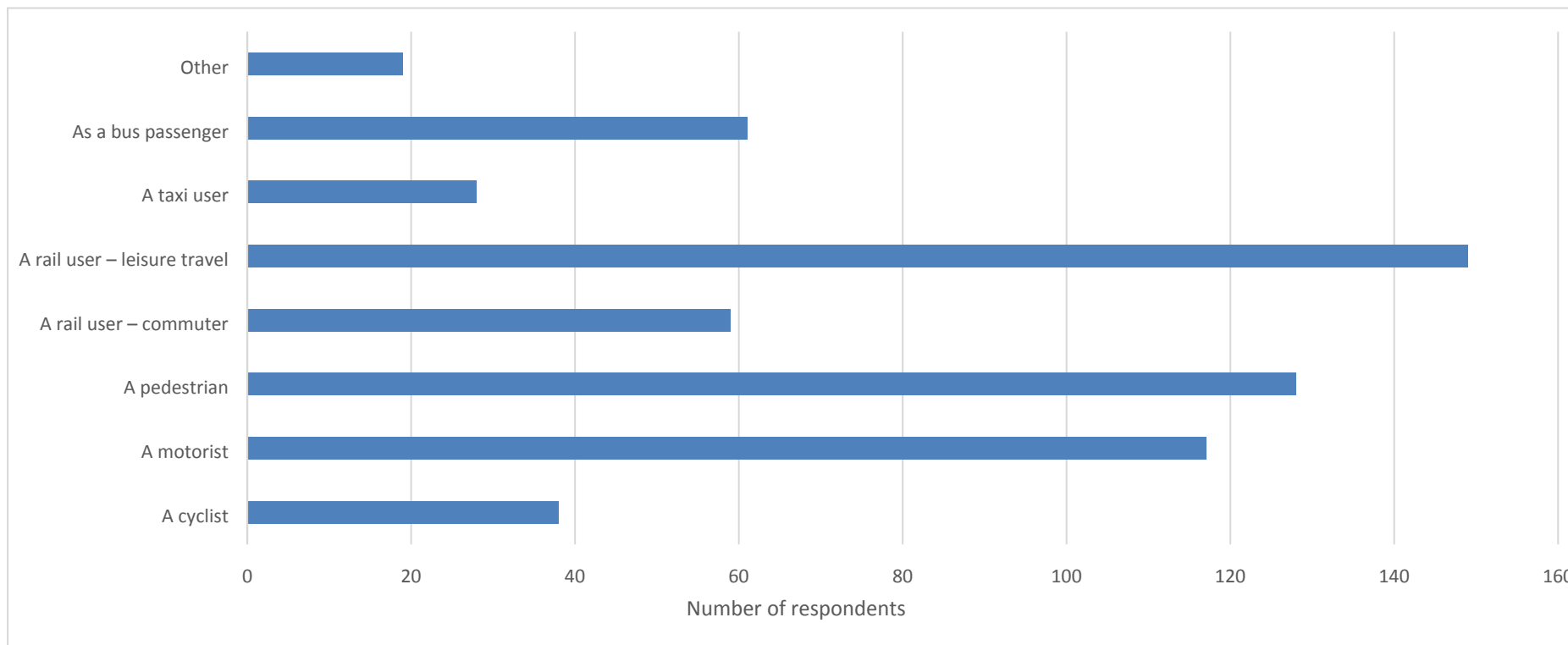


Table 4.4: Respondent Groups: To help us to understand your interest in our proposal, please tell us how you interact with Tonbridge Station:

The group 'other' included entries from motorcycle users, carers 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 from the Tonbridge centre region.

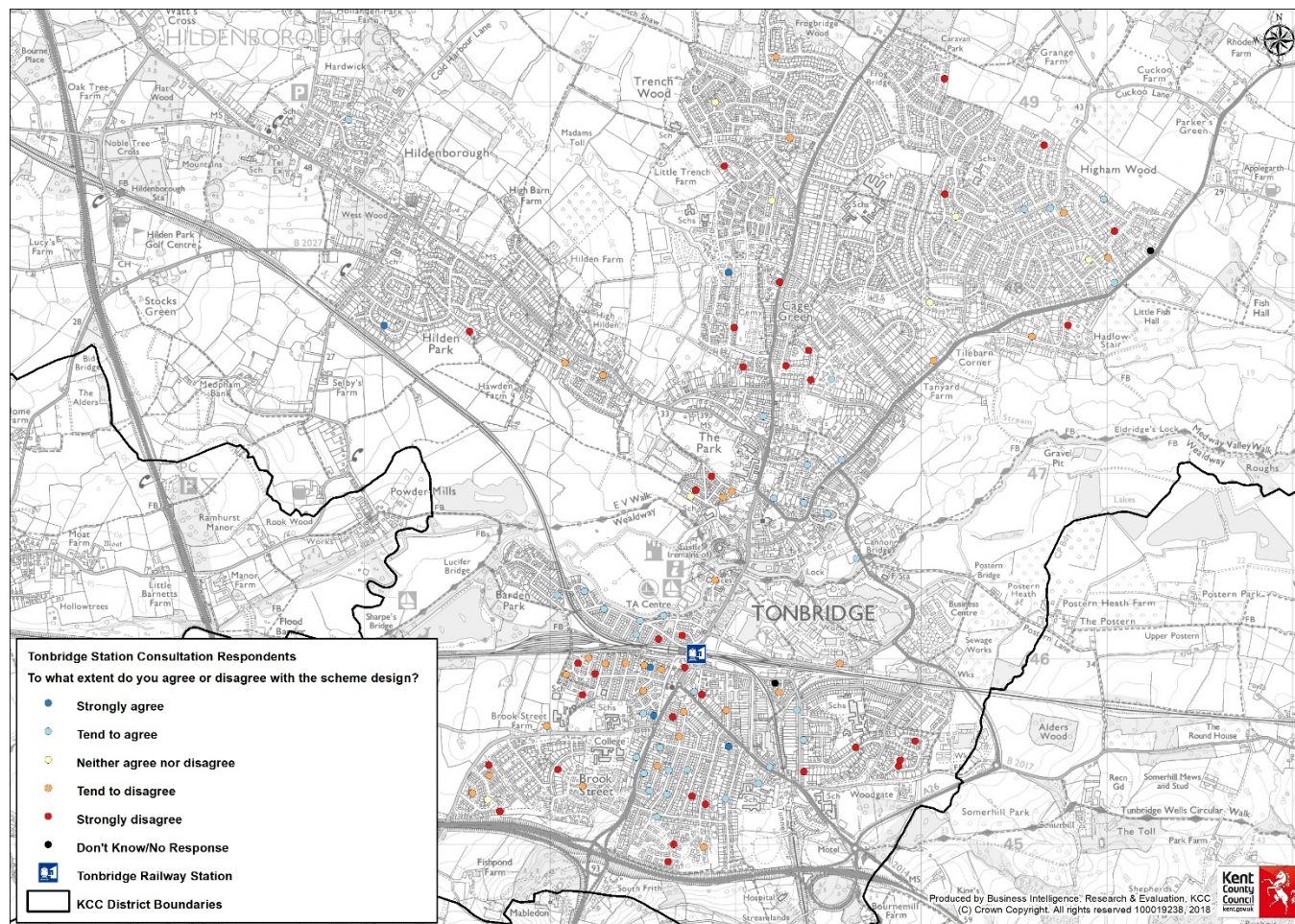


Figure 4.5: Respondents origin location

5 Consultation Results:

5.1 Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the scheme design?

There were 195 responses to this question

40% of respondents agreed

53% of respondents disagreed

8% of respondents either did not know or did not agree nor disagree

Please Note: The percentages of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with a proposal may 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.

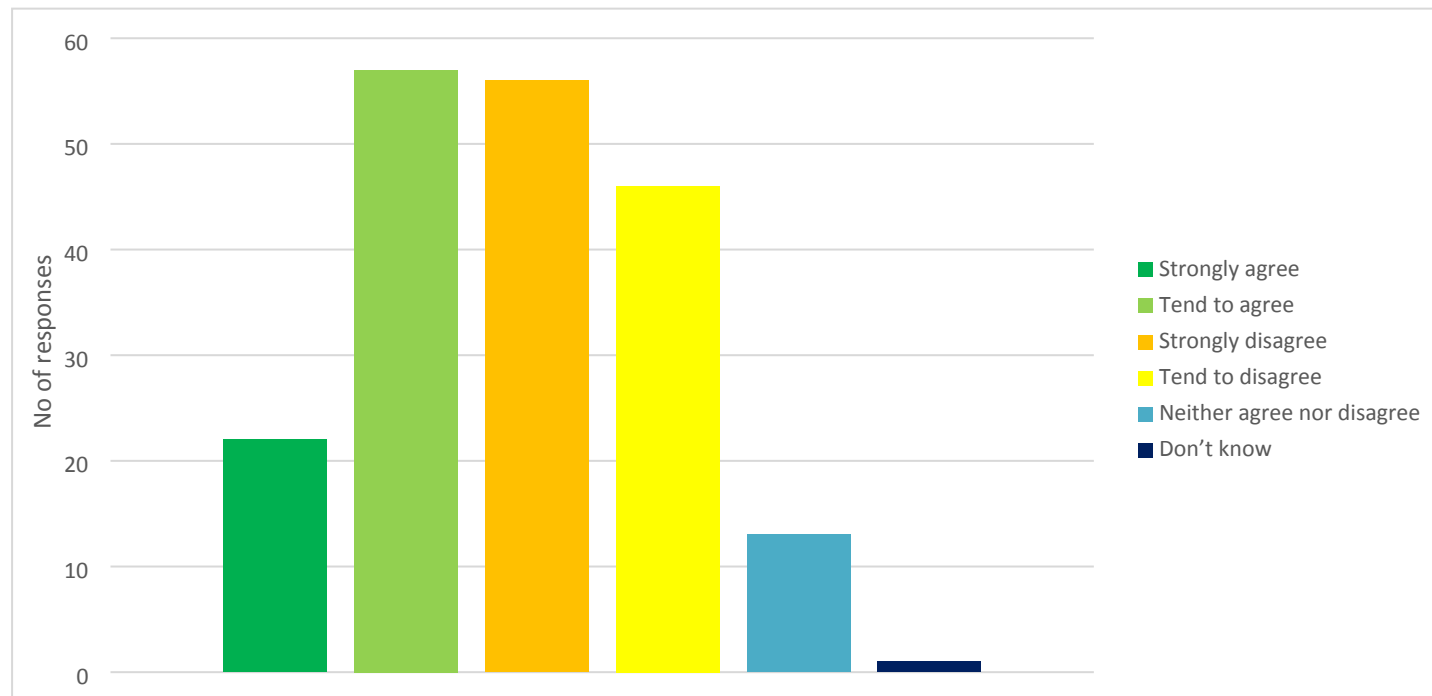


Figure 5.1: Respondents answers to Q4

| Theme of comments | Number of comments |
|---|--------------------|
| Unhappy with congestion in the high street | 52 |
| Priory Road drop off would be too far away from station | 45 |
| The scheme will cause congestion | 34 |
| The scheme benefits pedestrians | 34 |
| A drop off zone for elderly / disabled is required close to the station | 21 |
| Rail replacement buses need to be organised | 21 |
| Car drivers will abuse bus stop if drop off bays are further away | 20 |
| Reduce taxi rank spaces and make use of the space for drop off bays | 16 |
| Move bus standing away from the bus stop near Lidl | 12 |
| Would like to see more provision for cyclists | 10 |
| Move the taxi ranks elsewhere and use the space for buses/drop off | 9 |
| Liked the diagonal crossing as proposed in the 1st consultation | 9 |
| Railway approach shops should be removed for use as drop off spaces / bus stops | 9 |
| Splitting bus stops will confuse passengers | 8 |
| There should be two buses outside station | 8 |
| Make better use of Barden Road for drop off / taxi's | 8 |
| Disagree with banning right turn into Priory Road | 8 |
| Need to stop rat running in St Stephens and other side streets | 7 |
| Use station car park for buses / drop off | 6 |
| Don't want traffic signals on Waterloo Road | 6 |
| Must coordinate new traffic signals to optimise vehicle and pedestrian flows | 6 |
| Widen East side of Railway approach | 5 |
| Make Waterloo Road one - way | 4 |
| Signals on Priory Road | 4 |
| Remove drop off bays as plan shows from front of station | 4 |
| Enforcement at bus stops required | 4 |

Comments were collected from the questionnaire, online forum and notes on the on plans at the exhibition event.

Topics had to be mentioned at least 4 times to appear in the results table.

Although there are improvements from the original proposal, the problem of traffic flow is still an issue due to the problems still experienced in the High Street

I am worried that the 'kiss and ride' parking outside the station is removed to so far away to Priory Road

Adding in additional crossings may cause more backlogs of traffic - so is a possible alternative a footbridge over the main road

Drop off in front of the station is a must. People will not use Priory Road.

Safety of pedestrians is key so widened paths and new crossings are very welcome

I hope that the expanded footways can be made of the same red brick as the rest of the High Street

The changes to the road layout and the bus stops to improve pedestrian and traffic flow are good. However, the main issue is the drop off areas and their ease of access

The premises leading down from the station to the round-about (Vale Rd) are in a bad state and some improvement should be made before long.

5.2 Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase pedestrian space directly outside the main station entrance by relocating the short stay drop off spaces to Priory Road?

There were 195 responses to this question

45% of respondents agreed

49% of respondents disagreed

6% of respondents either did not know or did not agree nor disagree

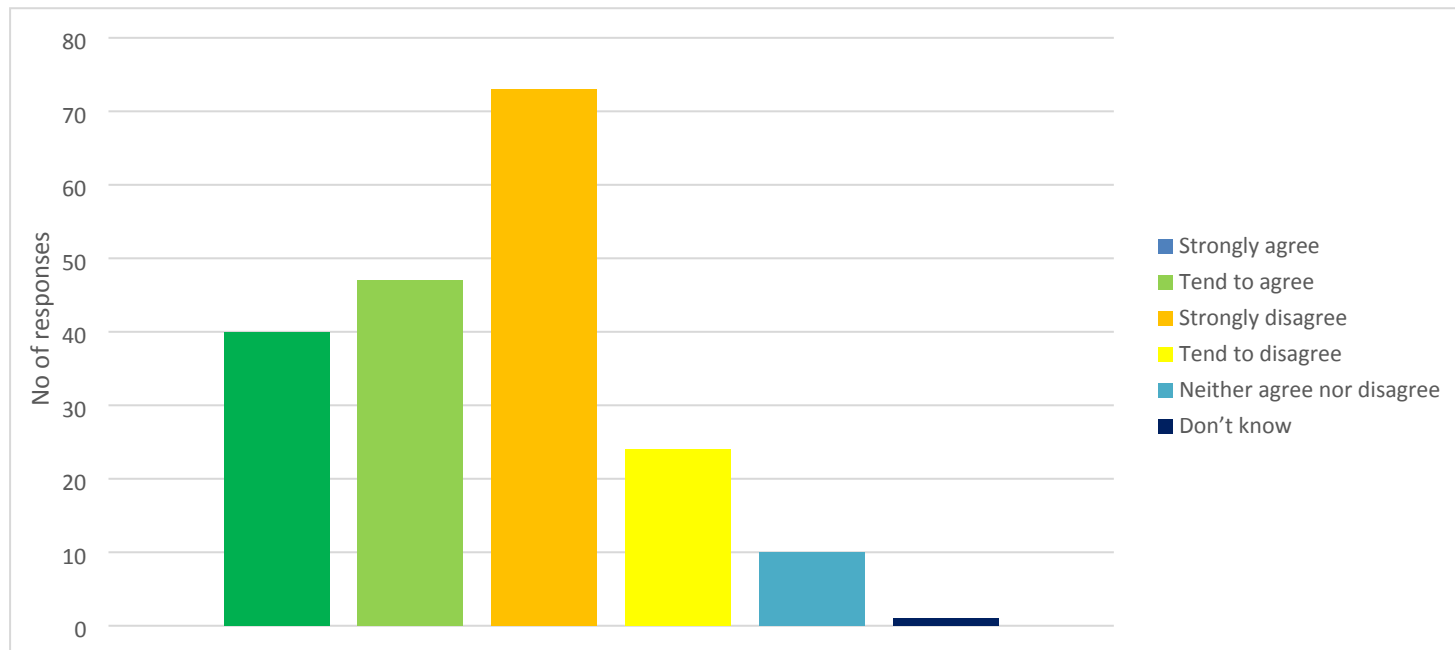


Figure 5.2: Respondents answers to Q5

| Theme of comments | Number of comments |
|--|---------------------------|
| A drop off zone for elderly / disabled / children is required close to the station | 35 |
| Priory Road drop off would be too far away from station | 30 |
| Car drivers will abuse bus stop if drop off bays are further away | 22 |
| Increasing pedestrian space is a good idea, but not in total agreement with the plan | 21 |
| In support of the plan | 19 |
| Drop off spaces insufficient for the requirement | 18 |
| Will cause congestion | 12 |
| Should not have buses stopping outside the station | 10 |
| Would need enforcement from TMBC | 10 |
| Would be too much traffic on the roads leading to the drop off and Priory Road | 8 |
| The no right turn makes drop off difficult to access / people will not adhere to it | 8 |
| Use some of the Waterloo Road space currently used by taxis | 7 |
| There wouldn't be a problem if children didn't gather near the station | 6 |
| Remove bus stop, not drop off space | 5 |
| Needs drop off to rear of station at Barden Road (and an entrance extension) | 5 |

Comments were collected from the questionnaire.

Topics had to be mentioned at least 4 times to appear in the results table.

Good idea but difficult to prevent unofficial dropping off outside station.

Disabled train passengers should be allowed to be dropped off at the bus stop immediately in front of the station

Another possibility for the drop off would be to provide less taxi parking spaces and to allow a drop off in Waterloo road.

People are reluctant to walk any distance and people will continue to use the area to drop and pick up resulting in increased congestion. Unless there is a permanent traffic warden presence.

Except for genuine disabled, far too many cars stop wherever they like because healthy passengers won't walk a few more yards. This is true all over the country, and creates all kinds of dangers, delays and frustrations. And avoidable exhaust pollution.

Please teach the school children to behave sensibly on the pavements.

Pedestrian space should certainly be increased but I think it is the bus stop that needs relocating, not the drop off spaces

Agree with the proposal to increase pedestrian space directly outside the station but not to relocate to Priory Road.

5.3 Q6. We have completed an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the proposals put forward in this consultation. We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything we should consider relating to equality and diversity.

There were **86** responses to this question.

| Theme of comments | Number of comments |
|--|--------------------|
| Don't understand how the question is relevant | 15 |
| Short stay drop off at front of station benefits disabled people | 12 |
| Equality analysis seems appropriate | 7 |
| Increasing walking distance is a problem | 6 |
| The current Barden road provides disabled access already | 3 |
| Make Barden Road disabled access easy as possible | 2 |
| Taxis are given priority over disabled users at present | 2 |
| Barden Road entrance is challenging for disabled | 2 |

Comments were collected from the questionnaire.

Topics had to be mentioned at least 2 times to appear in the results table.

What possible relevance to questions on the railway station is one's race, religion or sexual orientation?

The removal of the drop off bays would very much adversely affect access for elderly and disabled passengers.

Seems fair and I fully support it

5.4 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 or mobility impairment:

- Some residents were concerned that the three crossings may confuse those with a disability or visual impairment.
- 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 with the distance to travel from the proposed Priory Road drop off spaces
- Some residents were concerned that splitting the bus stops would confuse vulnerable users.

6 Next Steps

On 12th March 2018, 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 2018 with the works projected to begin in the Summer of 2018.

This report is available on our website 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 Gateway.

On the completion of the detailed design, it will be published alongside a document explaining how the consultation responses shaped the final design.