

Agenda Item 5 – Assets and Services Committee	
Committee	Assets and Services Committee
Month	February 2022
Report Title	Road Closure Consultation – Final Results
Report Author	Georgia Arnold - Committee Clerk
Attachments	Appendix A – Road Closure Consultation Report, October 2021 Appendix B - PowerPoint Presentation – Analysis of Results

Purpose of Report

To present to committee the analysis from the public consultation, regarding the road closures in Saffron Walden.

Background Information

As explained in Appendix A, SWTC has maintained a desire to pedestrianise Saffron Walden Town Centre – as part of the adopted priorities, found [here](#). This is further evidenced in the draft Neighbourhood Plan Policy SW20, *promoting walking and cycling* as supported in section nine of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The temporary Market Square Road closures have now finished and all roads are now open, except on Tuesdays and Saturdays for the Market – which will remain unchanged.

Aims and Objectives

As agreed in our Assets & Services Committee meeting (minute reference A&S 104-21) the following proposals were presented within the consultation for public consideration:

1. All roads closed (Pedestrianisation)
2. Partially open/closed - Retain the pedestrian area of Market Square but re-open King Street / part of Market Street for cars
3. All roads open to traffic, all year

Options 1 and 2 included the following variables, for the closures to take place:

All of the time; 08.00-16.00 Only; April-October Only; or Three days a week Only.

The aim of the second phase of consultation was to see if there was a favoured option from the above. The results would then be used as evidence for any decisions made.

Consultation Process

We continued to use the same online platform used in phase one, *Common Place*.

During phase two we purposefully kept the questions brief and presented the above proposals, asking which was favoured and if it should be limited to certain periods.

Illustrations were provided within the consultation as a visual aid.

The questionnaire again was kept anonymous; however, a question did include asking if respondents were from a business or not. Which is useful to understand how many residents, visitors or businesses responded.

The questionnaire was primarily online, however, paper copies were available from The Tourist Information Centre.

We ran the consultation for seven weeks, from 06/12/2021 until 24/01/2022. Phase one ran for six, however phase two ran over the Christmas and New Year period, so an additional week was added.

Marketing and Promotion

A marketing campaign was launched, very similar to phase one. Promotion methods included:

- Social Media Posts
- Local Newspaper adverts and press releases
- Electronic newsletters via The Tourist Information and Common Place
- Leaflets to local businesses
- Posters in and around Saffron Walden Centre
- Emails to Care Homes and assisted living accommodation, Schools, Churches, local clubs and groups
- Tourist Information Window Display
- Two face to face consultation days on the Market (21/12/2021 and 18/01/2022)
- Ongoing communication with the BID Group who engaged the businesses

Analysis of the results and Recommendations

The attached PowerPoint, Appendix B, provides the full analysis of the results, including a recommendation – repeated below for ease of reference.

- *To formally request Essex Highways, consider partially closing the roads (with the exception on Tuesday and Saturdays for the Market, which would remain unchanged)*
- *Respondents favoured the partial closure to be in place all of the time, i.e., all day, everyday*
- *This partial closure would allow cars along King Street and down Market Street (illustrated in yellow)*
- *Market Hill would be closed to traffic (illustrated in red)*
- *And this would leave the Market Square pedestrianised*
- *Suitable signage and safety barriers will be required and will need to be agreed and ordered.*

This partial closure would allow access for deliveries and car parking on King Street alongside the library and shops. Committee should consider whether the partial closure is in place all day, every day – this is the favoured option however, thought should be made for residents who live in the Town Centre.