

Agenda Item 9

Committee	Full Council
Month	March 2022
Report Title	Town Centre Road Closure Recommendation
Report Author	Georgia Arnold - Committee Clerk
Attachments	a) Phase One Road Closure Consultation Report, October 2021 b) Phase Two Road Closure Consultation Report, February 2022 c) Phase Two PowerPoint Presentation – Analysis of Results

Purpose of Report

To present a recommendation to Full Council regarding the Town Centre Road Closures.

Background Information

Appendices A and B detail the context as to how and why we split the consultation in to two phases.

Phase two sought to identify a favoured option from the following:

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 – i.e., the current traffic regulation order

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.

Analysis of results

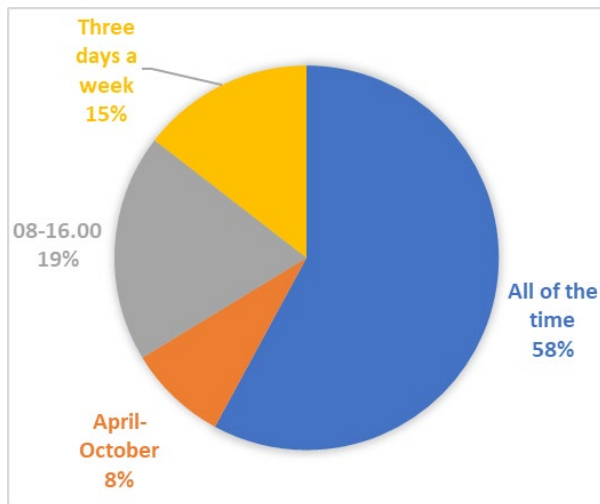
The results from Phase Two were presented to the Assets and Services committee on Monday 28th February, with headline figures stating:

- 40% asked for all roads to be closed (pedestrianised)
- 35% asked for a partial road closure
- 25% asked for all roads to be open

As detailed in Appendix C, slides 10-12, we also asked within the survey if any road closures should be in place all of the time or limited to certain periods and most preferred 'all of the time'.

Drawing particularly attention to this question, when we held face to face consultation during the two market days respondents particularly preferred the 08.00-16.00 option as this would allow access during the evening.

To close the survey, we asked the public to make their own comments and 26% of these related to the accessibility of the town for deliveries and those less mobile. These concerns were also brought forward during phase one of consultation, therefore a compromise could be met as 75% favoured some sort of road closure – which is supported and recommended by the Assets and Services Committee.



The timings of a closure are to be decided by Council, most respondents preferred a closure to be in place ‘all of the time’ however, as noted during the face-to-face consultation days respondents much preferred any closure to be in place 08-16.00 as it would allow them access in the evenings.

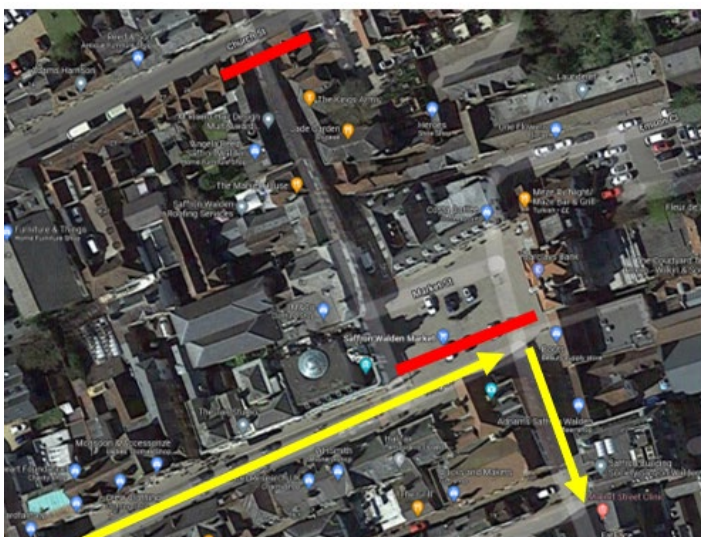
When Council makes a decision, they should also be mindful of the residents who live in the Town Centre as this consultation did not specifically target them.

The second favoured option was for closures to take place 08.00-16.00 – this would therefore allow cars to park in the Market Square in the evening.

The Assets and Services Committee support the proposal of a partial road closure, draft minute extract, reference 022-22 is below for reference:

“Committee unanimously agreed to support the principle of a partial road closure and this proposal will be presented to Full Council in March. It was resolved that an additional report will be presented to Full Council to agree suitable timings for the partial road closure as the favoured option was all of the time but Officers noted that decisions should be mindful of residents who live in the Centre.”

This partial closure is illustrated below and would allow vehicle access along King Street, with parking alongside the library and out down-Market Street. With barriers at the top of Market Hill and along the Square to retain a pedestrian area.



Recommendation

Council is requested to consider the following timing options for Officers to submit a formal request to Essex Highways to partially close the roads.

Partial closure is the second favoured option from respondents, supported by the Assets and Services Committee and pedestrianisation is one of the Council's priorities. (To note, the usual Market on Tuesdays and Saturday's will remain unchanged.)

1. Partially close the roads, all of the time

This partial closure would be in place all day and all week, so barriers would not need to be moved.

As noted during the face-to-face consultation days respondents preferred a limited closure 08.00-16.00; Council should also be mindful of the residents and businesses in the Centre who would be affected by this closure.

2. Partially close the roads, 08.00-16.00, everyday day

This would be in place 08-16.00 every day, including Sunday's meaning additional staffing will be required.

3. Partially close the roads, 08.00-16.00, weekdays only

This would be in place 08-16.00 Monday, Wednesday, Thursdays and Fridays. Vehicular access would be allowed in the evening after the Saturday Market and all-day Sunday.

4. Partially close the roads, 08.00-16.00, three days a week only

Similar to the Covid-19 measure, partially close the roads 08.00-16.00 on Wednesday, Thursdays and Fridays only. Allowing vehicular access all day on Monday and Sunday.

Council is therefore asked to consider these timings and which would be the most appropriate to put forward as a formal request to Highways. Noting that the public's favoured timings were all of the time, 08.00-16.00 and three days a week and only 8% asked for a seasonal closure.