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ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Llangollen 2020 Scheme

Revision C: 15 July 2021

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STRATEGY • **CREATIVITY** • **DELIVERY**

M20.145 Llangollen 2020/R.004.Report



Contents

1.0	Introduction and Background	2
2.0	How The Community Were Engaged	3
3.0	Engagement Findings	5
4.0	Different Perspectives on the Proposals	13
5.0	Support for the Llangollen 2020 Proposals	17
6.0	Emerging Themes	18
7.0	Conclusion	24

1.0 Introduction and Background

In January 2018, the Llangollen 2020 Group was set up and soon after they initiated the Castle Street project to consider improving traffic, parking, pedestrian and public realm issues in the town. The Group is comprised of the two County Councillors for Llangollen, one of whom, is Councillor Graham Timms who chairs the Group. The Group also includes representatives from Llangollen Town Council. Denbighshire County Council officers and officials from Welsh Government regularly attended project meetings with the Group to develop the Castle Street scheme.

In 2018, Cadwyn Clwyd funding was secured to commission Arcadis Consulting (UK) Limited to undertake a feasibility study. The aims of the study were to:

The aims of the study were to¹:

- Develop options for a safe and pedestrian-friendly town centre;
- Develop options to improve the operation of key junctions and the movement of traffic around and through the town;
- Rationalise signage to and within the study area;
- Develop town centre parking options, and
- Quantify, where possible, the extent to which these changes would enhance the town economically, environmentally and socially and thus contribute to county and national strategies.

The feasibility study process was informed by community and stakeholder engagement alongside a range of components including traffic surveys, junction modelling and a parking and signage review, as well as learning from case studies and precedents. The feasibility study was published in January 2019 and has informed the design of a detailed scheme. This process has resulted in funding being secured for a scheme that will:

- Remove on-street parking from Castle Street to enable the pavements to be permanently widened.
- Provide two loading bays on Castle Street and one on Market Street.
- Provide disabled parking bays at the Castle Street end of Oak Street and Bridge Street
- Introduce pedestrian dropped kerb crossings at a number of locations along Castle Street.
- Re-pave Castle Street with high quality kerb and footway paving materials.
- Raise the road surface at some side road junctions along Castle Street to reduce traffic speeds.
- Provide 14 short stay car parking spaces in Market Street car park.
- Make Market Street one-way in a westerly direction between its junctions with Castle Street and East Street.
- Remove on-street parking from Abbey Road at its junction with Castle Street, to enable the northerly pavement of Abbey Road to be permanently widened.
- Provide a pedestrian dropped kerb crossing across Abbey Road near to the railway station entrance.

Having secured funding support to deliver the scheme during financial year 2021/22, it is now appropriate to undertake another programme of community and stakeholder engagement, to obtain feedback on the proposed scheme and to identify and understand any concerns.

¹ [Llangollen 2020 Project: Feasibility Study February 2019, Arcadis Consulting \(UK\) Limited](#)

2.0 How The Community Were Engaged

2.1 2018 Engagement

In July 2018 an initial engagement took place that included:

- On-street engagement over an afternoon / evening.
- Over 300 responses to a survey.
- Engagement with local business.
- Meetings with key stakeholders.

The engagement process highlighted the following issues and opportunities²:

- The perception that Castle Street is dangerous for vehicles and pedestrians, due to on-street parking, illegal stopping, proportion of HGVs, buses and coaches, illegally parked lorries/vans and a lack of crossing facilities. Coaches turning into Market Street from Castle Street cause congestion.
- Opportunities for Castle Street include public realm improvements, involving the removal of on-street parking in this location. There could be an opportunity to incorporate delivery areas along Castle Street.
- The lack of parking in Llangollen was considered to have a detrimental impact as it puts people off from visiting. There is not considered to be enough resident-only parking areas. Whilst a number of residents pay for parking permits for Market Street car park, there is still no guarantee they can secure a space.
- Better enforcement of parking infringements in car parks and on-street and increase the amount of dedicated parking for residents in Llangollen.
- Market Street Car Park is underutilised. Coaches are not considered to make the best use of the available space. A number of respondents felt that coaches should not park in the Market Street car park, as it would free up space for cars and need a designated drop off point and then park elsewhere, for example, the Pavilion.
- Measures should be put in place to prohibit / discourage HGVs from using Castle Street as a through route. Such measures could include putting weight restrictions on the bridge over the River Dee.

In October 2018, a further phase of engagement shared the draft option with the community. At this point in the engagement process feedback from the public included³:

- General support for removing on-street car parking from Castle Street and the creation of goods only loading bays;
- Better use of existing car parks and exploring opportunities to utilise other assets, for example use of Ysgol Dinas Bran during August should be explored to provide extra capacity within the town, together with the reduction in the provision for coach parking within the Market Street car park, in order to free up capacity;
- There was widespread support for a mini roundabout to be introduced at the Abbey Road / Castle Street junction; and
- A consideration of the opportunity to close Market Street between Castle Street and Greenfield to traffic.

Following this engagement process a preferred option for the engagement of Llangollen Town Centre was developed. This option has since been through a development process to arrive at the final proposed scheme.

² [Llangollen 2020 Project: Feasibility Study February 2019, Arcadis Consulting \(UK\) Limited](#)

³ [Llangollen 2020 Project: Feasibility Study February 2019, Arcadis Consulting \(UK\) Limited](#)

2.2 June - July 2021 Engagement Activity

A further phase of engagement on the proposed final scheme took place between 14 June and 6 July 2021. This phase included:

Letter Drop: A letter drop to approximately 2,000 homes and businesses in Llangollen informing them about the proposals and inviting them to participate in the engagement process.

Online Engagement: An online engagement hosted on the Denbighshire County Council Portal. Through this portal there were 1,076 downloads of the materials available online.

Questionnaire: The community could complete a questionnaire online through the portal. Paper copies with a freepost envelope were also provided at the engagement event. In total 507 surveys were completed and returned.

Public Exhibition: A socially distanced and COVID-19 secure, public exhibition took place outside the Town Hall from Monday, 21 June to Friday, 25 June 2021. Approximately 450 people attended the event, to talk to the project team. Attendees were also offered the opportunity to complete the questionnaire.

Business Visits: Council officers visited 34 local businesses to provide an opportunity for them to raise their issues and concerns. Businesses were also encouraged to attend the public exhibition and / or complete a questionnaire. In total 95 questionnaires were returned by people who described themselves as owning a business in Llangollen.

Engagement with Visual Impaired (VI) Group: Members of the visual impaired community were invited to participate in the engagement through an online or face to face event. They opted to submit their feedback via Denbighshire County Council's Vision Support officer. 7 member of the community submitted their comments through this mechanism.

Post or Email: Members of the public could also provide comment and feedback by writing to or emailing the Council.

Social Media Listening: Social media listening is the process of monitoring social media platforms for comments and feedback related to the proposals.

2.3 Analysing and Understanding What the Community Told Us

All engagement activity was recorded and logged in an appropriate manner. All engagement tools were designed to capture information and feedback from participants, whether this be notes from discussions or completion of a questionnaire.

Quantitative data from the questionnaire was analysed using a two step process:

Stage 1. Tabulation Analysis

In essence tabulation analysis involves laying out data in easy to understand summary tables. This commenced with a frequency distribution analysis, which communicates the number of respondents who gave each possible answer to a question. This enables an understanding of the number and percentage of respondents who gave answers to each question and provides an overview of the pattern of responses, which informed further tabulation and analysis. Further analysis of the data took the form of cross-tabulation process which enabled the cross-referencing of responses to one question relative to responses from one or more questions. For example, this process will enable us to understand if local business owners have different perspectives to local residents.

Stage 2. Statistical Analysis:

The next stage was to undertake statistical analysis to examine the data further and identify or confirm patterns to determine if they are statistically significant e.g. "if a particular difference is large enough to be unlikely to have occurred due to chance or sampling error, then the difference is statistically significant (Wilson, 2019)."⁴

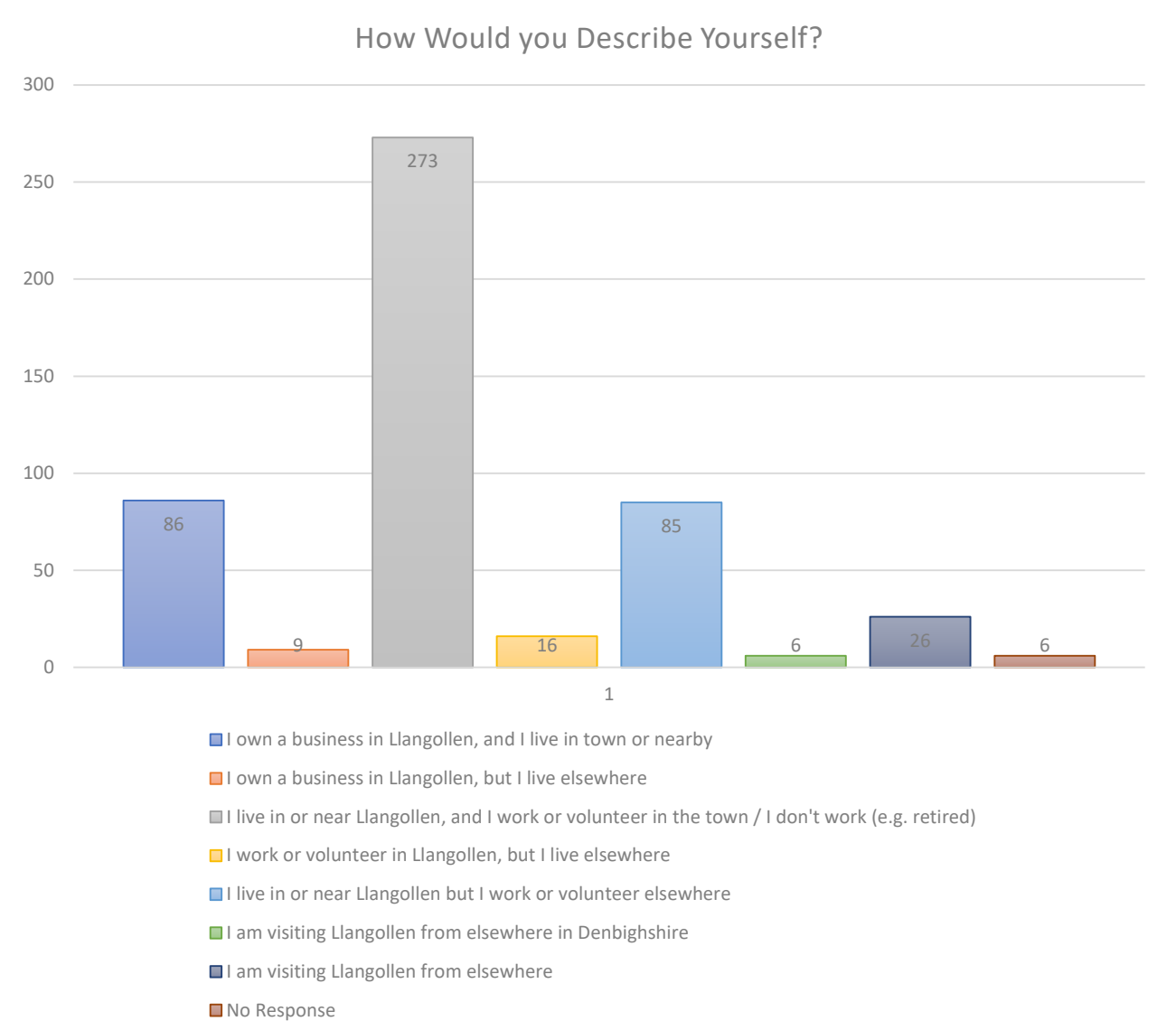
Qualitative data gathered through techniques such as discussions with members of the public, open ended questionnaire responses, emails and letters, was analysed using inductive coding, whereby the data collated was reviewed to identify words or phrases that participants use repeatedly. These were used as codes to look for themes and patterns in responses.

3.0 Engagement Findings

3.1 Introduction

This section of the report presents the results of the 507 questionnaire responses received during the engagement period. 54% of respondents described themselves as “I live in or near Llangollen, and I work or volunteer in the town / I don’t work (e.g. retired)”. Figure 1 below shows the make up of respondents to the survey.

Figure 1. How Would You Describe Yourself

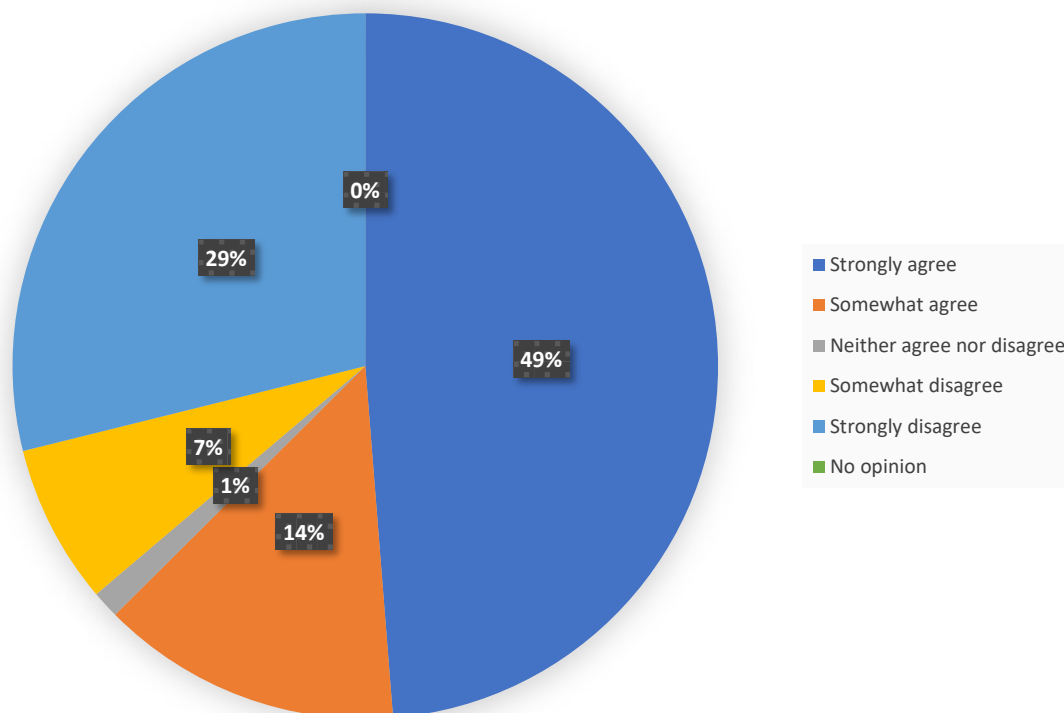


3.2 Removing on-street parking to make the pavements wider on Castle Street

Respondents were asked about the proposal to remove on-street parking on Castle Street to make pavements wider on Castle Street. Figure 2 below shows that just under half of survey respondents strongly agreed with this proposal.

Figure 2. Removing on street parking to make the pavements wider on Castle Street is acceptable?

Removing on-street parking to make the pavements wider on Castle Street is acceptable.



Among those who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposals the main concerns raised included:

- The impact on local businesses of the removal of parking on Castle Street - “removing ALL pop and shop parking on Castle St hurts local shops, 9 months of the year are very quiet” (questionnaire respondent). During business visits one owner explained the loss of “pop and shop” parking had already impacted their business with customers opting to go to Aldi instead.
- The impact on people with disabilities- “I am disabled and cannot walk from the car park to get my meat and bread in Castle Street. It is far harder to cross Castle Street now with the planters in the way” (questionnaire respondent).
- The road being too narrow to accommodate two large vehicles passing- “I take it you understand that the Dee Bridge is a major crossing point over the river and that you have coaches, trucks and other vehicles trying to make their way down Castle Street? You can’t squeeze large vehicles in a reduced highway with out causing problems i.e. log jams” (comment on Llangollen 2020 Facebook page).
- What wider pavements might be used for - “the idea of extending the pavements only allows businesses and cafés to extend onto the pavement. Llangollen is not conducive to outdoor cafe culture as the main fare is low grade kebab and pie and chips” (questionnaire respondent”.
- Respondents also mentioned concerns around levels of a boards and business displays currently on pavements in the town.

In addition, there is a perception among some participants that the current scheme to widen the pavements, using planters, to support social distancing is an illustration that the proposal won’t work as illustrated in the quote below:

“Widening the pavement is no advantage, the pavement area is being used by cyclists and shops. Since the temporary widening of the pavement in Castle Street traffic problems have been made worse. Dreadful to cross the road if a small amount of traffic speeds. If there’s a lot of traffic it all gets held up and vehicles mount pavements. These hold ups cause long queues when traffic moves again I walk to town and through town most days.”

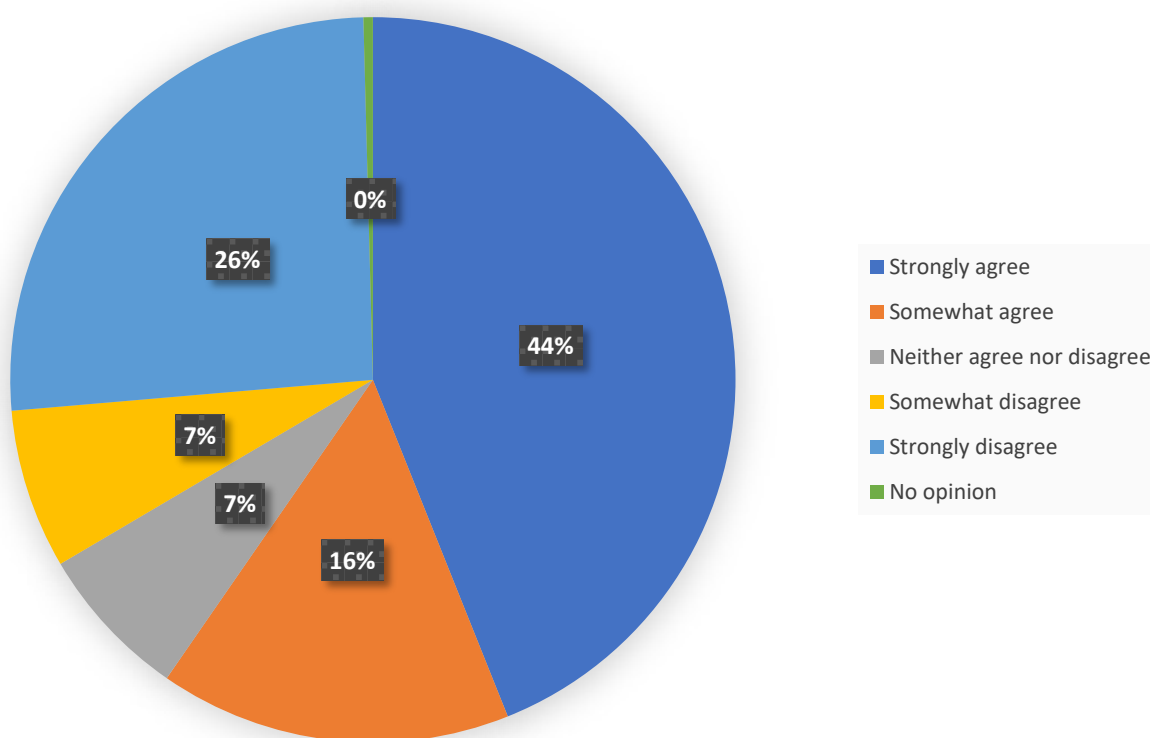
Questionnaire Respondent

3.3 Removing on-street parking to widen the northerly pavement on Abbey Road (the side opposite the railway and the canal)

Figure 3 below shows that 44% of respondents strongly agree with the proposal, compared to 33% who somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

Figure 3. Removing on-street parking to widen the northerly pavement on Abbey Road (the side opposite the railway and the canal) is acceptable?

Removing on-street parking to widen the northerly pavement on Abbey Road (the side opposite the railway and the canal) is acceptable.



Those who support the removal of on-street parking cited reasons including it “will allow traffic to flow without any obstacles causing problems” (questionnaire respondent) and improved safety “crossing the road has been very challenging as the parked cars reduce visibility and run the risk of children and adults being reversed into or (in the case of children) being hit by a car after stepping out from behind a parked car. Removing the parking will improve visibility for drivers as they will be able to see those stepping out into the road and also pedestrians will have a better view of the traffic making it easier to cross” (questionnaire respondent).

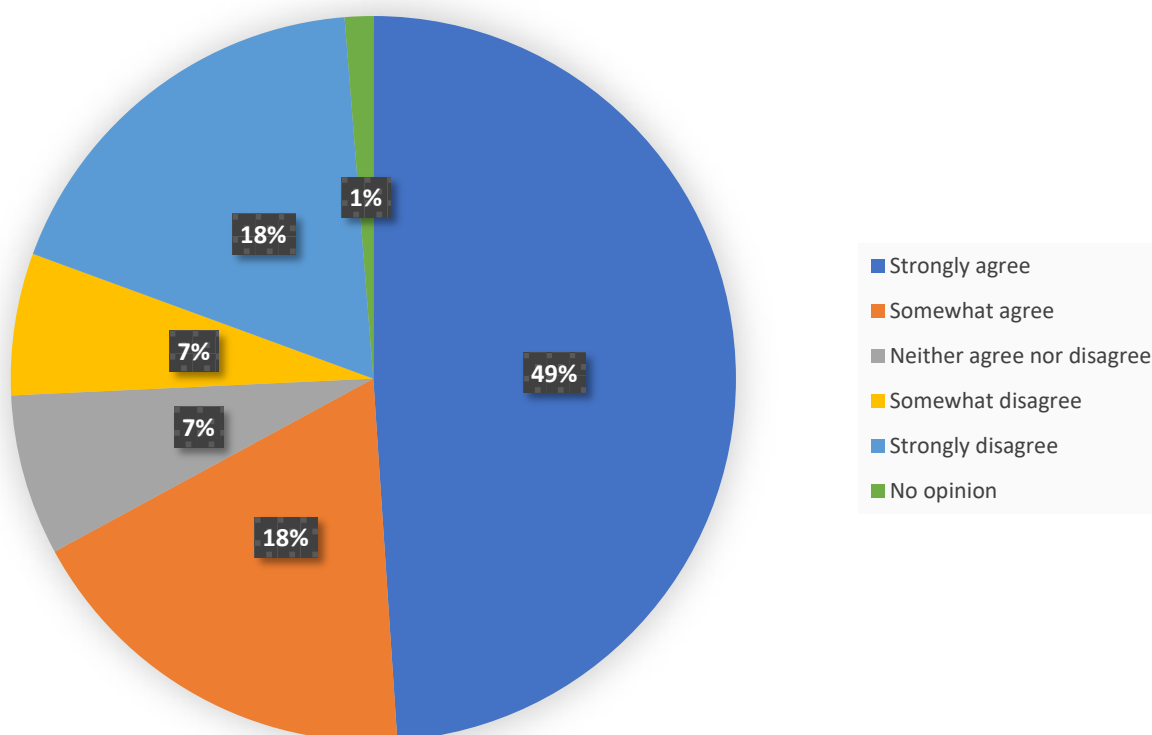
However, as with the proposed removal of on-street parking in Castle Street there is concern about the impact on business as well as on residents “losing parking spaces to the north side of Abbey Road has made it extremely difficult for Abbey Road residents to park, it’s only the mid to end of Abbey Road that have driveways” (questionnaire response) and “by removing parking on Castle Street and Abbey Road you will force people to park in side streets. Residents already have a problem parking” (questionnaire response). As with Castle Street (3.2) the widened pavements raise concerns about large vehicles and “on street clutter.”

3.4 Making a short section of Market Street one-way to allow a loading bay to be provided

Figure 4 below shows that just under half of respondents strongly agree with this proposal, compared to a quarter who strongly or somewhat disagree.

Figure 4. Making a short section of Market Street one-way to allow a loading bay to be provided is acceptable?

Making a short section of Market Street one-way to allow a loading bay to be provided is acceptable.



The proposed loading bay raised a number of concerns including:

- That a commercial loading bay will not meet the needs of all local businesses- “these measures are ‘too little too late’ if they were designed to help post covid. As a small business I find it impossible to 1. Deliver raw goods to my kitchen. 2. Collect baked goods or deliveries. The ‘commercial’ loading bays will be not help as I am too small to get it delivered” (questionnaire respondent).
- That the loading bays will have a negative impact on the flow of traffic and have the potential to be abused- “I think loading bays would be a log jam waiting to happen and so discount the excellent idea of free and slowly, but continuous moving traffic. The world and his wife will be using and abusing these loading bays, to pop and shop (which would block an even narrower high street) as there is no real traffic warden presence in Llangollen to police these proposed bays” (comment on Llangollen 2020 facebook page).

- The potential for the bay to be a hazard - “using the loading bay in Market Street to transfer goods to shops is potentially dangerous, particularly carrying large carcasses to the butchers shop, which also has health and safety implications. Security is compromised as lorry would have to be left unattended and out of sight” (questionnaire respondent).

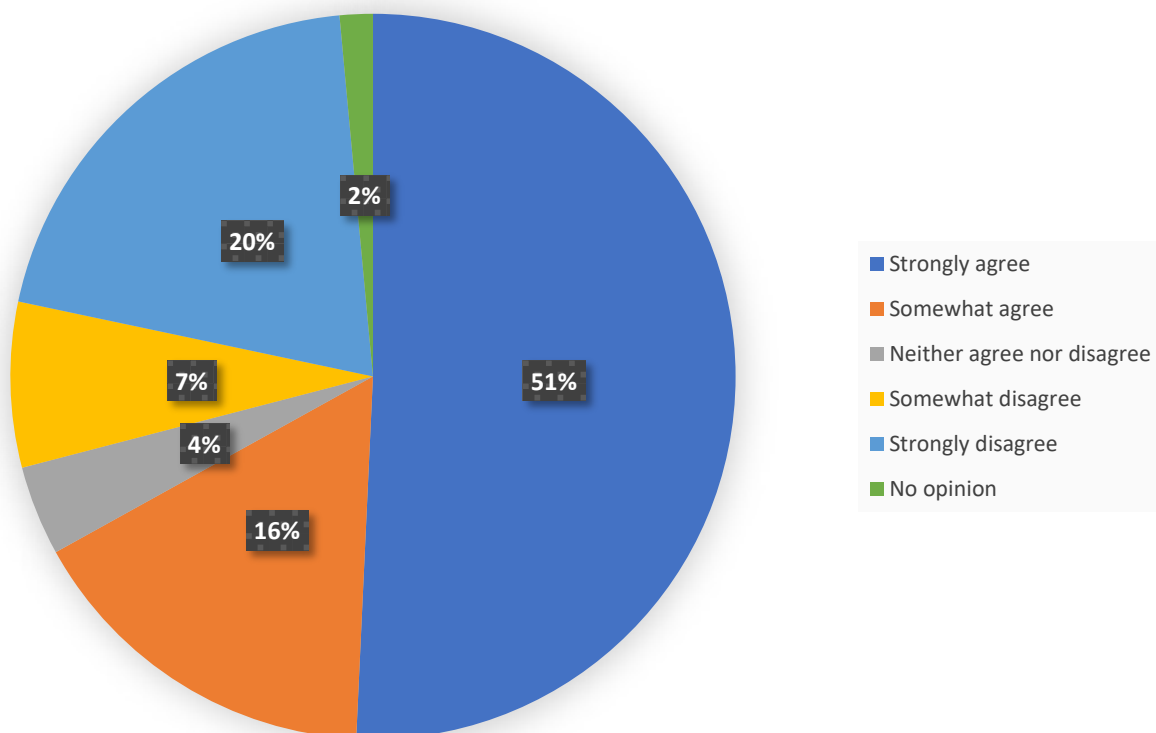
Respondents expressed concern that the proposed one-way system could impact traffic flow and create confusion “Market Street should remain ‘two way’ and should not be made one way from Castle Street to East Street. People are currently still driving the wrong way on this section of road despite the hundreds of temporary signs in place. It’s pure luck that an accident hasn’t occurred yet” (questionnaire response).

3.5 Providing 14 free 1-hour parking spaces in Market Street car park will help make up for the loss of on-street parking on Castle Street.

As shown in Figure 5 below while 67% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree with the proposal, 27% strongly or somewhat disagree.

Figure 5. Providing 14 free 1-hour parking spaces in Market Street car park will help make up for the loss of on-street parking on Castle Street?

Providing 14 free 1-hour parking spaces in Market Street car park will help make up for the loss of on-street parking on Castle Street.



Among those who responded to an open ended question asking for why they did or did not support the proposed scheme 20% mentioned issues or concerns related to parking. The proposal to provide free 1 hour parking spaces in Market Street car park raised questions and concerns around:

- How the free 1 hour parking limit will be enforced - “providing the 14 free 1 hour parking spaces in Market Street car park is a good idea, but it will need to be monitored or it will be abused” (questionnaire respondent).
- That the proposal will not reduce congestion in the town, but result in more tourists driving around to locate available parking.

- That 14 spaces is insufficient and will not reduce the impact of the loss of “pop and shop parking” - “14 spaces to accommodate the lost spaces is not enough. Locals shop between 8.30am and 10am on the whole at weekends to avoid the crowds. So not enough spaces to cover the locals! Better to give free parking for an hour first thing so you don’t lose local custom. IF locals go elsewhere then the local shops will suffer in winter” (questionnaire response).
- That the scheme doesn’t provide enough disabled parking and it is in the wrong locations - “no regard for disabled residents- for whom the walk from Market Street car park is too much. I am now unable to access shops on Castle Street, since changes made. Traffic has increased the time taken to travel through the village massively” (questionnaire respondent).

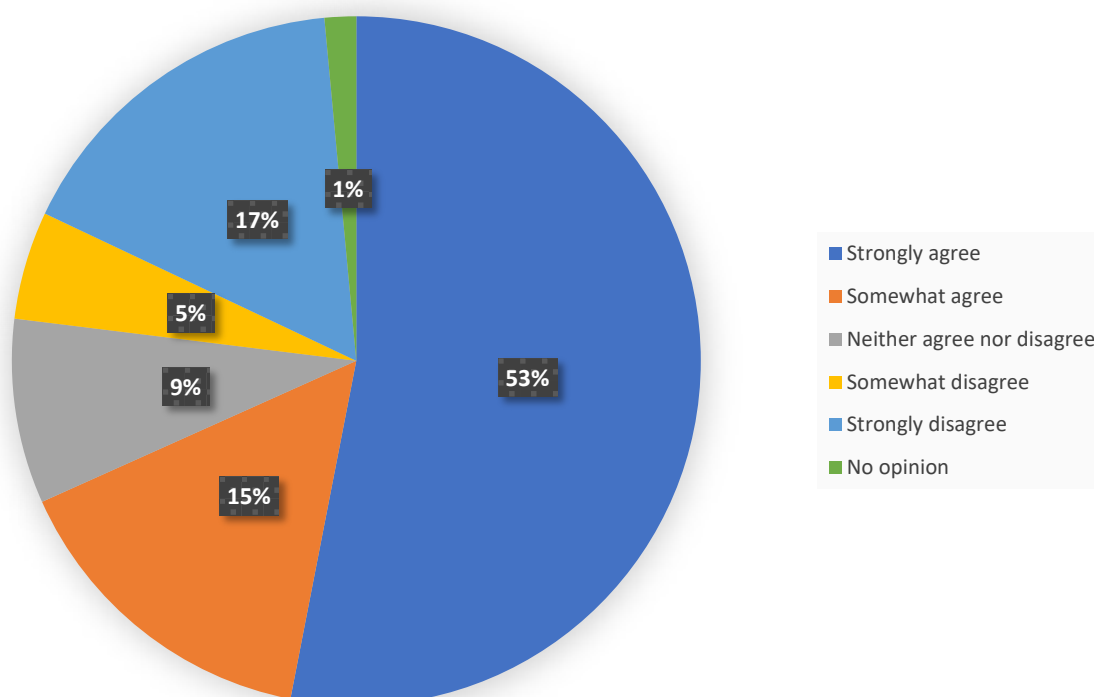
Overall, in relation to parking the analysis of qualitative data suggests there is a perception that “the scheme does not address the main problem i.e. parking in the town especially for locals” (questionnaire respondent).

3.6 Introducing a 20 mph speed limit and ‘ramped’ road surface at the Bridge Street junction will make Castle Street safer.

53% of survey respondents strongly agree with the proposal, compared to 22% who somewhat or strongly disagree. With 53% strongly agreeing this is the most popular element of the scheme.

Figure 6. Introducing a 20 mph speed limit and ‘ramped’ road surface at the Bridge Street junction will make Castle Street safer?

Introducing a 20 mph speed limit and ‘ramped’ road surface at the Bridge Street junction will make Castle Street safer.



Overall the response to the 20mph speed limit is positive “I agree the 20mph is good for ALL round safety” (questionnaire respondent). However, a number of respondents expressed that they “agree with a 20 mph speed limit throughout the town centre, but do not think that ramps on any street are a good option” (questionnaire respondent).

Among a significant proportion of respondents it was felt that a zebra crossing was the solution for making Castle Street safer- “why can’t we have a pedestrian crossing on Castle Street?” and “no pedestrian crossing! What are you doing?” were examples of questionnaire responses in relation to this idea.

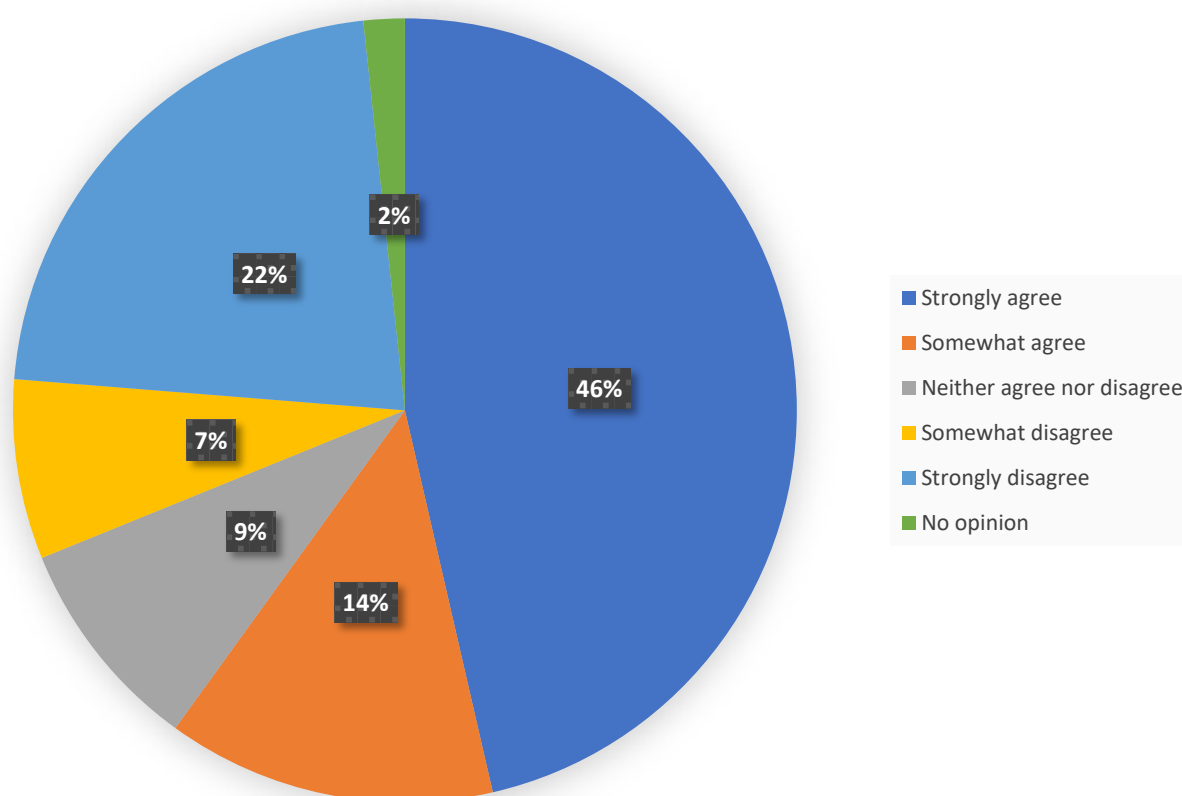
As with the free parking spaces people questioned “who will monitor the new proposed speed restriction of 20mph? If it is not monitored, then it will probably be ignored” (questionnaire respondent).

3.7 The proposed scheme will make Castle Street a more attractive place for shoppers and visitors

There is a clear concern among respondents about the current appearance of the town- “the town depends on visitors, especially the shopkeepers. At present it looks untidy, depressing and scruffy” (questionnaire response). Figure 7 below shows that 46% of respondents to the survey strongly agree that the proposed scheme will make Castle Street a more attractive place for shoppers and visitors.

Figure 7. The proposed scheme will make Castle Street a more attractive place for shoppers and visitors?

The proposed scheme will make Castle Street a more attractive place for shoppers and visitors.



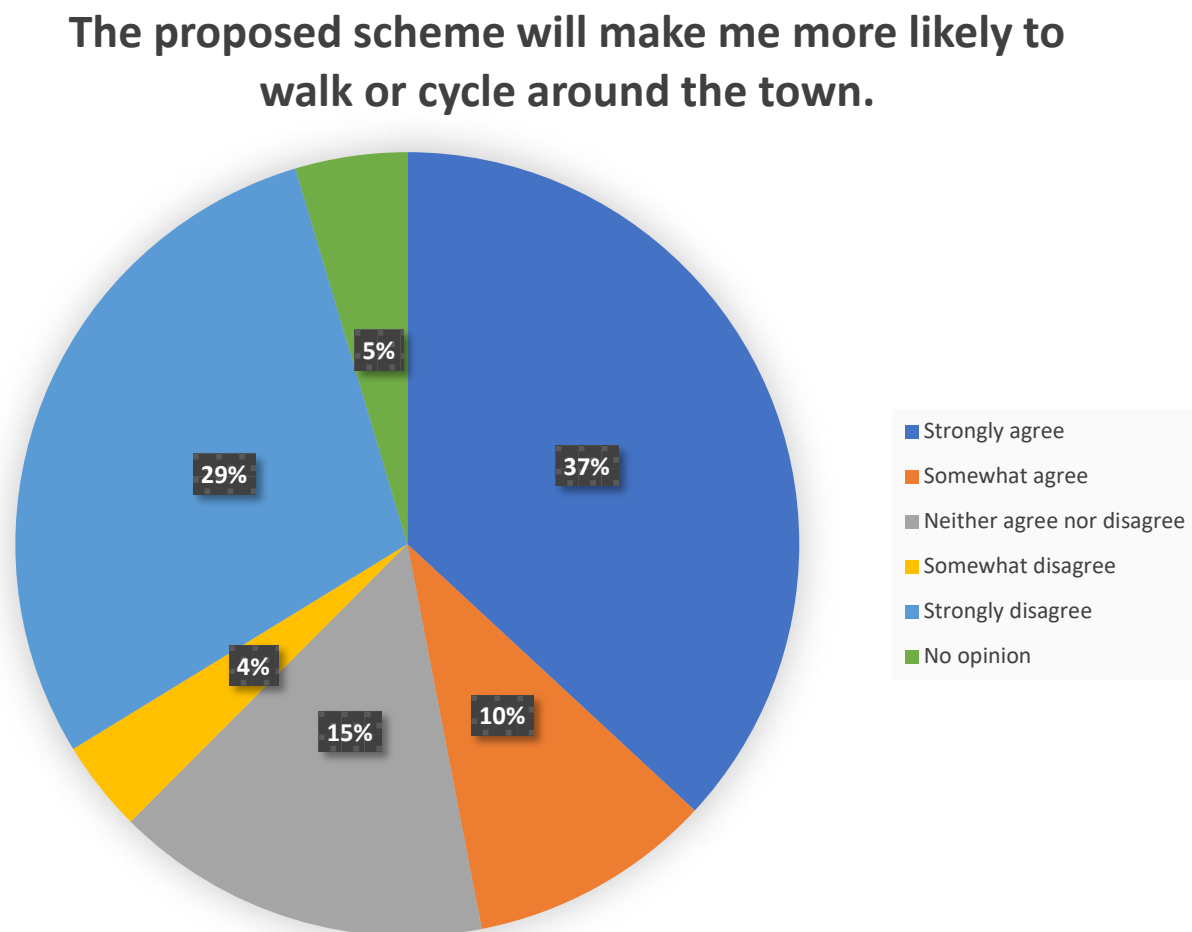
Among those who agree with this statement there is a general consensus that “the changes will have a positive effect for the town and make it more attractive for visitors” and “I think the scheme will make the area more attractive” (questionnaire responses). However, amongst this group there are some who “whilst I approve of the proposals as they stand I strongly believe that they do not go nearly far enough and that a huge opportunity for a shared space scheme has been missed. The proposals largely will improve the look of the town centre only (questionnaire response). There is also a belief that the scheme should be used to plant more trees and bring more plants into the town for example “could more street trees and planting be added to help Llangollen make a contribution to climate change” (questionnaire respondent).

Those who disagree with the statement cite a belief that the proposal will take away what makes Llangollen special “Llangollen is a quirky, quaint country town, chipping away at all the little bits in the town will eventually turn it into something totally different, to the regret of all of us” (questionnaire respondent). As well as having the potential to negatively impact on the town - “the scheme is very unattractive and discourages tourism / shopping” (questionnaire respondent) and “there are no significant benefits as a result of the scheme, whilst the charm and character of the town is diminished” (questionnaire respondent).

3.8 The proposed scheme will make me more likely to walk or cycle around the town.

Whilst 37% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement ‘the proposed scheme will make me more likely to walk or cycle around the town’ 29% strongly disagreed.

Figure 8. The proposed scheme will make me more likely to walk or cycle around the town?



Respondents felt that proposed changes such as “removal of parking on Castle Street will make the street easier to cross, and make it easier to cycle along” (questionnaire response). However, there was evidence of a divide between walkers and cyclists- “I feel there is not enough safe cycle access. I am happy to walk but cycle improvements could be made” (questionnaire responses). Issues raised by cyclists included:

- That the scheme does not include - “cycle routes / cycle lanes. Clearer places / further places for securing bicycles” (questionnaire response).
- Concerns about narrowing of roads to widen pavements - “as a frequent cyclist, I wonder if one could add signage or marking to make cycling safer on Castle Street; e.g., I would not want cars passing cyclists narrowly because of the overall reduced width of the road” (questionnaire response).

- That the proposed scheme doesn't link with other cycle routes in the area - the scheme should include "a safe cycle route that extends well beyond the town centre and links up specific areas such as the Pavilion or the new nature reserve" (questionnaire response).

Among pedestrians there was a concern that "widening the pavement is no advantage, the pavement area is being used by cyclists and shops" (questionnaire response).

4.0 Different Perspectives on the Proposals

4.1 Introduction

This section of the report compares opinions on the 7 proposals, that form the basis of the scheme, by type of respondent. Respondents have been classified based on how they answered the question 'how would you describe yourself?':

Business Owners: I own a business in Llangollen, and I live in town or nearby or I own a business in Llangollen, but I live elsewhere. 95 respondents came from this category.

Live and/or Work/Volunteer in Llangollen: I live in or near Llangollen, and I work or volunteer in the town / I don't work (e.g. retired), I work or volunteer in Llangollen, but I live elsewhere or I live in or near Llangollen but I work or volunteer elsewhere. 374 respondents defined themselves as being part of this category.

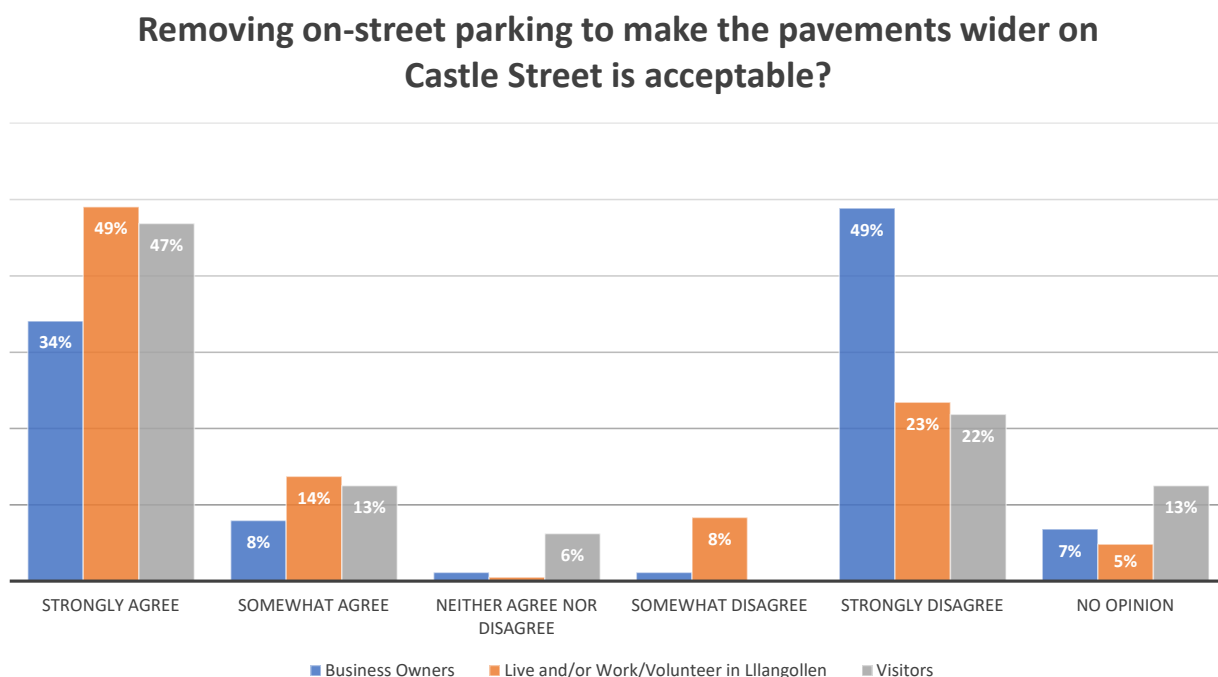
Visitors: I am visiting Llangollen from elsewhere in Denbighshire or I am visiting Llangollen from elsewhere. 32 respondents defined themselves as a visitor.

6 respondents did not answer the question 'how would you describe yourself?'

4.2 Proposals for Castle Street

Figure 9 below shows that business owners are the group most likely to oppose (strongly disagree with) the proposal to remove on street parking and make pavements wider in Castle Street. 49% of business owners strongly disagree with the proposal, with 34% strongly agreeing with the idea.

Figure 9. What do different types of respondents think about the proposal to remove on street parking on Castle Street to make the pavements wider?

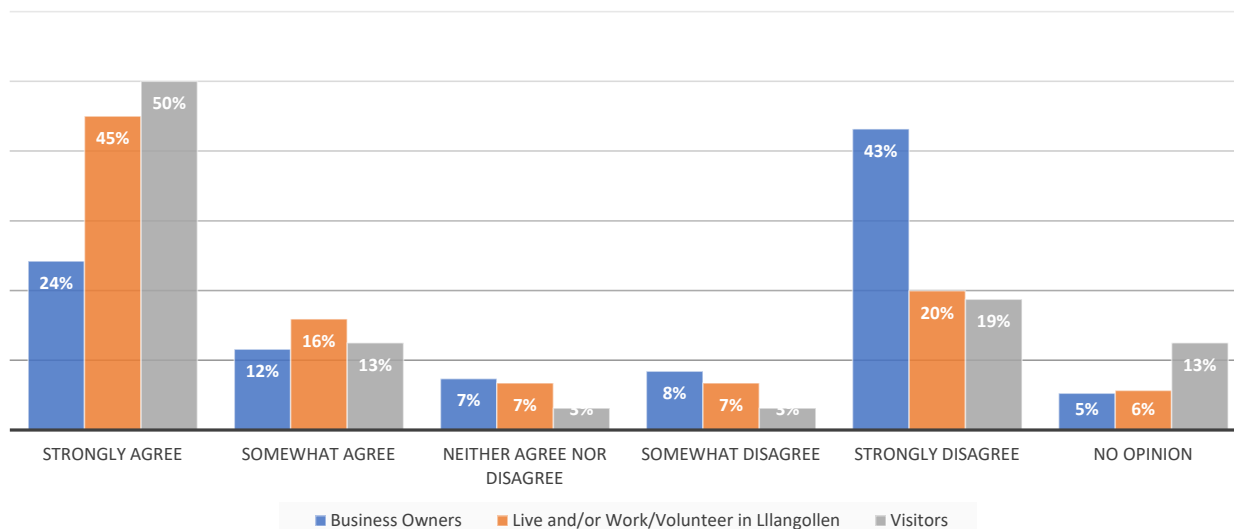


4.3 Proposals for Abbey Road

As shown in figure 10, the proposal to remove parking to enable the Abbey Road pavement to be widened was much more popular with residents and visitors than with business owners. Just over half of business owners (51%) somewhat or strongly disagree with this proposal.

Figure 10. What do different types of respondents think about the proposal to remove on street parking to widen the northerly pavement on Abbey Road?

Removing on-street parking to widen the northerly pavement on Abbey Road (the side opposite the railway and the canal) is acceptable?

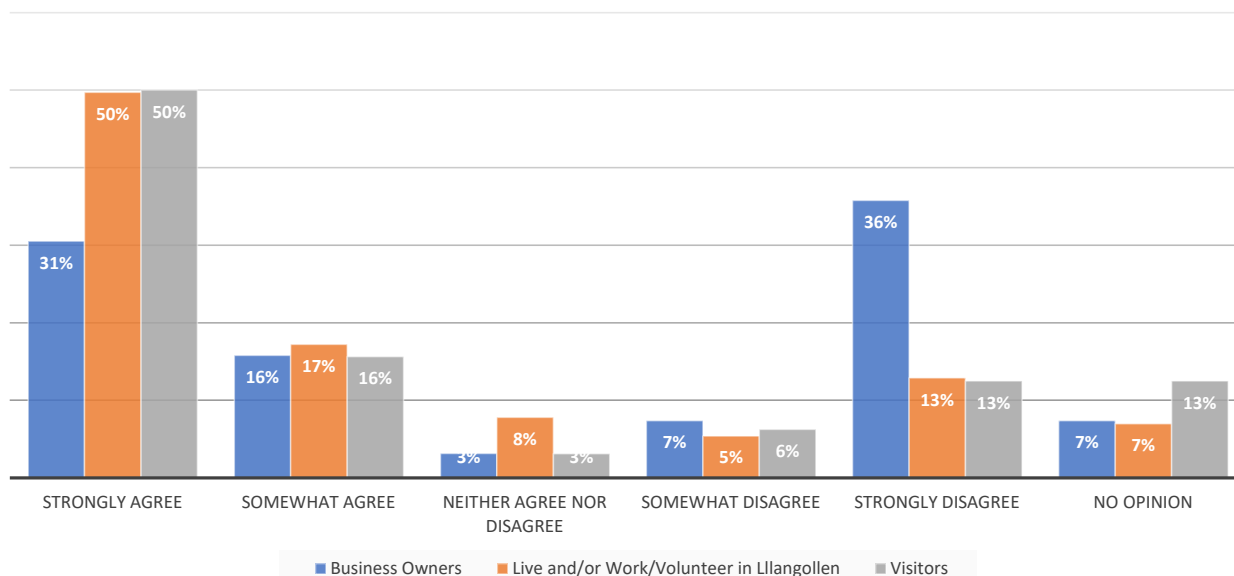


4.4 Proposals for Market Street

Figure 11 shows strong support for the proposal among visitors and those who live and / or work / volunteer in Llangollen for this proposal. 31% of businesses also strongly agree, however, 36% strongly disagree with the proposal for Market Street.

Figure 11. What do different types of respondents think about the proposal to make a short section of Market Street one way to allow a loading bay to be provided is acceptable?

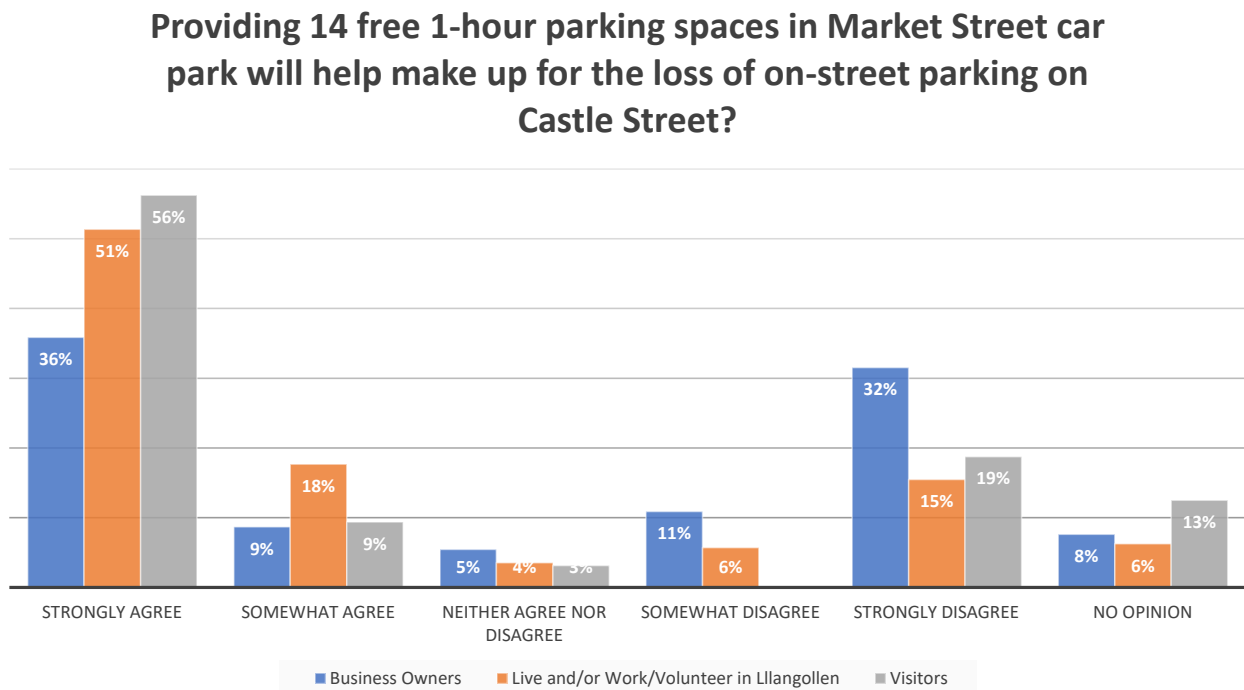
Making a short section of Market Street one-way to allow a loading bay to be provided is acceptable?



4.5 14 Free 1 Hour Parking Spaces

45% of businesses owners strongly or somewhat agree with the proposal, compared to 51% of those who live and / or work / volunteer in Llangollen and 56% of visitors. However, almost the same proportion (42%) of business somewhat or strongly disagree with the proposal for 14 free 1 hour parking places.

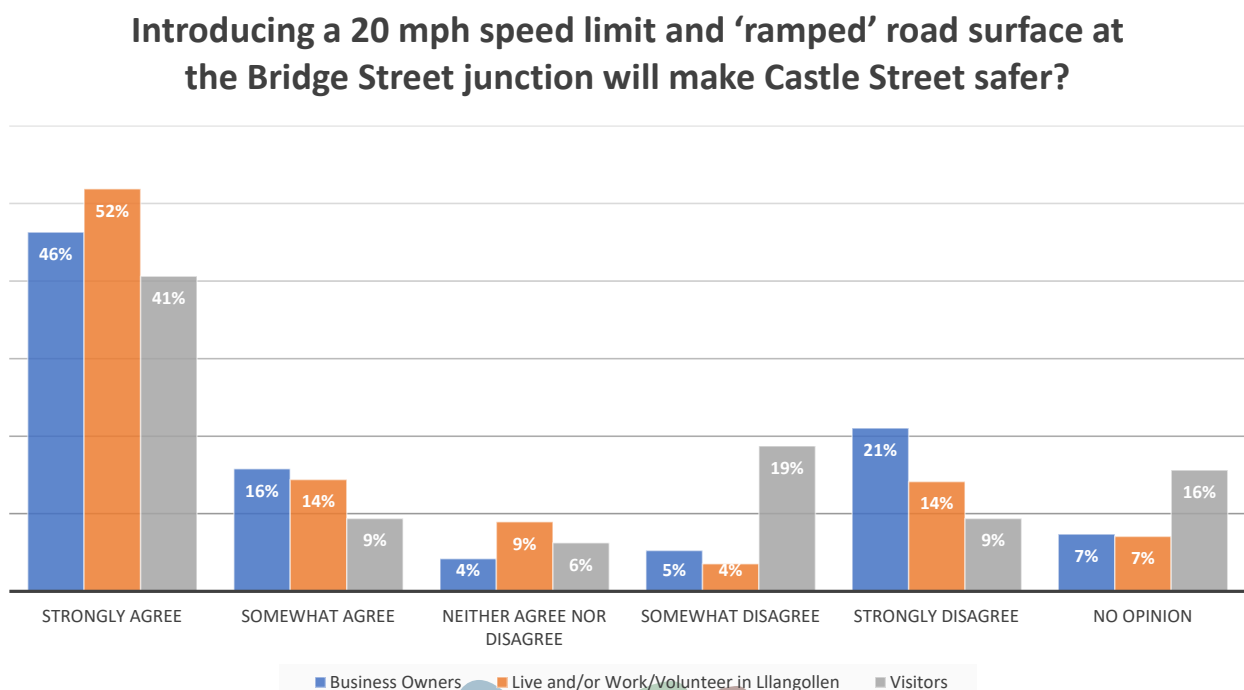
Figure 12. What do different types of respondents think about the proposal to provide 14 free 1-hour parking spaces in Market Street car park will help make up for the loss of on-street parking on Castle Street?



4.6 20mph Speed Limit

As shown in figure 13, 62% of businesses owners somewhat or strongly agree that the proposal to create a 20mph speed limit and ramped road surface at Bridge Street junction will make Castle Street safer. 21% of business owners strongly disagree, compared to 14% of residents and 9% of visitors.

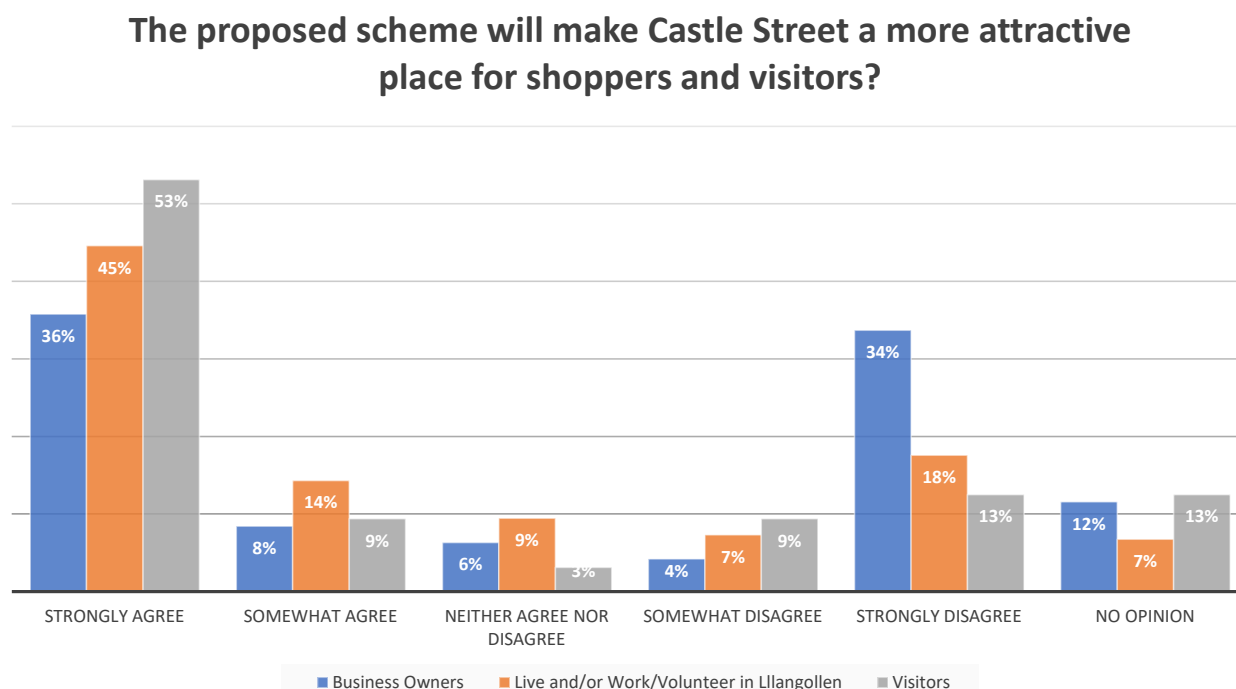
Figure 13. What do different types of respondents think about the proposal to introduce a 20 mph speed limit and 'ramped' road surface at the Bridge Street junction will make Castle Street safer?



4.6 A More Attractive Place for Shoppers and Visitors

Figure 14 shows that an almost equal proportion of business owners strongly agree (36%) and strongly disagree (34%) with the statement that the proposed scheme will make Castle Street more attractive for shoppers and visitors.

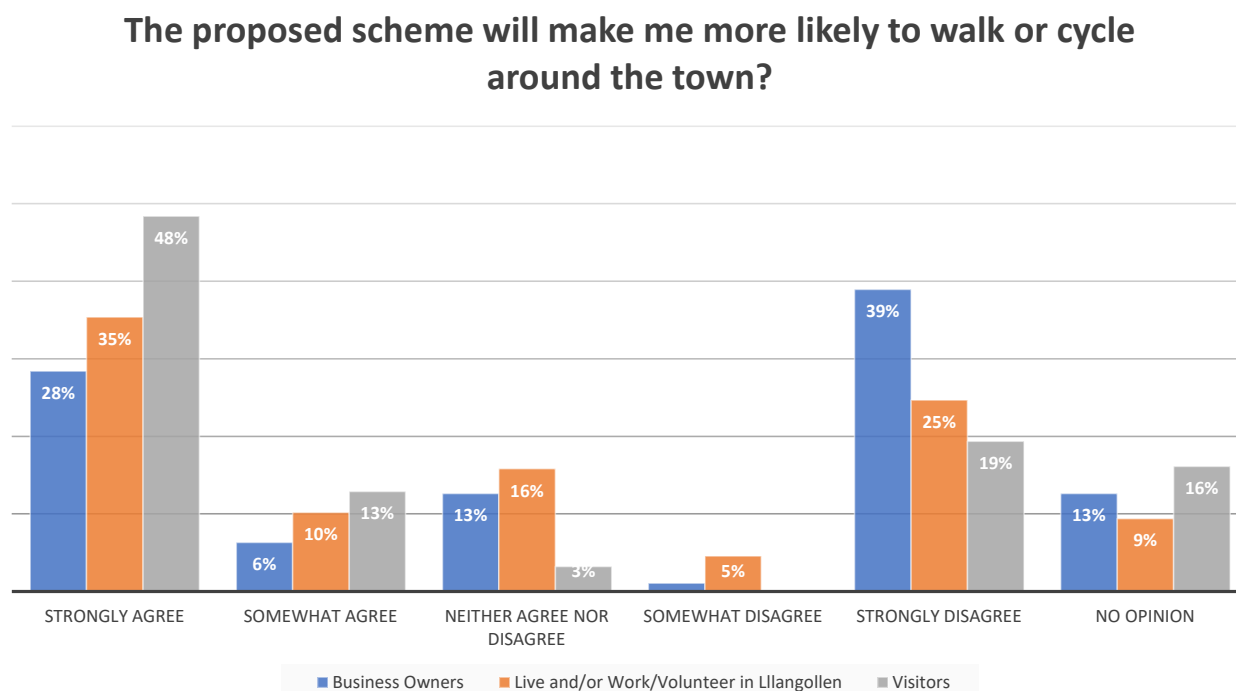
Figure 14. Will the proposed scheme will make Castle Street a more attractive place for shoppers and visitors?



4.7 Will People Be More Likely to Walk or Cycle Around Town?

Visitors are the group who think the proposals will result in them being more likely to walk or cycle around town. 39% of business owners strongly disagree that the proposed scheme will increase their likelihood of walking and cycling around town.

Figure 15. Will the proposed scheme will make me more likely to walk or cycle around the town?



5.0 Support for the Llangollen 2020 Proposals

As shown below, 40% of respondents to date believe ‘the scheme is generally a good idea, and I support most/all of the proposed changes.’ 36% believe the ‘scheme is not generally a good idea’.

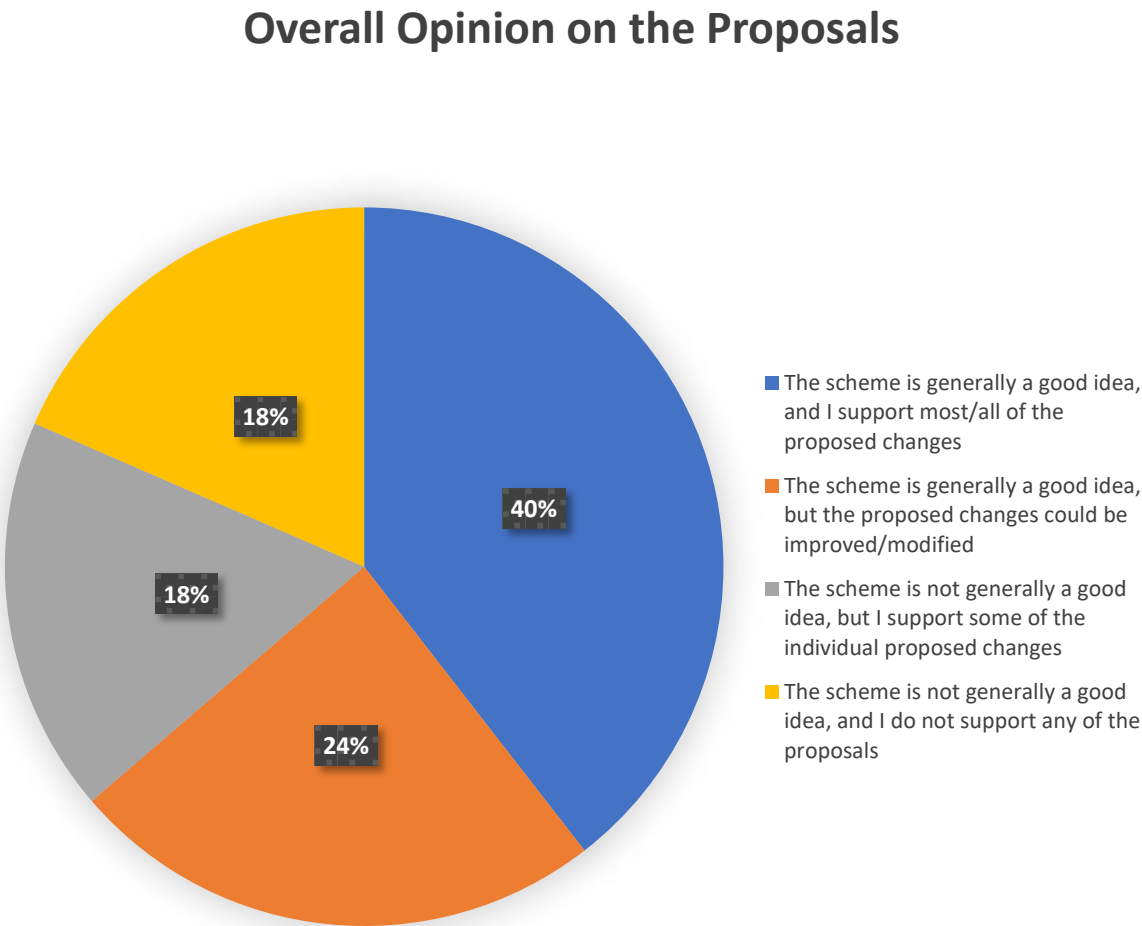
“If not broken, why mend. Bad plan.”

Questionnaire Respondent

“As a resident in Llangollen I feel it has been obvious for some time that these changes have been necessary to improve the town centre for both residents and the increasing number of tourists.”

Questionnaire Respondent

Figure 16. Overall Opinion on the Proposals



“You do not support the shops in the town.”

Questionnaire Response

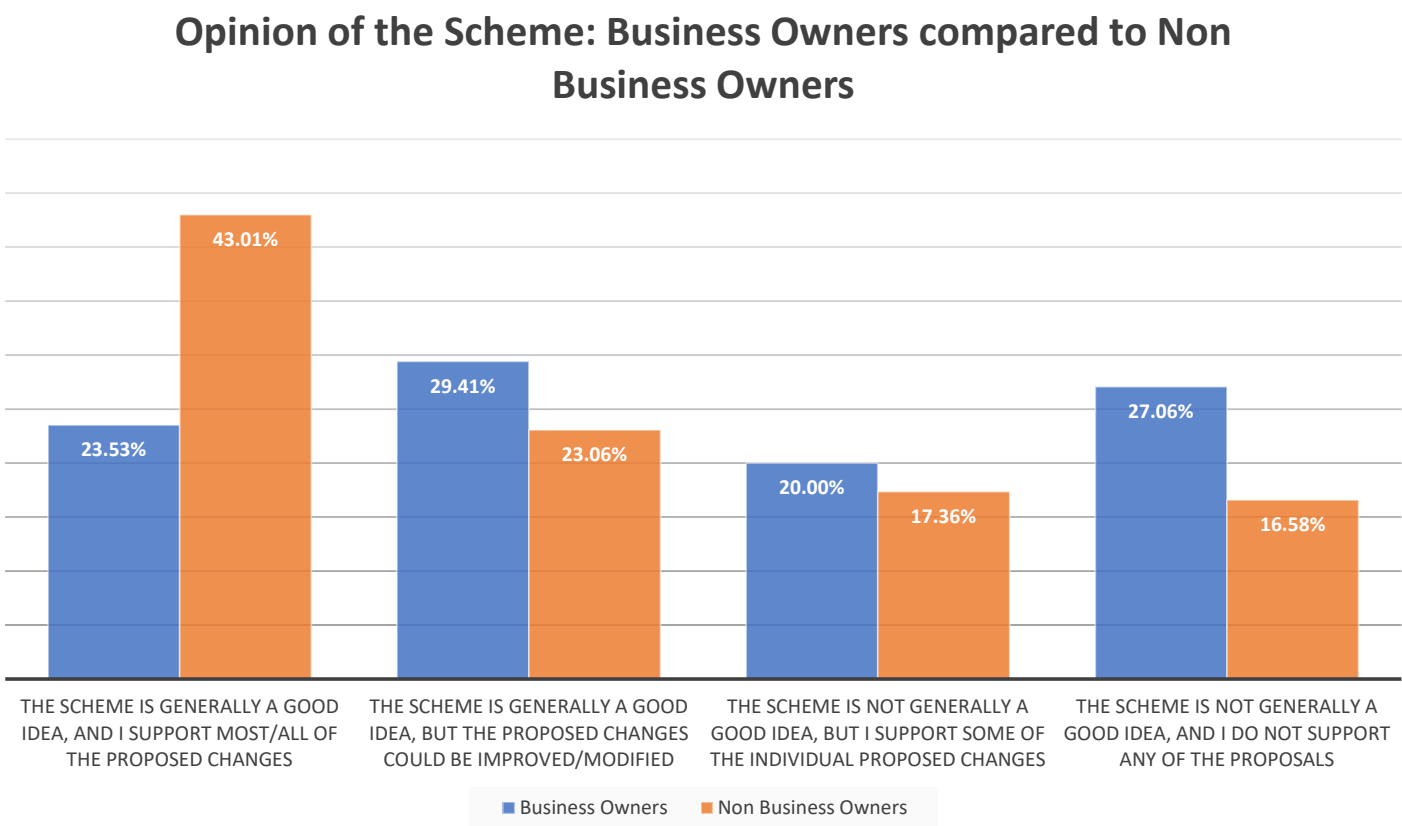
“Removing all parking on Castle Street severely restricts local pop and shop.”

Questionnaire Response

The analysis suggests there is a difference in perspective between business owners and non business owners. 91% of those who described themselves as being a business owner, also said they lived in Llangollen or nearby. Figure 11 shows that 24% of business owners agree with the statement ‘the scheme is generally a good idea, and I support most/all of the proposed changes’ compared to 43% of non business owners.

Overall 47% of businesses describe themselves as disagreeing with the scheme, compared to 34% of non-business owners. The concerns of business owners are summarised in section 6.0 Emerging Themes.

Figure 17: Overall Support for the Proposals Comparing the Response of Business Owners and Non Business Owners



6.0 Emerging Themes

Based on a coding and analysis of the qualitative data from the survey and engagement process, the following themes have emerged as potential areas of concern for the community. It should be acknowledged that people who disagreed with the scheme were more likely to leave feedback / respond to the open ended survey questions.

Parking

“The scheme does not address the main problem i.e. parking in the town especially for locals.”
Questionnaire Response

The coding of the qualitative engagement suggests a perception that the Llangollen 2020 proposals have not addressed the parking challenges facing Llangollen. The responses suggest a belief that there is not sufficient parking in the town to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

“Lack of parking is stopping many visitors - a park and ride scheme needs to be considered for weekends and holidays (stops cars even entering the town).”
Questionnaire Response

“I am disabled and cannot walk from the car park to get my meat and bread in Castle Street.”
Questionnaire Response

Respondents raise concerns about parking in nearby streets and roads, impacting on local residents. There is a perception that there needs to be a parking strategy that considers the needs of local people (ideas such as permits and free parking for local people are referenced) as well as businesses and visitors. From a business

perspective there is concern that the removal of on street parking will end *“the local pop and shop”* despite the provision of free parking places elsewhere in the town. Proposals do include 2Nº disabled bays near to Castle Street but there is also concern about the impact on disabled visitors.

“All parking restrictions must be enforced, otherwise this will be a total waste of money. DCC must commit to Llangollen, sufficient Parking Warden resource to enforce the parking restrictions, on a daily basis.”

Questionnaire Response

As shown 67% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree with the proposal to provide 14 free 1 hour parking spaces, compared to 28% who somewhat or strongly disagree. However, there is concern that this is potentially open for abuse; respondents would like more information on how this will work and how the 1 hour period will be enforced.

HGVs and Large Vehicles

“The proposed 6 metre road width of Castle Street is insufficient for two lorries to pass each other. I think it should be 6.3 to 6.5 metres to prevent lorries from mounting kerbs (I am a retired lorry driver).”

Questionnaire Response

“Making pavements wider means roads are narrower, therefore buses, lorries and tractors have difficulty passing each other.”

Questionnaire Response

“The proposed narrowing of the Abbey Road/Castle Street junction and the Castle Street/Bridge Street junction will make both junctions too narrow and cause safety problems.”

Verbal feedback from members of local community

“Road narrowings will cause more congestion and increase vehicle fumes.”

Verbal feedback from members of local community

Analysis of the qualitative feedback suggests there is concern that the proposals will cause issues by reducing space and preventing two large vehicles from being able to safely pass each other. There was also concern about access for emergency vehicles.

“It does not address the issue of movement of heavy through traffic in Castle Street. There is an urgent need to review access with regard to a bypass / new bridge to the East of the Town.”

Questionnaire Response

“One way traffic on Market Street is increasing congestion problems at East Street/Parade Street 90 degree corner”.

Verbal feedback from members of local community

“Inset the proposed Castle Street loading bays so they extend a shorter distance into the road”.

Email feedback from local resident

In addition among some respondents there is a preference for limiting / preventing access by HGV's, coaches and other large vehicles to Castle Street and the wider town centre.

Safety

"The existing layout particularly on Castle Street is not a place I want to spend time with my family. In fact as a town centre resident I actively avoid it due to difficulty in moving around with children safely."

Questionnaire Response

"The narrowing of Castle Street will pose a real danger to pedestrians."

Questionnaire Response

While some respondents believe the project area is unsafe and will become safer as a result of the proposals, others believe the Llangollen 2020 approach will have a negative effect on the town in terms of pedestrian, cyclists and driver safety. Narrower roads, changes to one way systems and poor visibility were particular areas of concerns.

"A further controlled crossing from the A5 to Castle Street would be beneficial as the only other controlled crossing were a fair distance away."

Email submission from Member of Visual Impaired Group

There is also evidence that the community feel a zebra crossing would be more likely to improve safety than the proposals outlined.

Impact on Businesses

"I work in Solitaire and have noticed a huge difference since the parking was taken away. Locals no longer pop for a couple of bits in town, affecting many of the businesses."

Questionnaire Response

"I believe it will have a detrimental effect on local businesses. This has been seen in other towns where on street parking has been removed and speaking to business owners in Llangollen this has already been seen with a reduction of customers coming into town."

Questionnaire Response

As shown in Figure 11 there is a difference in perspective on the quality of the proposals between business and non business owners. The qualitative data suggests concern regarding the potential impact on businesses, particularly in terms of the loss of on street parking and that the free 1 hour parking will not mitigate for this. There is a belief that 'pop and shop' market will disappear as a result of the planned proposals.

"Main concern is that she considered that the loading bays needed to be general loading bays as many business owners including herself use their own cars to unload goods."

Notes from Interview with Local Business Owner

"Loading bays need to be usable by private cars and not just limited to goods vehicles as many business owners use their own vehicles."

Notes from Interview with Local Business Owner

"Proposed loading bay on Bridge Street should be located further in to Bridge Street."

Verbal feedback from members of local community

During discussions with local business owners a number of them raised concerns about the type and location of the proposed loading bays. They explained that a proportion of them use their own vehicles to deliver stock to their business, meaning a commercial loading bay would not be suitable for them. In addition the proposed locations where issues for concern, whilst some felt it would be too far away to serve there business others were concerned that a loading bay out front would hide their frontage. As with parking there was concern about who would enforce the loading bays so they are not used for parking.

"The loss of pop and shop parking in the main street has been devastating for some Castle Street businesses and has also increased the amount of illegal parking in Market St."

Questionnaire Response

"No parking on Castle Street has killed the local / passing trade. Making harder to earn a living."

Questionnaire Response

"Consider making loading bays "mixed use" i.e. loading for part of day, pop and shop parking for part of day."

Verbal feedback from members of local community

"Need to create more parking on the outskirts of the town and more on-street parking on proposed one way section of Market Street."

Verbal feedback from members of local community

There was a perception that planters and other interventions, that have been introduced to the town to enable social distancing and other COVID-19 protocols, are already having a negative impact on businesses and highlighting the issues that will result from the Llangollen 2020 proposals.

"Will businesses be compensated for disaster already in place and when works start?!"

Questionnaire Response

"Construction window needs to be limited to complete by May bank holiday 2022 otherwise summer volumes chaos."

Questionnaire Response

"He was particularly concerned about the impact of constructing the permanent scheme."

Notes from Interview with Local Business Owner

Businesses were also concerned about the timing and impact of the construction of the scheme and how it would affect their business. Raising issues such as the timing of the work, there was a preference for avoiding the tourist season, and how long it would take to be completed.

People with Additional Needs

Among those members of the VI (Vision Impaired) support group who submitted feedback about the proposals there was a belief that Castle Street is "an absolute fiasco" and that navigating the area means "taking your life in your hands when crossing roads." Among this group there was a clear preference for controlled crossings such as zebra crossing. Improvements to pavements would address issues such as uneven pavements making it easier to move around the town. Removal of Street parking would also make it easier for those with visual impairment issues to cross the road safely.

"I need parking close to shops ie.. Castle Street as my wife is disabled and has to walk with crutches she has a mobility scooter but is excluded because of the planters and dangerous state of our town during lockdown."

Questionnaire Response

"I have a blue badge and I used to park in Castle Street to do my shopping but now I drive around Oak Street, Bridge Street etc to try and park. Move often than not after 3 circuits I go home without shopping."

Questionnaire Response

"Would love more consideration towards disabled coming into town. I am a blue badge holder for my wife to have access to shops i.e. butchers, green grocer."

Questionnaire Response

Whilst some felt that wider pavements would benefit people with disabilities and others, for example parents with prams and pushchair, there were those who believe that the parking would be in the wrong place for people with accessibility issues and therefore couldn't walk from the car park. The proposals do include 2N^o disabled bays near to Castle Street but this was not specifically referenced in the questionnaire.

Look and Feel of the Town

"As Llangollen is a very popular tourist town in Denbighshire I truly believe that it should be made attractive and suitable for people to come here for visits, holidays etc."

Questionnaire Response

A significant number of respondents felt the proposals will help improve the look and feel of the town, which is described as being "scruffy" and "untidy." It is also felt that the delivery of the project has the potential to raise the standard of the town and its appearance, improving the area for residents and visitors.

"The idea of extending the pavements only allows businesses and cafés to extend onto the pavement. Llangollen is not conducive to outdoor cafe culture as the main fare is low grade kebab and pie and chips."

Questionnaire Response

"So wrong to allow tables and seats and other street furniture - it does not make social distancing easy. Pavements are for walking not for drinking beer."

Questionnaire Response

However, there is concern about levels of "street clutter" and that "the proposed attempt to make more space for pedestrians on the pavement is negated / contradicted by the large number of advertising A boards that shops put outside on the pavement plus large litter bins. If the A boards and bins were removed the pavement needn't be widened!"

Residents v Tourists

"Llangollen is a busy town and these proposals do not benefit any business owners on Castle Street and is only aimed at tourists / day trippers. Businesses need to survive 12 months of the year and rely on locals to park outside."

Questionnaire Response

"Enough is enough. I love the town centre and quality of life has nose dived, the residents of this town are never considered. It is all about the tourists."

Questionnaire Response

Analysis of the open ended questionnaire responses and other submitted feedback suggests a perception that the proposals have been developed with a focus on meeting the needs of tourist rather than local people. That the proposed scheme does not address local, community issues such as "residents themselves who are paying thousands of pounds for their street being used as a free car parking facility and having to clean up the rubbish that is left behind" (questionnaire responses).

There is a desire to see residents facing solutions for example "consideration also needs to be given to specific parking for residents who live in the town centre as reducing parking provision pushes even more cars on to residential streets" and "love the idea of free parking but suggest it is for locals only" (questionnaire responses). In addition there is some support for schemes such as park and ride and that "tourists visiting Llangollen should be encouraged to park outside the town centre and not drive around the town looking for parking spaces nor park irresponsibly and illicitly" (questionnaire response).

The Impact of COVID-19

It is important to acknowledge that the feasibility work and prior community engagement took place before the COVID-19 pandemic. That, in the interim period changes have taken place in Llangollen, to support social distancing and other COVID-19 protocols, and that this may have effected some people's views about the permanent scheme.

"I am driving around this town very regularly. I am a local driving and advanced driver I have to navigate pupils up and down Castle Street many, many times a day. These proposals are ridiculous, I now have to be ready to steer my pupils to avoid them catching the side mirror on the planters as a large vehicle is approaching. To make the road even more narrow will be disastrous."

Questionnaire Response

"Current Covid Active Travel scheme has had a huge impact on some businesses and has made some of them unsustainable. The loss of limited waiting parking "pop and shop" parking is a major issue."

Notes from Interview with Local Business Owner

"Leave our town as it is!!! Even the changes you have made already (May / June) have caused great distress. The town may be very crowded on some days most of the year, especially October - May is almost deserted."

Questionnaire Response

"I have not used a Castle Street business since the current restrictions have been in place. The idea of looking for a parking space in the car park when all I want is to drop a cheque into the bank or buy a pint of milk in the Spar is ridiculous. The previous system was not perfect but it worked. Traffic moves much faster now than it did before which is a bad thing. I fear that we will lose many of the businesses from the street when it is easier and quicker to use Aldi and Home Bargains."

Questionnaire Response

For example, as previously discussed, existing interventions such as the planters are seen as evidence that proposals around widening pavements will not work, that local businesses are already being impacted by the changes, citing the loss of the "pop and shop" audience and local people taking their trade to Aldi and other towns.

"I totally do not understand of see any evidence come forward to the reason for closing Short Street, other than for local businesses to use."

Letter from Member of the Public

"Closing off Short Street again without asking people's thoughts on this is taking a liberty."

Questionnaire Response

A number of people also mentioned the closure of Short Street, expressing frustration at the closure and suggesting that there has been limited engagement and explanation as to why it has been closed.

A Missed Opportunity To Do More

"I think that the scheme, whilst of benefit to the town overall has missed opportunity to address many of the issues the 2020 group stated an interest in resolving."

Questionnaire Response

Within the qualitative engagement there is evidence that the community would like to see a wider reaching approach, issues that respondents felt the scheme could and should address included:

- Bringing trees and plants into Llangollen, greening the town. There are references to the number of trees being reduced for the original plans and concern about the potential removal of the tree near the Town Hall.
- A strategy for the look and feel of the wider town including public realm works and street furniture.
- Supporting the active travel agenda including consideration of public transport.
- Cycle lanes and infrastructure such as places to park bikes.
- Addressing climate change and contributing to the carbon neutral agenda, for example electrical vehicle charging points.
- Addressing pollution and creating healthy streets.

The Engagement Process

"Who authorised this? Feel lack of communication with the residents of Llangollen has been absolutely disgraceful."

Questionnaire Response

"The whole process has the feeling of a self appointed group (2020), who regardless of the public, are trying to impose their view, withholding information, being indifferent to genuine locals views."

Questionnaire Response

"When you have a County Council Consultation, Town Councillors should not be allowed to be loitering around the process making people feel intimidated by their presence."

Email from a member of the Public

It is important to acknowledge that 12% of respondents to the questionnaire expressed concerns about the engagement process and in particular the role and decision making processes of the Llangollen 2020 group. This may in part be attributed to the amount of time between initial engagement in 2018 and this next phase of discussion with local people.

7.0 Conclusion

The survey responses suggest that 64% of respondents think that the scheme is generally a good idea. This is made up of 40% of respondents who think it should be implemented as advertised, and 24% of respondents who think it is a good idea but that it could be improved/modified.

It is important to remember that community engagement is not a vote but a process to understand the community's concerns and frustrations about the proposed scheme. The following next steps are recommended:

- Based on the feedback received, consider making modifications to the proposed scheme.
- Provide an explanation of what suggested modifications will or won't be incorporated into the final scheme, together with an explanation of the associated reasons in each case, including evidence where possible.
- Explain that the subsequent phases of work include a parking strategy and what work that will involve.
- Communicate how long the Covid Active Travel interventions are likely to be in place.
- Illustrate how the findings of this engagement process will shape the delivery of the scheme.
- Should the scheme go ahead, work closely with businesses to ensure they're kept regularly informed about construction work and that contractors liaise closely with businesses in terms of deliveries and the potential for impact on their operation.