

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Executive Director
(Neighbourhoods and Environment)

To

Traffic Regulation Working Party & Cabinet Committee

On

21st December 2022

Report prepared by: Neil Hoskins, Head of Civil Engineering

Thorpe 20mph Neighbourhood

Place Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Councillor Steve Wakefield

Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- To advise members of the results of the public consultation into the 20mph proposals for Thorpe.
- For members of the Traffic Regulation Working Party to discuss the results and recommend an approach.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That neither option A or Option B be taken forward for construction. This is due to:

- Option A only received 18% support from the consultation,
- Option B only received 42% support (once those with a free text comment indicating a 'do nothing preference' were removed)
- The free text comments stating 'to do nothing' showed that 44% of respondents did not want a scheme,
- 71% of respondents thought that speed was either not an issue or not a huge issue,
- 90% didn't think air quality was an issue.

2.2 That the Traffic Regulation Working Party discuss the results related to respondent perception of speeding by road (diagram 3) and advise on a way forward on specific locations.

3. Background

3.1 On 7 February 2022 a paper was discussed at the Place Scrutiny Committee. The proposal was to create a 20mph zone in Thorpe Ward. The areas under consideration were:

- i. Area bounded by Thorpe Hall Avenue, Thorpe Bay Gardens, Maplin Way and Station Road.
- ii. Burges Road, Colbert Avenue and Wyatts Drive.
- iii. Shaftesbury Avenue, Kensington Avenue and Northumberland Crescent.

3.2 The Scrutiny Committee resolved that the matter be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration with the recommendation that the proposals for the 20mph Neighbourhood in the areas within Thorpe Ward be subject to full consultation with residents before considering whether scheme should be progressed.

4. Consultation

4.1 The consultation ran from 5 September to the 21 October 2022 with a total of 2,500 people access the portal with 440 individuals responding online. A further 87 emails, 19 postal consultations and one petition were sent back for consideration and noted. Since some of these were duplicated a total of 491 individual responses have been counted.

4.2 The consultation complied with both the Nolan principles of Public Life and the Gunning Consultation Principles, given that the consultation was held at a formative stage of the design; that adequate time was given for consideration and response; and that the responses are taken into account when finalising the decision.

4.3 Given the nature of the responses (See Appendix A) and the absence of a clear ‘no action’ option a straightforward choice between option A and option B is problematic.

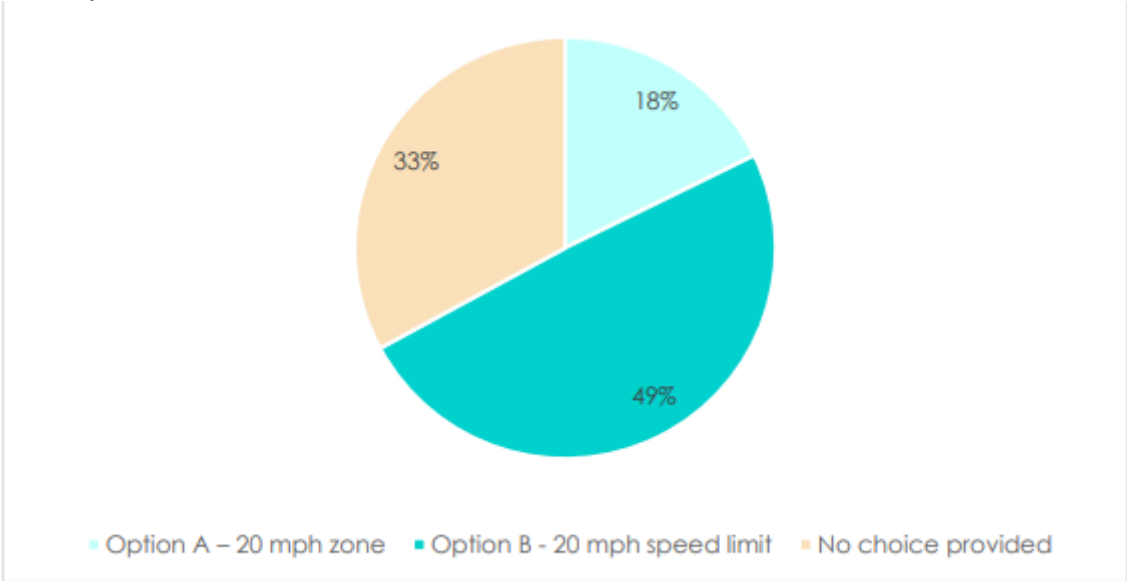


Diagram 1a – Which of the proposed options would you prefer

4.3.1 In response to question 1 asking which scheme is preferred, 49% said option B; 18% option A and 33% didn't choose either option. The choice to not tick the option box (either Option A or Option B) was initially erroneously mandatory which meant that there was no choice but to choose either Option A or Option B. This error was brought to our attention on 20 September and was changed immediately. During this period a total of 21 responses were received. Two of those chose Option B (stating that this was ‘under duress’) and five people commented that the proposal was a waste of money and not necessary. Given that this constitutes a low percentage of the total responses it is not felt that this error had a material impact on the outcome of the consultation.

4.3.2 However, a significant number of the 49% stated that they had chosen option B 'under duress' since a 'do nothing' option was not available, which they would have chosen if one was available. From diagram 1b, this group is made up 7%, which reduced the clear option B choice to 42%.

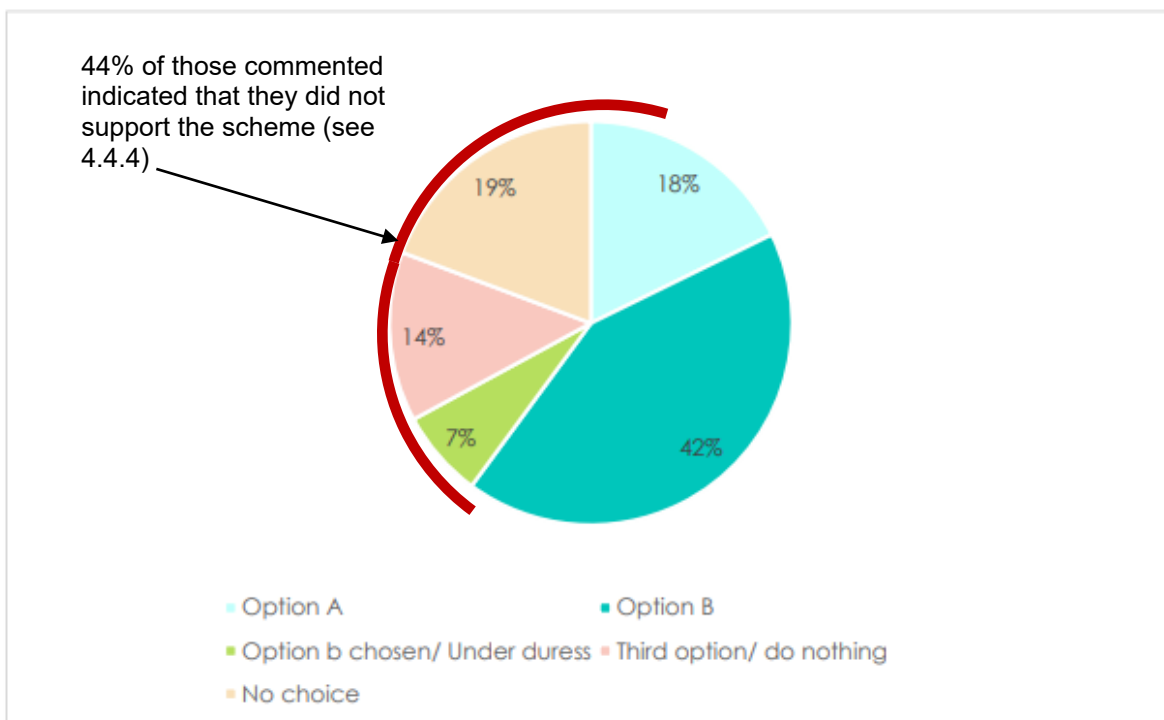


Diagram 1b – Further breakdown of 1a

4.3.3 Analysing the 33% (no choice) in diagram 1a, 14% indicated in the comments that they would have voted for a do nothing option if one was available. The remaining 19% did not indicate any preference in the comments.

4.4 Other Questions

4.4.1 82% of respondents stated that they drive the affected roads every day with only 1% stating that they don't drive.

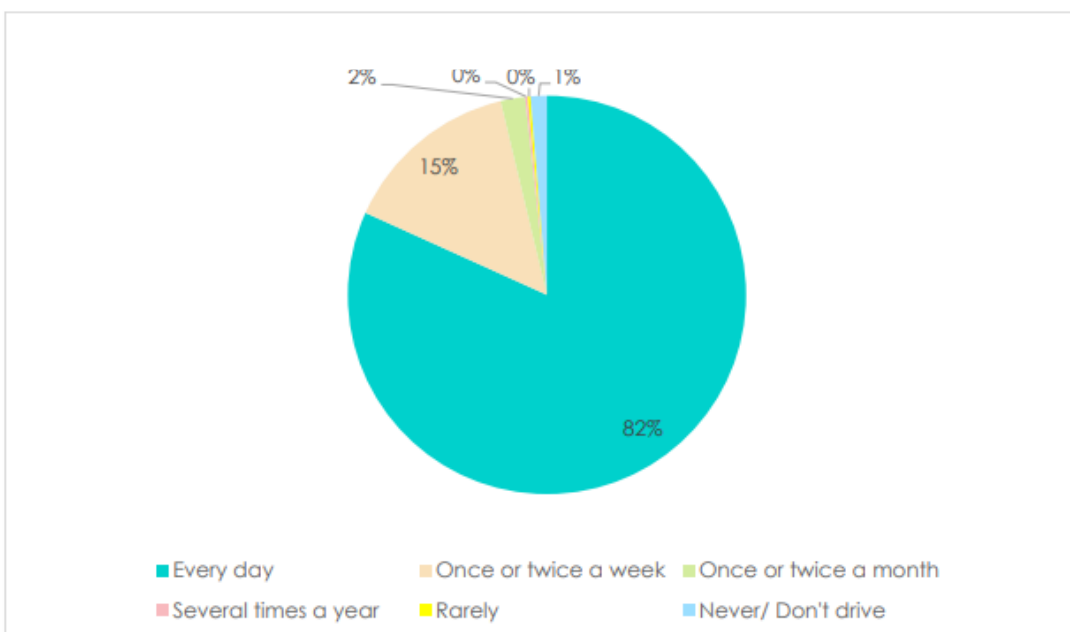


Diagram 2 – How often do you drive on any of the roads included in the proposed pilot area

4.4.2 When asked which roads, if any, have an issue with speeding vehicles, just over 160 said Burges Road and Thorpe Hall Avenue. However almost 140 stated that there wasn't a speeding issue on any of the roads.

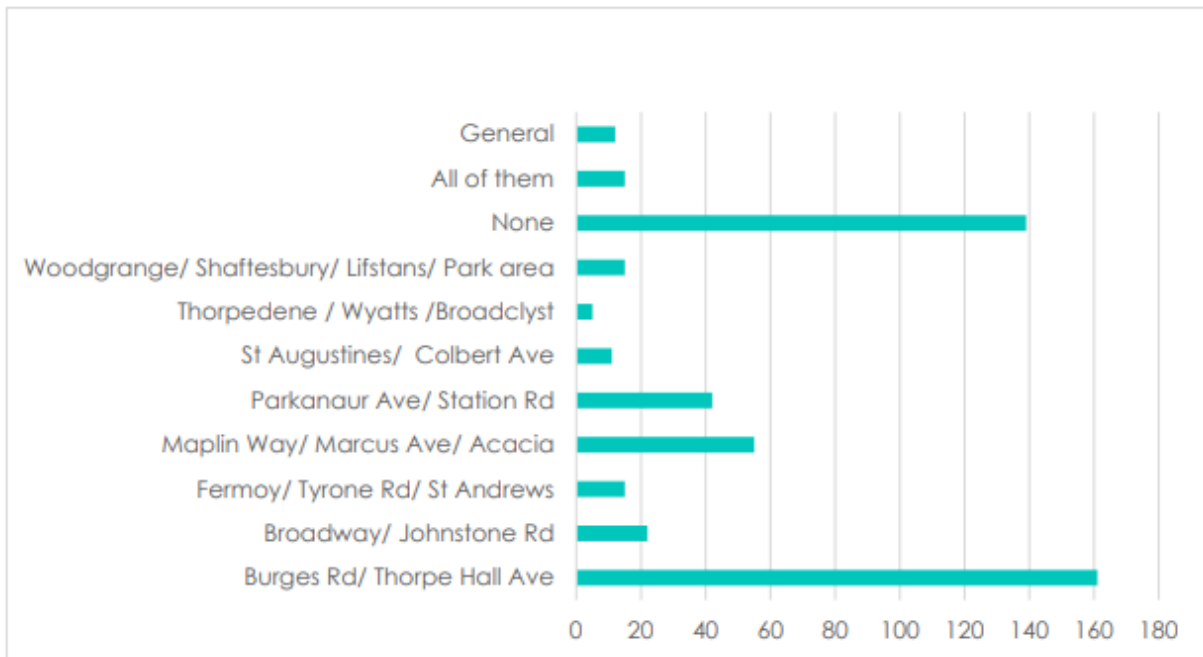


Diagram 3 – Which roads in the proposed pilot area, if any, do you feel have an issue with vehicles travelling too fast?

4.4.3 In response to being asked if they would choose a more active travel mode if there were fewer vehicles 83% said that this wouldn't make any difference.

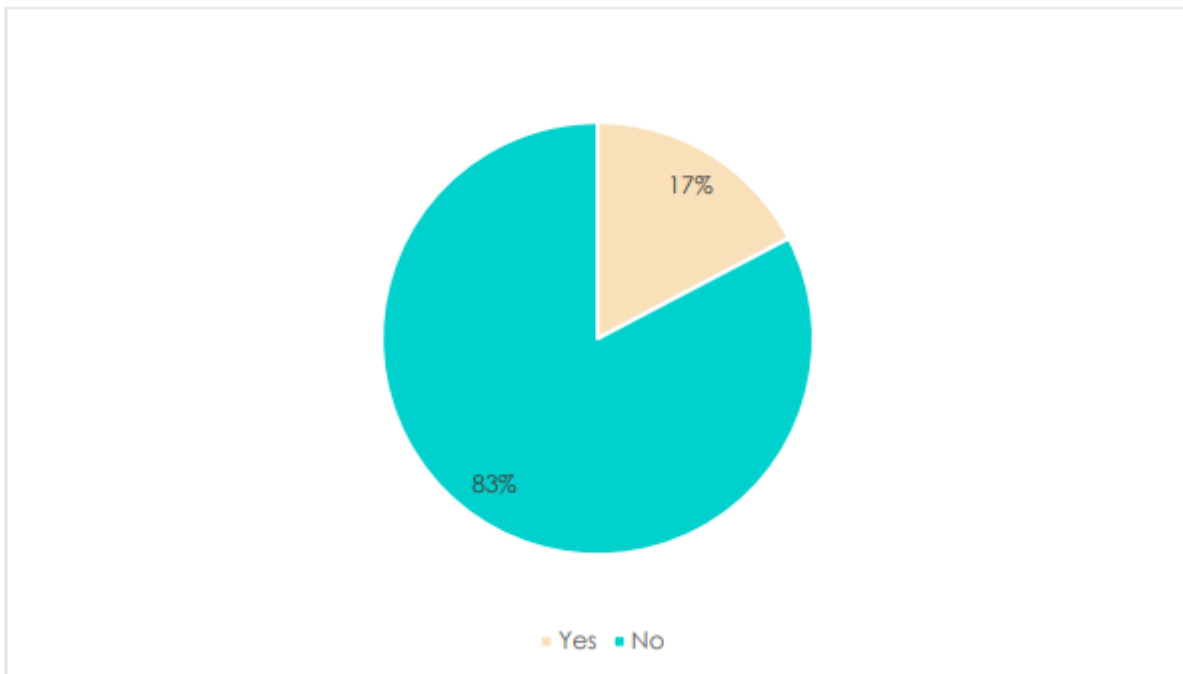


Diagram 4 – If there was less traffic in the proposed pilot area would you walk and/or cycle more?

4.4.4 In the any other comments section, 51% of those who left a comment (420 individuals) did not support or would rather do nothing in this area. This equates to 44% of all respondents.

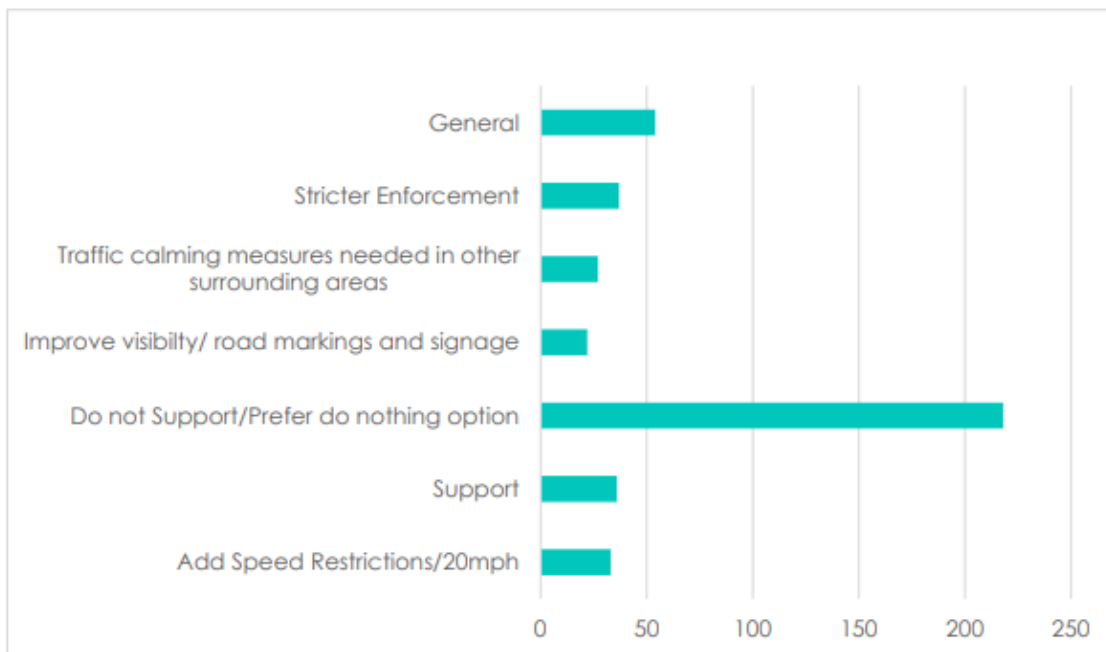


Diagram 5 – Do you have any other thoughts/comments to add on the proposal?

4.4.5 90% of respondents lived in the affected area.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 An absence of a 'do nothing' option appears to have caused respondents to indicate that this would be their preference in a different way. It appears that they either indicated an option 'under duress' or didn't tick either option and/or indicated this preference in the free text. For this reason, no clear preference is discernible from the data. It would be hard therefore to justify the levels of expenditure detailed in 5.2 below

5.2 The cost of option A is £427K and the cost of option B is £402K. Clearly the cost of a do nothing with regards a 20mph scheme/limit is £0.

5.3 Members will be aware that both residents and some Councillors have very strong views on the options at this location, some for and some against. It is clear therefore that whatever decision is ultimately taken that there will be dissatisfied stakeholders, with possible legal challenges already being mooted.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map

6.1.1 Safe & Well - This scheme contributes to the Council's visions, particularly in terms of moving towards a safer borough by reducing vehicle speeds and improving safety for pedestrians and school children ensuring residents feel safe and secure in their neighbourhoods. The works area are also situated around schools participating in the School Streets programme, so these

schemes will also seek to contribute to the safety of school children and parents. This is in line with the Policy 16, taken from the councils Local Transport Plan, which highlights the need to “carry out a programme of measures designed to improve road safety and to promote road safety for all road users.”, which is what this pilot scheme, and subsequent 20mph Neighbourhood schemes, will seek to address

6.1.2 Active & Involved – By improving safety, the ambition of the scheme is to encourage our residents to use active and sustainable transport options. This will be achieved by improving the perceived safety for pedestrians, who would be more inclined to use active travel options if it was their belief that these options were safe enough for use by both adults and children. This is in line with the councils Green City Action Plan sub-priority 2.4, which highlights the need to enable sustainable transport within the City and the actions that can be taken to achieve this

6.2 Financial Implications

6.2.1 If implemented the cost of option A is £427K and the cost of option B is £402K. This will be from the DfT LTP grant funding.

6.3 Legal Implications

6.3.1 The scheme would require an Experimental Traffic Order, but there is a risk that the consultation process is challenged.

6.4 People Implications

6.4.1 A lower speed limit may reduce the severity of any collision with a pedestrian.

6.5 Property Implications

6.5.1 None

6.6 Consultation

6.6.1 The results of the consultation are in Appendix 1.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.7.1 An EIA will be carried out prior to implementation

6.8 Community Safety Implications

None

7. Appendices

7.1 Consultation Report