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28th November 2018

CHURCH LANE AND ST. MARY’S WALK, ACKLAM – POTENTIAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS: RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE

Middlesbrough Council carried out an extensive public consultation exercise in October and November 2018 to gauge the level of support for a number of potential highway improvement options on Church Lane and St. Mary’s Walk in Acklam. The occupiers of 264 properties on Church Lane, St. Mary’s Walk and those roads directly accessed via either Church Lane or St. Mary’s Walk were consulted as part of this exercise.

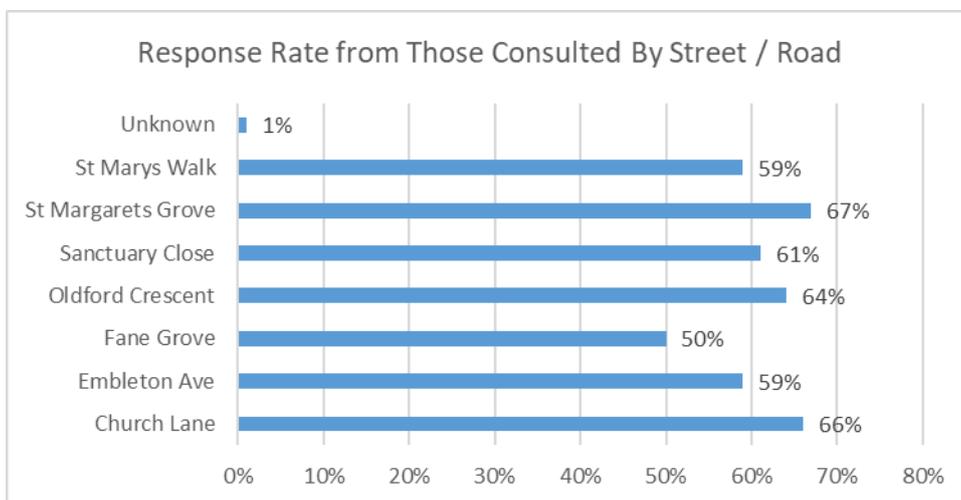
The potential options were:

Option 1 – Introduction of a series of round top road humps, positioned at approximately 70 metre intervals along the full length of Church Lane and St. Mary’s Walk and designed to reduce the average vehicle speed to 20 mph, in line with the speed limit in force on both roads.

Option 2 – Introduction of a full road closure at the corner of Church Lane and St. Mary’s Walk, preventing vehicles from travelling between Green Lane and Acklam Road via this route.

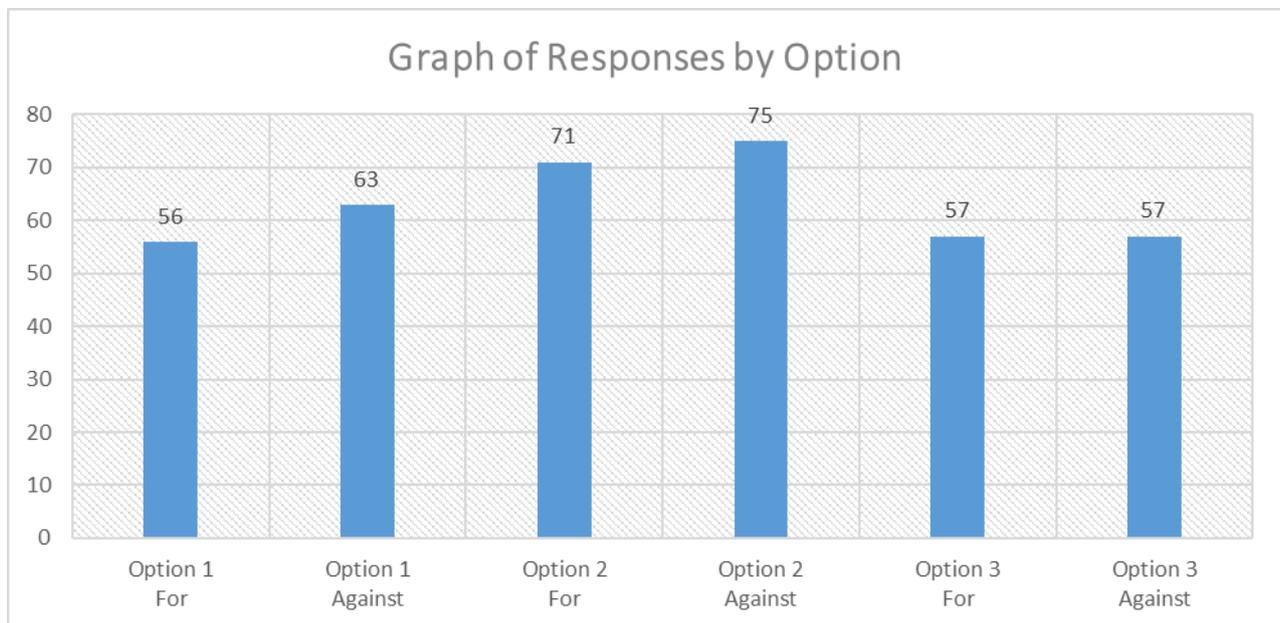
Option 3 – ‘Do Nothing’. No change to the existing road layout.

A total of 165 responses were received, representing a response rate of 63%. The graph below details the response rate for each road included in the consultation exercise:



The table and graph below detail the overall level of support for each of the three potential options:

		No. of Votes
Option 1 – Road Humps	For	56
	Against	63
Option 2 – Full Road Closure	For	71
	Against	75
Option 3 – ‘Do Nothing’	For	57
	Against	57



As can be seen, both Option 1 and 2 received a negative net approval rating, whilst the number of respondents for and against the ‘Do Nothing’ option was evenly split.

The table below summarises the key issues raised by respondents, together with a response from Middlesbrough Council in each case:

No.	Issue	No. of Responses	Middlesbrough Council Response
1.	A closure will only increase traffic through the Lakes Estate/adjacent estate.	21	A point closure on Church Lane and St. Mary's Walk will, inevitably, result in some of the drivers that currently uses those roads diverting onto adjacent estate roads instead. As most of these roads are narrower than Church Lane and St. Mary's Walk, consideration would need to be given to the need for additional traffic calming measures to mitigate the impact of increased vehicular movements.
2.	Speeding vehicles is the issue.	21	Although the accident record on both roads is good, recent speed surveys show a low level of compliance with the 20 mph speed limit in force. The current policy adopted by the Cleveland Safety Camera Partnership is not to carry out camera enforcement on roads subject to a 20 mph speed limit. Consequently, camera enforcement is not currently an option on either Church Lane or St. Mary's Walk.
3.	Church Lane/St. Mary's Walk is Used as a through road, and 'rat running' occurs.	18	Noted. However, traffic surveys carried out earlier this year show that the number of vehicles using Church Lane and St. Mary's Walk as a through route remains low, with a maximum of between 5 and 6 vehicles per minute (two-way flow) recorded during the AM and PM peaks.
4.	Enforce restricted access/Camera enforcement is required.	15	Although the existing access restriction is fully enforceable, Cleveland Police – who are responsible for the enforcement of 'moving traffic' restrictions – do not have the resources to enforce it. The current policy adopted by the Cleveland Safety Camera Partnership is not to carry out camera enforcement on roads subject to a 20 mph speed limit. As a result camera enforcement is not an option on either Church Lane or St. Mary's Walk at present.
5.	Amend existing traffic signals at junction of Acklam Road and Lodore Grove to include Church Lane.	15	Modelling work has previously been carried out to test the viability of signalling Church Lane by incorporating it into a staggered junction arrangement with Acklam Road and Lodore Grove. The results of the modelling exercise demonstrated that such an arrangement would have a severe detrimental impact on Acklam Road and the operation of the highway network. As a result this option was rejected.

No.	Issue	No. of Responses	Middlesbrough Council Response
6.	Parking around Green Lane Primary school is an issue.	7	Noted. The Council continues to work with Green Lane Primary Academy to address this issue.
7.	Left turning only lane should be created on Church Lane, next to the Master Cooper pub.	4	There is insufficient width to create an additional lane for left turning vehicles within the adopted highway. Making left turning manoeuvres easier would also result in increased use of Church Lane and St. Mary's Walk as a through route, particularly during the PM peak.
8.	Resurface the carriageway/footway on Church Lane & St. Mary's Walk.	4	This suggestion will be considered separately.
9.	The volume of traffic is the issue.	4	Traffic surveys carried out earlier this year show that the number of vehicles using Church Lane and St. Mary's Walk as a through route remains low, with a maximum of between 5 and 6 vehicles per minute (two-way flow) recorded during the AM and PM peaks.
10.	Both options will inconvenience residents and prevent reasonable access.	3	Although both options would affect traffic movements on Church Lane and St. Mary's Walk, access to individual properties would be maintained in each case.
11.	The introduction of road humps will cause damage to vehicles.	3	As highlighted within the consultation letter, the road humps would be designed to comply with the Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999, thereby maximising their effectiveness in reducing vehicle speeds whilst minimising their impact on nearby properties in terms of noise and vibration. Therefore, only vehicles that are driven at speeds well in excess of the 20 mph speed limit in force on both roads would be at risk of being damaged.
12.	Both options would cut the church and church hall off and have an impact on church attendees, including events.	3	The road hump option would have no impact on access to the Church. The point closure option would still allow access to the church, although visitors might need to change their route to avoid the closure.
13.	Remove the existing chicanes.	3	The existing chicanes are an effective traffic calming measure, and an important factor in the good safety record on both roads. Removal of the chicanes would result in an increase in vehicle speeds – and, therefore, an increase in the potential for collisions to occur.

No.	Issue	No. of Responses	Middlesbrough Council Response
14.	Disagree with survey results and the average speeds.	2	The surveys undertaken earlier this year were carried out using radar traffic counters. These counters record the number and speed of vehicles over a seven day period, thereby providing a comprehensive picture of traffic movements on both roads.
15.	Emergency vehicles - Cannot introduce cushions because of ambulance and fire brigade.	2	The emergency services do not normally have objections to the introduction of traffic calming provided that its design complies with the Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999. It is standard practice for Middlesbrough Council to consult with the emergency services on all potential highway improvement schemes.
16.	Taxis in particular use Church Lane/St. Mary's Walk as a through road.	5	There is nothing to prevent taxis – or any other legitimate class of vehicle – from using Church Lane or St. Mary's Walk. Traffic surveys carried out earlier this year show that the number of vehicles using Church Lane and St. Mary's Walk as a through route remains low, with a maximum of between 5 and 6 vehicles per minute (two-way flow) recorded during the AM and PM peaks. It is reasonable to assume that all road users – including taxis – would be deterred from using Church Lane and St. Mary's Walk as a through route if either of the options was introduced.
17.	Monitor traffic flow electronically (automatic number plate recognition).	2	The Council does not have the power to enforce access restrictions, as this is the responsibility of the Police. Cleveland Police do not currently use automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) to monitor such activity

Yours faithfully

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Copies to: **Councillor Shamal Biswas**
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