

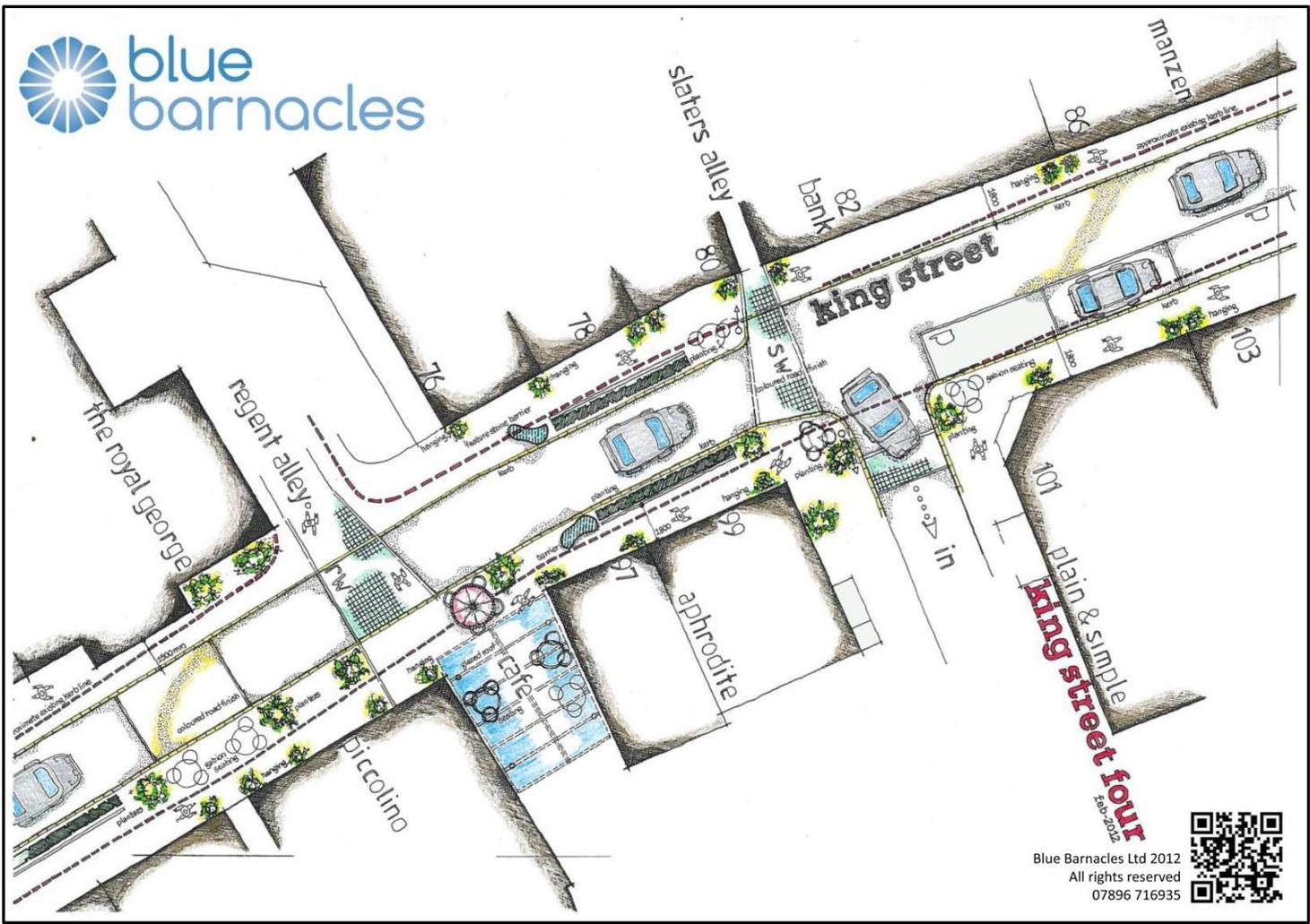
KING STREET ENHANCEMENT

**REPORT BY
KNUTSFORD TOWN PLAN
TOWN CENTRE WORKING GROUP**

August 2012

Knutsford Town Plan

www.knutsfordtownplan.org



Blue Barnacles Ltd 2012
All rights reserved
07896 716935



Artists impression of one of the many ways that improvements could potentially be made within King Street

KING STREET ENHANCEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of 18 months work by the volunteers on the Knutsford Town Plan Town Centre Working Group, considering how the Central Section of King Street (Between King Street Car park access road and Old Market Place) could be improved, in particular to provide enhanced provision for pedestrians.

It presents a summary of the options available and the outcome from the extensive consultation which has taken place.

The report comes to firm conclusions about the way forward and makes specific recommendations for Knutsford Town Council (KTC) to adopt.

We are conscious that the Working Group can only go so far and that now is the time to pass the main responsibility for driving forward the enhancement of King Street to the Town Council and to Cheshire East Council (CEC). In passing-on the baton, the Town Centre Working Group would expect to be involved in the future project management of the scheme as a key local partner alongside KTC, CEC and business representatives.

2. BACKGROUND

The sequence of events related to proposed pedestrian priority measures on King Street goes back a long way. However, the current policy and proposals for the Street are probably best picked up from 2004.

2.1 Borough of Macclesfield Local Plan 2004 - Proposals for Knutsford Town Centre

The overall objectives of the Local Plan for Knutsford Town Centre are as follows

- a) To conserve and enhance the historic character of the town centre
- b) To retain and enhance the attractive open spaces which form an essential part of the historic setting of the town centre
- c) To improve the environment, particularly for pedestrians, through pedestrian priority measures
- d) To provide satisfactory servicing and parking arrangements
- e) To encourage further small scale comparison shopping in the shopping area

In order to achieve these objectives the following policies were adopted by the newly formed Cheshire East Council so far as King Street is concerned

“KTC17 - PROVIDE A LINK ROAD BETWEEN MALT STREET, OLD MARKET PLACE AND KING STREET IS PROPOSED, AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, TO PROVIDE REAR SERVICING AND ACCESS.

Reason The link road will enable pedestrian priority measures to be introduced in King Street by allowing the maintenance of rear servicing and access.”

"KTC18 - PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY MEASURES ARE PROPOSED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE TOWN CENTRE PARTICULARLY IN:
1 KING STREET (FROM THE JUNCTION WITH CHURCH WALK UP TO NO 109 KING STREET, FOLLOWING CONSTRUCTION OF THE SERVICE ROAD)
2 PRINCESS STREET.

Reason: Pedestrian priority measures will make the town centre a safer, pleasanter and more attractive environment. Access for buses, the disabled and servicing will be considered at the detailed design stage."

This Local Plan remains the substantive planning context document for the area until the adoption of the Town Strategy which will be part of the new Local Development Plan Framework.

It should be noted however that although a scheme to implement these policies for King Street was developed, designed and subjected to public consultation, it has effectively stalled. It is understood that the scheme is no longer being pursued by CEC.

2.2 Knutsford Town Plan 2010 Proposals

The Knutsford Town Plan was published in March 2010. Knutsford Town Council adopted the Town Plan report in spring 2010 as 'a blueprint for the future'.

The survey contained a question – "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following about pedestrianisation?"

- It would enhance the character of the town:
- It would adversely affect trade:
- It would increase the risk of crime:
- It would be more convenient and safer for people with children, prams, wheelchairs etc.

In response to this question approximately 2,500 gave their views, a short summary of which are as follows:-

- 1,800 (73%) believed that it would enhance the character of the town ;
- 820 (33%) thought it would adversely affect trade
- 2,100 (86%) that it would be safer and more convenient for the disabled, for people with children and prams and for wheelchair users.

69 respondents identified themselves as business owners or workers in the town. Although a small sample, the opinions of this group showed similar trends to the main survey, although not as marked. For example, 61% thought it would enhance the character of the town and 44% thought it would adversely affect trade.

When asked about specific parts of town, 74% voted for pedestrianisation of the central section of King Street (Section B - roughly from the access road for the King Street car park to Old Market Place or 109 King Street), 24% voted against this.

As a result of this substantive survey response, the Town Plan put forward the following recommendations

“Recommended Action (Ref. PT 1)

Implement Pedestrian Priority measures in the central part B of King Street as set out in the 2004 MBC Local Plan Policies KTC17 and 18.

Recommended Action (Ref. PT 2)

The Town Plan Implementation Committee to conduct ongoing surveys on community opinion and liaise with CEC in the detailed design stage of Pedestrian Priority measures in King Street”

These recommendations were endorsed and the proposals were subsequently incorporated into the Town Plan Action Plan as a ‘High Priority’ Measure

2.3 Knutsford Town Centre Working Group

In order to implement the Town Plan recommendations, a series of Working Groups were formed, based on specific Themes.

The Town Centre Working Group decided that, given the weight of responses devoted to this issue, that the recommendations PT1 and PT2 (above) on pedestrian priority was the most important and urgent item to be driven forward by the Group.

In response to this, in addition to the Knutsford residents on the group, a number of local professionals in key disciplines joined the team to assist on a voluntary basis. These include a highways and pedestrian-flow engineer; an urban designer; and a town planning and urban regeneration specialist.

This Working Group has

- analysed the main problems and opportunities on King Street (Central section),
- undertaken research on pedestrian schemes throughout the country and some examples from abroad,
- developed viable options for the future of the central section of King Street,
- undertaken a public consultation exercise to assess reaction and views.

A summary of the findings and results of this work is provided in the sections which follow

3. OPTIONS FOR ENHANCEMENT

3.1 Objectives

The Working Group has been very mindful that there is a delicate balance to be achieved in any enhancement proposals for King Street. This balance essentially is between creating more pleasant and safe experience for pedestrians; ensuring that any changes improve trading and footfall; and caring for the character and environment of the street.

The key objectives for enhancing King Street are therefore

- To create a safer and more pleasant shopping and visitor experience
- To increase "footfall" i.e. the number of users/visitors
- To help to improve trade
- To improve the environment
- To conserve the historic character of the street

Any proposals for the enhancement of the street should be evaluated against these objectives.

3.2 Options for Consultation

In order to achieve our objectives we have identified two possible options for improving King Street.

Our brief was to look at the central section (Section B) of the street from Knutsford in Bloom/ Mugli Restaurant to Mowlem Kitchens/Amayra.

A copy of the consultation questionnaire providing information on the options for the public is provided in **Appendix A**.

Option 1. Timed Pedestrianisation

This option would pedestrianise this section of the street say between 12.00 am and 4.30 pm.

No vehicles could enter the street between these times but vehicle access, through traffic and deliveries would be allowed before and after. The layout of the street, parking spaces and footways could remain largely the same as existing.

Option 2. Increased Pedestrian Priority

This option allows vehicles to enter at all times but provides much increased pedestrian priority by **either**

- providing proper footways along both sides of the street (minimum width 1.5metres) or
- providing 'shared space' where the street would be totally level and drivers would be expected to give way to pedestrians.

Option 2a to provide proper footways is a straightforward design concept. Option 2b is to provide 'Shared Space'. This is an approach to street design which minimises demarcations between vehicles and pedestrians. The concept is becoming increasingly influential across Europe; its origins were in the Netherlands, before being adopted more frequently in Scandinavia and in recent years in the UK. The UK government defines shared space as "A street or place designed to improve pedestrian movement and comfort by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles and enabling all users to share the space rather than follow the clearly defined rules implied by more conventional designs"

For both these options 2a and 2b, some on-street parking could be retained although it would be less than is available now.

4. COMPARISON OF OPTIONS

In this section we provide a technical comparison of the options alongside how they would compare with the existing situation. The comparisons have been made under the following headings;

- Provision for pedestrians
- Accessibility for all
- Servicing of frontage properties
- Vehicular Movement past frontage properties
- Parking
- Appearance of street
- Safety
- Cost
- Impact of diverted traffic on neighbouring streets
- Impact of diverted traffic on congestion in town centre.

4.1 Provision for pedestrians

At the present time the footways are inadequate along both sides of King Street. Government highway and accessibility guidelines identify absolute minimum footway widths as being 1.3 metres but 1.5m being the appropriate minimum width. In King Street the footways are often less than even 1.3 metres. They are of insufficient width generally to allow pedestrians to browse or 'window shop'. Indeed they do not exist at all over certain lengths forcing pedestrians to walk in the roadway.

All the three options greatly improve the provision for pedestrians.

Option 1(Timed Pedestrianisation) provides a dramatic improvement for pedestrians for the period King Street is closed to vehicles. Pedestrians able to stroll freely down the street, no danger from vehicles and ample space. However for the other 16 hours a day conditions will remain inadequate for pedestrians.

Options 2a and 2b will provide a less dramatic improvement for pedestrians but for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Option 2a would provide adequate width (1.8m minimum) footways along both sides of the street along the whole of its length. This will allow people to pass more easily, prams and pushchairs to be able to use the footway and avoid any need to walk in the roadway unless crossing the road.

With Option 2b for Shared Space it is more difficult to formally quantify the benefits for pedestrians. Pedestrians will have a much greater use of the street. A significant percentage of the parking/servicing areas will be removed such that there will be more space for pedestrians. Traffic will remain in the street but the design of the street will be such that pedestrians have equal or greater status than vehicles, with generally vehicles ceding priority to them. However vehicles and pedestrians will be sharing the same space such that pedestrians will have to be aware of vehicles at all times.

Existing traffic flow levels are such that it is unlikely that pedestrians will be able to stroll up or down the street down the centre of the road but they will be able to along either side and cross over with drivers ceding priority to them. Hence it should be viewed not as pedestrians having to walk into the roadway as occurs at present but vehicles having to drive through a pedestrian space.

4.2 Accessibility for All

Streets especially in town centres should be readily accessible by all. They should be accessible by the visually or mobility impaired.

It is currently not possible for wheelchair and mobility scooter users to access many frontage properties. Such users must travel in the roadway. Similarly pedestrians with pushchairs or prams have to walk in the roadway. The visually impaired have in many areas of the street no features from which to navigate safely.

All the three options will greatly improve accessibility for all. Option 1 only improves the situation for the 6 hours or so per day when pedestrianised. Options 2a and 2b improve the situation all the time. It is likely that Option 2a with footways would be preferred by those with visual impairments since they will be able to navigate more easily and have greater certainty where vehicles will travel along the street. Option 2b is more likely to be beneficial to those with mobility scooters, pushchairs or prams since there are no kerbs to negotiate.

4.3 Servicing of frontage properties

Some of the frontages have rear servicing but a number do require servicing direct from King Street. At the present time this servicing can occur at any time, mostly from the sections of roadway with single yellow line parking restrictions. The situation is far from perfect because of the narrowness of the roadway and the number of blue badge holders who often (but legally) park on the single yellow lines.

With Option 1 servicing could not occur from the street for 6 or so hours per day and servicing times would have to be modified. This creates some difficulties, especially initially. However over time occupiers in other towns with such streets have managed to rearrange servicing times.

With Options 2a and 2b servicing could occur at any time but lengths of the street where servicing can occur will be substantially reduced and it may require some occupiers to trolley their goods over short distances.

4.4 Vehicular Movement past frontage properties

During the consultation process many of the retailers commented that 'passing trade' was very important to the success of their businesses. Indeed a survey undertaken by a local graduate of 25-30 of the King Street traders found that they considered passing trade to be more important to their businesses than parking in King Street. At the moment vehicles can pass along King Street at any time. With Option 1 this would not be possible for 6 or so hours per day. With options 2a and 2b vehicles can pass along the street at any time.

4.5 Parking

At the present time on the Central section of King Street there are approximately 23 time limited free parking spaces (20/30 minutes maximum – soon to be changed to 60 minutes). These are well used spaces and typically are fully occupied during the day and the evenings. Blue badge holders can also park on other lengths of the street.

With Option 1 this arrangement would remain for approximately 18 hours per day, but all spaces would be unavailable for approximately 6 hours per day. With Options 2a and 2b some parking spaces would remain depending upon the detailed design adopted. Surveys have been undertaken of the King Street car park where typically there are sufficient spaces during the day and in the evening to accommodate the displaced parking from on-street. However these spaces are charged, at a cost of 60p for 1 hour/ £1.00 for 2 hours.

4.6 Appearance of Street

This is a very subjective comparator. However the existing situation is of a congested street constructed of poor quality surfaces and full of parked cars. It is difficult to appreciate the fine architecture of many of the buildings or see many of the shops.

With all the options it is the considered opinion of the working group that the appearance of the street will be improved. The street will look less congested and less dominated by

vehicles. Given the limited time periods proposed in Option 1 for it being pedestrian only, it is considered that the street will be vibrant at these times given the number of pedestrians and the potential use of the street space by certain of the occupiers. For Options 2a and 2b it is again considered the street will look vibrant but less dominated by vehicles even though they can pass along the street.

4.7 Safety

The existing safety record of the street as determined from reported personal injury accidents is good, with few accidents. There is however a *perception* by users that it is unsafe. A recent survey as part of a university project found that over 2/3rds of people using the street ranked safety as being poor or very poor.

Safety on King Street should improve with Option 1, being identical for approximately 18 hours per day, but with no accidents due to the segregation for the other 6 hours. However accidents could increase on the streets where traffic is displaced to. Indeed during the consultation process safety of the road alongside Moorside Road which could be used as an alternative route was a recurring concern.

With Option 2a, the improved provision of footways will remove the need for pedestrians in the roadway if simply walking along the street. Visibility will also be improved with the removal of a number of parked cars. These benefits could be partially offset by potentially higher vehicle speeds. Parked vehicles at the moment restrict the available road width and slow vehicles. On balance it is considered safety should if anything improve in comparison with the existing situation.

With Option 2b, the nature of the shared space design should slow speeds and make drivers more aware of pedestrians, improving visibility between pedestrians and vehicles. It is difficult to determine how shared space surfaces in particular streets will perform in terms of safety. Well-designed schemes elsewhere have typically at least maintained the safety record of a street. Great care therefore needs to be taken in the design for such an option.

4.8 Cost

Option 1 could be a low cost scheme. The street could simply have a gate or bollards placed at the entry to prevent vehicle entry at certain times. The former Macclesfield Borough Council scheme for full Pedestrianisation had two costly elements, firstly footway works were to be undertaken to improve their width in certain areas and secondly property acquisition was proposed to enable a new connection to be made between the King Street car park and Egerton Square to provide an alternative route for diverted traffic. This latter item is no longer considered practical. These properties could not be compulsorily purchased given that realistic alternatives avoiding the need for their demolition are possible. A low cost version of Option 1 is possible but it is likely some monies will have to be spent elsewhere in the town to mitigate for the diverted traffic. However Option 1 would be a lower cost than either Option 2a or 2b.

Options 2a and 2b require considerable modifications to the kerb lines and surfacing of the street. Given the street is in a conservation area the materials to be used will have to be of high quality and hence costs will be high. It may well be that implementation of either of these options will have to be phased.

4.9 Impact of diverted traffic on neighbouring streets

Option 1 will require traffic to divert onto alternative routes. Surveys show that up to 300 vehicles per hour currently use King Street at times that it may be pedestrianised. As noted earlier, the previous Macclesfield Borough Council scheme for full pedestrianisation proposed a new section of highway from the King Street car park to Egerton Square parallel to King Street to minimise the impact of diverted traffic. Such a link is no longer considered

deliverable. The two alternative routes for the up to 300 vehicles per hour are either along Moorside and via Egerton Square or via Adams Hill and King Edward Road.

The route via Moorside and Egerton Square is wholly unsuited to accommodating this additional traffic. Egerton Square is a residential street with on-street resident parking; Moorside bisects the Moor with its busy children's playground, from the town centre.

In traffic terms the preferred alternative route is via Adams Hill and King Edward Road, however this is a congested route at peak times and many motorists may choose to use the highly unsuitable route along Moorside since it is likely to be quicker. It will be difficult to prevent increased use of this route without impacting on access to these areas. Option 1 therefore has a major impact on neighbouring streets.

Options 2a and 2b which maintain traffic along King Street should only have lesser impacts on neighbouring streets.

With Option 1 the preferred alternative route for traffic will be via Adams Hill, King Edward Road and via the Canute Square Roundabout. Traffic flows up Adams Hill could increase by over 10% in the early evening peak period. The additional traffic on these roads in the evening peak period will increase congestion the town centre. Options 2a and 2b should have limited impact on congestion levels elsewhere.

5. CONSULTATION

In this section we outline the consultation methods and events which have been undertaken, together with a summary of the results of the consultation. An extensive consultation process was undertaken including consultation events on three days, a traders meeting, a presentation at an annual town meeting and features in the local press. A detailed account of the consultation and of the detailed analysis is provided in **Appendix B**.

5.1 Questionnaires

Paper questionnaires were distributed at various events as listed in section 5.2 below. More were distributed pro-actively to increase the up-take especially from groups from whom it was important to obtain views, In particular, traders, businesses and employees in King Street.

On-line Questionnaires. Questionnaire could be completed by members of the public via a link on the Knutsford Town Plan website (www.knutsfordtownplan.org). . The on-line questionnaires were identical to the paper version.

5.2 Presentations and Meetings

Civic Centre display and briefings. On 27 April 2012 a full day and evening consultation event was held in the Civic Centre. This was manned at all times and included four talks/discussion sessions. 223 people signed in as attendees. When the display closed 167 questionnaires had been completed and handed-in. On the same evening, questionnaires began to be completed on-line via the Town Plan website.

On-Street Events. To widen the consultation and gains the users of the street and the views of visitors to the town, two on street consultation events were held. Firstly on May Day a stall was manned (10am- 2pm) on Silk Mill Street with an associated exhibition within the Market Hall

Secondly a stall was taken on King Street during the Lions Day event on the 4th June.

Meeting with traders and business people. In mid-April, a member of the Town Plan Working Group hand-delivered more than a hundred letters and questionnaires to shops and businesses in King Street informing them about the forthcoming King Street Improvement survey. By early June, 49 Knutsford businesses and traders had completed questionnaires.

The Town Centre Working Group wished to ensure that traders had the best possible opportunity to get involved and so arranged a special meeting in the Jubilee Hall on the evening of 19th June. About 80 traders were personally notified and invited to attend by a King Street businessman. 20 traders attended the special meeting as did the CEC Knutsford Town Manager. They were invited to complete the Town Plan questionnaire at the end of the meeting. One did so. Two said they had already completed questionnaires. During the following week, only two more business people submitted completed questionnaires.

By the end of the consultation, 33 traders and 28 business people had completed the survey.

5.3 Response to questionnaire

The total number of questionnaires completed was 571.

A total of 494 questionnaires were completed on paper. A further 77 were completed on-line.

Our analyst transposed all questionnaires (whether 'paper' or on-line) into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and each was checked for validity. Key results of the analysis are provided below. A more comprehensive analysis is provided in Appendix B.

5.4 Analysis of Survey Results

Question No. 1 – Do you agree that improvements are necessary to provide greater priority for pedestrians on King Street?

Of the 571 survey respondents, 502 (88%) want to see improvements made to pedestrian priority in King Street. (See Table 5.1).

| Table 5.1 – All Survey Respondents | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Yes | No | Total |
| 502 | 69 | 571 |
| 88% | 12% | |

A breakdown of these responses by category of respondent is shown in Table 5.2. The average of all six categories is 88%. In all categories the majority want to see improvements. This is strongest amongst resident and visitors (90%) and at its lowest amongst the traders. However even then 70% of traders wish to see pedestrian improvements

| Table 5.2 - Percentages of respondents wanting pedestrian improvements in King Street, by category | | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----------|---------|------------|----------|---------|
| Residents | Visitors | Employees | Traders | Businesses | Disabled | Average |
| 90% | 90% | 91% | 70% | 75% | 84% | 88% |

Question No 2 – Which Option do you prefer? Please rank in order of preference: 1, 2, 3 (1 being best).

All Survey Respondents (571 people).

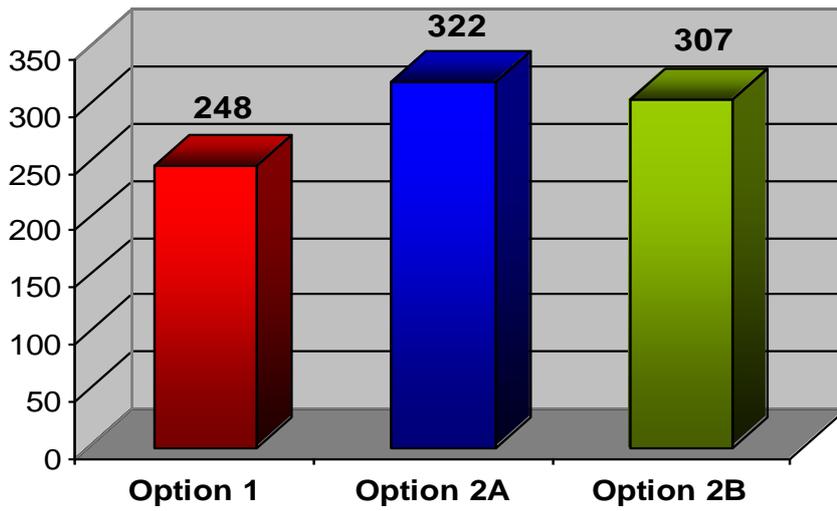
Table 5.3 shows the preferred choice of for the options put forward by the group for improving King Street. Option 1, 2a or 2b. The number of 1st preferences for Option 1 and Option 2b (two very different, virtually opposite, concepts) were almost equal each with 37% of the total. Option 2a was the preferred choice with 26% of respondents.

No single option was the choice of the majority of respondents and improving pedestrian priority on King Street will clearly require compromises. Hence peoples' 2nd choice has also been considered in the evaluation. The 1st and 2nd Option preferences were added to identify which of the three Options (1, 2a and 2b) gained the most 1st and 2nd preference votes overall. Results are shown in Table 5.3 and Figure 5.1. Interestingly Option 2a was the second choice of the majority of respondents. It is effectively the compromise option, pedestrianisation and shared space polarising opinion. When 1st and 2nd preferences are totalled Option 2A is marginally the most popular option, again however with 37%, with Option 2B at 35%.

Table 5.3 - Option Preferences of all Survey Respondents

| Option 1 | Option 2A | Option 2B | Preferences |
|----------|-----------|-----------|--|
| 187 | 129 | 188 | 1st choice |
| 61 | 193 | 119 | 2nd choice |
| 173 | 80 | 101 | 3 rd choice |
| 248 | 322 | 307 | 1 st + 2 nd choice |
| 43.4% | 56.4% | 53.8% | |

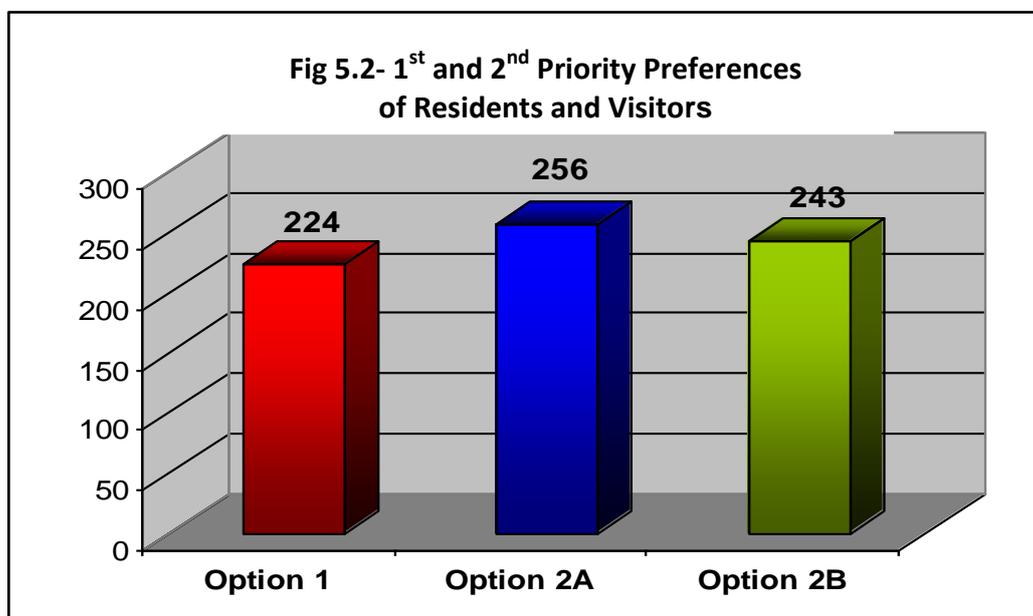
Figure 5.1: 1st and 2nd Priority Preferences by all respondents



Knutsford Residents and Visitors (425 people).

Subsequent Tables and Figures examine and compare the preferences of individual categories of respondents. The first examines responses by local residents and visitors to Knutsford. These can be viewed as typical shoppers and customers of King Street retail traders, restaurants and other businesses. Table 5.4 and Figure 5.2 show the preferred choice of option and the combined 1st and 2nd choices of this category.

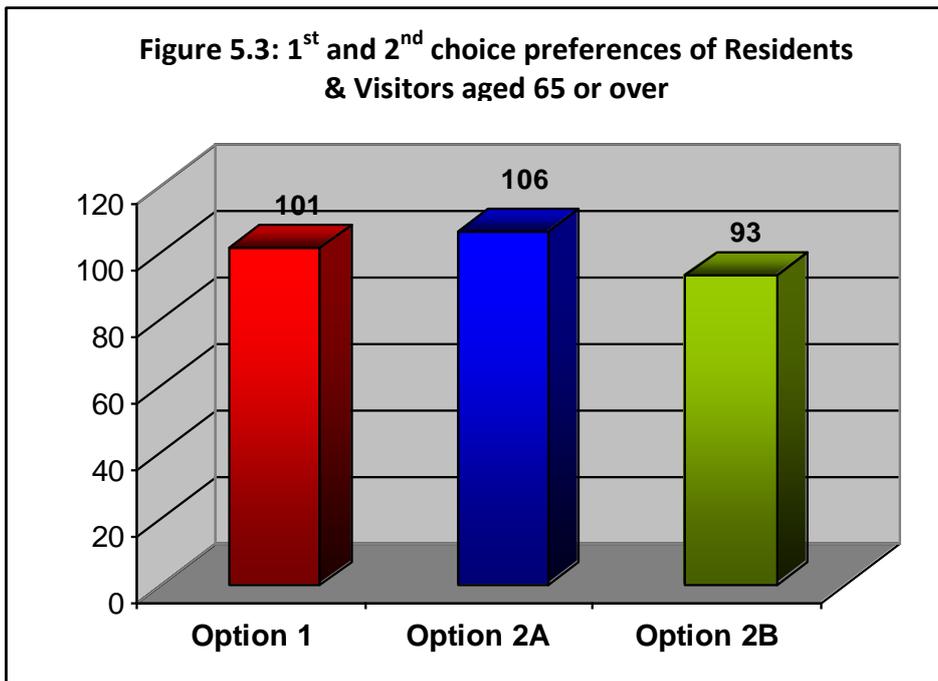
| Table 5.4 - 1st & 2nd Option Preferences of Residents and Visitors | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|---|
| Option 1 | Option 2A | Option 2B | Preferences |
| 169 | 106 | 145 | 1st choice |
| 55 | 150 | 98 | 2nd choice |
| 224 | 256 | 243 | 1 st +2 nd choice |
| 52.7% | 60.2% | 57.2% | |



Residents and Visitors aged 65 years and over (185 people)

Table 5.5 and Figure 5.3 show the Option preferences of residents and visitors aged 65 years and over. Option 1 is the most popular. When 1st and 2nd preference votes are added, Option 2a becomes the more popular choice, gaining 57.3% of the sample size.

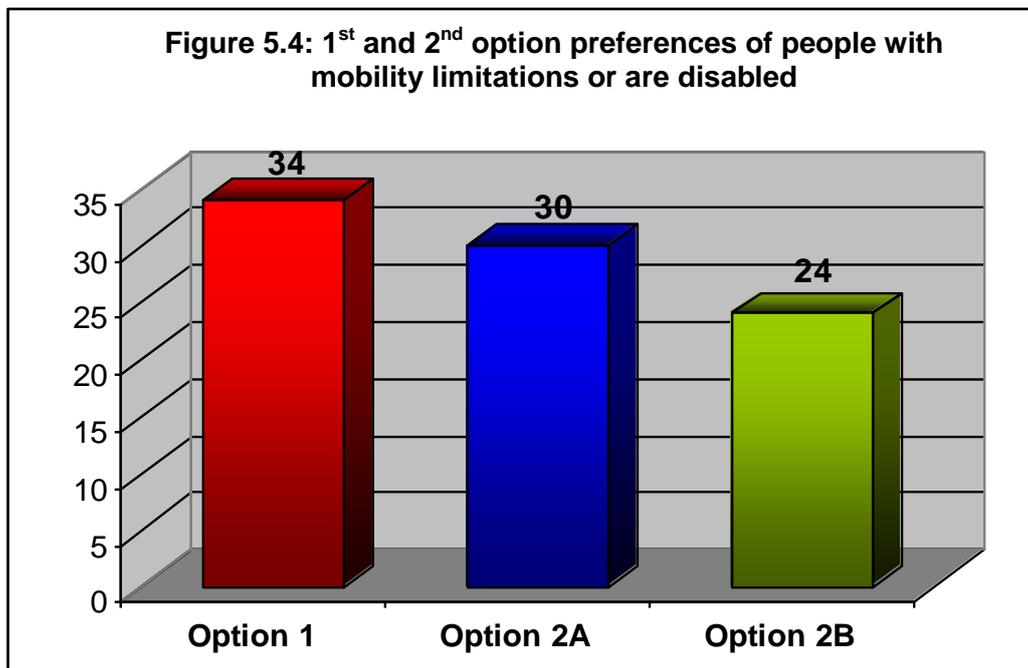
| Table 5.5 - 1st & 2nd Option Preferences of Resident & Visitors Aged 65+ | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Option 1 | Option 2A | Option 2B | Preferences |
| 81 | 42 | 62 | 1st choice |
| 20 | 64 | 31 | 2nd choice |
| 101 | 106 | 93 | 1st+ 2nd choice |
| 54.6% | 57.3% | 50.3% | |



People with Mobility Impairments or other Disabilities (60 people).

Table 5.6 and Figure 5.4 show results for people with walking difficulties, other mobility impairments or who are disabled, blind or deaf. As with the over 65s, Option 1 is the most popular 1st preference. When 1st and 2nd choice preferences for Option 1 are added, its popularity increases from 36.6% to 56.7%

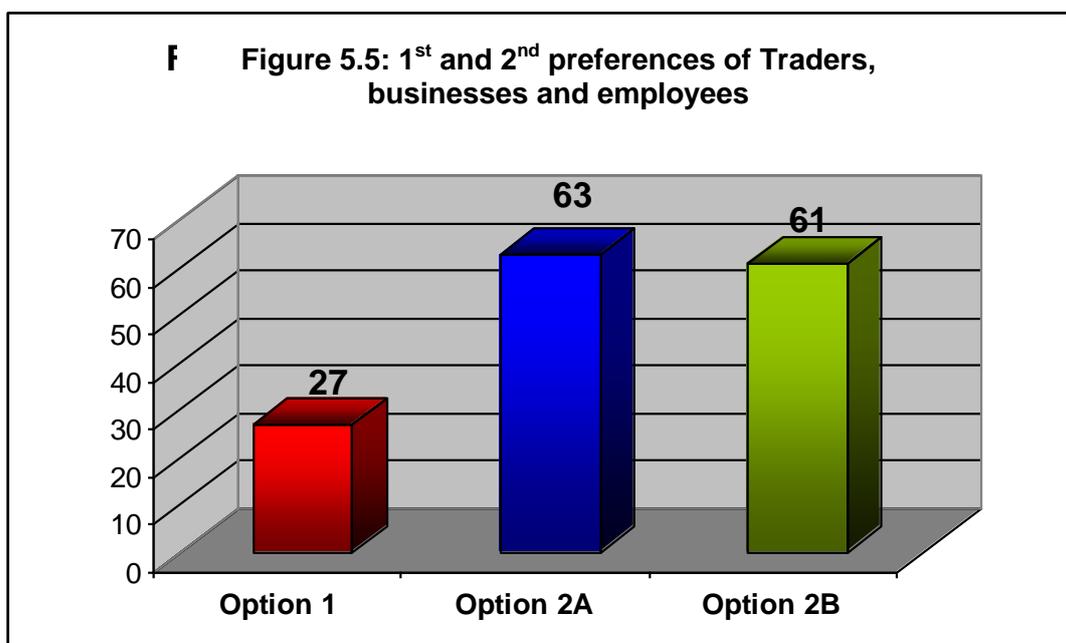
| Table 5.6 - 1st & 2nd Option Preferences of 60 People with Mobility Limitations or are Disabled | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|--|
| Option 1 | Option 2A | Option 2B | Preferences |
| 22 | 16 | 15 | 1st choice |
| 12 | 14 | 9 | 2nd choice |
| 34 | 30 | 24 | 1 st + 2 nd choice |
| 56.7% | 50% | 40% | |



Traders, Business people & Employees (94 people).

Table 5.7 and Figure 5.5 show that, when both 1st and 2nd choices are summed, the order of Option preferences of the 61 Traders and Business people, together with the 33 Employees, puts Option 2A just ahead of Option 2B. Option 1 (Timed Pedestrianisation) is by far the least popular Option. Option 2A gains a majority vote (67%) marginally higher than Option 2B (65%).

| Table 5.7 - 1st & 2nd Option Preferences of 94 Traders, Businesses & Employees | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|--|
| Option 1 | Option 2A | Option 2B | Preferences |
| 19 | 22 | 41 | 1st choice |
| 8 | 41 | 20 | 2nd choice |
| 27 | 63 | 61 | 1 st + 2 nd choice |
| 29% | 67% | 65% | |



Summary of analysis of option preferences.

To summarise the results on people's preferences for an improvement option; Options 1 and 2b were the most popular, with effectively the same number choosing each. However even the most popular option 2b was chosen by only 37% of respondents. Hence respondent's second choice is important if a compromise gaining majority support is to be achieved.

Table 5.8 below summarises the data for respondent's 1st & 2nd preference of option. Although Option 2a was the least popular first choice option, Options 1 and 2b divide opinion. Option 2a is effectively a compromise solution since it is generally the second choice of the majority of respondents. When 1st and 2nd choices are combined it is the most popular option although Option 2b is close when all respondents are considered. However amongst certain important user groups such as those over 65 (which will be an increasing proportion of the population in the future) the difference is greater.

Option 1 is the least popular option when 1st and 2nd choices are combined. Although it is the most popular option for the mobility impaired or disabled category. Option 1 is unpopular with the traders and business community category.

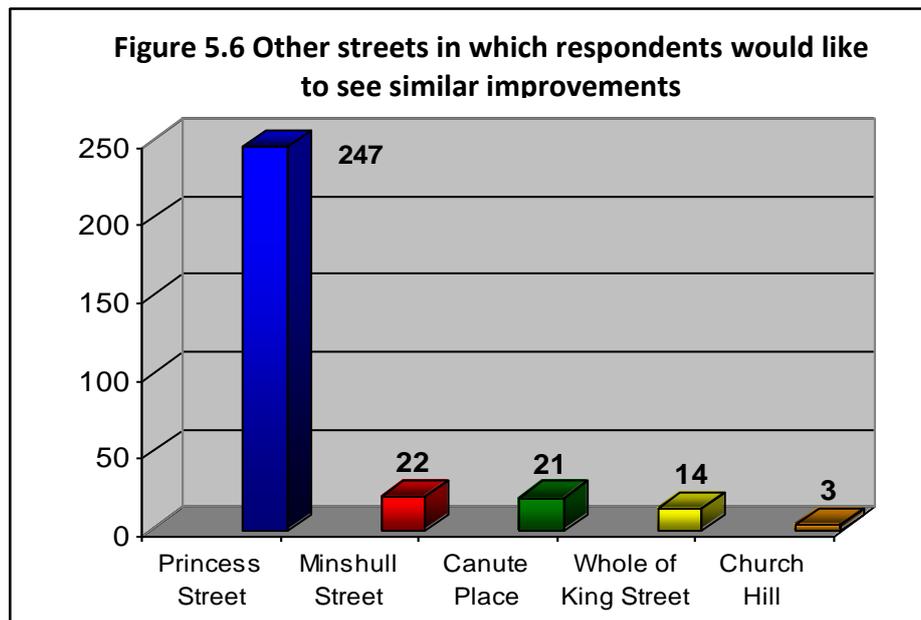
| Table 5.8 - Overview of the Percentage Combined 1st & 2nd Option Preferences of different Categories of people & Overall | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| | Option 1 | Option 2a | Option 2b |
| Residents & Visitors all ages | 52.70% | 60.20% | 57.20% |
| Residents & Visitors age 65+ | 54.60% | 57.30% | 50.30% |
| Mobility Impaired or Disabled | 56.70% | 50.00% | 40.00% |
| Retail Traders & Business people | 26.60% | 65.60% | 65.60% |
| Mean of all 571 Respondents | 43.40% | 56.40% | 53.80% |

Question No 3 – If changes to King Street prove to be worthwhile, would you like to see similar changes in other parts of the town centre?

In Question 3 respondents were able to tick 'Yes' or 'No' in answer to the above question and could also name any streets they had in mind for similar improvements. Table 5.9 shows that 58% of 571 respondents would like to see similar improvements to other streets, 35% do not wish to see such changes.

| Table 5.9 - Would you like changes to other streets? | | |
|---|-----------|-------------------|
| Yes | No | Don't Know |
| 331 | 202 | 38 |
| 58% | 35% | 7% |

Figure 5.6 show the street names selected for possible future improvement. Princess Street was selected for improvement by 43% of respondents. Two other streets, Minshull Street and Canute Place were nominated by 22 and 21 respondents, respectively, while 14 suggest that the whole of King Street should be improved rather than just between Church Hill and Old Market Place.



Further analysis of the data by Age group and Category of Respondent is provided in Appendix B.

5.5 Summary of the Individual Public Comments Received via the Questionnaire

The public were invited to write their own comments on Options 1, 2a and 2b, and other associated concerns. 207 comments were made and these are presented as a compilation in Annex 1 to Appendix 'B'.

These comments are summarised below

- 1) Attention should focus on lowering the risk of accidents to pedestrians, especially children, elderly people with mobility impairments, and people with acute deafness or seriously impaired sight. (Annex 1 items 25 to 50)
- 2) There is a strong community desire that the design and construction of pedestrian access improvements should feature pavement widening and roadway improvements using good quality materials that are in sympathy with and will retain the individuality and historic character of today's King Street (see items 9 to 23 and 164 to 173 in Annex 1 to Appendix 'B').
- 3) There is also a strongly expressed community desire that changes to King Street should not transform it into a clone of other modernised Cheshire town streets (see Annex 1 to Appendix 'B', especially items 9 to 23).
- 4) Uneven pavement surfaces, narrow widths and the consequent closeness of pedestrians to passing vehicular traffic badly affect many with wheelchairs and electric scooters, those with seriously impaired sight or hearing, and elderly people with mobility problems, as well as parents with young children (Annex 1 items 25 to 50, 89 to 141 and 164 to 173).
- 5) A Speed Limit of 20 mph should be enforced in King Street. (Annex 1 Items 177 to 204).
- 6) Traffic should be slowed by constructing raised traffic calming surfaces across the road at intervals along the length of King Street. These can double as pedestrian crossing places (Annex 1).
- 7) To reduce traffic congestion, an appropriate Maximum Gross Weight Limit on Heavy Goods Vehicles should be enforced within King Street (Annex 1 items 205 to 207).
- 8) Ways should be found to discourage the type of 'through traffic' that simply uses King Street as a 'rat-run' in peak periods (Annex 1 items 24 and 188 to 204).
- 9) Free parking spaces should be retained in King Street to the maximum extent possible except where other pedestrian access improvements make this impossible. Additional parking spaces should be sought elsewhere in the street and parking time limits reviewed to maximise shopping opportunities and trade (Annex 1 items 142 to 163).
- 10) Parking charges in Knutsford town centre car parks need to be reviewed (Annex 1 items 142 to 163).

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section we present some key conclusions, drawing together the results of the consultation, together with the comments received and the technical analysis.

6.1 Conclusions

The issue of pedestrian priority on King Street remains an important one for the residents of Knutsford and the businesses on the Street, as demonstrated by the weight of comment on the original Town Plan Survey and the responses to this current consultation.

There is a delicate balance to be achieved in any enhancement proposals for King Street. The balance essentially is between creating a more pleasant and safe experience for pedestrians; ensuring that any changes improve trading and footfall; whilst caring for the character and environment of the street.

The current consultation has reached a significant number of residents and interest groups through bespoke exhibitions and meetings, as well as through attendance at existing Knutsford public events. In addition two letter-drops have been posted to traders and businesses on King Street.

The number of responses to the Questionnaire is statistically significant - 494 handwritten and 77 on line responses.

90% of residents and visitors; and between 70 and 75 % of traders and businesses, agree that improvements are needed to King Street

Our overall consultation response shows, by a factor of more than 2 to 1, that Option 2 Increased Pedestrian Priority (629 responses) was preferable to that of Option 1 Timed Pedestrianisation (248 responses)

Within Option 2 there was an even balance between those who preferred Option 2a Increased Pavement Widths (322 responses) and Option 2b Shared Space (307 responses)

There are variations in preference between different groups.

For mobility impaired people there was a slightly greater preference for Option 1.

For business and traders there was a very strong preference for Option 2 (124) over Option 1 (27)

Consultation responses and comments received suggest it would be prudent to consider the whole of King Street when designing the scheme to ensure there is consistency of approach and proper consideration of access and parking issues. However it is clear that the central section should be implemented as soon as possible as Phase One.

6.2 Recommendations

Our technical analysis, together with the results of the consultation, leads the Knutsford Town Plan Town Centre Working Group to recommend that:

- The original 2004 Local Plan policy to pedestrianise the street with service roads; and the Knutsford Town Plan Proposal recommending pedestrianisation should be withdrawn.
- The development of a 'New Plan' for King Street enhancements should be pursued vigorously by the Knutsford Town and Cheshire East Councils.
- The New Plan to be based upon 'Increased Pedestrian Priority' in which a range of options including widened footways or 'shared surface' concepts should be implemented depending upon the location, width and character of the street. Vehicular access should be maintained at all times.
- The Town Council should request that CEC seek funding to implement the scheme appointing officers and urban designers within the 2012/13 financial year.
- The project management team set up by CEC should include, in addition to its own officers, representatives from Knutsford Town Council, the Town Centre Working Group and King Street businesses.
- CEC designers should consider phased implementation and identify low cost elements that could be implemented in early years.
- CEC designers should consider looking at the whole of King Street for pedestrian priority measures, with the central section as the first phase. It should include a gateway feature into the street at Adams Hill as a key element of the improvements.