



# Local Sustainable Transport response to Covid-19: Detailed engagement and consultation response data for DENBIGH

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## Purpose of this report

This report aims to provide a detailed breakdown of data from representations received by key stakeholders and the community of Denbigh in respect to Denbighshire County Council's *Local Sustainable Transport Response to Covid-19 for Denbigh*

For the purpose of this report, representations made between 21<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020 are included.

## How the data has been collected

Data in this report is taken from:

- Representations made directly to the council by email, letter, telephone call or face-to-face meeting
- Representations made via e-petition (where closed and presented to the council)
- Representations made directly to the council via social media
- Representations made directly to the council via the County Conversation Portal (the Council's online engagement and consultation hub)

Other data which the council is aware of, but is unable to include for analysis includes:

- Comments made to the local or national press
- Representations made by community members to the town council, to county councillors, to Welsh Assembly Members (AMs) or to UK Members of Parliament (MPs). Note: it is expected that these elected representatives would provide their own response, which should be representative of any contact they have received from their local community.
- Comments made on social media channels not set up and/or not moderated by the Council, including local Facebook groups
- e-petitions which have been created but which have not been submitted to the Council for consideration

## Representations by elected representatives and other stakeholder groups

Between 21<sup>st</sup> June and 24<sup>th</sup> July, the Denbighshire County Council received representations from the following:

- Dr James Davies, Member of UK Parliament (MP)
- Ann Jones, Member of Senedd (MS)
- Denbigh Town Council

## Representations made by the community

- 3 emails
- 3 letters
- 44 responses on the separate 'Town Centre Recovery' survey
- 858 'Local Sustainable Transport Response to Covid-19' consultation survey responses

The Council wishes to note it is aware of (at least) one Facebook group called 'Denbigh Residents and Businesses against the proposed road changes' – however the group is currently listed as private and the Council is unable to obtain any data from nor interact with this group as a result.

The Council also wishes to note that it is aware of (at least) one e-petition which has been circulated widely on social media, opposing the proposals. At the time the consultation period drew to a close (26<sup>th</sup> July 2020), no e-petition had been submitted to the Council for consideration. Therefore, the contents of any such e-petition, if eventually intended for delivery to the Council, cannot be included in this consultation data report.

It will, therefore, be up to individual Member Area Groups (MAGs) and/or the Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment to consider separately the contents of any such e-petition should this be submitted to the Council prior to any discussions or decisions being made with regards to the proposals for Denbigh town centre.

## Welsh Language

Representations were received by language as follows:

- 13 representations were made in Welsh
- 898 representations were made in English

## Preliminary 'Town Centre Recovery' survey data

On 21<sup>st</sup> June 2020, the Council launched a survey for businesses and a survey for town centre visitors, intending to capture 'snapshot' of people's experiences in Denbigh and to highlight any concerns about returning to town centres after an extended period of 'lockdown'.

The surveys are ongoing and the council intends to continue to collect this data as new ways of accessing towns (such as social distancing) are likely to have an impact on the tourist season, as well as in winter when external factors such as inclement weather may have more of an affect. These surveys will be reported on separately on a quarterly basis (every 12 weeks from survey commencement) until further notice.

Some response data provided for the 'Town Centre Recovery' survey was clearly intended (evidenced by respondent comments) to be included in the Local Sustainable Transport Response to Covid-19 consultations.

Denbigh received 44 of these comments, and this comment will be included in the consultation summary in the next section of this report.

## Feedback from consultation stage

The consultation for the Local Sustainable Transport Response to Covid-19 for Denbigh ran from 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020 to 26<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

The consultations were hosted online on the Council's County Conversation Portal due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to coverage in the local press, the consultation was promoted on the Council's own website, on the Council's social media channels and in some local community-based Facebook groups not run by the Council.

## Social media and County Conversation Portal analytics

Between 9<sup>th</sup> July and 26<sup>th</sup> July, the Council's social media reach (the amount of times posts were seen) in regards to the consultations was as follows:

English Facebook posts: 6,535 total reach

English Twitter posts: 4,465 total reach

Welsh Facebook posts: 127 total reach

Welsh Twitter posts: 110 total reach

**Total across all social media:** 11,237 total reach

Google Analytics is used to track visits to the County Conversation Portal, and shows approximately **4,800 unique users** visited the County Conversation Portal during the consultation period over **6,900 sessions** (suggesting a number of users visited the site more than once in this period). Average time spent on the Portal per session was 4 minutes and 36 seconds.

This is approximately 4x the average number of visits per month (based on an average of 1,100 visits per month from January to June 2020).

Visitors to the County Conversation Portal downloaded the Denbigh proposal documents a total of 240 times, and 858 responses in total were received against the consultation specifically.

The Council understands that a direct link to the survey only may have been circulated widely on local social media forums, accounting for the higher number of people responding to the proposals than accessing them. The other three *Local Sustainable Transport Response to Covid-19* consultations each had a higher number of people accessing the proposals than responding to them (which is the Council's usual experience for consultations or similar engagement activities).

## Elected representative and partner/stakeholder feedback

**Denbigh Town Council** submitted an email to Denbighshire County Council dated 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The Town Council stated that they held a meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and held a vote on whether to support or oppose the proposals. The Town Council stated that the vote went in favour of supporting the proposals 5:3 with one abstention.

A copy of the Town Council's email is available in the appendices of this report. Further information about the Town Council's meeting may be available by contacting the Town Council directly.

**Dr James Davies MP** sent an email dated 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020, to express that he had received representations from residents and businesses and was generally **against** the proposals. The MP's response is included at the end of this report.

**Ann Jones MS** sent an email dated 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020, to express that she had received representations from residents and businesses and was generally **against** the proposals. The MS's response is included at the end of this report.

## Online response survey quantitative data

In total, the Council received 858 responses to online surveys on the County Conversation Portal in direct response to this consultation, and an additional 44 comments on the Council's separate *Town Centre Recovery* project, also being hosted on the County Conversation Portal at the same time as the *Local Sustainable Transport Response to Covid-19* consultation.

With regard to the specific consultation response survey, not all respondents answered all questions. The questions and a summary of the responses received continue on the next page of this report.

## About the proposals

This section of the online survey asked respondents to state to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements in regards to the proposals for Denbigh.

### 1. The proposal to widen pavements will make social distancing easier

825 respondents answered this question

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Strongly agree	111	13.45%
Somewhat agree	153	18.55%
Somewhat disagree	194	23.52%
Strongly disagree	356	43.15%
No opinion	11	1.33%

### 2. The proposal to create shared pedestrian/cycle paths will increase the numbers of people who choose to walk or cycle around town

809 respondents answered this question

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Strongly agree	116	14.34%
Somewhat agree	116	14.34%
Somewhat disagree	181	22.37%
Strongly disagree	385	47.59%
No opinion	11	1.36%

### 3. The proposal to support cafes, pubs and restaurants to introduce outside seating will make the town centre more welcoming

812 respondents answered this question

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Strongly agree	181	22.29%
Somewhat agree	185	22.78%
Somewhat disagree	170	20.94%
Strongly disagree	255	31.4%
No opinion	21	2.59%



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## 4. Relocating Denbigh Market to the High Street will make the town centre feel more welcoming

805 respondents answered this question

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Strongly agree	162	20.12%
Somewhat agree	162	20.12%
Somewhat disagree	195	24.22%
Strongly disagree	257	31.93%
No opinion	29	3.6%

## 5. Introducing a temporary one-way system to enable these changes is acceptable

803 respondents answered this question

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Strongly agree	81	10.09%
Somewhat agree	59	7.35%
Somewhat disagree	117	14.57%
Strongly disagree	521	64.88%
No opinion	25	3.11%

Overall, respondents seem to be largely **against** the proposed changes for Denbigh, with 79.45% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the proposals were an acceptable way to promote active travel and to ensure that social distancing can be maintained.

There does appear to be limited support for promoting café culture (45.07% of respondents) in the town and for possibly re-locating the Market (40.24% of respondents) to the High Street.

### Reasons to visit Denbigh Town Centre

This section asked respondents to think about which reasons commonly given to visit a town centre such as Denbigh were the most important to them.

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## 1. Going to work (such as in a shop, restaurant or café)

This question was answered by 730 respondents

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Very important	221	30.27%
Somewhat important	113	15.48%
Not that important	76	10.41%
Not at all important	76	10.41%
Not applicable	244	33.42%

## 2. Purchasing essential goods/services such as food or medical supplies

This question was answered by 780 respondents

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Very important	564	72.31%
Somewhat important	176	22.56%
Not that important	32	4.1%
Not at all important	4	0.51%
Not applicable	4	0.51%

## 3. Purchasing non-essential goods/services such as clothes, hobby/interest items

This question was answered by 749 respondents

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Very important	235	31.38%
Somewhat important	304	40.59%
Not that important	135	18.02%
Not at all important	55	7.34%
Not applicable	20	2.67%

## 4. Eating out or socialising

This question was answered by 757 respondents

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Very important	227	29.99%
Somewhat important	299	39.5%
Not that important	152	20.08%
Not at all important	59	7.79%
Not applicable	20	2.64%

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## 5. Spend time with friends or family

This question was answered by 749 respondents

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Very important	337	44.99%
Somewhat important	216	28.84%
Not that important	101	13.48%
Not at all important	54	7.21%
Not applicable	41	5.47%

## 6. Spending time outdoors

This question was answered by 741 respondents

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Very important	310	41.84%
Somewhat important	240	32.39%
Not that important	95	12.82%
Not at all important	57	7.69%
Not applicable	39	5.26%

The response data from this section suggests that visiting the town to carry out essential shopping activities is by far the most important reason for local respondents to visit Denbigh town centre, with 72.31% of respondents saying this was 'very important' to them. The next most important activity was to be able to spend time with friends and family, with 44.99% of respondents saying this was 'very important' to them.

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## How respondents travel to and access the town centre

This section asked respondents to decide which way they most commonly travelled into or accessed Denbigh town centre, and whether the proposed *Local Sustainable Transport Response to Covid-19* measures would change this at all.

### 1. Thinking about how you access the town centre, which of the following statements is applicable to you?

If you vary how you travel, please select the option that you feel is most relevant to you.

This question was answered by 790 respondents

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
I usually walk into the town centre	213	26.96%
I usually cycle into the town centre	10	1.27%
I usually drive and try to park on Vale Street and High Street	236	29.87%
I usually drive and use a nearby car park	311	39.37%
I usually rely on public transport	20	2.53%

### 2. Do you think the proposed changes will have any effect on this?

This question was answered by 778 respondents

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents (nearest whole %)
Yes	516	66.32%
No	262	33.68%

The response data indicates there is a strong preference for being able to drive into Denbigh town centre, even for local journeys, with 69.24% of respondents preferring to drive and either parking on Vale Street/High Street or looking for a nearby car park.

To understand the types of journeys being made, the answers provided by respondents who also provided their address data were input into a custom Google MyMap.

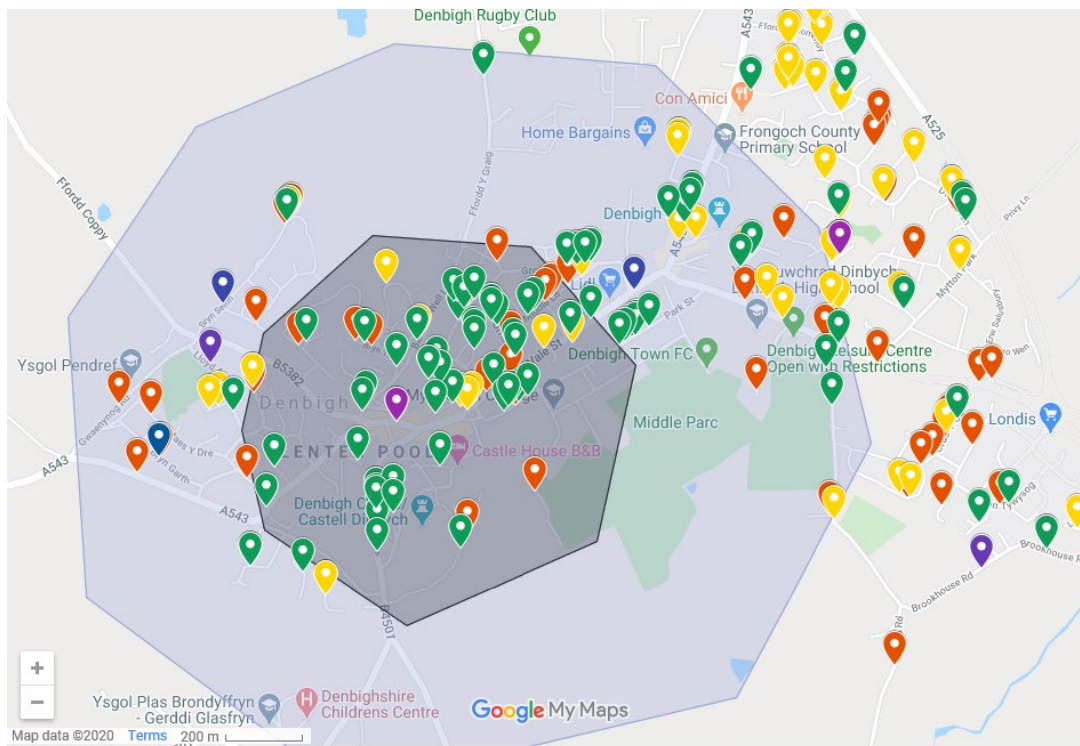
# Local Sustainable Transport response to Covid-19: Stakeholder and community engagement report for DENBIGH

The Google MyMap includes data from 289 respondents. Of these, 66.43% of respondents said they preferred to drive into the town centre.

Of those who preferred to drive, 14.58% of respondents were making journeys of less than 500 metres (equivalent to a 15 minute walk at a speed 2kmph), and a further 17.70% of respondents were making journeys of less than 1 kilometre (equivalent to a 30 minute walk at a speed of 2kmph). This means that 32.28% of journeys, or roughly one in every three made by car to Denbigh town centre, are from less than 1 kilometre away from the High Street.

Of those who preferred to walk, 18.6% of respondents were walking for longer than 1km (or longer than half an hour, assuming a walking speed of 2kmph).

A screenshot of the Google MyMap, centred around Denbigh High Street, is below:



**KEY:** Red pins – respondents who drive and park on High Street/Vale Street (96 total)  
Yellow pins – respondents who drive and park in a car park (96 total)  
Green pins – respondents who walk (86 total)  
Blue pins – respondents who use public transport (8 total)  
Purple pins – respondents who cycle (3 total)

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The Google Map can be viewed via the following link:

Link to [Google MyMap showing respondents' preferred means of travelling to Denbigh Town Centre](#)

## Comments on the proposals

In addition to being able to answer multiple choice comments on the consultation survey, respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments explaining the reasons for their views.

In explaining their general views on the proposals, the respondents were able to leave comments. In total, 675 respondents chose to leave a comment on this first section of the consultation survey, in addition to 44 respondents who left comments on the Council's separate *Town Centre Recovery* project, which are included in this section for analysis. Several comments expressed opinions on more than one matter. The comments have been split and summarised as positive or negative statements on the next page.

The Council respects everyone's rights to their own opinions, whether these are positive or negative, however the Council wishes to note that it has a 'zero tolerance' policy on the following types of comments as part of its Customer Service Standards:

- Abuse directed at individuals or organisations
- Comments which are defamatory or libellous with regards to individuals involved with (or perceived to be involved with) the proposals
- Comments which contain foul language.

14 of the 719 comments left were withdrawn from consideration by the Council because they violated the 'zero tolerance policy' in one of the above-listed ways. The multiple choice element of these respondents' representations will still be included where applicable.

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Positive comments were expressed as follows:

Positive comment theme	Number of mentions
Generally supportive of the proposals	47
Supportive of promoting 'café culture' in town centre	22
Supportive of proposal to promote and encourage active travel	21
Supportive of proposal to re-locate market to High Street	15
Supportive of proposal to introduce 20mph speed limit along Park Street, Beacon's Hill and Grove Road	12
Supportive of one-way system element of proposal	6
Supportive of reduction in pollution on Vale Street/High Street	6
Supportive of measures to reduce reliance on cars to travel around Denbigh	6
Support proposals to promote social distancing	4
Supportive of prioritisation for pedestrians over vehicles in some areas	3
Support 'greening' the town (e.g. planters/trees)	2
Support reduction of traffic to Vale Street	2

A number of respondents, whether agreeing or disagreeing with the scheme, also took the opportunity to make (generally) positive suggestions for alternative methods to assist in promoting local sustainable transport or assisting in the recovery of Denbigh Town Centre.

These suggestions are summarised as follows:

Suggestion	Number of mentions
Introduce a one-way system on the pavements as an alternative to a one-way system on the road(s)	42
Look at active travel routes in other areas, for example Denbigh/Henllan, Denbigh/Rhewl, Denbigh/St Asaph	27
Reduce or make parking free in town centre	22
Introduce roundabout or other junction improvements at Station Road retail park (Aldi area)	14
Close/pedestrianise the High Street on Market Day only	8
Re-locate or remove the bus stops at the top of the High Street	6
Introduce traffic calming measures on through routes which are residential	6
Re-locate the Market to Back Row, or one of the car parks such as Crown Lane or Factory Ward	5
Have the one-way system running down the hill on Vale Street rather than up	3
Create additional pedestrian crossings on Vale Street	1
Install the one-way system, but to create extra parking bays rather than to widen the pavements	1
Make the pavements narrower to create additional parking bays	1

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A number of comments against the proposals were expressed as follows:

Negative comment theme	Number of mentions
Generally against the proposals	244
Concerns about volume of traffic on alternative 'down' routes (Park Street, Beacon's Hill and Grove Road)	154
Concern about width of roads on alternative 'down' routes	103
Concerns for resident safety on alternative 'down' routes and 'cut through' / rat running routes	71
Concerns that the proposals could lead to an increase in road traffic collisions (RTCs) at junctions or an increase in speeding on one-way roads	52
Concerns about impact on emergency service response times or municipal services (e.g. refuse collections)	48
Concerns about town centre access for disabled, elderly or otherwise car-dependent shoppers	34
Concerns about the loss of on-street parking	32
Concerns about access for businesses and issues with loading/unloading deliveries	26
Concerns about 'café culture' being messy/cluttered or antisocial	19
Concerns about impact on access to town via public transport	14
Concerns about air pollution on alternative 'down' routes	14
Concerns about noise pollution on alternative 'down' routes	10
Concerns that proposals will make access difficult for through traffic from Denbigh Moors (Groes/Bylchau etc) and from Henllan	10
Concerns that proposals will increase some journey times by car	5
Dislike the idea of promoting active travel	2

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In explaining their reasons for visiting Denbigh town centre, 294 respondents chose to leave a comment. Some respondents provided more than one reason why they visit the town centre. Their reasons are summarised below:

Reason(s) for visiting	Number of mentions
Visit shops and other services e.g. hairdressers	98
No clear reason given, additional negative comments against the proposed scheme or about the current layout/offer of shops/services in Denbigh Town Centre	82
Visit to access healthcare services e.g. doctor/dentist/pharmacy	43
Visit Post Office or bank	33
Visit Library and One Stop Shop	32
Socialising (meeting up with family/friends)	26
Work or volunteer in town centre	23
Visit pubs/cafes/restaurants/takeaways	23
Resident in the town centre	23
No clear reason give, additional positive comments in favour of proposed scheme or about the current layout/offer of shops/services in Denbigh Town Centre	15
Free parking bays are available on Vale Street / High Street	12
For exercise / to walk the dog	11
Denbigh is a nice place to spend time / historical / pretty town	11
To visit the Castle	6
Use Denbigh as a through-route to elsewhere	5
To attend events (e.g. Boxing Day, Plum Festival, Carnival)	2

**NOTE:** a total of 1 comment was withdrawn from this section because it violated the Council's zero tolerance policy on abuse ([see previous explanation](#))

31 comments in this section also related to how respondents accessed the town centre. These have been included in the next section, which asked respondents about whether the proposals would affect their access.

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In explaining whether they felt the proposals for Denbigh would impact how they travelled to/around the town centre, 343 respondents chose to leave a comment.

Some respondents commented about more than one issue. These have been grouped and are summarised below:

Impact on access	Number of mentions
Would not visit the town centre if changes go ahead (no additional reason provided)	87
Would generally find changes inconvenient	48
General negative comments about the proposals for Denbigh	46
Parking would be more difficult	41
Proposals would lead to increased journey times	41
Would feel less safe in town if proposed changes went ahead	30
Unable to park anywhere other than (or expressed a very strong preference for parking on) Vale Street / High Street / Love Lane	27
Felt that disabled / elderly / limited mobility access would be worse as a result of proposed changes	25
Would like free or cheaper parking	25
Concerns that proposed changes would make pedestrian access less safe on residential routes (e.g. Barker's Well, Park Street, Grove Road)	23
Would like to see an increase in on-street parking availability in Vale Street / High Street	22
Would not like to lose the ability to drive in 'loops' (either behind Denbigh Library and back to Lenten Pool, or up Love Lane and back down Smithfield Road) to look for on-street parking in High Street and Love Lane	18
No impact on access	18
Would walk or cycle more often	15
Would like to see additional active travel infrastructure between Denbigh and outlying villages (e.g. Henllan, Rhewl)	9
Would drive more as would feel less safe to walk	9
Concern about negative impact on businesses e.g. loading/unloading, congestion	8
Additional positive comments in favour of proposals	7
Additional comments in support of active travel objectives	5
Feel they would have to move out of proposed one-way area / out of Denbigh if changes go ahead	4
Concerned about negative impact on public transport routes	3
Would like High Street bus stops to be removed to create additional on-street parking	2
Concerns about increased travelling costs	1

**NOTE:** a total of 8 comments were withdrawn from this section because they violated the Council's zero tolerance policy on abuse ([see previous explanation](#))

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# Local Sustainable Transport response to Covid-19: Stakeholder and community engagement report for DENBIGH

As evidenced by the fact that over 2 out of 3 journeys made into Denbigh town centre are made with a car, parking is an important issue amongst respondents. Parking issues had 135 specific mentions in respondent comments for this section, with other concerns around access which are likely to be related to parking (such as access for elderly/disabled or less mobile town centre visitors) remaining an important theme throughout respondents' comments.

## Response summary

Overall, respondents for Denbigh can be considered generally against the proposals or some modified form of them, with 79.45% of respondents on the consultation survey either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the introduction of a temporary one-way system to facilitate pavement widening on Vale Street / High Street would be an acceptable temporary change for the town.

The primary reasons given for these objections by respondents include the suitability of alternative routes to cope with the volume and type of downhill traffic currently absorbed by Denbigh High Street, and concerns around the impact on being able to 'pop and shop' – particularly amongst respondents who prefer to drive in. Concerns about rat-running on smaller side roads at peak times were expressed, as were concerns about the potential impact of the scheme on emergency service response times.

With respect to the Welsh Government's wish to promote social distancing, this was not brought up by many respondents, and a number of respondents referenced that Denbigh was 'too quiet' for this to be an issue.

With respect to enabling the creation of safe outside 'dwell' spaces through introducing an element of 'café culture' to the town or by relocating the market, there does appear to be some limited appetite for this, with slightly over 40-45% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that this might be a good idea (compared with 55-60% of respondents who disagreed, and 0-5% who had no opinion).

With respect to the Welsh Government's wish to promote active travel in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a very small appetite (approx. 3% of respondent comments) for active travel in/around Denbigh but based on respondent comments this would largely

appear to relate to a desire for active travel infrastructure between Denbigh and outlying villages such as Henllan and Rhewl, rather than within Denbigh town centre itself.

From respondents who live in Denbigh, there seems to be a strong preference for use of the car (or similar personal motor vehicle) as a means of getting around, with over two thirds of respondents stating they preferred to drive into the town centre. A number of comments referenced a desire to increase rather than decrease parking infrastructure in response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and to increase Denbigh's profile as a 'pop and shop' town.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Representation from Denbigh Town Council

**From:** Jenny <[townclerk@denbightowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@denbightowncouncil.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 16 July 2020 09:52  
**To:** Ben Wilcox-Jones <[Ben.Wilcox-Jones@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:Ben.Wilcox-Jones@denbighshire.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Denbigh Covid-19 Sustainable Transport grant schemes

Good morning Ben,

Following on from last night's meeting, I can confirm that the vote went in favour of the transport scheme 5:3 with one abstaining.

The town councillors requested a copy of the results of the consultation once the consultation period has come to an end.

Concerns were raised regarding the proposed new location of the bus stop on Station Road by the theatre, needs to be at a safer location.

The town councillors may respond to the consultation personally.

If you require any further details, please let me know.

Kind regards Jenny

Jenny Barlow  
Clerc y Dref a Swyddog Cyllid / Town Clerk and Finance Officer  
Cyngor Tref Dinbych / Denbigh Town Council  
Neuadd y Dref, Lon Crown, DINBYCH, Sir Ddinbych  
Town Hall, Crown Lane, DENBIGH, Denbighshire  
LL16 3TB  
Tel: 01745 815984  
e-mail: [townclerk@denbightowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@denbightowncouncil.gov.uk).  
[www.denbightowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.denbightowncouncil.gov.uk).

Mae'r wybodaeth a gynhwysir yn yr e-bost hwn ac unrhyw ffeiliau a drosglwyddir gydag o wedi eu bwriadu yn unig ar gyfer pwy bynnag y cyfeirir ef ato neu atynt. Os ydych wedi derbyn yr e-bost hwn drwy gamgymeriad, hysbyswch yr anfonwr ar unwaith os gwelwch yn dda.

Mae cynnwys yr e-bost yn cynrychioli barn yr unigolyn(ion) a enwir uchod ac nid yw o angenrheidiwydd yn cynrychioli barn Cyngor Tref Dinbych. Serch hynny, fel Corff Cyhoeddus, efallai y bydd angen i Gyngor Tref Dinbych ddatgelu'r e-bost hwn [neu unrhyw ymateb iddo] dan ddarpariaethau deddfwriaethol.

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## Appendix 2 – Representation from Dr James Davies, Member of Parliament (MP)



**Dr James Davies MP**

Member of Parliament for Vale of Clwyd/ Dyffryn Clwyd  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 4606  
Email: [james.davies.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:james.davies.mp@parliament.uk)

Judith Greenhalgh  
Chief Executive  
Denbighshire County Council  
County Hall  
Ruthin  
LL15 1YN

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020

Dear Judith,

**Local Sustainable Transport response to Covid-19 - Denbigh**

I am writing in strong opposition to the proposed “temporary” highway adaptations to Denbigh town centre, as detailed in the ‘Local Sustainable Transport response to Covid-19’ document. My understanding is that one-way arrangements and temporary bollards would be in place for a trial period of up to 18 months, with a possibility of the alterations becoming permanent beyond this. It is unclear how funding would be obtained to provide a suitably high-quality permanent scheme if the changes were to be retained.

Firstly, I am disappointed by the relatively short period of consultation, only available online, for residents and businesses, for a proposal that would hugely alter traffic management throughout the town centre and a number of neighbouring residential streets. It appears that little effort has been made to ensure those who may be most affected are aware of the proposals. I have received a number of emails from residents living on the affected streets who did not know about the proposals until they had received correspondence from me.

I am aware of an online petition which has been signed by over 1,000 people against the plans, and whilst I am aware it would be common practise for council to consider the petition as a single objection, I would appeal to you to acknowledge each individual signature and the strength of feeling generated by the proposals.

The vast majority of the scores of individuals who have contacted me on this matter are fervently against the proposals, which I feel are a short-sighted and hasty response to Welsh Government funding clearly aimed at larger, flat city centres rather than small, more rural towns such as Denbigh. I am opposed to public money being used simply because it is available rather than for the benefit of the local area, and this is a view that has been echoed by many.

I would strongly encourage the reassessment of the proposals from an economic perspective. I feel the current plans would be damaging to businesses, at a time when they have already faced more than enough challenges. It is well known that shoppers are more commonly attracted to retail offers that are easily accessible, where they can park nearby at low cost. These proposals would reduce the available on-street parking and reduce accessibility. The topography of Denbigh may also discourage shoppers from using businesses if they are unable to easily park nearby.

**Constituency Office:**

198 High Street, Prestatyn, Denbighshire, LL19 9BP  
01745 888920

Website: [www.jamesdaviesmp.co.uk](http://www.jamesdaviesmp.co.uk)



**Dr James Davies MP**

Member of Parliament for Vale of Clwyd/ Dyffryn Clwyd  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 4606  
Email: [james.davies.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:james.davies.mp@parliament.uk)

From an equality point of view, I am also extremely concerned that the reduction of on street parking does not take into account those who have reduced mobility. The new layout and increased street furniture will do little to support those partially sighted, the disabled, and parents with young children. There will also be a reduction in available bus stops, potentially increasing the reliance on cars and restricting access for those dependent on public transport.

Early data from the council's "Town Centre Recovery Survey" appears to illustrate little appetite for the introduction of the proposed measures. I note that '78% of local business respondents and 80% of local residents said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with how safe their town centre feels'. It is stated that 'nearly half of respondents who left a comment expressed concerns about the width of pavements and over 60% expressed concerns about social distancing'. I would ask for the number of respondents who have expressed these concerns to be published.

The council's data also suggests '80% of residents said they were visiting town centres to carry out essential tasks only, and 65% of businesses said they felt quieter than usual'. I would suggest this conclusion is skewed, as the date the survey was launched was prior to non-essential shops being able to reopen, when people were still being encouraged to stay within a 5-mile radius and only carry out essential journeys. Many high street businesses such as hairdressers or beauty salons etc. reopened even later and some remain closed.

The footfall of local High Streets rarely reaches a point at which it would be impossible to maintain social distancing requirements. In Denbigh town centre, while I agree there are a couple of pinch points, these are very much the exception rather than the rule.

In the main, the residents of Vale Street, High Street, Beacon's Hill, Grove Road, Barker's Well Lane and other neighbouring roads have voiced strong concerns regarding the proposals in relation to increased traffic and its speed; reduced access to properties and parking spaces; road and pedestrian safety threats; an increase in traffic noise; heavy goods vehicles and buses being forced to use smaller, residential side roads; limited access and blockages for emergency vehicles; queues and tailbacks at various junctions at times when the traffic volumes are higher; and delays caused by refuse vehicles.

Whilst I appreciate the prospect of grant funding from Welsh Government should never be overlooked, I would suggest that these grant terms are sadly more suited to the large urban centres of South Wales, and not the pedestrian and cycling realities of a hilly market town. I would encourage the council to contact Welsh Government to seek permission to use the funds in another way, perhaps to provide pedestrian and cycling links to the former North Wales Hospital site in readiness for its redevelopment. In the longer term, I would not necessarily oppose a quality and permanent scheme of road alterations in Denbigh town centre, but this would need to be fully consulted upon and command the support of businesses and residents. I am supportive of the green agenda and, as a doctor, certainly encourage walking and cycling, but the future priority of semi-rural areas will I feel be electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles and not the marginalisation of the motor car.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr James Davies MP**

**Constituency Office:**  
198 High Street, Prestatyn, Denbighshire, LL19 9BP  
01745 888920  
Website: [www.jamesdaviesmp.co.uk](http://www.jamesdaviesmp.co.uk)

## Appendix 3 – Representation from Ann Jones, Member of Senedd (MS)

### **Ann Jones MS Vale of Clwyd Response to Traffic Flow Denbigh Post Covid**

This response is submitted to the proposals announced by Denbighshire County Council to alter the traffic flow in Denbigh in light of the pandemic and the required social distancing that will still be in operation and for the need to see Denbigh Town Centre move to the new normal trading regime.

I feel these proposals have been hurriedly put together in an attempt to meet criteria announced by Welsh Government in May 2020 in response to the Covid pandemic and will not be given due scrutiny by residents in those communities as the consultation is of a short duration and only available to those who can access online services.

I believe the intention of the Welsh Government when offering this grant was to be able to look at schemes that had been approved or received approval from communities around the sustainable travel agenda and looking to reduce the number of cars on the roads and in town centres but had slipped in delivery and that these works should be able to have been carried out whilst there was fewer cars on the roads due to the lockdown restrictions and to provide an opportunity to ensure that town centres can start to return to trading and to allow for residents to have confidence to use local businesses.

This is certainly not the case in relation to this proposal as the proposed start date I understand is the 1st September when the schools are returning for the start of a new academic year and with the uncertainty around pupils returning to schools, it is likely that more parents will want to transport their children to their respective schools.

Turning to the proposals -

There are several mistakes in the proposals that give rise to confusion ; the written proposals refer to Barker's Well Lane yet the map clearly highlights Beacons Hill. Which is it? Removing the market from Hall Square to the Main Street where is Hall Square? Is it meant to be Crown Square?

These examples are given as they raise serious points that if authority staff cannot get locations right, how can residents accept what is being proposed as professional and these mistakes must set doubt in the minds of those who will have to live with the proposals if they go ahead.

I do not believe that these proposals will offer any real benefit either to those walking in the town centre or those who want to drive to Denbigh and then access the town centre. It would be far better to ensure that pavements are suitable for pedestrians in other areas such as Beacons Hill and certainly on Vale Street just past the short term car park.

Many of the roads in Denbigh where there are pavements do not allow for 2 people to pass safely (even without social distancing) and certainly is dangerous for anyone with a pram or a wheelchair, however, I believe that people will be sensible when coming across these locations.



**Ann Jones MS Vale of Clwyd  
Response to Traffic Flow Denbigh Post Covid**

To look at extending the width of pavements or even providing a cycle way would be better than re arranging the traffic flow totally to further extend pavements that are already sufficient in width and that will accommodate social distancing that may become the new normal way of operating. Certainly a portion of the pavements is on a split level in the town centre and that may allow for a one way system for pedestrians.

The centre of town already has a wide road that if redesigned may be able to allow for a dedicated cycle lane whilst still maintaining the two way traffic system rather than looking to make this a one way system. To look to seek to put much more traffic along Beacons Hill in both directions is quite dangerous and will lead to severe congestion and even the risk of accidents

Part of the criteria for awarding this funding was that an equality impact assessment must be done , can I ask where this is please and what was its outcome? What work has been done to ensure that persons with disabilities will not be at a disadvantage.

What work has been done with those organisations that assist in town centre planning to ensure there is total equality of access for all?.

What discussions if any have taken place with the emergency services on these proposals, I believe the proposals being offered by the authority may have unintended consequences for the emergency services, again as a result of a hasty approach.

Like many residents who have contacted me I believe these proposals are ill thought out, will not deliver the outcomes expected of the alterations and will not provide best use of scarce funding. The negative benefits for residents along Barker's Well Lane, Grove Road and Beacons Hill will be far greater than an positive benefits of a one way system.

The authority should also state whether these are temporary alterations or whether they will be permanent. There is great concern amongst the community that this is not clear. I note that the document refers to a period of 18 months but many have told me they have heard these changes are intended to become permanent. If the proposals are to form a permanent change then they must not be allowed to be carried out in their present form and certainly not without proper and meaningful scrutiny and should they be for the period of 18 months as stated to assist the return to activity in the town centre post Covid pandemic they should be revisited .

The authority could put the funding to better use than as put forward in this proposal , the continued policy to have shared spaces is not helpful and I would prefer to see a policy change to stop cycle/pedestrian spaces, these should be dedicated pedestrian areas where every pedestrian does not have to constantly worry about cyclists and also for pedestrians with reduced mobility, or have a hearing or sight impairment or other additional needs should not be sharing services with cyclists. Cyclists, too, need their own cycle lanes if we are to see more people using sustainable transport.

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Response to Traffic Flow Denbigh Post Covid**

Whilst there is a need to ensure that the economy can restart, the over reliance on a 'cafe pavement' scene is also problematic for those with impairment if there is to be more street furniture placed in pedestrian areas which will reduce freedom to walk without danger.

I also believe the market being moved will not bring the desired effect the proposals seem to suggest

In Summary :

- Ill thought out proposals that I believe will cause more issues than the present traffic flow and bring far more negative consequences for a group of residents affected by the proposed one way system
- The increasing of shared surfaces does not offer equality of access
- There should be a relook at where possible widening existing pavements to accommodate the required social distancing
- Revisit the cost of these proposals against the outcomes, is this value for money?
- Look to provide dedicated cycle lanes

I am disappointed with the way the Authority has sought to rush these proposals through and I believe it has damaged the reputation with many residents, I believe will be difficult to repair the damage caused and whatever future proposals may come forward I feel that the authority will struggle to persuade the community of any positive benefits.