

Report to	Denbigh Member Area Group (MAG), and Cllr Brian Jones, Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment
Date of meeting	Tuesday 25 th August 2020
Lead Member / Officer	Emlyn Jones, Head of Service for Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services
Report author	Public Engagement Officer; Senior Engineer – Road Safety and Sustainable Transportation
Title	Summary report of community, business and elected representative responses to the <i>Local Sustainable Transport Response to Covid-19 – Denbigh</i>

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. This report summarises the range of responses received from the local community, local businesses and elected representatives in respect to the *Local Sustainable Transport Response to Covid-19* consultations for the town of Denbigh.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To assist the members of Denbigh Member Area Group (MAG) and the Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment to understand the strength of feeling for/against the proposed temporary *Local Sustainable Transport Response to Covid-19* scheme by local residents, businesses and their elected representatives.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That the Denbigh MAG and Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment reads the engagement summary report and detailed engagement data report, and uses these responses as a key consideration in their decision-

making process alongside other available data (for example road sensor/traffic flow and footfall data) which can be used to inform the scheme.

- 3.2. That Denbigh MAG and the Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment ensure they are aware of the strength of feeling in the community and that they are aware of other media (such as physical protest signs, local press coverage etc) designed to highlight the community's feelings towards the proposed scheme
- 3.3. That the Denbigh MAG and the Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment ensure they are aware of the level of follow-up engagement required by the Council to ensure that the community of Denbigh is fully debriefed and knows what to expect next.

4. Report details

The consultation with the community of Denbigh received 911 responses directly. The Council is also aware of the existence of (at least) one e-petition with approximately 1,300 signatures and aware of a number of roadside signs objecting to the proposals.

Taking the response data at face value, the Council understands that respondents are generally **against** the proposed scheme with approximately 79% of all representations being made against the scheme and approximately 21% of representations being made in favour. Primarily the reasons for these objections relate to concerns about the impact of the proposals on alternative routes (Barker's Well, Grove Road and Park Street), loss of parking or difficulty in accessing parking along these routes, resident safety along the proposed routes, and emergency service response vehicle access times.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

- 5.1. The decision to consider responses from engagement activity contributes to the Council's corporate priority for Resilient Communities, by ensuring that local communities are an empowered and active part of Council decision-making processes.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1. Funding has already been agreed in principle for the schemes themselves. With respect to engagement activity specifically (which this report is about), follow-up

engagement (if agreed to by the Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment) is very likely to be in-house and largely with the interested parties who already engaged with the Council during the consultation period.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. N/A

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1. Consultation has been carried out with the local communities of Denbigh

8.2. 911 representations have been received including from:

- 8.2.1. Dr James Davies, MP
- 8.2.2. Ann Jones, MS
- 8.2.3. Denbigh Town Council
- 8.2.4. Local residents and businesses

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. N/A

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. There is strong objection within the community of Denbigh to the proposals and Denbigh MAG and the Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment will need to ensure that these objections are given due consideration alongside other data (such as footfall data, pollution data etc.) against the Welsh Government's desire to ensure that social distancing can be maintained in Wales' town centres, and against the Welsh Government's desire to support and sustain active travel as part of a countrywide response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

10.2. The Council understands that there has been a wide amount of misinformation shared on social media with regards to this scheme. The consultation for

Denbigh was the only consultation of out of a total of four similar proposals (other towns being Rhyl, Ruthin and Llangollen) where the number of objections to the proposals outstripped the number of people accessing the proposals to read in the first place. A number of the responses to the consultation indicated that respondents felt the scheme to be a 'done deal' and that a decision has already been made. The Council has attempted to mitigate this already by reassuring residents via press releases and social media updates that this is **not** the case, however a large amount of work to repair the Council's reputation amongst the community of Denbigh remains. Ensuring absolute transparency and being specific about the reasons for supporting, amending or rejecting the proposals overall at the decision-making stage will be vital to further mitigate this reputational damage, as will a comprehensive range of follow-up engagement to ensure that the community of Denbigh feels listened to.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. The Denbigh MAG are responsible for making overall recommendations with respect to the *Local Sustainable Transport Response to Covid-19* proposals for Denbigh, and the final decision with respect to the scheme rests with the Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment who will be expected to consider the representations of the MAG.