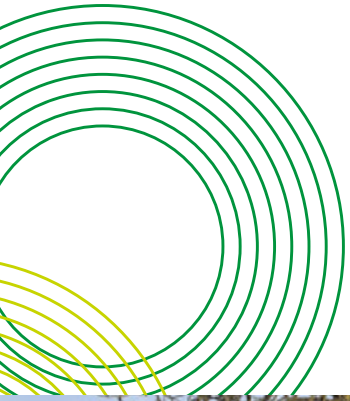


#OurSixTowns

Norton High Street Improvement Scheme

Summary of Findings



Delivered by



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

In December 2021, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council asked Norton's residents, businesses and visitors for their feedback on the proposed design for improvements to the most southern section of Norton High Street.

Residents, businesses and visitors were given the opportunity to provide their thoughts on the proposed design for the High Street, which include a new one-way system, flexible events spaces and public realm improvements to provide a more pedestrian-friendly environment to support the growing daytime and evening economy.

The scheme is part of the Council's Town Centres Investment Programme, with an aim to bring further improvements to Norton to create more high quality, safe and accessible spaces for both residents and visitors to enjoy.

The improvements are proposed following the 'Let's Talk About Our Towns' public consultation in 2020 to help accommodate the increasing footfall in Norton and to allow room for new opportunities and further growth.

Two engagement sessions took place in Norton on Wednesday 1 December and Friday 3 December 2021. There was also an online feedback form available on the Council's website for two weeks.

The purpose of the sessions was to seek the views of Norton's residents, businesses and visitors to inform the final design of the scheme, before work begins on site in early 2023.

More information about the Council's Town Centres Investment Programme can be found at: [Stockton.gov.uk/towncentres](https://www.stockton.gov.uk/towncentres)

The in-person engagement sessions and the online feedback form were promoted widely on social media and were included in an invitation that was posted to all households in Norton North ward and the surrounding area of the High Street.

All responses were added together, giving a total of sample size of 103.

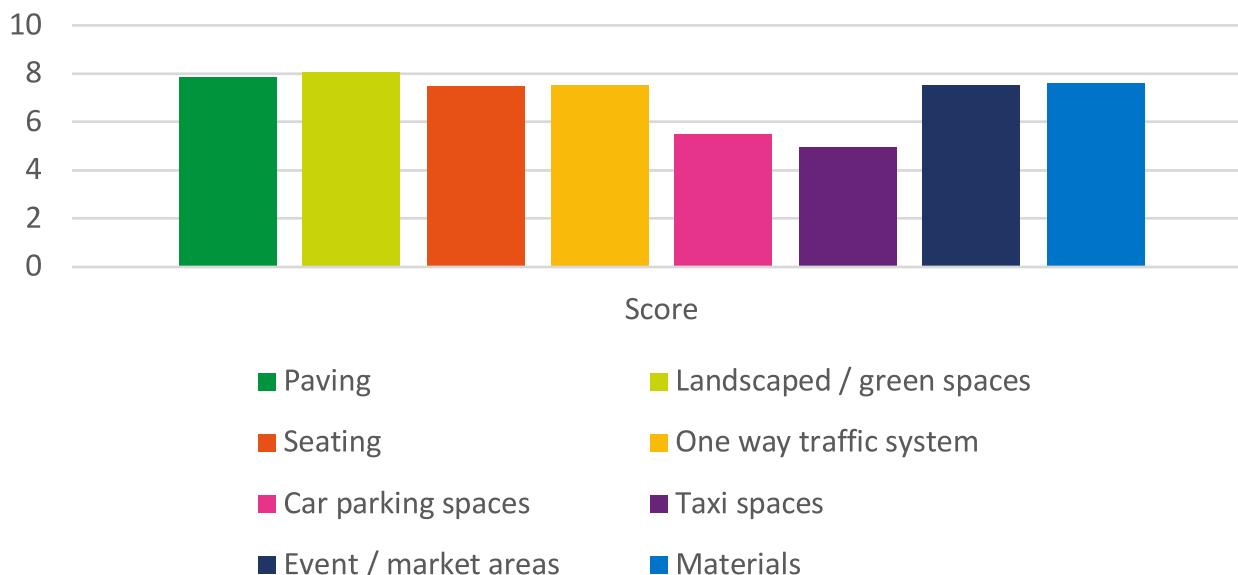
This summary presents the findings from the engagement sessions and explores views on the scheme layout that was presented, the key features and materials in the design, as well as the benefits of what improvements to the highways and public realm would bring to Norton.

It also explores a range of themes covering attitudes towards car parking in the town, traffic flow, outdoor dining, pedestrianisation and the evening economy.

Summary of Findings

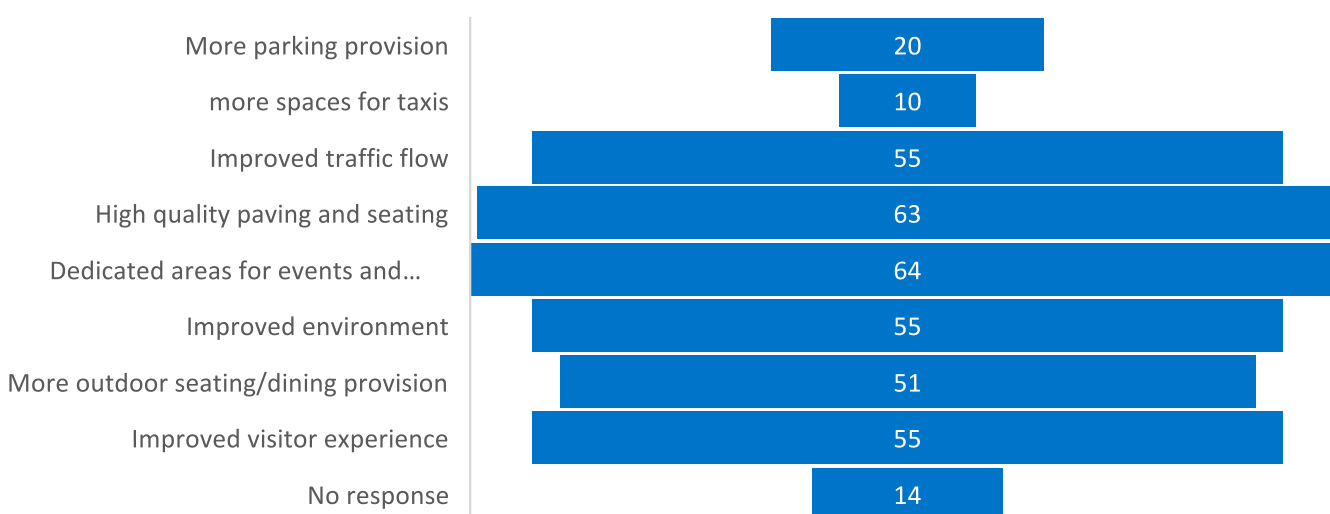
Respondents were asked 'How well do you feel the design elements of the scheme complement each other?' on a scale of 1-10.

The graph below shows the total value of scorings:



- Landscaped/green spaces received the highest average score of 8.2 whilst paving, seating, materials, event/market areas and one way traffic system followed closely with an average score of 7 out of 10.

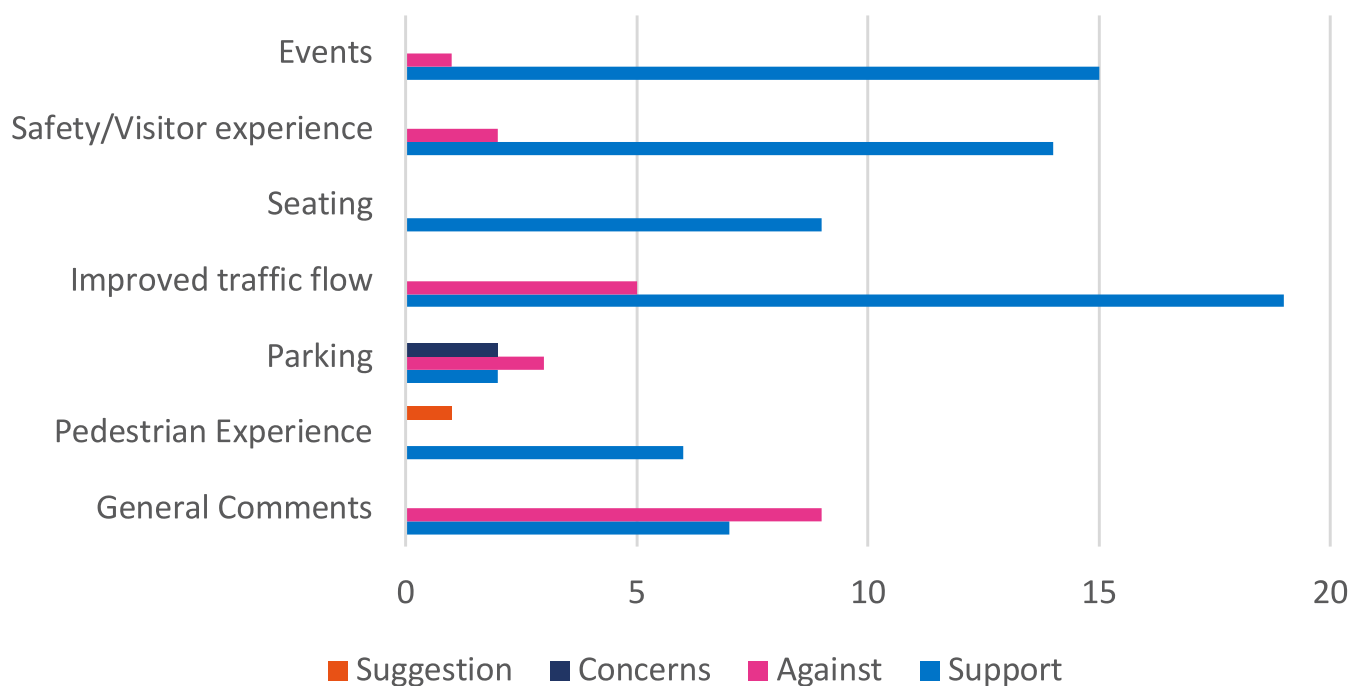
What in Norton do you think will be improved as a result of this scheme? (Tick all boxes)



When asked 'what do you think will be improved as a result of this scheme?' Dedicated areas for events and markets scored highest with 64 votes, followed by high quality paving and seating with 63 votes.

More spaces for taxis scored lowest with only 10 votes. 14 people provided no response to this question.

How do you think the scheme will benefit you?



76 people offered responses to how the scheme would benefit them.

Of the comments provided, 75 per cent of the themes were positive and in support of the scheme. The positive responses covered a broad range of themes like events, safety and visitor experience, improved traffic flow, parking, pedestrian experience and other general comments.

'I think it would be good to experience events and markets in Norton and the one-way system will be more safe for pedestrians on an evening.'

'Pleasanter feel to the village to encourage more day-time visitors.'

'It will improve access to the High Street as a pedestrian. Additionally, improving pedestrian areas outside Harland Place will improve the experience for everyone.'

'It will be easier to drive through the village.'

'I work in the village so more footfall will be a bonus – keeping me employed.'

'It will make the High Street more of a destination point for residents and visitors.'

'The plans look well thought out and make good use of the space available without losing the charm that Norton Village has.'

Some of the comments received were against the scheme and expressed concern and/or suggestions across the key themes listed below.

Parking concerns:

'The pedestrianisation is good, however it appears to me that this is at the detriment of car drivers. Living in Norton and going to the High Street everyday, it is the vehicles parking where they want that needs addressing. Also the parking bays in the High Street are positioned so that parked cars are actually sticking out into the road. As I live in Norton I think the down sides outweigh any benefits.'

Pedestrian experience suggestion:

'Be nicer for the village, however needs to be pedestrianised for safety at the later time of the day. Maybe no vehicles down the southern end of the High Street after 1800hrs.'

Traffic flow:

'I think it will make getting into my place of work more difficult.'

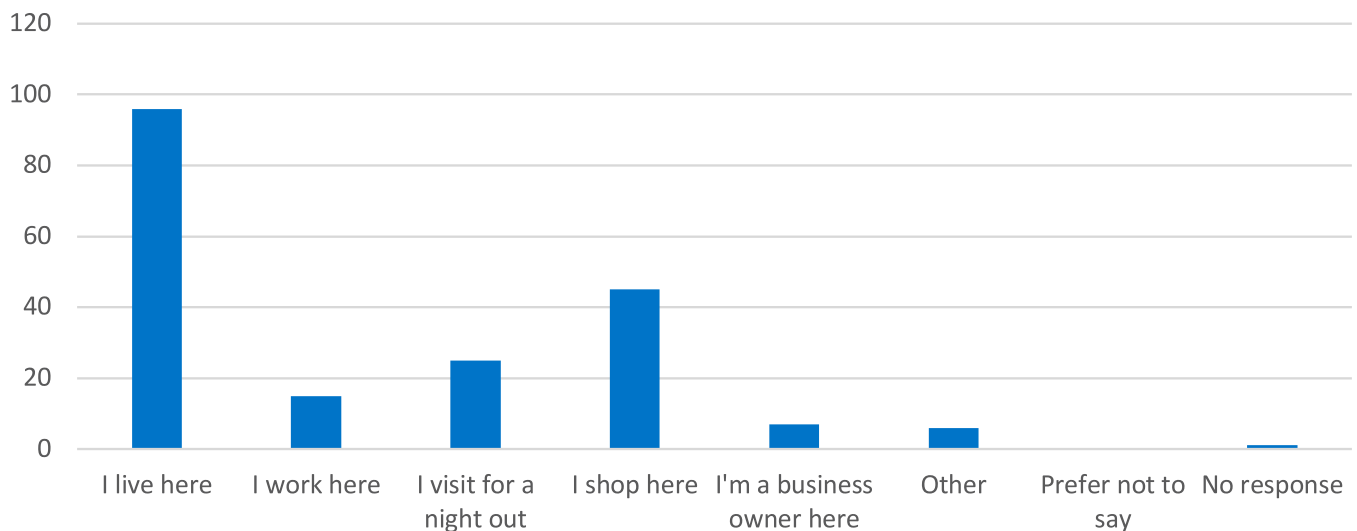
General comments against the scheme:

'I'll have a better experience as I usually walk to the village but those driving from further afield may struggle especially if parking regulation is enforced at the new Lidl.'

'Great to have investment in the local area but needs to be part of a wider approach to reducing traffic and making more attractive pedestrianised spaces.'

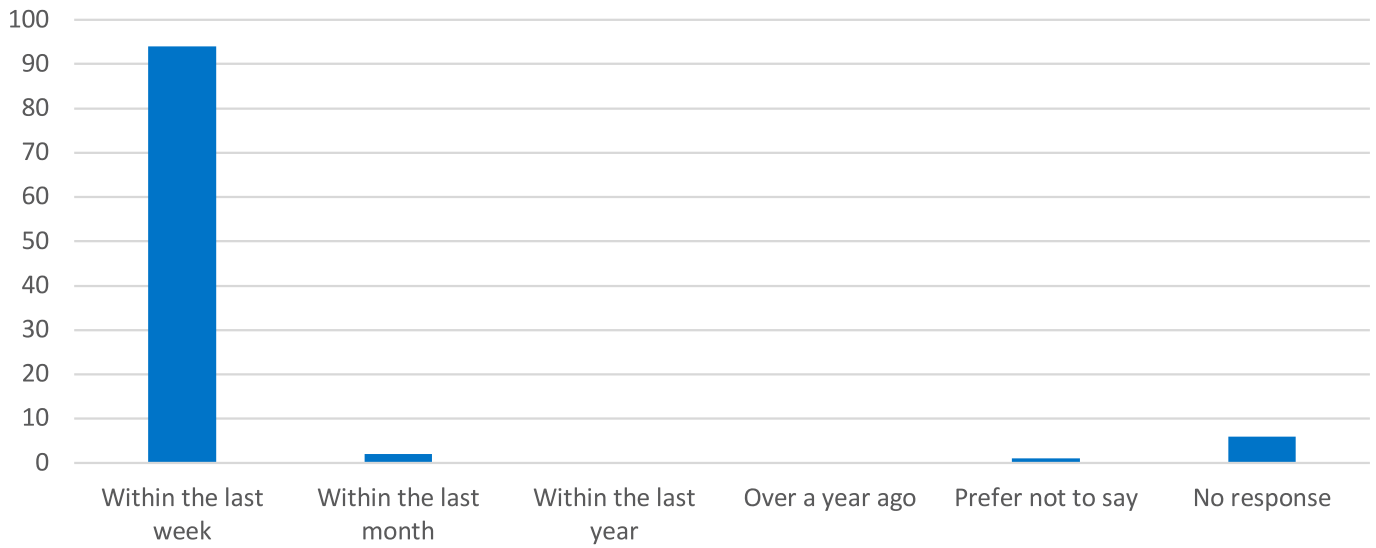
Profile of Responses

Respondents were asked to tick all options that applied to them in terms of their profile.



- 94 people who provided feedback said that they lived in Norton, showing that the majority of respondents were residents.
- 45 people who responded with feedback said that they shop in Norton, with 25 saying they visit for a night out.
- 15 people said that they worked in Norton and seven said they were business owners.

When did you last visit Norton High Street?

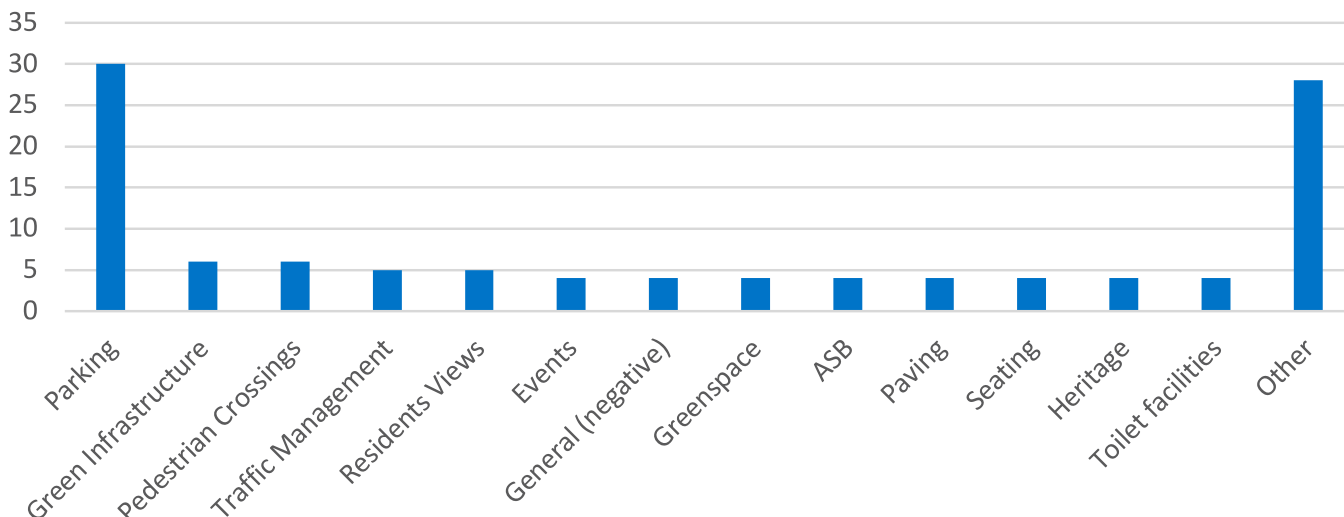


- 98 respondents said that they had visited Norton High Street within the last week, meaning they are frequent visitors to the area.
- 2 respondents said that they had visited the High Street within the last month.
- 1 respondent said that they would prefer not to say and 6 people provided no response to this question.

Tell us your age

- Nine percent of respondents with aged between 16 and 25 years.
- 22.5 percent of respondents were aged between 26 and 40 years.
- 37.5 percent of respondents were aged between 41 and 65 years.
- 25 percent of respondents were aged over 65 years.
- Two percent of respondents preferred not to say and four per cent provided no response to this question.

Additional Comments



Is there anything else you would like to see covered in this scheme that has not been included?

78 respondents offered additional comments when asked 'is there anything else you would like to see covered' in the Norton High Street proposals.

30 comments related to parking, followed by 20 'other' comments which covered a range of topics such as the impact of a supermarket close to the High Street, the provision of digital screens and activities for children.

Parking

Parking was highlighted as an area of concern in the wider area, along with requests for better enforcement and patrols in place.

'Consider time limiting some of the parking, evenings can be exceptionally challenging.'

'I would like to see use of the parking spaces along the High Street patrolled more often to ensure that the vehicles are parked within the space and not extending outside the white lines. If this can't be done then the orientation of some of the spaces should be changed. However this would result in less parking spaces.'

'In Norton we don't have more space for any more parking. If people enjoy using Norton for a night /day out then buses are available and for late nights taxis can be used. This would only mean having one or two drinks less to pay for a taxi.'

'Car charging parking spaces and disabled spaces when events are on. Also improved toilet facilities. Be good to get another ATM down duck pond end, appreciate this isn't a council led issue though.'

Public realm and accessibility

There were comments included that supported further provision for outdoor dining and there were further requests for areas for young people and for sustainability awareness to be considered in the design.

'Outdoor dining - More outdoor dining, drink, heaters etc, continental feel.'

'It would be nice to have a small area for children to be able to play. There are a lack of parks around the nearby area and nowhere for children to play safely.'

'Waste & recycling - waste disposal facilities, including recycling facilities.'

General (negative) comments

Other comments included concern for the historic character of Norton to remain despite the High Street undergoing changes.

'Modern supermarkets building their shacks. Not enhancing the historic ambience of Norton High Street. We are losing our quaint village ethos.'

'I would like to see the shop frontage maintained to appropriate standards.'

Other comments

Other comments highlighted the need for a supermarket and for wayfinding options to be explored.

'A supermarket. Norton has been without one for last six months.'

'Customer map or digital information signage. Possible allocation of space for signage for trails or heritage walk.'

'No more pubs.'

Revisions to the scheme following public engagement and the next steps

This scheme was presented to the public through a series of in-person and online engagement sessions. The feedback received has helped to shape the design of the Norton High Street improvement scheme.

Although broad support for the scheme was received, a series of issues and concerns were raised. These concerns have been considered and addressed in this summary.

Parking arrangements

The proposed scheme will now provide a total of 49 parking spaces, which is an increase of seven. This will include the provision of six flexible taxi spaces, two that are dedicated solely for taxis and four that will be evening only.

This scheme maximises the amount of space on the High Street that is available for car parking and taxi spaces.

Four dedicated loading bays will also be created during specific daytime hours.

Norton will also benefit from the appointment of an additional 12 Civic Enforcement Officers who will be dedicated across the Borough's six town centres. This additional resource will allow more time to be spent in our communities, focusing on key issues for residents such as parking enforcement.

Traffic flow and congestion

Concerns on the flow of traffic through Norton were raised through the engagement sessions, with congestion and pedestrian safety all being key themes that featured in this.

The proposed scheme will improve traffic flow and movement by introducing a northbound one-way system at the southern end of the High Street. This will reduce the volume of traffic on this section of the High Street and improve road safety for pedestrians and vehicles.

As part of the scheme, vehicle access south of the High Street has been removed which means that High Street traffic would have to turn left onto South Road and exit via the Red Lion roundabout.

Whilst sentiment around this element was positively received, there were concerns raised around pedestrian safety when crossing over South Road. The proposed scheme will address this concern by improving the existing pedestrian crossing point to ensure the safety of people navigating in this area.

Concerns were also raised around the proposal to make Holly Street a one-way system, due to the potential disruption that increased traffic would have on surrounding residential streets.

The Council has considered this feedback and developed a revised scheme layout which will maintain the two-way road layout on Holly Street. For example, the left turn into Holly Street is maintained and a left out turn only onto the High Street one-way system is created. This layout will minimise disruption both to residents and businesses in the surrounding streets.

Public Realm and accessibility

The proposed improvements to the public realm are considered to be an effective solution to creating high-quality, safe and accessible public spaces in Norton whilst improving traffic flow and movement through the introduction of a one-way system.

The proposals include new and improved paving, hard and soft landscaping and planting as well as seating areas along the southern end of the High Street. Investment in the public realm will create an improved environment in this area by improving connectivity and creating multi use spaces that will provide a more pedestrian-friendly environment to support the growing daytime and evening economy.

The proposals also strike an important balance between improving the physical environment and creating wider pedestrian areas with addressing some of the concerns raised through public engagement on car parking, taxi provision, traffic movement and congestion.

High-quality and durable materials such as Yorkstone, Granite paving and Porphyry Setts will be used as the main paving materials. The design and materials of additional features such as new benches, planters and street furniture will also be selected to ensure the scheme complements and enhances the surrounding conservation area.

The scheme will provide improvements to the existing pedestrian crossing on South Road to improve the safety of pedestrians. New cycle parking will also be provided.

An updated plan is provided overleaf to show how public realm improvements and soft landscaping will be incorporated into the scheme design to deliver maximum benefits to the physical environment.

A statutory consultation in relation to the use of the highway is set to take place in Summer 2022.

Following this, the programme of works is expected to begin in early 2023, lasting for approximately six months.

Information on the updated design and programme is available to view online at:

stockton.gov.uk/our-six-towns

