

**#OurSixTowns**

Building a bright future together



# **Yarm High Street consultation**

## **Summary of findings**

Delivered by



**Stockton-on-Tees**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Introduction

In August 2022, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council asked the public to give their input and ideas on plans for improving public spaces and access to Yarm High Street.

The Council asked Yarm's residents, businesses and visitors to give their views on ways in which the High Street can be improved as part of the overall allocation from the Government's Levelling Up Fund.

The Stockton South constituency has been awarded £20million of funding from the Government's Levelling Up Fund. Part of this funding opportunity will include building on the success of Yarm as an attractive, popular destination and supporting businesses through improvements to public spaces in and around the High Street.

Opportunities are being explored to make the High Street more accessible and user friendly through a range of potential interventions. In recent years there has been a shift in focus on high streets, with changing uses bringing different requirements for public spaces.

The consultation aimed to find out what the current issues in the area are and how things could be improved, as well as identifying the positive aspects of the area that could be retained and enhanced.

An online consultation form was available on the Council's website for three weeks and a series of in-person consultation sessions took place in Yarm Library on Yarm High Street.

These opportunities were promoted widely on social media, the Council's website and in local media. An invitation was also sent to every household in the Yarm ward.

All responses were added together giving a total sample size of 205 responses.

This summary presents the findings from the public consultation to help shape design options for the High Street improvements that reflect the aspirations and needs of users of the High Street.

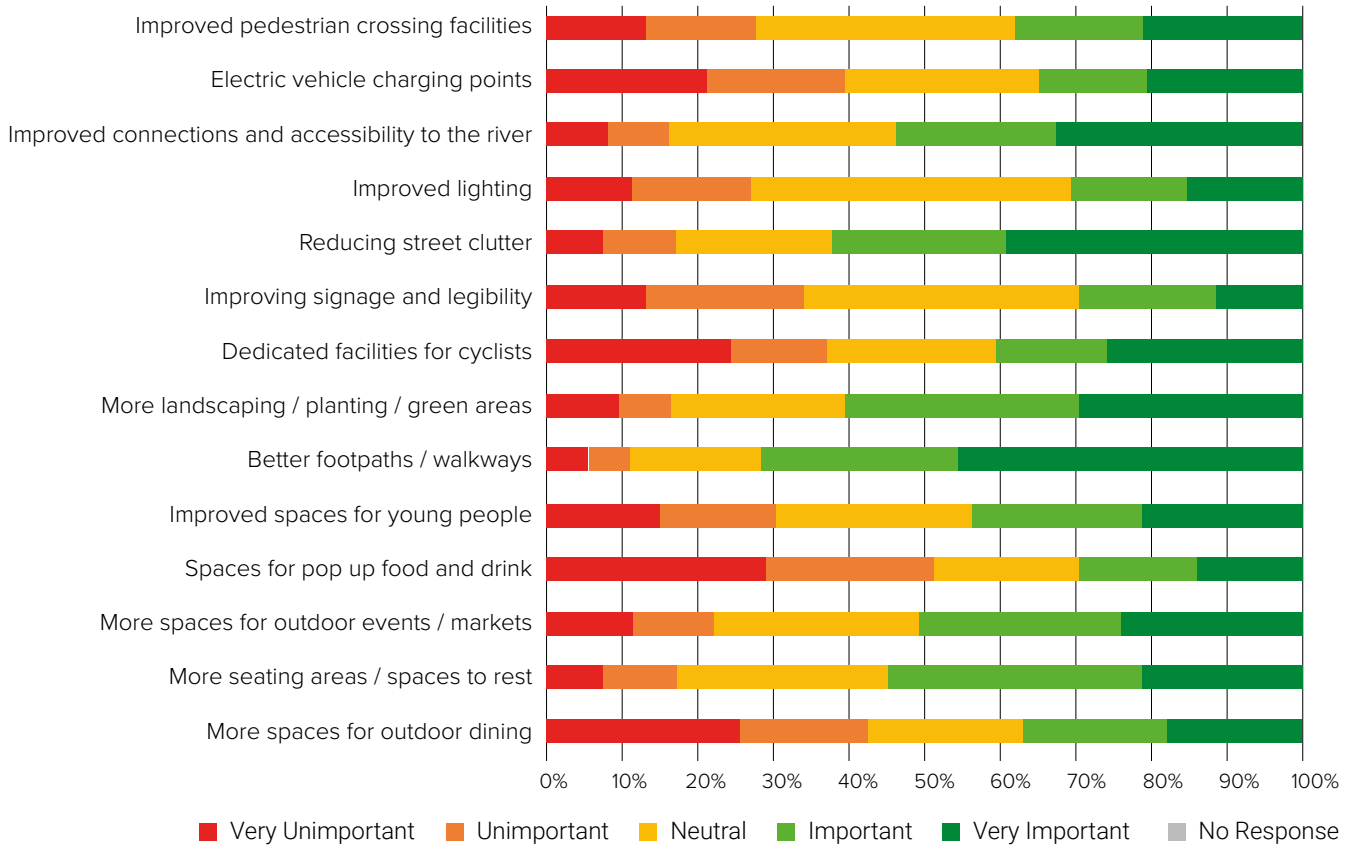
More information on how the Council is transforming Yarm and the wider Town Centres Investment Programme can be found at: [stockton.gov.uk/our-six-towns](https://stockton.gov.uk/our-six-towns)



## 2. Priorities for investment

Respondents were asked 'When you think of potential improvements to the High Street, how important is it that the following things are incorporated?'

The distribution of responses for each improvement category included in the survey ranged from 'very unimportant' to 'very important'.

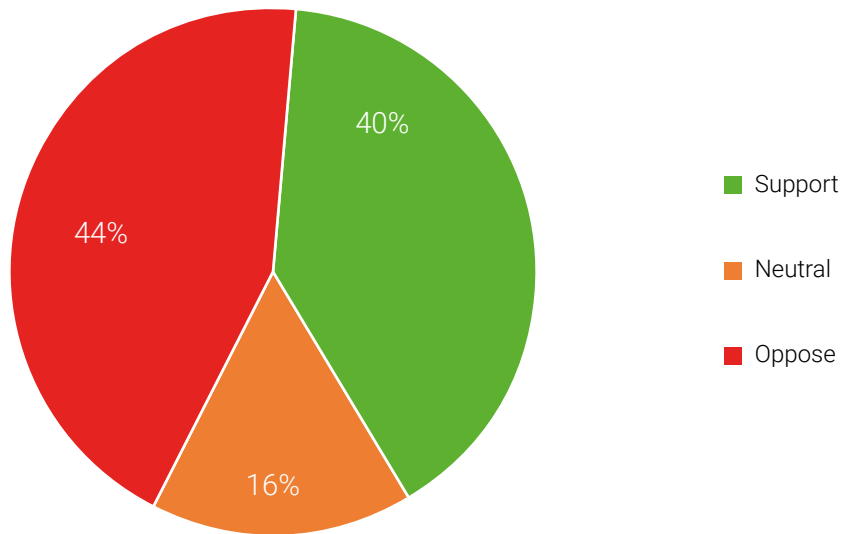


This has demonstrated that the top five improvements people want to see are:

- improving footpaths
- reducing street clutter
- adding more planting
- improving connections and accessibility to the river
- providing more seating and places to rest

### 3. Removing car parking

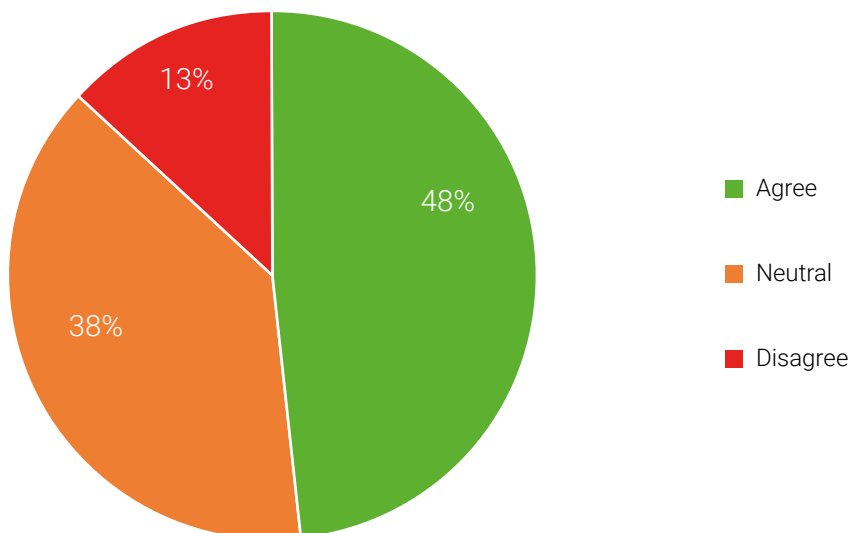
Respondents were asked “Thinking about potential improvements to Yarm High Street, how would you feel about a reduction in car parking to accommodate some of the opportunities suggested above?”



The responses show a split opinion across respondents around parking removal, with 40 per cent of people supporting the removal of parking to facilitate other uses and 44 per cent of respondents wanting to retain the existing parking provision.

### 4. Focus on accessible spaces

The survey asked respondents “Do you think improvements to Yarm High Street should focus on creating more accessible spaces and facilities?”



Generally, respondents were supportive of a focus on accessibility, with 48 per cent of respondents agreeing that the scheme should focus on creating more accessible spaces and only 13 per cent who disagreed with this sentiment.

The high percentage of people that gave a neutral response may indicate some uncertainty around the meaning of this question.

## 5. Free text responses

Thematic analysis of the two free text questions – “What types of accessibility improvements would you like us to consider?” and “Is there anything else you’d like to see improved on Yarm High Street?” was undertaken to identify common themes across respondents. The key themes are summarised below.

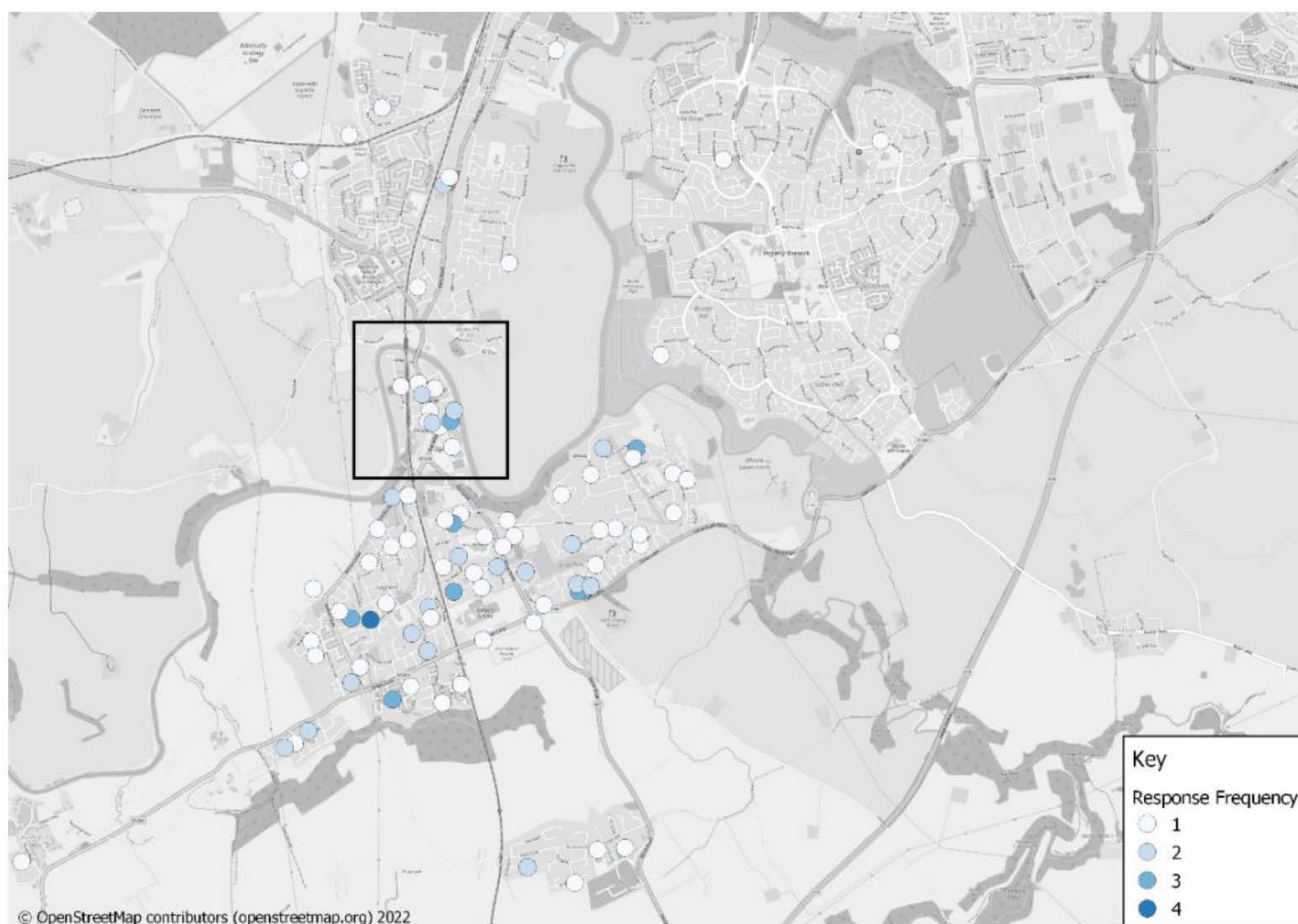
Themes	Common Elements
Pavements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widen footways</li> <li>Replace with better materials/level paving</li> <li>Less kerbs/raised areas</li> <li>Preserve/maintain cobbles</li> <li>Pedestrian priority across side roads</li> </ul>
Street furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce street clutter</li> <li>More bins – including recycling bins</li> <li>Improve quality of street furniture</li> <li>Lighting of heritage features</li> </ul>
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To the river</li> <li>To nearby places</li> <li>To transport links (stations)</li> <li>To heritage assets</li> <li>Map of high street businesses</li> </ul>
Use of High Street Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor dining (without reducing pavement space)</li> <li>More/better space for seating - access and protection from traffic</li> </ul>
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EV parking</li> <li>Cycle parking – better/more obvious/more accessible/more secure</li> <li>Improve parking enforcement</li> <li>Accessible parking for people with disabilities</li> <li>Widen parking spaces</li> <li>More off high street parking/Park &amp; Ride</li> <li>More bays for loading/deliveries</li> <li>Parking signs – digital signage/signs to other car parks</li> </ul>
Connections to other areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible river walks</li> <li>Bus services</li> <li>Protected cycle facilities</li> </ul>

In addition to thematic analysis, ideas for specific interventions written in the free text responses have been extracted and summarised below:

- Reduce street clutter/furniture and make more space for pedestrians outside Mockingbird/Saks
- 20mph speed limit
- Make use of vacant land on corner of Bentley Wynd. Suggestions include more parking, a park, cycle parking, toilets, seating and green space
- Make West Street one-way
- Improve the river behind Sainsbury's
- Upgrade benches – particularly near Yarm Surgery Roundabout
- Better facilities in the play park area
- A pedestrian crossing at the south end of the High Street
- Angled parking on the west side of the high street with a roundabout at each end of the high street to let people turn - one at Blue Bell/Cleveland Bay junction, and at Spital/Worsall Road junction – and a central reserve to stop people crossing the road to park

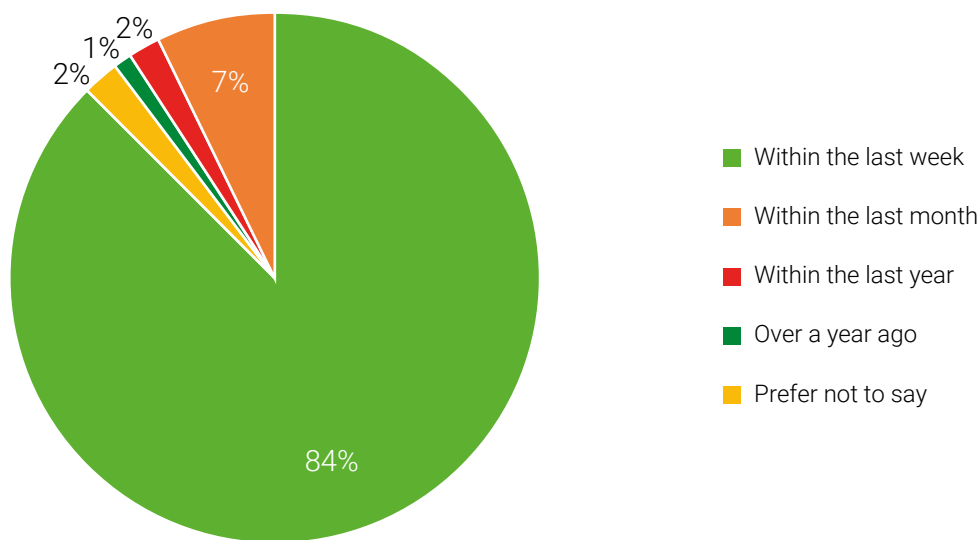
## Profile of responses

Respondents to the consultation were generally from the local area, with a significant cluster of responses from people living near the high street.



The majority of respondents (77 per cent) were over 40 and only three people under 25 responded to the consultation.

The vast majority of people that responded to the consultation were people that have visited Yarm recently, with 85 per cent of respondents visiting within the last week.



In terms of connections to the area, respondents typically live in the area and/or shop in Yarm. Only a small number of responses were received from people that work in the area and only three business owners submitted responses.



When travelling to and from Yarm, the most commonly used modes were walking or travelling by car. Users could select more than one option, however grouping these results into single modes and combinations of modes found that 23 per cent of respondents only travel by car and 22 per cent of respondents only walk to Yarm.



## Next steps

This report has presented a summary of the results from the consultation on improvements to Yarm High Street that was held from 8 August to 26 August 20. In total, 205 survey responses were received during the consultation period.

Overall, responses to this consultation were from local people that are either live in Yarm or visit for shopping or leisure and most of the respondents are people that have recently visited Yarm. The most common modes used by respondents when travelling to Yarm were walking or travelling by car.

This round of consultation received less engagement from young people and people that work or own a business in Yarm. At the next stage of consultation, further direct engagement with these groups will be undertaken to gather their feedback.

The feedback received through this consultation will be used to inform the design of the scheme, ensuring that the proposed interventions align with the wants and needs of local people.

A further round of consultation will be held before the end of the year where the public will have the opportunity to view and comment on the emerging scheme designs before a preferred scheme is refined and agreed in early 2023.

Delivered by

