

Engagement report

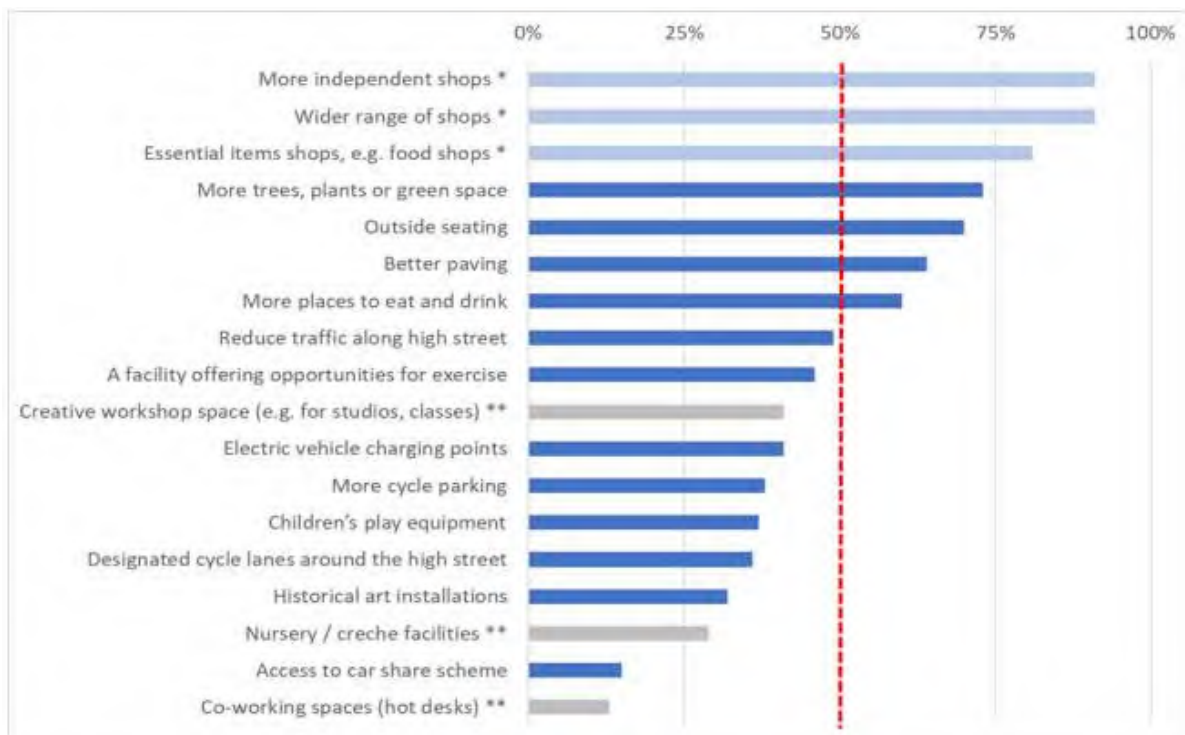
15 August 2023

Hanham Public Realm Improvements

Background and public engagement Phase 1

In 2020 South Gloucestershire Council carried out a survey asking local people what they thought of Hanham High Street and what improvements they would like to see. The survey received 758 responses, of which 77% were from local residents who live in Hanham¹. Areas of importance identified included improving trees, plants and green space, improving paving and the inclusion of additional outside seating.

Fig 1: How important is it to improve the following features of Hanham High Street? (% of respondents ranking each option as “quite important” or “very important”)



Base: 758 respondents

Using the survey data, the council developed a long list of schemes, created a shortlist, identified suitable funding and created a business case. Ongoing engagement was undertaken with the Hanham Partnership Group which includes local councillors and local business representatives

¹ The full results of the 2020 survey can be found at www.southglos.gov.uk/Hanham

who agreed the approach outlined below. Funding was awarded via the Love our High Streets Fund for a scheme for public realm improvements in February 2023.

The scheme aims to:

- Support recovery and respond positively to the changing nature of the high street
- Improve the character and attractiveness of the street – to create a distinct identity for the High Street to benefit local residents, visitors and businesses
- Increase footfall to the High Street by creating an attractive and walkable space which will support local businesses and the wellbeing of its visitors
- Encourage more businesses to choose Hanham
- Increase the time visitors spend at the High Street which will benefit local businesses
- Improve biodiversity for nature and respond to the climate emergency priorities

The improvements included:

- New planters and increased planting in verges
- More seating
- Making it more attractive to walk and cycle with new paving and the installation of bike stands
- Installing new signage to make it easier to find places of interest
- Refurbishing the toilet block

Public engagement Phase 2 (July 2023)

A public engagement exercise was undertaken during July 2023 to further engage with the public and gain feedback on the proposed improvements. Feedback was sought from key stakeholders², including South Gloucestershire Council Councillors, local Parish Councils, local businesses, community and youth groups, residents and representatives from seldom heard³ groups.

People could access and view key information on the scheme in person at Hanham Library where display boards were available to view. Alternatively, information was available on-line at a dedicated webpage www.southglos.gov.uk/hanham. Feedback was invited by email, letter or over the phone.

The following activities were undertaken to raise awareness of the scheme and engagement period:

- Email to key stakeholders (to announce start of engagement, and reminder near the end)
- Postcards and posters were delivered or displayed in key places on the High Street, including shops, community centre, library, church and public toilets
- Press release to news outlets (articles in Bristol Evening Post, Bristol World, The Week In, and Hanham and Longwell Green Voice)
- Social media posts were released on facebook and twitter
- Presentations at Hanham Partnership Group meetings
- Attendance at South Glos Low Vision Group meeting
- Pop up attendance in Hanham High Street to talk to people and hand out postcards

An accessibility walkabout of the High Street was undertaken with representatives/residents who experience challenges due to disability. This included people who had vision impairments and a

² A stakeholder is someone(s) who can impact, or be impacted by, proposed projects and policies.

³ Seldom-heard groups is a term that refers to under-represented people/groups that are less likely to be heard during the engagement process and decision making. These groups include those who are protected under the Equality Act, for example, older/younger people, disabled people or minority ethnic groups.

mobility scooter user. 50 issues were identified during the walkabout, however not all of these were related to accessibility. The full list can be found in Appendix A.

Media coverage and promotion

A press release was issued to inform people about the project on the 3rd July 2023: [Proposals on show for high street improvements in Hanham | Newsroom \(southglos.gov.uk\)](#)

Information about the project was included in the residents' newsletters on 7th July, which was sent to 91,000 people. The Hanham link was clicked 848 times: [New home for Majestic Gym, support when leaving hospital and more \(mailchi.mp\)](#)

26 people have signed up to the new Hanham High Street newsletter.

Two articles about the High Street project appeared in local media:

[Huge plans to revamp Hanham revealed - Bristol Live \(bristolpost.co.uk\)](#)

[Vision unveiled to 'make a difference' on high street near Bristol | BristolWorld](#)

Results of the public engagement Phase 2 (July 2023)

33 responses were received in total during the phase 2 engagement process, comprising a mix of emails sent to the project team and responses at meetings with stakeholders or during the pop-up event in the High Street. The responses received reflected a mix of opinions. On the whole the majority of people spoken to during our discussions were positive about the proposed improvements.

The themes of the comments are summarised here, and a full list of comments made is available on request.

Table 1: Themes of comments made during the phase 2 public engagement

Theme mentioned	Number of mentions
Scheme improvement suggestions/support for project	11
Project is a waste of money/general criticism of the project	6
High Street needs to be made one-way for traffic	6
High Street area needs more parking	5
High Street needs a better range of shops	4
Toilets need to be improved	3
High Street needs more seating	2
Project should cover a wider area	2
Mention of the current access issues – accessibility	2
Need to prioritise disabled/pushchair access in future	3
Suggestion to pedestrianise/traffic free days	2
More plants/greenery	2
Council should be paying for these improvements	2
Suggestion for farmers markets/fair/community events/trails	2
Need more community facilities	1

Improve maintenance – potholes and weeding	2
Traffic speed is too high	1
Need more information to comment	1
Unrelated comment	1

Base: 33 responses (some responses mentioned more than one theme)

Comments made reflected a mix of opinions, with several respondents **giving suggestions** for other things that could be included in the project (11 comments), but others feeling that the scheme was a **waste of money** or wouldn't resolve current issues (6 comments).

Six respondents mentioned that the High Street could benefit from a **one-way traffic system**. People felt that this could help to ease current problems with congestion and pollution. Five people mentioned that the area needs more **parking**, and suggested that provision for this should be included in the scheme.

“Brilliant news that the plans involve refurbishing the public toilets, safe cycle parking and more seating. The reality is that to keep the High Street going, parking is so very important.”

“It’s great to hear that work is being done on the High Street. Have you considered adding some history ceramic plaques such as the ones in Chepstow?”

“There needs to be a better range of shops on the high street to get me shopping there...”

“Would be good to close the road in one direction as no-one wants to sit out in a polluted road.”

Access for those with disabilities or pushchair users was mentioned by five respondents, with two people mentioning that there are current access problems for those with disabilities, and three people stating that disabled access should be prioritised in future.

Other respondents mentioned issues which will not be dealt with as part of the current project proposals. These included needing a different mix of shops to attract visitors, the potential for the High Street to be pedestrian-only, and the benefits of regular community events such as a farmers' market.

“I hope at long last that all amenities in Hanham High Street will become accessible to wheelchair users.”

“...I think it is a good idea to create a more attractive street and have a greener place to protect our environment and our health. However, in my opinion, what is more important is what people will find in the High Street. At the end of the day, if we can't find what we want or need, we won't go there...”

"...After speaking to shop owners day in and day out and as a local resident who uses all these businesses, there is one clear and recurring problem that comes up: - The road through the village ruins the village. Traffic is heavy, often speeds and needlessly pollutes the area. Cars separate each side of the High Street making it quite unpleasant for children and elderly people. People are put off from visiting due to the small pavements and heavy pollution/noise (cafes notoriously do not do well here as people don't like to sit outside). Plus during peak times parking is a nightmare due to how car-dependent the road is and due to car dependence to get anywhere on this side of the city. Solution Look at what Keynsham has done on their high street and replicate it..."

Results of the accessibility walkabout (July 2023)

An accessibility walkabout of the High Street was undertaken in July 2023. This was attended by people with a range of disability-related challenges, and by representatives of people with those challenges.

49 different issues or suggestions were identified. Some of these were able to be passed to other council departments for action as part of the normal maintenance programme, or to other organisations who held responsibility for the issue. Other issues identified will be considered as part of this project, and look to be resolved, where possible.

Table 2: Accessibility issues raised during the walkabout

Accessibility issue	Number of instances
Ground/trip hazard/steps/cambers	17
Repair/change/improve street furniture	8
Signage/road markings	6
Request for additional project element	6
Cleaning/maintenance	3
Improvements to toilets	2
Landscaping	2
Obstruction of pavement	2
Confirmation that current feature is OK	2
Changes to kerbs	1
Problems caused by parking	1
Safety issue for road crossing	1
Query over project element	1

Base: 49 issues

By far the most common theme raised on the walkabout was **issues related to the ground**, whether it be tactile paving, uneven paving, steps, or steep pavement camber etc (17 instances).

This was followed by 8 instances of needing to **repair, change or improve street furniture** such as bike stands, bollards, bins and lamp posts.

Improvements to **signage and road markings** were requested 6 times, and the potential for **an additional project element** such as new planters, flower bulbs, fencing, and a green screen was requested 6 times.

Promotion and feedback on social media

The project was featured in various social media posts, prompting some feedback from residents:

4 July:

Facebook post:

2,255 impressions

69 clicks

4 likes

1 comment (negative about Thornbury High Street)

1 share

Tweet:

2,198 impressions

43 clicks

18 July:

Facebook post:

8,942 impressions

129 clicks

10 likes

27 comments (mixture of criticism of work in Thornbury, comments about waste service disruption. See attached)

1 share

Table 3: Theme of comments received in reply to 18th July Facebook post:

Theme of comment	Number of instances
Negative about project	9
Mention of Thornbury	8
Comment unrelated to Hanham	6
Council should spend money elsewhere	4
Parking issues around High Street	4
High Street needs more attractions	4
Suggestion for inclusion in project	2
Resident in reply to other comment	2
Concerns about transport to High Street	1
Positive comment about High Street	1

Base: 34 comments; some comments included more than one theme

Tweet:

3,870 impressions

43 clicks

2 likes

Responding to the feedback received

The below table shows the summary of all feedback received and how we will look to address these.

Theme mentioned	Response
Suggestion of additional locations for planters and seating	Additional areas will be considered at suggested locations if space and budget allows.
Suggestion to have sustainable planting scheme (perennial plants) and encourage biodiversity	The scheme will incorporate planting schemes to provide seasonal interest as well as supporting biodiversity. This will be informed by the current green infrastructure project which aims to respond to the need to adapt current planting practices to address climate change.
Suggestion to introduce local history/art installations	An art project is starting shortly in the High Street through work with the local partnership group. The community will be engaged with further during this project to help shape and influence the designs. We will look at opportunities to incorporate local history in the High Street.
Volume and speed of traffic concerns – suggestion of making road one way/cycle path installation	Noted. The scope of the current project does not extend to traffic management alterations. This can be considered in any future funding requests.
Suggestion to have traffic free days for themed events/more attractions for visitors in High Street– e.g. fayres/farmers markets/evening events. Have trails that attract people like Unicorn Trail	Through the ongoing work with Hanham Partnership Group, the SGC High Street Coordinators have already supported and will continue to work with the partnership group to support events aimed at increasing footfall to Hanham. Funding can be made available for events led by the community to aid their delivery.
Project is a waste of money/general criticism of the project – main criticisms were around the project not addressing other issues (e.g. traffic/parking) or the grant should be used for alternative projects.	There was clear support for improving the pedestrian environment during the survey in 2020 and through discussions with key stakeholders. The council seeks grants to provide financial resources for projects. The grant awarded was for public realm improvements which aligned with the business case drafted following the survey. Unfortunately, we are unable to use the grant for some of the alternative suggestions. However, we will continue to engage with the community and seek funding for alternative projects.
Parking concerns	Noted. Concerns regarding parking in Hanham have been raised through the partnership group. The scope of this current project does not extend to traffic management alterations. This can be considered in any future funding requests. However, the scheme does aim to support visits to the high street by alternative transport modes and does not reduce current parking levels.
High Street needs a better range of shops	This is common theme arising from many South Glos high streets. Vacancy levels in Hanham are low and work is underway to address how the Council can

	proactively support the reuse of vacant units to help support the diversity of the high street offer. The council have already helped to establish markets in other high streets and will continue to work with the partnership group with the aim of delivering a different retail offer for Hanham.
Toilets need to be improved/be more accessible	The public toilets will be refurbished as part of this project. Accessibility issues were noted during the walkabout.
Accessibility issues on the High Street and public toilets	A range of accessibility issues were recorded at the walkabout. We will look to address these, where feasible as part of the project. A road safety concern was raised for crossing the road near Lidl. This has been reported to South Glos Council Assess and Decide Team by Hanham Parish Council.
Council should be paying for these improvements	The Council is committed to help support the decline in the high street and help high streets to evolve and recover from the impacts of the pandemic. The funding secured is ring-fenced for this purpose and will not impact upon the delivery of other key council services.
General maintenance issues (e.g. potholes/weeds)	The project will aim to improve the public realm and enhance the perception of Hanham as a place to visit. This will include maintenance on the High Street where it falls with the scope of the project.

Next steps

The feedback received during the public engagement will be used to shape the next stages of the project. To keep up to date on progress, please visit the webpage www.southglos.gov.uk/hanham where you can sign up for the project newsletter.

Contact information

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