Hayes Town Centre
Improvements
Consultation Report (December 2012)
Hayes Town Centre Improvements
Consultation Report

Contents

1. Consultation background and rationale
2. Consultation methodology
3. Summary of results
4. Conclusions and next steps

Appendix 1 Consultation leaflet & promotion
Appendix 2 Detailed response raw data

Contact

Town Centre Improvements
London Borough of Hillingdon
Civic Centre (4W/06)
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1BT
Email: towncentres@hillingdon.gov.uk
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/towncentres
Tel: 01895 250461
1. Consultation background & rationale

1.1 Background:-

1.1.1 Hayes Town Centre sits at the juncture of four roads with very different characteristics, two of which were formerly part of the A312 local distributor road, linking the A4020 Uxbridge Road and the once thriving industrial employment areas north of Heathrow. Hayes was historically well known for its aviation and music industries – both largely vanished from the area. What was once a thriving, bustling town centre has lost much of its old magic, although there is a reassuring bustle and vibrancy despite the prevailing national economic challenges which sees, for example, a relatively low vacancy rate amongst the shops in the centre.

1.1.2 Hayes is a secondary town centre, and suffers from the competitive draws of Uxbridge Town Centre (Hillingdon’s main Metropolitan Town Centre, with a good range of shops, employment and transport interchange) and, just across the boundary into Ealing, of Southall. In addition, the relocation in the 1990s of a large Sainsbury supermarket from the heart of Hayes Town Centre to a new retail park one kilometre north (at the junction of Coldharbour Lane and the A4020 Uxbridge Road) contributed to further decline.

1.1.3 Hillingdon Council had already identified Hayes Town as a priority in terms of centres requiring investment and support and therefore, as part of the Council’s ‘total approach’ to the regeneration of town centres, work had already started in Hayes on a holistic range of complementary programmes to help with shop front enhancements, visual merchandising work, retail apprenticeships and public realm improvements. More specifically, the four key elements to the ‘total approach’ are:

- improvements to the public realm, which may include new parking measures, and/or improvements to footpaths and streets, street signage, street lighting and landscaping;
- improvements to shop fronts (by means of grant assistance to independent traders);
- providing commercial expertise to independent traders, such as advice on visual merchandising and customer service; and
- providing a retail apprenticeship scheme for traders in partnership with Uxbridge College.
1.1.4 In 2011, the Mayor of London invited local authorities in Greater London to bid for funding from Round One of his ‘Outer London Fund’ (OLF). Although the bid criteria were loaded against town centres which were seen as benefiting from Crossrail or Olympics related investment, the case for helping Hayes Town Centre was a powerful one, and as a result a sum of £240,000 was made available to fund a programme of measures aimed at helping boost the viability of the town centre.

1.1.5 The Council embarked on a programme aimed at revitalising the business community as well as the environment. Using the Council’s own funds as well as £60,000 from the 35 businesses who participated, shop fronts and areas of private forecourts have been significantly improved. As well as dramatically enhancing the appearance of the town centre, this process has reinvigorated the business community and the Council has been able to form solid and supportive relationships.

1.2 Rationale

1.2.1 Although the OLF money could not tackle all the problems of the local street environment and the traffic and highway configuration in Hayes, it did allow the Council to forge very strong links with the local community, who as a consequence of the significant improvements they have experienced to the appearance and viability of their businesses, have become advocates for further change.

1.2.2 The OLF money was also used to fund a detailed Urban Study for Hayes Town with options for improving traffic flow within Hayes town centre.

1.2.3 The overall purpose of the public consultation was to understand the views of people who live, work and run businesses within Hayes town centre concerning the public realm including traffic flow and parking arrangements within Hayes. This could include the opening up of Station Road to certain traffic and more importantly enable the Council to take forward majority opinions within a future major improvements scheme, subject to funding from Transport for London.
2. Consultation methodology

2.1 The consultation was closely planned in conjunction with the Hayes Town Centre Stakeholder Working Group to maximise coverage and responses. Membership of the group includes:

- Botwell and Townfield ward councillors;
- Chair of Hayes Town Partnership;
- Chair of Hayes Town Business Forum; and
- Council officers

2.2 The consultation documents and programme were agreed in order to provide clear, easily understood, timely and up to date information to all stakeholders in a variety of formats including a leaflet with prepaid postal response, on-line and public displays. A full six weeks was allowed for responses with the consultation starting on the 12th September and ending on the 24th October 2012. The consultation documents are shown in Appendix 1.

2.3 A variety of methods were used to ensure that the people who live, work, run a business and/or study within the Hayes area knew about the consultation and had an opportunity to have their say and find out more information. These included:

- A leaflet drop, with covering letter, to 4,350 households within the area;
- Face to face/distributed survey at peak times at Hayes & Harlington station and within Hayes town centre itself;
- Two public displays at either end of the town centre where officers were also in attendance on publicised days to give more information;
- A written briefing given to all the Botwell and Townfield ward councillors, followed up with an invitation to an information session;
- A full page feature in Hillingdon People, the Council magazine delivered to all households within the borough;
- An electronic mail out to a variety of stakeholders for wider distribution and promotion through their networks; and
- Posters and leaflets distributed via local businesses to their customers.

Examples of the above are also included within Appendix 1.

2.4 Following advice from the Hayes Town Centre Stakeholder Working Group, the language of the leaflet was simplified to eradicate jargon and unnecessary technical terminology. The response included tick box options as well as broader open ended questions.

2.5 In total, 10,000 leaflets and 50 posters were printed for distribution as outlined in paragraph 2.3, above.
3. Summary of results

3.1 In total, 678 responses were received made up of 190 (28%) on line and 488 (72%) written responses. This represents a 6.78% response rate based on the 10,000 leaflets distributed. This section is a summary of the results and more detail can be found within the detailed responses in Appendix 2.

3.2 Of the 678 responses received:-
  512 (75%) were from people who lived in Hayes
  142 (21%) were from people who worked in Hayes
  75 (11%) did not specify
  40 (6%) were from people who owned a business in Hayes
  13 (2%) were from people who studied in Hayes
In some instances multiple boxes were ticked

3.3 Three broad, open-ended questions were asked:
  • What are the 3 things you like most about Hayes Town Centre?
  • What are the 3 things you would want to change about Hayes Town Centre?
  • What other improvements would you like to see in Hayes Town Centre?

3.4 The ‘Word Cloud’ shown on the cover of this report, and below highlights the most common responses received to these three questions.
The words ‘better’ and ‘shops’ are the most prominent to appear, indicating motivation and support for regeneration and an improved retail ‘offer’. Parking, traffic, town and people also stand out as topics that Hayes residents, businesses and visitors feel are most important to the town centre and may be areas where they would like to see improvements for the ‘better’.

The next question was more specific, asking people to select their top three improvements they would like to see in Hayes Town Centre from a list of 10 provided. Below is a chart showing responses to this question.

Traffic up and down Station Road to Coldharbour Lane was by far the most popular top three choice, followed by town centre markets and events, and better lighting. A play area for children, more places to sit and replacing the bandstand with a new town centre feature were the least popular choices.

The final question gave people an opportunity to select a traffic layout for Hayes based on four options:
- Existing layout – keep the pedestrian area in Station Road as it is, with no through traffic;
- Open Station Road to buses only – allow buses only to travel between Station Road, Coldharbour Lane, Botwell Lane and Pump Lane;
- Two-way traffic through Station Road – allow two-way traffic for all vehicles except heavy lorries to travel between Station Road, Coldharbour Lane Botwell Lane and Pump Lane;
- One-way system – open Station Road to allow all vehicles to travel northwards only to Coldharbour Lane, Botwell Lane and Pump Lane. All vehicles would also be allowed to go southwards only along Crown Close.

3.8 The pie charts below clearly show support to change the existing layout, with less than a third of respondents (31%) in favour of retaining the existing traffic layout.

3.9 Of the options set-out within the consultation, the most popular choice was to allow two-way traffic to travel between Station Road, Coldharbour Lane, Botwell Lane and Pump Lane (as shown in pie chart below).
4. Conclusions and next steps

4.1 Conclusions

4.1.1 The response to the Hayes Town Centre public consultation demonstrates the local appetite to reverse the decision of more than twenty years ago and re-open Station Road to through traffic.

4.1.2 This would provide opportunities to improve access for all modes (in particular re-introducing the bus routes through Station Road), promote growth in commercial activities including the night-time economy, reducing fears of crime, allowing major enhancements to the tired and outdated urban realm and building on the golden opportunity to support the other regeneration in the vicinity, both private and public – including Crossrail.

4.1.3 In tandem with Crossrail, there is significant investment underway or planned. Hayes is the former home of the world famous EMI record business and the ‘Old Vinyl factory’ forms an integral part of a major redevelopment project adjacent to the town centre. The radical mixed-use masterplan for the Blyth Road site was unanimously approved by Hillingdon Council on the 29th November 2012 and has now been referred to the Mayor of London for endorsement.

4.1.4 The "mini village" will contain up to 600 flats, provide offices for up to 4,000 workers, and include restaurants, a museum, a sustainable energy centre and playgrounds and landscaped gardens on the 17-acre site.

4.1.5 Canalside improvements have taken place alongside the Grand Union Canal and a major residential development called ‘High Point Village’ is now open, right next to the station.

4.1.6 There is therefore a very timely opportunity to reconfigure and overhaul the fabric of the town centre to complement these other developments.

4.2 Next Steps

4.2.1 A summary of the Hayes Town Centre Consultation will feature in the Jan/Feb 2013 edition of Hillingdon People and on the Council website. Respondents who gave contact details in order to be kept updated will be notified.

4.2.2 Council Officers will continue working with Transport for London to secure funding to take forward development of firm proposals. A decision on the success of a £4.5m bid is expected by Jan 2013.
Appendix 1
Consultation Documents
Appendix 2
Detailed response raw data