



**GROUNDWORK**  
CHANGING PLACES  
CHANGING LIVES

# Rethinking Victoria Road

## Consultation and Concept Report

September 2018 - March 2019



TEES VALLEY  
COMBINED  
AUTHORITY

TEES VALLEY MAYOR



HM Government

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Methodology.....	4
Phase 1 Community Engagement.....	4
Drop-in sessions .....	5
Community Ambassadors .....	5
Traffic Surveys .....	5
Phase 2 Community Engagement.....	6
Results from Phase 1 Community Engagement.....	8
Stickyworld – Phase 1 Results .....	8
Drop in Session Results .....	12
Survey Monkey Results .....	13
Other Feedback .....	13
Key themes from Phase 1 consultation.....	14
Traffic Survey Analysis.....	16
Concept plans .....	21
Results from Phase 2 Community Engagement.....	23
Stickyworld – Phase 2 Results .....	23
Public Consultation Events .....	24
Other stakeholder feedback .....	26
Key themes from Phase 2 Consultation .....	28
Conclusion .....	29
Appendices .....	31

## Groundwork Contact

Groundwork was commissioned to undertake a consultation exercise with the public and businesses in the Victoria Road area between September 2018 and March 2019. The contract for Groundwork's involvement concludes on 17 March 2019. This consultation and report was compiled and written by;

Groundwork North East,  
Clock Tower,  
South Park,  
Darlington,  
DL1 5TG  
[www.groundwork.org.uk/sites/northeast](http://www.groundwork.org.uk/sites/northeast)

## Introduction

Groundwork was awarded a tender in summer 2018 to undertake community planning events and consultation for the Victoria Road area on behalf of Darlington Borough Council.

Our commission will build on the vision for Darlington Station, and as part of that the Council wants to improve the access to the station. The improvements will aim to improve the journey to the station for those travelling by sustainable transport – walking, cycling and bus, whilst considering those arriving by car and taxi. Any proposals will also look at improving the public realm and capturing uplift for the local economy. Scheme designs will also seek to better meet the needs of disabled people.

We have been appointed to carry out a consultation process focusing on Victoria Road. The TVCA Sustainable Access to Employment Programme has provided some Development Funding to develop ideas, concepts and then designs for delivery in 2019/20 (subject to a successful application for funding). The scope of the work is Victoria Road near to the portico entrance into the station (but excluding any work on the station itself) to where it joins St Cuthbert's Way at the roundabout. It will also include all the junctions with the side roads and comments regarding those side roads will be considered. In addition, the back lane behind the northern side of the street (the Royal Mail delivery side) will be included as it is a thorough fare to the station and currently is the signed cycle route.

The first stage of the process will be to identify what issues people have with the existing layout and function of the street and any ideas they have for improvements. This information will then be used to create suggestions and concepts for a second stage of consultation will take place to get feedback on those concepts.

The aim is to engage with as many people as possible who live, work or use the street, including local residents and businesses as well as those arriving/departing the Rail Station. Key stakeholders will also be contacted to provide input including taxi operators, bus operators, organisations associated with the Rail Station, disability groups and so on. We will also need to take professional advice from colleagues to ensure that the final designs are deliverable – this will include issues around the function of the adopted highway; land ownership; environmental health; ecology; heritage; safety.

This report provides an overview of the consultation, the processes undertaken and the results of the feedback from residents, businesses and wider community. The concept designs and rationale behind these. Feedback from the consultation of these designs and finally recommendations for the Council, based on feedback of people engaged.

## Methodology

Desktop research was undertaken in late summer 2018 to identify the boundaries of the targeted consultation and the businesses in that area. This allowed us to identify and initiate discussions with residents / businesses / and potential community ambassadors to gain greater insight into the communities, and to start to identify potential issues and concerns as well as people's suggestions and ideas.

### Phase 1 Community Engagement

We initially made contact by posting a letter to all residents within an agreed boundary (see **Appendix 1**). We explained we were acting on behalf of Darlington Borough Council, the purpose of us making contact and that we would be inviting residents to engage through a variety of methods to investigate their aspirations, needs and motivations (a copy of the letter can be found in **Appendix 2**). We also contacted the local Councillors to explain the project and shared information of how they could be involved and that they would be updated throughout the project.

Survey Monkey and Stickyworld survey tools were created to allow people to engage on-line. Stickyworld is an online engagement tool which was used to allow people to make comments on specific locations or issues on Victoria Road that they felt were important. Survey monkey is an online survey platform, which is widely used and also provides analysis of responses. It was felt that using both online tools added to the depth of data gathered.

Survey Monkey asked people about how they used Victoria Road – different versions were available for residents and businesses (Copies of these questions can be found in **Appendix 3**). Stickyworld was requested to be used by Darlington Borough Council to engage with people who use Victoria Road to be able to virtually post sticker on to maps and 360-degree photos and allow comments to be made. For example, participants could select a walking sticker and place it on a crossing point which currently they may feel is unsafe, and then allowed them to explain their concerns and potential improvements. This was a new exciting tool used within the consultation process and allowed users to be more interactive, giving them opportunities to add their own images as well as comments.

A map of the boundaries was agreed with Darlington Borough Council to define which properties received a letter and were door-knocked and which properties only received a letter. Approximately 1390 properties received letters about the consultation. For the inner consultation boundary every property was door-knocked by a Groundwork member of staff between 22<sup>nd</sup> November and 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018. If residents were in, they were invited to complete an initial questionnaire. They were also provided with the Stickyworld link to complete in their own time. If people were too busy or didn't answer the door a slip was put through the letter box providing the opportunity to complete the questionnaire online or via the phone. Residents were also reminded of the "drop in" sessions being held.

Businesses were visited, introducing them to the consultation; they were provided with a letter (found in **Appendix 2**) and re-visited by staff during the same dates as residents, and invited to complete the questionnaires, either in person or online and invited them and their staff to attend the "drop in" sessions. Businesses were also asked to display a poster advertising the drop-in sessions and the online consultation links.

The on-line surveys, Stickyworld, and the posters were shared on several local Facebook pages and shared by Darlington Borough Council and other organisations and individuals.

People using Victoria Road (street participants) were engaged and provided slips with the on-line consultation link on to invite them to give their views. Information slips were also given to people on the platforms at the station to engage those who use Victoria Road.

Residents from a block of social housing just behind Victoria Road were engaged by attending one of their weekly activities. Many of these residents are elderly or vulnerable but were keen to engage (notes can be found in **Appendix 4**).

## Drop-in sessions

Two drop-in sessions were held at the beginning and end of the initial consultation at the Atisha Kadampa Meditation Centre (Buddhist Centre) located at the end of Victoria Road. These were held on Thursday 22 November and Wednesday 5 December 2018. This provided the opportunity for those who did not have internet access to come along and share their views. The sessions were attended by a mixture of residents and business owners. 11 people attended Thursday 22 November and approximately 21 attended the 5 December session. Along with the drop-in sessions and on-line consultation engagement people also emailed or wrote to us to express their views. These comments have been collated and can be found in **Appendix 5**.

During stage two of community engagement Groundwork undertook an assessment of the official cycle route from town to the station as well as:

- Engaged with the Clifton Road Medical Centre
- Contacted Arriva bus service
- Contacted A1 taxis
- Engaged with the Police's Architectural Liaison Officer
- Contacted Royal Mail.

Although several attempts were made to engage Arriva, A1 taxis and Royal Mail verbally and in writing Groundwork did not receive any response. The Police and the Medical centre have continued to engage throughout the whole process of the consultation and they agreed to share the information internally to colleagues.

## Community Ambassadors

Part of the proposal submitted to Darlington Borough Council was to provide opportunities to engage Community Ambassadors, who would help promote the project and speak to other local residents and businesses to gather further views and be more involved in the development of the consultation. We know this is a successful way to promote what is trying to be achieved within a project and create greater buy-in and ownership from local people and businesses.

All who were contacted directly, residents (approximately 1390 properties) and businesses or completed online consultation were invited to provide their contact details if they would like to receive updates or become an ambassador. These ambassadors were contacted and information was shared with them via email or letter providing them with posters and leaflets about further consultation

7 people expressed a desire to become an ambassador.

## Traffic Surveys

Traffic surveys were commissioned to be undertaken on two dates; during a cattle market day and one when the market was not in use. Both were undertaken on weekdays. This traffic information, capturing usage and peak times along with feedback from residents and businesses was used to inform the concept designs for the next stage of consultation.

## Phase 2 Community Engagement

Community Project Managers and the Landscape Design team collated the information from the initial consultation stages and traffic surveys to highlight key issues and look at ways to address these. Concept plans were created and these were used for this stage of consultation. The concept plans were based on structural improvements for Victoria Road, as the landscape team felt until these larger issues were addressed, the secondary issues such as shop frontages and social behaviour changes and enforcement would not address the initial primary underlying issues.

Public consultations were held at the Dolphin Centre on the following dates:

- Saturday, 19th January from 10.30am to 1.30pm
- Wednesday, 23rd January from 3.30 to 7pm.

The days and times were selected to try to allow as many people to engage as possible. These events were promoted in the following ways;

- In the letters sent to all properties in November;
- Posters with businesses along Victoria Road;
- An article was included in the One Darlington magazine which goes into every residence in Darlington;
- Darlington Borough Council shared the poster promoting the events on the screens in the Dolphin Centre;
- Reminders were sent to all those previously engaged who provided email addresses in Stages 1 & 2;
- A press release was issued by Darlington Borough Council;
- The Community Ambassadors were asked to help promote the events for us, through their local contacts
- On several local social media pages.

The public consultation at the Dolphin Centre displayed the concept proposals and a 3D plan of Victoria Road was available to help visualise the area. This was a tool which allowed people to highlight precise locations linked to their comments. Community Project Managers attended the event, explained the plans and noted comments made by the public. Leaflets were also provided on the day with the link to the next stage of Stickyworld consultation (**Appendix 6**). This showed the same concept plans as displayed at the public consultation and provided the opportunity to comment for those who were unable to attend or thought of more comments after the events.



After the public consultation events the Stickyworld link was sent to everyone who provided a contact, this included both residential and businesses. Community Project Managers attempted to visit all businesses to share their views. Those who were available were provided with posters to share in store and through their own social media. Groundwork updated their own and other local social media pages with the up to date Stickyworld link for completion.

The second stage of consultation on Stickyworld displaying the concept plans were live for two and a half weeks after the public events.

## Results from Phase 1 Community Engagement

People had the opportunity to engage initially either face to face, through on-line surveys or attending the drop-in sessions. In summary:

- Initial engagement 1394 houses received letters
- 377 door knocked – properties were visited at least three times each.
- 8 residents spoke to us on the door knock.
- 5 residents spoken to on the door knock wanted to think about their responses, so asked to complete on-line or come to events.
- Individual properties who engaged on the doorstep were given a number of options to engage. Individual property locations were not recorded, if participants engaged through on-line surveys it was their choice on whether to give their contact details.
- 32 Survey Monkey questionnaires completed in total.
- 229 comments made on the initial Stickyworld questionnaire.
- 37 slips with online links given to people on the street.
- 56 properties and businesses were consulted on Victoria Road.
- Businesses visited at least three times to encourage engagement, spoken to face to face, including the takeaways.
- Hot spot areas for those engaged were along Victoria Road, Waverley Terrace, Bedford Street and Herbert Street.
- Drop in session attendance figures -
  - Thursday 22 November 11 people attended.
  - Wednesday 5 December approximately 21 people attended.

More detailed overviews of these are provided below.

### Stickyworld – Phase 1 Results

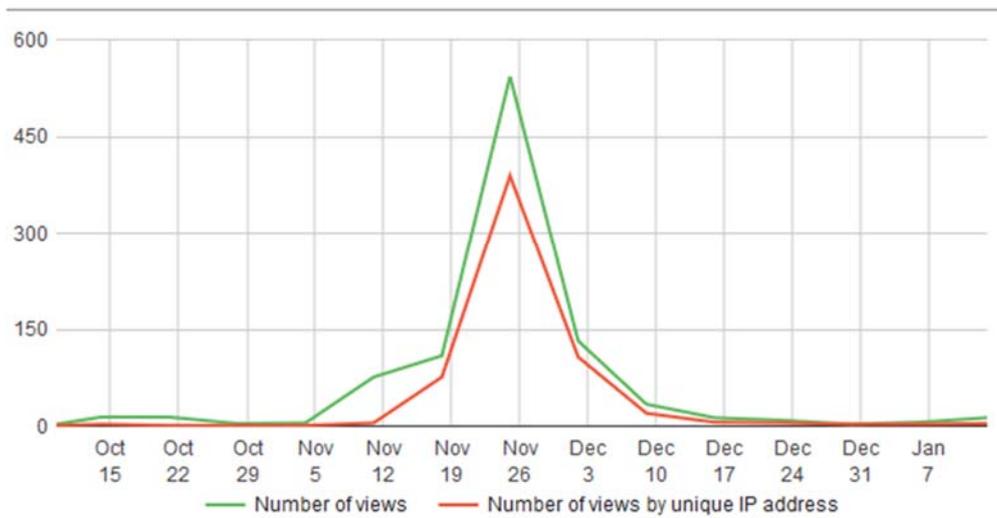
<https://victoriaroad.stickyworld.com/home/explore> was the link provided for consultation stage one and two.

All of the following points relates to the initial engagement from the above link.

#### Public Questionnaire

The public survey was opened 788 times and 229 stickers / comments were made. People had the opportunity and were encouraged to subscribe which means they have provided us their contact details and could be updated with any changes and further information with regards to the consultation.

### Views over time



The way Stickyworld is set up we are unable to state how many people have used it. We can state how many times the survey has been opened, but unless people subscribe we can't be sure whether one person has opened it 10 times, or if 10 people have opened it once. As a new tool to many of the people Groundwork consulted were pleased with the number of people who accessed and engaged with the page.

#### Issues and Barriers

Participants had several sticker icons they could use to highlight issues and barriers. These icons were;

- |   |                       |   |                  |
|---|-----------------------|---|------------------|
|  | Walking               |  | Safety           |
|  | Anti-social behaviour |  | Bike             |
|  | Cleanliness           |  | Public Transport |
|  | Car                   |  | General comment  |

This information on Stickyworld was collated into several plans with numbered spots referring to the numbered comments, under each of the sticker themes available, these can be found in **Appendix 7**. An example of which is here;



A summary of these results are as follows;

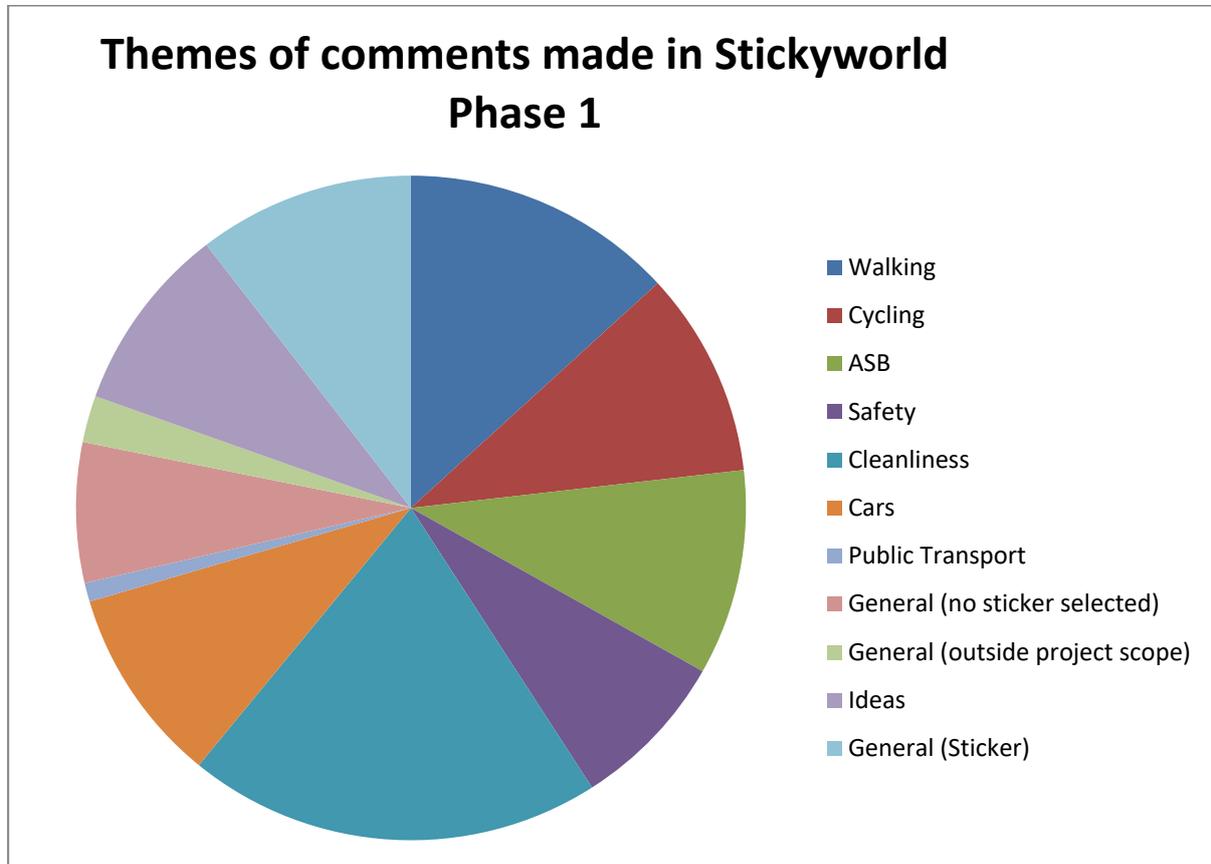
- Walking – many of the comments referred to traffic driving too fast and examples of bad parking resulting in making it difficult and dangerous to cross the road, areas specifically referenced were the Zebra crossing near the Buddhist centre; Clifton Road junction, near Royal Mail and at the station entrance.
- Anti-social behaviour – The main focus of comments referred to anti-social behaviour related to drug and alcohol users, in addition to groups of men 'hanging' around making the road feel intimidating or threatening to walk along at various points of the street and at different times of the day.
- Cleanliness – Trapped litter, fly tipping, overflowing bins and the area looking shabby, dirty, unappealing and neglected were all regular comments. Back lanes are subject to fly-tipping and bags of rubbish. Bins need to be reviewed as many are overflowing. Grubby pavements from takeaways, broken glass and dog dirt were highlighted. Several comments were made about empty properties, potential for artwork in signage / on blank building walls and whether shop frontages could be improved as this would make a high visual impact.
- Car – Participants highlighted that traffic is often speeding and that the area could benefit from traffic calming measures. Parking is an issue, particularly referring to the areas near the Post Office, resulting in blocked back lanes and congestion. Requests for the roads to be resurfaced were also made, particularly in the back lanes.
- Safety – Several comments were made about fast traffic and cars not stopping at the zebra crossing making it unsafe and difficult to cross and cyclists were left to feel intimidated on Victoria Road itself, accessing at the latest point possible. Some areas were also highlighted as poorly lit, making it feel unsafe and a place that they would not want to walk through at night.
- Bike – A dedicated cycleway would be ideal. Comments refer to the area being hostile to cyclists, with fast traffic, poor driving and areas having "social safety" issues, which are poorly lit, potholed surfaces, dirty routes and anti-social behaviour along routes that are not overlooked which result in discouraging cyclists to use the existing facilities.
- Public transport – Suggestions to subsidise public transport instead of subsidising parking.

### Ideas

People were asked to give ideas and comments of how to improve Victoria Road. The individual ideas and comments can be found in **Appendix 7**.

Most comments recognised that the view upon leaving the station from Victoria Road needs to be improved. This was proposed by:

- Promoting/celebrating the rail heritage and improving signage to other locations and businesses
- Provide more vintage lighting in keeping with the history of the area
- Add more greenery where possible
- Rationalise street furniture
- Improve standard pedestrian pathways and pedestrian experiences
- Improve cycle routes and cycle path surfaces
- Increase enforcement around anti-social behaviour
- Enforce misuse of parking and littering
- Address social issues to improve overall appearance and feeling of the area.



### Business questionnaire

The business link was opened 13 times and 4 stickers were used to highlight anti-social behaviour; dangerous crossing points and cleanliness along Victoria Road.

An example of a comment from Business Stickyworld page;



This crossing point near Victoria Embankment has a car sticker placed on it to highlight this as an issue / barrier. No comment was left

### Drop in Session Results

Feedback from the initial drop in sessions, talking to residents, people travelling through Victoria Road and businesses over and above what has been captured in Stickyworld or Survey Monkey show a cross section of comments but repeating concerns or issues about the area. Comments recorded from door-knocking, street surveys and comments sent via post or email are included with these results. It was noticed the engagement on the business on-line surveys was low and addressed this by revisiting them and asking them specifically what their concerns were and if they had suggestions of improvements. The full comments from the drop-in sessions can be found in appendix 5. We have summarised the main points below.

Parking was a common topic highlighting businesses and residents having difficulty parking; illegal and dangerous parking; the need for parking around Royal Mail needing to be reviewed as the current system is not working well and the need for a greater need of enforcement– whether illegal/ dangerous parking or misuse of parking permit areas. The speed of traffic and the difficulties of crossing the road at several locations were highlighted. The need to improve road, path and back lane surfaces was raised – several areas were highlighted as in a poor state of repair. The desire for better signage and designated cycle path was raised.

Rubbish was highlighted as a big issue for the area, better / bigger bins, more frequent emptying, ripped bags and better enforcement of business bin storage and dog dirt in back lanes was raised. Requests for more street cleaners to collect “loose” litter and better support for Street Champions were made. Several comments were raised about takeaways pouring fat into the gully's, increasing the risk of flooding.

Suggestions were made to improve shop frontages; add artwork with rail heritage links; promote the area to try to encourage better quality shops and discourage takeaways (too many takeaways on this street was a reoccurring complaint); rationalise street furniture; have better signage and add more greenery to the area. Examples of other places which have undergone similar processes to renovate the area were given for consideration; the area around York Station and Sheffield street art.

Participants highlighted how the area looks dull and uninviting and has lost the “village” feel that it used to have – that there is a requirement to improve the buildings in the area. Requests for better lighting, and even a suggestion to consider having Christmas lights up Victoria Road were made.

It was quite apparent at these drop-in sessions that there is a strong desire to see the area improve, people have enjoyed living and working here and want to make changes/ improvements to the area to achieve its full potential.

## Survey Monkey Results

Two questionnaires were set up to establish base-line data: one targeting residents and one for businesses. We established the businesses survey had a poor uptake but noticed that some responses in the "resident" questionnaire were from businesses. A summary of the results follows, full results can be found in **Appendix 8**.

### Residents' surveys

31 surveys were completed.

Over half of the participants lived nearby. 70.9% visited Victoria Road every day and 16.3% a few times a week. People use Victoria Road throughout the day and night. 32.2% people travel through Victoria Road by walking and 32.2% travel through by car and the same percentage travel via car and walking. Only one participant travelled via bike through Victoria Road. The top three reasons participants had for visiting Victoria Road were going to the Railway Station; going to the Town Centre or going to the Post Office.

The most common responses to what people felt the main barriers / issues for the people using Victoria Road were included parking; traffic; poor state of repair for houses; litter; poor pavements and lighting; a desire for a safe cycle route; diversity in shops; anti-social behaviour and difficulties crossing the roads. When asked about safety concerns participants highlighted similar issues; difficulty in getting parked; bad or illegal parking and insufficient enforcement; litter; difficulty in crossing the roads; anti-social behaviour – both real and perceived; it being dangerous to cycle and several issues associated with the cattle market. A comment of the overall appearance of Victoria Road included –

"It's one of the worst Roads in Darlington, yet this is what represents Darlington to most of our visitors. Just a few simple changes, would have a massive impact."

Participants stated that the area needs a facelift; litter and general cleanliness in the area is poor; paths and road surfaces need improving, the road is busy and parking causes several problems. When participants were asked what they liked about Victoria Road there were several negative responses but positive points included the proximity to facilities; the historic buildings; the opportunity to make this a gateway to the Town Centre. 83.9% of participants do not like how Victoria Road looks at present. 90.3% wished to be kept informed about this project. 23.3% of participants stated they would consider being a Community Ambassador for this project and a further 36.7% wished to find out more before deciding.

### Business surveys

1 survey was completed.

Most of their customers travel to the business via car. They feel most of the business is generated through Facebook. They feel the area is scruffy and doesn't have enough parking. The area could be improved by:

- Providing more car parking
- Creating more social areas like coffee shops and bistros
- Introducing one-way traffic,
- Tidy paths and a general tidy up of all shops and houses and to encourage more independent businesses to come to the Road.

The manager drives to work, but their staff walk. They would like to be kept informed.

## Other Feedback

We consulted the Doctors Surgery; Police and an Experienced Cyclist. Their feedback includes;

### Doctors;

- Old people feel intimidated where the bus stops are situated, they need to be moved to a better place
- Parking outside of Sainsbury's (Clifton Road) needs to be addressed its dangerous for people crossing

- Would be really nice to feel safe in a well-lit street at night
- The traffic light crossing is in the wrong place, needs moving to somewhere safer especially for disabled people.
- Parking is massive issue for patients especially with mobility issues
- Steep banks can't get up or down really bad for the elderly in Winter months
- Could have traffic cops out from 5pm until 6pm for those parking illegally, some park over-night in a two-hour parking bay
- More litter and dog bins are needed
- No more takeaways on Victoria Road please
- Maybe a mini roundabout for the traffic flow /lower the speed limit on Victoria Road
- Nice signage to let people know where to go when they leave Victoria Road.  
Trees and lighting would improve the appearance, example of Duke Street given.
- Pot hole need filling in, roads tarmacking, new pavements
- CCTV is needed.

#### **Police;**

The only traffic management issues associated with this area are connected to the Cattle Mart, involving queueing traffic. The Architectural Liaison Officer reinforced the comments about the broken paving highlighted through the drop-in feedback above and the amount of dirt and litter in the area.

**An experienced Cyclist** undertook a test ride up Victoria Road. Their feedback is as follows:

'I've ridden the route and it is very poor. Some of that is down to the nature of Victoria Road as it's narrow, busy and has lots of street parking which means there's lots of car's and delivery vans coming and going all of which is far from ideal. The rest is down to poor maintenance and planning, for instance there are no signs directing you towards the town centre as you leave the station. The only sign I could see directed you to Morton Park. The next sign which directs you to turn right to avoid the busy roundabout at the bottom of Victoria Road is on the right-hand side of the road, has been disfigured and is very easy to miss (which I did) as you are cycling downhill and can go quite fast and oncoming traffic can block it.'

'It doesn't get much better when cycling from the bottom of Victoria road, the first sign is a little unclear as to a left turn or straight on. This is further compounded by the damaged sign at the bottom of the cycle path. From here you follow a back ally to another damaged sign where you are directed right and onto Victoria Road. You then have to brave the busy and narrow road to the train station. I saw several cyclists just peddling up the footpath whilst I was there but this gets quite congested around the doctors' surgery area with post boxes and street furniture.'

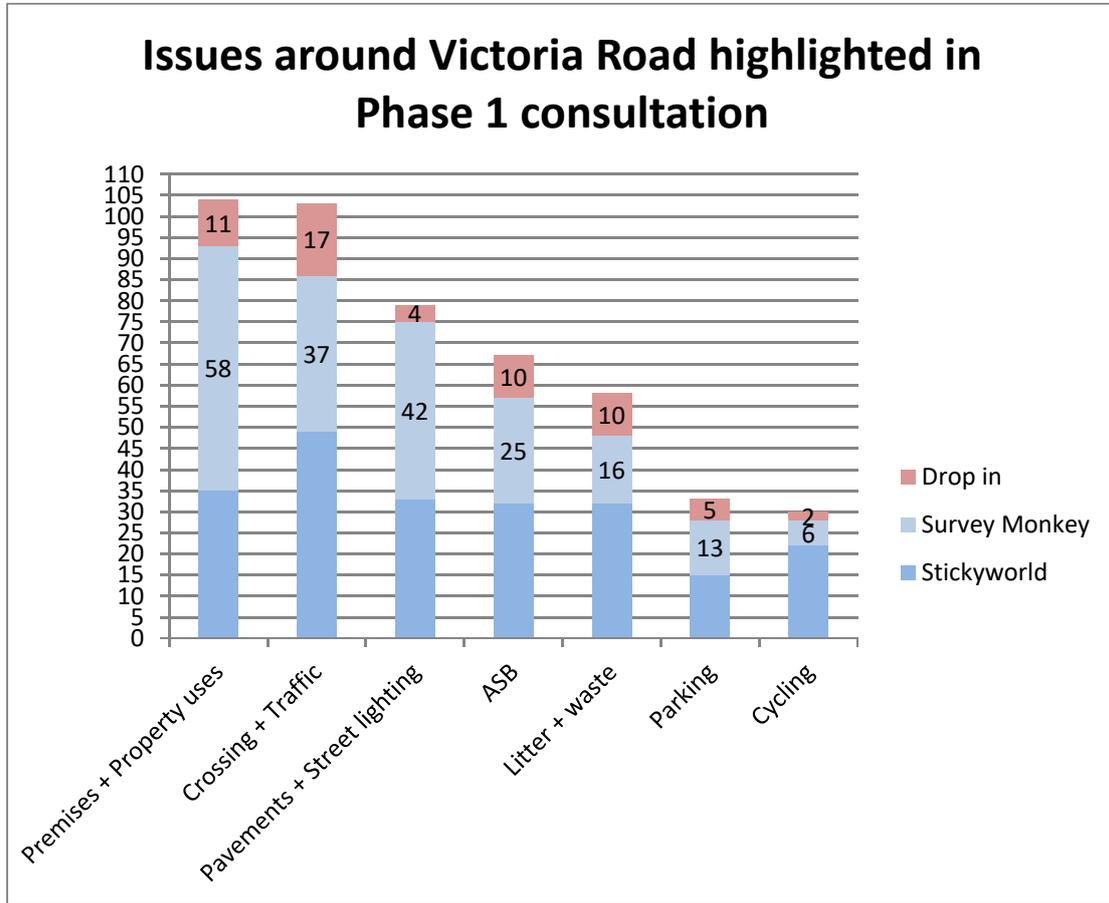
### **Key themes from Phase 1 consultation**

People had several opportunities to engage in the initial consultation; either through on-line tools or face to face with street surveys; door-knocking and two drop-in sessions. There was repetition of the feedback being relayed via the different engagements.

We have been told the area suffers from heavy and fast traffic making people feel unsafe to cross or cycle in the area; parking is a big issue ranging from illegal parking to dangerous parking and misuse of parking permit areas. There is poor enforcement as far as the public can see. The area could particularly benefit from better lighting; improvements to footpath and road surfaces.

Suggestions were made to have incentives to improve shop frontages; that buildings should be encouraged to retain the heritage elements; other heritage elements could be added including artwork highlighting the rich heritage of the area, incorporated into better visitor signage, empty shops and blank walls.

Better bins would benefit the area; along with more greenery. People care about this area and are passionate to see change. However, without social issues being addressed, the physical infrastructure will not flourish – better enforcement around anti-social behaviour issues linked to drug and alcohol misuse; along with better enforcement around littering, general cleanliness linked to the surroundings of the takeaways and parking are also needed. Many of the issues highlighted in combination give a general unpleasant perception of the area and is not an attractive thoroughfare.



Examples of comments grouped under these headings include;

**Premises + Property uses** - Uses of buildings, Maintenance of frontages, Signage of Businesses, Owner / Tenants of buildings

**Crossings + Traffic** Safety of Crossings, Speed of traffic, Amount of traffic

**Pavement + Street Lighting** - Street lighting, Surfacing, Street furniture, Highway signage, Traffic control (Bollards)

**ASB** Intimidating groups of people, drugs and alcohol issues

**Litter + Waste** Rubbish, Animal faeces, Human waste, Fly tipping, Broken glass

**Parking** Lack of Residential Parking, Lack of loading bays, Illegal Parking, Position of current parking, Lack of parking for commercial use

**Cycle Safety** No segregated cycle path, Surfacing of cycle route, Lighting of cycle route, Gradient of Road/Paving, Obstructions, Traffic

## Traffic Survey Analysis

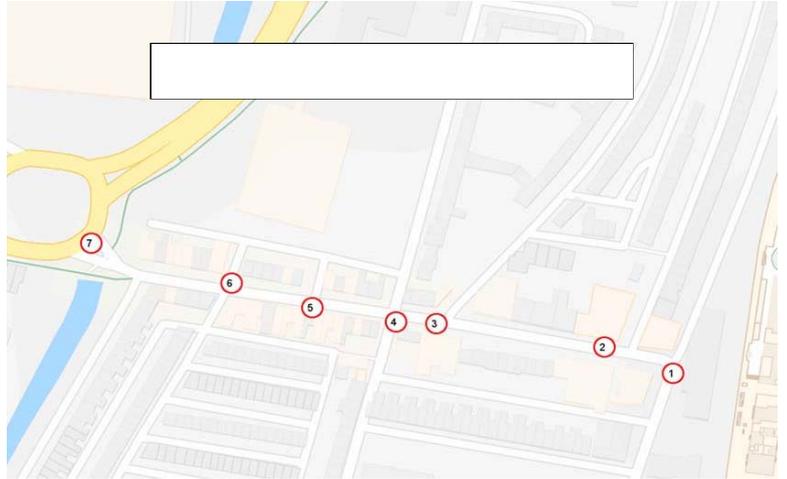
Following the initial consultation stage, a traffic survey was carried out to gain a greater understanding of the amount and types of vehicles using Victoria Road.

### Analysis & evaluation of surveys carried out by Tracsis

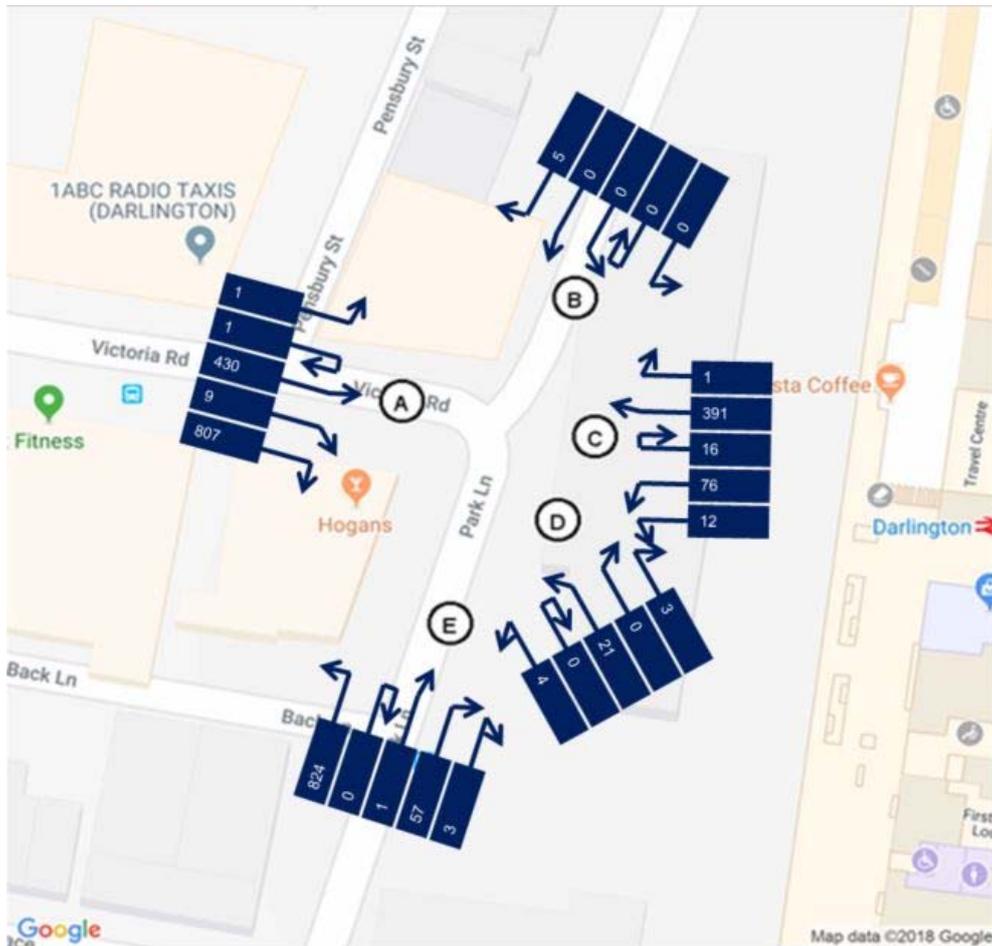
Dates of survey: 6 Dec 2018 (cattle market day) and 17 Dec 2018

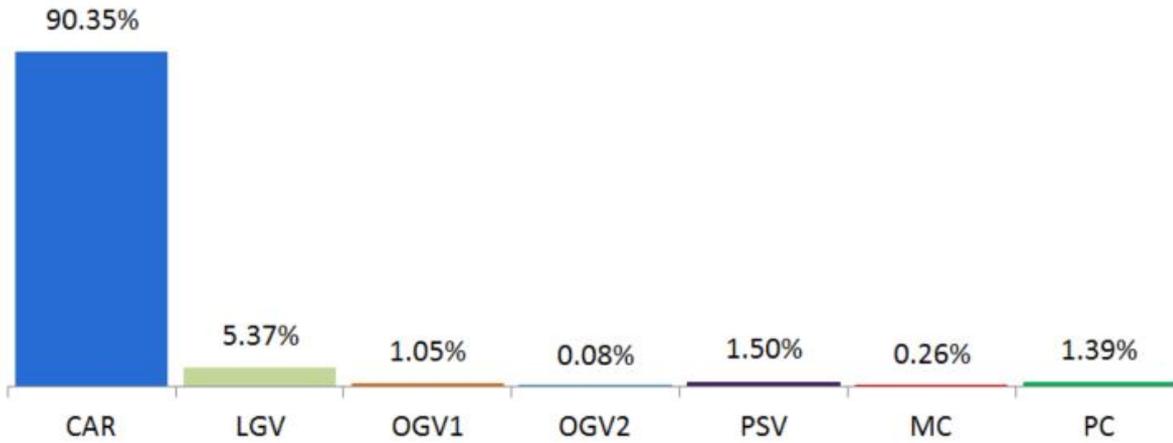
Times: 7.00 -10.00 and 16.00-19.00

An independent traffic survey company surveyed 7 sites along Victoria road as shown on the attached plan: from site 1 at the Station end to Site 7 at the Feetham's roundabout, and each road intersection in-between. Recorded Junction Turning Counts (JTC) for 6 Dec are higher in every category



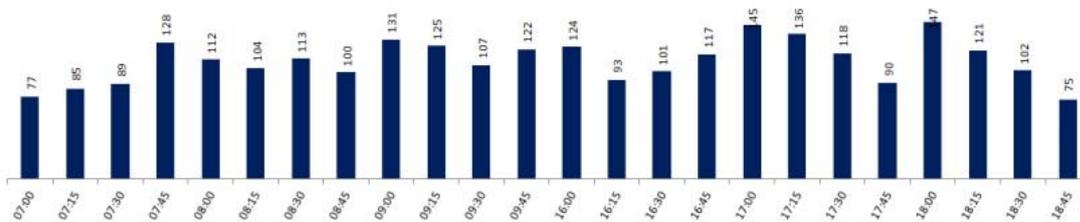
Junction Turning Counts were presented graphically in terms of total numbers turning in each direction from each 'arm' of the junction, as shown opposite for Site 1 – Train Station end of Victoria Road and as a graph of total vehicle numbers. Refer to Appendix B for Junction Turning Count analysis for Sites 1-7





Percentage of vehicle by class

- CAR Cars, taxis, minibuses, motorhomes and smaller ambulances
- LGV Light goods vehicle: transit vans, small pick-ups; single rear wheels
- OGV1 Ordinary goods vehicle larger rigid vehicles with two or three axles
- OGV2 Rigid vehicles with four or more axles and all articulated vehicles
- PSV Public service vehicles and works buses
- MC Motorcycles
- PC Pedal cycles



Total number of vehicles per interval

In all traffic counts cars dominate the vehicle type: in Site 1, shown above, over 90% of vehicle numbers are cars, with light goods vehicles (LGVs) second at 5.3%.

The key findings from evaluating the Junction Turning Counts are presented below: a summary of traffic flows along Victoria road is followed by an assessment of the three main junctions.

### Summary of traffic flowing East and West along Victoria road 6 Dec 2018

	Site 1 Station end Victoria Rd		Site 4 Junction Clifton Rd and Victoria Rd		Site 7 Roundabout end Victoria Rd	
	Westbound	Eastbound	Westbound	Eastbound	Westbound	Eastbound
7-10am	604	611	1033	950	1246	1116
4-7pm	638	637	1221	1018	1448	1260
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1242</b>	<b>1248</b>	<b>2254</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>2694</b>	<b>2376</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2490</b>		<b>4222</b>		<b>5070</b>	

The above figures show that traffic flows in the lower section of Victoria road – from Clifton Road junction down to the roundabout – are twice that seen in the upper section – from Clifton Road up to the Station

#### Site 1 Station end Victoria Road

The peak times are 7.45am to 10am and 4.45pm to 6.30pm. Highest hourly peak flows are:

- 162 vehicles per hour from Park Lane to Victoria Road between 8 and 9am
- 142 vehicles per hour from Victoria road to Park Lane between 5 and 6pm

The data (over the 6-hour period) shows that vehicle movements along Victoria Road in both directions are 50% higher than along Park Lane. Of the 1248 vehicles arriving from Victoria Road, one-third (430) are turning into the Station. A slightly lower number (391) return along Victoria Road, with the remaining turning onto Park Lane. Relatively few vehicles (57) turn from Park Lane into the Station.

#### Site 4: Junction Clifton Road and Victoria Road

This junction has an impact on traffic flows in the lower half of Victoria Road: The traffic totals\* here are 70% higher (4222) than the Station end of Victoria road (2490). This is due primarily to traffic joining from Clifton Road (703) with a small number from Park Place (292)

\*combining flows in both directions for the 6-hour period

#### Site 7: Roundabout

The composition of vehicle types has changed slightly: LGVs have risen to 7.9% of the total, and the proportion of cars has fallen by a similar amount to 87.8%. This might be explained by delivery vehicles reaching their destination at some point along or off Victoria Road before arriving at the Station end.

The traffic at the roundabout end of Victoria Road is over twice the volume than at the Station end (5070 over 6 hr period compared with 2490). Although primarily due to traffic turning into or out of Clifton Road (1326) with a small number from Park Place (543), the contributions of other side roads (Victoria embankment, Bedford Street and Park Street) are significant.

Between the Clifton Road junction and the roundabout traffic increases by one-fifth (from 4222 to 5070) due to traffic to and from adjoining streets preferring access via the roundabout end rather than the station end: Victoria Embankment (199), Bedford Street (567), and Park Street (357)

## Pedestrian movement analysis by Video Observation

### Site 1 Train Station on Victoria Road

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018 7.00 – 10.00 and 16.00 to 19.00

The Park Lane entrance to the station has 2 separate pedestrian access points with separate vehicular entry and exit points in between them. Numbers of pedestrians entering and exiting the four entry points to the Station are shown in the table below.

	Entry A		Entry B		Car park entrance A		Car park entrance B		TOTALS	
	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit
7-9 am	238	57	19	1	103	32	159	11	519	101
4-7pm	216	401	8	9	61	218	39	51	324	679
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>920</b>

More people leave the station within these hours than enter it (920 exiting, 843 entering). This may be explained by the survey timing; perhaps entry to the station is spread across a wider time period (e.g. arriving for trains earlier than 7am)

**Entry A** (north pedestrian arch) is the most popular access point with total 454 pedestrians entering (446 adults, 8 children) and 597 exiting (581 adults, 16 children)

**Entry B** (south pedestrian arch) has few users (only 27 entering and 10 exiting)

The car park entrances are well used by pedestrians, but with differing patterns of usage:

**Car Park entrance 1** has more people exiting (250) than entering (164)

**Car park entrance 2** has more people entering (196) than exiting (63)

A possible explanation may be the tendency for users of the Park Lane car park to walk into the station at entrance 2 and leave by entrance 1. As might be expected the daily pattern is for more pedestrians to enter the station between 7 and 10am (517) than to leave (101). With the reverse true for the period 4-7pm: entry total 324 and exit total 679

### Site 3: Junction of Hargreave Terrace and Victoria Road, adjacent to the Clifton Court Medical Practice.

	Victoria Road west of junction		Hargreave Terrace		Victoria Road east of junction	
	N'bound	S'bound	E'bound	W'bound	N'bound	S'bound
7-10am	53	52	156	169	24	41
4-7pm	63	64	150	200	19	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>65</b>

The numbers of pedestrians crossing Hargreave terrace are significantly more than those crossing Victoria road: pedestrians walking up and down Victoria road will make up the bulk of these numbers.

Few children make up these numbers (8 crossing Hargreave Terrace each way).

**Site 6: Junction of Bedford Street and Victoria road**

Pedestrians crossing west of the junction

Total 233 cross Northbound and 225 southbound.

**Site 1 Darlington Station Car Park (drop off car park within the station building) All classes of vehicles**

	Entrance 1		Entrance 2	
	In	Out	In	Out
7-10am	294	2	1	234
4-7pm	257	3	1	259
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>493</b>

The data indicates that the IN and OUT directions are generally respected.

Analysis of arrival and destination of vehicles is summarised in the above section on Junction Turning Counts Site 1, which indicates that a large majority of vehicles entering and leaving the station do so from / to Victoria Road.

Further information about the traffic survey results can be found in **Appendix 9**.

## Concept plans

A visual survey of Victoria Road and adjacent streets, combined with feedback from the initial consultation, cycling test ride and the results of the traffic survey identified the key issues impacting on Victoria road. These are set out on the existing Layout plan in appendix 10 and include:

- Traffic dominates the street in terms of volume and speed making crossing the road hazardous to pedestrians particularly at the Feetham's roundabout end
- Zebra crossing does not always feel a safe place to cross
- Cyclists don't feel safe on the road and sometimes ride on the pavement
- Parking is insufficient especially around the Post office pick-up point
- Back lanes are an eyesore with over-flowing bins, litter, pot holes and ASB
- General appearance of street: litter, broken pavements, run-down shop frontages

Concept plans, developed to address those issues relating to the public realm layout, were used to generate discussion at the January consultation events.

Shown in **Appendix 10**, the Consultation plans included inspiration from other street improvement schemes and ideas for changing the layout of Victoria Road and adjacent streets.

Main themes we identified were:

### Strengthening the link to the Town Centre:

Darlington Train station is an important arrival point for visitors to Darlington and Victoria Road can be a visitor's first impression of the Town. Victoria road has an important public realm function beyond the movement of traffic. It serves a community function as a space for social interaction and a gateway to the town centre. A clean, attractive and legible street will provide a safe and welcoming experience for both residents and visitors.

Use of materials and street furniture should respect the character of the built environment.



### Creating a multi-user friendly space:

Wide pavements, well managed traffic, provision for cyclists, good lighting contribute to well-designed, people-friendly streets. Reducing clutter through minimising the use of barriers and street furniture.

Placing a high priority on meeting the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users will create an inclusive and sustainable streetscape.

Reflecting and facilitating pedestrian desire lines within the street design.



### Improving Green Infrastructure:

Street trees have a vital contribution to enhancing the public realm, providing visual interest, shading, improved air quality and biodiversity. Integrating sustainable drainage measures into public realm improvements: tree



pits, kerbside planting and rain gardens can contribute to management of surface water and flooding.

The concept 1 proposals included the following:

**Station Plaza:**

- pedestrian priority zone
- gathering / socialising space
- improved lighting
- one-way traffic
- cycle lane
- dedicated drop off zone
- taxi rank provision
- new bus stop

**Station Approach:**

- widened footpath
- landscape strip & street trees
- one-way traffic
- two-way cycle lane
- retained car parking

**Waverley Terrace:**

- one-way traffic
- cycle lane
- resident permit parking
- strengthened landscape buffer strip

**Clifton Road intersection:**

- diagonal pedestrian signal-controlled crossing to replace existing crossing
- raised table to slow traffic
- cycle lanes
- planting boxes

**Backhouse Street intersection:**

- raised table to slow traffic
- parking on side road
- cycle lane diverted to back lane
- sections of back lane made one-way for vehicular traffic

**Feetham's Roundabout end:**

- road narrowed to slow traffic
- redesigned central refuge and crossing point
- landscape strip & trees

Concept 2 included all the above with the proposal of 20mph along the upper end of Victoria road and all side roads

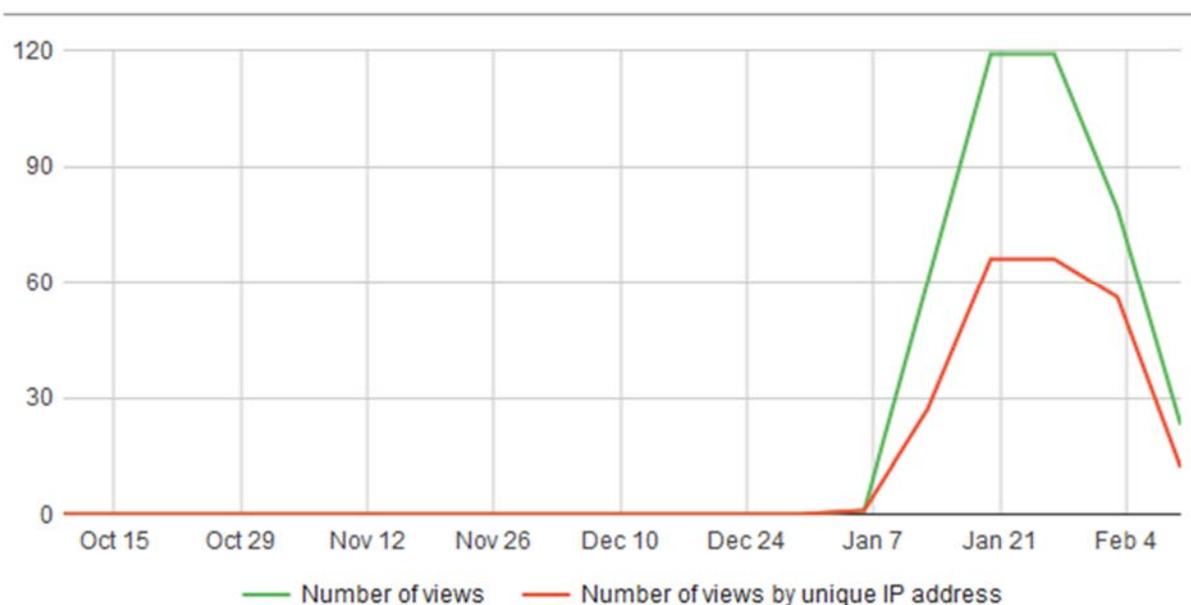
## Results from Phase 2 Community Engagement

### Stickyworld – Phase 2 Results

<https://victoriaroad.stickyworld.com/room/presentation?roomid=5#landing/home> was used for stage 2 consultation.

The public survey was opened 329 times and 94 stickers / comments were made. (A spreadsheet of people who wish to be kept informed about this project will be sent separately to Darlington Borough Council in a secure way to comply to GDPR guidelines).

### Views over time



The second link for Stickyworld included the same concept plans as those displayed at the public consultation events at the Dolphin Centre. It gave those who could not attend, or those who wanted to add more after the event, the opportunity to leave comments.

Comments were made about the plans which had been displayed at the community events. The plans and full comments from Stickyworld can be found in **Appendix 11**.

### Draft Concept Plan 1

Feedback was made that these proposals must be linked with the Station master plan proposals and the plans for the Cattle Market site, as they all connect. One response highlighted that businesses they had spoken to feel this process would have a negative impact on trade due to added restrictions on traffic.

The following concerns and comments were made in relation to Draft concept plan 1:

- Concerns were highlighted by several participants about the concept of the one-way system. Concerns over increased traffic, difficulty turning into and out of Waverley Terrace; increased risk to residents and their vehicles and increase of pollution were highlighted if the one-way system is implemented
- If the raised table is installed, this will either be damaged by the HGV's or drivers will find another route through residential areas, increasing traffic in other areas. This would however mean the traffic would be using several alternative roads rather than just Victoria Road.
- Litter enforcement was highlighted as an ongoing issue.

- Many agreed that Clifton Road is also in need of traffic calming measures,
- A suggestion made by one participant throughout this consultation highlights the potential alternative to a one-way system would be to put traffic lights in from Pensbury Street junction to just past the Waverley Terrace junction to slow and reduce the traffic going around the corner or create a series of priority chicanes.
- There was support for more greenery if a maintenance plan is put in place.
- There was support for point 6 on the plan – improving the crossing point at Feetham's end with an added suggestion to add a table top to demarcate distributor road to public space.
- A repetitive desire to maintain and improve the history of the area was made.

### **Draft Concept Plan 2**

Many comments referred to concerns of increasing pressure to residents on Waverley Terrace. Concerns for residents in Back Lane between Victoria Road and Waverley Terrace were highlighted due to increased traffic if one-way system was implemented, having impacts on the safety of residents. Concerns over bin collections and an increase in litter; as well as increase of traffic using this route which they believed could cause potential subsidence. Residents mention of traffic already speeding down this road causes problems to residents living there, i.e. children playing / people using garages.

Parking was highlighted again as a real issue in the area; what provision would be made for delivery vans to unload for businesses in the one-way system. Participants prefer the idea of the whole of Victoria Road being 20mph.

### **Bus and vehicle movement**

Comments were made about a bollard that is regularly being knocked over and having to be replaced on the corner of Clifton Road and Victoria Road, demonstrating vehicles find it a hard corner to negotiate. Several residents highlighted that Waverley Terrace does not have the infrastructure for increased traffic to travel down it.

A suggestion was made to tidy up Victoria Roads pathways and buildings, to create a more pleasant route and not implement a one-way system. Fears of how the one-way system would have a detrimental effect on residents in Waverley Terrace and may impact on side streets were highlighted.

### **Cycle movement**

Concerns were raised over the volume of traffic into the Royal Mail site would be a hazard to people using the cycle route. The question was raised as to the need to increase / improve cycle provision. Another asked if physical features would be included to stop drivers from encroaching on cycle lanes.

Concerns were raised for residents of Waverley Terrace about losing parking provision to accommodate bus and cycle routes. Other comments indicated that they believed that a cycle route being put down Waverley Terrace would be pointless as bikes would not use it, they would just cycle down Victoria Road, regardless of the designation.

### **Pedestrian movement**

Some residents of Waverley Terrace said they feel the one-way system proposal increases the risks of accidents for those accessing the terrace on foot, of all ages. Concerns were raised around consideration being needed for the increase in traffic to Waverley Terrace residents. The final comment stated this was a good concept but that there is need for careful consideration of the plaza, aiming for a more pedestrian friendly space.

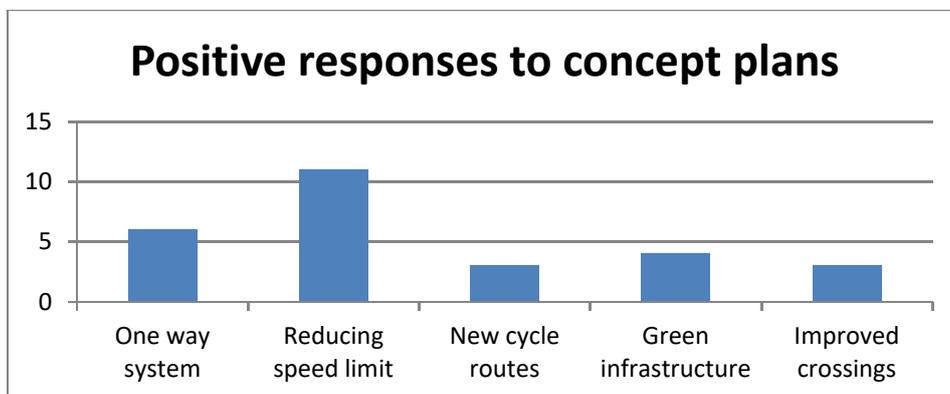
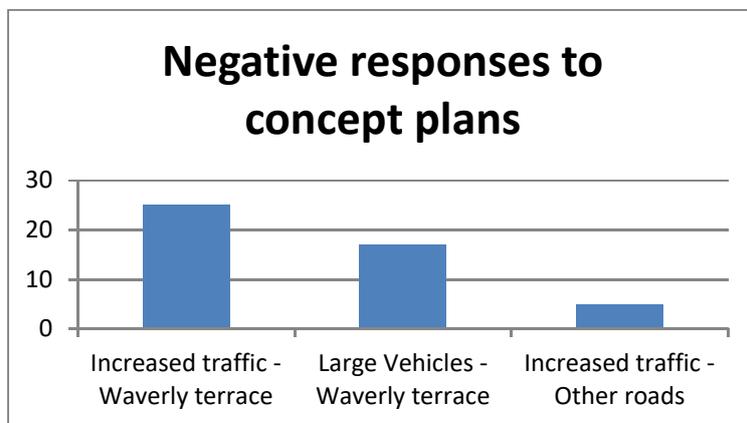
## **Public Consultation Events**

Two public consultation events were held at the Dolphin Centre in January. The feedback from the two events had discussions of similar trends. Both events were very well attended. 46 people gave their details at the

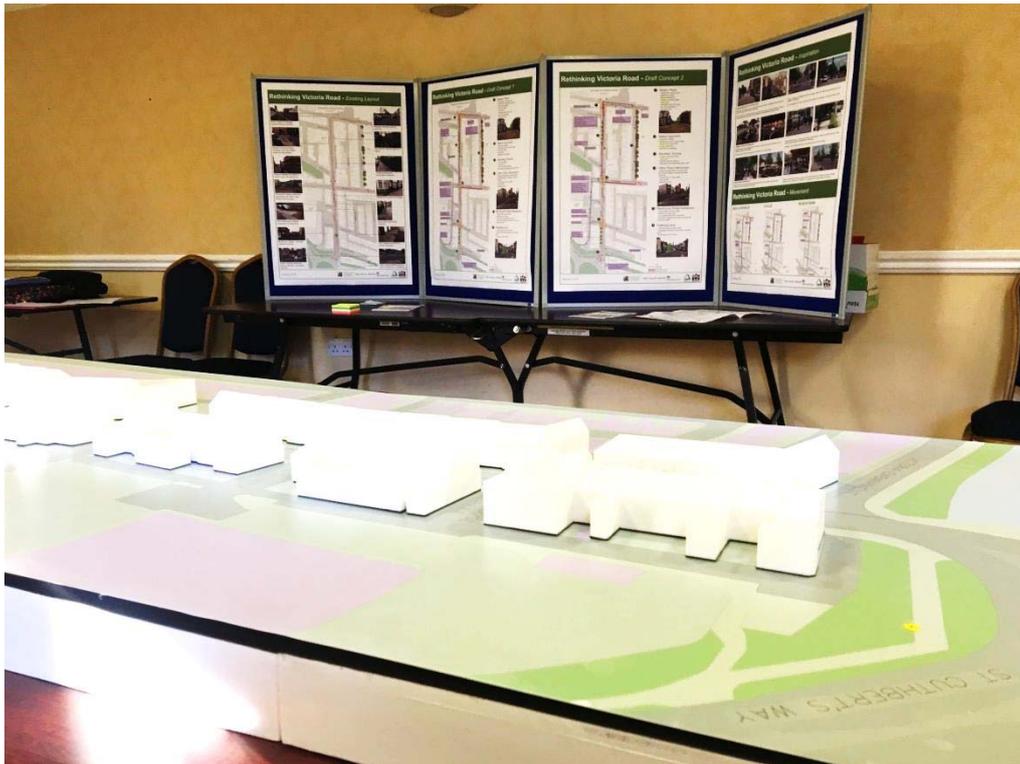
events. Groundwork are aware more people attended, an estimated 60 attended on Saturday and 80 on Wednesday. Figures estimated by staff in attendance at the events, actual figures not known as not everyone signed in.

Comments were written down by either participants or staff attending the event. Many similar comments have been made through the earlier engagements. These comments can be found in full in **Appendix 12**. Litter & dog waste, 'unsavoury' characters, general run-down appearance of some properties and dominance of traffic, perceived usage road crossing, lack of parking and enforcement and general maintenance of the street were some of the main themes.

Discussions were led by individuals particularly those living on Waverley Terrace who were opposed to the one-way proposal. Approximately 15 respondents strongly objected. Several reasons were highlighted, repeating the points made on Stickyworld Link 2. Other participants liked the concept as they felt it helped address the dangerous crossing point near the station. Again, suggestions of the proposed one-way route coming through the cattle market development was suggestion, reducing the opposition to the proposal.



Participants were generally happy with the proposals to increase greenery to Victoria Road, if it is maintained. Improvements to the cycleway were welcomed. People largely agreed with the proposed diagonal crossing point at Clifton Road junction, as well as the 20mph zone, throughout the whole area.



At both events a 3D representation of Victoria Road was shown with a base plan map underneath for people to be able to put numbered stickers on if they felt there were specific issues associated with areas or had a comment about a specific area. The numbered comments from both events can be found in **Appendix 12**. The main points made reinforced the above comments, about turning circles for the proposed one-way route being tight; wanting the shop frontages smartened up; highlighting congested areas, and back lanes being used for deliveries causing damage to road surfaces and insufficient parking. Support for the plaza area stating, the safer this area can be made and freshened up – slow zone area, creates arrival factor and makes it a liveable area.

### Other stakeholder feedback

Direct feedback from other stakeholders over and above the feedback given through the on-line consultation and consultation events has been collated below.

#### Police

Groundwork have been in correspondence with the Police throughout the consultation. Following the January events, the Architectural Liaison Officer has considered the proposals and discussed with colleagues. The full feedback can be found in **Appendix 13** which includes crime report figures. The main points to note about the designs are as follows;

- Traffic Management Department has reviewed the proposed options, they have no comment to make other than they expect a detailed assessment to be made by the Local Authorities Highways Department before the final design is approved.
- The issues around appearance are readily apparent, the footpaths are in poor repair and many of the shop fronts are in need of renovation, this run-down appearance can help create a fear of crime.
- An analysis of Police reports for the last five years is encouraging, suggesting that crime is not a significant issue.
- Between the Railway Station and St Cuthbert's roundabout there are 3 buildings providing supported living accommodation, 11 fast food outlets and a public house, all of which have the potential to generate nuisance in the form of litter and loitering, this could potentially undermine any investment in improving the street scene, for example, grease from spilt food accumulates and is very difficult to clean.

- Careful consideration will need to be given to providing seating areas; the 'bull ring' on Church Row (next to the Boot & Shoe) in the town centre is an example of problem seating. In Victoria Road people from the supported living accommodation and customers of the food outlets could dominate seating areas.
- Improving the street lighting will be important; a uniform level of light with no dark spots will help people feel safe, it should achieve a minimum Uo value of 0.25.
- Nuisance from cyclists speeding across the pedestrian precincts in the town centre is a long term problem, to prevent this being replicated in Victoria Road deterrent paving should be used to break up any potential desire lines, channelling cyclists onto the dedicated routes.
- An example of good design is the Linear Park which runs along the side of the river to the rear of the town hall; the uncluttered and open aspect appears to have discouraged loitering and so far it has proved to be free of anti-social behaviour, a similar approach to Victoria Road may prove successful.

### **Fire Station**

A meeting was held with the manager of the Fire Station and as far as they were concerned they would only engage if they felt the proposals would cause them an issue. At this stage he felt the proposals should only enhance the area and make it safer for general use.

They have an issue turning from Victoria Road on to Park Lane - they tend to use the opposite end of the road.

### **Royal Mail**

The manager was contacted given information about the consultation and provided the Stickyworld link. He responded with the following points;

- I am responsible for the Royal mail site off Victoria Road. We are having huge problems with parking on double yellow lines in Park Street which is the very small road leading to Royal mail. Customers who come to collect parcels from us are parking on double yellow lines along with people visiting takeaways hair dressers and betting shops causing some really difficult situations that are becoming very dangerous.
- The council to their credit have allowed 2 hours free parking in the Park Place car park but this is a very busy car park and is used by a lot off staff from the town hall who have permits following the reduction in parking there.
- I think new improved better signage would improve people's knowledge and their experience when visiting Victoria road.
- The condition of some of the buildings leaves a lot to be desired.
- Hotel 119 telling people they can't park in the back lane to the rear of the property is adding to the parking issues in the area.

### **LNER**

The initial consultation was shared and promoted in the station itself. The Stickyworld links for both initial and second consultation links provided. The station staff were happy to share information and for us to consult with people in the station.

Information was sent to the regional office and the Station Partnership Project Manager. They have not engaged.

### **Arriva**

Feedback from Arriva's commercial manager commenting on the concept designs made these points; Arriva wouldn't be opposed to a one-way loop and would prefer this to be in an anti-clockwise loop, with the outbound route of the X26/X27 using Waverley Terrace, and the inbound journeys retaining their current route via Victoria Road (directly past the station). Anything to improve the public realm outside of the rail station would be welcomed, especially if this were to include improved bus stops and waiting facilities. Ideally bus stops would be as close to the station as possible.

Many years ago, Arriva did operate via Waverley Terrace and ultimately they ceased doing so due to issues with parked cars on Clifton Road opposite Waverley Terrace and down towards Victoria Road junction. These issues

would need to be addressed and the size of the buses using Waverley auto tracked to check suitability of the road and junctions (with parking restrictions in place).

The local depot also commented and stated they are concerned that a one-way loop wouldn't work, even with adequate parking restrictions. Their comments are summarised below:

- Have concerns turning in and out of Waverley Terrace as the street is quite narrow.
- Parking restrictions are good but often ignored, these would need to be properly enforced.

We received several emails and letters throughout the full consultation period. These comments have been included in the feedback above. Examples have been included in **Appendix 14** due to the detailed information about specific areas and photos. This provides useful local knowledge but also helps demonstrate the passion of the people who live in the area. There is a strong sense of desire to see the area improve.

### Key themes from Phase 2 Consultation

- The second stage of consultation reinforced many of the issues and barriers highlighted in the first age of consultation. In addition;
- Concerns were raised by residents of Waverley Terrace about the proposed one-way system.
- Royal Mail vans and people parking for the sorting office cause problems with both traffic and parking.
- Links need to be made with other masterplans and strategies including the Cattle market development and Darlington station masterplan.
- There was support for increased priority being given to pedestrians; 20mph zones; more greenery if it's maintained; traffic calming measures and improvements to cycleway.
- Consideration could be given to whether shops frontages could be improved, potentially through a bursary, setting guidelines to have a more uniform / smarter frontage.
- Other proposals were made such as businesses adopting a hanging basket – adding greenery to the area but putting the responsibility onto the business to care for it.
- A more thorough study around the parking concerns, illegal parking and the alleged abuse and issues associated with parking permits.

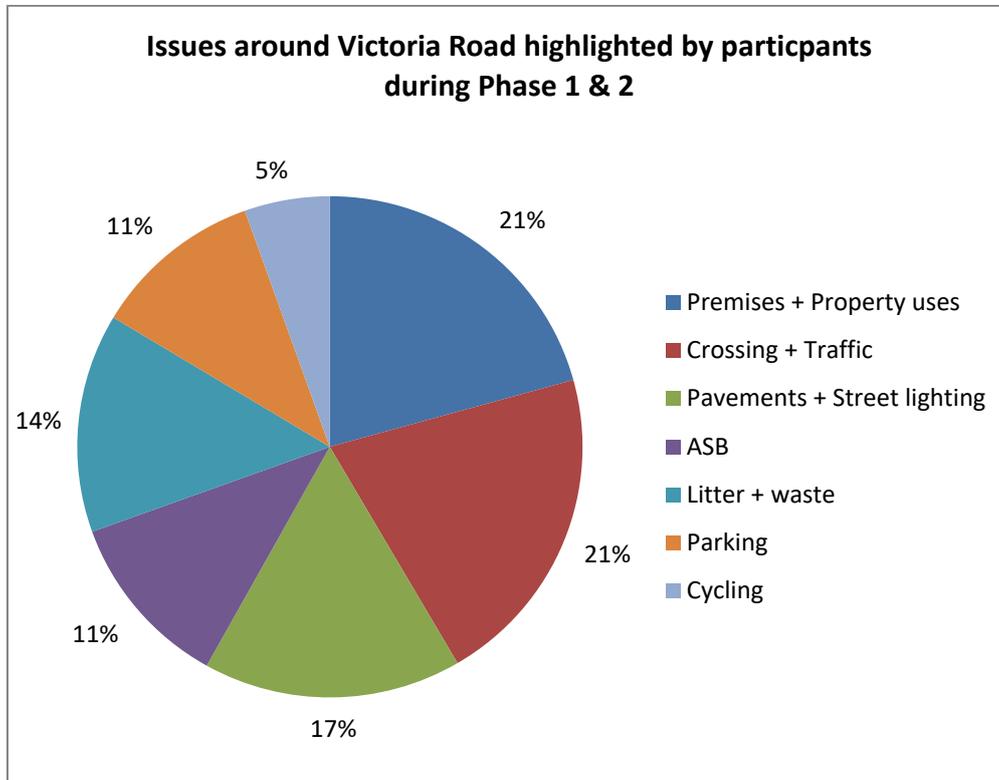


## Conclusion

We have had good engagement with the businesses and community throughout this consultation. The public consultation has been well attended, aided by the production of a 3D model of Victoria Road to help people visualise the area. Stickyworld has been a good learning model to enable conversations to take place outside of formal events capturing comments that may not have been captured otherwise. The initial concept developed in response to the first phase of consultation resulted in some strong responses both positive and negative responses.

The benefits that have come from this process are that the discussions generated around the two concept plans have given residents and businesses an opportunity to give detailed comments and enabled them to influence final designs. People want a strengthened link to the Town Centre, enhancing the street scape to make it a greener, friendlier, multi-functional space to provide a safe and welcoming environment to all.

The element of the concept plans which gave rise to negative comments was the introduction of a one-way system incorporating Waverley Terrace. Residents of the terrace are generally strongly opposed. This is a view that has been highlighted to Darlington Borough Council.



We have learned that the key issues and barriers are a combination of physical and social issues;

- Traffic
- Cycle routes
- Crossing points
- Frontages of shops
- Anti-social behaviour
- Lighting
- Litter
- Parking
- Changing use of buildings – consideration needed for future planning proposals
- Too many takeaways

People are passionate about the area and keen to see improvements made. They liked;

- Introducing more greenery
- 20mph proposal
- Improved cycle routes
- Improved crossing points
- Creation of pedestrian priority area near the station.

Groundwork will present the findings of the consultation to Darlington Borough Council in March 2019, these findings will then be shared publicly by Darlington Borough Council. This concludes the consultation project delivered by Groundwork.

Darlington Borough Council will use this report and the feedback included in it to plan the next stage. Funding is still to be secured for this project, it is envisaged that Darlington Borough Council will approach Tees Valley Combined Authority. The information in this document will be used to support any future funding applications. If funding is secured Groundwork would recommend that further consultation is carried out in detail with those already engaged. In addition, further engagement is needed with Royal Mail and LNER due to limited input to date.

Surrounding developments around Victoria Road such as the Railway Station and Cattle Market need to be discussed alongside future improvements for Victoria Road to ensure that there is a shared vision across all partners in the local area.

A database of stakeholders, residents and others engaged has been created, in line with GDPR guidelines. This will be provided to DBC to show who has been contacted and who wishes to be kept informed as the project progresses.

## Appendices

1. Consultation boundary map
2. Letters to residents and businesses
3. Survey Monkey Questions
4. Notes from residents social housing
5. Initial drop in feedback
6. Stickyworld Flier
7. Initial Stickyworld feedback and maps
8. Survey Monkey results
9. Traffic Survey Results
10. Concept Plans
11. Second stage Stickyworld feedback
12. Feedback from public consultation (including 3D plan comments and plan)
13. Police feedback
14. Letters / emails sent directly to Groundwork.