

EFDC Safer Spaces Commonplace report 17 August 2020

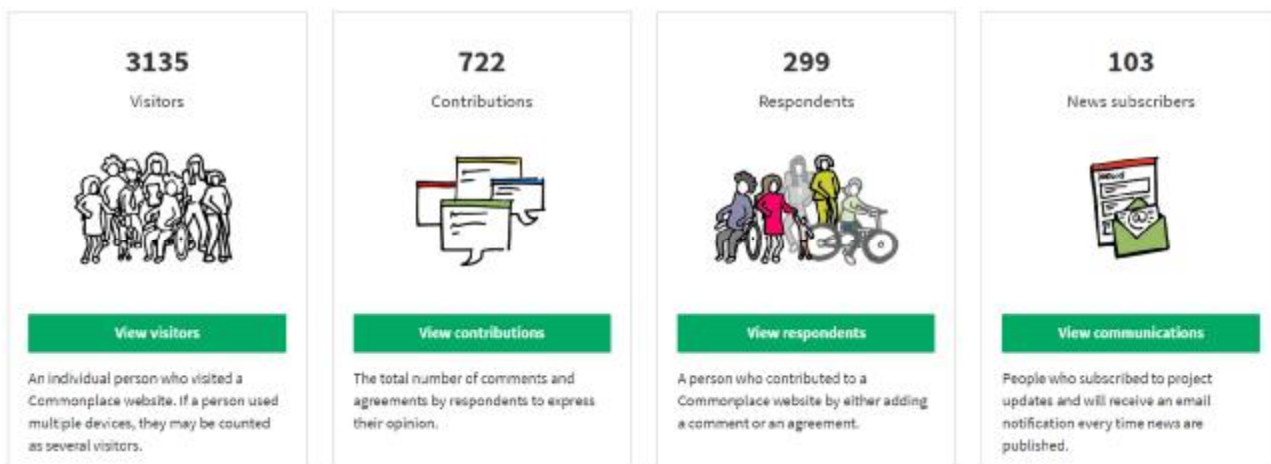
Visit the website and have your say at <https://efdcsaferspacescovid19.commonplace.is/>

Engagement

The EFDC Safer Spaces during COVID-19 commonplace platform launched on the 13 June 2020. Up to 17 August there were 3,135 visitors. This has increased by 300 in the 2 week period since 3 August.

Total contributions are now at 722 which is up by 8 since 3 August. The contributions are made up of 207 comments and 515 agreements. 103 people have subscribed to receive the project news by email.

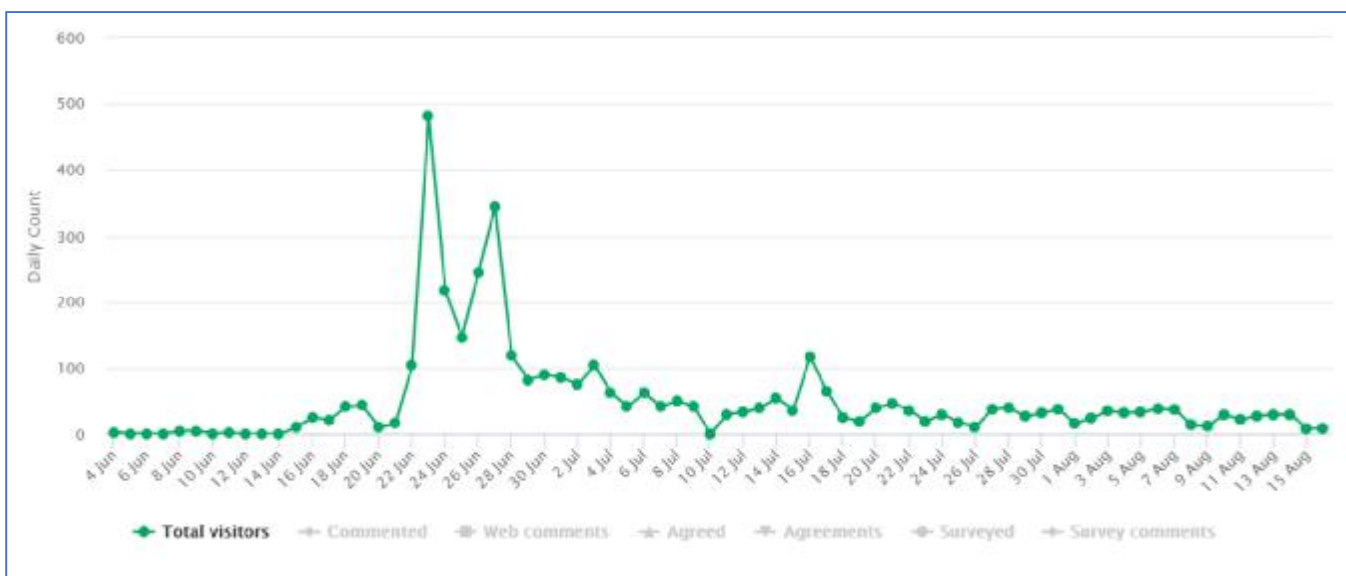
Of the 299 respondents, 183 confirmed their email address to be genuine and are public. There are 31 comments and 99 agreements from 116 unconfirmed respondents which are not public.



The top 4 referrers are:

1. Facebook 813
2. Epping Forest District Council website 707
3. Visit Epping Forest website 401
4. Twitter 61

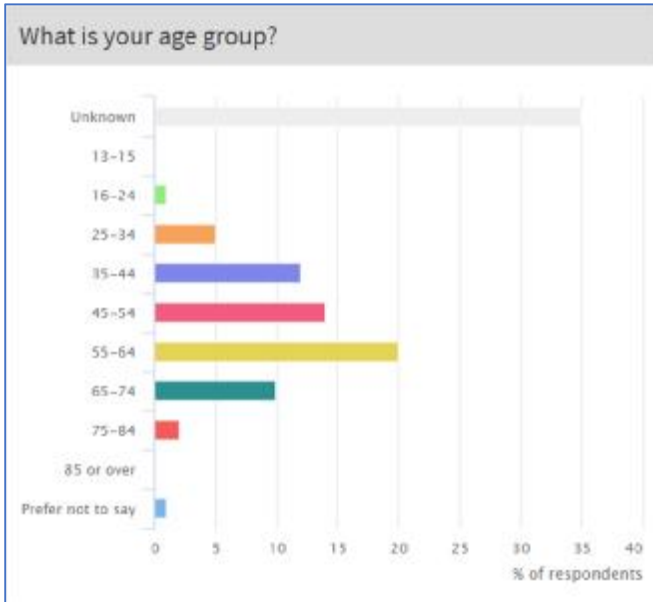
Visitors over time



Demographics

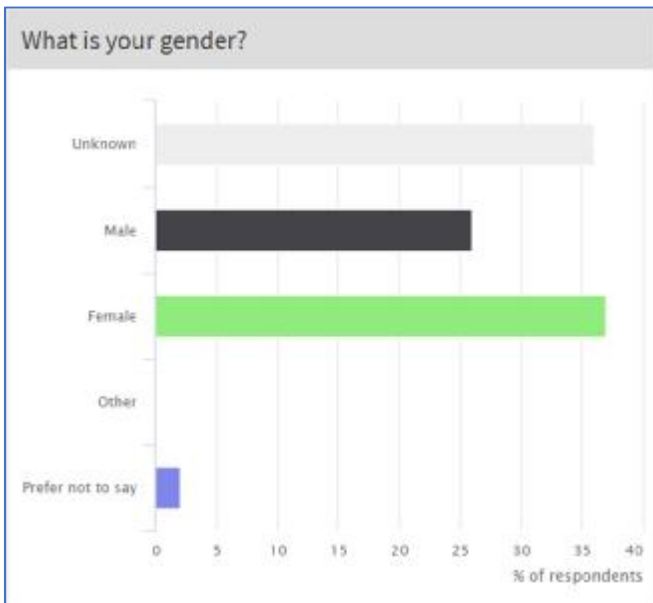
What is your age group?

The age group most represented in comments is 55-64 with 20%. Only 6% of respondents are younger people below the age of 35. 35% are unknown.



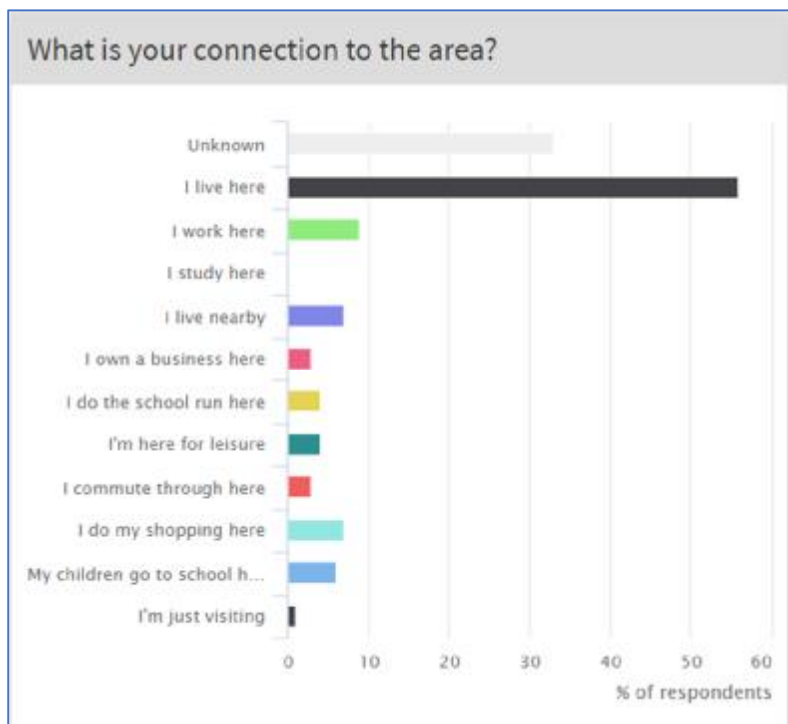
What is your gender?

37% of respondents identified themselves as female and 26% male. 38% are unknown or prefer not to say.



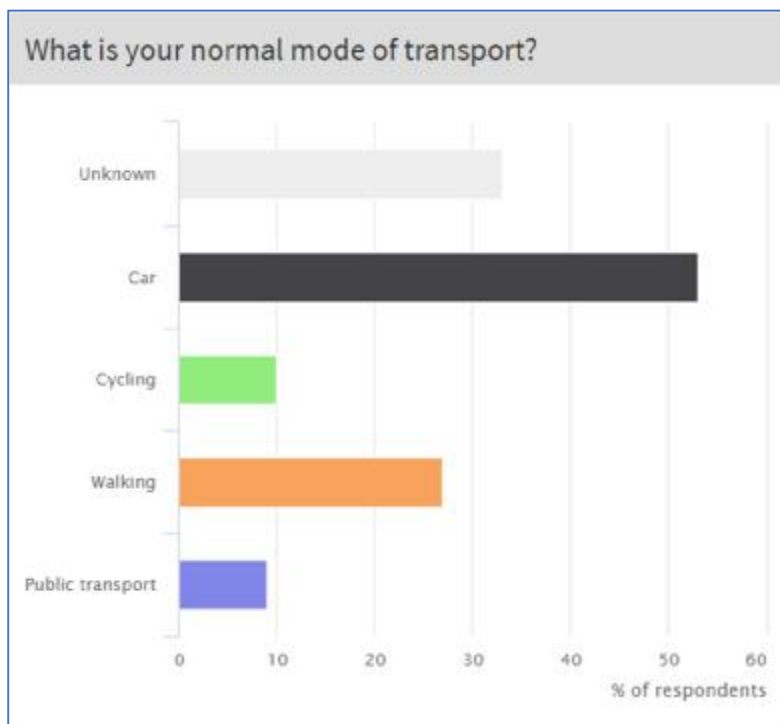
What is your connection to the area?

56% of respondents replied I live here, 9% I work here and 7% I live nearby. 33% unknown.



What is your normal mode of transport?

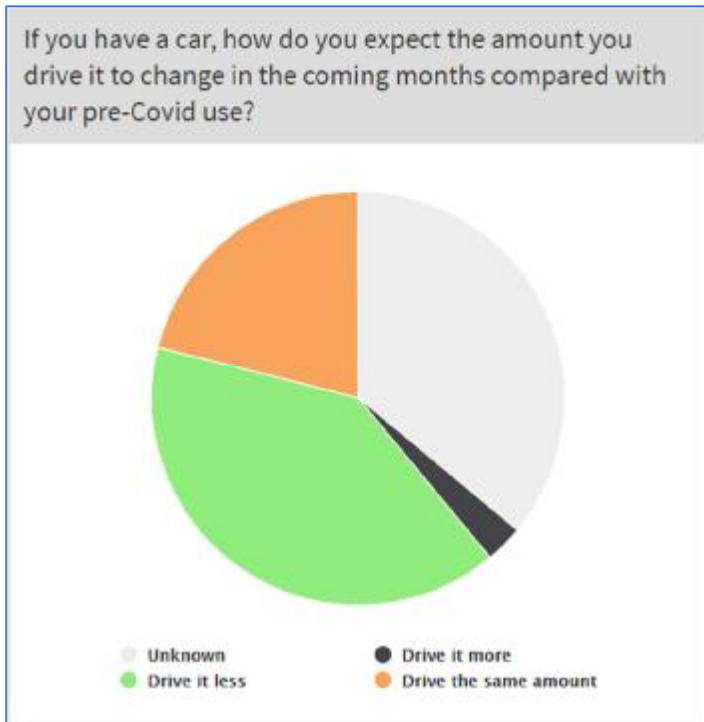
53% car, 27% walking, 10% cycling and public transport 9%. 33% unknown.



Transport and air quality

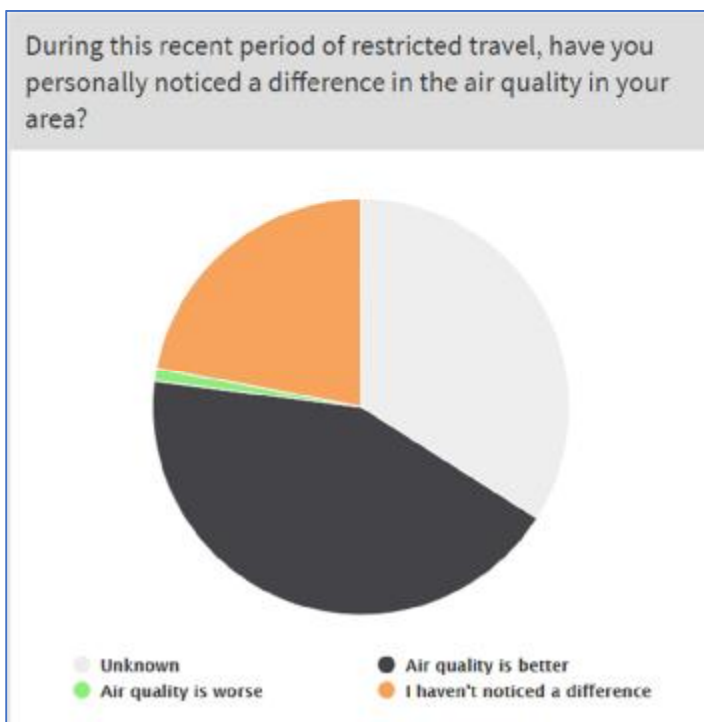
If you have a car, how do you expect the amount you drive it to change in the coming months compared with your pre-Covid use?

40% of respondents said they would drive it less. 21% said drive the same amount and 3% said they would drive it more. 36% unknown.



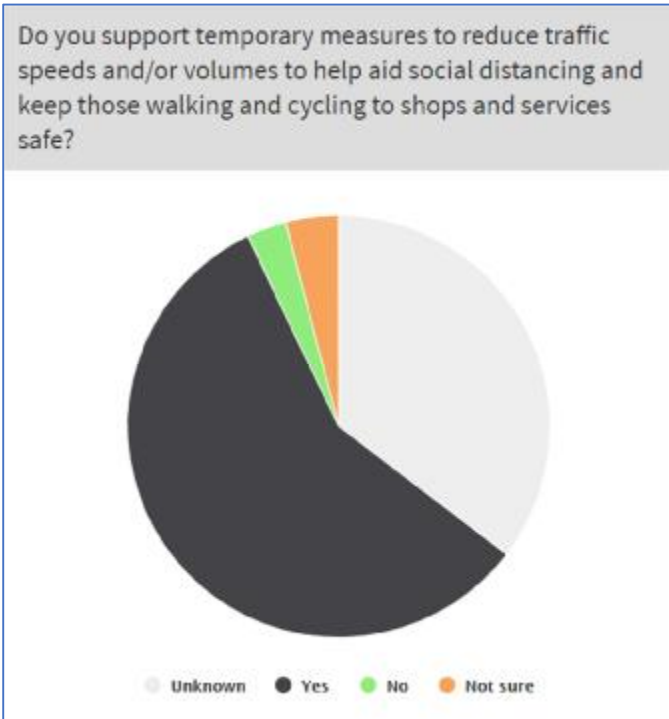
During this recent period of restricted travel, have you personally noticed a difference in the air quality in your area?

43% said air quality is better, 22% haven't noticed a difference, 1% worse. 34% unknown.

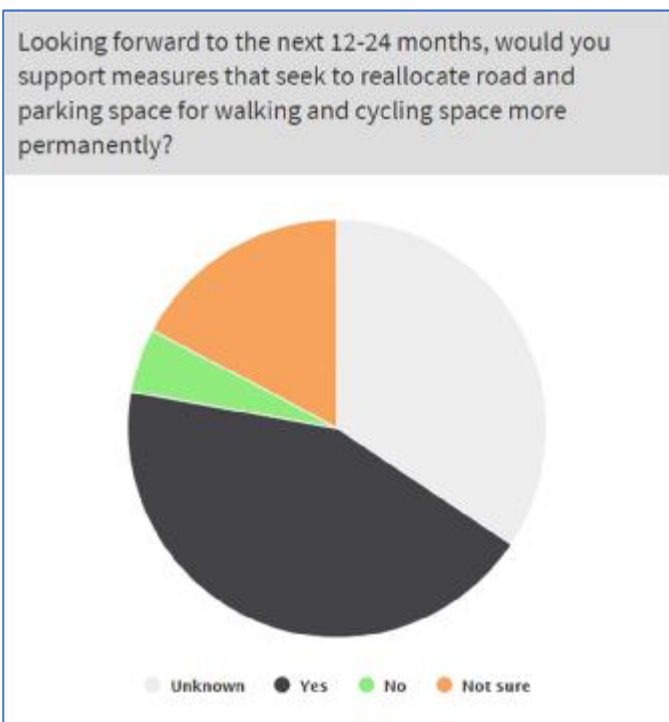


Support for interventions and measures

58% of respondents support measures to reduce traffic speeds and volumes to help aid social distancing, with 43% noting they would support measures that seek to reallocate road and parking space for walking and cycling more permanently.

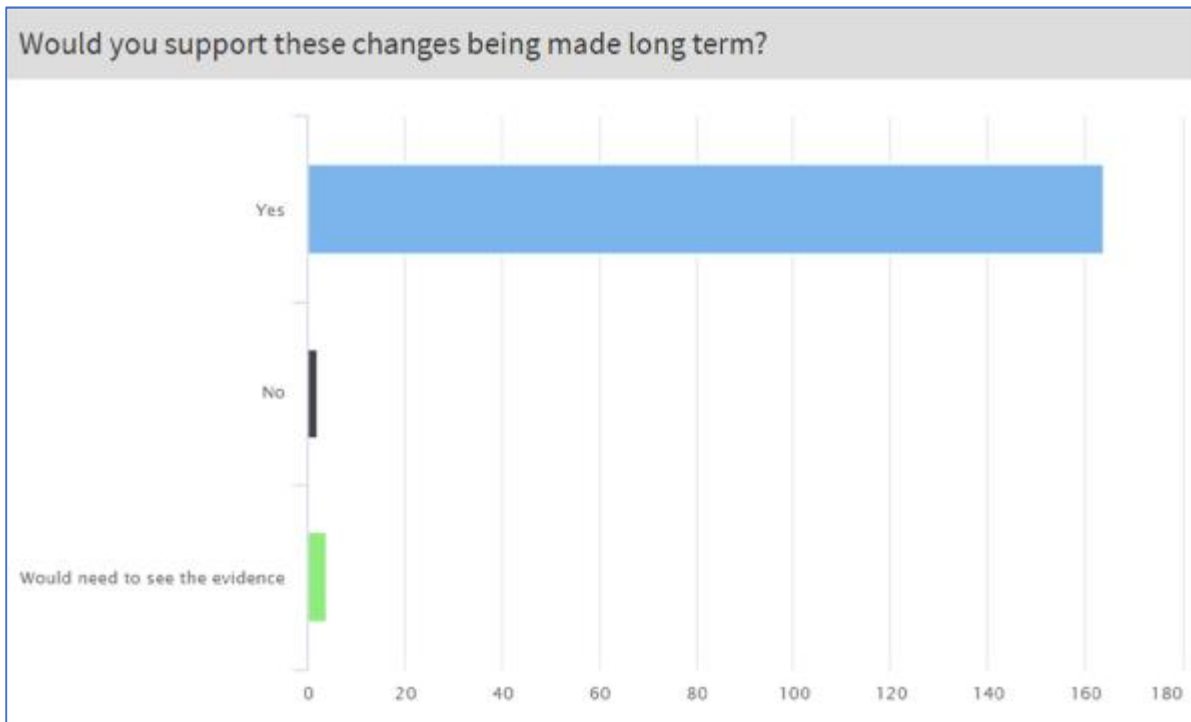


Do you support temporary measures to reduce traffic speeds and/or volumes to help aid social distancing and keep those walking and cycling to shops and services safe?



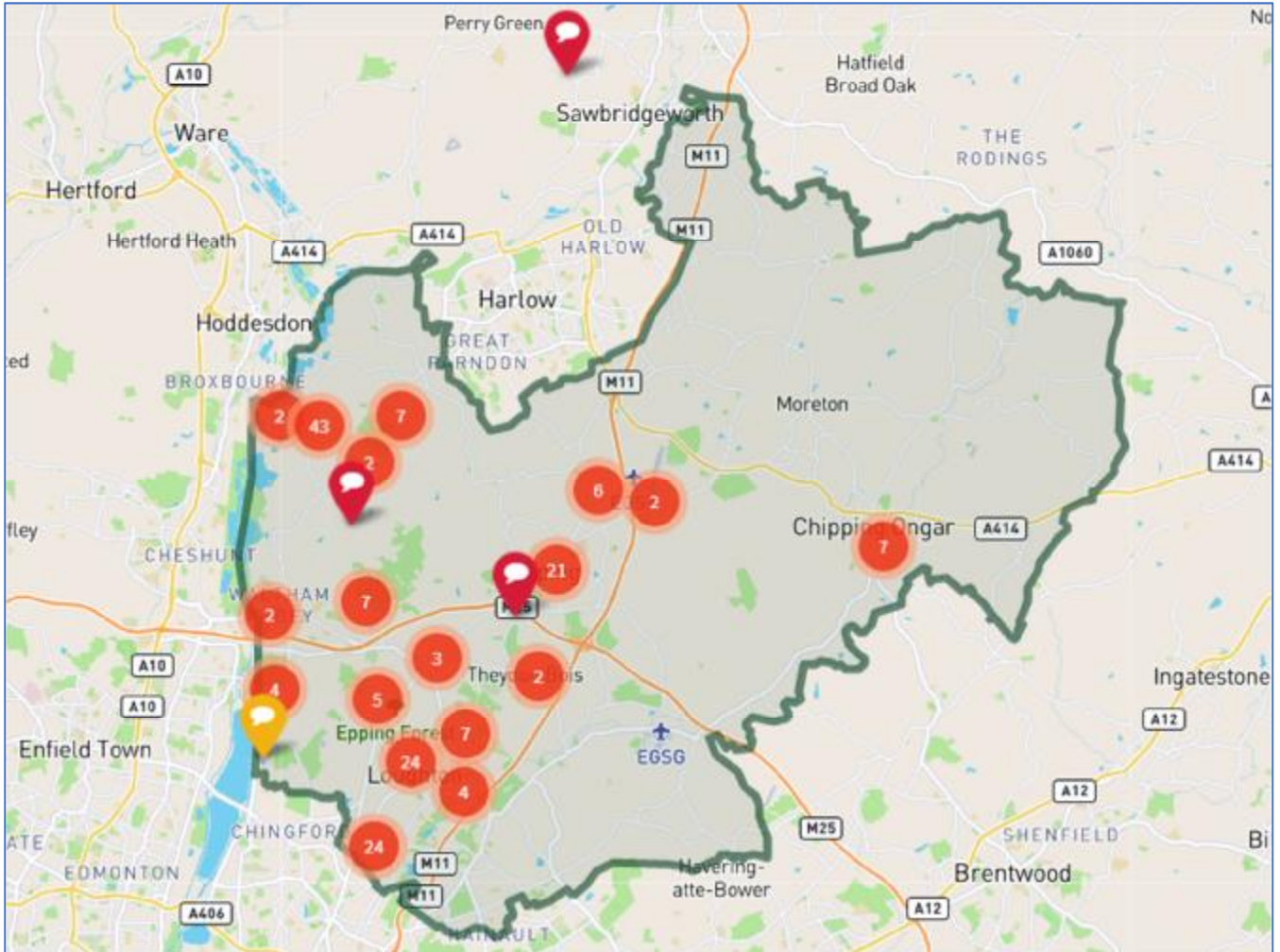
Looking forward to the next 12-24 months, would you support measures that seek to reallocate road and parking space for walking and cycling space more permanently?

Would you support these changes being made long term?
164 respondents said yes, 4 would need to see the evidence and 2 said no.



Comments across the District

The comments so far have been focused in the west of the district, with a large number about Lower Nazeing, Loughton and Buckhurst Hill, amongst other areas West of the M11. Further comments received since last reporting two weeks ago have been focused primarily in Epping.



Above: Commonplace heat map on 17 August 2020.

Comments focused on Local High Streets

Below reports on some key areas of focus for comments in the District's main High Streets.

Epping High Street

A number of comments relate to the need for pavement widening and are positive towards measures which have been implemented along Epping High Street and Station Road to allow for this, including removal of parking spaces. One comment notes concern that the removal of parking bays may be detrimental to shops. However comments point out that with the increased widths provided, street furniture and signs need to be monitored, particularly outside popular cafes, so that they don't cause further barriers. Some concerns are raised about not being able to social distance at the shops and market on Market day.

Loughton High Road

There are limited comments on the High Road, but these include the need for faster crossing times for pedestrians, creating a more attractive environment with less car-dominance, and providing more space for cycling (with better road surfaces and cycle rack provision). There are also concerns raised about anti-social

behaviour outside some specific pubs and restaurants and the need to manage this. Leading to the High Road, a large number of comments have been received regarding Forest Road – these focus on bad driving, volume and speed of traffic and associated air quality and safety concerns. On Traps Hill cutting back foliage has been noted as a key issue.

Debden Broadway

Two comments have been received in regard to Debden Broadway – one suggests a Saturday evening closure of The Broadway for outside dining, and another notes the issue of the volume of traffic.

Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill

Whilst there are limited comments providing for Queen's Road, comments on the area and streets around it focus primarily on issues of pavement parking and bad driving. Suggestions include restricting parking and further enforcement to reduce illegal parking. Crossing of the High Road at this southern end is also noted as an issue, with long waiting times and fast traffic, and additional safe crossing points and safer junctions are suggested.

Sun Street, Waltham Abbey

There is one comment relating to Sun Street, noting the need for enforcement of parking restrictions in Market Square.

Ongar High Street

Comments have been made relating to Ongar High Street and difficulty to social distance due to narrow pavement widths and the need to step into the road to pass other pedestrians. There is also a comment on the lack of safe crossing of the High Street for school children

How could we make it better?

When asked 'How could we make it better?' The top 10 improvements were:

1. Slow down traffic - 83
2. Reduce speed limit - 67
3. Restrict vehicle access - 38
4. More space for walking - 36
5. Keep the pavement clear - 30
6. Cut back foliage - 27
7. More space for cycling - 24
8. Restrict parking - 23
9. Safer junction - 23
10. Add crossings - 22

Collaboration and funding

Epping Forest District Council is working with Essex County Council Highways Authority, to propose and install some key interventions to enable social distancing and better active travel. The comments on Commonplace are helping to shape proposals that the District Council is discussing with the County Council, for them to bid for Government funding. We are continuing to review funding opportunities for social distancing, revitalising the local economy and reopening high streets safely. Epping Forest District Council is also reporting an overview of comments to Local Councillors, to ensure that the voices of those commenting are being heard by decision-makers in their area (see 'Comments focused on Local High Streets' section).

Actions

Some of the comments which are not exclusively to do with social distancing should be reported direct to the relevant body to action. These include:

Roads and pavements

For issues with roads and pavements such as blocked pavements or cycle lanes, and particular traffic concerns– you can report to Essex Highways - [Essex Highways tell us about road or highway issues](#).

Parking

For issues with parking – you can report to NEPP - [North Essex Parking Partnership \(NEPP\) contact us](#).

In Epping Forest

For issues with overgrown footpaths in Epping Forest – you can report to City of London - [City of London fault reporting](#).

Everything else

Other issues (such as issues with flooding, pollution, drainage, private water supply, high hedge, planning enforcement, crime and safety or food businesses) can be reported via Epping Forest District Council website - [Epping Forest District Council report a problem](#).