

# **Brixton SPD Questionnaire report**

## **1. Introduction**

A summary booklet and questionnaire was an important component of the draft Brixton SPD consultation. It aimed to provide a convenient way for people to express whether they agreed or not with the main proposals and to provide additional views in their own words. It was able to offer some means of capturing demographic information, which could be analysed along with the other findings.

The consultation also encouraged people to submit written responses directly, particularly on behalf of organisations. In addition, more proactive engagement activity, such as 'mole' events and roadshows, whilst promoting the questionnaire, also provided an opportunity to have their views listened to directly and these have also fed into the consultation process.

## **2. Methodology**

### ***Content***

The summary booklet and questionnaire was designed to provide an overview of the ideas put forward in the draft SPD, as well as showing how we got there. Content needed to explain in plain language some complex issues so that as many people as possible could understand what was being proposed and could see the relevance for them. The booklet was also able to introduce two of the Future Brixton projects already coming forward and present these in the context of the SPD work.

The questionnaire included an attitudinal survey. Respondents were asked to consider a number of the main proposals put forward in the draft SPD. These proposals were expressed as fifteen statements, grouped under five themes, and respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements.

This method was designed to draw people's attention to the main proposals and to hopefully provide some food for thought. People were then encouraged to add further comments into the freefield section. The questionnaire could be completed online or returned to the council by freepost.

### ***Distribution and promotion***

The summary booklet and questionnaire was distributed to all addresses in the four Brixton wards touched by the draft SPD area – Brixton Hill, Tulse Hill, Coldharbour and Ferndale – along with Herne Hill, which is also a Brixton ward. This was a total of 30,174 addresses.

In addition copies of the booklet were made available, along with copies of the draft SPD and supporting materials, at all Lambeth libraries, Lambeth Town Hall and ground floor reception of the council's offices at Phoenix House. Exhibition material was provided for Lambeth Town Hall and Phoenix House, posters and a posting box were also provided at Brixton Library to draw people's attention to the consultation and to make it as easy as possible to respond.

Posters, flyers and copies of the booklet were distributed to cafes, shops and community spaces in the Brixton area including Brixton Recreation Centre, Costa, Starbucks, KFC, Carphone Warehouse, San Marino, Mothercare, TK Maxx, Bernardo's corner and Ferndale Centre.

Copies of the summary booklet were also taken to each engagement event and about 1,000 copies were handed out via the roadshows. The main focus of the roadshows was to provide outreach activity targeting some harder-to-engage residents and to encourage people to complete

the questionnaire, although comments made at the time were also noted and form the basis of a separate mini report for the roadshows themselves.

The questionnaire was promoted in all communications for the draft Brixton SPD, which included:

- The futurebrixton.org website
- The Future Brixton facebook page
- Tweets from @FutureBrixton @LambethRegen and @Lambeth\_council
- Email updates to the Future Brixton mailing list, linking to online detail of all activity.
- Online banner advert on Brixton Blog
- Article and advert in February edition of Brixton Bugle
- Public notice in The Weekender
- Article in February edition of Lambeth Talk
- Plasma screen adverts in Lambeth Council customer centres

We also encouraged key community stakeholders to promote the consultation via word of mouth, social networks, local forums, re-tweets, and so on.

### **3. Overview of feedback**

#### ***Data analysis***

555 questionnaires were submitted by the closing date – 380 of these arrived by post and 175 were completed online.

All the subgroup percentages quoted are significant at the 10% level / 95% confidence interval. In addition, there are strong correlations within some subgroups, reflecting in the results:

- White British people more likely to be in full time paid work and owner occupiers
- White other more likely to be owner occupiers and aged 30-34.

More than 67% of questionnaire respondents (372) provided additional information in the free field section of the questionnaire. These have been analysed in relation to the questions, where appropriate, and in a separate section at the end of the report (see section 5).

Overall the findings should be seen in the context of the respondent profile, which had a high proportion of White British people (60%), home owners (61%) and people living in Brixton (66%).

#### ***Overall findings***

There was widespread agreement with the majority of statements (80% to 96% of respondents agreed with 9 of the 15 statements).

Respondents were less likely to agree with the statements relating to the three area-specific proposals, for which more detailed projects were coming forward.

The more controversial issues were around additional town centre parking, encouraging major high street retailers and providing a significant numbers of new homes.

Fig 1: Overall findings



Base: all respondents c.555

The most contentious statement was whether we should encourage high street retailers along Brixton Road. This statement had the highest percentage of people who disagreed with the proposal (36%) and seemed to go to the heart of a debate about Brixton's identity. More than 100 additional comments were made on the subject but the people providing comments were more likely to disagree with the proposal for more high street retailers.

*"It's vital that investment and support is given to local and independent business. If not. the major brand manes will move in and Brixton becomes Bromley, losing its character and it's creativity."*  
Brixton father, aged 45-59, mixed ethnic background

*"Brixton is a great place to live in and visit. It needs to retain its cultural heritage and traditional connection with the Arts World. As well as the ethnic diversity of its people. These make Brixton attractive and this is why people come to shop or visit Brixton, its original character (see Dulwich, Clapham). Large retail outlets will destroy this originality, Brixton cannot compete with Oxford Street..."* Female Brixton resident, aged 30-44 and renting from council

The proposal people were least likely to agree with was for providing additional town centre parking (with 52% agreeing). Comments were split on whether additional parking was needed to support the success of the town centre or whether sustainable transport solutions were needed as a longer term solution.

*"I realise that a lot of residents and traders were unhappy about losing the car parking when the temp ice rink was built, but the market has coped fine without it. PLEASE resist the pressure to create more parking, it will only encourage car use. people must change their unsustainable habits."* Brixton businessman, aged 30-44

With both increased parking and encouraging major high street retailers age and housing tenure seemed to influence whether people were likely to support the proposals or not. Older people,

those renting from the council and from BME groups were more likely to agree with both statements. Younger people and those renting privately were less likely to agree with either statement.

Congestion and overcrowding throughout the town centre were seen as significant issues for getting around and for the provision of new housing. People who did support new homes were likely to prefer these to be affordable homes. Again, those living in social housing and from BME groups were more likely to support proposals for new homes, whilst owner occupiers were less likely to do so.

*"I have put strongly agree around housing but only if this is affordable housing - the private market is too expensive even for those who work."* Woman working in Brixton and renting privately, aged 30-44

*"I've lived in the area for over 20 years. I feel population density has reached saturation point."* White Brixton owner occupier, aged 45-59

Celebrating and investing in the markets; making sure everyone can enjoy Brixton safely in the evenings; and supporting independent businesses were the proposals receiving most support (96%, 95% and 95% of respondents agreeing respectively).

*"Keep the markets and especially Brixton village. Encourage more independent shopping in town centre and fewer major chains."* Brixton father, aged 30-44

Additional comments showed that respondents were anxious that any developments respected the character of Brixton and didn't price existing residents or businesses out of the area.

*"We must support the businesses and locals who have always been there - don't price them out!"* Female Brixton resident, aged 20-29

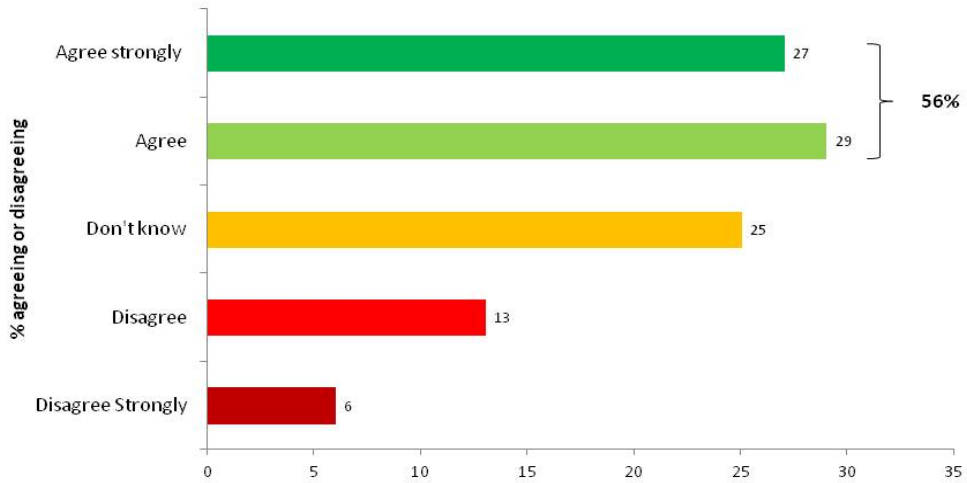
*"It is important to consider Brixton's history and culture when planning improvements/new developments. This will keep Brixton unique among other high streets beyond phone shops/coffee shops that are ultimately characterless."* Unemployed Brixton man, aged 45-59

## **Responses to individual questions**

### **4.1 Homes**

#### **Q1 Brixton needs a significant number of new homes for current and future communities.**

Those living in social housing were most likely to agree with this statement (83% agreeing). In terms of tenure, this fell to 64% of those renting privately and less than half of owner occupiers (49%) were in favour. Those from BME groups (68% agreeing) and men (61% agreeing) were also more likely to be in favour. It was also the proposal most likely to have a 'don't know' response (25%).



Base: all respondents (544)

A significant number of additional comments were received on this issue (45) reflecting the importance people attach to housing. A large number of comments mentioned how overcrowded Brixton felt already – going on to say that any additional housing would need to bring with it the necessary improvements to infrastructure or that it shouldn't be prioritised at all.

*“Brixton is already very densely populated - I really don't know, whether building new homes would be a good idea.”* White female owner occupier, aged 45-59

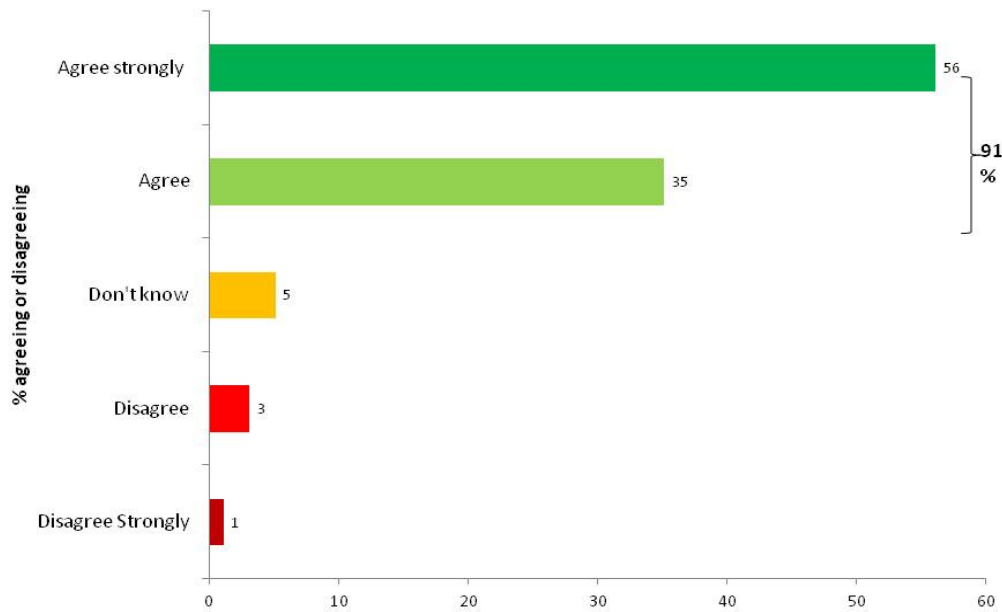
People who added further comments in support of new housing were likely to qualify this by requesting this to be affordable housing. More than five comments specified social housing over 'affordable' housing, implying that this was not really affordable for local residents.

*“Brixton probably does need more housing however measures must be taken to ensure services keep up. There is already a shortage of good school places and transport is crowded - especially buses.”* Brixton mother, aged 30-44 and owner occupier

A number of comments suggested we should concentrate on improving the existing homes or making better use of empty spaces.

#### 4.2 Getting around

**Q2 Making the train station easier, safer and more pleasant to use will encourage visitors, residents and commuters to travel by rail.**



Base: all respondents (553)

This was the joint fourth most popular proposal. Those with a disability were more in favour of this proposal than average (98% agreeing) as were those living in social housing and Christians (96% and 95% respectively). The views of men and women differed (94% and 89% respectively). Those living in Brixton were less in favour (89% agreeing) with those living elsewhere in Lambeth more so (97%).

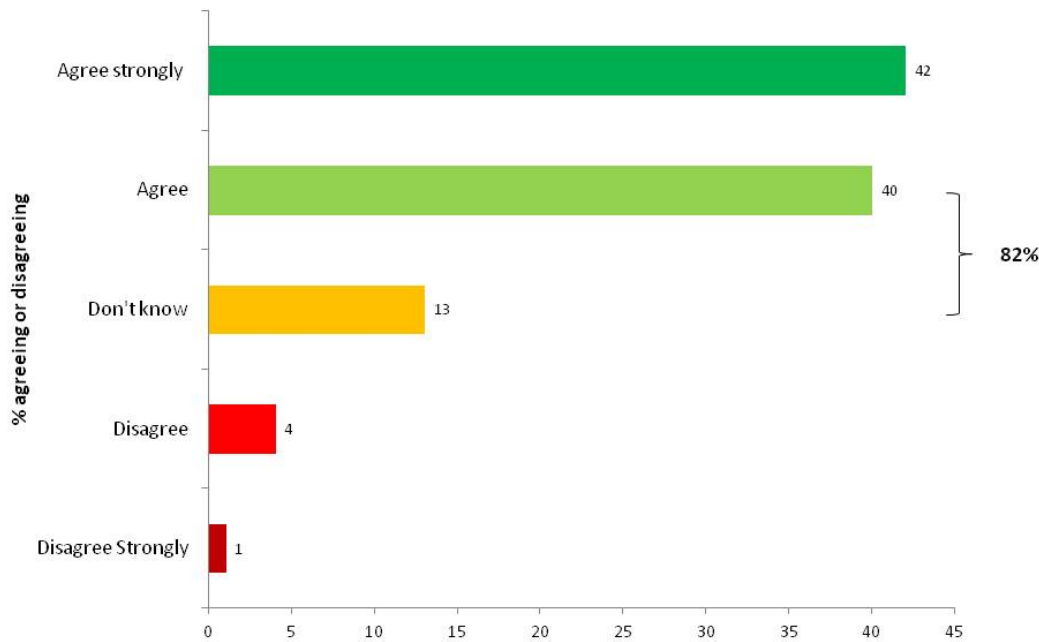
Of the 41 additional comments received about the tube and train in Brixton, most were concerned that Brixton rail station included a high level platform so that London Overground, formerly East London line extension, trains can stop at Brixton. This suggests that, while cosmetic improvements are important, the connections the train services offered as, if not more, important.

*“It was foolish to allow Overground to be run between Denmark Hill and Clapham with no platforms built at Brixton for interchange to the Victoria Line. Installing such a facility should go hand-in-hand with a total refurbishment of the existing rail station to make Brixton a more inviting destination. I of course welcome the proposal to open up a more convenient entrance into the tube station.”* 30-44 year old male Brixton visitor

Comments do reflect support for improving the accessibility and attractiveness of both stations and for improving the connections between them, including opening a second tube station entrance.

*“The Brixton rail station is desperately in need of a makeover - some people aren't even aware it exists.”* Brixton mother, aged 44-59

**Q3 Opening up the railway arches and viaducts at key locations and routes through the viaducts could help people to get around the town centre more easily.**



Base: all respondents (551)

The only group to have a significantly different view on this is people with children under 16 who appeared to be more strongly in favour (88% agreeing).

This proposal is designed to help pedestrians move around the town centre more easily and to ease congestion on pavements particularly along Brixton Road. Additional comments showed that congestion is certainly an issue for respondents, particularly for the elderly, disabled or those with young children. Fourteen comments were made about congested pavements and half of these comments attributed some of the problem to the bus stops. Solutions offered included pedestrianising some side streets and increasing pavement widths.

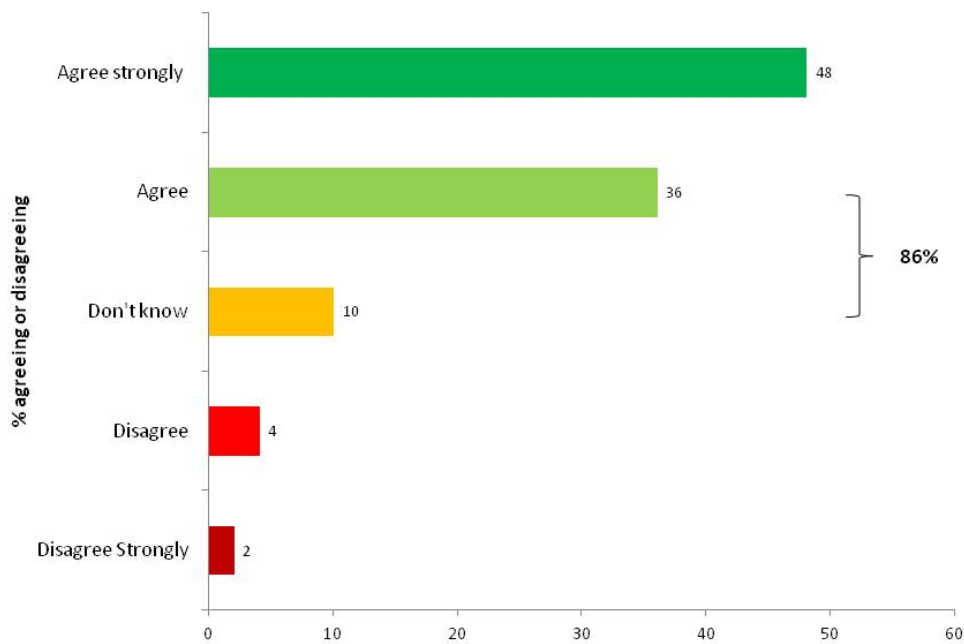
*“Please bear in mind wheelchair users and families with buggies when making these very welcome improvements - especially where the train station is concerned.”* Brixton working mother, aged 30-44

*“Brixton is very crowded for pedestrians so please pedestrianise streets like Atlantic road, coldharbour lane, Brixton station road and increase pavement widths on Brixton Road.”* Anon

There was some support for opening up the railway arches but equally other comments either did not consider it necessary or needed further information.

*“I think opening up some of the arches and viaducts will also help greatly to improve the flow of people and to make the area feel less constricted and more open.”* Female Brixton visitor

**Q4 Improved cycle parking and the availability of bike hire bays will encourage people to cycle.**



Base: all respondents (551)

Those living in social housing were less in favour than average on this issue (75% agreeing) as were those from BME groups (70% agreeing). White British people, those aged 30-44 and those in full time work were more likely to be in favour (all 87% agreeing).

More than 80 respondents wrote additional comments specifically about cycling. The majority of those who commented felt that the proposals hadn't gone far enough to promote or encourage cycling and that they lacked detail.

*"There is a strong need for better cycle provision - not just parking spaces. By this I mean clearly defined, traffic free cycle lanes to make it easier and safer for people like myself to come in to, and out of Brixton town centre. It's not good enough to have somewhere to leave a bicycle if there's no safe way to get in to the area in the first place."* Male Brixton visitor, aged 30-44

*"Providing additional cycle parking is all very well, but significant improvements need to be made to the overall cycling infrastructure in the area. In particular more segregated cycle paths. I wouldn't currently feel safe cycling in the centre of Brixton."* Male Brixton resident, aged 45-59

A number of respondents suggested we look at Hackney, and in particular Dalston, to see some innovative solutions to encouraging cycling. Other suggestions included direct and segregated cycle routes and promoting use of minor streets for cycling with only limited access for cars.

One particular junction noted as requiring attention was the main junction in the heart of Brixton town centre where Brixton Road meets Coldharbour Lane, Effra Road, Brixton Hill and Acre Lane.

*"The cycling strategy seems simplistic and is limited to providing additional cycle spaces around the town centre. I do not believe this alone will encourage cycling, as the real problem is the lack of safe cycling routes around the SPD area. The junction of Acre Lane / Brixton Road / Coldharbour Lane is designed entirely for motorised vehicles and is extremely dangerous for cyclists. Brixton*



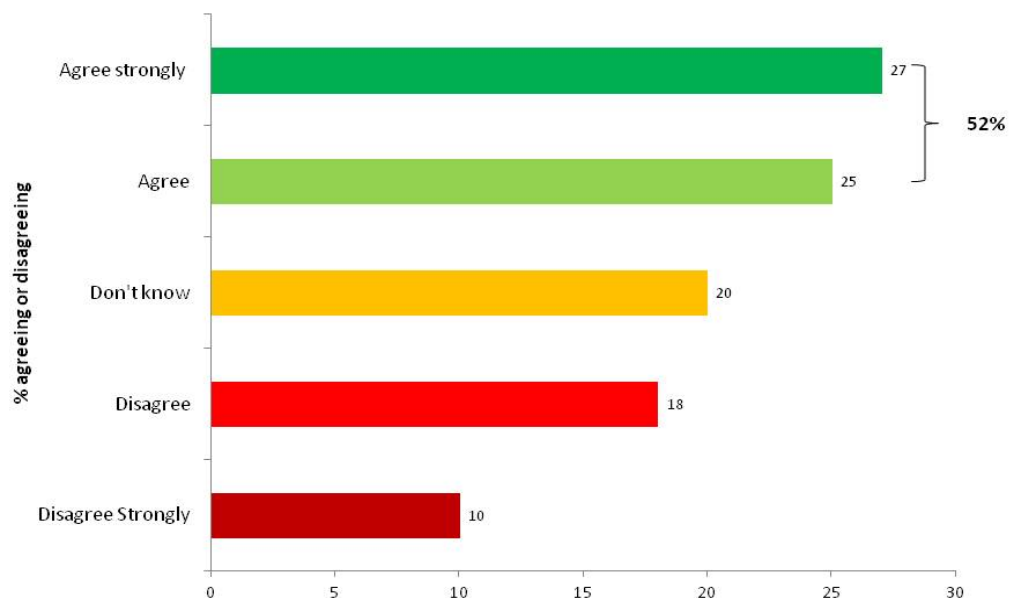
*Road, with its numerous buses pulling out from stops at all times, is similarly hazardous. I realise that Brixton Road is a TfL managed route but feel that the Council should seek to engage with TfL to enhance the overall cycling infrastructure, not just parking facilities.*” Male Brixton resident, aged 20-29

Additional cycle parking and the extension of the Barclays Bike hire scheme were generally welcomed but not thought to be solutions in themselves. Even additional cycle parking would need to be more security conscious.

*“It would be great to make Brixton more cycle friendly. Safer road lanes; larger, safe, secure bike parks (particularly at night).”* Female Brixton visitor, aged 20-29

**Q5 Increased off-street short stay parking will encourage more visitors to shop in the town centre.**

Less respondents agreed with this proposal than any other (52% agreeing) and a high percentage of people chose the ‘don’t know’ option (20%).



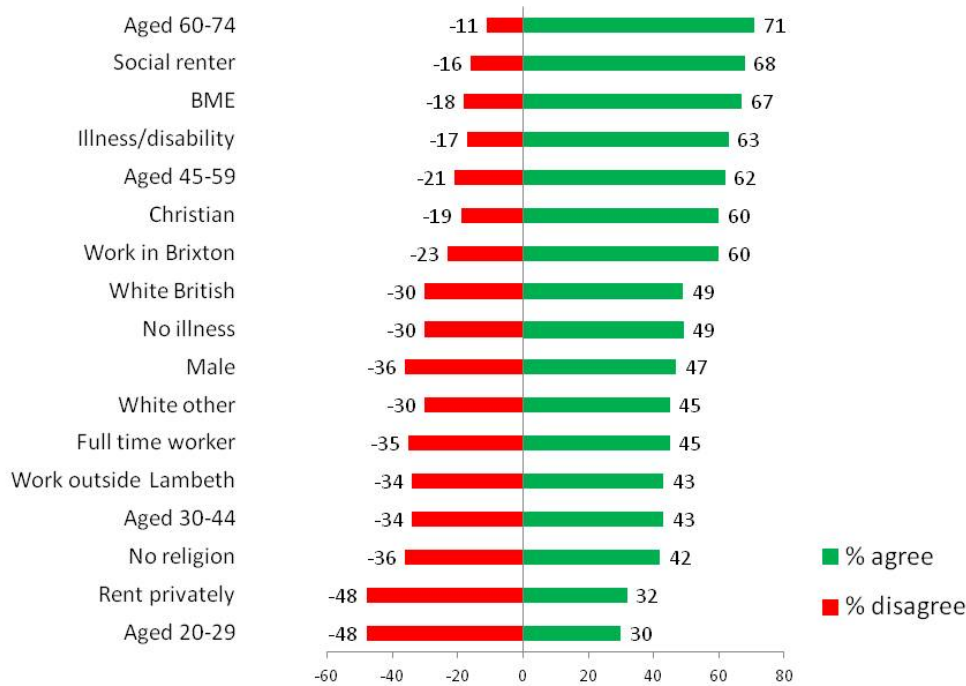
Base: all respondents (552)

This issue led to a lot of variation in views (see graph below). Younger people and those that rent privately are least in favour of this measure with more disagreeing than agreeing. There seems to be evidence to suggest that the younger people were the less likely they would be to support this proposal. Social renters, people from BME groups, older people and those with an illness or disability are more in favour.

There were more than thirty people who provided additional comments about cars and parking and these were fairly evenly split between those who felt the success of the town centre depended on providing adequate places for shoppers to park and those who felt that the reliance on motorised transport had to be reduced.

*“Brixton needs more car parking for visitors and shoppers. Local businesses are suffering since the multi-storey car park was closed.”* Female Brixton resident, aged 60-74

*“According to the 2011 census, Lambeth has one of the lowest level of car ownership in London and nearly half of all car journeys within Lambeth are under two miles, so wouldn't it be more realistic to invest in encouraging alternative modes of transport whenever possible?”* Female Brixton resident, aged 30-44



Base: various – those showing significant variation from the average

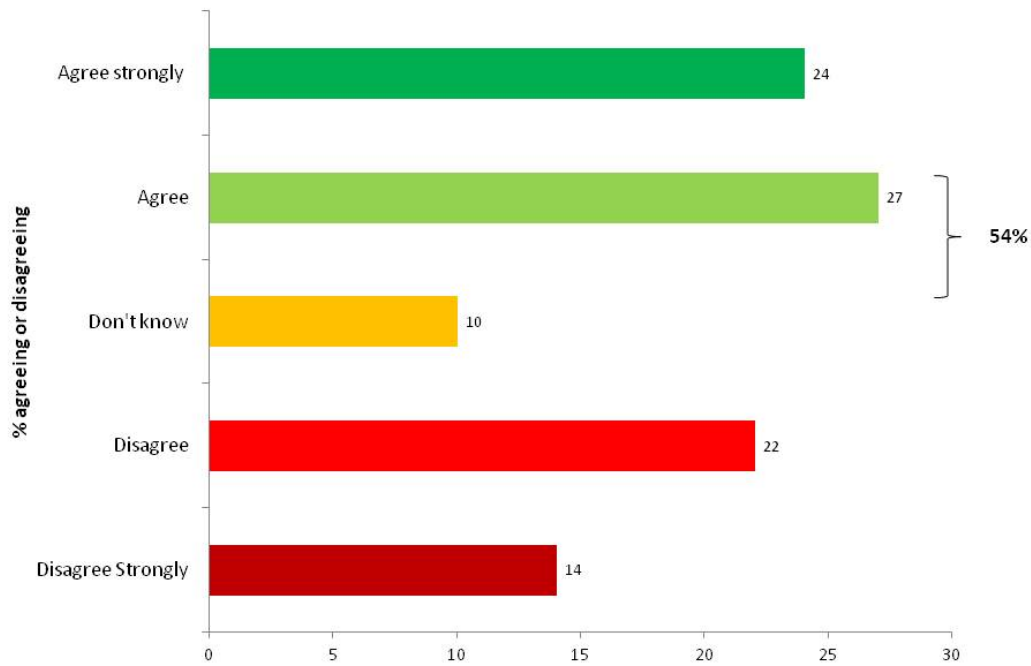
Some comments highlighted the needs of elderly and disabled people to have easily accessible parking and for parking to be affordable. Other suggestions included opening up resident's parking bays during the day.

A popular suggestion for reducing traffic more generally was for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit. One comment also suggested we get tougher on cyclists flouting the rules of the road.

### 4.3 A town centre

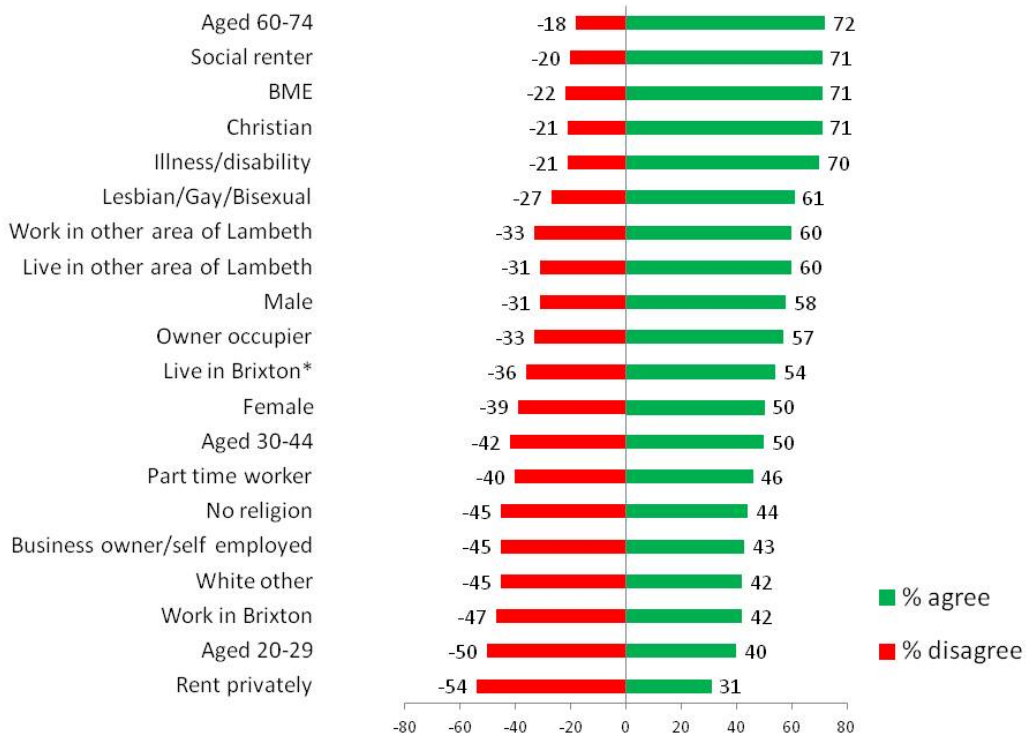
#### **Q6 Brixton needs to compete with other local town centres and needs a shopping area that encourages major high street retailers, particularly along Brixton Road.**

This was the probably the most contentious proposal and had more respondents disagreeing with it than for any other proposal (36% disagreeing).



Base: all respondents (548)

This issue polarised opinions and even within many of the sub groups views are evenly split for and against (see next diagram).



Base: various – those showing significant variation from the average  
 \*% agreeing/disagreeing not significant difference

Looking at the diagram above, those that live in Brixton represent the average view, with those lying below less in favour and those lying above more in favour. Older people, BME groups and those renting socially are more likely to be in favour of the proposal (72%, 71% and 71% respectively agreeing). Younger, private renters and those working in Brixton are less likely to be in favour (50%, 54% and 47% respectively disagreeing).

Almost one third of all people who provided additional comments, made a comment on the types of shops they wanted or didn't want to see in the town centre. This discussion seemed to go to the heart of the debate about Brixton's identity and regeneration. The discussion needs to be looked at together with responses to questions 7 and 8.

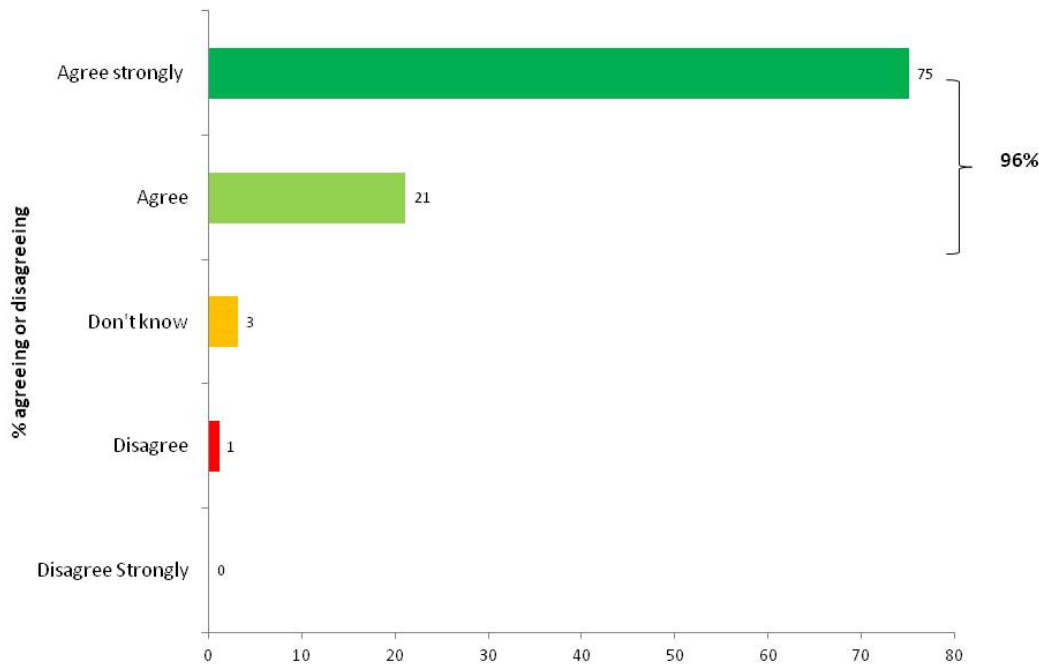
*"It's vital that investment and support is given to local and independent business. If not, the major brand manes will move in and Brixton becomes Bromley, losing its character and it's creativity."*  
 Brixton father, aged 45-59, mixed ethnic background

There was some support for a better mix of retail, including some additional high street retailers but in general comments suggest priority should be given to encouraging the independent shops and the markets. A number of respondents identified too many mobile phone shops and supermarkets as particular problems.

*"We agree that some high street stores are required, but the last thing Brixton needs is to be over run with them!"* Brixton male resident, aged 30-44 and renting privately

*"I am unhappy that there are now 6(!!!) mobile phone shops ..."* Female Brixton resident, aged 60-74

**Q7 Brixton needs to celebrate and invest in its markets as a defining feature of the town centre.**



Base: all respondents (551)

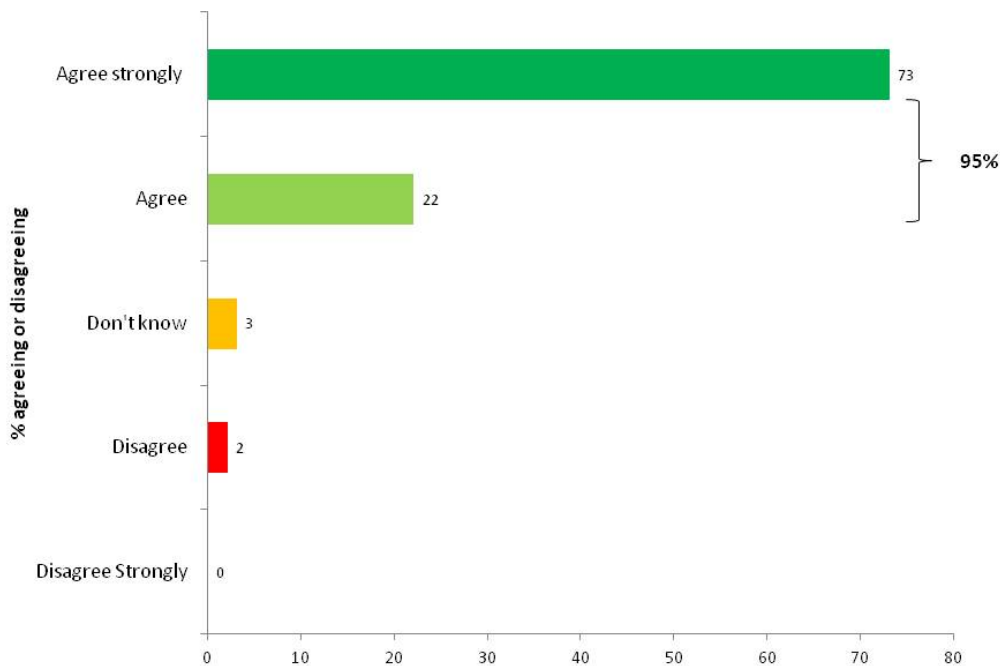
This proposal is very popular and it had the highest ‘strongly agree’ score of all the proposals, as well as the highest overall agreeing score. There were some differences in the views between social housing tenants (90% agreeing) and private renters (99% agreeing). Those stating they had ‘no religion’ or were aged 20-29 were more in favour (98% and 100% agreeing respectively) whereas those working in Brixton and those from BME groups were a bit less positive (90% and 92% agreeing respectively).

Additional comments about the markets were overwhelmingly supportive and suggested that the markets were one of Brixton’s best assets. There were about 30 comments expressing concerns around rent rises and changes to the markets forcing out some existing stall holders. This reflects recent rent rises and subsequent local media coverage and petition around rent rises in the market.

*“is a very special part of London but it currently runs the risk of turning into any other part of London through over development, increasing property prices and market vendors being pushed out of the market. While the regeneration of the market has been great, it seems to be turning into a bit of a monster and changing the character of the place. If food vendors and shops has to leave due to rent hikes, this will be a terrible disappointment.”* Female Brixton business owner, aged 30-44

*“I am very happy with the proposals and am delighted by the development of Market Row at Brixton Village plus the Farmers Market and the Crafts and make Market. I hope that rents can be kept reasonable.”* White retired female, aged 60-74

**Q8 Independent businesses, which help to define Brixton’s character, should be supported by making the streets off Brixton Road more attractive for visitors.**



Base: all respondents (550)

This was another popular proposal and second overall only to the proposal to celebrate and invest in the markets. Only two groups differing slightly in view from the average and it had the second highest 'strongly agree' score of all the proposals. Those in social housing were slightly less in favour (with 91% agreeing). Those from a 'white other' background were more in favour (with 99% agreeing).

Again, many of the additional comments about the character of Brixton reflected on the importance of independent shops and creative businesses. Improving the attractiveness generally around the town centre was seen to be a good thing and comments suggested that the council, business owners and residents may all have a roll to play in this.

*"The corner of Cold Harbour lane and Somerleyton Road is very uninviting and intimidating and needs particular attention. Improving the appearance of this area and facilities, and making it safer would help "extend" the town centre and encourage visitors to venture further down and not just stay around Brixton village and Atlantic Rd.* "White female owner occupier, aged 30-44

*"A problem I find is the dirt in some areas, particularly around the viaducts. Basically, anywhere which isn't owned by a major retailer! It encourages negative stereotypes about South London and Lambeth."* White female, aged 16-19

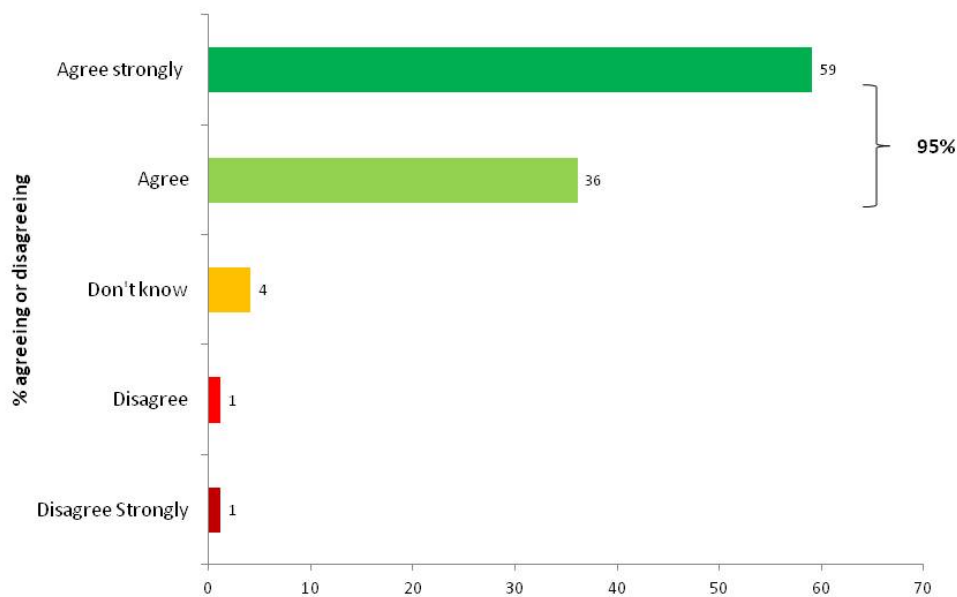
A number of comments wanted to see more attractive shop fronts, some arguing for a shop front policy.

*Make shop owners in the back streets revamp their shop fronts and signage every few years or so, so flat the place doesn't look run down. get the parking wardens to calm down a bit they are totally ruthless."* Male Brixton business owner, aged 30-44

Adding greenery to the streetscape and more pedestrianisation were popular suggestions.

*I suggest not forgetting green spaces, planting trees, hanging baskets, etc in your future plans."* Female Brixton resident, aged 45-59

**Q9 The council should work with partners and businesses to make sure everyone can enjoy a variety of activities safely during an evening out in Brixton**



Base: all respondents (551)

This was another popular proposal and came joint second in terms of proposals respondents in general were most likely to agree with. Only those working in Brixton were slightly less in favour with 90 per cent of those respondents agreeing.

Comments received showed support for social infrastructure across the age spectrum – people valued the existing Brixton Rec, the temporary ice rink and were generally excited about a potential new theatre.

*“Focus is needed in dealing with gang crime, and to give young people with issues at home support. Funding should be focused on support groups and the Rec centre which has lots of activities which prevent them from getting in gangs and should be supported so they can keep them going.”* Young female Brixton resident aged 16-19

However, there were some concerns expressed about the negative impact of the evening economy, including the increasing popularity of Brixton Village - problems included noise, litter and urinating in public.

*“The increased evening visitors to The market are making living here increasingly difficult due to noise and traffic.”* [23]

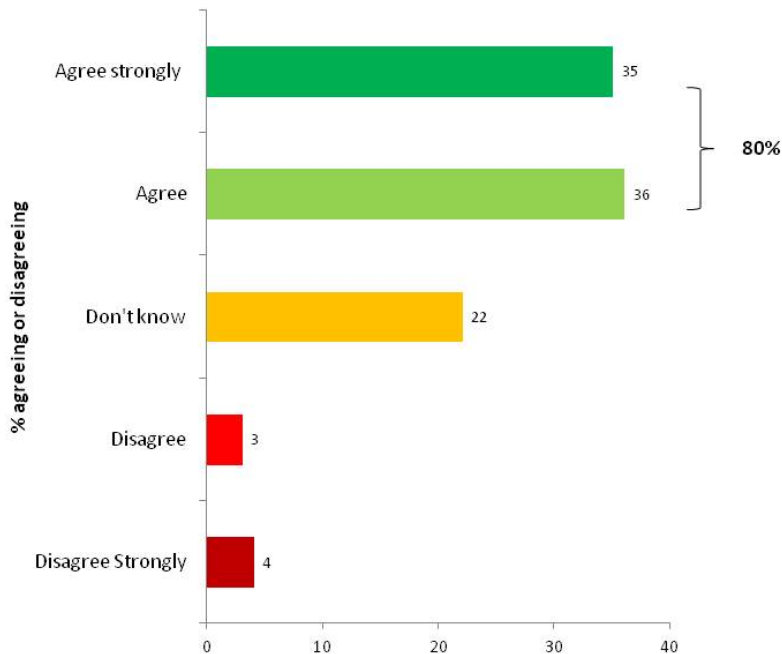
*“A 24-hour retail/entertainment culture does not always sit well beside the requirements of those whose homes are close to the Brixton town centre.”* Female council tenant, aged 60-74

The fear of crime and Brixton’s reputation were also commented on.

*“Brixton's major problem is still that it feels quite, unsafe in the evenings - I can never go out in the evenings unless someone gives me a lift - It is still the reality of living in Brixton and i see it as it's number one problem....”* Female business owner, age 45-59

#### 4.4 More jobs

##### Q10 Brixton needs more suitable and affordable work spaces to encourage enterprise and create new jobs.



Base: all respondents (550)

Overall 80 per cent of respondents agreed with this proposal, which made it only the 9th most agreed with proposal overall and the least likely of the more jobs proposals to be agreed with. There was also a reasonably high level of respondents who 'didn't know' how to respond (22%).

Those with an illness or disability were more in favour of this proposal (96% agreeing) as were those renting social housing (also 96%). There was most variation among age groups with those age 20-29 and 30-44 less in favour (67% and 74% respectively) and with 45-59 year olds and 60-74 year olds more likely to be in favour (87% and 97%).

Affordable workspace was a popular topic for comments in the freefield section. These were largely, but not wholly, focused on the rent rises in the markets. A number of comments focused on the creative and cultural industries.

*"Creative people contributed massively to Brixton's character - do not squeeze them out. They need affordable work space."* Female housing association tenant, aged 45-59

Another comment suggested that empty commercial space needed to be promoted better.

*"Greater promotion of affordable, start-up business units should be encouraged particularly outside of the core shopping strip (ie; Coldharbour Lane, eastern side of Brixton Village Market). At present empty shops exists with no tenants providing an unattractive streetscape and boarded up ground floor units."* Male Brixton resident, aged 30-44



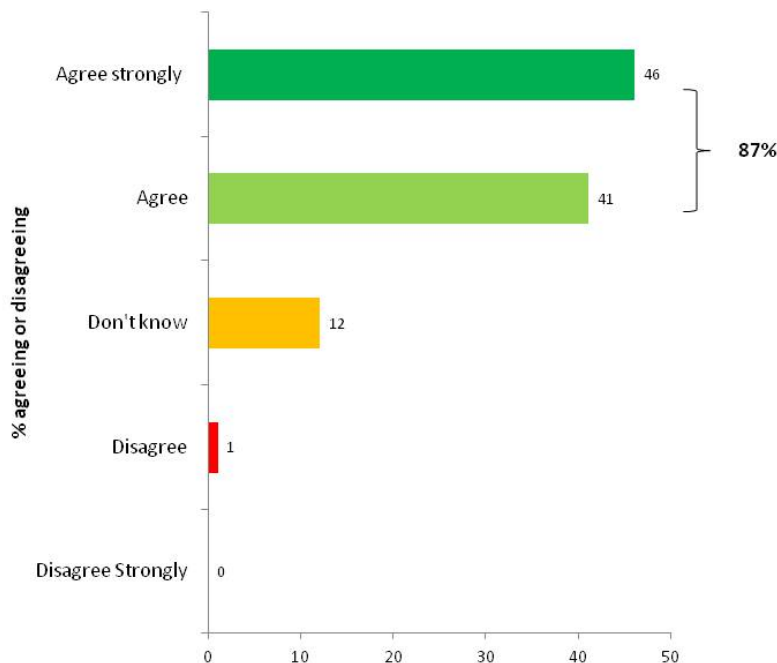
In addition, some comments reflected the need for flexible space to accommodate growing businesses.

*“Brixton needs a business centre offering serviced office space on flexible terms to encourage small and medium sized enterprises locate here”* Male respondent aged 45-59

There was some concern that developments would lead to less rather than more affordable workspace.

*“I think it will be disgusting if the council uses this development to destroy the cheap rental units that currently exist.”* Male Brixton resident, aged 20-29

**Q11 Developers need to support local employment through training initiatives, such as apprenticeships, and access to direct employment during construction.**

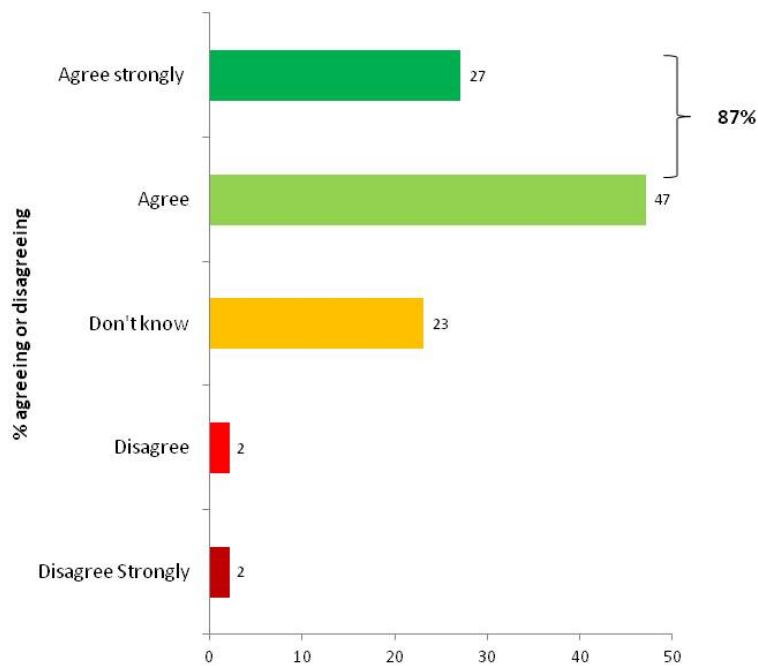


Base: all respondents (548)

This was a fairly popular proposal with a low number of respondents disagreeing with the statement (1%). Men, owners occupiers and those working outside of Lambeth were slightly less in favour (all 84% agreeing). There was a similar trend among those in full time paid work (81%) and aged 30-44 (83%) whereas people aged 60-74 or in social housing were more in favour (97% and 95% respectively).

There were no comments specifically relating to this proposal.

**Q12 The council should work with existing and new businesses, partners and others to make sure local people benefit from job and training opportunities.**



Base: all respondents (548)

This was another popular proposal with 91 per cent of respondents overall agreeing with the statement – the joint fourth most likely to be agreed with.

Those with an illness or disability (98% agreeing), living in social housing (99%), of Black or minority ethnic background (96%), women (93%), aged 60-74 or Christian (both 94%) were more in favour. Owner occupiers (89% agreeing), those that worked full time (87%) or work outside Lambeth (89%), White British people (89%) and those aged 30-34 (88%) were slightly less enthusiastic.

Within the freefield section, there were 21 comments about jobs and training and young people were singled out as requiring support.

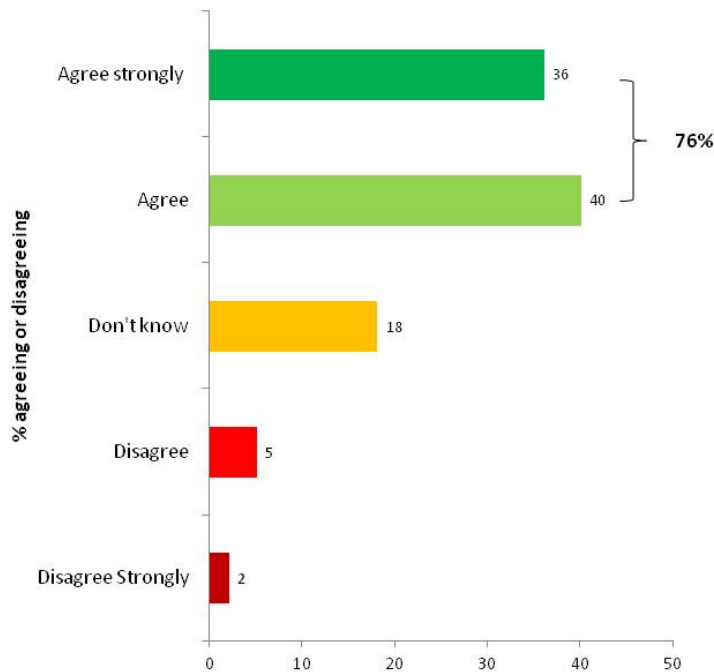
*“More training for young people (16-21)”* Black female Brixton resident, aged 45-59

*“Invest in the young, make sure businesses pay their taxes, Encourage businesses to take on young people to train and give them Saturday/weekend jobs otherwise where do they get experience and money from invest in economic programs aimed at the young there should be work based workshops in the arches where they can pick up construction skills etc”* Male respondent, aged 30-44

#### 4.5 Area specific proposals

All three of these more specific proposals were overall slightly more controversial than the majority of the proposals, with between 63% and 76% of respondents agreeing with the statements. They were also statements that people were quite likely to give a ‘don’t know’ response to. Only the three controversial areas of new homes, high street retail and parking were more likely to divide opinion.

**Q13 A new cultural facility, such as a theatre, at the north end of Somerleyton Road will be a major new attraction and draw visitors to this area.**



Base: all respondents (548)

More respondents agreed with this area based proposal than the other two (76% agreed). There was not much variation in opinion among different groups and 18 per cent of respondents 'didn't know'.

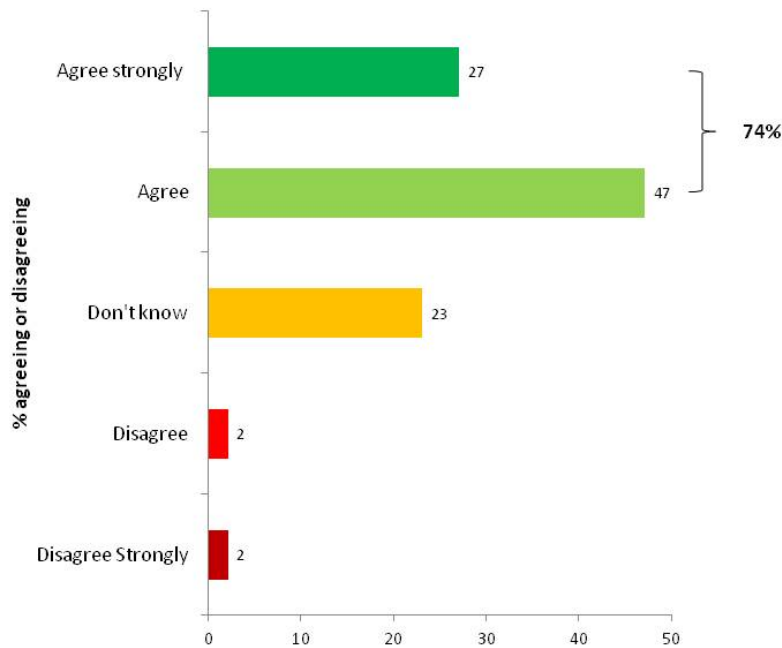
Those that lived in Brixton were slightly more in favour (81% agreeing) and those in other areas of Lambeth were slightly less so (70% agreeing). Younger people aged 20-29 were also more in favour (88% agreeing) whereas those aged 45-49 were less supportive of the idea (68% agreeing).

In the freefield section there were 10 comments that were specifically in favour of Ovalhouse moving to Somerleyton Road. However, there were four comments that raised questions about the location for the theatre and whether this project should be a regeneration priority.

*"[I] particularly support theatre or new cultural facility on Somerleyton Road."* Female, part-time worker, aged 45-59

*"Not sure that Somerleyton Road is the right location for a theatre"* Male Brixton owner occupier, aged 60-74

**Q14 The council should share its office space in Brixton with organisations working in partnership with the council, the community and local enterprise.**



Base: all respondents (545)

About three-quarters of respondents (74%) agreed with this proposal, which was a similar level of support to Q13 and less respondents disagreed. However, this question received the second highest level of 'don't know' responses (23%).

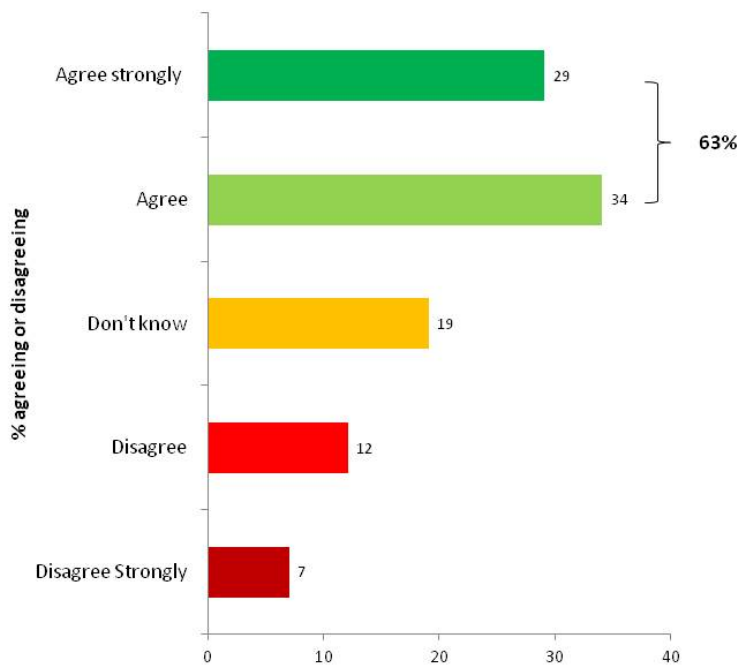
There was not much variation in opinion among different groups. Those who rent privately were slightly more in favour (82% agreeing), as did those in part-time work (84%).

Comments on the need for suitable and affordable workspace generally are covered under Q10. In addition there was some support for the proposals around the SW2 Enterprise Centre, along with some wariness.

*“providing office space for enterprise and voluntary groups in public buildings practical and important”* Female respondent, aged 44-59

*“Council shouldn't share office space as it promotes cronyism and we all know Lambeth Council has been and probably still in rife with that”* Male Brixton business owner, aged 45-59

**Q15 Major development, including retail and homes, along Brixton Station Road would make it a more attractive destination.**



Base: all respondents (549)

This was the least popular area-based proposal with 63% of respondents agreeing with the statement. It was also the area-based statement that respondents were most likely to disagree with (19%).

Those more in favour included those with a disability or illness (83%), those in social housing (80%), BME groups (76%), Christians (74%), lesbian/gay or bisexual people (79%), people living in another area of Lambeth (71%) and those aged 60-74 (75%). Those less supportive comprised business owners or self employed (51% agreeing), those working in Brixton (54%) and those renting privately (48%).

Comments in the freefield section showed people had reservations about large scale development in this area – how it would affect the existing businesses and, importantly, Brixton Recreation Centre.

*“Brixton Station Road development would harm the market.”* White female business owner, aged 60-74

*“Any redevelopments must insure the integrity of Brixton Recreation Centre in its current position and maintain its current facilities. This must be written in the “stoniest of all stones” We are extremely fortunate to have such a facility in the area and it must be protected from any commercial developers”* Male council tenant, aged 60-74

#### 4. Other comments

Almost 70 per cent of questionnaire respondents provided additional comments on a range of topics. Analysis of comments relating to questions has been included in section 4 above, further analysis is given below by theme and a complete table of comments is included as an appendix.

Comments were analysed against the 10 themes that emerged during conversations with local residents and businesses when writing the draft Brixton SPD. These themes had been outlined in the consultation booklet and are:

1. People love Brixton
2. Brixton should support a diverse economy
3. The importance of social infrastructure
4. Provide homes for all
5. Improve access and connections
6. Respect local character
7. Keep it safe
8. Sustainable Brixton
9. Use every space
10. Make it happen

### **5.1 People love Brixton**

A genuine and deeply felt affection for Brixton was evident through the majority of the comments, whether people were trying to protect what they loved or improve the bits that annoyed them.

- People loved the Brixton ‘vibe’ – which included creativity, independent businesses and the community.
- The key places people singled out were the markets and Brixton Rec and there were also a number of comments in praise of Windrush Square.

*“I love Brixton and any regeneration should be sensitive to the community vibe of Brixton - supporting independent shops and the markets rather than encouraging major high street chain retailers so that it looks like any other town centre.”* Female Brixton owner occupier, aged 30-44

### **5.2 Brixton should support a diverse economy**

This was a popular theme for people to comment, with 139 respondents addressing issues around the town centre, business and jobs. People were particularly concerned about:

- Getting the right mix of retail in the town centre - including protecting the markets and the independent businesses that make Brixton special.
- The affordability of employment space.
- Providing jobs and training, particularly for young people.

*“Encourage businesses to take on young people to train and give them Saturday/ weekend jobs otherwise where do they get experience and money from invest in economic programs aimed at the young there should be work based workshops in the arches where they can pick up construction skills etc”* Respondent not resident in Brixton

### **5.3 The importance of social infrastructure**

Comments on this theme were made by 66 respondents and many of these were in support of Brixton Rec and the proposals for a new theatre. A number of comments focused on things for young people to do – some of these in praise of the temporary ice rink and asking about its future. Four comments were made about the need for more and better schools. An overview of the comments is

- People, particularly young people, needed things to do and there was significant support for Brixton Rec, proposals for a new theatre and the temporary ice rink.
- Social infrastructure, particularly school places, needs to be thought about in context of new residents and visitors that will be encouraged to the area,

*“Brixton needs more social and youth clubs. there are far too many children of school age on the streets any day of the week and they could benefit if more places and activities are targeted to them.”* Italian/British female resident, renting privately

#### **5.4 Provide homes for all**

Over 40 respondents commented specifically on housing.

- People who supported providing new homes wanted these to be affordable.
- People were concerned about Brixton being overcrowded as it is and keen to make sure that existing homes and social infrastructure were improved.
- Empty homes and brownfield sites should be considered first for the provision of new homes.

*“I have put strongly agree around housing but only if this is affordable housing - the private market is too expensive even for those who work.”* Woman working in Brixton and renting privately, aged 30-44

#### **5.5 Improve access and connections**

This was the most popular theme and 165 people provided comments. About half of comments included support for better cycling provision.

- More detail needs to be provided as to how we can encourage cycling by making it easier and safer.
- Improving access to and the attractiveness of the stations is important but improvements to the overground service (i.e. connecting with the London Overground) would do more to encourage people to go by train.
- Views were divided over the need for more town centre parking to support business against the need to encourage more sustainable transport.
- Congestion was another big issue – on the roads and pavements.

*“Explore the idea of 'pedestrian lanes' to deter crowds of people from standing in middle of pavement while they wait for buses on Brixton Road. .. Or, reposition bus stops, to avoid walkways being blocked by crowds waiting for busses. Or, much longer bus shelters to encourage people to queue along the road for busses - instead of crowding in the middle of the pavement.”* Male business owner, aged 45-59

#### **5.6 Respect local character**

Sixty respondents provided comments around this theme, which chimed with what people loved about Brixton.

- People were anxious that developments didn't price existing residents or businesses out of the area or deliver benefits they could not take advantage of.
- There was a fear of losing Brixton's individuality and of the area becoming like a generic town centre.

- Protecting Brixton 'icons', e.g. the market, Brixton Rec and the nuclear dawn mural were important demonstrations of respecting local character

*"Brixton is still very culturally divided. recent expansion of Brixton Village is attracting a lot of visitors with money to the area, but doesn't seem to be used much by local people. Don't let it expand any further, as it is pushing out the traditional market."* White Brixton mother, aged 45-59

### **5.7 Keep it safe**

Included within this theme were comments about keeping the area clean and pleasant as well as comments about antisocial behaviour and crime. There were 58 comments made under this theme.

- Antisocial behaviour, e.g. noise, street drinking and dog fouling, was a frequent complaint and a deterrent to people enjoying the town centre – solutions included better lighting and more police.
- People still felt that crime or fear of crime in Brixton, particularly gangs and drugs may still put people off coming.
- If everyone respected the local environment more and kept it cleaner and more attractive this would benefit businesses, residents and visitors and encourage people to keep it nice.

*"Safer streets - especially at night - is really important to making people want to stay in Brixton."* Male Brixton resident, aged 35-44

### **5.8 Sustainable Brixton**

Sustainability in its broadest sense ran through many of the comments made. Those analysed under this theme were restricted to specific comments on use of energy, water and waste, as well as pollution.

- More needed to be done to deter car use and encourage sustainable transport throughout the town centre, which would also have a positive impact on congestion, road safety, pollution and well being.
- Green spaces, trees and space for allotments would help with pollution, water drainage and providing fresh food.
- New developments need to be to highest sustainable standards, be carbon neutral and consider local energy provision.

*"I would be thrilled to see more emphasis on "green" issues and less about major development. I think a magnificent idea would be to develop the idea of anaerobic digestion and which could create bio gas and electricity for the community of Brixton. This would reduce landfill, reduce green house gases, and create power for the community just by using the millions of tonnes of household and commercial food waste that we produce every year. It seems mad not to do this."* Female part-time worker, aged 45-59

### **5.9 Use every space**

This theme covered the use of empty buildings as well as better use of public spaces and there were 22 comments on this theme.

- There was support for bringing empty properties back to use, providing much needed space and making the town centre more attractive.
- There were calls for more and better open spaces – these could be greener and better used for community events. Greenery didn't need to be limited to open spaces, however.



*“There isn't enough greenery either. There's a general impression of misuse and disrepair, which could be greatly improved with vertical gardens, trees etc...”* Female respondent, aged 16-19

### **5.10 Make it happen**

Comments considered under this theme included those concerning the area-specific proposals, community involvement and the boundary of the SPD itself.

- There were a number of comments asking for regeneration initiatives to cover areas outside the SPD boundary, including Acre Lane, Rushcroft Road, Loughborough Junction and Streatham.
- There was some support for the regeneration ambitions but concern for more detail, including how things would be financed and how the community would be involved.
- People wanted to know how the community could be involved.

*“Future Brixton document is a bold vision, but it is just that, with few concrete proposals or timescales, or indeed indications of what funding is available.”* White male respondent, aged 30-44

**5.11** Some additional comments criticised the content and format of the questionnaire. These felt that the questions were leading and offered no meaningful opportunity to comment.

More open questions and engagement techniques had been used during the earlier stages of the development of the draft SPD. The questions or statements in this consultation were designed to encapsulate the proposals in the draft SPD. Respondents were encouraged to supply additional comments and 67 per cent of respondents did so.

However, comments on this issue will be useful in considering how best to consult on future planning policy.

## **5. Participation and evaluation**

There were 555 completed questionnaires received by the closing date. This represented a response rate of 1.84% given that 30,152 were distributed through letterboxes in the five Brixton wards. For a self-completion questionnaire, this was a comparable, if not slightly higher, response rate than for the draft Vauxhall SPD consultation undertaken in Autumn 2012.

Of the questionnaires received, 380 (or 68%) were received through the freepost mechanism. This showed that the physical booklet and questionnaire proved the greatest driver for action. The remainder of the questionnaire responses were completed online and this method was encouraged through all promotional activity that was not face to face (e.g. newsletters, magazine articles, adverts, twitter and facebook).

Although response rates are a useful indicator of participation, it may be argued that a quality response (one that is well considered) is more useful for the consultation. More than 370 questionnaire respondents (67%) supplied additional comment. These have allowed us to analyse issues of obvious concern in greater detail than would otherwise have been possible.

One of the aims for the consultation was to ‘to proactively consult with the whole community on the draft SPD’. Although the questionnaire was one of many methods used during the consultation it was the only one whereby we could accurately collect demographic data to see whether respondents did represent people living in the SPD area. Almost 95% of questionnaire respondents completed all demographic questions.

For the purposes of this analysis 'Brixton' is made up of Coldharbour, Ferndale, Brixton Hill and Tulse Hill wards. The ward data used is from the 2011 Census. Overall, the respondent profile did not reflect the demographic profile of Brixton, although it should be remembered that 34% of respondents did not live in Brixton and 7% lived outside of Lambeth.

The sample differs from the age profile of the area in terms of over representing people age 30 to 74 and under representing younger people age 16 to 29. For example, 45 per cent of respondents were aged 30-44, whereas this age group represents 29 per cent of Brixton residents. Eleven questionnaire respondents were aged 19 or under.

The sample is very over represented in terms of White British people and underrepresented in terms of Black or Black British African or Caribbean people, who are underrepresented by about half. White 'other' was reasonably well represented (17% of sample and 19% of Brixton population). This group is made up of Europeans and North Americans.

There is a big disparity between the number of owner occupiers responding to the questionnaire (64%) and the number living in Brixton (24%). Conversely those renting were under represented, particularly those renting from the council or a housing association.

There are roughly double the number of full time workers in the sample than there are in Brixton and a larger disparity between the number of unemployed people responding to the questionnaire (4% of sample and 15% of Brixton population). There are roughly half the number of students, retired and self employed people in the sample.

The sample is slightly under represented in terms of people with a disability or long term illness. There were more stating they followed no religion in the sample than Brixton as a whole (29% compared with 48%) and fewer Christians (39% compared with 52%).

For the reasons given above, the findings should be seen in the context of the respondent profile, which had a high proportion of White British people (60%), home owners (61%) and people living in Brixton (66%).

Overall, a high percentage of all respondents agreed with the majority of the statements reflecting the proposals within the draft Brixton SPD. Respondents were less sure about the area-specific proposals and the three most contentious issues concerned new homes, high street retail and town centre parking.

Interestingly, within these three contentious issues there were different views between some of the demographic groups that were under represented.

Those living in social housing and from BME groups and renting privately were more likely to support proposals for new homes. Although it should be noted from the comments that people supporting new homes were likely to prefer the provision of affordable homes.

Those living in social housing and from BME groups were also more likely to support proposals for additional town centre parking and encouraging major high street retailers.

Those with an illness or disability were much more likely to support proposals for additional town centre parking and encouraging major high street retailers.

In terms of those groups that were over represented in the sample, owner occupiers were less likely to support proposals for new homes and White British people were less likely to support proposals for additional town centre parking.

Outreach work for traditionally harder to reach groups consisted of a number of roadshow events (please see separate mini report). This work did aim to encourage people to complete questionnaires but it obviously had limited success in ensuring the respondent profile in this instance was representative.

For more contentious issues and particularly as projects develop it will be important to ensure the views of groups under represented in this consultation are heard.