

## Appendix B: Consultation Report

### 1. Consultation Format

- 1.1 Informal consultation was carried out during October 2021 to shape the drafting of the Chard Shop Front Design Guide.
- 1.2 A press release was issued and letters were sent by email to the statutory Local Plan consultees in the Area West, as well as all District Councillors, to notify key stakeholders and the public that a new Shop Front Design Guide for Chard was being drafted, and to invite them to put forward their views in the early-stage consultation. As a funding partner in the High Street Heritage Action Zone, Historic England also reviewed an early draft of the document.
- 1.3 The consultation took the form of three public consultation events at Chard Guildhall – running alongside the Future Chard Strategy consultation – and an online consultation on the Council’s consultation website.

### 2. Consultation Response

- 2.1 Over 100 people attended the in-person public consultation events with 46 people providing their comments. A further 29 people participated online. Respondents to the public consultation included members of the public as well as representatives of local businesses, Abri, Chard Baptist Church and Historic England.
- 2.2 In addition, we received letters from Avon & Somerset Police and Natural England, and an email from Historic England.

### 3. Public Consultation Results

- 3.1 We asked: “What invites you to enter a shop? What makes a shop attractive to you?” Respondents were asked to tick 3 choices from a list of shop-front characteristics.

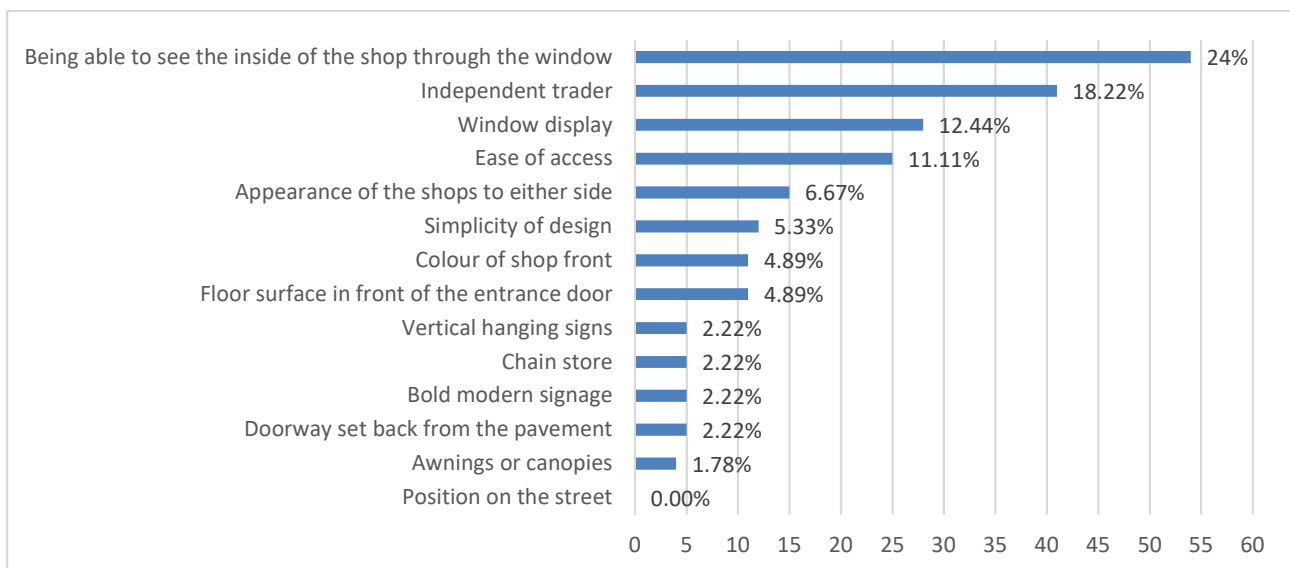


Figure 1: Quantitative Data: “What invites you to enter a shop? What makes a shop attractive to you?”

3.2 The results show that being able to see into the shop through the window is very important, with nearly a quarter of all respondents selecting this. Independent traders are considered to be more attractive than chain stores. Window displays are a draw, and ease of access is also important.

3.3 A free-text section to the questionnaire invited people to provide their own commentary. The qualitative data collected here backed up the points made above, but also highlighted some other key themes:

- A good standard of decoration makes a shop attractive – clean and tidy, not dirty or paint peeling, a need to renovate (17%)
- Good window dressing makes a shop attractive, including creative seasonal display and product display (7%)
- Shops should be in-keeping with the local character/history/tradition (7%)
- Individuality is important (5%)

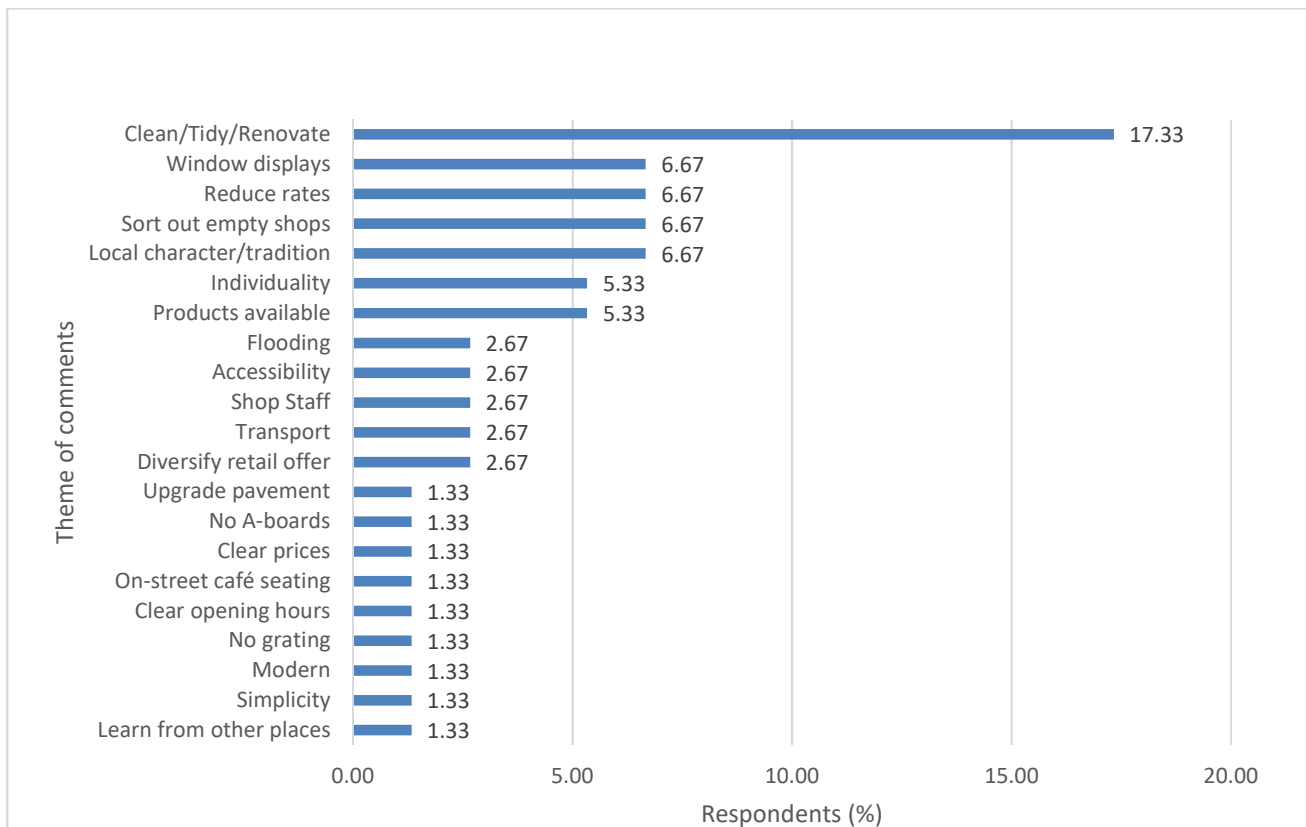


Figure 2: Coded Qualitative Data: "Any further comments?"

3.4 The consultation attracted suggestions to fill the empty shops (7%), reduce business rates (7%) and diversify the town centre retail offer (3%). Although the Shop Front Design Guide cannot directly address these sorts of issues, it is one part of a package of Chard Regeneration/High Street Heritage Action Zone interventions which are set to revitalise the town centre.

3.5 There were also comments on the importance of parking or public transport, and the need to address local flooding issues, which are beyond the scope of the Shop Front Design Guide.



3.6 The comments from the public have been used during the development of the draft Chard Shop Front Design Guide to shape its intent and recommendations. Reference to the consultation is woven throughout the document, with direct quotes used to give weight to its key principles.

## **4. Statutory Consultee Responses**

### **Avon & Somerset Police**

4.1 Avon & Somerset Police submitted a response concerning shop front security, including shutters/grilles, glazing, stall risers, alarms and doorways. The information provided has been referenced in detail in the draft Chard Shop Front Design Guide.

### **Natural England**

4.2 Natural England declined to provide specific comments, noting that the Shop Front Design Guide was unlikely to have major effects on the natural environment. The general comments that were provided are more applicable to the green infrastructure policies of the Local Plan, rather than those which this Shop Front Design Guide is supporting.

### **Historic England**

4.3 Historic England provided direct comments on an early draft of the Chard Shop Front Design Guide. These included support for:

- including a summary of Chard's shopfront features across different periods, and a summary history of Chard;
- the proposed colour palette;
- the level of detail;
- including illustrations and historic photographs, and sketches of how things could look.

4.4 Suggestions were also made for including post-war shop front examples, examples of good alternatives to poor design, and reference to the Conservation Area and National Heritage List for England. All of these comments have been incorporated into the draft.

## **5. Next steps**

5.1 The environmental stakeholders (Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency) have now received a copy of the draft Guide along with the Strategic Environmental Assessment/Habitats Regulations Assessment screening assessment for their comment.

5.2 Once approved by District Executive, statutory consultees and members of the public will be invited to make comments on the draft Chard Shop Front Design Guide through the formal consultation.