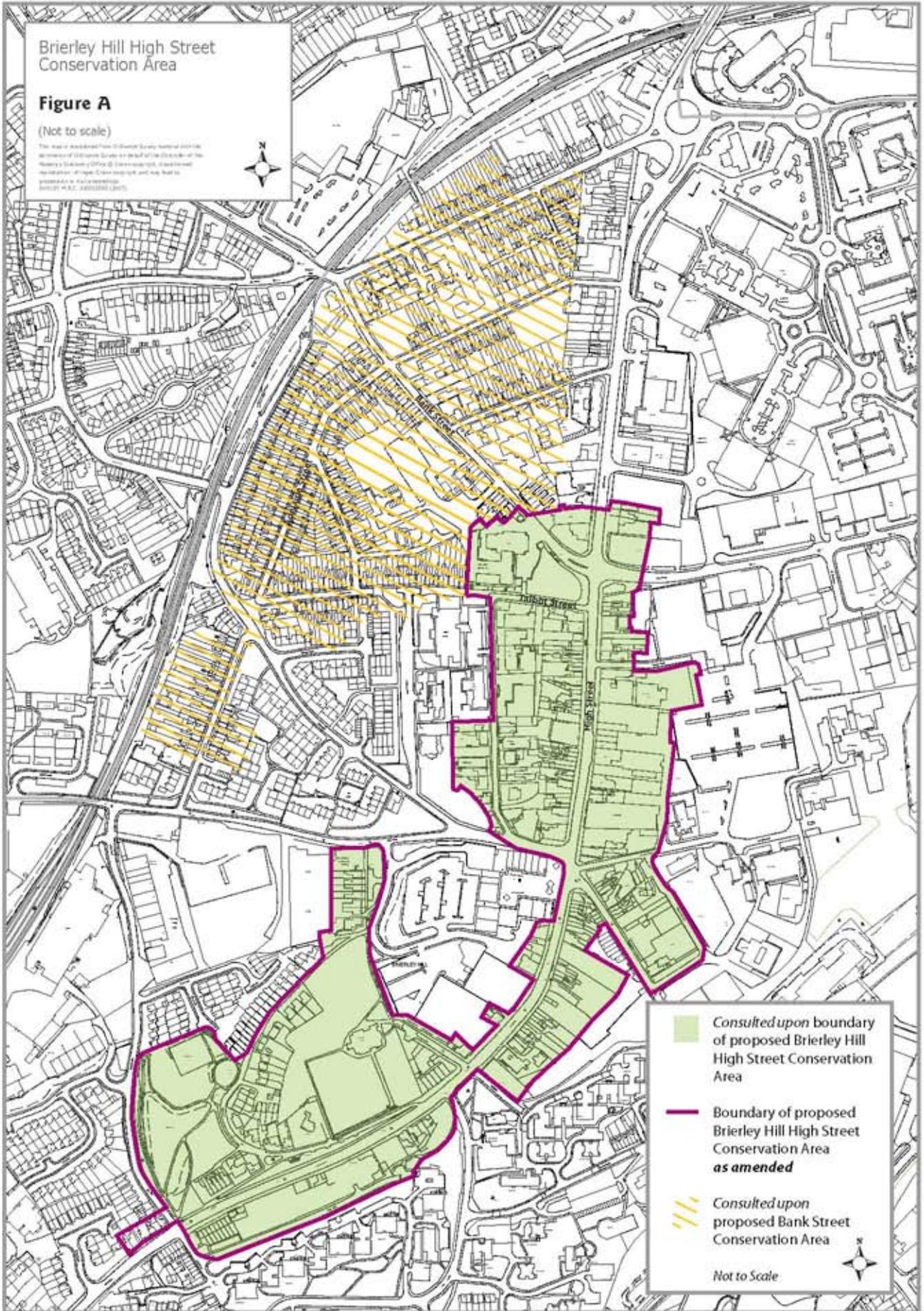


Appendix A

Public Consultation Report



1. Introduction

At the meeting of the Development Control Committee on 5th November 2007 the Director of the Urban Environment was authorised to produce a draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Brierley Hill High Street and to undertake public consultation. The Appraisal was carried out on behalf of the Council by consultants "The Conservation Studio" and their analysis concluded that Brierley Hill High Street and its environs possessed sufficient special architectural or historic interest to justify Conservation Area designation. The Brierley Hill High Street Character Appraisal sits within the context of a wider Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study carried out in order to inform the Brierley Hill Area Action Plan (BHAAP).

Character Appraisals, not least in order to carry full weight in planning appeals, need to be subject to effective public consultation and therefore extensive consultation was carried out between 17th March 2008 and 28th April 2008. This was in conformity with the Council's adopted procedures and with the Directorate of the Urban Environment's own Consultation Strategy.

This report of consultation describes the various methods employed to engage the local community and key stakeholders in the process of preparing the Conservation Area Character Appraisal proposing a new Brierley Hill High Street Conservation Area and a potential Bank Street Conservation Area. All the participants who attended the consultation events were invited to fill in a questionnaire, which was attached to an information leaflet, offering their views on the proposals. In total over 900 leaflets were distributed. The outcomes of the consultation including questionnaire responses have been analysed and the results are presented in this report.

2. The Consultation Process

Between the 17th March 2008 and 28th April 2008 public consultation was undertaken on the draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Brierley Hill High Street. Through an intensive and widely publicised series of events Dudley M.B.C sought to engage all members of the local population, the business community, landowners, community groups, local politicians and a cross section of external consultees. A large print version of the Character Appraisal for people with sight impairment was made available on request and a translation service was provided in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Punjabi and Urdu.

External Consultees

The process began with a letter and accompanying leaflet being sent to around 2500 individuals and organisations who had shown interest in the Brierley Hill area previously. The letter was sent as part of consultation on the wider Brierley Hill Area Action Plan Preferred Options document, and it explained the purpose of the consultation events and gave details of their dates and venues.

Internet Access

Details of the proposals in the form of a leaflet/questionnaire and

copies of the exhibition posters were deposited on the Council's website. A full version of the Draft Brierley Hill High Street Character Appraisal was made available upon request. Users were invited to send their responses and comments electronically direct to the Historic Environment Section of Dudley Council.

Key Stakeholder Groups

Detailed "one to one" consultation sessions were also held with key stakeholder organisations such as:

- Brierley Hill Traders Association
- Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership

Community Groups

A presentation of the draft proposals was made to Brierley Hill Community Forum on 2nd April 2008 at Bank Street Methodist Church in Brierley Hill. A large print version of the Character Appraisal for people with sight impairment was made available on request.

Exhibition and Presentation to Dudley Elected Members and the general public

A presentation was made to Brierley Hill Area Committee on 3rd April at Brierley Hill Civic Hall.

Public Exhibition

Throughout the consultation period a detailed exhibit was displayed in the reception area of the Planning Department at 3 St James's Road, Dudley together with a copy of the Brierley Hill High Street Character Appraisal and leaflets, inviting visitors to comment and deposit completed questionnaires in a purpose made post box.

An exhibition of the draft proposals and the background work that informed its preparation was also staged over two weeks in the foyer of Brierley Hill Library. On 2 days (21st and 22nd April 2008) the exhibition was manned by council officers from 10 am until 4 pm.

Similar exhibitions were also erected, at 'Signpost' in Brierley Hill High Street (over the whole period of consultation) in Dudley Council Plus, Dudley, and at Lye Community Centre (manned on Friday 11th April).

3. Questionnaire Responses

By the 28th April, 111 questionnaires had been received where at least one of the questions had been answered or a comment made. Four specific questions were posed in the questionnaire which allows quantitative assessment of the results. Respondents were asked if they 'supported', had 'no opinion', or 'opposed' various propositions posed by the Draft Character Appraisal proposals. A detailed analysis and tabulation of the core results is provided at the end of this document. Space was also provided on the questionnaire for people to make general comments and a selection of these is reproduced below.

Quantitative Questions, Nos 1-4

Q1. Do you support the views expressed in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal that Brierley Hill High Street has a special character today that should be conserved and enhanced for the future through conservation area designation?

All 111 respondents answered this question with a majority of 94% supporting the view that Brierley Hill High Street should be conserved for the future.

From the comments made it is apparent that local people feel it is important to preserve and enhance Brierley Hill's character for the future. The following comments were typical:

"I strongly support the proposed High Street Conservation Area and the potential Bank Street Conservation Area; as you can see I live in the High Street area."

"Good ideas"

"I think these changes are necessary and I support the council with them".

"Very much in favour of the whole project."

"Protecting the historic environment contributes to peoples quality of life, and to the local economy – making Brierley Hill (as a strategic centre) a better place in which to live and work."

"The original character of Brierley Hill centre and the wider area should be retained as far as possible."

"The Conservation Area designation will help to protect the areas character."

"Thank you for asking the people of the Black Country's opinion – we want change in-keeping with our history."

"Very interested and impressed with the black country core strategy. I like Brierley Hill and I use it regularly. I would like to see it enhanced".

"I believe in change and think that it would be good for the area".

"I support the regeneration of Brierley Hill as it will enhance the lives of old people living in and around the town centre."

Two respondents opposed the proposals, making the following comments:

"This area already struggles. To impose further conditions would only create further burden on an already struggling area."

"Brierley Hill needs updating and changing for the better."

Q2. Does the Conservation Area boundary shown on the plan provided have your support?

Again all respondents answered this question with 86% in support of the boundary proposed. However, 3 respondents felt the Conservation Area should be extended further:

"Generally I agree with the boundaries of the High Street area but suggest a small adjustment between Bell Street South and Moor Street to include two sites which if excluded could so easily result in inappropriate development; as the 6th of your key issues. Perhaps it's worth noting that good quality modern buildings of merit are also worth conserving (even those not yet constructed) just as much as old buildings. If the conservation area is a success then in fifty or sixty years time may well be regarded to have historical value."

"I feel that Brockmoor/Station Road should also be looked at for conservation/preservation as these are beautiful examples of Victorian architecture."

"Could the proposed conservation area be extended further, for example, into Brockmoor?"

Comment

These areas were felt to be too divorced from the core of the Conservation Area to allow for their inclusion.

The Victorian Society made the following comments:

"We would also like to request that consideration is given to including the small group of buildings on the north side of Church Street just to the west of Marsh Park and the junction of North Street and to the east of Lancaster Place. These appear to include an example of a small brewery building to the rear of the premises. You are, I'm sure, also aware of the Baptist Church in South Street..... "

Comment

The boundary has been extended as suggested (See Figure A). Other than that the Baptist Church was felt to be too isolated a structure to warrant inclusion.

The Diocese of Worcester also had comments on the proposed boundary:

"May I make a comment about the boundary of the proposed area? St Michaels Church is included in the draft, but in the Brierley Hill Area Action Plan Preferred Options paper, the church is not marked as being included in the designated area. However, to confuse the issue, the church is mentioned at least twice in the text as being an important feature of the area. It would seem to make sense that the two plans should relate to each other by having a common boundary at this particular place."

Comment

The Area Action Plan Boundary has now been amended as suggested.

One respondent opposed the boundary proposed, commenting *“the derelict former public house on the corner of High Street/Bell Street South should be excluded from the conservation area to enable the appropriate redevelopment of land adjacent to the Moor Centre.”*

Comment

This would appear to be a response from a landowner concerned for his own self interest and since the building makes a positive contribution it has not been excluded.

Q3. Do you support the Council in applying an Article 4 Direction to help protect the locally distinctive details of the areas residential property?

With all respondents again answering this question 82% supported the proposal, whilst 16% had no opinion.

One respondent welcomed the proposal.

“The Bank Street Article 4 Direction is welcomed as the area has some beautiful surviving features.”

Q4. Do you support the proposition that a Conservation Area Character Appraisal should be carried out for the area of Brierley Hill centered on Bank Street (as shown on Figure A)?

All 111 respondents answered this question with 82% supporting, whilst 15% had no opinion and 3% were in opposition.

One respondent who answered this question in the negative nevertheless commented on the Brierley Hill area, saying *“I think its good that its being noticed that much of Brierley Hill is worthy of conservation and we should do more to make locals aware.”*

Other comments

Located at the end of the questionnaire there was space for members of the public to provide additional comments. Comments generally fell into a number of broad categories which can be summarised as follows:

Types of businesses

A number of respondents voiced their concerns over the perceived limited variety in businesses present within the High Street.

“No more take-aways in Brierley Hill. Encourage quality shops, specialist shops not cheap goods. More stalls on market place. The Moor Centre could have tables outside for a more café culture, and pedestrianise the High Street.”

“If the conservation area is to succeed then the High Street must prosper, otherwise the necessary money will not be available to maintain the existing buildings and the extra funds generated to ensure that new developments are of a high and durable quality. Brierley Hill High Street is not outstanding architecturally, culturally or in any other way but it is different and has some real qualities; clearly it could be

very much better. Sadly however, trend is one of decline, in the last fifteen months we have lost four independent traders that really did make Brierley Hill different. A wet fishmonger, an antique shop, a tailor and most recently Potters who baked and sold their own bread in the town."

"Amongst other things, I now hope that the whole area can be persuaded to become more tasteful and tidy, especially in the High Street. Within reason, we need to control the types of shops – yes, I want to see competition, but I don't want to see 5 chip shops and 5 shops selling canned beer."

Condition and appearance of buildings

"Although I support the views that Brierley Hill should be conserved – many of the buildings give the impression Brierley Hill is a 'dump'! – I think improvements are required."

"Many buildings are dirty and some need repair. Help for landlords to remedy this would help. The 1960's buildings that look awful and do not fit in, may only need new mock Victorian/Edwardian fascias and perhaps pitched roofs. Protect the mock Victorian lampposts painted in the town's colours. Extend this scheme to other street furniture (if possible) and other areas of town. Promote the area as 'Brierley Hill Old Town' to raise profile and bring investment."

"The town centre definitely needs a make over, it lets the area down."

"Whilst conserving the character of the High Street is important, more work needs to be done to bring the High Street up to an acceptable level of structural soundness and decoration."

Loss of historic buildings

Concerns were expressed over past loss of historic buildings:

"I am pleased to see that 'Dudley' is now at last trying to rectify the undoings started in the 1950's and 60's, when anything pre late Victorian was obliterated, to make way for cheapo modern. The big stores had only to wave their cheque books and the Town Planners rushed to form a line."

"The now demolished Brierley Hill swimming baths would have merited inclusion as a good example of good civic planning and expression of ambition/pride during the prosperous years. Were the heritage office consulted prior to their demolition."

Support for the market

A number of respondents felt strongly about the retention of the market and welcomed future improvements:

"In my view the key to Brierley Hill High Street's prosperity is 'The Market', on market days the town has a vibrancy which is not there when it is closed. Like the High Street, the market is not outstanding but could be very much better. There are plenty of very good markets around country to gain inspiration from, Barnstable in Devon is an excellent

example and in a town of comparable size."

"If the Local Authority were to actively support the market, expanded it, made better access from both ends, possibly added a street market a couple of days a week, then perhaps this would be the impetus needed to bring prosperity to the High Street generally".

"Brierley Hill High Street need to be revamped drastically for the future but the markets need to be retained".

Requirement for a Youth Centre

One respondent felt that the addition of a youth centre could be a potential deterrent for crime:

"The present Library in the High Street when empty could be turned into a youth centre and also used as a one stop advice centre like Dudley Council Plus in Dudley – access to benefits information etc. A youth centre somewhere because when all the money is spent making Brierley Hill nice we want it kept nice. At the moment even though there are CCTV cameras, the shop windows are kicked in. We need proper policing of the cameras to stop the new areas being vandalised and something to stop youths being bored"

Housing

"Constructing road is good, but Council also have to build new houses. Is it good to wait for a year before receiving these from the Council?"

"Need to ensure that the housing market in Brierley Hill is balanced, and includes high quality housing."

Highways & trees

Comments were received over the area's roads and trees:

"I was amazed to discover that, after the one day completion of the road works, Brierley Hill will not become one-way as Lye has done. This would help traffic flow. Although I live in Amblecote/Wordsley, I shop and work in Brierley Hill, and do feel involved."

"Roads at Bank Street are poor. Need pot holes filled."

"Replace the street trees on the High Street."

Partnerships

"Please link with Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership and Brierley Hill Community Forum. Generally a very positive scheme."

"Much needed review, but would have liked to have read how the partnerships involved react in programme, would have liked to have seen some figures."

Future information

"Keep people informed by newsletter and via the press – persuade

people, don't be too heavy handed."

Letters of Support & Comments from Organisations

Letters of support for the proposed conservation area designations were received from:-

The Victorian Society

"... wanted to add the support of the Victorian Society to the proposal as presented for designation of the area, which contains many buildings and features of interest from the period (1837-1915) with which we are concerned."

The Inland Waterways Association

"IWA notes that the whole of the conservation area, as shown on the plan accompanying the consultation, is well away from the canal and not visible from it. Therefore, this being the case, it falls outside our remit and thus we do not have any comments to make."

4. Key Stakeholder Responses

Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership (BHRP);

Management Proposals

During discussions with Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership, they were keen to ensure that the formulation of management proposals for the proposed conservation area was synergised with the ambitions of the Regeneration team.

Comment

This has been achieved.

Conservation Area Guidance

BHRP also confirmed they were keen to see the production of formal guidance in terms of materials, signage, best practice etc to inform future development.

Links between the High Street and adjacent area.

BHRP felt that the formation of links between the High Street and proposed developments behind it were crucial.

Brierley Hill Traders Association:

Types of businesses

Concerns over the number of stores in the High Street which are closed during the day (typically take-away restaurants), leaving the street with an unattractive façade of roller shutters.

Condition and appearance of buildings

Concerns over the state repair of some historic buildings within the High Street which have been left in dereliction due to the owners apparent reluctance to invest in their maintenance.

Redevelopment of Moor Centre

Conscious of the great opportunity presented by the possible redevelopment of the Moor Centre and keen that every consideration is given to the new development making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the new Conservation Area.

Enhancement of the Public Realm

Supportive of proposals to enhance the High Street and note that Traders would wish to collaborate over timing of the works to avoid potential problems (e.g. preserving access to shops and businesses particularly at peak times). Commented that improvements to street surfaces and pavements should not be restricted to within the Conservation Area boundary but should consider areas beyond- new development (e.g. Moor Centre) should be encouraged to carry through any adopted scheme.

Centro had the following comments:

Traffic

“Centro would welcome a strategy to deal with the heavy traffic loads along the High Street. There are several bus services operating along the High Street and these will benefit from improved journey times and will therefore become more attractive to potential passengers”

Poorly Defined Open Space at Bank Street/High Street/Level Street Junction

“Centro supports any attempt to make this area more pedestrian friendly and therefore would welcome the development of a strategy to achieve this aim”

Street Surfacing

“It should be ensured that the chosen materials are bus friendly to give a smooth ride for passengers and if any traffic calming is proposed to lower the speed of traffic within the Conservation Area, the views of bus operators should be sought”

Metro Line

“The terminus of the proposed Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Extension of Midland Metro Line 1 is located just outside the boundary of the Conservation Area and therefore should have no impact on the Conservation Area or vice versa”

5. Conclusions

Through the questionnaire survey (which yielded 111 returns) four particular questions were posed and people were asked to indicate their support or otherwise in relation to:

- Q1.** Do you support the views expressed in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal that Brierley Hill High Street has a special character today that should be conserved and enhanced for the future through conservation area designation?
- Q2.** Does the Conservation Area boundary shown on the plan provided have your support?
- Q3.** Do you support the Council in applying an Article 4 Direction to help protect the locally distinctive details of the areas residential property?
- Q4.** Do you support the proposition that a Conservation Area Character Appraisal should be carried out for the area of Brierley Hill centred on Bank Street?

The overall total response to all four questions revealed that 86% of the respondents supported the proposals thus leaving 12% with no opinion and only 2% opposing. (The survey results are fully broken down and depicted graphically at the end of this report).

The questionnaire responses alongside indirect and direct consultation with key stakeholders therefore demonstrate substantial public support for the conclusions of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Brierley Hill High Street and for the proposal to designate a new Brierley Hill High Street Conservation Area. They also demonstrate support for the making of an Article 4 Direction to better control changes to the Conservation Area. Support was also shown for the future provision of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal to be carried out for the area centred on Bank Street (see Figure A).

The responses received did, however, point to the need to slightly extend the suggested boundary of the Brierley Hill High Street Conservation Area at the southwest corner to encompass a number of historic buildings on Church Street (Figure A). The finalised proposed boundary is now, therefore, as shown on Figures 1 and 5 in Part A of this document.

The results of public consultation also allowed the concerns and suggestions of local people, businesses and other organisations to be taken into account in the formulation of Management Proposals for the new Conservation Area. These set out a programme of actions designed to preserve or enhance the areas character or appearance (See Part B of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal).

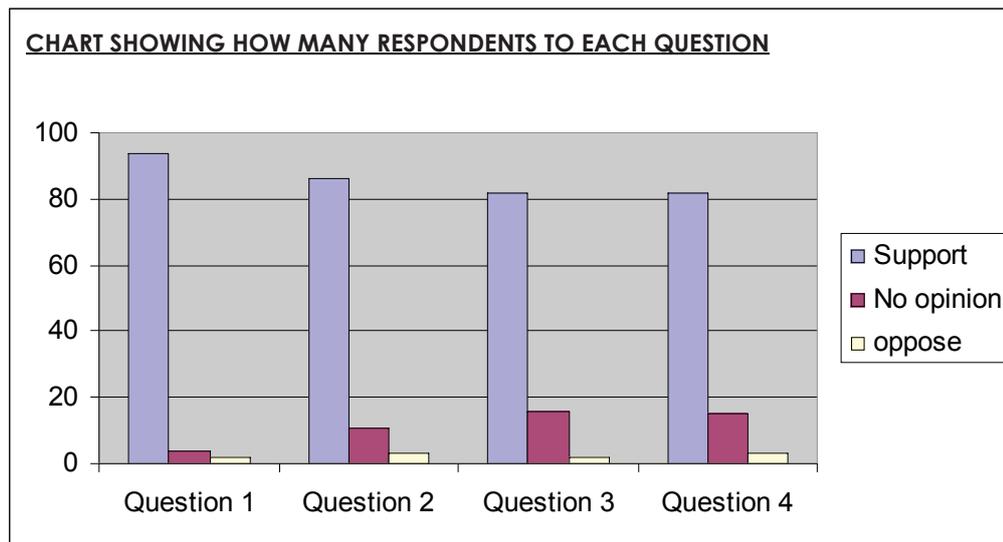
Feedback on the public consultation and a presentation in relation to the Management Proposals was given at Brierley Hill Area Committee on the 4th December 2008.

Of the whole range of proposals those relating to the intended adoption of a coordinated approach between the Council and its' partners to the future management of the Conservation Area may be felt to be particularly key.

Graphical Interpretation of the Public Consultation Results

Figure 1

Bar Chart and Table showing peoples responses to each question



Totals	Support	No opinion	Oppose
Question 1 <i>(Do you support the views expressed in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal that Brierley Hill High Street has a special character today that should be conserved and enhanced for the future through conservation area designation?)</i>	94%	2%	2%
Question 2 <i>(Does the Conservation Area boundary shown on the plan provided have your support?)</i>	86%	1%	3%
Question 3 <i>(Do you support the Council in applying an Article 4 Direction to help protect the locally distinctive details of the areas residential property?)</i>	82%	6%	2%
Question 4 <i>(Do you support the proposition that a Conservation Area Character Appraisal should be carried out for the area of Brierley Hill centred on Bank Street (as shown on page 2 of leaflet)?)</i>	82%	5%	3%

Figure 2

Bar Chart showing the overall total survey results.

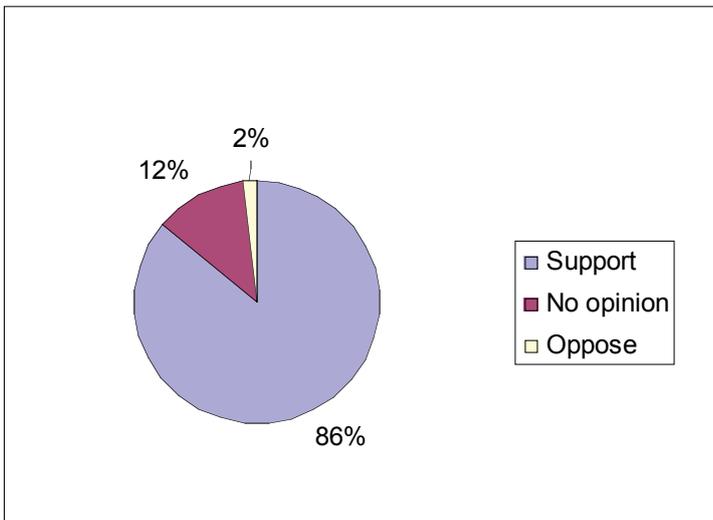


Figure 3

Pie Chart showing the age makeup within the respondent group

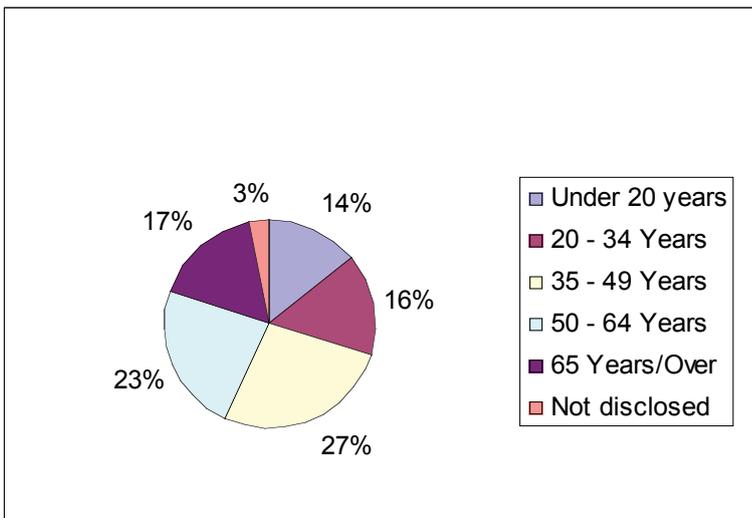


Figure 4

Pie Chart showing the work status of the respondent group

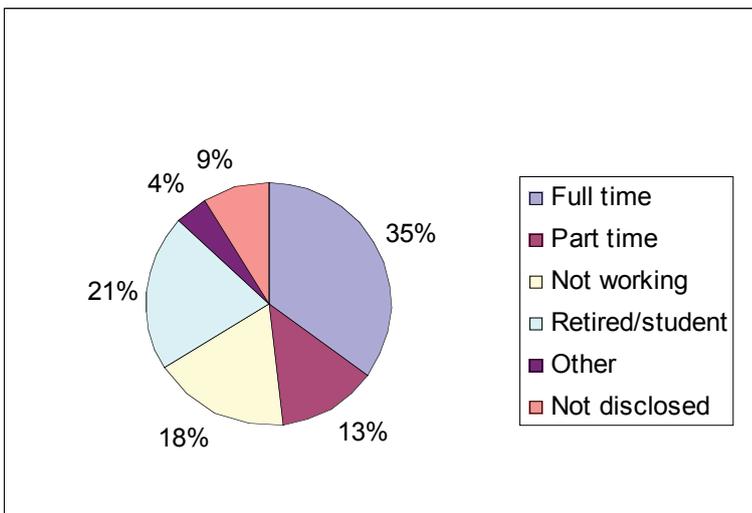
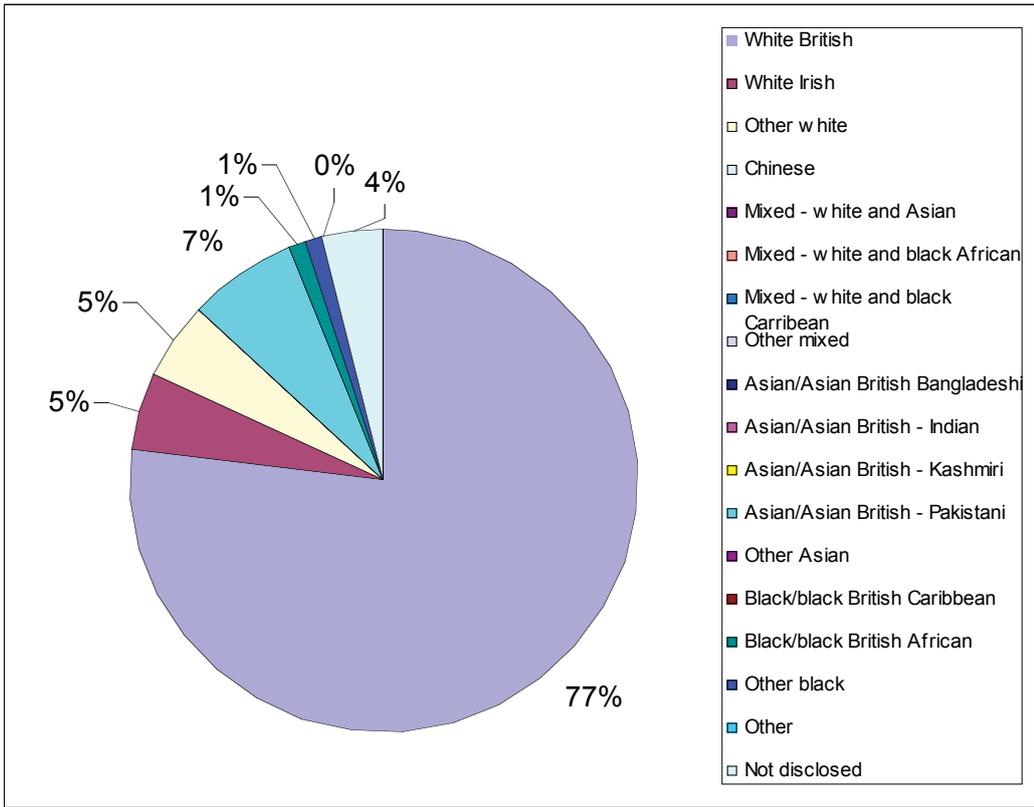


Figure 5

Pie Chart showing the ethnic makeup of the respondent group





Conservation Area Character Appraisal
and
Management Proposals for
Brierley Hill High Street

March 2009