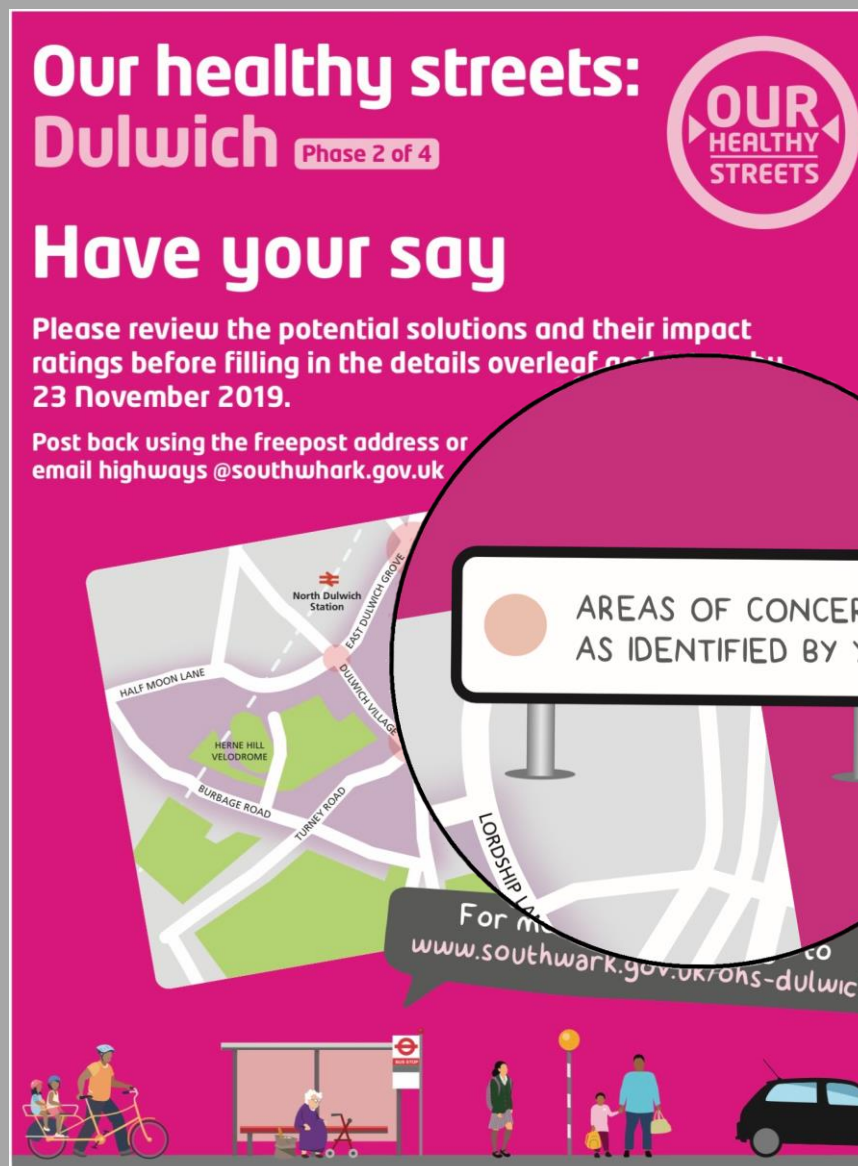


Who closed Dulwich Village junction?



An analysis of the 2019 public consultation: how Southwark asked the questions and interpreted the results

One Dulwich and the Dulwich Alliance
May 2021

1. Executive summary

The detailed analysis in this report reveals:

- **Southwark’s claim in early 2020 that there was popular local support for closing Dulwich Village junction was untrue**
- **This claim was based on a survey that weighted responses from those living in Hammersmith, Islington and Croydon equally with those from the Dulwich area**
- **The very small group of respondents in Dulwich who supported the junction closure was clustered round the junction itself, and represented only a tiny minority of local residents**
- **Southwark reported only favourable responses and left out those supporting different options, and those who didn’t think any measures were needed at all**
- **Southwark Council’s manipulation of data to show support for the closure of Dulwich Village junction raises serious concerns about its ability to run a fair and impartial public consultation**



See page 16: a word cloud representing the number of responses by street in favour of closing Calton Avenue between Court Lane and Townley Road. Data Source: Southwark Council OHS Phase 2 Feedback. Online responses analysed by post code (where provided)

2. Introduction

During 2019 and 2020, Southwark Council carried out a public consultation, in three phases, on roads and traffic in Dulwich. A recent FOI (Freedom of Information) request has revealed the data behind the published results of Phase 2.

This report analyses the data and raises serious concerns about the way Southwark Council has interpreted the results. Problems include poor process and execution, misrepresentation of data, evidence of bias, and selective reporting. It is also impossible to clarify how many respondents were local to Dulwich.

Two key questions follow from this:

- **Has Southwark Council given the local community misleading information so far?**
- **Does Southwark Council have the necessary skills and resources to run a public consultation?**

Both of these issues are important because Southwark is about to run another public consultation, expected to be concluded in July, on the road closures in Dulwich.

Why the results of this public consultation are significant

Southwark Council used the results of Phase 2 (October and November 2019) to justify Phase 3 (the scheme put forward in spring 2020), which then turned into the current road closure scheme we have now.

Southwark has always said that it is responding as a council to what local people want.

Summary of this report's analysis and conclusions

The [overview of Phase 3](#) in spring 2020 stated that the objective was to present proposals that responded to concerns from local residents.

Southwark claimed, under "What you have told us so far", that in Phase 2 (autumn 2019) *"You told us you favoured radical action at the Calton Avenue/Court Lane junction, including a permeable road closure that stops motor traffic but allows access for pedestrians and cyclists."*

Southwark also claimed the feedback provided *"strong support for measures to reduce through traffic on Dulwich Village and Townley Road, particularly during peak hours."*

This [feedback from Phase 2](#) was part of the "evidence" (including traffic flows, volumes of through traffic, and Q&As) that Southwark presented to those who were about to respond to the Phase 3 consultation.

However:

- Southwark Council’s claim that local residents “favoured radical action”, which included closing Dulwich Village junction, is not supported by the feedback. Instead, it is a fundamental misrepresentation of the responses.
- Southwark’s suggestion that the consultation represents the view of local residents is not supported by the evidence. The response rate was extremely low and the online responses are, in general, spread over an area much wider than the presumed consultation area.
- The exception to the poor online response amongst local residents is a tightly clustered group of responses from residents on Calton Avenue and very close to Dulwich Village junction, who benefit disproportionately from the closures. The high response rate from Calton Avenue may be linked to the “working group” of campaigners, Dulwich Village ward councillors and a representative from Calton Avenue RA who were closely involved in a parallel, informal consultation.
- The consultation and survey process were poorly executed, contain misleading data and show evidence of bias. Of particular concern is the selective reporting, which highlights only those in favour of measures and excludes those who picked alternatives or expressed no preference, giving rise to a false impression of the results.
- Based on the analysis of the data below, and contrary to the published claims, it seems that few local people who took part in this consultation favoured the closure of Dulwich Village junction. Despite this, the 24/7 closure of Dulwich Village junction was the central measure of the interlinking proposals in Phase 3 – based, according to Southwark Council, on what local people had already said they wanted.

Our healthy streets: Dulwich

Phase 2 of 4



Have your say

Please review the potential solutions and their impact ratings before filling in the details overleaf and return by 23 November 2019.

Post back using the freepost address or email highways@southwark.gov.uk



@lb_southwark facebook.com/southwarkcouncil

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Figure 1: the leaflet that was delivered to an unknown number of households in the Dulwich area in the autumn of 2019. The consultation area was never defined, and Southwark didn't record the postcodes or addresses of those who responded via the tear-off slip

5 Who closed Dulwich Village junction?

3. The consultation and survey: a series of problems

This Phase 2 consultation took place in October and November 2019. It consisted of two workshops, a feedback form posted to residents, and an online survey.

There are serious problems with the methodology of the consultation. These fall into two categories:

- Undefined criteria
- Unsatisfactory survey structure

Undefined criteria

- *What was the consultation area?*

Southwark has not published its definition of the consultation area, nor listed the roads that should have received the feedback form. A reasonable working assumption is that the Council followed the consultation area(s) used in the subsequent Phase 3, though it is unclear whether it focused just on Area B or also included Areas A and C.

- *How did the different methods of data-gathering affect the results?*

Responses to the survey were gathered through four channels:

- Forms and comment sheets at the public workshops
- Feedback forms from residents
- The online survey
- Individual emails

Southwark has grouped the feedback into two categories – firstly, the online survey results; and, secondly, all the other three channels combined (referred to as face-to-face). The breakdown of the face-to-face (F2f) responses between workshops, forms and emails is not defined, so it is not known if or how these different data-gathering methods affected the results.

Unsatisfactory survey structure

The survey consisted of six locations/road sections. For each road section, up to eight possible traffic intervention measures could be selected.

The road sections were:

1. Junction of Calton Avenue, Court Lane and Dulwich Village
2. Calton Avenue between Court Lane and Townley Road
3. Townley Road
4. Junction of Eynella Road and Lordship Lane
5. Junction of Court Lane and Lordship Lane
6. Junction of East Dulwich Grove and Dulwich Village

(The first two are just different methods for closing Calton Avenue to through traffic.)

The available eight traffic intervention measures were:

- Permeable road closure
- One-way streets
- Banned turns
- School Streets – restrict traffic outside school entrance at certain times
- Traffic calming
- Pedestrian crossings
- Camera access filter
- Other (Undefined)

This survey structure raises serious concerns because:

- There was no option for respondents who felt no measures were necessary at a particular location. The only way to express this view was to select Other or leave the question unanswered.
- The option to close the road – the most radical measure – was positioned as the first option for each location. This leaves the consultation open to a known survey phenomenon called [order bias](#), where respondents are more likely to pick the first option.
- Respondents could select as many measures as they liked, which has inflated the results. Many respondents, especially those answering from outside the presumed consultation area, selected up to eight measures for each location.
- Respondents were not asked to rank their choices in order of preference. This allowed the selection of multiple contradictory measures, such as closing a road while simultaneously adding traffic-calming measures, making it one-way and turning it into a School Street.

4. Do the respondents represent local residents?

In total, for all eight road sections, the council received 425 responses – 228 online and 197 face-to-face.

If all the responses were local, that would equate to around 5% of those eligible to vote in Dulwich Village ward, and just over 1% of those eligible to vote in Champion Hill, Dulwich Hill, Dulwich Village, Dulwich Wood and Goose Green wards combined.

However, **it is not possible to say how many of these responses were from local residents.**

The Council cannot provide a breakdown by area of the face-to-face responses (see page 6). There is no way of knowing where these respondents lived. However, it is reasonable to suppose that paper leaflets and forms are more likely to have come from local residents.

There is more information about the online respondents because most of them gave a postcode. Responses came from a wide area of London – from Hammersmith to Islington to Croydon – except for a tight cluster on Calton Avenue and very close to Dulwich Village junction (see the map on page 17). For example, the responses to section 1 (options for Dulwich Village junction) show that less than half come from those living in Dulwich Village ward (this figure represents about 1.3% of all voters in Dulwich Village ward). Please see the table below.

It is clear from the data that responses to Phase 2 cannot be said to represent local opinion.

Online responses to section 1 (junction of Calton Avenue, Court Lane and Dulwich Village) based on respondents' postcodes	No of responses
No postcode provided (assume out of area?)	31
Dulwich Village ward	101
Other South Dulwich wards	43
Other Southwark wards	20
Outside Southwark	22
Total number of online responses	217

Figure 2: table showing online responses to road section 1 by postcode

5. Interpretation of results

Southwark has presented the data in a document called “OHS – Dulwich Summary of Phase 2 Feedback”, which you can find by scrolling down to the section ‘Related’ in [Our Healthy Streets: Dulwich Phase 3](#).

There are a number of problems with the way Southwark has chosen to interpret and present the data, leading overall to an inaccurate and misleading picture.

Online versus Face-to-Face

Although the summary of results includes both the F2f and online responses, Southwark’s report invites us to treat the online responses as more reliable because duplicate responses have been removed. (It seems it was not possible to remove duplication from the F2f channels, because Southwark failed to request or record respondents’ postcodes via these channels.) However, it should be noted that Southwark included in the results online responses with no postcodes which could be duplicates.

We know from analysing respondents’ postcodes that many of the online responses came from outside the local area. This means that concentrating on the online responses alone is unlikely to give an accurate picture of local people’s views.

Selective reporting

In the Summary of its findings, the Council examines each location/road section in turn, giving the total number of responses in favour of each of the eight intervention measures. These totals are then presented as graphs, both in the summary and the detailed report.

However, the graphs, and the Council’s conclusions, **show only those in favour and ignore responses that are not in favour**. This is similar to holding a referendum and counting only Yes votes, even though these are fewer than the No votes.

To demonstrate the effect of leaving out the No votes, we reproduce an extract from the Southwark report, below, showing responses for the first location, the junction of Calton Avenue, Court Lane and Dulwich Village. This graph ignores responses not in favour (although these can be calculated).

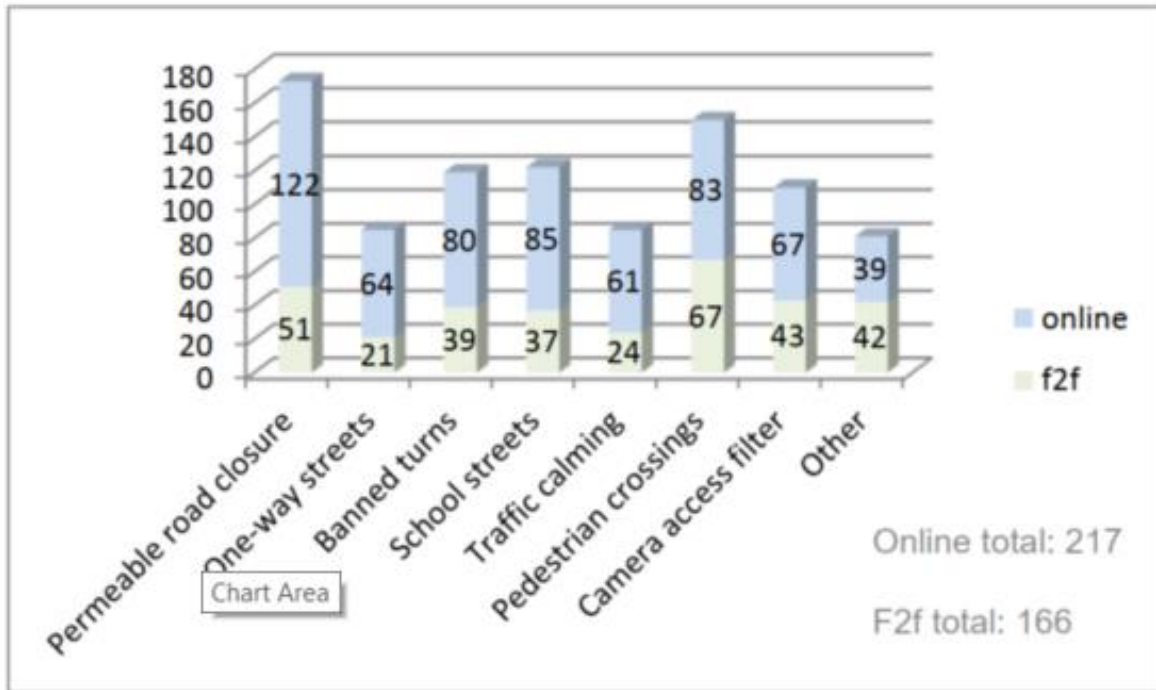


Figure 3: extract from Southwark's Phase 2 report showing responses in favour of options for Section 1

We know that the total number of combined responses (both online and F2F) at this location (road section 1) was 383. The graph below shows what happens if, based on this total, you include the responses for those **not** in favour of each of the measures. As we can see, the picture changes dramatically.

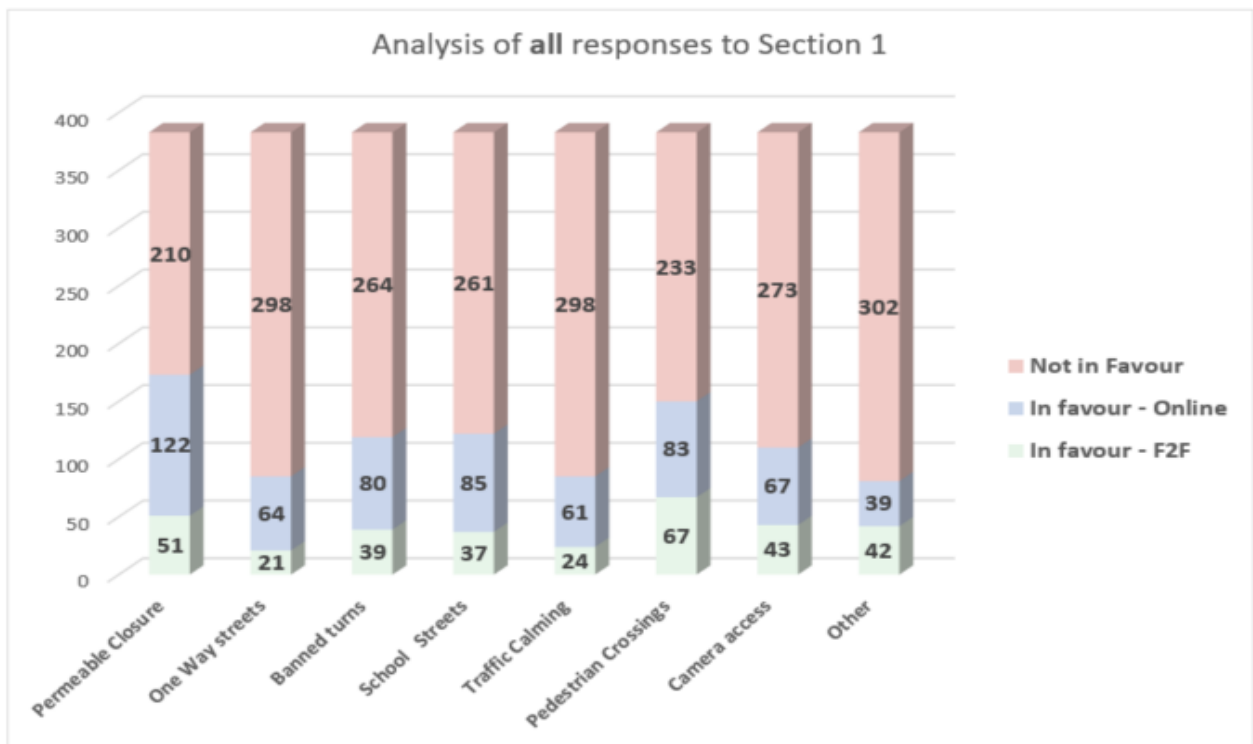


Figure 4: Southwark's original graph showing those in favour of different options, but with those **not** in favour now added in for context

The claims versus the data

Southwark’s claims in the published results are not borne out by the actual data. Some points to note:

- We have combined the results of the online and F2f responses: this is completely consistent with the council’s own presentation.
- Although the analysis of all the road sections/locations is not included in this part of our report, the original data shows that responses for road sections 3 to 6 show even less support for the measures the Council eventually proposed in Phase 3 than responses for sections 1 and 2.

(1) Dulwich Village junction: “The option of a permeable closure at this junction was clearly very popular”

This statement is true only if you look at those in favour. If you include all respondents, the statement is manifestly incorrect. This is visually represented in the graph below, by comparing those who wanted to close the junction (173) with those who preferred other measures (210).

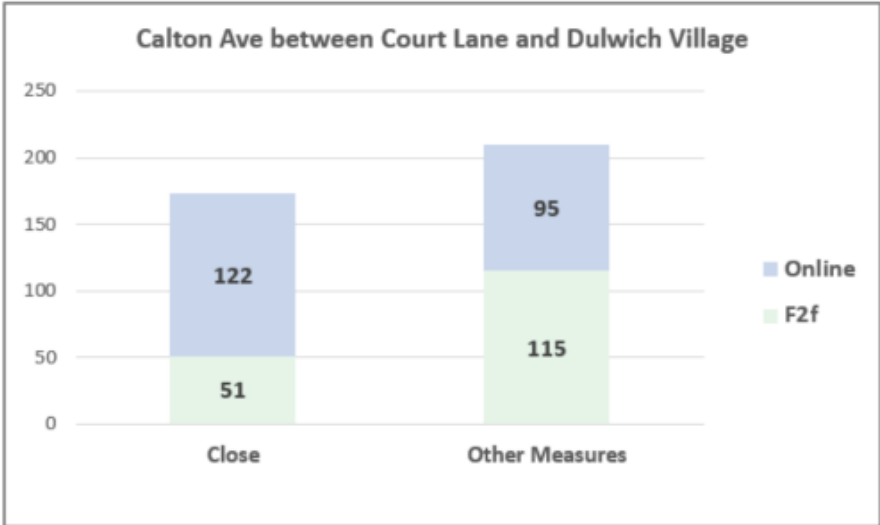


Figure 5: those who wanted to close Dulwich Village junction compared with those who chose other measures

The difference is even more pronounced (see the graph below) if you add in those who didn't think any measures were needed at all. ('Do Not Close', in this and further graphs, stands for those who preferred other measures, combined with those who didn't think any measures were needed at all.)

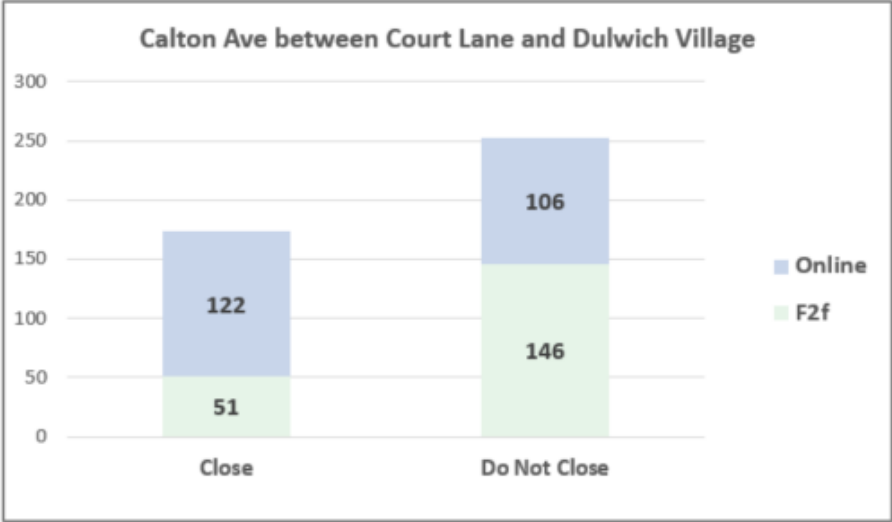


Figure 6: those who wanted to close Dulwich Village junction compared with (combined) those who preferred other measures or those wanted no measures at all

(2) Calton Avenue: “A permeable closure was clearly also a popular option here”

Again, this statement is not borne out by the data. In the graph below, we compare those who wanted to close Calton Avenue (164) with those who preferred other measures (193):

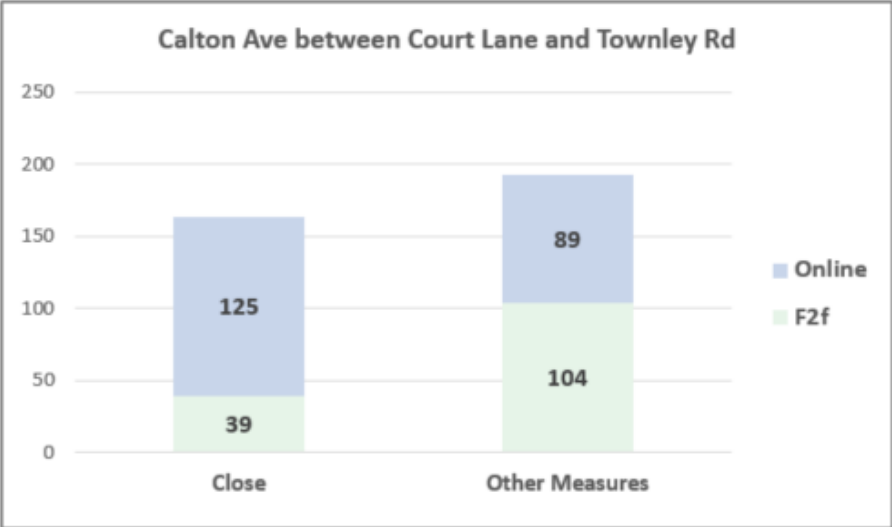


Figure 7: those who wanted to close Calton Avenue compared with those who preferred other measures

If you add in those who didn't think any measures were needed at all, the difference between those wanting to close the road (164) and those not wanting to close the road (261) is greater.

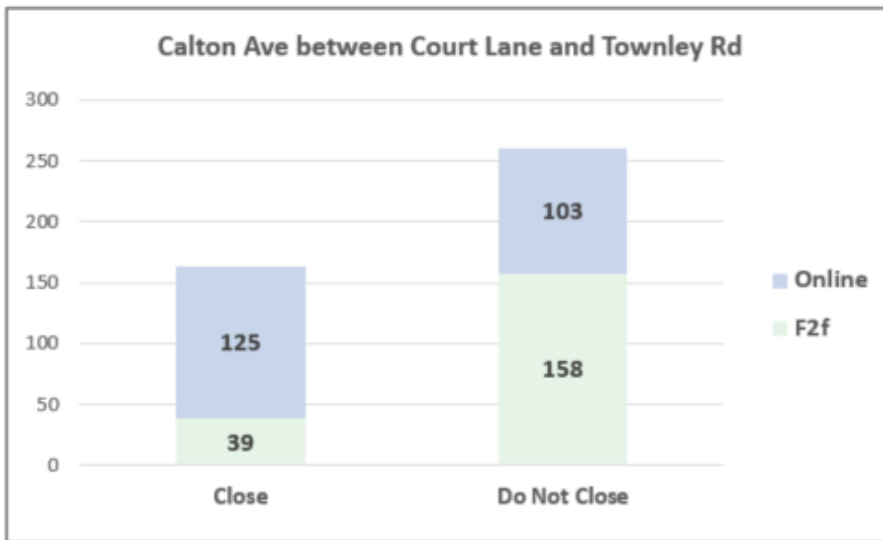


Figure 8: those who wanted to close Calton Avenue compared with (combined) those who preferred other measures or wanted no measures at all

(3) Residents supported “radical action” To investigate this claim, we have examined support for the most radical action, road closures, at each of the locations. At all locations, support for road closures is significantly less than 50%. We have split the total number of responses into two different categories:

1. Online and face-to-face responses combined

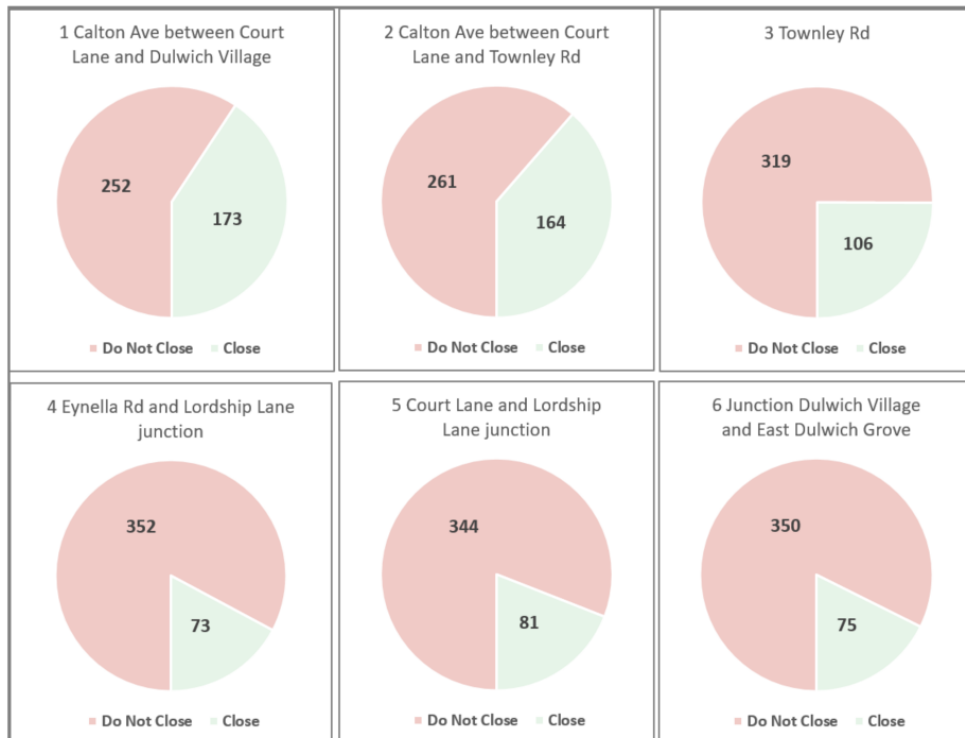


Figure 9: a comparison of online and face-to-face responses (combined) in favour, and not in favour, of road closures at all six locations/road sections

2. Face-to-face responses only

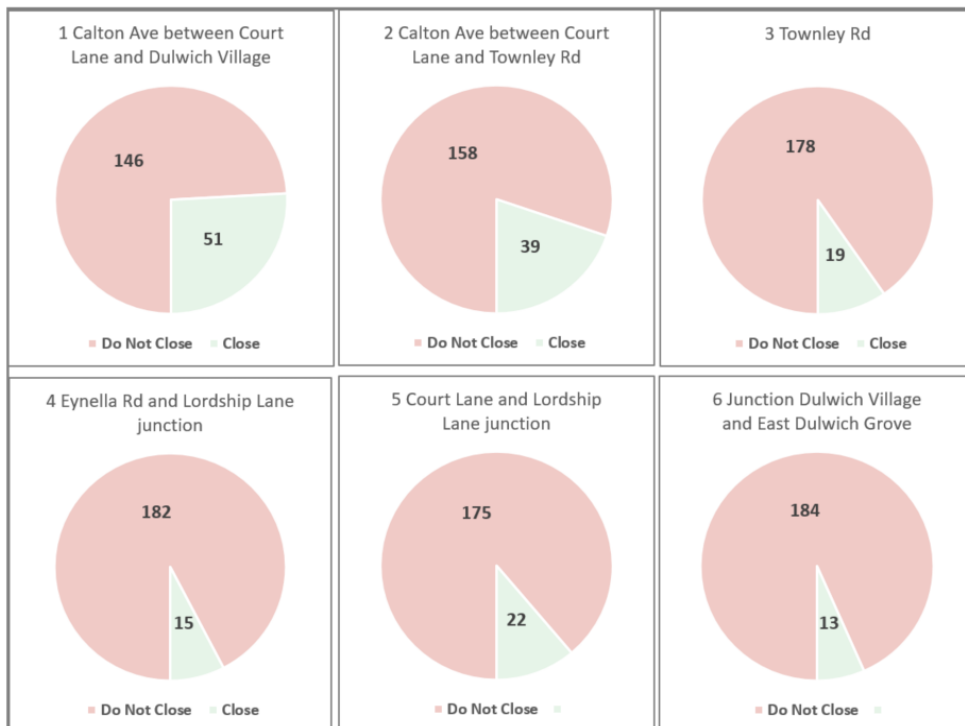


Figure 10: a comparison of face-to-face responses (on their own) in favour, and not in favour, of road closures at all six locations/road sections

If we consider only the F2F responses, which are more likely to represent the views of local residents, the level of support for the “radical” road closures drops even further. It is highly significant that this analysis shows that only 25% of the F2F respondents supported the closure of Dulwich Village junction (Calton Avenue between Court Lane and Dulwich Village)

(4) Townley Road and Dulwich Village: “There was strong support for measures to reduce through traffic on Dulwich Village and Townley Road, particularly during peak hours”

Dulwich Village

Whether or not this is a measure that residents may ask for in 2021, in the 2019 consultation there were no questions about reducing through traffic on Dulwich Village, and a review of the text comments listed in Southwark’s report shows few comments about this. The above claim is, therefore, completely unsubstantiated.

Townley Road

In the case of Townley Road, there is some truth in Southwark’s claim. However, it is presented in a misleading manner and Southwark extrapolates the result in contradiction of the comments.

The survey shows 190 respondents in favour of a School Street along Townley Road. This is the highest level of support for any measure in the survey and it also receives a high level of

support from F2f responses, which are more likely to reflect the views of local residents. However, it is important to note that this support is still only 44% of replies (less than half of the respondents).

Although Southwark did not specify the hours of a School Street closure, it is clear from the comments that respondents expected such a closure to be for a very limited time only, corresponding to school arrival and departure times (for example, 8am to 9am, and 3.30pm to 4.30pm), up to a maximum of 2 hours. In the Phase 3 consultation, this had been extended to “peak hours”, which Southwark defined as 7am to 10am and either 3pm to 8pm or 4pm to 8pm (in other words, a total of seven to eight hours).

While many local residents might well support the concept of limited restrictions to allow safe access for pupils travelling to school (and those who accompany them), this support cannot be used to justify lengthy timed restrictions or permanent closures.

The map below provides an interesting analysis of those in favour of closing Calton Avenue. There are a significant number of residents on Calton Avenue in favour but, apart from that, support is minimal and is spread thinly across a wide area.

Key points to consider:

- The majority of supporters of the closure live in Calton Avenue or close to the junction with Dulwich Village
- Based on online responses, only 1.3% of voters in Dulwich Village ward supported the 24/7 closure of Calton Avenue
- On Court Lane, Dovercourt Road and Woodward Road, with over 450 households (possibly 1,000+ of voting age), there were only 27 responses in support of closing Calton Avenue.

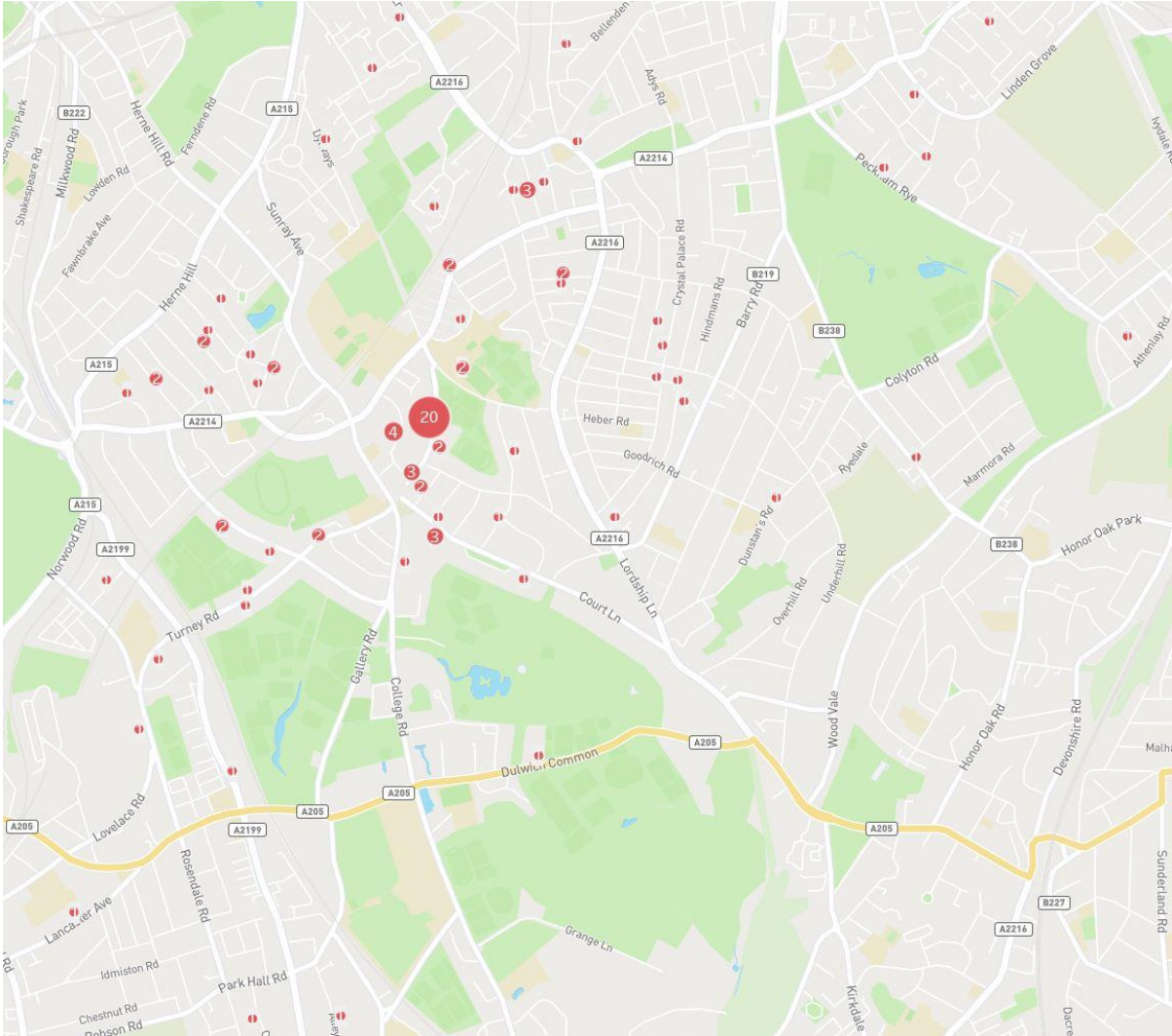


Figure 12: a map showing the high concentration of online responses from Calton Avenue and the roads nearest to Dulwich Village junction.
Data Source: Southwark Council OHS Phase 2 Feedback. Online responses analysed by post code (where provided)

7. Conclusion

This analysis of Southwark Council's methodology and interpretation of results in relation to Phase 2 of OHSD suggests that the information published by Southwark about this phase of the Our Healthy Streets consultation is both misleading and unreliable.

It follows from this that the proposals put forward in Phase 3 of OHSD were based on inaccurate information that did not represent community views. This misrepresentation will have affected how people responded to the consultation in the spring of 2020, and will mean that any results, still unpublished as of 9 May 2021, cannot be relied upon.

It also follows that Southwark Council's claim that the current experimental road measures are based on a process of consultation showing community support is unfounded.

From our analysis in this report, it seems that Southwark Council lacks the ability to conduct full, objective and impartial public consultations, to publish the results in a fair and timely manner, or to draw reasonable and reliable conclusions from them. This has grave implications for the forthcoming review of the closures and restrictions implemented in the Dulwich area in 2020.

Disclaimer

One Dulwich and the Dulwich Alliance take full responsibility for the work presented here, and all the opinions expressed are solely our own.

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