

Street Trading Licensing Policy Consultation Results

Nov 2025



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South Kesteven District Council

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Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the results of a consultation carried out in respect of elements of South Kesteven District Council's Street Trading Licensing Policy.
2. The consultation was undertaken to ensure there was an opportunity for various stakeholders to comment on potential changes to parameters of the Street Trading Licensing Policy prior to its consideration for approval by the Council's Cabinet in January 2026.
3. Suspended on July 25, 2025, following reservations that some of the policy requirements were too onerous, and putting off traders from applying for licences, the consultation was live for two weeks and was structured to reflect areas of concern.

Scope

4. The scope of this consultation was focused on specific elements of South Kesteven's Street Trading Policy thought to make the application process more onerous for traders and enforcement more difficult to administer. They included: designation of the area where a licence to trade is required, the requirement to take photos of the pitch and vehicle being used, a requirement to obtain a street trading licence for a "one-off" event and the inclusion of mobile traders in the remit of the policy.
5. It also reflected the Council's obligations in other areas- particularly in relation to the promotion of road safety, public safety, the prevention of crime and disorder and public nuisance

Objectives

6. The objectives of the consultation were to:
 - Raise awareness of the legislation that governs the provision of street trading
 - Communicate the parameters of SKDC's Street Trading Policy
 - Measure the degree of support or otherwise for potential changes to the Street Trading policy
 - Clarify what stakeholders would like to see included in the Street Trading Policy
 - Illustrate that feedback from licence holders, parish councils, residents and other stakeholders has been considered prior to any decision to approve the policy
 - Inform the decision that will be taken by SKDC in respect of the policy
 - Understand and be aware of the impact approving this policy may have on specific stakeholders

Timescales

7. Responding to the concern that the conditions outlined in SKDC's Street Trading policy were too stringent, the policy was suspended on 24 July 2025 for 6 months.
8. To fit in with the 6-month suspension, the following timescale was adhered to:
 - Preparation of consultation commissioning brief Sept 2025
 - A two-week consultation - 8 to 22 October 2025
 - Results presented to Licensing Committee - 25 November 2025
 - Recommendations presented to Rural and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 10 December 2025
 - Draft policy presented to Cabinet for approval - 15 January 2026

Stakeholders

9. The stakeholders were identified as follows:
 - Licence holders
 - The public
 - Local Businesses
 - District Councillors
 - Town and Parish Councils
 - The Chief Constable of Lincolnshire Police
 - Lincolnshire County Council
 - Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue
 - Other sections in SKDC including Environmental Health and Planning

Methodology

10. The table below identifies the method(s) that were thought to be the most appropriate for each of the stakeholder types:

Stakeholders	Method(s)	Details
Licence holders	Licence holders contacted by email and asked to complete an on-line survey.	Licence holders invited to participate in the consultation by either clicking on the web link or scanning the QR code.
Members of the public –	Members of the public made aware of the consultation through the following channels: Press release to the local media	Press release prepared promoting the consultation. Release included a web link to the survey and a QR code.

	SKDC Social Media Channels SKDC website	Consultation promoted on SKDC's social media channels Facebook and X. Posts included a link to the survey. Webpage contained • An explanation of why the existing Street Trading policy has been suspended • A section asking for their feedback and explaining how their feedback will be used • The current version of the Street Trading policy Street Trading Policy Consultation also displayed on current consultations page
Local Businesses	As above – promote consultation to local businesses at same time as promoting to public	Please see above for details
Town and Parish Councils & District Councillors	Contact all District Councillors, Town and Parish councils by email to ask them to complete a survey on-line.	HG contacted district councillors and Town and Parish Councils.
The Police – Chief Officer of Lincs Police and the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner	To contact the chief officer for Lincolnshire Police	HG contacted the chief officer for Lincolnshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner
Lincolnshire County Council		HG contacted LCC
Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue		HG contacted the chief officer for Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue
Other sections in SKDC	Environmental Health Planning	HG contacted Environmental Health and Planning sections of SKDC

Details

11. Further to concerns expressed by members of SKDC's Licensing Committee that the application process to become a street trader in South Kesteven was too onerous, respondents were asked for their opinion on various street trading policy parameters. These included: consent areas, consultation with specific consultees, timeframe for renewal, inclusion of mobile traders, consent for one-off events and if traders should be required to take photos of their location and vehicle/stall as part of the application process.
12. The survey¹ for Street Trading was structured to reflect these parameters and included:
 - **An introduction.** Respondents were informed about the consultation, why the Council needs their help and how their feedback will be used to inform the decision(s) that will be taken in respect of reviewing and approving the Street Trading Licensing Policy for 2026
 - **Where a street trading licence is required.** The whole of South Kesteven is currently an area where consent to trade is required. Respondents were asked if they agreed with this approach or if they would prefer specific areas to be designated. If they wanted specific areas to be areas where permission to trade is required which streets/ areas would they like to see designated?
 - **The Consultation Process.** When a street trading consent is applied for, SK currently consult specific consultees. These vary depending on where the street trader is intending to trade and could include Lincolnshire County Council (Highways) for example. Respondents were asked if they thought potential traders should contact identified consultees themselves or if they thought SKDC should do it.
 - **Timeframe for renewal.** Respondents were informed that street traders are currently required to submit a renewal application 6 weeks prior to the existing consent. They were asked if they thought this timeframe was too long, too short or about right. If they thought it was too long or short a time period, what did they think was acceptable?
 - **Who needs to apply.** Mobile traders (i.e. traders who do not wait in one location for more than 30 minutes) were included in the remit of the policy approved in 2022. Respondents were asked if they would like this to continue.
 - **Applying for a one-off consent.** Respondents were also asked if they thought it should be possible for someone organising a one-off event to apply for a one-off event consent (with one fee charged which would cover the whole event). The applicant would be the responsible person for the event, removing the need for individual street traders/stall holders needing to apply for individual consents. They were also asked if they thought there should be a limited number of stalls per event and if so, how many. Should the fee chargeable be structured on the number of street traders/stall holders at an event or one flat fee regardless of stall numbers?
 - **Taking photos of the street trading area (and the stall/vehicle).** Participants were informed that as part of the application process, the licensing team ask for photographs of the street trading area, and the stall or vehicle they are operating from. Respondents were asked if they would like to see this requirement removed from street trading applicants at charity events.

¹ Copy of Street Trading Survey attached at appendix one

- **Definition of a street.** A street is currently defined as “Any area that is 30 metres from the centre of any (or part of any) road, footway or other area to which the public have access without payment” in SKDC’s Street Trading Policy. Consultees were asked if they thought this should be removed and if not, why not.
- **Opportunity to comment.** Respondents were given the option to ask questions or make further observations about the proposal(s)
- Respondents were asked to supply their details so that they can be contacted in relation to their query
- A statement on how any personal data they supply will be treated
- A question to determine who they are responding as e.g., a mobile trader, a local business, a member of the public, a consultee etc
- A question to determine postcode sector
- A thank you and closing date

13. Although a press release was issued to promote the consultation in the local media, no articles appeared in either the Stamford Mercury, Grantham Journal or Lincs Online. The reason for this is not known. The consultation was however promoted on the Council’s social media channels and website during the consultation period and also appeared on the Grantham Matters² website on October 12, 2025. The Facebook posts during October reached 9,402 people, 18 interactions and 30 clicked on the link. There were 443 impressions on X and one share and one like.

14. The consultations closed on 22 October 2025. 74 responses were received. Eight of the responses to the Street Trading Consultation were received from individuals currently issued with a street or mobile trader’s licence (or thinking about applying for one).

The results

Section One - Where a street trading licence is required

15. Respondents were informed that the Council is currently required to licence all street traders operating in South Kesteven. This is because the whole district is designated as an area where consent to street trade is required. When asked if they agreed with this approach, or if they thought consent to trade on the street should be limited to certain areas, seven out of ten (51 or 71.8%) said that they thought a licence should be required for anyone wishing to trade on the street anywhere in South Kesteven. Just under three out of ten (20 or 28.2%) thought consent to trade should be limited to designated areas. This is illustrated in the graph overleaf:

² <https://granthammatters.co.uk/have-your-say-on-street-trading/>



16. When asked to specify which areas of the district they thought should be designated (if they thought a street trading licence should only be required in designated areas) town centres, public highways including laybys and specific streets were the options chosen most frequently as shown below:



17. When given the option to specify which streets in which areas, some respondents advocated for all streets in towns to be included to ensure fairness and reduce disputes. Others recommended only designating busy, built-up areas or places where trading could cause obstructions or health and safety issues.

“All streets anywhere in a town to give everyone a fair chance and stop people arguing”

“Busy, built up areas where trading could cause a obstruction or nuisance for the public.”

Section Two – The Consultation Process

18. Respondents were then asked about the consultation process. When an application is received the Council may consult other organisations. These include Lincolnshire County Council Highways or Highways England (depending on the area of trading), Lincolnshire Police, Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue Service, relevant businesses in the location, Town and Parish Councils and other sections within the council e.g. Environmental Health Services.
19. Under the terms of the current policy, the Council is given ten working days (following receipt of the completed application form and all other required documentation) to undertake this consultation. In order to reduce the amount of time it takes to approve an application, SKDC is considering if applicants, as part of the application process, should be required to consult other organisations themselves.
20. When asked if potential street trading licensees should be required to consult other organisations as part of the application process, or if they thought the Council should continue to do so, just under a third (20 or 31.7%) thought this should be undertaken by the applicant. Over half (35 or 55.5%) thought that the Council should continue to consult with other organisations, as illustrated here:



21. When asked why they had chosen to answer in this way, the comments made by respondents focused on the role the Council has in maintaining standards and retaining control of the process.

“Council best placed for these consultations.”

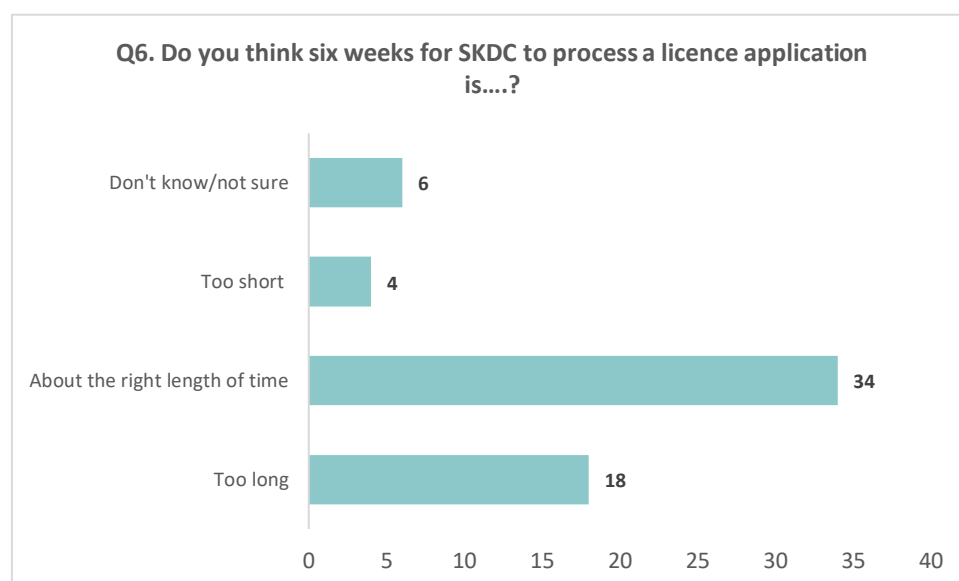
“To make sure it’s safe”

Some thought that asking individual traders to undertake this function may put them off applying, as shown below:

“It’s difficult enough for some people to register and apply for things as it is. I think it’s easier and more efficient for the council to consult with other organisations.”

Section Three – Renewing a Street Trading Consent

22. The third potential change to SKDC’s Street Trading Policy respondents were asked about is the timeframe for renewing a licence. Existing licence holders are currently required to submit their applications for renewal at least 6 weeks before their licence is due to expire. If a renewal application is not submitted before the existing consent expires, it could result in the location being allocated to another trader.
23. When asked if they thought six weeks to process a licence renewal was too long, about right or too short a timeframe, over half of those responding (34 or 54.8%) thought it was about right. Just under three in ten (18 or 29%) thought it was too long, as illustrated here:



24. When asked to state what time frame they thought would be acceptable (if they thought the timeframe was either too short or too long) responses varied from one to six weeks. As one mobile trader said

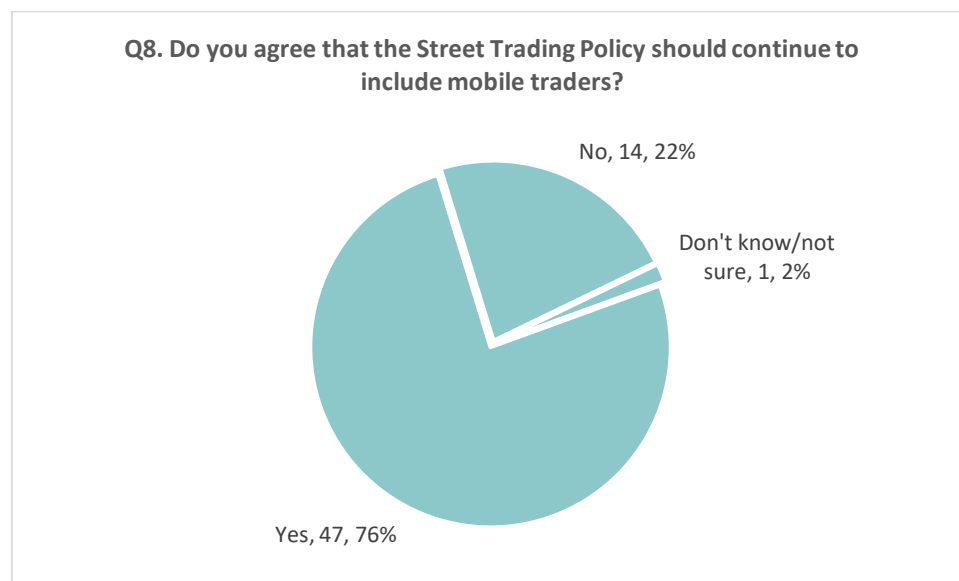
“Sometimes you get a booking 1 week before the event, in which case this gives us no time to get a licence. I know that can’t be viable in all cases however maybe there should be a way to get a last-minute licence.”

25. The period suggested most often as an alternative was four weeks.

Section Four - Who needs to apply

26. The fourth parameter of SKDC’s Street Trader Policy respondents were asked for their views on related to the Council’s decision to extend the scope of who must apply to include mobile traders. Introduced during the last review of the policy in 2022/23, a mobile trader is defined by the Licensing Authority as someone who moves from location to location to ply their trade. Ice cream vans, mobile sandwich providers and hot food sellers (that do not have specific customers to whom they visit on a round³) are types of mobile trader.

27. When asked if the policy should continue to include mobile traders, three quarters of respondents (47 or 75.8%) said that they thought it should. Just over one in five (14 or 22.6%) said that it shouldn’t, as shown in the graph below:



28. When asked to explain why they had answered in this way, some said it was because it was important that all traders are subject to the same rules.

³ Mobile Traders that have a contract in place or a round agreed with customers are known as Roundsmen and do not need a mobile trading consent.

“Anyone trading on the street should need a licence, to keep things fair.”

“Licensing is a way of controlling who trades and where. We can't have a free-for-all.”

Section Five –Applying for a one-off event consent

29. Respondents were then asked if they would support the introduction of an option to apply for a one-off event consent (with one fee charged for the whole event), or not. This would cover all street traders attending that event. Under the terms of the current policy, street traders are required to apply for individual consents to trade. It makes no difference if they are trading on their own or are trading alongside other street traders and stalls selling goods.
30. Two thirds of respondents (41 or 68.3%) would support the introduction of a one-off event consent with one fee being charged to cover all street traders/stall holders selling goods, when asked. Ten respondents (16.7%) didn't support the proposal, and nine respondents (15%) didn't know.



31. Analysing the reasons why participants had chosen to answer in the way that they had revealed an appreciation of the difference it might make to those organising and attending events:

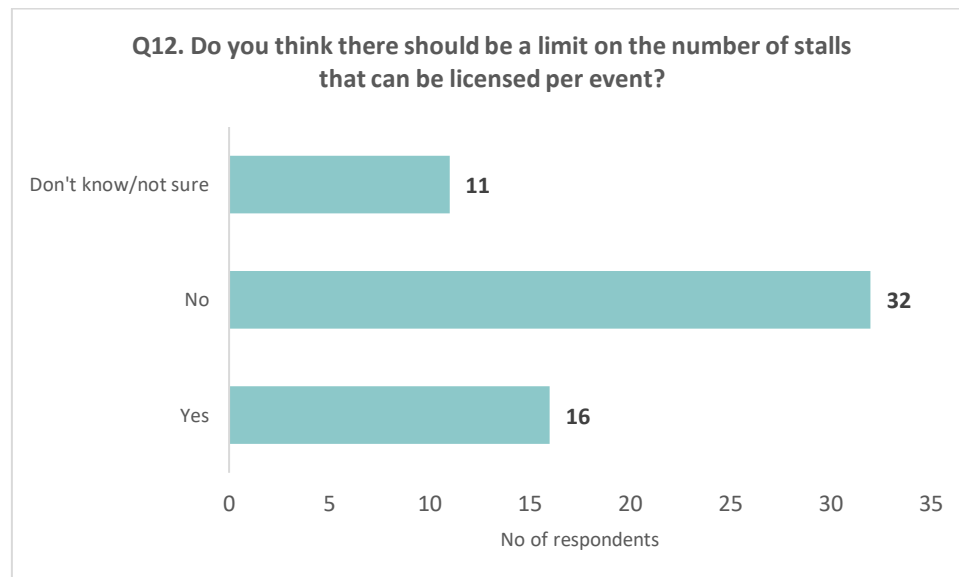
"It makes it easier for event organisers"

"Might encourage smaller organisations to come forward and take part if the cost was already covered."

A few didn't support the idea as illustrated here:

"Loss of control each vendor needs to be reviewed and approved."

32. The twelfth question on the survey asked respondents if they thought there should be a limit on the number of stalls that can be licensed per event. Just over half (32 or 54.2%) didn't think that there should be a limit. Just over a quarter (16 or 27.1%) thought that there should be, as illustrated in the graph below:

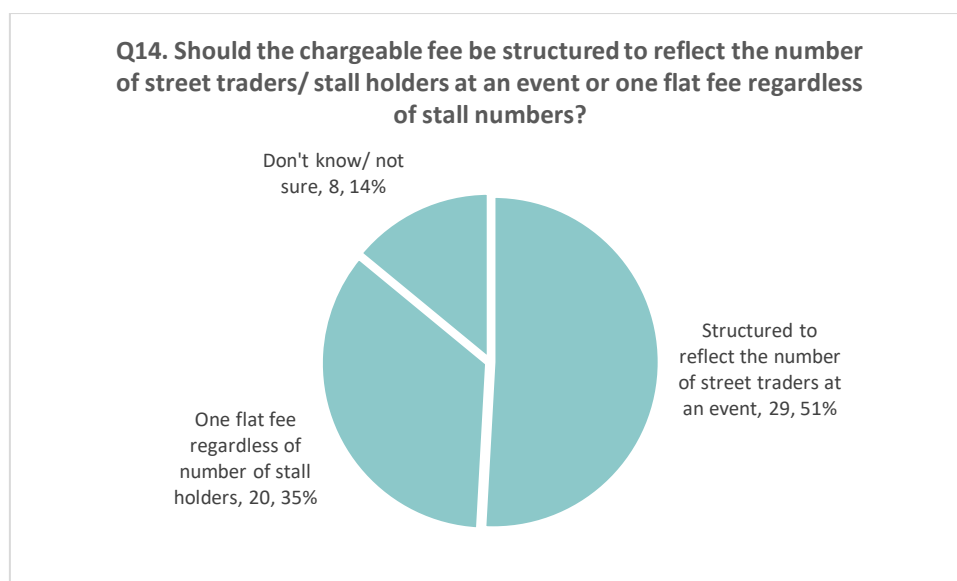


33. When asked what they thought the limit should be, most said it depended on the type of event, where it was being held and how many people are expected to attend.

"It should be event dependent"

"The number should reflect the area that is being used"

34. Respondents were then asked for their opinion how the fee for an event of this kind should be determined. Half of those who responded to this question (29 or 50.9%) thought that the fee should be structured to reflect the number of street traders at an event. Just over a third (20 or 35.1%) thought that there should be one flat fee regardless of the number of stall holders. Eight respondents (14.0%) didn't know.



35. The quotes below illustrate each side of the argument:

“Because a village event may only want 6 stalls whereas a bigger event in town may have 50. It is unfair to have a flat rate”

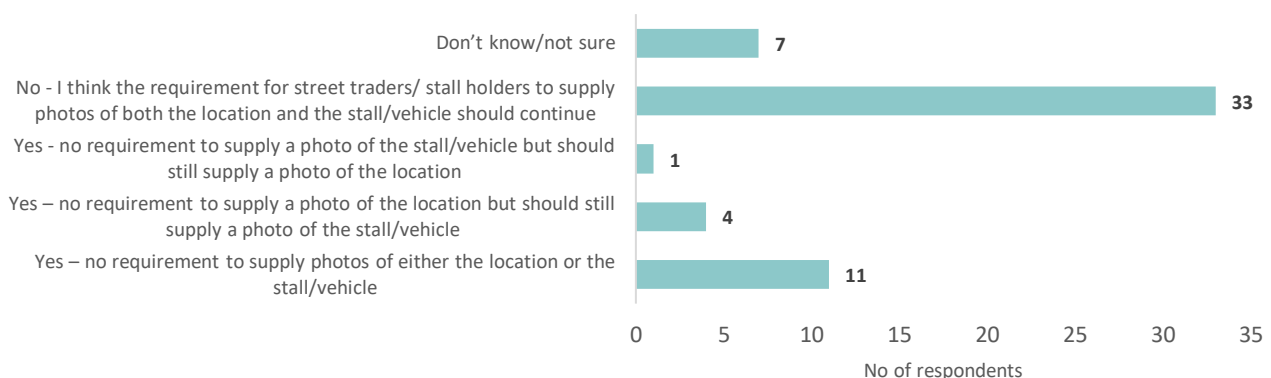
“It’s fair everyone should be charged the same”

Section Six – Taking photos of the street trading area

36. The sixth proposal respondents were asked for their opinion on was centred on the requirement in the policy for the street trader to take photos of the street trading location and the stall or vehicle they are operating from (at a charity event). This is to protect South Kesteven from street traders trading in inappropriate locations and from inappropriate stalls or vehicles.

37. When asked if the requirement to take photos of the street trading location and the stall or vehicle should be removed from street traders/stall holders trading at a charity event, three fifths of respondents (33 or 58.9%) made no distinction and thought that it shouldn’t. A fifth of respondents (11 or 19.6%) didn’t think it was necessary for traders to take photos if trading at a charity event, as illustrated overleaf:

Q16. Do you think the requirement to take photos of the street trading location and the stall or vehicle should be removed from street traders/stall holders trading at a charity event?



38. Respondents' comments illustrated why they had answered in the way that they had. Some thought that taking photos of both the location and the vehicle was an important part of the process and helped to maintain public safety and regulation compliance. Others argued for a flexible approach:

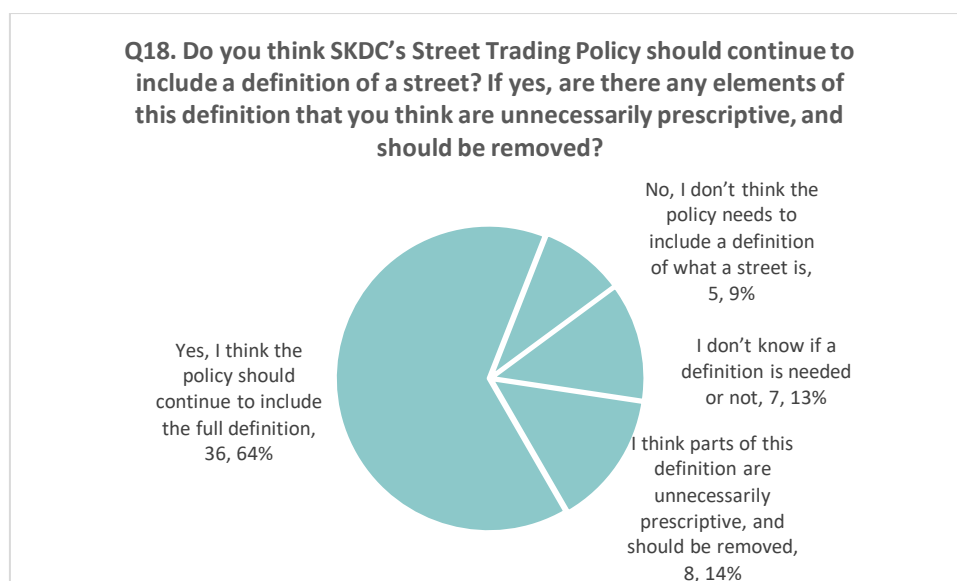
“Essential to ensure safety and suitability in any given surroundings just like a permanent frontage”

“We want to promote community effort not stifle it - don't make the process too onerous”

Section Seven – The definition of a street

39. The seventh and final area SKDC asked respondents for their feedback on was if a definition of what a street is should be included in the Street Trading Policy. A street is currently defined as “any area that is 30 metres from the centre of any (or part of any) road, footway or other area to which the public have access without payment” in the policy.

40. When asked if they thought SKDC's Street Trading Policy should continue to include a definition of a street and if they did, if there were any elements of this definition that thought were unnecessarily prescriptive, and should be removed, just under two thirds of respondents (36 or 64.3%) thought that it should, as illustrated overleaf:

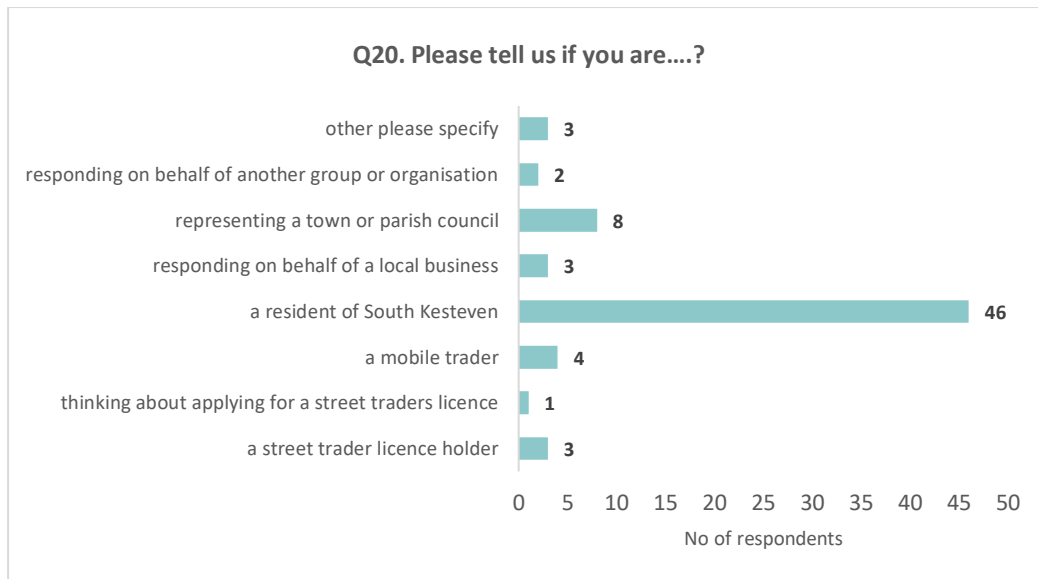


41. When asked which parts of the definition were unnecessarily prescriptive and should be removed, respondents used the opportunity to provide an explanation of why they had chosen to answer in the way that they had, rather than identify which elements should be removed. Their comments focused on the need for clear, simple, and unambiguous definitions of what constitutes a street as shown below:

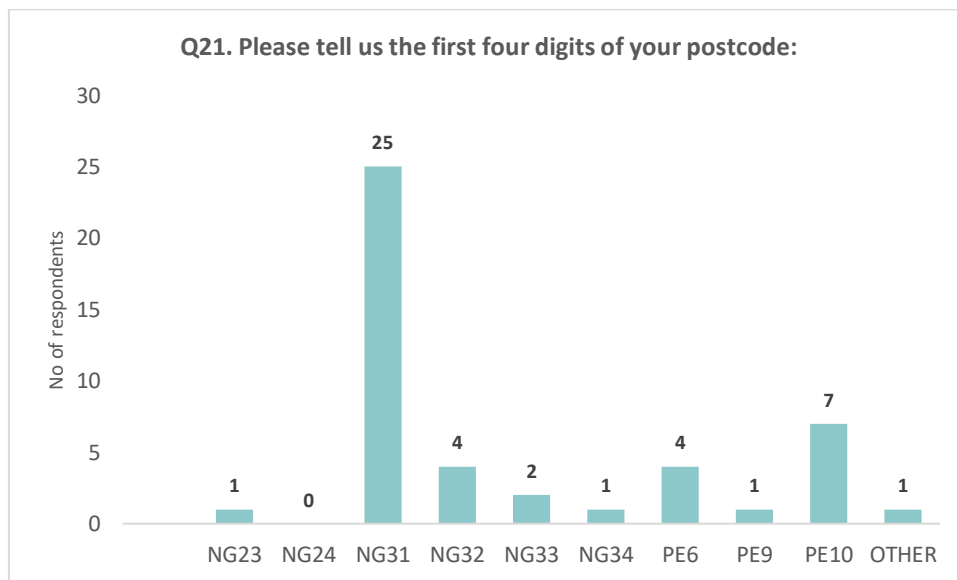
“A street should be exactly that. One which is owned by LCC or highways including the footpath. Not private land.”

Section Eight – About you

42. Most respondents (46 or 85.2%) were residents of the district, as illustrated in the graph overleaf. Four responses (7.4%) were received from mobile traders, with another four respondents (7.4%) stating that they either had a current street trading licence or were thinking of getting one. Eight responses (14.8%) were from town or parish councils:



43. Feedback about the policy was received from across the district. Just over half (25 or 54.3%) were from those living in the Grantham area (NG31), as shown here:



44. The final question on the survey asked respondents if they had any questions or wanted to comment on anything included in the survey. An analysis of the comments made by respondents revealed some had reservations about the policy – that it may have unintended negative consequences - especially for small businesses and community events. Respondents were concerned that a blanket approach and high fees could discourage participation, reduce profitability, and add unnecessary bureaucracy, as expressed in the quote overleaf:

“I am deeply concerned that this policy has not been fully thought through in terms of its likely impacts. ... If we inflict this licensing on the many small home based/artisan craft businesses that attend these events they simply won't come.”

“The fees are far too expensive now, when trying to provide a service to the public.”

45. Some offered constructive feedback on how the policy and how it's administered could be improved. Respondents suggested streamlining processes, making renewals easier for ongoing license holders, and ensuring requirements are not overly burdensome.

“We think there should be a way of renewing licenses for ongoing license holders, that doesn't require the whole process.”

Conclusion

46. Undertaking this consultation has been a worthwhile exercise. Most respondents support most of the parameters of SKDC's Street Trading Licensing Policy. There is, however, some evidence that some of the policy requirements are viewed by respondents as being overly prescriptive and expensive, which means some traders – particularly those operating at a more amateur level - are dissuaded from applying for a licence.

“Please make the policy to allow small community events to continue and remove over complicated and expensive requirements which are off putting for both stallholders and event organisers.”

47. It should be noted that, in contrast to the consultation undertaken in 2022, where no responses were received from mobile traders, four responses have been received from individuals currently operating as mobile traders. Three responses were from current street trade licence holders and one from an individual thinking about applying for a street trading licence. Perhaps not surprisingly they were keen to make the application process less onerous, with quicker turn-round times. Each thought six weeks to process a licence application was too long:

“Needs to be express, we are playing with peoples' livelihoods here.”

48. Some respondents used the free text options available in each section of the survey to comment on specific elements of the Street Trading Policy arguing that some conditions are too restrictive and could discourage street traders from taking part in community activities and events.

“over-regulation could stifle community engagement and vibrancy.”

“I also think expecting all stallholders to have a DBS check is completely ridiculous, the DBS check is designed to protect children and vulnerable people who are likely to have contact with people in a one-to-one setting not as part of a busy street market event.”

49. Some respondents called for a distinction to be made between regular commercial trading and occasional community activities, allowing the latter to proceed without excessive paperwork.

“The definition needs to change to allow local community events like Christmas events, fundays, car boots to continue without unduly onerous legislation, requirements and paperwork which discourages the organisers and participants.”

50. Members of SKDC’s Licensing Committee, Rural and Communities Overview Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet are asked to note the results of this consultation.

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