



Poppleton Neighbourhood Plan

Business Report on Consultation prior to pre-submission consultation

November 2014

Part 6

Analysis of Report on the questionnaires distributed to the three Business Parks in the Parishes of Nether and Upper Poppleton.

All businesses were contacted via a personal invitation to an information session at Poppleton Community Centre in order to help the Neighbourhood Planning Team to draw up an effective questionnaire. Although the meeting held on 23 September 2014, was poorly attended those who came were able to give an accurate and sensitive picture of aspects of the Business Parks.

Following this meeting the Team were able to draw up a questionnaire that was although basic, highly informative of the activities of the client base and each company was then hand delivered a questionnaire, with a stamped addressed envelop. This activity together with the Parish Questionnaire was funded by Locality a government organisation with a remit to assist parishes and areas to develop Neighbourhood Plans.

The results of each question were then analysed and this report summarises the main outcomes and comments elicited by informal and formal discussions with Business Park Owners, Company Directors, Company Owners, and Employees.

Questionnaire was distributed to three Business Parks in the Parishes of Nether and Upper Poppleton. They were: Northminster Business Park situated in Upper Poppleton Parish which offers a discrete small well managed business park housing 33 companies with 3 vacant offices, having national and international clients as well as many serving the local population.

York Business Park, in Nether Poppleton, which includes some office blocks known as Westminster Place, a number of car showrooms, restaurants, a children day-care centre, a Premier Lodge Hotel and a number of gyms and fitness suits including Bannatynes. There area also many large and small business units .A new business development of 6 units called the Rose Park is nearing completion. The occupancy level of Westminster Place has never been more than 60% and the Mandale Group who own the building have commented that the lack of good infrastructure has inhibited their opportunities for complete occupancy. The building has a 'To Let' sign on the side of all buildings (3) since it opened in 2001(Appendix 1 photo1).

Millfield Lane Business Park which has a number of large transport units housing 18 ton vehicles, the Post Office Parcel Delivery Yard for York and Millfield Haulage who work internationally. Also on this site there are business units comprise 18 workshop units administered by the London Ebor Group.

This is adjacent to a large Brownfield site, the former British Sugar Site, which is due for development into 1100 housing units with no immediate indication of amenities, schools, medical services or shops.(Appendix 1 photo 2)

There is also a sub-station for overhead supply of electricity adjacent to the Millfield Lane business park. Aerial photos show a number of unoccupied units and a low level of security.

The Former British Sugar Site at present is undergoing some sanitation work as the site consists of at least 4 washing pools for sugar beet that are not drained. Aerial photographs in the gallery clearly show the site.

Q 1 What is the name of your company?

The following companies completed a questionnaire

Business replies from

business parks	North	York	Millfield	Ebor	West	other
Ad Hoc Property Management		1				
Alexanders York		1				
Animalcare Ltd		1				
Ashcourt Rowan Plc	1					
Autoservices York		1				
Bannatynes Fitness		1				
Barker Butchers (owner)						village
Barkers Butchers (employee)						village
Blenk Engineering Ltd				1		
C & M Auto Services		1				
Calverts Carpet and flooring				1		
City Electrical Factor Ltd				1		
Clive Owen and Co Plc	1					
Direct Finished Ltd						forum
Ebor Court Care Home		1			1	
Essential Eating		1				
Exactis Interactive Print				1		
Future Cleaning Services		1				
G & B Cash Registers		1				
Hall Associates Marketing		1				
Handlesbanken		1				
Healthcare Property Consultants		1				
J M Butler				1		
Legend Club Management						
Systems		1				
Leisure Park 2000 Ltd		1				
Lynden Design Studio Ltd	1					
McCarthy Stone	1					
Millfield Haulage				1		
Minster Equine Group						1
Monitor Computers		1				
Newton Solicitors		1				
Northminster Limited		1				
Park Leisure Group			1			
Pilotwise International Ltd			1			
Product development cor			1			
Professional Paper Suppliers		1				
Quality Solicitors and Burns Co					1	
Renishaw		1				
Sacmedinas Solicitors			1			
Saville Audio Visual				1		
Simpson Associates			1			
Teleproducts		1				

The Lemon Tree						village
Upper Poppleton Pharmacy						village
Webcertain Group Ltd	1					
Wetherby Whaler		1				
Wills and Ellis Service Centre		1				
Wombells Auctioneers	1					
York Bathrooms		1				
York Bionanlitical Solutiions Ltd	1					
York Coffee Emporium				1		
York Millennium Windows		1				
York Premier Laundry Ltd		1				
York Kitchens		1				
YRG Group		1				
	12	27	6	3	1	6

Table 1

Total number of responses 55 from 95 questionnaires distributed

Each organisation was given the same questionnaire, and a respondent was identified. Some large companies on site such as the car show rooms, Marshall Honda, Volvo, Nissan, Hyundai and Premier Inn indicated that it was not company policy to reveal statistics about their company.

Other companies who were on site indicated that they were about to close due to the downturn in the computer chip market, the company was being relocated to the USA and most employees were being retrenched so it was not felt appropriate to leave a questionnaire.

Ad Hoc is an address company where no employees are actually on the premises but it consists of a number of companies using it as a mail drop off point.

The Restaurants did not respond nor did the Children's Day Care Centre. Some of the organisations within Westminster Place Office Block occupy more than one floor.

Q 2 In which Business Park are you located?

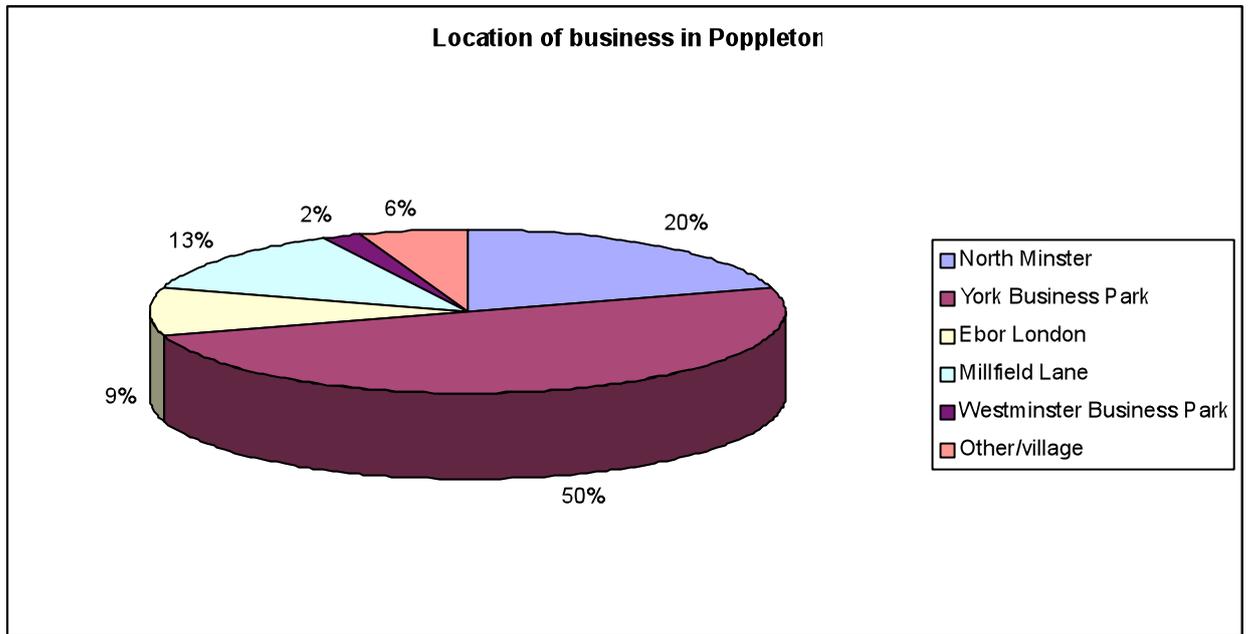


Figure 1

As indicated in the table above the raw data indicated that the most highly occupied of the Business Parks is York Business Park, and coincidentally it is the Park with the greatest number of vacancies and free building land. While not asked directly on the questionnaire if they owned their buildings or rented, on discussion with many of the businesses there were many who were start up companies and therefore leasing premises was considered the best option. Westminster Place is situated within York Business Park and the key issue for respondents here was lack of security of tenure. Being able to rent has advantages but also disadvantages in that you have no control over which business may be near you that might be competitors. (Appendix 1 Photo 3,4,5)

Q3 How long has you run your business form this location?

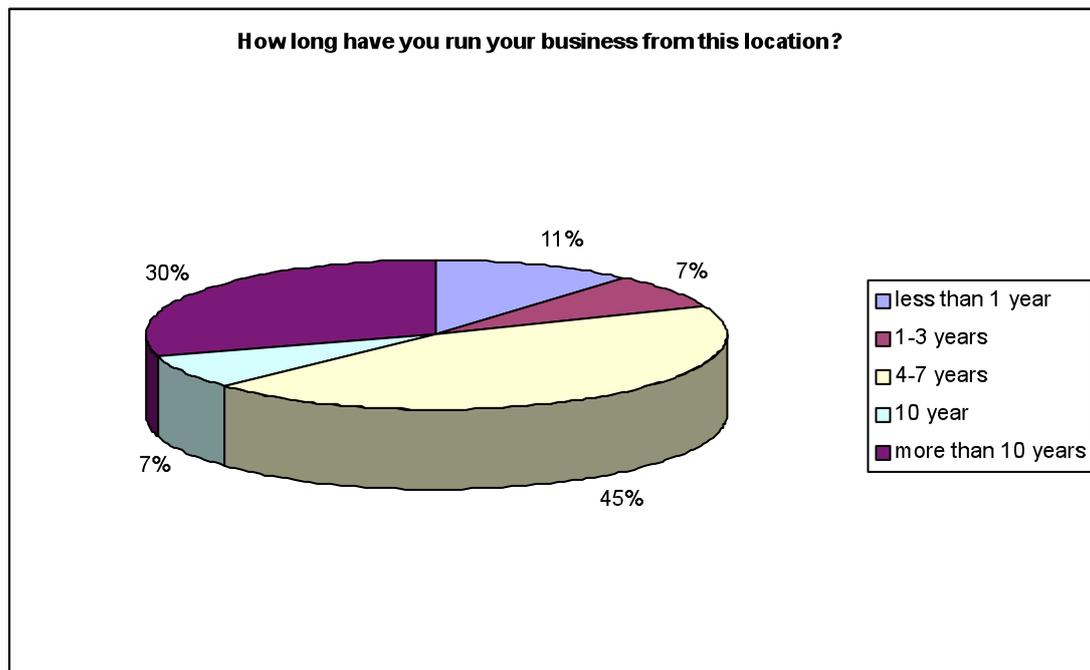


Figure 2

From the graph 30% of business operated from the same location for more than 10 years. When the business parks first opened some were an instant success because of good buildings, good transport links and good management structures. For example at Northminster Business Park, the management has a suite on site so issues are sorted for clients immediately. Also there have security of ownership of their premises as the company has given them a 250 year lease of the land and building. Many companies rely on a regular repeat business and it is important to feel that they feel management and owners are respected. An international company now owns York Business Park and respondents found communications difficult.

Q4. How many full time employees do you have in your company?

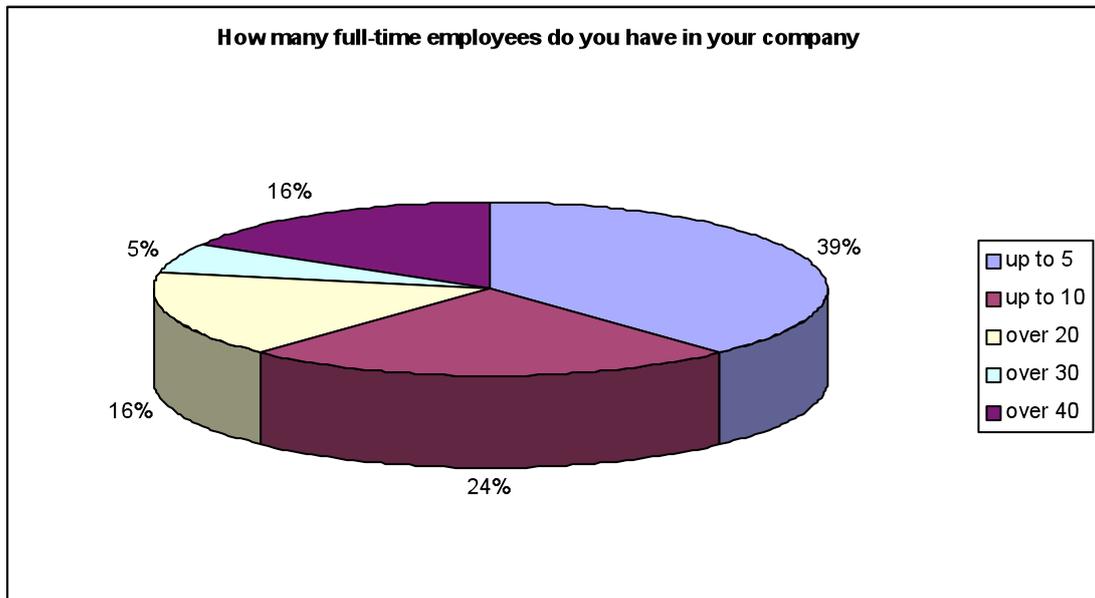


Figure 3

The rationale behind this question was to try to obtain a picture of whether the area was attracting large multinationals or small and medium sized enterprises (SME's). Clearly the latter is the case with a maximum of 10 full time employees being the case in 63% of the cases illustrated. SME's are the driving engine of modern British economy and are the highest employers locally. This affords employment opportunities for local people as well as with some of the organisations, highly skilled personnel that have studied at York University, like the area and wish to remain in the City.

Q5 How many part-time employees do you have in your company?

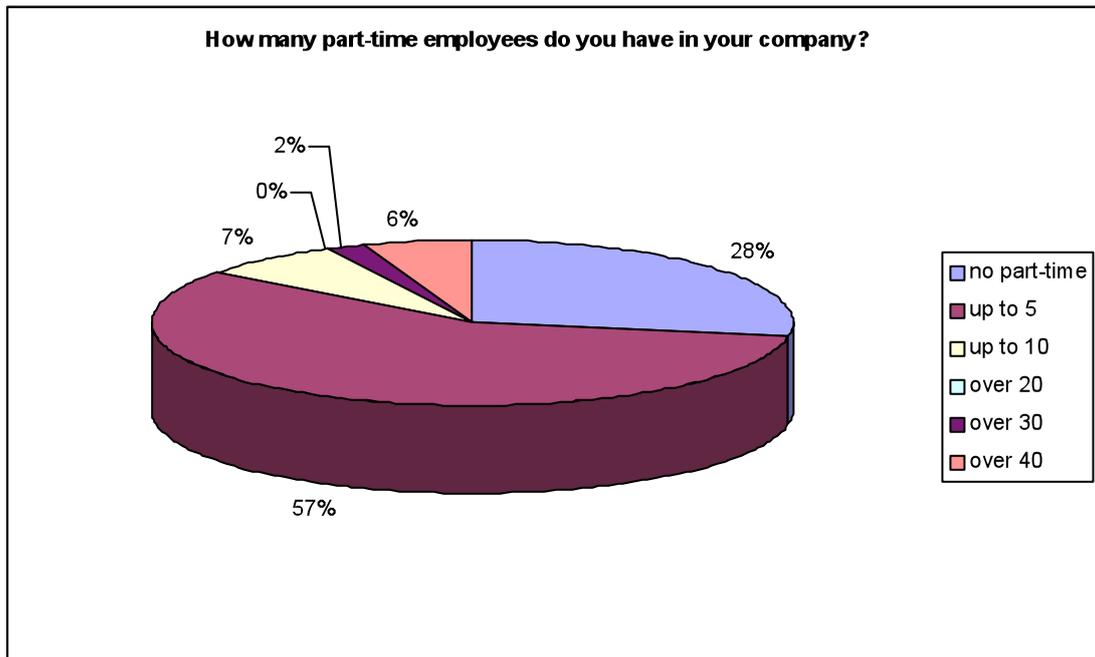


Figure 4

Part-time employment is popular with those who have limited time to work, such as those reaching the end of the working life, or people who have a major job as a carer, either of children or adults. Most companies only have a limited amount of part-time employment on offer. It still allows local people to have the opportunity of employment close to their homes.

Q 6 Are you considering expanding your workforce?

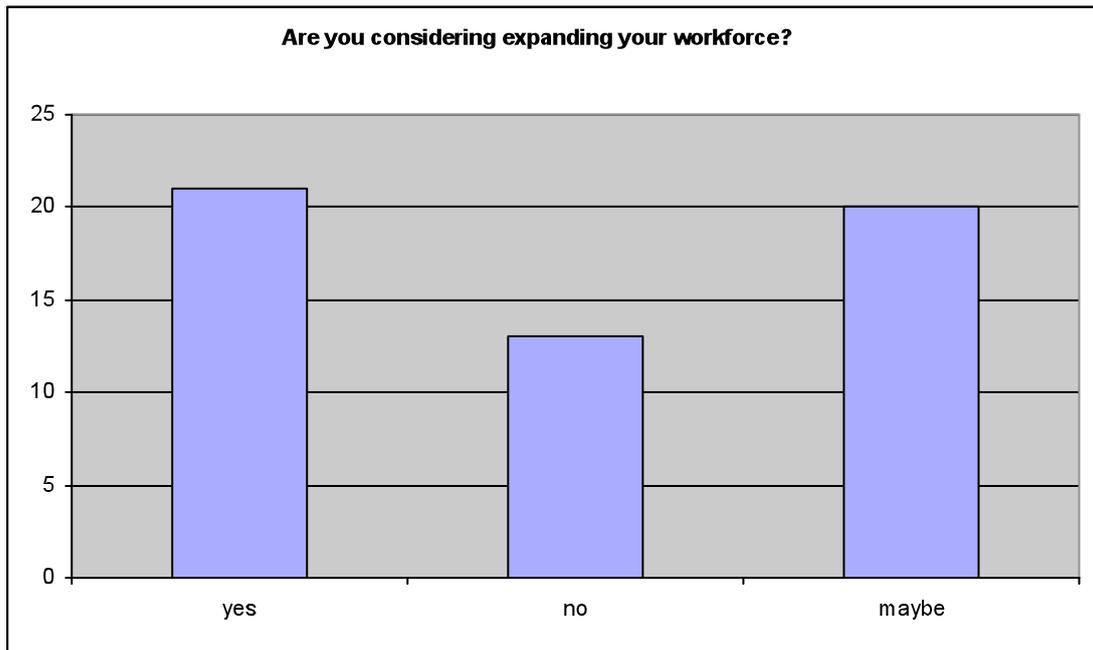


Figure 5

While this question is hypothetical it was asked to try to gauge how successful companies were, and how confident they were in their future development. Whether expansion takes place also is an important factor for companies deciding if they are located in the right place to attract the right skills set required for the company. York has many graduates who wish to remain in the City; this results often in them taking lower paid or lower skilled jobs than they might take. As a result it drives the academic standard higher for many people seeking employment. In a graduate study conducted for the Millennium Volunteers, through the University of York, 20% who could not find employment in their field of study took lower paid jobs so that they might remain in York (2002 report). Vertical axis represents the number of respondents.

Q7 How do your employees get to work?

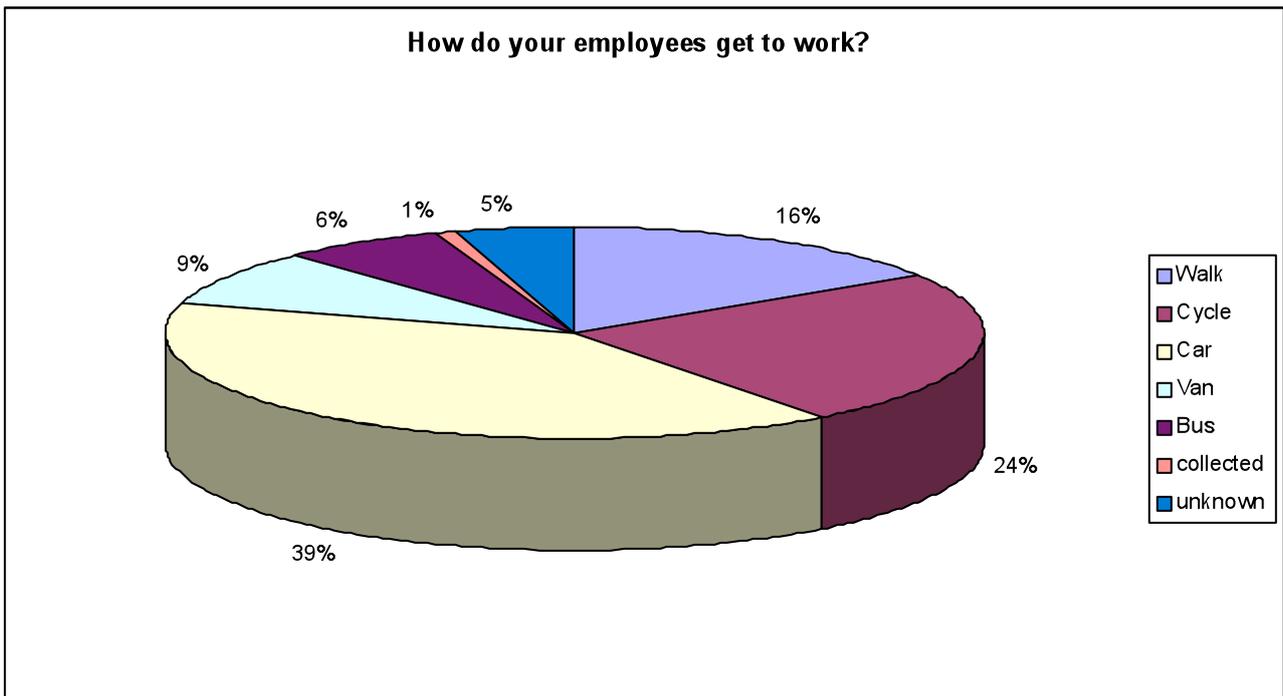


Figure 6

York, as a historic city has a major problem with road access because the northern section of the Outer Ring Road is for the most part single carriageway. The Dual Carriageway section to the south of the City allows easy access to those establishments, businesses and villages situated there. However, for the remainder of those employed who have to cross the City or travel around the Outer Ring Road at peak times the traffic is very slow moving. Comments from the Business Parks about this issue ranged greatly.

Those using Northminster Business Park have benefited from the installation of Traffic Lights at the end of their road, as part of the Poppleton Bar Park and Ride Scheme. Journey time leaving the site is now counted in a few minutes.

On the other hand the two Business Parks of York Business Park (including Westminster and Rose Parks) and Millfield Lane (including Manor Academy and London Ebor Business Park) have to calculate their departure time from the premises in half hour periods and longer.

Peak times would indicate that it is only a matter of time before a traffic light system is required to allow traffic to move freely between the hours of 4.00pm to 6.00pm. Comments from respondents constantly echoed the same point that the improvements to the A59 have meant that traffic moves too quickly through the roundabout to allow access on to the roundabout at Nether Poppleton, plus the sheer volume of cars leaving at the same time creates high levels of frustration.

A simple suggestion was that the exit junction from York Business Park to be three not the current two lane, in this way the traffic wishing to travel to the

east could access and cross the standing traffic, while those wishing to go to Poppleton Villages would not be embroiled in the congestion at the roundabout. It is unusual to have four junctions on 180 degrees at a roundabout.

Q8 Do you have enough parking for all your employees?

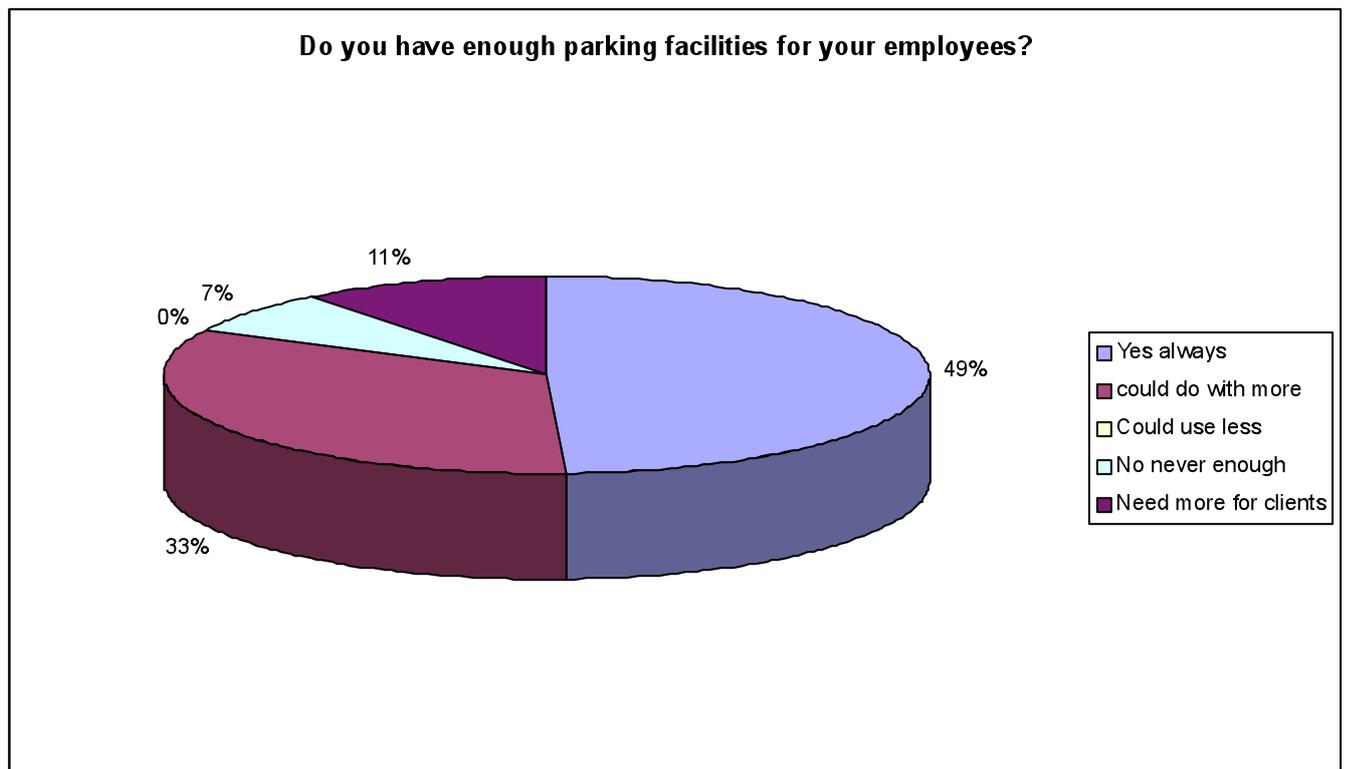


Figure 7

While most respondents indicated that there is sufficient for their employees and their clients there is a significant number who never have enough and need more. This results in lots of road parking occurring particularly at York Business Park and at Millfield Lane. In the picture gallery on the website at www.plan4poppleton.co.uk there are clear examples of cars parking on the roadside and across cycle paths during the working day.

The cycle path parking is of particular note as this is prior to any development of the Former British Sugar Site and clearly there will be issues if this is to be an egress point for the site, not only during construction but also during the final occupation by homeowners.

The use of the highway for parking has increased markedly over the past three years and it is to be hoped that a workable solution can be found, as there are still more plots to be occupied on the York Business Park. Northminster has no such problems, each business site has sufficient parking and individual premises have barriers to prevent use of their parking spaces out of hours.

While not everyone arrives at work by car as illustrated in Figure 6 those who travel by bus, bike or walk have indicated that the cars parked on the pavement are a particular hazard during the winter when lighting is poor and visibility lower. (Appendix 1 photos 7,8,9)

Q 9 Do you have any problems with vandalism, theft, break-ins, litter or poor maintenance of the area?

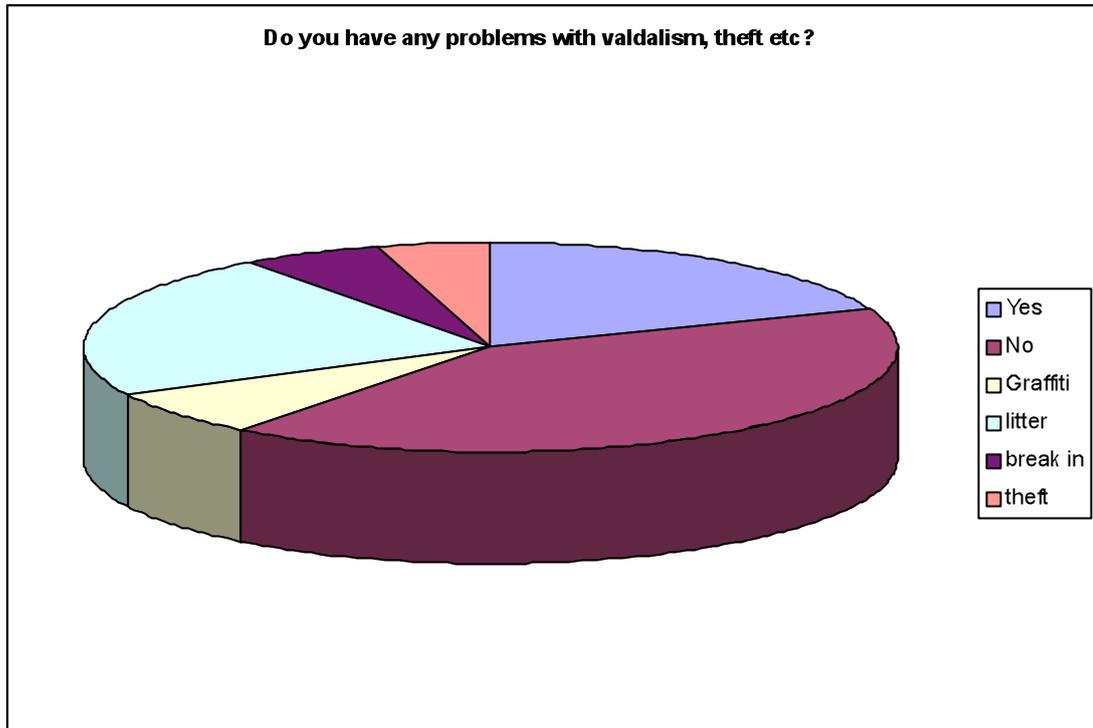


Figure 8

On the Questionnaire this question was open to examples in reply, hence issues that arose related to litter, and maintenance of the area and appearance for clients visiting the businesses.

Most companies had no issues and break- ins were minor and significantly less than in early years of the development of the Business Parks. One company commented on issues with travellers parking for prolonged periods of time and commented on how pleased they were that the City Councillors for the local area had taken up their issues quickly.

Litter was most evident in areas where fast food outlets were situated. Takeaway products in plastic or polystyrene were obvious in a number of areas most particularly close to the grass verges and open land that has not yet been developed in York Business Park. Clearly for some respondents this gives a poor impression to professional services for example insurance, solicitors and banking services.

There is a marked absence of litterbins in the area.

Q10 What was the main reason for choosing to run your company from Poppleton?

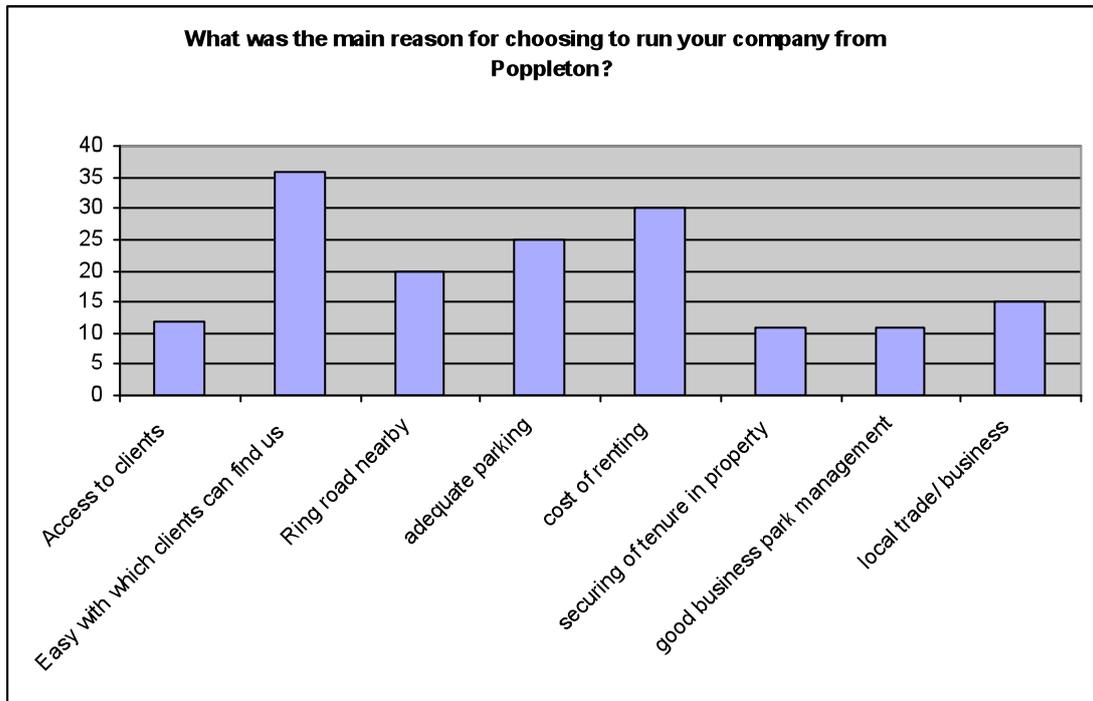


Figure 9

When a company selects a site from which to operate, ease of access to clients, and location is a major factor.

York has a good business base for small and medium sized enterprises, and for the Business Parks that have been developed around Poppleton a key factor was the access to the Outer Ring Road.

However, where companies have to travel out to clients with large vehicles such as 18-ton trucks negotiating the roundabouts is proving to be difficult hence many are the damaged.

Cost of hire or lease of premises is important when starting up, however once a company is established a capital asset of premises is usually their security, hence leasing on a long-term (250 years) is an excellent proposition as is the case at Northminster Business Park. At the other sites it would appear that the option to buy premises is not available, and leasing is the only option.

Some businesses commented on the business rates applied by the City of York as not being empathetic to starter business and that, combined with a lack of good management of the site in concert acted as a deterrent to new and starter small and medium sized enterprises (SME's)

Management of the site in terms of looking after verges, shrubs, trees, and general tidiness was for some companies an issue.

Q 11 In which area would you say most of your business is conducted?

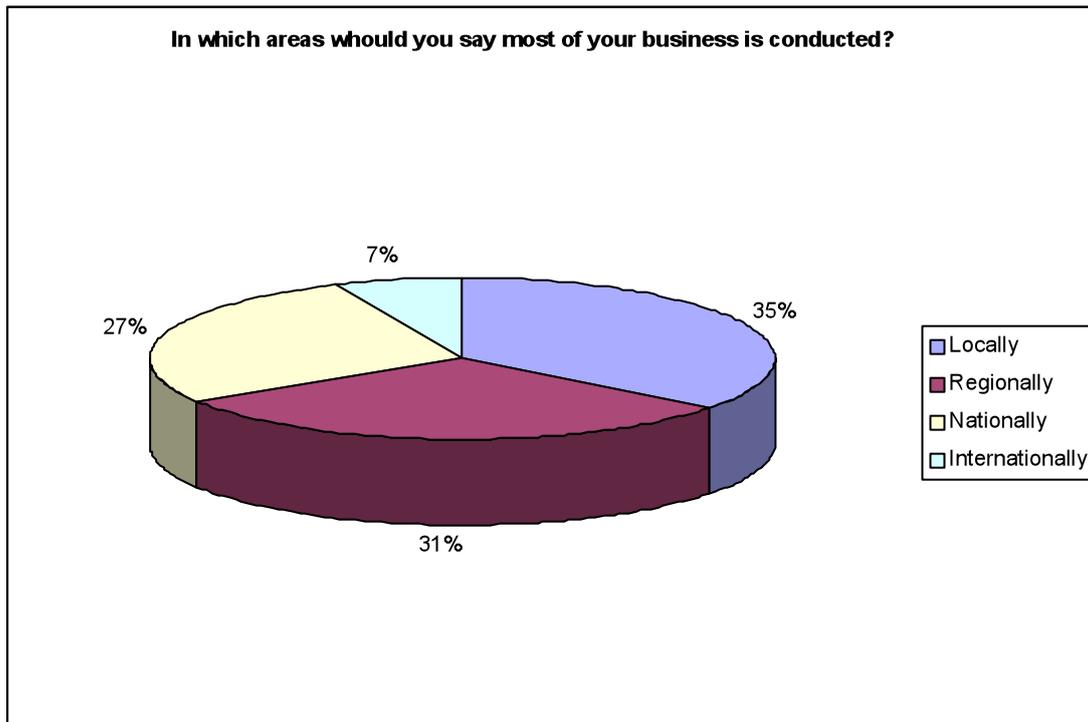


Figure 10

Most businesses indicated that their client base was local or within the Yorkshire and Humberside region. This means that the client base can contact and visit with ease. Some companies have showrooms, which are easily accessed by those in York.

Other companies have an international base and it was highly significant how many companies were dealing with computer work, graphic design, web-page work. This again reflects the skill base that a university city like York offers.

Small garage repair work, and local mechanical work was also highly evident during the distribution of questionnaires, and discussion with owners demonstrated the difficulty in attracting young people to apprenticeships.

Q12 Would the development of housing (1100 on the former Sugar Beet Site and 161 on the Civil Service Site) affect your business?

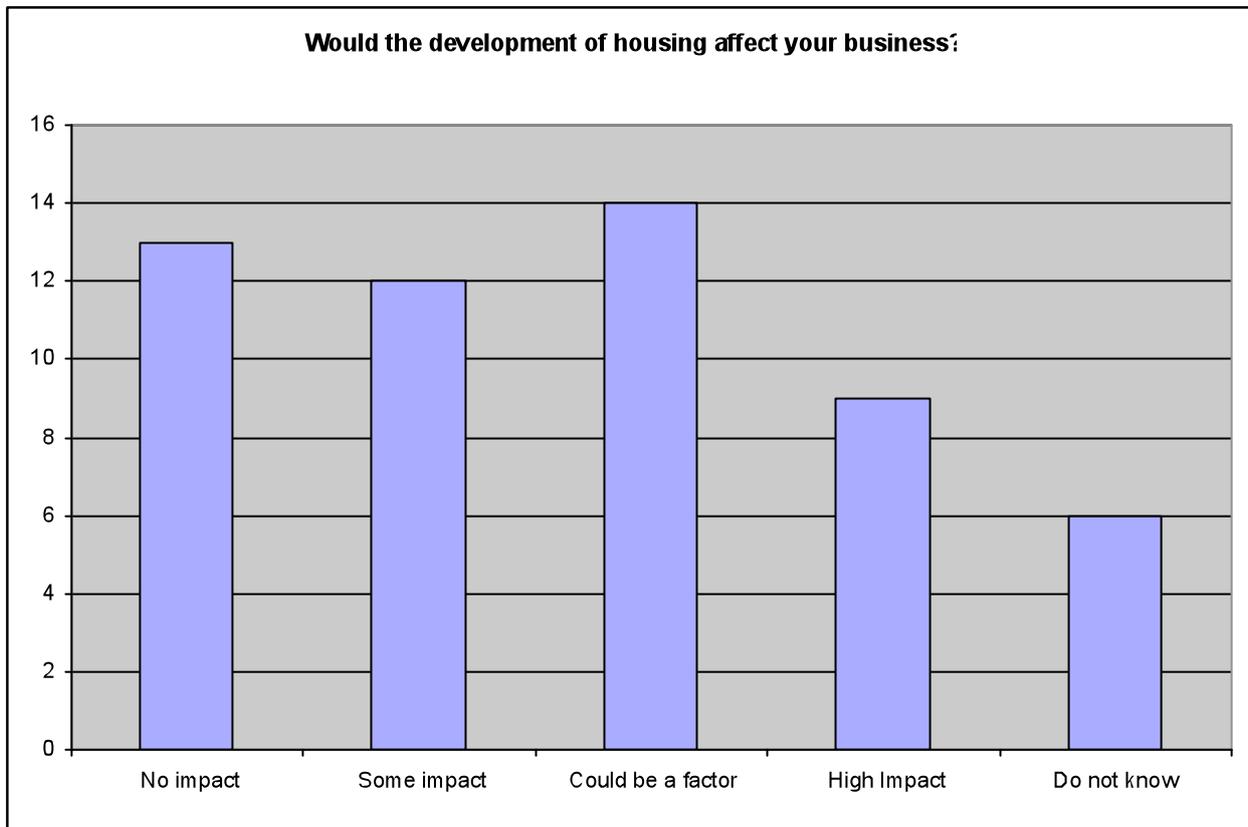


Figure 11

The responses were significant from Millfield Lane and London Ebor Business Parks in particular. This was mainly because they are adjacent to the two proposed sites. York Draft Local Plan has earmarked the former British Sugar Site for housing development and the initial housing density was reasonable, however there is not final decision about what types of houses, what density of housing any access and egress will be achieved.

Green Belt Land surrounds the former Civil Service Site and in fact the whole site is in the Green Belt as defined by the City in 2001. This development should only take place in the opinion of the Parish Councils of Nether and Upper Poppleton once the Sugar Beet Site is completed and limited to just the former Civil Service Site. Manor Academy has indicated that if the number of students increases significantly they would require the buffer zone, which is currently agricultural land, be safeguarded for educational expansion.

The impact shocked many of the respondents from the London Ebor Business Park and they expressed surprised that this development was being considered. Some business are located there because they need to be away from the possibility of complaints about noise of operation, smells associated with the work and traffic issues.

Comments from the respondents that the Parish Councils need to consider.

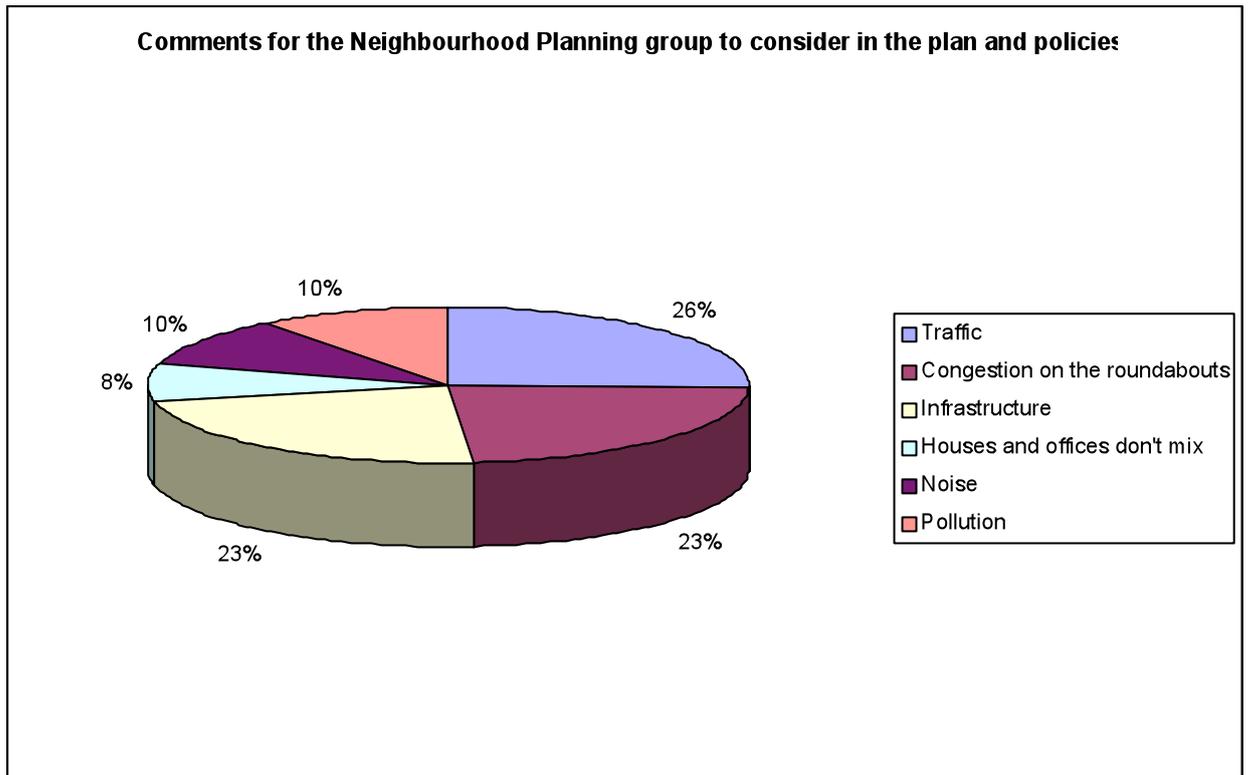


Figure 12

This open question invited respondents to highlight their main areas of concern that we could address in our Neighbourhood Plan.

The greatest concern, as with other reports was in relation to traffic. We are clear that there is a situation where the car is the preferred and major mode of transport for the majority. Even although York has a good bus service to and from the Business Parks, and the development of the Park and Ride Scheme has increase the potential for employees to use a variety of transport, this is not reducing the traffic, congestion and frustration associated with the Outer Ring Road.

A significant number of respondents felt that housing and commercial businesses did not mix and those who reported most concerns were those where housing was in close proximity to the premises, Poppleton Park is situation on the outskirts of York Business Park and close to Millfield Lane.

Conclusion

This report has been aimed to encapsulate the findings from the questionnaire, together with the formal and informal discussions with respondents. The response of over 60% returns of questionnaires was in part because the individuals were handed the document, and a stamped addressed envelope was provided. It is felt that this report can inform Policy 7PNP of the Neighbourhood Plan and this document should be read in conjunction with the Planning documents. Both can be viewed on www.plan4poppleton.co.uk.