

Background

In late April, SUSU (the University of Southampton Students' Union) invited students to share their thoughts on the Portswood bus gate trial as part of SCC's feedback-gathering process. While the survey was open, SCC unexpectedly announced the premature ending of the trial; at the point of that announcement, we had received 164 responses from students. (All responses are definitely from students as they had to log in to our website to complete the survey.)

The overview of those responses is given below, while the full breakdown of all data including the 350 free text comments has been submitted as a separate document.

For context, there are approximately 24,500 students at the University of Southampton and around 1 in 4 residents in Portswood is a student. Although students are often dismissed as temporary members of the local community, many of them do in fact remain in Southampton after they graduate and students who complete both undergraduate and postgraduate studies here may be here for up to 10 years just as a student. SUSU is working to make our students feel more connected to the local community and to amplify their voice. Students make up more than 10% of the Southampton population and we believe their voice needs to be heard more in local decision-making.

Survey Results Overview

We first asked students:

Since the partial bus gate came into operation on 27th January, have you noticed any difference? (on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = much worse and 5 = much better)

1	46 %
2	16 %
3	11 %
4	16 %
5	11 %

So in summary, 62% of respondents felt the situation was worse since the introduction of the bus gate and 27% felt it was better.

We then invited respondents to explain their score. Full qualitative data can be found in the other document shared but a total of 124 responses were received with by far the largest number citing the negative impact on the surrounding roads.

We then asked:

Have you noticed any impact of the traffic calming measures on Brookvale Road and Belmont Road?
(on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = much worse and 5 = much better)

1	43 %
2	19 %
3	27 %
4	8 %
5	4 %

Again, 62% of respondents felt the situation was worse since the change but this time only 12% reported a positive change.

Looking at the 77 free text answers provided when respondents were invited to explain their score, they reflect the concerns expressed more widely, especially that Brookvale and Belmont Road have experienced inappropriately and dangerously high volumes of traffic, which have created more dangerous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

We then invited students to **tell us what they thought should happen when the trial ended in July, choosing as many options as they wished:**

Continue as a part-time bus gate	8%
Become a full-time bus gate	8%
Discontinue bus gate	27%
Improve physical spaces in Portswood to make it more attractive	26%
Keep traffic-calming measures in Brookvale & Belmont	8%
Remove traffic-calming measures	14%
Change traffic-calming measures	6%
I don't care	1%
Other	2%

By far the most popular options were to discontinue the bus gate and to improve the physical spaces in Portswood. Reading through the comments, it is clear that many students feel the same as other local residents – they would like Portswood to be a nicer area that attracts people to spend time (and money) there.

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