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South Gloucestershire Council

Delivering for you

A4174 improvements

Consultation feedback report

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Executive summary

This consultation survey attracted a good response rate. Overall, there was majority support for all the measures included within the proposals, except for the proposed speed limit changes. Local residents and people who travel by walking, wheeling or bike and bus passengers are especially supportive of the changes.

However, support was not unanimous, and many people hold strong opposing views. The most opposed are people who drive along the route, who are frustrated by current levels of congestion and do not want any further disruption to their journeys. Whilst the improvements are popular with bus passengers, pedestrians and people who travel by bike, a relatively small proportion of non-active travellers said that they are more likely to switch away from their cars.

Next steps

The designs are generally supported, but tweaks are suggested for the location of the new bus stop and the proposed design for the filter lane. Additional measures, including further widening of the path and improved lighting are requested in some locations, with many respondents highlighting existing issues near the M32 junction, which are not fully addressed by the plans.

The project team will consider the feedback provided through this consultation exercise and identify opportunities to improve the scheme by evaluating potential improvements and enhancements and addressing potential concerns. A separate design response document will summarise the findings of this exercise.

Background

South Gloucestershire Council has been awarded government funding from the West of England Combined Authority to invest in improved facilities for cyclists, wheelers and pedestrians (referred to in the rest of this report as pedestrians) and bus users. This money can only be used for measures which support the government strategy to make it easier, safer and more pleasant to use active and sustainable travel options and therefore make it more feasible for people to switch away from their cars.

Proposals have been put forward to provide better options along a section of the north of the A4174 ring road. This includes:

- A 2-way cycleway with separate footway on the southern side of the road to be constructed by widening the existing shared use path,
- A new westbound bus stop west of the Wick Wick roundabout with a new footway connecting the bus stop with the existing shared use path,
- Improved crossing facilities to provide safety of pedestrians and people who travel by bike,
- Extension of the westbound high occupancy vehicle lane towards Wick Wick roundabout,
- Reduction of speed limits for Westbound traffic from Bromley Heath roundabout to Abbey Wood Roundabout,
- Additional left turn lane to Coldharbour Lane to reduce delays for left turning traffic.

The consultation

The consultation ran from 6 November until 18 December 2023.

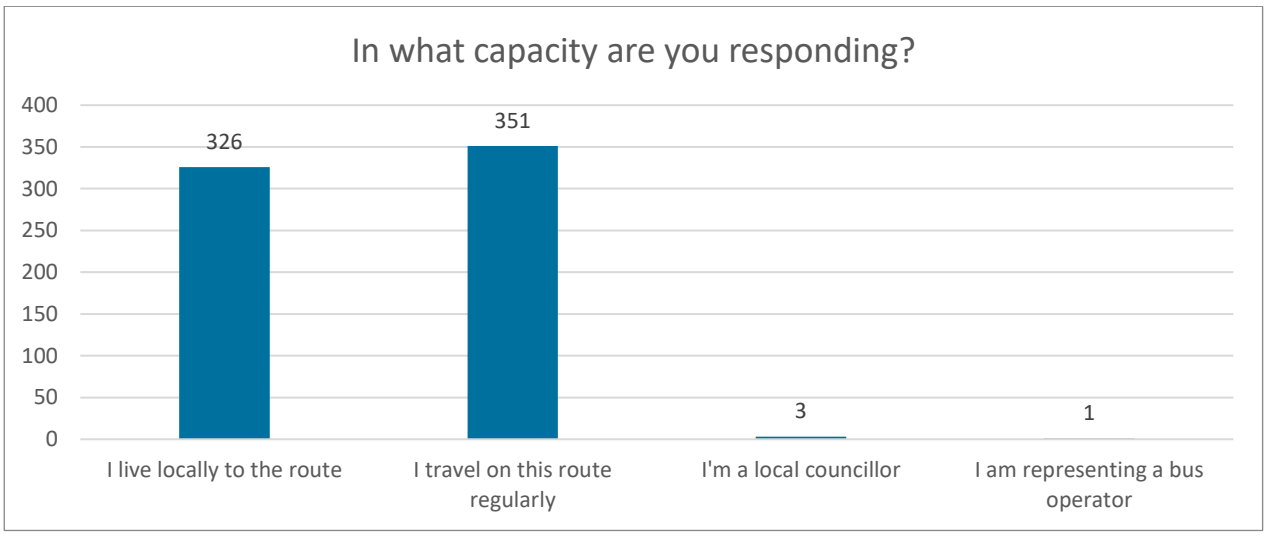
An online Common Place site was created to provide information about the proposals so that people could provide informed feedback. Respondents could provide feedback either via an online survey on this site or by completing a paper survey response. To raise awareness and give interested parties plenty of opportunity to provide feedback, the consultation was widely promoted through various channels including:

- an email to stakeholders such as town and parish councils, schools and travel groups,
- a letter drop to 752 business and residential addresses,
- an advert in the Downend Voice,
- regular promotion on social media, and
- featured in the council's resident and business newsletters.

During the consultation period, in-person events in local venues were held as well as online events. The purpose of these events was primarily to allow people the opportunity to ask questions about the proposals and so feedback has not been reported here – instead people were directed to the consultation to share their views.

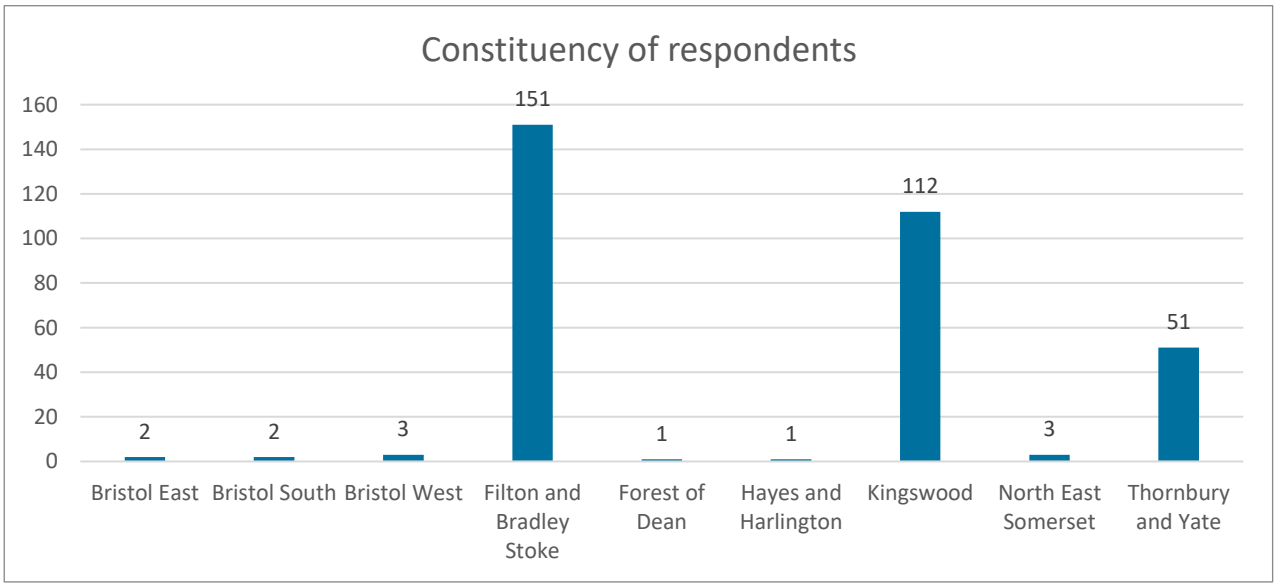
Survey respondents

In total, 566 people responded to the consultation.



Base: n=485

Most people told us they completed the consultation because they either live locally and/or travel on the proposed routes.



Base: n=326

From postcode data provided by respondents, we have been able to consider trends in responses from people who live in different Parliamentary Constituencies (we have considered Parliamentary Constituency because it is the smallest geographical area which allows for meaningful analysis). The entirety of the route lies within the Filton and Bradley Stoke Parliamentary Constituency (which includes Bromley Heath, Frenchay, Stoke Gifford and Hambrook), but we can see that many respondents live in neighbouring Parliamentary Constituencies.

We also received written responses from interested organisations, including North Bristol SusCom, CyclingWorks Bristol, and the charity, Guide Dogs.

A more detailed summary of survey respondents and the full representations from interested parties is provided in the appendices to this report.

Views on different aspects of the proposals

Through the consultation we sought feedback on the different aspects of the scheme which are designed to make active travel easier and more appealing: the segregated cycleway/footpath, the new bus stop, improvements to pedestrian crossings, reduced speed limits and the additional left turn lane.

For each of the measures, the survey asked two questions:

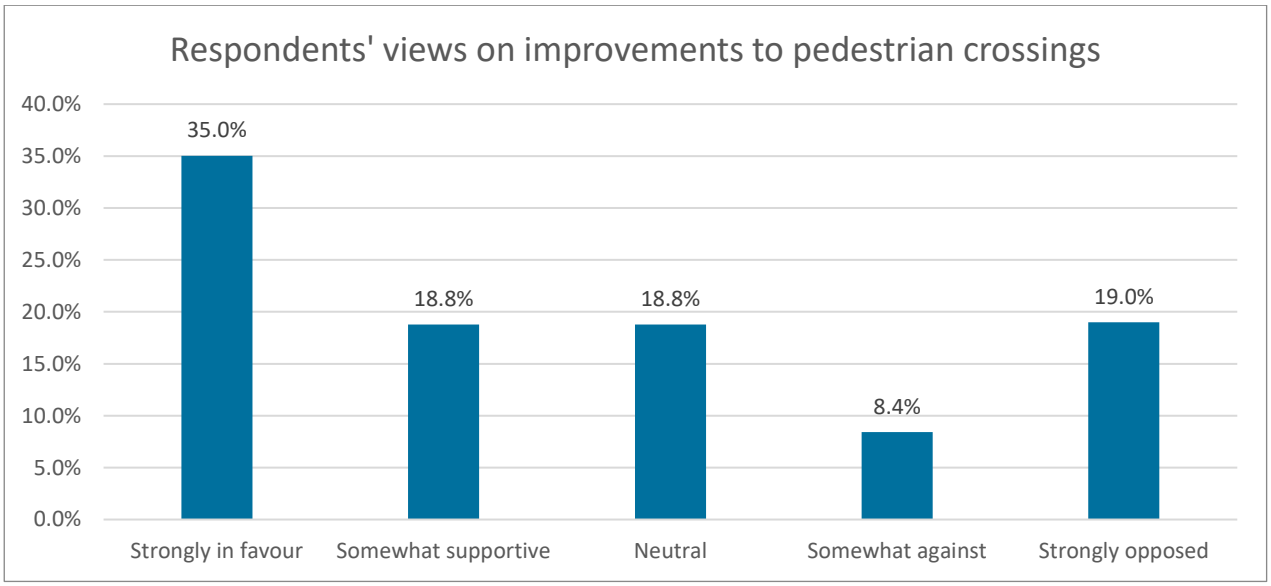
1. To what extent people were in favour or opposed to the changes, and
2. Why they held that view.

Across every measure, people who opposed changes were significantly more likely to provide a response to the second question explaining their opposition and many respondents provided lengthy responses setting out a range of potential concerns.

To demonstrate the full range of different perspectives expressed, this report highlights each of these concerns so that the project team and decision-makers can fully consider potential issues.

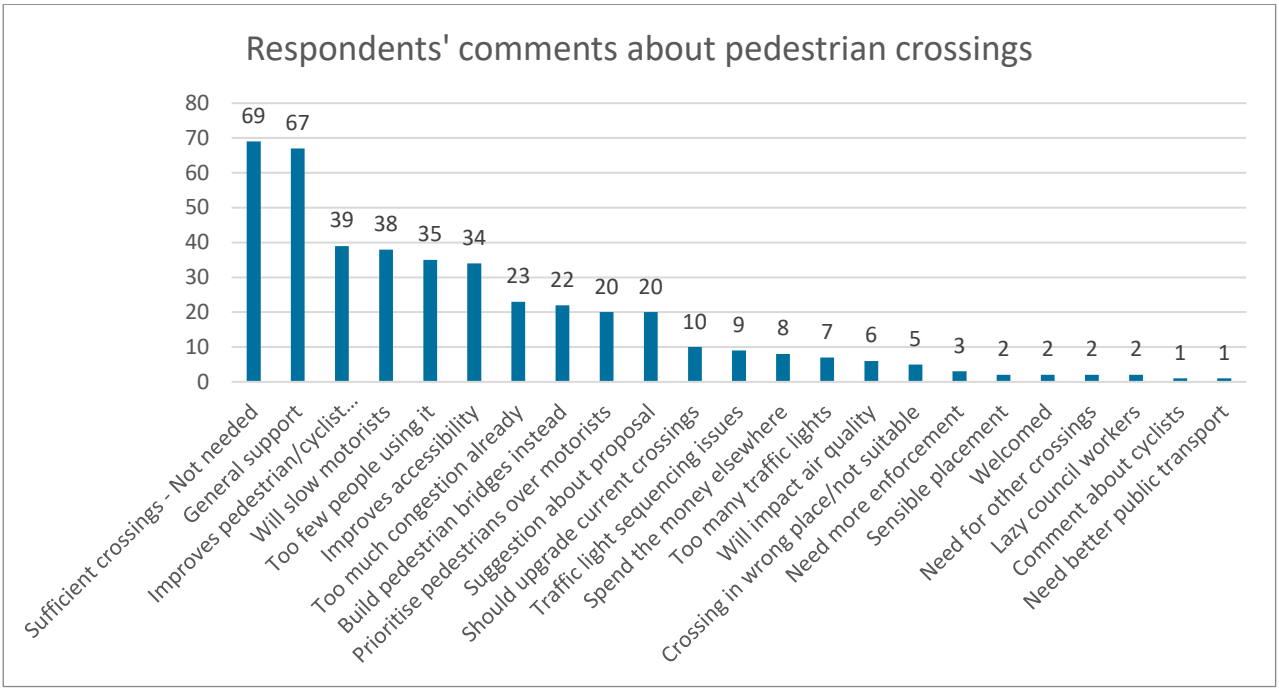
Pedestrian crossing improvements

Respondents are supportive of the changes to pedestrian crossings, with 53.8% supportive and 27.4% opposed to the changes.



Base: n=511

Not all respondents supported the changes and by digging a little deeper into the data, we can understand some of the reasons for this opposition.



The most common comment was that there are already sufficient crossings and that this was the council 'meddling' with roads and slowing down motorists and commuters.

"The flow of traffic along this section of the A4174 is already awful at peak hours. New crossings would only worsen this. There are already crossings at key points."

"The ring road creates a real barrier for pedestrians. A reduced speed limit and more crossings help redress the balance."

Looking at relative support/opposition to the pedestrian crossing proposals amongst different groups, there is a big discrepancy between the net support for those who live in the local Parliamentary Constituency of Filton and Bradley Stoke (which includes people living in Bromley Heath, Frenchay, Hambrook and Stoke Gifford) and those who live in the neighbouring constituencies of Kingswood or Thornbury and Yate. Local people who would be the main beneficiaries of changes are supportive, whilst those living further afield are less keen.

Constituency	Net support for proposal
Filton and Bradley Stoke	49.00%
Thornbury and Yate	11.80%
Kingswood	35.60%

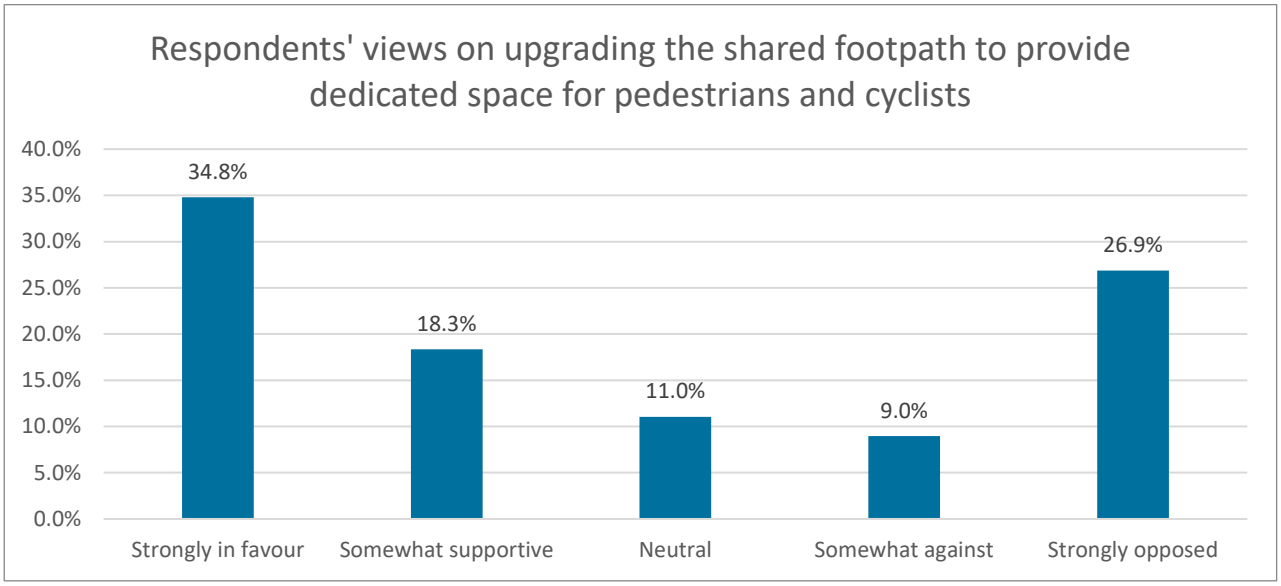
Indeed, it is noteworthy that the feedback from those living in the Thornbury and Yate Parliamentary constituency is more negative throughout the survey. The A432 Badminton Road overbridge was closed shortly before the launch of this consultation, which has caused delays for commuters travelling between Yate and Bristol and it could be that this

was a factor in the results to this consultation – there were comments throughout the survey insisting that getting this road re-opened should be the council's priority.

Those who walk, cycle or take the bus were all much more supportive of these changes than those who don't. The survey asked people about their employment status and across the survey, part-time workers, people on zero hours contracts, students and the unemployed were far more in favour of these measures. Lower income groups are less likely to have access to a private vehicle and it may be that this support is due to greater reliance on public transport amongst these demographic groups.

Segregated cycleways and pedestrian footpaths

Opinions on the proposed cycleway are strongly held, but with a majority (53.1% versus 35.8%) in favour.



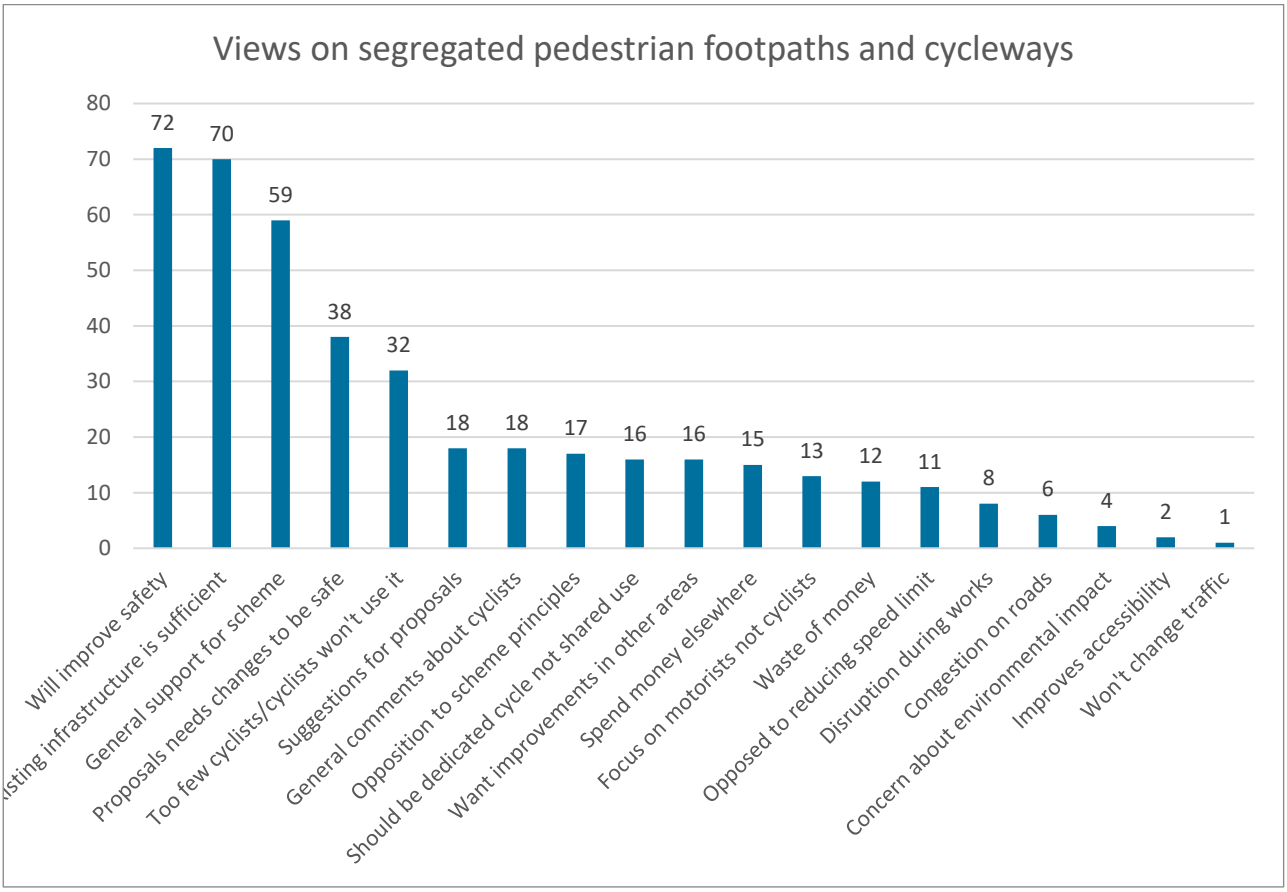
Base: n=480

Considering the reasons why people answered as they did, again, we have seen fewer of those in favour expressing an opinion than those who are opposed, but supporters believe the segregated footpaths will make a positive difference in improving accessibility and safety.

The main criticism of the proposals is that they are unnecessary as there are too few cyclists to justify the expenditure. Linked to this, some of those opposing highlighted their individual priorities of what they would prefer to spend money on, with many commenting that the priority focus should be on motorists not people who travel by bike – there were numerous negative comments about people who travel by bike and cyclist behaviour in this question and throughout the survey. (It is important to remind readers of this report, that this funding is ringfenced to be spent only on measures which encourage active and sustainable travel).

"It's great to make a clear separation between pedestrians and cyclists. Slightly less happy as a cyclist about being that much closer to the polluting traffic!"

"The current path is already a cycle lane and I don't see people currently using that either."



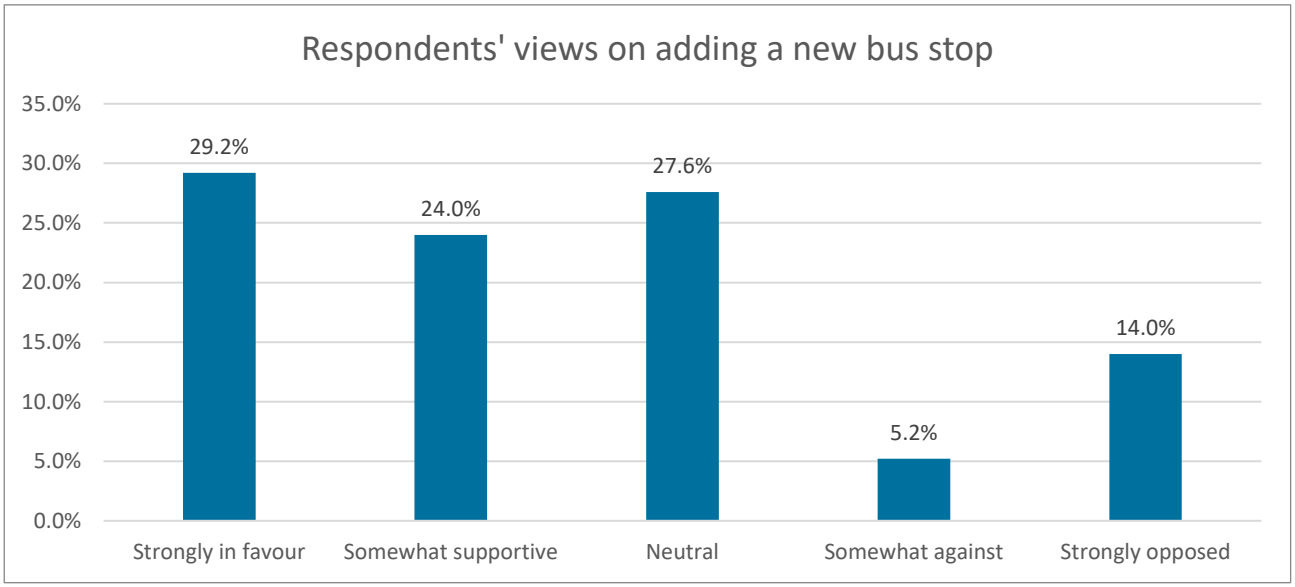
People who travel by bike were more supportive than those who don't cycle, with occasional cyclists the most in favour and bus users and pedestrians also providing very positive feedback. Younger people were more likely to be in favour of the proposals than middle aged and older people and again, local constituents were likelier to agree with the plans.

Net support amongst different age groups		
Under 40	40-60	Over 60
43.8%	30.3%	23.0%

Net support amongst people from different constituencies		
Filton and Bradley Stoke	Thornbury and Yate	Kingswood
40.5%	4.5%	32.3%

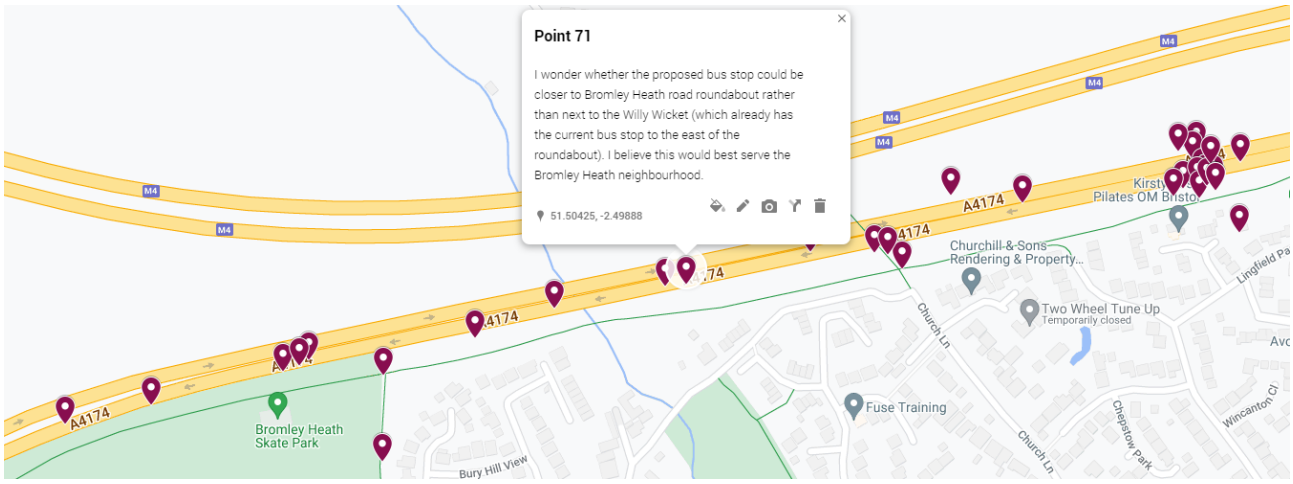
New bus stop

Again, the consultation showed majority support for this proposal, with 53.2% in favour and only 19.2% against. The feedback to this proposal was less polarised than for other measures, with a high proportion of neutral responses.



Base: n=500

Whilst there was little disagreement on the benefits of a new bus stop, the location of the proposed stop was a more contentious issue. As the map graphic shows, whilst having a new stop in this location would benefit some, a lot of people suggested that there was greater need for a new stop nearer to Bromley Heath.



In their commentary, whilst most feedback was positive, in addition to comments about the location of the stop, other people questioned the need for bus stops and if they were to be provided, asked that they be located off the main carriageway so buses didn't disrupt traffic. There were also comments about the reliability of bus services and scepticism about whether improving the bus infrastructure would make a difference if the services continued to be unreliable.

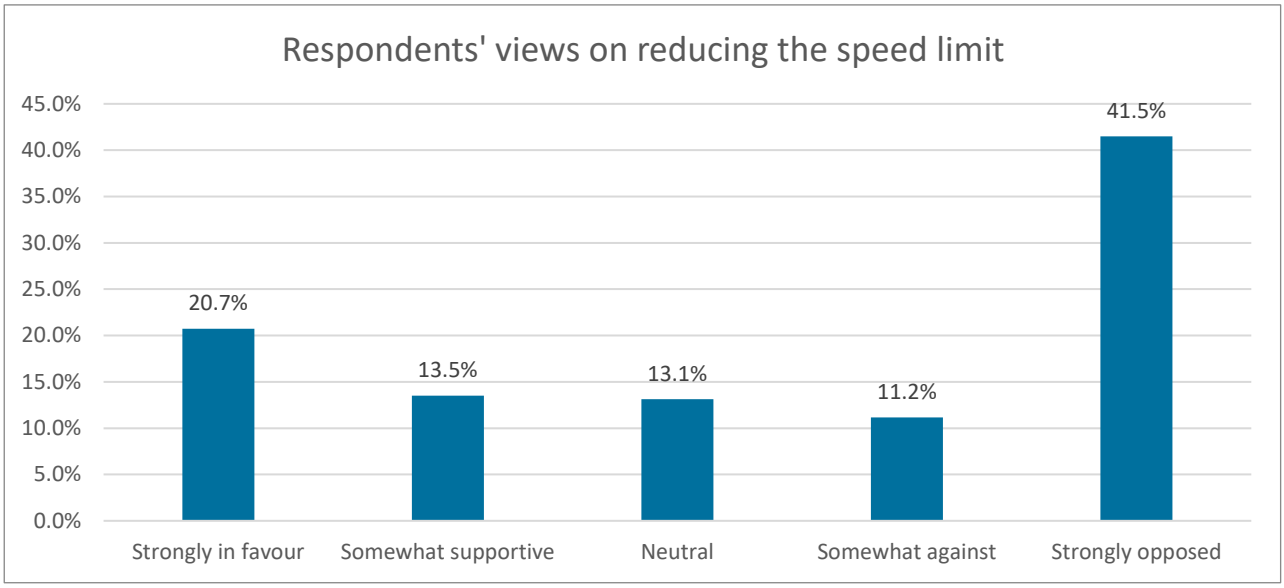
"It's definitely time to do this. It's also time to ensure that the stop is as close to the traffic lights as possible so people don't have to walk alongside the ring road in the dark. It's terrible for older people or people with mobility issues."

"This sounds a good idea, however if the number of buses available doesn't increase, it will be pointless."

Again, bus users, people who travel by bike and pedestrians were much more supportive than those who don't use alternatives to the car. Older people and lower income groups like students, part time workers and those on zero-hour contracts were more in favour than others.

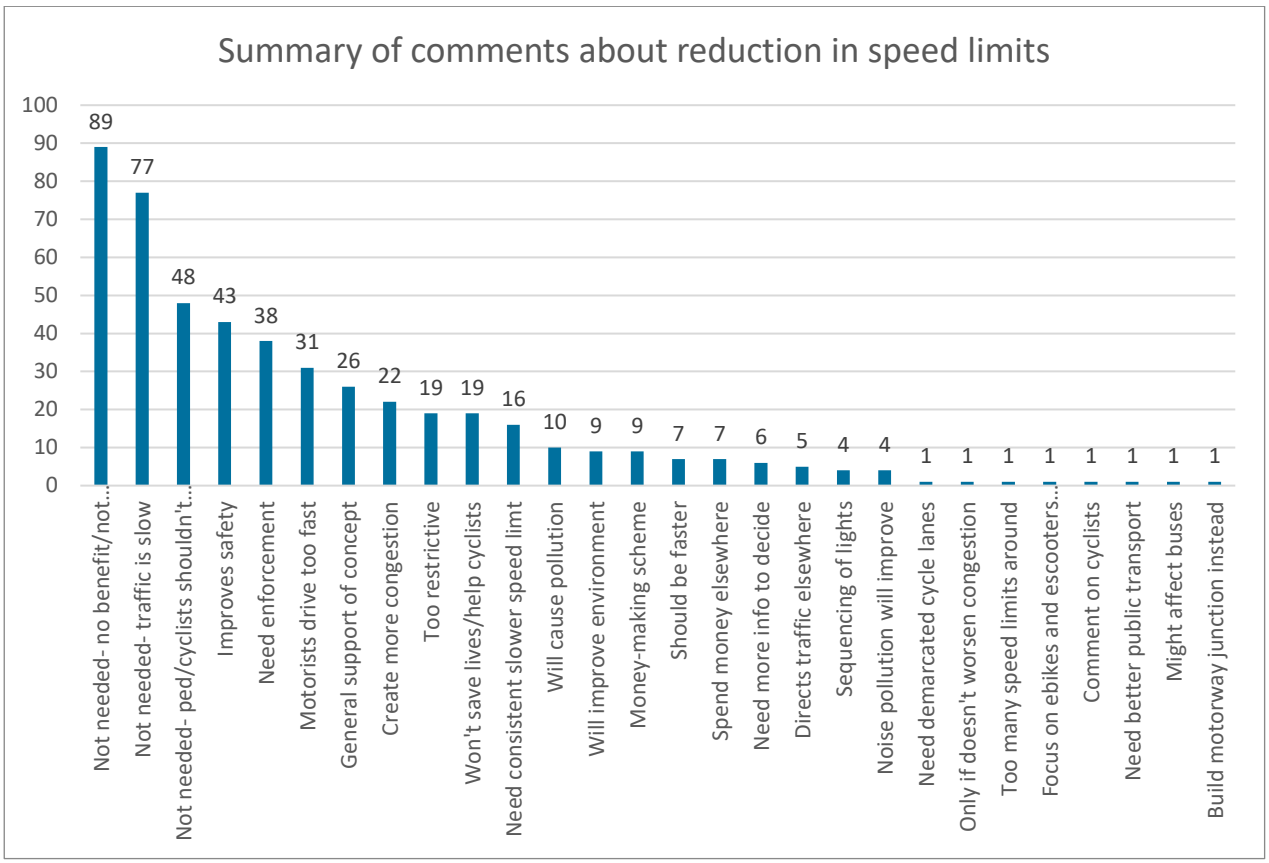
New speed restrictions and extension of high occupancy vehicle lane

These two measures were the least popular of all the changes proposed, with net opposition of 18.4% for a reduction in speed limits (34.2% in support and 52.6% opposed).



Base: n=511

Whilst some people supported the changes to improve safety - and reported that many drivers regularly travel well above the speed limit - many people think these measures are unnecessary.



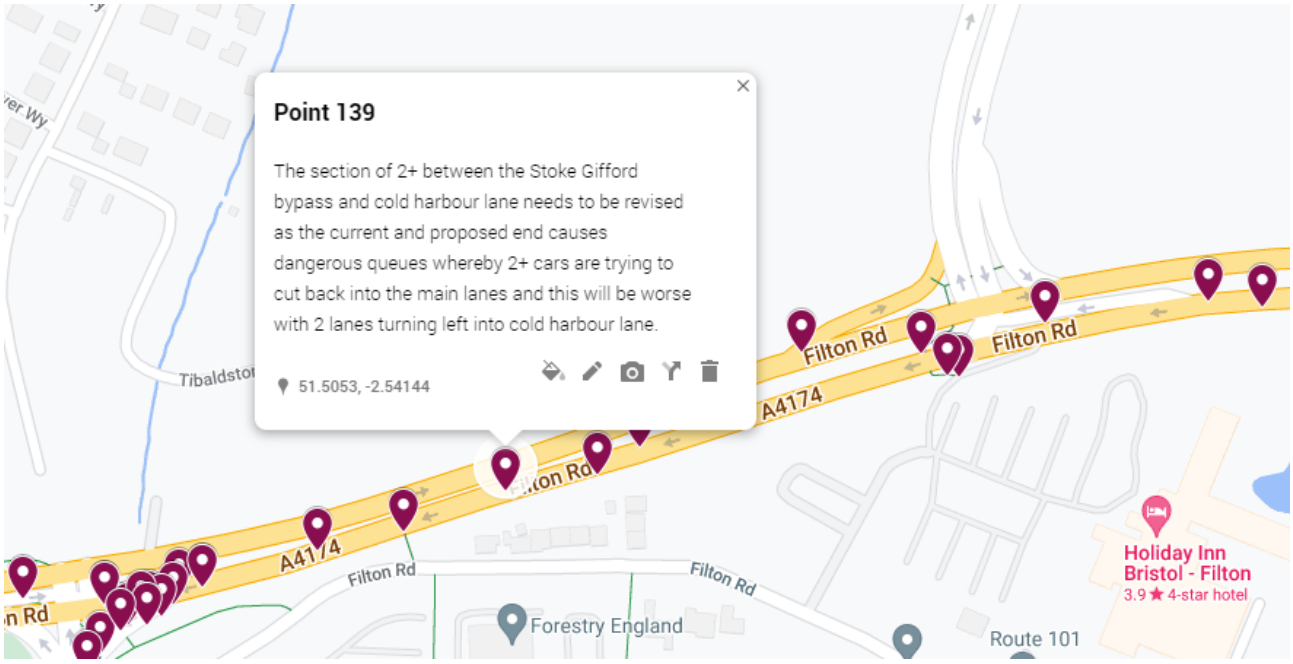
There were three main arguments put forward for why the changes weren't needed:

- At peak times, traffic travels much slower than this speed and so they would have no impact,
- Pedestrians and cyclists have their own lane away from the carriageway and so there is little safety benefit,
- Restrictions are not enforced and so whatever the speed limit is set at, people will flout the rules if there is no deterrent.

This third point was raised as a key reason against the extension of the High Occupancy Vehicle Lane (HOVL). Many respondents provided anecdotal feedback that the lack of enforcement meant that there was widespread abuse of this measure with single occupant drivers regularly using the HOVL to avoid queues in other lanes. Others highlighted practical challenges to the operation (and proposed extension) of the HOVL, with more vehicles switching between lanes causing congestion and potential accidents.

"You are planning to build cycle/pedestrian walkways - why do you need to reduce the speed limit? All these plans will do is increase the congestion on the ring road."

"The road can the proverbial race track from Keynsham to Filton. In an ideal world the multiple speed limits would be unified at a single consistent level. 40mph ideally"



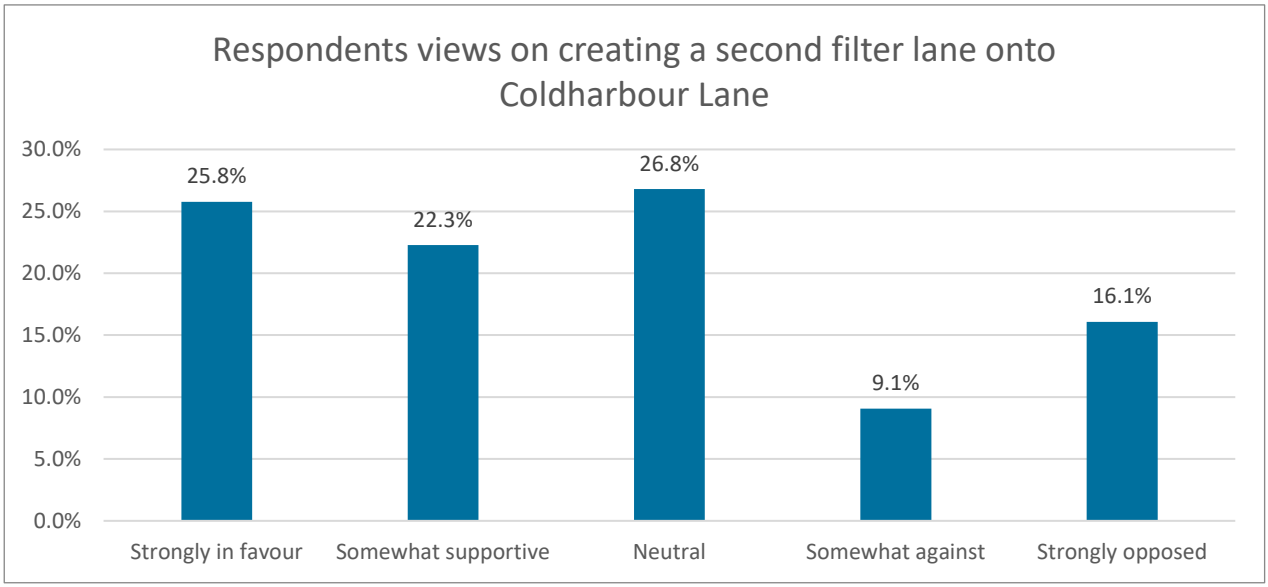
Others linked speed restrictions to increased congestion and were therefore opposed.

Whilst overall there is opposition to this proposal, it is not universally opposed by all groups. The following segments were in favour of the change:

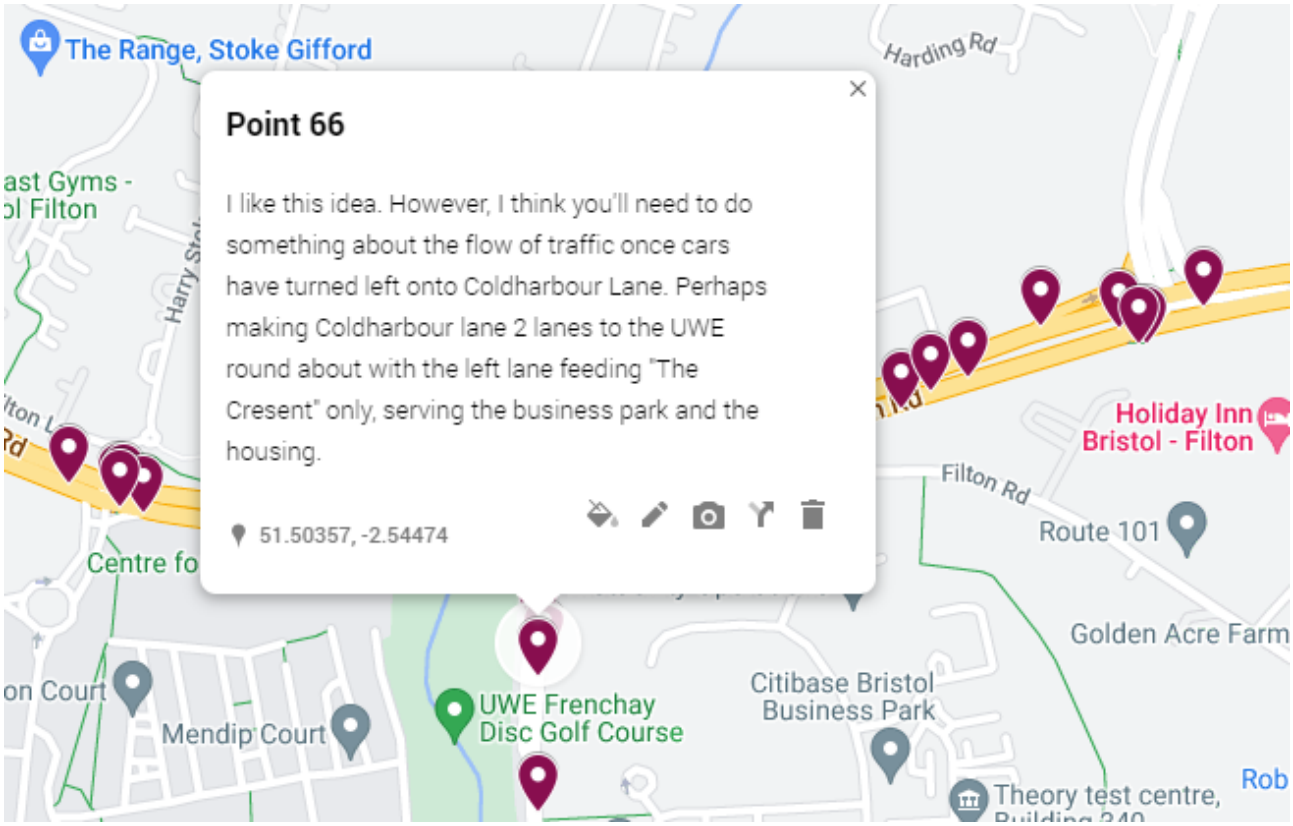
- Local constituents (people who live in the Filton and Bradley Stoke Parliamentary Constituency, which includes Bromley Heath, Frenchay, Stoke Gifford and Hambrook),
- Women,
- Pedestrians,
- People who travel by bike,
- Bus passengers.

Creating a second filter lane onto Coldharbour Lane

There is majority support for creating a second filter lane in this congestion hotspot, with 48.0% in favour and 25.2% against.



The graph shows a very similar pattern to that seen earlier for the introduction of a new bus stop, and the commentary is also very similar, with the overriding summary being 'Yes, but…'. In this case, the 'yes' highlights the large number of people who recognise that this junction does get congested and welcome any measure which could help alleviate the issue. The 'but' is from people who say that unless the second lane continues all the way down to the UWE roundabout, the measure will have limited impact and simply push the congestion further down the road.



Summarising the comments, it is seen as helpful for improving the reliability of bus services, but some people are concerned about the loss of green verge and worry about the impact for motorists whilst roadworks take place.

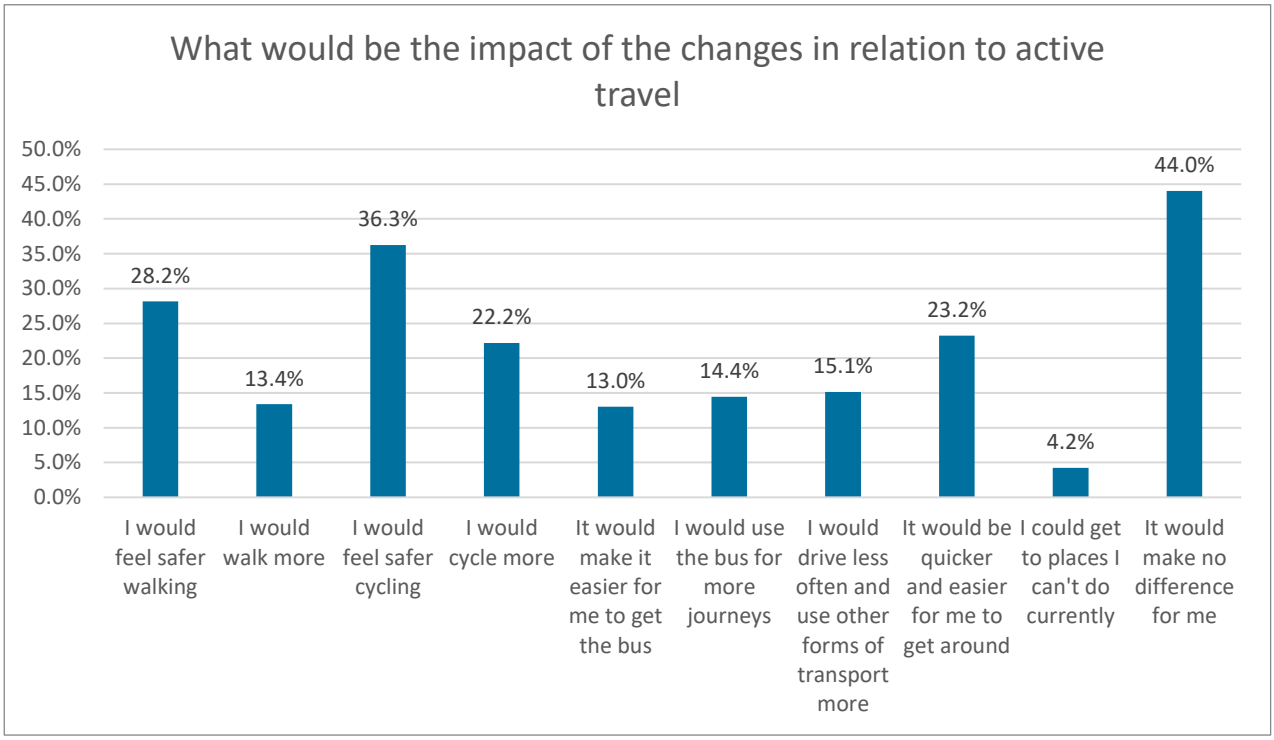
"I can't see how this will help as its not long before its back to a single carriage way."

"This is a busy junction. The two lanes will also make it safer for cars turning left into Filton Lane."

Impacts – changes in travel behaviour

This question was intended to gain a better understanding of the likely positive impacts of the changes in terms of the overall ambition of the proposals to provide options and make it easier and safer for people to travel in different ways to the car.

Our survey sample was tilted towards those who aren't currently using active or sustainable travel in this area; 63.5% do not cycle or do so infrequently, and the figures for bus travel and walking are similar at 67.4% and 66.0% respectively.



Safety concerns are cited regularly in surveys as one of the main deterrents to people cycling. 36.3% of respondents reported that these changes would make them feel safer cycling, which led 22.2% to say that they would cycle more (of these 22.6% are people who currently don't cycle).

The results also show improving safety for pedestrians with 28.2% reporting that they would feel safer. It is unlikely that the scheme would have a significant difference in encouraging more pedestrian journeys with 13.4% saying they would walk more. 14.4% of people said they would use the bus for more journeys; commentary from respondents showed that whilst the additional bus stop was helpful, it would be more useful nearer to Bromley Heath and having reliable bus services travelling to the places people wanted to go was a more important factor.

Overall, 15.1% of people said they would drive less often and use other forms of transport instead. Approximately a quarter of this group are currently not using the bus, walking or cycling, so it would appear that these proposals are likely to have greater impact in encouraging those who are already open to active travel to do it more often.

"Will be great when it's done. We, as a family, will use our car less."

"Think again! Stop wasting tax payer money to satisfy a handful of cyclists."

44.0% of respondents said they would make no difference to their travel behaviour, and many used this as an opportunity to share their feedback on how they might be negatively

impacted by the changes. This feedback is very similar to what was captured in the subsequent question which asked people about what concerns they had about the scheme, which is summarised in the next section of this report.

Other suggestions

The purpose of consultation into schemes like this is to firstly gather the perspectives of a broad cross section of local people to assess relative support for proposals and secondly to use their local knowledge in support of in-depth technical assessment work to identify the most appropriate improvements. This section focuses on suggestions made within the consultation commentary asking about people's concerns.

Looking firstly at the overall general comments and as we have already seen, majority support was in favour of the changes outlined in this scheme. There were many comments about the necessity of schemes like these to make more environmentally friendly alternatives to the car more attractive to help people make the switch away from private vehicles for more journeys.

"Thank you for promoting schemes which are essential for future generations. Please can you apply pressure where you can so we can get the same focus on improving public transport, which is arguably more needed than these measures."

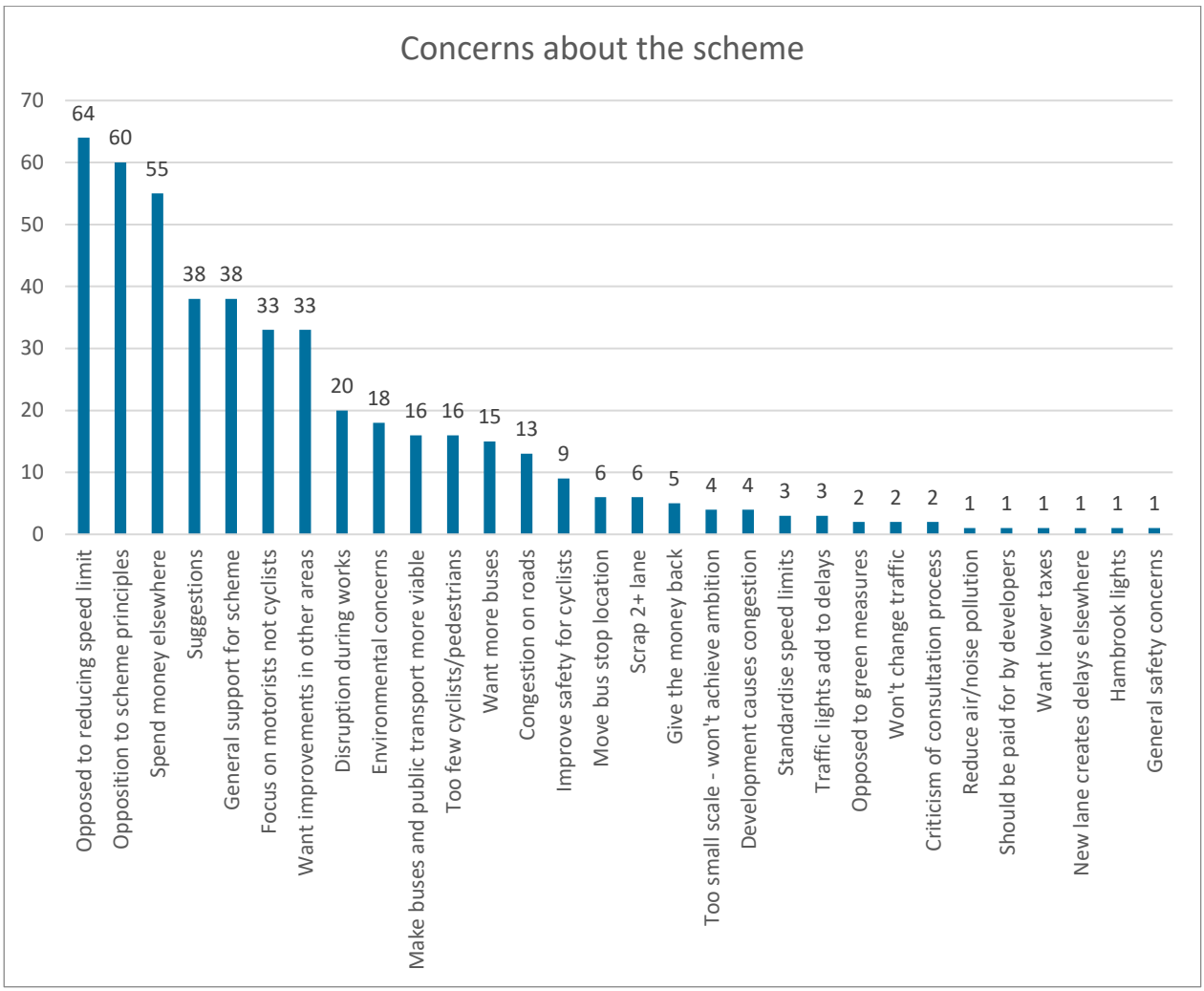
"The Ring Road seems to get busier. Most cars have one driver. The waste and pollution they create is very damaging. The more drivers who can be encouraged to walk, cycle or take the bus the better for everyone and the planet."

"None of these proposals would be necessary if there were to be a proper strategy for mass transit in the area. The only way to remove traffic from the road is to develop a substantial, fully integrated public transport system."

The countering arguments can be roughly grouped under two headings:

- People opposed to measures focused on cyclists and pedestrians, which may lead to disruption, delays and congestion for those who either can't or don't want to consider alternatives to the car,
- Questions about the relative merit of money spent on active travel schemes in relation to what else funding could be spent on (although it is important to note that this particular funding can only be spent on active travel measures).

The concerns expressed in response to this question are summarised in the following chart.



These frustrations are exacerbated by what people see as a deteriorating travel experience. Concerns raised include:

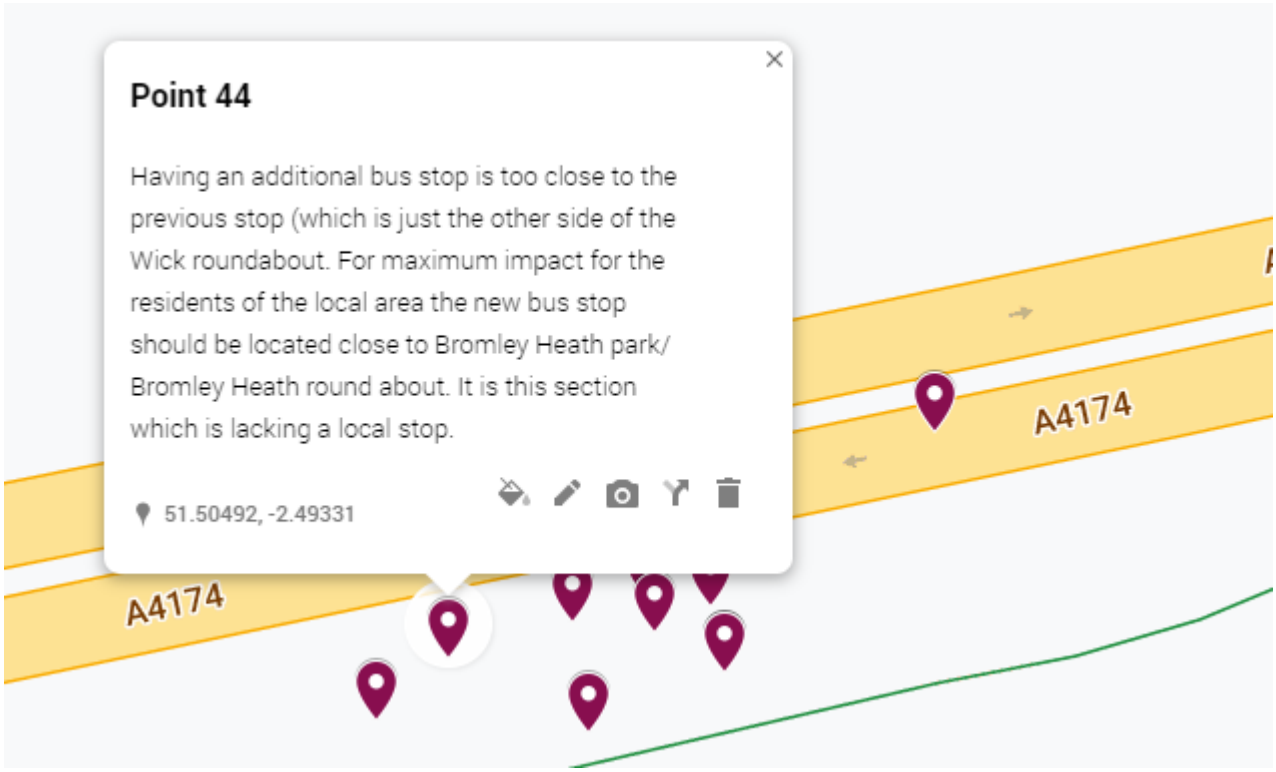
- Bus routes being cut and services becoming increasingly infrequent and unreliable,
- Congestion and delays on roads,
- Perceived unnecessary 'meddling' with road layouts, junctions and speed limits,
- Frustration with the HOVL
- Housing development without supporting infrastructure,
- Lack of pre-planning about future transport needs.

Practical considerations and suggestions

Those completing the survey were invited to pinpoint on a map where they had thoughts about the current plans and designs and could provide suggestions of improvements. These comments are shown on this map.

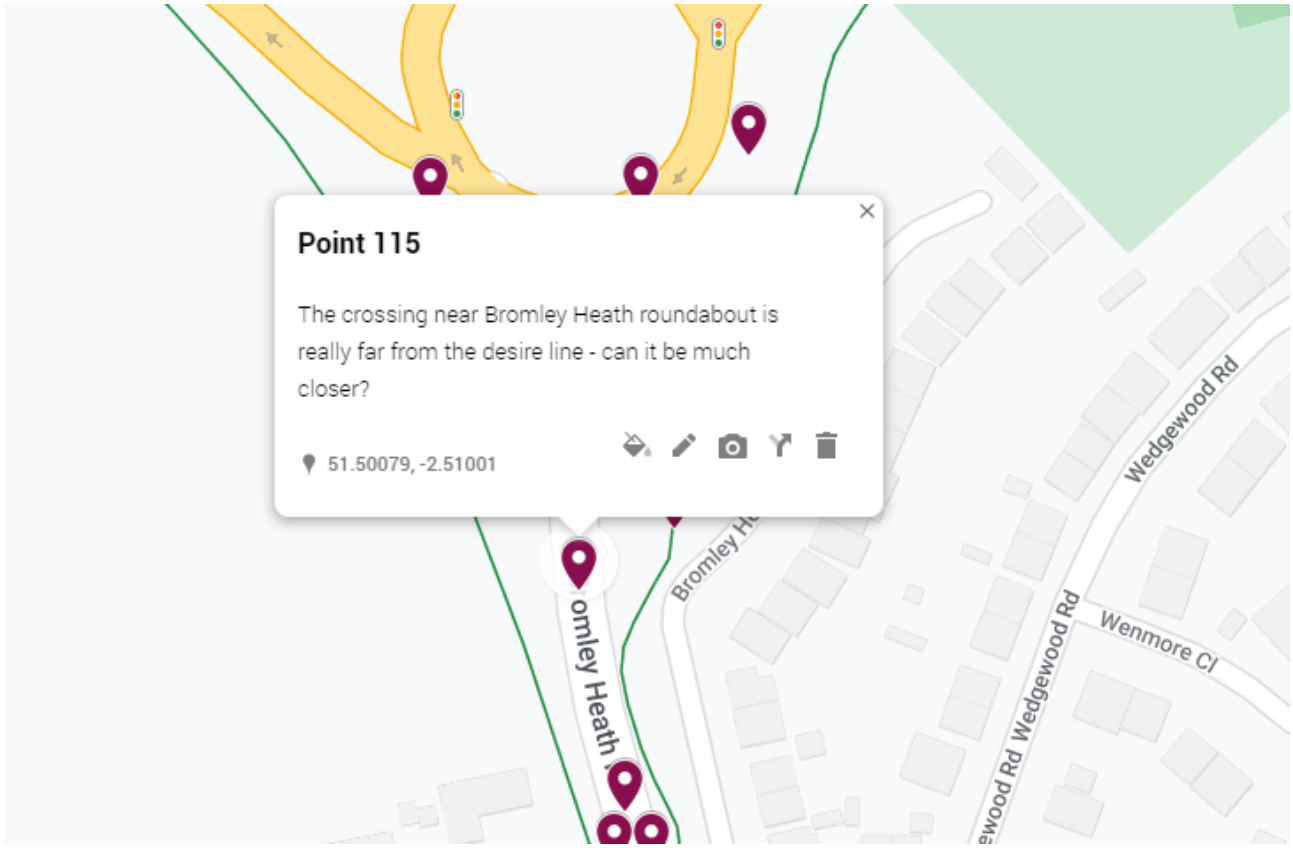
Below are highlighted some of the issues and suggestions raised by more than one respondent. This report's author is aware that technical limitations may restrict alternative options in some locations; the following is simply a presentation of the suggestions made through the consultation.

Location of new bus stop



As has already been reported, a number of people felt that a new bus stop nearer to the Bromley Heath roundabout would have greater benefit in opening up bus travel to more people, especially those who live in the Bromley Heath area.

Issues for cyclists and pedestrians crossing Bromley Heath roundabout



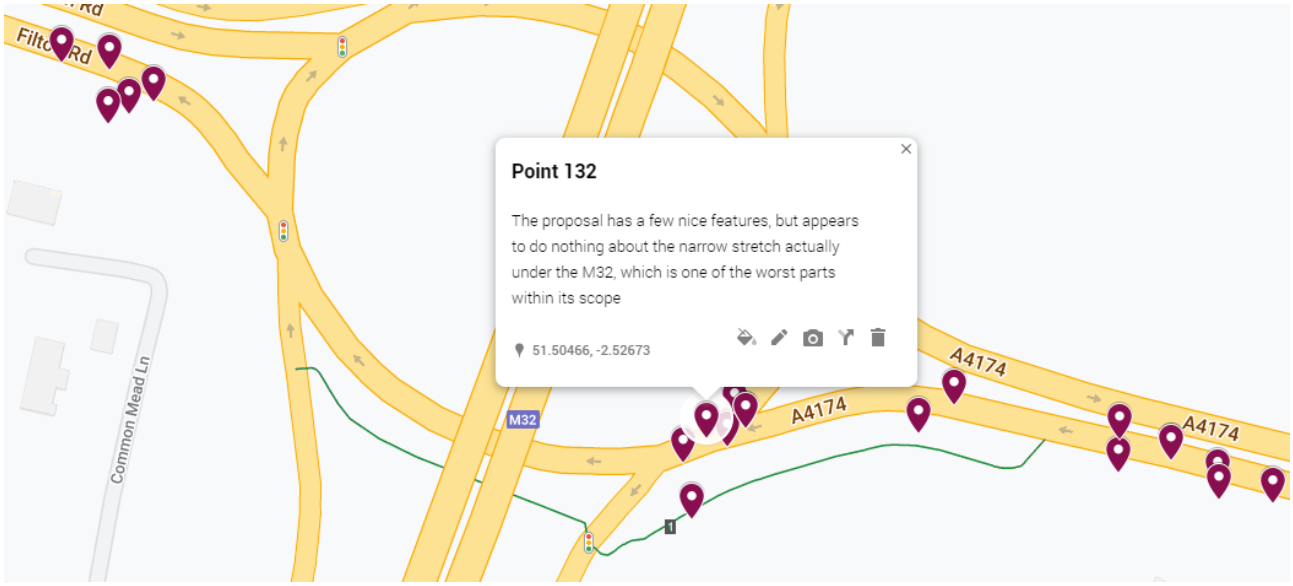
A range of issues were raised which related specifically to this section.

- The existing track involves a considerable detour away from the ‘desire line’,
- The timing of the traffic lights mean a long wait for pedestrians and cyclists,
- Blind corners with poor visibility,
- Inadequate lighting.

Frustration with restrictions at Hambrook junction

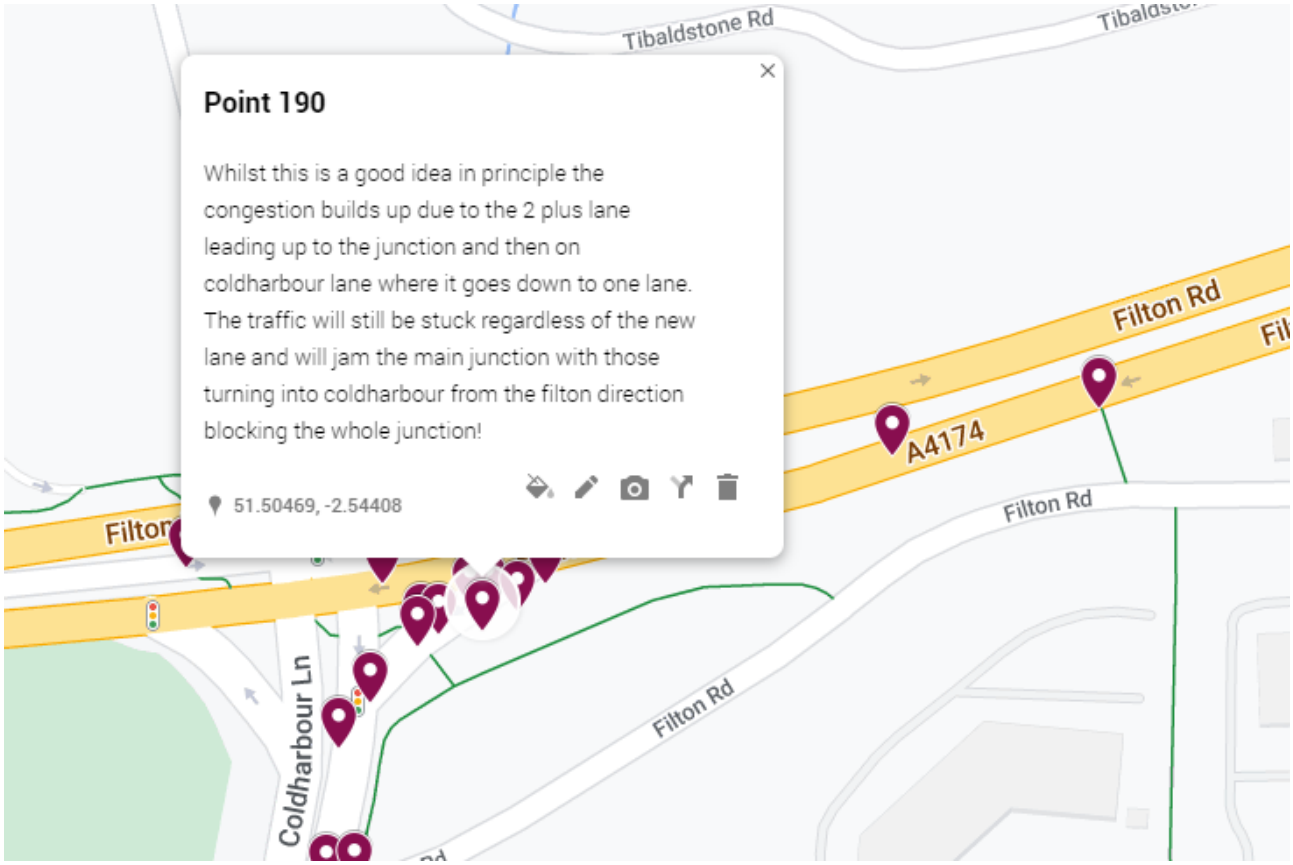
Whilst this is out of the scope of this project, the ongoing restrictions at Hambrook junction were raised by many respondents who travel on this route. There were also safety issues raised by pedestrians and people who travel by bike at this junction.

Narrow stretch of cycle path near the M32 junction



Many people who travel by bike use this route as part of their commute. Many commented that the section approaching the M32 in either direction was the worst part of their journey currently and they were disappointed that more wasn’t proposed to resolve existing issues. The path is seen as too narrow, poorly lit and is regularly congested with current cyclist numbers.

Concern that second filter lane onto Coldharbour Lane won’t have the desired impact



The proposed additional filter lane at Coldharbour Lane attracted most interest. As has been highlighted earlier in the report, many motorists felt this wouldn't have the desired benefits unless there was a second lane which continued along Coldharbour Lane to the UWE roundabout.

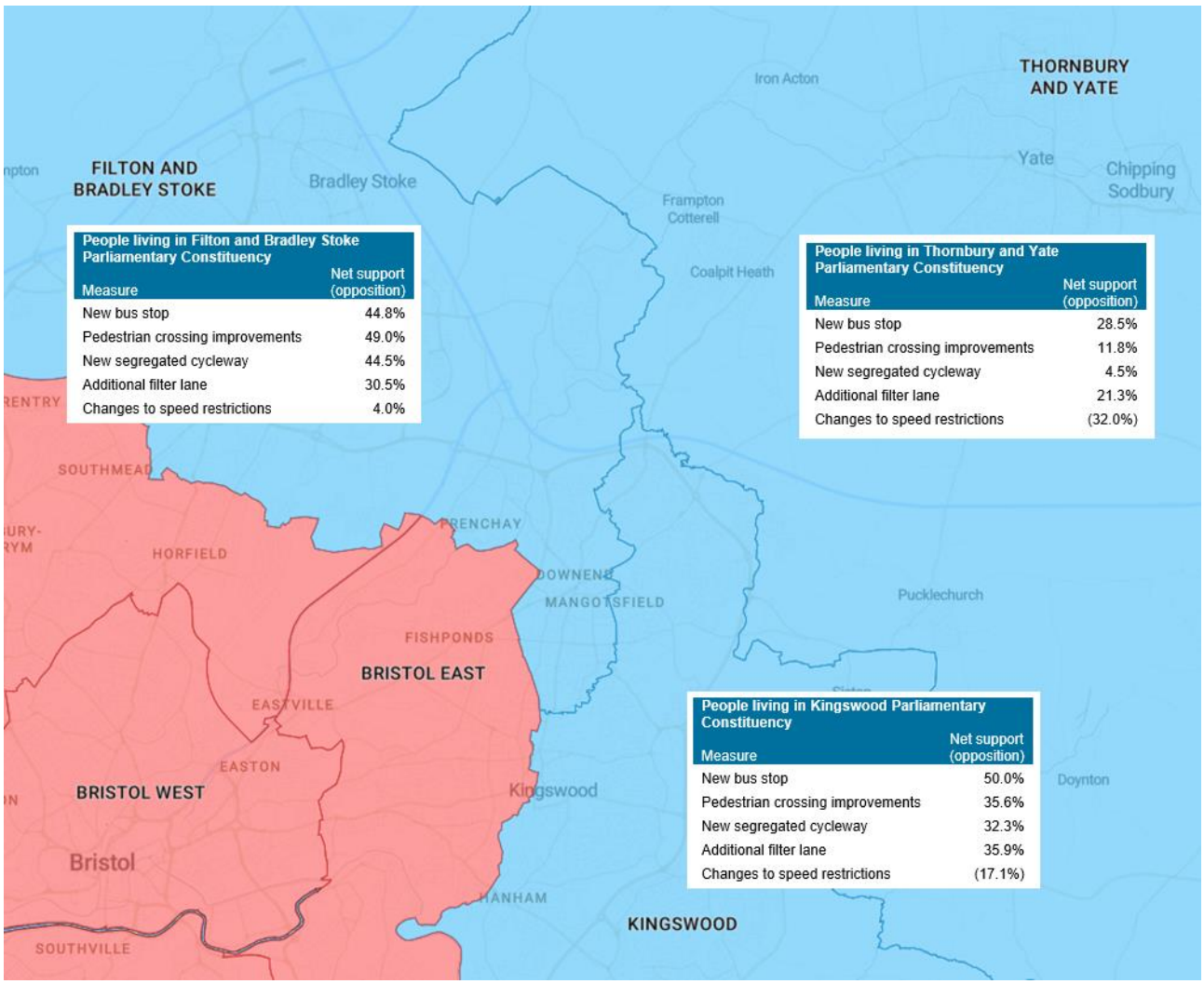
Comments about consultation

The council is regularly accused of not listening to local people and people commented through the consultation that they didn't think it mattered what they said, and that decisions have already been made. This report, which will be shared with decision-makers and the project's funders to help them make the decision on next steps, will also be published in full, giving respondents the chance to see what others have said.

Groups who are most likely to be supportive or opposed

Further analysis of the data showed that there was majority support for the proposals amongst most demographic groups, but there were some groups who were more likely to be supportive/opposed to the proposals than others.

There were significant differences in feedback from people living in different areas. As highlighted throughout the report, the people who live most local to the scheme are the most supportive, whilst people who live in the Yate and Thornbury Parliamentary constituency were more negative.



Graphic showing differing net support figures for people who live in different Parliamentary Constituencies (figures for other Constituencies are not shown due to low response numbers)

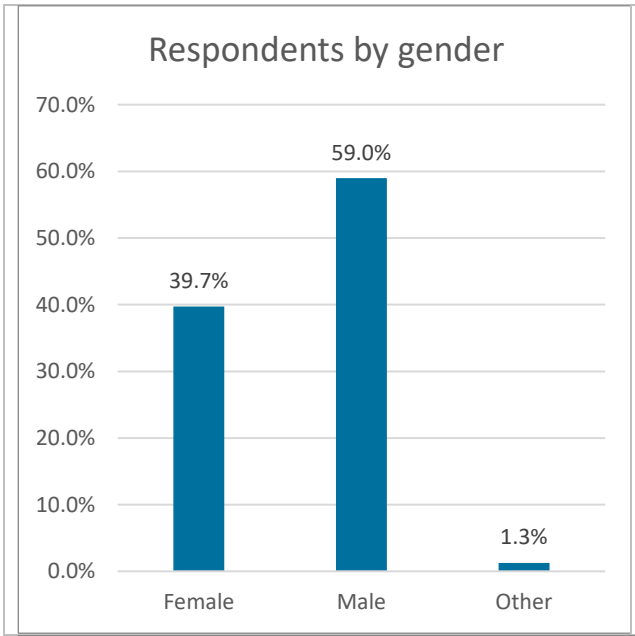
It may be that this is because many people see measures aimed at improving options for active and sustainable travel as anti-motorist and people living further away are more likely to be motorists. The disruption caused by the closure of the Badminton Road overbridge may also have played into more negative sentiment amongst people who commute on this route.

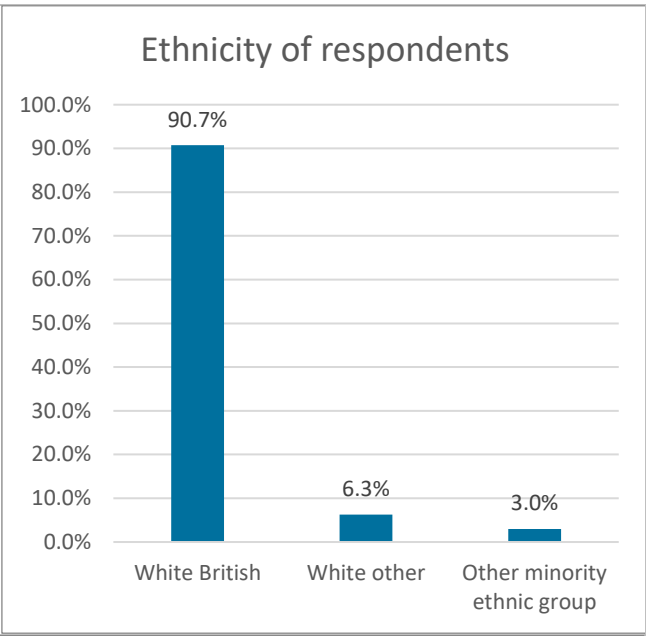
Women were much more supportive than men about any of the changes which were aimed primarily at encouraging cyclists, pedestrians and bus users, but this pattern was reversed for the proposal to add an extra filter lane.

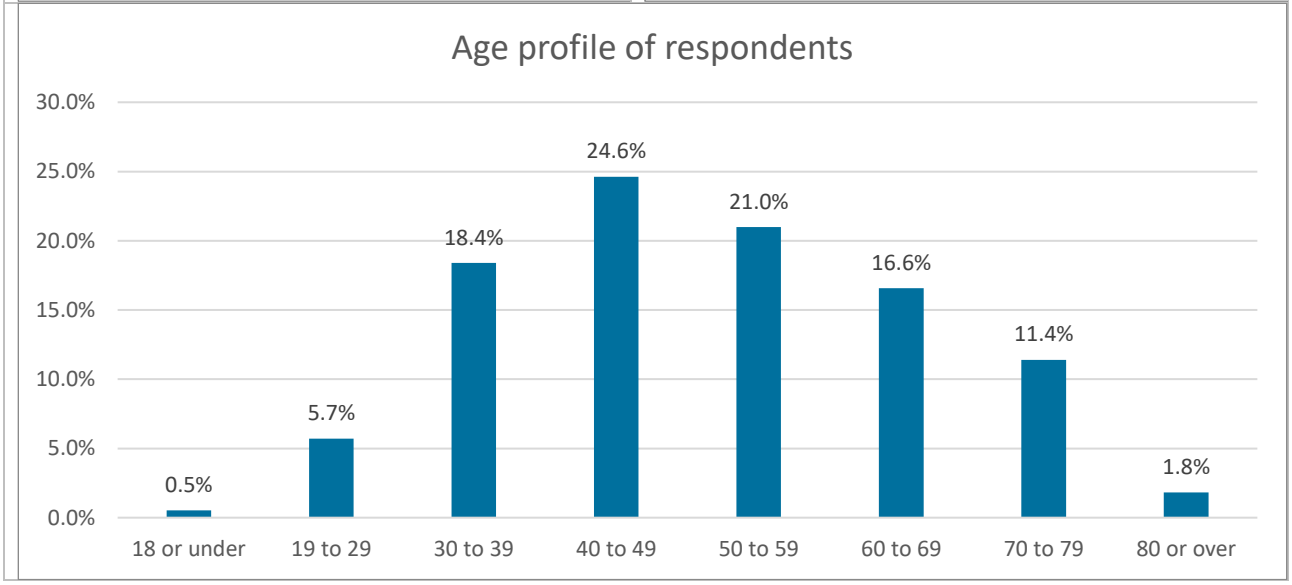
People with a disability had consistently more negative feedback about the different proposals. Improving accessibility is one of the primary aims of these proposals, but it would appear that disabled people either do not believe that enough is being done to support their needs or that they would like money to be spent on other priorities. Dissatisfaction amongst disabled people is something which has been seen across multiple consultations and surveys (both in South Gloucestershire and nationally) and further investigation is required to understand if this group have specific concerns with this scheme or if this is part of a more general trend.

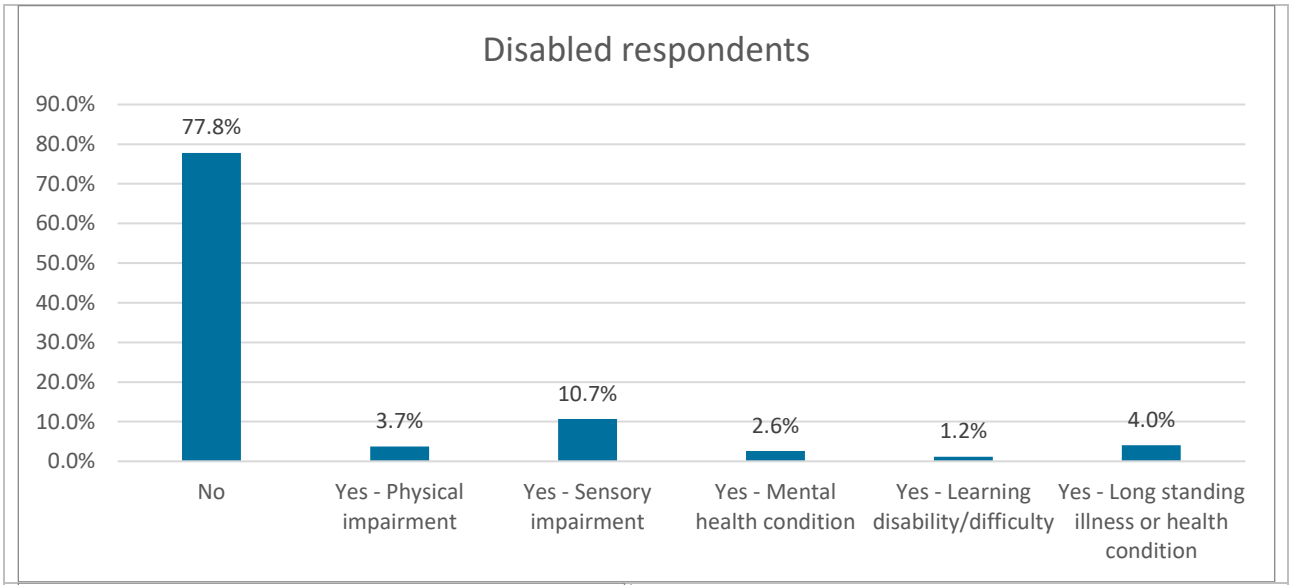
Appendix 1: Survey respondents

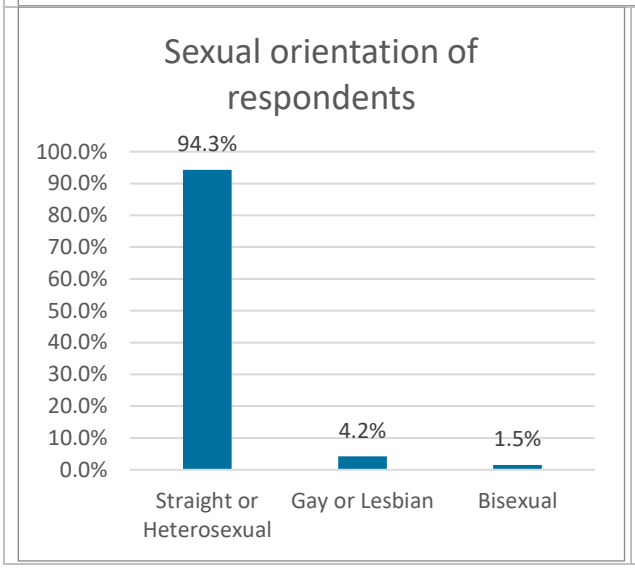
The survey sample is reasonably representative of the local population. The exceptions to this are that men would appear to be significantly over-represented and there are very high numbers of disabled respondents. Younger people (aged under 30) are under-represented.











Appendix 2: Written representations

Letter by email from North Bristol SusCom

A4174 Ring Road improvements consultation response

North Bristol SusCom Ltd. is a group of leading employers, located in North Bristol, working together to enable **sustainable commuting** for our 45,000+ employees, 30,000 students and many visitors**.** We know that combatting traffic congestion and increasing the viability of walking, cycling and public transport is vital for the long-term prosperity of our businesses, a strong economy, the health and wellbeing of our employees and tackling the climate emergency.

Our members have worked together, over a number of years, to enable staff to use sustainable transport for their commute to work. We have done this by supporting staff on-site through our facilities and our company policies. We also work closely with others, like South Gloucestershire Council and the West of England Combined Authority, to ensure that the necessary sustainable transport infrastructure and transport services are in place to make sustainable commuting possible.

General Comments
North Bristol SusCom is supportive of the proposals to "transform the A432 and A4174 route between Yate and the Coldharbour Lane Junction on theA4174 to give residents and visitors better options for using buses, walking, cycling and wheeling" for their journeys, for work, for leisure and recreation.

We have promoted participation in this consultation to our businesses and their employees and asked them to respond directly into the consultation using their local knowledge along the proposed routes. We are also providing this collective response to the consultation for consideration.

This project has the potential to address issues that many of our member's employees have raised over the years through the annual travel to work survey. A number of our members are based along this part of the A4174 corridor including Babcock, Hewlett Packard, Holiday Inn Bristol Filton and UWE. Other members are located just off the corridor including Lake View (Aviva) and SGS College. We also have a number of members located to the East of these proposals, in Emersons Green, including ALD Automotive, the Bristol and Bath Science Park, IAAPS, Leidos, and National Composites Centre.

We would love to see future proposals brought forward to extend the 2 way segregated cycling and separate walking infrastructure further along the A4174 ring road corridor to the East to serve these key business locations. We do have a number of comments on the proposals which we would like to be considered.

Firstly, we cannot see anything in the proposals that tackle the very narrow, unsafe section of shared use path between M32 Jct 1 and Hambrook Junction. Given the narrowness of the path along this section, and the minimum recommended separation noted int eh table below, does it mean that a 30mph speed limit will need to be introduced along this stretch as the shared use path is immediately next to the road? We think this section needs to better considered and a solution included in the proposals if we want to increase the number of people using this corridor for active travel.

M32 JUNCTION 1 TO COLDHARBOUR LANE

- **Additional left turn lane** – we would question the need for an additional road traffic lane unless this was a dedicated bus/2+ lane. If we want to tackle road congestion along this corridor we need to support those forms of road transport that are the most efficient users of space – buses and multiple occupancy vehicles. 2+ lanes will need monitoring and enforcement if they are to be effective.
- **Speed Limit reductions** – we support the reduction of speed limits in the area. We would ask that you consider reducing the limit between Coldharbour Lane and the Abbey Wood Roundabout from 50 to 30, not just the 40 proposed. With the new student accommodation being built across the A4174 from campus there will be additional student movements across that section of the A4174 so we feel it warrants lower speeds. We will consult with Avon and Somerset Police on the reduction in speed limits.
- **Signalised parallel crossing at rear entrance of Holiday Inn Bristol Filton hotel –** this is a pinchpoint in terms of safety that has been raised in the annual travel to work survey. In terms of signalisation, we would expect that the signals would prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements over vehicles. Perhaps remaining on green for active travelers and making vehicles wait until the route is clear before allowing them to move forward into the rear entrance of the hotel.
- **Shared Use Sections –** We would like to see full segregation between walkers and cyclists for the entire length of these proposals. If shared use paths are being retained will they be resurfaced and better marked so they tie in with the overall scheme?

HAMBROOK JUNCTION

We support the upgrading to segregated 2-way cycling and separate footway, the upgrading of the existing Toucan crossing and the reduction in speed limit.

BROMLEY HEATH ROUNDABOUT
We support the widening of the existing shared use path to segregated 2-way cycling and separate footway east of the roundabout and the reduction in speed limit for westbound traffic.

We would ask if it is possible to upgrade the existing shared use path to the west of the roundabout to segregated 2-way cycling and separate footway appreciating that the route over the viaduct would have to be shared use space given space constraints.

The current Toucan crossing is not in the best location for either cyclists or walkers. Shared use pavement space on the west side is not wide enough for shared use, it contains a sharp right turn which is hard to complete on a bike.

The proposal for converting the existing path east of Bromley Heath Road to shared use is of some concern. There is poor visibility on that stretch as there it a bend where visibility is reduced. We would ask that the designs for this section are re-looked at to ensure higher safety.

WICK WICK ROUNDABOUT

- **New Toucan Crossing –** we are very pleased to see that a crossing on the northern side of the A4174 at the roundabout is being put forward. This will make it much easier for bus users to get to the business park.
- **New Bus Stop** – we would ask that thought is given to how people will access the new bus stop and that its location is well considered. There are lessons to learn from the siting of Metrobus stops where access to them was not given enough thought. Some current stops required you to walk longer distances that necessary because new connecting infrastructure was not put in place to provide quicker and easier access. How people will get to the bus stop from the business park and the surrounding housing areas needs careful consideration.

To summarise, North Bristol SusCom is very supportive of these proposals and the step-change this will help deliver in terms of the increase in active travel and bus use. We look forward to seeing the project continue to be developed and delivered and are keen to be involved in any further consultation and in helping promote the new infrastructure, when in place, to our members and their employees.

We also look forward to seeing the adjoining proposals for the A432 corridor, from the Wick Wick roundabout to Yate, and engaging in that consultation when it is launched.

Yours Sincerely
Ann O'Driscoll
North Bristol SusCom

Letter by email from CyclingWorks Bristol

A4174 ring road improvements – consultation response

CyclingWorks Bristol is a group of organisations supporting better cycling infrastructure in Bristol to enable their staff to travel safely to work by bike. We represent over 50 business, employing over 30,000 people, in the wider Bristol area.

We are pleased to see that the A4174 corridor will be getting support for the delivery of coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive cycle corridors from Wick Wick roundabout to Coldharbour Lane. This corridor will support staff commuting by bike to UWE, MOD Abbey Wood, Babcock and even those businesses based in Emersons Green and the Bristol & Bath Science Park.
We support the delivery of fully separated 2-way cycle corridors built to the latest LTN 1/20 standard. We note these proposals include some shared use paths and we ask that where possible these are improved to provide 2-way segregation and separate walking facilities. We also support the reduction in speed limits along this corridor and the proposed improvements to Toucan crossings.

However, we note that the proposals do not address the pinchpoint between the M32 Jct 1 and the Hambrook Junction. There is a very narrow shared path section that is an area of concern given its close proximity to the road. A reduction in speed limit along that section is not enough to make it safe for pedestrians and cyclists to use.

We ask South Gloucestershire Council to continue to develop and deliver fully separated cycle corridors throughout the Unitary Authority area and hope that this standard of provision will eventually be extended eastward (to Emersons Green/Lyde Green) and westward (Coldharbour Lane to Filton) along the A4174 corridor in future.

We look forward to working with South Gloucestershire Council and the West of England Combined Authority as the project progresses to ensure that the improvements will enable many more employees to commute by bike across the wider South Gloucestershire area and help the area reach its Net Zero ambitions.

Yours sincerely,
Haydn Gill
Chair, **CyclingWorks Bristol**

Letter by email from Guide Dogs

Guide Dogs provides mobility services to increase the independence of people with sight loss in the UK. Alongside our mobility work we campaign to break down physical and legal barriers to enable people with sight loss to live their life on their own terms.

Within Gloucestershire, it is estimated that there are 24,600 people living with sight loss with 3,365 people registered as blind or partially sighted. Due to a variety of reasons, including an ageing population, the number of people with sight loss is predicted to increase to 31,000 by 2032[1].

The RNIB estimates that only one in four people of working age who are registered as blind or partially sighted are employed[2] and that blind and partially sighted people are twice as likely to be inactive than people without sight loss[3]. Consequently, the benefit of improving the accessibility of

[1] RNIB, Statistics on Sight Loss, available at https://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/knowledge-and-research-hub/key-information-and-statistics/sight-loss-data-tool
[2] RNIB, Key information and statistics on sight loss in the UK, available at Learn more about sight loss statistics across the UK | RNIB

[3] RNIB; See Sport Differently. https://www.rnib.org.uk/about-us/see-sport-differently

the built environment for the wellbeing of people with sight loss and to improve their equity of access to opportunity cannot be overstated.

Guide Dogs welcomes the ambition of South Gloucestershire Council to "… invest in local transport to make it easier and safer for people walking, cycling, wheeling, and travelling by bus between communities in and around Bradley Stoke and Thornbury and on into Bristol".

For people with sight loss, a journey outside their front door is a holistic process; each aspect of that journey must integrate with the next seamlessly and safely for them to be confident to travel independently.

However, the lived experience of people who are blind or partially sighted indicates that they frequently face numerous challenges when navigating within their local community and the wider urban environment; from identifying their location, traversing cluttered or confusing streetscapes or simply being unable able to cross the road in safety.

An accessible and inclusive environment is vital to allow blind and partially sighted people to live their lives independently. Proper infrastructure can make the difference between a person with sight loss travelling with confidence or forced to remain at home, with all that means for their health and wellbeing.

Cycle Infrastructure

76% of people with sight loss said that shared pedestrian and cycling routes on pavements reduce their confidence to leave the house[4].

Public bodies from the Department for Transport downwards increasingly focus on active travel to improve public health and the environment. Special focus has been given to using active travel as the mode of transport for 'last mile' journeys. Therefore, dedicated cycling infrastructure, including cycle tracks, bus stop bypasses or shared use paths, are becoming a more prominent.

What are the challenges people with sight loss face?

Cycle traffic can be difficult to detect for people with a vision impairment, who may rely on hearing to navigate safely. Without adequate provision for people with sight loss, cycle traffic can make walking the streets a stressful experience, particularly when cyclists and pedestrians share space on the pavement or where bus stops are separated from the pavement by a cycle track. Existing guidance on street design does not reflect the impact on people with sight loss when cycling infrastructure does not consider their specific needs.

How should you minimise the negative impact on people with sight loss?

We believe that as far as possible, cycling should be accommodated on the carriageway, rather than on the pavement. This benefits both pedestrians with sight loss and cyclists, which is reflected in current guidance which states that 'the conversion of a footway to shared use (between cyclists and pedestrians) should be regarded as a last resort'[5].

Key considerations for local authorities include:

[4] Insight Angels and Guide Dogs, 'The Future of Mobility in the Built Environment Survey' (2021). https://gd-prod.azureedge.net/-/media/project/guidedogs/guidedogsdotorg/files/about-us/what-we-do/research/making-the-built-environment-inclusive-december-2021.pdf

[5] Department for Transport, 'Local Transport Note 1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design' (2020) para. 6.5.4. [5] Insight Angels and Guide Dogs, 'The Future of Mobility in the Built Environment Survey' (2021). https://gd-prod.azureedge.net/-/media/project/guidedogs/guidedogsdotorg/files/about-us/what-we-do/research/making-the-built-environment-inclusive-december-2021.pdf

[5] Department for Transport, 'Local Transport Note 1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Des

- People with sight loss often rely on hearing to navigate safely and find it difficult to detect and avoid quiet cycle traffic. This has the largest impact where pedestrians and cyclists share space.
- The default position of any proposed changes should be that space is reallocated to cycling on the carriageway.
- Shared use areas where pedestrians and cyclists use the same space are inaccessible for people with a vision impairment even with low levels of cycle traffic.
- There should be a physical demarcation between pedestrian areas and cycle tracks, such as a kerb, barrier or, where these are not possible, a raised tactile strip. A change in colour is also desirable, but a sign or a purely visual cue, such as a white line alone, will not be effective[6].
- Where pedestrians would need to cross a new cycle lane, there must be adequate controlled crossings for people with sight loss to do this safely, particularly where cycle lanes affect access to bus stops or other public transport.
- Where significant increases in cycle traffic are anticipated, existing crossing provision should be upgraded to allow pedestrians to cross safely.

Shared Use Routes/Surfaces (Pedestrians/Cyclists)[7]

This section should be read in conjunction with the sections on Shared Space (Vehicles) and Cycle Infrastructure[8], as many of the issues facing people with sight loss are similar and contain additional information regarding mitigation measures.

What are the challenges people with sight loss face?

Even where vehicles are removed from a particular environment, there are substantial risks to people with a vision impairment where a surface will be shared by cyclists and pedestrians.

Cyclists are difficult for people with sight loss to hear and so they may not know which direction a cyclist is coming from or where to go to avoid them. This can lead to collisions, which may result in serious injury.

How can you minimise the negative impact on people with sight loss?

Segregating shared routes using a kerb, a raised tactile strip, level difference or street furniture, helps people with sight loss use such routes safely and confidently without fear of walking into the path of a cyclist.

Where there are open spaces which are shared between pedestrians and cyclists, features should be included to encourage cyclists to use a different route instead of travelling through them.

Floating Bus Stops, Bus Stop Bypasses and Bus Boarders

People with sight loss rely on public transport and the pedestrian environment as their main means of getting around. If they are not accessible, people with sight loss are prevented from getting out and about independently and safely. The intention behind floating bus stops, bus stop bypasses and bus boarders is to prevent conflict between cyclists and buses. However, this design tends to confuse and, in some instances, pose barriers for people with a vision impairment who have to

[6] Department for Transport, 'Local Transport Note 1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design' (2020) para. 6.2.8.

[7] We have used the terminology employed in LTN 1/20, which replaces LTN 1/12, namely that 'shared use' applies to routes or surfaces which is 'available for use by both pedestrians and cyclists', which may, for example, include public squares or paths. See Department for Transport, 'Local Transport Note 1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design' (2020) para. 6.5.1

[8] Making the built environment inclusive - guidance on ensuring regeneration schemes are accessible for people with sight loss https://gd-prod.azureedge.net/-/media/project/guidedogs/guidedogsdotorg/files/about-us/what-we-do/research/making-the-built-environment-inclusive-december-2021.pdf

navigate across a cycle track to access bus stops; especially as it is difficult or impossible to detect the presence of bicycles. The conflict and fear of conflict makes it unsafe and stressful for people with sight loss as it creates anxiousness, fear and, for some, can lead to them avoiding certain areas.

What are the problems people with sight loss face?

- Bus stop bypasses or boarders that do not have a detectable cycle track put people with sight loss at risk of walking in front of a cyclist they cannot see or hear approaching.
- Not knowing which bus stop has a bypass or boarder and stepping out into a shared area with cyclists.
- Not able to detect the crossing point to get onto the island due to wide pavements and lack of cues. It would be helpful if guidance paving is used to lead someone with a vision impairment to the tactile paving located at the crossing point.
- The indiscriminate designs of bus stop by passes and boarders.
- The speed of cyclists using the bypasses. Lack of measures to reduce the speed of cyclists using this route for instance raised bumps at the beginning and end of the bypass.
- The removal of kerb upstands on bus boarder islands makes it difficult to know where the island ends and the cycle track begins and vice versa depending on whether you alight from the bus or want to get on the bus.
- The introduction of level islands and crossings without the appropriate tactile paving to assist people with sight loss in identifying and using them safely and independently. Someone with significant sight loss is not able to detect where a crossing point is located, or when they have completed a crossing if there is no tactile paving on the opposite side.
- Reduction of cues and clues that assist people with a vision impairment with orientation and navigation. Some people with sight loss use certain features within the built environment to determine where they are, the lack of such features can make it difficult to navigate. For example:
    - clear signage.
    - contrasting colour between raised roadway or cycle path and footpath.
    - the importance of tactile paving.

How do you keep public transport accessible?

Guide Dogs believes that the external environment should be inclusive and consider the needs of people with sight loss. Guide Dogs is not opposed to cycling and investment in cycle infrastructure, so long as it is designed inclusively which should include the following:

- All pedestrian crossing points over cycle tracks running behind bus stops should have an auxiliary aid, such as an audible and/or tactile signal, which indicates to someone with a sight impairment when it is safe to cross the cycle track. In addition to an audible signal at the crossing, a raised hump, or other traffic calming measure, should be used to encourage cyclists to slow down.
- Markings and signage must be provided to instruct cyclists to stop when pedestrians are near or on the crossing point.
- We recommend a notice to reduce speed should be marked on the bypass approach to remind cyclists that the area they are cycling through is predominantly a footway.
- We strongly recommend full kerb upstands between the cycle track and the pavement and the cycle track and the bus stop island, with the recommended tactile paving at the crossing points.
- Where a floating bus stop is located along a wide pedestrian footway or pavement, guidance paving should be installed to guide someone with sight loss to the blister paving on the crossing point to get onto the bus.

Guide Dogs welcomes investment that is inclusive for all members of the community and have published comprehensive guidance to assist designers, architects, and local authorities in creating places that are both inclusive of people with sight loss, and ready to address the challenges towns and cities face in the future.

The “Making the built environment inclusive” guidance can be viewed and downloaded by clicking on the following link:

www.guidedogs.org.uk/inclusive-regeneration/

I would be grateful if you could share the link to this guidance with your colleagues and partner organisations.

Guide Dogs has a history of working in partnership with local authorities, be it in service provision or in consultation, and I look forward to this continuing.

Peter Bungay
Policy and Campaigns Manager – South West
Guide Dogs