South Gloucestershire Council

Bristol and Bath Railway Path improvements

Consultation report

Executive summary

The consultation on the Bristol to Bath Railway Path improvements project attracted a high level of interest with 767 survey responses received. We would like to thank those who responded for their helpful comments which will enable South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) to finalise the proposals and will also provide useful context and information for potential future projects.

Overall, there was good support for the proposals, with respondents backing the installation of CCTV and the redesign of barriers which are creating pinch points. However, there was lower support for the proposed locations of the CCTV which many people felt should be more evenly distributed along the length of the path. Concerns were raised that reducing pinch points could enable greater access for unauthorised motorised vehicles on the path.

Over half of respondents (57%) believed that lighting should be provided on the path and benefits to humans would outweigh ecological impacts. A fifth of respondents stated that they weren't sure and reflected that it was a difficult balance to strike. The most common suggestion within this question was to look for a compromise solution to provide lighting with a lower ecological impact. Many respondents use the path less frequently in winter and the hours of darkness.

When asked for any other suggestions or concerns about safety on the path, the most common responses related to either police presence, path maintenance, or user behaviour.

Most of the survey respondents were users of the railway path. We heard from a fairly broad range of ages but with very few respondents aged under 20 or over 80. We heard from more men (57%) than women (35%). Respondent demographics have not been compared to local averages as respondents came from a broad geographical area including Bristol and Bath and Northeast Somerset council areas, indicated via postcode data and comments provided.

Background

South Gloucestershire Council has the opportunity to access funding from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority via the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements fund to invest in improved facilities for walking, wheeling and cycling. 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 private vehicles.

Proposals have been put forward to improve safety and accessibility on the Bristol and Bath Railway Path including:

- 20 CCTV cameras between Teewell Hill and the former Mangotsfield Station and a further two at Warmley Waiting Room
- redesign or removal of barriers at nine locations that create pinch points for accessibility particularly for wheelchair users, adapted cycles and push chairs.

Proposals were informed by an independent community-led investigation into crime and anti-social behaviour on the path from 2019 and previous engagement with the Bristol Cycling Campaign stakeholder group.

Lighting was not included within the proposals at the consultation stage due to impacts on the natural environment, on the advice of professional ecologists.

Next steps

The project team will consider the feedback provided through this consultation exercise and identify whether any changes to the proposals are required and possible to make prior to submission of a Full Business Case to the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority. A separate design response document will be produced to summarise the findings of this exercise and respond to the key feedback received.

The consultation

The consultation ran from 10 December 2024 to 31 January 2025, with an online Commonplace site created to provide information about the proposals for people to provide informed feedback either via an online survey on the site or by completing a paper survey response.

The consultation sought to gather views on the proposals as well as providing people with an opportunity to share other concerns and suggestions regarding safety on the path.

To raise awareness, the consultation was widely promoted through various channels including:

- Poster boards displayed on lighting columns and other infrastructure along the railway path
- Posters and postcards provided to local community venues
- Eight social media posts on Facebook and X in December and January
- Provided statements to media inquiries from several local publications and specialist national online news sites
- Two articles in the residents update weekly newsletter in January and December. Also included in the Kingswood newsletter in December.
- Emails to local parish councils
- Pop-up event outside Staple Hill primary school
- Presentation at Cycle Forum meeting, and Climate and Nature Emergency Community Engagement meeting
- Article on South Gloucestershire Council staff intranet.

We also wrote to 228 residential addresses identified as being within 50m of the proposed CCTV locations.

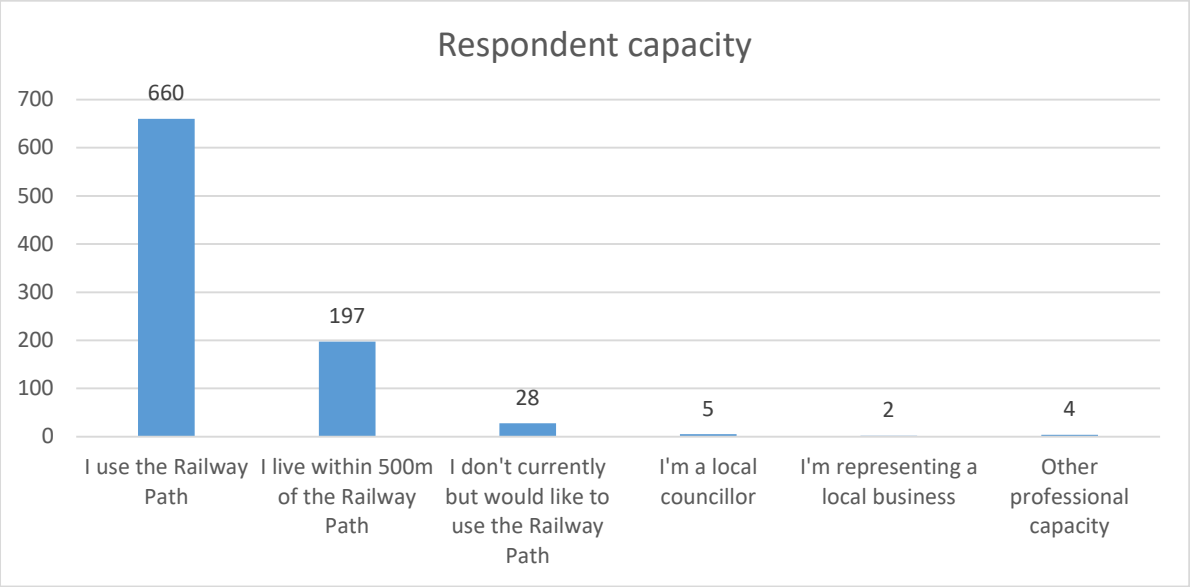
During the consultation period, a public drop-in event was held in Warmley Community Centre which was attended by members of the South Gloucestershire Council project team and a local policing representative. The purpose of this event was primarily to allow people the opportunity to ask questions about the proposals and so feedback has not been reported here – instead people were directed to the consultation to share their views.

Survey results

Respondents

In total, 767 people responded to the consultation survey.

Most people who responded are users of the railway path, but we also heard from 28 people who don't currently use the path but would like to. 197 respondents indicated that they live in close proximity to the path.

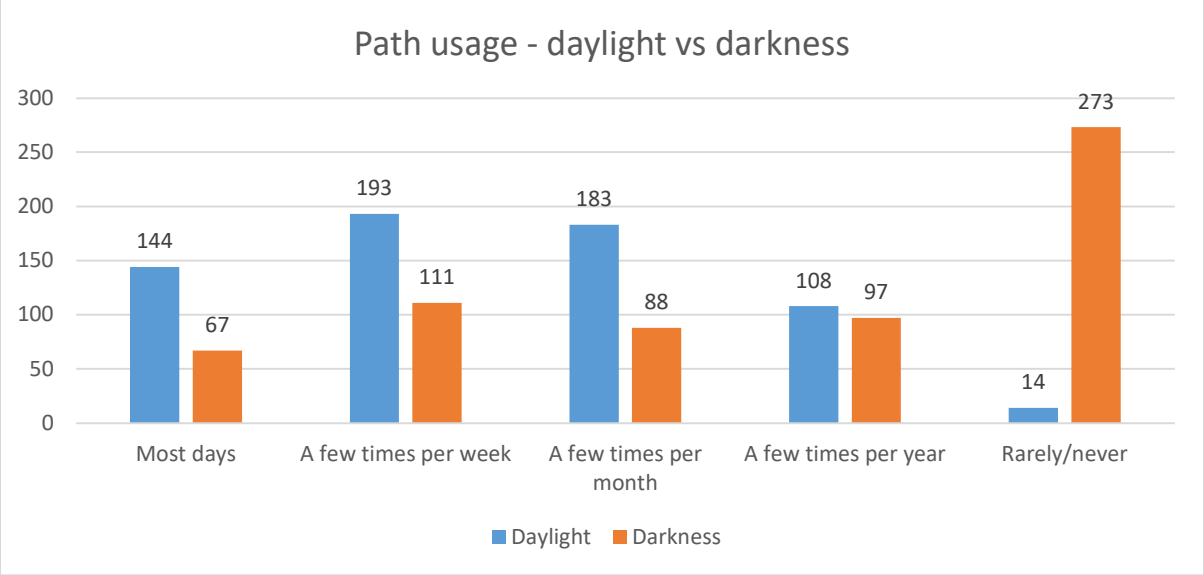


More details of the demographics of respondents are provided in Appendix 1 and written responses from interested organisations are provided in Appendix 2.

Travel behaviour

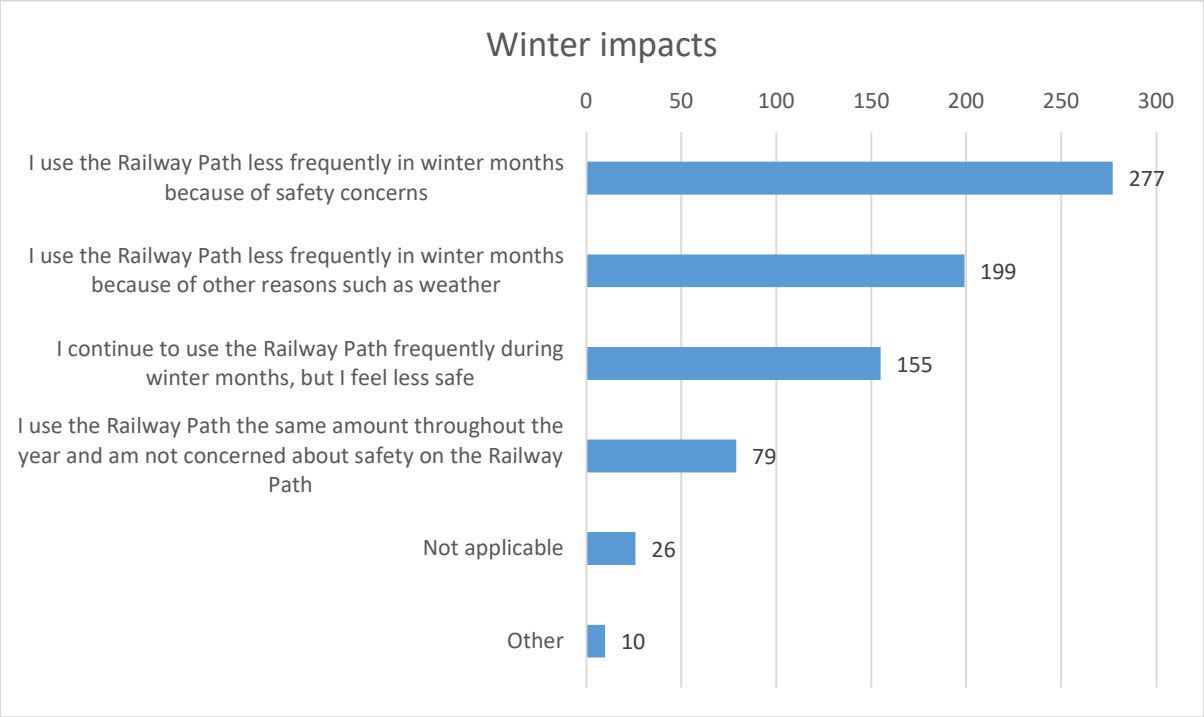
Path usage in hours of daylight and darkness

Respondents were asked how frequently they use the railway path during the hours of daylight, and how frequently they use the railway path in the hours of darkness.



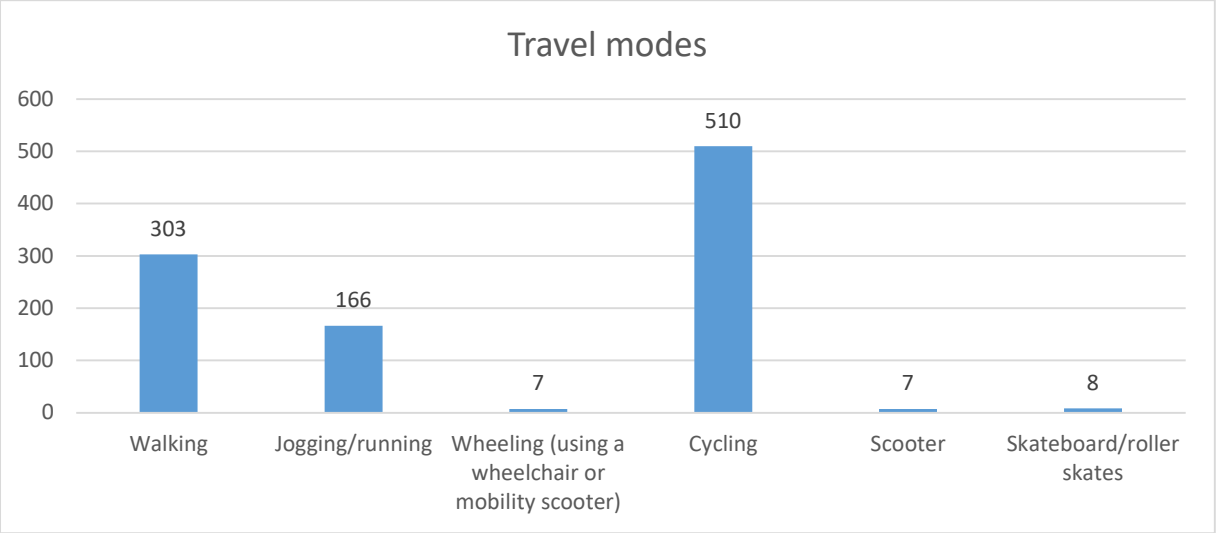
Results indicate a significant number of respondents who are regular users of the path in the daylight rarely or never use the path in the hours of darkness.

Impacts on travel behaviour in winter



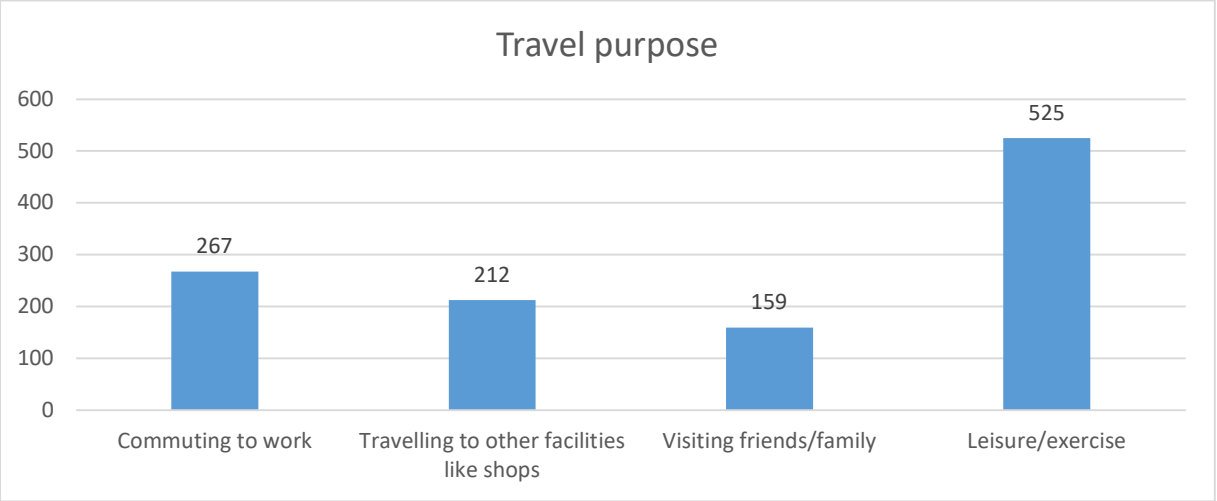
The majority of responses to this question show that people use the railway path less frequently in winter months because of safety concerns, and a large number of people (199) also indicate other reasons such as weather for using the path less frequently in winter. 155 people continue to use the path as frequently in winter but feel less safe doing so.

Travel modes



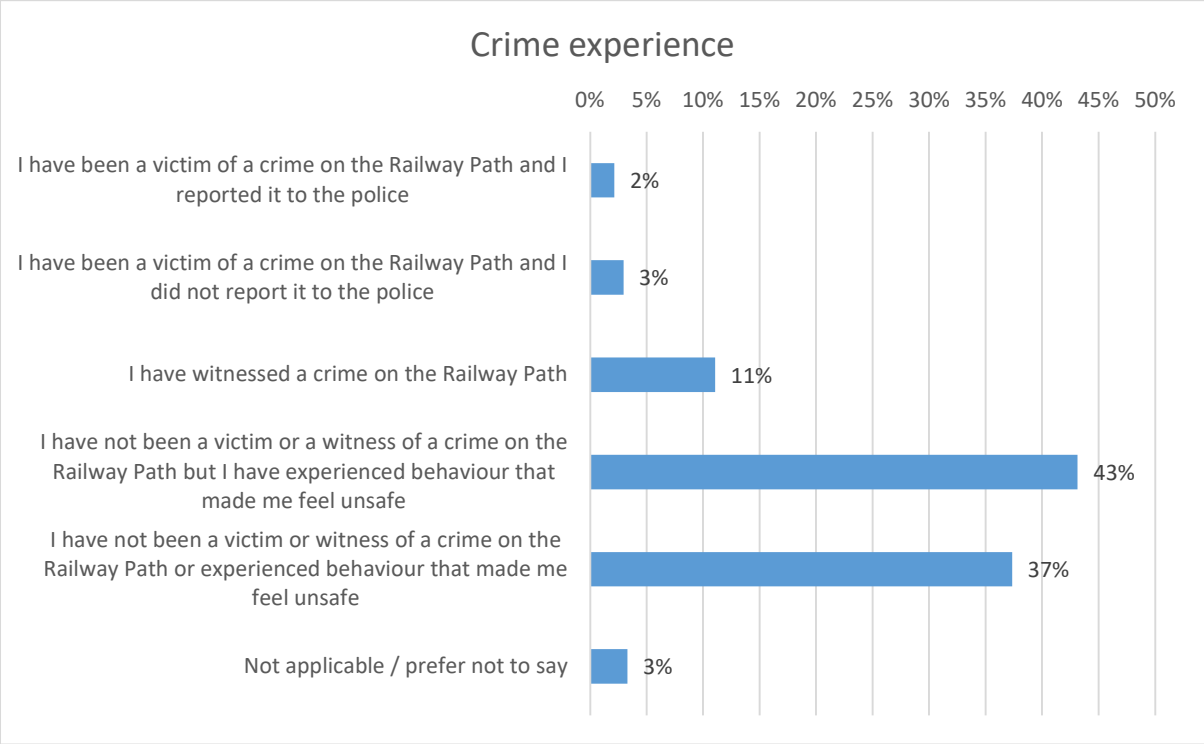
The most common mode of travel on the railway path used by survey respondents is cycling but we also heard from a lot of people who walk, jog or run on the path. Only 7 respondents indicated that they use a wheelchair or mobility scooter on the path.

Travel purpose



Results of this question show that the path is well used as a leisure or exercise route, but many respondents are also using it for other purposes including commuting to work or accessing local facilities.

Experience of crime on the path



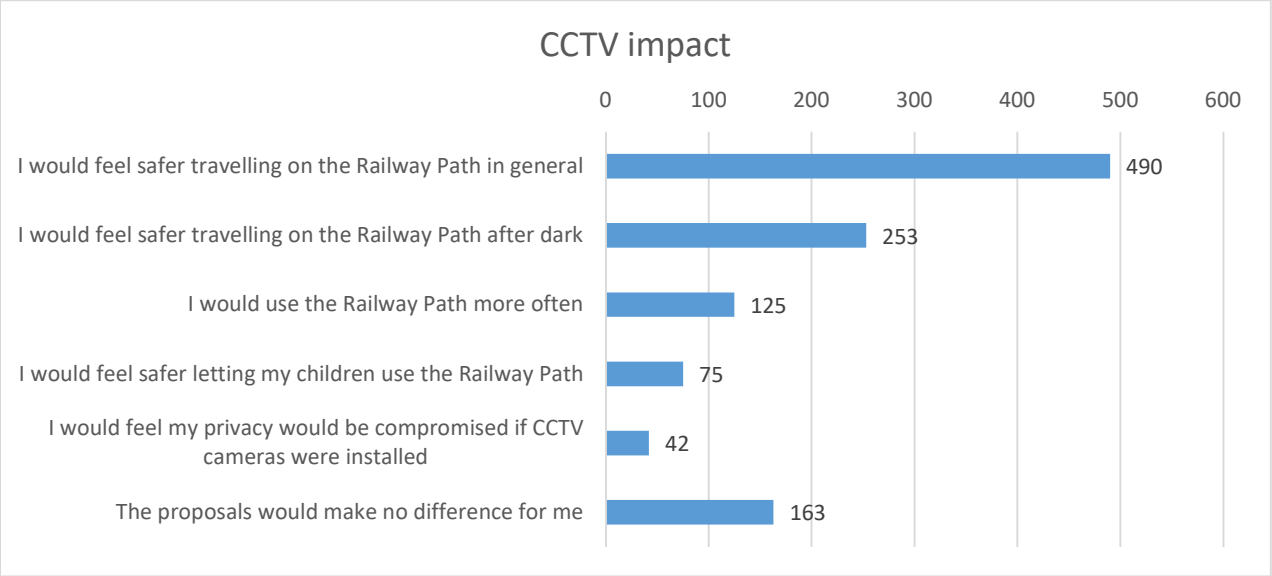
Base: n=605

Only a small number (5% combined) of respondents report having been a victim of a crime on the railway path but the majority of people (54% combined) report having either witnessed a crime or experience behaviour that made them feel unsafe on the path.

Just over a third (37%) of respondents have not experienced behaviour on the path that made them feel unsafe.

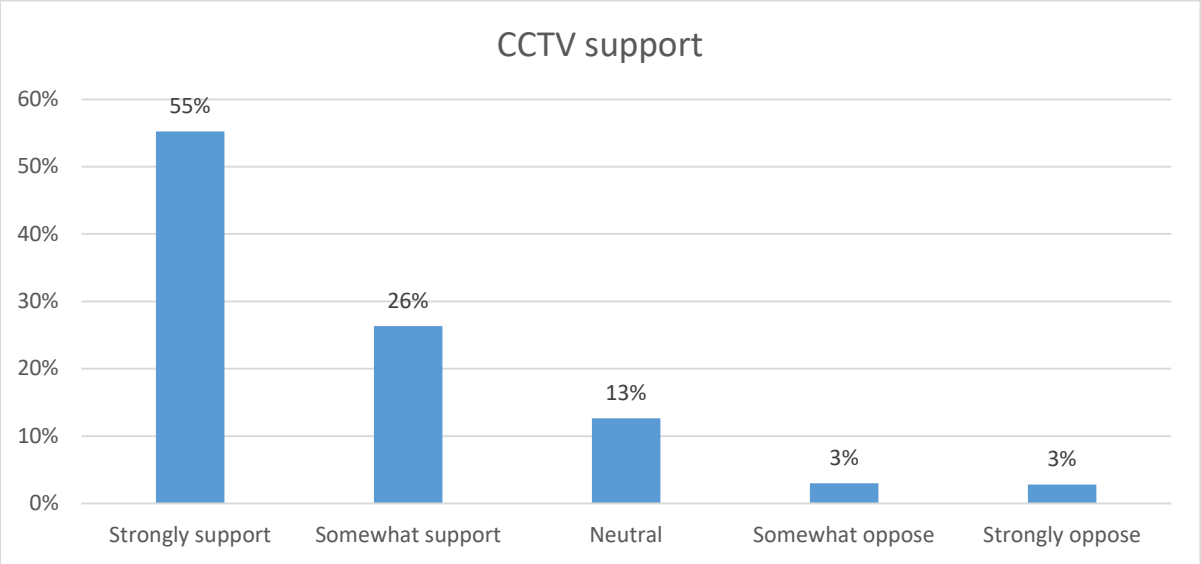
Views on proposals

CCTV



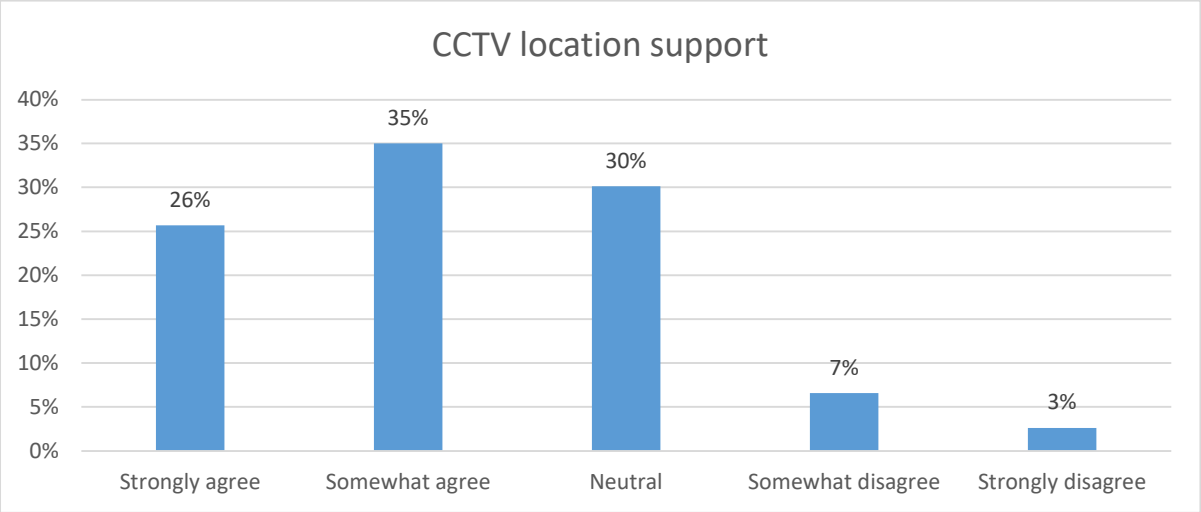
The majority of respondents (490 out of 750 total responses) indicate that they would feel safer travelling on the railway path if CCTV were to be installed with 253 people saying they specifically would feel safer after dark. 42 people (6%) stated they felt their privacy would be compromised if CCTV were to be installed and 22% of people felt that the installation of CCTV would make no difference for them.

There is a clear majority support for the proposals to install CCTV with a total combined percentage 81%.



Base: n=672

There was a more mixed response to whether people supported the proposed locations for the CCTV with more people 'somewhat' agreeing (35%) or 'neutral' (30%).



Base: n=654

Respondents were asked to explain if they didn't agree with the proposed locations for CCTV. Many respondents agreed that CCTV locations should be selected based on areas with the highest incidences of crime and anti-social behaviour. The most frequent response to this question was that cameras should be evenly distributed along the full length of the path and that putting cameras only in specific locations will simply push crime or anti-social behaviour to parts of the path without CCTV. There were suggestions that if it was not possible to get CCTV coverage of the full path length, then entry/exit points should be prioritised.

There was a large number of respondents who suggested that cameras would be useful on the Bristol City Council section of the path.

Specific suggestions of locations to consider have been collated and shared with the project team for consideration and for future reference.

"It's not they will be in the wrong position it's that they do not over a long enough area and all entry/ exits must be covered."

"They need to be all along the path, not in one area. Crime will just move to another area instead."

"I think the selected locations are sensible from a South Gloucestershire perspective but we desperately need more in Easton."

People were provided the opportunity to share any other comments on the proposals to install CCTV. Some people were concerned about the maintenance costs associated with the CCTV and potential for vandalism whilst others commented on the need for high quality images. Some respondents felt that CCTV would not actually deter crime, particularly with people easily able to cover their faces, and if the footage is not being actively monitored.

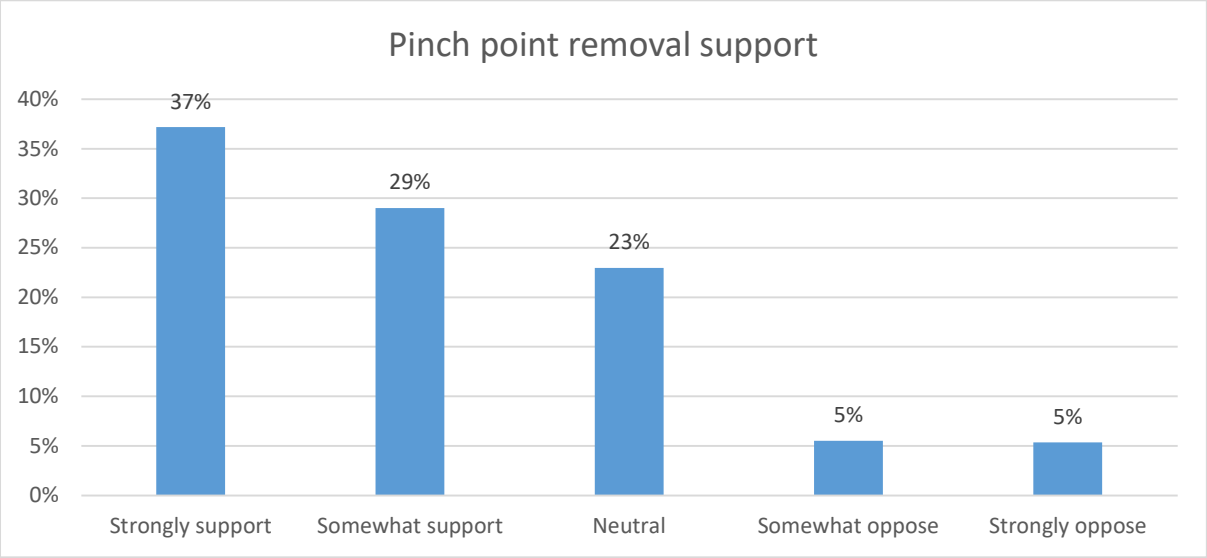
"It's really important that cameras that are installed are monitored and are good enough to capture useable photos - too often councils put in cameras where the images aren't good enough to actually prosecute anyone."

"I think sadly in life today it's a good thing to have CCTV to make users of the railway paths feel safer and enjoy their use."

"The people that cause trouble and make me feel unsafe are all wearing masks. I don't feel like CCTV will deter them."

Pinch Point Barriers

People were asked to describe what impact the removal of pinch point barriers would have on them. There was general positive support for these proposals, with some respondents describing a significant improvement to accessibility, and many more people acknowledging that whilst they may not personally notice much difference, they could see the important benefits for other users. This is reflected within the graph below showing a majority combined support of 66%.



Base: n=710

The main concern raised frequently within these responses related to whether these proposals would lead to more unauthorised motorised vehicles accessing the path.

Some people also felt that it is important to have some barriers to slow excessive cyclist speed.

Some respondents provided specific detailed feedback in relation to the proposed pinch points and to other pinch points along the route which has been shared in full with the project team.

"It would improve it. They are awkward cycling and I've fallen off trying to get through them."

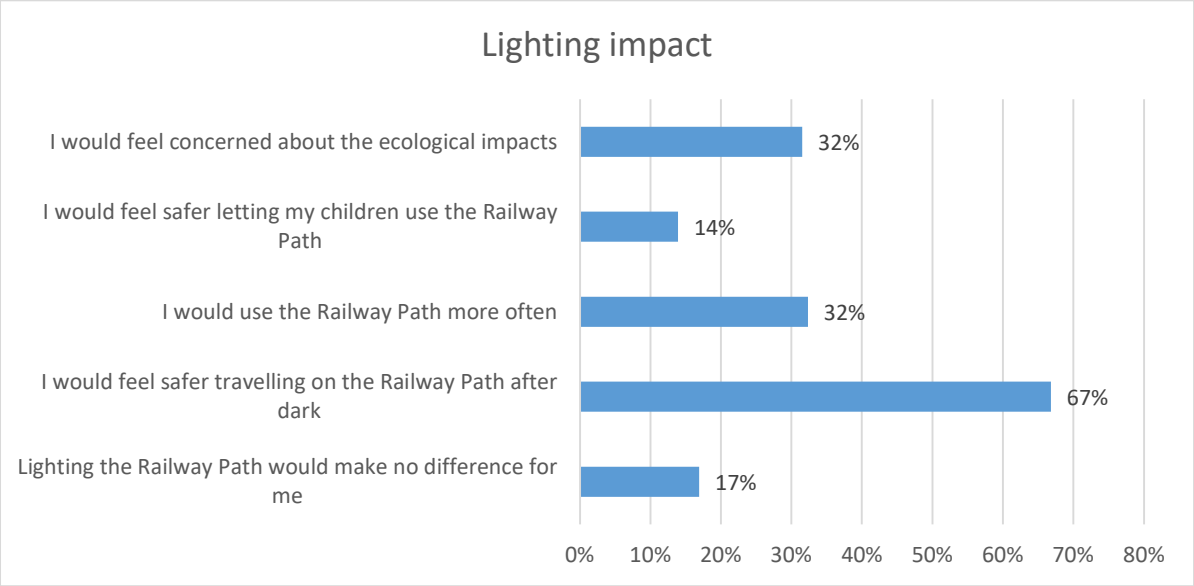
"Fantastic, the more accessible the better. But how to avoid motorbikes then and scooters going so fast?"

"My daughter uses an adapted bike due to disabilities. We have had to lift her bike over a few times so removal of them would help our family enjoyment. She is also a wheelchair user."

"The removal of the barriers will mean that mopeds will have access to the paths and parks. By taking away the barriers you are allowing other forms of transport not allowed on the path access."

Lighting

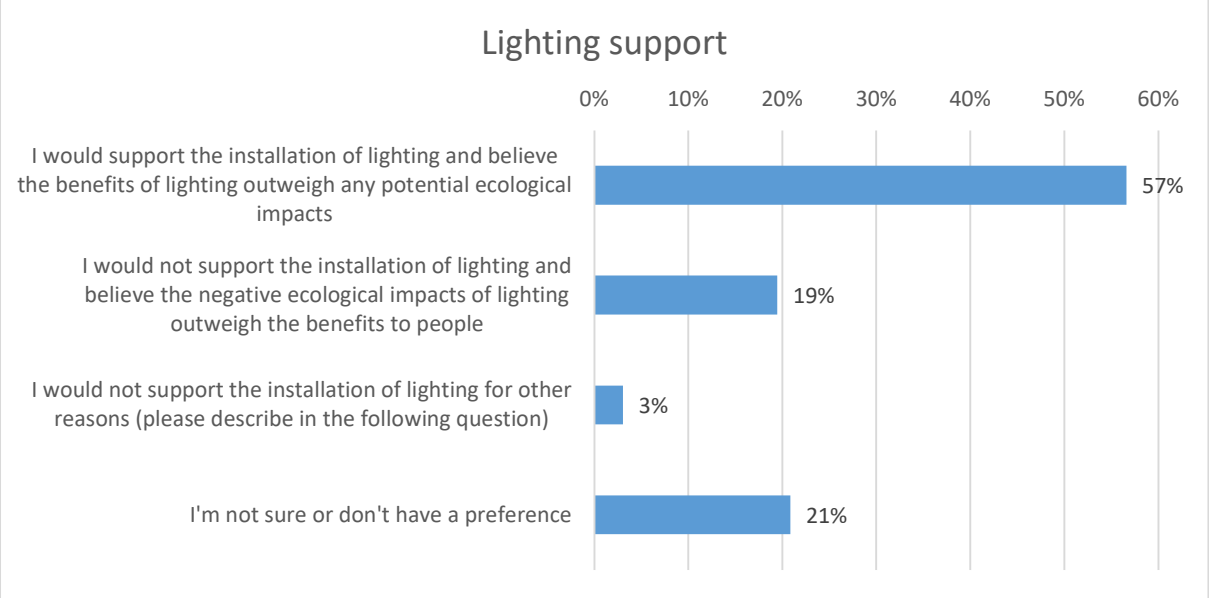
Whilst lighting was not included within the project proposals, it was acknowledged that this would be a common concern or suggestion for respondents. Therefore, questions were asked to better understand the public opinion on benefits and impacts of lighting the path for future consideration.



Base: n=732

Results show that two-thirds (67%) of people would feel safer travelling on the path after dark if lighting was installed and nearly one third (32%) would use the path

more often. An equal number of people were concerned about the ecological impacts lighting would have.



Base: n=652

When asked whether, on balance, people would support the installation of lighting, 57% felt the benefits of lighting would outweigh and potential ecological impacts. 19% of respondents felt that the negative ecological impacts would outweigh benefits to people and 21% of people weren't sure or didn't have a preference.

People were then provided an opportunity to share any comments related to lighting the railway path. Many respondents acknowledged that this was a difficult decision to make and would require more detailed evidence of likely impacts in order to make a decision, likely explaining a large number of the 'not sure' responses to the previous question.

There were comments representing all ends of the lighting spectrum from requests for the brightest possible flood lighting to no lighting at all, but the majority of comments requested that a compromise solution be found. Suggestions included that this could be provision of low-level or ground-level, warm or red lighting, cat's eyes or glow in the dark strips, lighting at specific busy times only, or motion-activated lighting. Multiple respondents suggested the use of solar-powered lighting to minimise environmental impacts.

Some respondents felt that lighting was not necessary, and that people could just use bike lights or head torches, and others stated that they still would not feel safe on the path after dark even with lighting.

"I would love to see more lighting, as a female often cycling on this route solo, I stop using this resource in the darker months due to safety concerns, especially after peak commuter hours, but before 10pm, which I normally wouldn't be concerned about elsewhere during the darker months. Lighting along the route would help with perception of security massively."

"Even if the path was well lit I wouldn't use it after dark."

"There is a consideration for both and a balance to be found."

"Lighting would be great along the railway. Maybe low levels of light distributed along the path to ensure the ecological system is not compromised but humans can still feel safe at night."

"I feel that the negative impacts on the railway path as an important dark corridor for wildlife far outweigh the benefits to people."

Other

Respondents were provided with the opportunity to share any other suggestions or concerns relating to safety on the railway path.

The most common responses to this question related to wanting an increased number of police patrols on the railway path and a more active or proactive police response to issues. In particular, concerns were prevalent regarding the prolific, dangerous and intimidating use of unauthorised motorised vehicles on the railway path such as motorbikes, mopeds, scooters, and high-speed e-bikes.

Many respondents commented on issues relating to user behaviour on the path, from a variety of perspectives. These were generally centred around providing clarity on how people are expected to behave on the railway path, reminding people to be considerate of other users, particularly more vulnerable users, and whether pedestrians are expected to walk on the left- or right-hand side of the path. It was commonly requested that signage be installed to remind people of these expectations.

Another common theme represented in the responses was maintenance of the path. This varied from flooding issues, clearance of vegetation, repaving uneven sections, tree root issues, and a need for better gritting during icy weather.

Whilst the majority of comments related to the above issues, other concerns and suggestions included:

- Widening and/or segregation of the path
- Other specific pinch points that should be reviewed

- Reiteration of the need for lighting
- Removal of cattle grids
- Improving or adding further connection points onto the path
- Providing facilities or creating opportunities for more business along the path such as catering, events, public toilets
- Improving alternative routes so there is less reliance on the railway path
- Issues relating to sections of the path in neighbouring council areas

"There needs to be greater police presence on the path, especially at night. Stiffer penalties for bike theft, assault and robbery."

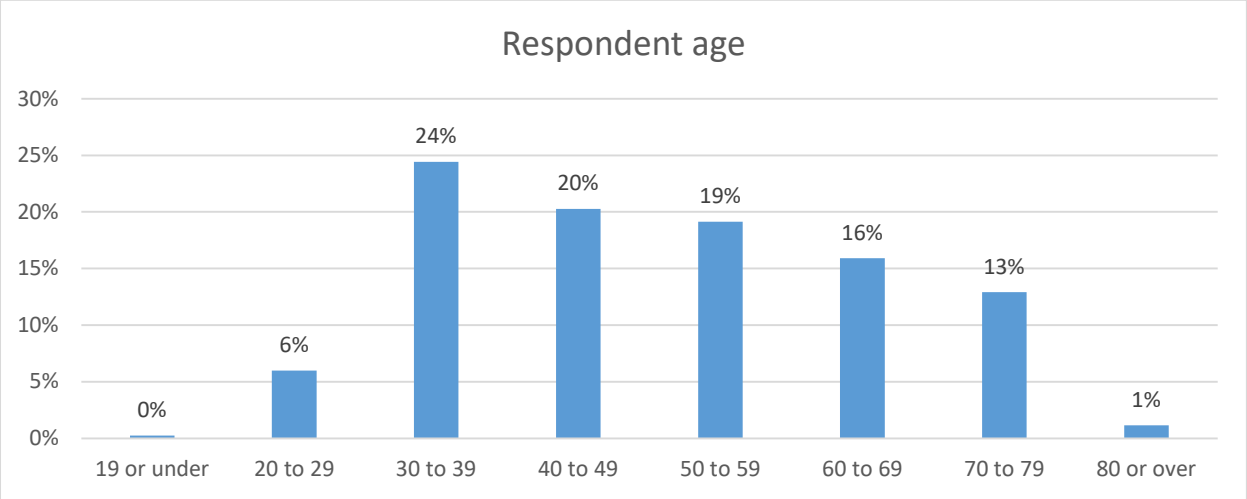
"Motorised cycles and scooters are more of a concern in the last year or so - very fast and dangerous and put me off using the path more."

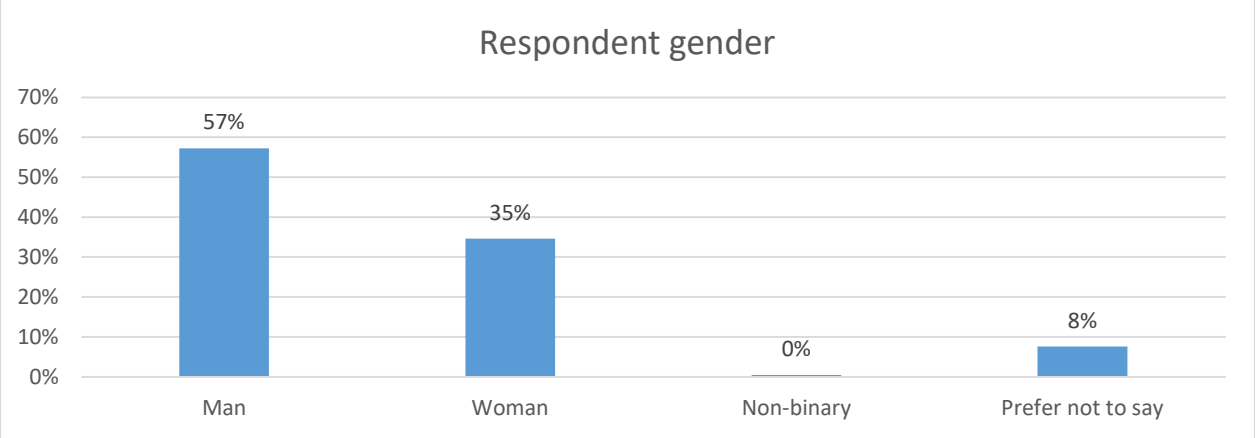
"I would like to see signage pointing out that the path is a mixed use path where all users have equal rights of way not a cycle path as I feel most cyclists who use it seem unaware of this."

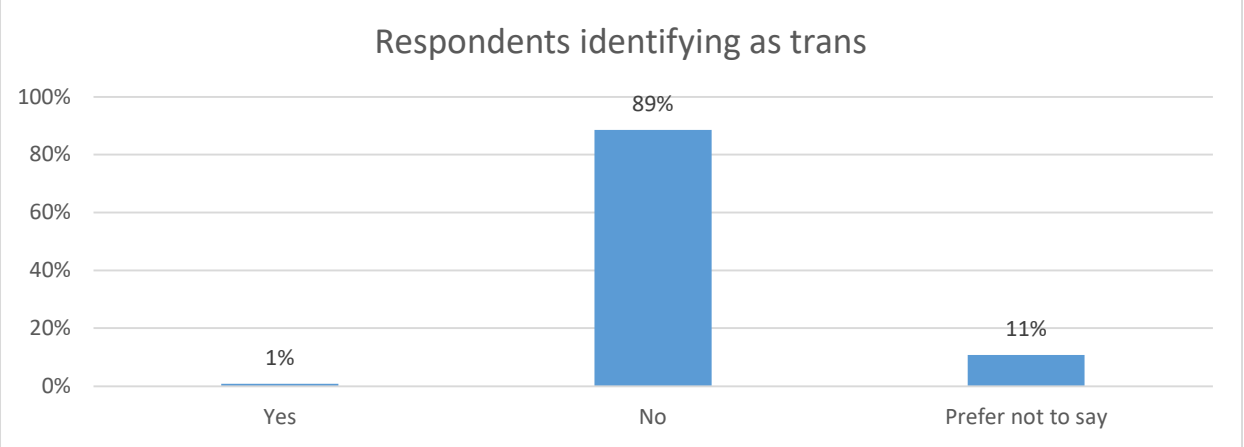
"A lot of people don't know what the safe side to walk on is. A lot of people incorrectly think you should treat it like a road and walk in the opposite direction to bikes. A few white men on the floor would help educate people and would probably help avoid collisions."

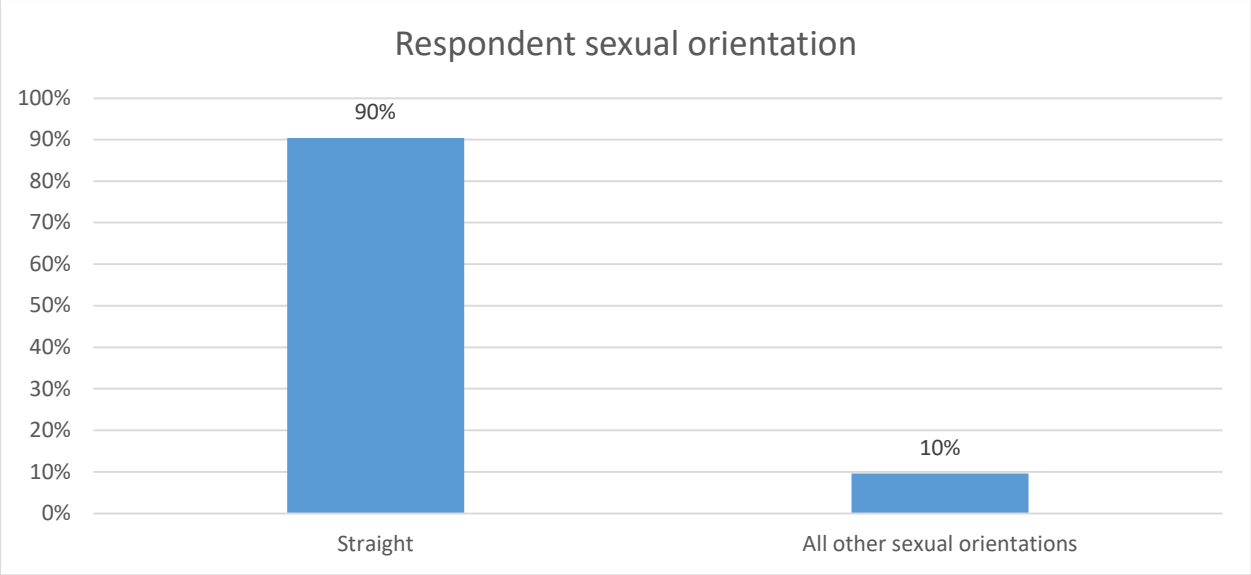
"Leaves need to be removed more regularly in Autumn and the width of the path could be increased by removing some of the compacted leaves and overgrowth that has built up. It also really needs to be resurfaced in a lot of places."

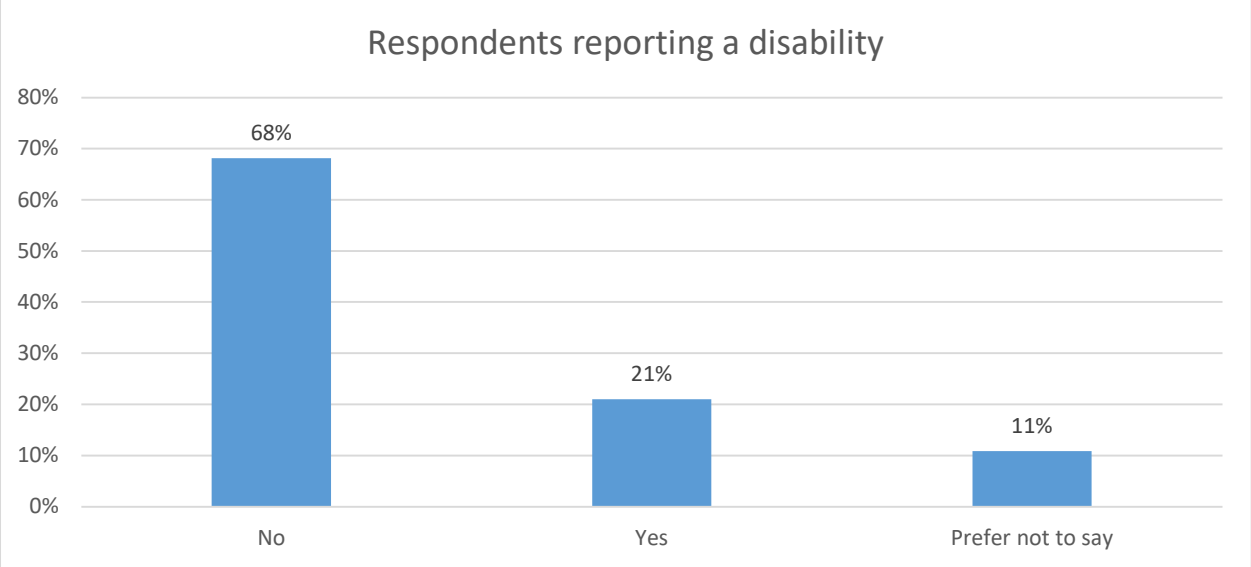
Appendix 1: Respondent demographics

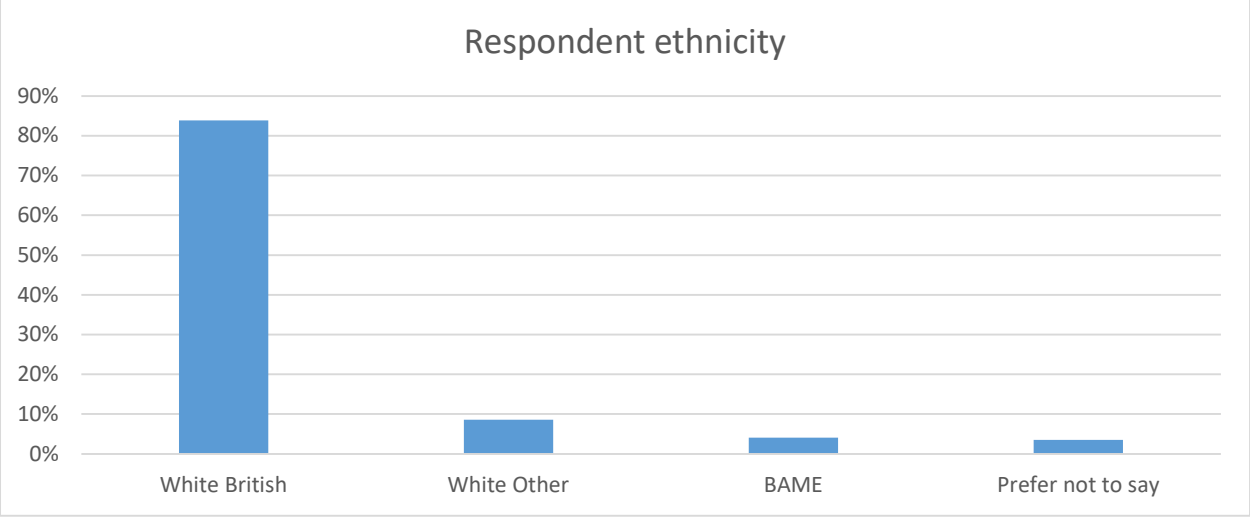







Respondent sexual orientation
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
90%
10%
Straight
All other sexual orientations


Respondents reporting a disability
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
68%
21%
11%
No
Yes
Prefer not to say


Respondent ethnicity
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
White British
White Other
BAME
Prefer not to say

Appendix 2: Written representations

Letter received via email from Bristol Cycling Campaign

Response to consultation

Bristol to Bath Railway Path (BBRP) Improvements

30 January 2025

Brief Summary

We support plans to improve access on BBRP by removing pinch points. We know from feedback that path users feel CCTV can help to reduce crime, especially when at entry/exits & lighting increases confidence after dark, but needs to minimise wildlife impact.

https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/bbrp/consultationHome

Summary

Bristol Cycling Campaign is fully supportive of the proposals published by South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) in its consultation to make safety improvements on its section of Bristol to Bath Railway Path between Staple Hill Tunnel and Bitton Station. The proposals specifically include the installation of fixed location CCTV cameras and removing barriers that create accessibility pinch points especially for cyclists on adapted or cargo bikes, people wheeling or pushing buggies. The consultation also refers to the idea of lighting on the path which we also believe will make some path users feel more comfortable about using the path after dark (we understand that appropriate design can mitigate adverse impacts on wildlife).

Bristol Cycling Campaign Response to Bristol to Bath Railway Path (BBRP) Improvements Consultation

We welcome the work by SGC to make the BBRP safer with this consultation on proposals to install CCTV cameras on a crime "hotspot" section of the path between Staple Hill Tunnel (E) up to the former Mangotsfield Station and to improve a number of “pinch points” on the path to Bitton Station. The prospect of lighting on the path is also positive.

We are pleased to see that these initiatives originate in part from the path user community survey we organised in Winter 20/21 – which was itself prompted by the spike in criminal & anti-social activity on the path at that time (see our blogpost from Jan'21- https://bristolcycling.org.uk/bristol-to-bath-railway-path-safety/)

We appreciate it takes a long time to get funding allocated and applaud SGC for maintaining their commitment to making the path safer.

Removal of Pinch Points

Chicanes and barriers on and off the path either exclude or make it less accessible. They are also known to increase crime risk & make passage more unsafe for users. They do not achieve their original goal of excluding prohibited vehicles from the path. We fully support their removal along the SGC section of the path.

Pinch points created with bollards on the path itself exclude or make it inconvenient for some users, and we fully support their removal along the SGC section of the path.

Commentary on proposals to remove nine pinch points with the objective of making the path more accessible and easier to use.

Pinch point 01: We believe the proposal to widen of gap between bollards on the BBRP is essential to allow safe passage for all esp for cargo bikes & non-standard bikes such as those used by Warmley Wheelers.

Pinch point 02: We believe the proposal to widen of gap between bollards on the BBRP is essential to allow safe passage for all esp for cargo bikes & non-standard bikes such as those used by Warmley Wheelers.

Pinch point 03: We believe that increasing the clearance through chicane on/off the BBRP at Station Close will improve access to the path for all.

Pinch point 04: We believe that removing part of stone wall will increase clearance through this chicane on the BBRP at it's junction with A420 and allow safe passage for all, especially for cargo bikes and non-standard bikes such as those used by Warmley Wheelers

Pinch point 05: This intervention will both improve passage along the path with the removal of a bollard on path and improve access with increased clearance on the on/off chicane.

Pinch point 06: Removal of metal constriction that serves no useful purpose is positive.

Pinch point 07: The removal of the chicane and its replacement with a self-close gate will make access to/from the play area easier and use of the play area safer.

Pinch point 08: A minor adjustment of the gate position will increase clearance and make access easier.

Pinch point 09: Reducing the length of the chicane barrier will make access easier.

Additional Comments

On the southern side of A420 (across from pinch point 4) there is a closed gate and a narrow section for Railway Path users to get through that could be improved

Bitton Station car park - Designing the swing gates prior to arriving at Bitton Station (from the west) to make it more straightforward for people to push their cycles across the railway line. Currently the gates are designed in such a way that even people that are not affected by disabilities may struggle to get a two-wheeled cycle through without assistance.

In winter 20/21 a substantial survey of all types of path users (cyclists, walkers, joggers) was undertaken which included questions about the role of CCTV in making people feel safer when using the path. 90% of the 820 people answering were supportive of installing CCTV (see appendix 1 - Bristol to Bath Railway Path User Survey, published February 2021).

Accordingly, we remain confident that for most path users this is an acceptable compromise of individual privacy. However, people were also specific about the location of the cameras and consistently felt their efficacy & impact would be greatest when placed on entry & exit points on the path in order to capture evidence of the movement of perpetrators of criminal & anti-social behaviour when required.

However, CCTV is not a silver bullet against crime & anti-social behaviour and needs to be combined with other actions (see Appendix III) to reduce this; especailly regular police patrols ideally with officers on e-bikes. Also, by selectively covering one section, there is a risk of moving the problems to other places.

CCTV proposals:

● We would question the rationale for the chosen locations of the 20 cameras along a continuous section between the Eastern entrance to the Staple Hill tunnel and the former Mangotsfield Station, especially as it would appear from the indicative diagram that locations #1, #5, #6, #7, #8 do not cover entry/exits on the path. Could these cameras be more effective if located at other places?

● Also, we want to ask as to whether the equipment being installed can be used to measure movement speed & count of users by mode – as this would be useful data to gather when considering future actions needed to make the path safe & of sufficient capacity going forward with the pace of residential development activity in the area.

Installation of Lighting

As part of the path user survey referenced above, a question was included about the role of lighting in helping people to feel safer & more confident to use the path after dark. 93% of the 825 people answering were supportive of improved lighting on the path (see Appendix II - Bristol to Bath Railway Path User Survey, published February 2021).

Accordingly, we are supportive of the idea of installing lighting on the path that helps those path users who need to use the path after dark (i.e people commuting to/from work) in order to help them:

1. to navigate the path more easily

2. avoid collisions with obstacles or other path users

3. to feel more at ease regarding the threat of crime or anti-social behaviour.

However, we are cognisant of the fact that this section is at the transition between a highly urbanised area into rural areas and accordingly the impact of lighting on

nature needs to be carefully assessed. The consultation itself refers to the potential impact of lighting on the known local populations of bats, badgers and glow worms.

Accordingly, we would ask that in considering the installation of lighting that a balance is found between the needs of path users and that of nature and that best practice mitigation steps are taken in achieving that.

For instance:

● Assess light needed based on location i.e. good illumination at junctions, lighting to aid navigation on bends

● Minimise light spillage using down shaded lamps or mounted at lower height

● Use lowest level of light to achieve desired benefit for users

● Filter frequency of light emitted e.g. the use of red light that is found to be less disruptive to bats, see: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/ https://www.fastcompany.com/90179848/these-bat-friendly-lights-show-how-to-mak e-cities-safe-for-nature

● Consider hours of operation relative to path usage

Based on feedback, we would recommend the avoidance of sunken up-lights on the path edge as these will likely quickly be covered by vegetation.

Other points

Please note that Bristol Cycling Campaign does not comment on the scale, architecture or appropriateness of developments, only the cycling elements. We remain available to engage with the council and/or developers to facilitate the best possible designs for active travel infrastructure.

Letter received via email from Warmley Wheelers

Warmley Wheelers response to the South Gloucestershire Council consultation on making improvements to the Bristol to Bath Railway Path

South Gloucestershire Council has launched a consultation on proposals to make improvements to the section of Bristol to Bath Railway Path between Staple Hill Tunnel and Bitton Station. These include installing CCTV cameras and removing barriers that create accessibility pinch points.

As a provider of adapted cycles promoting inclusive cycling along this whole stretch of the Railway Path, we at Warmley Wheelers have a real interest and stake in ensuring that any changes that are made will directly benefit people with support needs who use who want to use the Railway Path, including those who access our service.

We have reviewed the changes proposed by the council and believe that they are largely sensible and have the potential to be of real benefit to people with accessibility requirements; however, not everyone will necessarily feel the same way. We would therefore urge all our users to review and consider responding to the consultation, either independently or by following our lead.

Installation of CCTV

Warmley Wheelers only operates during daylight hours therefore it and its users are not directly affected by safety after dark.

We do acknowledge that crime has been a factor on the Railway Path, however, and recognise that CCTV may be a useful deterrent and encourage greater use if implemented. We are keen for a specific and informed approach to their distribution acknowledging entry and exit points, as well as areas of risk – for example with blind corners or narrow sections. Our response is as follows:

How do you feel that the installation of CCTV on the Railway Path would impact you?

I would feel safer travelling on the Railway Path after dark

To what extent do you support the proposed installation of CCTV cameras along the Railway Path?

Somewhat support.

To what extent do you agree that the proposed CCTV cameras would be in the right locations?

Somewhat agree

If you do not believe that CCTV cameras are proposed in the right location, please explain why and where you believe they should be located instead

We would welcome a consistent and coherent proposal for positioning the CCTV cameras to ensure that incidents can be recorded where they are most likely to occur.

Please provide any other comments on the proposals to install CCTV cameras on the Railway Path

We would be keen to see some consistency with CCTV coverage across the Railway Path, not just the section that is in South Gloucestershire.

Pinch Points/Barrier

Removal Please describe how the removal or redesign of barriers at these pinch points would impact your use of the Railway Path

Warmley Wheelers enables people with support needs to cycle using adapted cycles, many of which are wider than two wheeled cycles – such as our horizontal tandems, where the two riders sit side by side.

We have had experiences where our users have had narrow misses or actual collisions with bollards and low walls because of the narrowness of the pinch points, affecting the users and causing damage to our cycles. Some sections are so narrow that even experienced riders are required to slow down to less than walking pace because the width of our adapted cycles only just have enough space to pass through the bollards.

Our users are also restricted in their destinations because of pinch points including the swing gate just before arriving at Bitton Station.

We have every reason to believe that our experiences will be reflected in those of cyclists who do not use Warmley Wheelers but have adapted cycles of their own, and who stand to benefit from improving accessibility across this section of the Railway Path.

Do you support the removal of pinch point barriers that constrain access along the Railway Path

Strongly support

Installation of lighting

How do you feel the installation of lighting on the Railway Path would impact you?

N/A

Considering the likely positive and negative impacts of lighting the Railway Path, please choose the statement which most applies to your views

I’m not sure or don’t have a preference

Please provide any comments relating to lighting the Railway Path

Warmley Wheelers only operates during daylight hours, therefore the lighting does not affect us directly. However, we are supportive of any measures that will support people to feel safe and confident in making sustainable and healthy travel choices.

We know that there are many factors that influence safety and accessibility of walking, wheeling and cycling on and around the Railway Path. Please tell us of any other issues or suggestions relating to the use of the Railway Path that we can use to inform these proposals as well as future projects and to share with relevant internal teams and external organisations.

Our suggestions include:

• Making adaptations to the pinch point on the southern side of the junction of the Railway Path with Station Road. Currently adjustments are being suggested for the wall on the northern side but on the southern side there is a closed gate and a narrow section for Railway Path users to get through

• Designing the swing gates prior to arriving at Bitton Station (from the west) to make it more straightforward for people to push their cycles across the railway line. Currently the gates are designed in such a way that even people that are not affected by disabilities may struggle to get a two-wheeled cycle through without assistance.

• Ensuring that the Railway Path is included in systematic maintenance tasks including clear of leaves and branches, clearing of snow and laying salt in periods of freezing temperatures

• Monitoring drainage during periods of heavy rainfall. The path by the Warmley platform has been particularly affected by the pooling of rainwater from the path and Warmley Forest, leading to significant flooding – to the extent that it is impossible to pass this section of the Railway Path without going through a large, flooded area.

Letter received via email from North Bristol SusCom

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, wheeling, 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.

We welcome and fully support South Gloucestershire Council's plans to make the proposed improvements to the Bristol and Bath Railway Path. The installations of CCTV cameras will help people feel safer using the path and deter future anti-social behaviour and criminality along the path. We are also pleased to see that improvements will be made to make the path much more accessible to all active travellers, and especially wheelers.

There are a few additional points we would like to make comment on here:

Lighting – We would like to see lighting provided along the Bristol and Bath Railway Path as visibility is a key component of making the Path accessible and safer to all, especially at night. We fully appreciate the challenges around lighting the path and the balance that needs to be struck to minimise any adverse impact on nature. We believe that there are examples from elsewhere that the Council could draw upon to find a workable solution to enable lighting to be provided along the corridor.

Shared Use Conflict – There is a lot of local debate about which side of the path cyclists and pedestrians should travel on. Some have strong opinions that all users should stay on the left, while other argue pedestrians should stay on the right (as suggested in the Highway Code – though that advice is for pedestrians in the road, not on a shared use path. At the South Glos Cycle Forum meeting earlier this week, this topic was discussed. It was mentioned that as part of the One Path project delivered by Sustrans with Bristol City Council, and in consultation with Path users, that the suggestion is now that everyone stays left. We understand that on the Bristol sections of the Path there are signs asking everyone to stay left. It would be great if this could be applied along the whole length of the Path to help minimise potential conflict amongst all Path users.

Maintenance – Within the plans, there needs to be a clear understanding of the maintenance requirements and provision to provide ongoing maintenance of the Path. As a major transport corridor is should receive a high level of ongoing maintenance (including gritting, trimming, hole filling etc). Ideally this would be carried out and delivered simultaneously with Bristol and B&NES as the corridor passes through all three areas.

To summarise, North Bristol SusCom is very supportive of the proposals as they will help existing users feel safer using the path. The proposals will also help attract and enable more users to access and discover the benefits of traffic-free travel and that freedom that the Path already brings to our cohort of commuters and to the wider community as a whole.

Resident email (anonymised)

I live in Bitton and I use the Railway Path daily as a cyclist and walker.

My general concern is how seems to be a geographic imbalance of the planned improvements - too little seems to be targeted at Bitton compared to the other areas.

Bitton is lucky enough to have expanded its population considerably in recent years and benefits from exceptional connections to our cycle and walking infrastructure, but provision for active mobility in the the Bitton area has sadly failed to keep pace. Indeed getting on the Railway Path from the village has become increasingly more challenging as traffic volumes and speeds increase and evolve.

My specific concerns:

1. The plans do not include improvements for safer access to the path from the A431 for the community. For me, this is a priority. Using this consultation effort to help make it safe (or safer) to cycle to The Meadows School and/or Bitton Recreation Ground to and from the station or Mill Estate should be one of the key goals of this project.

2. The plans do not address fixing access to the Railway Path at Fieldgrove Lane in Bitton. The steep steps are unsuitable for those with limited mobility and of course cyclists.

3. Removing the pinch points at and near Bitton Station **can** be a good thing - if the aim is to increase the speed and ease the flow for cycling users …. **but** this increase in flow and speed of cycling traffic can be bad for pedestrian users or any user with limited mobility. How does SGC plan to address this?

4. There is no mention of the gated pinch point on the path where the path crosses the rail tracks just before Bitton Station

Resident email (anonymised)

I would like to bring your attention to the Railway/Cyclepath Crossings just North of Bitton Station, and also at Meadowcourt/St Anne's School.

I have witnessed what I can only describe as "near misses", predominantly at the former. I have seen cyclists and pedestrians ignore the warning signs and whistles from the approaching train and crossing with scant regard for their own safety. I am aware that trains take a considerable distance and time to stop, even at low speeds. If there is one place that CCTV would prove a deterrent and potential life-saver it's at this crossing.

The crossing at "Meadowcourt" is less well used except during school opening and closing times, but even here I have seen groups of parents/carers waiting for children actually stood on the railway track, gossiping with each other completely oblivious to the possibility of a train approaching. They set a terrible example to small children.