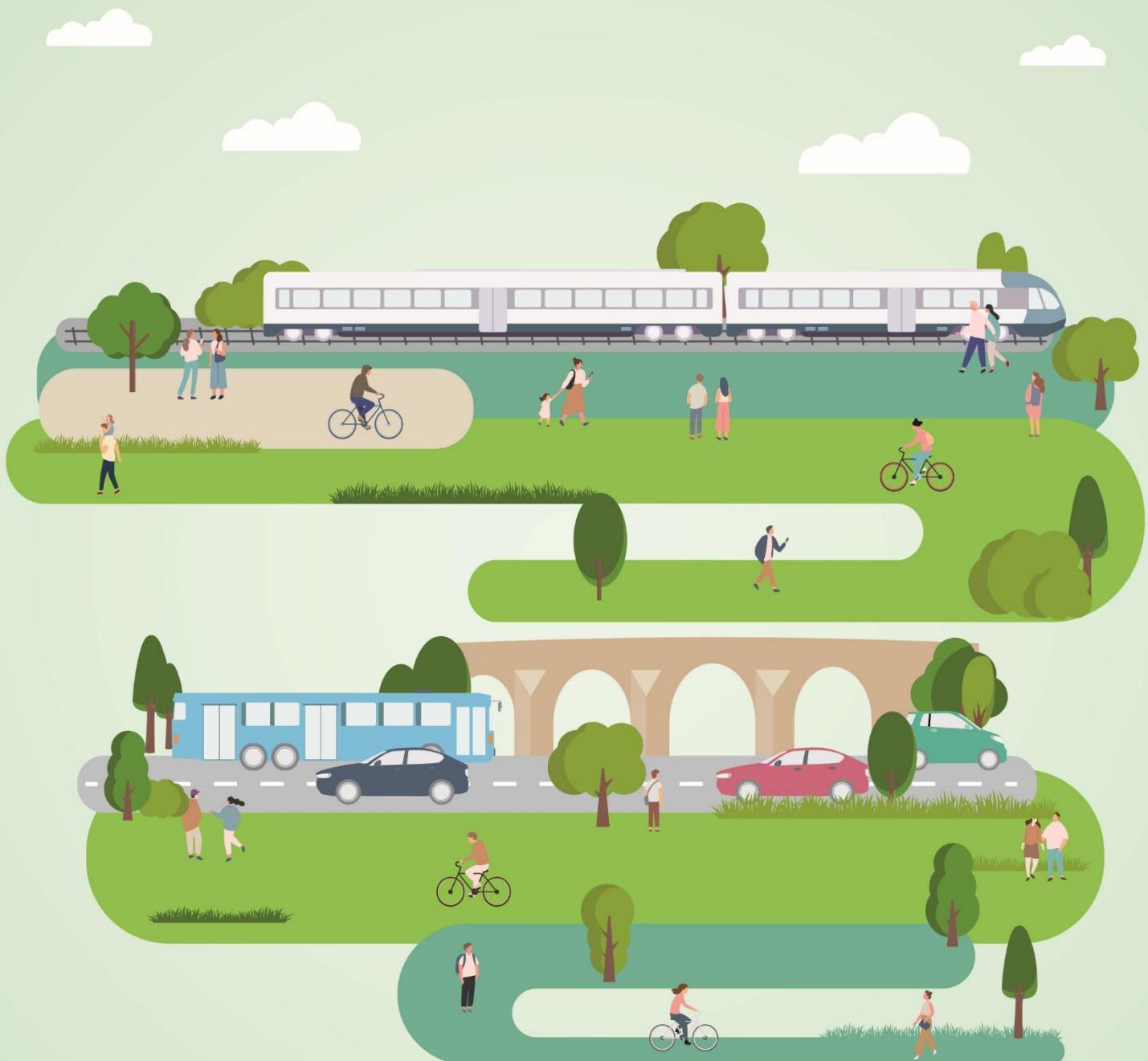


Baseline Consultation Report

Medway Local Transport Plan



Draft Report
November 2025

MEDWAY COUNCIL LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

STAGE 1 STAKEHOLDER AND GENERAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

Medway Council has commissioned SYSTRA to scope, develop and deliver a new Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Medway. The new LTP will replace Medway Council's existing LTP3 (2011 – 2026) and will:

- Establish a comprehensive strategy and policy framework for transport in Medway.
- Enable the identification of current and future transport, economic, social and environmental challenges and opportunities.
- Set clear and evidence-based investment priorities.
- Establish approaches to improve, manage and maintain the transport network efficiently and sustainably.

The first stage of consultation associated with development of the Local Transport Plan involved obtaining the views of stakeholders and members of the public on current transport challenges and opportunities in Medway. The purpose of this phase was to inform problem identification and the development and potential strategy themes.

Stage 2 of consultation will be to gather the views of stakeholders for the development of a vision for the strategy and for a range of possible future scenarios. This work will inform scheme option long-listing and appraisal.

Following the production of a draft LTP, Stage 3 of consultation will provide the public and stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on the proposals contained in the draft before it is finalised.

Stage 1 activity comprised:

- An online survey, distributed to the wider Medway community, including residents, people working, studying or going to school in Medway, people visiting or travelling in Medway, and people who travel through Medway.
- Engagement workshops with five groups of stakeholders (young people, people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010, transport operators and experts, businesses, and Parish Council representatives).

This report summarises the findings of this Stage 1 engagement activity.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Online survey

The online survey questionnaire was designed by Systra Ltd., and feedback on the survey design was provided in two rounds by Medway Council. The survey was scripted using Snap Surveys by Medway Council staff and hosted on the Council website.

The survey consisted of questions covering:

- Connection to Medway
- Current travel behaviours, including mode, time of travel, and purpose of travel
- Attitudes towards travel in and around Medway
- Barriers to using different modes of travel (walking, cycling, travelling by bus and rail)
- Views on transport issues in Medway
- Opportunities for changing travel behaviour (more walking, cycling, or use of bus or rail)
- Views on priorities for the Local Transport Plan
- Demographic information, including sex, age, ethnic group, disabilities and health conditions, area of residence, vehicle ownership, children, income, and working status.

The survey was advertised through the following channels:

- On the Medway Council website
- Via Medway's Social Media accounts
- On posters at bus stops and stations across Medway

The survey data was analysed using the statistical software SPSS. After undergoing data cleaning (e.g. ensuring no duplicate responses, ensuring variable and value labels were clear to interpret, and breaking-out multiple response sets), frequency tables were produced for all survey questions. Further to this, crosstabulations were produced to examine any differences in responses by key population segments (i.e. by respondent gender, age, and disabled people vs. non-disabled people). Differences in responses by these groups are commented upon in this report when statistically significant. Responses to open-ended questions were qualitatively coded by a SYSTRA researcher who identified themes from these responses.

2.2 Workshops

A bespoke topic guide was developed by SYSTRA Ltd for each of the five workshops. An initial four workshops (with people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010, transport operators, businesses, and Parish Council representatives) were hosted on MS Teams by a SYSTRA facilitator. Following discussion with the Council's Youth Service, it was decided to hold three smaller sessions

with young people, these were held in person and facilitated by a Medway Council youth worker supported by a SYSTRA researcher.

The topic guide for the workshops consisted of questions around:

- Overall views on transport in Medway
- Challenges with transport, and how these challenges impact people
- What works well with transport currently
- Views on Medway's transport in the future
- Barriers and enablers to future improvements to transport in Medway

Notes were taken by a SYSTRA researcher during the sessions. Four of the sessions (all but the sessions with young people) were recorded with participant consent and thorough notes, including verbatim quotes, were taken from MS Teams' automatic transcription service.

Participants for the workshops were identified with support from Medway Council; details of the workshop and attendees are as follows:

- Protected characteristics groups: Friday 10 October 2025 (4 participants)
- Transport operators: Monday 13 October 2025 (8 participants)
- Parish councils: Tuesday 14 October 2025 (4 participants)
 - An additional one-to-one interview was held with a participant who was unable to attend the 14 October workshop (1 participants)
- Businesses: Wednesday 15 October 2025 (6 participants)
- Young people:
 - SEND young people: Wednesday 5 November 2025 (5 participants)
 - Care leavers: Tuesday 11 November 2025 (3 participants)
 - Young people based in and around Grain: Tuesday 11 November 2025 (5 participants)

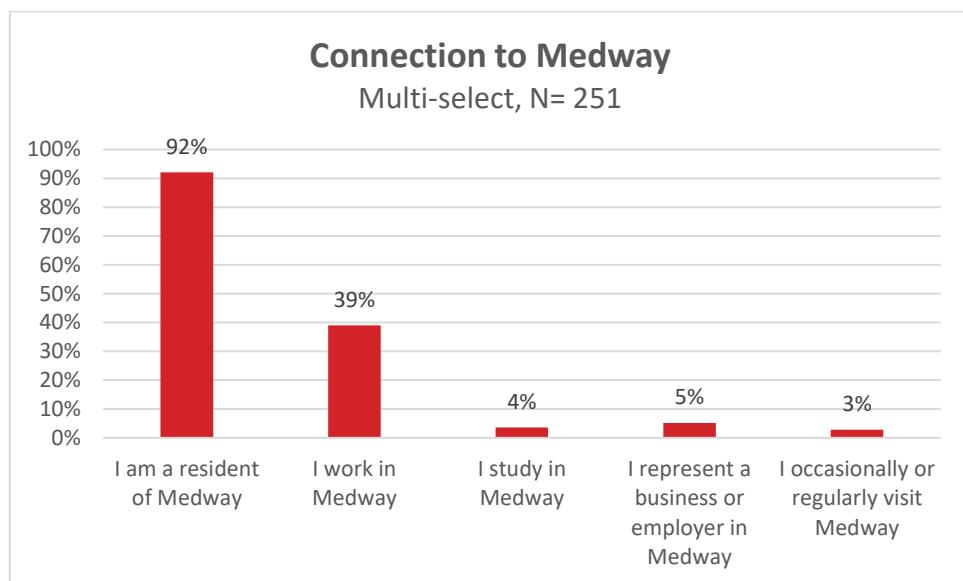
Notes were produced during the workshops, and supplemented/quality assured using the meeting transcripts after the workshops.

3. KEY FINDINGS FROM ONLINE SURVEY

3.1 Respondent profile

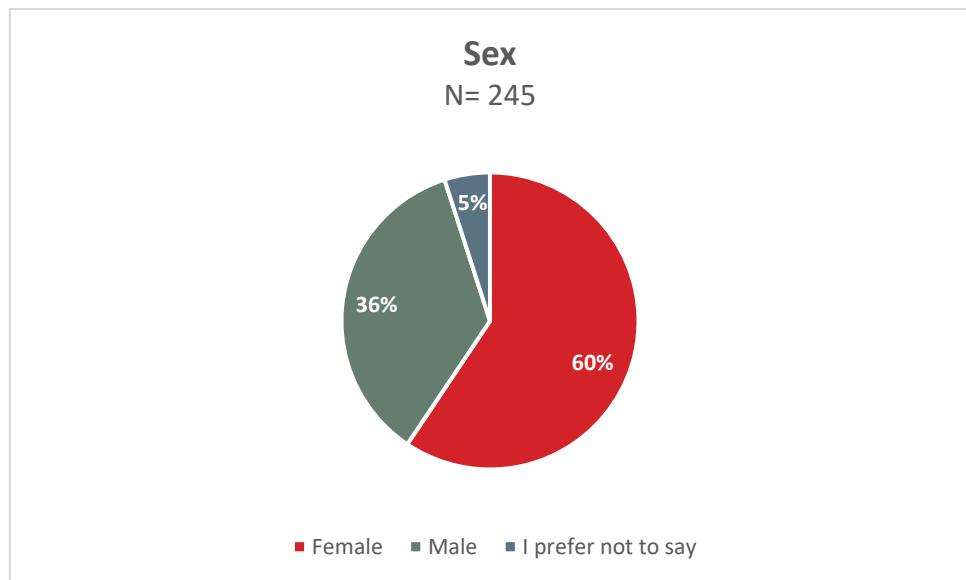
In total, the survey received 251 valid responses. In the first part of the survey respondents were asked a series of demographic questions; the following section summarises the answers to those questions.

3.1.1 Connection to Medway



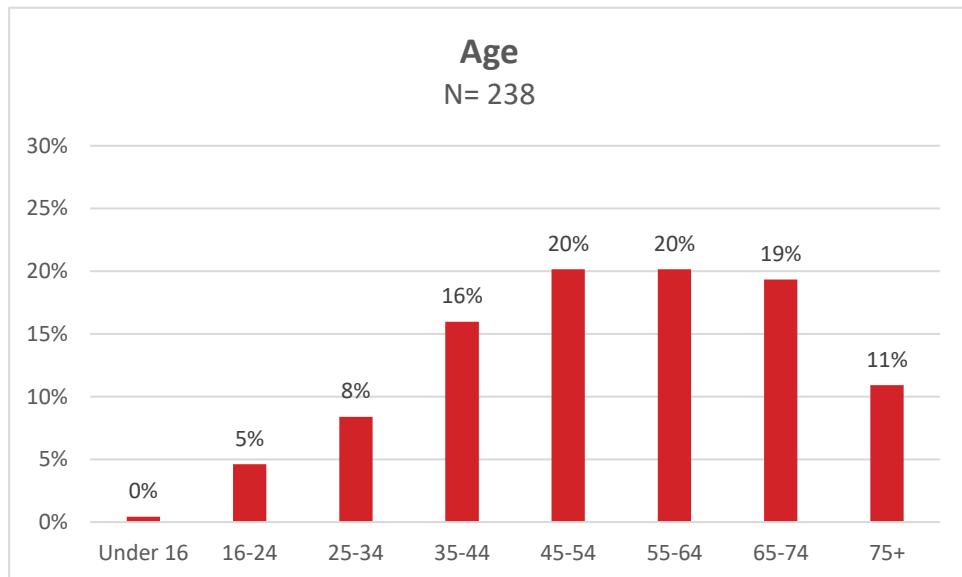
92% of survey respondents lived in Medway, and 39% worked in Medway. It was less common for respondents to study in Medway, represent a business or employer, or to be visitors. Note that the percentage total exceeds 100, as respondents were able to select multiple responses to this question.

3.1.2 Sex



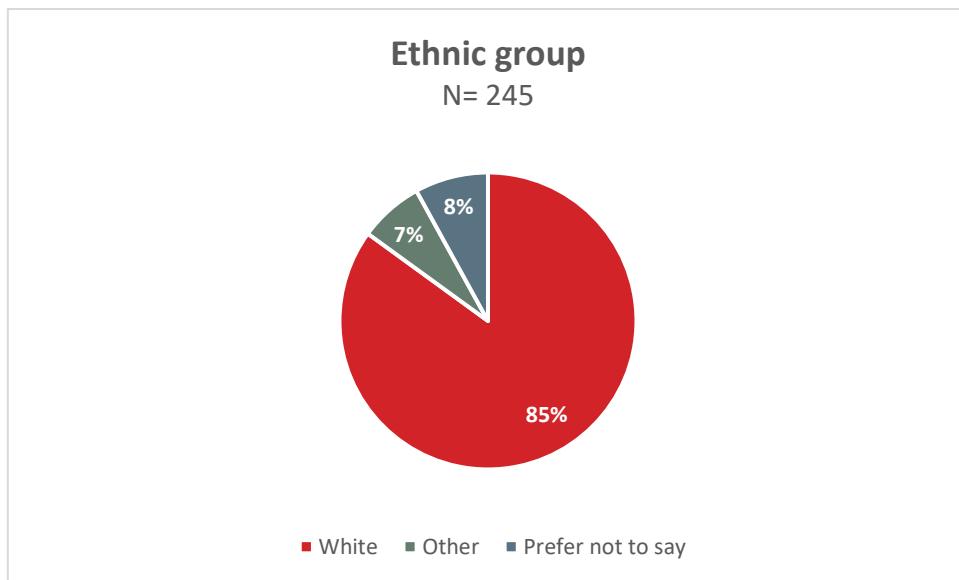
6 in 10 respondents were women, and 36% were men. The remaining 5% preferred not to state their sex.

3.1.3 Age



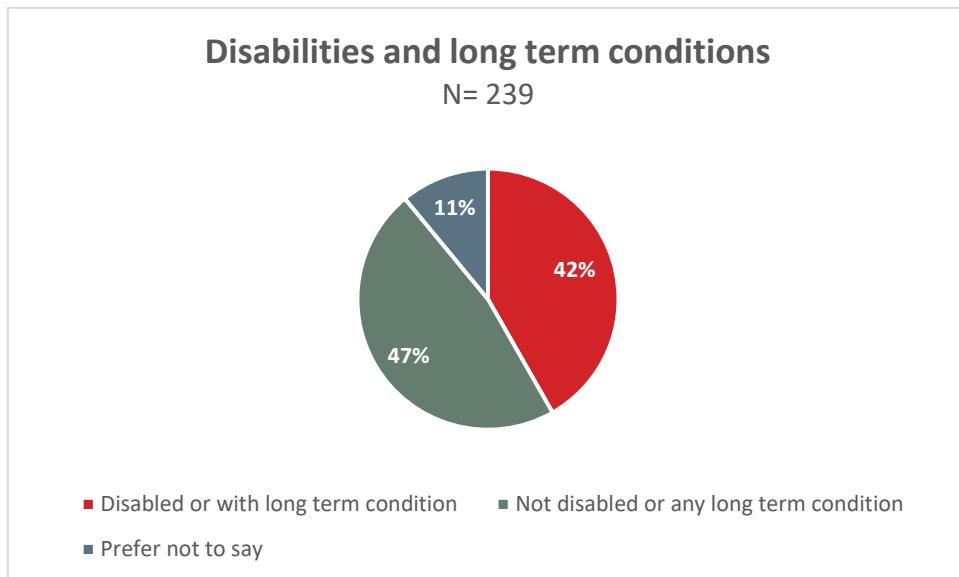
4 in 10 respondents in total were aged between 45 and 64 years of age; 3 in 10 were aged 65 or over, and 16% were aged between 35 and 44. In total, 13% of respondents were aged 34 or younger.

3.1.4 Ethnic group



85% of respondents were white¹. 8% preferred not to say, and the remaining 7% identified with other ethnic groups².

3.1.5 Disabilities and long-term conditions

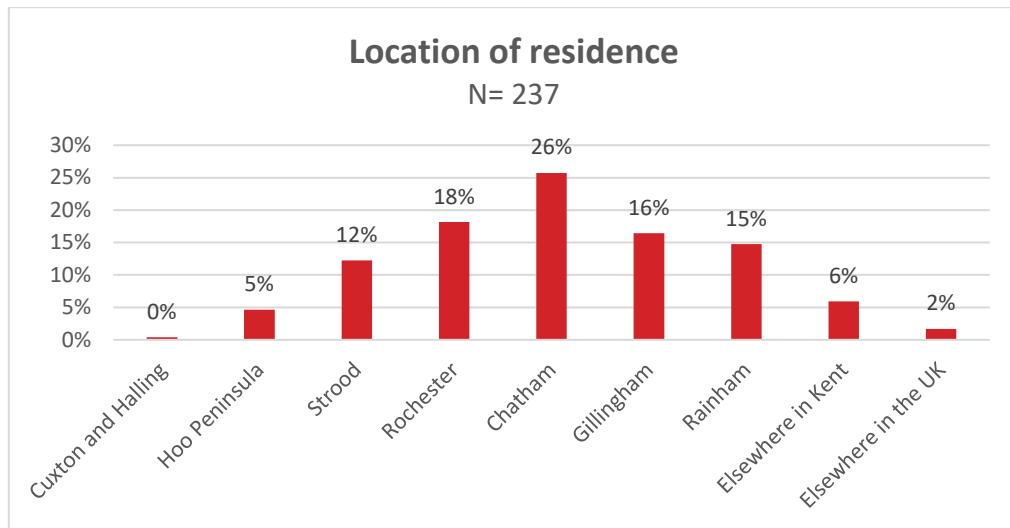


47% of respondents did not have any form of disability or long-term health limiting condition. Among the 42% who had a disability or long-term condition, 34% had a physical disability, 27% had 'any other long term condition', 18% had a mental health condition, 14% had a sensory disability, and 7% had learning difficulties.

¹ White – English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British, Irish, or any other white background.

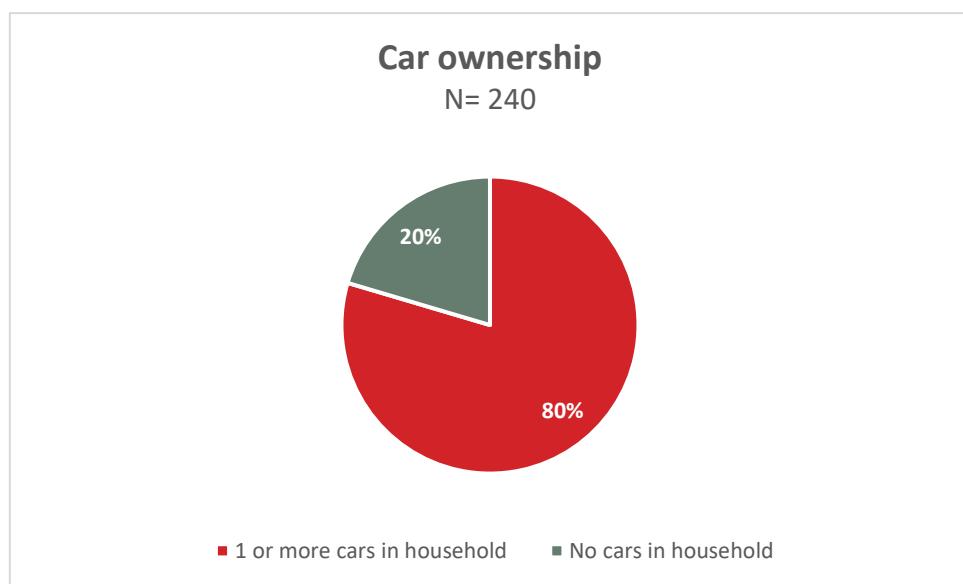
² Mixed – White and Black Caribbean, White and Asian; Black/Black British – African; Black/Black British – Caribbean; Any other Black/African/Caribbean background; Asian/Asian British – Indian; Asian/Asian British – Pakistani; Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi.

3.1.6 Location

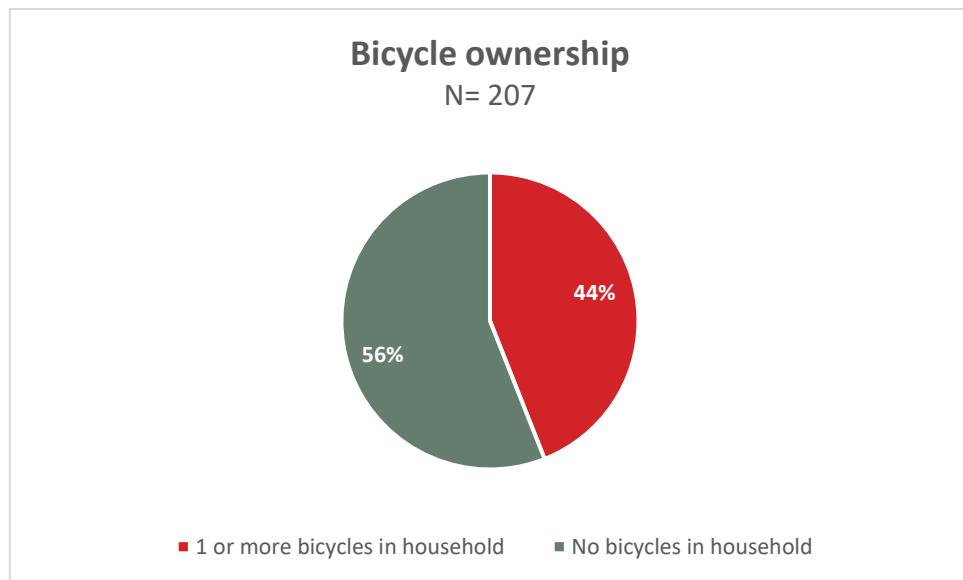


1 in 4 respondents lived in Chatham, and between 10 and 18% of respondents lived in either Strood, Rochester, Gillingham, or Rainham. Less than 10% each of respondents lived in either the Hoo Peninsula, Cuxton and Halling, elsewhere in Kent, or elsewhere in the UK.

3.1.7 Car and bicycle ownership

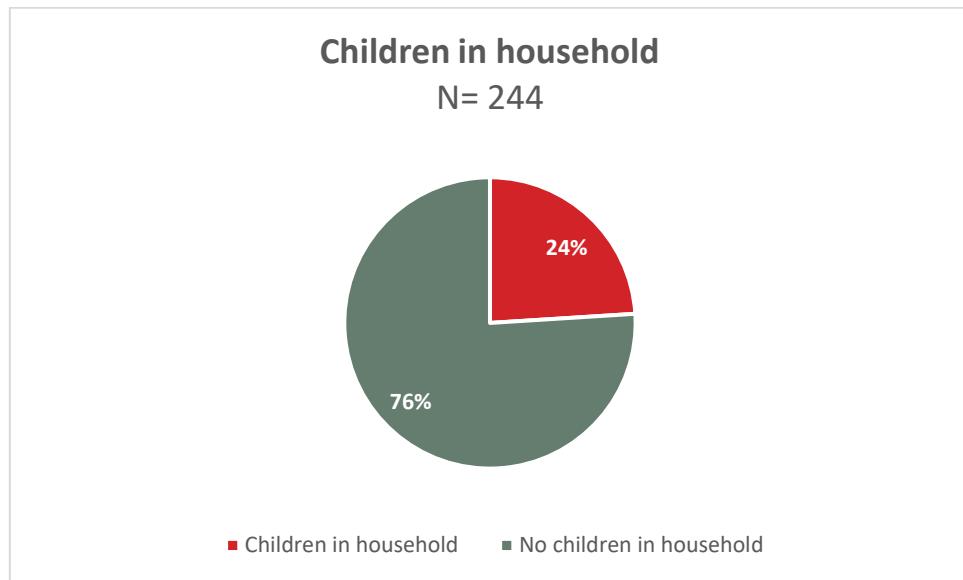


80% of respondents had one or more cars in their household, and the remaining 20% did not own a car.



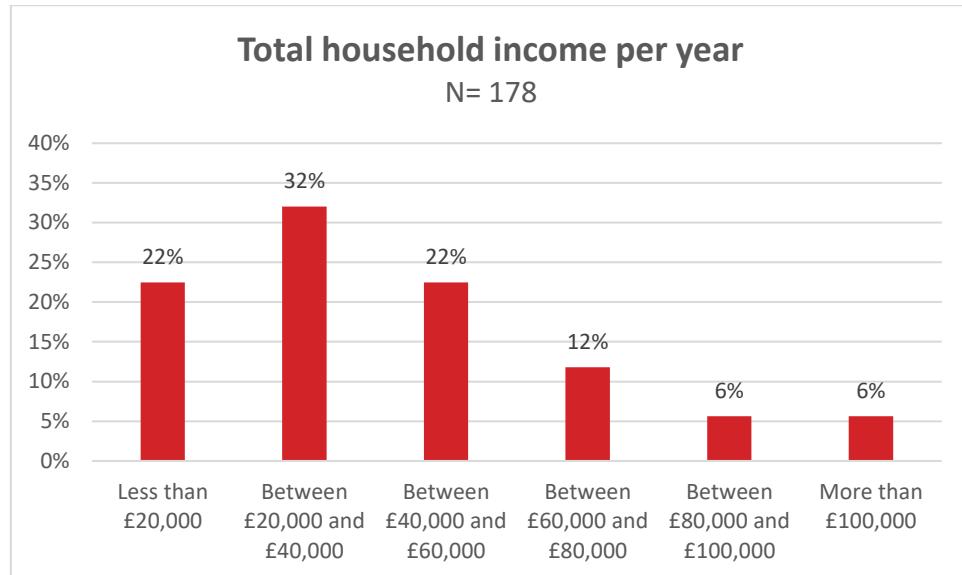
44% of respondents had one or more bicycles in their household, and the remaining 56% did not have any bicycles.

3.1.8 Children



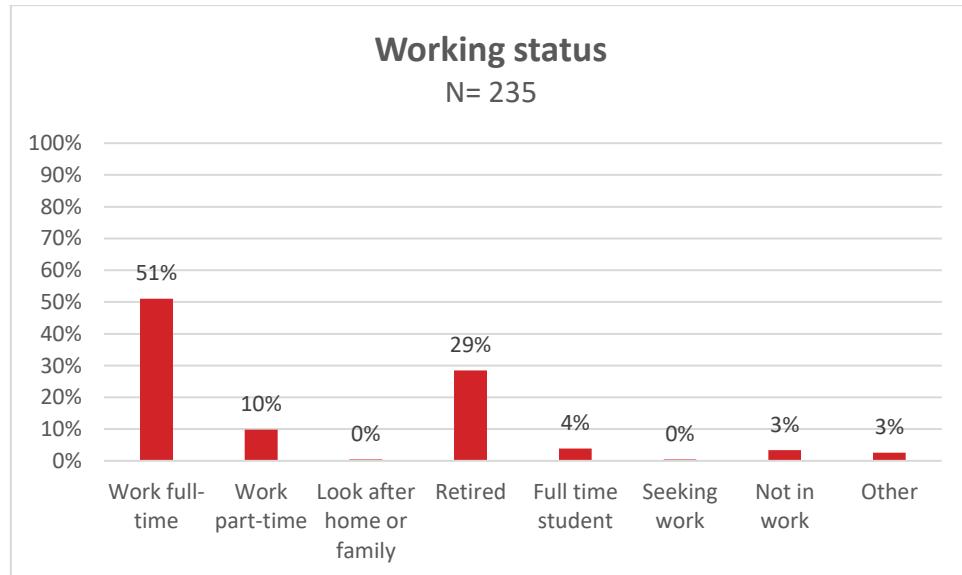
3 in 4 (76%) of respondents did not have children living in their household. The remaining 24% had children living in their household.

3.1.9 Household income



Around 8 in 10 (77%) of respondents had a total annual household income of £60,000 or less. The remaining 23% had a total annual household income of over £60,000.

3.1.10 Working status

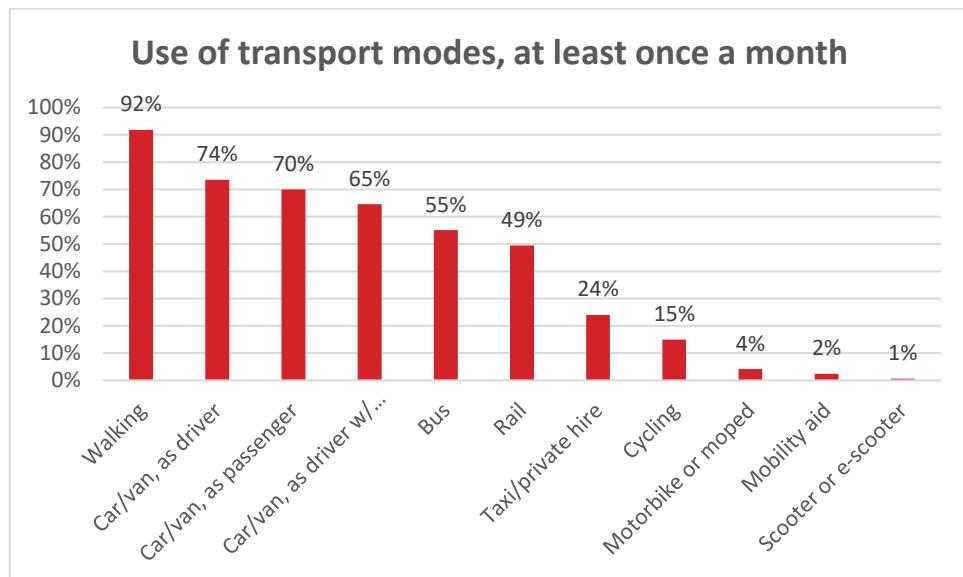


Half of respondents (51%) were in full-time employment (30 or more hours per week), and 10% were in part-time work (under 30 hours per week). 29% were retired and 4% were full time students. 3% were not in work and not seeking it due to long term illness or disability. A few respondents were either seeking work or looking after the home or family. 3% reported 'other', and this included being self-employed or freelancing, volunteering, and being stay-at-home carers or guardians.

3.2 Current travel behaviour

The next section asked respondents to describe how they travel, the journeys they made, and for what purposes.

3.2.1 Use of different modes of transport

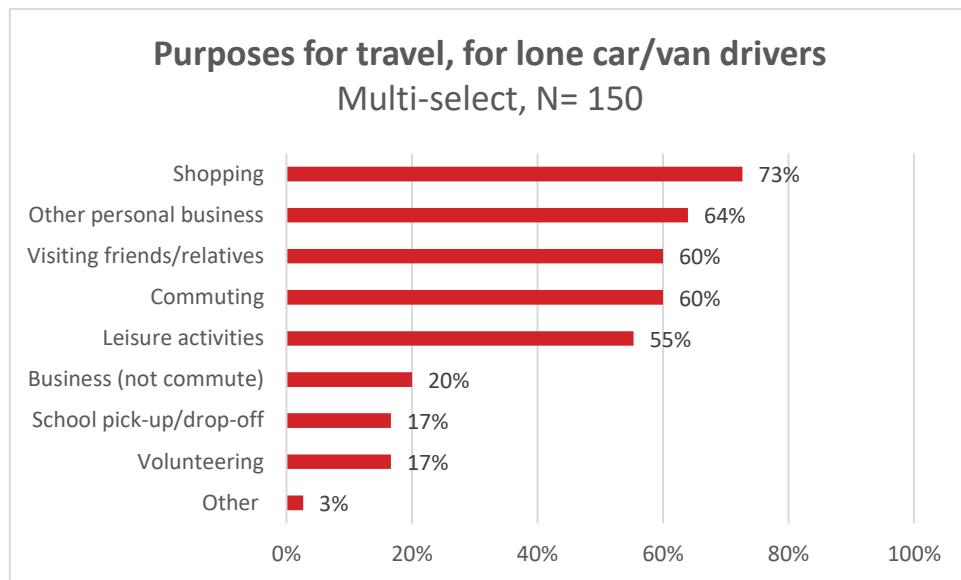


Respondents were asked about what modes of transport they use, and how frequently they use them. Per transport mode, the most common to have been used at least once a month, were:

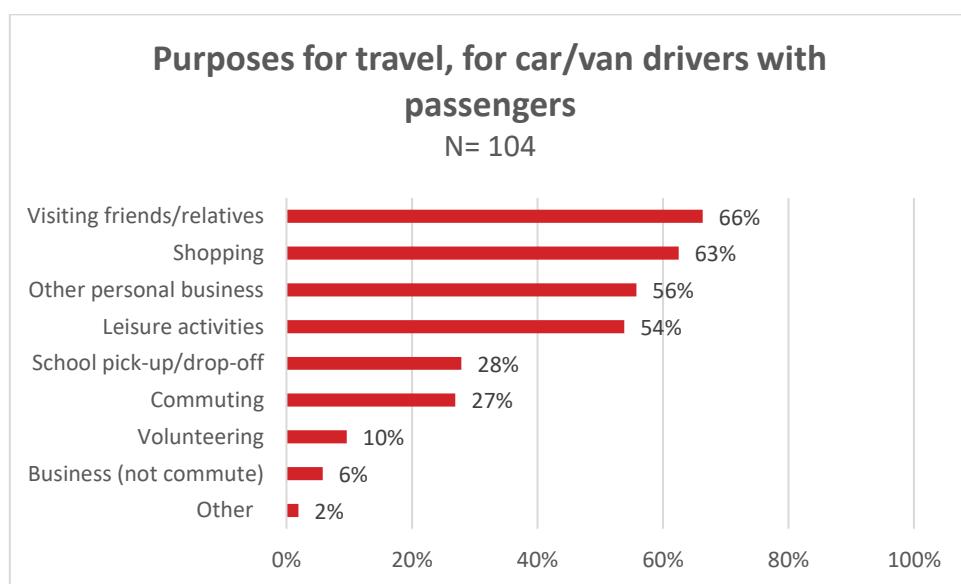
- Walking (92%)
- Car or van, as a driver (74%)
- Car or van, as a passenger (70%)
- Car or van, as a driver with passengers (65%)
- Bus (55%)
- Rail (49%).

About 1 in 4 (24%) used taxi or other private hire vehicle, such as Uber or Bolt, and 15% cycled.

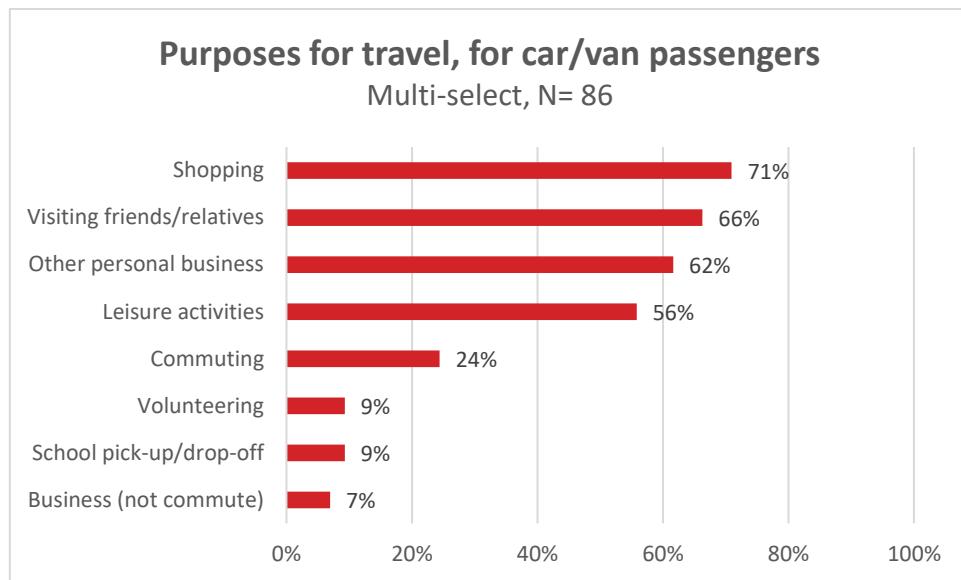
3.2.2 Travel purposes



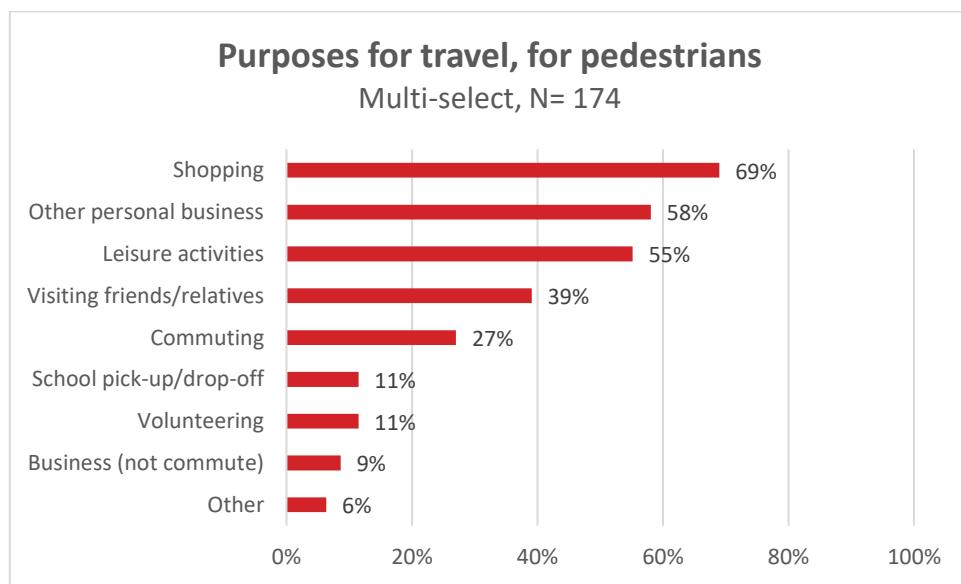
Among respondents who drove a car or van on their own, the most common purposes for travel using this mode were shopping, other personal business, visiting friends/relatives, or commuting.



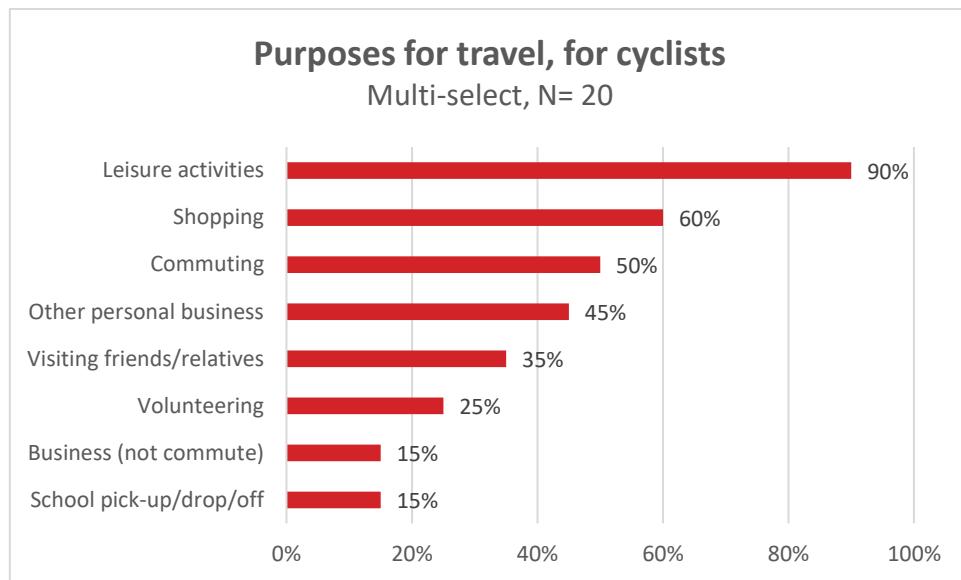
The four most common purposes for travel among car or van drivers with passengers were visiting friends or relatives, shopping, other personal business, and leisure activities.



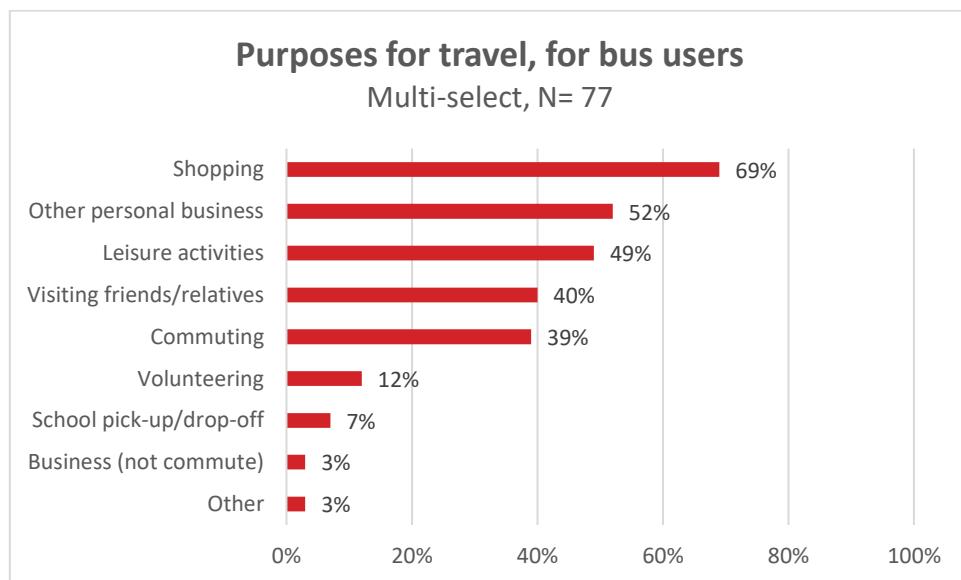
Among those who travelled by car or van as passengers, the most common purposes for travel were shopping, visiting friends or relatives, other personal business, and leisure activities.



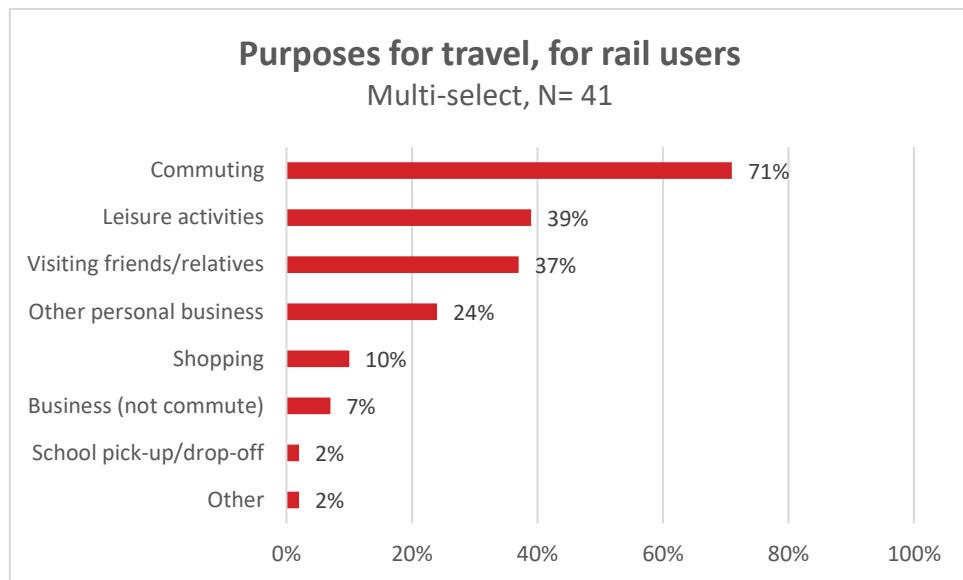
The most common purposes for travel for pedestrians were shopping, other personal business and leisure activities. As compared with those travelling by car, it was less common for people to walk to visit friends or relatives. A much smaller proportion (27%) of walkers than lone car or van drivers (60%) used this mode to commute to work, college or university. Those who reported having other purposes for walking than the options listed, tended to walk for exercise, leisure, dog walking or to shop locally.



The most commonly reported purpose for travel for cyclists was leisure activities, which includes sports. Further, 60% of these respondents cycle to go shopping, and half of cyclist respondents cycle to commute to work, college or university.



As for most other modes, shopping was the most reported reason for travel for bus users. About half of bus users also used it for other personal business (52%) and leisure activities (49%).



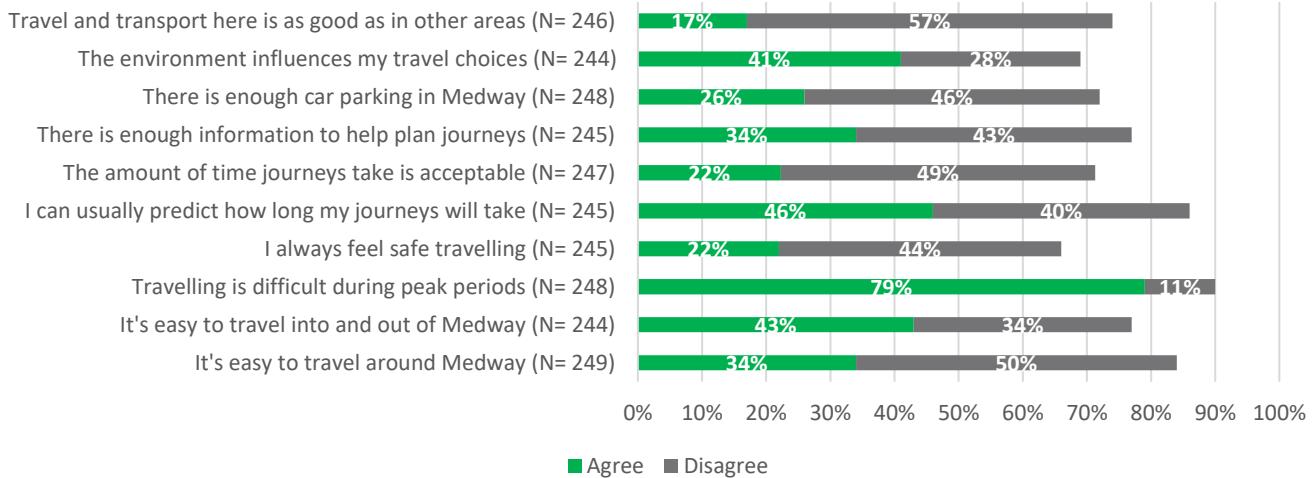
The purposes for rail travel were somewhat different from the other modes. The primary reason for rail travel was commuting (71%), and it was less common to travel by rail to attend leisure activities or attend to other personal business or shopping. No respondents reported travelling by rail to volunteer and only few for non-commuting business reasons or school travel reasons.

The remaining modes (motorbike or moped; taxi; and mobility aid) were used by only a minority of respondents and the purposes for travel are therefore not presented here. No scooter users reported their purposes for travel.

3.3 Attitudes to travel in and around Medway

Survey respondents were presented with a list of statements with which to either agree or disagree. A Likert scale was shown, with the answer options 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree', and 'strongly disagree', as well as 'don't know' or 'N/A'. Those who responded either 'strongly agree' / 'agree'; or 'disagree' / 'strongly disagree' have been combined in the below chart. **These questions were asked to all respondents, regardless of whether they had stated they used different modes of transport or not.**

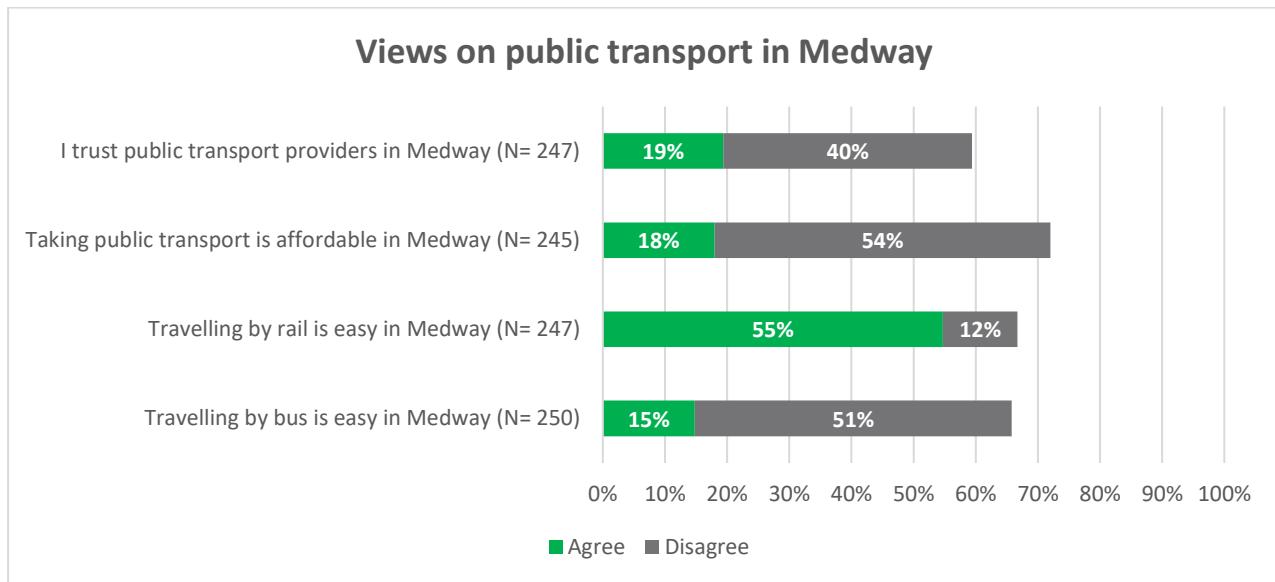
General views on travel in Medway



The main findings on general views on travel in Medway were:

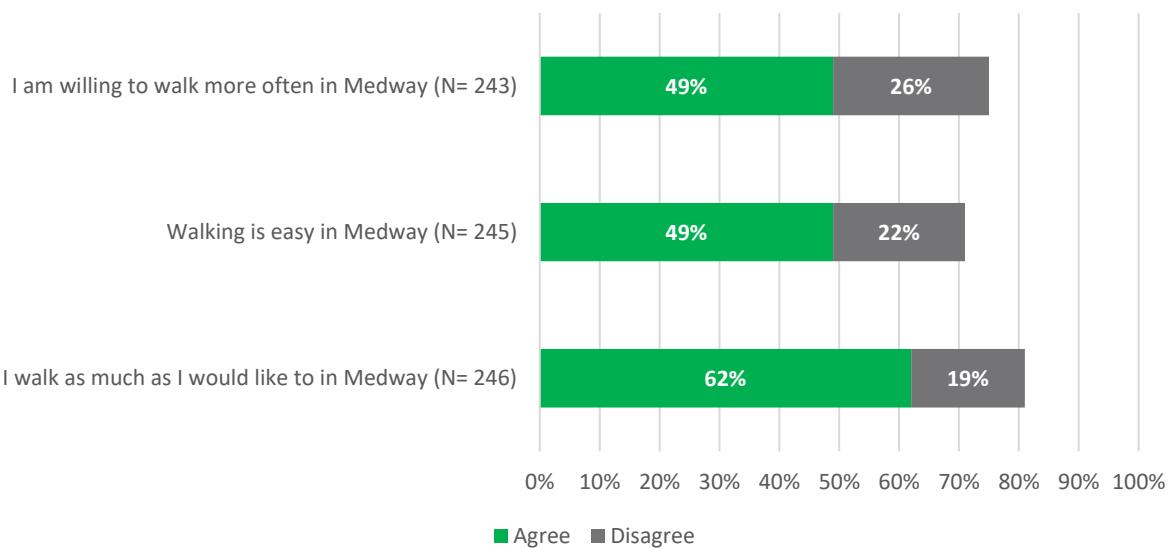
- 57% of respondents **disagreed** that travel and transport in Medway is **as good as it is in other areas**.
- 4 in 10 (41%) **agreed** that **consideration for the environment** influences their travel choices.
- Around half (46%) of respondents **disagreed** that there is **enough car parking** in Medway
 - Those aged between 55 and 74 tended to **disagree** with this statement more than people in other age groups.
- A higher proportion of respondents **disagreed** (43%) rather than agreed (34%) that there is **enough information to help plan their journeys** in Medway
- On how long it takes to travel around Medway:
 - Half (49%) of respondents **disagreed** that the amount of **time that journeys take** is acceptable. 22% of respondents agreed with the statement.
 - The proportions of respondents who agreed or disagreed that they can usually **predict how long their journeys will take** were fairly similar, although more (46%) **agreed** with this statement than **disagreed** (40%) with it.
 - People aged 45 years of age or older were more likely to **disagree** with this statement than younger people
- 44% **disagreed** that they always **feel safe travelling** in Medway
 - Women were more likely than men to **disagree** with the statement
- 8 out of 10 (79%) **agreed** that **travelling during peaks periods** (8-10AM and 4-6PM) is **difficult**
- 43% **agreed** that it is **easy to travel into and out of Medway**

- People who were 44 years or younger tended to agree with this statement more than older people did, and disabled people were less likely to agree than non-disabled people
- Half of respondents (50%) **disagreed** that it is **easy to travel around Medway**
 - People aged 45 or older were more likely to disagree with this statement than people aged 44 years of age or younger.



- 4 in 10 (40%) of respondents disagreed with the statement "**I trust public transport providers in Medway**"
- Just over half of respondents (54%) **disagreed** that public transport in Medway is affordable
 - People aged 24 or younger were more likely to disagree with this statement than people of older ages
- Also, just over half (55%) **agreed** that **travelling by rail** in Medway is **easy**
- Half of respondents (51%) **disagreed** that **travelling by bus** in Medway is **easy**.

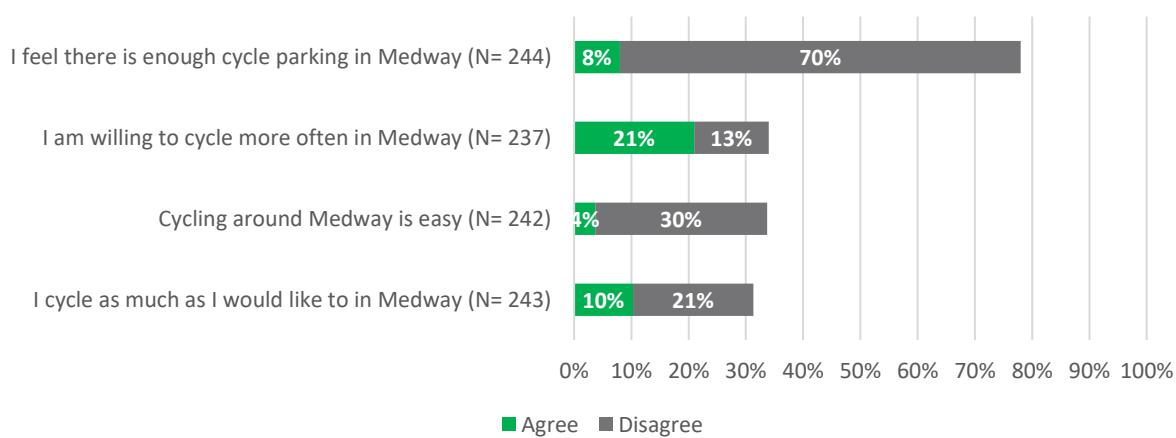
Views on walking in Medway



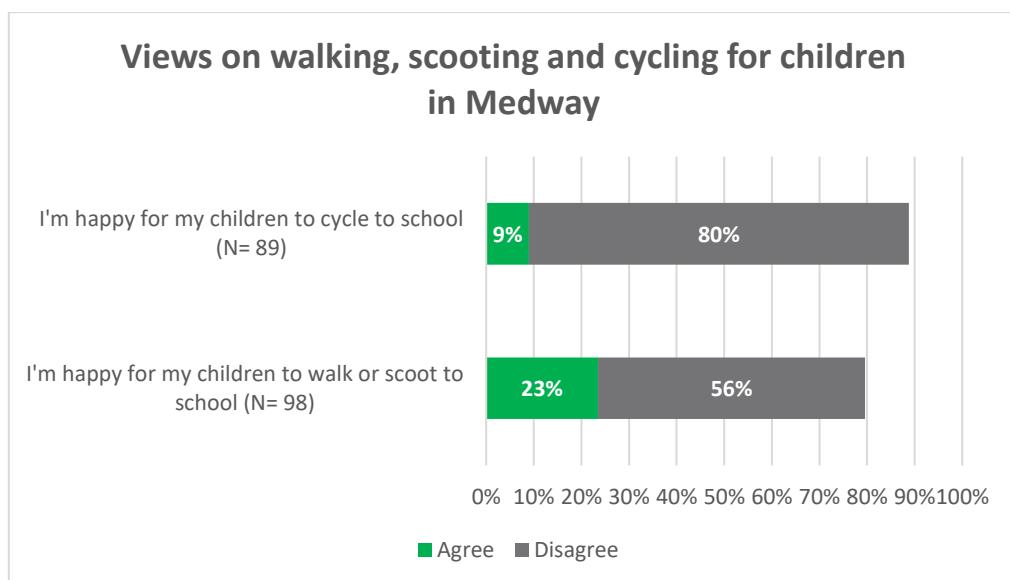
Views on walking in Medway were fairly positive compared to satisfaction with public transport and general views on transport and travel in Medway.

- Half of respondents (49% each) **agreed** that they are willing to **walk more often** and that **walking is easy** in Medway
 - Men were more likely than women to agree that walking is easy in Medway
- 6 in 10 (62%) **agreed** that they **walk as much as they would like to**, while 19% disagreed with this.

Views on cycling in Medway

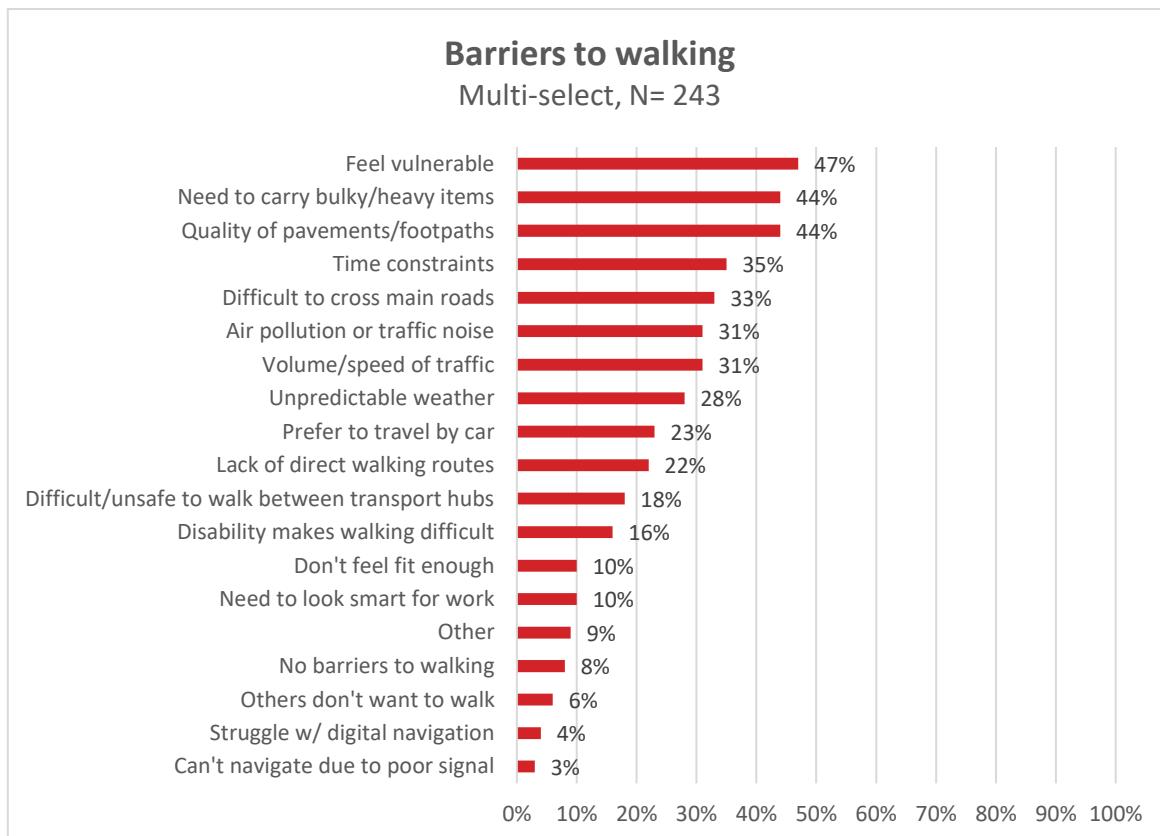


- 70% of respondents **disagreed** that there is **enough cycle parking** in Medway
- 1 in 5 (21%) **agreed** that they are willing to cycle more often
 - People over 65 years of age were less likely to agree they are willing to cycle more often than the younger age groups
- 30% **disagreed** that **cycling around Medway is easy**
 - Men were more likely than women to agree with the statement
- 21% **disagreed** that they cycle as much they would like to, and 10% **agreed** that they cycled as much as they would like to
 - Men were more likely than women to agree that they cycle as much as they would like to
 - People aged up to 24 were more likely than other age groups to disagree with the statement



- 8 in 10 (80%) respondents **disagreed** that they would be happy for their **children to cycle to school** (*noting that responses of 'don't know' or 'not applicable' to this question were omitted from analysis*)
- Views towards **children walking or scooting to school** were slightly more positive, with around 1 in 4 (23%) **agreeing** they would be happy for their child to do this, but still over half (56%) **disagreeing** with this (*noting that responses of 'don't know' or 'not applicable' to this question were omitted from analysis*).

3.4 Barriers to using different transport modes



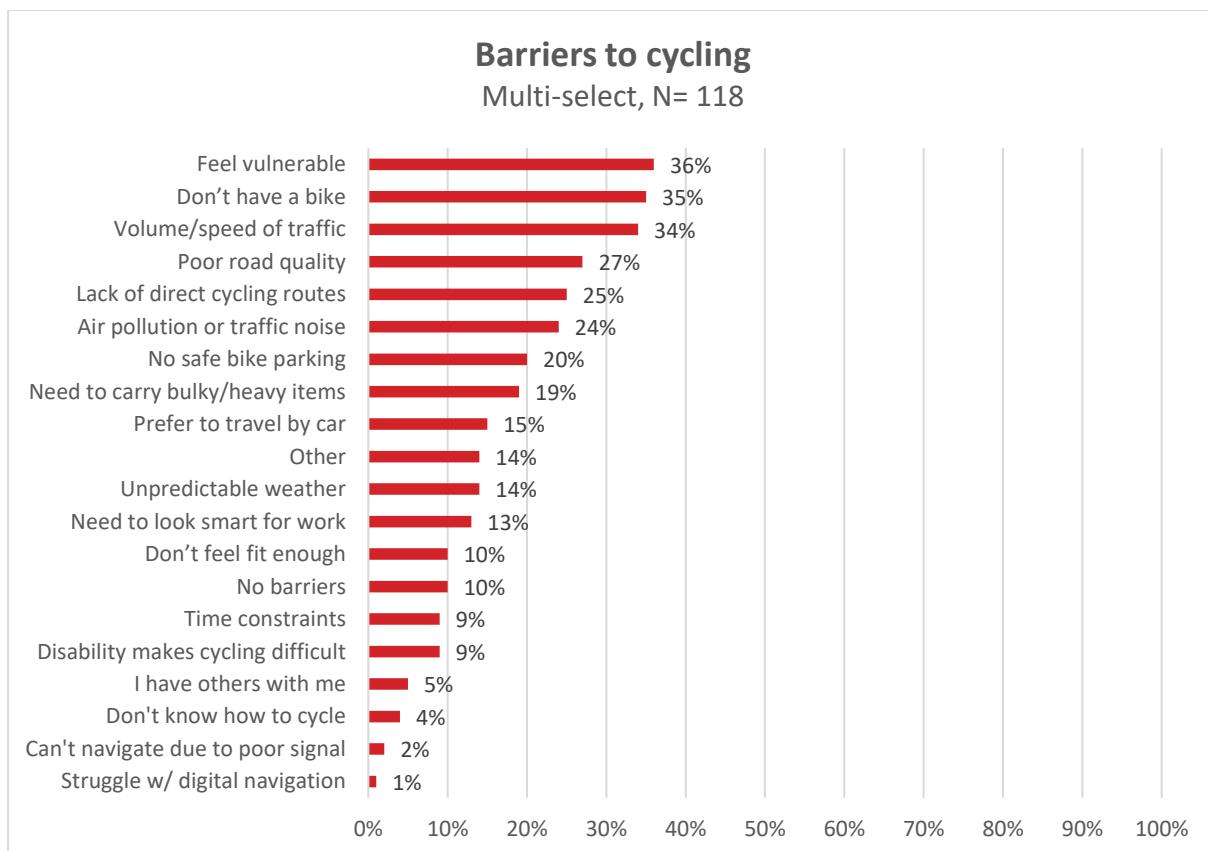
Respondents were asked if there was anything preventing them from walking as much as they would like to in Medway. It was possible to select multiple answer options for this question. The most common barriers to walking in Medway, reported by nearly half of respondents, were:

- **Feeling vulnerable walking on some routes** (47% of respondents reported this as a barrier)
 - Women, people aged 24 or younger, and disabled people were more likely than men, older people and disabled people to experience this as a barrier to walking
- **Needing to carry bulky or heavy items, for example shopping** (44%)
 - Men were less likely than women to experience this barrier, and disabled people were more likely than non-disabled people to experience needing to carry bulky or heavy items as a barrier
- **Poor quality of pavements and footpaths** (44%)
 - Women were more likely to experience this as a barrier as compared to men, as were those aged 65 and over as compared to younger people, and disabled people compared to non-disabled people.
- 8% of respondents selected 'other', and 17 survey respondents provided written descriptions of these barriers, which included:
 - Lack of green spaces to walk in (3 respondents)
 - Topography making walking difficult (2 respondents)
 - Walking not being feasible due to village living (2 respondents)

- Littering on pavements and footpaths (2 respondents)
- Personal safety concerns, with one respondent connecting this to lack of lighting during winter (2 respondents)

One respondent each also mentioned the following barriers:

- Poor road and footpath conditions causing drainage issues
- Long distances
- Time constraints
- No toilet facilities
- Vehicles parked on pavements
- A lack of shade during warmer weather.



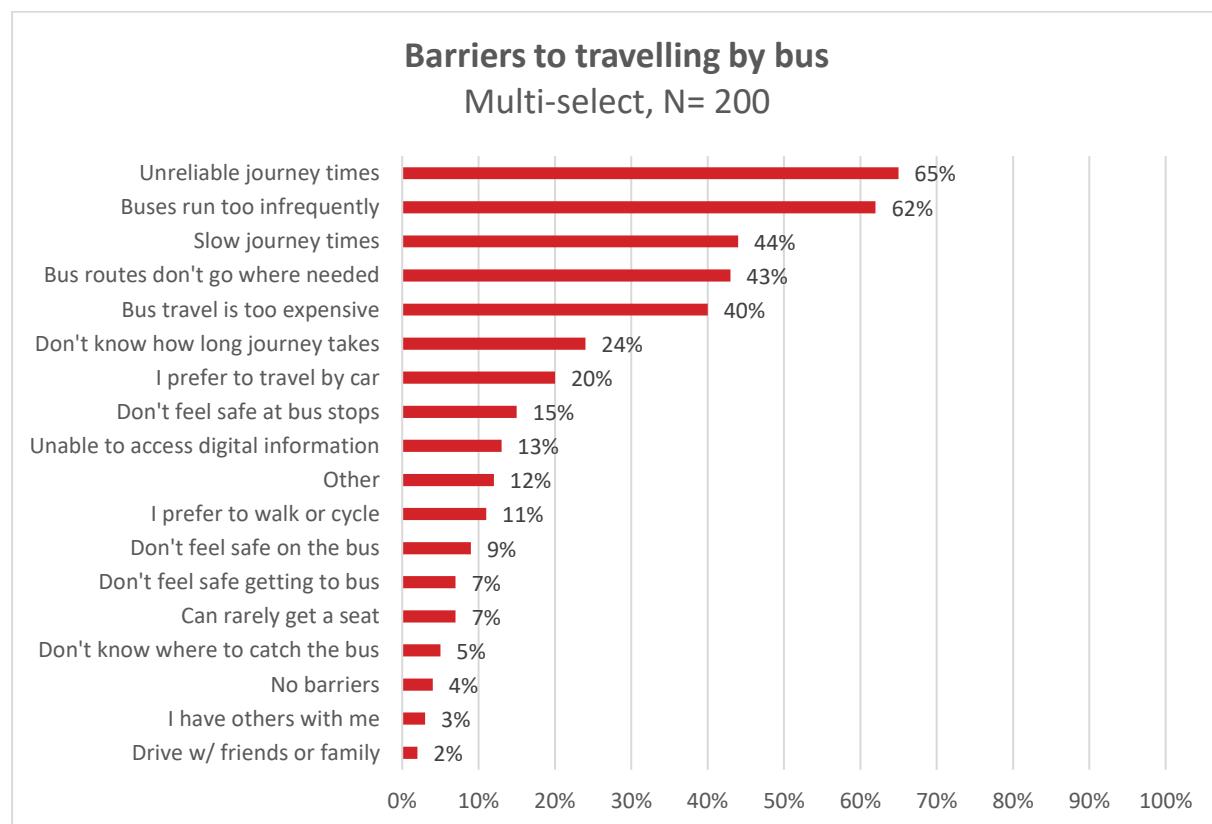
Respondents were also asked if there was anything preventing them from cycling as much as they would like to in Medway, and again, they were able to select multiple answer options. The most common barriers to cycling, reported by between 30 and 40% of respondents to the question were:

- **Feeling vulnerable cycling on some routes** (36% reported this as a barrier)
 - Women were more likely than men to experience this as a barrier, and non-disabled people were less likely to report this as a barrier than disabled people
- **Not owning a bike** (35%)

- Women were more likely than men to report not owning a bike as a barrier to cycling, as were people aged up to 24 or 65+, as compared to other age groups, and also disabled people as compared to non-disabled people
- **The volume or speed of traffic making them feel unsafe (34%)**
 - Disabled people were more likely to report this as a barrier than non-disabled people.
- 14% of respondents selected 'other', and 12 respondents provided a description of these other barriers to cycling:
 - Road safety concerns, either in general or specifically relating to motor vehicles or e-bikes (7 respondents)
 - Not enough cycle routes or lanes (3)
 - Long distances (2).

One respondent each also described the following barriers to cycling in Medway:

- Poor conditions of roads or cycle paths
- Time constraints
- Topography.

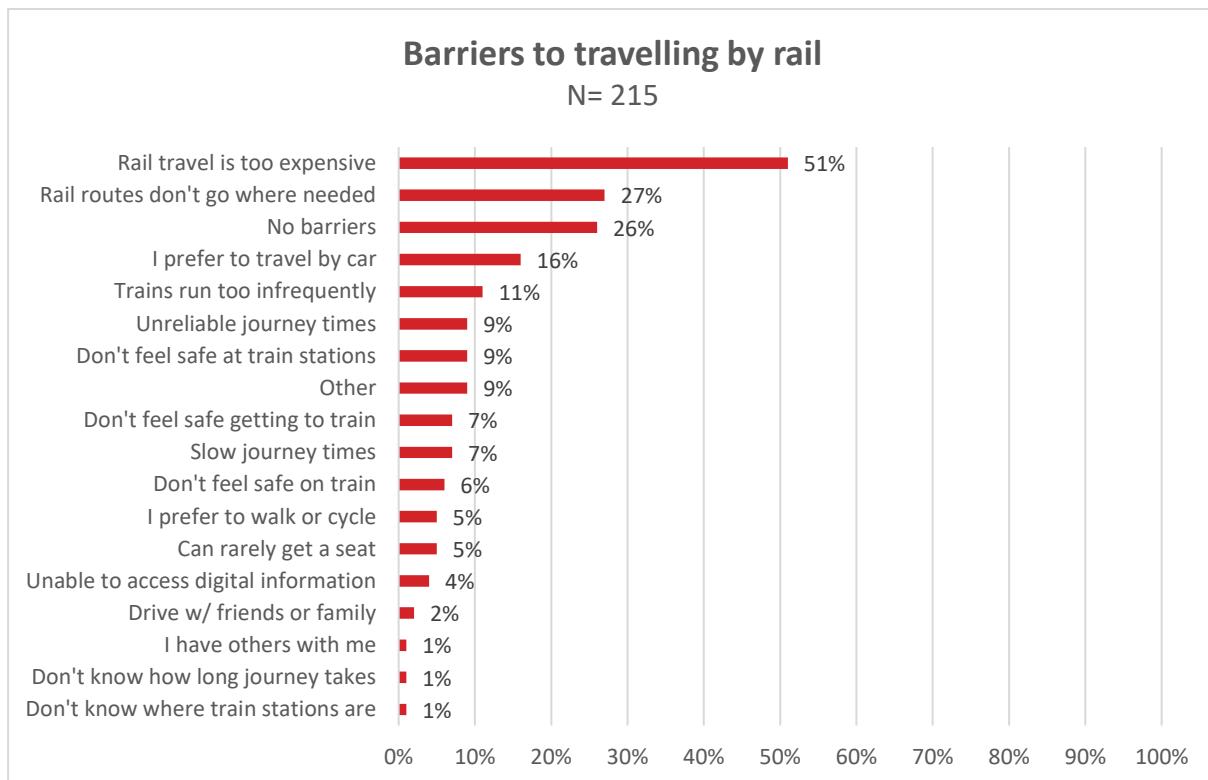


The most frequently listed barriers to bus travel related to bus journey times, the frequency of buses, the location of bus routes, and the cost of bus travel. As before, respondents could select multiple barriers. The five barriers reported by the highest proportions of respondents were:

- **Journey times by bus are unreliable** (65% of respondents)
 - Men were more likely than women to experience this as a barrier, as were people aged up to 24 as compared to other age groups
- **Buses don't run frequently enough** (62%)
 - People aged up to 24 and over 65 years or age were more likely to agree with this than other groups, as were non-disabled as compared to disabled people
- **Journey times by bus are too slow** (44%)
 - People aged up to 24 were more likely to experience this as a barrier than other age groups
- **Bus routes don't go where I need to travel** (43%)
 - Non-disabled people were more likely than disabled people to report this as a barrier
- **Bus travel is too expensive** (40%)
 - People aged under 65 were more likely to report this as a barrier than older people.
- 12% of respondents to this question selected 'other', and 20 respondents provided a written explanation of these barriers:
 - Buses are perceived as unreliable, with some respondents describing that buses can be cancelled at late notice, be late, or just not turn up as expected, (9 respondents)
 - Buses take too long, and connecting between buses can be difficult due to long waits (3)
 - Buses don't go frequently enough (2)
 - Buses aren't sufficiently accessible for disabled people (2)
 - There is a need for more direct routes (2).

One respondent each also described the following barriers to bus travel in Medway:

- Bus travel is too costly
- Lacking shade and shelters at bus stops
- Inaccurate timetables
- Poor bus coverage in some areas (not specified)
- Bus services don't run late enough in the evenings
- Anti-social behaviour on buses, including vaping.



Besides **cost** being listed as a barrier to travelling by rail by half of respondents (51%, and by more men than women, and by more younger than older people), the other barriers were reported by smaller proportions of respondents than for the other modes of travel. In addition to this, 26% reported experiencing **no barriers to train travel** (in comparison, only 4% reported no barriers to bus travel). The second most reported barrier to train travel was **rail routes not going where needed**, which was reported by 27% of respondents. As before, respondents were able to select multiple barriers to travelling by rail.

- 9% of respondents reported facing other barriers to train travel and 17 respondents provided a written description of these barriers, which included:
 - Car parking issues at train stations: either too few parking spaces or parking being too expensive (9 respondents)
 - Train stations being too far away from where people live to make train travel an attractive option (6)
 - Train travel being perceived as not time-effective, which some attributed to the distance to train stations (4)
 - Trains perceived as unreliable (3)

Additionally, one respondent each reported the following barriers to train travel:

- Not enough taxis to take you to and from the station
- Reduced Eurostar services
- Complicated pricing system (i.e. off peak and peak fares)

- Not enough direct routes
- Train travel too costly
- Bus connections perceived as unreliable.

3.5 Perceptions of issues with transport in Medway

Survey respondents were asked “What do you think is the most significant transport issue in Medway?”. There were 223 responses to this question. These responses were qualitatively coded into themes, and the frequency of each theme addressed in responses to this question are presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Points raised in open-ended responses to question “What do you think is the most significant transport issue in Medway?”

TRANSPORT MODE	THEME	NO. RESPONSES
Cars	Traffic congestion	84
Cars, buses, cycling	Roadworks / road closures / poor road conditions	60
Buses	Unreliable	54
Buses and trains	Too expensive	32
Buses	Too infrequent	22
Buses	Insufficient routes / links	21
Cycling	Poor quality or insufficient cycle paths	20
Cars	Parking issues	18
Buses	Poor coverage (e.g. in rural areas and new developments)	15
Buses	Insufficient or inaccurate information provision	15
Walking	Poor quality or insufficient footpaths, pavements or crossings	14
Buses	Lack of services early mornings, nighttime or at weekends	12
Driving	Traffic lights poorly timed or too frequent	9
Buses	Too slow	9

TRANSPORT MODE	THEME	NO. RESPONSES
All	Pollution (air and noise)	8
All	Difficulties accessing services (e.g. medical appointments) and work	7
Buses	Not enough seats/too small for volume of passengers	5
Buses	Bus connection issues	4
Buses	Poor waiting facilities (stops and stations)	4
Buses	More concessions needed	3
Buses	Anti-social behaviour on buses, stops and stations	3
Walking	Accessibility issues on pavements and footpaths for disabled people	3
Buses	Accessibility issues for disabled people	3
Trains	Not enough services	2
Walking	Lack of lighting	2
Buses and trains	More payment options needed (e.g. cash, contactless, Oyster card alternatives)	1
Buses and trains	Lack of connectivity between buses and trains	1
Walking	Anti-social behaviour concerns when walking	1

The issue with transport in Medway described by the most survey respondents was **traffic congestion**. Respondents described finding the volume of vehicle traffic in Medway overwhelming, and that this leads to congestion. Some highlighted congestion as particularly bad during peak commuting hours, i.e. before and after work and school, and congestion was also seen as an impact of a growing population in the area. Further to this, some respondents argued that the perceived **poor quality of other transport modes** (buses in particular, but also infrastructure for cycling and walking) had led to a perception of cars being the only viable option for transport and therefore an overreliance on cars.

"Poor communication between councils regarding road works. Recently took me 2 hours to go from Lordswood to Medway Crematorium because Medway council decided to do works at the same time as KCC on all diversions of the roundabout."

“Because the bus system is so terrible and expensive, the roads a[re] clogged with unnecessary car journeys.”

“Cars are given priority over every other mode of transport (walking, cycling, bus).”

“Increasing populations, too many developments and infrastructure not always meeting demand.”

“Car traffic exceeds road capacity for too much of the day. Public transport needs to be good enough to provide an alternative to using cars to get around Medway.”

Roadworks, road closures and poor road conditions were also frequently described transport issues, both for cars and buses.

“Constant temporary road closures (e.g. Station Road in Strood closed multiple times in last 12 months causing travel chaos) and very poor quality road surfaces.”

“Heavy traffic in lots of areas sometimes as a result of clashing roadworks.”

“The state of the roads- pot holes as you have to slow down to go over some of them otherwise you damage your car, which on main bus routes cause a delay on the buses. For the above reason I use my car which is more expensive than using a bus.”

As described above, public transport, buses in particular, was frequently described as having issues, in particular relating to **reliability, cost, frequency**, and **not going where they are needed**. Some respondents argued that too much consideration is given to car drivers and that there is not enough investment or action to improve bus services. Further, **unreliable bus services** was described by some participants as negatively impacting their access to services, including medical appointments, and to work.

“Our public transport services, particularly buses, are not to the standards (frequency, journey time reliability, length of service) as an area our size.”

“The bus doesn’t go directly where you want to. You always have to interchange at Chatham which wastes time. The cost is too high for both adults and children (it’s cheaper to drive or get a taxi). It’s not a frequent service at all but especially at school times when my local bus is taken off route to take kids to the high schools. It means I can’t use the bus for primary school or for work.”

“I didn’t need to drive before moving to Medway. Why do the bus routes all seem to go to Chatham, we don’t always want to travel there! The buses are the unreliable as are the digital updates on the due times, there is no notification on bus stops if they are temporarily out of use, it is expensive. The buses themselves are also very polluting.”

Issues were also raised around cycling and walking infrastructure, with respondents arguing for **safer and more accessible cycle paths and lanes and footpaths, pavements and crossings**.

“The lack of high quality walking and cycling infrastructure. Footways are often in poor condition and crossing at road junctions feels unsafe due to the wide radii/mouths, making it much longer to cross the road.”

“The lack of active travel routes, including cycle paths/lanes which don’t end when it becomes inconvenient or affects cars. Linked to this is the speed of motor vehicles on back roads, especially when main routes are closed or congested, making cycling or walking intimidating.”

“I don’t feel very safe walking in and out of Gillingham to get home and the paths I walk down are very inaccessible should anybody have a physical disability.”

Another frequently described concern was around parking, with some respondents describing a need for more parking spaces and more affordable parking, and others highlighting pavement parking as an issue for pedestrians.

“Lack of parking which is also overpriced.”

“A lack of parking, particularly in Rochester, and the cost if you manage to find a space.”

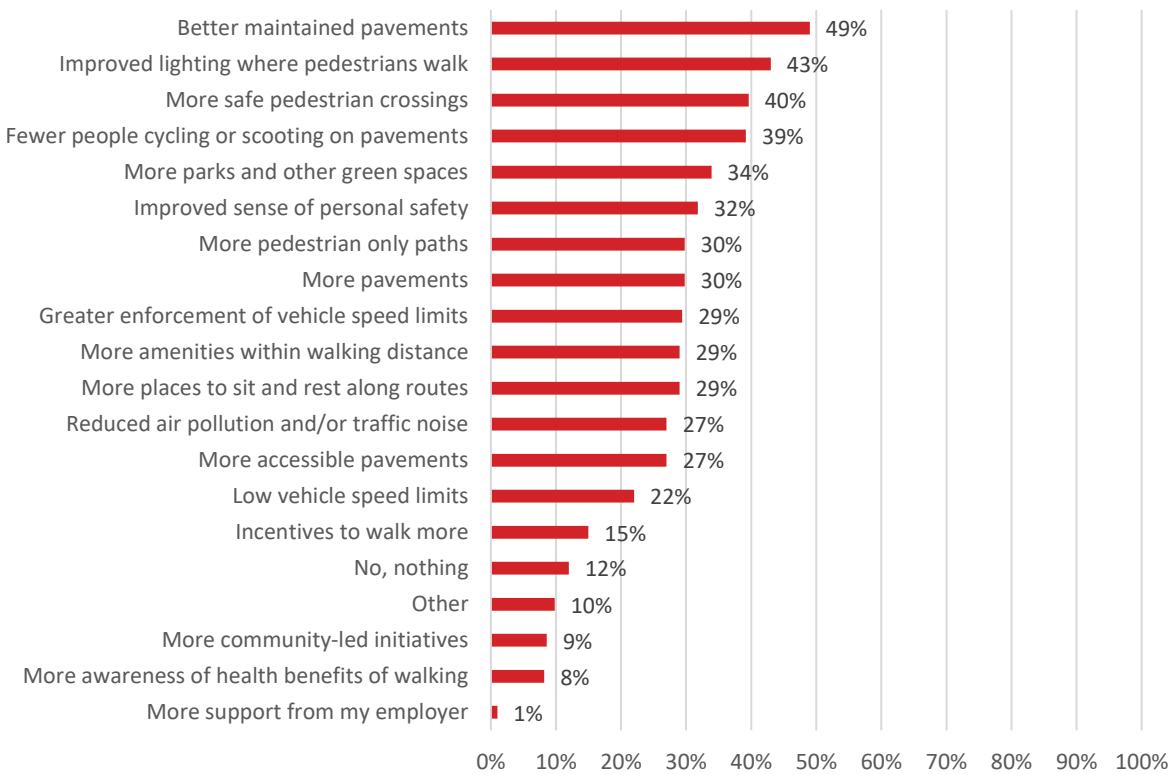
“Insufficient long stay parking close to stations.”

3.6 Enablers to using different transport modes

Survey respondents were asked about what would make active and sustainable modes of travel (walking, cycling, and travelling by bus or train) more attractive to them.

Perceptions of what would make walking more attractive

Multi-select, N= 245



Noting that respondents could select as many answer options as they wanted to, the most frequently reported improvements to make walking more attractive were:

- **Better maintained pavements** (49% of respondents)
 - Women were more likely than men to select this option, as were disabled people as compared with non-disabled people
- **Improved lighting where pedestrians walk** (43%)
 - Women were more likely than men to select this option, as were disabled people compared to non-disabled people
- **More safe pedestrian crossings** (40%)
 - People aged up to 24 years old were more likely than other age groups to select this option
- **Fewer people cycling or scooting on pavements** (39%)
 - People aged 65 or over were more likely to select this option than younger people
- 10% of respondents selected 'other', and 19 provided a written description of this:
 - Reducing pavement parking (6 respondents)
 - Improve cleanliness of pavements and pedestrian paths (5)

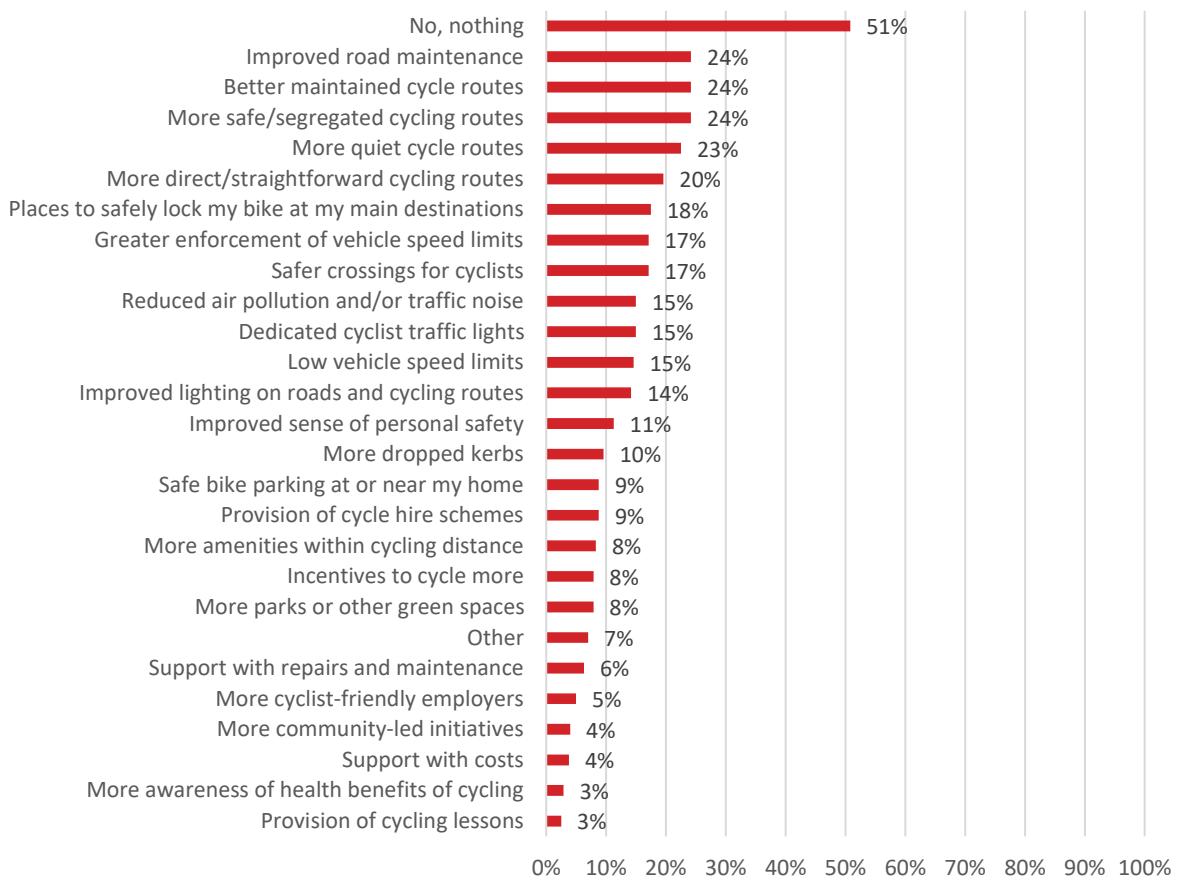
- Dog control measures including requiring dogs to be on leads and addressing dog fouling (3)
- Add more greenery (2)
- Reduce anti-social behaviour (2).

Additionally, one respondent each described the following would make it more attractive to walk:

- Provide alternatives to steep hills
- Provide more public transport
- Enforce driving violations
- Maintain greenery
- Ensure footpaths are consistent
- Reduce clutter on footpaths
- Provide walking route maps
- Provide parking for parks
- Ensure public rights of way.

Perceptions of what would make cycling more attractive

Multi-select, N= 240



Noting that half of survey respondents (51%) stated that there was **nothing that could make cycling more attractive** to them, the measures to make cycling more attractive agreed with by the largest proportions of respondents were:

- **Improved road maintenance** (24% of respondents)
 - Men were more likely to select this option than women
- **Better maintained cycle routes** (24%)
 - Men were more likely to select this option than women, as were people aged 44 and younger, as compared with those aged 45 or older
- **More safe/segregated cycle routes** (24%)
 - Men were more likely to select this option than women, and people aged up to 24 as compared to other age groups
- **More quiet cycle routes** (23%)
 - As before, men were more likely to select this option than women, and those up to 24 were more likely to select it than older age groups
- 7% of respondents selected 'other', and 4 respondents provided additional information on what would make cycling more attractive to them, which included:
 - Providing consistent cycling routes
 - Fewer Ubers on roads
 - Adding more cycle routes at river level
 - Providing low-cost cycling repair workshops with volunteer placements for young people.

Perceptions of what would make bus travel more attractive

Multi-select, N= 246



When it came to what could make bus travel more attractive, as before, respondents were able to select more than one answer, and the most commonly selected improvements were:

- **Bus stops with real-time information** (60% of respondents)
 - Women, people aged up to 24, and disabled were more likely than men, older people, and disabled people to select this option
- **Improved reliability of buses** (59%)
 - Women and people aged up to 24 were more likely to select this option than men and older people
- **More frequently running bus routes** (55%)
 - Bus routes to more destinations (48%)
 - More affordable bus fares (47%)
 - People aged 65 and over were less likely to select this option than younger people.

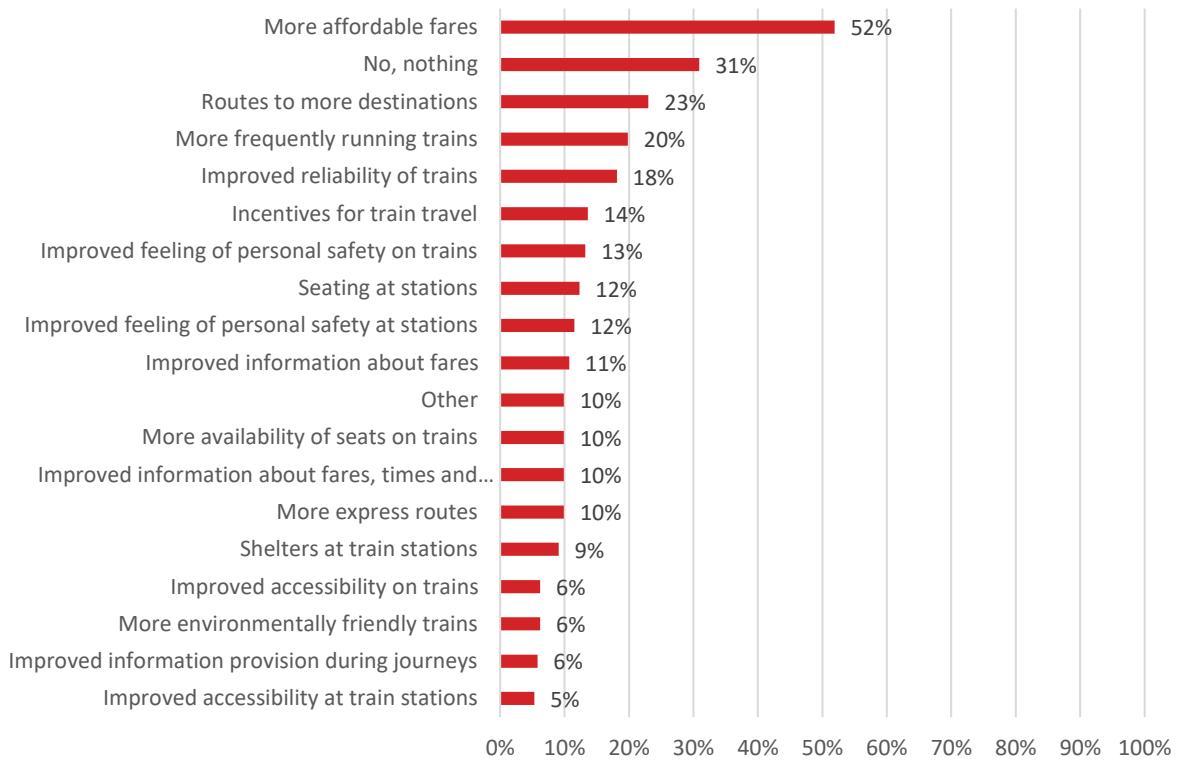
- 8% of respondents selected 'other', and 14 respondents suggested measures that would make bus travel more attractive to them, which included:
 - Concessionary bus travel for over-60s (3 respondents)
 - Concessionary bus travel for students and pupils at peak times (2)
 - More morning/evening services (2).

One respondent each suggested the following measures to make bus travel more attractive:

- A new bus hub to the west of Medway
- Tickets that carry over when changing buses
- Free bus travel for all
- A change of bus service providers
- Better behaved school children on buses
- Unified ticketing across operators
- Less anti-social behaviour on buses.

Perceptions of what would make train travel more attractive

Multi-select, N= 243



With regards to making train travel more attractive, the measures that the largest proportions of respondents supported were:

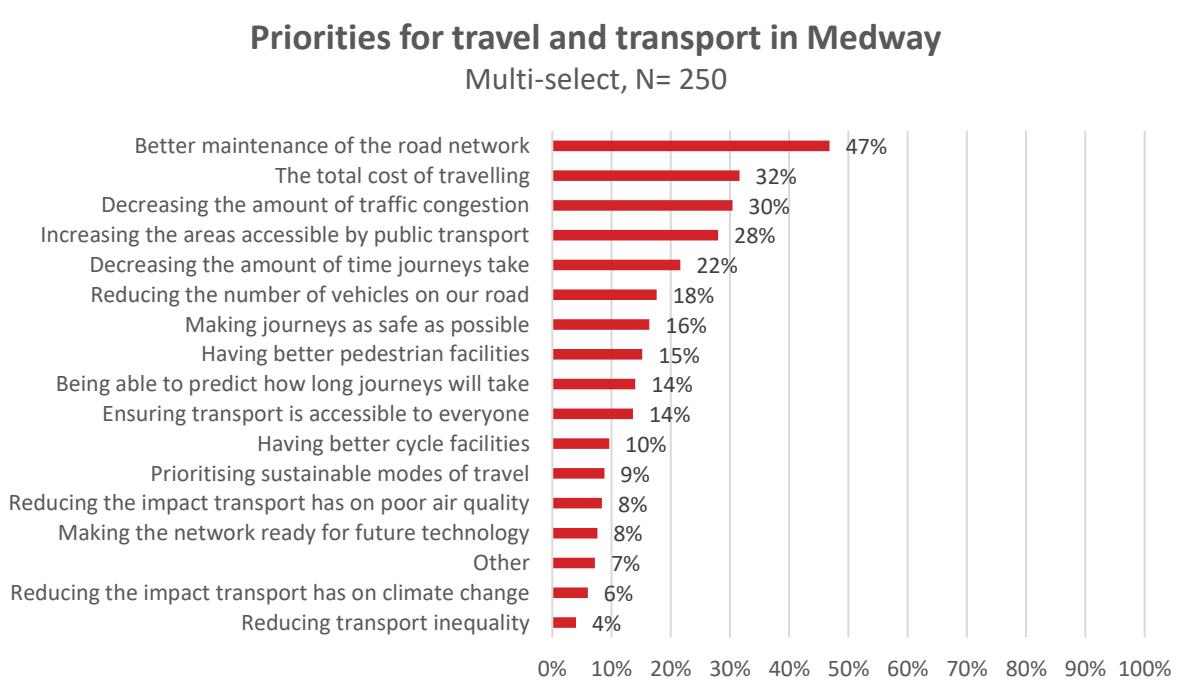
- **More affordable fares** (52% of respondents)

- More men than women selected this option, and more people aged up to 24 as compared to other age groups
- **Routes to more destinations (23%)**
 - Men were more likely than women to select this option, as were people aged up to 24 as compared to older age groups
- **More frequently running trains (20%)**
 - More people aged 24 or under selected this option as compared to other age groups.
- 31% of respondents stated there was **nothing that could make train travel more attractive** to them, and 10% selected 'other'. 11 respondents provided other measures that could make train travel more attractive to them, which included:
 - Connecting bus services with trains, including bus services to and from bus stations (3 respondents)
 - Train stations in additional locations in Medway (3)
 - Changes to parking provision at train stations, including more long stay parking and more affordable parking (2).

The following measures were suggested by one respondent each:

- Being able to get a taxi to the train station during school drop-off times
- Less complicated rail fares
- Better integration of cycling and train travel, by allowing more bikes on trains and providing secure bike storage at stations.

3.7 Priorities for development



Survey respondents were asked to choose the three things most important to them for transport and travel in and around Medway. The most frequently selected priorities were:

- 1. Better maintenance of the road network (47% of respondents)**
 - People aged 45 and over were more likely to select this option than other age groups
- 2. The total cost of travelling (32%)**
 - Non-disabled were more likely than disabled people to select this option
- 3. Decreasing the amount of traffic congestion (30%)**
- 4. Increasing the areas accessible by public transport (28%)**
- 5. Decreasing the amount of time journeys take (22%).**
 - 7% of respondents selected 'other', and 14 respondents provided written descriptions for this, which included:
 - Improved public transport, in general (4 respondents)
 - More greenery (2)
 - Better planning of roadworks (2)
 - Facilitating active travel (2)

One respondent each proposed the following priorities:

- Improving access between residential areas and main routes
- Improving traffic flow
- Better bus connections
- Transport planning in accordance with population growth
- Making improvements for motorists
- Removing Uber from Medway
- Adding more parking at the hospital
- Improving driver behaviour
- Adding more public toilets open at all times

3.8 Concluding comments

Finally, respondents were asked if they wanted to provide any additional comments on what they thought the priorities for the Local Transport Plan should be. 119 respondents provided an answer to this, and these have been summarised into four broad categories for prioritisation: improvements to public transport; improvements to motor vehicle driving experience; improvements to active travel; and other comments.

3.8.1 Improvements to public transport

62 respondents wrote comments arguing that improvements to public transport should be a priority for the Local Transport Plan. These comments largely echoed sentiments summarised previously and included:

Arguments for the need to make public transport attractive to all, by providing improved service levels on buses and trains. This included requests for more and improved transport links, for instance to Medway hospital and less populated areas, and greater integration between trains and buses. A need

for buses at more times to the day was also expressed: buses that run later in the evenings, earlier in the mornings, and at weekends, and more frequently. Improved reliability of buses was also a key concern, with several people describing instances of buses not running according to timetables or not turning up as expected. Related to this, respondents also argued for improvements to information provision, about bus routes, stops and times, including real-time bus information. The case was also made for need for modal shift in Medway, away from cars to public transport, made possible through improvements to public transport. Several comments were also made to argue for the introduction of trams in Medway, and to introduce more dedicated bus lanes.

"Medway needs a redesign in terms of public transport / roads – it is way behind other conurbations of a similar size. But also people need re-educating in terms of their mindset about using the car as it's an easy, comfortable way to travel – that will be hard to do."

"Buses need to be more reliable, more frequent, run to more places during evenings and weekends and better values. Employers and bus companies should offer incentives to travel by bus. There should also be more priority for buses on the roads to speed up journeys during peak times."

"Definitely making sure buses run reliably and are not cancelled."

"Evening transport – very difficult to get buses to/from town centres in the evenings. Public transport does not support our nighttime economy."

"Make more bus routes covering more remote places."

"I really think you're missing a trick with Gillingham pier and the surrounding area. You could easily extend a lot of bus routes to reach this community."

"Joined up transport, i.e. a bus arrives at Chatham station/ Rochester on time and then you are able to get a train 5 or 10 minutes later to London, and obviously the same on return."

"To genuinely improve bus reliability it can only be achieved through physical infrastructure that prioritises buses on road spaces, such as bus lanes and bus gates."

The need to make public transport more affordable and accessible was also highlighted, with both buses and trains found to be expensive. Arguments for the continued provision of concessionary bus travel were made. Additionally, people argued that concessionary travel passes should be valid at more times, including in the mornings, and for more people, including from the age of 60.

"Train prices are insane and a massive disincentive."

"Reduce the cost of public transport."

"A cheaper, more effective public transport system will provide an incentive for people to reduce personal car use."

"Both buses and trains are expensive I don't know how much influence the Council can have over fares – ideally the buses should be under Council control and made affordable."

"Ensuring free bus passes for the elderly as this has a benefit for good health for older people."

"Being able to use free bus pass earlier."

"Making public transport accessible, flexible and reliable."

"Please, please give it your serious consideration to provide better and more frequent bus service with particular attention given to older/disabled passengers. For most elderly people buses are the only means to take them to and from hospital appointments, shopping social visits and getting out home to enjoy the outdoors."

"Reduce age criteria for pensioner pass from 65 to 60 as it is elsewhere in the country."

Suggestions were made to think beyond bus and train with regards to the provision of public transport, with a number of survey respondents proposing the addition of a tram, park and ride services, and car sharing:

"More incentives for car shares, park and ride etc."

"Tram system? Be bold with your plan. People will use sustainable transport if they can."

"Park and Ride near the motorway with dedicated bus routes which together are more reliable than driving all the way into Chatham."

"Free or cheap park and ride schemes as in other areas of the UK (with toilet facilities)."

"More could be done to promote walking to school to help get cars off the road or car share."

"Make things electric and have a modern, frequent and all day and night running transport service. The rest of Europe uses trams for this purpose, not pokey minibuses."

3.8.2 Improvements to motor vehicle driving experience

34 respondents wrote comments regarding the experience of driving a motor vehicle. Most of these comments were about the need to direct additional funding to road resurfacing, better coordination of roadworks and more capacity for motor vehicles to ease congestion.

With regards to road resurfacing, many survey respondents argued that fixing potholes and other motorway issues should be prioritised in the new Local Transport Plan. Reducing congestion on roads was also argued by many survey respondents to be made a priority for the new Local Transport Plan. Many respondents also argued that congestion on roads should be addressed through better coordination of roadworks, and suggestions were also made to build wider roads, provide more parking spaces, and to allow traffic to flow better through adjustments to traffic lights, increased speed limits and removing red routes.

"To maintain the road network in such a condition as to make it safer to take the car or bike out rather than risking costly damage."

"The paths and roads are horrendous in Medway, the worse I've seen in years as in pot holes and pavements raising."

"Filling Potholes. Must be main priority."

"The roads around Medway can be very congested. With all the building going on the roads need to be looked at. They are just going to get worse with more cars using them, they need to be maintained properly."

"Congestion should be the main priority but alternatives have to be attractive."

"Improve traffic flow through the towns and sensible adjustments to traffic lights to allow constant flow at a given speed."

"Stop the war on cars! Provide wider roads with more lanes and more parking."

"Avoid roads going from two lanes to one lanes and producing bottle necks that just add to traffic."

"I do not want to start or end my long commute into London each day with anything other than the comfort of my car where I control what time I leave and where I go on the way."

3.8.3 Improvements to active and sustainable travel

24 respondents commented that improvements to active travel should be a priority for the new Local Transport Plan, on the basis of active travel facilitating improvements to public health and being beneficial to the environment, and respondents suggested that both health and environmental concerns should be addressed through the Local Transport Plan by making it easier and more attractive for people to travel actively in Medway.

With regard to improvements to active and sustainable travel, respondents argued that there was a need for behaviour change, especially with regards to the journey to school. Suggestions were also made to improve infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, including adding more footpaths and separate cycle lanes, making existing footpaths and pavements more accessible to disabled pedestrians by reducing pavement parking and making road surfaces more even, and adding more secure bike parking.

"I think the school streets are a great idea but something needs to be done to encourage parents to park away from the school or to walk with their children."

"I don't trust that my bike isn't going to get nicked so I feel uneasy parking it in some places. Even places like dockside which feels safer, there is no indoor/bike shed type thing. Instead my expensive bike is there on show for everyone to see."

"We need to adapt to the changing climate. ... The wider street environment really needs to be considered, all new developments should have to include for street tree planting and or active travel support."

"More people should be walking children to school, and secondary school children should be able to get themselves to school without being driven."

"The state of the roads and pavement in and around Maidstone is terrible especially if, like me you have a disability that affects your walking."

"More greenspaces and more footpaths that bypass towns (i.e. footpath from rochester railway station to the bus station via the river medway etc etc)."

"Improved pedestrian facilities Ban pavement parking."

"I think safe and segregated cycle paths and affordable and reliable buses should be the main priorities."

3.8.4 Other feedback

24 respondents suggested that other focus areas should be prioritised in the new Local Transport Plan. These comments tended to revolve around suggestions to have less housing development in Medway, concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour (including illegal scooter driving), and suggestions for other improvements, including to town centres.

"Too much development without adequate infrastructure."

"Stop building more houses in Medway."

"Definitely needs to be some further security measures on public transport."

"For women this area has become very unsafe with the influx of people from London now in the area."

"There is also a lot of antisocial behaviour on buses."

"Scooters are not legal [...] so should not be used in public areas or on our roads and footpaths."

"Try and make local centres more attractive, encourage more visible policing on high streets. Consider relaxing the areas that are defined as primary retail areas to contract and allow a change of use, so that one doesn't have to walk through boarded-up shop fronts to get to the town centres. Maximise other uses, like GP and community in town centre locations, to maximise their footfall."

4. KEY FINDINGS FROM WORKSHOPS

4.1 Views on transport in Medway currently

Across the workshops, participants tended to bring attention to issues they experience with public transport in Medway currently. Key issues across multiple workshops included (in no particular order):

- The reliability and quality of bus services
- The cost of public transport
- Insufficient information provision for public transport
- Inequalities in the provision of public transport around Medway and car reliance
- Lacking provision for active travel
- Congestion on roads

These issues are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

4.1.1 The reliability and quality of bus services

Buses in Medway were depicted as unreliable across all stakeholder workshops. This was described as negatively impacting Medway residents' ability to access services - for instance late or cancelled buses were held as responsible for people missing medical appointments. Further, late buses were described in the workshop with people with protected characteristics as particularly negatively impacting disabled people, as being out in the cold for extended periods can be especially challenging for people with certain forms of disability. Issues with reliability meant that some workshop participants - especially Parish Council representatives - expressed distrust in public transport, particularly with bus services.

"Frequency and timing [of buses] are real issues." – Protected characteristics workshop participant

"You have some buses that don't turn up when it's supposed to be there, they just skip some buses." – Young people's workshop participant

"I think we need to do much, much more in the future to try and get reliability and punctuality into the bus network." – Transport operator workshop participant

"We mustn't forget the children from the outlying villages need transport to school, and quite often buses do not turn up and all the children are standing at the bus stop, sometimes during winter time, in freezing cold and pouring rain." – Parish councils workshop participant

The supply of bus services in Medway was frequently described as not adequately meeting demand, especially during peak hours. Pre- and post-school hours bus services were described as especially difficult; with overcrowded buses, a lack of seating, and some workshop participants described finding it intimidating to travel by bus during these times. In the workshop focusing on protected characteristics, participants highlighted this may feel especially intimidating for older and disabled passengers. Participants in the young people's workshops also reported finding bus services at school

times overwhelming. Suggestions were made to provide school buses to avoid these issues, or to provide double-decker buses during these times, to provide more space.

Crime and anti-social behaviour at bus stations, bus stops and on buses was also described as a deterrent to travelling by bus, with some participants describing incidents of attacks at bus stations. Vandalism, general disrepair and a lack of lighting were also described as features of bus stations, especially Chatham bus station.

“When standing alone and being female, it’s quite intimidating, when it’s dark especially, it’s quite uncomfortable.” – Young people’s workshop participant

“I want a new bus station, loads of flowers, comfortable chairs so people can actually wait for the bus..., and security guards.” – Young people’s workshop participant

4.1.2 The cost of public transport

Workshop participants often described cost as a barrier to using public transport. Some participants argued that the £3 fare cap has negatively impacted passengers because they are no longer able to get return tickets or because they have several legs to their journeys, each leg costing £3. As an example of this, one participant described paying £12 for a return trip to work as a result of taking separate buses. As an alternative to this pricing model, some participants suggested it should be possible to ‘fare hop’ when changing buses and also that return tickets should be available. This suggestion was raised in both the protected characteristics workshop, and in one of the young persons’ session. However, opinions were divided on fare capping, with some participants of the protected characteristics workshop describing the £2 and £3 fare caps as beneficial.

Train travel was also often described as too costly, as were taxis. Some participants, including participants in protected characteristics workshop, and in one of the young persons’ workshop, described finding private hire options like Uber preferable to metered taxis due to lower cost.

“Trains are just for rich people.” – Young people’s workshop participant

The provision of concessionary bus travel was also discussed in several of the workshops, with multiple participants benefitting from these bus passes, but arguing for changes to how concessionary travel works currently, including suggestions to:

- Allow disabled person’s bus pass holders to travel by bus pre-9 AM – this was argued on the basis of supporting access to employment opportunities.
- In one of the young persons’ workshop, participants argued for the provision of concessionary travel for care leavers both for trains and buses. One participant also argued for the need for financial support with getting a young person’s railcard, as they were not

able to pay for the upfront cost of this and currently had several fines they were unable to pay for.

- Young people also argued for greater consistency in age limitations for children's/young person's tickets across buses and trains.
- The eligibility criteria for a disabled person's bus pass was also perceived as lacking in clarity, and one participant had been told their pass was due to expire but had not been provided any information about whether they were eligible for a new one.

"I spend most of my money on buses." – Young people's workshop participant

"There should be something [a bus pass] for people in care and care leavers." – Young people's workshop participant

The range of payment options available for bus travel was also described as an issue in several of the young people's workshops, which raised issues around contactless payment, which can be difficult to use if you don't know how much money is left in your account and/or are unsure of the total cost of travel.

4.1.3 Insufficient information provision for public transport

The protected characteristics workshop described finding it challenging that there is no provision of tactile audio information buttons at bus stops, as is provided at London bus stops. This negatively affects visually impaired people. Further, there were several requests across stakeholder workshops, for real-time information provision at bus stops through digital screens, and timetables that were clearer and easier to understand.

Train fares were described as causing confusion in one of the young persons' workshops, with participants arguing that different pricing for different speeds of trains was not intuitive for them to understand and causing issues with fines if they got on a train without information about whether the ticket they had purchased would be applicable on the train they were travelling on.

4.1.4 Inequalities in the provision of public transport between areas and car reliance

Workshop participants frequently highlighted inequalities in the provision of public transport, both buses and trains, between different areas in Medway, with rural areas (including Hoo) and new developments often described as lacking in public transport provision, and these communities therefore becoming 'isolated'. Participants argued that the lack of public transport in these areas lead residents to become reliant on cars, and therefore perpetuated a culture of car reliance, even for short local journeys, over more sustainable and active forms of transportation. With regard to Hoo, requests for a railway were expressed, in order to improve connectivity for residents.

"Public transport isn't easy, especially where I live on the Hoo Peninsula" - Protected characteristics workshop participant

“Where I am, it’s very easy to get anywhere by car, but if I start looking at public transport, because I am slightly rural, it adds a lot of time and a lot of cost.” – Transport operator workshop participant

4.1.5 Lacking provision for active travel

Participants highlighted a need for more efforts to facilitate active travel and concerns were raised around a lack of footpaths in the workshops with people with protected characteristics and with transport operators. This lack of footpaths was described as an issue both in rural and more urban areas, and some described rural areas as ‘not walkable’. The protected characteristics and young peoples’ workshop participants also argued that many roads, footpaths and parks are unlit which makes them feel unsafe, and that overgrown greenery also adds to the feeling of poor lighting. Workshop participants also argued there is a need for more pedestrian crossings. Pavement parking was also argued to inhibit pedestrians in their movements, and this issue was raised in several workshops, including those focusing on protected characteristics and with transport operators.

“You need infrastructure, you need safe spaces for people to be active and take bikes and walk.” – Transport operators workshop participant

“I struggled to get along a road with a bend the other day because there were cars parked on the path either side. A disabled person or a mother with a pushchair would have to walk in the road.” – Protected characteristics workshop participant

“Lack of safe spaces and accessible routes for walking, wheeling, cycling.” – Transport operators workshop participant

“Cycling is very difficult on the peninsula ... the amount of traffic does make transport by bike very, very difficult.” – Parish councils workshop participant

With regard to cycling infrastructure, young people perceived this as good but suggestions were made to make cycle lanes a different level than pavements, so that it is clearer what is a bike lane and what is for pedestrians. Business owners and participants of the parish council workshop highlighted the lack of infrastructure as a deterrent to active travel, with some expressing frustration that the Council is promoting cycling while they perceived cycling to be unsafe due to the volume and speed of motor vehicle traffic, as well as cycle paths on the Hoo peninsula being muddy.

4.1.6 Congestion on roads

Workshop participants often described Medway roads as ‘gridlocked’, with accidents and frequent roadworks leading to journeys taking longer than they should do. Related to this, the condition of roads was also described as poor (including in the protected characteristics and business workshop), and this was sometimes attributed to the amount of heavy goods vehicles on Medway roads and arguments were made for the need for improved road maintenance. It was also suggested that roadworks should be better coordinated to minimise disruption. Road congestion was argued to be particularly bad during peak hours, including around the school run. Participants of the parish council workshop also expressed concerns about congestion leading to emergency vehicles being unable to respond to

emergencies in rural areas, and having negative impacts on air quality in areas such as the Hoo peninsula.

“Roadworks never seem to be synced with other roadworks.” – Transport operator workshop participant

“Road closures need to be balanced a lot better.” – Parish councils workshop participant

“The times we’ve had conflicts of two road closures and areas becoming gridlocked, it’s crazy, absolutely crazy.” – Parish councils workshop participant

Road safety was a concern raised by both young people, transport operators, and business representatives, with some participants reporting unsafe driving and speeding to be common. Participants in the business workshops also highlighted a need for more loading zones and more provision of parking.

4.2 Views on the future of transport in Medway

Workshop participants were asked to state what they thought Medway Council should have accomplished by the end of the next local transport plan. Responses to this included:

- Improved, and real-time, information for public transport users, with suggested improvements including:
 - A singular app showing bus and train information in real time and in multiple languages
 - Read-out live information on bus stops
- A reliable public transport system, including:
 - Provision of park and ride services
 - Introducing more bus lanes, buses and bus routes
 - Introducing a ferry service across the river
 - Improved integration between modes of transport
 - Helpful bus drivers, who address crime and anti-social behaviour when these occur on public transport, stops and stations
- A more inclusive public transport system, including:
 - A system accessible for disabled people
 - Information provision in multiple languages
 - Lower prices for public transport for all
 - Changes to concessionary bus passes, including bus passes for care leavers and over 16 pupils and students
 - The provision of multiple payment methods, including pin and chip card payment, contactless card payment, and cash payment
 - Reduced inequalities in public transport provision for rural and urban areas
- Improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure, including:
 - No more pavement parking

- Improved maintenance of footpaths
- Reduced traffic congestion, more provision of parking and safer roads
- Improvements to planning, including:
 - Infrastructure and transport planning accounting for population growth
 - More engagement with the public, and improved understanding of local contexts especially rural areas
 - Less silo working – improved collaboration and communication between local authorities, transport operators and the public

4.3 Priorities for improvement

When it came to priorities for improvement, key themes included:

- A modal shift towards more sustainable transport: Moving from a culture of car reliance to a behaviour change of using public transport, walking and cycling to get around Medway. Arguments were also made by young people to have more electric buses, as these are more environmentally friendly.
- More equal distribution of public and active transport across all of Medway: Future-proof provision of public and active transport that accounts for existing population in both rural and urban areas, as well as a growing population.
- Reducing congestion on roads: Reducing pressure points on arterial roads and main through-routes, better coordination of roadworks to reduce traffic build-up caused by this, and expanding highway capacity to account for the needs of the population, especially considering a growing population through new developments.
- Provision of more public transport for schools: Provision of school buses for a diverse population of Medway pupils and students, to reduce congestion during school commute times, and to support the growing population of people travelling into Medway for education.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

Engaging Medway residents' on attitudes to transport has revealed a set of interconnected priorities and challenges that must guide the development of the Local Transport Plan. The themes identified below represent the core concerns and aspirations shared by participants and highlight the opportunities for creating an accessible, efficient, and sustainable transport system for Medway.

5.1.1 Public Transport Reliability, Affordability, and Coverage

Medway residents express persistent concerns regarding public transport. The reliability, frequency, affordability, and spatial coverage of services are major issues. Many see current options as falling short—delays, infrequent services, and inadequate reach particularly affect those in less central areas. Addressing these concerns is essential to increasing public transport usage and reducing dependence on private vehicles.

5.1.2 Traffic Congestion and Road Infrastructure

Traffic congestion is a frequent source of frustration. Existing road infrastructure struggles with growing demand, leading to longer and less predictable journeys. Bottlenecks and a perceived lack of effective solutions highlight a pressing need for coordinated infrastructure investment and smarter congestion management.

5.1.3 Promotion of Sustainable and Active Travel

There is robust support for more sustainable travel options, including walking and cycling. Respondents, however, raise concerns about the safety, connectivity, and convenience of current active travel routes. Investment in secure, well-connected infrastructure and supportive facilities is fundamental to encouraging higher uptake of sustainable travel.

5.1.4 Inclusivity and Equality in Transport Provision

Inclusivity is a recurring thread in residents' feedback. Many emphasise the importance of designing transport systems that cater to all, including disabled people, older adults, and lower-income groups. A barrier-free, equitable approach is essential, supported by ongoing engagement with diverse users.

5.1.5 Integrated Transport Planning

Calls for integration across modes—including buses, trains, cycling, and walking—are widespread. Seamless connections, integrated ticketing, real-time information, and harmonised timetables are seen as critical to providing convenient, connected journeys and encouraging modal shift away from private cars.

5.1.6 Environmental and Safety Concerns

Environmental sustainability and safety are integral to residents' aspirations for Medway's transport future. There is support for measures to combat climate change—such as cleaner vehicles and

emission reduction—while improvements in road safety for all users, especially pedestrians and cyclists, remain a key priority.

Meeting Medway's transport needs will require a holistic approach that addresses these interconnected themes. By prioritising inclusive, reliable, integrated, sustainable, and safe transport, and fostering ongoing partnerships with residents and stakeholders, the Local Transport Plan can lay the foundation for a thriving and accessible future for all. The learnings and themes identified at this early stage will be used to inform the development of the LTPs vision, option longlisting, and appraisal.

5.2 SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 out of 10 walk survey respondents walk at least once a month Easy to travel into Medway
WEAKNESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only about half of survey respondents use public transport at least once a month Survey respondents and workshop participants argued there isn't enough parking in Medway Congested roads, especially during peak commuting hours, including before and after school Frequent and coordinated roadworks create delays and contribute to congestion Survey respondents and workshop participants described experiences of feeling unsafe using public transport Public transport is perceived as too costly Lacking information provision about public transport, including real-time bus updates and information about train fares The provision of public transport varies by area, with people in rural areas feeling underserved Perceived inadequate provision of infrastructure for cycling and walking, and barriers like pavement parking 35% of survey respondents didn't own a bike
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 41% of survey respondents agreed that concern for the environment influences their travel choices Introducing park and ride Introducing measures to reduce the cost of public transport, including concessionary travel for more groups (e.g. young people, care leavers) and expanding the times when concessionary travel is possible
THREATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A culture of car reliance, fostered by an unreliable public transport system (especially buses) and lacking provision of public transport around new developments A growing population and a perception that this population growth isn't supported by improvements to infrastructure Only 1 in 5 survey respondents trust Medway's public transport providers, and workshop participants also expressed distrust in buses and bus operators

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