

Halton Active Travel Cycle Route Enhancement

Consultation Summary Report

1. Introduction

Halton Borough Council (HBC) hosted a public consultation for a scheme of six cycle route enhancements in Halton between Monday 2 October and Monday 30 October 2023. The aim of the consultation was to obtain feedback to incorporate into the designs and the overall funding request to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

The aim of the scheme is to transform local and strategic connectivity, making it easier to travel sustainably, affordably, and quickly, improving access to employment and enhancing quality of life. HBC is seeking funding from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Fund for six cycle route enhancements around Halton, bringing improvements to safety, convenience, and connectivity.

The purpose of this report is to outline the consultation approach, summarise the findings, and demonstrate how the key feedback will be considered and incorporated into the scheme going forward.

2. Consultation Promotional Activities

The following activities were undertaken to promote the consultation:

- Social media posts.
- Flyer drop to properties in the local area.
- Engagement platform linked to the HBC East Runcorn Connectivity webpage on the [HBC website](#).
- Consultation email notifications to key stakeholders.
- Stakeholder workshop with key stakeholders.
- Telephone and email contact for scheme consultation queries.

3. Consultation Events

During the consultation period two public drop-in events were held on:

- Tuesday 10 October 2023 12pm-6pm at The Studio, The Brindley Theatre, High St, Runcorn, WA7 1BG
- Saturday 14 October 2023 10am-2:30pm at City Square, Shopping City, Runcorn, WA7 2EU

A total of 20 people attended over the two events. Feedback obtained at the in-person events is outlined below:

- Queries as to whether there are plans to join up the walking and cycling links from Frodsham-Runcorn.
- Queries as to whether there are plans to tie these routes into Sustrans' aims for the National Cycle Network.
- Comments that proposed and existing routes should be maintained and free of debris and overhanging vegetation.

- Suggestions for dropped kerbs on routes that provide connections.
- Suggestions that if there are crossings over roads, cyclists and pedestrians should have priority.
- Concerns that on-street car parking on Main Street could be removed.
- Suggestions for traffic calming measures on Main Street as it has issues with speeding.

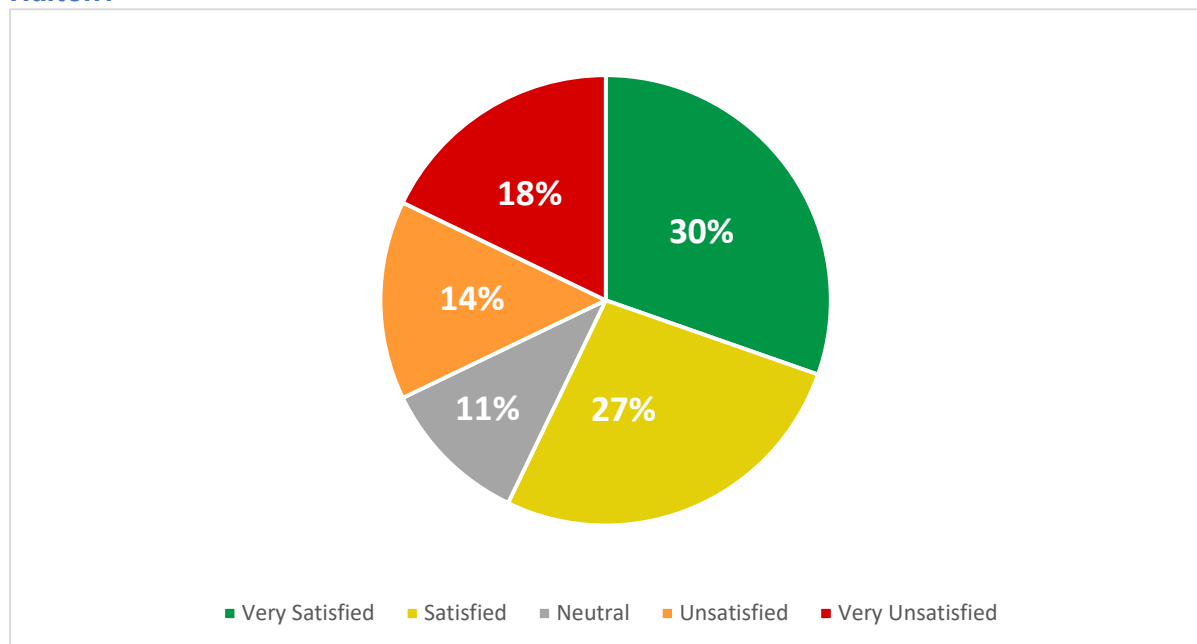
Formal feedback was recorded via the online engagement platform survey or printed surveys (which were available at the public events or on request). Key themes and comments from the consultation feedback are provided in Section 4 to 12 of this report.

4. Feedback – General

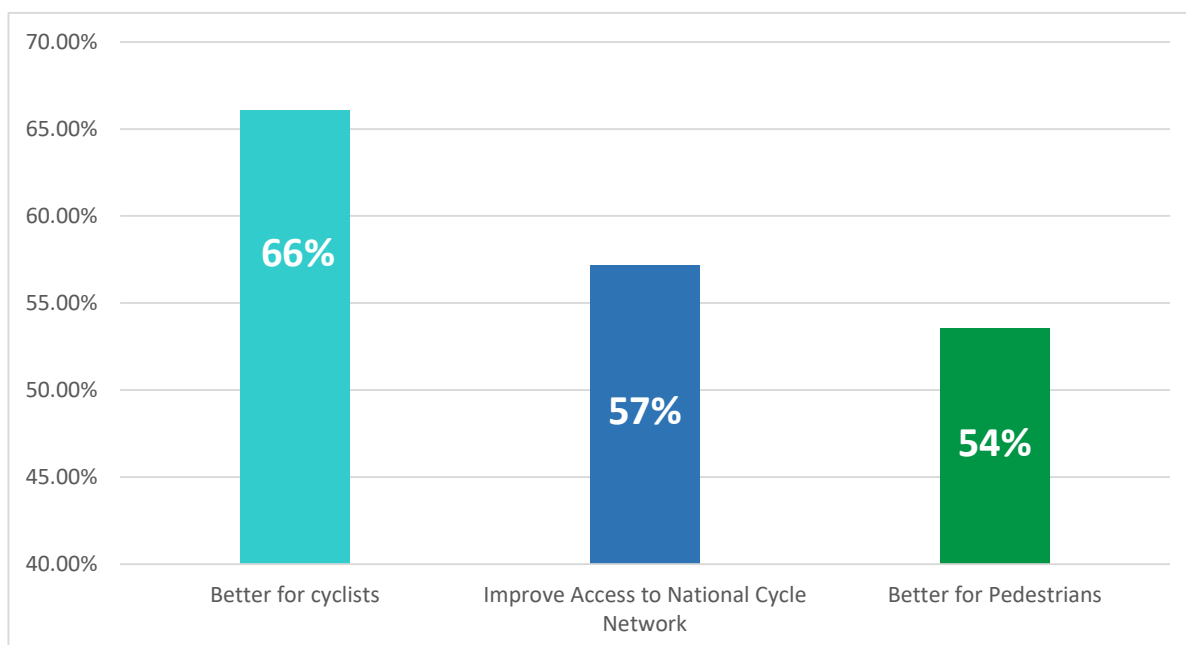
A total of 57 responses were received during the consultation period between Monday 2 October and Monday 30 October. All 57 responses came via the online engagement platform and no printed surveys were received.

The online engagement platform received 1,575 views with an average of 58 views per day. Key general feedback from the survey, not specific to individual routes, is outlined in this section.

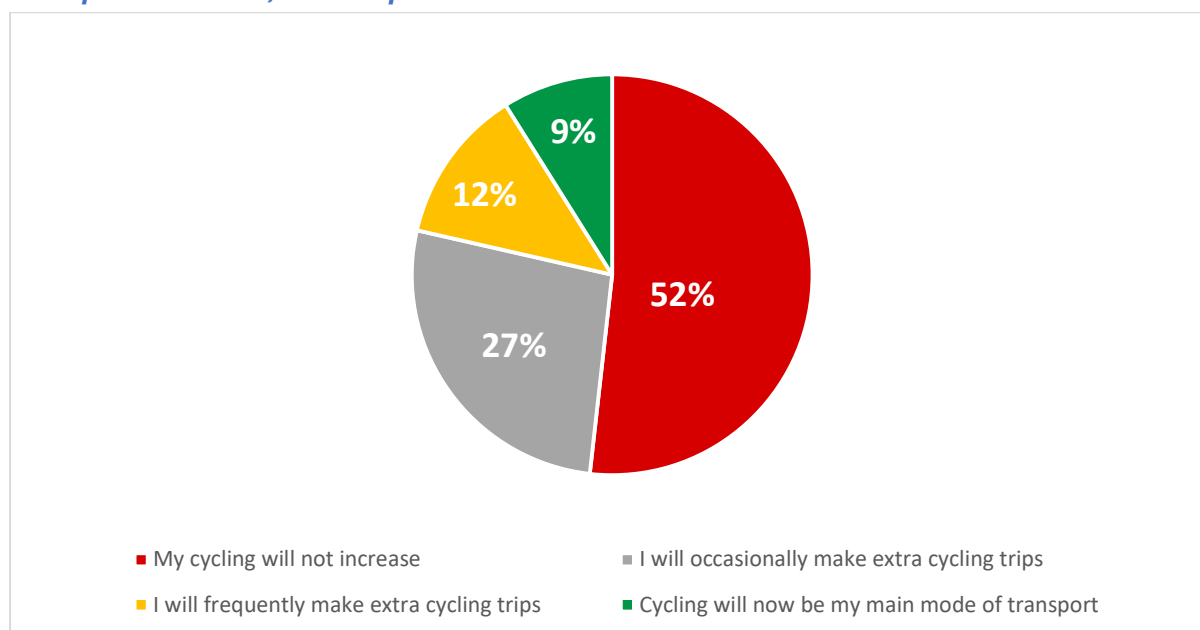
How do you feel about our proposals for the cycle route enhancements around Halton?



Do you feel these enhancements will be better or worse for ... [3 most popular responses]



How much do you feel the cycle route enhancements will impact your choice in transport for short, local trips?



The results demonstrate that there is a good level of support for the proposals with 57% of respondents indicating that they were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the proposals overall. Almost half (48%) of respondents indicated that the amount of cycling they do would increase if the scheme were to be implemented.

A number of key comments were identified for the scheme from the survey. These comments and responses are shown below:

Comment: Why are no improvements proposed in Widnes?

Response: The routes presented to date are within East Runcorn. HBC are currently developing a wider Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan for the entire borough. This will look at the existing and new cycling and walking infrastructure requirement for Halton and will provide a delivery plan for the next 10 years

Comment: Can signposting on new and existing routes be improved?

Response: New wayfinding signs will be provided as part of any new scheme. HBC's Online Mapping System and the Liverpool City Region Wayfinding strategy will also be used to help to improve signposting for walkers and cyclists on the network.

Comment: Existing cycleways are difficult to use due to debris (leaves and rubbish) blocking paths.

Response: HBC is seeking solutions to this matter with consideration to budgetary constraints.

Comment: Improved lighting and security would encourage more people to cycle.

Response: HBC are proposing routes along more frequently used roads to increase security and will seek to provide adequate lighting or alternative solutions along routes where possible.

Comment: Signalised crossings delay cyclists and walkers as we have to wait for vehicle cycles.

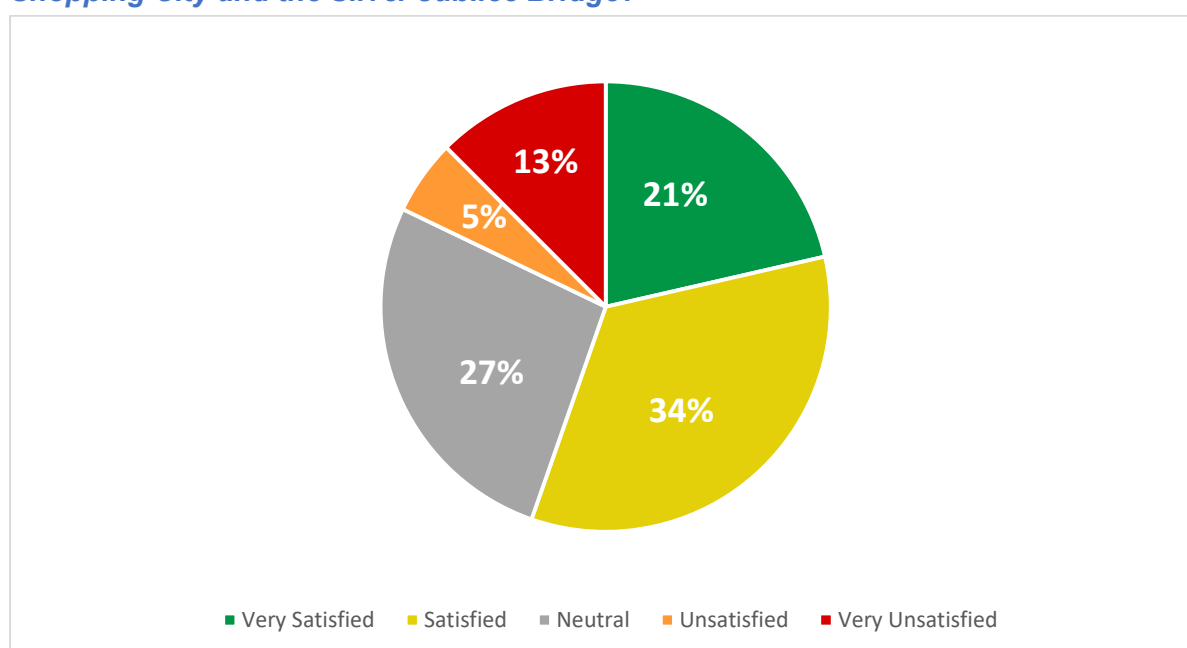
Response: For signalised crossings proposed as part of these routes, we will seek to provide an improved experience for cyclists and walkers, either by 'on demand' crossing stages (when the button is pushed) or automatically with advance detection. This will be done in conjunction with traffic modelling to minimise impacts on traffic flow and capacity.

Section 5 to Section 0 of this report include further feedback on approval ratings and key themes for each of the six routes. Further general and route specific comments have been noted and responded to in Section 0.

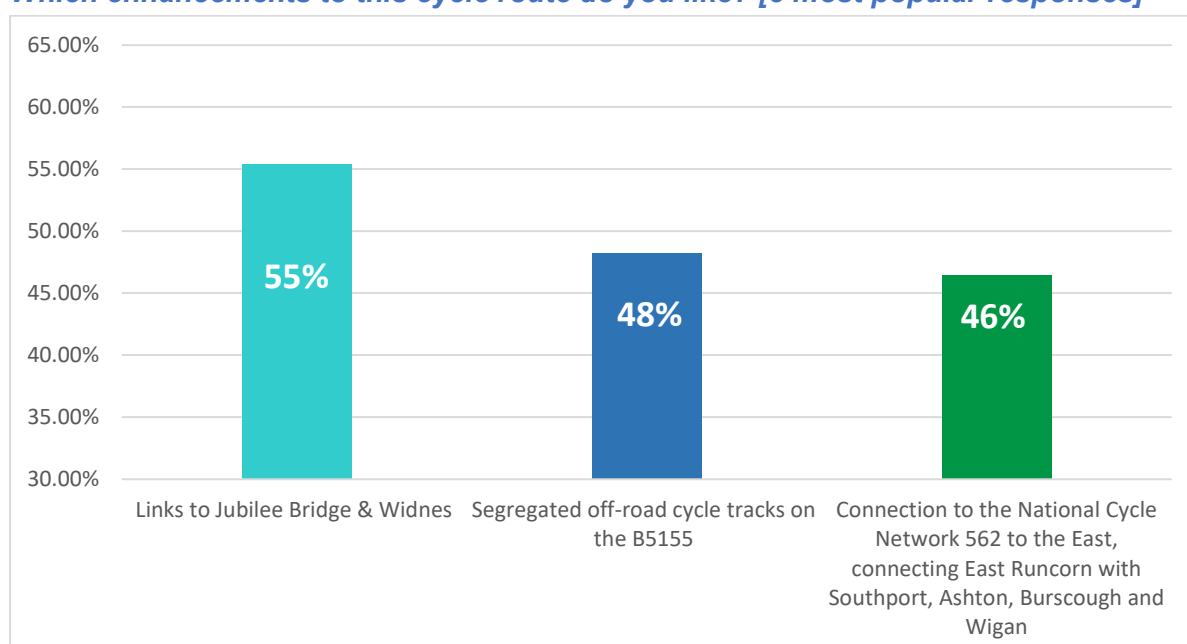
Section 5 to Section 0 of this report include further feedback on approval ratings and key themes for each of the six routes. Further general and route specific comments have been noted and responded to in Section 0.

5. Feedback - Route 1: Silver Jubilee Bridge to Shopping City

How do you feel about our proposals for the cycle route enhancements between Shopping City and the Silver Jubilee Bridge?



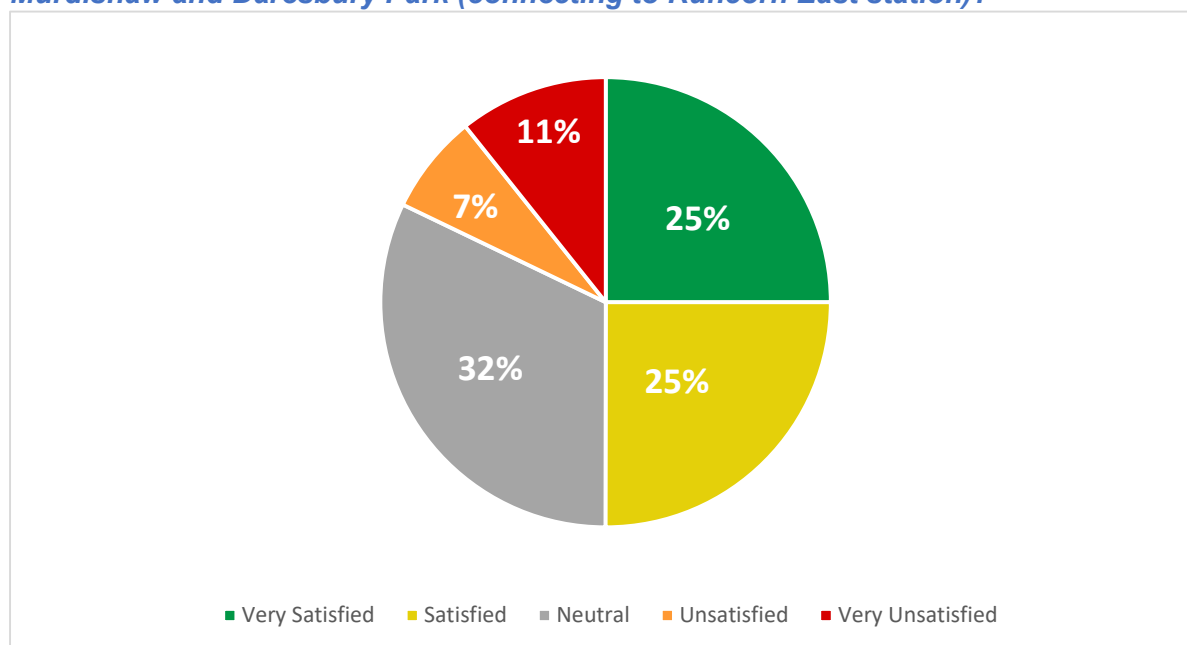
Which enhancements to this cycle route do you like? [3 most popular responses]



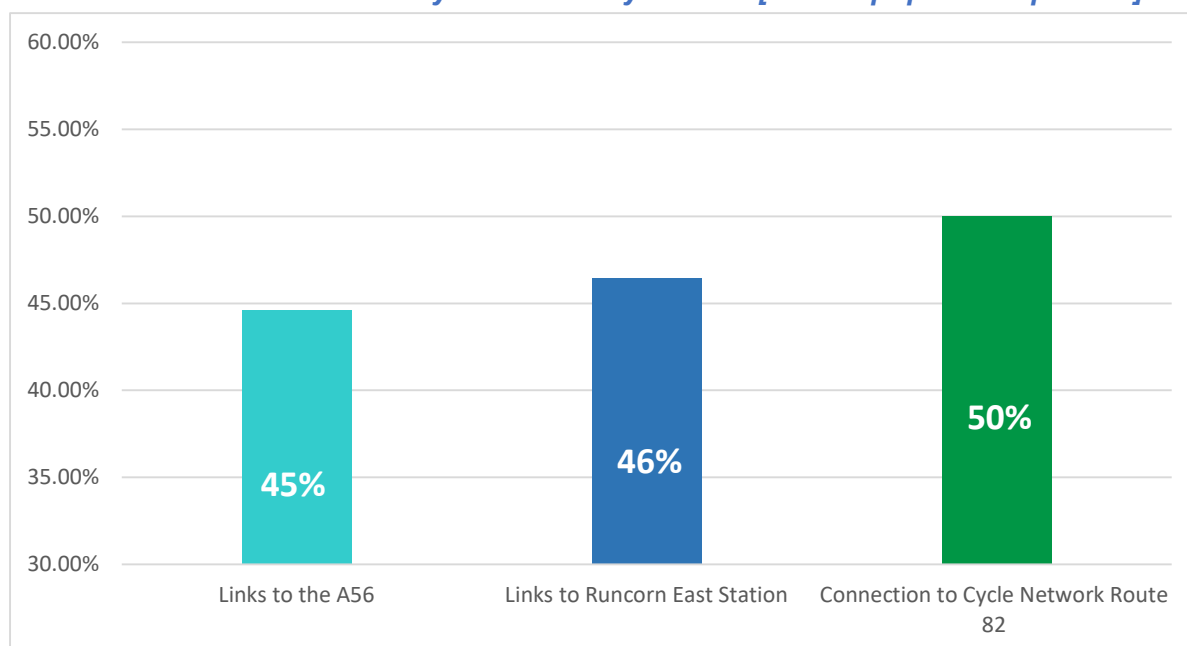
Overall, there was relatively strong support for Route 1, with 55% of respondents 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' and 18% of respondents providing negative feedback. No specific themes were raised in written responses.

6. Feedback - Route 2: East Runcorn Station Access

How do you feel about our proposals for the cycle route enhancements between Murdishaw and Daresbury Park (connecting to Runcorn East station)?



Which enhancements to this cycle route do you like? [3 most popular responses]



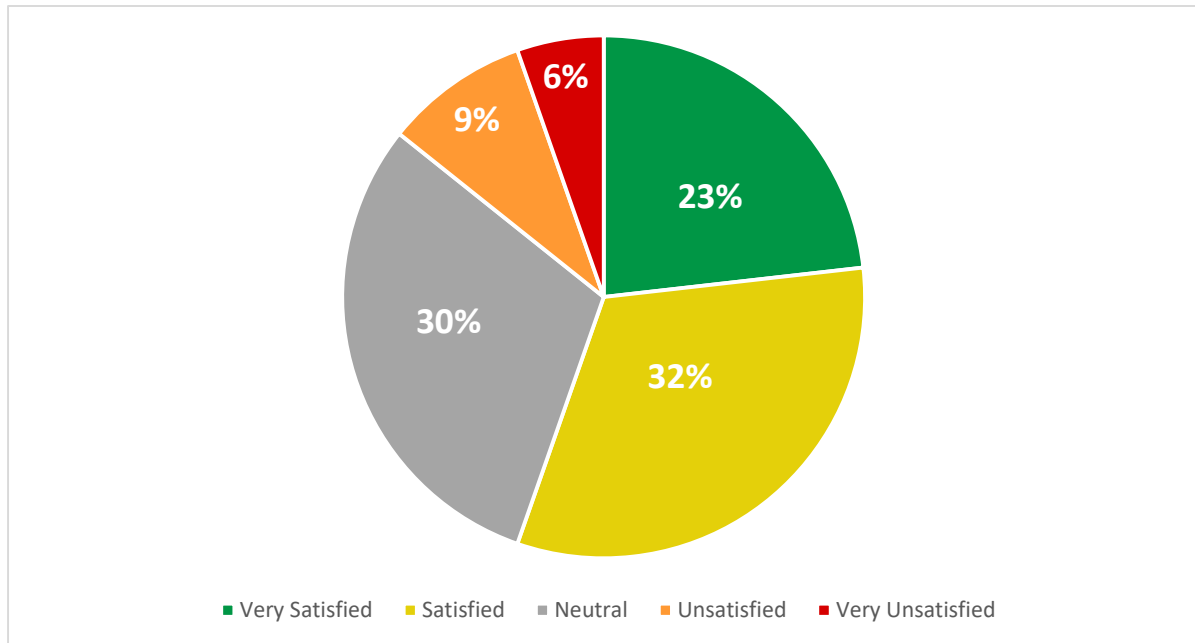
Overall, there was relatively strong support for Route 2, with 50% of respondents 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' and less than 18% of respondents providing negative feedback. One main theme emerged from the comments for this route which is illustrated and responded to below:

Comment: Red Brow Lane is very steep, which could deter people from using the route. This could also cause drainage issues and slip risk to cyclists and pedestrians.

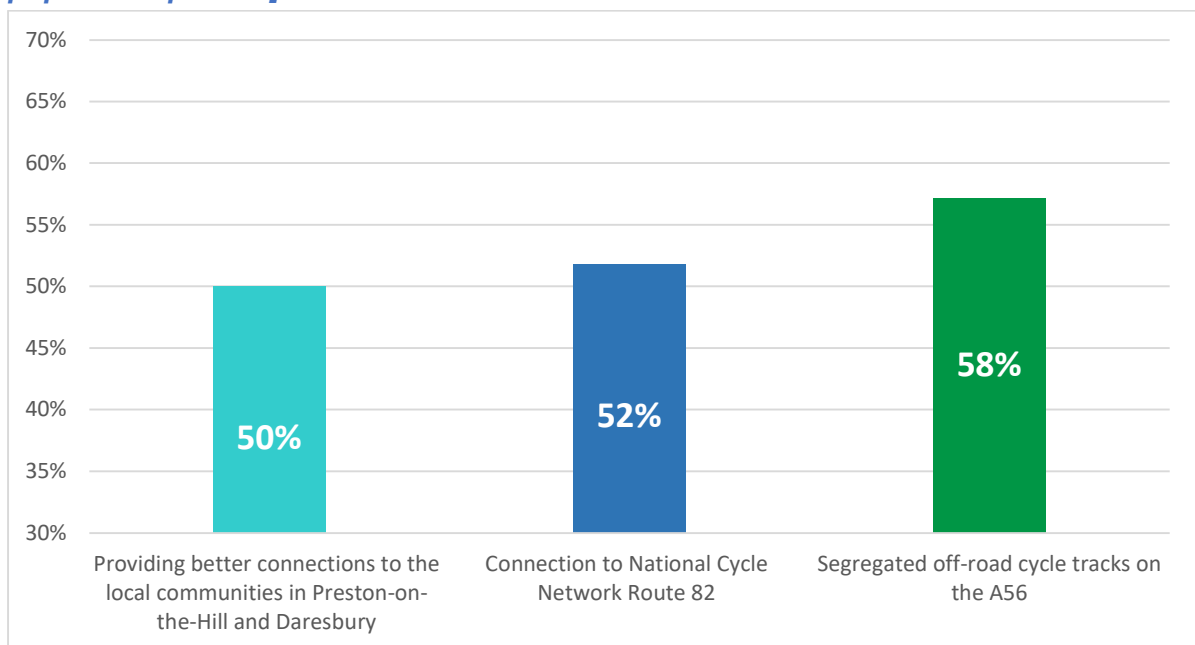
Response: The proposed route will connect to other active travel routes, which could be used to avoid some areas of steep gradient. We will also consider providing non-slip surfaces and improved drainage.

7. Feedback - Route 3: Chester Road (A56) to Daresbury Park

How do you feel about our proposals for the cycle route enhancements on the A56 (Chester Road) and along the Keckwick Brook Canal Path?



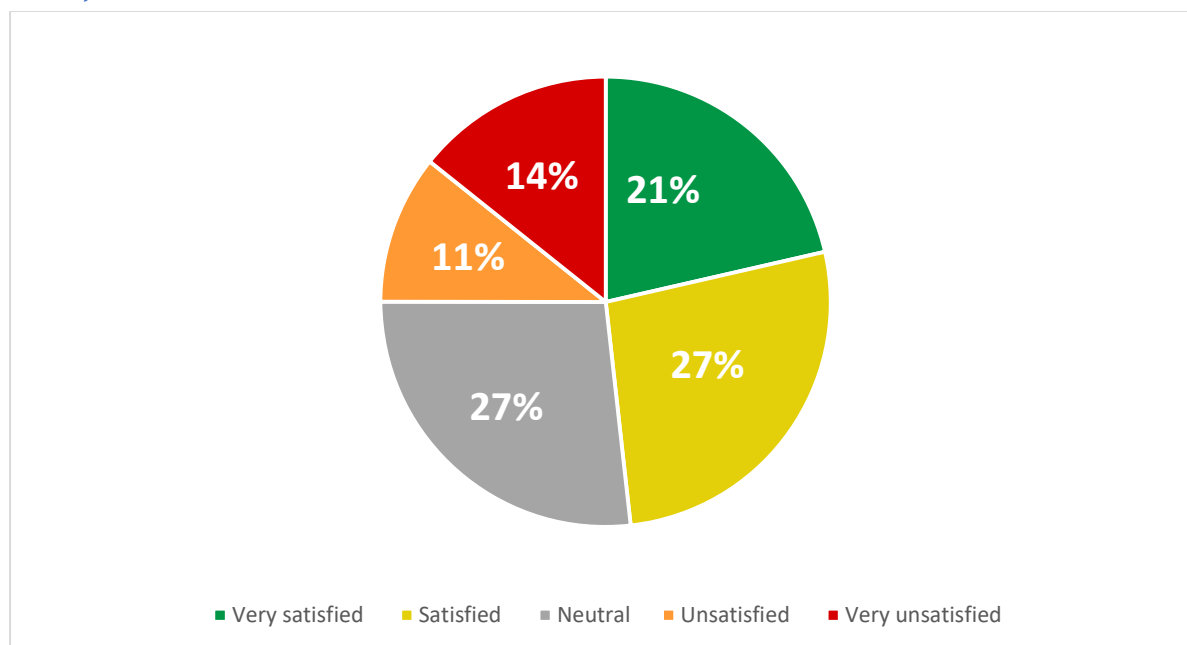
Which enhancements to this cycle route do you like? (pick all that apply) [3 most popular responses].



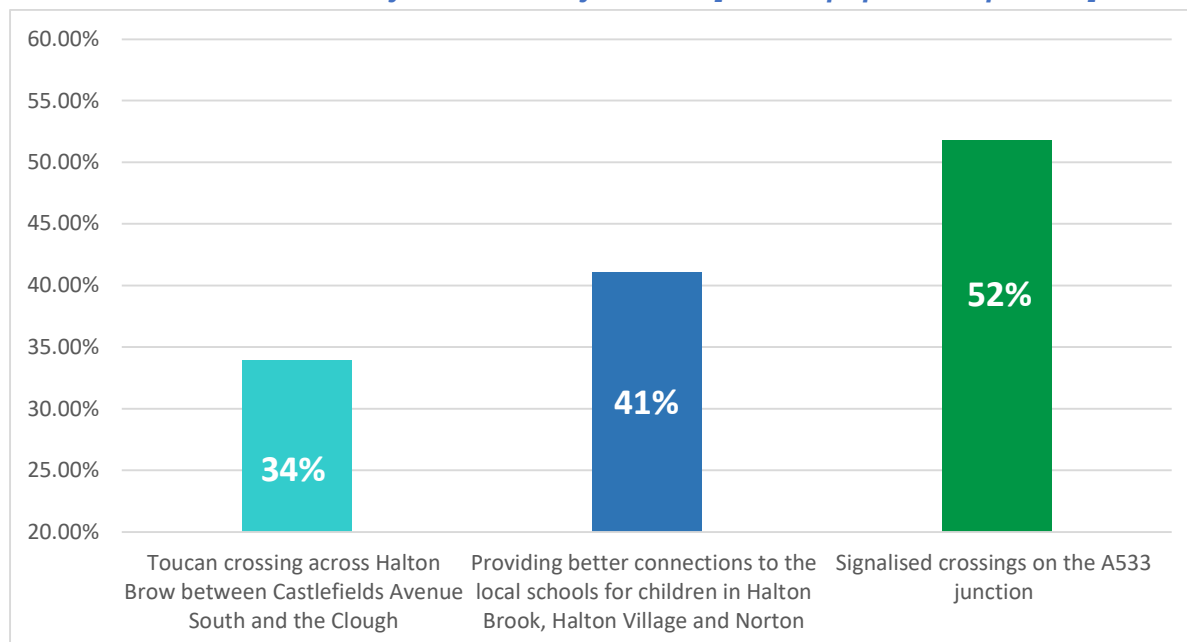
Overall, there was relatively strong support for Route 3, with over 55% of respondents 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' and less than 15% of respondents providing negative feedback. No specific themes were raised in written responses.

8. Feedback - Route 4: Halton Brow, Main Street and Norton Lane

How do you feel about our proposals for the cycle route enhancements along Halton Brow, Main Street and Norton Lane?



Which enhancements the cycle route do you like? [3 most popular responses].



Overall, there was some support for Route 4, with approximately 48% of respondents 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied'. However, this option received the highest level of negative feedback with 25% of respondents 'unsatisfied' or 'very unsatisfied'. Two specific themes emerged which reflected concerns with this option which are illustrated and responded to below:

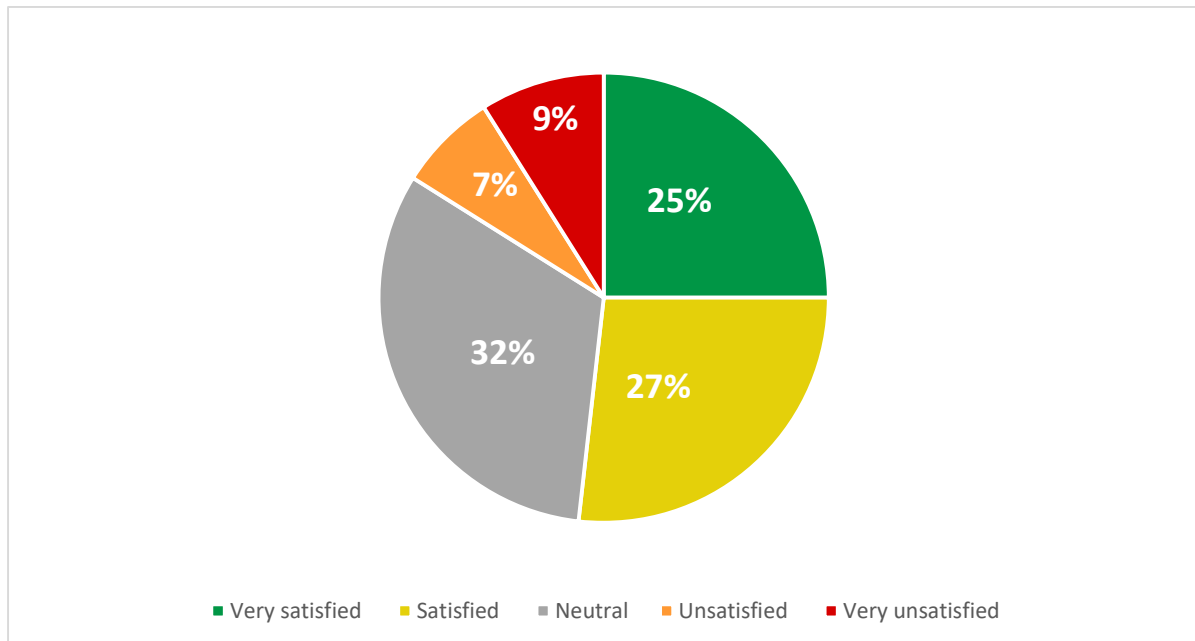
Comment: Parking is currently an issue on Main Street. Any proposals that reduce parking further are not supported by local residents.

Comment: Main Street is quite steep for cyclists and drivers do not adhere to the speed limits.

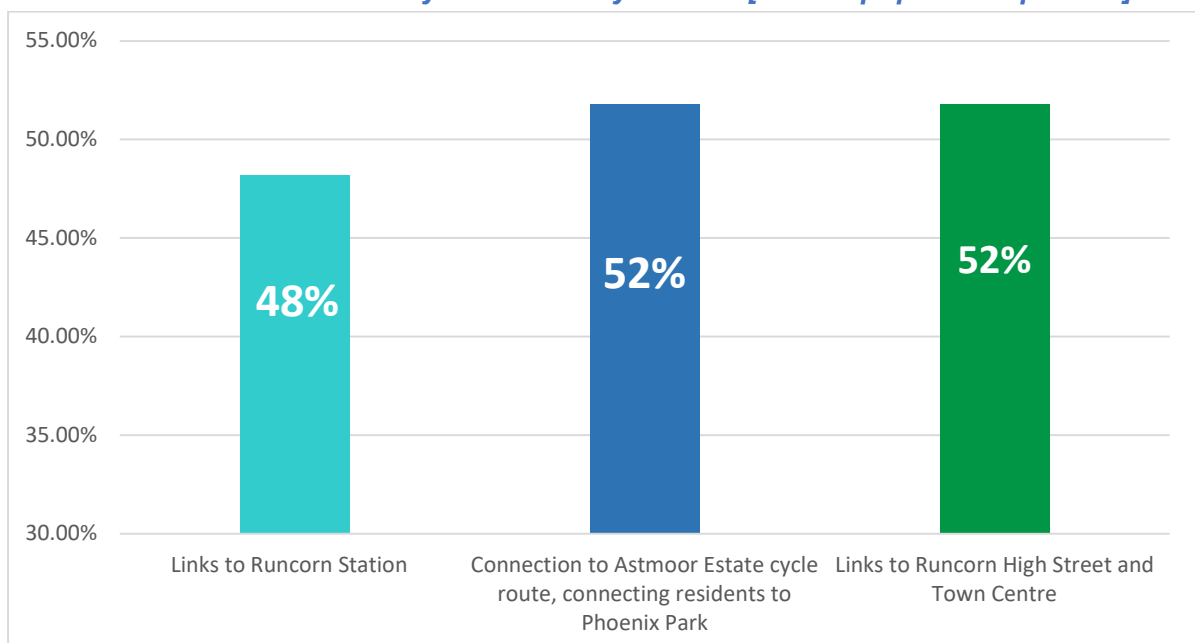
Response: It has been noted by the project team that the loss of street parking is of particular concern to local residents, as well as suitability of the route. As a result, we would not propose to progress the route at the present time. In the future, we will look for alternative solutions to retain existing parking while providing a safer route for active travel along this corridor. Any proposals would be presented to local residents before progressing further.

9. Feedback - Route 5: Bridge Street to Windmill Hill

How do you feel about our proposals for the cycle route enhancements along Bridge Street to Windmill Hill Avenue North?



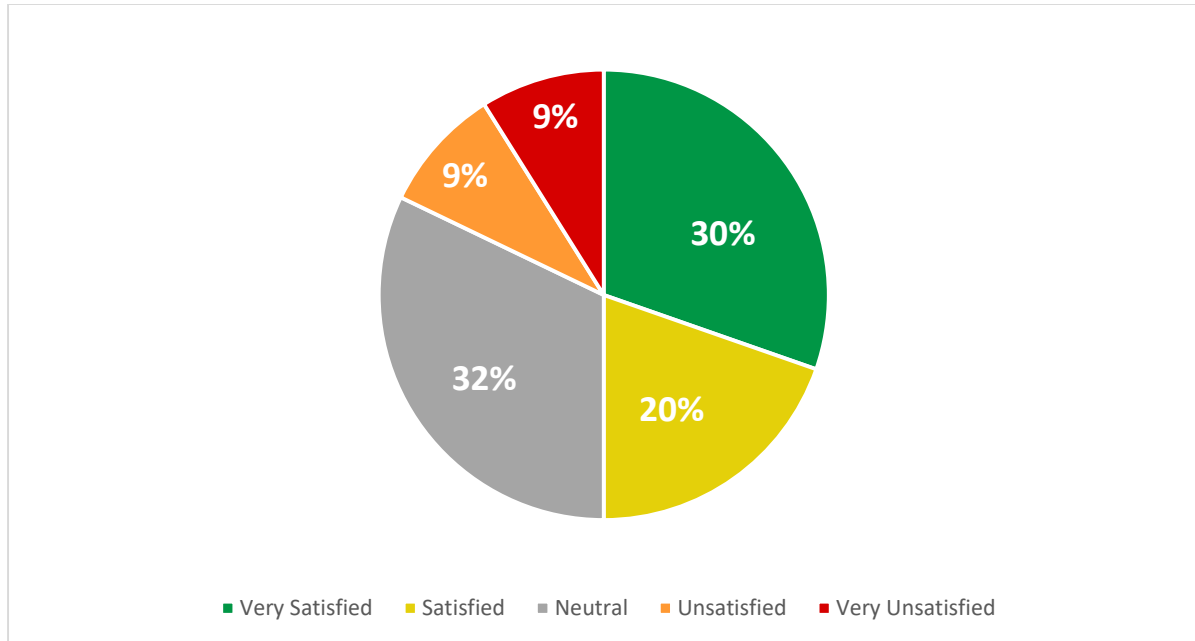
Which enhancements to the cycle route do you like? [3 most popular responses].



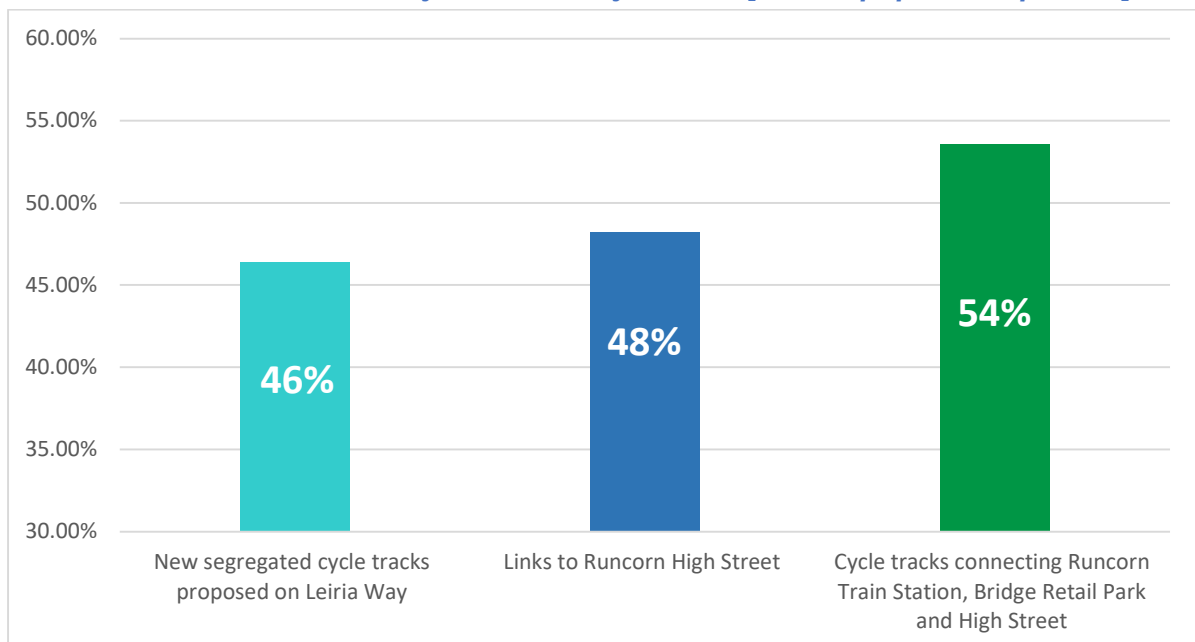
Overall, there was relatively strong support for Route 5, with over 51% of respondents 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' and approximately 16% of respondents providing negative feedback. No specific themes were raised in written responses.

10. Feedback - Route 6: Leiria Way Connectivity Upgrades

How do you feel about our proposals for the cycle route enhancements along the Leiria Way connectivity cycle loop?



Which enhancements to the cycle route do you like? [3 most popular responses].



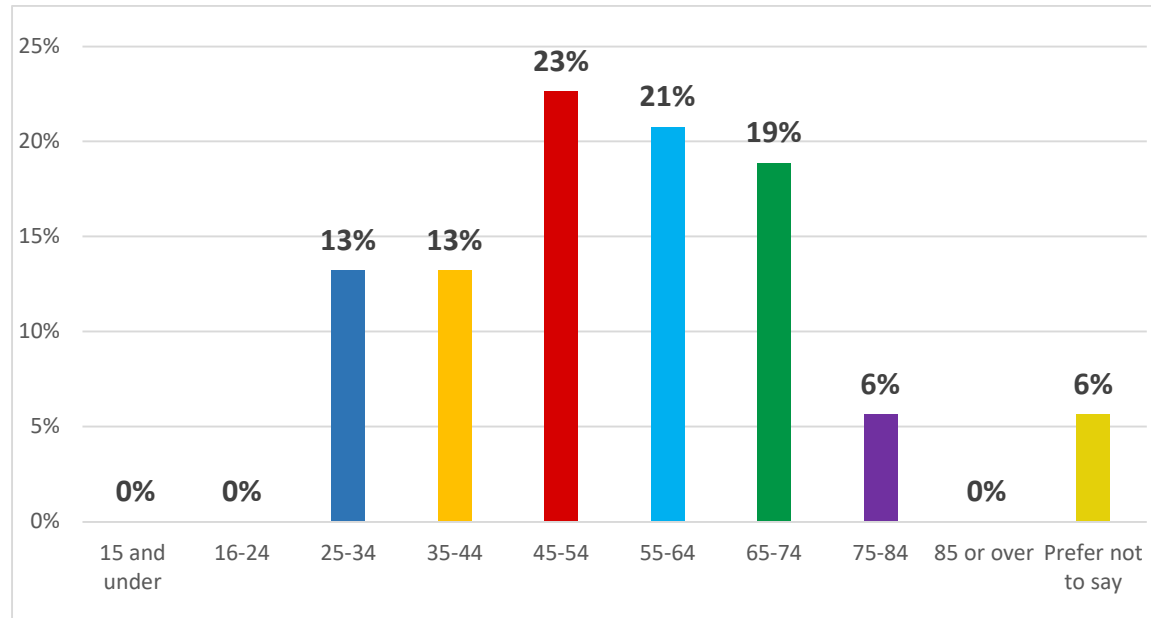
Overall, there was relatively strong support for Route 6, with 50% of respondents 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' and approximately 18% of respondents providing negative feedback. No specific themes were raised in written responses.

11. Audience Profile Questions

What is the first half of your postcode?

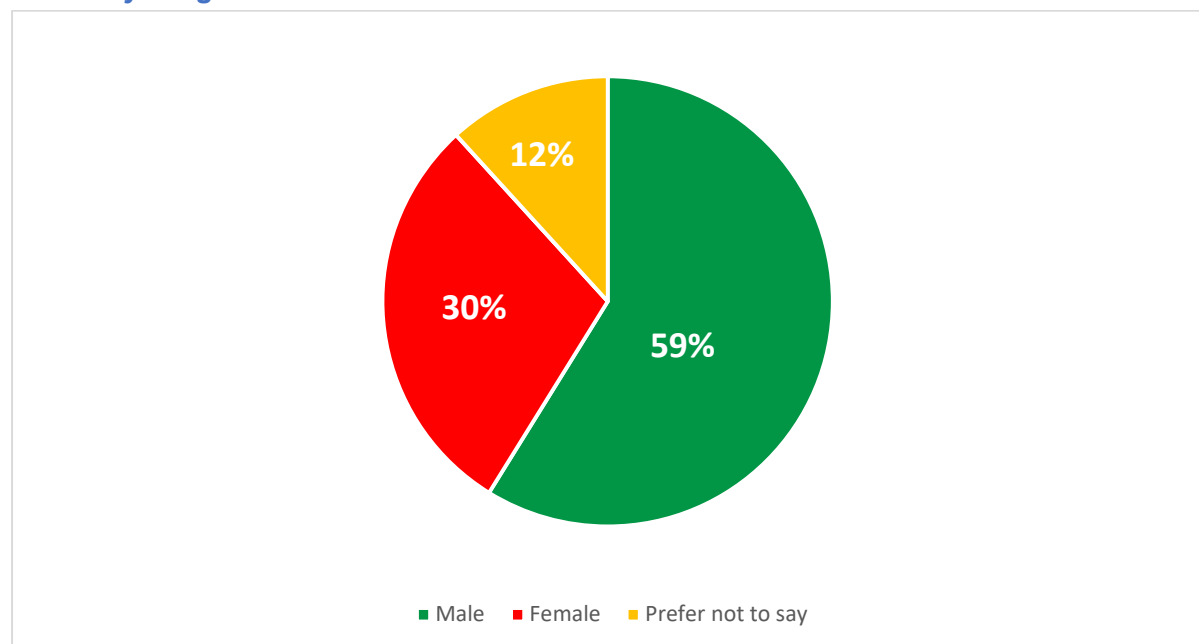
- 61.7% of respondents live in Runcorn (WA7).
- 15% of respondents live in Warrington (WA8).
- The rest of the respondents live in the Manchester, Cheshire and Liverpool areas.

What is your age group?



- The mean age of respondents was 51.

What is your gender?



12. Additional Comments and Responses

Area	Comment	Response
General	<p>'The main areas of interest for riding were Town Park and Manor Park and there were frequent comments from these riders on the lack of safe access to these spaces, made worse by the Merseyside Gateway and the lack of maintenance on current bridlepath routes. The Halton Active Travel plan has the potential to benefit a wider breadth of the community if it ensures the routes provided are suitable for all users, including horse riders.'</p> <p>'If equestrians are not an included user on active travel routes, the consequence is that equestrians are left on the carriageway with lorries and cars passing them on the outside and cyclists passing them on the inside, which is another accident waiting to happen. It is therefore important that this aspect is considered in the risk assessment for such routes.'</p> <p>'I would be interested to discuss how Halton might incorporate horses into its active travel plan to ensure a safe multi-user route for all.'</p>	<p>The aim of Active Travel is to achieve modal shift away from motorised vehicles, to reduce the number of cars on the road. The majority of this 'modal shift' is focused on encouraging walking and cycling. However, consideration is also given to horse riders, where appropriate.</p> <p>It is generally not considered safe or appropriate to encourage horse riding in heavily urbanised areas. However, HBC acknowledges that much of the East Runcorn Area is rural urban edge in nature. Therefore, much of the development in this area will either accommodate or improve routes for horse riders (e.g. bridleways and quiet lanes).</p> <p>We will aim to consider horse riders through all stages of design development. This will include retaining or improving facilities where horse riders have existing rights and to seek opportunities to enhance these where possible. HBC will continue to engage the British Horse Society to identify opportunities to enhance equestrian provisions as part of developments and active travel schemes within Halton.</p>
Route 1	I use the Devonshire Place crossing at least four times a week; crossing it from the bridge side is slightly awkward. If cyclists are prioritised here that will be an improvement.	A separate scheme delivered by HBC will be consulting on this linkage to potentially reduce the speed limit. Currently, no signalised crossing can be provided on safety grounds due to proximity to the roundabout. However, a reduction in the speed limit would allow an improved crossing to be considered.
Route 1	This project will improve the existing NCN through the area by formalising existing crossings, as well as the alignment towards Shopping City. Further improvement could be made by continuing the project slightly further east to connect up to Route 562.	We are undertaking a review of all cycling and walking routes within Halton to provide a similar programme of cycling improvements across Halton, including Widnes. As part of this we will seek to improve connectivity between the NCN and key destinations, including coordination with the Runcorn busway improvements.

Route 2	<p>Red Brow Lane (between the A56 and Daresbury Park) (contrary to reported in the proposal) is actually a very busy road at "rush hour".</p> <p>I regularly walk that road to get to Runcorn East station during these times, and many cars use this road as a "rat run", often in excess of the speed limit, and dangerously close to pedestrians.</p> <p>Increased pedestrian/cycle traffic is gonna increase the danger cars along that road pose to them.</p>	<p>We are seeking to implement a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to prevent motorised through traffic. Bollards will be placed around sections of Red Brow Lane as appropriate and allowed by the order.</p>
Route 2	<p>Thinking about the section running east from the station, the road here is quite narrow and winding so would need significant work. Had you considered improving the existing path called Wood Lane running from the end of Starling Close down to the roundabout?</p>	<p>We have considered alternative routes, including Wood Lane. Whilst this provides a more direct route between the two points, it is enclosed between housing boundaries. This prevents adequate infrastructure widths or visibility. For this reason, the proposed route is preferable for user safety as it is more open/overlooked.</p>
Route 2	<p>I travel to the area on train. E-Bikes are not allowed on trains and are actively refused travel. There are also 2 bike spaces per train, and 2 people already get on/off at Runcorn East station as it is, for the whole route. Bikes are often turned away as the train is too full</p>	<p>We have consulted with Transport for Wales and recently cycling lock up facilities have been installed at Runcorn East Station. Halton officers have raised concerns about a 2-bike policy per train with the train operator in the past, however this outside of the Council's control.</p>
Route 3	<p>The cycle path on the M56 J11 roundabout looks like the "long way round" - could a cycle path be implemented on the north side of this roundabout as well?</p>	<p>The options of providing a route to the west or east of the M56 junction have been considered. The shorter west route could not be provided without either widening the existing bridge or construct a new bridge over the M56. The route to the east (as indicated on consultation plans) could be achieved within the existing bridge width and therefore is significantly less costly. This provides a segregated route and the on-demand priority signal phases of the crossings should provide a beneficial cycle route.</p>
Route 4	<p>[I have] Concern about opening up Norton Lane for full disability access... Already have new gates here so money wasted. Don't want to encourage dirt bikes and vehicle access through the park if no gates.</p>	<p>LTN 1/20 guidance states we should remove barriers to access. However, if the scheme were to progress, we would seek a balanced approach in line with government guidance and the Equality Act whilst mindful of potential anti-social behaviour.</p>

Route 4	[I] also believe there's an obvious better alternative available than along Halton Brow and Main Street, which would be to run the cycle route from foot of Halton Brow (by Boston Avenue) directly up the avenue running through the outer edge of The Brow estate (Calvers side), and linking to what's colloquially referred to as 'Shopping City field' near Lodge Lane, then the cycle lane could continue through the scenic greenery and link up with the Town Park on Holt Lane. This stretch of park is desperate for some TLC anyway, and The Brow avenue (by The Calvers) is pretty wide and pretty quiet.	Whilst this route is no longer being progressed, in future, this suggested option will be given consideration.
Route 5	The current cycle route along from windmill hill north to astmoor could be improved with surface changes, when crossing Astmoor Road currently there are 4 lanes of 40mph traffic including HGVs to contend with and no drop kerb on the astmoor busway side, crossings along the busway can be "cluttered" so improvements along may make it cleaner. Additionally the crossing at bridge Street should be very useful for onward connections.	Formal signalised crossings and improved cycle priority across Astmoor Road are part of the LCWIP Runcorn to Daresbury Scheme and should be delivered by late 2024/early 2025.
Route 6	Making [Leiria Way] one way means cars will take longer journeys and thus emit more pollution.	Preliminary traffic modelling on the revised junction arrangement has determined that Leiria Way and the surrounding junctions are currently operating under capacity. This modelling indicates proposals have no negative impact on overall traffic flows and the number of vehicles using Leiria Way is small. Therefore, additional journey time (and distance) increase caused by the proposals is minimal.

Next Steps

We are currently reviewing all of the designs to address the feedback received. We have noted the significant concerns raised about loss of on-street parking on Main Street (Route 4). On this basis, this route will not be progressed in this funding period.

Following this design review, we will be seeking funding to deliver the routes over a number of years depending upon further investigations. Scheme development updates will be provided on the East Runcorn Connectivity project website on a regular basis.