



Westhill to Aberdeen – Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Proposals

Public Engagement Outcomes Summary

On behalf of **Aberdeen City Council**

Project Ref: 332611654 | Date: August 2024

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 Proposals to improve walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure between Westhill and Aberdeen were first developed as part of the **A944 / A9119 Multi-modal Corridor Study**. The Study identified options for delivering transformational change to sustainable transport provision (both bus and walking, wheeling and cycling) on the A944 (Lang Stracht / Westburn Road) and A9119 (Queen's Road / Carden Place) western road approaches to Aberdeen. The active travel aspects of this project were subsequently progressed separately through the Westhill to Aberdeen Active Travel Study and an online consultation exercise undertaken to gain views and opinions from the public on the proposals.
- 1.1.2 The online public survey was open for viewing and providing feedback between 5th July and 18th August 2024, with a wide range of stakeholders emailed to inform them that the survey was live. Aberdeen City Council promoted the opportunity to the wider public via a press release and social media posts.
- 1.1.3 The survey was embedded within an ArcGIS StoryMap which included background information on the project along with a description of the proposals, and high-level indicative plans. Further links within the StoryMap enabled the proposals to be viewed in greater detail.
- 1.1.4 This report provides an overview of the responses received to the consultation exercise and includes feedback received through the survey and directly to both the Council and Stantec project team from stakeholders.

2 Survey Responses

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 A total of 1007 responses were received to the survey over the six-week period. Of these 98% (n=982) stated that they were a member of the public and the remaining 2% (n=25) represented an organisation, including:

- A B Robb Investments Ltd
- Rosemount and Mile End Community Council
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- North East Sensory Services (NESS)
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Imajica Brand Evolution
- Infinity Partnership
- Azets
- KF
- Space Solutions
- Hutcheon Mearns Limited
- Various companies
- Shortday Limited
- Queens Cross and Harlaw Community Council
- Aberdeen Civic Society
- Strategic Offshore Research Ltd
- ACC
- Blackwood Partners LLP
- Care At Home Service
- Piper Sandler
- Hamish Munro
- West End Traders
- Countesswells Community Group
- Aberdeen Volks Centre Ltd

■ JR Webb Antiques

- 2.1.2 All the respondents were asked if they use the route between Westhill and Aberdeen city centre at any point on their journey. Of all 1007 respondents, 99% (n=997) noted that they do use the route and the remaining 1% (n=10) do not use the route. Those who do not use the route did not respond to the next question regarding how they travel on the route.
- 2.1.3 The 997 who do use the route were then asked how they typically travel along the route and were presented with a list of modes of travel. The respondents were able to select all the modes which apply to them. The responses are shown in Figure 2:1.

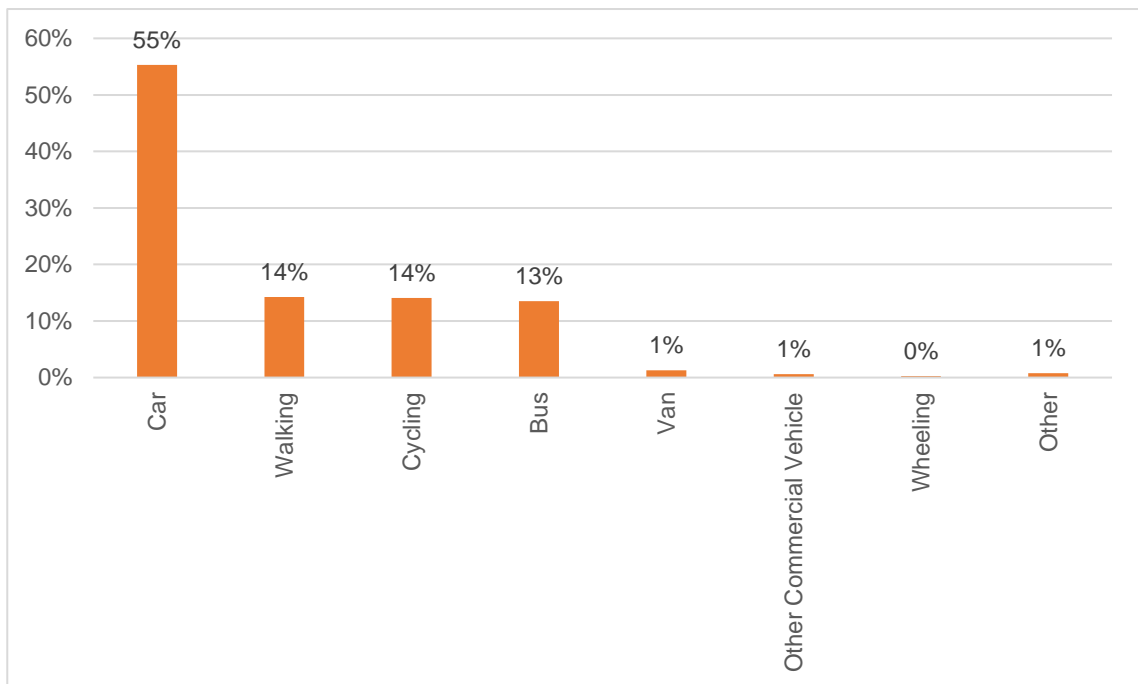


Figure 2:1: How do you typically make these journeys?

- 2.1.4 Over half of the respondents, 57%, indicated that they travel along the route by car, van or other commercial vehicle (Car: 55%, n=926; Van: 1%, n = 21; Other Commercial Vehicle: 1%, n = 10). Levels of noted walking (14%, n=239) and cycling (14%, n= 236) were similar. A further 13% (n=226) stated that they travel by bus, with the final 1% stating they travel by other modes (n=13).
- 2.1.5 The 'Other' responses included running (n=6), motorcycle/motorbike (n=4), taxi (n=1), motorhome (n=1) and working in the affected area (n=1).

2.1.6 All the respondents were then asked which area best describes where they live, or where their business is based. The responses are shown in Figure 2:2 below.

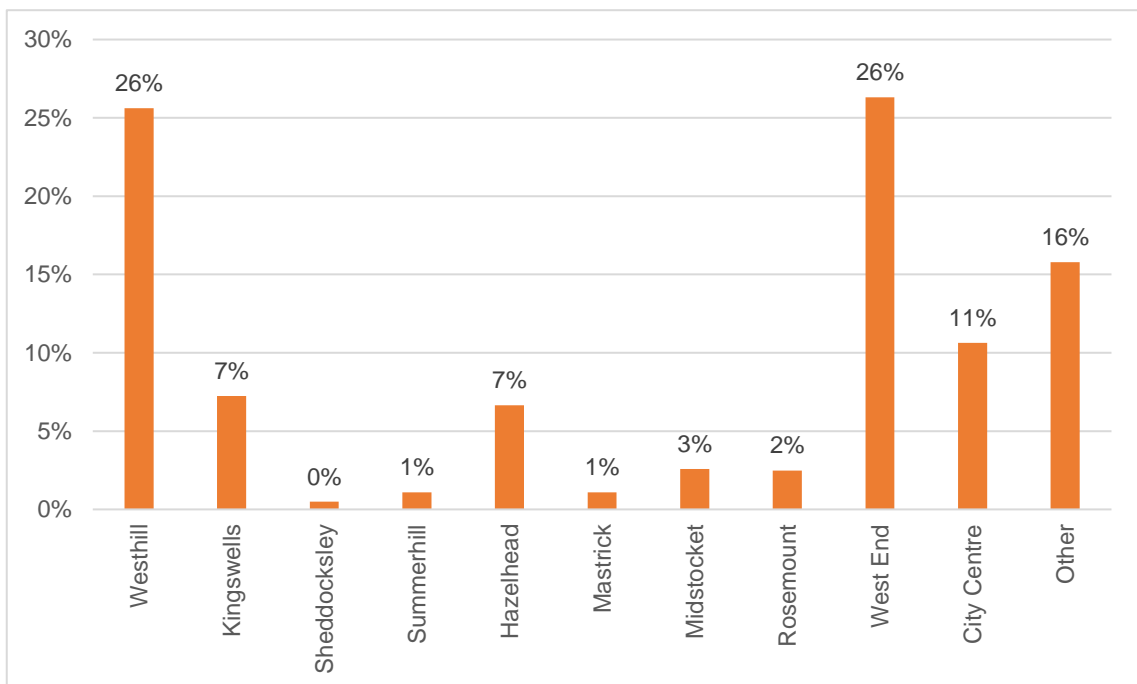


Figure 2:2: How do you typically makes these journeys?

2.1.7 More than half of all respondents noted they live in either the West End (26%, n=265) of the city or Westhill (26%, n=258). The city centre accounted for 11% (n=107) of all responses while 7% of responses were received from both those living in Kingswells (n=73) and those living in Hazelhead (n=67). A total of 3% (n=26) said they live in Midstocket and a further 2% (n=25) live in Rosemount. The same number of respondents live in Summerhill and Mastrick (1%, n=11) and only five people noted they live in Sheddocksley.

2.1.8 16% (n=159) of respondents selected 'Other' and entered their own location. The locations which were listed more than once include:

- Aberdeen City (n=2)
- Aberdeenshire (n=9)
- Balmedie (n=2)
- Banchory (n=2)
- Bridge of Don (n=17)
- Bucksburn (n=4)
- Countesswells (n=11)
- Cove (n=6)
- Craigiebuckler (n=4)
- Cults (n=8)
- Danestone (n=2)

- Dyce (n=2)
- Hilton (n=3)
- Inverurie (n=2)
- Kincorth (n=3)
- Newmachar (n=3)
- Old Aberdeen (n=2)
- Other (n=3)
- Peterculter (n=9)
- Portlethen (n=2)
- Skene (n=3)
- Stonehaven (n=2)

2.2 The Proposals

2.2.1 Respondents were asked if they think that walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity and infrastructure needs improving along the route. The overall responses are shown in Figure 2:3 below.

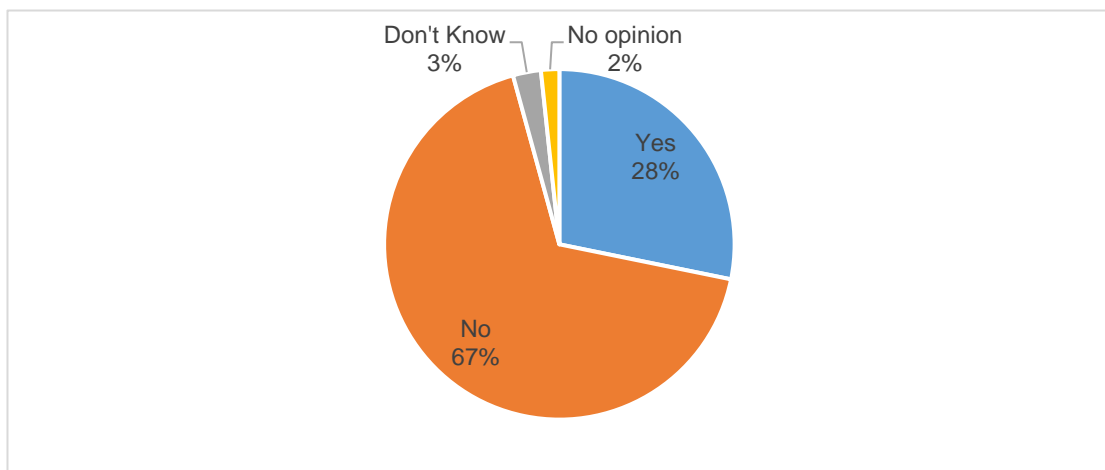


Figure 2:3: Do you think that walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity and infrastructure needs improving along the route(s) between Westhill and Aberdeen?

2.2.2 The majority of respondents (67%, n= 680) noted they do not think that active travel infrastructure and connectivity needs improving along the route between Westhill and Aberdeen. A further 28% (n= 284) stated that it does need improvement. A total of 5% (n=43) noted that they either do not know or have no opinion on whether improvements are needed.

2.2.3 The above responses have also been split out based where the respondent noted they live, or where their business is based, as shown in Figure 2:4 below.

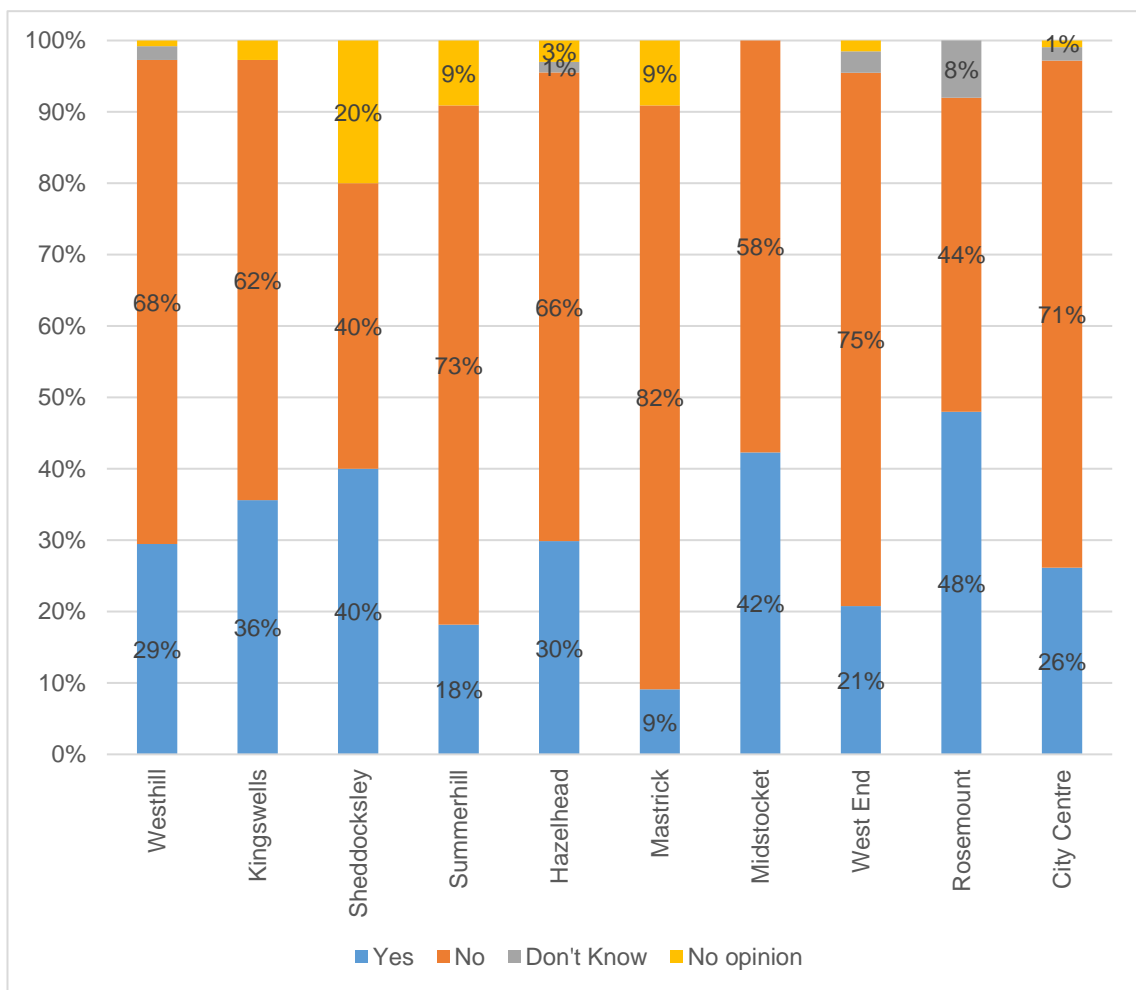
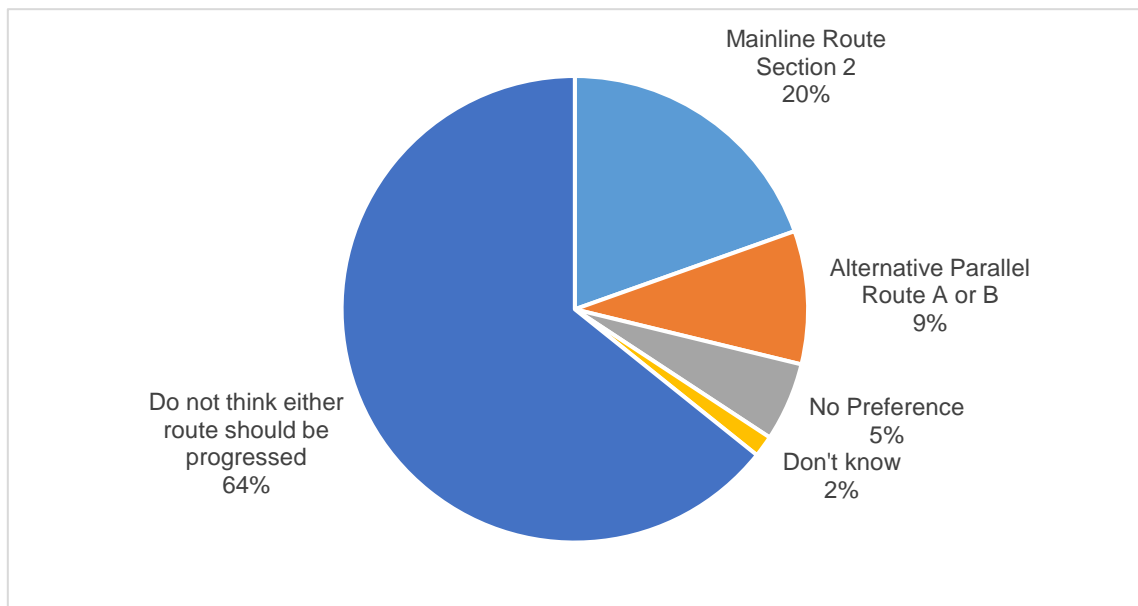


Figure 2:4: Do you think that walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity and infrastructure needs improving along the route(s) between Westhill and Aberdeen? By location

- 2.2.4 As shown in Figure 2:4, the area which has the greatest proportion of respondents who disagree with the need to improve the active travel infrastructure is Mastrick with 82% (n=9), followed by those from the West End with 75% (n=198) and Summerhill 73% (n=8). A total of 71% (n=76) of respondents who live in the city centre also disagree with the need for improvement and just over two-thirds (68%, n=175) of respondents from Westhill.
- 2.2.5 A greater proportion of respondents from Rosemount support the need to improve walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure and connectivity, with 48% (n=12) supporting it and 44% (n=11) disagreeing. There is an equal split in opinion from respondents from Sheddocksley with 40% (n=2) in support and the same number in disagreement, although the very small sample size is noted.
- 2.2.6 All respondents were asked to indicate their preference, between a main road active travel route and potential alternative parallel routes, between King’s Gate and Carden Place. The



results are shown in Figure 2:5 below. Figure 2:5: Please state your preference for the route between King's Gate and the city centre

2.2.7 From the responses, 64% (n=647) do not think that either a mainline or alternative parallel active travel route should be progressed. 20% (n=197) stated that the mainline route should be progressed and 9% (n=93) considered that an alternative parallel route should be progressed. A further 5% (n=55) have no preference and 2% (n=15) do not know.

2.2.8 Respondents who selected a preference for either a mainline or alternative route, don't know or no preference to the previous question (n = 360) were then asked to give their opinion on either the use of Rubislaw Den North or Rubislaw Den South for the routing of the alternative parallel route. The results are shown in Figure 2:6 below.

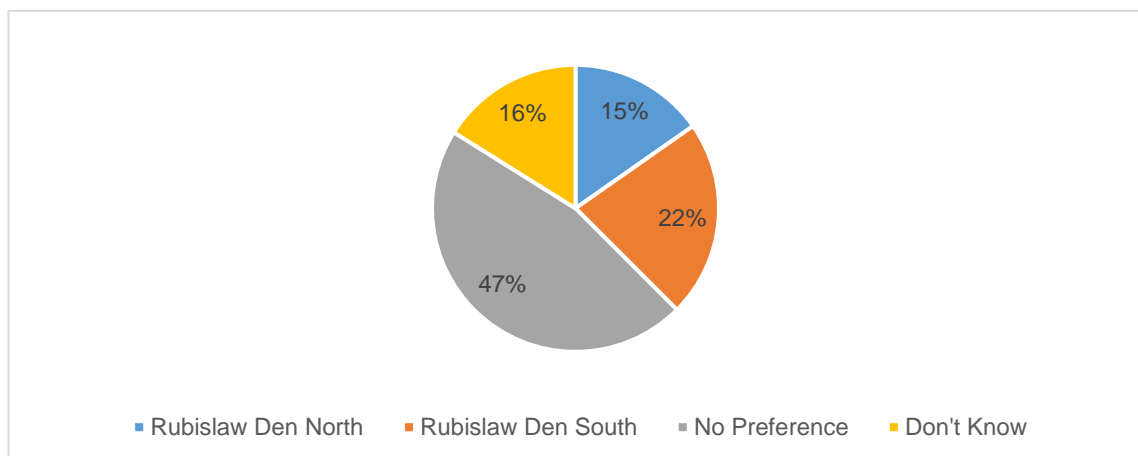


Figure 2:6: If either Alternative Parallel Route A or B were progressed (as opposed to the preferred mainline route on Queen's Road) would your preference be for the route to be via Rubislaw Den North or Rubislaw Den South?

2.2.9 The majority of respondents (47%, n=167) stated that they have no preference whether the route uses Rubislaw Den North or South. One quarter of respondents (22%, n=80) would prefer the cycle route to go down Rubislaw Den South while 15% (n=55) would prefer to be routed down Rubislaw Den North. The remaining 16% (n=58) did not know.

2.2.10 Respondents were provided with an opportunity to explain their choice to the question above. A total of 205 respondents chose to leave a comment and a summary of these responses is provided below:

Mainline Route

- Several respondents highlighted that the main route on Queen's Road is the most direct route and therefore cyclists would prefer to use this than the alternative parallel routes proposed

Parallel Routes

- There were several responses generally objecting to the proposals for the alternative parallel routes citing they were not practical and would further restrict access to travelling in Aberdeen
- Many respondents highlighted that both the parallel routes are not appropriate and therefore would not be used
- There were several comments suggesting that the parallel routes would have a positive impact as it removes cyclists from the main roads
- Several comments were made about the poor quality of the road surface on both Rubislaw Den North and Rubislaw Den South
- There were several comments from respondents who were unsupportive of cycle routes being on residential streets in general
- A couple comments were made regarding the loss of on street parking and the negative impact this would have on residents of the affected streets

Walking

- There were some comments about the need to ensure safe walking routes along the routes

Rubislaw Den North

- A few respondents noted that Rubislaw Den North appears to be less steep than Rubislaw Den South
- Several comments were left which highlighted that the routeing down Rubislaw Den North results in less time being spent on Anderson Drive which improves safety for cyclists
- A few respondents highlighted that there are fewer properties on Rubislaw Den North and they all appear to have off-street parking / driveways

Rubislaw Den South

- Many of the respondents identified Rubislaw Den South as the more direct route which is preferable for cyclists
- Many noted that there are fewer turns in the route along Rubislaw Den South and is easier to navigate

- A few respondents highlighted that this route is less steep compared to Rubislaw Den North
- It was highlighted that this route provides better access to local services
- It was indicated by several respondents that Rubislaw Den South is the safer of the two alternative parallel routes as the crossing on Anderson Drive is at the existing crossing and it is generally a quieter street
- There were a couple of comments regarding the loss of on street parking as not all the properties on the road have a driveway

Alternative Options

- It was suggested that pavements could be widened to create shared use paths
- Another suggestion was to improve green time to help improve traffic flow at roundabouts

2.2.11 These respondents were also asked whether they would prefer a two way segregated cycle track or a cycle street for the Rubislaw Den North or South sections of the alternative parallel routes. The responses are shown in Figure 2:7 below.

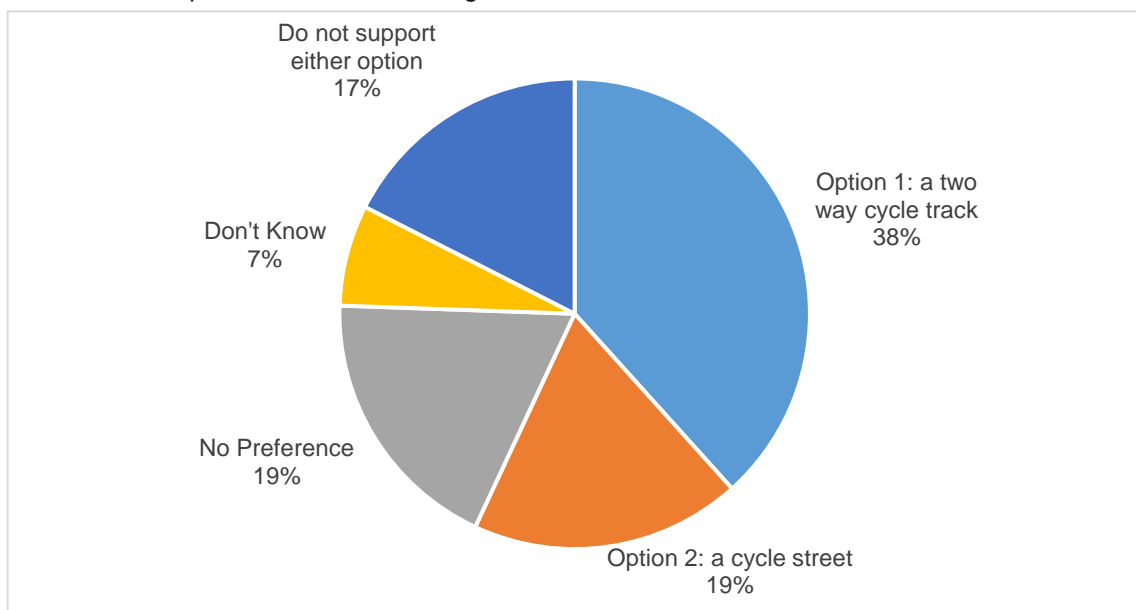


Figure 2:7: Preference for a two way segregated cycle track or a cycle street for the Rubislaw Den North or South sections of the alternative parallel routes

2.2.12 A total of 38% (n=138) stated a preference for a two way cycle track, while 19% (n=67) would rather have a cycle street. A further 19% (n=67) noted that they have no preference and 7% (n=25) stated that they did not know. The remaining 17% (n=63) stated they did not support either option for Rubislaw Den North or South.

2.2.13 All 1007 survey respondents were asked if walking, wheeling or cycling infrastructure was improved whether it would change the way they travel. The responses are shown in Figure 2:8.

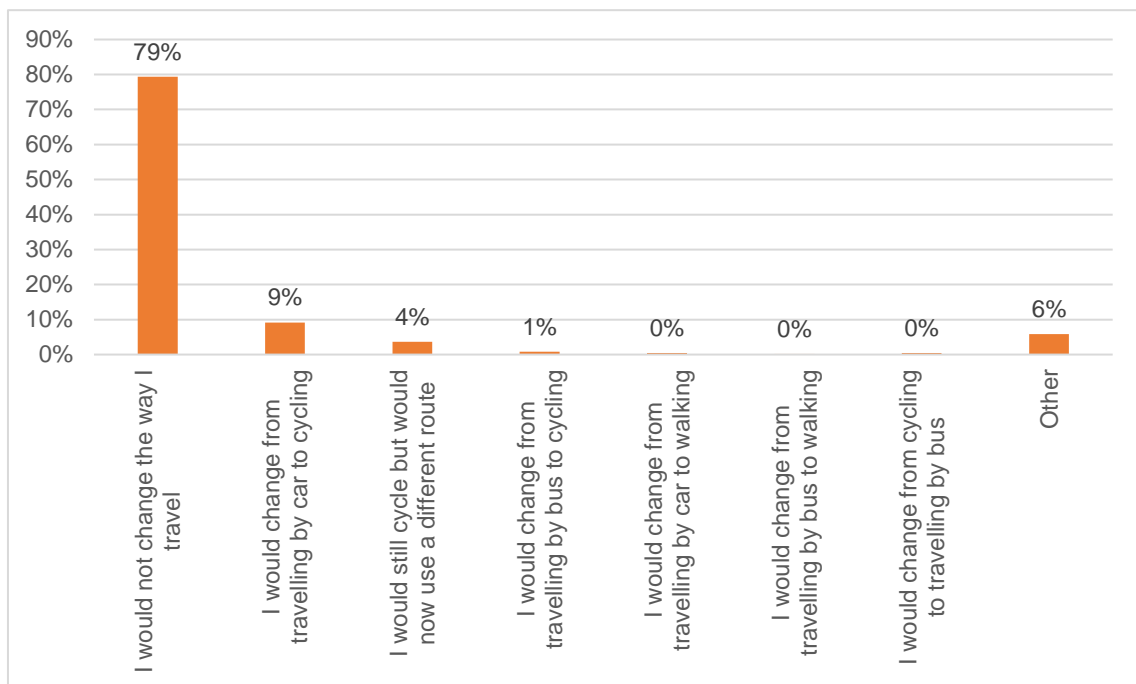


Figure 2:8: If walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure were improved between Westhill and Aberdeen, would this change your travel behaviour, and if so how?

2.2.14 The majority of respondents noted that they would not change the way they travel (79%, n=799) while 9% (n=92) said they would change from travelling by car to cycling and an additional 4% (n=37) would continue to cycle but change their route. A total of 1% (n=8) stated they would change from travelling by bus to cycling. The remaining changes all accounted for 0% of the total and received five or less responses. No one said they would change from cycling to walking.

2.2.15 A total of 6% (n=59) selected 'Other' and these responses included:

- Would continue to cycle / cycle more (n=28)
- Would avoid Aberdeen / City Centre (n=9)
- Would drive but it would increase journey times (n=8)
- Would continue to walk (n=3)

2.2.16 All respondents were provided with an opportunity to leave any other comments on the proposals. A total of 761 comments were provided. A summary of these responses is outlined under the themes below.

Cycling Infrastructure

- **Shared Paths:** Concerns about the safety of shared paths for cyclists and pedestrians are prevalent among the responses received. Some respondents suggest that current paths are already underused or unsafe, and that new paths might not be any better.
- **Safety:** Some respondents suggested improvements to create safer cycling and walking routes, including better maintenance and clearer signage. Respondents also noted that improving safety would encourage more people to cycle and walk.

- **Weather:** Many people highlighted that the local climate makes cycling impractical for many, especially for commuting or shopping trips. Respondents also highlighted that the harsh weather conditions in Aberdeen are a significant deterrent to cycling.
- **Distance from Westhill to Aberdeen city centre:** It was noted by some respondents that the distance between Westhill and Aberdeen city centre is impractical to cycle for many, especially when commuting to and from work.
- **Existing Infrastructure:** Some respondents felt that existing cycle paths are adequate, and that further investment should focus on improving road conditions instead. Conversely, several respondents noted that the existing cycle paths are not adequate and need upgrading.
- **Roundabouts and junctions:** Several respondents noted that junctions and roundabouts need to be improved by giving priority to cyclists over general traffic to make it safer. Examples include:
 - Five Mile Garage
 - AWPR
 - Queens Cross Roundabout
 - Anderson Drive
- **Traffic Congestion:** Several respondents highlighted that introducing cycle infrastructure on the main road will only increase congestion and increase carbon emissions from cars and buses.
- **Use of main roads:** A few respondents indicated that they would still use the main roads when travelling by bike as it is quicker and more direct.
- **Improving Existing Routes:** Some respondents suggested enhancing existing routes and infrastructure rather than creating new ones and that upgrading current paths and roads would be more beneficial.

Environmental and Practical Concerns

- **Emission Reduction:** While there is general support for reducing emissions, many respondents said that the proposed changes are impractical and will not achieve the desired environmental benefits. It was noted that the proposals may not lead to a reduction in car usage as people prefer to drive.
- **Alternative Solutions:** Several alternative solutions were suggested:
 - investing in park-and-ride
 - improving existing roads
 - enhancing public transport
 - use the Deeside railway line

Respondents stated that these alternatives would be more effective in reducing emissions.

- **Environmental and Aesthetic Impact:** Several respondents made comments on the environmental and aesthetic impact of the proposed removal of trees and green spaces along the route. Some respondents emphasised the importance of preserving the city's natural beauty.
- **Vegetation Removal:** Some respondents highlighted that there is a need to remove some vegetation by widening paths, maintaining trees and improving lines of sight – e.g. Five Mile Garage.

Impact on Local Businesses / City Centre

- **Economic Impact:** Many respondents highlighted their concerns that the proposals will negatively impact local businesses and city centre businesses by reducing accessibility for car users. Respondents emphasised that these proposals would result in fewer people visiting the city centre.
- **Impact on City Centre:** Some respondents mentioned that the proposals will further discourage people from visiting the city centre, exacerbating existing issues caused by bus gates and the Low Emission Zone (LEZ). They also emphasised the potential long-term impact on the city's economy and vibrancy as a result.
- **Parking Issues:** There were many comments raising concern about the removal of on-street parking and its impact on local businesses. Respondents highlighted specific examples of how the loss of parking would create significant inconvenience such as accessing banks and the local church on Albyn Place.
- **Low Emissions Zone:** Many respondents highlighted that the introduction of the LEZ in the city centre has had a negative impact on businesses.

Impact on Residents

- **Parking Issues:** Many of the respondents raised concerns about the removal of on-street parking and its negative impact on residents. Respondents highlighted specific examples of how the loss of parking would create significant inconvenience for workers and visitors to their homes. (e.g. Carden Place, Albyn Place).
- **Resident Needs:** The on-street parking needs of specific groups was highlighted, such as the elderly and disabled, and families with young children, who rely on cars for mobility and cannot easily switch to cycling or walking.
- **House Prices:** A few respondents noted that the loss of on street parking would have a negative impact on the value of their home.
- **Impact on Daily Life:** Examples were highlighted by a few respondents of how the proposed changes would negatively affect daily life, such as difficulties for parents dropping off children at school or residents accessing their homes.
- **Community Engagement:** Many respondents noted that there was a need for more community engagement and consideration of local needs in planning decisions. Respondents noted they wanted the council to involve the community more in the decision-making process.

Economic Concerns

- **Economic Viability:** Questions were raised about the economic viability of the proposals, with some respondents doubting that the benefits would justify the costs. A

more detailed cost-benefit analysis and evidence of demand for the proposals was requested.

- **Spend:** Many respondents noted that they felt this is not an appropriate way of spending money in Aberdeen and that it should be spent elsewhere where it would be of benefit to the majority of people rather than the minority.
- **Public Transport Issues**
 - There were many comments requesting better public transport options, including more frequent and direct bus routes. Respondents noted that improving the overall public transport network would be more beneficial than focusing solely on cycling infrastructure.
 - **Traffic Congestion:** Many respondents believe that converting lanes to bus lanes will worsen traffic congestion, especially during peak hours. They argue that this will lead to longer travel times and increased frustration for drivers.
 - **Ineffectiveness:** Several respondents highlighted that bus lanes would not significantly increase bus usage due to the current low frequency and high cost of bus services. Respondents also noted that without addressing these underlying issues, bus lanes alone will not be effective

General Sentiment

- **Distrust in Council:** There is a general distrust in the council's understanding of local needs and priorities, with many respondents indicating that the proposals are out of touch with reality. Many respondents expressed frustration with what they see as the council's lack of practical solutions.
- **Call for Practicality:** Many respondents noted that they want the council to focus on practical, cost-effective solutions that address the immediate needs of the majority rather than idealistic projects. Respondents highlighted that they want the council to prioritise realistic and achievable improvements to the city.
- **Cycle Demand:** It was noted by several respondents that there are low numbers of cyclists using the current infrastructure and due to low demand, it is not logical to invest in new cycle infrastructure.
- **Car Use:** Several respondents highlighted that the Council is making it increasingly difficult to drive a car in Aberdeen.

2.3 Demographics

- 2.3.1 Respondents were asked a number of demographic questions but these were not mandatory. As such, the total number of responses to these questions varies from question to question.
- 2.3.2 Respondents were asked to provide the first four digits of their postcode, with the map below highlighting the areas from which responses were received.

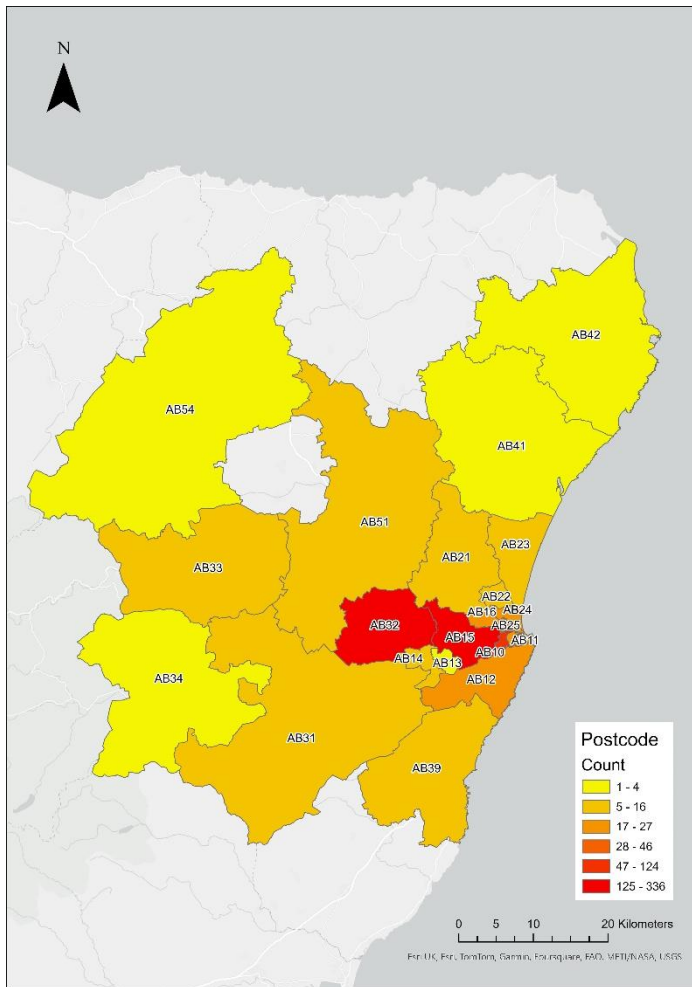


Figure 2:9: Please enter the first four digits of your postcode (i.e, AB10)

2.3.3 From this, the majority of people who responded are from AB10, AB15 and AB32 which is where the majority of the walking, wheeling and cycling proposals are focussed. These areas include Westhill, West End and the City Centre which account for a total of 63% (n=630) of the total responses to the survey.

2.3.4 Respondents were asked which gender they identify with, with responses as shown in Figure 2:10 below.

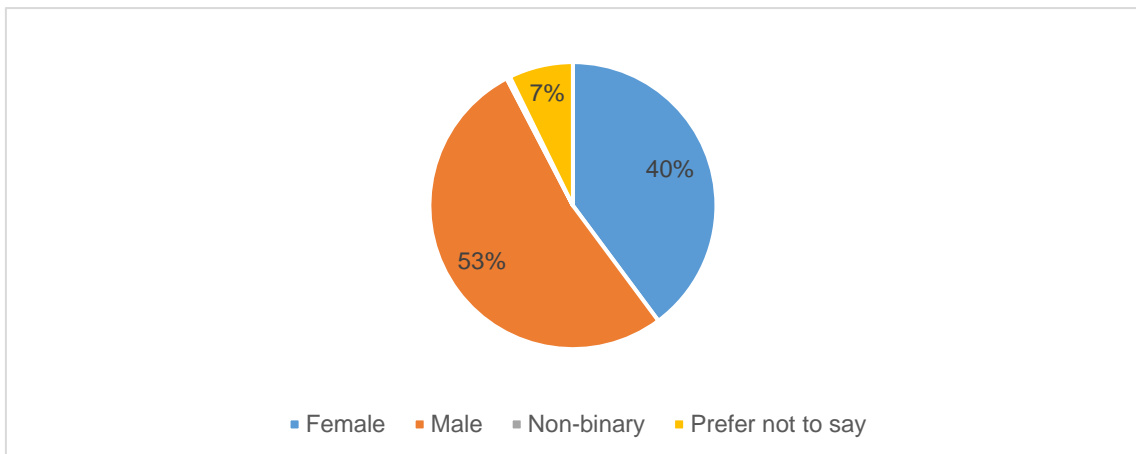


Figure 2:10: Which gender do you identify with?

2.3.5 Just over half (53%, n=522) stated that they identify as male, while 40% (n=396) identify as female. A total of 7% (n=72) selected 'Prefer not to say' and four people indicated they identify as non-binary.

2.3.6 Respondents were also asked to indicate which age group they fall within. The results of which are shown in Figure 2:11 below.

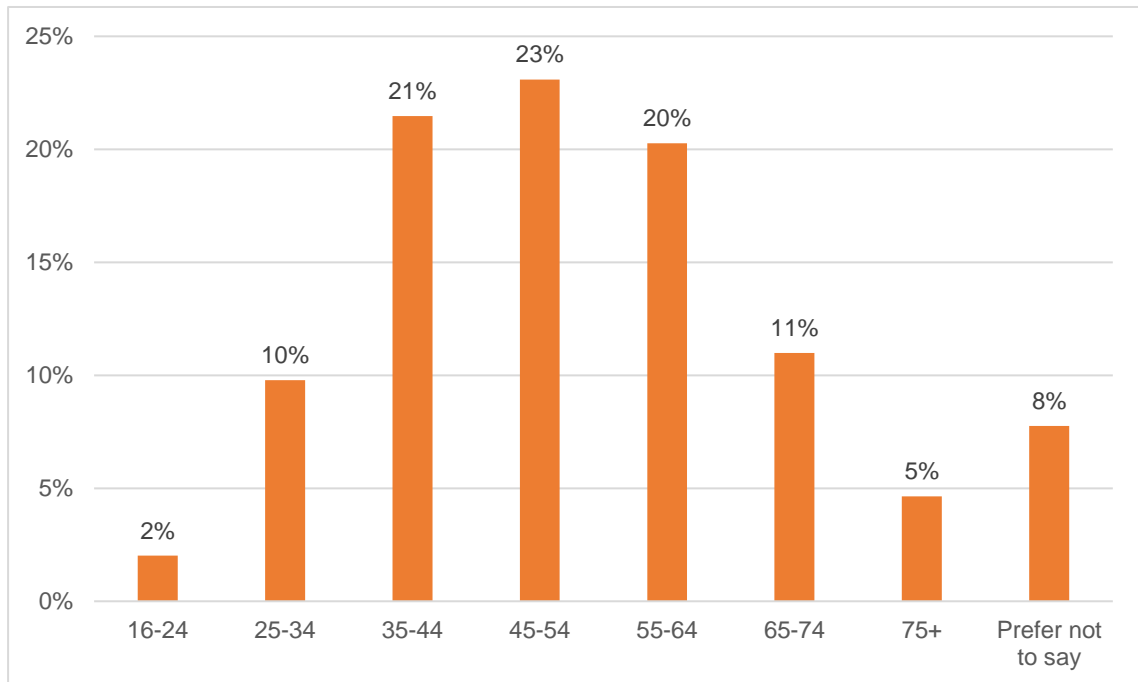


Figure 2:11: What is your age?

2.3.7 The majority of respondents fall within the 45-54 age bracket (23%, n=229), while 21% (n=213) are within the 34-44 age group and 20% (n=201) are aged 55-64. A total of 11% (n=109) are aged between 65 and 75 with a further 5% (n=46) being aged 75 or older. At the younger age range, 2% (n=20) fall within the 16-24 age bracket and 10% (n=97) are aged 25-34. A total of 8% (n=77) opted to select 'Prefer not to say'.

2.3.8 All respondents were also asked what their employment status is, with the results shown in Figure 2:12

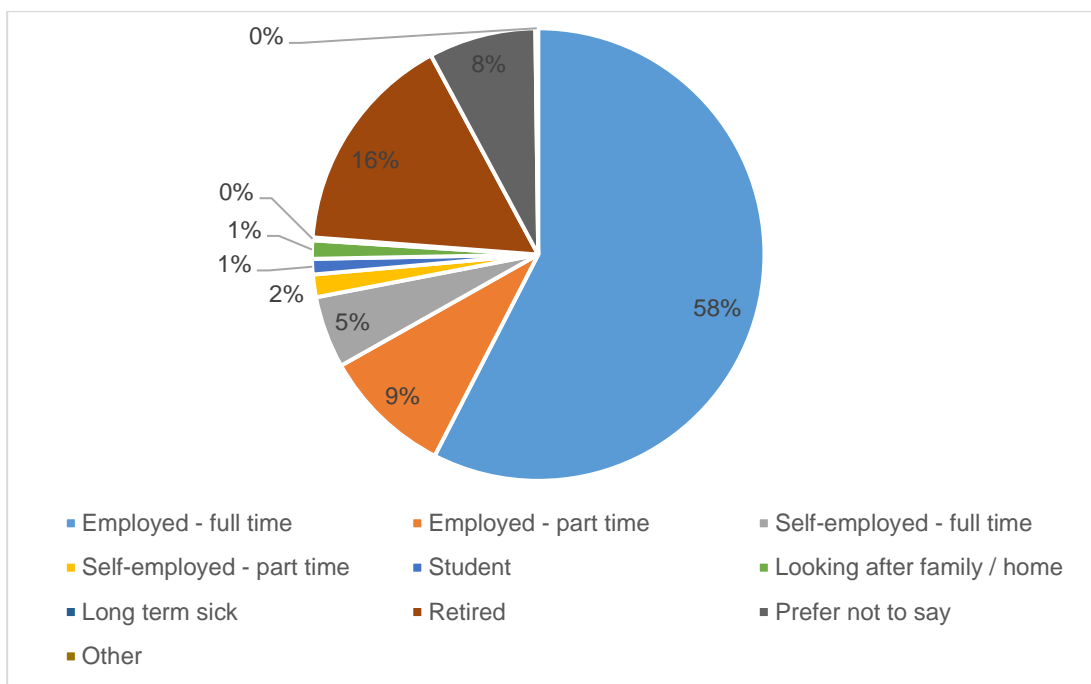


Figure 2:12: What is your employment status?

2.3.9 Over half (58%, n=571) of respondents noted that they are employed full time with 9% (n=92) being employed part time. A total of 5% (n=51) stated that they are self-employed full time and a further 2% (n=16) are self-employed part time. Of the respondents, being a student (n=11) and looking after family / home (n=13) account for 1% each, while 16% (n=158) state that they are retired. Only two people noted that they are long-term sick and a further two people selected 'Other' and wrote their own responses of being semi-retired and holding volunteer positions.

2.3.10 All respondents were asked whether they have a health condition or illness which affects their personal mobility, with the responses shown in Figure 2:13 below.

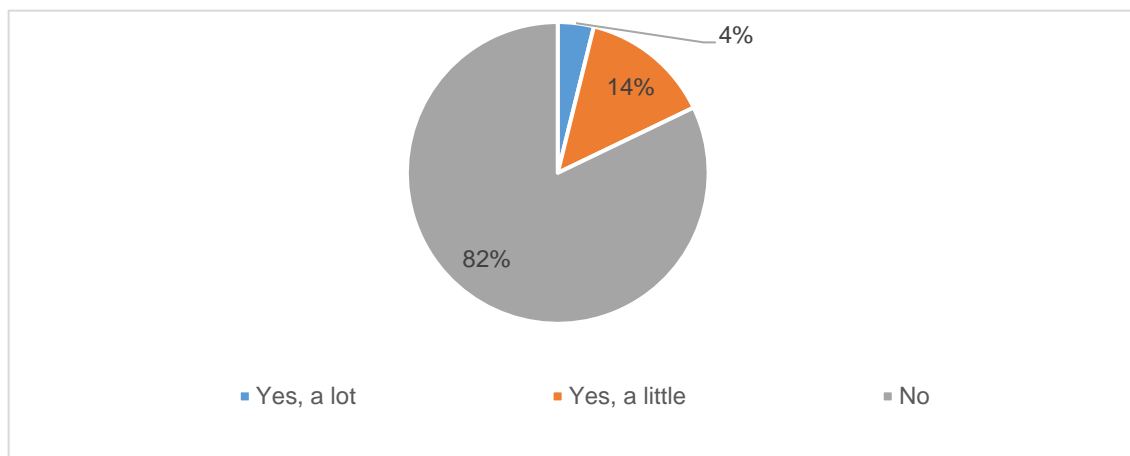


Figure 2:13: Do you have a health condition or illness which affects your personal mobility?

2.3.11 The majority of respondents noted that they do not have a health condition or illness that affects their personal mobility (82%, n=809). A total of 14% (n=138) stated that they have a health condition or illness, but it only affects them a little, while 4% (n=38) noted it affects them a lot.

2.3.12 Those who indicated they have a health condition or illness which affects their personal mobility (n = 176), they were then asked whether it affects their ability to use public transport. The responses are shown in Figure 2:14.

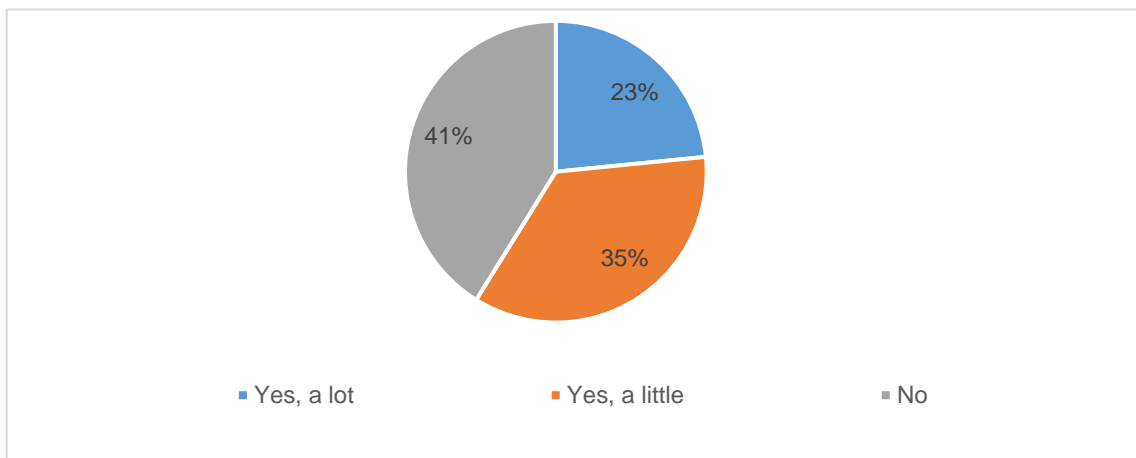


Figure 2:14: Does your condition or illness affect your ability to use public transport?

2.3.13 Of those who have a health condition or illness, 41% (n=72) said it does not impact their ability to use public transport. A total of 35% (n=62) noted that it affects them a little, while 23% (n=41) stated that it affects them a lot.

2.3.14 Finally, all the respondents were asked which income bracket best describes their annual household income. The results are shown in Figure 2:15.

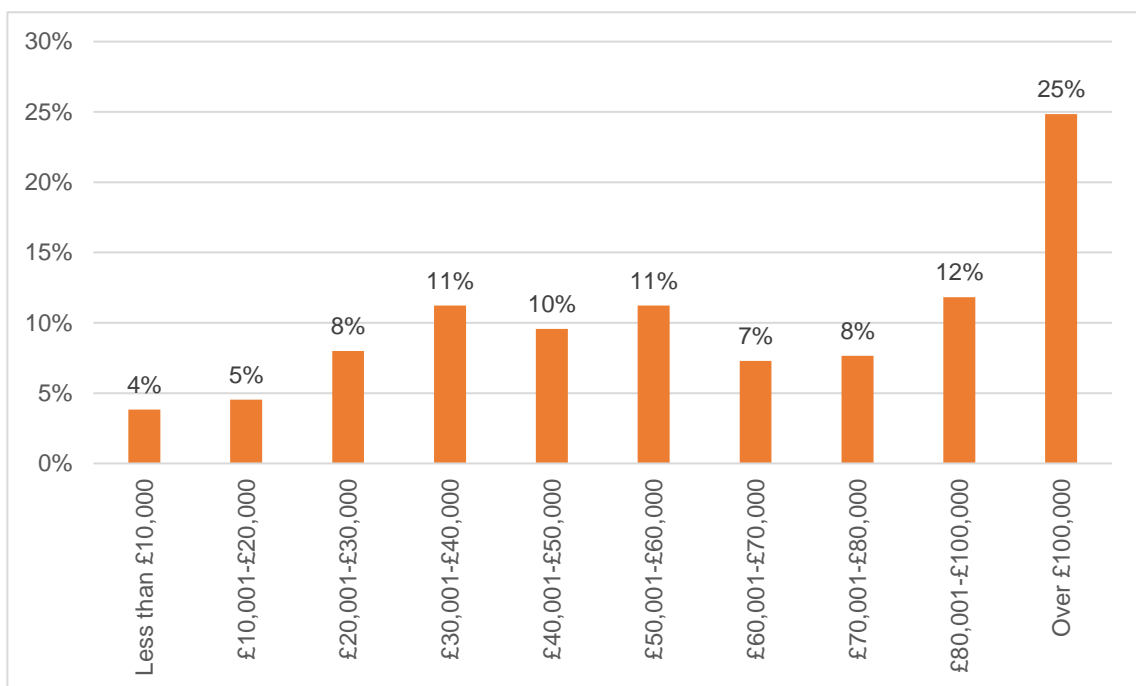


Figure 2:15: Which of the following best describes the annual income of your household (before tax)?

2.3.15 One quarter (25%, n=208) stated that their annual household income is over £100,000. A total of 12% of the respondents earn between £80,001-£100,000 (n=99) per annum, while 11% either earn between £30,001 - £40,000 (n=94) or £50,001-£60,000 (n=94). A further 10% (n=80) earn between £40,001 - £50,000. There is an even proportion of respondents who earn between £20,001 - £30,000 (8%, n=67) and between £70,001 - £80,000 (8%, n=64) with a further 7% (n=61) earning between £60,001 - £70,000. A total of 5% (n=38) earn £10,001-£20,000, with a further 4% (n=32) earning less than £10,000 a year.

2.4 Letter / Email Comments

2.4.1 Several submissions were received from businesses / organisations through Aberdeen City Council, and these have been summarised below:

- **Historic Environment Scotland** responded noting that they do not have any comments at this stage of the project.
- **Aberdeen Cycle Forum** responded to note that they agree with the corridor approach and agree that the mainline route on Queen's Road should be the preferred route. Their response also included the following comments:
 - The cycle track in the centre of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road junction may feel isolating and therefore unsafe for some
 - Concerns around priority at the Five Mile garage
 - Concern around the design on Skene Road as it was unconventional and unlikely to be successful
 - Cyclists prefer signal controlled junctions which should be applied to the roundabout on Anderson Drive, Forest Road, Esslemont Avenue and Albert Street
- **Residents of the slip road of Queens Road** submitted a written response to voice their concerns and objection against the proposals citing:
 - An increase in congestion at King's Gate roundabout because of making the road one way
 - The loss of on-street parking as not all houses have a driveway and there are a high number of elderly and disabled people on the street
 - Alternative suggestions to the proposal were noted, including:
 - Changing the pavement to a shared use path
 - Diverting cyclists along Woodend Crescent / Woodend Place
 - Building on the strip of grass and trees on Queens Road