

An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood with several houses and green spaces. A large, semi-transparent blue rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing white text.

# A326 (North) Large Local Major Scheme (LLM) engagement report


An aerial photograph of a road intersection. A large truck is stopped at a red traffic light, and a smaller car is visible further down the road. The road has white lane markings and green grassy areas.

Image from Stantec fly through video commissioned by Hampshire County Council

# Key findings

# Key findings

There were mixed feelings about the different aspects of the scheme's impact, as shown below.



Improving the traffic flow was ranked the most important priority for the area; however, over half of respondents (54%) felt the scheme would not deliver this.



The second most important priority was improving crossing of the A326 for people walking and cycling. 51% of respondents said the scheme would deliver this.



66% of those that cycle along or across the A326 preferred the option of the off-road cycle route directly adjacent to the A326, between Main Road and southern Marchwood.



Nearly two thirds of respondents had concerns about the environmental impact of the scheme, with 44% being very concerned. However, the scheme priority related to the environment (improve biodiversity through mitigation and enhancement) was ranked the lowest in terms of importance.



Overall, there was more support for, than opposition to, the scheme specific elements. The component with the most support was for undertaking a major junction upgrade at Twiggs Lane rather than at Staplewood Lane.



There were lots of comments and ideas about the scheme provided in the open text questions. However, there was little consensus due to conflicting views between environmental concerns, catering for increased traffic and the need to reduce traffic.

# Introduction

# A326 (North) LLM - background



## Background

A significant amount of growth is planned in the Waterside area over the next few decades, with several large development sites identified in the Local Development Plan, and four of the Solent Freeport sites being located on the Waterside.

Hampshire County Council has responded to this growth with the Waterside Transport Strategy and Action Plan, which was adopted in November 2022. The Strategy sets out how the Council will work with partners to plan and deliver transport improvements to support growth, in a way that enhances the sensitive environment of the area.

Improvements to the A326 are included in the Strategy to ensure that it can continue to fulfill its function as the main road link to/ from the area. This would be achieved by increasing capacity on the A326, resulting in reduced traffic on roads through the New Forest National Park and Waterside communities.



## The scheme

The highway network in the Waterside area is very constrained. The A326 is the only major route connecting communities to Southampton and the M27 and providing access to the New Forest. There are high levels of delay due to the lack of suitable alternative routes and limited alternatives to the car.

Following a call for schemes by Transport for the South-East (TfSE) in 2019, the County Council put forward improvements to a north section of the A326 between west Totton and Applemore. On the back of this, in March 2020, the County Council was invited to submit a Strategic Outline Business Case for funding from the Large Local Majors fund.

The scheme objectives are to:

- enhance accessibility for all users of the transport network including non-motorised users
- address congestion along the corridor
- facilitate economic development along the corridor
- minimise the impact on the New Forest
- compliment other investment in the area

# A326 (North) LLM – aims and method



## Aims

Hampshire County Council is committed to listening to the views of residents and stakeholders. The purpose of this engagement project was to inform the further development of plans for the A326 (North) scheme, as there will be another stage of design work undertaken before a Planning Application is submitted for any changes. Specifically, the engagement sought views on the following elements of the scheme:

- the environmental impact of the proposals
- the priorities for the design
- what changes should be made to the design
- feedback on specific elements of the scheme design at various locations



## Method

In order to enable an informed response, an information pack was produced which outlined the scheme proposals, and this was published online, along with a ‘fly-by’ video showing what the scheme might look like once completed.

Four live exhibition events took place on 5, 15 and 23 June and 11 July 2023, offering members of the public and stakeholders an opportunity to find out more about the scheme and ask questions of County Council officers. Two online question and answer sessions were also held on 23 June and 6 July.

The views expressed in this report include responses to an open feedback form, which was available (online and in other formats) to anyone to complete, from Monday 5 June to Sunday 16 July. There were no quotas or sampling targets, in keeping with the spirit of open engagement. All questions in the feedback form were optional, and the base therefore changes throughout the report. This is noted on each chart.

*Note: Where percentages do not total to 100%, this is due to rounding.*

# Summary of engagement activities



Four in-person engagement events were held within the Waterside area. The approximate number of attendees for each of the venues were:

- Totton (Hanger Farm Arts Centre) 400;
- Marchwood (Village Hall) 300;
- Hythe (St Anne's Neighbourhood Centre) 200; and
- Fawley (Jubilee Hall) 85.



Two online Q&A sessions were held, providing an opportunity for those that couldn't attend the in-person events to hear about the scheme and ask questions. Seven people logged on to these sessions.



505 online and paper surveys were completed.

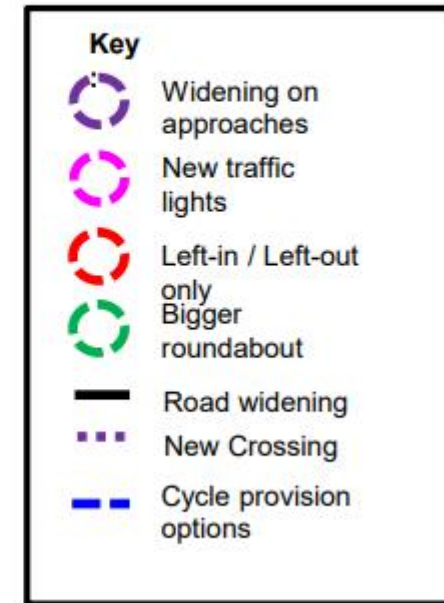
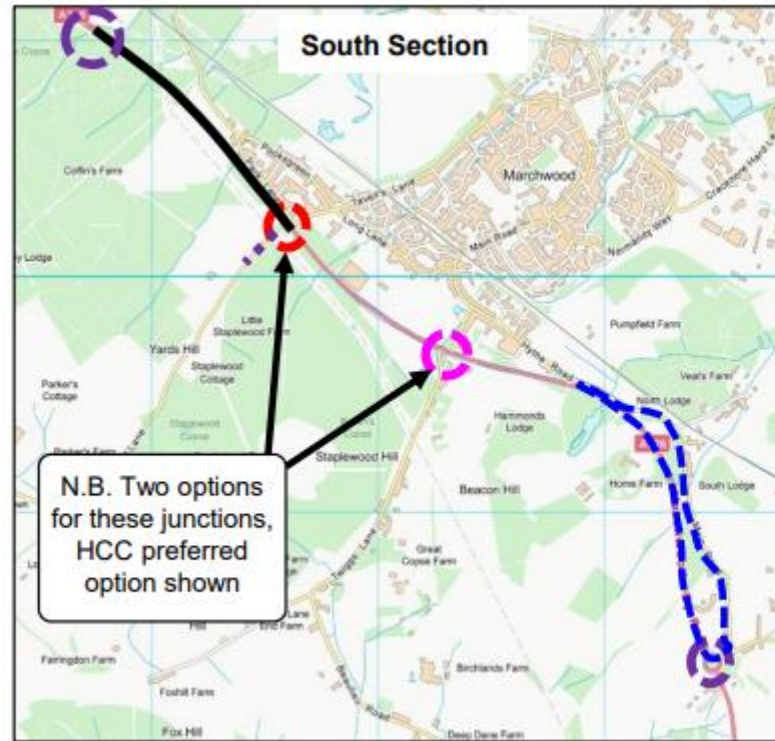
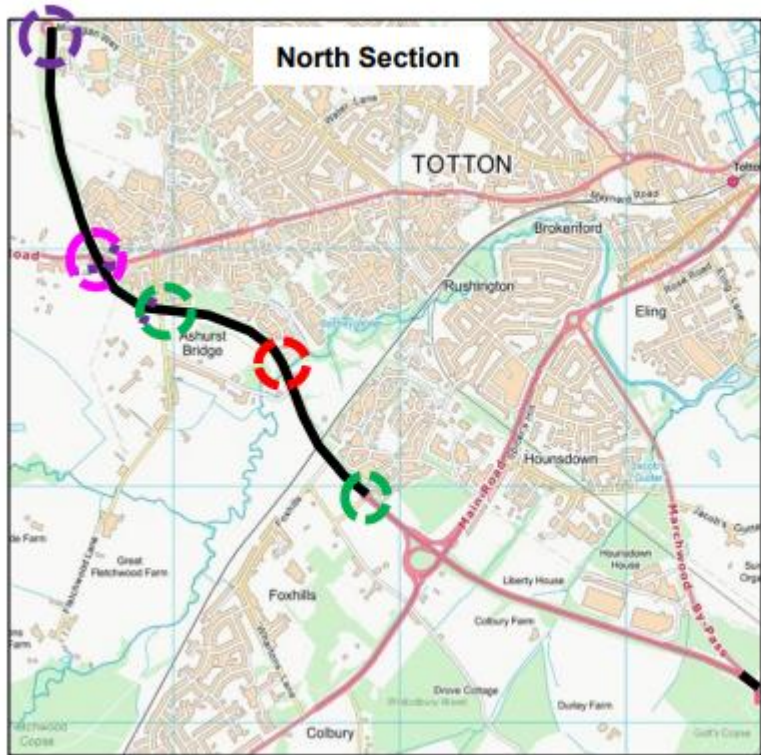


19 emails were received, 13 from individuals and six from organisations.

Five comments were made on Instagram.

173 comments were made on Facebook.

# Preferred Scheme Overview

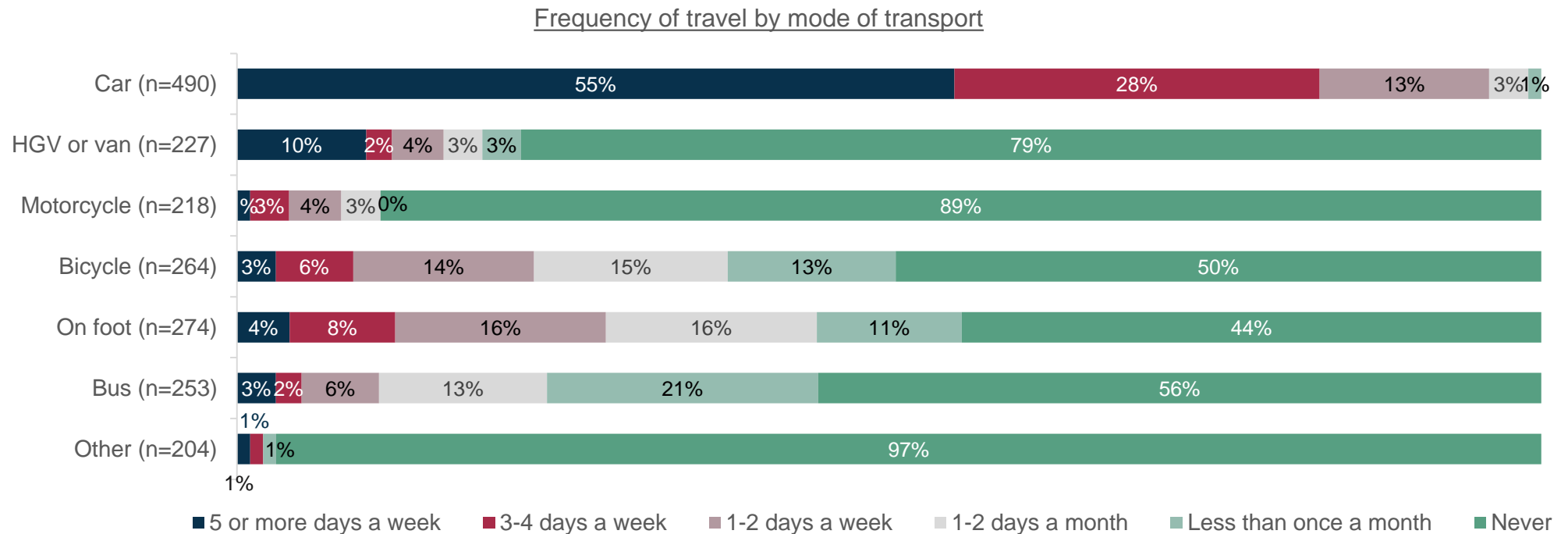




# Detailed findings

# Travel habits (1)

Most respondents reported travelling along and across the A326 by car, with over three quarters doing this 3-4 days a week or more (83%). Over a quarter of those people who reported walking do so 1-2 days a week or more (28%). Nearly a quarter of respondents who reported travelling by bike said they cycle 1-2 days a week or more (23%).

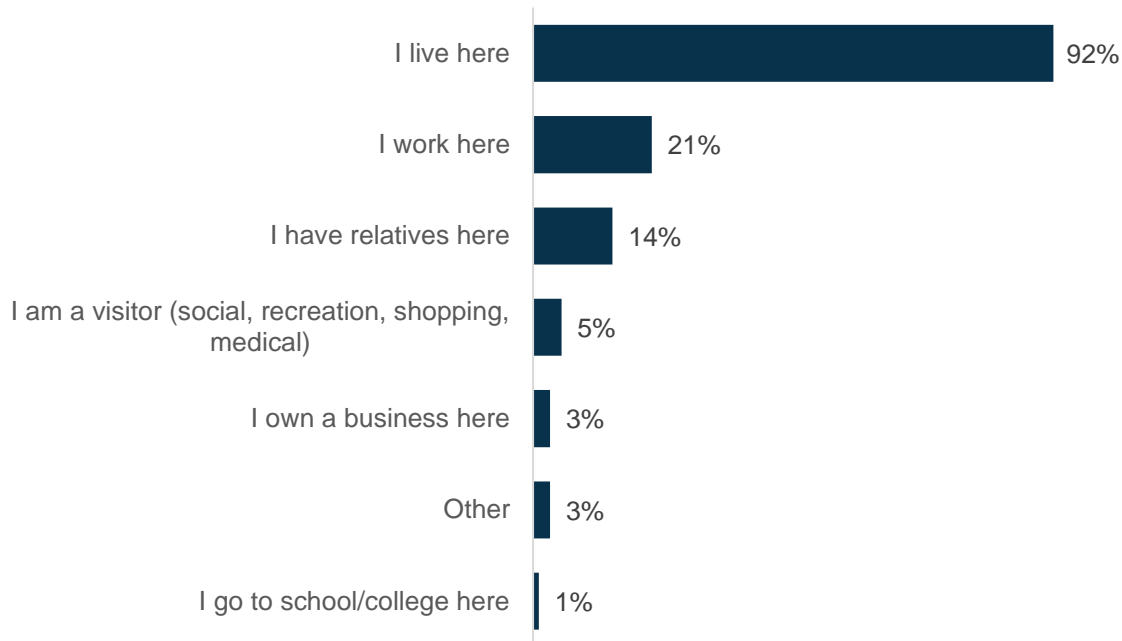


*How often do you typically travel along and across the A326 by the following methods of transport?*

# Travel habits (2)

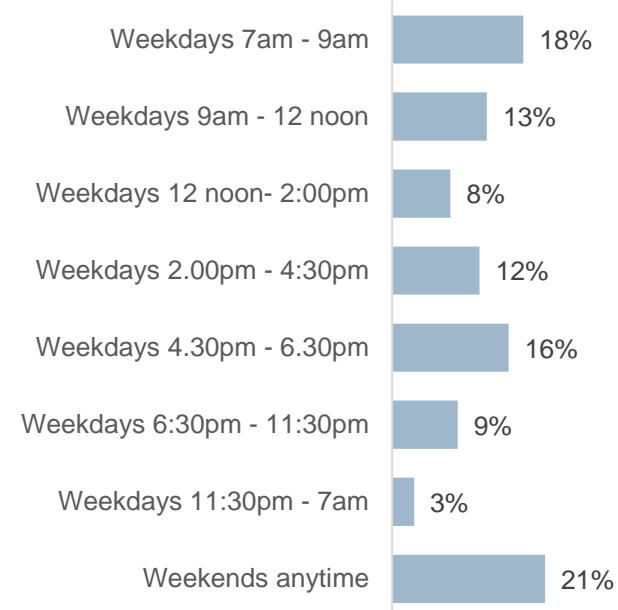
Over two thirds of respondents were connected to the Waterside area because they live there (92%). The most common times for journeys along the A326 were at 'weekends anytime' (21%), followed by weekday commuting times, 7am - 9am (18%) and 4.30pm - 6.30pm (16%).

Connection with area (n=502)



What is your connection with the Waterside area? [Multi-code]

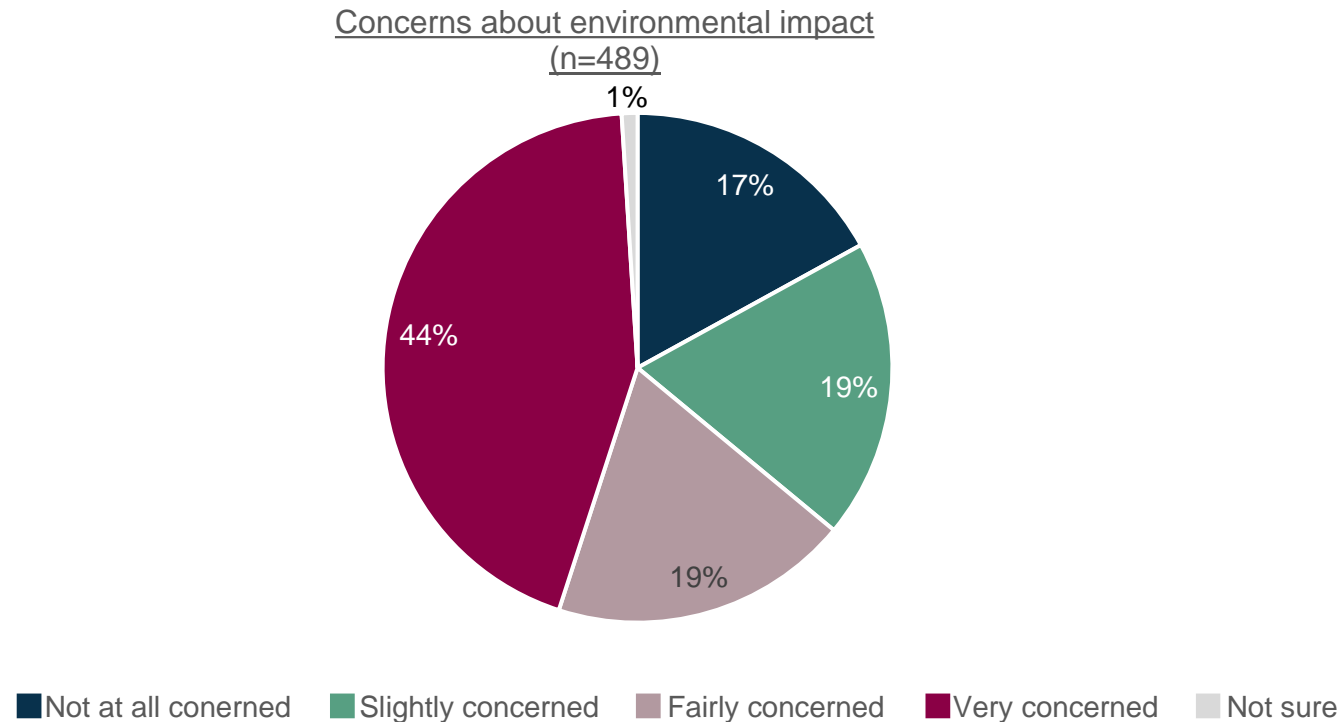
Journey times in the area (n=1692)



When do you typically travel on this stretch of road? [Multi-code]

# Views on the environment (1)

Almost two thirds of the respondents felt concerned about the potential environmental impact of the scheme (44% very concerned and 19% fairly concerned). Nearly one fifth of respondents (17%) were not at all concerned about the scheme's environmental impact.



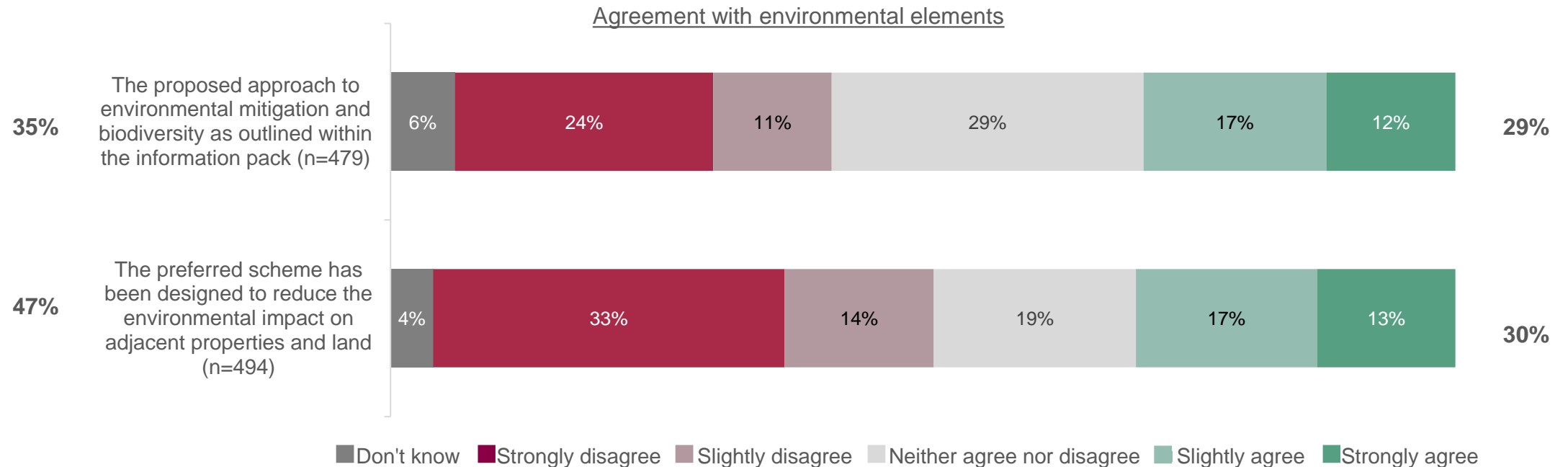
*How concerned are you about the potential environmental impact of the scheme?*

# Views on the environment (2)

Over a third (35%) of respondents disagreed with the proposed approach to environmental mitigation and biodiversity proposed for the scheme and almost half (47%) strongly disagreed that the scheme had been designed to reduce the environmental impact on adjacent properties and land.

Disagree

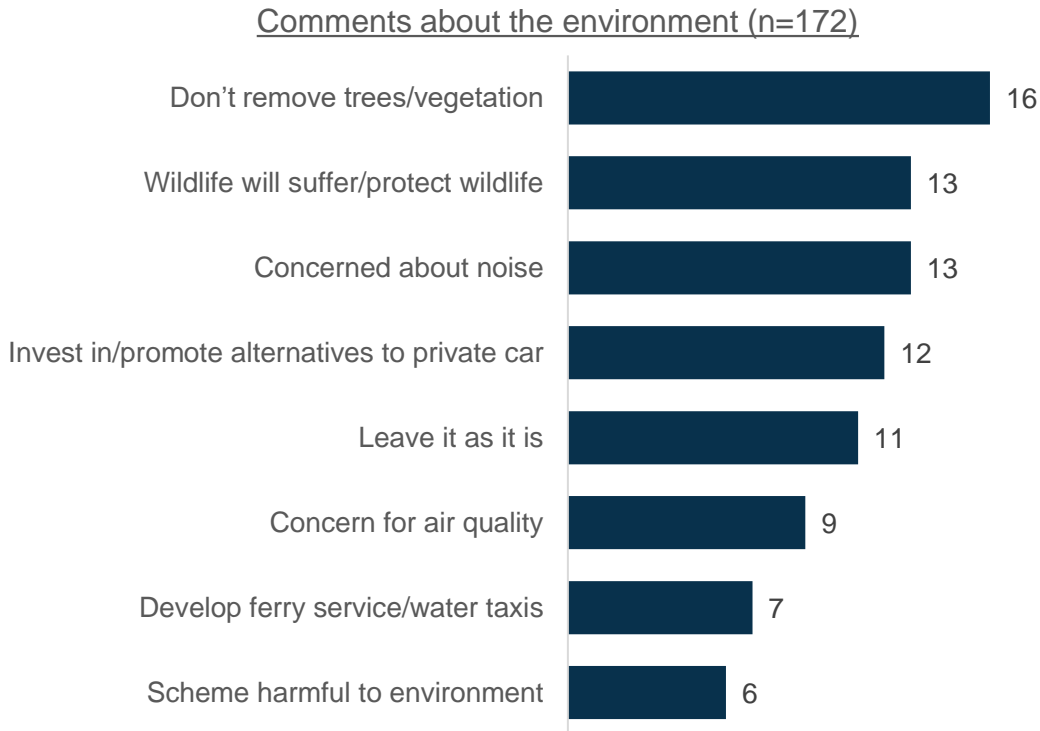
Agree



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following environmental elements of the scheme?

# Environmental comments

When asked what additional environmental actions should be taken, the most frequent comment related to not wanting trees or vegetation to be removed. Other comments included protecting wildlife, concerns about pollution and wanting to see alternatives to private car use.



*"The amount of trees and hedges being removed and the loss of habitat. This should not be allowed" (Male car driver and cyclist aged 45-54)*

*"I know how much the trees contribute to reducing the noise and pollution from the road. As you will be removing the trees to build the embankment this is going to cause detriment to our home and health" (Female who travels by car, bike, bus and on foot aged 35-44)*

*"Consider enhanced public transport particularly using the water which surrounds us for a new sustainable form of transportation. Provide boat stops where parking is available and make travel into the city cheaper and more convenient using alternative modes of than taking the car into the city. Plough funds into this and revived rail link" (Female who travels by car, bike and on foot aged 65-74)*

*"The environmental impact can be reduced to zero by not carrying it out at all. There will be a negative impact on the wildlife, trees and vegetation as a result of the construction - both during and after. The subsequent additional traffic will result in air and noise pollution" (Female car driver aged 55-64)*

What else should we be doing to improve the environment of the scheme or mitigate the schemes impact?

Top 8 most frequent comments shown

# Design priorities (1)

Improving traffic flow was ranked as the most important priority. Improving crossings for people walking, cycling and horse riding was voted the second most important priority. The least important priority for respondents was improving biodiversity through comprehensive environmental mitigation and enhancement works.



Improve traffic flow for vehicles to reduce queuing and delays



Improve crossings of the A326 for people walking and cycling



Improve facilities for walking, cycling and horse riding on adjacent roads

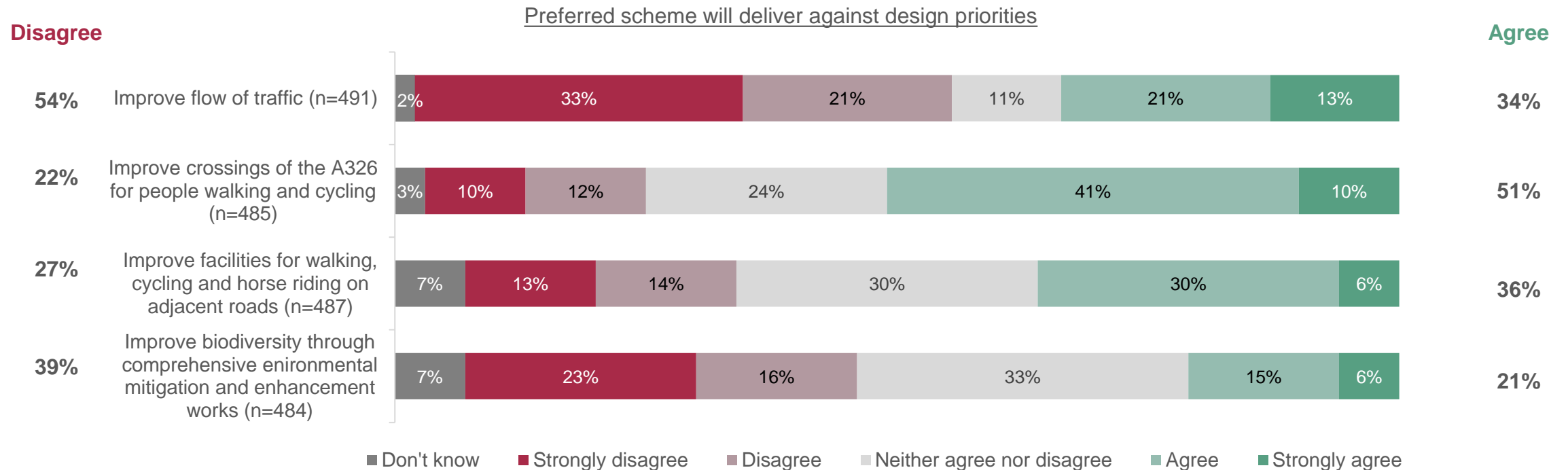


Improve biodiversity through comprehensive environmental mitigation and enhancement works

*Please rank the design priorities in order of importance (n=490).*

# Design priorities (2)

Although deemed the most important priority, more than half of respondents (54%) disagreed that the scheme would deliver an improvement in traffic flow. Just over half (51%) agreed that the scheme would deliver improved crossings for people who walk or cycling, which was voted the second most important priority.

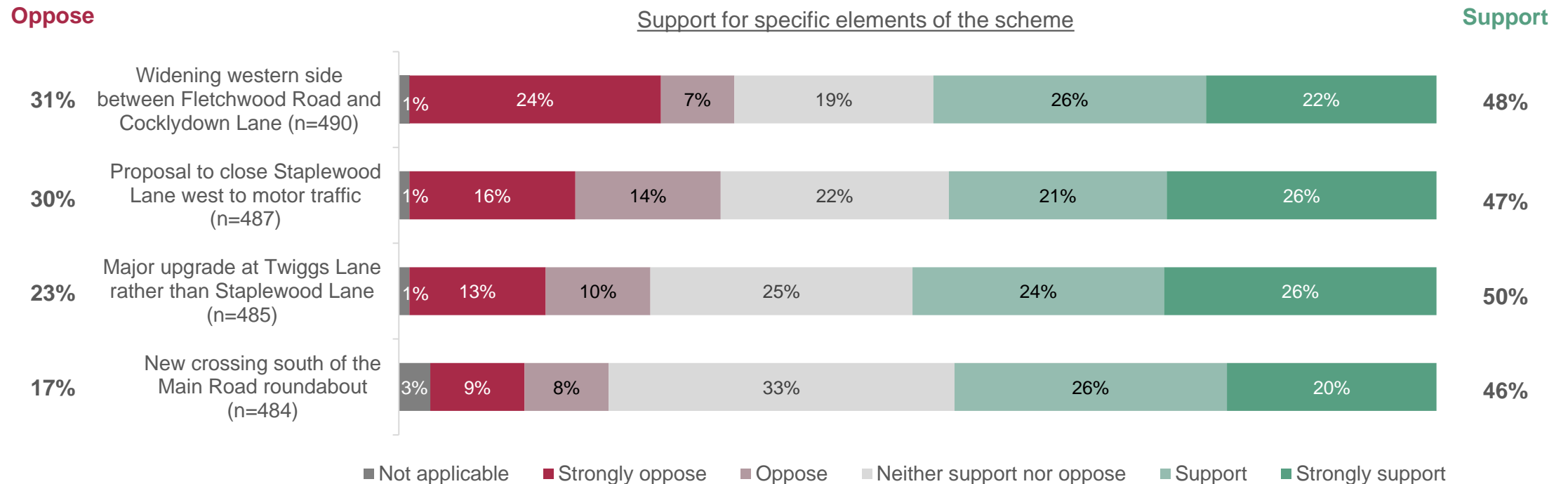


*To what extent do you agree or disagree that the preferred scheme will deliver against the design priorities?*



# Scheme specific elements

Overall, there was more support than opposition for each of the design elements. Around half of the respondents agreed with each proposal. The proposal with the greatest opposition was the narrowing of the western side of the A326, between Fletchwood Lane and Cocklydown Lane, with 31% of respondents opposing this.

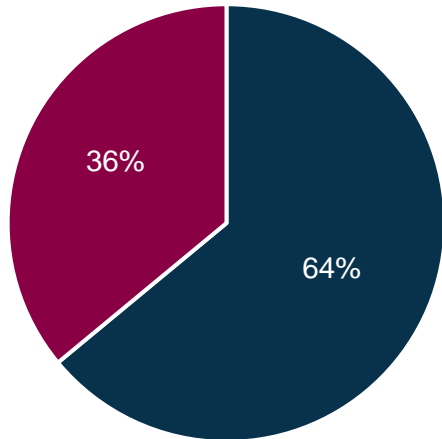


To what extent do you support or oppose the following elements of the scheme: (list)

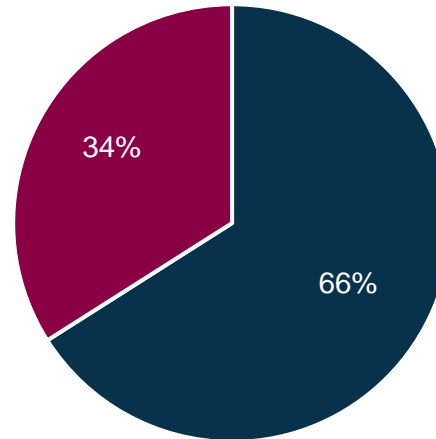
# Cycling options for Marchwood to Dibden (1)

The majority of respondents (64%) preferred the option of the off-road cycling route directly alongside the A326. Looking at the preferred option amongst **all** those people who currently cycle and those who **frequently\*** cycle this sentiment was echoed.

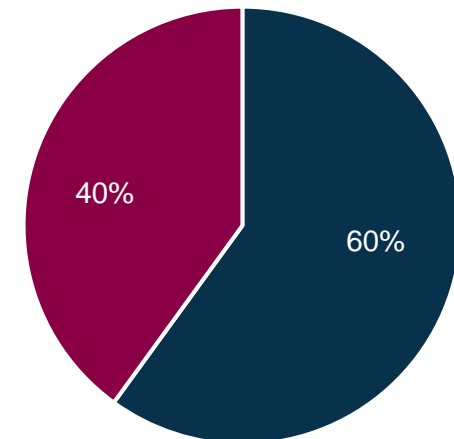
Support for different types of cycling facilities – all respondents (n=458)



Support for different types of cycling facilities amongst all those who cycle (n=244)



Support for different types of cycling facilities amongst those who frequently\* cycle (n=58)



- Off-road cycling route directly adjacent to the A326
- On-road route along Hythe Road

\* Frequently = once a week or more

*There are two cycle route options, an on-road facility for people cycling along Hythe Road (preferred by the County Council) or an off-road route directly adjacent to the A326, which would require the removal of existing vegetation and trees along this route. Which option do you prefer?*

# Cycling options for Marchwood to Dibden (2)

People that preferred the on-road route were asked to rank four options for improving the on-road route along Hythe Road. Adding traffic calming was the most popular, and closing the road to through-vehicles was the least popular.



Option D  
Traffic calming



Option C  
Remove centre line and add  
advisory cycle lane



Option B  
Change to one-way



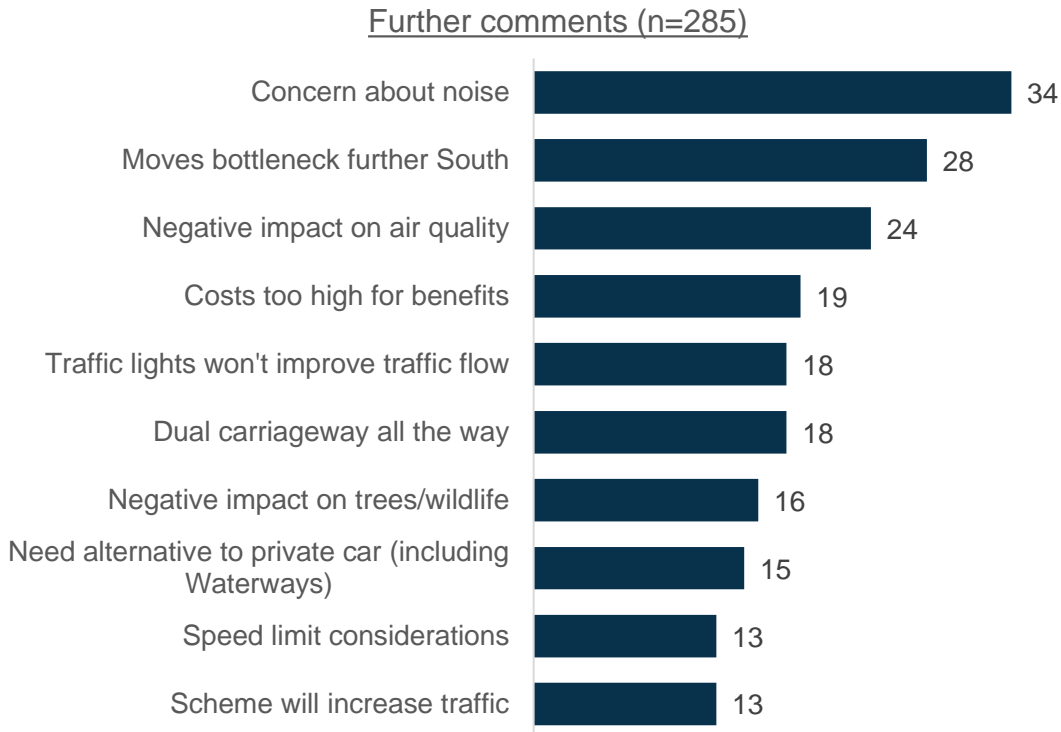
Option A  
Close road to through  
vehicles

*Rank the four options for the Hythe Road on-road cycle provision in order of preference (n=153).*

# Unstructured comments

# Further comments

Concerns about noise and air quality were amongst the most frequent comments made, along with people stating the scheme would move the bottleneck further south.



*"Noise is a major concern for residents adjacent to the proposed A326 dual carriageway - the existing single carriageway is extremely noisy" (Male car driver aged 65-74)*

*"The A326 problems only occur because of the bottle necks. The plan just moves the bottle neck further south. It's a waste of money" (Male car driver aged 35-44)*

*"The associated costs are astronomical compared to the benefits. Life for local residents will be a total misery for 2 years if this is constructed. There is no mention of compensation for residents, especially for the potential reduction in property values the scheme will cause. BNG is far too intangible" (Male car driver aged 45-54)*

*"The use of many sets of traffic lights means that the traffic flow won't be improved. Local traffic will just use the forest roads instead which is what I will do" (Female car driver 45-54)*

Top 10 most frequent comments shown

If you have any further comments about specific parts of the scheme that haven't been addressed by any of the previous questions, please add below.

# Free text survey questions

There were opportunities for respondents to add free text responses on the following issues:

- how the scheme would impact their business (if they had previously stated they had a business in the Waterside area);
- locations where more could be done to improve facilities for people traveling on foot, bike or horse;
- missed opportunities, particularly in terms of facilities for walking, cycling and horse riding on adjacent roads; and
- alternative cycling route options.

Whilst a large number of respondents provided their views and comments on these matters, there was no overall consensus on any issue as the comments were many and varied. Therefore, no charts have been presented on these issues in this report. All the comments made on these topics have been forwarded to the project team for consideration.

# Comments received by email (1)

In addition to responding to the survey, people could send an email with any comments or queries they had about the scheme. 19 emails were received, 13 from individuals and six from organisations. The comments received have been grouped into themes and these are shown over the next four slides.

## Ensuring traffic uses the A326

- Respondents felt that the scheme risks creating rat runs which need to be made unattractive, possibly with the use of traffic calming (especially during the construction phase of the scheme). They felt there was a lack of evidence to show if and how the scheme will reduce traffic through the New Forest National Park (NFNP) and concerns that the scheme will increase traffic on adjacent roads.
- One comment called for the consideration of alternative junction options that are less likely to result in traffic using parallel roads to the West (such as a new junction between the A326 and a position between the Pilgrim Inn and the access to the Priory Hospital). It was also thought that making Trotts Lane a 'green lane' alongside the restriction of motorised traffic on Main Road could prevent general traffic using this route instead of the A326.

Respondents felt there were lots of documents relating to the area that need to be joined up, not stand alone. It was felt the scheme does not align with the LTP4 vision and contradicts the Government and Hampshire County Council climate crisis solutions, such as green economy and green transport. The New Highway Code 2022 Hierarchy of Road users should be considered with the needs of those travelling on foot coming first and those travelling on bike second.

A few respondents perceived that the scheme would not improve congestion, as traffic lights would cause bottlenecks and increase journey times. Respondents gave contradicting comments relating to the dualling of the carriageway; one comment called for the whole route to be dual carriageway, and another asked for serious consideration of the lower-cost scheme option (with no widening).

Respondents felt that alternative transport options were needed, with a suggestion that these should be implemented first to avoid reliance on the car increasing. However, a contrary view on this was that the scheme route expansion will encourage active travel, improve connectivity and could allow for future ferry route expansion. There was also a call to review the buses and the bus strategy.

# Comments received by email (2)

Environmental concerns were noted in many comments and are summarised below:

## Legislation

- Respondents felt that the environmental assessment does not fully acknowledge the National Park (NP) and will have a negative impact on Natura 2000 qualifying features. It was thought that there is an emphasis on trees, ignoring other special qualities of the NP and the value of grassland habitats and common land for grazing.
- One response remarked that the scheme constitutes a 'major development' and therefore needs to be set against the National Planning Policy Framework major development tests. For such schemes to go ahead in the NP the environmental enhancement to offset the loss of landscape must be central to the plans. Other respondents asked for clarity on how biodiversity net gain will be achieved and stated it needs to go beyond the statutory 10% to reflect the special context of the NP.

A respondent wanted to understand who would own, and therefore have responsibility for maintaining, the land between the road infrastructure and residential properties.

There were concerns amongst respondents about noise pollution and a call for more dialogue with residents and a request for compensation to be considered.

## Protecting flora and fauna

- A respondent suggested providing wildlife road crossings (e.g. underpasses) to protect the wildlife.
- Respondents had concerns for damage caused to sensitive locations, particularly during the construction phase.

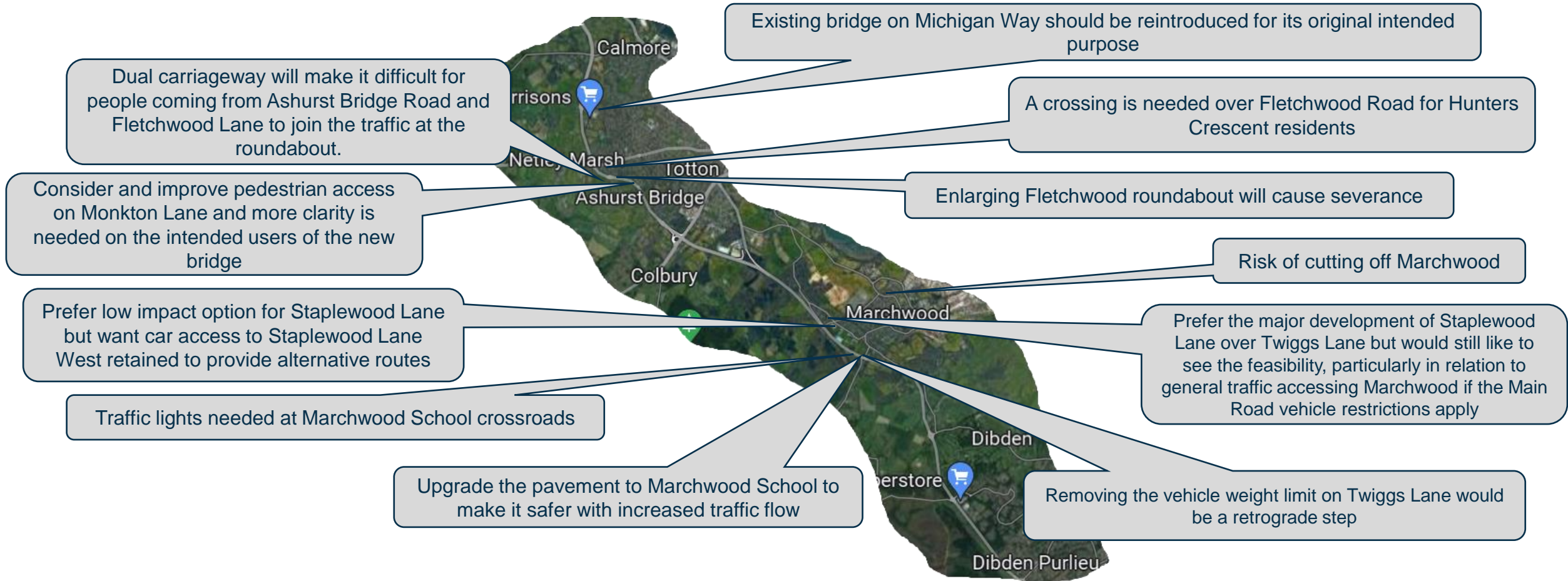
## Protecting the National Park (NP)

- One respondent felt that the scheme will create a gateway to the NP, putting pressure on the landscape and there is a need to divert excessive recreational pressure away from the NP.
- A respondent suggested maintaining the tranquillity of the New Forest through the consideration of lighting and road surfaces. There were concerns amongst respondents about noise and pollution and the effectiveness of trees versus sound proofing fences.



# Comments received by email (3)

There were also comments about some specific locations along the scheme:



# Comments received by email (4)

General comments about the whole scheme are given below:

Acknowledgement that the scheme proposal was in its early stages and a request for additional information about congestion impact, road safety, ecology, biodiversity, environmental health, climate change and sustainability as the scheme progresses.

There was concern for buses moving across fast lanes.

It was thought to be an unrealistic notion that the scheme would provide opportunities to open other routes, such as commuter routes to Salisbury.

A suggestion that if there are cost constraints, Michigan Way to Ringwood Road could be left as a single carriageway.

Requests for traffic calming on all roundabout approaches.

Some respondents felt that the real reason for the scheme was to support the industrial development of Marchwood and Dibden Bay, not to benefit residents.

There were concerns that the scheme would lead to further development of the Waterside Area (and this was deemed negative).

# Questions and comments from online Q&A sessions

Two online Q&A sessions were held to give people that couldn't attend the in-person events an opportunity to see the scheme proposal, ask questions and give their views. Seven people attended these sessions.

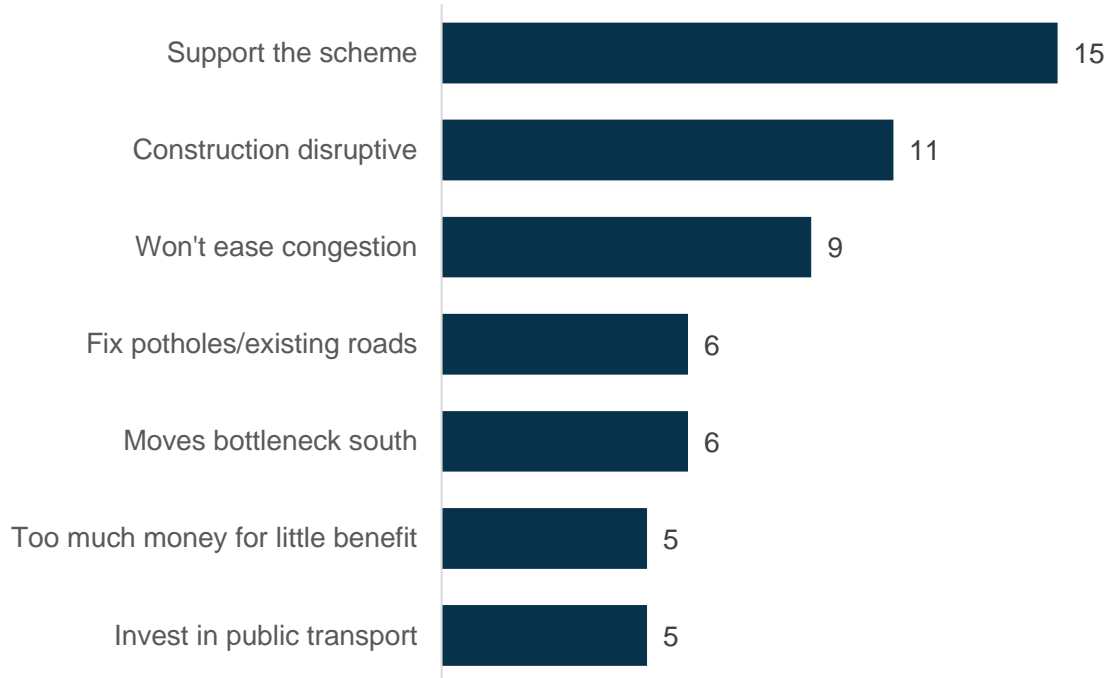
Areas of discussion included:

- cycle access around the BP Solent Gateway access road;
- vehicle access to Arters Lawn if Staplewood Lane is closed to vehicles;
- environmental impacts on the National Park and biodiversity net gain ambitions;
- ancient tree removal;
- concerns about pollution from cars merging into single carriageway near Staplewood Lane;
- impact on Marchwood village if northbound right turn into Staplewood Lane restricted;
- needs of residents versus the environment and National Park, widen roads away from housing;
- noise and air pollution assessment;
- road widening encroaching residential properties near Goodies roundabout; and
- LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance.

# Comments received via social media

There were 173 Facebook comments and five Instagram comments about the scheme. Most frequently, comments were in favour of the scheme, followed by concern about the disruption caused by roadworks.

Facebook and Instagram comments (n=178)



*"I fully support this"*

*"Anything that eases the congestion on the A326 gets my vote, this is long overdue, the pollution is less from moving traffic than slow moving or stationery traffic surely. I wish they'd do the entire Marchwood Bypass."*

*"I really don't think anyone has considered the disruption this will have to their travel. Temporary traffic lights everywhere"*

*"...widening certain sections will just move traffic to the parts that haven't been widened!! You'll still get the same traffic at all the roundabouts as normal, no matter how wide you make it!! Even worse with more pedestrian and cycle crossing points!!"*

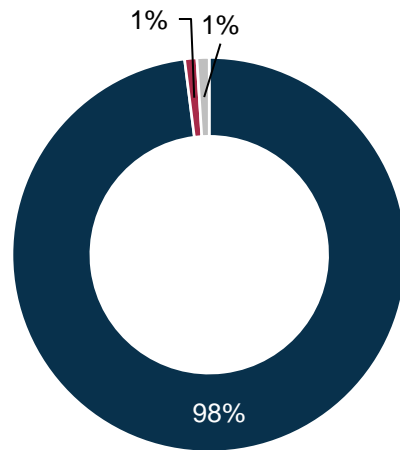
Top 7 most frequent comments shown

# Respondent profile

# Respondent profile (1)

Most responses were personal, however six people responded to the survey on behalf of organisations, groups or businesses and four were democratically elected representatives. The majority of respondents (84%) lived within the Waterside area.

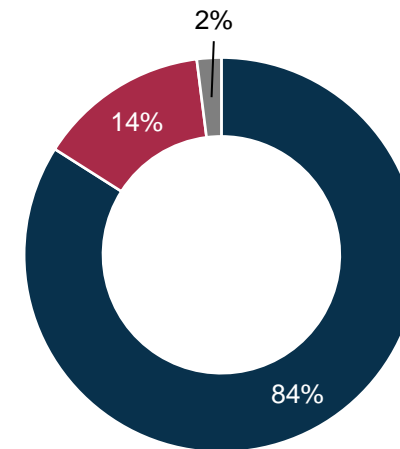
Type of respondent (n=499)



- Personal
- Organisation, group or business
- Democratically Elected Representative

*Is this a personal response or are you responding on behalf of an organisation or group that you represent?*

Residence (n=477)



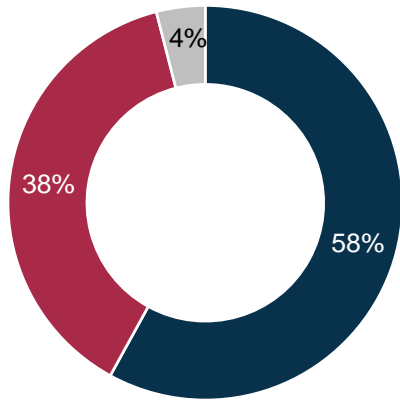
- In the Waterside area
- Outside the Waterside area
- Prefer not to say

*Where do you live?*

# Respondent profile (2)

Most respondents were male (58%) and 38% were female. Respondents were aged 25-85+ with nearly a quarter (24%) being aged 55-64. The majority of respondents (73%) reported not to have any physical or mental health condition.

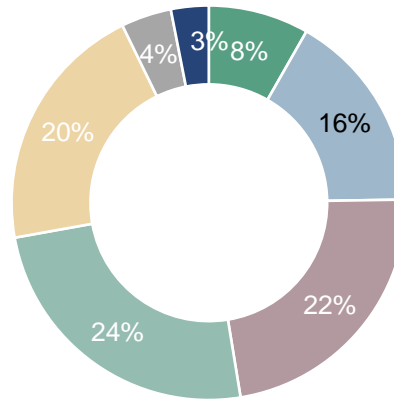
Gender (n=471)



■ Male ■ Female ■ Prefer not to say

*Which of the following best describes your gender?*

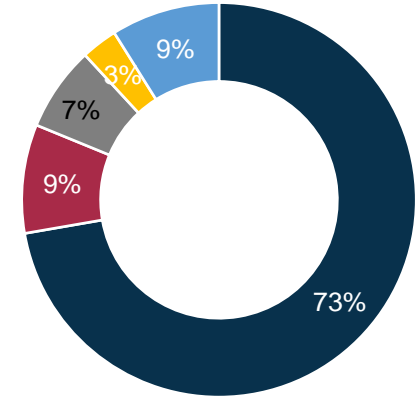
Age (n=475)



■ 25-34 ■ 35-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55-64  
 ■ 65-74 ■ 75-84 ■ 85+

*What is your age?*

Health or disability (n=483)



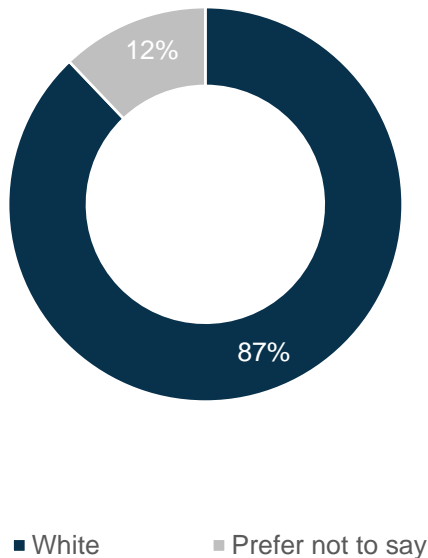
■ No  
 ■ Yes, but they do not reduce my day-to-day activities  
 ■ Yes, and they reduce my day-to-day activities a little  
 ■ Yes, and they reduce my day-to-day activities a lot  
 ■ Prefer not to say

*Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting, or expected to last, 12 months or more?*

# Respondent profile (3)

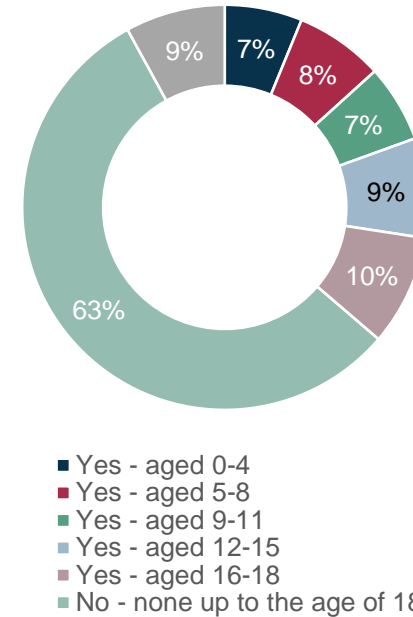
Most respondents described their ethnicity as white (87%), the rest preferring not to say. Nearly two thirds of the respondents (63%) did not have any children or young people living in their household.

Ethnicity (n=481)



*What is your ethnic group?*

Children living at home (n=532)



*Are there any children or young people up to the age of 18 living in your household?*





Hampshire  
County Council