

# Maidstone Joint Transportation Board



**13  
January  
2021**

## Emergency Active Travel Fund - Maidstone

<b>Decision Making Authority</b>	Kent County Council
<b>Lead Director</b>	Simon Jones
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Tim Read
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Russell Boorman/Lee Burchill
<b>Wards and County Divisions affected</b>	Maidstone North East & Maidstone Central
<b>Which Member(s) requested this report?</b>	Committee

### **This report makes the following recommendations:**

**For Information.** This report is for update purposes only and the board are asked to note its contents.

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board	13 January 2021

# Emergency Active Travel Fund - Maidstone

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

On the 23rd May 2020, The Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps announced The Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF).

To help Local Authorities to restart Local Transport as part of the Government's Covid-19 recovery roadmap, The Department for Transport (DfT) announced the £250 million EATF.

The two key aims of the funding are to:

- Enable more people to walk and cycle where possible
- Support safe social distancing in areas where people congregate, e.g. town centres, high streets, transport hubs or bus stops.

The types of measures that the DfT required Local Authorities to consider included:

- Road closures
- Widened footways
- Pop up cycle lanes
- Temporary cycle parking
- Social distancing signage

Kent County Council was provisionally allocated over £8 million by the Department for Transport, which was and will be used to invest in promoting measures identified above in the wake of coronavirus.

The first round of funding (Tranche 1) agreed by the Government supplied £1.6 million, with the rest of the funding dependant on the first round being spent within 8 weeks. The second round (Tranche 2) has subsequently been awarded with an allocation of £6.1 million.

## 2. Scheme Updates:

### Tranche 1:

Two schemes were identified for the Borough of Maidstone, King Street and Earl Street. These were to provide a 'pop up cycle' route and 'support for social distancing', respectively.

Due to the limited timeframe for the conception, design and installation of the schemes, the engagement and consultation was not at the level usually given to projects of this nature. However, details of the proposals were communicated to the County and Borough Members.

It was made clear that any of the EATF schemes were of a temporary nature and could be adjusted accordingly following any feedback from the local community in relation to the implementation of the measures.

A dedicated email address was set up prior to commencement of the schemes to allow ease of contact. This email address saw an unprecedented number of enquiries and the decision was made to implement an automated response. It must be noted that all correspondence was and continues to be assessed and responded to accordingly if required. Each correspondence has been logged and is one of the tools to be used for the retention of the measures.

No specific durations were given by the DfT for the measures to be insitu. It was therefore decided that KCC would carry out attitudinal surveys to better understand the public's perception and thoughts of the implemented measures. A copy of the report can be seen in **Appendix 1**.

Although the response to the attitudinal surveys has been positive, Maidstone Borough Council are due to carry out their rejuvenation of the Bus Hub early in the New Year, and to assist with this, KCC has taken the decision to fully remove the King Street 'pop up cycle' route. However, the measures in Earl Street will remain in place with minor adjustments being made to the 'parklet' seating areas to allow for additional loading and parking.

KCC are currently seeking S106 funding to progress a permanent solution for King Street Maidstone, which links to MBC's overall cycling strategy of linking Mote Park with Maidstone East railway station. This will be carried out as a 'normal' scheme and therefore will follow all the consultation and engagement procedures that Members, stakeholders, and local community has come to expect.

### **3. TRANCHE 2:**

KCC have been successfully awarded £6.1 million from the DfT to deliver further measures for Active Travel under Tranche 2.

The bid document was very specific and Local Authorities were able to bid for 5 named schemes, which demonstrated good value for money and will provide a long-term benefit for cycling and walking.

In addition, Local Authorities are required to undertake formal consultation on the proposals. KCC has therefore launched a consultation for the "Kent Active Travel" measures, this first consultation is on the concept of the proposals and will form the basis of which measures will be taken forward to the next stages of design. Further consultation will then follow on the details of each scheme.

The consultation can be viewed at the following:

<https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/kentactivetravelconsultation/consultationHome> and closes on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

## Appendix 1:



# Maidstone Active Travel – Pre Research Report

Prepared by Lake Market Research  
November 2020



1

## Background and objectives

- In May 2020, the Emergency Active Travel Fund was introduced to help local authorities to restart local transport as part of the Government's Covid-19 recovery roadmap. The two key aims of the funding are to enable more people to walk and cycle where possible, and support safe social distancing in areas where people congregate, e.g. town centres, high streets, transport hubs or bus stops.
- Kent County Council commissioned Lake Market Research to conduct a quantitative survey amongst residents of Maidstone to capture views on two of the schemes implemented in the town centre. A second survey wave will take place early 2021 to monitor feedback over time.
- Please note that as interviewing is taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic, a flexible approach to scheduling interviewing has been required.

### Earl Street pedestrianisation scheme

*An extension to High Street restrictions to provide more traffic free space for pedestrians with vehicle restrictions at the entrance to Earl Street. Seating and planters have been placed outside the Living Café and outside of the Nando's section of Earl Street between the junctions of Pudding Lane and Rose Yard. Seating space is now available for all businesses in Earl Street to use for their customers as an alternative to indoor seating.*

### Kings Street pop up cycle lane

*A new cycle lane in King's street to provide facilities for cyclists on the carriageway between the junctions of Wyke Manor Road and Church Street. Changes have been made to the loading and disabled bays to enable the bus lane to be extended and shared by cyclists. A crossing for pedestrians and cyclists at the access to the bus station and car park near Maidstone House has also been fitted.*

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## Methodology and sample

- 362 interviews were conducted with residents of Maidstone town centre in October 2020.
- The survey was conducted face to face with local residents. Interviews were conducted by an interviewer using a pre-scripted questionnaire on a handheld tablet.
- We have ensured that our resident sample in terms of gender and age is broadly consistent with the population statistics. We did, however, ensure that we interviewed a sub sample of residents who cycle.
- Please note that the sum of all individual percentages for any given question may not sum 100% in the instance of multiple response being permitted or due to rounding. For the relevant questions in this report, net percentages are shown.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE		
GENDER	Male	48%
	Female	52%
AGE	Aged 16-24	25%
	Aged 25-34	19%
	Aged 35-54	33%
	Aged 55-64	12%
	Aged 65 & over	11%
LIVE IN POSTCODE AREA	ME14	28%
	ME15	48%
	ME16	18%
	ME17	7%

## Frequency of travel by mode



## Frequency of mode travel around Maidstone

- As perhaps expected, the most common means of transport around Maidstone is by car prior to the pandemic. Just over half used the bus to some degree; just over a third (34%) used them at least once a week.
- Frequency of mode travel is broadly consistent pre pandemic and during October.

BY CAR	% PRE PANDEMIC	% OCTOBER
Every day	17%	15%
5 to 6 times a week	9%	8%
3 to 4 times a week	7%	6%
2 times a week	9%	11%
Once a week	11%	13%
Less often	12%	15%
Never	34%	33%

BY BICYCLE	% PRE PANDEMIC	% OCTOBER
Every day	3%	2%
5 to 6 times a week	4%	4%
3 to 4 times a week	4%	4%
2 times a week	5%	6%
Once a week	7%	8%
Less often	8%	7%
Never	69%	69%

BY MOTORCYCLE	% PRE PANDEMIC	% OCTOBER
Every day	1%	1%
5 to 6 times a week	1%	1%
3 to 4 times a week	2%	2%
2 times a week	0%	0%
Once a week	0%	1%
Less often	1%	1%
Never	95%	95%

BY FOOT/ WALKING	% PRE PANDEMIC	% OCTOBER
Every day	25%	26%
5 to 6 times a week	22%	27%
3 to 4 times a week	19%	18%
2 times a week	14%	19%
Once a week	10%	4%
Less often	5%	2%
Never	5%	5%

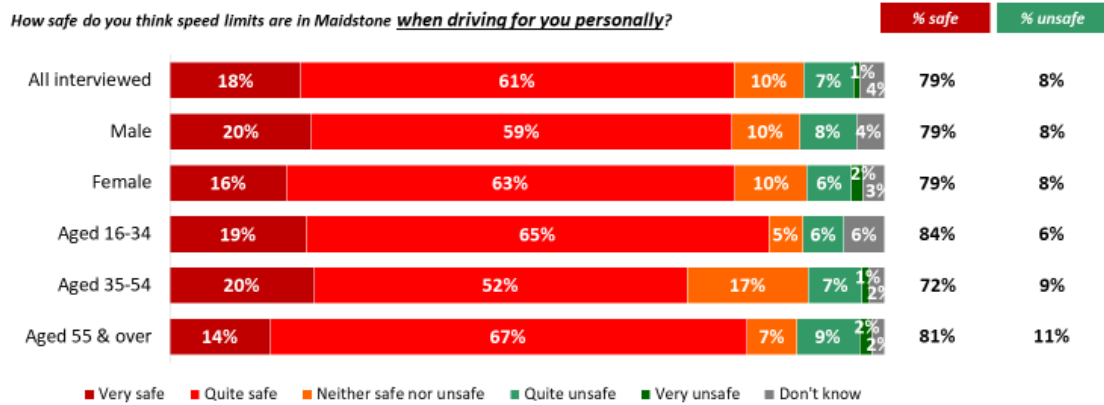
BY BUS	% PRE PANDEMIC	% OCTOBER
Every day	5%	4%
5 to 6 times a week	5%	2%
3 to 4 times a week	8%	8%
2 times a week	7%	7%
Once a week	8%	6%
Less often	19%	17%
Never	47%	54%

## Safety perceptions of current speed limits



## Perceived safety of speed limits in Maidstone when driving

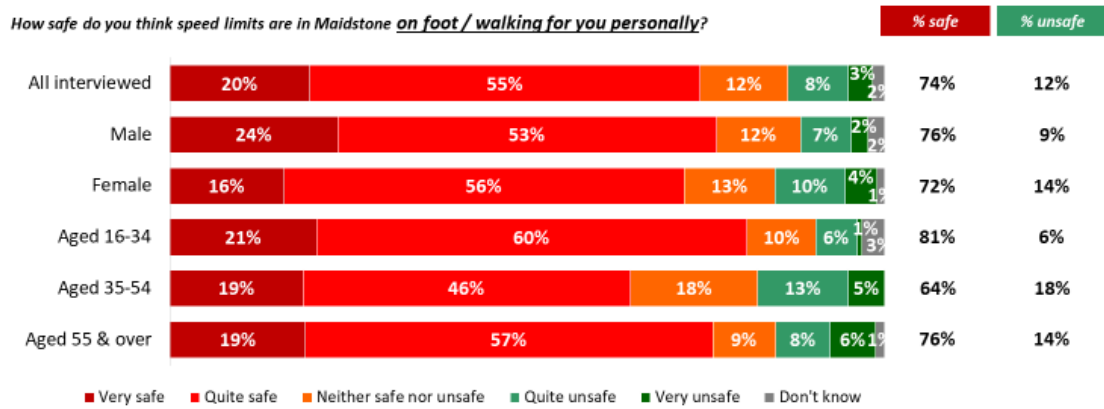
- Just under eight in ten consider speed limits in their local area to be safe when driving; one in five consider them very safe.
- Perceptions are broadly consistent by demographic group; safety perceptions are lowest amongst residents aged 35-54.



Base: all answering (256)

## Perceived safety of speed limits in Maidstone on foot / walking

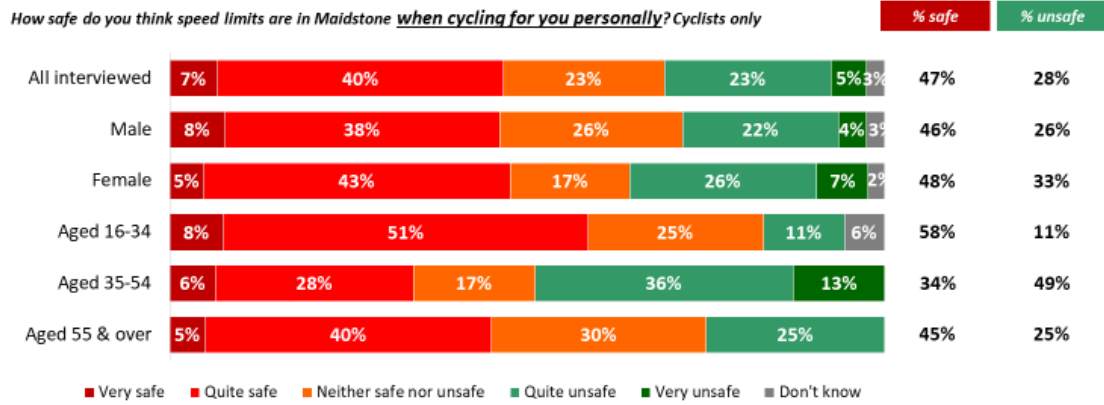
- Broadly consistent proportions observed from the perspective of walking / travelling on foot with just under three quarters considering limits to be safe.
- Perceptions of safety are lowest amongst residents aged 35-54.



Base: all answering (353)

## Perceived safety of speed limits in Maidstone when cycling

- Perceptions of safety are markedly lower in the context of cycling in the local area at just under half considering them safe overall.
- Consistent with other modes, safety perceptions are lowest amongst residents aged 35-54.

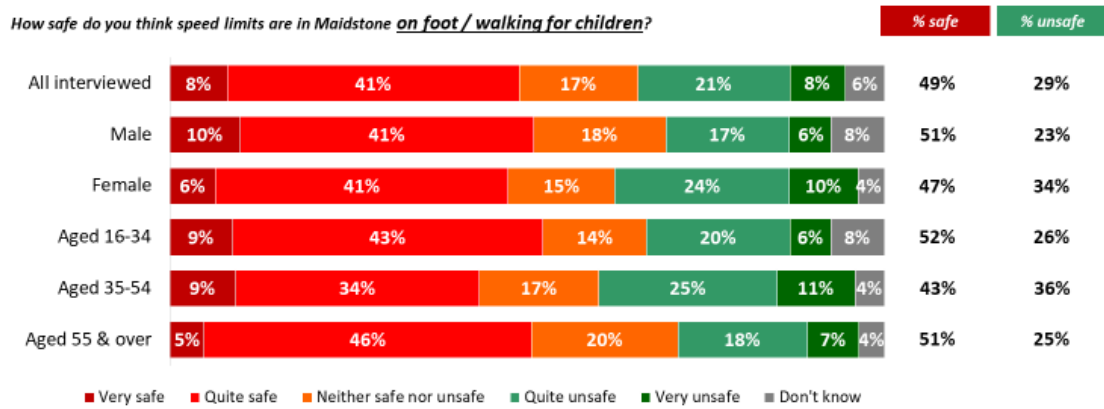


Base: all answering (120)

9

## Perceived safety of speed limits in Maidstone on foot / walking for children

- Perceptions of safety are markedly lower in the context of children walking / travelling on foot in the local area at around half considering them safe overall; three in ten consider them unsafe.
- Perceptions of safety are lowest amongst residents aged 35-54.



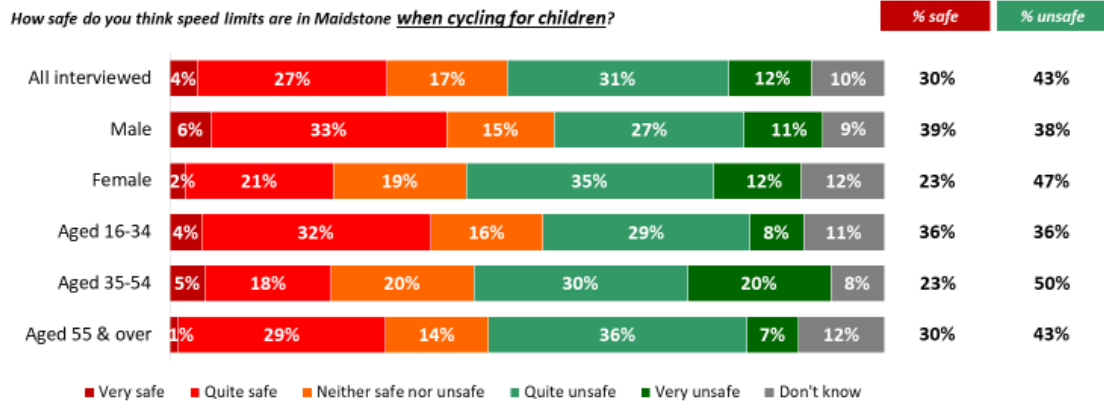
Base: all answering (362)

10



## Perceived safety of speed limits in Maidstone when cycling for children

- Perceptions of safety are also markedly lower in the context of children cycling in the local area with broadly equal proportions considering them safe and unsafe.
- Consistent with walking, perceptions of safety are lowest amongst residents aged 35-54.

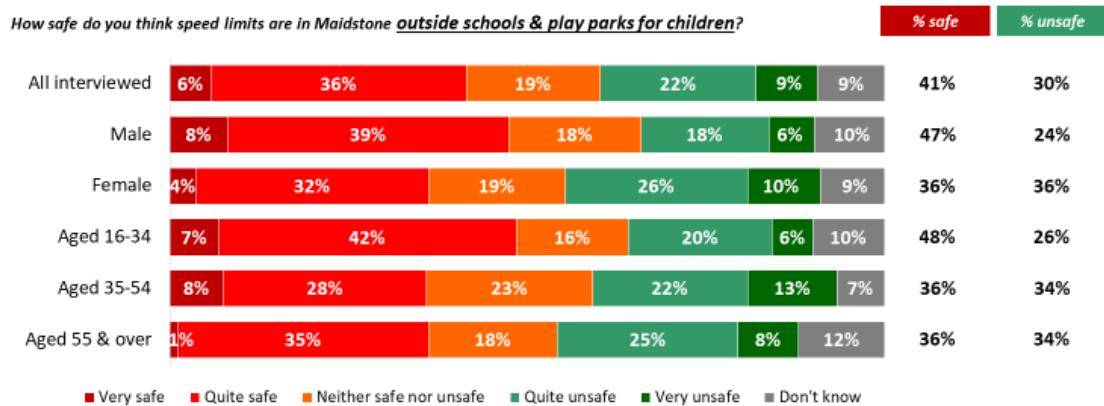


Base: all answering (362)

11

## Perceived safety of speed limits in Maidstone outside schools & play parks for children

- Around four in ten consider speed limits in their local area to be safe for children outside school & play parks.; three in ten consider them unsafe.



Base: all answering (362)

12

# Perceptions of air quality & exhaust fumes



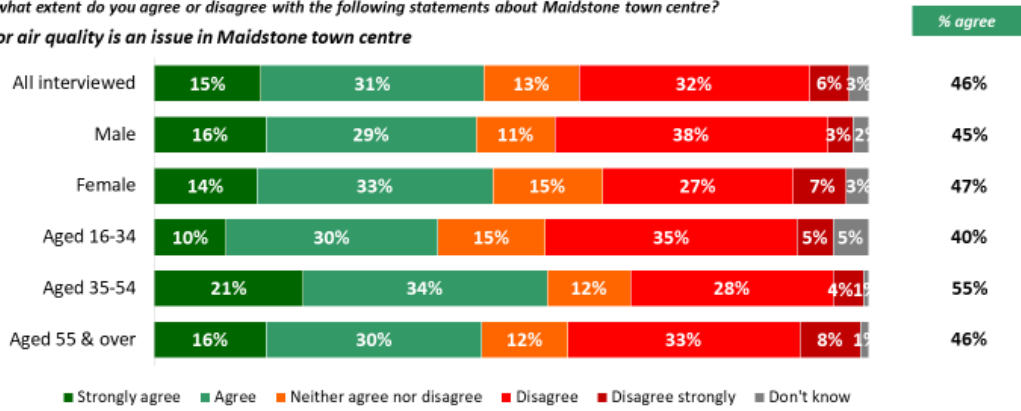
Perceptions of air quality & exhaust fumes

## Perception of air quality in Maidstone town centre

- Perceptions of air quality in the town centre is polarising with broadly equal proportions agreeing and disagreeing it is an issue.
- Agreement air quality is an issue is highest amongst residents aged 35-54.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Maidstone town centre?

**Poor air quality is an issue in Maidstone town centre**



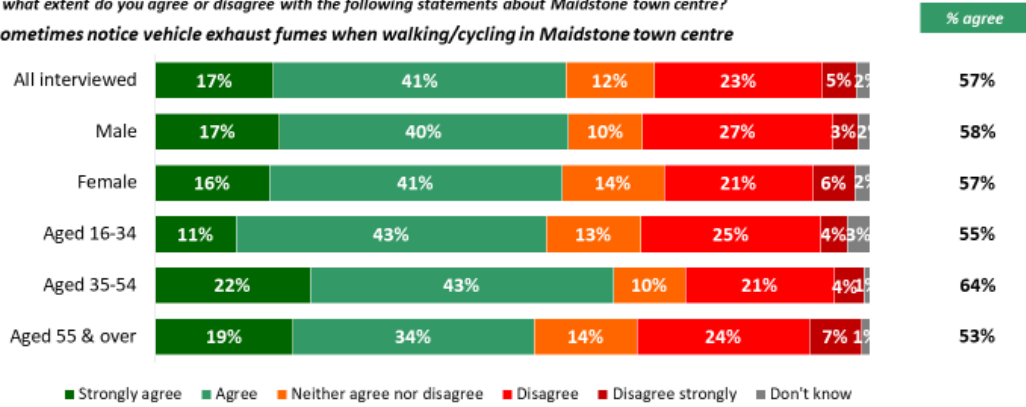
Base: all answering (362)

## Awareness of vehicle exhaust fumes in Maidstone town centre

- Agreement levels are higher for noticing vehicle exhaust fumes in the town centre at 57%; 28% disagree they notice them.
- Awareness of vehicle exhaust fumes is highest amongst residents aged 35-54.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Maidstone town centre?

**I sometimes notice vehicle exhaust fumes when walking/cycling in Maidstone town centre**



Base: all answering (362)

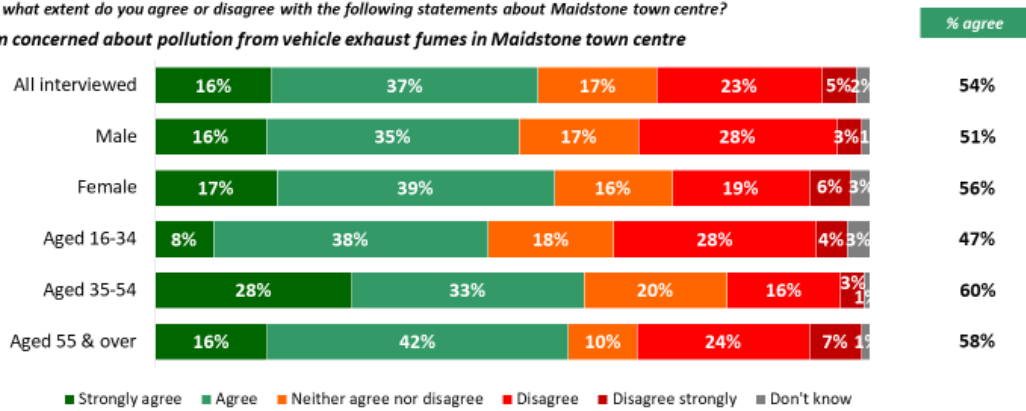
15

## Pollution concerns from vehicle exhaust fumes in Maidstone town centre

- Agreement proportions are broadly consistent in terms of concern about pollution from exhaust fumes.
- Concern is highest amongst residents aged 35-54.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Maidstone town centre?

**I'm concerned about pollution from vehicle exhaust fumes in Maidstone town centre**



Base: all answering (362)

16

## Awareness & perceptions of road traffic initiatives



### Unprompted awareness of new road traffic initiatives in Maidstone town centre

- A quarter had heard of new road initiatives. Awareness increases with age.
- 63% of those aware of a new initiative referenced the Kings Street pop up cycle lane and 41% referenced the Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme. Awareness of both schemes vary by age and gender.

	All answering	Male	Female	Aged 16-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55 & over
% heard of new road traffic initiatives in Maidstone town centre	24%	27%	20%	16%	28%	33%



Which new road traffic initiatives have you heard of?

	All answering	Male	Female	Aged 16-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55 & over
Kings Street pop-up cycle lane	63%	55%	74%	72%	68%	48%
Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme	41%	43%	39%	36%	35%	52%
Other road traffic initiatives	17%	21%	11%	8%	18%	26%
Don't know / can't remember	9%	9%	11%	16%	12%	0%

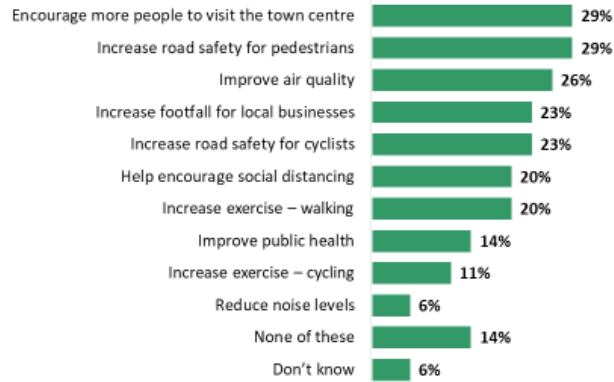
Base: all answering (362 / 86)

## Main benefits of Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme – those who have heard of initiative

- The main benefits seen amongst those who had heard of the initiative are encouraging people to visit the town centre, increasing pedestrian safety and improving air quality. 23% believe the scheme will increase footfall for businesses.

Amongst the 41% who had heard about Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme...

Which of the following, if any do you think are the main benefits of the Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme?



Base: all answering (35)

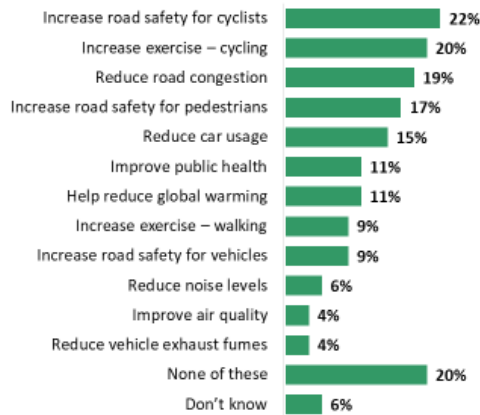
19

## Main benefits of Kings Street pop up cycle lanes – those who have heard of initiative

- The main benefits seen amongst those who had heard of the initiative are cyclist safety, increasing exercise and reducing road congestion. 20% of those who had heard of the initiative did not consider any of these benefits to apply to scheme.

Amongst the 63% who had heard about Kings Street pop up cycle lane scheme ...

Which of the following, if any do you think are the main benefits of the Kings Street pop up cycle lanes?



Base: all answering (54)

20

## Prompted awareness of new road traffic initiatives

- When prompted, approximately one in five recalled seeing or hearing information and/or communication about the Kings Street pop cycle lane scheme and the Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme.
- Awareness of both schemes is highest amongst residents aged 55 & over.

*Have you seen or heard any information and/or communication about Kings Street pop-up cycle lane?*

	All answering	Male	Female	Aged 16-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55 & over	Travel around Maidstone by car	Travel around Maidstone on foot	Travel around Maidstone by bicycle
% Yes	22%	24%	21%	16%	25%	31%	21%	22%	19%

*Have you seen or heard any information and/or communication about Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme?*

	All answering	Male	Female	Aged 16-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55 & over	Travel around Maidstone by car	Travel around Maidstone on foot	Travel around Maidstone by bicycle
% Yes	19%	20%	19%	17%	17%	28%	17%	19%	21%

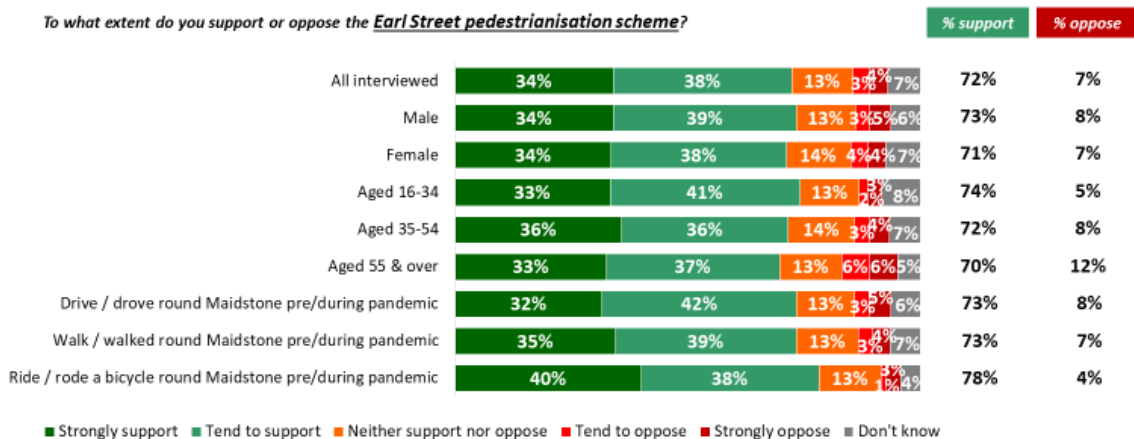
Base: all answering (308/327)

21

## Support for Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme

- Just under three quarters indicated they support the Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme; just over a third strongly support it.
- Support for the scheme is broadly consistent by demographic group and travel modes.

*To what extent do you support or oppose the Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme?*

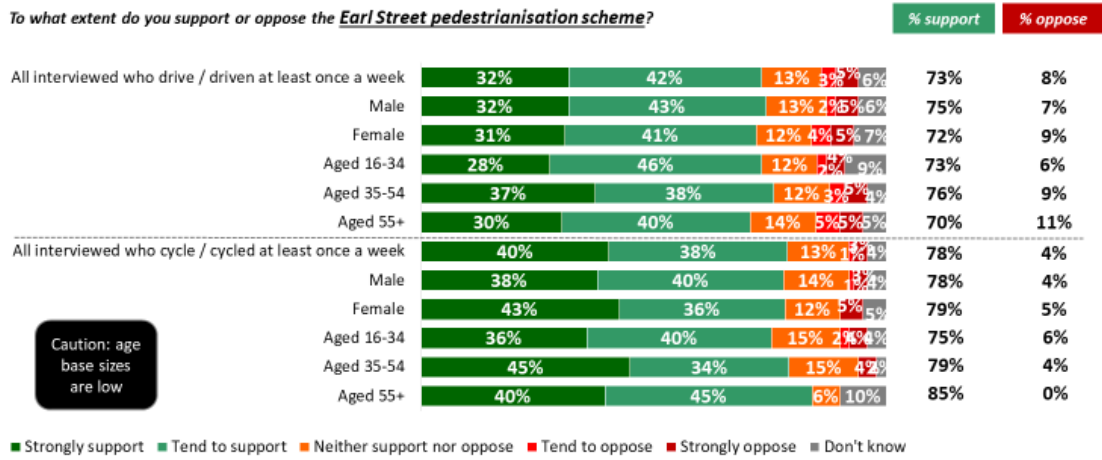


Base: all answering (362)

22

## Support for Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme – breakdown by mode of travel

- Support is broadly consistent across all demographic groups amongst those who drive around Maidstone and cycle around Maidstone.

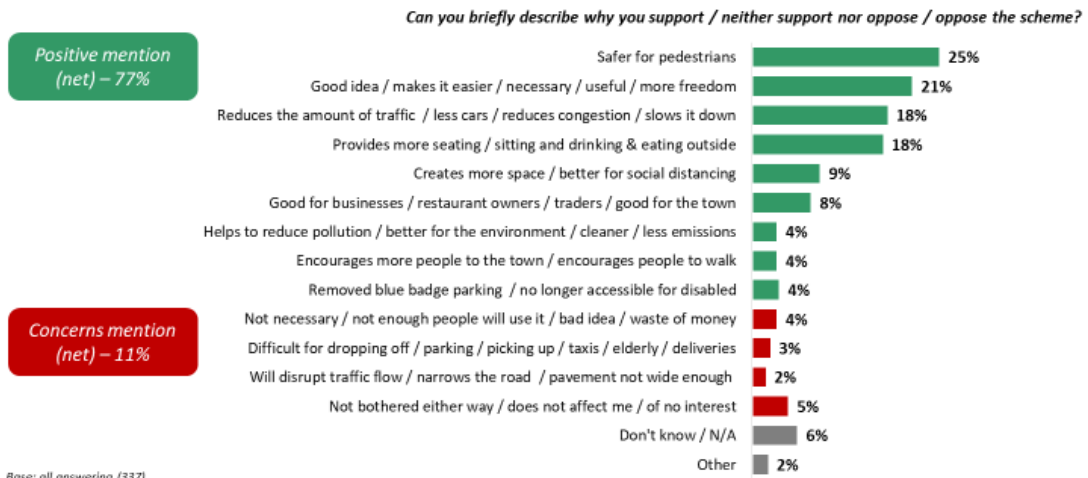


Base: all answering (Drive - 256 / Cycle - 120)

23

## Reasons for supporting / not supporting Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme

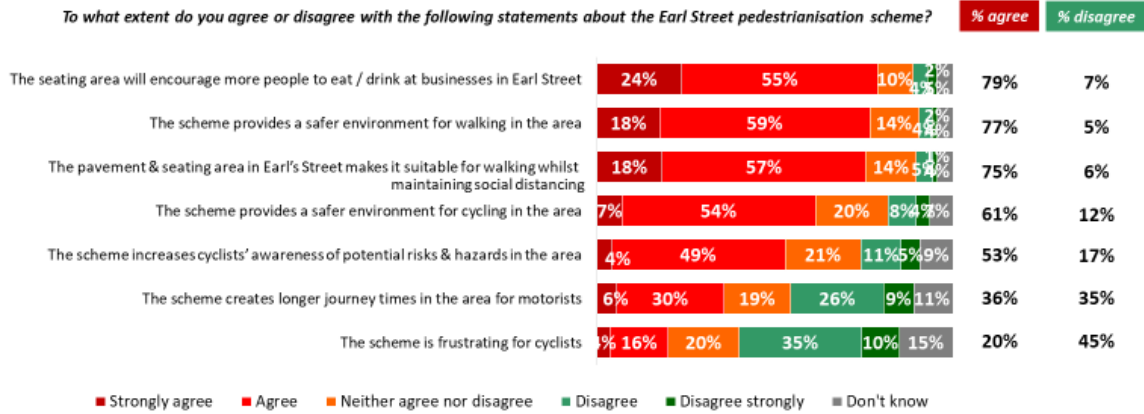
- 77% made a positive comment in support of the scheme. The main reasons for supporting the scheme are pedestrian safety, reducing congestion and providing more outdoor seating.
- Only 11% referenced a concern. Low proportions reference its use and the affect on drop offs and traffic flow.



24

## Perceptions of Earl Street pedestrianisation scheme

- The majority agree the scheme will encourage more people to eat / drink at the businesses in Earl Street, provides a safer environment for walking and is suitable for walking whilst maintaining social distancing.
- Perceptions of the scheme's impact on journey times for motorists are polarising. 20% agree the scheme is frustrating for cyclists.

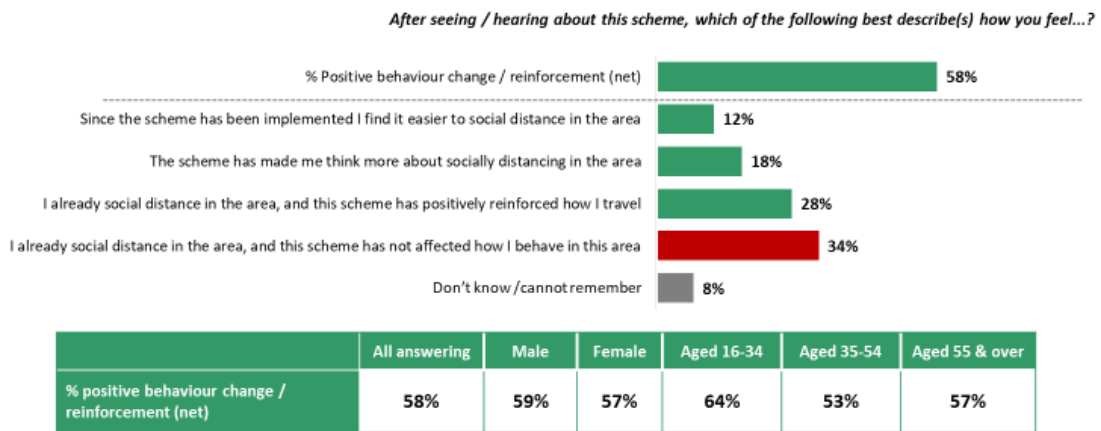


Base: all answering (362)

25

## Earls Street pedestrianisation scheme – behaviour change

- The campaign has positively influenced social distancing behaviour / attitudes for 58% of those interviewed.
- 34% indicated they already social distance in the area and the scheme has not affected how they behave.



Base: all answering (362)

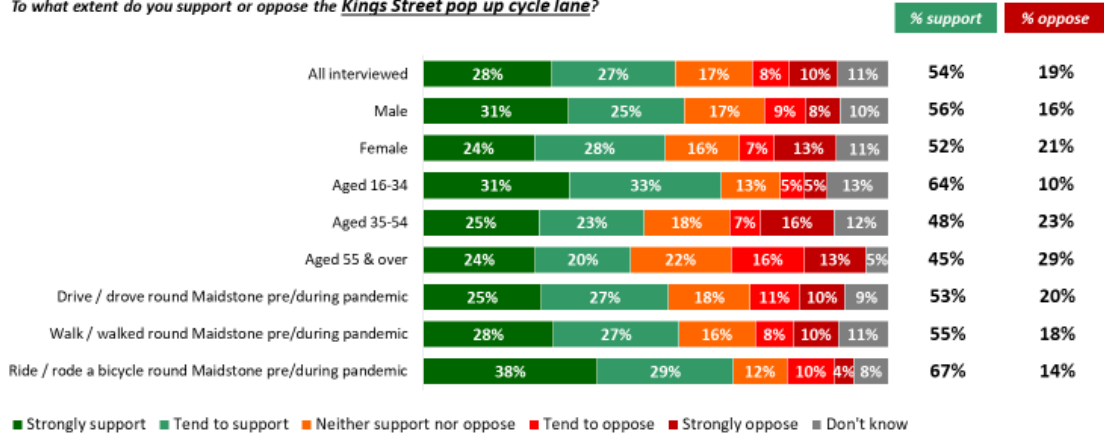
26



## Support for Kings Street pop up cycle lane

- Overall support for the Kings Street pop up cycle lane scheme is lower at just over half (54%); just under three in ten strongly support it.
- Support for the scheme is higher amongst residents aged 16-34 (64%) and residents who cycle (67%).

To what extent do you support or oppose the **Kings Street pop up cycle lane**?



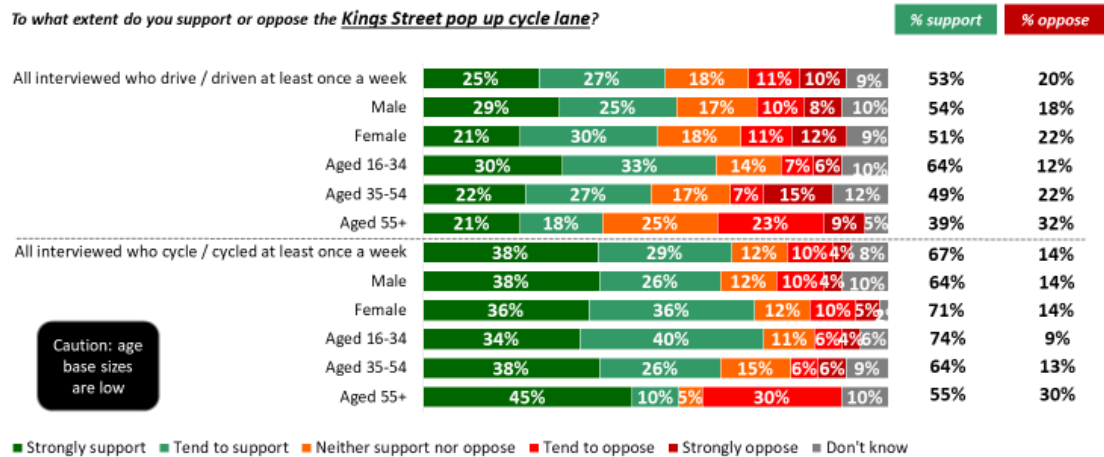
Base: all answering (362)

27

## Support for Kings Street pop up cycle lane – breakdown by mode of travel

- Support is higher amongst motorists aged 16-34 (64%) and cyclists aged 16-34 (74%), as well as female cyclists (71%).

To what extent do you support or oppose the **Kings Street pop up cycle lane**?



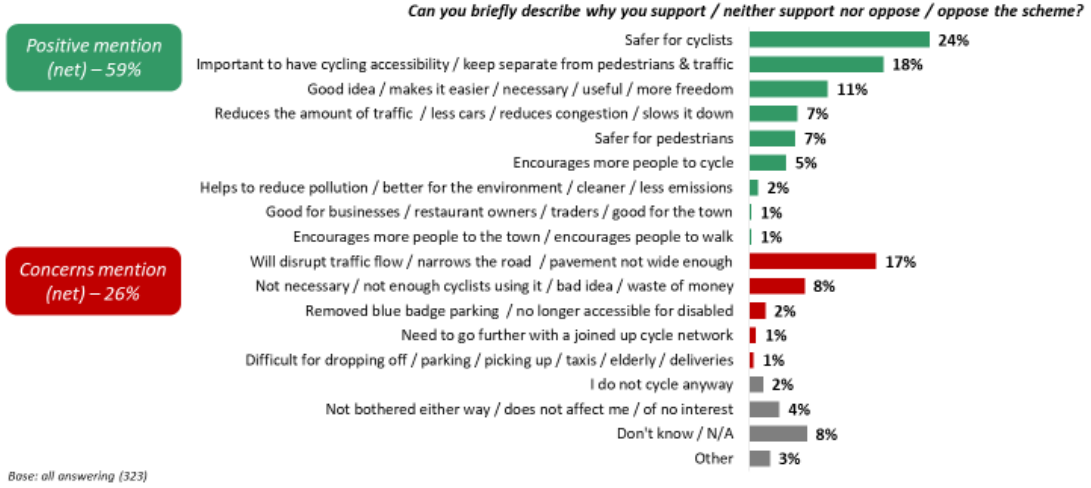
Caution: age base sizes are low

Base: all answering (Drive - 256 / Cycle - 120)

28

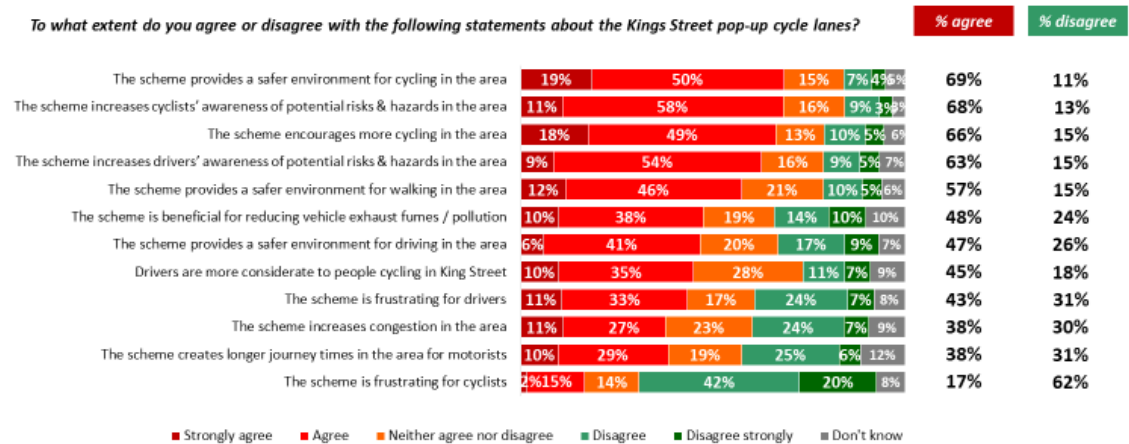
## Reasons for supporting / not supporting Kings Street pop up cycle lanes

- 59% made a positive comment in support of the scheme. The main reasons for supporting the scheme are cyclist safety and accessibility, reducing congestion and pedestrian safety.
- Just over a quarter (26%) referenced a concern. The primary concern is traffic flow / narrowing the road.



## Perceptions of Kings Street pop up cycle lanes

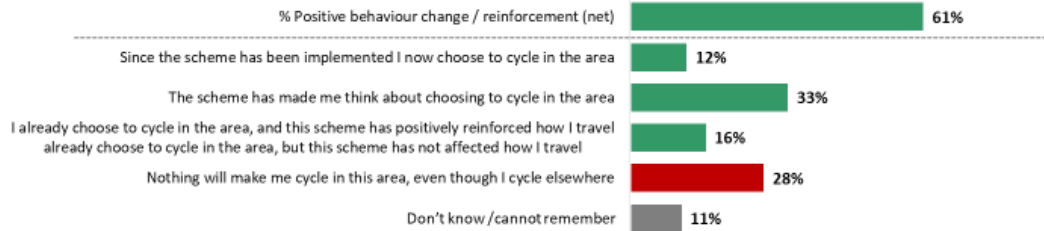
- Approximately two thirds agree the scheme provides a safer environment for walking, increase cyclists' awareness of potential risks & hazards and encourages more cycling in the area.
- Perceptions of the scheme's impact on congestion and journey times are polarising. 43% agree the scheme is frustrating for motorists.



## Kings Street pop up cycle lane – behaviour change

- Amongst those who cycle, the campaign has positively influenced their attitudes towards cycling in the area for 61% of those interviewed.
- 28% indicated nothing will make them cycle in the area, even though they cycle elsewhere.

*After seeing / hearing about this scheme, which of the following best describe(s) how you feel...?  
Excluding those who answered they do not ride a bicycle (51%)*



	All answering	Male	Female	Aged 16-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55 & over
% positive behaviour change / reinforcement (net)	61%	65%	56%	68%	52%	65%

Base: all answering (178)