

**KANTAR**



Department  
for Transport

# Public Opinion Survey on Traffic and Road Use

## General Public Research

### Report

November 2020

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# Background and methodology

## Background

In May 2020 the Emergency Active Travel Fund was announced<sup>1</sup>. The scheme aims to get more people to travel on foot and bike and helps mitigate public transport capacity constraints due to Covid-19 social distancing requirements. It supports local authorities to develop cycling and walking facilities and projects such as Low Traffic Neighbourhood Schemes (LTNs). LTNs are programmes that intend to reduce road access to motorists and increase spaces for walking and cycling. These schemes (LTNs) have been developed in towns and cities across England.

This research was conducted for the Department for Transport (DfT) and explored public attitudes to traffic and road use in England.

## Methodology and Analysis

This quantitative research consisted of an online survey (see questionnaire in Appendix). Fieldwork was conducted between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020, interviewing 2211 adults aged 16+ in England. Results were weighted to be nationally representative of the general population using the key demographics: gender, age, region, social grade<sup>2</sup> of chief income earner, final age in full-time education and household size.

The research was conducted via the Kantar online omnibus, Research Express, which runs twice weekly, and looked at perceptions of government action, road and street conditions, and potential changes to roadways.

Respondents were asked what modes of transport they tended to use when traveling in their local neighbourhood. The results were analysed to explore links between respondents' transport use and perceptions of topics covered; drivers, cyclists and pedestrians were key explored subgroups. Respondents were also categorised into demographic subgroups for analysis: key subgroups were age, working status, parental status, social grade, rural/urban and region.

**Figure 1.1: Which of the following do you tend to use to travel in your local neighbourhood?**

Mode of transport	Unweighted base size (total base: 2211)
Walking	1507
Car/van as driver	944
Car/van as passenger	648

<sup>1</sup> [Link to gov.uk webpage about Emergency Active Travel Fund](#)

<sup>2</sup> Social grade: ABC1 (Higher managerial/ Professional/ Administrative, Intermediate managerial/ Professional/ Administrative, Supervisory or clerical/ Junior managerial/ Professional/ administrator) and C2DE (Skilled manual worker, Semi or unskilled manual worker, Student, Retired and living on state pension only, Unemployed)

Bus, minibus, coach	482
Bicycle	348
Taxi/minicab	197
Train	187
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	70

The report highlights statistically significant differences at the 95% level. The margin of error for the total sample is  $\pm 2.1\%$ .

The report has NET scores noted in some Figure 1.2, Figure 1.3 and Figure 1.4. The NET is the sum of two independent answers total the scores for two answers – such as agree and strongly agree – added together to create a NET (agreement) score<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Net agreement and net disagreement scores are shown above and below the bars in each of the Figures respectively

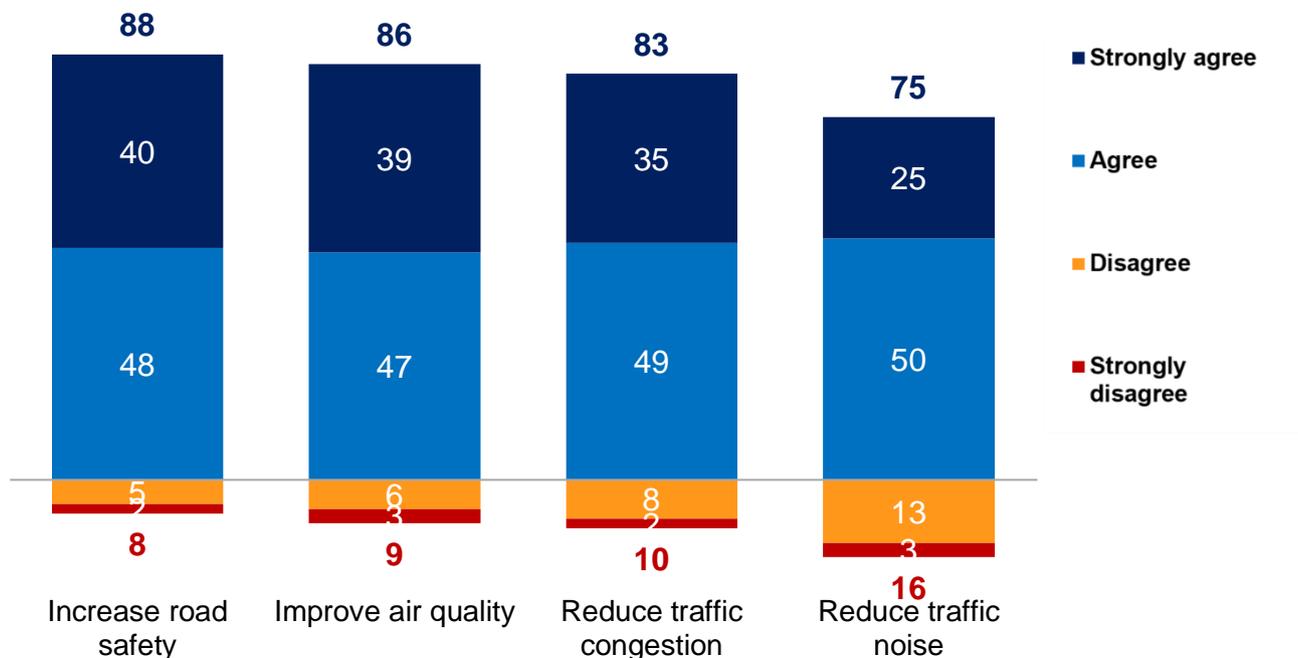
# Topline findings

- Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the government should act in local neighbourhoods to *increase road safety* (88%), *improve air quality* (86%), *reduce traffic congestion* (83%) and *reduce traffic noise* (75%).
  - Support varied by subgroup. However, respondents were consistently more likely to agree than disagree with interventions across subgroups, with pedestrians and cyclists more likely than car/van drivers to agree to government intervention, and 16-24 year olds least likely to agree than other age groups.
- Three quarters of respondents supported the reduction of road traffic in *towns and cities in England* (77%) and their *local area / neighbourhood* (78%), and two thirds of respondents were supportive of reallocating road space to walking and cycling across *towns and cities in England* (66%) and their *local area / neighbourhood* (65%).
  - Support for reducing road traffic across national and local areas was significantly higher than support for reallocating road space to walking and cycling, although both received high levels of support of two-thirds or more.
  - Support also varied by subgroup, but all subgroups were consistently more likely to support, rather than oppose, reducing road traffic and reallocating road space to walking and cycling. Cyclists, pedestrians and those who rent, live in social or other types of housing were among the subgroups who were the most supportive; car/van drivers and homeowners were among the least supportive.
- The four areas considered to be the most *serious problems* in *residential* and *high streets* were: *vehicles going too fast* (30% residential, 26% high street), *not enough car parking spaces* (27% residential, 26% high street), *heavy traffic* (20% residential, 23% high street) and *traffic fumes* (20% residential, 24% high street). Apart from *vehicles going too fast* and *not enough car parking spaces*, all other problem areas were seen to be a more *serious problem* in *local high streets* than *residential streets*.

# Views on government action in local neighbourhoods

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the government should act in local neighbourhoods to *increase road safety* (88%), *improve air quality* (86%), *reduce traffic congestion* (83%) and *reduce traffic noise* (75%).

**Figure 1.2: Agreement that government should act in local neighbourhoods in certain ways (%)**



**Q001. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the government should act in local neighbourhoods to...? Base: All respondents (2211) Net agreement and net disagreement scores are shown above and below the bars respectively**

Pedestrians<sup>4</sup> were significantly more likely than car/van drivers to agree that the government should act in local neighbourhoods to *improve air quality* (88% pedestrians versus 84% car/van drivers), *reduce traffic congestion* (86% versus 83%) and *increase road safety* (90% versus 87%).

<sup>4</sup> 39% of pedestrians were also car/van drivers

Similarly, cyclists<sup>5</sup> were significantly more likely than car/van drivers to agree that the government should act to *reduce traffic noise* (81% cyclists compared to 74% car/van drivers).

Respondents aged 16-24 were less likely than older respondents to agree with the statements across all the different areas of proposed intervention, or to say that they *don't know* whether the government should intervene. This was most prominent for *increase road safety* where 16-24 year olds not only had the lowest agreement score (81%), but had significantly lower agreement scores than all other age categories (25-34 88%, 35-44 88%, 45-54 90%, 55-64 87%, 65+ 90%).

Finally, those with children living at home were significantly more likely than those without to agree that the government should act to *increase road safety* (90% versus 87% respectively).

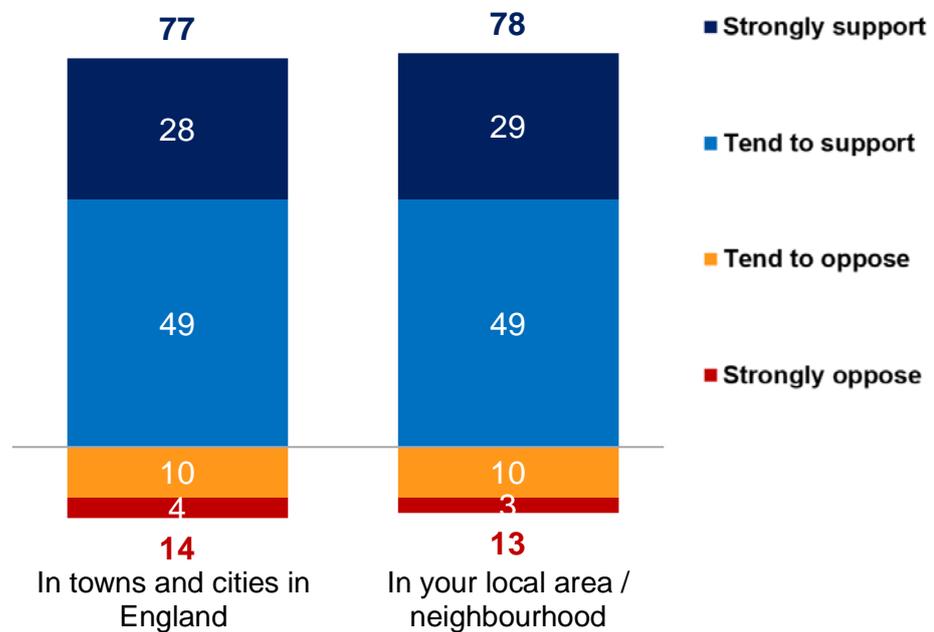
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<sup>5</sup> 44% of cyclists were also car/van drivers

# Support for reduction of road traffic

Overall, respondents strongly supported the reduction of road traffic. Support was even for the reduction of road traffic in *towns and cities in England* (77%) and their *local area / neighbourhood* (78%), as was the balance between *tend to support* (49%, 49%) and *strongly support* (28%, 29%).

**Figure 1.3: Support for the reduction of road traffic (%)**



**Q002. To what extent do you support or oppose the reduction of road traffic in towns and cities in England? Q003. To what extent do you support or oppose the reduction of road traffic in your local area / neighbourhood? Base: All respondents (2211) Net support and net oppose scores are shown above and below the bars respectively**

Cyclists and pedestrians<sup>6</sup> were significantly more likely than car/van drivers to support reduction in traffic. For *towns and cities in England* 83% of cyclists and 81% of pedestrians were supportive of reduction of road traffic, while 76% of car/van drivers were supportive. Similar results were seen for *local area / neighbourhood* where 81% of cyclists and pedestrians and 76% of car/van drivers were supportive.

Further, for *towns and cities in England*, those who do not work or those who rent, live in social housing or other types of accommodation were significantly less opposed to the reduction of traffic (12% and 10% opposed respectively) than workers and homeowners (both 15%). The same was

<sup>6</sup> 44% of cyclists were also car/van drivers; 39% of pedestrians were also car/van drivers.

also true for *local areas/ neighbourhood* (11% opposition compared to 15% opposition from workers and 13% from homeowners).

Support for the reduction in road traffic varied by age, with 16-24 year olds the least supportive both nationally and locally. Support for reducing road traffic in *towns and cities in England* was significantly higher among respondents aged 45 and over (79%) than 16-24 year olds (73%).

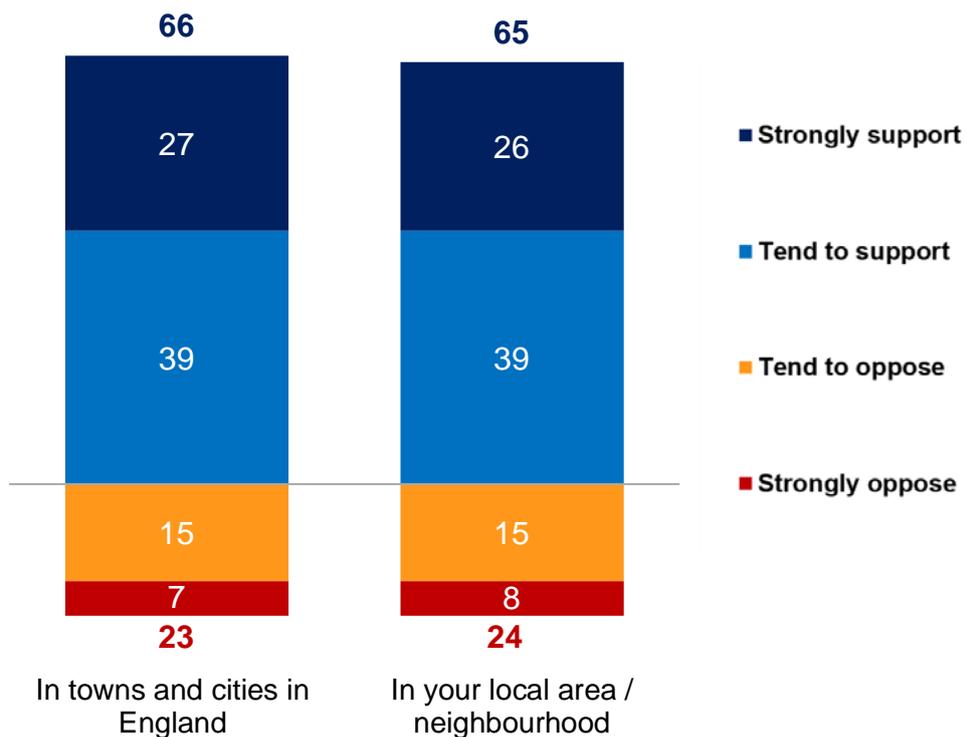
Finally, those living in the South East / East of England were significantly more supportive than those in all other regions of reducing road traffic in *towns and cities in England* at 82%. People in these regions were also the most supportive of road traffic reduction in their *local area / neighbourhood* (81%).

# Support for reallocation of road traffic

Two thirds of respondents supported reallocating road space to walking and cycling across *towns and cities in England* (66%) and their *local area / neighbourhood* (65%), with a quarter *strongly supporting* it (*towns and cities in England* 27%, *local area / neighbourhood* 26%).

Support for reallocating road space to walking and cycling was significantly lower than support for reducing road traffic across both areas: in *towns and cities in England*, 66% supported reallocation to walking and cycling compared to 77% supporting the reduction of road traffic; in *local area / neighbourhood*, 65% supported reallocation for walking and cycling and 78% supported the reduction of road traffic.

**Figure 1.4: Support for the reallocation of road space for walking and cycling (%)**



**Q004. To what extent do you support or oppose reallocating road space for walking and cycling in towns and cities in England? Q005. To what extent do you support or oppose reallocating road space to walking and cycling in your local area / neighbourhood? Base: All respondents (2211) Net support and net oppose scores are shown above and below the bars respectively**

Respondents aged 65 and over were the least supportive (59% national, 58% local) and most opposed (31%, 33%) to reallocating road space in *towns and cities in England* and their *local area*

*/ neighbourhood*; respondents aged between 25-54 were significantly more supportive (70% national, 70% local) and less opposed (19%, 19%) than respondents aged 65 and older.

Cyclists and pedestrians<sup>7</sup> were significantly more likely than car/van drivers to *strongly support* the reallocation of road space to walking and cycling in *towns and cities in England* (43% and 29% compared to 23%). Similar significant differences were seen for *local area / neighbourhood* where 42% of cyclists and 28% of pedestrians, compared to 21% of car/van drivers, *strongly supported* the reallocation of road space to walking and cycling.

For both locations, non-driving cyclists and non-driving pedestrians were comparatively even more likely than car/van drivers to *strongly support* reallocation of road space to walking and cycling (*towns and cities in England*: non-driving cyclists (46%), non-driving pedestrians (33%), car/van drivers (23%); and *local area / neighbourhood*: non-driving cyclists (46%), non-driving pedestrians (32%), car/van drivers (21%).

Further, those who work were significantly more likely than non-workers to support the reallocation of traffic to walking and cycling in *towns and cities in England* (68% compared to 63%). This was also true for *local areas/ neighbourhoods* (68% compared to 62%). Similarly, those living in rented, social or other types of housing were also significantly more likely to support the reallocation of traffic to walking and cycling in *towns and cities in England* (69%) and their *local area / local neighbourhood* (69%) than homeowners (63% *towns and cities in England*, 62% *local area / local neighbourhood*).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, urban respondents were significantly more likely than those living in rural areas to *strongly support* the reallocation of road space to walking and cycling in their *local area / neighbourhood* (27% compared to 22%). Similarly, those with children under 15 years of age living at home were significantly more likely than those without to support reallocating road space in their *local area / neighbourhood* (71% compared to 62%).

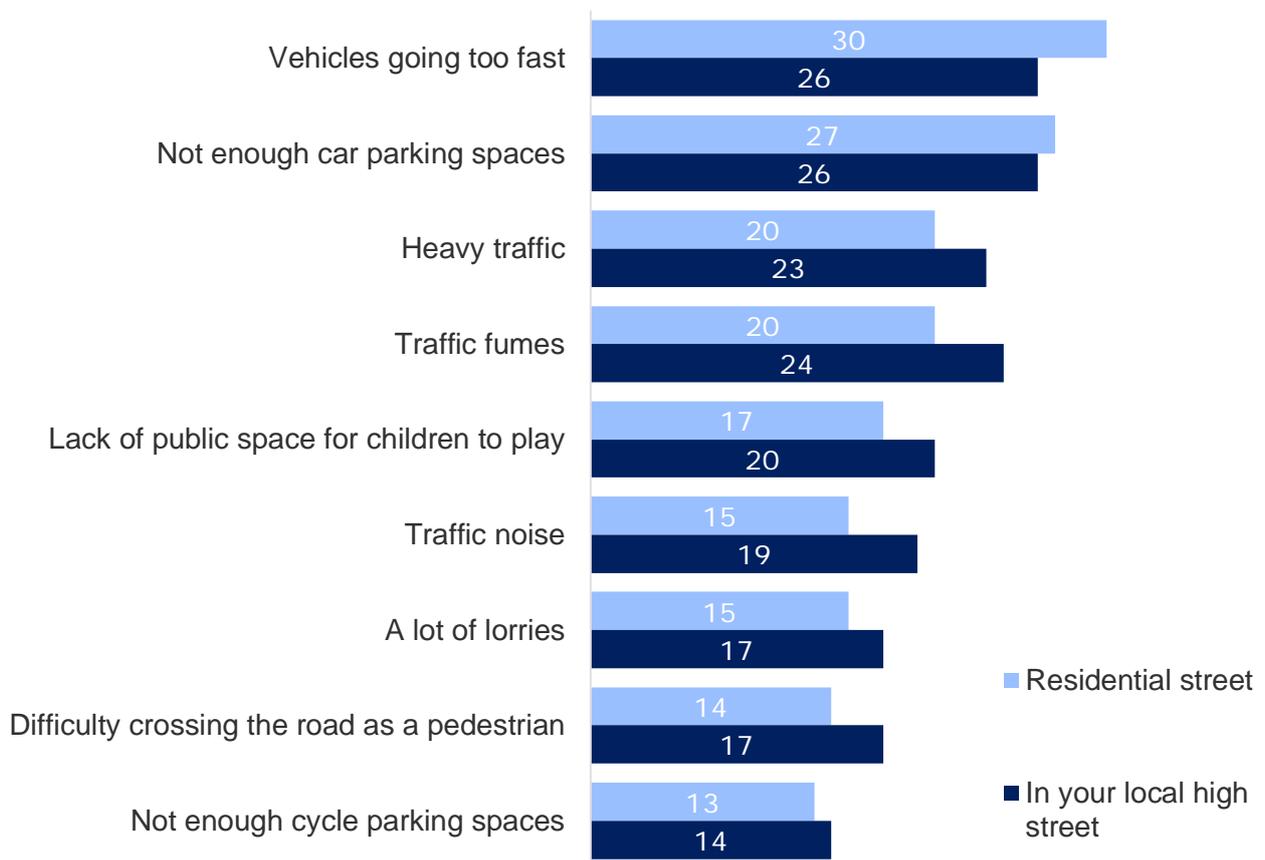
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<sup>7</sup> 44% of cyclists were also car/van drivers; 39% of pedestrians were also car/van drivers.

# Perceived problems in local areas

The four areas that were considered the most *serious problems* in *residential* and *high streets* were: *vehicles going too fast* (30% residential, 26% high street), *not enough car parking spaces* (27% residential, 26% high street), *heavy traffic* (20% residential, 23% high street) and *traffic fumes* (20% residential, 24% high street). Apart from *vehicles going too fast* and *not enough car parking spaces*, all other problem areas were seen to be a more *serious problem* in *local high streets* than in *residential streets*.

**Figure 1.5: Areas considered to be a serious problem in residential and local high streets (%)**



**Q006. To what extent, if at all, do you think that the following are a problem on your residential street? Q007. To what extent do you think that the following are a problem, if at all, in your local high street? Base: All respondents (2211)**

Cyclists were significantly more likely than car/van drivers to think that issues relating to cars and traffic were *serious problems*. For example, two in ten (19%) cyclists compared to one in ten (11%)

car/van drivers thought *traffic noise* was a *serious problem* in their *residential street*, and twice as many cyclists as drivers thought that *traffic fumes* (30% cyclists v. 16% car/van drivers) and *heavy traffic* (25% v. 17%) were also *serious problems* in their *residential street*. A similar response pattern was seen for issues relating to cars and traffic in relation to *local high streets*.

Further, those living in urban areas were more likely than rural respondents to see many of the statements as *serious problems* in both their *residential* and *local high street*. For example, of urban respondents, 22% saw *heavy traffic* in their *residential street* and 25% in their *high street* as a *serious problem* in comparison to 15% and 17% of those living in rural areas. Similar significant differences across locations are seen for the statements: *not enough cycle parking spaces*, *traffic fumes*, *traffic noise*, *difficulty crossing the road as a pedestrian* and *lack of public place for children to play*.

Those with children under the age of 15 living at home were significantly more likely than those without to think that most of the statements were *moderate* or *serious problems* in their *residential* and *local high street*.

Finally, those in social-economic groups C2DE and respondents renting, living in social housing or other accommodation types were significantly more likely to report many of the problem areas as being *serious problems* in their *residential street* and *local high street* than ABC1 respondents and homeowners (see figure 6.2 below). For example, C2DE respondents and non-homeowners were significantly more likely than ABC1 respondents and homeowners to think *heavy traffic* and *difficulty crossing the road* are *serious problems* in their *residential* and *local high street*.

**Figure 1.6: Areas considered to be a serious problem in residential and local high streets by social grade<sup>8</sup> and housing type (%)**

^ = significantly higher than comparison group for same street type

	ABC1	C2DE	ABC1	C2DE	Homeowner	Renter,	Homeowner	Renter, social housing, other
							h	Local high street
Vehicles	29%	28%	24%	30% ^	28%	32%	24%	27%
Not	26%	30% ^	24%	29% ^	25%	28%	24%	26%
Heavy	18%	23% ^	21%	26% ^	17%	24% ^	19%	27% ^

<sup>8</sup> Social grade: ABC1 (Higher managerial/ Professional/ Administrative, Intermediate managerial/ Professional/ Administrative, Supervisory or clerical/ Junior managerial/ Professional/ administrator) and C2DE (Skilled manual worker, Semi or unskilled manual worker, Student, Retired and living on state pension only, Unemployed)

Traffic fumes	18%	22% ^	23%	25%	17%	23% ^	20%	27% ^
Lack of public space for children to play	14%	21% ^	17%	25% ^	16%	14%	17%	23% ^
Traffic noise	15%	16%	16%	21% ^	13%	19% ^	16%	23% ^
A lot of lorries	14%	17% ^	16%	19%	14%	15%	16%	17%
Difficulty crossing the road as a pedestrian	13%	16% ^	15%	20% ^	12%	17% ^	14%	21% ^
Not enough cycle parking spaces	12%	14%	13%	16% ^	10%	16% ^	12%	18% ^

**Q006. To what extent, if at all, do you think that the following are a problem on your residential street? Q007. To what extent do you think that the following are a problem, if at all, in your local high street? Base: ABC1 (1265); C2DE (946); Homeowner (1157); Renter, social housing, other (711)**

# Appendix

## Questionnaire

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the government should act in local neighbourhoods to...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
1a. improve air quality					
1b. reduce traffic noise					
1c. reduce traffic congestion					
1d. increase road safety					

2. To what extent do you support or oppose the reduction of road traffic in towns and cities in England?

Strongly oppose      Tend to oppose      Tend to support      Strongly support      Don't know

3. To what extent do you support or oppose the reduction of road traffic in your local area / neighbourhood?

Strongly oppose      Tend to oppose      Tend to support      Strongly support      Don't know

4. To what extent do you support or oppose reallocating road space for walking and cycling in towns and cities in England?

Strongly oppose      Tend to oppose      Tend to support      Strongly support      Don't know

5. To what extent do you support or oppose reallocating road space to walking and cycling in your local area / neighbourhood?

Strongly oppose      Tend to oppose      Tend to support      Strongly support      Don't know

**6. To what extent, if at all, do you think that the following are a problem on your residential street?**

	Not at all a problem	A minor problem	A moderate problem	A serious problem	Don't know
6a. Vehicles going too fast					
6b. A lot of lorries					
6c. Not enough car parking spaces					
6d. Not enough cycle parking spaces					
6e. Heavy traffic					
6f. Traffic fumes					
6g. Traffic noise					
6h. Difficulty crossing the road as a pedestrian					
6i. Lack of public space for children to play					

**7. To what extent do you think that the following are a problem, if at all, in your local high street?**

	Not at all a problem	A minor problem	A moderate problem	A serious problem	Don't know
7a. Vehicles going too fast					
7b. A lot of lorries					
7c. Not enough car parking spaces					
7d. Not enough cycle parking spaces					
7e. Heavy traffic					
7f. Traffic fumes					
7g. Traffic noise					
7h. Difficulty crossing the road as a pedestrian					
7i. Lack of public space for children to play					

**8. Which of the following do you tend to use to travel in your local neighbourhood?  
Please select all that apply.**

- 1        Underground, metro, light rail, tram
- 2        Train
- 3        Bus, minibus or coach
- 4        Motorcycle, scooter or moped
- 5        Car/van as a driver
- 6        Car/van as a passenger
- 7        Taxi/minicab
- 8        Bicycle
- 9        Walking
- 10       Other (please specify)
- 998     None of the above *\*Fixed \*Exclusive*
- 999     Don't know *\*Fixed \*Exclusive*