



APPENDIX A

North Herts Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan
Partnership Project between
Hertfordshire County Council and North Herts Council

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North Herts LCWIP Consultation Report

Consultation overview

The North Herts LCWIP consultation ran from the **26 September to 14 November 2022**, led by Hertfordshire County Council in partnership with North Herts Council. The following report provides an overview of the key outcomes of the consultation and a summary of the engagement delivered by HCC and NHC.

The aim of the consultation was to gain feedback on:

- The primary/secondary walking & cycling networks
- The infrastructure improvement plans and proposals
- The prioritised routes and scoring
- The overall plan (Technical Report & Appendices)

Response to the consultation

Stakeholders were given several potential avenues through which to submit their views and responses:

- By completing an online survey
- By adding a location-specific comment on an interactive map
- By emailing the North Herts LCWIP inbox

The response rates for the different methods were as follows:

Total responses: 1239

- Responses via online survey: 703
- Responses via interactive storymap: 449
- Responses via email: 87

Further in person engagement was also conducted by North Herts Council where people could provide their feedback directly to officers and ask questions. Further detail and information on this engagement can be found in the North Herts engagement section of this report.

Overall support for the North Herts LCWIP

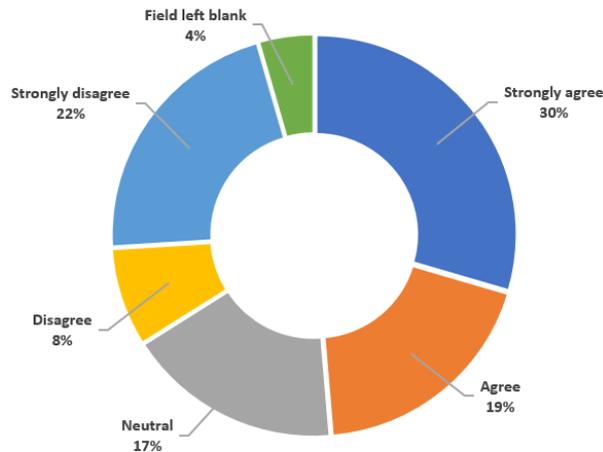
The overarching aim to improve walking and cycling across North Herts varied by location but was broadly well received and supported. When broken down by response types, the online consultation survey asked whether people *'[...] support the proposed approach of the LCWIP in improving cycling and walking provision across North Hertfordshire?'*

In response **73%** said that they supported the proposed approach and **27%** either disagreed or expressed concerns with the proposed approach.

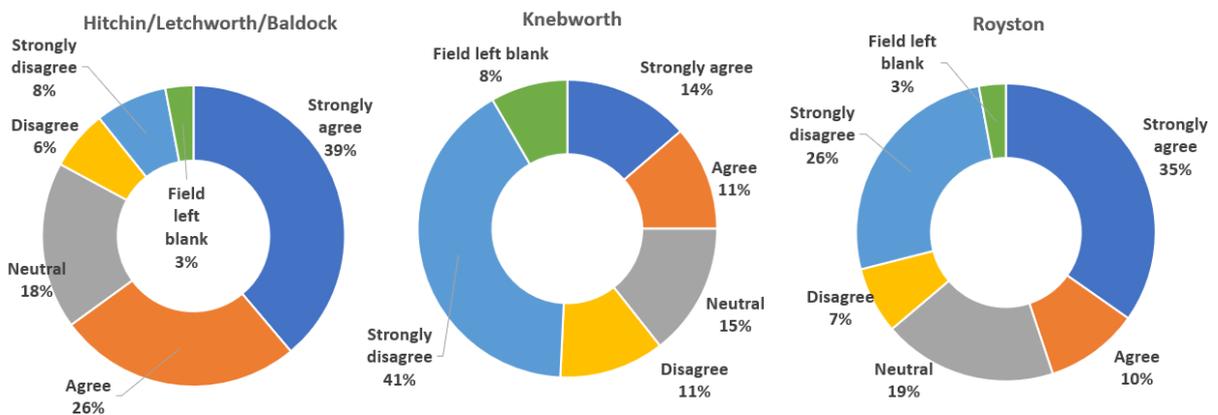
For the storymap feedback, people were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposals. A breakdown of the 449 responses can be found below.

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Storymap consultation satisfaction



Overall, **49%** agreed with the proposals and **30%** disagreed but this picture changes by location, as illustrated below:

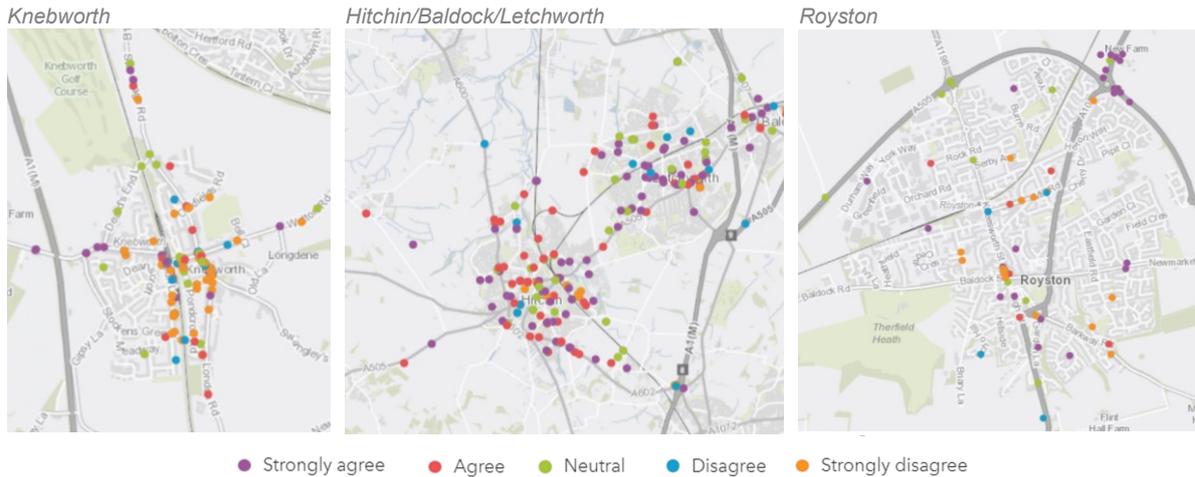


When broken down to specific areas:

- Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock (counted as one area in interactive map): **65% agreed and 14% disagreed**
- Knebworth: **25% agreed and 52% disagreed**
- Royston: **45% agreed and 33% disagreed**

This breakdown can be illustrated further by the positioning of the geolocated comments via the online interactive storymaps. The areas with the highest concentration of purple/red were supported while the areas with the highest concentration of orange/blue were not. Many of the opinions and comments expressed within the consultation feedback were influenced heavily by specific measures proposed. For example, in Royston many people opposed the interventions in the High Street area but strongly supported the A505/A10 crossing (as can be seen on the right below).

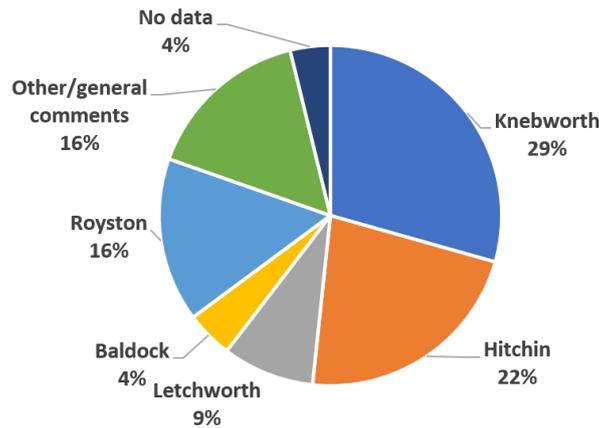
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Comments received by area

For the storymap/geolocated comments the responses were divided into three areas. Hitchin/Letchworth/Baldock were counted as one area but following a review of the comments a breakdown by each individual has been provided below.

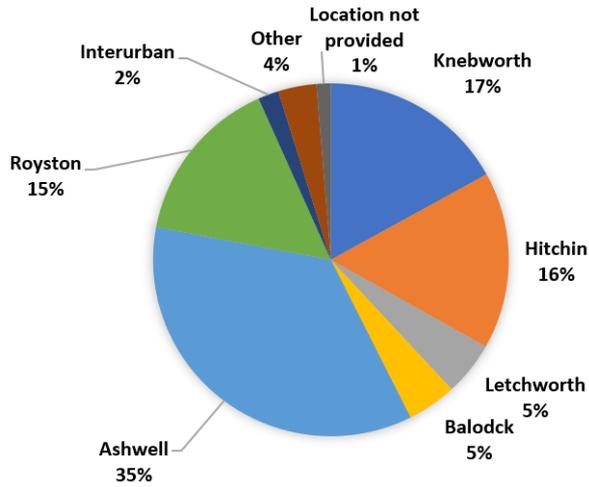
Storymap responses by area



Survey responses by area

The responses for the survey provided a slightly different picture, suggesting that the different methods of responding (storymaps, survey, email) may have been publicised or shared more widely than others within the different areas. A notable difference in the responses via the survey is the overwhelming response from Ashwell Village which received over 220 comments, all of which almost exclusively campaigned for a route from the village to the station to be prioritised.

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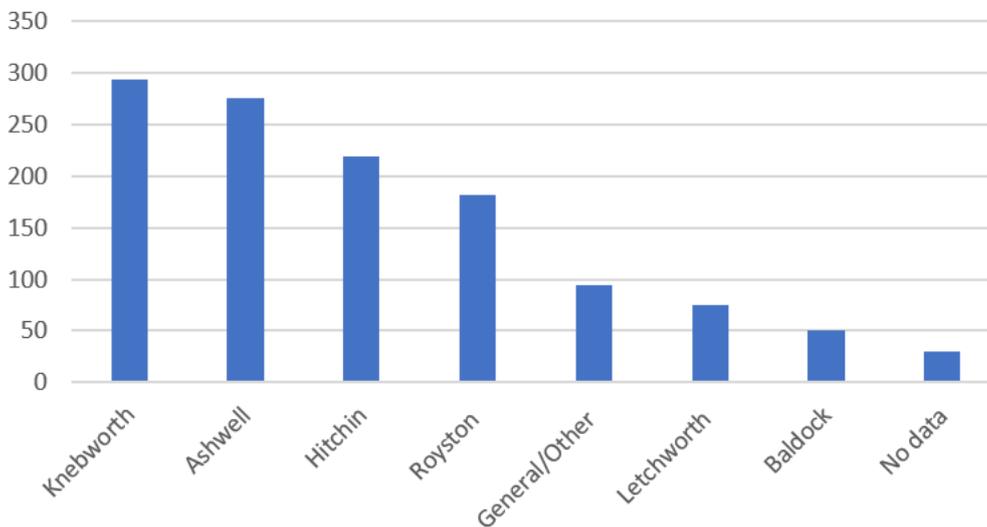


Email responses by area

For the comments received by email, the highest proportion came via Knebworth (44), followed by Ashwell Village (28), Hitchin (7), Royston (6), Letchworth (2) and then Other (2). Many of the email responses covered multiple issues and areas, providing detailed insights and local knowledge.

When combining all datasets, the area with the highest response rate was from Knebworth and Ashwell (where there were clearly organised resident campaigns in place). Balodck was the area which obtained the least amount of feedback, as illustrated below:

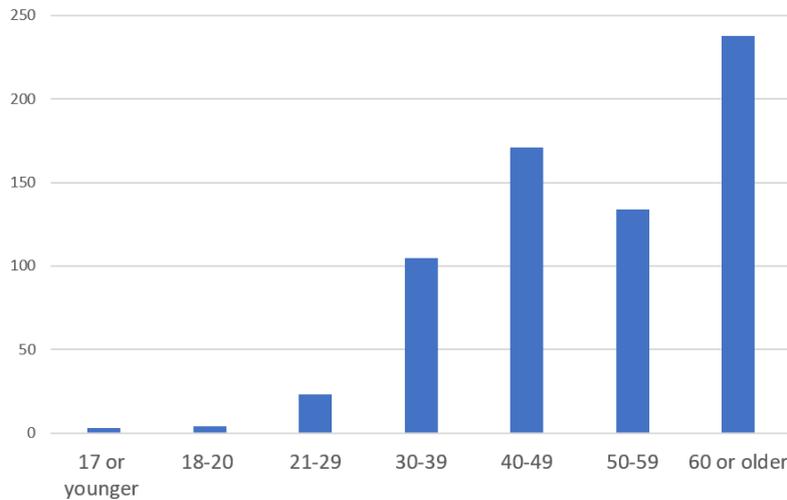
Total responses by area



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Further insights from survey results

Age breakdown

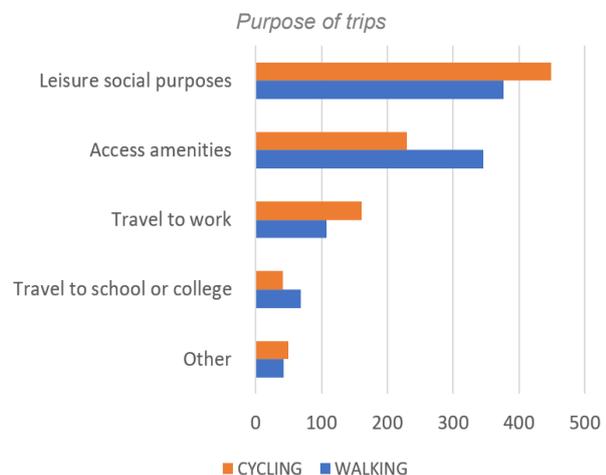
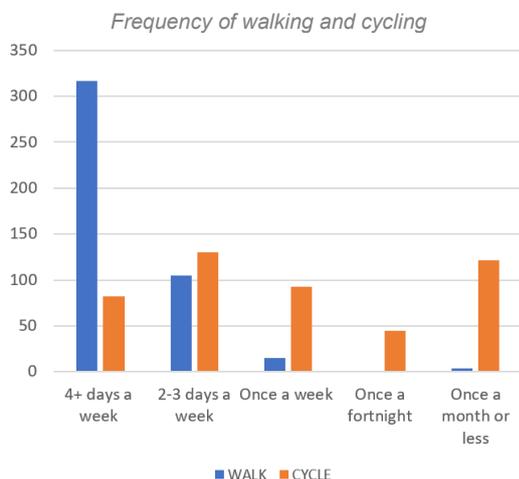


A notable observation from the survey responses was that 60 or older made up the highest proportion of respondents (35%) with under 30s making up just 4.3% of total respondents. The percentage of responses from over 60's was highest in Letchworth (61%) and Knebworth (45%) and lowest in Baldock (22%). The percentage of responses from under 40's was lowest in Knebworth (11%) and highest in Royston (28%).

Based on the above data, there is a clear imbalance in the ages represented. Each age group brings their own unique values and priorities which have the potential to influence the outcome of any decision-making process. By ensuring a diverse range of opinions from different age groups we can avoid the risk of skewed outcomes that may favour the interests of a particular generation and neglect the aspirations of others. Going forward it is important that we seek out the opinions of the younger generation (which are largely absent from these results) to ensure an inclusive outcome that represents the interest of the whole community.

Further questions were asked around ethnicity and gender. 86% of respondents identified as British, 6% other and 2% preferred not to say. There was an even split of male to female respondents (49% / 49%) with 2% preferring not to say.

Frequency of walking and cycling and purpose of trips



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Based on the responses from the survey, 400 people (59%) stated that they currently cycle within the district compared to 282 (41%) who stated that they did not. 441 people (66%) stated that walking was their primary means of travel, while 244 (36%) stated that it was not. The primary reason for walking and cycling was for leisure and accessing amenities. Around 100 people stated that they cycle to work which shows that there is considerable scope to encourage more walking and cycling for commuting. This data could be considered further alongside the latest 2021 travel to work census data for North Hertfordshire (below).

Method used to travel to workplace	Census 2011	Census 2021	% change
Work mainly at or from home	4422	28689	+548%
Underground, metro, light rail, tram	221	113	- 48%
Train	7794	2442	- 68%
Bus, minibus or coach	1117	457	- 59%
Taxi	167	159	- 5%
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	400	211	- 47%
Driving a car or van	40153	27107	- 32%
Passenger in a car or van	2809	2061	- 26%
Bicycle	1240	875	- 29%
On foot	6364	4567	- 28%
Other method of travel to work	303	476	+57%

*Source: [Travel to work, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Overview of key comments

When ranked by number of responses the top 20 proposals/issues from the feedback are identified below.

	Areas/issues with highest number of comments
1	Safe walking cycling route from Ashwell to Ashwell & Morden Station
2	Interventions proposed for Knebworth High Street
3	A505 Crossing (A10 & A1198) (Royston)
4	General comments on approach (Knebworth)
5	Modal filter(s) on Gun Lane (Knebworth)*
6	Hitchin to Stevenage interurban route (inc. A1(M) J8 improvements)
7	Closing Lower King Street to traffic (Royston)
8	Modal filter on Pondcroft Road (Knebworth)
9	Cambridge Road Railway Underpass (Hitchin)
10	A602/Whitehill Road pedestrian crossing (Hitchin)
11	Vehicle speeds/traffic calming (Knebworth)
12	Bedford Road and Northern Hitchin connections (inc. Industrial Estate)
13	General comments on approach (Hitchin)
14	Queens Street/Mill Road proposals (Royston)
15	Cadwell Bridge Railway Underpass (Ickleford)

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16	Knebworth to Stevenage (via Stevenage Road)
17	Parking on cycle lanes/ parking enforcement (Hitchin)
18	Safe cycle route between Baldock and Letchworth
19	Vehicle speeds/traffic calming (Baldock)
20	Vehicle speeds/traffic calming (Letchworth)

*It should be noted that a second modal filter was added on Gun Lane in error on the mapping

The proposals which received the most support were Ashwell – Ashwell & Morden Station walking/cycling route, A505 crossing in Royston, Hitchin to Stevenage Interurban route, the Cambridge Road underpass (Hitchin) and support for the crossing on the A602/Whitehill junction (Hitchin). The proposals which received the most opposition were the Knebworth High Street interventions, general opposition to all proposals in Knebworth, the modal filters placed on Gun Lane, closing Lower King Street in Royston and the modal filter placed on Pondcroft Road (Knebworth).

Further analysis has been conducted to identify the key issues by area.

Overview of key comments by area

Below is a brief overview of the key issues received by area based on the number of comments received within each area.

Knebworth

There was strong and well organised opposition by some of the residents and local businesses to most of the interventions proposed in Knebworth. There was more consensus around making improvements for walking than for cycling and some support for specific measures. Top issues highlighted include:

- Very strong opposition to the proposals for the London Road High Street; the removal of parking would significantly impact local businesses/trade.
- Strong opposition to modal filters on Gun Lane and Pondcroft – this would increase traffic on other roads
- Support for interurban proposal via Stevenage Road but concern around current condition of footway/roads and traffic speeds
- Acknowledgement that the route under the railway bridge is a key safety issue but mixed views on the proposals put forward
- Lack of routes to outlying towns and villages, such as Codicote, Welwyn, Oaklands, Woolmer Green etc.
- General opposition to the proposed approach

Hitchin

An engaged community that is generally supportive of the LCWIP proposals. A broad range of differing comments highlighting multiple issues (many of which were captured by the LCWIP) but some concern that some proposals could make traffic worse. Top issues highlighted include:

- Strong support for the interurban route to Little Wymondley and Stevenage, including improvements to the J8 interchange
- Cambridge Road rail bridge underpass highlighted as a key issue for pedestrians accessing Hitchin Station

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- Parking and parking enforcement an issue in Hitchin – vehicles parking on narrow pavements and cycle lanes (St Michael's Road mentioned more than once) making walking and cycling difficult and undermining the improvements/aspirations
- Multiple roads/junctions highlighted as being dangerous to navigate for pedestrians and cyclists; A602/Whitehill Road highlighted the most followed by Bedford Road, Redhill Road, Old Park Road, Fishponds Road, Nightingale Road, Oakfield Avenue, Grove Road, Stevenage Road and Woolgrove Road
- Better connections needed to industrial estate (particularly for HGVs passing through central Hitchin) and support for routes to North Hitchin/Ickleford areas
- Cadwell Bridge railway underpass highlighted as a key issue (Ickleford)

Letchworth

Generally supportive of the LCWIP and some improvements identified but less comments/feedback than from other areas. Top issues highlighted include:

- Traffic calming, footway improvements and crossing points supported in key areas, such as Pixmore Way, Baldock Road (A505) and Avenue One
- Prioritisation should be given to the Letchworth Greenway and green cycle routes/PRoW
- General comments about the poor quality of footways and lack of regular maintenance making walking and cycling difficult, particularly for those with disabilities
- Multiple suggestions for new crossings points (Icknield Way, Birds Hill, Rose Hill, Avenue One, B656, A505, Broadway and Norton Road)
- Support for interurban connections to Baldock and Hitchin
- Several comments highlighting the need to prioritise safe school routes
- Support for interurban connections to Baldock and Hitchin

Baldock

Low feedback numbers but generally supportive of the proposals and approach with some additional comments and concerns. Top issues highlighted include:

- More traffic calming needed in key residential areas and near schools (Royston Road, Bygrave Road, Weston Way, Clothall Road, High Street)
- North Road and the B656/A507 junction highlighted as dangerous for cyclists and in need of intervention to support access to the station
- HGVs using Baldock as a cut through an issue, particularly in areas with narrow footways, such as Royston Road
- Safe Baldock to Letchworth cycle route needed
- Not enough new cycle routes proposed given the scale of development coming forward in Baldock
- **Ashwell:** Comments almost exclusively in relation to the creation of a safe walking/cycling route from the village to the station

Royston

Broadly in favour of the proposals with very strong support for some of the measures but equally strong opposition/concern for others. Top issues highlighted by area include:

- Very strong support for the A10/A505 Melbourn Greenway link
- General opposition to the intervention proposed for the Lower King Street/High Street area – while some welcome increased pedestrianisation, most of the comments feel

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it would make traffic worse, impact local businesses and increase issues on other nearby roads

- Strong desire to see better/safer cycle routes from Bassingbourn and Litlington into Royston. Providing a safe crossing across the A505 is a critical issue in Royston
- General concern about the proposals for Mill Road and Queens Road – not enough room to accommodate cyclists
- Would like to see proposals expand to the industrial area
- Mixed views of redevelopment of the A10 gyratory

Post consultation review

Following a review of the LCWIP comments, several site visits and workshops were conducted to investigate and discuss the feedback in more detail. This included:

- Workshop with one local district councillor, five local representatives (Neighbourhood Plan committee, parish council and local business), HCC & NHDC officers on 15 March.
- Guided cycle tour of Letchworth with three members of Letchworth Cyclists with NHDC officer on 21 April.
- HCC & NHDC officer tour of Hitchin on 14 April.
- HCC & NHDC officer tour of south-west Baldock, Ashwell to Ashwell & Morden station, and Royston on 19 April.
- HCC officers met with Hitchin MP, local councillor and residents in Hitchin on 10 March 2023
- HCC officer project validation site visit – Cadwell Bridge, Ickleford on 19 April 2023
- HCC officer project validation site visit – Ashwell/Ashwell Station on 21 April 2023
- HCC officer project validation site visit – A600 Lower Stondon (North Hitchin/Westmill to Henlow) on 19 December 2022

Further changes were also considered in light of some of the new and forthcoming developments which have progressed and become more defined since the initial LCWIP routes were formulated.

As a result of the site visits, workshops, development considerations and additional project validation work that has been undertaken within some of the routes within North Herts, some changes and amendments have been recommended for the final LCWIP document (see **summary of proposed changes** document).

Overview of LCWIP consultation activity

Consultation overview

This section of the report provides an overview of the public and member engagement delivered by HCC and North Herts Council for the LCWIP consultation. The respective HCC and NHDC officers and communications teams worked closely together to identify opportunities and coordinate our respective campaigns to ensure maximum impact.

HCC Engagement:

A summary of the key marketing activities from HCC included:

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- **Direct mailouts:** issued to key stakeholders, which included local councillors, town, and parish councils, walking, and cycling groups, local businesses, and schools
- **A dedicated social media campaign, which included:**
 - Total posts: 26
 - Total impressions: 23,408
 - Total engagements: 183
 - Enquiries: 0

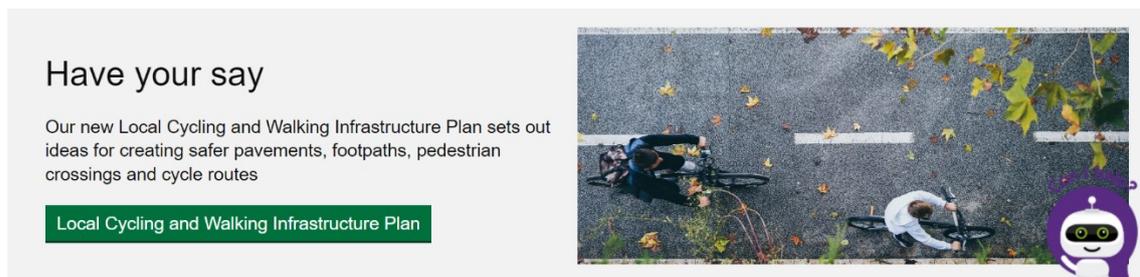
(For context, the level of engagement was higher than the previous WGC LCWIP campaign and around the same as the posts issued for emergency works and winter service updates, which are generally some of the most popular posts with the public)

- **Press releases/ Highways Update Me bulletin:** The 'Have your say on North Hertfordshire walking and cycling routes' story at the end of October was sent to 12,212 subscribers and viewed by 5,962 unique openers. There were 115 unique clicks on the *Have your say* button which signposted viewers to the consultation page
- **Website:** a dedicated North Herts LCWIP consultation website page was also set up. The page had 606 unique external page views in September 2022, 3,033 unique external page views in October 2022, and 934 unique external page views in November.

North Herts Engagement:

For North Herts, the consultation was promoted through:

- Dedicated page in the News section of the North Herts Council website: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/have-your-say-walking-and-cycling-routes>
- Ad block on the home page:



Have your say

Our new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan sets out ideas for creating safer pavements, footpaths, pedestrian crossings and cycle routes

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

- Twitter: 8 tweets plus mentions in relation to Town Talks and Community Surgeries
- Press release (which was picked up by the Royston Crow)
- Emailed the Citizens' Panel (approx. 600 people)
- Posted to the North Herts Council Intranet Message Board
- Coverage in internal staff magazine (Insight)
- Presentation at one of the monthly staff briefings on Zoom

North Herts in person engagement

The following is a summary of all the public and member engagement conducted by North Herts, with approximate audience figures. This additional level of engagement was likely a key factor in increasing the overall consultation response rate through direct engagement and encouraging word of mouth (as can be seen from the earlier engagement graph).

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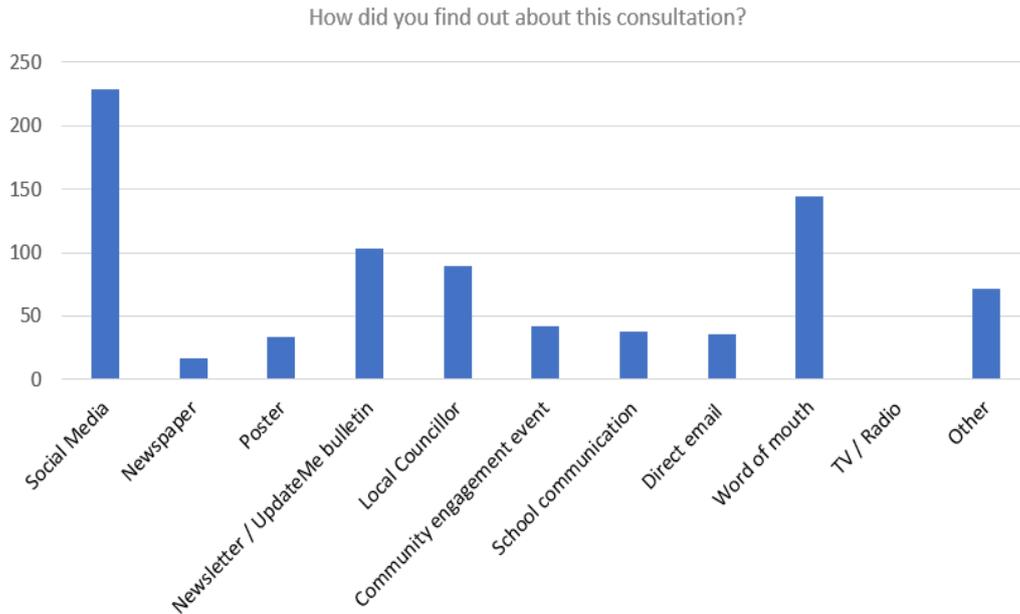
Allowing for double counting, the estimated number of people engaged with was around 650, including all local councillors.

Date	Location	Organisation	Audience (estimate)	
			Size	Unique
21 Sep	Letchworth	Letchworth Committee	15	4
29 Sep	Letchworth	Southern Rural Committee	8	3
1 Oct	Hitchin	Hitchin Councillor Surgery	20	20
10 Oct	Email	Invitation to NHDC and North Herts HCC members, parish clerks and key stakeholders about Cabinet Panel on Transport	105	105
11 Oct	Hitchin	Hitchin Town Talk	40	40
11 Oct	Hitchin	Hitchin Committee	14	3
12 Oct	Royston	Royston Town Talk	15	15
12 Oct	Royston	Royston and District Committee	14	4
15 Oct	Letchworth	Letchworth Councillor Surgery	8	8
17 Oct	Royston	LCWIP drop-in	5	4
17 Oct	Royston	Royston Town Council General Purposes & Transport Committee	10	8
18 Oct	Email	Reminder to NHDC and North Herts HCC members and parish clerks about Cabinet Panel on Transport	92	0
18 Oct	Letchworth	NH50Plus	50	50
18 Oct	Zoom & YouTube	NHDC Cabinet Panel on Transport	70	40
20 Oct	Email	Reminder to NHDC and North Herts HCC members and parish clerks about LCWIP consultation	92	0
20 Oct	Knebworth	LCWIP drop-in	80	80
28 Oct	Royston	Meeting with councillors	2	0
31 Oct	Baldock	Baldock Town Talk	70	70
31 Oct	Baldock	Baldock and District Committee	12	4
2 Nov	Letchworth	LCWIP drop-in	4	4
2 Nov	Knebworth	Parish talk	130	100
3 Nov	Zoom	NHDC staff briefing	80	80
3 Nov	Baldock	LCWIP drop-in	15	12
Total unique:				654

Impact of marketing campaign

The North Herts LCWIP consultation received a higher level of engagement and response rate than previous LCWIP consultations. An overview of the ways people found out about the consultation can be found below. Based on the responses, social media was the primary means of engagement, followed by word of mouth.

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Consultation impact assessment

The response to the LCWIP consultation has provided a broad range of local knowledge and feedback that we have used to help improve the LCWIP policies and proposals.

From the 1239 responses received we have identified approx. **48 changes**, which includes modifications to specific routes and proposals, updates to the LCWIP mapping, the addition of new policies (such as equestrians), further information and clarify on key routes and general changes to improve the overall presentation of information and accessibility of the report.

The feedback has also helped to identify and prioritise future project validation work with detailed site sites being carried out at the Ashwell/Ashwell Station route and Cadwell Bridge underpass (and detailed options developed) as a result of the strong response from the consultation.

In addition to the changes identified to key routes and proposals, a series of broader learnings and insights have also been obtained from the feedback which can be used to inform future planning. The key insights included:

- **Safety:** Many comments highlighted safety concerns and risks associated with walking and cycling within their local areas. This included accident-prone locations, difficult or unsafe road crossings, and areas where residents felt there was inadequate infrastructure. We also received several comments highlighting risky behaviours of people driving and cycling that deter others from walking and cycling.
- **Accessibility:** Several comments were received from elderly residents and people with mobility impairments and disabilities, highlighting specific sites and general concerns within their local areas. These comments reinforced the importance of regular maintenance of footways and cycle tracks.
- **Connectivity:** Local insights into the connectivity of existing walking and cycling routes were provided which has helped identify gaps in the network or insufficient connections to key destinations such as schools, workplaces, parks, and public transportation.

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- **Economic considerations:** Economic impacts of implementing walking and cycling infrastructure were highlighted, in particular the potential impact on local businesses, tourism, property values and transportation costs.
- **Usage and demand:** Information was obtained on usage of walking and cycling infrastructure, including footpaths, bike lanes, and shared spaces.
- **Health and well-being:** The consultation feedback provided information on people's walking and cycling habits, which has helped to provide some insights into the health and wellbeing and activity levels of people within the district.
- **Environmental impact:** General concerns about the environment were evident in the feedback. There was a strong consensus about the need to reduce traffic congestion, noise pollution, and improve the overall sustainability of the transportation system.
- **Implementation and funding:** The feedback will help HCC develop detailed implementation plans and support future funding applications through local support and buy-in for specific areas/proposals.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** While the LCWIP consultation received a large response, some groups were nevertheless under-represented, in particular people under the age of 30 (4.3% of respondents).
- **Future consultations:** Significant learnings have been obtained from the consultation process which can be applied to future consultations.

Delivery of the LCWIP will enable more people to access a wider range of education and job opportunities, and to lead a fulfilling social, active, and cultural life without needing to own a car. In the 2021 Census, 15.5% of households in North Herts did not have access to a car or van (8,781 out of 56,732 households).

Next steps

To review and agree the recommended changes and to the LCWIP document and appendices.