

Staff Travel – 2023 Survey Review

Introduction

Executive Summary

East Staffordshire Borough Council (ESBC) conducted a Staff Travel Survey in 2023 to gain insight into employees' commuting habits and identify opportunities for promoting sustainable travel. The survey received 81 responses from a pool of 274 staff members, representing a 30% response rate.

Key findings include:

- Car Dependency: 66% of respondents commute by car
- Short-Distance Commuters: 30% of respondents live within 2 miles of their workplace, presenting an opportunity for active travel promotion.
- Flexible Working: 79% of respondents have some degree of work-hour flexibility.
- Public Transport Barriers: Time, frequency, reliability, and cost are the main deterrents to public transport use.
- Electric Vehicle Adoption: Only 17% of respondents are likely to consider purchasing an electric vehicle in the near future.
- Active Travel: Only a small proportion of employees regularly or cycle to work.
- Environmental Considerations: Only 15% of respondents consider carbon emissions in their travel choices.

Based on these findings, key recommendations include:

- Promoting active travel through improved infrastructure and targeted campaigns.
- Implementing a formal car-sharing program.
- Supporting electric vehicle adoption through workplace charging facilities.
- Encouraging flexible working arrangements to reduce peak-time congestion.
- Improving communication about available travel schemes.
- Developing a comprehensive workplace travel plan with clear targets and regular monitoring.

The Staff Travel Survey was conducted to understand current commuting patterns and preferences, identify barriers to sustainable travel, gauge interest in alternative transportation methods, and collect feedback on potential improvements and incentives. It covered various aspects of commuting, including mode of transport, travel time, flexibility, and attitudes towards sustainable travel options.

This report presents a detailed analysis of the survey findings, interprets the results, and provides recommendations for promoting more sustainable travel habits among ESBC staff. The insights gained from this survey will inform the development of a new and updated sustainable staff travel plan.

Survey findings

Respondent Demographics

The majority of survey respondents (56.8%) were based at Burton Town Hall, followed by a significant portion (27.2%) working remotely full-time, with the remaining respondents distributed across various other council locations including the Brewhouse Arts Centre, Millers Lane Offices, Stapenhill Cemetery, and Market Hall Market Place.

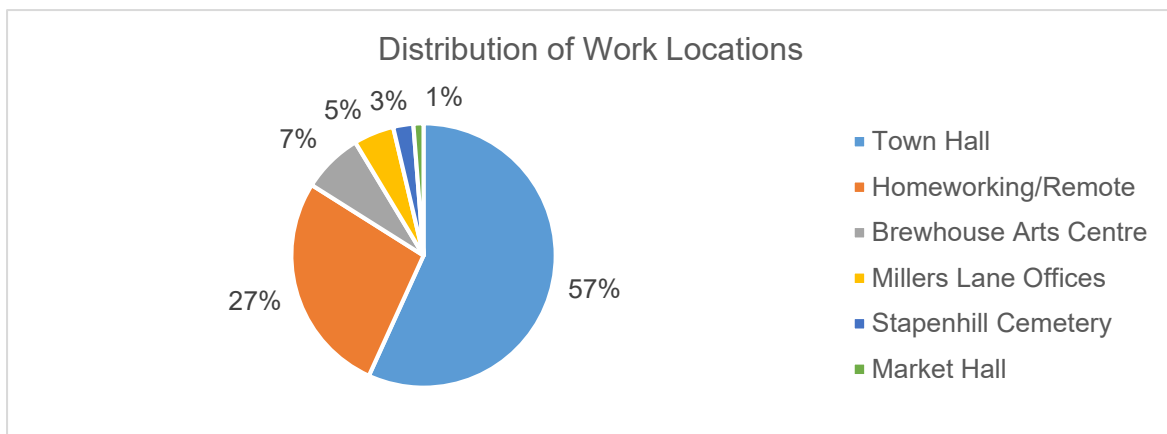


Figure 1: Distribution of work locations

Current Commuting Patterns

The survey revealed that driving alone was the predominant commuting method, followed closely by working from home, while active travel options like walking and cycling were less common, and public transportation (bus) was the least utilised mode among respondents.

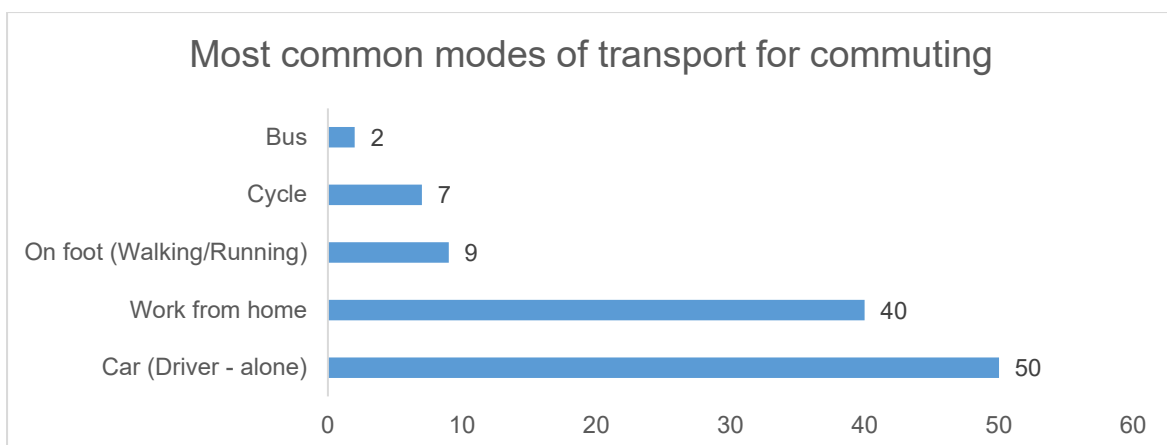


Figure 2: Most common modes of transport for commuting

Notably, these figures suggest that many respondents use multiple modes of transportation throughout the week, combining driving, remote work, and active travel options to suit their varying needs and schedules.

Here's a summary of the main reasons given for traveling to work via each of these modes:

Car (Driver - alone):

- Convenience and time-saving were the most common reasons
- Lack of viable alternatives, especially for those living farther away
- Need for flexibility, particularly for work-related visits or carrying equipment
- Unreliability of public transport
- Personal commitments (e.g., school runs)

Car (As a passenger):

- Cost-sharing
- Environmental considerations
- Lack of other options

On foot (Walking/Running):

- Health and fitness benefits
- Environmental considerations
- Convenience for short distances
- Cost-effective

Cycle:

- Health benefits
- Environmental considerations
- Convenience for short to medium distances
- Weather-dependent (some use it when weather permits)

Bus:

- Lack of other options (e.g., don't drive)
- Environmental considerations

Work from home:

- Convenience
- Time and cost savings
- Employer policy or preference

Train:

- Only one respondent mentioned using the train, citing a lack of alternatives

Motorbike/Scooter/Moped:

- One respondent cited it as an alternative when public transport isn't viable

In summary, many respondents cited multiple factors influencing their choice. Those using cars often mentioned a lack of viable alternatives, especially for longer distances or when needing to carry equipment.

Active travel modes (walking, cycling) were often chosen for health benefits and environmental reasons but were more common for shorter distances.

Working from home has become a significant "mode" of work, often chosen for convenience and cost savings.

Public transport (bus, train) was less frequently mentioned, often cited as a last resort when other options weren't available

Journey Duration and Distance

The survey data on commuting patterns revealed a wide range of journey times and distances among the 43 respondents who provided valid information. The average journey to work took 28.7 minutes and covered an average distance of 9.5 miles, suggesting a moderate commute for most employees.

At one end of the spectrum, the data also showed a considerable number of employees with longer commutes. Several respondents reported journey times of 40-60 minutes or more, with distances ranging from 18 to 45 miles. The longest reported commute was 65-75 minutes covering 27 miles. These longer commutes highlight the challenges some employees face in adopting more sustainable travel options

However, 13 respondents (about 30% of those who provided distance data) reported commutes of 2 miles or less, indicating a significant portion of employees live within walking or cycling distance of their workplace.

Examining the data in more detail, of these 13 respondents; 5 typically commuted using a car, 3 on foot, 3 cycled and 2 used a mix of modes (One uses a mix of car, on foot, and cycle, and the other uses a mix of car, as a passenger and on foot).

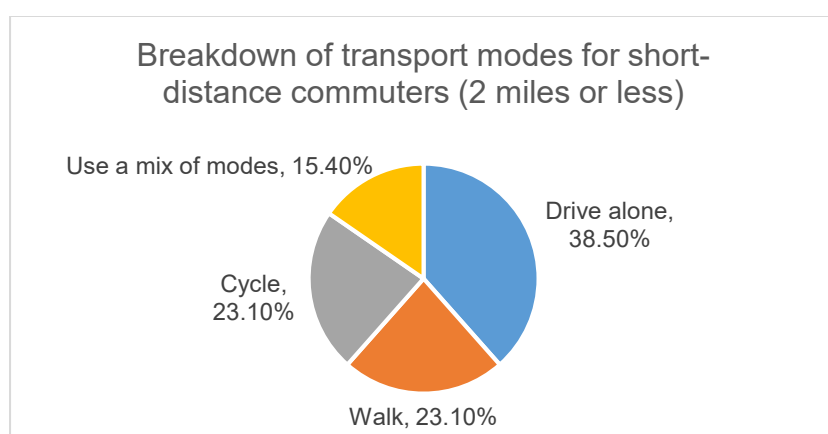


Figure 3: Breakdown of transport modes for short-distance commuters (2miles or less)

This data reveals that even among those living within walking or cycling distance of their workplace, driving alone is still the most common mode of transport.

However, it's encouraging to see that nearly half of these short-distance commuters (46%) are using active travel modes (walking or cycling) as their primary means of getting to work.

The two respondents using mixed modes suggest that some employees are flexible in their commuting habits, possibly adapting to daily circumstances or weather conditions.

Using the three most commonly used modes of transport, an average journey for each looks like this:



Figure 4: Typical journey length by transport mode

It's important to note that some respondents use multiple modes of transport throughout the week, and some data points might represent combined journeys (e.g., walk + bus). Also, the sample sizes for modes other than cars are quite small, so these averages should be interpreted cautiously.

The data shows that car journeys tend to be longer in both time and distance compared to active travel modes like walking and cycling. This suggests that those who live closer to their workplace are more likely to use active travel modes, while those living further away rely more heavily on cars.

Flexibility in Work Hours

Regarding work-hour flexibility, the vast majority of respondents (79%) indicated some degree of flexibility in their schedule. Specifically, over half of the respondents (56%) reported they could flex their work hours by up to an hour, while 22.5% could flex by 30 minutes. A smaller portion (19%) stated they had flexibility but preferred not to use it, and only a tiny fraction (2.5%) had no flexibility at all.

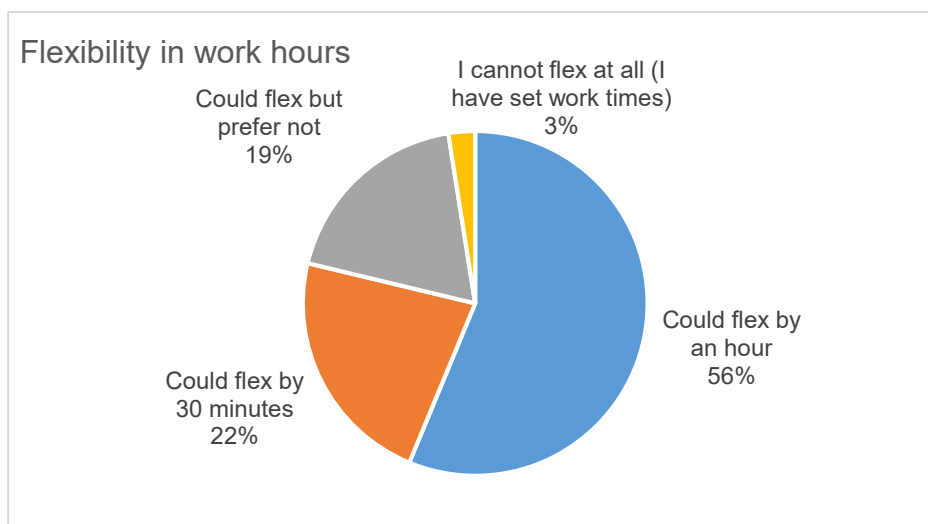


Figure 5: Flexibility in work hours

The survey data reveals consistent commuting patterns across different sites and transport modes, with most employees arriving between 8 am and 9 am and departing between 4 pm and 5 pm. This pattern holds true for both car users and those using active travel modes like walking and cycling.

Bus users tend to arrive slightly later, while remote workers demonstrate the most flexible schedules.

Notably, despite different locations and modes of transport, the core working hours remain relatively standard for most employees, with some variations observed at sites like the Brewhouse Arts Centre, where departure times are more diverse.

Work-Related Visits

The survey reveals that work-related visits are a significant aspect of many employees' roles at East Staffordshire Borough Council, with 37% of respondents reporting such visits.

The frequency of these visits varies widely, ranging from monthly to daily, with the most common being once a month (28% of those making visits) or once every couple of weeks (24%).

Notably, personal car use dominates as the primary mode of transport for these visits, with 82% of respondents driving alone.

This heavy reliance on individual vehicles likely reflects the need for flexibility and the diverse locations visited, as 93% of those making work-related journeys report traveling to sites across the East Staffordshire Borough.

While some employees demonstrate flexibility in their transport choices, using alternatives like walking or car-sharing when possible, the overall pattern suggests a significant challenge for implementing more sustainable travel policies. Any future

initiatives aimed at reducing the carbon footprint of work-related travel will need to carefully balance the requirements for mobility and flexibility with environmental considerations, potentially exploring options such as low-emission fleet vehicles or incentives for using public transport where feasible.

Travel Schemes

The survey results reveal varying levels of awareness and engagement with the council's travel schemes. The Cycle to Work Scheme emerges as the most recognised and utilised option, with 76% of respondents aware of its existence and 7.6% having used it. This suggests a positive foundation for promoting cycling as a sustainable commuting option.

In contrast, the Share-A-Lift Scheme and Public Transport Passes show lower levels of awareness, usage and interest.

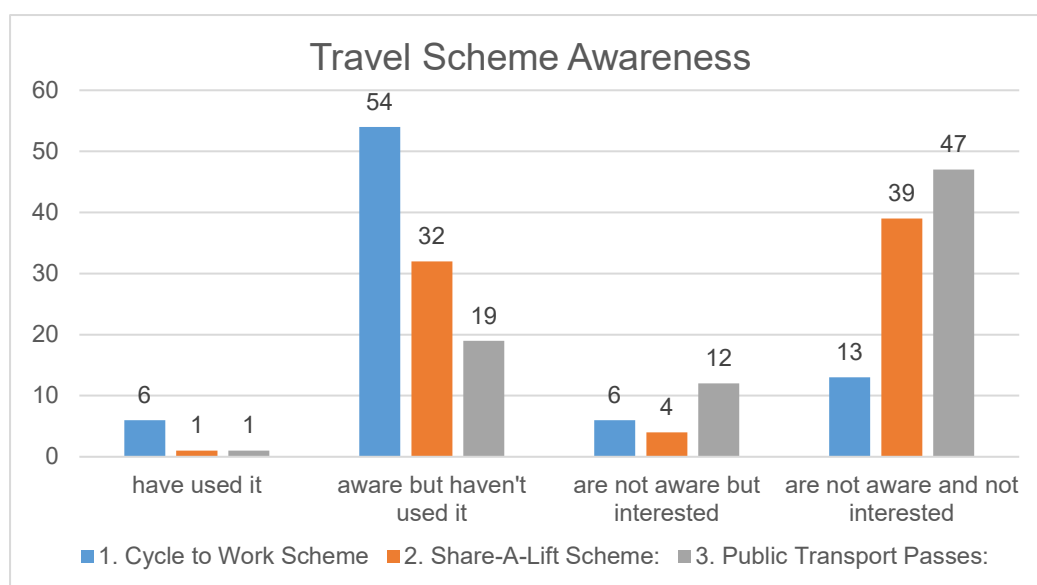


Figure 6: Travel scheme awareness

The survey also reveals a communication challenge, with 58% of respondents unaware of where to find information about these schemes. This suggests that improving the accessibility and visibility of scheme information could boost participation rates.

Overall, these findings indicate that while there is some engagement with sustainable travel schemes, particularly the Cycle to Work program, there is significant room for improvement in both awareness and utilisation across all offerings.

Travelling by Car

The survey reveals that car usage is the dominant mode of transport for commuting among respondents, with 66% (54 out of 81) reporting that they travel to work by car. However, a closer examination of the data provides a more nuanced picture of this car usage. The vast majority of these car commuters are driving alone, with 50 respondents reporting solo driving at least once a week. In contrast, car sharing is currently practiced by only a small number of employees, with just 2 respondents reporting driving with passengers and another 2 traveling as passengers.

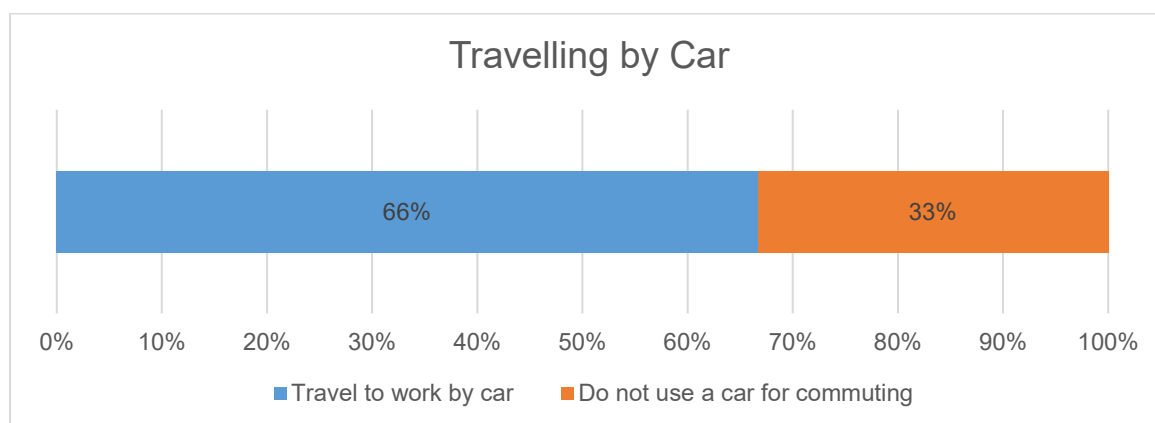


Figure 7: Travelling by car

For those who drive, workplace parking is readily available for most, with 91% of car users parking at their workplace. Only a small fraction (9%) park elsewhere. The majority (85%) report no difficulties finding suitable parking spaces, although 11% sometimes face challenges, and 4% consistently struggle to find parking.

The survey also shows that the current vehicle fleet is predominantly composed of traditional fuel vehicles, with 96% of car users driving petrol or diesel vehicles. Only 4% reported using alternative types such as hybrids, and notably, no respondents currently use fully electric vehicles.

Electric Vehicle Adoption

Looking towards the future of electric vehicle (EV) adoption, the survey indicates a cautious approach among employees. Only 17% of respondents expressed the likelihood of purchasing or leasing an electric vehicle in the near future. The majority were either uncertain or unlikely (55%) to make the switch.

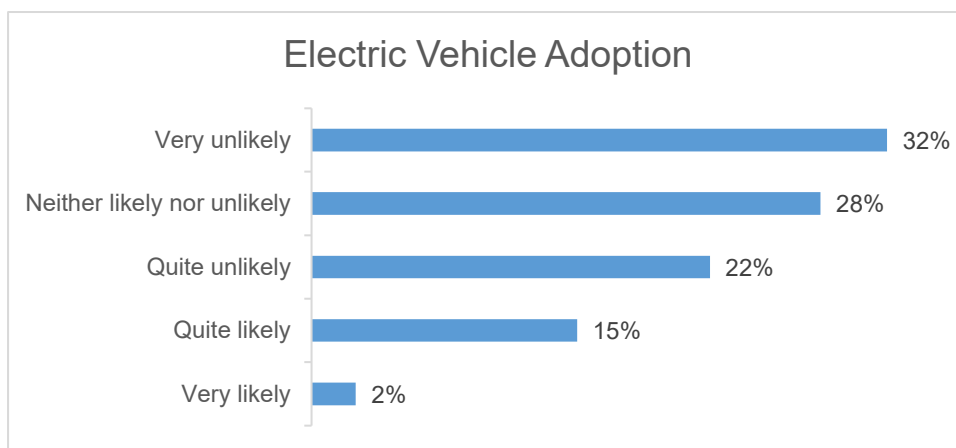


Figure 8: Electric Vehicle Adoption

However, some factors could potentially encourage EV adoption. The presence of workplace charging infrastructure emerged as a significant incentive, with 32% of respondents indicating that free on-site charging would encourage them to consider an EV, and 26% being swayed by the mere presence of workplace charging facilities. Home or near-home charging capacity was also a consideration for 22% of respondents.

When considering the timeline for potential EV adoption, the majority of respondents see it as a medium to long-term possibility. 42% would consider purchasing an EV in 3-5 years, while 30% see it as a 6-10 year prospect. However, a significant portion (20%) stated they would never consider purchasing an EV, highlighting potential barriers or resistance to this technology.

Car Sharing

The survey reveals a mixed attitude towards car sharing among respondents. While 47% are not interested in car sharing, a majority (53%) would consider it in some capacity.

Of those open to car sharing, most (38%) are flexible about being either a driver or a passenger. The main factors that would encourage car sharing are help with finding suitable partners and having alternatives available in case of emergencies. However, a significant portion stated that nothing would persuade them to car share. These findings suggest there's potential to increase car-sharing uptake, but it would require addressing logistical challenges and providing reassurances about flexibility.

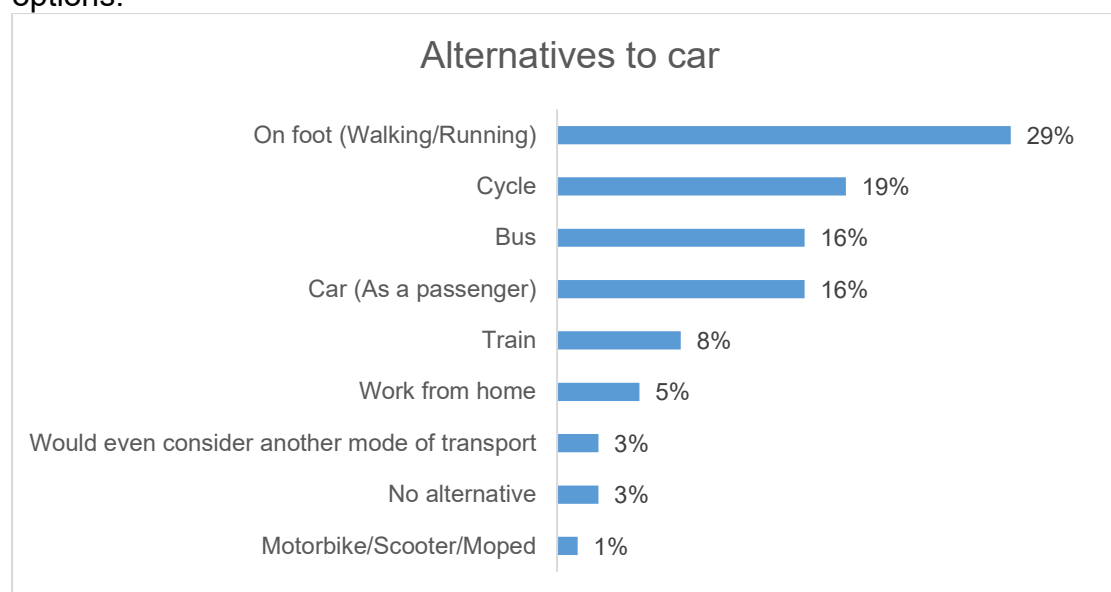
These findings suggest that while there's significant resistance to changing travel habits, there's also a substantial portion of employees who are open to alternatives, particularly car sharing.

Alternatives to Car Use

With the right incentives, half of the respondents said they are either open to the idea or very likely to consider an alternative method of transport to the car.

However, the other half of the respondents are unlikely to consider alternative transport methods even with incentives.

The survey explored alternative modes of transport respondents would consider if they were to not use their car. The results show a strong preference for active travel options:



Traveling by Bike or Walking

The survey revealed that currently, only a small proportion of employees regularly use active travel methods for commuting - 9 respondents use walking/running at least once a week and 7 respondents use cycling at least once a week.

The main factors preventing or discouraging walking or cycling to work are:



Figure 9: Factors preventing walking or cycling to work

With 'other' reasons given as driving behaviours of car users, lack of cycle lanes/dedicated route

The most popular factors likely to encourage cycling or walking more often:

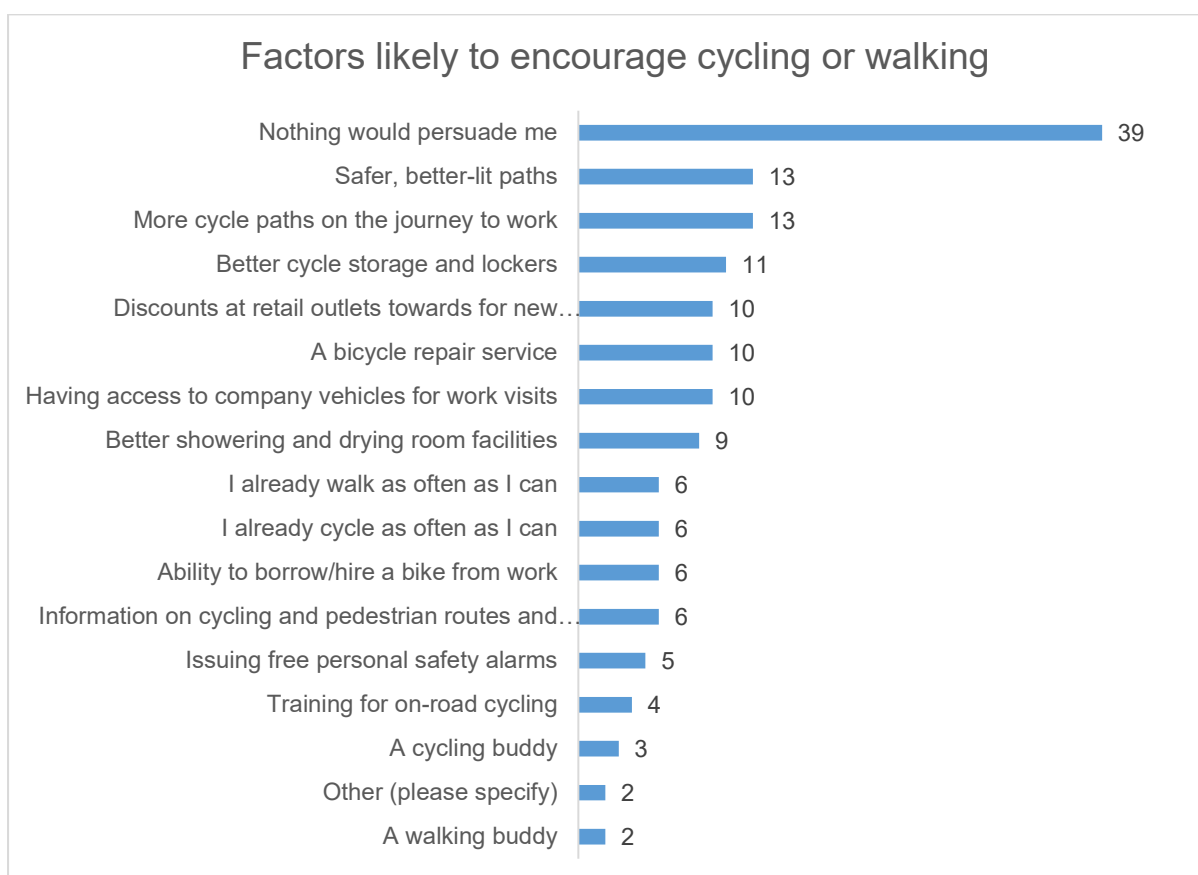


Figure 10: Factors likely to encourage cycling or walking

It's worth noting that 39 respondents indicated that nothing would persuade them to cycle or walk more often.

This suggests a significant challenge in promoting active travel, but also highlights the importance of targeting initiatives towards the nearly 50% who might be open to change given the right incentives.

The data reveals that the main barriers to active travel are related to distance, time, and practical concerns such as weather and carrying capacity. Encouragingly, many of the factors that could increase cycling and walking are infrastructure-related, such as improved cycle parking facilities, which could be addressed through targeted investments and partnerships with local authorities.

To increase active travel, a multi-faceted approach addressing both infrastructure improvements and practical support (like access to equipment and repair services) could be most effective. Additionally, given the high number of respondents open to working from home, a hybrid approach combining remote work with active travel on office days could be a promising strategy to reduce overall car dependency.

Traveling by public transport

The biggest factors preventing or discouraging the use of public transport were:

- It would take too long
- Services aren't frequent enough
- It's unreliable
- It's too expensive
- It's inconvenient

These results indicate that time, frequency, reliability, cost, and convenience are the main barriers to public transport use among respondents.

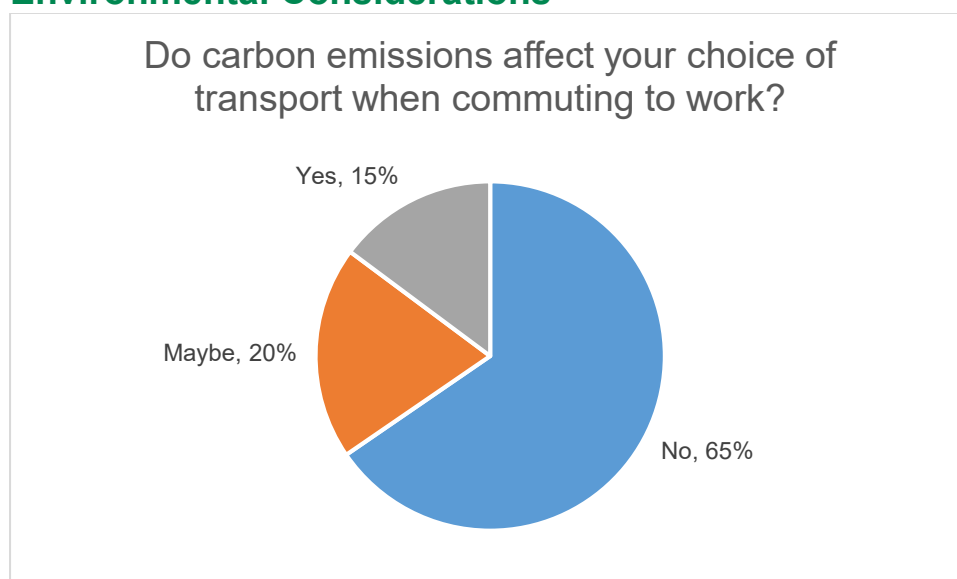
Factors that would encourage the use of public transport more often would be:

- Cheaper ticket prices
- Faster/more frequent journey times
- More direct routes
- Easily accessible public transport information

However, it's important to note that again, 39 respondents (48%) indicated that nothing would persuade them to use public transport more often.

This data suggests that while there are significant barriers to public transport use, there's also potential to increase ridership through improvements in pricing, service frequency, route planning, and information accessibility. The high number of respondents unwilling to consider public transport regardless of improvements also indicates a need for broader strategies to shift attitudes towards sustainable travel options.

Environmental Considerations



Only 15% of respondents say that carbon emissions definitely affect their choice of transport, with an additional 20% saying it might. This suggests that environmental concerns alone are not a strong motivator for most staff in their commuting choices.

Priorities

Respondents were asked to rank a list of 13 options in order of their preference for what they would like to see in a revised travel plan.

The top priorities for were:

- Improved information about bus services
- Discounted travel passes
- Electric vehicle charging facilities
- Pool cars or bikes
- More cycle paths

It's worth noting that while some of the other options like improved cycling facilities weren't as frequently ranked as top priorities, they still received significant support in the second and third-priority rankings.

This information suggests that respondents are interested in a mix of improvements across different modes of transport, with a focus on better public transport information and incentives, support for electric vehicles, and improved cycling infrastructure.

In addition, several respondents provided additional comments about their commute and potential improvements. A common theme was the challenge of long-distance commutes, with some noting that alternatives to driving were limited or impractical due to their location. Infrastructure issues were also highlighted, with mentions of

poor road conditions (e.g., potholes needing repair) and suggestions for improved safety on major routes like the A38.

Some respondents expressed interest in better public transport options, particularly more reliable and cost-effective services. The impact of ongoing roadworks was noted as a factor affecting journey times.

For those with shorter commutes, there were comments about the need for better cycling facilities and safer routes for active travel.

Several respondents who primarily work from home mentioned the benefits of this arrangement in terms of time and cost savings. However, they also noted the importance of occasional office visits for meetings and client interactions.

A few respondents touched on the subject of electric vehicles, with some expressing interest but citing affordability as a barrier. There were also suggestions for more flexible working arrangements and hybrid approaches combining remote work with in-office days to reduce overall commuting.

Overall, the comments reflect a diverse range of experiences and needs, highlighting the complexity of designing a one-size-fits-all solution for improving staff travel. The feedback suggests that a multi-faceted approach, addressing infrastructure improvements, public transport enhancements, support for active travel, and flexible working policies, could help address the varied needs of the workforce.

Analysis and interpretation

- **Car Dependency:** The survey reveals a high dependence on cars for commuting, with 66% of respondents traveling by car and 62% driving alone. This suggests a significant challenge in promoting sustainable travel options.
- **Short-Distance Commuters:** Despite 30% of respondents living within 2 miles of their workplace, many still choose to drive. This indicates an opportunity to promote active travel for short-distance commuters.
- **Flexible Working:** With 79% of respondents having some degree of work hour flexibility, there's potential to encourage off-peak travel and reduce congestion.
- **Public Transport Barriers:** The main barriers to public transport use (time, frequency, reliability, cost) suggest areas for improvement in collaboration with local transport authorities.
- **Electric Vehicle Adoption:** While current interest is low, there's potential for growth with appropriate incentives and infrastructure.
- **Active Travel:** Infrastructure improvements and practical support could encourage more walking and cycling among those open to change.

- **Work-Related Visits:** The high reliance on personal cars for work visits presents a challenge for sustainable travel policies.
- **Environmental Considerations:** With only 15% of respondents definitely considering carbon emissions in their travel choices, there's a need for increased awareness and education.

Recommendations

- **Promote Active Travel:** Invest in improved cycling infrastructure, secure storage, and changing facilities. Implement a targeted campaign to encourage walking and cycling for short-distance commuters.
- **Enhance Public Transport:** Work with local transport authorities to address identified barriers. Consider subsidising public transport passes for staff.
- **Car Sharing Scheme:** Implement a formal car-sharing program with incentives like priority parking and emergency ride-home services.
- **Electric Vehicle Support:** Install charging points at workplaces and provide incentives for EV adoption.
- **Flexible Working:** Encourage staggered start times and remote working where possible to reduce peak-time congestion.
- **Travel Information:** Improve communication about available travel schemes and sustainable options.
- **Sustainable Fleet:** For work-related visits, consider investing in a pool of low-emission or electric vehicles.
- **Travel Plan:** Develop a comprehensive workplace travel plan incorporating these recommendations, with clear targets and regular monitoring.
- **Awareness Campaign:** Launch an education program on the environmental impact of travel choices and the benefits of sustainable options.