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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The findings of this study are considered in four categories; cycling in Medway, what types of provision are preferred, priorities of the respondents and how to encourage cycling within Medway, areas for improvement.

Cycling in Medway:

- The number of cyclists within Medway has a seasonal variation.
- The needs of the cyclists vary in accordance with their reason for cycling.
- The vast majority of respondents cycle for leisure.
- Safety is the main reason for the respondents not cycling.

Preferences regarding cycle facility type:

- It is clear that the type of provision preferred by all groups of respondents is a designated cycle lane, either on the road or on the pavement.
- Age is not a factor in provision preference.
- Cycling frequency does appear to be a factor in provision preference, with infrequent cyclists preferring pavements to road and frequent cyclists preferring roads to pavements.
- The membership of a cycle club indicates a preference for designated cycle lane on roads, inline with the preferences of frequent cyclists.

Cycling Priorities:

- Safety is a major concern across all groups and divisions.
- Low traffic levels and directness of route are also fairly high in priority with all respondents.
- Regular cyclists and cycle club members highlight the 'few stops' issue as being particularly important, in opposition to the priorities ranked by schoolchildren.
- The lack of facilities such as secure cycle parking was a priority for the schoolchildren who responded.
- The age and cycling frequency of the respondents was not considered to be a major factor in the identification of cycling priorities.

Encouraging Cycling in Medway:

- Cycle security was the most popular issue raised and included the need to build new facilities and improve existing ones.
- Safer routes to school encompassing more direct routes with lower traffic levels and fewer hills was also considered to be a major factor in preventing schoolchildren cycling to school.
- Poor image was not considered to be a major factor.
- The Medway tunnel was considered to be a barrier to movement by most of the adult respondents.
- The extent to which the tunnel is a barrier depended upon where the respondent lives.

- Age was also seen to be a factor in the extent to which the Medway tunnel is a barrier, the age groups at either end of the spectrum did not consider the tunnel to represent a major barrier.
- The provision of an off-road mountain bike facility raised considerable interest across a broad spectrum of respondents. However, some considered the improvement of the current cycling network to be of a higher priority.

Areas for Improvement:

- The A2 and other major routes through Medway were considered to be in need of improvement.
- Improvements need to consider the connection of the main shopping centres with major routes via a network of unbroken cycle routes.
- Concern was raised regarding the condition and maintenance of the current cycle routes.
- There were some requests for more rural cycle routes.
- Extra cycle parking has been requested for all the town centres in Medway, with Chatham being the highest priority.

INTRODUCTION

The following report produced by Medway Council in spring 2002 outlines the results of a survey of the cycling needs and provisions within Medway. This data has been collected by the distribution of 15,000 questionnaires asking for the public's opinion of the adequacy of the current cycling provisions and what people would require in order to cycle more. The questionnaires were distributed in and around Medway in local schools, libraries, recreational facilities and was also published in Medway Matters. This report considers the rationale for conducting a cycling survey and outlines the analysis of the data followed by an interpretation of the results. The report closes with a summary of the results, what conclusions can be drawn from this study and provides recommendations on how the cycling networks in Medway can be developed to encourage cycling as a means of transport around Medway.

2.1 Aims and Objectives

The aims of this study were to determine barriers to cycling and the effectiveness of the current cycling provisions and how facilities for cyclists should be improved.

This aim was to be met by the completion of a number of objectives:

- The formulation of a cycling questionnaire covering the main cycling issues.
- The distribution of the questionnaires to key locations around the Medway Towns frequented by all members of society.
- The analysis of the questionnaires returned.
- The interpretation of the results.
- The identification of key issues raised by the Medway residents.
- Recommendations as to how the current provisions may be reviewed or improved in order to increase the effectiveness of these provisions.

Once all the objectives had been met it was possible to present the findings in a Cycling Forum Report to be circulated to key stakeholders involved in developing cycling networks and provisions within Medway.

2.2 Sampling Overview and Data Analysis

The returned questionnaires were statistically analysed to take into consideration the age and place of residents of the main respondents. The effect of the age and demographic profile was considered in any interpretations made.

In total, 1,322 usable responses were received, as well as a few blank or otherwise non-valid responses, which have been discounted for the purposes of this analysis. The sample includes non-local people including a Belgian tourist. Males make up 54%, (713) and females 46% (609) of questionnaires returned.

The age distribution of the respondents primarily comprised people from the ten to fifteen years old age group (67%). The remainders were over 16 years old with 2% of respondents not giving their age.

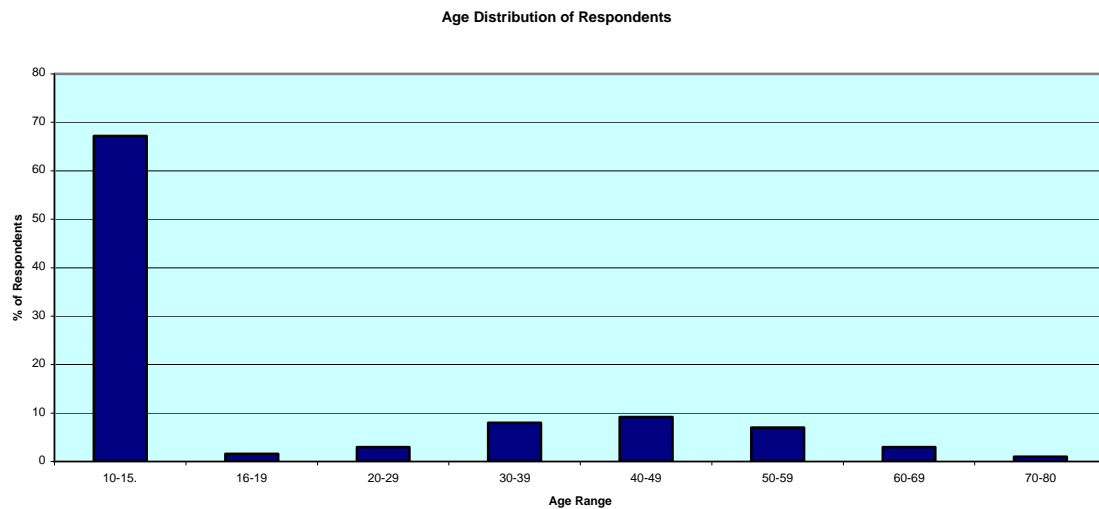


Fig 1. Age Distribution of Respondents

There are two primary reasons for this distribution skew, both arising from the necessary non-random sampling methods used. Firstly, age is a direct factor as the questionnaires were distributed to many local schools, targeting a key area of the population. The adult respondents however were not as effectively targeted and reflect the members of society who attended the recreational facilities or amenities at which the questionnaires had been distributed. The amount of leisure time available to the different members of society would indirectly affect the amount of questionnaires returned. A key factor is that keen cyclists would be more likely to pick up, complete and return the questionnaires. There is also a slightly skewed response by gender and age combined, the majority of the female respondents were schoolchildren, and the majority of adult respondents were male. However, these differences are small and should not adversely skew the conclusions of this analysis. In most cases schoolchildren are considered separately due to the disproportionately high level of responses received from this age group.

2.3 Cycling Frequency

In order to consider the current cycling provisions it was necessary to assess the frequency with which Medway residents cycled and used the cycling facilities currently provided. The effect of seasonal changes was considered and almost all respondents said that they cycled more in summer than in winter, even so, there are still a considerable number of people cycling regularly in winter. Of people who gave details of cycling frequency, 23% said that they did not cycle at all in the winter months. In general, the respondents comprised a fair mix of regular cyclists, non-cyclists, and a broad spectrum in between the two extreme ends of the sample.

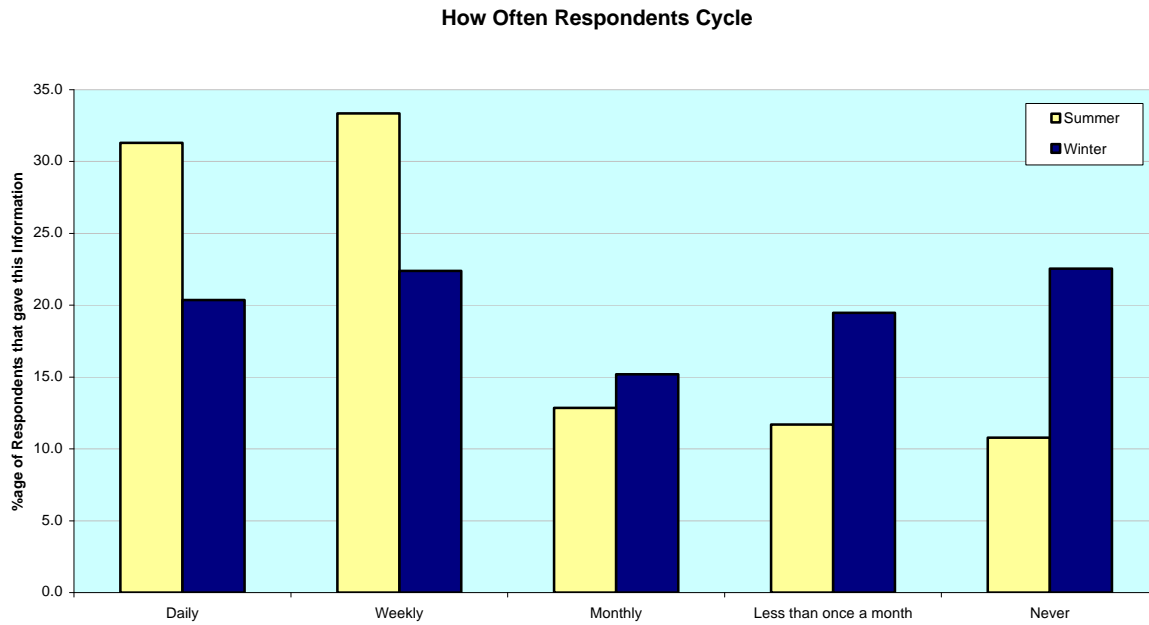


Fig 2. How Often Respondents Cycle.

The graph demonstrates the change in distribution of cyclists in accordance with the seasons and that more regular cycling takes place in the summer. The graph also demonstrates a decrease in the frequency of cycling during the winter period. This data provides key information regarding the cycling habits of the respondents and should be taken into consideration when reviewing cycling provisions. Those who cycle during the summer months may do so for a variety of reasons and to a number of recreational and work venues within the Medway Towns. Those who cycle in the winter may represent commuters and those who are ardent cyclists. Therefore the provisions, which these different groups require should be tailored accordingly and this factor should be considered in any future research. The following section on the research questions focuses in more detail on the reasons why people cycle, the provisions they require and their priorities of respondents.

3.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions aims to identify the key aspects of cycling as a means of transport as well as a leisure activity. The questions were targeted at the positive and the negative aspects of cycling in Medway with a view to identifying peoples preferences and those facilities that were ineffective or restrictive in nature.

3.1 For which purposes do people in Medway cycle?

This question needed to identify why the respondents cycled, and the options offered were:

- To get to work,
- Cycle for leisure
- To get to leisure facilities
- To get to school/college
- To go shopping'
- Other uses.

The most popular other uses were 'for fun' (which has been included with 'leisure' in the results), 'for exercise', and 'visiting'. A few schoolchildren mentioned paper rounds and some commuters mentioned cycling to train stations; some people also mentioned charity or sponsored cycling. The graph below (Fig 3.) clearly shows the most popular reason for cycling within Medway.

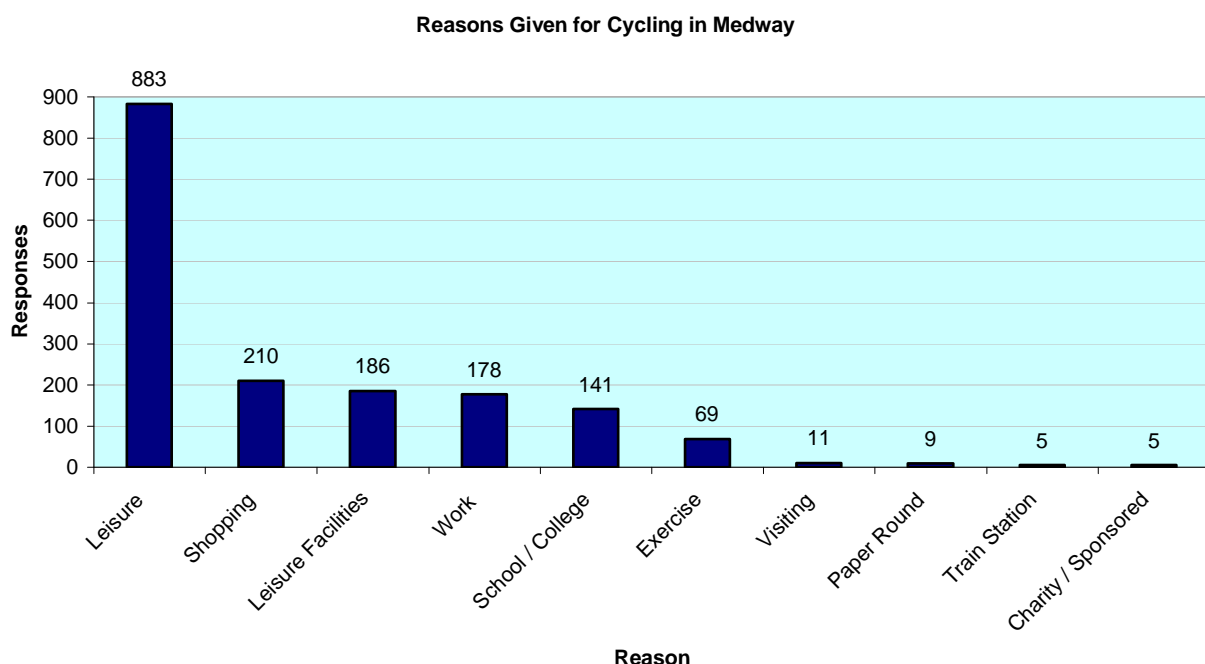


Fig 3. Reasons given for cycling in Medway.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Respondents usually gave multiple reasons for cycling, and, when they did so, leisure was usually ticked as one of those reasons. There are almost half as many responses for 'exercise' as there are for 'school/college'. This is surprising considering most respondents to the questionnaire were schoolchildren, and 'exercise' was not a tick-

box option; about seventy people went out of their way to explicitly mention it as a reason for cycling. This is significant given that many people only filled in ‘box-tick’ parts of the questionnaire, with few willing to write in their own words. It is therefore possible that exercise is a far more important reason for cycling in Medway than the graph would at first indicate. Had it been a tick-box option, it may have rivalled ‘leisure’ in popularity. One overriding point is that commuting does not appear as one of the main reasons people cycle. The main reason is for recreation, whether that be for leisure, exercise, or to get to leisure/recreational facilities. This could highlight areas where cycling provision can be improved or developed.

3.2 What prevents people from cycling?

As well as asking why people usually cycled, the questionnaire also asked why they didn’t. The question was phrased to apply only to non-cyclists, but many cyclists answered it as well, as a means of highlighting what prevented them from cycling more. The options were:

- safety
- restricted mobility
- cars going too fast
- do not have a bicycle
- lack of confidence
- lack of facilities
- lack of suitable cycle paths
- lack of cycle parking
- steep hills
- poor image of cycling
- weather
- other

The main reason for this question was in order to address to what extent the lack of adequate cycling provisions prevents people from cycling within the Medway area. As can be seen from the graph (Fig 4.), the main reason given for not cycling was the weather however the next three top answers related to cycle routes and safety issues.

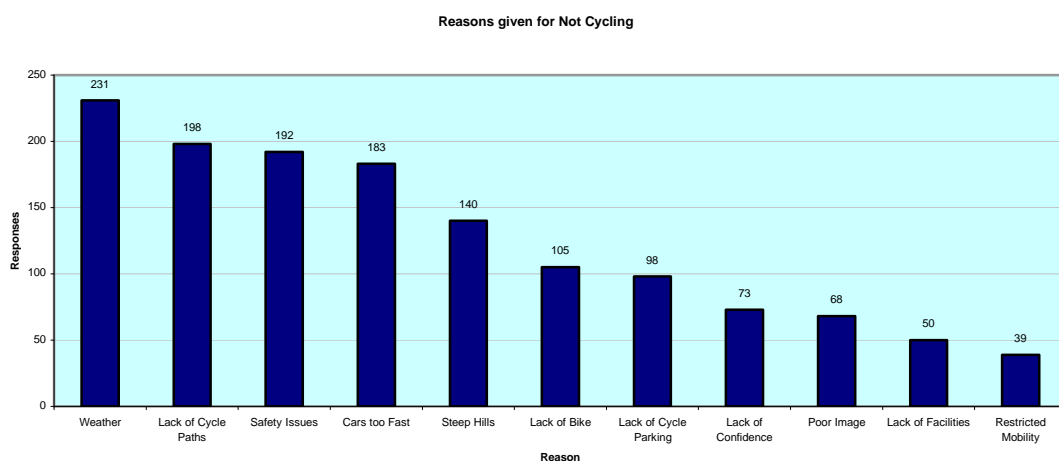


Fig 4. Reasons given for not cycling.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The main concerns that fall within the remit of Medway council were the lack of cycle paths, safety issues, and the speed of cars. Facilities image and were not considered to be major concern however lack of confidence is an issue that may be addressed by improved cycle training. There were two categories of written-in 'other' reasons: one person cited medical reasons, and three people cited lack of time. It is likely that many people do not cycle because they feel that there would be insufficient time, or simply because they find car use more convenient.

3.2.1 Is this different for schoolchildren?

Schoolchildren's reasons for not cycling understandably matched fairly closely to the 'raw' results (not surprising given that the majority of the 'raw' results were the responses of schoolchildren). They were more concerned with the speed of cars than others, though, and poor image was a proportionately greater concern. In general, the same rough ranking of priorities applies for school children as for other age groups. The same applies to non-cyclists, although a major preventative factor for that group is (somewhat unsurprisingly) a lack of a bike.

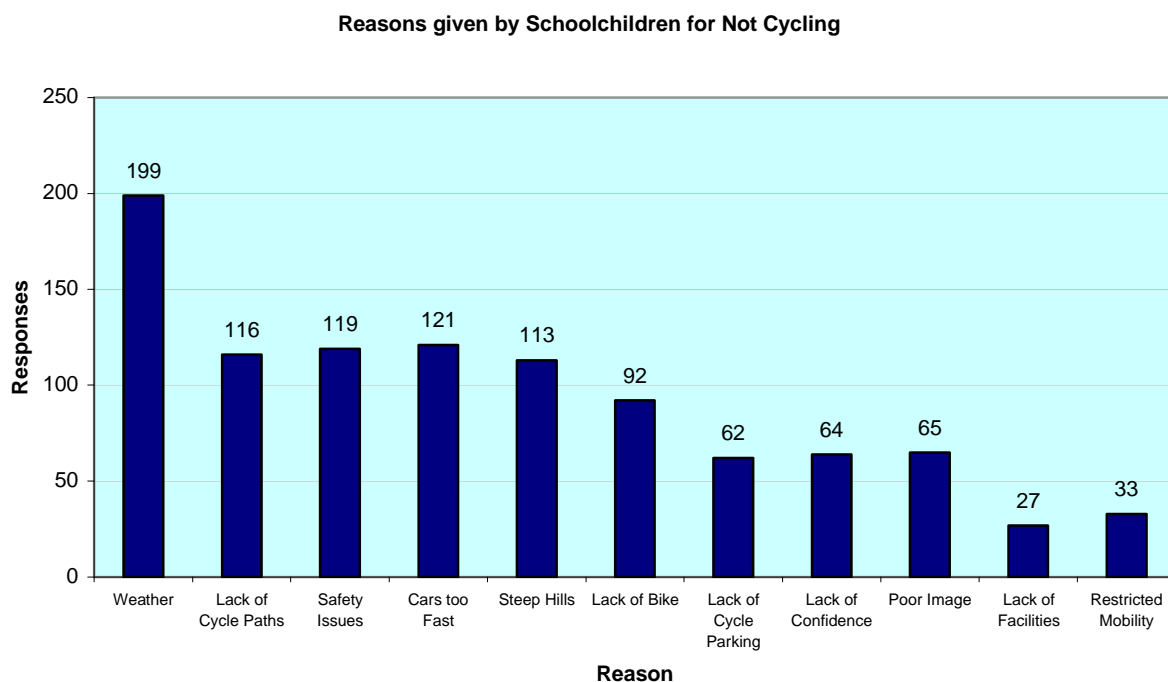


Fig 5. Reasons given by schoolchildren for non-cycling.

The results suggest that all groups of society have the same or similar concerns and needs. Therefore by addressing these needs it would be possible to reduce the current restrictions that inhibit a large component of Medway residents from cycling, and not just non-cyclists but improved provisions may increase the frequency of current cycling enthusiasts including children.

3.3 Which types of cycle provision are preferred?

This question asked people to grade five options 1 to 5 in order of preference, 1 being the most favoured option and 5 being the least. The options related to the type of cycling provision desired:

- on road
- on road with cycle lane
- on pavement shared with pedestrians
- on pavement separated from pedestrians
- Off road trail.
- Other

There were a few lines for respondents to write in any other types of cycling provision they liked. This question provides the opportunity to determine the preferences of all cyclists and determine the preferences of various groups of cyclists such as members and non-members of cycle organisations. It is important that the results are analysed in context as some provisions are highly favoured by some groups and not by others. The use of an average score would provide a value that may be disproportionately influenced by the age and type of respondents.

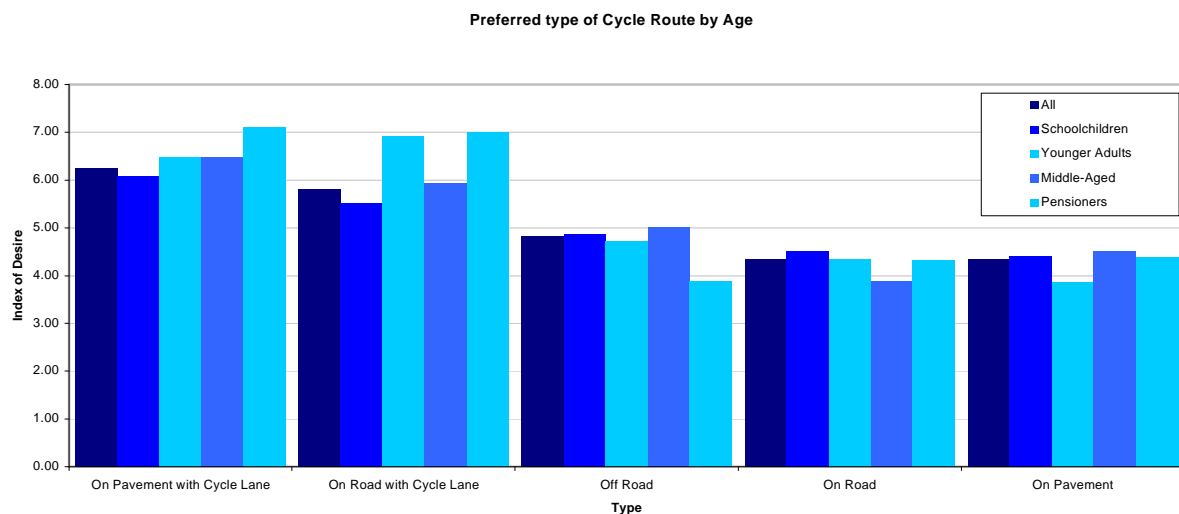


Fig 6. Preferred type of cycle route by age.

3.3.1 Are different types of provision preferred by different age strands or user segments?

For further analysis, the sample has been broken down into three groups with a number of subdivisions.

Age - the sample has been split into four:

- schoolchildren
- under-40s not attending school (younger adults)
- 40 to 60 year olds (the middle-aged)
- over-60s (pensioners)

Data and Interpretation

The general order of preference is that cycle lanes on pavements are most popular, with cycle lanes on roads a close second. Much less preferable are off road routes and routes located on the road without cycle paths or on pavements shared with pedestrians.

However, these results do not convey the whole picture. This is due to the grading system utilised on the questionnaire, which allowed respondents to indicate their level of preference. For example 251 people gave 'on road' a 5, compared to 176 who gave 'on pavement shared with pedestrians' a 5. Of those who gave a 1 for either option, 94 preferred to be on the road compared to only 37 who preferred the pavement. The averages hide the fact that, of those who dislike non-cycle-path routes, pavements are preferred to roads, and of those who prefer non-cycle-path routes, roads are preferred to pavements. Therefore more respondents preferred cycling on the road in comparison to on the pavement with pedestrians, however, a large component do prefer the pavement with pedestrians and to choose one type of provisions may be to the detriment of other, therefore a compromise is required. People generally dislike the lack of cycle paths, and resort to cycling on roads rather than illegally on pavements.

3.3.2 Do frequent cyclists have different opinions than non-cyclists and infrequent cyclists?

The sample has also been split by cycling frequency into three groups:

- non-cyclists
- frequent cyclists
- infrequent cyclists

Cycling frequency is decided by the respondents' answers and a 'frequent' cyclist is taken as someone who said that they cycled 'daily' or 'weekly' in Summer; 'infrequent' cyclists 'monthly' or 'less than once a month' and non-cyclists 'never'.

The sample was then split by cycle-club membership, into the following groups:

- all schoolchildren
- non-schoolchildren who were not members of a cycling club or environmental group
- Non-schoolchildren who *were* members of a cycling club or environmental group.

The results are shown on the following graphs. The 'index of desire' is a figure calculated for easy comparison, representing the reciprocal of: the total sum of all 1-5 gradings in a category, divided by the total sum of all 1-5 gradings in all categories. A higher value indicates a greater preference for that option.

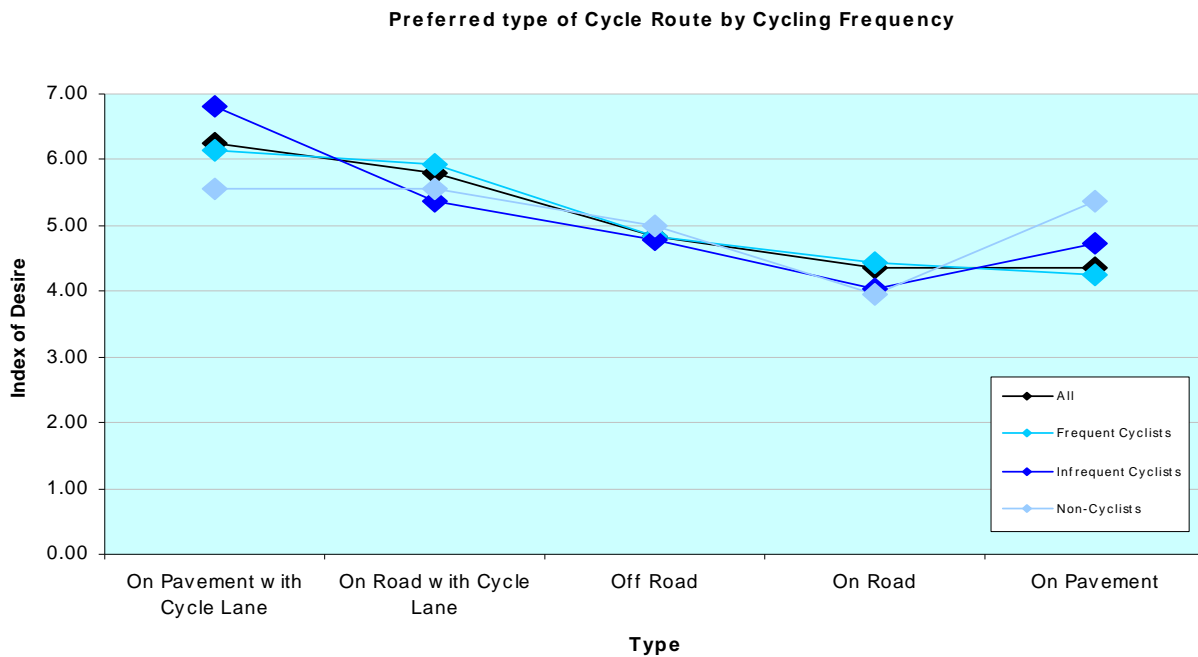


Fig 7. Preferred type of cycle route by cycling frequency.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The graphs (Fig 6, 7 and 8.) show several interesting trends in cycle route preferences. Firstly, consider the graph showing the sample split by age (Fig 6.). It seems clear that there are no real trends in preferences for cycle route provision as people age, other than an increased wish for separate cycle lanes.

Secondly, consider the graph of the sample split by cycling frequency (Fig 7.). This shows a very interesting feature. Infrequent cyclists prefer cycle lanes to be on the pavement rather than on the road, for frequent cyclists it is only a very mild preference. In the absence of cycle lanes, infrequent cyclists prefer to cycle on the pavement than on the road (as would non-cyclists, though this trend is even stronger in that case); frequent cyclists, however, slightly prefer the road to the pavement. This generally suggests that the more frequently people cycle, the more they feel comfortable on roads, up until a point where they even start to slightly prefer it. This however may be due to increased competency, reasons for cycling and the nature of the route taken, i.e. a more direct route with fewer stops.

This naturally has implications for policy decisions. If a strategy of getting more people to cycle is preferred, then resources might be targeted towards cycling on pavements in order to produce routes more attractive to non-cyclists or infrequent cyclists. If a strategy of getting existing cyclists to cycle more is preferred, resources would be better spent extending road-based cycle networks, which could be done at a far lower cost.

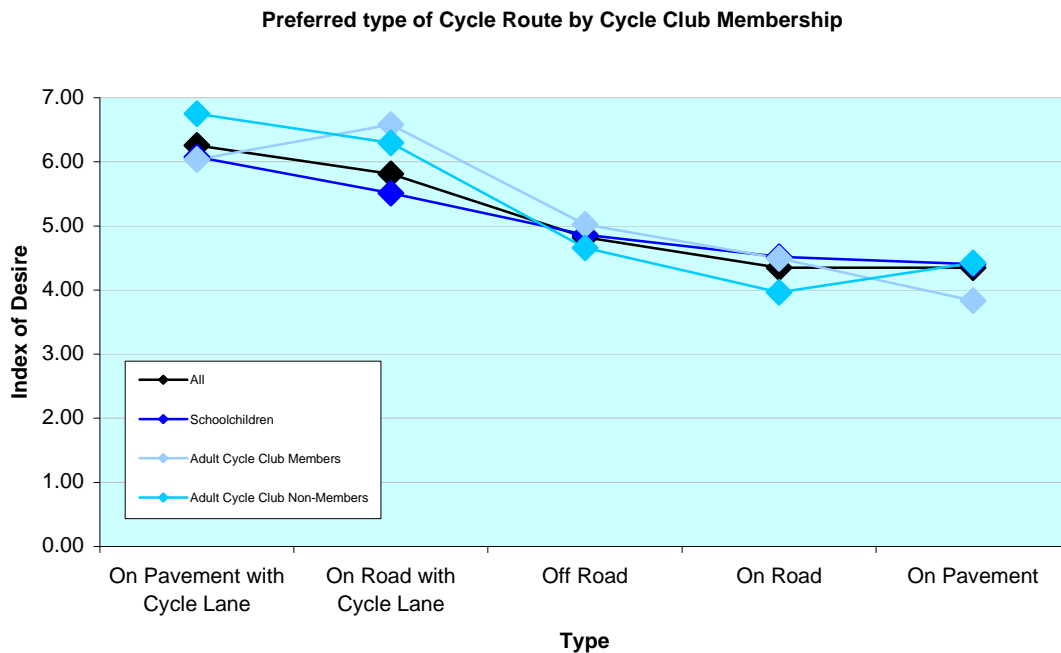


Fig 8. Preferred type of cycle route by cycle club membership.

Thirdly, consider the graph of the sample split by cycle-club status (Fig. 8.). This shows that schoolchildren seem to be more indifferent about cycle route provision than adults. The most interesting feature is the result that members of cycling clubs far prefer cycling provision on roads to provision on pavements, whereas the opposite opinion (albeit slightly less emphatically) is held by those adults who are not members of cycling or environmental groups. This difference is one of the strongest trends revealed by these graphs, showing that cycle-club members have different provision requirements to the non-club members. In general, however, the response is clear and unanimous: people far prefer cycle lanes to a lack thereof, but the difference between roads and pavements in that respect is only small (193 '1' grades for cycle lanes on pavements, 170 '1' grades for cycle lanes on roads). The only major advantage of on-pavement cycle lanes over on-road ones is that they appeal to cyclists lacking confidence, infrequent cyclists, and therefore may encourage more people to cycle in Medway.

3.4 What do people want from cycle routes?

This question asked respondents to numerically grade eight options in order of preference. The options were:

- a direct route
- suitable for disabled access
- pleasant scenery
- facilities on the route
- safety
- low traffic levels
- limited number of hills
- limited number of places where you are required to stop/dismount

Again, the same limitations apply to the statistical processing of this data as did for the previous question. However, the results produced (Fig. 8.) has been far more forceful, highlighting greater differences between the different groups and also highlighting distinct priorities.

3.4.1 Is this different for different age strands and user segments?

In order to meet the requirements of all the major groups it was necessary to consider each component separately when asking for details of cycling priorities. It would therefore be possible to assess the possibility of finding a solution that is of benefit to the majority of cycle network users.

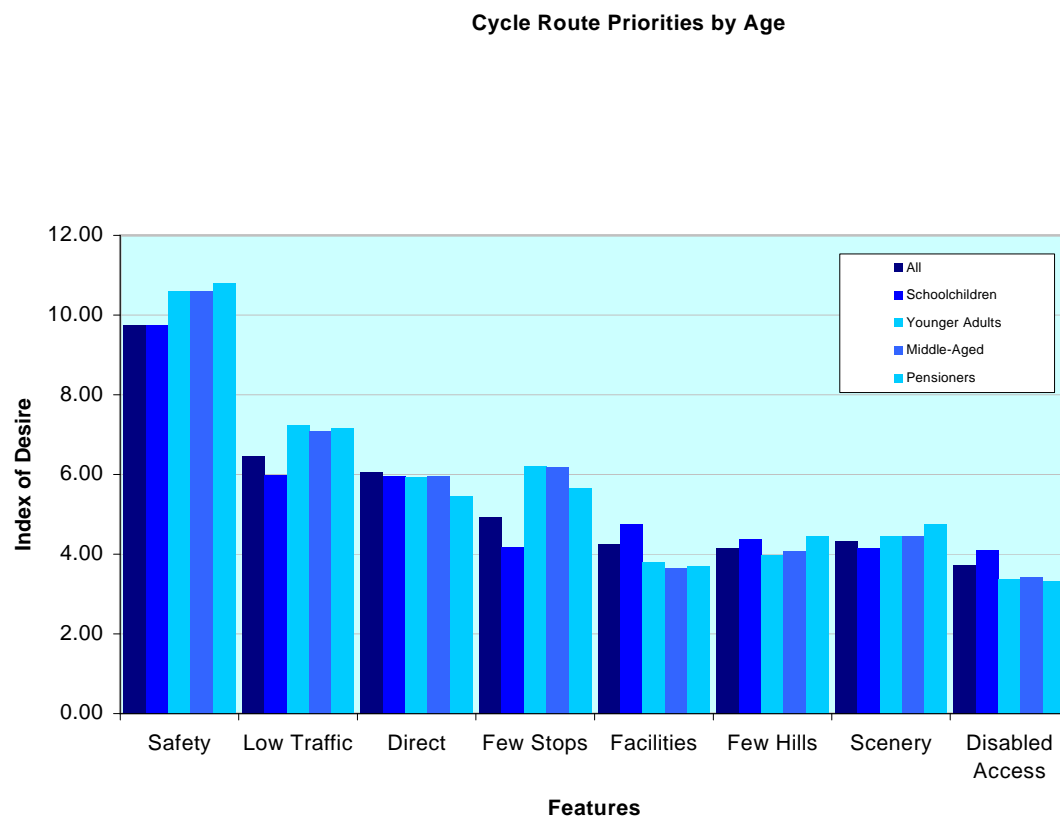


Fig.9. Cycling route priorities by age.

For comparative purposes the priorities of different age groups were compared with the priorities of the major cycling groups i.e. all respondents, schoolchildren, adult cycle club members and adult cycle club non-members. The graphs (Fig. 8. and 9) show very similar trends and disparity in the level of priority of each category.

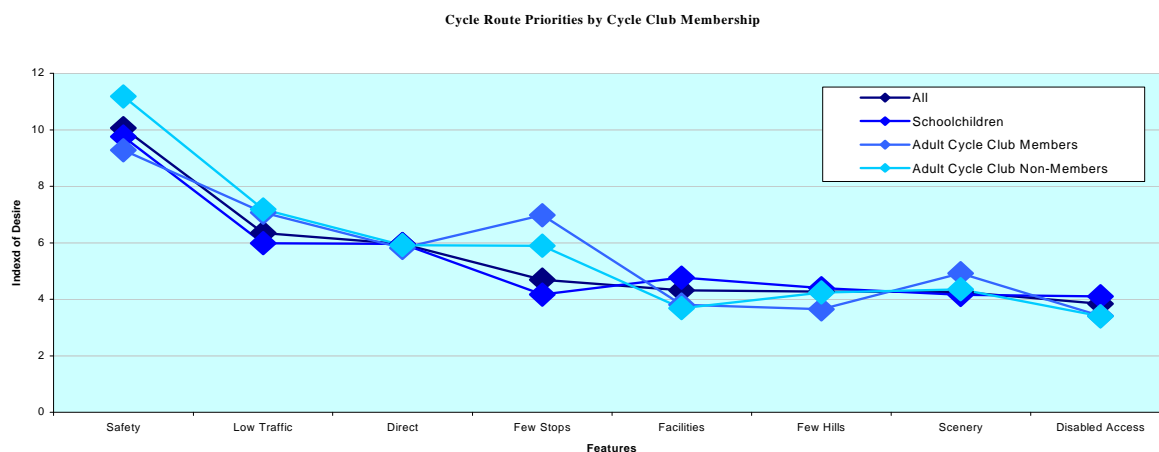


Fig. 10. Cycle route priorities by cycle club membership.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The most important priority by far was safety. Over 50% of all those who made a valid response to Q6 listed safety, as they're most important, grade 1 priority. Of lower priority are low traffic levels and the directness of the route. The facilities, lack of hills, scenery and disabled access, however, form a much lower level of priority, being of greater importance to some groups than others. The 'few stops' option falls in an interesting category being of considerable importance to some groups whilst being of low priority to others.

3.4.2 Is this different depending on how frequently people cycle?

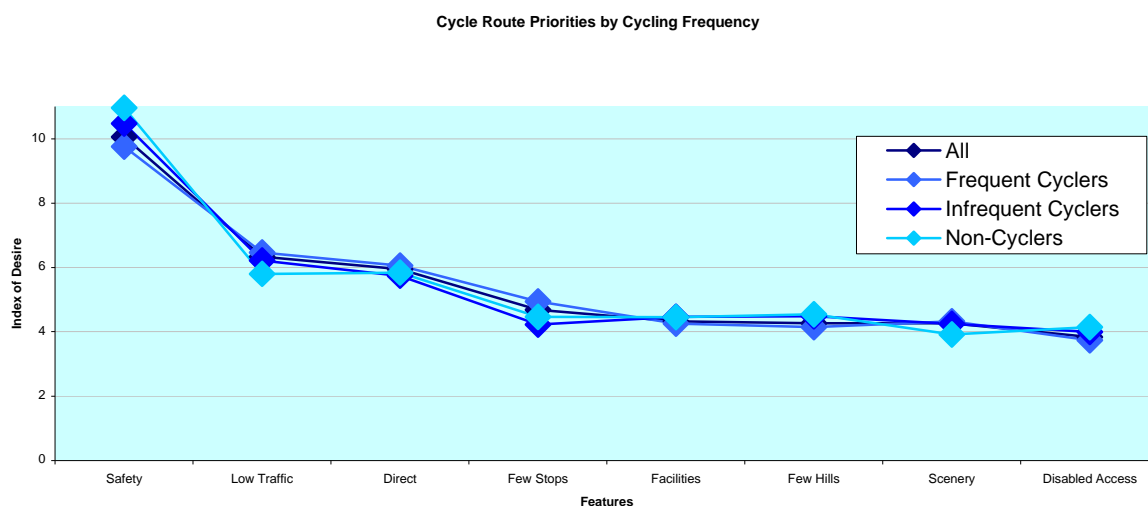


Fig 11. Cycle route priorities by cycling frequency.

The data reveals that the skewed age distribution of the sample has effected the result for this question. For schoolchildren, 'few stops' definitely ranks as a low priority issue, for non-schoolchildren; however, 'few stops' is one of the more important issues along with low traffic levels. This is a significant result and highlights a key area that can be addressed when considering the development and improvement of the current cycling provisions, which could benefit a considerable portion of the frequent

cyclists and cycling club members, Fig 11 shows the results if the distribution of respondents had been more representative.

There does not seem to be much disagreement between frequent cyclists, infrequent cyclists and non-cyclists; there is greater disagreement between age bands and a surprising amount of disagreement based upon cycle-club membership status. Non-schoolchildren as a whole share some common characteristics, but in some categories, adult cycle-club members are more similar to schoolchildren than adult cycle-club non-members, e.g. safety. Cycle-club members are the group that give this option least priority (though it is still very important for them), with schoolchildren valuing it a bit more, and cycle-club non-member adults valuing it the most.

The older groups list safety as a high priority, however the pensioners don't mind indirect routes quite as much as other age groups, whereas schoolchildren have a distinct disinterest in 'few stops', interest is high for other groups, but decreases with age. Across all categories, schoolchildren are the one group with the most distinctive set of priorities, and should to some extent be considered separately from other cyclists.

However, it is useful to generalise the level of priority for these issues. Safety is the main priority for all groups irrespective of age; gender and experience; low traffic and directness of route tend to be of a lower priority. Reducing the requirement to stop is an issue for everyone, however it is given a low priority by schoolchildren. The others provisions considered are desirable, but are regarded to be of the lowest priority by all groups

3.5 What would encourage schoolchildren to cycle to school?

This question was specifically for schoolchildren and there were a total of 596 responses. Some answers gave multiple responses of which, some of these requested payment for cycling, others stated that they did not cycle because they walked, and would only cycle to school if they lived further away. By far the most popular response (82) regarded cycle security. This could be considered in combination 43 requests for bike sheds or cycle parking at school (including both construction of new facilities, and the expansion and/or upgrading of existing ones). The responses made it clear that cycle parking once at school was a definite priority in the minds of schoolchildren.

A major concern was also cycle routes to school. With 68 schoolchildren wanting more cycle lanes, 48 wanted safer routes, 44 less traffic, 26 a quicker and easier route, 9 shorter routes, 6 wider paths and 41 wanted less hills (bearing in mind that some individual schoolchildren wanted many or all of these, and so are being counted several times). Routing issues were considered to be as important as parking issues, with distance raising around 60 complaints.

Only 13 respondents expressed a poor image of the cyclist, whereas 36 respondents expressed the sentiment that they would cycle if more of their friends cycled in. This encouragingly suggests that peer pressure is not a major factor in discouraging cycling. However, there is the possibility that if cycling to school increased in the future, it would begin to encourage cycling to school. The only other significant issue raised was that of school uniform. When the school insists on its pupils wearing

impractical attire (e.g. skirts and uncomfortable shoes), it can have a noticeable affect and has been mentioned more than ten times as a specific impediment. Thus, a very cheap way of encouraging cycling to school would be for schools to change their regulations, either permitting pupils to wear trousers, or allowing them to wear non-regulation uniform on their way to and from school.

Perhaps of more relevance is the statistical analysis of schoolchildren's responses, which provided the ability to assess the desirability of differing forms of cycle-route provision and the facilities provided thereon.

3.6 Is the restriction to cycling through the Medway Tunnel a barrier to cycling in Medway?

The cycling restriction on Medway Tunnel was clearly something that affected local people and found it to be barrier to movement around the Medway Towns. This question was formulated as a simple yes/no tick-box response. However, this question was perhaps the one that inspired the most emphatic responses. It was the one tick-box question that people were most likely to elaborate on in the margin. This took the form of underlining the tick for 'yes' multiple times, or squeezing upwards of five ticks in the 'yes' box area, or expressing extreme confusion and some anger as to why the Medway Tunnel had a cycling restriction.

The Medway Tunnel was also a popular response to another question regarding the areas of the cycle network in Medway needed improvement, which was mentioned more than fifty times by respondents before the issue of the Medway tunnel access had even been raised, later in the survey. This is especially significant given that only a small proportion of respondents bothered with this question at all. Some respondents even mentioned specific journeys they could make by cycle, were they able to use the Tunnel, e.g. people living in Cuxton wanting to cycle to work in Gillingham and currently unable to do so, or people wishing to visit relatives. Of the responses received nearly 50% (645) found the Medway Tunnel to be a barrier, with 46% (603) stating that they did not. However, there are a number of considerations to be accounted for.

The geographical distribution of questionnaire respondents: The questionnaire required the completion of the respondents postcode, from which it is possible to get idea of how many people per thousand answered the questionnaire for each postcode area. On average, five people in every thousand living in Medway answered. This rose to nine per thousand for ME1 (Rochester), almost eight per thousand for ME8 (Rainham), and there was only two to two and a half per thousand for the Hoo peninsula and everyone living on the Strood side of the river. In other words, people living in Rainham or Rochester were more than three times as likely to have responded to the questionnaire than people living in Strood or Hoo, and people living in these areas are most likely to find the cycling restriction in the tunnel to be a barrier¹. Indeed, out of the people who had given ME2 or ME3 postcodes, 69% (85) found the Medway Tunnel to be a barrier, and only 29% (36) did not, and as before, a few respondents did not answer either way.

¹ *N.b.* it is entirely possible – even probable – that people in Rainham or Rochester may simply be more likely to cycle than people in Strood or Hoo, and this may fairly account for some of the geographical skew in the questionnaire responses – but it is unlikely to fairly account for all of this skew.

3.6.1 To whom is it a barrier for?

It is necessary to consider the age distribution of our respondents. Most of the responses came from schoolchildren; most schoolchildren will not need to cross the river, especially if they live on the South side. They are less likely to travel to school too far from their homes (in contrast to adults who may live and work on different sides of the river), and when visiting any relatives on the other side they will often be taken by car with their parents. Only 354 schoolchildren found the Medway Tunnel to be a barrier; 498 did not.

This equates to ratio of 0.7 stating that the Medway Tunnel is a barrier, for every one that does not find it a barrier. Younger adults found the Tunnel restriction to be far more of a problem, with 113 to 48, producing a ratio of 2.4 indicating that the Tunnel is a barrier. The Medway Tunnel was the greatest barrier for the middle-aged: 163 found it a barrier compared to only 40 who did not producing a ratio of 4.1 confirming that in about 80% of middle-aged cyclists in Medway found the Tunnel to be a barrier to their movement. For pensioners there were only 1.8 affirmatives per negative, possibly because pensioners are on average less able to undertake long cycle journeys.

These age specific results are significant when we consider that over half of Medway's populace is between the ages of 20 and 60 – i.e. the group that finds the Medway Tunnel restriction to be most obstructive. The 50/50 response returned by the raw data is due to the massive respondent bias towards schoolchildren, who are the only age group in Medway that are less likely to find the Medway tunnel a barrier than not. It is also skewed by the geographical distribution of respondents, as relatively few people from the North side of the river have answered. It is concluded that the restriction to cycling through Medway Tunnel is perceived as quite a significant barrier to cycling in Medway, with no more than thirty-five percent of actual or potential cyclists not considering it a barrier at all.

Note: the restriction is not just a physical barrier; it is also a psychological one. Many respondents considered the deliberate ban on cycling to be a deliberate affront to cyclists; it was felt that lifting the ban would be a significant symbolic indicator that Medway Council was committed to encouraging cycling and making Medway cyclist-friendly. Its symbolic value affected everyone, not just those wishing to cross the river.

3.7 Is there a big enough market for a mountain bike facility in Medway?

This question was also a simple yes/no tickbox, asking people whether they would use an off road mountain bike facility. The raw results come out strongly in favour, with 62% (816) in favour and 34% (451) saying that they would not use this facility. The results are different from the Medway Tunnel question results, though, in several important respects. Many people expressed the opinion that it was a much more pressing concern to fund the general cycle network.

3.7.1 What would the demographic profile of its users be?

The demographic skew of the respondents also skews the response towards. In which 620 schoolchildren said they would use it, compared to 245 who said they would not (a ratio of 2.5). Younger adults (non-schoolchildren below the age of 40) replied with

95 saying 'yes' and 67 saying 'no'. Given the massive over-representation of schoolchildren in the sample, it is reasonable to speculate that a realistic cross-section of Medway's cyclists would have returned more of a 50/50 result. There are also, potentially, issues with understanding what an off-road mountain bike facility is. In the over-sixties who filled in the questionnaire 13 of 46 said that they would use the facility. The positive response is overwhelming and even if less than half of the people who said they would use the facility actually would, there is still a considerable market for it.

3.8 Which portions of the cycle network in Medway need improving?

This question asked respondents to list particular roads, routes or areas where they felt cycle routes need to be improved. Responses ranged from the general (e.g. everywhere) to the very specific (e.g. specific tasks such as clearing glass, cutting down weeds or filling potholes on particular roads). There were, however, a few strongly recurrent themes that emerged from the data set (Fig. 11).

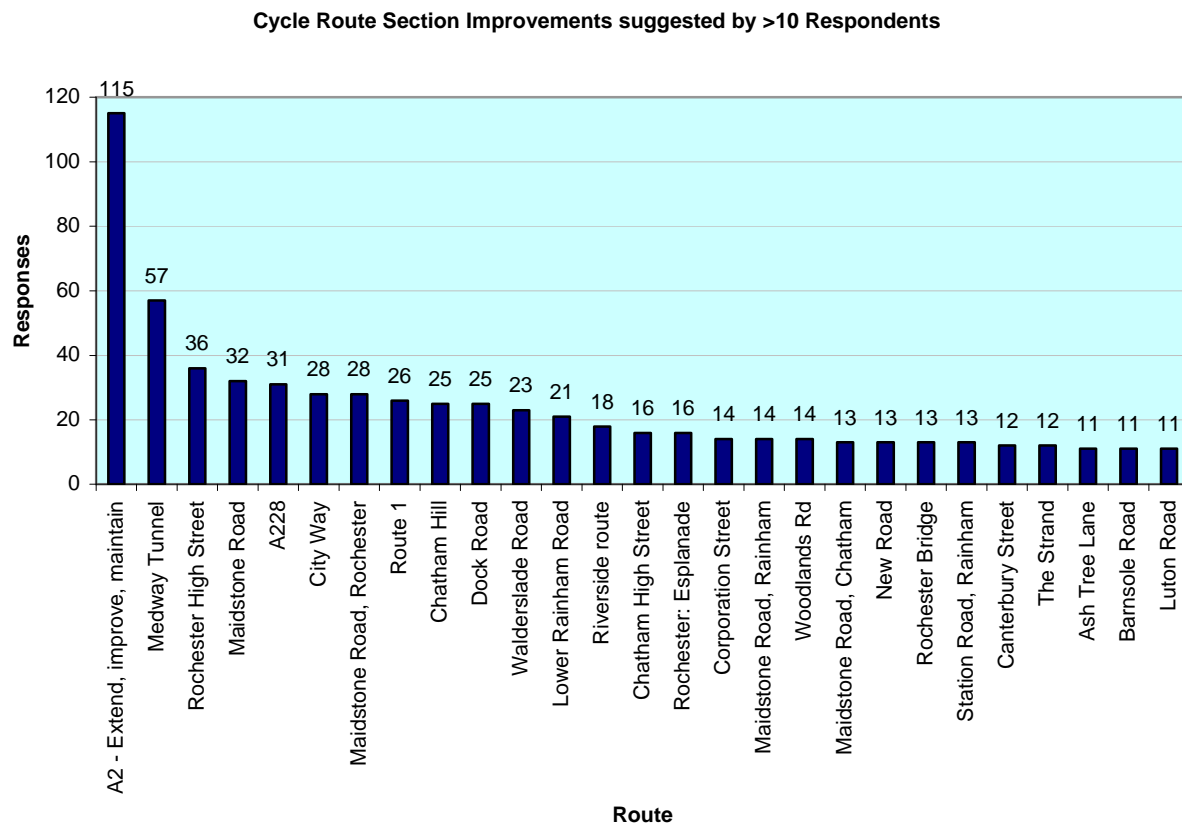


Fig 12. Cycle Route Section Improvement suggested by <10 respondents.

The A2 was a major concern for many people, but so was the Medway Tunnel, the latter being perhaps the more important of the two, because many people only voiced concern over specific, short lengths of the A2. The fact that the Medway Tunnel caused such a major response in comparison is certainly significant. After that, main concerns are generally related to expected major routes through Medway.

Due to the highly varied nature of the responses (and the fact that respondents could write in any number of responses they wished), numerical analysis is not necessarily as meaningful as it would be for the other questions. It is possible to establish that there is a consensus of opinion in the need for unbroken cycle routes connecting the main shopping centres of each of the Medway towns, with the A2 as the main spine of this route.

Respondents also used this question to voice general concerns about the condition the network with about 10 responses regarding the sweeping cycle lanes clear of glass or litter and signing. Requests for more cycling provision in country lanes or rural areas, and concerns regarding cycle lane width, curbs and speed bumps were also raised.

3.9 Where must Cycle Parking be improved?

People listed those areas where they felt that cycle parking should be improved (either in quantity or quality). A wide range of locations were mentioned in varying degrees of generality, sometimes people listed a specific aspect of a specific cycle park, such as the lighting or a particular road. Sometimes respondents just gave a town name or gave a general descriptor of a whole class of facilities (e.g. shops, leisure centres).

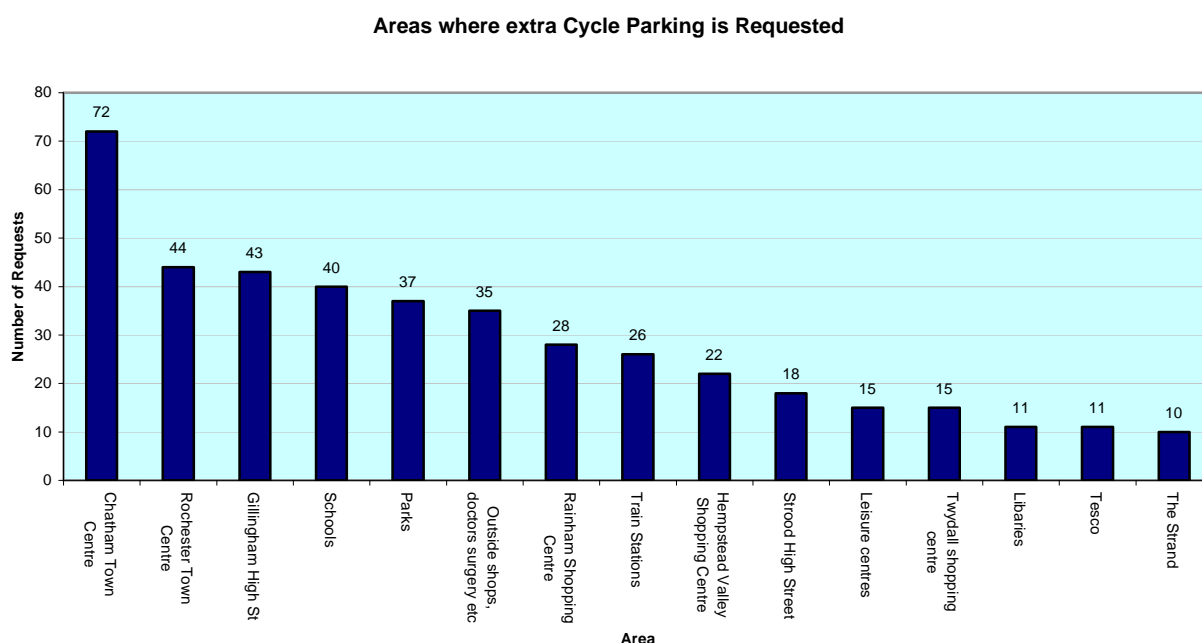


Fig 13. Areas where extra cycle parking is requested.

As can be seen in Fig 12, by far the most common response was that cycle parking needs to be improved in Chatham Town Centre (the Pentagon was given particular mention). Town-centre parking preferences were (in decreasing order of importance) Rochester, Gillingham, Rainham and Strood. This data should, however, be considered in the light of the uneven geographical distribution of the questionnaire respondents and the bias towards those living in Rochester and Rainham and away from Chatham, Gillingham and, in particular, Strood.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the current cycling provisions and how they can be improved. This was to be achieved by reaching a number of set objectives resulting in the production of this report outlining some recommendations for improvement to the cycling network in Medway.

It is considered that the implementation of this report will encourage cycling and increase the effectiveness of Medway's cycling strategy. In conclusion, this study has highlighted a number of key areas and issues that require addressing when considering the type and location of future cycling provisions within Medway.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a list of recommendations based upon issues and concerns raised during this cycling survey:

- Separate designated cycle lanes to be provided where possible (roads / pavements)
- Unbroken routes
- Safety issues such as reduction of traffic levels on cycle routes.
- General improvement of the current cycle network
- An increase in the cycling parking provision
- The full consideration of the mountain bike facility.
- Removal of the restriction caused by the Medway Tunnel to cyclists

These recommendations are considered to be an accurate representation of the needs expressed by the 1322 respondents to the cycling survey conducted by Medway Council in spring 2002.

6.0 CONTACT DETAILS

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