



**Buckinghamshire County Council
Transport, Economy and Environment**

Aylesbury Transport Strategy

Consultation Report

**Main consultation:
November 2016 – January 2017**

January 2017



Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the analysis of the responses to the Aylesbury Transport Strategy (ATS) main consultation undertaken between 18th November 2016 and 3rd January 2017. The analysis has helped to identify respondent's views on our policies and helped to inform a revised draft ATS.

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Section 1: How we consulted

How We Consulted

The survey consisted of 15 main questions, 7 multiple choice and 8 with comments, plus an additional 8 demographic questions to help us understand who was responding. This survey was able to be completed online and would work with tablets and smart phones to ensure it was very accessible. A small number of responses were made by email and have also been included within the analysis.

The survey was publicised using social media, emails to known stakeholders, through press releases and the 'My Bucks' newsletter. In addition, hard copies of the survey were made available at Aylesbury and Buckingham Libraries.

Within the demographic questions we asked respondents to state how they had heard about the survey so that we could analyse the effectiveness of the various methods of promotion that we used.

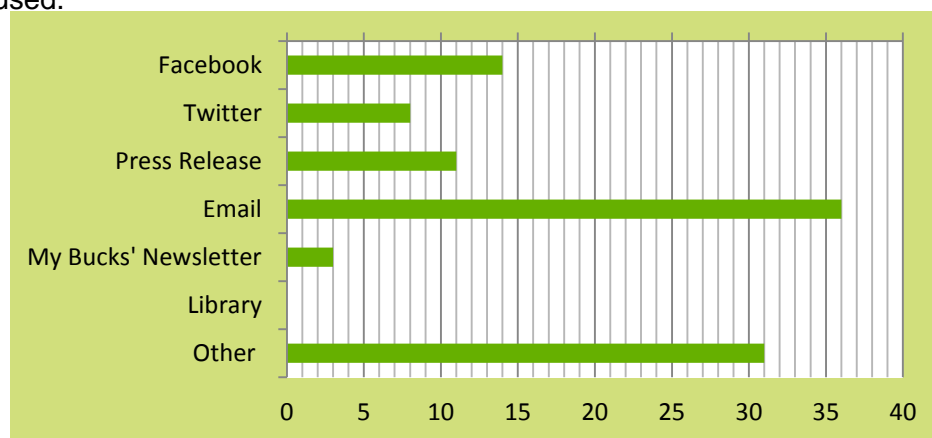


Figure 1– How respondents heard about the survey

In

it is clear that the majority of respondents heard about the survey by email, with the 'Other' being the next most common. 31 people selected 'other' and detailed a variety of other sources:

Most common responses to 'other'	Number of Respondents
Local Media – including posters, radio etc	7
Word of mouth	7
External Bodies	6
External website	3
BCC website	1
Councillor	1

Figure 2 – Most common responses to 'other'

We also asked that respondents state who they were responding on behalf of, either as an individual, or as a representative of a group or organisation. As evidenced by **Error! Reference source not found.** below, the majority of respondents were as individuals, followed by those representing an organisation, and Parish or Town Councillors.

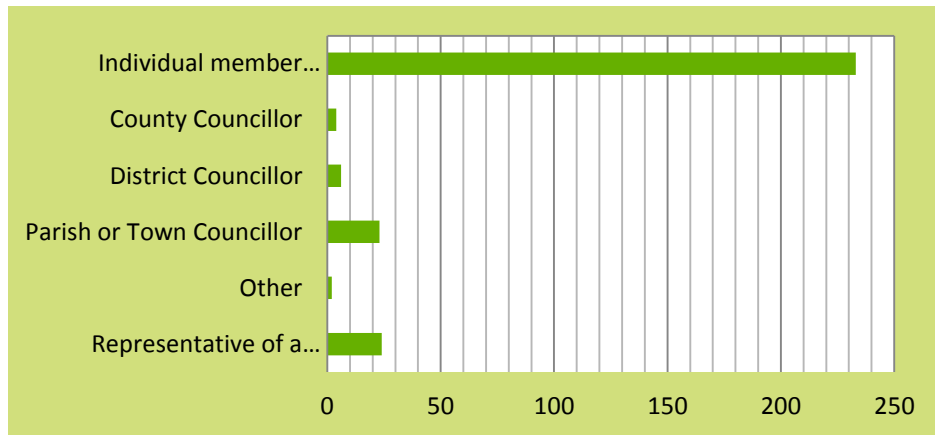


Figure 3– Chart of type of respondent

Those that represented a group or organisation that was not listed were invited to clarify who they responded as. Listed below are the various responses received:

- Parish Councils
- Residents Associations / Local Groups
- Transport Organisations / Professionals
- Developers
- District Councils
- Buckinghamshire County Council

Section 2: Who Responded

Who Responded

This section provides an overview of who responded to the consultation. It considers the profile of the respondents in terms of:

- Age
- Ethnicity
- Working status
- Usual method of travel to their place of work or education

This information helps us to understand how we should use the information in other chapters, particularly where groups may be under or over-represented. There were 241 respondents to the online survey. We also received 17 email responses which did not include this level of information.

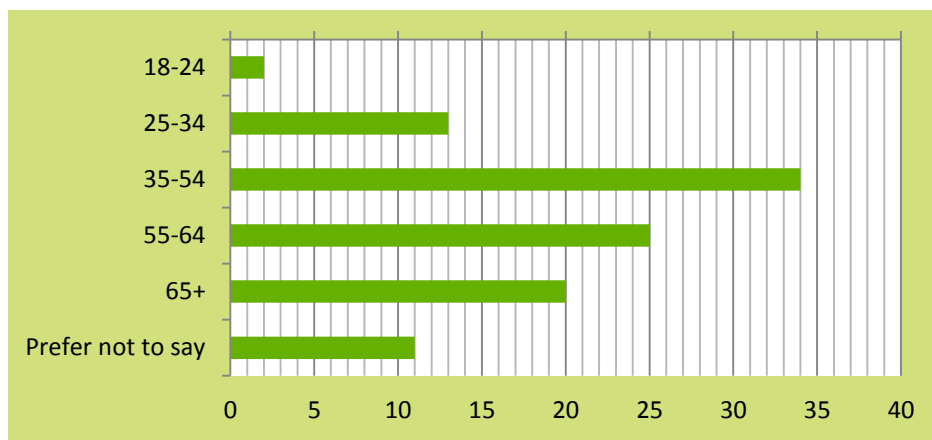


Figure 4– Responses by age

The largest proportion of responses were from the 35-54 age category with 34 responses, a 32% share of the total (note that 105 respondents included their age). The 65+ age group was also well represented, as were the 55-64. Unfortunately there was a low response from the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups with 15 responses, a 13% share of the total.

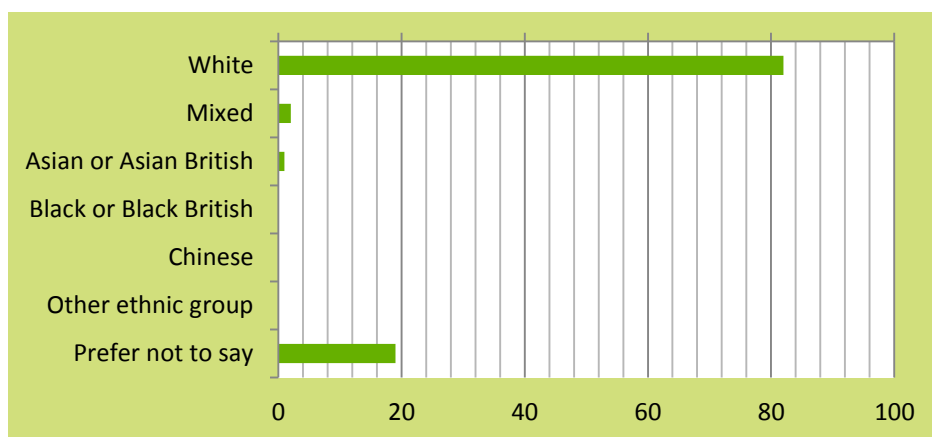


Figure 5 – Responses by ethnicity

78% of respondents stated they were white, which fits well with for the Buckinghamshire profile as a whole, where 86% of people are white. Unfortunately, we received no responses from the Black, Black British or Chinese ethnic groups, however a number of people responded with 'prefer not to say' therefore it is unclear whether these would have fallen into a different category.

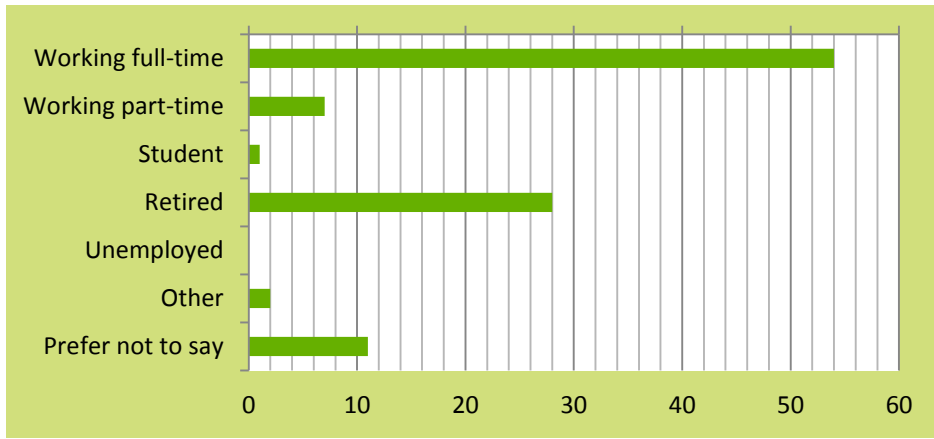


Figure 6 – Responses by current work status

Of the 241 responses, 103 included information on their current work status. 52% of respondents were in full time employment whereas 6% worked part time. Therefore, over 58% were in some form of employment. When we compare our results to the 2011 census we received a disproportionate number of responses from retired people. According to the 2011 census, 18% of residents in Buckinghamshire are retired, whereas 27% of respondents were retired. 1 student took part in the consultation (less than 2%) of total responses and there were no respondents who were unemployed.

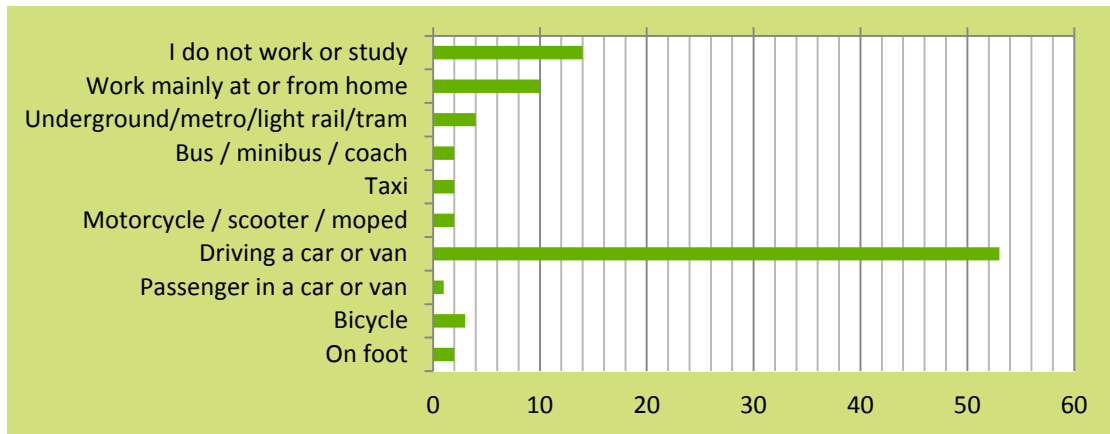


Figure 7 – Responses by method of travel to work

A total of 101 people responded to this question. 24 (24%) said that they don't work/study or they normally work at home and as such did not state a mode of transport. Of the respondents who selected a mode of transport to work, 76% indicated that the car/van was their usual mode of transport, which is above the county average of 69% taken from 2011 census data. The next most popular mode of transport is the rail category with 6%.

Whilst there are (inevitably) some biases in who responded, the response was in some ways more representative than is often the case in exercises like this: being slightly more representative in terms of age and ethnicity. Some ethnic minority groups and younger people were less well represented. It is important that we consider these groups and how the data may not reflect their needs as closely as others as we move through this report.

Section 3: How we analysed the responses

Response analysis – categorisation

In order to properly analyse the responses we received, the comments they made were allocated to various categories which are listed in the table below. Within these categories, comments were also assessed as positive (e.g. agreeing with proposals, making constructive comments or giving suggestions), negative (e.g. negative about a proposal, area or issue) or neutral. Dividing the comments into these groups allowed us to see what people said about different issues, where they agreed and where they disagreed. You will see these categories used later in the the report, i.e in the ‘What people said’ section.

Category	Definition
Roads	Comments relating to traffic, potholes, specific roads or road layout
Parking	Comments relating to parking availability and cost
Buses & Trains	Comments on bus and train services, lack of services or potential services
Cycling & Walking	Any comments on improving cycling or walking, or the walking and cycling environment
Connectivity	Wider links, links to services, integrated transport and smart ticketing
Environment	Comments relating to protecting wildlife, landscapes, historic character and noise and air pollution (including CO2) etc.
Growth	Comments on developers, house building or the impact of growth
Economy	Any comments regarding budgets, resources and cost. Both of services or to the public
Structure & Processes	Comments on our own processes and structure of the plan
Alternative Transport	Canals, aviation, equestrian etc
General	Other comments that did not fit into any of the main themes such as: home to school transport, freight and HS2
Unallocated	Any comments which could not be related to the question posed or the ATS as a whole.

Figure 8 – List of Analysis Categories

Section 4: What people said

Objectives

Consultees completing the online survey were asked whether they agreed with the objectives in the draft Aylesbury Transport Strategy.

The results of this question are provided in the diagram below:

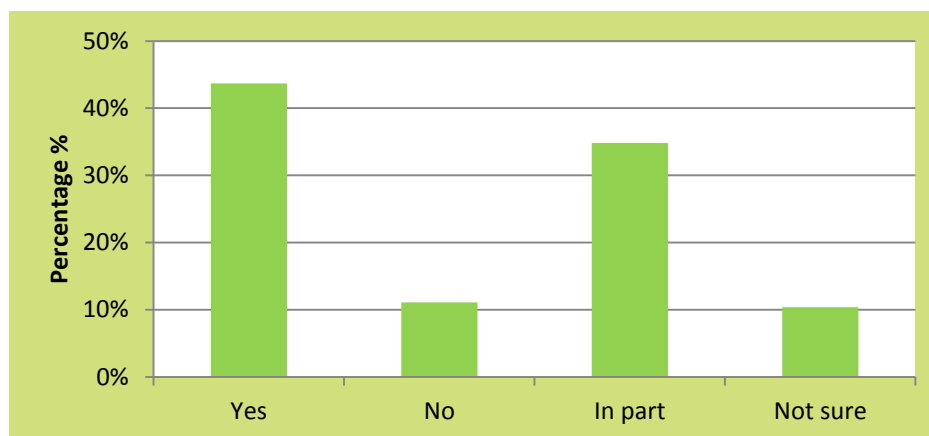


Figure 9 – Percentage of Respondents to Question 1

Feedback showed people tended to agree with the high level objectives (44%). Those who disagreed made up a small percentage (11%), much like those who responded by answering 'not sure' (10%). 35% of all respondents answered 'in part'.

These statistics demonstrate that most people either agreed with the aims and objectives or did so in part. Subsequently, there will be a greater focus on analysing comments relating to these two areas.

The comments on the objectives were wide ranging and included comments about more specific issues rather than those on the objectives themselves. Of those that did comment specifically on the objectives, most agreed with them in general but felt some issues were overlooked and that more detail was required on the implementation. Those comments there were negative were more associated with traffic lights, reducing through traffic and the need for a 'bypass'.

Comments include:

"The key part to improving transport provision is to build link roads between the major trunk roads so traffic can avoid the town centre"

"Not bold enough! Need to channel through-traffic on strategic routes around Aylesbury so that they don't come anywhere near the town and don't have delaying junctions"

"it rightly points out that without highways to circumnavigate Aylesbury many other initiatives will fail (bus lanes for example). there is therefore a need for a strong order of works precedence to be outlined."

The comments surrounding specific issues will be discussed later in the report as these comments are reflected throughout the questionnaire. Regarding the comments on the objectives, as this plan covers all areas of transport and a wide range of different issues, it is felt that these high level objectives encompass as many of the issues as possible. If we were to try and resolve all the more detailed issues within the objectives, we would end up having too many. Each objective has been broken down to describe what they cover. For instance, many comments expressed concern that we do not look at through traffic as a

specific issue, however this issue is connected with the first 4 objectives (although we conceded that this is not explicitly expressed).

A few of the comments were negative about the amount of the development proposed in Aylesbury. As this is not within the scope of the strategy (the strategy is to support the growth proposed by AVDC, not to inform growth levels) these comments will not be discussed here, but all concerns will be passed on to AVDC so that they can consider them with regards to the VALP

Question 4: Key Transport Issues

Consultees who completed our online survey were asked to order the following key transport issues according to priority:

- Highway Network
- Public Transport
- Cycling
- Walking
- Car Parking

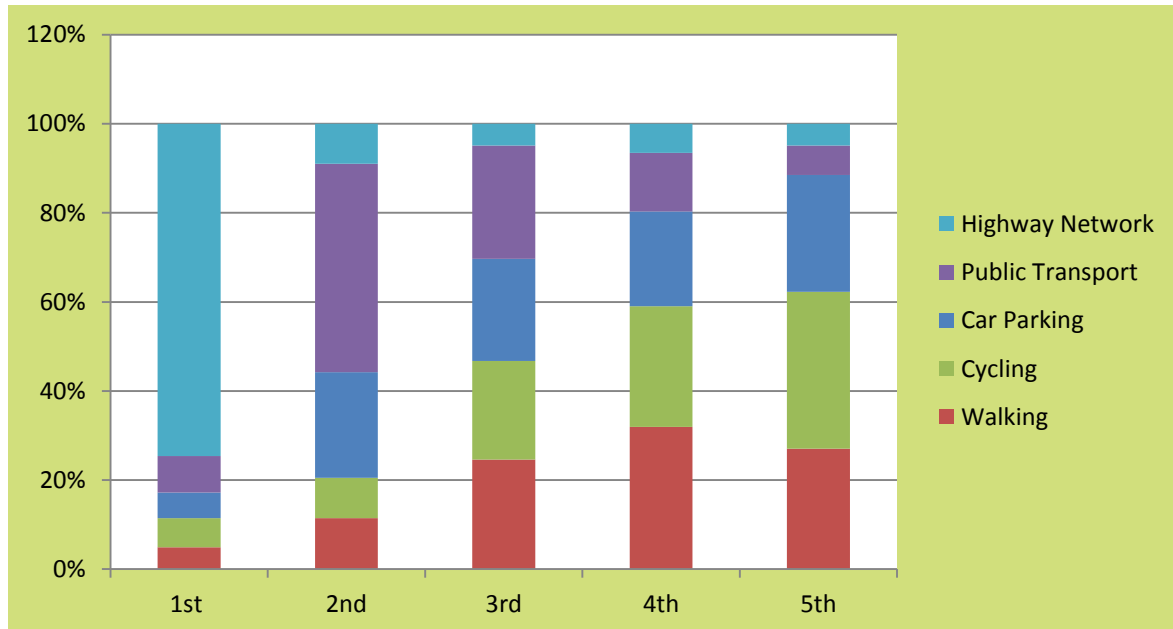


Figure 10 – Percentage of Respondents to Question 4

As you can see from the graph above, the majority (75%) put the Highway Network as their top priority followed by public transport (8%). The second highest priority is Public Transport with 47% of responders putting this as their 2nd choice. The last three transport issues are fairly well balanced, however Car Parking is 3rd, Walking 4th and cycling 5th. This clearly shows that active travel is not a high priority for residents. This fits with the data nationwide whereby the car is the most popular form of transport. It is this attitude of placing active travel lowest amongst priorities that we hope to address with the Aylesbury Transport Strategy as cycling and walking will be encouraged through new infrastructure and promotion.

Comments on these priorities mostly deal with the perceived ‘gridlock’ in Aylesbury during peak hours. It is therefore interesting that people have indicated that Highway Issues are the most important as it is only by reducing reliance on the private car that congestion issues will be reduced (as infrastructure alone will not resolve all of the issues). Within the comments there is a perception that everyone can and should be able to drive themselves without causing congestion, and that putting in cycle and bus lanes will not help this.

“The current highway network along the A41 and A413 as with much of the arterial roads into Aylesbury are already at breaking point. The Gemstone initiative, launched in 2006, has not resulted in an increase in cycle use. If you want people to use the town centre you must have carparking. People will not walk, cycle or use public transport. The supermarkets are close to the town centre and you cannot expect people to carry weekly shopping on a bus”.

“Yes. The current PPTCs ensure that limited road space is wasted. Aylesbury is a bottleneck for anyone trying to get into or through the town - there are no realistic alternative routes. The current public transport corridors waste 1/3 to 1/2 of the road

network in the areas where they exist leading to an underutilised road system just when it is needed most ie at rush hour.”

Questions 6 - 15: Transport Improvements

Questions 6 - 15 of the online survey asked people to leave feedback on the proposed transport improvements identified for Aylesbury. Aylesbury was divided into 5 sectors each with their own potential improvements. Consultees were asked if they agreed with the improvements in each sector and then invited to comment on the proposals.

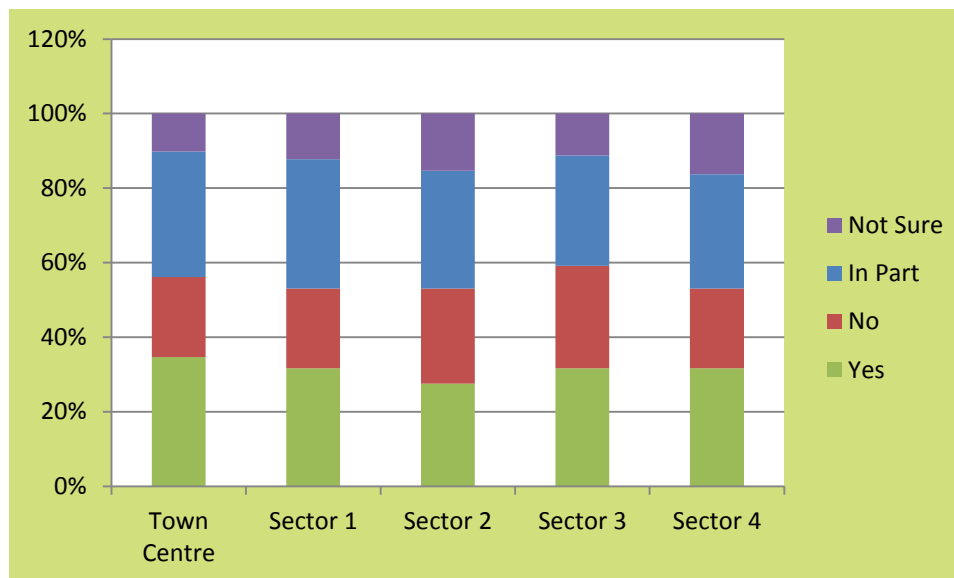


Figure 11 – Percentage of respondents to Questions 6 - 15

The figure above shows that the majority of respondents either agreed in full or in part with the transport proposals in each sector.

Town Centre Comments

Comments in the town centre were quite mixed, but the common themes were parking, buses and trains, roads, and cycling and walking. The majority of negative comments were in the roads and parking categories.

“It would not be prudent to reduce car parking in the town centre until other services are in place. Currently there are no bus services to either out of town developments or villages for theatre, cinema etc.”

“Hard junctions reduce traffic flow and increase tailbacks and pollution. Create roundabouts or better still, slip roads and flyovers to aid continuous traffic flow.”

However there were also constructive comments received from the Buses & Trains and Cycling & Walking categories.

“One of the key priorities should be the implementation of an improved highway structure for public transport with additional investment to reduce fares therefore encouraging use by more members of the public. This as a consequence reduces the number of road users.”

“... it is important to radically improve incentives for cycling and walking: properly joined up and safe cycleways. Improved facilities such as bus station will, of course, be welcome. Aylesbury town centre pedestrian zone is currently badly managed. Better enforcement of the pedestrian area is required if Aylesbury is to become a garden town. At the moment, it is shambolic...”

Sector 1 Comments

The main issues people felt with this sector were the fact that some of the schemes here are stated as 'aspirational'. They also felt that cycling should be improved in the area. Overall though there tended to be an agreement with the schemes proposed.

"The link road should not just be aspirational, it is essential and should be implemented"

"I would welcome seeing at the next stage how and when the aspiration to build a link road between the A418 and A41 may be fulfilled."

"Expanding the cycle lane network is key especially if traffic free lanes can be created."

"Lack of in-town walking and cycling links, other than to town centre"

Sector 2 Comments

As with Sector 1, people felt that it was not acceptable for some of the schemes to be stated as 'aspirational'. There was also mixed opinion on the proposal for an additional Primary Public Transport Corridor (PPTC).

"The link road, HOV & PPTC should not just be aspirational, they are essential and should be implemented"

"...The new PPTC on the A413 from Buckingham Park is a complete waste of road space and will only serve to increase congestion for the majority road users - cars, vans and goods vehicles."

"In 20 years time, the 'aspirational' northern link road will probably be needed alongside any planned future growth but for the time being it appears reasonable in its current form."

Sector 3 Comments

This sector had the largest number of comments, most likely because it includes both the Woodlands and Hampden Fields developments. Respondents were pleased that the link roads were not 'aspirational' in this section but most of the comments here are reactions to the development proposed in the area. Of those that comment on the strategy, many comments speculate whether a park and ride scheme is necessary and also what the location of the link road will mean.

"How many Park and Ride's does Aylesbury need? There's not that much to come into town for anyway."

"Sceptical about the use of park and ride - the parking is usually too expensive and busses infrequent."

"It's interesting that the link road you propose now goes through the middle of Hampden Hall estate. The plans for Hampden Fields show it going through the nearby field adjacent to Bedgrove..."

Sector 4 Comments

Comments in this section mainly focussed on the location of the link road. Many people feel that the link road should not be in the middle of development and should be located elsewhere.

"Again the proposed link road is surrounded by residential development. Any restrictions on this road from traffic lights and roundabouts will just create additional congestion, just in different areas."

"Main roads should not be located through the middle of housing and recreation areas. They prevent safe and convenient access to facilities within the development."

Question 16: Further Comments on the Transport Proposals

The final question asked consultees if they had any further comments to make on the Transport Proposals. However respondents tended to use this section to voice their personal concerns. Of those comments that were related to the strategy, they were very mixed. Some were positive about the strategy as a whole whereas others were critical about the approach, especially with regards to the link roads. However there were some comments that also placed importance on sustainable and active travel.

“This is a good attempt to resolve existing complexities.”

“Build proper roads round the outside of the town before any housing development is even considered.”

“Just want to stress again the importance of making a radical shift to sustainable transport. This means proper resources for designing, building and maintaining cycle paths and cycle parking facilities. At present, facilities are chaotic. Even good cycle paths are falling into disrepair. Continuing dependence on private transport is no good to anyone, including those people who need to drive.”

“It is silly to have a mainly dual carriageway inner ring road, yet have single carriageway outer ring roads. It is obvious the main outer ring roads should be constructed and in use before any if the other changes are made. I don't agree that parking in the town centre is underused and would not like to see any reduction in this. Lots of us like to be independent and use our own cars to come and go as we please and what is convenient to us.”

Section 7: Changes to ATS

Changes Made

Many of the responses received were positive, so there were few changes to make with regards to the schemes proposed or the general aim of the strategy. However we have updated the strategy in response to some comments as detailed below:

1. **Oxford Cambridge Expressway** – A lot of comments we received were negative about the plan because it was felt we did not adequately take the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway into account. We have now updated the strategy with the following:

“It is too early in the process of the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway development to include detail within the ATS. Whilst there might be a positive benefit to Aylesbury in terms of a new route connecting the A418 west and east of the town (to the north), this is not guaranteed, therefore the ATS had to be developed without taking this potential scheme into consideration..”

2. **Purpose of the Link Roads** – There was a lot of confusion throughout the consultation regarding the role and purpose of the Link Roads. As such, new text has been added:

“Associated with this growth are already a number of new link roads proposed outside the town centre which would together form part of an external circular ring road and redirect through-traffic to peripheral routes rather than through the town centre, also providing the opportunity for a more pedestrian and cycle friendly town centre and space for additional bus priority and shared paths closer to the town centre.”

3. **Aylesbury Garden Town Status** – during the time of the consultation it was announced that Aylesbury had been successful in achieving Garden Town Status. This has now been mentioned in the Strategy
4. **Right of Way changes** – we received comments from the Rights of Way team at Buckinghamshire County Council regarding some of the maps and figures and we have actioned all of these changes.
5. **More detail on phasing / implementation** – members of the public were concerned that there was not enough detail on how the strategy was going to be actioned. In order to address this further explanation has been provided in the document. The strategy recognises that there would need to be further work to develop the schemes proposed.

Section 8: What we have not changed and why

What we have not changed and why

Although most of the comments about the ATS were generally positive, there were some negative comments that we considered needed to be addressed. Listed below are the main themes of comments we received and an explanation as to why no changes have been subsequently made in the strategy.

1. **Link Roads vs Bypass** – a lot of comments stated a preference for a bypass rather than link roads. We feel that this point can be addressed by describing the progression from a bypass proposal in the late 80s to the current proposal for link roads.

In the late 1980s BCC put a proposal to the Government for a southern bypass for Aylesbury. After years of discussion with the Government the scheme did not receive funding and in order to progress, BCC had to find funding elsewhere. BCC is now seeking to use a mixture of Government grants, HS2 mitigation payments and funding from developments to progress a series of link roads for the town. Government grants are now focused on road infrastructure unlocking sites for housing and jobs.

Since a “bypass” cannot be built all at once, the link roads provide the service of a “bypass”, i.e. re-routing those going through the town centre (whether for cross-town trips (which a bypass would not allow for) or passing through Aylesbury to get elsewhere). They also provide links for the new developments into and around the town, which is important to ensure the new communities are not isolated.

2. **Roundabouts vs Traffic Lights** – a lot of comments were received that were very negative about traffic lights; requesting that we change them to roundabouts. In response we feel it is best to try and explain the circumstances where traffic lights work better than roundabouts and vice versa.

Roundabouts work well when we only look at motorised vehicles, like cars and HGVs, however they are hazardous for cyclists and pedestrians. They are also effective if all the traffic entering a roundabout is evenly balanced so that everyone is able to continue their journey smoothly. Driver ability and vehicle size are also very important factors, as lane discipline and driver judgement are vital to the success of a roundabout.

Traffic signals are a controlled way of operating junctions that allow for cars, pedestrians and cyclists to pass through safely by using signals to hold other traffic at stop lines. Signals also allow traffic from minor roads to join major roads where it would otherwise be difficult to pull out. Additionally, traffic lights are used to manage the road network within the town, making sure that if there is more traffic in one area that it does not negatively impact other parts of the town.

It is worth noting that the issues that sometimes occur with signalised junctions are because when they are initially put in place the timings have not yet been calculated. It takes time to work out the correct sequencing on a network but when it is connected efficiently, the traffic flow improves.

3. **Growth** – a lot of comments were generally negative about the proposed growth. It is not within the scope of this strategy to discuss the growth proposed by AVDC so no mention of this has been made in the final strategy. The Transport Strategy put forward has been developed based on the growth proposals provided by Aylesbury Vale to support the VALP.
4. **Infrastructure before development** – there were some comments that infrastructure should be put in place prior to development being agreed. However, as much of the funding for infrastructure comes from developments, normally a proportion of the site needs to have been developed to raise sufficient funds for the infrastructure to be built. BCC ensures that developments provide infrastructure and transport schemes or financial contribution to these as requirements of the planning permission. BCC works

closely with developers to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is secured and delivered as timely as possible (within the constraints faced), as well as working with Government to try and secure funding for key infrastructure, and will continue to do so through the ATS period.

5. **Perceived lack of parking** – a few comments highlight that people are surprised that the ATS stated that there was an oversubscription of parking in Aylesbury. Parking is a delicate subject because if too much parking is put in then that promotes car travel and increases congestion. Conversely, if there is too little parking available this leads to on street and illegal parking. Whilst the most popular car parks (such as the surface level carpark by the cinema) are very busy, other car parks within the town centre have plenty of space, therefore overall there is an excess of parking. AVDC (in partnership with BCC) is currently working on a parking strategy for the town centre which will investigate this in more detail.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank all those that took part in the consultation. It is only with the invaluable help of communities, businesses and other organisations that we can ensure the Aylesbury Transport Strategy will be fit for purpose. We would especially like to thank those who promoted the consultation and helped us to reach so many people.