

# Connecting Sheffield: Sheaf Valley Cycle Route

## Executive Summary

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### **1.0 Launching Connecting Sheffield**

Connecting Sheffield – the overarching vision and ambition for transforming travel in Sheffield within which the Active Travel Fund (ATF) projects sit – launched on 3 November 2020. **The Connecting Sheffield: Sheaf Valley Cycle Route** scheme was one of three ATF schemes to be brought forward under Connecting Sheffield. While each project stands on its own, the wider overarching vision that brings each project within the Connecting Sheffield umbrella was considered important to communicate. As a consequence, prior to any public consultation, there was a media launch of Connecting Sheffield as a concept on 3 November 2020, to ensure that the aims and goals that knit together each project are recognised and understood.

The Connecting Sheffield consultation website went live at this time. The website provides information on the overarching aims and ambitions for active travel and bus services. It is also designed to host the separate consultations on each project within Connecting Sheffield, as they are ready to be launched. The **Connecting Sheffield: Sheaf Valley Cycle Route** consultation was one of three active travel fund schemes to go live in July 2021.

### **2.0 Sheaf Valley Cycle Route – Consultation**

The public and stakeholder consultation on the **Connecting Sheffield: Sheaf Valley Cycle Route** proposals were held between 16 July 2021 and 13 August 2021. The consultation process was as follows:

#### **2.1 Stakeholder Mapping**

Prior to the start of consultation, an extensive community and stakeholder mapping process was undertaken to identify different individuals and groups who were likely to have an interest in the proposals. The following key stakeholders were among those identified:

- **Political Representatives:** Paul Blomfield MP; Olivia Blake MP; Louise Haigh MP; and local Councillors.
- **Economic and Business Groups:** Ponds Forge International Centre; Bramall Lane Stadium; The Showroom Workstation; The Site Gallery; BBC Radio Sheffield; The Climbing Works; other key businesses and organisations in Sheaf Valley.
- **Educational Organisations:** University of Sheffield; Sheffield Hallam University; UTC Sheffield; Nether Edge Primary School; Holthouse Infants School; and Meersbrook Bank Primary School.
- **Community and Interest Groups:** Sharrow Cycling Club; Sharrow Community Forum; Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group; Upper Don Trail Trust; and Heeley Development Trust.
- **Accessibility Groups:** Transport 4 All; Disability Sheffield; Access Liaison Group; and Sheffield Cycling 4 All.
- **Local Transport Organisations:** Confederation of Passenger Transport; South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive; First Group; Stagecoach East Midlands; TM Travel; and others.
- **Local Service Providers:** South Yorkshire Police; South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue; Yorkshire Ambulance Service; Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust; and Sheffield Children's Hospitals.

- **Local Residents and Businesses** were also contacted directly. A distribution area for the consultation leaflet including Meersbrook, Heeley, Highfield and part of the city centre was defined so that nearby properties would directly receive information about the proposals and how they could respond and find out more information. The identified distribution area for the postcard included 13,186 properties.

## 2.2 Engagement Overview

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, methods of engagement that did not require face-to-face contact were primarily employed. However, the consultation was undertaken to ensure that people could still get the appropriate information and have their say. We did this in the following ways:

1. **Consultation Postcard:** A consultation postcard was delivered to all residential and business properties in the designated distribution area of 13,186 properties.
2. **Consultation Website:** A project specific page was set up on the Connecting Sheffield website which uses the community engagement platform, Commonplace. The platform makes it easy to share the consultation widely via social media and allows anonymised comments to be viewed publicly adding transparency to the process. We also received feedback through an **email address, Freephone information line and Freepost address.**
3. **Stakeholder Webinars:** Ahead of the consultation launch, two online webinars were arranged to which stakeholders with a specified interest in the **Connecting Sheffield: Sheaf Valley Cycle Route** scheme were invited. Key community groups and businesses were invited to the webinars. The first webinar was held for business along the Sheaf Valley Cycle Route. The second webinar was held for local community groups and was well attended.
4. **Recorded Presentation:** A commentary was recorded to accompany a presentation on the proposals and circulated by email to local businesses, stakeholders and community groups identified as likely to have an interest in the proposals.
5. **Stakeholder Meeting:** After the launch of the consultation, the Connecting Sheffield team were directly contacted by businesses located along Little London Road, who expressed concerns around the loss of parking and access to their businesses. To respond to these concerns, an **outdoor** in-person drop-in meeting (to minimise concerns regarding Covid-19) was held on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2021 to which local businesses were invited to come along at a convenient time.
6. **Press Release:** A press release was issued at the start of the consultation to major regional and local media outlets. The press release provided introductory information about the Sheaf Valley Cycle Route proposals and details of the consultation period.

## 3.0 Explaining the Consultation Responses

### 3.1 Public Consultation

A total of **1,317** responses were received as part of the **Connecting Sheffield: Sheaf Valley Cycle Route** consultation. **19** of those responses came through via email, the Freephone line, Freepost and hard copies of feedback forms from the event and the remaining **1,298** were submitted online via the Commonplace Connecting Sheffield website.

The website provides two avenues to comment:

- a) A **heatmap** referenced as (a) that shows all corridors to be consulted on as part of the total package of schemes to be consulted on under Phase One of Connecting Sheffield.
- b) A **design tile** referenced as (b) – featuring details of what is proposed specifically for the Sheaf Valley Cycle Route scheme.

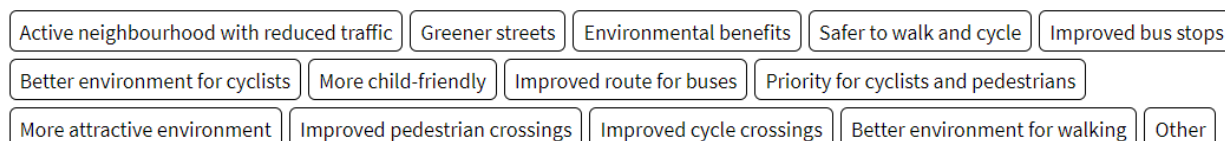
### 3.2 Design Tile Feedback

Comments received via the design tile (b) are authenticated on Commonplace, with respondents asked to confirm their email address to check that an email address is correct and corresponds with the person submitting the feedback. All responses, even those which are not authenticated, are considered when mapping comments – which can be viewed in the body of the full consultation report – to ensure any specific detailed concerns are picked up and can be considered.

Design tile feedback is attained via a mixture of ‘closed’ questions – for example, ‘what do you like about this scheme’, and ‘what don’t you like about this scheme’, that allow respondents to select responses from a menu of options. Opportunities to highlight positives and negatives are split into separate questions. Respondents tend to choose between one and five options for each question that most closely align with their views on a topic.

Respondents can also respond to ‘open’ questions – that allow respondents to comment however they wish. While respondents can answer open questions in whichever form they wish, in practice, they often tend to provide more details on the responses they have provided to closed questions. The screenshots below (Figure 1 and 2) show how open and closed questions are presented on the consultation website.


What do you like about this scheme?



A screenshot of a closed question response form. The question is "What do you like about this scheme?". Below the question is a grid of 15 buttons, each containing a feedback option. The buttons are arranged in three rows: the first row has five buttons, the second row has four buttons, and the third row has six buttons. The options are: Active neighbourhood with reduced traffic, Greener streets, Environmental benefits, Safer to walk and cycle, Improved bus stops, Better environment for cyclists, More child-friendly, Improved route for buses, Priority for cyclists and pedestrians, More attractive environment, Improved pedestrian crossings, Improved cycle crossings, Better environment for walking, and Other.

Figure 1: Closed question response

Do you have any other comments on this scheme?



A screenshot of an open question response form. The question is "Do you have any other comments on this scheme?". Below the question is a large, empty text input area with a rounded bottom-right corner.

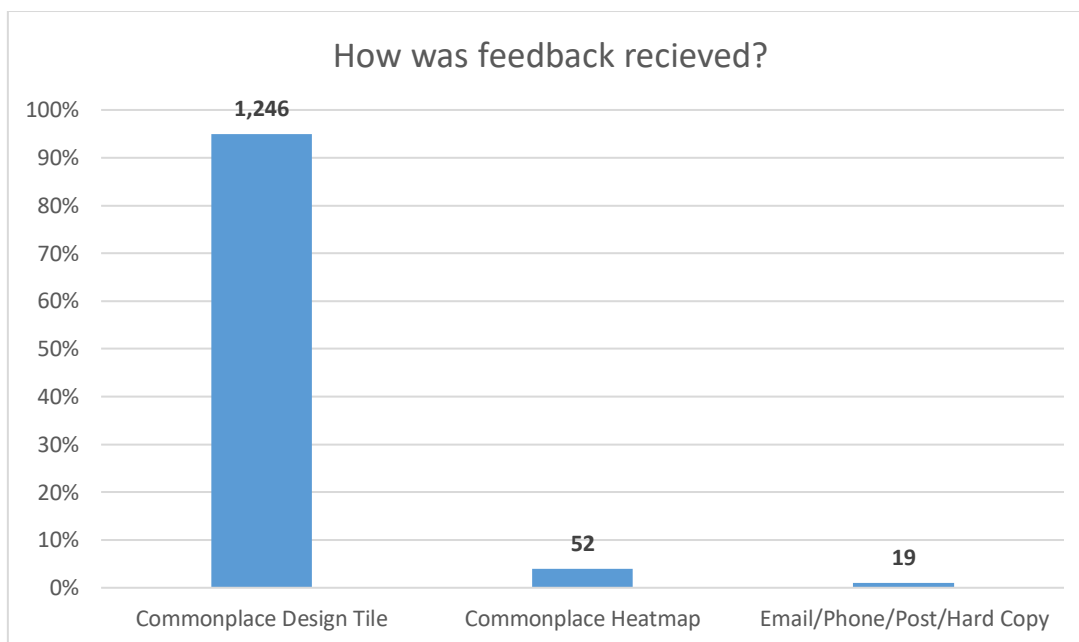
Your comment will be public. Please don't mention any personal details.  
By commenting you agree to our terms of use. Read our privacy policy.

Figure 2: Open question response

### 4.0 Summary of Feedback

Considering each of the different methods for feedback open to respondents, the following is a summary of feedback.

In total, **52** responses were received via the heatmap (a). **1,246** responses were made via the design tile (b). **19** responses were received by email, Freephone, Freepost or hard copy feedback forms.



#### 4.1 General Sentiment – Heatmap

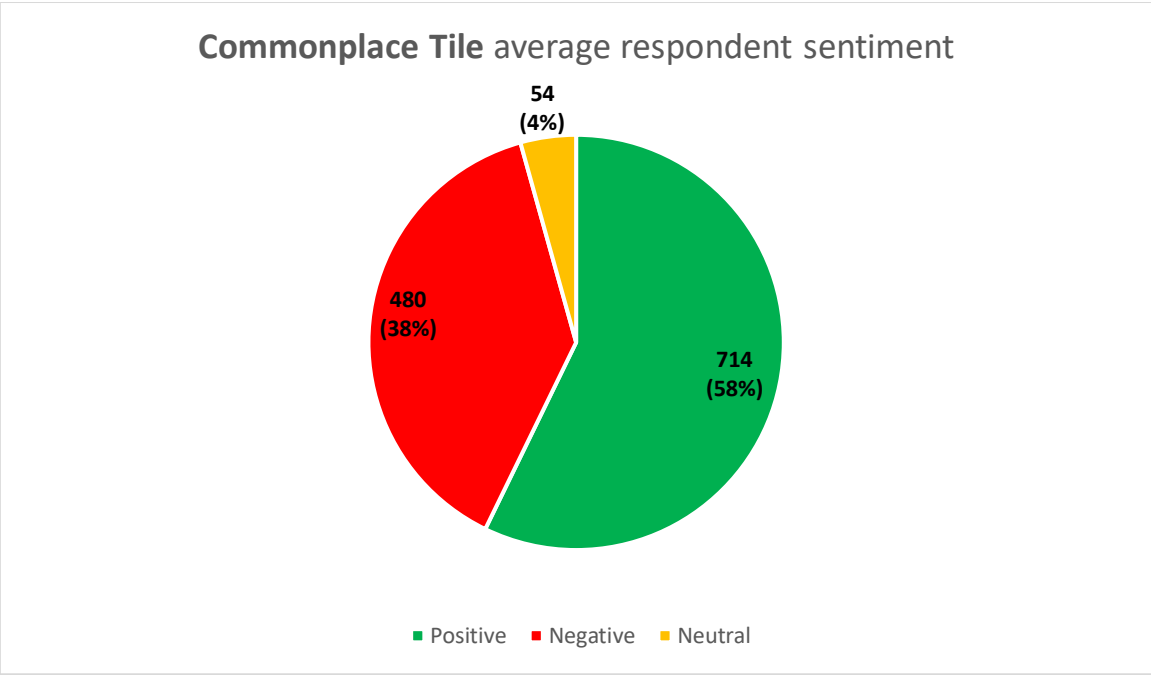
**People commenting on the heatmap** tend to take a more overall view of the proposals. On entering the Connecting Sheffield website, they will have seen the overview of the vision and aims of Connecting Sheffield as a long-term project before then visiting the heatmap to comment. Because the heatmap then also shows the totality of the routes under Phase One, commentators tend to be more likely to view and give feedback on the wider scheme aims compared to visitors who purely view the details of a specific scheme via the design tile.

Visitors to the heatmap can still leave comments on specific schemes and they can continue to visit the scheme design tile thereafter for details, but their feedback tends to present an indication on views of the wider aims of Connecting Sheffield because of the use patterns explained above.

Among the 52 people who responded via the heatmap 86% of the comments received were positive, indicating strong support for the principles behind Connecting Sheffield.

#### 4.2 General Sentiment – Design Tile – All Responses

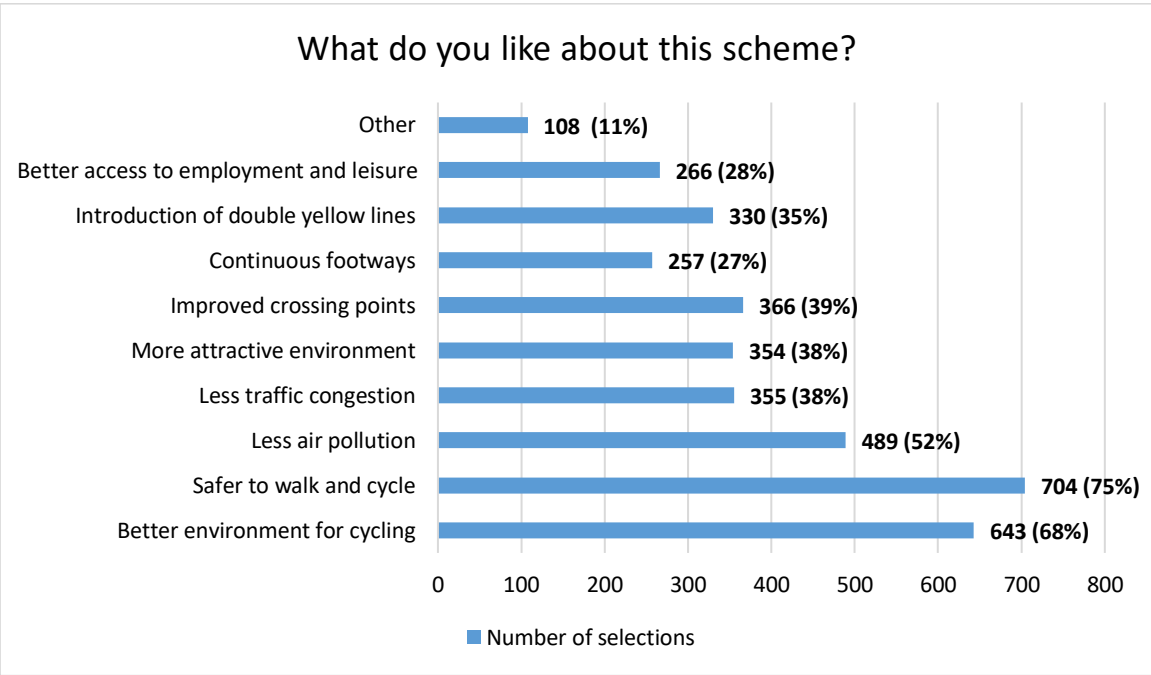
As people see more detail of any proposals, it is natural that this then raises more questions and carries greater potential for people to find objections or questions about proposals. Of the **1,246 responses received via the Connecting Sheffield: Sheaf Valley Cycle Route design tile**, there was a majority in favour, with **58%** providing positive feedback. **38%** of comments were negative and **4%** were neutral. This indicates that there is overall support for the **Connecting Sheffield: Sheaf Valley Cycle Route** proposals among those who commented.



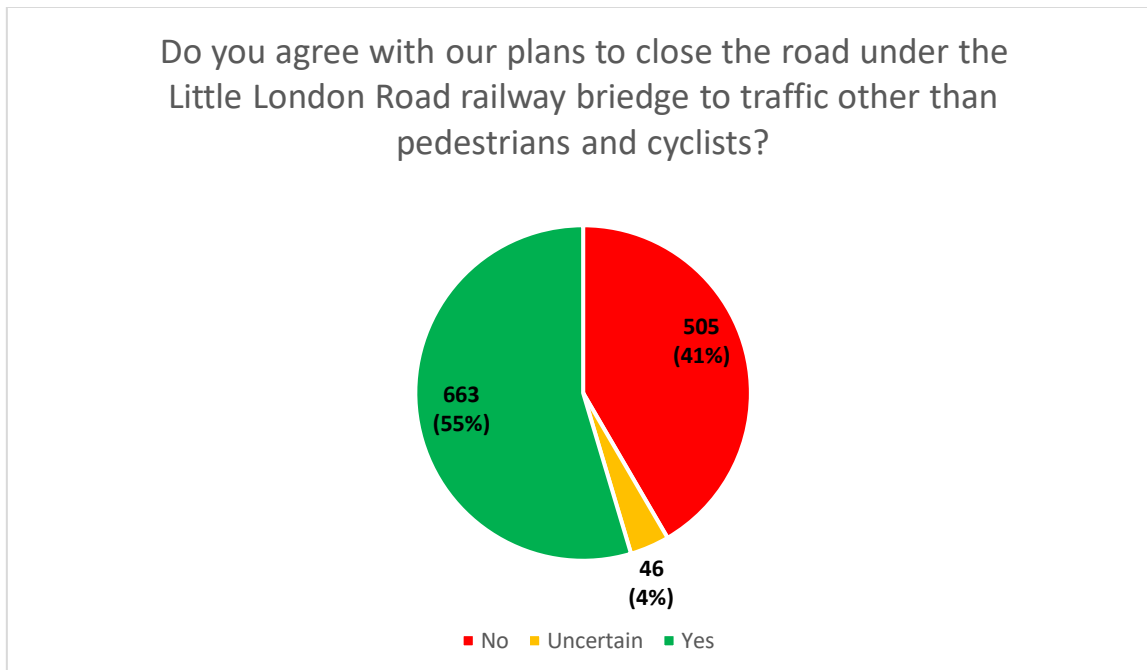
**5.0 Specific Themes from the Consultation**

**5.1 Positive – Closed Questions**

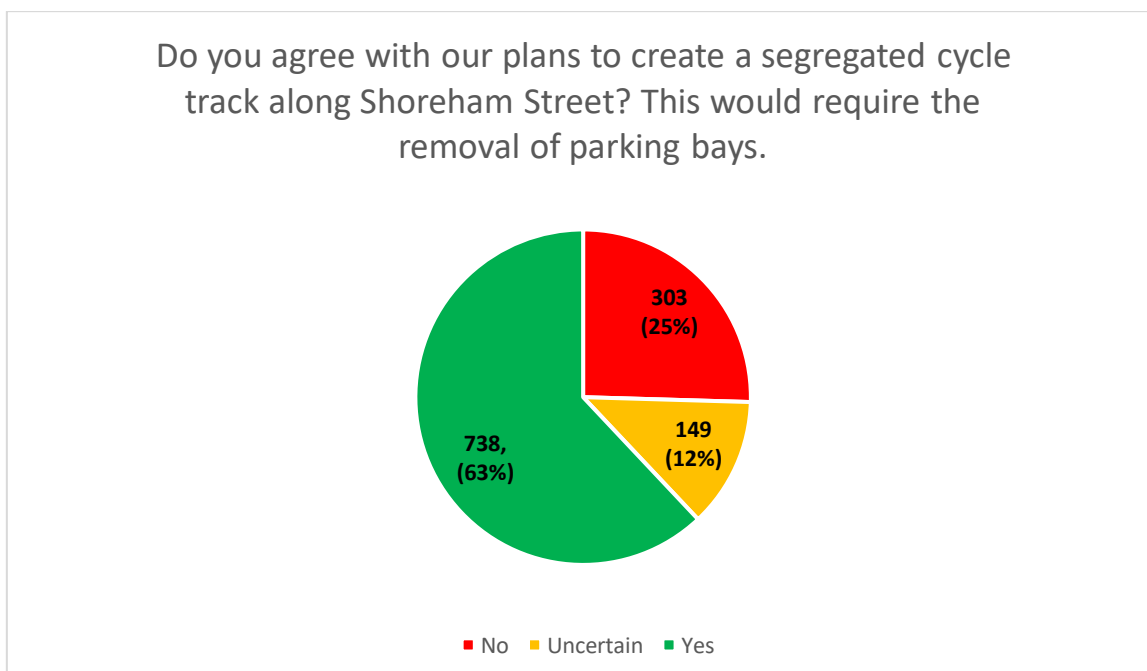
The table below shows what people liked most about the scheme in response to the closed questions in the Commonplace design tile. **75% (704)** of respondents said they liked the scheme because it would make it safer to walk and cycle and **68% (643)** liked the scheme because it would make the environment better for cycling.



The pie chart below shows the average respondent sentiment in response to the proposed closure of the road under the Little London Road railway bridge. The chart shows that **55% (663)** of respondents supported the closure of the road under the Little London Road railway bridge, with **4% (46)** of respondents being neutral and **41% (505)** opposing.



The pie chart below shows the average respondent sentiment in response to the proposed creation of a segregated cycle track along Shoreham Street. The chart shows that **63% (738)** of respondents supported the creation of a segregated cycle track along Shoreham Street, with **12% (149)** of respondents being neutral and **25% (303)** opposing.



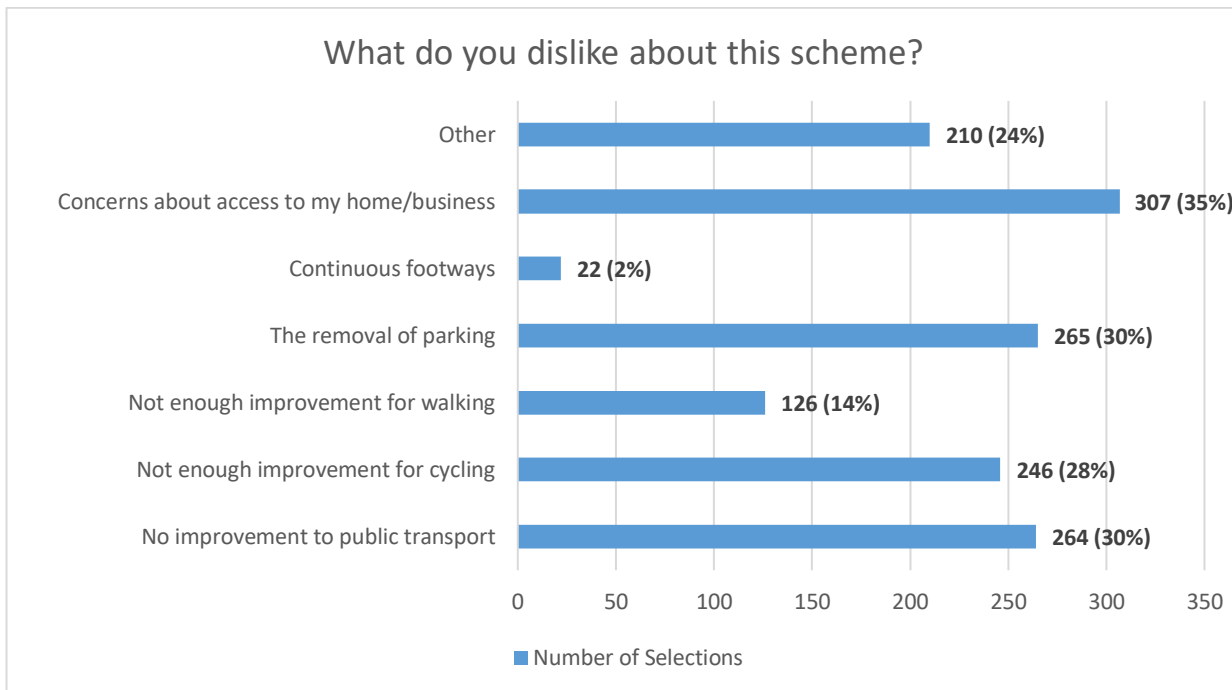
## 5.2 Positive – Open Questions

In terms of the themes highlighted through feedback on the design tile that underpin the positive sentiment towards the scheme, increased safety for cyclists and pedestrians was most prominent with respondents commenting they would now be more likely to cycle safely locally, especially with their children. There were also positive comments around the proposals creating better separation of cycling and traffic.

A number of respondents encouraged the start of an attempt to rebalance city travel towards more sustainable forms of transport.

## 5.3 Key Concerns – Closed Questions

The table below shows what people disliked most about the scheme in response to the closed questions in the Commonplace design tile. **35% (307)** of respondents to this question were concerned about access to residences or businesses. In addition, **30% (265)** of respondents did not like that the schemes would be accompanied by a loss of parking. **30% (264)** of respondents felt that there wasn't enough improvement for public transport; **28% (246)** felt there wasn't enough improvement for cycling and **14% (126)** felt there wasn't enough improvement for pedestrians in the proposals.



## 5.4 Key Concerns – Open Questions

The major concern expressed by **6% (73)** respondents was the **likely increase in congestion** along this route and the potential for increased congestion to lead to more accidents. In addition, **2% (24)** respondents stated that the proposals would cause **more pollution** due to this increased congestion. **2% (21)** respondents were also concerned about the **closure of Little London Road** to cars and the potential knock-on effect this could have on adjacent roads like Abbeydale Road and Woodseats Road.

Concerns were also expressed that the proposals do not address the key problems cyclists experience along the route, including some highlighted as very dangerous or inconvenient. Several respondents questioned the thinking behind shifting cyclists and pedestrians onto side roads; respondents would **prefer the safety of main roads, especially for pedestrians**. Some respondents requested improvements in these areas to make them safer such as **upgrading street lighting and pavements**.

A number of respondents commented on the **lack of consideration for elderly and disabled people**. The main themes of these comments were that it is ambitious to expect elderly and disabled people to use this cycle route; too much emphasis has been put on cyclists with no improvements for public transport, which elderly and disabled people use the most; and the scheme excludes those who need these reliable transport options.

Respondents also commented that the scheme is a waste of money and wasn't addressing the most pressing issues in Sheffield.

## **6.0 Stakeholder Consultation**

### **6.1 Sheaf Valley Cycle Route Businesses Webinar**

Businesses based along the Sheaf Valley Cycle Route were invited to a webinar, though the Showroom Workstation was the sole business to take up the invitation. Their representative requested clarification on any changes proposed near to The Showroom which include improvements to the Harmer Lane crossing and widening of the contraflow cycle lane on Sidney Street to improve segregation.

**The Showroom Workstation was generally supportive of the proposals but asked to be kept updated on any works taking place on Paternoster Row.**

### **6.2 Sheaf Valley Cycle Route Community Groups' Webinar**

**Resident groups were positive about the proposals with the exception of some concerns as to whether Shoreham Street is the best option for a new cycle route considering how busy it is.** They requested that the routes be connected into other nearby cycle networks and that there is provision of more cycle parking.

### **6.3 Other Stakeholder Feedback**

Sustrans urged the Council to work with them to ensure the scheme meets The National Government plan of doubling the number of journeys made by walking and cycling by 2025. **Generally, they were supportive of the Sheaf Valley Cycle Route proposals but emphasised the importance of meaningful community engagement to gain public support and ownership.**