

Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi-Modal Corridor Study

Initial Appraisal: Case for Change

Consultation Report

Nestrans

January 2022

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Objectives

Nestrans is currently undertaking a multi-modal study investigating transport problems and opportunities on the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk corridor focusing on walking, cycling, bus and rail travel. The aim of this study is to identify options that will encourage more people to travel sustainably for trips along the corridor, especially for regular commuting journeys.

To understand the viewpoints of members of the public and key stakeholders, Nestrans have asked for feedback to better understand views on the existing transport network along this corridor, understand how people plan to use the network on the corridor in the future and what options should be considered in order to improve the sustainable transport offering.

The 'Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi Modal Corridor Study' Consultation was held between Monday 20th September and Wednesday 20th October 2021 (running for 4 weeks in total).

1.2 Report Structure

Following this introduction, the report is set out as follows:

- Section 2: describes the methodology;
- Section 3: discusses the profile of respondents;
- Section 4: presents the consultation findings; and
- Section 5: summarises key conclusions.

2. Methodology

2.1 Questionnaire

2.1.1 Questionnaire Design

An initial questionnaire was drafted by AECOM on behalf of Nestrans based on the research objectives outlined for this piece of work, a copy of which can be found in **Appendix A**. This questionnaire was reviewed to ensure the questionnaire adhered to Market Research Society (MRS) guidelines and code of conduct. The questionnaire was also quality checked to ensure that the survey length, routing, and questionnaire terminology worked correctly.

The final questionnaire included questions about:

- The existing transport network for walking;
- The existing transport network for cycling;
- The existing transport network for bus travel;
- The existing transport network for rail travel;
- The existing transport network for road travel; and
- Anticipated future travel behaviour on the corridor.

2.1.2 Online Questionnaire Promotion

In order to inform people about the survey and to encourage a high response, several methods were used to promote the online survey including:

- Social media posts from Nestrans;
- Emails direct to key stakeholders; and
- Emails direct to Community Councils.

Local Elected Members, MSPs and MPs were also contacted via email to raise awareness of the survey and support its promotion. Additionally, a local MP sent a letter mailshot to inform Cove residents that the study was ongoing during the consultation period.

2.1.3 Response Mechanisms

The design stages of this consultation were undertaken when social distancing and some face-to-face restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic were still in place. Therefore, the primary response mechanism was an online questionnaire, available via the Nestrans website. Alternative means of responding were also available including:

- Hard copies available, if requested; and
- Emails direct to the client team, including the offer for a study team member to complete the survey over the phone with members of the public.

The number of responses for each response mechanism is shown in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Number of responses

	Online	Hardcopy (paper)	Email	Total
Number of responses	1104	0	7	1111

2.2 Data Management

This section explains how the data was processed and coded.

2.2.1 Data Processing

Response data was downloaded from the online portal and collated with data from all the emails received.

Data was cleaned to ensure accuracy as follows:

- All questions not answered by a respondent were given the same value as “missing” data to ensure these were not included in the analysis;
- Where a response was specified in free text which could be attributed to an answer in the list provided in the questionnaire, this was updated.

Data was imported from Askia (the Online Survey Software) into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Additional variables were created using syntax in preparation for analysis.

2.2.2 Coding

All free-text responses and emails were grouped into themes to allow meaningful analysis.

Where possible, free text responses have been analysed by topic rather than response to a question to allow meaningful analysis and avoid double counting where respondents have given the same response to several questions.

The themes from each question were created by AECOM using the initial set of responses, before full coding began. Where new themes emerged, these were verified before continuing. A minimum of 10% quality assurance checks and validation were completed on the coding for each question by AECOM.

2.2.3 Preparation for Analysis

The frequencies for each response per question were calculated, checked, and verified to ensure all data had either a response, a no comment or a missing value. This data was prepared for analysis by creating a series of crosstabs for key criteria such as demographics.

2.3 Analysis and Reporting

The consultation was open to all and, therefore, respondents were self-selecting. This, coupled with the fact respondents could choose which of the questions they answered, means the results and responses should be viewed as indicative of the wider population and any identified sub-groups rather than representative. The profile of respondents is detailed in the next section.

As respondents were not obliged to answer all questions in the questionnaire, the percentages shown only include those that responded to each question.

Where percentages do not sum to 100% in the main body of the report, this is due to rounding. An asterisk (*) denotes less than 0.5%.

Throughout the analysis stage of the consultation, all data collected has been crossed with key variables such as age, gender, disability, as well as respondent location to identify any significant differences within the data by these key characteristics to see if any are more prominent than others within the responses provided. If significant, the findings have been included and commented upon within this report.

3. Respondent Profile

3.1 Type of Respondents

A total of 1111 responses were received to the consultation. **Table 3.1** shows the response by each type of respondent, covering all response mechanisms.

Table 3.1: Type of respondent

	Online Questionnaire	Email	Total	%
General Public	1097	4	1101	99
Organisations	7	3	10	1
Total	1104	7	1111	100

3.2 Respondent Location

All members of the public who responded to the survey were asked where best describes where they live. Over a third (38%) said they live in Cove¹, whilst 27% said they live in Newtonhill and 10% said Laurencekirk.

Table 3.2: Location of respondent

	Location	Count	%
Which of the following areas best describes where you live?	Cove	418	38
	Newtonhill	297	27
	Laurencekirk	109	10
	Portlethen	50	5
	Chapelton of Elsick	36	3
	South Aberdeenshire – Other	31	3
	Stonehaven	28	3
	Muchalls	24	2
	Aberdeen	23	2
	Aberdeen South – Other	15	1
	Fettercairn	13	1
	Drumlithie	13	1
	Angus	12	1
	Aberdeen North	9	1
	Fordoun	6	1
	North Aberdeenshire	6	1
	Aberdeen West	3	*
	West Aberdeenshire	3	*
	Outwith Aberdeenshire	1	*
	Total		1097

**Note: Only individuals were asked this question, therefore the 7 organisation responses did not answer this question*

3.3 Representativeness of Response

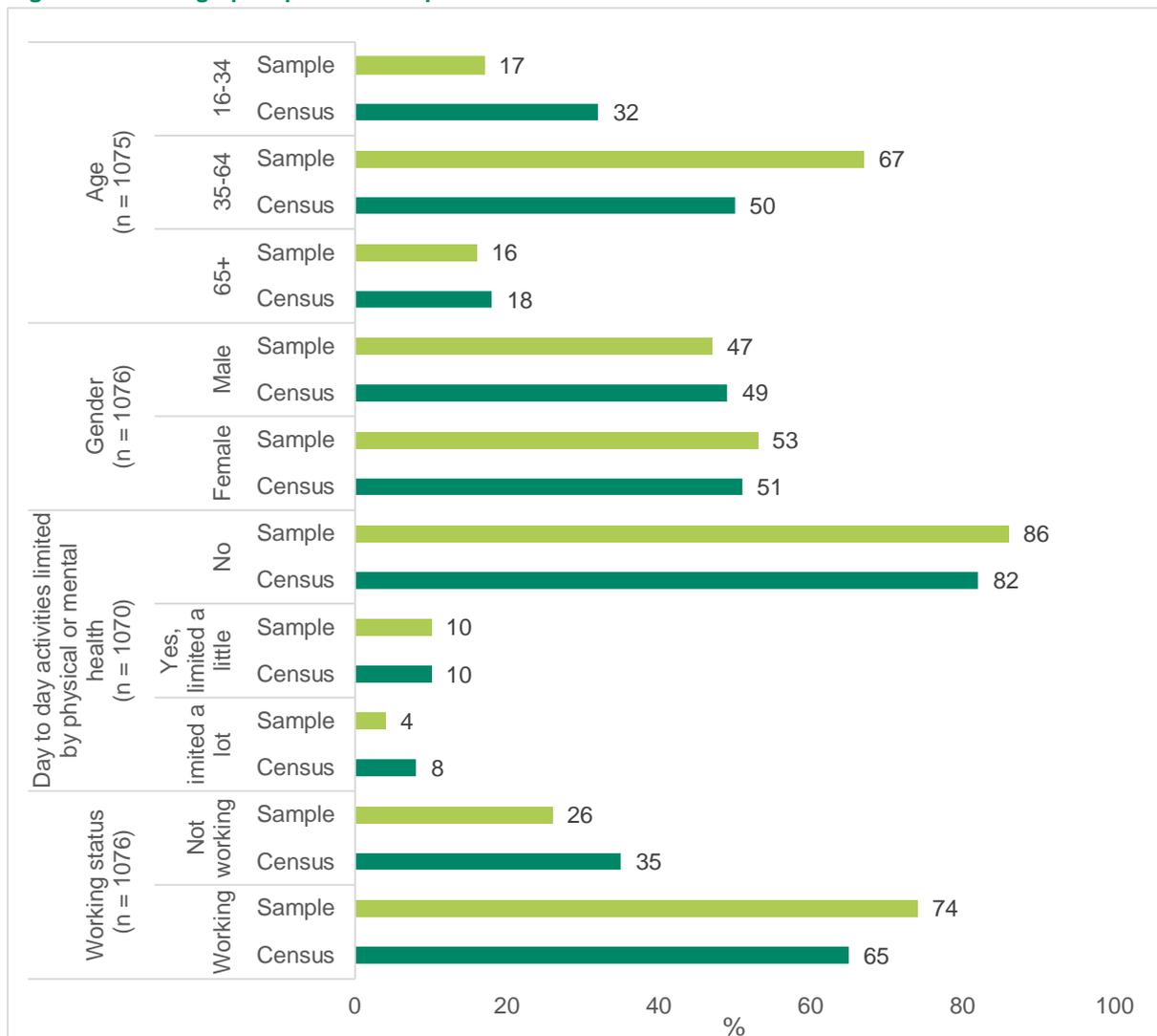
Figure 3.1 illustrates the demographic profile of the general public who responded to the consultation, via the questionnaire only (n=1097). Two thirds of the respondents (67%) were aged 35-64 whilst there was a slightly higher proportion of females compared to males (53% compared to 47%). 14% of the respondents said they were either limited a little (10%) or limited a lot (4%) in their day-to-day activities due to a mental or physical health condition or illness. Almost three quarters of the respondents (74%) classed themselves as working currently.

In order to compare the consultation responses against the population area, the profile of respondents has been shown alongside the 2011 Census population statistics for the combined Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire regions in

¹ As noted in Chapter 2, the higher response rate for Cove may be related to a letter mailshot which was sent to Cove residents by a local MP during the consultation period.

Figure 3.1. As highlighted, the representation of respondents is in line with the results of the census in the majority of categories.

Figure 3.1: Demographic profile of respondents



*Note: All respondents who said “prefer not to say” are not included in the figure above.

3.4 Email Responses

During the consultation period, in addition to the online survey responses, seven email responses were received.

Four were from residents in the area and covered the following points:

- Three residents were in favour of a new railway station in Cove and thought it would be a great help to Cove residents and improve commuting to the City Centre; and
- One resident focused on the lack of safe, effective cycling and walking links along the corridor.

Three emails were received from organisations, with a summary of key points provided below:

- There has been increased demand for safe cycling and walking routes during the COVID-19 pandemic and this trend has continued as restrictions have eased. This should be further encouraged to improve the physical health and mental wellbeing of the community.
- There is demand for safe walking and cycling routes between Newtonhill and Portlethen; Muchalls and Stonehaven and to reinstate the path to the beach at Muchalls.
- There are problems with parking on pavements and overhanging hedges within Newtonhill that can make footways unusable for pedestrians with prams and for those with impaired vision.

- There is limited safe and viable options for walking and cycling near the main road along the corridor and there is an aspiration for segregated facilities for active travel users, particularly between Stonehaven and Aberdeen.
- There is a need for greater capacity and availability for cycle commuters to be able to carry their bikes on buses and trains themselves as part of their journey rather than solely relying on parking at interchanges and stations.
- Road layout along the corridor in parts is not safe for cyclists and needs to be revisited.
- To encourage fewer car journeys, it is considered that the public transport system needs to be improved, with Aberdeen Bus Station identified as a priority for improvement.
- Newtonhill has a very reasonable bus service and the Park & Ride facility in the town is well-used; it is not certain what value a Park & Ride facility at Portlethen would provide.
- There are mixed feelings in the community regarding a new rail station at Newtonhill. Whilst a new rail station would provide benefits for local journeys, particularly to and from Aberdeen, it was noted that some residents have expressed concerns about car parking creating problems on the local road network as well as concerns about potential demand for rail in the town in light of changing travel patterns and increased home working.
- An extension of the proposed Aberdeen Rapid Transit system to Stonehaven (and including Newtonhill Park & Ride) was suggested as potentially providing a superior alternative to a new rail station.
- More charging points for electric vehicles are required.

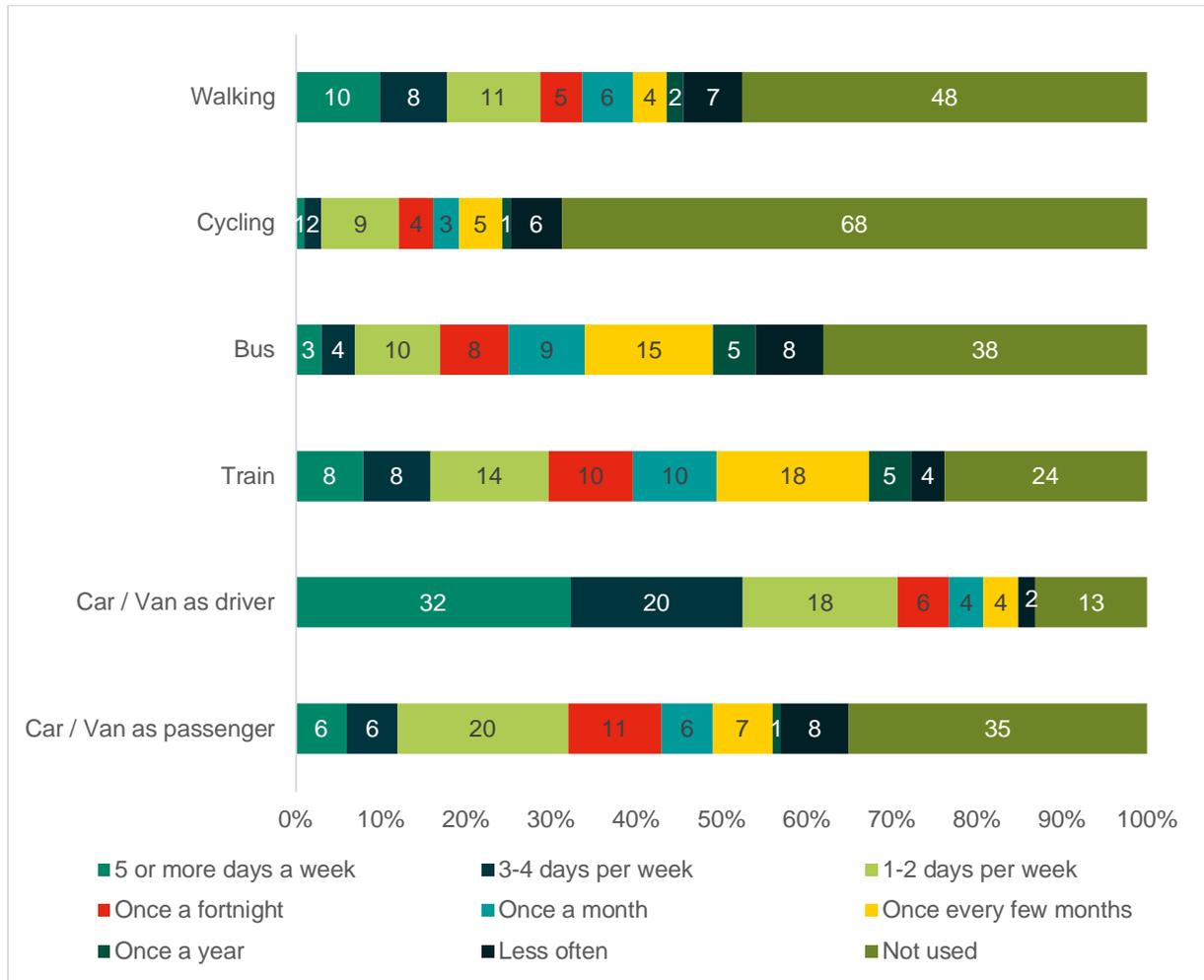
4. Consultation Findings

4.1 Use of the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Corridor

Respondents who completed the survey were asked about their future use of the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk corridor by different modes. In responding to this question, reference was made to the future recognising that for some corridor users, current travel behaviours/patterns may still have been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions. Accordingly, respondents were asked to think about how they would expect to travel once travel restrictions have been lifted and they considered it safe to do so.

Figure 4.1 below shows the expected frequency of using each mode for future use of the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk corridor. Almost a third of respondents (32%) said they would likely use the corridor by car or van as a driver 5 or more days a week whilst 8% said the same by train. However, 11% said they would use the corridor by walking 1-2 days a week and 10% said five days a week or more.

Figure 4.1: B1 - Future use of the corridor by all modes

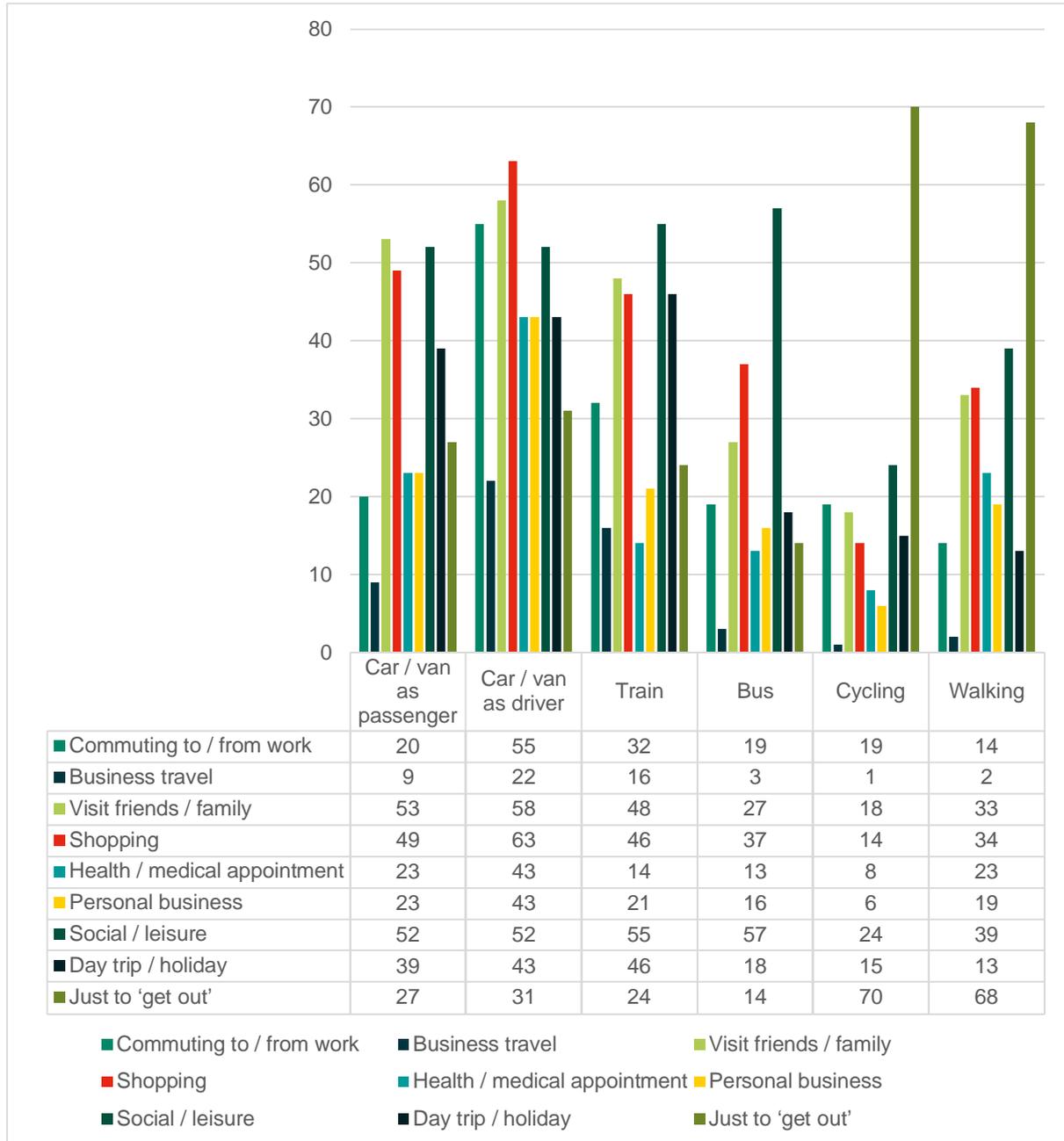


Base: 1104 respondents

Respondents were asked what journey purpose they would use each mode for in future on the corridor (**Figure 4.2**). Over half of the respondents (55%) who said they would use the car or van as a driver said they would use the corridor for commuting to / from work whilst 32% said they would use the train for the same purpose. 58% of respondents said they also used their car or van as a driver for visiting friends or family.

70% of those who said cycling said they would travel by bike just to ‘get out’ while 68% said the same journey purpose for walking.

Figure 4.2: B2 - Modes by journey purpose



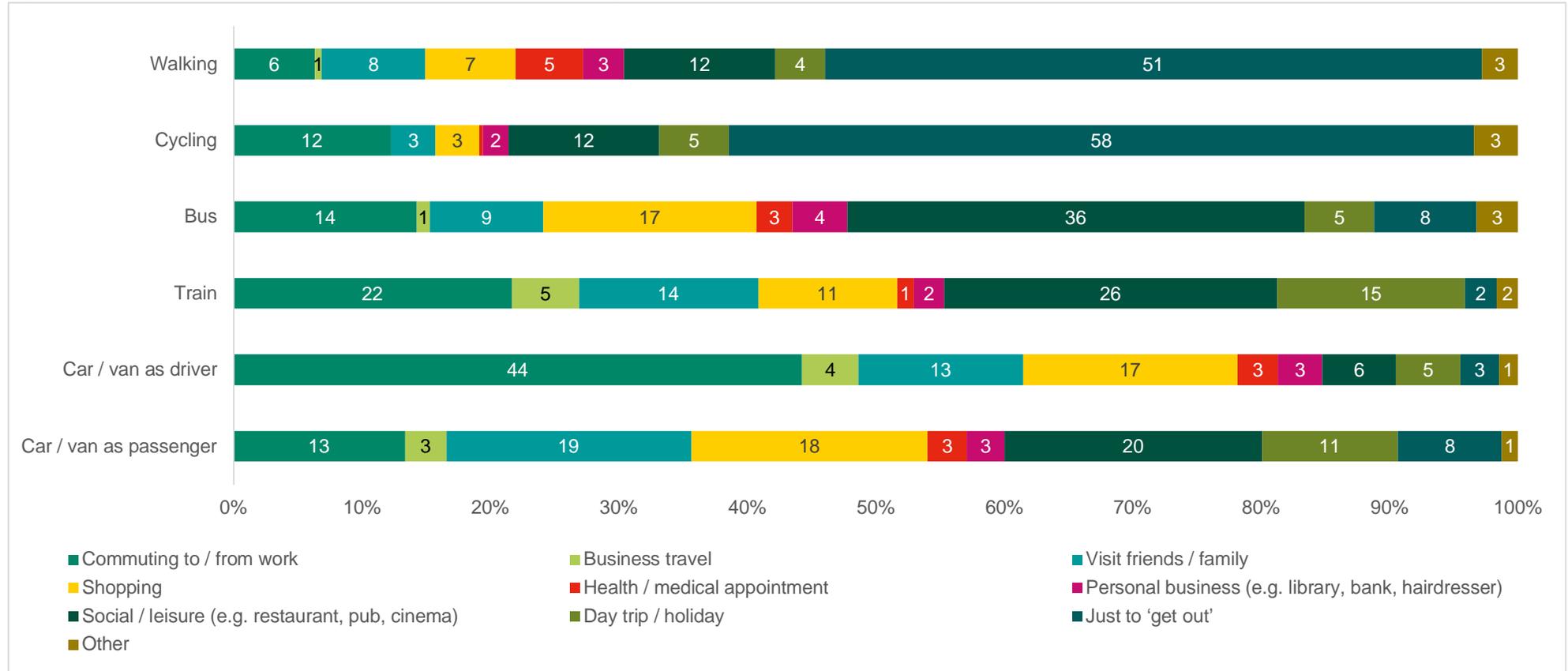
**Note: All respondents could give more than one journey purpose per mode.
Base: 1104 respondents*

In terms of their most frequent journey purpose (see **Figure 4.3**), over two fifths (44%) said they would most frequently commute to / from work as a driver of a car or van whilst 22% said the same journey purpose but by train. Over half said they would most frequently travel by cycling (58%) or walking (51%) to just 'get out'.

In addition:

- Over two thirds (68%) of the respondents who said they would commute to and from work by cycling were male compared to 32% of respondents who were female.
- However, this is the reverse when it comes to using the bus to commute to / from work as 62% of the respondents stating they would likely commute to / from work using the bus were female whilst only 38% were male.

Figure 4.3: B3 - Most frequent journey purpose by mode when using the corridor

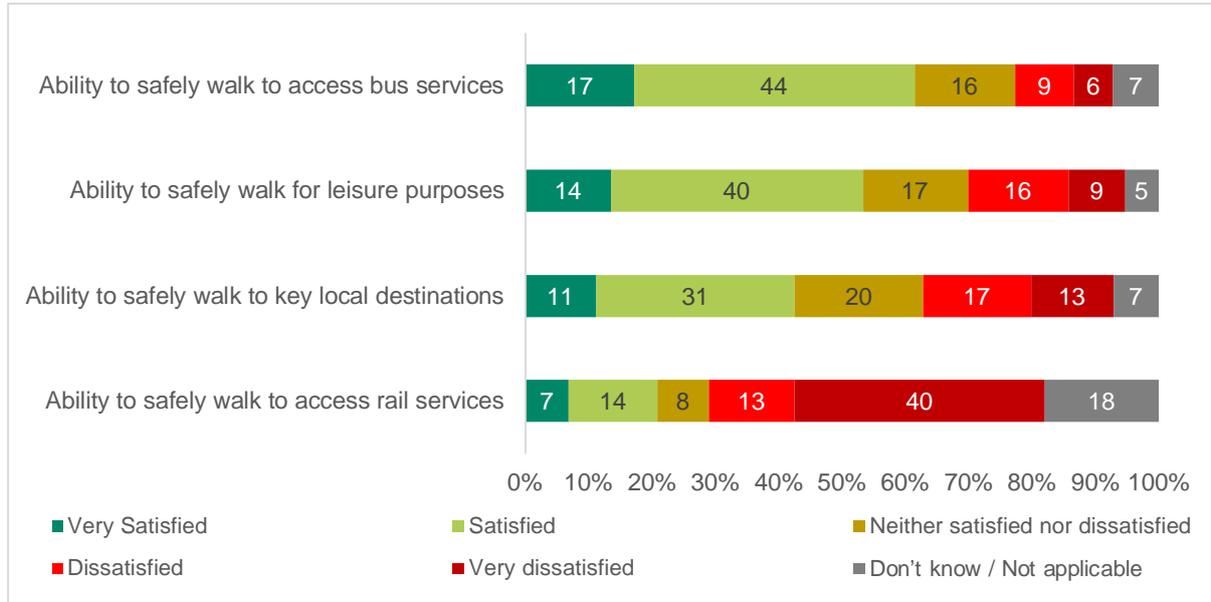


Base: 1104 respondents

4.2 Views on Walking

Respondents were asked about how satisfied they are with facilities for walking in their area (**Figure 4.4**). Over three fifths (61%) of respondents were either satisfied (44%) or very satisfied (17%) with their ability to safely walk to access bus services in their area. This was closely followed by 54% of respondents who stated that they were either satisfied (40%) or very satisfied (14%) with their ability to safely walk for leisure purposes in their area. However, over half of the respondents (53%) stated that they were either very dissatisfied (40%) or dissatisfied (13%) with their ability to safely walk to access rail services.

Figure 4.4: C1 - Satisfaction with facilities for walking in their area



Base: 1104 respondents

Of those who were dissatisfied with their ability to safely walk to access bus services²:

- 16% (n=48) of those located in Newtonhill were very dissatisfied;
- 38% of 65+ were satisfied compared to 34% aged 16-34 and 30% aged 35-64; and
- 25% aged 16-34 were dissatisfied.

As is highlighted further in **Figure 4.5**, it is possible that those expressing dissatisfaction in some areas (e.g. Drumlithie and Muchalls) is related to the lack of bus services operating via these communities and therefore accessing bus services would require walking to other communities, which could be a significant distance away in some cases.

Of those who were dissatisfied with their ability to safely walk to access rail services²:

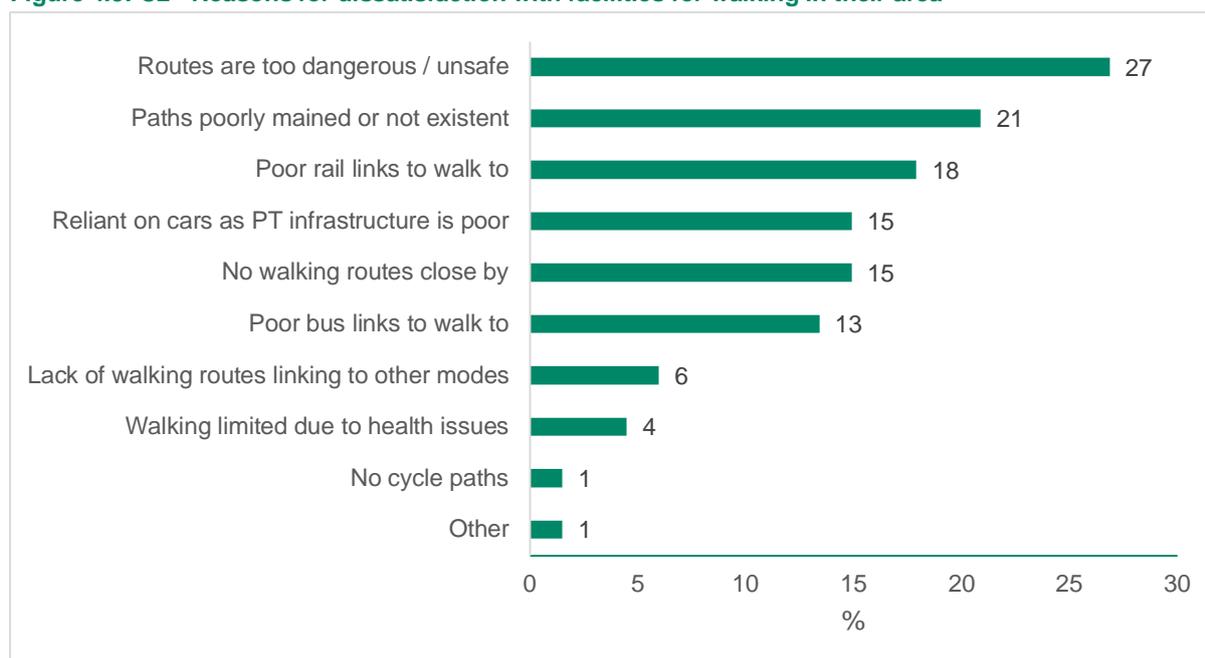
- 71% (n=17) of those located in Muchalls were very dissatisfied;
- 48% (n=143) of those located in Newtonhill were very dissatisfied; and
- 47% aged 16-34 were very dissatisfied.

As is highlighted further in **Figure 4.5**, it is possible that those expressing dissatisfaction in some areas (e.g. Muchalls and Newtonhill) is related to the lack of rail services operating via these communities and therefore accessing rail services would require walking to other communities, which could be a significant distance away in some cases.

² Please note that there are small sizes for some of the locations so please treat the results accordingly.

7% (n=67) of respondents provided reasons for dissatisfaction with the facilities for walking in their local area. The main reasons why respondents were dissatisfied can be seen in **Figure 4.5** below.

Figure 4.5: C2 - Reasons for dissatisfaction with facilities for walking in their area



Base: 67 respondents

Comments included:

- Routes being unsafe or too dangerous (27%, n=18):
 - *“A lot of walks involve the A92 which is not safe, alternatively you have to walk through fields.”*
 - *“Lack of safe walking area when no pavement exists due to potholes and collapsed verges. Fordoun railway bridge still not adapted to permanent traffic lights and widened footpath.”*
 - *“There are no safe routes to walk out of Fettercairn. I’d love a track between Fettercairn and Laurencekirk.”*
- Paths poorly maintained / non-existent (21%, n=14):
 - *“Roads too busy, pavements in poor condition.”*
 - *“Paths in and around the areas are poor - very dangerous with numerous areas very close to mains roads dual carriageways and A trunk roads. The quality of the path either doesn't exist or is in very bad condition. There should be a green zone connection town. Also, in each town there should also be a Green route that completely separates the pedestrian / cyclist disabled vehicle from Cars and dangerous roads.”*
 - *“Access to most other transport infrastructure is very poor - no pavements or poorly maintained pavements/paths. Clear off-roads paths not well designed or sign-posted.”*
- Poor walking routes to link up with rail services (18%, n=12):
 - *“Currently, it doesn't work as nothing is joined up...”*
 - *“Poor lightning and lack of pavements. Train station too far away at Portlethen.”*

32% (n=353) provided further comments about walking facilities in their area, as summarised in **Figure 4.6** below.

Figure 4.6: C3 - Other comments on facilities for walking in their area



Base: 353 respondents

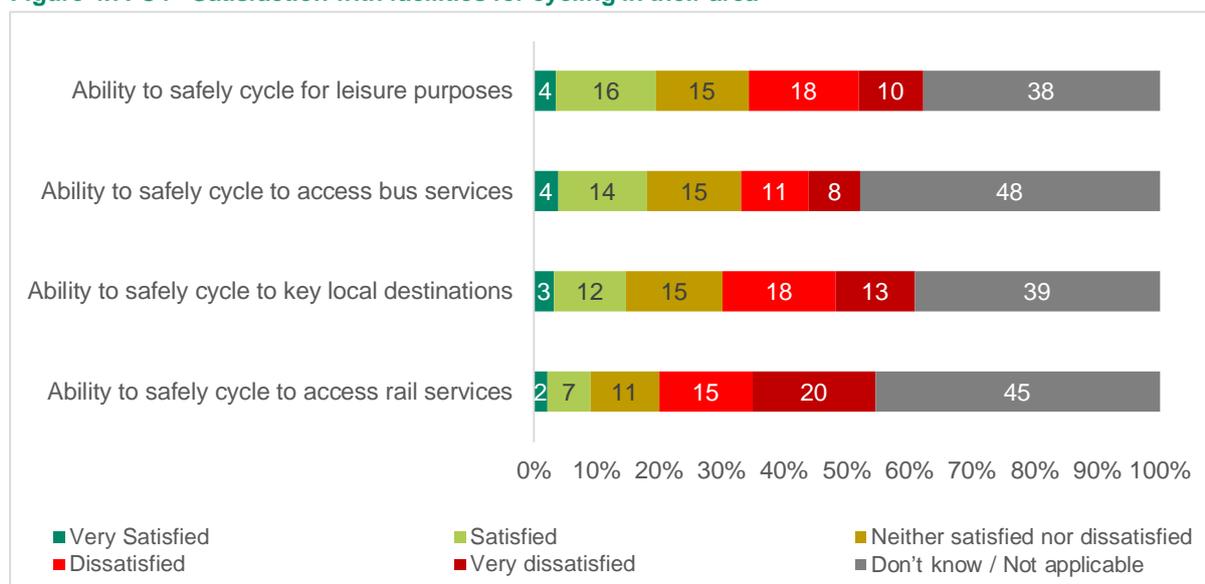
Comments included:

- Routes are not safe (41%, n=145):
 - *“Need pavement between Marywell and gateway business park. At the moment you have to walk along the road and nearly get knocked down by cars, lorries, and buses. Need streetlights too.”*
 - *“There is only one place to safely cross the A92, which restricts safe walking routes. Walking alongside the A92 feels unsafe as the footpath is so close to the traffic and no safety barrier. The Nortrail used to allow walking from Stonehaven through to Aberdeen but has fallen into disrepair and is no longer possible.”*
 - *“Condition of path to Newtonhill bay is dangerous - an accident waiting to happen. The whole path needs to be fixed like done recently at the bottom. The steps are too high.”*
- More / improved walking routes needed (26%, n=92):
 - *“A walking route and/or cycle path from Fordoun village to Laurencekirk along old Aberdeen road would encourage healthier lifestyles and encourage safe cycling in summer months reducing road traffic for local commuting.”*
 - *“Walking in my immediate area has plenty of coastal leisure walks. Walking to commute is fine going north to Portlethen, but the footpath south past Bridge of Muchalls disappears which, given the A92 is a very busy road, would make such a pedestrian journey very difficult, and possibly dangerous.”*
- Routes are poorly maintained / non-existent (24%, n=85):
 - *“Walking locally is very much the lowest form of transport, with no funding of quality or indeed barely safe options it’s no wonder that people know and feel that the Car is King. This is desperately sad and needs to be changed.”*
 - *“The paths and surrounding environment could be better maintained.”*
 - *“This area of Aberdeenshire is very poor on maintaining paths. Having travelled to other areas of Scotland there are so many path networks. Ok some are Forestry Commission etc, but I have seen Council networks paths in place in cities and other shires.”*

4.3 Views on Cycling

Respondents were asked about how satisfied they are with facilities for cycling in their area (**Figure 4.7**). Only a fifth (20%) of respondents were either satisfied (16%) or very satisfied (4%) with their ability to safely cycle for leisure purposes in their area. This was similar to the 18% of respondents who stated that they were either satisfied (14%) or very satisfied (4%) with their ability to safely cycle to access bus services in their area. However, over a quarter of the respondents (35%) stated that they were either very dissatisfied (20%) or dissatisfied (15%) with their ability to safely cycle to access rail services. It is also worth noting that for between 38% and 48% of respondents on each question, the respondent stated, “don't know / not applicable”.

Figure 4.7: C4 - Satisfaction with facilities for cycling in their area



Base: 1104 respondents

Of those respondents who were satisfied about their ability to safely cycle for leisure purposes:

- 20% were males and 12% were females; and
- 19% were working compared with 12% who were not working.

Of those respondents who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied about their ability to safely cycle for leisure purposes:

- 18% who have access to a car / van for personal use were dissatisfied compared with 4% of those who do not have access;
- 12% aged 35-64 were dissatisfied compared with 7% aged 16-34 and 5% aged 65 and over; and
- 60% aged 65 and over were very dissatisfied compared with 36% aged 16-34 and 33% aged 35-64.

Of those respondents who were satisfied or very satisfied about their ability to safely cycle to access bus services:

- 17% of male respondents were satisfied compared to 12% of female respondents; and
- 21% aged 16-34 were satisfied compared to 14% aged 35-64 and 7% aged 65 and over.

Of those respondents who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied about their ability to safely cycle to access bus services:

- 12% aged 35-64 were dissatisfied compared to 11% aged 16-34 and 5% aged 65 and over;
- 33% based in Aberdeen and 25% based in Muchalls were dissatisfied.

Of those respondents who were satisfied or very satisfied about their ability to safely cycle to key local destinations:

- 15% were males compared to 9% females who were satisfied; and
- 6% aged 16-34 were very satisfied compared to 3% aged 35-64 and 2% of those aged 65 and over.

Of those respondents who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied about their ability to safely cycle to key local destinations:

- 18% who have access to a car / van for personal use were dissatisfied compared with 4% of those who do not have access;
- 12% aged 35-64 were dissatisfied compared with 7% aged 16-34 and 5% of those aged 65 and over; and
- 60% of those aged 65 and over were very dissatisfied compared with 36% aged 16-34 and 33% aged 35-64.

Of those respondents who were satisfied about their ability to safely cycle to access rail services:

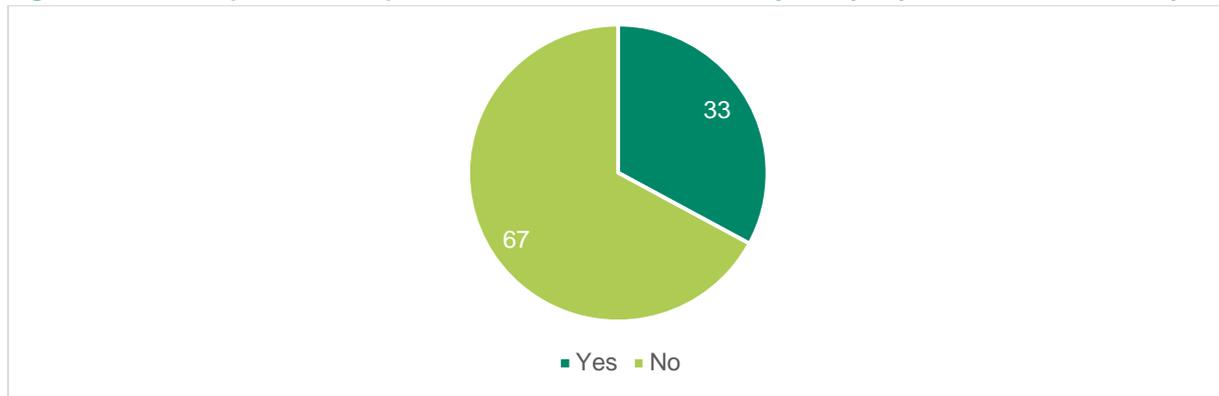
- 9% were males and 5% were females; and
- 36% of respondents based in Stonehaven and 22% of those based in Laurencekirk said they were satisfied.

Of those respondents who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied about their ability to safely cycle to access rail services:

- 24% of males compared with 16% of females were very dissatisfied;
- 22% aged 35-64 were very dissatisfied compared with 18% aged 16-34 and 11% of those aged 65 and over; and
- 21% of those living in Newtonhill were very dissatisfied.

A third (33%) of respondents stated there are journeys they would like to make by bike but are currently unable to (**Figure 4.8**). There were more males than females who said there are journeys they would like to make by bike but can't (38% of males compared to 28% of females).

Figure 4.8: C5 - Proportion of respondents who would like to make journeys by bike but can't currently

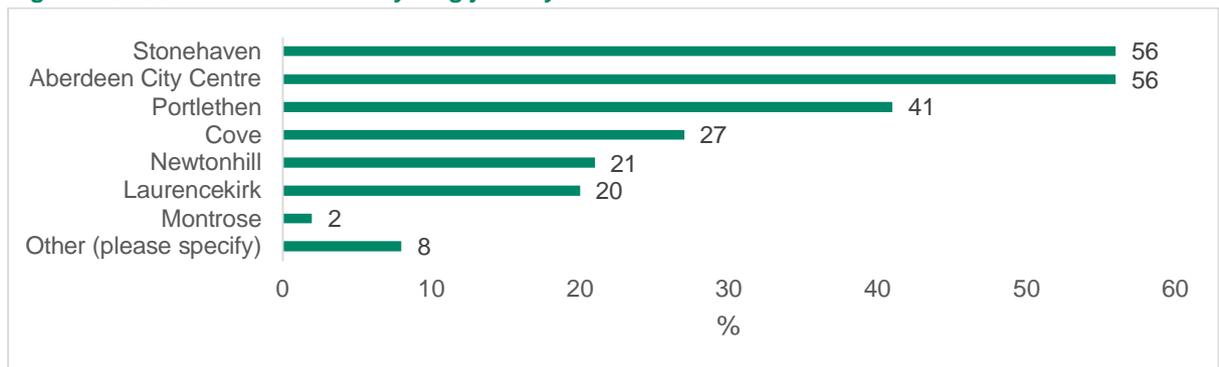


Base: 1104 respondents

Respondents who said there were journeys they would like to make by bike but can't were then asked the locations of the journeys they would like to make (**Figure 4.9**). Over half of the respondents (56% each respectively) mentioned journeys to Aberdeen or Stonehaven whilst a further 41% mentioned journeys to Portlethen.

- 70% of those who live in Cove would like to be able to cycle into Aberdeen City Centre; and
- 80% of those who live in Newtonhill would like to be able to cycle into Stonehaven.

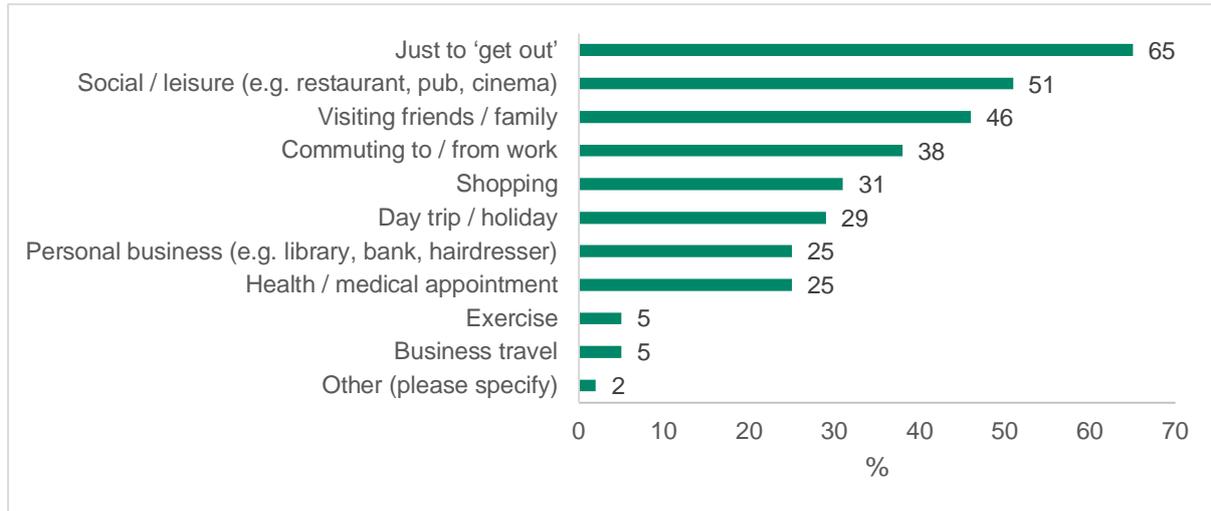
Figure 4.9: C6 - Locations these cycling journeys would be to



Base: 363 respondents

When asked what the purpose of these journeys would be, over three fifths of respondents (65%) stated these journeys would be just to 'get out' whilst over half (51%) said the trips would be for social or leisure reasons (Figure 4.10).

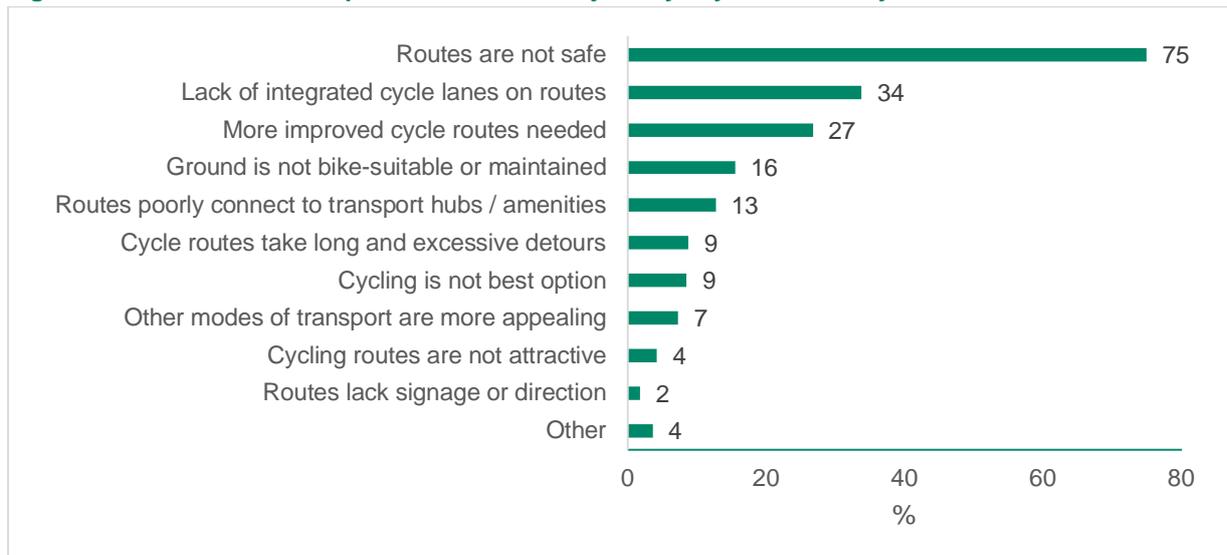
Figure 4.10: C7 - Journey purpose of the cycling journeys



Base: 363 respondents

Almost a third (30%, n=328) of respondents gave a reason as to why they said they cannot make journeys by bike currently. The reasons why respondents cannot make journeys by bike can be seen in Figure 4.11 below.

Figure 4.11: C8 - Reasons respondents can't make journeys by bike currently



Base: 328 respondents

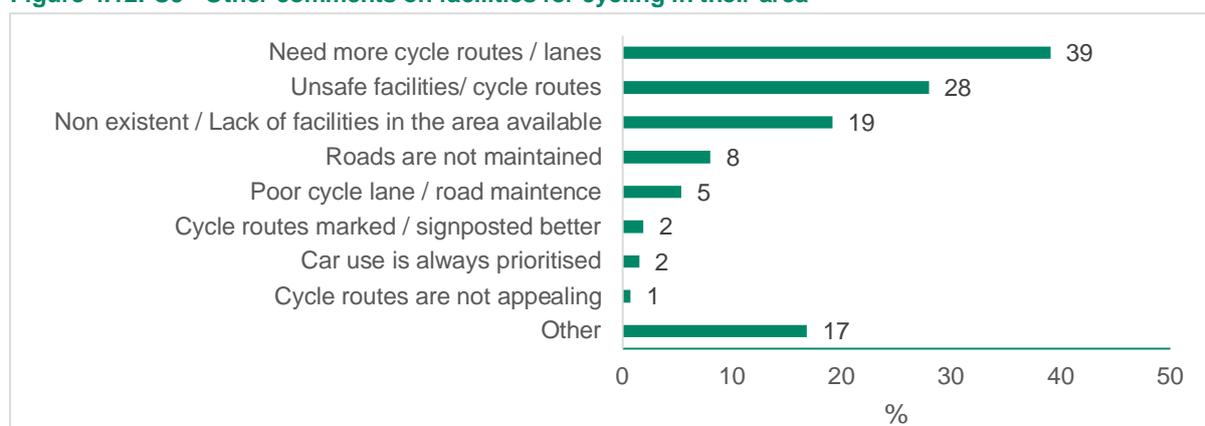
Comments included:

- Routes are not safe (75%, n=246):
 - *“Unsafe to travel by bike, I got rid of my bike when I moved to the Aberdeen area. Limited cycle lanes (most overlapped by car lane), inability to cycle slowly on pavements forcing us onto the road, drivers are not aware of cyclists, or even when aware, road layouts provide limited forward visibility. I will not take my child out cycling in those scenarios.”*
 - *“The only route is alongside the A92. There should be a proper route away from the A92. It's just not safe in my opinion.”*
- Lack of integrated cycle lanes on routes (34%, n=112):
 - *“Not comfortable cycling on busy roads and to my knowledge there are no existing cycle routes where you don't have to share the road with cars. I would prefer a lane solely for cyclists.”*

- *“There is NO CYCLE path along the A90 between Newtonhill, where I live, and Stonehaven. The grass verge is very dangerous and stops my grandsons even attempting to visit me.”*
- More improved cycle routes needed (27%, n=89):
 - *“No surfaced footway/cycleway between Den of Logie and Muchalls bends on east side of A92. It is reasonably good north of this. Section needing improved is only usable by MTB. Plans exist for this upgrade, just do it.”*
 - *“Because there is no good cycle path for quite a long section along the A92 - from Muchalls nearly to Stonehaven. Following the recommended cycle route is nearly twice the distance.”*
 - *“In Aberdeen, you can’t safely cycle with children to a place as there is no segregation of traffic. Also, the networks of cycles routes are disjointed and not connected. There is no clear route to Stonehaven from Aberdeen.”*

24% (n=261) provided further comments about cycling facilities in their area, as summarised in **Figure 4.12** below.

Figure 4.12: C9 - Other comments on facilities for cycling in their area



Base: 261 respondents

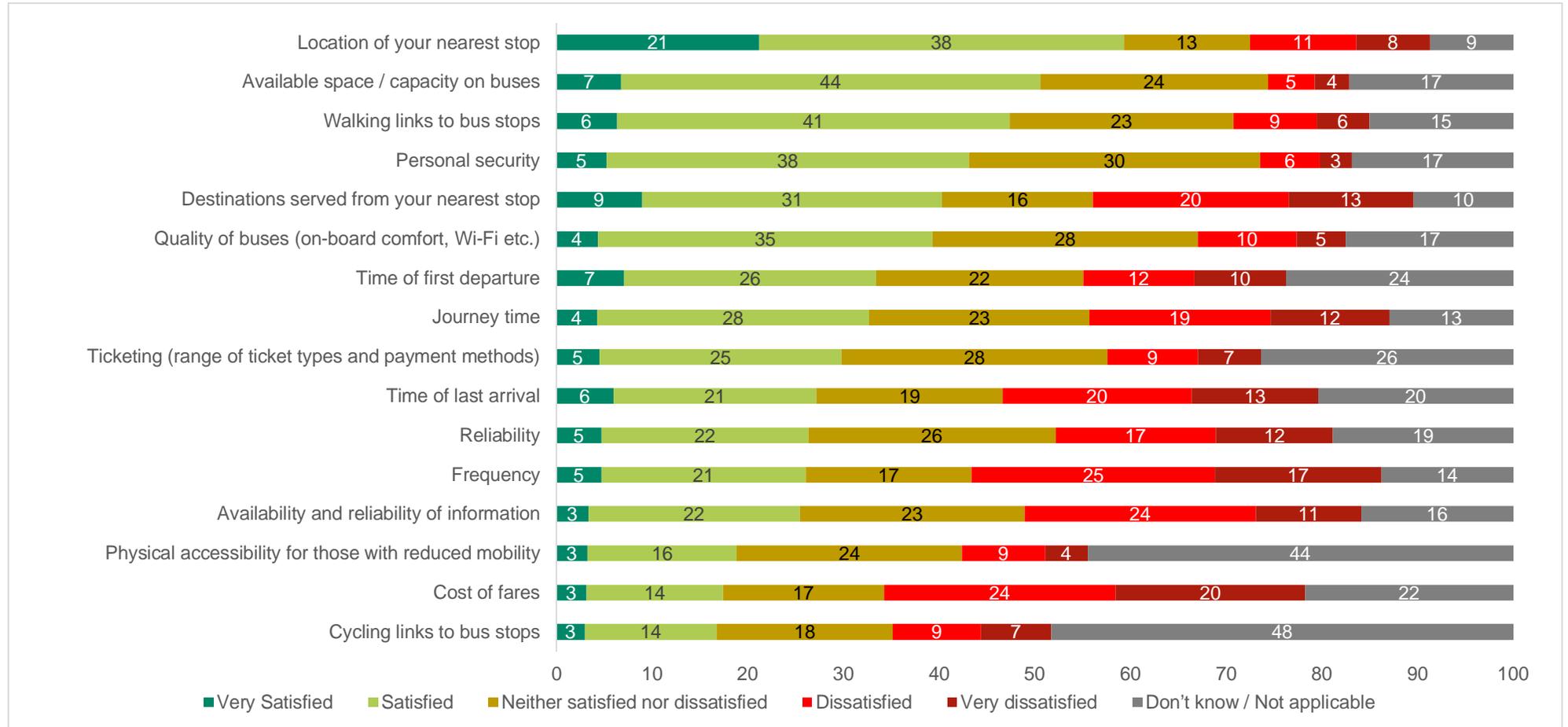
Comments included:

- Need more cycle routes / lanes (39%, n=102):
 - *“There are no suitable cycle paths in the area. The country roads inland of the A92 are usually fine but the A92 itself is not suitable for cyclists.”*
 - *“Need a dedicated cycle lane along the whole corridor, especially at junctions/roundabouts. If £1bn was available for the AWPR, why not money for cycling.”*
 - *“Better cycle paths or cycle ways would improve the safety of cyclists.”*
- Unsafe facilities / cycle routes (28%, n=73):
 - *“I don’t feel safe cycling anywhere locally as there is too much traffic.”*
 - *“Cycling involves having to cycle along the footpath on the A92. I would love safer routes so that my children could also join me and feel safer if we weren’t next to cars traveling very fast.”*
 - *“Cycling facilities are an afterthought and often actually dangerous: What is the point of bicycle lanes that randomly end when the road narrows, or parking spaces start? Why do cyclists need to give way at all intersections, even when they are going straight on? Make cycling the safe and faster choice for city journeys, by turning narrow roads into one-way or dead-ends for cars, but two-way and through for bicycles.”*
- Facilities are poor / non-existent (19%, n=50):
 - *“They are pretty non-existent & any parts that do kind of exist don’t actually join to anything else where they mostly give priority to motor vehicles “*
 - *“There are no specific facilities for cycling, other than existing (main) roads used by irate car drivers!”*
 - *“They don’t exist. Throughout my life, I have been envious of citizens in other western European countries who have long enjoyed dedicated, safe cycling facilities as a matter of course. ”*

4.4 Views on Buses

Respondents were asked about their views on buses and the different attributes associated with passenger satisfaction when travelling by bus (**Figure 4.13**). Over half of the respondents (59%) were either satisfied (38%) or very satisfied (21%) with the location of their nearest bus stop whilst 44% said they were either very dissatisfied (20%) or dissatisfied (24%) with the cost of bus fares.

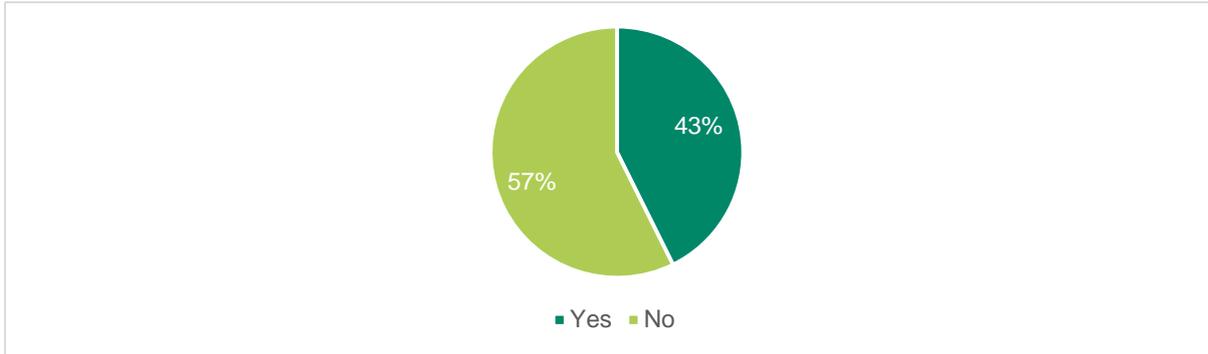
Figure 4.13: C10 - Satisfaction with Buses



Base: 1104 respondents

43% of respondents said there are journeys they want to make by bus but can't compared to 57% who said there are not (Figure 4.14). 58% of respondents from Laurencekirk said there are and 49% of females said that there are compared to only 35% of males.

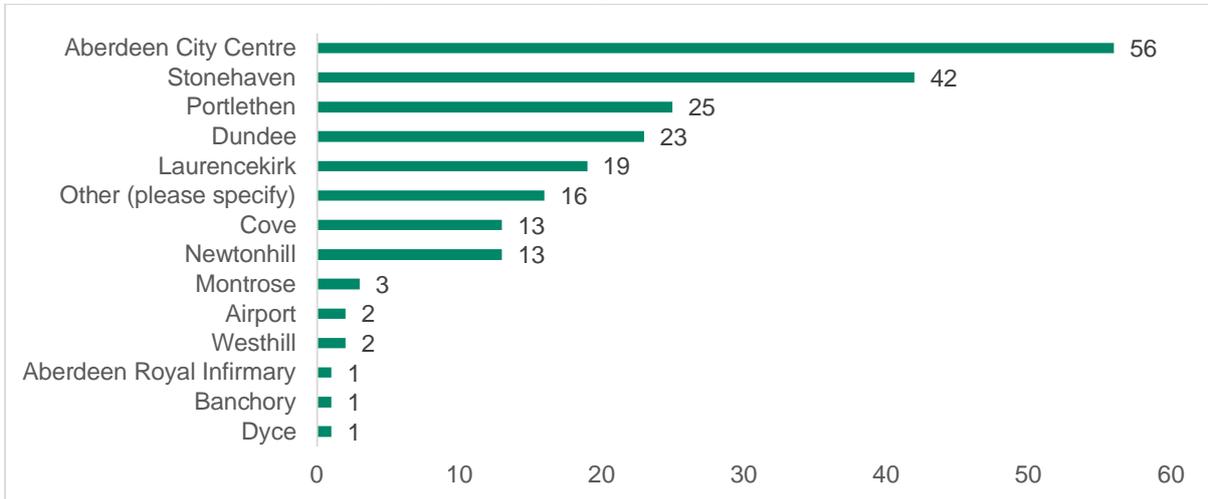
Figure 4.14: C11 - Journeys they currently want to make by bus but can't



Base: 1104 respondents

Over half of the respondents who said there are journeys they want to make by bus but can't want to make journeys to Aberdeen City Centre (56%) whilst 42% want to be able to make trips to Stonehaven by bus (Figure 4.15).

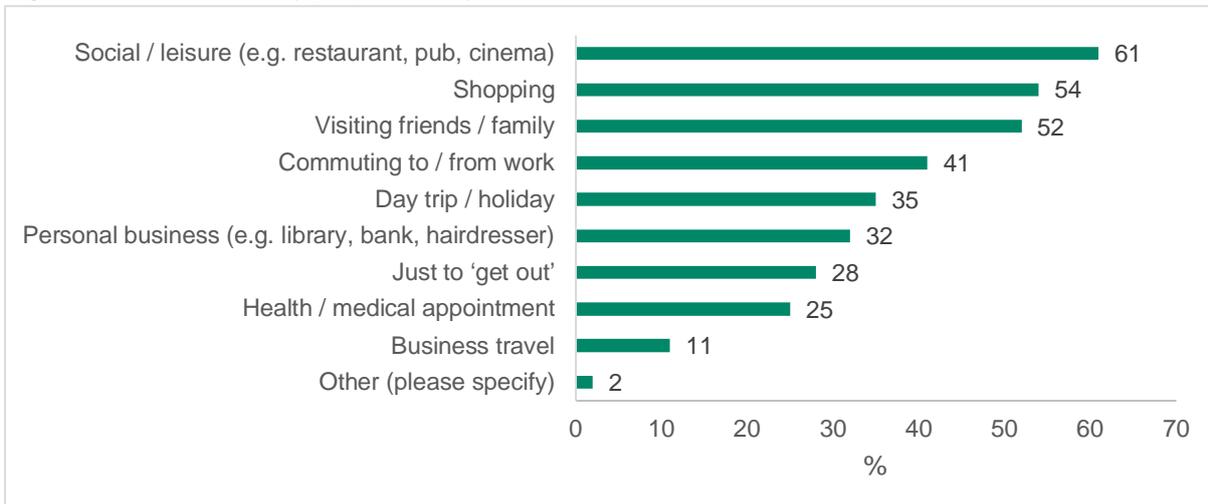
Figure 4.15: C12 - Locations they want to travel to by bus but can't



Base: 471 respondents

For these trips, over three fifths (61%) want to be able to make trips by bus to locations in order to go out for social or leisure reasons whilst 54% want to be able to use the bus to access locations for shopping purposes (Figure 4.16).

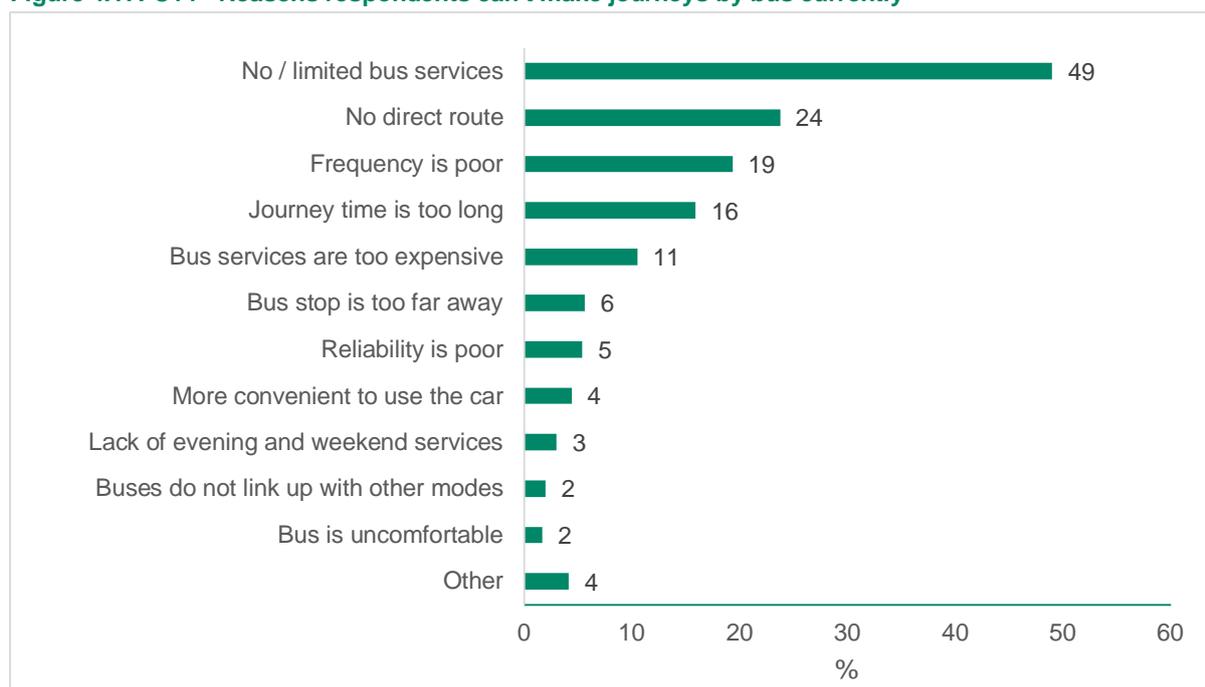
Figure 4.16: C13 - Journey purposes they want to use the bus for but can't



Base: 471 respondents

Over a third (37%, n=408) of respondents gave a reason as to why they said they cannot make journeys by bus currently. The reasons why respondents cannot make journeys by bus can be seen in **Figure 4.17** below.

Figure 4.17: C14 - Reasons respondents can't make journeys by bus currently



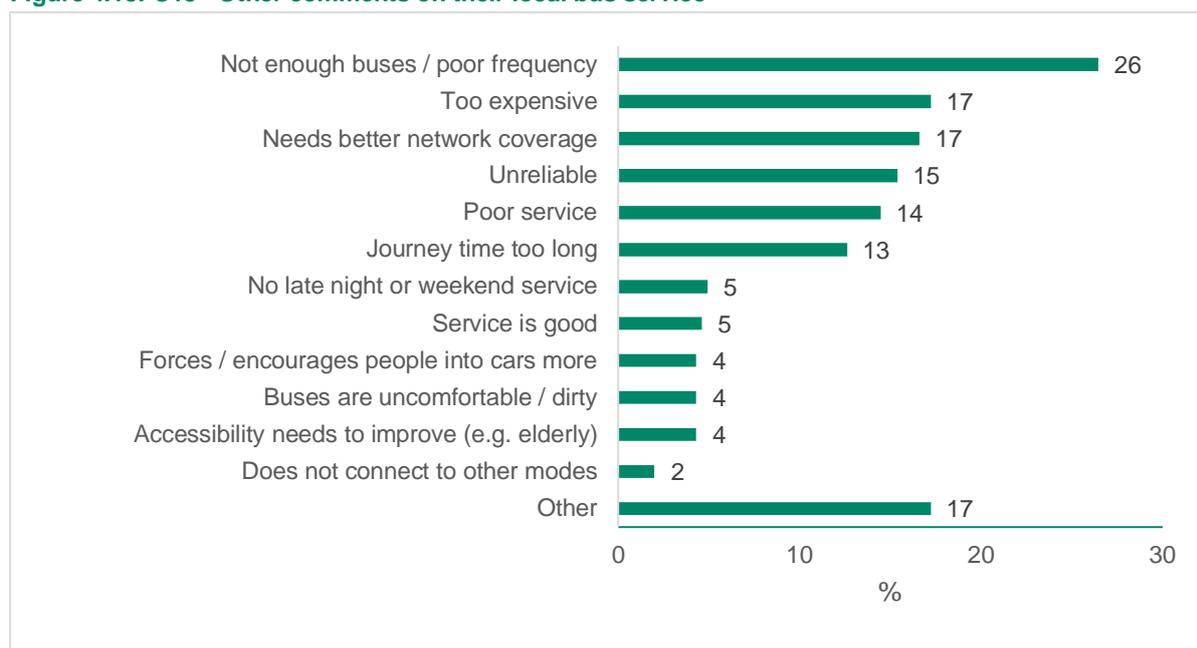
Base: 408 respondents

Comments included:

- No / limited bus services (49%, n=200):
 - *“Bus service was withdrawn even though our doctor has an additional practice in Kincorth which can't be accessed unless you drive.”*
 - *“Limited service, doesn't run often enough, takes far too long to get anywhere, timings are too late in the morning and not late enough at night. Destinations aren't great. No choice.”*
 - *“Not a bus from Laurencekirk after 6 on a weeknight and people work past 7”*
 - *“The bus service to and from Cove is absolutely shocking. For being one of the fastest growing suburbs in Aberdeen, with many new houses being built there is only one bus that serves the community. It is reasonably frequent and is fine if you want to go somewhere on that route but if you want to go to e.g., the Holburn Street area you need to take 2 buses which is ridiculous. Also, there is no late-night bus service which does not exactly encourage you to leave your car at home and use public transport. In other cities in Scotland there seems to be a variety of buses you can catch to get to your destination....”*
- No direct route available (24%, n=98):
 - *“I am not aware of buses that go directly there. I would have to go to the city centre and out again.”*
 - *“No available buses from Cove/Altness to Portlethen, Stonehaven or Dundee unless you go in other direction to city centre by bus. It adds on unwanted cost & time.”*
 - *“Too time consuming to travel into city centre by bus then wait for a connection to required destination and infrequent services.”*
- Frequency is poor / Too infrequent (19%, n=78):
 - *“The times of buses are awful, not frequent enough, and routes are too long need to be more direct.”*
 - *“There is a very infrequent bus to Stonehaven which does not stop close by.”*
 - *“There is a very limited timetable and locations are also limited. The frequency of buses has reduced in the area. As have the locations I am able to access due to reduced routes available from Cove.”*

29% (n=325) provided further comments about bus services in their area, as summarised in **Figure 4.18** below.

Figure 4.18: C15 - Other comments on their local bus service



Base: 325 respondents

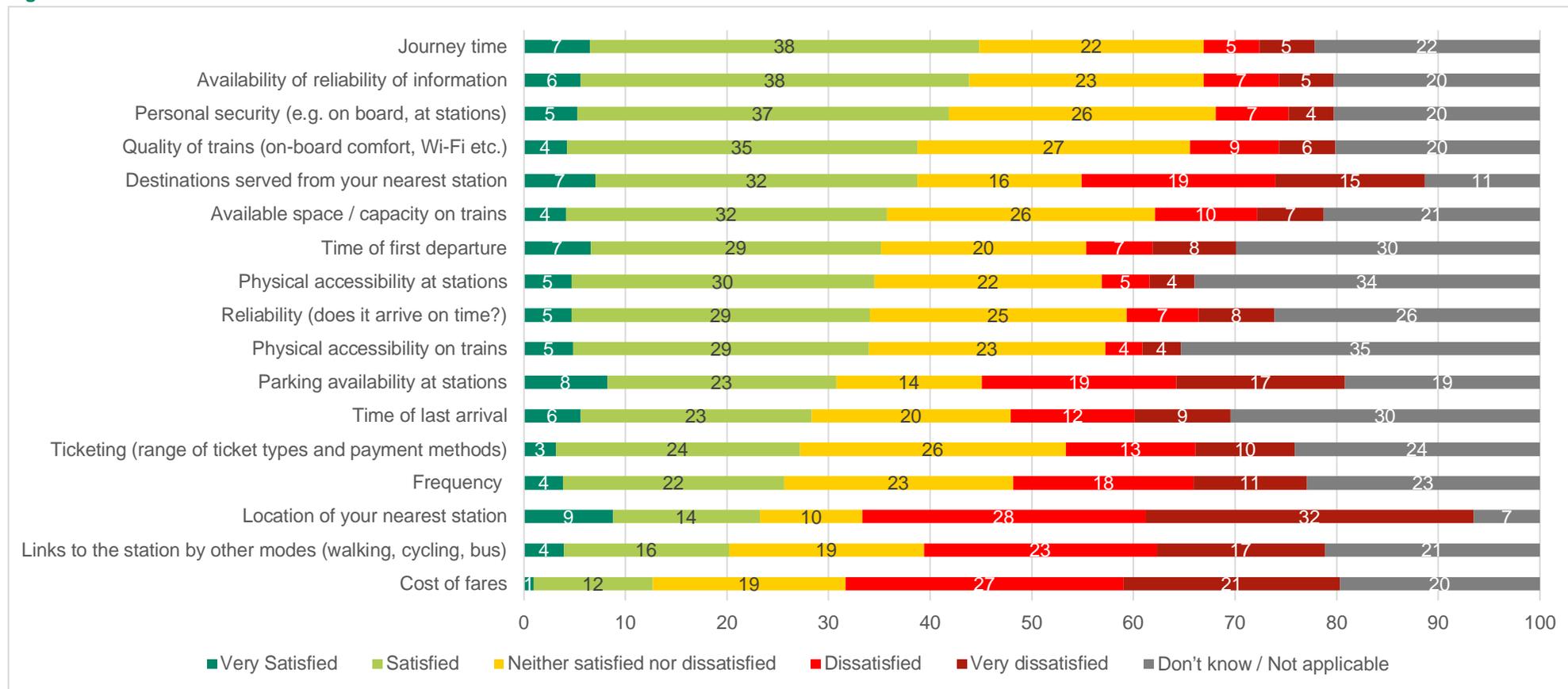
Comments included:

- Not enough buses / poor frequency (26%, n=85):
 - *“Would not use the bus service as too infrequent and does not stop near my house.”*
 - *“The frequency could be improved and if that was the case more people would leave their cars at home and use the bus.”*
 - *“Needs to be more regular and faster to make it worth using for me.”*
 - *“Far too infrequent - city-centre service is every half hour. Needs to be every 10 minutes minimum.”*
- Fares too expensive (17%, n=55):
 - *“I find it very expensive for work commuting. Based on the time that it takes to commute it is very expensive. For family use it is terribly expensive. It takes far too long to reach a destination for the cost.”*
 - *“Fares need to be lowered; more destinations served.”*
 - *“Expensive and unreliable. Frequency of services going away from Aberdeen and towards Stonehaven from Portlethen are embarrassingly infrequent.”*
 - *“Cost is too expensive; I can drive and park in Aberdeen for 2 or 3 hours for less cost (including fuel) than the cost of the bus.”*
- Need a better network coverage (17%, n=55):
 - *“For some reason or other the number 21 route through Cove was altered some time ago and although the number 3 still runs through Cove it doesn't go near Holburn Street and the top end of Union Street. This is a real shame because quite a lot of Cove residents I spoke to utilised the 21 service but are now having to take two buses to access the Holburn Street area.”*
 - *“I am disappointed that considering the current issue with climate change, it is simpler and cheaper to take the car rather than the bus. Buses that service our local streets within the village are extremely old single or double decker diesel vehicles which are mostly empty, they are very noisy, smelly and heavy which is adversely affecting the road surface and breaking drains.”*
 - *“Local bus service into Aberdeen from Cove is excellent but to access anywhere else you need to be able to access a train station which means travelling into Aberdeen first.”*

4.5 Views on Rail

Respondents were then asked how satisfied they are with attributes of rail services along the study corridor and 45% of respondents were either very satisfied (7%) or satisfied (38%) with the journey time of trains whilst 44% said the same on the availability of reliable information (**Figure 4.19**). However, in a similar way to buses, three fifths (60%) said they were either very dissatisfied (32%) or dissatisfied (28%) with the location of the nearest station, whilst 48% of respondents said they were either dissatisfied (27%) or very dissatisfied (21%) by the cost of fares on the trains. A higher proportion of respondents aged 18-34 were very dissatisfied with physical access at stations compared with other age groups (8% compared with 4% of 35-64 year olds and 1% of those aged 65+). There were no significant differences by disability.

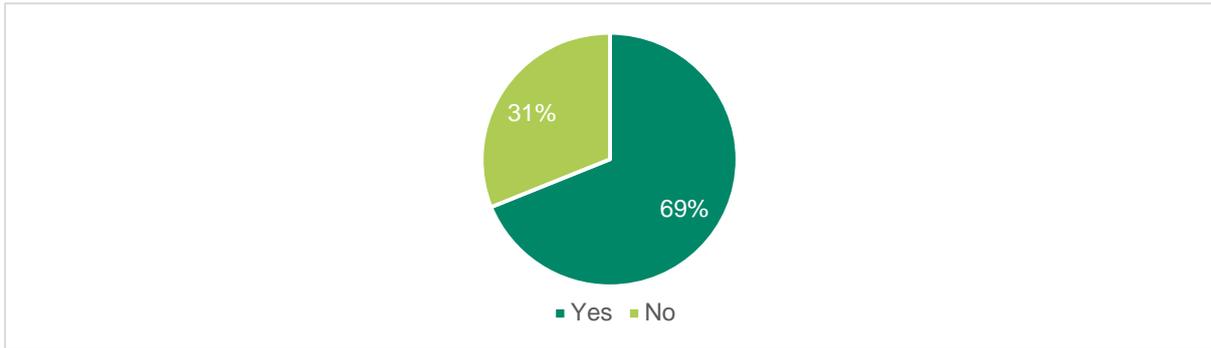
Figure 4.19: C16 - Satisfaction with rail



Base: 1104 respondents

Over two thirds (69%) said there are journeys they would like to make by rail but can't at the moment (**Figure 4.20**).

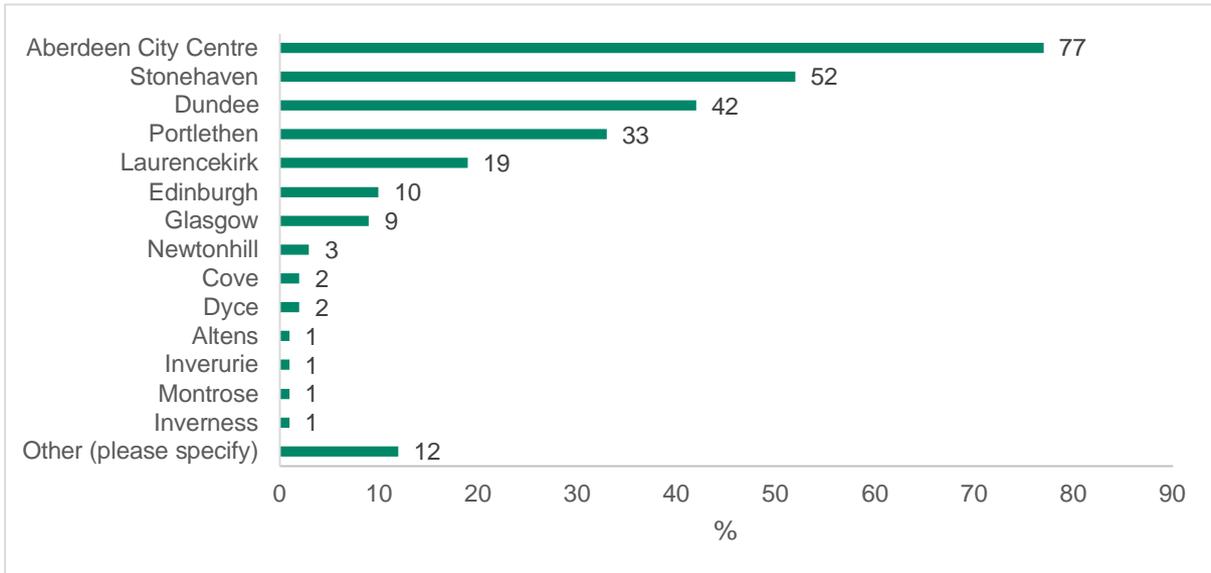
Figure 4.20: C17 - Journeys they currently want to make by rail but can't



Base: 1104 respondents

Aberdeen (77%), Stonehaven (52%) and Dundee (42%) were common locations respondents wanted to visit by train but can't (**Figure 4.21**).

Figure 4.21: C18 - Locations they want to use the train to get to but can't



Base: 780 respondents

For these journeys, over three quarters (77%) want to be able to make trips by train to locations in order to go out for social or leisure reasons whilst 74% want to be able to use the train to access locations for shopping purposes (**Figure 4.22**).

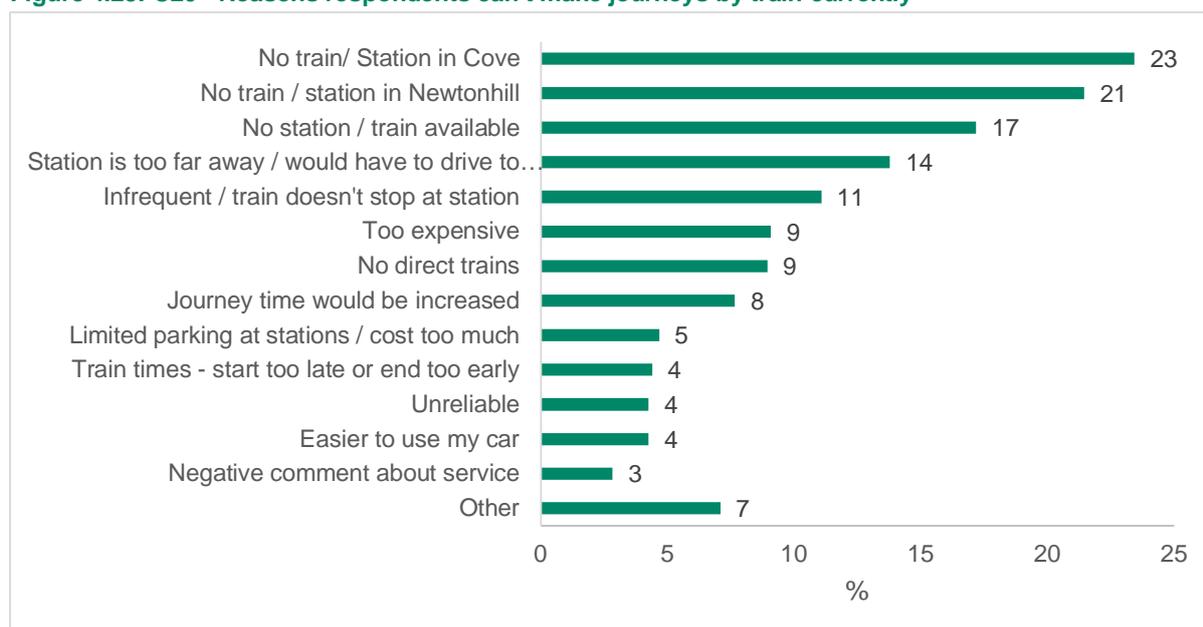
Figure 4.22: C19 - Journey purposes they want to use the train for but can't



Base: 780 respondents

Almost two thirds (64%, n=704) of respondents gave a reason as to why they said they cannot make journeys by train currently. The reasons why respondents cannot make journeys by train can be seen in **Figure 4.23**.

Figure 4.23: C20 - Reasons respondents can't make journeys by train currently



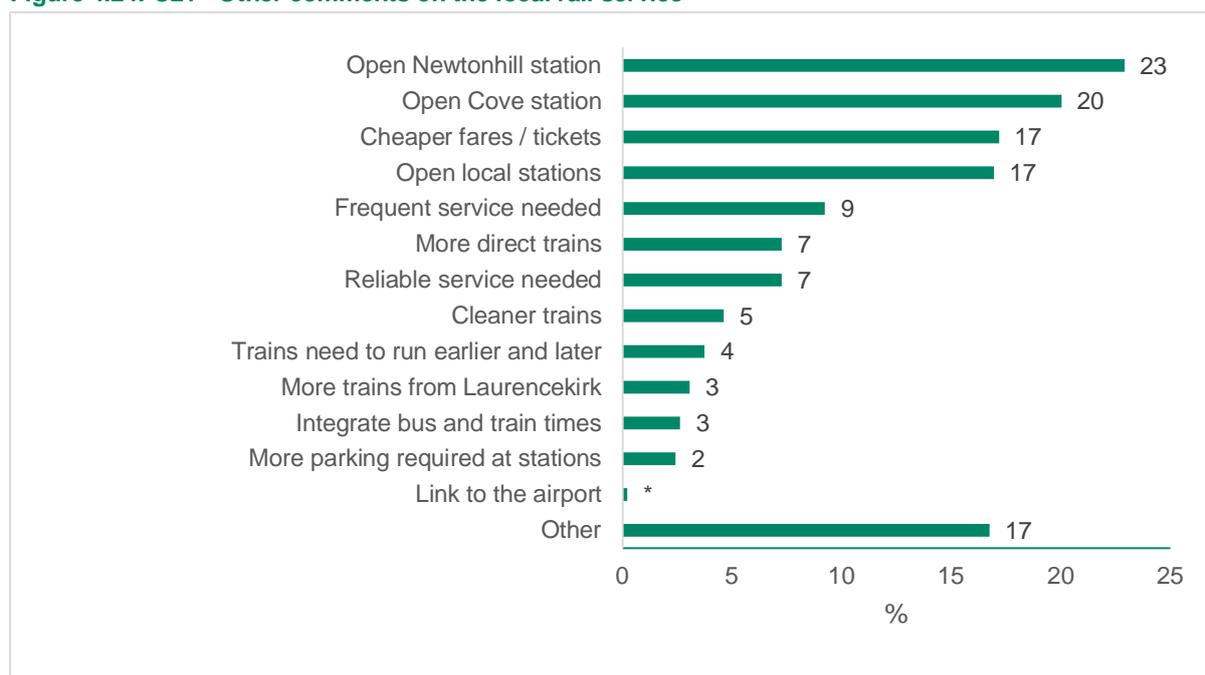
Base: 704 respondents

Comments included:

- No train / station in Cove (23%, n=162):
 - *“There isn't a station at Cove. So, I can't use it. It's frustrating to see it pass quickly and I can't get on it.”*
 - *“There are no train stations in Cove meaning that other ways of travel must be used. This makes planning journeys hard and owning a car essential. If there was a train service in Cove, I would not need to own a car.”*
 - *“There is no train station in Cove, so it is pointless travelling into Aberdeen, paying for parking to then take a train to Stonehaven. I would take a train from Cove to Aberdeen rather than driving. The bus service isn't reliable from Cove.”*
- No train / station in Newtonhill (21%, n=148):
 - *“There is no train station at Newtonhill, and it is just easier to take my car than travel to Portlethen or Stonehaven to catch a train.”*
 - *“There is no station at Newtonhill and the nearest ones aren't within walking distance without going along the dual carriageway. Parking at Stonehaven railway station is minimal...”*
 - *“No local train station in Newtonhill, too much hassle to get dropped off at Portlethen or Stonehaven.”*
- No train / station available (17%, n=120):
 - *“There is no station. I live one minute from where it used to be. It closed in 1956 when the village had about 200 houses. We have now about 1500 more homes in the immediate area, if not more.”*
 - *“The nearest train station is Portlethen and not all trains stop there so it isn't a good service. Would have to go all the way into Aberdeen City Centre and there is no parking, and the bus stop is too far away from my house “*
 - *“No train station where I live - no point driving to Portlethen to get train especially if want to have a meal with a drink as would have to drive home.”*
 - *“Nearest station is Portlethen. I don't drive. Can't walk there safely. The bus is too expensive to get there and then a train.”*

41% (n=454) provided further comments about rail services in their area, as summarised in **Figure 4.24** below.

Figure 4.24: C21 - Other comments on the local rail service



Base: 454 respondents

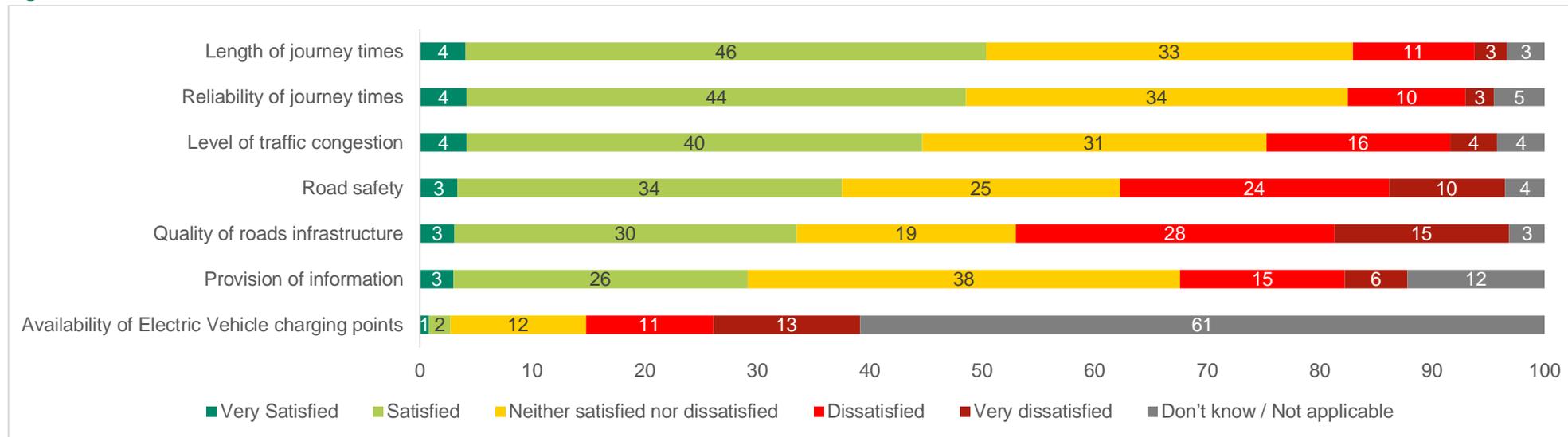
Comments included:

- Open a station at Newtonhill (23%, n=104):
 - *“It would be very good to have a train stop at Newtonhill, much quicker than the bus and much easier than some of the buses to get on and off. As an elderly resident it be very helpful. If there had been a train when I worked, I would have definitely used it.”*
 - *“Newtonhill is expanding with new houses being built in the village and also a new town being built at Chapelton. A train station would be very welcomed and I'm sure very well used if the times and frequency of the trains were good.”*
 - *“More stations including Newtonhill please. I strongly believe more local stops are needed between Dundee and Huntly. By extending the area of focus makes intercity jobs/working possible.”*
- Open a station at Cove (20%, n=91):
 - *“Cove should have a rail service it also has big hotels and near to all offices and Altens would benefit from it.”*
 - *“A station being built to facilitate the Cove community would be very helpful. Currently the nearest station is a 10-minute car journey but with very little parking.”*
 - *“A train station in Cove would be an asset to the community linking Cove to both Aberdeen, Portlethen and other surrounding areas.”*
- Have cheaper fares or tickets (17%, n=77):
 - *“Tickets can be quite expensive. Pre-pandemic trains were often not big enough to cope with passenger demand. A stop in Cove would be beneficial to the growing local community and the city generally. The stop at Portlethen could be better utilised.”*
 - *“Prohibitively expensive though a great way to travel. The limited number of stations is also a barrier.”*
 - *“Overall rail service is excellent; Cost is prohibitive £18.80 return Laurencekirk to Aberdeen is far too much.”*
 - *“Too expensive. It should be half the price it is. 2 adults £28 return for a few hours on Saturday night out etc. For not much more can stay over in a cheap hotel. Or better still make it cheaper and more trains to Stonehaven I would probably use the train 2/3 times a month for leisure.”*

4.6 Views on Road Network

Respondents were asked about their views on the road network (**Figure 4.25**). Half of all respondents (50%) were either satisfied (46%) or very satisfied (4%) with length of journey times on the road network whilst 48% were either satisfied (44%) or very satisfied (4%) with the reliability of journey times. However, 43% were either very dissatisfied (15%) or dissatisfied (28%) with the quality of the road infrastructure, 34% with road safety and 24% with the availability of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Figure 4.25: C22 - Satisfaction with the road network



Base: 1104 respondents

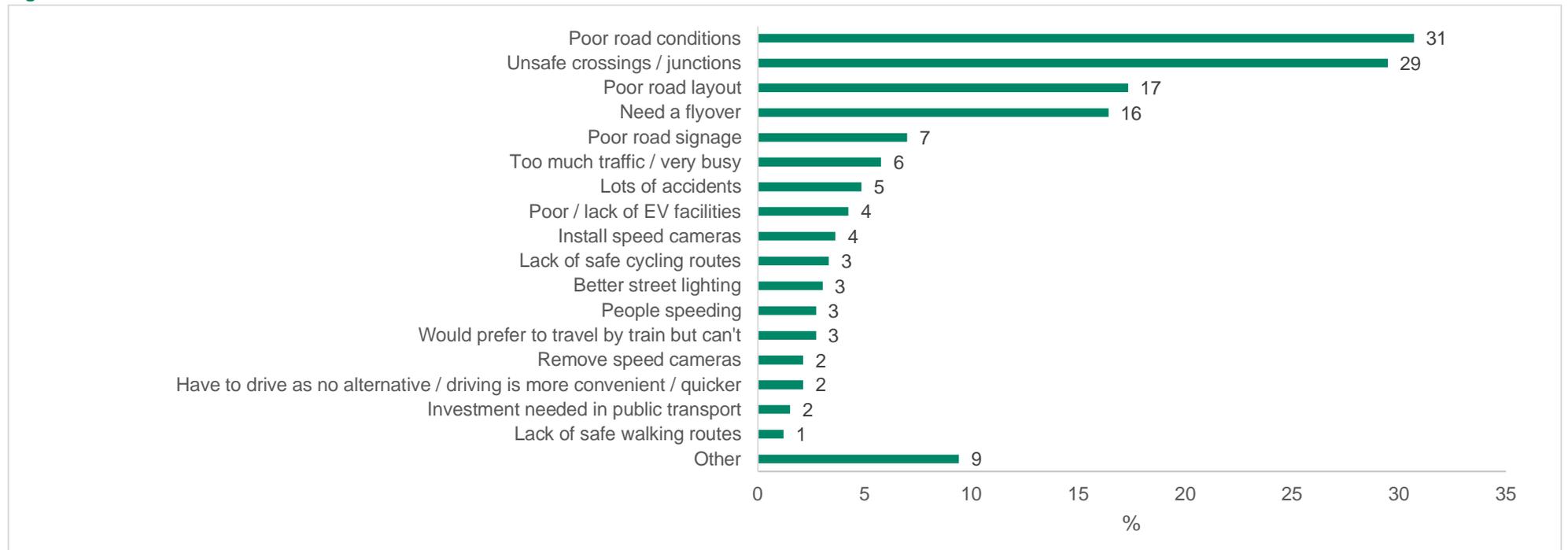
Only fourteen respondents gave comments on why they are dissatisfied with aspects of the road network along the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Corridor and those comments included:

- *“Always busy, roads are full of bumps and potholes.”*
- *“Bus and vehicle travel times are unreasonable. Very limited access to cycle. Bus is becoming expensive, and most buses are diesel which is not good for environment.”*
- *“Crossing on the A90 extremely dangerous, especially the one at Laurencekirk. Why is money being wasted on this survey when it is a well-known fact the Laurencekirk south junction is dangerous.”*
- *“No infrastructure available and the local authorities do not listen actively.”*
- *“Not enough information made available and quite often road work signs and speed signs not removed at completion.”*
- *“Road surfaces in poor condition.”*
- *“Roads are always under repair & too many cars on bad roads.”*

- *“Roads are too congested, especially at peak times, road surface is horrendous with potholes, uneven surfaces and not often gritted on time if needed. Too much road works constantly roads are shut, and roads are not any better.”*
- *“Southern access Junction to Laurencekirk and to Montrose is a death trap. Should not be allowed to stay like this.”*
- *“Speeding vehicles including HGVs on Coast Road. Nothing available on Coast Road except access to Doonies Farm & Coastal path.”*
- *“The road network is shocking and so dangerous. Crossing the motorway is literally like dicing with death some days. The lack of safety on the roads is frightening and negligent. So many accidents on the road and nothing changes. We are moving from the area closer to work because of this reason.”*
- *“The roads are not maintained by the council very well that’s on the dual carriageway and the roads in the towns and villages, far too many cars on the road and too many accidents.”*
- *“The state of the roads is appalling!”*
- *“Traffic terrible, roads terrible congestion horrendous.”*

30% (n=329) provided further comments about the road network along the corridor, as shown in **Figure 4.26**.

Figure 4.26: C24 - Other comments on the road network



Base: 329 respondents

Comments included:

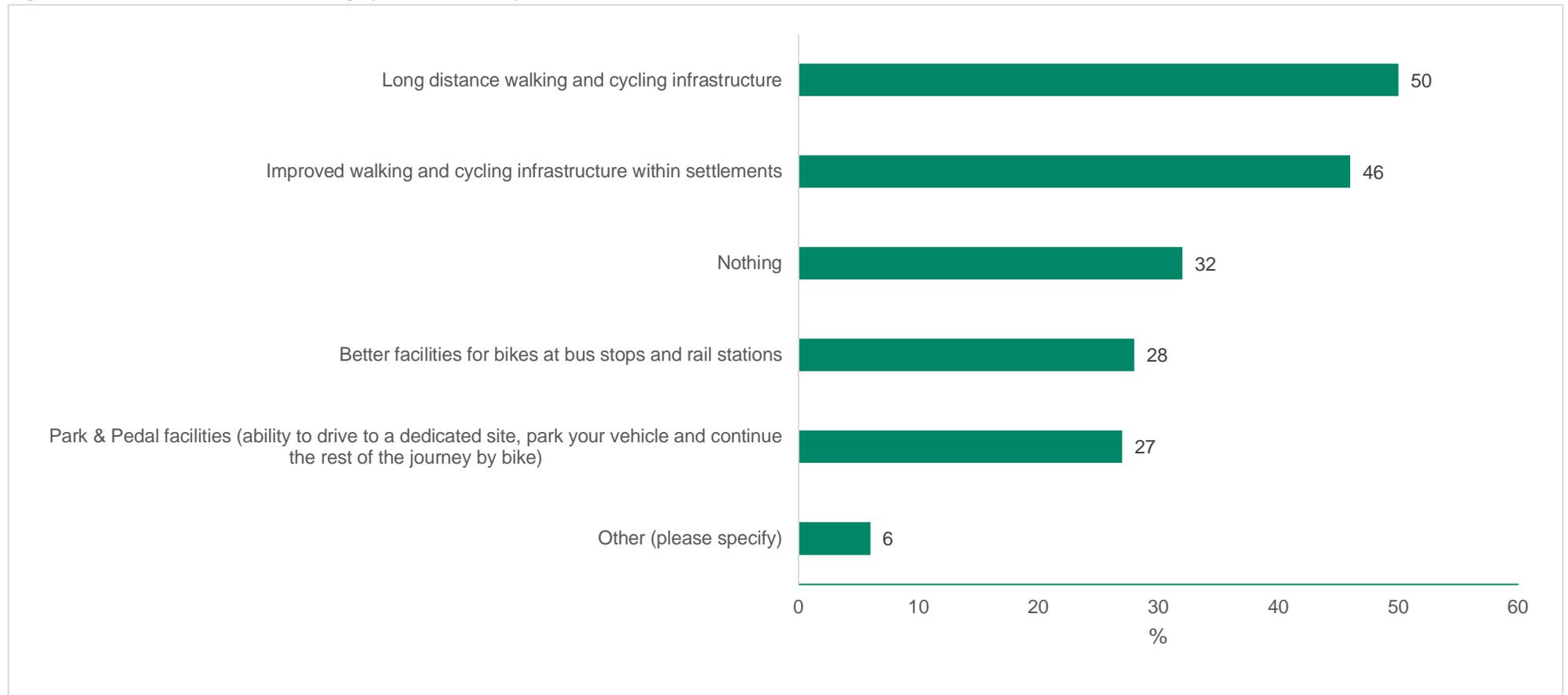
- Poor road conditions (31%, n=102):
 - *“The state of the roads is ridiculous due to potholes on most of the commonly travelled routes causing damage to vehicles and dangerous/evasive driving to avoid them.”*
 - *“The road conditions are very poor, with potholes and road surfaces being in a very poor condition.”*
 - *“State of the roads in Newtonhill area is terrible. Potholes remain unrepaired for months on end causing damage to car wheels and punctures, have highlighted this several times but still no action. Very disappointing.”*
- Unsafe junctions or crossings (29%, n=95):
 - *“The 3x main Laurencekirk entrances via A90 need to be made safer. You take your life in your hands any time you need to cross.”*
 - *“Numerous dangerous junctions. At least 2 or 3 accidents every week. Roads are full of potholes, badly maintained other than around Stonehaven where there have been years of contraflows.”*
 - *“Hate the cross junctions over the A90 as cars come speeding out to get north when going south.”*
- Poor road layout (17%, n=56):
 - *“Lack of slips roads at major junctions such as Muchalls and Laurencekirk. Joining traffic travelling at 70 mph is not advisable.”*
 - *“with only one access in and out of the village, if there is an accident on the dual carriageway, travel times can be horrendous.”*
 - *“Some sharp bends from Aberdeen to Stonehaven which are dangerous especially when raining.”*

4.7 Potential Improvements

Finally, respondents were asked about potential improvements or interventions that would encourage them to travel more sustainably in the future.

Firstly, respondents were asked what would encourage them to walk or cycle more (**Figure 4.27**) and half of the respondents said that long distance walking and cycling infrastructure was needed whilst 46% said improved walking and cycling infrastructure within settlements was needed.

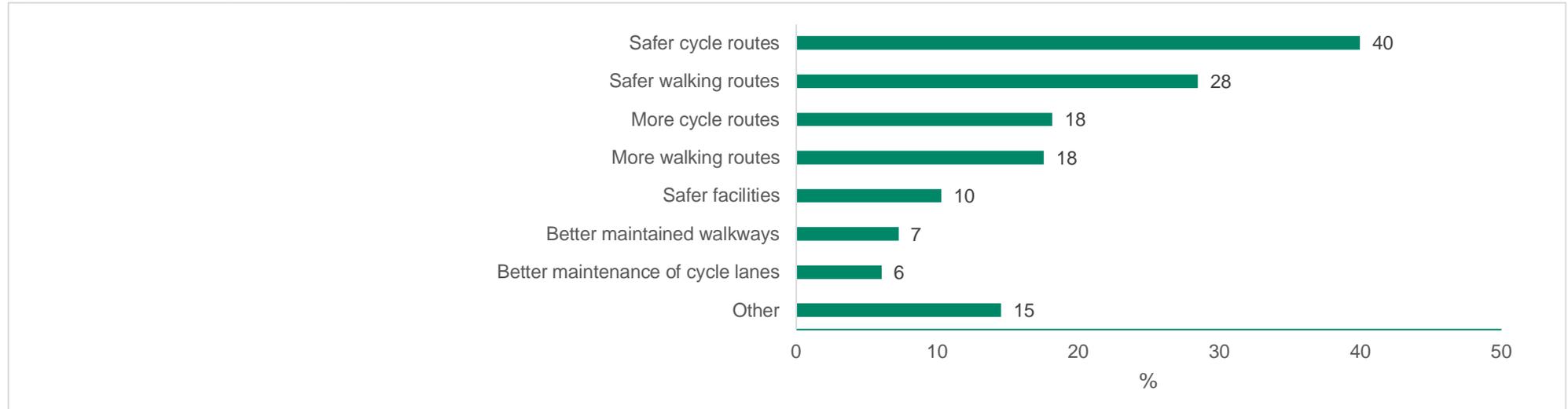
Figure 4.27: D1 - What would encourage you to walk or cycle more



Base: 1104 respondents

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments in relation to walking and cycling improvements. 15% of respondents (n=165) gave a comment with two fifths (40%) of those respondents saying they wanted safer cycle routes, whilst 28% wanted safer walking routes.

Figure 4.28: D2 – Walking and Cycling improvements



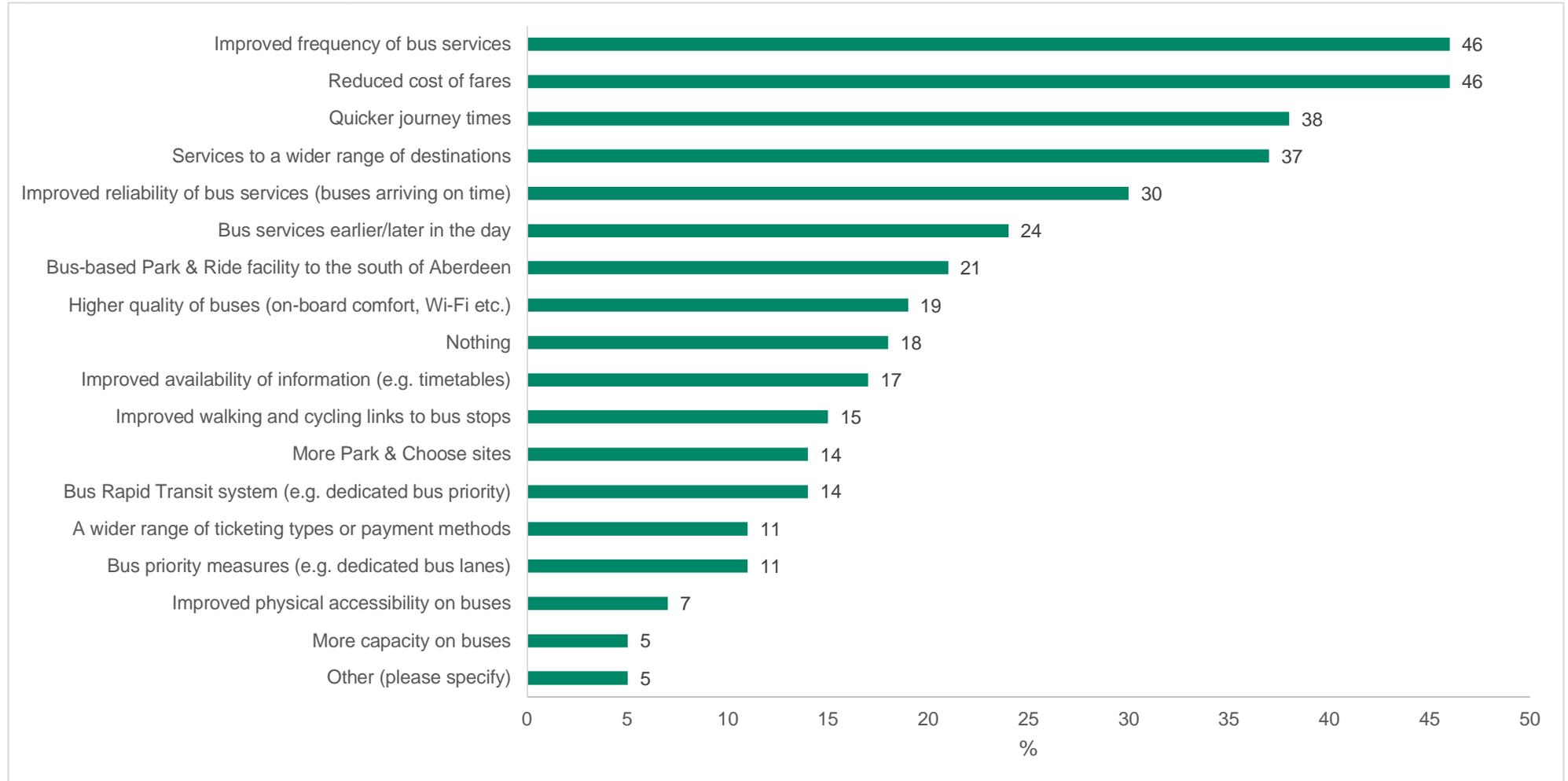
Base: 165 respondents

Comments included:

- Safer cycle routes (40%, n=66):
 - *“Segregation of bike paths from fast moving roads essential for family biking with young kids.”*
 - *“Safer footpaths/cycle routes would encourage me to walk or cycle for leisure.”*
 - *“Cycling in both the city and countryside feels unsafe without dedicated bicycle lanes.”*
 - *“Cycle tracks are vital for safety and increasing use of bikes by the public. Aberdeen area has very few cycle lanes and tracks. Better education of drivers and cyclist regarding cycle safety.”*
- Safer walking routes (28%, n=46):
 - *“Some off-road trails and tracks dedicated to walkers in rural areas would be a dream for me.”*
 - *“Safe paths, segregated from motor traffic.”*
 - *“Pedestrian walkway from Newtonhill to Muchalls is far too close to the road - many a time I have been wafted by HGV vehicles.”*

Respondents were also asked about what would encourage them to use the bus more (**Figure 4.29**) and almost half (46%) of the respondents said that improved frequency of bus services was needed and a reduced cost of bus fares. 38% also said that quicker journey times were needed.

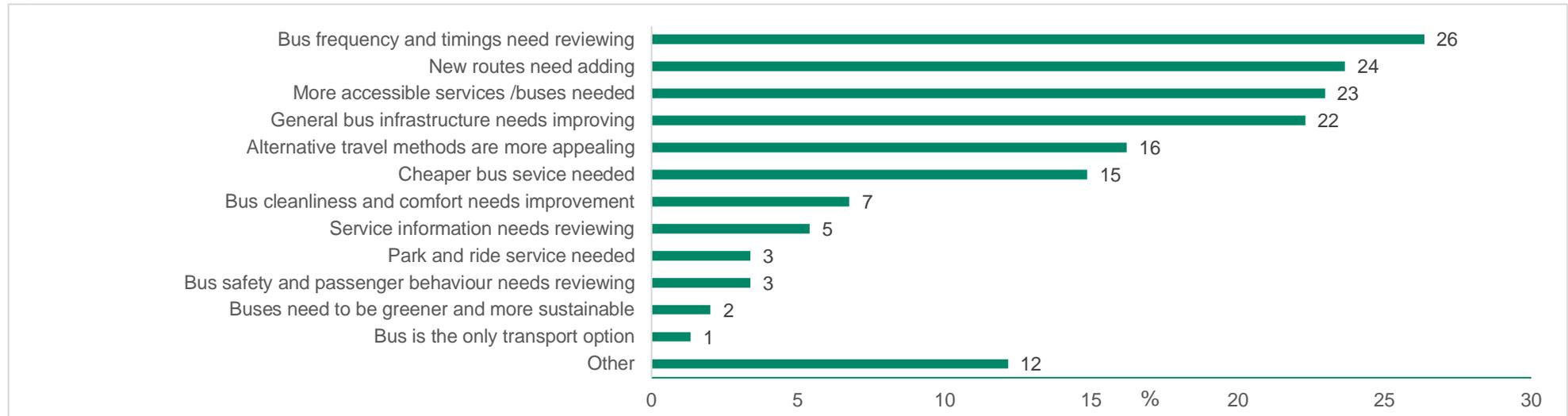
Figure 4.29: D3 - What would encourage you to use the bus more



Base: 1104 respondents

13% of respondents (n=148) provided further comments in relation to improving the bus services in their local area.

Figure 4.30: D4 - Bus Improvements



Base: 148 respondents

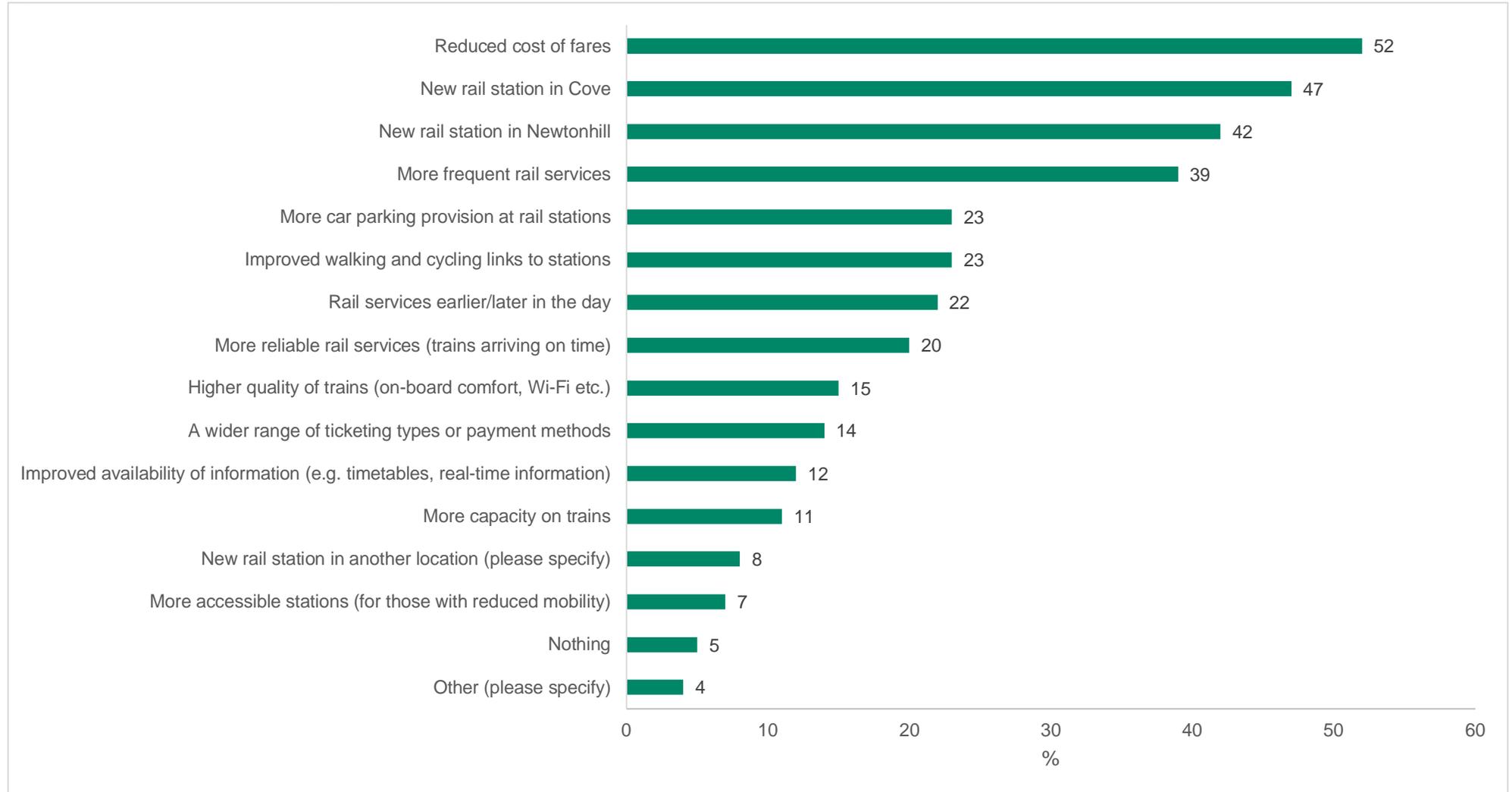
Comments included:

- Bus frequency and timings need reviewing (26%, n=39):
 - *“Current journey from Laurencekirk to either of the hospitals in Aberdeen takes a total of 2 hours 39 minutes. That’s not feasible for commuting.”*
 - *“The bus service isn’t really on my radar due to very low frequency of service locally.”*
 - *“Express buses that stop at 1 third of stops. Works in Edinburgh. Review of all stops to remove stops that are actually too close. While the stops might be busy, is it an issue if people have to walk an extra minute. So much time is lost in bus slowing down and speeding up at stops that just seem redundant. Also, more direct routes in and out of city. South College Street.”*

- New routes need adding (24%, n=36):
 - *“Routing the 26 to Fettercairn & Edzell Woods when it goes to Luthermuir would be a start.”*
 - *“Laurencekirk does really need a direct service to Aberdeen and maybe Dundee.”*
 - *“Need direct links to Aberdeen and Dundee via bus which are cost effective e.g. less than driving and parking.”*
 - *“Bus service to and from Aberdeen from Laurencekirk have been sadly lacking for years so we no longer look to this as an option since it was removed as a route.”*

Respondents were asked what would encourage them to use rail for journeys on the corridor and 52% said a reduced cost of fares, whilst 47% said a new rail station in Cove and 42% said a new rail station in Newtonhill (Figure 4.31).

Figure 4.31: D5 - What would encourage you to use the train for trips on the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk corridor



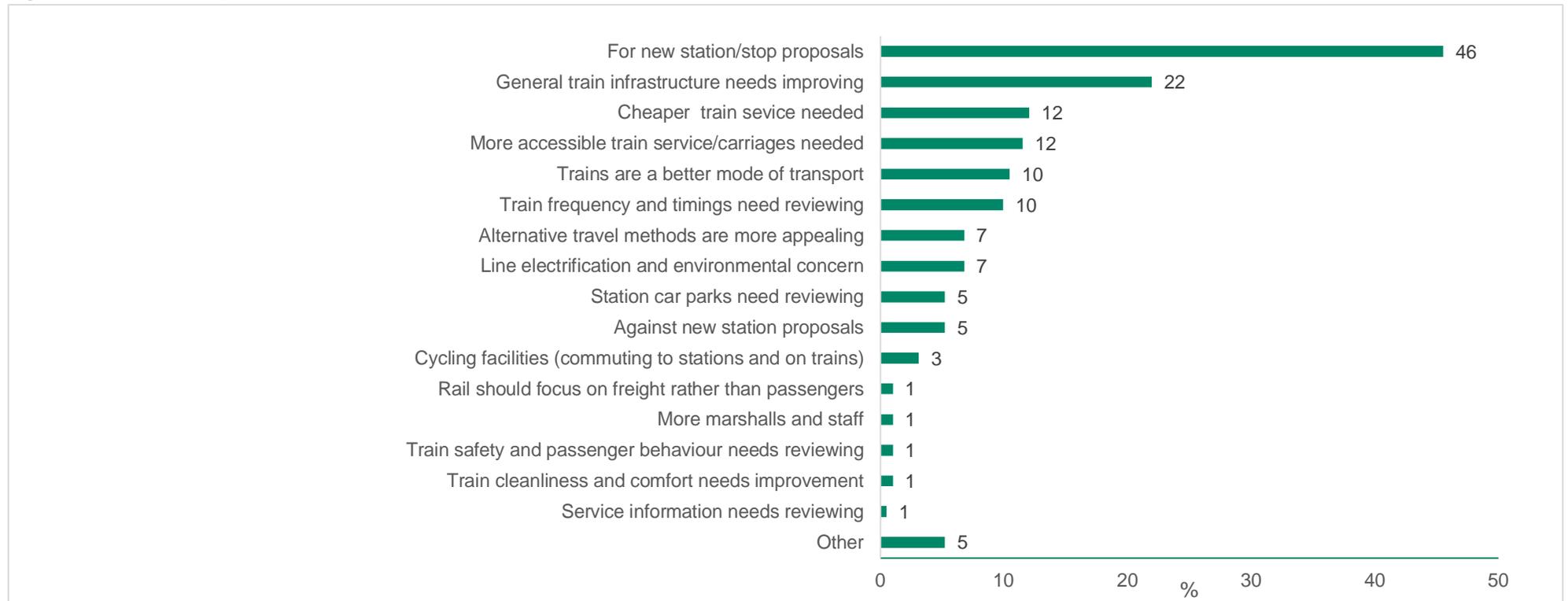
Base: 1104 respondents

Further analysis was undertaken on the ‘New rail station in Cove’ and ‘New rail station in Newtonhill’ responses to determine if responses were from residents based within the settlements themselves. The analysis found that:

- 47% of respondents (n=519) selected a new rail station in Cove as a potential improvement and 76% of those respondents (n=395) resided in Cove;
- 38% of respondents to the survey (n=418) resided in Cove, of which 95% (n=397) selected a new rail station in Cove as a potential improvement;
- 42% of respondents (n=463) selected a new rail station in Newtonhill as a potential improvement and 58% of those respondents (n=268) resided in Newtonhill whilst 13% (n=60) resided in Cove; and
- 27% of respondents to the survey (n=297) resided in Newtonhill, of which 90% (n=267) selected a new rail station in Newtonhill as a potential improvement.

17% of respondents (n=191) provided further comments in relation to improving the rail service in their local area.

Figure 4.32: D6 - Rail Improvements



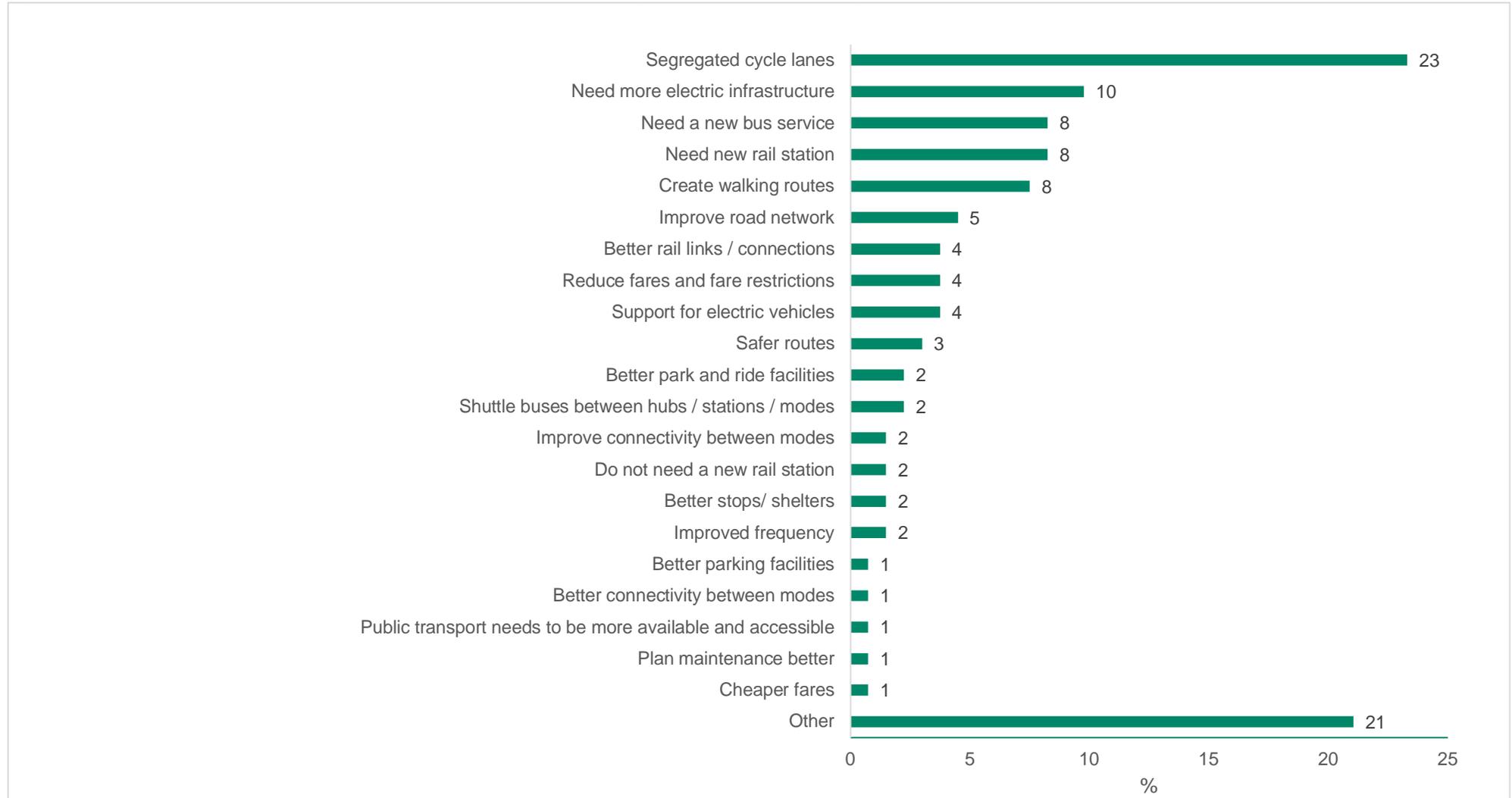
Base: 191 respondents

Comments included:

- Respondents for new station / stop proposals (46%, n=88):
 - *“Would be fantastic to have a rail station in the Cove area.”*
 - *“Please reinstate Laurencekirk as a main line station south - changing at Montrose does not work.”*
 - *“Cove residents would greatly welcome a rail link to be installed in the area. We have been hopeful for this for many years and as Cove has increased in size, so has road traffic with the Cove roads becoming busier and more dangerous. Benefits of walking to the Cove Platform and hopping on a train are immeasurable with many residents being able to cancel expensive parking permits in the city and cutting back some damage to the environment. Much quicker than the current bus service.”*
 - *“Unfortunately, our local train station in Newtonhill has been taken away so the nearest options are not cost effective or time effective to get to.”*
 - *“Desperately needed for environmental reasons. The volume of additional housing being built in Cove fully justifies a train service. This would result in many cars being removed from the city centre. Also, overnight services for key workers and transport staff again resulting in cars being removed from the roads if this was provided too.”*
- General train infrastructure needs improving (22%, n=42):
 - *“There is an urgent requirement for this area to have similar train services to other parts of Scotland “*
 - *“We need a better local rail infrastructure so it can become a part of daily life instead of just being used for long distance journeys. Combined tickets with bus services would make it easier for people to travel on public transport.”*
 - *“Lack of interconnected public transport options across Aberdeenshire and no rail service leave no option but to drive.”*

12% of respondents (n=133) provided comments on other options they would like to see considered to help encourage sustainable travel along the corridor, with the results shown in **Figure 4.33**.

Figure 4.33: D7 - Options to be considered for any mode to help encourage sustainable travel along the corridor



Base: 133 respondents

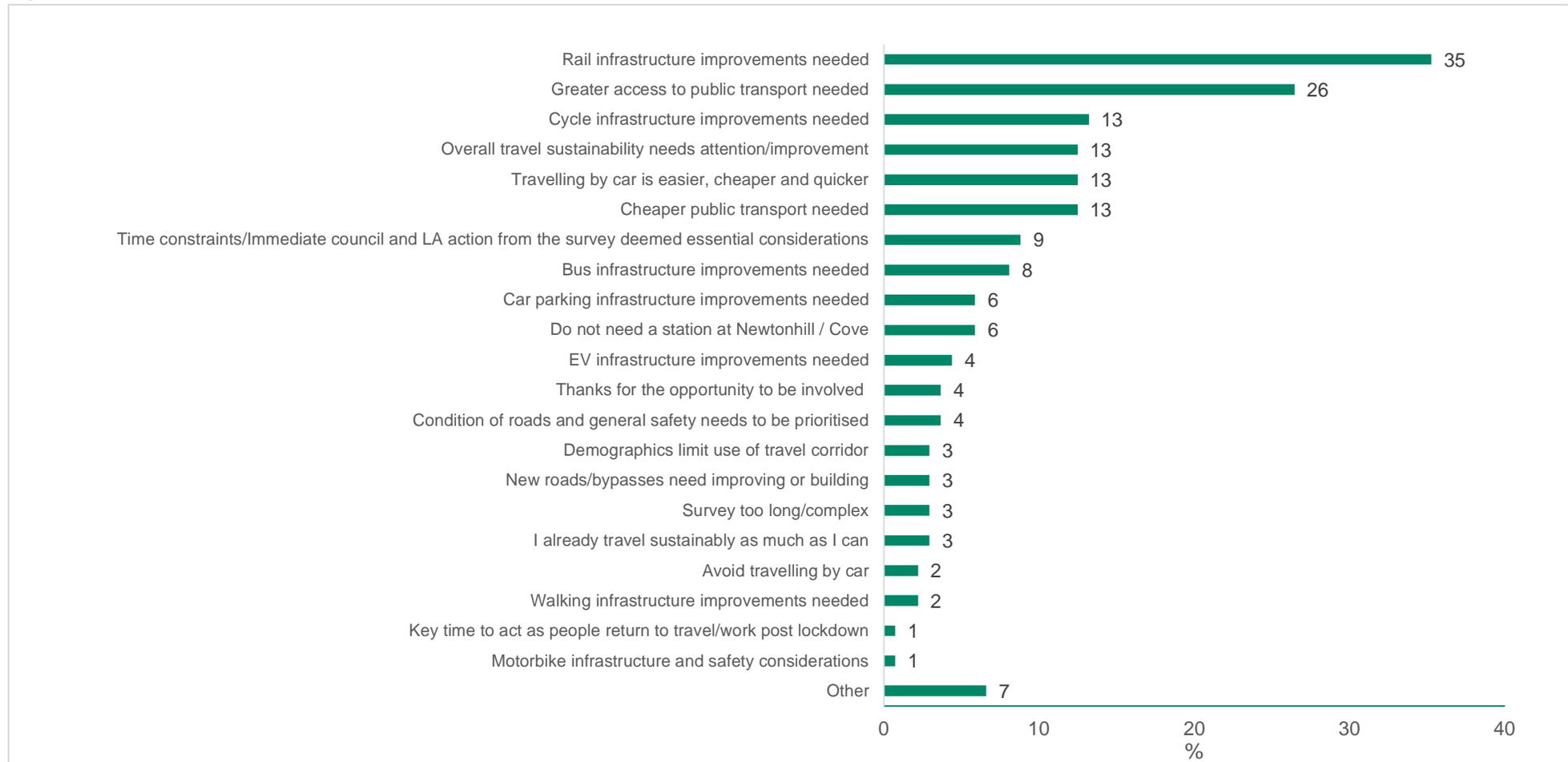
Comments included:

- Segregated cycle lanes (23%, n=31):
 - *“Separate cycle paths (i.e., not shared with cars) and increased use of trains to make direct journeys (i.e. buses stop so often and take such a long time - bus journey from Cove to Aberdeen is 30-40 mins, train could be 10 mins).”*
 - *“A high quality and direct cycle route from Aberdeen to Portlethen, Cove, Muchalls, Chapelton and Stonehaven should be a top priority. It is ridiculous that it doesn't exist already.”*
 - *“I just wish the cycling problem could be fixed. I really want to cycle to work, but it's really difficult just now.”*
 - *“Proper segregated bike path east of the railway line linking Stonehaven, Muchalls and Newtonhill.”*
 - *“Segregation of bike paths, bike path east of railway line from Stonehaven north linking Muchalls, Newtonhill and Portlethen “*
 - *“It is not very pleasant to cycle next to the A92 between Aberdeen and Stonehaven, but cycle paths with proper surfaces would be a big improvement. More signs reminding motorists that they need to expect to share the road with cyclists would also be a good thing.”*
- Need more electric vehicle charging infrastructure (10%, n=13):
 - *“Upgrade existing EV charge point in Stonehaven, it is underutilised because it's prohibitively slow.”*
 - *“Electric car charging points at stations, doctors and shopping areas etc.”*
 - *“Although we charge our Electric Vehicle at home mainly, more recharging facilities on the Laurencekirk-Aberdeen corridor would be helpful to EV drivers.”*

4.8 Final Comments on the Study

Lastly all respondents were asked if they had any final comments they would like to make on the study before they submitted their responses. 12% of respondents gave a comment (n=136) which included 35% of respondents who said rail infrastructure improvements are needed and 26% who said greater access to public transport is needed.

Figure 4.34: Final comments



Base: 136 respondents

5. Conclusions

5.1 Sample

Overall, there were 1,111 responses to the consultation over a four-week period. The majority (99%) of the responses were from the general public.

Over a third of the responses (38%) were from respondents based in Cove, whilst a further 27% were based in Newtonhill and 10% were based in Laurencekirk. It is likely that a letter mailshot that was sent to the residents of Cove by a local MP contributed to the high response rate from this community.

Two thirds (67%) of the respondents were aged 35-64, whilst similar proportions (17% and 16% respectively) were aged 16-34 or 65 and over. 53% of the respondents were female whilst 47% were male.

86% of respondents said they were not limited in their day-to-day activities due to a physical or mental impairment whilst 10% said they were limited a little and 4% said they were limited a lot.

5.2 Future Use

Almost a third (32%) of respondents said that, in the future post-easing of COVID-19 travel restrictions, they would likely use the corridor by car or van as a driver five or more days a week whilst 8% said the same by train. However, 11% said they would use the corridor by walking 1-2 days a week and 10% said five days a week or more by walking.

Over half of the respondents (55%) who said they would use the car or van as a driver said they would use the corridor for commuting to / from work whilst 32% said they would use the train for the same purpose. 58% of the respondents said they also used their car or van as a driver for visiting friends or family. However, 70% of those who said cycling said they would travel by bike just to 'get out' while 68% said the same journey purpose for walking.

Over two fifths (44%) said they would most frequently commute to / from work as a driver of a car or van whilst 22% said the same journey purpose but by train. Over half said they would most frequently travel by cycling (58%) or walking (51%) to just 'get out'.

5.3 Views on Walking

Over three fifths (61%) of respondents were either satisfied (44%) or very satisfied (17%) with their ability to safely walk to access bus services in their area. Also 54% of respondents stated that they were either satisfied (40%) or very satisfied (14%) with their ability to safely walk for leisure purposes in their area. However, over half of the respondents (53%) stated that they were either very dissatisfied (40%) or dissatisfied (13%) with their ability to safely walk to access rail services. This was shown to be highest in locations without a rail station, therefore reflecting the increased (and often unfeasible) distances that would be required to walk to the nearest rail station.

Only 7% (n=67) of respondents gave a reason as to why they said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with facilities for walking in their area. This included routes being unsafe or too dangerous (27%), paths being poorly maintained / non-existent (21%) and poor walking routes to link up with rail services (18%).

When asked if respondents had any other comments on the walking facilities, 32% (n=353) gave a response. These included routes not being safe (41%), more / improved walking routes being needed (26%) and routes being poorly maintained / non-existent (24%).

5.4 Views on Cycling

Only a fifth (20%) of respondents were either satisfied (16%) or very satisfied (4%) with their ability to safely cycle for leisure purposes in their area. This was similar to the 18% of respondents who stated that they were either satisfied (14%) or very satisfied (4%) with their ability to safely cycle to access bus services in their area.

However, over a quarter of the respondents (35%) stated that they were either very dissatisfied (20%) or dissatisfied (15%) with their ability to safely cycle to access rail services. It is also worth noting that between 38% and 48% of respondents on each question, the respondent stated, "don't know / not applicable".

Respondents were asked if there are journeys they would like to make by bike but are unable to currently and 33% of respondents said there are.

Respondents who said there were journeys they would like to make by bike but can't were then asked the locations of these journeys they would like to make. Over half of the respondents (56% each respectively) mentioned journeys to Aberdeen or Stonehaven whilst a further 41% mentioned journeys to Portlethen.

Over three fifths of respondents (65%) stated these journeys would be just to 'get out' whilst over half (51%) said the trips would be for social or leisure reasons.

The main reasons for not being able to make a journey by bike included routes not being safe (75%), lack of integrated cycle lanes on routes (34%) and more improved cycle routes being needed (27%).

When asked if respondents had any other comments on the cycling facilities, 24% (n=261) gave a response. This included more cycle routes / lanes being needed (39%), unsafe facilities / cycle routes (28%) and facilities being poor / non-existent (19%).

5.5 Views on Buses

Over half of the respondents (59%) were either satisfied (38%) or very satisfied (21%) with the location of their nearest bus stop whilst 44% said they were either very dissatisfied (20%) or dissatisfied (24%) with the cost of bus fares.

Respondents were then asked if there are journeys they currently want to make by bus but are unable to and 43% said there are compared to 57% who said there are not.

Over half of the respondents who said there are journeys they want to make by bus but can't want to make journeys to Aberdeen City Centre (56%) whilst 42% want to be able to make trips to Stonehaven by bus.

For these trips, over three fifths (61%) want to be able to make trips by bus to locations in order to go out for social or leisure reasons whilst 54% want to be able to use the bus to access locations for shopping purposes.

Over a third (37%, n=408) of respondents gave a reason as to why they said they cannot make journeys by bus currently. When asked if respondents had any other comments on their local bus service, 29% (n=325) gave a response. These comments included:

- Not enough buses / poor frequency (26%);
- Fares being too expensive (17%); and
- Needing better network coverage (17%).

5.6 Views on Rail

Respondents were asked how satisfied they are with attributes of rail services on the corridor and 45% of respondents were either very satisfied (7%) or satisfied (38%) with the journey time on the trains whilst 44% said the same on the availability of reliable information. However in a similar way to buses, three fifths (60%) said they were either very dissatisfied (32%) or dissatisfied (28%) with the location of the nearest station, whilst 48% of respondents said they were either dissatisfied (27%) or very dissatisfied (21%) by the cost of fares on the trains.

Respondents were then asked if there are journeys they currently want to make by train but are unable to and 69% said there are compared to 31% who said there are not.

Over three quarters of the respondents who said there are journeys they want to make by train but can't want to make journeys to Aberdeen City Centre (77%) whilst 52% want to be able to make trips to Stonehaven by train.

For these journeys, over three quarters (77%) want to be able to make trips by train to locations to go out for social or leisure reasons whilst 74% want to be able to use the train to access locations for shopping purposes.

Almost two thirds (64%, n=704) of respondents gave a reason as to why they said they cannot make journeys by train currently. Comments included:

- No train / station in Cove (23%);
- No train / station in Newtonhill (21%); and
- No train / station available (17%).

5.7 Views on Roads

Respondents were asked about their views on the road network. Half of all respondents (50%) were either satisfied (46%) or very satisfied (4%) with length of journey times on the road network whilst 48% were either satisfied (44%)

or very satisfied (4%) with the reliability of journey times. However, 43% were either very dissatisfied (15%) or dissatisfied (28%) with the quality of the road infrastructure.

31% of respondents who provided further comments on the road network said that there are poor road conditions (including maintenance, potholes etc) whilst 29% said there are a number of unsafe junctions or crossings on the corridor and 17% said there is a poor road layout.

5.8 Potential Improvements

Finally, respondents were asked about what would encourage them to walk or cycle more and half of the respondents said that long distance walking and cycling infrastructure was needed whilst 46% said improved walking and cycling infrastructure within settlements was needed.

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments in relation to walking and cycling improvements. 15% of respondents (n=165) gave a comment with two fifths (40%) of those respondents saying they wanted safer cycle routes, whilst 28% wanted safer walking routes.

Respondents were also asked about what would encourage them to use the bus more and almost half (46%) of the respondents said that improved frequency of bus services was needed and a reduced cost of bus fares. 38% also said that quicker journey times were needed.

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments in relation to improving the bus services in their local area. 13% of respondents (n=148) gave a comment with over a quarter (26%) of those respondents saying that bus frequency and timings need reviewing, whilst 24% said new routes needed to be added.

Respondents were asked what would encourage them to use the train for journeys on the corridor and 52% said a reduced cost of fares, whilst 47% said a new rail station in Cove and 42% said a new station in Newtonhill.

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments in relation to improving the rail services. 17% of respondents (n=191) gave a comment with almost half (46%) of those respondents saying they supported new stops or station proposals, whilst 22% said general train infrastructure needs improving.

Respondents were also asked if there are any options that they would like to see considered to help encourage sustainable travel along the corridor. Almost a quarter (23%) said segregated cycle lanes whilst 10% said more electric vehicle charging infrastructure is needed and 8% said a new bus service is needed.

5.9 Final Thoughts

Lastly all respondents were asked if they had any final comments they would like to make on the study before they submitted their response. 12% of respondents provided a comment (n=136) which included 35% of respondents who said rail infrastructure improvements are required and 26% who said greater access to public transport is required.

The next most common themes (all 13%) related to the importance of improving cycling infrastructure, making bus fares cheaper, and improving sustainable travel overall, as well as noting that travelling by car is easier, quicker and cheaper – potentially highlighting the challenges of changing people's behaviour to sustainable modes.

Amongst the other comments and feedback received, it is worth noting that whilst a significant proportion of respondents to the survey were in favour of new rail stations on the study corridor, a small number of respondents highlighted their opposition to these proposals. Concerns raised included how parking would be provided, potential adverse impacts on the local road network and on the local bus services, particularly in Newtonhill.

Other comments included the need for infrastructure improvements (including bus, car parking and electric vehicle charging infrastructure) and concerns regarding the condition of roads.

5.10 Next Steps

The findings from this consultation will be considered in the context of the broader analysis of transport-related problems and opportunities in the study corridor set out within the Initial Appraisal: Case for Change report for the study.

The Case for Change report is following Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG), which highlights the importance of effective participation and engagement in study development. The consultation analysis undertaken as part of this study will help to demonstrate an understanding of how the Aberdeen-Laurencekirk transport system is used by local communities and the impacts that transport-related problems and opportunities in the study area have on travel behaviour.

Appendix A Online Survey

Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi-Modal Corridor Study

Nestrans – the Transport Partnership for Aberdeen City and Shire – are carrying out a study to investigate transport problems and opportunities between Aberdeen and Laurencekirk, considering walking, cycling, bus and rail travel. The main aim of the study is to identify options that will encourage more people to travel sustainably for trips along the corridor (i.e. walking, cycling and using public transport), particularly for regular commuting journeys.

To help inform this study, we want to understand your views on the existing transport network between Aberdeen and Laurencekirk, how you think you will use the transport network in the future and what improvements or interventions you would like to be considered to improve the route for all modes of travel but in particular walking, cycling, bus and rail.

The survey should take around 10-15 minutes to complete and all responses will be anonymised in reporting.

The survey will close at 11:59pm on Wednesday 20th October 2021.

Many thanks for your participation in this study.

Privacy and Your Personal Information

This survey is being carried out by AECOM on behalf of Nestrans. The survey is being carried out under the MRS Code of Conduct and in line with GDPR guidelines. Your data will be aggregated so you will not be identified in the reporting of the survey findings. We will combine the information you provide with that of other respondents to understand the transport problems and opportunities along the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk corridor.

A copy of AECOM's privacy policy as data processors is available at: <https://www.aecom.com/privacy-policy/> Any personal information you provide will only be stored for as long as required to build an understanding of key issues for consideration in developing the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi-Modal Study, then it will be deleted. If at any time after completing this questionnaire you would like your information to be deleted, please contact us on the details provided at the end of the questionnaire.

Further information about data privacy and your rights under the General Data Protection Regulation (the “GDPR”) can be found at the ICO website (data protection regulator) ico.org.uk/for-the-public

Are you responding to this study as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Select one only

- Individual
- Organisation / Business (please specify)

If Always, Only ask 'Intro1'

If ((A1 Has 1)), Only ask 'A2'

If A1 Has 2, Only ask 'A1_Organisation_please_specify_'

Which of the following areas best describes where you live? *Select one only.*

- Cove
- Portlethen
- Newtonhill
- Chapelton of Elsick
- Muchalls
- Stonehaven
- Fordoun
- Inverbervie
- Laurencekirk
- Fettercairn
- Other (please specify)

If A2 Has 11, Only ask 'Single1_Other_please_specify_'

Section B: Your Travel Patterns

We appreciate that travel and daily life has changed considerably as a result of COVID-19. When answering questions in this section, please think only about how you expect to travel once travel restrictions implemented have been lifted and you consider it safe to do so.

Thinking about your future travel on the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Corridor, how often will you be likely to make trips on the corridor using the following modes? *Select one only per row.*

	5 or more days a week	3-4 days per week	1-2 days per week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Once every few months	Once a year	Less often	Not used
Walking	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Cycling	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Train	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Car/Van (Driver)	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Car/Van (Passenger)	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>								

AskB1o

If ^Grid 4^.Iteration(7) Has 1 to 8, Only ask 'B1o'

Are there journeys you would like to make by bike but can't at the moment?

- Yes
- No

If ((C5 Has 1)), Only ask 'C6'

Where would these cycle journeys mainly be to? *Select all that apply.*

(7 maximum responses)

- Aberdeen City Centre
- Cove
- Portlethen
- Newtonhill
- Stonehaven
- Laurencekirk
- Other (please specify)

If ((C5 Has 1)), Only ask 'C7'

If C6 Has 7, Only ask 'C6_Other_please_specify_'

For what purpose would these cycle journeys be made? *Select all that apply.*

(10 maximum responses)

- Commuting to / from work
- Business travel
- Visiting friends / family
- Shopping
- Health / medical appointment
- Personal business (e.g. library, bank, hairdresser)
- Social / leisure (e.g. restaurant, pub, cinema)
- Day trip / holiday
- Just to 'get out'
- Other (please specify)

If ((C5 Has 1)), Only ask 'C8'

If C7 Has 10, Only ask 'C7_Other_please_specify_'

Are there journeys you would like to make by bus but can't at the moment?

- Yes
- No

If ((C11 Has 1)), Only ask 'C12'

Where would these bus journeys mainly be to? *Select all that apply.*

(8 maximum responses)

- Aberdeen City Centre
- Cove
- Portlethen
- Newtonhill
- Stonehaven
- Laurencekirk
- Dundee
- Other (please specify)

If ((C11 Has 1)), Only ask 'C13'

If C12 Has 8, Only ask 'C12_Other_please_specify_'

For what purpose would these bus journeys be made? *Select all that apply.*

(10 maximum responses)

- Commuting to / from work
- Business travel
- Visiting friends / family
- Shopping
- Health / medical appointment
- Personal business (e.g. library, bank, hairdresser)
- Social / leisure (e.g. restaurant, pub, cinema)
- Day trip / holiday
- Just to 'get out'
- Other (please specify)

If ((C11 Has 1)), Only ask 'C14'

If C13 Has 10, Only ask 'C13_Other_please_specify_'

Why can't you make these journeys by bus at the moment?

Do you have any other comments about your local bus service?

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the rail service in your area? *Select one only per row.*

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know / Not applicable
Location of your nearest station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parking availability at stations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Destinations served from your nearest station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time of first departure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time of last arrival	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frequency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reliability (does it arrive on time?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journey time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost of fares	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ticketing (range of ticket types and payment methods)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Available space / capacity on trains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of trains (on-board comfort, Wi-Fi etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal security (e.g. on board, at stations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical accessibility at stations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical accessibility on trains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of reliability of information (e.g. timetables, real-time displays etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Links to the station by other modes (walking, cycling, bus)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are there journeys you would like to make by train but can't at the moment?

- Yes
 No

If ((C17 Has 1)), Only ask 'C18'

Where would these train journeys mainly be to? *Select all that apply.*

(6 maximum responses)

- Aberdeen City Centre
- Portlethen
- Stonehaven
- Laurencekirk
- Dundee
- Other (please specify)

If C18 Has 6, Only ask 'C18_Other_please_specify_1'

If ((C17 Has 1)), Only ask 'C19'

If C18 Has 6, Only ask 'C18_Other_please_specify_1'

For what purpose would these train journeys be made? *Select all that apply.*

(10 maximum responses)

- Commuting to / from work
- Business travel
- Visiting friends / family
- Shopping
- Health / medical appointment
- Personal business (e.g. library, bank, hairdresser)
- Social / leisure (e.g. restaurant, pub, cinema)
- Day trip / holiday
- Just to 'get out'
- Other (please specify)

If C19 Has 10, Only ask 'C19_Other_please_specify_1'

If ((C17 Has 1)), Only ask 'C20'

If C19 Has 10, Only ask 'C19_Other_please_specify_1'

Why can't you make these journeys by train at the moment?

Do you have any other comments about your local rail service?

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the road network along the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Corridor? *Select one only per row.*

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know / Not applicable
Level of traffic congestion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of roads infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Length of journey times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Road safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reliability of journey times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of Electric Vehicle charging points	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of information (e.g. roadside electronic signs with incident or travel time information)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If dissatisfied, please state why this is.

Do you have any other comments about the road network along the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Corridor?

Section D: Potential Improvements

This section asks you about what could be done to encourage increased sustainable travel on the corridor (walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing, electric vehicle use etc.).

Which of the following would encourage you to walk or cycle more often for trips on the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Corridor? *Select all that apply.*

(5 maximum responses)

- Long distance walking and cycling infrastructure
- Improved walking and cycling infrastructure within settlements
- Better facilities for bikes at bus stops and rail stations
- Park & Pedal facilities (ability to drive to a dedicated site, park your vehicle and continue the rest of the journey by bike)
- Other (please specify)
- Nothing

If D1 Has 5, Only ask 'D1_Other_please_specify_'

Please provide any other comments you wish to make in relation to walking and cycling improvements.

Which of the following would encourage you to use the bus more often for trips on the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Corridor? *Select all that apply.*

(17 maximum responses)

- Services to a wider range of destinations
- Bus services earlier/later in the day
- Improved frequency of bus services
- Improved reliability of bus services (buses arriving on time)
- Quicker journey times
- Reduced cost of fares
- A wider range of ticketing types or payment methods
- More capacity on buses
- Higher quality of buses (on-board comfort, Wi-Fi etc.)
- Improved physical accessibility on buses for those with reduced mobility
- Improved availability of information (e.g. timetables, real-time information)
- Improved walking and cycling links to bus stops
- Bus-based Park & Ride facility to the south of Aberdeen
- More Park & Choose sites (similar to the existing facility at Newtonhill)
- Bus priority measures (e.g. dedicated bus lanes, reallocating space on the existing road network to bus)
- Bus Rapid Transit system (e.g. dedicated bus priority provided via additional lanes to the existing road network)
- Other (please specify)
- Nothing

If D3 Has 17, Only ask 'D3_Other_please_specify_'

Please provide any other comments you wish to make in relation to bus improvements.

Which of the following would encourage you to use the train more often for trips on the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Corridor? *Select all that apply.*

(15 maximum responses)

- New rail station in Cove
- New rail station in Newtonhill
- New rail station in another location (please specify)
- More car parking provision at rail stations
- Rail services earlier/later in the day
- More frequent rail services
- More reliable rail services (trains arriving on time)
- Reduced cost of fares
- A wider range of ticketing types or payment methods
- More capacity on trains
- Higher quality of trains (on-board comfort, Wi-Fi etc.)
- More accessible stations (for those with reduced mobility)
- Improved availability of information (e.g. timetables, real-time information)
- Improved walking and cycling links to stations
- Other (please specify)
- Nothing

If D5 Has 15, Only ask 'D5_Other_please_specify_'

Please provide any other comments you wish to make in relation to rail improvements.

Are there any other options (for any mode) that you would like to see considered as part of the study to help encourage sustainable travel along the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk corridor?

Section E: About You

We must consider how different people will be affected by our strategies and policies, and we also want to make sure we hear from people from all backgrounds. Therefore, the last few questions are about you, to help us ensure we hear from a range of voices, and to help identify any possible discrimination or barriers for particular groups of people. The personal information you give us will remain strictly confidential and we will not use it in a way that could identify you. If there are questions you would prefer not to answer, please choose the 'prefer not to say' option.

How would you describe your gender? *Select one only*

(1 maximum responses)

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary (gender neutral)
- Prefer to self-describe
- Prefer not to say

Which of these age groups do you belong to? *Select one only*

(1 maximum responses)

- Under 16
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+
- Prefer not to say

Are your day-to-day activities limited by any physical or mental health condition or illness lasting, or expected to last, 12 months or more? *Select one only*

(1 maximum responses)

- No
- Yes, limited a little
- Yes, limited a lot
- Prefer not to say

Which of the following best describes your working status? *Select one only*

(1 maximum responses)

- Working full-time (30+ hours per week)
- Working part-time (less than 30 hours per week)
- Education (student)
- Unemployed / not working
- Retired
- Long-term sick or disabled
- Looking after the home / family
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to say

If E4 Has 8, Only ask 'E4_Other_please_specify_'

Does your household have access to a car / van for personal use? *Select one only*

(1 maximum responses)

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Please provide any further comments you would like to make on the study at this time in the box below.

Thank You for completing the survey

If Always, do not ask 'MyMail'

Please provide your email address and we will send you a link so you can return to the questionnaire, where you left it, and complete later. We will not use your email address for any purpose other than sending you the questionnaire link and a reminder email. We will not store or keep your email address once the survey has closed. If you are under 13 the email address you provide must be that of your parent or guardian and have their permission to do so.

Further details of how AECOM process your personal data provided during the consultation and for details of how you can exercise your rights are available at aecom.com/privacy-policy or email privacyquestions@aecom.com.

Thank you, the email should be with you shortly.

If you wish to continue with the questionnaire click next to proceed. At any time you can close your browser and your answers will be saved. Please note you must click next for your answers to be recorded, so please do this before closing your browser

If Always, Run Script:

dim mystring = ""

mystring = LastQuestion.value

Interview.SetPosition(Survey.Questions.FindByShortcut(mystring))

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