

**To: Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board 3**

**Date: Sept 2021**

**Subject: Appendix 3 – Let’s Talk survey results**

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## **1 Background and methodology**

- 1.1 Coventry City Council are in the process of developing a new Transport Strategy. To inform this work, an initial survey of residents has been carried out via the Council’s online consultation platform, Let’s Talk. This document provides a summary of the Let’s Talk survey results.
- 1.2 The Let’s Talk survey was carried out between 3 February and 7 March 2021.
- 1.3 Survey questions were mostly open and were intended to capture residents’ views on the city’s current transport network and on their aspirations for the future. This is in advance of a more detailed public consultation being carried out on a draft strategy.
- 1.4 In total 262 people completed the survey. The vast majority of these (256) were responding as individuals, with only a very small number of responses (6) coming from organisations.

## **2 Executive summary**

- 2.1 This section provides a brief summary of the main headlines from the Let’s Talk survey. A more detailed analysis of the results is provided in section 3.
- 2.2 When asked what about Coventry’s existing transport system works well, residents most commonly mentioned:
  - the city’s comprehensive bus network. While many respondents also suggested that some services could be more frequent, more reliable or more affordable, most comments in response to this question were still broadly favourable
  - recent/planned improvements to cycle infrastructure. Many respondents were keen to see more of this in the future
  - the city’s good rail connections, particularly the frequent services to London and Birmingham
  - the ease with which motorists can move from one part of the city to another, facilitated by the Ring Road
  - the pedestrianisation of much of the city centre, particularly the areas around Coventry Railway Station and Coventry University.
- 2.3 When asked what about Coventry’s existing transport system requires improvement, residents most commonly mentioned:
  - the lack of safe space for cyclists
  - congestion on the road network
  - a lack of safe, attractive or suitable spaces for pedestrians, outside of the city centre
  - infrequent or unreliable bus services
  - gaps in the bus network or a lack of direct bus services between particular places
  - a lack of car parking or the cost of car parking
  - issues with junction design at particular locations, most commonly the on/off slip roads on the Ring Road.

- 2.4 When residents were asked to name a town or city with a good transport system, the most popular choice was London because of its comprehensive and affordable public transport network and its good facilities for cyclists.
- 2.5 Other popular choices included Amsterdam (and various other cities in the Netherlands) Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham and Copenhagen. The reasons given for choosing these cities were generally similar – a good public transport network (including a metro/tram/underground system) and good facilities for cyclists.
- 2.6 Residents' top priorities for the Transport Strategy are making walking and cycling easier, reducing air pollution, improving public transport and tackling climate change.
- 2.7 Residents' most common suggestions when asked to name something which should definitely be in the Transport Strategy were more cycleways, or other measures to make cycling safer, and the creation of a Very Light Rail/tram/metro/underground system.

### **3 Full analysis of survey results**

3.1 A fuller summary of residents' responses to each survey question is set out below. This is not an exhaustive list of all responses but is intended to highlight the recurring themes that emerged from the responses to each question.

3.2 **Question: In terms of travelling around, into and out of Coventry, what do you think currently works well? Think about all forms of transport. What should we keep doing/do more of?**

#### 3.3 Public transport

There were a high number of responses to this question relating to public transport.

In particular, there were lots of comments (53) about the frequency, reliability and coverage of the city's bus network. Most of these were broadly positive, although some also suggested that some services could still be made more frequent, more reliable or more affordable.

*"Buses seem to be able to get in and out (of the city centre) reasonably well and cover most areas"*

*"Bus services, with some exceptions, have good frequency and accessibility to (the) city centre but less so to hospital and employment destinations"*

*"Bus services are generally good, but need a more regular service outside peak times"*

*"The bus network, whilst the coverage is good, doesn't always perform reliably"*

*"The busses are very expensive, but the routes seem to work well"*

There were also a number of positive comments (12) about the new electric buses, which are now operating on some routes.

*"Bus routes are generally good. The fact that they are electric busses is very good"*

In addition, there were also a high number of comments (24) about the city's rail connections, particularly the frequent services to London and Birmingham.

*"Train frequency is good in the most part"*

*"Good railway links to London and Birmingham (and thus to the rest of the UK from these nodes)"*

#### 3.4 Active travel

There were also a large number of comments relating to active travel.

In particular, a high number of respondents (42) were positive about recent/planned improvements to cycle infrastructure and wanted to see more of this in the future.

*"I have used the temporary cycleway on Charter Avenue and I look forward to the Coundon cycleway. I love cycling"*

*"I know that two cycle ways are being built, this network needs to be expanded to cover all areas of the city"*

*"We have some good cycle routes, we need more of them and they need to join up"*

*"New cycleways on Barkers Butts Ln and Binley Rd will be great! The plans and progress look really good, glad to see they're fully segregated"*

*"The new canal towpath surface is amazing. It has made the cycle into Bedworth (for work) much safer and enjoyable"*

A number of respondents (15) also commented on the pedestrianisation of sections of the city centre, saying that this had created a better environment for walking. Respondents specifically mentioned the areas around Coventry Railway Station and Coventry University.

*"The pedestrianised centre of the city is great, it's much more pleasant to be able to walk around without cars"*

*"The walking route from the train station into town is great and is a pleasure to use"*

*"(The) Pedestrianised city centre was ahead of its time. (The) train station to city centre walking route (is now) much more attractive"*

### 3.5 Car travel

There were also a significant number of comments about car travel.

Of these, a large number (22) related specifically to the Ring Road, which respondents felt facilitated the movement of traffic between different parts of the city effectively.

*"Getting from one side of the city to the other is relatively efficient... The Coventry Ring Road, whilst much maligned, does a good job here"*

*"The Ring Road has always worked well at moving traffic from one radial road to another"*

There were also a smaller number of comments in support of:

- the rollout of average speed cameras (10)
- the relative lack of congestion on the city's road network (7)
- proximity to the motorway network (6)
- ease of access to the city centre and the availability of city centre car parking (6).

There were both positive (9) and negative (5) comments about the removal of bus lanes.

### 3.6 Other comments

There were also a group of respondents (16) who felt that there was nothing, or very little, that works well about the current transport system.

*"Honestly, nothing works well. Traffic is too congested for cars, public transport is not connected enough and takes too long, cycling is too dangerous"*

### 3.7 **Question: In terms of travelling around, into and out of Coventry, what do you think works less well? Again, think about all forms of transport. What should we improve?**

### 3.8 Active travel

The largest number of responses to this question related to active travel.

A very large number of these (89) related specifically to the lack of safe spaces for cyclists.

*“Compared to other similar sized and located cities... cycling infrastructure is woeful in Coventry. More people would be cycling if the infrastructure was there, people don't cycle due to being afraid of cycling on the roads”*

*“Roads (are) unsuitable and often dangerous for cycling”*

*“The city is relatively compact - easily within cycling distance - but many routes are just too dangerous to cycle”*

*“Getting around Coventry by bicycle is not a pleasant or safe feeling thing to do”*

Related to this, some respondents (11) also mentioned a lack of cycle parking facilities.

*“(The) lack of bike parking at shops or in parks is a problem”*

A significant number of respondents (21) also cited a lack of safe, attractive and suitable infrastructure for pedestrians. More specific comments included concerns about pedestrian underpasses, a lack of pedestrian crossings on busy roads and poorly maintained pavements.

*“Ring Road pedestrian underpasses are unattractive and a blight on the city”*

*“Pedestrian & cycle access into the city centre is poor - at almost every point where the Ring Road needs to be traversed the experience is off putting”*

*“The A45 is such a barrier to active transport. There are so few crossing points and those that do exist favour motor transport over cyclists and pedestrians”*

*“Pavements (are) not well maintained in a lot of areas”*

### 3.9 Car travel

There were also a large number of responses to this question relating to car travel.

The majority (48) of these related to congestion. Respondents cited a variety of different causes of congestion, including the sheer volume of cars on the road, the impact of traffic lights at key junctions and the number of HGVs operating on certain parts of the network.

*“Car traffic is terrible at peak times”*

*“Most routes into and out of the city have key ‘pinch points’ which slow the flow of traffic considerably... Also when there is an accident on the M6, every route into and out of town grinds to a standstill”*

*“When there are more cars back on the road again, the sheer volume of traffic is just too much. We need to encourage more people to cycle or use public transport”*

*“(There are) too many traffic lights on the main routes into the city centre causing delays and congestion”*

*“Lorries in and around Allesley are having a real impact on road services”*

A number of respondents (16) also raised concerns about either the cost or availability of car parking. Various specific locations were mentioned, including the city centre, University Hospital and Tile Hill Railway Station.

*“(There is a lack of) affordable parking for people who work in the city centre or at the hospital”*

*“Car parking can be an issue at busy times in (the) city centre”*

Several respondents (15) also criticised junction layouts at specific locations. These most commonly related to the on/off slip-roads on the Ring Road, however various other locations were also mentioned.

*“People (from) out of Coventry hate the Ring Road junctions and avoid Coventry as a shopping and leisure destination”*

*“The Ring Road is absolutely appalling, but is virtually the only way to traverse the city”*

*“Many roundabouts (are) poorly designed and drivers can't understand how they work”*

In addition, there were also a smaller number of comments relating to:

- air pollution (11)
- traffic speeds (10)
- lack of enforcement of parking restrictions, particularly pavement parking (10)
- potholes/poor maintenance of road surfaces (6).

### 3.10 Public transport

There were fewer responses to this question relating to public transport.

However, the greatest number of these related to either infrequent or unreliable bus services (20) or gaps in the bus network/a lack of direct bus services between particular places (18).

*“Bus services (are) too infrequent, especially (at) evenings and weekends”*

*“Buses are not regular and do not meet their schedules”*

*“To go to another area of Coventry nearly all journeys involve (a) change of bus”*

*“In general, I think the buses are pretty good but they don't really work if you have to change”*

*“Bus routes don't run regularly to (the) hospital outside of 9-5pm, making their use for workers hard”*

A number of respondents (11) also mentioned the cost of travelling on public transport.

*“Bus (services are) too infrequent, and too expensive. (When a) family of four trip to town (costs) £8... why wouldn't you just drive?”*

*“Another drawback to using buses is the one-off price, £2 I think to go even just one or two stops. This encourages people to drive short distances”*

A smaller number of respondents mentioned the continuing presence of diesel/petrol buses and taxis (9) and infrequent or unreliable train services (6).

### 3.11 **Question: Is there another town or city you have visited that you think had good transport opportunities? Please briefly tell us where you visited and what was good about it**

Respondents mentioned a wide variety of different towns and cities with good transport systems. However, London (34) was the place which was highlighted most frequently. Respondents particularly praised its comprehensive and affordable public transport network, with joined up ticketing, and its cycling facilities.

*“Cycling in London is actually really good, (it is) well signposted and the cycle super-highways are excellent”*

*“Some of the cycle paths in London are awesome. They are segregated from both pedestrians and motor vehicles. They have their own traffic lights”*

*“London buses are fab. (You pay a) flat fare, (and) travel as far as you like”*

*“Use of the Oyster card and excellent public transport means most people never use a car, and many don't even own a car”*

*“London has a fantastic one ticket (system covering) all forms of (public) transport”*

*“Fast, cheap and easy. Everyone takes public transport because it's the easiest option”*

Within the UK, Birmingham (18), Manchester (12) and Nottingham (10) were all also popular choices. Several respondents highlighted their respective metro/tram systems and their cycling facilities:

*“Birmingham has great transport opportunities with trams, dedicated cycle lanes... and a good suburban train network, along with many bus routes to all corners of the city”*

*“The cycle provision there (in Manchester) was great. Drivers (are) physically separated from cyclists... (and) the tram network was fast and reliable”*

*“The tram network in Manchester is excellent. It has great connectivity and goes to all areas”*

*“(The) tram network (in Nottingham) is good for a city its size”*

Many respondents also mentioned various European cities, the most common of which were various cities in the Netherlands (33). Respondents mostly cited Amsterdam, however Arnhem, Breda, Groningen, Leiden and Rotterdam were all also mentioned. Respondents commonly cited the excellent cycle facilities in these cities and the Dutch culture of cycling, as well as their good public transport services.

*“Joined up public transport offering, priority given to cycles and pedestrians over private cars. The public transport was frequent, clean, and you felt safe”*

*“The public’s transport and cycling provision are world class”*

*“Cycling is so easy there, bikes are given at least equal priority to cars everywhere, which means everyone cycles. The segregated cycle lanes are great! Particularly helpful as well is how easy it is to transfer from cycling to public transport and back again, with lots of secure bike parking”*

*“Both the cycling and public transport infrastructure, I believe, make Amsterdam the gold standard in getting around in a safe and greener way”*

Outside of the Netherlands, a number of respondents (12) identified Copenhagen, for similar reasons.

*“My favourite cities with regards to transport are Copenhagen and Amsterdam. The cycling infrastructure encourages all levels and all ages to cycle. Families can cycle safely”*

*“Cycling is extremely easy and safe, so everyone, from kids to old ladies, do it on a daily basis. Separated cycle paths go everywhere, including lots of routes that are for cycling and walking only.”*

*“Cycle paths on every road and an excellent circular rail/metro system allowing easy access to all areas of the city”*

### **3.12 Question: Which of the following do you think are the most important for us to consider in relation to transport in Coventry. Please choose three only**

Respondents were asked to choose their top three from a selection of possible policy priorities. When ranked from the most to least popular choices, these were:

- making walking and cycling easier (170)
- reducing air pollution (147)
- improving public transport (144)
- tackling climate change (93)
- preventing road traffic accidents (66)
- better connecting Coventry to the rest of the country (54)
- improving access to employment opportunities (48)

- enabling new jobs to be created (46)
- enabling new technology (e.g. driverless cars) (37)
- enabling new homes to be built (13).

**3.13 Question: What one thing do you think we absolutely should include in the strategy?**

Respondents made a wide variety of suggestions when asked for something that should definitely be included in the strategy. These were a mix of specific policy suggestions and broad areas for improvement.

However, the most common, recurring choices were:

- more cycleways/safer cycling (58)
- Very Light Rail/trams/metro/underground (24)
- improved public transport (in general terms) (14)
- reduced air pollution (13)
- reduced car dependency (12)
- safer/better walking routes for pedestrians (11)
- more/more affordable/free car parking (9)
- improved provision for motorcycles/motorcycle parking (8)
- reduced congestion (8)
- climate change (8)
- improvements to walking and cycling (mentioned in general terms) (8)
- electric buses (7).

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