COGNISANT RESEARCH

Active Travel Report

Produced for Northamptonshire County Council

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MRS COMPANY PARTNER

Executive Summary

Northamptonshire County Council commissioned Cognisant Research to conduct a market research study to gain a better understanding of resident's attitudes towards travel in Northampton, Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough.

The research shows very strong interest in cycling and walking for exercise. This interest appears to have increased during the pandemic. However, there is significant dissatisfaction with exciting cycling amenities, in particular. This suggests that the pandemic has presented an opportunity for Northamptonshire County Council to improve walking and cycling amenities to further encourage residents to exercise.

More specifically the survey showed that:

- **Walking is more common than cycling, and facilities for walking were rated better than those for cycling.** When asked to score the overall quality of walking facilities in their local area, the average rating was 8.2 out of 10. When asked to score the overall quality of cycling facilities in their local area, the average rating was 4.9 out of 10.
- **Agreement that walking eases congestion, helps the environment and improves health was consistently high across demographics** (more than 93% overall for each statement). Significantly, 87% of respondents overall felt that the shared path for pedestrians and cyclists could be dangerous.
- **70% of respondents felt that pedestrians should be given priority over cars in towns.** Although the youngest participants (16-29) were most likely to disagree that they should be prioritised (32% disagree or strongly disagree).
- **Agreement that cycling eases congestion, helps the environment and improves health was consistently high across demographics (**more than 80% overall for each statement). 59% of respondents felt that cyclists should be given priority over cars in towns, with the youngest age range of participants (16-29) most likely to disagree that they should be prioritised (40% disagree or strongly disagree).
- **Overwhelming support of local cycle lanes.** It was noted that only 20% of all residents agreed cycle lanes were problematic for cars on roads, and 73% of residents disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement.

- **67% of respondents were walking 2-3 times a week or more before the pandemic.** Those aged over 66 were most likely to have walked this frequently for exercise (72%), 23% of the youngest age group of 16-29-year-olds reported to have walked on a monthly basis or less.
- **Cycling was far less common than walking in residents before the pandemic.** Overall, 22% of residents cycled two times per week or more frequently. The data shows that the highest levels were reported by; male residents (32%), those aged 66+ (28%), and those living in Corby (32%).
- **Very few respondents anticipated walking or cycling less post-Covid.** Convenience of the car and lack of time are the main reasons given for walking less. In terms of cycling less, road safety concerns, a lack of time, the convenience of the car, poorly maintained road surfaces, drivers' attitudes towards cyclists and Ill-health reasons were all identified as factors.

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1 Introduction

Northamptonshire County Council commissioned Cognisant Research to conduct a market research study to gain a better understanding of resident attitudes towards improvements in the walking and cycling infrastructure in the towns of Northampton, Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough areas.

Beginning with an explanation of the research methodology, this report sets out results concerning the perception of walking and cycling amenities, as well as an assessment of pre and post-Covid exercise levels, before presenting overall conclusions.

2 Methodology

This section of the report sets out how this quantitative research study was undertaken. The research was designed to understand resident's attitudes concerning four key areas:

- Perception of walking amenities locally
- Perception of cycling amenities locally
- Pre-Covid exercise levels
- Post-Covid exercise levels

Cognisant Research undertook telephone interviews with residents in four specific locations. The primary focus for this project were residents living within Northampton. The interviews outside of Northampton were split between the towns of Wellingborough, Kettering and Corby.

2.1 Population of Interest

A review of Census data for the town of Northampton[1], estimates the total number of households to be 93,003, with a population of approximately 215,173. Further analysis undertaken for Wellingborough[2] estimated the total number of households to be 21,439, with a population of approximately 49,128. In Kettering[3] there were estimated to be 25,202 households and 56,226 residents, whilst in Corby[4] there were estimated to 23,356 households and 54,927 residents.

Table 1, below, sets out how many interviews were conducted in each area, how many households were contacted, as well as giving an indication of accuracy based on sample size.

2.2 Fieldwork

In total, 4,062 telephone calls were made between January 28th and March 15th 2021, achieving 1,250 completed interviews. The telephone numbers were predominately generated through Random Digit Dialling, which is computer-based technique that selects numbers at random, to provide a representative survey sample. The selection used for this project was made using the postcode areas referenced above.

In order to ensure that mobile network only households were not excluded from the study, mobile phone numbers, confirmed as belonging to individuals living in the population of interest, who have opted in to be contacted, were also included.

Table 1, shows the total number of interviews broken down across each area and how this impacts the accuracy of the findings in this study, in terms of Margin of Error.

[1] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E35001201

[2] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E35001306

[3] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E35001167

[4] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E35001263

Table 1 – Response Rates Across Areas

	Interviews	Households Contacted	Total Households	Margin of Error
Northampton	500	5,175	93,003	±4.38%
Wellingborough	250	2,304	22,099	±6.18%
Kettering	250	2,580	25,202	±6.18%
Corby	250	2,453	24,192	±6.18%
Total	**1,250**	**12,512**	**140,304**	**±2.77%**

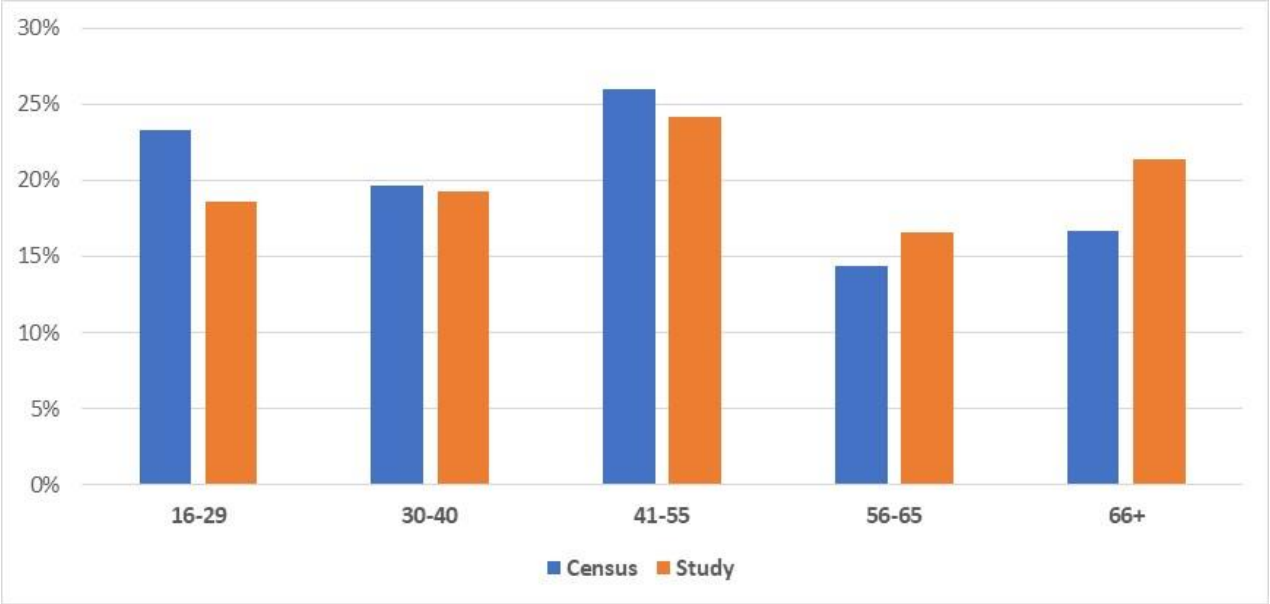
At an individual level, it is important to understand how representative those responding were of the overall population. Table 2 below shows the 1,250 respondents, broken down by age and gender.

Table 2 – Responses by Age and Gender

	Total Number	Total %	Female	Male	Prefer not to say
16-29	233	19%	153	79	1
30-40	241	19%	153	87	1
41-55	302	24%	192	109	1
56-65	207	17%	120	87	0
66+	267	21%	155	111	1
Total	**1,250**	**100%**	**773**	**473**	**4**

There is a significant imbalance in the number of women participating, as compared to men (which should have been 51% but was actually 62%), however distribution in terms of age was much more consistent, as shown in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1 - Comparison of Respondents by Age to Census



Comparing the study's age profile with that in the Census shows that we gathered more responses from people aged over 56 than would have been representative and fewer responses from those aged under 55. However, analysis of data weighted to match the Census profile shows no difference from that produced using the unweighted data.

Respondents were asked about their mobility, in terms of their ability to walk and/or cycle. Table 3 below sets out the 1,250 respondents, broken down by age and mobility.

Table 3 - Respondents by Age and Mobility

	Total Number	I can walk and cycle	I can walk but not cycle	I cannot walk or cycle
16-29	233	227	4	2
30-40	241	229	6	6
41-55	302	261	26	15
56-65	207	172	21	14
66+	267	165	56	46
Total	**1,250**	**1,054**	**113**	**83**
Total %	100%	84%	9%	7%

3 Results

This section of the report sets out the key findings gathered from this research project, the questions in the survey were constructed to relate to four key topics, which are split into the sub-headings for the remainder of the results section.

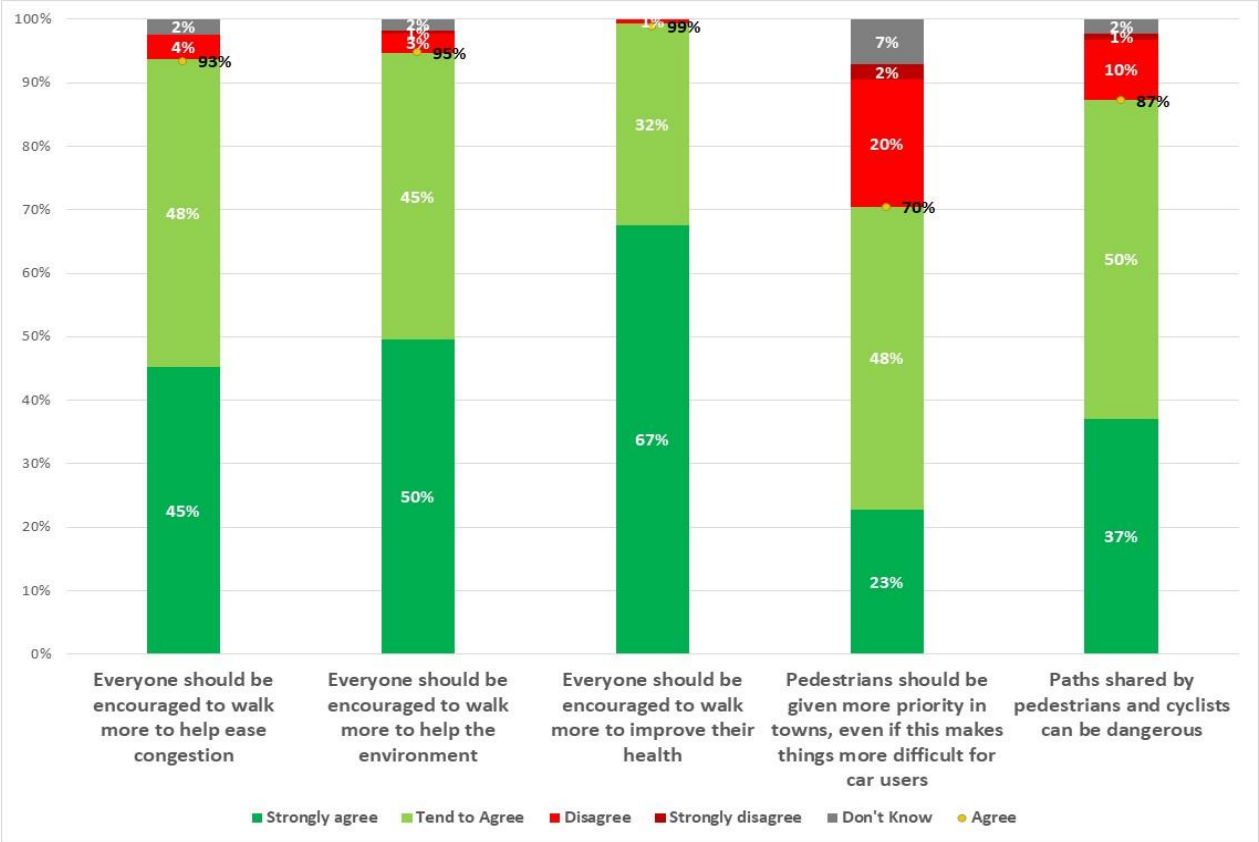
- Perceptions of Walking Amenities
- Perceptions of Cycling Amenities
- Pre-Covid Exercise Levels
- Post-Covid Exercise Levels

The analysis is presented by area of residence, age and gender. The charts use a traffic light style to highlight support and opposition, or the level to which respondents agree or disagree with statements.

3.1 Perceptions of Walking Amenities

Respondents were provided with a series of statements concerning their attitudes towards walking. Figure 3 below shows that overall respondents were hugely in favour of encouraging people to walk in order to ease congestion, benefit the environment and improve health. Indeed, 71% of respondents felt that pedestrians should have priority over car users in towns. However, 87% of respondents felt that the shared pathways used by walkers and cyclists had the potential to be dangerous.

Figure 3 – Overall Analysis of Walking Amenities

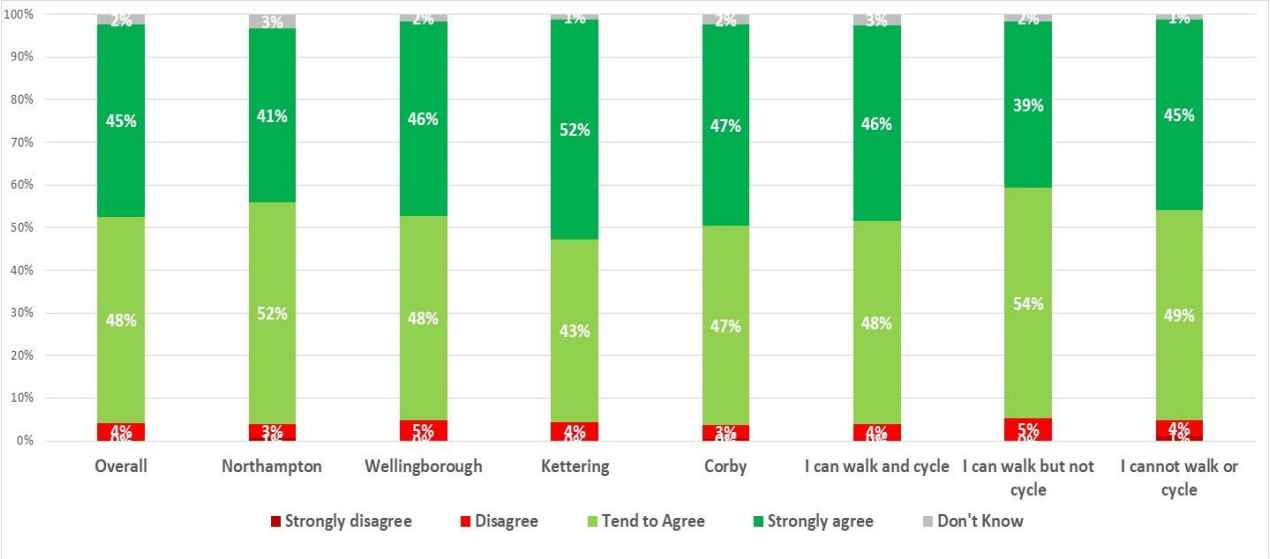


3.1.1 Walking to Ease Congestion

Considering whether more people should be encouraged to walk to help ease congestion, analysis by age and gender shows that respondents across all categories had very consistent views, with 95% of female and 91% of male respondents agreeing with this statement and between 92% and 95% across all age groups, also expressing their approval.

Figure 4 shows that support for walking to ease congestion was also consistent across the four towns. Agreement ranged from 93% in Northampton to 95% in Kettering, where 52% of respondents expressed strong agreement. Interestingly, those who responded that they had the ability to both walk and cycle were just as likely to be in agreement with this statement as those who responded that they could neither walk nor cycle, showing that the benefits of walking to ease congestion are understood by everyone.

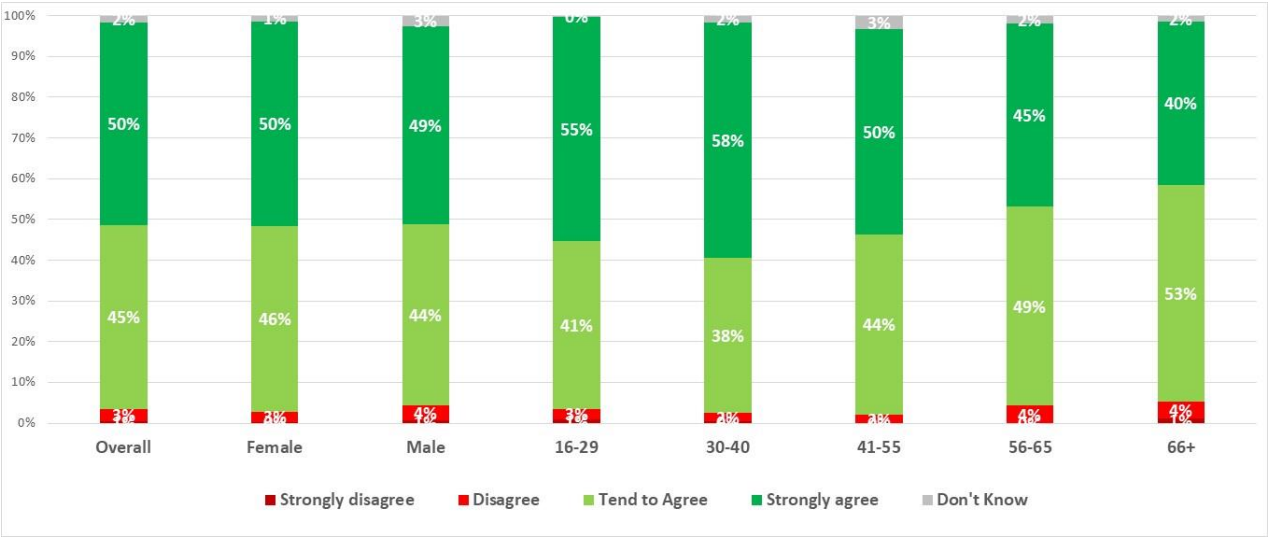
Figure 4 – Location Breakdown for Encouraging Walking to Ease Congestion



3.1.2 Walking to Help the Environment

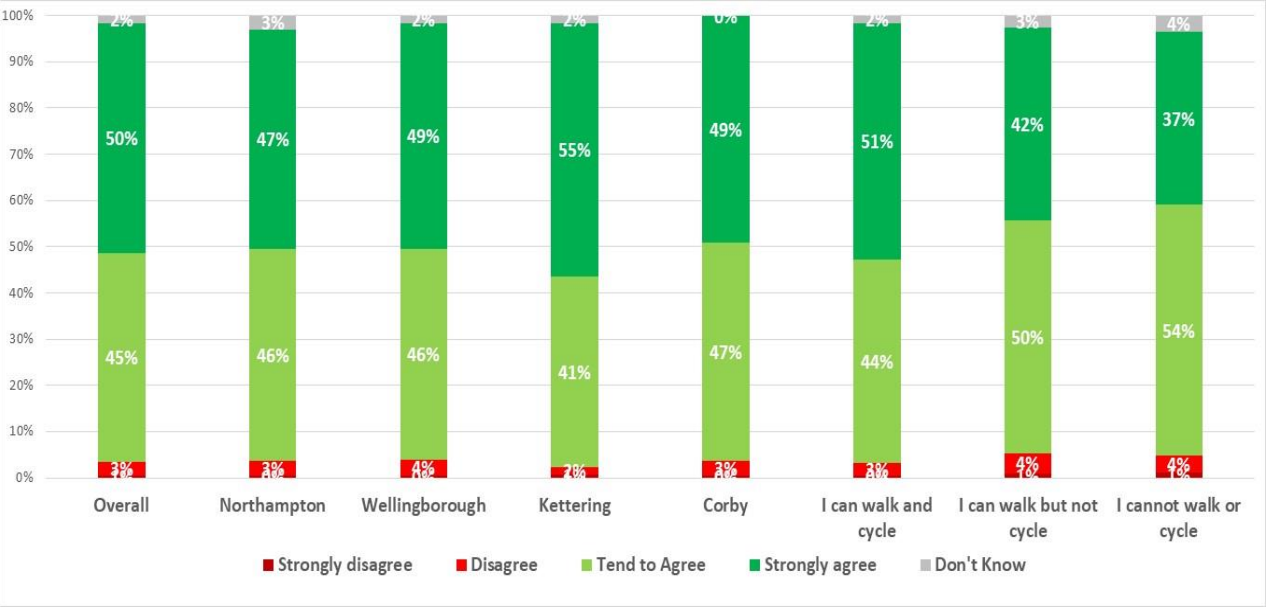
Figure 5 shows that support for walking to help the environment was also very strong and fairly consistent across gender and age. In total, 96% of female and 93% of male respondents agreed with this statement and whilst there was strong agreement across all the age groups, it is interesting to note that 58% of respondents aged 30-40 strongly agreed with this statement, compared to 40% of those aged 66+.

Figure 5 – Gender and Age breakdown for Encouraging Walking to Help the Environment



As seen in the previous location breakdown, agreement with walking to improve the environment was high across all four towns, with the strongest agreement coming in Kettering where 55% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

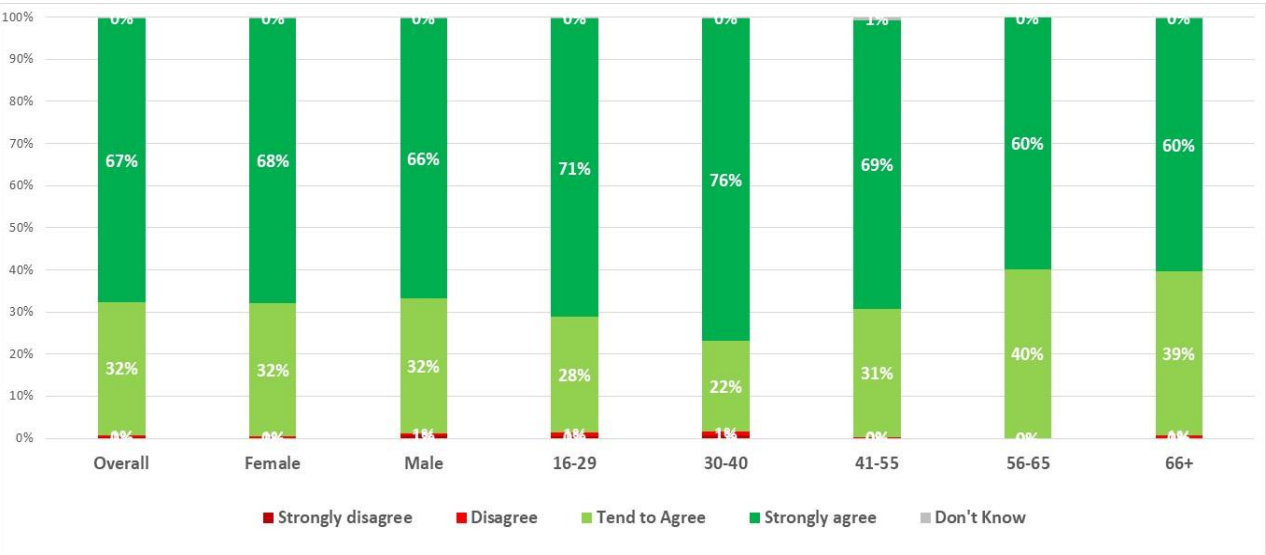
Figure 6 – Location Breakdown for Encouraging Walking to Help the Environment



3.1.3 Walking to Improve Health

Participants were asked how much they agreed with the statement that people should be encouraged to walk more to improve their health. This statement gained the highest level of agreement in the study. Figure 7 shows that nearly every respondent either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, with the highest proportion of those strongly agreeing aged 30-40.

Figure 7 – Gender and Age breakdown for Encouraging Walking to Improve Health



In terms of agreement with the idea that walking improves health across the four towns, all were uniform in both their overall support for this statement and those respondents indicating strong support, which was consistently rated at around 67%.

3.1.4 Giving Pedestrians Priority in Towns

Participants were then asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement that pedestrians should be given more priority in towns, even if it made things more difficult for car users. Almost three-quarters of respondents (71%) overall agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Some variation can be found in the level of disagreement, as shown in Figure 8, with male respondents slightly more likely to disagree than female respondents. It is also clear that the youngest age group of 16-29 were both most likely to disagree or strongly disagree (32%) and least likely to agree (61%), and that those aged 56-65 were both most likely to agree (79%) and least likely to disagree (15%) with this statement.

Figure 8 – Gender and Age breakdown for Prioritising Pedestrians

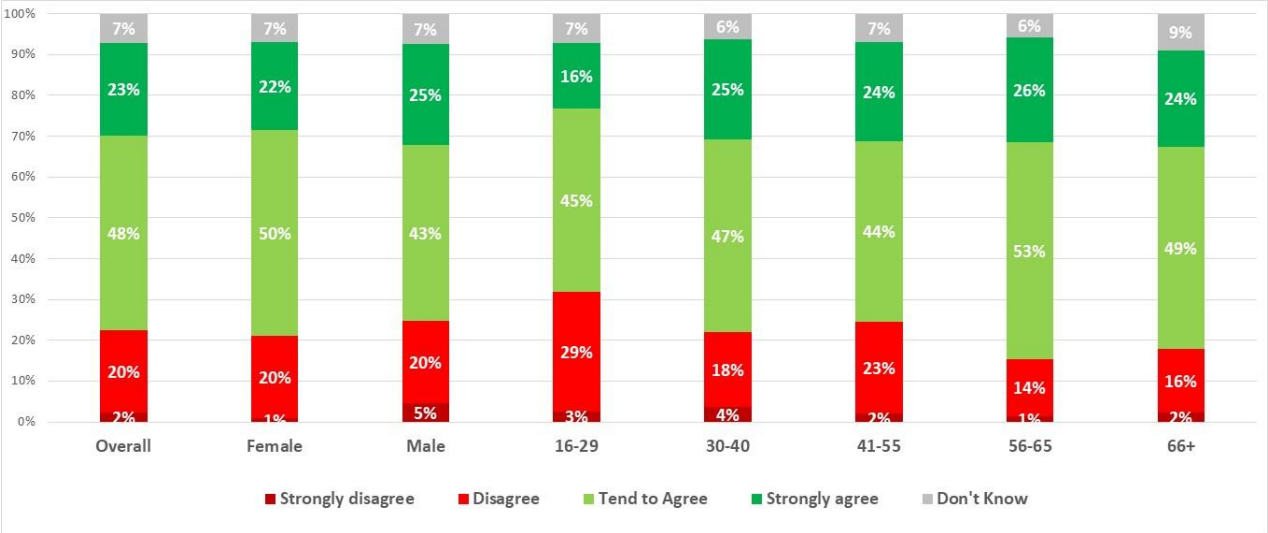
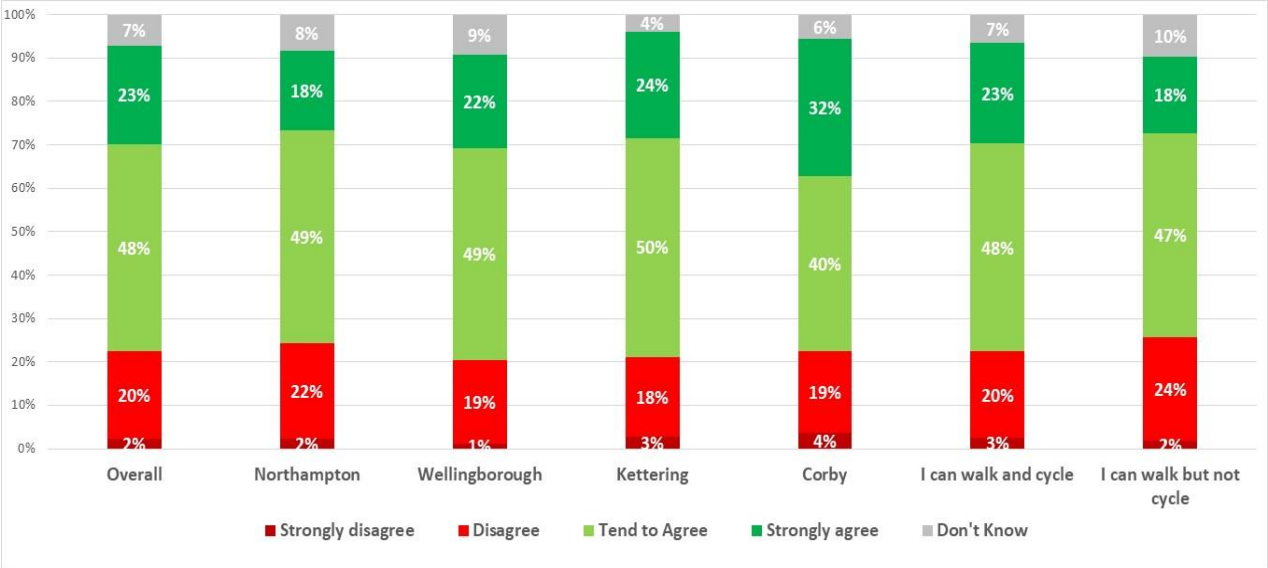


Figure 9 shows how respondents felt about giving pedestrians priority across the four towns. Those living in Northampton were the most likely to disagree or strongly disagree (24%) and those living in Kettering were most likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement (74%). However, those living in Corby were more likely to reply “strongly agree” at 32% in comparison to Northampton, where the number expressing this view was only 18%.

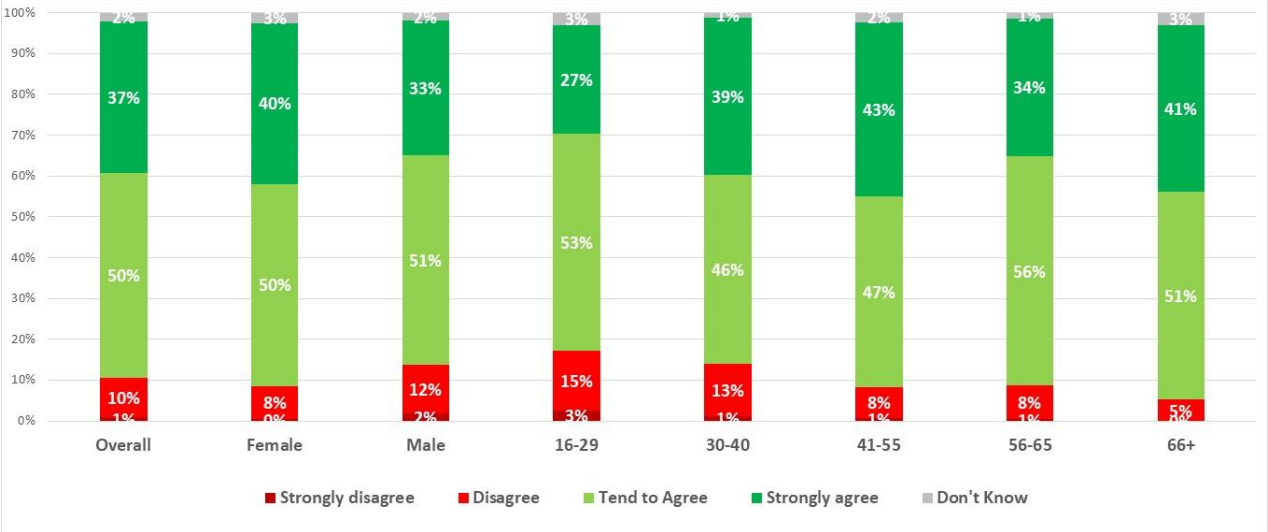
Figure 9 – Location Breakdown for Prioritising Pedestrians



3.1.5 Danger of Shared Paths

Participants were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement that paths shared by pedestrians and cyclists can be dangerous. Respondents aged 16-29 were most likely to disagree with this statement, with 18% expressing the view that they are dangerous at 18% and had the lowest level of agreement at 80%. As shown in Figure 10, there is a trend between a respondent's age and how much they agreed with this statement, with agreement growing as respondents got older. However, overall it is clear that a significant majority of all respondents have concerns about the safety of these shared pathways.

Figure 10 – Gender and Age Breakdown for Dangerous Paths

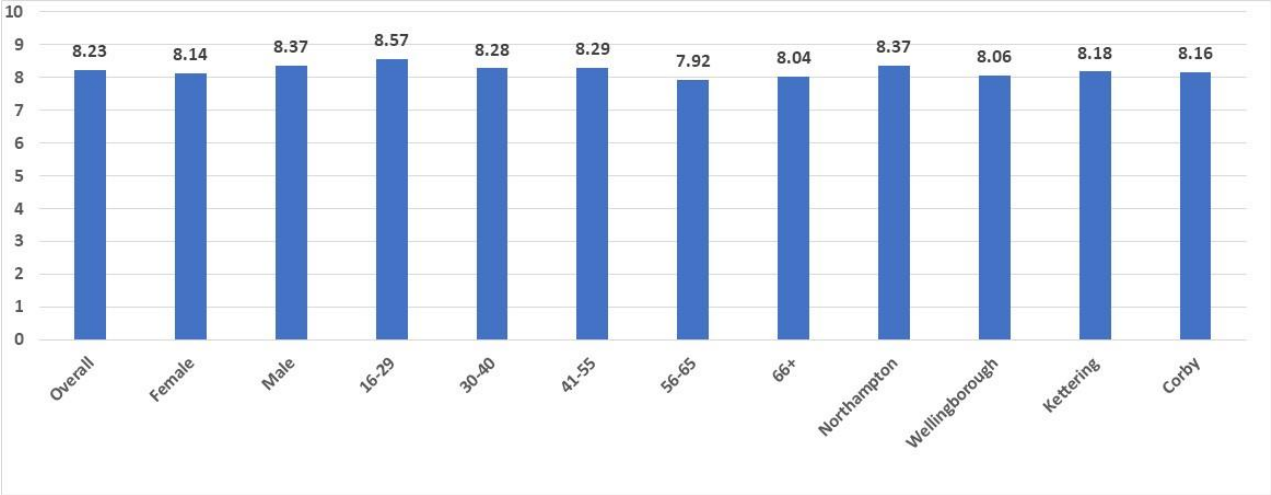


In terms variation between the four towns, there was very little difference in sentiment to the overall attitude described above.

3.1.6 Quality of Walking Amenities

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of the walking amenities in the local area on a scale of one to ten, where ten is the highest score. Figure 11 shows that the scores given across all respondent categories are consistently around 8, with only the 56-65 age group providing an average score slightly below this level. The younger age group 16-29 provided the highest overall rating of 8.57, whilst comparison of the four towns would suggest very little variation, with respondents in Northampton providing a slightly higher rating of 8.37.

Figure 11 – Quality of Walking Amenities Score



However, the problem with presenting the data in this way is that it is not very insightful. In order to gain a different perspective on these results, these scores have been analysed using the Net Promoter Score method[5] of assessing customer satisfaction, where respondents are grouped as follows:

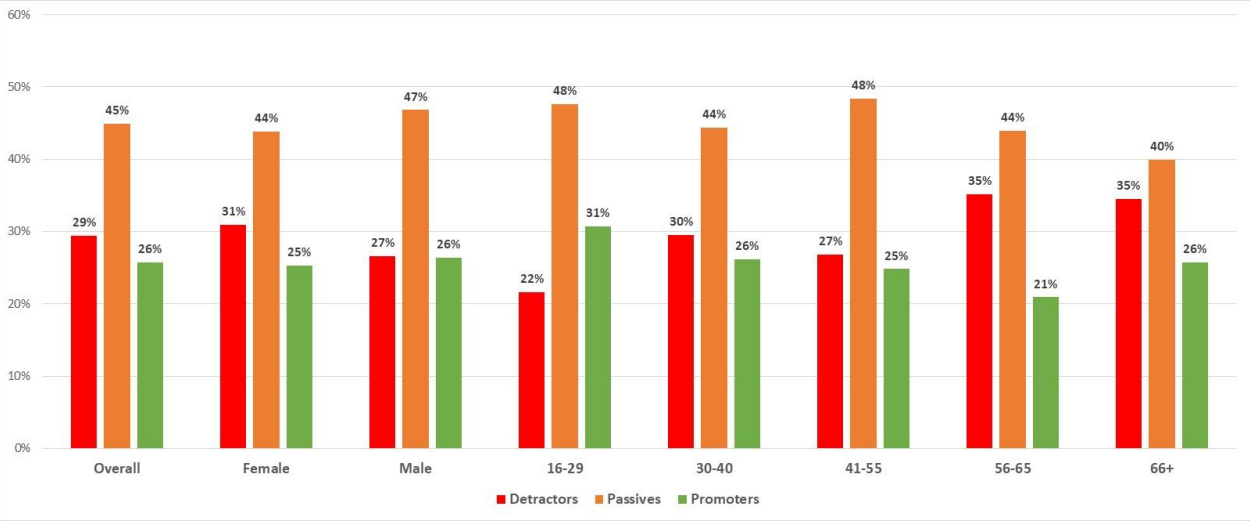
- Promoters (score 9-10) are loyal enthusiasts who will keep using the facilities and advocate to other about them.
- Passives (score 7-8) are satisfied but unenthusiastic residents.

[5] https://www.netpromoter.com/know/

- Detractors (score 0-6) are unhappy residents who may use negative word-of-mouth about the facilities.

Figure 12 sets out these three groupings by the age and gender of respondents.

Figure 12 – Gender and Age breakdown for Net Promoter Score



By subtracting the percentage of Detractors (red column) from the percentage of Promoters (green column) we generate a Net Promoter Score. Overall, 26% of respondents were Promoters of their local walking facilities, compared to 29% who were classified as Detractors, (26% - 29%) giving a NPS of -3%.

Table 4 sets out the individual NPS for each of the respondent categories identified in Figure 12.

Table 4 – Gender and Age breakdown for Net Promoter Score

Respondent	NPS
Female	-6%
Male	0%
16-29	9%
30-40	-3%
41-55	-2%
56-65	-14%
66+	-9%

Using the NPS model, female respondents were slight Detractors at -6%, compared with men who were neutral with an NPS of 0. In terms of age, those aged 16-29 were net Promoters at +9%, whilst the other ages groups were slight Detractors, peaking at those aged 55-65, with an NPS of -14%. In summary, it is therefore possible to see the subtle variations which can be considered when developing policy.

Figure 13 - Location breakdown for Net Promoter Score

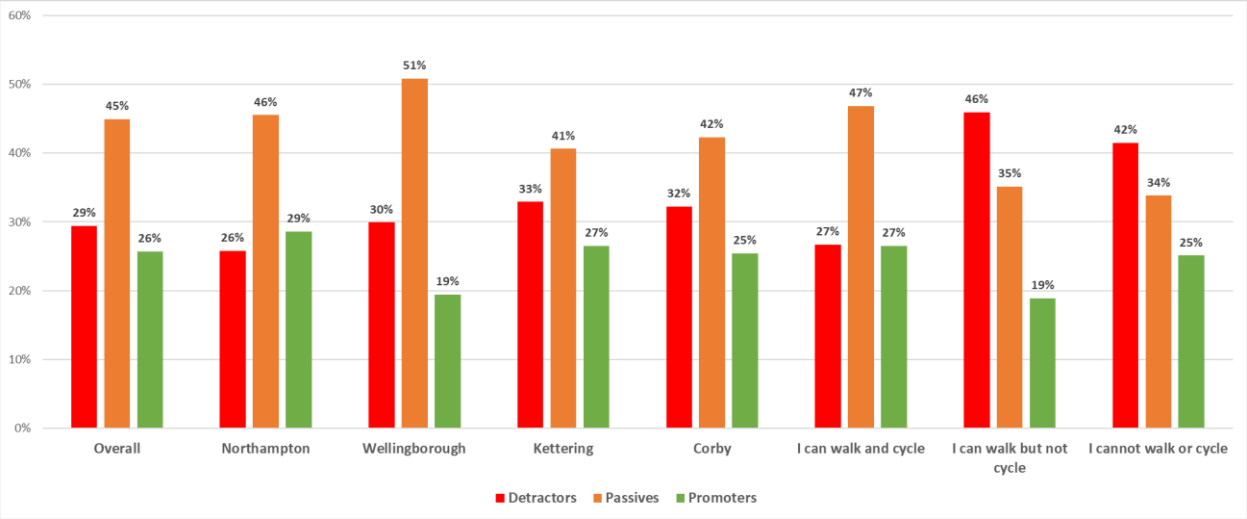


Figure 13 provides a geographic analysis of walking facilities NPS across the four towns, with specific NPS ratings set out in Table 5, below.

Table 5 – Location Breakdown for Net Promoter Score

Respondent	NPS
Northampton	3%
Wellingborough	-11%
Kettering	-6%
Corby	-7%
I can walk and cycle	0%
I can walk but not cycle	-27%
I cannot walk or cycle	-16%

Respondents in Northampton were most positive, providing an NPS of +3%, whilst residents in Wellingborough were net Detractors, with an NPS of -11%. It should be noted that those who reported that they could walk but not cycle were significantly more

unhappy with their local walking amenities than those that could both walk and cycle, with an NPS of -27% and 0% respectively.

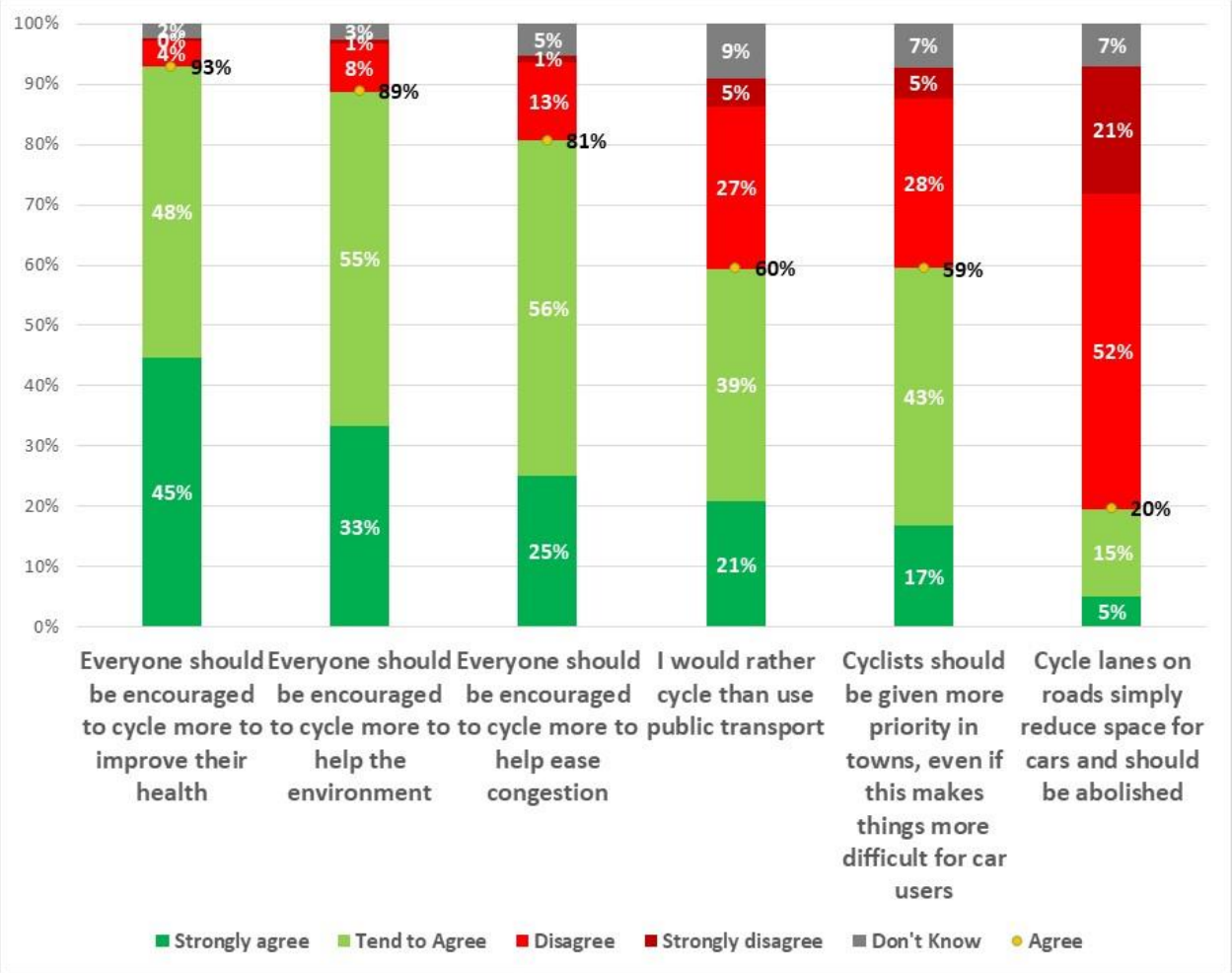
PERCEPTIONS OF WALKING AMENITIES: SUMMARY

Agreement that walking eases congestion, helps the environment and improves health was consistently high across demographics, more than 93% overall for each statement. 87% of respondents overall felt that the shared path for pedestrians and cyclists could be dangerous. 70% of respondents felt that pedestrians should be given priority over cars in towns, with the youngest age range of participants least likely to agree that they should be prioritised. When asked to score the overall quality of walking facilities in their local area, the average rating was 8.2 out of 10.

3.2 Perceptions of Cycling Amenities

Respondents were asked to give their opinions on a variety of issues concerning local cycling facilities. Figure 14 shows that overall respondents were in favour of encouraging cycling in order to help the environment (89%) and improve health (93%) and ease congestion (81%). Three fifths (59%) of respondents felt that cyclists should have priority over car users in towns, with a third (33%) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement. Three fifths (60%) of respondents also felt that they would prefer to cycle than use public transport.

Figure 14 – Overall Analysis of Cycling Amenities



3.2.1 Cycling to Ease Congestion

Participants were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement that everyone should be encouraged to cycle more in order to help ease congestion locally.

Analysis by gender shows that female respondents across were slightly more supportive of this statement, with 90% expressing overall agreement, compared to 84% of male respondents. Analysis by age showed only slight variation with agreement between 76% and 86% across all categories, as set out in Figure 15.

Figure 15 – Gender and Age Breakdown for Encouraging Cycling to Ease Congestion

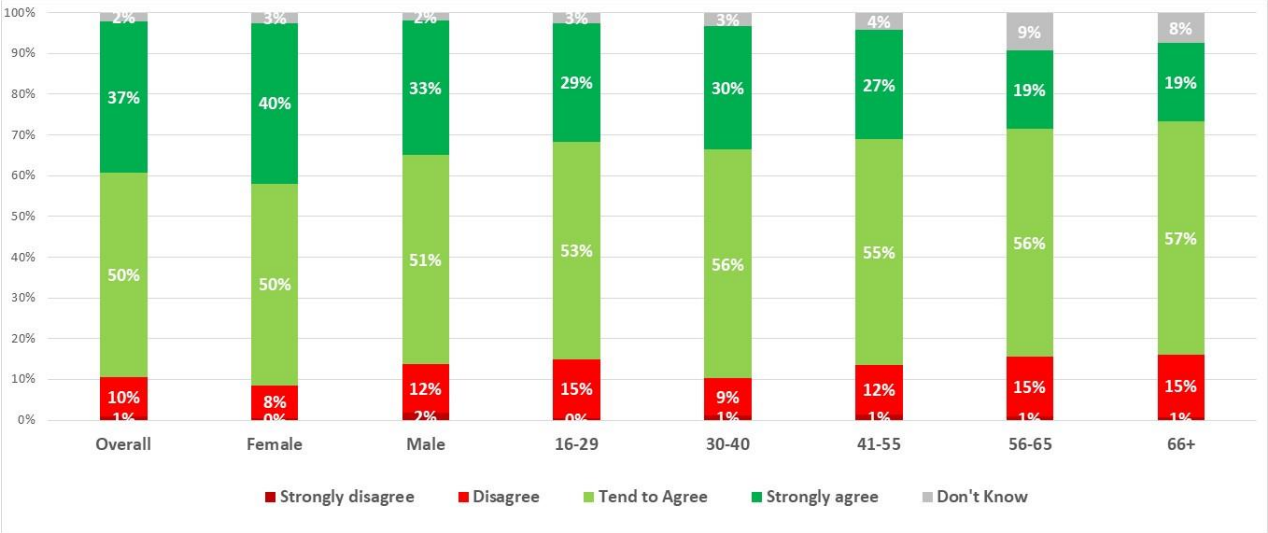
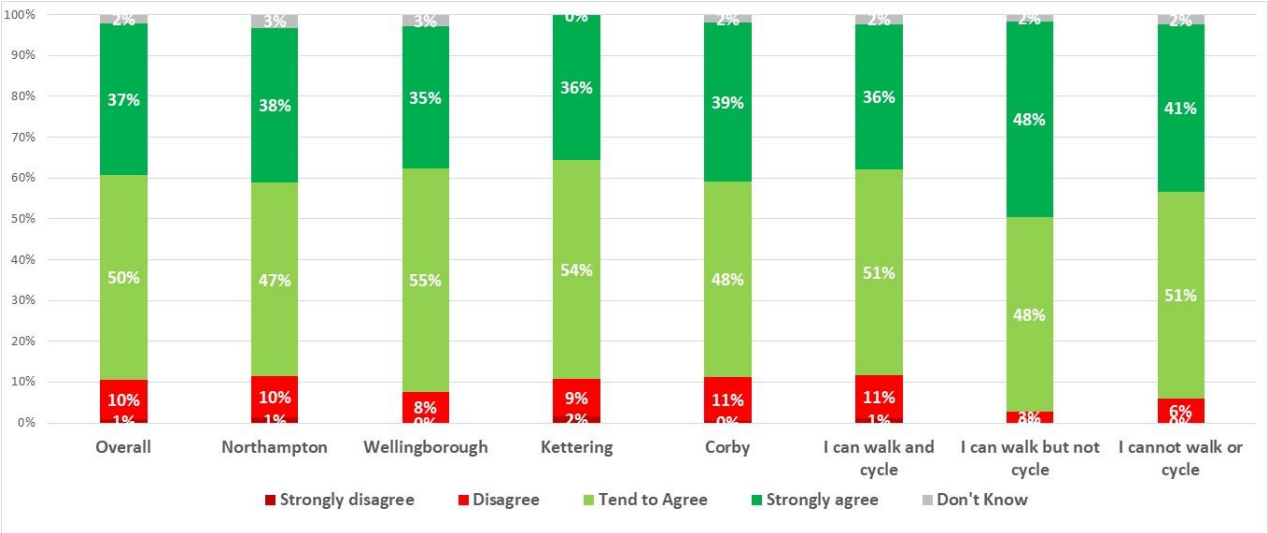


Figure 16 shows that support for more cycling to ease congestion was consistent across the four towns, ranging from 85% in Northampton to 90% in Wellingborough and Kettering.

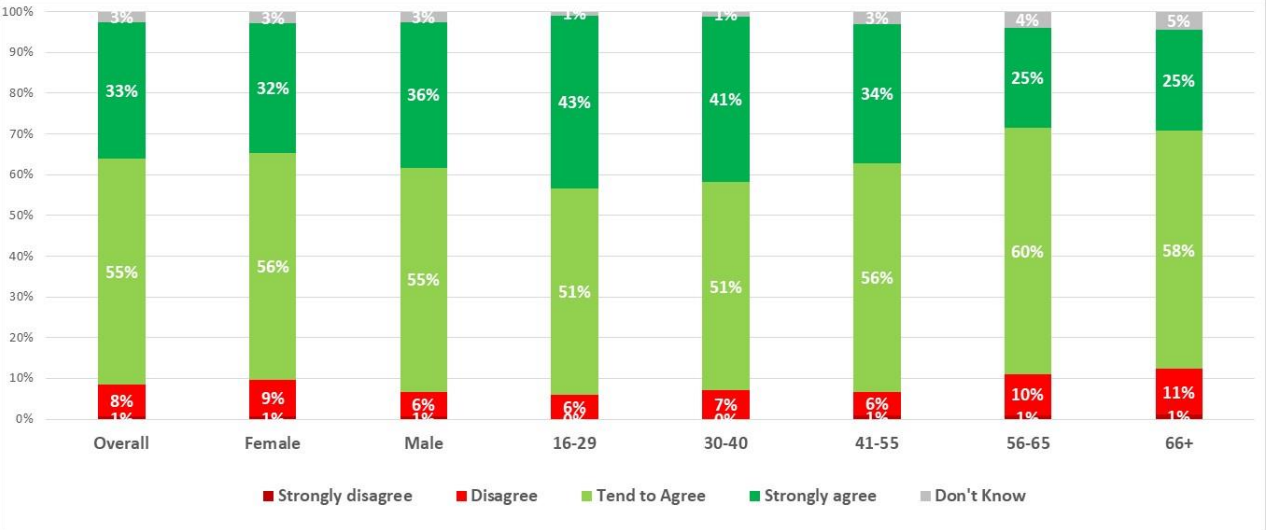
Figure 16 – Location Breakdown for Encouraging Cycling to Ease Congestion



3.2.2 Cycling to Help the Environment

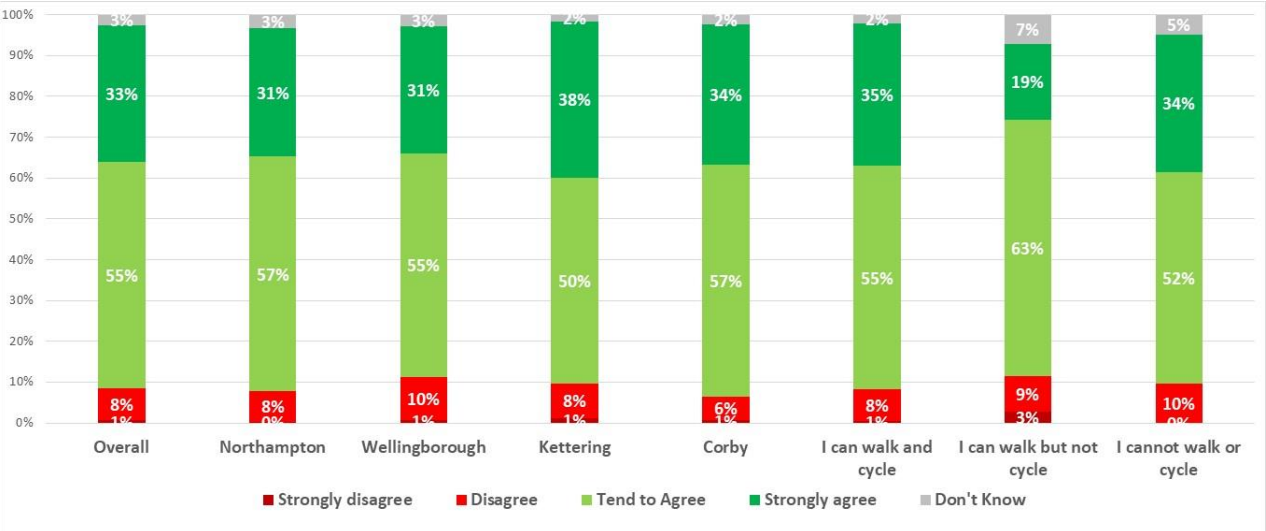
Figure 17 shows that cycling more to improve the environment was heavily supported across all gender and age categories. In total, 88% of female and 91% of male respondents wanted to see more cycling to help the environment. As shown below, the level of agreement to this statement is highest in those aged 16-29 at 94% and decreases gradually to 83% in the oldest age group, 66+.

Figure 17 – Gender and Age Breakdown for Encouraging Cycling to Help the Environment



In contrast to the previous location breakdown for congestion, agreement with encouraging cycling to help the environment was lowest in Wellingborough at 86%. Agreement was highest in Corby at 91%, however Kettering had the most residents in strong agreement at 38%, as shown in Figure 18 below.

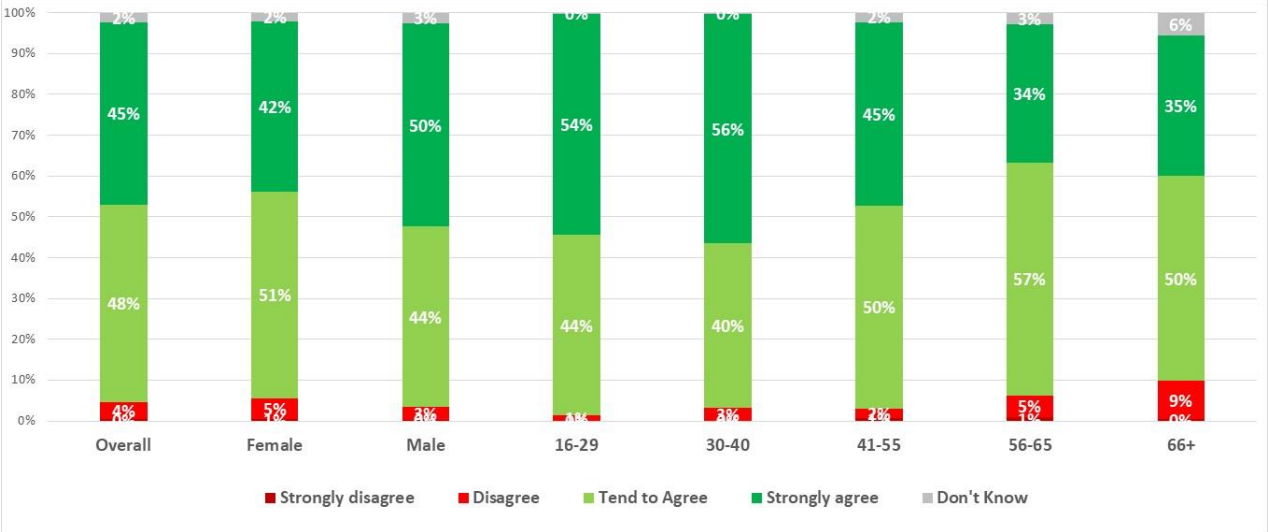
Figure 18 – Location Breakdown for Encouraging Cycling to Help the Environment



3.2.3 Cycling to Improve Health

Participants were asked how much they agreed with the statement that people should be encouraged to cycle more to improve their health. This gained the highest level of agreement across all the statements asked in this section of the survey. Figure 19 shows that nearly 94% of male and 93% of female respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. Agreement gradually decreases as age increases, ranging from 98% in those aged 16-29 to 85% amongst those aged 66+.

Figure 19 – Gender and Age Breakdown for Encouraging Cycling to Improve Health



Analysis across the four towns should very little variation, with a minimum of 91% of residents agreeing with this statement and a minimum of 44% strongly agreeing.

3.2.4 Giving Cyclists Priority in Towns

Participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that cyclists should be given more priority in towns, even if it made things more difficult for car users. Three fifths (60%) of respondents overall agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, as did a majority of respondents in all age and gender categories.

Figure 20 shows that, overall, a third (33%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Whilst there was little variation by gender, the youngest age group of 16-29 were most likely to disagree or strongly disagree at 40%, although a majority 56%, were in agreement. Giving cyclists priorities in towns was a statement that gathered support as respondents got older.

Figure 20 – Gender and Age Breakdown for Prioritising Cyclists

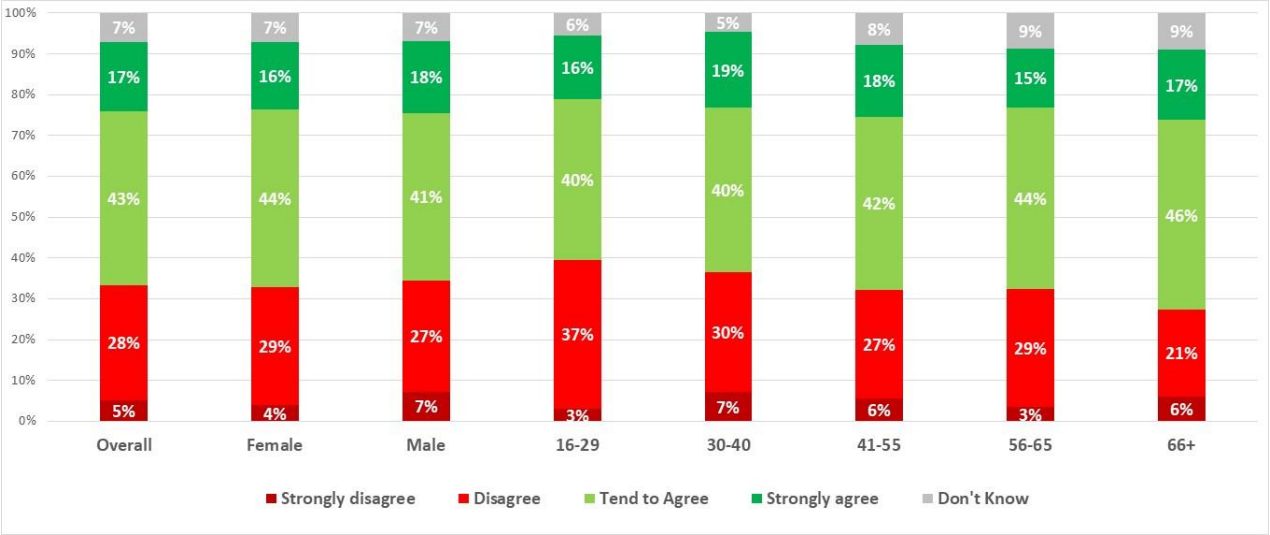
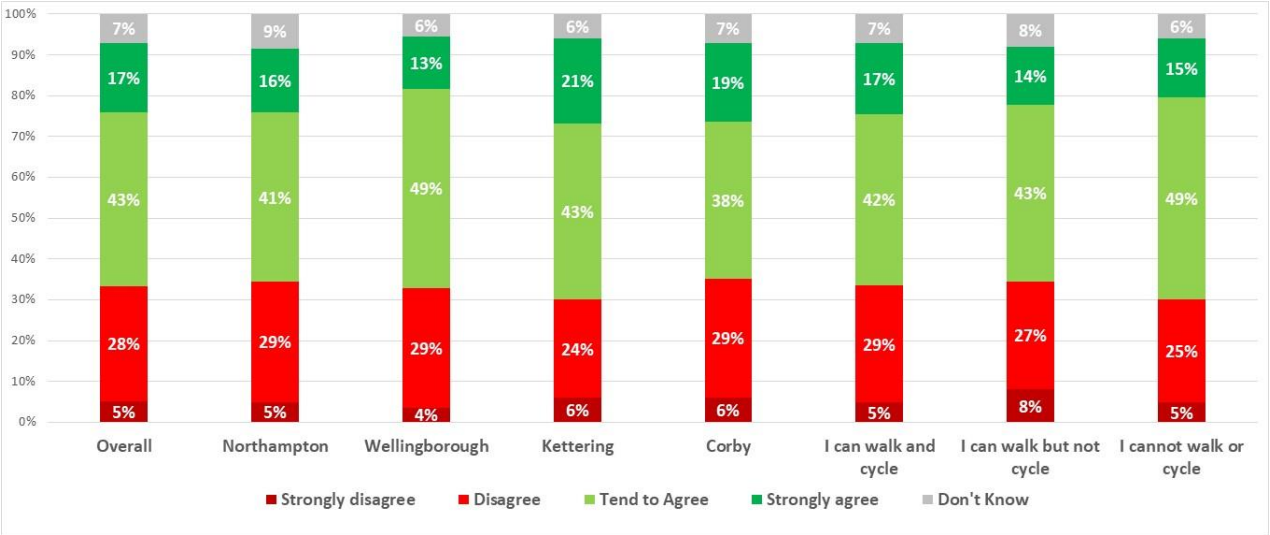


Figure 21 shows how respondents across the four towns felt about giving cyclists priority. Overall levels of agreement were consistent, although only 13% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement in Wellingborough, compared to 21% in Kettering.

Figure 21 – Location Breakdown for Prioritising Cyclists

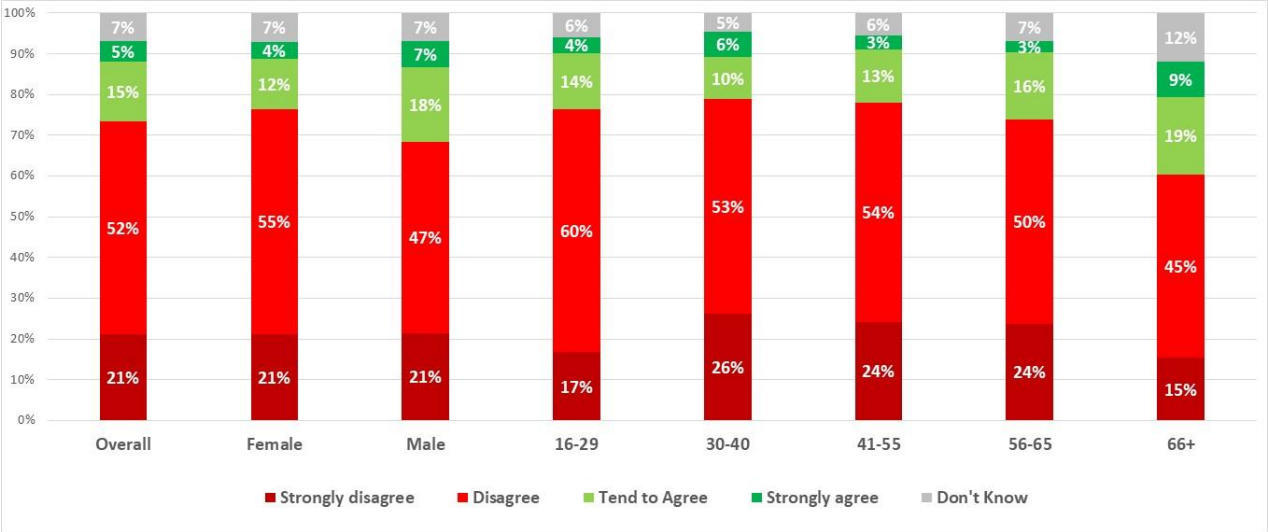


3.2.5 Abolition of Cycle Lanes

Residents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement that cycle lanes reduced space for cars on the roads and should be abolished. As shown in Figure 22, there was strong opposition to this statement across all respondent categories. Although, male respondents were more supportive at 25%, compared with female respondents with only 16% in agreement.

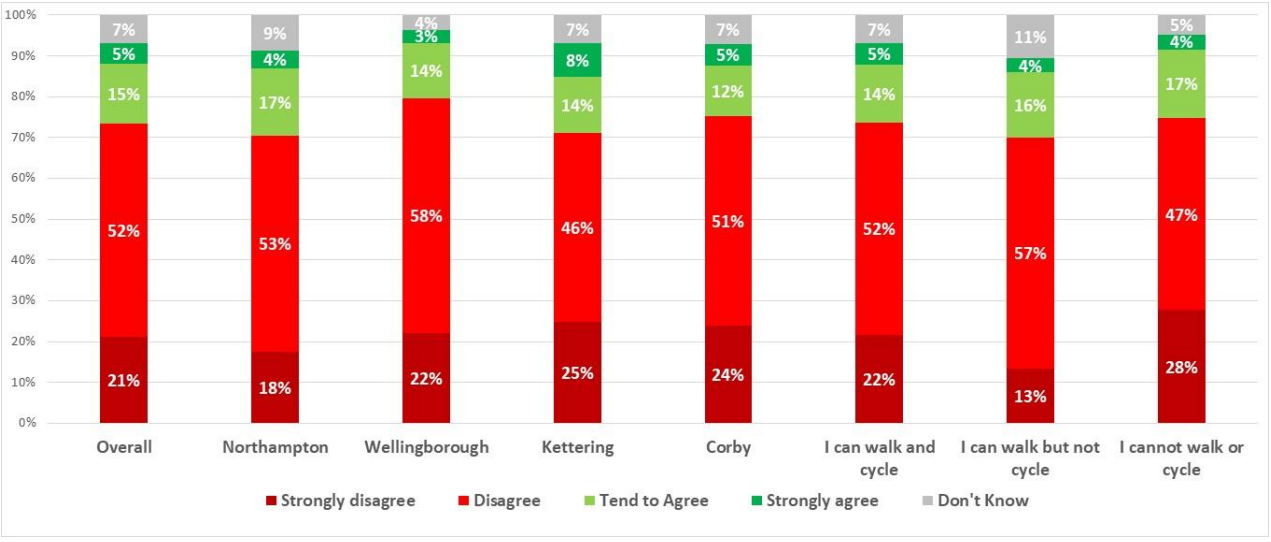
In terms of age, the oldest respondents, 66+, expressed the highest level of agreement with this statement at 28%, but a clear majority of respondents in this group expressed their opposition to the abolition of cycle lanes.

Figure 22 – Gender and Age Breakdown for Abolishing Cycle Lanes



As shown in Figure 26, there is a clear majority of opposition across all four town to the abolition of cycle lanes. However, support for this proposal was highest in Kettering, at 22% and Northampton, at 21%.

Figure 23 – Location Breakdown for the Abolition of Cycle Lanes

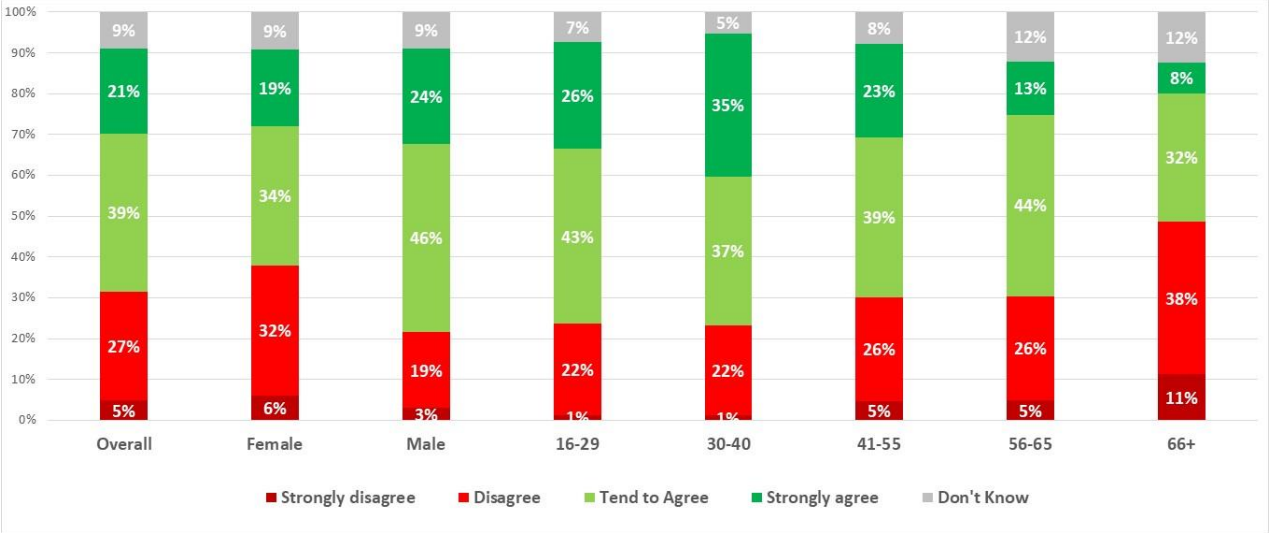


3.2.6 Cycling Versus Public Transport

Residents were next asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement that they would prefer to ride a bicycle than use local public transport. Overall, three fifths

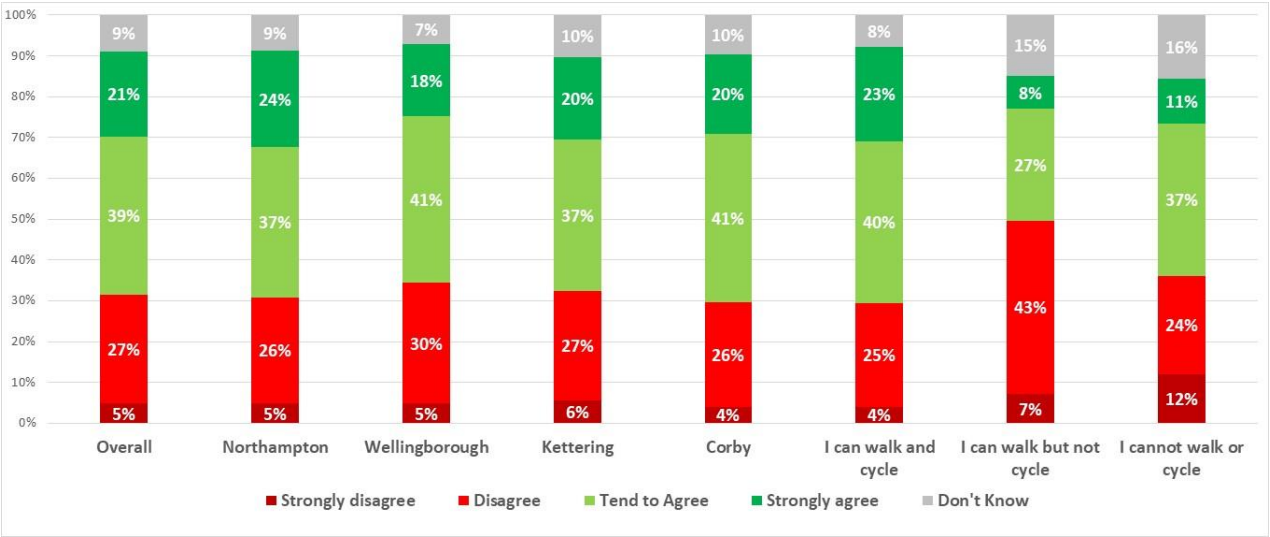
(60%) agreed with this statement, although there was some variation between male and female respondents, with 38% of females indicating a preference for public transport, compared with only 22% of men, as shown in Figure 24, below. Analysis by age shows a clear preference for cycling over public transport across all age categories, expect the oldest, 66+, with 49% disagreeing, compared to 40% in agreement. Preference for cycling over public transport declined as respondents got older.

Figure 24 – Gender and Age Breakdown for Cycling over Public Transport



Analysis by town showed that preference for riding a bicycle compared to taking public transport remained consistent, with 57% of respondents in Kettering agreeing with the statement, rising slightly to 61% in Corby, as shown in Figure 25, below.

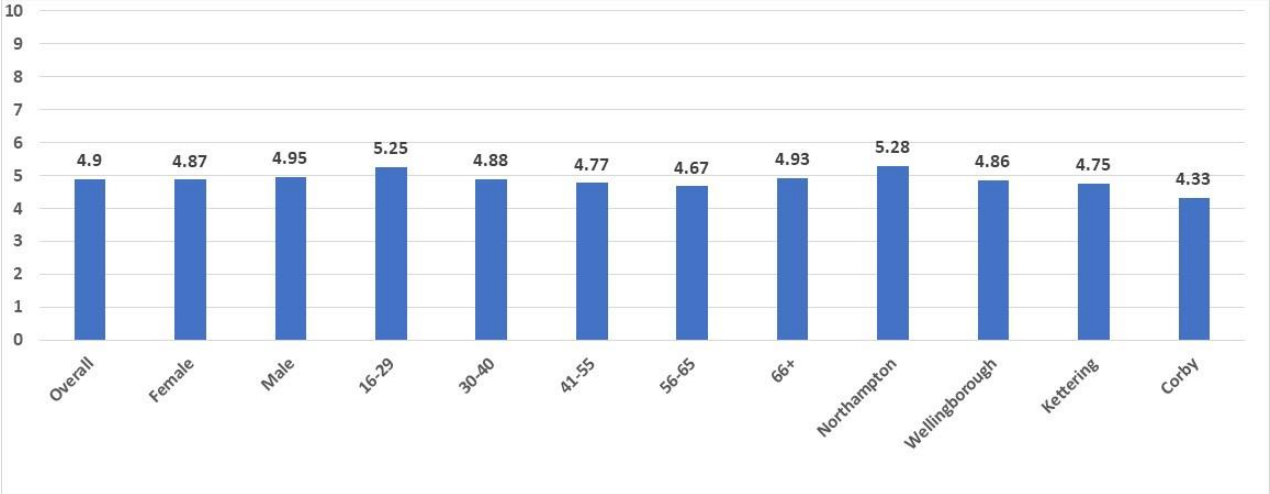
Figure 25 – Location Breakdown for Cycling over Public Transport



3.2.7 Quality of Cycling Amenities

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of the cycling amenities in the local area on a scale of one to ten, where ten is the highest score. Figure 26 shows that the scores given across all respondent categories were consistently around 5, with residents in Corby providing the lowest rating at 4.33 and residents in Northampton providing the highest rating 5.28. Overall, the average is 4.9, well below the ratings provided for walking amenities.

Figure 26 – Quality of Cycling Amenities Score



Using the NPS method described in section 3.1.6, overall, only 4% of respondents were Promoters, as shown in Figure 27 below, whilst 75% were classified as Detractors, giving cycling amenities an NPS of -71%.

Figure 27 – Gender and Age breakdown for Net Promoter Score

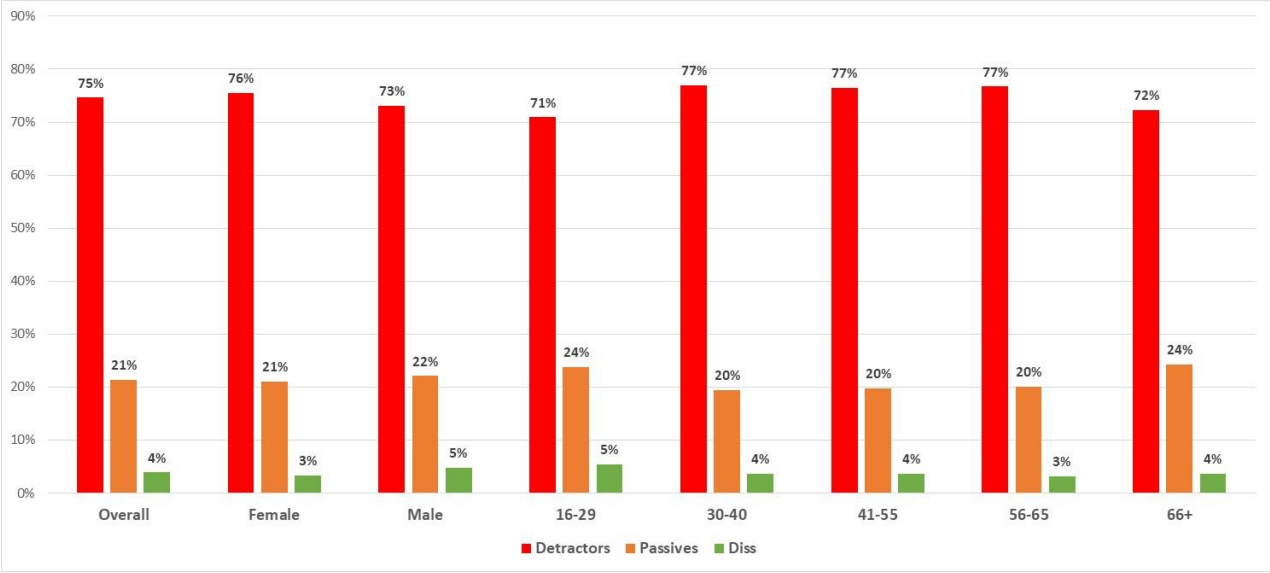


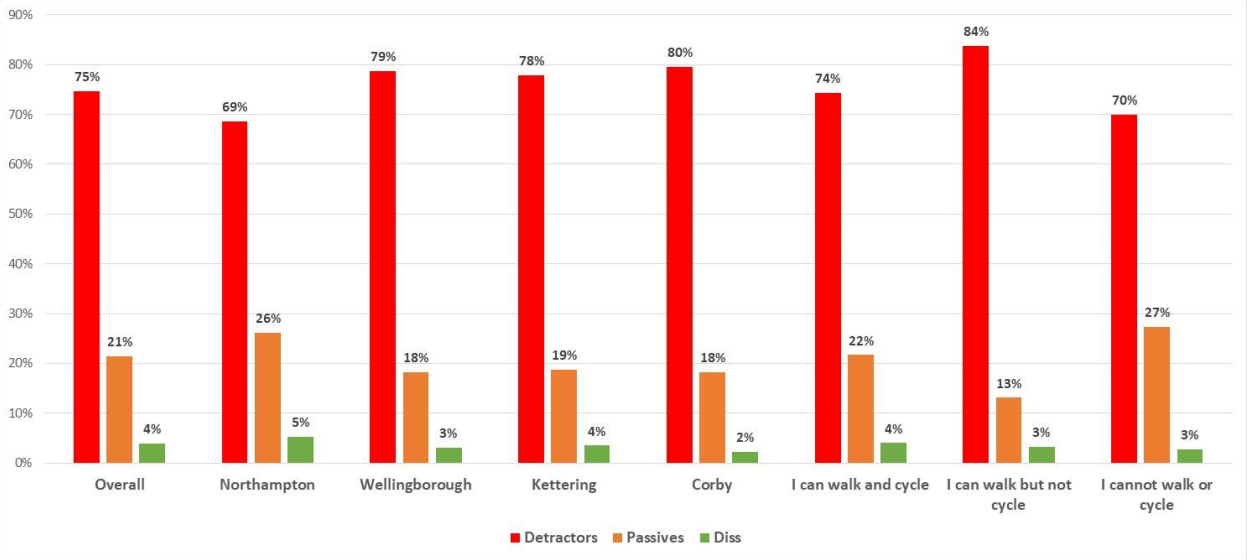
Table 6 shows that whilst the NPS is slightly better for men than women, the overall picture is very clear that using this model highlights a great deal of dissatisfaction with cycling facilities across all respondent groups.

Table 6 – Gender and Age Breakdown for Net Promoter Score

Respondent	NPS
Female	-72%
Male	-68%
16-29	-66%
30-40	-73%
41-55	-73%
56-65	-74%
66+	-69%

Figure 31 provides a geographic analysis of walking facilities NPS across the four towns, with specific NPS ratings set out in Table 7, below.

Figure 31 - Location breakdown for Net Promoter Score



Geographic analysis across the four towns shows the same picture, as shown in Figure 28. Using the NPS model, residents in Northampton were slightly less dissatisfied at -63%, compared with around three-quarters of residents living in Wellingborough,

Kettering and Corby who were detractors. Those living in Corby gave the lowest score of -77%.

Table 7 – Location breakdown for Net Promoter Score

Respondent	NPS
Northampton	3%
Wellingborough	-11%
Kettering	-6%
Corby	-7%
I can walk and cycle	0%
I can walk but not cycle	-27%
I cannot walk or cycle	-16%

PERCEPTIONS OF CYCLING AMENITIES: SUMMARY

Agreement that cycling eases congestion, helps the environment and improves health was consistently high across all demographics, more than 80% overall for each statement. A majority (59%) of respondents felt that cyclists should be given priority over cars in towns, with the youngest age range of participants most likely to disagree that they should be prioritised (40% disagree or strongly disagree).

Overwhelming support of local cycle lanes was noted, with only 20% of all residents agreeing they were problematic for cars on roads, and 73% of residents disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement. When asked to score the overall quality of cycling facilities in their local area, the average rating was 4.9 out of 10.

3.3 Pre-Covid Exercise Levels

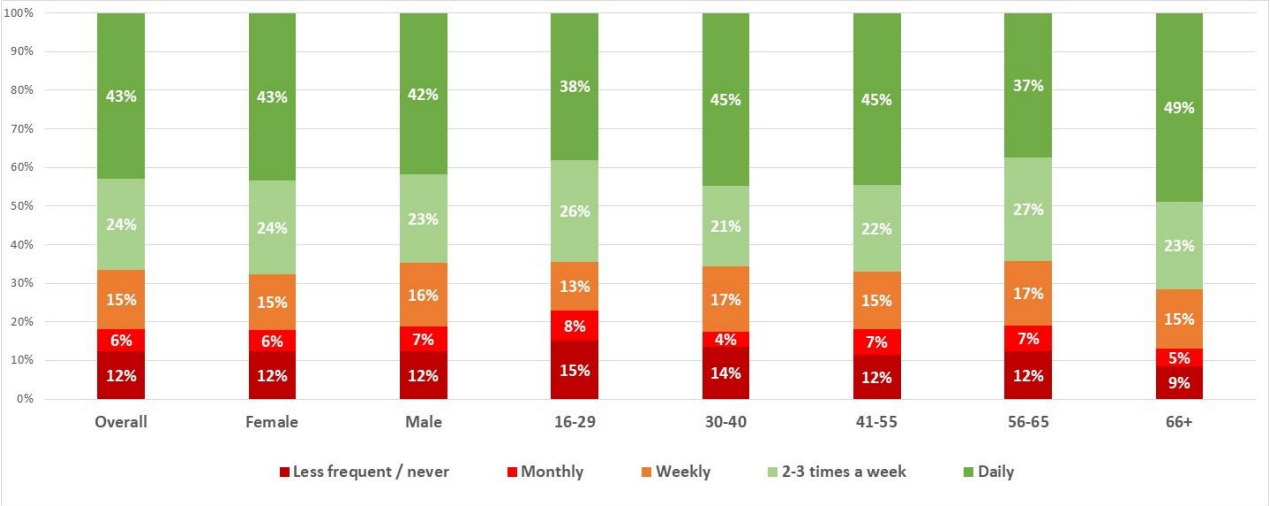
Respondents that were able to cycle or walk were asked about their level of exercise before the Coronavirus pandemic hit in March 2020.

3.3.1 Walking for Exercise Pre-Covid

Respondents were asked how frequently they went for walks before the pandemic, where walking was the main objective and form of transport. Overall, 67% of respondents indicated that they walked for exercise at least twice a week.

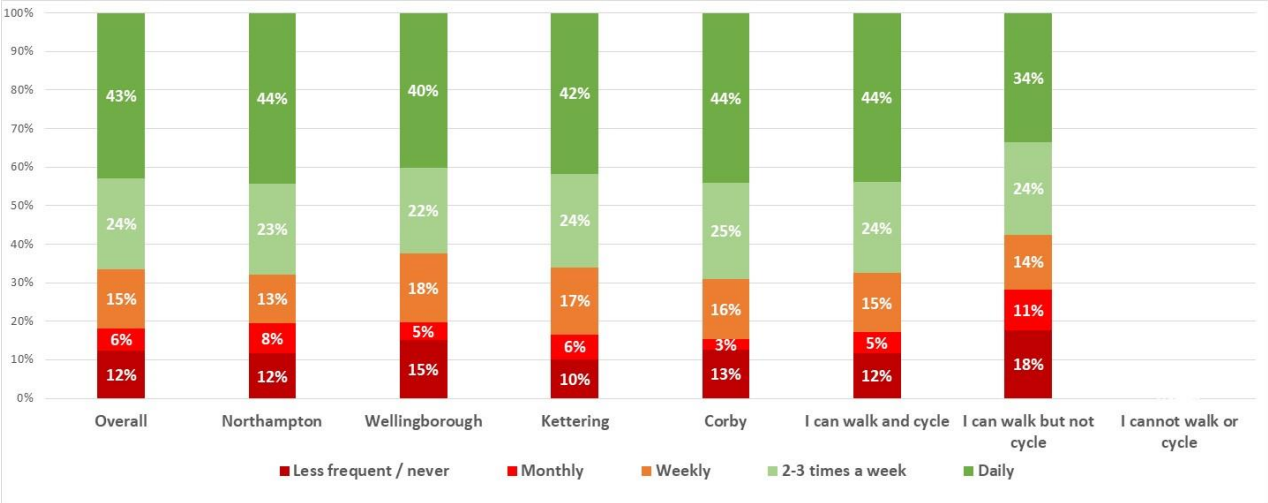
Figure 28 shows that there was little difference in walking behaviour pre-Covid between genders, with 67% of female, and 65% of male respondents walking two times per week or more. Analysis by age shows a relatively consistent level of frequent exercise defined as at least twice a week, with 72% of the oldest respondents, 66+, exercising at this level. Indeed, nearly half (49%) of respondents aged 66+ indicated that pre-Covid they walked daily for exercise. The level of daily walking exercise fell to 38% for those aged 16-29 and 37% for those aged 56-65.

Figure 28- Gender and Age Breakdown for Walking Pre-Covid



Similar results were found when breaking down the data by location, with around two fifths of respondents from each of the four towns indicating that before the pandemic they walked daily for exercise and around two thirds indicating they walked for exercise at least twice a week, as shown in Figure 29.

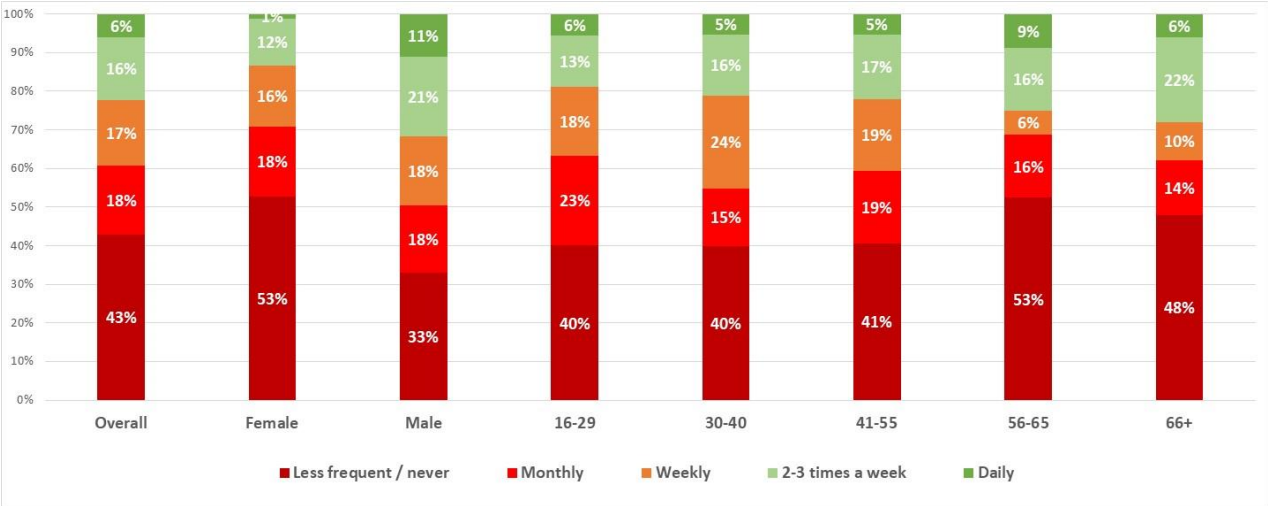
Figure 29 – Location Breakdown for Walking Pre-Covid



3.3.2 Cycling for Exercise Pre-Covid

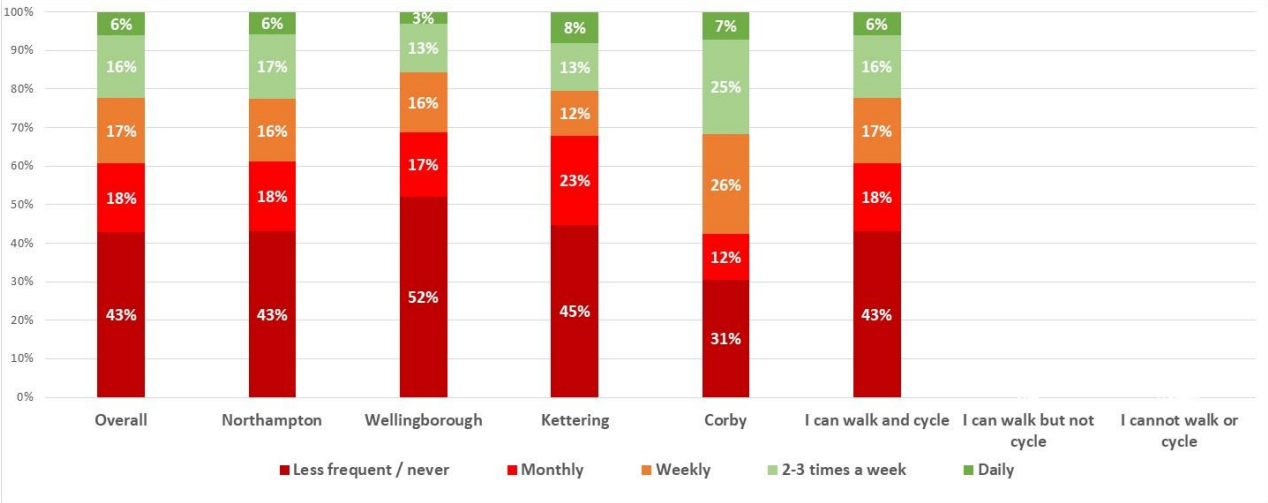
Respondents were also asked how frequently they travelled by bicycle before the pandemic. Cycling was far less common than walking amongst resident's pre-covid. Overall, 22% of residents cycled at least twice a week. In contrast to walking, there was a more noticeable difference in cycling pre-Covid between genders with only 18% of female respondents, compared with 32% of male respondents, cycling twice a week or more. Analysis by age, set out in Figure 30, found that those in the oldest age group of 66+ were most likely to have cycled at twice a week pre-Covid, at 28% compared to those aged 16-29, where only 19% reported to have done so.

Figure 30 – Gender and Age Breakdown for Cycling Pre-Covid



When examining the results across the four towns, Corby residents reported the highest levels of cycling before the pandemic, with 32% of residents cycling at least twice a week, compared to just 16% of those living in Wellingborough, where just over half (52%) of residents indicated that they cycled less than once a month, if ever.

Figure 31 – Location Breakdown for Cycling Pre-Covid



PRE-COVID EXERCISE: SUMMARY

Before the pandemic, 67% of respondents were walking 2-3 times a week or more. Those aged over 66 were most likely to have walked this frequently for exercise (72%), as were Corby residents (69%), whereas 23% of the youngest age group of 16-29-year-olds reported to have walked on a monthly basis or less.

Cycling was far less common than walking in residents before the pandemic. Overall, 22% of residents cycled twice a week or more frequently. The breakdowns show that the highest levels were reported by; male residents (32%), those aged 66+ (28%), and those living in Corby (32%).

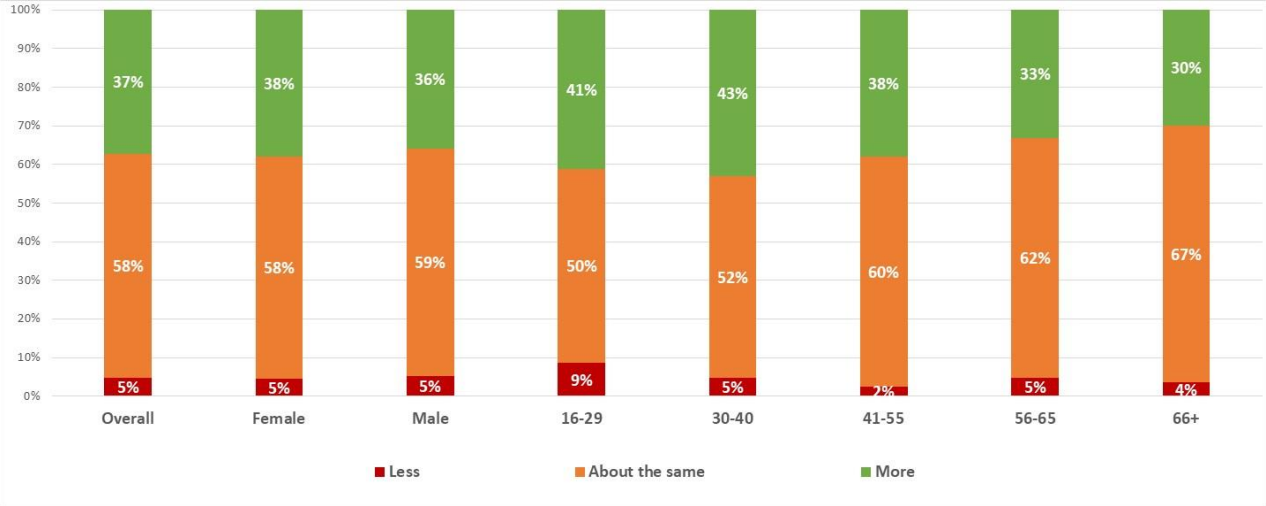
3.4 Post-Covid Exercise Levels

Respondents that were able to cycle or walk were asked what they believed their level of exercise after the pandemic might be.

3.4.1 Walking Levels Post-Covid

In terms of walking, over a third (37%) of respondents felt they would walk more than they had done before the pandemic. Whilst there was very little difference in terms of gender, respondents aged 30-40 were most likely to walk more, with 43% indicating this to be the case. Across all categories, walking less was chosen by only a very small number of respondents, at 5%, rising to 9% amongst those aged 16-29.

Figure 32 – Gender and Age Breakdown for Walking Post-Covid



Analysis across the four towns shows very little variation, with predicted activity levels matching the overall trend identified above, although 39% of Corby based respondents indicated they would be walking more.

Respondents who replied that they would walk less were asked why they felt this would be the case. Overall, just under a third (29%) stated that it was easier to go by car, with 44% of respondents aged 56-65 making this point. A fifth of respondents suggested they didn't have the time to walk recreationally, rising to 55% of those aged 30-40. One of the other most commonly identified reasons for walking less after the pandemic was ill health at 16%, although this was the most commonly identified issue affecting respondents aged 66+. These results have been set out in Figure 33.

Figure 33 – Gender and Age Breakdown for Reasons for Walking Less

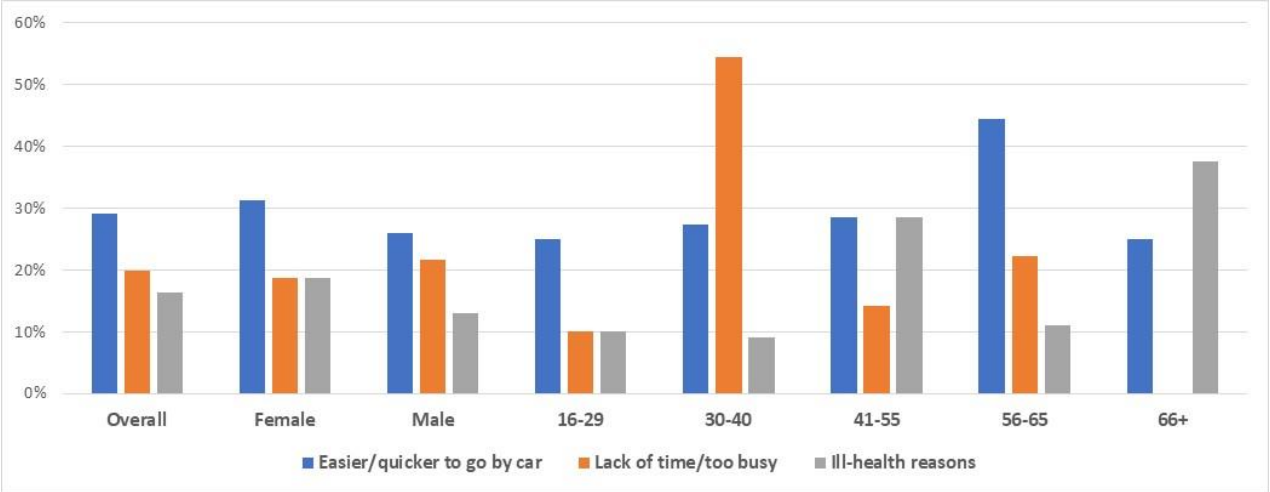
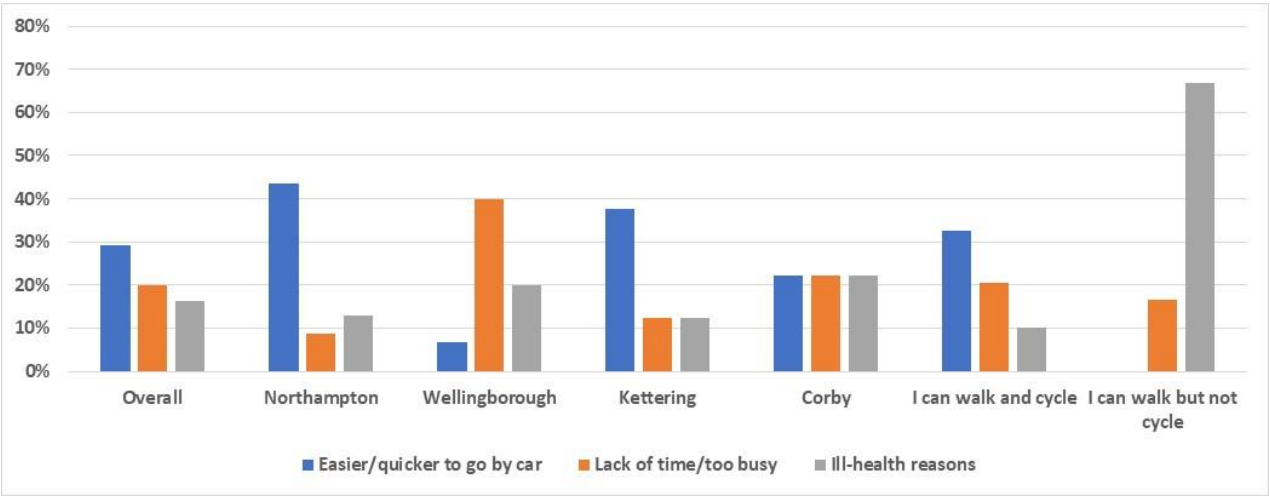


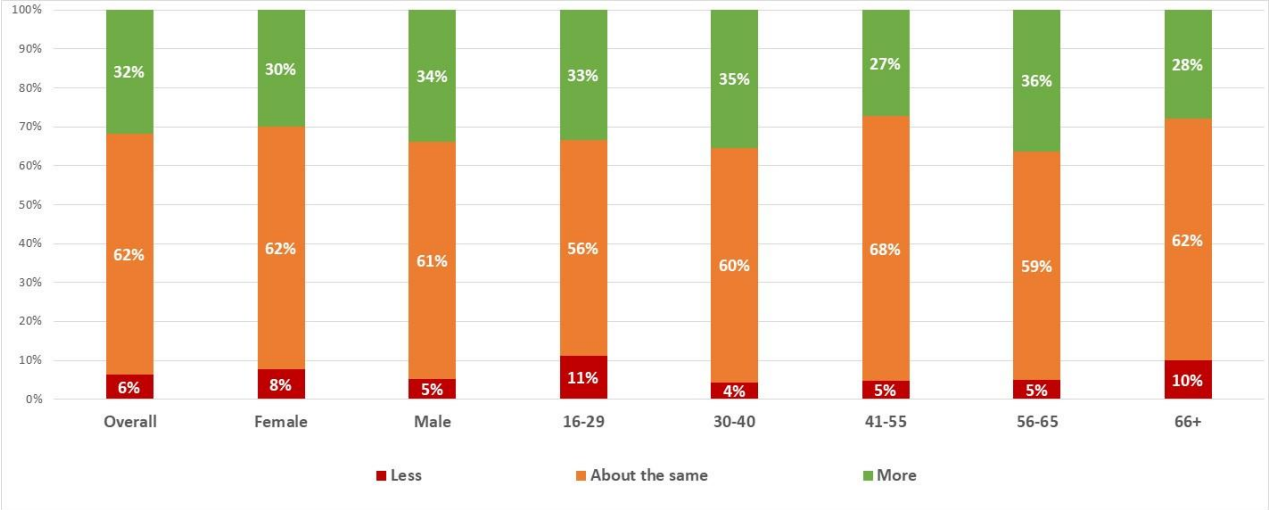
Figure 34, below, shows that respondents living in Northampton and Kettering were most likely to identify the ease of travelling in the car as the main reason for walking less post pandemic, with around two fifths of respondents making this point. The convenience of the car was not an issue for Wellingborough respondents, with two fifths identifying a lack of time as the main reason.

Figure 34 – Location Breakdown for Reasons for Walking Less



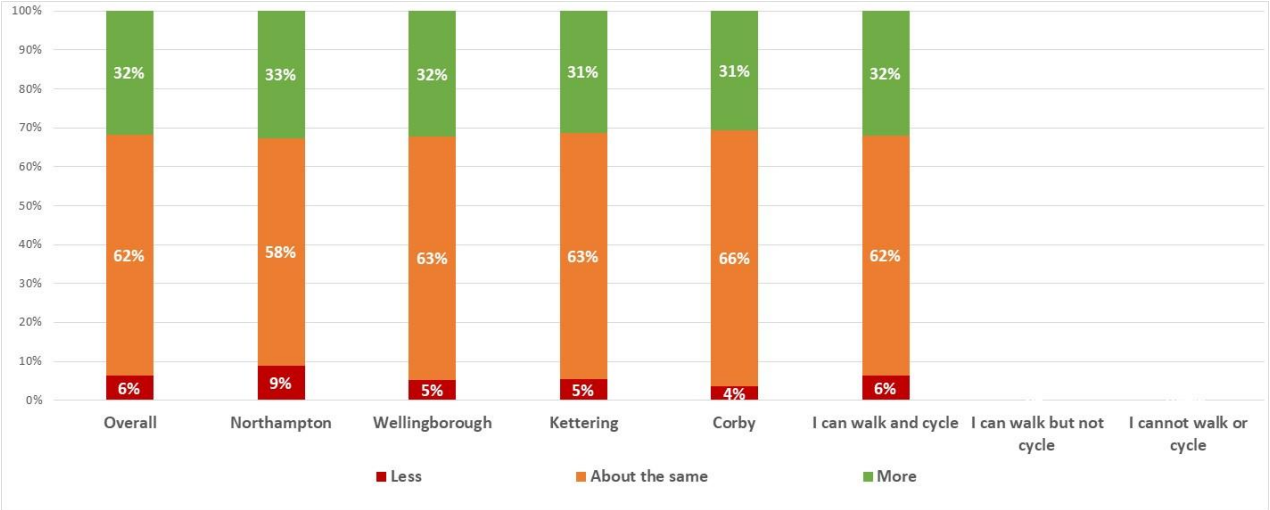
In terms of cycling, anticipated levels of activity post-Covid, were fairly consistent across gender and age. Figure 35 shows that the smallest anticipated increase in cycling was recorded in those aged 41-55, with 27% saying they would be doing more of this activity, whilst 68% of this age category said they'd be cycling about the same. In terms of those cycling less this was highest amongst 16-29-year-olds at 11% and 66 and over at 10%.

Figure 35 – Gender and Age Breakdown for Cycling Post-Covid



Responses by location were almost identical across all four towns, as shown in Figure 36 below. Whilst all indicated that around a third of respondents would be cycling more, the only town showing a significant decrease in cycling frequency post pandemic was Northampton at 9%.

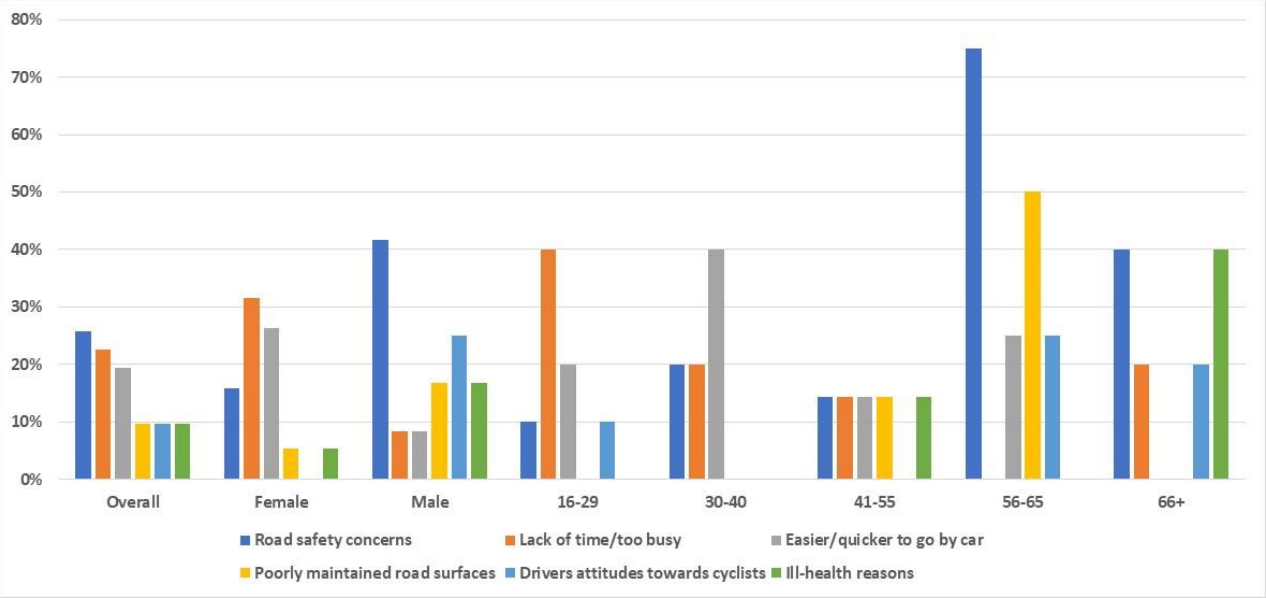
Figure 36 – Location Breakdown for Cycling Post-Covid



Respondents who replied that they would cycle less were asked why this was. Overall, a quarter of respondents to this question raised concerns about road safety, followed by a lack of time and then the convenience of using the car, identified by around a fifth of respondents indicating that they would be cycling less after the pandemic. These were the three main issues raised, but other issues included poorly maintained road surfaces, driver's attitudes towards cyclists and ill-heath.

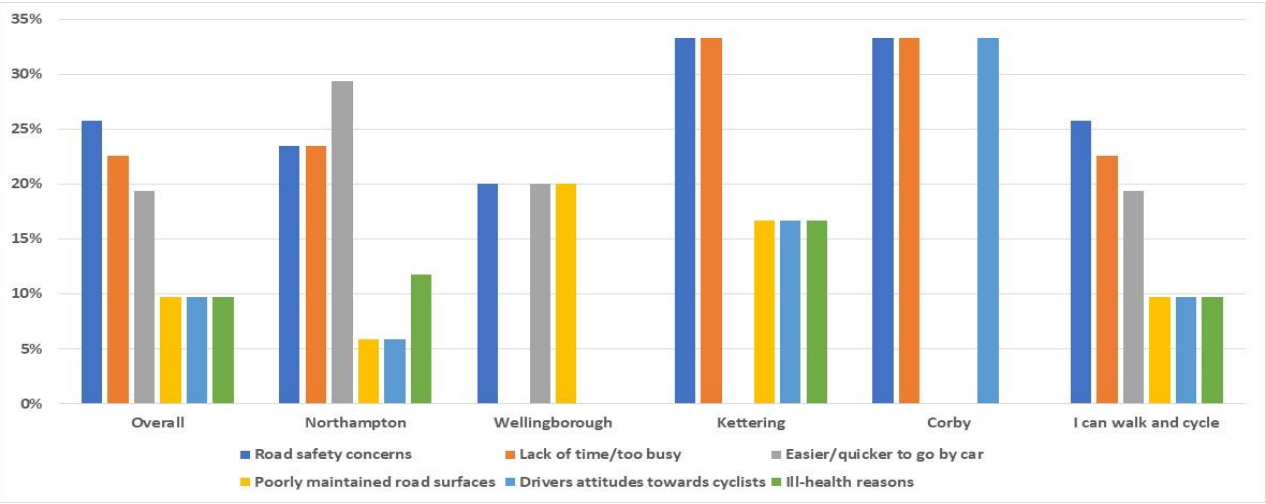
More than two fifths of male respondents raised road safety concerns, whilst a third of female respondents indicated that they would cycle less post pandemic due to a lack of time. The reasons for cycling less also differed greatly by age, as shown in Figure 37 below. The oldest age category, 66 and over, were most likely to raise ill-health as a reason, whilst the younger respondents, 16-29, raised a lack of time. Two fifth of respondents aged 30-40 found it easier to go by car.

Figure 37 – Gender and Age Breakdown Reasons for Cycling Less



Analysis by town, set out in Figure 38 shows that road safety concerns were common across all towns. However, in Northampton the ease of using the car was a significant factor, whilst in Wellingborough and Kettering around a fifth of respondents raised concerns about poorly maintained road surfaces.

Figure 38 – Location Breakdown for Reasons for Cycling Less



POST-COVID EXERCISE LEVELS

After the pandemic, 37% of residents across the four towns said they would be walking more often than they had before the pandemic, whilst 5% said they would walk less. Reasons for walking less were that it is easier/quicker to go by car, not having enough time or health problems.

The same questions were asked to those who cycle, with 32% overall indicating they would be cycling more than they had before the pandemic and only 6% indicating they would be cycling less. The reasons given for cycling less included; concerns for road safety, a lack of time, the convenience of using the car, poorly maintained road surfaces, concern about driver's attitudes towards cyclists and health problems.

4 Conclusions

Given that over two fifths of respondents to this study indicated that they walk every day, increasing to two thirds (67%) indicating that they walk at least two or three times a week, it is clear that before the pandemic, a significant majority of respondents recognised the importance of regular walking as part of living a healthy lifestyle. This conclusion is supported by the very high proportion of respondents recognising the benefits that walking has in terms of easing congestion, helping the environment and living a healthy life.

However, 6% of respondents were walking only monthly and a further 12% were walking less than that. It is significant, therefore, that over a third of respondents indicated they would be walking more in the future, with only 5% indicating that they anticipated walking less. Although this is only a small proportion, it is important to note that of those suggesting they will walk less, a lack of time and the convenience of using the car are the primary factors.

In terms of walking facilities, the rating of 8.2 out of 10 looks extremely positive and is significantly higher that the rating received for cycling facilities. However, using the NPS method to analyse this data highlights differing levels of approval for the walking facilities between the town of Northampton, where they are perceived the best and Wellingborough, where they have the lowest promoter rating.

Going forward a clear majority (87%) of respondents raised concerns about shared paths, with 70% of respondents wanting pedestrians to be given more priority in towns, rising to 75% in Kettering.

Looking at cycling, the levels of activity before the pandemic were lower than for walking, but still significant, with over a fifth of respondents who could cycle, doing so at least twice a week. It is extremely positive to reflect on the fact that nearly a third (32%) of respondents indicated that they would be cycling more after the pandemic, with only 6% cycling less, although it should be noted that 11% of respondents aged 16-29 believed they would cycle less after the pandemic. Reasons for cycling less were much more varied than those given for walking less, with road safety concerns, a lack of time and the convenience of going by car as the main factors, although poorly maintained road surfaces and drivers' attitudes towards cyclists were also contributing factors.

The highest levels of regular cycling were found in Corby, with 32% of respondents cycling at least twice a week, compared with only 16% of respondents in Wellingborough.

Looking at cycling facilities, the fact they rated of 4.9 out of 10 suggests room for improvement. Indeed, using the NPS analysis highlights considerable dissatisfaction with the existing facilities across all four towns covered by this survey.

Going forward, it is interesting to note that at 60% of respondents would rather cycle than use public transport. A similar proportion of respondents also wanted to see cyclists being given more priority in towns, a finding that is consistent with the 73% of respondents who did not want to see cycle lanes abolished.