

Getting around Sedgefield and Fishburn

Consultation report, September 2023

Introduction

The Active Travel Group was established in 2021 to look at issues surrounding active travel within the electoral ward of Sedgefield and Fishburn (this incorporated the smaller settlements of Mordon, Bradbury and Thorpe Larches).

The group agreed to carry out a community consultation with residents, businesses, visitors, and other organisations, to obtain their views about active and sustainable travel, as well as wider traffic and highway issues in the area.

This report will highlight issues and views raised by local people via the consultation and will be passed to relevant departments or agencies, and used to secure funding for new projects and for improvements to current infrastructure.

To date, two projects have already been completed:

- An accessible path from Station Road, Sedgefield to Hardwick Park underpass
- Installation of new bike racks in the centre of Sedgefield.

Consultation process

We consulted with residents, businesses, community organisations, visitors, schools and others, over an eight-week period between 21 November 2022 and 16 January 2023.

Opportunities to get involved were promoted via social media networks, local press, the farmers' market, Sedgefield News, council buildings including the library, the town council and parish councils/meets, community centres, and through local active travel group networks such as Sedgefield Development Trust's Bicycle and Active Travel Group.

We undertook the consultation using a range of methods including:

- Face-to-face meetings and presence at events in the ward
- An online survey hosted on the council's website

- Information provided to local schools
- Paper copies made available locally for people to complete.

Respondents

The format of responses was recorded as below; paper copies were entered on the system to enable them to take part and are included in the PC responses.

- Mobile 254 = 65.8%
- PC 104 = 26.9%
- Tablet 28 = 7.3%

The largest response to this consultation was from residents, followed by community organisations, employees, visitors and business owners.

People travelled between multiple areas, so the percentages quoted in the report are in some cases higher than 100%. A high number of respondents stated that they frequently travelled through Sedgefield and Fishburn. Other villages were mentioned, but in smaller numbers.

Respondents could indicate that they use more than one method of travel. Some selected several, so again the percentages quoted in the report are higher than 100%. Most respondents stated they were car drivers, walkers, car passengers, cyclists, runners or bus users. A very small number stated that they have prams or use wheelchair/mobility scooters.

Motorcycles and horses were mentioned as other modes of transport.

Some respondents provided details of the location where they would like to see improvements whilst others did not. Where they did not, they are highlighted as no specific location identified.

Consultation responses:

Safe walking or travel using mobility aids

The survey asked if respondents felt safe walking or using a mobility aids. There were 211 responses to this question and 53.6% stated they didn't feel safe. Across all towns and villages, there were concerns about footpath conditions, lack of crossings, speeding traffic and parking issues, which were also linked closely with obstruction and crime and safety.

Suggestions for change were made, including to look at traffic calming measures, parking solutions, enforcement, crossings, maintenance of footpaths and installation of new footpaths.

65.5% felt they could access all parts of settlements using a roadside path. Of the 34.5% who stated they couldn't access roadside paths in most locations, suggestions made were to install new footpaths and maintain the current footpaths and use enforcement.

Respondents from the smaller villages requested new footpaths and cycle paths.

The survey asked how respondents rate the roadside paths. This looked at conditions, links, and accessibility. This was a mixed response depending on the likely ability of the user. The suitability of paths for people with pushchairs and mobility issues requiring aids was rated as poor.

In summary, improvements could be made to roadside footpaths in all areas. These include more pedestrian crossings, maintenance of footpaths, lighting, creation of new links in some areas to improve accessibility between villages, and wider footpaths to accommodate more users. Traffic management and enforcement measures were mentioned in most areas.

Safe bicycle use

Respondents were asked if they ride a bicycle. From the 374 responses, 41.4% said they did and 58.6% said they didn't. When asked why not and how this can be changed, most said they would feel unsafe, whilst a small number suggested to increase cycle lanes, introduce traffic calming and remove HGVs from villages.

The 41.4% that responded that they did ride a bike, were asked to rate the cycle paths in the area. This looked at condition of the path, links and lighting. There was a mixed response, depending on which area they travelled in. The paths were rated as poor for some of the categories.

Suggested improvements included better path conditions, new pedestrian/cycle zones and lighting.

When asked about improved cycle networks between the settlements, creating more links between areas, and between Sedgefield and other parts of the county, were most popular.

When asked if they use the bicycle racks/stands currently provided, 73.3% of those responding said they didn't. The most common reasons for this are that they don't cycle or stop in the areas where there may be racks and don't know where facilities are. A small number wouldn't leave their bikes unattended.

When asked if they believe that there are enough bike racks in the area, 73.7% said there are not enough. Respondents were then asked if existing car parking spaces should be re-purposed for bike racks. The responses were that whilst there is a need for more bike racks, those should not necessarily take up a car parking space. Areas which were highlighted for the addition of bike racks were Sedgefield and 'no specific' location. There could be possible promotion of bike stands in areas.

N.B. The survey was conducted before the installation of new bike racks in the centre of Sedgefield.

Car Parking

Respondents were asked to state if they had any problems parking their vehicles in different situations.

- People stated that they experienced difficulties when at events or shopping.
- Of the businesses owners that responded to this survey, 88.9% didn't provide staff with designated parking and 68.9% said that parking their vehicle for work wasn't an issue.
- Residents who answered the question had a mixed response, depending on where they lived.
- When dropping and collecting children from school/college, 82.2% said there was an issue and a need to look at potential restrictions.
- Geographical areas of concern for parking were Sedgefield, no specific location and Fishburn.

When asked if they felt the number of parking spaces should be increased or decreased, 68.1% of respondents stated that they think parking spaces needed to be increased.

We asked if parking restrictions were introduced, which would they prefer. The preferred restrictions were time restricted parking, single and double yellow lines, and resident parking in high footfall areas.

When asked if more public electric vehicle (EV) charging points were required, there was a 50/50 split and locations requiring an increased number were Sedgefield, no specific location and Fishburn. When asked how many additional EV points were required, responses varied and ranged from one to as many as possible.

Respondents in all areas made other suggestions about car parking, which included additional parking solutions, reducing obstructions and increasing enforcement.

Road layout and traffic management

Respondents were asked if the current speed limits are correct. 59.5% of respondents thought that speed limits in operation were not correct and over 75% would like to see a 20mph limit introduced in most locations across the ward.

Additionally, traffic calming and management were suggested for all locations in the ward, to change the road layout.

About your priorities

The survey asked for people to provide their three main priorities to improve getting around the area. These varied, but overwhelmingly the most common theme in all areas was traffic calming and management. Also mentioned regularly were:

- Safety
- Improvements to footpath conditions and links
- Improvements to cycleways/links
- Parking issues which could link with enforcement.

When asked if they have any other comments, people regularly referred to public transport issues.

Appendix:

Available on request from the East Durham Rural Corridor AAP.

- Consultation with full results
- This consultation is broken down into respondents travelling in areas and residents travelling in their areas
- Cyclists only section.