

Connecting Sheffield: Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road Consultation

Executive Summary

1.0 Launching Connecting Sheffield

Connecting Sheffield represents a first significant step in transforming Sheffield's transport infrastructure for active travel and bus services. The **Connecting Sheffield: Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road** proposals were the seventh of several ambitious projects to be consulted on, all of which are to be delivered by March 2023. While each project stands on its own, the wider overarching vision that brings each project within the Connecting Sheffield umbrella was important to communicate. As a consequence, prior to any public consultation, there was a media launch of Connecting Sheffield as a concept on 3rd November 2020, to ensure that the aims and goals that knit together each project are recognised and understood.

The Connecting Sheffield consultation website went live at this time. The website provides information on the overarching aims and ambitions for active travel and bus services. It is also designed to host the separate consultations on each project within Connecting Sheffield, as they are ready to be launched. The **Connecting Sheffield: Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road** consultation was the seventh scheme to go live.

2.0 Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road Consultation

Public and stakeholder consultation on the **Connecting Sheffield: Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road** proposals was held between 17th November 2021 and 21st January 2022. The consultation process was as follows:

2.1 Stakeholder Mapping

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

- **Political Representatives:** Paul Blomfield MP; Clive Betts MP; Olivia Blake MP; Mayor Dan Jarvis; and local Councillors.
- **Economic and Business Groups:** Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road businesses.
- **Educational Organisations:** Sheffield Hallam University Collegiate Campus; Holt House Infants School; Carter Knowle Junior School; St. Peter's and St. Oswald's; Sheffield Hallam University; Parkhead Cottage Nursery; Nether Edge Primary School; and Sharrow School.
- **Community and Interest Groups:** Sheaf and Porter Rivers Trust; Nether Edge and Sharrow Sustainable Transformation; Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group; Sharrow Community Forum; Banner Cross Neighbourhood Group; Abbeydale and Sharrow Stakeholder Group; and others.
- **Religious Places of Worship:** Mother of God Catholic Church; Jamia al Furqaan; Carterknowle Methodist Church; St Peter and St Oswalds Church; The Well; United Reformed Church; St William of York Catholic Church; Banner Cross Methodist Church; and All Saints Church.

- **Local Healthcare Services:** Sheffield NHS Teaching Hospitals Trust; Sheffield Children’s Hospital; Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust; Sharrow Lane Medical Centre; and Hanover Medical Centre.
- **Accessibility Groups:** Transport4All; Disability Sheffield; Access Liaison Group; and Sheffield Cycling 4 All.
- **Local Transport Organisations:** Confederation of Passenger Transport; South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive; First Group; Stagecoach; Sheffield Taxi Trade Association; and others.

Local Residents and Businesses were also contacted directly. Two distribution areas for the consultation postcard were defined, one for Abbeydale Road and the other for Ecclesall Road. The identified distribution areas for the consultation postcard included 16,231 addresses: 8,034 on Abbeydale Road and 8,190 on Ecclesall Road. Businesses along Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road were also sent a letter about the consultation in an envelope alongside the postcard.

2.2 Engagement Overview

Throughout the consultation, a range of communication methods were used to raise awareness of the proposals among stakeholders and the local community, who were provided with various accessible and convenient means by which to provide feedback.

The methods used to engage stakeholders and publicise the consultation are set out below.

1. **Consultation Postcard:** A consultation postcard was produced and distributed to all residential and business properties located within the agreed distribution areas of 8,034 properties on Abbeydale Road and 8,190 properties on Ecclesall Road.
2. **Consultation Website:** A project specific page was set up on the Connecting Sheffield website which uses the community engagement platform, Commonplace. The platform makes it easy to share the consultation widely via social media and allows anonymised comments to be viewed publicly adding transparency to the process. We also received feedback through an **email address, Freephone information line and Freepost address.**
3. **Online meetings:** Ahead of the consultation launch, four online meetings were planned to which identified stakeholders with a specified interest in the **Connecting Sheffield: Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road** scheme were invited. Several key community groups and businesses located on or near the route were invited to the meetings.
4. **Recorded Presentation:** A commentary was recorded to accompany a presentation on the proposals and circulated by email to local businesses, stakeholders and community groups identified as likely to have an interest in the proposals.
5. **Press release:** At the start of the consultation, a press release containing introductory information about the Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road proposals and details of the consultation period was directly issued by the Council to media outlets.
6. **Shopper Survey:** An independent market research company was commissioned by the Council to undertake an in-person survey on Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road during the consultation. A summary of the results of the survey is provided in **7.0 Shopper Survey.**

3.0 Explaining the Consultation Responses

3.1 Public Consultation

In total, **3,680** responses were received during the Connecting Sheffield: Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road consultation. **3,456** of these were received through the feedback form on Commonplace, **88** were through via email, Freepost and Freephone and **136** were submitted via the Commonplace interactive heatmap.

The website provides two avenues to comment:

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

3.2 Design Tile feedback

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

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

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

What do you like about this scheme?

Active neighbourhood with reduced traffic	Greener streets	Environmental benefits	Safer to walk and cycle	Improved bus stops
Better environment for cyclists	More child-friendly	Improved route for buses	Priority for cyclists and pedestrians	
More attractive environment	Improved pedestrian crossings	Improved cycle crossings	Better environment for walking	Other

Figure 1: Closed question response

Do you have any other comments on this scheme?

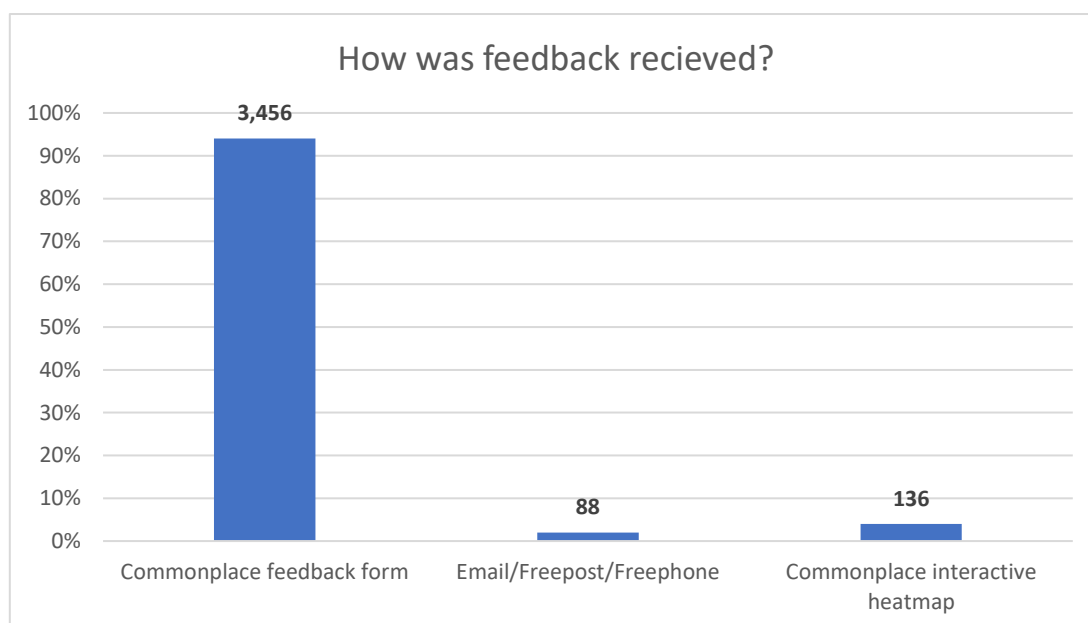
Your comment will be public. Please don't mention any personal details.
By commenting you agree to our terms of use. Read our privacy policy.

Figure 2: Open question response

4.0 Summary of Feedback

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

In total, **3,680** responses were received during the **Connecting Sheffield: Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road** consultation. **3,456** of these were received through the Commonplace feedback form, **88** were through via email, Freepost and freephone and **136** were submitted via the Commonplace interactive heatmap.



4.1 General Sentiment - Heatmap

People commenting on the heatmap tend to take a more overall view of the proposals. On entering the Connecting Sheffield website, they will have seen the overview of the vision and aims of Connecting Sheffield as a long-term project before then visiting the heatmap to comment. Because the heatmap then also shows the totality of the routes proposed under Phase One, commentators

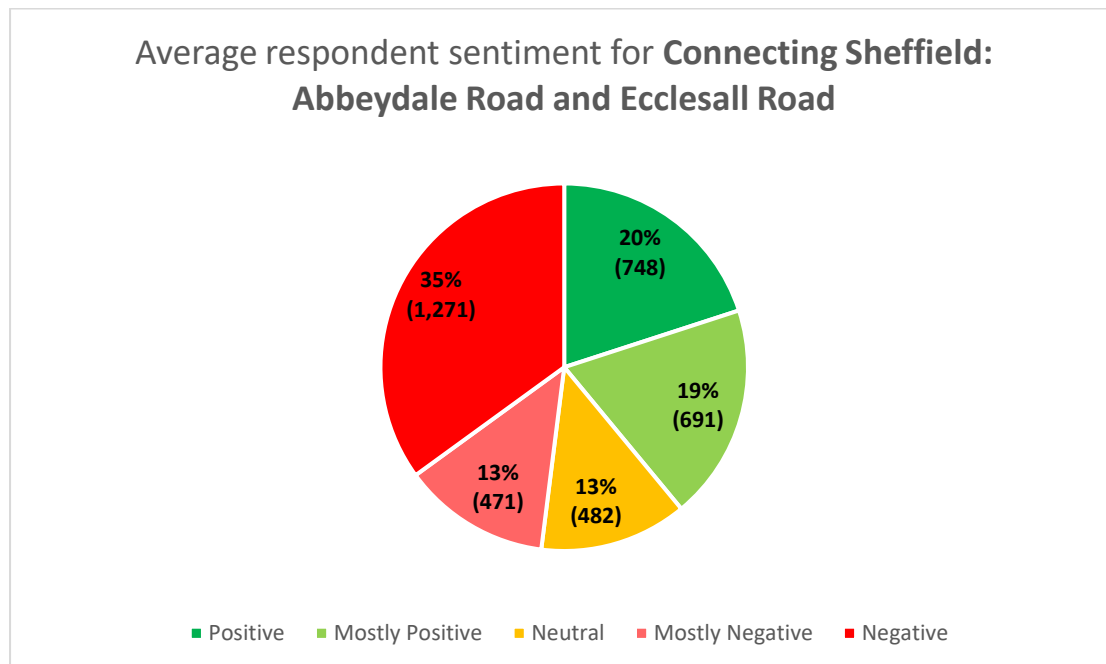
tend to be more likely to view and give feedback on the wider scheme aims compared to visitors who purely view the details of a specific scheme via the design tile.

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

Among the **136** people who responded via the heatmap **97%** of the comments received were positive, indicating strong support for the principles behind Connecting Sheffield.

4.2 General Sentiment – Design Tile – All Responses

As people see more detail of any proposals, it is natural that this then raises more questions and carries greater potential for people to find objections or questions about proposals. Of the **3,456 responses received via the Connecting Sheffield: Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road design tile**, there was a majority sentiment opposing the proposals and initial ideas, with **48%** providing negative feedback, mainly due to concern for businesses that are located along the two roads. **39%** of comments were positive and **13%** were neutral.



5.0 Specific Themes from the Consultation

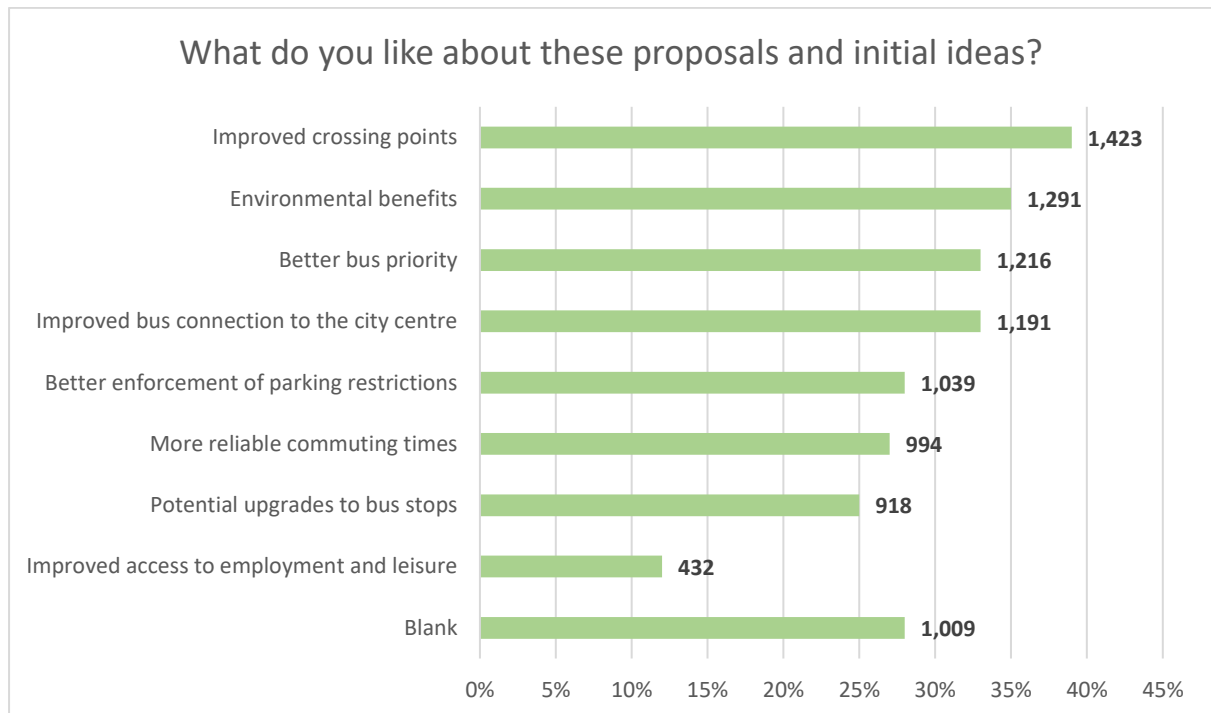
Connecting Sheffield: Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road was consulted on as one scheme with closed questions on the design tile either asking for feedback on proposals that would be applied across both corridors (bus priority, increased bus lane operating hours, increased enforcement of traffic restrictions, improved crossing points), or on specific measures proposed at a named location on either corridor.

Where people differentiated between Abbeydale Road and Ecclesall Road in the feedback they provided through the open question on the design tile, the comments provided and themes arising were consistent for both corridors.

Analysis of the postcodes provided by respondents on the design tile highlighted a significantly higher level of engagement from people living on or near to Ecclesall Road compared to those living on or near to Abbeydale Road, though the themes raised through the feedback were the same across both corridors as outlined above.

5.1 Positive – Closed Questions

The table below shows what people liked most about the scheme in response to the closed questions in the Commonplace design tile. This shows that around **38% (1,423)** of respondents like the improved crossing points, while **35% (1,291)** of respondents liked the environmental benefits.



5.2 Positive – Open Questions

Open questions allow nuances in views to be identified, or further clarification on views to be given. The responses to the open question showed **support for changes at junctions with 78 respondents expressing support for the changes proposed at the Bannerdale Road junction, and a further 19 respondents expressing support for the changes proposed at Hunter’s Bar roundabout.**

The responses to the open question also highlighted support for changes to traffic lights and improved bus priority with **66 respondents expressing support for the proposals on bus priority at traffic lights.**

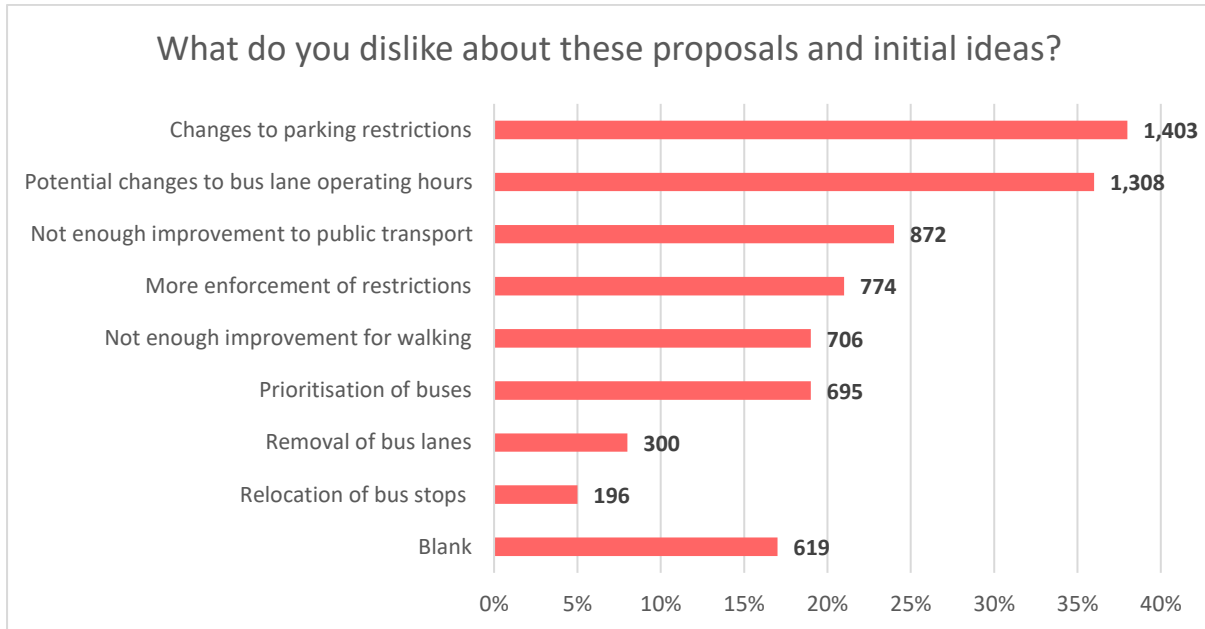
35 respondents also expressed **support for enhanced enforcement of restrictions** along the routes.

5.3 Positive but with Caveats – Open Question

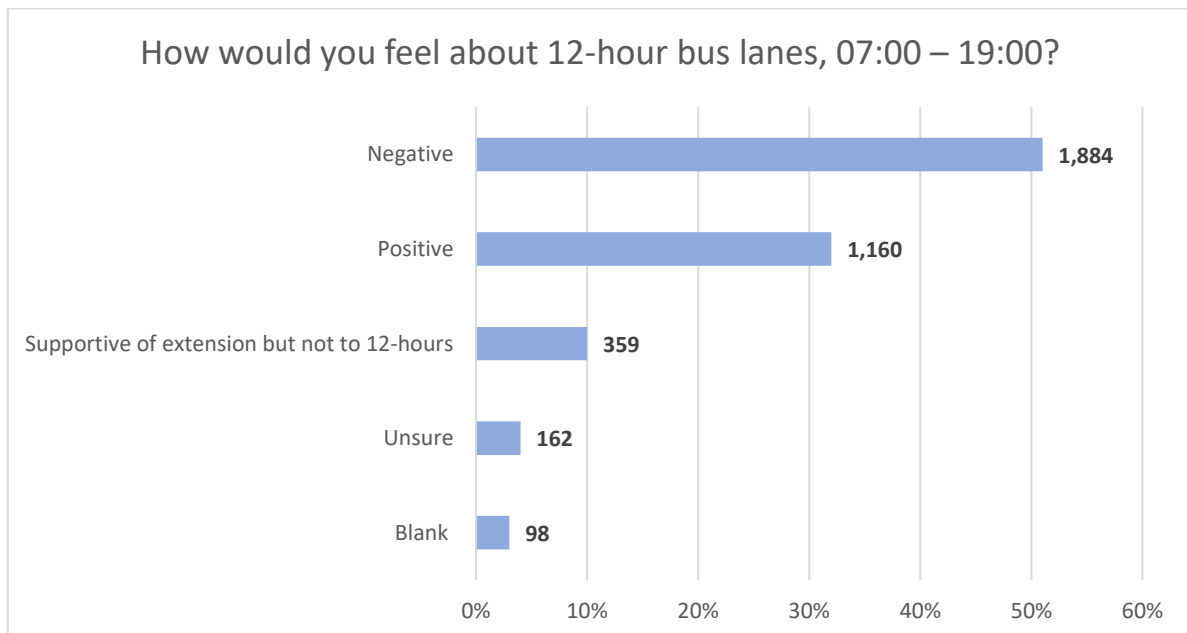
Some respondents were broadly supportive of measures but had caveats on their support. For example, **282 respondents suggested that bus prioritisation measures should be considered only after significant improvements to the bus service. 12** respondents stated that they would **support 12-hour bus lanes only if bus services were considerably improved first.**

5.4 Key Concerns – Closed Questions

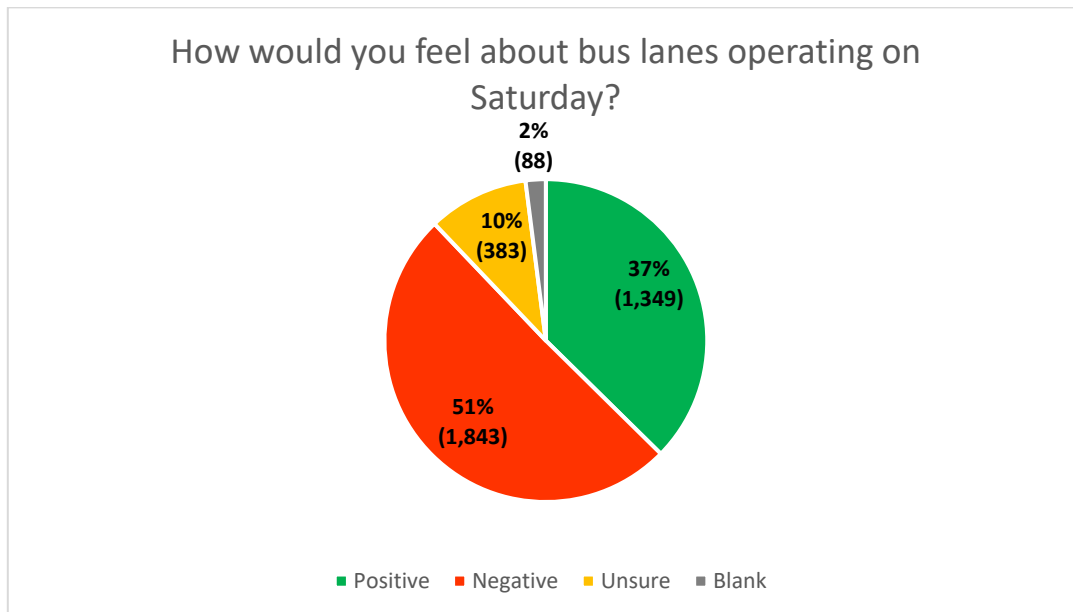
The graph below shows what respondents dislike most about the scheme in response to closed questions. Around **37% (1,403)** of respondents disliked the changes to parking restrictions, while around **36% (1,308)** respondents did not like the potential changes to bus lane operating hours.



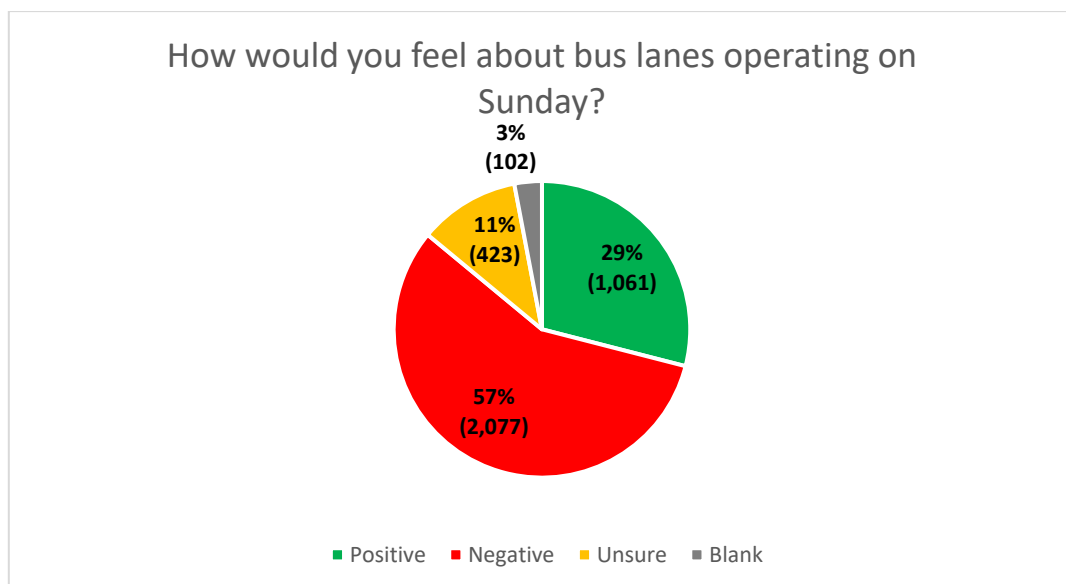
The graph below shows how respondents would feel about 12-hour bus lanes between 07:00 and 19:00. It shows that **51% (1,884)** of respondents would feel negative about 12-hour bus lanes, **32% (1,160)** would feel positive about 12-hour bus lanes, while **10% (359)** would be supportive of an extension but not to 12-hours.



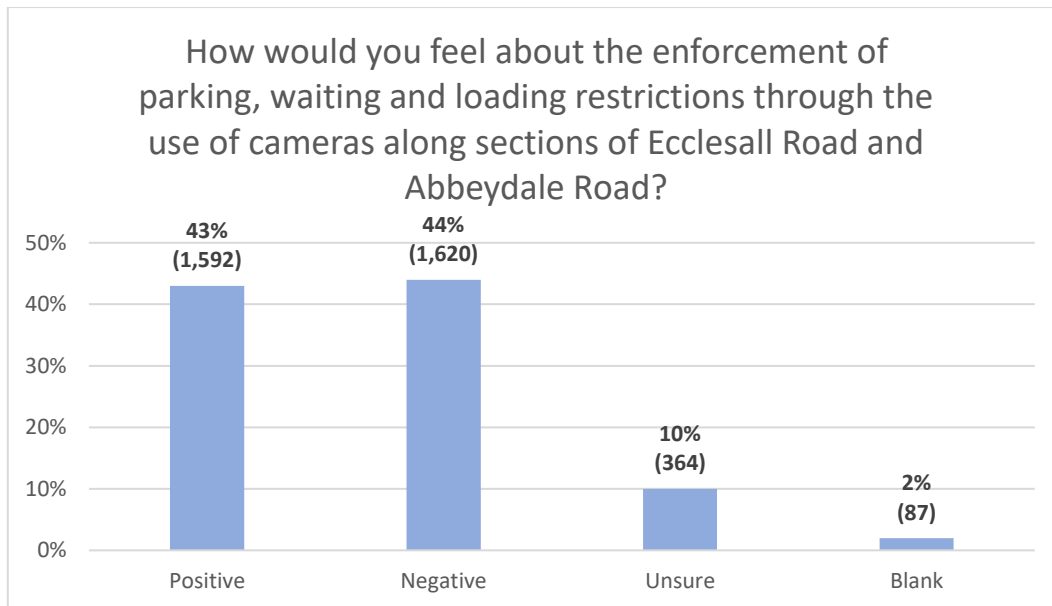
The chart below shows how respondents feel about bus lanes operating on Saturday. It shows that **50% (1,843)** of respondents felt negative about bus lanes operating on Saturdays, **37% (1,349)** of respondents felt positive, while **10% (383)** felt neutral.



The chart below shows how respondents feel about bus lanes operating on Sunday. It shows that **57% (2,077)** of respondents felt negative about bus lanes operating on Sundays, **29% (1,061)** of respondents felt positive, while **11% (423)** felt neutral.



The graph below shows how respondents feel about the use of cameras to enforce traffic restrictions. It shows that **44% (1,620)** of respondents felt negative about the use of cameras, **43% (1,592)** of respondents felt positive, while **10% (364)** of respondents were unsure how they felt.



5.5 Key Concerns – Open Question

1,146 respondents expressed concern about the potential negative impact of 12-hour bus lanes and the effect that the resultant loss of parking would have on local businesses. The main themes of these comments included respondents expressing concern that businesses would not be able to receive deliveries and that people may start to go elsewhere, outside of Sheffield, to do their shopping if they are unable to park easily.

405 respondents called for improvements to be made to bus services themselves, rather than changes to bus lanes. A further **263** respondents stated that one of the most significant issues with the bus service was the high cost of fares, and **130** respondents stated that poor bus routes, in particular routes between suburbs, made bus use in Sheffield unviable.

301 respondents suggested that increased bus lane operating hours could cause further congestion, which in turn would lead to more pollution.

145 respondents expressed disappointment that the plans made no mention of cycling.

119 respondents expressed concern that the proposals for 12-hour bus lanes and the resultant loss of parking would have a **significant negative impact on people with disabilities or accessibility requirements, and older people.** **39** respondents suggested that bus travel simply was not an option for many people, owing to accessibility requirements.

6.0 Stakeholder engagement

Due to the ongoing pandemic, drop-in events were not planned for this scheme. As large-scale webinars are not conducive to participation and constructive discussion, smaller, online meetings were proposed to enable in depth two-way discussion with stakeholders about the proposals.

Four online meetings were planned for this consultation: one for businesses on Ecclesall Road, one for businesses on Abbeydale Road, one for community groups on Ecclesall Road, and one for community groups on Abbeydale Road.

As there are hundreds of businesses located along both routes, the businesses located closest to where significant works were proposed and those employing larger numbers of people were invited via email to an online meeting. Follow-up emails and telephone calls were made where no response was received to the invitation. Due to a lack of response from invitees to both online meetings for Abbeydale Road, neither of those meetings took place.

A recorded version of the presentation delivered at the meetings was issued via email to businesses whose email address was available and all businesses along the route were sent a letter and postcard via Royal Mail to let them know about the consultation and to direct them to the website to find out more about the proposals and have their say. The letter also provided the Connecting Sheffield Freephone number, email address and Freepost address for businesses to get in touch with any questions.

6.1 Online meeting with Ecclesall Road Community Groups

A community group expressed overall support for the proposals, though some of its members were in full support of the proposals and some completely opposed. During the meeting, it became clear that those who lived closest to bus routes were most supportive of the proposals, whereas those for whom bus use was less accessible were less supportive. Concern was raised that the proposals seemed to be aimed at younger, able-bodied people, with older people and those with accessibility requirements finding bus use far more difficult.

The cycling group and the active travel group who attended the online webinar were also generally supportive of the proposals, particularly in favour of the proposed changes at junctions and improvements to crossing points which would make it easier to get around on foot and by cycle. They did, however, express disappointment that there weren't significant improvements proposed for those who cycle.

6.2 Online meeting with Ecclesall Road Businesses

Of those invited, only one business attended the meeting. Some concern was raised that businesses with car parks may see a significant increase in the number of cars trying to use them in the event of further parking restrictions along the roads. It was generally felt that this would not have a negative effect on businesses with car parks along the route, and that they would be able to mitigate against this potential issue.

7.0 Shopper Survey

Mindfield was commissioned by Sheffield City Council to undertake in-person research during the consultation. The company surveyed 50 people on Abbeydale Road and 176 people on Ecclesall Road and asked them a series of questions regarding their usage of the area, awareness of the proposals and their sentiment towards the proposals. The sample size was higher on Ecclesall Road due to higher footfall. 64% of respondents surveyed walked or caught the bus to reach their destination, and 36% of respondents travelled by car.

Respondents expressed concern about the potential impact of an extension to bus lane operating hours and increased parking restrictions on local businesses but there was also support for the potential environmental benefits of the proposals.