

Parkway bridge engagement survey summary

Background

Changes were made to the road layout under Parkway railway bridge, Brierly Furlong to create a single lane for traffic, controlled by temporary traffic signals. The extra space created either side of the traffic lane is designated for people walking or cycling under the bridge and allows them to keep a safe distance from each other.

Signs and road markings are in place to notify road users of the new road layout and direct cyclists and pedestrians to use it safely and appropriately.

The road under the bridge is historically a hot spot for cyclists and pedestrians and there are three education campuses (Abbeywood Community School, South Gloucestershire & Stroud College and Bristol Technology & Engineering Academy) located near to the railway bridge. The section of road under the bridge needed some adjustment to enable people to socially distance from one another and improve safety as roads become busier when more people return to work and school as we recover from the Covid-19 pandemic

As restrictions ease, staying safe and saving lives by keeping to social distancing rules is more important than ever to help protect the most vulnerable and reduce the rate of infection. Our routes to work, education establishments and shops need to be safe and provide people with the confidence to use them. As a council we need to take bold action to provide reassurance and peace of mind before traffic levels start to return to normal.

The changes under Parkway Bridge were implemented from 14 June and a public engagement survey was carried out from 01 September to 01 October 2020 to understand the impact of the new measures. In addition, the council is carrying out regular monitoring of the scheme and engaging with the local educational campuses.

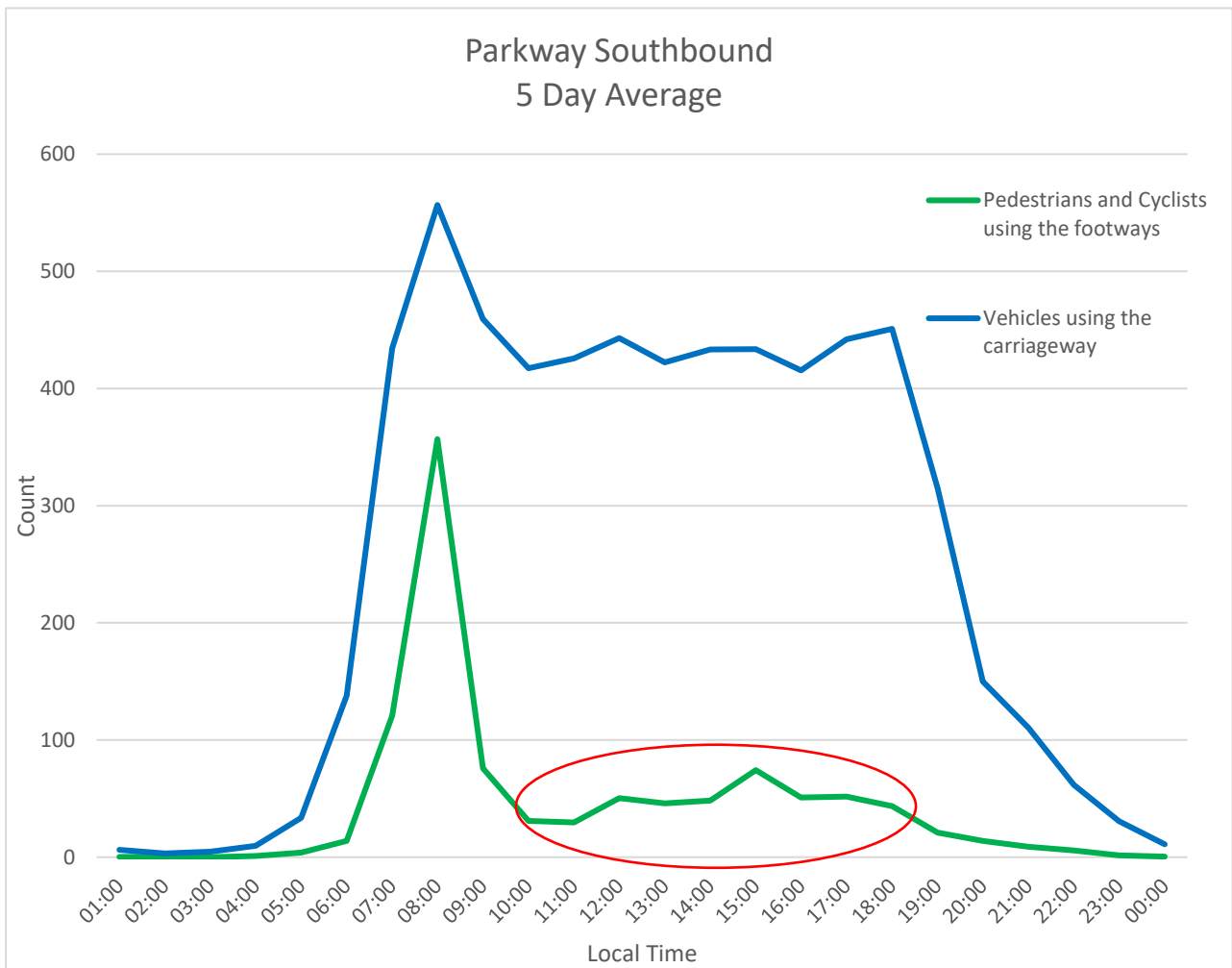
Summary of survey results

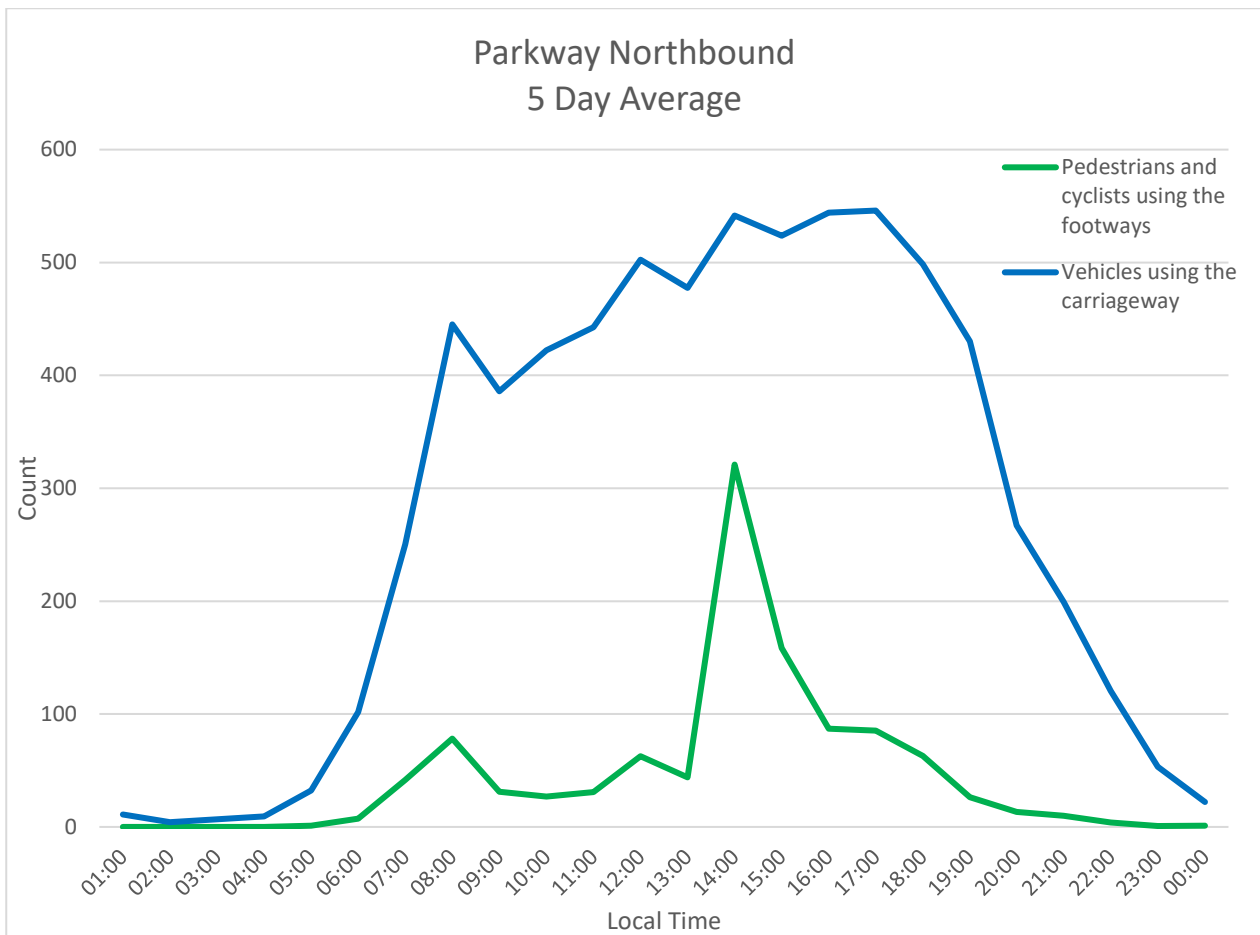
- The majority of responses to the survey were negative with respondents citing increased journey times (591 comments) and a lack of benefit provided by the changes (very few pedestrians and cyclists seen using the footways). Queuing times seen on site were short with vehicles clearing with most changes of the lights. Claims of “nightmare traffic” and adding an “extra hour to each of my journeys” seem to be exaggerated with the temporary measures creating a minor inconvenience for car users rather than any major delays.

Many of the traffic complaints were aimed at other works in the area including Gypsy Patch Lane, Great Stoke (Rabbit) roundabout and metrobus works.

- 96 comments from the survey stated that there were very few pedestrians or cyclists using the facilities whilst they were waiting at the lights. The graphs below which show data from the monitoring sessions demonstrate that off-peak, pedestrian footfall under the bridge is much lower relative to the traffic flows. However, there is a significant

spike before schools open (southbound) and after (northbound) schools close. At these times, pedestrian and cycle flows account for 40 percent of all traffic under the bridge. A number of respondents to the survey said that pedestrian volumes are low enough that they are able to wait at the end of the bridge for someone to pass before passing underneath when walking. This would suggest that many of the respondents who walk under bridge do so during off-peak hours as it would be difficult to do this during peak times.



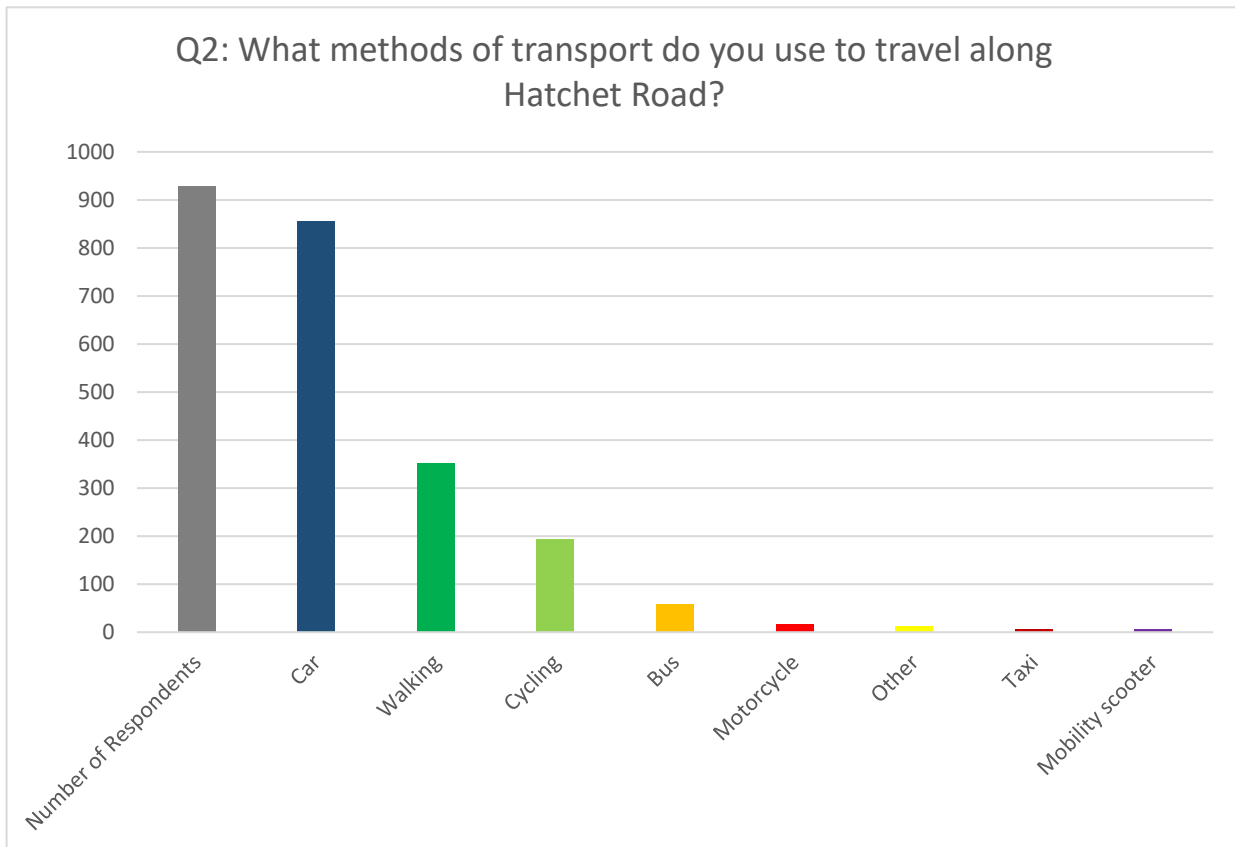


- 92 percent of responses were from car users who drive along Hatchet Road. The main group observed to be benefitting from the changes during site visits (at peak times) are school children who walk and cycle under Parkway Railway Bridge at peak times. This group was not captured by the survey (most respondents were middle aged).
- Concerns were raised about traffic volumes returning to normal when the Ministry Of Defence (MOD) and AXA offices re-open, leading to longer delays. Vehicle volumes on Hatchet Road in September 2020 were approximately two thirds of pre-Covid levels and half between March and June 2020.
- 734 (79 percent) of respondents strongly disagreed with making the proposals permanent. 454 (49 percent) strongly agreed and 215 (23 percent) somewhat agreed with pursuing an underpass.
- There have been no recorded bridge strikes whilst the temporary measures have been in place and only one comment to the survey mentioned this.

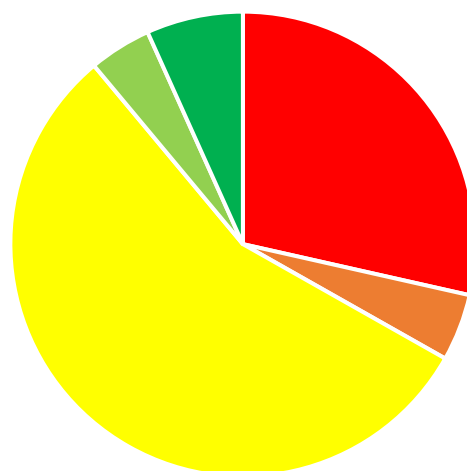
Survey results

There were 929 responses to the Parkway Bridge engagement survey.

Q2. 83 percent of respondents travel under the bridge once or more a week and the majority travel by car:



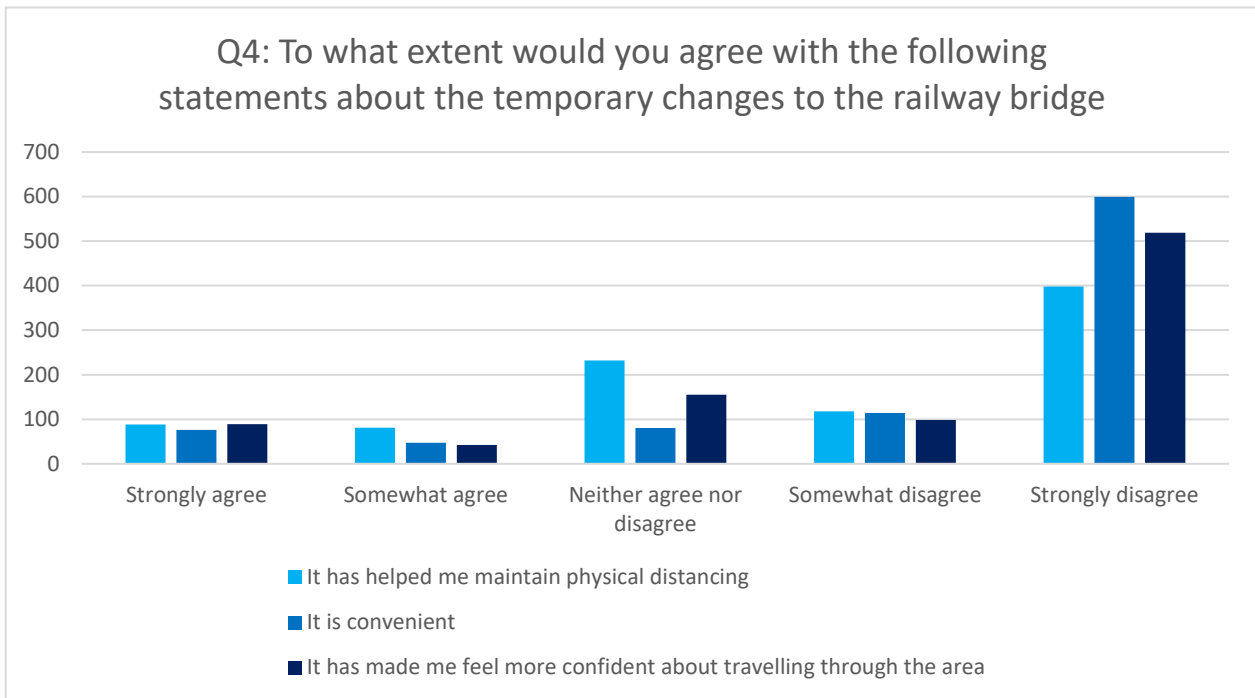
Q3: Have the changes at the railway bridge made you more or less likely than before to walk, cycle or use a wheelchair/mobility scooter when travelling?



■ Much less likely ■ A little less likely ■ About the same ■ A little more likely ■ Much more likely

Q3. Most respondents said the changes would not make them more or less likely to walk, cycle or use a wheelchair/mobility scooter than before, with 28 percent saying it would make them much less likely.

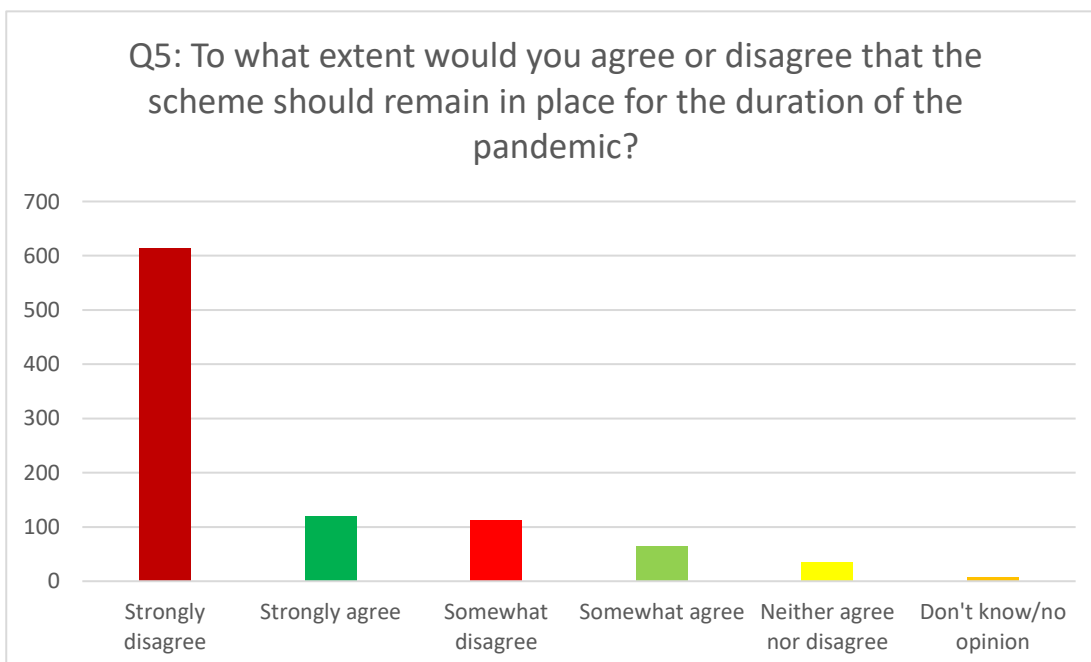
Q4. The majority of respondents strongly disagreed with the comments; “It has helped me maintain physical distancing”, “It is convenient” and “It has made me feel more confident about travelling through the area”.



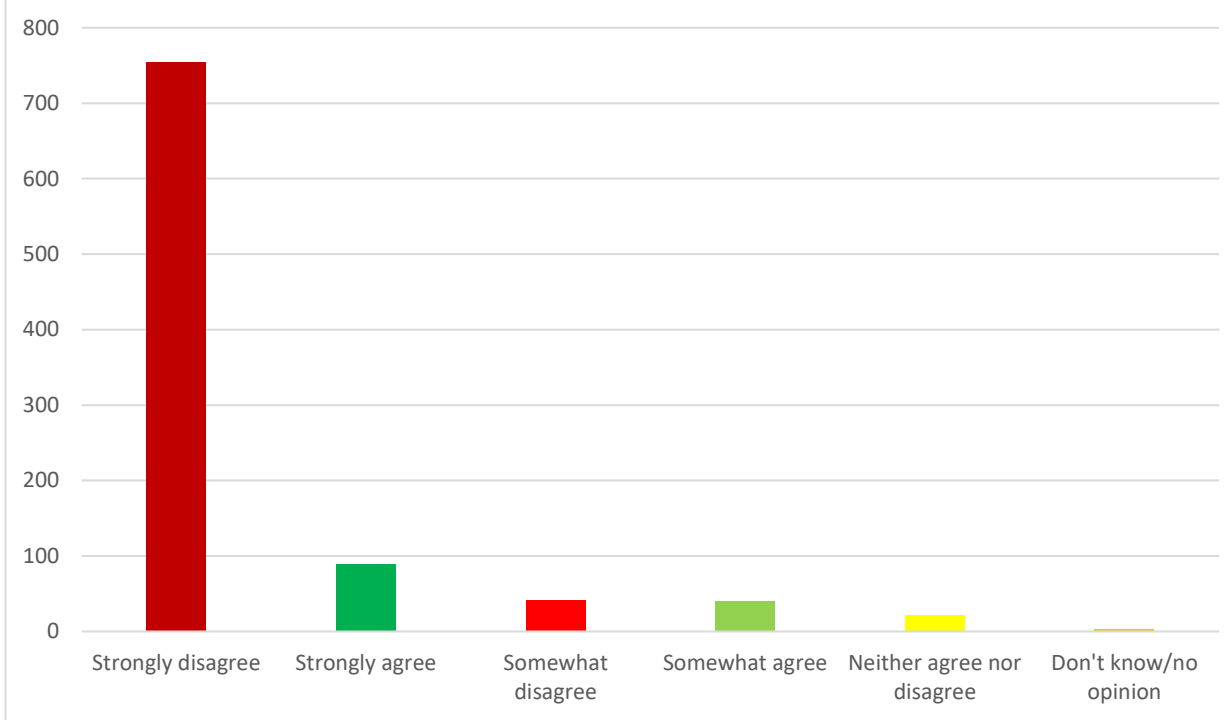
Q5. 65 percent of respondents strongly disagree with keeping the proposals in place for the duration of the pandemic.

Q6. 79 percent strongly disagreed with making the changes permanent

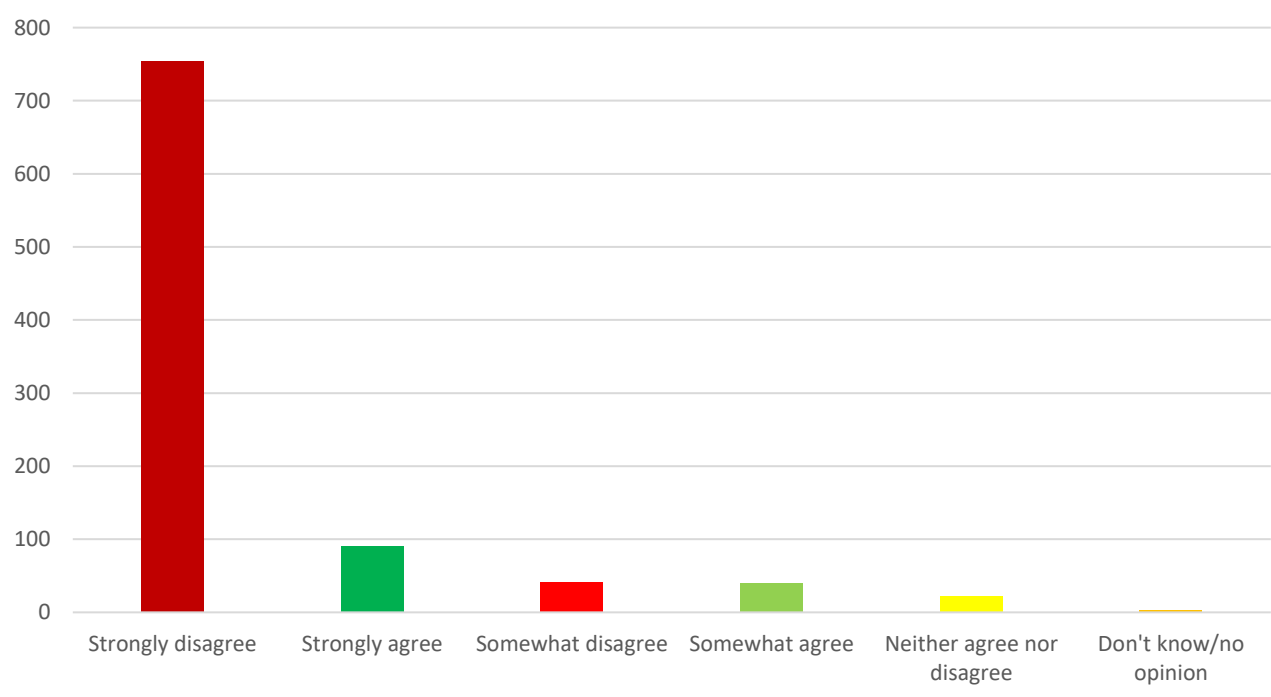
Q7. 68 percent strongly disagreed with extending the pavement to the width of the temporary barrier



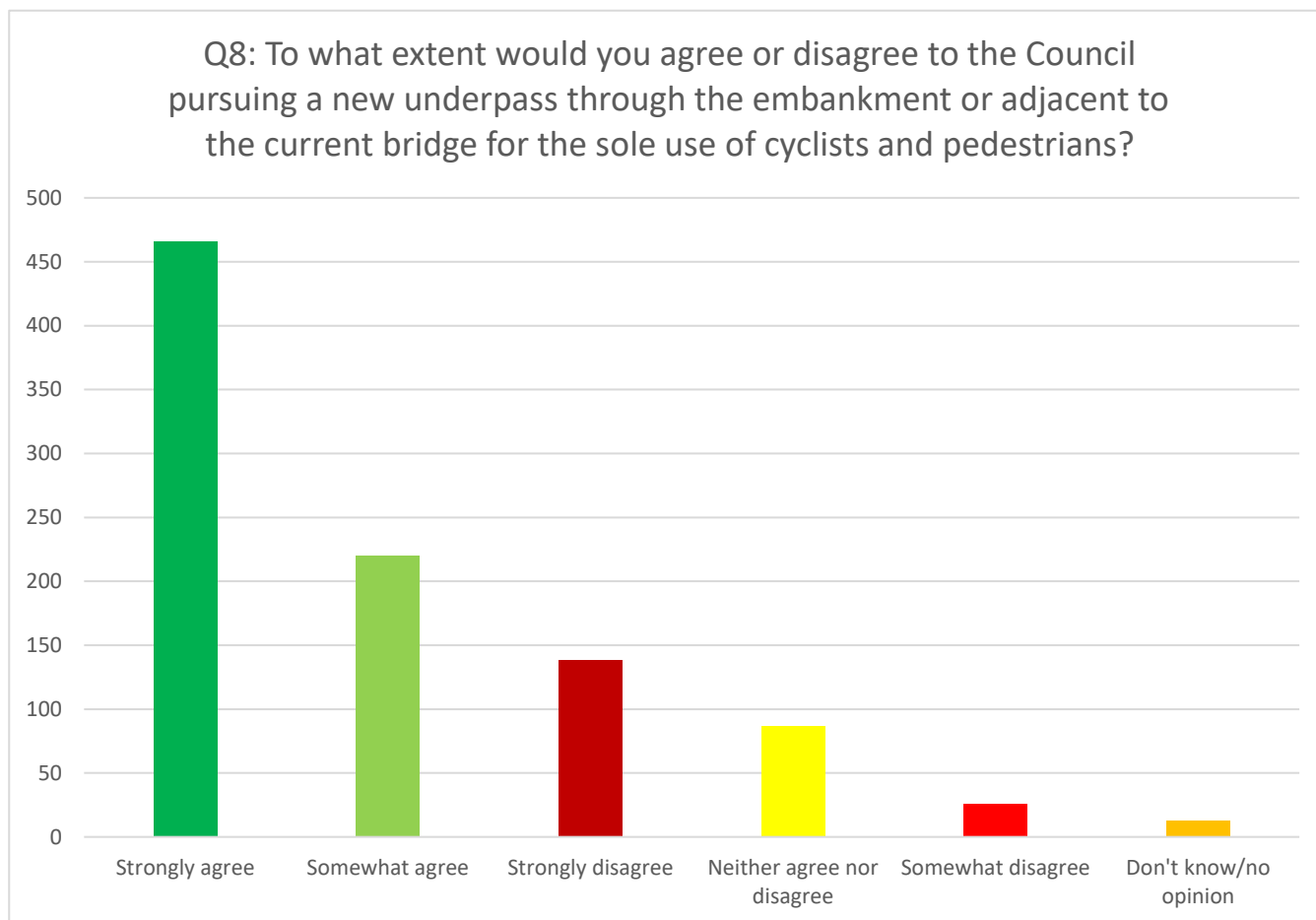
Q6: To what extent would you agree or disagree with these changes being made permanent?



Q7: To what extent would you agree or disagree with extending the pavement to the width of the temporary barrier, to increase the size of the footway?



Q8. The majority of respondents agreed with the Council pursuing an underpass.



Qu 9 and 10 asked for comments regarding the “impact” of the scheme and anything else that should be taken into consideration. The majority of responses to Qu 10 were repeating or elaborating on Qu 9. A summary of the comments is below.

Summary of comments

There were a total of 789 responses to Qu 9. The most common comments were:

Delays from queuing traffic (591 comments)

Many referred to significant delays (e.g. delays of over 15/20 minutes).

There were several comments about the number of road works in the area significantly increasing journey times including Gipsy Patch Lane, Great Stoke (Rabbit) Roundabout, metrobus stop.

There were concerns about the traffic becoming far worse once people return to office working (See the traffic count data in the section below).

There were a number of positive comments about the traffic including:

“As a pedestrian, the old arrangement was an absolute menace (especially, but not only, with an infant).”

“As a driver, the current arrangement is a very slight inconvenience. The safety of small children should trump the convenience of drivers every time.”

“Not "Impacted" (strong word) at all. I use that section of road several times a week between 09:00 and 17:00. I use the roadway (not the footpath) for both cycling and driving. Have rarely had to wait for more than one red phase; usually straight through on green, or wait one red phase, so seems like the timing is about right. It's really not a problem, and more necessary now that school is open (more peds, more need for social distance space).”

Increased pollution from queuing traffic (98 comments)

“Makes walking and cycling under the bridge less attractive” was a common comment. There were also positive comments saying that pollution had been reduced under the bridge.

Not enough pedestrians and cyclists using the facilities to justify the scheme (96 comments)

Many referred to there being no pedestrians under the bridge whilst they were queuing and that as a pedestrian, you can just wait on one side of the bridge for pedestrians coming the other way to pass underneath.

There were some comments referring to people not using the extra space due to the kerb.

The most common suggestion was to make the footpaths one way instead or introduce traffic lights for pedestrians

The proposals are dangerous (34 comments)

The main reasons given for this were:

- Drivers jumping the lights
- Drivers being more aggressive (a number of respondents made the comment that drivers have been more aggressive towards cyclists as a result of the changes)
- Conflict between cyclists and pedestrians

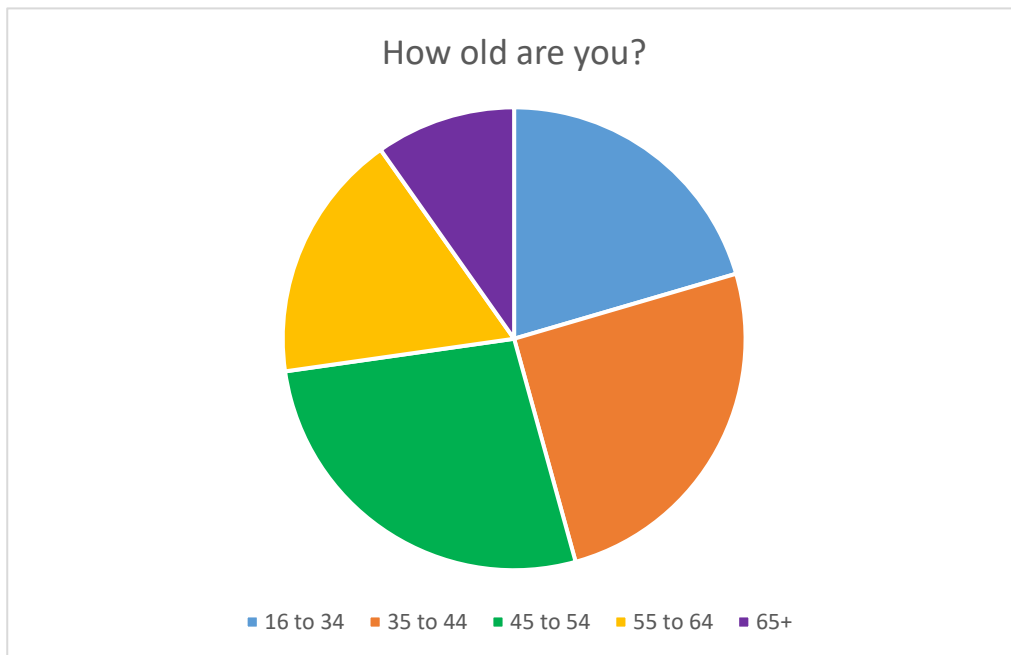
People don't socially distance under the bridge anyway so the scheme is pointless (25 comments)

“Kids don't social distance anyway”

There was one comment about there being no bridge strikes since the temporary arrangement has been in place.

Age data

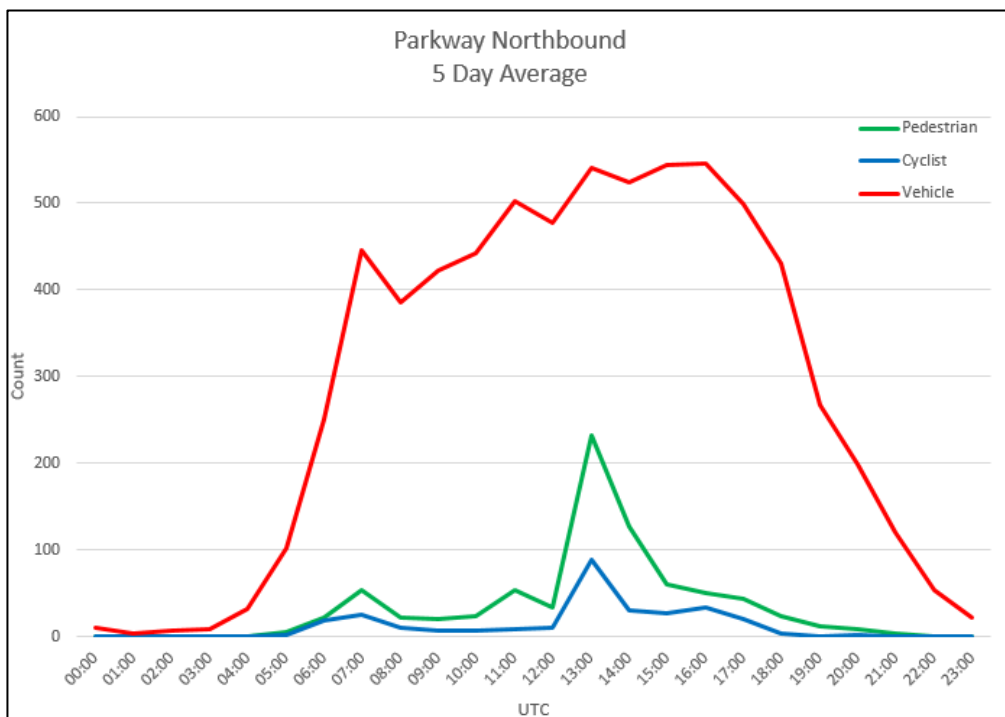
The majority of respondents were middle aged. 20 percent were aged 16 to 34.

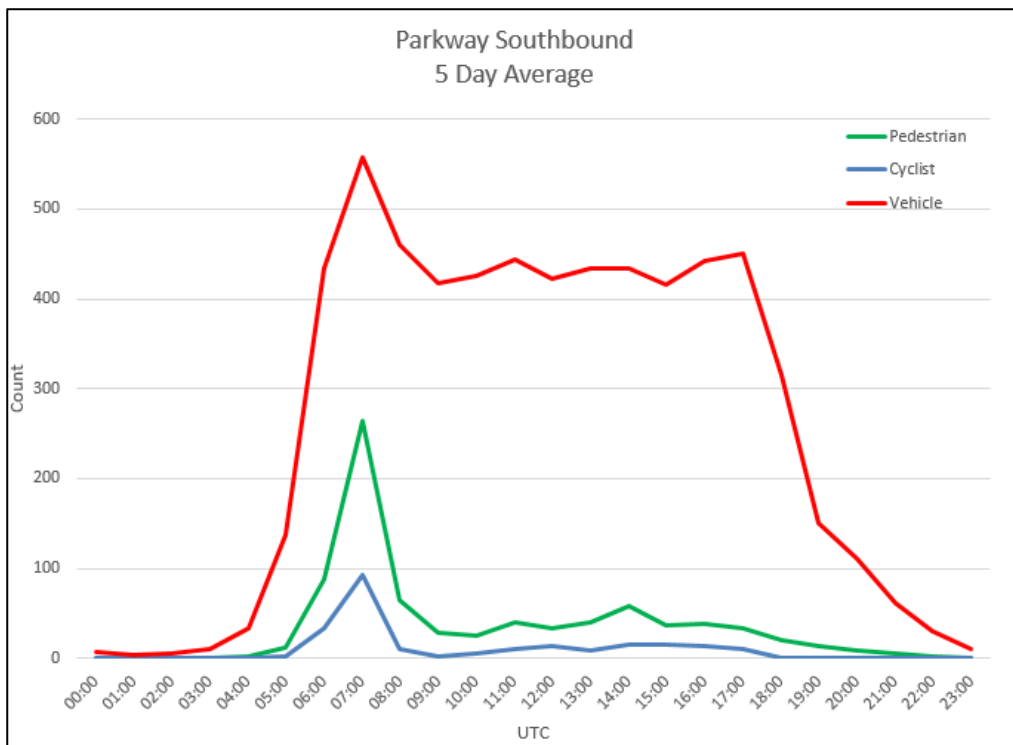


Note: It would have been useful if school aged children had been separated into a different category (i.e. <18). There was also no option for people below the age of 16 to tick.

Count data

Count data for the carriageway and footways has been collected and analysed for the week starting 21 September 2020. A small number of cyclists (25 per hour at peak time) used the carriageway instead of the footways, these are included in the vehicle volume data. The time is presented in UTC, local time is one hour ahead.





Vehicle volumes of approximately 1000 per hour were sustained between 6am and 6pm. Pedestrian and cyclist volumes using the footways were significantly lower except during peak periods (8:00am – 9:00am and 2:00pm and 3:00pm local time) where pedestrian volumes would spike to 300 per hour and cyclists using the footways would spike to above 100 per hour. It was observed in site visits that most pedestrians and cyclists were school children travelling to and from the schools and colleges along New Road (see below).

Traffic volumes are expected to increase back to normal in the long term which needs to be taken into consideration when considering any longer-term proposals. The five day average (weekdays) vehicle volume data on Hatchet Road (north of Sandringham Road) in 2019 was 19,292 vehicles per day. The five day average volume data at the same location from end of February to beginning of July 2020 was 10,228 (approximately half) and vehicle volumes under Parkway bridge in September 2020 were 13,046.

Pedestrian volumes under the bridge walking out of Parkway Station are also expected to increase when workers return to the offices at AXA and the MOD.

Site Observations

SGC officers have carried out regular site visits targeting peak periods in the morning and afternoon. Officers observed that queues were clearing on most changes of the lights. Occasionally this would not happen due to batches of cars arriving just as the temporary lights were changing to red, either due to the pedestrian crossing to the south or the temporary traffic lights to the north (Metrobus works).

To the north of the bridge, queues usually extended up to the mini roundabout with North Road and occasionally beyond.

To the south of the bridge, queues would occasionally extend past the signal-controlled crossing to the southbound Brierly Furlong bus stop.

Waiting times were low even when queues did not clear on a single set of lights (maximum of a few minutes).



