

Aberdeen

# Walking and Cycling Index 2023





# Foreword

Our vision for walking, wheeling and cycling in Aberdeen



One of the benefits of living in a city the size of Aberdeen is the wide range of active travel options that are available.

Walking, wheeling and cycling are a real alternative to the car for

many people, especially for short journeys.

This latest Walking and Cycling Index shows that 23% of Aberdeen residents want to drive less. It also tells us that 50% of residents want to walk or wheel more, and 47% want to cycle more. This shows a real appetite to travel more actively in the city.

Aberdeen City Council has invested heavily in recent years to improve cycling facilities in the city with five clear objectives in mind:

- To maximise the role of cycling for short journeys
- To develop safe, convenient and efficient infrastructure
- To increase cycling for leisure, tourism and recreation
- To integrate policies for cycling across council strategies
- To set policies which contribute to meeting cycling targets

Over the last year some exciting cycling initiatives have started. In November 2022 we were proud to launch our e-bike scheme, operated by Big Issue. The scheme already has 213 e-bikes in place at 58 locations across the city. Since its inception, altogether users have cycled almost 160,000km. More recently Aberdeen has also seen the launch of six Fuel Cell Cargo Pedelects (FCCPs) which will be used for “last mile deliveries” by private, public and third-sector organisations across the city.

The City Council’s future plans include the approval of Aberdeen’s next Local Transport Strategy. This high-level transport plan will set out the policies and changes to guide the planning and improvement of the city’s local transport network for the next five years and beyond. The Council’s focus is also firmly on improvements to the most prominent areas of our city, with a number of projects outlined in the City Centre and Beach Masterplan. These projects will contribute to reducing emissions and creating a more welcoming environment for people to spend time in.

I am delighted to introduce our second Walking and Cycling Index for Aberdeen. This report provides us with key insights that emphasise the importance of continuing to deliver on improving active travel opportunities for everyone.

**Councillor Ian Yuill, Convener of Net Zero, Environment and Transport**

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## The Walking and Cycling Index

The Walking and Cycling Index (formerly Bike Life) is the biggest assessment of walking, wheeling and cycling in urban areas in the UK and Ireland.

It is delivered by Sustrans in collaboration with 23 cities and urban areas. Each city<sup>i</sup> reports on the progress made towards making walking, wheeling and cycling more attractive, everyday ways to travel.

The Walking and Cycling Index reports every two years. This is the second report from Aberdeen produced in partnership with Aberdeen City Council. The data in this report comes from 2023 and includes local walking, wheeling and cycling data, modelling and an independent survey of 1,146 residents aged 16 or above in Aberdeen. The survey was conducted from March to June 2023. Social research organisation NatCen conducted the survey, which is representative of all residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

Across this report we have included comparisons to 2021 data where available.

Our thanks to the people of Aberdeen who took part in the survey and shared their stories with us.

More details on all reports can be found at [www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index). For more data, see the [Index Data Tool](#).



### Defining wheeling

We recognise that some people who use wheeled mobility aids, for example a wheelchair or a mobility scooter, may not identify with the term walking and may prefer to use the term wheeling. We use the terms walking and wheeling together to ensure we are as inclusive as possible.

i. City is used as a shorthand for Walking and Cycling Index cities, city regions, metropolitan areas and boroughs.

# Headlines

## Aberdeen

### Population<sup>i</sup>

227,430

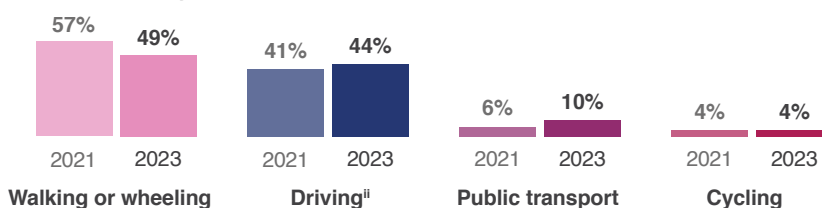
### Survey area



## The impact of the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic had a big impact on travel. In 2021 whilst most restrictions had been lifted, many people were taking fewer journeys and working from home.

### Residents who travel by the following modes five or more days a week in Aberdeen



Participation in cycling on a regular basis has stayed about the same since 2021, but walking and wheeling has decreased.

**49%**  
of residents walk or wheel at least five days a week  
57% in 2021

**16%**  
of residents cycle at least once a week  
15% in 2021

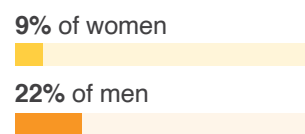
## Walking, wheeling and cycling participation is not equal

Residents' travel choices and their perceptions of walking, wheeling and cycling sometimes vary widely between different groups.

### Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a week

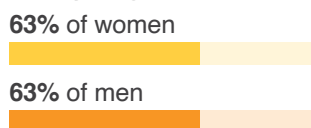


### Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week<sup>iii</sup>

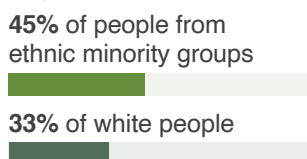


## Not all residents feel safe and welcome in their neighbourhood

### Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety is good



### Proportion of residents who think cycling safety is good



### Proportion of residents who feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood



Socio-economic group is a classification based on occupation maintained by the Market Research Society. Groups A and B are professional and managerial. Group C2 is skilled manual.

i. NRS mid-year 2021 population estimates. This is the most recent available for Aberdeen. ii. Travelling as driver or passenger of car, van or motorcycle. iii. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender 'in another way' was too low to be statistically significant and therefore is not presented here.

## Everyone benefits when more people walk, wheel and cycle

Every day, walking, wheeling and cycling in Aberdeen take up to **55,000** cars off the road.<sup>iv</sup> Each year in Aberdeen these three modes combined:



Prevent

**573**

serious long-term health conditions



Create

**£163.4 million**

in economic benefit for individuals and Aberdeen



Save

**9,400 tonnes**

of greenhouse gas emissions

## Residents want to walk, wheel and cycle more and drive less

Percentage of residents who would like to use different types of transport more or less in the future:

23% of residents want to drive less, yet 39% of residents often use a car because no other transport options are available

Walk or wheel

50% more

2% less

Cycle

47% more

2% less

Take public transport

31% more

9% less

Drive

15% more

23% less

## Residents want more funding for walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

Percentage of residents who would like to see more government spending in their local area:

51% on walking and wheeling

51% in 2021

44% on cycling

55% in 2021

67% on public transport

59% in 2021

38% on driving

28% in 2021

## Increased funding would help support more liveable neighbourhoods

Among Aberdeen residents:

58% support

25% oppose

more cycle paths along roads, physically separated from traffic and pedestrians

55% agree

24% disagree

that increasing space for people socialising, walking, wheeling and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

70% support

11% oppose

the creation of more 20-minute neighbourhoods<sup>v</sup>

73% support

11% oppose

banning vehicles parking on the pavement

54% support

19% oppose

the creation of more low-traffic neighbourhoods<sup>vi</sup>

48% support

25% oppose

shifting investment from road building schemes to fund walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport

iv. Based on walking, wheeling and cycling by residents that live in a household with a car. Does not include leisure cycling or leisure walking or wheeling trips.  
v. See definition on page 14. vi. For definition see [Methodology document](#).



# Walking in Aberdeen

Walking and wheeling participation, safety and satisfaction

## Walking and wheeling participation

Overall in Aberdeen the number of people walking and wheeling regularly (at least five days a week) has decreased since 2021.

Walking and wheeling are often overlooked in transport. This is despite being an efficient use of space, good for our health and having no environmental impact.

**94%**  
of all residents walk or wheel

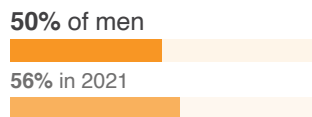
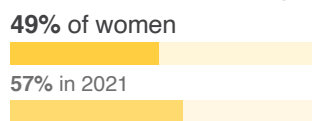
97%  
in 2021

**49%**  
of residents walk or wheel  
at least five days a week

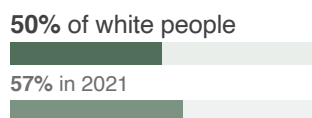
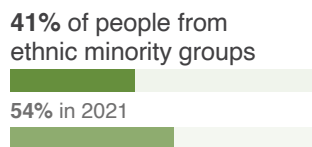
57%  
in 2021

### Proportion of residents who walk or wheel at least five days a week

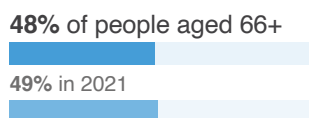
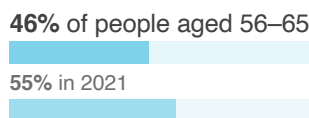
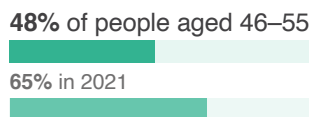
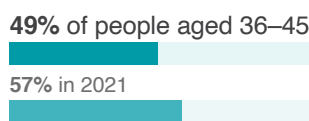
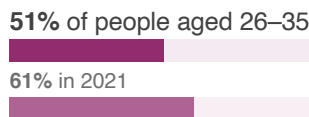
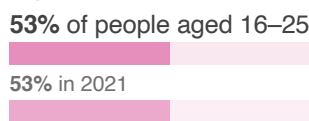
#### Gender<sup>i</sup> and sexuality



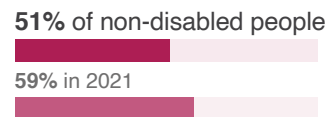
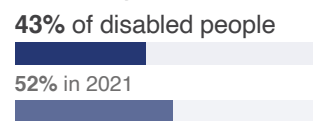
#### Ethnicity



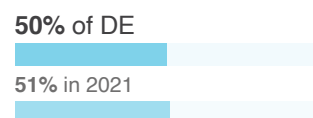
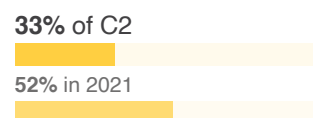
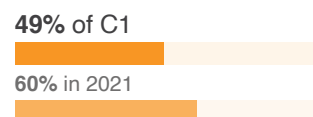
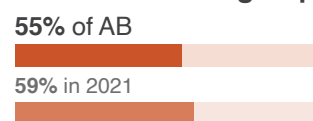
#### Age



#### Disability



#### Socio-economic group<sup>ii</sup>



i. The sample size for respondents who identified their gender 'in another way' was too low to be statistically significant and therefore is not presented here.

ii. Socio-economic group is a classification based on occupation maintained by the Market Research Society. Groups A and B are professional and managerial. Group C1 is supervisory/clerical and students. Group C2 is skilled manual. Groups D and E are semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, homemakers and people not in employment.

## Walking and wheeling safety and satisfaction

**63%**

of residents think the level of safety for walking or wheeling is good

79% in 2021

**49%**

of residents think the level of safety for children walking or wheeling is good

61% in 2021

**71%**

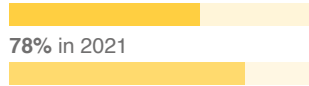
of residents think their local area overall is a good place to walk or wheel

81% in 2021

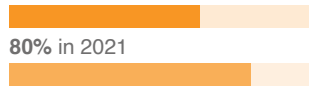
### Proportion of residents who think walking or wheeling safety in their local area is good

#### Gender and sexuality

**63%** of women



**63%** of men



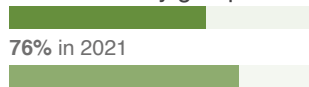
**58%** of LGBTQ+ people



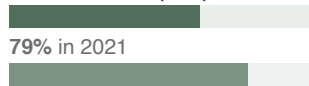
**65%** of non-LGBTQ+ people

#### Ethnicity

**65%** of people from ethnic minority groups



**63%** of white people

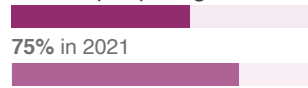


#### Age

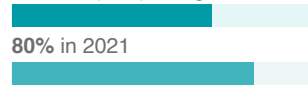
**65%** of people aged 16–25



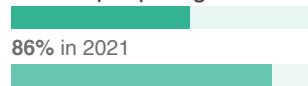
**59%** of people aged 26–35



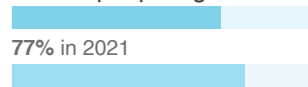
**66%** of people aged 36–45



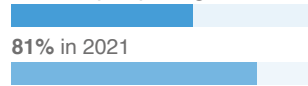
**59%** of people aged 46–55



**69%** of people aged 56–65

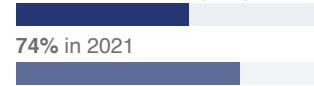


**60%** of people aged 66+

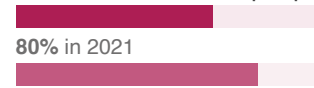


#### Disability

**57%** of disabled people

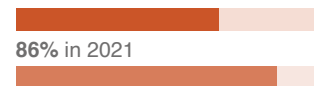


**65%** of non-disabled people

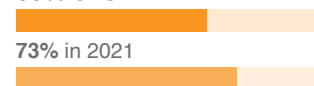


#### Socio-economic group

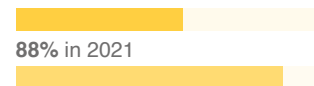
**67%** of AB



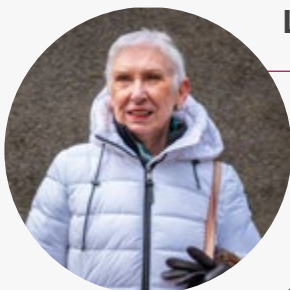
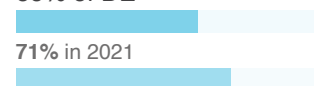
**63%** of C1



**55%** of C2



**60%** of DE



**Louise, car-free convert**



When I retired, I got rid of my car. Walking became my main form of transport and my exercise of choice. I am lucky everything I need is within walking distance from my home.

I have always liked the headspace walking gives me. I love connecting to my environment at my own pace, exploring Old Aberdeen, and walking along the Esplanade and the river Dee.

The city has so many lovely walking paths!



# Cycling in Aberdeen

## Cycling participation, safety and satisfaction

### Cycling participation

Overall in Aberdeen the number of people cycling has stayed about the same since 2021. Despite a much larger potential, only **16%** of people cycle regularly.<sup>i</sup>

Cycling participation, however, is not equal. Barriers to cycling can be far more pronounced for some people. Safety, including road safety and personal safety, is the single largest barrier to cycling.<sup>ii</sup> Aberdeen residents perceive cycling to be less safe than in 2021.

**36%**  
of all residents cycle

37%  
in 2021

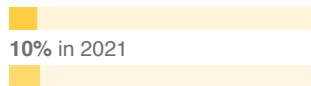
**16%**  
of all residents cycle at least once a week

15%  
in 2021

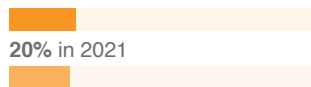
### Proportion of residents who cycle at least once a week

#### Gender and sexuality

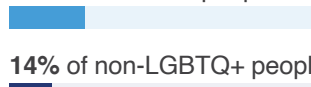
9% of women



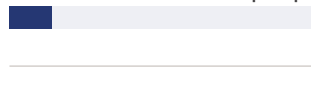
22% of men



25% of LGBTQ+ people



14% of non-LGBTQ+ people

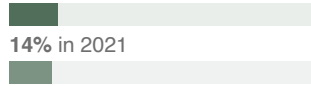


#### Ethnicity

15% of people from ethnic minority groups

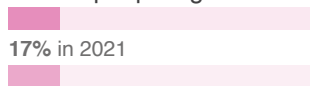


16% of white people

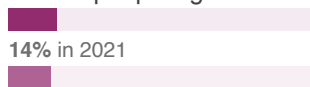


#### Age

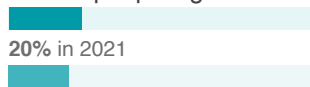
17% of people aged 16–25



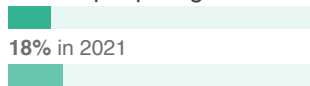
16% of people aged 26–35



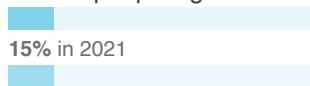
24% of people aged 36–45



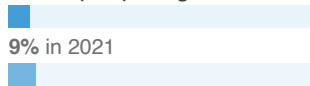
14% of people aged 46–55



15% of people aged 56–65

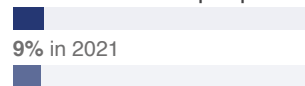


7% of people aged 66+



#### Disability

10% of disabled people



17% of non-disabled people

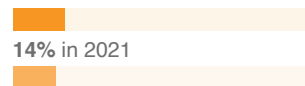


#### Socio-economic group

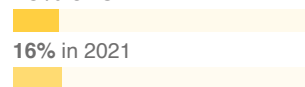
15% of AB



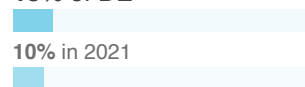
17% of C1



15% of C2



13% of DE





## Cycling safety and satisfaction

**34%**

of all residents think the level of safety for cycling in their local area is good

41% in 2021

**29%**

of all residents think the level of safety for children cycling is good

32% in 2021

**38%**

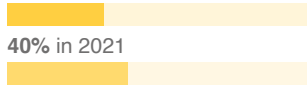
of all residents think their local area overall is a good place to cycle

40% in 2021

### Proportion of residents who think cycling safety in their local area is good

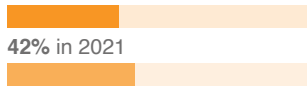
#### Gender and sexuality

**32%** of women



40% in 2021

**37%** of men



42% in 2021

**26%** of LGBTQ+ people

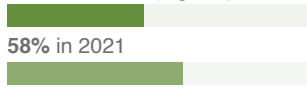


**36%** of non-LGBTQ+ people



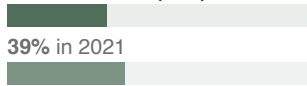
#### Ethnicity

**45%** of people from ethnic minority groups



58% in 2021

**33%** of white people



39% in 2021

#### Age

**42%** of people aged 16–25



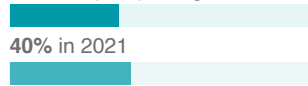
42% in 2021

**30%** of people aged 26–35



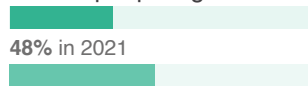
36% in 2021

**36%** of people aged 36–45



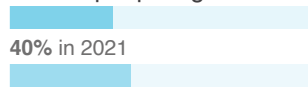
40% in 2021

**34%** of people aged 46–55



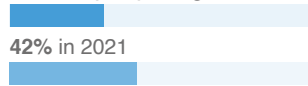
48% in 2021

**34%** of people aged 56–65



40% in 2021

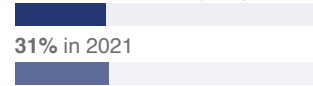
**31%** of people aged 66+



42% in 2021

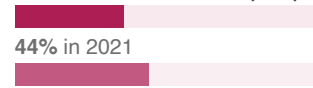
#### Disability

**30%** of disabled people



31% in 2021

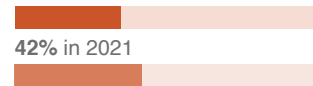
**36%** of non-disabled people



44% in 2021

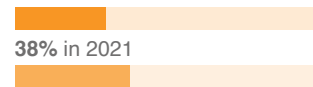
#### Socio-economic group

**35%** of AB



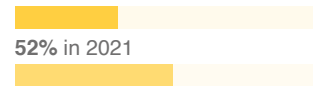
42% in 2021

**30%** of C1



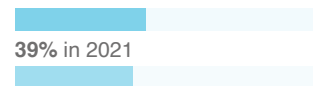
38% in 2021

**34%** of C2



52% in 2021

**43%** of DE



39% in 2021



**Nathalie, graduate**



As a student, I was looking for a convenient and affordable way to travel around Aberdeen. The bus was too expensive, so I started cycling thanks to a free bike from BeCycle. I immediately loved this solution! It was fast, cheap, and great daily exercise.

However, you need to be confident to cycle in the city centre, as you often navigate between cars and buses with no dedicated cycle lanes.

I believe if we had better infrastructure, more people would enjoy cycling in Aberdeen!



# Benefits of walking

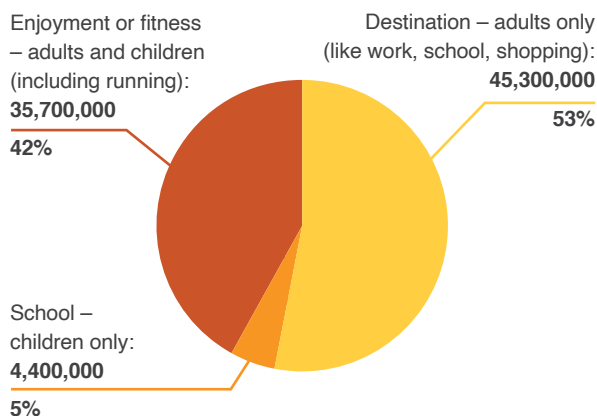
Why everyone gains when more people walk or wheel

## Aberdeen residents walk or wheel 10 times around the world every day

There has been a reduction in trips to a destination since 2021. Walking and wheeling levels have also decreased for enjoyment or fitness trips.

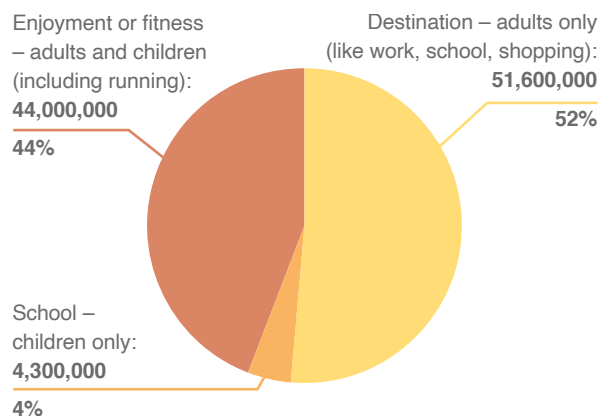
### Annual walking and wheeling trips by purpose<sup>i</sup>

**2023:**  
**85.4 million trips**



This adds up to  
**94.2 million miles**  
= 260,000 miles a day

**2021:**  
**99.9 million trips**



This adds up to  
**116.1 million miles**  
= 320,000 miles a day

## Walking and wheeling benefits residents and the local economy

The Walking and Cycling Index uses a model to understand the costs and benefits of driving and walking. For example travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

5p  
in 2021

**46p is saved<sup>ii</sup>**  
for each mile walked or wheeled  
instead of driven in Aberdeen.

Over a year this adds up to

**£10 million**

from adults with a car in their household  
walking or wheeling to work, school  
and other destinations.

£1.3  
million  
in 2021

The total annual economic benefit from all  
trips walked and wheeled in Aberdeen is

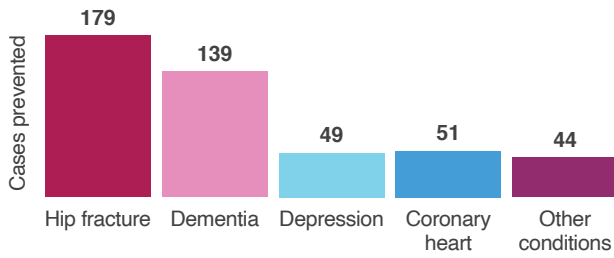
**£131 million<sup>iii</sup>**

£143.9  
million  
in 2021

i. Trips for enjoyment or fitness include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment). School trips are shown separately for children only. ii. Benefits have increased significantly, mainly because of increased costs of driving and greater traffic congestion. iii. This includes trips walked or wheeled for enjoyment or fitness, and trips to destinations by people with and without a car.

## Walking and wheeling unlocks health benefits for everyone

520 in 2021 **Walking in Aberdeen prevents 462 serious long-term health conditions each year**



'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, colorectal cancer.

Saving the NHS in Aberdeen

£3.4 million in 2021

**£5.7 million per year**



equivalent to the cost of

**140,000 GP appointments**

110,000 in 2021

Based on applying Aberdeen data to Sport England MOVES tool which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In Aberdeen the physical activity benefits of walking

**prevent 129 early deaths annually**

142 in 2021

which is valued at

**£469 million<sup>iv</sup>**

£468 million in 2021

Please note wheelchair or mobility scooter trips are modelled as walking trips for the purposes of the MOVES and HEAT models.

People walking and wheeling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

**15,000 kg of NO<sub>x</sub>**  
and

20,000 kg in 2021

**2,200 kg of particulates**  
(PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>)

2,800 kg in 2021

**61% of residents agree the air is clean in their local area**

62% in 2021



## Walking and wheeling in Aberdeen helps mitigate our climate crisis

6,800 tonnes in 2021 **5,900 tonnes** of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by walking or wheeling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of



42,000 people in 2021 **37,000 people taking flights** from Aberdeen to London

In 2021, transport within Scotland (excluding international aviation and shipping) accounted for **26%** of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Despite a reduction in emissions associated with the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, transport rebounded in 2021 and remains the largest source of emissions in Scotland.

Scottish Government, Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2021

## Walking and wheeling keeps Aberdeen moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.<sup>v</sup> This helps to keep Aberdeen moving for all road users.

54,000 in 2021 **48,000 return walking and wheeling trips** are made daily in Aberdeen by people that could have used a car.

v. Litman, 2023. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back

**142 miles**

equivalent to the distance from Aberdeen to Glasgow

162 miles in 2021



iv. Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of walking by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of walking.



# Benefits of cycling

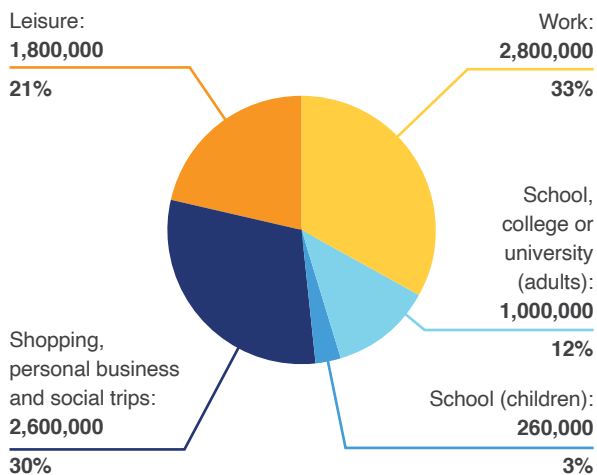
Why everyone gains when more people cycle

## Aberdeen residents cycle 3 times around the world every day

There has been an increase in commuter trips since 2021 as more people return to the workplace. Cycling levels have also increased for shopping, personal business and social trips.

### Annual cycling trips by purpose in Aberdeen<sup>i</sup>

2023:  
**8.5 million trips**

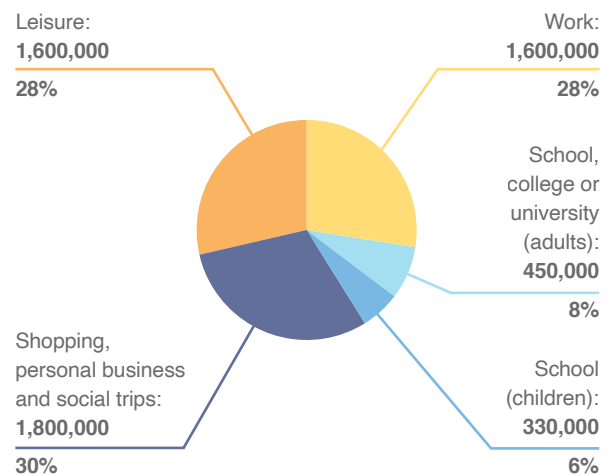


This adds up to

**31.6 million miles**

= 86,000 miles a day

2021:  
**5.8 million trips**



This adds up to

**23.2 million miles**

= 64,000 miles a day

## Cycling benefits residents and the local economy

The Walking and Cycling Index uses a model to understand the costs and benefits of driving and cycling. For example travel time, vehicle operating costs, health benefits, air quality and taxation.

**£1.40 is saved**

for each mile cycled instead of driven in Aberdeen.

94p  
in 2021

Over a year this adds up to

**£18 million**

from adults with a car in their household cycling to work, school and other destinations.

£7.1  
million  
in 2021

The total annual economic benefit from all trips cycled in Aberdeen is

**£32.4 million<sup>ii</sup>**

£19  
million  
in 2021

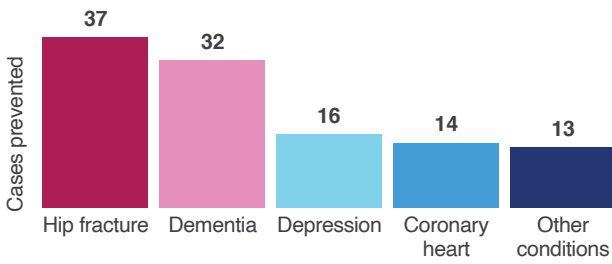
i. Leisure trips include adults and children (with and without adult accompaniment).

Education trips are shown separately for adults and children. All other trips are just adults.

ii. This includes trips cycled for enjoyment or fitness, and trips to destinations by people with and without a car.

## Cycling unlocks health benefits for everyone

83 in 2021 **Cycling in Aberdeen prevents 111 serious long-term health conditions each year**



'Other conditions' includes type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, colorectal cancer.

Saving the NHS in Aberdeen

£550,000 in 2021

**£1.4 million per year**

18,000 in 2021



equivalent to the cost of

**34,000 GP appointments**

Based on applying Aberdeen data to Sport England MOVES tool which shows the return on investment for health of sport and physical activity.

In Aberdeen the physical activity benefits of cycling

**prevent 14 early deaths annually**

9 in 2021

which is valued at

**£50.7 million<sup>iii</sup>**

£29.6 million in 2021

People cycling more instead of driving improves air quality, saving annually:

**6,700 kg of NO<sub>x</sub>** and

4,200 kg in 2021

**999 kg of particulates** (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>)

606 kg in 2021

**61%** of residents agree the air is clean in their local area

62% in 2021



## Cycling in Aberdeen helps mitigate our climate crisis

2,100 tonnes in 2021

**3,500 tonnes**

of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) saved annually by cycling instead of driving, equivalent to the carbon footprint of



13,000 people in 2021

**22,000 people taking flights**

from Aberdeen to London

In 2021, transport within Scotland (excluding international aviation and shipping) accounted for **26%** of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Despite a reduction in emissions associated with the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, transport rebounded in 2021 and remains the largest source of emissions in Scotland.

Scottish Government, Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2021

## Cycling keeps Aberdeen moving

Studies show walking or cycling frees up road space in comparison to driving.<sup>iv</sup> This helps to keep Aberdeen moving for all road users.

4,300 in 2021

**7,100 return cycling trips**

are made daily in Aberdeen by people that could have used a car.

iv. Litman, 2023. Evaluating Transportation Land Use Impacts. Based upon Eric Bruun and Vuchic, 1995. The Time-Area Concept.

If these cars were all in a traffic jam it would tail back

**21 miles**

equivalent to the distance from Aberdeen to Banchory

13 miles in 2021



iii. Based on WHO/Europe Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which enables an economic assessment of the health benefits of cycling by estimating the value of reduced mortality resulting from specified amounts of cycling.



# Walking solutions

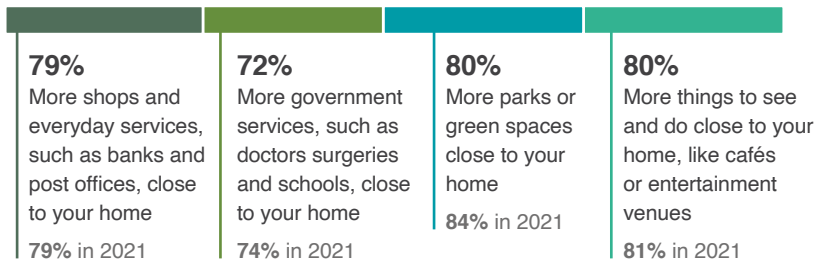
What would help make walking and wheeling easier?

## Residents want more services and amenities within walking and wheeling distance

Ideally, walking or wheeling should be the most attractive option for short journeys. An area can support this by ensuring many of the things people need are found near to where people live. The environment should be safe, comfortable and welcoming.

20-minute neighbourhoods are places where you can walk from your home to many of the things you need on a regular basis. Based on a 20-minute return journey this is around 480 metres each way for the majority of people.<sup>i</sup>

### What percentage of residents would find more local amenities and services useful to help them walk or wheel more?



**63%**

of Aberdeen households are in neighbourhoods of more than 40 homes per hectare. These are or can become 20-minute neighbourhoods.

63% in 2021

These higher-density neighbourhoods with more people can sustain local businesses and public transport routes.<sup>ii</sup>

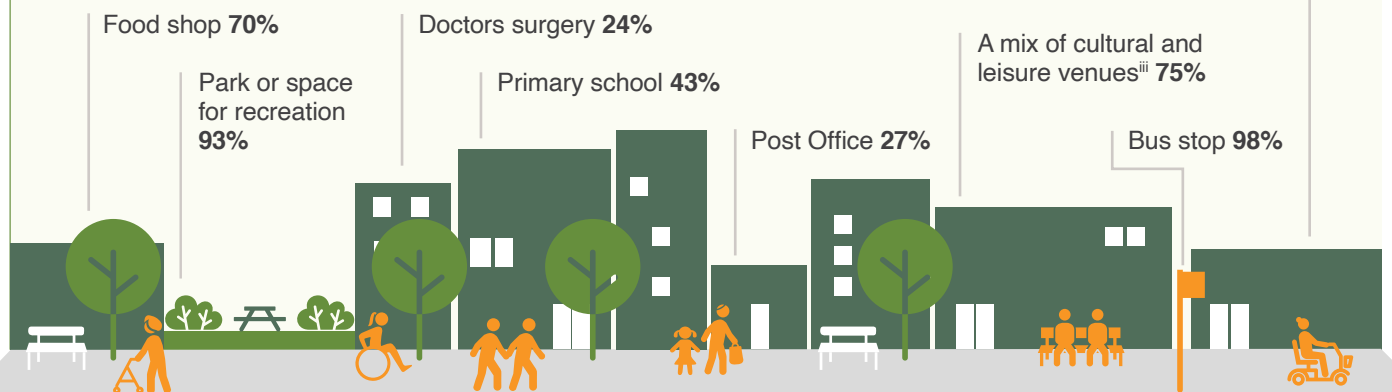
**50%**

agree they can easily get to many places they need to visit without having to drive

56% in 2021

### Proportion of households within a 400m radius of the following amenities

This is modelled as a straight-line distance, as opposed to the actual walking distance based on street layout which is likely to be longer (approximately equivalent to 480m).

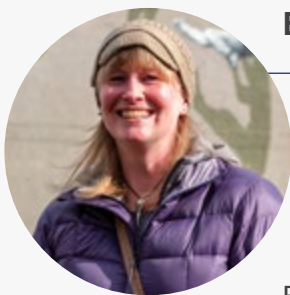
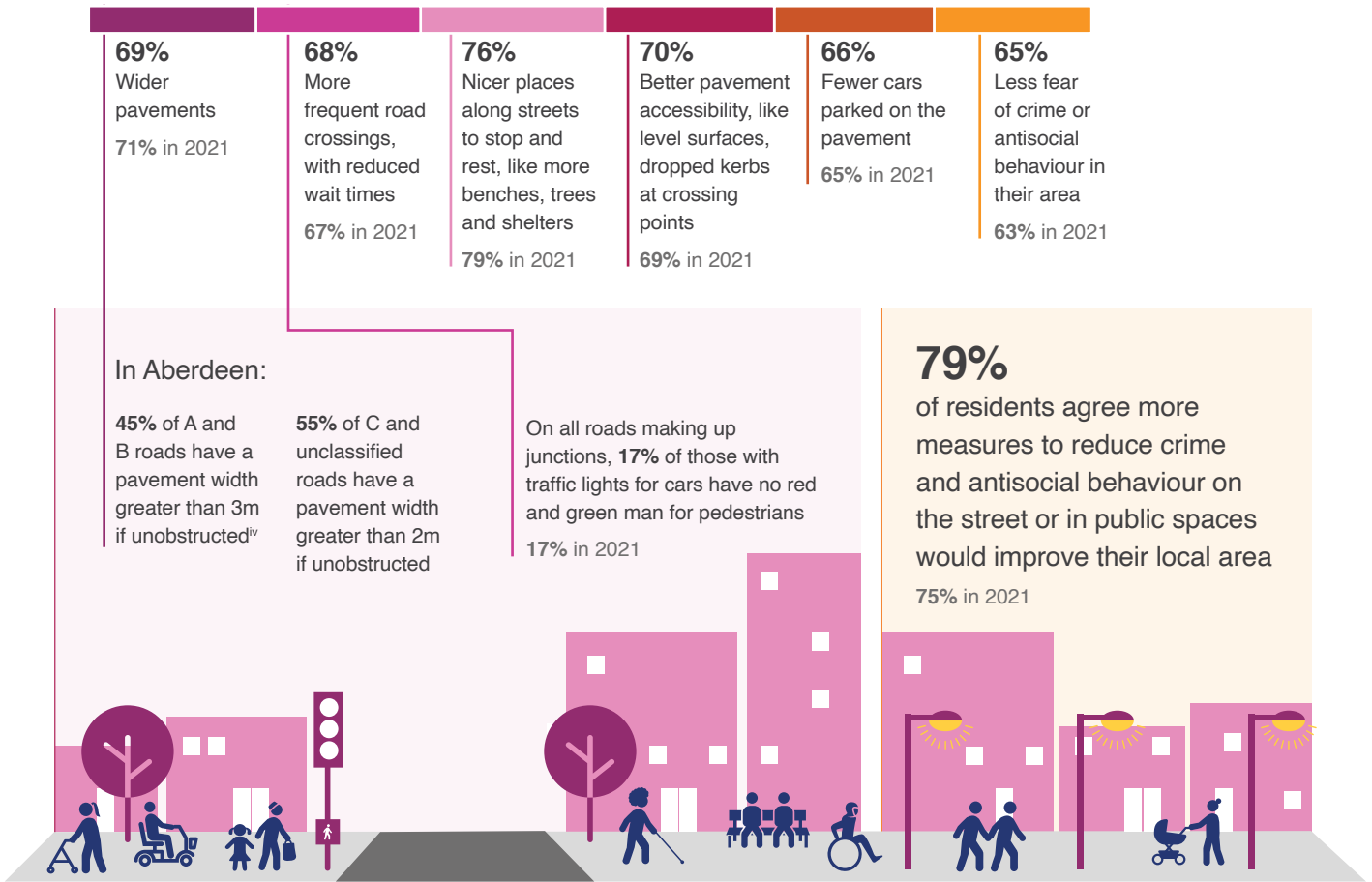


i. Asher et al, 2012. Most older pedestrians are unable to cross the road in time: a cross-sectional study. Age and Ageing.  
 ii. Sustrans, 2017. Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning.  
 iii. A minimum of three distinct types of cultural and leisure venues, like cafés, pubs, bingo halls, cinemas, museums.

## Residents want better streets

There are many ways to make our streets and neighbourhoods safe, welcoming and comfortable for everyone to walk or wheel in.

### What percentage of residents think that these changes would help them walk or wheel more?



**Emily, keen walker**



I walk to work as much as I can. I only live a mile away from my workplace, so I don't see the point in driving. I prefer getting the daily exercise, rather than sitting in my car. It also helps me save on fuel and parking costs.

Even though my commute is along main roads, I still enjoy my daily walk.

The main issue I come across is pavement maintenance, particularly during the winter. I have found myself sliding onto the road more than once. Well-maintained pavements would be a game-changer for so many people. It would also be great to see drivers following the new Highway Code and being more aware of pedestrians!

iv. OS source measurement now excludes grass verges, so is more accurate than in the 2021 report. A and B roads are main roads. C roads and unclassified roads are more minor roads and often residential streets.



# Cycling solutions

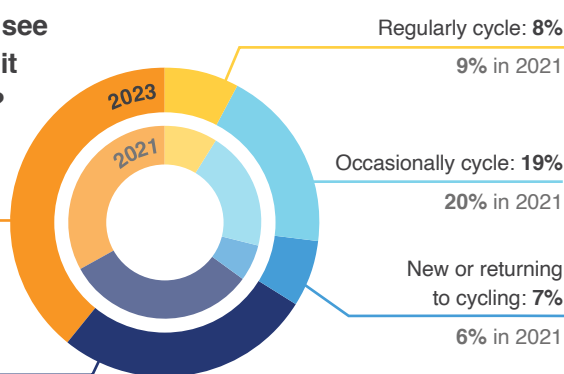
What would make cycling better?

## Many Aberdeen residents want to cycle

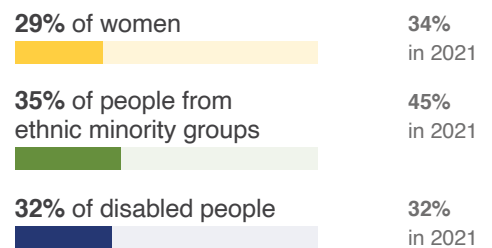
**How do residents see themselves when it comes to cycling?**

Do not cycle and do not want to: **39%**  
33% in 2021

Do not cycle but would like to: **27%**  
32% in 2021



**What proportion of residents said they 'do not cycle but would like to'?**



## Residents want improved cycling infrastructure

**What percentage of residents would be helped to cycle more by better facilities?**

**70%**  
More traffic-free cycle paths away from roads, like through parks or along waterways  
71% in 2021

**66%**  
More cycle paths along roads that are physically separated from traffic and pedestrians  
69% in 2021

**63%**  
More signposted local cycle routes along quieter streets  
68% in 2021

**62%**  
Better links with public transport, like secure cycle parking at train stations  
60% in 2021

There are **146** cycle parking spaces across the **2** railway stations and no cycle parking spaces at the only bus station in Aberdeen  
72 in 2021  
0 in 2021

Aberdeen has:<sup>i</sup>

**36 miles**  
of traffic-free cycle paths away from the road  
33 miles in 2021

**2 miles**  
of cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians  
1 mile in 2021

**15%**  
of households within 125m of these routes  
14% in 2021

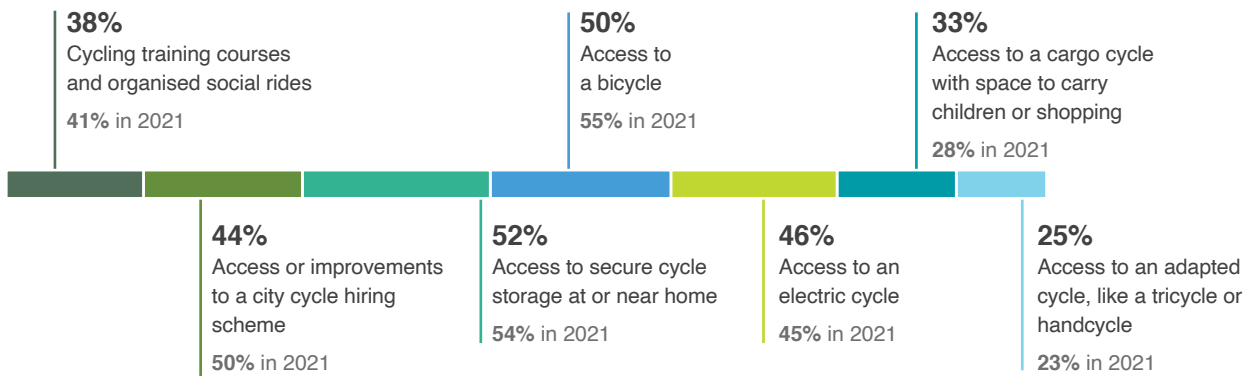
**58%**  
of residents support building more cycle paths physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic  
61% in 2021





## Residents want more support to cycle

### What percentage of residents think that these kinds of support would help them cycle more?



#### Aberdeen cycle hire scheme<sup>ii</sup>

**213**

hire cycles

**58**

cycle hire stations

**24,539**

annual trips

#### Reported cycle thefts

There were **385** reported cycle thefts in Aberdeen in 2022/23.

539 in 2021/22

For every **254** people who own an adult cycle in Aberdeen, there was **1** reported cycle theft in the past year.

#### Proportions of residents with access to an adult cycle

**51%** of residents

51% in 2021

**32%** of socio-economic group DE

44% in 2021

**61%** of socio-economic group AB

60% in 2021

**51%** of residents support financial discounts for people on low incomes or not in employment to help them buy a cycle

**34%** of households are within 800m of a cycle shop<sup>iv</sup>

There is a public cycle parking space for every **55** people who cycle in Aberdeen.<sup>iii</sup>

115 in 2021



#### Katie, new cyclist



A few months ago, I started cycling on a regular basis, almost every day. I realised it was easy to cycle into the city centre from where I live in Danestone. I have great cycle lanes on my route, and most journeys only take me about 20 minutes.

I now cycle 75 miles per month! It helps me save money and do my bit for the environment. Despite good cycle lanes, there are still junctions where I don't feel safe. I know I shouldn't, but I often cycle on the pavement.

It would be great to see better infrastructure at these dangerous crossings. This would benefit both cyclists and pedestrians.

I can no longer imagine my life without cycling. I feel part of a community of cyclists in my city!

ii. 2023 data covers November 2022–June 2023.

iii. 2021 Data is thought to be underestimated. iv. Credit to the Association of Cycle Traders (ACT) for their assistance with cycle shop locations and services offered.



# Neighbourhood solutions

What would help make neighbourhoods better?

## All residents should feel welcome in their neighbourhood

Proportion of residents that feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood

**72%**

of residents

77% in 2021

**73%** of women



77% in 2021

**73%** of men



78% in 2021

**63%** of disabled people



67%  
in 2021

**76%** of non-disabled people



81%  
in 2021

76%  
in 2021

**77%** of people from ethnic minority groups



78%  
in 2021

**72%** of white people



**65%** of LGBTQ+ people



**73%** of non-LGBTQ+ people



**67%** of socio-economic group DE



62%  
in 2021

**79%** of socio-economic group AB



86%  
in 2021

## The dominance of motor vehicles can discourage walking, wheeling and cycling

32%  
in 2021

Only **34%** of residents think that their streets are not dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles.

**Residents would find fewer motor vehicles on their streets useful to:**

61%  
in 2021

**54%** Walk or wheel more



57%  
in 2021

**51%** Cycle more



Unclassified roads are not designed to carry through-traffic, but in Aberdeen **22%** of their total length has nothing to prevent it. This can result in rat-running.<sup>i</sup>

23% in 2021

**43%** agree that restricting through-traffic on local residential streets would make their area a better place.

50% in 2021

**24%** of Aberdeen's streets have 20mph speed limits.<sup>ii</sup>

22%  
in 2021

**Residents would find more streets with 20mph speed limits useful to:**

**48%** Walk or wheel more



55%  
in 2021

**48%** Cycle more



54%  
in 2021

## Residents want local streets to be better spaces for people to spend time in

60%  
in 2021

**55%**

agree increasing space for people socialising, walking, wheeling and cycling on their local high street would improve their local area

**48%**

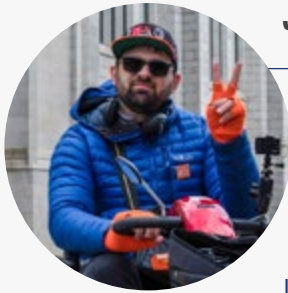
agree they regularly chat to their neighbours, more than just to say hello

52% in 2021

**54%**

support low-traffic neighbourhoods

65% in 2021



## Jev, city explorer



I have difficulty walking, so I use the car or a mobility scooter to get around. It took some time for me to accept being a younger person using a mobility scooter. But my passion for exploring my city helped me overcome this.

I love travelling around Aberdeen, taking photographs and exploring the street art. My favourite places are the art gallery, the beach, and Fittie. Once I even went 8 miles out of Aberdeen using the Deeside Way path!

Aberdeen is fairly accessible for mobility scooters and wheelchairs. However, some pavements are too bumpy or don't have dropped kerbs, and unless you're feeling a bit experimental, I wouldn't recommend that!

For me, the mobility scooter simulates walking. It allows me to see all the life around me, and it means a lot!

## Neighbourhoods must be designed with children in mind

Neighbourhoods should be places for children to thrive. Increasing independence, providing space to play and socialise, and improving the journey to school are all important.

If we design neighbourhoods with children in mind they will then work better for everyone else too.

### 10 years old

average age when people living with children would let them walk, wheel or cycle independently in their neighbourhood.

10 years old in 2021

80% of seven-year-olds in Germany are allowed to go alone to places within walking distance, other than school.<sup>iii</sup>

52% of residents agree there is space for children to socialise and play



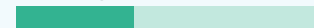
55% in 2021

65% of households are within 400m of a children's playground



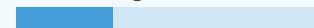
Among Aberdeen residents:

39% agree



39% agreed in 2021

32% disagree



27% disagreed in 2021

closing streets outside local schools to cars during drop-off and pick-up times would improve their local area

These are known as 'School Streets'.

### 0 schools

in Aberdeen have School Streets schemes<sup>iv</sup>

0 schemes in 2021



iii. Children's Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action, 2015. iv. Figure given is correct as of 31 May 2023.



# Developing Aberdeen

Recent walking, wheeling, cycling and neighbourhood changes

## Hydrogen Hub

The Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub continues to support the Council’s vision to become a climate positive city and help realise our ambition of reducing emissions and improving air quality.

This year saw Aberdeen City Council add to its range of hydrogen powered vehicles, strengthening our status as one of Europe’s foremost energy cities in the hydrogen revolution.

Our latest addition is a small fleet of Fuel Cell Cargo Pedelecs for trialling with private and public organisations in and around the city centre, offering a zero emission “last mile” option for small to medium sized local cargo deliveries.

## E-bike Hire Scheme

The e-bike share scheme for Aberdeen was launched in November 2022 with 153 e-bikes and 33 geo-fenced stations based in the city centre. It has steadily grown in coverage since its introduction, increasing to 213 e-bikes and 58 parking locations. With around 8,000 registered users and over 30,000 journeys undertaken since its launch, it has been hugely successful. There is now an emphasis on expanding the scheme to include the two universities and NHS Grampian.

## City Centre and Beach Masterplan

The City Centre and Beach Masterplan was approved in 2022 and significant progress has been made on several high-profile projects to date.

On Union Street, Aberdeen’s main street, private cars have been removed from the central section. Work to improve the public realm and general streetscape has also been approved and will include a new bi-directional segregated cycle lane.

Supporting traffic restrictions have also been introduced on surrounding streets, funded by Nestrans and Transport Scotland as part of the Bus Partnership Fund programme. With the



The e-bike hire scheme has been hugely successful with around 8,000 registered users and over 30,000 journeys undertaken since its launch.



exception of limited local access, private vehicles have been removed from these streets through bus-gate enforcement. These changes further prioritise public transport and taxis / Private Hire Car (PHC), and promote walking, wheeling and cycling. This enhances the main shopping areas in the city centre, making it a more pleasant area to live and visit.

## Footway Improvement Schemes Programme

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A selection of new and upgraded footways have been constructed, including:

- Springhill Road – tactile paving and dropped kerbs have been installed along 2km of existing footway, with further works around nearby schools proposed next year.
- Whitestripes Road – a rural section has been upgraded from grass verge to footway, to give pedestrians a vital link to a new housing development and nursery school.
- Stronsay Drive – the narrow, unsurfaced, water-damaged path has been replaced with a wider bitmac path suitable for wheelchairs, scooters and buggies. This path connects residential areas and provides pedestrian access to a substantial recreational area.

## I Bike for Schools

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Increasing pupils' confidence on a bike is essential to empowering them to make active journeys. Aberdeen has been supported by an I Bike for Schools officer for several years now, resulting in significant progress in engaging both primary and secondary school pupils across the city.

Many pupils in Aberdeen have never had the opportunity to ride a bike before. In 2022/23, the I Bike officer provided Bikeability training at six schools across the city. 68 pupils benefitted from "learn to cycle" lessons, and nearly all of them can now cycle independently having now completed Bikeability Levels 1 and 2. Positive feedback from pupils indicates increased confidence cycling, with one school pupil saying they felt "on top of the world".

The annual Hands Up Scotland Survey from Sustrans shows that schools with an I Bike programme experience higher rates of pupils travelling actively to school, and lower rates of pupils travelling to school by car.



# Looking forward

Better streets and places for everyone

## Local Transport Strategy

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The Local Transport Strategy (LTS) is the cornerstone of all policy and planning to meet transport needs in Aberdeen through to 2030 and beyond. The draft LTS (with supporting documents) will complete its consultation in January 2024, with the final plan anticipated later in 2024.

## City Centre and Beach Masterplan

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The City Centre and Beach Masterplan is a strategic, place-led, project-focused document which will be a key tool in delivering improved connections between the city centre and beach areas and their respective planned developments. The Masterplan prioritises active and sustainable travel and promotes the creation of new spaces for people to enjoy. Projects within the Masterplan, combined with the Low Emission Zone (operational in summer 2024), will see vehicle emissions reduced leading to a more pleasant, people-centred place to live, visit and enjoy:

- City Centre Streetscape – improving public realm across a number of key city centre streets and spaces.
- New Market – retail units, landscaping and improvements to public realm, and an accessible pedestrian link to Union Street.
- Belmont Quarter – high quality public realm and outdoor seating area, improving active travel opportunity.
- George Street – revitalising the streetscape and improving pedestrian and cycling experience.
- Beachfront – creating a transformational new waterfront destination with a series of areas including the Beach Ballroom, Events Park and Field, Core Play Park, Broad Hill development and a potential Stadium and Leisure/Beach Village.
- Beach Boulevard – reconfiguring the Beach Boulevard to promote active travel between the beach and the city centre, with reallocation of road space providing environmental improvements through increased planting and better water and air quality.



The City and Beach Masterplan prioritises active and sustainable travel and promotes the creation of new spaces for people to enjoy.

## Active Travel Network Project

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Work has recently commenced on a region-wide active travel network review. Aberdeen City elements focus on the identification of a high-quality, deliverable, city-wide active travel network. Engaging closely with key stakeholder groups and members of the public, the outcomes of the review will support the development of a pipeline of active travel projects, made possible by recent increases in national funding for active travel.

## I Bike for Communities

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Aberdeen City Council has recently secured an embedded I Bike for Communities officer. We look forward to working with them to increase community participation in cycling and normalise cycling as an economical, sustainable and healthy way to travel around the city.

## Ashgrove Connects Project

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Consultation within the Berryden Corridor Improvement (BCI) project highlighted the need for additional off-carriageway cycle infrastructure. The key benefits of this will include:

- 20mph speed limit on Ashgrove Road and Ashgrove Road West
- Reduced carriageway width and crossing distances
- Continuous footways at side roads to provide design priority for pedestrians
- An increase in street trees and green infrastructure
- Protected cycle paths
- Enhanced bus stop facilities and cycle bypasses at bus stops.



### Robin, cargo bike family



When our daughter started nursery, my wife and I were looking for an easy way to drop her off before work. Driving was not an option as there was no car park at our workplace. We are both confident cyclists, so a cargo bike seemed like the best solution.

We immediately loved it and even sold our regular bikes. We've been using it for commuting, shopping, and weekend adventures. We often face barriers such as heavy traffic or bollards blocking our large bike from accessing cycle paths. This hasn't put us off cycling in the city, but it would be so much easier if we had better infrastructure!

The family grew, and we bought a second cargo bike. Our kids, 5 and 2 years old, absolutely love riding them. We hope that cycling daily will show them that active travel is an option and that cars shouldn't be the default choice.

## Notes on methodology:

The attitudinal survey was conducted from March to June 2023 by independent social research organisation NatCen.

The survey is representative of all Aberdeen residents, not just those who walk, wheel or cycle.

2021 survey data was collected from June to August 2021, also by NatCen, following the same methodology.

All other data is sourced from our city partners, national data sets or modelled and calculated by Sustrans.

Trip estimates use a model developed by Sustrans. When comparing to other travel surveys, some variation may exist in the proportion of journeys travelled by journey purpose.

Rounding has been used throughout the report. In many cases we have rounded to the nearest whole number. Rounding is avoided where this may cause confusion, for example with modelled estimates shown in the summary and benefits sections.

More information and a detailed methodology are available at [www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-cycling-index)

Sustrans makes it easier for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle.

We work for and with communities, helping them come to life by walking, wheeling and cycling to create healthier places and happier lives for everyone.

Join us on our journey. [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

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