

# Bingley Rural Green Travel Project Survey Results: Executive Summary

Bingley Rural Green Travel Project takes a community-led approach to sustainable transport engagement, awareness-raising and development. For peri-urban areas such as Bingley Rural, which have become increasingly car-dependent over many decades, the imperative to reduce car use poses particular challenges. Understanding local views, needs and aspirations is key. This one-year project, funded through Shipley Climate Action Fund and run by the village and town councils of Cullingworth, Denholme, Harden and Wilsden, working with Sustrans and Mapping for Change, has set out to engage residents of Bingley Rural and Bingley, as well as some of the area's thousands of visitors.

At a series of 4 roadshow events held in summer/autumn 2021, and through an online survey, people have identified the current barriers to travelling sustainably in and around the Bingley Rural area. They also identified what is needed to enable them to walk, cycle or use public transport more frequently. Crucially, local residents and visitors also expressed interest in and positivity about travelling more sustainably, if these barriers are broken down. A total of 249 surveys were conducted, alongside a range of qualitative input from conversations at the roadshows. This input has been analysed by Sustrans, who produced this report on behalf of the project's steering group.

## Car use

The vast majority of survey respondents who lived in the Bingley Rural area used a car most days. However, despite a high reliance on cars, the survey responses, as well as conversations held at the roadshows, demonstrated that people were keen to explore alternatives and had constructive views to feed in.

It is striking that over 90% of those surveyed at St Ives Estate had arrived by car. Significantly, the majority were from outside the Bingley Rural area, highlighting the extent to which the estate brings additional traffic into the area. It also suggests that St Ives Estate – alongside possibly other green spaces in the area - is not adequately accessible and inclusive for those without access to a car. There is a great opportunity to bring in visitors in greener, healthier and more inclusive ways if safe and convenient walking, cycling and public transport connections are created, and awareness raised amongst visitors.

## Public Transport

A key theme in the comments, and in conversations at the roadshows, was the extent to which inter-village sustainable transport does not adequately meet people's practical needs. Over a third of respondents thought that public transport was poor. Also significant was people's lack of awareness of public transport as an option. 20% of respondents that lived in the area said they did not know about public transport options in the area, and most visitors to St Ives seemed to struggle to answer the survey question about the quality of local public transport.

**“Buses need to be more regular and turn up on time!”**

Complaints about buses were mostly around regularity, reliability, expense, the need for evening buses, and the need for better connections (particularly between Denholme and Bingley; between the villages and towns in Bingley Rural; and between trains from Bingley Station and the villages/towns in Bingley Rural).

Another theme in the comments was concern about using public transport due to the pandemic, suggesting a need to (re)build confidence and positivity about public transport.

## Walking and cycling

Walking was largely seen to be good in the area. However, a distinction should be drawn between traffic-free leisure routes – often accessed by car, as at St Ives – and an integrated network of active travel routes that connect people to everyday destinations and green spaces. When asked what would enable them to travel more sustainably, the majority of people cited “safer walking and cycling routes.”

Concerns were raised about the width of pavements, particularly in relation to walking with children and prams/pushchairs. More generally, parents raised concerns about the lack of opportunities for children and families to walk and cycle, it not being safe on the roads, and the lack of safe, active access to green spaces like St Ives Estate.

“There is only a very narrow path leaving [Harden] down towards Bingley. The path is just wide enough for one person in places, in a poor state of repair and very overgrown... The speed limit is 40mph but often vehicles travel much faster making walking down this road really quite scary!”

Nearly half of respondents said that cycling options in the area were poor. Key concerns were a lack of safe, segregated cycle lanes, and connectivity to traffic-free routes. There was also frustration about cycle lanes that stop abruptly, such as the one on Main Street in Wilsden.

## Emerging conclusions

This project comes at a crucial time, as we seek to recover and rebuild from the pandemic. There is an opportunity to reshape behaviours at a community level, building on the positivity and interest both residents and visitors show in sustainable travel, but as the evidence in this report shows, it will require both further awareness-raising and engagement, and infrastructure and service improvements to overcome practical and perceived barriers.

Sustrans’ analysis of feedback from residents and visitors, and discussion by the project steering group, suggests there is a need for:

- a thorough review of public transport routing and timetables, with a joined-up approach between bus and rail operators, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and local councils;
- consideration by local councils and Bradford Council of specific improvements needed to active travel routes between the villages, Bingley, St Ives, and other key conurbations and green spaces, and measures to manage traffic speeds, to make it safer, easier and more pleasant to walk and cycle as a means of travel;
- measures to raise awareness and encourage non-car-based travel (and travel confidence) both among visitors to St Ives and other destinations, as well as local residents.

The next step of the Bingley Rural Green Travel Project is a series of mapping workshops to explore and pinpoint local needs, issues and aspirations in more detail. The local councils of Cullingworth, Denholme, Harden and Wilsden will then be considering how they can take a joined-up approach with Bradford Council and WYCA, to take forward and prioritise improvements to current provision, and deliver further community-led interventions to further raise awareness and increase positivity and confidence around green travel.