

<u>CHESTERTON-ABBEY BRIDGE – TO REPORT CONSULTATION RESPONSE AND SEEK APPROVAL TO PROCEED</u>			
<i>To:</i>	Economy and Environment Committee		
<i>Meeting Date:</i>	21st October 2014		
<i>From:</i>	Graham Hughes, Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment		
<i>Electoral divisions:</i>	Abbey and East Chesterton		
<i>Forward Plan ref:</i>	Not applicable	<i>Key decision:</i>	No
<i>Purpose:</i>	To advise Committee of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the consultation response, • to outline the current risks with the delivery of the bridge, • and to seek approval to progress the project. 		
<i>Recommendation:</i>	Committee are requested to: <p>a) note the consultation response and the current project risks;</p> <p>b) approve the development and submission of a planning application based on Option One (a truss type bridge) placed as close to the existing rail bridge as possible on the east side; and,</p> <p>c) approve continuing negotiations with landowners.</p>		

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Chesterton-Abbey Bridge is part of the Chisholm Trail project that seeks to provide a high quality foot and cycle link between the existing and proposed new railway stations in Cambridge. A bridge would support the Science and Business Parks to the north of the river Cam, and link to retail areas and business hubs to the south and residential areas to the east.
- 1.2 As part of the Section 106 agreement relating to the new station, the County Council is required to produce a feasibility study report into the possible construction of a foot and cycle bridge over the River Cam at Chesterton. The study was completed in March 2014.
- 1.3 User modelling suggests that an average of 3,000 trips a day could be expected from a bridge in this location. The siting of a bridge here would make for reduced journey lengths across the city for certain trips, and hence would make walking and cycling more attractive than car travel.
- 1.4 There is currently a budget for the Chisholm Trail, including the bridge, of £500,000 but more funding is likely to be available in future, through Section 106 developer contributions, Growth Deal or other funds. A bridge is likely to cost around £4.5 million to deliver due to the complexities of working near to a live rail line, on a flood plain and at a location that is difficult to access in terms of deliveries of equipment, construction materials and heavy plant.

2. LOCATION

- 2.1 The feasibility study was reviewed by County Council engineers and bridge specialists, who concluded that two locations to the east of the rail bridge over the Cam were potentially deliverable for a bridge development. Locally a bridge joined to, or very close to the existing rail bridge is more desirable, but this is not feasible from a construction, management and maintenance point of view.
- 2.2 Locating the bridge to the west of the existing rail bridge would have a big impact on residential properties fronting the river, whereas to the east there are no properties.
- 2.3 A public engagement exercise carried out at the start of the feasibility study in October 2013 suggested that a bridge that blended in with the current rail bridge was preferable to a modern high impact design, such as Riverside Bridge.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 An initial round of public engagement was undertaken in July 2014 which comprised a period of consultation, a number of public events and a pre-consultation meeting with a stakeholder group.

- 3.2 The public were asked for their views on two proposed locations for the bridge, as shown on **Plan 1**. They were also consulted on three design options, the ramp footprint and bridge colour. The consultation also offered a comment box that received 595 responses, a breakdown of this can be found in **Appendix 1**. The bridge designs, a photograph of the existing bridge and the consultation materials can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/mkrz8ut>
- 3.3 A total of 885 responses to the consultation were received. 58% were local residents. A high proportion of respondents (69%) were cyclists, which is not surprising as they would be the main beneficiaries.
- 3.4 Location one, (close to the rail bridge) was clearly the most popular, with 72% of respondees. Of the three bridge types, 49% said they preferred Option one (truss type), 26% chose Option two (box girder), and 9% opted for Option three (half girder).
- 3.5 Green emerged as the favoured choice of colour, and views were fairly evenly split on the shape in plan of the bridge and ramps.
- 3.6 Fen Ditton Parish Council distributed a leaflet urging residents to state their opposition to the idea of a bridge. A petition strongly objecting to a new bridge was organised and submitted by Fen Ditton residents, containing 324 signatures. They feel that the need for a bridge has not been demonstrated, and they are unhappy that the options proposed are on the east side of the existing railway bridge in Ditton Meadows, which they describe as a unique open space and is a City Wildlife Site. The petitioners see no need for a new bridge and they feel that none of the proposed options are acceptable.
- 3.7 The full results of the consultation can be found in **Appendix 2**.

4. PROJECT RISKS

- 4.1 Land acquisition is a high risk. Negotiations with landowners are ongoing. The land on the Chesterton side is owned by Network Rail and the land on the Abbey side is owned by Gonville and Caius College.
- 4.2 The Project Team have recently met Gonville and Caius and their land agents. Strong support to co-operate and support the project has been expressed. The college currently have some adjacent land leased to Sustrans to enable The Jubilee Cycle Path to be open. This route links Fen Ditton to the city and is part of the National Cycle Network.
- 4.3 Finalising an agreement with Network Rail is likely to be more difficult as they have suggested that their land may be required for other uses, but they have agreed to meet and discuss other options including permissive use. These discussions will be commencing very soon.
- 4.4 Access for plant and equipment for construction is very challenging because of limited space. Discussions are underway with a number of property owners, regarding potential access arrangements over land from or in the vicinity of Ditton Walk Business Park area. Construction would require a haul road to be built across Ditton Meadows, and a large compound area sited close to the river. This would be removed and land reinstated at the end of the project. This option is the most economical and practical.

- 4.5 Local opposition based around visual aspects and environmental concerns from residents of Fen Ditton and local interest groups such as The Friends of Stourbridge Common is also a major issue to consider.
- 4.6 Funding for the scheme is yet to be agreed but is expected to be available from a combination of developer contributions and Growth Deal funding.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 A new bridge at this location would bring many benefits, and would link up with the new station and employment sites, but the consultation has revealed some opposition to the idea.
- 5.2 Clearly the attractive and historic setting of Stourbridge Common and Ditton Meadows is cherished by many in the local area. Officers however, are confident that a sensitive design for a bridge can be developed to allay some of these concerns, and to ensure that the many economic, access and health benefits of providing a new bridge link can be realized.
- 5.3 Officers propose to continue negotiations to secure the necessary land either by purchase, lease or permissive access. This could take some time, particularly where Network Rail are concerned. Discussions will continue regarding construction access.
- 5.4 It is proposed that an architect be appointed to develop the design in more detail. The design will be based on the consultation comments, and thus a preference for a truss type bridge placed as close to the existing rail bridge as possible on the east side.
- 5.6 Discussions will commence with the County Planning Team as to requirements and timescales for a planning application, and more analysis of potential benefits and journey time savings for residents of Fen Ditton will be undertaken.
- 5.7 Full funding for the scheme will be pursued.
- 5.8 If land negotiations are not held up, the following timescale would be feasible: Final delivery is dependent on funding.

Action	Start	Completion
Negotiation for land and outline legal agreements	underway	March 2015
Outline designs	November 2014	April 2015
Planning preparation and application	April 2015	November 2015

6. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

More people cycling and walking contributes to a healthier population, improved productivity, reduced traffic congestion, reliability of journey times and adds capacity into an already constrained road network, all of which contributes to economic wellbeing. A new bridge would link large residential areas to large employment sites and give improved access to the new station at Chesterton.

6.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

Currently many people feel unsafe cycling, although cycling is potentially a form of economic, reliable transport that allows them to access employment or training and hence independence, and the opportunity to incorporate active travel into their lives.

6.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

The new bridge would link the communities of Chesterton and Abbey, making for convenient journeys by foot and cycle and would give a means of access for wheelchair users.

7. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Resource Implications

The scheme will be capital funded from a variety of sources to include Section 106 contributions. The bridge would be designed to ensure minimal maintenance and revenue costs.

7.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

A new bridge would be subject to a planning application. If there is a high level of opposition it is possible that a planning inquiry would be needed. The key risks are set out in section 4 above.

7.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

A new bridge would be designed such that it is available for everyone in the community to use.

7.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

A thorough and extensive period of consultation and engagement has been undertaken. Further meetings of the stakeholder group will take place and there will be further public consultation once the bridge design is progressed.

7.5 Public Health Implications

More people cycling and walking undoubtedly contributes to improved public health. A new bridge would enable more people to incorporate exercise into

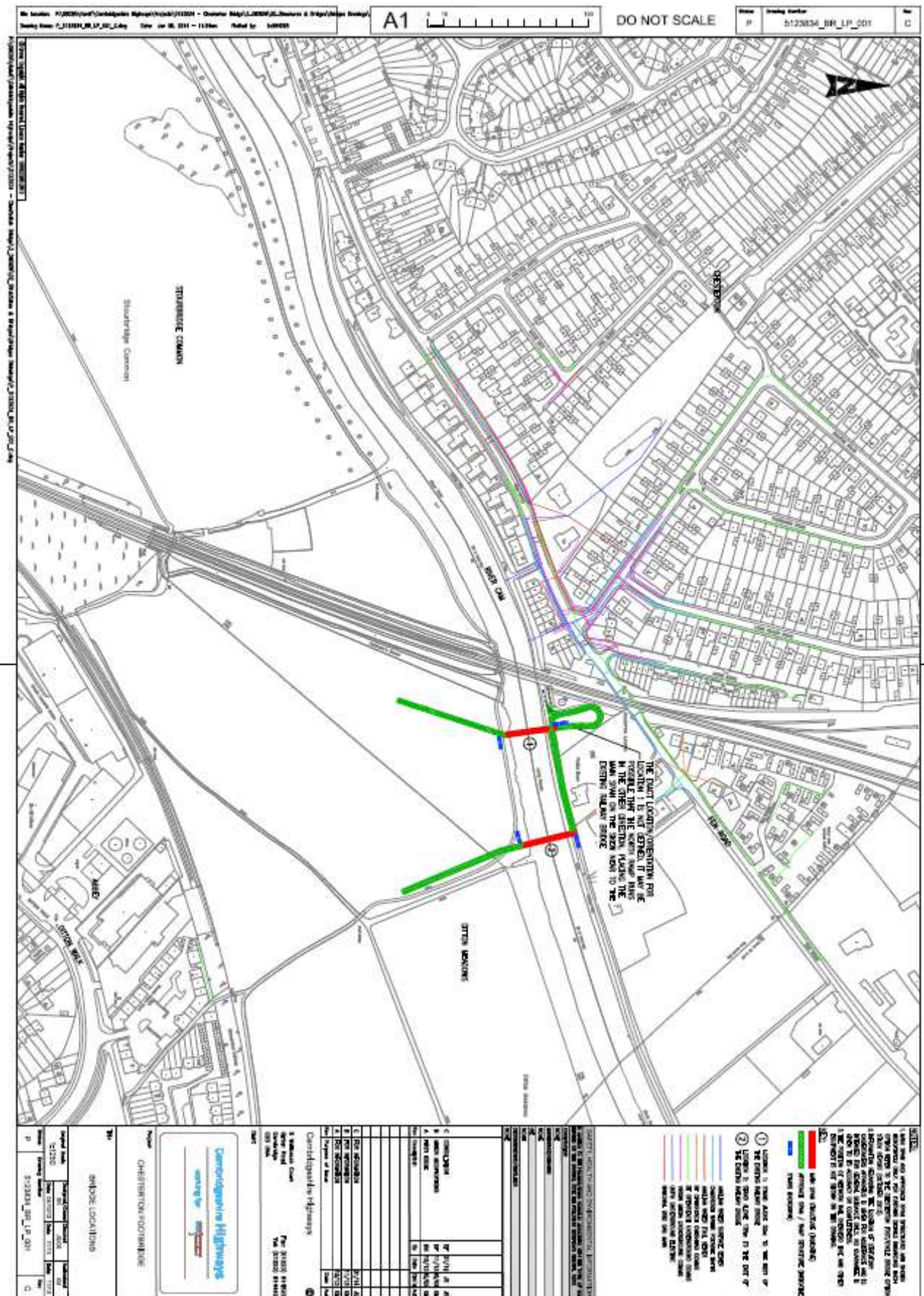
their daily lives including commuting by foot or cycle, as well as for leisure activities such as running and dog walking.

7.6 Localism and local member engagement

There has been extensive public and stakeholder consultation. The Project Team have engaged with, and updated local members throughout.

Source Documents	Location
Consultation responses	A Wing, Floor 2 Castle Court, Cambridge

PLAN 1 – BRIDGE LOCATIONS CONSULTED ON

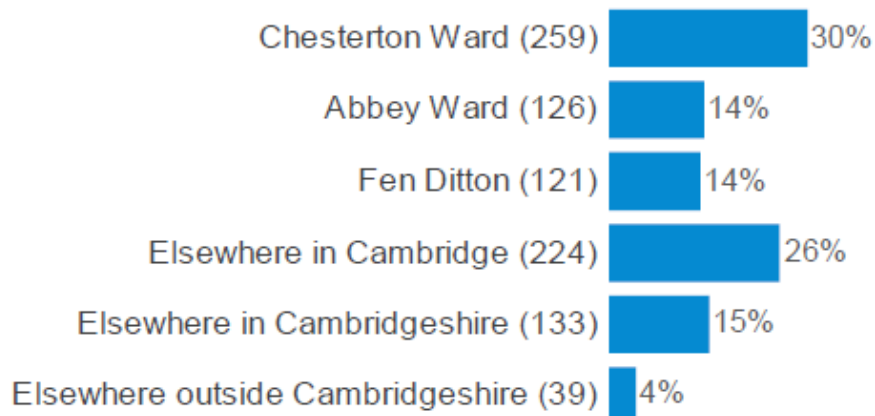


APPENDIX 1 – BREAKDOWN OF COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE CONSULTATION RESPONSES

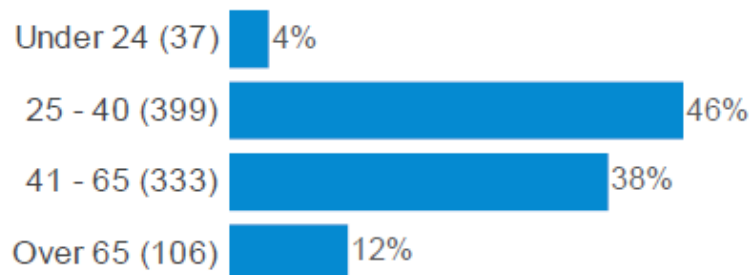
Category:	Number:
General positive comments	136
A new bridge would spoil the natural environment/have a negative visual impact	77
A new bridge is not necessary	75
Proposals are too expensive/a waste of money	67
General negative comments	59
Attach bridge to existing railway bridge	43
Need for clear separation between pedestrians and cyclists	39
The design needs to incorporate better visibility/lighting	33
The proposals carry negative implications for wildlife	27
A new bridge should be sited west of the railway bridge	26
Construction Management concerns	13
Total	595

APPENDIX 2: ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

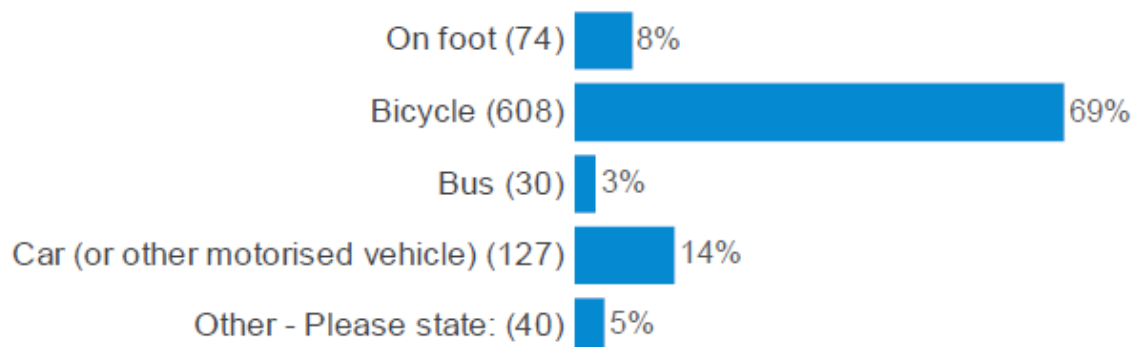
Are you a resident of:



What is your age?



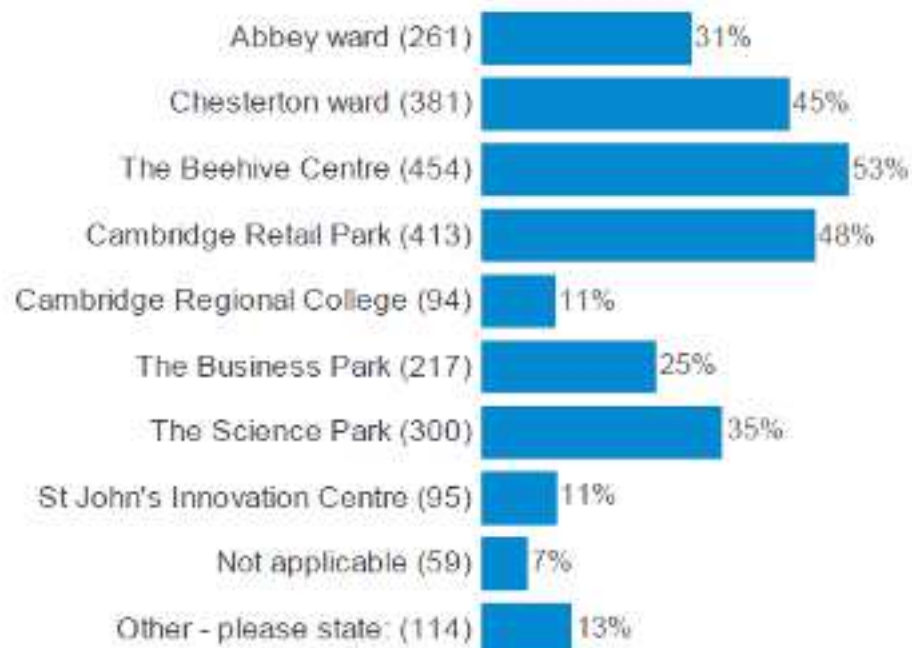
What is your most frequently-used means of transport around Cambridge?



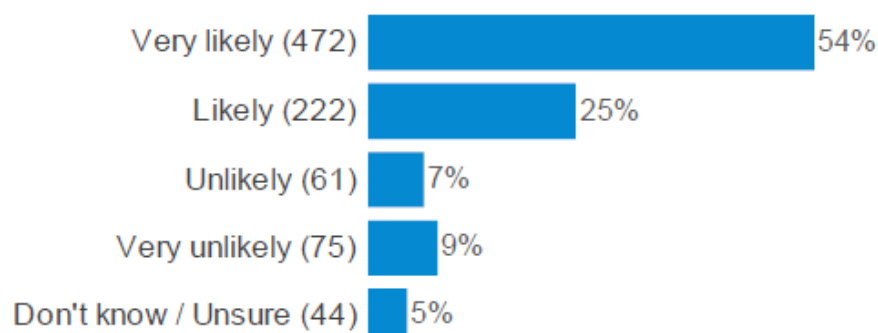
Do you have a disability or long-term illness that makes it difficult for you to get around?



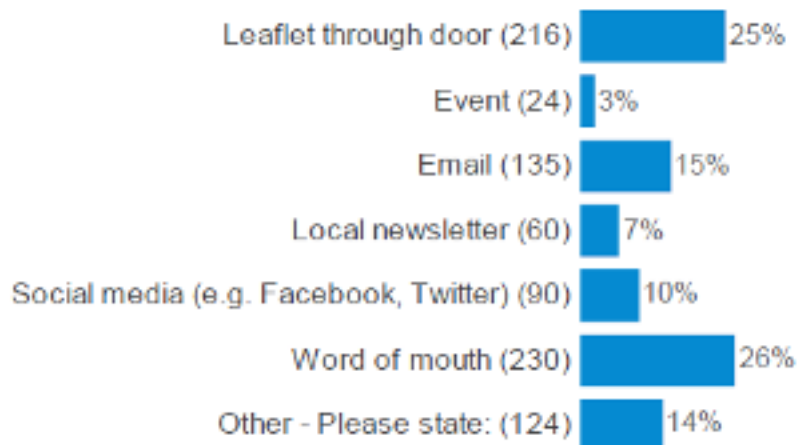
Do you work / study / visit the following locations? Please tick all that apply.



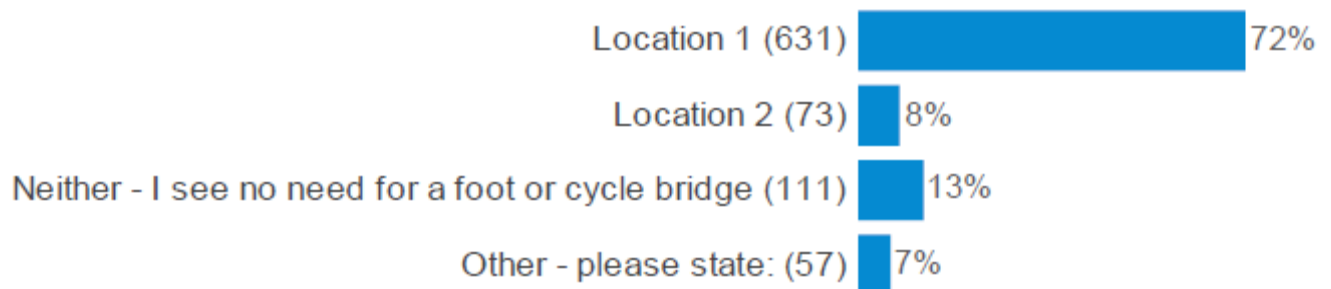
How likely is it that you would use a foot/cycle bridge between Chesterton and Abbey?



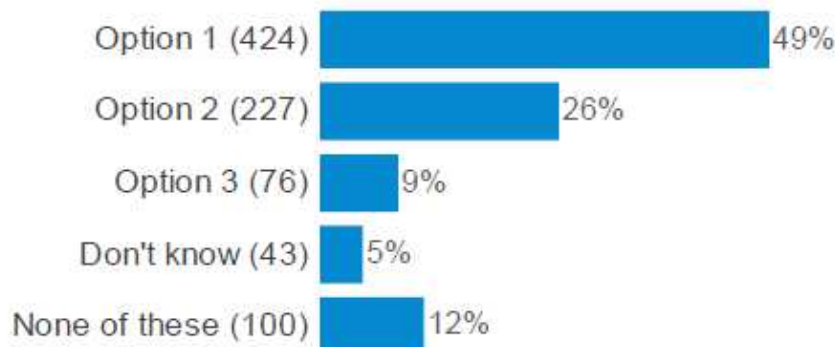
How did you first hear about our proposals?



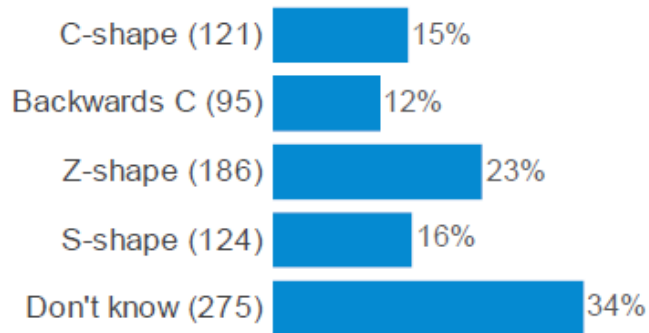
Of these locations, which do you prefer?



Which is your preferred type of bridge?



In principle, which shape of bridge and ramps would you prefer?



Which is your preferred colour of bridge?

