

Appendix 2: Summary of Responses to Public Consultation

A public consultation regarding the proposed Active Travel Hierarchy was undertaken over a ten-week period from 22 July to 30 September 2024.

Objectives

The aims of the consultation were:

- To better understand our stakeholders' perspectives on the proposed introduction of the Active Travel Hierarchy for the prioritisation of maintenance standards.
- To recognise the criteria that respondents consider important when prioritising maintenance standards.
- To obtain location-specific data relating to the perception of our stakeholders on the draft Walking and Wheeling Hierarchy and Cycling Hierarchy, and on the importance of specific Public Rights of Way (PROW).

The above objectives were intended to help build an evidence-base of community- and stakeholder-led feedback. This will enable the draft Active Travel Hierarchy to be refined and updated prior to adoption by the Council. For example, if respondent feedback suggests that a particular route, or type of route, should be ranked higher in the Hierarchy, it may be appropriate to alter the Hierarchy to reflect this. Similarly, if our stakeholders advise that they value a particular approach towards reactive maintenance, the Highways Maintenance service can consider whether certain activities can be prioritised once the Hierarchy is adopted.

The consultation was structured to enable respondents to give feedback in two ways:

1. By providing feedback on the principles of an Active Travel Hierarchy through commenting on preferred approaches to prioritised maintenance
2. By providing location-specific feedback on how routes had been ranked within the draft Walking and Wheeling Hierarchy and draft Cycling Hierarchy, and asking which PROW were most valued by users.

Assessment of feedback

Across these feedback options, **1,147 responses** were provided. Numerous forms referenced more than a single active travel route.

The feedback we received was nuanced and varied. Stakeholder responses were rich with additional written information which requires consideration before potentially being integrated into the Active Travel Hierarchy.

Thematic analysis – responses relating to specific questions and key considerations have



been grouped into themes in order to identify the main issues that stakeholders wished to tell us about. This will assist us in identifying which priorities our communities wish us to focus on.

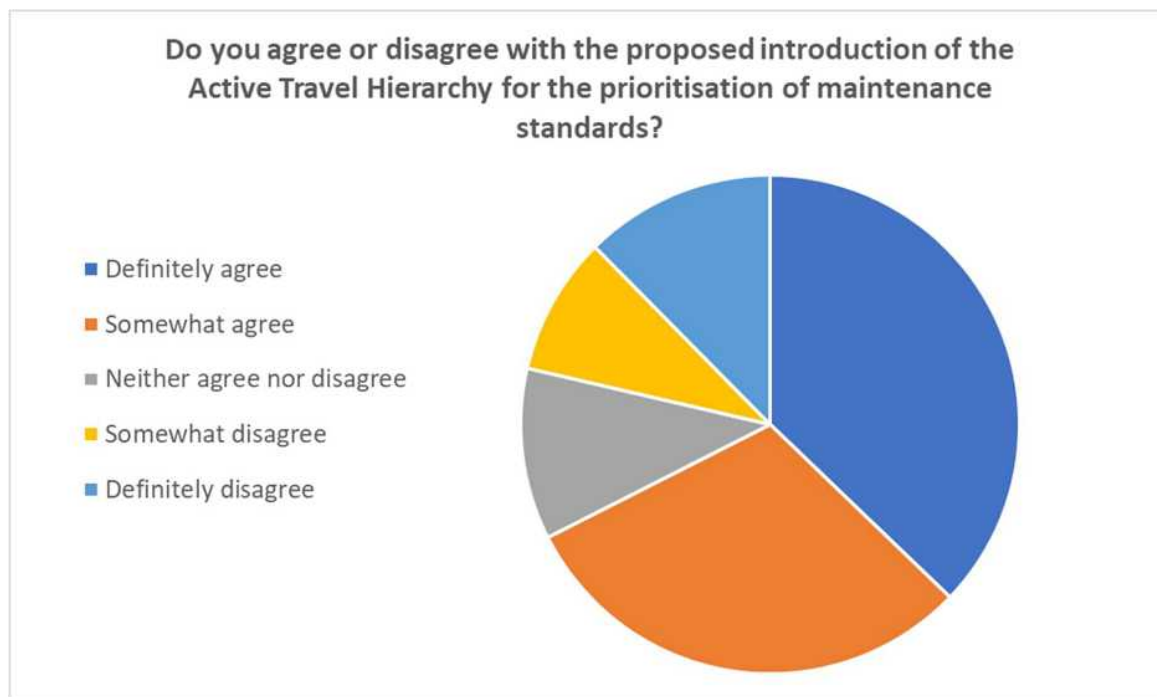
Spatial analysis – the vast majority of the location-specific feedback can be matched to geographic records in our highway maintenance systems. This enables us to pinpoint the precise routes that stakeholders were providing comments on. This exercise is still being completed. When finished, it will enable us assess the relevance of respondents' feedback to our overall highway network, and to consider whether that feedback should result in a change to the ranking of specific routes.

Assessment of the feedback is ongoing but we are able to provide Committee with a summary of the key findings from the form which sought respondents' opinions on the principles of an Active Travel Hierarchy. Please see pages 3 to 7 below.

Principles of the Active Travel Hierarchy: Key findings

- Opinion on the proposed introduction of the Active Travel Hierarchy was **generally favourable**

Over two thirds of respondents “somewhat” or “definitely” agreed with the proposal.



- Respondents consider the **level of risk to users to be the most important criteria** when prioritising maintenance standards

“Level of risk” ranked highest in respondents’ feedback, although this was closely followed by the “importance” of a section of highway. Three options were presented, with 1 being the highest available score. “Level of risk” was chosen as the most important criteria by over half of respondents.

Which do you think should be the most important considerations when we prioritise maintenance standards?	Average Rank
The level of risk to users (eg, where pedestrians have to share spaces with motor traffic, or a cycleway next to a high-speed road)	1.54
The importance of a section of highway to users (eg, where a route links localities or important destinations like schools or workplaces)	1.85
The level of use of that section (eg, how many people use the route)	2.54

- Respondents also **suggested other criteria** that could be used to prioritise maintenance activities

Which do you think should be the most important considerations when we prioritise maintenance standards? Respondent suggestions	
Surface of the route	21%
Needs of specific users	12%
Vegetation clearance	8%
Availability of alternative routes	5%

A sample of the free-text comments that respondents provided is below:

- *“It is vital that vegetation is kept cut back otherwise this narrows the path”*
- *“Clearing away cars and trucks from parking on/across pedestrian footpaths and cycle lanes”*
- *“Road users aren’t just cars. Potholes are far worse for a cyclist than a car”*
- *“Walking wheeling and cycling require well maintained surfaces as a minimum”*
- *“All public rights of way should be kept open and free of obstructions”*

- **“Speed of repair” was identified as the most important maintenance standard**, very closely followed by the “threshold for repair”

Respondents were asked to rank a series of criteria from 1 (most important) to 6 (least important) in order to identify their preferences for prioritised maintenance standards. Two options were clearly preferred in response to this question.

Which maintenance standards do you think should be prioritised as part of an Active Travel Hierarchy?	Average Rank
Speed of repair of potentially dangerous defects (eg, speed of repair to pothole which reaches the minimum repair threshold)	2.25
Thresholds for repair of potentially dangerous defects (eg, how deep a pothole is before maintenance is undertaken)	2.37
Frequency of safety inspections (how often a route is inspected for defects)	3.27
Allocation of budget for maintenance of different types of highway asset (eg, prioritising surface repairs over line marking)	3.74
Prioritisation of capital maintenance schemes for different types of highway asset (programmed schemes to repair/upgrade certain types of asset)	4.25
Prioritisation of winter maintenance services (eg, gritting)	4.51

- Regarding the **Walking and Wheeling Hierarchy**, respondents suggested that **surface maintenance** was most important to them

The maintenance of a route’s surface and management of vegetation overgrowth were found to be clear preferences for respondents.

Thinking about the Walking and Wheeling routes that are important to you, can you tell us which maintenance activities you would like to be prioritised?	
Surface maintenance	41%
Vegetation clearance	34%
Waymarking	12%
Flooding and drainage issues	11%
Clearance of obstructions	11%
<i>*Note: percentage totals may add to more than 100 as respondents had the opportunity to enter as many answers as they wished</i>	

A sample of other points raised in the free-text comments is below:

- *Shallow potholes impact walkers / wheelers / cyclists more than vehicles*
- *Sufficient widths needed for motorised wheelchairs and buggies*
- *Dropped kerbs*
- *Lighting*
- *High quality and durable repairs*

- Regarding the **Cycling Hierarchy**, respondents suggested that **surface maintenance** was most important to them

Similarly to the responses for the Walking and Wheeling Hierarchy, maintenance of a route's surface and management of vegetation overgrowth were found to be clear preferences for respondents. However in the case of the Cycling Hierarchy, respondents indicated that prioritising surface maintenance was by some margin their most important criteria.

Thinking about the Cycling routes that are important to you, can you tell us which maintenance activities you would like to be prioritised?	
Surface maintenance	58%
Vegetation clearance	31%
Waymarking	10%
Flooding and drainage issues	5%
Gritting and winter maintenance	5%
Clearance of obstructions	5%
<i>*Note: percentage totals may add to more than 100 as respondents had the opportunity to enter as many answers as they wished</i>	

Additional points raised as free text were very similar to those raised under the Walking and Wheeling Hierarchy comments above.

- Regarding **Public Rights of Way**, respondents suggested that **vegetation clearance** most important to them

Vegetation clearance was overwhelmingly selected as the most important issue for respondents when considering public rights of way.

Thinking about the Public Rights of Way that are important to you, can you tell us which maintenance activities you would like to be prioritised?	
Vegetation clearance	47%
Surface maintenance	16%
Clearance of obstructions	15%
Signage	14%
Flooding and drainage issues	8%
Needs of specific users (cycles, horses)	3%
<i>*Note: percentage totals may add to more than 100 as respondents had the opportunity to enter as many answers as they wished</i>	