

Evidence Report E: Resident Survey Findings – March 2026

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This Evidence Report sets out data and insights relevant to active travel obtained from surveys with East Dunbartonshire residents.

East Dunbartonshire Travel Survey

Surveys about travel and transport were carried out by the research agency Research Resource in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

2020 survey	2021 survey	2022 survey
1,245 respondents: 721 face-to-face interviews in town centres (February 2020) and 524 online (February 2020).	832 respondents: 721 face-to-face interviews in town centres (February 2021) and 111 online (between September and October 2021).	1,013 respondents: 722 face-to-face interviews in town centres (October 2022) and 291 online (between October and November 2022).

2020 Survey key findings

- Cars are the most commonly used mode of transport (main mode for 66% of respondents).
- 10% of respondents make daily journeys by car of under a mile.
- In a typical week 82% of people make journeys to supermarkets, 68% to local shops/services, 64% visit family or friends and 63% to leisure interests.
- More people perceive walking and public transport to be an option than the number of people who use those modes.

2021 Survey key findings

- 37% of respondents said the pandemic changed their travel behaviour, the main reason being home working.
- Cars are the most commonly used mode of transport (the main mode for 60% of respondents).
- 14% of respondents make daily journeys by car of under a mile.
- In a typical week 83% of people make journeys to supermarkets, 66% to local shops/services and 55% visit family or friends.
- More people perceive walking and public transport to be an option than the number of people who use those modes.

2022 Survey key findings

- 25% of respondents said the pandemic had continued to change their travel behaviour, the main reason being home working.
- Cars are the most commonly used mode of transport (the main mode for 69% of respondents).
- 23% of respondents make journeys of under one mile by car on a daily basis, up from 14% in 2021.
- In a typical week 76% of people make journeys to supermarkets, 71% to visit family or friends and 67% make journeys to local shops/services. These were the three most commonly made journeys in 2021, but visiting family or friends has increased from 55%.
- More people perceive walking and public transport to be an option than the number of people who use those modes.

Short journeys made by car

Figure E1, below, shows the differences between the three surveys:

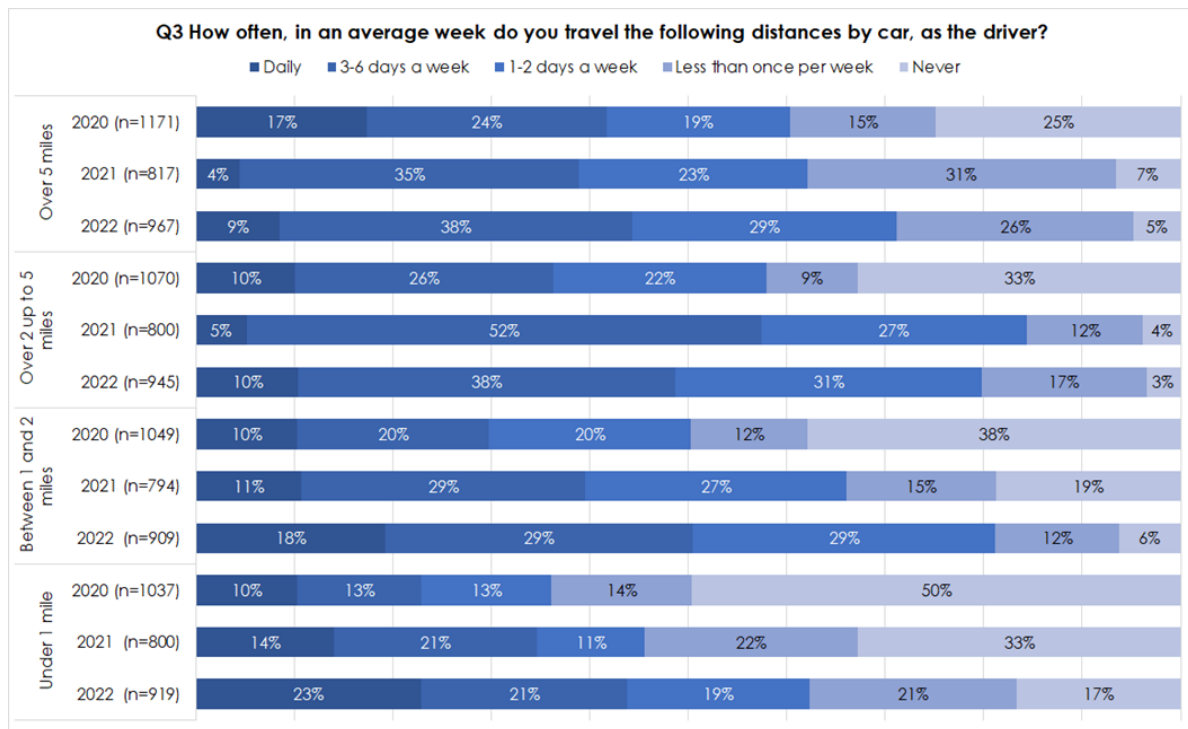


Figure E1 – Short Journeys Made by Car (2020, 2021 and 2022 comparison)

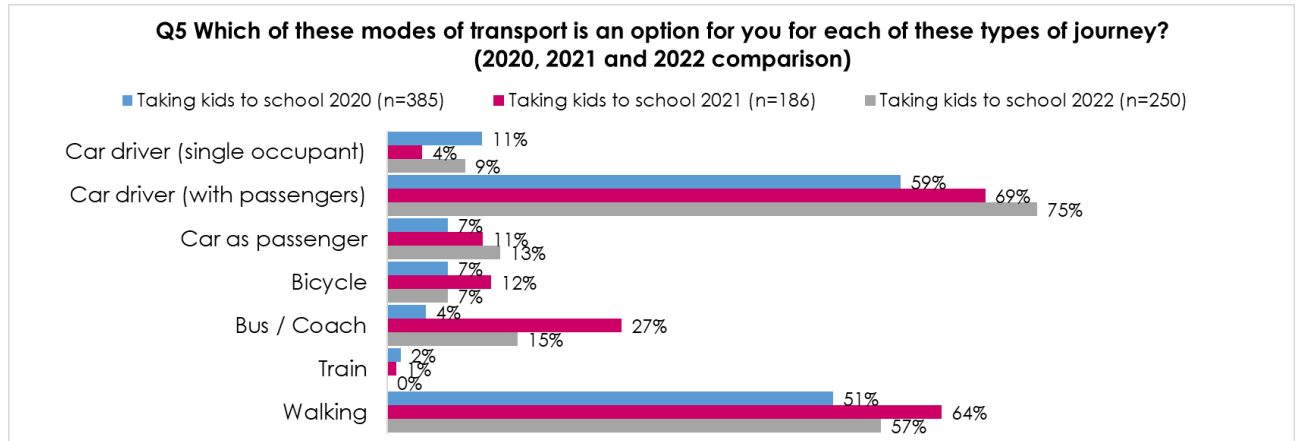


Figure E2 provides a breakdown of perceptions of transport modes as options for school travel across the three surveys, whilst **Figure E3** shows the main mode of transport used for the most recent journey to school.

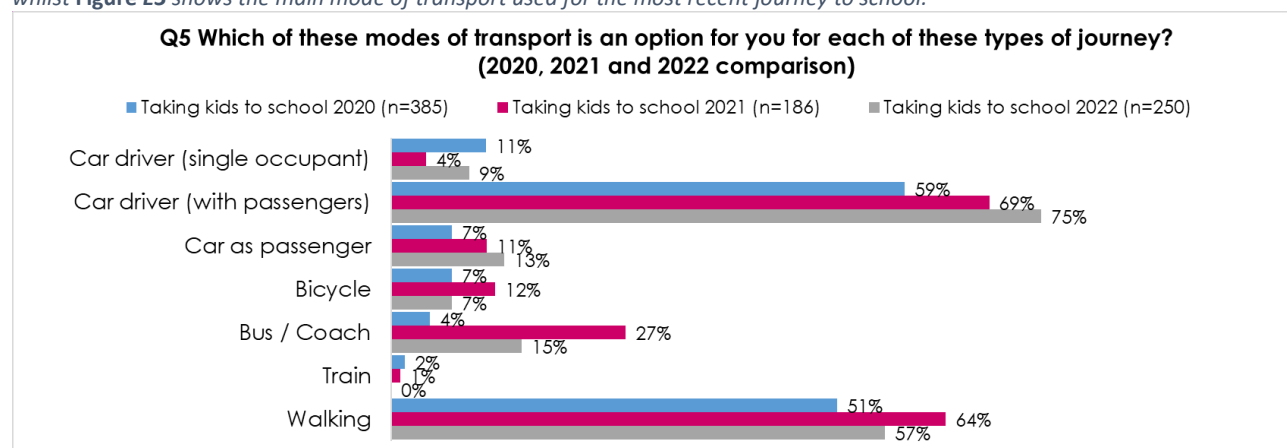


Figure E2 – Available Transport Options for Journeys to School (2020, 2021 and 2022 comparison)

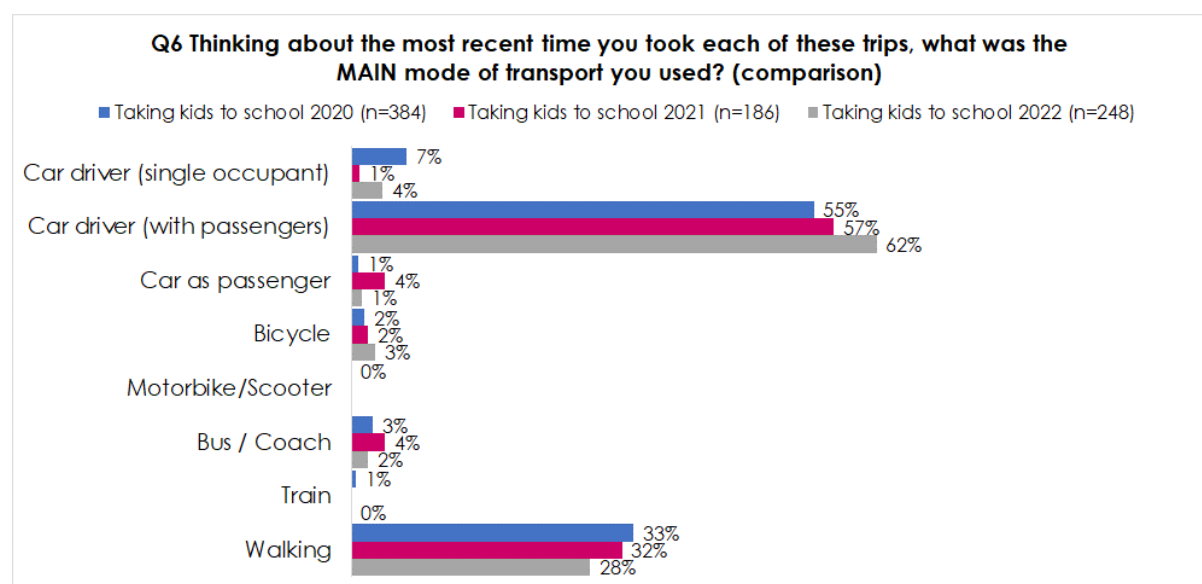


Figure E3 – Main Mode of Transport for Most Recent Journey to School (2020, 2021 and 2022 comparison)

Whilst car use as a main mode of transport for the journey to school has remained relatively steady between the surveys in 2020 and 2021 (62% in 2020 and 2021, and 66% in 2022, as shown in **Figure E3**), walking as a main mode has decreased overall from 33% in 2020 to 32% in 2021 and 28% in 2022.

As indicated by **Figure E2**, walking is perceived as an option for 57% of respondents to the 2022 survey but, as shown in **Figure E3**, only used by 28% of respondents. Similarly, cycling is perceived as an option for 7% of respondents, but only used by 3%. This suggests that active travel is perceived as an option by more people than the number who use it.

In 2022, respondents rarely reported walking (7%) and cycling (2%) to supermarkets although perceptions of walking and cycling as an option for this trip purpose were higher (21% and 5%).

To local shops, in 2022, walking rates improved significantly (45%), and 73% perceived it as an option. Only 3% cycled whilst 8% perceived it as an option.

Going to town centres, walking was the main mode for 13% in 2022 whilst 32% perceived walking as an option. The 13% of respondents walking is an improvement from 6% in 2020, but a slight decrease from 14% in 2021. 3% of respondents reported cycling to town centres whilst 7% perceived it as an option – this is unchanged from 2021.

Notably, bicycle was the second most commonly used mode of transport for those travelling to full-time education, used by 18% in 2022. This is down from 28% in 2021 but much higher than the 3% who reported travelling in this way in 2020. Travelling by bus or coach was the main mode of transport used to travel to full-time education in 2022 (56%), as was the case in both 2020 (60%) and 2021 (33%), although the proportion saying they travelled in this way in 2021 was lower.

Travel to work is the journey most likely to be undertaken in a single-occupant car and both perceptions of active travel as an option for journeys to work and the use of active modes are low.

There was an increase in the proportion of respondents noting that walking to visit family and friends was an option between 2020 and 2021 (29% to 40%). This figure reduced to 33% in 2022. Perceptions of cycling as an option for this type of journey have remained similar across the survey periods (7% in 2020 and 6% in 2021 and 2022).

The pattern of a difference between perceptions of active travel as an option and actual use of active modes continues in leisure travel. In 2022, walking was perceived as an option by 36% of respondents but used by 13% and cycling was perceived as an option by 9% but used by 6%. The figures for walking are lower than those recorded in 2021 but similar to those recorded in 2020.

Important issues when choosing how to make a journey

Respondents were asked to state the importance of a range of issues when choosing how they make their journeys. In 2022, on a scale of 1-10 where 1 was not important and 10 was very important, the most important were:

- Safety (mean rating of 8.9)
- Convenience (mean rating of 8.5)
- Ability to carry things, for example shopping and children (mean rating of 8.2)

The top 3 issues were consistent between the 2020, 2021 and 2022 surveys.

The factors least likely to be perceived as important were:

- Good for the community (mean rating of 6.8)
- Environmental impact (mean rating of 6.9)

Different demographics perceived the importance of issues differently. In the most recent (2022) survey:

- Speed

Considered most important for those aged 30-44 and least important for those over 75. Those in full-time employment rated speed highest. Those who mainly walk found speed least important.

- Convenience

Rated highest by car drivers and lowest by cyclists.

- Ability to carry things

Most important for those aged 60-74 and least important for younger respondents. Females were more likely than males to find this important.

- Environmental impact

Less important for those aged 75 and over. Most important for cyclists and less important for those who mainly travel by car.

- Health benefits

Most important for those in full-time education and least important for those who were a full-time homemaker. Most important for cyclists and least important for car drivers.

- Good for the community

Most important for cyclists and least important for car drivers.

- Cost

Rated more important amongst young respondents and students and least important for those aged 75 and over. Most important for those travelling by bus and least important for car drivers.

- Safety

Females more likely to consider this important than males.

Attitudes towards transport

In 2022, respondents were most likely to agree to the following statements:

- I know how to get hold of more information about different modes of transport (76% agreed).
- I am aware of the health benefits of changing from the car to another mode (76% agreed).
- I am aware of the local community benefits of reducing my car usage (74% agreed).
- For most journeys or trips I make I just use the same mode of transport I always do without thinking about it very much (70% agreed).

Respondents were least likely to agree with the following statements:

- I would cycle for more journeys if there was a safe way to do so (21% agreed).
- Nowadays I walk, cycle or get the bus or train for journeys that I previously used the car for (29% agreed).
- I should consider other means of transport more frequently (35% agreed).

Generally, the results of the 2022 survey show that the level of agreement has increased since 2021 and is more similar to 2020. The biggest increases in agreement are in relation to the following statements:

- I am thinking more nowadays about the mode of travel that I use to ensure I take the most cost-effective option (56% agreed in 2020, 46% in 2021 and 62% in 2022).
- I know how much I could save by changing from using the car to another mode (41% agreed in 2020, 46% in 2021 and 57% in 2022).
- I should consider other means of transport more frequently (39% agreed in 2020, 24% in 2021 and 35% in 2022).
- I am aware of the health benefits of changing from the car to another mode (77% agreed in 2020, 66% in 2021 and 76% in 2022).

On the other hand, there has been a decrease in the proportion of respondents who agreed that most trips or journeys they make they just use the same mode of transport they always do without thinking about it very much (decreased from 76% in 2021 to 70% in 2022).

What could be done to encourage more walking and cycling?

Finally, respondents were asked what, if anything, could be done locally to encourage them to travel more by walking or cycling over taking the car. This was asked as an open question where respondents could answer in any way they wanted. For the purposes of the analysis, responses have been grouped into broad themes based upon the nature of the comment. **Table E1** provides all responses to this question for each year of the survey.

Table E1 – Factors That Could Encourage More Walking and Cycling (2020, 2021 and 2022 comparison)

Q9. What, if anything, could be done locally to encourage you to travel more by walking or cycling over taking the car?			
Base: Gave a response	2020 (n=1245)	2021 (n=807)	2022 (n=974)
Cycling (for example increasing safety, providing infrastructure for cycling)	23%	11%	14%
Making walking easier (for example resurfacing or improving safety of pavements/ walking routes)	10%	5%	7%
Roads / Traffic / Safety (for example fewer cars on the road, enforce speed limits)	7%	4%	8%
Bus / train (for example more frequent / reliable / cheaper services)	10%	1%	6%
Other	3%	2%	2%
Nothing / don't know / no comment / not able to walk or cycle more* / already do	47%	83%	74%

* this code in 2021 and 2022 also includes those who said there was nothing that could be done as they were unable to walk or cycle more, for example due to old age or health reasons and also those who said they were already walking or cycling as much as possible. Those who already walk or cycle as much as possible were 12% of respondents.

Respondents could expand on their answers and, in 2022, 14% made comments about cycling-related issues, whilst 8% commented specifically on traffic safety. Comments of this nature are most often related to safe cycle routes. Some comments, gathered from across the three survey years, included the following detail:

- Volume and speed of traffic make active travel unattractive.
- Poor cycling infrastructure and dangerous roads leading to conflict between vehicles and cyclists.
- Too few safe crossings.
- Bears Way and other cycling routes need to be completed to ensure safe routes to school for children.
- Better cycling routes from East Dunbartonshire to neighbouring authorities.
- Fear for safety due to the lack of cycling lanes and poor driving in Bearsden and Milngavie.
- Better infrastructure, 20mph limits, filtered permeability and low-traffic networks.
- Would cycle but for congestion, lack of cycle lanes and attitudes of drivers.

In 2022, 7% of comments related to walking. These comments related to the condition of pavements, feelings of safety and access to services by walking. Across the three surveys, comments included:

- More safe crossings, pavements free of parked vehicles and more pedestrianised areas in town centres.
- Better surfaces needed, including for those with restricted mobility and impaired vision.
- Improved lighting and signposting.
- Safer pavements needed for families.
- Pavements need to be cleared of vegetation which sometimes forces people to walk on the road.

Implications of East Dunbartonshire Travel Surveys for the Active Travel Strategy

The data from the three surveys shows that there is a clear opportunity in East Dunbartonshire to increase the modal share of active travel. This is due to those modes being perceived as an option more than they are used. This is particularly evident in walking for school journeys and journeys to local shops and town centres.

The results of the surveys indicate that the most significant barriers to active travel are safety, convenience and speed. Improvement of current infrastructure and the wider provision of infrastructure would address these concerns and improve the uptake of active travel in the area.

If taking an average across the three survey years, a majority of respondents stated there was nothing that could be done to encourage active travel, a significant number listed areas that, if improved, would encourage them to switch their journeys to active travel. With older demographics more likely to state that nothing could be done to encourage them to travel actively, together with an ageing population, the forthcoming Active Travel Strategy 2 must understand the concerns of this demographic and, as far as possible, provide this group with the amenity required to switch everyday journeys to active and sustainable modes of transport. Likewise, travelling to a place of work is the journey most likely to be undertaken in a single-occupant vehicle, presenting an opportunity for modal shift to active travel if a small number of these journeys were to be undertaken by more active and sustainable modes.

The most important issues for respondents when choosing how they will make any journey were the same across all three years of the survey and provide insight into how options should be considered and taken forward within the forthcoming Active Travel Strategy. Those issues were:

- Safety
- Convenience
- Ability to carry things

The first two issues are particularly relevant to the development of the Active Travel Strategy 2 and, if the Strategy can successfully improve the safety and convenience of active modes of travel, East Dunbartonshire has the opportunity to see a significant change to active travel's modal share in the future.

2025 Research Survey

In 2025, research was undertaken to inform a study examining the potential for active travel uptake and emission reduction. A mixed-method approach was taken, combining online surveys with in-person engagement across East Dunbartonshire's main settlements. A sample size of 134

respondents was achieved, capturing a cross-section of the residential population. **Table E2** provides an overview of the demographic profile of survey respondents.

Table E2 – Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents (n=134)

Variable	Category	Count	%
Age	35-44	38	28.4%
	55-64	30	22.4%
	Other groups	66	49.2%
Employment	Employed	106	79.1%
Health limitations	Yes	18	13.4%
Car ownership / access	Yes	120	89.6%
Bicycle ownership	Yes	71	53.0%

Analysis of weekly trip frequencies revealed the dominance of private car use. On average, respondents undertook 6.60 car driver trips per week, surpassing walking (4.26), bus (1.26), train (1.47), and cycling (0.76).

Car driving was most dominant for commuting (30% of car driver trips), followed by visiting (23%), shopping (25%) and leisure (22%) trip purposes.

Respondents were asked to indicate factors that act as a barrier to walking or cycling more often. **Table E3** summarises the main barriers selected by respondents.

Table E3 – Barriers to Active Travel

Barrier	Count	%
Time constraints	95	70.9%
Weather conditions	93	69.4%
Distance too far	86	64.2%
Lack of safe cycling infrastructure	71	53.0%
Concerns about safety	63	47.0%
Need to carry items/children	62	46.3%
Poor pavement/sidewalk quality	49	36.6%
No showers/changing rooms	34	25.4%
Hilly terrain	29	21.6%
Poor lighting	23	17.2%

Time constraints emerged as the primary barrier to active travel, identified by 71% of respondents (n=95), followed closely by weather conditions at 69% (n=93). Distance considerations ranked third, with 64% of participants (n=86) indicating that destinations were too far to be undertaken by active travel modes.

Table E4 summarises the main enablers of active travel, selected by respondents.

Table E4 – Enablers of Active Travel

Barrier	Count	%
Better integration with public transport	63	47.0%
Improved pedestrian paths	62	46.3%
More traffic-free routes	54	40.3%
More cycle lanes	50	37.3%
Car-free zones	34	25.4%
Better street lighting	26	19.4%
Secure cycle parking	26	19.4%
Other factors	24	17.9%
Financial incentives	21	15.7%
Lower traffic speeds	21	15.7%

The analysis of potential enablers demonstrated that infrastructure improvements and transport integration were perceived as the most effective interventions. Better integration with public transport emerged as the leading enabler, selected by 47% of respondents (n=63), closely followed by improved pedestrian paths at 46% (n=62).

An examination of relationships between demographic characteristics and key behavioural variables revealed the following:

- **Age Group and Active Travel Intention:** Younger adults (18-34 years) demonstrated more positive intentions toward active travel, whilst middle-aged participants (35-54 years) showed greater disagreement.
- **Gender and Safety Concerns:** 52% of female participants identified safety as a barrier to using active modes compared to 25% of male participants.
- **Car Ownership and Policy Support:** Non-car owners showed 36% support versus 7% opposition to car-restrictive policies, whilst car owners demonstrated 23% support versus 60% opposition.
- **Age Group and Safety Concerns:** Older adults (55-64 and 65+ years) and younger adults (18-24) demonstrated higher safety concerns (55-60% reporting safety as a barrier) compared to middle-aged participants (35-54 years, 42-45%), suggesting age-related vulnerability perceptions affect active travel decisions.

Other key findings include:

- **Knowledge gaps about transport impacts and options:** Only 34% of respondents had high transport carbon footprint awareness and 21% were unaware of local active travel initiatives.
- **Poor infrastructure deters cycling adoption:** 50% rated cycling infrastructure as poor/very poor and 66% considered traffic conditions inadequate for cycling.
- **Limited community and family support for active travel:** 30% reported family encouragement and 46% said walking/cycling was not considered normal.
- **Strong awareness but weak behavioural intentions:** 83% acknowledged health benefits of active travel and 87% recognised environmental advantages, however only 34% indicated that they intend to increase their use of active travel.
- **Entrenched car dependency dominates habits:** 81% have car access and car is used for 61%-83% of all journey types.

Implications for the Active Travel Strategy

A central insight from the research is the existence of a clear paradox in current transport behaviours. Whilst there is strong cognitive support for sustainable mobility evidenced by over 86% of respondents recognising the environmental and health benefits of active travel, this awareness does not translate into corresponding intentions or actions. Only 34% indicated plans to walk or cycle more frequently.

The analysis of potential enablers demonstrated that infrastructure improvements and transport integration were perceived as the most effective interventions to encourage active travel uptake. Better integration with public transport emerged as the leading enabler, closely followed by improved pedestrian paths and more traffic-free routes. The analysis also indicates an opportunity to raise awareness of the local active travel initiatives available and to increase perceptions of active travel as being a natural choice for short, everyday journeys.

Scottish Household Survey

The Scottish Household Survey is a cross-sectional, continuous survey of a section of Scottish society that volunteers to respond to questions of varying themes in a phone interview. Sample sizes in recent years are around 10,000 respondents, around 250 of whom reside in East Dunbartonshire.

East Dunbartonshire

Walking

The Scottish Household Survey (2023) shows that rates of all physical activity (including walking) are higher in East Dunbartonshire than in the rest of Scotland (86% and 79% of respondents respectively). Walking rates in East Dunbartonshire consistently mirror those of Scotland as a whole, increasing from 58% of adults reporting walking for at least 30 minutes per week in 2007 to 78% in 2022. In 2023, 81% of adults in East Dunbartonshire reported walking for at least 30 minutes per week which is significantly higher than for Scotland (71%).

In East Dunbartonshire in 2023, the proportion of women who reported walking for 30 minutes or more for recreational purposes in the past four weeks was similar to the proportion for men (81% and 82%, respectively). Men were more likely to have cycled for at least 30 minutes for recreational, health, training or competition purposes than women (20% compared to 5%).

Climate change

The view that climate change is an urgent and immediate problem increased from 47% to 79% between 2013 and 2023 in East Dunbartonshire. It is reasonable to assume that COP26 in Glasgow and recent weather events have contributed to underlining the urgency of climate change and climate action.

The **East Dunbartonshire Climate Conversation** (held in Spring 2021) allowed residents to express their views regarding the urgency of climate action and what they do/are willing to do to tackle the climate emergency. Over 200 people responded to the consultation, of whom 94% considered that we are facing a climate emergency. In terms of travel, 94% reported having access to a vehicle although 71% also stated they were likely or very likely to change their travel behaviours; 66% said they wanted to switch to walking more and 42% said they wanted to cycle more. In extended responses, residents flagged concerns that the Council was failing to provide adequate, segregated cycling infrastructure. Furthermore, responses encouraged Councillors to support active travel infrastructure projects, including completing the Bears Way cycleway.

During extensive engagement undertaken over a 10-week period in late-2025 to inform the Council's **Climate Action Plan**, more than half of the survey respondents indicated that they were very concerned over the effects of climate change on future generations. Specifically in relation to active travel, a number of recurring themes emerged during the engagement, including a need for infrastructure to be suitable for people to feel safe when walking and wheeling (including enforcement of speed limits), demand for high-quality segregated active travel infrastructure, and potential demand for shared bike / bike hire facilities.

The outdoors

The 2023 Scottish Household Survey indicates that 77% of East Dunbartonshire residents make weekly visits to the outdoors for recreational purposes, which is significantly greater than 68% for Scotland as a whole. In 2024, 91% of East Dunbartonshire residents lived within a 10-minute walk of greenspace.

Scotland

National modal share figures

Table E5 – National mode share figures for all journeys (2024)¹

Mode	Share of Journeys
Car or Van (driver)	51%
Car or Van (passenger)	12%
Walking	25%
Bus	7%
Bicycle	1%

In 2023, 53% of children walked to school, 24% travelled by car or van and 2% by bicycle².

In 2024, 49.6% of journeys under two miles were walked and 1.4% of journeys under five miles were by bicycle. 43% of journeys under 2 miles and 52% of journeys under 5 miles were made by car or van (driver or passenger).³

Access to bicycles

In 2024, 34% of households have access to at least one bicycle for adults and 19% have access to two or more. Household access to bikes is higher at higher incomes: 61% of households with an income of £60,000 or more have access to one or more bikes.⁴

Implications of the Scottish Household Survey for the Active Travel Strategy

The Scottish Household Survey Data suggests that most East Dunbartonshire residents walk and practice sport weekly. This indicates that active travel modal share could be increased with infrastructure and concerted programmes towards behaviour change.

¹ Travel and Transport in Scotland 2024 (Table TD2))

² Travel and Transport in Scotland 2023

³ Travel and Transport in Scotland 2024 (Table TD4c and Table TD4d)

⁴ Travel and Transport in Scotland 2024 (Table TD4c and Table 18a)

Further indications of potential for modal shift can perhaps be linked to perceptions of climate change, with 79% of East Dunbartonshire residents responding to the Scottish Household Survey in 2023 indicating that climate change is an urgent and immediate problem. If the main barriers to active travel as indicated by the Travel Survey (safety, convenience and the ability to carry things) are tackled, there is potential for active and sustainable modal share to rise.

Inequality of access to cycles is a barrier to cycling uptake amongst low-income groups.

Hands Up Scotland Survey

This is a national survey of school travel with results available by local authority. Results are available for East Dunbartonshire Council schools dating back to 2012 to allow for comparison to 2024: results are shown in **Table E6**.

Table E6 – Change over time in modal share for school travel between 2012 and 2024

Mode	Change between 2012 and 2024
Walking	Increase from 43.5% to 47.3% (+3.8%pt)
Cycling	Increase from 2.5% to 2.7% (+0.2%pt)
Scooting/skating	Increase from 1.2% to 1.4% (+0.2%pt)
Park and stride	Decrease from 11.8% to 11.7% (-0.1%pt)
Car / taxi	Decrease from 27.9% to 25.2% (-2.7%pt)
Bus	Decrease from 12.1% to 11.2% (-0.9%pt)
Active travel	Increase from 47.2% to 51.4% (+4.2%pt)
Private motorised transport	Decrease from 27.9% to 25.2% (-2.7%pt)

Table E6 expresses all East Dunbartonshire Council schools combined (excluding nurseries). There are a few important differences between primary and secondary school travel:

- More pupils walk to secondary schools than primary schools (50% vs 45%)
- More pupils cycle to primary schools than secondary schools (4% vs 1%)
- More pupils are driven to secondary schools than primary schools (28% vs 22%)
- More pupils take the bus to secondary schools than primary schools (12% vs 11%)

Implications of the Hands Up Scotland Survey for ATS

Walking rates are high in schools in East Dunbartonshire while cycling rates are low. Research on traffic-free schools indicates that these measures have a positive impact on modal share for active travel for school travel. Action 16a of East Dunbartonshire's Parking Management Plan approves pilot traffic-free school schemes and the Active Travel Strategy can underline the positive impacts of these schemes and enhance infrastructure around schools where required.