

Let's keep Glossop Moving Travel Survey – preliminary findings

Executive summary

The Let's keep Glossop Moving Travel Survey was initiated by Glossopdale Action for Sustainable Travel (GAST) and Move More Glossop. Over 500 respondents completed the survey between Spring and Summer 2023.

There are clear patterns of behaviour that are contributing to traffic congestion and associated pollution in the Glossopdale area, such as shopping frequency and where vehicle users choose to park. However, walking as a method of travelling around the area is very popular which is encouraging for the success of any interventions designed to increase walking over vehicle use. There are clear issues that prevent or impede walking and these, such as on-street parking, which should help focus the design of interventions.

Wheeled travel around Glossopdale is difficult for most respondents due to the terrain and fears over safety. It will be a much harder task to increase cycling and wheeling due to the existing road architecture and topography. Significant investment in infrastructure will be needed and careful consideration to the design of cycleways and multi-user paths in order for them to be usable.

Public transport is used for specific journeys, e.g. commuting to work by train, and the survey results point to a failing in connected services that is preventing respondents from using these options more, especially buses. Respondents feel they miss out on activities, entertainment, medical appointments and jobs that could be solved by increased public transport options. Given how compact the Glossopdale area is, it is a prime candidate for experimenting with alternatives to car use.

Demographics

Respondents to the survey were mostly female (72%) and over 40yrs (78%) with no health conditions (88%). Views of under 30s and over 70s were poorly represented with only just over 10% of respondents falling into these age brackets.

Most (55%) work or study away from home. If respondents were home-based it was predominantly for work (82%). Most travel around Glossopdale for work, very few travel for study which is likely a reflection of the age demographic of respondents. Just less than 10% (45) of respondents use a wheel chair or mobility scooter to travel around Glossop. 12% (52) state they have a condition that impacts on the way they get around.

General findings

Respondents feel they miss out most on activity and entertainment due to lack of transport options (57.6% and 51.5% respectively). Respondents reported that they also missed out on medical appointments (26.2%) and jobs (25.3%); roughly half as much but these are still problematic for a large proportion of respondents.

65% shop locally 3 or more times a week (mean average is 3.4, median is 3 times a week). Single weekly shop doesn't seem to be a local pattern with only 13% saying they do. Combined with car usage data (all vehicle use is by far the most popular form of transport around Glossopdale) this suggests large numbers of vehicle journeys are shopping related. Nearly 78% of respondents own a car. Less than 50% own a bike.

Most respondents travel to work by car, which would account for traffic issues in the morning and evening. Most respondents don't have a concessionary travel card. Of those who do, close to 33% don't use it. This suggests an issue with understanding how and where they can be used.

Walking or Wheeling

Nearly all respondents (450 of 486) said they walked at some point, i.e. their 1st, 2nd or 3rd most frequent mode of transport. Travelling on foot is the single most popular mode of transport as a first choice with 202 selections. This suggests respondents are happy to walk around the area and don't find it particularly hard to navigate, however this is only just the case with 44% saying 'no' or 'only sometimes' when asked whether they find walking around Glossopdale easy.

There are specific issues respondents report in finding it difficult to walk around Glossopdale. The two most commonly reported are pavement parking and dog poo. The next most commonly reported issues are too much traffic, poor pavements and uneven surfaces. Nearly all respondents answered the question 'What causes you difficulty when walking around Glossopdale?' selecting 3.6 answers each on average (Pavement parking 51.9%; dog poo 44.8%; too much traffic 39%; poor pavements 38.6%; uneven surfaces 35.7%).

Respondents who walk like that it's free, healthy, enjoyable and helps their wellbeing. Given the popularity of walking and the reported problems walkers find, it seems likely walking would increase with improved infrastructure. Respondents reported that designated off-road walking routes (48%) and safe routes (45%) would encourage them to walk more. Better maintained pavements would also get more people walking (32% stating this would persuade them). Walking groups are not seen as important (6%) and only 5% of respondents do not have a vehicle, so this is not the reason people walk.

Cycling

Cycling is not popular as a primary mode of transport around Glossopdale, but is popular as a third choice: 10 respondents say they use cycles most frequently, 72 say it is their third most frequent mode of transport. This is mostly because they don't find it easy to cycle around Glossopdale (>63% find it hard). Feeling unsafe (31.8%), uneven surfaces (28%) and lack of safe cycle storage (27%) were strong reasons respondents find cycling difficult. Most respondents don't cycle because they think there is too much traffic, traffic moves too fast and that there is a lack of segregated lanes (67.8%, 51.1% and 43.3% respectively).

Respondents would cycle more if there were designated routes, preferably off-road, and driver behaviour is also an issue for respondents who might cycle, with 36% feeling that 'more considerate drivers' would encourage them to cycle more. It is clear that respondents feel cycling infrastructure is lacking. Respondents giving free text answers to what would persuade them to cycle more stated the geography of Glossopdale was too challenging. This will be a challenge to increasing cycling in the area and suggests additional interventions, such as electric cycle hire, will be needed. <50% of respondents own a bicycle.

Public transport use

Buses are a popular second or third choice for travelling around Glossopdale (a total of 96 responses, but less than ¼ the responses to on foot travel). Very few people choose it as their 'most frequent' method (12). Trains are the 2nd most popular method of getting to work but they are hardly used for travel to study or for volunteering or travelling around Glossopdale. Some of these data will be impacted by the lack of responses from under 20 year olds. In contrast, only 6% use buses to travel around Glossopdale for work. More than four times as many walk.

35% of respondents hold a concessionary card of some type; mostly Gold Card/Bus Pass and/or Senior Rail card (17%). 10% don't use the type of card they hold and 10 (2.7%) respondents are not sure when they can use their card.

More frequent services (72.6%), with better reliability (61.7%) and cheaper fares (56.3%) are key to increasing use of public transport. More destinations (51%) is also a key driver to increasing the use of public transport, with better connected services clearly a positive step (45% say this would encourage them to use public transport more). Respondents who don't use public transport are 'most likely', or 'likely', to be persuaded to by increased reliability, more frequent services and services going to the right destinations. Better timed services and better connected services are also important. Least likely to persuade them are 'nothing' (likely to mean they would never use public transport) and smart ticketing. This suggests that increased use of technological solutions will have little impact on public transport use. However, given the majority of surveys were completed online, it is not reasonable to say that technology is not a barrier, as the sample could already be tech-savvy. Further research is needed.

Real time information is only the 7th most likely to persuade respondents to use public transport out of 12 options. Safety seems to be a concern as the quite likely, likely and most likely responses are all similar, but this doesn't appear to be a standout issue.

Most people travel to the station on foot (82%), vehicle use is second but 1/3rd the numbers. Increasing walking to the station would help at key travel times and, with trains being the 2nd most popular method of getting to work, behind cars, increasing train capacity would reduce car use in Glossopdale.

Car and other vehicle use

Vehicle use as a lone driver is second to 'on foot' as the most frequent method of travelling around Glossopdale. When all vehicle use is taken into account though, powered transport is by far the most common mode of transport (770 selections against 450 on foot). Sharing vehicles or taking lifts are more frequent options as 2nd or 3rd choices; shared vehicle use is number 2 as second most frequent and 4th most popular as a third choice. Lifts are 5th most popular second choice and third choice. Vans and LGV/HGV are more often used as a third choice, suggesting these are specialist vehicles or used for specific purposes by respondents.

Using a car alone is the primary choice in travelling to work and using a car to get to the station is 2nd to going by foot. Including sharing and lifts, car use to the station is 1/3rd the amount of foot travel creating localised traffic issues at peak times.

On-street parking is the most popular choice for car parking when drivers are travelling around Glossopdale, followed by B&M, Howard town and Town hall car parks. Aldi car park is also popular.

Conclusions

Vehicle use is very strong in Glossopdale. Given shopping and parking habits reported in the survey it seems likely interventions to reduce parking, especially in Glossop town centre, would reduce local congestion and pollution. Also, given that the most reported difficulty respondents have walking around Glossopdale is pavement parking, interventions like this would increase walking in the town centre. The behaviour and preferences stated in the survey, such as shopping frequency and parking location, are clear enough for future surveys to home in on these and understand them fully. This would be necessary for the planning of any intervention.

Single occupancy car use is high in Glossopdale. The clear barriers respondents have to not using a car (feeling unsafe; the lack of off-road routes; poor pavements) strongly suggest that this is a result of the lack of satisfactory options for alternative modes of transport.

The survey clearly shows respondents feel the public transport options in Glossopdale are not serving their needs. Respondents want a more connected set of services that are reliable and more frequent. Increasing destinations available via public transport would increase use and prevent/reduce the number of activities, entertainment, medical appointments and jobs missed out on. It is clear from the survey that technological improvements to the public transport network will not increase use much.

Walking is a popular method of getting around Glossopdale but very specific issues prevent, or impede, walkers as they travel. Given the specific nature, e.g. pavement parking, interventions should be relatively straight forward to design and have an immediate impact on foot travel. Wheeling and cycling will be harder to increase with infrastructure improvements needed to persuade people to use these forms of transport. Glossopdale is relatively compact though, with a 1km radius from the centre covering most of Shirebrook, Old Glossop and parts of Simmondley, to Charlestown, Howard Park and past Tesco. Most of this area is residential so ideally suited to active travel initiatives.

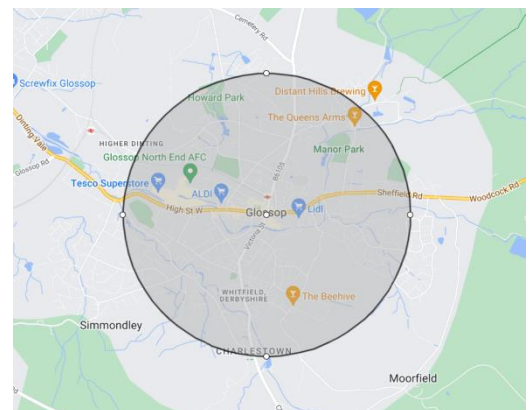


Figure 1: 1km area centred on the traffic lights near Glossop station.

From the survey results, the public consultation in June 2023 and successful interventions already trialled by Move More Glossop, GAST have identified priorities to improve the sustainability of transport options in the Glossopdale area. These have been detailed in the published GAST Priorities document.

GAST will identify further opportunities to work with other bodies (look to obtain funding and approvals) to influence further required actions to help people in Glossop travel around more sustainably.

There are plans to increase the accessibility and use of off-road routes (feasibility study already underway). GAST would like to work with other relevant bodies to help people of Glossopdale feel they can cross roads more safely and confidently by considering interventions such as additional road crossing points at key areas and dangerous roads and reducing the speed limit at such crossing points.

GAST will also look for opportunities to work with other relevant bodies such as Move More Glossop and Living Streets to support kids of Glossopdale to travel to school more sustainably. This could tie in with other bodies aims to promote children and young people being fit and active. GAST would like this age group to also feel that they can walk, run, cycle or wheel around Glossopdale safely and easily. To do this we would need to work with schools and relevant bodies in the area to understand children and young people's thoughts around sustainable travel and the barriers faced by this younger age group when travelling around Glossopdale.