Fort William Integrated Transport Plan

Options Engagement Summary Report

HITRANS

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Delivering a better world

Quality Information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
0	27/04/26	Initial draft for AECOM Review	ES	Emily Seaman	Director
1	20/05/26	Draft following additional stakeholder discussions	ES	Emily Seaman	Director
2	22/05/26	Draft for HITRANS review	JM	Joanne Melarkey	Regional Director (AECOM)
3	01/07/26	Update following CDG comment	JJ	Jo Jamieson	Principal Consultant

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 AECOM, in partnership with Stantec, has been commissioned by HITRANS, in partnership with The Highland Council, Transport Scotland and Highlands and Island Enterprise, to develop an Integrated Transport Plan (ITP) for Fort William in accordance with Recommendation 32 of the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2). The study area is shown in Figure 1-1 below.

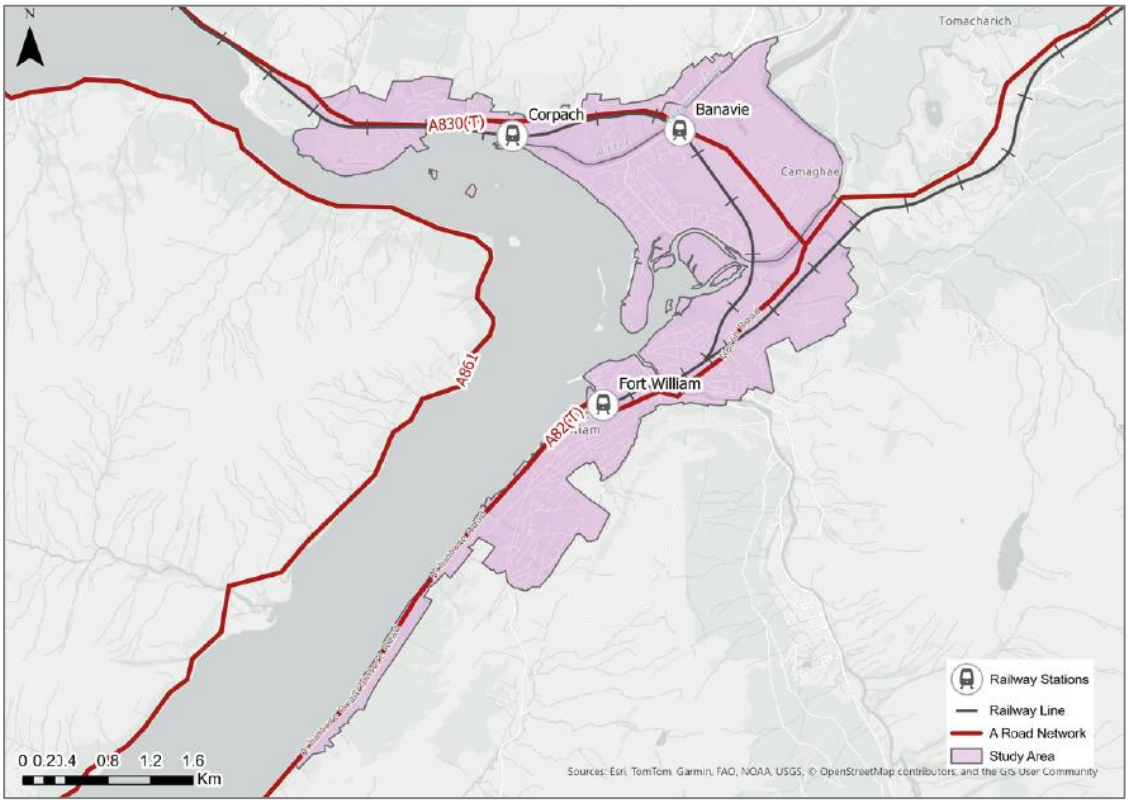

Figure 1-1 Fort William ITP Study Area

1.1.2 The study area incorporates the localities of Fort William, Caol and Banavie and Corpach, forming the wider Fort William settlement area. The population of the settlement was recorded as 10,302[1] in the 2022 Census.

1.2 Proposed Options

1.2.1 As part of this study, a long list of 67 options was developed across active travel, bus, rail, multi-modal, freight, road and other modes. These options were then sifted, with those unlikely to meet the study objectives, address identified problems and opportunities, or be deliverable removed from consideration. This process eliminated 10 options. In addition, some overlap between options was identified, leading to consolidation. This resulted in a short list of 34 options.

[1] Fort William: 2022 Overview. Accessed here: https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/search-the-census#/location/CSETT2022?title=Census%20Settlement%202022

1.2.2 Below is a list of each of the options, split into their respective packages. The references provided are in line with those used for the purposes of consultation. The reference included within the *Options Technical Note* provided separately to the Client Delivery Group has been provided in brackets for completeness.

Active Travel Options

1.2.3 10 active travel options were included as part of the consultation as summarised below.

- **Active Travel 1 (A1):** Improve active travel links between Fort William Town Centre and the bus and rail stations
- **Active Travel 2 (A2):** Implement localised active travel improvements throughout Fort William
- **Active Travel 3 (A5):** Create a north-south active travel route between Ben Nevis (Visitor Centre) and North Road Retail Park
- **Active Travel 4 (A6):** Address pinch points on the existing active travel network
- **Active Travel 5 (A10):** Create an Outer Orbital Route extending from the Old Fort / Fort William Travel Centre in the south to the north-west of the study area
- **Active Travel 6 (A11):** Create the Retail Park Links route providing two connections to the A82 from the Fort William Spine Route – the retail park on North Road and the Fort William Retail Park
- **Active Travel 7 (A12):** Create the College Link route providing a connection between the Fort William Travel Centre, NCN78 and Great Glen Way, and West Highland College with the Fort William Spine Route
- **Active Travel 8 (A15):** Create the Upper Achintore Links route including the Lundavra Road from West End Roundabout to Lundavra Primary School; Connochie Road / Heathercroft Drive; Plantation Path (via Pine Grove Park) from Kennedy Road to Nairn Crescent (via Heathercroft Drive); and Ross Place / Lochaber Road
- **Active Travel 9 (A16):** Create a new, more direct active travel link between Caol and Inverlochy
- **Active Travel 10 (A17):** Create a path directly through the land to the east of Glenmallie Road

Bus Options

1.2.4 Four bus options were included as part of the consultation as summarised below.

- **Bus 1 (B1):** Enhance bus timetables through an additional vehicle and improved frequencies, including during peak hours, evenings and Sundays
- **Bus 2 (B4):** Improve local and long-distance facilities for bus services in the centre of Fort William, including at the bus station and on Middle Street
- **Bus 3 (B6):** Implement bus priority along North Road
- **Bus 4 (B11):** Increase the frequency of long-distance coach services

Rail Options

1.2.5 Four rail options were included as part of the consultation as summarised below.

- **Rail 1 (RL1):** Increase the frequency of rail services to / from Mallaig, including the introduction of a commuter rail service between Corpach and Fort William during the morning and evening peaks
- **Rail 2 (RL2):** Introduce new stations near Carrs Corner and near Annat Farm and increase the frequency of local services
- **Rail 3 (RL3):** Improve the arrival experience at the railway station through upgrades / provision of a new building
- **Rail 4 (RL4):** Increase frequency of rail services on the West Highland Line between Fort William and Glasgow Queen Street, including the introduction of a commuter rail service between Spean Bridge and Fort William during the morning and evening peaks

Multi-Modal Options

1.2.6 Five multi-modal options were included as part of the consultation as summarised below.

- **Multi-Modal 1 (M1):** Introduce smart ticketing for rail, bus and ferry
- **Multi-Modal 2 (M5):** Reallocate road and parking space in the town centre for active travel and public transport
- **Multi-Modal 3 (M6):** Develop mobility hubs at key locations within the study area
- **Multi-Modal 4 (M7):** Introduce variable message signage on the A82 and A830 approaches / exits to / from Fort William
- **Multi-Modal 5 (M8):** Review opening hours of Banavie Swing Bridge

Freight Options

1.2.7 Two freight options were included as part of the consultation as summarised below.

- **Freight 1 (F2):** Develop facilities to move freight via water
- **Freight 2 (F3):** Improve rail freight capacity at Fort William and Corpach, including the creation of a rail freight hub at Corpach and making use of the Tom-na-Faire depot

Road Options

1.2.8 Eight road options were included as part of the consultation as summarised below.

- **Road 1 (R1):** Introduce localised junction improvements on the A82 that could reduce delays through Fort William
- **Road 2 (R2):** Implement A82 Western Relief Road (Alignment A)
- **Road 3 (R3):** Implement A82 Western Relief Road (Alignment B)
- **Road 4 (R5):** Implement Caol Link Road to A830 East of Blar Mhor Industrial Estate

- **Road 5 (R6):** Implement Caol Link Road to B8006 Kilmallie Road
- **Road 6 (R7):** Implement A82 Western Relief Road (Alignment B) with Caol Link to A830 East of Blar Mhor Industrial Estate
- **Road 7 (R8):** Implement A82 Bypass between Carrs Corner and the Belford Road Roundabout
- **Road 8 (R10):** Relocate off-street parking within the town centre and Nevis Terrace to a new multi-storey car park on the site of the existing An Aird car park

Other Option

1.2.9 One other option was included as part of the consultation as noted below.

- **Other 1 (W1):** Introduce a water taxi route between Corpach, the west side of Loch Linnhe and Fort William

1.3 Previous Engagement

1.3.1 Engagement has previously been undertaken for the following, related studies:

- Fort William Strategic Transport Study, Pre Appraisal Case for Change (AECOM, August 2018)
- Strategic Transport Projects Review 2
- Fort William 2040 (2019 onwards)
- Draft Fort William Town Centre Masterplan (January 2024)

1.3.2 The outcomes of engagement for these previous studies have been incorporated into the current set of options through the Review and Refresh Technical Note, produced prior to the current round of ITP engagement. Accordingly, the engagement undertaken for previous studies was also used to inform the engagement strategy for the current ITP study.

1.3.3 Initial stakeholder validation interviews were undertaken at the Review and Refresh stage of the current ITP study. The purpose of the initial stakeholder validation interviews was to ensure:

- The problems identified fully reflect the current issues;
- The TPOs express the outcomes sought for the study; and
- The recommended options for the appraisal help to resolve the problems identified and contribute to the TPOs.

1.3.4 The outcome of these discussions fed into the development of options and this process was reported within the Review and Refresh Technical Note. As such, they are not repeated here, and this report focuses on the information gathered during engagement on options.

1.4 Objectives of Engagement

1.4.1 The overarching objectives of the engagement for the ITP are to:

- **Objective 1** – capture local knowledge to feed into the detailed designs of the options / option packages, ensuring that solutions reflect the real needs and experiences of those who live and work in Fort William.

- **Objective 2** – build support for the project through engagement with key stakeholders, including elected members, public bodies, businesses, and community representatives, fostering a shared understanding and ownership of proposed interventions.

- **Objective 3** – clearly communicate the study's findings and recommendations to support transparency, encourage informed feedback, and enable evidence-based decision-making.

1.5 Purpose of this Report

1.5.1 This report presents the findings gathered through the engagement activities on the options considered for detailed appraisal within the Fort William Integrated Transport Plan. It summarises the key themes from the engagement activities, outlining the community's concerns and suggestions. The insights captured will be applied to the public acceptability assessment within the detailed options appraisal, to ensure that the options within the Plan reflect the opinions of the public and stakeholders.

1.5.2 This report will be updated at the conclusion of the appraisal stage to summarise how the feedback has been considered and to include details of the final drop-in session.

1.6 Structure of this Report

1.6.1 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2:** Outlines the engagement activities undertaken to gather the feedback contained in this report

- **Chapter 3:** Provides a summary of the findings from a series of one-to-one meetings with key stakeholders

- **Chapter 4:** Summarises the input provided by attendees at a public drop-in event held in Fort William

- **Chapter 5:** Details the feedback provided via an online survey and email responses

- **Chapter 6:** Summarises the outcome of the engagement at this stage and its bearing on the ITP study.

2 Engagement Activities

2.1 Activities

2.1.1 The engagement activities undertaken during the options engagement stage of the project were as follows:

- **Briefing note** sent to all elected representatives prior to the public engagement;
- **Targeted one-to-one stakeholder discussions**;
- An **online StoryMap** outlining key project information, background, options and frequently asked questions.
- An **online survey** aimed at both members of the public and wider stakeholders;
- A **dedicated Fort William ITP** email address for detailed comments; and
- A **Public and Stakeholder in-person drop-in session** (March 2026) – focused on presenting and gathering feedback on options.

2.1.2 A further drop-in session (expected autumn 2026) will follow the current stage of work and will focus on presenting outcomes from the appraisal to the public and stakeholders, prior to the formation of the Integrated Transport Plan.

2.2 Timeline

2.2.1 Engagement on the options took place between February and June 2026. The key dates for the engagement were as follows:

- Project briefing email to elected representatives: **Friday 27th February**
- Project briefing email to key stakeholders (Community Councils, statutory agencies, transport operators, local businesses, emergency services): **Week commencing 2nd March**
- Public drop-in event: **Tuesday 17th March 3-7pm** at The Nevis Centre, Fort William
- Survey and StoryMap published: **Monday 2nd March 2026 – 5pm**
- Survey closed: **Monday 13th April 2026 – 5pm**

3 Stakeholder Interviews

3.1 Stakeholder Interviews

3.1.1 Stakeholder meetings were conducted between February and June 2026, with a set of stakeholders identified in the Engagement Strategy and updated as the study progressed according to input from HITRANS, Transport Scotland, HIE and The Highland Council. The purpose of these interviews was to gather input into the suitability of the proposed options and test their acceptability across a range of stakeholders. These stakeholders were identified to ensure representation across key sectors with an interest in, or influence on, the transport network, including economic activity, freight, public services and community.

3.1.2 Interviews were conducted via MS Teams and typically lasted approximately one hour. During each interview, the ArcGIS StoryMap was used to provide an overview of the study area and the proposed options. This allowed stakeholders to comment on the options in detail, as well as to highlight existing issues and identify potential future transport challenges.

3.1.3 Table 3-1 outlines the stakeholders who participated in an interview, including the date and time of interview. While contact was made with all identified stakeholders, not all were available to participate.

Table 3-1: Stakeholder Interview Tracker

Stakeholder	Date and Time of Interview
FW2040 Community Stakeholder Group	04/03/26 16:15-16:45
Highland Timber Transport Group	23/03/26 11:00-12:00
ScotRail and Network Rail	23/03/26 14:00-15:00
Scottish Fire and Rescue	23/03/26 15:30-16:30
Alvance Aluminium	24/03/26 10:00-11:00
Mallaig Harbour Authority	25/03/26 10:00-11:00
Scottish Ambulance	26/03/26 11:30-12:30
Lochaber Chamber of Commerce	30/03/26 11:00-12:00
MOWI Scotland Ltd	31/03/26 12:00-12:30
BEAR Scotland	09/04/26 11:30-12:30
BSW Timber	11/05/26 10:00-11:00
Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)	15/05/26 10:00-11:00
Ferguson Transport	15/05/26 12:15-13:00

Stakeholder	Date and Time of Interview
Boyd Brothers	16/06/26 10:00-11:00
Gael Force	24/06/26 10:00-10:30

3.1.4 Where appropriate, Figure 3-1 shows the locations of key stakeholders, highlighting their position within the study area.

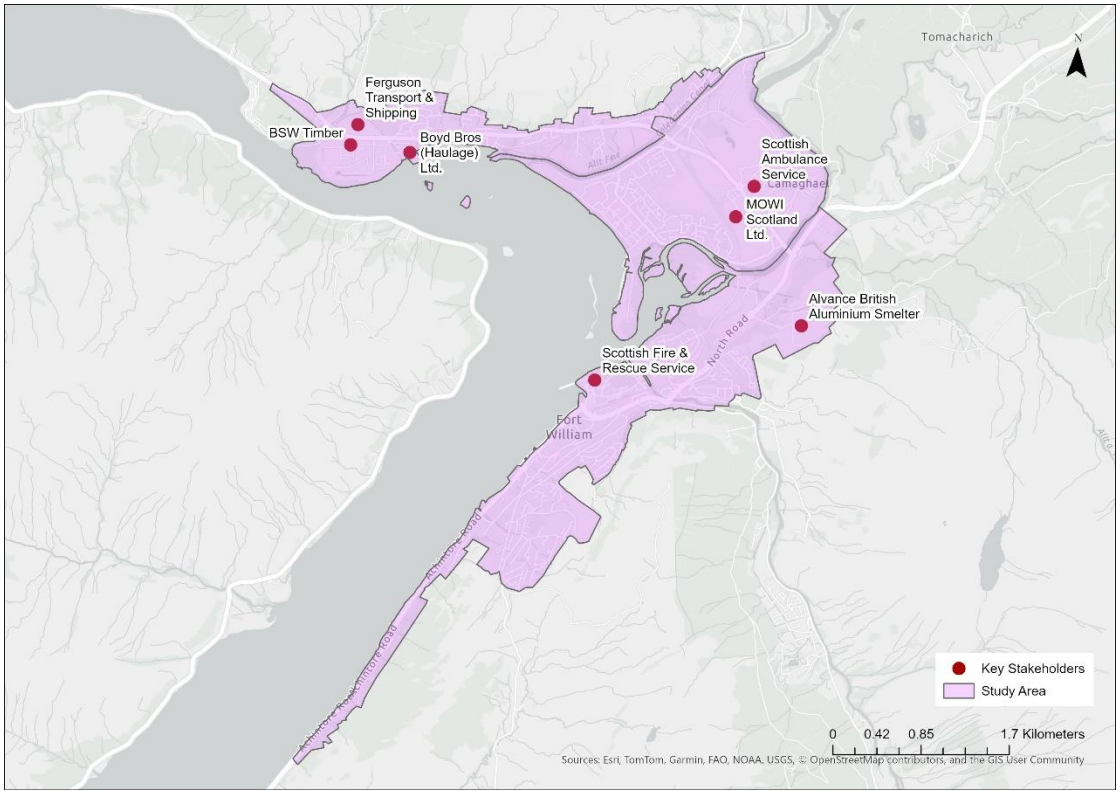

Figure 3-1: Locations of key stakeholders in the study area

3.1.5 The remainder of this chapter provides a summary of the key themes and issues raised through each stakeholder interview.

3.2 FW2040 Community Stakeholder Group

3.2.1 The FW2040 Board and Community Stakeholder Group represents a range of local organisations and interests involved in shaping the long-term vision for Fort William. The group has a strategic interest in the transport network as it underpins wider objectives around placemaking, regeneration and sustainable growth within the town.

3.2.2 The engagement took place as part of a wider FW2040 meeting and therefore focused on high-level discussion rather than detailed technical interrogation of individual options.

3.2.3 There was an acknowledgement that the current transport network in Fort William is no longer fit for purpose, with congestion, lack of resilience and single-corridor dependency identified as the key issues. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of delivering solutions that provide long-term resilience rather than short-term mitigation.

3.2.4 There was also recognition that transport issues are closely linked to wider placemaking and development objectives, with stakeholders emphasising the need for solutions that support future growth rather than simply addressing existing constraints.

Active Travel Options

3.2.5 Active travel interventions were generally well supported, particularly proposals that improve connectivity between Caol and the town centre. Active Travel 9 (Caol to Inverlochy link) was viewed positively, provided that it is clearly segregated and not accessible to general traffic. However, support for active travel was contingent on clear segregation from traffic and the extent to which proposals provide practical, direct connections for everyday journeys.

Road Options

3.2.6 Discussion of road options generated the strongest and most contrasting responses. There was clear opposition to Road 1 (localised junction improvements), with attendees stating it would not be supported locally and would fail to address the core problems on the network.

3.2.7 Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) was generally considered to offer the greatest benefits in terms of resilience, particularly through providing an alternative strategic route and relieving pressure on the A82. However, concerns were raised regarding the cost, the length of the route, and the extent to which it would address congestion in Caol and around Lochaber High School. Stakeholders also expressed concern about bypass options reconnecting to already congested roundabouts, particularly at the M&S junction.

3.2.8 A recurring theme was the desire for a bypass solution that provides additional river crossings, improving access into and out of the town centre and strengthening network resilience during incidents. It was also questioned whether the road alignments considered future growth, including the planned relocation of Belford Hospital to Caol and associated development opportunities.

3.3 Lochaber Chamber of Commerce

3.3.1 Lochaber Chamber of Commerce represents businesses across the Fort William area, with a particular focus on supporting economic development and investment. The organisation has a strong interest in the performance of the transport network, as congestion, reliability and accessibility directly affect business operations, freight movements and the wider competitiveness of the local economy.

3.3.2 During the interview, congestion and unreliability were identified as major constraints to business operations, particularly for freight-intensive industries. The Chamber of Commerce noted that transport investment has not reflected Fort William's economic significance. These concerns were framed primarily in terms of economic performance, with transport reliability seen as critical to business competitiveness, investment confidence and the ability to support future growth.

Road Options

3.3.3 A bypass was strongly supported as the only viable long-term solution to congestion, resilience and future growth. Road 1 (localised junction improvements) was viewed as insufficient in isolation and should only be progressed alongside a strategic road intervention. It was acknowledged that the strategic road options are expensive and would involve long timescales.

3.4 Highland Timber Transport Group

3.4.1 The Highland Timber Transport Group represents stakeholders involved in the movement of timber across the Highlands, including public sector organisations and industry

representatives. Timber extraction generates significant HGV movements on rural and trunk roads, making the group highly dependent on the A82/A830 corridor and focused on improving freight efficiency and network resilience.

3.4.2 Congestion on the A82/A830 corridor through Fort William was identified as a major constraint on timber movements, particularly during the summer peak. Reliance on the Corran Ferry, limited diversion routes and narrow local roads were highlighted as key operational challenges. The importance of reducing HGV volumes on the local road network and improving resilience to incidents and disruption was also noted by the organisation.

Freight Options

3.4.3 There was support for Freight 1 (water freight facilities), which was viewed as the most realistic short / medium-term opportunity to reduce HGV movements through Fort William. Existing port infrastructure at Corpach was seen as a strong foundation, although concerns were noted regarding the port depth, vessel size constraints and the need for additional handling and storage facilities. This support reflects a preference for solutions that can be implemented in the shorter term and integrated with existing infrastructure.

3.4.4 Freight 2 (rail freight) was considered significantly less viable due to high costs, limited flexibility, single-track constraints on the West Highland Line and a lack of suitable passing loops. While existing rail infrastructure at BSW Sawmill was acknowledged, rail was not seen as a competitive alternative to road freight without substantial investment[2].

Road Options

3.4.5 Among the road options, Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) was identified as the preferred bypass alignment, noting its potential to reduce pressure at key pinch points and improve resilience. The importance of strategic road investment to support the forecast increase in timber production over the long term was also noted.

3.4.6 However, it was acknowledged that even significant road improvements would not remove underlying operational constraints associated with dispersed rural supply chains, reinforcing the need for complementary solutions alongside strategic investment.

3.5 Mallaig Harbour Authority

3.5.1 Mallaig Harbour Authority manages one of the key ports on the west coast of Scotland, supporting fishing, aquaculture and ferry operations. The harbour generates significant freight movements to and from Fort William, including approximately 20-30 road tanker movements per day transporting fish to processing facilities, alongside inbound flows of feed and supplies, with all movements reliant on the A830 and A82 corridors.

3.5.2 Severe congestion within Fort William was highlighted as a significant operational issue, particularly during peak hours and summer months. It was emphasised that private car use remains unavoidable in a rural context due to the isolation of settlements and the limited other travel options. This reflects the specific operational requirements of the aquaculture sector, where maintaining consistent and predictable journey times is critical to product quality and commercial performance.

Freight Options

3.5.3 Freight 2 (rail freight) was considered desirable in principle; however, the Harbour Authority noted that it is not realistically viable. There is no rail facility at the MOWI plant, the destination for all freight coming into Fort William from Mallaig Harbour, and the infrastructure required to

[2] It should be noted that cost estimates will be prepared as part of the Detailed Appraisal process.

load and unload freight onto trains would be financially prohibitive. Furthermore, given the short transport distances involved and the operational constraints of the West Highland Line, rail freight would be slower than road-based alternatives for transporting goods to and from Fort William.

Road Options

3.5.4 A bypass was viewed as necessary to address long-term congestion and resilience issues. Road 6 (Western Relief Road Alignment B + Caol Link to A830) was identified as the preferred alignment due to the provision of multiple access routes and river crossings. Strong opposition was expressed to Road 5 (Implement Caol Link Road to B8006 Kilmallie Road), which was considered likely to worsen traffic on the A830.

Public Transport Options

3.5.5 Public transport improvements were supported but not viewed as sufficient to resolve congestion alone. Bus 2 (improved facilities for buses in Fort William) was strongly opposed as it was noted that the current bus station location is ideal for interchanging between buses and trains, and Other 1 (water taxi) was considered unlikely to materially reduce road traffic.

3.6 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

3.6.1 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is responsible for emergency response across the Lochaber area, including Fort William and surrounding rural communities. The service is based in the An Aird area, shown in Figure 3-1, meaning it is highly dependent on the road network for mobilisation of its workforce, who are not full-time employees and so are required to make their way to the station to respond to any incidents.

3.6.2 The reliance on on-call staff travelling in personal vehicles was highlighted as a critical vulnerability, with congestion significantly affecting mobilisation times, particularly in summer. The A82 was identified as a key point of failure, with limited alternative routes available. This creates a unique dependency on the local road network, where even minor delays can have a disproportionate impact on response capability.

Road Options

3.6.3 Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) was identified as the preferred bypass alignment due to its potential to remove through traffic from the town centre and significantly improve network resilience. This option is considered to offer the greatest benefit to emergency response reliability.

Alternative Option Raised by Stakeholder

3.6.4 Shorter-term local interventions were also suggested, including restricted emergency access routes and additional river crossings to relieve pressure on Nevis Bridge. This would be considered a shorter-term measure as it involves the use of an existing bridge that is structurally suitable for vehicles but is currently restricted to cyclists and pedestrians only. It was suggested that a system could be implemented whereby bollards can be raised and lowered by emergency service personnel.

3.7 Scottish Ambulance Service

3.7.1 The Scottish Ambulance Service provides emergency and patient transport services across Fort William and the wider region. The service is located in the Blar Mhor area, shown in Figure 3-1.

3.7.2 The interview focused on network resilience and emergency access, with particular emphasis on the lack of alternative routes through Fort William. The A82 is thought to be a single point of failure, with any incidents on the road preventing north / south movements and delays to employees getting to work. The lack of alternative routes was seen not only as an operational issue, but as a fundamental network weakness, with limited ability to maintain service continuity during disruption.

Road Options

3.7.3 Large-scale bypass options were viewed as high cost and long-term solutions, with concerns raised regarding deliverability. Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) was least favourable with concerns raised regarding previous failures to deliver a bypass. This position also reflects wider concerns around deliverability and the ability of large-scale infrastructure to respond to more immediate operational challenges.

Alternative Option Raised by Stakeholder

3.7.4 A more localised bridge connection between Caol and Fort William – for emergency access only – was proposed, similar in location to the active travel bridge (Active Travel 9), as a potentially quicker and more deliverable intervention to improve resilience and emergency access. This would save costs in principle as it would require shorter lengths of bridge to cross the River Lochy.

3.8 BEAR Scotland

3.8.1 BEAR Scotland is responsible for the operation, maintenance and management of the trunk road network, including the A82 and A830 through Fort William. As the trunk road operator, BEAR has detailed insight into network performance, congestion, maintenance constraints and operational challenges affecting the study area.

3.8.2 The interview with BEAR Scotland focused on trunk road operations, maintenance constraints and the performance of the A82 and A830 through Fort William.

3.8.3 Congestion, lack of diversion routes and operational constraints during incidents were identified as significant challenges. Seasonal restrictions on roadworks further exacerbate network pressure.

Road Options

3.8.4 Road 1 (localised junction improvements) was seen as potentially cost-effective in the short term in theory (it should be noted that cost estimates will be prepared as part of the Detailed Appraisal process). While there was interest in a bypass, concerns were raised about reconnection points and whether benefits would be sufficient given existing congestion at Morrison's roundabout.

Multi-Modal Options

3.8.5 Multi-Modal 3 (mobility hubs) and Multi-Modal 5 (Banavie Swing Bridge hours) were identified as potential supporting measures, though unlikely to significantly reduce traffic volumes on their own. More broadly, there was an emphasis on understanding how smaller interventions could complement wider network changes, rather than relying on any single solution.

3.9 Alvance Aluminium

3.9.1 Alvance Aluminium are the operators of the smelter located Northeast of Inverlochy, as shown in Figure 3-1. The facility produces approximately 32,000 tonnes of finished aluminium products

annually, all of which are distributed by road to destinations across the UK and for export via ports such as Liverpool.

3.9.2 Input materials are delivered primarily by rail via the West Highland Line, including around 60,000 tonnes of alumina per year, which is transported directly into the site. The other principal input, carbon anodes, are shipped to Corpach before being transferred to the smelter by HGV. Overall, the site generates an estimated 1,180 HGV movements per year in and out of Fort William.

3.9.3 The interview with Alvance Aluminium focused on freight operations, staff access and the importance of the road network to the smelter's ongoing viability. Congestion on the A82/A830 corridor was identified as the primary issue affecting logistics reliability and staff access.

Freight Options

3.9.4 While rail freight is currently used for raw material coming into the Alvance site, finished products remain entirely road-based due to cost and handling requirements which are not expected to change in the near future.

Road Options

3.9.5 Alvance Aluminium stated that any bypass must provide improved connectivity towards Corpach to deliver meaningful benefits. Strong concerns were raised about Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) reconnecting at the North Road Retail Park Roundabout due to the proximity of the smelter access and existing congestion issues. While delays do not directly halt production, they introduce operational inefficiencies and risks, particularly in relation to workforce access and shift patterns.

Rail Options

3.9.6 Rail 1 (increased frequency of services to/from Mallaig) was noted as potentially beneficial for reducing traffic from Corpach. Rail 2 (new stations) was viewed as offering limited benefit.

3.10 MOWI Scotland

3.10.1 MOWI Scotland is a major aquaculture company operating a fish processing facility located in Fort William, shown in Figure 3-1, forming part of one of the UK's largest export industries. The site generates significant time-critical freight movements, with approximately 20-30 tanker deliveries per day bringing fish from Mallaig and up to 25 HGVs per day distributing processed products to markets across the UK and Europe, making reliability on the A82/A830 corridor critical to operations.

3.10.2 Severe congestion, seasonal tourism pressures, and frequent incidents on the A82/A830 corridor were identified as major operational risks. Unpredictable delays were noted as creating a competitive disadvantage for MOWI in the fish industry as freshness-to-market is vital for them. This places emphasis on reliability over speed, with even relatively short delays having disproportionate commercial consequences.

Freight Options

3.10.3 Rail and water-based freight options were considered unsuitable due to slow journey times, infrastructure requirements and incompatibility with perishable products would mean that significant funding would be required for this to be viable. This highlights the limitations of alternative modes for time-sensitive, high-frequency logistics operations.

Road Options

3.10.4 Strong support was expressed for a bypass to remove through-traffic from the town centre and improve network resilience. Some concerns were raised regarding potential visual and environmental impacts on communities.

3.11 ScotRail and Network Rail

3.11.1 ScotRail and Network Rail are responsible for passenger rail operations and infrastructure management on the West Highland Line serving Fort William. The rail network provides both passenger and limited freight services. The interview provided an overview of current rail operations and explored the feasibility of rail-related options within the FWITP.

3.11.2 It was highlighted that Fort William has a relatively infrequent passenger rail service compared to other Highland settlements, with long journey times, seasonal peaks and significant single-track constraints limiting flexibility and future enhancement.

Rail Options

3.11.3 Rail 1 (increased frequency of services to/from Mallaig) would be challenging due to rolling stock availability, single-track infrastructure and the potential network-wide impacts of timetable changes. Any service uplift would require a demand case, particularly outside peak summer periods.

3.11.4 Rail 2 (new stations) were not opposed in principle; however, there would need to be clear evidence of demand due to the impact additional stops would have on journey times and timetable stability.

3.11.5 Improvements to Fort William station were noted as being progressed through a separate project, with a clear requirement for alignment between the FWITP and existing rail-bus interchange proposals.

3.12 BSW Timber

3.12.1 BSW Timber operates a major sawmill facility in Corpach (shown in Figure 3-1), processing approximately 500,000-550,000 tonnes of timber per year with plans to increase capacity. The site generates approximately 80-100 inbound HGV movements per day delivering raw timber from forests within a 50–100-mile radius and 45–70 outbound HGV movements distributing sawn timber and secondary products, primarily to a distribution centre in Carlisle, but with some smaller volumes of bulk timber products such as wood chippings transported by sea.

3.12.2 The interview with BSW Timber focused on the role of freight movements in the Fort William transport network, highlighting the scale of operations at the sawmill and the heavy reliance on road-based logistics to support both inbound and outbound flows.

Freight Options

3.12.3 Water freight facilities (Freight 1) are already utilised by BSW Timber on a limited basis and the option was viewed positively, particularly for bulk movements from coastal locations. They identified the potential to expand the use of maritime transport for their operations but noted constraints related to port infrastructure, including water depth limitations and handling capacity.

3.12.4 It was acknowledged that reliance on road transport alone would represent a risk to the planned growth in throughput. Whilst Freight 2 (rail freight) was supported in principle, it was viewed as challenging to implement in practice due to limited capacity on the single-track West Highland Line, high costs, and lack of flexibility compared to road haulage. While there is

some existing rail infrastructure at the site, it was recognised that rail would only be able to capture a relatively small proportion of overall freight demand without significant investment and this would need to be subsidised.

Road Options

3.12.5 BSW Timber expressed general support for road-based interventions that improve network resilience and journey time reliability. Incremental improvements, such as junction upgrades, were acknowledged as beneficial but insufficient to resolve underlying issues.

3.12.6 Support was expressed for bypass or link road options that would reduce pressure on key pinch points and provide alternative routes across the network.

3.13 Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)

3.13.1 Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is the regional economic development agency responsible for supporting business growth, investment and infrastructure across the Highlands and Islands. HIE has a strategic interest in the Fort William transport network as a key enabler of economic growth, housing development and major infrastructure investment in the Lochaber area.

3.13.2 Although HIE is represented within the client group, targeted consultation was undertaken to capture its perspective as a key regional stakeholder with extensive insight into the needs of businesses and economic development priorities in the area.

3.13.3 The A82 was identified as the primary constraint, with congestion and lack of resilience impacting business activity and limiting growth. The network's reliance on a single corridor was seen as unsustainable. This was framed not only as a transport issue, but as a constraint on regional economic growth and the ability to realise planned development.

Freight Options

3.13.4 HIE recognised the potential role of alternative freight modes in supporting long-term transport objectives. However, both were considered constrained in the short term due to infrastructure limitations and the need for wider network investment. As such, these options were viewed as complementary to, rather than a substitute for, improvements to the road network.

Road Options

3.13.5 Strong support was expressed for a strategic road intervention to separate through-traffic from local movements, improve resilience, and unlock development opportunities. Road 1 (localised junction improvements) was not considered sufficient to address long-term needs.

3.14 Ferguson Transport

3.14.1 Ferguson Transport is a major logistics operator that is based at a site West of Corpach (shown in Figure 3-1), providing integrated road haulage, shipping, port and warehousing services. The business undertakes extensive freight operations involving tens of HGVs based locally and millions of vehicle miles annually, handling a wide range of goods including timber, aquaculture products, industrial materials and general freight, with movements distributed across Scotland and the wider UK via the A82 corridor.

3.14.2 The interview with Ferguson Transport focused on freight operations and logistics, drawing on extensive operational experience of the A82 corridor and the wider transport network in Fort William.

3.14.3 Congestion and unreliability on the A82 significantly reduce freight efficiency, increasing costs and limiting daily HGV movements. A lack of alternative routes leads to severe disruption during incidents. These impacts were described in both operational and economic terms, with reduced efficiency directly affecting business viability and service delivery.

Freight Options

3.14.4 Ferguson Transport expressed strong support for integrated, multi-modal freight solutions combining road, rail and sea transport. In particular, the potential development of a freight hub at Corpach was identified as a significant opportunity to enable modal shift and improve overall network efficiency (Freight 2).

3.14.5 However, it was recognised that road freight would remain the dominant mode due to its flexibility, particularly for time-sensitive or smaller-scale deliveries. As such, alternative modes were seen as complementary rather than a replacement for road transport.

Road Options

3.14.6 Ferguson Transport emphasised that improvements to the road network remain essential, regardless of the development of alternative freight solutions.

3.14.7 Support was expressed for both incremental improvements, such as the widening of roads and additional lay-bys, and more strategic interventions to address congestion and improve resilience. The need to consider the interaction between different parts of the network was also highlighted, ensuring that interventions do not simply displace congestion elsewhere.

3.15 Boyd Brothers Ltd.

3.15.1 Boyd Brothers operate port facilities at Corpach (shown in Figure 3-1), supporting a range of freight activities including timber products and carbon materials associated with the Alvance Aluminium smelter. The site plays a key role in enabling water-based freight movements within the study area, with onward distribution typically undertaken via the road network.

3.15.2 Congestion on the A82/A830 corridor was identified as a significant operational issue, affecting both port-related haulage and wider business activity. Journey time variability and seasonal congestion were noted as key constraints, with peak conditions extending beyond the traditional summer period. These impacts were described as reducing operational efficiency and increasing costs, with haulage operations often adjusted to avoid peak periods.

3.15.3 Planning and regulatory processes were also identified as a constraint on development, with delays in securing approvals limiting opportunities to expand port operations or improve efficiency. Operational restrictions, including limits on working hours, were noted as further constraints.

Freight Options

3.15.4 The expansion of water-based freight (Freight 1) was strongly supported, with the stakeholder noting that the port is well positioned to accommodate increased volumes. Existing infrastructure was seen as providing a strong foundation, although constraints such as water depth, capacity and investment requirements were noted.

3.15.5 There was also support for a more strategic and integrated approach to freight, including the potential development of a freight hub linking port, road and rail infrastructure at Corpach. This was seen as the most realistic way to reduce HGV movements and improve overall network efficiency.

Road Options

3.15.6 Strong support was expressed for a strategic road intervention to address congestion and improve network resilience. Localised junction improvements (Road 1) were viewed as insufficient to address underlying issues without being implemented alongside a more strategic road intervention.

3.15.7 Solutions incorporating a bypass were preferred, particularly those that provide a direct route and avoid key pinch points such as Lochy Bridge and Nevis Bridge. Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) was identified as the option with the highest potential to remove through-traffic from the town centre.

3.16 Gael Force Group

3.16.1 Gael Force Group is a major Highlands-based aquaculture and marine services business, supporting fish farming operations across the region. The company undertakes a range of activities including manufacturing aquaculture equipment and supporting fish farming operations, with freight movements distributed across the West Highlands and beyond.

3.16.2 Congestion within Fort William was identified as a significant issue, with the road network described as operating at or beyond capacity during peak periods. It was noted that seasonal congestion now extends over several months, driven by a combination of tourism growth, increasing residential development and freight movements.

3.16.3 The stakeholder emphasised that the challenges are systemic, with limited capacity across the network and a reliance on a single corridor contributing to the issues on the road network.

Freight Options

3.16.4 There was strong support for increased use of water-based freight (Freight 1), with recognition that existing infrastructure provides opportunities to expand maritime transport. However, challenges were identified in relation to funding, ownership and the scale of investment required to develop facilities.

3.16.5 The stakeholder also indicated that expanding water freight options at the deep-water port site at Corpach will incur considerable costs and alternative options should be explored such as the pier that extends off Fort William town centre (west of Belford Roundabout).

3.16.6 Rail freight (Freight 2) was also supported in principle, although the stakeholder emphasised the need for an integrated, end-to-end approach in which the entire freight process is considered. Concerns were raised that isolated rail interventions could simply shift freight movements onto local road networks.

3.16.7 The stakeholder highlighted the potential role of the Caledonian Canal as part of a wider freight network, noting that it represents an underutilised asset which could support east–west movement of goods and reduce reliance on road transport.

Road Options

3.16.8 Strong opposition was expressed to localised road interventions (Road 1), such as junction improvements and traffic signalisation, which were not considered effective in addressing congestion and may exacerbate delays.

3.16.9 Support was expressed for more strategic bypass options that remove through-traffic from the town and provide additional capacity. Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) was viewed as the most effective long-term solution as it would remove all through traffic from Fort William town centre.

3.16.10 The stakeholder also emphasised the importance of adopting a long-term perspective, suggesting that interventions should be designed to accommodate future growth over a 50–100-year horizon.

3.17 Stakeholder Engagement Summary

3.17.1 Across all stakeholder groups, congestion on the A82/A830 corridor was consistently identified as the most significant issue affecting Fort William, with impacts extending beyond journey time delays to include reduced network resilience, constraints on economic activity, and challenges for emergency response. The reliance on a single strategic corridor was widely viewed as a critical vulnerability, particularly during incidents and peak tourist periods, reinforcing the need for interventions that address both capacity and network redundancy.

3.17.2 There was strong and widespread support for a strategic road-based intervention, most commonly in the form of a bypass, as the only solution capable of addressing long-term congestion and resilience issues. While Road 7 (Implement A82 Bypass between Carrs Corner and the Belford Road Roundabout) emerged as the most supported option across several stakeholders due to its capabilities to remove through traffic off the A82, this support was not unconditional. Concerns were consistently raised regarding its length, cost, deliverability, as well as the location of its reconnection points and the risk of transferring congestion to existing junctions. More broadly, stakeholders emphasised the importance of ensuring that any bypass option provides meaningful relief to key pinch points, improves access to strategic employment locations such as Corpach, and accommodates future growth, including planned developments in Caol.

3.17.3 In contrast, smaller-scale and incremental interventions, such as Road 1 (localised junction improvements), were generally recognised as offering short-term benefits but were not considered sufficient in isolation to address the underlying structural issues within the network. There was a clear preference for these measures to be delivered alongside, rather than instead of, a more strategic intervention.

3.17.4 Freight stakeholders consistently highlighted the critical importance of network reliability for business operations, particularly for time-sensitive industries such as aquaculture and timber. Road freight was universally recognised as the dominant and most flexible mode, with stakeholders emphasising that it will remain essential regardless of investment in alternative modes. Rail freight was generally viewed as uncompetitive due to infrastructure constraints, limited capacity on the West Highland Line, and high costs. In contrast, water-based freight was seen as offering greater potential, particularly for bulk movements, although this is dependent on investment in port infrastructure and is likely to play a complementary rather than transformative role.

3.17.5 Public transport and active travel measures were typically supported in principle, particularly where they improve local connectivity and offer alternatives to short-distance car trips. However, there was broad agreement that these modes alone would not materially reduce congestion on the strategic road network, particularly given the rural context of Fort William and the dispersed nature of surrounding settlements. As such, they were generally viewed as important supporting measures within a wider, multi-modal strategy rather than standalone solutions.

4 Public Drop-in Event

4.1.1 An in person public drop-in event was held on the 17th March 2026 at the Nevis Centre in Fort William. The event allowed members of the public to view the consultation materials, ask questions and complete the survey if desired. The layout of the display is shown in Figure 4-1.

4.1.2 Council officers and representatives from AECOM and Stantec were present throughout to answer questions and discuss the options in more detail.

Figure 4-1: Public Drop-in Display Layout

4.1.3 The event was held between 15:00 and 19:00 to maximise attendance. A total of 47 people attended the event over the four hours.

4.1.4 Large maps of the options being considered were displayed, where attendees could provide location-specific feedback using post-it notes. This interactive approach encouraged participants to highlight more detailed issues relating to specific options. The findings from the post-it note activity are summarised in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Comments from the Post-it Note Activity Conducted at the Public Drop-in Event

Option Package	Comments from Post-it Note Activity
Active Travel Options	▪ **Active Travel 1** (improved links between town centre and bus/rail stations) would help to provide a safe crossing from the train station to the town centre, as people are currently crossing main roads. Better signage would also be useful in this area. ▪ **Active Travel 3** (route to Ben Nevis Visitor Centre) would be well used by residents of Fort William. ▪ **Active Travel 5** (Outer Orbital Route) would be a good option, particularly if a road option doesn't materialise. ▪ **Active Travel 6** (Retail Park Links Route) is a link that would be important to the local community.

Option Package	Comments from Post-it Note Activity
	▪ **Active Travel 7** (College Link Route) would provide a safe route from the town centre to the waterfront. ▪ **Active Travel 8** (Upper Achintore Links Route) would be great for active travel between Fort William and Corran. ▪ **Active Travel 9** (Caol to Inverlochy link) would create a worthwhile link between Caol and the town centre. It would be good to complete Caol active travel route as part of this. ▪ **Active Travel 10** (path east of Glenmallie Road) should be completed even if compulsory purchase is needed.
Bus Options	▪ **Bus 1** (enhanced bus timetables) would be good if it allowed buses to run later into the evening so that people could access leisure activities during the evening. ▪ As part of **Bus 1** (enhanced bus timetables), the bus timetable should be linked to the train timetable to encourage multi-modal travel. ▪ As part of **Bus 2** (improved facilities for buses in Fort William), a park and ride would be useful at Blar Mhor and at Torlundy.
Rail Options	▪ **Rail 1** (increased frequency of services to/from Mallaig) and **Rail 4** (increased frequency of services to/from Spean Bridge) would work as a commuter rail service if there were shuttle trains that were frequent during peak hours. ▪ As part of **Rail 2**, it would be good to get a new rail halt, as well as a park and ride scheme, at Caol housing estate.
Multi-Modal Options	▪ **Multi-Modal 3** (mobility hubs) would be great for visitors to use the park and ride at Carrs Corner to reduce the number of vehicles coming into the town centre. ▪ As part of **Multi-Modal 3** (mobility hubs), it would be good to see a park and ride scheme at Banavie Train Station.
Freight Options	▪ No comments from the activity.
Road Options	▪ There was a general comment that any additional road should only be open to buses, cyclists, active travel and emergency services. However, another comment strongly disagreed, noting that this would mean the issues of congestion wouldn't be solved. ▪ Another general comment noted that the existing bridge between Camanachd Crescent and Abrach Road should be opened to emergency services. ▪ **Road 4** (Caol Link to A830) was considered to potentially move the problem to outside the High School where the proposed bypass ends. ▪ **Road 4** (Caol Link to A830) may create more congestion between the junction at which the proposed bypass ends and the roundabout that connects the A82 and the A830. ▪ **Road 4** (Caol Link to A830) and **Road 7** (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) should be combined. ▪ **Road 5** (Caol Link to B8006) would cause increased congestion on Kilmallie Road.

Option Package	Comments from Post-it Note Activity
	▪ There was an additional line drawn on the map of **Road 6** (Western Relief Road Alignment B + Caol Link to A830) to indicate an extension to the bypass alignment that continues the bypass that would originally end at Lochaber High School to continue round to Carrs Corner and in doing so provide an additional bridge over the River Lochy. ▪ **Road 7** (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) would increase the congestion at the roundabout near the North Road Retail Park. ▪ There was an additional line drawn on the map of **Road 7** (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) to indicate a new alignment of a road that connects Belford Road and North Road.
Other Option	▪ **Other 1** (water taxi) improves the diversity of transport options. It would also be good to see Caol included as part of the route.

5 Online Survey

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 An online survey was hosted within an ArcGIS StoryMap which was live from 2nd March to 13th April 2026. A snapshot of the StoryMap is shown in Figure 5-1. The StoryMap contained project information structured under the following headings:

- **Background** – Providing an overview of the project and re-cap on previous studies.
- **Problems and Opportunities** – Outlining the list of Problems and Opportunities identified though the review of the evidence collected to date.
- **Vision and Objectives** – Stating the draft ITP Vision and Objectives.
- **Option Generation** – Clearly explaining the shortlisting process by which the proposals have been identified.
- **The Proposals** – Interactively mapped proposals and written summaries under each of the infrastructure categories of Active Travel, Bus, Rail, Multi-modal, Freight, Road Corridor and Other.
- **Your feedback** – Outlining all the options for feedback, primarily via the online survey but also promoting the public event and noting the option to submit written responses via email.
- **FAQs** – Frequently Asked Questions in 'plain English' to help the public understand key aspects of the project development.

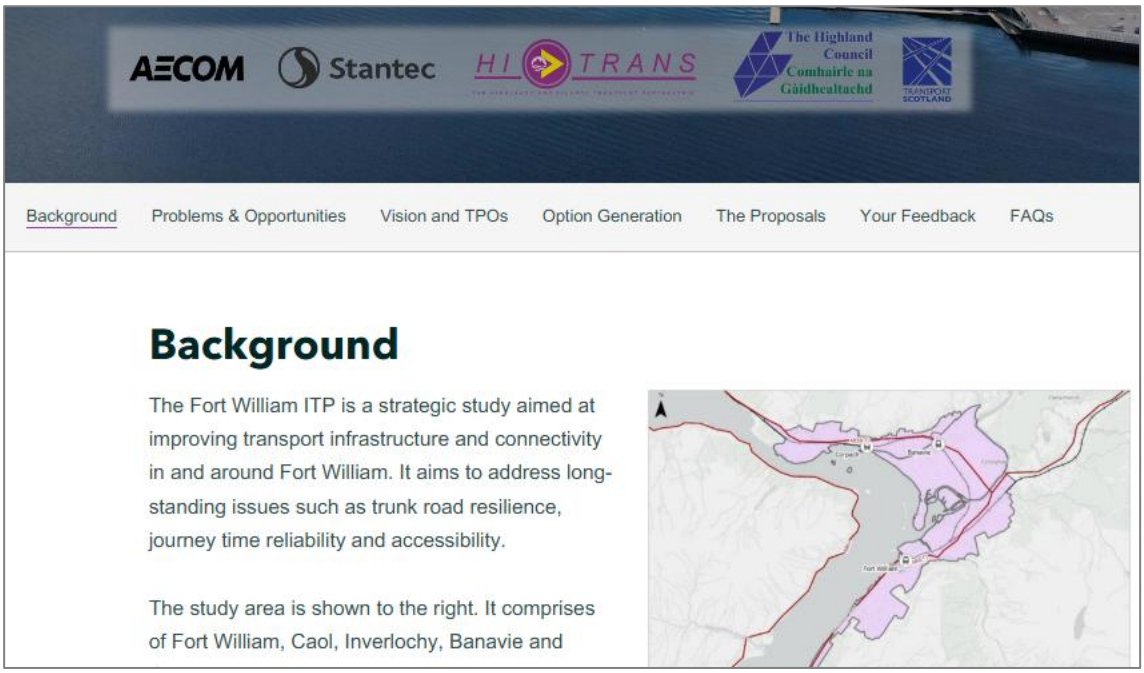

Figure 5-1 Snapshot of the Fort William ITP StoryMap

5.1.2 The public survey was promoted via local press, radio and social media as well as being promoted on buses and via a leaflet drop to all properties within the study area (as defined in Figure 1-1). A copy of the leaflet can be seen below in Figure 5-2.

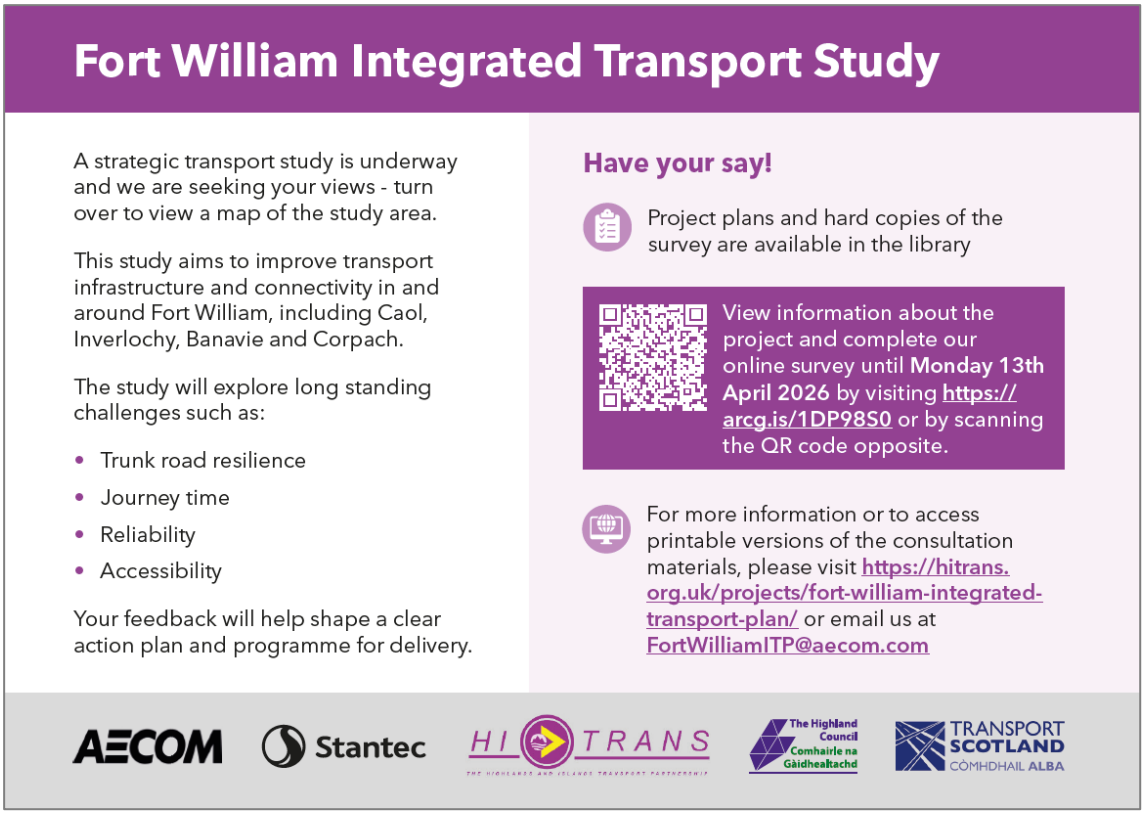

Figure 5-2: Copy of Leaflet Promoting the StoryMap and Online Survey

5.1.3 Following the in person drop-in event on 17th March, the project boards and paper copies of the survey were available at Fort William Library on the High Street. Paper copies were sent to HITRANS and collated within this analysis.

5.1.4 In total **207** responded to the survey, 204 were from the online survey and three were paper copies.

5.1.5 The survey was split between members of the public and those representing a business or organisation. The following analysis has therefore been split between these two groups within each section.

5.1.6 For both responses from the public and from businesses and organisations, the results have been split into the following sections:

- Transport Planning Objectives
- Active Travel Options
- Bus Options
- Rail Options
- Multi-Modal Options
- Freight Options
- Road Options
- Other Options
- Additional Comments

Public Responses

5.1.7 A total of **188** people responded to the survey as a member of the public, equating to 91% of all responses.

5.1.8 Respondents were asked to indicate which modes of transport they use on a day-to-day basis when travelling in, around and through the study area. The outcomes of this question are shown in Figure 5-3 below. Respondents were able to select multiple answers to this question.

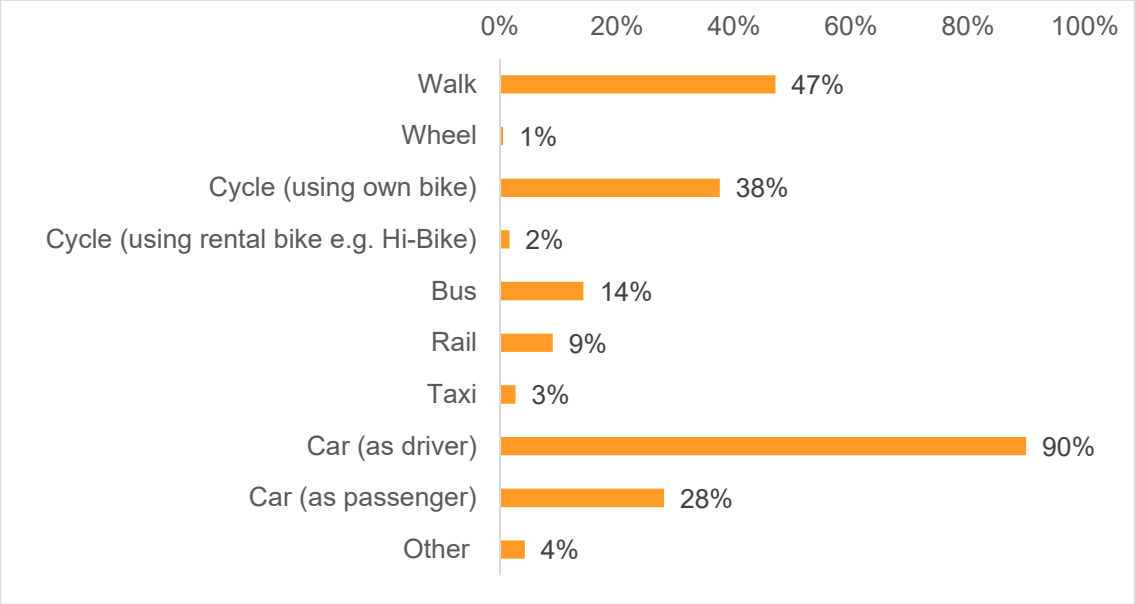

Figure 5-3: How do you typically travel for day-to-day journeys in, around or through the study area

5.1.9 The results indicate that the private car is the dominant mode of travel within the study area, with 90% (n=170) of respondents indicating that they travel by car as a driver and 28% (n= 53) of respondents travelling in a car as a passenger. Active travel also accounts for a substantial proportion of day-to-day journeys, with 47% (n=88) of respondents walking and 38% (n=71) of respondents cycling on a daily basis. In contrast, public transport usage is comparatively low, with only 14% (n=27) of respondents indicating that they use bus and 9% (n=17) of respondents utilising rail services in their regular travel.

Business / Organisation Responses

5.1.10 9% (n=19) responded on behalf of a business or organisation. Due to the smaller number of responses, the business / organisation responses have been analysed qualitatively. These businesses / organisations included:

- Ardgour Community Council
- Caol Community Council
- EMC Farming
- Fort William Inverlochy and Torlundy Community Council
- Fraser / Livingstone Architects
- Glen Nevis Holidays
- Hire Society Coaches

- Historic Environment Scotland
- Lochaber Disability Access Panel
- Lochaber engineering and welding
- Lochaber MRT
- Outward bound Lochiel
- Proterra Energy
- Public Services Delivery Scotland (Formerly NHS National Services Scotland - NHS Scotland Assure)
- Scottish Canals
- Scottish Citylink Coaches Ltd.
- Shiel Buses Limited
- Speeders Cabs
- Victoria house B&B

5.2 Transport Planning Objectives

5.2.1 The draft Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) set out for the Fort William Integrated Transport Plan for the purposes of consultation were as follows:

- TPO1: Reduce travel time delay and variability whilst minimising the generation of additional traffic
- TPO2: Improve the resilience of the transport network
- TPO3: Increase the proportion of people walking, wheeling, cycling and using public transport
- TPO4: Support sustainable economic growth, including improving opportunities for freight movements by non-road modes
- TPO5: Reduce the negative effects of severance
- TPO6: Improve integration between different modes

Public Responses

5.2.2 The public were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with each of the TPOs. The results of this question are presented in Figure 5-4.

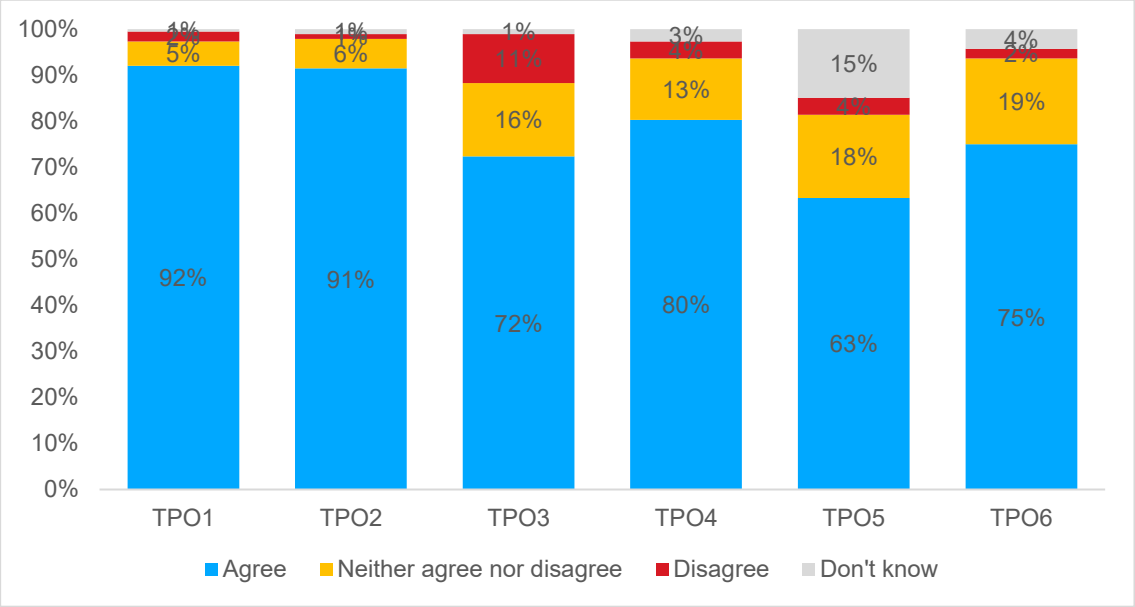

Figure 5-4: To what extent do you agree with each of the Transport Planning Objectives

5.2.3 The results indicate that TPO1 and TPO2 received the strongest levels of support with 92% (n=173) and 91% (n=172) of respondents in agreement. In contrast, TPO5 received the lowest level of agreement, with 63% (n=119) agreeing and a relatively high proportion of respondents who noted they neither agreed nor disagreed or indicated that they did not know (33%, n=62).

5.2.4 Levels of agreement recorded for TPO3, TPO4 and TPO6 were 72% (n=136), 80% (n=151) and 75% (n=141) respectively. However, TPO3 received the highest proportion of disagreement, with 11% (n=20) disagreeing.

Business/Organisation Responses

5.2.5 The business / organisations were generally supportive of the TPOs with the greatest support being for TPO2. TPO5 has the lowest level of support with a high proportion of respondents selecting 'neither agree nor disagree' and 'don't know'. Meanwhile TPO3 was the only TPO which received any 'disagree' responses.

Transport Planning Objective Summary

5.2.6 Generally, all respondents support the TPOs. TPO1 and TPO2 received the greatest support from both the public and the businesses / organisations. In contrast, TPO5 received the lowest support but the highest proportion of respondents selecting 'don't know'. This suggests they do not fully understand what TPO5 is intending to address. TPO3 received the highest proportion of people noting they disagree with increasing the number of people travelling by sustainable modes.

5.3 Active Travel Options

5.3.1 10 active travel options were included as part of the consultation as summarised below.

- **Active Travel 1:** Improve active travel links between Fort William Town Centre and the bus and rail stations
- **Active Travel 2:** Implement localised active travel improvements throughout Fort William
- **Active Travel 3:** Create a north-south active travel route between Ben Nevis (Visitor Centre) and North Road Retail Park
- **Active Travel 4:** Address pinch points on the existing active travel network
- **Active Travel 5:** Create an Outer Orbital Route extending from the Old Fort / Fort William Travel Centre in the south to the north-west of the study area
- **Active Travel 6:** Create the Retail Park Links route providing two connections to the A82 from the Fort William Spine Route – the retail park on North Road and the Fort William Retail Park
- **Active Travel 7:** Create the College Link route providing a connection between the Fort William Travel Centre, NCN78 and Great Glen Way, and West Highland College with the Fort William Spine Route
- **Active Travel 8:** Create the Upper Achintore Links route including the Lundavra Road from West End Roundabout to Lundavra Primary School; Connochie Road / Heathercroft Drive; Plantation Path (via Pine Grove Park) from Kennedy Road to Nairn Crescent (via Heathercroft Drive); and Ross Place / Lochaber Road
- **Active Travel 9:** Create a new, more direct active travel link between Caol and Inverlochy
- **Active Travel 10:** Create a path directly through the land to the east of Glenmallie Road

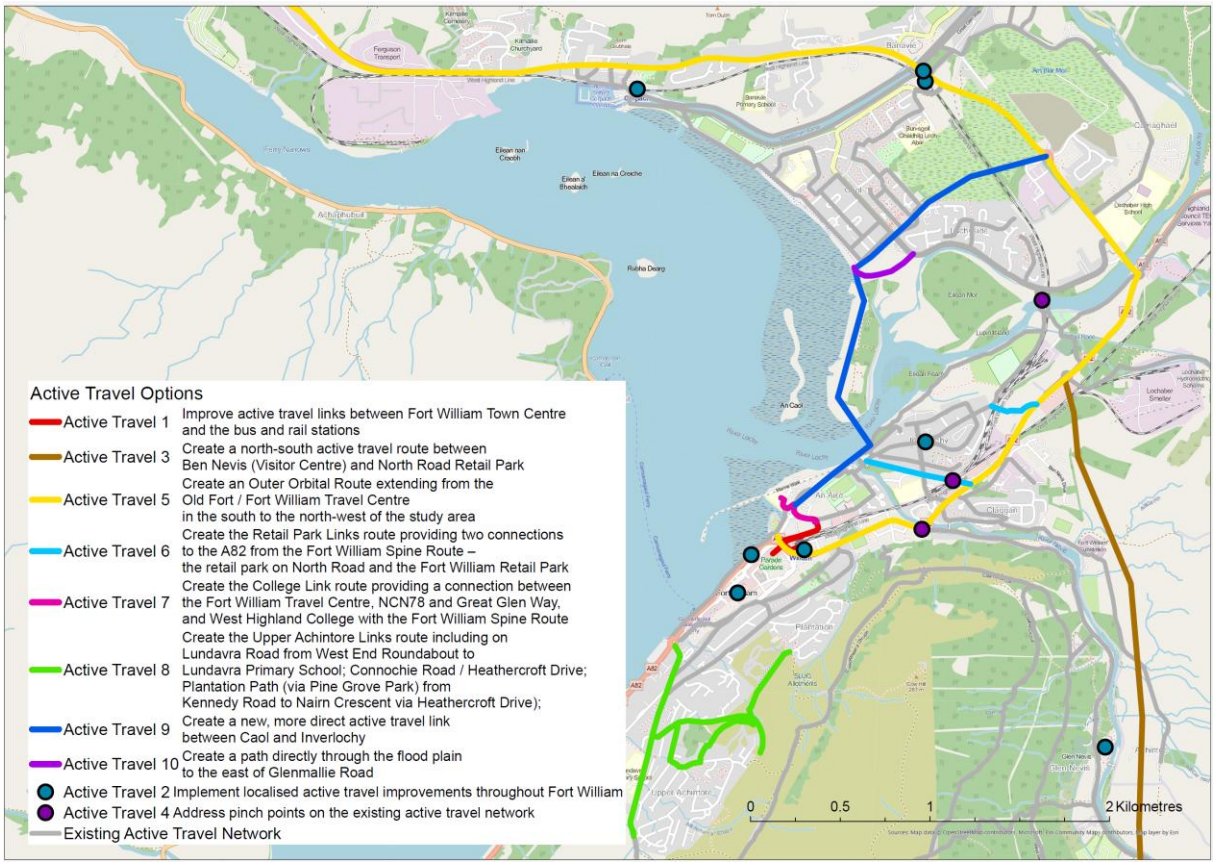

Figure 5-5: Map of Active Travel Options

Public Responses

5.3.2 The public were asked to indicate how each of the active travel options presented would impact them. The results of this have been presented in Figure 5-6.

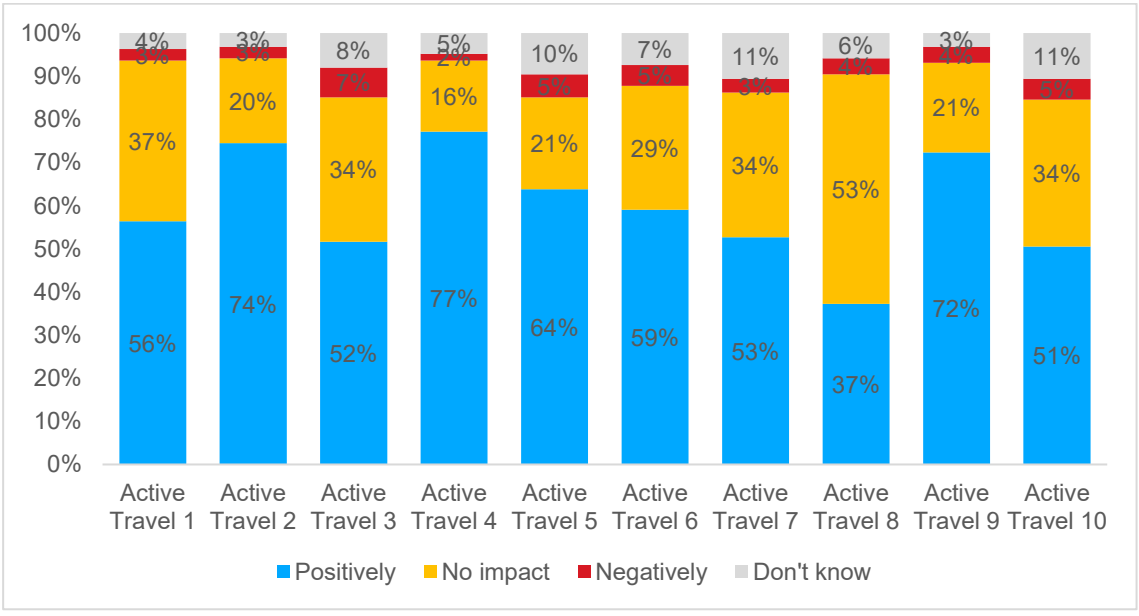

Figure 5-6: How would each of the active travel options under consideration impact you, if at all

5.3.3 The responses highlight that options Active Travel 2 (localised active travel improvements), Active Travel 4 (address existing pinch points) and Active Travel 9 (Caol to Inverlochy link) would have a strong positive impact, with Active Travel 4 (addressing existing pinch points) having the greatest positive impact (77%, n=145).

5.3.4 The majority of respondents (53%, n=100) noted that Active Travel 8 (Upper Achintore Links Route) would have no impact on them with a low proportion stating it would have a positive impact on them (37%, n=70). Active Travel 3 (route to Ben Nevis Visitor Centre) received the highest proportion of respondents noting that the option would negatively impact them (7%, n=13).

5.3.5 The public were also asked to outline which options would provide the most benefit to them. The results of this are presented in Figure 5-7. Respondents were able to select a maximum of two options for this question.

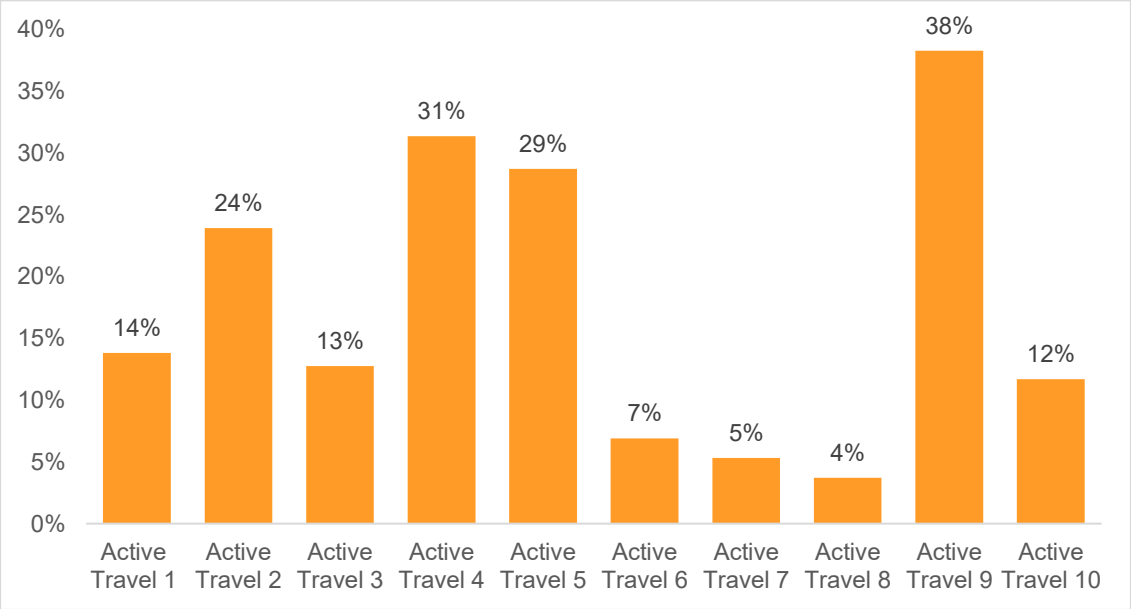

Figure 5-7: Which of the active travel options would provide the most benefit to you

5.3.6 The results largely reflect the responses shown in Figure 5-6, with Active Travel 2 (localised active travel improvements), Active Travel 4 (address existing pinch points) and Active Travel 9 (Caol to Inverlochy Link) identified as the options that would provide the greatest benefit to the public, being selected by 24% (n=45), 31% (n=59) and 38% (n=72) of respondents respectively. Active Travel 5 (Outer Orbital Route) was also well received, with 29% (n=54) of the respondents indicating that it would provide the most benefit to them.

5.3.7 Active Travel 1 (improved links between town centre and bus/rail stations), Active Travel 3 (route to Ben Nevis Visitor Centre) and Active Travel 10 (path east of Glenmallie Road) was selected by 14% (n=26), 13% (n=24) and 12% (n=22) of respondents respectively. In contrast, Active Travel 6 (Retail Park Links Route), Active Travel 7 (College Link Route) and Active Travel 8 (Upper Achintore Links) received the lowest levels of support, with 7% or less of respondents identifying these options as providing the most benefit.

5.3.8 Respondents were given a space to provide any specific comments they may have in relation to the active travel options. The overarching themes of the responses included:

- Strong overall support for improving active travel, with many respondents describing current conditions as unsafe, fragmented, or hostile - particularly for cyclists.

- Frequent reference to safety concerns, especially around pinch points where narrow bridges and roundabouts increase exposure to fast-moving traffic.
- Widespread belief that better active travel infrastructure would reduce congestion, particularly during summer and school peak periods, by enabling short local trips to be made without cars.
- Many respondents emphasised that active travel improvements should be continuous and direct, rather than isolated short links.
- A minority of respondents raised concerns about environmental impact or disruption to valued green spaces if routes were poorly aligned, particularly along the River Lochy corridor.

5.3.9 There were also some comments relating to specific Active Travel Options, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Active Travel 4 (address existing pinch points)** received consistent support, with specific locations cited including Lochy Bridge, Inverlochy roundabouts, Victoria Bridge, and narrow paths.
- **Active Travel 5 (Outer Orbital Route)** was generally supported, particularly by regular cyclists, though some queried delivery feasibility and environmental impacts.
- **Active Travel 9 (Caol to Inverlochy Link)** was repeatedly highlighted as one of the most beneficial schemes, with respondents noting its potential to provide a realistic alternative to driving for commuting, school journeys and leisure trips; remove the need to cross hazardous locations such as Soldier's Bridge; and connect Caol more effectively with the town centre.

Business / Organisation Responses

5.3.10 When asked about the likely impacts of the active travel options, responses of businesses / organisations broadly aligned with the findings from the public responses. Active Travel 4 (address existing pinch points) was considered to have the most positive impact followed by Active Travel 2 (localised active travel improvements), Active Travel 5 (Outer Orbital Route) and Active Travel 9 (Caol to Inverlochy Link). In contrast, Active Travel 8 (Upper Achintore Links Route) received the lowest proportion of positive responses.

5.3.11 When asked to identify which active travel option would provide the most benefit to their business or organisation, Active Travel 4 (address existing pinch points) was noted to have the most benefit. Active Travel 1 (improved links between town centre and bus/rail stations), Active Travel 2 (localised active travel improvements), Active Travel 5 (Outer Orbital Route) and Active Travel 9 (Caol to Inverlochy Link), also received a high proportion of responses. None of the businesses / organisations noted any benefit from Active Travel 6 (Retail Park Links Route).

5.3.12 Respondents were given space to provide any specific comments they may have in relation to the active travel options. The overarching themes of the responses included:

- Broadly supportive of active travel improvements that reduce congestion, improve workforce access and provide benefit to visitors.
- Strong emphasis on the importance of maintenance and long-term responsibility for new active travel infrastructure.
- Emphasis on the benefit of providing any infrastructure that could potentially reduce the reliance on cars for commuting staff.

Active Travel Option Summary

5.3.13 From the responses, Active Travel 4 (address existing pinch points) was considered to have the greatest positive impact by both the public and businesses / organisations. Active Travel 8 (Upper Achintore Links Route) received the lowest proportion of respondents noting it would have a positive impact. Active Travel 3 (route to Ben Nevis Visitor Centre) and Active Travel 5 (Outer Orbital Route) received the greatest proportion of respondents stating it would have a negative impact.

5.3.14 Responses between the public and the businesses / organisations differed slightly when considering which option would have the most benefit with the public selecting Active Travel 9 (Caol to Inverlochy Link) and the businesses / organisations selecting Active Travel 4 (address existing pinch points).

5.4 Bus Options

5.4.1 Four bus options were included as part of the consultation as summarised below.

- **Bus 1:** Enhance bus timetables through an additional vehicle and improved frequencies, including during peak hours, evenings and Sundays
- **Bus 2:** Improve local and long-distance facilities for bus services in the centre of Fort William, including at the bus station and on Middle Street
- **Bus 3:** Implement bus priority along North Road
- **Bus 4:** Increase the frequency of long-distance coach services

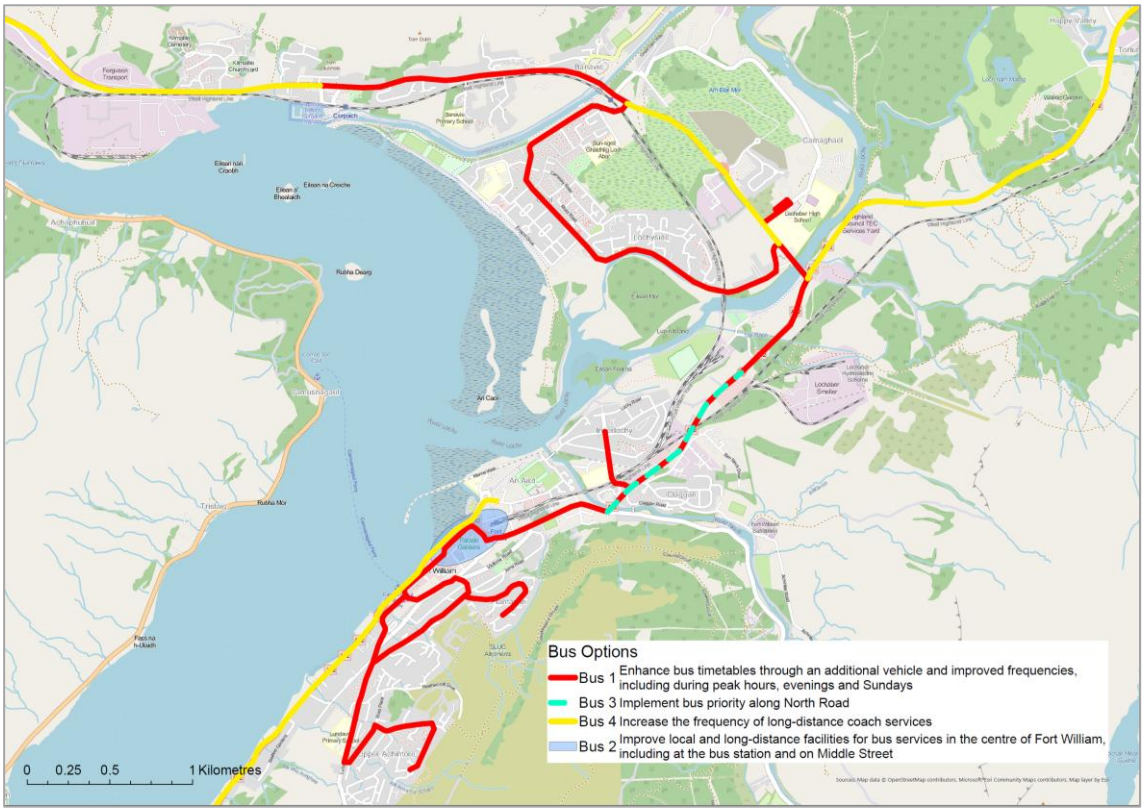

Figure 5-8: Map of Bus Options

Public Responses

5.4.2 The public were asked to indicate how each of the bus options presented would impact them. The results of this have been presented in Figure 5-9.

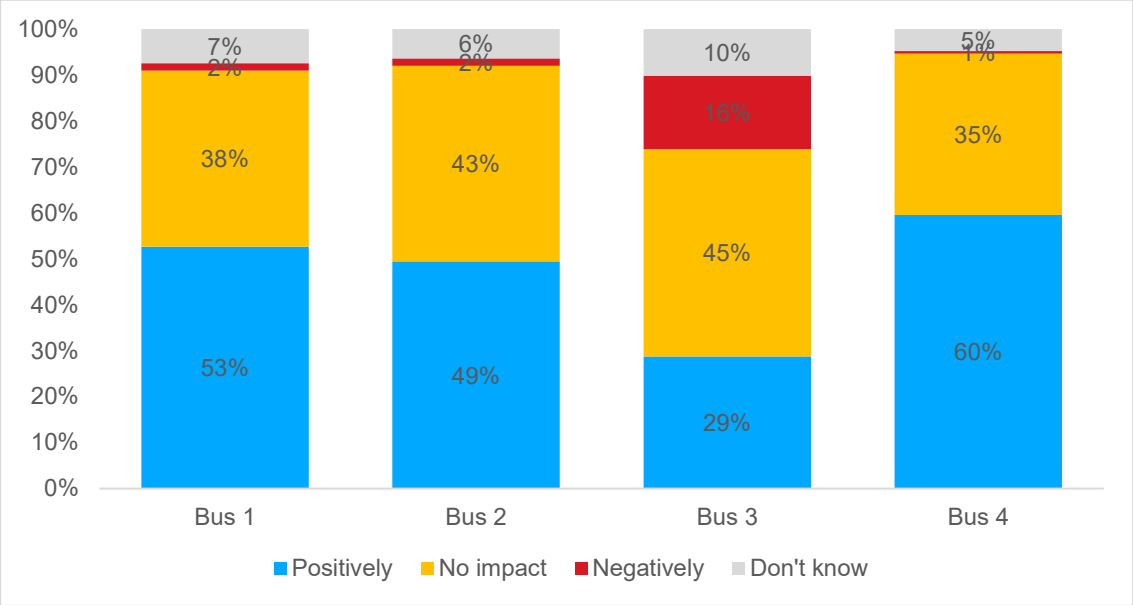

Figure 5-9: How would each of the bus options under consideration impact you, if at all

5.4.3 The results indicate that Bus 4 (increased frequency of long-distance coaches) received the strongest level of support, with 60% (n=112) of respondents indicating a positive impact. This was closely followed by Bus 1 (enhanced bus timetables) and Bus 2 (improved facilities for buses in Fort William), which received positive responses from 53% (n=99) and 49% (n=93) of respondents respectively.

5.4.4 In contrast, Bus 3 (bus priority on North Road) received lower levels of support, with only 29% (n=54) of respondents indicating a positive impact. Most respondents indicated that the option would have no impact 45% (n=85), while 16% (n=30) reported that it would have a negative impact, indicating a strong opposition to the idea of giving up road space to bus priority measures.

5.4.5 The public were also asked to outline which options would provide the most benefit to them. The results to this have been presented in Figure 5-10. Respondents were able to select a maximum of two options for this question.

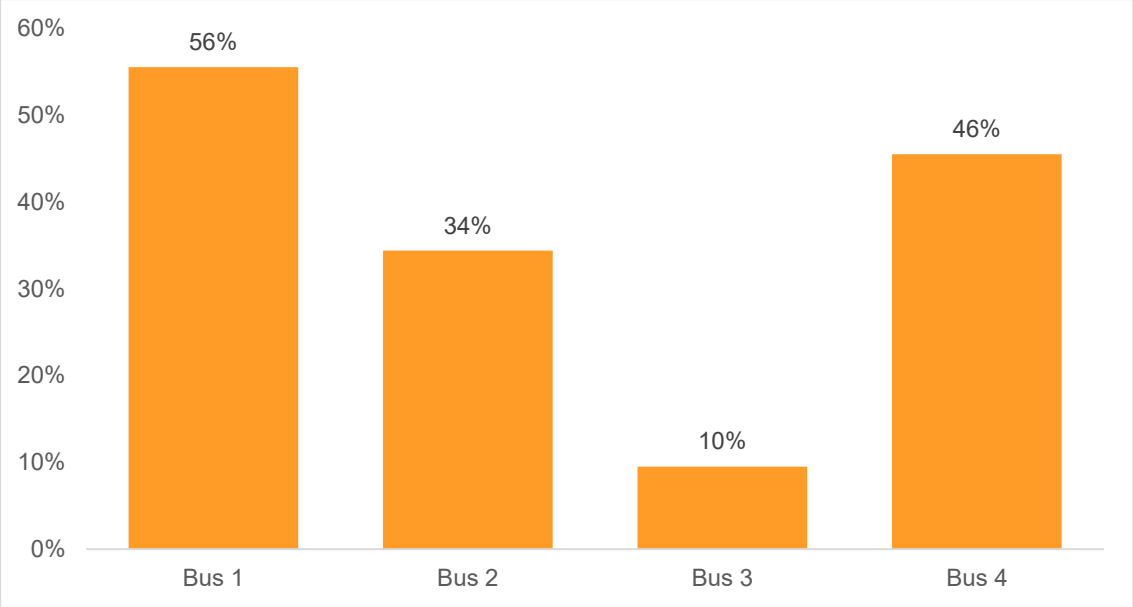

Figure 5-10: Which of the bus options would provide the most benefit to you as an individual

5.4.6 Bus 1 (enhanced bus timetables) was considered to provide the most benefit with 56% (n=105) of respondents selecting this option. Again, Bus 3 (bus priority on North Road) was outlined as providing little benefit in comparison to the other options, with only 10% (n=18) of the respondents indicating that it would provide them the most benefit.

5.4.7 Respondents were able to provide any specific comments they may have in relation to the bus options. The overarching themes of the responses included:

- Strong support for better bus services, particularly frequency, reliability, and evening / Sunday provision.
- Buses were seen as critical for reducing car dependency, especially for young people, older residents, non-drivers, and during congestion peaks.
- Many respondents stressed that improved bus services must be supported by adequate infrastructure and not be undermined by congestion.

5.4.8 There were also some comments relating to specific bus options, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Bus 1 (enhanced bus timetables)** was frequently cited as essential, especially for evening and weekend travel, as well as school-related peaks and commuting.
- **Bus 2 (improved facilities for buses in Fort William)** attracted support, with many criticising the current bus station as inadequate, poorly signed, and lacking basic amenities.
- **Bus 3 (bus priority on North Road)** received mixed but generally positive feedback. This contrasts with the quantitative results shown in Figure 5-9 and Figure 5-10, where it was perceived less positively than all other options, with 16% of respondents indicating that the option would have a negative impact. It was supported as it improves reliability and journey time for buses, but some drivers expressed concern about impacts on general traffic unless implemented carefully.

- **Bus 4 (increased frequency of long-distance coaches)** was widely welcomed, particularly referencing recent improvements by Ember, though respondents noted gaps in east–west connectivity and timetable coordination.

Business / Organisation Responses

5.4.9 Of the bus options, Bus 1 (enhanced bus timetables), Bus 2 (improved facilities for buses in Fort William) and Bus 4 (increased frequency of long-distance coaches) were generally perceived positively by businesses and organisations, with Bus 1 (enhanced bus timetables) receiving the highest proportion of positive responses. Consistent with the public responses, Bus 3 (bus priority on North Road) received the lowest level of support.

5.4.10 When asked to identify which bus option would provide the most benefit to their business or organisation Bus 1 (enhanced bus timetables) was identified as providing the greatest benefit. Although Bus 3 (bus priority on North Road) was thought to have limited positive impact, businesses and organisations indicated that it would provide equal benefits as Bus 4 (increased frequency of long-distance coaches).

5.4.11 Alongside these two questions relating to the bus options, respondents were able to provide any specific comments they may have in relation to the bus options. The overarching themes of the responses included:

- Strong emphasis on reliability and timetable resilience, especially during the peak summer congestion period.
- Buses viewed as highly vulnerable to congestion, making bus improvements a priority.
- Emphasis on the benefit of providing any infrastructure that could potentially reduce the reliance on cars for commuting staff.

5.4.12 There were also some comments relating to specific bus options as follows:

- **Bus 2 (improved facilities for buses in Fort William)** – whilst some respondents outlined the option as necessary for futureproofing and improving visitor experience, others raised concerns over moving the bus station away from the rail station and the parking available there.
- **Bus 3 (bus priority on North Road)** attracted support, particularly from bus operators who outlined the option as critical for maintaining services.

Bus Options Summary

5.4.13 Overall, there is a general lack of support for the bus options when compared to the active travel options. Bus 3 (bus priority on North Road) was considered to have the greatest negative impact and the least benefit of all the bus options. Additionally, the businesses / organisations noted that Bus 4 (increased frequency of long-distance coaches) would have an equally low benefit as Bus 3 (bus priority on North Road).

5.5 Rail Options

5.5.1 Four rail options were included as part of the consultation as summarised below.

- **Rail 1:** Increase the frequency of rail services to / from Mallaig, including the introduction of a commuter rail service between Corpach and Fort William during the morning and evening peaks

- **Rail 2:** Introduce new stations near Carrs Corner and near Annat Farm and increase the frequency of local services
- **Rail 3:** Improve the arrival experience at the railway station through upgrades / provision of a new building
- **Rail 4:** Increase frequency of rail services on the West Highland Line between Fort William and Glasgow Queen Street, including the introduction of a commuter rail service between Spean Bridge and Fort William during the morning and evening peaks

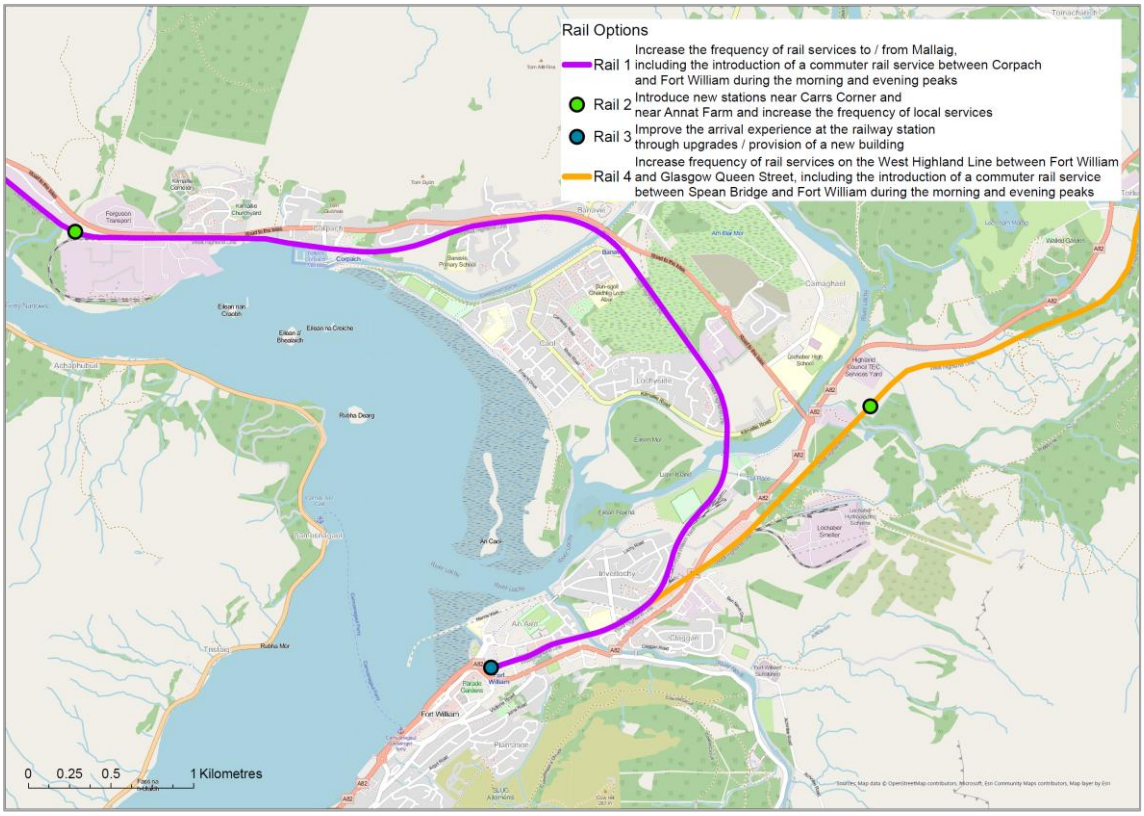

Figure 5-11: Map of Rail Options

Public Responses

5.5.2 The public were asked to indicate how each of the rail options presented would impact them. The results of this have been presented in Figure 5-12.

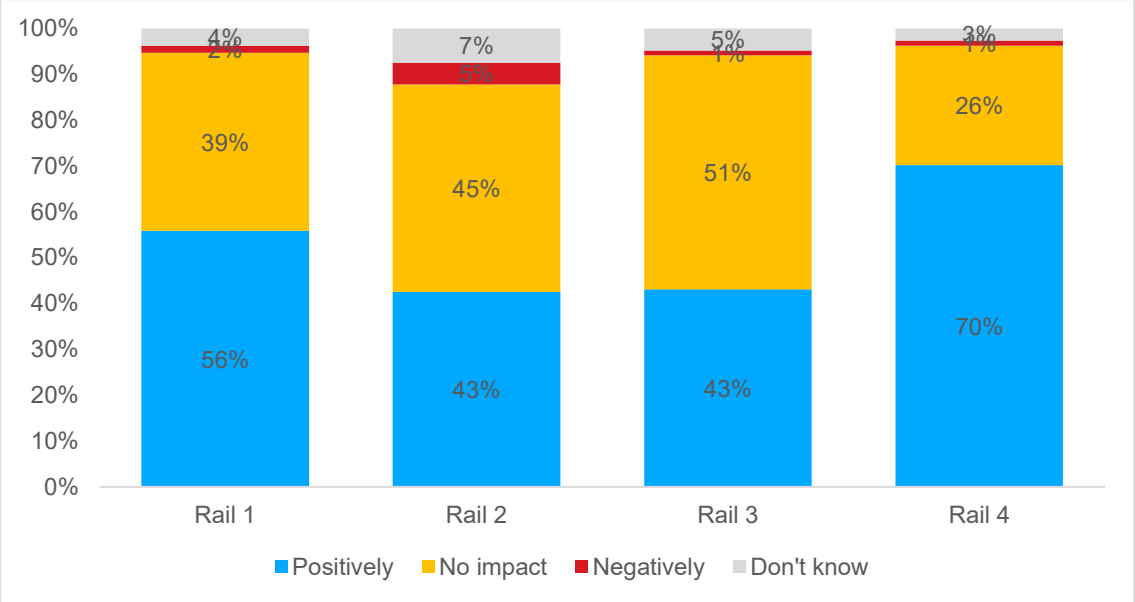

Figure 5-12: How would each of the rail options under consideration impact you, if at all

5.5.3 Of the rail options, Rail 4 (increased frequency of services to/from Spean Bridge) received the strongest level of support with 70% (n=132) of respondents indicating a positive impact. This was considerably higher than the next most positively perceived option, Rail 1 (increased frequency of services to/from Mallaig), which received 56% (n=105) positive responses. Rail 2 (new stations) and Rail 3 (improved arrival experience) received the lowest levels of positive response, 43% (n=80) and 43% (n=81) respectively.

5.5.4 The public were also asked to outline which options would provide the most benefit to them. The results of this are presented in Figure 5-13. Respondents were able to select a maximum of two options for this question.

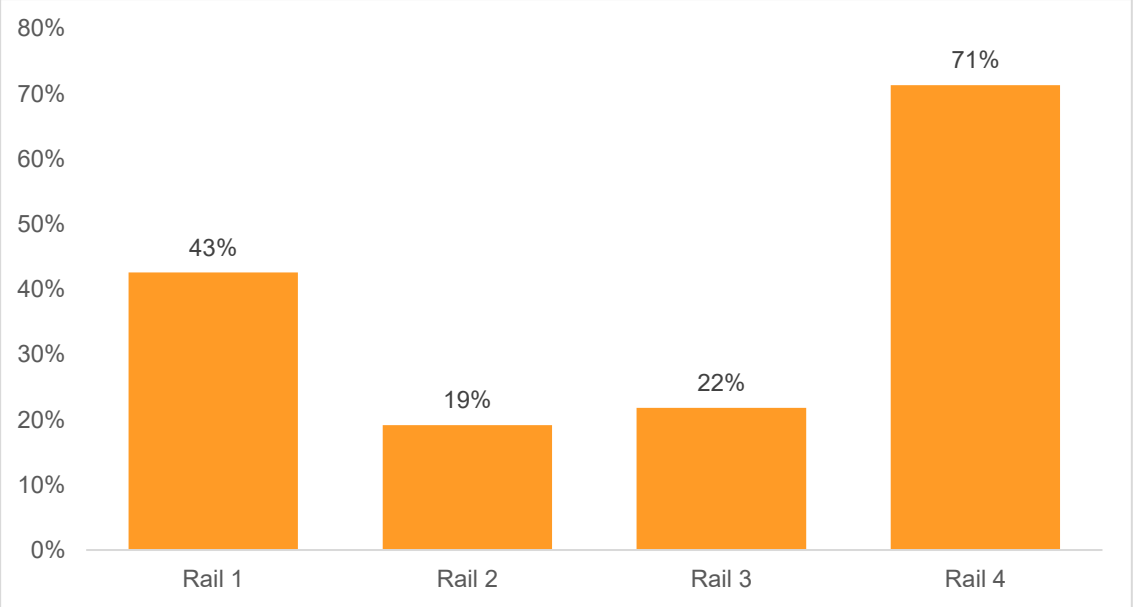

Figure 5-13: Which of the rail options would provide the most benefit to you as an individual

5.5.5 Rail 4 (increased frequency of services to/from Spean Bridge) is the clear preferred option, with 71% (n=134) of respondents noting it would have the most benefit. This is followed by Rail 1

(increased frequency of services to/from Mallaig), which 43% (n=80) of respondents selected, while Rail 2 (new stations) and Rail 3 (improved arrival experience) was only selected by 19% (n=36) and 22% (n=41) of respondents respectively.

5.5.6 Respondents were also provided space for any specific comments they may have in relation to the rail options. The overarching themes of the responses included:

- General support for rail improvements, with rail seen as a lower-carbon alternative that could reduce road traffic if services were frequent, reliable and comfortable.
- Scepticism from some respondents about rail's ability to significantly reduce congestion without meaningful increases in frequency and quality.

5.5.7 There were also some comments relating to specific rail options, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Rail 1 (increased frequency of services to/from Mallaig)** was primarily supported by residents located in Corpach, Banavie and Spean Bridge. However, there were some concerns over the general uptake of rail travel without an updated timetable that was more reflective of the needs of residents.
- **Rail 2 (new stations)** divided opinions, with some viewing the option as positive and improving access to schools and health facilities, while others expressed concern over the potential increase in delays and limited benefit.
- **Rail 3 (improved arrival experience)** was frequently highlighted as huge priority, with a need for better waiting areas, toilets, weather protection, improved accessibility and integration with buses.
- **Rail 4 (increased frequency of services to/from Spean Bridge)** received the most consistent support, particularly regarding additional afternoon and peak-period services, improved rolling stock and on-board comfort improvements.

Business/Organisation Responses

5.5.8 When asked about the likely impacts of the rail options, Rail 4 (increased frequency of services to/from Spean Bridge) received the highest proportion of positive responses from businesses and organisations, closely followed by Rail 3 (improved arrival experience). Rail 1 (increased frequency of services to/from Mallaig) and Rail 2 (new stations) received slightly lower, but still moderate, levels of positive response.

5.5.9 When asked to identify which rail option would provide the most benefit to their business or organisation, Rail 4 (increased frequency of services to/from Spean Bridge) was identified most frequently as providing the greatest benefit. In contrast to the public, the option thought to have the least benefit to businesses / organisations is Rail 3 (improved arrival experience). Only 14% selected Rail 3 as having a benefit despite 53% stating it would positively impact them.

5.5.10 Alongside these two questions relating to the rail options, respondents were able to provide any specific comments they may have in relation to the rail options. The overarching themes of the responses included:

- Support for improvements that enhance the connectivity of Fort William and the visitor experience.
- Concerns were raised by bus operators around the viability of rail investment when competing with the bus services currently on offer.

5.5.11 There were also some comments relating to specific rail options, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Rail 1 (increased frequency of services to/from Mallaig)** raised concerns over the effectiveness of commuter rail versus bus services.
- **Rail 3 (improved arrival experience)** was welcomed as a sign of investment into Fort William and to improve the arrival experience.

Rail Option Summary

5.5.12 Overall, Rail 4 (increased frequency of services to/from Spean Bridge) was considered as the option which would have the greatest positive impact by both the public and the businesses / organisations. In contrast, Rail 2 (new stations) was considered to have the least positive impact by both groups. When selecting which options have the most benefit, both stated that Rail 4 (increased frequency of services to/from Spean Bridge) would be of benefit. However, the options with the least benefit for the public was Rail 2 (new stations) and the businesses / organisations felt it was Rail 3 (improved arrival experience) as this has little impact on businesses / organisations likely using the rail network for the movement of goods.

5.6 Multi-Modal Options

5.6.1 Five multi-modal options were included as part of the consultation as summarised below.

- **Multi-Modal 1:** Introduce smart ticketing for rail, bus and ferry
- **Multi-Modal 2:** Reallocate road and parking space in the town centre for active travel and public transport
- **Multi-Modal 3:** Develop mobility hubs at key locations within the study area
- **Multi-Modal 4:** Introduce variable message signage on the A82 and A830 approaches / exits to / from Fort William
- **Multi-Modal 5:** Review opening hours of Banavie Swing Bridge

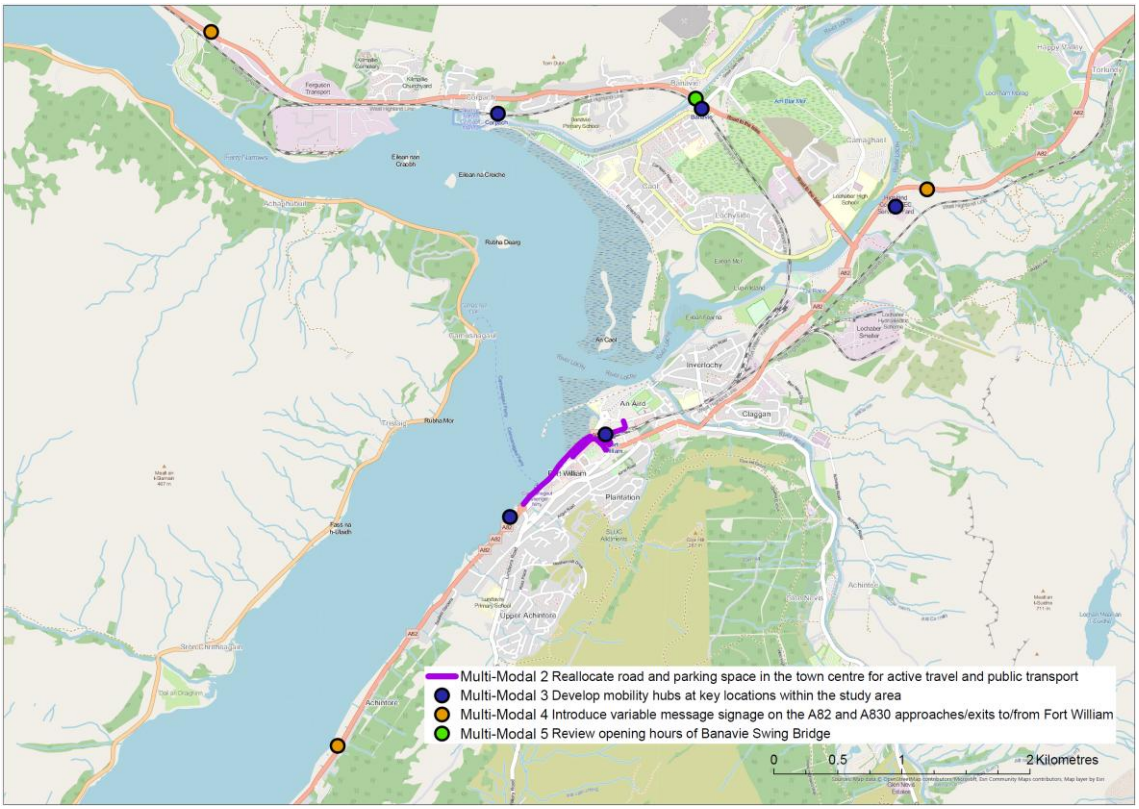

Figure 5-14: Map of Multi-Modal Options

Public Responses

5.6.2 The public were asked to indicate how each of the multi-modal options presented would impact them. The results of this have been presented in Figure 5-15.

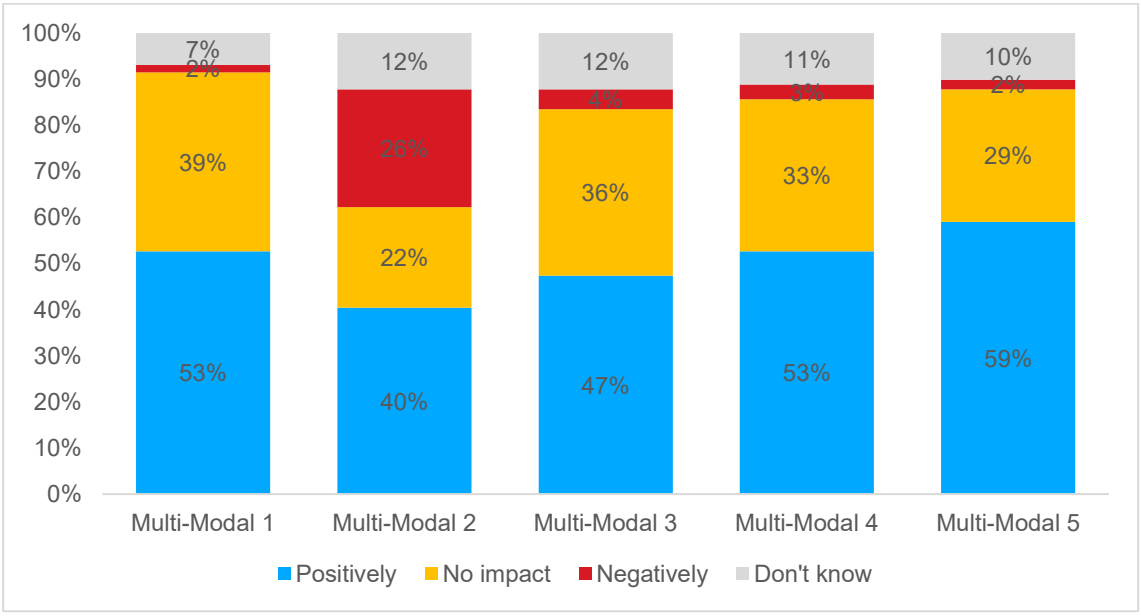

Figure 5-15: How would each of the multi-modal options under consideration impact you, if at all

5.6.3 Multi-Modal 5 (Banavie Swing Bridge hours) received the strongest level of support, with 59% (n=111) and this was closely followed by Multi-Modal 1 (smart ticketing) and Multi-Modal 4

(variable message signage), which each received positive responses from 53% (n=99) of respondents. Multi-Modal 3 (mobility hubs) received a more moderate level of support, with 47% (n=89) of respondents indicating a positive impact.

5.6.4 In contrast, Multi-Modal 2 (reallocation of road space) received the lowest level of support, with 40% (n=76) of respondents indicating a positive impact. This option also received a notably higher proportion of negative responses (26%, n=48) compared to the other multi-modal options, all of which recorded negative response rates of less than 5%.

5.6.5 The public were also asked to outline which options would provide the most benefit to them. The results of this are presented in Figure 5-16. Respondents were able to select a maximum of two options for this question.

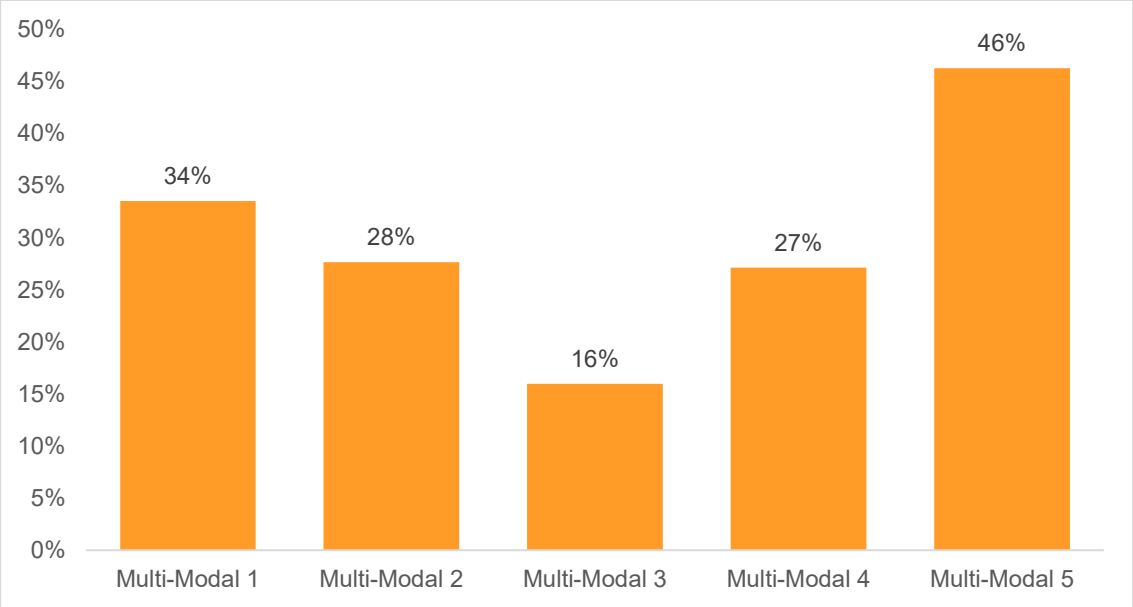

Figure 5-16: Which of the multi-modal options would provide the most benefit to you

5.6.6 Multi-Modal 5 (Banavie Swing Bridge hours) was the preferred option, selected by 46% (n=87) of respondents, while Multi-Modal 1 (smart ticketing) was chosen by 34% (n=63) of respondents. In contrast to the results in Figure 5-15, Multi-Modal 2 (reallocation of road space) was valued more highly than both Multi-Modal 3 (mobility hubs) and Multi-Modal 4 (variable message signage), as it was selected by 28% (n=52) of respondents compared to 16% (n=30) and 27% (n=51) respectively.

5.6.7 Alongside these two questions relating to the multi-modal options, respondents were able to provide any specific comments they may have in relation to the multi-modal options. The overarching themes of the responses included:

- General support focused on measures that improved the accessibility, reliability and integration of modes of transport.
- Respondents stressed that multi-modal measures should complement improvements elsewhere rather than stand alone.

5.6.8 There were also some comments relating to specific multi-modal options, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Multi-Modal 1 (smart ticketing)** was broadly supported, though several respondents stressed the need for paper and in-person ticket options alongside digital systems.

- **Multi-Modal 2 (reallocation of road space)** generated polarised responses, with some supporting the option believing it would rebalance the town centre towards people rather than vehicles. Others worried about the impacts on the high street businesses as well as parking convenience.

- **Multi-Modal 5 (Banavie Swing Bridge hours)** attracted support as the Banavie Swing Bridge was widely identified as a major source of unpredictable congestion. Respondents supported limiting opening during school and commuting periods, whilst also recognising the canal's importance.

Business / Organisation Responses

5.6.9 Businesses / organisations noted that Multi-Modal 1 (smart ticketing) would provide the greatest positive impact while Multi-Modal 3 (mobility hubs) received the lowest proportion of positive responses. Multi-Modal 2 (reallocation of road space) also received a notable proportion of negative responses.

5.6.10 When asked to identify which multi-modal option would provide the most benefit to their business or organisation, Multi-Modal 5 (Banavie Swing Bridge hours) was identified most frequently as providing the greatest benefit, which is the same as the public responses. Multi-Modal 4 (variable message signage) had the least number of businesses / organisations noting it would provide the most benefit.

5.6.11 Alongside these two questions relating to the multi-modal options, respondents were able to provide any specific comments they may have in relation to the multi-modal options. The overarching themes of the responses included:

- Support for integration of modes of transport that will improve the operational efficiency of the public transport network.

5.6.12 There were also some comments relating to specific multi-modal options, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Multi-Modal 3 (mobility hubs)** was supported for locations with existing assets that could be utilised as a mobility hub.

- **Multi-Modal 5 (Banavie Swing Bridge hours)** was strongly supported as the Banavie Swing Bridge was identified as a recurring operational risk for buses and freight movements.

Multi-Modal Option Summary

5.6.13 Generally, the multi-modal options received fewer positive responses from the businesses / organisations as the options were likely to have a limited impact on businesses / organisations. However, both the public and businesses / organisations noted Multi-Modal 1 (smart ticketing) and Multi-Modal 5 (Banavie Swing Bridge hours) as being the two options which were thought to provide the most positive impact. In both cases, Multi-Modal 2 (reallocation of road space) had the greatest number of responses stating that it would have a negative impact.

5.6.14 Both groups concluded Multi-Modal 5 (Banavie Swing Bridge hours) would be the most beneficial. In contrast, the public felt that Multi-Modal 3 (mobility hubs) would be the least beneficial and the businesses / organisations noted that Multi-Modal 4 (variable message signage) would be the least beneficial.

5.7 Freight Options

5.7.1 Two freight options were included as part of the consultation as summarised below.

- **Freight 1:** Develop facilities to move freight via water
- **Freight 2:** Improve rail freight capacity at Fort William and Corpach, including the creation of a rail freight hub at Corpach and making use of the Tom-na-Faire depot

Figure 5-17: Map of Freight Options

Public Responses

5.7.2 The public were asked to indicate how each of the freight options presented would impact them. The results of this have been presented in Figure 5-18.

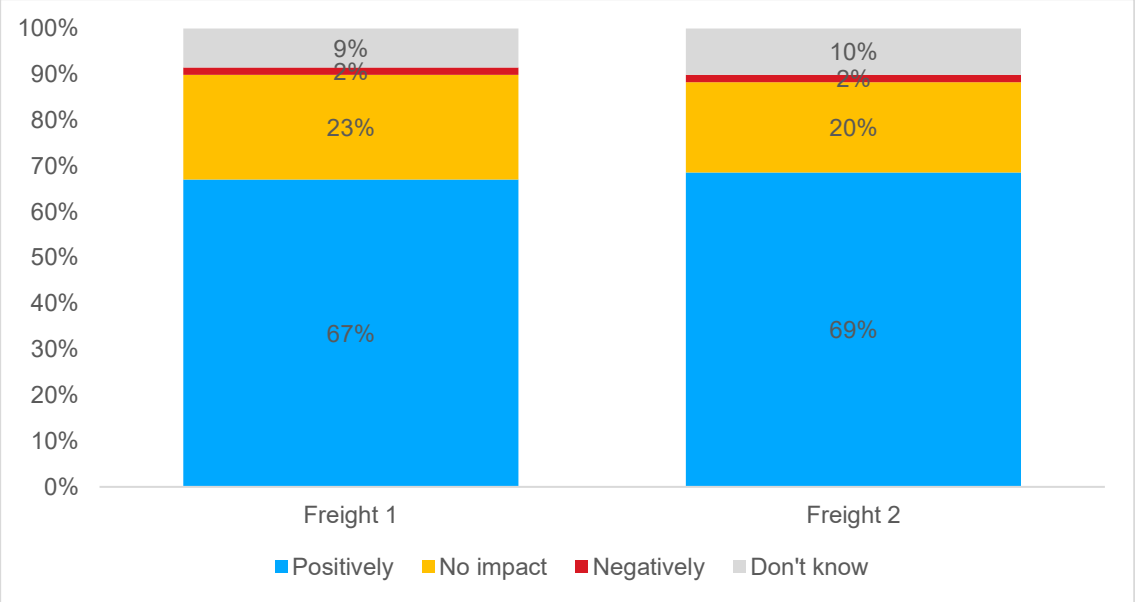

Figure 5-18: How would each of the freight options under consideration impact you, if at all

5.7.3 The responses to both freight options were generally very positive, with 67% (n=126) of respondents indicating a positive impact for Freight 1 (water freight facilities) and 69% (n=129) for Freight 2 (rail freight). As only two freight options were presented, respondents were not asked to identify which options would provide the most benefit to them.

5.7.4 Alongside the question on the impact of the freight options, respondents were able to provide any specific comments they may have in relation to the freight options.

5.7.5 The overarching themes of the responses included:

- Broad support for shifting freight away from roads, driven by concerns about safety, emissions, and congestion of having freight on the road network.
- Respondents recognised Fort William's historic rail and maritime assets as underutilised.

5.7.6 There were also some comments relating to specific freight options, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Freight 1 (water freight facilities)** was supported in principle, but concerns were raised regarding the environmental impacts, interaction with recreational water users as well as the cost and feasibility of the option.
- **Freight 2 (rail freight)** generally attracted stronger support as a lower-impact, more controllable option.

Business / Organisation Responses

5.7.7 Both freight options received similar levels of positive responses from businesses and organisations, with Freight 2 (rail freight) receiving the greatest proportion of negative responses.

5.7.8 Alongside the question on the impact of the freight options, respondents were able to provide any specific comments they may have in relation to the freight options. The overarching themes of the responses included:

- Strong support for freight to be taken off the road network by any means.

5.7.9 There were also some comments relating to specific freight options, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Freight 2 (rail freight)** generated some concern over the environmental impact on the Battle of Inverlochy site.

Freight Option Summary

5.7.10 Although there are only two options considered within the freight options, they received almost equal proportions of support from both the public and the businesses / organisations. Generally, a greater proportion of businesses and organisations noted these options would have a positive impact.

5.8 Road Options

5.8.1 Eight road options were included as part of the consultation as summarised below.

- **Road 1:** Introduce localised junction improvements on the A82 that could reduce delays through Fort William
- **Road 2:** Implement A82 Western Relief Road (Alignment A)
- **Road 3:** Implement A82 Western Relief Road (Alignment B)
- **Road 4:** Implement Caol Link Road to A830 East of Blar Mhor Industrial Estate
- **Road 5:** Implement Caol Link Road to B8006 Kilmallie Road
- **Road 6:** Implement A82 Western Relief Road (Alignment B) with Caol Link to A830 East of Blar Mhor Industrial Estate
- **Road 7:** Implement A82 Bypass between Carrs Corner and the Belford Road Roundabout
- **Road 8:** Relocate off-street parking within the town centre and Nevis Terrace to a new multi-storey car park on the site of the existing An Aird car park

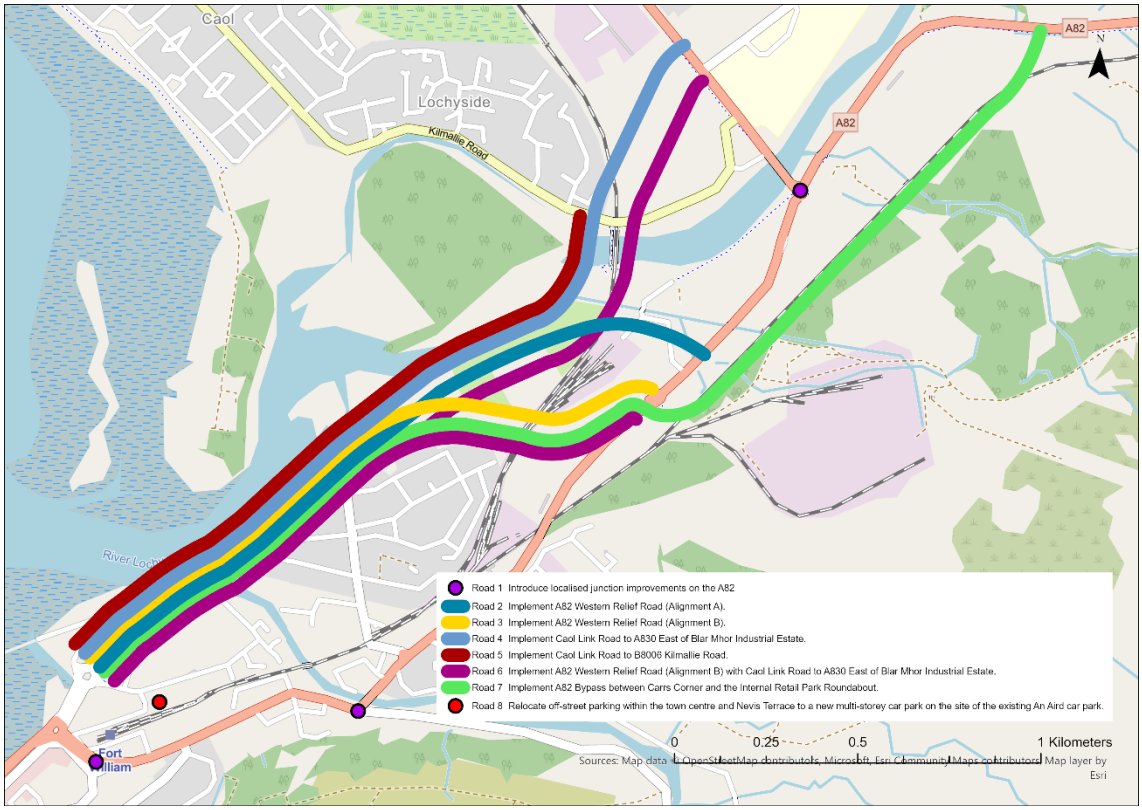

Figure 5-19: Map of Road Options[3]

Public Responses

5.8.2 The public were asked to indicate how each of the road options presented would impact them. The results of this have been presented in Figure 5-20.

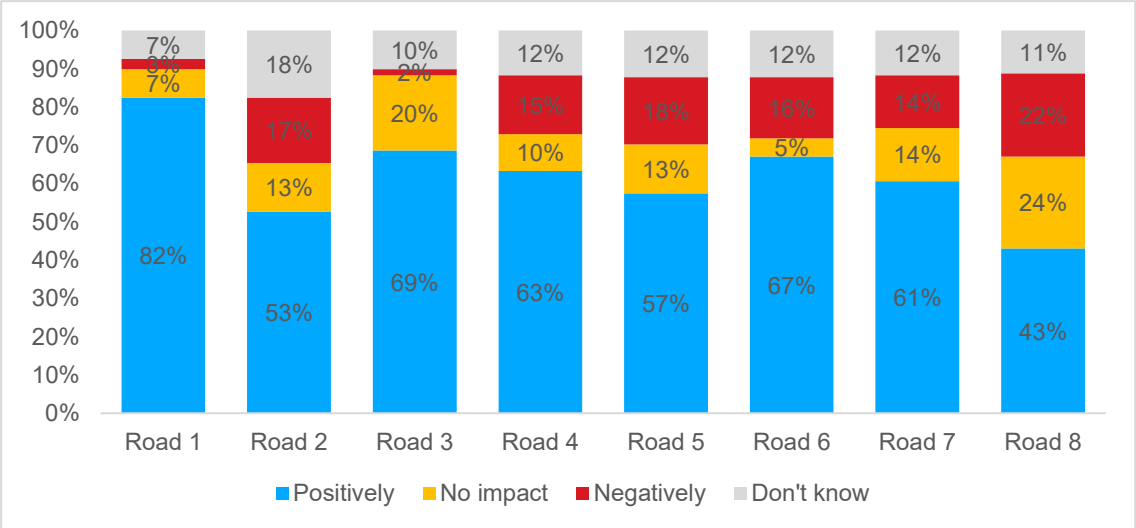

Figure 5-20: How would each of the road options under consideration impact you, if at all

[3] It should be noted that the alignments shown are the same as those presented during engagement. For the purposes of this report, they have been combined onto one diagram, and the lines are positioned to not overlap each other.

5.8.3 Whilst most stakeholders strongly opposed Road 1 (localised junction improvements), identifying it as a short-term 'plaster' for issues on the Fort William road network, public opinion showed a clear contrast. Results from the public survey reveal that Road 1 (localised junction improvements) received the greatest proportion of respondents noting a positive impact (82%, n=155). This differing viewpoint highlights the contrasting priorities of organisations and businesses compared with those of the general public.

5.8.4 Road 3 (Western Relief Road Alignment B), Road 4 (Caol Link to A830), Road 6 (Western Relief Road Alignment B + Caol Link to A830) and Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) received levels of positive response ranging between 60% and 70%. Road 2 (Western Relief Road Alignment A) and Road 5 (Caol Link to B8006) received comparatively low levels of support, with 53% (n=99) and 57% (n=108) of respondents indicating a positive impact.

5.8.5 Road 8 (multi-storey car park) received the lowest level of positive response, with 43% (n=81) of respondents indicating a positive impact, whilst also accounting for the highest proportion of negative responses at 22% (n=41). Unlike the other road options, this option does not involve improvements to the road network and instead focuses on changes to parking provision.

5.8.6 Except for Road 1 (localised junction improvements) and Road 3 (Western Relief Road Alignment B), all other road options received a notable proportion of negative responses, ranging from 14% to 22%. These results highlight the potentially significant and varied impacts that road-based interventions, including bypass provision, may have on the public.

5.8.7 Although Road 2 (Western Relief Road Alignment A) and Road 3 (Western Relief Road Alignment B) follow similar alignments, public perception differed notably between the two options. Road 3 (Alignment B) received more positive feedback and considerably less negative comment than Road 2 (Alignment A). Responses to open-ended questions indicated that some members of the public believed Road 3 (Alignment B) would have a lesser environmental impact, and they also favoured its connection to the A82 via an existing junction rather than the introduction of a new one. The public were also asked to outline which options would provide the most benefit to them. The results of this are presented in Figure 5-21. Respondents were able to select a maximum of two options for this question.

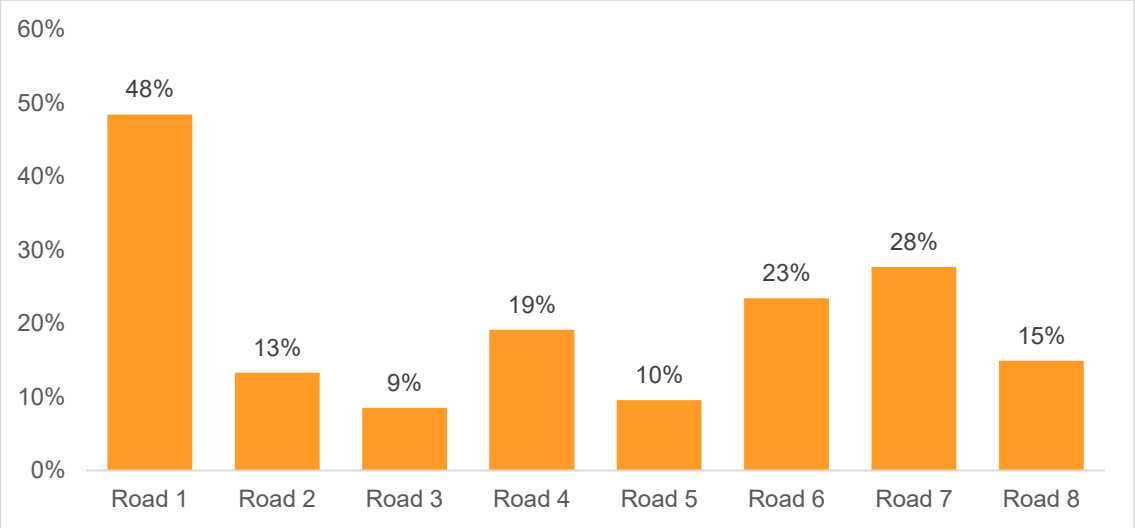

Figure 5-21: Which of the road options would provide the most benefit to you as an individual

5.8.8 Road 1 (localised junction improvements) was the most popular and selected by 48% (n=91) of respondents as the option that would provide the most benefit. The next most frequently selected option was Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout), with 28% (n=52), followed by Road 6 (Western Relief Road Alignment B + Caol Link to A830) and Road

4 (Caol Link to A830), which was chosen by 23% (n=44) and 19% (n=36) of respondents respectively.

5.8.9 Road 8 (multi-storey car park), Road 2 (Western Relief Road Alignment A), Road 3 (Western Relief Road Alignment B) and Road 5 (Caol Link to B8006) all received 15% or less of the responses, highlighting that these are considered to provide the least benefit.

5.8.10 Alongside these two questions relating to the road options, respondents were able to provide any specific comments they may have in relation to the road options. The overarching themes of the responses included:

- Road options were the most divisive, with tension between providing congestion relief and protecting the environment and recreational assets.
- Many respondents identified the routing of strategic through-traffic through the town centre as the core issue, providing support for road options that would alleviate this.
- Concerns were raised over the financial cost of building a bypass and the time frame of the solution, suggesting that it may not be worth it when weighing up the costs and benefits.
- Several respondents also noted that expanding the road network rather than altering travel patterns would induce more traffic on to the road network and ultimately result in the same congestion issues.

5.8.11 There were also some comments relating to specific road options, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Road 1 (localised junction improvements)** was broadly supported as a short-term solution, but respondents often emphasised that this wouldn't be sufficient on its own and must be delivered as part of a wider strategy with other options.
- **Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout)** received the most support out of the bypass alignments, with respondents arguing that it would improve network resilience and journey time reliability.

Business / Organisation Responses

5.8.12 The results indicate that businesses and organisations perceived Road 6 (Western Relief Road Alignment B + Caol Link to A830) as providing the greatest positive impact, followed by Road 4 (Caol Link to A830) and Road 5 (Caol Link to B8006). Consistent with the public responses, businesses and organisations indicated that Road 8 (multi-storey car park) would provide the least positive impact.

5.8.13 Businesses and organisations were also asked to identify which road option would provide the most benefit to them. The results reaffirm support for Road 1 (localised junction improvements) and Road 6 (Western Relief Road Alignment B + Caol Link to A830) which were followed closely by Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout). Road 2 (Western Relief Road Alignment A), Road 3 (Western Relief Road Alignment B), Road 4 (Caol Link to A930) and Road 8 (multi-storey car park) each received a relatively small proportion of responses, with none of the businesses and organisations selecting Road 5 (Caol Link to B8006).

5.8.14 Alongside these two questions relating to the road options, respondents were able to submit qualitative comments in relation to the road options. The overarching themes of the responses included:

- Businesses and organisations reiterated that Fort William's road network is highly constrained and vulnerable, meaning that any incident often leads to disproportionate impacts on operations.

- Journey time reliability was noted as a key operational issue, with unpredictable delays affecting staff access, deliveries, bus and coach timetables and the scheduling of freight operations.

- Road options were generally supported where they were perceived to improve network resilience.

- There was clear concern about construction impacts, with businesses emphasising that prolonged or poorly phased roadworks could have significant economic effects if not carefully managed.

- Businesses consistently noted that road options should not undermine town-centre accessibility, with concerns about maintaining appropriate access for customers, servicing, coaches and disabled users.

- While businesses and organisations recognised the need for road investment, respondents cautioned that road schemes alone would not solve congestion and should be delivered alongside measures that improve public transport performance and reduce unnecessary vehicle trips.

- Several organisations referenced the importance of deliverability, funding certainty and phasing, noting that stalled or partially delivered schemes can create prolonged disruption without delivering benefits.

5.8.15 There were also some comments relating to specific road options, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Road 1 (localised junction improvements)** was generally supported as an achievable intervention that would address delays at known pinch points and would help to somewhat reduce the congestion during the summer peak period.

- **Road 6 (Western Relief Road Alignment B + Caol Link to A830) and Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout)** received the strongest support amongst the road options, with respondents noting that they would provide the most resilience to the road network in Fort William and take through traffic away from existing pinch points.

Road Option Summary

5.8.16 From the responses, the public noted that Road 1 (localised junction improvements) would provide the greatest positive impact while the businesses and organisations stated that Road 6 (Western Relief Road Alignment B + Caol Link to A830) would. However, both groups noted that Road 8 (multi-storey car park) would have the greatest negative impact and the least positive impact, indicating a lack of support for moving off-street car parking to outside the town centre.

5.8.17 Both the public and businesses and organisations noted that Road 1 (localised junction improvements) would provide a relatively low cost option compared to the other options and would help alleviate the congestion issues at the existing junctions. However, the two groups differ in opinion across the other options with the businesses and organisations supporting Road 6 (Western Relief Road Alignment B + Caol Link to A830) and the public supporting Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout). Despite the differing opinion on the routing of the bypass, both the public and business responses indicate a broad level of support

for a strategic road intervention to address the issues on the road network alongside the shorter-term interventions outlined in Road 1 (localised junction improvements).

5.9 Other Options

5.9.1 One other option was included as part of the consultation as noted below.

- **Other 1 (W1):** Introduce a water taxi route between Corpach, the west side of Loch Linnhe and Fort William

Figure 5-22: Map of Other Option

5.9.2 The public were asked to indicate how the other option would impact them. The results of this have been presented in Figure 5-23.

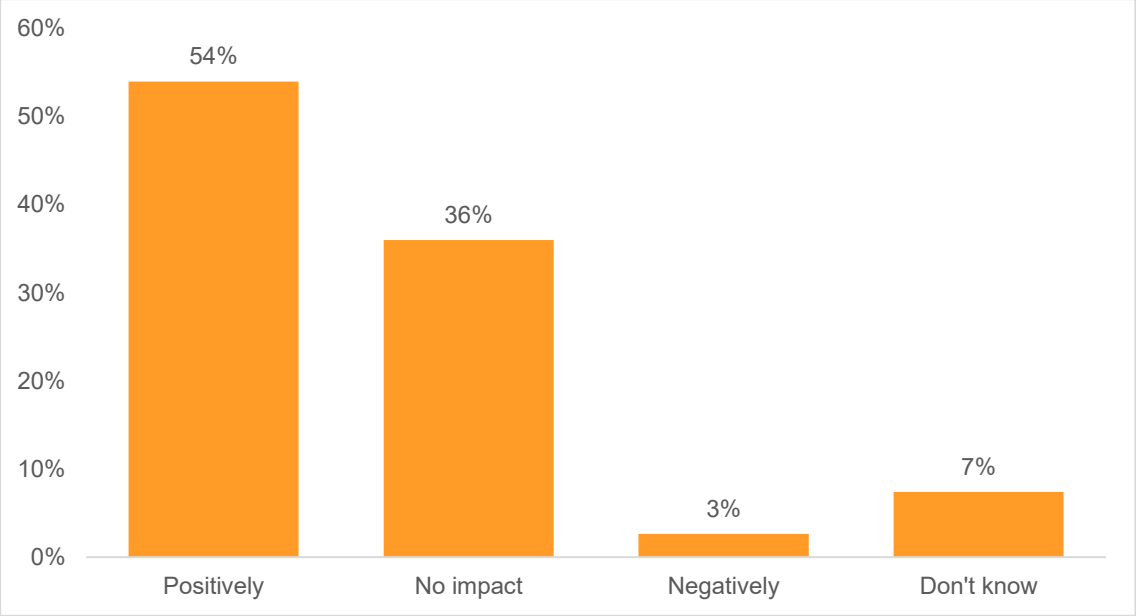

Figure 5-23: How would the other option under consideration impact you, if at all

5.9.3 Other 1 (water taxi) was moderately supported, with 54% (n=101) of responses being positive. However, a large proportion of respondents also indicated that it would not impact them (36%, n=68). As only one option was presented, respondents were not asked to identify the option that would provide the most benefit to them.

5.9.4 Alongside the question on the impact of the other option, respondents were able to provide any specific comments they may have in relation to the other option. Responses included:

- Seen as an attractive, distinctive idea rather than a clear solution to the traffic issues faced in Fort William.
- Regarded as a complementary service, useful for visitors and leisure trips, rather than every-day journeys.
- Some concern over the year-round viability of the water taxi due to the harsh weather conditions faced, particularly in winter months.
- Respondents recognised Fort William's historic rail and maritime assets as underutilised.

Business / Organisation Responses

5.9.5 The responses received from those representing businesses and organisations broadly aligned with the public responses. The majority noted that Other 1 (water taxi) would have a positive impact, with a large proportion indicating that it would have no impact on their business / organisation.

5.9.6 Alongside the question on the impact of the other option, respondents were able to provide any specific comments they may have in relation to the other option. Responses included:

- The idea was praised for utilising Loch Linnhe as an asset and respondents indicated that this option would provide a great experience for visitors.
- Some support for the option was dependent on the timetable and stop locations, with some responses raising concerns over the accessibility of the water taxi.

Other Option Summary

5.9.7 Generally, it was considered that the water taxi would have a positive impact, with a high proportion noting that it would have no impact on them. It was also noted that it would be unlikely to have a negative impact.

5.10 Additional Comments

5.10.1 Respondents were able to provide further comment on the Integrated Transport Plan Study more generally following the completion of the option sections. These responses have been separated based on whether they were from a member of the public or from those representing a business / organisation.

Public Responses

5.10.2 The responses received from the public included:

- Concern that previous transport studies and consultations have not resulted in visible delivery, leading to scepticism about whether the options proposed in the Fort William Integrated Transport Plan Study would materialise.
- Many respondents noted that shorter-term options should be prioritised over longer-term options.
- Several respondents highlighted that accessibility needs are often disadvantaged because of the poor quality of infrastructure, highlighting the need for consistent standards of infrastructure.
- Many respondents reiterated that poor maintenance and asset management is a core issue, that should be prioritised before additional infrastructure is considered.
- The pressure of tourism was a recurring theme, with respondents citing tourism as the cause of all transport issues rather than growing population. Respondents called for better visitor demand management and measures to discourage unnecessary car movements by tourists by placing greater expectation that visitors use rail, bus and active travel methods of travel.
- There were several requests for clarity on the costs of the options to better understand which would realistically be affordable.

Business / Organisation Responses

5.10.3 The responses received from businesses and organisations included:

- Emphasis on the importance of reliability and predictability, with businesses stressing that unexpected delay is often more damaging than moderate congestion.
- There was concern over seasonal volatility and the need for solutions to be a balance between what is required to deal with the summer peak period, whilst also understanding that during the quieter winter periods the roads aren't necessarily an issue.
- Repeated calls for clear accountability for the maintenance of both existing and new infrastructure, and the need to make this accessible for all.

- There was an emphasis on integration over expansion, with businesses and organisations favouring improvements to interchanges, clear signage and information, and coordination between modes of transport.

- There was some concern over the possibility of parking reconfiguration without adequate transition planning, particularly for businesses in the town centre.

- Several respondents noted that although smaller solutions are important, they will not solve the congestion issues in Fort William. However, they also cautioned against pursuing costly and long-term solutions without a clear business case.

5.11 Responses Received via Email

5.11.1 A briefing note and advanced access to the StoryMap was sent to all elected representatives prior to the public engagement with the offer of a one-to-one discussion. The information was sent to all local ward councillors, the constituency MSP, regional MSPs and the constituency MP.

5.11.2 Four responses were received directly via email and a summary of the key issues raised through the email correspondence are provided below. Due to their small number, email correspondence is available in full on request.

5.11.3 **Respondent 1 (Elected Representative):** This response provides a strongly policy-led perspective, questioning the inclusion of road expansion as a core solution. They emphasise that increasing road capacity risks inducing traffic and undermining climate commitments. Instead, they advocate a transport strategy centred on reducing demand and shifting modes:

- Strong concern about inclusion of road expansion options, highlighting evidence that increased capacity induces traffic and conflicts with climate policy.

- Calls for stricter appraisal of road schemes and prioritisation of demand reduction, modal shift, and accessibility.

- Emphasises need for high-quality active travel networks, improved bus priority, and more locally relevant rail services.

- Supports greater focus on freight by rail and water, and a broader definition of resilience based on reducing reliance on cars.

5.11.4 **Respondent 2 (Public Sector Organisation):** This response is operationally focused, recognising the value of rail improvements but highlighting practical constraints. It stresses the importance of coordination between different transport systems:

- Supports rail options that improve sustainable commuting (Rail 1 – increased frequency of services to/from Mallaig; Rail 2 – new stations; and Rail 4 – increased frequency of services to/from Spean Bridge).

- Accepts the issues around conflicts at the swing bridge affecting canal use (M8 – Banavie Swing Bridge hours).

- Recommends closer integration of rail timetabling and canal operation.

5.11.5 **Respondent 3 (Community Organisation):** This submission reflects local priorities around congestion and connectivity, with a clear preference for road-based interventions alongside active travel improvements.

- Supports specific road options Road 6 (Western Relief Road Alignment B + Caol Link to A830) and Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout), highlighting the benefits of new links and a second river crossing on resilience and development potential.

- Strongly supportive of active travel link from Caol to Fort William through Inverlochy (Active Travel 9), acknowledging the high potential to cycle into the town centre from Caol.

5.11.6 **Individual Respondent (road-options):** These views emphasise the importance of road options in providing practical congestion relief and network resilience:

- Supports specific road options Road 6 (Western Relief Road Alignment B + Caol Link to A830) and Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) or a combination of these two options to improve reliability.

- Highlights benefits of Road 7 (Bypass from Carrs Corner to Belford Road Roundabout) for opening up development.

- Endorses complementary active travel provision.

5.11.7 **Individual Respondent (rail-options):** This response takes a strategic view of rail, highlighting how current timetable constraints limit its role as an alternative to driving:

- Identifies the heritage rail services provided by the Jacobite as a material constraint on the usability of the Fort William-Mallaig section for wider public transport purposes (Rail 1).

- Emphasises the strong case for a midday Fort William-Mallaig return working and for an early-morning Fort William-Rannoch working that could serve both access to the upland corridor and inbound commuting before 09:00.

- Advocates expanded and more coherent rail services (Rail 1 and Rail 4).

- Emphasises rail's potential to reduce road congestion and support everyday travel.

5.12 Representativeness of the Online Survey Sample

5.12.1 The public were asked to provide some personal information to understand whether the responses received are reflective of the population in Fort William. These questions were not required to be completed, with respondents able to select 'Prefer not to say' if they did not want to provide this information.

5.12.2 As the study area incorporates the localities of Fort William, Caol and Banavie and Corpach, the wider Fort William settlement has been used to provide context data from the 2022 Census.

5.12.3 The population of the study area was recorded as 10,302[4] in the 2022 Census, meaning that the survey responses represent approximately 2% of the total population of the study area. It should be noted that respondents were required to be 18 or older to respond, meaning that 8,366 people out of the settlement population were able to respond. Residents from outside of the settlement area were also able to respond to the survey.

[4] Fort William: 2022 Overview. Accessed here: https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/search-the-census#/location/CSETT2022?title=Census%20Settlement%202022

5.12.4 Figure 5-24 outlines the place of residence of the respondents to the public survey, with 31% (n=59) noting they do not live within the study area. Other areas of residence included Roybridge (6), Kinlochleven (5), Lochyside (5), Claggan (3), Kinlocheil (3) and Spean Bridge (3). The other areas mentioned were only noted once.

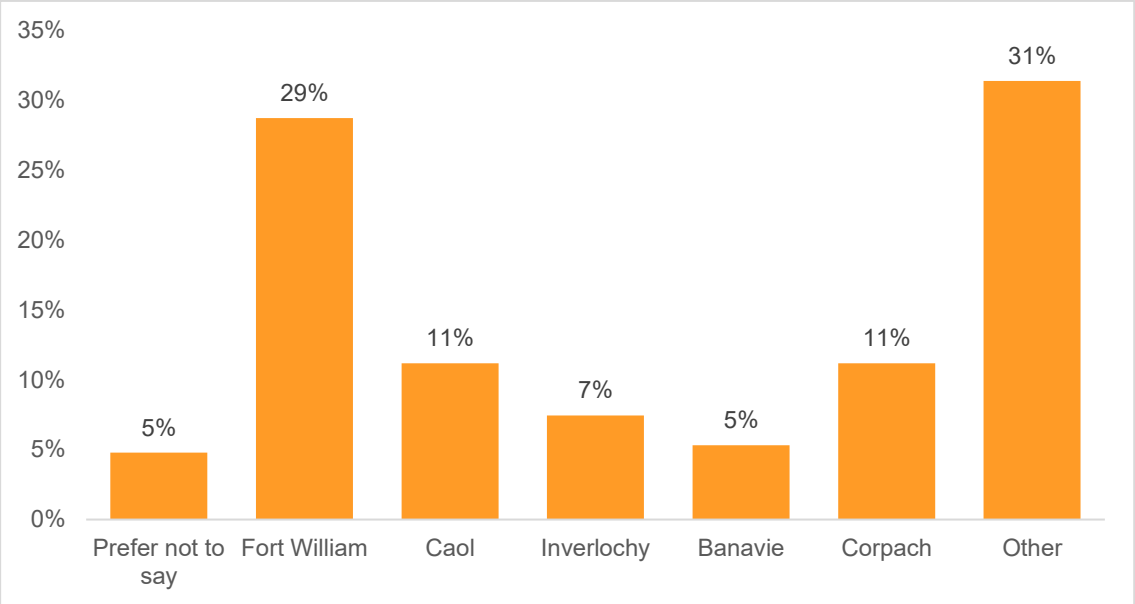

Figure 5-24: Place of residence of the respondents to the public survey

5.12.5 Figure 5-25 illustrates the sex of the respondents in comparison to the 2022 Census data. The split between male and female is similar between the survey responses and the Census 2022 data.

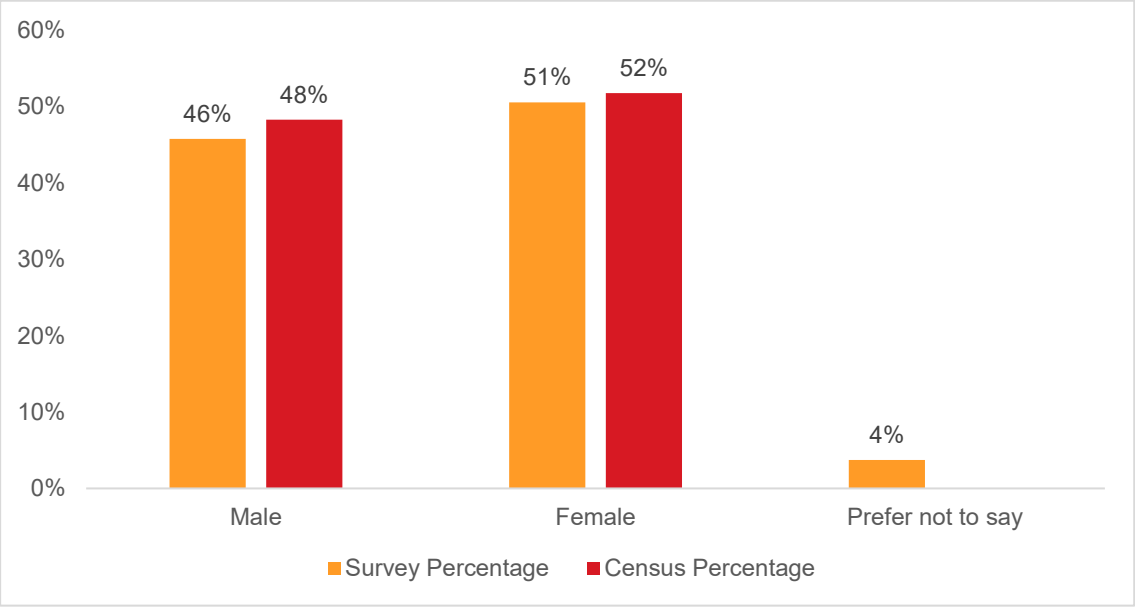

Figure 5-25: Sex of respondents to the public survey and the census data for the study area

5.12.6 Figure 5-26 presents the age of respondents to the survey compared to the 2022 Census for the study area. This shows that there is an overrepresentation of respondents aged between 25 and 54 and an underrepresentation of survey respondents over the age of 65.

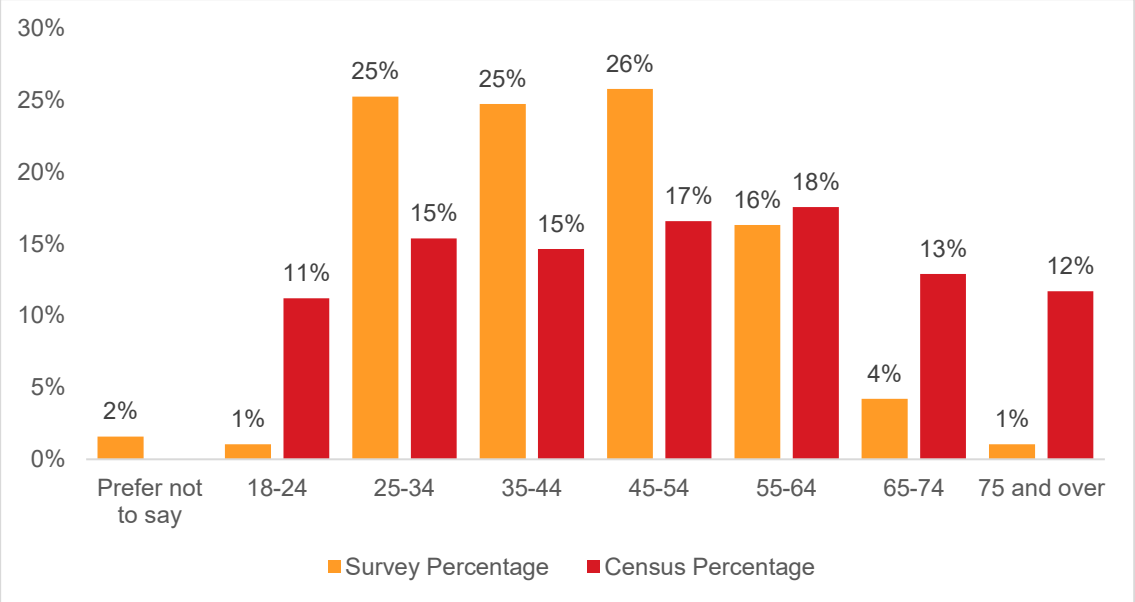

Figure 5-26: Age of respondents to the public survey and the census data for the study area

5.12.7 Figure 5-27 illustrates the current description of economic activity of the respondents in comparison to the 2022 Census for the study area.

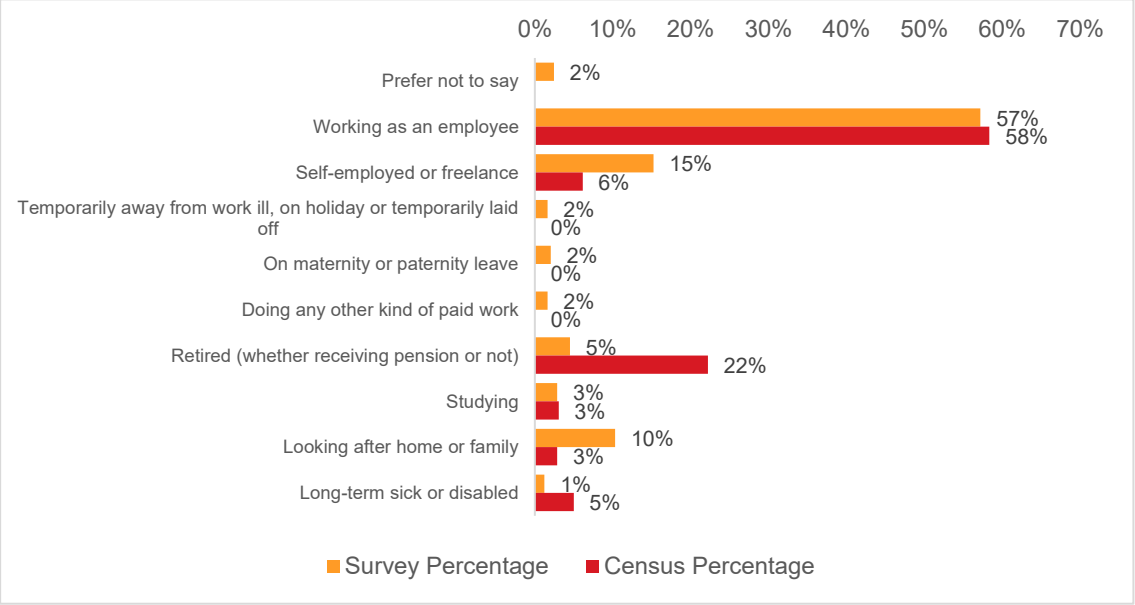

Figure 5-27: Economic activity of the respondents and the Census for the study area

5.12.8 The economic activity of the respondents is broadly reflective of the 2022 Census data for the study area, with the majority of respondents working as an employee. However, unlike the Census data, there is a lower proportion who are retired which reflects the low level of responses from those over the age of 65.

5.12.9 The number of cars per household is illustrated in Figure 5-28. Compared to the Census, the survey respondents underrepresented the number of people who do not have access to a car and overrepresented those who have access to 2 or more cars. This could lead to biases within the results of the public survey, with respondents potentially preferring options that favour private vehicles.

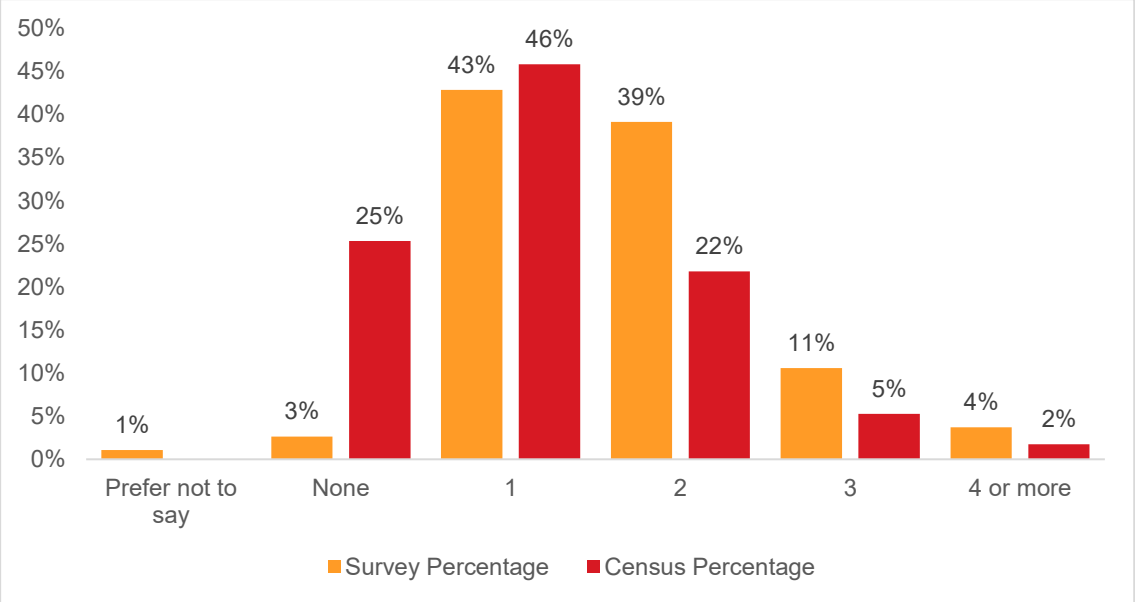

Figure 5-28: Cars per household of respondents to the survey and the Census for the study area

5.12.10 An overview of the health conditions of the respondents to the survey and the 2022 Census for the study area is outlined in Figure 5-29. The results indicate that generally those with health problems are under-represented in the results of the public survey.

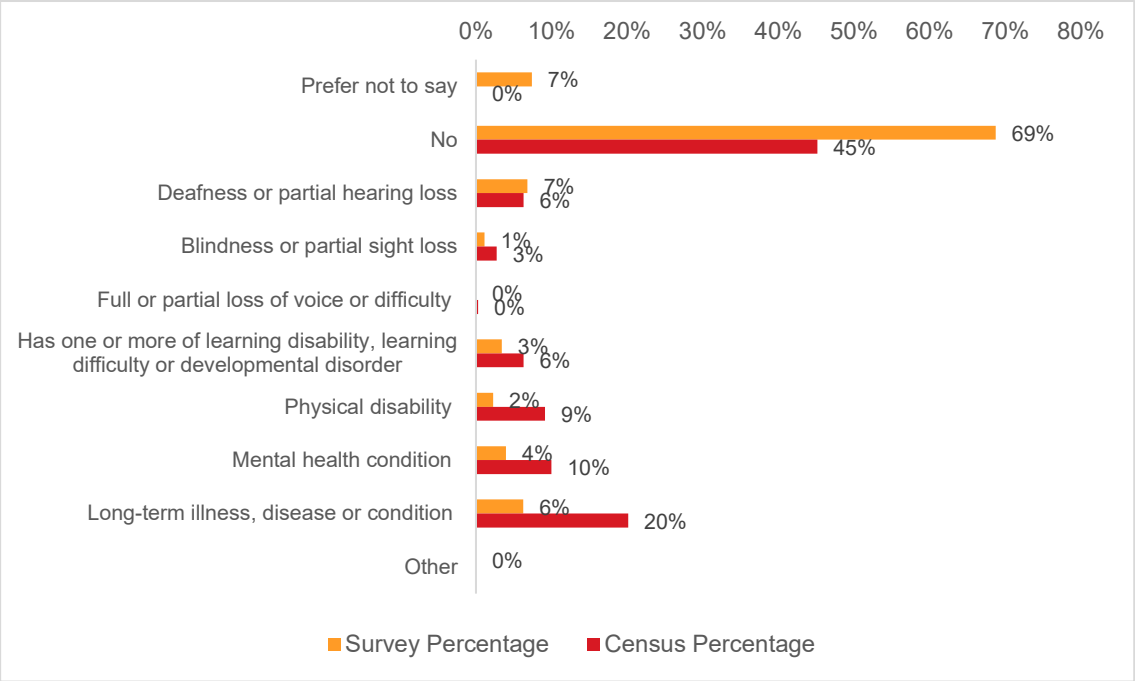

Figure 5-29: Health problems of the survey respondents and the Census for the study area

5.12.11 Figure 5-30 illustrates the number of survey respondents that are impacted by their health condition daily. Again, the public survey overrepresents those who are not impacted by health problems and underrepresents those who are impacted.

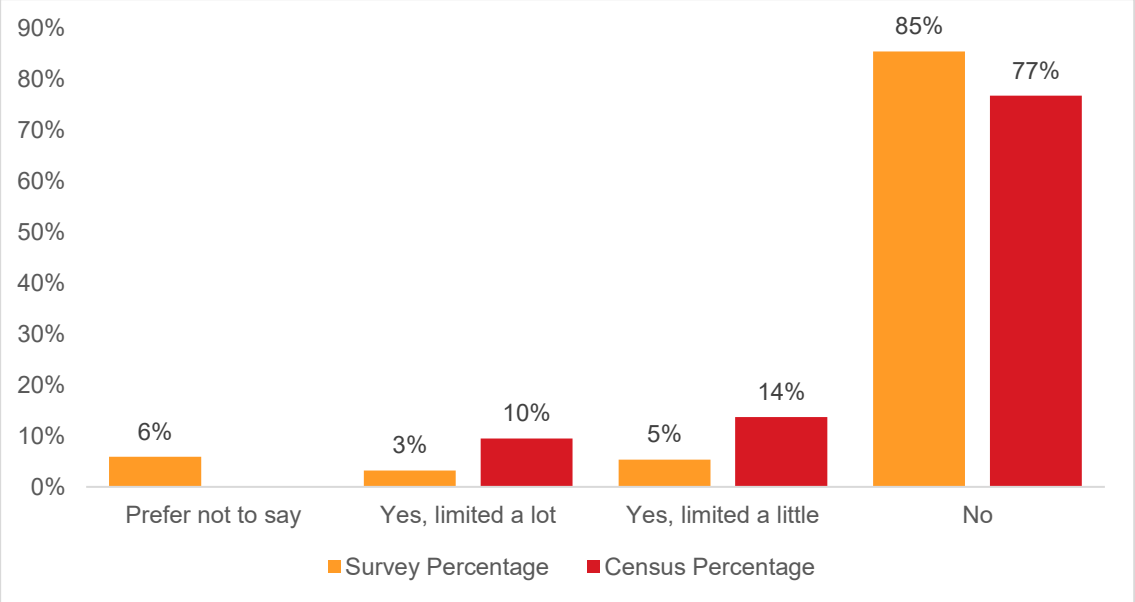

Figure 5-30: Impact of health problems on survey respondents and the Census for the study area

6 Engagement and Consultation Summary

6.1.1 The engagement and consultation activities undertaken as part of the Fort William Integrated Transport Plan Study provided a detailed understanding of the transport challenges currently experienced within Fort William and the surrounding areas, as well as the opportunities and concerns associated with the range of options under consideration. Engagement was carried out with a wide range of stakeholders, businesses, public authorities and members of the public to get a wide range of feedback on the proposed options.

6.1.1 Overall, there was recognition across all engagement streams that the existing transport network in Fort William is under significant pressure and is no longer fit for purpose. Congestion, lack of resilience, seasonal variability and the dependence on a limited number of key corridors were consistently identified as fundamental issues. These challenges were widely acknowledged to affect residents' quality of life, business operations, public transport reliability and emergency service response times.

6.1.2 Across both public and stakeholder engagement, there was clear support for those Transport Planning Objectives focused on reducing delay and variability, improving network resilience and supporting sustainable economic growth. While there was broad agreement with the overarching objectives, engagement responses demonstrated that views differed on how best to achieve these outcomes.

6.1.3 In addition to mode-specific feedback, several themes emerged repeatedly throughout the engagement. These included:

- Calls for prioritisation and phased delivery;
- Concerns about the delivery of previous transport studies not translating into tangible change;
- The ongoing importance of maintenance; and
- Accessibility and inclusive design of proposed infrastructure.