

Climate Action Strathaven

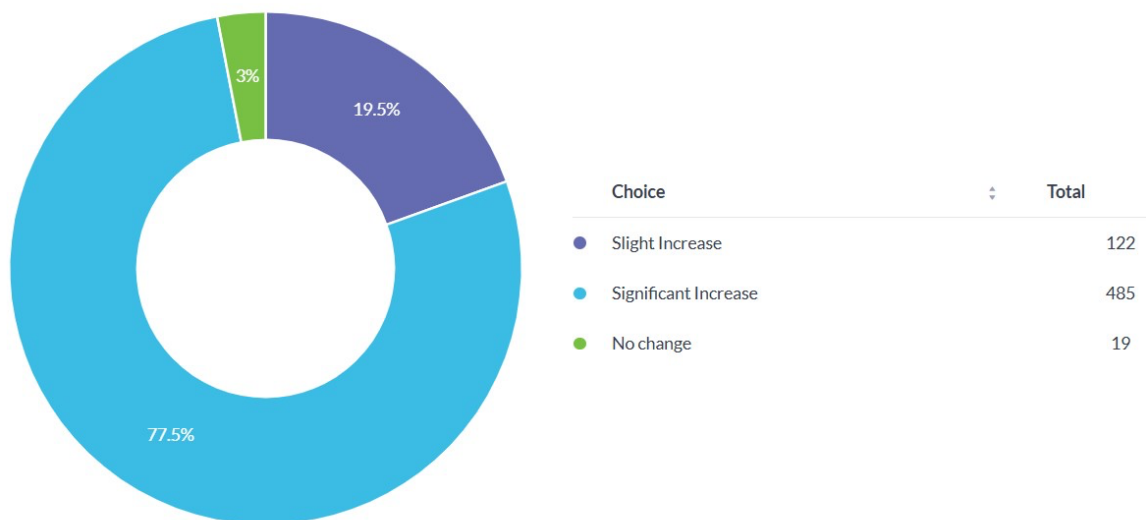
Strathaven Transport Survey 2024

Summary of Survey

Climate Action Strathaven initiated a transport survey in July 2024 to gauge opinion on a number of traffic and transport related areas around our town centre. This was open to residents of Strathaven and surrounding villages and resulted in 624 responses, 614 of which were from Avondale residents. The questions were either multiple choice (with more than one option being available to select), sliding scale or free format answers. This report is a summary of those 624 responses.

Q2

Have you seen an increase in the volume of traffic in and around Strathaven over the last few years?
Multiple Choice

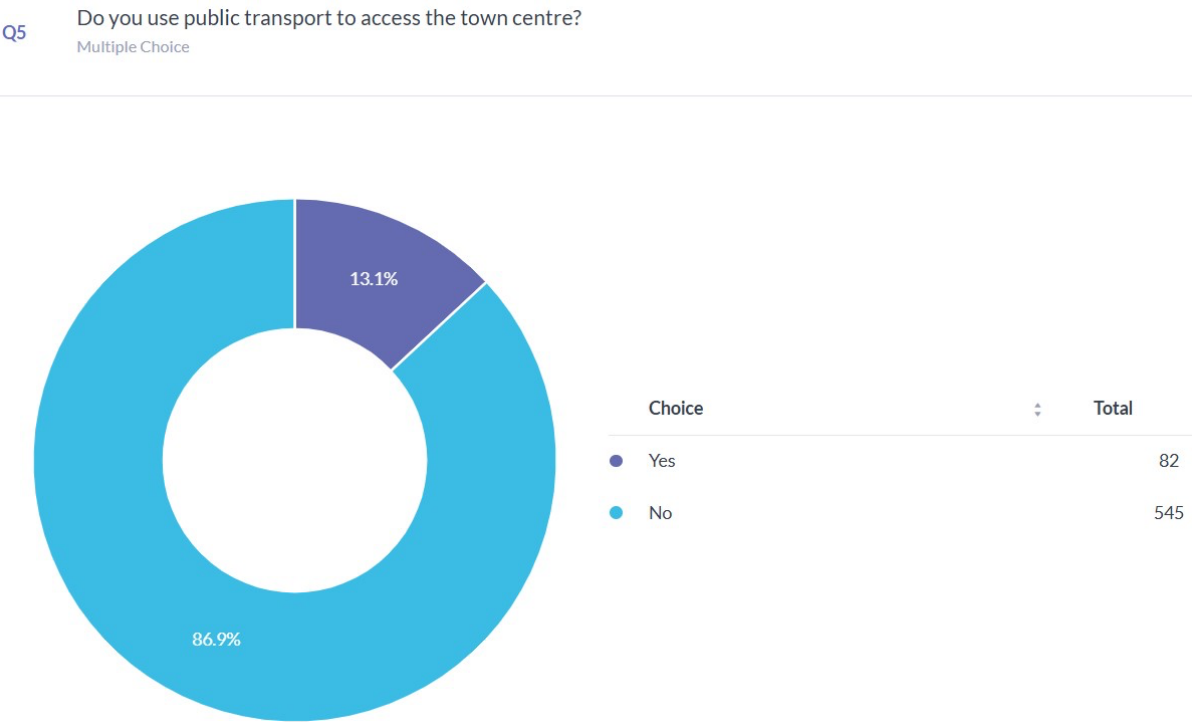


The first question related to traffic volumes in Strathaven town centre. 77.9% of respondents said they had seen a significant increase in traffic in recent years with 19.5% saying they had seen a slight increase. Only 3% thought there had been no change. This indicates a strong view that traffic volumes have increased, and that action is needed to address the concerns. Subsequent questions asked what changes were required and will be dealt with later in this report. However overall, this question alone suggests that we should be looking at options for how to mitigate this issue, and how we can make our town centre a more attractive place to visit through managing traffic volumes.

The survey then asked for respondents to say how safe they felt about their safety as a pedestrian. On a sliding scale from 1-10 with 10 being the most unsafe, the average was 6.03, indicating that the town centre is more unsafe than safe. Again this indicates that

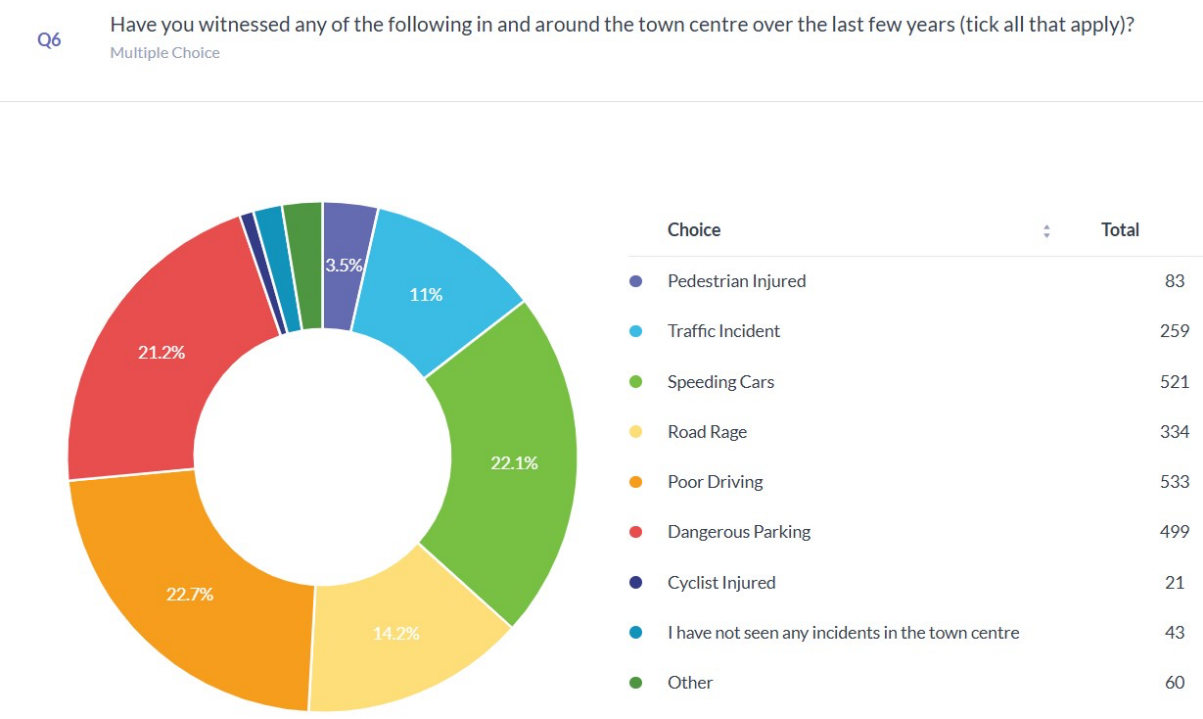
steps need to be taken to reduce this figure and work carried out to increase the perception of safety in our town centre.

On the question of how safe users of pedestrian crossings felt, on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the most unsafe, the average was 6.92, again indicating that users felt more unsafe than safe crossing our roads. Safety of pedestrians should be a priority within a town centre and this result indicates that work is required to address safety at pedestrian crossings. The only controlled crossings in the town centre are at the Green Street/Common Green/ Lethame Road/Townhead Street junction, on Kirk Street at the top of Main Street and the Barn Street/Glasgow Road/Commercial Road junction. All other areas require pedestrians to cross without traffic management and this will also be a potential safety issue.



The next question related to public transport. This is a key question, as effective public transport and good usage rates of public transport are essential to managing car usage in our town centre. 86.9% of respondents said they never used public transport. It suggests two things. That there may not be enough public transport in our area and that the public transport available either does not fully support user needs or there is no enthusiasm for using public transport as opposed to using a car. We have limited public transport with two bus services (254 and 256/13) servicing Hamilton and East Kilbride with access also to Stonehouse and Larkhall. There is the 3C service to and from Glasgow, also servicing Stonehouse. However there is no provision for public transport in many of our communities, for example Sandford and estates off Lesmahagow Road, new estates off the A71 and Lethame Road and residential areas off Hamilton Road. That is a significant number of residential areas with no access to public transport. Avondale Community Bus provides limited services to outlying areas but not on a daily

basis. It is clear that with a figure of 86.9% of respondents not using public transport, if this is reflected across the wider community we have a major challenge in changing transport behaviours.

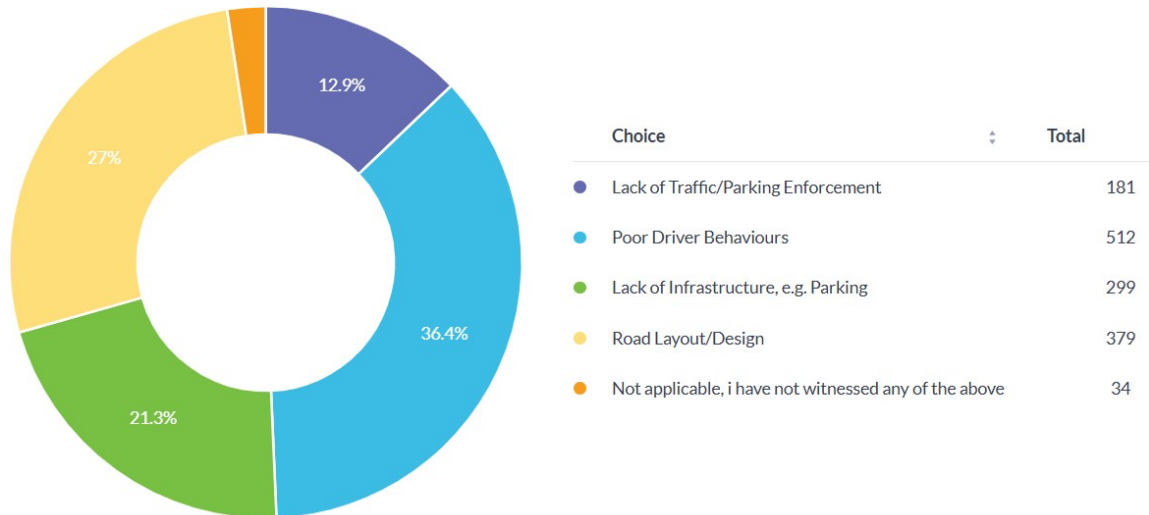


We then asked about the types of incidents respondents had witnessed. This was a multiple choice question with respondents able to answer for more than one type of incident. 533 had witnessed incidents of poor driving with 521 witnessing speeding cars. There were 499 reported incidents of dangerous parking and 334 incidents of road rage. Only 43 reported having witnessed no incidents at all. Strathaven and Glassford Community Council has long reported through the SLC Transport Liaison meeting that there were major issues in our town centre and this survey clearly reflects that. It builds on the excellent survey carried out last year by a concerned resident on Glasgow Road and emphasises that there is action required in our town centre, whether it is increasing driver awareness of the need to drive safely or changes in infrastructure or traffic management to reduce the likelihood of such incidents.

Q7

Thinking about your last answer/s, why do you think these incidents have occurred?

Multiple Choice

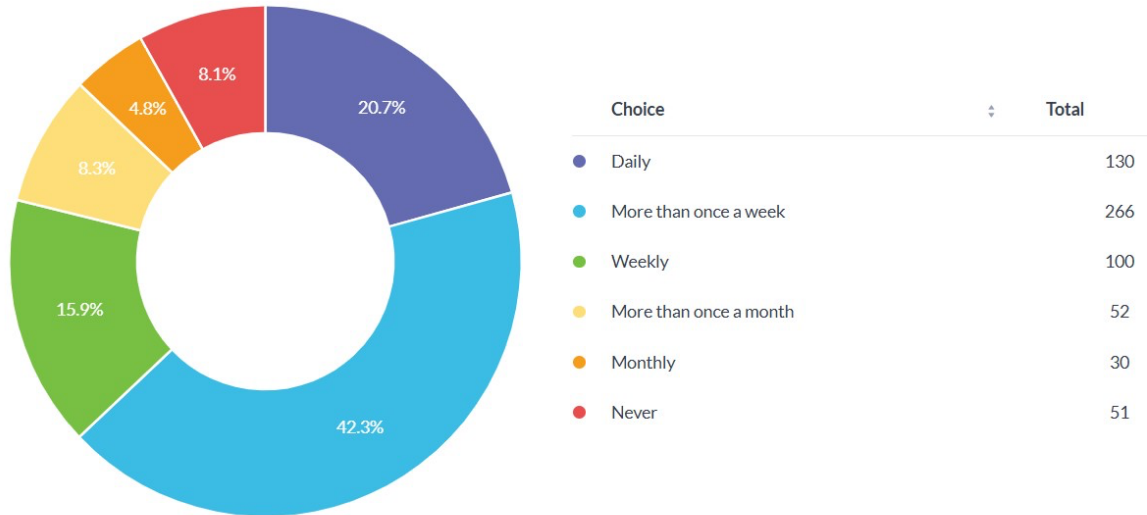


The survey showed that 379 respondents put the incidents down to road layout and design, 512 put the incidents down to poor driver behaviour and 299 to a lack of infrastructure to support traffic in the town centre. There is no one quick fix, but it suggests that a combination of driver awareness, layout changes and perhaps increased levels of traffic enforcement by the Police and South Lanarkshire Council could have an impact on the levels of incidents experienced in the town centre. A recent FOI request into fixed penalty notices issued for poor and/or dangerous parking in the last year revealed that none had been issued by Police Scotland in the previous two years. A similar request to SLC revealed 549 Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued in 2022/23 and 406 in 2023/24 in the whole of the ML10 area.

Q8

How often do you drive a car into the town centre?

Multiple Choice

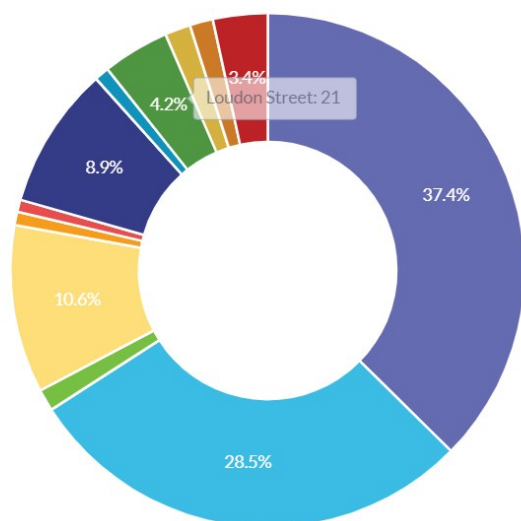


We asked how often people drive into the town centre. 20.7% (130) drive into the town centre daily, 42.3% (266) drive in more than once a week with only 8.1% never driving into the town centre. This shows there is a huge reliance on cars for bringing people into the town centre. The challenge is changing this behaviour without driving locals away from Strathaven and its businesses. We need to look at how this behaviour can be changed and how we make it easier for people to get into the town centre without using cars.

Q9

If you drive into the town centre where do you usually park your car (tick all that apply to you)?

Multiple Choice

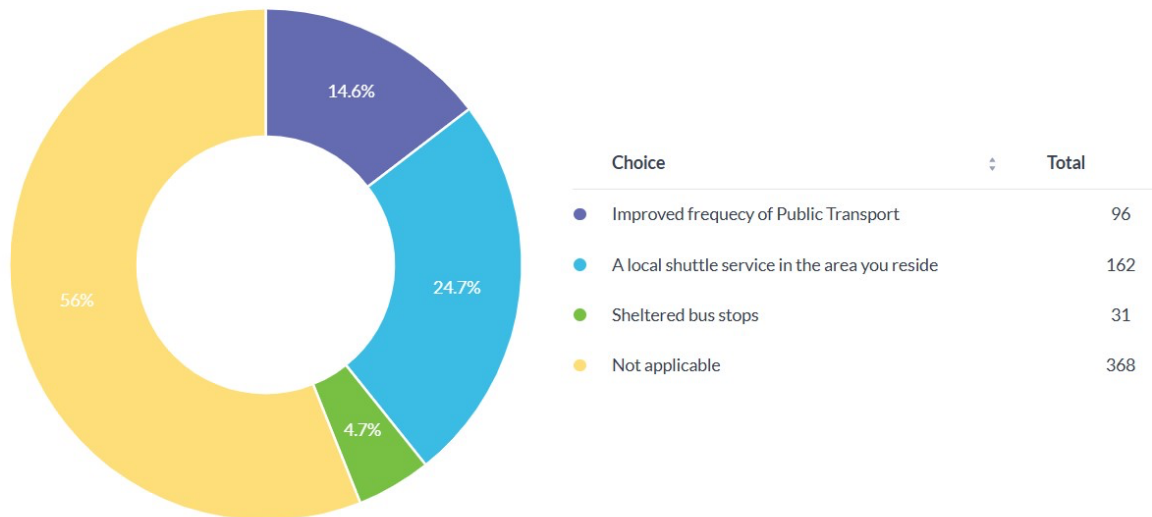


Common Green Large Car Park	489
Common Green Middle Area	373
Green Street	18
Waterside Street	138
Townhead Street	11
Kirk Street	10
Station Road	117
Thomson Street	12
The Ward	55
Loudon Street	21
None of the above	19
Not applicable, i never drive into the town centre	45

It is clear from the next question that drivers are keen to park as close to the town centre as possible. Of the 614, 489 use the Common Green car park, 373 park in the centre of the Common Green, 138 use Waterside Street and 117 use the long term car park on Station Road. Others use Loudoun Street, Commercial Road, Glasgow Road, etc. Parking on side streets can be disruptive for residents and also increases the risks to pedestrians. Again the challenge is how to change this behaviour to make it easier for locals to access the services they need without necessarily bringing their cars, whilst not driving them away from Strathaven town centre.

Q10

What would encourage you not to bring your car into the town centre (tick all that apply)?
Multiple Choice

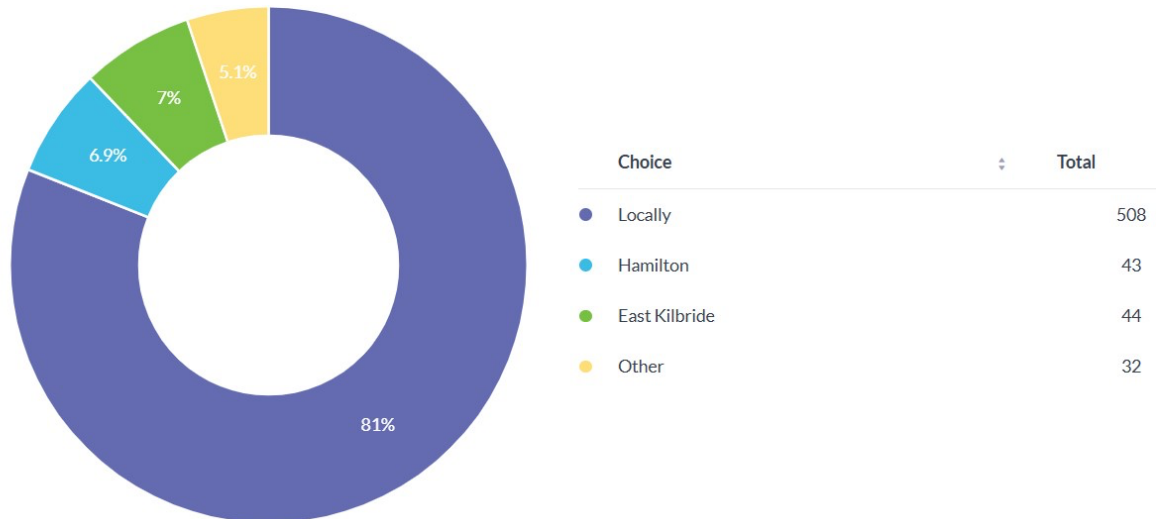


We asked next what would encourage drivers not to bring their cars into the town centre. 368 said this was not applicable, which suggests a lack of alternative options. 162 thought that a shuttle bus service would help. It reflects the comment earlier in the report about many estates in Strathaven and surrounding villages not being adequately served by public transport. This is something that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency to bring about effective change in driver behaviour. As with all things, only when a service is up and running and seen to be effective will behaviours change.

Q11

Where do you shop the most?

Multiple Choice

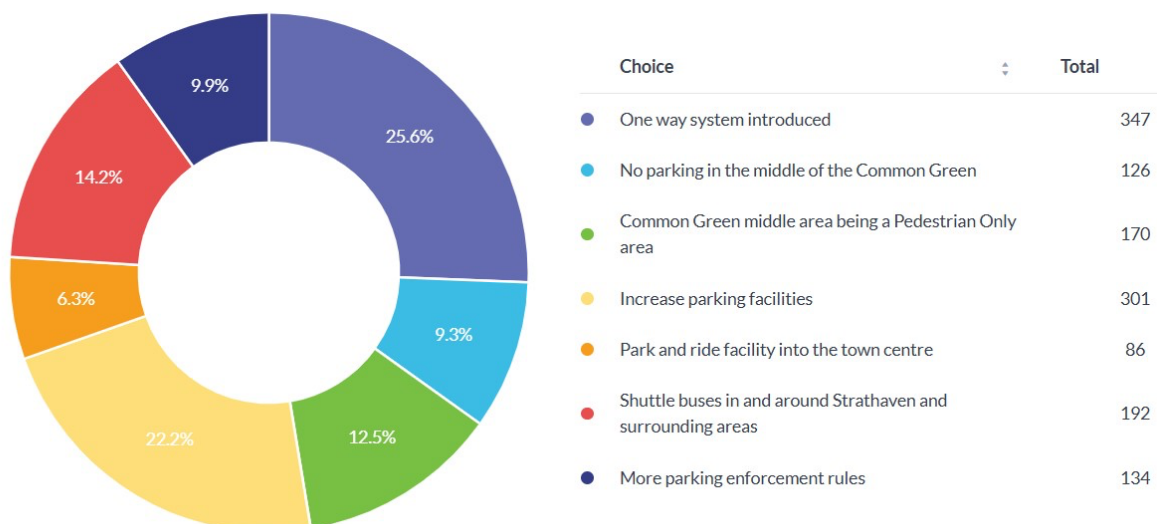


81% of respondents (508) said they regularly shop locally with 43 travelling to Hamilton and 44 to East Kilbride.

Q12

Thinking about the town centre, what changes would you like to see?

Multiple Choice



Finally we asked what respondents thought would bring about change in the traffic situation in the town centre. 347 thought a one way system would help. Following recent talks with South Lanarkshire Council about a one way system serving Wellbrae, Common Green and Bridge Street there was a public consultation after development of

outline plans. This is currently held up awaiting the outcome of a Reporter Hearing into the one objection that was received when this went out to public consultation. 301 thought increased parking was required, although this is not the solution if we are looking to reduce vehicle numbers in the town centre. 192 thought a shuttle bus was a good idea with 170 thinking that pedestrianising the Common Green was the answer. 134 thought increased levels of parking enforcement was required.

In summary there are some positives and negatives in the results of this survey. It is clear that the road layout is not fit for purpose in 2024, and that there remains a strong reliance on cars to get into the town centre. There is an appetite for change, but we need to decide how to drive this forward given the challenges of changing behaviours whilst not impacting on the use of Strathaven's many small businesses.

Conclusions

This survey highlights some key issues and challenges.

Enforcement

Firstly there is no enforcement in any realistic way that will influence and change driver behaviour. With a limited Traffic Warden presence, usually a few hours one day or more a week, there is no added incentive for drivers to park in a considerate and safe way. In a similar way, there are no regular Police patrols in the town. This limits the effectiveness of members of the public reporting dangerous parking to instigate enforcement due to the lack of Police presence in the town. Without enforcement of parking restrictions and yellow lines there is no way that driver behaviour is going to change in the short term. The fact that there have been no Police Scotland fixed penalty notices in the last two years is proof that enforcement is not happening, especially given the responses in our survey to incidents witnessed.

Public Transport

This is a key issue and one that is central to changing driver behaviour and reducing the number of vehicles in our town centre. For 89% of respondents to say they do not use public transport shows that it is either not adequate or there is no enthusiasm for using public transport. There has been a steady decline in the number of services in the last twenty years and we now have only the 254 and 13/256 services serving Hamilton and East Kilbride. There are no services catering for large areas and estates across Strathaven, meaning that residents are reliant on cars to get into the centre, or would have to walk significant distances which is not ideal with shopping. We need to see an expansion of public transport and for it to be delivered in innovative ways that suit our community. The 3C service is a good example. Since its launch in 2022 over 140,000 passengers have used this service which indicates that new services have an uptake.

In a similar way we need to see the development of local shuttle services serving communities without access to a scheduled bus service, as that could be a clear way to reduce vehicle numbers into Strathaven Town Centre. With the Transport Scotland Act

putting a responsibility on local authorities to support implementation of new bus services, we need to see support from SLC for such an initiative.

Road Layout/Design

Our towns and villages have expanded significantly in the last ten years. In Strathaven over 400 new houses have been built with more on the way. Infrastructure has not been improved to reflect the introduction of over 2000 new residents and in all likelihood at least 800 – 1000 new cars on our roads. Local villages have also expanded. The only major changes to road networks have been the dualling of Berebriggs Road and the change in priority at the Glassford Road/Hamilton Road junction.

South Lanarkshire Council manage any requests for road layout change based on injury accidents, with a minimum of three reports before it will consider changes to road layouts. We have a town with a road layout that was never designed for cars and we have a major trunk road dividing our town. The days of proposing a bypass may be over (the logical route for that of the old railway line has been built on in a number of locations deeming it unfeasible) but we need to see some action to improve our town centre for our community and our local businesses.

We await for example the report into the expansion of 20mph zones. There is a precedent of a major trunk road having a 20mph limit imposed. This was done on the A77 in Maybole prior to the introduction of a major bypass. There is no reason for this not being done on the A71 through Strathaven. We also need a radical rethink of the town centre, whether it is a one way system or limiting access to the Common Green, perhaps even pedestrianisation.

Active Travel

South Lanarkshire Council instigated an Active Travel survey a few years ago and despite a report being produced we have seen minimal action. We need to see pedestrians and cyclists given greater priority and support and that includes use of mobility vehicles as well. The survey showed pedestrians do not have confidence with the existing layout in the town centre and that has to be a priority for SLC.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the recent transport survey and this report be used to arrange a meeting with South Lanarkshire Council and Police Scotland to take forward the conclusions in this report.

It is also recommended that Climate Action Strathaven moves forward with the implementation of a shuttle service in areas not currently served by existing public transport.