

George V to Sea Lane Cycle Path 2025



WORTHING BOROUGH
COUNCIL

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Summary

This report details a public consultation regarding a proposal to widen the seafront footpath between Sea Lane and George V Avenue to create a shared-use path for pedestrians, cyclists, buggies, and wheelchair users.

Introduction

Worthing Borough Council have put forward a proposal to widen the seafront footpath that runs from Sea Lane to George V Avenue so that it can be enjoyed by pedestrians, cyclists, buggies and wheelchair users. This aligns with the council's priority to improve active travel.

Officers have been working with specialist transport planners and designers (WSP) to draw up preliminary designs for the path. We then launched a public consultation to gather views on the plans. This included an online form, two in person events and meetings with local stakeholders.

Background context

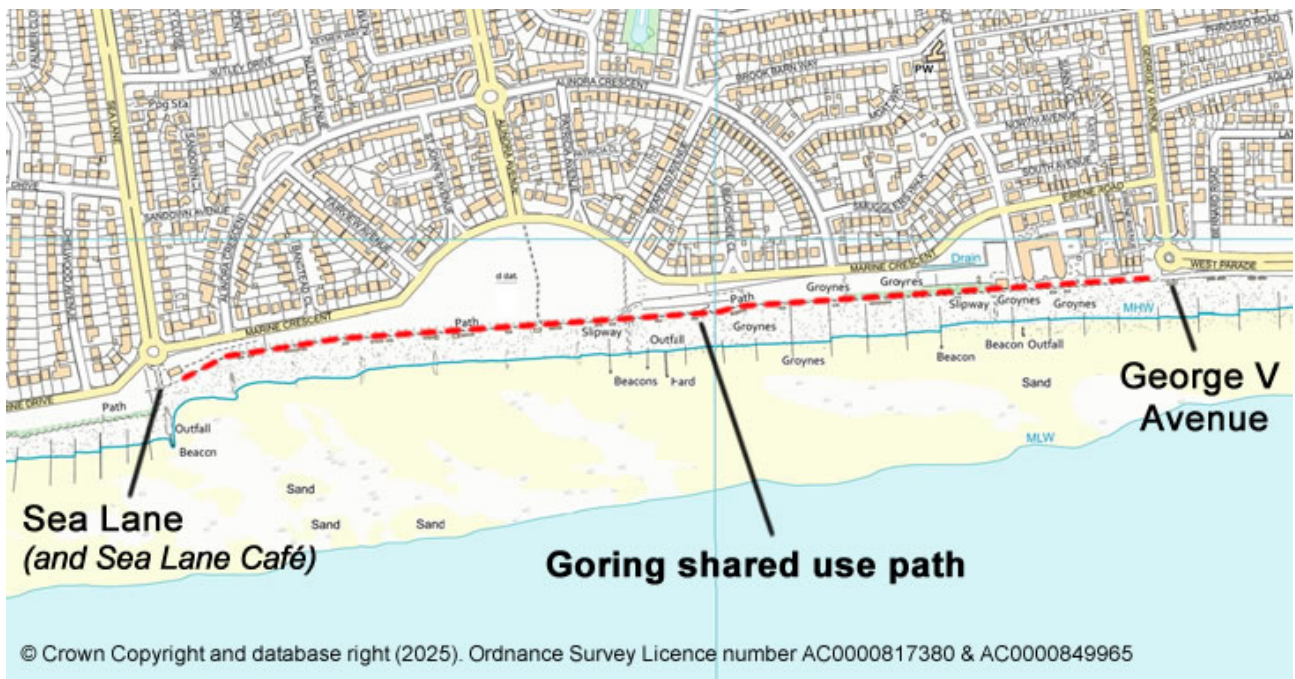
Worthing has a dedicated path providing seafront access for pedestrians from Sea Lane in the west to Brooklands Park in the east. This path largely coincides with National Cycle Network Route 2, which extends almost continuously from St. Austell, Cornwall, to Dover, Kent. Currently, there is a break in this route between George V Avenue in Worthing and Rustington, where the route resumes further west.

The section of the path from Sea Lane to George V Avenue is narrow at 1.8 metres wide and cycling is not permitted along this stretch, although we are aware that a significant number of cyclists already use the path.

Area for consideration

The proposal is to widen the path along this stretch to 3 metres to allow it to be designated as a shared use path and allow better access for both walking and wheeling.

The proposed area is shown below:



Two options are being considered for the western end of the path at Sea Lane. The first option comes to a stop before Sea Lane Café meaning that cyclists would need to dismount at this point and push their bike to rejoin the road network. The second option continues past the café to the west with a path running adjacent to the café and rejoins the road network at this point. Further work is required on the detail of the design at this point.



Consultation

The consultation ran from 13 August 2025 to 21 September 2025 and included an online form and two in-person events. We also accepted emails with comments which have been included in the analysis of comments.

The consultation was publicised on social media, posters at local libraries and through emails to relevant stakeholders (including local walking and cycling groups) asking for their feedback.

The consultation was informed by a number of documents produced by WSP:

- Preliminary designs - illustrative
- Visualisations which can be seen in Appendix A.
- Consultation boards which can be seen in Appendix B.

This information was available to the public on a dedicated page of the Councils' website which included a link to the Google Form to gather the public's view of the proposal and the options available. We also held two in-person events where we displayed the consultation boards and were available to speak with people. The boards had a QR code directing people to the online form and we also had paper copies of the forms for people who preferred this. These events were advertised on social media, in local libraries and by email to various groups. They were held as follows:

- Tuesday 19th August 2025 from 10am to midday at the eastern end of path near George V Avenue
- Sunday 7th September 2025 from 10am to midday at the western end of path near Sea Lane Café

We also met with Sea Lane Cafe and Worthing Sailing Club who are two key stakeholders along the proposed route.

The Council had approximately 1,280 responses during the consultation. This includes approximately 150 people attending the two in person sessions, 1,111 online responses, 15 emails responses and three formal responses from relevant organisations (Sussex Ramblers, Sussex Wildlife Trust and WSCC Project Officer for the King Charles III England Coast Path).



In-person consultation event held on 19 August on Worthing Promenade at George V Avenue

Data used as part of the consultation

1. WSP undertook traffic surveys on site in June on a Thursday and Saturday to assess the current levels of use along the path and Marine Crescent. The results were as follows:
 - More than 9,000 vehicles and 400 cyclists travel along Marine Crescent on a typical weekday
 - The path sees over 1,700 pedestrians on a typical weekday
 - The current path sees up to 150 cyclists each weekday
2. WSP used the Active Travel England route check tool to assess the design quality of the path schemes and scored them against the core design principles which are: safety, accessibility, comfort, directness, attractiveness and cohesion. It accounts for a variety of user experiences of people walking, cycling and wheeling. The results show that the two proposed options increase the ATE score significantly, with option 2 having the most positive impact. The results are shown below.

Categories	Existing Layout	Option 1	Option 2
Safety	19%	77%	88%
Accessibility	70%	70%	80%
Comfort	50%	90%	100%
Directness	67%	83%	100%
Attractiveness	20%	60%	60%
Cohesion	50%	50%	75%
Overall ATE Score	30%	75%	86%

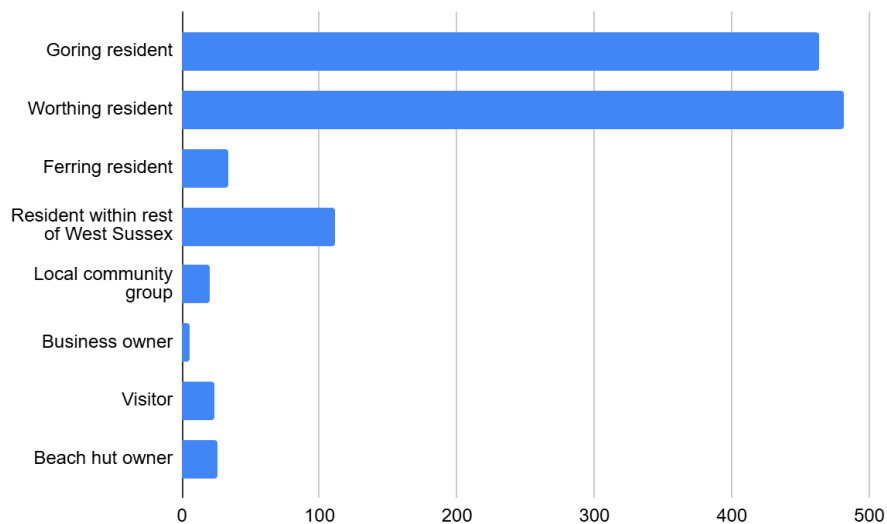
3. WSP also looked at the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) for the two path options in order to determine the value for money of the proposal. Both options would present 'very high' value money (a BCR of 4+ indicates this).

	OPTION 1	OPTION 2
BCR:	7.02	7.91

Consultation analysis

The proposal to widen the path and formalise it for shared use by pedestrians and cyclists has generated some strong and polarised opinions. There is a significant number of respondents who support the plan, seeing it as a much-needed improvement for both safety and accessibility. In contrast, there is a smaller but vocal group who oppose the plan, primarily due to safety concerns about mixing cyclists with pedestrians in what they consider to be a peaceful area.

The majority of respondents came from the Worthing area with a significant number being Goring residents.

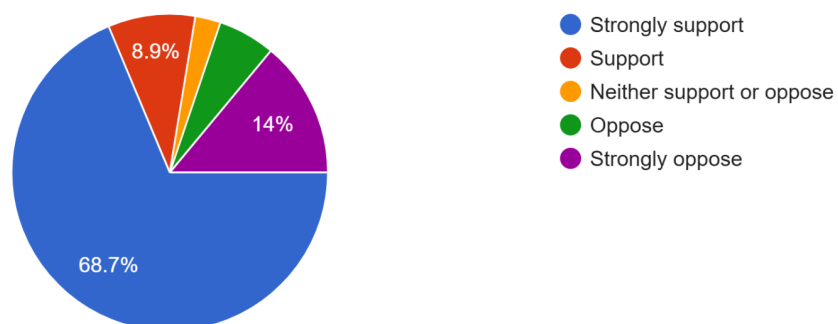


Over 50% of respondents visited the area between one and four times a week with 47.3% walking to the area, 25.8% cycling and 22% travelling by car. When asked how they travel when using the existing path, 88% stated they walked and 22% said they cycled (participants could choose more than one option).

When asked if they support the proposed plan for improving the shared use path between George V Avenue and Sea Lane Cafe, the majority responded in support of the proposal with 77.6% either strongly supporting or supporting the proposal and 19.9% either strongly opposing or opposing the scheme.

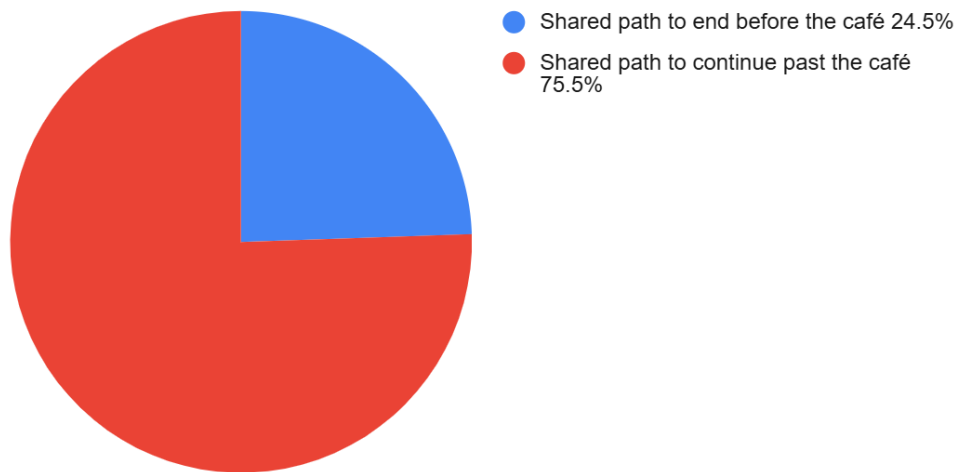
To what extent do you support the proposed plan for improving the shared use path between George V Avenue and Sea Lane Café?

1,111 responses



When asked to consider the proposal for the western end of the path the majority (75.5%) stated that they wanted the shared path to continue past the cafe and rejoin the road network at Sea Lane.

Looking at the proposed plans for the cycle path at the western end near Sea Lane Café which of the following is your preference? (Excludes those who oppose or strongly oppose the proposal)



Key Responses in Support of the Proposal

Supporters of the plan frequently raise the following points:

- **Safety for Cyclists:** One of the main arguments is that the proposal will create a much safer route for cyclists, especially families and children, who currently have to navigate the road along Marine Crescent to George V roundabout which can feel dangerous with traffic and parked cars.
- **Improved Accessibility:** Many respondents highlight that the current path is too narrow for wheelchair users, mobility scooters, and people with pushchairs to use comfortably, often forcing people to step onto the grass or shingle.
- **Connecting the Cycle Network:** The plan is seen as an important extension of the National Cycle Network Route 2, helping to provide a continuous off-road coastal route.
- **Formalising Existing Behaviour:** Many supporters note that cyclists already use the path illegally despite the cycling not being allowed on the current path. Widening and formalising it is seen as a pragmatic way to make the situation safer for everyone. Although there are some comments to say that just because people currently cycle on it does not mean we have to widen the path, they would like to see enforcement of the current rules.
- **Encouraging Active Travel:** The project is praised for promoting healthier lifestyles and more sustainable transport options, potentially reducing car journeys.

Key Responses in Opposition and Major Concerns

Opponents of the proposal consistently voice the following concerns:

- **Pedestrian Safety:** The overwhelming concern is the perceived danger of mixing faster-moving cyclists with more vulnerable pedestrians, particularly the elderly, young children, and people with disabilities or access needs (especially hearing impairments).

- **Negative Experiences on other Shared Paths:** Many respondents cited negative experiences on the main Worthing promenade and other shared paths as evidence that the model is flawed, leading to conflict and danger.
- **Perceived Cyclist Behaviour:** A significant number of comments describe cyclists as being "inconsiderate," "reckless," "too fast," and a general "menace" to pedestrians, with little regard for rules.
- **Loss of a Peaceful Area:** The path is valued as one of the few remaining seafront areas where pedestrians can walk peacefully without the stress of avoiding cyclists.
- **E-bikes and E-scooters:** There is a specific and frequently mentioned fear regarding the high speeds and silent nature of electric bikes and scooters, which are seen as an even greater threat.

Specific Points for Consideration

- **Path Endpoint at Sea Lane Café:** This is a major point of contention.
- **Arguments for ending the path *before* the café:** This is seen as the safer option due to the high concentration of people, including children and staff carrying food and hot drinks, crossing the path between the cafe and the beach.
- **Arguments for continuing the path *past* the café:** Many believe cyclists will not dismount regardless of where the path ends, so formalising and widening the route is safer than having them use a narrow, undesignated path. It also provides a logical connection back to the road network.
- **Shared Use vs. Segregated Lanes:** Many respondents, including some who oppose the current "shared use" plan, state they would be in favour of the project if it included a physically separate, dedicated lane for cyclists, similar to designs seen in Lancing or Brighton & Hove.

Other Significant Themes and Suggestions

- **Alternative Use of Funds:** A very common comment, particularly from opponents, is that the money would be better spent on creating physical barriers (mounds, bunds, or bollards) along the greensward to prevent unauthorised traveller encampments, which are seen as a more pressing issue for the community.
- **Dogs:** Many respondents from all viewpoints expressed concern about dogs running free or on long, extendable leads, creating a trip hazard and a danger for both cyclists and pedestrians. Several called for a "dogs on short leads" rule.
- **Extend the Path Further:** A suggestion from a number of supporters is for the path to be extended further west, connecting all the way to Ferring and beyond.
- **Signage and Enforcement:** If a shared path is implemented, calls are made for clear signage (speed limits, "cyclists give way to pedestrians"), and monitoring to ensure compliance.

Out of the 1,126 responses received online and by email, 685 had further comments. The table below shows the number of comments for the main points raised (note: the majority of comments contained more than one theme):

Themes	Summary	Related Comments
Safety/Danger/ Speed	The paramount concern is the safety of pedestrians, particularly children, the elderly, and dog walkers, due to the high speed of some cyclists, resulting in near misses, collisions, and a feeling of being intimidated or 'scared'.	354
Accessibility/ Encouraging Cycling (Positive)	Many comments strongly support the proposal, viewing it as long overdue and beneficial to the community. They highlight the path's potential to encourage more walking and cycling, especially for families and less confident riders, and to improve accessibility for wheelchair and pushchair users.	234
Path Width/Capacity/ Bottlenecks	Respondents acknowledge that the current path is too narrow for high usage and that widening is needed to improve general use and accessibility. However, many doubt the proposed widening is enough to safely accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians.	209
Shared vs. Segregated Path	There is a significant preference for a dedicated and segregated cycle path over a shared-use path. Many respondents feel a mixed-use path is unsuitable and leads to conflict between cyclists and pedestrians, citing poor examples from other areas.	181
Cafe Area Conflict	A specific and frequent concern is the high-density pedestrian area near the Sea Lane Cafe. Many strongly recommend that the cycle path should end before the cafe to prevent collisions and congestion in this bottleneck area. Although the overall preference is for the path to continue past the cafe.	170
Enforcement/ Existing Cycling Issues	A common point is the lack of enforcement of existing 'no cycling' rules, with many noting that cyclists already ignore the signs. Concerns were raised about how speed limits and shared-use etiquette would be monitored and enforced on the new path.	137
Path Continuation/ Connectivity	Many cyclists and supporters of the project desire the path to be extended further west, ideally to Ferring or the borough boundary, to create a cohesive and safer route and avoid cyclists having to switch to poor-quality roads.	123
Dogs/Pets	Specific concerns about the interaction between the proposals and pets, particularly dogs off-leash or on long, extendable leads which are cited as a significant trip hazard and danger to both cyclists and pedestrians.	114
E-Bikes/E-Scooters/M otorized Aids	Concerns were raised about the growing use of e-bikes and e-scooters, noting they are often silent and travel at high speeds, which increases the danger for pedestrians, especially those with hearing impairments or those using mobility aids.	76

Responses to other questions

Respondents were presented with four statements and asked for their opinion. The results are as follows:

Statement	Strongly support	Support	Neither support/oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
The proposed extended shared use path will make it easier and more enjoyable for me to travel along the seafront between George V Avenue and Sea Lane.	63.7%	9.7%	5.9%	5%	15.8%
Making some changes to the path and the proposal of some additional cycle parking on the Greensward justifies the loss of space in this area	56.1%	14.4%	7.6%	6.2%	15.8%
I believe this project will benefit the community by encouraging more walking and cycling.	62.3%	11.6%	7.6%	5%	13.5%
I feel comfortable sharing a well-designed path with both people walking and people cycling.	55.4%	13%	5.9%	6.5%	19.4%

When asked if they would or cycle more if the proposals were implemented, people responded as follows:

I will walk more	11.8%
I will cycle more	26.3%
I will walk and cycle more	26.2%
No change	18.4%
No	15.2%
Don't know	2.2%

When asked if they would like to see additional cycle facilities such as cycle racks or maintenance stations, 66% responded in favour of this proposal.

An analysis of responses based on age range shows the following average positivity scores:

Age Range	Average Positivity Score	Age Range	Average Positivity Score
under 20	3.75	20 to 29	2.39
30 to 39	3.18	40 to 49	2.94
50 to 59	2.15	60 to 69	1.4
70 to 79	1.1	80 or over	1.31
Prefer not to say	-1.39		

Formal responses

The consultation received three formal responses which are summarised as follows:

- The **Sussex Wildlife Trust** broadly supports the proposal but recommends caution regarding the vegetated shingle habitat, which is a rare and valuable priority habitat in the UK. They request that any expansion of the footpath be located away from vegetated shingle areas and focused on the opposite, grassed side of the current path.
- The **King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIIECP)** Project Officer confirmed that in principle the proposal is in line with the objectives of National Trails including the KCIIIIECP.
- **Ramblers Sussex** responded to oppose the proposal, citing several concerns including a lack of justification for change: the existing use of the footpath by cyclists does not warrant a change in its status; limited accessibility benefits: the Ramblers argue there are no significant accessibility issues on this specific section of the path; high potential for user conflict; Safety issues with people crossing the path; opposition to Public Right of Way (PROW) Extinguishment: on the assumption that creating a shared-use path would require a Cycle Track Order, leading to the extinguishment of this section of the PROW

Limitations of the data

- A number of respondents raised the wording of the questionnaire which asked people to choose a preference for the eastern end of the path regardless of whether they supported or opposed the extension. This has been mitigated by removing the responses of those who either oppose or strongly oppose the proposal from the answer to this question.
- Both in person events were held from 10:00 to 12:00. A different time of day may have caught different people although there was the option of a weekday or weekend day.
- The survey was mainly publicised on social media which may have limited the number of people who were aware. We did however ask WSCC Library Service to display posters and also sent information to a number of relevant groups including cycling forums and walking groups, to raise awareness.

Further considerations

As well as the results of the public consultation, there are a number of other considerations.

Village Green status

The Greensward has Village Green status meaning that it is an area of public land legally protected for public recreation, which prevents it from being developed. The extent of the Village Green designation includes the green space south of Marine Crescent including the current path. Further work will be required by our Legal team should the scheme move forward to ascertain if the path section of the can be de-designated to allow works and the

process for doing so. This may involve legal counsel as there is no precedent. Permission from the Secretary of State may also be required.

Memorial Benches

There are 46 benches along the current path with 43 of these being memorial benches. These would be moved onto concrete plinths on the north or south side (as space allows) so that the full 3 metre width of the path can be used for the movement of people. There is concern that some of the benches will not survive the move and would need to be replaced (approximately 14 benches). Consideration should be given to whether to replace the plaques on the benches.

Legal and Planning considerations

A number of Legal and Planning considerations need to be explored if a decision is made to progress to detailed design. These are as follows:

- Village Green designation - see note above
- Planning permission - WBC Legal team are investigating and will have a decision by mid-November
- Changing the public right of way to a cycle track order
- Sea Lane Cafe - a decision will be needed on whether to continue the seasonal licensing of beach seating area and the implications for continuing the path past the café
- HM Land Registry Title Checks will need to be carried out
- Third Party Rights (unregistered) will need to be checked
- Pleasure Ground byelaw - investigation into the area covered by "Alinora Open Space" and any implications this may have

The landscaping proposals developed by WSP were not included in the public consultation but should be considered at detailed design.

Consideration will need to be given to routing the path onto the beach and past the cafe seating area (licence granted for summer months) for safety reasons. This would allow the NCN to be re-routed to the new path and make it eligible for NCN funding - explore at detailed design stage?

Measures to mitigate concerns over the safety of a shared use path will need to be considered. These could include additional signage and surfacing. It might be advisable to consider the ongoing issue of cycling along the whole of the seafront and look at how behaviour changes can be implemented across the area as a whole and for all users.

Next steps

Decision

A decision is required on whether to progress with this project to the detailed design stage.

Detailed design

If the decision is made to progress with the project then WSP will need to be recommissioned for this work. We will need to fully scope our requirements to confirm the works we want WSP to carry out. This could include just the design work, or we could also ask them to write a business case, bid document and tender package of works.

Funding

There is funding through CIL for detailed design. However, SusTrans are considering funding the detailed design and should be able to confirm this in early 2026. There is no funding for the construction works.

Appendices

- A. Preliminary designs - illustrative - see separate document
- B. Visualisations - see below
- C. Landscaping proposals - see separate document
- D. Consultation boards - see separate document
- E. Quotes from consultation - see below

Appendix B - Visualisations



Sea Promenade, by Marine Crescent Parking looking East



Sea Promenade by Marine Crescent Car Park looking west



Sea Promenade, by Worthing Sailing Club looking East



Sea Promenade, by George V Avenue looking West

Appendix E - Quotes

A selection of quotes has been randomly selected to show both positive and negative feedback to the proposals.

Positive quotes

1. As a disabled person it is almost impossible to "walk" with my partner, side by side. I use a mobility scooter and we visit here less as it is not social enough for us to walk along as we are one in front of the other
2. I think it's a great idea. I would definitely cycle more. I don't personally like cycling along Marine drive up to the George V roundabout it can be a bit dangerous. I end up walking by bike up to the promenade for safety reasons.
3. This is a great idea. The number of people walking and cycling has increased enormously since the pandemic years. There is need for improvement in many places.
4. The current cycling option of using the road is made dangerous by the traffic islands near George V, and the vehicles parked further along often open their driver doors without looking for bikes at all. As such I take primary position on the road which annoys motorists and less experienced cyclists cycle near the car doors which is potentially hazardous and I see many 'holiday' casual cyclists on this route confused as to why they are on the road. Definitely would benefit from sorting out for all.
5. Plenty of signage saying cyclist give way to pedestrians, cycle speed limits, clearly marked crossing points at the busy pedestrian areas, clear exit and entry point for cyclist to join the path, dogs on leads signage all along the path, excellent idea, I look forward to the plan going ahead
6. The longer to path the better. I think it should go all the way to Ferring and wide enough to accommodate walkers, runners, cyclists and wheelchair users with separation to make it clear where the cycle lane is so walkers take better care when walking in the cycling area.
7. I think this would be a fantastic and much needed change - making this section of the seafront accessible to all. The option to extend the shared path past sea lane seems more sensible - it means the cycle route flows better and they re-emerge onto the road so they can continue their route. Curtailing the cycle route east of sea lane feels unfinished for the cyclists - on the plan would cyclists have to dismount at this point? That would be less than ideal. Only Concern about the section outside sea lane is you would want to avoid this becoming too congested and ending up with the issues experienced at lancing beach green outside the Perch where they have recently segregated it. Would need some thought about ped/cycle priority here as it gets very busy. The zebra crossings at lancing beach green seem to work quite well. Only other comment is around street lighting - appreciate it is a sensitive spot but as a female I wouldn't use the wider path in the winter once it gets dark if it is not lit. Thanks.

8. I have a parent who uses a wheelchair, and using the current path requires a lot of negotiation, and people walking off the sides on grass/beach to make space. Once, a passerby trying to get out of the way of the wheelchair actually misjudged the step off the path, and fell, grazing their leg. Widening would make wheelchair users feel less of a nuisance to others.
9. It will also allow safe cycling off the tricky road between this area and safe cycling, I'll be able to allow my children to cycle from Goring towards Worthing safely.
10. We need more shared spaces to encourage safer cycling, so everyone gets more accustomed to sharing safely.
11. Since the change to multi-use on the main seafront this extension of the path to cover the whole of the Worthing area has been long overdue. It will ensure so many more people can enjoy the area plus enhance safety for cyclists travelling along the coast. After leaving here for over 50 years I am incredibly supportive of this initiative
12. Designated cycle lane markings need to be implemented, with "share with care" restrictions like a speed limit. The amount of cars that overtake dangerously on the roadway, along with the narrowing due to parking, and the quality of the road (very very bad) the shared space is NECESSARY

Negative quotes

1. Shared spaces are awful for pedestrians, bikes travel too fast and are often inconsiderate of other users. It's impossible to relax as a pedestrian because you are always looking out for bikes approaching behind you.
2. Ending before the cafe is essential to reduce the risk of collision/ confrontation with cyclists as some simply won't ride sensibly past the busy area between the cafe and beach.
3. Shared paths don't work, there are plenty of examples throughout the town to prove this. Why remove the one area on the seafront where pedestrians are safe from cyclists? Your statement above says 150 cyclists use the existing path, were they fined for ignoring the multiple no cycling signs? Why use the money to improve the walking infrastructure that you constantly neglect in favour of cycling
4. Central Worthing prom is already highly dangerous for walkers due to there being no designated cycle lane and cyclists giving no regard to pedestrians. I walk to/from work on it every day and it's awful. This path at Goring should be left alone, it's a quiet respite from the main prom and I can't see how you're going to make it wide enough AND keep pedestrians safe, due to the drop down to the greensward. To have cyclists potentially bombing past the cafe when customers are walking across to the beach with food, drink and children is a ridiculous idea. If you're going to do it, put a cycle lane in, and put one on Worthing prom whilst you're there!

5. It is not a shared use path. A shared use path which includes cyclists will be a danger to the pedestrians. I support the widening as it is too narrow, and already accidents are caused by runners not being aware of who is around them. I do not support cyclists being included as it will still be too narrow and therefore dangerous
6. Like many people I have concerns because it's a long straight path and it's inevitable cyclists will go fast as they do along Worthing seafront except Worthing seafront is wider. I say this both as a pedestrian and carer who pushes a wheelchair and cyclist. I like the idea of cycling all the way to Worthing on this path which would be safer for cyclists. Just not sure it would be for pedestrians, not forgetting this section is hugely popular with local dog walkers. I am also aware of how busy it gets around Sea Lane Cafe and how this will impact. Also like for many people using the Goring Gap amenity, it has been spoiled several times this year putting my family off from using the area and the attendant issues it caused. I would like to at least see a genuine cost comparison. Lastly if the scheme does go ahead a major beneficiary will be Sea Lane cafe which is already over subscribed in the summer and at weekends. I would comment separately that there is minimal access at that cafe for wheelchair users as the bench tables are not usable. Anything you can do to get them to improve their Amenities for wheelchairs would be welcome!
7. My answers reflect my concerns about sharing the space with cyclists and pedestrians! I think with electric bikes and behaviour of some cyclists this could lead to accidents. I would need some persuasion regarding how design can make this safe. In principle I am 100% behind improvements to cycling lanes and encouraging physical activity but not in the same space
8. At the moment cyclists go too fast on the promenade and there is no policing this. There will be a serious accident at some point and extending cycle use will just make this more likely. There is also no one stopping electric bikes and electric scooters.
9. Cyclists already used this path illegally because very few of the residents here think any rule, whether traffic laws or simply by-laws, apply to themselves! Once cycling is sanctioned it will be a free-for-all of transport such as motorised scooters and probably even motorbikes and I do hope that the first pedestrian who is injured - or even killed - by such a driver, sues the council for all their worth! Far from encouraging exercise I think a lot of less mobile people will be put off using this venue. One of the reasons we moved here was because the esplanade isn't meant to be available for transport and is therefore safer for pedestrians. Now you aim to ruin that benefit when cyclists have easy access to other areas of the esplanade closer to town centres. Far from encouraging people to exercise this will do the complete opposite, once again completely riding roughshod over the elderly and infirm of the area. Thanks a lot for nothing!