



# Bus Strategy Consultation findings analysis



## Bus Strategy Consultation – analysis of responses and feedback

There were 1302 total responses to the consultation, of which 1103 were online and 199 hard copy (including 7 easy-read questionnaires).

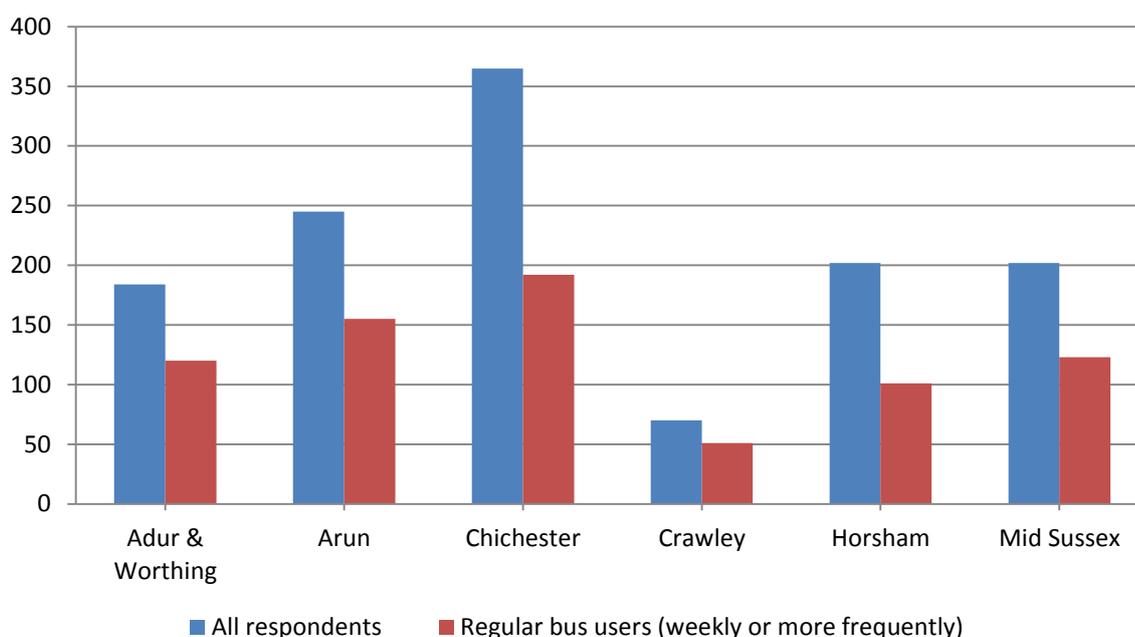
Of these, 42% of respondents were aged 65 or older, 22% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability or long-term illness, and 47% were free bus pass holders.

**Table 1: Breakdown of total responses received**

A West Sussex resident	1219
A West Sussex business	4
A West Sussex business (and resident)	24
A voluntary or community organisation	23
A Parish/Town/District/Borough Council	32

As **Table 1** shows, the overwhelming majority of responses were from individuals, however representations were made on behalf of 32 local councils, including many rural parishes, and 23 voluntary or community organisations.

**Fig 1: Location of responses received by District/Borough**

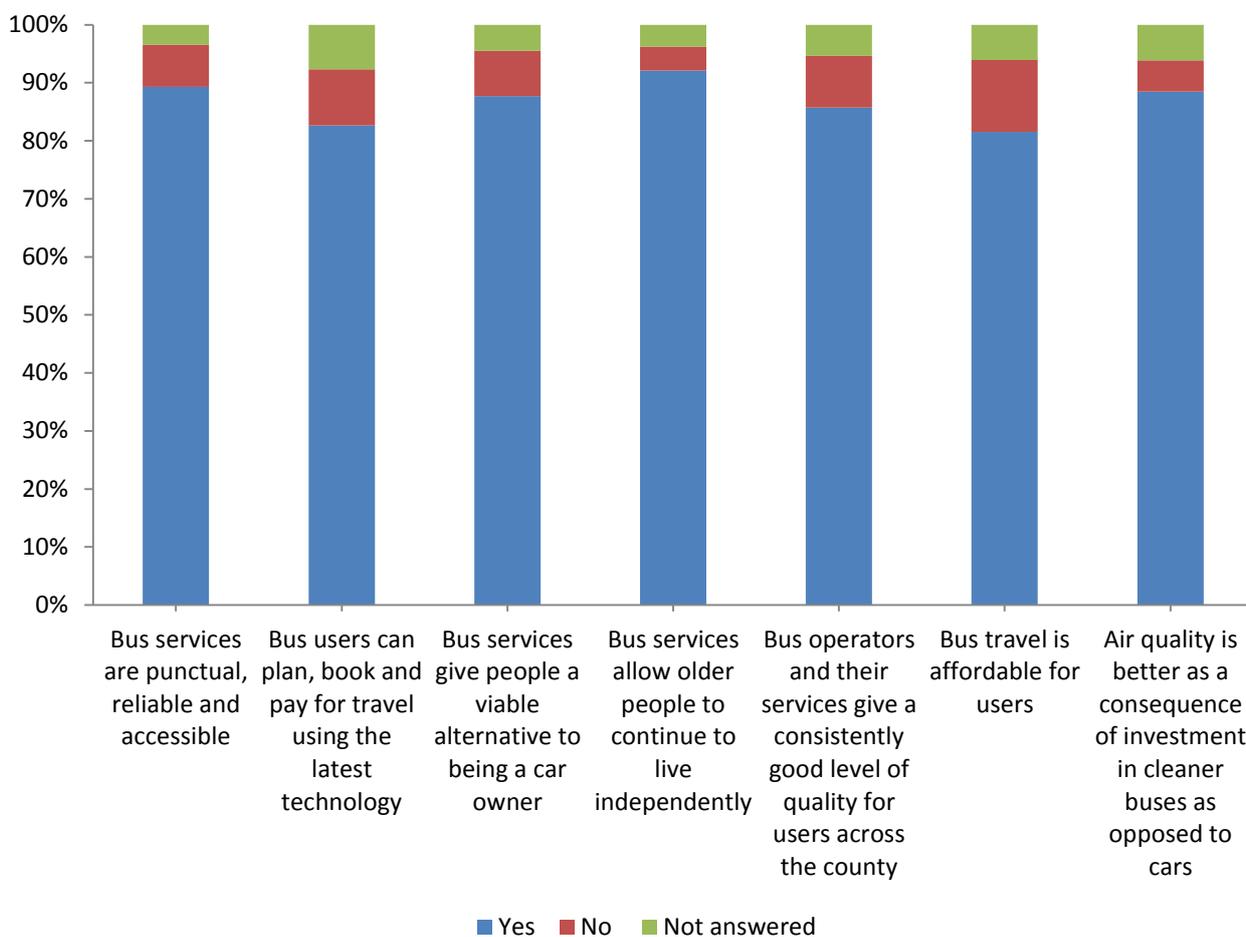


The highest number of respondents came from Chichester which is the largest rural area in the county. Crawley had the lowest number by some margin and has a predominantly commercial bus network with frequent services and the most extensive infrastructure in the county, including real-time electronic displays and guided busways.

## Proposed objectives for the new bus strategy

**Fig 2: Please tell us whether you support each objective by ticking Yes or No (%)**

West Sussex should be a place where:



As **Fig 2** illustrates, there was strong support for each objective with over 80% agreement for each of the objectives, and an average of 87% agreement overall.

Two of the objectives received slightly less support, to do with planning and paying for travel, and affordable bus travel. The feedback received on these points was that the option to be able to pay cash fares on the bus should remain, as not all residents have access to the internet or mobile technology. Similarly, almost half of all respondents already had free (off peak) bus travel through the English National Concessionary Bus Pass scheme.

## Proposed priorities for the new bus strategy

Respondents were asked to select the three priorities that were most important to them and rank these three in order of importance.

The results are as follows, with 1 being ranked as having the highest importance:

**Table 2: Priority ranking**

<b>1</b>	Prioritise investment in good accessible bus infrastructure for bus users
<b>2</b>	Give buses priority over other travel modes when congestion occurs
<b>3</b>	Work with all tiers of Local Government in seeking funding for prioritised local bus and community transport service
<b>4</b>	Work with bus operators to provide affordable fares for younger people
<b>5</b>	Work with property developers to design developments to incorporate buses as a priority with suitable infrastructure (such as bus stops, shelters and real-time information)
<b>6</b>	Promote the use of latest clean engine technology
<b>7</b>	Implement cross ticketing and easy payment systems
<b>8</b>	Explore whether it makes sense to use our own vehicles to provide services working with Community Transport where appropriate

### Comments about the priority ranking:

Respondents were asked to explain their reasons for ranking the objectives. The most commonly cited reasons, with sample comments, are outlined below.

Many respondents felt that the achieving a good accessible bus infrastructure was the key to improving services and encouraging modal shift:

- *"I feel the first thing to do if you want people to use public transport over cars is to invest in the infrastructure - provide a good viable public transport system first!! This gives people a choice."*
- *"Establishing robust infrastructure for bus services is key. Good accessibility infrastructure such as shelters and RTI are vital when trying to encourage a shift from car use - especially for access to employment and education."*
- *"A good accessible bus infrastructure is an essential starting point to encourage us to see the bus as a real, viable alternative to our cars."*

The need to reduce congestion and pollution was another commonly cited reason, and these were often mentioned in tandem:

- *"We must use our buses more. Other means of transport are causing increasing problems of pollution and congestion, and we must persuade people to leave their cars at home - especially for local journeys."*
- *"By giving buses priority on some routes they would be an attractive alternative to car use as commuters weigh up cost and time considerations."*
- *"Increasingly congestion, air quality and lack of parking is becoming an issue and this will only get worse. Accessible and timely public transport can help relieve this."*

Importance was also given to the necessity of obtaining funding support for local bus services:

- *"The County Council should continue to subsidize the bus service to ensure that there is no discrimination for older, less able members of the community and to ensure that young people can have access to the larger towns during term and half term breaks."*
- *"It is important to involve all tiers of local government in provision of services to ensure that smaller, rural communities are not disadvantaged when decisions are made around subsidised services."*
- *"Seeking government funding should be a priority in order to keep rural bus routes open to serve younger and older people, and to encourage people to use buses over cars."*

Support for rural communities and the prevention of social isolation was also a key factor for many respondents in determining the priority ranking:

- *"We are a rural county where small populations in remote areas cannot be served profitably by private companies, hence we need public investment in infrastructure and subsidies to ensure services are sustainable."*
- *"Rural bus services are lifelines for young and old alike and also those on low incomes."*
- *"Accessibility is crucial in rural areas and buses are essential for the community."*

Another frequently cited reason was the need to help and encourage young people to use buses:

- *"Young people are a significant proportion of public transport users but increasing costs mean more parents are driving children and young people to school which in turn contributes to traffic congestion and poor air quality."*
- *"As well as being beneficial to younger people in terms of cheaper fares, it will enable our evening economy to thrive more successfully by facilitating the transport to and from the less accessible villages and town for non-drivers such as younger people."*

## Other comments about the proposals

Respondents were asked if they felt anything was missing from the Bus Strategy, or if there was anything they would like to see included. Many provided comments about issues to do with specific routes and services which will be fed back to Transport Planners/Bus Operators as appropriate.

The most commonly occurring general themes are listed below:

**Table 3: Is there anything you think we have missed, or need to include as part of the new Bus Strategy?**

Comment	No. of Mentions
Measures to improve frequency and reliability	161
Support for rural communities	138
Affordable fares for younger people and commuters	98
More evening and Sunday services	84
Integrated public transport solutions	72
Accessibility for disabled passengers	59
Real-time information	50
School services	44
Bus stops and shelters	40
Smaller buses on some routes	21
Park & Ride	19

### Sample Comments:

#### Measures to improve frequency and reliability:

- *"If you are serious about encouraging people out of their cars you need to make buses quicker and more reliable especially at peak times."*
- *"Regular frequent services - having one or 2 buses a week is worthless."*
- *"You should have a much better focus on how the bus franchises and, consequently, the service given is working on a day to day basis."*

#### Support for rural communities:

- *"The strategy should include an objective to reduce and reverse the isolation of rural communities that have either had their only bus service removed or have it under threat."*
- *"My principle concern is that buses to villages are not cut, or bus times further reduced in number. They are a life-blood."*
- *"Ensure that rural communities' bus routes are not sacrificed in the quest to save cost. Integrate them with nearby routes so villages are still served."*

**Affordable fares for younger people and commuters:**

- *"Find a way of reducing fares for ordinary working people, at the moment it's cheaper and more convenient to use the car."*
- *"Most young people don't have much spare money and they won't use any bus service if they can't afford it."*

**More evening and Sunday services:**

- *"There doesn't seem to be a priority for increasing services and extending timetables to meet people's real needs, such as commuting or visiting destinations for an evening."*
- *"Large areas of the county have no bus service on Sundays or bank holidays. Aren't these people allowed to enjoy Sundays and bank holidays like antisocial motorists."*

**Integrated public transport solutions:**

- *"Buses must be seen as part of the solution and therefore used in an integrated strategy so they must be routed to railway stations and tie into train timetables."*
- *"Encourage operators to take a pro-active approach to timetabling bus/train connections and setting out clear guidelines for holding buses to meet trains."*

**Accessibility for disabled passengers:**

- *"Suitable infrastructure must include better disability and older person accessibility so that access is as flat or step-free as possible."*
- *"As I am visually impaired and a guide dog owner it would be very useful to have a 'talking bus'."*

**Real-time information:**

- *"Real time data is listed under property developers. It should be a standalone category. All bus companies should be required to have a real time data system available and 24 hours a day."*
- *"Provision of real time information at bus stops especially in rural areas where buses are infrequent."*

**School services:**

- *"Extremely important to continue to support school buses as they reduce traffic congestion and allow children to develop independence."*
- *"Getting children to school on time and allowing them to extend themselves by allowing them to get home after school activities would be my first priority."*

**Smaller buses on some routes:**

- *"Minibuses to provide access in more out-of-the-way places and as more economical than larger vehicles."*
- *"Smaller buses e.g. 20 seaters could be used on some routes out of rush hour."*

**Park & Ride:**

- *"There is land around Chichester, Horsham, Haywards Heath, Crawley which could be used for Park and Ride and I think this is an urgent priority."*

## Individual bus journeys

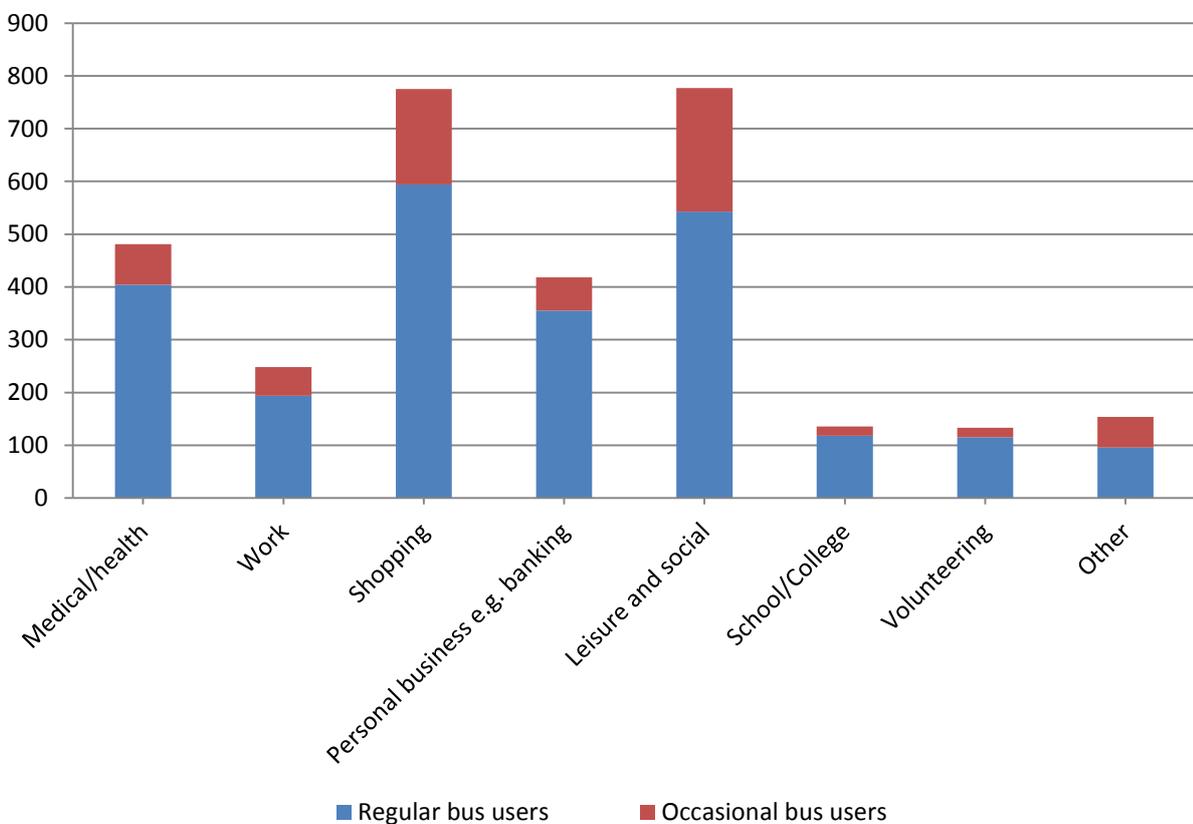
Respondents were asked how often they used bus services in West Sussex and what their bus journeys were for.

NB. organisations, businesses and local councils were not required to answer this section.

Of those who answered, 755 used buses regularly (weekly or more frequently) and 464 used buses occasionally (monthly or less often/never).

Fig 3 below shows a breakdown of the type of journeys made by regular and occasional bus users.

**Fig 3. What journeys do you use the bus for?**



As **Fig 3** shows, shopping and leisure/social are cited as the most common reasons to take the bus for both regular and occasional bus passengers, with medical/health appointments as the next highest. Travelling to school/college was relatively low with just 136 respondents stating that they used the bus for these journeys, of which 118 travelled weekly or more often.

## Profile of individual respondents

NB. organisations, businesses and local councils were not required to answer this section.

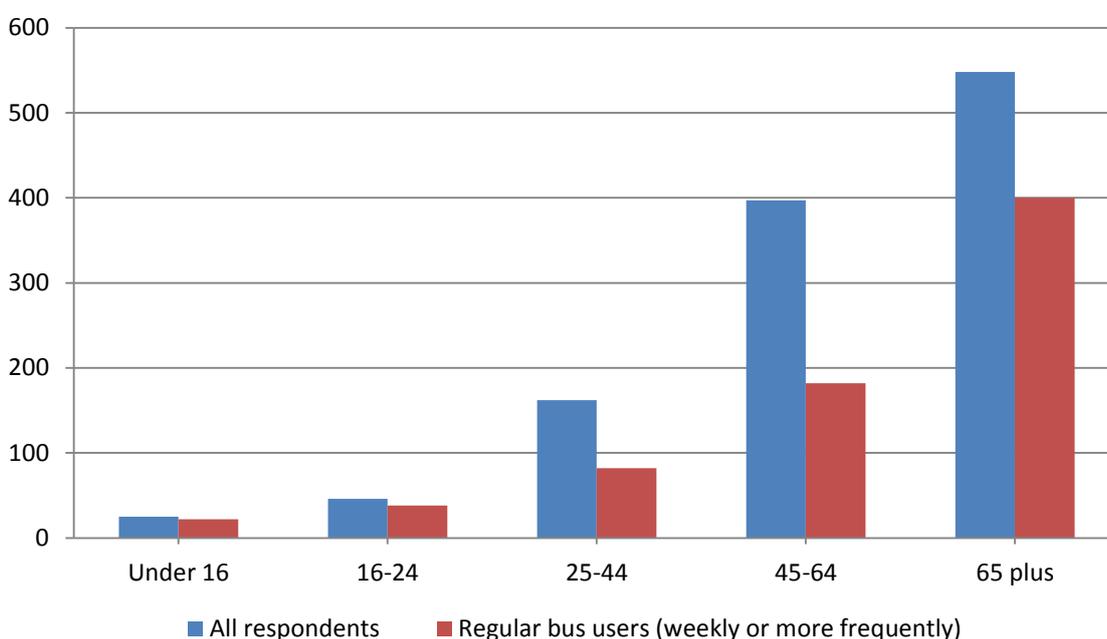
### Age

42% of respondents stated that they were aged 65 or above. The next highest age category was 45-64 with 30%, followed by 16-24 (12%) and Under 16 (2%). 40 people selected 'Prefer not to say'. 124 people did not answer this question.

41% of total respondents were also Older Persons Bus Pass holders.

The chart below shows the age categories of all respondents who answered the question, alongside the proportion of whom also use buses weekly or more often.

**Fig 4. Age profile of respondents**



As **Fig 4** illustrates, the highest percentages of regular bus usage by respondents occur in the under-24 and over-65 age groups, even though the number of responses from young people in this consultation is relatively small.

NB. The following questions were not answered by respondents aged under 16.

### Gender

The consultation received a significantly higher number of responses from female participants at 53%, with 35% male respondents and 3% selecting 'Prefer not to say.' 120 people did not answer the question.

### Ethnicity

The overwhelming majority of respondents described themselves as White, with 81% identifying as White British and 3% as White Other. Five respondents defined as mixed, while 4 respondents were Asian and 4 defined as Other. A further 88 people (7%) selected 'Prefer not to say'. 117 people did not answer the question.

## Faith or Religion

The majority of respondents (47%) described their faith or religion as Christian (all Christian denominations). The next highest category was 'No Religion' with 27%. Two people defined as Hindu, two as Muslim, five as Jewish and one as Sikh. Of the remainder, a further 13 people selected 'Any Other Religion'. 170 people (13%) selected 'Prefer not to say'. 131 people did not answer the question.

## Sexual Orientation

Almost 70% of respondents described themselves as Heterosexual/Straight. The second highest number of respondents, 202 (16%), selected 'Prefer not to say'. 28 people defined as Homosexual/Gay/Lesbian, 11 as Bisexual and 6 as 'Other'. A further 154 (12%) did not answer the question.

## Disability

290 respondents (22%) considered themselves to have a disability or long-term illness. Of these, 203 people stated that they used bus services weekly or more frequently.

63% of respondents did not consider themselves to have a disability, with a further 7% selecting 'Prefer not to say'. 121 people did not answer the question.

Respondents who answered 'yes' to the disability question were also asked what the nature of their disability was, and to state all categories that applied to them. The following table shows the breakdown of disability categories given by those who answered the question:

**Table 4: Type of disability**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Total mentions</b>
Physical impairment	142
Sensory impairment	56
Mental health issue	20
Learning disability	18
Long-term illness	134
Other	28

Out of 290 respondents with a disability or long-term illness, 70 were also Disabled Persons Bus Pass holders.