

Oxfordshire County Council Supported Transport Consultation

Annex C

Independent report of the public consultation



Public consultation meeting – Witney July 2015

Prepared by Oxfordshire Rural Community Council for Oxfordshire County Council



September 2015

Contents

Section	Page number
1. Background	2
2. The Consultation	3
3. Executive Summary	5
4. Analysis: feedback forms	9
5. Analysis: emails, letters and public meetings	39
6. Analysis: detailed submissions	45
7. Issues raised with the OCC analysis	55
8. Analysis: new ideas	56
Appendices	58
A1 Public consultation meeting notes	

1. Background

1.1 Continuing public spending reductions by central government mean that Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has to make significant savings. It is likely that the £290 million saving target for 2018 will be increased by a further £50 million.

1.2 In light of this savings target, OCC needs to save more than £6 million on supported transport services. The council has already made savings by running services more efficiently. However that is not enough. Further savings will have to come from reducing the £4 million a year the council pays in bus subsidies and for the countywide Dial-a-Ride service. These services are known as 'non-statutory' transport services.

1.3 OCC has put forward 2 proposals for making these savings:

- Option 1: withdraw all subsidies from subsidised bus services. Option 2: reduce bus subsidies by £2.3 million and;
- withdraw completely from providing direct funding for the Dial-a-Ride service.

These proposals formed the basis of the supported transport public consultation.

1.4 OCC provides full or partial subsidies for 118 bus services. This equates to 9% of the county's bus network, meaning that more than 9 out of 10 bus services are run on a fully commercial basis without any public funding.

1.5 The county wide Dial-a-Ride service, currently run by OCC, offers door to door accessible transport for people unable to use public transport. 439 are registered with the service and 238 people use it regularly.

1.6 If it is agreed to reduce bus subsidies by £2.3 million, OCC's preferred approach to protect off peak services as these tend to be used by older, disabled and more vulnerable passengers.

1.7 OCC has used a rigorous methodology to calculate which bus subsidies represent 'best value for money' (including, under option 2, prioritising off-peak services). Based on this OCC has ranked each subsidised bus service from very low risk to very high risk of the subsidy being withdrawn. To ensure fairness, OCC used address mapping taking into account: addresses served by each bus stop (using a 400m access criteria); the cost of the subsidy; access to commercial bus alternatives.

1.8 OCC is keen to support alternative transport solutions. It will work with existing community transport schemes, parish and town councils and community groups across Oxfordshire to see whether local groups can help if service gaps arise. There is likelihood that one-off pump prime funding will be available to help support new schemes. In addition, OCC are working with bus operators to see if some of the bus services can continue without a subsidy.

In the next section, we describe how the public consultation was undertaken.

2. The consultation

2.1 From 19 June 2015 to 15 September 2015, OCC carried out an extensive 12 week public consultation on its proposals for subsidised bus services and the Dial-a-Ride service. To support this consultation, OCC commissioned an independent, not for profit organisation, Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) to act as a facilitator and advisor during the 12 week consultation and to produce a report on the findings.

2.2 The consultation was launched on OCC and ORCC websites, via social media channels and through direct contact with key stakeholders, such as county and district councillors, town and parish councils, parish transport representatives, bus operators, campaign groups and voluntary and community bodies. Parish transport representatives and parish clerks were also sent a poster highlighting the consultation and encouraging feedback, with a request to place the poster on local parish and community noticeboards. The consultation was also promoted via the NHS South, Central and West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Information about this consultation was sent to the 1113 CCG stakeholders, their patient participation groups, and the 6 CCG locality Groups. Information was also sent out to a number of Oxfordshire's largest employers, Further Education bodies and the universities. Letters were sent out to all Dial-a-Ride users, where a change to their service and service provider was likely to be affected, to inform them of the consultation and how to have their say. In July posters advertising the consultation were also put up in buses travelling along potentially affected routes to ensure bus users were aware of the consultation. In addition, posters highlighting the public events were placed in all 50 OCC libraries across the county, and, following the events, new posters encouraging consultation feedback were placed in all the OCC libraries too.

2.3 Key documents to inform the consultation process included: a document setting out proposals and options; a feedback form; information on the methodology underpinning OCC's proposals; a list of the subsidised bus services; usage information; a Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA); and a Frequently Asked Questions document. These were made available on a special portal on the OCC website and hardcopies were provided in all libraries. All information provided online and in the libraries was updated throughout the consultation period.

2.4 Both OCC and ORCC provided additional channels to enable as many people to have their say. This included:

- providing a special Freepost address and an OCC and ORCC email address
- phone support by ORCC to people who asked for help with the consultation. ORCC received and responded to over 200 phone calls, answering questions about addressing concerns about the consultation.
- In a large number of cases, hardcopy feedback forms and other supporting documents were posted to callers when requested.

2.5 In addition to the online and phone support, OCC and ORCC organised 5 public meetings around the county and 2 specific stakeholder meetings for the voluntary sector and the bus operators. Senior representatives from the county council also attended a variety of meetings with key stakeholders. ORCC also attended several individual meetings* with parishes/towns and community groups on request. These included:

- The Bartons
- Oxford 50+ Network
- Henley area
- Chipping Norton
- Thame (information only)
- Stanton St John (and neighbouring parishes)
- Milton Under Wychwood
- Grove

*It is ORCC's and OCC's understanding that these meetings/information sharing were then used to inform subsequently submitted consultation responses

2.6 The main proposals, as set out in the consultation document are:

Proposal 1

Option 1 Subsidised buses – withdraw all bus subsidies

or

Option 2 Subsidised buses - reduce funding by half to subsidised bus services - and adopting the principle of prioritising, where possible, services most likely to be used by the elderly and disabled

Proposal 2

Dial-a-Ride - end direct funding of the Dial-a-Ride service - encouraging community transport groups across the county to deliver a replacement service.

2.7 The public was asked (a) which of the proposals, if any, would they accept and (b) if they used any of the services under consultation.

2.8 Overall the breakdown of the responses to the consultation was as follows:

- 275 people attended the 5 public meetings and 2 specific stakeholder meetings
- 2656 responses to the consultation questionnaire (2209 online and 447 hardcopies)
- 236 emails and letters from members of the public
- 7 petitions against the potential cuts to a specific route
- 13 detailed submissions

In the next section, we summarise the main findings from the consultation exercise.

3. Executive Summary

3.1 The response to the consultation has been high. The large number of letters and emails, along with detailed submissions, suggest that the public take transport and access to it very seriously. It is an area of deep concern for many of respondents, whether they live in rural or urban communities.

3.2 Efforts were made by OCC to ensure the consultation documents were user-friendly and written in plain English, but a number of respondents did say that they found the documents difficult to navigate and understand. This report incorporates information from both complete and incomplete forms and from the many separate emails and letters.

3.3 Based on the responses received for each survey questions and individual responses, we set out the key findings and trends below.

Proposal 1 – option 1: withdraw all bus subsidies

- A very small number of respondents, **2% (34 out 2055)**, agreed with option 1 in the feedback survey.
- No responses received via emails, letters, public meetings and detailed submissions agreed with option 1, and were, on the whole, **strongly opposed to option 1**.

Proposal 1 – option 2: reduce subsidised bus service by £2.3million

- Survey feedback forms indicate that **1083 (53%) of the 2055 respondents preferred neither of the two proposals to make savings on subsidised bus services**.
- **856 (41%) of survey respondents preferred proposal 1 option 2, to partially withdraw bus subsidies**, as they regarded this option as ‘the lesser of two evils’.
- **207 (73%) of emails and letters were against potential cuts to their particular bus service and bus services as a whole**. Most responses wanted to see their local bus protected and / or wanted to see the county council **invest in bus services and not make cuts**. Only 3.5% of emails and letters accepted some reduction in services.
- Survey feedback results show that **902 (47%) of the 1921 respondents agreed with the priority of protecting off-peak** transport for older and disabled people. However, an overwhelming proportion left comments stating that the young and working people, who use peak services, are just as important.
- **1216 (74%) of survey respondents use the bus service weekly or daily**.
- The main reasons for people using the bus services are for essential shopping and appointments. 663 (41%) of the 1598 survey respondents cited that they would find alternative transport difficult.

- Many respondents, through surveys, emails, letters and detailed submissions were critical of how the county council developed their methodology and ranking table for bus services and whether they had looked into, and fully valued, the social impacts for people who would be left without access to transport (see Section 7).

Proposal 2 – withdraw direct funding for the Dial-a-Ride service (but support not for profit, community transport initiatives)

- Of the 1715 respondents answering the survey question, **211 (15%) agreed with withdrawing direct funding from Dial-a-Ride services and a further 389 (29%) were neutral about the proposal. 194 (14%) of respondents disagreed and felt the service should be protected for the most vulnerable people.** 566 (42%) of respondents cited they did not know, which is unsurprising given the majority (97%) of respondents did not use the service and were unsure what service Dial-a-Ride offered.
- Many respondents wanted an option to be able to **pay more towards the Dial-a-Ride service.**
- Some respondents were concerned about (a) the availability of volunteers and (b) the limitations of many community transport schemes ability to take on a subsidised service and make it financially feasible, particularly in rural areas.

3.4 OCC asked the public to set out their thoughts on alternative transport solutions for their communities.

Supporting alternative solutions: ideas from the public

- Many respondents suggested those with concessionary bus passes who can afford to do so should be asked to **pay a donation when they use their bus pass** to help make the bus service viable.
- Similar suggestions were made regarding the **Dial-a-Ride** services. Many **respondents would be prepared to pay more towards the service.** At present, those registered with Dial-a-Ride are only required to pay a £5 pa membership fee.
- Many respondents called for **bus routes to be changed or combined** with other routes, as a means to secure their bus services. Bus providers should be invited to suggest how services that are currently subsidised could be made more profitable.
- Some respondents suggested **increasing Council Tax**, if the additional funds could be ring-fenced for subsidised bus services and Dial a Ride services.
- Several **area-specific ideas** were put forward including: two new community minibus schemes; 1 new bus company idea; and extending existing community transport schemes to cover a wider geographic area.

3.5 Summing up, there is little appetite to remove subsidies and reduce services. Nor is there agreement over which bus services should be prioritised if subsidy is removed. The public are sending out a strong message that greater effort should be made to maintain most – if not all - routes. If some routes are to lose their subsidy, the public want the county council, bus providers, the voluntary sector and community groups to find alternative ways of maintaining a service. Some respondents' suggestions are summarised above; many have thought about alternative options.

3.6. The feasibility of each suggestion will need to be assessed and the most promising developed further. This will need leadership and guidance from the County Council. We recommend the County Council nominates an officer to work with community groups and bus operators to help develop these ideas in more detail. In particular, options for managing a 'voluntary payment scheme' – suggested by many respondents –will need careful consideration.

The 3 case studies below give a flavour of some specific proposals that were raised during the public consultation.

Case study 1:

Swindon Dial-a-Ride aims to expand

The current West Oxon Dial-a-Ride service operates Monday to Friday within West Oxfordshire and to Oxford City and Kidlington as required. It has a lower membership than other districts - eighty-five members, mainly female, with an average age of 80+.

Swindon Dial-a-Ride, a not for profit organisation, are looking to offer the same level of service operating on Monday to Friday service (excluding Bank Holidays), using one wheelchair accessible minibus. The hours of operation would be with first pickup at 09.30 am and last pickup at 16.30 pm.

To ensure **sustainability** of the service the Swindon Dial-a-Ride would promote the new service to increase the number of users. And they would be keen to include more lucrative work in Oxfordshire to complement the new service.

Case study 2:

Rural based eco-bus company

An entrepreneur based in the Bartons has drafted a business case to initiate a new social enterprise called Our Bus Company. The new rural owned bus company aims to run electric midi-buses (small and narrow buses appropriate for rural roads) and would maximise the use of apps and online support, so that bus users can pre-book stops, if needed. This operation, should start-up funding be secured, could replace and extend bus routes to Oxford and Banbury for the Bartons, Glympton, Wootton, Sandford St Martins and Duns Tew.

Case study 3:

New Cholsey community minibus

Parishes in South Oxfordshire are seeking a community transport solution to run a community minibus service for the parishes of Cholsey, North & South Moreton, Mouslford, Little and Long Wittenham and the Astons. It could also be extended to serve Benson and Wallingford.

Funding is needed for the purchase of a wheelchair accessible vehicle. The vehicle would also be adapted to transport seated wheel-chair passengers. There are several second hand models on the market at a cost of approximately £15,000. In addition a good pool of volunteer drivers (and possibly paid drivers at a later stage) will need to be recruited along with experienced volunteers to administer the scheme.

The scheme would make an important contribution to people living in these parishes enabling them to live a full and active life within their own community.

4. Analysis: feedback forms

Part 1: Methodology and Key Findings

Methodology

This section provides an analysis of the feedback forms. In total, 2,656 feedback forms were received, both online (2,209) and on paper (447).

The results for each question are presented in this section. Numerical results are presented graphically. The questions that called for open text responses have been coded to extrapolate key themes from the many and varied comments received.

The following should be noted:

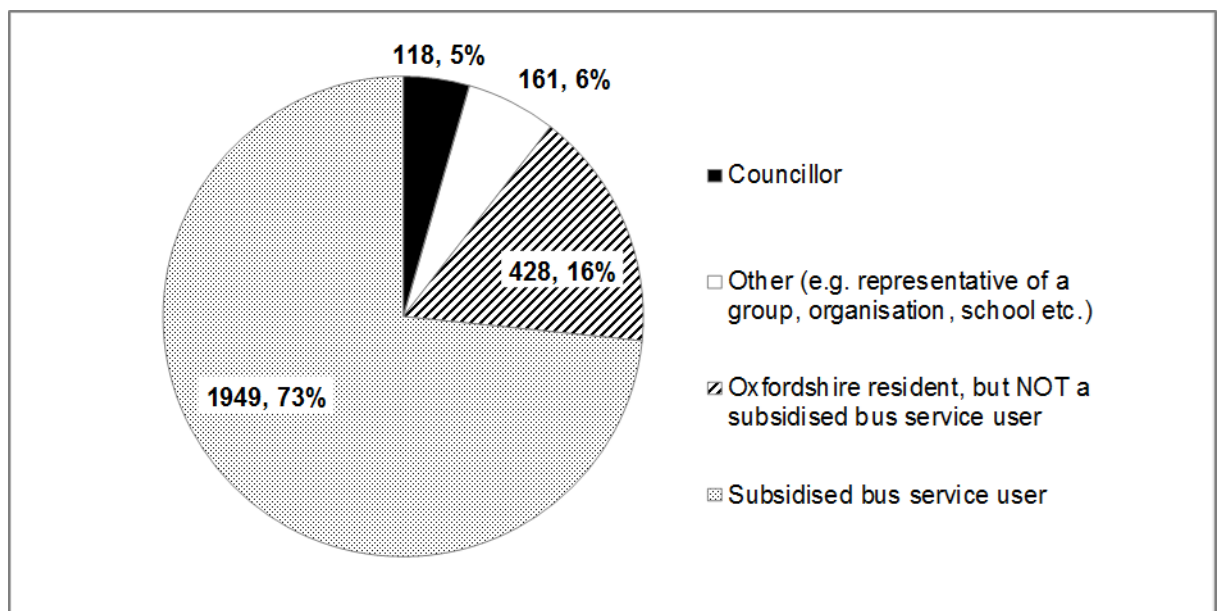
- Respondents did not always complete the whole form so the totals reported for individual questions are not the same as the total number of respondents. Also, some responses represented the views of groups or organisations so it is not possible to assess the representativeness of respondents.

Respondent profile

The survey questions 17 to 22 asked for personal details from each respondent. The information below provides an overall picture of the respondent profile.

- 73% of the responses came from subsidised bus users.

Chart 4.1: Responses to the question “Which of the following best describes you?”



- Most respondents provided responses online (2,209, 83%), and some (447, 16%) sent in paper forms using the Freepost address.
- Responses came from all age-groups, with 5% below the age of 24, 44% between 25 and 65, and 51% aged over 65.

Chart 4.2: age categories of respondents

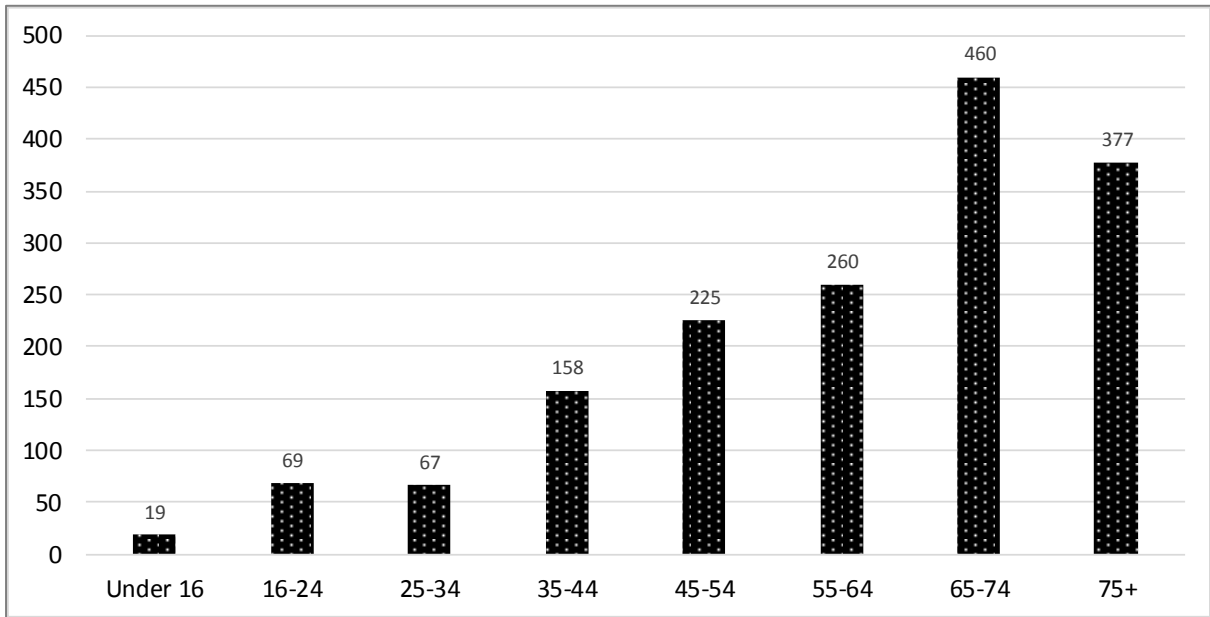
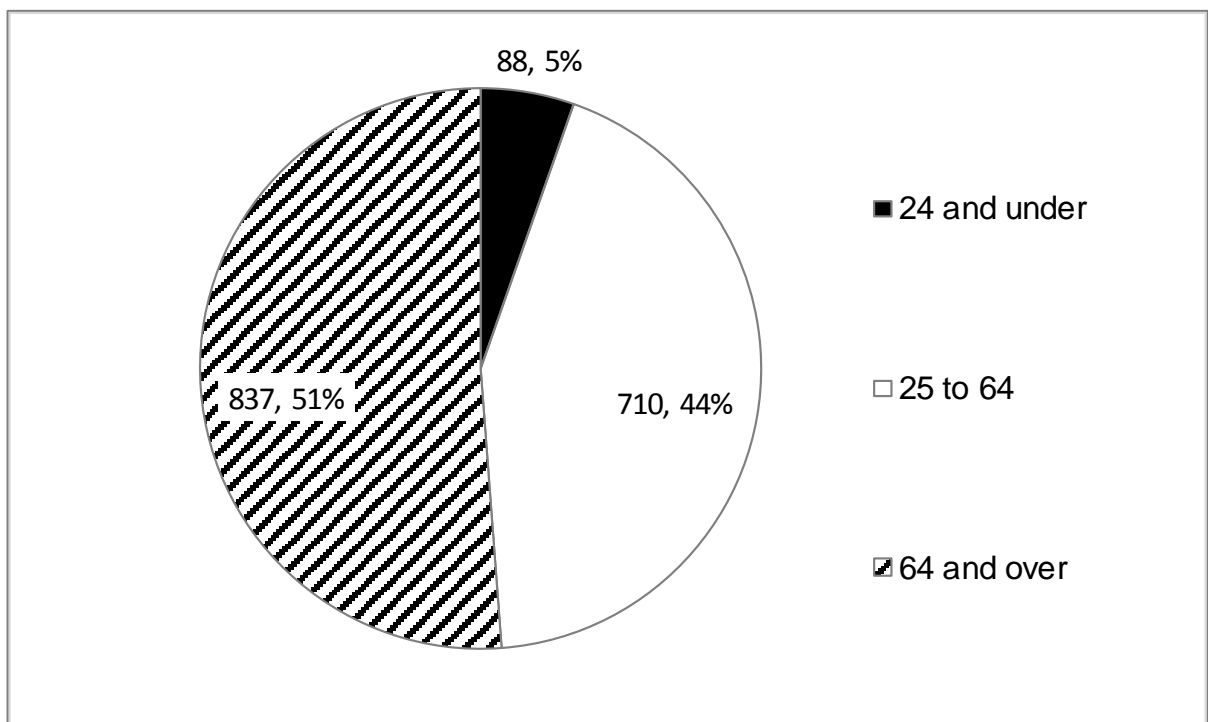
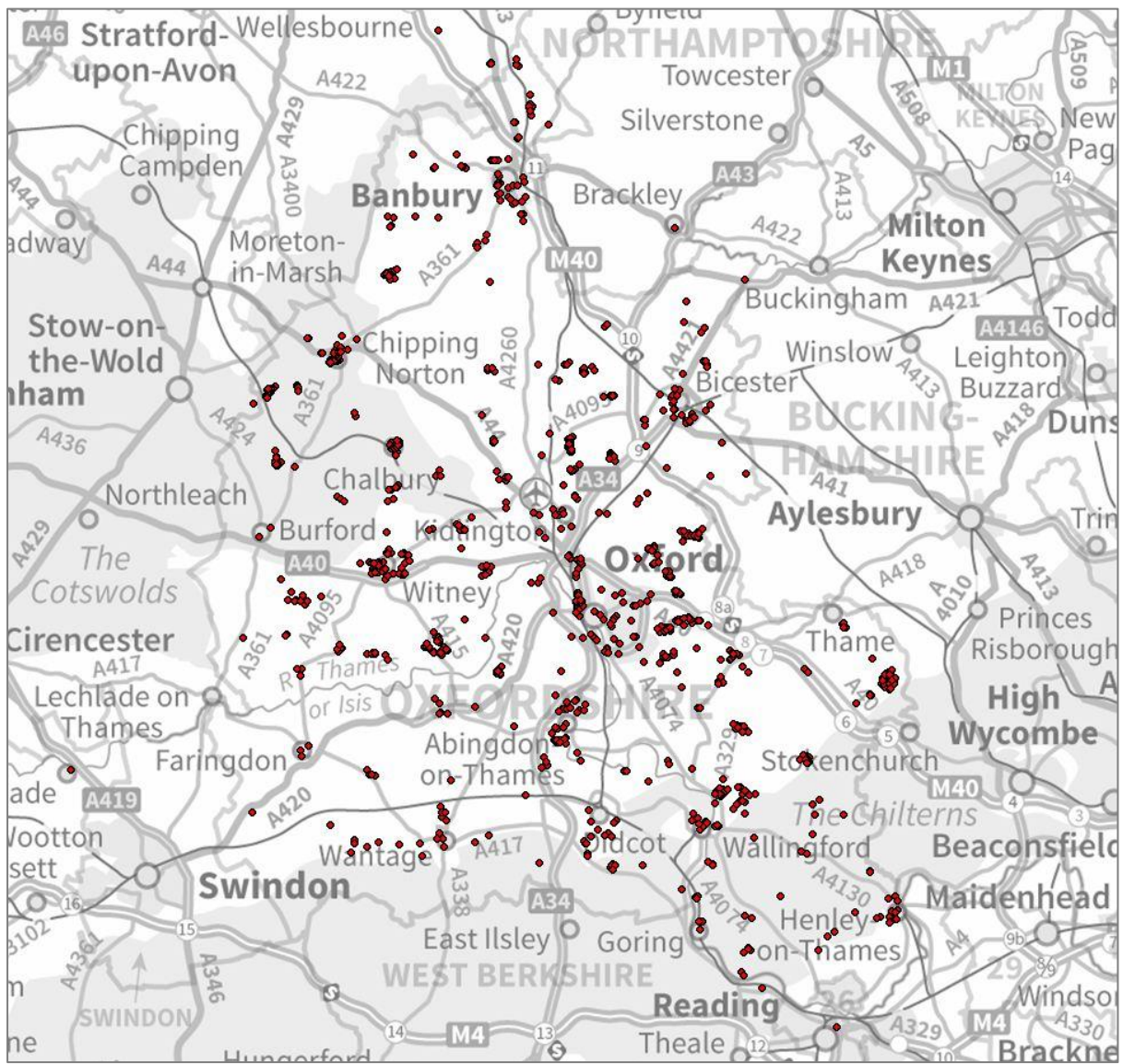


Chart 4.3: Proportions of respondents in major age groups



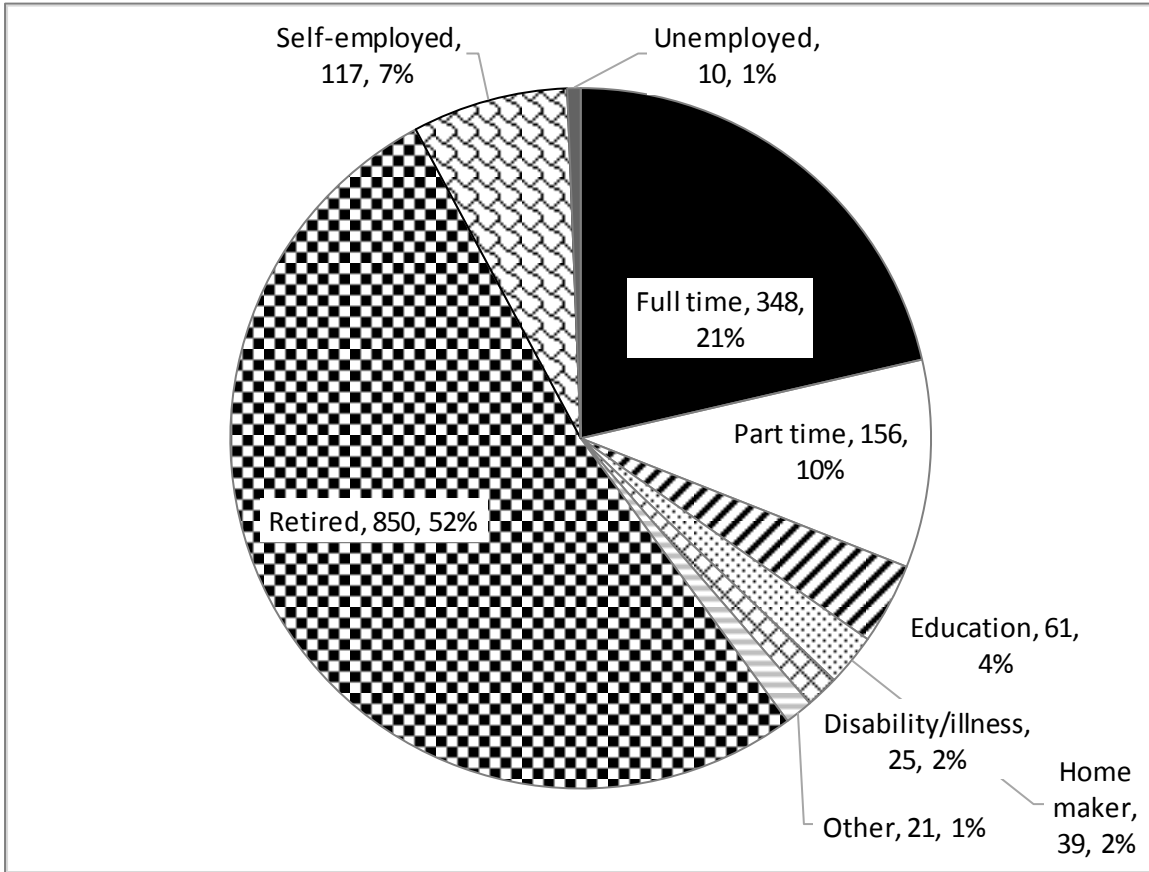
- As Chart 4.4 illustrates, respondents were from all over the county.

Chart 4.4: Post codes of respondents



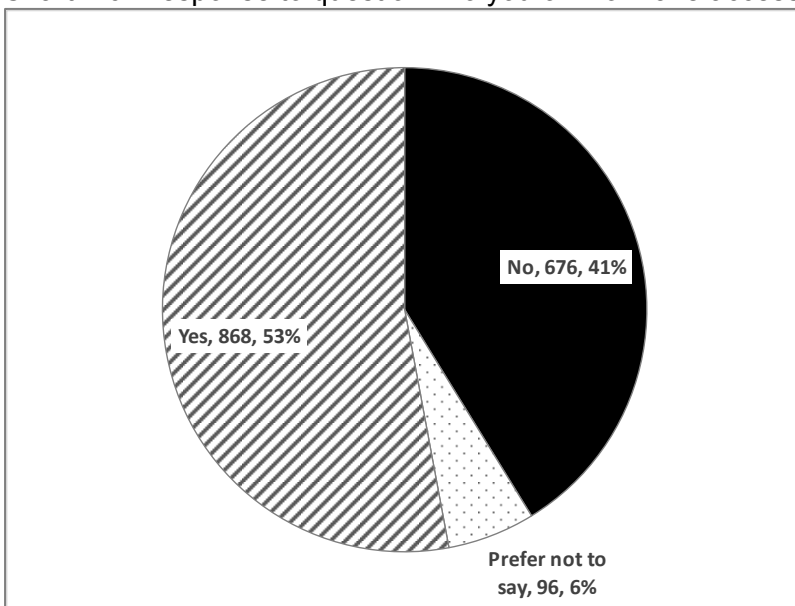
- Just over half the respondents are retired, and 38% are employed full time, part time or self-employed.

Chart 4.5: Employment status



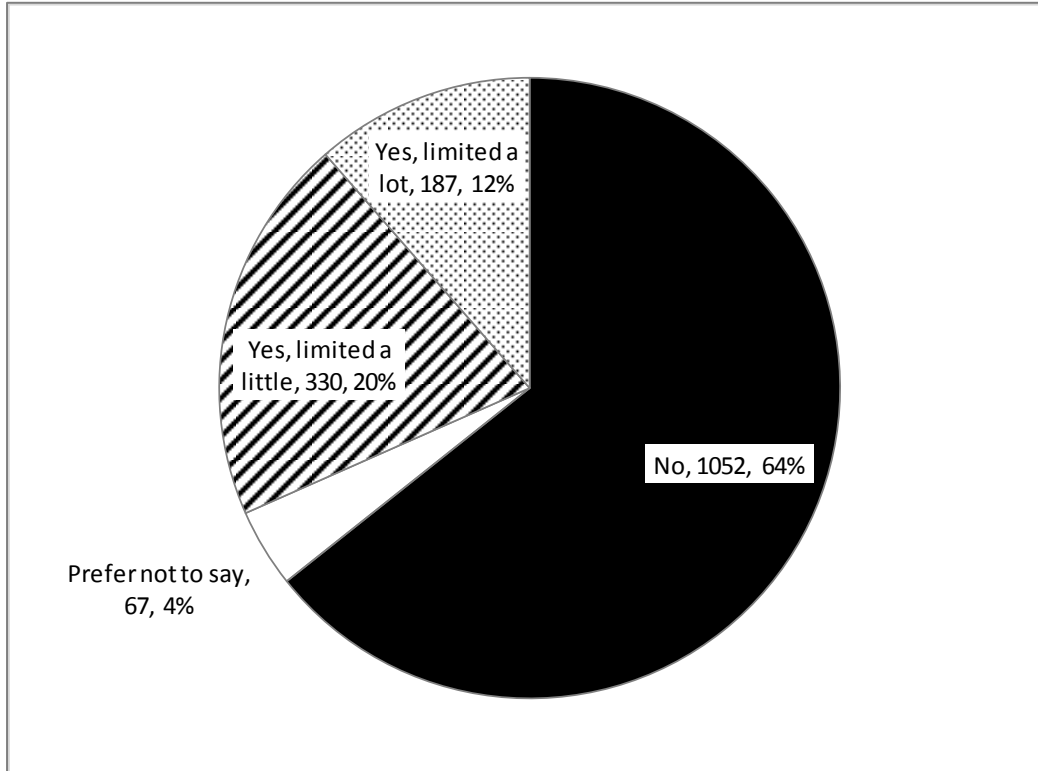
- Just over half of respondents have access to a car

Chart 4.6: Response to question “Do you own or have access to a car?”



- Most respondents do not have mobility problems, but one third reported that they are limited either a little or a lot by health and disability issues.

Chart 4.7: response to question “Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability...?”



Key Findings

Summary of main themes raised in the feedback forms

- 1587 respondents cited their most frequent bus service as tabled under Q2. However, over half (56%) of respondents answering Q1 used more than one subsidised bus service.
- 1216 (74%) of respondents who answered Q3 use the bus service every week. 576 (35%) respondents using the buses weekly or daily were over 65. 333 (20%) respondents using the bus weekly or daily were aged between 25 and 64 years old, and 73 (4.5%) respondents using the buses frequently were aged under 24.
- The main reasons for people using the bus services are for essential shopping and appointments. 663 (41%) of the 1598 respondents cited that they would find alternative transport difficult.
- Just over half (53%) of the 1640 respondents stated they owned or had access to a car and 676 (41%) respondents stated they do not own or have access to a car.

- **1083 (53%) of the 2055 respondents preferred neither of the two proposals to make savings on subsidised bus services. 856 (41%) of respondents preferred proposal 1 option 2, to partially withdraw bus subsidies and 34 (2%) of respondents preferred option 1, to withdraw all subsidies.**
- Overall, respondents regarded their local bus service as an important part of the community infrastructure, and should be protected, not reduced or withdrawn.
- **902 (47%) of the 1921 respondents agreed with the priority of protecting off-peak transport for older and disabled people.** However, an overwhelming proportion left comments stating that the young and working people, who use peak services, are just as important.
- Many respondents were critical of how the county council developed the ranking table for bus services and questioned whether they had looked into the implications for vulnerable people without transport.
- All 49 of Dial a Ride users who responded to the consultation stated that they would find it very difficult to find alternative transport solutions.
- Of the 1715 respondents, 211 (15%) agreed with withdrawing direct funding from Dial a Ride services and a further 389 (29%) were neutral about the proposal. 194 (14%) of respondents disagreed and felt the service should be protected for the most vulnerable people. 566 (42%) of respondents cited they did not know, which is unsurprising given the majority (97%) of respondents did not use the service and were unsure what service Dial a Ride offered.

Part 2: Analysis of individual questions

The feedback form comprised 24 questions. Fifteen questions were about the consultation proposals and nine questions were about the respondents. The results of each question are summarised below.¹

Q1 What subsidised bus services do you use?

Respondents were asked to list one or more subsidised bus service/s that they use. 1,501 respondents answered this question and just over half of these (56%) listed more than one bus route. 69 respondents who answered this question mentioned bus routes that were not on the subsidised bus list. Several respondents commented that they were unable to access the list of subsidised bus services. The list was in Annex X of the consultation documents available online and in hard copy from libraries and from ORCC. The ORCC helpline responded to over 200 phone calls and sent consultation documents by post to those that requested them (over 250).

Q2 Please state the Oxfordshire County Council subsidised bus service number you use most frequently

Respondents were invited to name the bus service that they use most frequently. A slightly higher number of respondents filled in this question (1,587). 9 responses were not legible, and 51 referred to services that are not subsidised.

In Table 4.8, each subsidised bus service is ranked by the number of respondents who stated that this is the service they use most frequently. The list should not be taken as showing the importance of each bus service to the community but as a reflection of the stated bus usage by the respondents.

Table 4.8: Subsidised services that are used most frequently by respondents

Service Number	Service Description	Option 2 Risk (from Annex Y)	Number stating this is the route they use most frequently
103/104	Oxford - Wheatley - Little Milton	Low	113
103/104	Oxford - Cuddesdon	Low	
108/118	Oxford - Forest Hill - Stanton St. John (- Elsfield)	Medium	104
108/118	Oxford - Brill (- Bicester)	Medium	
25A	Oxford - Bicester	At Risk (Under Review)	97
139	Wallingford - Henley-on-Thames	Medium	81
18	Clanfield - Oxford	Low	77
40	High Wycombe - Thame	Very High	75
25	Kidlington/Oxford - Bicester	Medium	70
T1	Oxford - Garsington - Watlington	Very High	62
X9	Witney - Charlbury - Chipping Norton	Low	58
X8	Kingham - Chipping Norton	High	57
17	Cotteslowe - Oxford	Low	48

¹ All charts are in black and white for visual accessibility and ease of printing. The charts are from numbers responding to each question, which does not always equal the total number of respondents.

Service Number	Service Description	Option 2 Risk (from Annex Y)	Number stating this is the route they use most frequently
488	Chipping Norton - Banbury	Very High	46
19	Carterton - Witney	Low	42
S3	Chipping Norton - Oxford	Very High	42
X15	Abingdon - Witney	Medium	35
94/95	Didcot - Blewbury - Hagbournes - Didcot	Medium	32
94/95	Didcot - The Moretons - Blewbury - Didcot	Medium	
277	Lighthorne Heath - Banbury	Medium	32
X2	OXFORD-ABINGDON-MILTON PARK-DIDCOT	Very High	26
22/23	Bicester -Langford - Caversfield - Bicester (circular)	Medium	25
22/23	Bicester -Langford - Caversfield - Bicester (circular)	Medium	
218	Wytham - Oxford	High	22
215	Witney : Market Square - Smiths Estate - Market Square (circular)	High	21
213/214	Witney : Market Sq - Wood Green - Cogges - Market Sq (circular)	Low	20
213/214	Witney : Market Square - Cogges - Wood Green - Market Square	Low	
143	Reading-Upper Basildon-Whitchurch Hill-Reading	High	19
8	Bicester - Silverstone	Medium	17
11	Witney - Oxford	Very High	17
63	Oxford - Cumnor - Southmoor	Medium	16
134	Goring - Stokes - Wallingford	Low	13
233	Burford - Woodstock	High	13
269/270	Banbury - Stratford upon Avon	Low	12
269/270	Banbury - Stratford upon Avon	Low	
41	North Abingdon Town Service anti-clockwise	Low	11
B7	Grimsbury & Edmunds Road - Banbury	Low	11
H2	Sandhills - Headington Quarry - Headington Centre	High	11
280	Aylesbury - Oxford City Centre	Very High	10
B1	Easington - Banbury	Medium	10
67	Wantage - Faringdon	Low	9
50A	Stratford-upon-Avon - Banbury	Medium	9
66	Faringdon - Oxford	Very Low	8
145	Woodcote (Oxon) - Henley-on-Thames	Low	7
C1	Charlbury - Leafield (Oxon) - Wychwoods	Very High	7
X1	OXFORD-DIDCOT-HARWELL CAMPUS-WANTAGE	Very High	7
42/43	North Abingdon Town Service via College	Low	6
42/43	North Abingdon Town Service	At Risk (Under Review)	
42/43	Abingdon Town Centre - Eaton (Oxon)	High	
154	Henley-on-Thames - Henley-on-Thames	Low	6
B2	Bodicote - Banbury	Low	6
K1/K2	Kidlington Town service	High	6
K1/K2	Kidlington - Begbroke - Yarnton - Kidlington	High	

Service Number	Service Description	Option 2 Risk (from Annex Y)	Number stating this is the route they use most frequently
S4	Banbury - Oxford	Very Low	6
T94	Oxford - Ambrosden - Bicester	Medium	6
X10	Wychwoods - Fulbrook - Burford	Very High	6
123	Thame Local Service	Medium	5
20	Oxford: Rose Hill - Cowley [- Unipart House]	High	5
44	Oxford - Bayworth - Sunningwell - Abingdon	Medium	5
A1	(Didcot -) Ardington - Wantage - Ardington (- Didcot)	Low	5
S4C	Middle Barton - Deddington	High	5
124/125	Thame - Wallington	Medium	5
124/125	Chalgrove - Watlington - Benson - Wallingford	Very High	4
38	Wantage Town service	Low	4
86	Lye Valley - Cowley	High	4
97	Wallingford - Didcot	High	4
B10	Hanwell Fields - Banbury	Low	4
64	Carterton - Swindon	Medium	3
152	Henley-on-Thames - Henley-on-Thames	High	3
67A	Wantage - Faringdon	Medium	3
W12	Woodstock - Wootton - Woodstock	High	3
83	Wantage - Faringdon	Very Low	2
89	The Baldons - Cowley	High	2
90	Banbury - Deddington - Upper Heyford	Medium	2
120	Princes Risborough, - Thame	Very High	2
275	Oxford City Centre - High Wycombe	Low	2
811	Salford (Oxon) - Cheltenham (Gloucs)	Very High	2
67C	Wantage - Faringdon	At Risk (Under Review)	2
B5	Banbury - Neithrop - Banbury	Very High	2
T2	Oxford-Science Park-Berinsfield-Abingdon	High	2
W10	Woodstock - Shipton on Cherwell - Kidlington - Woodstock	Medium	2
37	Bicester - Hardwick - Finmere	Medium	1
81	Bicester - Fritwell - Souldern - Banbury	Very High	1
90	Hungerford - Swindon Bus Station	High	1
98	Great Western Park - Didcot - Great Western Park	Very Low	1
114	Wallingford - Abingdon	Very High	1
126	Wallingford - Chalgrove - Wallingford	Very High	1
135	Wallingford - Moulsoford - Streatley - Goring	Very High	1
800	High Wycombe - Reading	Very High	1
67B	Wantage - Faringdon	Medium	1
V19	Icomb - Westcotes - Fifield - Wychwoods - Chipping Norton	Very Low	1
V24/V26	Upper Oddington - Witney	Very Low	1
V24/V26	Upper Oddington - Chipping Norton - Leafield - Witney	Very Low	
24	Bicester -Launton Road-Bicester (circular)	At Risk (Under Review)	0

Service Number	Service Description	Option 2 Risk (from Annex Y)	Number stating this is the route they use most frequently
46	Drayton St. Leonard - Abingdon	Medium	0
50	Stratford-upon-Avon - Chipping Norton	Very High	0
61	Faringdon Town Service	Very Low	0
84	Wantage - Stanford in the Vale - Goosey	Very Low	0
85	Iffley - Cowley	High	0
121	Princes Risborough - Watlington	High	0
131	Wallingford - East Hagbourne	Very High	0
131	Henley-on-Thames - Henley-on-Thames	Low	0
153	Henley-on-Thames - Henley-on-Thames	High	0
504	Horton - Horley - Banbury	High	0
136A	Wallingford - Cholsey - Wallingford	Very Low	0
136C	Wallingford - Cholsey - Wallingford	Very High	0
44A	Oxford - Abingdon	At Risk (Under Review)	0
81A	Bicester - Fritwell - Souldern - Somerton	Very High	0
County Connect	Oxfordshire Service Users. Unscheduled Routes. Claydon, Cropedy & The Bourtons	At Risk (Under Review)	0
H1	Old Marston - Headington	High	0
K3	Kidlington - Yarnton - Begbroke - Kidlington	Very High	0
M1	Watlington - Reading	High	0
Swindon Shopper Bus	Oxfordshire Service Users. Unscheduled Routes. Longcot, Shrivenham, Watchfield, Bourton and Ashbury in Vale of White Horse	At Risk (Under Review)	0
V1	Witney : Market Sq - Smiths Estate - Deer Park - Market Sq	Very Low	0
V12	Upper Oddington - Chipping Norton	Very Low	0
V17	Upper Oddington - Chipping Norton	Very Low	0
W11	Woodstock - Bladon - Woodstock	High	0
West Oxfordshire Routes	West Oxfordshire Routes (V14, V20, V21, V23, V24, V25)	Very Low	0

Technical note: Some respondents gave 2 service numbers that they use equally and consider to be the same service. Where these services were of equal risk the service numbers have been combined as shown in the table above so there is no double counting.

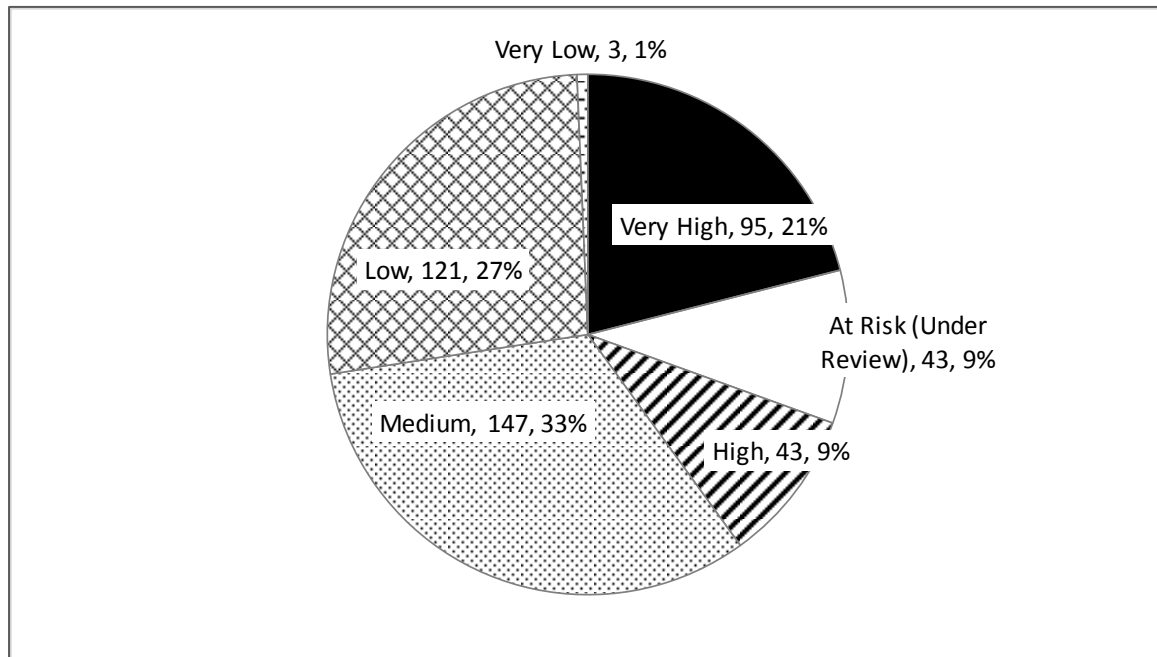
1,248 people answered the question “Do you make use of the concessionary bus pass scheme, which provides free off-peak travel? 742 (60%) responded that they hold an older person’s bus pass, and 36 (3%) hold a disabled persons’ bus pass. The other respondents do not hold a bus pass or prefer not to say.

Chart Table 4.10 Chart 4.11 and Table 4.12 show bus pass holders by the risk category of the bus they most frequently use.

Table 4.10

Risk category of bus used most frequently	No	Prefer not to say	Yes, I hold a disabled persons' bus pass	Yes, I hold an older persons' bus pass	Total
Very High	95	3	5	143	246
At Risk (Under Review)	43	3	1	31	78
High	43	2	2	102	149
Medium	147	4	13	218	382
Low	121	4	14	240	379
Very Low	3	2	1	8	14
Total	452	18	36	742	1248

Chart 4.11: Risk categories of the buses most frequently used by those holding an older persons bus pass



Q3 Thinking about the subsidised bus service you use most frequently, how often do you travel by this service?

Of the 1,633 respondents who answered Q3, the majority (1,216, 74%) use the bus services at least every week, and in many cases several times a week or daily.

Chart 4.12: How often respondents travel on the bus service that they use most frequently

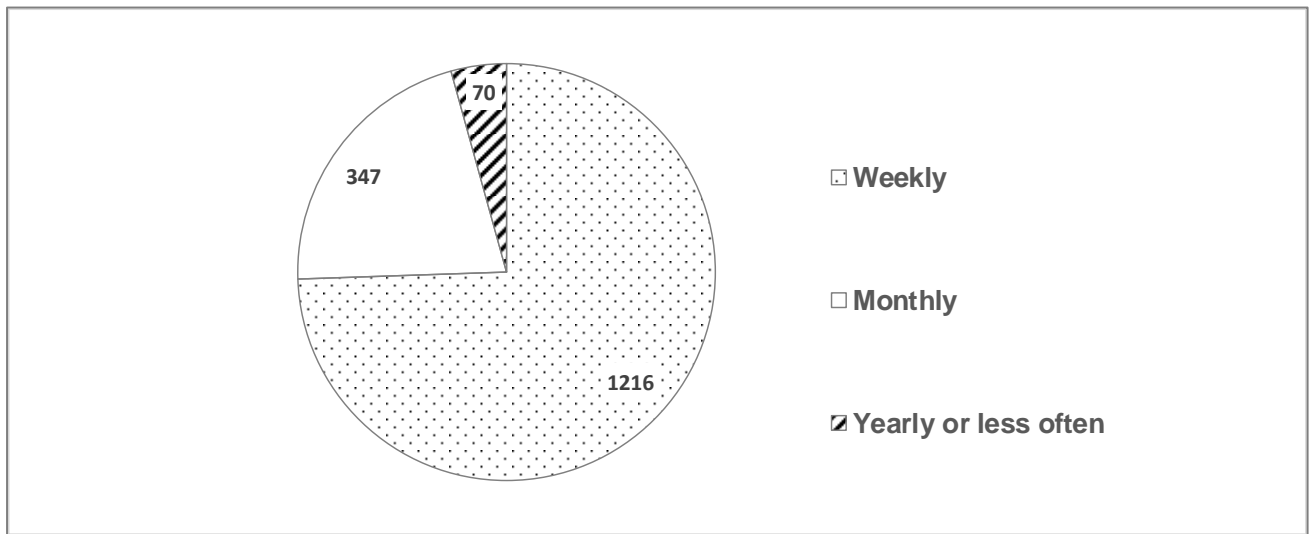


Table 4.13: Frequency of use by all frequency categories used in the feedback form

Q3 frequency of use categories	Respondents	%
Every day	230	14%
Three or more times a week	524	33%
Once or twice a week	462	27%
Less than once a week but more than twice a month	211	13%
Twice a month	136	8%
Once or twice a year	65	4%
Less often	5	0%
Total	1,633	100%

Table 4.14 shows that higher numbers of respondents aged over 65 reported weekly or more frequent use of their bus service. Significant numbers of respondents with access to a car also use the bus (Table 4.15).

Table 4.14: Frequency of use by age

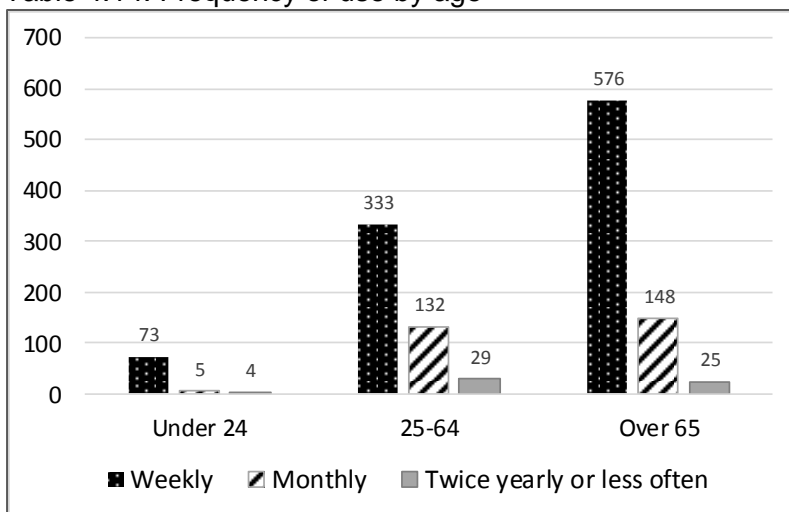
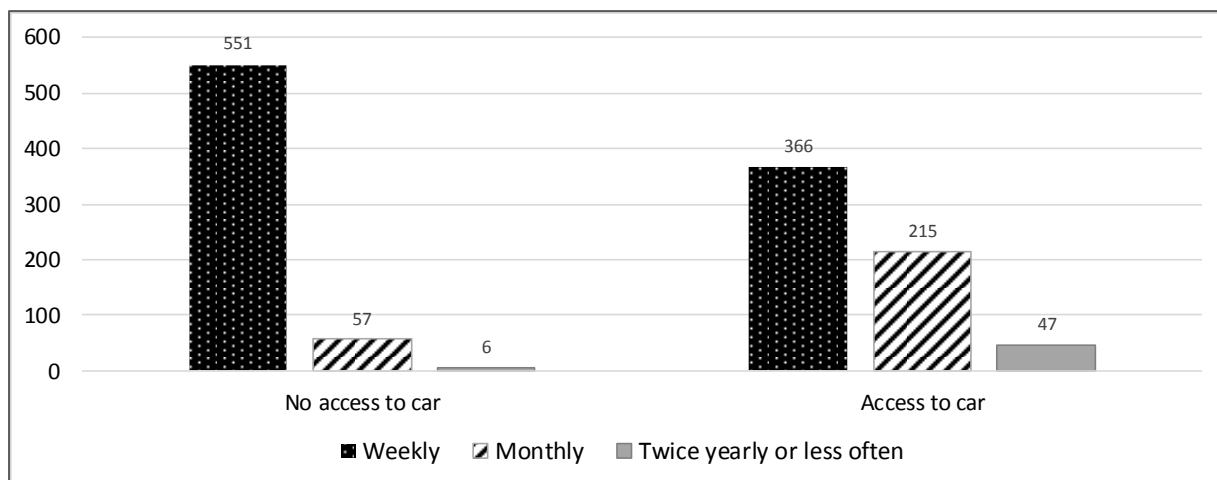


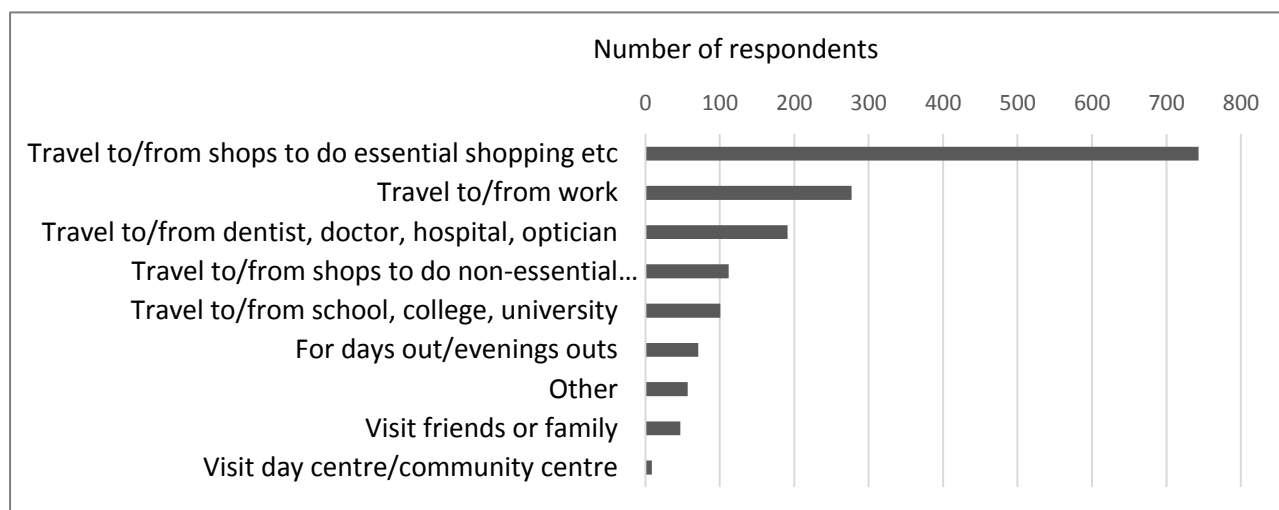
Table 4.15: Frequency of bus usage by access to a car



Q4a What is the main reason for using this service?

Trips for essential shopping and appointments is the most frequently stated reason for using the bus service (743 respondents, which is 46% of those who responded to this question).

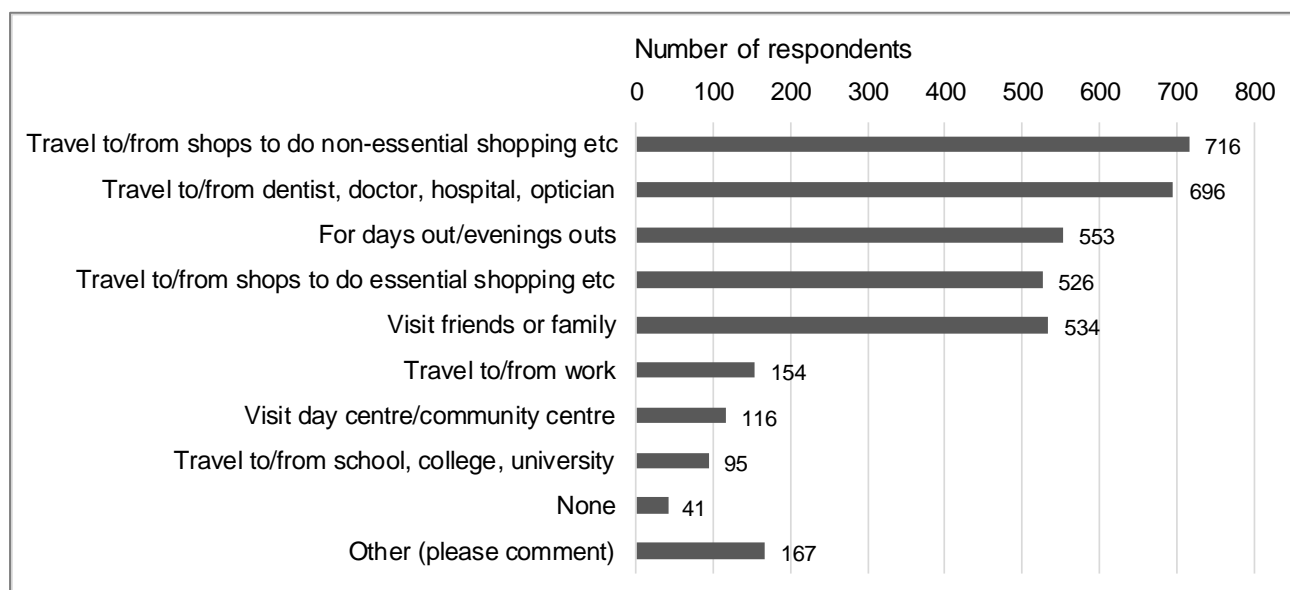
Chart 4.16: Main reason for using the bus service



Q4b Please highlight any other reasons why you make use of this bus service.

1,461 respondents had additional reasons why they use the bus service and 1,298 of these gave multiple additional reasons, showing a wide range of uses. Non-essential shopping (716, 49% of those responding to this question) and travel to medical appointments (696, 48%) were the most frequently stated additional reasons for using the bus.

Chart 4.17: Additional reasons for using the bus service



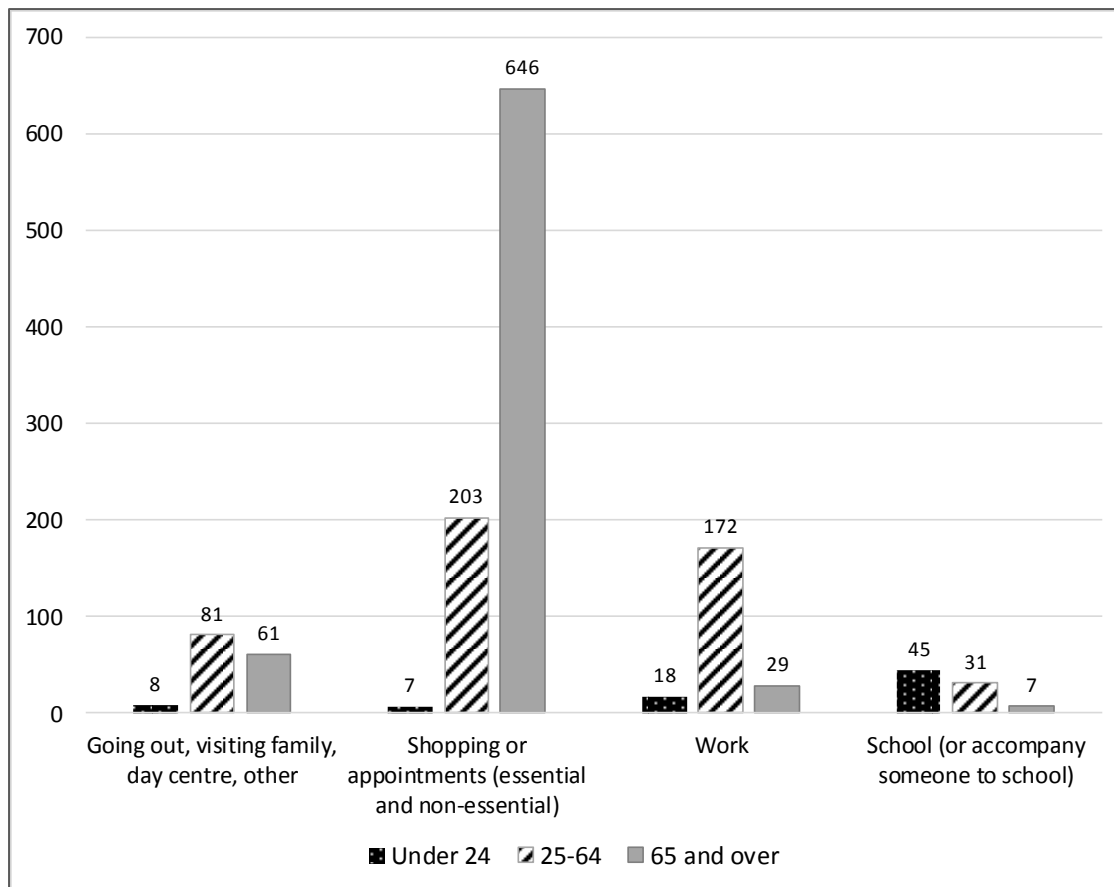
The comments given for “other” reasons showed that many people use the bus to access a wide range of facilities from their church, to museums, hospitals, schools, parks, and leisure facilities (76 comments). Another comment was that the subsidised buses provide links to the wider rail and bus networks for reaching other places in the county and nationally (44 comments). Others commented that the bus was necessary to access voluntary or paid work (11), or for caring responsibilities (13). Choosing an environmentally friendly mode of travel was another reason cited by a few respondents (5).

Chart 4.18: Other reasons for using the bus service

Other reasons (from comments)	Total
Access to rail/bus networks	44
Access to sports, faith, educational, medical, cultural or commercial facilities	76
Access to voluntary or paid work	11
Caring responsibilities	13
Environmentally friendly travel	5
Total	149

Chart 4.19 below shows that older people, in particular, need to use their bus service for essential food shopping, banking and appointments and that many people across working age categories use their bus service to travel to work.

Chart 4.19: Use of bus service by age group

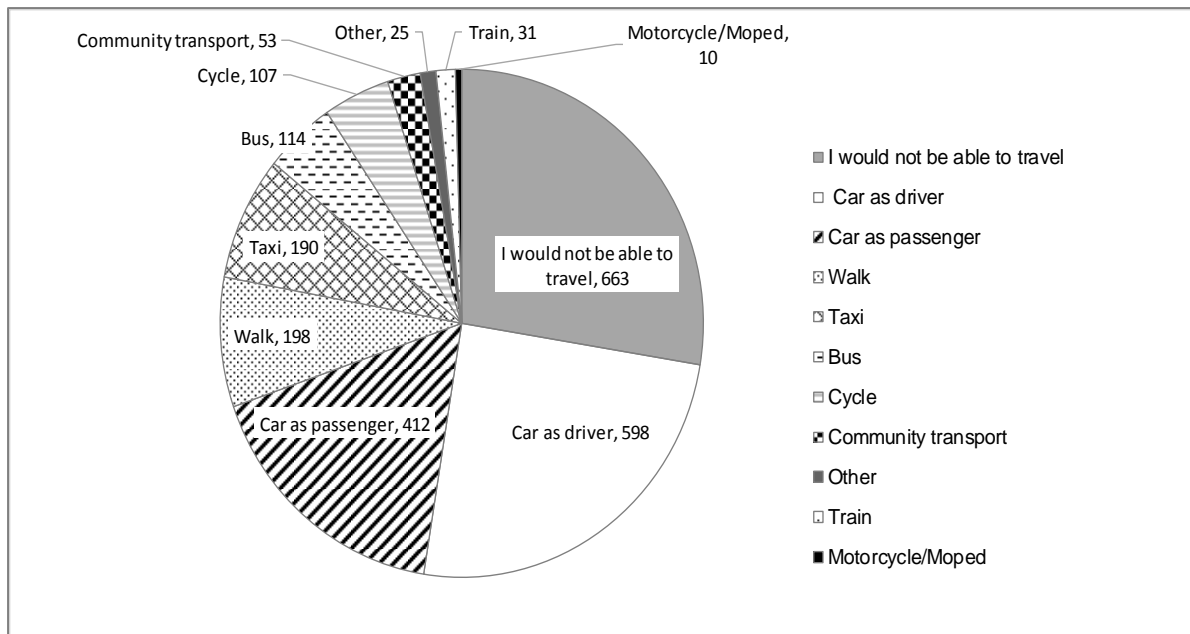


Q5 If the bus service/stop you use was withdrawn, how would you travel?

1,598 respondents answered this question, noting how likely or unlikely they would be to use alternative forms of transport if their subsidised services were to be withdrawn. 6 respondents did not fill out the table but added a comment (1,604 respondents in total). The majority (88%) of these respondents ticked more than one alternative mode of transport.

The largest proportion of respondents (663, 41% of the respondents who answered this question) stated that they would be very likely or fairly likely to be unable to travel. The next most common response was from people who reported that they would be likely to drive a car (598, 37%).

Chart 4.20: Likely alternative modes of travel



Combining those who would drive a car with those who would get a lift in a car, in total 896 respondents (56%) would be either very likely or fairly likely to use a car as their alternative mode of transport if their subsidised bus service was withdrawn – note that this takes into account the fact that some respondents ticked both categories.

Later in the feedback form, 25% of respondents answering this question (676) stated that they do not have access to or own a car/vehicle and 33% said they do have access to a car (868). Chart 4.21 shows the responses to Q17 on access to a car

Chart 4.21

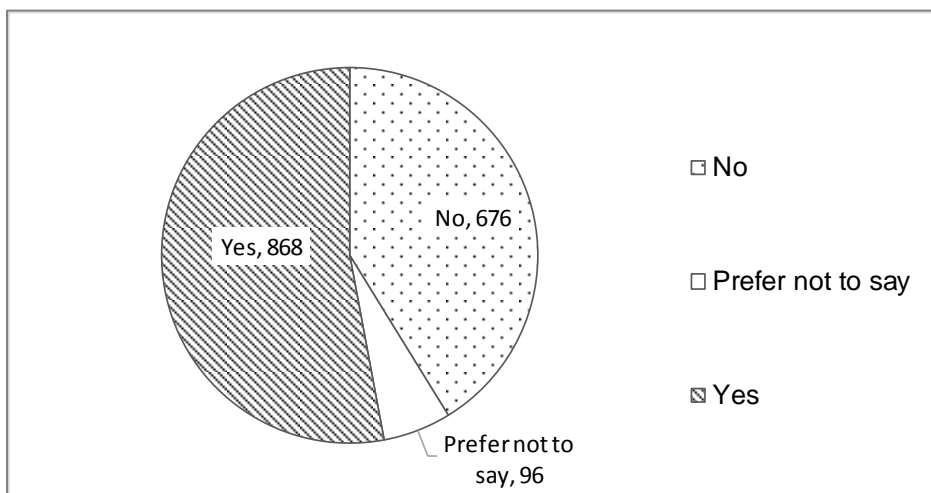
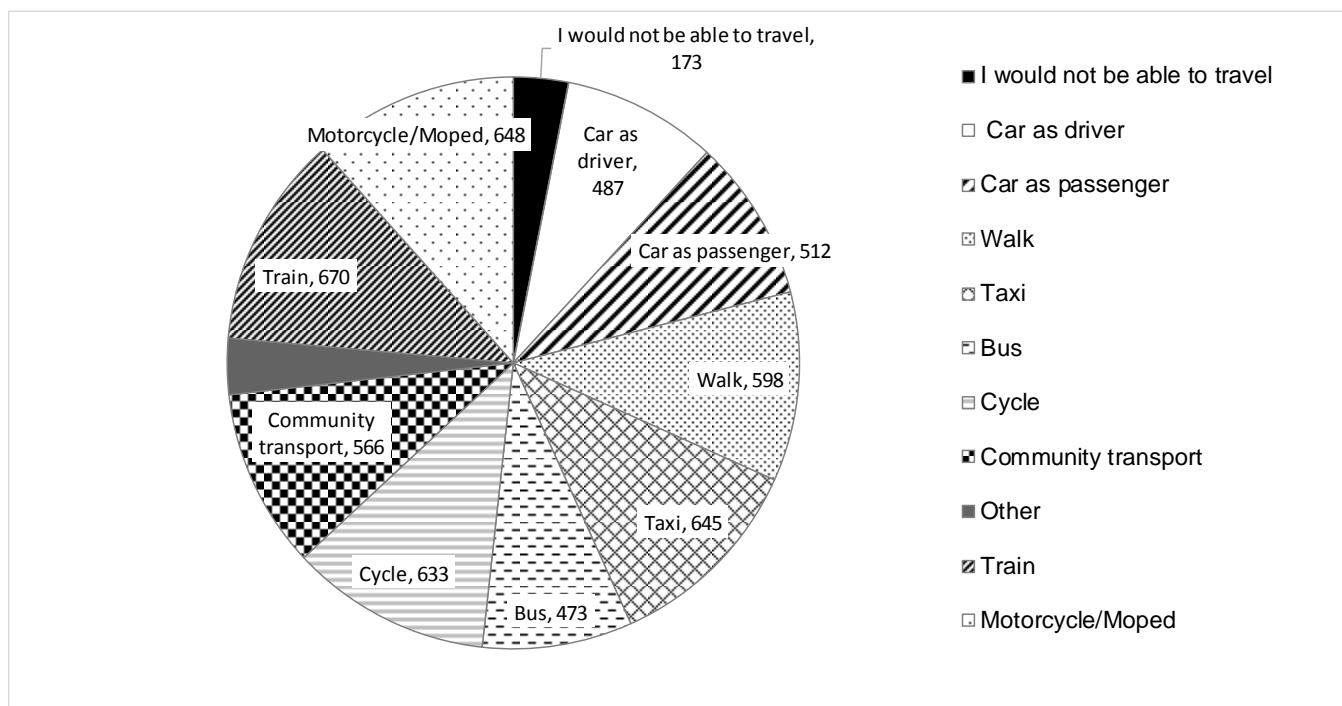


Chart 4.22: Unlikely alternative modes of travel



Many respondents to this question would be unlikely or very unlikely to use a taxi or there is no local service (645, 40%), walk (598, 37%), cycle (633, 39%) or use a motorcycle or moped (648, 40%). 640 respondents (40%) would be unlikely or very unlikely either to use a car either as driver or as a passenger – note that this takes into account the fact that some respondents ticked both categories.

670 respondents (42%) would either be unlikely to use the train or there is no local train service, and 473 (29%) would either be unlikely to use an alternative bus service or there is no other local bus service.²

Cross-tabulations were used to assess the alternative modes of transport that would be likely or unlikely for respondents in different age-groups. More of the older respondents 64 to 75+ would be likely not be able to travel, 64-74 year olds would be likely to use a car, and more older people are “not at all likely” to walk than the other age-groups.³ The cross-tabulation of alternative modes of transport against access to a car shows that many more of those without a car report that they would be unable to travel if their bus service were withdrawn. Nearly half of those who do have access to a car report that they are “very likely” or “fairly likely” to drive.

Q6 Which of the County Council’s two proposals for achieving savings from subsidised bus services do you prefer?

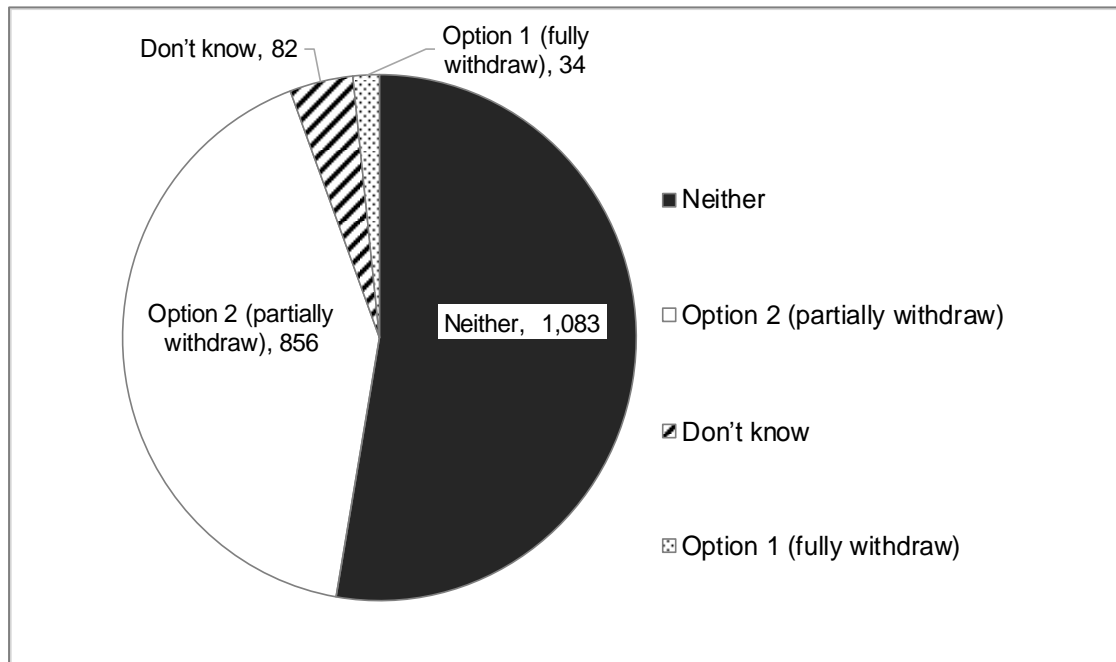
77% of respondents (2,055) answered this question. The most frequent preferred option was “Neither” 1,083 respondents which is 53% of those who answered this question. Most of those who chose an option preferred Option 2 (to partially withdraw subsidies from the

² Note, the 477 hard copy responses did not have “bus” as an option in this question on the feedback form, but bus was included as an option on the online form.

³ The detailed cross-tabulation results by age-group against degrees of likelihood of using different modes of transport are reported as the small numbers at that level of detail mean the results are not statistically significant.

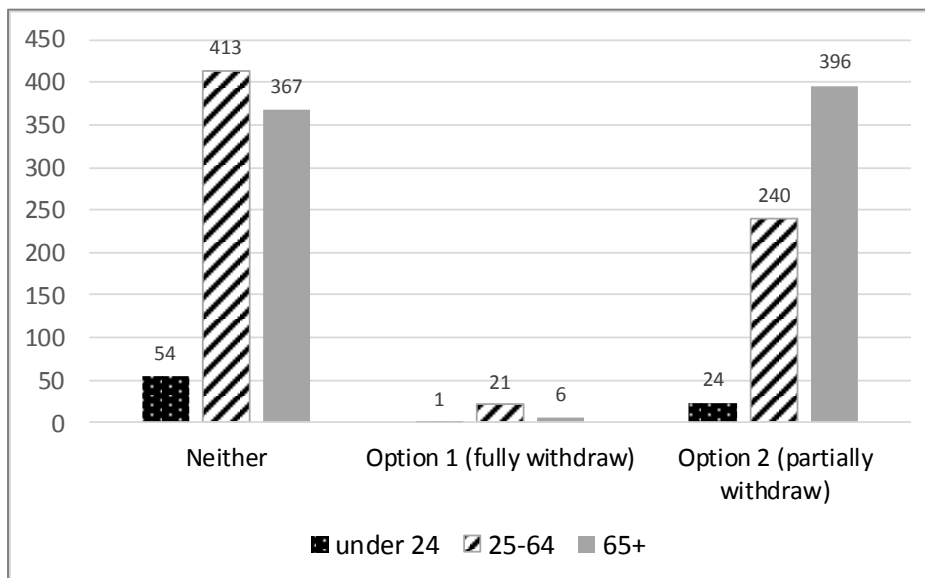
subsidised bus services), 856 respondents or 42%. 34 respondents (2%) selected Option 1 as their preferred option, and 82 (4%) selected “Don’t know”.

Chart 4.23, the preferred approach for achieving savings from subsidised bus services.



The age break-down of respondents shows a slight majority of people aged 25-64 selecting “Neither” (413, 50% of respondents selecting “Neither”) and more people aged 65 and older selecting Option 2 (partial withdrawal) (396, 47%) than other age-groups.⁴

Chart 4.24 Age profile of respondents choosing each option



⁴ Option 1 is included in the chart for completeness but the number of respondents is too small (34) to draw any conclusions.

Respondents were asked for the reasons behind their choices. 1,244 respondents commented in this section.

Of the 1,083 respondents who chose “Neither”:

- The largest group (480, 44% of those choosing “Neither”) cited impacts on local people from inconvenience, to the difficulty of getting to school, work or appointments, to loss of a life-line and isolation of elderly people.
- Others (94 respondents, 9%) cited concerns over adverse social, community or environmental impacts.
- The next largest groups of respondents (76, 7%) stated that there should be no cuts to subsidies, the council should find another way such as raising taxes, finding efficiency savings elsewhere, advertising on buses, or getting commercial operators to subsidise bus routes.
- Other comments by respondents selecting “Neither” were requests to retain specific services or services for particularly vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled (3%).
- Some respondents who chose “Neither” commented that if cuts absolutely must be made, then they would accept that Option 2 is preferable (fewer than 1%).
- Similar numbers (1%) were bus pass holders willing to pay partial fares in order to retain subsidised services that are vital to them.

The numbers selecting Option 1 (full withdrawal) were small (34 in total) and 17 comments were made that related to:

- Allowing the market to work
- The necessity for cuts.

Of the 856 respondents selecting Option 2 (partial withdrawal):

- The largest group commented that a reduced service was preferable to none at all, in some cases assuming that partial withdrawal would be applied equally across all services (244, 29% those choosing “Option 2”).
- Many comments were requests to retain specific services or services for particularly vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled (209, 24%).
- Others emphasised that they chose Option 2 only as a last resort if there was no way to avoid cuts to subsidies (4%).
- Again a small number of respondents (1%) were bus pass holders willing to pay partial fares in order to retain subsidised services that are vital to them.
- A similar number (1%) offered suggestions to avoid cutting the subsidies.

Chart 4.25 shows the age profile of respondents for the main categories of comments.

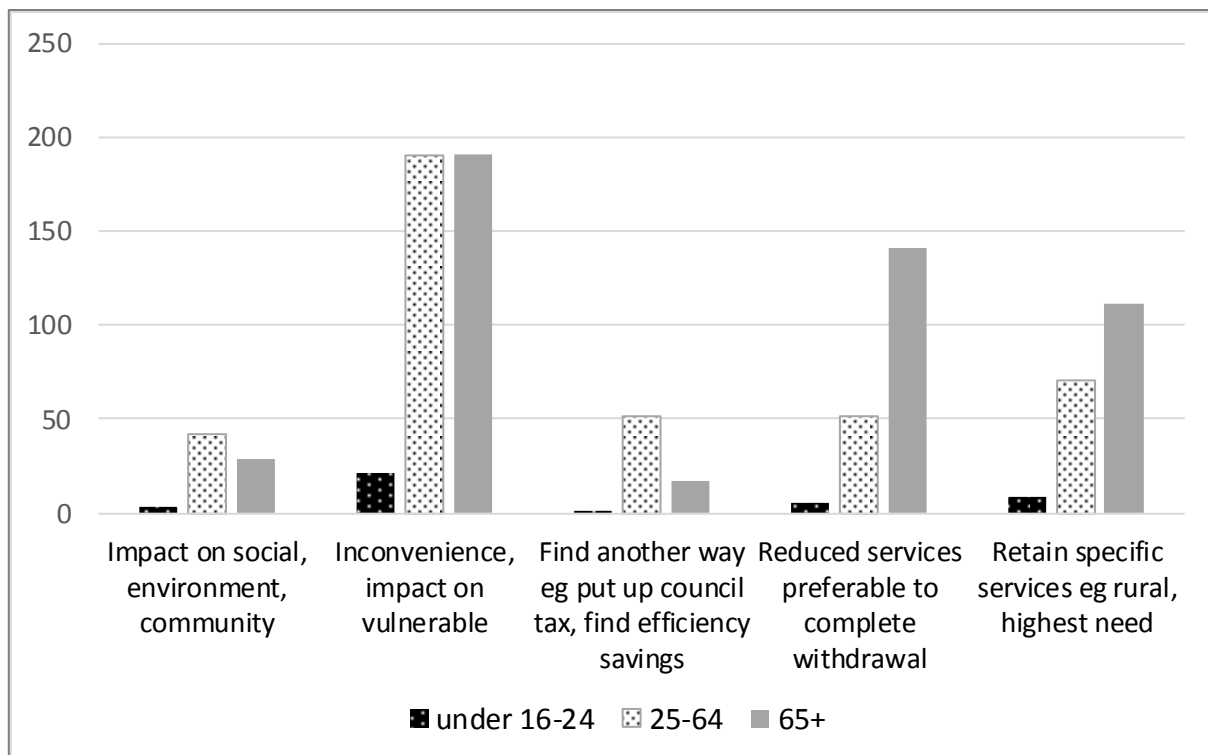
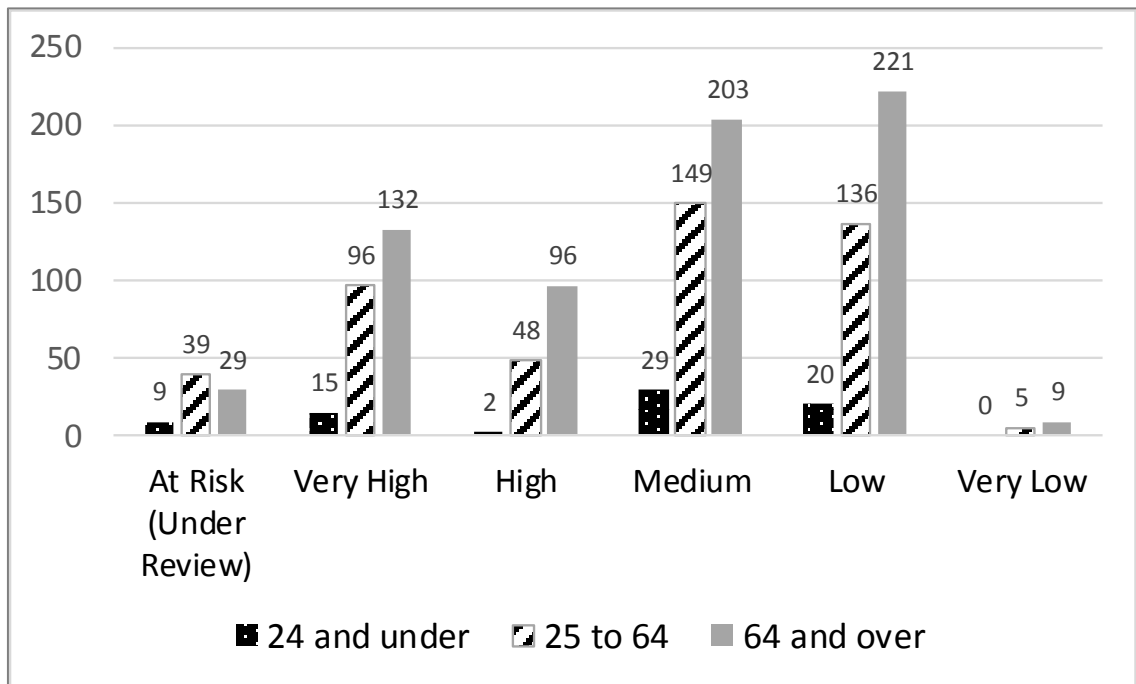


Chart 4.26 shows the numbers of respondents choosing “Neither” or “Option 2” by category of risk for the bus service that they use most frequently



Option 1 numbers are too small (6) to show in this cross tabulation.

Chart 4.27 shows the age-group of respondents by category of risk for the bus service that they use most frequently



Q7 What are your views on our preferred approach for Option 2 of prioritising subsidised bus services which are most likely to be used by older people and people with disabilities, who have free bus passes which allow them to travel off-peak?

1,921 respondents answered this question. Just under half of these (47%) agree with Oxfordshire County Council's preferred approach and another 20% are neutral (Chart 4.28). One quarter of respondents disagree with the approach. More people aged over 65 agree with the Council's preferred approach to implementing Option 2 than any other age-group (chart 4.29).

Chart 4:28: Responses to the Council's preferred approach for implementing Option 2

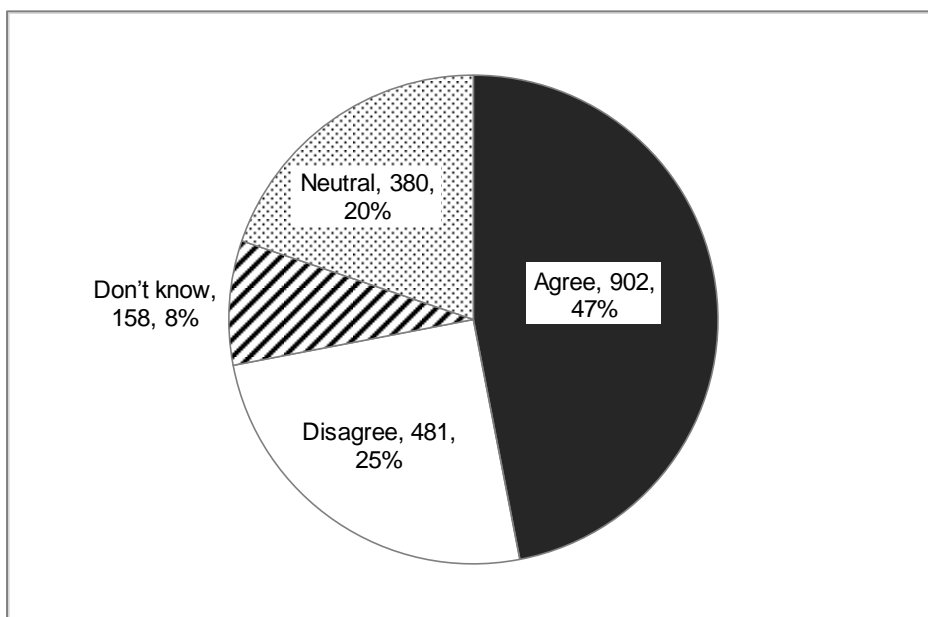
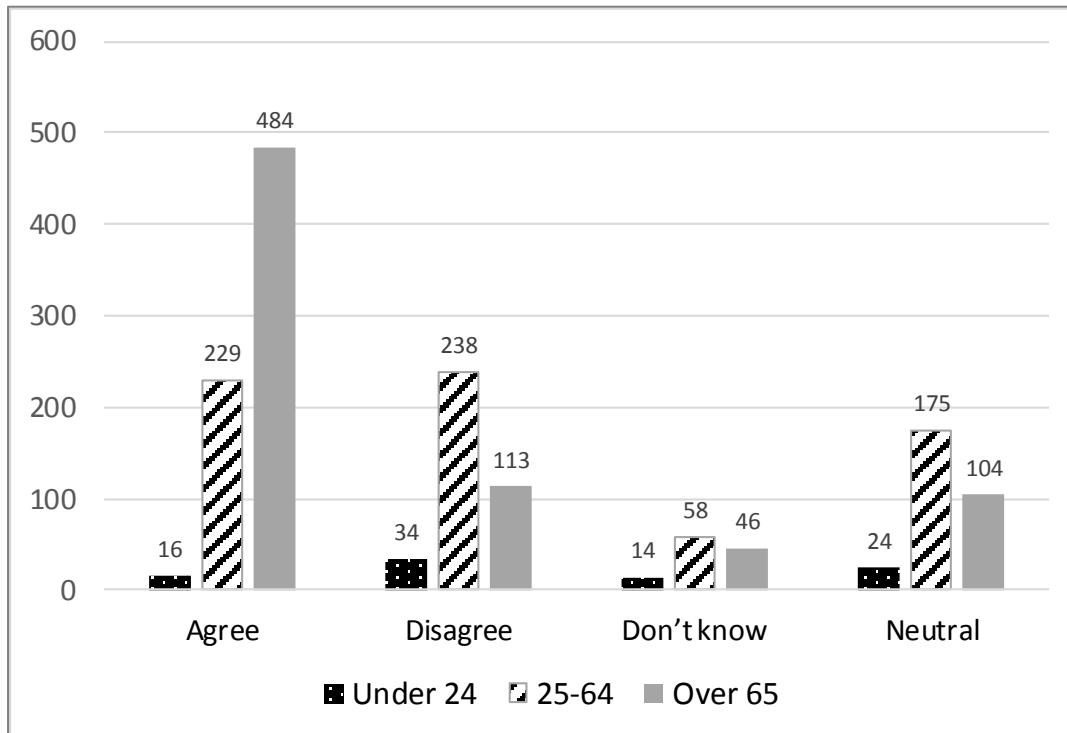


Chart 4.29: Responses to the Council's preferred approach by age-group



Respondents were asked for comments on whether they agree, are neutral, disagree or don't know with question 7. Out of the 1,921 who responded to the main part of question 7, 978 added comments. 46 of these comments were "no", "n/a", "-", or "see above", leaving 932 substantive comments.

Of those who commented, 397 (47%) chose "Agree". Their comments, categorised into key themes, were:

- The largest group (180, 19% of all who commented) stated that although they agree with the approach, they have concerns about the impacts on vulnerable people generally, effects on rural areas, and in particular the impacts on the elderly, disabled, and those without a car.
- A further 90 comments (10%) stated support of the preferred approach without concerns.
- Others (54 respondents, 6%) made comments about their dependence on specific bus routes, concerns about their main service, or offered ideas about how these services could be reduced but still retained.
- The next largest group of respondents (30, 3%), although they ticked "Agree" with the proposals, in their comments stated that the council should not cut subsidies for bus services but find another way such as finding efficiency savings elsewhere.
- There were also concerns over the impacts on things related to the economy (23, 2%), including bus services for those need to commute to jobs, or get to school or college, and concerns about future services in areas where housing is expanding.

- Other comments by respondents selecting “Agree” were :
 - Some felt that priorities should be set based on the needs of the whole community (11 comments), not just the elderly or disabled
 - A very few noted concerns about the impacts on the environment and traffic congestion (4); and
 - A few commented on the analysis used to reach the preferred option (4 negative, 1 positive)

Of those who chose “Disagree” 332 added comments (36%). Their comments, categorised into key themes, were:

- The largest set of comments (94, 10% of all who commented) were concerns over the impacts on things related to the economy, including bus services for those who need to commute to jobs, or get to school or college, and concerns about future services in areas where housing is expanding.
- The next largest group of respondents (68, 7%) stated that the council should not cut subsidies for bus services but find another way such as finding efficiency savings elsewhere
- The next main set of concerns (47, 5%) was about the impacts on vulnerable people generally, effects on rural areas, and in particular the impacts on the elderly, disabled, and those without a car.
- The same number (47, 5%) commented that priorities should be set based on the needs of the whole community (11 comments), not just the elderly or disabled
- There were also comments about specific bus routes (33 comments), concerns about the analysis used to reach the preferred option (15 comments), concerns about the impacts on the environment generally or traffic congestion (10), and some (4) who were unclear, had insufficient information or were not happy with the consultation process
- Some comments (10) were in favour of removing subsidies, seeing the necessity of cuts, and letting the market work.
- A few others (7) generally supported the preferred approach, although they ticked “disagree”, because they wanted to add specific caveats for example “It is the better of the 2 options, but there must be buses every day of the week”.

Of those who chose “Neutral” 163 added comments (17%). Their comments, categorised into key themes, were:

- The largest set of comments (49, 5% of all who commented) were concerns over the impacts on things related to the economy, including bus services for those who need to commute to jobs, or get to school or college, and concerns about future services in areas where housing is expanding.
- The next main set of concerns (31, 3%) was about the impacts on vulnerable people generally, effects on rural areas, and in particular the impacts on the elderly, disabled, and those without a car.
- The next largest group of respondents (30, 3%) stated that the council should not cut subsidies for bus services but find another way such as finding efficiency savings elsewhere
- Others (19) generally supported the preferred approach, although they ticked “neutral”.
- Others (14, 5%) commented that priorities should be set based on the needs of the whole community (11 comments), not just the elderly or disabled
- Some commented on a specific bus route (6) and some had concerns about the impacts on the environment (4)

- A few commented on the analysis used to reach the preferred option (3 negative); lack of information (5), or were not happy with the consultation process (2)

The comments of those who chose “don’t know” (40 comments) are in small numbers so are not summarised by theme.

Table 4.30

Question 7 comments: key themes	Number of comments
Impacts on vulnerable, rural areas, elderly, disabled, those without a car	263
Impacts on access to jobs, school, areas where housing is expanding, the economy	177
Find ways to support this service or alternatives	137
Support the preferred approach	116
Comments about a specific bus route	96
Priorities should be set based on the needs of the whole community	75
Comments about the analysis	24
Impacts on the environment	15
Unclear or unsure, insufficient information	12
Remove subsidies, let the market work	10
Not happy with the process used	6
Analysis is well done	1
Total	932

Q8 If you disagree, do you prefer one of the alternative approaches for prioritising subsidised bus services we set out in the consultation documents or do you have an alternative suggestion of your own?

As part of Q8, respondents who disagreed with the Council’s preferred approach were asked whether they agreed with one of the alternative approaches for prioritising subsidised bus services which were set out in the consultation document. 1,090 respondents answered this question. Of these 316 (29%) said “Yes” and 771 (71%) said “No”. 495 respondents included comments expanding on their answer. 75 of these comments were “no”, “n/a”, “-”, or “see above” leaving 420 substantive comments which are summarised

Of those who commented, 245 (58%) chose “Yes”. Their comments, categorised into key themes, were:

- The largest group (206, 49% of all who commented) stated that the council should not cut subsidies for bus services but find another way such as finding efficiency savings elsewhere.
- A further 22 comments (5%) were made on stated dependence on specific bus routes, concerns about their main service, or offered ideas about how these services could be reduced but still retained.
- A few (7, 2%) commented on the analysis used to reach the preferred option
- And a few (6, 1%) commented on concerns about the impacts on vulnerable people generally, effects on rural areas, and in particular the impacts on the elderly, disabled, and those without a car.

Of those who chose “No” 175 (42%) added comments. Their comments, categorised into key themes, were:

- The largest group (107, 25% of all who commented) stated that the council should not cut subsidies for bus services but find another way such as finding efficiency savings elsewhere.
- The next main set of concerns (27, 6%) was about the impacts on vulnerable people generally, effects on rural areas, and in particular the impacts on the elderly, disabled, and those without a car.
- A further 25 comments (6%) were made on stated dependence on specific bus routes, concerns about their main service, or offered ideas about how these services could be reduced but still retained.
- A few (10, 2%) commented on the analysis used to reach the preferred option.

Table 4.31

Question 8 comments: Key themes	Number of comments
Find ways to support this service or alternatives	383
Comments about a specific bus route	56
Impacts on vulnerable, rural areas, elderly disabled, children, those without a car	29
Comments about the analysis	20
Impacts on vulnerable, rural areas, elderly disabled, children, those without a car	8
Unclear or unsure, insufficient information	6
Not happy with the process used	3
Remove subsidies, let the market work	3
Community alternatives are unrealistic, cannot work for everyone	1
Not happy with the consultation process used	1
Total	510

Q9 Please give your views on the impacts identified. Have we missed anything?

OCC asked respondents to look at the Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA) and give their views on the impacts identified. This was an open question and 681 people commented. 134 of these comments were “no”, “n/a”, “-”, or “see above” leaving 547 substantive comments which are summarised

Their comments, categorised into key themes, were:

- The largest set of comments (155, 28% of all who commented) was about the impacts on vulnerable people generally, effects on rural areas, and in particular the impacts on the elderly, disabled, and those without a car.
- The next main set of concerns (87, 16%) were made on stated dependence on specific bus routes, concerns about their main service
- The next largest group of respondents (74, 14%) commented on the analysis used to reach the preferred options.
- 59 (11%) of respondents stated their concerns over impacts on jobs, access to school, areas where housing is expected to increase and the economy.
- 45 (8%) or respondents commented that the council should not cut subsidies for bus services but find another way such as finding efficiency savings elsewhere.

- Others (40, 7%) commented that there was unclear or insufficient information available or they were unsure about what to think.
- Some commented (32, 6%) that they agreed with the consultation and the analysis used.

Table 4.32

Question 9 comments: Key themes	Number of comments
Impacts on vulnerable, rural areas, elderly, disabled, those without a car	155
Comments about a specific bus route	87
Comments about the analysis	74
Impacts on access to jobs, school, areas where housing is expanding, the economy	59
Find ways to support this service or alternatives	45
Unclear or unsure, insufficient information	40
Analysis is well done	32
Impacts on environment	28
Not happy with the process used	17
Community alternatives are unrealistic, cannot work for everyone	6
Preferred approach to Option 2 is acceptable	3
Remove subsidies, let the market work	1
Total	547

Q10 Do you have any other comments on the proposed service changes options for subsidised bus services set out in the consultation document?

OCC asked respondents for further comments on the proposed changes. 712 respondents made comments, of which 148 were “no”, “n/a”, “-”, or “see above” leaving 564 substantive comments which are summarised

Their comments, categorised into key themes, were:

- The largest group (197, 35% of all who commented) stated that the council should not cut subsidies for bus services but find another way such as finding efficiency savings elsewhere.
- Next largest set of comments (155, 28%) stated dependence on specific bus routes, concerns about their main service, or offered ideas about how these services could be reduced but still retained.
- 90 (16%) respondents comments were based on their concerns about the impacts on vulnerable people generally, effects on rural areas, and in particular the impacts on the elderly, disabled, and those without a car.
- 40 (7%) of respondents stated their concerns over impacts on jobs, access to school, areas where housing is expected to increase and the economy.

Table 4.33

Question 10 comments: Key themes	Number of comments
Find ways to support this service or alternatives	197
Comments about a specific bus route	155
Impacts on vulnerable, rural areas, elderly, disabled, those without a car	90
Impacts on access to jobs, school, areas where housing is expanding, the economy	40
Not happy with the process used	23
Impacts on the environment	21
Comments about the analysis	19
Unclear or unsure, insufficient information	8
Community alternatives are unrealistic, cannot work for everyone	4
Remove subsidies, let the market work	3
Analysis is well done	2
Support preferred approach	2
Total	564

Dial a Ride Service - survey questions and analysis⁵

Q11a Do you use Dial a Ride?

There were 1,878 responses to the question "Do you use Dial A Ride?) and only 49 of these are Dial-A-Ride users, 5 of whom use Oxford Aspire's Dial-A-Ride service.

Table 4.34

Do you use Dial A Ride?	Numbers of respondents
Yes	44
Yes, the Oxford Aspire Dial a Ride service	5
No	1,829

ORCC offered telephone support to all Dial a Ride users to complete the consultation and ten contacted ORCC. Their views have been included in the analysis below. Three answered on behalf of Dial a Ride users.

Q11b How often do you travel using Dial a Ride service? And Q12a What is the main reason that you use the Dial a Ride service? Q12b Please select one main reason, and then highlight any other reasons why you use the Dial a Ride service.

The few respondents who answered this section of the feedback form are quite frequent users or were responding on behalf of those who are. 37 respondents answered the

⁵ The numbers responding to the Dial A Ride section are very small so the responses cannot be taken to representative of the wider population of around 238 users of Dial A Ride.

question “How often do you travel using Dial a Ride service?” 24 of these use the service once or twice a week. The remaining respondents use it less often than this.

The main reasons given for using the Dial A Ride service are for weekly (i.e. large) supermarket shopping (6), to get to appointments such as the GP (1) and for interaction to avoid isolation (1). 16 respondents gave additional reasons for using Dial A Ride. The other reasons given were:

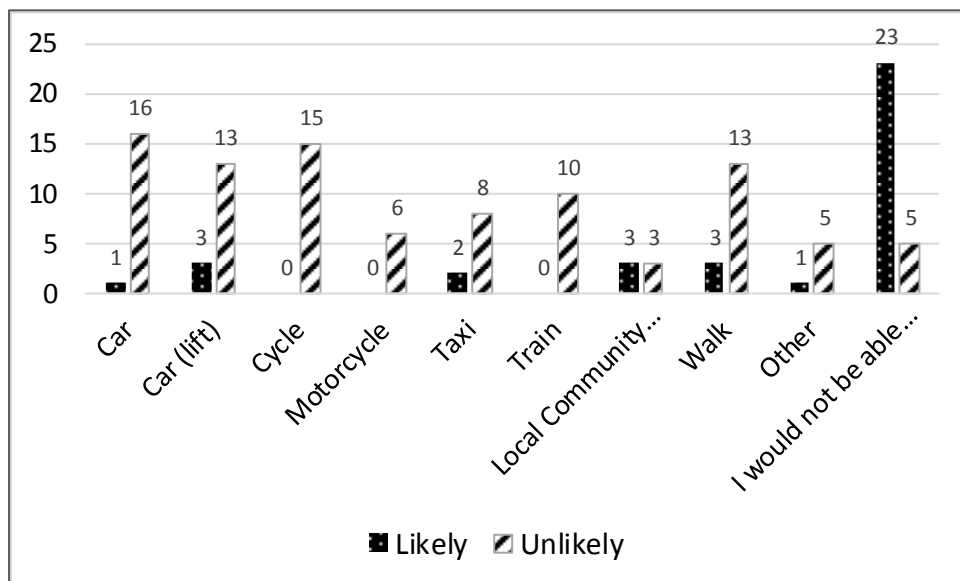
- for attending appointments e.g. dentist, chiropodist, hairdresser (5)
- for trips e.g. market days (7),
- to visit friends and family (7),
- or for days out (4).
- An added comment was use of Dial A Ride for social groups and support.

5 respondents use Dial A ride for two or more of these reasons.

Q13 Thinking about the main reason you use Dial a Ride. If the Dial a Ride service was unavailable, how would you travel?

38 respondents answered Q13. 23 respondents stated that they would not be able to travel and nearly all indicated that they would find it very difficult to find an alternative means of transport.

Chart 4.35

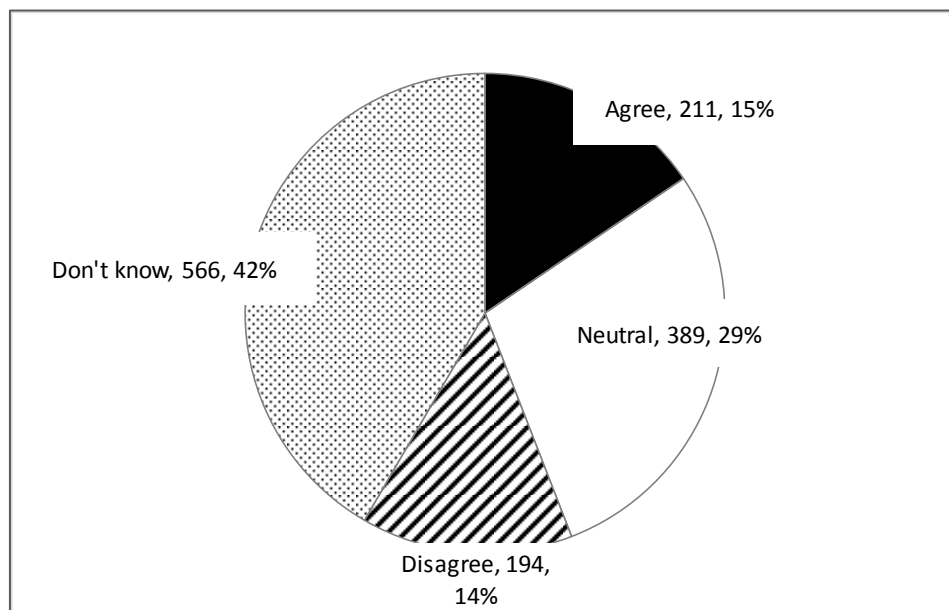


Q14 What do you think of our proposal for Dial-a-Ride? To work with community transport groups across the county to try and develop schemes which can meet similar needs to those which Dial-a-Ride currently serves and to stop funding Dial-a-Ride.

1,715 respondents answered Q14 on the proposals to withdraw the current dial a ride service, but to work with other community transport schemes to take on some or all of the service using pump prime funding.

15% agreed with withdrawing direct funding from Dial a Ride services a further 29% were neutral about the proposal. 14% disagreed and 42% responded don't know. As part of Q14 respondents were asked for their views, a text box below lists the key themes made.

Chart 4.36



Of the 1,715 respondents, 390 respondents made comments. 38 of these comments were “no”, “n/a”, “-”, or “see above” leaving 352 substantive comments which are summarised.

Their comments, categorised into key themes, were:

- The largest group (102, 29% of all who commented) stated that the council should not cut subsidies for bus services but find another way such as finding efficiency savings elsewhere.
- The next largest set of comments (92, 26%) agreed with the county council's alternative proposal.
- 70 (20%) of respondents felt unclear or unsure what Dial a Ride was as a service and did not feel they could comment further.
- 55 (16%) of the respondents commented on their concerns about the feasibility of community alternatives and the pressures of recruiting more volunteers.
- 15 (4%) of respondents stated that community transport schemes need support to do more, if they can do more.

Table 4.37

Question 14 comments: Key themes	Number of comments
Find ways to support this service or alternatives	102
Agree with dial a ride alternative	92
Unclear or unsure, insufficient information	70
Community alternatives are unrealistic, cannot work for everyone	55
Support community transport schemes	15
Not happy with the process used	9
Comments about a specific bus route	4
Impacts on vulnerable, rural areas, elderly, disabled , children, those without a car	3
Comments about access to the consultation and analysis	1
Mobility issues (people unable to walk 400 yards)	1
Total	352

**Q15 Please give your views on the impacts identified. Have we missed anything?
And Q16 Do you have any other comments on the proposal for Dial a Ride as set out in the consultation document?**

In question 15, respondents were asked to look at the Service and Community Impact Study (SCIA) and give their views on the impacts identified under the Dial a Ride proposal. There were 299 responses, but many (150) were “no” “n/a” “ditto” or “see above” so have been included in the analysis of earlier questions. The 149 comments received under question 15 are presented together in the table below, with specific comments under each question summarised later in the section.

In question 16, Oxfordshire Count Council asked respondents for any further comments on the proposed changes to the Dial a Ride services. There were 303 responses, but many (217) were “no” “n/a” “ditto” or “see above” so have been included in the analysis of earlier questions. The 86 comments received under question 16 fell within similar categories and are presented together in the table below, with specific comments under each question summarised later in the section.

Table 4.38

Category of comment	Number of comments Q15	Number of comments Q16
Analysis is well-done	7	3
Community alternatives are unrealistic, cannot work for everyone	12	10
Find ways to support this service or alternatives	6	40
Mobility issues (people unable to walk 400 yards)	12	2
Not happy with the process used	8	7
Comments about a specific bus route	4	1
Unclear or unsure, insufficient information	38	5
Comments about the analysis	15	0
Impacts on vulnerable, rural areas, elderly disabled, children, those without a car	47	18
Total	149	86

5. Analysis: public meetings, emails and letters

5.1 This section sets out responses mentioned in emails, letters and the public meetings.

- A total of 236 **emails and letters** were received.
 - 184 private individuals
 - 40 town and parish councils (including Parish Transport Representatives)
 - 5 community organisations
 - 2 County councillors (Cllr Anne Purse and Cllr Keiron Mallon)
 - 2 bus providers
 - 2 bus users groups
 - 1 City councillor (Cllr Ed Turner)
- **275 people** attended the 5 public meetings
- The length and breadth of each response varied from a single sentence to 6 pages.
- A small number of responses were repeated by individuals and parish councils as proof of providing local views. Where justified, these have counted as one response.
- **7 petitions** were received in support of retaining services on the following routes:

B1	49 signatories
B2 and B1	35
A1	52
17	400 (by 17.9.15)
'Wychwood Villages' buses	80
277	121
Abingdon Town Service (41, 42 and 43)	25
A letter was received referring to a petition regarding the K1 and K2 buses. However, no actual petition had been received by the close of consultation.	

- A usage survey was also submitted by a user of the H1/ H2 route. The individual travelled on 18 individual journeys from 17.8 until 8.9.15. 127 individuals with some degree of walking difficulty and/ or a visual impairment were recorded as having travelled on these 18 occasions (avg. of 7 per journey).

5.2 The following table highlights the **themes** that arose from analysis of emails and letters (236) and also comments (60) made in the recorded public meetings (296 in total). 515 total comments have been recorded.

Theme	Summary of/ example comments	No. of references
<p>Protect bus services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lifeline - Provides social value - Impact on vulnerable people - Vital to elderly - Important to young people - Contrary to Local Authority and national government plans - Valuable community service - A necessity for getting to hospital; appointments; shopping - Reduce the ability to volunteer (esp. elderly) 	<p>The reasons given were in relation to the removal or reduction in bus subsidies on a particular route/s.</p>	<p>217 of 296 73%</p>
<p>Seek creative solutions to maintain services</p>	<p>Conversations over individual bus services should take place to discuss combining routes, changing routes or extending and enhancing routes, rather than withdrawing them altogether. This was particularly highlighted in the Abingdon North (41,42 and 43 service), which included a petition to both keep the service and include a stop by Tesco's; and in Southmoor / Cumnor, which sought to see changes to the 63 service</p>	<p>49 of 296 16.5%</p>
<p>Peak and off-peak should be viewed equally</p>	<p>Many respondents felt that young people and working people would be penalised as they commonly use peak services</p>	<p>46 of 296 15.5%</p>
<p>Increase in car use and emissions</p>	<p>The options were felt to be contrary to Local Authority and national government plans (carbon reduction targets etc.)</p>	<p>44 of 296 15%</p>
<p>Willingness to pay more for fares</p>	<p>Look into how communities and the County Council can better support bus services and dial a ride. The most common suggestion was for people to pay half fares or full fares, if they can afford to, rather than use their concessionary pass. This 'paying a fare' was also mentioned for</p>	<p>31 of 296 10.5%</p>

	Dial a Ride services	
Plans do not take account of effect on economic growth/ productivity and tourism	2 businesses in Hampton Gay & Poyle and Benson along with RAF Benson, highlighted the difficulty faced for many of their employees getting to work should the bus services be withdrawn	27 of 296 9%
County Council methodology underpinning proposals	There were multiple criticisms; lack of patronage data (who is using a particular service and why); options flawed; options too broad; methodology for prioritising services	19 of 296 6.5%
Specific rural impact	Reducing services in rural areas would increase isolation and reduce the sustainability of villages	18 of 296 6%
consultation process	The consultation process was not user-friendly; had inadequate publicity; should have prioritised hard copy responses to the survey and not be so focused on online responses. Also, more than 6 public meetings should have been held	14 of 296 5%
More account needs to be taken of planned housing growth	Bus demand will increase with new housing	14 of 296 5%
Concern about the Dial-a-Ride service proposals	DAR was seen as a lifeline and of important social value to vulnerable users	12 of 296 4%
Service reductions preferable to removal of all subsidies	Minimisation rather than full removal of subsidies was preferable. Services should be prioritised for the elderly and vulnerable	10 of 296 3.5%
Investigate Community Transport solutions	While some support was expressed by a few respondents it was qualified by concern over financial sustainability of CT schemes and concern over availability of volunteers to run a scheme	8 of 296 3%
Willingness to pay more for Dial-a-Ride	<i>See above</i>	6 of 296 2%

5.3 151 respondents (letter and email) wished to comment on specific services (251 in total). A table of all subsidised bus services has been drawn up based on the number of responses (each response per group or individual was counted as 1 mention). **As in section 4, the table cannot suggest that the bus service with the highest number of mentions can be considered more important than the bus services with little or no responses received.**

Service Number	Service Description	Option 2 Risk – may change check with OCC	Frequently used service by number of respondents
103	Oxford - Wheatley - Little Milton	Low	15 (6%)
104	Oxford - Cuddesdon	Low	15
25	Kidlington/Oxford - Bicester	Medium	14 (5.5%)
108	Oxford - Forest Hill - Stanton St. John (- Elsfield)	Medium	14
118	Oxford - Brill (- Bicester)	Medium	13 (5%)
17	Cuttleslowe - Oxford	Low	11 (4.5%)
25A	Oxford - Bicester	At Risk (Under Review ²)	10 (4%)
139	Wallingford - Henley-on-Thames	Medium	9 (3.5%)
134	Goring - Stokes - Wallingford	Low	8 (3%)
40	High Wycombe - Thame	Very High	8
19	Carterton - Witney	Low	8
67	Wantage - Faringdon	Low	7 (2.5%)
18	Clanfield - Oxford	Low	6 (2%)
488	Chipping Norton - Banbury	Very High	6
63	Oxford - Cumnor - Southmoor	Medium	4 (1.5%)
280	Aylesbury - Oxford City Centre	Very High	4
213	Witney : Market Sq - Wood Green - Cogges - Market Sq (circular)	Low	3 (1%)
214	Witney : Market Square - Cogges - Wood Green - Market Square	Low	3
11	Witney - Oxford	Very High	3
S4	Banbury - Oxford	Very Low	3
X9	Witney - Charlbury - Chipping Norton	Low	3
67B	Wantage - Faringdon	Medium	3
215	Witney : Market Square - Smiths Estate - Market Square (circular)	High	3
W11	Woodstock - Bladon - Woodstock	High	3
X8	Kingham - Chipping Norton	High	3
S3	Chipping Norton - Oxford	Very High	3
B1	Easington - Banbury	High	3
B2	Bodicote - Banbury	Low	3
T1	Oxford - Garsington - Watlington	Very High	3
X15	Abingdon - Witney	Medium	3
121	Princes Risborough -	High	3

	Watlington		
277	Lighthorne Heath - Banbury	Medium	3
42	North Abingdon Town Service via College	Low	2 (<1%)
43	North Abingdon Town Service	At Risk (Under Review ⁵)	2
41	North Abingdon Town Service anti-clockwise	Low	2
269	Banbury - Stratford upon Avon	Low	2
270	Banbury - Stratford upon Avon	Low	2
67C	Wantage - Faringdon	Medium	2
H2	Sandhills - Headington Quarry - Headington Centre	High	2
W12	Woodstock - Wootton - Woodstock	High	2
A1	(Didcot -) Ardington - Wantage - Ardington (- Didcot)	Medium	2
38	Wantage Town service	Low	2
H1	Old Marston - Headington	High	1
125	Chalgrove - Watlington - Benson - Wallingford	Very High	1
K2	Kidlington - Begbroke - Yarnton - Kidlington	High	1
K1	Kidlington Town service	High	1
154	Henley-on-Thames - Henley-on-Thames	Low	1
66	Faringdon - Oxford	Very Low	1
83	Wantage - Faringdon	Very Low	1
W10	Woodstock - Shipton on Cherwell - Kidlington - Woodstock	Medium	1
143	Reading-Upper Basildon-Whitchurch Hill-Reading	High	1
233	Burford - Woodstock	High	1
121	Princes Risborough - Watlington	High	1
X10	Wychwoods - Fulbrook - Burford	Very High	1
120	Princes Risborough, - Thame	Very High	1
811	Salford (Oxon) - Cheltenham (Gloucs)	Very High	1
135	Wallingford - Moulsoford - Streatley - Goring	Very High	1
K3	Kidlington - Yarnton - Begbroke - Kidlington	Very High	1
504	Honton - Horley - Banbury	High	1
20	Oxford: Rose Hill -Cowley [Unipart House]	High	1
120	Princes Risborough - Thame	High	1
X2	Oxford – Abingdon Milton Park - Didcot	Very High	1
124	Thame - Wallington	Medium	1
85	Iffley - Cowley	High	1
90	Banbury - Deddington -	Medium	1

	Upper Heyford		
C1	Charlbury - Leafield (Oxon) - Wychwoods	Very High	1
136c	Wallingford - Cholsey - Wallingford	Very High	1
114	Wallingford - Abingdon	High	1
X1	Oxford- Didcot Harwell Campus - Wantage	Very High	1
94	Didcot - Blewbury - Hagbournes - Didcot	Low	1
95	Didcot - The Moretons - Blewbury - Didcot	Low	1
63	Oxford - Cumnor - Southmoor	Medium	1
275	Oxford City Centre - High Wycombe	Low	1

5.4 73% of 297 respondents to (email, letter and public meetings) were against potential cuts to their particular service and bus services as a whole. Most made a multi-faceted, locally-specific case for the retention of their service *as is*, with only 3.5% thinking service reductions were preferable to the removal of all subsidies. This is in marked contrast to the feedback survey, where 42% (856) of respondents agreed with Option 2 - to reduce the subsidies for buses by £2.3million.

5.5 In summary, comments made via emails, letters and public meetings provided contrasting feedback to that reflected in the analysis of the feedback questionnaire. Respondents were far more likely to disagree with the proposals entirely.

5.6 On the whole, comments made suggest that people feel that cutting services is short-sighted and that many communities and individuals are at risk of becoming isolated, with no obvious means to access essential services and / or work.

5.7 Community transport, as a solution to removing subsidy for Dial-a-Ride, was mentioned occasionally in emails and letters but more often in public meetings and key stakeholder meetings. Concern was raised about the capacity of volunteer-based community transport schemes to be able to manage Dial a Ride services. There was also some concern over relying on pump prime funding and the difficulty of successfully running a viable Dial a Ride service without continuing support.

6. Analysis: detailed submissions

6.1 This section provides a high level analysis of each of the detailed submissions. Each has been summarised and an overall summary of the key themes produced. We have defined 'detailed submissions' as communications that are longer than emails and letters and go into greater depth about several or most aspects of the topic.

6.2 The following table collates responses from detailed submissions regarding the County Council proposals.

Theme	Summary of comments	No. of references
Protection of bus services	Every response that made direct reference to Option 1 was opposed (often strongly) to the removal of all subsidies	8
Service reductions preferable to removal of all subsidies	Minimisation rather than full removal of subsidies was preferable. However, there was general recognition that the impacts of any cuts on elderly and vulnerable residents should, in particular, should be mitigated	7
Concern about the Dial-a-Ride service proposals	In general, Dial-a-Ride was seen as a service that is important to some of the most vulnerable people in Oxfordshire. The sustainability of the Dial-a-Ride service in Oxford was a concern for the City Council. Age UK noted that when Dial-a-Ride was cut back in Cherwell older people found it 'much more difficult to get to shops, to see family to keep medical appointments...'. In addition to Age UK's views, Cherwell District Council made a	6

	<p>further point via email to OCC, where they highlighted the high level of DAR users and comparatively lower number of voluntary car schemes in the district, as a consequence of the current enhanced OCC Dial-a-Ride service which is funded by CDC. CDC were concerned that this could lead to a disproportionate negative impact on the district if the service is ceased, and that any available pump-prime funding should be awarded to schemes on the basis of need. This would mean areas which are most affected are given higher priority.</p> <p>West Oxfordshire District Council questioned the ability of voluntary sector to 'step in and replace the proposed withdrawal of Dial-a-Ride.'</p>	
County Council methodology underpinning proposals	<p>There were criticisms regarding the methodology. Some examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better analysis needed of who uses the different bus services and an approach that better considers the economic impact (Oxford City Council) - Concern about the methodology of assessing and prioritising bus services (South and Vale and West Oxfordshire District Councils) - Wider definition needed of vulnerability (Bus Users Oxford) - Criticism over methodology used form identifying routes at risk (Go Ride) 	5
Seek creative solutions to maintain services	<p>Respondents had several suggestions. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Services currently provided by more than one vehicle be considered first for a reduction in frequency (Go Ride) - Start concessionary fares at 9.30 rather than 9 am (PTR representative) - Make better use of Section 106 funding (PTR representative) - Ensure connectivity with rail stations (Rail Future) - Improve the logistics of providing the Dial-a-Ride service by coordinating with VCS groups (OCC Councillor) 	4

Specific rural impact	It was felt that reduction or removal of services in rural areas would cause significant impact (South and Vale District Councillor, West Oxfordshire District Council) and that public transport was a necessity for certain residents (OCC Councillor).	4
Peak and off-peak services	There were conflicting views: Go Ride felt that the prioritisation of off-peak services was preferable while Oxford City Council 'urge the balance with peak hour, more commuter-focused services is considered more carefully'. ORCC also had concerns about an on/ off peak balance when withdrawing subsidies from bus routes.	3
More account needs to be taken of planned housing growth	Both Oxford City and South and Vale wished to see more account taken of future housing growth (SEP has committed to 100,000 new homes by 2030) and the impacts that this will have on demand for public transport	2
Investigate Community Transport solutions	Regarding Dial-a-Ride, ORCC suggested that OCC should conduct a trial to test whether alternative providers can offer a viable service, whilst CT schemes should be 'better incentivised to manage Dial-a-Ride-type schemes. ORCC also stated that existing CT schemes were supported to achieve sustainability while Age UK welcomed the 'intention to enable and facilitate more CT schemes.'	2
Criticism of consultation process	The consultation process was deemed to have had inadequate publicity and was not adequately conspicuous online (Bus Users Oxford). The PTR representative felt the consultation was too online-focused	2
Plans do not take account of effect on economic growth/ productivity and tourism	This point was emphasised by Oxford City Council: 'the potential to support economic growth is dependent on a balance between supply factors including employment space, housing availability and adequate, efficient infrastructure, including transport links'. The concern was also expressed that reduced levels of	2

	affordable transport 'is likely to result in staff recruitment and retention problems, congestion costs and these will impact on productivity.' The importance of public transport accessibility to future economic, environmental and social sustainability of settlements was also noted by South and Vale.	
Increase car use and emissions	Oxford City Council noted that a £2.3 million cut in subsidies could result in more vehicle commuters and more congestion.	1

6.3 The following summaries are taken from the key themes and concerns for each detailed submission.

Submission from **Witney Town Transport Representative** (46 pages)

The first part of the letter by the Town Transport Representative focuses on general views and ideas regarding the consultation and is included here. The second half focuses on Witney buses alone and this fed into Section 5.

The first 7 pages of the submission focuses on general comments about ways in which the county council could save money or make efficient changes in the way it runs or supports services; 24 points were made and these are amalgamated where possible:

- 'OCC pooled the transport budget together into Supported Transport and rid themselves of knowledge and experience of subsidised bus services. Will this mean that OCC will no longer support the free resource of Parish and Town Transport Representatives? If so, this is short sighted and means that OCC lack long term vision. It is hoped that OCC will ensure that the new Transport Hub will regain their knowledge and understanding of subsidised bus services and that OCC really are keen to have conversations with the public'.
- 'In terms of savings, OCC should draw up minimum levels of services of all council activities and operate more efficiently, rather than cutting vital services, such as subsidised bus services'.
- 'OCC should scrap all use of expensive consultants, scrap the RealTime information, which is of barely any use and scrap premium route networks. OCC should concentrate on supporting the 'have nots' rather than the 'haves'.
- 'OCC should make better use of Section 106 development funds. Ask the people in the affected community what they want first, so they can say transport if that is the priority'.
- 'Properly assess the real impacts across all of the council activities if you withdraw services and people become isolated'
- 'Concessionary fares should start at 9.30 am rather than 9 am, to save money that can be used to improve or protect current services. Charge for each journey made on Dial a Ride rather than withdraw it. People, where possible, will pay to keep the service'.

- 'If option 2 went ahead, then the ranking list should be reviewed as it is, arguably, incorrectly prioritised. Be sure to work with communities and bus operators to ensure you protect the right services and look at each bus service merits. Be open to changing or combining routes to improve the bus network and the reduced money that you have (*Note: the representative sent in proposed timetables for the Witney area*)'
- 'Hand over control of bus infrastructure fully to parish and town councils who are capable of sourcing bus shelters'.
- 'Do not discriminate against the many non-internet/computer users and make more hard copies of the consultation available. It is too online focused'

Submission from **Bus Users Oxford** (3 pages)

Bus Users Oxford (BUO) is a local bus users group, and act as the voice for bus passengers in Oxfordshire. BUO sent a number of submissions to OCC regarding the proposal to reduce or withdraw subsidised bus services.

A number of complaints about the consultation process were put forward, as BUO felt that publicity regarding the consultation was poor, the number of public meetings was too low and not enough people in Oxfordshire were able to attend them. They also felt that the consultation was heavily online based and prevented many people from sending their responses in, something that BUO attempted to mitigate this by providing alternative consultation posters and hard copy surveys to a number of their contacts.

BUO was critical of OCC's preferred option to protect off-peak services, and stated that they wanted to see OCC weigh peak and off-peak services as both important services to the people that use them. BUO request that OCC revise the criteria for deciding which routes to save and minimise the cuts to the services as much as possible. BUO were strongly against OCC withdrawing all bus subsidises.

Submission from **West Oxfordshire District Council** (4 pages)

The response centred on importance of an effective transport network to maintaining 'sustainable local communities', given the particular characteristics of the District, including; its rural nature; the increasing older age profile; and commuting patterns. The role of transport in supporting a 'fragile economic' recovery was also emphasised, as was its role in supporting tourism.

The Council stated that 'total cessation of all subsidies to rural areas would be disastrous for many residents. The County Council should do everything in its power to support and protect bus services to rural areas.'

The Council also made comment on the consultation material, finding it 'difficult to assess the value and viability of specific services.' The lack of timetable information and limited patronage data were criticised.

Specific comment was made on a number of District services and the Council questioned

whether voluntary provision could replace the proposed withdrawal of Dial-a-Ride.

The Council also noted that it would 'welcome the opportunity to discuss the approach that Oxfordshire County agrees at an appropriate time in the process.'

Submission from **Oxfordshire Rural Community Council** (1 page)

ORCC understand the pressure that OCC are under to make savings. If Option 2 is chosen, ORCC would argue that rural areas will need higher levels of support to find alternative transport solutions owing to the low population densities, which inevitably affect levels of demand across a wider geographic area.

ORCC agrees that prioritising vulnerable older and disabled people by protecting off-peak bus services is important. But this should not be at the expense of peak bus services used by younger people to get to work or education. ORCC therefore believes that decisions on withdrawing subsidies from some bus services should be made on a case by case basis with more emphasis placed on changing routes and identifying viable alternative options for managing or paying for the service.

Regarding dial a ride services, ORCC believe that some of the most vulnerable people in Oxfordshire are reliant on a door to door transport service. Our concern is that OCC wish to withdraw funding without having conducted a proper trial to test if their preferred alternative providers can offer a viable service. ORCC would like to see community transport schemes better incentivised to manage Dial a ride-type services. Similarly, we would like to see existing community transport schemes receive advice and guidance on how to grow and sustain themselves over the longer term.

ORCC identified a number of communities and groups who wanted to pay more towards subsidised bus services. We think they will need specialist help to decide if this approach is feasible and then to develop it and make it work locally.

Lastly, ORCC were keen to hear more about the OCC Transport Hub and the role it will play in the new supported transport services. Information on the Transport Hub should be made available to the public as soon as possible.

Submission from **Rail Future**, Thames Valley Branch (2 pages)

Railfuture is a national voluntary organisation which campaigns for improved rail services and the promotion of the contribution rail can make to sustainable transport.

Railfuture expressed its concern regarding the consultation on subsidised bus services and their importance for people accessing rail stations such as Kingham and Charlbury.

Not all rail passengers have cars and are therefore reliant on connecting bus services.

The organisation was mostly concerned with the increased need to access train stations, with the expanding housing development (Chipping Norton is expecting a further 850 houses). Buses, such as the 233, X8 and the S3 (on Sundays) are very important for people accessing the train stations, when car use is not a favoured or actual option.

They noted that examples in accessing train stations, should subsidised bus services be reduced or withdrawn, is a countywide issue, and needs to be taken very seriously.

Submission from **South and Vale District Councils** (4 pages)

South and Vale emphasised the specific rural impact of the proposals:

As 'predominantly rural district... the councils had a strong objection that reduction or loss of bus services could cause real hardship for many residents in southern Oxfordshire who rely on bus services for access to health services, employment and education. The councils are not therefore supportive of the County Council withdrawing subsidies completely.

The importance of public transport to council policy was also noted:

'In formal planning policy for both districts, public transport accessibility has been taken into account as part of our assessment of sustainability for development sites... Planning policy therefore reflects the importance of public transport accessibility.'

The County Council's methodology for its proposals was scrutinised:

'There is a concern that the assessment and prioritisation for subsidised bus services undertaken by the County Council appears to be based mainly on the absolute number of addresses within proximity to bus stops, and the cost of supporting services. This means that ranking of services does not appear to fully take into consideration wider settlement sustainability issues, or indeed whether bus services from these settlements provide access to a main centre with a wider range of services such as shops, medical facilities or employment.'

South and Vale were also concerned about the impact of the plans with regard to future growth:

'National Planning Policy in the NPPF requires that planning authorities actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling. There is also a need to protect sites and routes which could be critical in widening transport choice. Both councils have prepared local plans which do this. To reduce or remove bus services would have a serious detrimental impact on the planning of future growth across southern Oxfordshire.

And:

'South and Vale are also concerned that the assessment does not take account of planned growth, which could impact on future bus patronage and hence any subsidy required.'

Submission from **Oxford City Council** (6 pages)

In summary, the City Council urged the County Council not to cut all subsidised services: 'This would be a backward step for the sustainability of our county, and contrary to the "Connecting Oxfordshire Vision". Given the obvious financial realities, where cuts to subsidies must be made, these should be undertaken in a way that carefully considers and minimises the impact on public transport links along major commuter routes, to balance both social and economic impact. This analysis should consider the situation now and in the future and take account of planned growth in certain settlements and business locations.'

Housing growth was also a key concern:

'Where significant housing growth is taking place in certain settlements, we would like to understand if consideration of a managed, phased route from subsidy to sustainability for some services, in dialogue with providers, has been fully considered.'

In terms of methodology, 'The City Council would like to see a more robust and sophisticated analysis of who uses the different bus services and an approach to prioritising services which better considers the economic impact. It would also recommend additional dialogue with bus service providers to reduce subsidies in a way that moves services towards commercial sustainability.'

While strongly against Option 1, 'if these cuts are to be made the City Council would urge the County Council to agree Option 2 in order to minimise this impact. Yet, there is a caveat. We urge the balance with peak hour, more commuter focused services is considered more carefully, and in unison with the services for elderly and disabled. Where possible, these peak services should not subject to blunt cuts. Where there is potential to move towards viability for such services, other options should be considered, such as tapered subsidy reductions.'

The City Council also stressed the potential impact on economic activity:

'Businesses in Oxford, such as BMW, Unipart and Centrica and key sectors such the education and health, are concerned about recruitment and retention of staff and being able to employ staff with the appropriate levels of skills. This is primarily due to high housing costs in the city. Reduced levels of affordable transport in and out of the city is likely to result in on staff recruitment and retention problems, congestion costs and these will impact on productivity.'

The City Council was also concerned about the sustainability of the Dial-a-Ride arrangement in Oxford. It was also 'willing to supplement the Dial-A-Ride service where need is proven and it can provide good value for money, and meets otherwise unmet travel demand.'

Submission from an **Oxford City Councillor**

The comments from this submission on specific services have been included in section 5, above.

The Councillor would like to see reductions in subsidised transport kept to a minimum. In prioritising services appropriate weight should be given to services for the elderly and disabled, but also serving areas of deprivation. Usage figures should also be taken into

account and used to renegotiate contracts with operators, where possible.

Submission from an **Oxfordshire County Council councillor**

The comments from this submission on specific services have been included in section 5, above.

The councillor recognises the financial situation of the County Council but is strongly opposed to Option 1.

Option 2:1 (fund services that most likely to be used by older and disabled people) is the least worst option and would protect those most vulnerable in our society. Without it they will be forced into social isolation, living far from retail, leisure, social and health services.

The Councillor is opposed to the Dial-a-Ride option with the following caveats: whilst the uptake of this service has diminished it could still have a part to play. If such a service was to be supported it should be aimed at those with special physical, mental or mobility problems

Submission from an **Oxfordshire County Council Councillor**

The comments from this submission on specific services have been included in section 5, above.

The councillor's comments mainly focused on specific services. She also made more general points about the necessity of public transport in her rural division to allow people to access employment and services, such as shopping and medical facilities. In addition, she pointed out that people had indicated they would be willing to pay a full fare as an alternative to losing the service altogether.

Submission from an **Oxfordshire County Council Councillor**

This submission focussed in particular on the specific rural impact of the transport proposals. In his division, he feels it essential that all villages have at least one service per day to Banbury. He also emphasised the 'invaluable' nature of the Dial-a-Ride service to elderly residents and those who cannot use regular services.

Submission from **Age UK Oxfordshire** (2 pages)

Age UK stressed that transport is the issue that older people most commonly raise in discussions about maintaining independence and quality of life.

Age UK welcomed the intention to enable and facilitate more community transport schemes but strenuously urge the Council to re-consider its proposal to end direct funding of Dial-a-Ride.

The point was also made that the impact of any cuts would be felt most keenly in rural areas

where transport is already limited. The negative impacts of cutting Dial a Ride in rural West Oxfordshire was emphasised.

In addition, Age UK was concerned that the proposals would increase dependency and lead to reduced mobility and less active lifestyles and thus poorer health and greater social isolation.

Submission from **Go Ride** (10 pages)

Comments on specific services have been included in section 5, above.

Go Ride CIC is a not for profit company dedicated to cut carbon emissions and increase social inclusion through the provision of public transport in Great Britain. Go Ride operates 9 routes in Oxfordshire.

Go Rides thought it regrettable that the County Council is considering this action but that it comes as little surprise given the priorities of the County Council and HM government more generally.

Option 2 was the preferred option of Go Ride and of the 3 sub-options retaining off-peak bus services was preferable.

Go Ride also believed that those services which are currently provided with more than one vehicle could be considered first for a reduction in frequency by reducing the number of vehicles used. Go Ride was critical of the Council's approach to identifying routes at risk as not giving sufficient room for consideration of amalgamating resources to provide two or more routes where they currently provide 1. Withdrawal of entire routes would leave communities isolated and it would be better to reduce frequencies on routes, where practical.

Go Ride took issue with the County Council statement that 'more than 9/10 services run without any public subsidy', pointing out that of the 224 bus services on the County website 104 are subsidised, or 46%.

6.4 The detailed submissions covered multiple themes and have been summarised above. The main concerns focused on Option 1, where there was majority opposition (in those submissions which referred to it) to Option 1- removal of all subsidies. Option 2 was 'preferred' but with strong concern expressed about minimising impact on the elderly and vulnerable and some disagreement regarding the prioritisation of peak services. There was also widespread concern regarding the Dial-a-Ride proposals and the potential impact on the most vulnerable of Oxfordshire's residents.

7. Issues raised with the County Council's analysis

7.1 Priority for peak travel users. 902 (47%) of the 1921 respondents answering Q7 agreed with OCC's priority of protecting off-peak transport for older and disabled people. However, many of the respondents leaving comments for Q7 - stated that the young and working people, who use peak services, are just as important. This may suggest a general view that it is wrong to prioritise one user group over another or it may reflect the relative importance of each route for particular groups. Some respondents suggest OCC should take each subsidised service on a case by case basis and make a judgement about priorities according to demand.

7.2 Deprivation and vulnerable people. Many respondents were critical of how the county council developed the ranking table for bus services and questioned whether they had looked into the implications for vulnerable people without transport.

7.3 Rural isolation. Some felt that rural isolation was not given sufficient weight in the analysis. Many respondents relied on their bus service as a means to get to work or access key services and did not want to see people being isolated in the village if off-peak or peak services were withdrawn. Respondents felt that the consequences of withdrawing bus subsidies would isolate individuals that are reliant on bus service. Re Q10, many of the respondents' comments focused on 'thinking out of the box' to find ways to maintain subsidised bus services.

7.4 Patronage and subsidy details. More analysis is needed of levels of patronage and subsidy for each route to understand better the realism of suggested options for supporting them. A significant number of respondents commented on how subsidised bus services could be supported in different ways. The main suggestion involved asking people with concessionary bus passes and who can afford to pay to make a contribution towards their fare. If this is to be taken forward, more information is needed on patronage and subsidy.

7.5 Environment and congestion. A number of respondents felt that these issues were given too little weighting in the analysis. Reducing bus services will increase congestion and damage to the environment

7.6 Tourism. A small number of respondents commented that tourism would suffer if visitors were not able to travel easily by bus to rural locations.

8. Analysis: new ideas

8.1 In August 2015, the County Council invited communities to submit innovative ideas on local transport solutions should their subsidised bus and / or Dial a Ride service be withdrawn. ORCC also made contact with parish/town councils and the voluntary sector to encourage fresh thinking on this issue. A start has been made in Oxford city where the Dial a ride service is to be run by Aspire, a well-regarded local charity.

8.2 It is hoped that the County Council will agree funding to incentivise new and viable propositions. Pump prime funding is by definition temporary and therefore propositions have to be supported by robust business cases setting out how they will operate once the funding has ended. Local community groups will require advice and guidance to prepare these.

8.3 Throughout the 12 week consultation, many people offered general and area specific ideas, during the public meetings, in the feedback forms and through letters and emails. We have highlighted 3 of these as case studies in the executive summary. They include:

- an existing Dial a Ride organisation preparing to expand their services into another district and take on a home to school contract;
- a minibus scheme in Cholsey; and
- a draft business proposal to initiate a new eco midi bus service to take on existing bus routes in Cherwell.

8.4 The ideas suggested most frequently are set out below. They were put forward by individuals and community groups, organisations, and parish/town councils. With regards to the payment proposal, there are a small number of respondents against paying for a service they feel should be free. These ideas therefore do not represent a consensus. However, over half of all respondents, for example, said they would pay more towards a service in order to sustain it.

General Ideas

- **Voluntary payments.** Respondents, including holders of concessionary bus passes said that they would be willing to pay a donation or half fare in addition to using their passes in order to sustain a subsidised service.
- The same suggestion of paying for each journey was made in connection with the

Dial a Ride service.

- Many respondents wanted to see each subsidised bus service mapped out, to see if **changing or combining routes and times** would be an efficient and cost saving alternative to withdrawing services. This suggestion came from Witney, Southmoor, Appleton with Eaton and Stanton St John respondents.
- Several respondents wanted to see **Council Tax** increased and additional income ring-fenced for subsidised bus services and Dial a Ride. Two respondents suggested that a **Congestion Charge** could be introduced in Oxford City, and the funds raised could be ring-fenced to improve public transport.

Area or service-specific ideas

- Benson Traffic Advisory Committee wants to support the continuation of Service 139. They are working with other parishes on route, speaking with Thames Travel, & RAF Benson.
- A key individual in the Bartons has drafted a business case to initiate a new bus company to run electric midi-bus (small and narrow buses appropriate for rural roads). This operation, should start-up funding be found, would extend routes to Oxford and Banbury.
- Henley Handybus, an established community minibus scheme in Henley, are offering to help the small number of individuals in Nettlebed who use the existing Dial a Ride service, to take them shopping every other Tuesday. This will work within their schedule.
- Chipping Norton is speaking with Kingham and Churchill to see if there is interest in setting up a community minibus, should the X8 service be withdrawn.
- A respondent in Steeple Aston suggested that the large community transport schemes in Cherwell could collaborate with the district council to seek a means to provide Dial a Ride services.
- Cutteslowe, Wytham and Wolvercote (CWW) minibus scheme is in discussion on how they can expand their service both for specific bus routes and Dial a Ride type services.

8.5 It is encouraging that many respondents have thought about alternative transport solutions. **The feasibility of each will need to be explored. The County Council should nominate an officer to work with community groups and bus operators to help develop these ideas in more detail.** In particular, options for managing a 'voluntary payment scheme' will need to be worked up and discussed.

Appendices

A1 Public consultation meeting notes