

Agenda

Eastern Area Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday, 28 September 2023
Time 7.00 pm
Venue: Faversham Guildhall, Market Place, Faversham, Kent ME13 7AG*

Membership:

Councillors Lloyd Bowen, Kieran Golding, Alastair Gould, Mike Henderson, Carole Jackson, Rich Lehmann, Claire Martin, Ben J Martin, Hannah Perkin (Chair), Julien Speed, Terry Thompson and Chris Williams (Vice-Chair)

Quorum = 3

Pages

Information about this meeting

*Members of the press and public can listen to this meeting live. Details of how to join the meeting will be added to the website by 27 September 2023.

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1. Emergency Evacuation Procedure

Visitors and members of the public who are unfamiliar with the building and procedures are advised that:

- (a) There is no scheduled test of the fire alarm during this meeting. If the alarm does sound, please leave the building quickly without collecting any of your possessions, using the doors signed as fire

escapes.

- (b) Assemble outside where directed. Await instructions before re-entering the building.
- (c) Anyone who requires assistance in evacuating the building, should make themselves known during this agenda item.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Minutes

To approve the [Minutes](#) of the meeting held on 15 June 2023 (Minute Nos. 97 – 107) as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or friends.

The Chair will ask Members if they have any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) or disclosable non-pecuniary interests (DNPIs) to declare in respect of items on the agenda. Members with a DPI in an item must leave the room for that item and may not participate in the debate or vote.

Aside from disclosable interests, where a fair-minded and informed observer would think there was a real possibility that a Member might be biased or predetermined on an item, the Member should declare this and leave the room while that item is considered.

Members who are in any doubt about interests, bias or predetermination should contact the monitoring officer for advice prior to the meeting.

5. Parking Policy

6. Report on the Bus Consultation Project 5 - 38

7. Corporate Plan update 39 - 46

8. Flooding in the Eastern Area

9. Consultation on the closure of Faversham household recycling centre

10. Public Forum

11. Matters arising from previous meetings 47 - 52

12. Local issues to be raised

13. Matters referred to Area Committee by Service Committees

14. Matters referred to Service Committee Chairs for consideration

Issued on Monday, 18 September 2023

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in alternative formats. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, please contact **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES on 01795 417330**. To find out more about the work of the Cabinet, please visit www.swale.gov.uk

**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

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Eastern Area Committee	
Meeting Date	28 September 2023
Report Title	Bus Consultation Project
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson, Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property and Interim Head of Planning
Lead Officer	Christopher Blandford, Programme Delivery Co-ordinator
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To note the findings of the bus consultation report prepared by Project Centre Ltd (appendix I).

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The covering report provides the background to the attached *Bringing better bus services to Swale* report, which details the findings of the recent bus consultation in the Eastern area of Swale. The consultation was delivered by Project Centre Ltd between 28 March 2023 and 27 April 2023.
- 1.2 The aim of the consultation is to help inform discussions with Kent County Council and local bus companies when they are reviewing and developing bus services in the future.

2 Background

- 2.1 Eastern Area Committee members agreed on the 3 February 2023 to award £10,000 to undertake a public consultation on local bus services. There was a slight delay in launching the consultation due to a lack of resource at the time within the Regeneration, Economic Development and Property Department.
- 2.2 Preparation commenced in September 2022 with discussions undertaken with key stakeholders including members and Kent County Council, to help shape the project brief. Quotes were requested from a range of organisations in December 2022 and Project Centre Ltd was commissioned in February 2023 to carry out the consultation.
- 2.3 The project brief was to design and manage a public consultation to find out what residents would like to see from local bus services and produce a summary report on the findings of the consultation.
- 2.4 Kent County Council has statutory responsibility for bus services in the county. Swale Borough Council has limited influence over the bus services in the borough but can provide a consultative and lobbying role to the County authority and bus

companies as they design services in the future. Swale Borough Council also has a role as the local planning authority.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The Eastern Area Committee is invited to note and discuss the findings of the bus consultation (appendix I).

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 None identified at this stage.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The *Bringing better bus services to East Swale* (appendix I) report outlines the consultation which was held as part of the project.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The findings of the consultation will help to achieve Priority 1: building the right homes in the right places and supporting quality jobs for all, and Priority 3: tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone.
Financial, Resource and Property	The findings of the consultation will require funding to address, but this is out of budget and largely out of scope for Swale Borough Council.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The findings of the consultation could be used to help improve bus travel, and potentially encourage an increase in the number of people using the bus. An increase in people using bus services could help to improve air quality by reducing the number of cars on the road and their subsequent emissions.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.

Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	A privacy impact assessment was completed by officers at Swale Borough Council, and as a result a data processing agreement was agreed between the contractor and the Council to ensure that the consultation was compliant with the law. The Council also created a privacy notice which was displayed prominently on the consultation webpage so that the public were aware of how their data would be used.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: *Bringing better bus services to East Swale*

8 Background Papers

8.1 Update in [Matters arising from previous meeting report](#) at the Eastern Area Committee held on 3 Feb 2022

8.2 Minute item 708 and report [Bus Consultation Project](#) at the Eastern Area Committee held on the 22 March 2022.

8.3 Update in [Matters arising from previous meeting report](#) at the Eastern Area Committee held on the 16 June 2022.

8.4 Update in [Matters arising from previous meeting report](#) at the Eastern Area Committee held on the 29 September 2022.

8.5 Update in [Matters arising from previous meeting report](#) at the Eastern Area Committee held on the 15 December 2022.

8.6 Update in [Matters arising from previous meeting report](#) at the Eastern Area Committee held on the 28 February 2023.

8.7 Update in [Matters arising from previous meeting report](#) at the Eastern Area Committee held on the 15 June 2023.

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Bringing better bus services to East Swale

PROJECT
CENTRE





Content

1. Background and Context
2. What we did
3. What we heard
4. Key findings
5. Next steps

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Bringing better bus services to East Swale

In March 2021, the UK Government published the Bus Back Better strategy. It sets out an ambitious vision to improve bus services in England through greater local leadership.

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1

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In March 2021, the UK Government published the Bus Back Better strategy. It sets out an ambitious vision to improve bus services in England through greater local leadership.

The strategy asks local authorities, together with bus operators, to work with local communities to plan and deliver fully integrated bus networks and grow passenger numbers. As a result of the government's strategy, Project Centre Limited was commissioned by Swale Borough Council (SBC) to deliver an engagement programme to understand the needs of the local communities in East Swale, and report

back these views to councillors on where improvements can be made when funding is made available. The communities that are in question are as follows:

- Boughton Under Blean
- Doddington
- Dunkirk
- Eastling
- Faversham
- Graveney with Goodnestone
- Hernhill
- Luddenham
- Lynsted and Kingsdown
- Newnham
- Norton
- Oare
- Ospringe

- Selling
- Sheldwich
- Stalisfield
- Teynham
- Throwley
- Tonge

While there is no current funding available, the feedback gathered can be used to help Swale Borough Council understand the priorities of local people, so that if funds become available in future, improvements can be prioritised to shape a bus network that best meets the needs of the community.



There were four key methods used to inform the public about the consultation and gather their experiences and insights to support future decision-making about the bus network. These were:

1. Online survey
2. Dedicated project web page and social media
3. Meetings with community members
4. School workshop



2

WHAT WE DID

A public consultation was launched on 24 March 2023 and closed on 27 April 2023. The consultation sought to better understand the public's views on what could be improved to create a more sustainable, efficient and comfortable bus service that meets the needs of the community.

There were four key methods used to inform the public about the consultation and gather their experiences and insights to support future decision-making about the bus network. These were:

1. Online survey

2. Dedicated project web page and social media

3. Meetings with community members

4. School workshop

Briefing sessions were offered to local councillors, however due to the pre-election period and public holidays, information was provided individually via email to inform councillors and share onwards with constituents.

Online Survey

The online survey comprised of 22 questions and sought insight from respondents on the following areas:

- Travel habits
- Fares and tickets
- Their last journeys
- What would encourage them to use bus services more (existing users) or begin using bus services (non-users).

The final section of the survey was

designed to understand more about the demographics of people using and not using existing services. These questions were voluntary and sought to understand if members of the community have different needs based on their protected characteristics to deliver a more inclusive engagement process.

The online survey was shared on the dedicated project web page throughout the duration of the consultation, social media and via direct email with 45 community organisations. A total of 96 responses were received.

Dedicated project web page

Information about the consultation was hosted on the Council webpage, including the live survey link, for people to find out more about the consultation, how to respond and how their data is being used for the purpose of the consultation.



Eastern Swale bus consultation

swale.gov.uk/esb

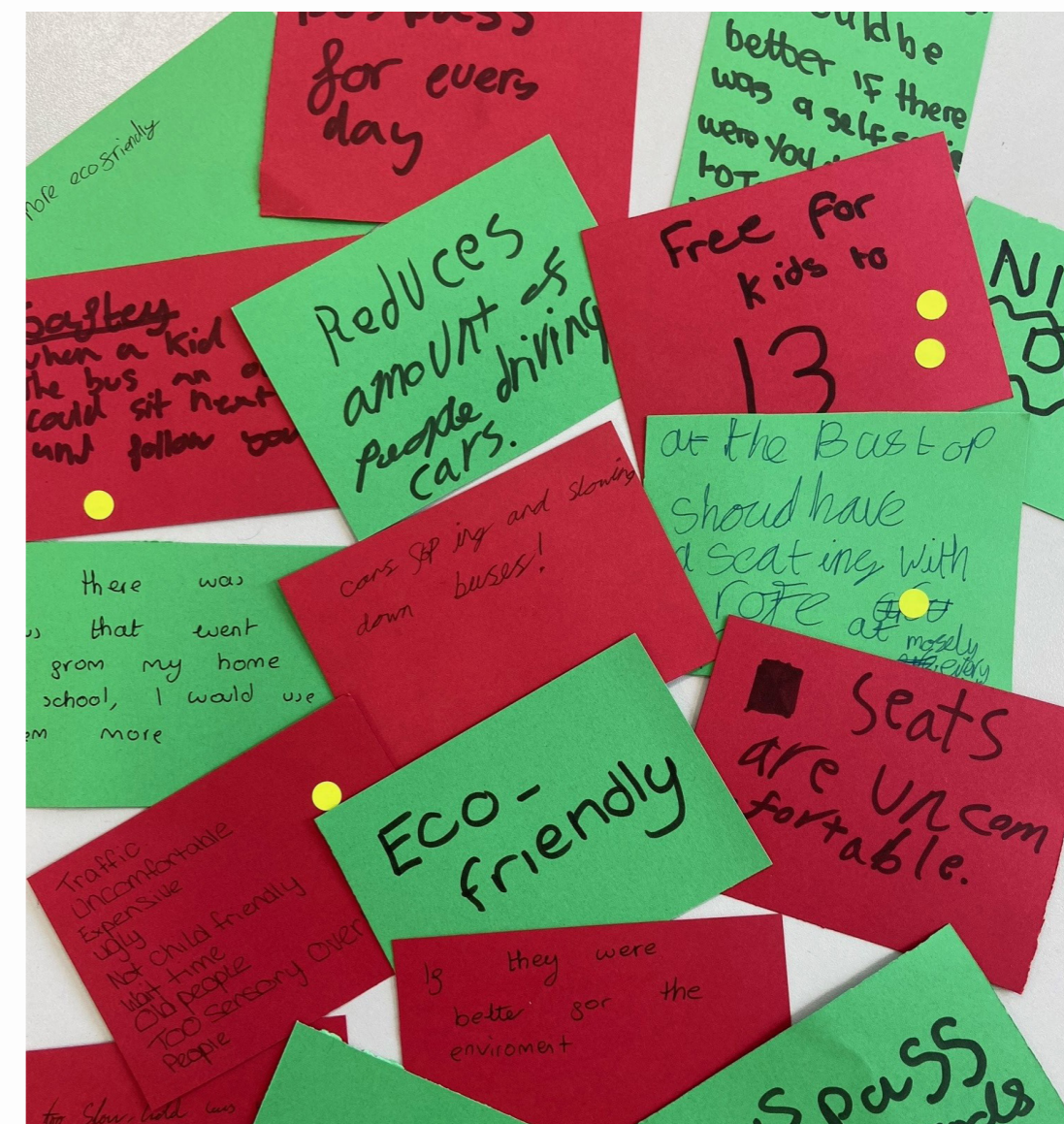


Image showing green and red cards from card storming exercise with Abbey School.

Information about the consultation, such as key deadlines, background and context and information on how to access the online survey were posted throughout the length of the consultation on social media. An example of the image that was used throughout the social media campaign can be seen on the left on the previous page.

Contact details for the Council were also posted on the website, to allow members of the public to contact the project team with any questions about the consultation.

Meetings with community members

Virtual community workshop sessions were designed to establish the key issues faced by the community regarding the local bus network, and what improvements could be made to encourage and enable more people to use bus services in Eastern Swale.

Two sessions were organised and a wide cross-section of the community were invited to participate including local businesses, transport stakeholders and disability and equalities groups.

The workshops included a short presentation to provide context for the consultation and SBC's ambition for the local bus network. A facilitated discussion about three specific elements of the bus network: 'level of service', 'fares' and 'on the bus'. There was also an opportunity for community members to ask any questions or provide feedback outside these categories to ensure all relevant information was captured.

School Workshop

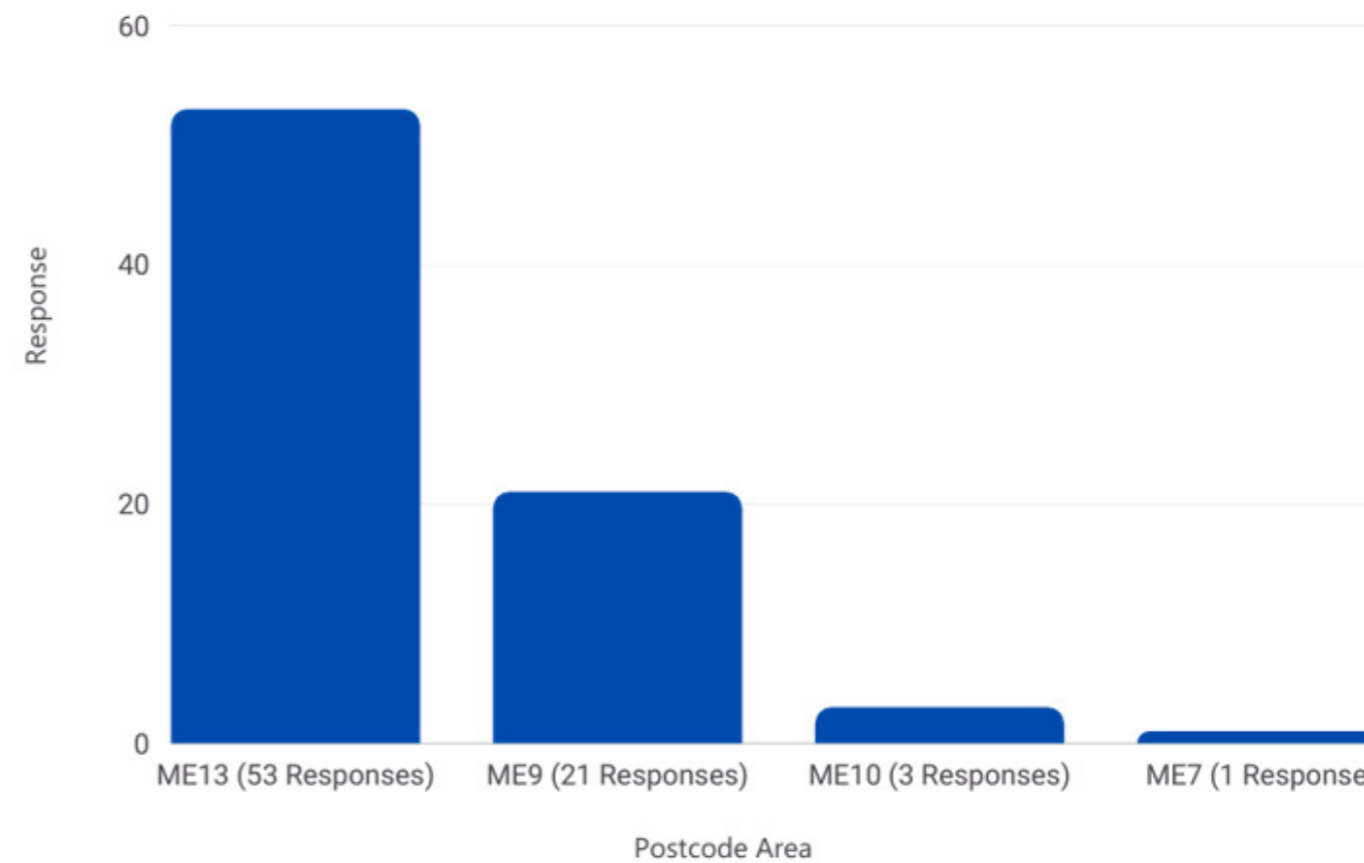
We facilitated a workshop with students aged 11 – 16 at Abbey School in Faversham. The workshop sought to understand the experiences

and opinions of young people, including what they liked and what could be improved on the local bus network.

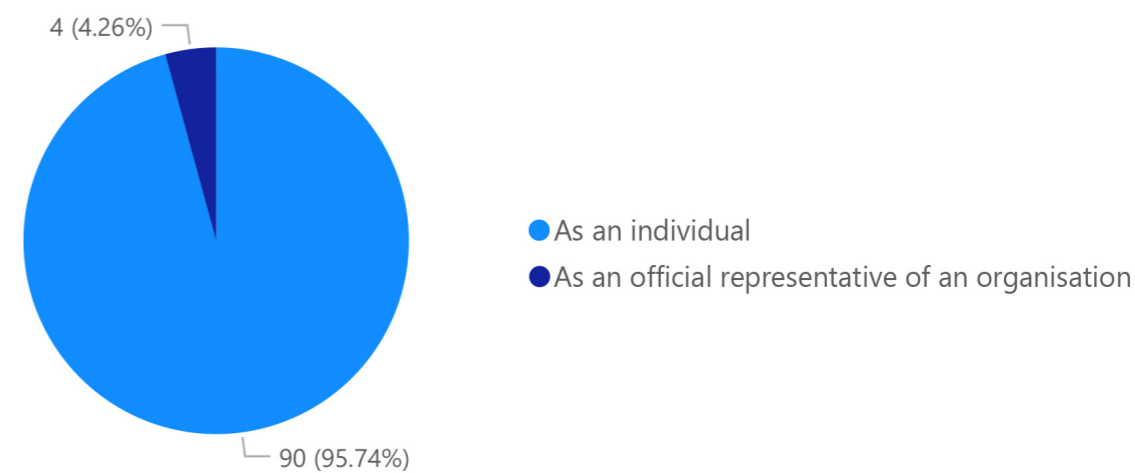
A card storming exercise was conducted to identify positive areas of the existing bus network, areas that needed improving, followed by a discussion of key or reoccurring themes that were shared by young people. The exercise consisted of giving groups of students green and red cards for them to write their ideas on. This activity helped understand areas of the bus network they currently enjoyed, and those particulars they thought could be improved in relation to specific aspects of the service.

Participant profile

Respondent post codes



Are you registering as an individual or as an official representative of an organisation?



3

WHAT WE HEARD

The online survey we conducted as part of the consultation asked the community the following

- Page 19
- Their participant profile
 - Where they responded from
 - How they travel around the borough
 - How often they use the service
 - Fares and tickets
 - Their last journey
 - What would encourage them to travel more on the service.

Each of the graphs that appear in this report contain the results for the questions asked in the survey, with some questions asking non users, bus users or both.

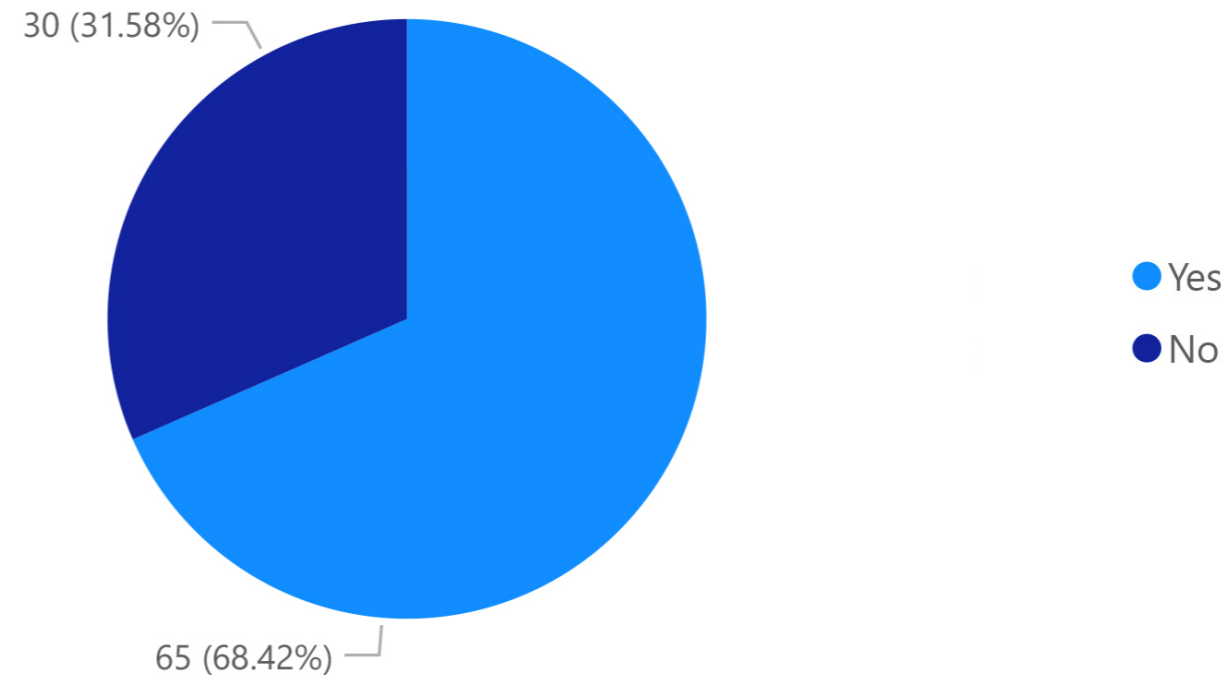
The most popular postcode for people to respond from was ME13 (53 post codes), where certain postcodes in this area had two or three responses. The second most popular area was ME9, where 21 postcodes were supplied. Other areas included ME7 and ME10, but these areas accounted for less than 5 total postcodes supplied.

The most popular postcode area for people to respond was from ME13, with 53 individual cases covering areas which could include Aylesford, Chatham, Faversham, Gillingham, Maidstone, Queenborough, Rochester, Sheerness, Sittingbourne, Snodland, West Malling.

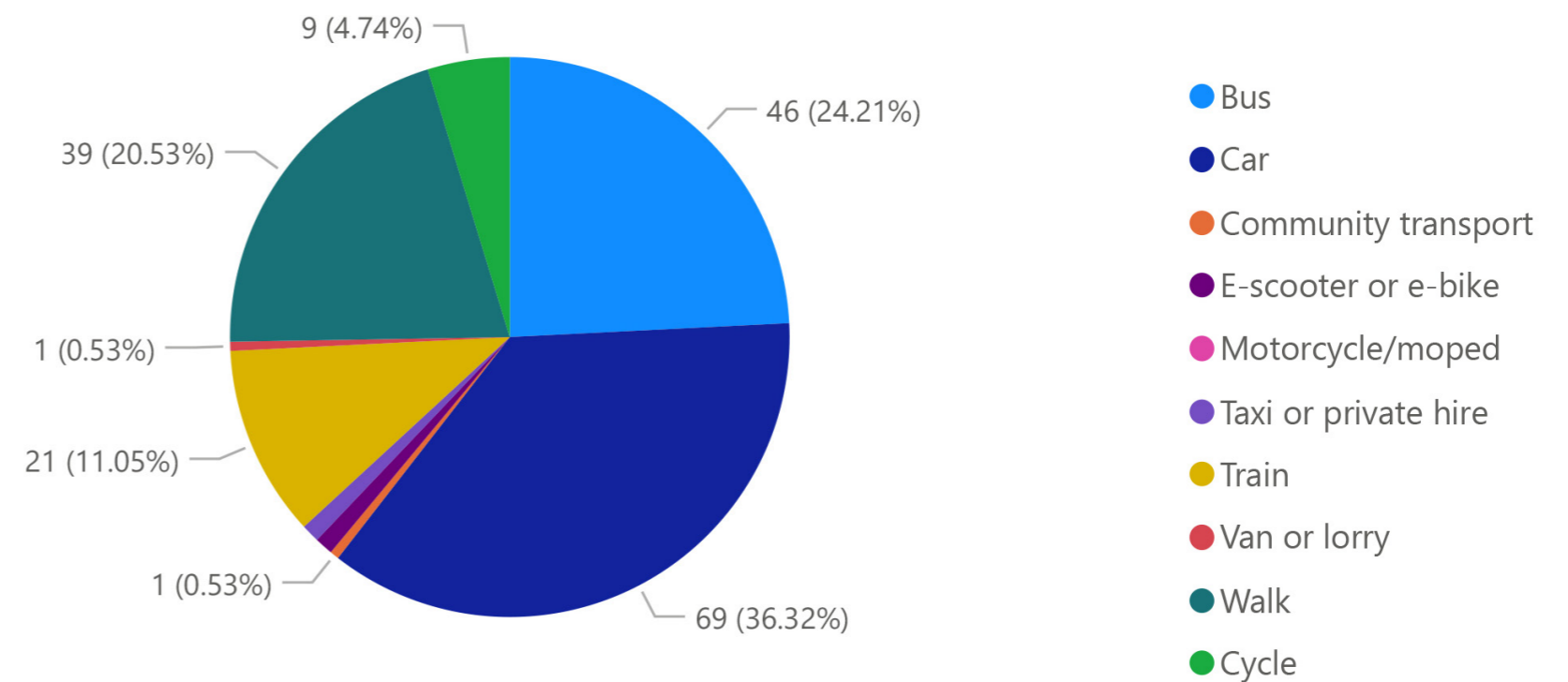


Travel Habits

Do you use the bus services in East Swale?



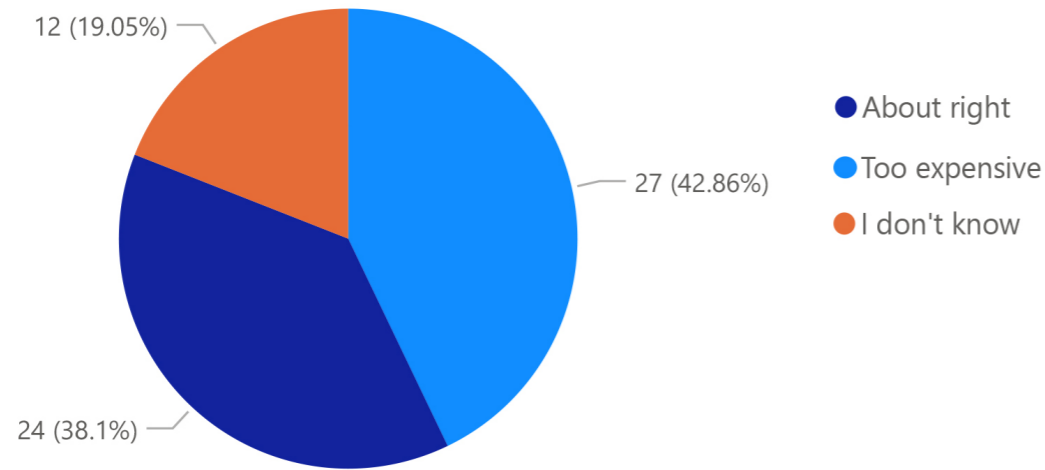
What is the main way you travel around the borough?



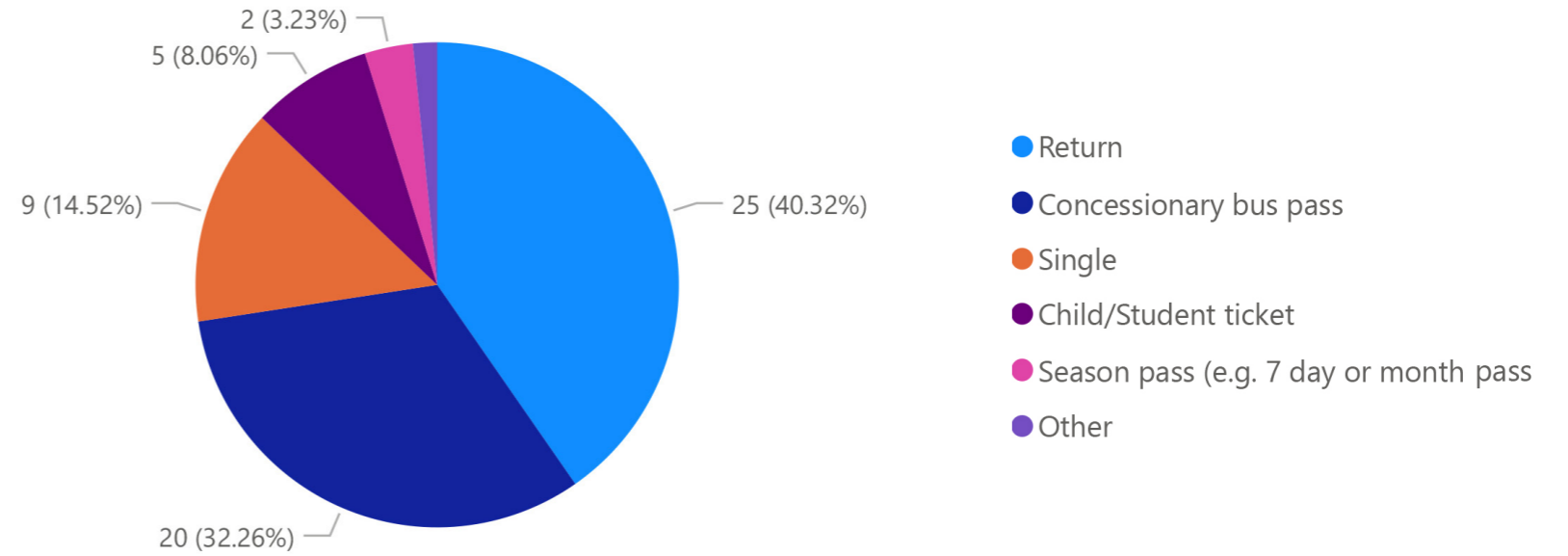
Most people who took the survey indicated cars were their main mode of travel around Swale, with buses and walking being the second and third most common options

Fares and tickets

When thinking about the price of your ticket, do you think it is:

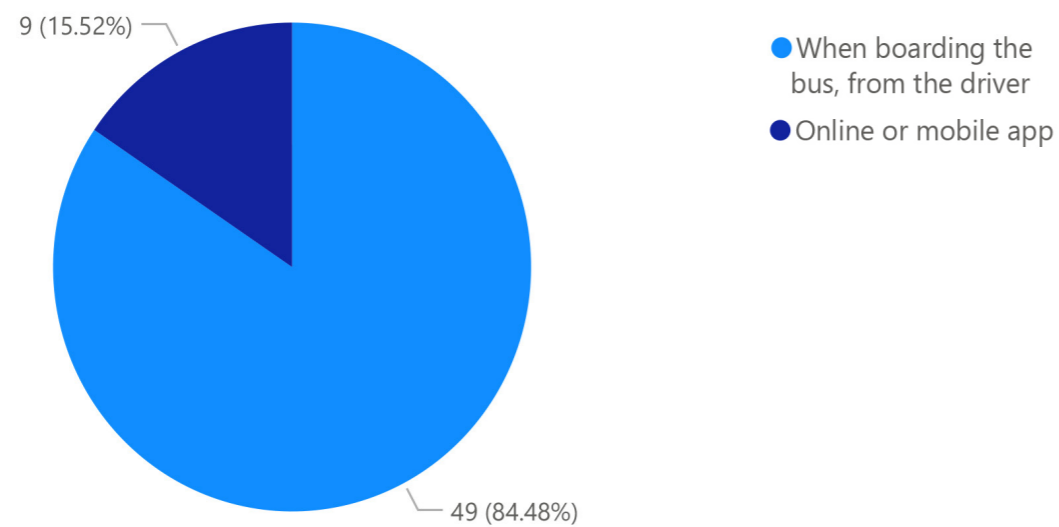


What type of ticket do you usually use?

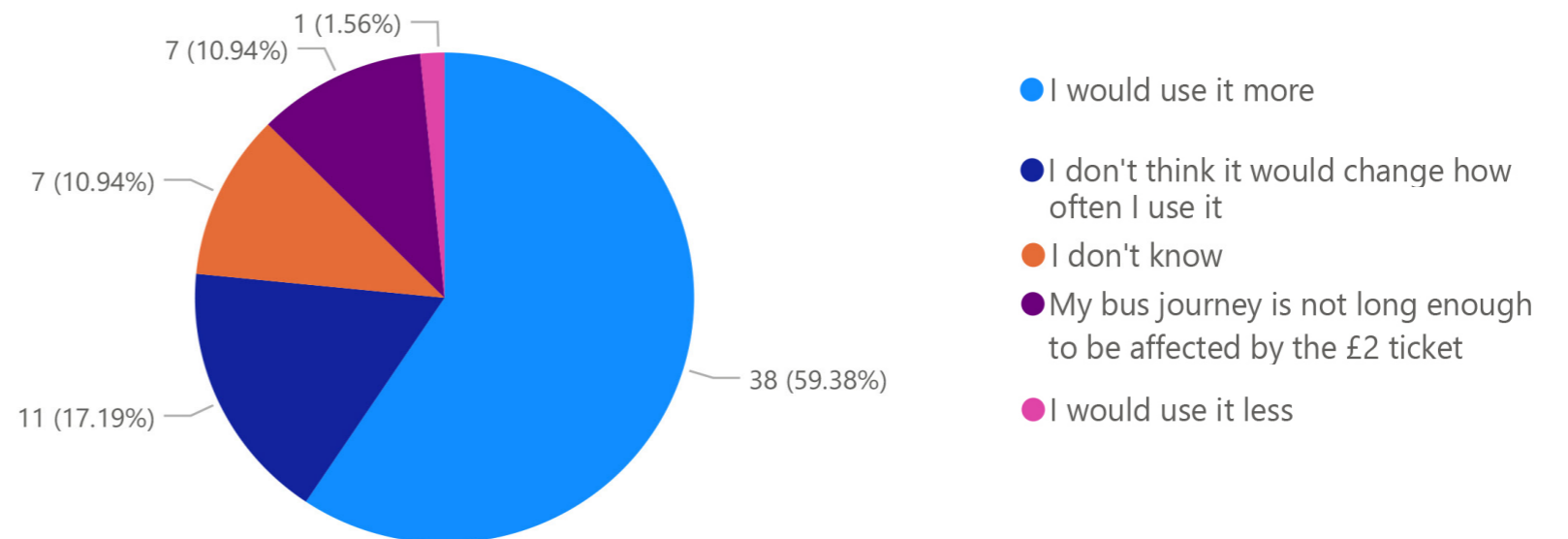


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How do you usually buy your ticket (s)?



Do you think £2 bus tickets (for an hour journey) encourage you to use the bus more or less?



About your journey

Nearly 85% of all bus users mentioned they bought tickets when boarding the service, compared with 15% who bought them prior to their journey online or through a mobile app.

Based on the recent introduction and expansion of the £2 bus fares for an hour journey, nearly 60% of respondents have suggested they are more likely to use the service than at

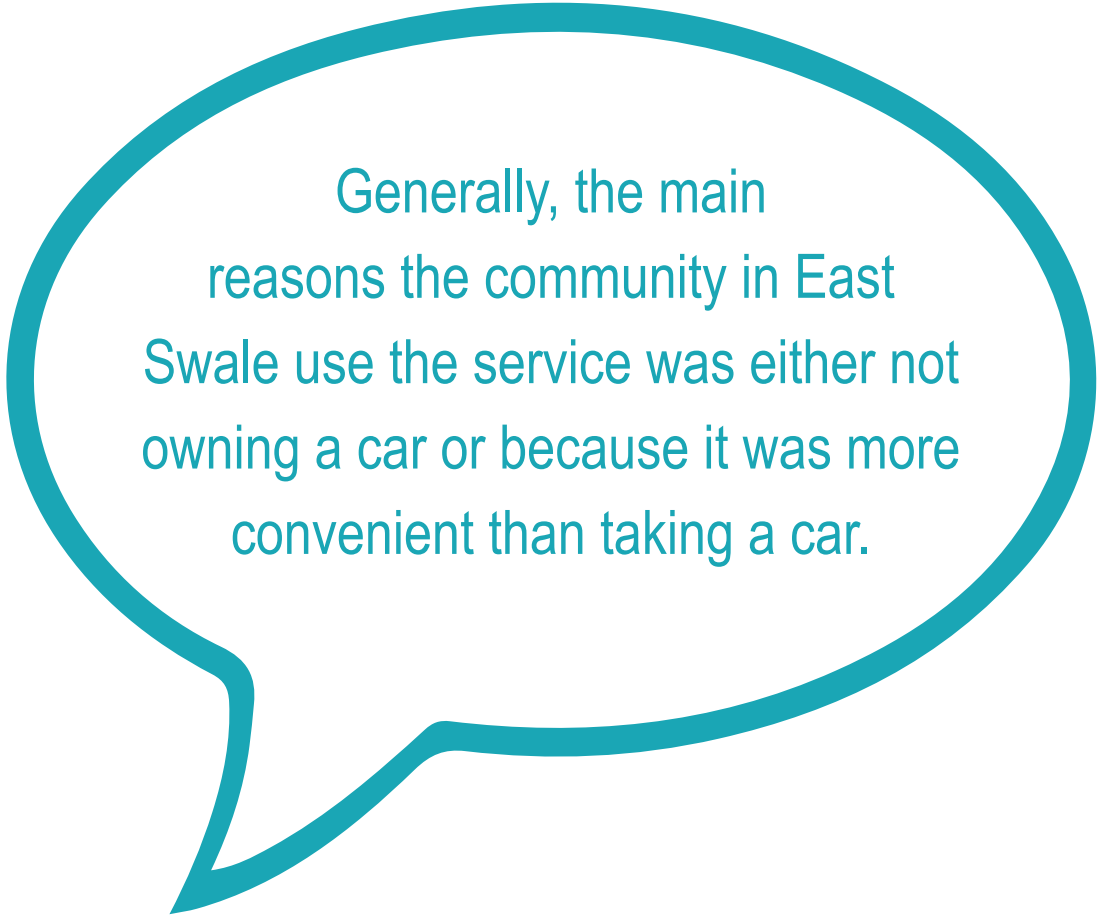
regular fare price, with less than 2% of respondents saying it would make them use it less.

Of the main reasons for taking the bus, the purpose of the visits taken was to either travel for shopping or leisure purposes. A large proportion of the community mentioned healthcare as the primary reason for travel, with commuting and education making up the smallest proportion of responses. Other reasons for travelling included visiting services such as funeral directors or going to the pub.

With regards to the variety of routes, there was no key indication of how respondents felt about this topic, however the largest proportion of respondents, at 29%, mentioned that the current variety of routes was 'fairly poor'. Respondents were asked about bus stops in terms of accessibility, maintenance, amount of stops in residential areas and amount of stops in town centres.

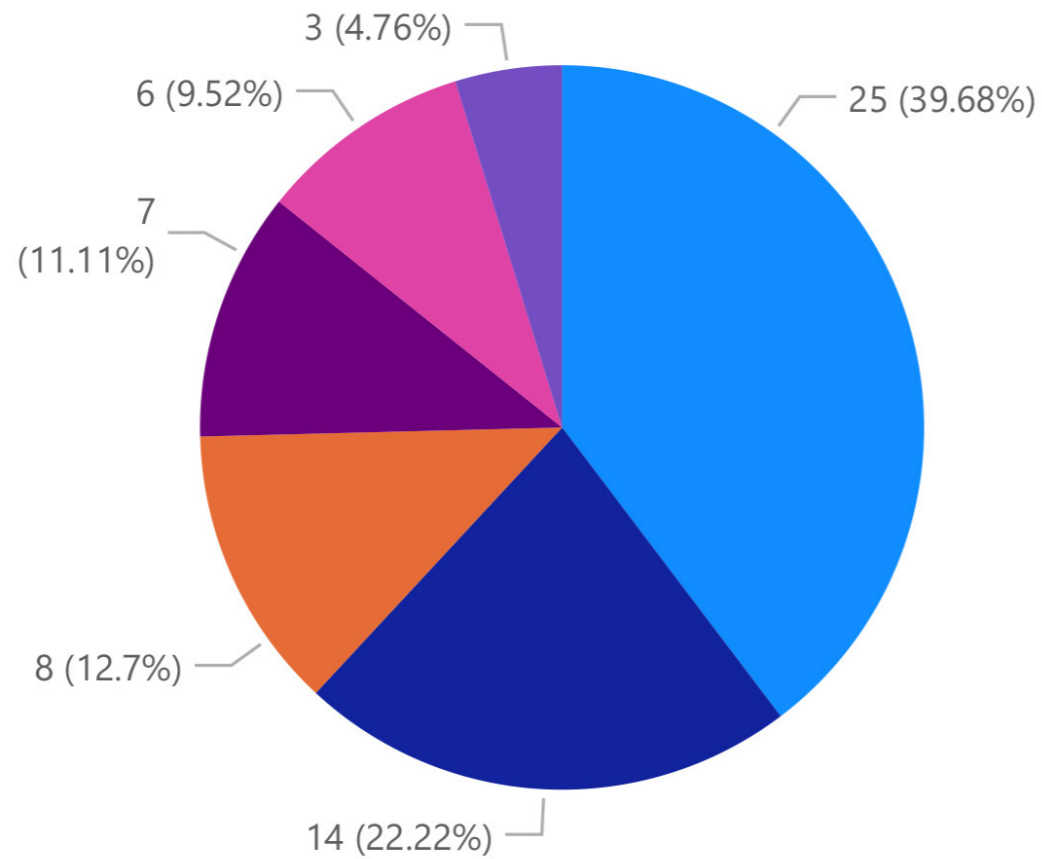
When asked about their last journey, most respondents, averaging 35%, rated these as 'fairly good' for all options.

With regards to the experience of the bus, most respondents noted that the cleanliness of the service and the level of comfort was 'fairly good', whereas the amenities on the bus and passenger capacity were considered adequate. Those who completed the survey rated the amenities neither good nor poor on their last journey.



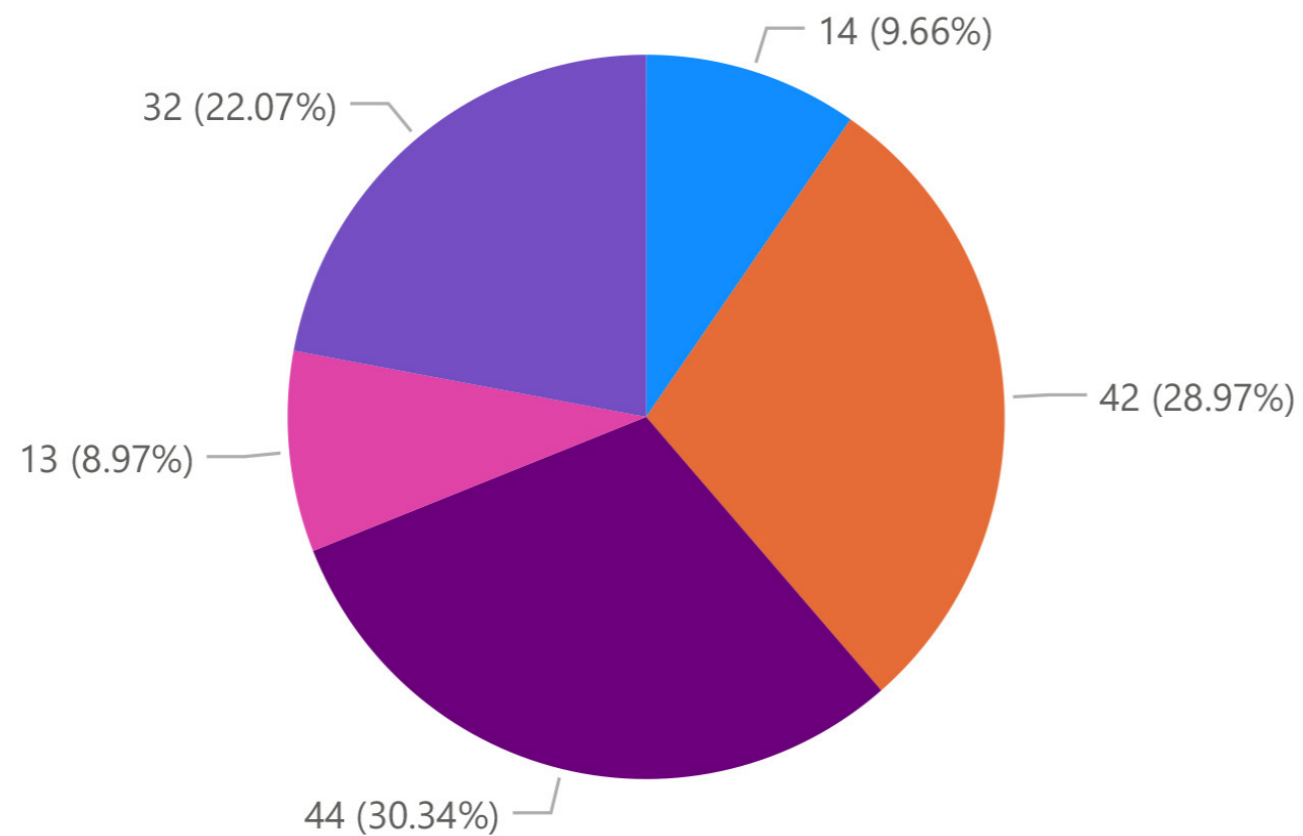
Generally, the main reasons the community in East Swale use the service was either not owning a car or because it was more convenient than taking a car.

Generally, what is the main reason you take the bus?



- I do not own a car
- It's easier or more convenient than driving
- I like to travel by bus
- It's better for the environment
- It's more accessible for me
- It's more affordable for me

What is the main purpose of your journeys on the bus?



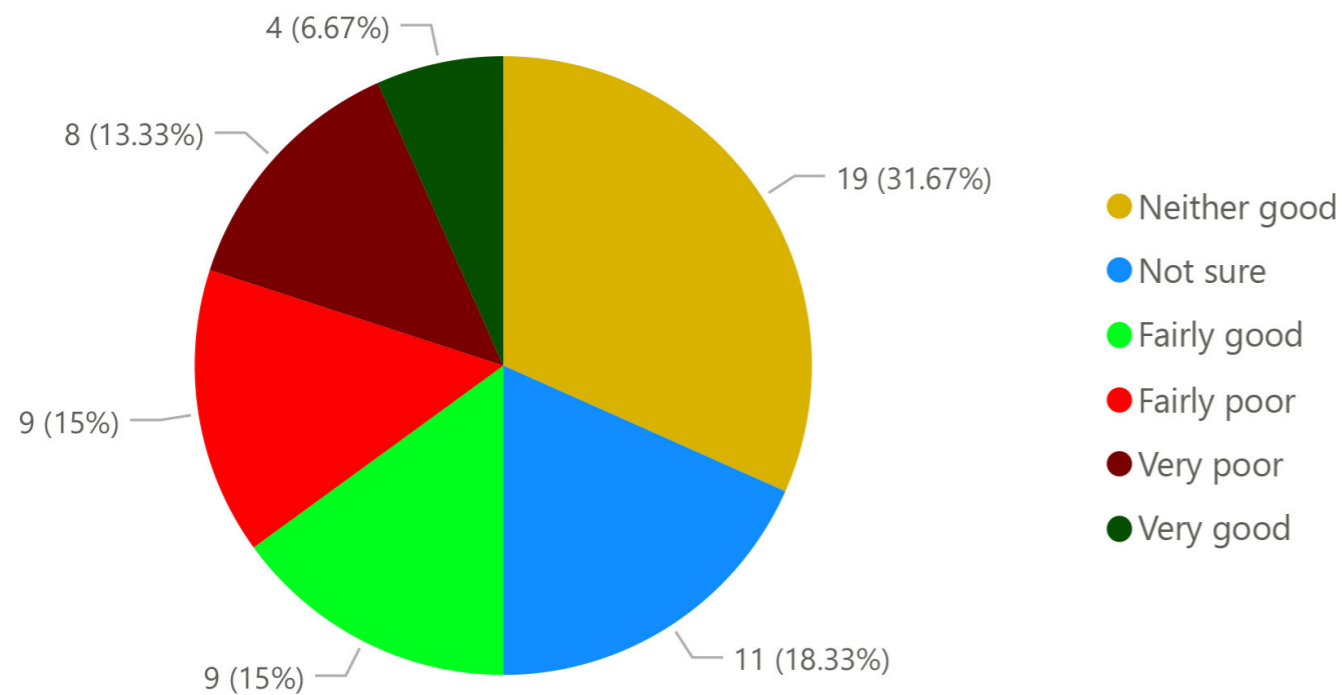
- Commuting
- Other
- Leisure
- Shopping
- Education
- Healthcare

Variety of routes and frequency of service

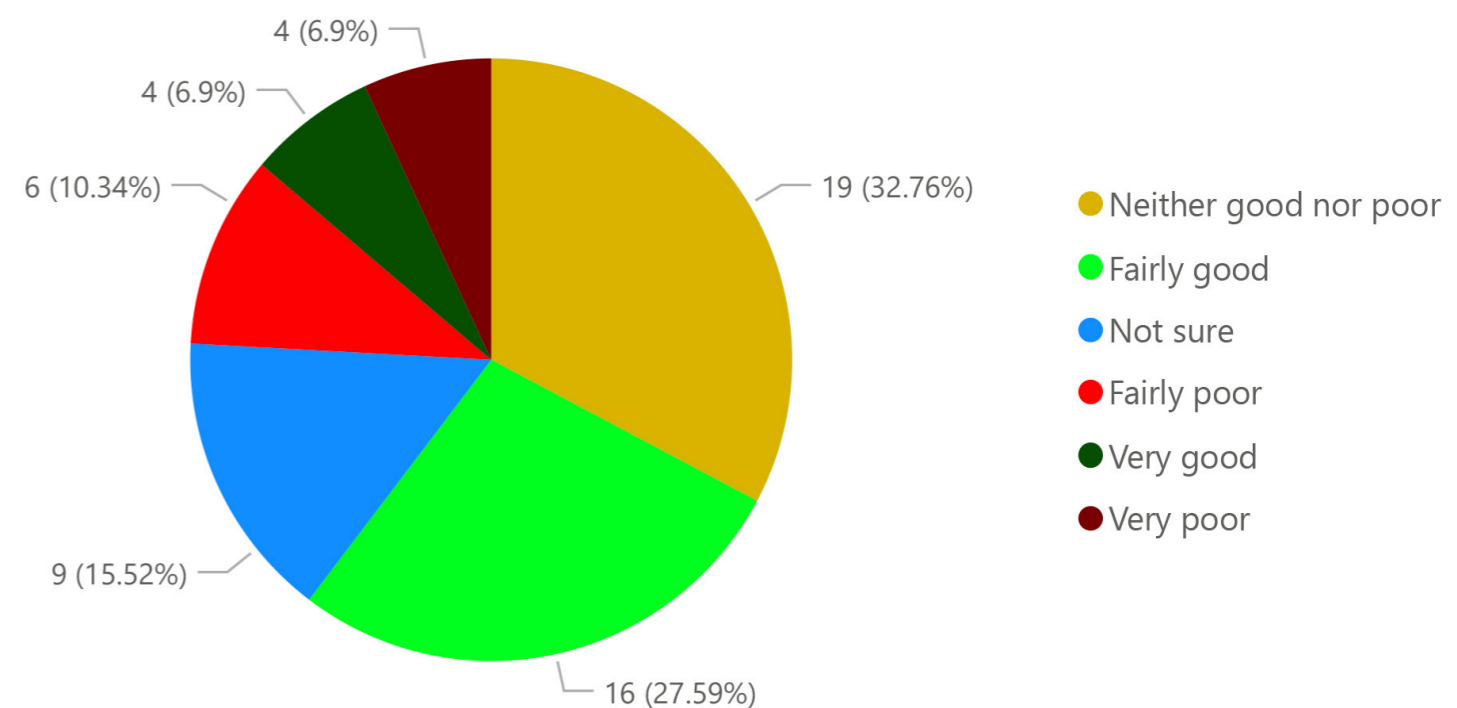
Respondents rated frequency of services negatively overall, with the largest proportion of ratings for frequency on night services showed they were 'very poor' at 63%, against 22% for day services

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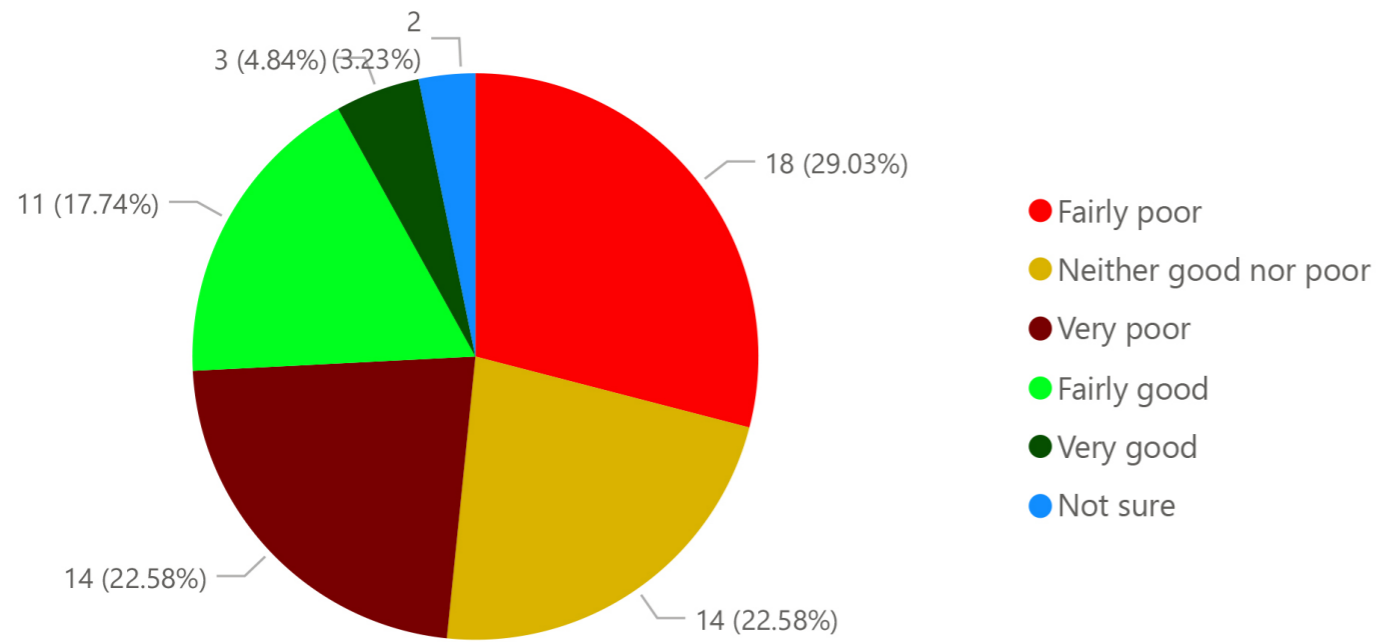
Price of tickets



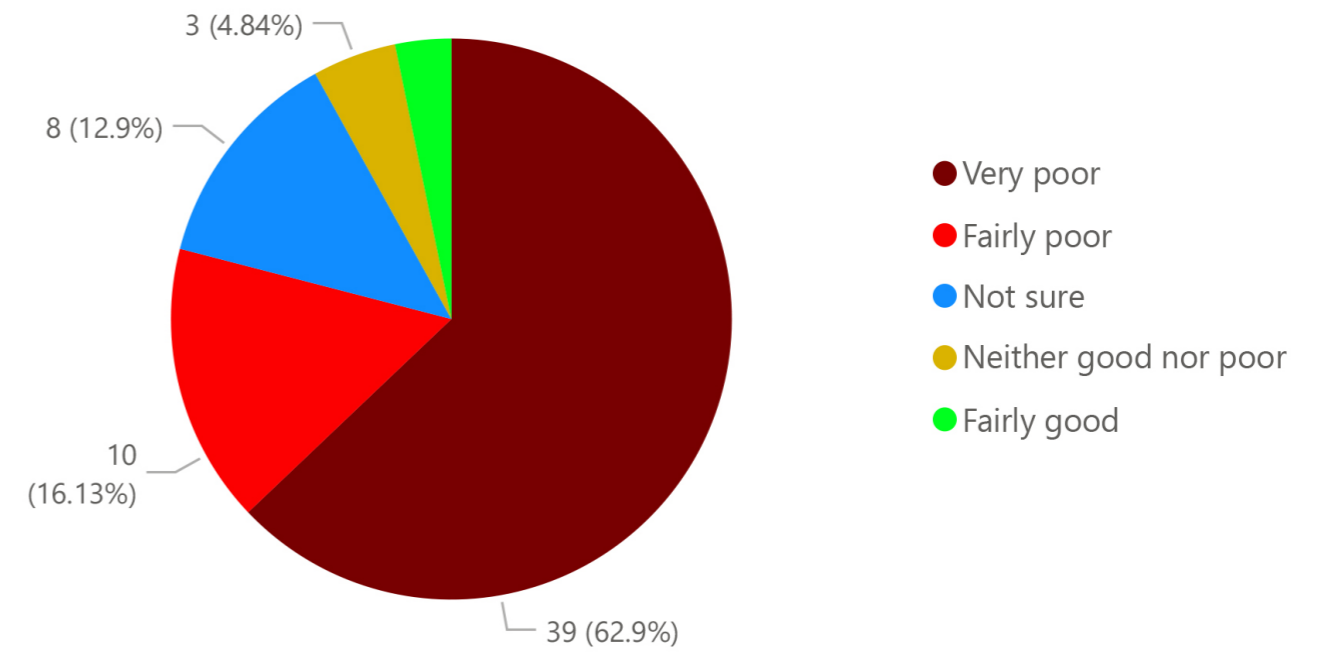
Variation of ticket type



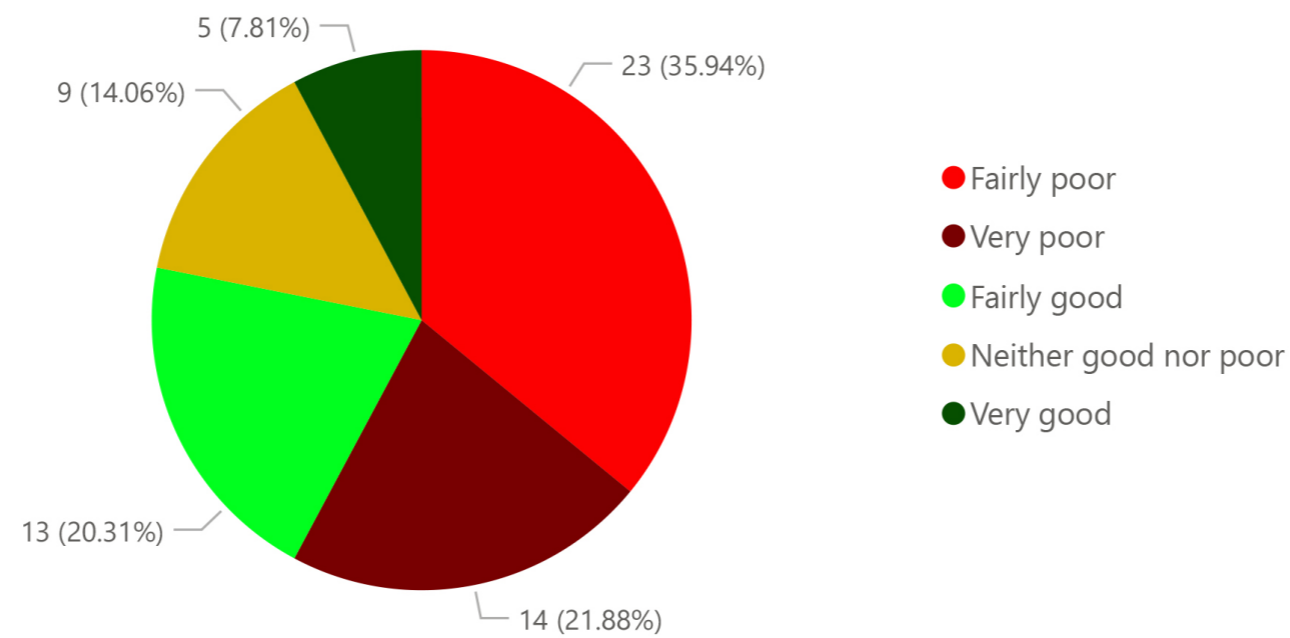
Variety of routes



Frequency of services at night

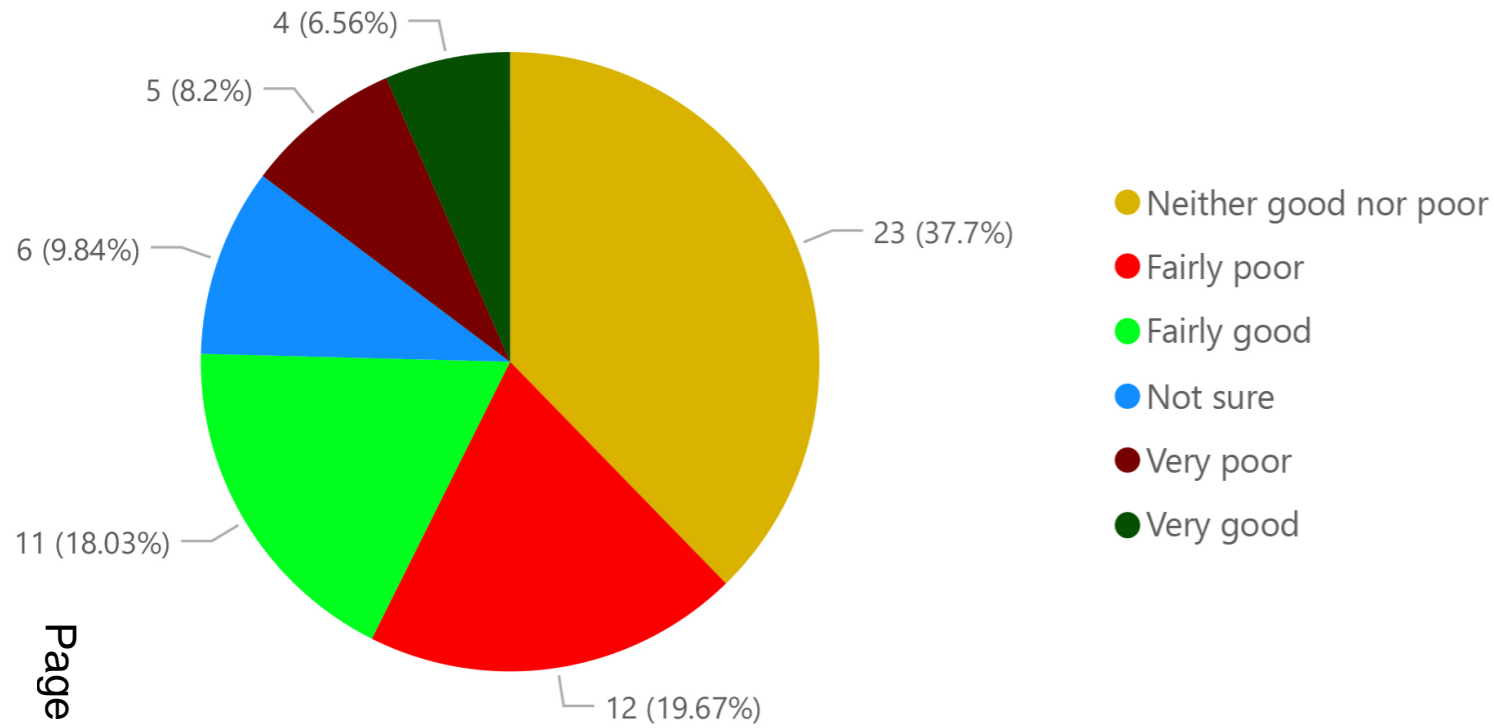


Frequency of services during the day

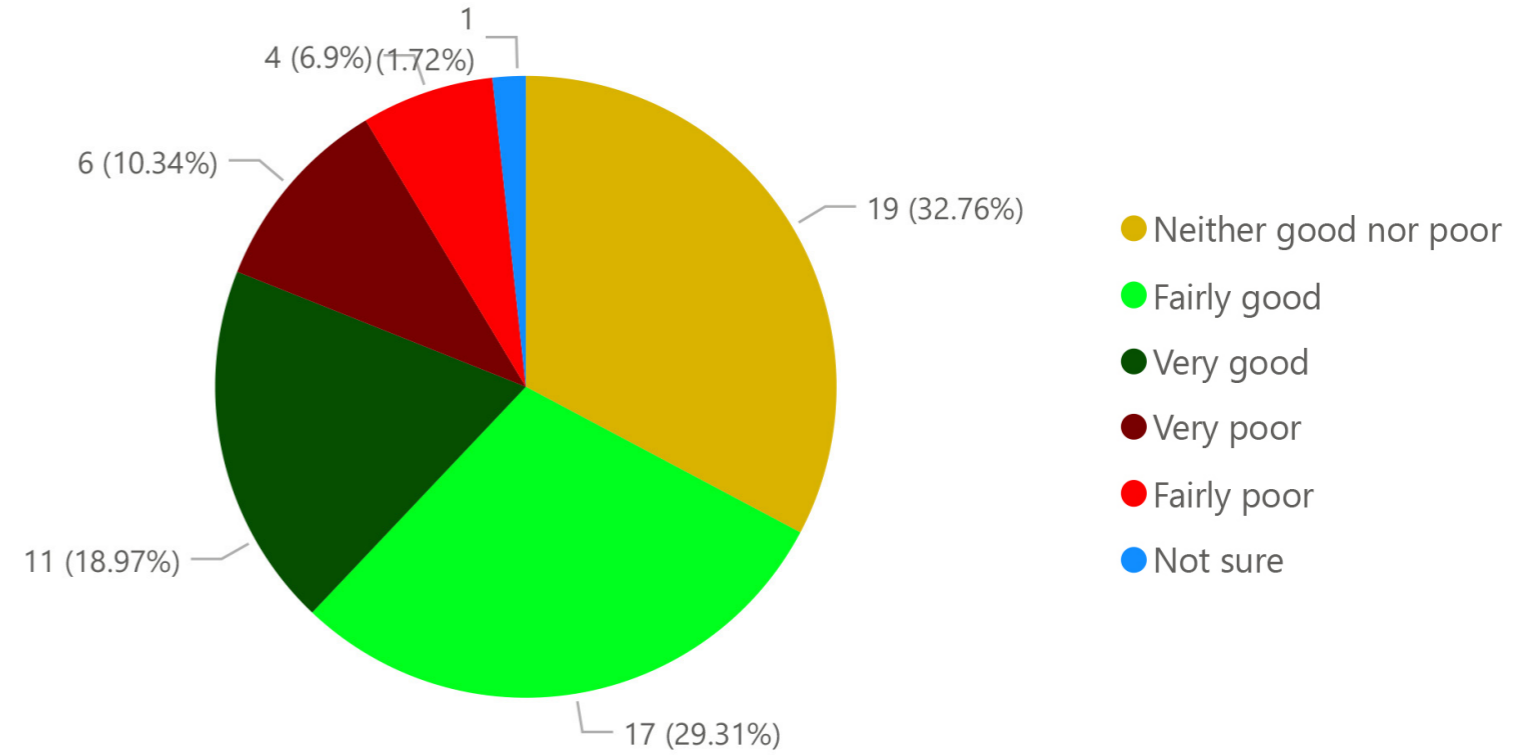


On the buses

Amenities on buses (for example Wi-Fi charging, seating)

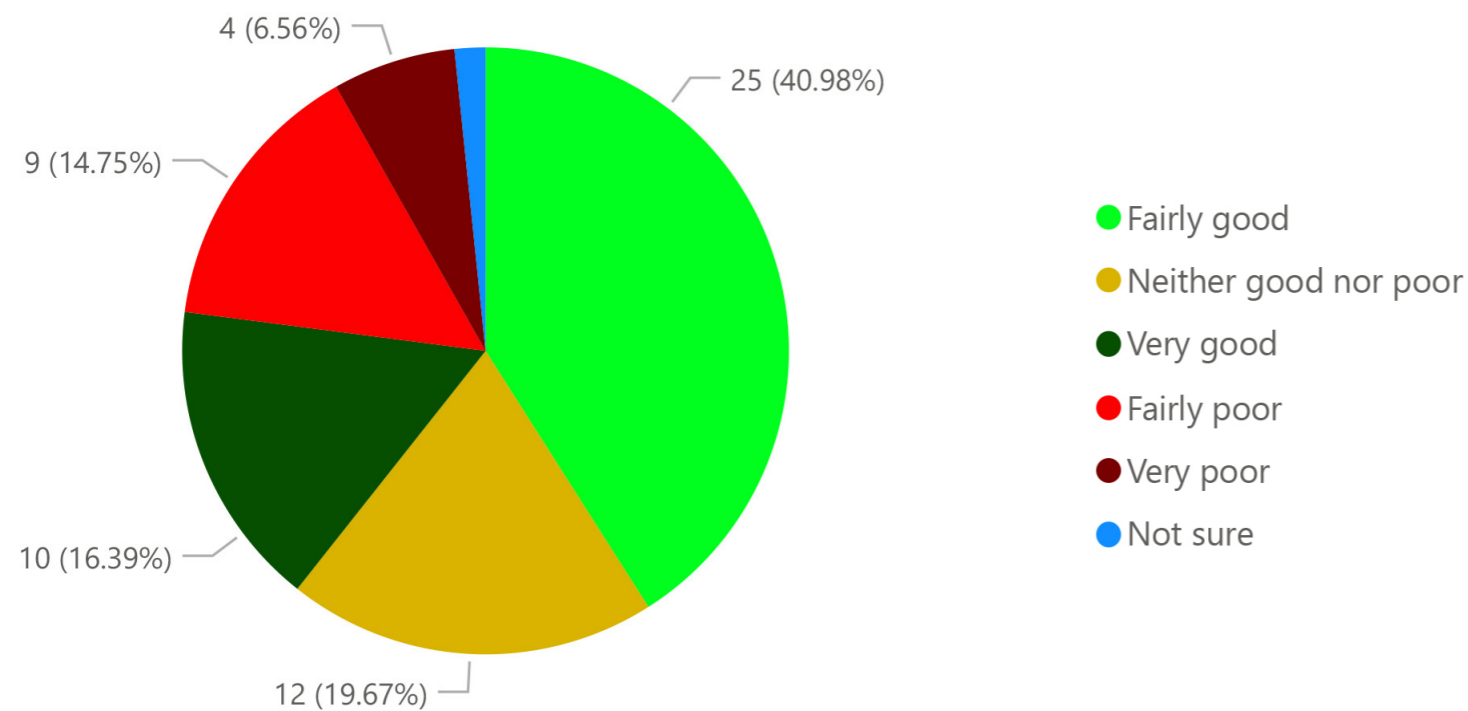


Passenger capacity

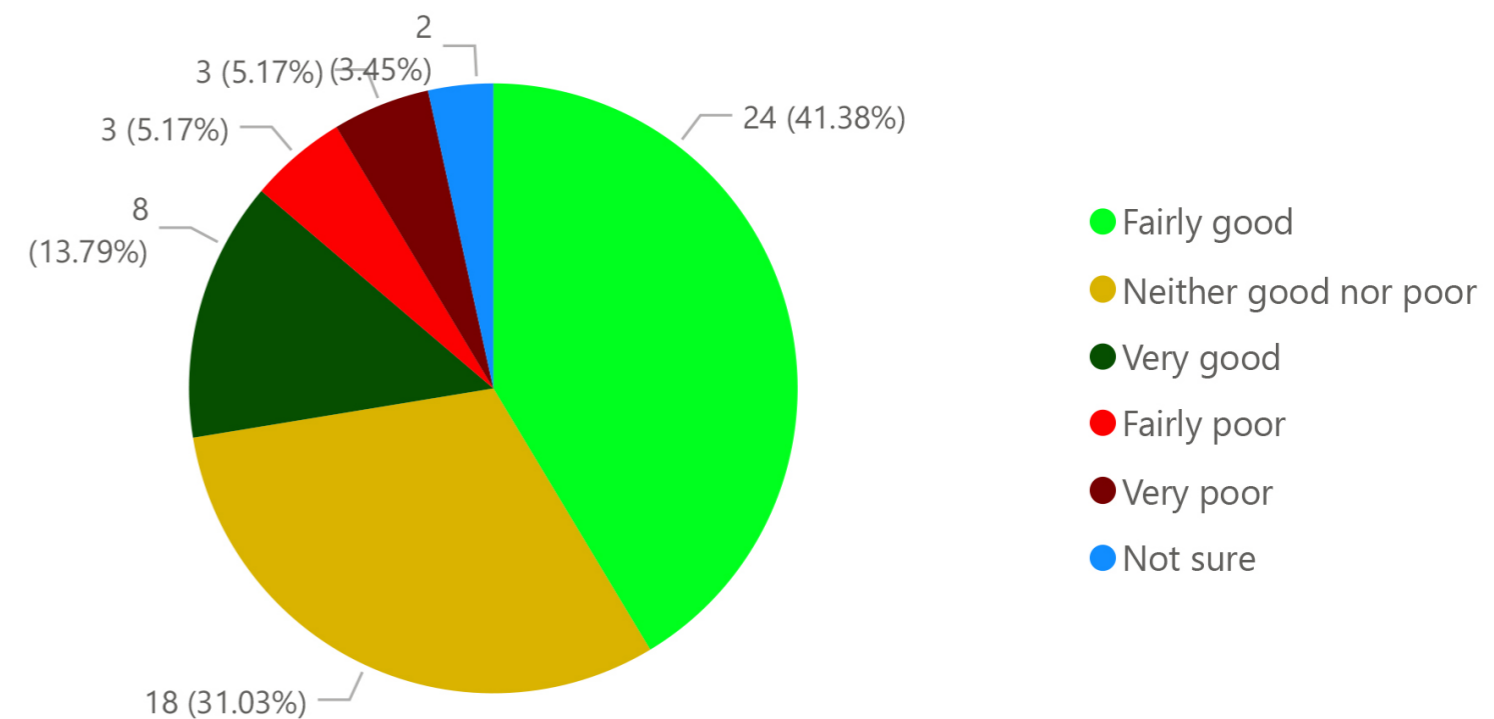


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Cleanliness of buses



Level of comfort (for example seating and railings)



4

KEY FEEDBACK

Based on the outcomes from the online survey, school workshop and meetings with the community, the following key findings have been identified:

Participants

- Of the 96 respondents to the survey, 90 were residents in Swale. Of those 65 residents who said that they use the bus services in East Swale (68%), the majority of people do so out of necessity or convenience.
- 96% of those who responded in the survey were either male or female, with the highest proportion of responses from those either aged between 16-20 (15% of all responses) or over 71 (24% of all responses).
- The community meetings and school workshop were made up a mix of

demographics, and reflected the demographics of the survey who reported using bus services in East Swale.

Fares and ticketing

- The current cost for using bus services and the variation of ticket types was considered acceptable, with only 11 survey respondents putting either of these options in their top five most important elements that would encourage them to take the bus more.
- During the community meetings, current fares were considered acceptable, but required more flexibility, especially when connecting with other services. Ticket types such as day riders and seasons tickets were offered as a solution for this.
- The national introduction of the capped £2 fare was considered successful, with many suggesting current fixed rates being useful, but more consideration is required regarding onward journeys and connectivity to other services.

- During the school workshop, free travel for under 13-year-olds and extended bus passes were identified as priorities to encourage more people to use bus services.

Amenities

- Students during the workshop suggested areas such as air conditioning, heated seats, Wi-Fi and charging points should be considered to improve services in future.
- During the survey, amenities were considered important in encouraging more people to travel on the services, but the current level of amenities provided was not considered unacceptable.
- When discussing general amenities on the bus during community workshops, this area was not considered an important issue needing improvement, with maintenance of existing amenities being referenced instead.

Safety

- Safety when travelling on the service and when waiting for the services

at the bus stops were mentioned consistently, however varied depending on the exercise undertaken.

- When asked in the survey, a high proportion of the community noted that personal security (26%) and safety concerns (28%) on their most recent trip was currently not considered neither good nor poor.
- When discussed in community meetings, services generally were deemed safe, but overcrowding created a risk, especially at night. Asking bus companies to send drivers on safeguarding training sessions was suggested to help improve the safety of the services in future.
- Students in the workshop suggested that older people being prominent on the bus, or being alone was a safety risk for young people.

Routes, availability, and connectivity

- The number of services that are connected and available, especially on routes where there is school pick-up and drop-offs were addressed as improvement areas across all the

exercises undertaken.

- Overcrowding and disruptions to the services based on the availability and connectivity of the current service was also considered an area of concern.
- The availability, reliability and frequency of services were key areas of concern across all exercises, including buses regularly being cancelled last minute and restricted operation.
- Bus speeds was consistently mentioned as an area for improvement, with suggestions that slow services held up traffic and caused congestion.
- When respondents were asked if there was anything further they would like to comment on, connectivity with other services was raised as one of the most suggested areas for improvement.
- 29% of survey respondents mentioned the variety of routes was poor and improvements could be made to create a better service

Other areas of improvement

- Queries about whether there were any

plans to introduce electric buses as a part of the local improvement programme were raised.

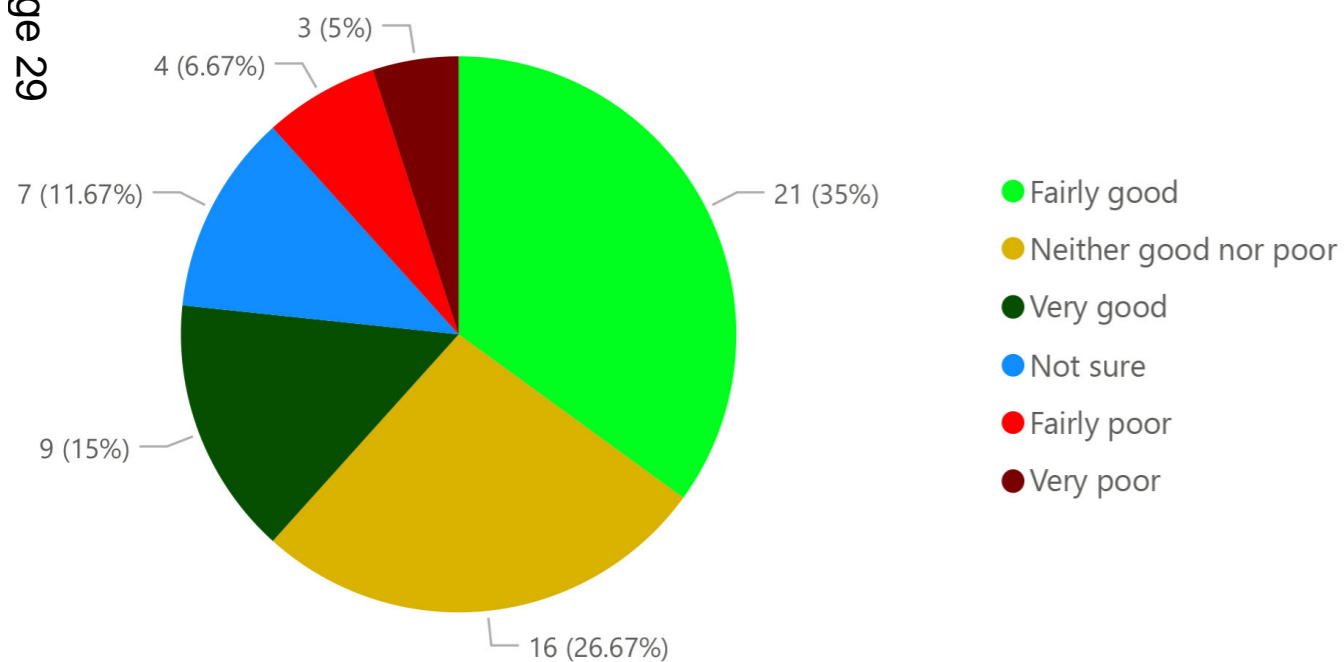
- Some participants suggested regular community forums or meetings to discuss future transport improvements within the local area would be a useful way to continue engaging with the council in future.
- Mix use transport and exploring micro networks was considered a further area where improvements could be made to the local service.
- Working with the private sector to deliver improvements was mentioned a number of times, for example working with bus companies to improve safeguarding or bus stop locations and understanding required safety and maintenance standards.

Safety and security

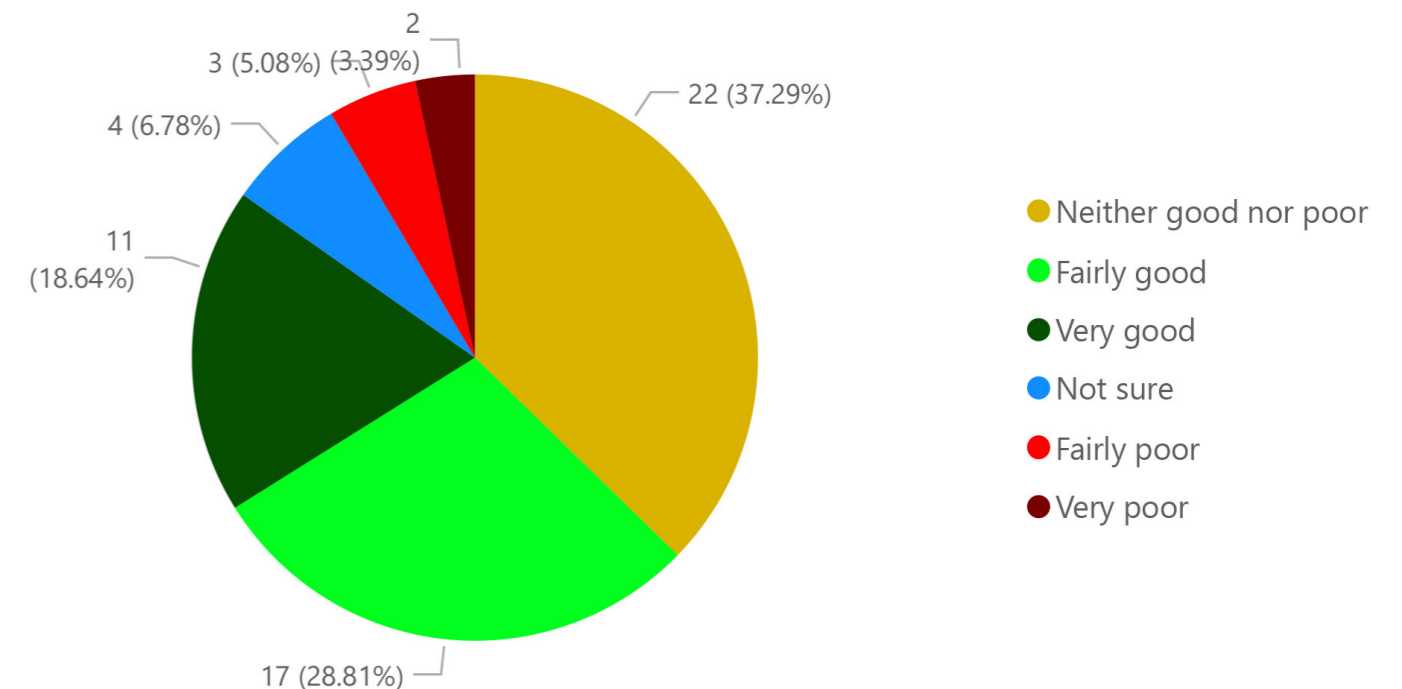
The majority of respondents noted that personal security on their most recent trip was 'fairly good', whereby in comparison to this, the highest proportion of respondents noted concerns of safety on their last trip were not noticeable, rating this area as 'neither good nor poor'.

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Personal security



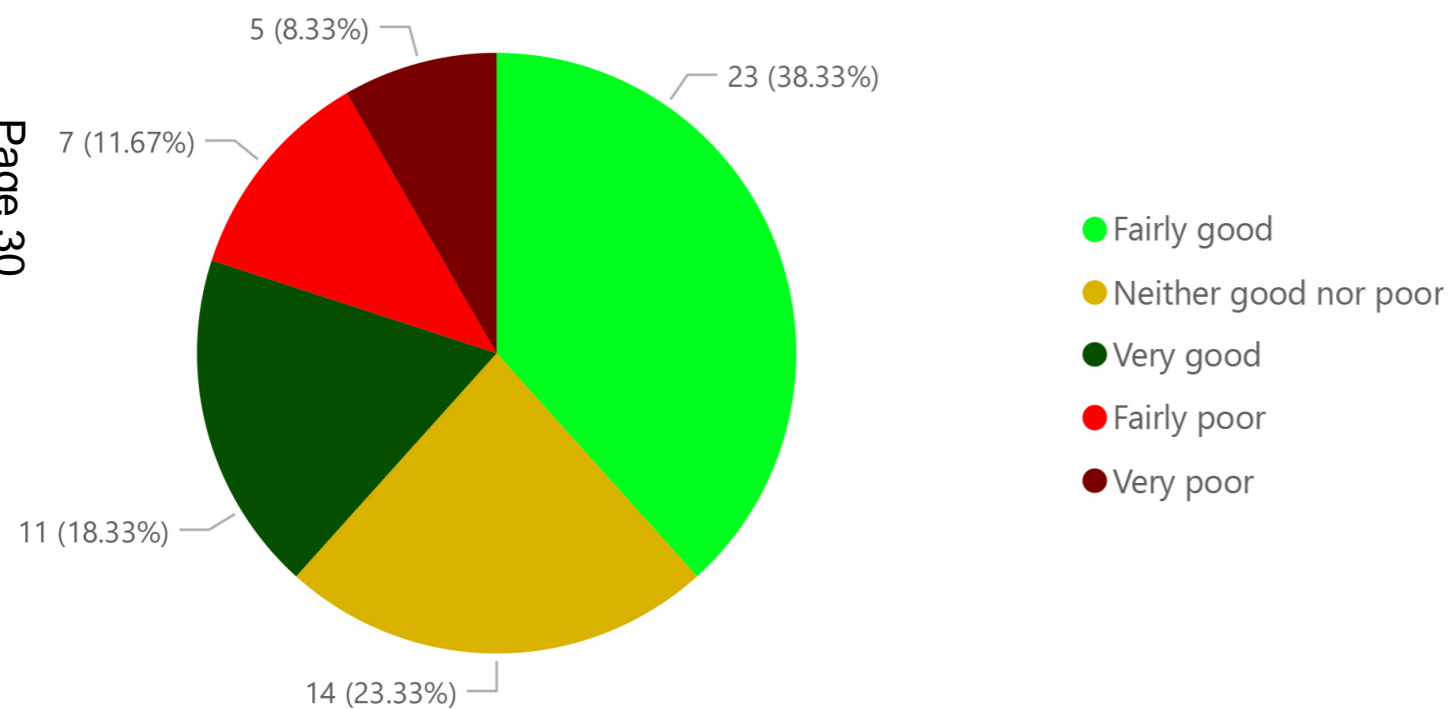
Safety concerns



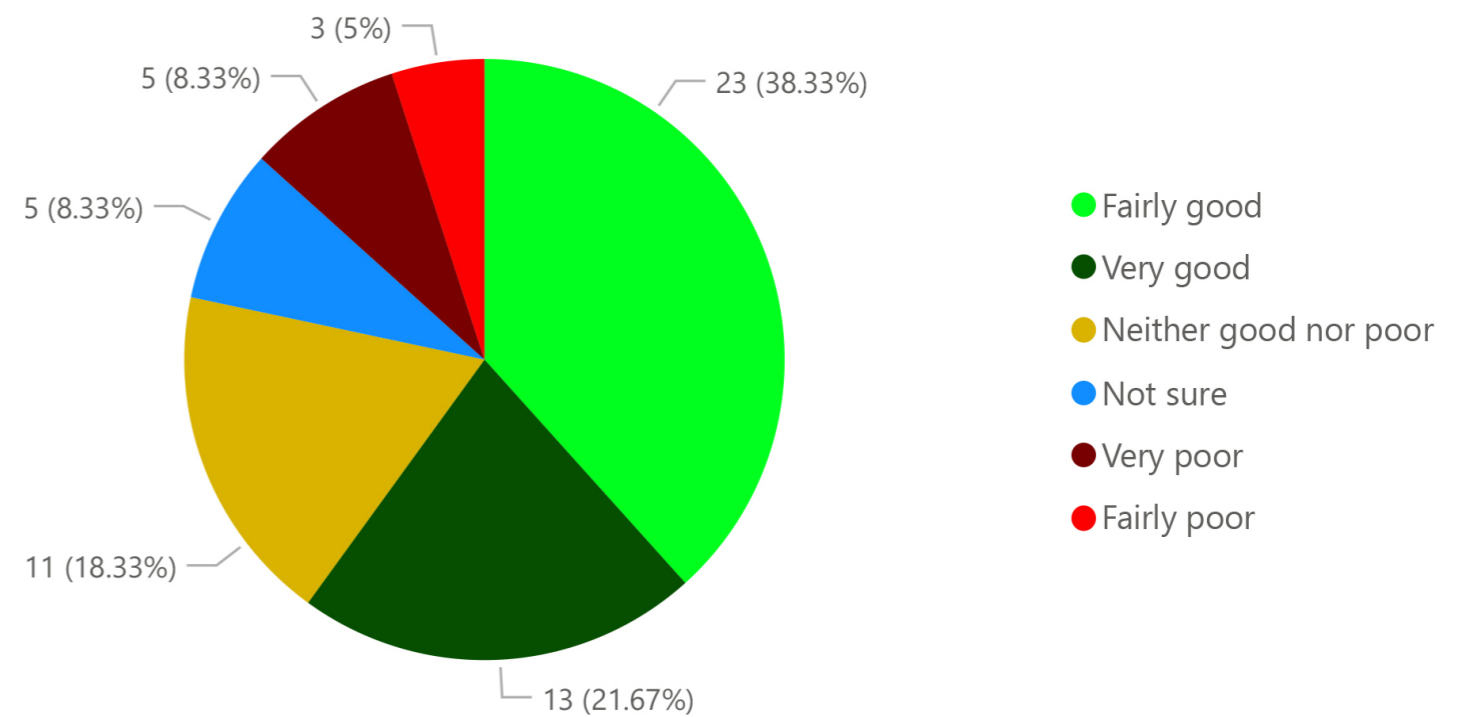
Accessibility

Most people completing the survey noted both the accessibility of buses and bus stops were fairly good. Less than 20% of responses noted the accessibility of bus stops and buses was seen negatively.

Accessibility of bus stops



Accessibility of buses



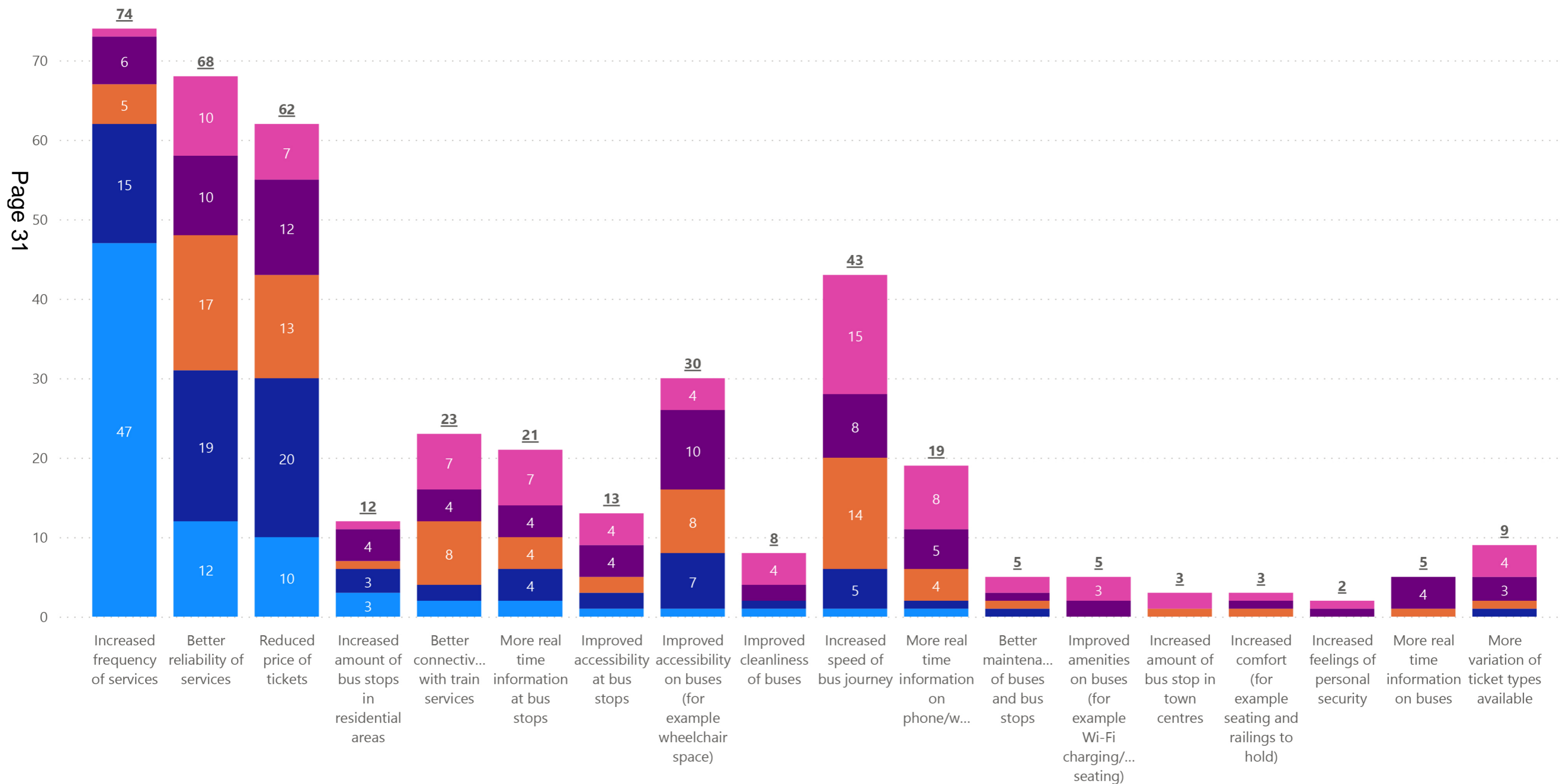
Journey improvements

Improvements to the frequency of services was selected both as the most common first priority, and within the top five priorities of all respondents.

Following this, better reliability of services and reduced price of tickets were the second and third most prioritised improvements respectively.

Select the top five improvements that would encourage you to take the bus more often

● First ● Second ● Third ● Fourth ● Fifth



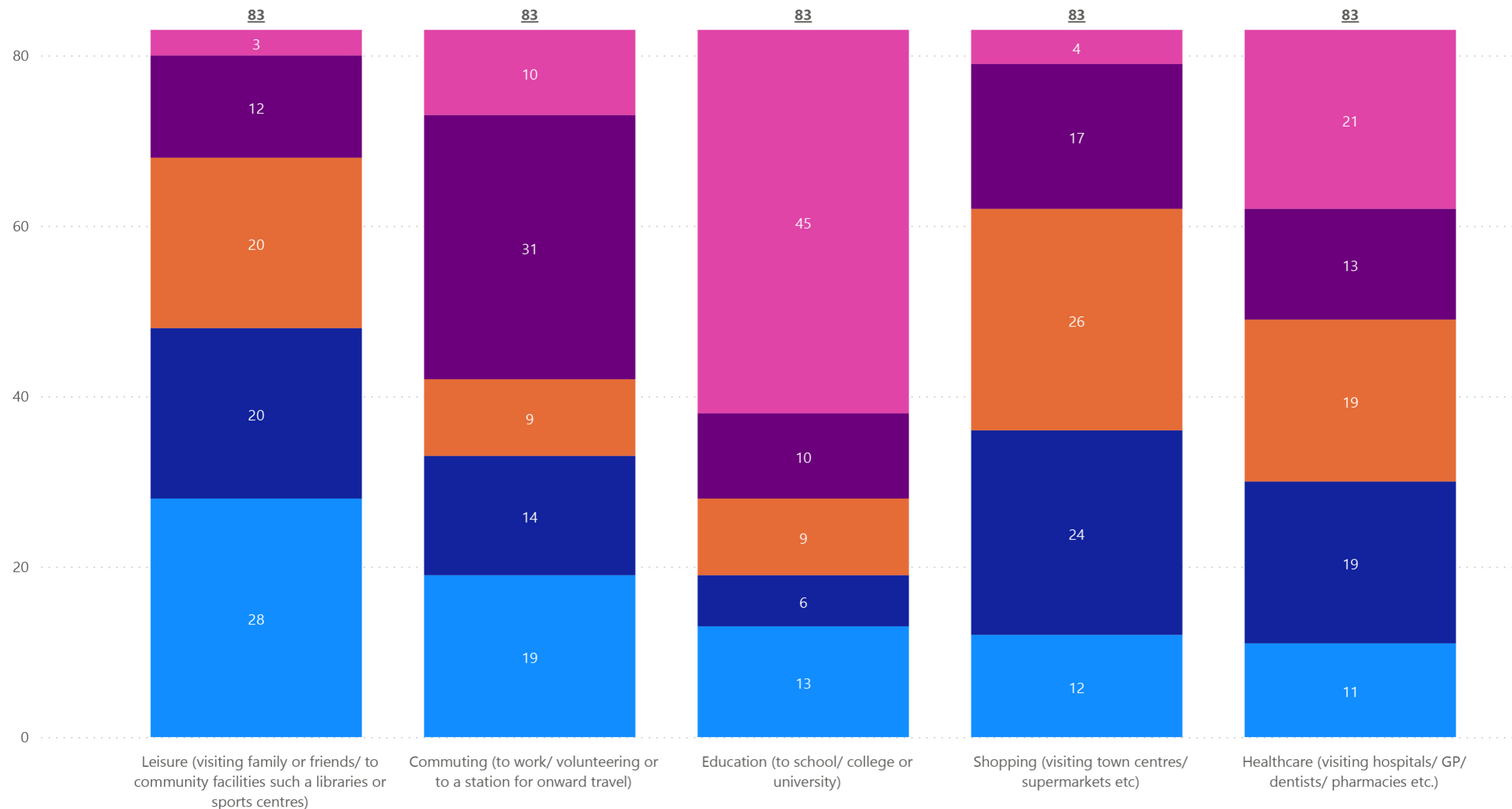
Journey improvements

On how likely the community would be to take certain journeys if these improvements were made, the most likely commutes included leisure visits and shopping. The option they were least likely to take out of the five provided was travelling for education purposes.

How likely would you be to make the following journeys by bus if these improvements were made?

● First ● Second ● Third ● Fourth ● Fifth

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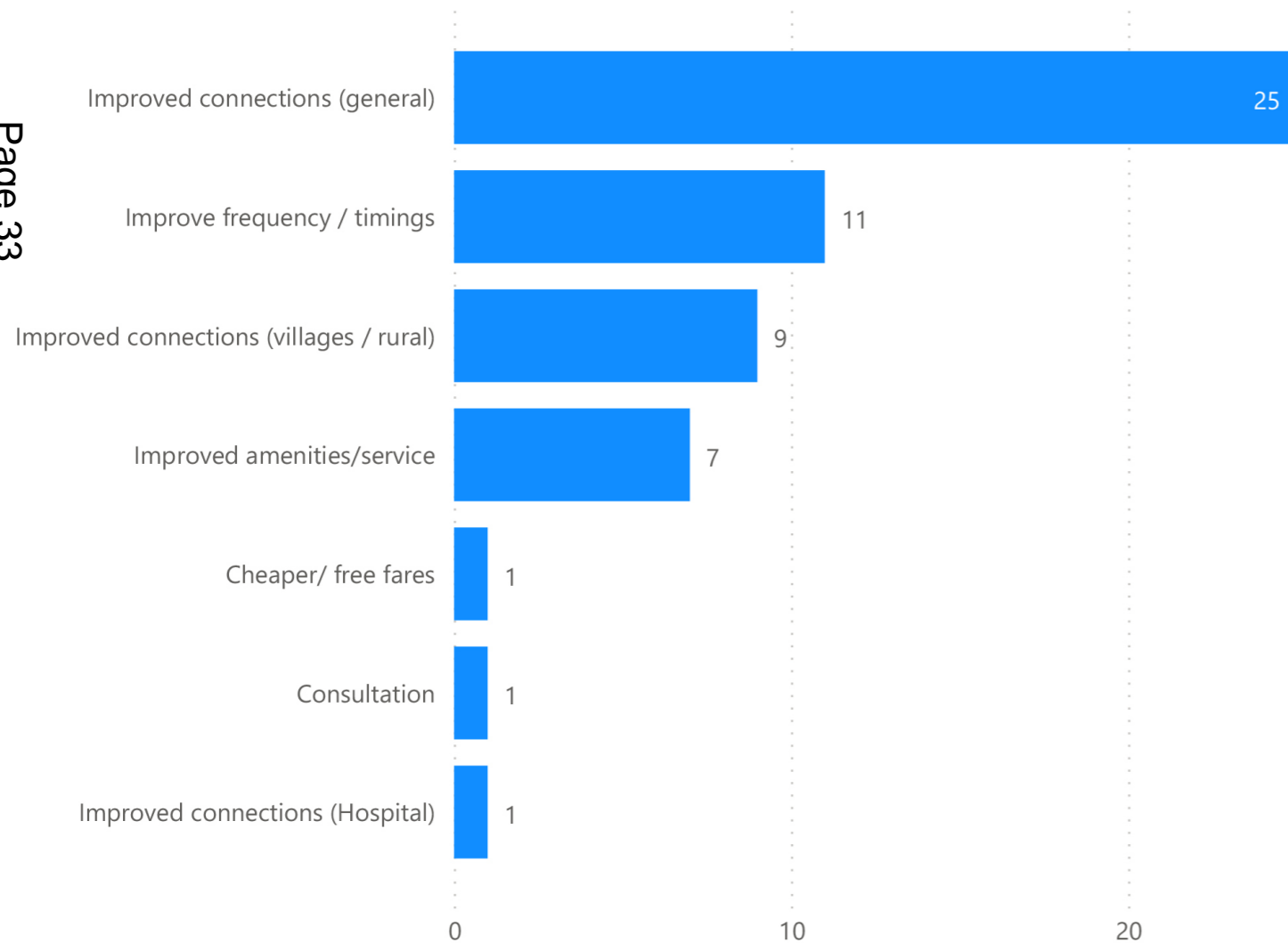


Journey improvements

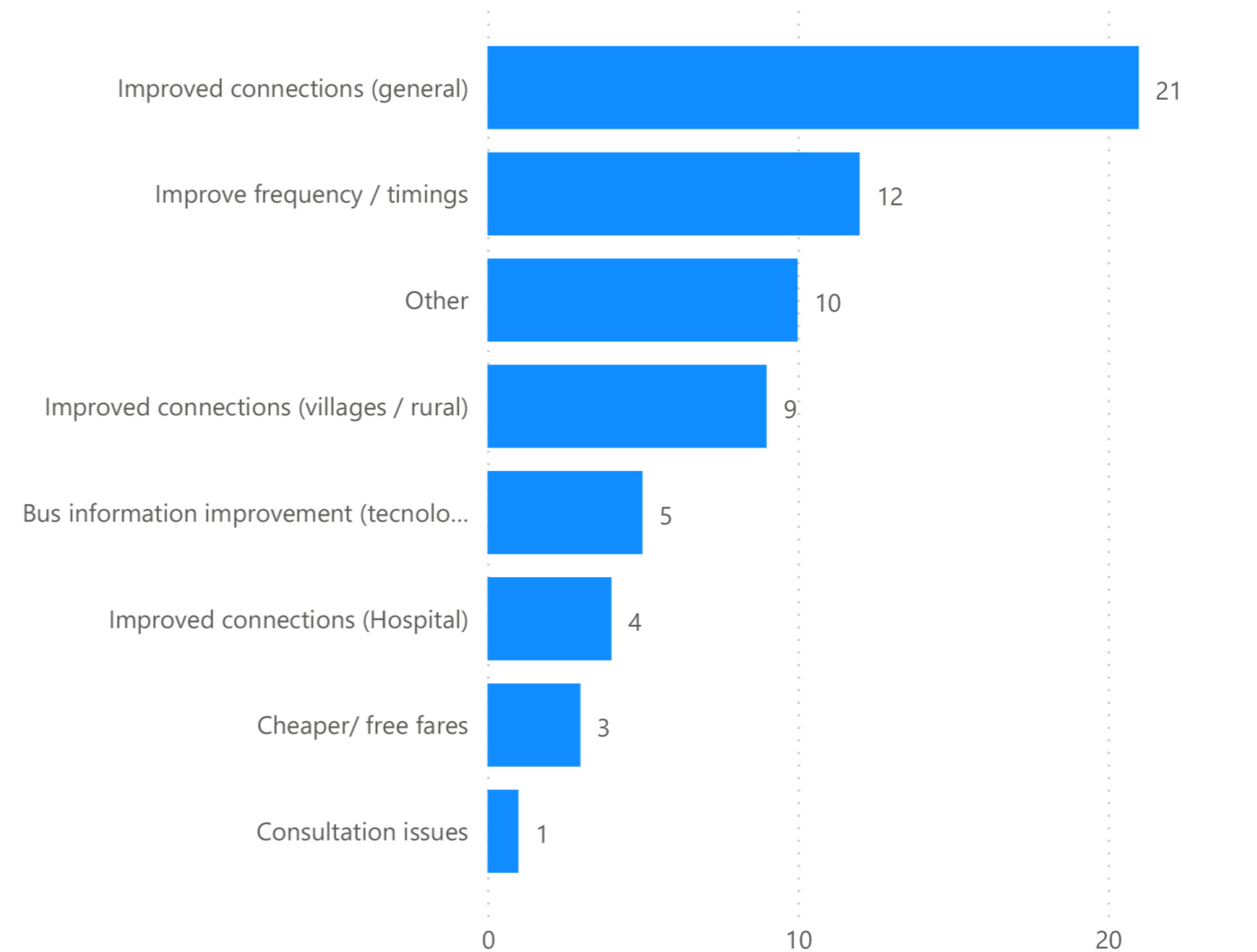
At the end of the survey, respondents were invited to provide their comments in an open question. The comments shared were analysed and grouped into eight themes on either improvement areas (which were not covered in the survey) that would encourage people to take the bus, or general considerations to help improve bus services in the future.

Is there anything else not listed that would encourage you to make more bus journeys?

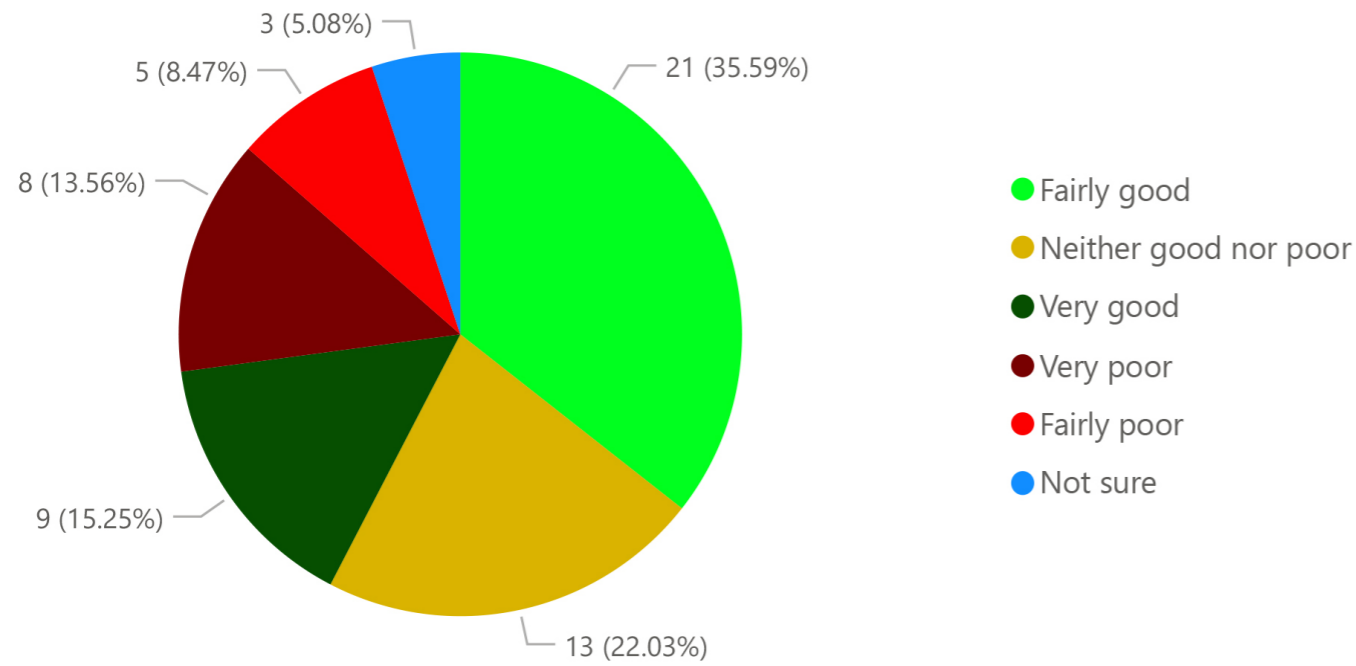
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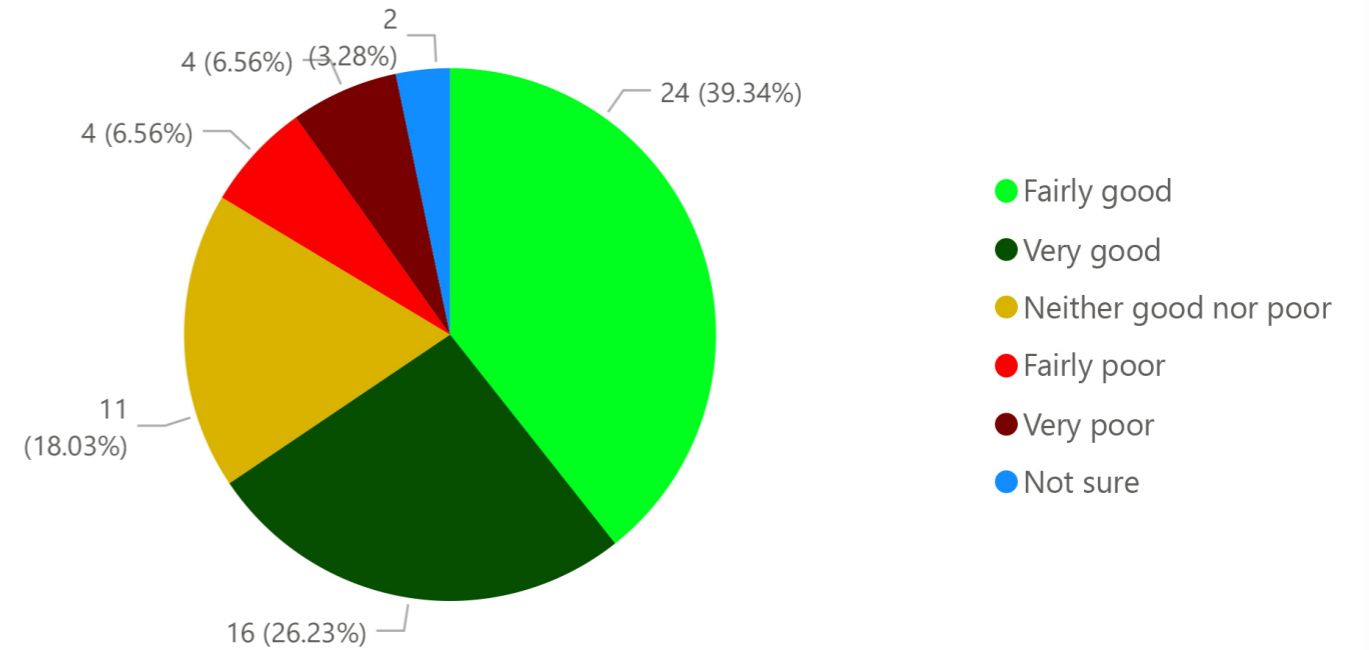
Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of our work to improve bus services in future?



Amount of bus stops in residential areas

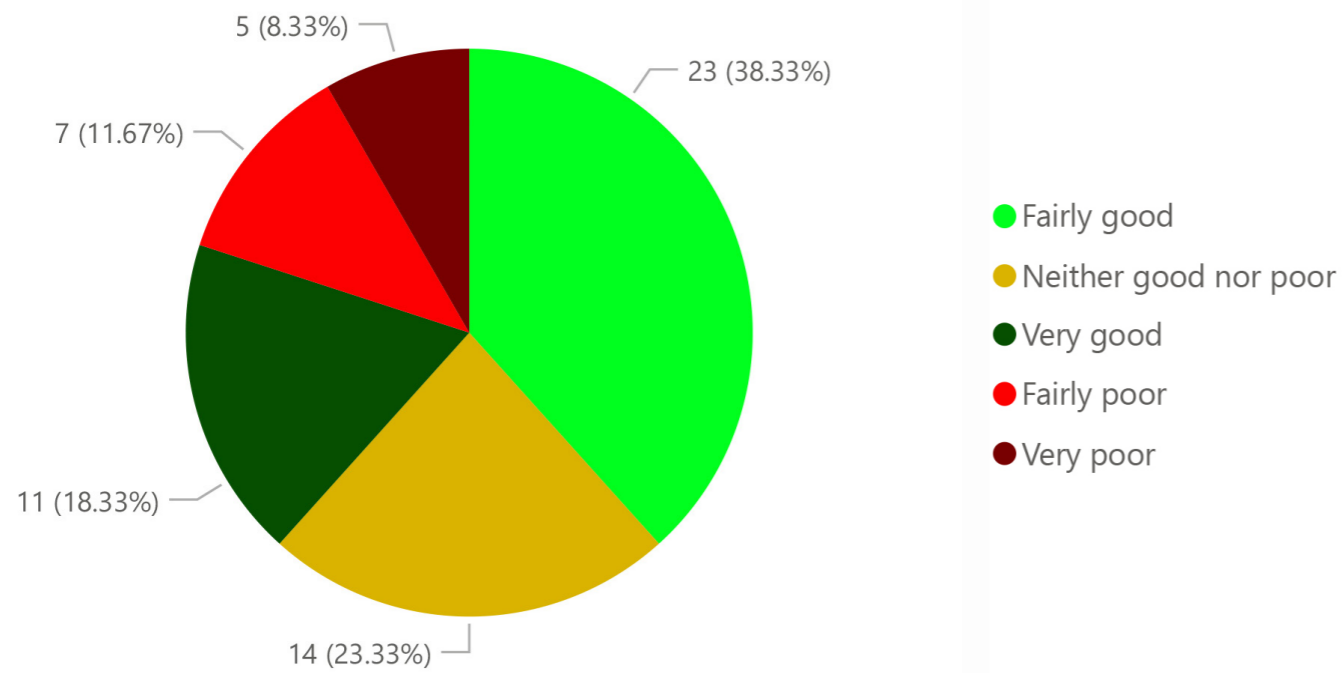


Amount of bus stops in town centre areas (There are enough bus stops in town centre areas)

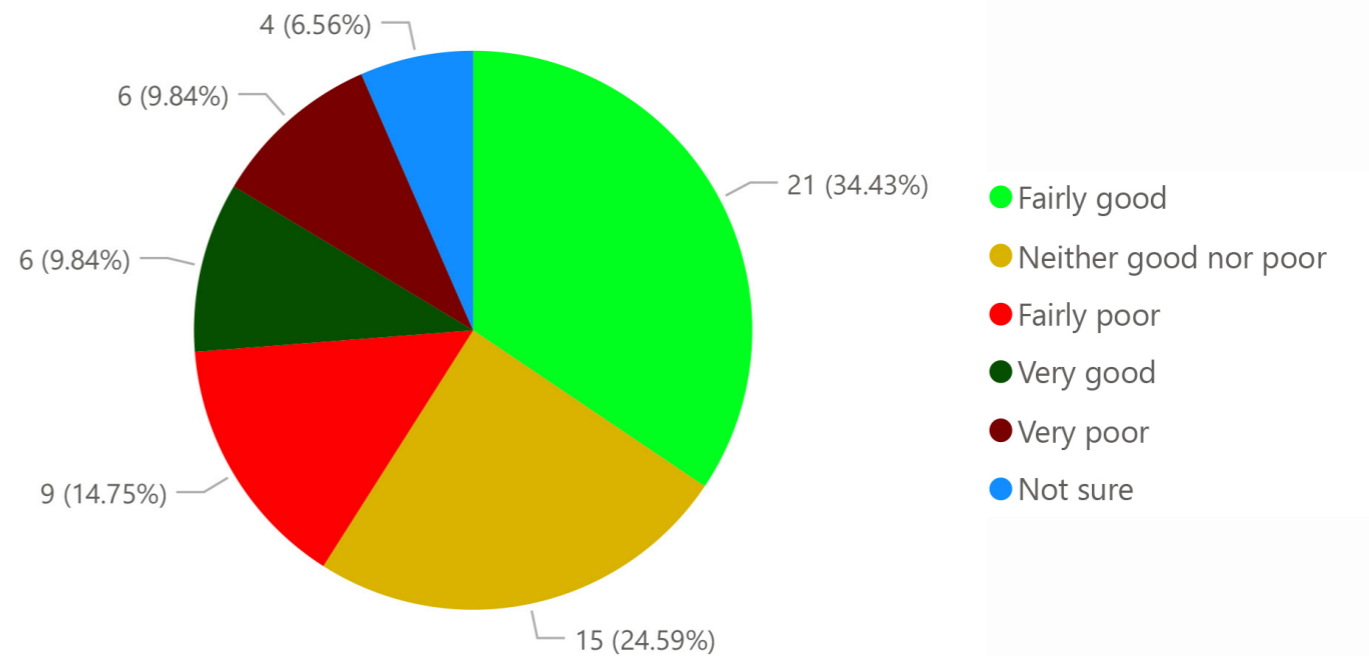


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Accessibility of bus stops



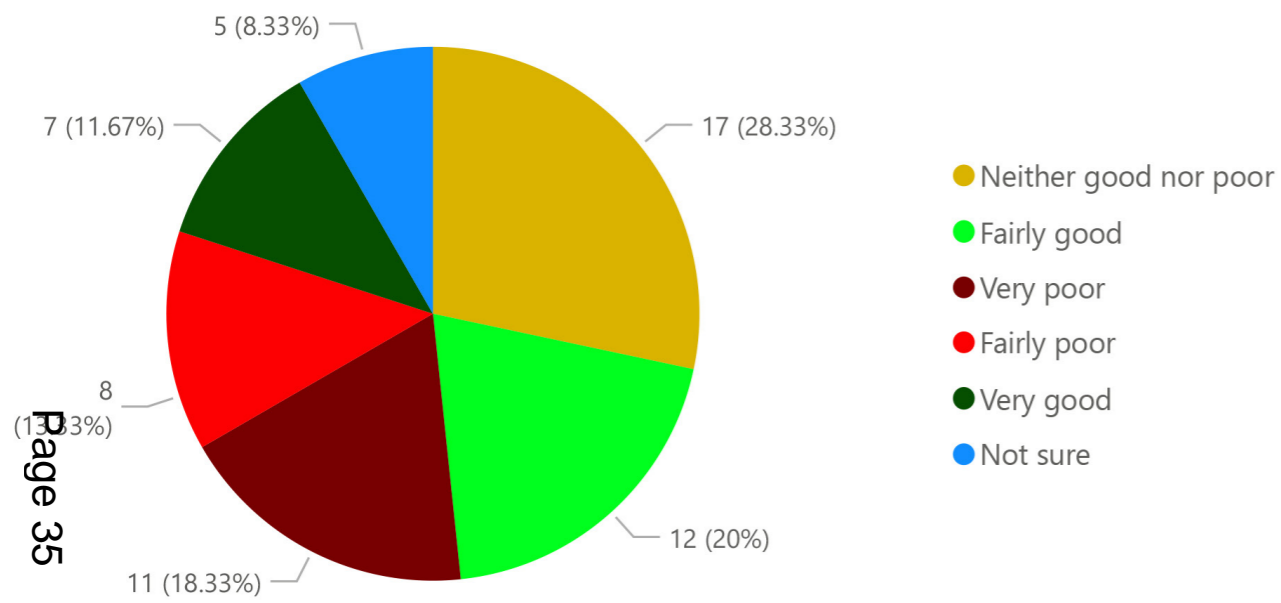
Maintenance of buses and bus stops



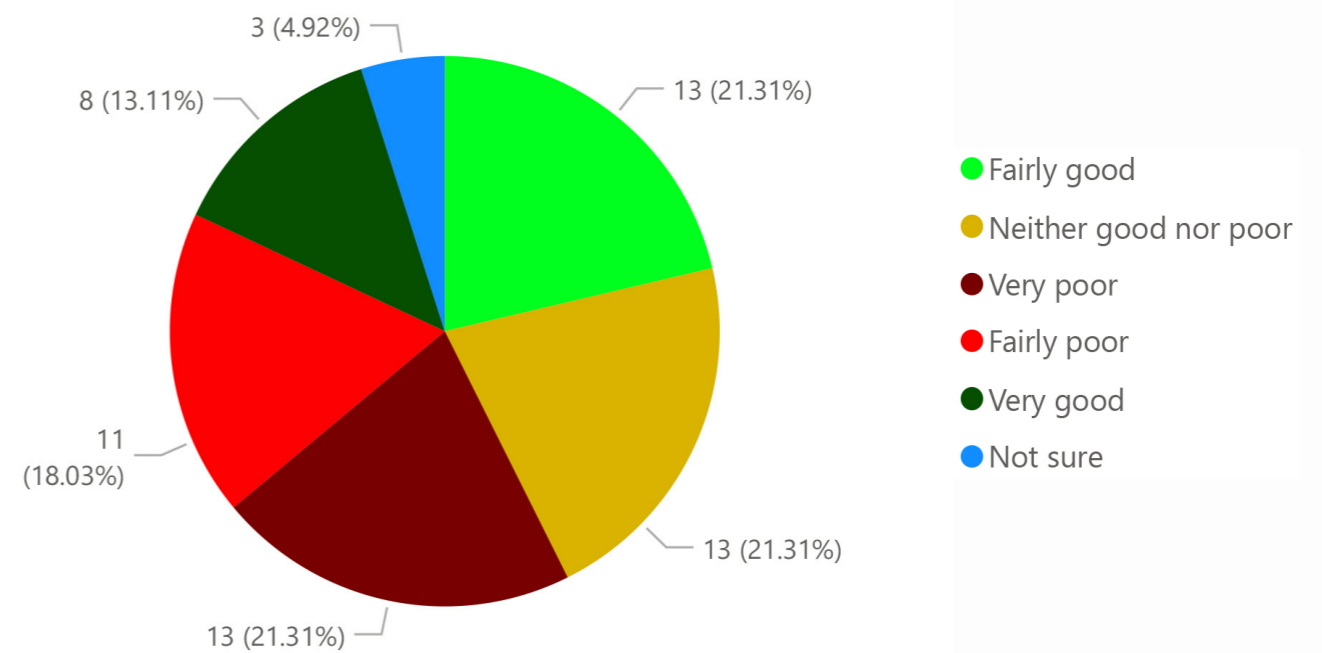
Connectivity and availability

With regards to the connectivity of the services and the availability of real time information, most respondents rated the service either 'fairly good' or 'neither good nor poor'

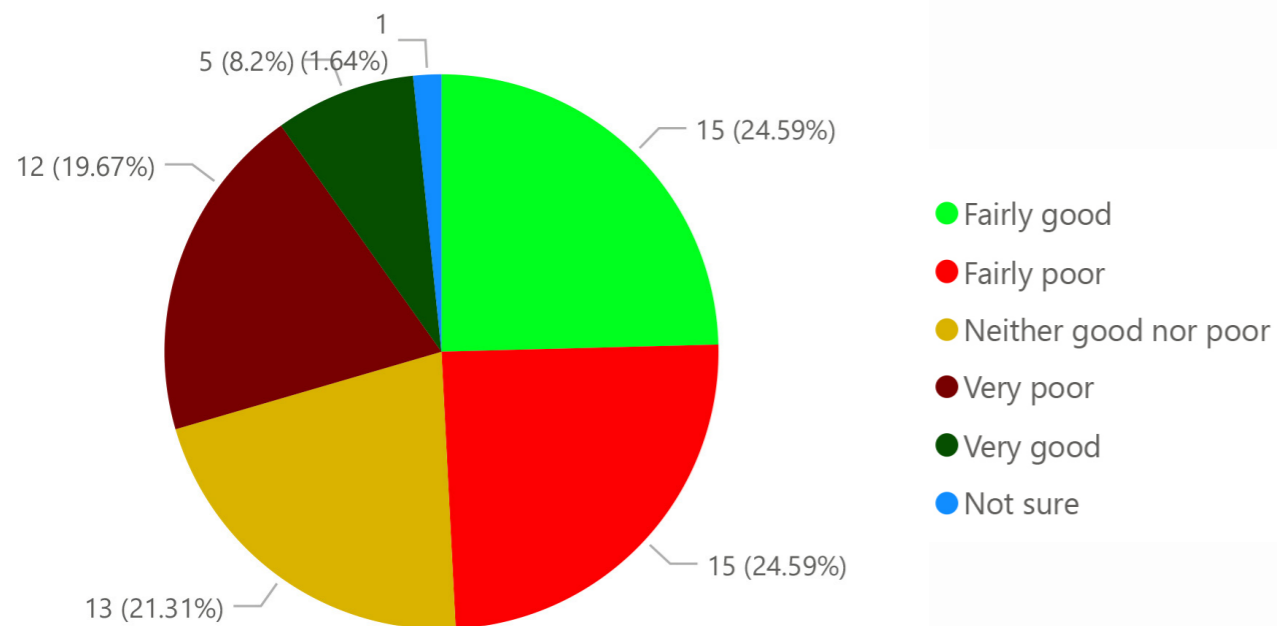
Connectivity with onward transport (for example trains)



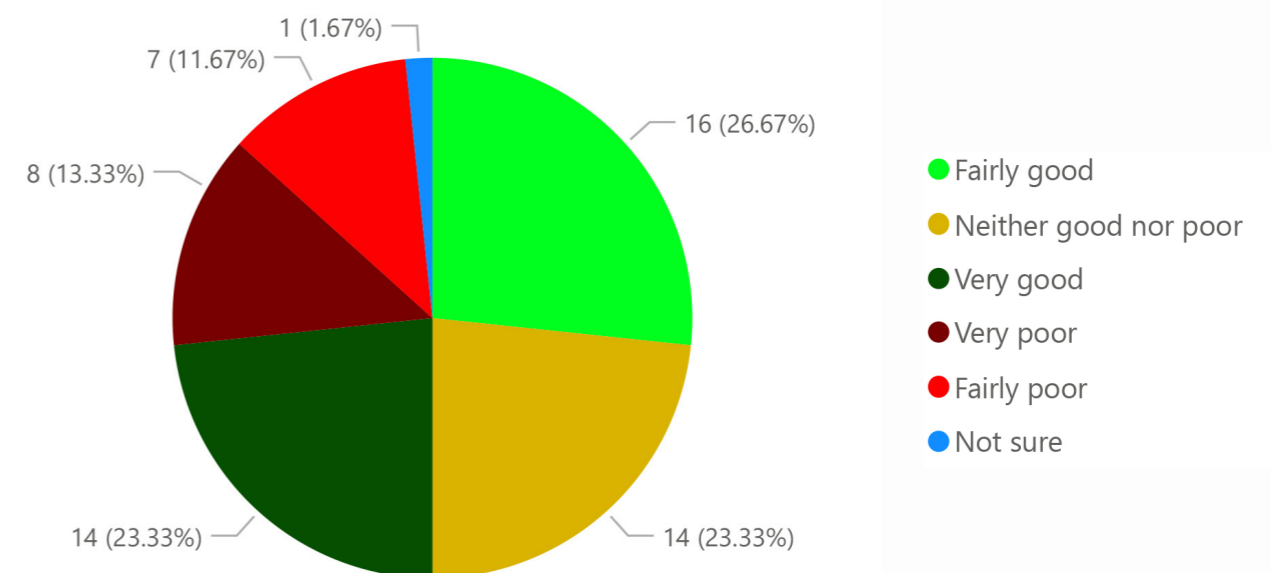
Availability of real time information



Reliability of service



Speed of services





bsi Quality Management System Certificate, ISO 9001:2015



Certificate of Registration

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - ISO 9001:2015

This is to certify that:

Project Centre Limited
12th Floor, One America Square
17 Crosswall
London
EC3N 2UB
United Kingdom

Holds Certificate Number:

FS 77166

and operates a Quality Management System which complies with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 for the following scope:

Central administration and specialist support for outsourced provision of multi-disciplinary consultancy & contractual services to the public and private sectors including feasibility studies, detailed design and implementation in the areas of traffic and transportation, traffic technology, parking, urban design, structural engineering and highways management.

For and on behalf of BSI:

Matt Page, Managing Director Assurance - UK & Ireland

Original Registration Date: 2003-04-28

Effective Date: 2022-04-29

Latest Revision Date: 2022-04-25

Expiry Date: 2025-04-28



Page: 1 of 2

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Area Committees - Corporate Plan update

At the June 2023 round of Area Committee meetings, all those in attendance were asked to consider what were the priority issues for their Wards. These were to help inform the new Corporate Plan. Please see Appendix 1 for list of priorities suggested.

The Service Committee Chairs and their Vice-Chairs met on 11 July 2023 for a facilitated workshop, and on 3 August 2023 for a meeting with officers, to discuss their vision and ambition for the Borough and to consider what the priorities for the Council should be for the period 2023-2027.

Members agreed the following five proposed priorities and would like to hear Area Committees' comments before progressing further with work on the Corporate Plan:

Proposed Corporate Plan Priorities

Community:

To enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our Borough; or
Supporting and enabling our communities.

Economy:

Support a thriving economy; or
Support the economy that helps businesses in a sustainable way; or
Working with our businesses and charitable organisations to improve the economy.

Environment:

To prepare our Borough for the challenges ahead; or
to provide a cleaner healthier more enjoyable environment.

Health & Housing:

Everyone to have access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing

Running the Council:

To engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver our priorities in an open and efficient way, working within our resources.

The table below shows how the Corporate Plan proposed priorities take into account the themes put forward by Area Committees.

Proposed Corporate Plan priority	Ambition	Themes arising from Area Committees:
Community	To enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our Borough; or Supporting and enabling our communities.	Crime and Community issues
Economy	Support a thriving economy; or Support the economy that helps businesses in a sustainable way; or Working with our businesses and charitable organisations to improve the economy.	Employment, skills, tourism and Leisure
Environment	To prepare our Borough for the challenges ahead; or to provide a cleaner healthier more enjoyable environment.	Waste and environment issues including the cleaner/greener agenda
Health & Housing	Everyone to have access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing	Health provision in Swale Access to housing
Running the Council	To engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver our priorities in an open and efficient way, working within our resources.	Transport, roads, education, planning and utilities

Breakdown of Area Committee priorities by area and questions asked - lists all priorities put forward by each Area Committee.

Sheppey:

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of SBC?

- Fly tipping including industrial waste;
- littering, more bins were needed (recycling and dog waste);
- use of CCTV and tackling anti-social behaviour especially in Queenborough and Thistle Hill, Minster;
- youth issues, addressing anti-social behaviour;
- the Planning application process, ensuring there was an opportunity for residents to respond;
- the cleaner and greener agenda; and
- refuse collection.

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of external partners?

- Education, Health and Care Plans for children with special educational needs;
- GP/health coverage across the Isle of Sheppey, in particular Leysdown;
- street-lighting;
- roads and transport links across the Isle of Sheppey;
- increased Police presence;
- employment;
- leisure;
- road safety including lack of routes for emergency services when roads are blocked by accidents;
- highway maintenance (potholes, drains);
- bus services, lack of services affected employment opportunities;
- cycle paths (new and improved existing);
- traffic calming/road humps;
- schools – lack of choice; and
- air quality affecting health – farmers burning plastics.

What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?

- Improved links from Lower Road to East Sheppey;
- improved transport links across the Isle of Sheppey;
- improved healthcare; and
- railings along Warden and Leysdown roads to protect pedestrians.

What were the top three issues you would like the Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

- Transport;
- bus companies needed to improve services;
- youth/education;
- community maintenance (CCTV, lighting and roads);
- planning application process;
- healthcare, lack of services;
- environment;
- road safety; and
- providing an emergency access route to the eastern end of the Isle of Sheppey.

Western:

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of SBC?

- Transferring land assets to parish councils;
- promote rural tourism;
- fly-tipping, and litter;
- anti-social behaviour;
- parking/idling outside schools;
- planning – including input on the design of housing developments;
- grounds maintenance;
- landscaping SBC properties in the Western area;
- protection of conservation areas;
- social housing;
- air quality; and
- housing levels.

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of external partners?

- bus services – better provision to tackle isolation and loneliness;
- good schools in local areas, school places;
- speeding on roads;
- NHS, doctors, hospitals;
- maintenance companies on new developments;
- roads – potholes;
- pavements;
- water companies dealing with leaks;
- provision of high-speed Wi-Fi;
- local roads being used as ‘rat-runs’;
- youth services;
- lack of household waste collection centres;
- home to school transport;
- mis-use of quad-bikes;
- housing levels; and
- fly-tipping.

What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?

- Better air quality and environment;
- keep/protect green spaces;
- training and jobs – rural apprenticeships;
- education;
- health services;
- road safety and maintenance;
- Wi-Fi
- bus services;
- putting infrastructure in before building houses; and
- anti-social behaviour.

What were the top three issues you would like the Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

- Buses;
- school placements;
- protection of countryside and wildlife;
- school parking/idling;
- highways – roads and pavements;
- health services;
- infrastructure to go in before building homes;
- fly-tipping, litter; and
- maintenance companies in new developments.

Eastern:

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of SBC?

- Planning;
- bins;
- litter;
- fly-tipping;
- graffiti;
- housing overcrowding;
- air quality;
- enforcement; and
- affordability of housing (social housing, social rent targets and self-build).

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of external partners?

- Anti-social behaviour;
- pot-holes;
- fly-tipping;
- air quality;
- flooding;

- public transport;
- climate change;
- loss of biodiversity;
- electric vehicle charging; and
- pushing back on the poor waiting lists for special educational needs provision.

What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?

- Better planning enforcement;
- improved public transport;
- youth provision;
- bring housing back into use;
- partnership working;
- air quality;
- water and sewage; and
- lobby government/passing things back up that were competing with our objectives.

What were the top three issues you would like the Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

- Biodiversity gains through reduced mowing;
- recycling hub and centre for re-useable goods;
- better cross agency communication on travel and public transport to try to improve transport across the area;
- air quality;
- develop a problem solving approach to electric vehicle charging to be shared across our area;
- local discussions and input into Section 106 spending and finding a way for this to happen without the challenge of pre-determination;
- look into the possibility of area committees being able to crowd fund;
- look at how area committees could apply for external funding; and
- the Council to collate sources of external funding and disseminate to parish/town councils.

Sittingbourne:

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of SBC?

- Safety – use of closed circuit television (CCTV);
- speed limits – 20 mph;
- grass cutting;
- anti-social behaviour;
- parking;
- graffiti;
- vandalism;
- bins;
- parks and open spaces;

- homelessness;
- housing;
- fly tipping/litter;
- planting green spaces and grass cutting;
- parking particularly outside schools; and
- lack of toilets in Milton Recreation Ground.

What issues affected residents in your Ward that fell within the responsibility of external partners?

- Noise;
- pot holes;
- bus services;
- crime;
- school and school transport;
- GPs and health services;
- public transport;
- lack of bus service in Milton;
- leisure services;
- overgrown trees (bottom and top); and
- illegal use of e-scooters.

What changes would you like to see that could improve the life of residents in the future?

- Community Police, more police patrols;
- Swale road cleaning;
- heritage;
- improved situation for the homeless;
- empty shops, look to see if they could be used as a community asset;
- anti-social behaviour – use of CCTV;
- police community engagement; and
- more to do in Sittingbourne.

What were the top three issues you would like the Area Committee to take forward in the coming year?

- Increased CCTV;
- bins;
- pollution;
- anti-social behaviour including vandalism and policing, working with young people – constructive activities;
- tourism, leisure, hospitality and heritage offer – link together and provide information on attractions;
- bring rural element into the town, Milton Regis Country Park was an asset to the town;
- housing;
- employment;
- holistic approach to uniting the community (leisure, health, mental health services);
- condition and maintenance of roads;

- green spaces – improve and maintain;
- parking particularly outside schools;
- road safety;
- fly tipping; and
- improved transport to get around Swale.

Eastern Area Committee Meeting September 2023 – Matters arising

No.	Item	Background	Progress on actions
1.	Bus consultation project	<p>At the December 2021 meeting, Eastern Area Committee Members agreed to award £10,000.00 to undertake a public consultation on local bus services. The Project Centre Ltd were commissioned in February 2023 to carry out the consultation, following a delay due to a lack of resource within the department.</p> <p>The consultation was launched on the 24 March 2023 and closed on the 27 April 2023. There were a range of different methods used to collect responses including a 22-question online survey, meetings with members of the community and a youth engagement workshop held at the Abbey School.</p>	The final report will be presented to the Eastern Area Committee at the September 2023 meeting and presented by the Programme Delivery Co-ordinator under item 6.
2.	Flooding in the Whitstable Road area and other parts of Faversham	<p>At the December 2022 meeting, Cllr Julian Saunders provided a written update which included a response from Sue Cobb, Southern Water (SW), about concerns raised by the Area Committee about CSO discharges and the local sewage network.</p> <p>Kent County Council (KCC) have advised investigations were successfully completed, with deeper soils 3 to 4 metres below the ground offering some permeability. They</p>	<p>KCC have carried out some additional works (installation of drain gulleys) in August 2023, they will be monitoring the effectiveness of the works over the next few months.</p> <p>The Greenspaces Manager reported he met with a contractor on site to look at a couple of approaches to the issue which may assist in reducing water run-off. However, he does not believe these are able to make a huge impact</p>

		<p>have subsequently drafted a catchment assessment and are working on designs and costs which would be capable of absorbing at least part, but not all of the run-off.</p> <p>The Greenspaces Manager advised that KCC Highways advised in April 2023 that planned works on Whitstable Road in May 2023 will help alleviate some of the matters raised by residents. They have further assessed the use of soakaways in the Recreation Ground, but advised doing so would require multiple soakaways, pushing up cost and the level of disturbance, versus the benefits it would bring. Therefore, delivering the work in Whitstable Road and monitoring the effectiveness seemed more appropriate at this time.</p> <p>Given the above information, Swale has started to once again consider how to slow and reduce water run-off from the Rec, to try to reduce the impacts.</p>	<p>on the levels of water that have been seen arriving in Whitstable Road:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To cut out some of the kerb stones on the western side of the Park Road path and grade the grass carefully between tree roots to allow greater natural run off from the path with additional creation of low areas to capture run off - £1,280.00 2) To lay a linear interceptor drain across the path before it runs out into Whitstable Road at the junction of tarmac and block surfacing, back from the entrance gates, along with a linked soakaway in the adjacent grass. - £6,715.00 <p>Discussions are ongoing as there is currently no budget identified to cover the cost.</p>
3.	Active Travel update	<p>At the June 2023 meeting, the Active Travel Co-ordinator gave an update on the Faversham Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 project. The project was being funded by the £995k secured from Active Travel England, it was hoped that work would begin by March 2024.</p>	<p>Updated provided by the Active Travel Co-ordinator:</p> <p>Detailed designs for the Cross Town Path are focussing on installing raised table junctions at:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Road junctions with Wallers Road, Beech Close, Cressway, Lion Field and Ospringe Road • South Road junctions with Tanners Street and Napleton Road • Bank Street junction with Swimming Pool car park access • Newton Road junction with Gatefield Lane • St Johns Road junction with William Street and • William Street junction with Park Road <p>Lower Road bus stops to have a clearway marking operation between 8am-3pm. A new bench is to be added at the footway leading to pathway to Noble Court. A new zebra crossing to be added to Newton Road and Napleton Road. A drop-in session is being planned at the Town Hall.</p>
4.	Solar Together	<p>A Member asked about the authenticity of letters being sent out to residents from Solar Together with the SBC logo on.</p> <p>The Chief Executive said she would check this and advise the Area Committee.</p>	<p>This is the Kent-wide scheme led by KCC with iChoosr managing it. Different installers are selected for each round with SBC (and other Kent districts) being in the current third round.</p> <p>Please see the KCC link for more information Solar Together Kent - Kent County Council</p>
5.	Whiting Crescent, Faversham	<p>A Member spoke about the piece of land at the end of Whiting Crescent, Faversham and asked if a reconditioned slide or swing could be installed. The Chief Executive</p>	<p>Officers confirmed the position is unchanged and as there are two other playgrounds within 10-15 minutes' walk from Whiting Crescent, the</p>

		<p>responded that it wasn't just the cost of equipment that would fall to SBC, but officers would have to carry out playground inspections, which would be difficult due to reduced resource.</p> <p>The Chief Executive said she would raise the matter with the Head of Environment and Leisure.</p>	<p>Council cannot provide any more playgrounds in that location.</p>
6.	Conservation Area Reviews	<p>The Conservation & Design Team report progress on Conservation Area Reviews to the Area Committees.</p>	<p>Faversham Town & Faversham - Preston Next Conservation Area Review - The appraisal documents have been prepared by Urban Vision with input from the Faversham Society. Six weeks public consultation for both the documents is scheduled from 23 October 2023 to 1 December 2023. Consultation responses and any further amendments to the appraisal documents is estimated to be presented to the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group in January 2024 and to Planning and Resources Committee in March 2024. It is envisaged that the adopted versions of both the Conservation Areas will be published on Swale Borough Council website by summer 2024.</p> <p>Cellar Hill & Green Street Conservation Area - Peter Bell has been appointed to undertake the review work for Cellar Hill & Green Street Conservation Area. A site walkaround was organised on Friday 15 September 2023 with</p>

			the Parish Council and local residents. Public Consultation for the document is estimated to be undertaken towards the end of 2023/early 2024.
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