

## Appendix 1: New Bus Support Criteria

Objective	Criteria	Scoring	Score
<b>Supporting the economy &amp; environmental sustainability</b>	Economic growth - journey purpose <sup>1</sup>	Both peak periods, evenings and weekends	5
		Both peak periods plus evenings (Mon-Fri)	4
		Both peak periods (Mon-Fri)	3
		Morning or evening peak period (Mon-Fri)	2
		Service operates off-peak/evenings only (Mon-Fri)	1
	Sustainable economic growth <sup>2</sup>	The route serves a significant (>1000 jobs) employment area	4
		The route serves a moderate (500-1000 jobs) employment area	2
		The route serves a low (<500 jobs) employment area	0
	Impact on Air Quality Management	The route directly serves an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and congestion hotspot	4
		The route passes nearby an AQMA or congestion hotspot	2
		No AQMA or congestion hotspots are served by the route	0
	Contribution to carbon emissions based on vehicle type and age <sup>3</sup>	Full EV and Hydrogen	4
		Hybrid EV and Hydrogen	3
		Euro 6 diesel	2
		Euro 5 diesel or below	1
<b>Improving access &amp; social inclusion</b>	Integration - transport interchange <sup>4</sup>	More than 3 interchange points on route	4
		1-3 interchange points on route	2
		No interchange points on route	0
	Accessibility - travel choice <sup>5</sup>	No reasonable alternative	4
		Alternative rail service available (1km walking distance)	2
		Alternative bus service available	0
<b>Bus service performance</b>	Cost per passenger <sup>7</sup>	Over 50% of the route length serves an area within 30% most deprived in the borough	4
		Under 50% of the route length serves an area within 30% most deprived in the borough	2
		The route does not serve an area within the 30% most deprived in the borough	0
		Subsidy per passenger is less than £2	5
		Subsidy per passenger is more than £2, but no more than £3	4
	Alternative / external funding options <sup>8</sup>	Subsidy per passenger is more than £3, but no more than £4	3
		Subsidy per passenger is more than £4 but no more than £5	2
		Subsidy per passenger is more than £5	1
	Service usage <sup>9</sup>	External funding contributions or cost sharing secured	4
		Potential for cost sharing or external funding	2
		No funding / resource alternatives	0
		More than 50,000 passenger journeys per annum	5
		More than 40,000 but less than 50,000 passenger journeys per annum	4
<b>Bus service performance</b>	Patronage trends - commercial potential	More than 30,000 but less than 40,000 passenger journeys per annum	3
		More than 20,000 but less than 30,000 passenger journeys per annum	2
		Up to 20,000 passenger journeys per annum	1
		Passenger numbers increasing	0
		Passenger numbers stable	2
		Passenger numbers decreasing	4

## Appendix 1: New Bus Support Criteria

Objective	Criteria	Scoring	Score
	Fare paying patronage recovery post-covid (compared to 2019) <sup>10</sup>	>100%	4
		90-100%	3
		80-90%	2
		<80%	1
	Concessionary patronage recovery post-covid (compared to 2019) <sup>11</sup>	>90%	4
		80-90%	3
		70-80%	2
		<70%	1

### Post-consultation updates to the criteria

1. In the absence of detailed journey purpose data for each supported service in the borough, timetable information has been used to show service availability. This helps to identify whether a service operates during peak periods (serving employment and education journey purposes) or predominantly during off-peak/interpeak periods (serving leisure and retail trips).
2. Census 2021 data is still in the process of being released, and there is uncertainty around the validity of journey to work data owing to the Census data collection taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, employment statistics for Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within Cheshire East have been used to identify whether supported services serve significant employment areas across the borough.
3. The scoring criteria has been updated to incorporate hybrid vehicles.
4. The scoring has been updated to include narrower thresholds (connections to 3 interchange points needed for the highest possible score).
5. The number of criteria sitting under this heading has been reduced, focusing on whether there is a rail or bus alternative to the route being scored.
6. The scoring metric has been adjusted to 30% in accordance with Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) deciles.
7. Narrower thresholds have been included as subsidy per passenger journey should not be greater than £6.
8. The criterion has been updated to differentiate between funding that is secured and potential funding.
9. Following an assessment of passenger numbers, this scoring criteria has been uplifted to better differentiate between services. In most cases, services are expected to have over 20,000 passenger journeys per annum as a minimum.
10. Bands have been adjusted in line with recovery to date.
11. Bands have been adjusted in line with recovery to date.

## Appendix 2 – Current Bus Support Criteria, August 2011

Criteria			
Objective	Criteria	Scoring	
<b>LTP Priority Themes</b> Weighting 35%	Business growth - journey purpose (max. score of 10)	Employment	5
		Education / training	4
		Health / medical / welfare	4
		Shopping / personal business	2
		Leisure (social / recreation)	1
	Sustainable economic growth	The route serves a significant (>1000 trips) travel to work area	4
		The route serves a moderate (500-1000 trips) travel to work area	2
		The route serves a low (<500 trips) travel to work area	0
	Impact on carbon emissions	The route directly serves an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and/or congestion hotspot	4
		The route passes nearby an AQMA and/or congestion hotspot	2
		No AQMA or congestion hotspots are served by the route	0
<b>Accessibility</b> Weighting 40%	Integration - transport interchange	More than 1 interchange point or major interchange point on route	4
		One interchange point on route	2
		No interchange points on route	0
	Accessibility - travel alternative	No reasonable alternative	5
		Alternative within 2 hours during daytime within no more than 800 metres	4
		Alternative within 2 hours during daytime at same location	3
		Alternative within 1 hour during daytime within no more than 800 metres	2
		Alternative within 1 hour during daytime at same location	1
	Access for older & disabled people	More than 50% passenger journeys by concessionaires	5
		Between 33% and 50% passenger journeys by concessionaires	3
		Less than 33% passenger journeys by concessionaires	1
		No passenger journeys by concessionaires	0
<b>Financial Considerations</b> Weighting 25%	Cost per passenger	Subsidy per passenger is no more than £1	5
		Subsidy per passenger is more than £1, but no more than £2.50	4
		Subsidy per passenger is more than £2.50, but no more than £5	3
		Subsidy per passenger is more than £5 but no more than £10	2
		Subsidy per passenger is more than £10	1
	Funding options / alternatives	Potential for external funding contributions	4
		Potential for sharing of internal resources (e.g. cross-departmental)	2
		No funding / resource alternatives	0
	Service Usage	More than 100,000 passenger journeys per annum	5
		More than 25,000 but not more than 99,999 passenger journeys per annum	4
		More than 10,000 but not more than 24,999 passenger journeys per annum	3
		More than 5,000 but not more than 9,999 passenger journeys per annum	2
		Up to 4,999 passenger journeys per annum	1
	Patronage trends - commercial potential	Passenger numbers increasing	4
		Passenger numbers stable	2
		Passenger numbers decreasing	0

# **A summary of responses to Cheshire East Council's Bus Support Criteria Consultation**

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# Executive summary and recommendations

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## Introduction

During June / August 2023 Cheshire East Council conducted a consultation to seek views on additional criteria to its bus support prioritisation process. The consultation was held online with paper copies being made available at Libraries and Contact Centres throughout Cheshire East. In total 995 responses were received.

## The objectives

The majority of respondents felt that all the objectives were important. It was clear however that 'access & social inclusion' was seen as the most important objective (93% selected either extremely or very important). Both 'bus service performance' and 'economy & environmental sustainability' received similar results (70% and 69% respectively selected either extremely or very important).

The most important objective for respondents was re-iterated at the end of the survey when respondents were asked to rank the objectives in order of priority considering all the information, they had received on them and their associated criteria. Access & social inclusion was again ranked as the highest priority receiving a score of 2339 out of a maximum possible score of 2730.

## The criteria

A set of criteria is used to assess the contribution a bus service makes to each objective. Over half of respondents agreed with each additional criterion proposed:

- 64% agreed (stating either strongly agree or tend to agree) with the addition of the 'contribution to carbon reduction' criterion to support our 'economy & environmental sustainability' objective and 15% disagreed,
  - The main reasons given when asked why they disagreed to this criterion were: contribution to carbon reduction' is lower priority / shouldn't be used to determine a bus routes requirement, general negative comment on costs / effect on the environment and buses are better than car journeys.
- 79% agreed with the addition of the 'bus provision in areas of deprivation' criterion to support our 'access & social inclusion' objective and 7% disagreed,

- The main reasons given when asked why they disagreed to this criterion were: depends on how the areas of deprivation are defined / should include rural & social deprivation and bus provision is important in all areas.
- 56% agreed with the addition of the 'number of concessionary passengers since Covid' criterion and 53% agreed with the addition of the "number of fare-paying passengers since Covid" criterion to support our 'bus service performance' objective. Both received 18% disagreement.
  - The main reasons given when asked why they disagreed to this criterion were: irrelevant comparison / duplicates passenger trends, need to encourage more people to use bus services again, bus services should be provided regardless of performance.

Each additional criteria was considered as the least important compared to the current criteria used under each objective.

As part of the business growth criteria - In determining whether bus services support the economy, we currently give highest priority to bus services that support access to jobs / employment whilst those that support access to leisure are given the lowest priority.

- 62% agreed (answering either 'strongly agree' or 'tend to agree') with the current order of priority whereas 27% disagreed.
  - The main reasons given when asked why they disagreed to this order of priority were: access to health / medical / welfare should be higher up, leisure (social / recreation) should be higher, others stated that the order of priority will vary person to person.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

It was clear that 'access & social inclusion' was the highest priority for respondents, respondents highlighted the importance of this, in particular, to rural areas, those with no other alternative transport options, the elderly and those with a disability. Whilst most respondents could see the importance of the other two objectives (economy & environmental sustainability and bus service performance) they were considered less important, and respondents did not want the criteria under these objectives to be considered over the needs of those people to which the service is considered vital.

The Research and Consultation Team recommend that the details of this report are considered alongside any other supporting information when reviewing the bus support criteria.

# Introduction

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## Purpose of the consultation

During June / August 2023 Cheshire East Council conducted a consultation to seek views on additional criteria to its bus support prioritisation process.

Bus companies are free to operate services on any route which they consider to be commercially viable - costs for these services are covered by the fares collected from passengers or by concessionary travel reimbursement. Bus services that are not seen as commercially viable but still deemed as important to run are supported (part-funded) by the Council. Cheshire East Council has a budget of £2.4m to spend on such supported bus services. Despite this, there is never enough money to fund all services that residents might wish to access. For this reason, we need to prioritise the bus services that we provide funding to.

## Consultation methodology and number of responses

The consultation was held online with paper copies being made available at Libraries and Contact Centres throughout Cheshire East. The consultation was promoted to:

- Residents of Cheshire East
- The Cheshire East Digital Influence Panel
- Local stakeholders including relevant community groups and organisations

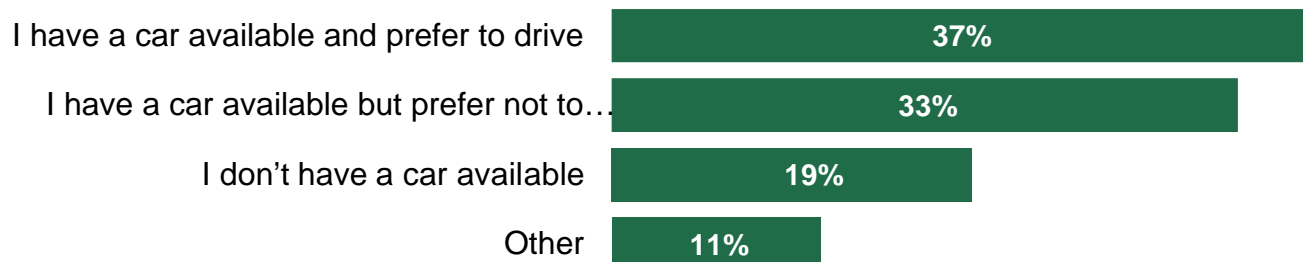
In total, 995 responses were received during the consultation (988 survey responses and 7 email responses).

## Respondent Characteristics

The majority of respondents who answered the survey were answering as an individual e.g., local resident (920, 93%). 40, 4% were answering as an elected Cheshire East Ward Councillor or Town/Parish Councillor. 12, 1% answered on behalf of a business, group, organisation or club and 14, 1% stated 'other'.

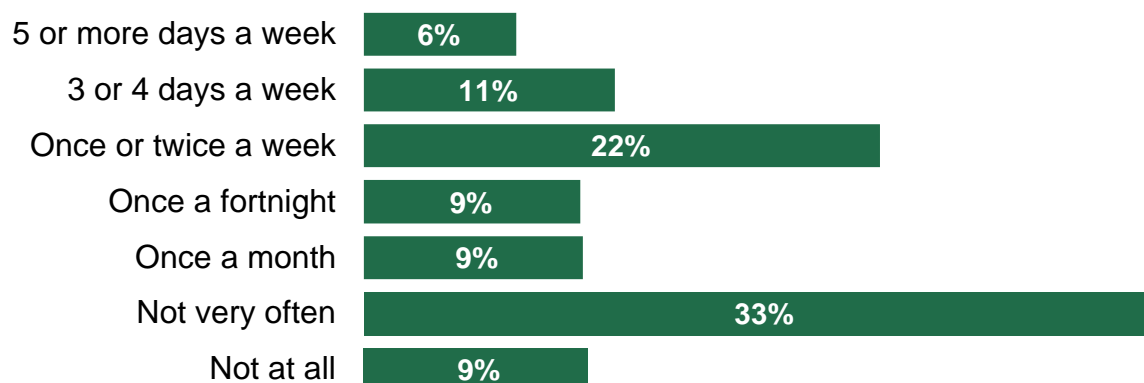
37% had a car available and preferred to drive, 33% had a car available but preferred not to drive and 19% did not have a car available as Figure1 shows.



**Figure 1: Do you own or use a car?**

Base for % = 972

39% of respondents stated that they typically travel by bus once / twice a week or more often. 18% travelled by bus once / twice a month, 33% did not travel by bus very often and 9% not at all. The full breakdown of response can be seen in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: How often do you typically travel by bus?**

Base for % = 941

A breakdown of respondent demographics e.g., age and gender, can be seen in Appendix 2, and a map of respondent postcodes can be seen in Appendix 3.

## Section 1: The objectives

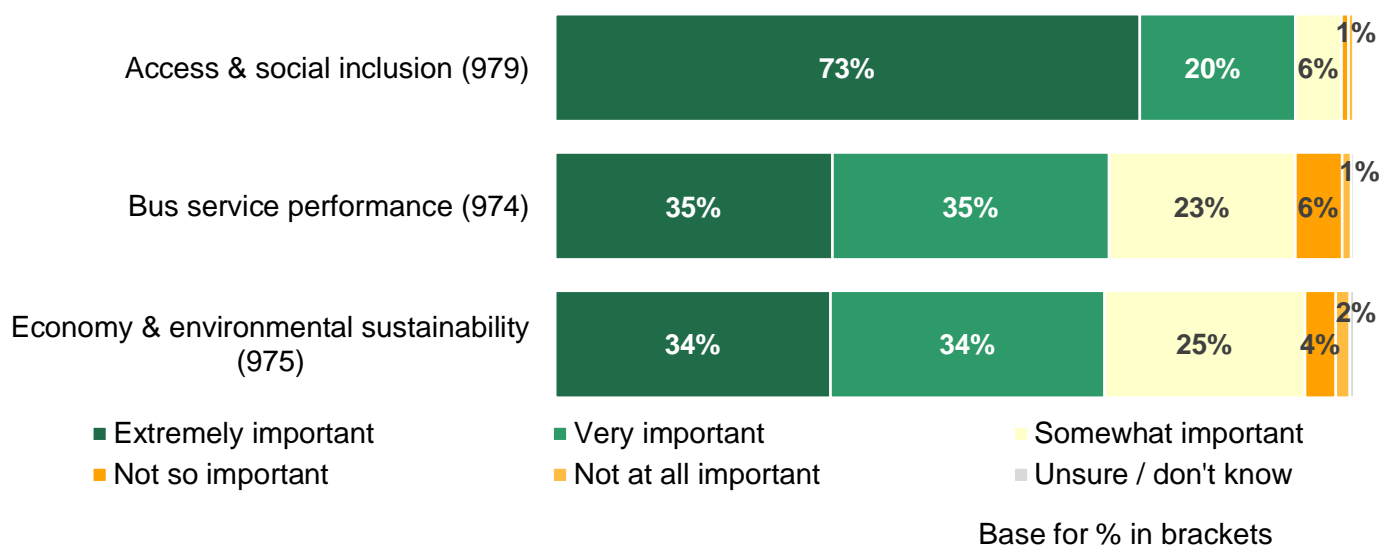
**The majority of respondents felt that all the objectives were important with access & social inclusion being identified as the most important.**

Respondents were presented with a set of objectives and were asked how important they thought they were when determining which bus services receive funding support. The objectives were as follows:

- **Economy & environmental sustainability:** We assess the extent to which bus services support the economy and help towards environmental sustainability, e.g., provide access to jobs and aid carbon reduction
- **Access & social inclusion:** We assess the extent to which bus services improve access and social inclusion, e.g., provide connections to other people and places
- **Bus service performance:** We look at how the bus service is performing in terms of value for money for taxpayers, e.g., passenger numbers and the cost to run service.

The majority of respondents felt that all the objectives were important (69% or more selected extremely or very important for each objective). It was clear however that 'access & social inclusion' was seen as the most important objective with 93% selecting either 'extremely important' or very important' for this. Both 'bus service performance' and 'economy & environmental sustainability' received similar results as Figure 3 shows.

**Figure 3: How important do you think the objectives are when determining which bus services receive funding support?**



If respondents answered 'not so important' or 'not at all important' to any of the objectives, they were asked to let us know why. 103 respondents chose to leave a comment. The three main reasons provided were as follows:

- 'Bus service performance' is a poor metric / not as important as the other objectives, 39 mentions,
- Consider access and social inclusion to be more important, 25 mentions,
- Environmental sustainability shouldn't be a factor (more buses mean less cars), 12 mentions.

Other comments provided included:

- General suggestions on improving the bus service, 8 mentions,
- Economy and environment should not be linked, 4 mentions,
- All the objectives are important, 4 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received on the objectives by theme is presented in Appendix 1, Table 1.

The most important objective for respondents was re-iterated at the end of the survey when respondents were asked to rank the objectives in order of priority considering all the information they had received on them and their associated criteria. Access & social inclusion was again ranked as the highest priority receiving a score of 2339 out of a maximum possible score of 2730, 643 more than the next ranked objective economy & environmental sustainability with a score of 1686. Bus service performance was ranked as the lowest priority with a score of 1444, 242 less than economy & environmental sustainability. See Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Considering all the information that you have received about the objectives and their associated criteria; how would you rank them in terms of priority for supported funding?**

Access and social inclusion

**Rank 1: Score 2329**

Economy & environmental sustainability

**Rank 2: Score 1686**

Bus service performance

**Rank 3: Score 1444**

Base for score = 910. Score is a weighted calculation. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is a sum of all weighted rank counts. Maximum score possible is 2730 and lowest 910.

## Section 2: Economy & environmental sustainability

**64% agreed with the addition of the ‘contribution to carbon reduction’ criterion to support our economy & environmental sustainability objective.**

To assess the contribution a bus service makes to the economy & environmental sustainability objective we currently use the following set of criteria:

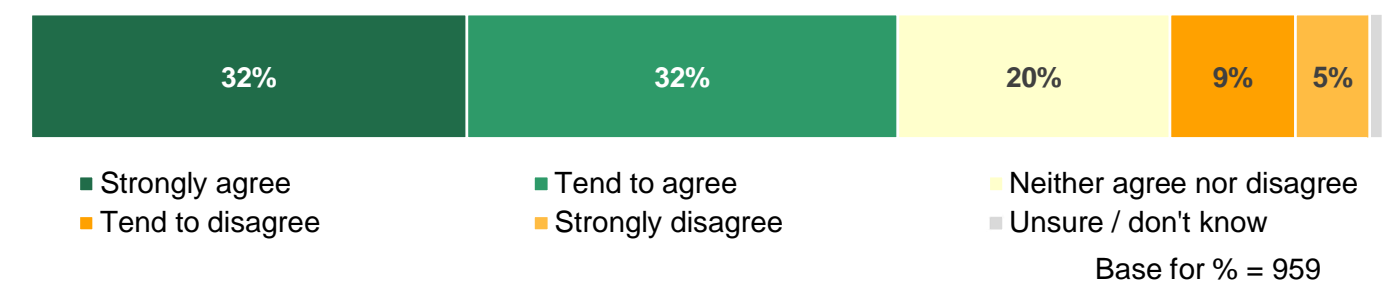
- **Business growth - main journey purpose:** We assess the extent to which the bus service support business growth by looking at passenger's main journey purpose e.g., for employment, education, health services, shopping, leisure etc.
- **Sustainable economic growth:** We assess the extent to which the bus service supports key travel to work routes e.g., key employment centres
- **Impact on carbon emissions:** We assess the extent to which the bus service reduces the impact on carbon emissions e.g., reducing the impact on air quality and the reliance on car journeys

As part of the consultation, we proposed an additional criterion to further support our economy & environmental sustainability objective:

- **Contribution to carbon reduction:** We want to assess the extent to which bus services contribute to carbon reduction e.g., low emission vehicles

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the additional criterion. 64% agreed (stating either strongly agree or tend to agree) with the addition of the ‘contribution to carbon reduction’ criterion and 15% disagreed (stating either ‘strongly disagree’ or ‘tend to disagree’) as Figure 4 shows.

**Figure 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the addition of the 'contribution to carbon reduction' criteria?**



If respondents answered that they ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ with the addition of the ‘contribution to carbon reduction’ criterion they were asked to let us know why. 156 respondents chose to leave a comment. The three main reasons provided were as follows:

- 'Contribution to carbon reduction' is lower priority / shouldn't be used to determine a bus routes requirement, 55 mentions,
- General negative comment on costs / effect on the environment, 39 mentions
- Buses are better than car journeys, 34 mentions,

Other comments provided included:

- Environmental sustainability is important, 15 mentions,
- 'Impact on carbon emissions' & 'carbon reduction' are similar, 11 mentions.

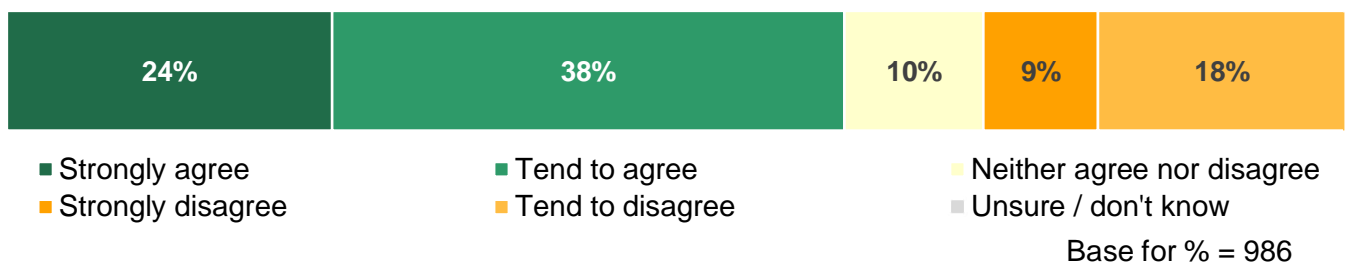
The full summary of the comments received on the addition of the 'contribution to carbon reduction' criterion by theme is presented in Appendix 1, Table 2.

**Business growth - main journey purpose:** In determining whether bus services support the economy we currently give highest priority to bus services that support access to jobs / employment whilst those that support access to leisure are given the lowest priority as indicated below:

1. Employment (Highest priority)
2. Education / training
3. Health / medical / welfare
4. Shopping / personal business
5. Leisure (social / recreation) (Lowest Priority)

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with this order of priority. 62% agreed (answering either 'strongly agree' or 'tend to agree') whereas 27% disagreed (stating either strongly disagree or tend to disagree) as Figure 5 shows.

**Figure 5: How strongly do you agree or disagree with this order of priority??**



If respondents answered that they 'tend to disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with the priority of order under the 'business growth – main journey purpose' criterion they were asked to let us know why. 270 chose to leave a comment. The three main reasons provided were as follows:

- Access to health / medical / welfare should be higher up, 72 mentions,
- Leisure (social / Recreation) should be higher, 62 mentions,

- Priorities will vary person to person, 50 mentions.

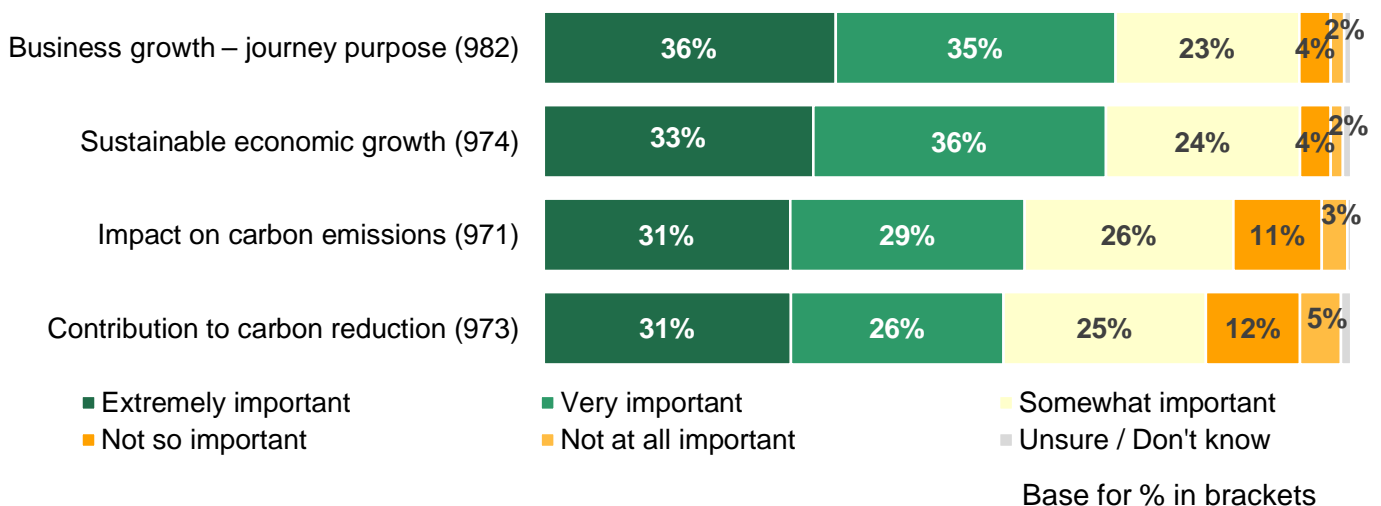
Other comments provided included:

- All have fairly even priority, 38 mentions,
- Workers use cars / more people working at home now, 23 mentions,
- Education / training should be higher, 17 mentions,
- Shopping / personal business should be higher, 13 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received on the order of priority by theme is presented in Appendix 1, Table 3.

Respondents were asked how important they felt each criterion was in supporting our economy & environmental sustainability objective. The criteria used to measure the economy aspect of the objective, 'business growth' and 'sustainable economic growth', were considered as slightly more important (71% and 69% selected extremely or very important respectively) than the criteria to measure the environmental aspect, 'impact on carbon emissions' and 'contribution to carbon reduction' (60% and 57% selected 'extremely important' or 'very important' respectively). The additional criterion proposed 'contribution to carbon reduction' was considered the least important. See Figure 6.

**Figure 6: How important do you think each criterion is in supporting our economy and environmental sustainability objective?**



Respondents were asked if any other criteria should be considered to demonstrate a bus service's ability to support our economy and environmental sustainability objective. 159 respondents chose to leave a comment. The main criteria that respondents thought should be considered included:

- Ability of residents to access services / workplace / education, 42 mentions,
- Extent to which the bus route reduces the number of cars on the road, 21 mentions,
- Specific environmental suggestion impact or concern, 17 mentions
- Ability to support communities /rural areas and reduce social isolation, 16 mentions,
- Cost of each journey / employer contributions, 9 mentions,
- Assess car ownership rates, demand and potential for growth, 7 mentions.

Other comments provided included:

- Bus services are important especially to particular groups of people, 18 mentions,
- Suggestion to improve the bus service to encourage use, 14 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received on the order of priority by theme is presented in Appendix 1, Table 4.

## Section 3: Access and social inclusion

**79% agreed with the addition of the 'bus provision in areas of deprivation' criterion to support our access & social inclusion objective.**

To assess the contribution a bus service makes to the access and inclusion objective we currently use the following set of criteria:

- **Connecting to a transport interchange point:** We assess the extent to which the bus service connects to rail stations or other bus services
- **Accessibility / travel choice:** We assess whether there is an alternative bus service available in the area e.g. access in rural areas

As part of the consultation, we proposed an additional criterion to further support our access and social inclusion objective:

- **Bus provision in areas of deprivation:** We want to assess the extent to which the buses serve areas of deprivation.

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the additional criterion. 79% agreed (stating either strongly agree or tend to agree) with the addition of the 'bus provision in areas of deprivation' criterion and 7% disagreed (selected either 'strongly disagree' or 'tend to disagree') as Figure 7 shows.

**Figure 7.: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the addition of the 'bus provision in areas of deprivation' criteria?**



If respondents answered that they 'tend to disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with the addition of the 'bus provision in areas of deprivation' criterion they were asked to let us know why. 101 respondents chose to leave a comment. The three main reasons provided were as follows:

- Depends on how the areas of deprivation are defined / should include rural & social deprivation, 31 mentions,
- Bus provision is important in all areas, 26 mentions,
- General agreement / suggestion for consideration, 21 mentions.



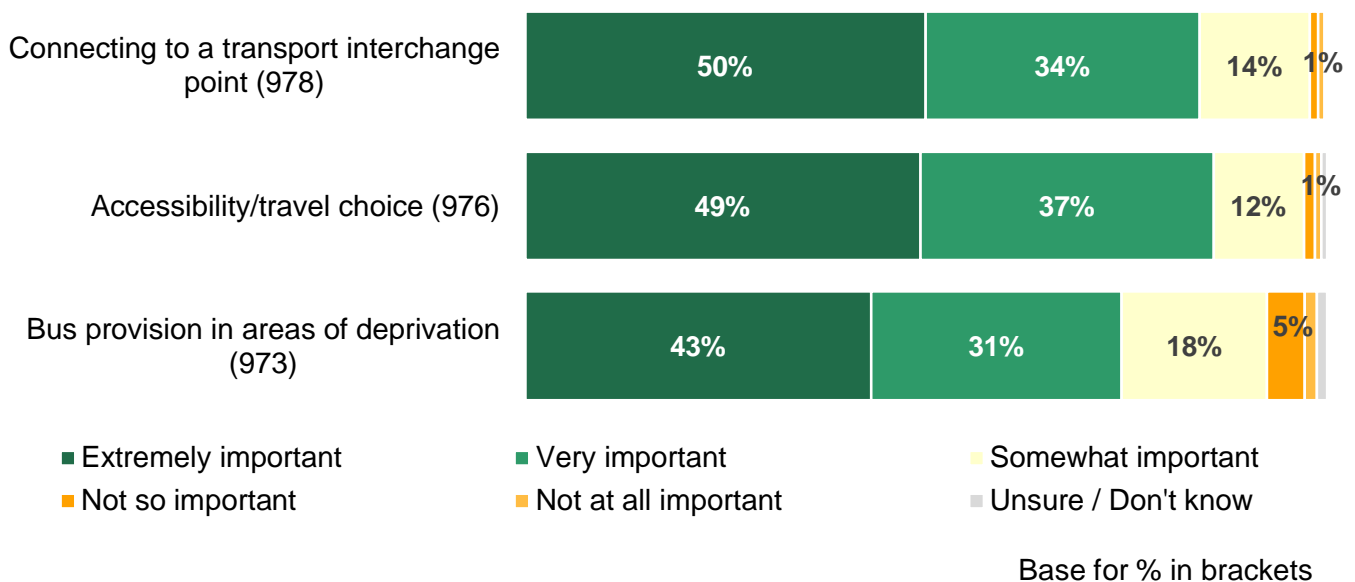
Other comments provided included:

- Areas of deprivation already served by transport / general negative comment (14 mentions).

The full summary of the comments received on the order of priority by theme is presented in Appendix 1, Table 5.

Respondents were then asked how important they felt each criterion was in supporting our access and inclusion objective. 'Accessibility / travel choice' and 'connecting to a transport interchange point' were considered the most important criteria under this objective (86% and 84% selected either extremely or very important respectively). The additional criterion proposed, 'bus provision in areas of deprivation', was considered less important (75% selected 'extremely important' or 'very important'). See Figure 8.

**Figure 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the addition of the 'bus provision in areas of deprivation' criteria?**



Respondents were asked if any other criteria should be considered to demonstrate a bus service's ability to support our access and social inclusion objective. 145 respondents chose to leave a comment. The main criteria that respondents thought should be considered included:

- Enables an adequate, frequent, and reliable service, 45 mentions,
- Extent to which the bus service enables access for particular groups of people, 24 mentions,
- Serves those with no alternative public transport /in rural areas, 21 mentions,
- Actual demand for buses / car ownership rates, 11 mentions.

Other comments provided included:

- Improve bus services generally, 22 mentions,
- Public transport important for all areas, 13 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received on the order of priority by theme is presented in Appendix 1, Table 6.

## Section 4: Bus Service performance

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**56% agreed with the addition of the ‘number of concessionary passengers since Covid’ criterion and 53% agreed with the addition of the ‘number of fare-paying passengers since Covid’ criterion to support our bus service performance objective.**

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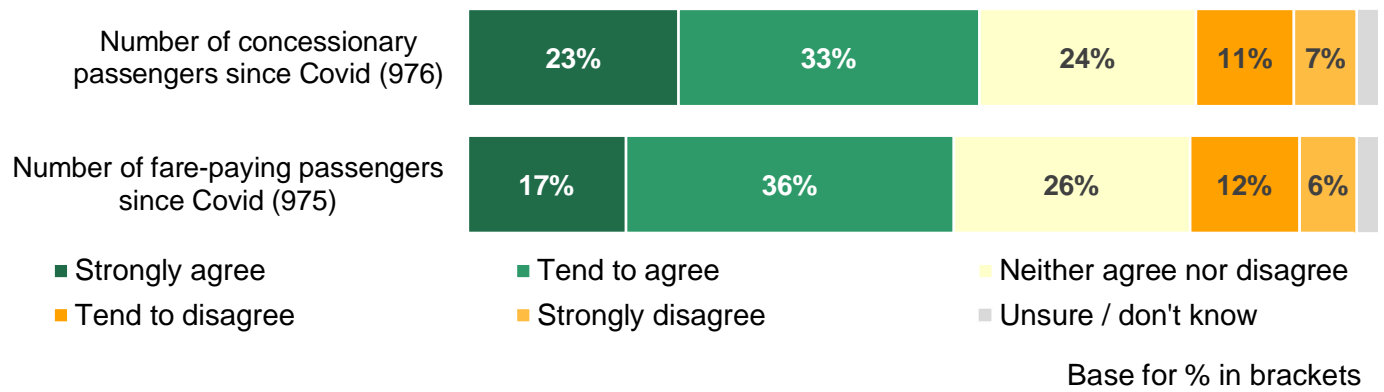
To assess the bus performance objective in terms of value for money to tax payers we currently use the following set of criteria:

- **Cost per passenger:** We assess the cost of the bus service per passenger
- **External funding support:** We look at whether the bus service receives funding from other sources e.g., funding could be provided by developers or neighbouring authorities
- **Service usage:** We look at the number of passengers per service
- **Passenger trends:** We look at passenger trends per service e.g., are passenger numbers stable, increasing or falling

As part of the consultation, we proposed two additional criterions to further support our bus service performance objective:

- **Number of fare-paying passengers since the Covid pandemic:** We want to assess the fare-paying passenger recovery since Covid by comparing current passenger numbers to 2019
- **Number of concessionary passengers since the Covid pandemic:** We want to assess the concessionary passenger (e.g., older persons or disabled passholder) recovery since Covid by comparing current concessionary passenger numbers to 2019

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the additional criteria. 56% agreed (stating either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘tend to agree’) with the addition of the ‘number of concessionary passengers since Covid’ criterion and 53% agreed with the addition of the ‘number of fare-paying passengers since Covid’ criterion. Both received 18% disagreement. See Figure 9.

**Figure 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the addition of the following criteria?**

If respondents answered that they 'tend to disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with the addition of the 'number of fare-paying passengers since the covid pandemic' or the 'number of concessionary passengers since the covid pandemic' they were asked to let us know why. 192 respondents chose to leave a comment. The three main reasons provided were as follows:

- Irrelevant comparison / duplicates passenger trends (55 mentions)
- Need to encourage more people to use bus services again (44 mentions)
- Bus services should be provided regardless of performance (37 mentions)

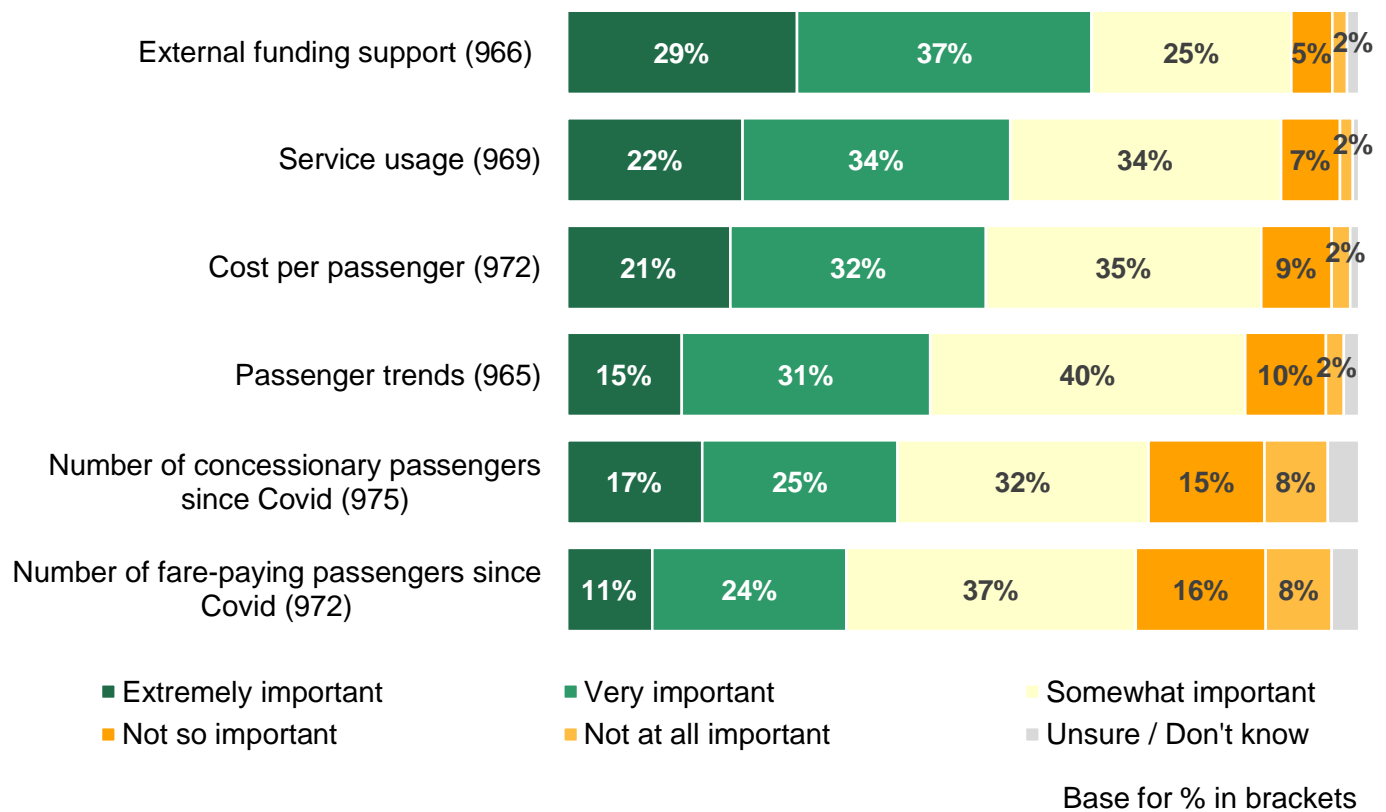
Other comments provided included:

- Potential inaccuracy of numbers / too soon to measure recovery since Covid (30 mentions)
- The number of concessionary passengers should not count (13 mentions)

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received on the order of priority by theme is presented in Appendix 1, Table 7.

Respondents were then asked how important they felt each criterion was in supporting our bus service performance objective. 'External funding support' was considered the most important criterion (66% selected 'extremely important' or 'very important') whereas the two additional criteria proposed 'number of concessionary passengers since covid' and 'number of fare-paying passengers since covid' were considered as the least important (42% and 35% selected 'extremely important' or 'very important' respectively). See Figure 10.

**Figure 10: How important do you think each criterion is in supporting our bus performance objective?**



Respondents were asked if any other criteria should be considered to demonstrate a bus service's performance in terms of value for money to taxpayers. 177 respondents chose to leave a comment. The main criteria that respondents thought should be considered included:

- Assess actual demand / needs for the service (33 mentions),
- Cost per journey / efficiency of vehicles (22 mentions),
- Satisfaction from users/ reliability of service (21 mentions),
- Reduction in car use / effect on the environment (12 mentions).

Other comments provided included:

- Shouldn't be about money / need bus service regardless (43 mentions),
- Suggestions on increasing bus use (27 mentions).

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received on the order of priority by theme is presented in Appendix 1, Table 8.

## Section 5: Other comments

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At the end of the survey respondents could leave any additional comments on the bus prioritisation objectives or criteria. 192 respondents chose to leave a comment, the comments provided were grouped into the following themes:

- Suggestions to improve the bus service (60 mentions)
- Bus services are important and play a vital role in communities (52 mentions)
- A good / affordable service will help people to use it more (30 mentions)
- Look long term / at the bigger picture / assess demand (15 mentions)
- All the objectives are equally important (11 mentions)

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received on the order of priority by theme is presented in Appendix 1, Table 9.

### Emails Received

In total 7 emails were received in relation to the bus criteria consultation, 4 from individuals and 3 from Town / Parish Councils.

One response was concerning the bus criteria in summary:

- Education and training is just as important as employment when sorting priorities for subsidising buses. Health/medical and welfare is an essential journey – should be higher. Leisure and Social are at the bottom of the list of priorities but positive Health and wellbeing is an important consideration for the strength of communities.
- Welcome the encouragement of EV and Hydrogen buses on subsidised routes and the need to serve areas of deprivation (but it is important to have buses that link rural areas)
- No consideration seems to be given for transport for New Homes and to specific timings / getting people to railway stations at peak commute times.
- Surprised that a bus that requires a subsidy of £10 or more per passenger is getting any points isn't there a more cost-effective ways of supporting travel.
- The criteria are aimed at supporting routes already in existence, rather than encouraging new routes to set up. Bus service that doesn't have current patronage is discriminated against.
- Concerned about the lack of funding for bus services. Need a more proactive approach to applying for more funds to retain / expand bus transport options, work harder to proactively promote bus services

Six responses were concerning specific bus routes / suggestions to improve a bus route. In summary:

- Bus route is a lifeline to elderly people those in rural areas and those who may not have access to a vehicle, (1 reference), buses are a vital resource to enable workers, visitors and residents to get around (1 reference). Hope there is still a bus service in my area, please keep our service, please reinstate our service, need a service to Leighton Hospital (5 references).

# Appendix 1 – Open comment analysis

## The objectives

**Table 1: Comments received on the objectives**

Overall theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
'Bus service performance' is a poor metric / not as important as the other objectives	Bus service performance is a poor metric / poor indicator of a bus services value for money to communities esp. in rural areas where buses play a vital role. The other two objectives are more important, concerned this would mean withdrawal of a bus service which would go against the other objectives. The needs of people are far more important than performance, bus services should run regardless.	39
Consider access and social inclusion to be more important	Access and social inclusion for the community is the most important objective / is the main criteria esp. for those with no alternative means of transport, the vulnerable and to those within rural areas. It is more important that economic sustainability/ environment and performance. Buses may be the only affordable transport and essential for some.	25
Environmental sustainability shouldn't be a factor (more buses mean less cars)	Buses are better for the environment than numerous private car journeys so should be encouraged rather than discouraged simply because the buses are older. Environment should not be a factor; the impact on pollution from buses is negligible. Concerned this will cost money, no money should be spent on EV, don't want the cost of EV to be considered.	12
General suggestions on improving the bus service	The model of public transport needs re-thinking / improving. Could digitalise the request for service so limited resources can be optimised, provide smaller buses as many run with very few passengers. Need a reliable affordable service to encourage use of public transport and reduction of cars on the road. More bus lanes, Sunday / evening services to e.g., Leighton Hospital, Town centres.	8
Economy and environment should not be linked	Economy and environment should be split they are not the same goal. Feel that economy is important but not necessarily environment, should be need, then environment.	4
All the objectives are important	All of these are important / a fully integrated bus service will cater for all the objectives.	4
Other comments	Other comments provided include statements of personal use of a specific bus / its importance and general negative comments.	7



## Economy and environmental sustainability

**Table 2: Comments received on the addition of the 'contribution of carbon reduction' criterion**

Overall theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
'Contribution to carbon reduction' is lower priority / shouldn't be used to determine a bus routes requirement	Carbon footprint reduction is desirable but not the most important objective to providing transport. Concerned this will lead to removal of a service. Having access to a bus service esp. for those without other transport and those in rural areas is more important than not having one for carbon reduction reasons. This criterion shouldn't be used to determine a bus route's requirement/ should be part of scoring tender bids. Should be obvious more up to date vehicles are needed without needed a criterion to judge it. Transport policy is about providing a service to those who need it not about climate change.	55
General negative comment on costs / effect on the environment	Seems like 'box ticking'. Not possible without affecting costs / environmental targets are costly. Would need to fund / support bus operators in switching to electric vehicles. Electric vehicles are heavier and cause more road damage. Buying a new vehicle causes more carbon emissions, should only apply to new vehicles. Batteries are bad for the environment and cannot be re-used. No money should be spent on EV – wait until hydrogen engines are widely available. We are not a massive carbon produce, whatever we do is a 'drop in the ocean' compared to the effect other countries have on the impact to the environment. Don't believe the hype.	39
Buses are better than car journeys	It is important to encourage bus journeys over car journeys, a more reliable frequent bus service will reduce the number of cars on the road and will result in a decrease in carbon emissions. Agree if it means more buses especially electric or hydrogen but not if it means reducing services, not all bus companies are profitable enough to update their vehicles. Need to compare impact on carbon reduction if a bus exists or not / the number of car journeys it removes on the roads.	34
Environmental sustainability is important	Environmental sustainability is more important than ever / vital for future generations. Often see big diesel-powered busses, belching out black smoke with only 1 passenger. Bus companies could make use of smaller / lower emission vehicles to reduce carbon footprint. Should be moving towards lower emission transport (electric / hydrogen) where possible. Need to clean air / save the planet.	15
"Impact on carbon emissions' & 'carbon reduction' are similar	Seems like a repeat of the current "Impact on carbon emissions" criterion, the existing criterion should be included / reworded to cover the addition.	11
Other comments	Other comments include suggestion to put the parking costs up to meet the extra cost of buses, question on how performance is measured against this criterion.	2

Table 3: Comments on the main journey purpose – business growth order of priority		
Overall theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Access to health / medical / welfare should be higher up	Access to health & medical is the most important aspect / should be higher up above education & training / joint top with employment. It is a universal / essential need which people should be able to access whether they have a car or not. It can also link into employment e.g.; Leighton Hospital has a very large workforce should be a bus service to here.	72
Leisure (social / Recreation) should be higher	Leisure should be higher priority; we should be encouraging use of buses for leisure; it is a good way to get people to change behaviours and start using public transport. Use for leisure contributes to people's health and wellbeing. Connectivity cannot be deemed lowest priority; buses can provide a lifeline to help prevent social isolation esp. in rural areas. Should be combined with health and welfare. Leisure helps boost local economies, employment in the hospitality, tourism, and small business industries is supported by leisure activities.	67
Priorities will vary person to person	Can't put these in order, priorities are different to different people and to different areas. The main purpose must be related directly to those who need the bus service, whatever their purpose, rather than for an agreed need. Would need to reflect both age profile and the time of day of the journeys. A one size fits all approach is unsuitable. Rural areas have differing priority, those who are elderly, disabled, without alternate transport, in deprived areas rely on access to a bus service and their needs are generally for shopping, leisure and health over access to employment.	50
All have fairly even priority	All points should have equal weight, they are all equally as important for individual wellbeing, the environment and a growing economy esp. to those without a car. They are all connected, employment is not inclusive. Should be access for all.	38
Workers use cars /more people working at home now	More people are working at home now so doesn't make sense for access to employment to be first. Most employed people have access to a car to get to work now. Buses often do not take suitable / convenient routes to work, aren't reliable enough or the timetables do not meet needs.	23
Education / training should be higher	Education should be the highest priority / combined with employment. Those in education more likely to be non-drivers and be on low incomes.	17
Shopping / personal business should be higher	Shopping should be a much higher priority if we want town centres to thrive, people who go to shops are supporting businesses. Grading this as higher, would increase patronage, resulting in improved frequency and reliability and increase bus usage overall.	13
Other comments	Other comments include general positive comments / agreement, general negative comments, those in education have dedicated bus services already.	12

**Table 4: Suggestions for other criteria that could be considered to demonstrate a bus service's ability to support our economy and environmental sustainability objective**

Overall theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Ability of residents to access services / workplace / education	Ability of residents to access services e.g., town centre, shopping, hospital, GP, dentist appointments, and workplaces / education establishments. Do buses offer the right routes at the right time, are they reliable, are services offered early morning / late evening / on a Sunday. How long does it take on average to reach key destination. Ease of use and connectivity to other transport options.	48
Extent to which the bus route reduces the number of cars on the road	Adopt a measure of reduction in car journeys as a carbon reduction target. Does the bus route decrease the number of car journeys being taken and reduce traffic / congestion, does reducing the bus service increase the reliance on home deliveries. Encourage kids on buses / not in cars - reducing congestion round schools at key times. If there was a decent bus service people would use the bus more reducing traffic congestion / pollution.	21
Bus services are important especially to particular groups of people	Buses are needed, all the objectives impact on one another. Public funding of bus services should focus on routes that will never be commercially viable, focus on growth is not relevant with regard to bus services. Cheshire East should take over the running of the buses with an integrated transport policy, we want service and not private profit. Buses provide vital transport solutions for women with small children, for those who are elderly, disabled, do not drive or on low income. Many of these users rely on the bus service and can add to the economic growth.	18
Specific environmental suggestion impact or concern	How many buses are electric / use hydrogen, what are the emission levels or age of the bus. Assess levels of congestion & air quality. Bus emissions v usage, use a model of carbon off setting. Should encourage use of electric vehicles but not at the detriment to the number of routes companies can afford to run - needs to be introduced gradually over time to reduce the financial burden on bus companies. Smaller buses may be more efficient. Need to assess lifetime emissions / environmental impact, batteries are extremely bad for the environment and cannot be reused.	17
Ability to support communities /rural areas and reduce social isolation	It's not all about business growth, need to consider how the bus service supports the needs of the community. How many people were able to get out and be socially mobile because they have a reliable bus service. Does it support rural deprivation, reduce social isolation and increase wellbeing / independence.	16
Suggestion to improve the bus service to encourage use	A more frequent, reliable and affordable service would encourage higher use. Being encouraged to use local facilities without a car bus transport is the only way to support local businesses, need transport options for the night-time economy, encourage school journeys on buses. A lot of new housing estates have been built a review of bus routes and siting of bus stops would lead to more passengers on buses.	14

Cost of each journey / employer contributions	What is the cost of each journey, cost is an important factor in the current climate, keep costs down whilst supplying an adequate service, the £2 fare has been a great help. A transferable ticket to different companies covering the area would also be a big advantage. Add contribution to GVA as measured by income or productivity, e.g., GVA per capita. Look at whether third party funding is an option to support costs and whether an employer contributes / encourages use of public transport e.g. providing transportation, supporting cycle schemes, walking initiatives.	9
Assess car ownership rates, demand & potential for growth	Assess car ownership rates, demand for bus services and of routes (suitable vehicles for the customer demand can then be provided). 'Potential for growth during contract term' should be included.	7
Other comments	Other comments include those stating that no money should be spent on EV, carbon should be only considered once in the criteria, all criteria is important, favour local run bus companies over big national ones, assess what business would be impacted if cuts are made.	9

## Access and social inclusion

**Table 5: Comments received on the addition of the 'bus provision in areas of deprivation' criterion**

Overall theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Depends on how the areas of deprivation are defined / should include rural & social deprivation	How are areas of deprivation defined? Deprivation is not always financial. Depends on if this also includes social deprivation, should also include areas that have no bus services due to location or areas where there are a number of people who do not drive (inc. the elderly & disabled community). Rural deprivation will be ignored / concerned that areas of deprivation will receive funded support over rural areas.	31
Bus provision is important in all areas	Encouraging greater use of public transport generally is surely the aim. Bus travel is important in all areas and should be available to everyone not just those in areas of deprivation, affordable transport for all. There are people in supposed wealthier areas that also struggle / require buses / cannot drive. If this extra criterion means diverting funding/services away from other, existing routes/services, then it should not be included.	26
General agreement / suggestion for consideration	Agree, vitally important, deprived areas need better, more affordable services / access and more than likely have no car. Child poverty is high, should also include new build areas for younger families.	21
Areas of deprivation already served by transport / general negative	In most areas of deprivation there is already a good bus route, these areas are close / within town centres. Solve deprivation out first / this amounts to levelling down.	14
Other comments	Other suggestions include a suggestion on how to improve the bus, general statement.	8

**Table 6: Suggestions for other criteria that could be considered to demonstrate a bus service's ability to support our access and social inclusion objective**

Overall theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Enables an adequate, frequent, and reliable service	Enables an adequate, frequent and reliable service to e.g. hospitals, schools, shops. What needs to be accessible and at what times? Running earlier, later or on a Sunday. Average wait time at the interchange station, direct connections.	45
Extent to which the bus service enables access for particular groups of people	Extent to which the bus service enables access to services for those that are elderly and/or disabled. Whether a bus passes through areas where such users are more likely to live. The elderly need a good bus service whether or not they are in an area considered deprived. Does the service provide good wheelchair access, visual and verbal passenger information systems, what is the distance needed to walk to a bus stop.	24
Improve bus services generally	Integrated ticketing could be something to consider. Weekend buses are needed, must be affordable, frequent. Need more direct buses.	22
Serves those with no alternative public transport /in rural areas	If there is no realistic alternative public transport, particularly in rural areas, this should be a criterion for funding. Rural area deprivation needs to be considered / support rural communities. Areas of deprivation must also include areas where people are unable to drive.	21
Public transport important for all areas	Depends on how deprivation is measured / what does it mean. The IMD statistics provide a partial view of areas of deprivation. Bus transport is important to everyone to help prevent isolation. Need to support all residents equally.	13
Actual demand for buses / car ownership rates	Compare car availability in areas of deprivation, car ownership rates. How much need there is for buses. How many people who use these buses. Potential number of passengers that could use a route. Look at residents by age group and with/ without access to car or driver licence to assess need for buses and times of day buses needed.	11
Other comments	Other comments include measure your social responsibility, keep bus provision where it already is, must be cost effective, statements of personal use of a specific bus,	9

## Bus service performance

Table 7: Comments received on the addition of the 'number of fare-paying / concessionary passengers since the covid pandemic'		
Overall theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Irrelevant comparison / duplicates passenger trends	Do not see the relevance, particularly as we move away from that period. Covid is immeasurable / was a one-off-event. Irrelevant comparison, there were more services before Covid so it is not comparing like for like / the frequency of services has not returned to pre Covid levels. Not sure why past performance should impact on current decisions, numbers currently matter. Should not be using covid as an excuse to reduce services. These appear to duplicate other criteria – e.g., cost per passenger, service usage and patronage trends.	55
Need to encourage more people to use bus services again	A regular, affordable and reliable service would encourage use again and lead to a greater number of passengers paying / lower emissions. Buses were cut during covid / now offer a reduced service leading to more people taking their car. If buses are reduced, it will never recover; investment / marketing should be used to promote bus services to get more people to switch from their car, need to take a longer-term view.	44
Bus services should be provided regardless of performance	Buses serve a necessary service to allow people to access vital services and should be provided regardless esp. in rural areas where passenger numbers will be fewer, the needs of the rural communities should be high on the list of priorities. It will also be vital to the elderly, disabled and those with no other means of transport. Inclusion is more important than performance.	37
Potential inaccuracy of numbers / too soon to measure recovery since Covid	If you include date since the bus service has reduced, then this will not be accurate. The number of concessionary passengers indicated will have fallen since Covid however as an ageing population the number of concessionary passengers will be increasing. Arriva ceasing their service will have had an impact on the number of passengers also. How do you know the accuracy of passenger numbers, Bus service often do not give tickets, therefore can invent the number of each type of passenger. To change people's habits and behaviours requires long term consistency you are not providing the opportunity for numbers to return to pre-Covid levels / it is too soon to measure recovery of passenger numbers post Covid.	30
Number of concessionary passengers should not count	Concessionary users tend to be from the groups who are totally reliant on bus services / can least afford travel. A high number of concessionary users should not be used in isolation as a measure for the viability of a bus route. Concerned that the authority will use this information to cease concessionary travel, bus concessions are vital and should not count.	13
Other comments	Other comments include those asking what the benefit is to collecting this data, some stating there are too many criteria already, suggestion to assess demand and encouraging people back to work.	13

**Table 8: Suggestions for other criteria that could be considered to demonstrate a bus service performance objective**

Overall theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Shouldn't be about money / need bus service regardless	Just because numbers may be low doesn't mean service isn't needed there is a danger that, by relying on numbers and trends the social importance of a route would be overlooked. Value for money isn't the essential criteria. It's about providing a service to improve quality of life & support health & wellbeing. Social inclusion is very important to the elderly and those in rural areas. Consideration should be given to people without cars / availability of alternative public transport. There should be more buses not less.	43
Assess actual demand / needs for the service	Should be aimed at the needs of the local residents, actual / potential demand for the service. 'Passenger numbers increasing' should be 5 points as it shows that there is clearly potential for the route. Review the bus route, ongoing survey to the public for missing or suggested routes/times. Assess what the impact would be should the service be withdrawn. Do the buses go to places at expected times, provide access to employment and healthcare. Better planning to rural areas and new estates. Linking in arrival times with services leaving from bus station.	33
Suggestions on increasing bus use	Try to increase bus usage. Provide a service at the right cost at the right times and numbers might come back. Later service needed in the evenings and at weekends. The £2 fare has been good over the last few months. Advertise the bus services more and provide timetables. Address the reasons why things may have changed since covid. New funding required. New ideas.	27
Cost per journey / efficiency of vehicles	Cost per journey / family compared with other transport options / cost per km. Subsidies should be based on miles covered. Promotional spend per bus route. Maintenance / running costs of the vehicle. Is the bus operator financially responsible. Efficiency of vehicles used for service, occupancy of vehicles, bus mileage without passengers on board. External funding support should be sought from a wider range of businesses. Concessionary passengers could pay a small fee for the service, flat rate £1 journey fee for bus pass holders.	22
Satisfaction from users/ reliability of service	Customer satisfaction surveys. Measure reliability, regularity of service, journey time, condition of bus, helpfulness of drivers, value for money. May need qualitative measurements as well as quantitative.	21
Reduction in car use / effect on the environment	Assess the number of car journeys reduced. Would like to see a significant investment in getting more people using buses and out of cars which would lead to less traffic congestion. Measure traffic generally and then estimate the impact of removing a particular bus time / route. Include carbon footprint and air quality. Assess the usage of a new electric passenger vehicle against an old diesel fumed vehicle.	12
Other comments	Other comments include Demonstrable commitment to people with disabilities, number of children to adults for each journey, it's the balance of these considerations that counts, general negative comments, general suggestion to improve buses, statements of personal use of a specific bus.	17



## Any Other comments

Table 9: Any other comments on the bus prioritisation objectives or criteria		
Overall theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Suggestions to improve the bus service	Bus provision is out of date, need to review demand for services / routes, need new ideas. Bring bus routes back. Need more frequent and reliable buses. Sunday service, services in the evening. Connectivity with railways, new housing estates, hospitals. Follow the Greater Manchester model. Subsidy should not be the only means of support - promote other models of transport in rural areas inc. volunteer driver schemes and community-based transport. Many bus stop do not have bus shelters & timetables are often destroyed / damaged problems in identifying times of buses as timetables are often difficult to read,	60
Bus services are important and play a vital role in communities	People should be your highest priority, it's all about inclusion, it shouldn't be about money / service before profit. Bus services play a vital role in many communities not just those in deprived areas and are a lifeline for many people, especially those without access to a car, those in rural areas, those with mobility impairments and the elderly. In order to give people equal opportunities and prevent isolation you need to give them access to transport. Benefits those who need to get to work, getting to schools, shopping, medical appointments, and socialising.	52
A good / affordable service will help people to use it more	A good / affordable service will help people to use it therefore should be prioritised and then everything else will follow. A well-run bus service can be economical and environmentally friendly. The reason why so many people drive is because there are no buses travelling useful routes. We should be encouraging more public transport, use of buses significantly reduces carbon emissions by reducing the number of cars being used. Priorities should be on routes useful to the public and advertising them, measure performance through customer satisfaction	30
Look long term / at the bigger picture / assess demand	Think about the long term / big picture in a joined-up way. Need to think strategically about why journeys are made and how to optimise services to meet those needs. The award criteria needs updating to include potential growth. A network approach is needed, bus provision needs to be assessed alongside overall transport strategy & infrastructure. Consider social and geographic changes, particularly the move of retail away from town centres. Assessment should be over time as it takes a while for travel behaviours to change. It would be helpful to know how many people would be affected by cutting each specific bus journey compared with retaining a bus journey.	15
All the objectives are equally important	All 3 objectives are equally important.	11
Other comments	Other comments include, economy & environment should be two separate items, no CEC money should be spent on EV - very heavy electric vehicles will increase the road damage and general negative comments.	24



## Appendix 2 – Respondent Demographics

A number of demographic questions were asked at the end of the survey to ensure there was a wide range of views from across different characteristics. All of the questions were optional and therefore won't add up to the total number of responses received.

**Table 10: Number of survey respondents by gender**

Category	Count	Percent
Female	464	50%
Male	433	47%
Prefer not to say	33	4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 11: Number of survey respondents by age group**

Category	Count	Percent
16-34	31	3%
35-44	61	6%
45-54	116	12%
55-64	187	20%
65-74	308	32%
75 and over	207	22%
Prefer not to say	38	4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>948</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 10: Number of survey respondents by ethnic origin**

Category	Count	Percent
White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / Irish	842	91%
Any other White background	19	2%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	8	1%
Asian / Asian British	5	1%
Black African / Caribbean / Black British	5	1%
Other ethnic groups	<5	<5%
Prefer not to say	50	5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 11: Number of survey respondents by religious belief**

Category	Count	Percent
Christian	514	56%
Buddhist	6	1%
Jewish	<5	<5%
Other religion	12	2%
No religion	282	31%
Prefer not to say	101	11%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 12: Number of survey respondents by limited activity due to health problem / disability**

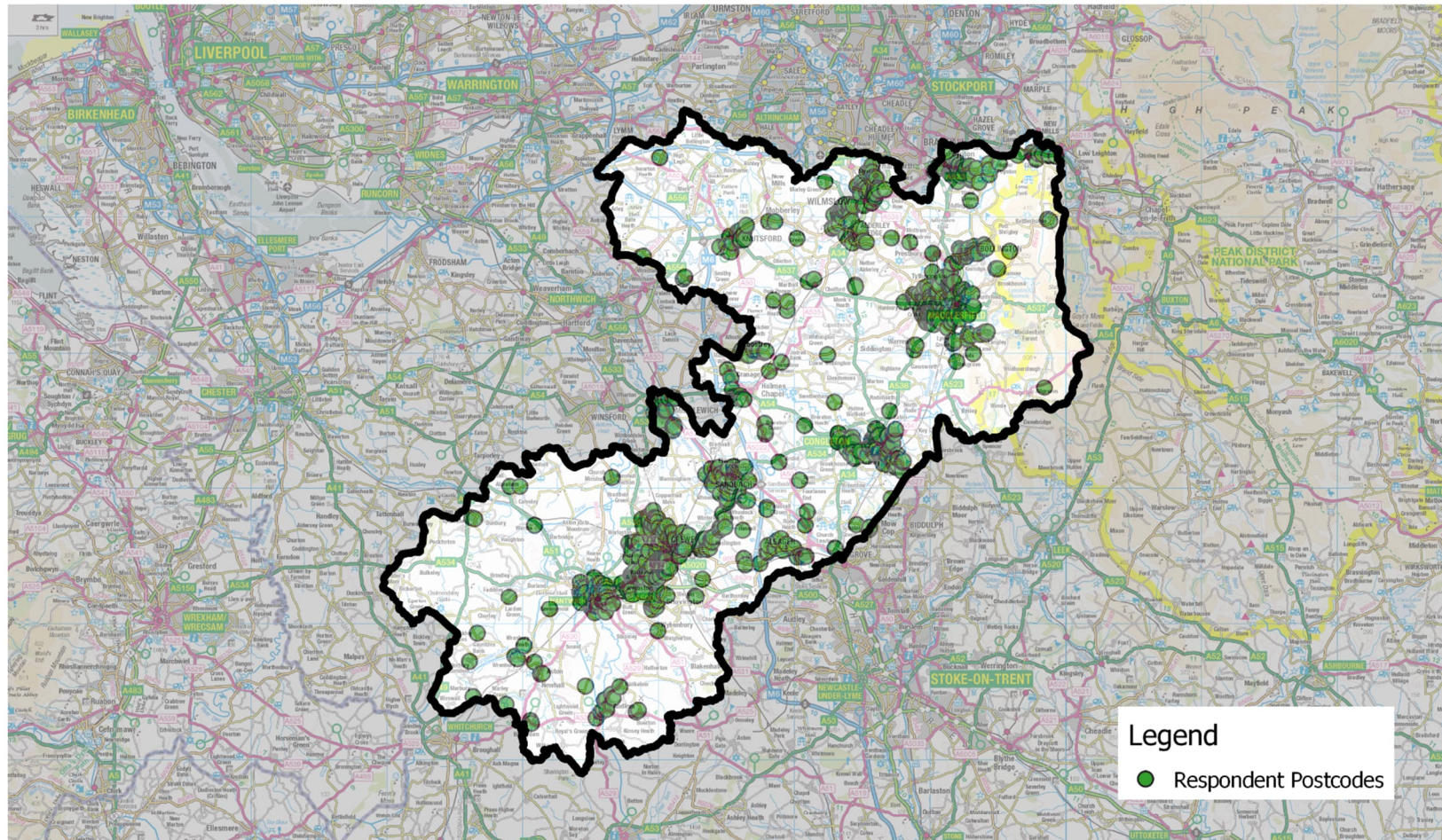
Category	Count	Percent
Yes, a lot	92	10%
Yes, a little	232	25%
Not at all	565	60%
Prefer not to say	52	6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 13: Number of survey respondents stating that their disability affects how they travel**

Category	Count	Percent
Yes	158	50%
No	161	50%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Appendix 3 – Map of Respondent Postcodes

The following map plots respondent postcodes that were provided and that are within Cheshire East (821 postcodes).



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Report produced on 23rd August 2023 by the Research and Consultation Team, Cheshire East Council, Email [RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk) for further information.

## Appendix 4 – BSIP+ Indicative Funding Allocations

The funding of the priorities have been considered against DfT requirements, and those proposed for BSIP+ are outlined in the table below. An indicative split of funding has been proposed, however this is subject to further development of costs, through engagement with local bus operators.

Priority	Potential scheme cost	Funding source
1: introduce a multi-operator ticket in Macclesfield and surrounding area, with local bus operators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- includes £35k for feasibility study on fare and revenue implications, with £20-30k marketing/back room costs for setting up the multi-operator ticketing.</li> </ul>	£55,000-£65,000	BSIP+
2: trial a young person's concessionary fare pass for 16-19 year olds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- assumes 15% of all 16-19 year olds in Cheshire East receiving 50% reduction on local 28 consecutive day pass price (currently circa. £49) for one year.</li> <li>- includes £30-50k costs for initial admin and marketing</li> </ul>	£700,000-£725,000	BSIP+
3: develop a "Buses in Cheshire East" website, to provide a one-stop shop for bus service information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- options for external provision of website</li> <li>- does not account for ongoing operational costs (assumed to be around £5k per annum)</li> </ul>	£20,000-£25,000	Outside of BSIP+
4: promote the 'System One' ticketing for north Cheshire East residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- includes updated information at bus stops and promotional advertising in paper and digital formats</li> </ul>	£20,000-£25,000	BSIP+
5: creation of 'hub stops' along the service 38 route <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- improved quality of stops and information provision at bus stops along the 38 route</li> </ul>	£57,000-£82,000	BSIP+
BSIP+ funding total	£833,000-£897,000	
Priorities total	£853,000-£922,000	



# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**TITLE: Cheshire East Bus Support Criteria**

## VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Author	Description of Changes
27.10.2023	2	Chris Taylor	Post Consultation

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT 0026

**CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**Stage 1 Description:** Fact finding (about your policy / service / service users)

<b>Department</b>	<i>Place</i>
<b>Service</b>	<i>Strategic Infrastructure</i>
<b>Lead officer responsible for assessment</b>	<i>Chris Taylor</i>
<b>Other members of team undertaking assessment</b>	<i>Jenny Marston Richard Hibbert</i>
<b>Date</b>	<b>12.10.2023</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Type of document</b>	<b>Procedure</b>
<b>Is this a new/ existing/ revision of an existing document</b>	<b>Revision</b>

<p>Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation)</p> <p>Please attach a copy of the strategy/ plan/ function/ policy/ procedure/ service</p>	<p>Bus Support Criteria for Prioritisation of Services</p> <p>Background</p> <p>Significant challenges have been posed to the bus industry in recent years on a national level. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic bus services within Cheshire East have witnessed a sharp decrease in patronage which remains lower than pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p>For the bus industry, there is continued uncertainty surrounding passenger and revenue recovery, coupled with cost increases associated with fuel and driver wage rates. These uncertainties alongside slow patronage recovery have further undermined the viability of the current network.</p>
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## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT 0026

Due to these challenges, the Department for Transport (DfT) have provided the Bus Recovery Grant (BRG) for operators and the Local Transport Fund (LTF) for Local Transport Authorities to aid the delivery of the existing bus network.

As BRG/LTF funding comes to a close and concessionary reimbursement aligns with actual patronage (rather than 2019 values) commercial operators will begin to evaluate the viability of their commercial services. At the moment it is uncertain what this might mean for the bus industry nationally and locally. This could lead to commercial services being withdrawn and supported contracts being handed back. For this reason the DfT has proposed that Local Transport Authorities should conduct detailed Bus Network Reviews, to understand services that are at risk and the support that would be required to provide a sustainable public transport network.

At the moment within Cheshire East, around 70% of services are supported by the council which costs £2.3m per annum.

In accordance with the Government's guidance on Network Reviews issued in April 2022, analysis has been conducted with operators to help identify which services within Cheshire East are deemed to be commercial, marginal or non-viable after the cessation of the BRG and LTF funding support. Conducting this network review is a condition of gaining access to the next phase of the BRG/LTF funding.

As services adapt to changing funding arrangements, there is a need to prioritise services. Cheshire East utilises a set of criteria which are used to score and prioritise bus services based on their ability to meet LTP priority themes, accessibility requirements for users and financial considerations.

The current criteria are summarised below:

- LTP Priority Themes: Including business growth (journey purpose), sustainable economic growth and impact on carbon emissions.
- Accessibility: Including transport interchange and travel choice
- Financial Considerations: Including cost per passenger, funding options/alternatives, service usage and patronage trends (commercial potential).



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	<p>This set of criteria was developed in 2011 and used as a reference case in 2017 during the bus service review to reflect the key themes and aspirations contained within the LTP.</p> <p>The bus network and industry within Cheshire East has witnessed significant challenges and changes since the adoption of this support criteria in 2011. For this reason, a refresh has been proposed in order to ensure services are scored based on relevant criteria as of 2022.</p> <p>The new criteria includes the following additions which are being presented for consideration:</p> <p>Decarbonisation – Cheshire East Council aims to be carbon neutral in its own operations by 2025, as outlined within the council’s Environment Strategy (2020-2024). Cheshire East made a further pledge in January 2022 to be a carbon neutral borough by 2045. With these targets in place, there is a need to ensure bus services contribute to their attainment. The emission standard of vehicles being used has been suggested as a new criterion, here services will be scored based on whether EV/Hydrogen, Euro 6, 5 or 4 vehicles are in operation.</p> <p>Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) – For this metric, the percentage of route length that sits within the top 25% most deprived areas will be used to score each bus service. Areas of deprivation typically rely on bus services for access to facilities and amenities, therefore this metric ensures that the social value of bus services is considered during decision making.</p> <p>Fare Paying and Concessionary Patronage Recovery post-covid (compared to 2019) – Recovery post-covid is still ongoing and significantly impacting the viability of bus services across the borough. While fare paying patronage on average has returned to around 80% of pre-covid levels, concessionary travel (which constitutes half of total passengers for many services) still remains at around 60%. These metrics therefore score services based on their rate of recovery for all ticket types.</p>
<p>Who are the main stakeholders and have they been engaged with? (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences, residents)</p>	<p>A survey was published online alongside hard copies delivered to customer contact centres and libraries across the borough. At the launch of this survey key stakeholders including, Ward Members, Town and Parish Councils, Neighbouring Authorities and Bus Operators were made aware of the survey and encouraged to partake and circulate far and wide.</p> <p>Following analysis survey responses, it is apparent that a good mix of participants were captured through public consultation process. Vulnerable groups are seen to have partaken in the consultation, with 54% of respondents aged 65 or over and 35% identified as having limited activity due to health problems/disabilities.</p>

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New criteria have been added to better represent the current bus network and its duties to serve the people of Cheshire East. In particular, the support criteria have been expanded to consider indices of multiple deprivation (IMD). This provides a measure of relative deprivation for small areas based on seven distinct domains of deprivation: income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment. IMD has been introduced to limit the impact of bus service alterations on vulnerable groups. Conversations with vulnerable groups will be conducted to ensure impacts on those with protected characteristics are minimised.

Key stakeholders encouraged to partake in the consultation include:

- The general public (including residents and visitors to the Borough);
- Cheshire East Council stakeholders;
- Public transport operators;
- Local businesses/organisations;
- Schools and education establishments;
- Neighbouring local authorities;
- Governmental bodies (e.g. Local Enterprise Partnership);
- Statutory transport bodies (e.g. Department for Transport and Transport for the North).
- Partner organisations
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Umbrella organisations for people with specialist transport needs; such as:
  - \* Space4Autism
  - \* Disability Information Bureau (DIB)
  - \* Cheshire Centre for Independent living
  - \* Cheshire Eye Society
  - \* Deafness Support Network
  - \* ADCA Medical Transport Service
  - \* Congleton Disabled Club
  - \* Care4CE
  - \* Leonard Cheshire Disability
  - \* The Stroke Association
- Transport interest groups; Such as:
  - Crewe & District Bus Users Group
  - Transition Wilmslow
  - Active Travel Congleton

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel Cheshire</li> <li>• Environmental groups;</li> <li>• MPs</li> </ul>
What consultation method(s) did you use?	<p>Early conversations held with key stakeholders (vulnerable groups and bus operators).</p> <p>It is important for the council to be open and transparent on the purpose of this engagement/consultation, which is to review the proposed criteria as a framework for decision making going forward. The consultation will need to clearly describe why the criteria are suitable for forming a framework that guides decision making. It is noted that the consultation will not propose any direct changes to the network.</p>

### Stage 2 Initial Screening

Who is affected and what evidence have you considered to arrive at this analysis? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)	<p>There will not be a direct impact on individuals who share one or more protected characteristic as a result of this revised support criteria. The future of the bus industry within Cheshire East remains uncertain, this criteria will be used as a tool to help manage future changes to the network. The criteria itself will not have an impact on the public or bus operators.</p> <p>On a national level the old, young and disabled are recognised as regular bus users and therefore most likely to be impacted by service alterations as a result of the updated criteria. Findings of the survey have been used to understand the impacts of the proposals are upon those who share one or more protected characteristic.</p>
Who is intended to benefit and how?	There will be no direct benefits associated with having this set of criteria in place. The criteria will serve as a tool for assessing the future bus network as it continues to evolve using more up to date and relevant criteria.
Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?	No
Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?	No

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Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (e.g. will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)	No
<b>Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?</b>	There is no specific targeted action to promote equality other than to ensure that the importance of the challenges faced and the absence of strategic guidance on the matter recognise the need for CEC to develop a strategic approach to bus passenger transport
<b>Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics</b>	Yes/ No
<b>Age</b>	No
<b>Disability</b>	No
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No
<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>	No
<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>	No
<b>Race</b>	No
<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>	No
<b>Sex</b>	No
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No

The outlined criteria will not lead to any direct changes to the bus network within Cheshire East. This is simply a scoring mechanism to evaluate bus services operating within the borough.

**What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts**

Characteristic	Findings	Mitigation	Consultation carried out
Age	<b>No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage.</b> However, there may be positive or adverse impact on older and younger people who tend		

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	<p>as groups to use public transport more than other age groups. Nationally the proportion of trips made by bus is highest amongst those aged between 17 and 20. Young people also face barriers to transport, include the availability and cost of public transport, particularly to further and higher education. Bus use is higher for those aged 60 and over than those in middle aged groups.</p> <p>Results of the consultation reveal a general acceptance of the new criteria, with 64% of the respondents agreeing with the addition of the contribution to carbon reduction criteria, 79% agreeing with the addition of the bus provision in areas of deprivation criteria and 56% agreeing with the addition of a covid recovery criteria.</p> <p>Of these responses, 31 respondents were aged 16-44, these agreed with the new criteria as follows:  carbon reduction criteria: 62% of respondents agreed  Bus provision in areas of deprivation: 82% of respondents agreed  Covid recovery criteria: 48% of respondents agreed</p> <p>There were 515 respondents who engaged with the survey aged 65 or over. Respondents aged over 65 agreed with the new criteria as follows:  carbon reduction criteria: 68% of respondents agreed  Bus provision in areas of deprivation: 82% of respondents agreed  Covid recovery criteria: 63% of respondents agreed</p> <p>Qualitative responses from the survey outlined that the criteria should reflect an age profile to ensure those who use and need the service most retain access. Priority should not be given to employment and education journeys as often elderly residents rely on access to a bus service and their needs are generally for shopping, leisure and health.  It was suggested that an assessment of the number of residents by age group and with/ without access to car or driver licence should be undertaken to assess the need for buses.</p>		
Disability	<p><b>No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage.</b> However positive or adverse impacts are possible depending on how the criteria is implemented. Key challenges faced by disabled people on the transport system include being able to access accurate and relevant travel information both before and during the journey, being able to access public transport</p>		

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	<p>interchanges, especially at night when these may be poorly lit, being able to access public transport vehicles and concerns regarding safety and comfort on the public transport network.</p> <p>There were 324 people who took part in the survey and identified as having a disability. 35% of respondents identified as having a disability of which 50% identified that this disability affects how they travel.</p> <p>These respondents agreed with the new criteria as follows:  carbon reduction criteria: 62% of respondents agreed  Bus provision in areas of deprivation: 83% of respondents agreed  Covid recovery criteria: 59% of respondents agreed</p> <p>Survey results have been analysed to understand whether respondents with a disability agree with the proposed criteria.  Qualitative results identify that 'access &amp; social inclusion' was the highest priority for respondents. Respondents highlighted the importance of this, in particular, to rural areas, those with no other alternative transport options, the elderly and those with a disability.</p>		
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<p><b>No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage.</b> However it is widely accepted that gendered abuse and sexual harassment are particularly associated with public transport with concerns around personal safety when travelling. This will be considered in future EqlAs following application of the criteria.</p>		
<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>	<p><b>No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage.</b></p>		
<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>	<p><b>No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage,</b> however a lack of adequate public transport provision creates further barriers to accessing medical establishments providing essential maternity services. This will be considered in future EqlAs following application of the criteria.</p>		
<b>Race</b>	<p><b>No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage</b> however it is important to recognise that Bus Services are aimed at all potential users regardless of ethnicity.</p>		

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<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>	<b>No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage</b> however, consideration needs to be given to how fears and risks of violence associated with public transport disproportionately affect people because of their religion or religious beliefs.		
<b>Sex</b>	<b>No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage</b> however, it is widely recognised that women are very often constrained by several barriers that shape how they travel. Women are also more likely to travel by bus and less likely to travel by rail than men.		
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<b>No particular negative impacts have been identified at this stage</b> however, it is crucial to consider how fears and risks of violence associated with public transport proportionately affects people from the LGBT community.		

<b>Proceed to full impact assessment?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Date: 27/10/2023</b>
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**If yes, please proceed to Stage 3. If no, please publish the initial screening as part of the suite of documents relating to this issue**

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### Stage 3 Identifying impacts and evidence

This section identifies if there are impacts on equality, diversity and cohesion, what evidence there is to support the conclusion and what further action is needed

Protected characteristics	<p>Is the policy (function etc....) likely to have an adverse impact on any of the groups?</p> <p>Please include evidence (qualitative &amp; quantitative) and consultations</p> <p>List what negative impacts were recorded in Stage 1 (Initial Assessment).</p>	<p>Are there any positive impacts of the policy (function etc....) on any of the groups?</p> <p>Please include evidence (qualitative &amp; quantitative) and consultations</p> <p>List what positive impacts were recorded in <b>Stage 1</b> (Initial Assessment).</p>	<p>Please rate the impact taking into account any measures already in place to reduce the impacts identified</p> <p><b>High:</b> Significant potential impact; history of complaints; no mitigating measures in place; need for consultation</p> <p><b>Medium:</b> Some potential impact; some mitigating measures in place, lack of evidence to show effectiveness of measures</p> <p><b>Low:</b> Little/no identified impacts; heavily legislation-led; limited public facing aspect</p>	<p>Further action (only an outline needs to be included here. A full action plan can be included at Section 4)</p> <p>Once you have assessed the impact of a policy/service, it is important to identify options and alternatives to reduce or eliminate any negative impact. Options considered could be adapting the policy or service, changing the way in which it is implemented or introducing balancing measures to reduce any negative impact. When considering each option you should think about how it will reduce any negative impact, how it might impact on other groups and how it might impact on relationships between groups and overall issues around community cohesion. You should clearly demonstrate how you have considered various options and the impact of these. You must have a detailed rationale behind decisions and a justification for those alternatives that have not been accepted.</p>
Age				
Disability				
Gender reassignment				
Marriage & civil partnership				



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<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>				
<b>Race</b>				
<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>				
<b>Sex</b>				
<b>Sexual orientation</b>				

### Stage 4 Review and Conclusion

#### **Summary: provide a brief overview including impact, changes, improvement, any gaps in evidence and additional data that is needed**

Acceptance of the proposed criteria for bus service support prioritisation will be determined as a result of Committee review and detailed consultation. The Council will continue to work with specific groups and focus groups to monitor the impact of all future alterations. At this stage there will not be a direct impact on bus services as a result of this revised support criteria and therefore no material change for members of the public who share one or more protected characteristic. The future of the bus industry within Cheshire East remains uncertain, this criteria will be used as a tool to help manage future changes to the network. The criteria itself will not have an impact on the public or bus operators. Application of this criteria will require additional Equality Impact Assessments to be conducted.

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<b>Specific actions to be taken to reduce, justify or remove any adverse impacts</b>	<b>How will this be monitored?</b>	<b>Officer responsible</b>	<b>Target date</b>
Review consultation findings following the close of the consultation period	Results of consultation	Chris Taylor & Jenny Marston	September 2023
Undertake future consultation to further determine the impacts on groups identified as having a significant impact	Through stakeholder engagement.	Chris Taylor & Jenny Marston	TBC following application of criteria.

<b>When will this assessment be reviewed?</b>	This will be reviewed at following acceptance of the criteria and during future application of the criteria.
<b>Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?</b>	Yes, when the criteria is required and applied to existing services for prioritisation.

<b>Lead officer sign off</b>	Jenny Marston	<b>Date</b>	27/10/2023
<b>Head of service sign off</b>	Richard Hibbert	<b>Date</b>	13/11/2023

**Please publish this completed EIA form on the relevant section of the Cheshire East website**