

Annex 3 - Bus Back Better: National Bus Strategy for England Engagement Feedback Summary

As set out in the main report, due to the Government's very tight timescale for the development of submissions to the national Bus Back Better process, time was limited to undertaken in depth consultation with residents and stakeholders.

The below summarises the responses to the 'Surrey Says' survey and other correspondence, either directly to the team or in response to the letters sent by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

This Annex also includes a summary of a webinar held by Bus Users UK and Disability UK focused on accessibility for disabled people.

Surrey Says Summary:

The consultation ran from 30/07/2021 to 10/09/2021. 544 people completed the survey.

The survey asked people to rank the importance of various elements that would encourage or enable them to use a bus. The results against each of the questions is presented in the tables below:

How often do you use buses in a typical week?

Option	Total	Percent
I don't typically use buses	240	44.12%
1-2 journeys	141	25.92%
3-5 journeys	81	14.89%
6-8 journeys	48	8.82%
9+ journeys	34	6.25%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Importance of factors influencing bus use:

Factor	% people stating factor is Important or Very Important
The bus arrives at my stop on time and gets me to my destination when it is supposed to	98%
Information about bus services, where they go, frequency, etc, is easily available through a range of channels	94%
Buses run when I need them, e.g. weekends and evenings	93%
Buses are frequent enough meaning I don't need to be concerned about long waiting times	92%
Bus fares and ticketing options are simple and easy for me to understand, with the information readily available through different means	85%
I can easily find out how much my journey will cost, and I can pay in a variety of ways, e.g. on the bus, on-line, on my smart phone, etc	81%
Connections between buses to trains and trains to buses	78%
The bus is well presented and clean	76%

When waiting for a bus, it is safe and comfortable to so, as bus shelters and seats are provided	74%
Buses are driven by friendly staff, with modern vehicles offering good on-board facilities, such as wi-fi, mobile phone charging points, etc.	58%
The bus is operated using 'green fuels', e.g. electric or hydrogen fuel cell buses	54%

What do you want to see from investment in the Surrey bus network:

Option	Percent
More services operating in my area in the evenings and at the weekends	76.47%
Existing services in my area operating more frequently	76.47%
Enhanced safe waiting areas with shelters seating and lighting being available	38.79%
Simple easy to understand fares and ticketing options	36.21%
Bus priority measures, such as bus lanes on the road and traffic management systems being introduced to promote quicker journey times	26.10%
More demand responsive transport, that I can book in advance of travel, rather than conventional standard timetabled services	21.69%
Not Answered	1.10%

From the survey, it is clear that reliability (the bus turns up on time and gets me to my destination on time), better information, more evening and weekend services, simpler fares and ticketing structures, along with better service frequencies (so residents don't have to be concerned about long waiting times) are key factors in shaping the decisions of residents to use buses. This accords closely with data from previous Surrey and national surveys. By listening to residents and addressing these issues through the BSIP we have an opportunity to grow bus patronage and deliver on the ambition set out in Bus Back Better.

Direct Correspondence

Emails from residents to the Council about our response to the National Bus Strategy generated by the 'Surrey Says' survey focused on the following issues as the ones that they felt Surrey's BSIP needs to address:

- The current lack of frequent services and quality waiting facilities discouraging bus use
- Rural areas being particularly poorly served
- Even on routes where the buses are punctual, timetables may not suit the needs to the communities they serve
- Concern that this exercise will reduce service, not improve them

- A desire to reintroduce services that have been removed or split, as part of previous network redesigns

In addition, there was detailed feedback provided by residents on specific routes, which has been shared with relevant officers to consider with operators.

Emails from stakeholders in response to the letters sent from the Cabinet Member provided the following feedback:

- There was general supporting the development of the BSIP
- Bus services are relied open by disabled residents to contribute to the economy and socialise with friends and family
- Rural communities need to be connected to towns, shopping locations and other amenities, either with timetabled service or with Community or Demand Responsive Transport
- Fares must be cheaper and consistent across the network. Having different fare costs in the same town, for example, puts people off from travelling by bus. A TfL style low cost, single fare would make things much simpler for everyone
- Co-design with disabled people will deliver better outcomes for everyone
- Improvements to bus services will promote inclusion, improve access to employment and education
- There was a desire by several stakeholders to see an expansion of the zero emissions fleet
- Changes to services should be considered to improve access to open spaces, such as National Parks, AONBs etc to encourage more sustainable leisure travel, especially at weekends
- There is a desire by several stakeholders to see multi-operator ticketing expanded to cover more of or the whole Surrey network
- There is an aspiration to see changes to services to create transport hubs, linking with train stations particularly at weekends, to further promote sustainable transport options
- Marketing and promotion will be key to the success of the Enhanced Partnership
- To work with partners and developers to create long term sustainable transport routes for new developments
- Having better discounted ticket offers would encourage more people to travel. For example, a family ticket will make it more affordable than driving and parking
- Appropriate implementation of bus priority measures will create reliable routes for buses and other sustainable transport
- Specific measures should be included to provide time limited discounted travel to support businesses recruit new staff and also encourage staff to use sustainable transport modes

Bus Users UK and Disability UK Accessibility Webinar

Below are some key points from the national webinar event held on 20 September for Local Transport Authorities.

Presenters focused on:

- Communication and information being key for disabled people to have confidence in uses buses,
- That older and disabled people are more likely to need to use public transport,
- That improving accessibility will be of benefit to everyone, and

- Advocating co-production of communication, information and training.

The “Digital Divide” was highlighted as a key barrier. Whilst many disabled people can make use of information, offers, cheaper tickets made available online, there are many who cannot.

This cannot be ignored, and people still need information in the way they need it. For example, hard copy timetables and route maps, having information at bus stops and bus stations, as well as from drivers and other information on buses will need to continue to be provided.

Presentations focused on driver training and wider forms of accessibility. For example, dementia friendly flooring colours.

An example of how accessibility can promote bus punctuality was mentioned. This was drivers manually deploying ramps. This was on the basis that:

1. This prevents automatic ramps from failing and causing delays, and
2. Promotes driver interaction with disabled bus users.

During the same presentation, a “virtual tour” for routes across Brighton & Hove that people can use on their devices to plan and familiarise themselves with their journey in advance. For example, where the bus stop is, what the stop looks like, what the bus looks like, following the route and where you get off.

This linked to the final element of focus. That being LTAs and operators to think more about ‘Holistic Journeys.’ This puts an emphasis on:

- Information available prior to travel
- The condition of bus stops and stations
- The ease of boarding and alighting
- Information on buses - “where am I now and when do I get off?”
- That buses are a safe way to travel