

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**HIGHWAYS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT PANEL  
FRIDAY, 15 MAY 2015 AT 10.15AM**

Agenda Item No.

**3**

**CABINET  
MONDAY, 18 MAY 2015 AT 2.00PM**

Agenda Item No.

**4**

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
TUESDAY, 19 MAY 2015 AT 10.00AM**

Agenda Item No.

**4**

**BUS SERVICES CONSULTATION OUTCOME**

Report of the Chief Executive & Director of Environment

Report author: Tom Hennessey, Business Manager Transport, Access & Safety

Executive Member: Terry Douris, Highways & Waste Management

**1. Purpose of report**

- To provide Members with an analysis of the responses to the public consultation undertaken in relation to proposals to reduce the amount of funding provided by the County Council to support certain bus routes in Hertfordshire;
- To provide options for consideration by Members in light of the County Council's statutory duty under the Transport Act 1985; the responses to the consultation; the Equalities Impact Assessment appended to this report and the County Council's financial position.
- To enable the Cabinet Panel to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Council's Bus Strategy.
- To enable Cabinet to decide at its meeting on 18 May 2015 whether to amend the Bus Strategy and, if so, how.
- To enable the County Council to consider the decisions taken by the Executive at its meeting on 18 May 2015 and to decide whether to support those decisions.

## **2. Summary**

- 2.1 In 2014, a public consultation was held to seek views on proposals to withdraw funding from County Council contracted bus services which operate after 6.30pm on Mondays to Saturdays, and all day on Sundays. At its meeting on 15 December 2014, Cabinet carefully considered feedback from 4,548 responses received during that consultation and decided to modify the proposals to address some of the concerns which had been raised.
- 2.2 A second public consultation was conducted between January and April 2015 on the following amended proposals:
- Withdraw funding from contracted services which operate after 7.30pm, rather than the 6.30pm cut off point proposed previously. This would mean some services cease after 7:30pm and would produce a saving of approximately £0.525 million in a full year.
  - Withdraw funding from contracted bus services on Sundays, except for routes which directly serve hospitals until 7.30pm. This would mean some services cease running on Sundays, and those directly serving hospitals cease after 7:30pm on Sundays. This would produce a saving of approximately £0.137 million in a full year.
  - Modify Value for Money Criteria to help determine which routes and services will receive funding, taking into account a range of factors including cost per passenger journey and need. This would give a framework to the use of the county council's resources to support bus services. Use of the revised criteria would save approximately £0.809 million in a full year and would mean that some services would reduce or cease running.
  - Amend the Bus Strategy to reflect any changes in how the Council supports and funds bus services. The Bus Strategy is a document that sits within the framework of the Local Transport Plan that sets out high level transport policies and strategies. The Bus Strategy is not, however a document that needs to be approved by Council. Amendments to the Bus Strategy can be agreed by Cabinet.
- 2.3 The County Council's Integrated Plan for 2015/16 - 2017/18, agreed by Council in February 2015, includes, subject to the outcome of the recent public consultation, savings from the bus budget of £0.858m in 2015/6 and increasing to £1.471m from 2016/7 onwards. For the County Council as a whole, there remains additional savings to be found of £19.974m in 2016/17 increasing to £56.405m in 2017/18.
- 2.4 The County Council agreed in February 2015 to increase Council tax by 1.99%, the maximum permissible without a referendum.

## 2.5 Response to the consultation

2.5.1 Copies of all the responses are available to Members in the Members' Lounge.

2.5.2 The twelve week consultation closed on 10 April 2015. The responses from the 1,582 questionnaires received are summarised in the following analysis.

- Over 53% of respondents were 55 years of age or over, and 25% of respondents declared having a disability.
- 90.5% of respondents were bus users.
- 36% of respondents objected to the value for money criteria with 32% in favour.
- 69.4% of respondents were against the proposals to withdraw funding for County Council contracted services after 7.30pm with 12.5% in favour of the proposal.
- 62.8% of respondents objected to the proposals to withdraw funding from services on a Sunday (excepting those routes that directly serve hospitals) with 14.3% in favour of the proposal.

2.5.3 In addition to the consultation questionnaires received, the Council received:

- 11 petitions containing a total of approximately 1,400 signatures
- 45 formal stakeholders responses
- 83 letters and emails from individuals
- 7 letters from 4 Members of Parliament

2.5.4 1482 respondents made a wide variety of comments and suggestions for how the County Council could make savings other than those set out in the proposals. The common recurring themes were:

### 2.5.4.1 ***Reducing the frequency of services***

This approach is a possible alternative to withdrawing a number of evening and Sunday services and has the potential for achieving savings. Savings can be made by missing out certain journeys and starting later and/or finishing earlier to improve schedule efficiency. Some rural shoppers' services operating five or six days a week could run on fewer days instead. However, in order to achieve significant savings, this approach would need to be applied across all County Council contracted services and could cause a greater level of impact upon passenger journeys.

### 2.5.4.2 ***Merging bus routes***

This may be an option where the County Council provides a network of supported services but to make savings would entail reducing frequencies and / or leaving certain sections of roads unserved. Where the County Council has proposed this in the past it has attracted strong local objections.

- 2.5.4.3 ***Increasing fares***
- 2.5.4.3.1 The County Council has been raising fares on contract services by 5% annually for some years but caution is required to ensure that increased fares do not act as a deterrent on both existing and potential users. Fares levels vary considerably between commercial operators and on the whole those for County Council contracts are around the average fares mark.
- 2.5.4.3.2 Where fares could be raised significantly without risk on passenger numbers would be on those services relying very heavily on older people's concessions revenue because the average cash fare controls the concessionary reimbursement. On evening and Sunday contract services fares are kept in line with those of the commercial daytime rates. A premium fares policy for these services could be trialled as an alternative to withdrawal. However caution would be required in adopting this approach as the revenue gain might not deliver significant savings.
- 2.5.4.4 ***Charging older people concessionary pass holders a fee or annual charge for their cards***
- This is a statutory scheme free to the user and as such this is not currently an option. However, given the consistency and strength of feeling among many of the respondents and those who took part in public meetings the County Council is committed to making enquiries with the Department for Transport to gauge its appetite for reviewing this scheme.
- 2.5.4.5 ***Provide smaller buses***
- 2.5.4.5.1 When contracting services the County Council specifies the minimum capacity necessary for the journeys carrying the most passengers. The main saving that could be made from using smaller vehicles derives from their lower fuel consumption but this may be only 12-13% of total costs. Small vehicles would be cheaper to purchase but depreciation costs may be high because they are not built for the 12-15 year life of a full-size bus. The cost of the driver which is the largest cost element is unlikely to be any different and accordingly significant savings would not be achieved by adopting this measure alone.
- 2.5.4.5.2 It is recognised that the shortage of peak-only smaller buses is creating problems for the coverage of off-peak only shoppers' services and it would be desirable to investigate the cost implications of mixing small vehicle education contracts with such local bus services. Smaller vehicles would need to meet the standards of the Equality Act 2010 to operate on local bus services.
- 2.5.4.6 ***Better advertising of services***
- While information is widely available via the internet it has to be actively searched for and bus users don't necessarily check for changes on a regular basis. There is scope for a greater focus on marketing by more traditional means both to raise awareness generally and to reach those

without access to the internet, who form a significant proportion of the customer base on certain services. This would be of relatively local small-scale benefit and would not achieve significant savings.

**2.5.4.7      *Make savings elsewhere in the running of the county council***

2.5.4.7.1      The County Council could decide not to take some or all of the £1.471m identified in the Integrated Plan to be saved from the bus budget (subject to consultation). However, this level of savings would need to be found from other budgets or from additional income streams, such as use of contingency funds in 2015/16 and increases in council tax in future years.

2.5.4.7.2      The Council's general contingency budget was set at £4m per year in the Integrated Plan for 2015/16 – 2017/18. The level of contingency reflects a consideration of uncertainties within the budget, and should be set at an appropriate level for this in each year. Where the contingency is used to cover a specific event within a year, it reduces the amount remaining to cover other risks in that year. The contingency budget cannot be used on an ongoing basis to cover a specific event or decision, as the level of risk and uncertainty across the County Council as a whole is unlikely to be significantly reduced by taking out that single event.

**2.5.4.8      *Value for money criteria***

The County Council could change the proposed order of the value for money criteria when assessing which services to fund. The consultation responses suggested that the priority order should favour older passengers with the cost related criteria being lower down in the priority order. If this were to be accepted then it would result in more services, including better value for money services, being withdrawn in order to meet the savings required (and therefore affect more passenger journeys including those made by older persons).

### **3.      Options**

3.1      In making a decision on the proposed reduction to the level of support provided by the County Council to contracted bus services Members must consider the Council's statutory duties under the Transport Act 1985; the responses to the consultation and the Equalities Impact Assessment appended to this report.

3.2      Having considered the matters set out at 3.1 above and the County Council's financial position the options available to Cabinet are to:

- (i)      Adopt the proposals as set out in the consultation;
- (ii)     Adopt the proposals set out in the consultation with some amendment (for example changing the order of the value for money criteria);
- (iii)    Make the required savings of £1.471m by reducing other county council services; and

- (iv) Use contingency funds to meet the £0.858m required saving in the current financial year and consider in the Integrated Plan 2016/17 onwards other actions to balance the County Council's budget
- 3.3 The Cabinet Panel is requested to consider the matters set out at 3.1 above and to make recommendations to Cabinet. Given the timescale those recommendations will be reported orally at the Cabinet meeting and circulated to Members in the Order of Business sheet.
- 3.4 Cabinet is invited to consider the report and the recommendations of the Cabinet Panel and to reach decisions on the outcome of the Bus Consultation. The decisions reached by Cabinet on 18 May 2015 will be reported to Council at its meeting on 19 May 2015 where Council will be invited to consider those decisions and to decide whether to support them.

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1 Over 35million bus passenger journeys are made each year in Hertfordshire and the County Council uses taxpayers' money to support approximately 11% of these journeys. The proposals outlined in this consultation would affect around 2% of all the passenger journeys made in Hertfordshire and have the potential to realise savings of £1.471m a year.
- 4.2 This consultation is the second public engagement process carried out by the County Council on the amount of financial support it provides to commercial bus companies to subsidise the provision of bus services in Hertfordshire. The proportion of services funded by the County Council has been steadily reducing since 2010 but the number of bus passenger journeys has remained stable over that period as more journeys have been made on commercial services. It is therefore accepted that the public transport requirements of Hertfordshire have remained stable, what has changed is the County Council's financial position.
- 4.3 A revised Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared to consider the impacts of the amended proposals and how these could be mitigated and this is attached at Appendix A to the report.

#### **5. Consultation Process**

- 5.1 The public consultation process was planned and carried out with support from Corporate Communications and covered the whole of the County.
- 5.2 The consultation was made available to all users and key stakeholders for comment via:
- the internet/website/digital media
  - local libraries (hard copy and access to the internet)
  - key stakeholder/operators/bus user groups and forums
  - Intalink vehicle, which visited 16 sites during the consultation (hard copies)
  - District and borough council offices reception areas (hard copies)

### 5.3 Consultation document

3,500 printed copies were circulated to the Council's Customer Service Centre, libraries and district and borough councils, with electronic versions emailed to all parish and town councils. All hard copies came with a freepost return option.

### 5.4 Intalink Bus

5.4.1 The Intalink Bus is a free mobile passenger transport information service. It travels around the County visiting key town centre locations. The driver of the vehicle has extensive knowledge about the Hertfordshire (and surrounding counties) bus network and is always happy to assist members of the public. On board there are printed publications as well as internet access to the Intalink website.

5.4.2 The vehicle also visits business parks to promote sustainable transport options to employees. It is used as an instrumental tool when promoting any new product or campaign including this bus consultation. The following table sets out the dates when the Intalink Bus visited towns to distribute the bus consultation questionnaire to the public.

Date	Location	Date	Location
20th Jan	Borehamwood	17th Feb	Rickmansworth
22nd Jan	Royston	18th Feb	St Albans
28th Jan	Hatfield	19th Feb	Hemel Hempstead
29th Jan	Stevenage	24th Feb	Ware
30th Jan	Welwyn Garden City	25th Feb	Hoddesdon
3rd Feb	Watford	26th Feb	Letchworth
4th Feb	Waltham Cross	27th Feb	Hitchin
5th Feb	Bishops Stortford	2nd March	Buntingford
10th Feb	Croxley Green Business Park	4th March	Baldock
11th Feb	Carpenders Park	5th March	Potters Bar
12th Feb	Hertford	12th March	Berkhamsted
13th Feb	Tring		

### 5.5 Posters and Flyers

250 posters and 3,000 flyers were circulated to all libraries, district and borough councils, parish and town councils as well as bus contractors and the Intalink vehicle.

### 5.6 Press releases

Press releases were sent to the media on the dates below:

- 15 December 2014 – informing of the decision made by Cabinet and the next steps
- 19 January 2015 – launch of the consultation
- 19 March 2015 – last few weeks reminder

### 5.7 Schools bulletin

An article in the schools bulletin was issued in February 2015.

### 5.8 HertsDirect Website

News articles went on the front page of HertsDirect on the dates below. The article was up for 5 days on each occasion.

- 19 January 2015 - launch of bus consultation
- 19 February 2015 - one month in
- 10 March 2015 - one month to go
- 7 April 2015 – reminding people it was the last week of the consultation

### 5.9 Horizons

An article informing the public that the consultation was live and encouraging people to have their say was issued in the spring edition of Horizons which goes to every household in the county. This was delivered to households from the week commencing 2 March 2015.

### 5.10 Twitter

The County Council has over 28,000 followers and the following proactive messages below were tweeted and added to our Facebook page:

Date	Message
15 Dec 2014	Cabinet today approved a further consultation starting January into the money we provide buses. Please keep updated at <a href="http://www.hertsdirect.org/bus">www.hertsdirect.org/bus</a>
19 Jan 2015	Our next bus consultation launched today. Please have your say on the 11% of bus journeys we fund <a href="http://www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult">www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult</a>
19 Feb 2015	The bus consultation is one month in. Please take 10 minutes to have your say <a href="http://t.co/54QyD97ckA">http://t.co/54QyD97ckA</a>
25 Feb 2015	Interested in having your say on how we spend some of your money? Visit our bus consultation online <a href="http://t.co/yYxPKSZiCr">http://t.co/yYxPKSZiCr</a>
2 March 2015	If you haven't had your say on our bus consultation please do, there is just over a month left <a href="http://www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult">www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult</a>
14 March 2015	Taken the bus to go shopping? Have your say on HCC funded services online <a href="http://t.co/r58ylj829N">http://t.co/r58ylj829N</a>
23 March 2015	There are only a few weeks left to have your say on how we fund local bus services. Fill in the online survey <a href="http://www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult">www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult</a>
3 April 2015	One week left to have your say about how we spend taxpayer money on bus services. Please fill in a survey online <a href="http://www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult">www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult</a>
7 April 2015	If you have a paper copy of the bus consultation please send these to the freepost address on the form.
9 April 2015	Take a moment to take part in the bus consultation at <a href="http://t.co/lx1bKXJq6z">http://t.co/lx1bKXJq6z</a> it closes at midnight tomorrow
10 April 2015	At midnight tonight the survey into how we fund local bus services closes. Take 10 mins to have your say <a href="http://www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult">www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult</a>



## 5.11 Facebook

Date	Post
19 January 2015	Today we launched a consultation into the funding we provide for bus services in Hertfordshire. Please have your say online at <a href="http://www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult">www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult</a>
10 March 2015	There is a month left to take part in the bus consultation. If you haven't had your say yet please do at <a href="http://www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult">www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult</a> by 10 April
9 April 2015	The bus consultation closes at midnight tomorrow. Please have your say online at <a href="http://www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult">www.hertsdirect.org/busconsult</a> We need your views to shape how we support bus services in Hertfordshire

## 6. Consultation Findings

6.1 Of the 1582 questionnaires received, 1249 electronic, 304 postal and 29 easy-read responses are included in this analysis. The questions in the easy-read document differed from those in the public engagement questionnaire. Where possible, responses to the easy-read document have been matched to the main public engagement questionnaire and included in the analysis. Copies of the public engagement questionnaire can be found in Appendix B and the Easy Read questionnaire is in Appendix C to this report.

### 6.2 Petitions:

At the time of writing, the Council has received 11 petitions regarding the proposals with a total of approximately 1,400 signatures<sup>1</sup> and has been made aware of a further petition, said to contain over 3,000 signatures.

**Table 1**

	Title	Petitioner	Signatures
1	Stop cuts to bus services in Hertfordshire	I M Herts (Mr)	7
2	Stop cuts to bus services in Hertfordshire	Leon Reeve	125
3	Stop the 388 bus service cuts	Caroline McFarlane	236
4	Save the greens 388	Gary O'Leary	176
5	Call on HCC not to proceed with proposals to cut routes 23, 24 and 25 serving villages in North Herts	Cllr Steve Jarvis Lib Dem North Herts DC	124
6	LG Bus Petition Strongly object to proposed reduction of bus service to and from Little Gaddesden during the week and removal of all buses at the weekend	Residents of Little Gaddesden	219
7	Save your bus into "HA1"RPENDEN	Carlo Gonzalez-Thomas	149

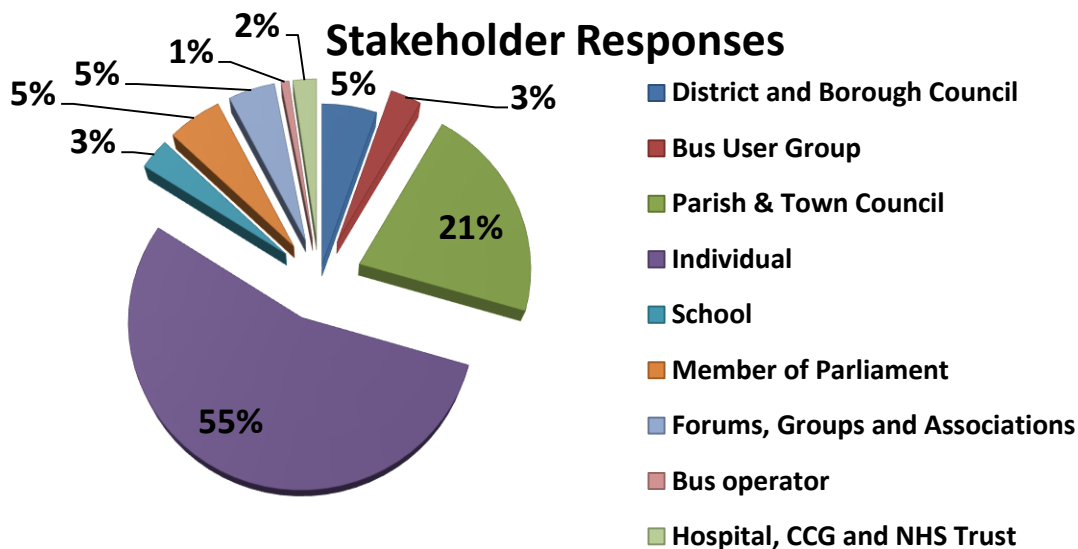
<sup>1</sup> The number of petitioners may have risen by the meeting of the Highways and Waste Panel on 15<sup>th</sup> May. It is not known whether some people signed more than one petition

8	Withdrawal of the 322 bus service	Margaret Bland (Mrs)	212
9	People who do not have access to the internet and were unable to obtain a paper copy of the survey. Focus is on access to the Lister Hospital	Residents of Letchworth Garden City	50
10	Call upon Herts County Council to listen to local residents and cancel their proposed bus cuts.	Stephen Giles-Medhurst	100+
11	Petition signatures against withdrawal of 322 bus service	Ciaran Holmes	95

### 6.3 Stakeholder Responses

6.3.1 In addition to the petitions identified above the Council also received:

- 45 formal stakeholders responses
- 83 letters and emails from individuals
- 7 letters from 4 Members of Parliament



**Figure 1** – Pie chart illustrating the sources of stakeholder correspondence

6.3.2 Over half of the stakeholder correspondence was received from individual members of the public through letters or emails direct to the County Council. The overwhelming majority - 98.5% (133) - of those who made written representations expressed concerns and issues about the proposals with 1.5% (2) broadly supportive of proposals.

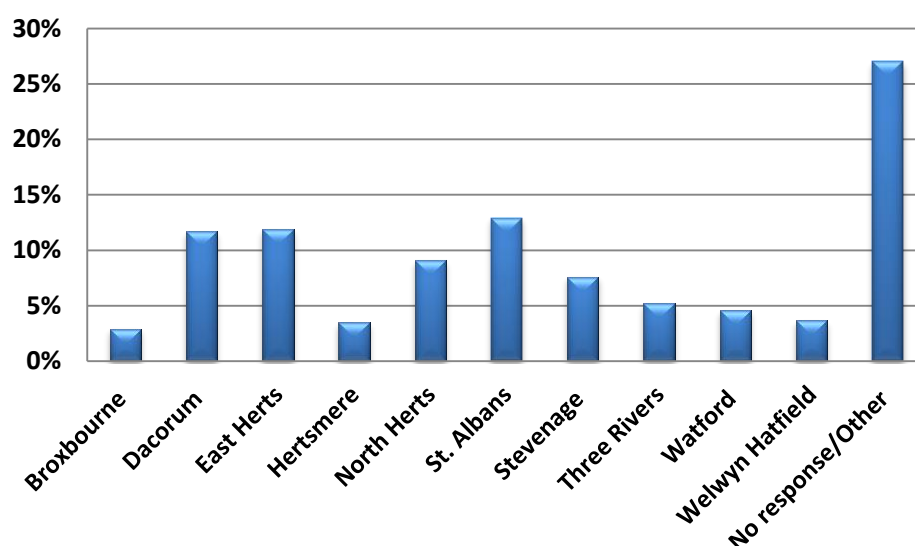
6.3.3 A full summary of the stakeholder responses is in Appendix D to the report.

### 6.4 Demographic information

The public engagement questionnaires were analysed to enable a better understanding of respondents' demographic characteristics, taking into account home postcode, gender, age, disability, caring responsibilities, ethnicity, first language and religion.

### 6.4.1 Respondents by district<sup>\*2</sup>

- 6.4.1.1 Responses were received from residents in every district and borough in the County. The majority of respondents provided their postcode. However, several respondents provided a partial postcode. Partial postcodes that detailed the postcode district (for example, HP4) were allocated to the district based on where the majority of postcodes from the postcode district lie. For example, 'HP\$' (which is assumed to be a typographical error which should read HP4) were allocated to Dacorum. 428 respondents did not give a postcode; gave an unidentifiable postcode or entered a postcode outside of Hertfordshire.
- 6.4.1.2 1154 respondents inserted a response that was categorised into one of the 10 districts and boroughs in Hertfordshire. Of these, the highest number of responses was received from St Albans' residents (13%) and the lowest number from Broxbourne Borough residents (3%). 428 respondents did not provide a postcode enabling categorisation to a district.



**Figure 2** – Bar chart displaying the number of responses from each Hertfordshire district. Respondents who did not enter a postcode, gave an unidentifiable postcode or who reside outside of Hertfordshire are represented with "No response/Other".

### 6.5 Gender\*

41.6% of respondents were male and 47.8% were female. 10.6% of respondents chose not to disclose their gender.

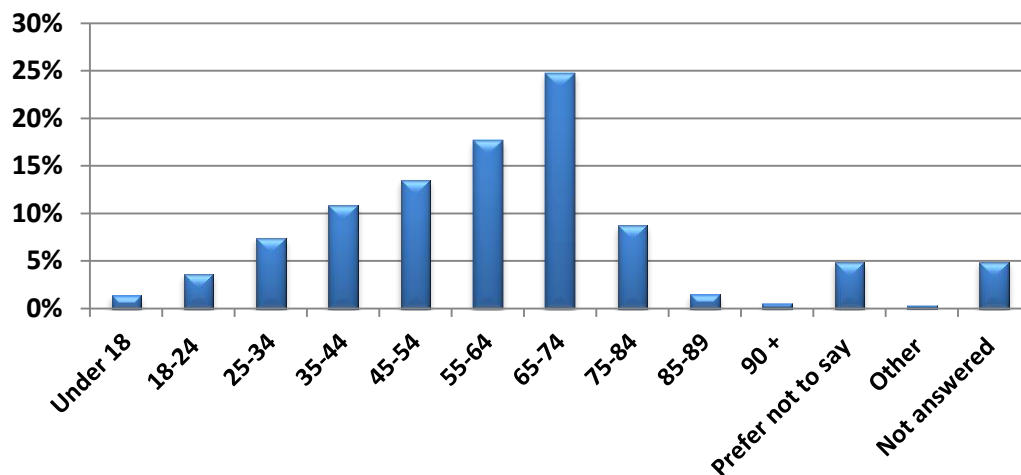
### 6.6 Age\*

The majority of respondents (53%) were over 55 years of age with the largest cohort of respondents in the 65-74 age bracket. The paper and online versions of the public engagement questionnaire gave respondents a list of boxes to select their age range from. The Easy Read consultation document provided a free text box for respondents to insert their age. As a result some

<sup>2</sup> Of the 1582 questionnaires received, 29 were Easy Read responses. Data that includes the 29 Easy Read responses is marked with an \*. Where it does not include the Easy Read responses, data uses the remaining 1553 responses

of the easy read responses could not be categorised into the age bands contained in the general questionnaire because responses included for example '40-50' and '50 and above'. These responses have been categorised as 'Other'.

### Percentage of respondents by Age Group



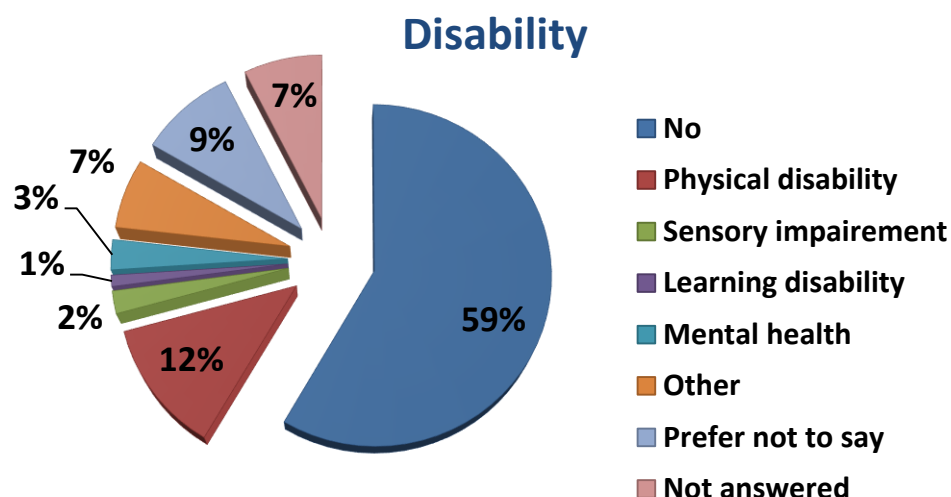
**Figure 3** – Bar graph chart illustrating the percentage of respondents from each age group

- 1505 respondents chose a response
- 77 respondents did not choose a response

## 6.7 Disability\*

6.7.1 Respondents who completed the online and paper version of the public engagement questionnaire were asked to indicate whether they had a disability and were given a number of options to select from including an 'other' option where respondents could specify. Respondents who completed the easy read version were asked to indicate whether they had a disability by selecting "Yes" or "No" but were not asked to specify the type of disability. Therefore, "Yes" responses were categorised as "Other".

6.7.2 Of those who responded to this question, 25% indicated that they had a disability. Physical disability was selected most often (12%). Responses in the 'other' category included conditions such as 'diabetes', issues relating to old age and mobility such as "just ageing!" and "bad knee" .

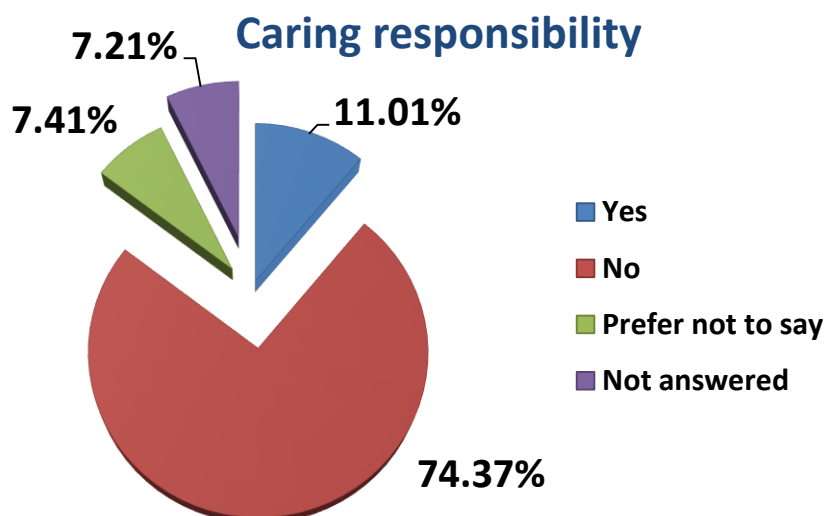


**Figure 4** – Pie chart illustrating the percentage of respondents who considered themselves to have a disability

- 1465 respondents chose a response
- 117 respondents did not choose a response

## 6.8 Caring responsibilities

11% of respondents reported that they had a caring responsibility for an adult and/or a child with a disability. 7.2% of respondents did not answer the question



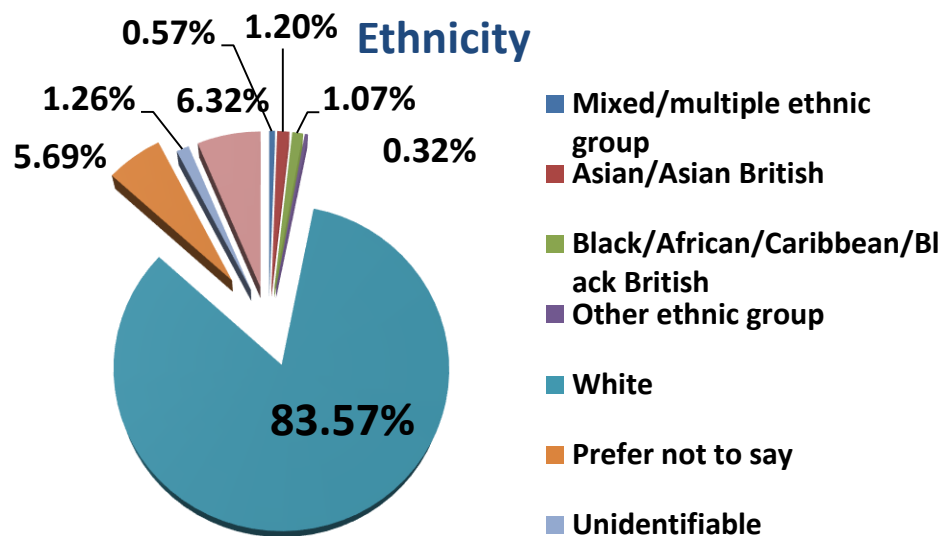
**Figure 5** - Pie chart illustrating the percentage of respondents who indicated that they have a caring responsibility for an adult and/or child with a disability

- 1441 respondents chose a response
- 112 respondents did not respond

## 6.9 Ethnicity\*

6.9.1 The majority of respondents (83.57%) reported they were White. 5.69% of respondents chose 'prefer not to say'. Less than 4% of respondents identified themselves as Asian/Asian British, Black / African / Caribbean / Black, Black British, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group.

6.9.2 6.32% did not answer this question and 1.26% of the respondents selected more than one ethnic group. These respondents were categorised under 'Unidentifiable'



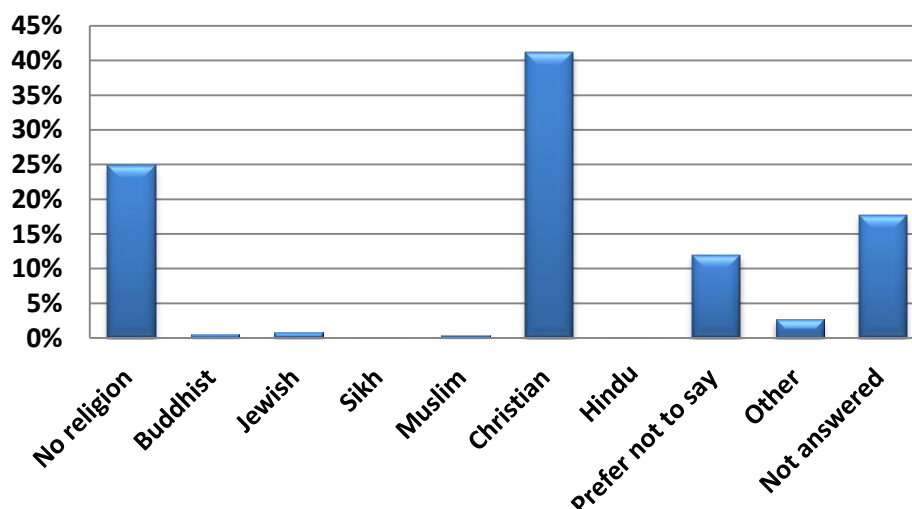
**Figure 6** pie chart illustrating the ethnic background of respondents

- 1482 respondents chose a response
- 100 respondents did not choose a response

## 6.10 Religion\*

41.2% of respondents identified themselves as being Christian, less than 5% of respondents indicated other religions such as Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim or identified with another religion. The most frequent response in the "Other" category was Church of England with other responses including Roman Catholic, Pagan and Jedi. 17.6% of respondents did not respond to the question. 24.8% stated that they did not have a religion and 12% preferred not to say.

### Respondents by Faith



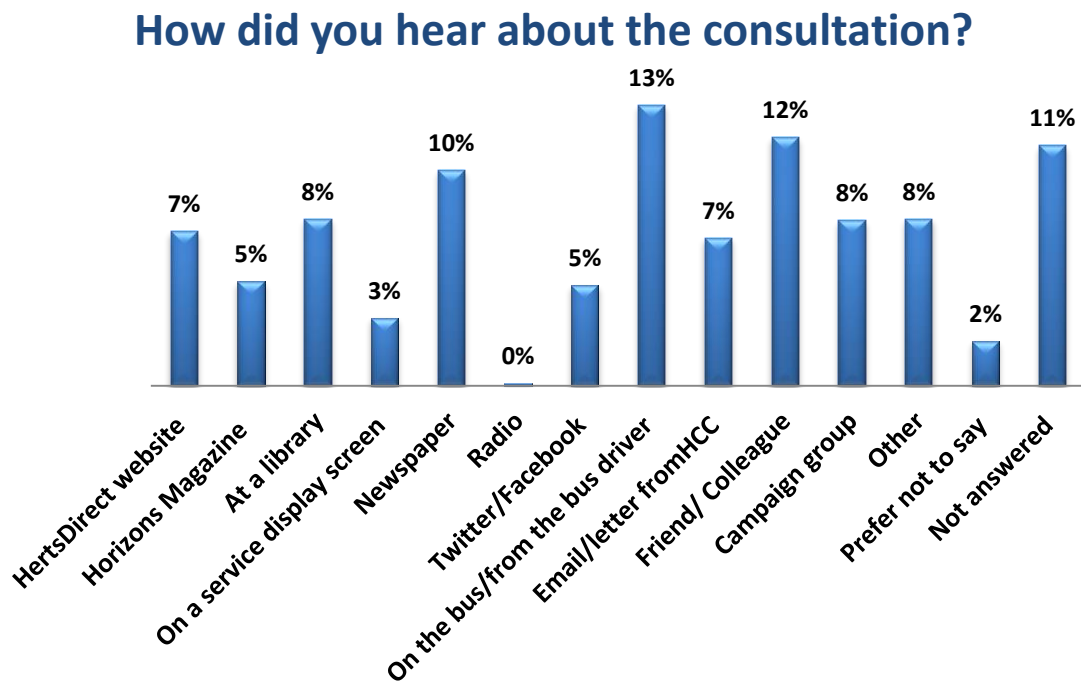
**Figure 7-** bar chart illustrating the number of responded from different religions

- 1303 respondents chose a response

- 279 respondents did not choose a response

### 6.11 Awareness of the consultation

Respondents were asked to indicate how they were made aware of the consultation. Those who completed the questionnaire online could only tick one option. Respondents who completed the questionnaire on paper were able to tick multiple options. For the purposes of analysis, only the first option selected by those who ticked multiple options in the paper responses has been included in this analysis. Figure 8 below shows that the most common sources of information about the consultation were obtained on the bus and/or from the bus driver, from a friend or colleague or from their local newspaper.



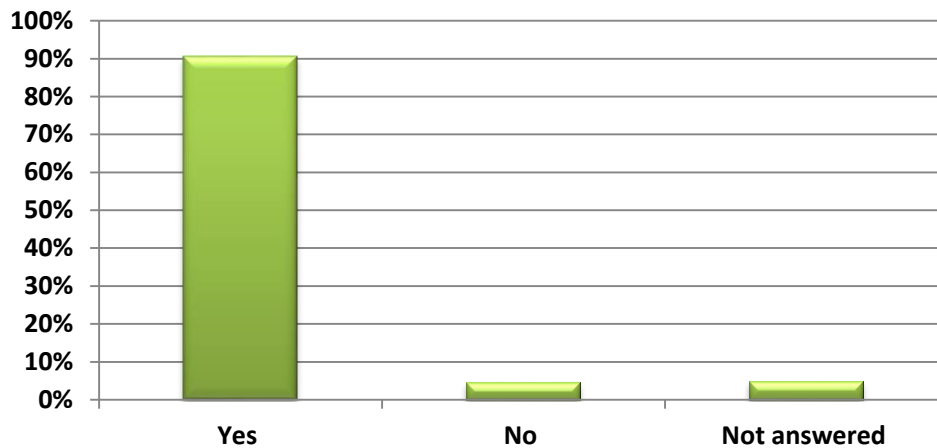
**Figure 8** - bar chart illustrating the ways respondents heard about the consultation

- 1376 respondents chose a response
- 177 respondents did not choose a response

### 6.12 Bus usage

6.12.1 Respondents were asked whether they were a bus user or not. 90.5% indicated that they were bus users.

6.12.2 Respondents who indicated that they were not bus users were directed to omit four questions about bus usage (to go from Question 1, directly to Question 6.). Similarly, bus users were directed not to complete Question 6. However, non-bus users and bus users did occasionally respond to these questions. All respondents' answers to these questions have been included in the analysis.

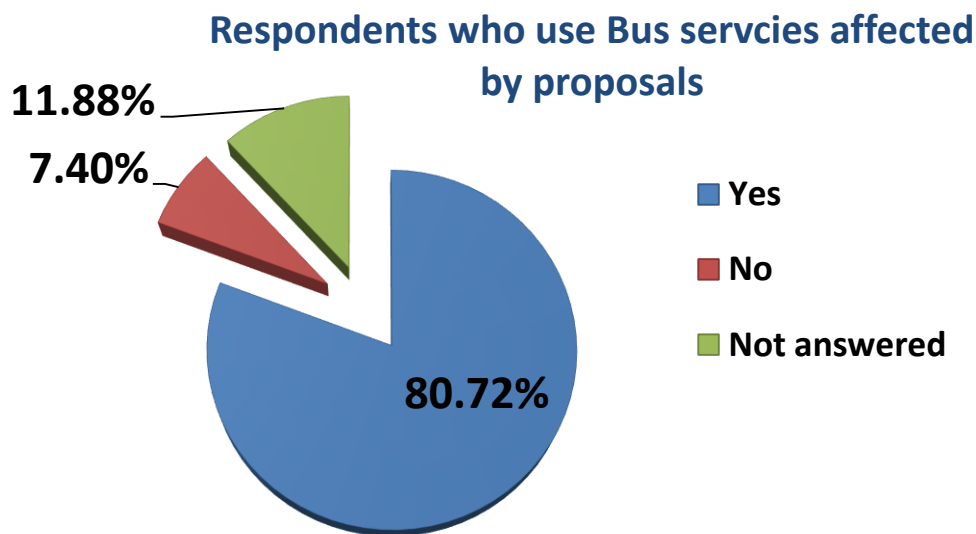


**Figure 9** Bar chart illustrating the number of respondents who travel by bus in Hertfordshire

- 1477 respondents gave a response
- 76 respondents did not answer

### 6.13 Services Used\*

6.13.1 Respondents were asked if they travel by bus on one or more of the County Council contracted services listed in the consultation documentation at Table A (in Appendix B). 80.7% of respondents indicated they used services directly funded by the County Council. Those who responded 'No' to this question were directed straight to Question 6, however not all respondents left out the questions in between.

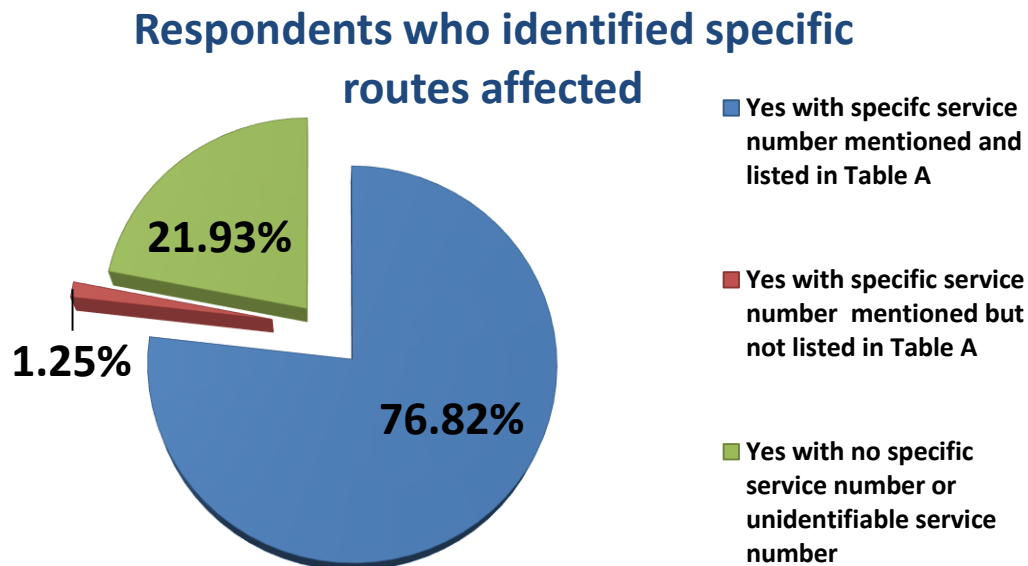


**Figure 10** Pie chart illustrating the percentage of responses travelling by bus on one or more of the services listed in Table A

- 1277 respondents answered 'Yes' and 117 answered 'No'
- 188 respondents did not answer the question

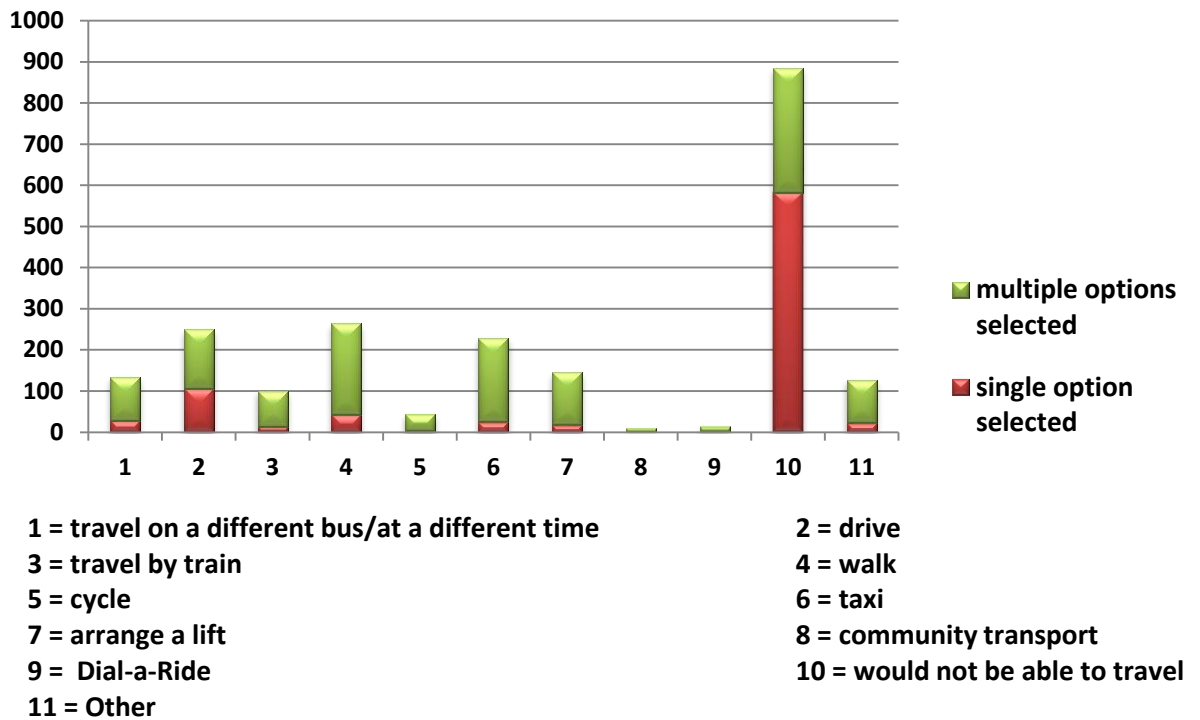
6.13.2 Respondents were asked to specify which bus services they used. The 1277 who responded 'Yes' to travelling by one or more of the buses listed in Table A, were grouped into three categories and represented in Figure 11 below:





**Figure 11** Pie chart illustrating the 1277 respondents who responded 'Yes' to travelling by bus on one or more of the services listed in Table A

- 6.13.3 Responses categorised as 'listed in Table A' should be treated with caution as it is not possible to establish the time of day when respondents used the services and therefore if they would be affected by the proposals.
- 6.13.4 In addition, it should be noted that some service numbers are run by multiple operators. For example, the number 10 services operated by both Redline and Centrebus are included in Table A and are affected by the proposals; however the number 10 Arriva service is not.
- 6.13.5 Where respondents only specified a service number without the operator, it was assumed this was a service listed in Table A.
- 6.13.6 Of those who indicated 'Yes' and specified a service number, 522 gave multiple responses and 475 gave single responses. For those who gave multiple responses, if at least one of their bus routes was listed in Table A it was categorised as affected.
- 6.13.7 6 respondents answering the online questionnaire commented that they were unable to access Table A.
- 6.14 Alternative travel options\***
- 6.14.1 To better understand what alternative travel options bus users might have, respondents were asked in Question 4 of the consultation questionnaire to indicate how they would travel if the bus they used was not available. Respondents could make multiple responses and record additional options.
- 6.14.2 The most frequently selected option (40.2%) was "Could not travel", followed by "Walking" (12%) then "Drive myself" (11.3%) and "Taxi" (10.4%). All responses by category are shown in Figure 12 below.



**Figure 12** Bar chart illustrating the alternative travel options if the bus service were not available

- 1373 respondents answered the question
- 209 respondents did not answer the question
- Respondents were able to select multiple options.
- 302 respondents who selected 'I would not be able to travel' also ticked another travel option.
- 583 respondents who selected 'I would not be able to travel' selected this as their only response.
- 127 respondents selected the 'Other' as at least one of their alternative travel options.

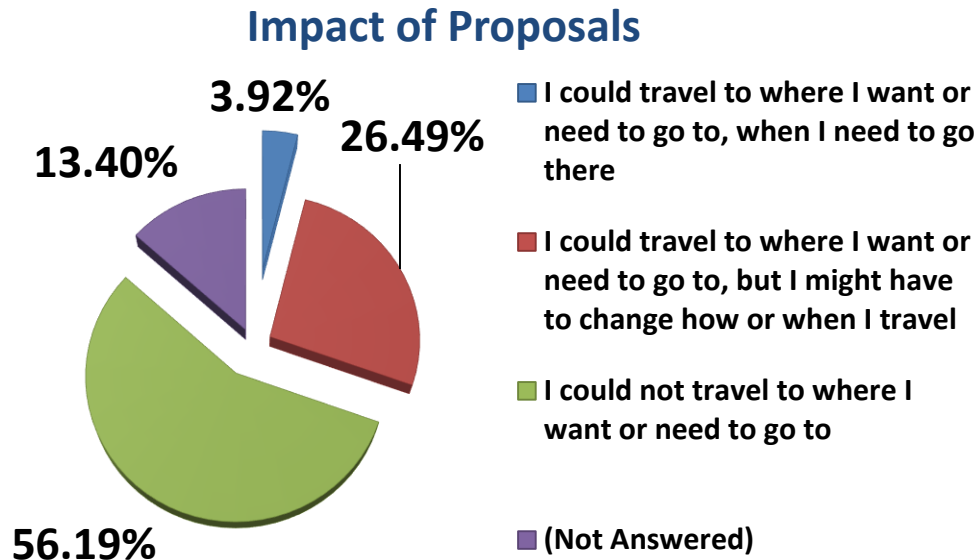
#### 6.14.3 Comments within the alternative travel option were varied, ranging from<sup>3</sup>:

- "I would have to rely totally on a family member giving me a lift – very difficult and restricting"
- "i would have to use at least two bus one to get to edgware from there another bus , instead of a journey of 1 hour , it could take me at least two hours"
- "I would only ask neighbours for a lift if it was absolutely essential like Dr appointment many things I just couldn't go."
- Options within the easy read questionnaire for the same question did not include 'arrange a lift', 'use community transport' or 'use Dial-a-Ride'.
- "Train" to "THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE". Some respondents used the "Use another alternative" category to clarify that, although they had selected "Taxi", this option would be too expensive, for example "cant afford taxi".

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this report the example comments shown are exact extracts from respondents and have not been edited for spelling, grammar or added emphasis such as using capitals.

## 6.15 Impact of proposals\*

6.15.1 Question 5 of the consultation questionnaire asked respondents to select an option indicating the likely impact the proposals would have on them. 56.2% of respondents said they would not be able to travel to where they wanted or needed to go with 30.4% suggesting they could still travel.



**Figure 13** - Pie chart illustrating the impact of reducing or withdrawing the service(s) on respondents

- 1370 respondents answered the multiple choice part of the question
- 212 (13.4%) respondents did not answer the multiple choice part of the question

6.15.2 Respondents were asked to add any other comments relating to the possible impact that reducing or withdrawing services might have on them. These responses were grouped into themes and are represented in 6.15.8 and 6.15.9 below. It is to be noted that a single response could have multiple themes.

6.15.3 Of the 13.4% of respondents who did not answer the multiple choice part of the question about what impact reducing or withdrawing the service(s) would have, 1.4% respondents made comments in the free text box which were categorised with the rest of the responses.

6.15.4 64.8% of respondents made additional comments in the free text box (including comments made by respondents who did not answer the multiple choice part of the question)

6.15.5 1.9% of respondents indicated that the reduction or withdrawal of services would have *little or no impact* on them personally either because they had access to a car or because they were not frequent bus users. However some of these respondents expressed concerns for different groups of people including the elderly, those on low income etc. as well as concern for the environmental impact of the proposals.

6.15.6 As an example comments were given such as: *“If bus is withdrawn, I will use my car, but there is no parking in Harpenden and would go against the Council's green policy”*

*“I am fortunate to own a car. I am concerned about the impact the cuts would have on those unable to drive, or who cannot afford to drive. Abbots Langley, Bedmond and Hunton Bridge will be cut off from local towns and hospitals in the evenings. The cuts will overwhelmingly hit the poor and sick. Hertfordshire can do better than this!”*

6.15.7 11 respondents made reference to the housing developments and the associated need for bus services as a result. For example: *“There are also hundreds of new houses being built in Buntingford and you are planning to get rid of all public transport? It's foolish.”*

*“WE ALREADY HAVE A VERY LIMITED SERVICE (ONLY 2 HOURLY) WITH ALL THE DEVELOPMENT MUTED FOR BUNTINGFORD IT IS UTTER MADNESS TO REDUCE IT OR REMOVE IT ALTOGETHER!!!”*

6.15.8 Respondents raised a variety of concerns associated with the proposals. These related to:

- Personal finance – the possibility of job loss, the need to move house, or increased travel fares
- Safety – the need to walk in the dark and increased risk of drink driving
- Accessibility (excluding to hospitals and medical services) – the ability to access local amenities and transport connections
- Access to hospitals – the ability to access hospitals either as a member of staff, patient or visitor
- Lack of alternative transport provision – limited or no access to alternative travel options and the prohibitive cost of taxis
- Future need for the bus service – a desire to have the bus services maintained so that these are available in the future should they be needed
- Well-being – increased isolation and the associated health risks
- Economic impact – loss of income for businesses
- Environmental impact – adverse environmental impact caused by an increase in car usage

6.15.9 Table 2 below identifies the number of respondents who raised concerns or issues relating to the impact of the proposed reduction or withdrawal of services.

**Table 2**

<b>Concern/issue</b>	<b>Example comments</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>
Accessibility concern	<p>"It would restrict the journeys that I made. It is a long way to have to walk if I have heavy shopping or the weather is bad."</p> <p>" Restrict my daily movements considerably"</p>	700
Lack of alternative transport	<p>"It would be bad because it would cost more to take a taxi and disabled living allowance does not give enough money to enable me to do this. It restricts my travel. I have free bus pass but cannot use it on a taxi."</p> <p>" I refer to the 88 bus service which runs from Luton to Hitchin. I live in Breachwood Green- there is no alternative. For health reasons I cannot drive. If the above service was withdrawn, myself and others from this and surrounding villages would be stranded."</p>	299
Financial concern	<p>"I would lose my job if I couldn't get into work by bus too far to walk with my conditions."</p> <p>" I could not afford taxis and being dependent on lifts would severely affect my lifestyle."</p>	255
Access to hospitals	<p>"Couldn't get to hospital appointments or travel in the evenings. I also use the W1 on Sundays."</p> <p>" This could affect my job as I work at the hospital on 8am to 8pm shifts."</p>	119
Wellbeing concern	<p>This would severely limit my ability to socialise in the evenings. It would mean that I would become isolated.</p> <p>" I would be unable to visit my mentally disabled son after 7:30 at night or at weekends. Neither would he be able to visit."</p>	85
Safety concern	<p>"I have to travel back late at night and I would not feel safe if I had to walk the 3 miles home. Therefore a bus would be much safer."</p> <p>"... I would consider walking in the evenings but as a pensioner do not feel it would be safe."</p>	70
Environmental impact	<p>"...BAD for the environment. More pollution from more cars. The incessant desire to build everywhere is causing enough environmental</p>	59

	<p>issues.”</p> <p>“ Any plans to limit people's access to public transport flies in the face of climate change and our aging population. We should be increasing public transport services, not decreasing them.”</p>	
Future concern	<p>“I am concerned that as I get older it will be harder to make alternative arrangements at a time when I expect my reliance on public transport to increase. Currently I only use the buses occasionally.”</p> <p>“ I am retired and use the buses frequently, although I still drive. As I get older I am less likely to be able to afford to keep a car so will rely entirely on the buses.”</p>	47
Economic impact	<p>“ I would not be able to afford taxis so my evening socialising &amp; spending in Hertford town (&amp; contributing to the town economy) would be significantly reduced.”</p> <p>“ Cutting funding or removing services will limit aalot of people and will have a massive aafct on peoples day to day lives. Risking jobs and businesses.”</p>	30

6.15.10 Table 3 below illustrates the number of respondents who raised concerns or issues relating to the impact of the proposed reduction or withdrawal of services on particular groups of people.

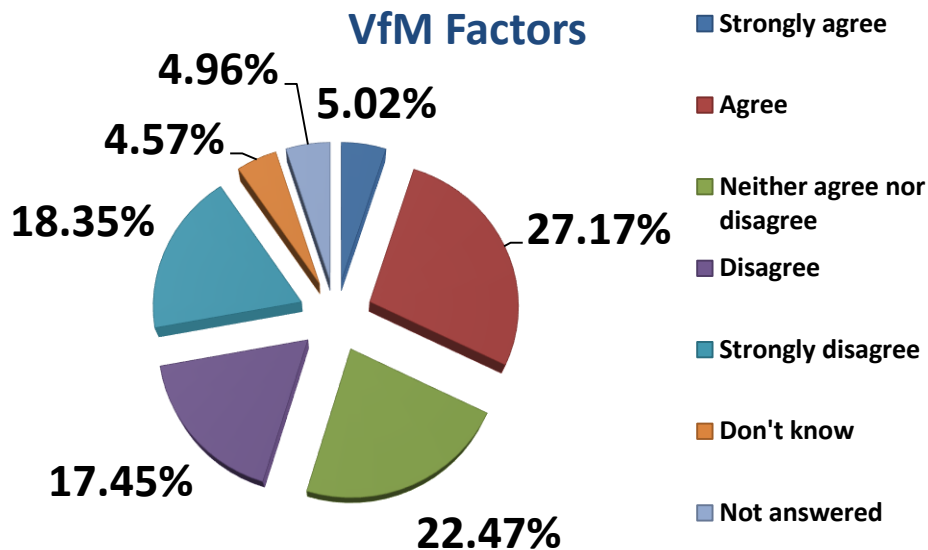
**Table 3**

<b>Impact on particular groups</b>	<b>Example comment</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>
Older adults	<p>“... there are many older people who could become isolated with any loss of service”</p> <p>“...a bus on a Saturday is a lifeline, both for shopping and social aspects, reducing loneliness especially for the elderly.”</p>	74
Others	<p>“ reducing and withdrawing services making life difficult for people who don't have any other mean of transport”</p> <p>“... But using the service I see how important it is for other local people who have difficulties just getting to the bus stop. No way could they walk up to 3 miles to the town centre.”</p>	54

Rural communities	<p>" Please consider seriously the impact on people who live in rural villages, as I do. Life would be very difficult without the bus services we currently have which are not very frequent currently."</p> <p>" Bus services are a lifeline to students and shift workers especially those living in rural communities"</p>	43
Children and young people	<p>".. bus services are a basic requirement of the elderly, disabled and our children..."</p> <p>"...Also, it isn't just older people who use the service, in the evening, you get quite a few youngsters using it too so any changes are going to make it difficult for them too."</p>	43
Commuters and shift workers	<p>" The 653 is the only bus service to the Jersey Farm area of St Albans. There are a significant number of commuters in that area who use the bus service. The loss of the evening service would mean those individuals when working late would have the additional costs of a taxi to get home."</p> <p>" I think it's so wrong. Low paid workers, shift workers, the elderly will all have problems travelling..."</p>	30
People who have a disability	<p>" Impact on other elderly &amp; disabled people locally who rely on bus would be high"</p> <p>"...You are discriminating against the elderly, disabled, every section of society which rely on buses to travel."</p>	24
People with lower incomes	<p>"the village bus services are vital lifelines for less well off residents who really dont have the option to fall back on rail or car journeys."</p> <p>"... The proposals descriminate against the aged, poor or disabled"</p>	21

## 6.16 Value for Money factors

6.16.1 Question 6 asked respondents to consider the choice of factors for the amended value for money criteria which the County Council is proposing to use to assess whether a particular bus services should be funded or not. 32.2% of respondents were in favour of the list of factors with 35.8% against the proposed list.



**Figure 14** – Pie chart illustrating agreement or disagreement with the Value for Money choice of factors

- 1476 respondents answered the multiple choice part of the question
- 77 respondents did not answer the multiple choice part of the question

6.16.2 Those that disagreed with the proposed list of factors were asked to indicate why, and to indicate any factors they thought should be omitted or added. Responses were categorised into common themes (see paragraph 6.16.4 below).

6.16.3 35.8% (556) respondents selected either 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' in the multiple choice part of the question. Of these 86% (479) made additional comments in the free text box which are summarised below.

6.16.4 Table 4 below shows the number of respondents who suggested different factors which should be added.

**Table 4**

Concern/issue	Example comment	No. of respondents
Impact on particular groups of people	<p>" There appears to be no criteria for the disadvantaged nor for impact on the environment nor for the safety of elderly, disabled etc."</p> <p>"The isolation of rural communities should be added. This mainly affects elderly, disabled and young passengers."</p>	49
Environmental Impact	<p>" Environmental sustainability and the public good should be primary criteria of 'value'."</p> <p>"Climate change should be a factor in deciding whether or not to provide public transport."</p>	35
Purpose of bus usage	"Should also consider whether bus is used for commuting, e.g. it goes to a business park."	18



	<p>" These factors are all relevant but I suggest access to leisure facilities should be a factor too, and also connections with other travel modes such as trains..."</p>	
Accessibility to services (e.g. shops)	<p>".... Also passengers who use the buses for their leisure activities."</p> <p>"... The loss of cost benefit analysis and wider benefits is negative. Access to schools, places of employment shopping and leisure, and reasons to do with the local economy and social isolation and health ignored"</p>	16
Economic impact	<p>" Need to consider local community and businesses benefitting from bus passengers spending money in the local community."</p> <p>" The proposed changes are based on a narrow interpretation of what constitutes value for money. The following questions have not been considered:... the potential impact on commercial development and the local economy"</p>	16
Social impact	<p>"... Also more attention should be given to socio-economic factors in the travelling population."</p> <p>".. why no assessment of the social impact in terms of the number of people who will no longer be able to work as a result of the short sighted council decision?"</p>	14
Future change	<p>"You have not factored in growth in population in the North."</p> <p>" ADD Increased use in future for elderly population growth..."</p>	7
Access to hospitals	<p>" It should include access to hospitals or other healthcare."</p> <p>"Visits to hospitals should feature - how will poor people visit sick relatives?"</p>	6

6.16.5 Other factors that were suggested for inclusion in the criteria were safety, public good, the availability of parking and wellbeing effects. Example comments included: *"I think that potential passenger safety should be an issue. i.e. if the buses were unavailable, is there going to be an increased risk when people walking in the dark after 7.30pm?"*  
*" There is no quality of life factor. Economic criteria are not the only factors."*

6.16.6 Table 5 below shows the number of respondents who identified one or more of the existing factors which should be omitted

**Table 5**

Existing factors to be omitted	No. of respondents
1. The availability of commercial/other bus services in the area	12
2. The cost per passenger on each service	32
3. The number of passengers	18
4. The level of use by elderly	5
5. Other alternatives available, including choice of destinations	8
6. The net cost of contracts	13
7. The likely future role of the service	7
8. Travel by young people for whom the county council has a statutory duty to provide transport between home and school/college	4

6.16.7 66 respondents made comments about the question or on why the existing factors are not appropriate or should be modified. For example “ *Unclear as to how these would work in practice? They are so broad they could interpreted differently in any situation leading to lack of clarity as to why some routes continue and some don't.*”

*“There are no other commercial bus services in the area. It shouldn't go on the amount of passengers but on their individual need. Each passenger will be different. Some need it to get to and from work, others to visit family or hospital patients. For others it is a life-line and the only way they can get out and see others.”*

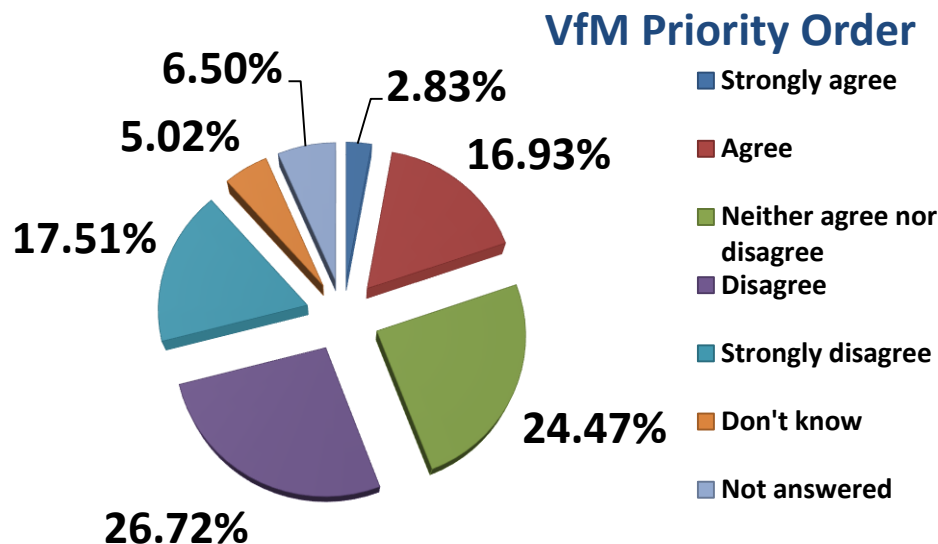
6.16.8 Some respondents took the opportunity to emphasise the importance of certain criteria on the list for example “ *Item 4 is the most important item that you should be considering at this time.*”

6.16.9 A large number of responses did not make reference to the Value for Money criteria factors listed but made general comments on disagreement with the proposals, the importance of the bus services, the impact on their lives and so on.

6.16.10 Example comments include: “ *Why should any person with or without bus passes suffer because the Government or local Authority can't find money to fund service at anytime of day or night if London can do it so can you.*”  
*“People would use buses more if they ran more frequently. Buses are a public service and should be funded as such...”*  
*“Cost is obviously important but I do think there should be a reliable regular bus service. We pay our fares and also our council tax. If the service is heavily subsidised I would hope that people fortunate enough to have cars would be generous enough to help those who don't.”*

## 6.17 Value for Money priority order

6.17.1 Question 6 further asked respondents to consider the priority order of the value for money factors. This is important as factors higher up the priority order list would have greater influence over decisions as to whether to fund a service than those lower down the priority list. 19.8% of respondents were in favour of the priority order of factors as proposed, with 44.2% against the proposed priority order.



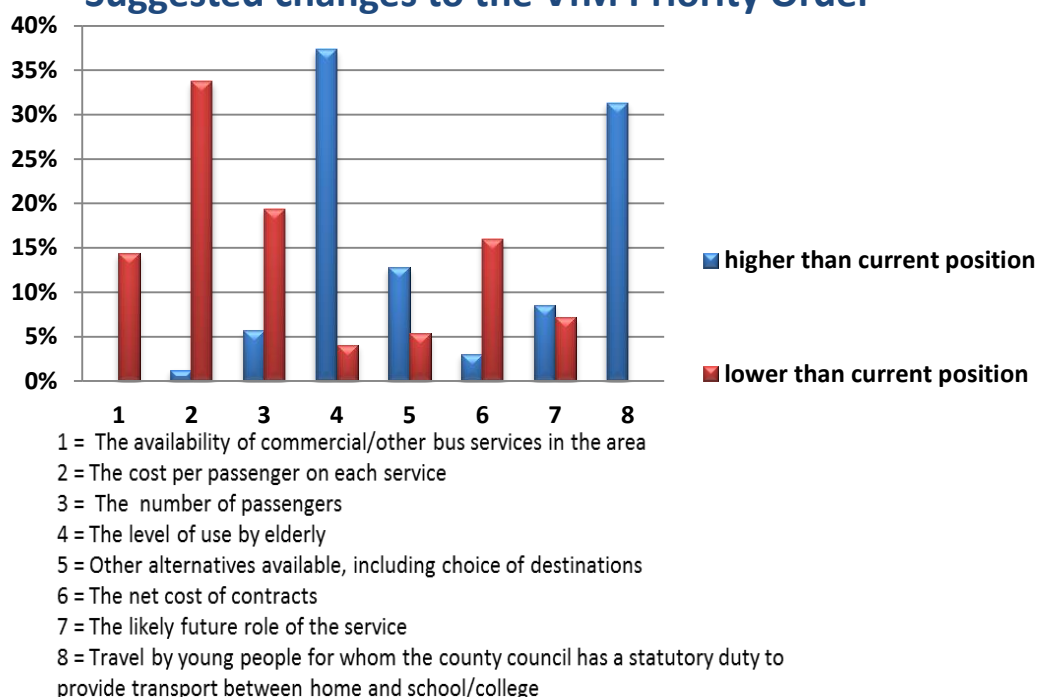
**Figure 15** - Pie chart illustrating agreement or disagreement with the priority order of the Value for Money criteria factors

- 1452 respondents answered the multiple choice part of the question
- 101 respondents did not answer the multiple choice part of the question

6.17.2 Those that disagreed with the proposed priority order of the list of factors were asked to indicate why and indicate their suggested order of priority. The responses are summarised below which shows the most suggested change in the priority order was for older people to be placed higher up on the priority list and the next most suggested was for travel for young people for whom the county council has a statutory duty to provide transport between home and school/college.

6.17.3 Costs per passenger journey was the most commonly suggested criteria to be moved lower down the priority list. Figure 16 below illustrates the responses in more detail.

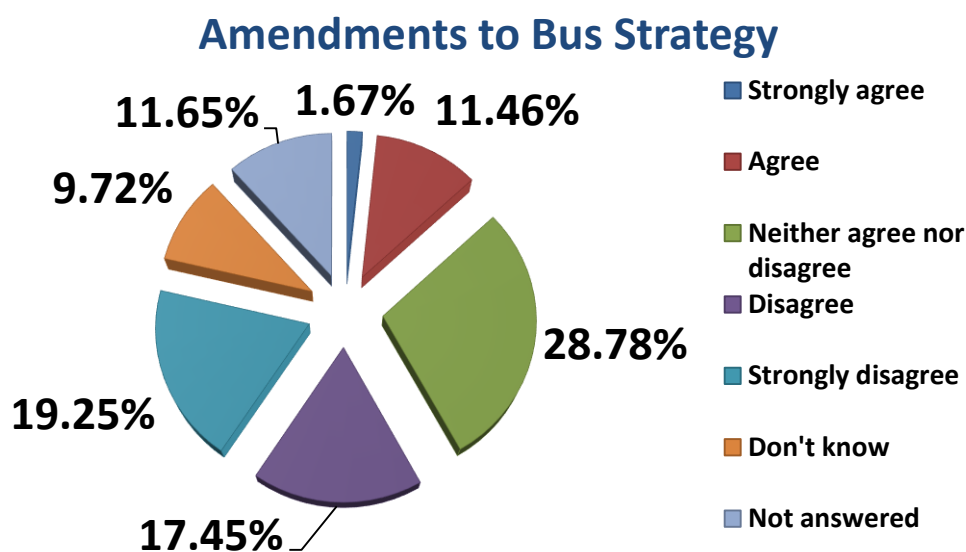
### Suggested changes to the VfM Priority Order



**Figure 16** – Bar chart illustrating the suggested changes in priority order of value for money factors based on their current position

### 6.18 Amendments to the Bus Strategy

6.18.1 In Question 7 respondents were asked to indicate if they were in favour of the proposed changes to the Bus Strategy. The proposed amended Bus Strategy was made available online with hard copies in all libraries, district and borough council offices and is appended to this report (Appendix E). 13.13% of respondents were supportive of the changes with 36.7% against the proposed changes.



**Figure 17** – Pie chart illustrating agreement or disagreement with the proposed amendments to the Bus Strategy

- 1372 respondents answered the multiple choice part of the question

- 181 respondents did not answer the multiple choice part of the question

6.18.2 However, 121 respondents (7.8%) made comments about the length or complexity of the strategy document or that they were unable to access the document.

Example comment include: *" This is very long (55 pages) a great deal for most public to comment upon with hours and hours of research and ysyudy"*  
*" Not easy to understand most of the jargon in this document!"*

6.18.3 Some responses were not in relation to the strategy but were general comments in opposition to the proposals, the impact of the proposals or the importance of bus services. For example comments included *'Restricting people's ability to get around in the evening is ridiculous. It's 2015 not 1915. We are going backwards.'*

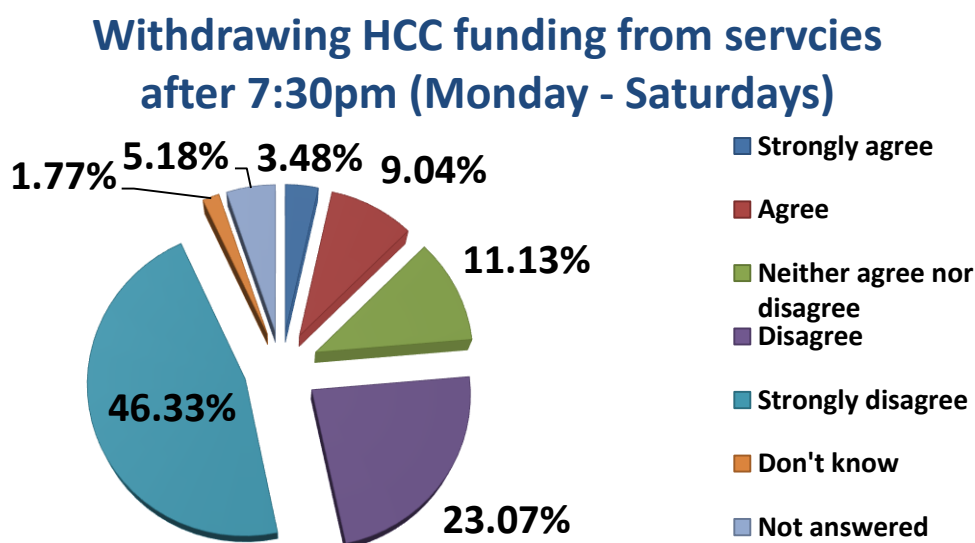
*"I am almost loosing the will to live with this survey, my point of view is we deserve a descent bus service that runs late to serve the public."*

6.18.4 13% (204) respondents selected 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' in the multiple choice part of the questions. Within this number, respondents who made additional comments included the agreement with the need to save money and the strategy document. For example: *" It's a big document and I've only skimmed but I really like the strategic policies."*

*" It seems to be well thought out with an eye on various changes outside of council control"*

## 6.19 Proposal to withdraw funding from subsidised bus services after 7.30pm Mondays to Saturdays?\*

6.19.1 Question 8 in the consultation questionnaire asked respondents to indicate if they were in favour of the proposal to withdraw funding from County Council contracted services after 7:30pm Monday to Saturdays. This proposal is an amended proposal from the first consultation which had an indicative bar of after 6:30pm. 69.4% of respondents were opposed to the proposal with 12.5% in favour.



**Figure 18** – Pie chart illustrating views on the proposal to withdraw funding from subsidised bus services after 7:30pm Mondays to Saturdays

- 1500 respondents answered the multiple choice part of the question
- 82 respondents did not answer the multiple choice part of the question

6.19.2 Of the 5.2% (82) of respondents who did not answer the multiple choice part of the question, 12 respondents went on to make a comment in the free text box. Of those who selected 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree', comments referred to prioritisation of daytime services over the evening services, the perceived lower usage of services after 7:30pm or respondents themselves' not using the service after this time.

6.19.3 Example comments included; *" IF THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE AND IT MEANS THE DAY TIME SERVICE REMAINS, IT HAS TO BE."*  
*" Must of the time we are only 2 people to travel in evening by 10 pm from Holywell to the town centre."* However, some respondents who chose 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' also made comments in opposition to the proposal to withdraw funding from bus services after 7:30pm. For example comments were given such as *"7.30 IS TOO EARLY FOR VISITORS AND WORKERS."* and *"The timings are ridiculous and very inconsiderate"*. 85 respondents made comments about the importance of the bus service and the need for it to be maintained and the benefits to certain groups of people.

6.19.4 Table 6 below shows the number of respondents who raised concerns or issues relating to the proposed withdrawal of funding from subsidised bus services after 7:30pm Mondays to Saturdays.

**Table 6**

Concern/issue	Example comments	No. of respondents
Accessibility concern	<p>" i would not be able to go out as i do not drive which would leave me stranded"</p> <p>"This proposed would have severe impact on my social life by putting certain areas 'out of bounds'."</p>	358
Lack of alternative provision	<p>" People who do not drive are penalised for wanting to go out later at night, as they have no way of travelling without using taxis, which costs a fortune"</p> <p>"HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF TRANSPORT"</p>	127
Financial concern	<p>"People who don't own a car can't afford to pay much to get about. Having to spend a lot on travel to work or school makes it difficult to make the journey worth the expense."</p> <p>"Most people wont able to get to work or home because of extra cost on transport on already drained wages or pay"</p>	96

Safety concern	<p>" these are the very times, especially in the winter when it is cold and dark, when it is difficult or dangerous for the young and the elderly to have to walk"</p> <p>" Could cause more road accidents because some people don't like to drive in the dark."</p>	72
Access to hospitals	<p>" If people were visiting relatives or friends in hospital, they would be unable to get home."</p> <p>" No consideration has been given to hospital/care workers who work until late at night maybe 10pm who do not drive or cannot afford taxi fares who may face long walks home along poorly lit streets..."</p>	67
Environmental Impact	<p>"Would encourage use of non-environmentally friendly means of transport."</p> <p>" ...also we are supposed to be protecting the environment and reducing carbon footprint so improving public transport should be the agenda, not reducing it."</p>	52
Economic impact	<p>"If you withdraw funding, the services will stop. Making it harder for people to travel just depresses the local economy further."</p> <p>"It will damage the evening economy and job opportunities for people who return home from work (or even go to work) after 7.30."</p>	41
Local and national government roles and responsibilities	<p>" It is a dereliction of your duty as a council. You should not just be looking at the bottom line. You are meant to be providing services to the inhabitants of Herts. You should be lobbying for more money from central government."</p> <p>"As a public body you have a responsibility to ensure that the needs of the whole community are met. It is not acceptable restrict access to employment and amenities outside the idealistic Mon - Sat 0700 - 1930 time frame."</p>	30
Wellbeing concern	<p>" ...Limits social and educational interaction of non drivers and will increase social isolation of non drivers many of whom are disabled/elderly and live on there own"</p> <p>" It limits what people can do and will cause distress and isolation for people who rely on a bus service..."</p>	22

6.19.5 Respondents also made comments about the proposed time of 7:30pm being too early and the effect of a 'curfew' or general opposition to the proposals. Example comments included:

*"Life doesn't stop at 7:30pm, so why should the buses stop at 7:30pm?"*

*"Work is no longer nine to five, we have a 24 hour economy. The cut off time is not realistic."*

6.19.6 Respondents also commented that the service they used currently did not run to this time. Example comments were: *"I would love to have a bus service after 7:30 on any day, but Tewin does not have this."*

*"NO BUSES RUN FROM BUNTINGFORD AFTER 7.30PM"*

6.19.7 12.4% (197) respondents expressed concerns over the impact the proposals might have on certain groups of people. A single response could make reference to multiple groups and are categorised in Table 7 below.

**Table 7**

Concern / issue	Example comments	No. of respondents
Commuters and shift workers	<p>"Reducing bus services at this time would affect shift workers and the night time economy."</p> <p>"...this proposal penalises shift workers."</p>	186
Children and young people	<p>"I am concerned for the safety of our teenagers who rely on buses to travel into/home from town, the station and between St. Albans and Hatfield. It will either make their journeys impossible or compromise their safety in making them walk long distances in the dark etc...."</p> <p>"this is grossly unfair to those who do not have use of a car. It makes people housebound, particularly youth who may wish to or need to go out in the evening."</p>	60
Others	<p>"Affects the most vulnerable people in the county"</p> <p>"It would make many people's lives impossible. There are too many people relying on evening services."</p>	57
Older adults	<p>"It will most affect elderly people who depend on the bus service..."</p> <p>"... Elderly people may be able to go out but find it difficult to get back so lose part of their independence."</p>	49
People with lower incomes	<p>"People on low income cant access a car and they may do shift work. They need a bus service..."</p> <p>"This will prevent people who can not drive, or have</p>	33

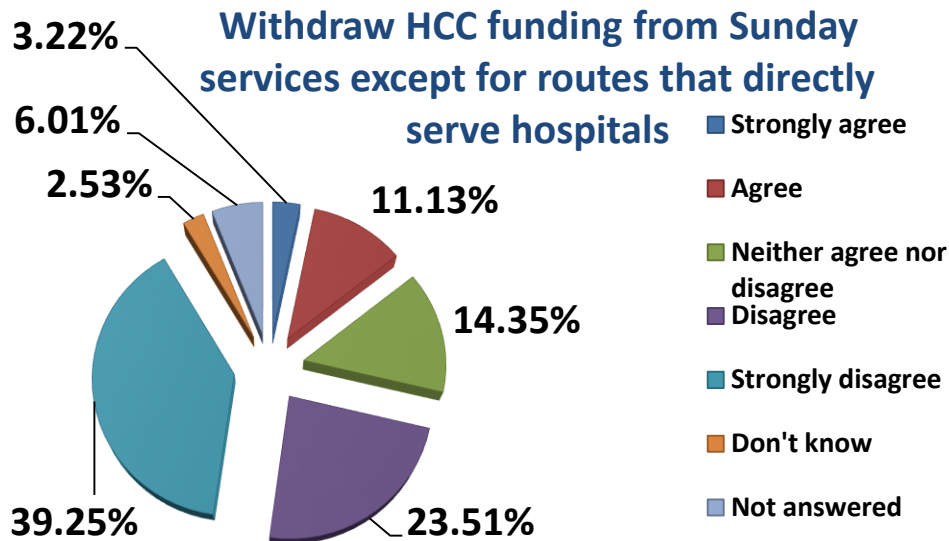


	limited income from going out and returning in the evening.”	
People who have a disability	<p>“Public transport should be funded for all areas of the community, in particular the elderly and disabled. Why should they be restricted to daytime/weekend travel!”</p> <p>“It means that residents who are elderly and disabled have no way to leave the village.”</p>	18
Rural communities	<p>“... You are offering a service of this kind to other parts of the county but denying it to villages. This is not a fair distribution of the benefits of tax payers' money, yet we all pay our taxes.”</p> <p>“ People in rural communities rely on the bus to get home. If you work in London and finish at a normal time, this withdrawal would often mean you were unable to get home from bfbroxbourne of hertford train stations.”</p>	9

6.19.8 76 respondents made comments relating to suggestions about the bus services including changing the frequency of services, merging routes, fare charges etc. These suggestions are captured more fully in paragraphs 6.21.2 and 6.21.4 below.

## 6.20 **Proposal to withdraw funding from subsidised bus services on Sundays, except for routes which directly serve hospitals which would run until 7.30pm?\***

6.20.1 Question 9 in the consultation questionnaire asked respondents to indicate if they were in favour of the amended proposal to withdraw funding from county council contracted services on Sundays except for routes that directly serve hospitals up to 7:30pm. This is an amended proposal from the first bus consultation which originally sought to withdraw funding completely for contracted services on Sundays. 62.8% of respondents were not in favour of the proposal with 14.3% in favour of the proposal.



**Figure 19** – Pie chart illustrating agreement or disagreement with the proposal to withdraw funding from subsidised bus services on Sundays, except for routes which directly serve hospitals which would run until 7:30pm

- 1487 respondents answered the multiple choice part of the question
- 95 respondents did not answer the multiple choice part of the question

6.20.2 Of the 6% of respondents (95) who did not answer the multiple choice part of the question, 26 respondents went on to make a comment in the free text box. Of those who selected 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree', comments cited less need and reduced usage of buses on a Sunday, necessity of the proposal as a saving measure and the importance of hospital routes as some explanations for agreement.

6.20.3 Example comments included: "Again these services seem to have a very low level of use." And "You need to protect the buses that serve our hospitals but I think withdrawing funding from the other services after 7.30pm is probably fair."

6.20.4 However, some respondents who chose 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' also made comments in opposition to the proposal to withdraw funding from subsidised bus services on Sundays, except for routes which directly serve hospitals which would run until 7:30pm. Example comments were: "There are seven days in a week. How are people expected to go about their daily business - particularly getting to work - if there is no transport?" and "Are only people who can drive or afford taxis allowed out on Sundays? Traffic is already diabolical in town centre. How is cutting bus services going to help?"

6.20.5 110 respondents (6.3%) made comments about the importance of the bus service to access hospitals as well as for other travel. Example comments included: "buses to hospitals are an essential service - where I live there is none which we used to have and it is a great disappointment and hardship to people who used to use it" "There are a lot of people travelling to places on Sundays, me included, so these services are important for social reasons."

6.20.6 18 respondents commented on the dissatisfaction with the current bus service making comments such as “ *Sunday services are sparse and rubbish and I can't see them improving with less investment*”

6.20.7 Table 8 below illustrates the number of respondents who raised concerns or issues relating to the proposed withdrawal of funding from subsidised bus services on Sundays, except for routes which directly serve hospitals which would run until 7:30pm

**Table 8**

Concern/issue	Example comments	No. of respondents
Accessibility concern	“ We would no longer be able to shopping town, or use Boots the Chemist in town.”	186
Access to hospitals	“Would deprive people from visiting relatives in hospital”  “People need to get to hospitals at all hours”	122
Lack of alternative provision	“For those who have no alternative to bus travel it seems unfair that they are unable to travel on a Sunday.”  “HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF TRANSPORT”	48
Financial concern	“ People who have no transport need buses to travel on so we can get from A to B in a reasonable amount of time for a reasonable amount of money. I already have to spend a huge amount of money to get to work and Sunday mornings.”  “ Access to HOSPITALS IS NEEDED till at least 10.30pm as you can be discharged untill that time and bus users do not have the £60 charged by taxis for Sunday unsocial hours charges.”	42
Economic impact	“The town will have no customers so no profit for the economic”  “ I have no idea what you lot are thinking. This is flawed and unfair on people that do not have thier own transport. This will have a massive impact Jobs, People and local businesses.”	31
Wellbeing concern	“ Reducion in social activity for the elderly will cause a deterioration in health with a consequential cost to the NHS.”  “ Also in makes Sunday a stay at home day, especially for older people. Not good for health.”	26

Environmental Impact	<p>" At a time when car travel should be discouraged due to global warming these cuts encourage car usage."</p> <p>"...also we are supposed to be protecting the environment and reducing carbon footprint so improving public transport should be the agenda, not reducing it."</p>	24
Safety concern	<p>" it could put people more at risk when it dark"</p> <p>" It could also encourage people to drink and drive"</p>	14

6.20.8 52 respondents (3.2%) commented about not having a Sunday service at present. Respondents also commented about Sundays being similar to any other day of the week in terms of work and trading and questioned why service provision should be different on Sundays for example " *the working day now includes Sunday so they should be treated the same as any other day*" and " *there are seven days in my working week, not everybody has Sunday off*"

6.20.9 178 respondents (11.2%) expressed concerns the impact of the proposals would have on groups of people. A single response could make reference to multiple groups and are categorised as below.

6.20.10 Table 9 below indicates the number of respondents who raised concerns or issues relating to the impact of the proposals on particular groups of people.

**Table 9**

Concern / issue	Example comments	No. of respondents
Commuters and shift workers	<p>"...More shops open on a Sunday now and staff still have to travel, those working in the emergency services, (not a hospitals which are exempt), still have to travel. They are already penalised by having to work while most have a weekend off and it is unfair to charge them extra to travel."</p> <p>"Again, would adversely impact people who work longer hours on this day."</p>	73
Others	<p>"Any cuts affect the most vulnerable people in the county"</p> <p>"how do less advantaged leave their homes for contact/support/community events if there is no bus service - this will result in increased isolation"</p>	54
Older adults	"Again you are putting the elderly and disabled at a further disadvantaged and making them housebound,	43

	leading to health/mental health problems”  “ I rely on public transport and can't afford to pay for taxi fares to go out. This is a punishment for senior citizens so they couldn't get out but stay in-doors after that time.”	
People with lower incomes	“ Shop workers (lowly paid) can't get to work and other weekend workers...”  “this will hurt the poor who use this service who needs to be protected with this funding”	31
Children and young people	“Prevents under 16s and those who don't drive from accessing Hertfordshire”  “This affects childrens ability to use the public services ( pool, football club,etc) would be severely affected to the point that they would not be able to participate.”	18
People who have a disability	“ If you withdraw Sunday service buses, then less people ie elderly, diabled, students etc will not be able to get to town etc to be able to shop, socialise etc. this will alienate alot of people.”  “ Many other people could be affected by the proposal such as the elderly, disabled and young people who want to see their friends on Sundays.”	14
Rural communities	“There is the potential to leave residents who cannot drive in some large villages being completely cut off on a Sunday”  “...It imposes a curfew on the inhabitants of rural Hertfordshire unless they have access to a car.”	11

6.20.11 76 respondents made comments relating to suggestions about the bus services including changing the frequency of services, merging routes, fare charges etc. These suggestions are captured more fully in paragraphs 6.21.2 and 6.21.4 below.

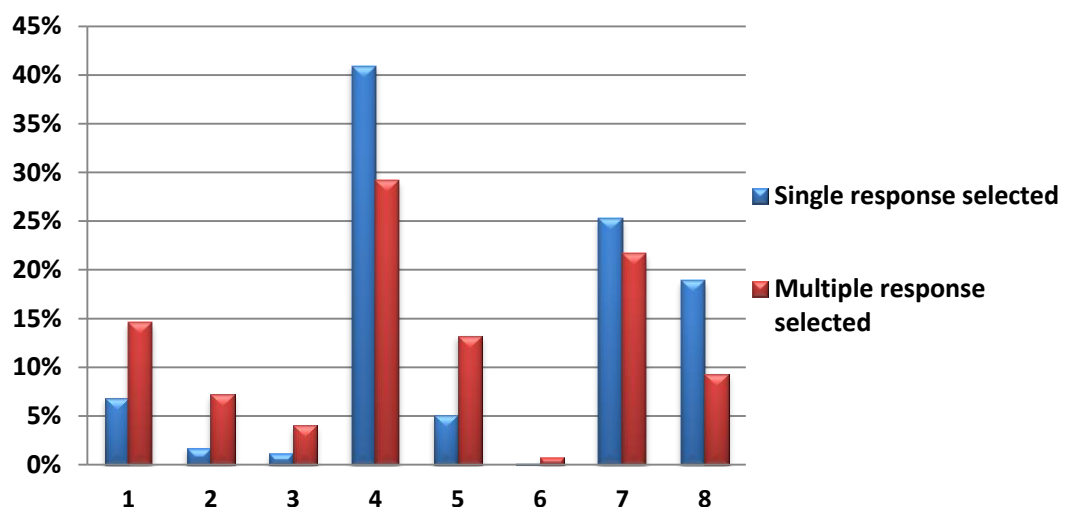
## **6.21 Suggestions to make savings on how bus services are funded**

6.21.1 Question 10 in the consultation questionnaire asked respondents to consider alternative ways the county council could make savings to the contracted bus services we fund. Of the 333 (21.44%) respondents who selected ‘None of the above’, 200 respondents also selected another option from the list.

6.21.2 643 (40.6%) respondents included comments in the ‘Other’ box. These suggestions were separated into 6 sub categories:

- Routes and services – changing service frequency, merging, modifying or adding routes
- Charging and payments (excluding Older person's concessionary passes) - *Changing journey charges, introducing flat rate fares, and adopting an Oyster Card like approach. Modified distribution and funding of bus passes (excluding older person's concessionary passes).*
- Older people concessionary passes - *Removal of the concessionary pass, charging an annual fee for the pass, and introducing journey charges for those with concessionary bus passes.*
- Vehicle usage - *Using smaller buses and more economical fuel, and adopting a more fuel efficient driving style.*
- Marketing and promotion of the service - *Promoting the use of the bus service, use of real-time information boards, and ensuring information about bus services is available and user-friendly.*
- Overall management of the bus service - *Changing the way bus services are managed, modifying contract management, taking inspiration from other local authorities/countries.*

### Suggestions to make savings to bus services



- 1 = Reduce the frequency of services  
 2 = Reduce the services to alternate days  
 3 = Reduce the number of destinations served  
 4 = Merge bus routes (for example, where two services operate on the same route)  
 5 = Increase fares  
 6 = Withdraw services  
 7 = Other. Please specify  
 8 = None of the above

**Figure 20** bar chart illustrating the saving suggestions respondents considered reasonable

- 95.43 % of respondents answered the question
- 4.57% of respondents did not answer the question

6.21.3 Of the service suggestions made, many respondents suggested a decrease in service frequency, often in the context of this being preferable to no service at all. For example *"reduce frequency in the evening but not completely stop the service"*. Any one comment could include a number of suggestions

6.21.4 Table 10 below illustrates the number of respondents who made a suggestion for making savings or generating income relating to the bus service or other areas of spending.

**Table 10**

<b>Saving suggestion</b>	<b>Example comment</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>
Making savings or generating income	<p>"increase parking charges"</p> <p>"reduce the number of councillors, get rid of the cost associated with the police &amp; crime commissioner, reduce councillors expenses, change the pension arrangements - there are dozens of ways you can save money to save a community public funded bus service. I thought using private companies was supposed because they were more efficient etc? it seems we simply end up with fewer buses?"</p>	193
Routes and services	<p>" Merge bus routes on parts of neighbouring routes."</p> <p>" reduce the number of buses running on route 10 they seem to run...sometimes mostly empty...every 10 minutes."</p>	185
Charging and payments (excluding older person's concessionary passes)	<p>" An increase in fares could be applicable in certain circumstances and may be preferable to reducing services."</p> <p>" Start charging modest fares for all, do away with free travel altogether."</p>	80
Vehicle usage	<p>" Provide bigger , better and more fuel efficient buses, as in London..."</p> <p>"On days and times that the service is not full up, why not sent mini bus size buses to cut costs".</p>	79
Management of the bus service	<p>" When tendering, specify that 7-day working (without premiums for weekends or public holidays) is the basis on which services should be provided"</p>	65

	" Make the service more efficient and look to the Europe for its public transport system. e.g. Geneva	
Older person's concessionary bus pass	" OAP TO PAY PART OF THEIR FARES."  " rather than free bus passes for pensioners perhaps a nominal charge unless in financial hardship"	42
Marketing and promotion of the service	" Maintenance of the network in terms of advertising and profile would make more people aware of the bus services.."  " Advertise the bus routes to get more passengers."	29

6.21.5 Some respondents used the 'Other' box to elaborate on their multiple choice response, for example a respondent who selected 'Merge bus route' inserted the following comment in the multiple choice box: *" YOU CAN ONLY MERGE BUS ROUTES IF THERE ARE PROPER AND PRACTICAL INTERCHANGE ARRANGEMENTS AT THE POINT AT WHICH THE OVERLAPPING COMMENCES. THIS MAY BE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE."*

6.21.6 Other comments included the possible impact of the proposals, opposition to the proposals or the importance of the bus services. Example comments include: *"Bus services are essential to reducing congestion and pollution."* And *" It is important bus services are not lost as they will not reappear."*

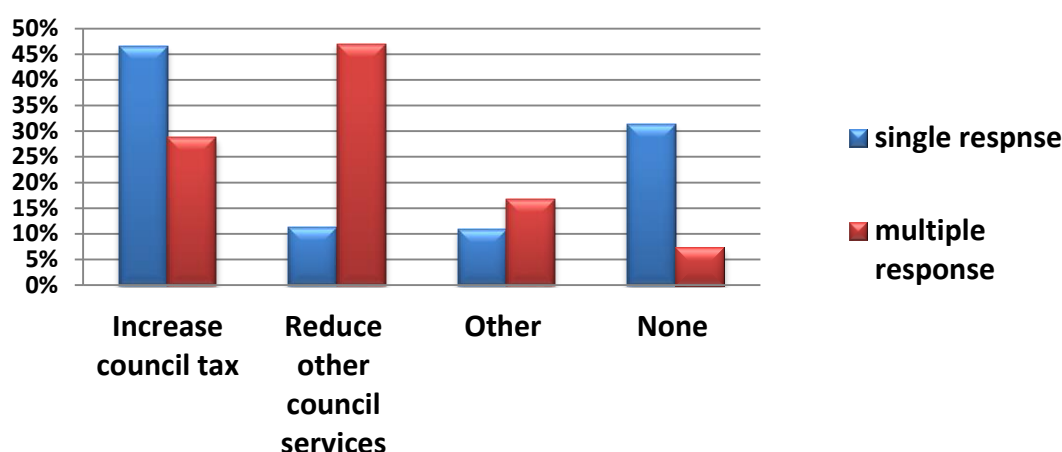
6.21.7 8 respondents made comments about the question or the consultation process. Comments were made such as: *" The question is based on the false premise that cuts are necessary or even desirable. Passengers need and deserve more and better services, not fewer and worse."*  
*"Stop wasting large amounts of money and officer time on rehashing the same consultation after it was opposed the first time around!"*

## **6.22 Other ways in which the county council could achieve the required savings.**

6.22.1 Question 11 in the consultation questionnaire asked respondents if they disagreed with the proposals to reduce funding for contracted bus services in Hertfordshire, to give their views and suggestions as to other ways the county council could make the necessary savings.



## Other ways to make savings



**Figure 21** – bar chart illustrating ways the county council should make required savings

- 85.77% (1332) of respondents answered this question
- 14.23% (221) of respondents did not answer the question

6.22.2 Of those that answered this question 44.2% (589) respondents selected 'Increase council tax' as a means for the County Council to make the required savings. Respondents who chose this option were subsequently asked if they would be prepared to pay more council tax. Over 97% (574) respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay more council tax with only 3% (15) of respondents indicating either they were not willing to pay more Council Tax or did not answer this part of the question.

6.22.3 Respondents who selected 'Other' and 'Reduce funding to other County Council services' were then asked to specify which services they would reduce. Respondents were directed to a list of services on Herts direct (<http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/>). Some respondents used the free text boxes to give multiple suggestions.

6.22.4 Table 11 below highlights the number of respondents who made a suggestion for the county council to make required savings

**Table 11**

Service	Number	%
Council and democracy (including councillors remuneration and expenses)	58	27%
Leisure and culture	25	12%
Transport and streets	22	10%
Libraries	21	10%
Publicity	18	8%
Childrens services (including education and learning and young people)	17	8%
Other benefits (including housing benefits)	17	8%
Environment and planning (including waste)	16	8%
Advice and benefits	10	5%
Health and Social Care	8	4%

- 6.22.5 Other saving suggestions included reductions in expenditure on housing, business, flowerbeds, internet, Police and Crime Commissioner. 36 respondents made suggestions for making savings or generating income relating to the bus service. Other responses included comments about the question their understanding of it and the need for more information.
- 6.22.6 Respondents also commented on the importance of the bus service and opposition to the proposals. For example “*SERVICES ALL ESSENTIAL*” and “*None - outrageous we need our public services*”
- 6.22.7 5.8% (90) respondents suggested savings could be made by making changes to the way the county council is run including reducing staff numbers, reducing salaries of senior officers, reducing administrative costs and use of contractors and consultants. etc. Example comments included “*Reduce the amount of managers in council offices and enable the people who are efficient and good at their jobs to do so and not to have the overpaid time wasters employed*”
- 6.22.8 3.12 % (49) respondents also made suggestions for different streams of funding or generating revenue eg: “*Raise parking charges. Increase business rates..*”, “*Perhaps we should look at the tax subsidy to road users in general. How can we reduce fuel duty if we have to slash bus services? Is there an election coming?*”

## **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1 The Council’s obligations are set out in s63 of the Transport Act 1985 (as amended). This places the following duty on the council:-
- “to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose”.*
- 7.2 The above duty is not an absolute one, but requires the county council, having identified the public transport requirements that would not otherwise be met, to secure what is appropriate. In deciding what is “appropriate” the county council is entitled to take its financial position into account.
- 7.3 As stated in paragraph 4.2 above, the number of bus passenger journeys has remained stable since 2010 so public transport requirements have not changed, However it is legitimate for Cabinet, given the savings the County Council needs to find, to now consider the level of service that it is appropriate for it to secure.
- 7.4 Section 63 (8) Transport Act 1985 provides that it is the duty of the county council in exercising or performing any of its functions under s63, to have regard to the transport needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled.

- 7.5 It is a contractual requirement for the County Council to give bus operators a minimum of three months' notice that it intends to withdraw funding for a contracted service. This timescale needs to be taken into account before any changes are made.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The Integrated Plan includes full year savings of £1.471m from post-consultation savings on supported bus routes, with savings of £858k included in 2015/16, subject to the consideration by Members of the outcome of the consultation. Should Members decide not to implement the proposals set out in the consultation document, savings identified in the Integrated Plan will not be achieved and the county council will have to seek further in-year savings or income, or draw on the council's contingency with a view to identifying savings in subsequent years.
- 8.2 Whilst a number of suggestions were made in the consultation responses (see paragraphs 2.5.4.5.1 to 2.5.4.5.6) it is not anticipated that these would achieve the same level of savings as the proposals.

## **9. Equalities Implications**

- 9.1 In addition to the duty under s63 (8) Transport Act to have regard to the transport needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled, when considering proposals that may lead to service changes, it is important that Members are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered, the County Council's statutory obligations in relation to equalities. Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation is made of any potential impact of decisions on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessments (EqIA).
- 9.2 The Equality Act 2010 requires the county council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010 are age; disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 9.3 The consultation was designed to enable all protected groups to have the opportunity to take part. The consultation documents were available in alternative formats and promoted by a number of methods to increase participation.
- 9.4 The EqIA on the proposals is attached as Appendix A to the report. This takes into consideration the potential impact the suggested proposals will

have on residents. Some potential negative or differential impacts have been identified for some protected characteristics, in particular, older people, people who attend religious centres, people with disabilities and carers. Measures have been proposed to mitigate the potential impacts, including an action plan to monitor and review potential service changes in order to assess their impact.

## Appendices

- Appendix A - *Equalities Impact Assessment*
- Appendix B - *Public Engagement Questionnaire*
- Appendix C - *Easy Read Version*
- Appendix D - *Summary of Stakeholder responses*
- Appendix E - *Draft Amended Bus Strategy*

## Background Information

*Reports to and Minutes of the Highways and Waste Management Cabinet Panel as mentioned in the report above*

*Report to and Minutes of the Cabinet as mentioned in the report above.*