

West Yorkshire Combined Authority Bus Strategy Consultation- Phase 1 Stakeholder Engagement Analysis Report

Phase 1 – Stakeholder Engagement

Quality information

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The image features a minimalist design with three thin, teal-colored lines that intersect to form a large, irregular triangle on the left side of the page. The lines extend across the top and left edges of the frame. The background is plain white.

Introduction

01

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Bus travel remains the most used public transport mode in West Yorkshire, but overall passenger numbers are in decline. As part of their Single Transport Plan for the region West Yorkshire's Combined Authority (WYCA) have devised a Public consultation on the Bus Strategy.

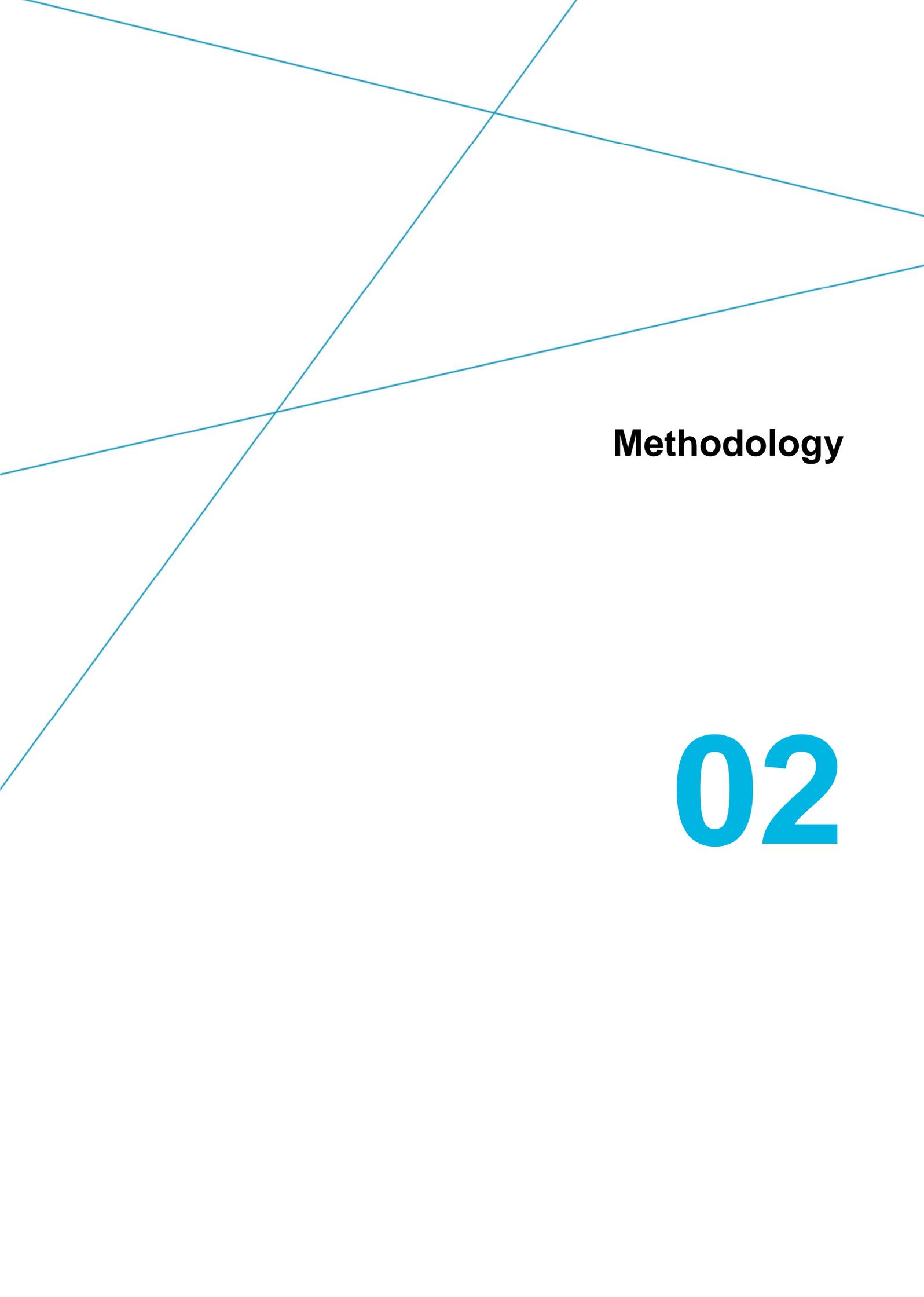
The first phase of the consultation took place in November 2015. WYCA engaged with stakeholder groups in the region to gather their views on the proposed overall vision for the bus strategy, and understand thoughts on current service provision. The information gathered will be used to inform strategy for the next 10-15 years.

Interviews were conducted online, collated as email responses or undertaken through individual depth or group discussions. Stakeholders approached included Local MPs, WYCA Transport Committee members, District Councillors, District Authorities, Neighbouring Authorities, Bus Operators of varying size, representatives from the Business Community, Broader Public Sector (e.g. Universities, Health and Police), Campaign and Transport User Groups and Trade Unions.

This report encompasses the primary data collected through the stakeholder engagement, and is the first analysis report from AECOM who have been commissioned for this purpose..

1.2 Report layout

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 outlines the methodology used in the study; Chapter 3 details the findings from the various elements of Phase One of the consultation and Chapter 4 provides the conclusions.



Methodology

02

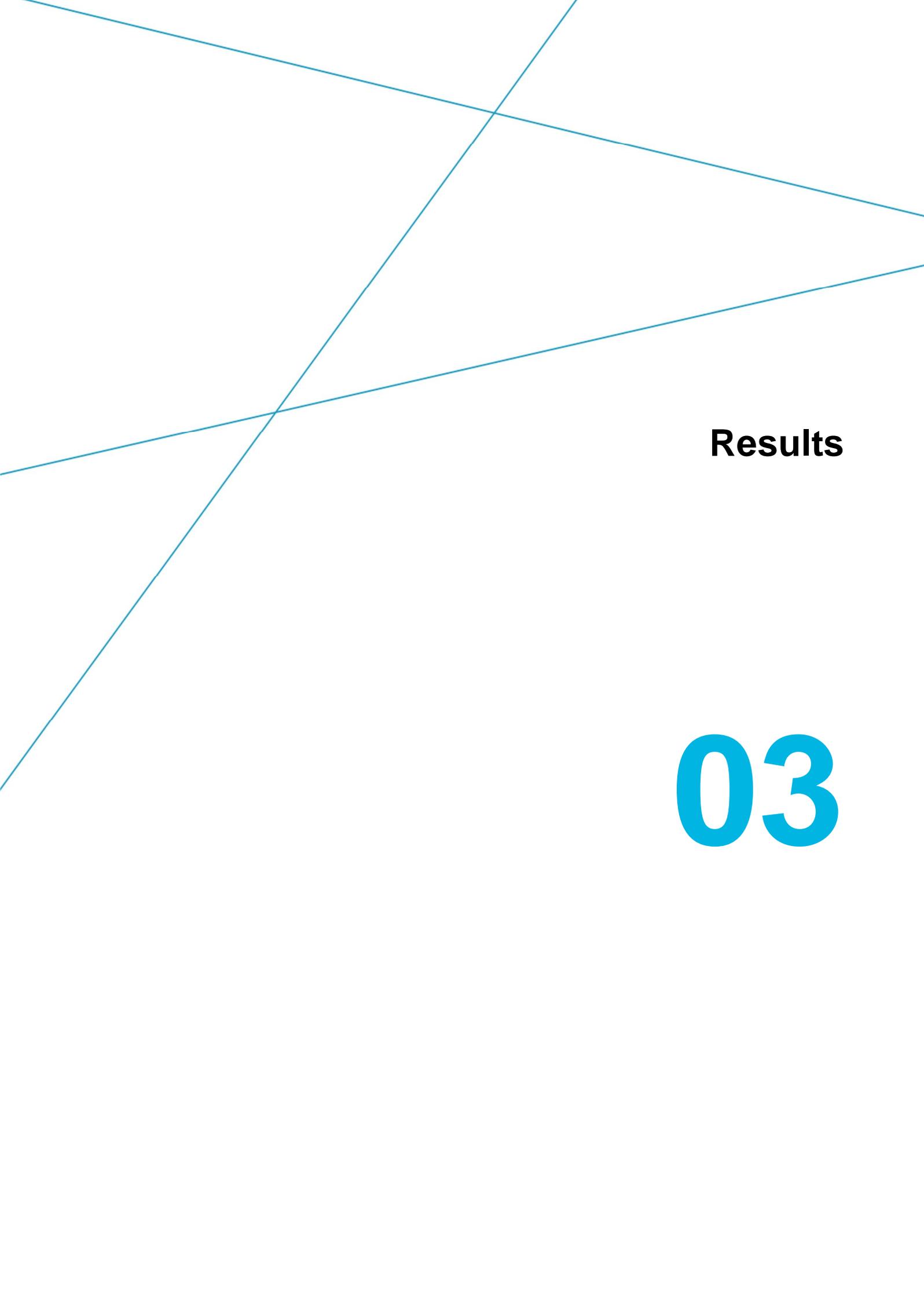
Methodology

2.1 Overview

WYCA identified key stakeholders to take part in the consultation. Each stakeholder was sent an invitation to take part in the form of an email which contained a link to the online survey. The majority of responses (88) were collected through the online survey link and as such are more structured. Eleven organisations responded to the invitation via email sending in their general comments on the strategy.

This report collates the findings from each response method. As there was a limited response to the demographic questionnaire at the end of the survey, sample sizes do not permit detailed sub analysis.

Several individual/ group discussions were also conducted with particular stakeholders identified as key opinion formers by WYCA. The findings from this exercise make up the final analysis section in this report.



Results

03

Results

3.1 Overview

In total there were 88 completed online questionnaires and 13 email responses. Nineteen respondents (of the 88 who completed the survey) indicated that they were completing it on behalf of their employer, 55 responded as individuals, 14 did not provide a response to this question.

All respondents were asked in which areas they use buses *Table 3.1*, shows Leeds and Bradford were the most commonly cited areas of travel. Thirty nine respondents did not provide a response to the question.

Table 3.1; do you use buses in any of these areas? – multiple response possible

| Area | Frequency |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Leeds | 32 |
| Bradford | 18 |
| Kirklees | 12 |
| Wakefield | 8 |
| Calderdale | 7 |
| All West Yorkshire | 6 |
| North Yorkshire | 2 |
| No areas cited | 39 |
| Base | (88) |

In terms of gender as shown in *Table 3.32*, 49 respondents gave a response to the question of these 29 were male and 20 were female. One respondent stated explicitly that they consider themselves to have a disability; shown in *Table 3.3*.

Table 3.2; Gender

| Gender | Frequency |
|---------|-----------|
| Female | 20 |
| Male | 29 |
| Missing | 39 |
| Base | (88) |

Table 3.3; Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

| Gender | Frequency |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Missing | 38 |
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 48 |
| Prefer not to say | 1 |
| Base | (88) |

Twenty four respondents told us about the sector their employer resides in; this data is shown in *Table 3.4*. In terms of geographies covered by organisations, very few had national or regional reach; locations of influence/activity were mostly limited to West Yorkshire.

Table 3.4; which of the following sectors best describes your organisation?

| Organisation type | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Bus / Coach Operator | 3 |
| Charity | 3 |
| Community Transport Provider | 2 |
| Transport User Group | 2 |
| Local Authority | 2 |
| Community Group | 2 |
| Member group for passenger transport operators/social movement | 2 |
| Business Institute / Chamber | 1 |
| Financial and Professional Services Sector | 1 |
| Education | 1 |
| Government Department | 1 |
| Government owned | 1 |
| Marketing/ Advertising business. | 1 |
| Professional Services | 1 |
| Public Authority | 1 |
| Base | (24) |

Table 3.5; does your organisation have a particular geographical interest? – multiple response

| Area | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| All West Yorkshire | 10 |
| Leeds | 5 |
| Bradford | 3 |
| Kirklees | 3 |
| Calderdale | 1 |
| Wakefield | 1 |
| Others (includes national and wider regional locations) | 4 |
| Base | (19) |

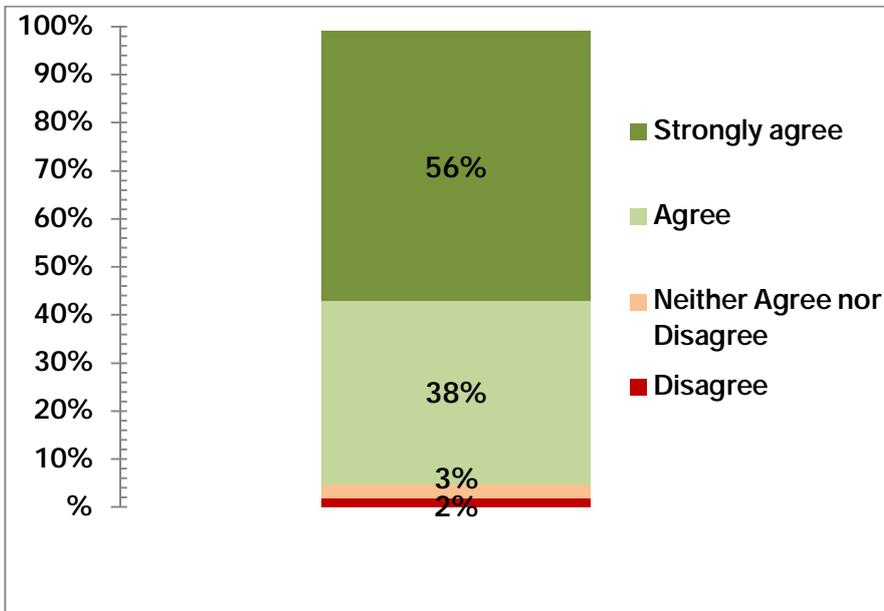
Quantitative findings – online survey

At the start of the survey, all respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the overall vision for the bus strategy. This was provided in full for them to read.

‘West Yorkshire needs a bus system that is seamlessly integrated with other modes and focuses on the needs of its current and future customers. Our vision is to deliver a bus network that people can rely on, with quick, punctual and reliable services that are simple and easy to use, are accessible for everyone, and which provide safe and comfortable travel, offering value for money to users and to the public purse. This necessitates that we have a financially sustainable and growing bus system in order to achieve West Yorkshire’s economic, environmental and quality of life ambitions’.

In terms of agreement with the Bus Strategy as outlined above, 92% of all responses were positive. Just 2 percent of respondents disagreed with the vision.

Figure 3.1 Agreement with overall vision for bus strategy – Base (88)



Respondents were then asked to expand on any particular elements of the Bus Strategy vision that they disagreed with. As there was a limited response to this question, the data is presented as a whole number (frequency) rather than as a percentage. Many respondents perceived this as an opportunity to complain about elements of the existing bus service.

Of those who referred to the strategy more closely, the improvement of the existing provision of local routes, particularly in rural areas, was seen as something that should encompass part of the strategy. Several respondents referred to issues related to a lack of consideration of public demand and felt that the vision should take this into account. Issues related to the commerciality of the bus service which was felt to non-passenger focused with regard to route planning and retention of services regardless of patronage.

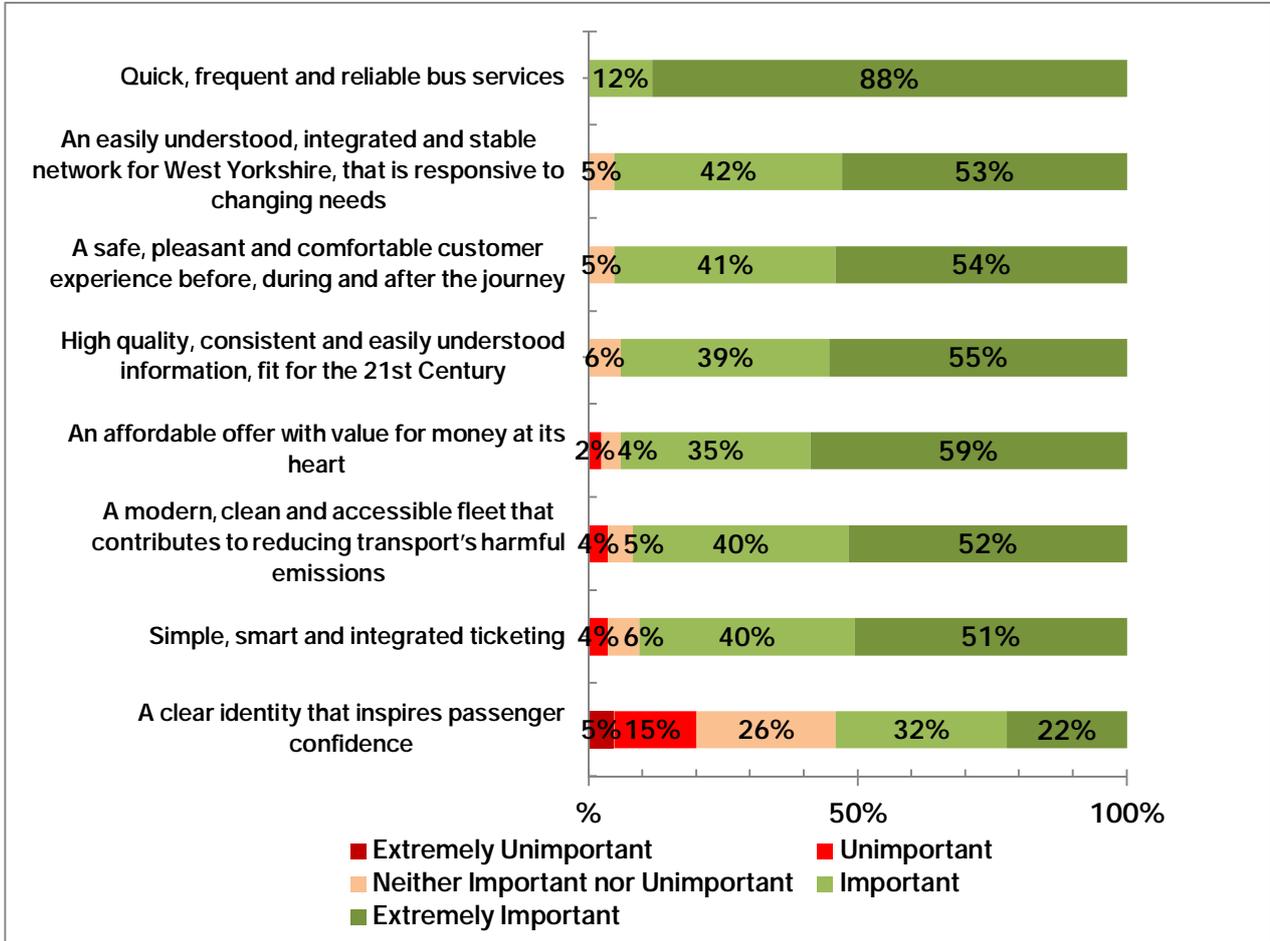
Table 3.67 – Elements of vision disagreed with

| Areas disagreed with: | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Local bus services are poor- need to improve this as part of vision | 3 |
| Need to develop coordinated /integrated multi-modal network | 3 |
| Not consulting/ listening to local communities | 3 |
| Integration of multiple modes unnecessary / many only use one mode | 2 |
| Public transport should be user and not profit focused | 2 |
| Reliability of public transport is key and should be prioritised | 2 |
| Need to ensure that transport infrastructure is reformed to introduce active traffic management, including bus priority, road space reallocation | 2 |
| Need to ensure safe and reliable journeys | 1 |
| Access to fair fares on public transport for unemployed / part time workers | 1 |
| Current bus fleet needs upgrading/is unsafe | 1 |
| Cynicism regarding consultation itself; feel that framework will be introduced regardless of public view | 1 |
| High quality buses are needed | 1 |
| More work needs to be done to reduce traffic congestion | 1 |
| Need to work with wider area / enable cross boundary travel as commutes increase | 1 |
| Need to work with wider area / other transport methods | 1 |
| Promote sustainable travel e.g. Park and ride | 1 |
| Routes should be retained even if they are loss- making | 1 |
| Rural services need not be quick but must be reliable | 1 |
| Train capacity needs to be increased- unacceptable that commuters have to stand. | 1 |
| Vision wording uses too much jargon | 1 |
| Base | (18) |

Respondents were then asked to rate each of the eight core principles in terms of their level of importance. *'Quick, frequent and reliable bus services'* gained the highest importance rating, with 88% of respondents rating this as 'extremely important'.

The branding related principle *'A clear identity that inspires passenger confidence'* was rated as least important overall 20% of respondents rated this as 'unimportant' or 'extremely unimportant'.

Figure 3.2 Importance rating – eight core principles- Base (88)



Respondents were asked why they gave their specific importance ratings to the eight core principles. Most respondents have responded to this question about public transport strategy in general terms; highlighting or expanding on elements they would like to see included in the vision. The most common themes relate to a desire to increase integration between modes, and improvements to connections between services. Value for money and increased reliability were also key themes.

Table 3.7 Expansion on reasons given for specific importance rating

| | Number of mentions |
|--|--------------------|
| Needs to look beyond just West Yorkshire / integrate other services | 8 |
| Bus service should be affordable and reliable | 6 |
| Connections between services need to be improved/made more frequent and reliable | 6 |
| Users' needs to be the main focus / customer service needs to be improved | 4 |
| Multi-ticket system needs to be improved/ greater integration | 3 |
| Branding not important | 3 |
| Buses need to be upgraded | 2 |
| Deregulation of bus service franchise has led to a decline in service | 2 |
| Need stricter guidelines / repercussions for franchise holders who fail to deliver service which is sub-par. | 2 |
| Needs to be responsive to consumer need | 2 |
| Negative comments about current bus/train service | 2 |
| Ticketing strategies need to be transparent/easy to understand | 2 |
| Travel choice based on flexibility / reliability / time constraints / cost | 2 |
| 24 hour working needs public transport support | 1 |
| Anti-social behaviour on buses needs to be tackled | 1 |
| Current timetable information is poor/too complicated | 1 |
| Customer focused delivery is key | 1 |
| Ensure that local route planning takes into account the needs of vulnerable groups e.g. disabled, elderly etc. | 1 |
| Increased road capacity more important than rail electrification and smartcard technology | 1 |
| Good transport links encourage tourism / visitors | 1 |
| Green buses desirable | 1 |
| In favour of bus partnership between operators and Council - cheaper than franchising | 1 |
| Increase competition | 1 |
| Integrated ticketing is desirable but limits competition which can help to keep fares down. | 1 |
| Integrated ticketing is key | 1 |
| Transport network needs to respond to business need business relocation | 1 |
| Positive experience of using Park and Ride- should be extended | 1 |
| Promotes individual route branding rather than one branded bus service | 1 |
| RTI important | 1 |
| Scepticism regarding claim that passenger numbers are in decline. | 1 |
| Should be there already / points are relevant | 1 |
| Traffic priority for buses will increase bus patronage/quicker journey times | 1 |
| West Yorkshire Bus service provision lags behind comparative services in Europe | 1 |
| Base: | (48) |

Several respondents welcomed and saw validity in all of the proposed objectives but applied caution with regard to implementation;

'We agree with all that is said above as all the points will benefit all communities using the services. But we would like to see what conditions will be applied if bus companies do not comply with any of the above.'

(Local council)

'It is difficult to dissent from any of these objectives. We know that delivering them will be the challenge.'

(Local civil society)

'I don't believe anyone could disagree with any of these core principles. They are all important in the traditional sense of what transport planners believe cause barriers to more people using buses. However, as always the devil is in the detail i.e. what exactly is meant by each principle?'

(WYCA staff member)

Several respondents felt that integrated ticketing was a key to make Public transport easier to use, particularly when making multi-modal journeys.

'Integration, comfort and safety are the key to me. In particular, I would like to see bus and train journeys joining up rather than having to wait for a connection, very relevant in remote areas, in adverse weather and for vulnerable travellers, and to have a one-ticket system i.e. a ticket that I can use on buses and on trains to complete my journey'

(Individual respondent)

'Ticketing needs to be more flexible between different bus companies to reduce confusion to passengers'

(Individual respondent)

'There should be a seamless joining between different modes of travel, but you have to factor in that train & bus companies already do what they think is best for their own customers.'

(Individual respondent)

Several respondents felt that the core principle to create 'a clear identity to inspire passenger confidence' was less important than the delivery of a reliable and punctual service needed to underpin customer confidence.

'The branding isn't important. What is important is that the bus turns up on time and I can use my single integrated ticket on it.'

(WYCA staff member)

'I do not agree with having a county wide identity. As long as services are basically good, individual route branding has been demonstrated to increase patronage. Buses need to be affordable, but is the quality and reliability is there, people are prepared to pay more'

(Campaign for Better Transport)

'The main thing that people desire is a frequent, reliable service. If this is not available, the identity, ticketing etc. is pointless, as no-one will use the service. Integration between bus and rail, or local buses and "express" services are important too.'

(WYCA staff member)

Respondents were then asked if they felt that there were any other important principles that should be considered for inclusion in the vision. Of the 88 respondents who took part in the online survey, 42 felt that there were other elements that should be included.

The most commonly cited suggestion was that there needs to be greater focus on the customer; first to ensure that services respond to customer needs and can be altered to meet fluctuations in demand, and secondly to deliver better customer service. Information provision was also a key aspect, with several responses mentioning the need to increase the reliability and accuracy of Real Time Information Systems and better on board information for passengers.

Several respondents also felt the network coverage (incorporating rural areas and services for specific groups in society) needed to be included as a key factor in delivering a service that is inclusive enough to be fit for purpose.

Table 3.8 Suggestions for elements missing from existing key principles

| | Number of mentions |
|---|--------------------|
| Respond to customer need / flexible to situation | 12 |
| Customer service training / Improve customer relations | 6 |
| Increase accuracy and reliability of RTI systems | 5 |
| Better transport planning / route management | 4 |
| Run evening/ night time services | 3 |
| Better integration between services | 2 |
| Ensure retention of services for rural areas | 2 |
| Increased privatisation is required to improve services | 2 |
| Improving ticket distribution / sales | 2 |
| Ensure that bus services are seen as a community resource | 2 |
| One ticket system- turn up and go | 2 |
| Services for villages and local areas | 2 |
| An objective to increase use of PT for environmental gain | 1 |
| Better transport planning / route management | 1 |
| Creating job opportunities within transportation sector | 1 |
| Do more to investigate why some routes are less used- is this due to poor reliability or cost rather than (assumed) low demand? | 1 |
| Ensure information about delays is adequate and timely | 1 |
| Ensure services are reliable | 1 |
| Give public transport greater traffic priority | 1 |
| Greater collaboration between customers, providers and stakeholders to strengthen services | 1 |
| Improve multi-ticket scenario- improve value for the customer | 1 |
| Improve security on public transport | 1 |
| Improved integration between transport services across service providers and infrastructure | 1 |
| Increasing information reliability | 1 |
| Investment in transport a misnomer if spending benefits foreign manufacturers | 1 |
| Make bus travel more affordable to deter people from using their cars | 1 |
| Make bus travel safer/ do more to prevent anti-social behaviour on board | 1 |
| More active alerts when services are delayed e.g. text message service | 1 |
| More analysis of customer need is required; cost vs. new etc. | 1 |
| More information on board- display next stops | 1 |
| Base: | (43) |

The following quotes highlight responses which refer to the need to provide a service which responds to customer need, with coverage and routes which are planned to meet demand. Customer service was also mentioned as part of the delivery of this;

'Decisions about routes, pricing etc. to be driven by data available and based on user need'
(Leeds South and East CCG)

'Coverage that serves the needs and aspirations of all communities in West Yorkshire'
(Individual respondent)

'Why some routes are not used as much as expected? Usually cost or frequency is the main factor.'
(Further education)

'Cover what expectations are around the locations covered and the hours of operation (plus availability of support outside of office hours)'
(Individual respondent)

'Also someone needs to tell bus drivers that they are customer service staff as much as they are drivers'
(TPN list)

The reliability and availability of information was also a key theme;

'Reliability and information is very important when service disruption/delay occurs.'
(Kirklees council)

'[Current] Information systems are rubbish. The ones at bus stops in Leeds are a complete lie.'
(Highways England employee)

'Real time information, some bus companies have it, some of the bus stop RTPI is old & needs updating. The customer wants to know exactly when or if the bus is turning up.'
(Individual respondent)

Applying a flexible approach to ensure that the network is accessible to all groups in society was a concern for those involved with community transport.

'A specific principle of inclusion of disadvantaged, isolated and disabled groups'
(Community Transport Operator)

'Flexibility - not all travelling groups are the same'
(Individual respondent)

'It's important that the bus strategy does not take a one size fits all approach. Each part, of what is a very diverse and differing county, requires relevant and value for money transport provision appropriate to its needs. As much focus must be placed on rural and community bus services where demand is less as there is on high frequency core routes with very high demand.'
(Community Transport Operator)

Respondents were then asked what the top three things were that they felt could be done to encourage more people to use bus services in West Yorkshire. The top priorities respondents felt should be included the top two responses were core elements of basic bus service provision: 'provide a reliable, frequent service' and 'reduce bus fares/ ensure value for money is obtained for users'. 'Integrated ticketing' was the third most mentioned suggestion.

Table 3.9; Top rated suggestion for increasing bus patronage in West Yorkshire

| High priorities – rated as 1 | Number of mentions |
|---|--------------------|
| Provide a reliable, frequent service. | 16 |
| Reduce bus fares/ ensure value for money is obtained for users | 13 |
| Integrated ticketing across all modes | 7 |
| More active traffic management to improve bus journey times | 4 |
| Improve the look, feel, comfort and style of buses/ cleanliness | 4 |
| Simple, transparent fare structure | 3 |
| Tackle congestion | 3 |
| Safe, punctual, reliable and coordinated bus network/covering rural areas | 3 |
| Greater integration of rail and bus | 2 |
| Improve marketing/advertising - especially to non-users | 2 |
| Discounted tickets for group travel (2 or more people) /monthly travel | 2 |
| Introduce pre-pay tickets to avoid delays | 2 |
| Ensure accuracy and availability of RTI | 2 |
| Run buses later in the evenings | 2 |
| Invest in light rail to speed up journeys | 1 |
| Let bus operators publicise their services themselves | 1 |
| Penalise bus companies for failure to provide reliable service | 1 |
| Punitive measures to reduce car use, especially for journeys which could easily be made by public transport | 1 |
| Base | (69) |

In terms of second tier priorities, respondents rated: *'provide a reliable, frequent service'* and *'reduce bus fares/ ensure value for money is obtained for users'* highly as second choice suggestions to increase bus use in the area. We also see *'ensure accuracy and availability of RTI'* and *'improve the look, feel, comfort and style of buses/ cleanliness'* move further up the list of priorities.

Table 3.10; Second rated suggestion for increasing bus patronage in West Yorkshire

| High priorities – rated as 2 | Number of mentions |
|---|--------------------|
| Provide a reliable, frequent service | 14 |
| Reduce bus fares/ ensure value for money is obtained for users | 8 |
| Ensure accuracy and availability of RTI | 7 |
| Improve the look, feel, comfort and style of buses/ cleanliness | 6 |
| Integrated ticketing across all modes | 4 |
| Invest in bus priorities to reduce running times and enhance reliability | 4 |
| More 'express' or direct services/ integrated with local services | 2 |
| A better thought-out bus stop system that takes people as close as possible to their place of work | 1 |
| Automatic compensation for season ticket holders where bus does not arrive (sufficient to pay for taxi journey) | 1 |
| Better quality publicity | 1 |
| Connectivity | 1 |
| Coverage that serves the needs and aspirations of all communities | 1 |
| Ensure staff are well trained and polite | 1 |
| Fines for local authorities that don't maximise public transport access on the roads | 1 |
| Focus on high patronage corridors as these attract more passengers | 1 |
| Greater integration of rail and bus | 1 |
| High quality, more comfortable and increased space | 1 |
| Improve park and ride facilities | 1 |
| Increase competition in market | 1 |
| Live Bus Stops | 1 |
| More "hopper" buses | 1 |
| More control needed over bus companies | 1 |
| More services evenings and weekends (including late night) | 1 |
| Reduction in prices to encourage more use of off peak services | 1 |
| Working closer with neighbouring authorities | 1 |
| Base | (63) |

Respondents were asked what the top three things were that they felt could be done to encourage more people to use bus services in West Yorkshire. In terms of third choice suggestions, reliable service and fare control are again mentioned, but staff training and improved journey times also emerging as suggestions.

Table 3.11; Third rated suggestion for increasing bus patronage in West Yorkshire

| High priorities – rated as 3 | Number of mentions |
|---|--------------------|
| Provide a reliable, frequent service. | 8 |
| Reduce bus fares/ ensure value for money is obtained for users | 7 |
| Ensure accuracy and availability of RTI | 6 |
| Ensure staff are well trained and polite/conductors on board | 6 |
| Quick journey times/ express services | 3 |
| Integrated ticketing | 3 |
| Advertise in local press special offers/ more visible marketing | 3 |
| Improve feeling of safety for passengers | 2 |
| Modern buses with Wi-Fi/reliable fleet | 2 |
| Accessibility | 1 |
| Awarding tenders on quality and cost, not just cost alone | 1 |
| Improve the look, feel, comfort and style of buses/ cleanliness | 1 |
| Combined interchanges enhance bus use. | 1 |
| Earlier mornings and later night services | 1 |
| Extension to outlying areas, subsidised if necessary | 1 |
| Extra consideration to busy times | 1 |
| Improve park and ride facilities | 1 |
| Improve the bus network away from the main corridors, integrating into existing bus and rail networks | 1 |
| Maintaining services unless clear evidence suggests change is required | 1 |
| Make operators take on less profitable routes services along with awarded more profitable ones | 1 |
| More active traffic management to improve bus journey times | 1 |
| Partnership | 1 |
| Promotion and funding of Community Transport | 1 |
| Regular review of services | 1 |
| Simpler fare structure based on Zones | 1 |
| Widespread parking restrictions to let the buses run unimpeded | 1 |
| Base | (57) |

Respondents were asked why they gave their specific suggestions as to how bus patronage could be increased. Being able to rely on a bus arriving at its stop when it was scheduled to was clearly cited as something that if achieved, would increase customer confidence in the service.

'The first answer is that if people don't believe the service will operate, they will use more reliable means to travel. Reliability is the main thing to tackle'

(WYCA member of staff)

'Users have to be confident that the bus will turn up, throughout the day. That the services connect with each other, so that if you have to catch more than one bus, you don't have to wait for ages to complete your journey and that they are accessible to even areas that are a little bit off the beaten track!'

(Local councillor)

'I know a lot of people who have a good bus route from their home to work but due to unreliability (often due to rush hour) they do not use it. I understand you are trying to make bus timetables more realistic and this needs to continue... alternative options could be considered i.e. additional buses on this route at peak time (or) a bus which covers the busiest part of this journey'

(Highways England)

'I catch the 508 which never runs to time and is frequently cancelled. The timetable along the route is updated in some part but not in others as it appears to show little relation to the actual printed timetable.'

(Anon)

'Bus travel is not cheap and a good frequent service with smart well-mannered staff makes travel more comfortable.'

(Further Education College)

'People will use the buses more if they can be confident that their bus will turn up on time.'

(WYCA member of staff)

Comments from those who pointed to the expense of bus travel as a deterrent to usage mentioned that using a private vehicle or travelling by taxi is often cheaper when travelling in groups as reasons for this.

'Buses are expensive - people quite often use taxis instead'

(Anon)

'I think that you should reduce the monthly fares.'

(Highways England employee)

'If it's cheaper or a similar price to use the car, people won't use public transport'

(Small Operator)

'And fares need to be cheaper, especially for family journeys. When you start to have 2 adults and 2 child fares, it is invariably both cheaper and more convenient to take the car.'

(WYCA member of staff)

Those who advocated integrated ticketing mentioned the introduction of an 'Oyster card style top-up scheme which would allow for fare capping and greater integration across modes; improvements which will increase patronage in their view. Some respondents who advocated changes to fare structure also thought that pre-payment and smart ticketing would provide the benefit of reduced journey times by reducing bus boarding times at stops.

'West Yorkshire needs an oyster style card thereby simplifying fares and capping the daily spend, couple this with the increased services, people will come back.'

(Leeds DSC Member)

'An Oyster card type scheme would enable customers to travel across West Yorkshire via bus or rail and just pay for the journeys they actually make.'

(Federation of Small Businesses)

'Better and more integrated ticketing over different modes for easier and more seamless journeys. Closer working with neighbouring authorities to improve cross boundary travel options and ticketing.'

(South Pennine Community Transport)

'Bus travel needs to be the mode of choice for more people and this would be much easier if there were to be easy hop on hop off ticketing.'

(Anon)

'Integrated ticketing and prepaid only ticketing would speed up buses considerably.'

(Leeds DSC Member)

Along with reliable, predictable bus services, the assurance of accurate Real Time Information about bus arrival times was thought to be positive change that would benefit existing users and increase consideration of bus use amongst non-users.

'Delay causing operational difficulties and that delay was caused by e.g. bad parking, road accidents. People dislike not knowing where their bus has got to. The company controllers know but the system does not allow for this to filter through so passengers feel ignored.'

(Individual respondent)

'When things go wrong customers want up to date travel information on smart phones/tables that gives them the opportunity to re-arrange travel plans'

(First Bus)

'The availability of internet real time bus journey information has improved my experience of bus usage, although I don't see this option advertised anywhere)... One further point on real time bus information is its reliability. There are times from my experience of using it that the bus has missed/not arrived. Customer expectation should be managed here with information that the bus is cancelled. This is not always the case.'

(Highways England employee)

Improve the look, feel, comfort and style of buses/ cleanliness was the fifth most cited suggestion for increasing bus patronage; respondents refer to personal experience in their description of poor on board conditions

'Buses can be very hit and miss Buses are often dirty, smelly and full of rubbish'

(Individual respondent)

'Some of the buses smell disgusting - it's more like using a public lavatory than a bus service'

(Individual respondent)

'If journey time, comfort and reliability is up to standard, how are car drivers to be persuaded to switch from car usage without sight of any advertising and substantiation of these claims'

(Highways England employee)

Respondents who pointed to customer satisfaction with the attitude and approach of drivers and staff felt customer feedback should be taken into account more readily, and there was a desire for staff to be more polite in their approach to improve experiences of using the bus.

'Customer questionnaires on their driver and experience could be carried out on certain routes. Bad service should be addressed and good service should also be rewarded if not already. This is an incentive for the driver to give good customer service.'

(Highways England employee)

'...A good frequent service with smart well-mannered staff makes travel more comfortable.'
(Further Education College)

'When bus drivers see you running for a bus it would be nice if they actually stopped and waited for the passenger.'
(Highways England employee)

Faster journey times and express services which stop less frequently were seen as key, particularly in West Yorkshire's more rural areas.

'We need to focus on quicker more efficient journeys to encourage people out of their cars.'
(Individual respondent)

'Buses are slow and unreliable only because Metro and the local authorities have not given enough road space and have been politically scared to build the necessary road capacity'
(Individual respondent)

'What would be better is if the bus served the local villages, and stopped at a hub, offering a train journey or express bus journey into the city'
(WYCA member of staff)

'Bus journey times could be reduced by having more express service buses.'
(Local Councillor)

Email responses to survey

There were eleven responses via email to the survey these organisations are listed below. Responses from organisations vary in detail.

Table 3.12; Email responses to survey- Organisations

| Organisations: |
|---|
| Harrogate Borough Council |
| Highways England |
| Individual respondent |
| Kirklees Council |
| Lancashire County Council |
| Leeds City Council |
| Rochdale Council (Highways, property and Strategic Housing) |
| Transport for Greater Manchester |
| University of Bradford |
| Wakefield Council |
| West Yorkshire Fire Service |

3.2 Individual response write ups

Local transport authority

The responding organisation agrees with the sentiment behind the vision but points towards several semantic changes to the presentation of the vision and the aims contained within the strategy.

The core principles are deemed to all be valid, and the responding organisation considers them aligned with their specific passenger priorities.

In terms of other principles that might be included the responding organisation points towards potential underpinning of strategy delivery by democratic accountability. They also question whether future plans might include greater detail on *how* strategy will be delivered i.e. modes used.

Local Council (1)

The response from this responding Council is positive and the principles are thought to cover the main issues currently impacting on bus travel. However this council would like to see consideration of passenger safety (at stops and on board buses) featured as a higher priority within the strategy. In terms of the commercial aspect of bus travel the organisation states that they recognise that an increase in fare-paying passengers is vital to ensure the maintenance of the network.

This council are also keen to ensure that cross boundary services (especially those that link Ripon with Leeds and Bradford with Harrogate) are retained and featured more prominently within the strategy as it is felt that these provide key links for residents in these areas.

Local Council (2)

There is a broadly positive response to the vision and strategy from this local Council, however as per the response from another local council there is also a keenness to ensure that cross-border services into East Lancashire are retained and involved in any future network plan.

This Council identify a primary focus on mode shift and would like more explicit detail on how the plan will meet the needs of disadvantaged communities.

Local Council (3)

The respondent from this council offered constructive criticism on several points of then strategy, including as stated by other representatives from neighbouring local authorities, the lack of detail regarding cross-boundary connections from West Yorkshire into Wakefield. It was specifically felt here that the failure to recognise and draw this distinction would make it difficult to achieve 'seamless' ticketing.

It is felt there is an absence of an integrated plan for transportation across modes i.e. there is no direct link between the strategy and its aims, the operation of bus services and the road highway network. It is felt that a failure to explicitly explain how this will be achieved will impact on the success of the strategy.

Much like the online respondents, the representative from this Local Council is keen to draw the distinction between high-use services and those that serve rural communities, serving a social purpose rather than a commercial one. The respondent would like to see more detail within the vision for these rural services, and assurances that there is a strategic vision to cover these vital links.

The respondent feels that the vision omits any detail regarding the local planning authority and how the vision will impact on their decision making. As with other responses, this respondent points to a lack of detail in the plan relating to accountability, and whether this is democratic, public or through financial sustainability.

As per the response from another Local Council, this respondent would like to see more focus on safety, with greater detail on how this will extend into the wider highways environment (beyond the passenger experience where it is currently focused).

Local Council (4)

The respondent from this Council broadly welcomes the vision and feels that it aligns with the vision for their locality and Greater Manchester; which itself aims to deliver greater access and growth through an improved bus offer.

The respondent feels that the core principle for the bus offer in the region needs to be 'an affordable offer with value for money at its heart', as this is the one that aligns most closely with the outlook for their area. There is an inherent challenge in continuing to provide subsidised travel, whilst investing in infrastructure; the costs of which are passed on to fare-paying passengers. This council are keen to ensure that those on low incomes are not penalised by this.

As noted by other local authorities, it is felt that further detail is needed on cross boundary services to ensure that both passengers travelling cross-boundary and businesses which rely on cross-boundary travel are supported. This includes road highway links and bus services.

Local Council (5)

The response from this Council is highly supportive of the consultation, highlighting that a quality bus offer is integral to the success of Leeds given the lack of a suburban rail network in the area. They would like to see a 'one system' offer of integrated transport.

As Leeds is vying to be the European Capital of Culture in 2023, there is a keenness to ensure that the bus provision is fit to compete, with sufficient evening and night-time services a primary concern. There is also a drive towards smart, integrated ticketing (as per the online response) to again, ensure competitiveness.

They also support the introduction of a new cleaner fleet of buses to improve air quality in Leeds, which at present is in breach of European Directives (NO2 emissions).

This Council feel there is a lack of detail regarding the timescales and specific delivery of the eight core principles, and feel that this needs to be addressed in order to gain stakeholder interest and funding.

Educational Institution

Broadly welcomed the vision, but would like to see more reference to the environmental principles i.e. greater encouragement of the use of electric or hybrid vehicles. The representative of this organisation also asked whether more could be done to encourage the student population onto the buses, and whether more measures could be introduced to make bus travel more affordable for those on low incomes.

Individual respondent

This respondent broadly welcomed the eight core principles and stated that their personal experience of bus travel also leads them to believe that it is prohibitively expensive for to use on a casual basis, in comparison with the train or travel by taxi. The respondent also believes that the integration of bus and rail needs to be improved in West Yorkshire towns (such as Shipley) to make it clearer for those alighting either mode what their next stage of onward travel should be.

Local Council (6)

The respondent from this Council has a specific focus on Adult Social care and the response focuses on the promotion of the needs of those with dementia, and requests that any future plan for transportation ensures that viable travel links are available to enable sufferers and their carers to remain connected with their family, friends and local community.

Transport Organisation

This organisation is supportive of the overall vision for the bus strategy, and in particular supports the principle of a holistic multi-model network. This they believe, if fully integrated, should help to attract more people to using the bus, thereby reducing the number of cars on their Strategic Road Network (their key focus).

The response draws out a number of the core principles as important for this organisation;

- *'An easily understood, integrated and stable network for West Yorkshire, that is responsive to changing needs'*- this is deemed important to this organisation, as a core element of their planning strategy is ensuring that future sites are sustainable. The provision of a well-integrated network to enable passengers to travel with ease is key to this.
- *'Quick, frequent and reliable bus services'* and *'A safe, pleasant and comfortable customer experience before, during and after the journey'*, the convenience and comfort of car travel is seen by this responding organisation as a major barrier in mode shift towards sustainable travel. Comfortable, quicker, reliable journeys are key to encouraging car users to consider and use the bus.
- *'Simple, smart and integrated ticketing'* and *'high quality and easily understood information'* - again these are key elements of the user experience to enable easy multi-modal journeys, the achievement of which is necessary to encourage the mode shift that is required to retain capacity within the transport network.

In terms of other elements they would like to see included in the plan, the organisation pointed to greater detail on the potential resilience of the network for example, in poor weather, or how the new network would cope with increased pressure on one mode when another fails.

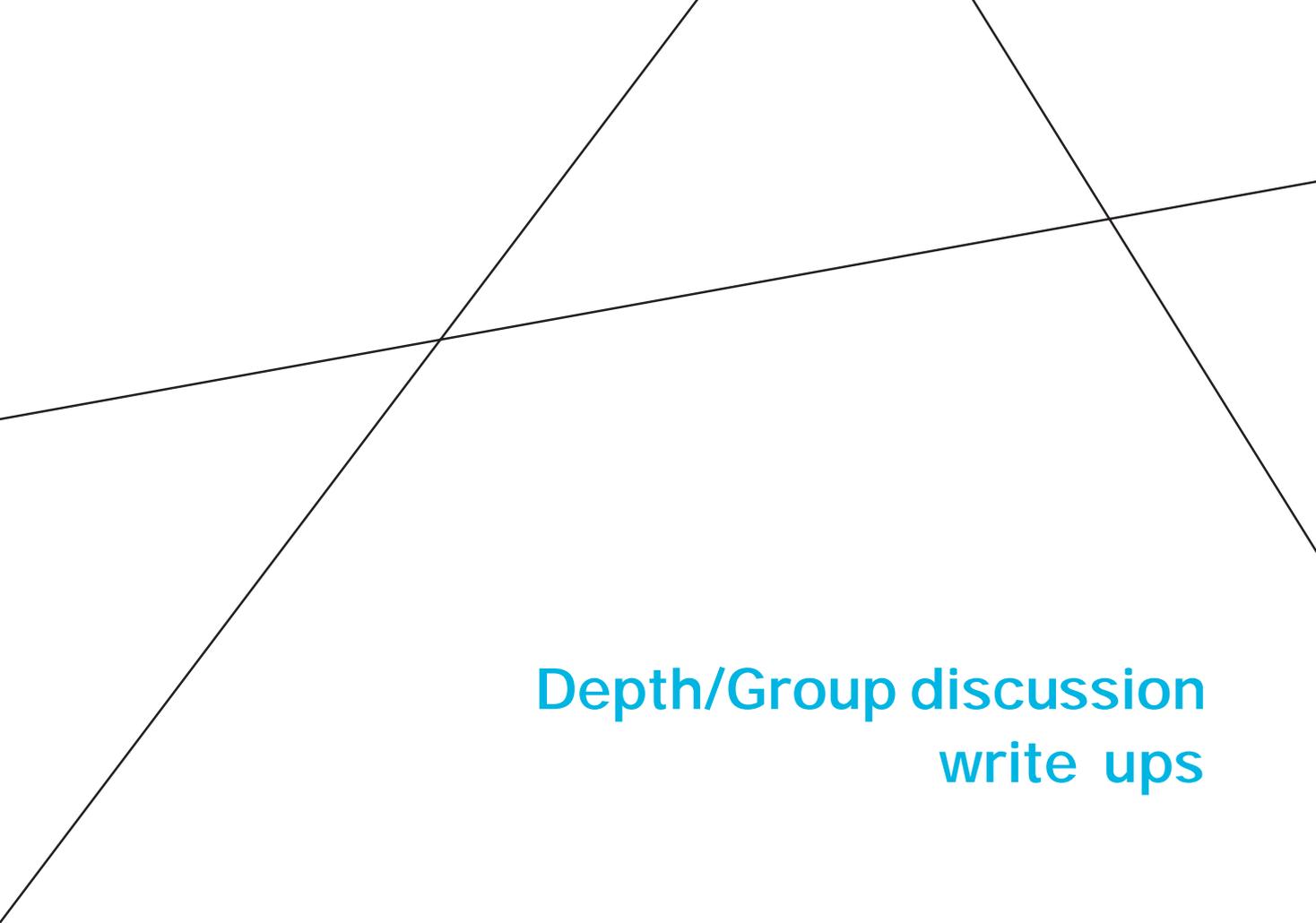
With regard to the aim of encouraging increased bus patronage in West Yorkshire the responding organisation point towards greater collaboration across boundaries. It notes (as have responses from neighbouring local authorities) that journeys are often cross –boundary and that these need to be enabled through the bus strategy.

Local Services

This organisation is in agreement with the broad themes and content of the vision, and feels that if the strategy is implemented as per the plan then it will lead to improvements for service users and business in the area.

3.3 Summary of key themes from email response:

- Cross boundary journeys must not be forgotten; strategy needs to take these into account, in particular with regard to the aim of integrated ticketing
- Two responses pointed towards greater detail in the plan as to how it would benefit those from disadvantaged groups/those with disabilities.
- Two responses request greater detail on environmental aspects of plan; will air quality be improved through the delivery of the vision; and
- Two responses feel that the omission of timescales for the plan means it may lack tangibility and make it harder to gain stakeholder buy in. It was also felt by one responding organisation that this iteration of the plan omits detail on accountability with regard to the success of the implementation.



**Depth/Group discussion
write ups**

04

One on one write ups

4.1 Overview

Throughout the phase one consultation period several stakeholder groups were engaged through workshops. Table 4.1 shows the organisations that participated.

Table 4.1 organisation participating in depth individual or group discussions

| | Written account of discussion accepted? |
|--|---|
| Bradford Metropolitan District Council | ✓ |
| Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce and West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce | ✓ |
| Transdev | ✓ |
| Confederation of Public Transport (CPT) | ✓ |
| Association of Bus Operators West Yorkshire | ✓ |
| Stagecoach Yorkshire | ✓ |
| Leeds Student Unions | x |
| First West Yorkshire | x |

Each took part in a discussion which broadly covered three key areas (in varying degrees of detail):

- To what extent do you agree with the overall vision for the Bus Strategy, please expand on any areas that you may disagree with;
- Discussion of the 8 core principles ; and
- Consideration of other principles that could be included.

This section of the report reviews each of the interviews in turn.

4.2 Individual write ups

Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Bradford Metropolitan District Council (BMDC) would like to see a review of the existing network based on current usage and travel data, with the outcomes of this analysis used to develop the network. This would ensure that it is fit for purpose. Similarly, BMDC feel there are lessons to be learnt from other areas outside London, such as Nottingham, where bus patronage is increasing. BMDC also felt the strategy needs to provide more detail on how the high level aims will become reality.

Information is a key area of focus for BMDC. BMDC believe that a new travel application is due as the existing 'Journey Planner' platform is ten years old and in need of an update. However there should also be accurate and reliable Real Time Information at stops to enable all passengers (including those who are not able to access information online) to access journey information. Information at bus stops can be developed through improved visual mapping of routes and local facilities/amenities and by bus stops themselves being renamed to make them more recognisable; BMDC suggest naming them by location rather than giving them numbers.

BMDC would like to see improved audio-visual information on board, and at stops, to make bus travel more accessible for those who experience difficulty when travelling (i.e. the disabled and the blind). A drive

towards training to increase driver knowledge and awareness so they can cater appropriately for the needs of vulnerable passengers is also suggested as a key requirement. Passenger perceptions of safety whilst travelling by bus also needs to be addressed in the view of BMDC, as drivers cannot exit the cab and passengers may feel safer having conductors on board.

BMDC believe that at present competition between the bus operators is limited and operates as a monopoly in some areas, which does not benefit the consumer. Similarly, in terms of the customer offer, BMDC would like to see a unified brand to simplify things and make it easier for passengers to understand. In addition, they feel that there is a need for a universal passenger charter to allow for redress when things go wrong.

Further detail with regard to hours of operation is flagged as an omission from the strategy by BMDC. Increased evening and night time services are required to service amenities such as Bradford's central shopping centre which remains open until 9pm. Similarly, they would like to see the bus network developed to cope with changing retail and working patterns; ensuring that it is fit to cope and cater for these changing demands. BMDC feel the bus strategy needs to contain more detail about integration with other modes to ensure that the whole network is developed holistically to cope with the transport demands of the future.

BMDC feel sustainability and carbon reduction should feature more prominently in the strategy, and agree with the aim to have a 'zero emission bus fleet within ten years'. BMDC feel that the health benefits of generating this change can be quantified and detailed in the plan to help to make the case for implementation.

Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce and West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce

Representatives from Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce and West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce requested more detail on how transportation can contribute to the growth of the region's economies. Representatives are keen to ensure that the transport networks enable businesses in currently difficult to reach locations, to attract staff.

As with other stakeholders, the Chambers of Commerce are keen to see consideration and allowance cross boundary travel within the plan. Smart technology and seamless ticketing is seen as a key deliverable to achieving this aim. The Chamber representatives also noted that the current cost of bus travel can be prohibitively high.

Transdev

Transdev agreed in principle with the core concept of the vision and principles, but made a few general comments on areas which could be expanded or covered in greater detail.

Transdev commented there is little content on security or the perception of safety on buses and at stops. They would also like to see greater cooperation between stakeholders to enable the aim of delivering an integrated, simplified service being achieved; with particular regard to managing disruption on highways. Transdev also felt the vision could incorporate more of the passenger perspective.

Ticketing was pulled as a key area for focus. Transdev felt the vision needs to deal with rail and bus integration in greater detail. It was felt this is something that is working well in other parts of the country but where West Yorkshire is falling behind. However, it was noted that there would have to be increased capacity in line with increased integration. It was agreed that ideally tickets should be rationalised and simplified to allow for multi-operator use, and a single ticket would make it easier to monitor usage. The current multi-ticket system is too complex and confusing for passengers. As per the thoughts of Stagecoach, Transdev feel that cheap prices are not always what passengers want; the perception of value is linked to quality of service rather than fares.

Improving communication between operators, utilities and police to provide advance notice or speedy notification of road closures was again flagged as a key need for a future bus network. Also mentioned as key was the provision of information for passengers on route planning i.e. ensuring passengers' improved awareness of the possible options for bus travel to complete their journey, therefore making the mode more attractive.

Transdev's current fleet are all equipped to supply Real Time Information (RTI). However they point out that RTI itself does not make buses more reliable as congestion and other operational issues still cause delays. Transdev would like to see greater development of Active Traffic Control. They would also like to see RTI applied to measure improvements in service delivery over time. Transdev felt WYCA have a role in delivering RTI to passengers as some operators do not provide it.

Measures to reduce emissions within the vision were welcomed by Transdev, who pointed out that their own research indicates passengers are less concerned about the environmental impact of bus travel. In terms of the aim to create a single identity, it was felt that this is less important than providing passengers with accurate travel information. Transdev suggested that creating a single point of contact for passengers who would then pass them to the relevant operator could help streamline the customer experience. As per the response from the Chambers of Commerce, Transdev indicated they would like to see an alignment of the vision with the aims for economic growth in the region.

Confederation of Public Transport

The representative from the Confederation of Public Transport (CPT) outlined that this engagement with WYCA was to serve as an opportunity to gather information about the bus strategy so this could be relayed to other CPT members. However, a few key considerations for the content of the strategy were mentioned. CPT were keen to see a growth strategy developed which caters for the various regions within West Yorkshire, and which would be informed by the analysis of specific data for those areas; for example investigations into whether overall declines in bus patronage vary across areas.

Information was again mentioned as a key requirement of the new network. The respondent stated that the main cause of delays to bus services was generated by short-notice roadworks by utilities companies. These need to have more advance warning and inform a network that can react quickly to counter these issues. Similarly, passengers need to be notified of changes to services. The respondent sees digital outputs (presumably apps) and social media as convenient channels for this information.

Intelligence gathering is seen as key to developing bus strategy. More data should be gathered to understand what is deterring bus use, and to discover what drives infrequent bus use to assess whether any specific drivers exist that can be leveraged to increase patronage. The respondent saw the conversion of infrequent users to regular users as a key growth opportunity, with strategies needing to be developed to encourage this. Convenience is seen as a major barrier to bus use at present and ticket pricing is crucial.

Association of Bus Operators West Yorkshire

Association of Bus Operators West Yorkshire (ABOWY) felt the vision itself and the core principles were a good starting point for engaging with stakeholders.

It was suggested that the first two principles '*integration*' and '*frequent and reliable bus services*' would be better placed side-by-side). ABOWY felt that the term '*integration*' needed to be well-defined to avoid confusion, and must serve a purpose. They pointed towards current under-used interchange between bus and rail which serves to delay and inconvenience bus passengers. Integration between bus and cycling was considered possible with greater parking slots for bicycles at bus stops on high-use routes.

The aim to enable '*quick, frequent and reliable services*' was viewed by ABOWY as the main priority for passengers and felt that as such this should form the first principle. ABOWY discussed the existence of several congested routes in Leeds which slow bus journeys.

ABOWY indicated that authorities tend to favour major infrastructural changes which involve long-term works or the creation of new road space. ABOWY feel reallocation of existing road space can be an alternative, although they accept this is often resisted by car users.

ABOWY noted that '*simple/ smart and integrated ticketing*' is not a new principle, as it previously featured in the 'partnership agreement' however it is key that passengers are able to access tickets easily.

In terms of the principle to '*provide high quality, consistent and easily understood information, fit for the 21st Century*', ABOWY felt that a better information system was needed to enable journey planning. Note that operators are unwilling to share data on fare prices, but there is a need for this to be collated into one place for passengers. ABOWY would like to see 'ease of use' for passengers incorporated into the aim to improve passenger information.

Real time information coverage is patchy in West Yorkshire as it is felt there is less of a requirement for RTI on high frequency routes. ABOWY also felt there is a need to improve information for passengers at bus stops.

With regard to the principle to create *'a clear identity that inspires passenger confidence'*, ABOWY felt there is a need to be more innovative when creating a unified branding across operators. ABOWY also noted that achieving great passenger confidence is linked to increased cooperation between policy and bus operators.

'An affordable offer with value for money at its heart' was felt to have the wrong focus, and that it should be changed to incorporate an aim to provide more customer-focused services.

With regard to the environmental aspects of the plan and the principle to reduce emissions by ensuring that buses are modern and clean, ABOWY pointed out that low emission buses need not necessarily be hybrids or electric. If West Yorkshire is vying to have a low-emissions fleet, then the principle needs to be implemented in ten years. ABOWY felt that other cities may be more successful in gaining funding to introduce a low emission fleet of buses.

The core and primary principles for ABOWY relate to service punctuality and reliability. Other principles they would like to see included in the strategy include more commitment to encouraging mode choice for passengers, parking restraints to enable the flow of traffic (buses) and land use planning.

Stagecoach Yorkshire

Stagecoach agreed with the overall approach but made several remarks on individual aspects of the consultation document. Bus travel in the region should be making a contribution to economic growth in the area and the strategy should therefore link in with this requirement.

Stagecoach referred specifically to the individual principles:

- *'An easily understood, integrated and stable network for West Yorkshire, that is responsive to changing needs'*
Changes related to punctuality are key to service delivery as they have a direct impact on the customer. However, frequent changes to services are seen as a barrier to adequate tracking and understanding of usage. Stagecoach believes that a ten year bus network is not the answer for West Yorkshire and that a balance needs to be sought between the stability of the network and responsiveness to change. Customers also need to be kept up to date with changes as they are generally uneasy about change.
- *'Quick, frequent and reliable bus services'*
This element is supported by Stagecoach, but again they refer to balance. There should be a balance between punctual services and frequency of services which are driven by adequate demand. It is felt that the introduction of popular 'quicker services' will drive profitability which can then be spent elsewhere on the network. Increased cooperation is required between operators and the highways department to allow the former to account for delays.
- *'Simple, smart and integrated ticketing'*
Stagecoach question whether *'smart'* and *'simple ticketing'* should be in the same principle. They also point out that smartcards represent relatively out of date technology and whether WYCA should look at the next generation of payment. Multiple tickets can confuse the customer; fare structures need to be simplified to enable understanding, as do geographies and price bands across operator routes. Stagecoach felt the existing bus journey planner for West Yorkshire could be improved with the addition of fare information. Stagecoach believes consumers lack confidence with regard to ticketing.
- *'High quality, consistent and easily understood information, fit for the 21st Century'*
Stagecoach has no strong view on the development of a bus travel app in west Yorkshire, felt that integrated ticketing mitigates some of the need for the app.
- *'A clear identity that inspires passenger confidence'*
Stagecoach feel it is possible for operators to retain their branding while residing under the banner of a single identity for buses in the region, and that the single identity can help with customer confidence. However it is key that the customer has an obvious, single point of contact.

- *'A modern, clean and accessible fleet that contributes to reducing transport's harmful emissions'*
Stagecoach point out that buses are 'both a solution and a problem in terms of environmental travel' being polluters in themselves whilst reducing the number of private vehicles on the road. Stagecoach have seen increased patronage on routes which have had hybrid buses put on them; however this may be due to the more modern feel of the buses which also have Wi-Fi.
- *'An affordable offer with value for money at its heart'*
Stagecoach feel that this principle requires greater definition in terms of delivering value for money i.e. is this value from the view of the consumer or value from a public funding perspective. Customer experience is more complex than just offering the cheapest option; in Stagecoach's view, customers will accept higher prices if they see the benefit in an improved service.

Leeds student unions

Bus isn't currently the mode of choice for students in Leeds, who prefer to use the train where routes allow. Value for money is a key concern for students; bus provision is thought to be expensive.

They feel that analysis of student travel behaviour is needed to understand where transport hubs exist and so map where the links are needed. Smartcards were advocated but only if they offer the best value fares. The Student Union representatives noted that Sheffield's partnership offer had represented good value for money, and had successfully helped to encourage students to remain in Sheffield post-graduation.

First West Yorkshire

First West Yorkshire (FWY) support the vision, but feel there may be some benefit to re-ordering the vision statement in terms of priorities. Given the limited use of multi-modal travel at present, First suggest that *'integrated network'* may not seem relevant for all passengers. *'Reliability'* should also be given higher precedence as a key requirement for passengers. First agreed that the vision should seek to stimulate and link to economic growth in West Yorkshire. They were also keen to see that research was conducted into public need to shape the strategy rather than it being based just on assumptions.

- *'An easily understood, integrated and stable network for West Yorkshire, that is responsive to changing needs'*
Paul Turner, FWY Head of Commercial believes that the existing bus network largely fulfils this need. Would like to focus on integration, and not just be limited to integration with rail. Improved infrastructure such as bus stops with designated cycle parking could assist with this. As per other operators, the respondent feels there needs to be greater integration with highways to ensure that they provide advance notice of road closures.
- *'Quick, frequent and reliable bus services'*
Respondent feels that *'frequent'* could be replaced with *'regular'* here to manage customer expectations.
- *'Simple, smart and integrated ticketing'*
As with the respondent from Stagecoach, the First respondent questioned whether *'smart'* and *'simple'* offer the same thing. Ticketing at the moment is *'incredibly complicated'*, but FWY believe most customers are confident they are purchasing the best value ticket for them. Given the high volume of single ticket purchases, one of the greatest challenges around ticketing is ensuring that value is offered when making additional journeys, and fare capping may be a solution to this.
- *'High quality, consistent and easily understood information, fit for the 21st Century'*
FWY stated that current information provision is generally poor and insufficient, and too slow to react and update to reflect delays to services. RTI is useful in this, but a common complaint is that countdowns to buses due, does not mean they will appear. Similarly, the on-bus RTI technology needs to be improved. Data from RTI is used to continually update timetabling as this provides a realistic timescale for journey times (based on actuals).

FWY would like to see a timetable for the installation of RTI across corridors. As per the views from Bradford Metropolitan District Council, it is key that those who do not have access to online

information are not forgotten and that the information provided at stops is improved. FWY feel that bus stops should have information relating to amenities in the vicinity rather than being route focused.

- *'A safe, pleasant and comfortable customer experience before, during and after the journey'*
FWY suggested productivity gains by using the bus (over the car) could be a draw to increase bus patronage (particularly amongst business users).
- *'A clear identity that inspires passenger confidence'*
This principle is thought to be a little vague. Some passengers have an allegiance with a particular operator and potentially changing bus branding/ livery could confuse them. Data suggests that most bus users only use one route so FWY question the relevance of an overarching identity for buses.
- *'A modern, clean and accessible fleet that contributes to reducing transport's harmful emissions'*
This principle is supported by FWY, but they indicate the statement is 'very anti-diesel' despite the fact that some forms of diesel fuel produce less emissions than hybrids. FWY also feel the strategy needs to look at reducing emissions through reducing the number of cars on the road (mode shift).
- *'An affordable offer with value for money at its heart'*
Affordability needs to be considered from the view of the consumer and from a public spending perspective.

Summary of key themes from depth/group discussions:

Views on the overall vision for the Bus Strategy

In general, the vision was well supported by all stakeholders. However, while they supported the vision, several stakeholders felt it should be informed by data analysis, to ensure that it meets the needs of the public and shapes a bus network that is fit for purpose. Bradford Metropolitan District Council in particular felt there were lessons to be learnt from other areas outside London, such as Nottingham where bus patronage is increasing. Similarly, CPT believe that intelligence gathering is key to developing a bus strategy; more data should be gathered to understand what is deterring bus use, what drives bus use when it is used by infrequent users, and to discover how can this be leveraged to increase patronage.

First West Yorkshire were also keen to see that research was conducted into public needs in order to shape the strategy rather than it being based on assumptions. This view was shared by Leeds Student Union who feel that analysis of student travel behaviour is needed to understand where transport hubs exist and thus map where links are needed to cater for the student population. Transdev felt RTI could be used to generate insights which could be used to improve the network over time.

There is consensus from the operators (and in line with views from the Chambers of Commerce) that the vision should align with plans to stimulate economic growth and that the bus strategy should contribute to the growth of the local economy in West Yorkshire. Chambers of Commerce expanded on this point to indicate the importance of improved transport networks to businesses in difficult to reach locations who are struggling to attract talent and who need to grow their firms.

In terms of the wording of the vision, First West Yorkshire suggest that *'integrated network'* may not seem relevant for all passengers. *'Reliability'* should also be given higher precedence as a key requirement for passengers.

Views on the core objectives

- Integrated ticketing is not supported by all operators, an indication that smart cards are already out of date and may not be *'future proof'*;
- Needs to be a balance between reliability and responsiveness to ensure customer expectations are managed, and that the network remains stable;
- Affordability as a concept within the strategy is currently ambiguous. Is the strategy referring to affordability in terms of public spending or for the end-user?
- Operators question the need for single identity branding, but felt that this is not insurmountable. A single focused branded identity is something that BMDC in particular support, specifically with regard to providing the customer with a clear contact if something goes wrong; and

- In terms of integration this should not be limited to integration on the network, greater cooperation between utilities, operators and highway control is required to ensure that problems on the road can be countered and managed to limit the impact on passengers.

Is there anything missing?

Stagecoach believes a balance needs to be sought between stability of the network and responsiveness to change. Bradford Metropolitan District Council feel the bus strategy needs to contain more detail about integration with other modes to ensure the whole network is developed holistically to cope with the transport demands of the future. Transdev agreed and felt the vision needs to deal with rail and bus integration in greater detail as this is something that is working well in other parts of the country but where West Yorkshire is falling behind.

Transdev also commented there is little content on security and the perception of safety on buses and at stops. This was mentioned by several local authorities as something they would like to see featured more prominently in the plan.

Bradford Metropolitan District Council called for greater detail within the strategy with regard to hours of operation as increased evening and night time services are required to service amenities such as Bradford's central shopping centre which remains open until 9pm. This is something that was mentioned by Leeds City Council in their email response.

BMDC feel that sustainability and carbon reduction should feature more prominently in the strategy, and agree with the aim to have a 'zero emission bus fleet within ten years'. BMDC feel that the health benefits of generating this change can be quantified and detailed in the plan to help to make the case for implementation. However while measures to reduce emissions within the vision were welcomed by Transdev, they indicated that their own research shows reducing emissions is less of a priority for passengers.

Three thin black lines intersecting on a white background. One line is nearly horizontal, sloping slightly upwards from left to right. Two other lines are steeper, one sloping upwards from left to right and the other sloping downwards from left to right, crossing the horizontal line.

Summary of findings

05

Summary of findings

5.1 Overview – quantitative findings

Almost all (92%) respondents to the online survey agreed with the vision for the bus network. When given the opportunity to comment on the elements they disagreed with most, respondents used this as an opportunity to identify weaknesses in the current network. Most cited issues with:

- local bus service provision;
- the need to develop multi-modal network links; and
- the failure of bus service providers to listen to the needs of local communities.

Of the eight core principles *'quick, frequent and reliable bus services'* was given the highest importance rating. *'A clear identity that inspires passenger confidence'* was given the lowest importance rating. Essentially, core service delivery was seen as paramount. When respondents were asked why they gave their specific importance ratings to the eight core principles, most again responded in general terms about public transport strategy highlighting or expanding on elements they would like to see included in the vision. The most common themes related to a desire to increase integration between modes, and improvements to connections between services. Value for money and increased reliability were also key themes.

Respondents were asked if they felt that there were any other principles that should be considered for inclusion in the vision. Of the 88 respondents who took part in the online survey, 42 felt there were other elements that should be included. Of the suggestions the most commonly cited was the need for greater focus on the customer; first to ensure that services respond to customer needs and can be altered to meet fluctuations in demand, and secondly to deliver better customer service.

In summary, the most often cited suggestions for increasing bus patronage are based on basic service delivery: the assurance of reliable bus services, which are frequent and offer good value for money. The lack of integrated /unified ticketing is also seen as barrier to bus use at the moment. Reliability of service is underpinned by predictability and the availability and assurance of accurate Real Time Information. This is seen as key improvement which would encourage increased bus use.

Table 5.1 Summary of most commonly suggested measures to increase bus patronage in West Yorkshire – shading denotes tier of selection

| Ranking | Suggestions: | Suggestion 1 | Suggestion 2 | Suggestion 3 |
|---------|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | Provide a reliable, frequent service. | | | |
| 2 | Reduce bus fares/ ensure value for money is obtained for users | | | |
| 3 | Integrated ticketing across all modes | | | |
| 4 | Ensure accuracy and availability of Real Time Information | | | |
| 5 | Improve the look, feel, comfort and style of buses/ cleanliness | | | |
| 6 | Ensure staff are well trained and polite/conductors on board | | | |
| 7 | Faster journey times/ express services | | | |

5.2 Overview – email responses

Concern was raised that cross boundary journeys were not included enough in the strategy, in particular with regard to the aim of integrated ticketing.

Stakeholders requested greater detail in the plan as to how it would benefit those from disadvantaged groups/ those with disabilities. Greater detail on environmental aspects of the plan, for example will air quality be improved through the delivery of the vision, was also raised.

Two respondents felt the omission of a specified timetable for implementation may act as a barrier and make it harder to gain further stakeholder buy in. One responding organisation also felt that this iteration of the plan omits detail on accountability with no mention of how the successful implementation of the plan will be measured. They would like to see more on this in future iterations.

5.3 Overview – Workshop findings

In general the vision was well supported by all stakeholders; however there was a clear difference in the responses from the existing bus operators and other (non-commercial) stakeholder groups.

Bus operators were supportive of the vision and strategy, but were keen to ensure that the commercial aspects of bus travel in West Yorkshire were not forgotten; they sought greater clarity on the meaning of affordability in the strategy. They were also keen to ensure that passenger expectations were adequately managed through the wording of the strategy i.e. there should be a balance between '*punctual*' services and '*frequency*' of services which is driven by adequate demand. Many stakeholders felt that seamless ticketing is a key deliverable for the strategy, although Stagecoach expressed caution with regard to rolling out Smartcards as a vehicle for this as they may not be future proof.

Almost universally, stakeholders wanted to see the application of robust passenger and journey data to inform future development of the strategy; this was seen as key to creating a network that was fit for purpose.

Almost all representatives from local authorities mentioned cross-boundary travel. These journeys need to be enabled to ensure that they are as simple as possible: ticketing options are rationalised to obtain the best value for the customer, and that remote areas remain or are made more accessible by public transport. Local authorities also pointed towards greater accessibility for the disabled, increased driver training when dealing with these passengers, and a need to improve on board and at stop information to make journeys easier. Bradford Metropolitan District Council in particular would like to see a greater emphasis on the environmental aspects and targets set out in the strategy.

There was some consensus that whilst the plan should focus on delivery for the customer, further work is needed to develop relationships between operators, highways and utilities companies, to ensure roadworks and other operational problems are highlighted in good time so delays can be mitigated. Although RTI is seen as a useful tool in alerting passengers to arrival times, this is not the only solution, and there needs to be greater interplay between agencies to feed RTI and maintain its accuracy.

5.4 Actions and recommendations

In terms of recommendations for the Bus Strategy wording and priorities, the primary research with stakeholders indicates that greater detail is required on the following:

Intelligence led development: to ensure that the strategy is able to shape a network that is *'fit for purpose'*. Feature more data to back up evidence of analysis of customer demand and existing network usage.

Local routes: include assurances that local and in particular rural routes will be protected and improved.

Economic growth: how will the strategy stimulate and contribute to the growth of the West Yorkshire economy. Quantifying this will help the plan gain traction.

Environmental benefits: feature these more prominently and quantify to gain traction with stakeholders.

Cooperation with utilities, highways, and police: encourage the sharing of information with operators to enable a key aim of achieving *'quick, frequent and reliable bus services'*.

Timescales and accountability: include more detail on timescales to give tangibility. Include measures to make operators accountable and include detail on how WYCA will measure the success of the plan.

Recommendations for Phase 2 engagement

'A clear identity that inspires passenger confidence' is rated as the least important principle by respondents from the stakeholder audience- potentially due to limited tangibility. This concept needs to be carefully explained to respondents from the general public to ensure they understand the relevance of this principle.

Given the focus on criticisms of the bus service in a large proportion of responses to this question, it is key that respondents from the general public are focused in their response to the vision, rather than using the exercise to simply complain about existing services.

Engaging with the General Public via a quantitative survey needs to be carefully considered, it is unlikely that respondents (unless incentivised to do so) will read the strategy in its entirety which may limit understanding and quality of response. It may be worth breaking it down into core elements, or asking them to view key elements of the document on screen if possible as part of the survey before they begin.

We recommend that the Phase 2 questionnaire for the General Public audience has routing applied to ensure that questions are asked consistently. Although responses should be encouraged, allowing responses over multiple formats allows for inconsistency in data collection and limits analysis across the response methods.