

Kent County Council The Big Conversation Written Report

Prepared by Lake Market Research for Kent County Council

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“This report complies to ISO 20252 and any other relevant codes of conduct.”

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Big Conversation Consultation was launched on 13th June 2018 for an eight-week period. Consultees were invited to submit their views on the proposals via a questionnaire, (online and hard copies), or at 12 Public meetings held across Kent. Parish meetings with Parish, Town and District Councillors were held in for locations, as well as 3 deliberative sessions with a targeted sample of Kent residents. Market engagement was undertaken with bus, taxi and community transport operators prior to the Consultation, which in conjunction with Public Transport helped develop ideas.
- A timetabled service that takes you where and when you want to go are the most important factors to Consultees in a rural bus service. This was supported by qualitative feedback in what constitutes a 'good bus service'. Overall, the key factors were a reliable service, a frequent service, a flexible service, affordable fares, punctual / timely arrivals and or departures, safe journeys, polite drivers and a service that operates evenings and weekends.
- Of the three ideas tested in the Consultation questionnaire, 'Idea 1 – Feeder Services' held the most appeal, particularly for those living in rural hamlets and isolated dwellings, defined using Rural-Urban Classification created by the Office of National Statistics for Local Authority Districts. The deliberative workshop sessions showed a mix of preferences; with some residents feeling 'Idea 1 - Feeder Services' was the solution for their community and this tended to be smaller, less dispersed communities that were relatively near a main bus service, also supporting Consultation questionnaire feedback. Communities more dispersed and perhaps less near to a bus stop felt that 'Idea 2 – Bookable Bus Service' might suit their community better, particularly those with mobility issues. The concept of 'Idea 3 – Taxi-style bus services' appealed to those who live rurally as having smaller buses on the roads reduced congestion and benefitted the community. All elements of the Consultation feedback streams referenced concerns regarding safety, overcrowding and the service being unreliable at school drop-off and pick-up times.
- One of the main findings emerging from the Consultation is that the solution for rural bus services was not just 'one' of the three ideas put forward; but a mix or a combination of the approaches, dependent on the area, and often the demographics and circumstances of Individuals. 'One size did not fit all' was mentioned repeatedly.
- A key finding of the Consultation was the need for many residents to be able to get to a hospital appointment easily and on a fairly direct route, as for some, just getting to these appointments took hours. Many residents asked for direct services to hospitals or GPs, or to Hubs such as large supermarkets or Park and Rides. There was concern regarding the future of GP surgeries and their locations being increasingly less accessible, with concerns that transport links to GP surgeries would not be available.
- There was also a very strong desire from many residents to run an evening bus service. This was considered essential, both for social occasions and also for people to be able to return home in the evening. This does not have to run every night; but perhaps Thursday to Friday would suffice and also attract the youth market to use the evening buses.
- Across the Consultation there was a great deal of consistency in responses with regard to the benefits of these services and also the concerns of these services. KCC will need to address these going forward in the promotion of these services to encourage use. The issues are:

Idea 1 - Feeder Service

- The reliability of the main connecting service;

- Punctuality of the main service (kept waiting);
- Location of bus stops, for some elderly or less mobile it might be too far to walk;
- Increased journey time;
- Concerned about being left by the side of road if connection is late or bus full;
- What happens to passengers if bus is late or the feeder or the main bus breaks down.

Idea 2 - Bookable Bus Service

- Concerns of overbooking with smaller vehicles;
- Hard for some individuals to access if not IT savvy or suffer from digital poverty;
- Potentially complicated for some elderly or vulnerable to use;
- Expensive to use;
- The barrier to using amongst those wanting a timetabled service.

Idea 3 – Taxi-style bus services

- Reliability of taxi buses around school drop off/pick up hours;
- Capacity concerns in terms of volume and type of user, e.g. buggies or wheelchairs.

General concerns – across all three ideas

- The price of fares for those with low incomes;
 - Use of smaller vehicles provide a perception of transfers being difficult for disabled, mobility issues, elderly or vulnerable to change buses;
 - Concerns whether there is sufficient space for buggies, wheelchairs, rollators, trollies;
 - Overcrowding concerns with small vehicles;
 - Some elderly are concerned about having to stand, it's unsafe on smaller bus;
 - Concerns about sharing a small vehicle with strangers;
 - Concerns as to whether the ideas will work as described in the Consultation.
- New ideas emerging for the future delivery of rural bus services proposed by the participants of the Consultation tended to be in key themes, which were:
 - Use the money to subsidise (improve and extend) existing bus routes;
 - KCC to create and run their own bus company (not legally permissible under the Buses Act 2017);
 - KCC to operate a car share scheme and manage it;
 - KCC to assist communities with setting up community buses – provide or part subsidise vehicle or driver etc.
 - With any idea proposed, widespread publicity is required to ensure that all age groups are aware of any new services to promote and encourage trial and use. Local Consultation is important in the setup of any new idea / pilot put forward to ensure it is relevant to the potential needs of users.
 - It will also be a significant challenge to persuade non-bus users to use these new schemes rather than take the car. Feedback from the Consultation suggests promotion of the concept of the schemes being regular, reliable, convenient and cost effective will help to encourage use.

1.0 BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH CONTEXT

Kent County Council (KCC) currently commits around £5.7m of net revenue per annum to supporting local bus services which are not provided commercially. These are largely catering for people living in rural areas or in out suburban areas and to enable services to operate in the evenings and at weekends.

The objective of the 'Big Conversation' is to gather and evaluate service users', residents' and key stakeholders' input on the future delivery of rural bus services.

The key aims of the consultative process are to inform what a transport model for rural services could look like. This will help KCC to get a view from providers, users, communities and other stakeholders to determine what 'good' is and how they can all work together to:

- Maintain and, where possible improve rural accessibility for those without alternative means of travel
- Help tackle social isolation
- Improve the use of existing transport resources including Community Transport and integrate those services with the wider commercial transport network
- Contribute to increasing resilience and continuity of service delivery
- Improve the sustainability of services
- Make best use of technology to transform access to public transport
- Understand acceptability of interchange from connector to main line bus
- Understand tolerance to charging or removing concessions from services
- Provide the "right transport solution for the right client need for the right price"

The consultation presented three initial ideas for how rural bus services could be provided in the future. These ideas were;

- Idea 1 - 'Feeder Service' - Using either a small bus or a taxi to provide a service which would connect rural communities with an existing commercial bus service for the onward journey.
- Idea 2 - 'Bookable bus service' - A service which would collect passengers from designated points within a community and could be used to access a range of destinations in a given area. Passengers would book the service.
- Idea 3 - 'Taxi-style bus services' – Kent County Council makes significant use of taxis as part of its network of home to school transport and there is an opportunity to make greater use of these vehicles. Instead of a bus or as a new transport link, there could be a taxi-bus - a smaller vehicle, such as people carrier or minibus. The taxi-bus would run to an agreed timetable and route and would stop at agreed points in each community it serves.

Market engagement was undertaken with bus, taxi and community transport operators prior to the Consultation, which in conjunction with Public Transport helped develop ideas.

The Consultation was launched on 13th June and run until 8th August 2018 (eight-week period). Consultees were invited to submit their views on the proposals via a questionnaire, available online on Kent.gov.uk/bigconversation. However, the Consultation materials including the questionnaire were also available in hard copy on request and hard copies were available from local public buildings (Libraries and Gateways) and at public and stakeholder events. The Consultation document, questionnaire, Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), including Easy read, large print and alternative formats, were available on request. Many questionnaires were issued

at the Public and Parish events that have been held during the Consultation period. As part of the Consultation, KCC also received a 12 number of letters containing feedback on the ideas as well as views on bus service provision in general. These have been reviewed by the team at Lake Market Research and have been incorporated into the findings of this report. The questionnaire was designed by Kent County Council, with advice from Lake Market Research. A full summary of the questionnaire responses can be seen in Section 2.

12 Public meetings were held across Kent. Parish meetings with Parish, Town and District Councillors were held in 4 locations, as well as 3 deliberative face to face workshop sessions with a targeted sample of Kent residents.

1.1 CONSULTATION PROMOTION

The Consultation was promoted via the following means;

- Information on KCC's website, including a banner on the homepage
- Promotion on KCC's Facebook and Twitter
- Leaflets handed out at local bus hubs across the county
- KCC press release resulting in coverage in local newspapers and radio
- Targeted advertising on social media
- Community notice boards, Healthwatch Kent and Kent Association of Local Council's newsletters
- Emails to key stakeholder organisations
- Email invites sent to c4,000 individuals registered on the KCC Consultation Directory
- Documents and posters available at KCC Libraries and Gateways
- Posters displayed at rural bus stops;
- Banners posted outside the 12 public meeting community venues
- Messages on road-side electronic signs

1.2 PUBLIC MEETINGS

Twelve public meetings were held across the districts of Kent, in the following locations;

- Dover – Dover Town Hall
- Margate – Margate Football Club
- Gravesend – Elite Venue Centre
- Sevenoaks – The Stag Community Arts Centre
- Canterbury – University of Kent
- Folkestone and Hythe – Saint Mary's Bay Village Hall, Romney Marsh
- Ashford – Homewood School, Tenterden
- Sittingbourne – UKP Leisure
- Sevenoaks - Borough Green Village Hall, Borough Green
- Maidstone – Sessions House, Kent County Council
- Tunbridge Wells – High Weald Academy, Cranbrook
- Dartford – Dartford Football Club

A full summary of these meetings is seen in Section 3.

1.3 PARISH WORKSHOPS

Four Parish workshops were undertaken in the following areas;

- Dover
- Tunbridge Wells
- Ashford

- Maidstone

A full summary of these meetings is seen in Section 4.

1.4 DELIBERATIVE WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Three deliberative workshop sessions were held Margate, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone, in which a mix of respondents participated. Locations were deliberately chosen to achieve a spread across Kent, with venues chosen with public transport and car access. The full report from these groups is seen in Section 5.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

All research conducted by Lake Market Research abides by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, of which we are a Company Partner. All personal data collected during the process of this survey will be retained in line with the General Data Protection Regulation at Lake Market Research's head office for up to one year.

2.0 QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

Summary of Key Points - Consultation Questionnaire Findings

- Just under three quarters (73%) of Individual Consultees noted that the availability of public transport restricts the places they go, suggesting existing provision doesn't meet current needs. This increases to 77% of Consultees living in rural areas.
- A timetabled service that takes you where and when you want to go are the most important factors in a rural bus service. Relative price is more important to those aged 24 and under, whereas a timetable and transport links are more important to those aged 65 and over.
- Levels of likely use range from 52% likely for 'Idea 1 – Feeder Service', 46% likely for 'Idea 3 – Taxi-style bus services' and 39% likely for 'Idea 2 – Bookable bus services'. Appeal increases for all three ideas amongst those living in rural areas (but not significantly). Appeal is highest for those living in rural hamlets and isolated dwellings and current taxi users.
- There are a number of key issues put forward with each idea:

Idea 1 - Feeder Service	Idea 2 – Bookable bus services	Idea 3 – Taxi-style bus services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection needs to be guaranteed / needs co-operation of other operators. • The frequency of the feeder service must be / at suitable / range of times/ routes. • Determine best solutions to minimise extended journey times. • Make the transition between buses as smooth as possible to minimise concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mindset change of booking versus a timetabled service. • Confirmation of how flexible users will need to be for pickup and arrival times. • Determine best solutions to minimise extended journey times. • Capacity / planning concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity / planning concerns. • Potential cost to the user. • Difficulty in access for specific user groups, e.g. those with buggies / wheelchairs.

2.1 CONSULTATION PROFILE

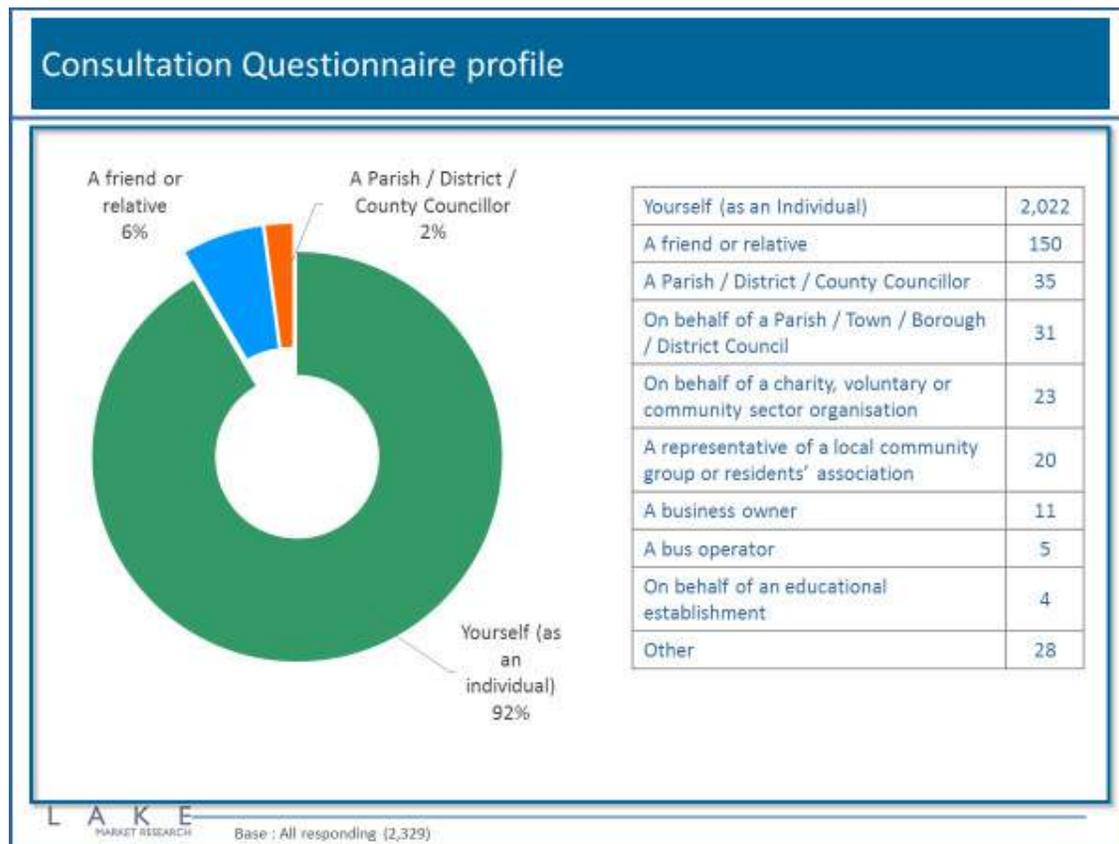
2,335 responses have been recorded for this Consultation. 2,329 of these responses identified themselves as Individuals, friends or relatives of Individuals, District / Town / Parish Councils, District / County Councillors, charity, voluntary or community sector organisations, local community groups or residents' associations, business owners, bus operators and educational establishments:

- 2,022 Individuals (87% of the sample)
- 150 friends or relatives (6% of the sample)
- 31 District / Town / Parish Councils (1.3% of the sample)
- 35 District / County Councillors (1.5% of the sample)
- 23 Charity, Voluntary or Community Sector organisations (1% of the sample)
- 20 Local community groups or residents' associations (0.9% of the sample)
- 11 business owners (0.5% of the sample)

- 5 bus operators (0.2% of the sample)
- 4 educational establishments (0.2% of the sample)

The feedback from business owners, bus operators and educational establishments has been considered when compiling the conclusions from the Consultation questionnaire feedback in this report. However, we have not included reference to statistics from these groups in this report due to base sizes.

Online was the most popular completion method with 81% taking part in the Consultation via the Consultation online portal. 29% submitted their response via a paper questionnaire. Of the 2,335 people completed a Consultation questionnaire; with 1,888 completing online and 447 completing a paper copy, of which 16 of these were via the Easy Read version.



Individuals only

Consultees were asked if they would be willing to complete the 'About You' demographic questions. 23% of Individual Consultees chose not to do so. This was significantly lower, by around 16% compared to other County wide Consultation exercises where a feeder question was not asked. As such the comparison tables in the chart below depict high proportions of those we could not compare to understand the profile of those responding compared to Census statistics (approximately a quarter of those responding).

24% of Individuals preferred not to disclose their gender. Of those who did answer, the majority are female (50%) compared to 26% male. It is therefore likely that a higher proportion of female Individuals responded to this Consultation compared to Kent Census statistics.

24% of Individuals preferred not to disclose their age. Those responding to the Consultation are from a range of age groupings, but the highest proportion are those 60 and over at 42% of those

indicating an age. It is therefore likely that a higher proportion of Individuals aged 60 and over responded to this Consultation compared to Kent Census statistics.

In the opening of the Consultation questionnaire, Consultees were asked to provide their postcode in order to aid our analysis. From the postcodes provided, we have been able to group responses together in terms of a Rural-Urban Classification created by the Office of National Statistics for Local Authority Districts as well as district.

As expected given the nature of the Consultation, the majority of Individual responses were from Consultees who live in Rural areas (56%); 13% rural hamlets & isolated dwellings, 24% from rural towns and fringes and 19% from rural villages. This proportion is higher than Kent Census statistics at 27%.

Consultation profile vs population statistics – Age / Gender / Area		
	2011 Census Population statistics *1	Profile of Consultation response
GENDER		
Male	48%	26%
Female	52%	50%
Could not identify	n/a	24%
AGE		
15 – 24	12%	7%
25 – 34	15%	4%
35 – 49	27%	11%
50 – 59	16%	12%
60 and over	30%	42%
Could not identify	n/a	24%
URBAN / RURAL CLASSIFICATION	2011 Census Population statistics *2	Profile of Consultation response
Rural hamlets & isolated dwelling	5%	13%
Rural town and fringe	14%	24%
Rural village	8%	19%
Urban city and town	61%	37%
Urban major conurbation	12%	3%
Could not identify	n/a	5%
*1 Source: 2011 Census Statistics as published on Kent County Council's website.		*2 Source: Office of National Statistics, PAF households

The table below represents the proportions of questionnaires submitted by Individuals living in each of the Kent districts. Representation has been achieved across all areas; validating the Consultation approach. Response was lower in Dartford and Gravesham, but this was largely expected as they are predominantly urban areas with additional provision from London.

Consultation profile vs population statistics - District

AREA	2011 Census Population statistics *2	Profile of Consultation response
Ashford	8%	11%
Canterbury	10%	7%
Dartford	7%	2%
Dover	8%	8%
Gravesham	7%	4%
Maidstone	11%	12%
Sevenoaks	8%	10%
Shepway	8%	12%
Swale	9%	9%
Thanet	9%	5%
Tonbridge & Malling	8%	9%
Tunbridge Wells	8%	9%
Outside Kent	n/a	1%
Could not identify	n/a	1%

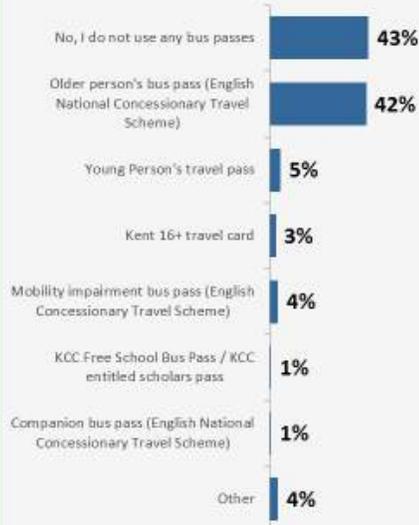
*1 Source: 2011 Census Statistics as published on Kent County Council's website.

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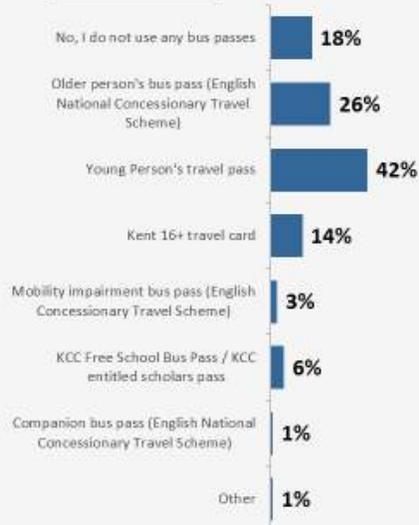
To further understand the profile of Consultees responding, it is worth noting that 42% of the Individual Consultees responding to the Consultation have an older person's bus pass (English National Concessionary Travel Scheme) whilst 43% do not have any bus passes. The profile of the friends or relatives answering on behalf of someone else is mixed with 26% of those they are answering for having an older person's bus pass and 42% having a Young Person's Travel Pass. Readers of this report should consider these profiles when assessing response to the Consultation questions. Please see the chart overleaf for the results of this question in full.

Do you travel using any of the following bus passes?

Yourself (as an Individual)



A friend or relative (answering on behalf of someone else)



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Base: Yourself as an Individual (1,985), a friend or relative (150)

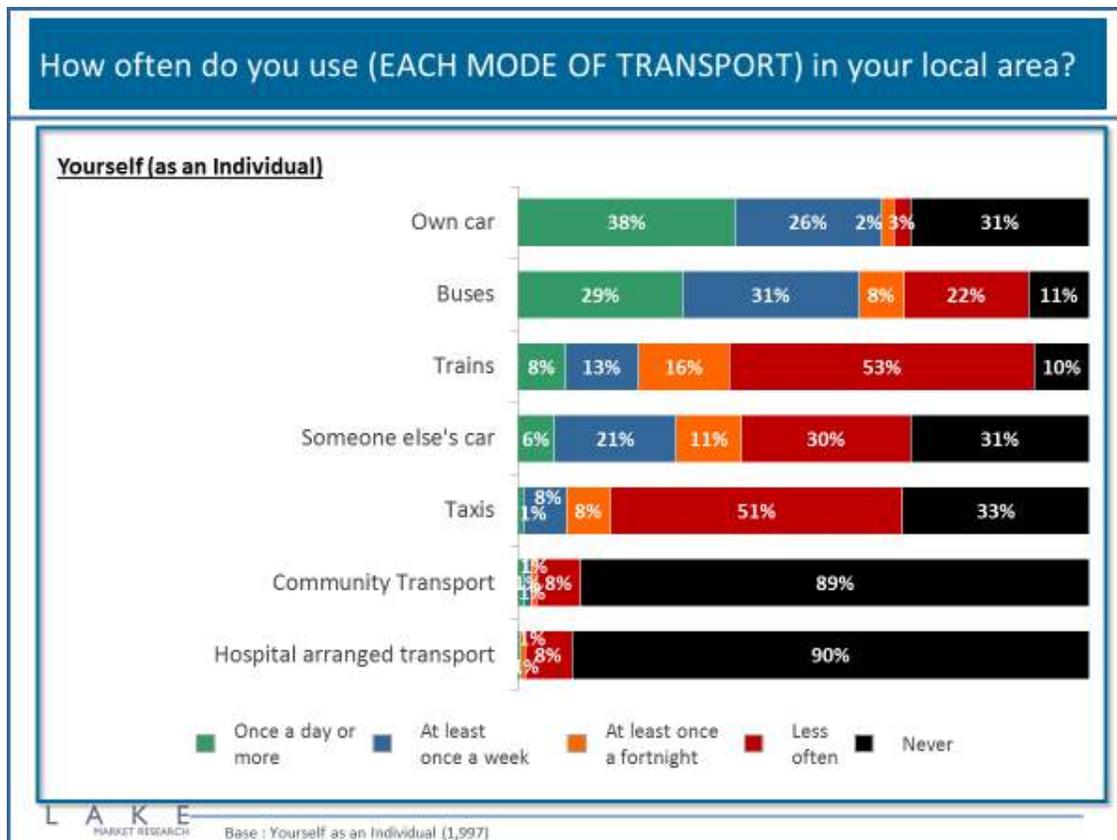
2.2 USE OF TRANSPORT

2.2.1 Current usage

Individuals only

Individuals own car is the most common form of transport amongst Consultees, with 64% using their own car at least once a week or more often. Just under a third (31%) of Individuals indicated they never use their own car in their local area. 27% of Individual Consultees travel in someone else's car at least once a week or more often.

As expected given the nature of this Consultation, buses are the second most common form of transport amongst Individual Consultees, with 60% using them at least once a week or more often. 11% indicated they never use buses in their local area. Just over one in five (21%) use trains at least once a week or more often. Taxis are used to some degree by 67% of Individuals, but the most common frequency is less often than once a fortnight (51%).

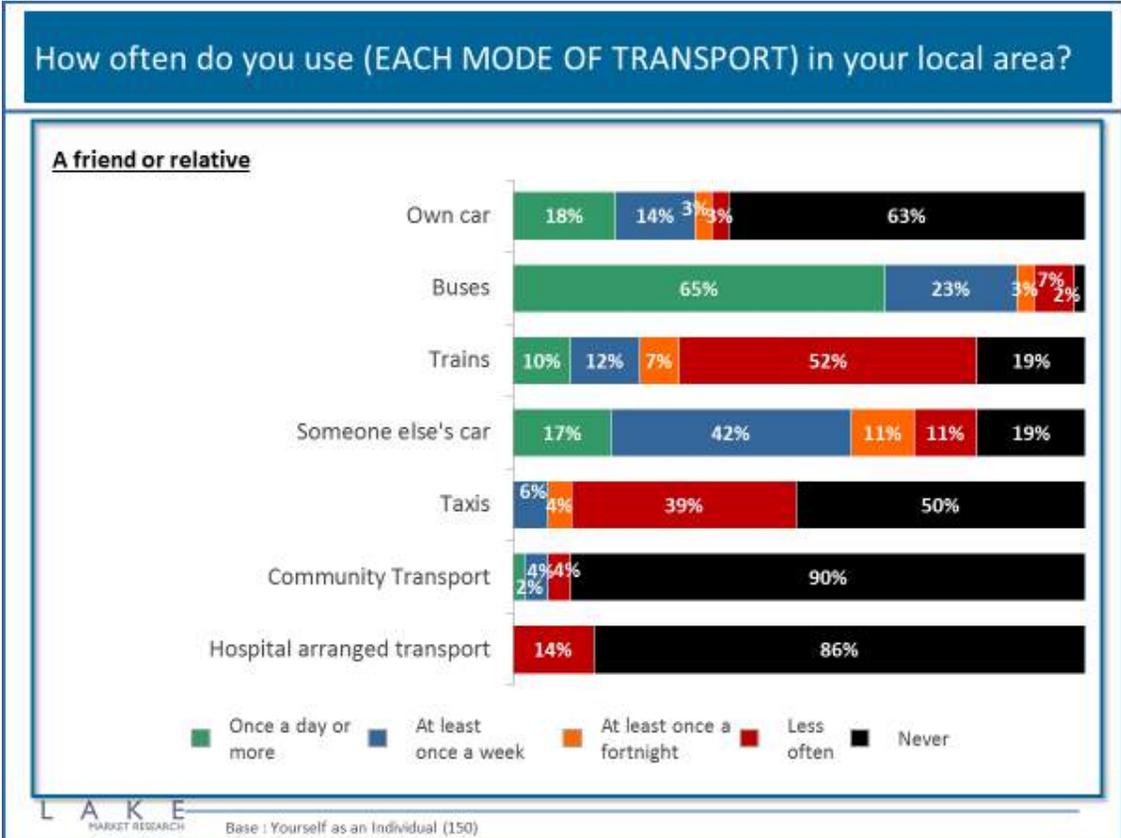


A friend or relative answering on behalf of someone else only

As perhaps expected given the sample group, buses are the most common form of transport amongst friends or relatives answering on behalf of others, with 88% using them at least once a week or more often (65% once a day or more, 23% at least once a week).

Someone else's car is the second most common form of transport with 59% travelling in someone else's car at least once a week or more often.

Just under a third (32%) use their own car at least once a week or more often and 22% use a train at least once a week or more often.



2.2.2 Transport user profiles

Individuals only

The table overleaf depicts the demographic profile of Individual Consultees who:

- Use buses at least fortnightly but do not use their own car at least fortnightly.
- Use buses at least fortnightly (irrespective of other modes of transport).
- Use their own car at least fortnightly.

There are some demographic differences when comparing the groups, as follows:

- A significantly higher proportion of females use buses at least fortnightly.
- A significantly higher proportion of Individuals who consider themselves disabled use buses at least fortnightly and not their own car.
- A significantly higher proportion of those living in rural areas use their own car at least fortnightly.

Profile of 'BUS FORTNIGHTLY USERS' and 'OWN CAR' fortnightly users

% BUS FORTNIGHTLY USERS & NOT CAR FORTNIGHTLY USERS		% BUS FORTNIGHTLY USERS		% OWN CAR FORTNIGHTLY USERS	
- Male	25%	- Male	31%	- Male	40%
- Female	75%	- Female	69%	- Female	59%
<hr/>					
- Aged under 24	15%	- Aged under 24	11%	- Aged under 24	4%
- Aged 25 – 49	20%	- Aged 25 – 49	19%	- Aged 25 – 49	19%
- Aged 50 – 64	22%	- Aged 50 – 64	21%	- Aged 50 – 64	29%
- Aged 65+	45%	- Aged 65+	50%	- Aged 65+	49%
<hr/>					
- Rural (net)	52%	- Rural (net)	54%	- Rural (net)	63%
- Rural hamlets & isolated dwelling	10%	- Rural hamlets & isolated dwelling	10%	- Rural hamlets & isolated dwelling	16%
- Rural town & fringe	23%	- Rural town & fringe	25%	- Rural town & fringe	26%
- Rural village	19%	- Rural village	19%	- Rural village	21%
- Urban city & town	45%	- Urban city & town	42%	- Urban city & town	34%
- Urban major conurbation	3%	- Urban major conurbation	3%	- Urban major conurbation	2%
<hr/>					
- Consider themselves disabled	25%	- Consider themselves disabled	19%	- Consider themselves disabled	13%
- Do not consider themselves disabled	75%	- Do not consider themselves disabled	81%	- Do not consider themselves disabled	87%

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Base : Yourself as an Individual (1,560)

Significantly higher % than other usage groups

2.2.3 Current usage

Individuals only

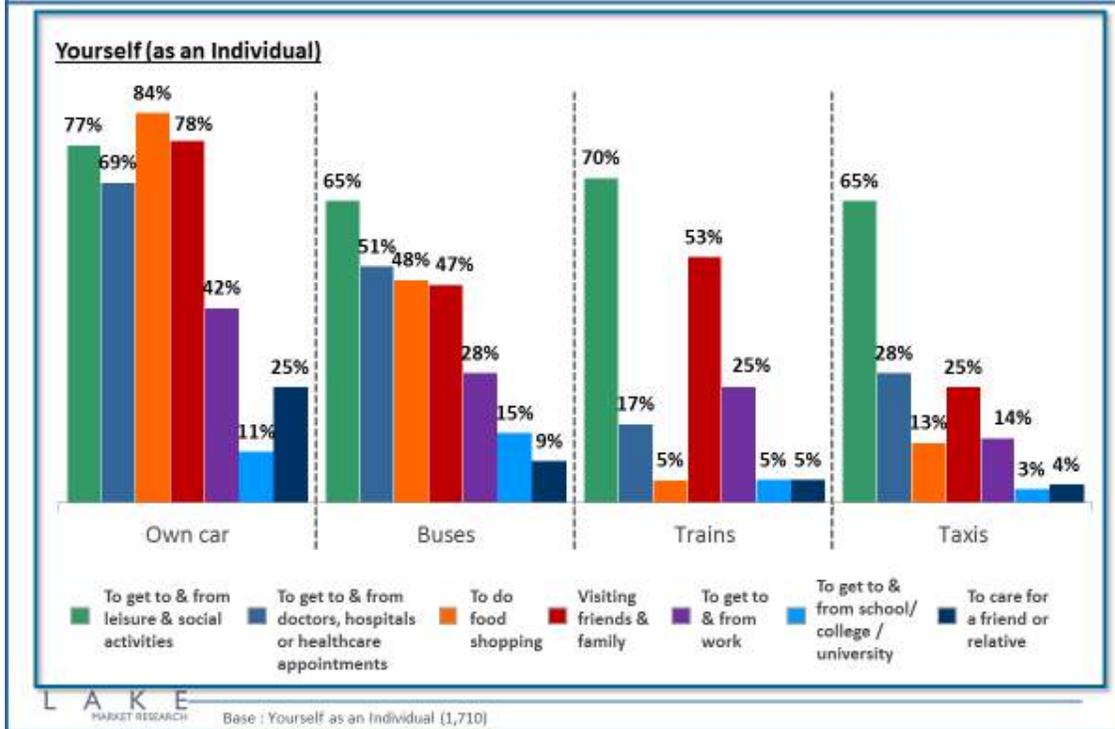
Consultees were then asked to select the reasons they use each mode of transport they indicated they currently use. Consultees could choose any many reasons as relevant.

The most common reasons for travelling using their own car is for food shopping (84% of those who use their own car), visiting friends & family (78%), getting to and from leisure and social activities (77%) and getting to and from doctors, hospitals or healthcare appointments (69%). These are also the most common reasons for travelling by bus but getting to and from leisure and social activities ranks first (65% of those who use buses), followed by getting to and from doctor, hospital or healthcare appointments (51%), food shopping (48%) and visiting friends and family (47%).

Reasons for train use are more distinctive and focus on socialising activities with 70% of train users using them for getting to and from leisure and social activities and 53% using them to visit friends and family. Other reasons are at 25% or below.

Getting to and from leisure and social activities dominates taxi use (65% of those who use taxis). The second most common reason for using taxis is getting to and from doctors, hospital or healthcare appointments at 28%.

Please select the reason for using (EACH MODE OF TRANSPORT)?



The most common reasons for travelling in someone else’s car are for socialising activities with 64% of train users using them for getting to and from leisure and social activities and 55% using them to visit friends and family.

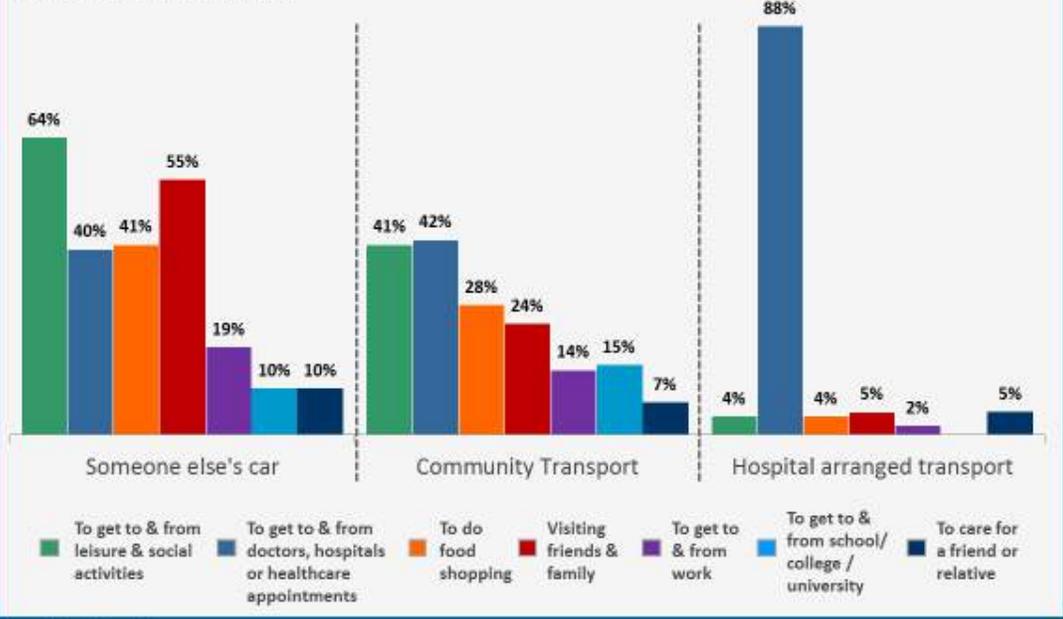
Reasons for using Community Transport are more diverse and reflect individuals’ needs for using. 42% of users use them to get to doctors, hospitals or healthcare appointments and 41% of users use them to get to and from leisure and social activities. Just over a quarter use them for food shopping and visiting friends and family (28%).

As expected, getting to and from doctors, hospitals or healthcare appointments dominates use of hospital arranged transport (88% of those who use hospital arranged transport).

Base sizes do not permit the breakdown of reasons for using transport modes for those answering as a friend or relative.

Please select the reason for using (EACH MODE OF TRANSPORT)

Yourself (as an Individual)



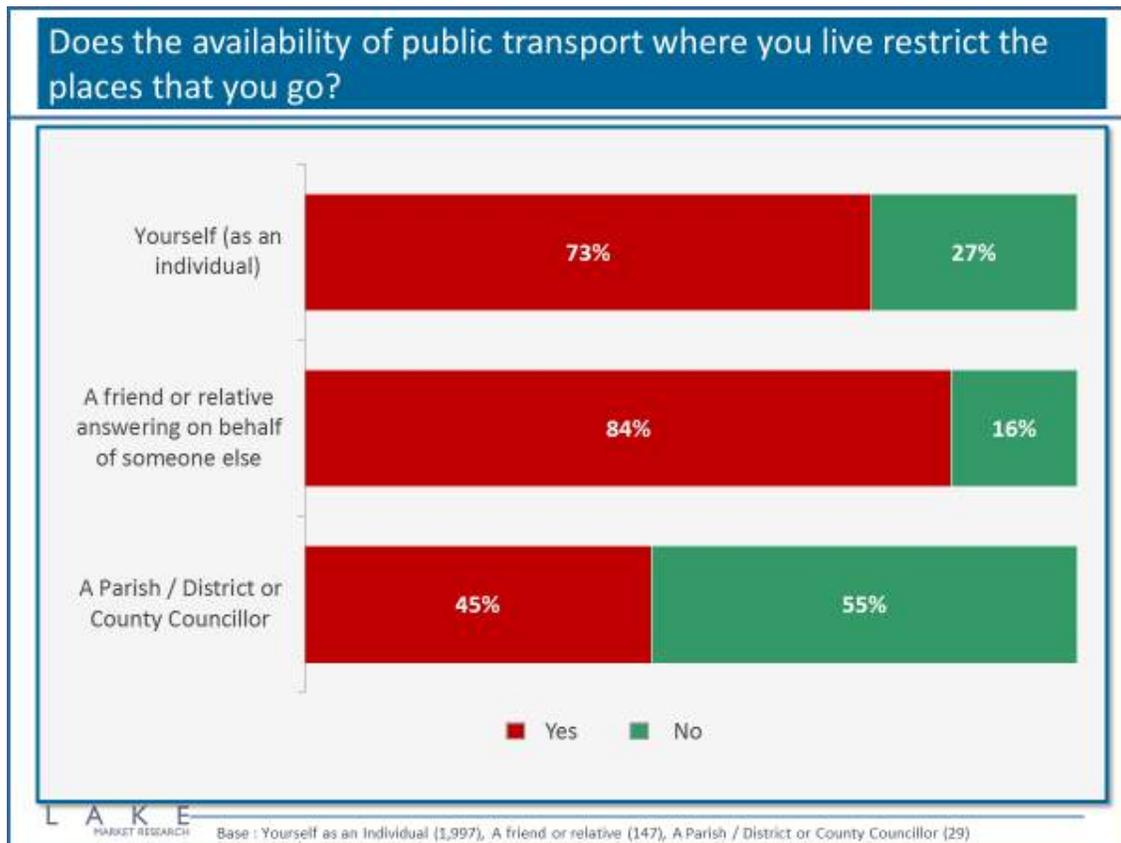
LAKE MARKET RESEARCH Base : Yourself as an Individual (1,710)

2.3 PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT RESTRICTING TRAVEL

Consultees were then asked to indicate whether the availability of public transport where they live restricts the places that they go, via a simple 'yes' or 'no' response. The chart below depicts the overall responses from Individual Consultees, friends or relatives answering on behalf of someone else and Parish / District and County Councillors.

Just under three quarters of Individual Consultees (73%) indicated the availability of public transport restricts the places they go. This proportion increases to 84% amongst friends or relatives answering on behalf of someone else (please note that this group noted previously that they have a heavier reliance on travelling via public transport and someone else's car).

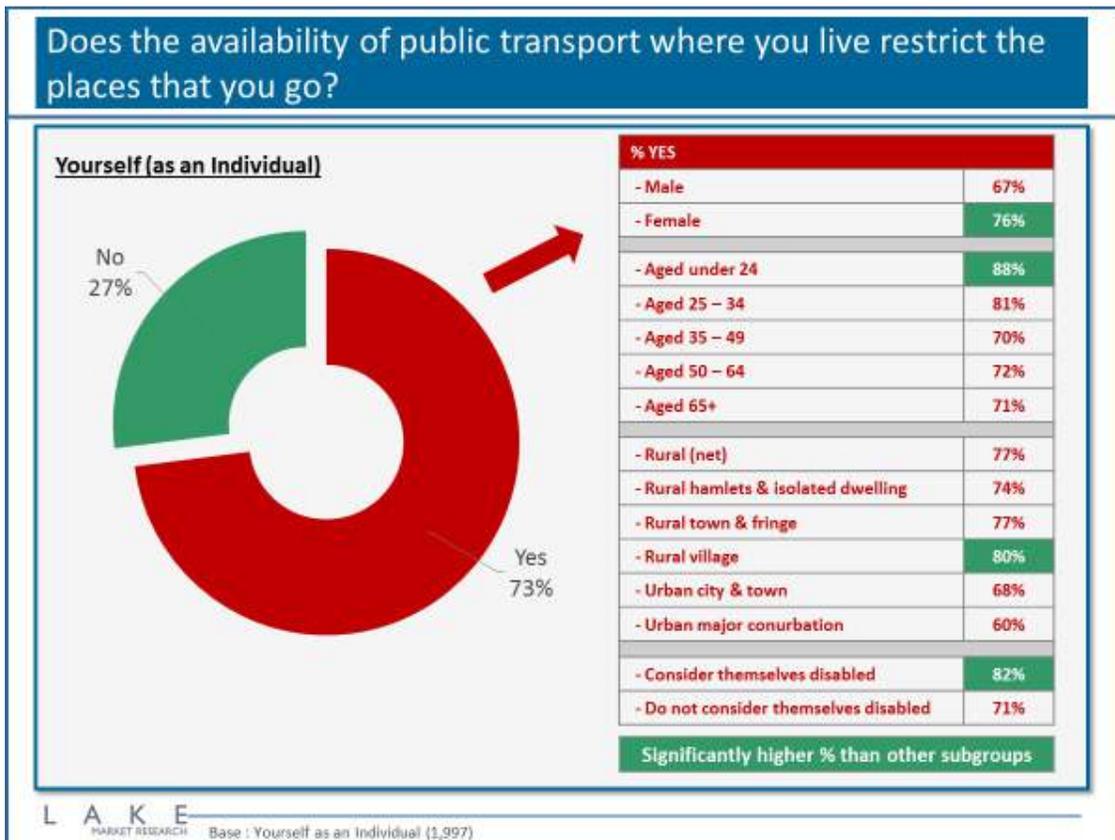
A smaller proportion of Councillors indicated the availability of public transport restricted the places they go (45%).



Individuals only

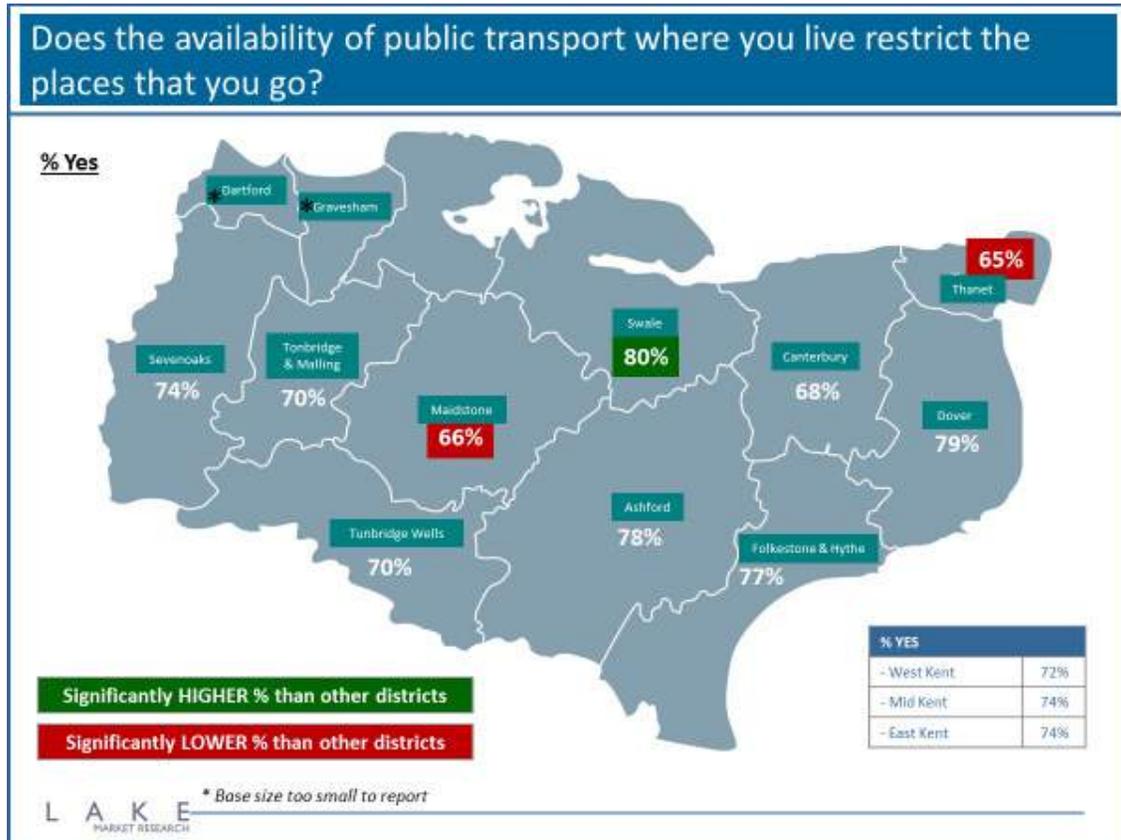
Focusing specifically on the response from Individuals, it is apparent that there are significant differences observed by gender, age group, where Consultees live as well as disability.

- A significantly higher proportion of female Individuals indicated the availability of public transport restricts the places they go (76% compared to 67% of males).
- A significantly higher proportion of Individuals aged 24 and under indicated the availability of public transport restricts the places they go (88%).
- A significantly higher proportion of Individuals who live in a rural village indicated the availability of public transport restricts the places they go (80%).

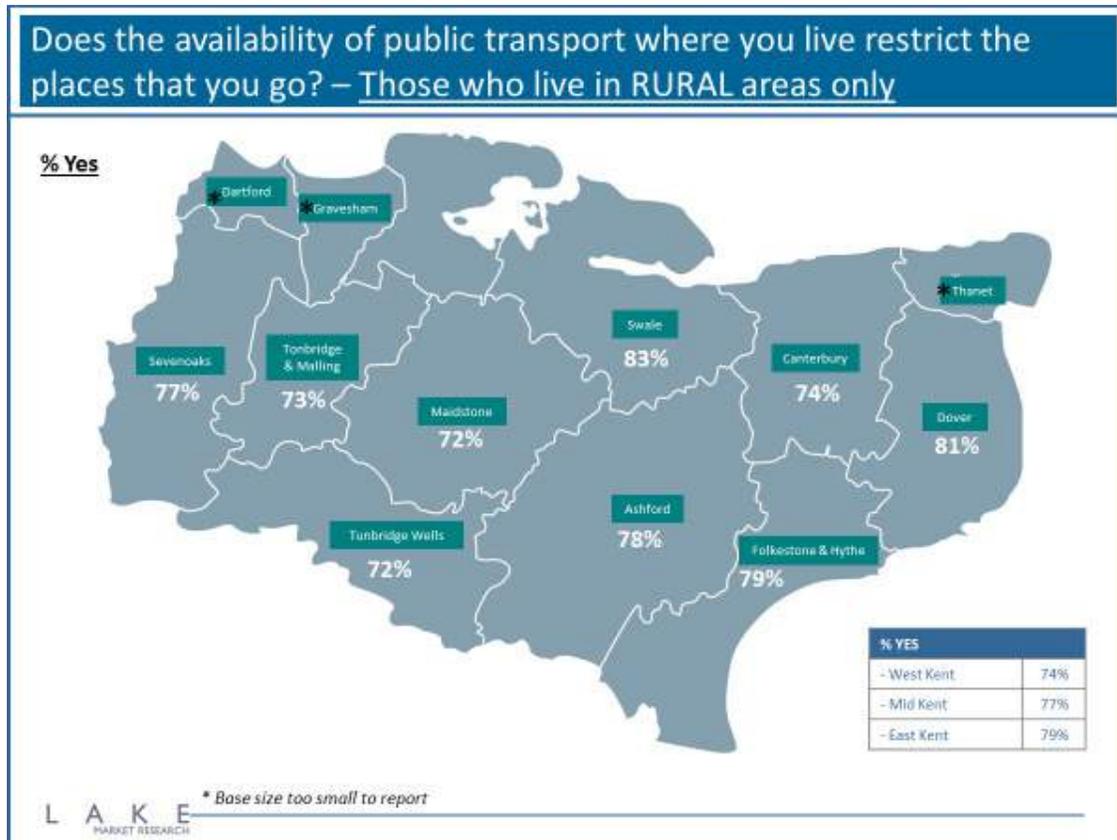


There are also a few significant differences in terms of districts with a significantly higher proportion of Swale Individuals indicating availability restricts the places they go (80%).

Conversely, a significantly lower proportion of Maidstone and Thanet Individuals (66% and 65% respectively) indicate availability restricts the places they go. It should be noted, however, that the Thanet Individual representation in this Consultation is low in terms of rural residents (18% of Thanet residents responding to Consultation live in a rural area).



Focusing on results in terms of district for Individual Consultees who live in rural areas only (i.e. those who live in rural hamlets and isolated dwellings, rural towns and fringes and rural villages), there is less disparity across the districts with no significant differences. This, together with the high proportions in agreement, suggests that there is a County wide issue in relation to public transport availability.



Consultees who indicated the availability of public transport restricts the places they go were asked to select the reasons for not being able to travel to where they want to go (from a pre-defined list). The most common reasons given by Individual Consultees are:

- Buses / trains are too infrequent – 69%
- Buses / trains don't run early or late enough – 58%
- Buses don't run on Sundays / Bank Holidays – 49%
- Journeys not direct / too many changes – 44%
- Journeys take too long – 32%

There are significant differences in response by age:

- A significantly higher proportion of Consultees aged 24 and under selected buses / trains are too infrequent, buses / trains don't run early or late enough, public transport is too expensive, and journeys take too long.
- A significantly higher proportion of Consultees aged 25-49 selected buses / trains are too infrequent and buses / trains don't run early or late enough.

- A significantly higher proportion of Consultees aged 50-64 selected journeys are not direct / too many changes.
- A significantly higher proportion of Consultees aged 65 and over selected buses don't run on Sundays / Bank Holidays and restricted times with travel passes.

What are the reasons for not being able to travel to where you want to go?

Top reasons selected – By Age

	Aged under 24		Aged 25-49
Buses / trains are too infrequent	89%	Buses / trains are too infrequent	77%
Buses / trains don't run early or late enough	74%	Buses / trains don't run early or late enough	65%
Public transport is too expensive	48%	Buses don't run on Sundays / Bank Holidays	49%
Buses don't run on Sundays / Bank Holidays	46%	Journeys not direct / too many changes	42%
Journeys take too long	41%	Journeys take too long	32%
	Aged 50-64		Aged 65+
Buses / trains are too infrequent	68%	Buses / trains are too infrequent	60%
Buses / trains don't run early or late enough	66%	Buses don't run on Sundays / Bank Holidays	56%
Journeys not direct / too many changes	51%	Buses / trains don't run early or late enough	50%
Buses don't run on Sundays / Bank Holidays	47%	Journeys not direct / too many changes	44%
Journeys take too long	38%	Restricted times with travel passes	44%

L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base : Yourself as an Individual (1,997)

Significantly higher % than other subgroups

2.4 THE MOST AND LEAST IMPORTANT FEATURES FOR A RURAL TRANSPORT SERVICE

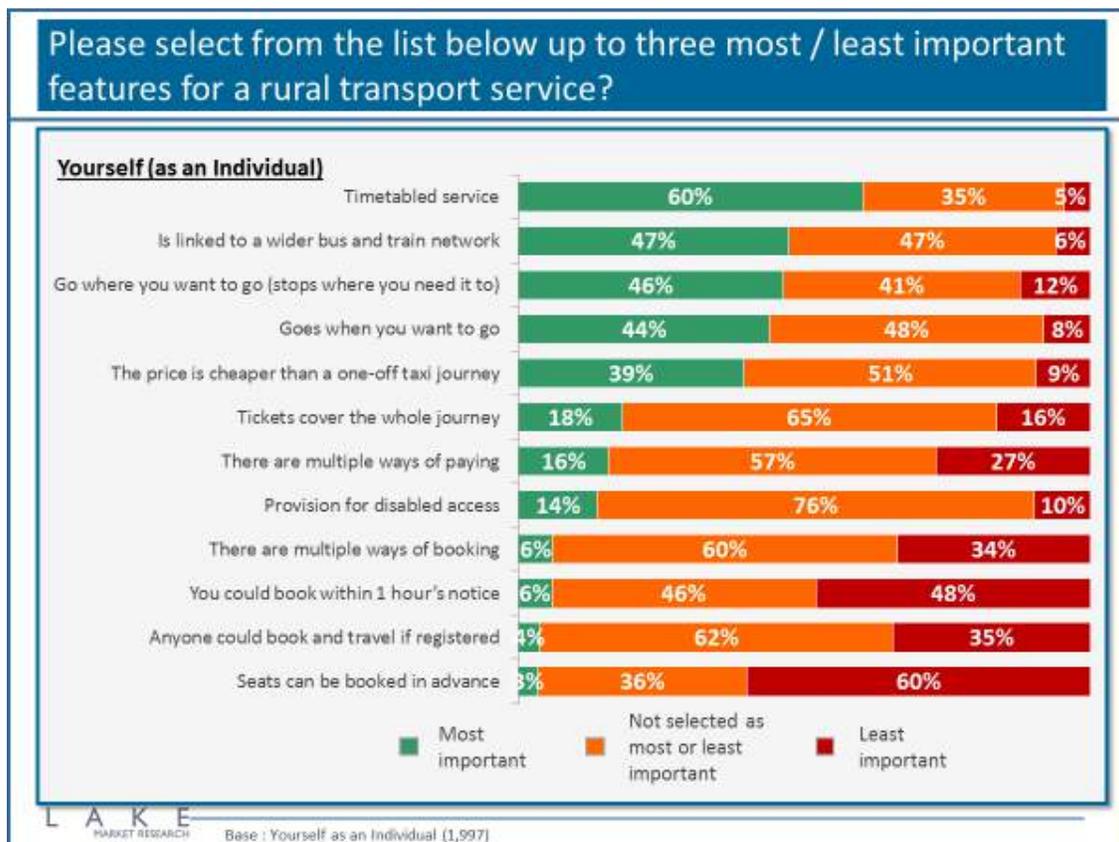
Individuals only

Consultees were then asked to select up to three most important features and up to three least important features for a rural transport service from a pre-defined list of 12 features. The chart below depicts the proportion of Individuals who indicated each feature was in their most important features (green), the least important features (red) and the proportion that was not chosen by Individuals to feature in the most or least ranking (orange).

Of the 12 features presented, a ‘timetabled service’ is the most preferred feature to Individual Consultees (60% of Individual Consultees selected it in their top three most important features). Only 5% of Individual Consultees selected it in their least three important features.

‘Is linked to a wider bus and train network’, ‘goes where you want to go’ and ‘goes when you want to go’ are then selected by broadly equal proportions of Individual Consultees at 47%, 46% and 44% respectively selecting them in their top three. Price ranks fifth with 39% of Individual Consultees selecting it in their top three.

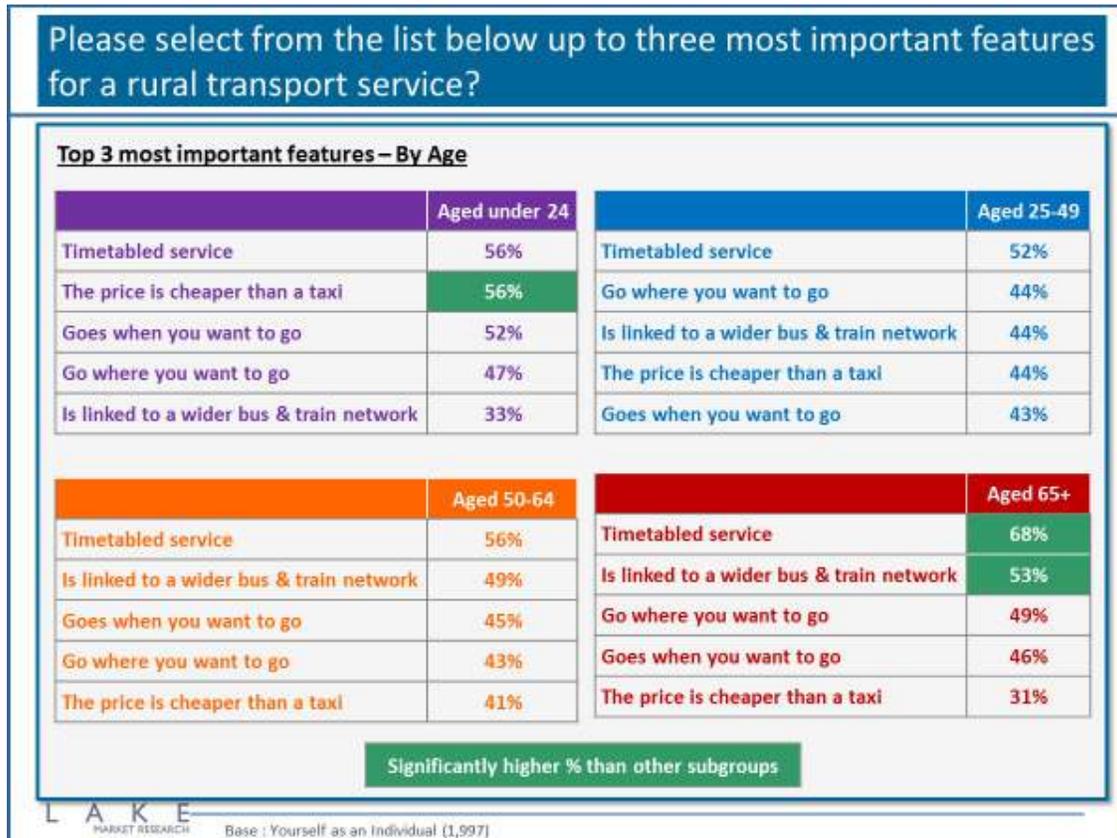
The ability to ‘book seats in advance’ and ‘booking within 1 hour’s notice’ are considered the least important with 60% and 48% selecting them in their least three important respectively.



Focusing specifically on the response from Individual Consultees, it is apparent that there are significant differences observed by age group.

- A significantly higher proportion of Individuals aged 24 and under selected ‘the price is cheaper than a taxi’ in their three most important features for a rural transport service (56%).

- A significantly higher proportion of Individuals aged 65 and over selected ‘timetabled service’ in their three most important features for a rural transport service (68%).
- A significantly higher proportion of Individuals aged 65 and over selected ‘is linked to a wider bus and train network’ in their three most important features for a rural transport service (53%).

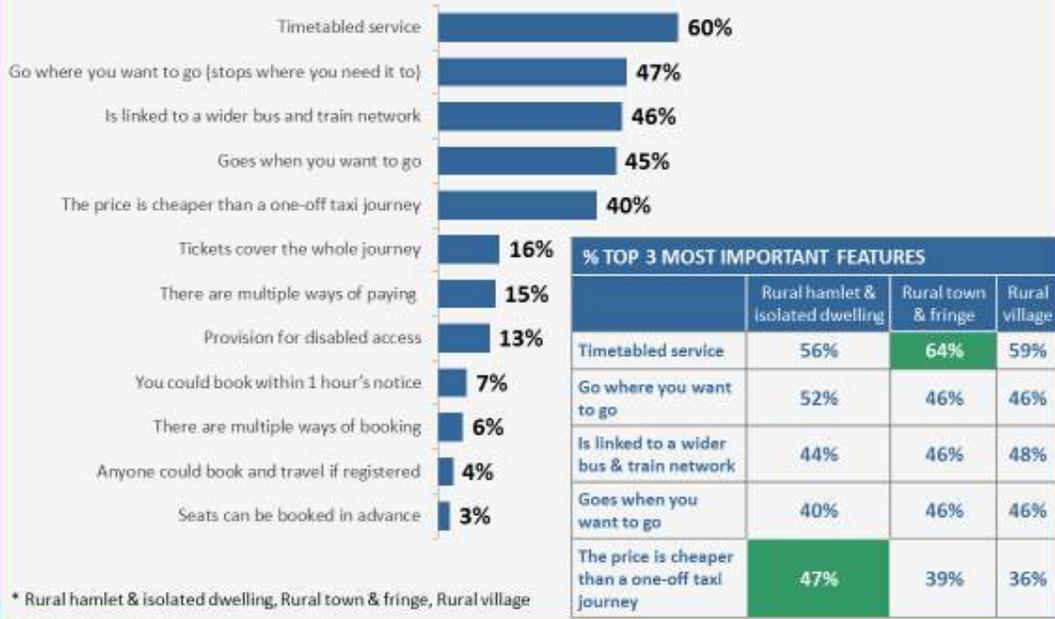


Focusing on results for Individual Consultees who live in rural areas only (i.e. those who live in rural hamlets & isolated dwelling, rural towns and fringes and rural villages), the top three features are consistent with those at an overall level, i.e. ‘timetabled service’ at 60%, ‘goes where you want to go’ at 47% and ‘is linked to a wider bus and train network’ at 46%.

Of the rural areas, a ‘timetabled service’ is considered more important to those who live in rural towns and fringes (64%) and ‘the price being cheaper than a one-off taxi journey’ is more important to those who live in rural hamlets and isolated dwellings (47%).

Please select from the list below up to three most important features for a rural transport service?

Top 3 most important features - Live in a rural area*



% TOP 3 MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES			
	Rural hamlet & isolated dwelling	Rural town & fringe	Rural village
Timetabled service	56%	64%	59%
Go where you want to go	52%	46%	46%
Is linked to a wider bus & train network	44%	46%	48%
Goes when you want to go	40%	46%	46%
The price is cheaper than a one-off taxi journey	47%	39%	36%

* Rural hamlet & isolated dwelling, Rural town & fringe, Rural village

LAKE MARKET RESEARCH Base : Yourself as an Individual (1,997)

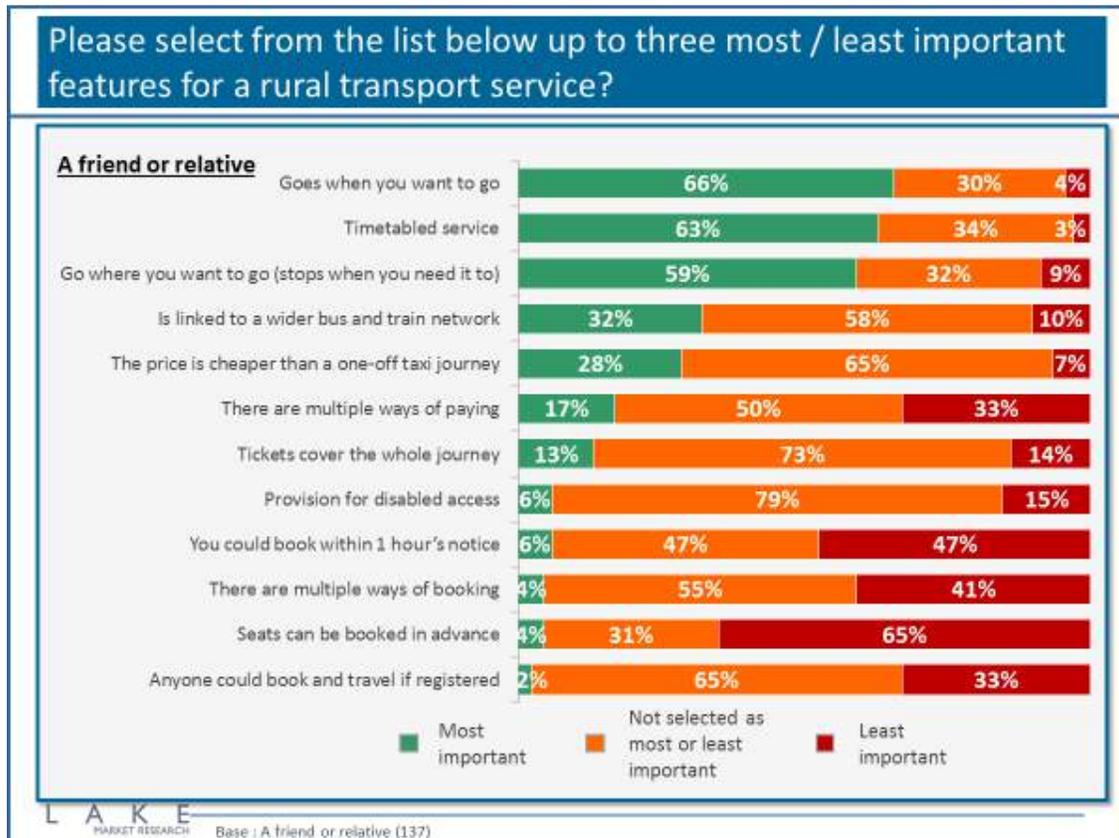
In terms of specific districts, there are also some significant differences in response:

- A significantly higher proportion of Dover Individuals selected 'is linked to a wider bus and train network' in their top three most important features (55%).
- A significantly higher proportion of Tunbridge Wells Individuals selected 'is linked to a wider bus and train network' in their top three most important features (56%).
- A significantly higher proportion of Tunbridge Wells Individuals selected 'the price is cheaper than a one-off taxi journey' in their top three most important features (51%).
- A significantly higher proportion of Tonbridge & Malling Individuals selected 'the price is cheaper than a one-off taxi journey' in their top three most important features (48%).
- A significantly higher proportion of Shepway Individuals selected 'provision of disabled access' in their top three most important features (22%).
- A significantly higher proportion of Thanet Individuals selected 'provision of disabled access' in their top three most important features (22%).

A friend or relative answering on behalf of someone else only

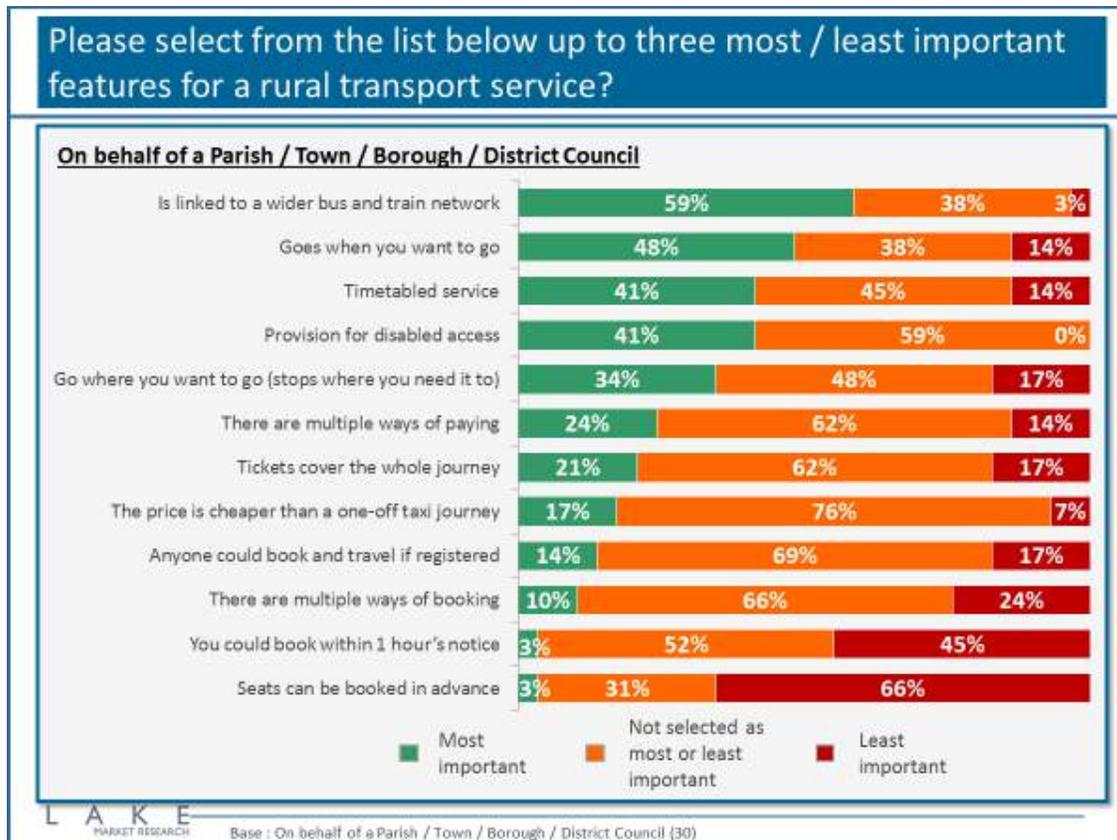
A higher proportion of friends or relatives answering on behalf of somebody else selected 'goes **when** you want to go' in their three most important features (66% compared to 44% of Individual Consultees). A timetabled service is as important to this sample group as for Individual Consultees (63% compared to 66% of Individual Consultees).

A higher proportion of friends or relatives answering on behalf of somebody else selected 'goes **where** you want to go' in their three most important features (59% compared to 46% of Individual Consultees). The ability to 'book seats in advance' is considered the least important with 65% selecting it in their least three important features.



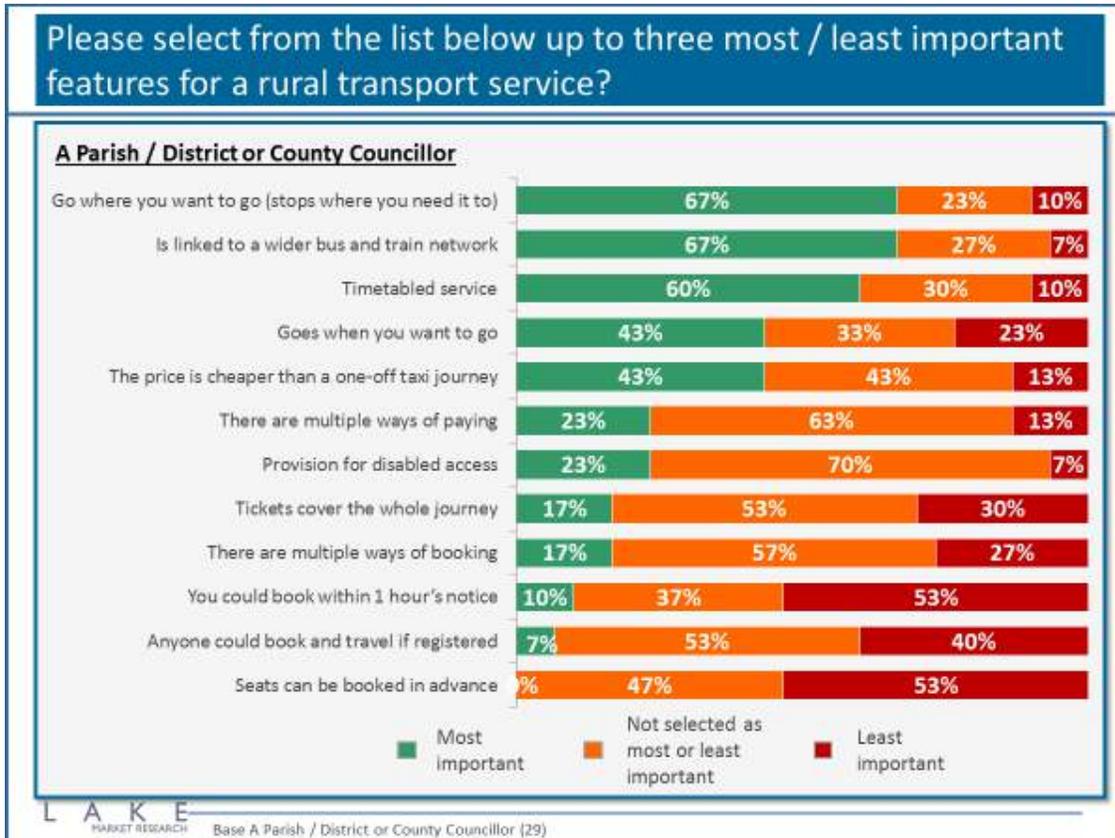
Answering on behalf of a Parish / Town / Borough / District Council

30 representatives from Parish / Town / Borough Councils gave their views on this question. Their responses are similar to those of Individual Consultees in that a high proportion consider 'linking to a wider bus and train network' and a 'timetabled service' to be most important (59% and 41% respectively). However, they have rated 'goes where you want to go' at a lower importance to Individual Consultees (34% compared to 46% of Consultees). 'Price being cheaper than a one-off taxi journey' is also ranked lower comparatively compared to Individual Consultees (ranked 8th in importance proportions compared to 5th for Individual Consultees).



Answering as a Parish / District or County Councillor

29 Parish / District or County Councillors gave their views on this question. Their responses are similar to those of Individual Consultees in that a high proportion consider 'goes where you want to go', 'linking to a wider bus and train network' and a 'timetabled service' to be most important (67%, 67% and 60% respectively).



2.5 PERCEPTIONS OF IDEAS PUT FORWARD IN CONSULTATION BOOKLET

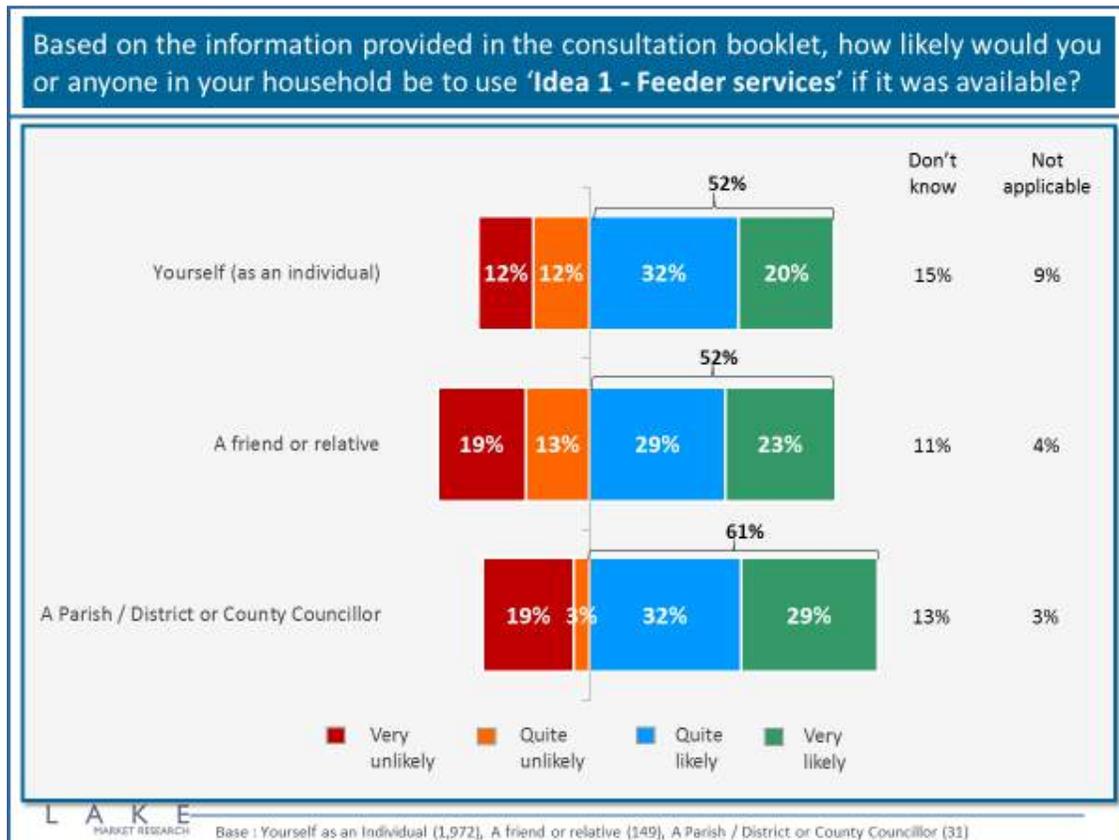
2.5.1 Perceptions of Idea 1 – Feeder Services – Likelihood to use

Further to a review of Consultation booklet, Consultees were then asked to indicate the likelihood of themselves or anyone in their household to use 'Idea 1 – Feeder Services', via a four-point likelihood scale of 'very likely', 'quite likely', 'quite unlikely' or 'very unlikely'. Consultees were also given the option to select 'don't know' or 'not applicable'. The chart below depicts the overall responses from Individual Consultees, friends or relatives answering on behalf of someone else and Parish / District and County Councillors.

Just over half of Individual Consultees (52%) indicated they or someone in their household would be likely to use 'Idea 1 – Feeder Services'. 15% indicated they did not know whether they or someone in their household would use it. A consistent proportion of friends or relatives answering on behalf of someone else selected very / quite likely (52%)

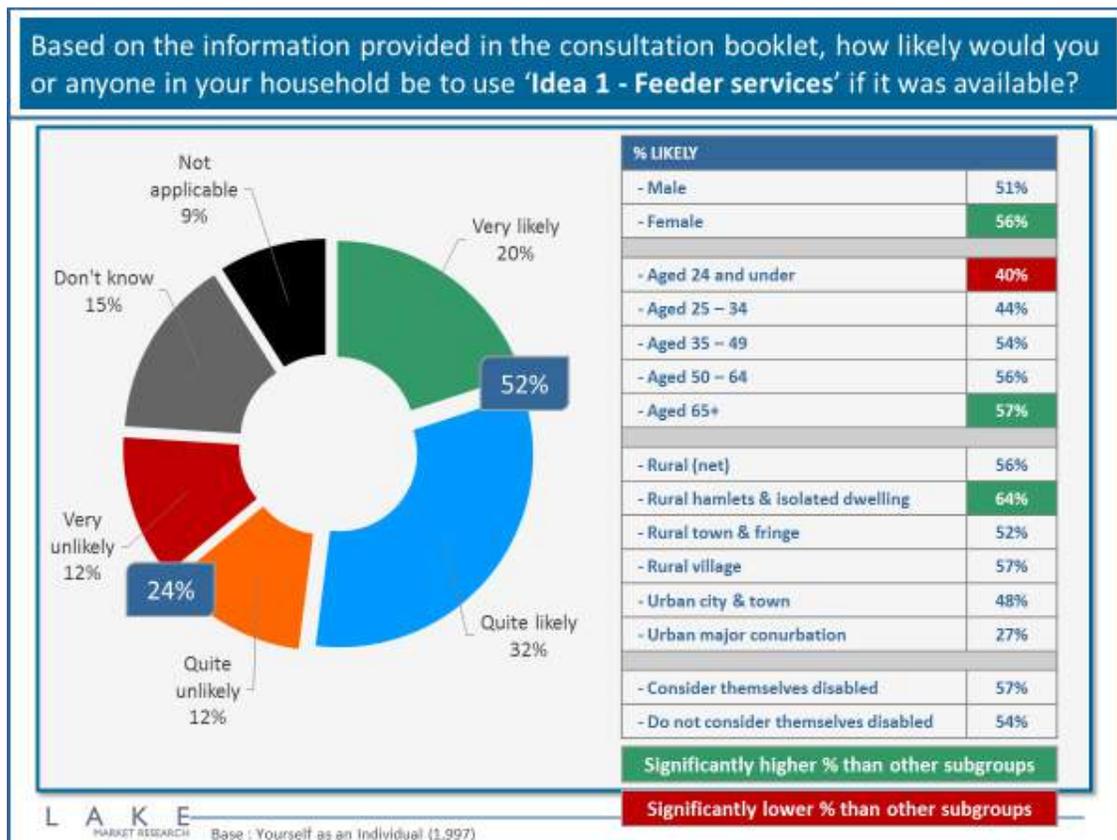
A higher proportion of Councillors indicated they would be likely to use 'Idea 1 – Feeder Services' at 61% (but this is not significantly higher than the response from Individual Consultees).

As this question was phrased from the perspective of household use, representatives from Parish / Town / Borough / District Councils did not answer this question.



Focusing specifically on the response from Individual Consultees, it is apparent that there are significant differences observed by gender, age group and where Consultees live.

- A significantly higher proportion of female Individuals indicated they or someone in their household would be likely to use the service (56%).
- A significantly higher proportion of Individuals aged 65 and over indicated they or someone in their household would be likely to use the service (57%). A significantly lower proportion of Individuals aged 24 and under indicated they or someone in their household would likely use the service (40%).
- A significantly higher proportion of Individuals living in rural hamlets and isolated dwellings indicated they or someone in their household would be likely to use the service (64%).

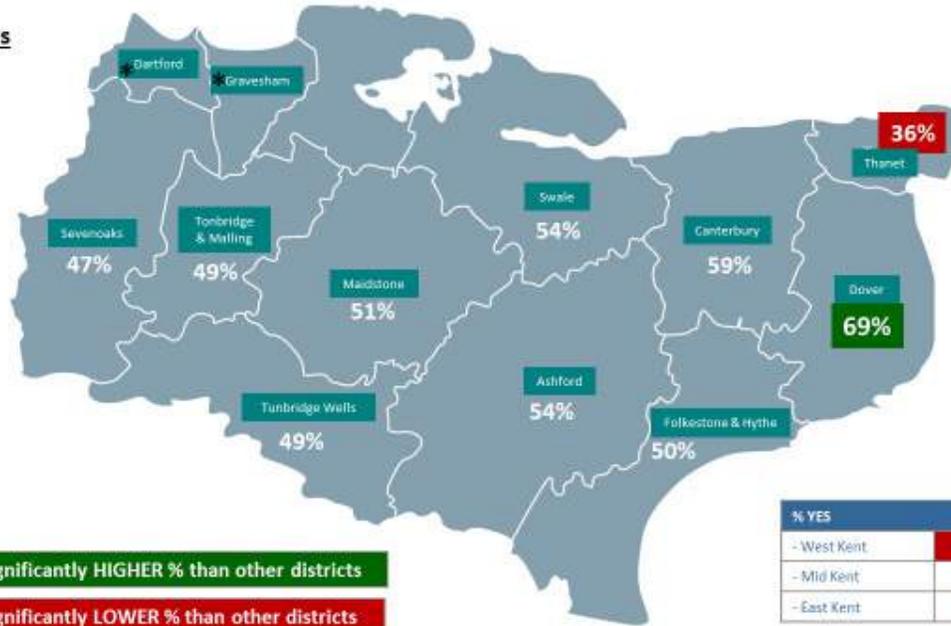


In the chart overleaf, there are two significant differences in terms of districts with a significantly higher proportion of Dover Individuals indicating they or someone in their household would be likely to use the service (69% compared to 52% of Individual Consultees overall).

Conversely, a significantly lower proportion of Thanet Individuals indicated they or someone in their household would be likely to use the service (36% compared to 52% overall). It should be noted however that the Thanet Individual representation in this Consultation is low in terms of rural residents (18% of Thanet residents responding to Consultation live in a rural area).

Based on the information provided in the consultation booklet, how likely would you or anyone in your household be to use 'Idea 1 - Feeder services' if it was available?

% Yes

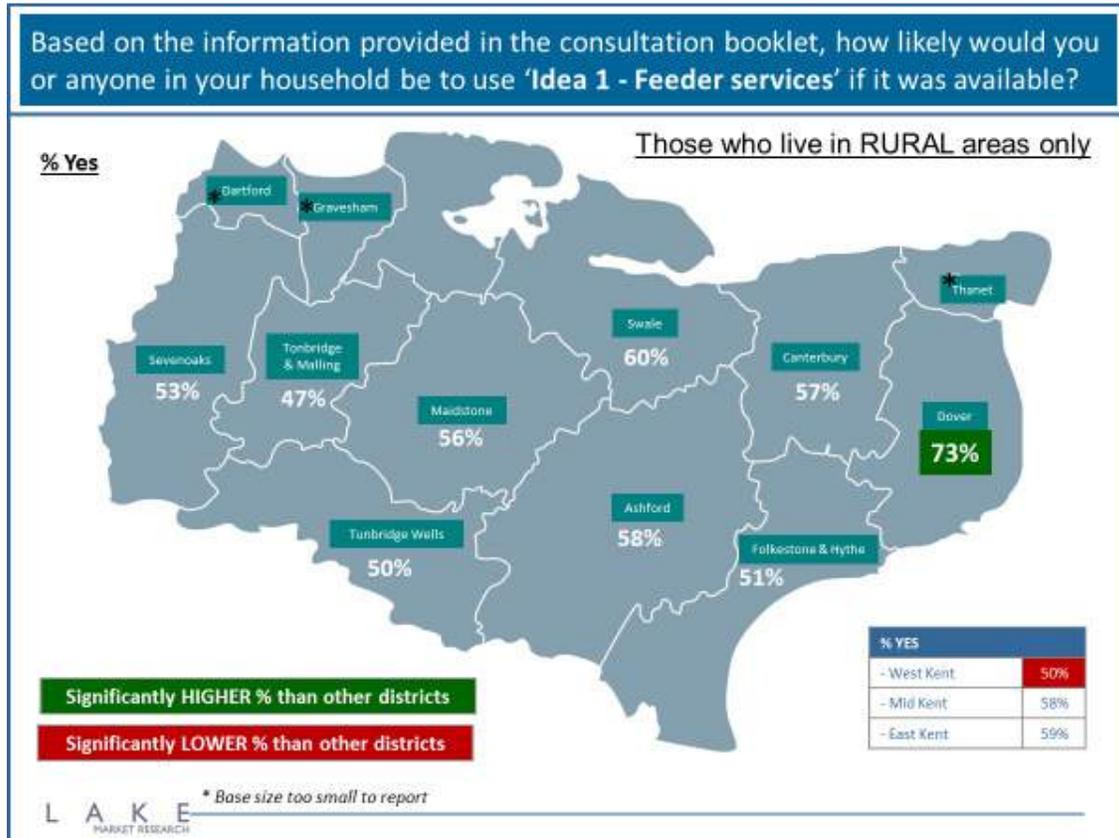


Significantly HIGHER % than other districts

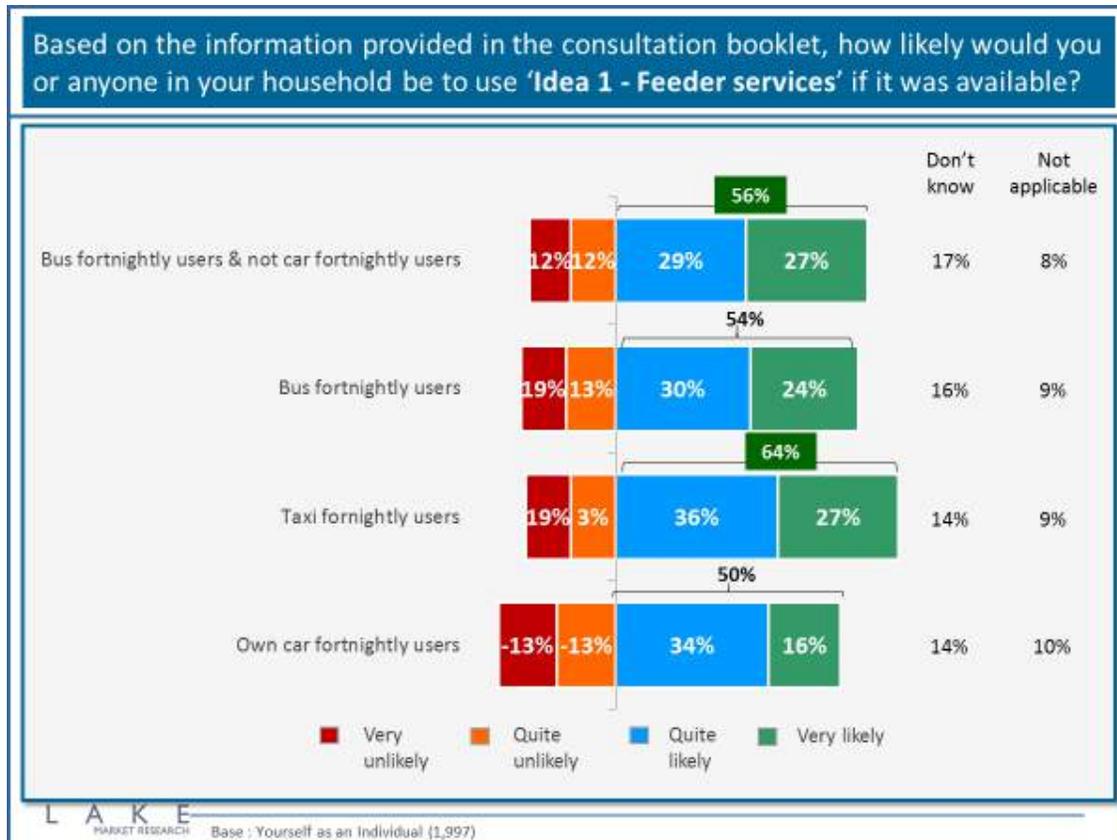
Significantly LOWER % than other districts

L A K E MARKET RESEARCH * Base size too small to report

Focusing on results in terms of district for Individual Consultees who live in rural areas only (i.e. those who live in rural hamlets and isolated dwelling, rural towns and fringes and rural villages), the majority of likelihood proportions increase (although not significantly). Consistent with trends at an overall level, a significantly higher proportion of Dover rural Individuals indicate they or someone in their household would be likely to use the service (73% compared to 56% of Rural Individual Consultees overall).



Focusing specifically on groups of transport users, highlighted in the earlier charts in this section, reveals there are significant differences in interest in 'Idea 1 – Feeder Services'. As perhaps expected, likelihood to use is significantly higher amongst those who currently use buses at least fortnightly and do not use their own car fortnightly (56%). In addition, likelihood to use is also significantly higher amongst those who currently use a taxi at least fortnightly (64%).



2.5.2 Perceptions of Idea 1 – Feeder Services – Reasons for likelihood to use rating

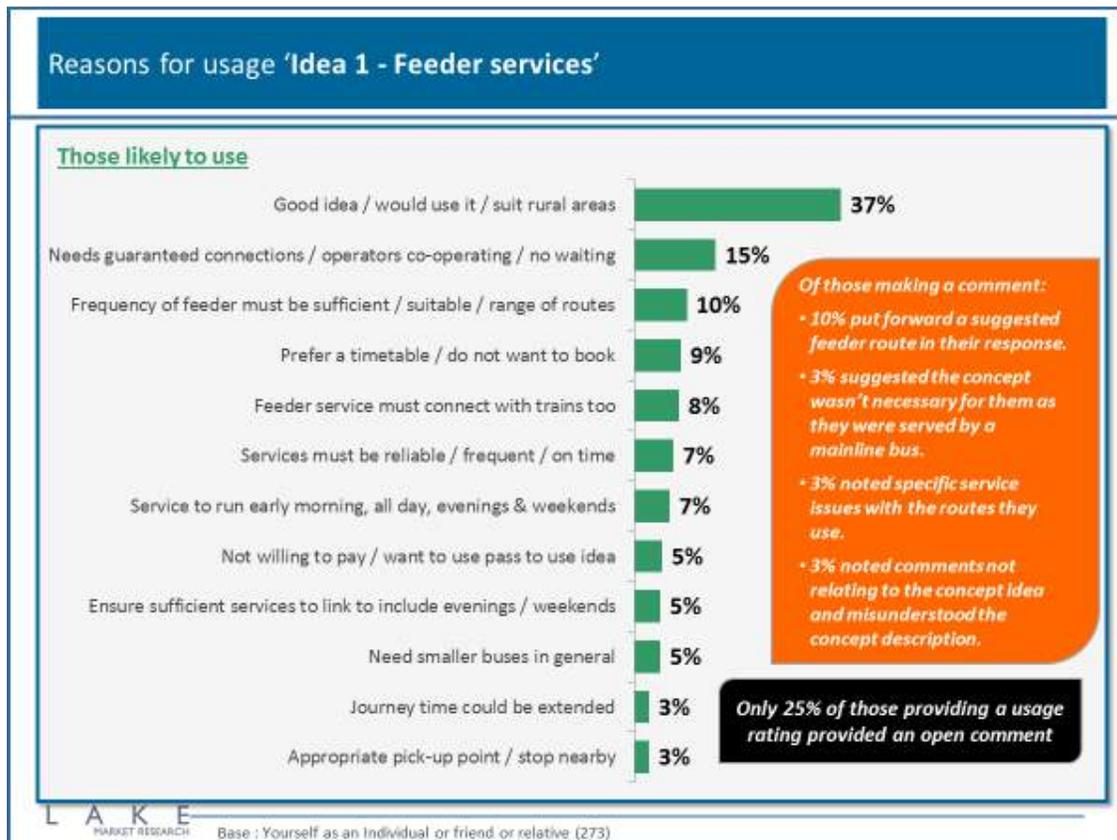
Consultees were then asked to describe their reasons for how likely they were to use 'Idea 1 – Feeder Services' in their own words. We have reviewed the comments provided and have grouped the comments into common themes in order to report the degree to which each were cited. It should be noted that only 25% of Consultees who provided a likelihood to use rating provided a comment at this question.

The chart below depicts the responses made by those who indicated they or someone in their household would be **'very / quite likely'** to use the service:

- 37% thought it was a good idea and would suit rural areas, particularly in areas where there was a recently lost service or in areas on the outskirts of commercial routes that were just out of reach and would like to take similar / recurrent journeys over a given period.
- 15% noted that the idea needs to ensure a guaranteed connection / there isn't any waiting as well as an assurance of commercial operators working in partnership.
- 10% noted that the frequency of the feeder service must be sufficient / at suitable and a range of times and on a range of routes.
- 9% noted that they prefer a timetable and do not want to book.

- 8% noted that the feeder service must connect with trains as well.

It is also worth noting that 10% of those responding put forward a suggested feeder route in their response. Small minorities misunderstood the concept and its purpose (i.e. for rural areas as opposed to an alternative to a commercial bus).



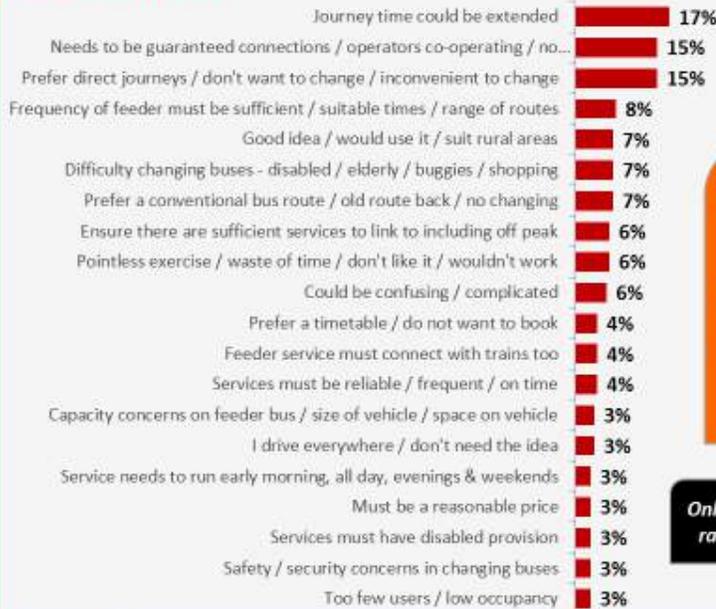
The chart below depicts the responses made by those who indicated they or someone in their household would be **'very / quite unlikely'** to use the service:

- 17% noted their journey times could be extended.
- 15% noted that the idea needs to ensure a guaranteed connection / there isn't any waiting as well as an assurance of commercial operators working in partnership.
- 10% noted they prefer direct journeys / don't want to change buses or it is inconvenient to change.
- 8% noted that the frequency of the feeder service must be sufficient / at suitable and a range of times and on a range of routes.
- 7% noted they would have difficulty changing buses due to disability / being elderly / having buggies or shopping with them.
- 7% noted they would prefer a conventional bus route / their old bus route back.

It is also worth noting that a proportion of this group (13%) misunderstood the concept and its purpose (i.e. for rural areas as opposed to an alternative to a commercial bus).

Reasons for usage 'Idea 1 - Feeder services'

Those unlikely to use



Of those making a comment:

• 13% suggested the concept wasn't necessary for them as they were served by a mainline bus.

• 5% noted specific service issues with the routes they use.

• 2% noted comments not relating to the concept idea and misunderstood the concept description.

Only 25% of those providing a usage rating provided an open comment

L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base : Yourself as an Individual or friend or relative (162)

Bases sizes do not permit for percentage analysis by representatives of a local community group or residents' association (17 entered a comment) or those responding on behalf of charity, voluntary or community sector organisations (14 entered a comment). However, a higher proportion of representatives of a local community group or residents' association raised a concern that they would not be able to use their bus pass on this idea, and a higher proportion of those responding on behalf of charity, voluntary or community sector organisations raised a concern with regards to difficulty changing buses compared to Individuals as a whole.

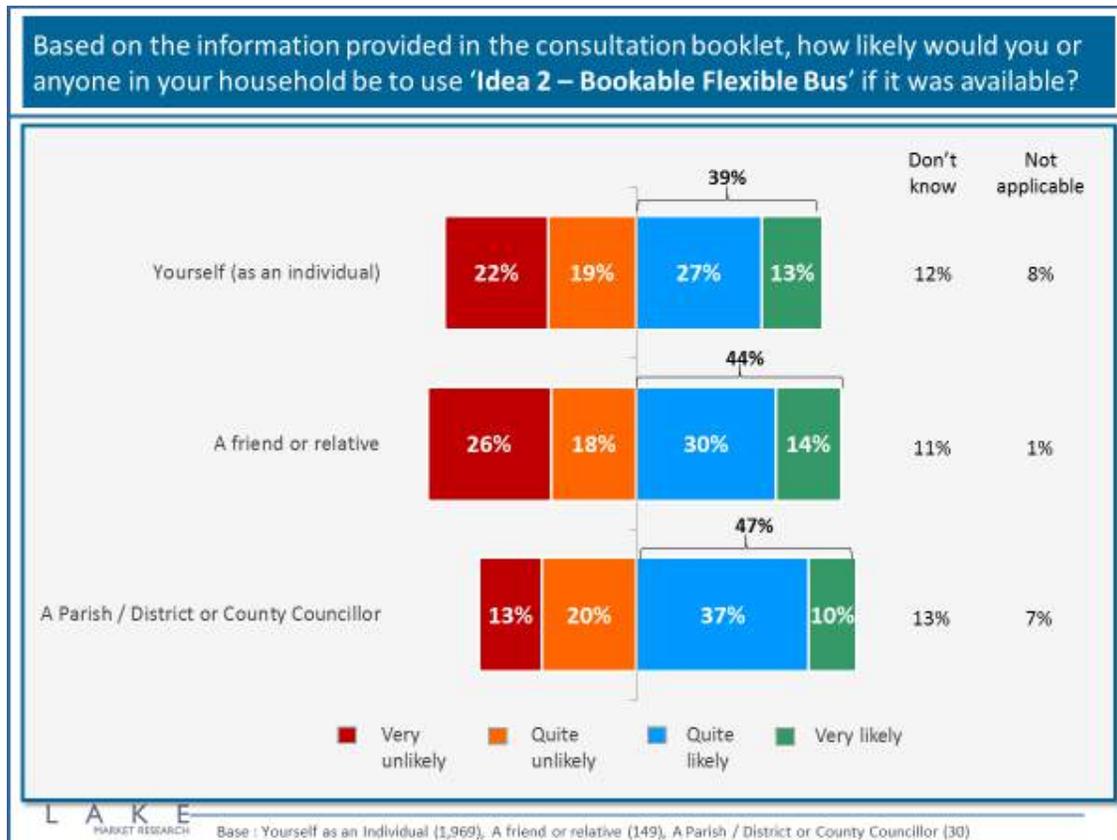
2.5.3 Perceptions of Idea 2 – Bookable Bus services – Likelihood to use

Further to a review of Consultation booklet, Consultees were then asked to indicate the likelihood of themselves or anyone in their household to use 'Idea 2 – Bookable Bus services, via a consistent scale to that used for 'Idea 1 – Feeder Services'. Consultees were also given the option to select 'don't know' or 'not applicable'. The chart below depicts the overall responses from Individual Consultees, friends or relatives answering on behalf of someone else and Parish / District and County Councillors.

Likelihood to use is lower for 'Idea 2 – Bookable Bus services' compared to 'Idea 1 – Feeder Services'. Just under four in ten Individual Consultees (39%) indicated they or someone in their household would be likely to use 'Idea 2 – Bookable Bus services'. 12% indicated they did not know whether they or someone in their household would use it. A slightly higher proportion of friends or relatives answering on behalf of someone else selected very / quite likely (44%); but this proportion is not significantly higher.

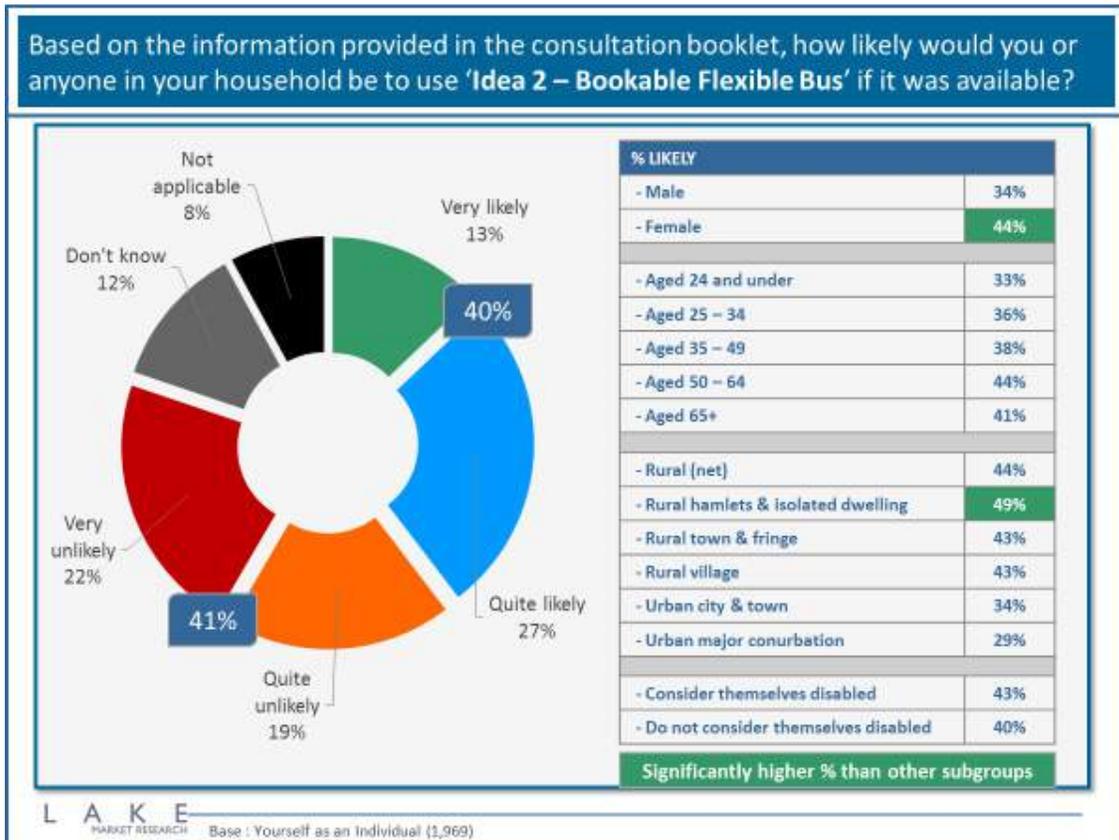
A higher proportion of Councillors indicated they would be likely to use 'Idea 2 – Bookable Bus services' at 47% (but this is not significantly higher than the response from Individual Consultees).

As this question was phrased from the perspective of household use, representatives from Parish / Town / Borough / District Councils did not answer this question.

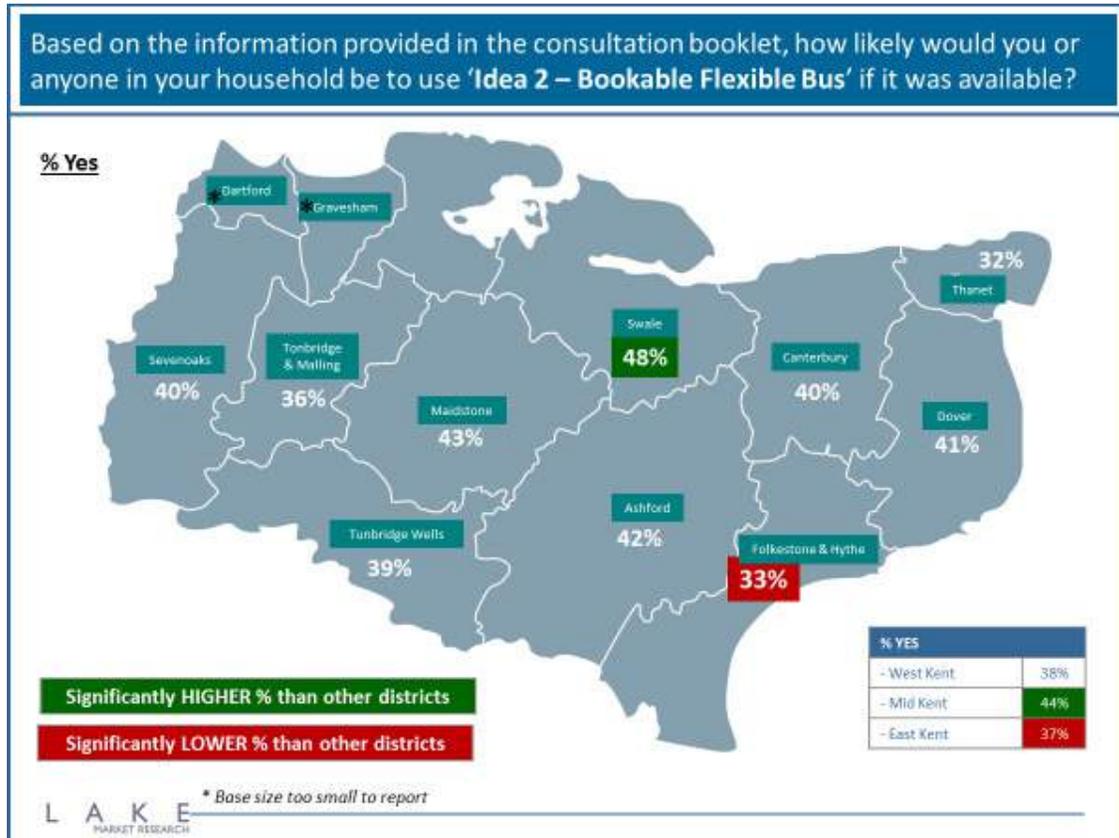


Focusing specifically on the response from Individual Consultees, it is apparent that there are significant differences observed by gender and where Consultees live.

- A significantly higher proportion of female Individuals indicated they or someone in their household would be likely to use the service (44%).
- A significantly higher proportion of Individuals living in rural hamlets and isolated dwellings indicated they or someone in their household would be likely to use the service (49%).

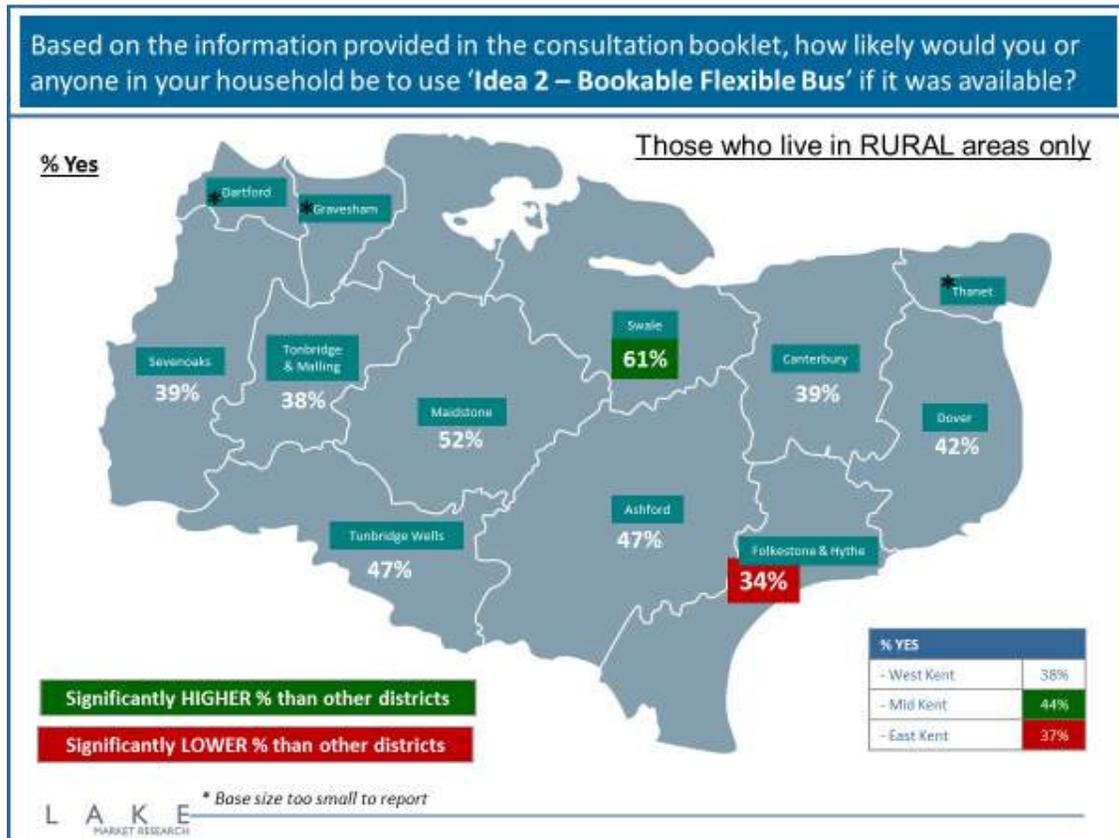


In the chart below, there are two significant differences in terms of districts with a significantly higher proportion of Swale Individuals indicating they or someone in their household would be likely to use the service (48% compared to 40% for Individual Consultees overall). Conversely, a significantly lower proportion of Folkestone & Hythe Individuals indicated they or someone in their household would be likely to use the service (33% compared to 40% overall).

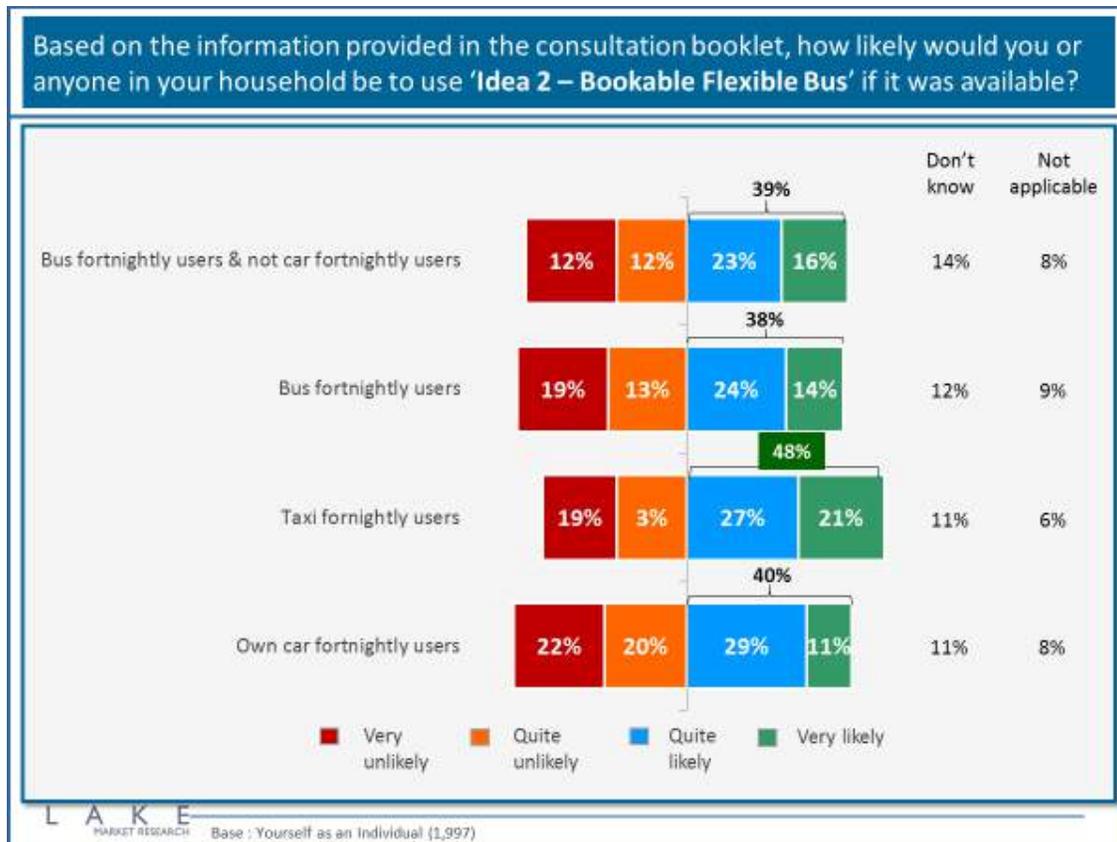


Focusing on results in terms of district for Individual Consultees who live in rural areas only (i.e. those who live in rural hamlets & isolated dwelling, rural towns and fringes and rural villages), the majority of likelihood proportions increase (although not significantly).

Consistent with trends at an overall level, a significantly higher proportion of Swale rural Individuals indicate they or someone in their household would be likely to use the service (61% compared to 44% of Rural Individual Consultees overall).



Focusing specifically on groups of transport users, highlighted in the earlier charts in this section, reveals there is one significant difference in interest in 'Idea 2 – Bookable Bus services'. Likelihood to use is significantly higher amongst those who currently use a taxi at least fortnightly (48%).



2.5.4 Perceptions of Idea 2 – Bookable Bus Services – Reasons for likelihood to use rating

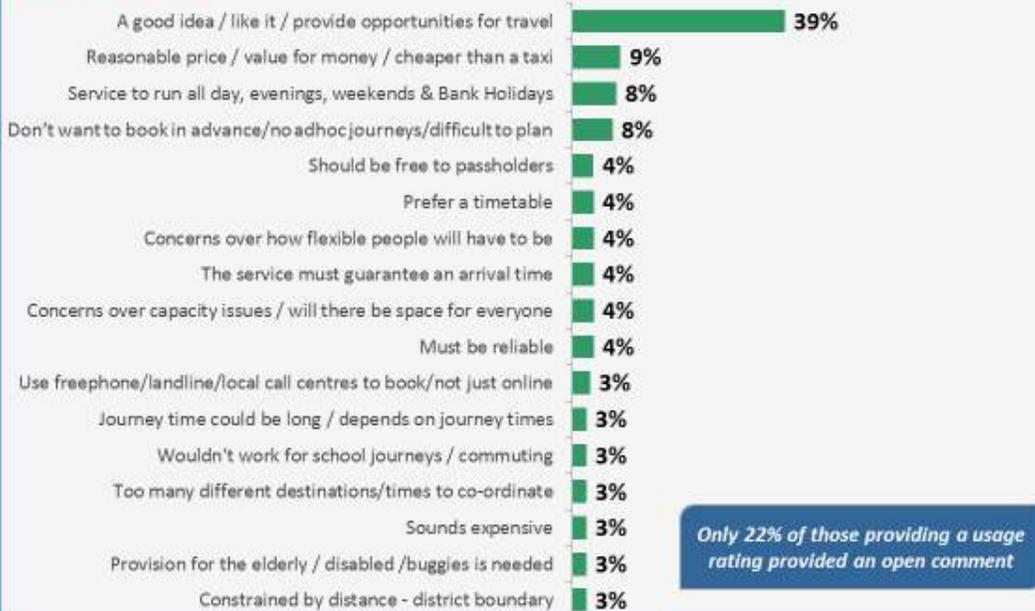
Consultees were then asked to describe their reasons for how likely they were to use 'Idea 2 – Bookable Bus services' in their own words. We have reviewed the comments provided and have grouped the comments into common themes to report the degree to which each were cited. It should be noted that only 22% of Consultees who provided a likelihood to use rating provided a comment at this question.

The chart below depicts the responses made by those who indicated they or someone in their household would be **very / quite likely** to use the service:

- 38% thought it was a good idea and would provide opportunities for travel, particularly for specific demographic groups such as the elderly or those who are disabled who would like to travel to particular destinations on a regular basis, as well as commuter travel to train stations / specific hotspots, and access to specific destinations such as shops, doctors and hospitals.
- 10% noted that it needed to be a reasonable price / value for money / cheaper than a taxi.
- 8% noted the service should run all day, including evenings, weekend and Bank Holidays to maximise use.
- 8% noted they don't like booking in advance and find it difficult to plan ahead.

Reasons for usage 'Idea 2 – Bookable bus service'

Those likely to use



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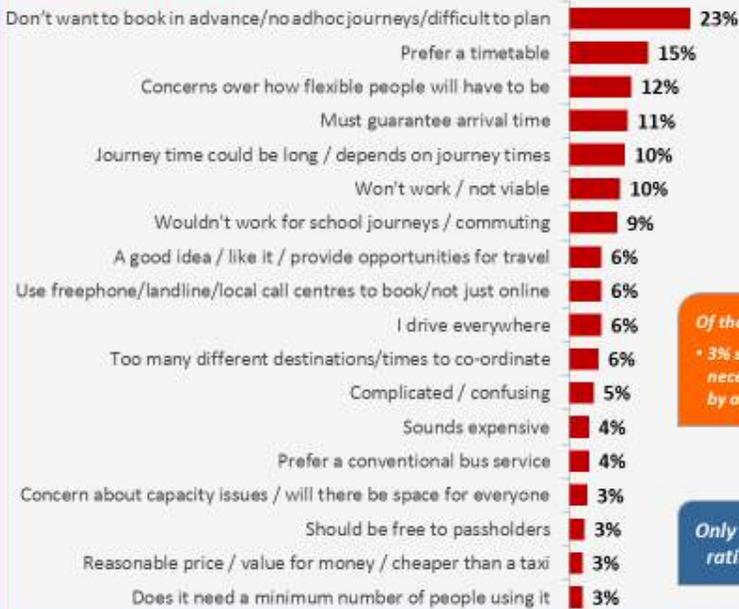
Base : Yourself as an Individual or friend or relative (146)

The chart below depicts the responses made by those who indicated they or someone in their household would be **'very / quite unlikely'** to use the service:

- Booking vs. a timetable is the primary concern with 23% noting they don't like booking in advance and find it difficult to plan ahead, and 15% noting they prefer a timetable for such a service.
- In addition, 12% noted concerns over how flexible users will have to be in terms of arrival and destination times.
- 10% noted the service would need to offer a guaranteed arrival time.
- 10% noted that the journey time could be too long or their likelihood would depend on estimated journey times.
- 10% noted it would not work or wouldn't be viable (without further explanation as to why this was the case). 9% noted it would not work for school journeys or commuting.

Reasons for usage 'Idea 2 – Bookable Bus Service'

Those unlikely to use



Of those making a comment:

• 3% suggested the concept wasn't necessary for them as they were served by a mainline bus.

Only 22% of those providing a usage rating provided an open comment

L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base : Yourself as an Individual or friend or relative (229)

Bases sizes do not permit for percentage analysis by representatives of a local community group or residents' association (18 entered a comment) or those responding on behalf of charity, voluntary or community sector organisations (14 entered a comment). However, a higher proportion of both groups noted they would like to use freephone/landline/local call centres / not just online to book and found the idea complicated compared to Individuals as a whole.

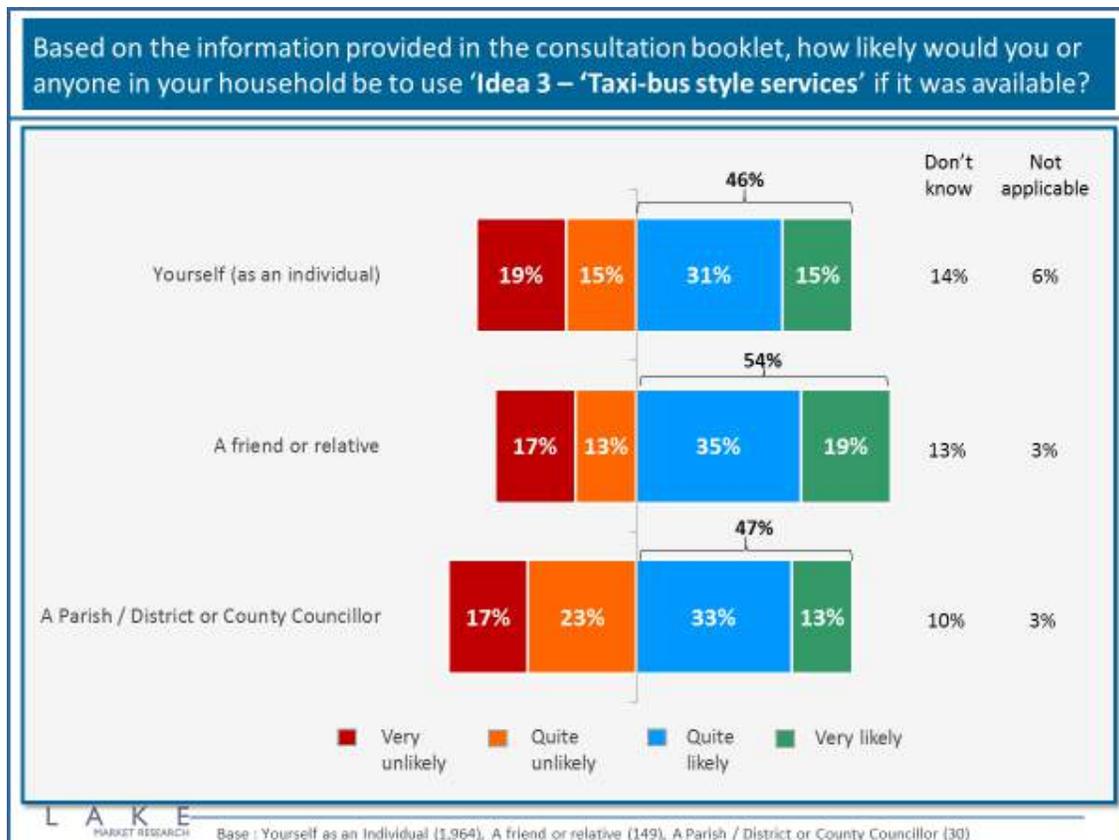
2.5.5 Perceptions of Idea 3 – Taxi-bus style services – Likelihood to use

Further to a review of Consultation booklet, Consultees were then asked to indicate the likelihood of themselves or anyone in their household to use ‘Idea 3 – Taxi-bus style services’, via a consistent scale to that used for the previous two ideas. Consultees were also given the option to select ‘don’t know’ or ‘not applicable’. The chart below depicts the overall responses from Individual Consultees, friends or relatives answering on behalf of someone else and Parish / District and County Councillors.

The proportion likelihood to use falls in between ‘Idea 1 – Feeder Services’ and ‘Idea 2 – Bookable Bus services’. Just under half of Individual Consultees (46%) indicated they or someone in their household would be likely to use ‘Idea 3 – Taxi-bus style services’. 14% indicated they did not know whether they or someone in their household would use it. A slightly higher proportion of friends or relatives answering on behalf of someone else selected very / quite likely (54%); but this proportion is not significantly higher.

Councillor perceptions are broadly consistent with those of Individual Consultees – 47% indicated they would be likely to use ‘Idea 3 – Taxi-bus style services’.

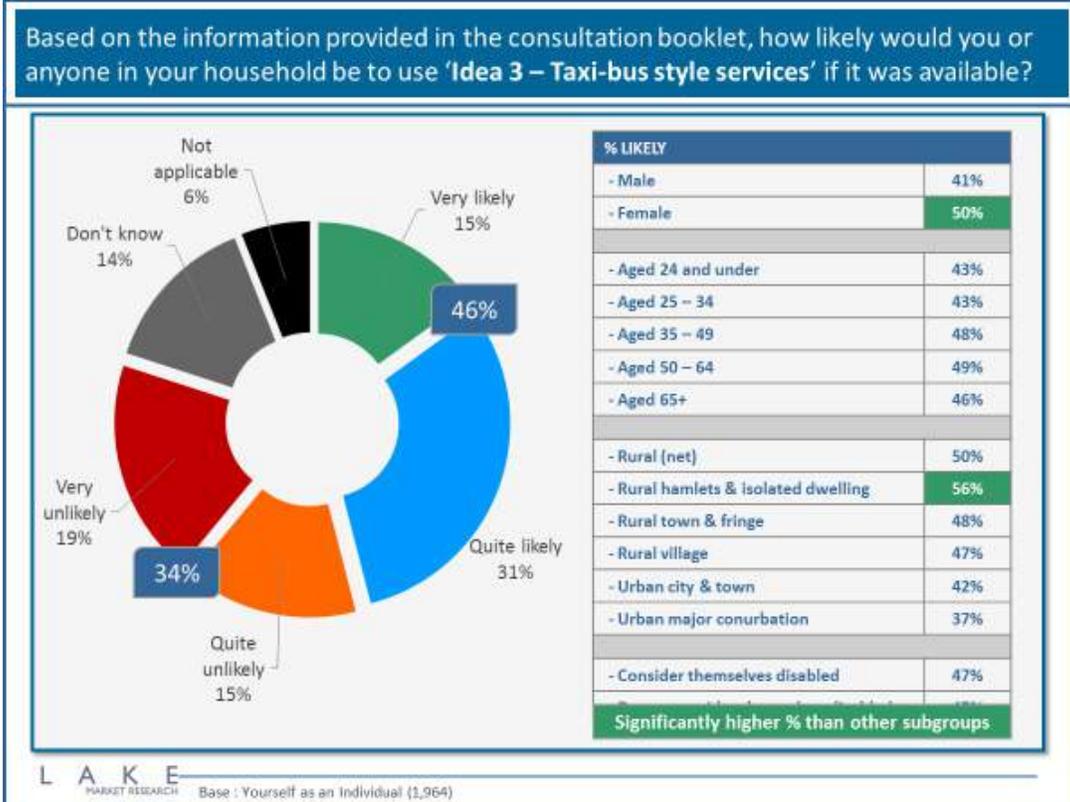
As this question was phrased from the perspective of household use, representatives from Parish / Town / Borough / District Councils did not answer this question.



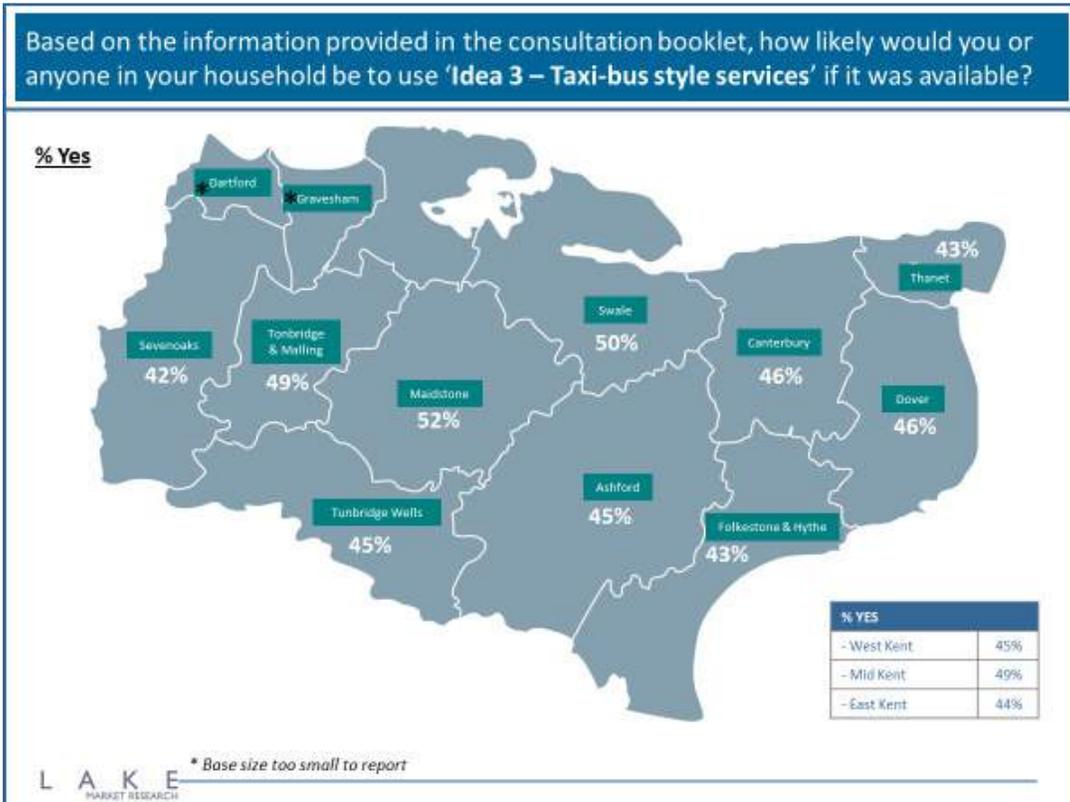
Focusing specifically on the response from Individual Consultees, it is apparent that there are significant differences observed by gender and where Consultees live.

- A significantly higher proportion of female Individuals indicated they or someone in their household would be likely to use the service (50%).

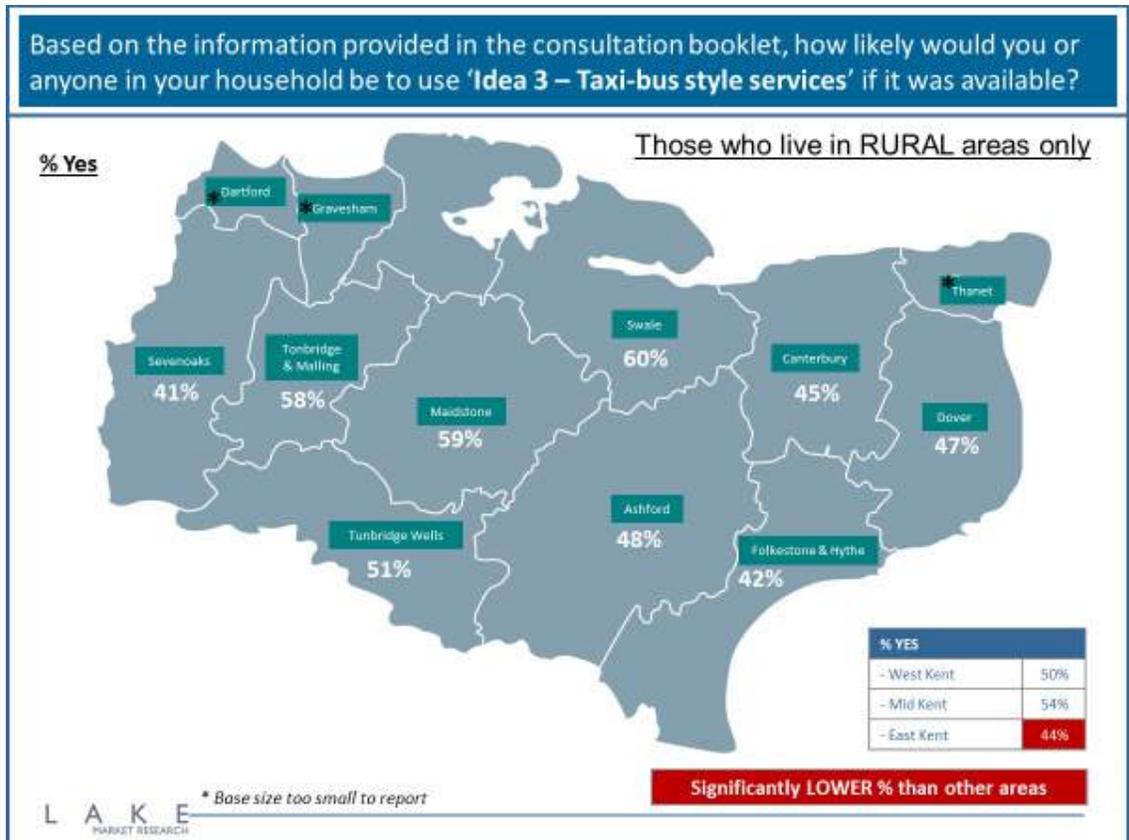
- A significantly higher proportion of Individuals living in rural hamlets and isolated dwellings indicated they or someone in their household would be likely to use this (56%).



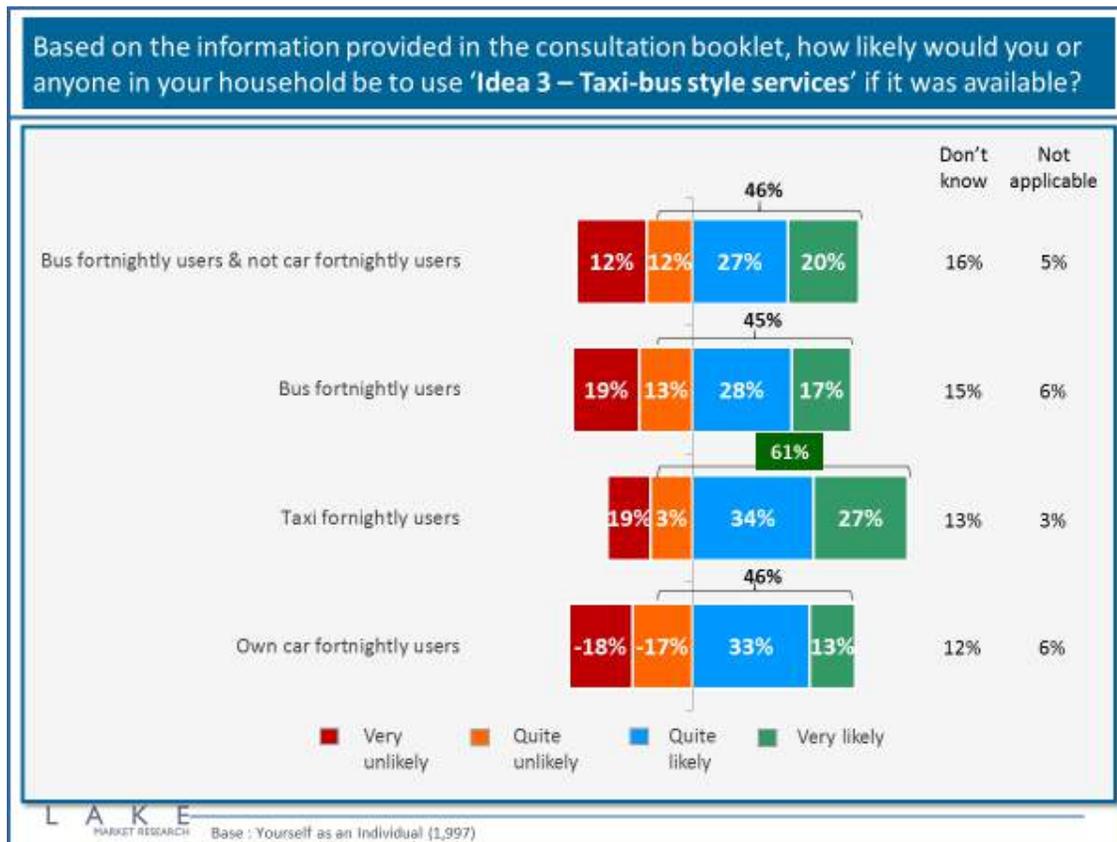
There are no significant differences in terms of likelihood to use this idea by district.



Focusing on results in terms of district for Individual Consultees who live in rural areas only (i.e. those who live in rural hamlets & isolated dwelling, rural towns and fringes and rural villages), likelihood proportions increase amongst Maidstone, Swale and Tonbridge & Malling residents (but not significantly). Likelihood to use is lowest in East Kent (44%).



Focusing specifically on groups of transport users reveals there is one significant difference in interest in 'Idea 3 – Taxi-bus style services'. Likelihood to use is significantly higher amongst those who currently use a taxi at least fortnightly (61%).



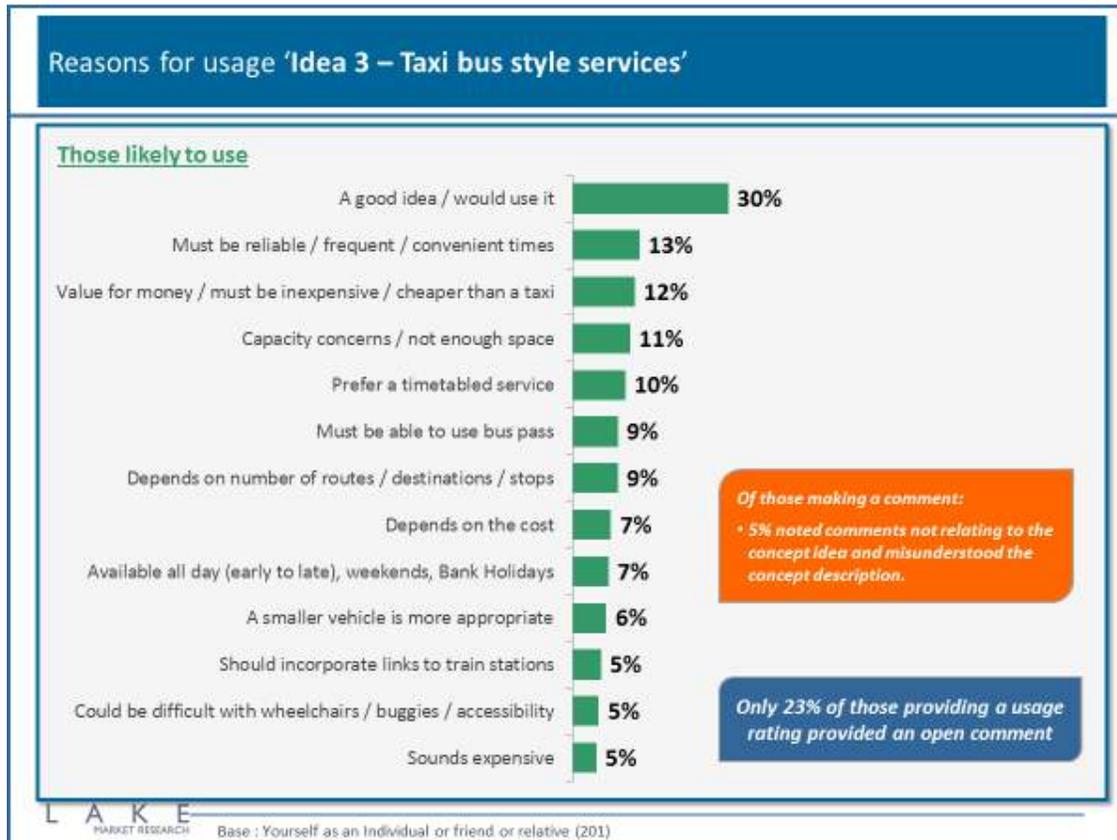
2.5.6 Perceptions of Idea 3 – Taxi-bus style services – Reasons for likelihood to use rating

Consultees were then asked to describe their reasons for how likely they were to use 'Idea 3 – Taxi-bus style services' in their own words. We have reviewed the comments provided and have grouped the comments into common themes in order to report the degree to which each were cited. It should be noted that only 23% of Consultees who provided a likelihood to use rating provided a comment at this question.

The chart below depicts the responses made by those who indicated they or someone in their household would be 'very / quite likely' to use the service:

- 30% thought it was a good idea, particularly for very rural areas and smaller communities where passenger numbers are low and there aren't many public transport services available. In addition, it would be useful for common destinations such as shops, doctors and hospitals.
- 13% noted the service must be reliable and frequent, and run at convenient times.
- 12% noted the service must be value for money and be cheaper than getting a taxi.
- 11% noted a concern with regards to capacity and the amount of space available in these vehicles.

- 10% noted they preferred the fact that this idea ran to a timetable (echoing earlier preferences).



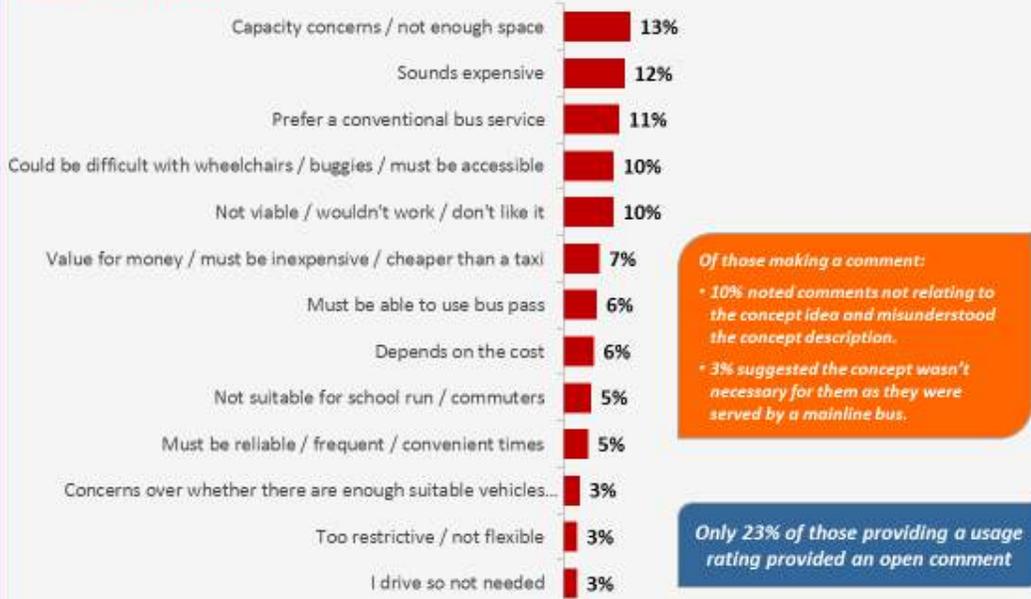
The chart below depicts the responses made by those who indicated they or someone in their household would be **'very / quite unlikely'** to use the service:

- Capacity is a concern for some with 13% noting they are not sure this service would offer enough space / the space that is needed.
- 12% noted the service sounds expensive from a user perspective.
- 10% noted the service could be difficult with wheelchairs / buggies and that it must be accessible to all.
- 10% noted it would not work or wouldn't be viable (without further explanation as to why this was the case).

It is also worth noting that a proportion of this group (13%) misunderstood the concept and its purpose (i.e. for rural areas as opposed to an alternative to a commercial bus).

Reasons for usage 'Idea 3 – Taxi bus style services'

Those unlikely to use



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH Base : Yourself as an Individual or friend or relative (177)

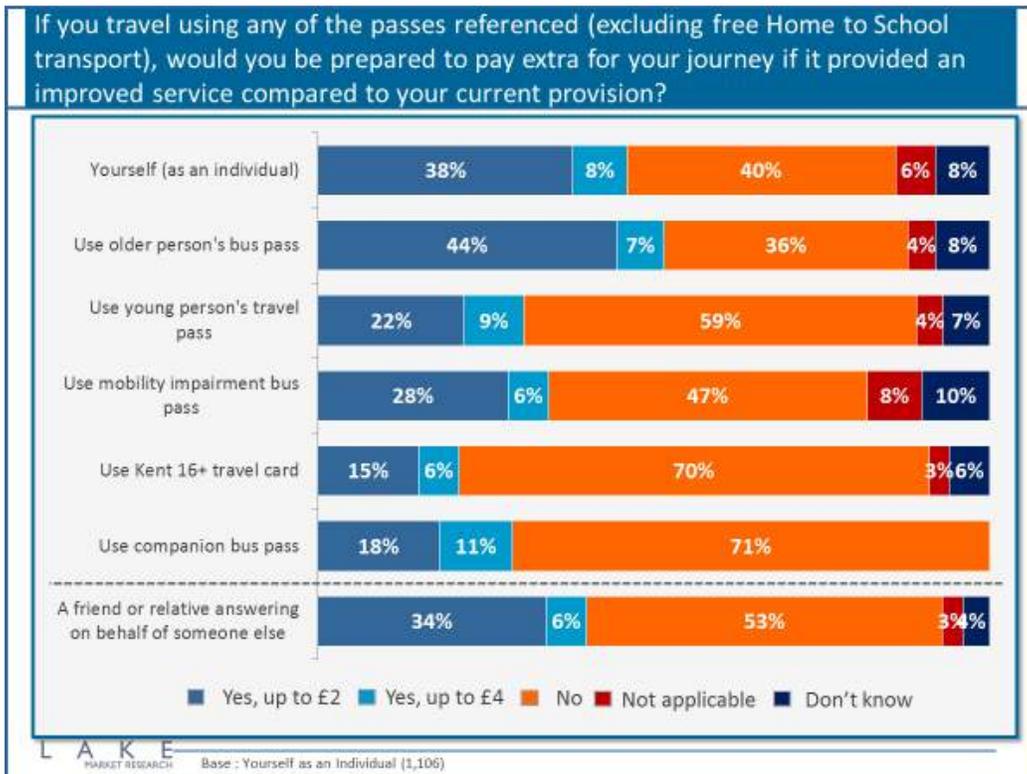
Bases sizes do not permit for percentage analysis by representatives of a local community group or residents' association (16 entered a comment) or those responding on behalf of charity, voluntary or community sector organisations (14 entered a comment). However, a higher proportion of representatives of a local community group or residents' association raised a concern that they would not be able to use their bus pass on this idea, and a higher proportion of those responding on behalf of charity, voluntary or community sector organisations raised a concern with regards to disabled access.

2.6 PROPENSITY TO PAY EXTRA FOR A JOURNEY IF IT OFFERED AN IMPROVED SERVICE – BUS PASS HOLDERS (EXCLUDING FREE HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT)

Consultees were asked to indicate which bus passes they currently use, if any. Those who indicated they use a bus pass currently (excluding free Home to School transport) were then asked to indicate whether they would be prepared to pay extra for their journey if it provided an improved service compared to current provision. It should be noted that an improved service was not defined so it is uncertain what an ‘improved service’ looked like / should be from the perspective of those answering.

At an overall level, 46% of Individual Consultees who use a bus pass would be prepared to pay an extra £2 or £4 (£2 – 38%, 8% - 4%) for their journey if it provided an improved service to current provision. 42% of friends or relatives answering the Consultation on behalf of someone else indicated those individuals would be prepared to pay an extra £2 or £4 (£2 – 34%, £4 – 6%) for their journey if it provided an improved service to current provision.

The proportion indicating they would be prepared to pay either £2 or £4 is higher amongst those currently using an older person’s bus pass, compared to those using all other passes.



2.7 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

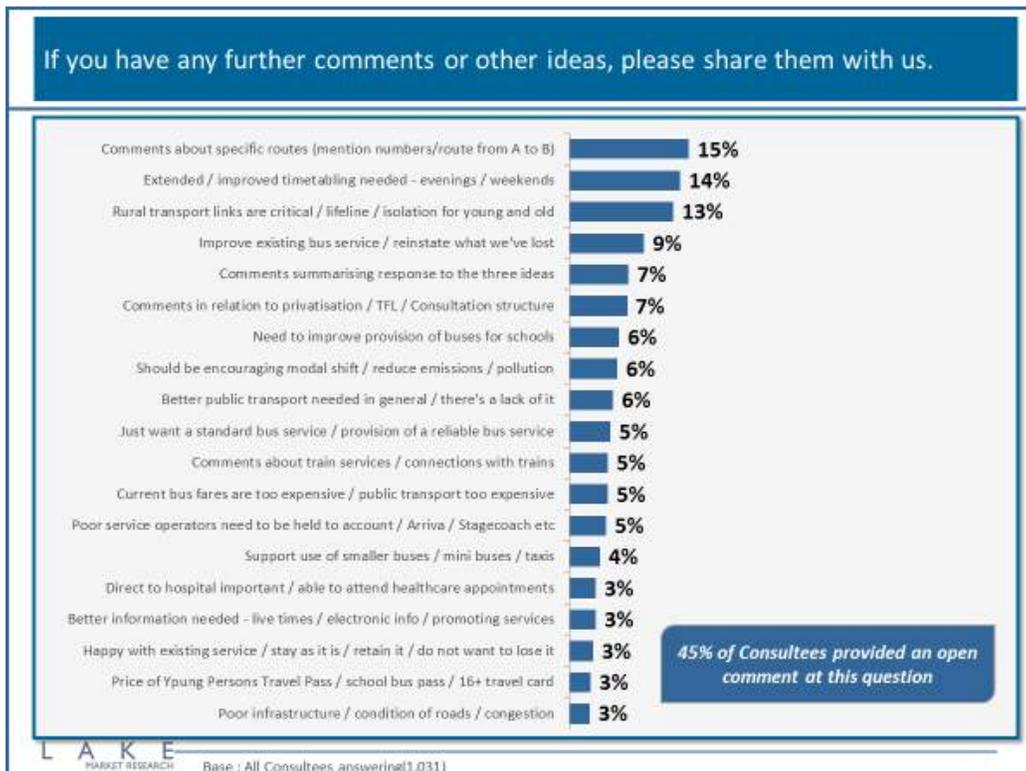
Consultees were also asked to describe any further comments they had or any other ideas they had in their own words. 45% of Consultees made a comment at this question.

The most common points noted are in reference to the existing bus service provision in general and outside of the three ideas proposed, i.e.

- Comments and concerns about existing specific routes (including references to service numbers and specific routes) – 15%. These are to be reviewed by the Public Transport team, but we envisage that the comments made here reference the commercial bus service as opposed to rural routes provided by Kent County Council.
- Comments and concerns in relation to a general need to extend / improve the timetabling of bus service provision so they are more regular and include evening and weekend provision – 14%.
- General improvements to the existing bus service / reinstating routes that have been taken away / lost – 9%.
- Need to improve provision of buses for schools – 6%.
- Desire for a standard bus service / provision of a reliable bus service – 5%.
- Need to connect / link in with trains – 5%.

There are also comments in relation to rural bus service provision:

- Comments in relation to rural transport links being critical / a lifeline / reduces isolation for the young and old – 13%
- The need to encourage a modal shift / reduce emissions / pollution – 6%



2.8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Kent County Council completed a Consultation stage Equality Impact Assessment to see if the proposed ideas could affect anyone unfairly. The Consultation questionnaire invited Consultees to note their views on the assumptions that had been made and the conclusions drawn. The Consultation document provided a link to the Assessment conducted.

91% of Consultees left this question blank. The most common responses from Consultees responding are as follows:

- Impacts on the elderly / they need to be considered carefully in any ideas – 18%
- Impacts on the disabled / they need to be considered carefully in any ideas – 18%
- Do not see the relevance of gender reassignment / religious beliefs – 9%
- Recent cuts / reductions in services isolate / are a barrier to people going out – 9%
- Services should be accessible to all / should consider everyone in the community – 7%
- Needs to consider young people / doesn't reference young people enough – 4%
- Needs to consider those who do not drive / unable to drive / on low incomes – 4%

3.0 PUBLIC MEETINGS

Summary of Key Points - Public Meetings

- All three ideas for the future delivery of rural bus services in Kent held a degree of acceptance, for different reasons, but primarily it was the concept that ‘something was better than nothing’. What was clear from the public discussions was that the solution for rural transport was not a ‘one size fits all’. Many Kent residents saw the solution as a combination of the approaches.
- There were a number of key issues with each idea put forward and these tended to have key themes across the three ideas:

Idea 1: Feeder Service	Idea 2: Bookable bus services	Idea 3: Taxi-style bus services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability of adjoining service. • Issues of changing buses – disabled, elderly. • Overcrowding concerns. • Safety concerns (left on bus/side of road/having to stand). • Cost of the fare. • Journey time/distance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elderly, vulnerable, disabled, those in poverty being able to access IT/Web/apps. • Overcrowding concerns. • Safety concerns (having to stand). • Timings: evenings & weekends. • Room for disabled, buggies, shopping trolleys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room for more than one disabled traveller? • Room for buggies, shopping trolleys, rollators. • Overcrowding concerns. • Safety concerns (having to stand). • Will any be available at school run times.

- Views regarding a concessionary charge were mixed, with some Senior Citizens Bus Pass holders (SCBP) being adamant that they would not pay extra (despite having no service currently); others were more willing to pay a small charge if it meant they had a service where currently there was none.

In total, 12 public meetings were held in a variety of locations around Kent. The purpose of these meetings was for KCC to present a series of ideas for rural bus services to the public and answer questions they may have. It should be noted that these public meetings were not designed to be the deliberative style format employed with the Parish meetings. Feedback was also collected through questions, participant feedback and end-of-meeting voting. Participants were also encouraged to complete a consultation questionnaire. Locations and attendee numbers are seen below:

Public Meeting Location	Number of Attendees	Public Meeting Location	Number of Attendees
Dover - Dover Town Hall	49	Margate – Margate Football Club	39
Gravesend – Elite Venue Centre	20	Sevenoaks – The Stag Community Arts Centre	72
Sevenoaks – Borough Green Village Hall	30	Canterbury – University of Kent	30
Folkestone & Hythe – Saint Mary’s Bay Village Hall, Romney Marsh	199	Ashford – Homewood School, Tenterden	70
Sittingbourne – UK P Leisure	42	Maidstone – Sessions House, Kent County Council	30
Tunbridge Wells – High Weald Academy, Cranbrook	31	Dartford – Dartford Football Club	9

3.1 FORMAT OF THE MEETINGS

The format of these Parish sessions were:

- Arrival and registration;
- Introduction to the Big Conversation;
- KCC presentation and discussion;
- Questions and Answers;
- Thanks and close and departure voting.

An overview of questions raised at the twelve sessions are seen in a separate Appendices document accompanying this report.

It should be noted that on many occasions, attendees of the Public meetings were there largely to complain about the loss of a bus service, in most instances from Stagecoach/Arriva or another provider. Many also felt these meetings were an opportunity to complain about the level of service received from bus operators. It should be noted that in some meetings, despite repeated attempts made to introduce the residents to the new ideas, many were unrelenting in their desire to discuss their local bus operator or the loss of service generally and refused to engage regarding the new ideas. While this was not the case in all meetings, some meetings were found to be much less productive than others.

It should also be noted from observations during these meetings, that there tended to be more emphasis on the potential ‘issues’ with any of the Ideas, rather than discussions surrounding any of the benefits of the various approaches.

3.2 OVERALL FEEDBACK ON THE IDEAS THE FUTURE DELIVERY OF RURAL BUS SERVICES IN KENT

3.2.1 Tabulated summary of feedback for the three ideas

SUMMARY FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS			
	Idea 1 – Feeder Services	Idea 2 – Bookable Bus Service	Idea 3 – Taxi-style Bus
Benefits/ Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered good for those who have lost bus service. • Like timetabled idea. • If put on at the right time and promoted people would use it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good idea for those able to book. • Many see this as a preferred solution, particularly to get to appointments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the idea of smaller buses on rural roads. • Much better for congested narrow local roads.
Concerns/ Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability/punctuality of main service. • Difficult for disabled, those with mobility issues to change buses. • Overcrowding concerns. • Elderly concerned about having to stand – unsafe. • Elderly concerned about being left by side of road. • What happens if late or feeder breaks down or main bus breaks down? • Are there enough people to use it? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard for some individuals to access if not IT savvy or suffer from digital poverty. • Overcrowding concerns • Elderly concerned about having to stand – unsafe. • How flexible? What hours? Evening/weekends? • Room for disabled, buggies, shopping trollies and shopping bags etc.? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowding concerns. • Elderly concerned about having to stand – unsafe. • Provision for buggies, shopping trollies or rollators. • Room for disabled? • Will there be any available at school pick up or drop off?

3.2.2 Feedback / Issues to Idea 1 – Feeder Service

Idea 1
Feeders to existing bus services

Rural communities may be less than 10 minutes from a frequent bus/rail service. For those communities the idea is the use of feeder bus links

This idea would use a small bus that could:

- run on a rural route with convenient stops
- provide a reliable connection with an existing “mainline” service
- be bookable or be on a scheduled timetable
- endeavour to provide more journeys than a current service
- open up new links


Public consultation 13 June - 8 August 2018


Reactions to Idea 1 were encouraging - although many raised genuine issues and queries about it, this idea had some acceptance with attendees of the public meetings. However, in many instances, attendees tended to focus on reinstatement of lost bus services, rather than the benefits of introducing a new scheme. Hence, overall some felt this was a good idea, while others were more reticent in their views. The perceived benefits and barriers were:

Idea 1 – Feeder Service	
Benefits / Advantages	Concerns / Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered good for those who have lost bus service. • Like timetabled idea. • If put on at the right time and promoted people would use it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability/punctuality of main service. • Difficult for those with disabled/mobility issues to change buses. • Overcrowding concerns • Elderly concerned about having to stand – unsafe. • What happens if late or feeder breaks down or main bus breaks down? • Elderly concerned about being left by side of road. • Are there enough people to use it?

The key issues and queries raised with Idea 1 (Feeder Service), were the following:

Safety Concerns / unreliability of operators

Many concerns were raised surrounding issues of reliability. Issues from many public meetings surrounded commercial operators being unreliable, removing services with no notification, overcrowded buses, rude drivers and very unclean buses. There was concern that people would be left waiting for a mainline bus or that the bus wouldn't come. Many felt the idea would only work with a reliable connection from a main service. They had fears about being left for hours on a bus and not having a connection. Other residents mentioned not liking the 'hassle' of moving from one bus to another. Concerns surrounded disabled/vulnerable residents and immobile or elderly residents finding it difficult to swap buses. Some elderly residents talked of their experiences of being left in bus shelters that were not fit for purpose, in wind and rain for up to an hour, waiting for a bus that was either late or not coming at all. Hence in some areas, much scepticism surrounded how efficient a service like this would be if the connection was not reliable.

Cost of service

Some felt that this idea (feeder service) would increase the cost of their travel significantly and those on lower incomes expressed concern that any additional costs would end up isolating them, as they would be unable to afford to travel. They wanted to assess how much extra these feeder services or other services would cost on top of the existing cheapest way that they currently travel. Views from those with bus passes were very mixed, but it did appear that in areas of higher social deprivation people would not consider paying an additional fare, while other more affluent areas, people were happier to pay a small fare, particularly if they were receiving a service that had not existed previously. A few questions were raised regarding whether any work had been undertaken by KCC on the tipping point for charges - for example, where the point was that people forsake their car and catch the bus because it is cheaper to do so.

Journey time/distance

Concerns regarding the length of journey times were raised with the feeder service and how much extra time this adds to a journey. Queries were raised surrounding the issues of delays to a mainline bus and whether the feeder bus would also be delayed, (or vice versa), and what would the impact be on the 'urban' users of the mainline buses'. The length of journey time was also raised as an issue, with some residents asking whether there would be a limit to how long/how far the journey was for this Idea 1, compared to Idea 2, and whether Idea 2 – A bookable, flexible service would be more suitable for longer journeys.

Safety

While smaller buses were welcomed by many meeting attendees, concern still existed over safety concerns particularly for older or disabled travellers. Some elderly residents were concerned that they may have to stand on some journeys and felt this would be more difficult to on a smaller vehicle. Others were concerned for the elderly to be waiting at bus stops for a feeder or on small cramped buses for any period of time. There was also mention of the safety of disabled, vulnerable or less mobile travellers when transferring from one vehicle to another.

Overcrowding/usage/ timings

Many raised concerns regarding the level of demand and how sustainable this service might be if it suffered from low usage or take-up. There were also concerns regarding what happened if people could not get on the bus. Many attendees asked whether the service would continue to run if only one or two people were on the bus one day and then the next day it might be 25. Additionally, at almost every meeting, residents stated that they wanted a bus service that fed their areas in the evenings and at weekends. As a result, many asked whether the Feeder systems would run early (i.e. before 7.30am) or later (i.e. up to 8pm or 9pm).

Comfort

A few elderly residents mentioned previous issues they had encountered using smaller minibuses. The point was made that any provision needed to be fit for purpose and comfortable for the passengers as some residents had experienced cramped and uncomfortable minibuses.

3.2.3 Feedback / Issues to Idea 2 – Bookable Flexible Service

Idea 2
Bookable, flexible services

- Demand Responsive Transit (DRT)
- A bookable, flexible bus service which uses technology and information to tailor services to demand from the public
- Number of schemes operating in the UK
- Potential for such schemes to work in rural communities

Public consultation 13 June - 8 August 2018

Idea 2
Bookable, flexible services

This idea would use smaller vehicles that could:

- cover a defined area
 - potentially a parish or multiple parishes
- cover a range of journey needs
 - going to school, medical appointment, to town centre
- look to complete your journey
 - as close as possible to a door-to-door service?
- be provided by a commercial operator or a KCC partnership (include community transport operators)
- enable people to book their journeys by phone, online or through an app

Public consultation 13 June - 8 August 2018

Again, feedback about this idea was encouraging, with genuine queries emerging after constructive discussions. Idea 2 resonated with some, who felt that this was a solution that would really suit them for certain types of appointments. However, some others had issues and queries and appeared less enthused about the idea, primarily due to it being a bookable service and not timetabled.

The perceived benefits and barriers were:

Idea 2 – Bookable Bus Service	
Benefits / Advantages	Concerns / Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good idea for those able to book. • Many see this as a preferred solution, particularly to get to appointments. • If well publicised, people would use it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard for some individuals to access if not IT savvy or suffer from digital poverty. • Overcrowding concerns. • Elderly concerned about having to stand – unsafe. • How flexible? What hours? Evening/weekends? • Room for disabled, buggies, shopping trolleys etc?

The key issues and queries raised with Idea 2 – The Bookable, Flexible Service - were the following;

Safety concerns

The issue of safety was raised, with some females feeling that they would feel unsafe if they shared a smaller vehicle with others that were strangers. They saw it very differently from getting on a bus with strangers. Some younger residents also shared this opinion.

Difficulties booking/accessing booking

Other comments surrounded potential inability of some residents to access and book the proposed service. Many comments were made regarding some people not having smart phones, the internet or a main phone line. Other comments surrounded some residents’ potential inability to access any of these services due to limited use of the internet, the physical abilities of access and not being able to afford the internet or a phone line (digital poverty).

Space/overcrowding

Concern was raised regarding those with disabilities accessing the buses as well as those with buggies. For example; if a large family with a buggy and a wheelchair booked the bus, would that mean no-one else could use it? Some residents wanted to know how disabled people could easily book and use the system and whether more than one disabled person could travel in the

proposed smaller buses. This also reflected the concerns shared previously about whether there was room for shopping trolleys, wheelchairs, and shopping bags on the smaller buses.

The call centre

Many residents expressed concern that a call centre would be in a foreign country and be expensive to call. Others expressed concern about the names of many villages and how the call centre needed to be local so that people understood the routes and the journeys. They felt local knowledge about the names of places, and how they are referred to by local people, was crucial.

Coverage/flexibility

Many raised the issue of the size of the area covered for this scheme, i.e. would it be district wide or county wide, and how buses would serve the area. This led into residents questioning what hours the flexible service would operate, hopeful of weekend and evening services. Some residents commented that this would work exceptionally well for commuters into the train station in the mornings and evenings. Other flexibility issues surrounded what would occur if people cancelled and whether this would delay the service, as well as how far in advance bookings had to be made.

3.2.4 Feedback / Issues to Idea 3 – Taxi Bus

Idea 3 Taxi bus

- We use lots of taxi buses to provide home to school transport
- Great potential in rural areas, where passenger numbers are low and buses too large
- Could charge individual fares for different journeys along the route
- Could run to an agreed timetable and route



Public consultation 23 June – 8 August 2018

Idea 3 Taxi bus

Ideas include:

- Smaller vehicles
- Rear wheelchair lift or a dedicated wheelchair ramp
- May not be walk on walk off, as a bus is now
- Smaller vehicle could be an advantage
- We want your views on the use of these vehicle types




Public consultation 23 June – 8 August 2018

Many saw this idea as a way to reduce congestion and free up space on the roads. Again, the advantages and concerns towards this idea were encouraging, with genuine queries. The perceived benefits and barriers were:

Idea 3 – Taxi-style Bus	
Benefits / Advantages	Concerns / Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the idea of smaller buses on rural roads. • Much better for congested narrow local roads. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowding concerns. • Elderly concerned about having to stand – unsafe. • Provision for buggies/ shopping trolleys or rollators? • Room for disabled travellers? • Will there be any available at school pick up or drop off?

Key issues and queries raised with Idea 3 – Taxi-style bus were very similar to issues raised with the other ideas.

Size of vehicles

Many had concerns with the size of the vehicles and their capacity, such as whether the buses would be big enough to take pushchairs as well as wheelchairs and whether they would be able

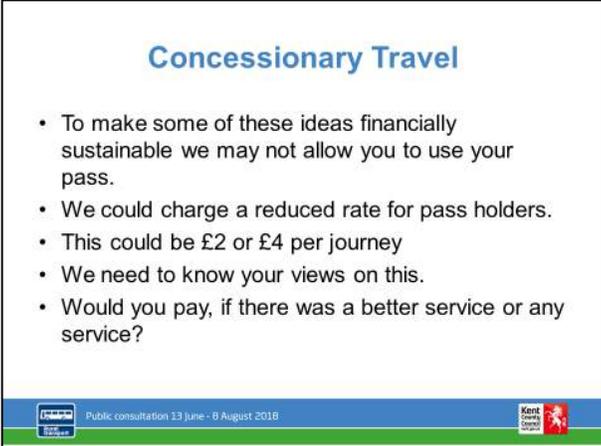
to get on the bus if there was a buggy or wheelchair already on board. Some asked whether all the passengers on board would need to be unloaded to get a wheelchair on. Concern was also raised regarding the vehicles being too cramped and whether the elderly would be able to have shopping trolleys with them.

Timings

Questions were raised regarding whether these services would run later in the day or earlier in the morning and at weekends. There was an element of concern that these vehicles wouldn't be available around the school drop off and pick up time, as they would be used for the school runs. Some liked the idea of these being timetabled, they felt it was a sensible option for the very rural villages where congestion exists and there are very few people on the larger buses during the day.

3.2.5 Concessionary Travel.

The idea of introducing a small charge was floated during the meetings, with KCC stressing that this was an idea to be explored only and not a policy change.



The slide is titled "Concessionary Travel" in blue text. It contains a list of five bullet points: "To make some of these ideas financially sustainable we may not allow you to use your pass.", "We could charge a reduced rate for pass holders.", "This could be £2 or £4 per journey", "We need to know your views on this.", and "Would you pay, if there was a better service or any service?". At the bottom, there is a footer with the text "Public consultation 23 June - 6 August 2018" and logos for Kent County Council and Kent County Council.

Views were very mixed depending on the area. Very negative feedback was received from some meeting attendees regarding this idea who made the point that many people (particularly the elderly and vulnerable) had only £100 per week to live on and couldn't afford to pay for a phone, let alone have to pay extra for the buses. Other elderly people made the point that elderly people that have Bus Passes have earned them (they have worked all of their lives) so why should they have to pay now? Many pensioners stated that they couldn't afford to run and tax cars as an alternative.

However, some residents were more inclined to pay a small fee if it meant that their area had something that it didn't have before and it benefited everyone. One resident made the point that many would be prepared to pay for a new service if it was guaranteed that the money would be invested back into the transport system. Another resident made the point that by charging people with concessionary passes to use these services, KCC would be penalising people who live in rural areas compared to those living in towns who do not have to pay anything.

A suggestion from a resident was made that older people pay £30 towards the cost of their free bus pass which would then last 3 years. A few residents in receipt of a bus pass complained that they had to pay a full fare on the buses if they travelled before 9.30am. Many elderly residents felt this to be unfair and in some areas some bus companies are allowing bus pass holders to travel for £1 before 9.30am on school buses to take them as close to town as possible. Many felt this to be an excellent idea and one that should be explored further by KCC.

3.3 KEY THEMES THAT EMERGED

The following is an overall summary of the key themes that emerged from the twelve meetings held across the County.

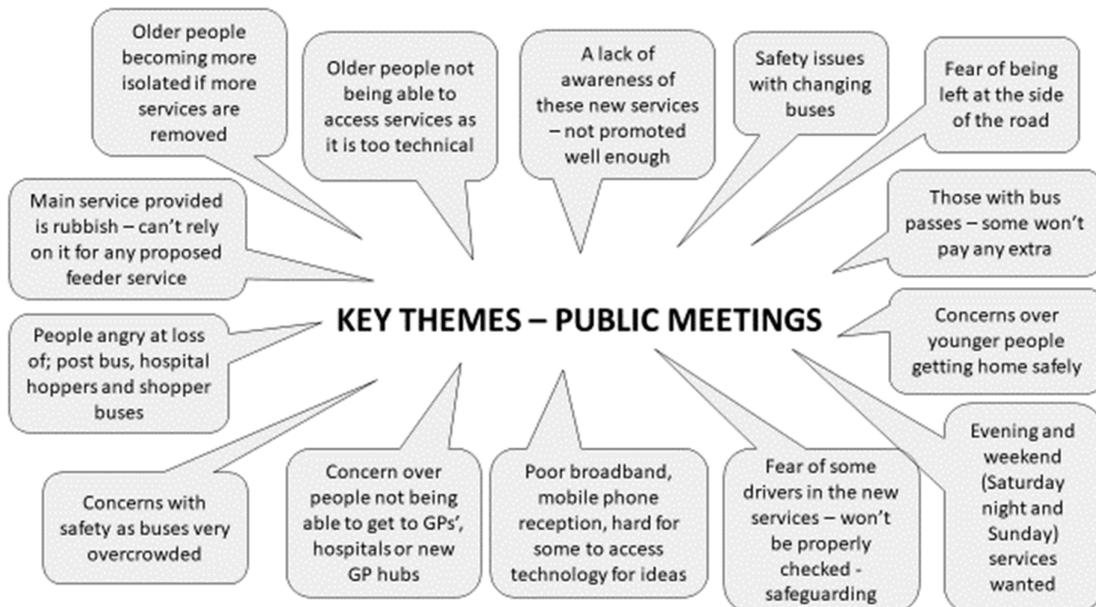
It should be noted that the majority of the attendees at the public meetings were primarily over 55s, with only a minority of respondents being younger. In fact, only a few 'younger' residents (16 - 19 years) were present in the 12 meetings. The spread of ages over 55 years was notable, with some very frail elderly making the effort to attend and share their views.

Key themes of concern that materialised from the public meetings varied across the area of Kent. However, there were overarching areas of concern and these are expanded below:

- Elderly people accessing services – awareness;
- Those in digital poverty accessing these ideas;
- Older people being more isolated as commercial routes are removed;
- Accessibility of these services for the disabled and vulnerable;
- The safety of younger people using these proposed services;
- Potential lack of awareness of these new services – better promotion;
- Access to GPs and hospitals for the elderly, infirm or vulnerable;
- Expansion of hours – early morning, later in evenings;
- Local area issues with broadband and cell phone reception.

It should also be noted that many residents raised the question of whether these ideas were replacing subsidised routes or whether these would be new schemes. Questions were raised regarding what would happen if the new/pilot schemes were unsuccessful, would people would then be left with no services at all?

Some of the key themes are outlined in the following diagram and expanded in more detail.



Elderly/disabled/vulnerable accessing technology / confidence

As highlighted previously concerns were expressed regarding how the elderly would access proposed services; many attendees felt that older people did not have smart phones or access to the internet and felt that this might promote isolation unless alternative ways of using these services was made widespread for the older age ranges. It was also stated that some elderly

people are set in their ways and may be anxious to use something new in the form of technology. Some attendees also made the point that some elderly prefer the security of a timetable, to enable them to be spontaneous and not lose their freedom, rather than having to book a service.

Many Kent residents voiced concerns regarding disabled and vulnerable users of the buses (as well as the elderly) and their potential inability to access any of these services due to limited use of the internet, physical abilities to access and not being able to afford the internet or a phone line (digital poverty). Further points made regarding how expensive bus fares are and how some people (not just the elderly) simply cannot afford them, thereby exacerbating isolation issues.

Unreliable operators

Issues from many public meetings surrounded commercial operators locally being unreliable, removing services with no notification, overcrowded buses, rude drivers and very unclean buses. There was also concern regarding the ideas that relied on a feeder bus meeting a 'main route service', as they felt the main route service was too unreliable and that this idea would be unlikely to work.

Lack of buses to hospitals/supermarkets

Points were made that hospital and bus services are needed for the elderly to maintain health. Many points were made regarding restricting services, meaning that older people would be in danger of being too isolated and not getting to GPs, hospitals or health centres - this was considered crucial by many in the community. There was also similar sentiment expressed regarding 'shopper buses' (i.e. to large supermarkets or shopping centres).

Repeated concern was raised regarding older people with concessionary bus passes needing to get to NHS surgeries - with some of these are closing and new Hubs being introduced, there was concern about whether these individuals would now be able to access the new Hubs on public transport.

Quality of life concerns / isolation

At many meetings, issues were raised regarding the elderly or isolated and their quality of life when services were removed. This was further exacerbated with some Kent residents feeling that the very frail or elderly would be unable to access these proposed ideas (unable to book/no access to IT) and would end up being more isolated as a result. Concerns were also put forward about the quality of life of Kent residents being affected if certain current transport services were withdrawn as a result of these new services; i.e. regular trips on the bus on certain days with friends, if these services are removed, isolation is risked.

Park and ride / local trains/ public transport

At many gatherings there were issues raised with the park and ride schemes. Some Kent residents talked of not being able to use them anymore as they now had to pay (there were many comments regarding isolation issues, as a result of these charges and older people not being able to afford to use them anymore). Other comments centred more on potentially re-locating some Park and Ride schemes to serve areas better (perhaps between Canterbury and Maidstone) and linking in with the proposed schemes. Many felt that perhaps a Park and Ride scheme was a good place for a feeder to 'feed' into.

Comments were also widely made about feeding into stations and organising timetables to complement bus and train times. Points made that many off-peak trains are empty, and some felt that KCC could liaise with the rail providers to provide a joined-up approach. Points were also made regarding cycle routes and trains and whether a hub for commuters could provide

safe and secure storage for bicycles, that might help promote the use of public transport over the car.

Volunteer drivers / community buses / local need

Encouragingly at the meetings many people came forward offering their services as volunteer drivers. Quite a few local schemes were mentioned, with some proposing to share data with KCC to help plan the pilot schemes and assess demand. A few Kent residents made the point that they felt KCC did not understand the type of people that use a bus and why; they proposed more research into what this group needs to identify what difficulties and what limitations there are. At a number of the meetings, points were raised regarding the desire locally to set up a community bus but the difficulties in doing so often outweighed the benefits. There were suggestions that KCC help local communities to set up local community bus schemes and help areas through the difficult process.

3.4 KEY SUMMARY BY MEETING.

3.4.1 Dover topline summary.

Overall 49 people came to the meeting; the demographic was very swayed towards the over 60s. There seemed to be an underlying expectation among some that they were there to hear whether they were 'getting their bus service back'. With respect to the ideas, much concern existed regarding the elderly not being able to get to GPs and suffering from isolation. There was also concern around the elderly not being able to 'book' or 'access' the ideas (i.e. no access to computers etc, unlikely to use phone).

Many points were made, and discussions ensued regarding Stagecoach having the monopoly locally and a sense from some residents that it had broken the rules by cutting certain services. There was much comparison made to TFL and London and various profit margins and budgets. No other suggestions were put forward as potential ideas, apart from KCC running a bus service of their own.

With regard to voting a few people suggested a combination of all three approaches.

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
18	2	2	18	9

3.4.2 Margate topline summary.

Overall 39 people came to the meeting and the demographic was very swayed towards the over 50s. Some Local Councillors arrived and then left within the first 30 minutes; particularly after it was clearly stated KCC were not there to discuss lost or threatened bus routes. As with Dover, there was the underlying expectation among some that they were there to hear whether they were 'getting their bus service back' or to find out what was happening to it. With respect to the ideas presented, there was concern from people regarding the elderly not being able to get to GPs (particularly now Hubs are being introduced) and concerns for isolation for this age group.

Concern also existed around the elderly being able to 'book' or 'access' the ideas (i.e. no access to computers etc, unlikely to use phone). Again, there were many points made and discussion about Stagecoach having the monopoly. There were also questions about whether concessionary passes could be used and how much new services might cost the very low-income travellers. Many were quite open to the idea of feeders/bookable services and cited that they

were trying to promote similar approaches locally (car share etc). It was also suggested (again) that KCC operate a bus service of their own.

With regard to voting a few people (as in Dover) suggested a combination of all three approaches.

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
10	3	3	15	8

3.4.3 Gravesend topline summary.

Overall 20 people came to the meeting and as with previous meetings, the demographic was very swayed towards the over 50s. Consistent with other meetings there were a number of issues raised regarding poor service from Arriva and Red Route and concerns such as buses running early and leaving early or very late. There was more concern from people regarding the elderly not being able to get to GPs and concerns for isolation from the elderly and those that were vulnerable. With regard to the ideas, the key concern surrounded the elderly being able to 'book' or 'access' the ideas (i.e. no access to computers etc, unlikely to use phone). Many residents also cited issues with no broadband in their area and talked of difficulties in using the internet and mobiles.

The issue of safety was raised, with some ladies feeling that they would feel unsafe if they shared a smaller vehicle with others that were strangers. They saw it very differently from getting on a bus with strangers. There were also questions about whether concessionary passes could be used and how much new services might cost. No new suggestions emerged apart from KCC operating their own bus service. With regard to voting:

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
6	2	3	9	0

3.4.4 Sevenoaks topline summary.

Overall 72 people came to the meeting and again the demographic was very swayed towards the over 60s. As with previous groups there were a number of issues raised regarding poor service from local bus services and concerns such as buses running early around the school pick up times, as well as lost services to various destinations. Residents asked KCC to help 'leverage' around improving timetables around school exit times. Suggestions were also made to try and liaise with train operators to improve connectivity.

There was the primary concern from local people regarding not being able to get to GPs, Pembury Hospital or Maidstone Hospital. Again, concern existed around the elderly being able to 'book' or 'access' the ideas (i.e. no access to computers etc, unlikely to use phone). It was also suggested (again) that KCC operate a bus service of their own or be open to franchises. New suggestions involved setting up car sharing schemes (but help would be needed to set this up from KCC) as well as using the money from the new ideas to improve the existing services.

With regard to voting:

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
17	23	9	11	12

3.4.5 Borough Green topline summary.

Overall 30 people came to the meeting with the demographic being very swayed towards the over 55s, with a few exceptions. As with previous groups there were a number of issues raised regarding poor service from a provider (Arriva in this instance) and concerns surrounding a lack of routes and buses for children to get to school or people getting to hospitals or the stations. Issues of getting to hospitals and stations was raised repeatedly. With respect to the ideas, questions were raised regarding the size of the 'area' for feeder services and having a reliable service to feed into. There were also points made about poor phone reception locally, hence there was some scepticism surrounding effectiveness of technology to be used, in addition to the points made about not everyone having access to phones or internet.

Locals felt that buses to stations were crucial locally; they also felt that this would reduce car parking locally as well as promote community if people were catching same links every day. Points made that this Consultation should not be Idea 1, Idea 2 or Idea 3, but instead should be a mixture of solutions for the community. With regard to voting:

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
10	5	3	10	2

3.4.6 Canterbury topline summary.

Overall 30 people came to the meeting and again the demographic was very swayed towards the over 50s', with a few exceptions. There were a number of issues raised regarding the location of the meeting venue and the lack of directions, and availability of buses to get to the venue. A few respondents had very specific issues with key routes locally, but these were addressed very early on with the Public Transport team.

Mixed views existed regarding the ideas with no major consensus on any of the three Ideas. Attendees seemed interested in the schemes with some feeling that a combination of all three of them would be the way forward. Some found it hard to imagine these working with unknown numbers of customers. There seemed to be positive interest in exploring the possibilities of some communities looking to do this themselves. With regard to voting:

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
9	11	2	7	1

3.4.7 Romney Marsh topline summary.

Overall 199 people came to the meeting and again the demographic was very swayed towards the over 60s, with a few exceptions.

Tensions were running exceptionally high as a result of Stagecoach's withdrawal of a number of services. Residents felt that Stagecoach was ignoring them and not responding, and they were angry and frustrated and were intent on using this meeting to air their views, despite being informed that this was not the forum. Despite repeated attempts at hearing some of the concerns regarding Stagecoach to enable the KCC team to feedback directly, many residents left the meeting, without hearing the ideas being put forward.

It should be noted that despite attempts made to introduce the residents to the new ideas, many were unrelenting in their desire to discuss Stagecoach and refused to engage regarding the new ideas. As the evening progressed and some of the most vocal residents left, this did enable a

slightly more constructive approach to ideas, but the emphasis of the evening (despite the best efforts of those involved) was on the Stagecoach withdrawal of services.

Many felt the idea of feeder services would not work locally due to the main service being unreliable, non-existent and consistently late. Many elderly residents complained that they were often left by the side of the road in bus shelters that were not fit for purpose, as the buses were often overcrowded, with locals and holidaymakers with large suitcases and buggies. Whilst some liked the concept of a bookable service, the issue of the elderly not having access to phones and technology was repeatedly raised. Using taxis as a bus (Idea 3) was accepted by a few, but there were consistent issues cited with provision for disabilities and buggies.

The idea of paying for a service was met with fairly widespread negativity, with a few exceptions. Those with bus passes believed strongly that it was their 'right' to have free travel. There also seemed to be a modicum of interest in exploring the possibilities of some communities looking to provide some level of service themselves.

Overall, there was no major consensus on anything. People felt that any money spare should go on reinstating the services that were lost and if Stagecoach were not going to do it then KCC should employ a company to do so. With regard to voting:

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
19	12	8	79	81

3.4.8 Tenterden topline summary.

Overall 70 people came to the meeting and again the demographic was very swayed towards the over 50's, with a few exceptions.

Many residents of the area were (again) under the impression that the meeting was focused on discussing the failings of the current operators and lost routes or services.

Again, there was concern surrounding the elderly not being able to access many of the suggested services due to access to technology and not having a smart phone, or poor local reception. There was also a great deal of concern regarding lost services and older people suffering from isolation as a result.

The idea of paying for a service was met with mixed views – with some that were very negative, and a few exceptions of those that would be prepared to pay. A number of those with bus passes believed that it was their 'right' to have free travel. Overall, there was no major consensus on anything. Some were keen on the ideas 1 and 2 and felt that a hybrid of these would be useful in various areas to serve certain needs. There was a willingness to get a rural mini bus service off the ground, but it was considered extremely difficult. As a result, there were requests that KCC could provide guidance notes or similar to help communities wanting to do this. More suggestions were made about connecting to other services such as trains and a Park and Rides etc. With regard to voting:

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
13	20	9	18	10

3.4.9 Sittingbourne topline summary.

Overall 42 people came to the meeting and the demographic swayed towards the over 50s, with a few exceptions. Views were mixed regarding the ideas and as with other meetings concern

was raised surrounding the elderly not being able to access many of the suggested services due to access to technology and not having a smart phone.

There was also a great deal of concern regarding lost services and older people suffering from isolation or loneliness as a result, and a request for the findings of the survey to be forwarded to the Minister for Loneliness. The idea of paying for a service was met with mixed views – with mixed feedback. A suggestion was made that older people pay £30 towards the cost of their free bus pass which would last three years. There was a suggestion that more work is put into linking buses, trains, cycle routes etc, to promote the use of public transport by making bike storage safer at bus stations, park and rides and stations.

Overall, there was no major consensus but a degree of acceptance across all three ideas. Some were keen on the ideas 1 and 2 and felt that a hybrid of these would be useful in various areas to serve certain needs, while those plagued with larger buses that were unsuitable for their Parish roads preferred idea 3. With regard to voting:

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
17	10	3	8	4

3.4.10 Maidstone topline summary.

Overall 30 people came to the meeting. The demographic was fairly mixed with around a third of the attendees under 50. The remainder were aged over 50.

A great deal of concern was voiced regarding the elderly, the disabled, those with physical and mental disabilities and vulnerable users of the buses and their potential inability to access any of these services due to a limited access to and use of the internet or ICT (information communication technology). Those in digital poverty were also of concern and these are described as individuals with little or no access to ICT. There was also a mention of potential lost services (park and ride) and the effect that this is having on some older people – exacerbating isolation or loneliness.

The idea of paying for a service was met with mixed views, but primarily negative ones. Ideas 1 and 2 had some acceptance with the attendees, but many felt resistant to change and tended to focus on revising or reinstating some bus routes rather than accepting and exploring these ideas in detail. There was much focus on the process of the Consultation and where the meetings were being held, how it was advertised and who could access meetings and have their say. With regard to voting:

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
6	3	1	10	10

3.4.11 Cranbrook topline summary.

Overall 31 people came to the meeting. The demographic was a mix of ages of respondents, but numbers were swayed towards the elderly. Following some initial resistance regarding any potential cost elements of the new ideas, there appeared a general acceptance of these ideas with many of the questions centred around the three ideas and how they would work. Concern was raised about how some disabled travellers and/or parents with buggies would access some of the ideas safely and whether there would be enough room for wheelchairs and or buggies on some of the smaller proposed vehicles.

Feedback seemed quite positive with some respondents feeling that some of the ideas would serve their communities well. Idea 2 seemed to have the most acceptance with attendees, but again the sense was that a range of schemes would work rather than one idea. Reliability was key to people using the bus. Some felt that if they had a reliable service then they would increase their use of the service, but this was the key element. With regard to voting:

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
5	15	8	3	0

3.4.12 Dartford topline summary.

Overall only 9 attended the meeting, the demographic was swayed towards the elderly, with two exceptions. Feedback was generally positive about the ideas and the attendees seemed to like the proactivity shown by KCC of coming up with something to help the current situation. Some residents felt that a combination of the three ideas would work well, while others tended to focus more on the feeder service and saw that working well as long as the link was reliable.

It was interesting to note that some of the local residents had effectively created their own 'hub' to get to and then go onto another journey – in this case it was Bluewater. Rather than trying to park at the hospital, they drove or were brought to Bluewater where they could catch the bus to the hospital and also park for free. Some also drove to an area where Fast Track started and parked their car there (free) and caught the bus. Access to the hospital and various GPs was a key concern, as was being able to get to them there and back again safely and in good time. With regard to voting:

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
2	3	1	3	0

3.5 Overall Voting

Taking the voting numbers overall from the meetings across Kent, the clear preferences were for Idea 1 (Feeder service) and Idea 2 (Bookable Flexible Service), with only half as many meeting attendees selecting Idea 3 (Taxi buses), although it was felt that Idea 3 was a concept that was not as well understood (or relatable to) as Ideas 1 and Ideas 2; in fact, many questioned why this wasn't occurring anyway.

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	No Specific Choice or Undecided	Did not vote at all
132	109	52	191	137

4.0 PARISH MEETINGS

Summary of Key Points - Parish Meetings

- In the views of parish representatives the words to describe what a ‘good bus service’ looked like were: Reliable; Frequent; Flexible; Affordable; Punctual / Timely; that operates evenings and weekends.
- As with the Public meetings, all three ideas for the future delivery of rural bus services in Kent resonated and appealed to some degree. As with the Public meetings the concept that ‘something was better than nothing’ was a key driver to assist with this suggested change. It was clear from these meetings also that the solutions for rural transport are not a ‘one size fits all’ - parishes saw the benefits of combining some of the approaches.
- There were a number of key issues with each idea put forward and these tended to have key themes across the three ideas;

Idea 1: Feeder Service	Idea 2: Bookable, Flexible	Idea 3: Taxi Buses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability of adjoining service • Not enough room for mobile impaired / issues of changing buses – disabled, elderly. • Concerns left on roadside if bus is late. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some may find it difficult to book or schedule; Elderly, Vulnerable, Disabled, in poverty accessing IT/Web/apps • Would this be cost effective even if it’s just one person? • Length of journey time. • Concerns over sharing small vehicle with strangers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sounds like a door to door service? • Can this be a bookable service? • Difficult for disabled and those with mobility issues/or pushchairs? • Worries about overcrowding and not being able to get on. • What happens at school pick up when these taxis are needed.

- Parish representatives were asked how they could help and many suggestions were made such as; volunteer drivers; community buses; helping create links to GPs, hospitals and helping to identify Hubs; providing some part funding and helping to promote any new rural bus services.

4.1 BACKGROUND

Kent County Council were keen to hear from Local Wards and Parishes and wanted to explore views at a very local level towards the proposed ideas. These sessions were designed to be more deliberative and discussion-based than the public meetings, enabling representatives from councils to feedback and discuss their views towards the proposed ideas and how they might work in their particular areas.

In liaison with the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC), Parish Council members were invited to attend one of four sessions being held around the county, undertaken in key locations shown in the following table.

Location of Parish Meetings/Seminars	Date held	Number of Attendees
Dover	3 rd July 2018	29
Tunbridge Wells	5 th July 2018	22
Maidstone	18 th July 2018	33
Ashford	24 th July 2018	16

A full list of Parishes that attended can be seen in Appendix 1.

4.2 FORMAT OF THE SESSIONS

All sessions were chaired and moderated by Lake Market Research. Representatives from Kent County Council were in attendance to undertake a presentation, which outlined some background to the project and put forward the ideas for discussion. The KCC team were there to respond to questions and to circulate to provide feedback on any issues or queries raised. Lake moderated the 'break out' sessions to ensure independent views were collected without chance of bias.

The format of these Parish sessions were:

- Arrival and Registration– initial views on key areas;
- General introductions, scene setting, order of play;
- Introduction to the big conversation;
- KCC Presentation and discussion;
- Questions and Answers;
- Breakout sessions with independent moderators, Lake.

4.3 TOP LINE FINDINGS

The following is an overall summary of the four meetings held. An overview of questions raised at these sessions can be seen in a separate appendices document to this report.

4.4 GOOD BUS SERVICE & KEY ISSUES FOR RURAL BUS SERVICES

Upon arrival to each of the sessions, all attendees were asked to give thought to two main questions.

- What does a good bus service look like?
- What are the issues for rural bus services in your area?

Attendees were asked to write their responses on Post-it notes and affix them to two boards in the room for further discussion. Examples of words used are seen on the following page.



What does a good bus service look like?



What are the issues for rural bus services in your area?

4.4.1 What does a good bus service look like?

Key words from 'what describes a good bus service' to many of the attendees were:



Key words that were raised repeatedly across both Public and Parish meetings was that a good bus service needed to be:

- Reliable;
- Frequent;
- Flexible;
- Affordable;
- Punctual / Timely;
- Operate evenings and weekends.

These are without doubt the key attributes needed for any bus service for it to be considered 'good'.

4.4.2 What are the issues for rural bus services in your area?

Key issues from the 'boards' exercise and discussions surrounding what the issues for rural bus services were are shown below.

- Safety issues – large buses on narrow roads, dangerous for children and the elderly, especially on roads with no pavements;
- No warning of cancellations / breakdowns;
- Overcrowding;
- Buses late or leaving early;
- Bus shelters not fit for purpose in exposed areas;
- Dirty filthy buses and shelters;
- Rude and unhelpful drivers;
- Lack of links between smaller villages – cross country routes;
- Students in villages unable to get to Canterbury for college / university;
- No bus information systems (digital);
- No easy read timetables;

- Infrequent service, not linking to train times;
- No evening and weekend service;
- No joined up thinking with school times or train times and bus timetables;
- No link to hospitals, GPs or main shops for rural villages;
- Not enough passengers to make them commercially viable.

4.5 OVERALL FEEDBACK ON THE IDEAS THE FUTURE DELIVERY OF RURAL BUS SERVICES IN KENT

The presentation outlined the background to the project along with stating clearly the position of the discussions. The discussion and presentation of the ‘ideas’ then followed. The three ideas were outlined in detail, along with two video examples of similar schemes working elsewhere.

Following the presentation and the session afterwards dedicated to questions, Lake organised the respondents into smaller groups and the ideas were discussed in more detail.

The following table is a summary of the points that were considered positive and negative about the ideas.

SUMMARY FEEDBACK FROM PARISH MEETINGS			
	Idea 1 - Feeder Bus	Idea 2 – Bookable Flexible Service	Idea 3 – Taxi Bus
Benefits/ Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would work well on a timetable. • Might provide a lifeline for some areas. • Reduce isolation. • Encourage community. • Re-connect communities. • Great for connecting into main service for those communities with nothing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would work well for commuters to main station. • Would use for hospital appointments and others specific appointments. • Be great for those who don’t want a timetabled service. • Cheaper alternative to taxis. • Get closer to where you want to go. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller on roads. • Less congestion. • Cheaper to run.
Concerns/ Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has to connect to a reliable main line service. • Concerns about being left by roadside if connection is late. • Changing buses was considered too much hassle by some elderly. • Ease of access/enough room for mobile impaired or disabled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some may have difficulty accessing the technology to book or find it difficult. • Would this be cost effective just with one passenger? • Length of journey time. • Share small vehicle with strangers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sounds like a door to door service. • Is it bookable? • Difficult for disabled or those with mobility issues/pushchairs etc. • Worries about overcrowding & not being able to get on. • What happens at school pick up when these are needed?

The following is a more detailed overview of the general feedback topics obtained from the Parish discussions.

4.5.1 Idea 1 – Feeder Services to existing bus routes

Idea 1
Feeders to existing bus services

Rural communities may be less than 10 minutes from a frequent bus/rail service. For those communities the idea is the use of feeder bus links

This idea would use a small bus that could:

- run on a rural route with convenient stops
- provide a reliable connection with an existing “mainline” service
- be bookable or be on a scheduled timetable
- endeavour to provide more journeys than a current service
- open up new links

Public consultation 13 June - 8 August 2018

Feedback to Idea 1 (Feeder Service), was mixed although for the most part there was very positive feedback to the concept. Certain Parish representatives appeared less receptive, but this was almost solely as a result of the reliability of their current bus services. The perceived benefits and barriers were;

Benefits / Advantages	Concerns / Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would work well on a timetable. • Might provide a lifeline for some areas. • Reduce isolation. • Encourage community. • Re-connect communities. • Great for connecting into main service for those communities with nothing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has to connect to a reliable main line service. • Concerns left by roadside if connection is late. • Change buses for some elderly – too much hassle. • Ease of access/enough room for mobile impaired or disabled.

The key issues and queries raised with Idea 1 (Feeder Service) were the following:

Timetabling

Feedback regarding these services being on a timetable was well-received. However, many made the point that the feeder service needed to also run during the evenings and weekends to feed into an existing (i.e. main) bus system that also ran at evenings and weekends and offered a reliable service

Reliable main service to connect/being left

The primary concern from many Parishes was the reliability of any connecting service and the concern that many passengers would be ‘left’ or that the connecting service would never appear. This tended to be more prevalent amongst those communities where a poor bus service was received.

Lifeline/community

Encouragingly some felt that this would be a lifeline for some older people and others felt that a service like this would reduce isolation in the community. Some felt it might generate more involvement with the community and re-connect some communities which was seen as a significant benefit.

Changing buses / ease of access

Some Parish representatives felt that some of the elderly would struggle with the concept of having to change buses and those that were less mobile would also experience difficulties accordingly. Concern was also raised regarding the ease of access onto a smaller feeder bus for

the disabled or those with mobility issues, as well as ease of access for passengers with buggies or prams.

Well advertised/publicised

A key issue that many Parishes raised was that any service of this nature needed to be widely publicised as examples were cited of previous similar schemes (e.g. Village Link) where these had stopped running as no-one knew about these services. Widespread promotion of any scheme that would incorporate/include promoting this to the whole community was considered essential.

Lack of footfall / regularity of service

Some Parishes expressed concerns regarding the potential lack of passengers in some areas and as a result suggested that these feeder services did not have to be an every day service; there were suggestions that these could operate a few days a week and still serve the community. Other Parishes suggested timetabling could be effective to incorporate commuters (to generate revenue), with a regular feeder service to a main line bus service (or train station if just as close), and then reduce the service during the day, but increase it again to pick up commuters returning home.

Paying a concession

Views about paying an extra fare (for SCBP holders) were mixed. Some Parishes felt that their residents would be happy to pay a concession as this would be a service they did not have currently, while Parishes in other areas were fairly adamant that their residents holding a SCBP would not pay any extra, despite it being a new service.

A few concerns were also raised from individuals not holding a SCBP, who felt that there may be issues with payment on these smaller buses as they had experienced problems such as not being allowed on buses locally by drivers, unless they had the right money.

Bus stops for feeder

Many points were raised regarding where the bus stops for these feeder services would be as many catching buses struggled to walk too far. This was seen as one of the key obstacles in using a service like this for some mobility impaired passengers.

Creation of feeder hubs

Many Parishes made the suggestion that careful consideration needed to be given to where these feeders 'fed into'. The KCC team were given a raft of suggestions from creating 'Hubs' in areas where a Morrisons or a large Tesco were, and where a main line bus operated every 10 or 15 minutes that fed into a larger town. This idea of 'Hubs' was key and was seen as a positive solution to where feeder services may feed into for some areas. One of the primary suggestions that emerged across all of the Parish groups, Public meetings and Deliberative workshop sessions was that feeder services would be useful to local GPs or Hospitals as this was one of the key destinations for many of the elderly.

4.5.2 Idea 2 – Bookable Flexible service

Idea 2
Bookable, flexible services

- Demand Responsive Transit (DRT)
- A bookable, flexible bus service which uses technology and information to tailor services to demand from the public
- Number of schemes are operating in the UK
- Potential for such schemes to work in rural communities

Public consultation 23 June - 8 August 2018

Idea 2
Bookable, flexible services

This idea would use smaller vehicles that could:

- cover a defined area
 - potentially a parish or multiple parishes
- cover a range of journey needs
 - going to school, medical appointment, to town centre
- look to complete your journey
 - as close as possible to a door-to-door service?
- be provided by a commercial operator or a KCC partnership (include community transport operators)
- enable people to book their journeys by phone, online or through an app

Public consultation 23 June - 8 August 2018

The concept of Idea 2 (Bookable Bus Service), was a well received as a concept for rural transport, with many seeing this as a positive alternative to unreliable buses and the cost of taxis. The perceived benefits and barriers were:

Benefits / Advantages	Concerns / Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would work well for commuters to main station. • Would use for hospital appointments and others specific appointments. • Would be great for those who don't want a timetabled service. • Offers a cheaper alternative to taxis. • Could get closer to where you want to go. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some may have difficulty accessing the technology to book or find it difficult. • Would this be cost effective just with one passenger? • Length of journey time. • Would have to share small vehicle with strangers.

The key issues and queries raised with Idea 2 (Bookable Bus Service), were the following:

Good solution for one-off appointments or trips

Some felt that this would be a good solution for occasions when they needed to access a GP or Hospital appointment; in this instance they felt this would be much better than a taxi. Some liked the idea that this would be cheaper than a taxi and they would likely get nearer to their destination than some bus services could take them. Parish representatives stressed that this needed to be publicised widely to the whole community; young through to older residents.

Solution for commuters

Many Parish representatives felt that this would work well for groups of commuters in the mornings and evenings to travel to a train station or town centre. Many felt that this would be a good solution for villages surrounding main line stations and that it was important to promote a scheme such as this to commuter communities.

Timetabled service

Views were mixed regarding a timetabled service. Many of the more elderly felt that while they preferred a timetabled service (they could plan better around a timetable). However, they did feel that for specific appointments such as GP's, hospital etc, that they would use this service particularly as it would take them to a specific location. There was some reticence from some areas who felt that there would be too many different needs in a rural community and a timetabled service would be much more cost effective.

Cost effectiveness

Many liked the idea of this service in that it would be much cheaper than catching a taxi and would also be one journey rather than a few to get to a destination. There were queries that surrounded whether the service would run with just one person on it and whether they would have to pay the entire cost of the whole vehicle rather than a normal fare.

Access to technology for the elderly/those without access to IT

The primary concern raised (and this has been prevalent through Parish, Public and the Deliberative workshop sessions), was the access to the technology for these schemes as many felt that the smartphone technology and internet booking would not be used by the elderly and would put them off. Despite assurances by KCC that a call centre for a land line would be available, many still felt reticence about the booking aspect of the service. Many also made the point that the call centre would have to be local (Kent based) so that the call centre operators understood all the different place names.

Journey time and length

Concerns for this idea tended to focus on what the length of the journey was, as some saw this as prohibitive, they felt that there needed to be a limit to the length of the journey or the number of pick-ups.

Sharing with strangers

A few individuals expressed a concern that they would be reluctant to share a journey in a smaller vehicle with strangers.

Concerns about lack of use – not publicised

As with Idea 1 (Feeder Services), many felt that the service needed to be widely advertised and promoted to encourage users to take up the scheme. Comparisons were made to Uber and these comparisons were both positive and negative. Also raised previously as an issue was the accessibility and ease of travel for the disabled or immobile and those with buggies and shopping trolleys.

Linking community provision

Across the four Parish meetings there were many suggestions relating to linking existing community transport schemes, in addition to the ideas suggested by KCC. Many felt that this would be a good utilisation of different schemes in various areas. Some Parish councils also proposed potentially part funding some schemes in their Parishes to get them off the ground.

4.5.3 Idea 3 – Taxi Buses

Idea 3 Taxi bus

- We use lots of taxi buses to provide home to school transport
- Great potential in rural areas, where passenger numbers are low and buses too large
- Could charge individual fares for different journeys along the route
- Could run to an agreed timetable and route



Public consultation 13 June - 9 August 2018

Idea 3 Taxi bus

Ideas include:

- Smaller vehicles
- Rear wheelchair lift or a dedicated wheelchair ramp
- May not be walk on walk off, as a bus is now
- Smaller vehicle could be an advantage
- We want your views on the use of these vehicle types




Public consultation 13 June - 9 August 2018

Key issues and queries raised with Idea 3 (Taxi-style Buses) were very similar to issues raised with the other ideas.

Benefits / Advantages	Concerns / Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller on roads. • Less congestion. • Cheaper to run. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sounds like a door to door service. • Is it bookable? • Difficult for disabled or those with mobility issues/pushchairs etc. • Worries about overcrowding & not being able to get on. • What happens at school pick up when these are needed?

The key areas were:

Less congestion /cost effective

This idea was well received by those living in rural areas with narrow roads, who suffer congestion caused by the current use of larger buses on local routes. Smaller vehicles were seen as a good solution to decrease congestion on these roads. Many stated that they felt the use of smaller buses would be significantly more cost-effective for the provider, and perhaps freeing up money to be put into running more services.

Access for disabilities / space generally

Similar issues mentioned by Parish attendees in relation to Idea 1 and Idea 2 were also raised for Idea 3, such as accessibility for the disabled and those with mobility issues, as well as passengers with shopping trolleys or pushchairs. Other people worried about there being sufficient space for shopping bags for those travelling to and from shops. Many felt that Idea 3 represented a good use of empty vehicles but they did wonder what would happen to the timetable when the vehicles were busy conducting the regular journeys for Special Educational Needs (SEN) children to and from school.

Overcrowding

A few concerns were raised regarding overcrowding and what happens on a route when the bus is full. Some people felt if it was a choice between Idea 3 (Taxi Bus) and Idea 2 (Bookable, Flexible Service) then they would choose Idea 2 as there was a greater chance they would be able to get on the service.

Overall, some Parish representatives felt that the use of taxis as a bus was a sensible idea and should be implemented anyway to save money and reduce congestion on rural roads.

4.5.4 Ways communities could help / New Ideas.

Key themes emerged from the discussions where Parish representatives felt that they could help KCC with these schemes. One of the overriding comments from Parish councils was that any pilot scheme should be created in close Consultation with the local Parish Council concerned to ensure that the scheme is viable, practical and fit for purpose for what is proposed in any given area. Other themes emerging from the discussions were:

Volunteer drivers

The lack of volunteer drivers was repeatedly raised during the meetings, in relation to both sourcing volunteers for regular trips and also maintaining a service with regularity. With these points in mind there was a suggestion that perhaps communities/Parish councils could work with KCC to fund paid drivers.

Community buses / licencing & sharing

Questions were raised regarding whether KCC could help more with communities who are seeking licences to run community buses, with many finding the process difficult and protracted. Some wondered whether KCC could help with licences, or provide help, advice and guidance regarding the legal requirements. A few Parishes raised the question of whether they could work with KCC to buy and share a minibus between the different villages – this was an issue where KCC's help and guidance would be appreciated.

Links to GPs, hospitals, supermarkets, park & ride

The creation of Hubs was mentioned repeatedly, as well as offering transport services to certain specific areas. Some wondered whether communities could work with KCC to link schemes to trains, GPs, hospitals and supermarkets, with many also mentioning Park & Ride schemes. Parishes felt that closer links with Park & Rides would help, perhaps linking Idea 1 (Feeder Services) or Idea 2 (Bookable Flexible Service) to local Park & Rides to feed into main Hubs. Some Parishes suggested approaching some of the larger supermarkets to gauge their interest in being used as a 'hub' for a feeder service to connect to a mainline service – and even to part-subsidise it - as this would encourage regular shopping trips from the outlying communities.

Provide some part funding

Some Parish Council representatives were willing to part fund some of these schemes to try and provide their communities with something rather than nothing. Some Parishes discussed 'stepped funding' arrangements i.e. providing more in the first year, then decreasing funding gradually as the scheme pays for itself. Mention was also made of some Parishes subsidising certain evening and weekend services to ensure they are viable.

Promotion of schemes within communities

Many Parish representatives felt that widespread activities to promote the new schemes and to engage the parts of the communities that would utilise these schemes would be crucial. The use of flyers, posters, social media, Parish newsletters, Parish noticeboards, local newspapers and leaflet drops were all suggested to help KCC advertise these schemes and promote usage. The University of the Third Age local groups suggested working with local Parishes to promote and assist elderly residents in using some of the booking systems. Parish council representatives also suggested approaching youth groups to raise awareness and generate usage of the schemes in key areas for the younger generation.

Connecting 'loops' rather than feeders

Suggestions were also made not just to connect feeder buses to a main bus route, but to also connect the rural villages together. Various suggestions such as 'loops' around key villages in certain areas on a timetable were made.

Other points raised were:

- The concept of pensioners being able to operate on a 'hail and ride' service was mentioned extensively at the Parish meetings.
- Could communities work with KCC to use school buses on return journeys?
- Many suggestions were made regarding greater utilisation of the current community transport schemes currently operating in many rural areas, as well as working closely with KCC to try and maximise the use of these under the new schemes.
- Parish councils suggested organising community and cross-Parish events, with transport provided to help reduce the isolation of some older people – perhaps shared community buses could be a solution.

5.0 Deliberative workshop sessions

Summary of Key Points – Deliberative Workshop Sessions

- Feedback from the attendees of the sessions highlighted the words and/or phrases that described what a ‘good bus service’ looked like to them. These were: prompt reliable service; Positive on-board experience (clean bus, polite driver); good information provision (timetables); space provision (room for wheelchairs, prams and buggies); affordable; safe and punctual.
- As with both the Public and Parish meetings, all three ideas presented to the sessions for the future delivery of rural bus services in Kent held a degree of acceptance from the meeting attendees; all having different opinions. However, primarily the acceptance was based on the concept that ‘something was better than nothing’. What was also clear from the public discussions was that the solution for rural transport was not a ‘one size fits all’. Many Kent residents saw the solution as a combination of the three approaches outlined at the meetings and this was largely dependent on area.
- There were a number of key issues with each idea put forward and these tended to have key themes across the three ideas:

Idea 1: Feeder Service	Idea 2: Bookable Bus service	Idea 3: Taxi-style Buses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability concerns of adjoining service; • How and where are tickets purchased? • Issues and difficulties of changing buses – disabled, elderly, vulnerable or mobility-impaired. • Concerns over what happens if feeder or main bus breaks down; • Concerns over insufficient space for buggies, prams, wheelchairs, etc.; • Longer journey times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some residents may have issues in accessing IT or internet, using the technology or be in digital poverty and hence unable to access booking; • Perhaps overcomplicated to book for some; • Concerns over insufficient space for buggies, prams, wheelchairs, etc.; • Concerns over potentially longer journey times; • Potential safety concerns (ASB/alone with strangers on buses). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns over availability at peak school times; • Concerns over insufficient space for buggies, prams, wheelchairs, etc.; • Potential safety concerns (ASB/alone with strangers on buses); • Concerns about overcrowding and not enough room to get on.

- Attendees of the groups felt that fares for these services should be affordable and pitched somewhere between a bus and a taxi fare. For feeder buses a fare of £2 seemed to resonate with most, although some residents with no service would pay up to £4 – however, younger respondents would only pay £2. People that had no service (as it had been cut) felt that any new service being introduced in their area should be free. Those with a Senior Citizens Bus Pass expressed mixed views about whether they would pay a small charge.

5.0.1 Background

Deliberative workshop sessions were three half day workshops in East, West and Mid Kent. These workshops were an opportunity to explore the issues and proposals in more detail with a targeted sample of Kent residents. Following the three deliberative sessions, Lake and KCC wanted to ensure the views of younger residents were captured, as whilst this age group were proportionately recruited to attend, actual attendance from this age range had been low at some of the deliberative sessions. To address this Lake recruited and ran a further smaller deliberative session solely with younger residents (16-24 years) in the Tonbridge & Malling area, to ensure that an overview of views from this age group were obtained. Tonbridge & Malling was selected due to cost effectiveness of venue and proximity to public transport.

5.1 RESPONDENT PROFILE

Respondents for the deliberative workshop sessions were recruited via free find face to face interviewing recruitment, targeting users and non-users of buses. Respondents were recruited in a variety of locations (using a rural and urban mix) across Kent. Attendees were recruited according to a gender and age profile to ensure that a good spread of residents attended each session, with ages of attendees ranging from 16 years to over 75 years.

Engagement levels from a recruitment perspective were relatively low and support a perceived lack of engagement or opinion on this topic amongst Kent residents as a whole.

Three venues were chosen to hold the workshop groups: Margate, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone. A further smaller 'Youth Group' was undertaken in Maidstone. Venues were selected on the basis of geographical spread, parking facilities, public transport access and value for money. Those attending the workshop groups were from a mixed demographic profile to ensure that a good spread of residents attended each session. The breakdown of attendees is seen below:

	Margate	Tunbridge Wells	Maidstone	Youth Group
TOTAL ATTENDING	32	26	44	9
GENDER				
Male	13	10	17	5
Female	19	16	27	4
AGE				
Aged 16-34	10	6	15	9
Aged 35-64	13	15	18	0
Aged 65+	9	5	11	0
SOCIAL GRADE				
ABC1	9	11	20	2
C2DE	23	15	24	7

It should be noted that the workshop groups were **qualitative** in their nature and this is not a summary of quantitative data where percentages can be applied. This was solely an exercise to gain attitudes and opinions of residents towards the Ideas presented which involved rural bus services. Care should be taken to ensure that this is understood to be an overview of attitudes and opinions and not a representative statistical overview of views of Kent residents.

5.2 FORMAT OF THE MEETINGS

The format of these deliberative workshop sessions was:

- Arrival and Registration;
- Welcome Introduction to the Big Conversation and the session;
- Warm up session in small groups;
- KCC Presentation and discussion - Questions and Answers;
- Further breakout sessions covering the three ideas in small groups; and
- Departure voting - Thanks and Close.

5.3 MAIN RESULTS OF THE DELIBERATIVE WORKSHOP SESSIONS

5.3.1 Warm Up sessions

At each deliberative session, respondents were firstly asked to write on Post-It notes what they felt a 'good' bus service looked like to them. Other warm-up discussions followed which explored local public transport choices and what issues respondents had with their local public transport system.

5.3.2 What does a good bus service look like to you?

Respondents came up with many words that they felt described a good bus service, with a great deal of consistency across all the groups and across both users and non-users of buses. The following slide shows the variety of words proposed by respondents.



Consistent themes emerged across all of the sessions regarding what respondents felt a 'good bus service' looked like and these tended to fall into specific categories. These categories are seen below and are expanded upon, with context provided:

- Prompt reliable service;
- Positive on board experience;
- Information provision;
- Space provision;
- Sensible pricing;
- Safe;
- Timings.

Prompt reliable service

A prompt and reliable service was considered 'utopia' for many respondents. There were many comments regarding buses being late, or leaving early, or not turning up at all. Words such as 'on time', 'frequent', 'reliable', 'prompt' and 'punctual' were all used repeatedly across all the age ranges as being something respondents wanted from a good bus service. For some non-users of buses, this had been one of the primary reasons that they had stopped using the bus in the past and used an alternative form of transport that they considered more reliable. Specific comments from some respondents were:

"They don't turn up and then two or three turn up all at once!"

"If I need to get to an appointment at a specific time, I just can't rely on the bus."

"I've been kept waiting for over an hour for a bus that's never turned up!"

Positive on-board experience

This category covered a multitude of issues raised. In simple terms, a good bus service meant a positive experience on board and this related to the cleanliness of the bus and the attitude of the driver as well as avoiding any antisocial behaviour issues occurring.

Many respondents had issues with the cleanliness of the buses - they felt that they were very dirty and often full of litter that was not cleaned up very often. The condition of the seats was mentioned extensively, with these often being dirty, gum-covered and unappealing. The attitude and customer service provision of drivers was also mentioned extensively, with many citing instances with drivers being rude, not allowing them on the bus (due to having no change), and being unhelpful in instances of disabled people struggling and antisocial behaviour occurring. For many respondents, a good bus service consisted of polite, welcoming and helpful drivers.

"They need to be cleaner, there's always muck and litter about."

"If the buses were a bit cheaper and cleaner I'd probably get the bus a bit more, as long as any extra we pay goes towards the buses being tidier and on time and stuff."

"Some of the drivers are shockingly rude, they never acknowledge you or offer to help."

Information provision

Many of the points raised that would make a good bus service centred around better information provision. This covered issues such as 'apps' that worked and were accurate and timetables that could be understood (comments made across all respondent types were that nearly everyone was unable to understand the current bus timetables). Further comments proposed more widespread timetables in rural areas, together with more digital timetables wherever possible.

Space provision

Lack of space appeared a key issue as many respondents were of the opinion that there was not enough space for wheelchairs, or disabled people, prams and buggies, as well as bikes and shopping trollies. Respondents felt that a good bus service would be one that had plenty of space for these things to enable disabled travellers or parents with buggies/prams to be able to get on the buses and not be left by the side of the road, if there happened to be a wheelchair or pram/buggy already on the bus.

"I was waiting at the bus stop the other day with my one year old in his buggy and there was a lady with a buggy on the bus already and the bus driver wouldn't let me on, I had to wait nearly an hour for another bus."

"I wanted to take my bike on the bus and the driver just shook his head and drove off."

Sensible pricing

Words and phrases such as 'affordable', 'value for money', 'reasonably priced', 'cheap fares', 'less expensive' were all used to describe what a good bus service looked like. Some of the younger respondents made the point that at 16 years of age they had to pay an adult fare, yet

many were not earning adult wages. Others on low incomes felt that the cost of buses could be made cheaper. Some respondents also mentioned easier ways to pay, as there had been many experiences of respondents not being able to get on the buses as they did not have the correct money. Many residents (particularly younger residents) suggested pre-paid tickets by phone or Oyster-style ticketing or card machines on buses.

Safe

Respondents mentioned bus stops as well as safety on the actual buses. Some respondents wanted a dry, clean and safe place to wait and some elderly respondents mentioned their bus stops not being fit for purpose, with nowhere to sit down or being too close to the road, leaving them feeling vulnerable and exposed. In addition, the issue of actual safety on the buses was raised repeatedly, with many respondents talking about wanting less antisocial behaviour and abuse from individuals or groups of youths on buses. A lack of control and policing of antisocial behaviour on the buses was also cited as a key reason for previous users of buses to have now stopped using them.

Timings

One of the most universally-made comments across the Consultation has been the desire by many to have buses that run later in the day and also on Saturdays and Sundays. This is what a good bus service looked like to many - being able to go out in the evening and be able to catch a bus back. This, together with weekend shopping hours in many town centres, meant that respondents would like buses to run on Sundays.

5.3.3 Local issues with travel and buses.

Respondents were asked whether they had any issues getting around their local area, or to their general destinations, and whether they also had any issues specifically with the local buses. Key issues tended to be the following:

- Journey time;
- Reliability concerns;
- Timetabling issues;
- High fares;
- General lack of availability of buses.

Concerns tended to decrease with age and socio-economic profile, with a relatively slightly higher proportion of elderly residents stating that they tended to use the car more because of mobility issues and bus stops being too far away, together with waiting times for buses being excessive.

Journey duration/car preferred

One of the primary comments, particularly from the Margate session, was the time it took to travel locally on the bus and that it was both quicker and easier to use the car. The same was cited for journeys into Canterbury and Ramsgate as many preferred to take the car because the buses were felt to be slow and unreliable to these destinations. Some respondents also mentioned that the bus stops were a fair distance away from a chosen destination so sometimes it was quicker to take a car as they had a lesser distance to walk or needed to go to a few places that were fairly 'spread out' that the bus did not serve.

In other sessions there were also some elderly residents with mobility issues who felt they had to take the car because their nearest bus stop was too far to walk to and there was no guarantee of a bus turning up on schedule with their current bus provider.

"Margate train station is a good 15-20 minute walk outside of Margate so it's difficult to get to and the bus takes over an hour (in morning rush hour) so it's a lot easier to drive."

"I don't use the buses as I've got a car...it's so much easier, it takes so much time on the bus, it's so much quicker if I just get in my car."

"I live at the top of a big hill and I can't walk up or down the hill from the bus stop, it's too far and on the way back I would have shopping, I have to use the car."

"I have problems getting to my Mum's, I live on a bus route which is fine into town (the No. 82)...and goes every 10 minutes...but my Mum lives in Marden and the bus can take 2 hours...it only takes 10 minutes in a car."

"Bus stops aren't placed that conveniently, sometimes it's a 20 minute walk away so for me it's easier to take the car."

Reliability concerns

This was a key issue across the three deliberative sessions, with many services in the different areas being criticised for being late, or not turning up at all. This also included some school buses which were said to often run very late.

"The bus to school is always late, the kids pay for being late with a detention but it's not that child's fault."

"I live out in the sticks and I use the bus to get to work and back every day. I'm always having to call my mum or dad as the bus hasn't turned up – I've had to now start getting up really early just to make sure I can catch something, and sometimes I get into town so early I have to wait an hour before I can get to work."

"Down my road there are three bus stops, if the bus is running late then they don't go down it and just ignore it, they often do that. When there are old people waiting for the bus to go into town the bus just misses it out and go straight into town...that is a big issue down our way, people are complaining but nothing is being done."

"I use the bus to get from Sandhurst to Maidstone, it's not very reliable. Where I live the journey is to go round into Sissinghurst but sometimes it will cut out Sissinghurst and go straight out onto the main road...so cuts out Cranbrook and Sissinghurst completely...so you have to wait for another one...which could be an hour."

Timetabling Issues

Many respondents made reference to the difficulties of reading the current bus timetables and being unable to understand them and this was a consistent finding across all the sessions. Other respondents talked about timetabling being made and passengers not being notified so travellers were often left waiting for a bus that was not coming or leaving from a different area. Other respondents mentioned a severe lack of buses and any form of timetables being present in rural areas generally.

"I live in a really rural village and there's only one bus that comes through every 2 hours and another one comes every 3 hours."

"What is a bus? I never see them where I live! They don't exist!"

"Timetables? They are unbelievable! Who writes them? I don't consider myself to be stupid at all but these things are ridiculous – I don't know anyone that understands them."

Fares / affordability

High fares were mentioned, particularly by younger passengers aged under 18 but still had to pay a full fare. Others had the view that in some areas the fares were very expensive for the short distance travelled.

"It costs £8 for a return to get to work, the journey is only 20 minutes. It should be around £5 to be fair because of the amount of people you get on there, it's a lot out of my wages to get to work and back...if I was driving a car it would probably cost me £5 in petrol to get there and back."

"My girlfriend works in Tunbridge Wells and she finishes work around 6pm but the buses coming back from Tunbridge Wells to Paddock Wood finish at 4:30pm...after the school kids the services stop. She has to get the train instead, which is more expensive and you also have to stop at Tonbridge to transfer trains."

"I'm 16 and I use the buses to get to work. I have to pay a full fare for an Adult, but I'm not earning adult wages, I'm not old enough to drink but I'm old enough to pay a full fare? It's not fair, I think 16-18s should get a discount."

5.4 OVERALL FEEDBACK ON THE IDEAS THE FUTURE DELIVERY OF RURAL BUS SERVICES IN KENT

5.4.1 Tabulated summary of feedback for 3 ideas

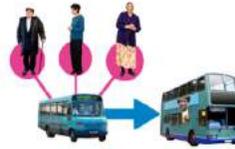
SUMMARY FEEDBACK FROM DELIBERATIVE WORKSHOP SESSIONS			
	Idea 1 - Feeder Bus	Idea 2 – Bookable Bus Service	Idea 3 – Taxi-style Bus
Benefits/ Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered good for those who have lost bus service; • Good for those with poor bus service links; • Like the idea of it being timetabled; • Awareness - people would use it, if promoted well; • Could potentially reduce social isolation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good idea for those able to book; • Many see this as a preferred solution, particularly to get to appointments; • Might reduce isolation and loneliness; • Considered cheaper than a taxi; • Good for those with reduced mobility as can be picked up closer to home; • More 'direct journey' potential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the idea of smaller buses on rural roads; • Much better for congested narrow local roads; • Might reduce isolation and loneliness; • Will cost savings mean that an increased service can be run? • Cheaper than a taxi.
Concerns/ Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of bus stops – might be too far for some to walk to; • Concerns over the reliability of main service; • Concerns over the price of tickets for low-income residents; • Potentially difficult for the disabled, vulnerable or those with mobility issues to change buses; • Concerns over enough room for disabled, buggies, shopping trolleys and shopping bags etc.; • Overcrowding concerns, may not be able to get on a bus; • Potentially increased journey time; • Some elderly or vulnerable residents concerned about being left by side of road; • Concerns about what happens if bus is late, or if feeder service or main bus breaks down. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns of overbooking, smaller capacity; • Hard for some individuals to access if not IT-savvy, have no access to IT or suffer from digital poverty; • Complicated for some elderly or vulnerable residents to use; • Overcrowding concerns, not getting on when need to; • Concerns over enough room for disabled, buggies, shopping trolleys and shopping bags etc.; • Safety concerns – smaller vehicles; • Potential journey time concerns; • Concerns about booking return journeys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowding concerns; • Concerns of being left behind if bus is already full; • Reliability around school drop off/pick up hours; • Elderly concerned about having to stand – unsafe; • Concerns over enough room for disabled, buggies, shopping trolleys, rollators and shopping bags etc.; • Safety concerns - sharing with strangers.

5.4.2 Idea 1 – Feeder Services

Idea 1: Feeder services



A small bus or taxi would be used to connect people living in rural areas with an existing commercial bus service.



For example, a small minibus would pick up passengers from three villages and connect with Bus A four times a day and do the same for the return journey.



These services would run at fixed times. They would pick up and drop off passengers at fixed stops along the route.



Passengers could wait on the feeder minibus or taxi for their connecting bus to arrive.

How is this different to the current rural bus service?



Passengers could buy a ticket for the whole journey (feeder service and existing bus).

Advantages	Disadvantages
More regular journey opportunities	Loss of direct journey
We might be able to connect more communities to the commercial bus routes	Passengers will have to change vehicles
Keeps a set timetable	Journeys may take longer

Feedback from the respondents in the deliberative sessions to this idea was positive, with the majority feeling that this was a good idea, particularly for those who lived in areas where the service was very poor (e.g. on the outskirts of towns or in very rural areas), or for those who had a long walk to their nearest main line bus stop. Many respondents tended to make suggestions about ‘who’ would use this scheme rather than stating that they would use this scheme themselves.

The perceived benefits and barriers were:

Benefits / Advantages	Concerns / Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered good for those who have lost bus service; • Good for those with poor bus service links currently; • Like the idea of it being timetabled; • Awareness - people would use it, if promoted well; • Could potentially reduce social isolation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of bus stops – might be too far for some to walk to; • Concerns over the reliability of main service; • Concerns over the price of tickets for low incomes; • Potentially difficult for disabled, vulnerable or those with mobility issues to change buses; • Space for wheelchairs, buggies, trollies, prams; • Overcrowding concerns, might not be able to get on the bus; • Potentially increased journey time; • Some elderly or vulnerable concerned about being left by side of road; • Concerns regarding what happens if feeder bus is late, or feeder bus or main bus breaks down.

It was interesting to note that although many felt that Idea 1 was a positive idea, this did not necessarily translate into them being likely to use the scheme. Hence, there is likely to be a significant challenge to encourage people to use these schemes when they are not regular bus users already. Thus, getting people out of their car and onto the buses will be a substantial task.

For those that were existing bus users, the propensity of them using the new scheme was much higher as they felt this was a very sensible solution for those living rurally, but they did state that these potential schemes needed to be widely and thoroughly publicised to encourage use.

Distance to feeder bus stop

Some of the more mobility-impaired respondents (across all ages) did have concerns about where the feeder bus stops would be and whether they might be too far for them to walk to.

"I like the idea of the feeder, some days I can't walk far so if I only have to walk a small amount to a taxi to take me to the bus stop, I think that's a good idea, if they are going to come more or less to your house to take you to the bus stop, I think that would work."

"Although I like the idea, I think I might have difficulties in accessing the pick-up point or the drop-off point because I can't walk far. If it's uphill I might have a bag of shopping and no taxi would take me because it's too short a distance."

Journey time

In the views of some respondents (particularly the elderly and the young) this idea would be better suited for appointments or travel that was not necessarily time-constrained. They felt they would tend to use this service if they did not have to get to an appointment or to a destination at a set time. Younger respondents had mixed views, with many stating that they were unlikely to use it and would pursue other options of transport where possible, such as lifts with parents and friends or taxis, if they didn't want to drive as they felt it was 'too much hassle' to change buses and would take too much time.

"I think it's completely pointless. Too much hassle. I want to go from A to B, not A to B to C."

"I think it would be good for leisure but not necessarily for important journeys. I could see myself using it for a leisure journey, if you were going out for a day and you weren't in a hurry."

"I think it's pointless to keep changing buses."

Regular bus users tended to be much more accepting of a longer journey time compared to those that weren't regular bus users but stated that they might use the service if it was convenient and near their home.

"I imagine there will be a curve – people will probably be prepared to add on an extra 10-15 minutes to their journey but people won't want an hour for example. It will also depend on the end destination and purpose – if it's to get into work for a certain time in the morning you can't be delayed too much and you have an absolute arrival time you need to be there."

"If you use public transport on a regular basis you already build in some delay/ buffer time into your journeys so it's not too different to that. You are used to leaving a leeway."

"People won't mind that it is a potentially longer journey time as it would be cheaper to use than a taxi – that's the trade-off. I think after a while people would get the benefits of the system – i.e. if you needed to go somewhere quickly now you could get a taxi."

Price of fares /purchasing tickets

Many respondents (particularly those on lower incomes and some less-affluent elderly), raised concerns regarding the price of Idea 1 (Feeder Service) and how much extra this would add to

the price of a journey. Some respondents felt that the fares should not be too high as it was only a feeder service, while others felt the service should be free, particularly those who had suffered from a bus service being withdrawn from their area.

There were also questions surrounding how tickets could be purchased and whether these would be valid for the whole journey. The level of comparative costs to a taxi were also compared and discussed, in addition to the types of payment methods, with respondents wanting easier ways to pay (perhaps even before a journey), rather than having to experience issues with change and, in some cases, not be allowed on a bus. Payment methods such as Oyster card-type arrangements, or family cards or an annual 'feeder' pass, were all suggested as factors to consider for payment options.

"If you are going to pay the same as a taxi fare, there's no point, if taxi fare is £10 and you are going to pay £4.50 for this, then you're going to jump on the bandwagon but say if it's £6.50 I'm only going to save a couple of pounds, so I'll get a taxi. People want to save money, pensioners, everyone."

"If it's their only option, like they live in the middle of nowhere and they've lost their bus service, then I think it should be free - especially if they have a bus pass."

"I think it's a good idea for people (who are) really rural, but I don't think they should pay."

"I think it should be a maximum of £2 a journey. I would want one ticket for the whole journey."

"If this is only going to be a drop-off service it's not going to be extortionate is it, it's a small distance."

"If it's a good service you have got to be prepared to pay for it. If it takes you where you want to go and when you should pay for it."

*"If there is a bus service already in place and then suddenly you've got to pay an extra £2 then it's a bit of a p***-take but if there's nothing there and that's all you've got then it wouldn't be too bad."*

Views were mixed regarding concessionary payments for SCBP holders with some elderly feeling that it was their choice to contribute extra if they could, while others were more adamant that their bus pass should cover it and they 'shouldn't' have to contribute extra.

"I have a bus pass and I'm a great believer that everyone should make their own choices - if you feel you want to pay that extra contribution that's fine but if you don't want to you don't have to. You can't expect a bus to turn up for nothing so it stands to reason even if you paid the same fare or a reduced one that would be fair."

"It should be free to those with concessionary passes and they should be honoured. It depends how far you are going, it shouldn't be any more than if you are using a normal bus service and must be cheaper than a taxi."

Awareness of the scheme

Many respondents made the point that they felt people would use the scheme, but the message had to 'get out there' to promote it. The suggestions were that this widespread promotion

should not just be to the regular users of buses, but also to the people that use their car or other methods of transport and who could be persuaded to use a service like this. Respondents felt that promotion of the ideas/schemes or the pilot schemes were crucial to the success and continuation of the proposed service.

"I think the biggest issue would be promoting the service and people knowing it's there."

"People would use it if they knew about it, I'm sure – it's just getting it out there and making them understand it isn't it?"

Timetabling

One of the key things liked by a range of the respondents was the fact that this service was proposed as being timetabled. People liked to know when something was due so they could plan their journey and day around it.

"I think a timetable would be so much better – we're set in the things we do – we like to plan so a timetable is perfect."

"This would only work on a set timetable....but the bus stop to feed into has to be super reliable."

"You'd use it if the timings were convenient, if the feeder bus time doesn't fit around where you need to be. It depends on when the main buses are going, if it's every two hours and the feeder bus is four times a day, there's not much flexibility."

"It would work really well for my mum who is quite rural and I like it on a timetable so I can connect to where else I want to go."

Reliability

Many respondents raised questions regarding reliability, both of the feeder bus itself and also the connecting main service. There were many worries expressed that focused on the event of the feeder breaking down or the main service breaking down (or a bus company withdrawing a route that a feeder relied on).

"Well this is only as good as whatever it's connecting to isn't it...If that's rubbish, the whole thing will be a rubbish service."

"If the connection is broken, does the little feeder bus take the person where they want to go?"

Space/overcrowding

This was a significant concern across all age groups and was mentioned at each of the sessions. It was also a concern that straddled all three Ideas as this was clearly focused on the capacity of the smaller vehicles proposed. The key concern was that people would be left at bus stops as the feeder bus might be full already.

"If you have a (mainline) bus of 60 people waiting at the bus stop and the feeder is late and it only has one person on it, they are going to be kicking off about it."

"At peak times, will there be enough space on the main bus for everyone on the feeder bus."

Many respondents were also concerned regarding space generally in the smaller vehicles and for those who were parents there were concerns regarding having enough space for buggies or

prams in the smaller vehicles, particularly if there was a buggy on board already. One young mother raised the issue that if the buggies had to be folded up to get on the smaller vehicle and the children were very young, how safe would the children be on the lap of the parent, with no seat belts or car seats. The same space concerns were raised regarding wheelchair spaces and also space for shopping trolleys or rollators.

"What about space for shopping trolleys, where's the space for them? I can't go into town without my trolley."

"I think I'd really struggle, on the way back if you see, trying to get off the big bus and then onto a smaller bus with all my shopping and my trolley"

Transferring buses

Respondents held mixed views regarding transferring from the feeder bus to the main bus - some were happy to do so, while others were much less enthusiastic at the prospect and this related to it being perceived as 'hassle'. Meanwhile, for others such as the elderly it was considered difficult with bags of shopping or trolleys. It was also perceived to be difficult for those respondents with mobility issues. Some also mentioned not wanting to transfer when the weather was very inclement.

"I'm not sure how the bus waiting for the feeder vehicles would work in practice because you would have multiple feeder vehicles for each stop. Unless there were designated areas where they could all decamp for the connection, there could be a ten minute wait/time period for connection. The conflict between not wanting to leave anyone on the side of the road and not delaying the commercial route in terms of timetable could be an issue."

"I like the idea of the feeder buses and the fact that you can stay on it - whether it's a heatwave or a blizzard you could stay on it for your protection until the next leg of the journey arrives. Safety is key here, it makes me feel a bit more secure about it."

"It's a real plus I think, I like the safety aspect of staying on the bus."

"I don't like the idea of losing a direct journey, it seems a right faff."

"I don't think it would work well for elderly people as you get on one bus and you have to get off and get on another bus when really you should catch just one, especially if access isn't that easy. It is the same for a mother and baby."

"I don't think I could do with the faff - getting on one, getting off and getting on another... I'm lazy, I don't like the idea."

"I definitely wouldn't use that, I'm disabled, it's difficult enough getting up one step let alone getting off and on buses that wouldn't work for me."

Some older respondents saw this Idea as a good thing and suggested that some elderly would use these schemes which would assist with reduced isolation and which promoted a greater degree of social interaction through using these types of services.

“Other benefits that we’ve not really talked about... using buses you actually have a chance to talk to each other, it’s not to do with money, but it’s social connection and wellbeing.”

5.4.3 Idea 2 – Bookable Bus Service

Idea 2: Bookable flexible bus services



A bookable bus service would collect passengers from chosen points and take them to a range of places in a set area.

This could be from a pick up point or from the passenger’s home.



Passengers would make a booking by telephone or on the internet.

They would say where they want to go and would be told when they could be picked up for their journey.



Bookings could be made 7 days, 1 day or hours before the journey.



Journeys would be shared with other passengers to make them as efficient as possible.

How is this different to the current rural bus service?

Advantages	Disadvantages
Not on a fixed route so can provide more journey opportunities	Journeys could take longer
Is available to passengers when they need it	Passengers would need to book in advance
Enables better access to locations where customer want to go	Booking times and journeys are shared, so passengers will need to be flexible



Passengers would need to be flexible with the time and length of their journey.

Passengers would need to allow more time to travel to fixed time appointments e.g. doctor’s appointment.

Feedback from the sessions for this idea were mixed, with some respondents liking Idea 2 very much and stating that they would use it if it was introduced. Others were much more sceptical and raised concerns such as the feeling that it would be expensive, the booking would be complicated, it was too difficult to work and that they did not like the fact it was not a timetabled service. The perceived benefits and barriers were:

Benefits / Advantages	Concerns / Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good idea for those able to book; • Many see this as a preferred solution, particularly to get to appointments; • Might reduce isolation and loneliness; • Considered cheaper than a taxi; • Good for reduced mobility – picked up closer to home, less distance to walk; • More direct journey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns of overbooking, smaller capacity; • Hard for some individuals to access if not IT-savvy, not having access to IT or suffering from digital poverty; • Complicated for some elderly or vulnerable to use; • Overcrowding concerns, not getting on when need to; • Concerns over enough room for disabled, buggies, shopping trolleys and shopping bags etc.; • Safety concerns – smaller vehicles; • Potential journey time concerns; • Concerns about booking return journeys.

More direct/easier journey

Many respondents liked this idea because they felt it was much easier than a regular bus. They liked the fact that it would pick them up closer to home at a time that suited them. This suited some elderly respondents well as they struggled to walk to bus stops, while other more able travellers liked the fact that they were more in control of their journey.

"It's a novel idea, it could be a new way of using public transport."

"It could work well as long as the booking system is reliable."

"I have to wear a shirt and tie to work and walking (to a bus or train stop) you can get hot and sweaty...it's not a very good start to the day! This would help you to get there a bit more comfortably."

"Oh I love it, you ring up, someone comes to get you, and takes you to where you want to go, its really good."

"This is a perfect solution for those people with mobility issues who can't even walk to a bus stop. This would also take cars off the road."

"You've got two different user needs here haven't you – you've got regular, I need it now, I know where I need to be and I need to rely on it for this service every day and then you have needs for ad hoc travel, i.e. not every day."

"I think this is a brilliant idea for older people to get to appointments who aren't on a direct route, you do struggle at times if you need to go somewhere else other than the main town and this would be much cheaper than a taxi service."

"I think this is the strongest of the three Ideas - it could work really well. The technology is there to do dynamic route planning so you can reduce the amount of unnecessary journeys by bus. Routes get faster and a small bus going round and doing this means you can get through smaller routes."

Booking concerns

There was a great deal of concern from some older respondents, who felt the concept of Idea 2 was complicated and would be difficult to use. Some respondents had no access to the internet and felt that a call centre would be very difficult to use. A key issue mentioned extensively in response to Idea 2 was the ability and capacity to access a smart phone or the internet to book this service (an issue that was also raised at the Public and the Parish meetings). Issues such as digital poverty, limited awareness and access were all considered to be barriers to a service such as this for many. Hence the bookable aspect was the aspect that they disliked about the service. Others felt it would be very complicated to set up and felt that the system would be too difficult to implement.

"To me, it seems to be quite complex and complicated for us old folk...would it work smoothly? I can see no-one being able to schedule anything to what they want – too many people wanting to go to different areas – I think it would be very confusing."

"The technology puts me off – I like structure – if I have to wait an hour for it to come then so be it. I like a timetable. I like pick up points, I'd arrange my day around this."

"I don't think it would work – it's too complicated isn't it – it blows my mind. Why isn't it simple?"

"I can't see any advantages to this, I like a timetable. I think it's because I don't like to plan. It is too much hassle."

"I don't know if it would work as well because I don't know if everyone would be willing to be flexible on their journey."

"I think there's a high chance it will always be overbooked."

"This is going to cost a fortune surely? I don't see how this is going to work?"

"I think using a booking service means this will make it difficult for older people to book young."

"Not everyone has a smart phone, not everyone understands Apps."

"Although I like a timetable because we are set in what we like to do, I like Idea 2 if you have something urgent."

"It's like an over-complicated taxi sharing service and it has too many options...if I had to get somewhere I'd just phone a taxi."

"Lots of older people just don't have access to the internet or smartphones."

Continuing with the concerns surrounding booking, some respondents had reservations about call centres or contact centres and maintained strongly that these should be local or UK-based so that there is a clear understanding of the area and place names.

"I think contact centres are rubbish, if they don't know the areas you are living in, how are they going to know where you want to go?"

"It is important to have a local contact centre. You can also ask them about the locations of stops, they can help you find the right one."

Concerns about return journeys

While some respondents saw this option as a good solution to getting to important appointments such as hospitals and GPs, there were others who felt this would not be suitable for getting to appointments in a timely manner and raised concerns regarding what happens to the return journey when hospital or GP appointments overrun and an allotted pick-up is missed, or alternatively if they needed to book the journey from a hospital or doctors' surgery. This was a real concern for some elderly residents who stated that this would make them very anxious, not knowing how to get home or how to book it from outside of their home.

"I have to make all my doctor's appointments around my bus service - so it is hard to work that out. This would be great for this, I'd worry a bit about what time I'd go home though."

"I think if you have a doctor's appointment then this isn't really the service for that because of the time, people being picked up and dropped off, so maybe that's the time when you do need to pay a little extra to get a taxi, you shouldn't really rely on a service like this (for that)."

"It would be good to get to a hospital appointment but they take ages and you never know how long you're going to be, so how can you book to go home? I'd get very stressed about that."

"What about your return journey, you might be sitting there for three hours before you are seen for your appointment so you can't book your return."

"There's just too many holes in it, too much could go wrong, too many 'what-ifs'. For important (getting to) urgent things, I'm just not confident."

Journey time

Some respondents had concerns about the length of their journey time and felt that if more than one person was being picked up then this would extend their journey excessively.

"You wouldn't want to go more than 20 minutes out of your way for a longer journey."

"It really depends how much you need to be at a certain place for a certain time and whether you have the flexibility for longer journeys and different journey times."

"I think you could only use this for journeys that aren't time critical."

"It's about changing your mindset about things. You've got to get your head around how it works. You might not get to somewhere by the absolute minute – for a hospital appointment you might still get a taxi for example, but for hospital visiting hours for example you can be more flexible. That would also be helping with car parking capacity, especially when hospitals aren't in the town centre and lots of people have to park which is often stressful."

Price of fares

Respondents were keen to assess the cost of this service, with some feeling that this would be a much better and cheaper alternative than catching a taxi. A few respondents (mainly in the younger and middle age ranges) felt that the cost needed to be pitched somewhere between a taxi and a bus fare.

"It's like getting in a taxi but a bit cheaper so it's a nice option to have."

I would consider using it actually, if it's at the right price point. It's convenient enough that I can understand how it is working, I know I'm not going to get caught short after the last bus has left and I can dial in (and say) 'oh when is the next one, oh it's in the next hour, that's great'. You can go out have a drink and you have the convenience of a taxi, it's safer than a taxi, it's better for the environment. If it's cheaper than a taxi, it would be used more often - it's a no-brainer to use it, it will then become sustainable."

"It's got to be, at maximum, half the cost of a taxi."

"If it's cheaper than a taxi I think lots of younger people would use it."

"It's all about price – I need to find the cheapest option. If it's a tiny bit more than a bus, but more reliable and cheaper than a taxi then I'd use it."

"I think it needs to be priced mid-way between a bus and taxi, but not too pricey."

Reducing isolation

It was interesting to note that many elderly residents felt that this sort of service would assist with sociability and reduce isolation. Many liked the idea that this would appeal to those who were unable to get out that much and felt that with booking it, then a few friends could go together, increasing the social aspect for some more isolated individuals.

"There's a social element to it as well – if you're with the same people every day doing the same journey to work then you can get to know them."

"Some people would prefer the company sitting down chatting to people as they haven't got any company at home, socialising."

"It's a way of getting some people that are stuck in - out, it may cost them £2 or £3 extra than if they had a bus stop outside their house, that is something better than nothing."

"I like the idea of sharing, I could make more friends."

"I'm thinking about a couple of elderly ladies in my village and it would be an absolute Godsend to them. They all go off to the over- 60s club to meet friends at a certain time and this could take them."

"If I lived in a rural location that didn't have a bus service and I didn't have the budget to get a taxi, I would consider this to be a lifeline, if I had time in the day and I understood there was a window of time to collect me in then I think I would use it, it's my way of getting out, not being lonely."

Commuters/train links

Many users and non-users of buses felt this would be an interesting scheme for commuters and potentially very popular for both morning and evening services to the stations or town centres, and this sentiment was also echoed in the Public meetings and the Parish meetings.

However, some residents that were commuters themselves and took the car were less enthusiastic about the prospect of using this service on a commute as they were largely driven by cost and questioned the time involved and the overall cost. Other respondents felt strongly that if this was publicised enough and timed appropriately with early morning and evening trains, the use of the service would be high, and this could potentially be a very lucrative service for a provider.

"If commuters were using it then they have to be assured that it would be there for them (when they come back on the train) and also on the way to the station in the morning so they don't miss the train."

"Well, if it costs me the same as parking at Paddock Wood station, there's no point me sitting on a bus with other people, I haven't got the time. I don't think it would save me any money or save me any time."

Safety concerns

Some respondents had a few issues concerning their personal safety - firstly with it being a smaller vehicle, and hence they did not like the idea of sharing a small vehicle with a stranger, and secondly others were concerned about whether the vehicle drivers would be regulated and checked for safeguarding purposes.

"Would they still be safe? Or have CCTV? I'd be happy to share, if it was cheaper than a bus I'd use it."

"Will it be regulated? I don't trust anyone that's not regulated."

"I wouldn't share a taxi - I don't think I would...I wouldn't feel safe."

"I wouldn't feel safe..... I'd sooner pay a full taxi fare and want to be on my own."

Space concerns

As with the other ideas, respondents had concerns with whether the taxis would sufficiently be able to cater for disabled people (and the possible issues if more than one disabled or person with mobility issues booked the service at the same time). There was also concern regarding safety for children in prams or buggies if they needed to be folded up because the vehicle was smaller.

"I would worry that there wasn't enough room for me on these smaller buses and that I'd just be left by the side of the road because someone else had booked and got on with a buggy."

"So what happens if there is one disabled person and a buggy on there already, with my disability I couldn't get on. Would they just not take me?"

5.4.4 Idea 3 – Taxi-style Buses

Idea 3: Use of taxi-bus style services instead of a bus



KCC uses taxis for taking some young people from their homes to school.

We can make greater use of these taxis.



Instead of a bus or as a new route, there could be a taxi-bus.

This is a smaller vehicle, such as 7-seater car or minibus.



The taxi-bus would run at fixed times and to a fixed route.

It would stop at fixed stops along the route.



The amount passengers pay for their journey depends on where they are going (just like an existing bus).

How is this different to the current rural bus service?

Advantages	Disadvantages
Keeps a set timetable	Smaller vehicle may require some users with accessibility requirements, such as wheelchair users, to book their seat in advance
May be possible to keep existing bus routes	Size of vehicle limits the number of passengers per trip

Views towards this idea were mixed, with no clear preferences emerging. Overall there was a sense that many liked the idea of smaller buses on the roads and many also liked the idea of a timetabled service, with a significant proportion of respondents questioning why this was not in operation already.

However, it was interesting to note that many respondents felt this to be a good service for the disabled and those who were less mobile and felt that this might promote more outings, therefore reducing loneliness. There were a few respondents that stated they might use the service, but again, this was wholly dependent on a number of factors. With regard to non-users of buses, many were still fairly adamant that they would not use this type of service as they preferred to use their car for a variety of different reasons (convenience being the primary driver). There might be a small group of people that would use a service such as this on occasion, but for the majority of non-bus users, it was unlikely they would change their current transport habits. The benefits and barriers/concerns raised with Idea 3 (Taxi Bus) were very similar to issues raised with the other ideas.

Benefits / Advantages	Concerns / Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the idea of smaller buses on rural roads; • Much better for congested narrow local roads; • Might reduce isolation, loneliness; • Will cost savings mean an increased service can be run? • Cheaper than a taxi. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowding concerns; • Concerns of being left if full; • Reliability around school drop off/pick-up hours; • Elderly concerned about having to stand – unsafe; • Room for buggies/ shopping trolleys or rollators? • Room for disabled? • Safety concerns – sharing with strangers.

Improving sociability

Many respondents felt that this would be a good service for those who struggled to 'get out' and hence would offer a cost-effective solution, especially for the elderly using a bus pass. There were also a number of respondents that felt this would be an effective service for disabled or vulnerable travellers who are able to travel independently. The timetabling and reliable fixed route stops were both considered as a positive element to the service.

"I think it's great for sociability. You do get to know who catches what bus and when and you see them every week – so if you don't see someone for a few days you try and see if they are OK. We look after each other, good for friendships."

"This would be for people that are stuck indoors 24/7 as they haven't got a carer to get out."

"For older children or adults with some sort of disability, it would be brilliant."

"I think this is the best one for disabled people, if you put it out here that this is a bus for disabled people, it would take off straightaway."

"I think this would be good during the day as there are so few people around rurally during the day. I think this is a much better idea, I like timetabling, no changing, I like this."

Overcrowding Issues

Many of the potential issues and queries raised with this idea were similar to the previous two ideas put forward. However, the primary concern from respondents appeared to be that of overcrowding or 'being left' if the bus was full. Many felt that there would be issues with high usage of the service at busy times (e.g. school holidays) and questioned whether there would be enough vehicles to be able to cope with the extra demand at very busy times.

"I'm worried about overcrowding – what happens if the buses are always full up because they've made them smaller? Can people stand on the smaller buses."

"It's a small capacity for a timetabled service, I might not be able to get in the vehicle and when is the next one turning up? A wheelchair can also eliminate two or three seats. That's why I like the idea of the bookable service, you know you have your seat, I'd be worried I couldn't get on this."

"I'd quite like it but I'd be worried there wasn't a seat, if you can guarantee a seat."

"Smaller buses often just leave, leaving all sorts of people by the side of the road."

Reliability / availability

Concerns regarding reliability emerged, with specific relation to keeping to the timetable and the availability of these vehicles around the school dropping off and picking up hours.

"I feel much less confident in this one in terms of reliability. I like the other two ideas better."

"I would be sceptical over whether they would care if they are running a bit late as their bread and butter is the school run and they've done that and this is just something for them to do before the school run picks up again. They would probably dash around towards the end of the off peak to get back for the school pick up."

"I would be sceptical of whether it would run to time with the school run in the morning – your own bookings could then be very late in the initial timetable after the school run has finished."

"The only disadvantage is there are a couple of hours in the morning and afternoon when this won't be running."

"I like the idea of a smaller timetabled service – the only disadvantage is that as it's a set timetabled – you might be waiting and it would be full."

Cost savings = increased service?

Some respondents were very enthused at the prospect of smaller buses being cheaper to run and as a result were hopeful that a greater service could be operated (i.e. every hour instead of every two or three hours) and whether even more of the smaller buses could operate on an extended timetable for weekends and evenings.

"If they have smaller buses make it so they come around every 15 minutes, so if you miss one you know there'll be round again shortly like the Little & Often service in Ashford."

"I think most people would prefer a smaller, nipper bus that did more stops and had a timetable and they could rely on it turning up. More people may use a smaller bus more so than a big bus that doesn't turn up."

"These could work before the school run and in the evening as well, it could be the same buses, making use of vehicles in their spare time."

"This is time when they are doing nothing but they have to be paid for so they are essentially doing nothing, makes sense...cost-effective."

"It's a bus but it's a smaller version of it – it will cut costs because it's a smaller bus and it is good for the environment. It is the sort of thing they should be doing already."

"It seems like the most economical one for KCC and the most manageable for them, considering that they'd be working with companies and networks that they've already been working with, just extending a service that they already use - not running something that they've never done before. It just seems like the most simple option."

"It's pointless having those minibuses sitting there for the rest of the day when they could be used as a taxi-bus."

Linking transport

Points were made regarding the potential for services to link with trains or a larger link, such as a Park & Ride. This supported comments made in the Parish meetings where 'Hubs' were discussed, with many of the Parishes suggesting that Park & Rides were a good hub for various feeder buses to feed into. Local stations were also a key suggestion, as many felt these services would be good for commuting.

"We need a regular reliable timetabled service to the station – this would be a real earner I think. Plus it might reduce the need for a second car if there is an easy way to get to the station."

"We would need a Park & Ride style. First trains and then timetabled to meet last trains!"

Distance to bus stop

There were a number of respondents across the sessions who did not live near a bus stop and had fairly limited mobility and preferred Idea 2 (Bookable Bus Service) to this Idea. They felt that this was a better option for them as Idea 2 would pick them up closer to their home. Many respondents wondered whether new bus stops would be created as some had concerns that they would have to drive to a bus stop to catch the bus (which some respondents did already).

"The problem is that if you live rurally...this is no advantage – the bus stop is not near me and that stops me using the bus."

"They'd still have to get their car out, drive to the bus stop, catch the bus, return to the car and then home because of where the bus stop is."

Safety concerns

Some respondents raised the issue of personal safety again and were unhappy at the prospect of potentially being in a situation that made them uncomfortable in a small vehicle with a stranger.

"It sounds the same as the other two Ideas, you have to share with strangers...I don't like it...If you are on a bus you can stand up or move, if someone is making you feel bad."

Fares

With respect to fares, many felt that the service would need to be cheaper than a taxi, with some feeling it should be a straight bus fare because despite it being a smaller vehicle, it is still a bus, hence the normal bus fare. Many respondents did however like the idea of being able to pay by card rather than cash and this preference was driven by experiences of not being allowed on buses as they did not have the correct money or the driver had no change.

"Even if it was half the price of a taxi the people would love that, they wouldn't have to fold their wheelchair down, they wouldn't have to rely on their taxi driver. With this, because the wheelchair access buses are more expensive to run as they have the machine that goes up and down, I would think the fare could go to half the price of a taxi."

"I don't see why I'd pay £2 more on top of my usual fare just to go in a smaller vehicle."

"I like the way that you can pay by card, you don't have to go to the cashpoint beforehand."

"I think it's good as long as it's cheaper than a taxi."

"Sometimes it's cheaper to catch a taxi if there's a group of you, we worked out it would have cost us £12 on a bus, but only £9 in a taxi."

5.5 Paying / concessionary travel / voluntary contribution.

Views were mixed with regard to the level of charges and whether there would be a charge in conjunction with a bus pass. Some elderly residents felt that every single journey should be £1 and that would balance the books sufficiently, while others were less enthusiastic at this prospect. Many felt that as all of the options were just another type of bus service then the cost should be the same as a bus. Some felt that an 'annual charge' type season ticket for a feeder would be a good idea. Some residents that currently had no service at all (or only a very limited one) would be happy to pay up to £4 for such a service but only if it was reliable. Some younger respondents would only pay £2, rather than £4. There were a few people that were adamant that as their service had been cut and they were left with no service at all, any new service into their area should be free.

"This would be a sensible option if they manage to include smaller communities that weren't reached before, if they've had nothing then I do think people would pay more".

"I think an annual charge of £25 would be a good idea for a feeder charge?"

"I would only pay if it was a really reliable service."

"I would pay, I don't have anything like this locally at all."

At the groups, respondents were asked: *'If you use a senior citizen/disabled bus pass and saw an advertisement asking you to pay a voluntary contribution of £1 or £2 to the cost of your journey every now and again, to help keep the buses running, would you be prepared to pay this little bit extra to preserve bus services?'*

Overall, three-quarters of the respondents with a SCBP claimed that they would pay a voluntary contribution of £1 or £2 to keep buses running. Nearly all respondents in the Tunbridge Wells and Margate groups claimed they would contribute, while only a third of the Maidstone group claimed that they would, and they were less likely to want to pay £2, settling on £1 instead.

"I just need a service I can rely on, then I'd happily give up my car."

5.6 New ideas proposed.

Following the testing and discussion of the three ideas in the groups, respondents were asked if they had any ideas that would save KCC money and provide a rural bus service.

Respondents in the Margate area made the proposal of a 'wider loop' service that incorporated some of the smaller villages that were outside of the existing bus loop service around the town. People held highly encouraging views about this existing service and were of the opinion that a wider loop would be a good solution, perhaps on an hourly basis.

Some respondents raised the idea that a community or Parish bus, run by the local community or Parishes, would provide a good service but weren't clear on how this could be set up. Hence, perhaps an opportunity exists for KCC to highlight the assistance they could provide in this area.

A key point that had been raised consistently by respondents aged over 60 was the ability to be able to 'hail a bus' and catch it that way. For some living rurally it was perhaps too far to walk to a bus stop so if they saw a bus passing they felt they should be able to hail it and get on it to travel to a bus stop or a destination.

Younger respondents suggested a 'Boris bike' style approach in the more rural areas as an alternative for those more able to cycle; they believed that this might take the pressure off public transport. Another suggestion from younger respondents was for KCC to operate an 'Uber' style taxi service, strictly controlled by KCC, who would provide the vehicles and hired the drivers but was cheaper than a normal taxi.

Respondents in Tunbridge Wells suggested extending schemes and working with charities such as Compaid to provide more transport to elderly and vulnerable residents through subsidies or providing extra vehicles. It is interesting to note that this concept of using existing buses had been raised at a few of the Public and Parish meetings across the county as a potential solution.

Community buses were mentioned across all the groups but there was an element of trepidation that surrounded the setting-up of the scheme (some felt it to be very difficult) along with sourcing voluntary drivers. If KCC could help with the set-up of these schemes, and perhaps source some regular drivers, many felt that this could be a solution. Other suggestions involved expanding dial-a-ride schemes locally in areas where there was need, where services were limited yet the dial-a-ride schemes had a good network in place.

Another suggestion was a KCC-operated car share, with KCC running and managing this scheme. Prices would ensure that it would be cheaper than a taxi and that there would always be more than one person in the car. Some of the younger and older respondents had concerns about a car share scheme in relation to the potential for 'driver impropriety' to occur.

"I think it's a bit dodgy for some in a car share; young ladies etc., even older ladies...I think it's a recipe for disaster."

"I wouldn't trust car sharing – I'm not being funny but if you got in a car with someone you don't know and they haven't been vetted or anything, they could be an axe killer!"

The overriding suggestion was that KCC should set up and manage their own bus service and this was suggested at all the deliberative sessions as well as many of the Public and Parish meetings.

5.7 Communicating the message

One of the key areas tested was how to get the message about potential new schemes out to the community. The age range of attendees to these sessions meant that a variety of methods

that would embrace all ages were suggested - over 65s were much more inclined to want to see leaflet drops, information in free papers or local papers and information stands in supermarkets or adverts at bus stops or in shops, compared to other age ranges. The variety of methods suggested from the groups across all age ranges were:

- Internet, apps, Facebook, Twitter;
- Leaflet drops, local newspapers;
- Back of buses/trains;
- Community notice boards;
- Libraries;
- Local shops;
- Bus stops;
- Town Hall meetings;
- Posters/leaflets in GPs and Hospitals;
- Local schools, playgroups;
- Job Centres;
- Schools/Colleges/Universities/Sixth Forms;
- Offer free trips/journeys to promote;
- TV/ Radio;
- Local supermarkets – posters and stands;
- Shopping centre stands.

A few respondents did make the point that they would use these services but that they needed to be made aware of them. Some elderly residents made the point that lots of Council-related schemes are only promoted through Facebook or Twitter or via emails and not through mediums that this age group can easily access.

5.8 Voting

In a similar way to the Public and Parish meetings, at the end of the sessions respondents were asked to select an option that they preferred the most. While this is not a truly indicative overview of views, as some wanted elements of one idea compared to another, it is still a general overview of ideas that resonated most with session attendees.

It must be noted however that many respondents felt that a combination of approaches was the answer, rather than just a 'one size fits all'.

Overall, the voting from the deliberative sessions is seen below, with Idea 2 and Idea 3 resonating most, although many respondents felt that a combination of the three Ideas was the answer for many areas. Over the three deliberative sessions, 17 people did not want to select an idea and therefore did not vote on an idea.

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	Idea 1 & 2	Idea 2&3	Ideas 1&3	All 3 ideas
11	23	40	13	12	4	1

5.9 Most and Least important factors

As with the questionnaire that was available throughout the Consultation, respondents were asked to complete the following table, which highlighted what the most and least important features of a rural bus service would be to them. The results showed that the top three most important features of a rural bus service were considered to be:

- Go where you want to go (stops where you need it to stop and is not limited to bus stops);
- The price is cheaper than a one-off taxi journey;
- Goes when you want to go.

Also fairly significant were:

- Tickets to cover the whole journey;
- A timetabled service;
- Linked to a wider bus network.

The three least important features of a rural bus service were considered to be:

- Anyone could book and travel if registered;
- Seats can be booked in advance;
- You could book within one hour's notice.

Other factors considered least important were:

- Multiple ways of paying;
- Multiple ways of booking.

There were very few differences in response by age of respondent. There were perhaps a greater number of elderly residents who felt that provision for disabled access was important and that the service needed to be linked to a wider bus and train network compared to other age ranges. Younger and older respondents tended to be slightly more inclined to feel that a timetable was most important compared to the other middle age ranges, who felt other factors to be slightly more important, such as tickets that cover the whole journey and prices being cheaper than a one-off taxi service. Younger and middle aged respondents were much less bothered about booking within an hour's notice or booking seats in advance, compared with some elderly residents who liked the idea of booking seats in advance - this underpinned this age group's concerns about overcrowded buses and being left at a bus stop due to there being no available room on the bus.

	Most Important	Least Important
Go <u>where</u> you want to go (stops where you need it to stop and is not limited to bus stops)	66	15
The price is cheaper than a one-off taxi journey	50	12
Goes <u>when</u> you want to go	37	8
Tickets cover the whole journey	36	15
Provision for disabled access	32	4
Timetabled service	32	19
Is linked to a wider bus and train network	29	19

There are multiple ways of <u>booking</u> e.g. by phone or online	15	23
There are multiple ways of <u>paying</u> e.g. by phone or online	13	35
You could book within 1 hour's notice	11	48
Seats can be booked in advance	8	50
Anyone could book and travel if registered	3	51

6. Conclusions

Testing these ideas in the community of Kent in both the Parish and Public meetings was a challenge. Many attendees to these meetings tended to focus on lost services from main providers such as Stagecoach or Arriva and as a result were significantly less receptive to new ideas as these issues overshadowed the more positive ideas being put forward.

The overriding conclusion that emerged from the Consultation overall was that the solution was not just 'one' of the ideas put forward, but instead a mix of the approaches. Many Kent residents put forward the conclusion that 'one size did not fit all'. Some liked various elements of each of the Ideas and felt that a mix of the Ideas was the solution as each area was very different and had varying needs within their communities.

For some residents, Idea 1 - The Feeder Service was the solution for their community, and this tended to be smaller, less dispersed communities that were relatively near a main bus service. Those communities that were more spread out felt perhaps that Idea 2 - The Bookable Bus Service might suit their community better, particularly for those with mobility issues who were unable to walk to a bus stop; they felt this type of service would benefit them greatly. Most residents that lived rurally did like the concept of having Idea 3 – Taxi-style buses on the roads to reduce congestion and benefit the community but did have concerns regarding safety, overcrowding and the service being unreliable at school drop-off and pick-up times. The elderly and young Kent residents who attended the Consultation meetings and deliberative sessions did tend to like the idea of a 'timetabled' service more than those in the middle age ranges – however, this was not a conclusive analysis of Kent residents overall, but a more indicative view of those attending the meetings or groups.

One of the primary concerns emerging from the research and Consultation was the need for many Kent residents to get to a hospital, GP surgery or some type of health-based appointment. Many relied heavily on buses to get them to these appointments, but for some it was becoming increasingly difficult; for example, some Sevenoaks or Tunbridge Wells patients were referred to Maidstone Hospital rather than Pembury Hospital and struggled to get there on the buses. Hence, many residents suggested the increased need for regular direct routes on buses to hospitals and or GPs/Hubs etc.

Another key issue that was echoed across all elements of the Consultation was the desire to have more evening bus services (for areas where there was a limited service) and an improved weekend service. For many, an evening service would be useful for social occasions, for youths to be able to go out or get home from work. The findings suggested the evening services did not need to be every day, but perhaps Thursday to Saturday would service the communities well.

At the Parish meetings and also some of the Public meetings, there did appear to be a local appetite in some areas for community buses to operate, or new schemes to be created. The feedback suggested that there were many 'hurdles' that Parish councils or communities found difficult to navigate and this often resulted in a scheme falling flat or falling at the last hurdle. Two of the primary hurdles tended to be a lack of volunteer drivers (to do regular bus runs) and also the difficulties and technicalities of getting a licence for the community schemes to begin with. The feedback was very clear that communities/Parishes would appreciate and welcome more help from KCC in setting up the schemes, sourcing the right vehicle, obtaining necessary paperwork and also sourcing reliable drivers. If KCC could assist in the 'enablement' of these schemes, then the feedback was that it was very likely that many more community schemes would be set up and would look to work with the council and local bus providers to provide a 'joined up' transport solution.

With respect to any 'new ideas' emerging from the Consultation, only a few ideas were suggested, and these tended to be in key themes:

- Use the money to subsidise (improve and extend) existing bus routes;
- KCC to create and run their own bus company (not legally permissible under the Buses Act 2017);
- KCC to operate a car share scheme and manage it;
- KCC to assist communities with setting up community buses – provide or part subsidise vehicle or driver etc.

With respect to the proposed pilot schemes that KCC are planning to set up and run in Spring 2019, one of the main things to consider from the feedback is that many Parishes felt that detailed research and discussions needed to occur with any Parishes involved in the pilot scheme. This was to ensure that all of the local needs were assessed, and any current community schemes or car share schemes were included - things like potential 'Hubs' or nearby park and rides could also be highlighted and identified.

With respect to the level of fares for these services, there were very mixed views across the Consultation. Some residents who had no service at all (meaning that life was difficult as a result) would happily pay a fare to have a service and those with a bus pass in these areas would happily pay as much as £4 for a return journey to be able to access a type of transport. Others in certain areas, particularly those in more deprived areas, were much less likely to be happy to pay a fare. In some areas, residents were of the opinion that as their service had been removed they should be able to travel to a mainline service for free. In addition, those with bus passes in these deprived areas were adamant that they would not be prepared to pay anything extra for their journey. In areas where people were slightly more affluent, there was a distinct willingness to pay over and above a bus pass to be able to have a regular reliable service.

The feedback across the Consultation with regard to the main bus providers in Kent must be included, as many residents felt that the success of one of the new Ideas (Idea 1 – Feeder Service) would be wholly dependent on the reliable provision of services by these providers. Even if the feeder service was not provided by one of the main bus providers, the success of the feeder scheme would still be dependent on the main bus service connecting to the feeder - a service which many Kent residents felt would be highly dubious in terms of actually happening. There was a consensus among residents and Parish council representatives that these bus companies needed to be regulated and controlled more by KCC and be made accountable for any poor service provided.

With any idea proposed, the feedback was that they would only work if they were publicised thoroughly across the county to ensure that all ages were aware of the new schemes, and hence to promote their use. It will also be a significant challenge to persuade non-bus users to use these new schemes rather than take the car. Non-regular users of buses expressed varied reasons for using cars over buses but all followed the same themes; cars were quicker, easier and more convenient than buses, and enabled more than one place to be visited in a short space of time, as well as providing the ability to buy more, or larger, goods and get them home easily. The feedback from these individuals regarding what would make them use one of the schemes mainly centred around the concept of the schemes being regular, reliable and convenient and also cost effective.

There were a variety of suggestions from residents regarding the different methods of getting the message out there to the community about these schemes. It was interesting to note that younger Kent residents suggested posters, bus advertisements and social media but also made suggestions of 'free trips', such as first two trips free' for Idea 1 (Feeder Services) or Idea 2

(Bookable Bus Service) as this would prompt them to try the scheme. 'Uber' also offer 'first ride free' so this was a comparison that was made in this respect. The elderly preferred to hear about these new services via free papers, local papers, leaflet drops, Parish newsletters, notice boards, local press, bus adverts and via a letter from the Council. There was a degree of positivity across most respondents to the idea of providing a few free trips for residents in order for them to get familiar with the service.

Overall, across the Consultation there was a great deal of consistency in responses with regard to the benefits of these schemes and also the concerns of these services that KCC will have to address going forward in the promotion of these services to ensure that public concerns have been heard and addressed. In addition, identifying the key reasons why people use their car over the bus is also important to note, with respondents in the sessions citing factors such as bus stops being too far to walk to, the bus service being unreliable, too much anti-social behaviour on the bus and the waiting / journey times as key issues. Addressing these directly may prompt some residents to use buses instead of their cars.

The following table summarises the collective benefits or advantages and the concerns / barriers across the Public meetings, the Parish meetings and the Deliberative workshop sessions. However, the key issues of consideration that are likely to act as a potential barrier to use for some residents are listed below.

Idea 1 - Feeder idea

- The reliability of the main connecting service;
- Punctuality of the main service (to avoid being kept waiting on a feeder bus or at a bus stop);
- Location of bus stops for pick up - for some elderly or less mobile it might be too far to walk;
- Increased journey time;
- Concerns about being left by side of road if connection is late or bus full;
- Concerns regarding what would happen if the feeder is late or breaks down or the main bus breaks down.

Idea 2 - Bookable, Flexible Service

- Concerns of overbooking with smaller vehicles;
- Hard for some individuals to access if not familiar with IT or the internet or suffer from digital poverty;
- Potentially complicated for some elderly or vulnerable to use.
- Expensive for users.
- The barrier of some preferring a timetabled service.

Idea 3 – Taxi buses

- Reliability of taxi buses around school drop-off/pick-up hours.
- Capacity concerns in terms of volume and type of users, e.g. buggies, wheelchairs.

General concerns – across all three ideas

- The price of fares for low incomes;
- Use of smaller vehicles provide a perception of transfers being difficult for the disabled, those with mobility issues, the elderly or vulnerable to change buses;
- Concerns whether there is sufficient space for buggies, wheelchairs, rollators, trollies;
- Overcrowding concerns with small vehicles;
- Some elderly are concerned about having to stand, which was considered unsafe on smaller bus;

- Concerns about sharing a small vehicle with strangers.
- Concerns as to whether the ideas will work as well as described.

To summarise overall, the following table is a collation of points raised at the Public meetings, the Parish meetings, Deliberative sessions and the Consultation questionnaire returns.

SUMMARY FEEDBACK FROM ALL ELEMENTS OF THE CONSULTATION			
	Idea 1- Feeder Bus	Idea 2 – Bookable Flexible Service	Idea 3 – Taxi Bus
Benefits/ Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered good for those who have lost bus service. • Good for those with poor bus service links. • Like the timetabled idea. • People would use it, if promoted well. • Might reduce isolation and provide a lifeline for some areas, encouraging and re-connecting communities. • Considered good for connecting into main service for those communities with nothing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good idea for those to book. • Many see this as a preferred solution, particularly to get to appointments. • Might reduce isolation, loneliness. • Good for reduced mobility – picked up closer to home. • Would work well for commuters to main station. • Be great for those who don't want a timetabled service. • Cheaper alternative to taxis. • Closer to where you want to go. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the idea of smaller buses on rural roads. • Much better for congested narrow local roads. • Might reduce isolation, loneliness. • Increased service? • Cheaper than a taxi. • Cheaper to run.
Concerns/ Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability of main connecting service. • Punctuality of main service. • Location of bus stops – might be too far. • Price of tickets for low incomes. • Difficult for disabled, mobility issues, elderly or vulnerable to change buses. • Sufficient space for buggies, wheelchairs, trollies. • Overcrowding concerns • Increased journey time. • Concerned about being left by side of road if connection is late or bus full. • What happens if late or feeder breaks down or main bus breaks down? • Some elderly are concerned about having to stand, it's unsafe on smaller bus. • Are there enough people to use it?/ sustain the service? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns of overbooking. • Hard for some individuals to access if not IT savvy or suffer from digital poverty. • Complicated for some elderly to use. • Increased journey time. • Overcrowding concerns. • Room for disabled, buggies, shopping trollies and shopping bags etc? • Safety concerns . • Would this be cost effective just with one passenger? • Concerns about sharing a small vehicle with strangers. • Some elderly are concerned about having to stand, it's unsafe on smaller bus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult for disabled or those with mobility issues/pushchairs etc. • Overcrowding concerns • Concerns of being left if full. • Reliability around school drop off/pick up hours. • Elderly concerned about having to stand – unsafe. • Room for buggies/ Shopping trollies or Rollators? • Room for disabled? • Safety concerns. • What happens at school pick up when these are needed?

APPENDIX 1 – List of Parishes attending the Parish Meetings

DOVER SESSION - 29 Attendees		ASHFORD - 16 Attendees	
PARISH	DISTRICT	PARISH	DISTRICT
Appledore	Ashford	Swanscombe and Greenhithe	Dartford
Bekesbourne with Patribourne	Canterbury	Hythe	Folkestone & Hythe
Bridge	Canterbury	Great Mongeham	Dover
Capel-le-Ferne	Dover	KALC	
Eythorne	Dover	Doddington x2	Swale
Eythorne & Tilnstone	Dover	Lympne	Folkestone & Hythe
Guston	Dover	Bilsington, Aldington, and Bonnington	Ashford
Hougham Without	Dover	New Romney x2	Folkestone & Hythe
Lydden	Dover	Harbledown & Rough Common	Canterbury
Nonington	Dover	Molash	Ashford
Northbourne x2	Dover	ROLVENDEN	Ashford
St Margaret's at Cliffe x2	Dover	Charing	Ashford
Staple	Dover	Shadoxhurst x2	Ashford
Whitfield x2	Dover	TUNBRIDGE WELLS SESSION - 22 Attendees	
Lyminge	Folkestone & Hythe	PARISH	DISTRICT
Newington	Folkestone & Hythe	Otham	Maidstone
Ramsgate	Thanet	Hunton	Maidstone
Minster x2	Thanet	Ash-cum-Ridley x2	Sevenoaks
KALC	Dover	Chiddingstone	Sevenoaks
River Parish	Dover	Chiddingstone and Leigh	Sevenoaks
Shepherdswell with Coldred	Dover	Dunton Green Parish Council	Sevenoaks
Staple	Dover	Westerham	Sevenoaks
KCC x3	Dover	Brenchley	
MAIDSTONE - 33 Attendees		Hadlow	Tonbridge & Malling
PARISH	DISTRICT	Ightham and Shipbourne	Tonbridge & Malling
Westwell	Ashford	West Malling	Tonbridge & Malling
Brabourne, Smeeth, High Halden, Westwell	Ashford	Hawkhurst	Tunbridge Wells
Marden	Folkestone & Hythe	Rusthall	Tunbridge Wells
Higham	Gravesham	Speldhurst x2	Tunbridge Wells
Boughton Malherbe	Maidstone	Paddock Wood x2	Tunbridge Wells
Boughton Monchelsea	Maidstone	KALC	
Broomfield & Kingswood	Maidstone	KCC	Tonbridge & Malling
Chart Sutton X2	Maidstone	KCC	Tunbridge Wells
East Farleigh	Maidstone	KCC	Pembury
Harrietsham X2	Maidstone		
Leeds	Maidstone		
Sutton Valence X2	Maidstone		
Collier Street	Maidstone		
Hollingbourne X2	Maidstone		
Aylesford	Maidstone		
Thurnham	Maidstone		
Headcorn	Maidstone		
Yalding X2	Maidstone		
Horton Kirby & South Darenth	Sevenoaks		
Graveney with Goodnestone; Oare	Swale		
Westgate on Sea X 2	Thanet		
Westgate on Sea	Thanet		
Plaxtol	Tonbridge & Malling		
KALC			
Staplehurst	Tonbridge & Malling		
Maidstone BC			
Kent CC X 2			