

Appendix 1

Consultation on Concessionary Rail Travel for Older People - findings analysis

Introduction

Earlier in 2019, the County Council completed a review of its approach to supporting non-commercial bus services and community transport. This included looking carefully at how we prioritise funding and support for local bus services and infrastructure.

The County Council currently operates a free older person's bus pass (for those who are permanent West Sussex residents and have reached the State Pension age) and a free disabled person's bus pass (for those who are eligible). This meets our statutory requirements under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS). We also provide additional funding to offer four discretionary enhancements to the scheme in West Sussex. Three of these enhancements are available to eligible disabled people and are not affected by this proposal. However it is proposed to no longer offer a free Senior Railcard as an alternative to the Older Person's bus pass.

Purpose

The purpose of this consultation was to gather feedback from passengers and others to help us understand the impact of our proposal. The results will be shared with members to help inform the decision on the future inclusion of free Senior Railcards within the West Sussex concessionary travel scheme.

Method

A consultation questionnaire was made available online and in paper format from 24 October until 4 December 2019.

Extensive press and publicity was done to promote the survey; posters and surveys were available on buses; through drivers and on company and WSCC websites. Surveys and posters were also distributed widely including to district, borough, town and parish councils, libraries and other information outlets.

Responses

In total there were **783** responses to the consultation, of which 725 were online and 58 paper. Respondents also submitted letters and emails with comments about the proposal. All feedback and comments have been included in the 'free text' analysis of the consultation.

77% of respondents stated that they were aged 65 or older, 23% of respondents who consider that they have a disability or long-term illness, and 48% (375 respondents) were holders of a Senior Railcard provided by the County Council.

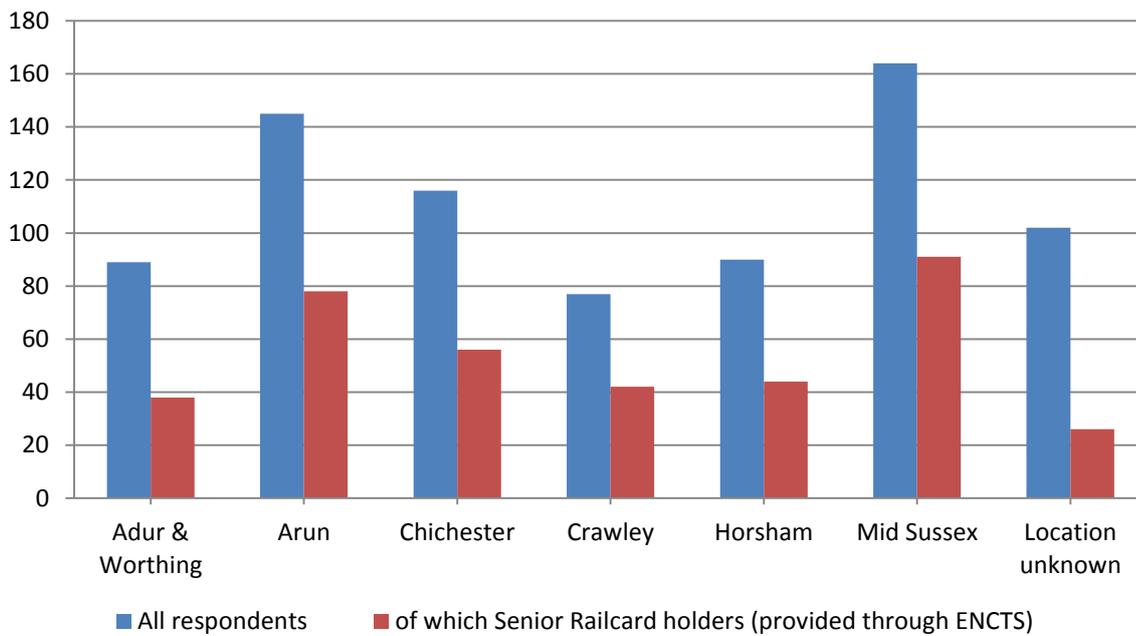
As the scheme only applies to residents who have reached State Pension age, respondents to the consultation were likely to have a different demographic composition to the population of West Sussex.

Table 1: Breakdown of total responses received

A West Sussex resident	661
A West Sussex business	1
A West Sussex business (and resident)	4
A voluntary or community organisation	4
A Parish/Town/District/Borough Council	7

As **Table 1** shows, the overwhelming majority of responses were from individuals, with representations were made on behalf of 7 local councils.

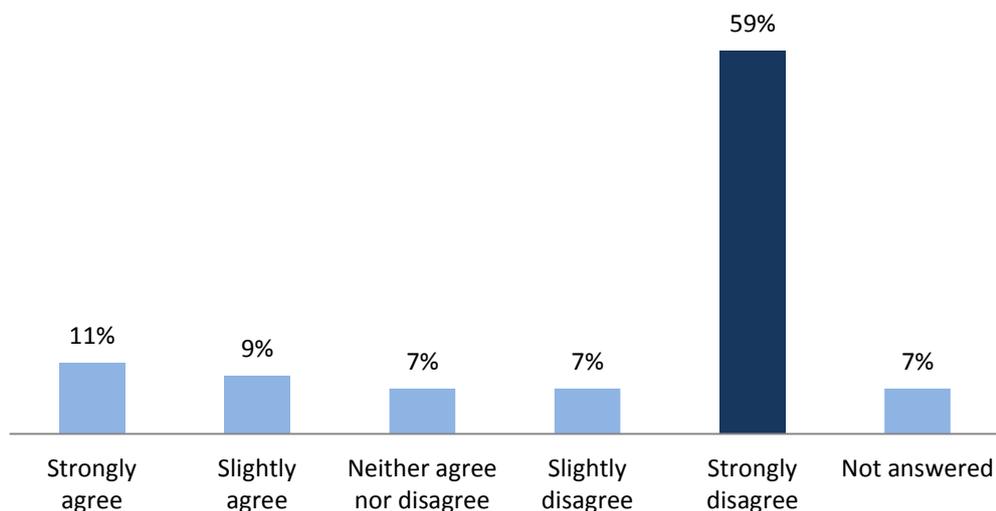
Fig 1: Location of responses received by District/Borough



The highest number of respondents came from Mid Sussex which is served by direct rail links to London, Gatwick and Brighton.

Response to the proposal

Fig 2: How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the free Senior Railcard option from the concessionary travel scheme in West Sussex?



Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to remove the Senior Railcard option from the concessionary travel scheme in West Sussex. 732 respondents provided an answer to this question.

As **Fig 2** illustrates, the highest proportion of respondents strongly disagreed with the proposal. Of the 465 respondents to strongly disagree with the proposal, 325 were holders of a Senior Railcard provided by the County Council.

Of the 160 respondents to strongly or slightly agree with the proposal, just 20 were holders of a Senior Railcard provided by the County Council.

Fig 3: Do you currently hold a Senior Railcard that has been provided through the concessionary travel scheme in West Sussex?

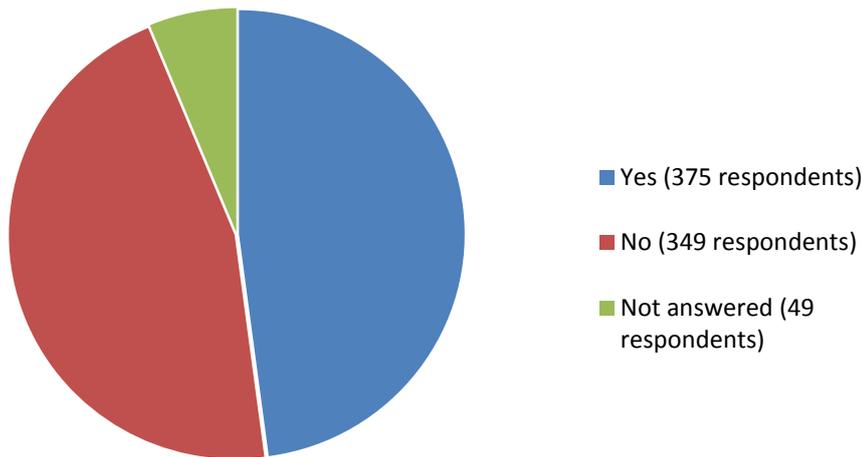
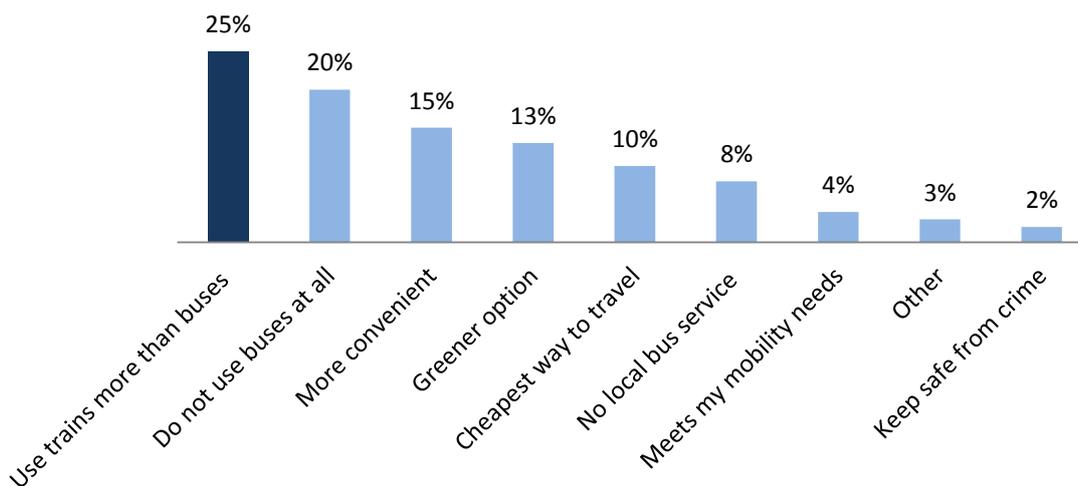


Fig 4: Why did you choose the Senior Railcard instead of the bus pass?

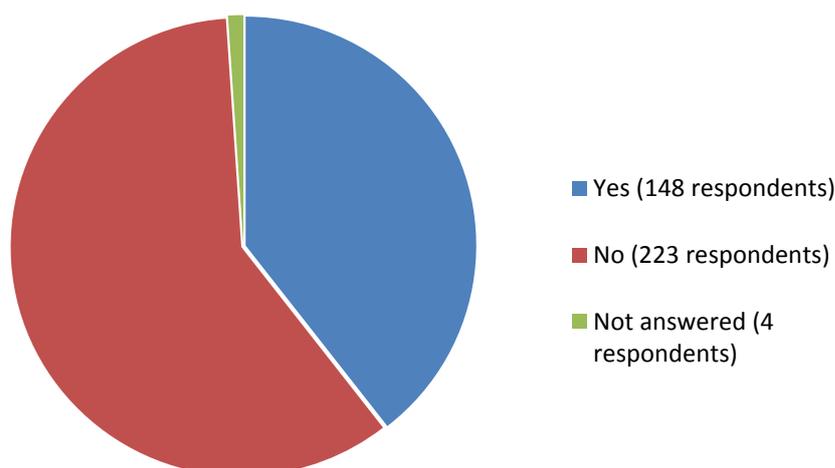
The 375 respondents with a Senior Railcard provided by the County Council were asked why they chose this option instead of the bus pass, and to cite as many reasons as were applicable. The percentage of mentions for each reason is given below:



As **Fig 4** shows, the most commonly cited reason was because railcard holders ‘use trains more than buses’ (247 respondents), followed by ‘do not use buses at all’ (198 respondents) and ‘more convenient’ (149 respondents).

Just 79 respondents (8%) mentioned that they chose the railcard option because they did not have a local bus service available.

Fig 5: Would you be interested in taking up your ‘free bus pass’ entitlement if the Senior Railcard option was not available? (Railcard holders only)



Additional comments

Key themes were identified from all open text responses in question 5 of the consultation (including any letters or emails received). The most commonly occurring themes are listed below:

Mentions on the impact of losing the free railcard option

It would cost me more	123
It would be harder to visit friends and family	110
I would not be affected	94
It would affect my independence / ability to get out and about	64
I would have less choice of travel	38
It would affect my mobility	36
It would be harder to access medical appointments	17

Other comments

The railcard is used for long distance journeys	150
I do not live in an area with a good bus service	125
It is unfair on the elderly	106
It will encourage less green transport options	88
Rail travel is easier than by bus	85
Question how much would be saved	52
Understand council has to make savings	31
Unfair on rural communities	22

Note: key themes give an overview of the different thoughts and feelings of respondents and are not exact quotes.

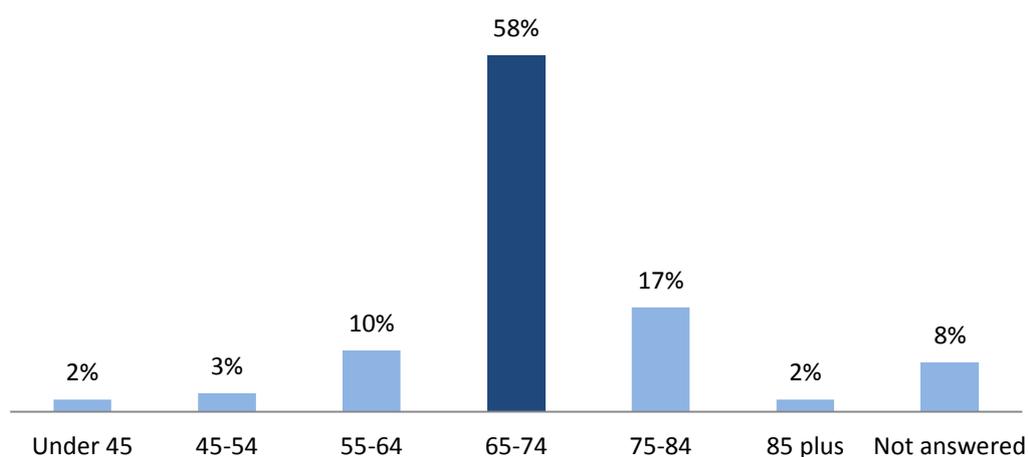
Profile of individual respondents

NB. organisations, businesses and local councils were not required to answer this section.

Age

The graph below shows the age categories of all respondents to the consultation.

Fig 6. Age profile of respondents



As expected the highest number of respondents (77%) were aged 65 and older. There were just 19 responses in total from people aged under 45 and no responses at all from people under 20.

Of the 375 respondents with a Senior Railcard provided by the County Council, the highest proportion were in the 65-74 age category (77%), followed by 75-84 (19%). There were just 5 respondents with a Senior Railcard who were aged 85 plus.

Gender

The consultation received a significantly higher number of responses from male participants at 50%, with 38% female respondents and 12% not answering the question. 2 respondents stated that their present gender was not the same as the one assigned to them at birth.

Of the 375 respondents with a Senior Railcard provided by the County Council, 205 (55%) were male, 152 (41%) were female, while the remainder did not answer the question.

Ethnicity

The overwhelming majority of respondents described themselves as White, with 81% identifying as White British and 3% as White Other. Just four respondents defined as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME), one as 'Mixed' and one as 'Other'. 47 respondents (6%) selected 'Prefer not to say' and a further 81 (10%) did not answer the question.

Faith or Religion

50% of respondents described their faith or religion as Christian (all Christian denominations). The next highest category was 'No Religion' with 24%. Three people defined as Buddhist, two as Jewish, one as Muslim and one as Hindu. Of the remainder, a further eight people selected 'Any Other Religion' and six stated that their religion as 'Unknown'. Of the remainder, 104 people (13%) selected 'Prefer not to say' and 84 people (11%) did not answer the question.

Sexual Orientation

74% of respondents described themselves as Heterosexual/Straight, 12% selected 'Prefer not to say' and a further 12% did not answer the question. Seven people defined as Homosexual/Gay/Lesbian, two as Bisexual and one as 'Other'.

Disability

179 respondents (23%) considered themselves to have a disability or long-term illness. Of these, 102 people had a Senior Railcard provided by the County Council.

It is worth noting that these figures do not include holders of the Disabled Railcard which is available to all residents with a qualifying disability and is not included in this consultation.

60% of respondents did not consider themselves to have a disability, with a further 7% selecting 'Prefer not to say'. 10% of respondents did not answer the question.

Respondents who answered 'yes' to the disability question were also asked what the nature of their disability was, and to state all categories that applied to them. The

following table shows the breakdown of disability categories given by those who answered the question:

Table 2: Type of disability

Disability	Total mentions
Physical impairment	102
Sensory impairment	23
Mental health issue	12
Learning disability	2
Long-term illness	80
Other	20