

Appendix B

Consultation on draft criteria for assessing
subsidised bus services

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1. Executive summary

The county council spends approximately £7m per year subsidising local bus services. The current assessment of contracts is based on a financial criteria where 40% of the cost of operation should be met through passenger revenue.

To take into account the priorities set out in the Local Transport Plan, the county council is proposing to revise the criteria to measure services in a more sustainable way. Each subsidised local bus service will be scored in relation to the purpose of the journey and how accessible it is to the local community.

Lancashire County Council consulted with interested parties to get feedback on the draft criteria. The consultation ran from 12 June to 5 August 2014 and was available as an online questionnaire, a downloadable pdf or could be requested by post. Stakeholders were informed directly about the consultation and the consultation was publicised through press releases and on Twitter and Facebook. In total, 138 responses to the questionnaire were received.

1.1 Key findings

Respondents were given details of each proposed criterion and asked how strongly they agree or disagree with each one. The key findings of the consultation are:

- Around three-fifths of respondents (62%) agree with the suggested categories and scores related to journey purpose.
- Around two-thirds of respondents (67%) agree with the suggested options and scores related to sustainable economic growth.
- Around two-thirds of respondents (64%) agree with the suggested options and scores related to impact on carbon emissions.
- Around two-thirds of respondents (66%) agree with the suggested options and scores related to operational service days.
- Around four-fifths of respondents (79%) agree with the suggested options and scores related to travel choice.
- Around four-fifths of respondents (82%) agree with the suggested options and scores related to access for older and disabled people.
- Just under half of respondents (45%) agree with the suggested options and scores related to service usage.
- Around two-thirds of respondents (68%) agree that the current method of assessment should be replaced by the proposed criteria.

A wide range of comments and suggestions were provided by respondents and these are given in full in the separate appendix.

1.2 Conclusions and recommendations

Response to the consultation was mixed – around two-thirds of respondents agreed with most of the proposed criteria but a large number of comments and suggestions were made for each criterion and these should be considered along with the quantitative analysis.

Common comments that were made are that the criteria are too focused on employment and that a number of the criteria, for example around sustainable economic growth, carbon emissions and service usage, are biased against rural areas. It is recommended that these comments, along with the other comments provided, are considered when finalising the criteria.

2. Introduction

The county council spends approximately £7m per year subsidising local bus services. The current assessment of contracts is based on a financial criteria where 40% of the cost of operation should be met through passenger revenue.

This way of ranking can result in those contracts that under perform financially being more likely to be withdrawn irrespective of the community needs that they fulfil.

To take into account the priorities set out in the Local Transport Plan, the county council is proposing to revise the criteria to measure services in a more sustainable way. Each subsidised local bus service will be scored in relation to the purpose of the journey and how accessible it is to the local community.

Lancashire County Council consulted with interested parties over a period of seven weeks to get feedback on the draft criteria.

3. Methodology

The consultation ran from 12 June to 5 August 2014. Documents explaining the draft criteria were made available on the county council's 'have your say' website (www.lancashire.gov.uk/haveyoursay) with a link to a questionnaire on the proposed criteria.

The consultation was also available as a pdf document to download and return by post. Alternatively, interested parties could request a paper copy be sent to them. Stakeholders were informed directly about the consultation. To inform the public of the consultation, press releases were issued and the consultation was publicised on Twitter and Facebook.

In total, 138 responses to the questionnaire were received: 121 online responses and 17 paper copies. In addition, 6 letters and emails providing feedback to the consultation were received. The comments given in these letters/emails have been incorporated into the analysis.

3.1 Limitations

Although the survey was available for anyone to respond to, the consultation was primarily aimed at stakeholders. Responses should not be seen as the view of the overall Lancashire population.

In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

4. Main research findings

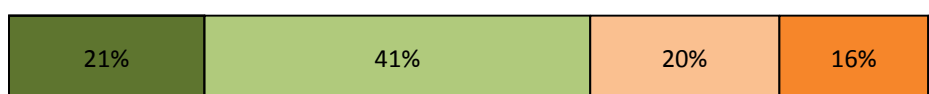
For each of the seven proposed criteria, respondents were asked to consider the suggested categories and scores. The criteria are shown in full in appendix 1.

4.1 Journey purpose, business growth

A key priority for Lancashire County Council's subsidised bus services will be to consider the principal purpose of the bus service and how it is used. A score will be allocated (up to a maximum of 10) based on whether services provide access for employment (5 points), education (4), health/medical/welfare (4), shopping (2) and personal business and leisure (1).

Respondents to the consultation were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the suggested categories and scores. Around three-fifths of respondents (62%) agree with the suggested categories and scores.

Chart 1 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the suggested categories and scores?



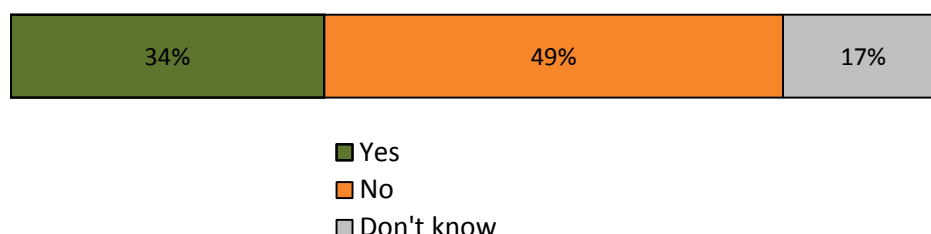
- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all respondents (138)

Respondents who disagree with the suggested categories and scores were asked why they disagree. 57 respondents gave a comment and the full list of comments is provided in the separate appendix document. Around a third of those who provided a comment felt that shopping, personal business and leisure should have a higher score. A number of respondents felt that, in rural areas, using the bus to travel to work is not generally viable because of variation in employment areas and working hours and so employment should not be the highest score.

Respondents were then asked whether they think any other categories should be included for this criterion. Around half of the respondents (49%) did not have any other categories to suggest.

Chart 2 - Are there any other categories you think should be included?



Base: all respondents (122)

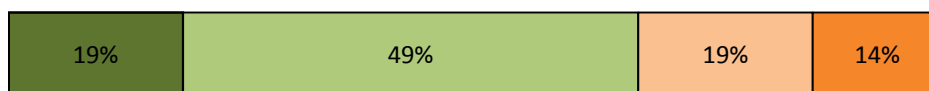
Respondents who thought other categories should be included were asked what those other categories should be. 43 respondents gave a suggestion and all suggestions are provided in the separate appendix document. The most common suggestion was to include a 'use by older people' category as buses may be their only form of transport but, as they are less likely to work, they would not be prioritised by the suggested categories. A number of respondents suggested that 'tourism' should also be added.

4.2 Sustainable economic growth

The county council will allocate a score to bus services based on how many trips they make that serve employment areas, including business parks, town and city centres.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the suggested options and scores. Around two-thirds of respondents (67%) agree with the suggested options and scores.

Chart 3 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the suggested options and scores?



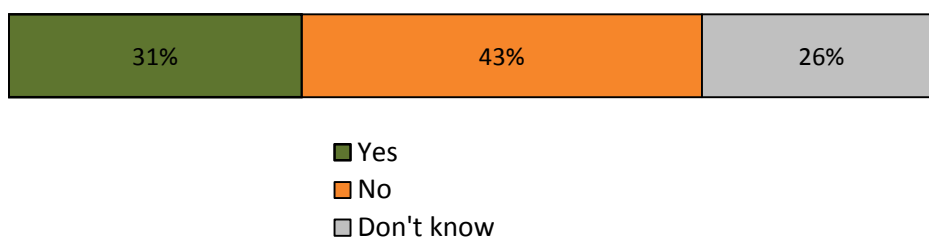
- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all respondents (123)

Respondents who disagree with the suggested options and scores were asked why they disagree. 44 respondents gave a comment and the full list of comments is provided in the separate appendix document. The most common responses are that this criterion ignores those who don't use the buses for employment purposes and that it would be difficult to define 'employment areas' without ignoring those who work in rural areas or from home.

Respondents were then asked whether they think any other options should be included for this criterion. Around two-fifths of respondents (43%) did not have any other options to suggest.

Chart 4 - Are there any other options you think should be included?



Base: all respondents (105)

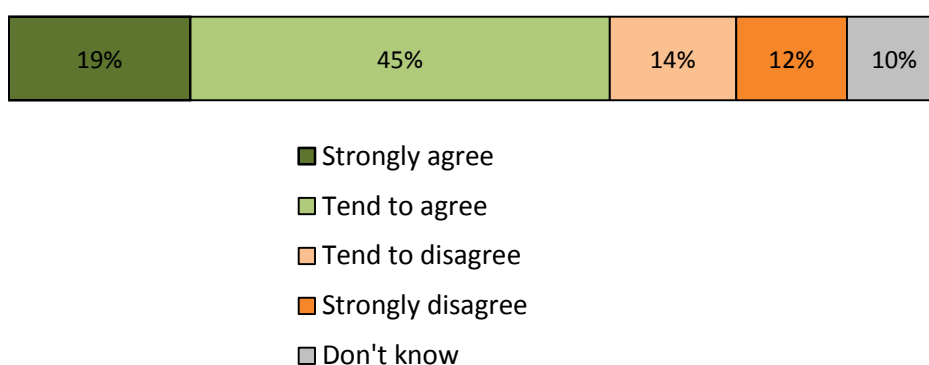
Respondents who thought other options should be included were asked what those other options should be. 34 respondents gave a suggestion and all suggestions are provided in the separate appendix document. Responses to this question were varied and there seemed to be no particularly common responses.

4.3 Impact on carbon emissions

The county council will allocate a score to bus services based on proximity to Air Quality Management Areas and congestion hotspots.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the suggested options and scores. Around two-thirds of respondents (64%) agree with the suggested options and scores.

Chart 5 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the suggested options and scores?

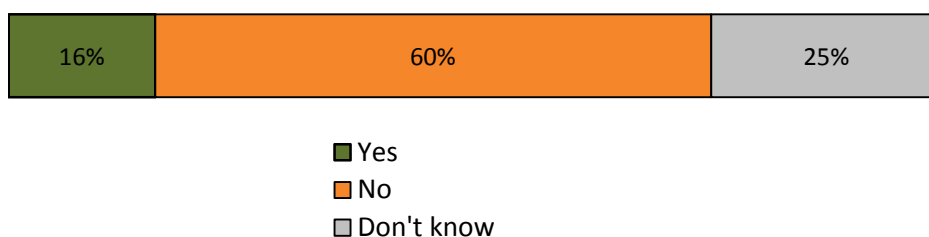


Base: all respondents (118)

Respondents who disagree with the suggested options and scores were asked why they disagree. 29 respondents gave a comment and the full list of comments is provided in the separate appendix document. The most common responses are that this criterion discriminates against rural areas which are not congestion hotspots and don't have poor air quality, and also that this should not be a criterion as it is not a priority for people.

Respondents were then asked whether they think any other options should be included for this criterion. Three-fifths of respondents (60%) did not have any other options to suggest.

Chart 6 - Are there any other options you think should be included?



Base: all respondents (89)

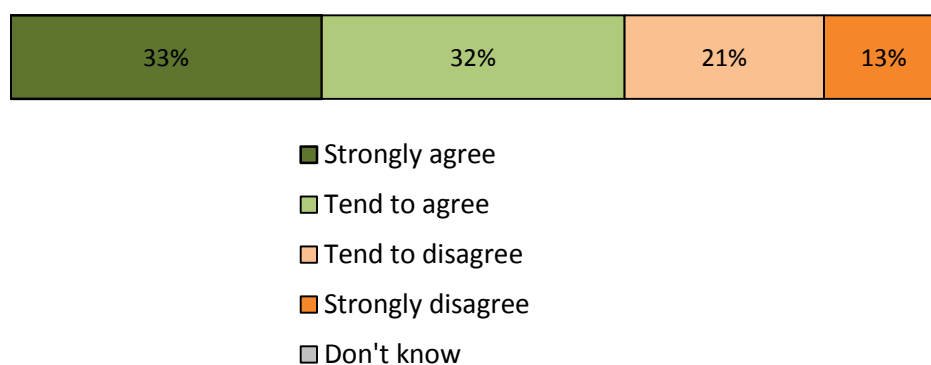
Respondents who thought other options should be included were asked what those other options should be. 15 respondents gave a suggestion and all suggestions are provided in the separate appendix document. Responses to this question were varied and there seemed to be no particularly common responses.

4.4 Operational service days

The county council will allocate a score to bus services based on the days and frequency of operation. Those services operating on Monday to Saturday daytimes, where no alternative commercial service is available, will be given higher priority.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the suggested options and scores. Around two-thirds of respondents (66%) agree with the suggested options and scores.

Chart 7 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the suggested options and scores?

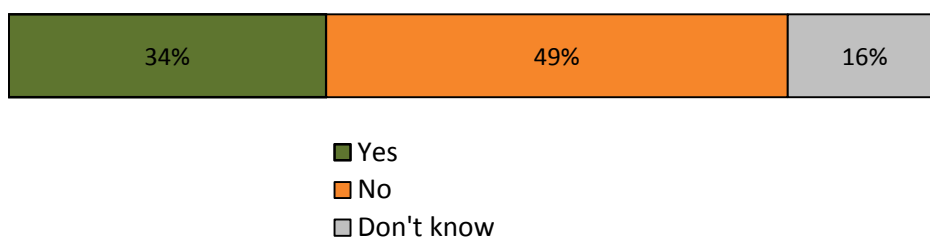


Base: all respondents (117)

Respondents who disagree with the suggested options and scores were asked why they disagree. 45 respondents gave a comment and the full list of comments is provided in the separate appendix document. The most common responses are that evening and weekend services are as important to people as weekday daytime services particularly considering that many people no longer work the traditional Monday to Friday, 9 to 5.

Respondents were then asked whether they think any other options should be included for this criterion. Around half of the respondents (49%) did not have any other options to suggest.

Chart 8 - Are there any other options you think should be included?



Base: all respondents (97)

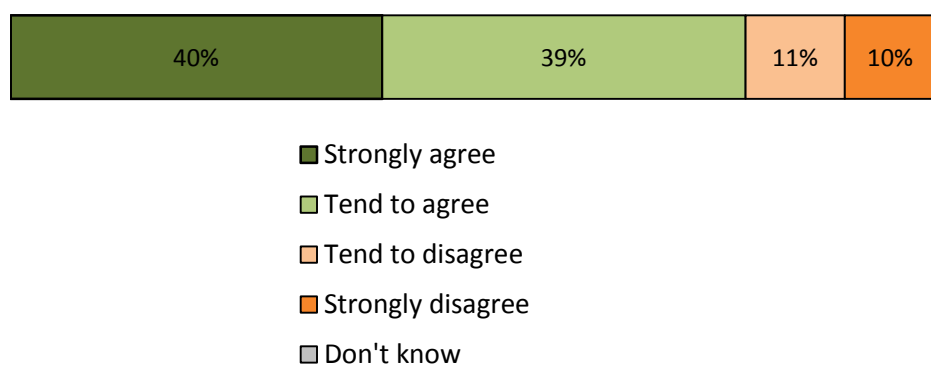
Respondents who thought other options should be included were asked what those other options should be. 33 respondents gave a suggestion and all suggestions are provided in the separate appendix document. Common responses were for higher scores for evening and Sunday services and for introducing an early morning option.

4.5 Accessibility – travel choice

The county council will allocate a score based on whether there are alternative public transport solutions available within an 800m radius of current subsidised bus services. Areas not served by alternative public transport will receive a higher score.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the suggested options and scores. Around four-fifths of respondents (79%) agree with the suggested options and scores.

Chart 9 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the suggested options and scores?

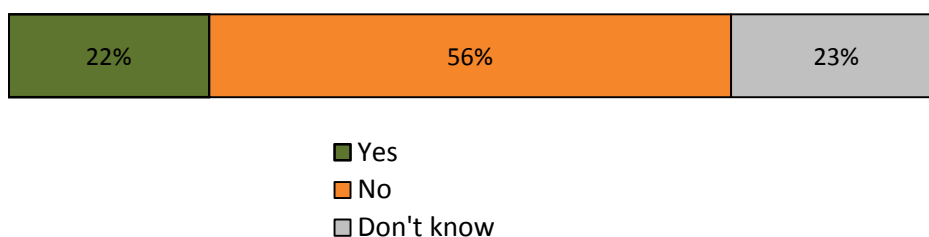


Base: all respondents (113)

Respondents who disagree with the suggested options and scores were asked why they disagree. 31 respondents gave a comment and the full list of comments is provided in the separate appendix document. The most common response is that 800m is too long a distance when considering elderly or disabled passengers.

Respondents were then asked whether they think any other options should be included for this criterion. Around half of the respondents (56%) did not have any other options to suggest.

Chart 10 - Are there any other options you think should be included?



Base: all respondents (93)

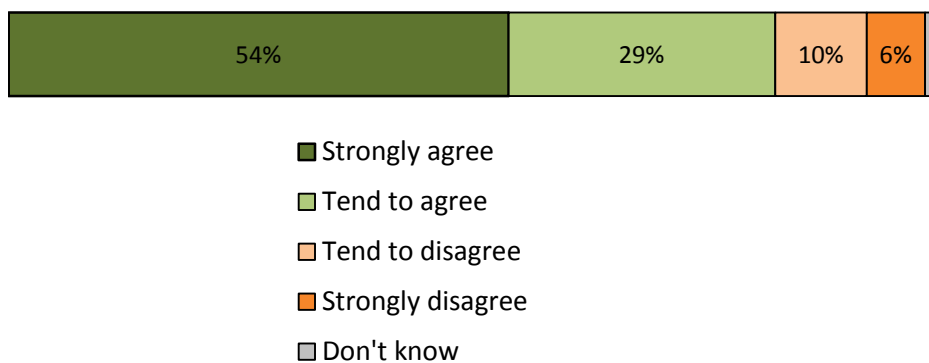
Respondents who thought other options should be included were asked what those other options should be. 21 respondents gave a suggestion and all suggestions are provided in the separate appendix document. The most common response is that, as well as considering the distance to an alternative form of transport, the topography of the route should be considered.

4.6 Access for older and disabled people

The county council will allocate a score to bus services based on how many people with older or disabled persons ENCTS passes are carried, giving a higher priority for those carrying a greater number of pass holders.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the suggested options and scores. Around four-fifths of respondents (82%) agree with the suggested options and scores.

Chart 11 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the suggested options and scores?

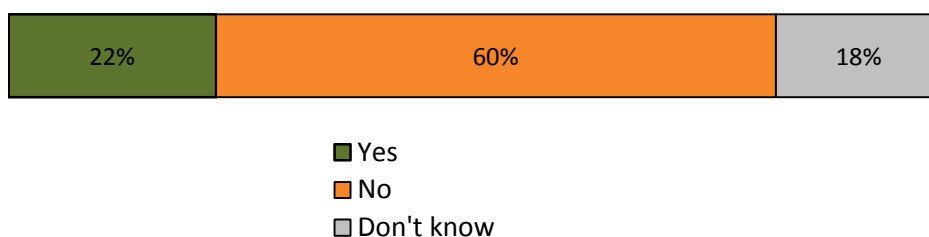


Base: all respondents (112)

Respondents who disagree with the suggested options and scores were asked why they disagree. 28 respondents gave a comment and the full list of comments is provided in the separate appendix document. The most common responses are that elderly and disabled passengers should not be prioritised over other passengers – the bus service may be just as important to young people and workers, for example, as it is to ENCTS pass holders.

Respondents were then asked whether they think any other options should be included for this criterion. Three-fifths of the respondents (60%) did not have any other options to suggest.

Chart 12 - Are there any other options you think should be included?



Base: all respondents (90)

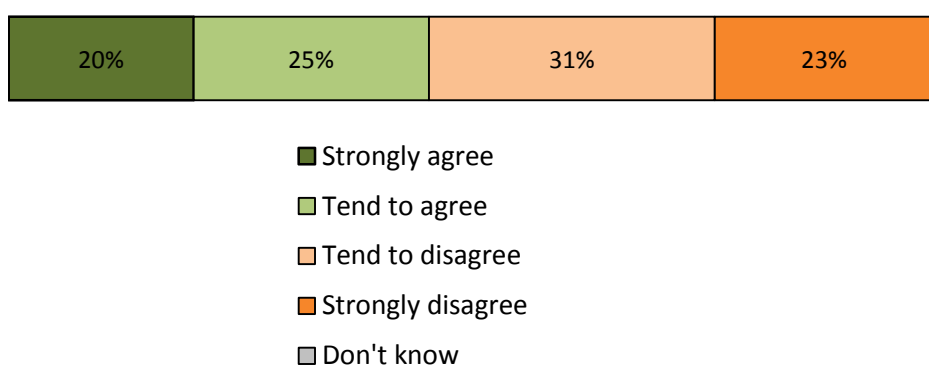
Respondents who thought other options should be included were asked what those other options should be. 21 respondents gave a suggestion and all suggestions are provided in the separate appendix document. The most common response is to include young people in the criteria.

4.7 Service usage

The county council will allocate a score to bus services based on the overall number of passengers carried each year.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the suggested options and scores. Just under half of respondents (45%) agree with the suggested options and scores.

Chart 13 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the suggested options and scores?

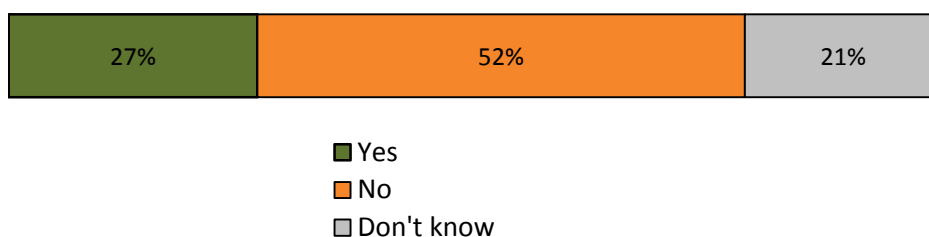


Base: all respondents (111)

Respondents who disagree with the suggested options and scores were asked why they disagree. 63 respondents gave a comment and the full list of comments is provided in the separate appendix document. Around a third of these respondents commented that a service may not be used by a large amount of people but may be vital to those that do use it. There were also a number of comments that suggested that this criterion is biased against rural services as they will not carry the number of passengers that urban services do.

Respondents were then asked whether they think any other options should be included for this criterion. Around half of the respondents (52%) did not have any other options to suggest.

Chart 14 - Are there any other options you think should be included?



Base: all respondents (90)

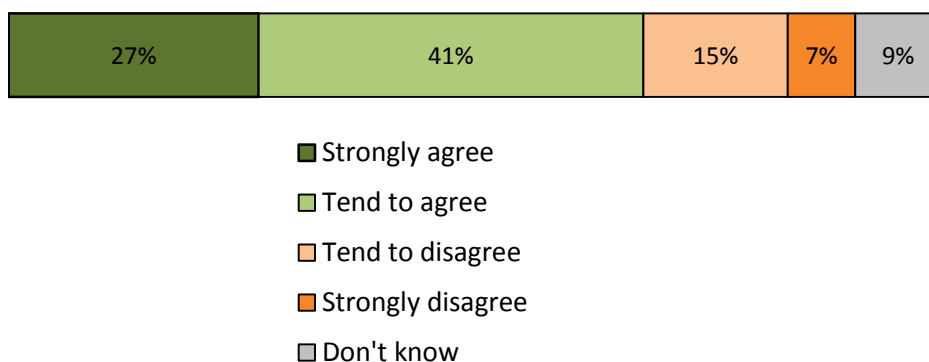
Respondents who thought other options should be included were asked what those other options should be. 27 respondents gave a suggestion and all suggestions are provided in the separate appendix document. Responses to this question were varied and there seemed to be no particularly common responses.

4.8 Overall

Lancashire County Council currently assesses its subsidised local bus services purely on financial grounds - 40% of the cost of the provision should be met through fares income, including both that paid by passengers on bus together with the reimbursement of funding from the carriage of older or disabled persons ENCTS concessionary travel pass holders. The proposed new criteria takes into consideration operational aspects of the subsidised bus services and also the county council's priority themes.

Respondents were asked overall how strongly they agree or disagree that the current method of assessment should be replaced by the proposed new criteria. Around two-thirds of respondents (68%) agree that the current method of assessment should be replaced by the proposed criteria.

Chart 15 - Overall, how strongly do you agree or disagree that the current method of assessment should be replaced by the proposed new criteria?



Base: all respondents (97)

Respondents were then asked if they had any further comments to make on the proposed criteria. 67 respondents gave a comment and the full list of comments is provided in the separate appendix document. The responses covered a wide range of comments and suggestions. Some common responses are that it is good to see an effort to move away from just financial assessment of services and that the proposed new criteria are biased against rural services.

5. Profile of respondents

Respondents were asked to select whether they were responding to the consultation as a member of the public or on behalf of an organisation/business. 111 respondents answered this question. 78 (70%) responded as a member of the public while 33 (30%) responded on behalf of an organisation/business.

Respondents were asked to provide their postcode in order to allow distribution of respondents by district to be analysed. The table below shows the number of respondents in each district.

District	Percentage	Count
Burnley	0%	0
Chorley	3%	5
Fylde	5%	7
Hyndburn	1%	1
Lancaster	14%	20
Pendle	4%	6
Preston	8%	12
Ribble Valley	6%	9
Rosendale	6%	8
South Ribble	9%	13
West Lancashire	5%	7
Wyre	8%	12
Blackburn	1%	2
Blackpool	1%	2
Outside Lancashire 14 area	3%	5
Not provided	24%	34

The following organisations/businesses responded to the consultation:

Adlington Town Council
Arkholme with Cawood Parish Council
Astley Village Parish Council, Chorley
Barnoldswick – local Councillor.
Blackpool Transport
Bretherton Parish Council
Brindle Parish Council
Broughton Parish Council
Bus Users UK
Campaign for Better Transport
Chorley Borough Council representative for Wheelton and Withnell ward
Forum of Older People in Hyndburn
Freckleton Parish Council
Lancashire Campaign for Better Transport
Lancaster Central Division Green Party
Lancaster City Council
Little green bus
National Pensioners Convention - Transport Group
Pendle Seniors Group
Pilling Parish Council
Preesall Town Council
Rail and Road Passenger Transport Authority of Great Britain
Read Parish Council
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Rossendale Borough Council - Consultation Working Group
Seniors Together in Rossendale (Over 50's Forum).
Slyne with Hest parish council
Stagecoach North West Ltd
Stalmine with Staynall Parish Council
TravelWatch NorthWest.
West Lancashire Borough Council
Whitworth Town Council
Whittington Parish Council

6. Appendix 1 – draft criteria

Objective	Criteria	Scoring	Points
Priority Themes Weighted 40%	Business growth - journey purpose (max. score of 10)	Employment	5
		Education	4
		Health / medical / welfare	4
		Shopping / personal business	2
		Leisure (social / recreation)	1
	Sustainable economic growth	The routes serves a significant (>1000 trips) employment area	4
		The routes serves a moderate (500-1000 trips) employment area	2
		The route serves a low (<500 trips) employment area	0
	Impact on carbon emissions	The route directly serves an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and/or congestion hotspot	4
The route passes nearby an AQMA and/or congestion hotspot		2	
No AQMA or congestion hotspots are served by the route		0	
Accessibility Weighted 60%	Operational service days	Monday to Saturday Daytime	5
		Sunday Daytime	3
		Daily Evening	1
	Accessibility - travel choice	No reasonable alternative	8
		Alternative within 2 hours during daytime within no more than 800 metres	4
		Alternative within 2 hours during daytime at same location	3
		Alternative within 1 hour during daytime within no more than 800 metres	2
		Alternative within 1 hour during daytime at same location	1
	Access for older & disabled people	More than 50% passenger journeys by concessionaires	5
		Between 33% and 50% passenger journeys by concessionaires	3
		Less than 33% passenger journeys by concessionaires	1
		No passenger journeys by concessionaires	0
	Service usage	More than 100,000 passenger journeys per annum	5
More than 25,000 but no more than 99,999 passenger journeys per annum		4	
More than 10,000 but no more than 24,999 passenger journeys per annum		3	
More than 5,000 but no more than 9,999 passenger journeys per annum		2	
Up to 4,999 passenger journeys per annum		1	