

Your views on our proposal to review bus services supported by the County Council

Respondent information

Respondent Numbers

There were **1,184** responses received for this proposal. Of these, two-thirds (799 people or 67%) replied as individuals.

Responding as:			
An individual / member of the public	799	67%	90%
A family	268	23%	
On behalf of a voluntary or community group	19	2%	5%
On behalf of a statutory organisation	22	2%	
On behalf of a business	8	1%	
A Norfolk County Councillor	4	0%	4%
A district or borough councillor	5	0%	
A town or parish councillor	32	3%	
A Norfolk County Council employee	6	1%	
Not Answered	21	2%	2%
Total	1,184	101%*	101%*

*Please note: Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%

Of the **1,184** responses received, the majority (968 or 82%) were online submissions to the consultation.

How we received the responses

Online submission	968	82%
Consultation paper feedback form	109	9%
Email	83	7%
Letter	24	2%
Total	1,184	100%

How often respondents use the bus services we subsidise

Every day	244	21%
Every week	427	36%
Every month	158	13%
Every few months	116	10%
Never	98	8%
Not sure	18	2%
Not Answered	123	10%

How often respondents use the community transport schemes we grant fund		
Every day	43	4%
Every week	110	9%
Every month	48	4%
Every few months	41	3%
Never	646	55%
Not sure	129	11%
Not Answered	167	14%

The reasons that respondents use the bus		
To get to and from work	318	27%
To get to and from doctors, hospital and other healthcare appointments	623	53%
To do essential food shopping	485	41%
To get to and from leisure and social activities	612	52%
I don't use the bus	2	0%

Responses by groups, organisations and businesses
<p>Twenty two respondents told us they were responding on behalf of a statutory organisation, although they did not all provide the name of their organisation. The organisations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus Users UK • Cromer Town Council • Dereham Town Council • East Rudham Parish Council • Garvestone, Reymerston & Thuxton Parish Council • Honingham Parish Council • Kirby Bedon Parish Council • Mattishall Parish Council • Melton Constable Parish Council • Rockland St Mary with Hellington Parish Council • Sheringham Town Council • Shipdham Parish Council • Snettisham Parish Council • South Norfolk Council • Surlingham Parish Council • Swanton Morley Parish Council • The Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind • Upper Sheringham Parish Council • Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, part of Yaxham Parish Council • Yaxham Parish Council <p>The statutory organisations expressed the following views:</p>

- Sixteen of the organisations said that bus services are vital, essential or a lifeline – particularly for older people and people living in rural communities.
- Our proposal includes prioritising support for bus services which help people get to and from work and essential services, such as healthcare appointments and food shopping, however organisations said they are worried that our proposal would make it more difficult to get to healthcare appointments (15 mentions), to work (eight mentions) and to go food shopping (nine mentions).
- Several organisations said they felt our proposal would make it more difficult for children and young people to get to school, college or university.
- Several organisations said they were concerned that our proposal would increase loneliness and social isolation – particularly for vulnerable, older and disabled people and people who live in rural areas.
- Almost all of the organisations were concerned about the impact on rural communities and that it would affect the quality of life of people who live in rural communities.

Nineteen respondents told us they were responding on behalf of a voluntary or community group, although they did not all provide the name of their group. The groups are:

- Bact Community Transport
- Bawburgh Community Car Scheme
- Broadland Older Peoples' Partnership (BOPP)
- Chapel Coffee House, part of Light of Life Baptist Church, Ormesby
- Community Action Norfolk
- Cruse Bereavement Care, Norwich and Central Norfolk Branch
- Dereham U3A
- Downham Dementia Support Association
- East Norfolk Transport Users Association
- East Suffolk Travellers' Association
- Norfolk Living Streets
- Norwich Housing Society
- Opening Doors Management Committee
- Padmaloka
- Sewell Community and Friends Group
- The Board of Trustees of Opening Doors
- Together

The voluntary and community groups expressed the following views:

- Many of the groups said that bus services are vital, essential or a lifeline – particularly for older people, disabled people, people with learning disabilities and people living in rural communities.
- Our proposal includes prioritising support for bus services which help people get to healthcare appointments, however eight groups said they are worried that our proposal would make it more difficult to get to healthcare appointments.
- The majority of the groups were concerned about the impact on rural communities and that it would affect the quality of life of people who live in rural communities.
- Almost all of the organisations said they were concerned that our proposal would increase loneliness and social isolation, and make people less independent – particularly vulnerable, older and disabled people, people with learning disabilities and people who live in rural areas.

Eight respondents told us they were responding on behalf of a business, although they did not all provide the name of their business. The businesses are:

- Allcare Community Support
- Burnham Market Area Community Car Scheme (BMACCS)
- Holiday Property Bond
- Norwich Research Partners LLP
- Sanders Coaches

The businesses expressed the following views:

- Almost all of the businesses were concerned about the impact on rural communities and that it would affect the quality of life of people who live in rural communities.
- Many of the business said they felt worried about the impact our proposal would have on vulnerable, older and disabled people.

Four respondents told us they were a Norfolk County Councillor. They expressed the following views:

- Councillors were concerned about the impact on rural communities and said that it would affect the quality of life of people who live in rural communities.
- They were concerned that our proposal would increase loneliness and social isolation, particularly for vulnerable, older and disabled people.

Six respondents told us they were a Norfolk County Council employee. They expressed the following views:

- Employees said they have concerns about the bus services we are proposing to support in future, in particular they were concerned that our proposal would make it harder for people to see their family or friends, or to go to cultural or leisure activities. They were worried that this would increase loneliness and social isolation, and be bad for people's health and wellbeing.
- Our proposal includes prioritising support for bus services which help people get to healthcare appointments, however three of the employees said they are worried that our proposal would make it more difficult to get to healthcare appointments.

Five respondents told us they were a district, borough or city councillor. They expressed the following views:

- Our proposal includes prioritising support for bus services which help people get to healthcare appointments, however three of the councillors said they are worried that our proposal would make it more difficult to get to healthcare appointments.
- Four councillors said they were concerned that our proposal would increase loneliness and social isolation – particularly for vulnerable, older and disabled people and people who live in rural areas.
- Three councillors said they were concerned about the impact on rural communities and that it would affect the quality of life of people who live in rural communities.

Thirty two respondents told us they were a town or parish councillor. They expressed the following views:

- Twenty three councillors said they were concerned about the impact on rural communities and that it would affect the quality of life of people who live in rural communities.
- Many councillors said that bus services are vital, essential or a lifeline – particularly for older people and people living in rural communities.
- Many councillors also said they were concerned about the impact our proposal would have on vulnerable, older and disabled people.
- Our proposal includes prioritising support for bus services which help people get to healthcare appointments, however eight of the councillors said they are worried that our proposal would make it more difficult to get to healthcare appointments.
- Ten councillors agreed with our proposal to prioritise supporting bus services which help people get to and from work and essential services, and that help people who live in areas where there are no other transport options available.

A response by Brandon Lewis MP was also received which recognised that there were financial pressures and savings need to be met but noted that services for local communities must be protected. He asked us to reconsider this proposal given Norfolk is a rural community and often residents complained about how difficult it was travel around the county.

Summary of main themes

Overall theme	Issues raised	Number of times mentioned	Quotes
<p>Bus services are vital, essential or a lifeline</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many respondents said that bus services are vital, essential or a lifeline – particularly for older people and people living in rural communities. • Some people went on to say that the County Council should invest more money in subsidising bus services (45 mentions), including a few respondents who said that we should do this rather than build new roads (16 mentions). 	<p>437</p>	<p>“These services are vital for people who need to shop, visit doctors or hospitals and also to stay in touch with their family and friends.”</p> <p>“I think the local buses and community schemes provide a lifeline for many people who have no access to a car, or cannot drive. There should be no more cuts, and I would pay more CT to support these services.”</p> <p>“Buses are a life line to many of our clients who for medical and financial reasons are unable to drive.”</p> <p>“I understand the need to save money but think that other ways should be considered before reducing essential bus services.”</p> <p>“Bus travel is ESSENTIAL. Buses provide a lifeline for people without cars. I live in Norwich and, like a third of the population here (2011 census figures), I do not have access to a car or other private vehicle. (I do not drive.) Buses provide the only means for me to get to parts of Norfolk.”</p> <p>“I am filling in this survey on behalf of my daughter who has learning difficulties. She can lead a very independent life due to the bus service. The fast 8 & konect 4 are her lifeline.”</p> <p>“Our family is devastated of even the thought that you might be cutting these vital bus routes. We pay our Council Tax, and it is our money you are spending. We want the Bus Services to continue.”</p>

			<p>“I think that there should be no cuts whatsoever. Actually, rural communities need more bus services”</p> <p>“I think that there are not enough subsidized bus services in Norfolk.”</p> <p>“There is already far too much spent on roads (especially new ones like the NDR), that could be redirected to improve bus services: car drivers already have a good deal.”</p> <p>“I must insist this vital lifeline is maintained and we must not return to the mess of the 1980s when services were a waste of time and 20 years of establishing a reliable network of connecting bus services are going to be destroyed.”</p>
<p>The County Council should review which bus services it supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some respondents think it is good practice to review services every now and then, to see if they could be improved or if the County Council could get better value for money. • Some people said they recognise that they County Council is in a difficult financial position and understand that we have to make some hard choices. • A few respondents said they agree with the County Council reviewing the bus services it supports, but this doesn't mean that they would all support the outcome of a review. 	<p>84</p>	<p>“It is generally a good idea to review services every now and again.”</p> <p>“A review conducted without great expense is probably necessary, and may result in wiser spending of limited funds.”</p> <p>“It is vitally important that Norfolk County Council reviews the money it spends on subsidizing bus companies.”</p> <p>“A review has got to be useful. But any action at the end of the review should be consulted on before action is carried out.”</p>

<p>The proposal would make it more difficult for people to get to healthcare services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our proposal is to prioritise supporting bus services that help people get to and from healthcare appointments, however many people said they are worried that our proposal would make it more difficult for them. • Respondents said that buses play an important role in getting people to healthcare appointments. • A few members of staff from the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital said they were worried our proposal would make it difficult or impossible for them to get to work. • A few respondents said our proposal would result in more people driving to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and this would put more pressure on parking there. 	<p>436</p>	<p>“As I am a non driver this is the only way I can reach the hospital unless I go into Norwich and catch another bus. This would add considerably to the journey time and make it difficult to get to the appointment on time.”</p> <p>“Difficult decisions of how to visit, say, Cromer Hospital - can I afford taxi? or do I risk not having check-ups?”</p> <p>“If you cut the Community Car service and Community Bus service to Stanhoe we should have no way of getting to the doctor or hospital or for food shopping if we did not drive. I should be isolated myself.”</p> <p>“If the No.4 bus service was removed, this would cause many problems to people in the area who do not or cannot drive. It is the only way some are able to get to their place of work, the doctors, hospital and shops.”</p> <p>“Personally I and my elderly parents often use Konectbus 9 from Little Melton to the N&N Hospital. Otherwise we have to go into Hethersett, get a bus into the city and out again, or drive past the hospital to Costessey Park and Ride to come back again.”</p> <p>“If they cut my bus service I won’t be able to get to work ... I work at NNUH and without this bus service I will loose my job as wont be able to afford any other transport to get to work.”</p> <p>“It is already hard enough to get to where you need to go especially for work or health appointments. We live in a 24/7 world where you can't prioritise when and how people need these services.”</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some respondents questioned what we mean by 'support bus services that help people get to and from healthcare appointments', because people need to get to healthcare services at different times of day. 		
<p>The proposal would make it more difficult for people to get to work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our proposal is to prioritise supporting bus services that help people get to and from work, however several people said they are worried that our proposal would make it more difficult for them. • Respondents said that buses play an important role in getting people to work. • A few respondents questioned what we mean by 'support bus services that help people get to and from work', because people work quite varied working patterns (53 mentions). 	<p>274</p>	<p>"I am hanging on to my job by the skin of my teeth as they keep threatening me with having to work evenings and weekends which is already very difficult if not impossible by bus so don't make it so I can't get there in the day time either."</p> <p>"If you drop the sanders no 6 then I'd have to give up my job which means I'd also have to move house!"</p> <p>"It would be devastating and I wouldn't be able to get to/from work. I couldn't afford to buy a car, so I'd be forced to leave."</p> <p>"It will have a major impact on myself as I work in the city for the NHS and there is only 1 bus in the morning and 1 in the evening to take me to and from work. ... I do not drive so I would have to give up work."</p> <p>"It would have a huge impact on my family, especailly my Mum, who uses the bus to get to and from work everyday. If the bus service was cut, she will not be able to get to work, which she enjoys doing as it still gives her the independence she needs."</p> <p>"Also by work if you mean 9-5 that's not good enough and doesn't reflect reality."</p> <p>"Any cuts will effect peoples lives. How will you know you are not cutting work routes?"</p>

			<p>"If the buses were to be affect I would be unable to get to and from work resulting in losing my job and then end up living on the streets as I would be unable to pay my bills."</p>
<p>The proposal would make it more difficult for people to do their shopping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several people said they are worried that our proposal would make it more difficult for them to do their shopping. • Our proposal is to prioritise supporting bus services that help people to do essential food shopping. Some people specified they are worried about being able to do their food shopping. • A few respondents said that people need to be able to buy more than just food. 	304	<p>"We would not be able to get to the shops for our food plus we would not get to Norfolk & Norwich Hospital which we visit very frequently, so we would be stuck in Yaxham as we can not afford taxi fares."</p> <p>"As I no longer drive and am in receipt of a basic pension, the No. 4 service is essential for grocery shopping and hospital visits."</p> <p>"I am partially sighted and have a guide dog. Using the no.4 bus from Swanton Morley to Dereham, Tesco and Norwich is my lifeline. If this service was stopped, I would face great difficulty in my day to day living."</p> <p>"There is other shopping which needs doing not just food."</p>
<p>The proposal would make it more difficult for people to get to cultural, leisure and social activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several people said that they are worried that our proposal would make it more difficult for them to get to cultural, leisure and social activities. • Cultural, leisure and social activities are important for people's physical and mental health. 	232	<p>"Surely some provision is needed to allow the car-less in society the chance to go out in the evenings and on Sundays to enjoy whatever pleasures or pursuits the do enjoy. This county has a lot to offer and with most of the those who need buses to attend any events, especially evenings and on Sundays will again be denied the opportunity to enjoy them."</p> <p>"It would impact on our quality of life and being able to access leisure and shopping facilities."</p> <p>"I understand that cuts need to be made but it is essential that people are not cut off from leisure and work."</p>

The proposal would make it more difficult for people to see family and friends, and increase loneliness and social isolation

- Several people said that our proposal would increase loneliness and social isolation – particularly for vulnerable, older and disabled people, people who do not drive and people who live in rural areas.
- Some people said that our proposal goes against the County Council’s ‘Promoting Independence Strategy’ and would make people less independent.

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“I think it will contribute to increased social isolation.”

“I think that the council needs to consider very carefully the problem of social isolation which in rural communities is a very serious problem.”

“If elderly people can't get out, they become lonely and isolated and will cost far more in healthcare, social services and care provision than will be saved on transport.”

“Puts impossible/massive costs on a small section of most vulnerable section of society who otherwise cannot visit friends/relatives.”

“Loneliness is a contributory factor in suicide of which Norfolk has one of the highest rates in any county - 74 last year. We should be aiming to increase social engagement not decrease it and investing in public transport provision is one of the ways this can easily be achieved.”

“People in small villages need the bus services to get around. My life would come to a stand still without them.”

“The problem is that the frequency of bus services have reduced and affect sustainability of local villages and it is lack of facilities that effectively trap non-motorists in their homes.”

“I have friends nearby who have children with S.E.N who cannot drive and for one reason or another there only transport is the local bus. There are many elderly people living in mine and surrounding villages. To cut buses for people in these or similar situations would be heartless and would make it difficult for people to have contact with the world outside their front door.”

			<p>“This is a vital service for elderly and vulnerable people to allow them to maintain their independence.”</p> <p>“We run a day center and respite house based in Cromer and Mundesley for people with Learning disabilities and Autism. We encourage our members to regularly use public transport along with their support workers as this is an essential part of them being more independent and integrating with the general public.”</p>
<p>The proposal would negatively affect people living in rural parts of the county</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many respondents said that our proposal is not fair on people who live in rural communities and that it would affect the quality of life of people who live in rural communities. • Some respondents who live in rural communities said that although there would be little impact on them now, they could foresee that as they got older they would rely more on bus services and so are worried about our proposal. • A few people said that we should take into account that there are more houses being built in villages and so there will be more people needing or using a good bus service (25 mentions). 	<p>504</p>	<p>“It is already difficult for many village residents to access local towns and services. Cutting the bus subsidies in these areas will have a detrimental effect to quality of life, cost of living and health.”</p> <p>“It would also build a two tier Norfolk with many less financially well off being stuck in rural communities, facing difficulty maintaining a daily life.”</p> <p>“Whilst it is understood that savings need to be made, it is still important that needs of rural communities and the vulnerable adults with those communities are not completely isolated.”</p> <p>“I understand that the poor and the disadvantaged ... are very low down the scale of priorities so we will most definitely be forced out of the villages so rich car owners can move, saving the government and the councils the bother of subsidising bus services.”</p> <p>“The provision of a good transport system in rural areas is essential for social mobility.”</p> <p>“My wife and I, although retired pensioners are currently able to use our car, but the time will come when this may not be the case, and living in the village of Mattishall may come to rely more on the rural bus service.”</p>

		<p>“Villages are increasingly losing services, making it even harder for our young people to stay in their communities.”</p> <p>“We live in a rural area of Norfolk and receive very little in return from NCC for the high council taxes we pay. I will be very annoyed if one of the few benefits we receive is removed.”</p> <p>“I moved to Loddon because of its bus services; this is why many people move here. If you reduce them, you would severely affect the prosperity of the village.”</p> <p>“Cutting off the last remaining public transport links in rural Norfolk will be a huge backwards step, and one from which it will be very difficult to see the rural economy recover.”</p> <p>“No post offices, no pubs, no shops, no schools in small villages. How will people be able to stay living in the villages? NCC are losing sight of what Norfolk really is about!”</p> <p>“If the bus service is even more limited or even stopped I and many others will be virtually "village-bound" with no contact at all. I am lonely please don't make me even more loney and isolated.”</p> <p>“Please make sure that the isolated villages do not become like forgotten places full of ageing, lonely and unhappy people.”</p> <p>“My concern is that even small villages like ours are having new houses built ... Fakenham is planning a new development of I think 950 new houses , a school and hotel and Holt is currently developing 270 new houses. These are significant developments. Is this being factored in at all?”</p>
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			<p>“If bus subsidies are cut in rural areas it will disadvantage people who already lack the facilities we would all consider necessary in the 21st century. ... Younger people leave the villages because of expensive housing and no facilities. Properties are bought by older and wealthier people, often as second homes, and the villages become lifeless and exclusive; this creates further divisions in our communities between those who drive and own a car, or can afford taxis, and those who can do neither.”</p>
<p>The impact on jobs, businesses and the economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people said that our proposal would result in fewer people going to local shops and supporting local businesses. • A few people said that our proposal would be particularly bad for Norwich as fewer people would visit the city and spend money in the shops and on leisure activities. 	<p>55</p>	<p>“Cuts here are a FALSE ECONOMY leading to decreased custom to local businesses, more businesses going under, and, therefore, less tax revenue.”</p> <p>“However, increasing numbers of people work shifts which may require them to travel to and from work late at night. Cuts in late night buses can therefore affect their employment options. ... Lack of buses can mean ... less business for pubs, clubs, restaurants, cinemas and theatres.”</p> <p>“Cutting transport subsidies could then reduce the use of these health, leisure, shopping services and perhaps some of those would then be closed -- thus impacting everyone not just those reliant on subsidised public transport to get to them. These indirect costs and benefits must be quantified too and taken into consideration in this decision-making process.”</p> <p>“The only problem is that during the week and workhours, we (OAP's) are the only ones spending money in the shops. We are heading for the end of town shopping if no provision is given - after all we are all living together.”</p>

			<p>“Going into Norwich provides businesses with customers which are lacking in the high street due to out of town retail parks.”</p>
<p>The proposal would result in more people driving and so would be bad for the environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people said that our proposal would result in more people driving, increased congestion and additional pressure on car parking. • Some people went on to say that our proposal would be bad for the environment because more people would be driving (82 mentions). 	155	<p>“The impact will result in more people reverting to using cars, increasing traffic on the roads and resulting in more congestion.”</p> <p>“It would encourage the use of our car and car parking on an already struggling infrastructure in the peak times.”</p> <p>“If pensioners like myself cannot easily get around by bus they might start driving again, with risks to road safety, a need for more road maintenance and an increased demand for parking spaces.”</p> <p>“You will also put more cars on the road or increase car journeys - that's bad for the environment.”</p>
<p>The financial implications for people who use subsidised bus services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some respondents said they are worried about the financial implications for them and that our proposal would make them financially worse off. • A few people said that our proposal would mean that they have to buy a second car. 	167	<p>“Removing the service would cause a lot of extra expense and hardship.”</p> <p>“West Norfolk is not a wealthy area and not everyone can afford cars or petrol costs.”</p> <p>“I suppose we would need to get another car but that would put a real strain on our finances.”</p> <p>“For me personally not having the bus service (85 Surlingham) would mean that we would have to purchase a second car for me to be able to get to work.”</p> <p>“A great deal, I have a disability and an increase in travel expenses, an increase in council tax, an no increase in wage — will definitely have a negative influence on me and my family.”</p>

			<p>"The cuts in subsidies to Sanders 45 service have led to real hardship for residents of Briston and Melton Constable. I am aware that many people have had to resort to using expensive taxis in order to attend hospital appointments and carry out vital food shopping."</p>
<p>People think that we are proposing to prioritise the right bus services to support in future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several people agreed with our proposal to prioritise supporting bus services which help people get to and from work, get to essential services, such as healthcare appointments and to go food shopping, and in areas where there are no other transport options available. 	293	<p>"Seems very reasonable."</p> <p>"I would agree the services should be prioritised on these grounds."</p> <p>"I think this makes total sense and I agree with it."</p> <p>"I think people getting to and from work easily, getting to healthcare appt and food shopping are essential and should be prioritised."</p> <p>"I think it is very important, I am willing as a council tax payer to support this proposal."</p>
<p>People agree with our proposal to prioritise some bus services, but with an added proviso</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people said they agreed with our proposal to prioritise particular bus services, but then added a proviso, for example that we should also support bus services which help people get to leisure activities or education. 	115	<p>"I think that these are the right priorities but also think that access to social activities especially for older people is equally important to combat loneliness."</p> <p>"Fine as priorities, but getting to and from leisure and recreational facilities is important too for general well-being and quality of life."</p> <p>"It is right to prioritise services and those listed should get some priority. But other services may provide indirect benefits (e.g. access to leisure facilities has indirect benefits for health, fitness and anti-obesity reasons, indirect benefits for mental health, for employment etc)."</p>

			<p>“Yes agree with the listed priorities, but I would also add in that younger people rely on the bus service for training and education. This group generally have very little alternative than the bus service, especially in the rural villages.”</p> <p>“Agree with priority, but with the addition of journeys to school and college.”</p> <p>“Yes I think those services do need to be prioritised. There does need to be some weekend services though for weekend workers.”</p> <p>“I am inclined to agree. I would include access to central Norwich for opticians, hearing services, and, increasingly, banks and building societies.”</p> <p>“I agree with these principles but the council needs to work closely with operators to work towards making buses commercially viable.”</p>
<p>People have concerns about the bus services we are proposing to prioritise supporting in future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people said they have concerns about the bus services we are proposing to support in future. • The majority of these respondents were concerned that our proposal would make it harder for people to see their family or friends, or to go to cultural or leisure activities. They were worried that this would increase loneliness and social isolation, and be bad for people’s health and wellbeing. 	<p>135</p>	<p>“Don't overlook that social contact and activity is also essential to good mental and physical health, so I oppose the purely 'functional' approach proposed.”</p> <p>“These criteria on their own would reduce the quality of life for those of us in an area like this to something akin to living under curfew.”</p> <p>“It is not the business of the Country Council to decide for me what services are essential. A social visit to Norwich may be just as essential to me as a visit to a clinic or shopping for food.”</p> <p>“Quality of life in rural areas depends on social interactions, not just work.”</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few respondents questioned what we mean by 'support bus services that help people get to and from healthcare appointments', because people need to get to healthcare services at different times of day.• A few people said our proposal doesn't take into account that some people need to use multiple buses to get to their final destination, and so many of the bus services we support help people to get to non-subsidised buses and trains which they use to get to and from work and healthcare appointments and to do food shopping (27 mentions).• Some people said that we should also prioritise bus services which children and young people use to get to school and college (152 mentions).	<p>"For people in rural areas, public transport to the nearest town is usually needed in order to connect to buses to Norwich and all the facilities and services that are based there, so public transport other than commuter buses is needed."</p> <p>"Also vital to prioritise students getting to/from schools/colleges. It is essential to make sure that timings tie in with college/work so that they are used and also look at return timings as well."</p> <p>"What do you mean by other transport options? Officially we have non-direct options but it can take a couple of hours to get home from work with a lot of hanging around at bus stops, walking between stops and the multiplier effect of the regular delays per service."</p> <p>"The majority of bus services the exist in Norfolk are the only public transport there is already (due to the virtually non-existent train network) so this will be difficult to acheive."</p> <p>"You are missing the point that any cut in service WILL be catastrophic to some people who have no other means of transportation."</p> <p>"This change will make it harder for people with learning disabilities who go to day services by bus. They are not able to use their bus passes before 9.30 am. If they buses are running in time for people to get to work, they would be before the time people can use their bus passes."</p> <p>"If there are not so many buses in the middle of the day it discriminates against people who need care and support to get up in the mornings. They would need to be up and ready much earlier to catch early buses. This is not always possible."</p> <p>"What about children getting to school and college?"</p>
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			<p>“Post 16 children in COMPULSORY education don't necessarily travel at normal school times. They have flexible timetables. Its bad enough we have to pay when they are in COMPULSORY education but without a regular service they would not be able to get to college when they need to.”</p>
<p>Several people suggested their own ideas</p>	<p>Ideas included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some respondents said that people should pay more or be able to make a donation to keep bus services running (86 mentions) – a lot of these comments related to people saying that those over-60 should pay for their bus pass (78 mentions). • A few people said we should reduce staff pay, the number of staff or not increase Member allowances. • A few people mentioned specific routes where they thought the service could be changed, for example people suggested stopping particular services which they have noticed have few passengers. 	<p>292</p>	<p>“Why not charge every Bus Pass holder (which I am) a £1 per journey charge this would be more acceptable to the general public.”</p> <p>“An annual charge, as little as £5 per year for a free bus pass, no exceptions, would raise the amount you require.”</p> <p>“Plus also i would seriously consider paying a fee to have my disabled blind person bus concession card. i would pay £10 per year for the benefit. It is a committment by us passengers and setting a £10 fee would encourage people to use the service more.”</p> <p>“I think the 37 service should continue to receive subsidy, although you could cancel the 9.15 service from Downham Market as Lynx will not accept bus passes until 9.30, meaning that there are not many passengers on this route.”</p> <p>“If services have to be cut, stopping evening and Sunday journeys elsewhere where there are good daytime services would be fairer.”</p> <p>“A couple of journeys a day (like Watlington and Wimbotsham) would be better than none at all.”</p> <p>“Stop using single decker buses that run empty for much of their journey. Use mini buses or people carriers.”</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few people suggested that we could have fewer buses running on the park and ride, and that park and ride buses could pick more people up on route.• A few of people suggested stopping or reducing services in the evenings or at weekends.• A few people suggested using smaller buses or minivans on routes with not many passengers in order to reduce running costs.• A couple of people suggested that we should have vehicles which act as a bus and fulfil another function, for example delivering mail or non-emergency patient transport.• A couple of people suggested that we should not subsidise any bus services or private companies in general.• A few people said cut services in the city in order to maintain rural bus services.		<p>“Indeed you should be looking at ways of extending services whilst at the same time cutting costs for example by substituting people carriers or minibuses for coaches, or by using European post bus services, where the same vehicles that carry the mail also carry people.”</p> <p>“Have you ever looked at co-ordinating all the passenger carrying operations in the county - buses; school transport; non-emergency patient transport; social services transport; hotel, airport and superstore courtesy buses.”</p> <p>“Conclusions should initially look to reduce frequency of journeys before cancelling service completely.”</p> <p>“A solution would be that users pay an annual subscription equal to the subsidy provided by NCC, this would be regardless of whether they have a bus pass or not or the frequency of use. This perhaps needs to be organised by a local organisation such as a parish council so they have a collective power over the bus company.”</p> <p>“For routes to towns such as Swaffham, Beccles, Wymondham, etc. could you not approach the large supermarkets there for some support as services to those towns bring in customers for them.”</p> <p>“In my view cutting night services in Norwich where many people would use taxis to go to entertainment venues and build this in to the cost of the evening, may be more appropriate. Businesses with night staff could be asked to contribute to the public transport costs for these hours.”</p>
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			<p>“In some villages there are subsidised taxi schemes and these can be used instead of a bus. One fare between say four villagers brings down the cost considerably and at time convenient for themselves. I believe that all subsidies should be removed.”</p> <p>“I think you should encourage people to make more effort to car-share or to be more pro-active in helping each other to get around without buses.”</p> <p>“The Council needs to look at sustainable transport links, rather than spending tens of millions on making it even easier to drive around Norfolk.”</p> <p>“Park and ride services could stop at one or two points on their journey into the city and pick up paying customers.”</p> <p>“In many instances we believe scheduled bus services are not the most effective solution to enable people to access services and that demand responsive transport options, alongside service outreach and digital solutions can be more effective at meeting needs.”</p> <p>“I feel far from cutting these services, a well advertised increase in services would give good results.”</p> <p>“I think that Sunday services could be cut.”</p> <p>“Are there specific transport/community levy's imposed on new housing developments around the region in reasonably remote areas that might help support some of the required financing?”</p> <p>“If a fares increase would solve the problem then we would be prepared to pay more.”</p>
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<p>Some people said do not cut bus subsidies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people said that they do not want the County Council to cut bus subsidies or that they opposed any review of bus services we support, but they did not add much further explanation. • A few people did say that they thought bus services have already been cut and shouldn't be cut further (29 mentions). 	<p>118</p>	<p>"The buses in Walcott (34) are essential. Please do not cut them."</p> <p>"This will have a huge devastating impact on me and my family, please do not cut the route 4."</p> <p>"I think you should leave as is. The service is already quite basic and further reduction would be very damaging."</p>
<p>Challenge to the thinking behind the proposal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some respondents challenged the thinking behind our proposals, in particular people said that investing in bus services keeps people independent and prevents them from needing more complex and costly public services. • A few people said that our proposals go against our campaigns to get more people using public transport and to tackle loneliness. 	<p>70</p>	<p>"If elderly people can't get out, they become lonely and isolated and will cost far more in healthcare, social services and care provision than will be saved on transport."</p> <p>"We also know that loneliness and isolation are an issue among people living in country areas, leading in some cases to mental health issues which if exacerbated by an inability to get out and about will lead to a greater pull on the already overstretched NHS."</p> <p>"In the case of patients some of these will inevitably require hospital funded transport as an alternative - something which will doubtless cost the tax payer infinitely more in the long run."</p> <p>"Not long ago we were told to use public transport more not less."</p> <p>"We also reject the financial driver for these cuts. History shows time again and governments and councils can always find the money for the things they care about. It is simple a matter of prioritisation, and the sums being considered here are, in the grand scheme of things, tiny."</p>

Comments about the consultation

- A few people said that not enough has been done to promote the consultation.

28

“Why has this consultation document not been publicised more??? Also WE do not all have computers.”

“Keep the useful buses going as there vital to not just the younger generation but elderly too who don't know about your proposals.”

“As to be expected, this is another short term and xmas period only consultation designed to only work for those who operate Microsoft computer systems.”

Additional responses

List responses received in addition to the standard format (e.g. petitions, postcard campaigns, letters) and summarise main points

A/ Petitions

As of 9 January 2018, we had received six petitions about this proposal.

1. We received a petition from Age Space signed by 524 people. The wording of the petition is:

Help fight elderly loneliness and keep our local bus services running

Bus routes across Norfolk could be withdrawn if Norfolk County Council move forward with planned cuts of £500,000 to subsidies for bus operators.

Subsidised bus routes across Norfolk, including Great Yarmouth, Norwich, King's Lynn, Thetford, Beccles, Aylsham, Swaffham, Acle, Wymondham, Dereham, Watton, Diss, Fakenham, Bradwell, Holt, Cromer, North Walsham and Sheringham, could all be affected.

These cuts will affect all ages but will have an especially disastrous impact on elderly people living in rural areas. The subsidised bus routes are a lifeline enabling older people to get out and about for health checks, shopping, socialising and indeed volunteering in their community.

Last year, an Age UK report revealed that loneliness is more dangerous than smoking when it comes to older peoples' health. For many, the proposed bus cuts will take away their independence and access to wider services which keep them active and social.

We hope by encouraging people to sign our petition we will show the council how strongly the public feel about enabling older people to stay independent and active members of their community.

Age Space is an online resource sharing information and advice on all things relating to elderly care and we hear first hand the impact loneliness can have on older people and their carers who are often elderly themselves.

We know that keeping older people active, improves their health and quality of life. Age Space is all about celebrating later life and we believe older people (most who have worked hard and paid their taxes), deserve to be able to take part in their community.

The wider cost implications of older people becoming more isolated and the effects this will have on health and social care budgets should be taken into consideration.

<https://www.change.org/p/norfolk-county-council-keep-our-local-bus-services-running>

2. We received a petition from residents of Woodgate Park signed by 32 people. The wording of the petition is:

Re: Proposed Cuts to Rural Bus Service Subsidies

We, the residents of the Assisted Living Retirement Community at Woodgate Park, view with concern and dismay the announcement that the No.4 Bus Route which serves this village and others, is at risk of curtailment in the event of withdrawal of local Government subsidies to meet central Government savings target in public transport services.

The majority of the 50 elderly residents in this Community are in their late 70s and 80s, and most try to remain as independent and active as health and disabilities will allow. To enable them to continue to do this is dependent on having public transport to Dereham, the NNUH, and Norwich City, which this service provides within an albeit limited schedule. It is a lifeline to those without any other form of transport, who are disabled, or who are no longer able to drive. Those who do have their own transport are steadily reducing as age and health take their toll, and become more reliant on public transport.

We note the Council's intention to take rural residents views into consideration in establishing a level of priorities for these subsidies, and urge it to consider the growing needs of the infirm and elderly, and others who depend on public transport to get to work or to school in rural areas.

Together with the closure of Post Offices, Banks, and pubs in these areas, the increasing number of seasonally unoccupied second homes, and the exodus of young people to leave through lack of employment and the near impossibility of renting or purchasing a home, many such village communities will become more isolated and unsustainable.

If cuts have to be made, many of the residents here would sacrifice their bus passes to retain a service, whilst possibly maintaining their issue only to those registered disabled or in similar need.

Those who make these cuts today should reflect that they will one day find themselves in a similar position, and a longer term view should be taken

KEEP THE NUMBER 4 SERVICE

3. We received a petition from the Norwich Labour Party signed by 99 people. The wording of the petition is:

Save the 50A and 21/22 bus services

Sign our petition to maintain the regularity of the 50A and 21/22 bus services. Cuts to bus subsidies by the Tory-controlled Norfolk County Council are putting your bus services at risk. Your Labour councillors Julie, Matthew and Ed will stand up for our community. These services are a lifeline for our elderly and disabled residents. The 21/22 bus is the only way some our residents can get to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital.

4. We received a petition from The Sewell Community Group and Friends signed by 73 people. The wording of the petition is:

Save the 50/50A bus

Sign our petition to maintain the regularity of the 50/50A bus services. Cuts to bus subsidies by the Tory-controlled Norfolk County Council are putting our bus services at risk. Our Labour councillors Julie, Matthew and Ed will stand up for our community. These services are a lifeline for our elderly and disabled residents.

5. We received a petition from Councillor James Wright (Norwich City Council) signed by 102 people. The wording of the petition is:

I the undersigned recognise the importance of local bus services and oppose the planned Norfolk County Council cuts.

6. We received a petition from Downham Market U3A signed by 96 people. The wording of the petition is:

Petition Against Proposed Review of Bus Services Supported by Norfolk County Council

B/ Letters and other formats

1. Surlingham Parish Council organised a campaign asking residents to sign a letter that they had drafted and to send it to us. We received 67 copies of the letter. The wording of the letter is:

'The Parish Council are concerned that provision of the No 85 Bus Service from Surlingham to Norwich could be at threat. If you want to preserve our bus service, then please add your name & address to the letter below and send it to Norfolk County Council by 2nd Jan 2018 or complete an online questionnaire.

Norfolk County Council (NCC) are reviewing the impact a reduction to the bus subsidy would have. The subsidy enables bus companies to provide a service which would otherwise be unprofitable for them. It is possible that our bus service would cease without a subsidy.

The provision of our bus service in line with the objectives of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 regarding social exclusion and health of the population. Reducing or cutting the subsidy and consequently the service would show total disregard for that Plan.

The parish council believe that the bus service is essential for many in our community who use it to:

- Shop for food at competitive prices
- Attend further and higher education
- Travel to and from work
- Attend N&NU hospital and other health care appointments
- Socialise and visit friends and family, the theatre, cinema etc, all of which promote wellbeing.

If you agree with the statement above then please complete your details below and send the whole leaflet to Bus Subsidy Consultation, Norfolk County Council, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2SQ.

Alternatively, complete the online consultation at [web address]

The closing date for responses to the consultation is 2 January 2018.'

Twenty nine people made additional handwritten comments on the letters they sent us. These people told us that bus services are vital or essential, particularly for older people and people living in rural communities (11 mentions). Some people said they were worried that our proposal would increase loneliness and social isolation (5 mentions). Respondents reiterated the thought our proposal would make it more difficult for people to get to healthcare services (5 mentions), to do their shopping (5 mentions) and to get to work (4 mentions). People also said they thought it would make it harder for children and young people to get to school and college (7 mentions). Lastly, respondents said they felt our proposal would result in more people driving and so would be bad for the environment (7 mentions).

2. Norfolk County Council Labour Group organised and promoted their own separate consultation. They described this consultation proposal as: “Cuts to Bus subsidies will mean service reductions, more isolation and difficulty getting to work, education, social activities, health appointments and to care for others. Details of which services will be affected have not been disclosed.”

Seventy six of the responses contained comments relating to this proposal. Respondents told us that bus services are vital or essential (13 mentions), and they thought that our proposal would disproportionately affect children and young people, disabled people, older people, those on low incomes and those living in rural communities (36 mentions).

Some people said they were worried that our proposal would increase loneliness and social isolation (28 mentions). People also said they thought it would make it more difficult for people to get to healthcare services (25 mentions) and to work (23 mentions), as well as harder for children and young people to get to school and college (25 mentions). Some respondents were critical of the Norfolk County Council consultation for not providing enough information (20 mentions).

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