

Thanet Bus Changes Consultation Report

January 2019



Public Consultation:
22 November – 19 December 2018



Find out more and tell us your views by visiting our website. You can also speak to our team at one of our consultation drop-in events:

29th November 1300 - 1500 St Peter's Church Hall, Broadstairs CT10 2TR
3rd December 1415 - 1615 Minster Neighbourhood Centre, Ramsgate CT12 4EA

kent.gov.uk/thanetbusconsultation

Consultation closes 19 December 2018
For a hard copy of the consultation document or any alternative format please email: alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call: 03000 421553 This number goes to an answer machine, which is monitored during office hours.



Alternative Formats

This document can be made available in other formats or languages, please email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or telephone 03000 421553 (text relay service 18001 03000 421553). This number goes to an answer machine, which is monitored during office hours.

Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1. Background.....	4
1.2. Purpose of the Consultation.....	4
1.3. Purpose of this Report	5
2. Consultation Process	6
2.1. Promoting the Consultation	7
2.2. Pre-consultation Engagement Activities	8
2.3. During Consultation Activities	8
3. Response Profile.....	10
4. Equality, Accessibility & Demographics	11
4.1 Respondent Demographics.....	12
4.1.1 Age.....	12
4.1.2 Gender.....	12
4.1.3 Disability	12
4.1.4 Carer responsibilities	13
4.1.5 Other Equality Impacts.....	13
4.2 EQIA Conclusion.....	14
5. Consultation Results.....	15
5.1 Q4. Please tell us, if any, which service(s) you travel on?	15
5.2 Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the approach we have taken to making these savings?	16
5.3 Question 5 - further analysis	17

5.3.1	Question 5 - Service breakdown	17
5.3.2	Question 5 – Age breakdown.....	18
5.3.3	Question 5 - Disabled status breakdown.....	19
5.3.4	Question 5 - Carer Status breakdown	20
5.3.5	Question 5 – Location breakdown.....	21
5.4	Q5a. Please add any comments on our approach to support your answer to question 5 and on any other Equalities implications in response to question 6.	22
6.	Next Steps	26

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Over the summer of 2018, we held a Big Conversation consultation with communities and transport providers to consider how we provide rural transport in the future. This has resulted in a series of pilot schemes that might help shape future provision. In the meantime, we need to make some savings.

Following engagement with bus operators, KCC has been presented with proposals that will enable us to reduce spend, whilst being able to protect school services and ensure those communities currently served still have access to transport.

Two proposals; from Stagecoach in Thanet (services 42/42A, 56 and 39/39A) and from Go-coach in Sevenoaks (services 404 and 405) have been consulted on. These would save KCC approximately £410k per year (£360k from Thanet proposals and £50k from Sevenoaks proposals).

From 22 November to 19 December 2018, Kent County Council (KCC) consulted on changes to bus services in the Thanet area. **This document focuses on the consultation responses received for the Stagecoach proposals in Thanet**

1.2. Purpose of the Consultation

The purpose of the public consultation was to inform the public and stakeholder organisations about the detail of the changes proposed and provide them with the opportunity to ‘Have their say’ and gain feedback on any potential impacts. The consultation gave the opportunity to:

- Understand why changes to buses in Thanet are proposed.
- Consider the possible impacts and benefits of the proposals.
- Ask us questions and provide views on the proposals.
- Advise KCC of any particular equality impacts the proposals could cause.

1.3. Purpose of this Report

This report presents the analysis and findings of the responses to the public consultation on the proposals.

In addition, the report summarises the consultation process and the engagement and promotional activities that took place. The report also states how the feedback will be used to progress the proposal and identifies the next steps.

This report will be published and presented to the KCC's Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee, which is made up of elected members from KCC, who will make a recommendation on the proposals to KCC's Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport & Waste. The Cabinet Member will then make a final decision.

2. Consultation Process

This chapter outlines the process followed to deliver the consultation and details the activities and documentation developed to support the delivery of the consultation. The consultation was divided into the five stages shown in Figure 2.1. Detailed information on each section is given below.

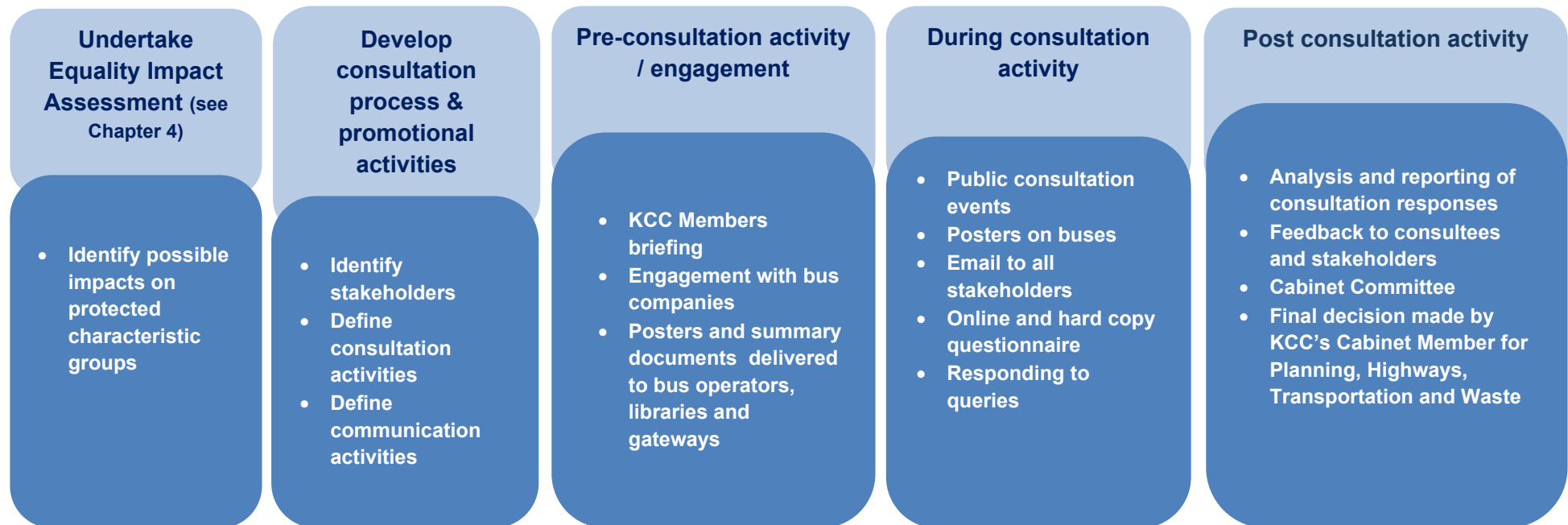


Figure 2.1: The consultation process

2.1. Promoting the Consultation

The consultation process was developed with the aim of enabling local bus users, residents, community groups and other stakeholders to understand the detail of the proposal, to feedback on the approach adopted and to tell us of any particular impacts (positive or negative) presented by the changes to bus services.

The following promotional activities were undertaken to support the delivery of the consultation:

- E-mail and summary document provided to all known stakeholders, including; District and Parish Councils and registered parties on KCC's Consultation Directory who had expressed an interest in being kept informed of consultations regarding transport in Thanet.
- Press release and coverage in local newspapers.
- Posters and summary documents placed on affected buses.
- Posters and summary documents displayed at local libraries and gateways.
- KCC Public Transport Inspectors travelled on affected services promoting the consultation and answering questions.
- Two public drop-in events held in areas potential impacted by the proposals.
- A page on KCC's Consultation Directory on Kent.gov.uk.

Please note: materials are available for reference at www.kent.gov.uk/thanetbusconsultation



Find out more and tell us your views by visiting our website. You can also speak to our team at one of our consultation drop-in events:

29th November 1300 - 1500 St Peter's Church Hall, Broadstairs CT10 2TR
3rd December 1415 - 1615 Minster Neighbourhood Centre, Ramsgate CT12 4EA

kent.gov.uk/thanetbusconsultation

Consultation closes 19 December 2018

For a hard copy of the consultation document or any alternative format please email: alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call: 03000 421553 This number goes to an answer machine, which is monitored during office hours.



2.2 Pre-consultation Engagement Activities

- KCC officers engaged with Stagecoach to develop the proposals and understand the impacts.
- Equality Impact Assessments were developed to take account of further detail.
- A report was taken to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee prior to the public consultation to present the proposals and plan to consult.

2.3 During Consultation Activities

The consultation launched on the 22nd of November for a four-week period. Several activities were undertaken during the consultation period.

Consultation material

A full consultation booklet with maps and timetables was created and available to read and to download from the consultation webpage: www.kent.gov.uk/thanetbusconsultation. A summary document outlining the detail of the proposals was created and distributed on buses, through a KCC Public Transport Inspector when travelling on services and through libraries and gateways. In addition, hard copies of the summary and of the consultation questionnaire were made available at the two public events. All documents could be provided in the post on request.

The below table shows the number of times each document was downloaded from the consultation webpage.

Document	Downloads
Full consultation document	192 (Word version 46 and PDF version 146 times)
Existing Thanet Bus Network Map	131
Proposed Thanet Bus Network Map	327
Consultation Stage Equality Impact Assessment	30 (Word version 9 and PDF version 21 times)
EqIA Appendix A: Detailed assessment of service change impact	21 (Word version 3 and PDF version 18 times)
Word version of consultation questionnaire	36
Consultation poster	37

Feedback mechanism

People were asked to provide feedback via a consultation questionnaire, which was available online and in a paper version. The paper version was available through libraries and gateways, was distributed at the public events and was made available on request via telephone or e-mail.

Consultation Events

Two public information drop-in events were conducted:

- 29th November 1300 – 1500 at St Peter's Church Hall, Broadstairs
- 3rd December 1415 – 1615 at Minster Neighbourhood Centre

These events were held in venues accessible to those using the directly affected bus services. The proposals were presented to the audience and then KCC officers and Stagecoach representatives were available to respond to any detailed questions. The events were well attended with an estimate of over 200 attendees.

During the consultation period, the local KCC Public Transport Inspector travelled on affected services, distributing summary documents and responding to any questions.

3. Response Profile

This chapter summarises the number of consultation responses received and who responded to the consultation.

There was a total of **108** responses to the consultation:

- Of the 108 responses to the consultation questionnaire, **98** were received online and **10** were hard copy responses
- There were **8** e-mails or letters written to KCC. The comments have been added to the questionnaire responses and included in this report but the respondents have not been included in the statistical information.
- Cliffsend Parish Council and the Bethesda Medical Centre both responded as organisations, in greater length in writing, expressing particular concern on the impacts to their communities.
- The responses were analysed together to give an overall picture of the attitude towards the proposals. All responses have been collated and summarised in section 5.

Please tell us in what capacity you are completing this questionnaire	No. of responses
Yourself	96
Representative of local community group	1
As a Parish/Town/District Council	2
On behalf of a business	1
On behalf of a charity	1
On behalf of a friend or relative	5
Other	2

Table 3.1: Respondent Groups

4. Equality, Accessibility & Demographics

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) provides a process to help us understand how the proposals may affect people based on their protected characteristics (age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion / belief or none, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership and carer's responsibilities).

We carried out an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on the proposals to identify how people may be impacted. This document was downloaded 30 times. The EqIA is available to view at www.kent.gov.uk/thanetbusconsultation. We will use the feedback gathered from the consultation to update the EqIA for the detailed design.

The following steps were taken to ensure the consultation was accessible to all:

- In addition to the consultation being available online, two events were held at accessible venues to provide the opportunity for people to view the material and ask detailed questions in order to fully understand equalities and other impacts posed by the changes. Hard copies of the online questionnaire were available and staff on hand to provide support.

This was particularly important to ensure the consultation was accessible to people who could not or did not want to access the consultation online.

- Hard copies of the consultation summary and questionnaire were available in libraries and gateways and made available on affected bus services.
- KCC's local Public Transport Inspector travelled on affected services, distributing material, explaining the changes proposed and answering questions.
- All publicity material included a phone number and e-mail address for people to request hard copies and alternative formats of the consultation material. Word versions of the consultation booklet, EqIA and questionnaire were provided to ensure accessibility of documentation to consultees using audio transcription software.

Of the protected characteristics identified within Equalities legislation, our Equality Impact Assessments identified; Age, Disability and those with Carer responsibilities as being more adversely affected by changes to bus services than other (non-protected) groups.

As such, analysis of the demographics of the responses focus on these areas.

4.1 Respondent Demographics

The following section documents the demographics of the respondents. This data was collated using the 'About You' questions in the questionnaire.

4.1.1 Age

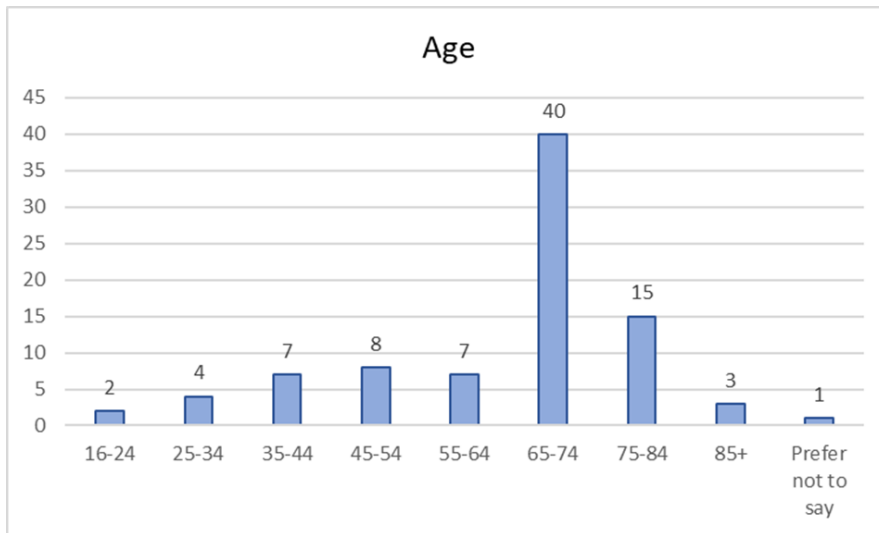


Figure 4.1: Respondents by age

Figure 3.2 shows the distribution of respondents' age. Over 65% were over 65 years old. Not all respondents answered this question.

4.1.1 Gender

- 62% of respondents are women
- 38% of respondents are men
- 21 respondents preferred not to state their gender

4.1.2 Disability

- 29 respondents considered themselves to be disabled.
- Of those that stated they considered themselves having a disability, the impairments that affected each respondent are shown in Figure 4.2.

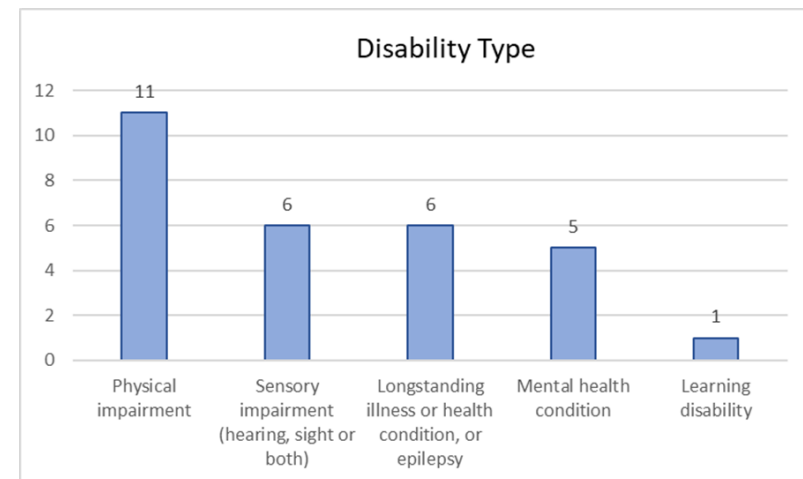
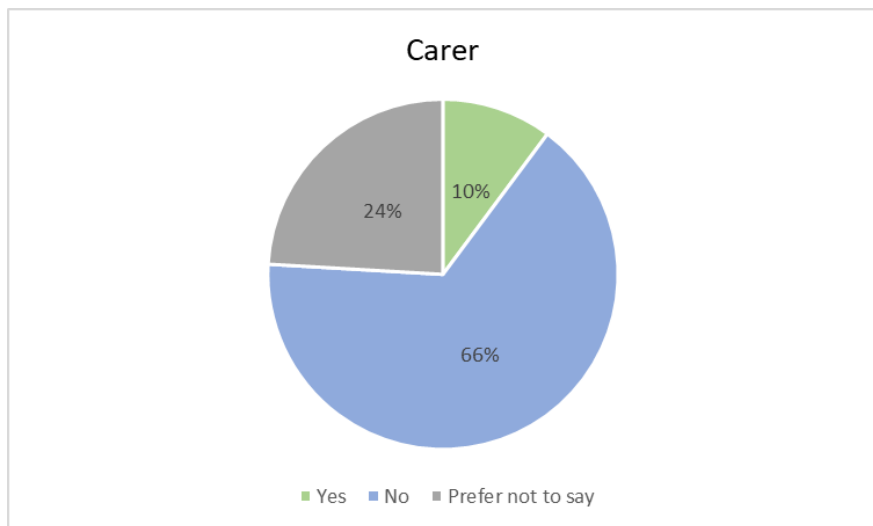


Figure 4.2: 'Disability impairments'

4.1.3 Carer responsibilities

Responders were also asked to identify if they were a carer. Of the responses received, 97 responded no or preferred not to say. 11 respondents identified themselves as a carer (10%), as identified in the chart below:



4.1.4 Other Equality Impacts

Respondents were invited to provide comments on the Equality Impact Assessment completed at the consultation stage and of any particular impact from an equality and diversity perspective. The comments received are summarised below.

Theme	No. of comments
Greater impact for elderly	9
Greater impact for disabled	7
Other	26

4.2 EQIA Conclusion

High proportions of elderly responders and 29 responders considering themselves to be disabled have been identified in section 3. In addition, 11 responders identified themselves as having carer responsibilities in response to question 13 in the questionnaire. All of these protected groups were identified by initial EQIAs as potentially being more adversely affected by changes to bus services than other cohorts of society and the volume and proportion of responses from these groups would appear to confirm this.

In addition, 62% of responses were identified as being from female respondents suggesting that women are perhaps also more adversely affected by bus service changes. It is thought that maybe this stems from a greater reliance on the bus as the available mode of travel for women where those in the over 65 age cohort may have outlived a spouse who was previously the sole driver in the household.

Section 5.3 (below) seeks to analyse the extent to which respondents view varied dependent on whether they formed part of one of the protected groups of; age, disability or carer. However, the combination of the consistency of these responses with the general tone of response and in some instance limited representation means that no particular conclusions can be drawn from this analysis.

Consideration of some of the open comments provided does not draw any specific issues created for these protected groups by the changes proposed and as such it is problematic to identify tweaks to the proposals that could be made to limit impact if accepting that the savings have to be made and therefore that fundamentally the service has to reduce.

Full copies of updated Equality Impact Assessments are attached as an appendix.

5. Consultation Results

5.1 Q4. Please tell us, if any, which service(s) you travel on?

There were 132 responses given to this question which includes those from respondents who use more than one of the services affected.

A summary of the services used by responders is provided below in figure 5.2.

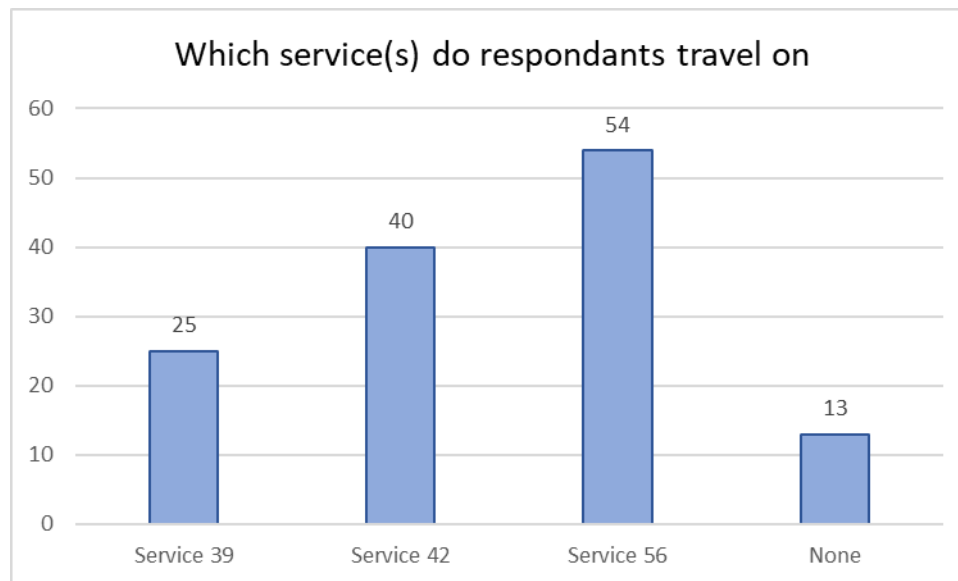


Figure 5.1: Respondents answers to Q4

5.2 Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the approach we have taken to making these savings?

There were 108 responses to this question

64% of respondents disagreed with the approach.

28% of respondents agreed

8% of respondents did not agree or disagree or did not know.

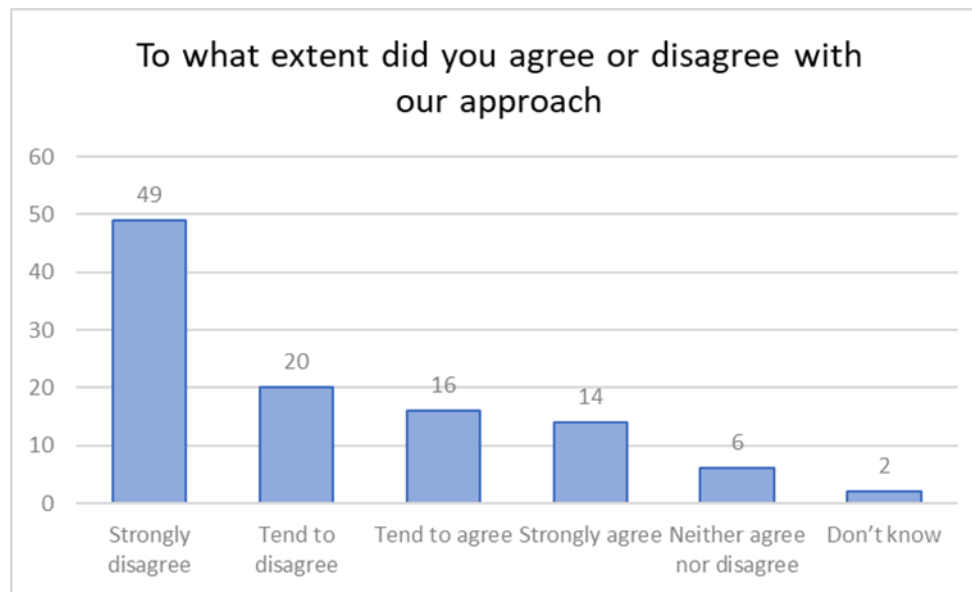


Figure 5.2: Respondents answers to Q5

5.3 Question 5 - further analysis

To further our understanding of the reasoning behind why respondents agreed or disagreed with the approach adopted, we completed some analysis looking at whether the bus service used, respondent age, disabled status or carer status affected their view of the proposal.

5.3.1 Question 5 - Service breakdown

The figure below identifies the responses provided to question 5 broken down by service used. This suggests a consistent view, with the opinion of respondents not particularly affected by the bus service used.

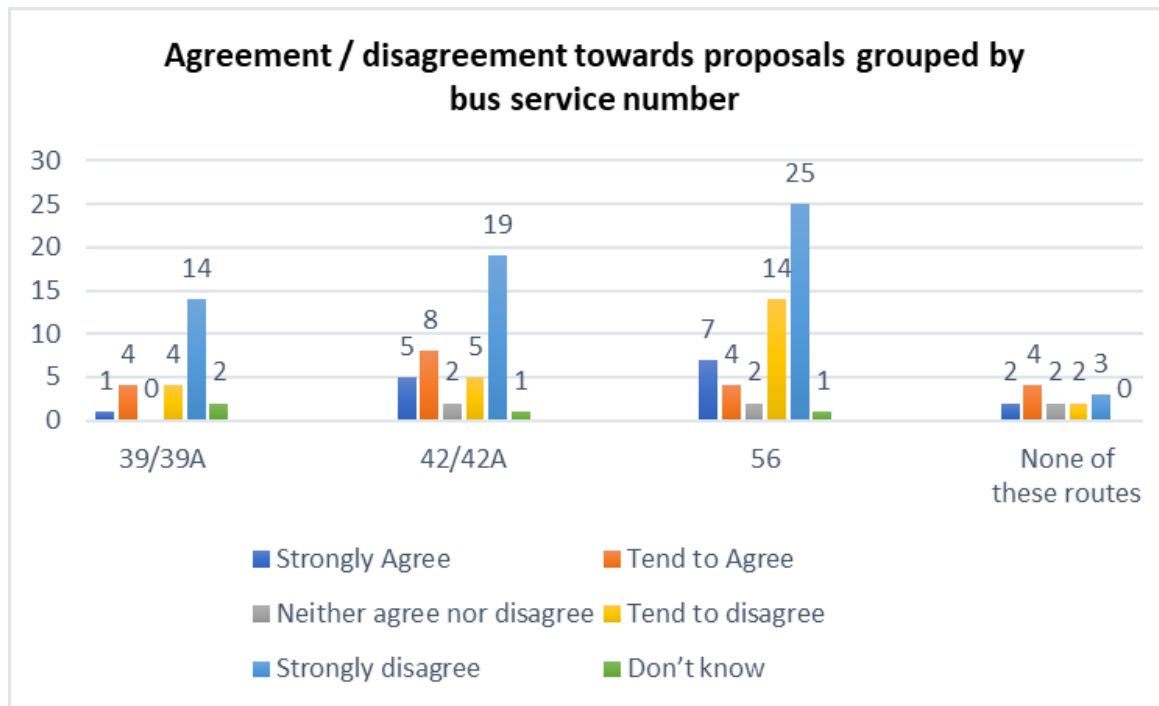


Figure 5.3: Respondents answers to Q5 by service used.

5.3.2 Question 5 – Age breakdown

The figures below compare the responses to question 5 by those under the age of 65 against those over the age of 65 to determine if there is any fundamental difference of view dependent on age. Analysis identifies a very similar position regardless of cohort with similar majorities of responses in each instance disagreeing with the approach adopted.

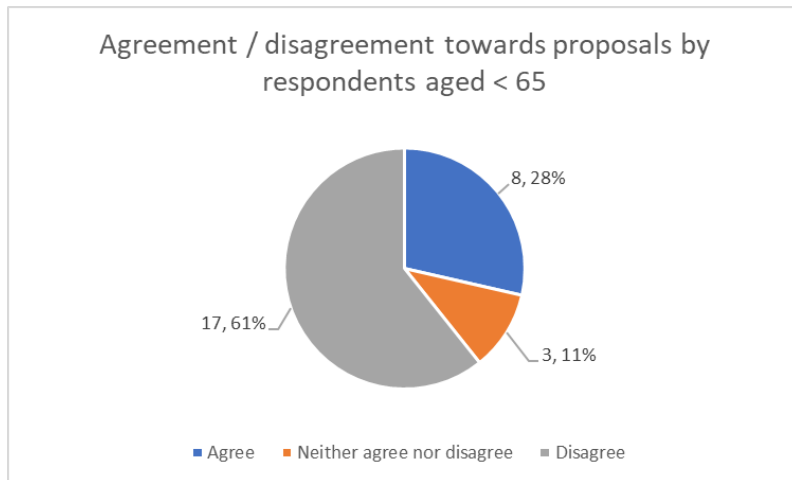


Figure 5.4: Respondents answers to Q5 by those under the age of 65

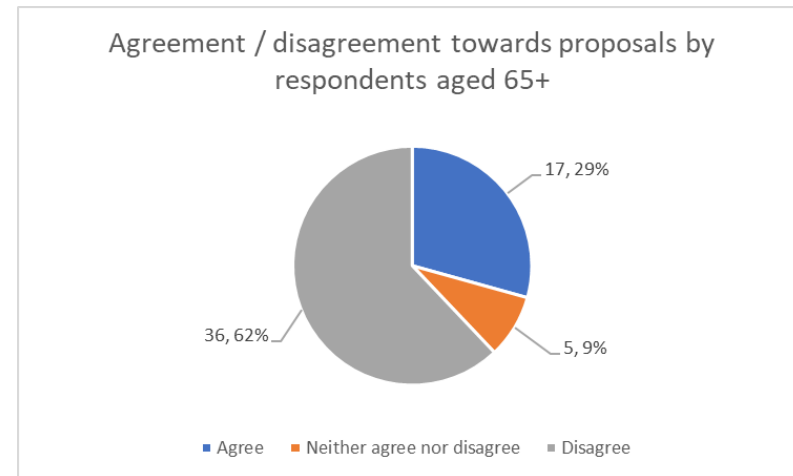


Figure 5.5: Respondents answers to Q5 by those over the age of 65

5.3.3 Question 5 - Disabled status breakdown

18 respondents identified themselves as disabled. The figures below compare the responses to question 5 provided by those respondents identifying themselves as disabled against those not identifying themselves as disabled. Comparison shows higher levels of disagreement to the approach adopted by those identifying themselves as disabled which could suggest a greater impact on this group consistent with the concerns identified within initial EQIAs.

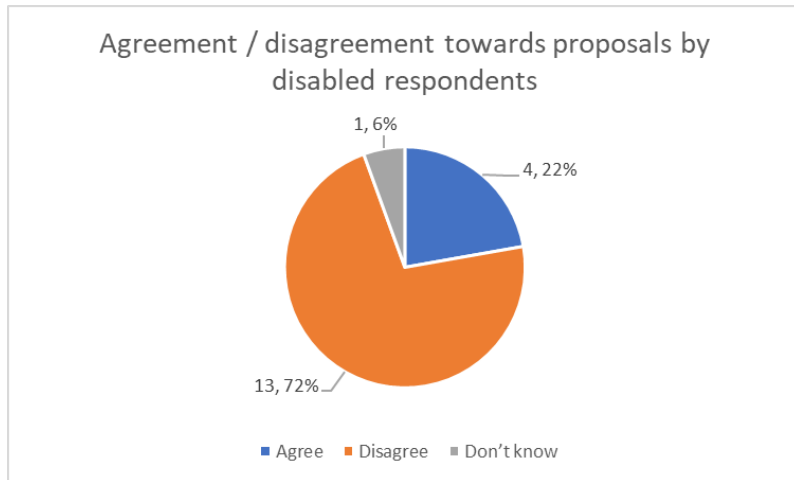


Figure 5.5: Respondents answers to Q5 by those identifying themselves as disabled

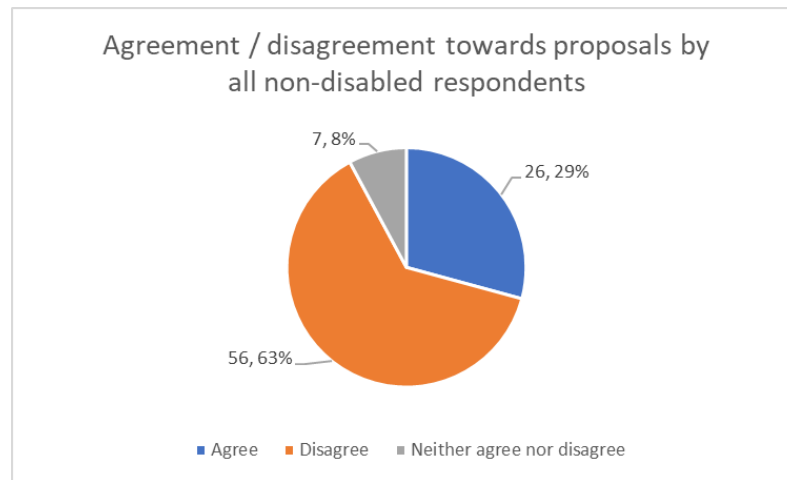


Figure 5.4: Respondents answers to Q5 by those not identifying themselves as disabled.

5.3.4 Question 5 - Carer Status breakdown

11 respondents identified themselves as having a carer responsibility. The figures below compare the responses to question 5 provided by those respondents identifying themselves with a responsibility as a carer against those without this responsibility. Comparison shows higher levels of disagreement to the approach adopted by those identifying themselves as having a responsibility as a carer which could suggest a greater impact on this group consistent with the concerns identified within initial EQIAs.

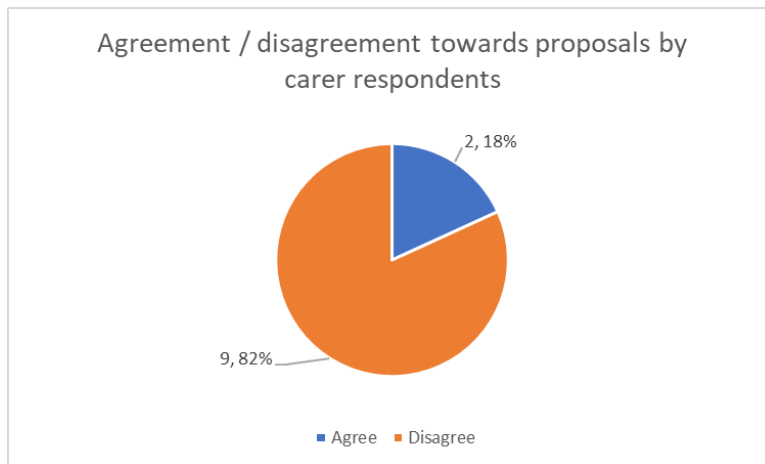


Figure 5.6: Respondents answers to Q5 by those identifying themselves as having a responsibility as a Carer

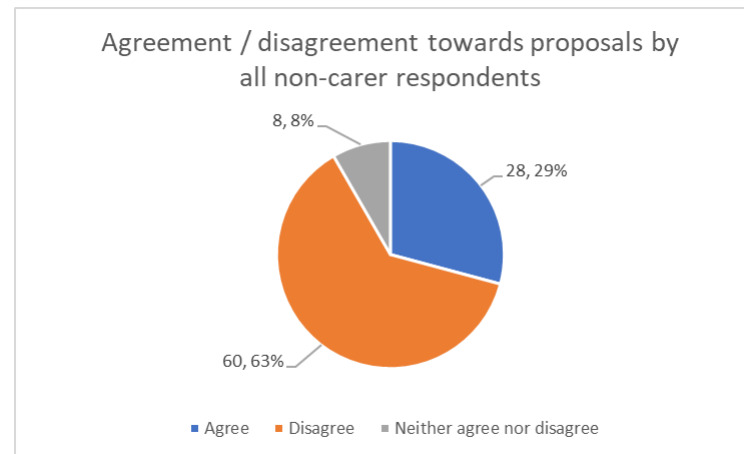
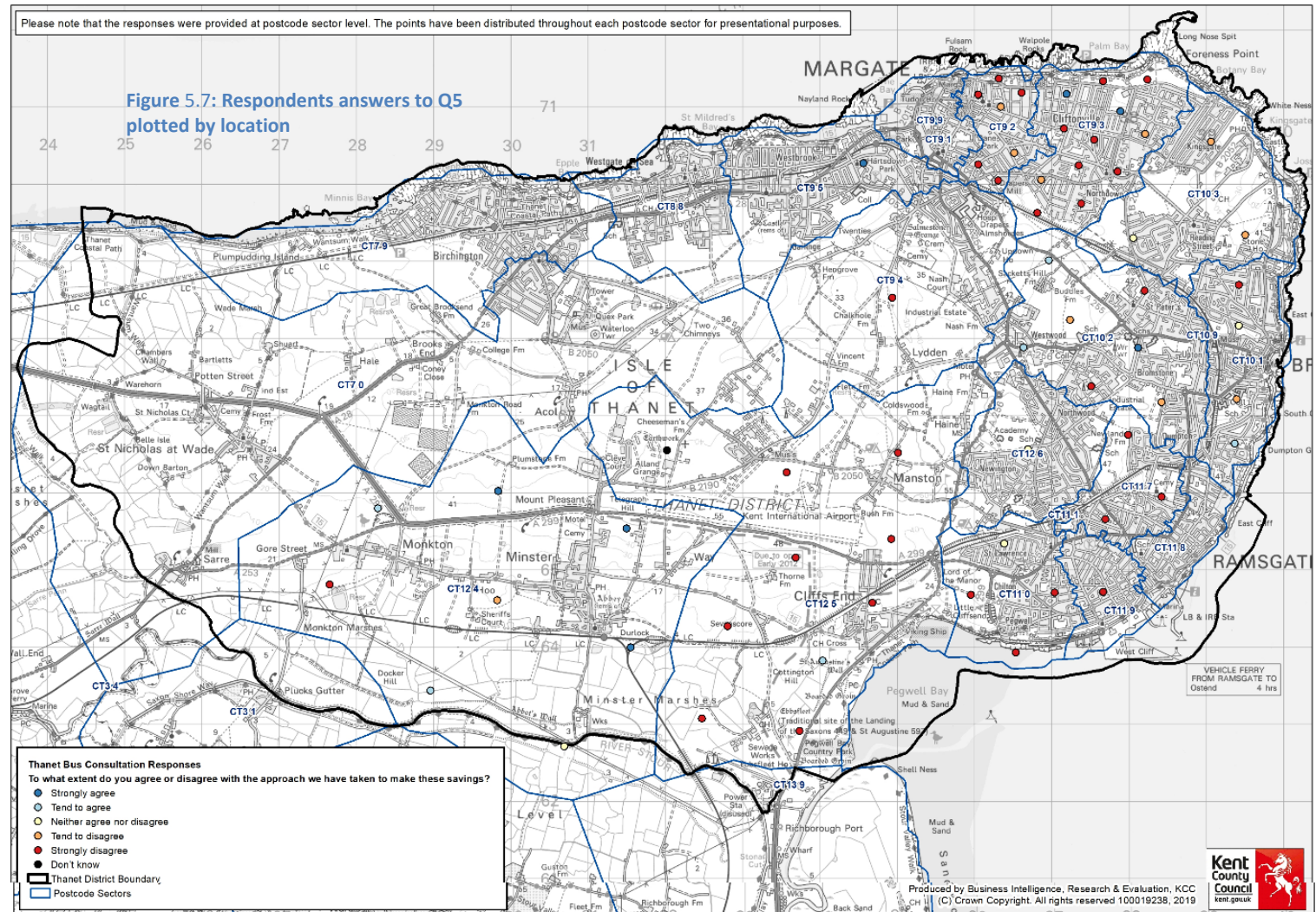


Figure 5.6: Respondents answers to Q5 by those identifying themselves as NOT having a responsibility as a Carer

5.3.5 Question 5 – Location breakdown

The figure to the right shows responses to question 5 plotted by location. Analysis shows firstly that responses have been received across a broad area within the District suggesting that there was good and widespread awareness of the consultation. More detailed consideration of the response type suggests the highest concentration of positive responses were received from the Monkton and Minster areas which would be expected given the more positive implications of the network changes on these areas in comparison with the rest of the area.



5.4 Q5a. Please add any comments on our approach to support your answer to question 5 and on any other Equalities implications in response to question 6.

Respondents were invited to provide comments as free text in response to question 5 (relating to the approach) and in response to question 6 (in relation to Equalities impacts). The responses were very similar and, in many instances, completely duplicated. Therefore, for the purposes of representing this information, the questions have been combined.

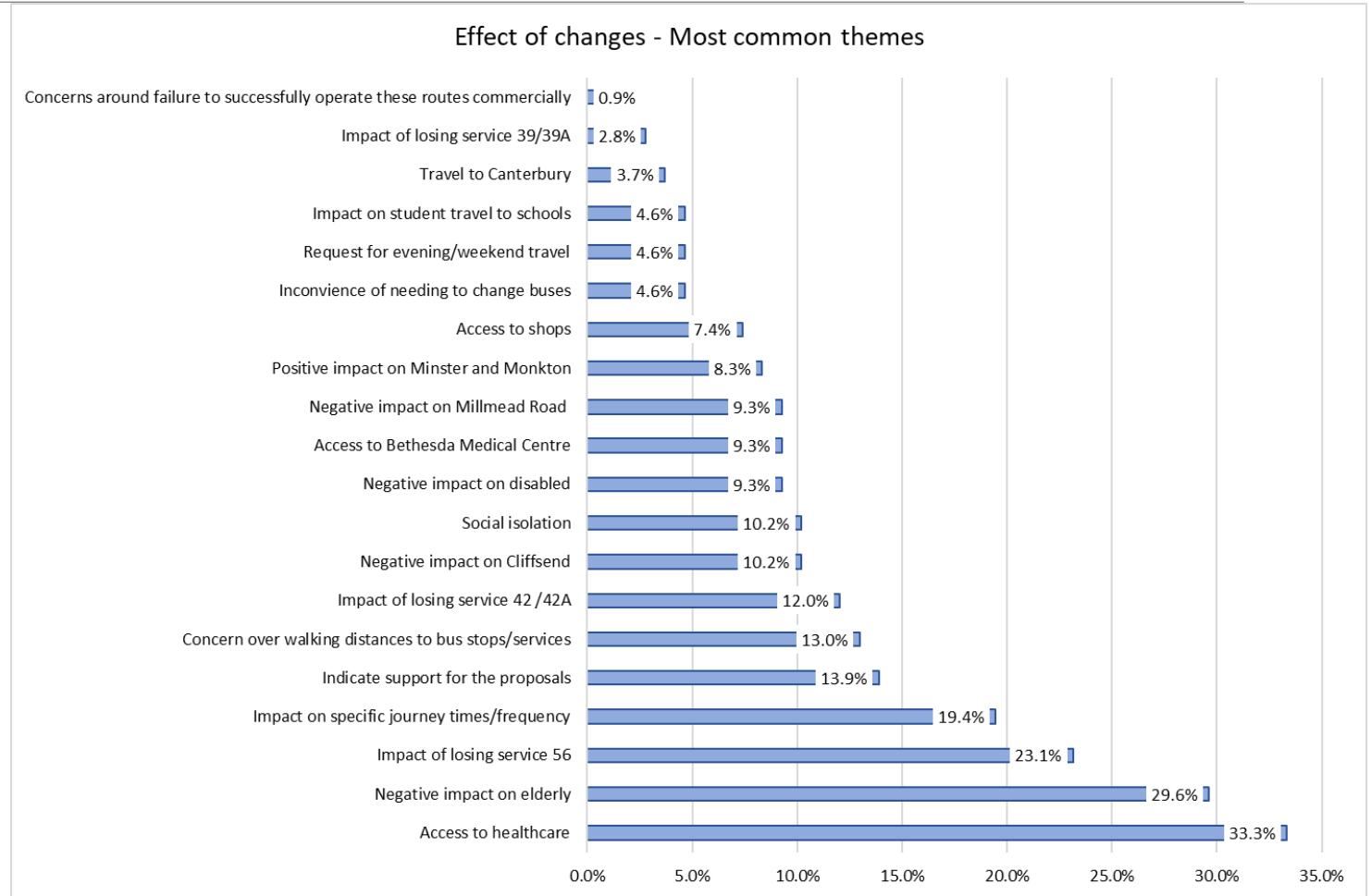


Figure 5.8: Themes to open questions by proportion.

Some of the typical comments are presented in the table below.

Figure 5.9: Themes to open questions by example

Theme	Number of comments including each theme	They said....
Access to Healthcare	36	<p><i>"Fewer journeys impact on ability to attend doctor/dentist/hospital appointments"</i></p> <p><i>"Impact on healthcare provision for people in Millmead, Northdown Road and Devonshire Gardens"</i></p> <p><i>"Many elderly residents in Cliffsend are too old to drive and need 42/42A to safely get to surgery in Minster"</i></p>
Negative impact on Elderly	32	<p><i>"People will lose independence as many elderly people use these services to get about"</i></p> <p><i>"42/42A urgently needed in Cliffsend due to the high number of elderly residents"</i></p> <p><i>"The people using the buses contain a high proportion of elderly and infirm, to whom a 10-minute walk may cause suffering"</i></p>
Impact of losing service 56	25	<p><i>"New 37 service provides fewer journeys and longer times between buses"</i></p> <p><i>"The number 56 bus tends to be used by ENCTS bus pass holders and the first number 37 bus from Broadstairs would be too early for them to be used"</i></p>
Specific journey times / frequency	21	<p><i>"I agree with the new routes, but the timetables need to be extended later into the evening so that people can use them to get to / from work"</i></p>
General indication of support for the proposed changes	15	<p><i>"The replacement 38 service for the withdrawn 56 bus is a great improvement for residents along Eastern Esplanade and for patients using Bethesda Medical Centre"</i></p> <p><i>"The proposal seems to still cater for those people in remote areas to be able to get out and about"</i></p>
Concerns around walking distances to bus stops / services	14	<p><i>"The proposals indicate no more than a 5-10-minute walk, but for areas like Devonshire Gardens and College Road in Margate that can be 25-30 mins for a disabled walker"</i></p> <p><i>"Walking times given to access alternative routes are very optimistic considering the type of people it will effect"</i></p>

Impact of loss of 42 / 42A	13	<p><i>"The removal of the 42 bus will significantly impair the free movement of Cliffsend residents"</i></p> <p><i>"Should The 42 service be removed many residents particularly those of more advanced years will be left without access to Public Transport"</i></p>
Negative Impact on Cliffs End	11	<p><i>"Cliffsend generally is without footpaths and is a retirement area, so losing service 42 means that old and less mobile people would need to walk along roads lacking footpaths"</i></p> <p><i>"Of particular concern is the loss of the direct 42 service between Cliffsend village centre and Minster"</i></p> <p><i>"No provision for a daily service to the QEQM as is in place once daily by the 42"</i></p>
Potential for Social Isolation	11	<p><i>"The bus service enables interaction, conversation and companionship for many who would otherwise live very isolated lives"</i></p> <p><i>"Reducing bus services could trigger social isolation"</i></p>
Negative Impact on Disabled	10	<p><i>"Being disabled this is going to completely change my life. If these changes go ahead, I worry for my mental and physical health"</i></p>
Specific mention of Bethesda Medical Centre ("Palm Bay Drs")	10	<p><i>"The replacement 38 service for the withdrawn 56 bus is a great improvement for residents along eastern esplanade and for patients using Bethesda medical centre"</i></p> <p><i>"Northdown Surgery is due to merge with Bethesda Medical Centre... loss of 56 route would make it very difficult for patients to access their doctor"</i></p>
Negative impact on Millmead Rd area	10	<p><i>"Millmead needs a direct link to Westwood Cross and not just the 32 to Margate and back"</i></p> <p><i>"Diminished access to healthcare for people living in Millmead"</i></p>
Positive impact on Minster/Monkton	9	<p><i>"The proposal of the number 9 bus serving Minster and Monkton is very welcome indeed and will benefit both communities"</i></p> <p><i>"I think rerouting the number 9 through Minster is amazing! Will allow both myself and people I know to have so much more journey options!"</i></p>
Access to shops	8	<p><i>"Improved bus services on the number 9 bus for both Minster and Monkton will be very helpful for older people who are reliant on the bus to access shops"</i></p>

Negativity around need to change Buses	5	<i>"39 route takes you to Montefiore medical centre. If you use other buses it would involve 2 changes. If you are disabled, this makes it very difficult"</i>
Request for evening / weekend travel?	5	<i>"Improvement in the indicative timetable proposed as to hours but it may miss those going to work in Thanet as not early enough service.... A later evening service would be great for young people"</i> <i>"...the 9 from Westwood Cross finishes too early"</i> <i>"It would also be great if a limited Sunday/Bank Holiday service was introduced on the number 9 and 11"</i>
Potential impact on student travel to schools	5	<i>"Cutting of the 42A would have a hugely detrimental impact to those young persons who fill the bus on its journey from Monkton/Minster to the schools"</i>
Travel to Canterbury	4	<i>"It will provide quicker journey time to Ramsgate and Canterbury than the existing services"</i> <i>"My Concern is the extra time the 9 will take from Broadstairs to Canterbury, going via Minster and Monkton, as these buses can't keep to time"</i>
Impact of loss of 39/39A	3	<i>"The 39 service is the only bus link from Sherwood Gardens to Montefiore Doctors Surgery"</i>
Concerns around Stagecoach withdrawing (previously supported) services in future	1	<i>"A back-up plan needs to be put in place in the event that Stagecoach fail to successfully operate these routes commercially"</i>

6. Next Steps

On the 17th January, this report and an updated EqIA will be considered by the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee, who will be asked to make a recommendation about whether to progress with the changes proposed or not.

The consultation report, EqIA and recommendation will be considered by the Cabinet Member for Highways Transportation and Waste who will ultimately make the decision.

This decision and this report will be communicated via our website www.kent.gov.uk/thanetbusconsultation and we will send a notification to those who have provided contact details throughout the process, including stakeholder organisations.

If the decision is taken to make changes to services these would likely take effect from Monday 1st April and in advance of this notices would be placed on all affected bus services notifying passengers of the change.