

# Maidstone Bus Pilot Consultation Report

March 2019



Public Consultation:

22 January – 19 February 2019

## **Alternative Formats**

This document can be made available in other formats or languages, please email [alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk](mailto: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

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1. Background .....	4
1.2. Purpose of the Consultation.....	5
1.3. Purpose of this Report .....	5
<b>2. Consultation Process .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1. Promoting the Consultation.....	7
2.2 Pre-consultation Engagement Activities .....	7
2.3 During Consultation Activities .....	8
<b>3. Response Profile.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4. Equality, Accessibility &amp; Demographics .....</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Respondent Demographics .....	16
4.1.1 Q11 Age .....	16
4.1.2 Q9 Gender.....	16
4.1.3 Q13 Disability .....	16
4.1.4 Q14 Carer responsibilities .....	17
4.1.5 Q8 Other Equality Impacts .....	18
4.2 EQIA Conclusion.....	20
<b>5. Consultation Results.....</b>	<b>21</b>
5.1 Q5a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the changes we have proposed for the 13 service (Hollingbourne – Maidstone) .....	21
5.2 Q5a - further analysis.....	22
5.2.1 Q5a – Service User breakdown .....	22

5.2.2 Q5a – Disabled status breakdown .....	23
5.2.3 Q5a - Age breakdown .....	24
5.2.4 Q5a - Carer Status breakdown.....	25
5.3 Q5b. Please add any comments you have on the proposed changes to the 13 service (Hollingbourne – Maidstone).....	26
5.4 Q6a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the changes we have proposed for the 59 service (Grafty Green – Maidstone).....	28
5.5 Q6a - further analysis.....	29
5.5.1 Q6a - Service breakdown .....	29
5.5.2 Q6a - Disabled status breakdown .....	30
5.5.3 Q6a – Age breakdown.....	31
5.5.4 Q6a - Carer Status breakdown.....	32
5.6 Q6b. Please add any comments on the proposed changes to the 59 service (Grafty Green – Maidstone).....	33
5.7 Q7. Please add any further comments you have on the proposed changes to the 13 and 59 services in the box below. ....	35
<b>6. Next Steps .....</b>	<b>36</b>

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

From June to August 2018, Kent County Council (KCC) held a county wide consultation, the Big Conversation, with communities and transport providers to explore innovative and sustainable ways of providing transport to rural communities in Kent. Despite ever-decreasing funding for local councils, we want to maintain and improve accessibility for those without an alternative means of travel in rural areas.

We have used the results of the consultation to develop a number of pilot schemes to test out the ideas and help shape the future delivery of public transport. The most popular idea in the Big Conversation consultation was a feeder service.

The feeder bus picks up passengers from villages in rural communities and then drops them off at a bus stop to transfer on to a commercial service to complete their journey. This type of service makes good use of regular, high frequency commercial bus services to provide more frequent bus services to rural communities.

One of these pilots proposes making changes to the 13 and 59 services, which we already support, in order to improve them to see if we can make them more sustainable by converting them into feeder buses. The pilot scheme is proposed to run from June 2019-June 2020. Full details of the proposed changes can be found within the Maidstone Bus Pilot Consultation Document at [www.kent.gov.uk/maistonebuspilot](http://www.kent.gov.uk/maistonebuspilot).

From 22 January to 19 February 2019, Kent County Council (KCC) consulted on changes to bus services in the Maidstone area. **This document focuses on the consultation responses for changes to the 13 and 59 services in Maidstone.**

## **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 services 13 and 59 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 changes 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 and Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport & Waste, who will make a final decision on whether or not to proceed with the changes.

## 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.

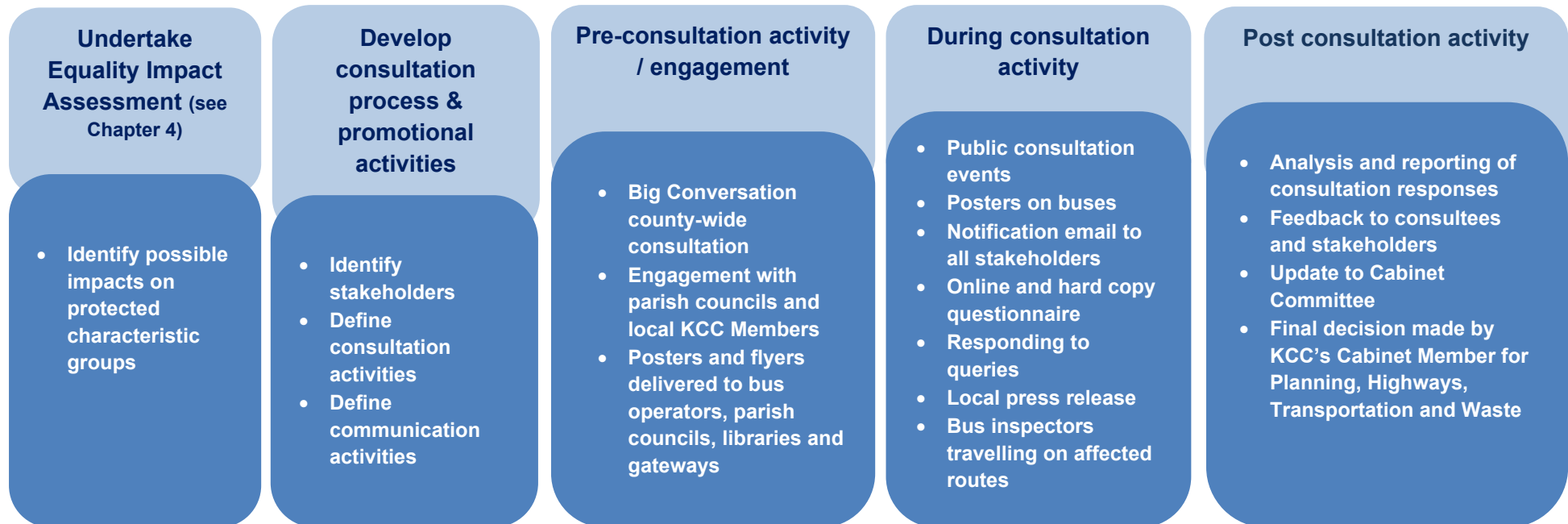


Figure 2.1: The consultation process

## 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 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 Maidstone.
- Press release and coverage in local newspapers.
- Posters and flyers placed on affected buses.
- Posters, flyers and consultation materials displayed at local libraries and gateways in areas potential impacted by the proposals.
- KCC Public Transport Inspectors travelled on affected services promoting the consultaion and answering questions.
- Two public drop-in events held in areas potentially impacted by the proposals.
- A page on KCC's Consultation Directory on Kent.gov.uk.

Parish Councils provided significant support to the promotion of the consultation ensuring materials were displayed in their communities and that residents were informed. The strong response level is testament to their hard work.

*Please note: materials are available for reference at [www.kent.gov.uk/maidstonebuspilot](http://www.kent.gov.uk/maidstonebuspilot)*

## 2.2 Pre-consultation Engagement Activities

- KCC officers engaged with Arriva and Nu-Venture to develop the proposals and understand the impacts.
- KCC officers met with local members and parish councils to develop the proposals and understand the impacts.
- The results of the Big Conversation consultation were used to develop the proposals and can be found at [www.kent.gov.uk/bigconversation](http://www.kent.gov.uk/bigconversation).
- Equality Impact Assessments were developed to take account of further detail.

## 2.3 During Consultation Activities

The consultation launched on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 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/maidstonebuspilot](http://www.kent.gov.uk/maidstonebuspilot). A flyer outlining the detail of the proposals was created and distributed on buses, by a KCC Public Transport Inspector when travelling on services and through libraries and gateways. In addition, hard copies of the flyer 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	124
Consultation Stage Equality Impact Assessment	19
Word version of consultation questionnaire	19
Consultation poster	17
Consultation flyer	13

Table 2.3: Material Downloads

### 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 by the bus inspector and was made available on request via telephone or e-mail.



## Face to face engagement

During the consultation period, the local KCC Public Transport Inspector travelled weekly on affected services, distributing flyers, booklets and questionnaires as well as responding to any questions of detail about the nature of the changes and the reasons for them. Over two dozen booklets and questionnaires were distributed in this manner. The bus operator was also supplied with copies of the flyer which were distributed by drivers.

## Consultation Events

Two public information drop-in events were conducted:

- 4<sup>th</sup> February 10:00 – 13:00 at St Nicholas Church, Leeds, Maidstone (on the 13-bus route)
- 9<sup>th</sup> February 09:30 – 12:30 at Kingswood and Broomfield Village Hall, Kingswood, Maidstone (on the 59-bus route)

These events were held in venues accessible to those using the directly affected bus services. KCC officers were available to explain the changes to residents and respond to any detailed questions. 10 people attended the event first event and approximately 60 attended the event in Kingswood. Kingswood and Broomfield Parish Council provided excellent support at the parish event in their village hall, helping to manage high levels of attendees.

### 3. Response Profile

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

There was a total of **112** responses to the consultation:

- Of the 112 responses to the consultation questionnaire, **79** were received online and **33** were hard copy responses
- There was 1 letter 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.
- 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.

<b>Q1. Please tell us in what capacity you are completing this questionnaire</b>	<b>No. of responses</b>
Yourself	94
Representative of local community group	1
As a Parish/Town/District Council	1
On behalf of a business	2
On behalf of a charity	0
On behalf of a friend or relative	8
Other	0

Table 3.1: Respondent Groups

Respondents were asked which of the services they travelled on:

- 62% of respondents travel on the 59 service
- 26% of respondents travel on the 13 service

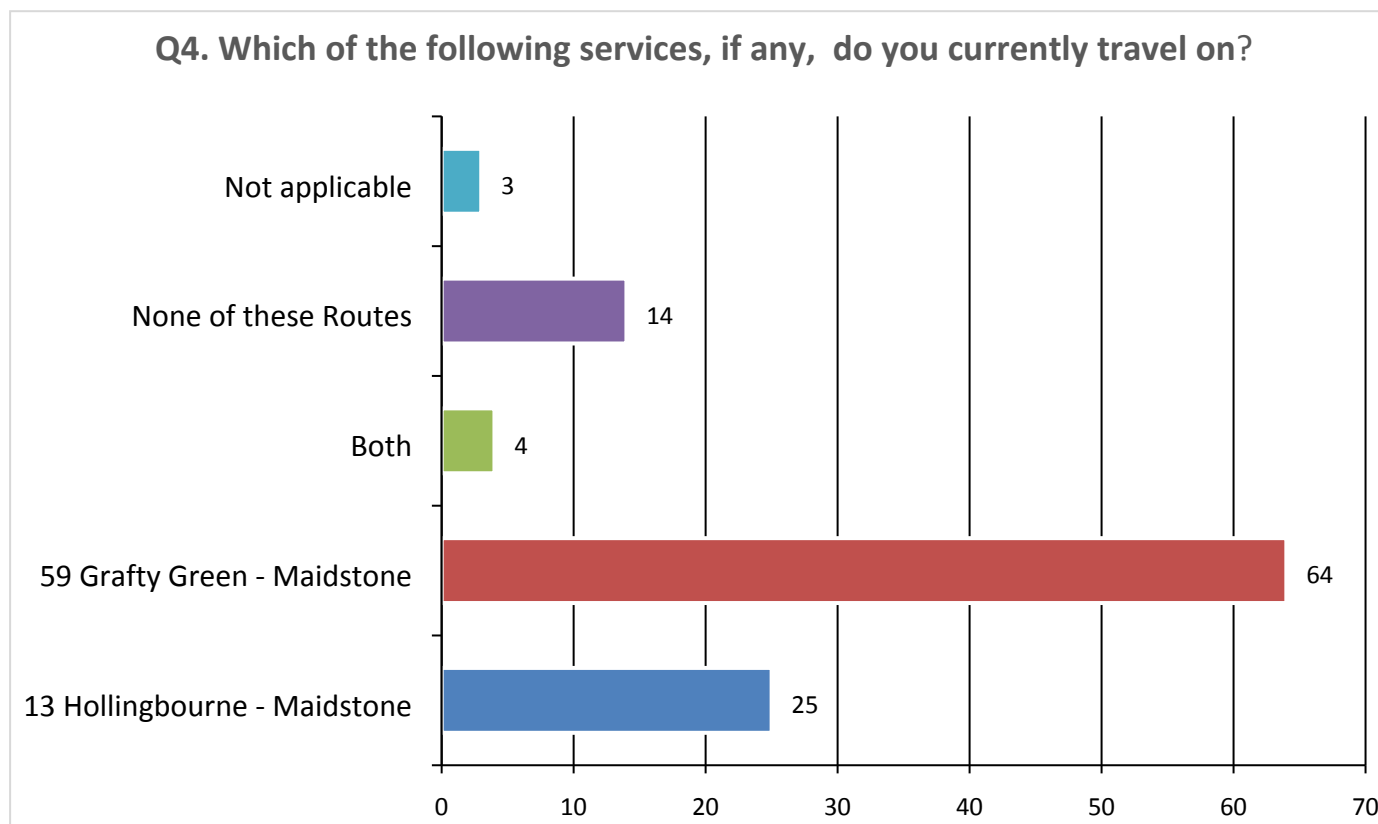


Figure 3.1: Service Users

Respondents were also asked if they travelled using a concessionary travel pass.

Q3. Do you travel using any of the following bus passes?	No. of Responses
Older Persons (English National Concessionary Travel Scheme)	61
Mobility Impairment (English National Concessionary Travel Scheme)	9
Companion (English National Concessionary Travel Scheme)	1
Young Persons Travel Card	6
Kent 16+ Travel Card	3
KCC Free School Bus Pass	1
No, I do not use any bus passes	19
Not applicable	12

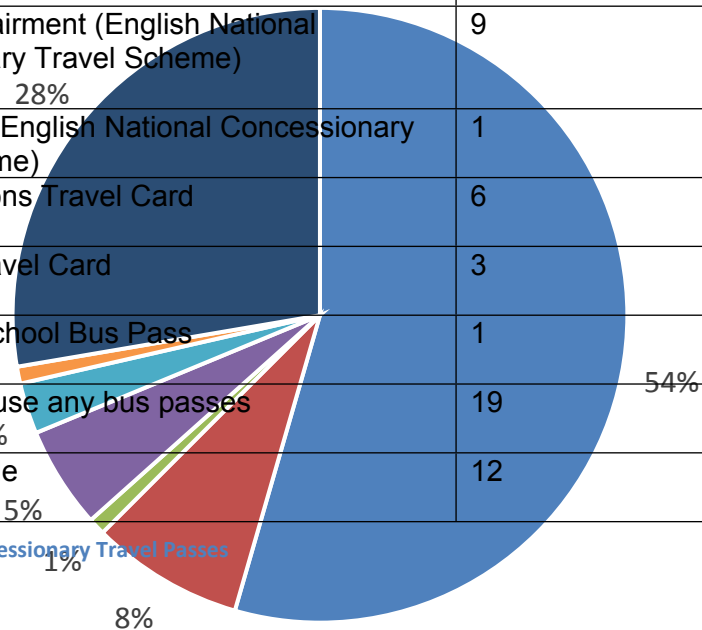


Table 3.2 Concessionary Travel Passes

Figure 3.2: Concessionary Travel Passes

The figure to the right shows the breakdown of responses by postcode. Analysis shows firstly that responses have been received across a broad area along the bus route, suggesting that there was good and widespread awareness of the consultation.

14 responses to this question were not valid and 11 gave the response ME17.

Q2. Please tell us the first 5 characters of your postcode.	No. of Reponses
ME173	59
ME171	18
ME174	6
ME158	3
ME145	3
ME172	2
ME159	2
ME157	1
ME143	1
ME141	1

Table 3.3 Postcode Data

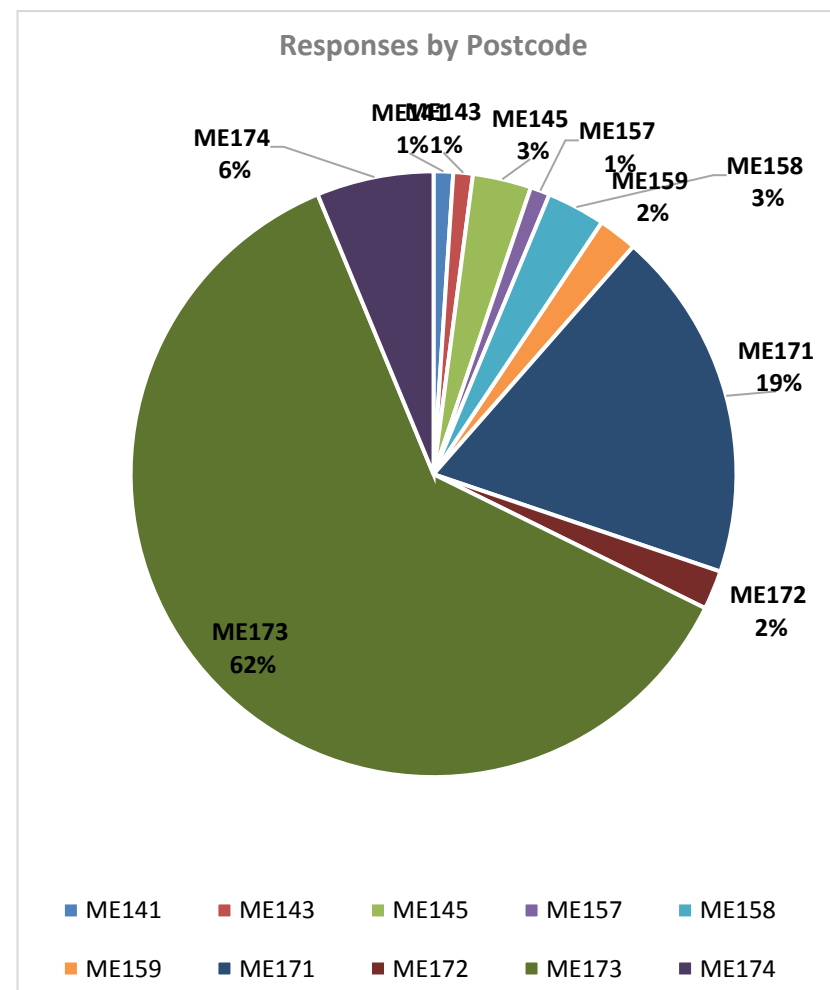


Figure 3.3 Postcode Data

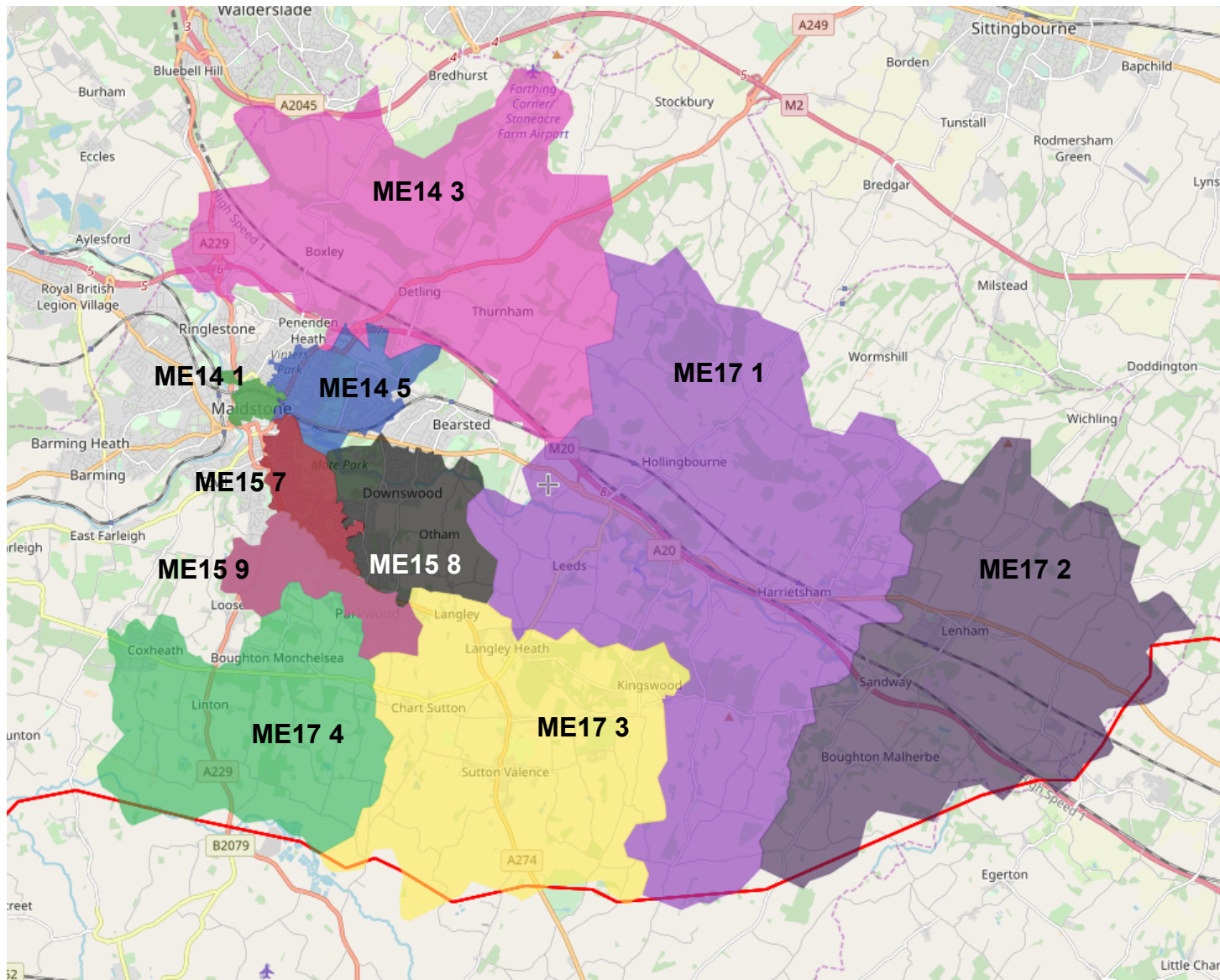


Figure 3.4 Postcode Map

## 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, sex, 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 available during the consultation and downloaded from the webpage 19 times. The EqIA is available to view at [www.kent.gov.uk/maidstonebuspilot](http://www.kent.gov.uk/maidstonebuspilot). We have used the feedback gathered from the consultation to update the EqIA for the proposed pilot scheme.

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; Disability and Pregnancy & Maternity as being more adversely affected by changes to bus services than other groups. It also identified Age and Carers as being more positively affected by the changes.

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 'More About You' questions in the questionnaire. As passenger data is not collected on bus service, analysing if these response levels are representative of service users is difficult.

Elderly and disabled passengers combined account for around 40% of respondent, which is comparable with the 40% of passengers traveling on these services with ENCTS passes. This suggests they are appropriately represented.

### 4.1.1 Q11 Age

Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents' age. Over 64% were over 65 years old. Not all respondents answered this question.

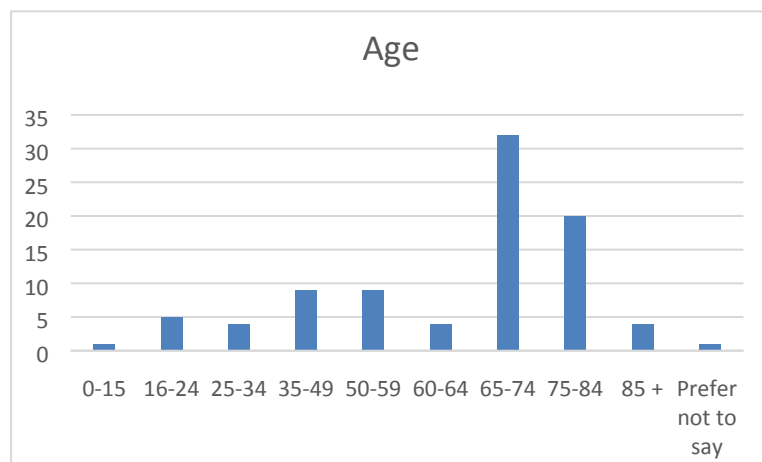


Figure 4.1: Respondents by age

### 4.1.2 Q9 Gender

- 60% of respondents are women
- 38% of respondents are men
- 2% respondents preferred not to state their sex.

### 4.1.3 Q13 Disability

21 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. Some respondents had multiple impairments.

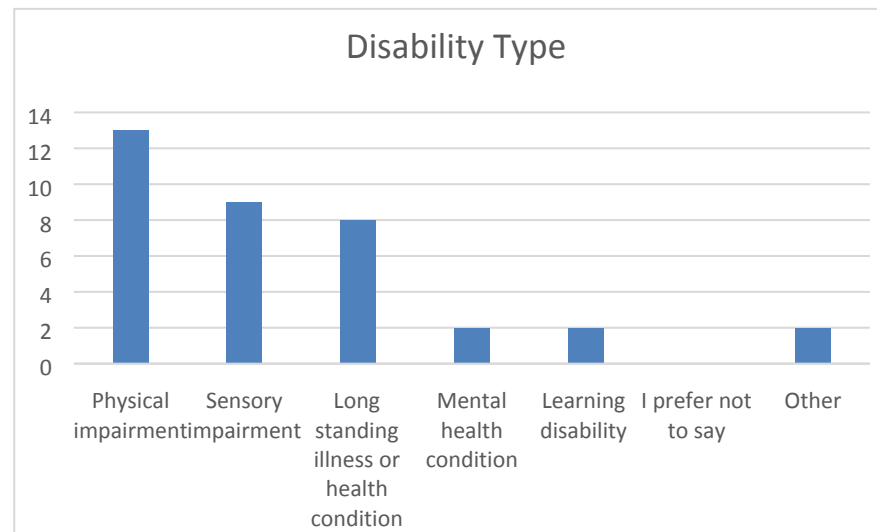


Figure 4.2: 'Disability impairments'



#### 4.1.4 Q14 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. 12 respondents identified

themselves as a carer (10%), as identified in the chart below:

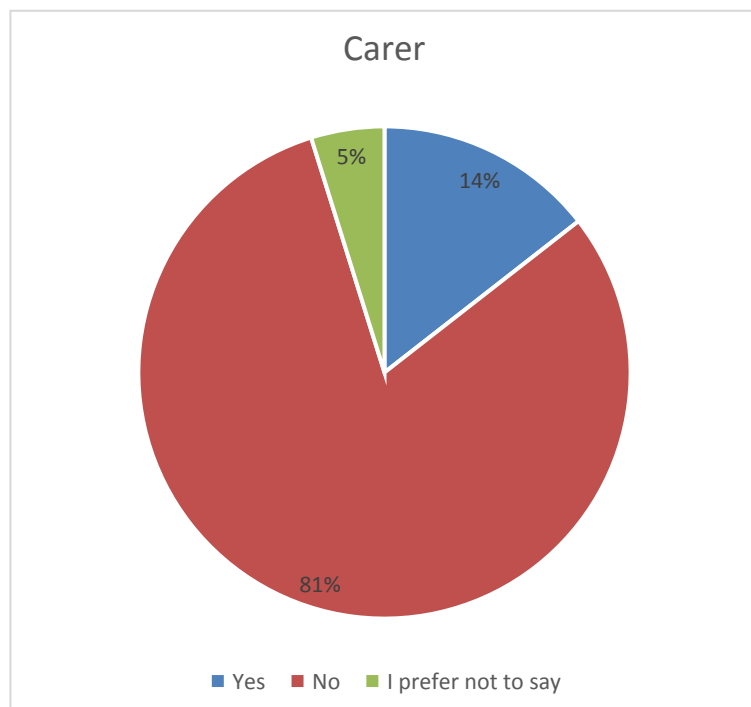


Figure 4.3: 'Carer Responsibilities'

#### 4.1.5 Q8 Other Equality Impacts

Question 8 consisted of two parts:

- **Q8a. Our EqIA has identified that our proposals may negatively impact on disability and maternity. If you identify with these groups, please provide us with details of how these changes could impact you.** 11 people responded to this question.
- **Q8b. If you have any comments about the Equality Impact Assessment, please provide them in the box below.** 3 people responded to this question.

The responses to these questions were very similar and thus they have been reported together.

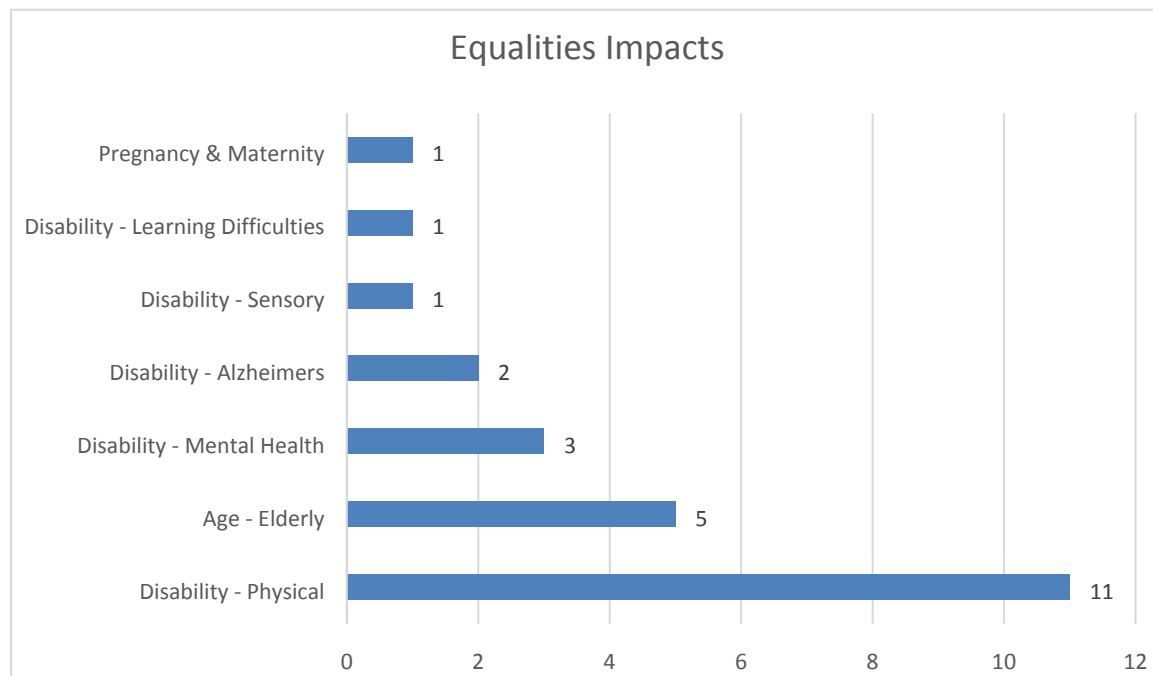


Figure 4.4: 'Equalities Impacts by Proportion'

Theme	Number of comments including each theme	Examples of feedback
Disability – Physical Disability	11	<p><i>“I would be unable to walk the long distance to Sutton rd or Ashford rd to get a bus as I visit Leeds village three times a week”</i></p> <p><i>“This would mean walking a lot further with my friend who uses a walking aid and both of us would find standing around at a bus stop at Morrisons waiting for a connection almost impossible”</i></p>
Age – Older Residents	5	<p><i>I am an 'older' person, and whilst I do not have major disability problems, yet... have knee problems, and cannot stand for long periods</i></p> <p><i>This would be a great help to elderly people who don't drive</i></p>
Disability - Mental Health / Anxiety	3	<p><i>“Having to change to a second bus ...is also very stressful and increases anxiety</i></p>
Disability – Alzheimers	2	<p><i>“I think this would also impact on people with dementia who have got used to doing to same journey and will probably get confused about where they are going and where to get off”.</i></p> <p><i>“I am a carer for a dementia patient, and the longer and more complicated journey will be a disadvantage”</i></p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	1	<p><i>“I ...was recently also pregnant. Having to change to a second bus is just not practical”</i></p>
Disability – Learning Difficulties	1	<p><i>I feel you've neglected to include people with learning difficulties</i></p>
Disability – Sensory	1	<p><i>I AM VERY SHORT SIGHTED AND GETTING MORE DISABLED, RE GETTING UP HIGH STEPS</i></p>

Table 4.1: 'Equalities Impact by Example'

## 4.2 EQIA Conclusion

High proportions of elderly responders and 21 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 groups of society and the volume and proportion of responses from these groups would appear to confirm this.

In addition, 64% of responses were identified as being from female respondents suggesting that women are perhaps also more affected by bus service changes. This is consistent with other recent bus consultations and 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 group 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.

The responses across both services were similar. As anticipated, those with a disability were more likely to disagree with the proposals than those who do not identify as disabled. Similarly, those with Carer responsibilities were much more likely to disagree with the changes than those without Carer responsibilities. Although this is a relatively small sample size with only 12 responses from this group, this feedback has been incorporated into the Equality Impact Assessment.

The responses suggest that those over the age of 65 were no more likely to disagree with the proposals than younger respondents. The over 65s were **more likely to agree** with the changes to the 59 service than the younger group, suggesting they would gain greater benefit from the increased journey frequency.

Consideration of some of the open comments provided has allowed for a more detailed breakdown of the impact of these proposals on those with a disability.

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

## 5. Consultation Results

### 5.1 Q5a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the changes we have proposed for the 13 service (Hollingbourne – Maidstone)

There were 91 responses to this question. The figure on the right identifies the total responses to this question.

- 10 respondents disagreed with the changes.
- 47 respondents agreed with the changes.
- 34 respondents either did not agree or disagree with the changes or did not know.

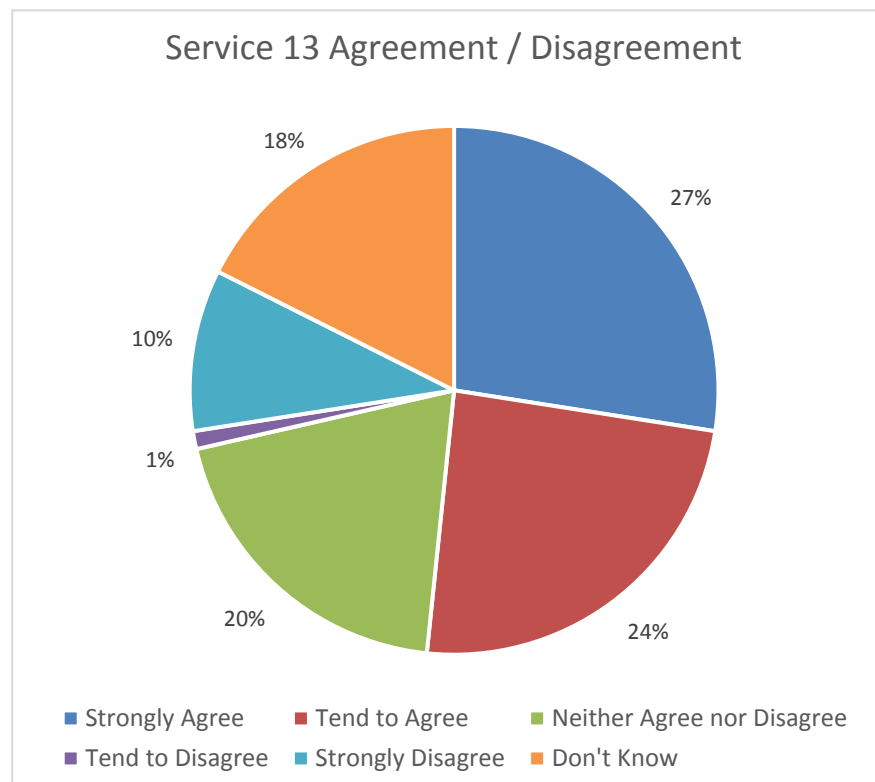


Figure 5.1 Respondents answers to Q5a

## 5.2 Q5a - further analysis

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

### 5.2.1 Q5a – Service User breakdown

All 29 current users of service 13 responded to this question.

The figure on the right identifies the responses to question 5 from respondents from this group. Of these:

- 5 disagreed with the changes
- 19 agreed with the changes
- 5 either did not agree or disagree with the changes

Levels of both agreement and disagreement are slightly higher due to a reduction in respondents who were unaffected by this service.

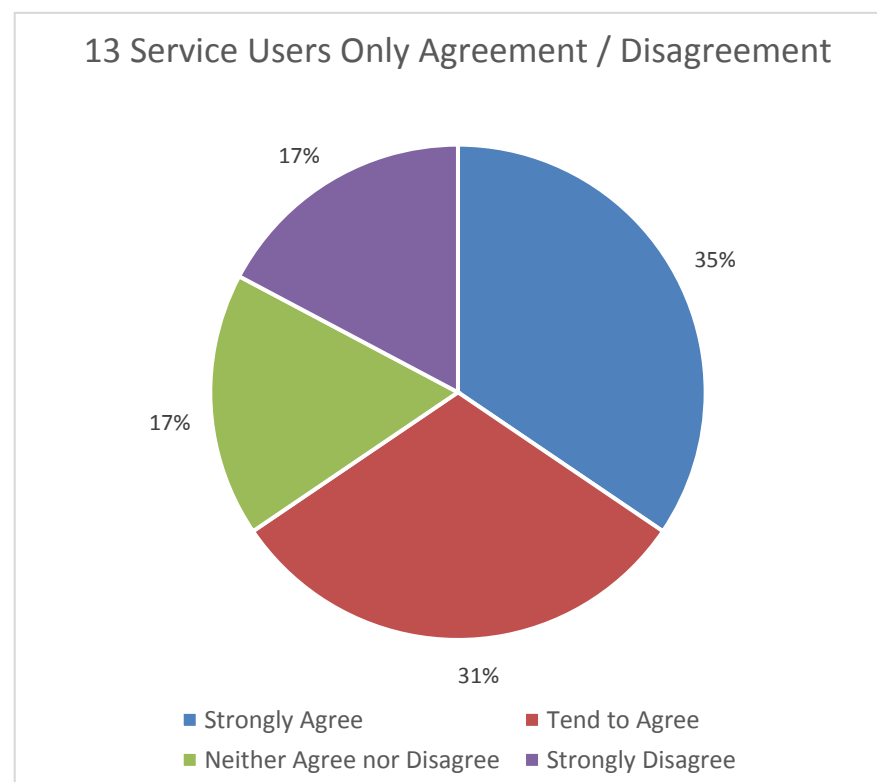


Figure 5.2.1: Respondents answers to Q5 by service user.

### 5.2.2 Q5a – Disabled status breakdown

21 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.

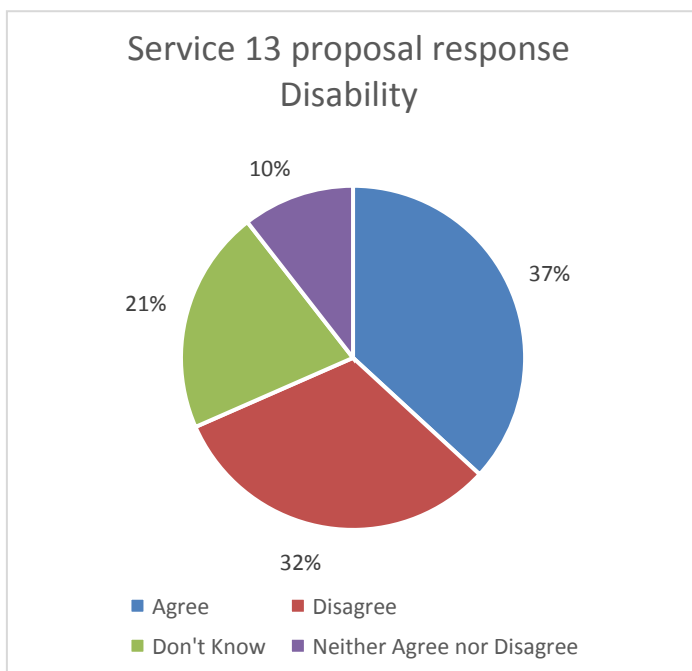


Figure 5.2.2: Respondents answers to Q5 by those identifying themselves as disabled

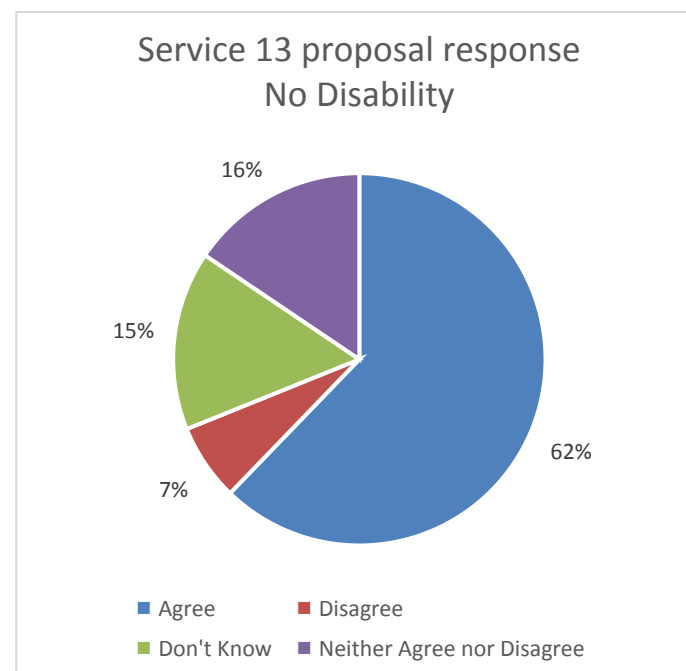


Figure 5.2.3: Respondents answers to Q5 by those not identifying themselves as disabled.

### 5.2.3 Q5a - 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 those over the age of 65 are marginally more likely to agree with the changes suggesting they may gain greater benefit from the changes.

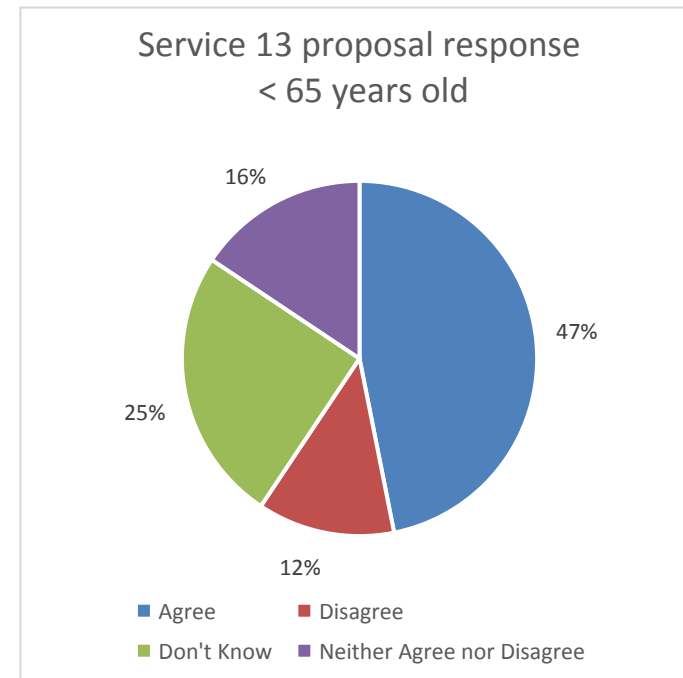
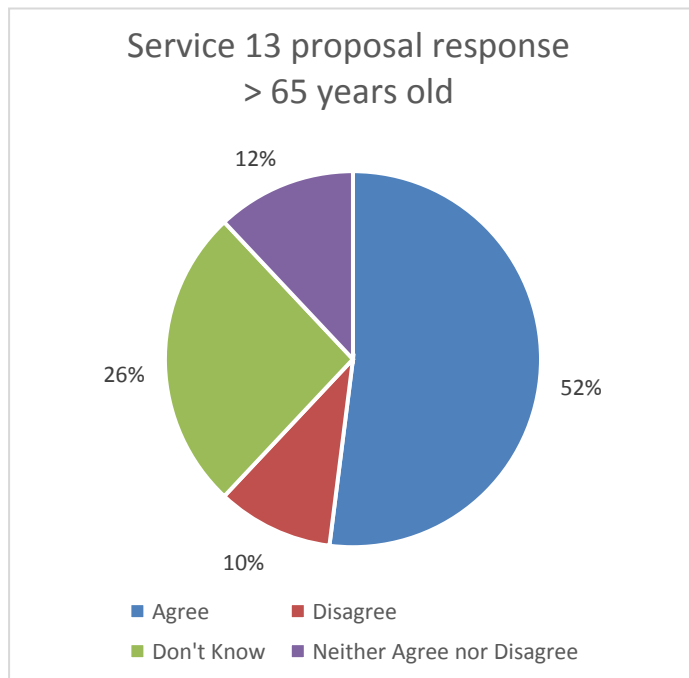


Figure 5.2.4: Respondents answers to Q5a by those over the age of 65

Figure 5.2.5: Respondents answers to Q5a by those under the age of 65



### 5.2.4 Q5a - Carer Status breakdown

12 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.

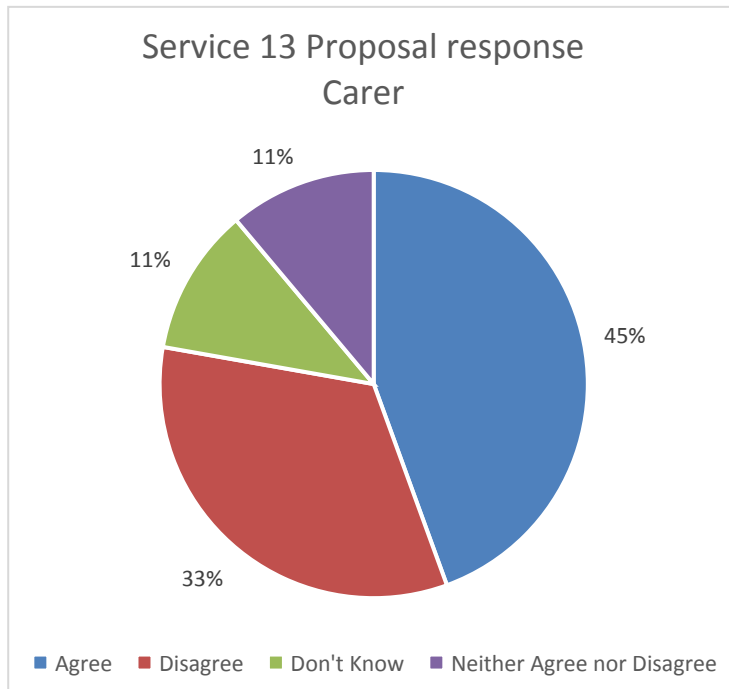


Figure 5.2.6: Respondents answers to Q5 by those identifying themselves as having a responsibility as a Carer

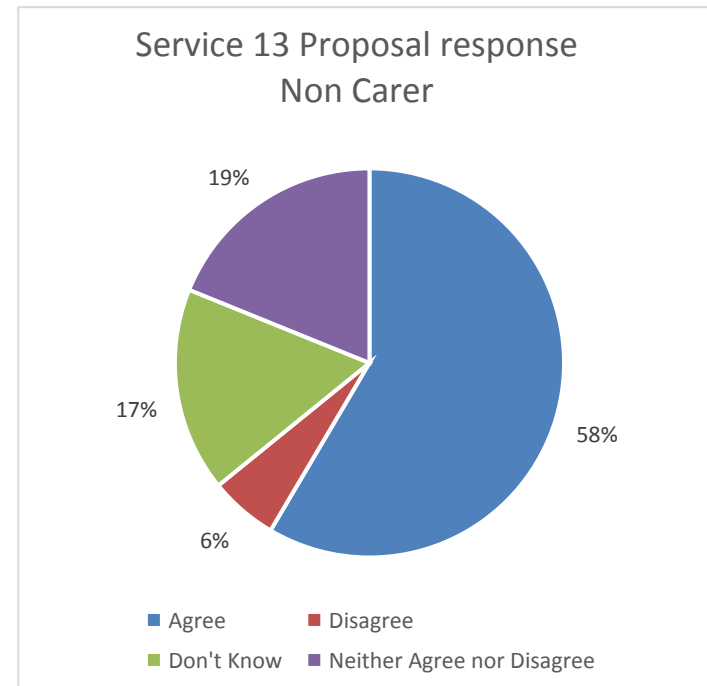


Figure 5.2.7: Respondents answers to Q5 by those identifying themselves as NOT having a responsibility as a Carer

### 5.3 Q5b. Please add any comments you have on the proposed changes to the 13 service (Hollingbourne – Maidstone)

There were 38 responses to this question. Some of the typical comments are presented in the table below.

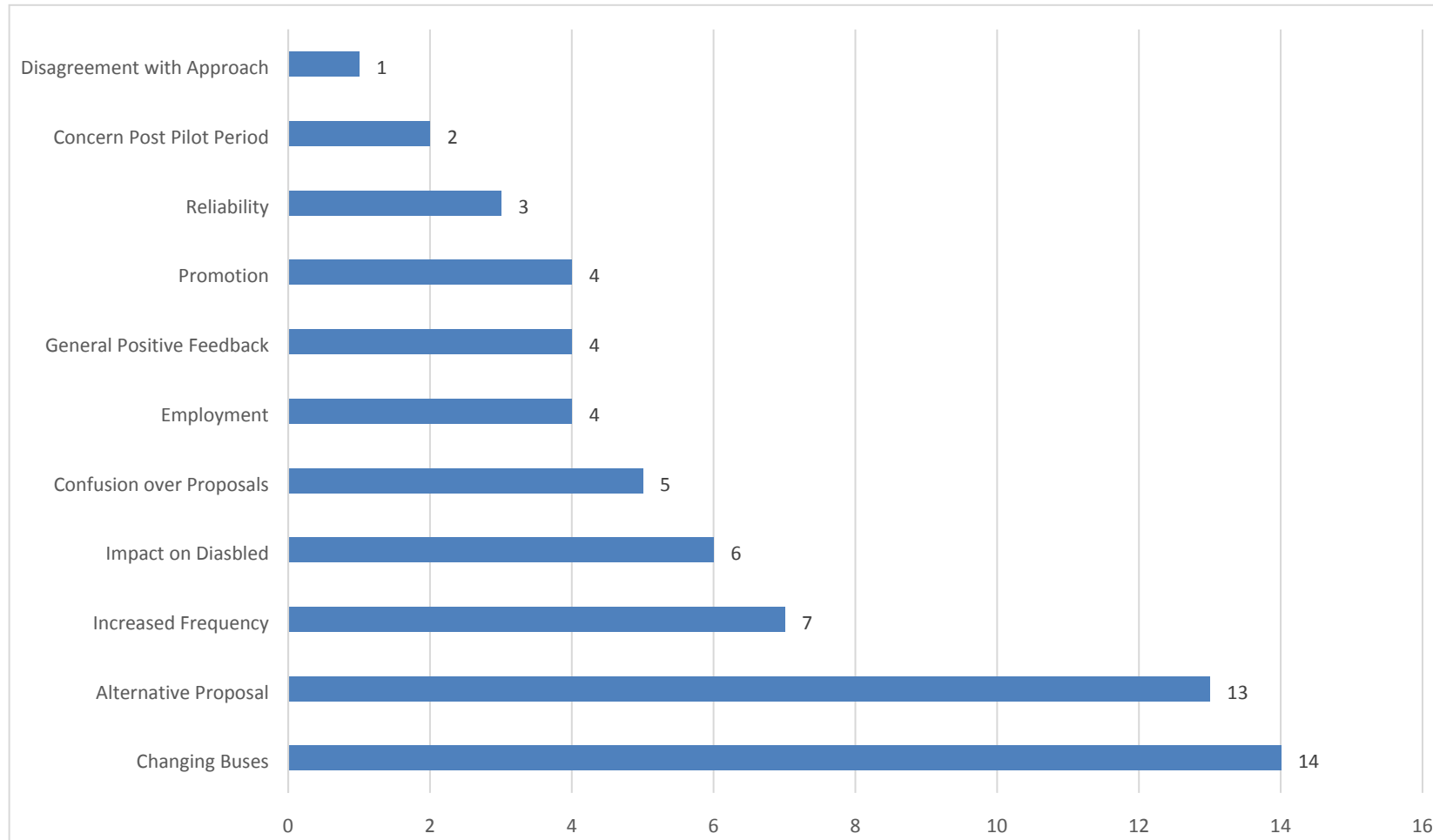


Figure 5.3: Themes to open questions by proportion.

Theme	Example of feedback
Changing buses	<p><i>A feeder service would be acceptable as long as the busses interconnected without too much waiting around</i></p> <p><i>My only worry is that the link bus to Maidstone is not punctual</i></p> <p><i>I agree as long as the feeder bus connects ok and you don't have to wait another hour</i></p> <p><i>The 82 is supposedly a 10 min service but on any given day the 82s seem to run in bunches, ie disruption in Maidstone means they are never equally spaced running.</i></p>
Alternative Proposal	<p><i>would like a bus stop at the plough and Aldi</i></p> <p><i>There will be a new retirement village in Leeds Village</i></p> <p><i>A connection to the 10x service at Great Danes would be welcome</i></p>
Increased Frequency	<p><i>Agree as long as there are more buses</i></p> <p><i>I think it will be great to have more frequent service</i></p>
Impact on Disabled	<p><i>As great as it would be to have a more regular service as someone who suffers with severe anxiety and depression having to disrupt my journey to change busses will add extra stress to using public transport.</i></p>
Confusion over Proposals	<p><i>In relation to the phrase that buses will "terminate at Morrisons, Sutton Road" - where do they go after that?</i></p> <p><i>It is unfair to leave the villages of Hollingbourne, Leeds and Langley without a bus service</i></p>
Employment	<p><i>I need to get to work on time and I worry that the feeder bus idea will incur late arrival to town</i></p>
General Positive Feedback	<p><i>It should improve the service for residents</i></p>
Reliability	<p><i>The most important factor in bus transport for me is reliability</i></p>
Promotion	<p><i>What will be done to entice people out of their cars and onto these buses, that doesn't already happen now?</i></p> <p><i>Please find a way of informing the public of the new service. I would be very upset if the whole of the service was removed because of lack of use.</i></p>
Concern Post Pilot Period	<p><i>What happens to the services if after the years trial they are deemed a failure?</i></p>
Disagreement with Approach	<p><i>There is nothing new in these ideas</i></p>

Table 5.3: Themes to open questions by example.

### 5.4 Q6a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the changes we have proposed for the 59 service (Grafty Green – Maidstone)

There were 67 responses to this question.

- 60% of respondents agreed with the changes
- 21% of respondents disagreed with the changes
- 19% of respondents did not agree or disagree or did not know

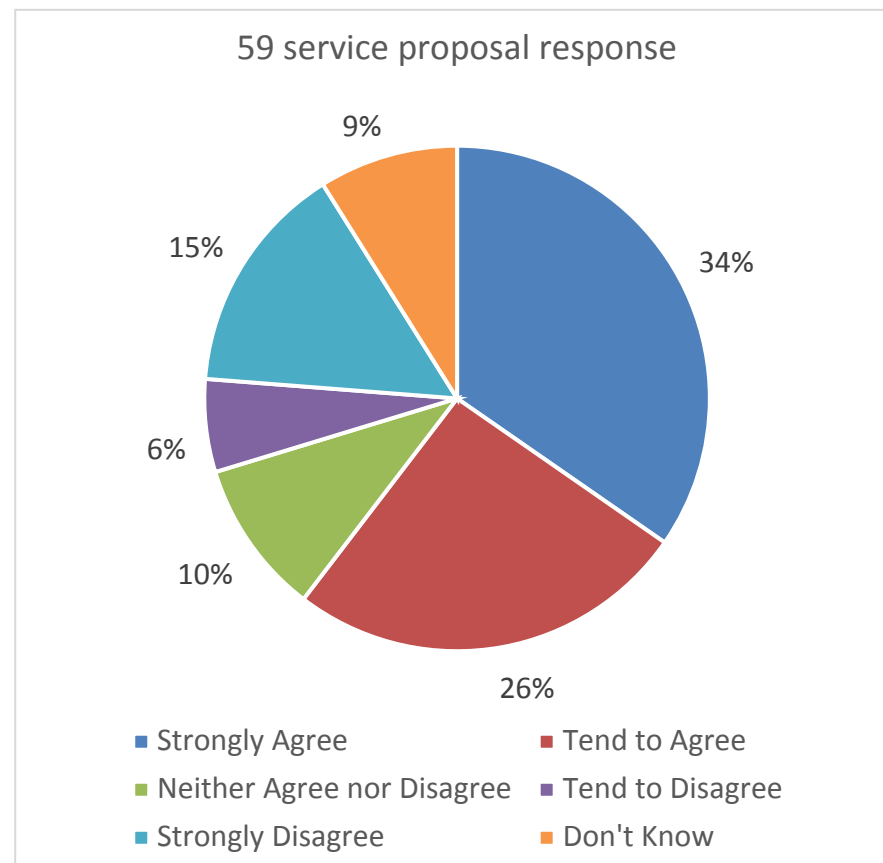


Figure 5.4: Respondents answers to Q6.

## 5.5 Q6a - further analysis

To further our understanding of the reasoning behind why respondents agreed or disagreed with the proposed changes, we completed some analysis looking at whose responding as service users, respondent age, disabled status or carer status affected their view of the proposal.

### 5.5.1 Q6a - Service breakdown

All 68 current users of service 59 responded to this question.

The figure on the right identifies the responses to question 5 from respondents from this group. Of these:

- 48 (72%) agreed with the changes
- 18 (25%) disagreed with the changes
- 2 (3%) neither agreed or disagreed with the changes

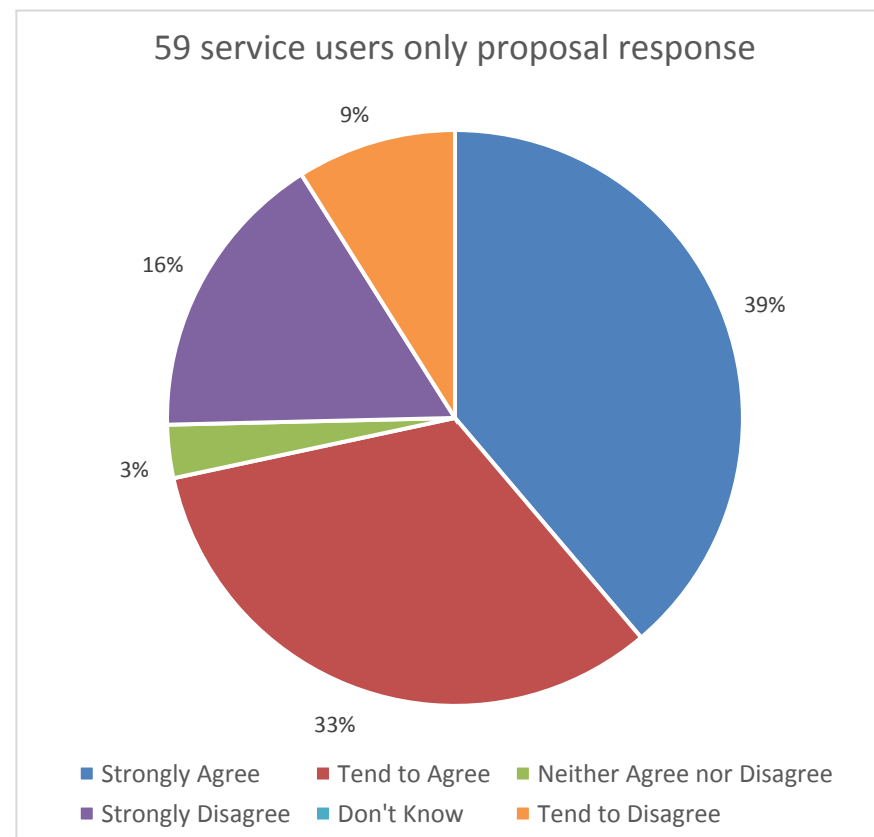


Figure 5.5.1: Respondents answers to Q6 by service user.

### 5.5.2 Q6a - Disabled status breakdown

21 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.

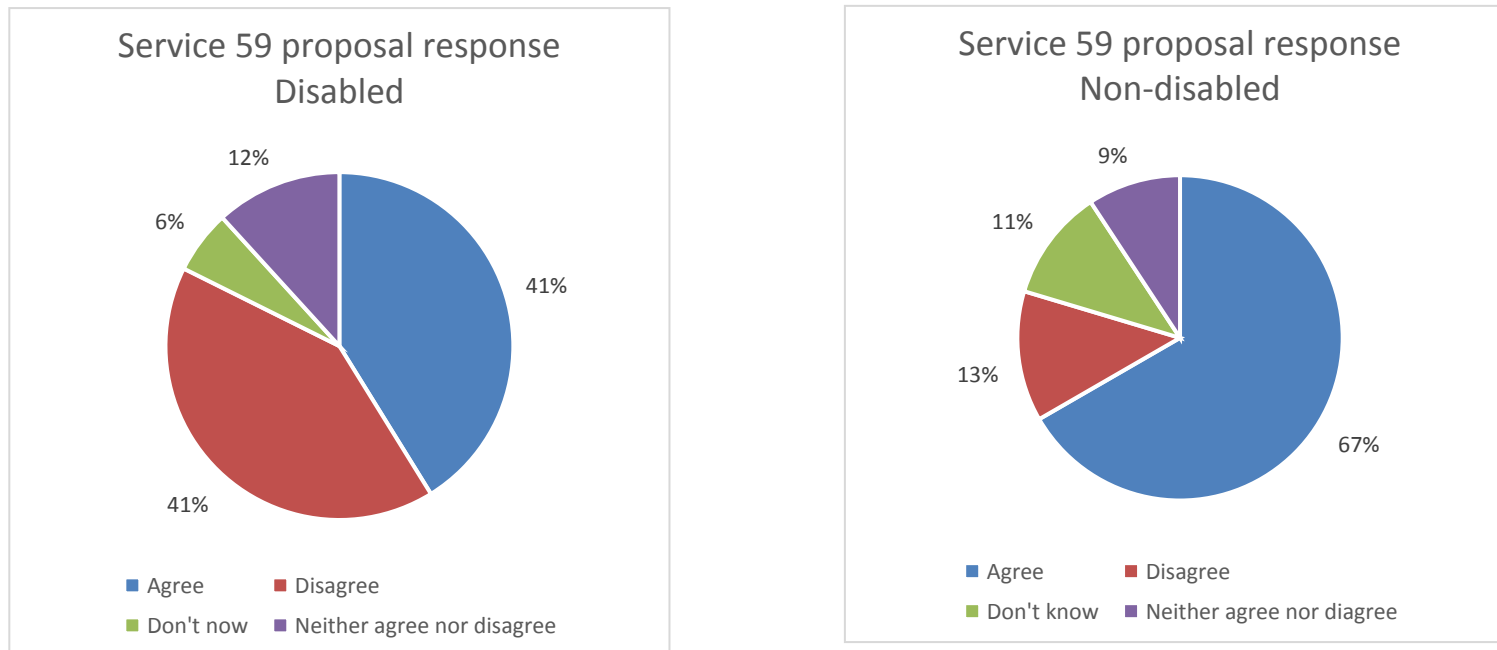


Figure 5.5.2: Respondents answers to Q5 by those identifying themselves as disabled

Figure  
by tho  
disable

### 5.5.3 Q6a – 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 those over the age of 65 are more likely to agree with the changes suggesting they will gain greater benefit from the changes.

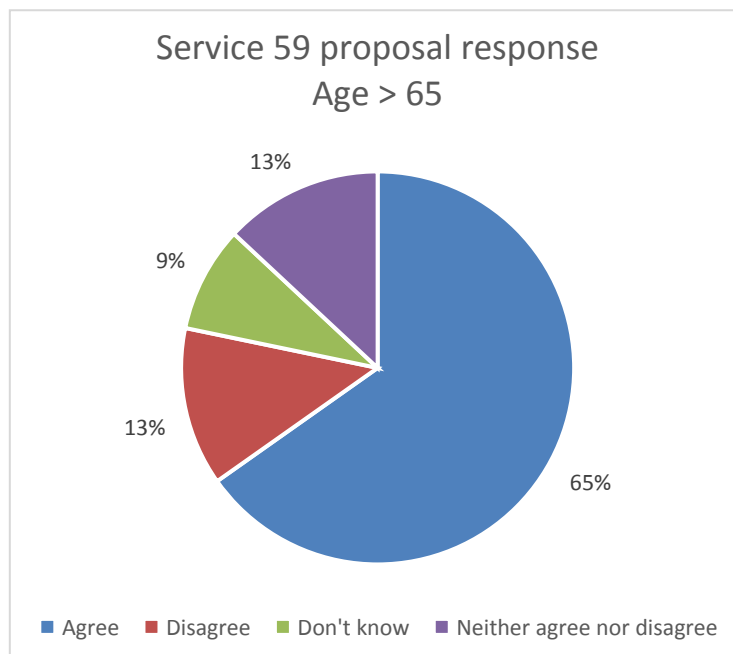


Figure 5.5.4: Respondents answers to Q5 by those over the age of 65

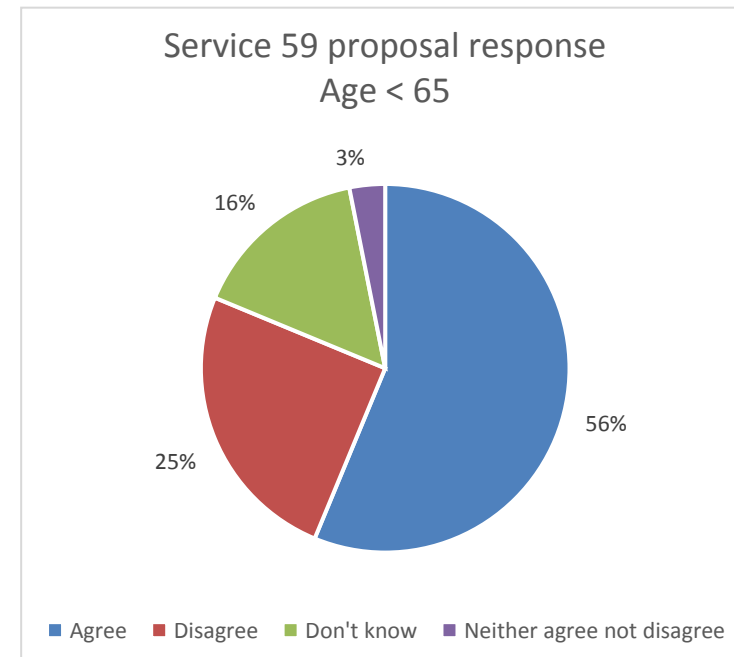


Figure 5.5.5: Respondents answers to Q5 by those under the age of 65

### 5.5.4 Q6a - Carer Status breakdown

12 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 EqlAs.

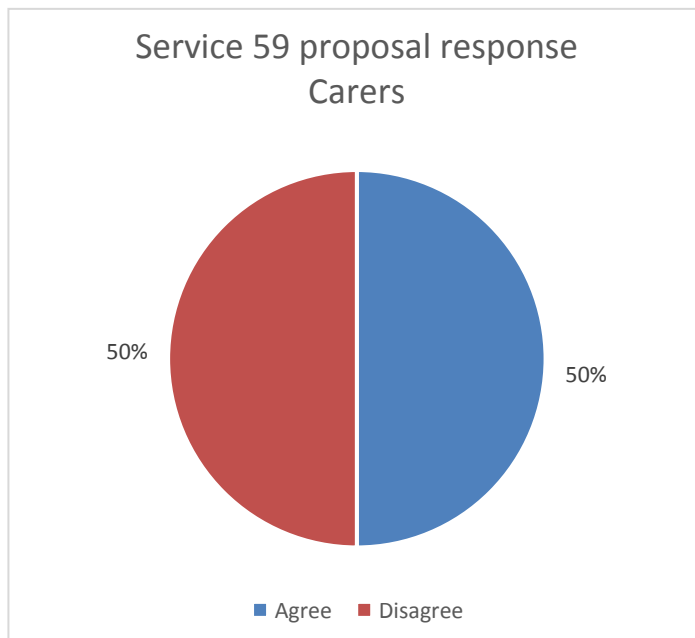


Figure 5.5.6: Respondents answers to Q5 by those identifying themselves as having a responsibility as a Carer

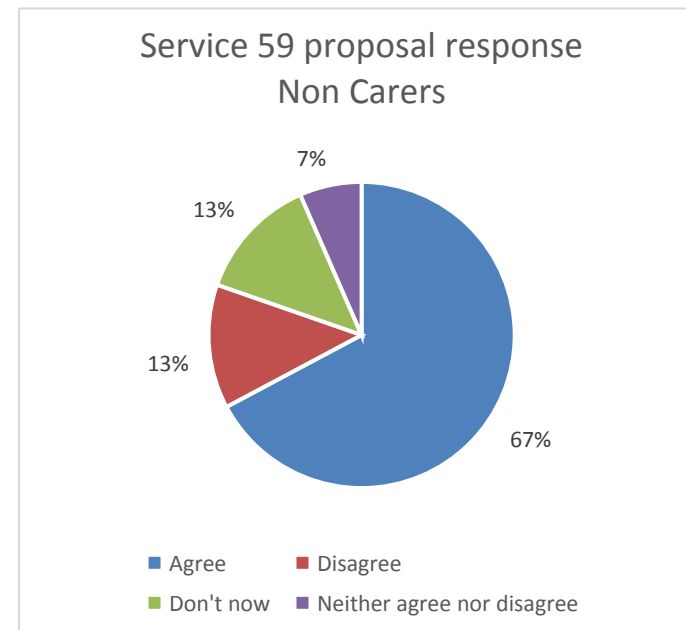


Figure 5.5.7: Respondents answers to Q5 by those identifying themselves as NOT having a responsibility as a Carer



### 5.6 Q6b. Please add any comments on the proposed changes to the 59 service (Grafty Green – Maidstone)

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

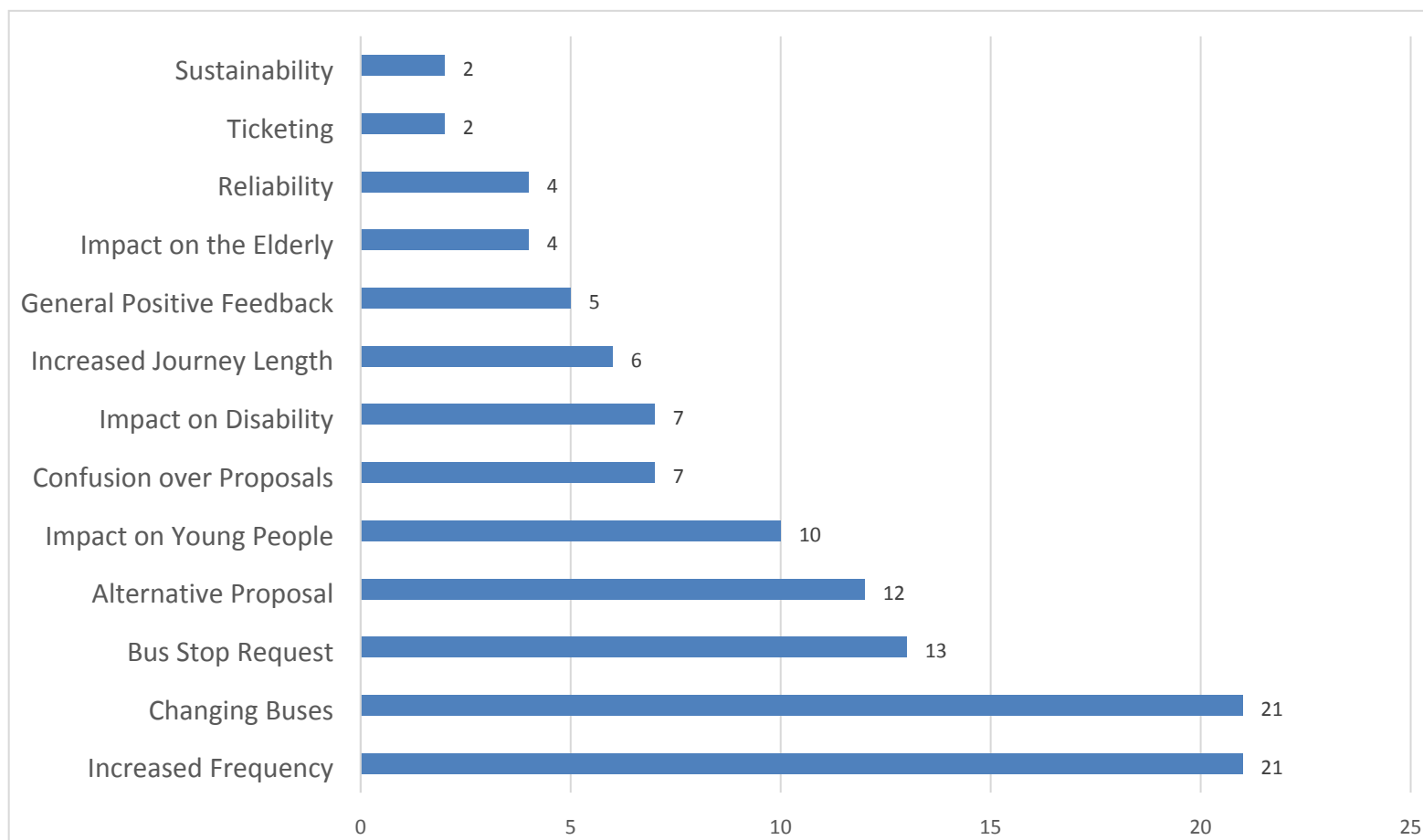


Figure 5.6: Themes to open questions by proportion.

Table 5.6: Themes to open questions by example.

Theme	Examples of feedback
Increased Frequency	<i>Would prefer the greater frequency of buses which link up with the 82 and 12 I agree on the basis that the proposal, if implemented, would mean more no. 59 buses if it means more buses servicing rural villages, it must be a good thing It would make things easier if more buses ran The more frequent service is an advantage, and much needed</i>
Changing Buses	<i>the need to change at Morrisons would be an inconvenience The biggest problem would be missing the last bus I am concerned about the bus shelters available on the sutton rd and if the buses will wait at Morrisons should the 82 be held up by traffic It is therefore really important that consideration is given around timings Having to change buses mid route is very stressful</i>
Bus Stop Request	<i>would like bus stops at the plough and aldi We would be really interested in a stop at one or both of our office locations</i>
Alternative Proposal	<i>an additional interchange at Warmlake Crossroads would do much to increase destination opportunities and minimise journey times there will also be no way for our residents to get to the doctors surgeries at Coxheath</i>
Impact on Young People	<i>The trial should also have made changes to the school bus... The Coxheath loop needs to be taken out</i>
Confusion over Proposals	<i>buses will "terminate at Morrisons, Sutton Road" - where do they go after that? This will undoubtedly encourage parents to drive their children to school rather than getting them to change buses and have a longer journey Leaving the people stranded in these villages is unfair</i>
Impact on Disability	<i>This would not be suitable... Especially when visually impaired "I could not stand and wait at Morrisons for too long "I will be unable to use this service as I will not be able to change buses</i>
Increased Journey Length	<i>some concern over ... increased overall journey time</i>
General Positive Feedback	<i>Good idea to link to Morrisons shopping stop</i>
Impact on the Elderly	<i>change of busses is a distinct problem for elderly</i>
Confusion over Proposal	<i>This will undoubtedly encourage parents to drive their children to school Just because we live in a village we shouldn't be cut off from getting to town</i>
Reliability	<i>Please make 59 more frequent and reliable</i>
Ticketing	<i>Bus prices need to be sorted out</i>
General Disagreement	<i>Would strongly recommend thinking again about these changes</i>

**5.7 Q7. Please add any further comments you have on the proposed changes to the 13 and 59 services in the box below.**

This question was answered 50 times.

- 8 comments were clearly related to service 13 and have been included in section 5.3.
- 32 comments were clearly related to service 59 and have been included in section 5.6.
- 10 comments were not specific to either service, but repeated themes already mentioned in Q5b or Q6b. These have been reported in **both** sections 5.3 and 5.6.

[Table 5.6: Themes to open questions by example.](#)

## 6. Next Steps

On the 19<sup>th</sup> March, this report and an updated EqlA 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, EqlA 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/maidstonebuspilot](http://www.kent.gov.uk/maidstonebuspilot) 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 3<sup>rd</sup> June. In advance of this, notices would be placed on all affected bus services notifying passengers of the changes. Should the pilot go ahead, additional or alternative proposals made by respondents will be considered by the Public Transport team.

The Equality Impact Assessment has been updated and the agreed adjustments will be taken forward.