

Sudbury Steering Group

Regeneration Opportunities at Hamilton Road Quarter

July 2015

The Hamilton Road Quarter is the largest town centre regeneration site in the area and is identified as a key site to deliver economic growth to Sudbury. The development of this area provides a real opportunity to increase the town's leisure and retail offer, thereby ensuring Sudbury remains a vibrant centre for visitors, workers and local people alike.

The site has been in need of regeneration for decades, whilst a number of developers have looked at the potential for the site for leisure led-mixed use regeneration scheme, all have identified it to be non-viable with the bus station in its current location.

To provide the maximum opportunity to regenerate this area through mixed-use development the Steering Group is seeking a solution with Babergh District Council and Suffolk County Council for the Hamilton Road site which can achieve both the economic growth whilst ensuring bus provision remains sustainable and able to meet the growth population of Sudbury.

To develop a commercial, viable scheme which is capable of delivery at Hamilton Road the relocation of the bus station to a suitable location will be necessary.

With this in mind, an exhibition was held during July 2015 which formed the first phase of work, sharing what the key objectives are for the site, along with putting forward the concept ideas and the preferred option for feedback. This feedback is contained in this document which will help form the next stages.



Regeneration at Hamilton Road Quarter: Phase 1 Engagement Results

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Introduction

Responses to the Regeneration Opportunities at Hamilton Road Quarter Engagement

Responses to this engagement were gathered in two ways. Firstly, an exhibition introducing the Steering Group and the proposals for the first phase of redevelopment of the Hamilton Road Quarter, including the Steering Group's Preferred Option for the first phase, in Sudbury Town Centre was held at Sudbury Heritage Centre. This engagement ran from 2pm on Thursday 2 July to 4pm on Friday 17 July, with weekday opening hours between 10am and 4pm. In addition to this the exhibition was manned on the following occasions:

- 2pm to 6pm on Thursday 2 July
- 10am to 2pm on Saturday 11 July
- 7pm until the end of a Sudbury Town Council Meeting on Tuesday 14 July

At this event hardcopies of the Survey were available, with respondents asked to return their completed surveys to the exhibition before its close on Friday 17 July.

Secondly, an online version of the survey was open between 2pm on Thursday 2 July and 9am Monday 20 July. Both the exhibition and the online survey were promoted in local media and via Babergh District Council's website and social media channels.

Survey Responses: Summary

Over the 18 day period that the survey was open, 175 responses were received.

Of these responses 115 were hardcopy surveys submitted via the exhibition, while 60 were completed online. These responses indicated:

- A dissatisfaction with the Preferred Option
- Multiple respondents independently raised the option of retaining the current Bus Station with improvements
- An approval of working to improve bus provision in Sudbury Town Centre
- That the large majority of respondents were over the age of 50 and lived in Sudbury and the immediate area

The surveys asked 8 questions, which were:

1. Which of these factors is most important to you in a wider regeneration of Hamilton Road Quarter? (A list of seven factors was included)
2. How would you rate the Steering Group's Preferred Option?
3. What aspects of the Steering Group's Preferred Option do you like?
4. What changes could be made to the Preferred Option to improve it?
5. How frequently do you use public buses?
6. Which of the following would make you more likely to use public transport? (A list of 8 factors was included)
7. Please indicate your age range
8. Please provide the first part of your postcode

The answers to these questions are expanded below, with the key points at the top of each page.

Frequent Questions

As well as answering the question in the survey, many respondents took the opportunity to write their own. Some of the questions which were frequently asked were:

- Have bus drivers/companies been consulted on these plans?
- Has work been carried out to prove the demand for additional retail space?
- Has work been carried out to prove the demand for a town centre cinema?
- What work can be done to guarantee easy connectivity for bus users – i.e. that frequently made connections between two bus services will be delivered at one site, with no need for passengers to walk between the split sites
- What provision will be made to offset loss of town centre car parking in Girling Street?

The Steering Group may wish to consider including answers to these questions – highlighting previous work or planned future work – as part of any formal response to this engagement.

Age of Respondents

Before reading the results of the engagement, it is worth noting that over 57% of respondents were over the age of 65. As such these respondents may have access to free bus travel or make regular use of public transport during off peak hours, which could in turn influence their views on provision of public transport and regeneration in Sudbury.

Possible explanations for the disproportionately high number of respondents above the age of 65 may include the timing of the exhibition, open largely during normal working hours, and the location in the Town Hall and Heritage Centre rather than venues with higher through traffic.

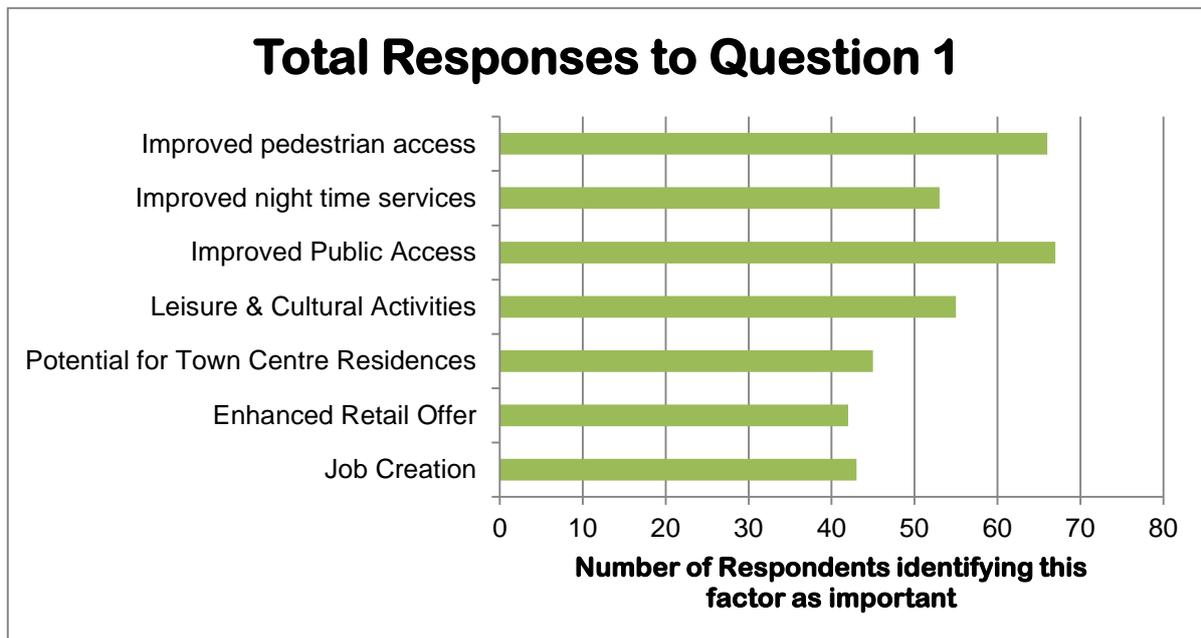
Full results for the age of respondents can be found in the answers to Question 7, summarised on page 15.

Question 1: Which of these factors is most important to you in a wider regeneration of the Hamilton Road Quarter?

- The following three factors were identified as important by the most respondents:
 - Public Access, identified by 38.29% of respondents
 - Pedestrian Access, identified by 37.71% of respondents
 - Leisure & Cultural Services, identified by 31.43% of respondents
- 168 responses to this question were received
- 7 Respondents did not answer this question

The full question asked respondents to choose up to three of the following factors as most important in a wider regeneration of the Hamilton Road Quarter:

- Improved Pedestrian Access
- Improved Night Time Services and Activities
- Improved Public Access
- Increased Leisure and Cultural Activities
- Potential for Town Centre Residences as part of a Mixed Use Scheme
- Enhanced Retail Offer
- Job Creation



Note: Some respondents listed these factors in order of importance, labelling them from 1 to 7. In order to include their responses in the above data, the three most important factors identified by each of these respondents was included above.

In addition, 25 respondents to the hardcopy survey took the opportunity to add additional comments to this question. The following factors were raised independently by several different respondents:

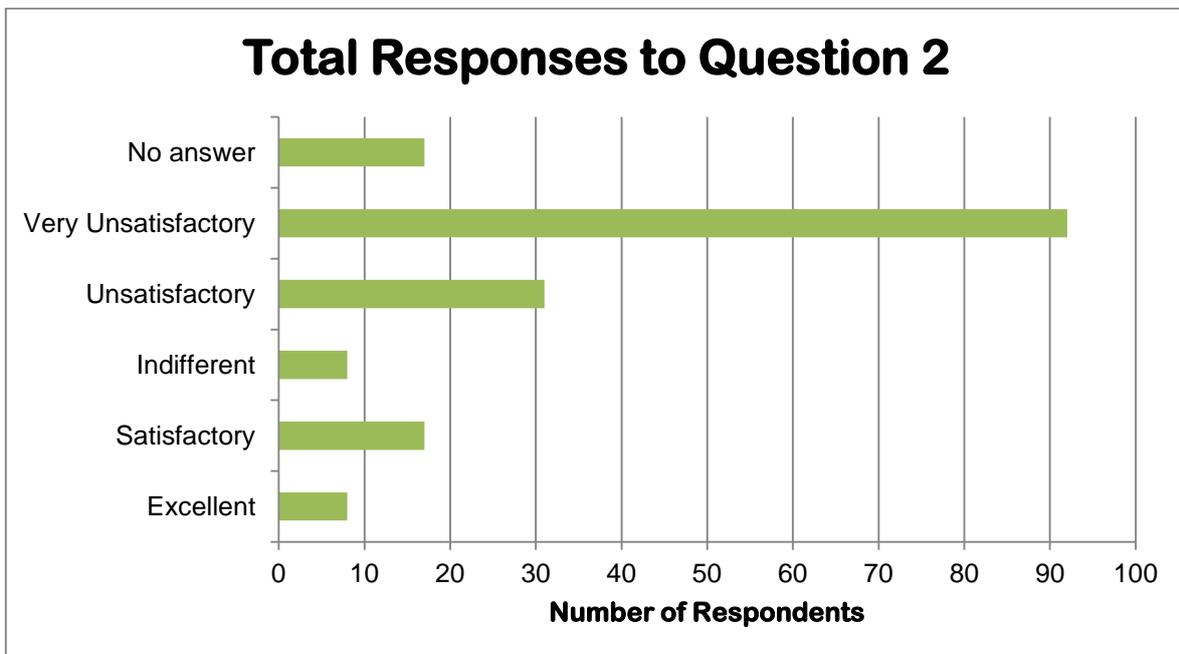
Suggested Factors for Consideration	Number of Respondents raising this
An Improved Bus Station/Bus Service	6
Maintaining the Bus Station at its current location	3
“None” (Annotated by respondents, not including answers left blank)	3
All Factors marked as Important	3
Provision of a Cinema	2
Maintenance or expansion of car parking areas	2
Uncertainty over how an Enhanced Retail Offer could be provided in light of currently unoccupied retail units in Town Centre	2

Question 2: How would you rate the Preferred Option?

- 52.57% of Respondents rated the Preferred Option as Very Unsatisfactory, with a further 17.71% rating it as Unsatisfactory
- 169 responses to this question were received
- 6 Respondents did not answer this question
- 1 Respondent provided a Written Answer in place of Answers to Questions 3 and 4

The Full question asked respondents to rate the Preferred Option (Split site bus station between Great Eastern Road and Girling Street) against the following ratings:

- Excellent
- Satisfactory
- Indifferent
- Unsatisfactory
- Very Unsatisfactory



In addition, 14 respondents to the hardcopy survey took the opportunity to add additional comments to this question. The following factors were raised independently by several different respondents:

Frequently raised concern	Number of Respondents raising this
Concerns around congestion on Girling Street	3
Concerns around pollution/fumes (particularly on Girling Street)	2
General Dissatisfaction with the Preferred Option without specifics*	5

** Respondents had the opportunity to refer to specifics in answers to Questions 3 and 4*

Question 3: What aspects of the Sudbury Steering Group's Preferred Option do you like?

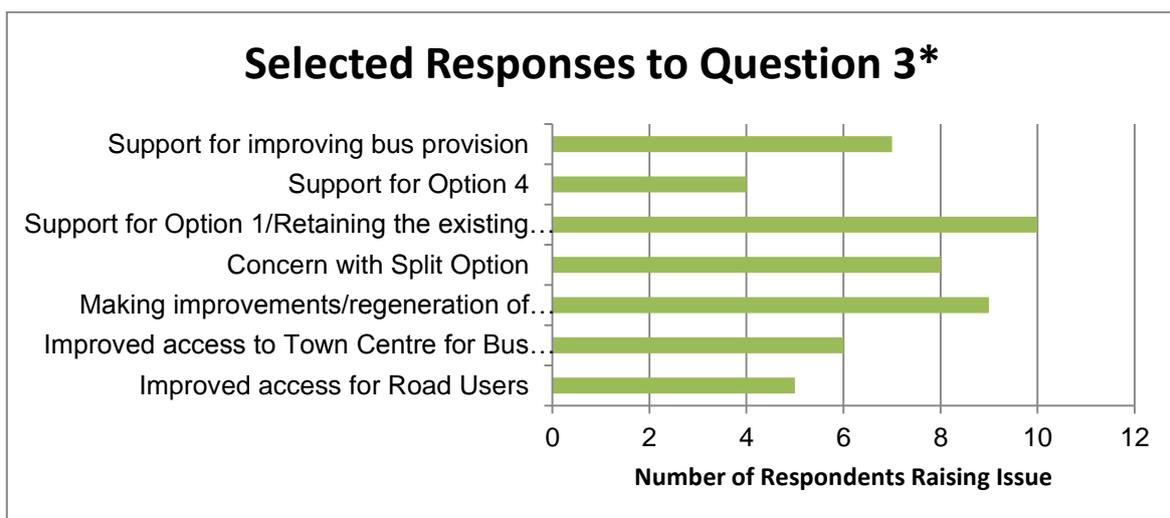
- 42.73% of Respondents stated there were no aspects they liked
- 9.09% of Respondents independently indicated a preference for Option 1 (improving the existing site)
- 110 Answers to this question were received
- 65 Respondents did not answer this question

The Full Question gave respondents the opportunity to comment on any aspects of the Preferred Option of which they approved. Many respondents took this opportunity – the first in the survey to seek open answers – to raise additional issues or viewpoints.

The most common response to this question was “None”, indicating that there was no aspect of the Preferred Option of which the Respondents approved. 47 Respondents, forming 42.73% of those who answered this question and 26.86% of those who submitted a response to this survey, chose this option.

Other than this, the following issues were raised repeatedly by different respondents:

- Support for Option 1/retaining the existing bus station (including retaining the bus station with improvement)
- Support for taking steps to improve areas of the Town Centre (e.g. Hamilton Road Quarter, North Street, etc.)
- Concern with Split Option proposals
- Support for improving bus provision in Sudbury
- Support for improving access to the Town Centre for bus users
- Support for improving access to the Town Centre for road users
- Support for Option 4 (Single location bus station provision at the current Kingfisher Leisure Centre car park)



***Please Note:** This chart does not include the response that there were No aspects of the Preferred Option supported. This was the **largest single response**, with over 4 times the responses of the Support for Option 1 listed above. This response was not included in the above chart to provide a clearer comparison between the levels of support for the other issues independently raised

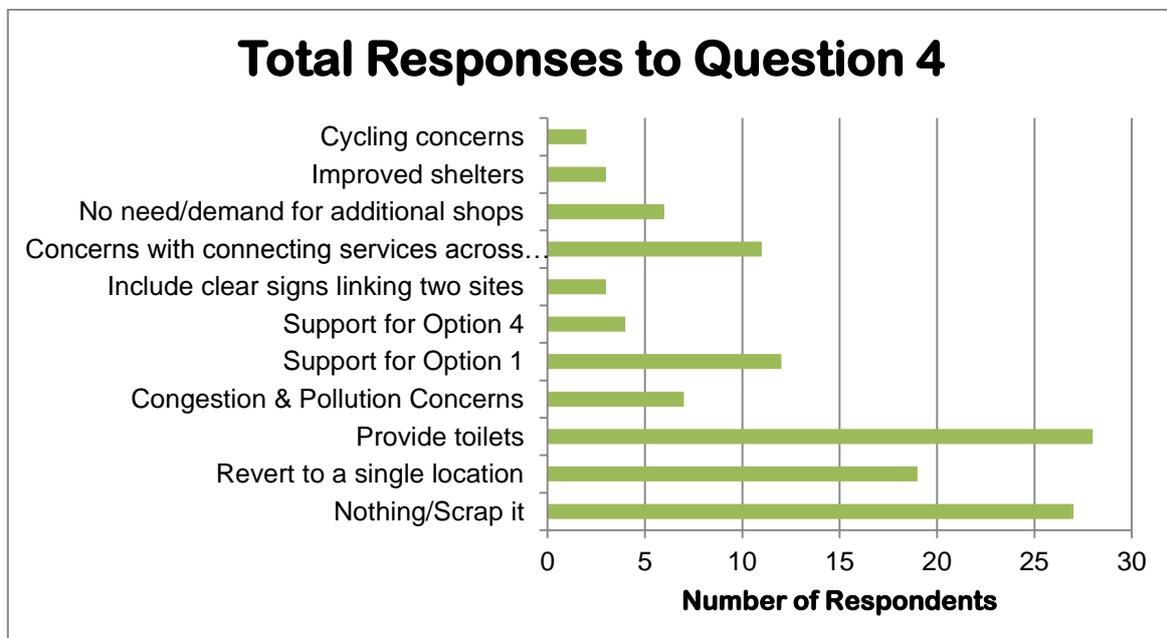
Question 4: What changes could be made to the Preferred Option to improve it?

- The most frequently raised improvement was the provision of toilet facilities at both sites, cited by 23.73% of respondents
- 22.88% of respondents to this question felt there was nothing that could improve the Preferred Option (almost unanimously from a perspective that these plans should be dropped)
- 16.1% of respondents wished to see plans revert to a single location bus station
- 118 Answers to this question were received
- 57 Respondents did not answer this question

The Full Question gave respondents the opportunity to comment on any aspects of the Preferred Option of which they approved. Many respondents took this opportunity to raise additional issues or viewpoints.

The most common response, raised by 28 people, was that any new plans for a bus station must include toilet facilities – including facilities at each site in the case of the Preferred Option. This was highlighted by 23.73% of respondents to this question (16% of respondents to the survey overall).

The second most common responses was that the Preferred Option should be scrapped, and that nothing could be done to improve it sufficiently to warrant it’s pursuit, with 27 respondents (22.88% of those who answered this question, 15.43% of respondents to the survey in total) commenting on these lines.



In addition, the following suggestions and concerns were raised by multiple respondents:

- Suggestion to revert to a plan with a single location bus station
- Suggestion that Option 1 (improving the existing bus station) be pursued

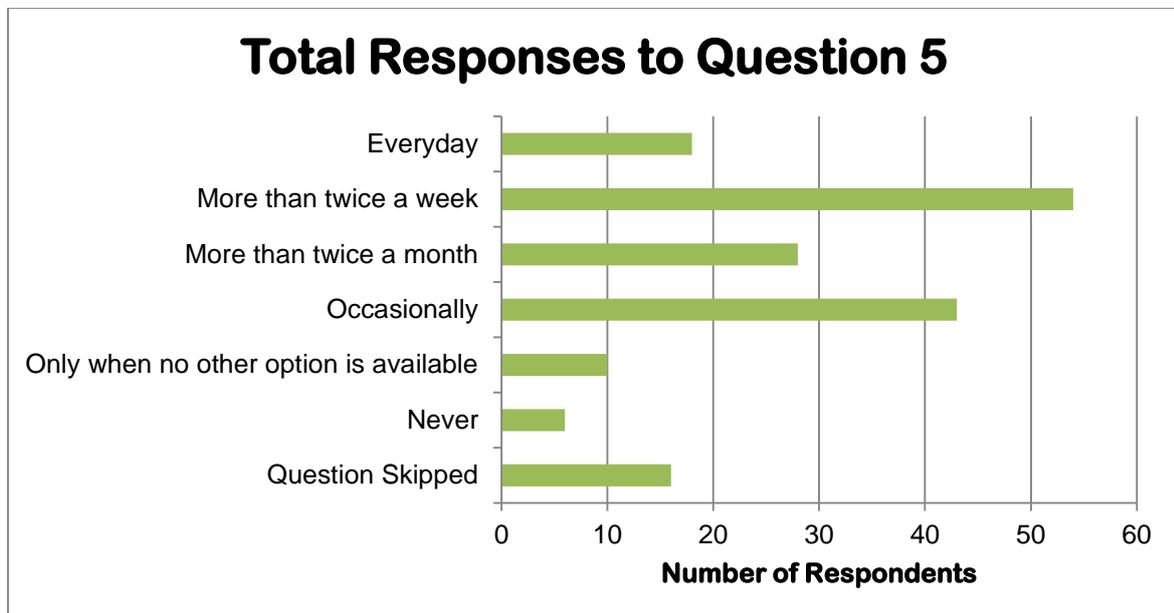
- Concern with the ease of making connecting journeys via a split site bus station
- Concern over the Town Centre congestion that the Preferred Option could generate
- Concern that there is insufficient demand for additional retail space in the town to justify additional retail space in a wider regeneration of Hamilton Road Quarter
- Suggestion that Option 4 (a new bus station sited by the Kingfisher Leisure Centre) be pursued
- Suggestion that additional bus shelters are provided at the new sites
- Suggestion that clear signs be installed in the town to lead people to the new sites
- Concern that the Preferred Option could make the town less cyclist friendly

Question 5: How frequently do you use public buses?

- 30.86% of Respondents use public buses more than twice a week
- Less than 10% of Respondents use buses “Only when no other option is available” or “Never”
- 159 responses to this question were received

The Full question asked respondents how frequently they use public buses, asking them to select from the following options:

- Everyday
- More than twice a week
- More than twice a month
- Occasionally
- Only when no other option is available
- Never



Some respondents took the “Everyday” option to mean literally every day, rather than every day that services were available, and took the opportunity to highlight the current absence of Sunday or Bank Holiday services.

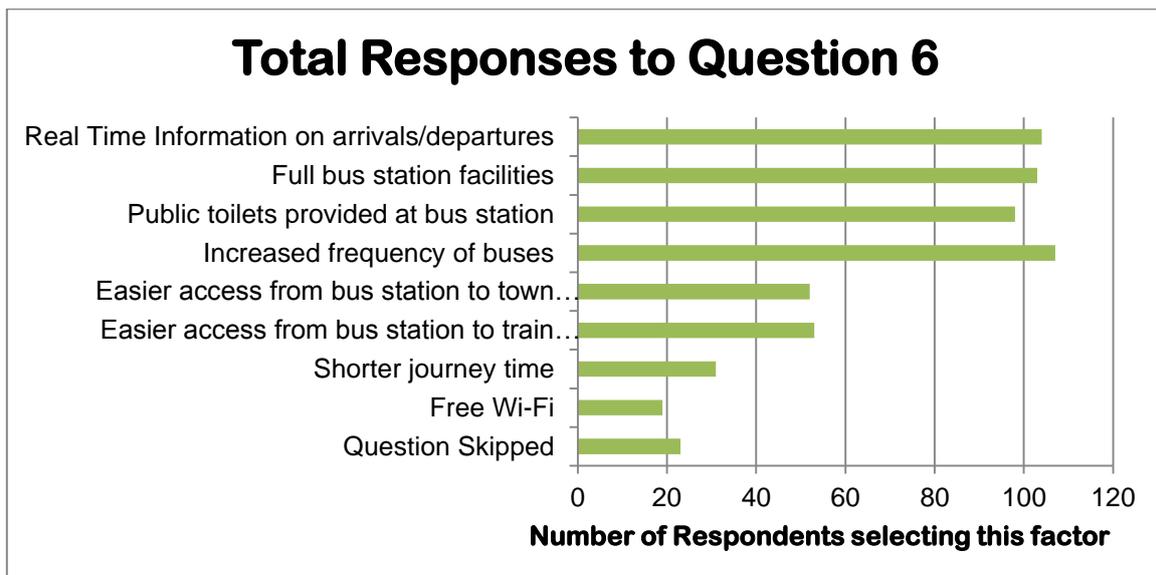
Question 6: Which of the following would make you more likely to use public transport?

- The following four factors emerged as the most likely to encourage greater use of public transport:
 - Increased frequency of buses, selected by 61.14% of respondents
 - Real time information on arrivals/departures, selected by 59.43% of respondents
 - Full bus station facilities, selected by 58.86% of respondents
 - Public toilets provided at the bus station, selected by 56% of respondents
- The least likely factor to encourage greater use of public transport was Free Wi-Fi, selected by only 10.86% of respondents
- 152 responses to this question were received

The full question asked respondents to select all the factors from a list that would make them more likely to use public transport. The list consisted of:

- Real Time Information on bus arrivals/departures
- Full bus station facilities
- Public toilets provided at the bus station
- Increased frequency of buses
- Easier access from the bus station to the town centre
- Easier access from the bus station to the train station
- Shorter journey times
- Free Wi-Fi

Respondents were invited to select as many as apply.



27 Respondents to the Hardcopy survey took the opportunity to add additional comments to this question. An appetite for additional services out of current hours (i.e. Sundays, Bank Holidays, evenings) was raised independently by 5 of these respondents.

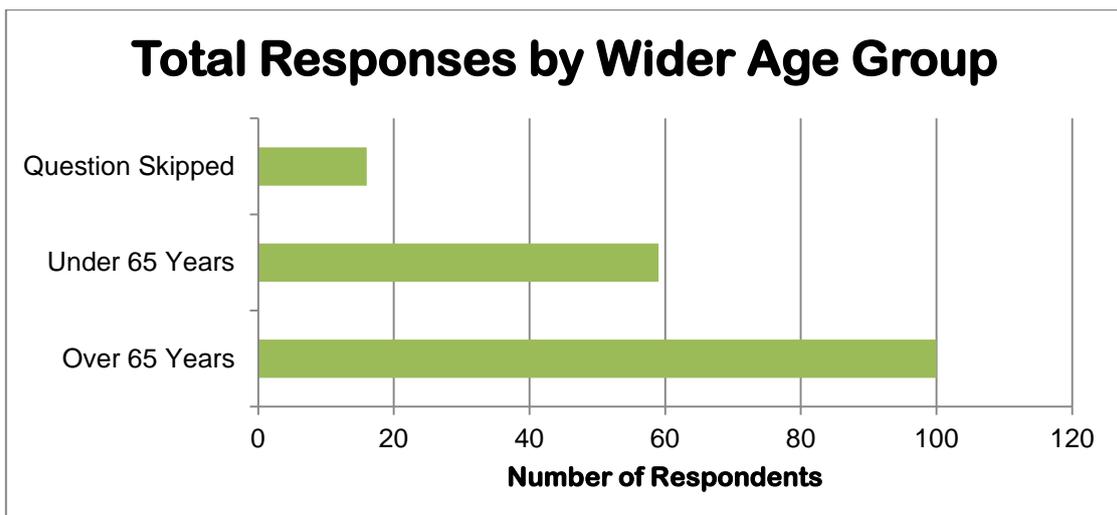
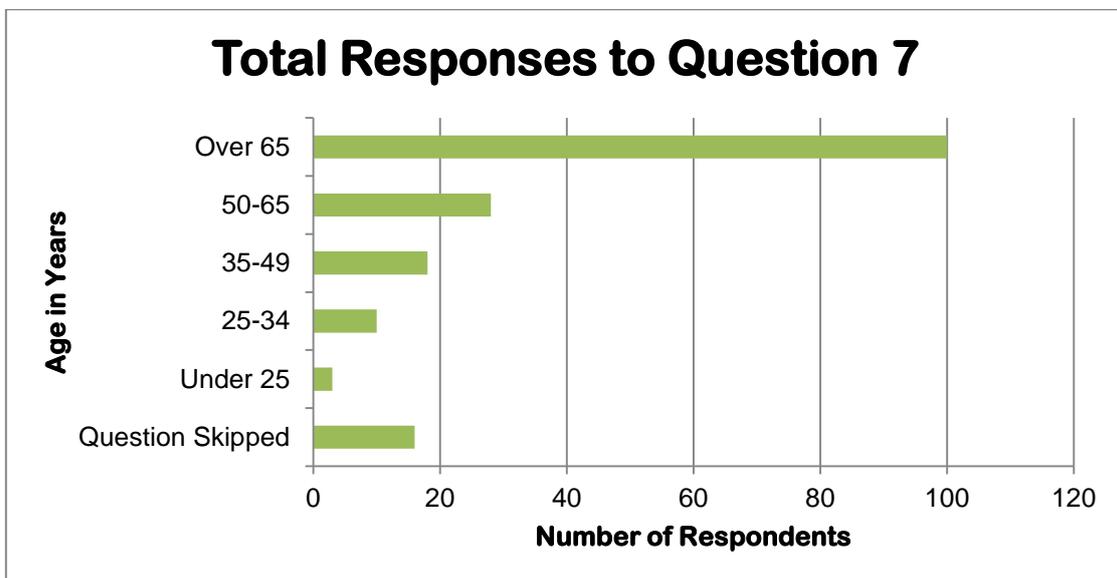
Questions 7: Please Select Your Age Range.

- 57.14% of Respondents are over the age of 65 159 responses to this question were received.

Respondents were asked to choose from the following age ranges:

- Under 25
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 49
- 50 – 65
- Over 65

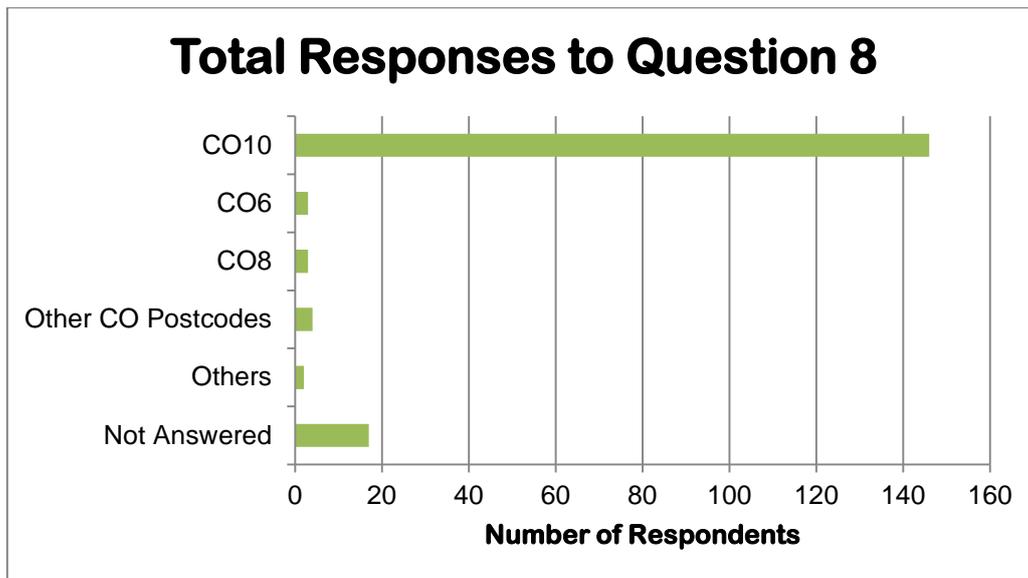
Of the 175 respondents, 159 provided answers as follows:



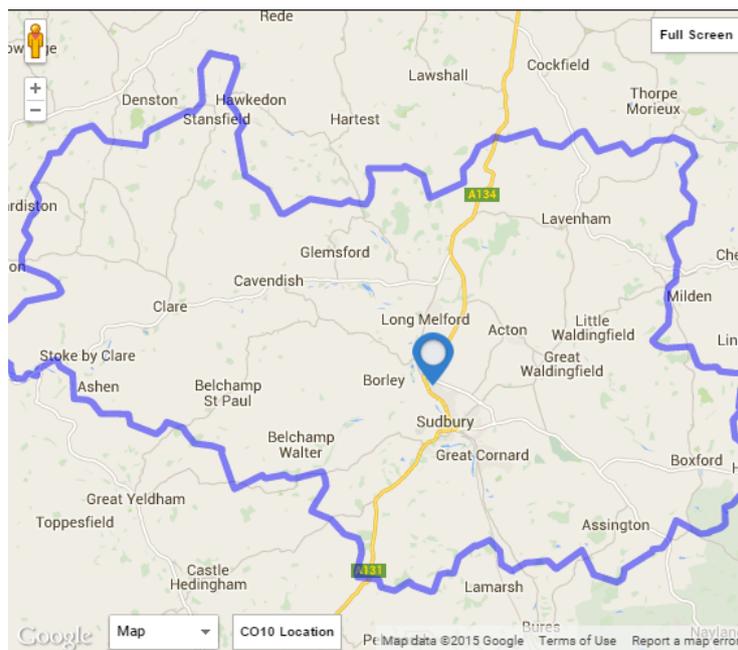
Question 8: Please provide the first part of your postcode.

- 83.43% of Respondents are from the area of which Sudbury is the primary urban area
- The most significant areas outside the CO10 Postcode that responded were from CO6 and CO8 (each home to 1.71% of respondents) – both to the south of Sudbury
- 158 responses to this question were received.

Respondents were asked to provide the first part of their home postcodes. The results were as follows:



Unsurprisingly the vast majority of respondents – a total of 83.43% – come from the CO10 postcode, including Sudbury and the area immediately around the town.



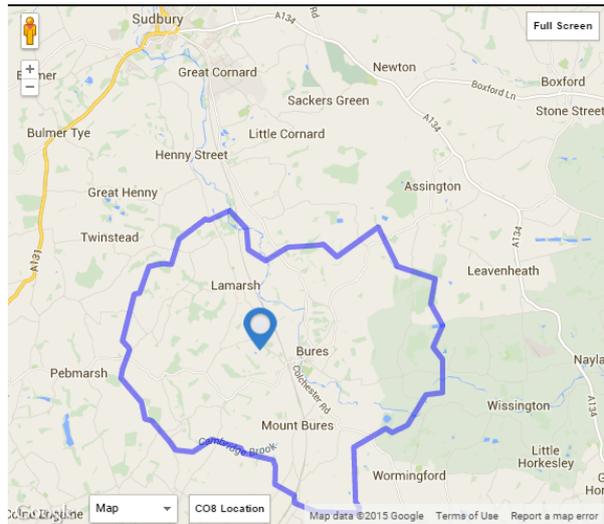
Map from Google Maps via www.postcodearea.co.uk

The next two most frequent postcode areas were CO6 and CO8, with 1.71% of respondents from each area. Both of these areas are south of Sudbury:



Postcode Area CO6

Map from Google Maps via www.postcodearea.co.uk



Postcode Area CO8

One additional comment was made on a Hardcopy Survey to Question 8, reading:

“In Braintree District but Sudbury is Key Service Centre for shopping, bank, doctor, dentist, clinic”

Additional Comments

Numerous respondents provided additional comments, not connected to any of the previous questions.

- **7 did so via written submissions attached to their Hardcopy Surveys**
- **31 issues were raised verbally by exhibition visitors on three occasions:**
 - **8 issues raised verbally during the Exhibition Launch on 2 July 2015**
 - **7 issues raised by the public attending the Steering Group Meeting on 2 July 2015**
 - **16 issues raised verbally during the Exhibition's Open Hours on the evening of 14 July 2015**

The written submissions vary in length and complexity, including a 1,195 word response that proposes an alternative solution to bus service provision in Sudbury. This report has sought to highlight recurring themes and positions in response to the Preferred Option: as each additional submission is unique and authored by an individual, they cannot be considered "recurring".

A number of issues raised verbally have also been highlighted above as recurring answers in response to previous questions. These issues include:

- The potential for a new bus station to spur on regeneration of other areas of the Town Centre (e.g. the Hamilton Road Quarter, North Street, etc.)
- A demand for toilet provision to be guaranteed at bus station sites
- Concern around pollution, particularly in Girling Street
- Concern around congestion, particularly in Girling Street
- Loss of car parking space in the Town Centre as a result of developing the Girling Street site
- Concern around the connectivity of buses between the two sites of the Preferred Option